

Traffic and Parking in Jesmond

An alternative plan for Jesmond

July 2023

Introduction

Following the introduction of the East Jesmond low traffic neighbourhood scheme (LTN), this document is a proposal to make targeted improvements to Jesmond and Osborne Road. This road specifically has become a significant concern for residents as the LTN scheme closed several routes accessing Jesmond.

Background to Jesmond

Jesmond is a diverse city centre suburb. It has 5 schools in its vicinity, educating over 3,000 children. It has several early year nurseries and a school for people with personalised needs. There is a large population of 18-25 year olds, with a majority attending nearby universities. There are also many families and residents who've lived in the area for many years.

Proposal aim

The aim of this proposal is to agree a pathway towards an area that has a lower volume of vehicles, whilst enabling the needs of people with a clear reason for a journey.

As an example, the number of schools necessitates a large quantity of school journeys. Similarly, residents shouldn't suffer from their journey times increasing as a result of having to navigate heavily congested traffic junctions.

At the heart of the issue is the ability for residents in central, North and West Jesmond to access their homes. By closing several access routes, the traffic at both ends of Osborne Road has significantly increased. This results in excessive journey times, lengthy queues and the overloading of busy junctions.

Prior to the LTN, Osborne Road traffic was manageable as traffic would use the roads through east Jesmond. The traffic would consistently be around 20mph, and the low level of queues meant you could traverse the road in relative safety on a bike or scooter. Following the LTN introduction, the queues now cause safety concerns as traffic becomes backed up along the road. There are also concerns that typical bus journeys are taking longer.

This proposal aims to lower the congestion on Osborne Road, make targeted improvements to the LTN and reduce the annual influx of cars to Jesmond.

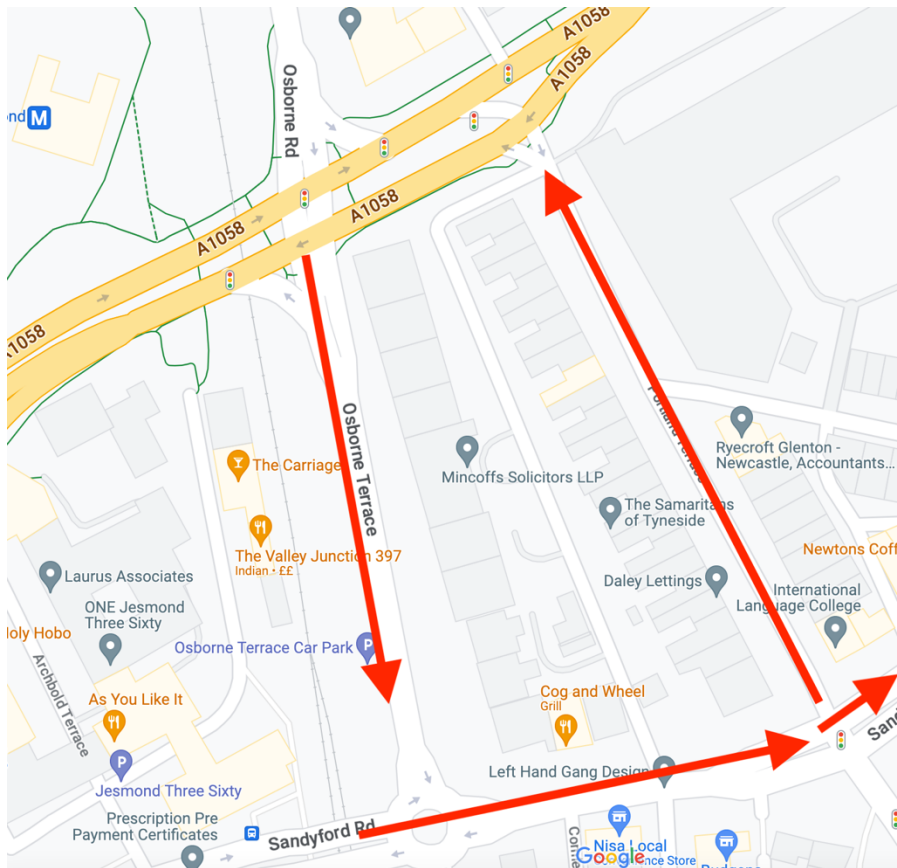
Note

This proposal does not intend to address all resident concerns or attempt to create an outcome that is beneficial to all parties. Instead, it aims to assist the city in hitting its net zero plan through a reduction in vehicles whilst alleviating congestion hotspots.

1. Osborne Road/ A1058 (Jesmond Road)

By making a limited reconfiguration to this junction, traffic into and out of Jesmond could navigate through the area at a more predictable pace. As it stands currently, there are 3 entry points to the A1058 - Osborne Terrace, Portland Terrace and Sandyford Road - from the city centre and only one – Osborne Road - from Jesmond.

If Osborne Terrace became one way, south towards the city centre, then traffic would exit from the current traffic light pattern. The time previously given to the Osborne Terrace light change could then be swapped to Osborne Road, effectively doubling the frequency and time to leave Jesmond, which would remove the congestion.



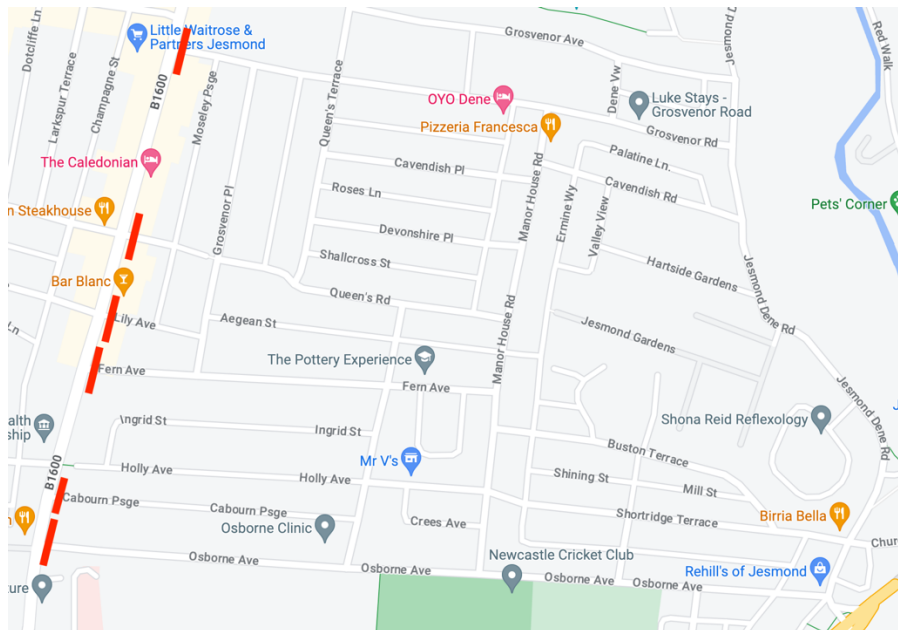
The traffic that would access the A1058 via Osborne Terrace can instead go via existing routes - either Portland Terrace to access the central motorway or Sandyford Road to access the coast. As the various city centre traffic reduction measures take hold, the need for a third entry point to the A1058 via Osborne Terrace will diminish.

The net result of this change will remove congestion from this junction, without increasing traffic as the routes through Jesmond have been closed. By allowing vehicles to move through the area, emissions will reduce as traffic is not idling unnecessarily in the Osborne Road congestion.

2. East Jesmond access to Osborne Road

The positioning of the bollards for the East Jesmond low traffic neighbourhood scheme has removed a major access point to Jesmond via the Cradlewell intersection. This forces traffic unnecessarily onto Osborne Road.

To mitigate this, vehicles should instead be directed away from Osborne Road. The bollards for the current LTN scheme are situated along Manor house road. If the bollards were to be positioned along Osborne Road, then residents would be directed in/out via the Cradlewell junction, which is currently underutilised.



Red lines show the suggested position of the East Jesmond LTN bollards

A benefit of this adjustment is that it would avoid dividing the area in two and allow the removal of the concrete blocks on Jesmond Dene Road. This would allow delivery routes across the estate to be simplified and give the emergency services an easily identifiable access point when gaining entry to this area.

By moving all resident journeys away from Osborne Road, it would allow the residents to benefit from the less congested Cradlewell entry/ exit point. The LTN would still achieve its aims of placing an additional consideration on making shorter car journeys.

Residents that wish to access Osborne Road would have a short walk, with those needing to drive for mobility reasons being able to do so. However, as all LTN residents would be unable to access Osborne Road, pressure on this road will be reduced.

This suggestion is made on the basis that residents within the LTN remain in favour of the scheme. Clearly, if this changes then other ideas should be considered.

3. Jesmond Parking

Jesmond is partially covered by a parking permit scheme, which is currently having a limited impact on controlling the number of vehicles in the area. The area has a high number of houses that have been sub-divided, resulting in an unmanageable number of permits issued under current rules.

These cars are increasingly kept in areas not covered by the parking scheme, such as Jesmond Vale and North Jesmond. By introducing a controlled parking zone (CPZ) to cover all of Jesmond, the volume of cars can be reduced to a sustainable level. This can be achieved through signage at the entry/exit points to Jesmond.

As an example, the volume of cars in July/ August is significantly lower than October/ November. By managing the car volume through a CPZ, it would be realistic to achieve the July/ August car density all year round. This brings the added benefit that fewer cars mean less car journeys and less emissions.



A scheme could calculate the number of available parking spaces on a street, then issue residents of the street a permit first. After this, any available permits can then be released to houses on the street registered as an HMO, ideally with a requirement based on a demonstrated car parking need.

This approach would allow longer term, settled residents to park on the street they live on. It would also encourage residents of HMOs, who are typically university students, not to bring a car to university and return to the level of car use seen prior to the pandemic. It would also nudge people to use alternatives such as e-scooters.

By applying a scheme to the whole of Jesmond, it prevents cars being parked outside the permitted streets which undermines the scheme intentions and impedes residents.

There are a number of workers that drive to Jesmond. These people could park in the already designated paid-parking bays such as those on Lyndhurst Avenue. It would be beneficial to adjust the maximum parking time from 4 hours to 8 and reduce the charge to make it less of a financial burden for them. There is also the option for the business to provide them a permit for £92 per year under the Business Parking Permits scheme.

School Traffic

Jesmond has a significant number of schools and early year nurseries. These schools are typically viewed as an asset to the area by most residents, albeit with concerns on the streets nearer to the schools.

Tackling school traffic is not a simple solution and the range of age groups adds to this challenge. The schools do appear to be acutely aware of the issue and regularly push parents to consider alternative transport means.

There is a willingness from residents to help find solutions to accommodate school traffic. One possibility is to use the closed lane on Osborne Terrace (as a result of the road becoming one-way) as a drop off zone for the schools, allowing traffic to be diverted outside of Jesmond.

If there is support from the Council, then this along with other options for the schools can be explored further.

Summary

The suggestions made in this proposal seeks to lower the congestion on Osborne Road, rectify some of the challenges around the LTN and make a notable impact on the city's climate target through a positive action to reduce the annual influx of cars to Jesmond.

The suggestions are made with a conscious knowledge that there is unlikely to be funding available for these proposals, hence cost-effective solutions have been suggested to make pragmatic changes with minimal funds.

Whilst it is impossible to present a solution to satisfy all residents and opinions, this proposal spreads the challenge of Newcastle hitting its net zero target across a wider range of residents, based on their ability to adapt their lifestyle.