

## Highgate road safety and speeds

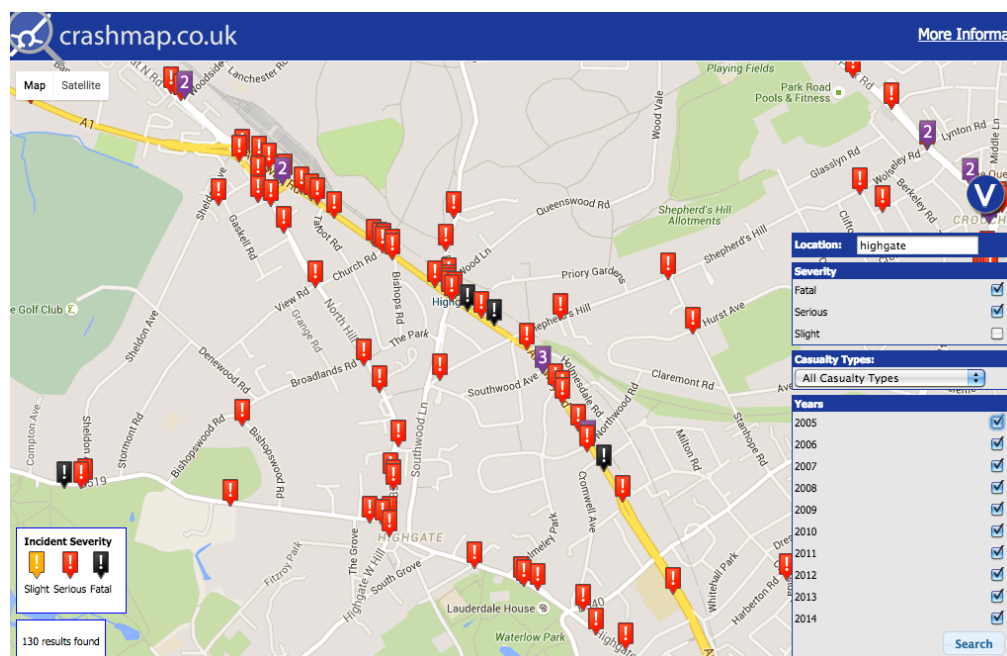
By Simon Briscoe

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Road safety is important. There is a need to make street life safer and feel safer. If our streets are more appealing places to be more people will use them as pedestrians and cyclists, encouraging a greener and healthier lifestyle. Making progress on this is a passion for the Highgate Neighbourhood Forum.

We have several traffic problems in Highgate and they might seem contradictory. We have plenty of commuters passing through, high pollution, dangerous manoeuvres, double parking, dangerous corners and crossings. The real paradox is that we have too many queues but also speeding when the queues are not there. Throw in a lot of children coming to the many schools (possibly 10,000 pupil movement each school day<sup>1</sup>) and parks, and elderly trying to get around, and the mix is potent. Some of this is measurable and some is more anecdotal.

The statistics show that there are many accidents on the streets nationally<sup>2</sup> (1,700 killed and 22,000 seriously injured in 2014). Highgate has its problems too. The map below shows that virtually all the incidents occur on the main roads, Archway Road or Highgate Hill through to North Hill. Even if the chances of an incident on any one walk or cycle are minuscule, accidents do happen. And while the perception of risk remains, fewer will shift away from car to foot or bike. We want to do something about it.



<sup>1</sup> In the forum area we have two primary schools and Channing and Highgate School with total pupil numbers of about 3,500. They come and go each day. In addition, there are movements between sites and children returning home to the area from other schools or passing through. This adds to at least 10,000 movements.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2014>

The evidence about speeding is pretty clear too. The complicated thing about Highgate's traffic is that for most people and much of the day the traffic is crawling. "What speeding?" people will wryly ask when you say there's a speeding problem.

Here we have some data from the boroughs. Camden does surveys on Swains Lane, Highgate West Hill and Highgate Hill and Haringey does so on North Hill. The excerpt below is from one day in March 2015 on Highgate Hill between (see the second column) 05.45 and 17.45. You can see (three columns at the middle of the table) that virtually all traffic passes at between 10 and 25mph. That fits with perceptions. Before the rush hour there are rather more vehicles moving at between 25 and 35mph as the lower traffic volumes allows that. The "mean" column, four from the end, is interesting. It records speeds around 25mph early in the day dropping to a low of 10mph at 08.15 before spending most of the day in the high teens. All looks reasonably safe and pretty much as expected.

46 Highgate Hill Eastbound		Bus - Lorry										Articulated																
		Micro-cycle	Light vehicle	UV towing	2 axle	3 axle	4 axle	4 axle	5 axle	6 axle											Mean	Vpp 85	Vmin	Vmax				
Date	Time	Cls 1	Cls 2	Cls 3	Cls 4	Cls 5	Cls 6	Cls 7	Cls 8	Cls 9	Cls 10	Vbin 0-5	Vbin 5-10	Vbin 10-15	Vbin 15-20	Vbin 20-25	Vbin 25-30	Vbin 30-35	Vbin 35-40	Vbin 40-45	Vbin 45-50	Vbin 50-55	Vbin 55-60	Vbin 60-130				
04/03/2015	0545	0	21	0	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	13	11	1	0	0	0	0	0	23.3	27.5	14.9	30.5
04/03/2015	0600	2	20	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	9	12	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	26.6	31.1	18.6	33.5
04/03/2015	0615	1	43	0	10	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	9	21	22	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	24.3	28.6	11.4	42.6
04/03/2015	0630	2	86	0	7	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	2	13	17	34	29	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	21.4	25.6	4.4	32.8
04/03/2015	0645	2	97	0	10	3	2	0	0	2	0	2	2	17	43	34	14	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	20.6	25.3	4.8	112.9
04/03/2015	0700	5	125	1	10	2	5	0	0	0	1	0	9	40	54	37	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	17.3	22.8	5	35
04/03/2015	0715	6	115	3	10	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	51	48	22	8	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	16.6	21.9	5.3	35
04/03/2015	0730	6	132	1	7	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	36	44	46	20	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.4	19.9	4.2	28.9
04/03/2015	0745	6	115	2	6	2	0	0	0	0	1	3	9	38	61	17	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.1	19.9	1.1	28.1
04/03/2015	0800	8	114	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	11	38	59	15	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	15.8	19.5	0.7	30.6
04/03/2015	0815	6	93	0	6	5	0	2	0	0	0	8	43	47	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10.2	13.6	0.7	16.6
04/03/2015	0830	4	93	0	6	2	0	1	0	0	0	3	29	55	17	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11.8	15	4	24.9
04/03/2015	0845	5	132	1	17	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	14	53	52	33	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.4	21.3	5	30.3
04/03/2015	0900	5	116	1	7	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	27	57	36	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.1	18.6	2.6	81
04/03/2015	0915	3	53	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	23	16	10	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15.3	21.5	5	28.8
04/03/2015	0930	10	101	0	11	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	24	50	42	8	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.3	19	5.8	28.3
04/03/2015	0945	2	96	1	10	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	7	27	35	27	10	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	17.8	24.2	2.9	32.8
04/03/2015	1000	4	97	0	12	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	14	31	41	24	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.2	20.8	7.8	31.2
04/03/2015	1015	1	78	1	12	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	7	15	33	26	13	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	24.8	7	32
04/03/2015	1030	3	96	2	14	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	41	29	16	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.2	19.9	5.7	25.3
04/03/2015	1045	2	89	0	10	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	8	29	37	24	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.5	21.3	1	26.4
04/03/2015	1100	0	97	1	14	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	23	36	36	11	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.6	19.9	4.4	33.7
04/03/2015	1115	0	78	0	9	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	44	23	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	18.7	5.5	24.3
04/03/2015	1130	2	85	0	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	16	46	26	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18.3	22.6	7.5	28.7
04/03/2015	1145	2	82	0	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	34	26	18	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.4	21.7	5.9	28.8
04/03/2015	1200	2	86	1	8	1	3	1	0	0	1	1	16	32	31	17	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	15.6	21.5	3.3	32.6
04/03/2015	1215	0	73	1	14	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	11	31	29	16	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15.4	21.9	7	29.1
04/03/2015	1230	2	82	0	13	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	18	34	15	28	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	16	23	4.6	40.5
04/03/2015	1245	0	80	0	15	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	15	26	39	15	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	15.7	21	3.4	32.7
04/03/2015	1300	3	86	0	11	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	16	47	23	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	18.4	22.8	6	31.7
04/03/2015	1315	0	89	0	13	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	31	36	18	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15.5	21.3	5.1	26.7
04/03/2015	1330	2	88	0	10	2	1	2	0	0	0	3	27	27	29	16	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.2	20.4	2	31.3
04/03/2015	1345	3	76	0	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	27	33	11	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	19.7	23.9	10.8	36.4
04/03/2015	1400	4	76	0	5	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	9	9	26	27	10	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	18.9	25.1	0.9	34.5
04/03/2015	1415	3	80	2	13	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	20	43	27	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	17.9	22.4	9	31.7
04/03/2015	1430	6	72	1	3	2	3	1	0	0	0	2	14	35	17	16	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.9	21.5	3.5	29.1
04/03/2015	1445	1	62	1	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	23	27	14	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	17.2	21	7.3	37.8
04/03/2015	1500	4	88	0	6	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	16	45	25	11	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	14.4	19.2	1.4	40
04/03/2015	1515	4	71	0	6	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	12	20	26	16	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.2	23	3.8	27.7
04/03/2015	1530	4	79	0	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	9	25	34	17	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.5	21.5	1.8	34.1
04/03/2015	1545	0	111	0	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	76	27	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13.3	16.6	5.4	25
04/03/2015	1600	1	93	0	9	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	16	48	37	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	14.2	17.7	0.5	36.5
04/03/2015	1615	3	76	0	8	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	15	21	24	14	11	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.4	23.7	2.3	30.4
04/03/2015	1630	2	75	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	7	13	33	12	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	17.4	24.2	0.5	33.1
04/03/2015	1645	3	91	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	18	35	36	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	18.9	23.7	5.4	34.3
04/03/2015	1700	5	120	0	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	35	53	32	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17.8	22.6	5.5	28.9
04/03/2015	1715	3	118	0	7	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	16	65	38	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14.2	17.9	3.7	56.3
04/03/2015	1730	4	107	1	6	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	12	35	51	14	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.5	21.3	5.1	28.3
04/03/2015	1745	8	111	3	7	2	3	0	0	1	0	2	11	43	37	27	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.9	24.2	0.8	29.3

But the real danger of very bad outcomes from road traffic accidents is not at those speeds. The final column in the excerpt shows the maximum speed recorded in that period. It shows three extreme speed events: 113, 81 and 58mph. These are very high as anyone who knows the road could testify. They are only three out of perhaps 8000 vehicles on a typical day. The two fastest are almost certainly motorbikes.

The best measure of potential danger is perhaps the "Vpp85" column, three from the end. This shows the speed that 15% of vehicles exceed. The table below shows that it rises from about 20mph in the early evening (and where it has been most of the day) to nearly 30mph by the time the pubs and restaurants are closing. That's one danger time. A typical day might see 500 to 1000 vehicles moving along that stretch of road at a

speed over 30mph. They are the ones – one in three passing vehicles in the evenings – that need to be slowed.

Date	Time	Cls 1	Cls 2	Cls 3	Cls 4	Cls 5	Cls 6	Cls 7	Cls 8	Cls 9	Cls 10	Vbin 0	Vbin 5	Vbin 10	Vbin 15	Vbin 20	Vbin 25	Vbin 30	Vbin 35	Vbin 40	Vbin 45	Vbin 50	Vbin 55	Vbin 60	Vbin 130	Mean	Vpp 85	Vmin	Vmax
06/03/2015	1815	3	124	1	8	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	32	31	34	32	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	15.3	22.1	4	37.7
06/03/2015	1830	2	134	2	13	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	39	40	48	25	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.5	20.1	5.8	29.7
06/03/2015	1845	4	108	0	6	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	4	42	42	24	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12.5	17.7	3.1	23.6
06/03/2015	1900	3	101	2	7	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	38	47	10	16	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12.7	20.6	4.8	28.9
06/03/2015	1915	6	128	1	7	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	9	73	50	7	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18.7	23	7.4	35
06/03/2015	1930	2	122	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	43	68	14	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21.1	24.4	12.7	32.2
06/03/2015	1945	5	119	2	4	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	5	61	49	13	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20.7	24.4	8	32.1
06/03/2015	2000	2	96	0	6	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	27	51	17	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21.8	25.5	9.5	35
06/03/2015	2015	3	90	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	38	41	13	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21.4	25.9	9.3	34.1
06/03/2015	2030	5	87	0	11	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	26	52	17	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21.3	25.1	13.4	30.7
06/03/2015	2045	0	92	1	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	36	51	11	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21.3	24.2	12.9	31.6
06/03/2015	2100	2	68	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	39	14	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	22.9	25.9	15.5	37.2
06/03/2015	2115	3	70	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	14	44	14	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22.5	26.2	8.1	33.7
06/03/2015	2130	2	69	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	44	21	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23.2	26.6	15.7	34
06/03/2015	2145	3	70	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	38	17	8	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	24	27.1	16.1	43.3
06/03/2015	2200	4	74	0	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	44	17	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	23.2	26.6	16.1	44.3
06/03/2015	2215	1	72	2	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	19	30	22	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	23.7	29.3	14.8	38.3
06/03/2015	2230	1	69	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	41	17	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	23.3	26.2	15.6	38.3
06/03/2015	2245	2	51	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	13	28	11	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	23.3	27.1	16.5	37.2
06/03/2015	2300	3	50	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	31	10	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23.8	29.1	12.7	33.9
06/03/2015	2315	2	76	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	45	24	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24.2	27.7	15.7	37.2
06/03/2015	2330	2	61	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	30	22	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	24.3	28	16.8	41.5
06/03/2015	2345	3	61	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	34	15	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	23.4	26.6	16.3	38

The solution is not simple or easy. We have imperfect figures on accidents and safety from the police, fuzzy thinking from campaigners and policy makers, and divided responsibility between authorities for roads. On top of that we have a range of shouty vested interests from “Ban the car” through to petrol heads, and so the path to safer roads can seem well hidden.

Introducing a 20mph speed limit is the latest fashion. Camden has had one since the end of 2013<sup>3</sup> following Islington<sup>4</sup> (which claimed to be the first 20mph borough earlier in that year), and Haringey<sup>5</sup> introduced it (for residential roads at least) at the start of March 2016.

It sounds sensible – lower speeds must mean fewer accidents and especially fewer serious accidents. But does it make sense to have it on every street at all times? Streets come in all shapes and sizes and what might suit a small lane outside a school is not necessarily right for a three lane urban motorway like the North Circular.

Beyond the principle, there are additional problems especially if a local authority is driven by evidence and wants to introduce a 20mph limit on the roads where the accidents mostly occur. In London, local authorities only have control over the more minor roads – main roads, mostly those with buses on them, are the responsibility of Transport for London. TfL’s main priority is for the fast movement of buses to cut travel times. This has resulted in the creation of urban motorways and fast moving bus lanes (for example Archway Road) which are not consistent with slower traffic speeds and safer roads. TfL red routes are virtually all still 30mph yet it is on main roads where most accidents occur.

Speed limits are most effective when they are enforced by the police. Generally they have not been over active in doing so with the 20 mph limits, believing that their time is more urgently required on other activities. It was reported that no fines were issued in

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/content/transport-and-streets/traffic-management/speed-limits.en>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.islington.gov.uk/services/parking-roads/street\\_improvements/Pages/20mph\\_limit.aspx](http://www.islington.gov.uk/services/parking-roads/street_improvements/Pages/20mph_limit.aspx)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.haringey.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-travel/roads-and-streets/road-safety/speed-limits>

the first six months of the operation of the scheme in Islington<sup>6</sup>.

The Haringey policy is particularly unambitious. It only applies to side roads and measured speeds on side roads were virtually all below (or well below) 20mph, despite the 30mph limit, so introducing the lower limit is nearly a pointless exercise. It is great for sign manufacturers, councils that want to look busy and campaigners, but if traffic is already at low speeds, lower limits with new signs will have little impact on road safety.

The early boroughs introduced the limits some time ago, so data is now beginning to surface that lets us see the effectiveness of the policy. This has been requested via Freedom of Information (FoI).

The evidence shows next to no change in driving speeds in Islington since the introduction of the 20mph limit. This was written up in a story<sup>7</sup> in the Ham&High in 2014. During Oct/Nov/Dec 2013 Islington surveyed speeds in 158 locations over the borough. The main conclusions:

- Good news - at 39 locations the average speed had dropped by more than 2mph compared to the year before.
- Bad news - at 24 locations speeds had increased by more than 2mph.
- At the other sites (95) there was no perceptible change in speed. (There's no point in looking at changes of less than, say, 2mph as there will be random movements in the survey.)
- At only 31 of the 158 sites was the average speed below 20mph.
- Only at 2 sites was the 85th percentile speed (the speed at which 85% of vehicles go below) under 20mph. Indeed at 38 sites (one quarter) 85th percentile speeds are 30mph+.

So, many vehicles are breaking the speed limit and little has changed since the lower limit came in. It takes time to change behaviour, fans of the 20 mph zones say. Perhaps. More enforcement might be the answer but it would be unrealistic to expect it in the current environment. If we want to change behaviours we need buy-in from road users and that probably means two things.

First, we need to have sensible policies. This probably means a “horses for courses” approach adopting different solutions in different areas. There are roads where 30mph or even 40mph is fine – stretches of Aylmer Road or Archway Road, at night, when there are few if any other vehicles or pedestrians on the road. Similarly, there are stretches of road – outside schools on North Road and North Hill, perhaps – when even 20mph is probably too fast at a time when hundreds of children are spilling out on their way home. People generally respond more favourably to policies that make sense.

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[http://www.islingtongazette.co.uk/news/islington\\_s\\_20mph\\_limit\\_branded\\_toothless\\_after\\_no\\_fines\\_are\\_issued\\_1\\_2331079](http://www.islingtongazette.co.uk/news/islington_s_20mph_limit_branded_toothless_after_no_fines_are_issued_1_2331079)

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[http://www.hamhigh.co.uk/news/environment/road\\_safety\\_campaigners\\_lambast\\_pointless\\_haringey\\_20mph\\_limit\\_plans\\_1\\_3706571](http://www.hamhigh.co.uk/news/environment/road_safety_campaigners_lambast_pointless_haringey_20mph_limit_plans_1_3706571)

Second, we need what might be called engineering solutions. The Forum will be consulting over road safety ideas, including engineering solutions such as cobbled roads, altered junction layouts, chevron parking, new signs and shared space, to try to get the balance right for Highgate. This is why we support the calming and greening plans from TfL for North Road. We believe that they will have the greatest effect on safety and speeds – and can also make Highgate look nicer.