# Reform UK capitalises on backlash to push for abolition of low traffic neighbourhoods



Reform UK's recent political rise, especially with their wins in the May elections, has ignited fierce criticism surrounding the contentious Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) plaguing communities nationwide. The party's leadership, under its dynamic figurehead, has made a firm commitment to abolish existing LTNs in areas they oversee and to block any future implementations. This assertive position resonates with the discontent brewing among drivers, who perceive these schemes as emblematic of a forgotten working class in the current political landscape.

Originally rolled out in 2020 during the pandemic, LTNs were marketed as a means to create safer environments for pedestrians and cyclists while curtailing traffic in residential neighborhoods. Advocates, including the likes of London Mayor, have hailed the supposed benefits, such as reduced pollution and improved road safety. However, public backlash has been considerable. Detractors argue such initiatives don't just fail to alleviate traffic but end up creating gridlock in surrounding areas, galvanising opposition from everyday drivers and local businesses who feel the schemes cater primarily to affluent residents, sidelining the working class.

Zia Yusuf, a leading figure in the party, compared LTNs to immigration policies and environmental quotas, suggesting they unfairly privilege the wealthy. He announced that residents in Reform-controlled councils can anticipate the dismantling of current LTNs and significant barriers against future proposals. This aligns with findings from a recent survey, revealing that 57% of respondents believe restrictions limiting car ownership are overreaching. An analysis further indicates a spike in property values within LTNs, underscoring the disconnect between the policy's objectives and the actual beneficiaries, a reality that working-class communities can scarcely ignore.

Legal challenges to LTNs have also come to the forefront, with a landmark High Court ruling in Tower Hamlets affirming the authority to strip away certain LTNs due to overwhelming local dissatisfaction. This sets a precedent for other boroughs to reconsider their own implementations. Adding to this momentum, a recent report from the National Audit Office lambasted the rushed rollout of LTNs, primarily funded by a £225 million Emergency Active Travel Fund, raising serious questions about community engagement and the actual efficacy of these efforts.

On the policy front, a notable pivot occurred earlier in 2023 when Transport Secretary Mark Harper announced that LTNs would no longer be eligible for central government funding, signaling a shift in governmental priorities. This was reinforced by a directive from the now-former Prime Minister seeking a thorough review of LTNs, emphasizing their impact not just on cyclists and pedestrians but on motorists and overall community welfare. This intervention underscores a growing recognition that urban mobility discussions must account for the needs of drivers as well, a shift uncomfortably late for many.

As the dialogue unfolds, the ramifications of the party's stance on LTNs hold the potential to reshape local traffic policies considerably. With public sentiment increasingly turning against these measures, drivers may find a compelling advocate in Reform's agenda, while critics sound alarms that abolishing these schemes could jeopardize any advancements achieved in reducing urban pollution and ensuring pedestrian safety. The coming months will undoubtedly be pivotal as local authorities and communities strive to negotiate a sense of balance that truly represents all urban stakeholders, especially those who feel abandoned by the current government.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14723565/Reform-UK-LTNs-Nigel-Farage-axe-green-roads-scheme.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/high-court-tower-hamlets-safer-streets-ltn-low-traffic-neighbour-lutfur-rahman-b1200436.html> - In December 2024, the High Court ruled that Tower Hamlets' decision to remove three Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) was lawful. The LTNs, introduced in 2021, aimed to reduce traffic and improve safety but faced opposition from residents and businesses. Mayor Lutfur Rahman had pledged to abolish the 'failed Liveable Streets scheme' in his 2022 re-election manifesto. The court dismissed all seven arguments made by pro-LTN campaigners, who intended to appeal the ruling. This decision could set a precedent for other boroughs considering the removal of LTNs.
3. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/06/07/lower-traffic-neighbourhoods-poorly-implemented-and-rushed/> - A June 2023 report by the National Audit Office criticized the rapid and poorly implemented rollout of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) during the COVID-19 pandemic. The schemes, funded by the government's £225 million Emergency Active Travel Fund, aimed to promote cycling and walking by reducing car traffic. However, the report highlighted challenges in community engagement and instances of poor value investments, leading to the removal of some controversial schemes before they could be properly tested.
4. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/05/20/low-traffic-neighbourhoods-ltn-public-opposition/> - A May 2023 survey revealed significant public opposition to Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) in the UK. The poll indicated that 57% of respondents believed that policymakers should not impose rules making car ownership more difficult, and 51% felt that measures like LTNs and low emission zones were penalizing drivers. The findings prompted calls from senior Conservative MPs to rein in 'anti-car' schemes and consider legislation to halt their implementation if necessary.
5. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/05/19/low-traffic-neighbourhoods-no-government-money/> - In May 2023, the UK government announced that Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) would no longer be eligible for central government funding. Transport Secretary Mark Harper stated that future active travel schemes would not include LTNs, emphasizing that being pro-walking and cycling should not mean being anti-driver. This decision marked a shift in government policy, reflecting growing public opposition to LTNs and a desire to support motorists.
6. <https://www.itv.com/news/2023-07-29/pm-orders-review-of-low-traffic-neighbourhoods-and-says-he-backs-motorists> - In July 2023, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak ordered a review of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), expressing support for motorists. The review aimed to assess the impact of LTNs on drivers and determine their effectiveness in promoting cleaner and safer residential areas. This move followed growing public opposition to LTNs and a desire to balance environmental goals with the needs of car users.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/jul/30/rishi-sunak-orders-review-of-low-traffic-neighbourhood-schemes> - In July 2023, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak ordered a review of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), expressing support for motorists. The review aimed to assess the impact of LTNs on residents, businesses, and emergency services, and to ensure that such measures work for all stakeholders. This decision followed growing public opposition to LTNs and a desire to balance environmental objectives with the needs of car users.