22nd September 2009 **(v2.0)**

The Tesco Proposal For Highams Park

Why is the Highams Park Forum seriously concerned about the traffic impact when the "experts" say "it will be OK" ?

The Tesco Proposal For Highams Park

The latest report from Tesco's consultant Waterman Boreham (page 13, Table 4.1) predicts 77% of the visits to the store will be by car. Any argument that putting the store next to the station would save car trips looks weak.

If there is a problem with the traffic then it needs to be addressed now. We can't wait until it is built and hope that a small amount of "tinkering" will fix it. The road network has minimal scope for tinkering. What we build now will be cast in stone (quite literally) and we will have to live with the consequences for years to come.

Residents don't trust traffic models they can't check

➔ Both traffic consultants (Tesco's and the Council's) have used mathematical models and a series of assumptions to reach the conclusion that "No significant adverse impact is predicted on the local highway network within Highams Park as a result of the proposed development".

➔ This conclusion does not seem credible to local residents who know the road network.

➔ The highly technical and theoretical nature of the models makes it impossible for residents to check that they properly take account of the many unusual aspects of the location.

➔This series of slides outlines some of the problems we foresee.

➔ We challenge the traffic consultants to explain, in layman's terms, why each of these problems will not occur.

➔ It is time for the traffic consultants to stop hiding behind mathematical models and show that they understand the real problems.

How could the traffic models possibly be wrong?

➔The traffic models could easily be wrong if they do not take account of the "real world" behaviour of motorists and pedestrians within a complicated road network which includes a busy level crossing.

➔The expression "Rubbish in - rubbish out" is relevant here.

➔Transport for London also have doubts about the model. LBWF officers' report (top of page 25 para 7.5) states, in respect of the model: "TfL consider trip generation may have been underestimated".

➔The difference between the "real world" and a "theoretical model" can be enormous. There are a number of potential "tipping points" in the road network which mean a small increase in traffic can have a huge impact.

➔The consultants predict that the traffic queues waiting at the closed level crossing will completely clear each time it opens.

➔Features that delay the traffic, and which are not allowed for in the model, will mean that queues will not clear and will get bigger and bigger. The slides that follow show numerous reasons why the clearing of the queues could be delayed.

Highams Park streets

➔Highams Park's streets are all minor roads (the highest designation being a "B" road). The proposed development would be the only Tesco store in the North East London Corridor that is not sited on an 'A' Road.

➔All streets have only enough room for one line of cars in each direction. And in some cases (notably Winchester Road) parked cars often make the roads "single track" if buses and lorries are passing.

➔One small exception is the short section of Larkshall Road north of the level crossing which supports two southbound lanes for a short distance to allow traffic to turn right into Winchester Road. This causes some unexpected "tipping points" in traffic flow which are explained in the slides. The length of this turning lane assumed in the model will be critical.

Our challenge to the traffic consultants

➔The traffic consultants have used the "peak hour" 5pm to 6pm Friday evening as their assessment scenario.

➔They predict traffic numbers and queue lengths, and conclude that there will be *"no significant impact…"*.

➔The slides which follow take the consultant's figures and depict 12 significant problems. We ask the traffic consultants to explain why these problems will not be significant.

➔The slides take as their starting position the situation where the level crossing has been closed for a few minutes to allow the arrival of a commuter train from Liverpool Street. They then predict what will happen next….

➔The main source of traffic predictions used by Tesco and Council Officers is the latest report from Tesco's consultant Waterman Boreham (WB) dated 21st May 2009.

The queues that need to be dispersed.

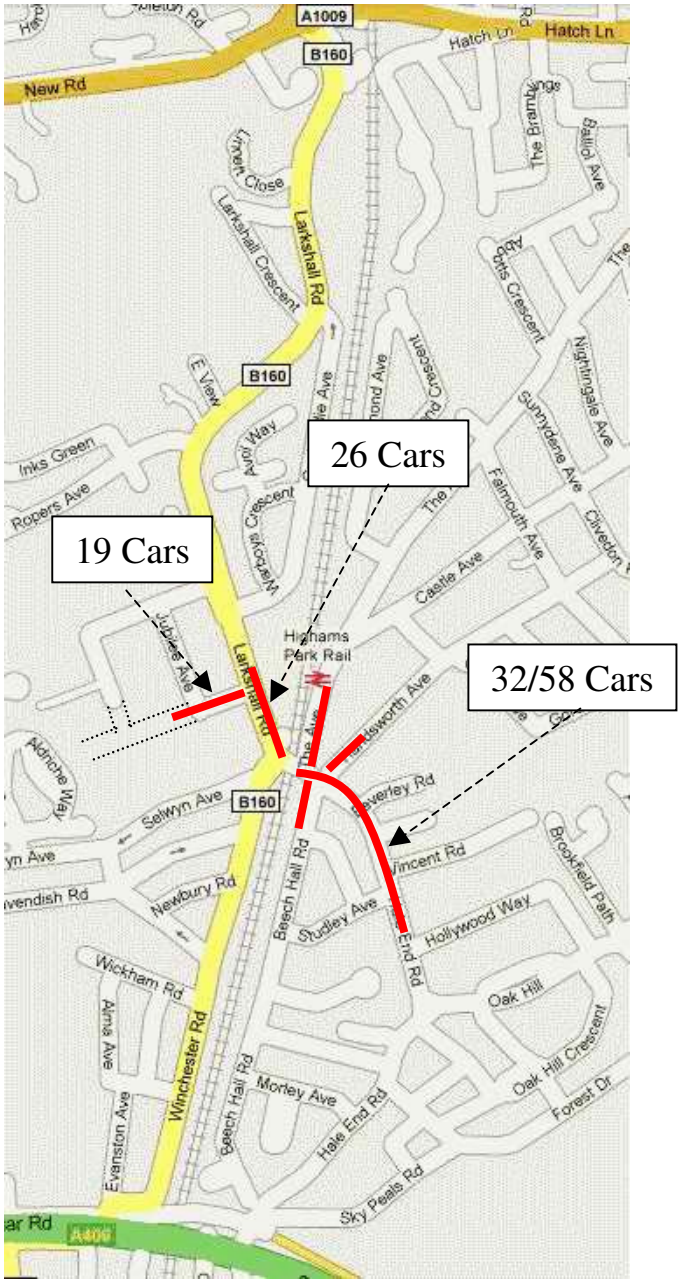
➔Queues will form in the roads marked in red (to scale where queue lengths are given by WB).

➔The consultants predict the following queue lengths with existing train frequency as:

- ➔Hale End Road = 32 cars (58 cars with increased train frequency - that's a long queue!)
- ➔Larkshall Road = 26 cars
- ➔Jubilee Avenue = 19 cars (that's a lot of cars to turn right into Larkshall Road at an uncontrolled junction).

➔The predicted queue lengths are "average" so half the time they will be longer!

➔If the queues do not clear between crossing closures, the queues will be <u>much</u> longer.

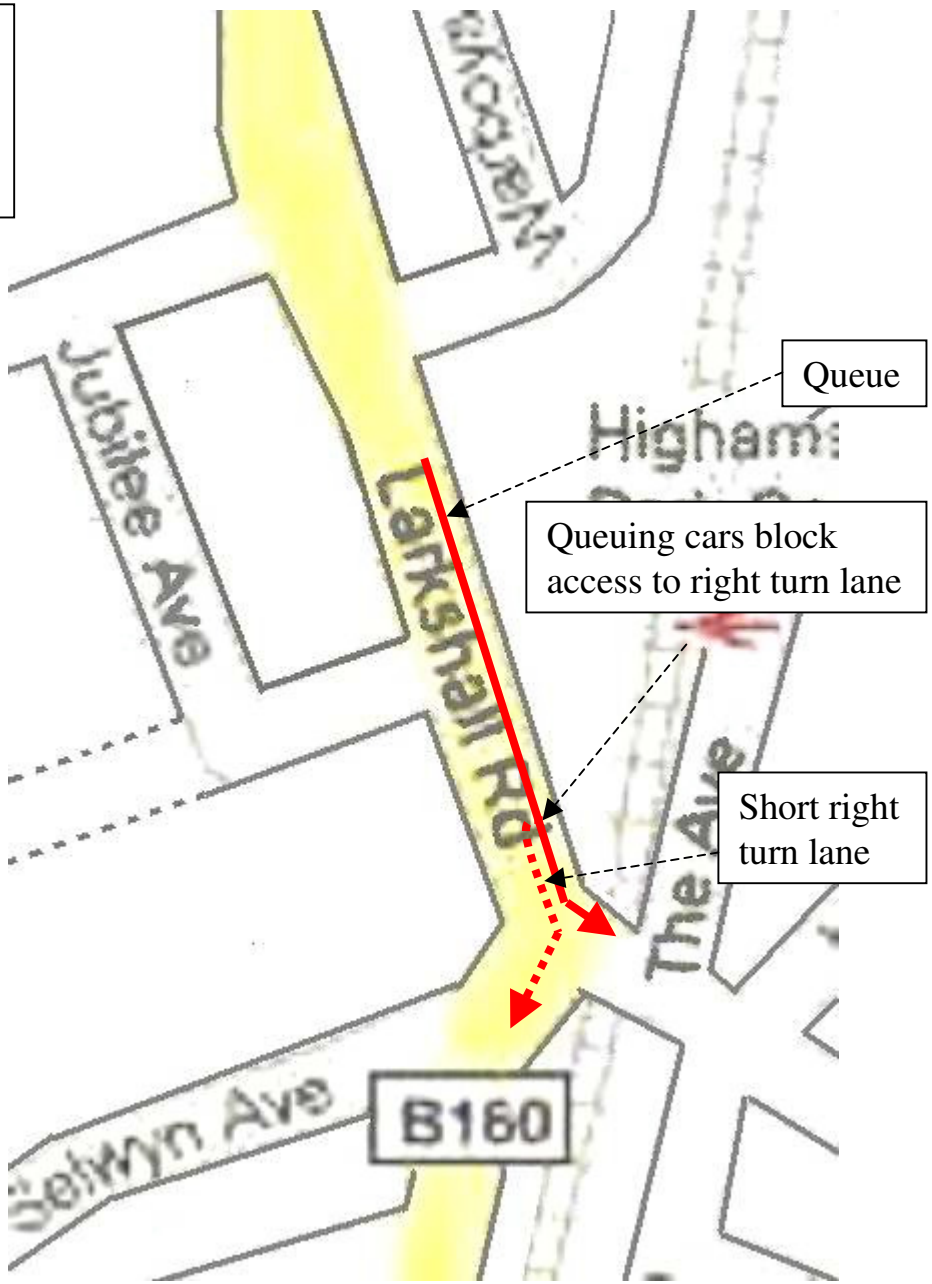


Problem 1

Right turn traffic stuck in queue

➔ The southbound queue in Larkshall Road will block the short right turn lane, preventing cars turning right into The Broadway.

➔Cars wishing to turn right will add to the queue length since they won't be able to get to the right turn lane.

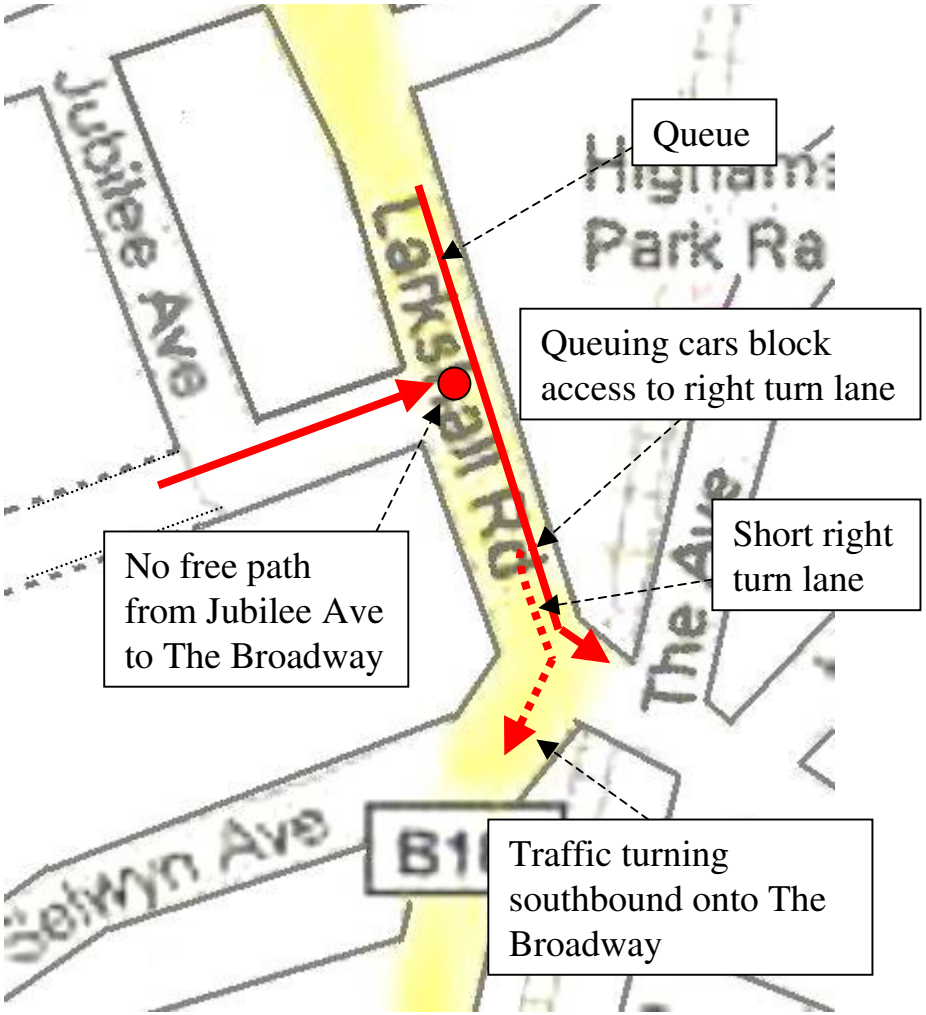


Problem 2 (1 of 2)
No free path: Jubilee Ave to The Broadway

➔Tesco's traffic report states that traffic turning right out of Jubilee Ave will have a clear path to The Broadway even if the level crossing is closed and a queue has formed in Larkshall Road. The report then states: "This existing movement has already been incorporated into the Paramics Model." (WB Report Page 23 para 6.18)

➔This manoeuvre is not possible. See next slide for an aerial photograph confirming the problem.

➔This is therefore a fault in the model and Jubilee Ave queues will be longer than predicted.



Problem 2 (2 of 2)
No free path: Jubilee Ave to The Broadway

➔The aerial photograph currently displayed by “Google Maps” shows the problem perfectly.

➔The southbound queue is 17 vehicles with an 18th arriving. (WB predict even longer at 26 vehicles).

➔The queue has blocked the right turn lane and formed a single file (not two lanes).

➔Jubilee Ave traffic can’t join the queue and has no free path to The Broadway despite WB’s assertion.

➔The data fed to the Paramics model is therefore incorrect and will underestimate the queues.

The Junction - Enlarged

Problem 3

More “Dubious Data”

➔Page 13 Table 4.1 in the WB report shows:
Visits to the store by train = 0% (not just a small number, but actually zero)
Visits to the store by underground (completed by bus) = 2%.

➔Anyone who knows the area will see that this is clearly ridiculous.

➔Some shoppers will come by train (e.g. from Wood Street and North Chingford).

➔Hardly any shoppers will come by underground and certainly far less than the number by train.

➔Although not significant from a traffic perspective, it shows an inadequate grasp of local conditions.

➔If the WB report is so obviously wrong on this "prediction" how can we be expected to believe its other predictions.

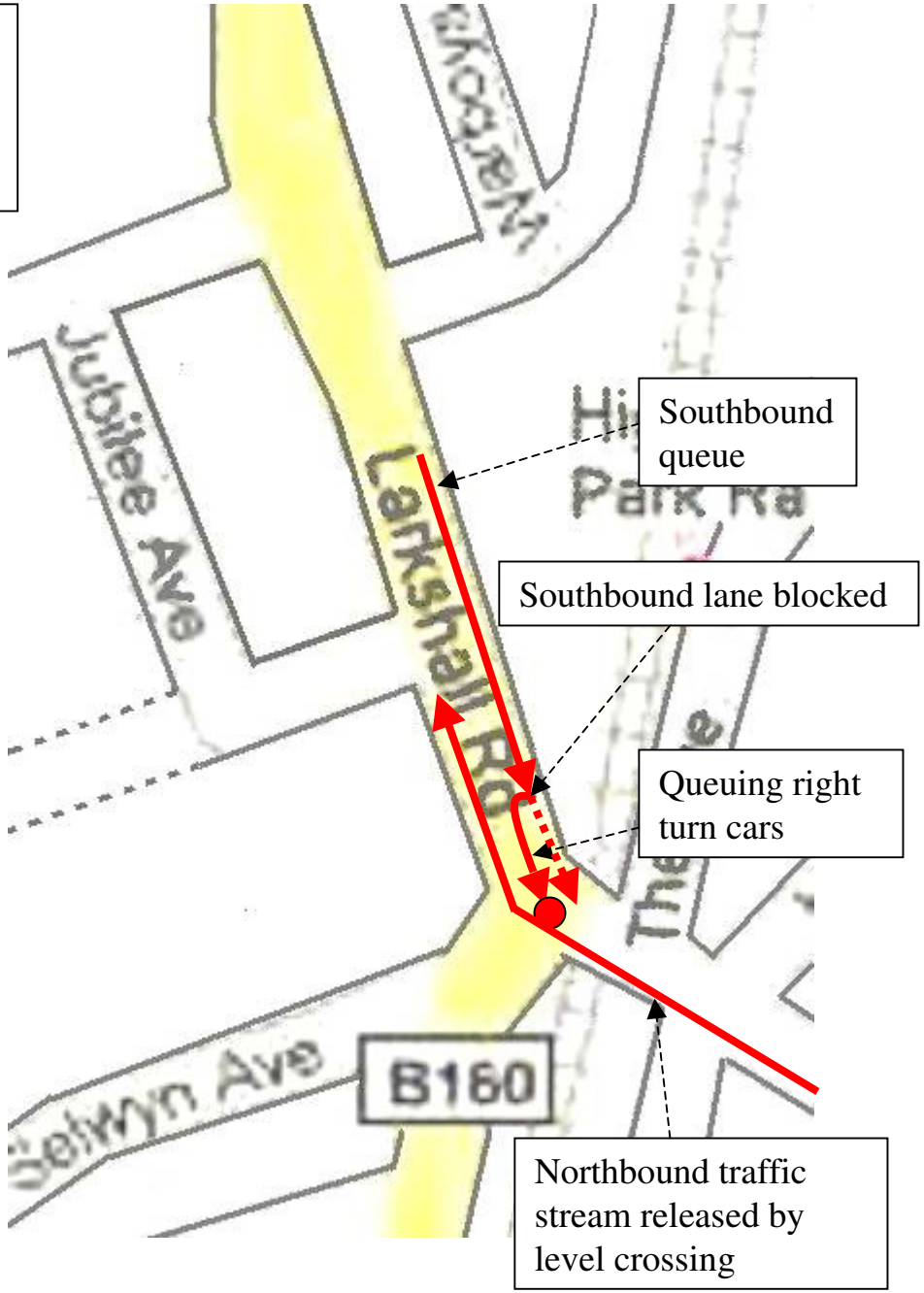
Problem 4

Southbound traffic blocked

➔When the level crossing opens, the northbound traffic will stream into Larkshall Road stopping southbound traffic turning right into The Broadway.

➔The right turn traffic will back up in the short right turn lane until it blocks the southbound traffic.

➔This will delay the clearing of the southbound queue.



Problem 5 (1 of 3)

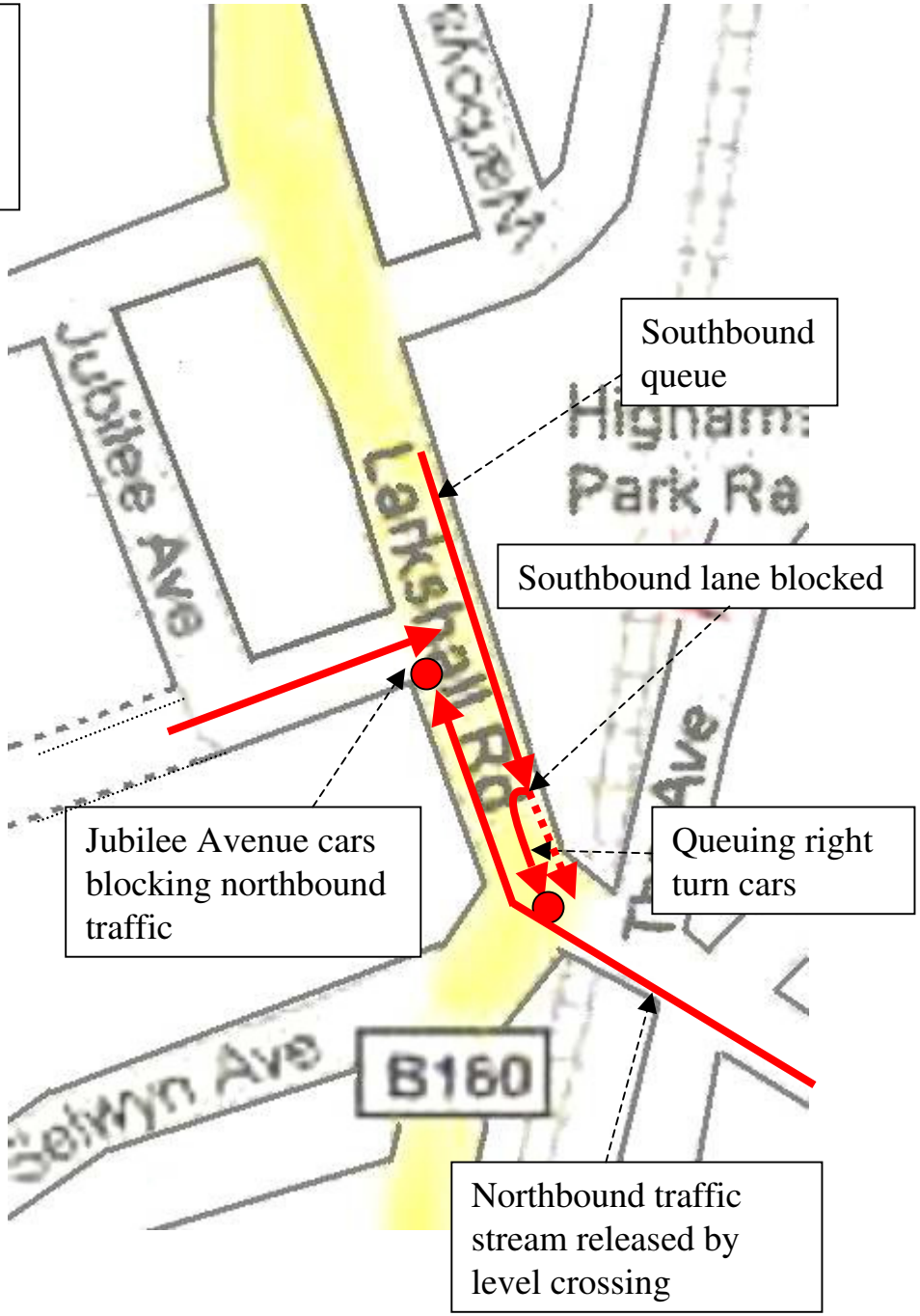
Gridlock in Larkshall Road

➔Frustrated drivers in Jubilee Avenue will force their way across Larkshall Road to try to break into the southbound queue, causing danger.

➔They will block the northbound traffic, which in turn blocks the southbound right turning traffic.

➔This then blocks all the southbound traffic and prevents Jubilee Ave traffic breaking into the southbound queue.

➔Hence GRIDLOCK, causing delay to the clearing of both north and southbound queues. Real risk of queue straddling the level crossing when it next closes.



Problem 5 (2 of 3)

Jubilee Ave Problem: No solution

➔All southbound traffic leaving the development must use Jubilee Avenue.

➔Appendix 5 of the WB report shows an average of 19 right turning cars waiting in a queue to get out of Jubilee Avenue in the busiest period.

➔WB Report page 22: relating to all scenarios they tested, states:
"from a visual inspection of the model all the queues clear before the next closure."

➔Based on the previous slides, do you believe all 19 cars will get out before the next closure of the crossing?

➔Note that LBWF officers agree that Hale End Road is the most acceptable route for Tesco delivery lorries. These must turn right out of Jubilee Avenue, so they will be part of this queue trying to get out into Larkshall Road.

Problem 5 (3 of 3)

Jubilee Ave Problem: No solution

➔The previous slides show the right turn exit from Jubilee Ave just won't work! And WB have not been able to identify a viable alternative.

➔WB have already agreed NOT to use traffic signals at this junction because of the close proximity of the level crossing (WB report page 6 para 2.2).

➔WB have also ruled out a right turn at Hickman Ave (WB report page 6 para 2.3).

➔Even if a right turn was allowed at Hickman Ave it would be difficult for Tesco lorries to use it since the service ramp from the store has been designed for access via Jubilee Ave.

➔WB also state that any alternative solutions they tried showed worse traffic impact! (WB report page 6 para 2.4)

➔So there is no viable solution for Jubilee Avenue.

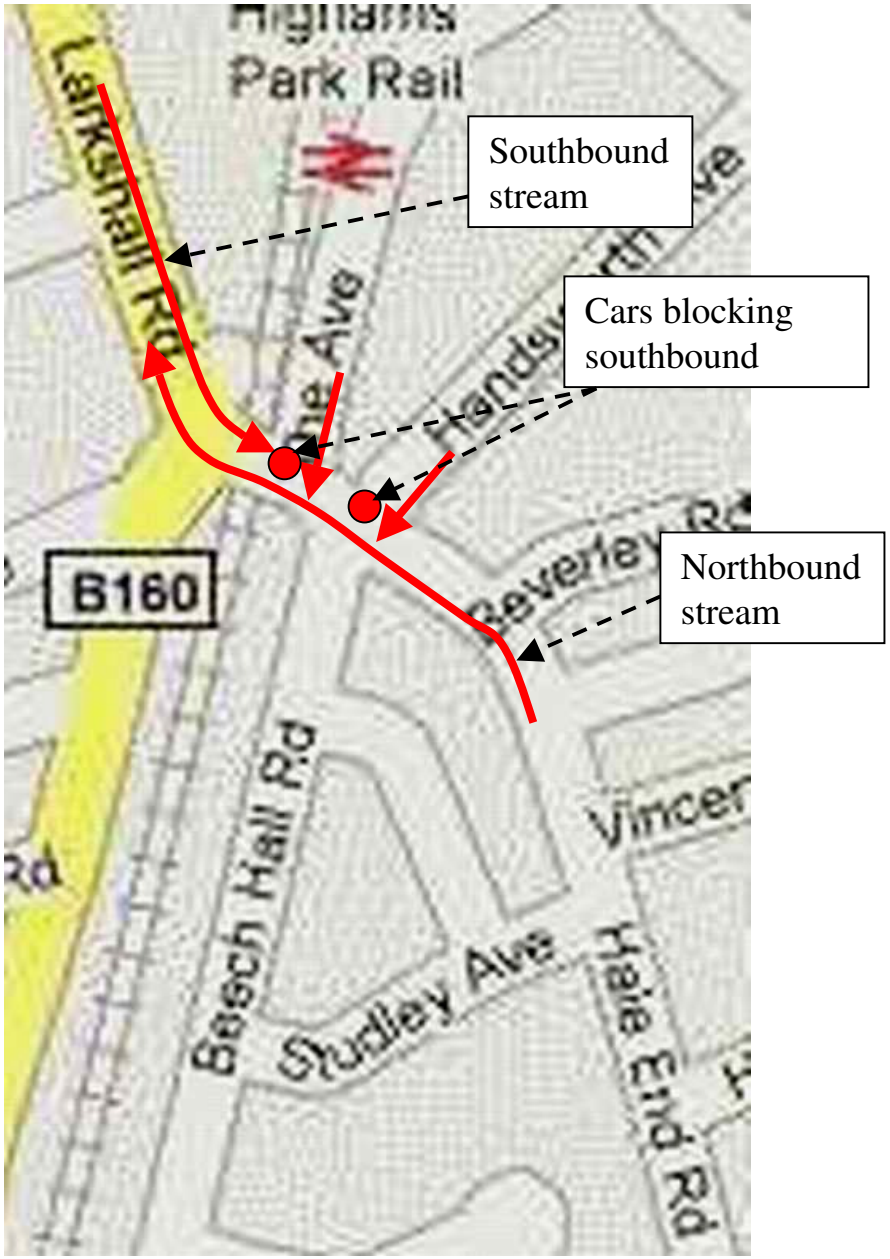
Problem 6

Southbound traffic delayed

➔When the level crossing opens, frustrated drivers queuing in The Avenue and Handsworth Avenue will attempt to force their way into the slow moving Northbound traffic queue.

➔They will block the southbound traffic stream which has just crossed the level crossing.

➔This will delay the clearing of the southbound queue. Further risk of queue straddling the level crossing when it next closes.



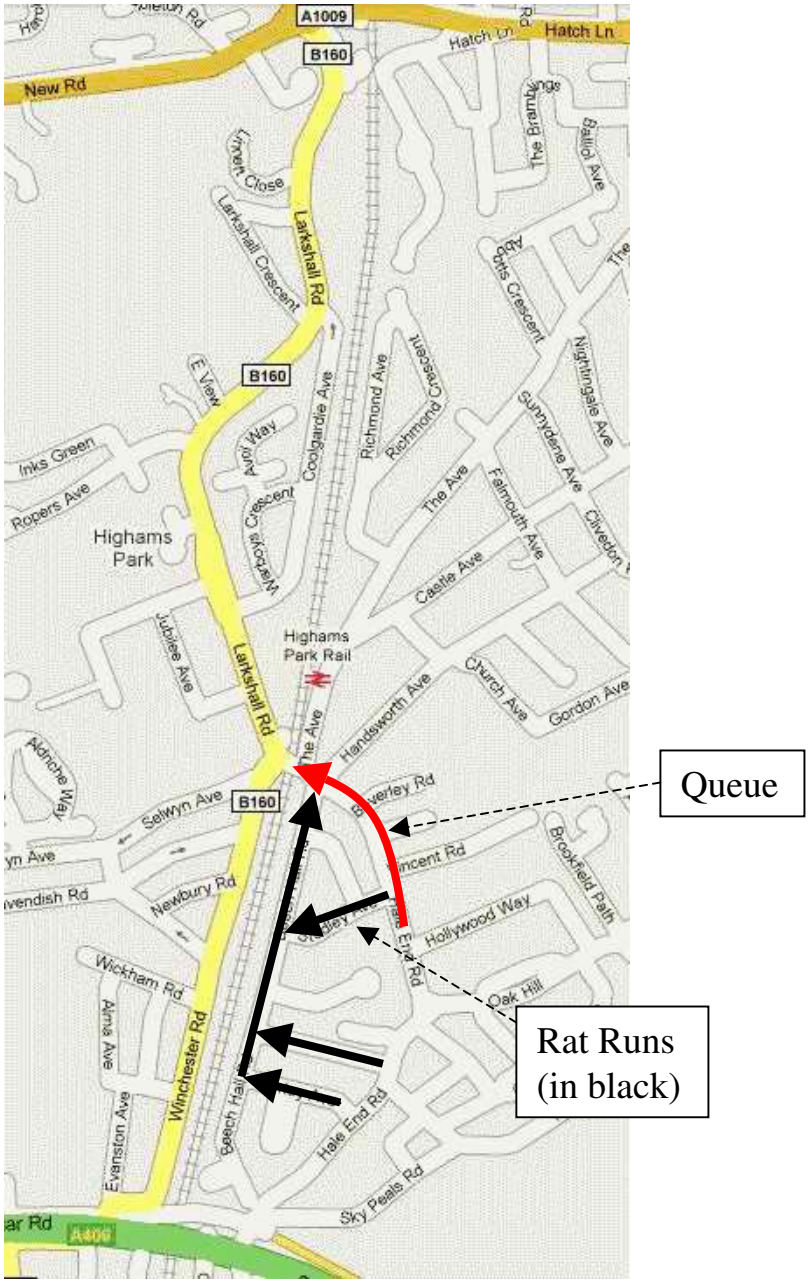
Problem 7

The Beech Hall Road Rat Run

➔With a long queue in Hale End Road, impatient cars will “rat run” down Beech Hall Road to cut in at the front of the queue. They will drive quickly.

➔This will cause an accident risk to residents and school children in these residential streets.

➔When the queue eventually moves, the cars cutting back in will disturb the smooth traffic flow and delay the clearing of the queue.



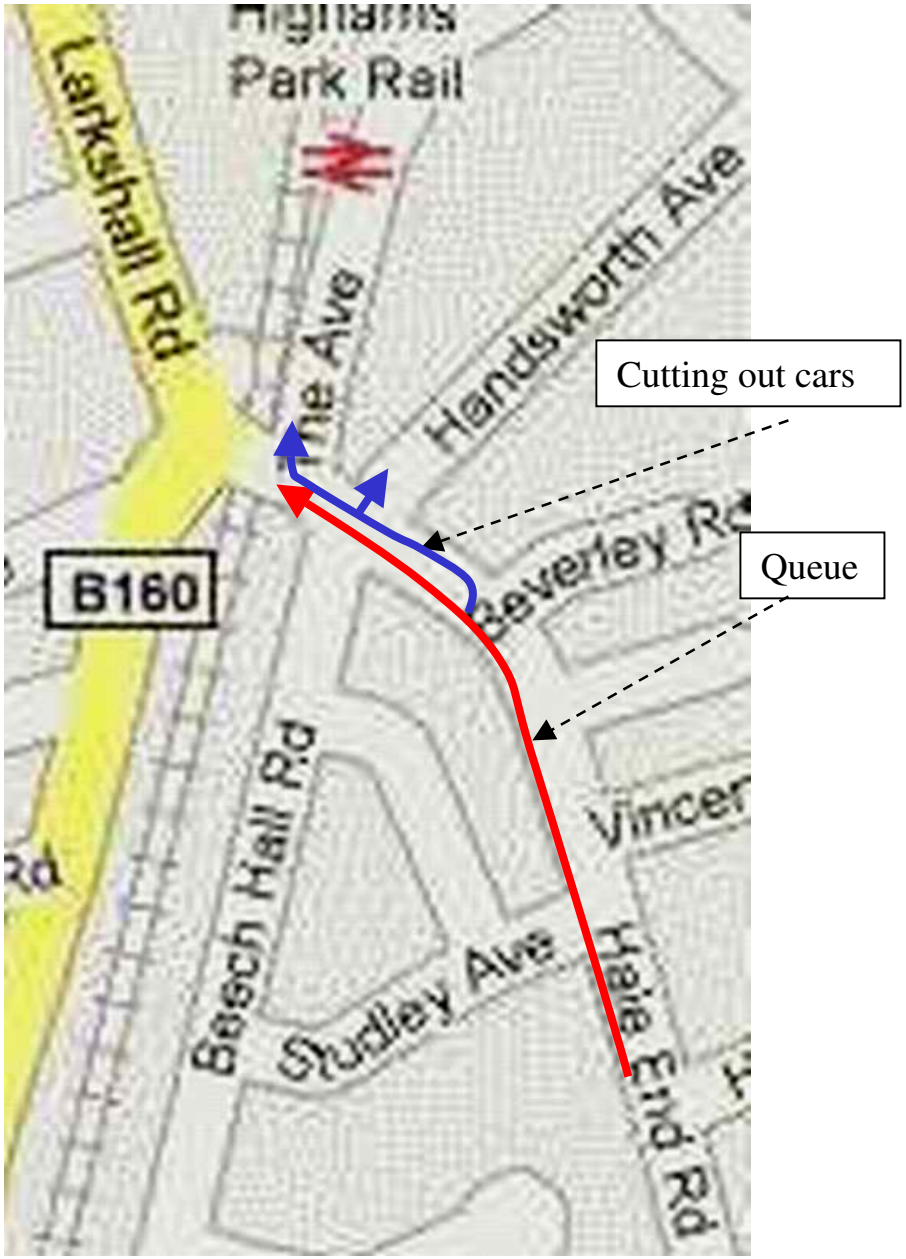
Problem 8

Cutting out of the queue

➔With a long queue in Hale End Road, impatient cars cut out of the queue, driving on the <u>wrong side of the road</u> to turn right into Handsworth Avenue and The Avenue.

➔This is not hypothetical. We see it now when there are queues.

➔This is a major safety risk to pedestrians looking the other way on the crossing.

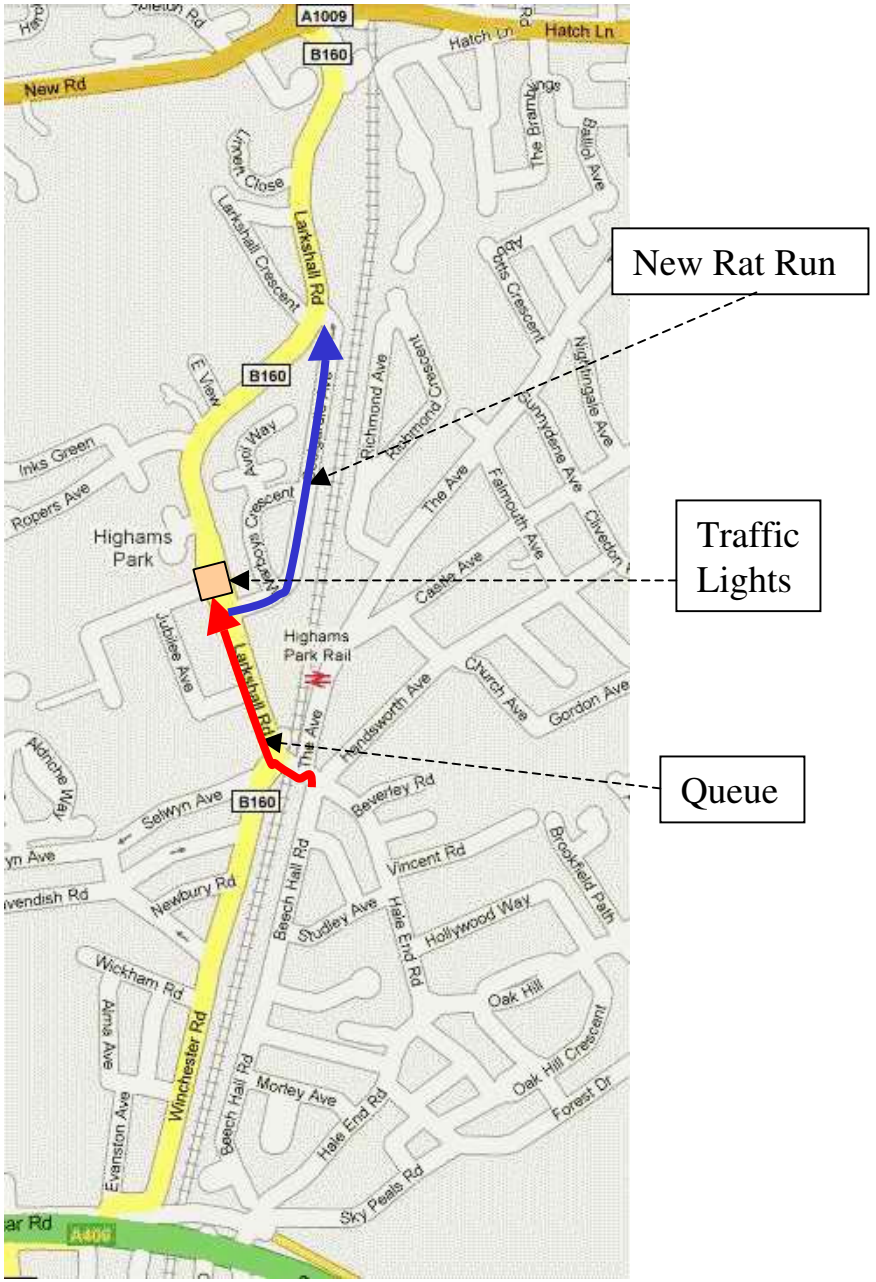


Problem 9

The Coolgardie Avenue Rat Run

➔The proposed traffic lights at the Hickman Avenue junction with Larkshall Road will cause a northbound queue. Impatient cars will rat run at speed down Coolgardie Avenue to avoid the lights.

➔This will cause another hazard in the side streets.



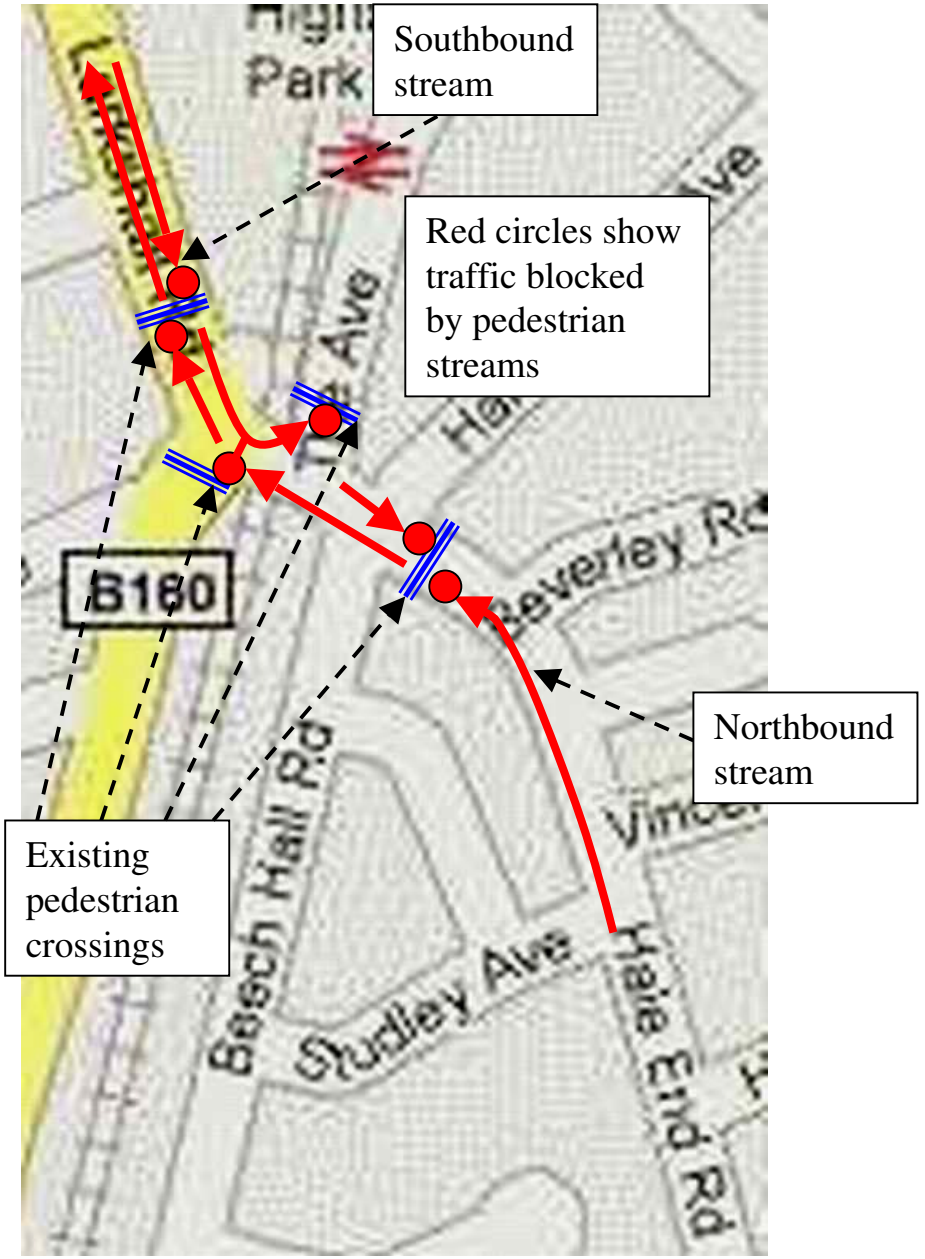
Problem 10

Commuter Pedestrians

➔The train that arrived while the level crossing was closed will have delivered a large number of commuters who stream out of the station and across the existing pedestrian crossings. They are in a hurry to get home and will force the traffic to stop.

➔This will delay the clearing of both the north and southbound queues.

➔Due to the large number of schools close to the level crossing, a similar problem will occur earlier in the day when pedestrian school children stream out of school at the end of their day.



Problem 11

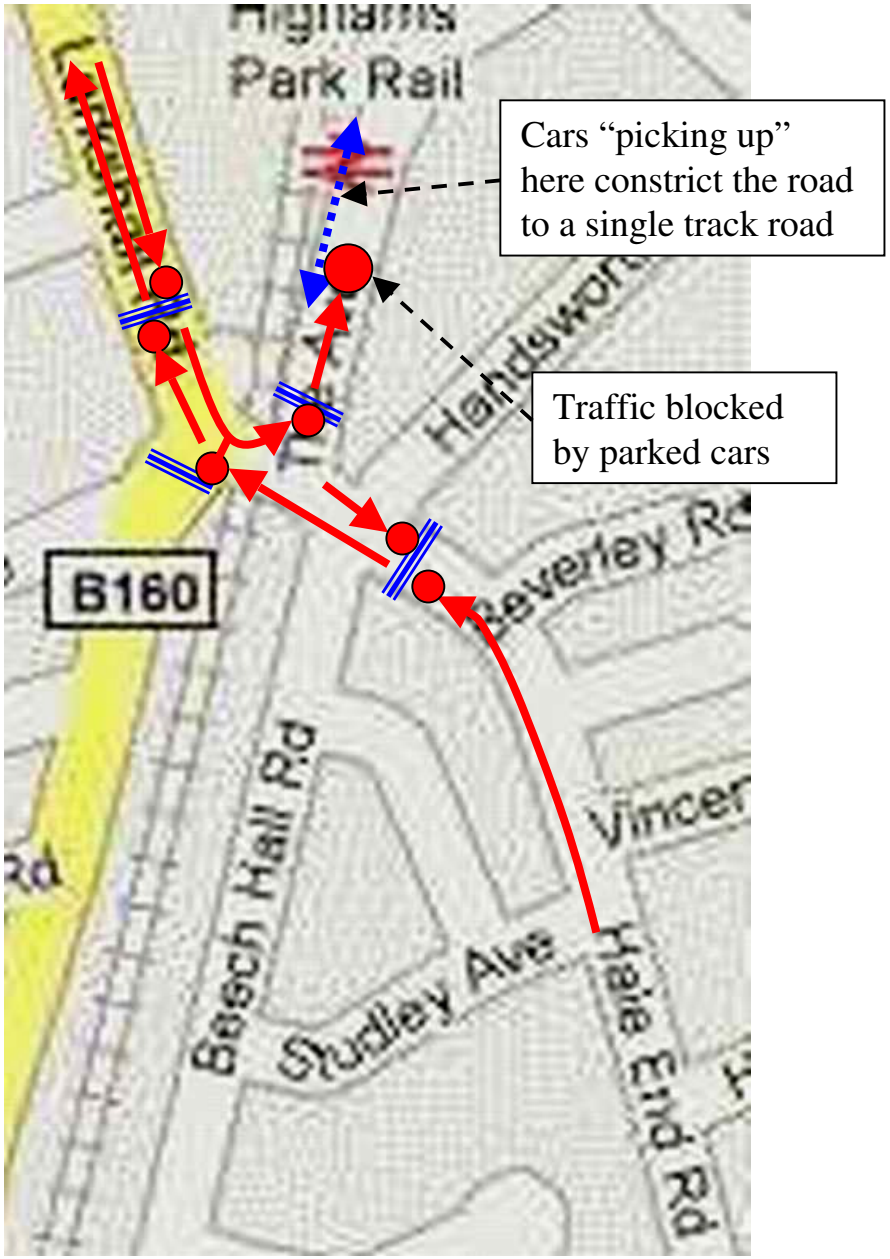
Cars picking up pedestrians

➔Cars arrive to pick up commuters from the train.

➔They stop and park improperly, reducing The Avenue to a single track.

➔Any queue, in either direction, then completely blocks the street and traffic builds further.

➔This will further delay the clearing of the southbound queue.



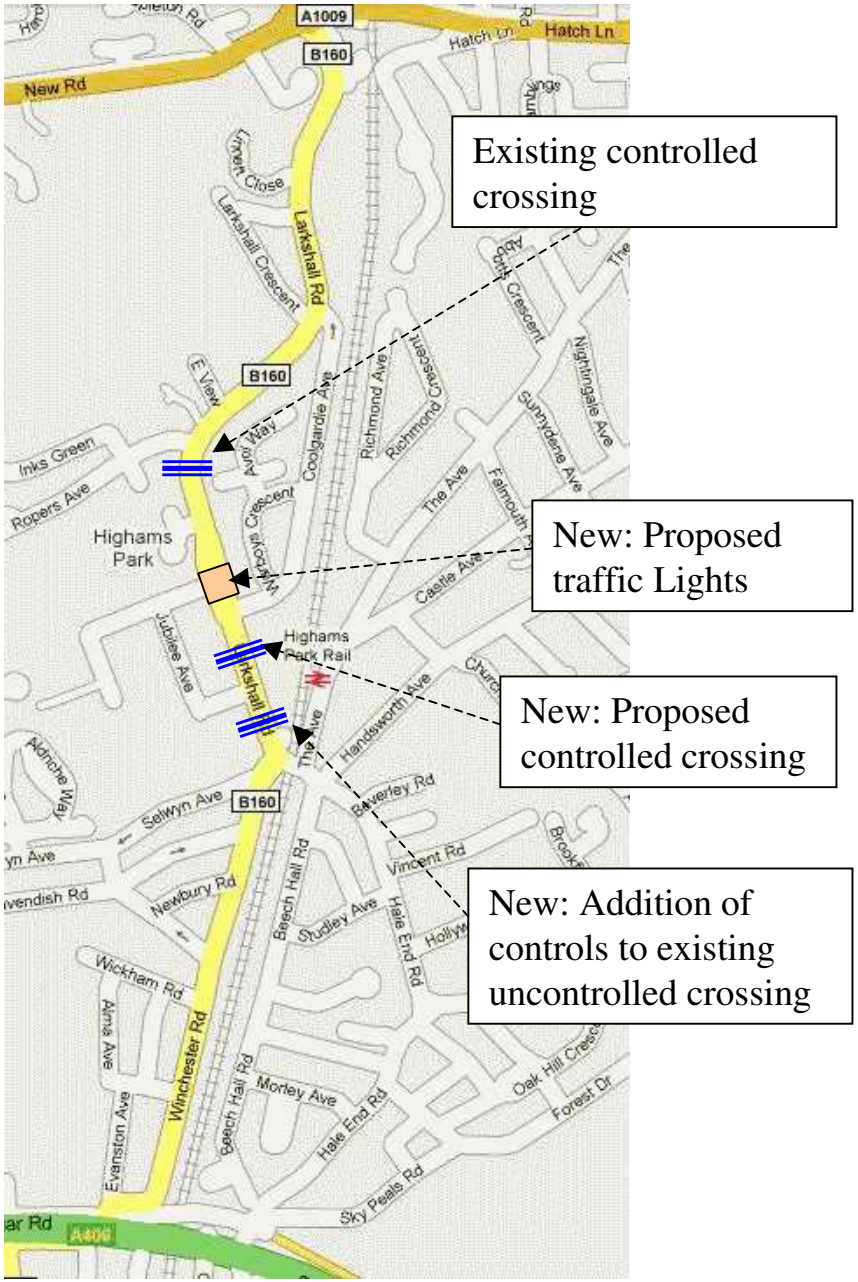
Problem 12

The new traffic obstacles

➔In addition to the delay and danger caused by the existing traffic obstacles, Tesco's plans propose some new ones in Larkshall Road:

- ➔A set of traffic lights at the Hickman Road Junction.
- ➔A new controlled crossing
- ➔Addition of controls to an existing uncontrolled crossing close to the level crossing.

➔This will add yet another layer of danger and will further delay the clearing of the queues.



The Tesco Proposal For Highams Park

Do you still believe that there will be:
"No significant adverse impact on the local highway network" ?

But it doesn't have to be like this !

See next slide……..

The Tesco Proposal For Highams Park

What's the solution to the Traffic problem?

➔ The Highams Park road network won't cope with the number of vehicle "trips" from outside the area generated by the current proposal.

➔The key to the problem is that a massive supermarket generates large numbers of "short stay" trips. Cars are used because of the need to carry shopping.

➔So, what would work?

➔We need uses for the site which generate a smaller number of trips and which allow greater use of public transport.

➔A mix comprising a smaller store, less dense housing, leisure use (restaurants, cinema, etc), and industrial use would appear to fit the bill. NOT one massive supermarket.

➔Regeneration can still happen with a smaller store. The current centre doesn't attract locals, but our plan will do.

The Tesco Proposal For Highams Park

Thank you for your attention.

We are happy to answer any questions.

The Highams Park Forum