

BRAG PUBLIC MEETING 25 JULY 2018, Lumen Church, Tavistock Place, WC1



DISCUSSION – HOW WILL IT AFFECT YOUR AREA?

This summary includes input from residents who were unable to attend the meeting but sent in comments.

The discussion at the meeting focused on three geographical areas:

- Area 1: West of Judd Street, north of Tavistock Place
- Area 2: East of Judd Street, north of Tavistock Place
- Area 3: South of Tavistock Place (and wider area)

AREA 1 – West of Judd Street

Residents who contributed to the discussion live in:

- Woburn Walk
- Duke's Road
- Flaxman Terrace
- Upper Marchmont Street
- Brunswick Centre
- Sandwich Street
- Thanet Street
- Judd Street (west side)

KEY ISSUES

Forcing traffic on to small roads. Suitability of Duke's Road as means of access

- Impracticality of using Duke's Road; a well-known accident hot-spot & far too narrow for large vehicles
- Impact on historic character of Duke's Road / Woburn Walk
- Negative impact on businesses and residents of Duke's Road / Woburn Walk
- Danger to pedestrians at junction of Duke's Road and Euston Road, as there is no official crossing
- After 2017 fatality on Duke's Road, the coroner was highly critical of TfL
- Unless vehicles are directed along Flaxman Terrace, they will use Burton Place / Cartwright Gardens – highly impractical
- Fear of losing all access from the north (Euston Road) as Duke's Road is so impractical
- Can alterations be made to Duke's Road, Burton and Flaxman Terrace to allow traffic to move through this awkward turn more easily?

"The additional traffic seems not only impractical in terms of road capacity but it will also have a significant negative impact on local residents, businesses and the character of the area."

"TfL should be solving the problem at Duke's Road, not suggesting more traffic should be directed down it."

"We occasionally get lorries down Flaxman Terrace that can't get around the corner, they get stuck and then have to reverse."

"Burton Place is even narrower than Duke's Road. Unless vehicles are forced to go up Flaxman Terrace they will inevitably choose to go along Burton Place and around Cartwright Gardens."

"The junction of Duke's Road and Euston Road is already a very busy pedestrian route, but without any official crossing it is also a dangerous one."

"You simply can't bring traffic up Duke's Road. It's impossible. It's a red herring. So, they'll say, oh, this is a terrible idea and close that too"

Deliveries are essential for residents and businesses

- Most traffic in the area is simply delivering to someone who lives here
- Delivery vehicles will tend to take the easiest route
- Size and number of delivery lorries in the area (especially servicing the Brunswick Centre)
- Large delivery lorries exit on to Hunter Street – what about the safety of cyclists?
- Impact on small businesses due to inadequate means of access for deliveries.
- Food deliveries are essential

"They've got great long juggernauts delivering at a quarter past 4 in the morning - it's bumper to bumper at the moment."

"It will result in lots of small businesses scared of going under due to inadequate means of access."

"What about the Waitrose lorries - they come out on Hunter Street, but where will they go? Will they have to do a U-turn, across the cycle lanes?"

“The government is so keen to make cycling safe but have they thought about where the delivery lorries will go?”

“The truck deliveries will have to go somewhere - we all need food.”

Local politics /inadequacy of consultation process

- Lack of awareness of 2016 consultation (eg residents of Burton Street, Woburn Walk, Duke’s Road, Thanet Street, managers of mansion blocks in area, large and small businesses)
- Narrow consultation area for Brunswick Square proposals
- Report of consultation results shows no clear majority in support
- Were the LTDA consulted on the Judd Street/Euston Road scheme? No indication in report.
- The Council needs to be seen to be doing something

“The whole things should be scrapped. The Council just have to be seen to be doing something.”

“The council is meant to be reducing traffic on the roads, not increasing it.”

“So far as I understand the analysis of the consultation process given at pages 105, 106 and 112 of the consultation document, it shows a clear majority of respondents disagreeing with the schemes... This does not seem to give any weight to the democratic process and makes a mockery of the proceedings.”

Camden’s hierarchy of movement

- Impact on pedestrians

“I own neither a car nor a bicycle, and use buses, tube, walk or take a taxi. Given the attitude of many cyclists who regularly jump the lights at the junctions of Judd Street and Marchmont Street with Tavistock Place, I cannot see that any part of this scheme will benefit pedestrians.”

Benefit of local knowledge

- Local residents know best how the streets work

“I have lived in Judd Street for 50 years, I’m a pedestrian, cyclist, driver, and freedom pass holder, so I think I have a balanced view of how the traffic works on my street. I’m dead against both schemes.”

AREA 2 - East of Judd Street

Residents who contributed to the discussion live in:

- **Judd Street** (east side)
- **Argyle Square**
- **Crestfield Street**
- **Wicklow Street**

Contribution from representative of **London Living Streets**

KEY ISSUES

Inadequate consultation process

- Invalid consultation
- Inadequate information about access routes
- Plans need to show clearly what the consequences would be

“You can’t have a consultation unless you have some real sense of what is happening and which way you can go...I’m arguing that it was an invalid consultation.”

“I’ve been asking the Council how I can get home from any direction. They produced some maps but without any information about which way you can turn at any one point. Basically, they’re pulling a fast one.”

Consultation with and access for emergency vehicles

- Have emergency vehicles been properly consulted? What did they say?
- There must be ease of access to hospitals in an emergency, when a private car is necessary as ambulances take too long to arrive

“Do we know they have properly consulted with the emergency services?”

“I had a meeting with the officers last week who accepted that it will take longer to get where you’re going. They suggested one should just leave earlier. But what if there’s an emergency?”

“Ambulances are struggling now to go between UCH and GOSH. They take too long to arrive. If you have to wait for over an hour for an ambulance, it can be quicker to take a private car.”

Increased congestion and impact of displaced traffic

- Displaced traffic – especially on to Kings Cross Road, Grays Inn Road
- Increased congestion on Gray’s Inn Road

“The congestion is really bad coming from the Grays Inn Road. You could drop dead while stuck in traffic.”

“I live in the small streets off Kings Cross Road. We are gridlocked with displaced traffic from all the changes which push more and more traffic on to the gyratory. Why is it OK for us to get all the pollution?”

Increased weights on smaller roads

- Road weight regulations will be needed if larger vehicles, including coaches, move through narrow streets around Hunter and Judd Streets
- Refurbishment of mansion blocks and Camden Town Hall will require large amounts of scaffolding

“The matter of refurbishment of buildings comes to mind when, for instance, large amounts of scaffolding are required – for the Town Hall refurbishment, for instance, or the exterior refurbishment of the various mansion blocks in the area.”

Local politics & policies

- Schemes need to be judged in relation to the long-held transport policies of Camden Council and the Mayor of London
- Improvements require action
- Alternative solutions are needed

“Camden Council is trying to reduce unnecessary through traffic in local streets, and to stop rat-running.”

“Officers accepted that they might need to re-open Whidborne Street (to enable access from Argyle Square) But they fear this would encourage cabs coming from St Pancras.”

“You need to look at this scheme (and others) in the context of Camden’s long held policy and their hierarchy of traffic movements: pedestrians - cyclists - public transport - private vehicles (which includes taxis and private hire vehicles)”

“There’s also the context of the Mayor’s transport policy. The aim is Vision Zero - no one killed on the streets by 2041. It’s a distant horizon.”

“You can’t leave things as they are and hope they will get better on their own”

AREA 3 - South of Tavistock Place and wider area

Residents who contributed live in:

- Brunswick Centre
- Calthorpe Street
- John Street
- Lambs Conduit Street
- Red Lion Street
- Southampton Row
- Russell Square

Contributions from:

- Chair of Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum
- RMT Ranks and Highways
- London Living Streets

KEY ISSUES

Difficulties in getting to hospital

- Impact of longer taxi journeys
- Anxiety of passengers trying to get to medical facilities
- Patients and staff from hospitals in Queens Square are ferried from one hospital to another using ordinary transport

“Passengers going to hospital think that cab drivers are taking them out of their way, to get a higher fare. It makes them very anxious.”

“I took a cab today as I was late getting to the Macmillan Cancer Centre. The taxi driver said that they already have to spiral round areas causing lengthened journeys. As the cabbie said, if this goes ahead there will just be more spiraling.”

“It’s not just vehicles with blue lights. We learned during the public inquiry about patients and staff being ferried about in ordinary vehicles. These are not life or death situations, but their day to day lives are severely hampered”

Consider needs of all road users

- Impact on people who cannot walk or cycle – tend to be high users of deliveries
- Impact of those who are tired - sometimes require a taxi
- The safety of ALL road users

“What about all those people who cannot cycle, who cannot walk. What about them? They are often a high user of deliveries too because they can’t get out to walk or cycle. They are affected negatively by these changes. Who is considering these people?”

“I find that increasingly, I sometimes have to take a taxi in order to return to my home when I cannot muster the energy to go by public transport or to walk.”

“We need to make sure that all road users are safe.”

"We're all part of a busy, living community"

Knock-on effects in adjoining areas & lack of joined up thinking

- Lack of joined up plans
- Changes to one area have a knock-on effect on another
- Road closures in Holborn will create more traffic elsewhere, eg Guilford Street
- Impact on Guilford Street from extra traffic from road closures plus redevelopment of GOSH
- Impact on John Street & Doughty Street
- Need for proper study into impact of changes on wider area – much better data is required

"I'm a lifelong pedestrian - I walk everywhere. But none of these plans join up"

"With the changes anyone coming from the east along High Holborn won't be able to get into Southampton Row to go north. They will have to go up Gray's Inn Road and then along Guilford Street. If Southampton Row isn't used it will simply push more traffic on to Guilford Street."

"The change at Holborn will have huge impact on Guilford Street. No one has thought about the knock-on effect of the changes to Shaftesbury Avenue either."

"This proposal will no doubt cause traffic to build up in Guilford/Doughty & John Streets"

"If we (taxi drivers) are coming here from the West End, and can't turn left on to Southampton Row, we'll have to go round Queen Square, then Great Ormond Street left to Guilford Street. All the traffic is being pushed elsewhere because roads are shut and there's no access."

"We (Mount Pleasant) are going to have the same issues - what happens to your area will affect ours. The devil is in the detail."

Lack of evidence supporting decisions - Facts and figures

- Importance of correct data and traffic modelling
- Criticism by independent Inspector of Public Inquiry

"Camden must be made to conduct a proper study into the impact on the wider area if it is to have a realistic model of the traffic patterns & impact across our area."

"It is shocking that the independent report into Tavistock / Torrington noted that Camden simply didn't have the data on the traffic displacement & negative impact on the wider area."

Increase in pollution and congestion

- Increased pollution due to increase in congestion, start-stop traffic
- Cleaner smaller streets will push pollution elsewhere
- Good traffic flow reduces levels of pollution
- Increase the Congestion Charge

"The pollution will just increase with cars sitting gridlocked in traffic"

"I have to drive from Holborn to Camden Town three times a week to collect heavy equipment - I know what the traffic flow is like already."

"I work on Guilford Street and I'm very concerned. I understand that this overall macro plan is to clean up the small streets but there seems no understanding of what that means in practice. It will cause more pollution elsewhere."

"We all want less pollution, less congestion but the plans don't do this; it's not possible; basically it's difficult to reduce pollution and congestion."

"I've been a lecturer in epidemiology. We know that pollution is the greatest killer - we don't have ten years, we need to do something now. We must do all we can to avoid stop-start traffic, to have traffic flowing properly."

"It's obvious - you just need to increase the Congestion charge for people who don't live here - it's just not expensive enough to deter through traffic"

"All the displaced traffic has to go somewhere. You can't just snap your fingers and it goes away."

Inadequate consultation and collaboration

- Lack of communication on reasons for change
- Lack of proper consultation
- Lack of preparation by Camden in advance of making changes
- Concern about the process and how to be involved
- Lack of engagement by residents is not indifference
- Weighting of views of consultees
- Respect differences of view
- Need to work together to solve potential problems

"None of it makes sense to me. Why are they doing it? There's no reason."

"I'm really alarmed at what I'm hearing tonight. Overall the aims are laudable, but this is a mess."

"One of Camden's main failings is the way they make the changes and worry about what happens later. We need to work through the potential problems together. They are not preparing the way but just do it and we all suffer the consequences."

"There's a lack of joined-upness. We need to sit down and talk about the issues with real discourse and pre-consultation"

"So many of us who are affected by these capricious alterations to traffic patterns are away or have not had sufficient time to respond. This is no way means that we are indifferent to the incessant "tinkering" that goes on the neighbourhoods in which we live."

"A point that struck me looking at the results of the consultation was that the views of Brent Cyclists are apparently given equal weight to those of the residents!"

"We all agree there's been a failure of consultation. But one person who suggests something different should not be shouted down"

“What is coming out loud and clear is the lack of proper consultation – it’s very poor or at best fake - it doesn’t do it properly. Issues don’t get debated. We need a much better consultation process. Camden council need to consult in a much more open, efficient way - we need to recommend a different way of consultation”

Potential benefits

- In the long term there has to be a change in how we get about.
- Putting traffic on main roads leads to a healthier life
- Changes will make pavements wider, so better for wheelchair users

“Forget about displaced traffic - we need more projects planned like this, which will be better for the city at large.”

“It may take ten years or longer, but we need to embrace positive change.”

“I’m Chair of the Mount Pleasant Association. We’ve been discussing traffic flows at our meetings. In principle I do side with putting traffic on the main roads to have a healthier life. In the long term there has to be a change in how we get about.”

“People who aren’t able to walk are not forgotten. One of the reasons for the changes is to make sure pavement widths can more easily take wheelchairs, so they are not half on, half off pavements. We (Living Streets) are very conscious of the less able.”

Camden / London politics

- Involve TFL – get them to explain
- Decisions are made by unelected officers
- Increased costs to residents
- Local politics leads to collateral damage to the residential neighbourhood

“Get TfL into the room to explain the reasons for the changes - there must be some logic behind them.”

“At the meeting on the 27th June there was representative from TFL in the room. I asked him why they hadn’t put pollution monitors along Grays Inn Road and Kings Cross Road. He said if you think there’s a problem, buy a monitor. That sort of attitude isn’t very helpful.”

“Decisions are often made by employees (council officers) who are not elected and therefore are not accountable to us the voters (although we certainly pay their salaries through our council taxes.)”

“Camden has made it increasingly more difficult and much more expensive for me to reach the home where I live and for which I pay a considerable council tax, due to byzantine road closures and one way systems.”

“Local politics seems very anti-democratic. There is only one aim - to make sure traffic cannot move through the area - it’s absolutely deliberate. It seems that if the cyclists don’t like it, what they say goes. They don’t care about pollution or the collateral damage to the neighbourhood. The aim is to get rid of every motor vehicle and Camden will run rings round us with fake consultation processes.”