

REPORT

of the

PUBLIC MEETING

organised by BRAG (Bloomsbury Residents Action Group)
on
Tuesday 24 July 2018



Bloomsbury Residents' Action Group

BRAG
Residents matter!

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Background Information

Formation of BRAG (Bloomsbury Residents Action Group)

BRAG was formed at the end of May 2016 by a group of neighbours in response to the realisation that decision-makers (Camden Council and Transport for London) are imposing changes to the physical layout of our neighbourhood without appropriate consultation with the people who live there, particularly long-term permanent residents. This concern is echoed by the owners and managers of small shops and local businesses, with whom residents interact on a daily basis.

Residents Matter!

A quick look at the 2015 electoral register confirms that there are at least 20,669 people living in the streets south of the Euston Road, which are part of three Camden wards: Bloomsbury, Kings Cross and Holborn and Covent Garden. This confirms the areas as a highly dense inner city residential area.

To live an ordinary day-to-day life, permanent residents have different needs to the two groups of people for whom recent changes to the road layout are intended to benefit: students attending the University of London and UCL (and associated colleges such as Birkbeck, SOAS etc); and commuters going to work in Bloomsbury, whose homes are in other areas of London. It seems that voices of those who are 'transient' are being heard; whereas those of long term permanent residents are not.

We thus formed BRAG to assert to all who would listen, that Residents' Matter!

Torrington Place to Tavistock Place experimental traffic scheme

Our first campaign was to raise awareness amongst the community of the reasons behind the sudden loss of a westbound route along the Tavistock-Torrington corridor, which resulted in displaced traffic being forced into streets such as Judd Street and Endsleigh Street (and many others) as vehicles sought an alternative route to reach their destination.

Due to an error of process, the Council decided to initiate a Public Inquiry, which took place over 4 weeks in the autumn of 2017. Mr Elliott, the independent Inspector, produced his report in mid 2018. His recommendation is that the corridor should remain one-way to allow for two enlarged cycle lanes (as per the trial) and wider pavements; but that the direction of travel for vehicles should be from east to west. In his considered opinion, this would benefit the greatest number of people but still support Camden's transport policy which encourages walking and cycling in preference to the reliance on motor vehicles. The final decision is due to be made by Camden's Cabinet Members on 5 September 2018.

As far as Judd Street is concerned today, we note the situation has returned to pre-trial levels (unless there are road works elsewhere) mostly because the phasing of the traffic lights with Euston Road enables more cars to leave the junction at any one time. Those who live on this particular street do not expect traffic to disappear (this is an inner London residential area) but traffic flow (as opposed to start-stop conditions) reduces the high levels of pollution we were experiencing two years ago.

What BRAG has been doing

In June 2016 BRAG set up a website (www.brag.org.uk) and with the help of a leaflet invited local people to get in touch. It quickly became clear that a large number of residents were feeling ignored by decision-makers. In the two years since our formation, we have attracted membership from a growing number of residents who live in south Camden (details of streets in Appendix 3).

As an unfunded group of volunteers, we rely on word of mouth to spread information about our existence and we send out occasional newsletters to all those on our database.

We held a Community Planning Day in September 2016. A report of the key findings was published and sent to the Council as part of our response to the Consultation of the Tavistock-Torrington experimental traffic scheme. We also distributed a Petition, which was signed by 760 people who lived in the streets adjacent to the TaviPlace corridor.

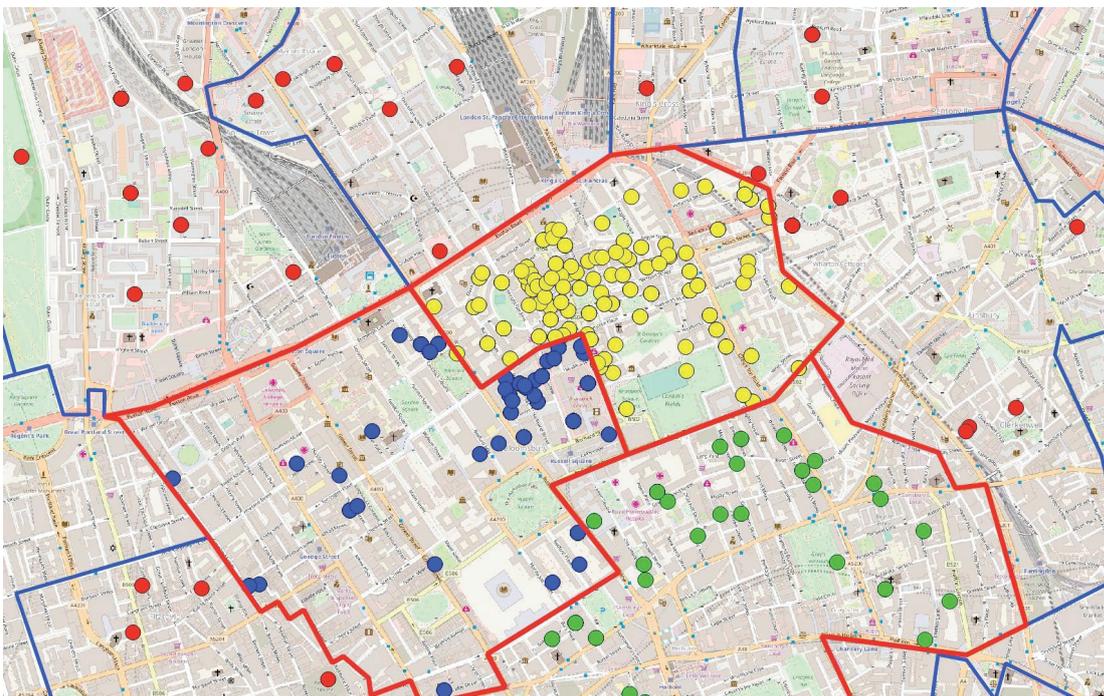
We held a Public Meeting in October 2018, at St Pancras Church, at which a vote was taken to support our intention to suggest that the Tavistock-Torrington corridor should remain two-way for motor vehicles but with cycle tracks on either side of the road, in direction of travel, changing from a bi-directional cycleway, as previously installed.

BRAG was a key participant in the 2017 Public Inquiry which was held in relation to the Tavistock-Torrington Experimental Traffic Order. BRAG's comments on the outcome of the Public Inquiry, with a summary of the Inspector's conclusions, can be read at Appendix 2.

We try to keep our members informed about the various consultations initiated by Camden and TfL. The "Walking and Cycling Improvement" schemes generally require road closures, making day to day life more and more difficult for those who live in central London.

We also support residents who wish to object to planning and licensing applications, including change of use. BRAG representatives participate in a number of Community Liaison Groups that have been set up to design Construction Management Plans for large new developments in WC1.

We answer correspondence from all who contact us - whether they support or disagree with our campaigns.



Map showing where residents live who signed BRAG petition in 2016

What residents need

Residents require deliveries (more so as the internet becomes an ever-growing retail focus). Local shops in particular rely on regular deliveries to be able to operate their business effectively. Shops that are used regularly by residents include the local convenience store, patisserie, café, hairdressers, building supplies and chemist.

Residents need to load and unload outside their front door. They may require building contractors to repair their homes. Such trades require nearby parking too. The many large mansion blocks in the area need regular external maintenance that requires a large amount of scaffolding.

Residents require the ability to move around without being penalised for living in WC1.

Without residents an inner city area can become dead. Passive surveillance, from people living and overlooking public spaces, also helps public safety. Many residents work from home and some have businesses that require the use of a car.

The area of London in which we live includes a large number of Council and sheltered housing flats, occupied by the frail and elderly whose voice is less likely to be heard in the 21st century, dominated by social media as the preferred means of communication.

Most permanent residents of WC1 do not own a car; they rely on walking, cycling, or public transport to get around the city. Residents occasionally acquire large items, such as furniture and equipment, items not easily transportable on a bicycle. Car clubs and taxis are then brought into use. Some residents are infirm and need regular transport to and from one of the many hospitals in the area. Friends with cars can help, or taxis provide a useful service. These are not unnecessary journeys, they are part of the daily life of residents who may also be disabled and unable to walk or ride a bike.

Consultation

Our principal concern has always been with Camden's poor consultation process when proposals for new schemes are introduced.

The Council's website articulates this clearly in regard to information about the Torrington Place-Tavistock Place trial. We learn that this was developed with input from the following groups: Transport for London, Camden Cycling Campaign, London Cycling Campaign, Living Streets, University College London and the University of London.

There was a noticeable absence of one stakeholder group that would be most affected by the change: residents.

It is this glaring error BRAG is campaigning to change.

Written and compiled by
Debbie Radcliffe
Chair, BRAG
Bloomsbury Residents Action Group
August 2018



Lansdowne Terrace



Judd Street / Euston Road

Dear All

Thank you to everyone who contacted their ward councillors regarding the proposals by Camden to close the north and south end of Judd Street to motor vehicles. Despite 9 deputations to the Leader of the Council at a meeting at the Town Hall on 27 June (2 in favour, 7 against) Councillor Georgia Gould gave it the go-ahead.

There are a number of issues which concern us:

- The reality that a very large number of residents and businesses in the affected area did not know about the proposals
- The long delay of two years, three months since Camden's original consultation
- The fact the decision has been made before any decision on the changes to the Tavistock-Torrington corridor (to be decided by Camden's Cabinet Members on 5 September)
- The apparent failure of local democracy to give any meaningful regard to the concerns of local residents and businesses.
-

We have decided to hold a public meeting to raise the importance of these issues.

Tuesday 24 July 6.30-8.00pm
Lumen Church,
88 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RS

BRAG was formed in 2016 to give residents a Voice, so it seems appropriate to organise a time and place where local people can come together to express their views.

Please join us to discuss suggestions for next steps and a positive way forward.

Best wishes,
Debbie Radcliffe
Bloomsbury Residents Action Group
www.brag.org.uk



View of Burton Street from Duke's Road

Invitation letter sent to BRAG's mailing list

Public Meeting 24 July 2018

Introduction

On 27 June 2018, a decision was made by the Leader of Camden Council to close the north end of Judd Street (junction with Euston Road) to motor vehicles, as well as the south end of Hunter Street (continuation of Judd Street) at the Lansdowne Terrace / Guilford Street junction. Despite seven deputations against the proposals (with only 2 in favour) Councillor Georgia Gould gave these proposals the go-ahead.

BRAG was formed in 2016 to give residents a Voice, so it seemed appropriate to organise a time and place where local people could come together to express their views. This took place from 6.30 to 8pm on Tuesday 24th July at the Lumen Church, 88 Tavistock Place, WC1

The meeting was well attended by over 60 people - including residents, small business owners, a journalist from the Camden New Journal and a representative from the RMT Ranks and Highways, representing taxi drivers. One local resident represented London Living Streets, the campaign group for promoting everyday walking.

As we are encouraging the Council to be much more “joined up” in its thinking, it was good that residents came from all three local wards: Kings Cross, Bloomsbury and Holborn & Covent Garden. There are knock-on effects and the issues ripple out much further than one single street - as the Chair of the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum, who attended, clearly articulated. Her comment, “the devil is in the detail” also resonated with the audience.



Attendees at BRAG Public Meeting on 24 July 2018, at Lumen Church, Tavistock Place



Public meeting 24 July 2018

AGENDA

1. **Welcome**
2. **What is happening round here?**
3. **Is the consultation valid?**
4. **Will the Judd Street/Hunter Street closures prejudice the outcome of the Public Inquiry?**
5. **Discussion: how will it affect your area?**
6. **Conclusion**

What is happening round here?

After a welcome by BRAG's Chair (**Debbie Radcliffe**), there was a brief introduction to BRAG by **Bob McIntyre (Vice-Chair)** followed by a short presentation about what is actually happening to local streets. Some decisions have already been made (closures to junctions in the Holborn area), some are still to be made (Frederick Street / Princeton Street).

The two schemes which precipitated the public meeting are

EUSTON ROAD / JUDD STREET CLOSURE

<https://consultations.wearecamden.org/culture-environment/midland/>

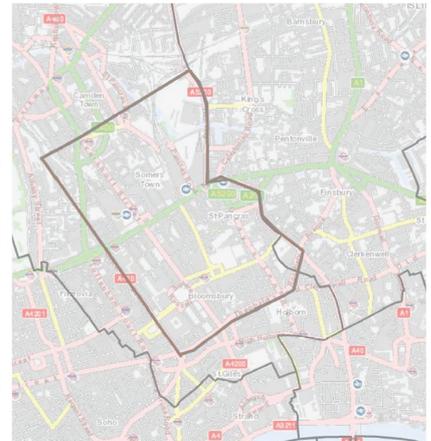
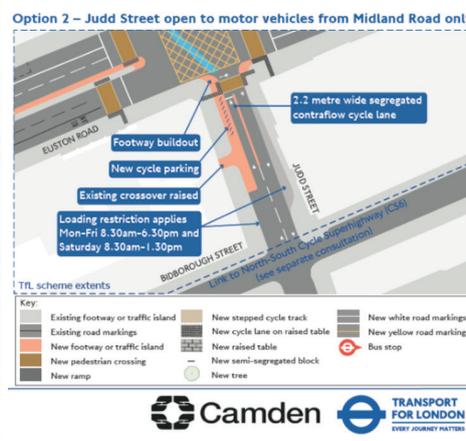
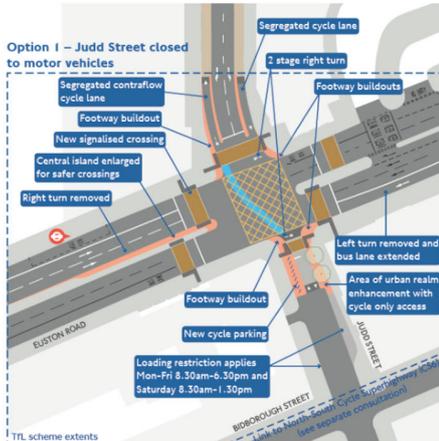
BRUNSWICK SQUARE / LANSDOWNE TERRACE CLOSURE

<https://consultations.wearecamden.org/culture-environment/brunswicksquare/>

These proposals are inevitably linked with other schemes, especially the Tavistock-Torrington Place trial scheme which has been in operation since November 2015.

Is the consultation valid?
Researched, written and presented
by **Diana Scarrott**

There was then a presentation about the validity of the consultation process, which took place over 2 years ago, and the selective reporting of results in the Officer's Report.



Options one and two from the 2016 consultation

Consultation area

Councils have a lot of discretion about how consultations are carried out. But sometimes consultations are challenged in the courts and case law then defines some principles.

Consultations should:

- take place when proposals are still at a formative stage
- give enough information to allow intelligent consideration
- give adequate time for response
- be reported on in a timely fashion
- be conscientiously taken into account in subsequent decision-making

There is also guidance from the Local Government Association.

Their checklist includes these two points:

- **Monitor the responses:** keep track of the number of responses you receive so action can be taken to improve response rates if necessary. Check the responses being submitted to get an idea of the issues arising.
- **Analyse the results:** Consider what story the data are telling and what this means in terms of the questions asked. Calculate how many people gave certain answers and look for any variations. You should also seek to identify any patterns, trends or themes to help identify key issues

The first thing to say about the 2016 consultation about changes at the north end of Judd Street was that it had a very low response rate.

- 19,384 consultation letters were sent out in an approximately rectangular area around the Judd Street-Euston Road junction.
- 104 paper responses and 48 online responses came back from within the consultation area – 152 or 0.8%.

The Council says: 'in general, responses to consultations have varied from 5% to 15% although it is not uncommon to see a response rate which is either below or above this range'.

But this consultation's response rate is really very low and begs the question why?

First, there were problems with the distribution which the Council acknowledged at the time and attempted to deal with.

But there is another problem.

The traffic impact on Euston Road was discussed briefly in the consultation papers and 'slight increases in journey times' are mentioned but traffic displacement onto surrounding streets was not examined at all. The response might have been higher if the proposals had not been presented as 'walking and cycling improvements'. Yes, there was a choice between full closure and partial closure of the Judd Street - Euston Road junction but how many people got past the title to think about the implications of a junction change?

Local people are now working out the implications but these ought to have been discussed in the consultation documents.

- How does one get from A to B, and C to D, with each option and how does it compare with what we have now?
- Are the streets wide enough to take these alternative routes?
- Will big delivery lorries be able to get round this corner if they can't go round that one?
- What does this mean for a local accident black spot?

With that sort of open questioning the response would almost certainly have been much higher.

Altogether, 754 responses were reported for the 2016 consultation, but without separating consultation area views from other views.

After the June 27 meeting, at our request, the Council provided us with the following figures:

- The consultation area generated 20% of the response (152 replies),
- Other parts of Camden produced 11% (82 replies)
- The other 69% (520) came from outside Camden altogether.

Comparing the 152 consultation area responses with those from outside the area:

- More didn't want either option (53% against 48%),
- Fewer wanted option 1 – full closure (24% against 42%)
- More wanted option 2 – part closure (17% against 3%).

Since, in both groups, more people wanted neither option, this can hardly be called a ringing endorsement of option 1.

Nevertheless, a report went to the Council Leader on June 27 offering just two options – 'Do nothing' or 'Approve the proposals as consulted on with the full closure of Judd Street where it joins Euston Road'.

But these were not the options consulted on. 'Do nothing' is not equivalent to responding 'neither option'.

It is easy to dismiss the 'neither option' as people wanting to do nothing, dinosaurs opposed to change. But there are other options and there are more options now than in 2016 when the consultation took place, as vehicle recognition technology advances have become cheaper. People supporting neither option still want something done about congestion and pollution and could well support other options such as control of business delivery times. Also, the 27 June report did not separate views in the consultation area from views outside and understated the support for option 2 amongst people closest to the junction.

A decision has been taken based on a report which was not at all transparent. This is why BRAG wants to talk to Camden about improving the consultation process.

The response in this consultation was dominated by views from a very large surrounding area. This is not to say that people from a wider area are not entitled to opinions – of course they are. But the community is entitled to know what sort of stakeholders are joining in the consultation.

In summary, BRAG's view is that the consultation on the junction at the north end of Judd Street was seriously flawed, both in its initial drafting and implementation and in the way that its findings have been used.

The consultation fails three of the five requirements for good consultation that case law has defined:

- **It did not give enough information to allow intelligent consideration, so many residents and businesses most affected by the changes did not take part**
- **It was not reported on in a timely fashion – government guidance is that consultations should be followed up within 12 weeks, not 120 weeks**
- **The incomplete reporting of findings means that the June 27 decision cannot be said to have conscientiously taken them into account.**

There should therefore be a new examination of options and a new and more thorough consultation.



Outcome of the Public Inquiry on the Tavistock Place/Torrington Place one-way road trial.

INTRODUCTION

The Public Inquiry ran from 10 October 2017 for four weeks and cost in excess of £300,000. It was a formal legal process with a barrister representing the council.

The council had opted for this voluntary Public Inquiry, the conclusions of which are advisory, because it had failed to display a key document about the trial for the public.

BRAG was one of many objectors to the council's one-way east-bound road scheme. BRAG presented over 100 pages of evidence and put forward nine witnesses. BRAG members attended every day of the Inquiry. Up to 10 officers per day attended for the council. No councillor attended at all.

The independent Inspector, Mr Martin Elliott, weighed up the evidence presented for and against the trial and concluded, after six months' deliberation, that the route should remain one-way but that the direction should be reversed to west-bound.

Although the Inspector's recommendation was not BRAG's first choice (which was two separate cycle lanes with two-way traffic, as worked well pre-2005) BRAG took the view that it offered a fair and balanced solution, preserving the new cycle tracks but also recognising the needs of the wider community. The evidence at the Inquiry showed that one-way west-bound traffic will cause less displaced traffic and pollution on local streets and supply the much needed west-bound route (the only one between the Strand and Euston Road).

BRAG supports this compromise recommendation from the independent Inspector, and has called on the council to implement the recommendations.

*Extract of outcome from the independent inspector's report
SEE APPENDIX FOR FULL DETAILS*

Will the Judd Street/Hunter Street closures prejudice the outcome of the Public Inquiry?

Researched, written and presented
by Nicky Coates

The Public Inquiry on the Tavistock Place/Torrington Place trial

- Ran from 10 October 2017 for four weeks
- Error of process: The Council failed to display key document to the public (hence the decision to hold the Inquiry)
- Cost of Inquiry was in excess of £300,000
- Recommendations are advisory
- BRAG presented over 100 pages of evidence and 9 witnesses
- No Camden Councillor attended at all

Outcome of the Inquiry

- The independent Inspector, Mr Martin Elliott, concluded the route should remain one-way but be reversed to west-bound.
- BRAG proposed to the Inquiry that there should be two separate cycle lanes with two-way traffic
- But BRAG has taken the view that the independent outcome should be respected
- The Inspector's recommendation would preserve the new cycle tracks but also recognise the needs of the wider community.
- One-way west-bound traffic will cause less displaced traffic and pollution on local streets and supply the much needed west-bound route (the only one between the Strand and Euston Road).
- BRAG has called on the council to respect the outcome of the Public Inquiry

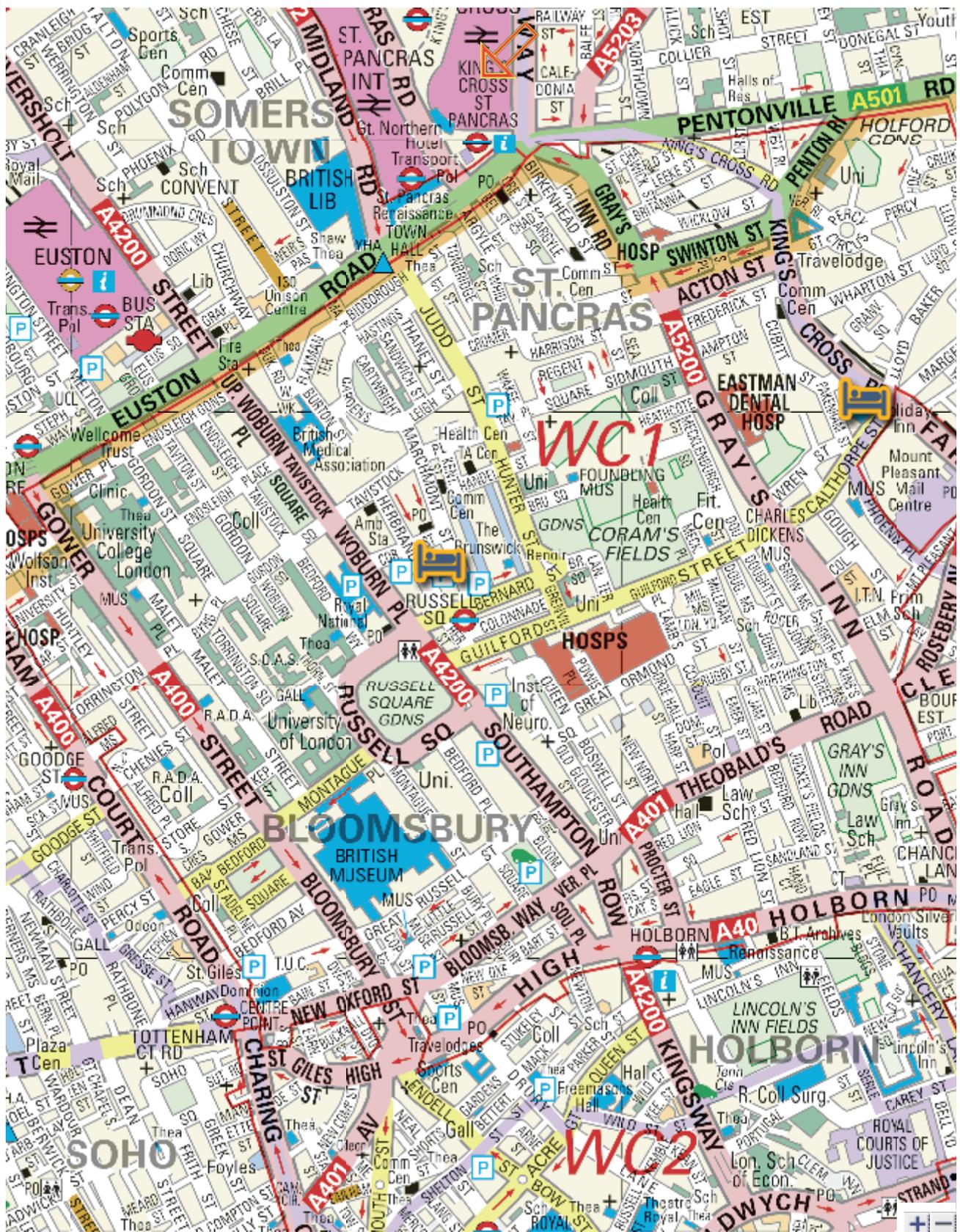
Key conclusions from the Inspector's report

1. Traffic jams worse
2. Pollution was not reduced across the area – and higher than expected on streets with displaced traffic
3. Cycling accidents increased
4. No reduction in traffic volumes
5. No increase in cycling numbers
6. No evidence of health benefits or modal shift to active travel
7. A 'fundamental paucity of evidence to support the efficacy of the trial'
8. The council's traffic modelling and pollution monitoring were shown to be unreliable.

Impact of the new closures [Judd/Euston & Lansdowne/Guilford] on the Inquiry decision

- Decision to be made on 5 September. There is concern that recommendations may be rejected
- Inquiry was based on information about the roads **as they were then** - but which the Council is now seeking to change **before** the Inquiry decision is made
- The new closures mean vehicles driving from Euston Road to Judd Street will now have to go via either:
 - Dukes Road/Burton Street (or Flaxman Terrace)/Cartwright Gardens, or
 - Upper Woburn Place, and then either Coram Street/Marchmont Street/Bernard Street or...via Tavistock Place (if it remains east-bound)
- The Judd Street closure creates for the Council **new justifications to reject the Inquiry outcome and keep the east-bound route** – which is the Council's preferred option but which was proved during the Inquiry to have multiple disadvantages – re traffic jams, pollution and cycling safety

So, if this happens, the Inquiry, which cost council tax payers £300,000+ (and was also a significant cost to objectors), will have been pointless.



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Map of streets in south Camden

Discussion - how will it affect your area?

**The discussion was facilitated by Nicky Coates and Mark Foley
& recorded and written up by Debbie Radcliffe**

This summary includes input from residents who were unable to attend the meeting but sent in comments (see Appendix 1)

The discussion 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 (and streets further east)

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.”

Camden’s hierarchy of movement

- Impact on 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.”

“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.”

“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.”

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?”

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

“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’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

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.”

“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.”

“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"

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

"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!"

"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.”

“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.”

“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.”

Resolutions voted on at end of meeting

The meeting concluded with two resolutions that we will take back to Camden Council, along with a report on the issues that were brought up during the evening.

The first was endorsed by the majority of people at the meeting, though not all (four against) and there were a couple of abstentions.

RESOLUTION 1

This public meeting calls on Camden Council to reconsider its decision to close the north end of Judd Street and the south end of Hunter Street at Lansdowne Terrace, on the grounds that:-

significant numbers of local people and businesses did not have an opportunity to express their views because they did not receive the 2016 consultation papers.

the consultation papers did not explain clearly how these road closures would displace traffic onto small quiet streets and cause significant harm and inconvenience to local residents and businesses

the interval between the 2016 consultation and the reporting of its results in 2018 breached government guidance that consultations should be reported on in a timely fashion

the 27 June decision was made on the basis of options which differed significantly from those consulted on in 2016 and must be considered unsound as a consequence

The Public Inquiry on Tavistock-Torrington Place was based on the premise that the decisions on Judd Street and Lansdowne Terrace would be made AFTER the decision on Tavistock-Torrington Place. Taking these decisions prematurely risks rendering the Public Inquiry meaningless.

This meeting calls on the council to reconsider this decision in the context of other adjoining schemes and other options; and to undertake fresh consultations, with genuine engagement with local people. There are other options that could accommodate both the needs of local people and the needs of transient road users.

RESOLUTION 2

That BRAG should form a working group to draw up a consultation code of practice to be followed by Camden Council.

The second resolution was endorsed by all present, with one abstention.

This is now being progressed actively, with a view to having some proposals ready for discussion with Camden in the autumn.

Appendix 1

Feedback from residents unable to attend meeting

Bloomsbury Residents' Action Group
BRAG
Residents matter!

BRAG PUBLIC MEETING
Tuesday 24 July 2018, at Lumen Church, 88 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RS

Do give your views at the meeting but if there is no time to say what you would like to say, or thoughts occur to you later, please fill in this form & send to: info@brag.org.uk (pass on to friends and neighbours)

PLEASE LET US KNOW ANY COMMENTS, CONCERNS AND IDEAS

First name	Surname	Street	Postcode	Ward *	Email
SIMON	PEARSON	DUKE'S ROAD	WC1H 9AD	KX	

I believe this plan to be concerning for the following reasons:

- a number of local residents on Duke's Road and Woburn Walk appear not to have received the consultation that was sent out in Spring 2016;
- the consultation contains traffic modelling information but does not at any point mention Duke's Road, despite the fact that after the closure of Judd Street, Duke's Road would become the most direct entrance to Bloomsbury from Euston Road. An FOI request, submitted to the council in July 2018, reveals that the modelling does not find that Duke's Road, Cartwright Gardens, nor Marchmont St, will receive significant additional traffic. This is at best questionable, as this would become the most direct route into Bloomsbury from Euston Road [2];
- 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, where safety needs to be reviewed – something our local councillor Jonathan Simpson pledged to do [3] following the death of Mark Welsh on 6 July 2017 [4]. A significant increase of traffic would serve to also significantly increase the already high safety risk;
- Duke's Road is a narrow, brick-paved one-way street (two-way to cycles) with parking provision and a narrow entry to Burton Street. Its buildings have significant historical value. The additional traffic seems not only impractical in terms of road capacity, but will also have a significant negative impact on local residents, businesses and the character of the area.

[1] <http://democracy.camden.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=205&Mid=7982&Ver=4>
[2] https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/detail_of_traffic_modelling_done
[3] <https://twitter.com/CamdenJonathan/status/882934730244665345>
[4] <https://thelincolnite.co.uk/2017/07/he-will-be-greatly-missed-tributes-to-council-manager-from-lincoln-killed-in-crash/>

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PLEASE LET US KNOW ANY COMMENTS, CONCERNS AND IDEAS

First name	Surname	Street	Postcode	Ward *	Email
MONICA	COOMBS	JOHN STREET		H	

Thanks for all your work in mobilising residents.

I will be away & unable to make the meeting but 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!

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

I am a John St resident & this proposal will no doubt cause traffic to build up in Guilford/Doughty & John Streets.

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.

Feedback from residents unable to attend meeting



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PLEASE LET US KNOW ANY COMMENTS, CONCERNS AND IDEAS

First name	Surname	Street	Postcode	Ward *	Email
LYNN	BARLOW	THANET		KX	

Thank you for the email of 16 July, confirming the decision of the Council following the meeting on 27 June. I did turn up to the meeting but was unable, due to lack of space, to get inside the committee room. There are a few points I would like to make about the Council's proposals, as follows:

1. I have been a resident of Rashleigh House in Thanet Street for over 30 years. I have never seen the Brunswick Square Consultation document of March 2016, nor did I know of its existence, until I saw it referred to in the Committee document of 27 June, although I accept that Thanet Street is not within the consultation area referred to on page 21 of that document.
2. However, as I understand the position, the Council proposed to treat the proposed Brunswick Square closure and the Judd Street/Euston Road/Midland Road scheme as one unified plan. Although, in Appendix A at page 99 of the document, there is reference to public discussion hearings in February 2016 about the closure of Judd Street, I have neither seen nor heard of any reference to this proposal before. I do not think, therefore, that the Council has gone to any great lengths to consult local residents and I say this particularly, as the managers of this block of flats and Queen Alexandra Mansions and a block at the top end of Grays Inn Road, had never heard of these proposals before your notification of the meeting on 27 June. QAM and RH are both at the northern end of Judd Street and their residents are people who will be affected by these proposals.
3. 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. Further, you say that of the nine deputations represented at the meeting on 27 June, seven were against and only two in favour. Despite this and the response to the consultation paper being against the proposals, you say that the Council is going to go ahead. This does not seem to give any weight to the democratic process, and makes a mockery of the proceedings.
4. I should say that I own neither a car nor a bicycle, and use buses, tube, walk or take a taxi - in connection with the latter, I see that the LTA does not appear to have been consulted on the Judd Street/Euston Road scheme, although I am sure that they would be firmly against. 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.



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PLEASE LET US KNOW ANY COMMENTS, CONCERNS AND IDEAS

First name	Surname	Street	Postcode	Ward	Email
RITA	PHILLIPS	54 RUSSELL SQUARE	WC1B 4HR	B	

I am unable to attend the very important meeting this evening. I am sorry that I failed to respond in time to the consultation as well.

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 in the neighbourhoods in which we live.

What can we do?

I find that increasingly, I sometimes have to take a taxi in order to return to my home in Russell Square when I cannot muster the energy to go by public transport or to walk. 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 (recently increased by Ms. Gould) due to byzantine road closures and one way systems. 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.) I fear that I could go on and on.

I greatly appreciate your efforts and the efforts of others in BRAG to try to raise the profile of those of us who live in Bloomsbury, but who are often overlooked by those who are in a position of decision making.

Appendix 2

Outcome of the Public Inquiry on the Tavistock Place/ Torrington Place one-way experimental trial scheme

INTRODUCTION

The Public Inquiry ran from 10 October 2017 for four weeks and cost in excess of £300,000. It was a formal legal process with a barrister representing the council. The council had opted for this voluntary Public Inquiry, the conclusions of which are advisory, because it had failed to display a key document about the trial for the public.

BRAG was one of many objectors to the council's one-way east-bound road scheme. BRAG presented over 100 pages of evidence and put forward nine witnesses. BRAG members attended every day of the Inquiry. Up to 10 officers per day attended for the council. No councillor attended at all.

The independent Inspector, Mr Martin Elliott, weighed up the evidence presented for and against the trial and concluded, after six months' deliberation, that the route should remain one-way but that the direction should be reversed to west-bound.

Although the Inspector's recommendation was not BRAG's first choice (which was two separate cycle lanes with two-way traffic, as worked well pre-2005) BRAG took the view that it offered a fair and balanced solution, preserving the new cycle tracks but also recognising the needs of the wider community. The evidence at the Inquiry showed that one-way west-bound traffic will cause less displaced traffic and pollution on local streets and supply the much needed west-bound route (the only one between the Strand and Euston Road).

BRAG supports this compromise recommendation from the independent Inspector, and has called on the council to implement the recommendations.

KEY CONCLUSIONS FROM THE REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT INSPECTOR

1. Cycling numbers on the Tavistock-Torrington corridor have not increased.

The number of cyclists on the corridor has not 'doubled', as stated by Camden New Journal (31.5.18). The Council claim, put forward by officers at the Public Inquiry, that cycling had increased up to 52% was discredited and subsequently withdrawn by council officer Louise McBride under cross-examination. The Inspector concludes (8.5.4 of the Public Inquiry Report): 'In the absence of reliable data it is only possible to conclude that cycle use of the [Tavistock-Torrington] corridor has not decreased.'

2. No overall reduction in traffic in the study area, and significant displacement on to surrounding streets.

The Inspector noted (8.6.10) that there had been no overall reduction in traffic and said that 'traffic has diverted along other available westbound routes, in particular, Great Russell Street, Endsleigh Gardens, Gower Place, Tavistock Square (southwest side) Endsleigh Place and Judd Street to access Euston Road. This accords with the data ... which shows increases in traffic at certain times of the day by as much as 554% (Endsleigh Gardens). This in my view indicates a significant increase in traffic on routes adjacent to the corridor at the times surveyed.'

3. Cycling safety has not improved on the corridor

Cycling accidents increased from 7 to 11. It was demonstrated at the Inquiry that this could not be explained by an increase in volume of cycling on the corridor. The Inspector says (8.16.1): 'there has been an increase in cycling casualties which is unexplained but cannot be attributed to an increase in cycle use'

4. Pedestrian safety is better on the corridor but worse where traffic has been displaced

The Inspector says (8.16.1): 'pedestrian casualties along the corridor have reduced'. However pedestrian accidents were shown to have increased on Great Russell Street, one of the recipient streets for displaced traffic from the corridor. The Inspector confirmed (8.7.11) this increase which he said was 'unexplained'; and said that 'it is clear that since the implementation of the trial there has been an increase in casualties.'

5. Pollution was not shown to have reduced across the area.

The Inspector noted the absence of pre-trial monitoring in streets which received the displaced traffic from the corridor and says (8.9.4) that in some surrounding streets 'pollution levels are higher than expected'.

The Inspector notes, with regard to monitoring on the corridor, the admission by the Council (8.9.2) that 'some level of caution must be used when analysing the [Council's] results. [Council officer] Andrew Webber in cross examination also acknowledged that the data gathered was not the annual mean concentrations (annualisation) and had not been adjusted to take account of seasonal influences.'. The Inspector therefore concludes (8.9.3) 'it is difficult to quantify the level of improvement in air-quality on the corridor'.

6. Traffic jams have got worse.

The Inspector says (8.6.18): 'since the implementation of the trial there has been an increase in congestion which has resulted in increased journey times and travel costs; this has had an adverse effect on the quality of life and commercial operations.' Hence the recommendation to change the direction of vehicle traffic, which will help ambulances and other essential services just as much as taxis.

7. No evidence of health benefits in the area or modal shift to active travel

The Inspector states: (8.10.2) 'The Council now accept that there has been no increase in pedestrian traffic on the corridor and can now only submit that there has been no decrease in cycling.' He concludes (8.10.3): 'there is no evidence to show that the trial has resulted in a modal shift [in means of transport] such that there will be wider health benefits.'

8. Fundamental paucity of evidence

In his conclusions the Inspector refers (8.6.15) to 'a fundamental paucity of evidence to support the efficacy of the trial'.

Appendix 3

Residents who have been in contact with BRAG (correspondence, signed petition, attended meetings, joined as members etc) live in the following local streets:

Agar Grove	Hampstead Road
Ampthill Square	Handel Street
Ampton Street	Harpur Street
Argyle Street	Harrison Street
Argyle Square	Hastings Street
Baldwin's Gardens	Hatton Garden
Barnsbury Park	Heathcote Street
Bewdley Street	Herbrand Street
Bidborough Street	Hunter Street
Birkenhead Street	Huntley Street
Bridgeway Street	Islay Walk
Brill Place	John Street
Britannia Street	Judd Street
Brunswick Centre	Kenton Street
Burton Street	King's Cross Road
Bury Place	Lamb's Conduit Street
Calthorpe Street	Leather Lane
Cardington Street	Leigh Street
Cleveland Street	Marchmont Street
Compton Place	Mecklenburgh Square
Coram Street	Mecklenburgh Street
Cranleigh Street	Mildmay Street
Crestfield Street	Millman Street
Cromer Street	Mornington Crescent
Cubitt Street	Mount Pleasant
Doughty Mews	New Cavendish Street
Doughty Street	New North Street
Duke's Road	Regent Square
Endsleigh Street	Ridgmount Gardens
Euston Street	Royal College Street
Farringdon Street	Rugby Street
Flaxman Terrace	Russell Square
Foley Street	Sandwich Street
Frederick Street	Shorts Gardens
Gilbert Place	Sidmouth Street
Goodge Place	Southampton Row
Gordon Street	Swinton Street
Gosfield Street	Tankerton Street
Gower Street	Tavistock Place
Grafton Street	Tavistock Square
Gray's Inn Square	Thanet Street
Gray's Inn Road	Tonbridge Street
Great Ormond Street	Wakefield Street
Great James Street	Wharton Street
Great Percy Street	Whidborne Street
Great Portland St	Wicklow Street
Grenville Street	Woburn Place
Guilford Street	Woburn Walk