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Our reference: Covid-19 Safe travel in Camden/HeathStreet
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Making travel in Camden Safer: Responding to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

New Coronavirus (COVID-19) safety measures on Heath Street

Dear Resident / Business / Stakeholder Group,

Summary

- **We are making changes on Heath Street to make it safer and easier for you to walk and cycle in the area to reach key locations, in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)**
- **We are making changes to widen some sections of pavement on Heath Street to make it easier for you to physically distance from other people in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)**
- **Work will start from 22nd August to implement these changes**
- **You can share your comments on these changes via safetravel@Camden.gov.uk**
- **You can find out more about these changes on this website <https://www.camden.gov.uk/making-travel-safer-in-camden>**

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has created new road safety challenges that the Council is taking seriously. We want to make it easier and safer for people to walk and cycle locally, shop on their local high street, reach their local green spaces, schools and NHS sites, all while maintaining physical distancing. We are also looking to tackle future challenges caused by the way that people travel, as lockdown restrictions continue to ease. This includes a predicted rise in walking, cycling and car use, with people less likely and less able to choose public transport due to the reduction in capacity caused by physical distancing requirements.

The safety based changes we are implementing are mandated by the Government. The Department for Transport has issued statutory guidance to Councils to rapidly reallocate road space to people walking and cycling as a response to Coronavirus (Covid-19). In addition, the Mayor of London has issued similar guidance to London Boroughs in relation to the TfL Streetspace programme.

To respond to these new challenges quickly we are making a series of safety-based changes to streets in Camden. Included in this letter is:

- Detail on the changes being made in your area
- A drawing showing the changes being made
- A drawing showing who we have notified
- Information on how to find out more

How are we responding to Coronavirus (COVID-19) safety issues?

We have identified a number of locations across the borough to begin to tackle the safety issues, including that proposed in your area. These initial locations have been chosen as they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- New safety issues related to limited space for physical distancing, walking or cycling have been highlighted to us as a result of Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Before the pandemic there had already been some local community engagement from existing projects which highlighted issues which we are now looking to address
- They are areas where we can make it easier and safer for people to maintain physical distancing while walking and cycling locally, to shop, reach their local green spaces, schools and NHS sites

These safety measures include looking at widening pavements, reducing through traffic on residential streets and creating new “pop-up” cycle lanes. This will make it easier for people to access amenities and to use local roads to journey to key destinations or simply for exercise all while staying physically distanced.

What are the challenges on Heath Street?

Overall the number of vehicles using our roads is down but speeding has increased as a minority of irresponsible drivers take advantage of quieter roads. Across London, during the lockdown period, some average speeds were recorded at 37mph on 20mph roads. Locally, areas of Camden which already suffered from speeding problems have seen speed increases of as much as 13%.

As the lockdown continues to ease there is expected to be a rise in walking, cycling and car use – as both public transport capacity decreases due to physical distancing, and people choose alternative means of travel. This change in the way people travel will mean extra pressure on streets.

TfL have estimated that if all car-owning households switched their usual public transport journeys to car journeys, some boroughs would see a near doubling in the number of private transport journeys, causing massive congestion issues. In Camden this would be an increase in private transport trips of over 90% in addition to an increase in car trips originating in other boroughs. We know however that in Camden the proportion of households without a car across the borough is 69%, making walking and cycling safety and facilities crucial.

Additionally early modelling by TfL has revealed there could be more than a 10-fold increase in kilometres cycled, and up to five times the amount of walking, compared to pre-COVID levels. We have already started to see this reflected in Camden. Weekend cycle flows at our three automatic cycle count point sites have recorded an average increase of 120% in cycling levels this May compared to last.

We are also aware that physical distancing requirements have meant that some areas of pavement are now too narrow for pedestrians to use safely.

On Heath Street specifically we know that there are sections of very narrow pavement particularly outside popular shops and cafes. This is a busy area and is one of the neighbourhood's main shopping area with a diverse mix of retail and non-retail outlets. The current pavement does not provide enough space for people to queue for shops and walk past while maintaining physical distancing. This issue could worsen if more businesses take advantage of the ability to add tables and chairs to the pavement.

Wider pavements have also been requested through our online engagement tool Commonplace, where we invited people to suggest locations where new walking and cycling projects might be needed to facilitate physical distancing requirements. Narrow pavements on Heath Street were highlighted, with, for example, 18 people supporting one suggestion to widen the pavement. This Commonplace tool is now closed but you can read the comments made on the website. <https://camdensafetravel.commonplace.is/> .

In order to respond to the challenge of narrow pavements in this location we are going to be temporarily widening sections on both sides of Heath Street. This will make it easier for people to maintain a physical distance while shopping or walking through the area as well supporting local businesses to keep their customers safe and boost business.

What will the work involve?

The changes we will be making on Heath Street include widening the pavement in the following locations using temporary barriers to protect pedestrians from vehicles:

- Temporarily widening sections of pavement on Heath Street between the junction with Hampstead High Street and Oriel Place creating extra space for pedestrians to walk locally while limiting their need to step into the road. This includes:
 - Increasing the pavement to 3.79m wide by the Tesco Express
 - Providing an extra 1.72m of pavement width outside Artichoke and Louis Patisserie
- Removing 16m of parking spaces to create more space for pedestrians including:
 - Three pay by phone parking spaces outside 32-36 Heath Street
- Temporarily adding water filled barriers with gaps left for refuse collection to protect pedestrians from the road
- This will not be noisy work

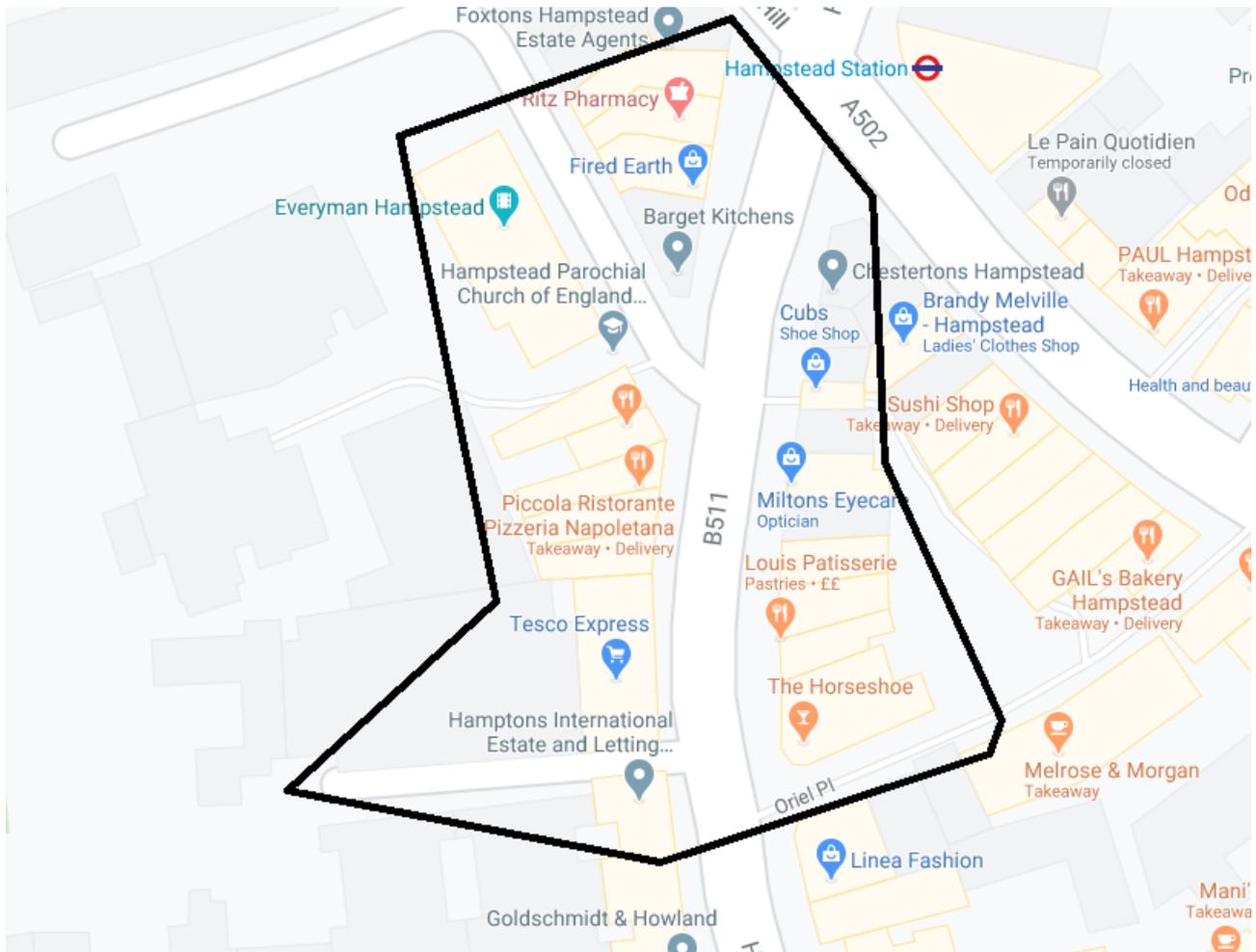
Drawings of what these changes will look like is included with this letter.

How can you give your views?

We know that there is an immediate need for these safety improvements in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) so we are making these changes as quickly as possible using Temporary Traffic Orders. If you have any concerns or comments on the changes you can get in touch via the details below

We have already consulted with statutory emergency services on these changes. We are also notifying local residents, businesses and stakeholder groups within the local area and

you can see the map of those notified below. You will also see information going up on the local streets and on our website.



The scheme will run for a maximum period of 18 months

How can you find out more?

More information on this scheme, and the other changes we are making across Camden in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) can be found on our dedicated website:

<https://www.camden.gov.uk/making-travel-safer-in-camden>

Where you can also find:

- The Non Key Executive Officer Decision report

In the meantime if you have any further questions or comments on the project, please don't hesitate to get in touch via safetravel@camden.gov.uk,

SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES ON HEATH STREET

