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Our reference: Covid-19 Safe Cycling/York Way
Email: safetravel@camden.gov.uk
PeopleFriendlyStreets@islington.gov.uk

Environment &
Regeneration
Room 2.05
Town Hall
Upper Street
London N1 2UD

T 020 7527 2000
W www.islington.gov.uk

Transport Strategy Service
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE

Phone: 020 7974 4444
camden.gov.uk

Responding to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

New Coronavirus (COVID-19) cycling safety measures on York Way (Phase 1)

Dear Resident / Business / Stakeholder Group,

Summary

Camden Council and Islington Council are working together to implement the following scheme:

- **We are making changes on York Way to make it safer and easier for you to cycle in the area to reach key locations in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)**
- **We will be installing protected mandatory cycle lanes, between Freight Lane and Wharfdale Road (Phase 1), making it safer for cyclists.**
- **The cycle lanes will be continued further north along York Way to Cliff Road/Hungerford Road as part of phase 2. A separate notification letter will be provided ahead of this work**
- **Camden Council will be installing Shared Use Bus Boarders on northbound bus stops to protect cyclists around bus stops**
- **Islington Council will be making changes to waiting (parking) arrangements for vehicles between Crinan Street and Wharfdale Road, and north of Copenhagen Street**
- **Work will take place from the week of 06 July for approximately four weeks, between 9am and 5pm**
- **You can share your comments on these changes via safetravel@Camden.gov.uk and PeopleFriendlyStreets@islington.gov.uk**
- **You can find out more about these changes on this website <https://www.camden.gov.uk/making-travel-safer-in-camden>**

Why is this happening?

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has created some serious new road safety challenges caused by the need for continued social distancing in everyday life. Camden Council and Islington Council need to make it easier and safer for people to walk and cycle locally, shop on their local high street, reach schools, medical services, green spaces and places of work, all while maintaining social distancing.

We are also looking to tackle future challenges in the way that people travel once lockdown restrictions fully eased. This includes a predicted rise in walking, cycling and car use with people less able to take public transport due to reductions in public transport capacity caused by social 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 Covid-19. In addition, the Mayor of London has issued similar guidance to London Boroughs in relation to the TfL Streetspace programme.

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

- There had already been some local community engagement from existing projects, prior to the pandemic, which highlighted issues to address
- Previous road safety problems have been identified in the area
- The ability to make it easier and safer for people maintaining 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 “pop-up” cycle lanes.

Proposals to increase cycling across our streets will also help deliver one of the 17 recommendations from Camden’s Citizens Assembly on the climate crisis, which called for more segregated cycle lanes. Similarly, Islington’s draft Transport Strategy calls for *‘making more effective use of the existing transport network...rebalancing road user priority...towards walking, cycling’*. The proposed temporary changes on York Way, will be part of the Borough-wide cycle networks for Camden and Islington, helping to deliver that aim.

This scheme is being funded by Camden Council, and as well as seeking a contribution from the Transport for London Streetspace programme. More information on this can be found at:

www.tfl.gov.uk/travel-information/improvements-and-projects/streetspace-for-london

What are the challenges on York Way?

As the lockdown is easing, more people are walking, cycling and using cars – as public transport capacity is diminished due to social distancing requirements, and people choosing alternative means of travel. This change will put extra pressure on the streets.

York Way already has high cycle flows of over 1300 people cycling each day. It also has a poor road safety record for cycling with 15 cycling casualties recorded over the past 3 years. Transport for London have identified York Way as a high priority route for installing pop-up cycle lanes due to its useful north-south alignment leading into many other new and existing protected cycle routes to help people get into central London, including Euston Road and Grays Inn Road.

Modelling by TfL showed that 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 our respective boroughs. Weekend cycle flows at three automatic cycle count point sites in Camden have recorded an average increase of 120% in cycling levels this May compared to last.

Through a crowd-sourcing website, Camden Council invited people to comment, and suggest locations where new walking and cycling projects might be needed to facilitate social distancing requirements. York Way was highlighted by 13 people, with a further 61 people supporting their suggestions for improved cycling conditions on this road.

Speeding by car drivers has increased as some drivers take advantage of quieter roads during lock down. In London some average speeds are being recorded at 37mph on 20mph roads. Some areas of Camden have seen speed increases of as much as 13%.

TfL have estimated that if all car-owning households switched their usual public transport journeys to car, some boroughs would see a near doubling in the number of private transport journeys, causing massive congestion issues. In Camden and Islington, this would be an increase in private transport trips of over 90%, and over 50% respectively, in addition to an increase in car trips coming into the Boroughs which originate elsewhere. We know however that in Camden the proportion of households without a car across the borough is 69%, and in Islington 71% of households do not own a car, making walking and cycling safety and facilities crucial in both Boroughs.

What will the work involve?

York Way is lengthy, and varies in its complexity and challenges. Accordingly, the project will be delivered in three phases, each following in quick succession over the summer:

Phase 1 – Installation of protected cycle lanes and in the *southern* half of York Way (between Wharfdale Road and Freight Lane) as per the details below.

Phase 2 – Installation of protected cycle lanes in the *northern* half of York Way (between Freight Lane and Cliff Road/Hungerford Road). Installation of Shared Use Bus Boarders on northbound side of York Way.

Phase 3 – Changes to signalised junctions along the whole cycle route to improve safety for cyclists at junctions.

Phases 2 and 3 are subject to further approvals before they commence: If approved we will write to you again ahead of works starting.

There is an immediate need for this safety improvement in response to Coronavirus, so Camden Council and Islington Council are using Experimental Traffic Orders which once made can be brought into force relatively quickly. Phase 1 of the York Way cycle lane scheme (Wharfdale Road to Freight Lane) includes the following changes:

- Installing protected mandatory cycle lanes of between 1.5m and 2.5 metres wide on both sides of the road wherever possible, leaving a minimum vehicular travel lane (3.25m wide) in each direction.
- Installing temporary 'kerb and wands' inside the white cycle lane marking to protect cyclists. Where there is a need for vehicles to reach 'inset' parking, rubber 'orca' kerbs will be installed to allow vehicles to drive over them. See image 2 for a picture of what they look like.
- Lengthening of advanced stop lines for cyclists at each junction to allow more space for cyclists to wait at junctions.
- Installing of Shared Use Bus Boarders at northbound bus stops, to maintain protection of cyclists around bus stops, whilst still enabling bus passengers to board and alight from buses at the same level. See image 3 for a picture of what they look like.
- Removing paid and residential parking near Copenhagen Street to enable a safe continuous cycle facility to be built leading up to the junction.
- Removing off-peak hours parking facility on York Way between Crinan Street and Wharfdale Road.
- Restricting the ability for vehicles to load next to the kerb between Freight Lane and Crinan Street to create an uninterrupted, safe cycling route.

Drawings of these changes, are included in this letter.

How can you give your views?

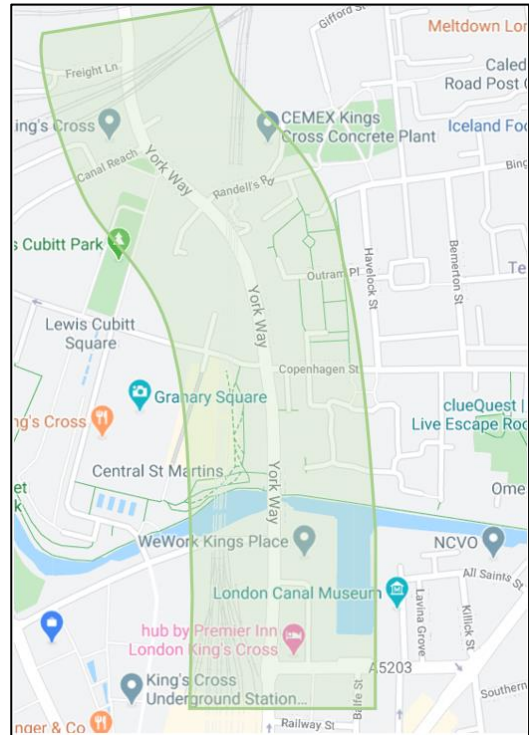
Statutory emergency services have already been consulted with on these changes, who have raised no objections. Local residents, businesses and stakeholder groups within the local area (see image 1) are being notified, including you. You will also see information going up on the local streets and on both council websites.

The experimental scheme will run for 18 months and you are able to comment at any time on the changes we have implemented. Camden Council and Islington Council would like to carry out a full public consultation after the experimental scheme has run for 12 months and will take a decision as to whether it can do this nearer the time in light of the circumstances then prevailing.

The consultation will then inform the Councils' decision as to whether, at the end of the 18-month experiment, the changes should be made permanent. Traffic levels will also be monitored, as required, on relevant streets after the scheme is implemented.

We will be in contact with you again with more details on this closer to the time.

Image 1: Map showing area of properties being notified of this project



How can you find out more?

More information on this scheme, and the overall Covid-19 emergency transport projects, can be found here:

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

<https://www.islington.gov.uk/roads/people-friendly-streets>

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, or PeopleFriendlyStreets@islington.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Camden Safer Travel Team
Islington People Friendly Streets Team

Image 2: 'Kerb and wand' sets, attached to the carriageway to protect cyclists in the cycle lane and prevent kerbside access by vehicles



Image 3: 'Orcas', attached to the carriageway to protect cyclists in the cycle lane, whilst allowing vehicles to access the kerbside and inset parking



Image 4: 'Shared use bus boarder' (a raised section of cycle lane) placed at the bus stop, over which bus users have priority when boarding or alighting from a bus

