
From: Simon Elmer <Simon.Elmer@bedfordestates.com>

Sent: 10 October 2017 17:25

To: Pauline Butcher

Subject: RE: Tavistock ETO

Dear Pauline,

We wish to register our concerns with the potential continuation of the Experimental Traffic Order (“ETO”) which runs from Tavistock Place to Torrington Place and is currently open to a public consultation by the London Borough of Camden.

Based on our experiences since the implementation of the ETO in November 2015, it is clear to us that the ETO in its current form is having a negative impact on traffic congestion across much of Bloomsbury. Residents and business owners have frequently complained of car traffic being forced to snake around side streets away from the Tavistock Place/Torrington Place corridor. It is also our sense that although there have been marginal improvements in air quality in the corridor itself, there has been increased pollution in side roads where cars are forced to wait with engines running for extended periods.

We wish to make it clear that we applaud the Council’s support for cycling and walking and recognise the importance of both modes in improving the health of residents in Camden. Our concerns are not anti-cycling. They are that the current ETO is having a direct role in worsening traffic congestion across much of Bloomsbury and making life harder for local residents, local businesses and the emergency services.

We were disappointed that the public consultation on the ETO in 2016 only provided binary choice for respondents of either making the current ETO permanent or returning the Tavistock Place/Torrington Place corridor to previous two way car traffic. It is our belief that a further range of options should have been considered prior to any final decision being made. One such option would be the re-routing of car traffic from eastbound to westbound in the Tavistock Place/Torrington Place corridor which we believe is an option which may address the problem of snaking traffic congestion through much of Bloomsbury. It should be noted that this option would retain two way cycle lanes as under the ETO.

Furthermore, we have been concerned that the London Borough of Camden have only cited air quality readings in a small number of locations in Bloomsbury – Gordon Square, Russell Square and Tavistock Place. From our discussions from both residents and business owners, there are genuine concerns that snaking traffic congestion is worsening air quality throughout many of the side streets away from the corridor and we feel that residents in these roads deserve a thorough assessment of air quality in these roads prior to a final decision on the future of the ETO.

In addition, we understand that there are also some concerns around the impact of the current ETO on the length of time required to transport patients to nearby hospitals. Given the serious, life and death consequences of such journeys, we urge the London Borough of Camden to fully investigate how access for emergency services vehicles can be improved prior to a final decision being taken on the future of the ETO.

We therefore call on the London Borough of Camden to undertake the following actions prior to the publication of a final decision on the future of the ETO:

1. Commit to further investigations of the merits of a westbound only car traffic scheme in the Tavistock Place/Torrington Place corridor.
2. Commit to conducting air quality tests in at least five other locations (aside from Gordon Square, Russell Square and Tavistock Place) in Bloomsbury to give a more accurate picture of the position on air quality throughout Bloomsbury.
3. Consult fully with the emergency services and nearby hospitals on the issue of emergency vehicle access.

The built environment of Bloomsbury is an eclectic mix of residential, academic, healthcare and business communities, which is loved by many people from across the world. We hope a sensible agreement can be reached to ensure that the future prosperity and health of Bloomsbury is not put at risk by well-meaning policies which have damaging unintended consequences.

Yours sincerely

Simon Elmer