

Torrington Place to Tavistock Square Public Inquiry

Proof of Evidence – London Living Streets: Witness John Hartley

1. London Living Streets is the London branch of the National Living Streets organisation, which is the UK charity for everyday walking (App. 1). <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/what-we-do/key-issues>
 - A key objective (App. 2) is the desire *“to reverse the decline in walking. By making streets fitter for walking and encouraging more people on their feet we can create a walking nation. We work with government to make change happen and work on the ground to get communities walking.”*
2. We have a particular focus on key issues (App. 2), namely:
 - WALK TO SCHOOL
 - Walking to school is good for children’s health and the environment.
 - AIR POLLUTION
 - Walking is great for your health, but air pollution is putting the public at risk.
 - PAVEMENT PARKING
 - Parking on pavements is a major concern for our supporters and the general public.
 - CROSSINGS
 - Everybody should be able to cross the road safely, directly and without delay
 - 20MPH
 - Our urban areas need more 20mph speed limits to create safer streets, and more vibrant communities where people live, work and shop.
3. London Living Streets is dedicated to making London one of the world’s best cities for walking. We support wholeheartedly the Mayor of London’s Healthy Streets Project (App. 3) and see the Tavistock – Torrington Place Scheme as an important local step in achieving this aim. At a local level, we applaud Policy 1.3 on Page 74 of the Camden Transport Strategy August 2011 (App. 4), which puts pedestrians and cyclists at the top of their road user hierarchy.
4. London Living Streets’ manifesto (App. 5) can be found here: <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/2411/londonlivingstreetsmanifesto-liveable-london-timeforatransportrevolution.pdf>
5. London Living Streets strongly supports Camden Council’s proposal to implement a permanent improved version of the trial scheme in Tavistock – Torrington Place. We were pleased to see that Camden’s implementation of the Experimental Traffic Order shows the reality of the experiment, thus not relying purely on modelling to demonstrate that the scheme has had a significant beneficial impact, both on air quality and collisions compared with previously.
6. We note that the scheme, once implemented permanently with the associated improvements, will provide wider pavements, “desire line” crossings at major junctions and raised entry crossings at minor junctions, all of which make life easier for pedestrians and will encourage walking.
7. We believe that the permanent implementation of the scheme will make a significant contribution to four of London Living Streets’ key issues (the fifth, the 20mph limit, is already Borough-wide in Camden).
 - WALK TO SCHOOL
 - For example, UCL Day Nursery and Collingham Gardens Nursery are both on streets adjacent to Tavistock Place. A cleaner, safer environment will encourage parents to walk their children to school and may indeed lead to older children walking in safety to school on their own. Many respondents to the consultation (Camden SoC Appendix E, page 18) reported an improved environment for children, encouraging active lifestyles and walking “independently”.
 - AIR POLLUTION
 - The significant reduction in air pollution along the route, as evidenced in Camden Council’s measurements, directly meets this key target.
 - PAVEMENT PARKING
 - As we all know, some drivers use the pavement for “short term” parking, causing obstruction to pedestrians, rather than block the motors’ carriageway. However, the fact that that carriageway is physically separated from the footway by the bike lanes means that pavement parking is less likely.
 - CROSSINGS

Improved “desire line” crossings e.g. North/South crossings on West and East of Woburn Place (Camden SoC Appendix - Camden Information leaflet map section 2) and reduced motor traffic will give pedestrians more confidence in crossing the road. Additionally, the “confusion” reported with the previous bi-directional cycle and motor lanes (Camden Council Information leaflet, page 3) has been removed.

8. Pedestrian environment is improved - Camden SoC paras 7.5 to 7.7
 - Paragraph 7.5 shows that during the trial, pedestrian casualties, both serious and slight, have been ZERO.
 - Paragraph 7.6 shows there is scope for wider footways for improved pedestrian comfort and safety.
 - Paragraph 7.7 shows potential for wider footways and “desire line” crossings at junctions.
9. Air quality - Camden SoC Appendix 6 page 13
 - This section shows a significant improvement in air quality along the corridor, from 9% up to 21% by reduction of NO₂, which makes for a healthy environment for everyone and has, in particular, removed a perceived barrier to walking. From a purely pedestrian point of view, the wider cycle tracks move pedestrians even further away from the pollution emanating from motor vehicles using the route.
10. We must listen to the will of the people
 - In the Consultation responses (Camden SoC Appendix C), we find that:
 - In Question 2, A large percentage (47%) identified themselves as pedestrians (possibly in addition to other means of transport).
 - In Question 4, pedestrians overwhelmingly supported the retention of the trial scheme.
 - On page 20, “1296 noted in their comments that the road was now easier to cross as a pedestrian”.
11. London Living Streets supports a permanent scheme, implemented with all the improvements shown in the consultation plans, including the increased and improved space for pedestrians. This will continue to encourage people (of current and future generations) to choose sustainable methods of travel, whether walking or cycling.
 - London Living Streets is fully behind the scheme and sent an official supportive response to the consultation (App. 6).
 - The scheme strongly supports the Mayor’s Healthy Streets Strategy.
 - The scheme improves health and fitness whilst also tackling congestion and pollution in Central London.
 - The scheme significantly improves the environment for local people as well as visitors to the area.

In summary

12. London Living Streets believes that reverting to the old scheme would be a declaration that we should disregard:
 - National, London-wide and local policy;
 - the strategy of the Mayor;
 - the priorities of Camden Council;
 - the desires of the thousands of individuals and organisations that responded positively in Camden’s consultation.Rejection of the scheme would also fly in the face of the widely held view that our city should be a city primarily for people, not vehicles.
13. London Living Streets believes the case to make the scheme permanent is self-evident and that the advantages to pedestrians, cyclists, local workers, local residents and businesses vastly outweigh any inconvenience to those who wish to turn the clock back to the bad old days when people were considered less important than vehicles.

Appendices

- 1 Living Streets**
- 2 Living Streets Key Issues**
- 3 Mayor’s London Healthy Streets Project**
- 4 Camden Transport Strategy August 2011 Page 74**
- 5 London Living Streets’ Manifesto**
- 6 London Living Streets’ response to the Consultation**