

APPENDIX B - CONSULTATION RESPONSES AND OFFICERS' COMMENTS

Heath Street/East Heath Road/West Heath Road Junction Proposed Improvements

1. Introduction

- 1.1. A total of **902** consultation packs were distributed to addresses in the consultation area (as detailed in appendix A), and local and statutory groups. In addition, consultation leaflets with layout plans were sent to Ward Councillors.
- 1.2. The public consultation commenced on 10 December 2018 and ended on 23 January 2019. A copy of the consultation package is also included in Appendix A.
- 1.3. The consultation was also available online through the WeAreCamden.org portal. This allowed respondents to submit their feedback via an online questionnaire.
- 1.4. A total of **364** online, email and postal responses were received from individuals, groups and ward members.

2. The responses to the public consultation can be summarised as follows:-

2.1. Question 1 - Do you agree with the proposal to change the number of westbound lanes on Hampstead High Street from one to two to increase capacity at the junction?

	Support	Object	Indifferent
Individuals	175 (51%)	125 (37%)	42 (12%)
Local Groups / Ward Members	6 (38%)	9 (56 %)	1 (6%)
Total	181 (51%)	134 (37%)	43 (12%)

2.2. Question 2 - Do you agree with the proposal to change the zebra crossing on Hampstead High Street by Oriel Place to a signalised crossing to improve the efficiency of the junction and reduce congestion?

	Support	Object	Indifferent
Individuals	122 (35%)	215 (63%)	7 (2%)
Local Groups / Ward Members	4 (25%)	12 (75%)	0 (0%)
Total	126 (35%)	227 (63%)	7 (2%)

2.3. Question 3 - Do you agree with the proposal to introduce a new diagonal crossing across Heath Street?

	Support	Object	Indifferent
Individuals	243 (71%)	53 (16%)	45 (13%)
Local Groups / Ward Members	12 (75%)	2 (13%)	2 (13%)
Total	255 (71%)	55 (15%)	47 (13%)

2.4. Question 4 - Do you agree with the proposal to modify parking restrictions along Hampstead High Street to remove the pinch point that is contributing to congestion?

	Support	Object	Indifferent
Individuals	235 (69%)	71 (21%)	35 (10%)
Local Groups / Ward Members	12 (75%)	4 (25%)	0 (0%)
Total	247 (69%)	75 (21%)	35 (10%)

2.5. Officers further analysed the particular issues raised in the comments section of the consultation document by grouping those comments into the dominant themes with their respective response rate shown below (Note: the numbers below show all respondents (individuals and groups) who opted to leave comment on the themes described):-

Further objections to the removal of the zebra crossing	Proposals will bring more traffic to the area and more measures are needed to reduce traffic	More parking restrictions needed to improve traffic flow	Provision of cycling infrastructure is unnecessary
78	34	20	6

Other themes from comments received:-

- Perceived difficulty for traffic turning through the junction
- Speed of vehicles would increase
- Critical risks for cyclists not addressed in the design

2.6. Other transport related issues were raised within the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum's 30 page submission "Recommendation and response" document that were considered outside of the scope of this project and there is no funding identified to address the wider issues to provide an area wide solution at this time. Officers will however collate comments on those issues and forward them to planners and to the Council's Placemaking team for consideration towards for a 'future vision' of Hampstead Town Centre.

3. This section provides a summary of the main comments received and officers' response to them.

<p>'Disagree on converting the zebra crossing to a signalised crossing'</p>
<p>More than 63% of respondents objected to the proposal to convert the existing zebra crossing by Oriel Place to a signalised crossing. The reasons for objection ranged from concerns for pedestrians having to wait to cross to the impact that it would have to the village feel of the area and the concern that it would segregate the eastern and western sides of the street.</p> <p>Almost all resident and business groups objected to this feature of the proposals.</p> <p>Ward members commented:- "It is a busy pedestrian thoroughfare, and by directly connecting Oriel Place to Flask Walk, it provides a direct pedestrian route from one side of Hampstead Village to the other. Camden's Planning Guidance on Town Centres notes that 'it is key [for public realm improvements] to ensure Camden's centres are pleasant, safe, and convenient places to walk', and we believe the thoroughfare guaranteed by the zebra crossing is essential to ensuring that."</p>
<p><i>Officer comment:</i></p> <p>The zebra crossing by Oriel Place has a very high pedestrian demand with more than 1,250 people using it between 7am and 10am and over 1,600 people using it between 4pm and 7pm. The uncontrolled way that pedestrians cross the road prevents the crossing from being coordinated with the signals at the junction which can mean that when northbound buses have a green light at the junction they are unable to access it due to being trapped at the zebra crossing.</p> <p>Traffic modelling that was undertaken for the proposals show that converting the zebra crossing to a signalised crossing would provide buses with significant journey time savings of up to 3.5 minutes in the evening peak period.</p> <p>However, the level of objection received from the public and local groups clearly demonstrates that such a proposal would be unpopular irrespective of the potential benefits to be gained for public transport users.</p> <p>For this reason, officers recommend that this aspect of the scheme not be taken forward to detailed design and implementation.</p>

<p>'Proposals will bring more traffic to the area and more measures are needed to reduce traffic'</p>
<p>This was a common theme of comments received by the consultation and although that this project is not specifically aimed to reduce general traffic, many of these comments raise an important point that a reduction in traffic numbers would itself improve bus journey times. The Hampstead CRAAC, Pilgrim's to Willoughby Residents Association, Lindfield Langland Neighbourhood Association and the Hampstead BID all suggest measures to limit traffic coming into Hampstead Village. The concerns on air quality were also a dominate issue from individuals and groups with the ward members commenting:-</p> <p>"Increasing the capacity of the road junction will have the effect of increasing vehicle usage via the A502, and therefore we ask that offsetting mechanisms are introduced elsewhere in the Plan area."</p>

In the introduction to their 30 page submission document “The Hampstead Neighbourhood forum commented:-

“It is important that they (the changes) are aligned with the community’s wishes as set out in the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan, which was approved by more than 90% at referendum in June 2018, and the Mayor’s Transport Strategy, with its over-riding aim to reduce the dominance (and number) of motor vehicles on our streets.”

The CCC commented:-

“Any such increase of motor vehicle capacity will increase road danger for people who walk and cycle since they will have to compete with even greater volumes of traffic. In Healthy Streets, walking and cycling, being healthy modes of travel are promoted above the needs of motor traffic which these proposals fail to do.”

Officer comment:

Officers recognise that these comments received do align with Camden’s broader strategy to discourage car use and promote more walking and cycling. However this needs to be balanced against the need to promote the option of public transport which is an essential travel option for many people including the elderly. Whilst the projects aims are to improve bus journey times, improvements have been made to support better walking and cycling by introducing advanced stop lines for cyclists and a new diagonal crossing for pedestrians.

An area wide traffic reduction scheme does not fall within the scope of this project, however the emerging Camden Transport Strategy includes a range of policies and measures that seek to reduce traffic on borough roads including those on residential streets so as to meet targets agreed with Transport for London (TfL).

Post-monitoring will identify any increases in vehicular traffic/vehicle speeds as a result of this scheme and the data learned will be used to help form policy and practise for future bus priority schemes.

‘More parking restrictions are needed at all times of the day to help manage traffic flow’

There was an opinion among the comments from individuals that more parking should be removed at various locations across the Village to help ease traffic congestion. Some respondents were also in favour of completely removing the bays on the south side of Hampstead High Street, by Greenhill embankment to aid traffic flows as also suggested by the Pilgrims to Willoughby Residents’ Association:-

“The most important thing is to clear the High Street by Greenhill, and the best way to do this would be to stop all parking on one side of the road. Parking on both sides isn’t necessary and causes endless blockages.”

Ward members discussed options with officers and TfL with a view to moving the entire embankment so as to provide the extra carriageway width required while also retaining all the parking bays. Despite very few comments received asking to retain the existing parking operation, Members did support an option to keep them:-

“The availability of parking spaces adjacent to Greenhill is essential to ensuring the shops located between Gayton Road and Pilgrim’s Lane remain viable.”

Officer comment:

The removal of parking at particular times of day is addressing congestion during the AM and PM peaks for the specific purpose of improving bus journey times.

Whilst it is accepted that the removal of parking bays increases carriageway widths thereby improving driving conditions, the Council must balance this with ways to ease congestion for buses.

Officers acknowledge other ward member concerns that Heavy Goods Vehicle traffic may increase as a result and would be contrary to the draft Clean Air Plan and to the objectives of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan.

Unfortunately their proposed solution to remove/relocate the embankment on Greenhill whilst retaining all the parking bays will not be funded as part of this project, although this has been discussed with officers separately.

Officers have considered the various views on this, ranging from removing all parking to ease congestion, to retaining the existing parking situation. Taking this into consideration, as well as the recommendations made by the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum (who suggest the school run period as being the main cause of congestion at Greenhill), officers are now recommending to amend the period when restrictions are proposed for parking, waiting and loading.

The recommendation is to now restrict parking between 7-9am and 3-8pm on Mondays to Fridays only. (Saturday parking times would remain unchanged)

If approved, officers will evaluate any feedback/complaints received and review the measures implemented. Any changes proposed would have to be considered in the future and subject to funding being available.

'The proposed upgrades for cyclists are unnecessary'

Individuals commented that cyclists are rarely seen in the Hampstead Village area and the infrastructure provided by the proposal would not be needed

Officer comment:

While the main aim of the scheme is to reduce journey times for buses it is also necessary to consider improvements for other road users such as cyclists and pedestrians where feasible within the project constraints.

This approach is required to help to meet the objectives set out in Camden's draft Transport Strategy, to help deliver the vision ... "enabling and encouraging people to travel sustainably; nurturing healthier lifestyles..."

The Heath Street carriageway south of the junction is approximately 7.9m wide which is sufficient for a 3m northbound lane and an adjacent 1.5m wide cycle lane that links to the proposed advanced cycle stop line at the junction. The addition of a cycle lane here is a sensible one as it is not to the detriment of other road users and can help encourage more sustainable modes of transport.

Some comments received have highlighted that the kerbside space reserved for the proposed mandatory cycle lane will be in conflict with the existing loading facilities at that location outside Nos. 29-31. Loading here is presently restricted between 9am-8pm on Mondays to Saturday.

Officers propose that these are the times within which the mandatory cycle lane will operate so as to maintain the existing loading facilities for businesses at this

location. The markings for the mandatory cycle lane will help discourage others to load during the restricted hours, especially in the evening when cyclist numbers may be higher travelling northbound.

'Perceived difficulty for traffic turning through the new junction layout'

These concerns raised from individuals developed from the proposals to build out the footways at the Holly Hill and Heath Street junction the effect of which will narrow the carriageway at the junction mouth.

Officer comment:

Officers acknowledge that the footway build outs proposed at the junction will reduce the radius of corners making for a sharper turn for vehicles entering Holly Hill.

Holly Hill is a one-way road with a 7.5T restriction imposed except for access and there will be limited number of large vehicles that will need to make this turn. Even so, officers have 'tracked' all new kerb alignments with specialist software to ensure that long articulated vehicles will be able to navigate through the new junction layout.

In general, driver behaviour will have to adapt to these new conditions with the measures encouraging drivers to reduce speed when turning.

'The speed of vehicles will increase'

Individuals commented that the extra capacity at the junction and the removal of parking may increase vehicle speeds in Hampstead Village

Officer comment:

It is accepted that pinch points will be removed at peak hours to relieve conditions where traffic is obstructed from moving. This will help to expedite flows at these times only for the specific purpose of improving bus journey times.

Our Road Safety Action Plan has not identified an issue with the speed of vehicles in Hampstead Village. However officers will continue to monitor the effects of the scheme post-implementation and will recommend further action as necessary.

'Critical risks for cyclists not addressed in the design'

The CCC were the only respondent to specifically highlight a potential risk to cyclist safety using the new junction layout. They commented:-

"The extra capacity should be used to make conditions far safer for people cycling, allowing them to reach the ASL box and to deal with the risk of left hook collisions between cycles going ahead up Heath Street and motor vehicles turning left towards Fitzjohns Avenue. This would require a separated cycle lane together with a signalling arrangement to avoid the left hook risks and help people to complete a difficult uphill manoeuvre."

Officer comment:

The scope and budget allocated to this project does not allow for high level cycle facilities to address all the concerns expressed by the CCC in their submitted response.

However options were explored which would further enhance the cyclist level of service at the Hampstead High Street/Heath Street junction.

Traffic modelling was undertaken to assess the impact of introducing an 'early release' at the traffic signals which would give cyclists a 4 second head start to move away from the stop line before general traffic was allowed through.

Unfortunately, the modelling showed that this feature would in fact increase bus journey times compared to the existing layout and that outcome will not align with the project objectives and neither would it be funded by TfL.

The tables and diagram on the next page illustrate the benefits and dis-benefits of the different scenarios tested.

The following diagram shows the movements the various buses take through the junction and the charts below are the journey times undertaken for these movements. For example, A-E in the tables below denote buses travelling from bus stop A to bus stop E, which for this junction is bus No 268 arriving from Hampstead High Street and turning right into Heath Street.

