



Swain's Lane Safe and Healthy Streets Consultation Information sheet

Proposals to make the trial changes on Swain's Lane permanent

Making your neighbourhood safer and healthier

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed how communities in Camden live, travel and work. We want our streets to have more space for everyone to walk and cycle, for you to be breathing cleaner air, for children to get to and from school safely and for businesses to be able to flourish. Whether it's an essential journey like taking your children to school, getting to work or just popping out to enjoy your local park we want you to love where you live, and to love Camden.

To help we have been making changes across Camden in our Safe and Healthy Streets Programme. This included making trial changes on Swain's Lane in June 2020, to reduce traffic volumes in order to make it safer for people walking and cycling to observe social distancing, and to improve air quality



About the Swain's Lane Safe and Healthy Streets Scheme

We know from listening to local people and from our traffic counts in the area that there were concerns about the high volumes of motor traffic using Swain's Lane north of the entrance to Highgate Cemetery to reach Highgate Village, instead of using the more suitable parallel routes on Highgate West Hill and Dartmouth Park Hill. This made Swain's Lane dangerous for people walking and cycling who wanted to access the Cemetery and Waterlow Park, particularly as the pavement in these areas is very narrow (nearly as little as half a metre in some places). Moreover, during the pandemic pedestrians often needed to step into the road to maintain social distancing while passing others.

In response, we implemented a Safe and Healthy Streets scheme as a trial on Swain's Lane, using an Experimental Traffic Order (ETO). To deter drivers from using this street as a cut-through, we banned northbound motor traffic on Swain's Lane from turning right



onto South Grove and also from turning right onto Bisham Gardens. The decision report related to this ETO [can be viewed on our website](#).

The trial scheme went live in June 2020; and since then the scheme has been monitored and comments from local residents and stakeholders have been received. The decision report noted that a further consultation, after approximately 12 months of the trial scheme, would be undertaken on any proposed permanent changes. We are now asking local residents and stakeholders as part of this final 12-month consultation to give their views on whether or not the scheme should be made permanent after the end of the 18-month trial period.

Monitoring information collected before and during the trial

The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on traffic levels in Camden and across London. This has made it difficult to directly compare data collected during the ETO period of the scheme, since the pandemic, with data from before the scheme was in place and before the pandemic started. The summary information below and in the accompanying detailed Monitoring Report explains this further.

Automatic Traffic Counts (ATCs) were undertaken before and after the scheme's implementation to help better understand the effect it has had on local traffic flows. 'Before' and 'after' traffic counts across five sites in the Swain's Lane area were used to compare local traffic flows. These sites were Swain's Lane, South Grove, Highgate Hill, Chester Road and Highgate West Hill.

For before-scheme data, traffic counts from 2019 were used (apart from the sites on South Grove and Chester Road where 2017 data was used). For after-scheme data, counts were conducted in July and December 2020. We have adjusted this data to account for seasonality and changing traffic patterns during the pandemic; the full methodology for this adjustment is set out in the Monitoring Sheet accompanying this consultation.

We acknowledge that residents contacted the Council during the trial raising concerns about increased traffic levels on Pond Square as a result of the scheme. Unfortunately, pre-scheme counts for Pond Square were not available to us so we are unable to compare 'before' and 'after' scheme implementation traffic flows on this street. However, we have monitored 'after scheme' data for traffic turning into Pond Square from South Grove during July and





October 2020, although the data has not been adjusted for covid or seasonality.

In summary,

- Traffic volumes have decreased on **Swain's Lane** by 28% (unadjusted) and 17% (adjusted)
- Traffic volumes have decreased on **South Grove** by 13% (unadjusted) and 5% (adjusted)
- Motor vehicles volumes have decreased on **Chester Road** by 19% (unadjusted) and 5% (adjusted)
- On **Highgate West Hill** there was a decrease in traffic levels of 14% (unadjusted) however when adjusted traffic levels increased by 1%.
- On **Highgate Hill** there was a decrease in traffic levels but this is recorded as a 0% (unadjusted) figure as the change was negligible. However, the adjusted figure shows an increase of 17%.
- On **Pond Square**, traffic levels increased by 56% (unadjusted) between July and October 2020.

There was also an increase in the number of journeys made using rental bikes from the operator, Lime. Journeys went from 553 trips to 3,697 for trips starting or ending in the scheme area; this is equivalent to an increase of 569% between 2019 and 2021.

The full methodology is set out in the Monitoring Report which can be found in the "Related Information" section of the online consultation page.

Feedback during the Experimental Traffic Order (ETO) Period

189 comments on the scheme were received on the Council's Commonplace site during the trial "ETO" period. 70% of the respondents were not supportive of the changes including:

- 102 comments (with 195 additional agreements with these comments) mentioned that traffic levels are still bad or worse
- 80 comments (with 163 additional agreements with these comments) mentioned that air pollution is still bad or worse
- 66 comments (with 141 additional agreements with these comments) mentioned that walking here is still unsafe or less safe.



Those that were supportive of the scheme suggested that it has encouraged them to cycle more in the area.



We also received a number of emails raising concerns about drivers using Pond Square as a cut-through from South Grove and also U-turning on South Grove to circumvent the traffic restrictions on Swains Lane to get to Highgate High Street, with people saying this was now happening as a result of the restrictions on Swain's Lane.

What are we now consulting on?

Considering a number of factors, including the monitoring data, the feedback received from residents and stakeholders during the trial period, and our policies and objectives set out in our Camden Transport Strategy and Climate Action Plan, we are now consulting on making the trial changes to Swain's Lane permanent. These proposed changes are:

- Banning northbound motor traffic on Swain's Lane from turning right onto Bisham Gardens
- Banning northbound motor traffic on Swain's Lane from turning right onto South Grove

In addition to these proposals, we are also seeking respondents' views on any further changes they may wish to see in the area, including any modifications to the trial Swain's Lane Safe and Healthy Streets scheme.

You can view the drawings of the changes in the "Related Information" section of the online consultation front page.

What happens next?



After the consultation a decision report will be produced and published online via our website. Local residents and stakeholders will be notified of the outcome. The report will consider the consultation responses, relevant policies and other data/information.

The report will then outline if at the end of the trial period, the experimental scheme should be made permanent, modified or allowed to lapse. If a decision is made to approve any permanent proposals, the construction of any required elements would then take place.

The consultation closes on Sunday 5 September 2021.

We also wish to highlight that through-traffic issues in the wider area are also being investigated as part of a scheme for the wider Dartmouth Park area, and will be subject to a separate consultation process in due course.