

Camden TRO Torrington Place to Tavistock Place Inquiry

Written Representation pursuant to the 1994 Rules Section 24. (10)

- Statement of Case by Michael Gwinnell

Background

I am the carer for my wife who suffers from Multiple Sclerosis, is ambulant disabled and occasional wheelchair user, and as such has been assessed as a recipient of the Higher Level of Disability Living Allowance and is the holder of a Blue Badge. We live in Islington off Upper Street and often wish to travel by car to the West End to attend concerts at Wigmore Hall and art exhibitions, in particular at the Royal Academy of Arts in Piccadilly. Until the introduction of the experimental traffic scheme in 2015 our preferred westbound route was via Torrington Place and Tavistock Place, in order to avoid the delays and congestion around the Kings Cross Gyratory and in Euston Road. Possible alternative routes now involve using the Euston Road and have added twenty minutes or more to journey times. We now choose to follow a circuitous route to the West End via Camden Town to minimise the risk of traffic delays making us late for a concert, resulting in extra mileage, fuel consumption and concomitant air pollution.

Pre-inquiry request

With reference to the PIM note paragraph 25, further traffic modelling should be requested to include (1) the evening peak and (2) the impact of the Kings Cross Gyratory proposals.

Objections to the TRO

My objections to the TRO are based on the following:

- Increased journey times
- Lack of consideration for people with disabilities who need to use a car
- Increased congestion and reduced air quality in surrounding streets
- Failure to provide alternative westbound routes avoiding the congested TLRN and SRN when alternative eastbound routes exist
- Unjustified prohibition on right turn from Tavistock Place into Judd Street

Matters to be considered by the Inspector

The obvious benefits to cyclists and residents from one way vehicle flow and two cycle lanes along the TT corridor are accepted, however:

- The consultation procedure was flawed and undue weight should not be given to the preferences expressed in favour of the eastbound proposal
- More careful scrutiny is required of the Council's case against reversing the scheme to westbound: more modelling is needed
- The knock-on traffic effects on other streets are unacceptable and the Inspector's site visits should include such locations
- If the eastbound proposal is maintained an alternative westbound route should be provided e.g. by making Montague Place one way westbound
- If the draft TRO is to be approved the following provision should be deleted:

“Require any motor vehicle proceeding westwards in Tavistock Place to turn left on reaching the junction with Hunter Street and Judd Street.”

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These points are expanded below:

Criticism of consultation procedure

The initial consultation about the Torrington/Tavistock scheme (TT scheme) was not well publicised outside Camden and only came to my attention after finding the way west blocked with inadequate diversion signs in November 2015. Finding the relevant documents on the Camden website was a tortuous process and there was (and remains) a lack of linkages with other relevant consultations over the West End Project (WEP) and the Kings Cross Gyratory, Judd Street and Brunswick Square proposals.

The list of preferred options on the TT Scheme consultation did not include reversing the direction between Hunter Street and Gower Street to westbound, thus biasing the responses in favour of the eastbound proposal. (The Council's approval of the WEP included an unsubstantiated preference for the eastbound direction.)

More careful scrutiny required of case against reversal to westbound

Camden's Statement of Case (SoC) Appendix D includes modelling of the TT scheme combined with the Judd Street and Brunswick Square proposals but does not include the impact of the Kings Cross Gyratory proposals, which seem likely to have a marked impact on traffic in the area modelled.

The modelling focuses on the morning peak without having considered the likely reduced westbound flows during the afternoon peak, both of which should be taken into account in assessing the impact of reversing the TT scheme.

Unacceptable knock-on effects on other streets

The Inspector's site visits should be at peak times and include the congested areas around the junctions of Endsleigh Gardens/Gordon Street; Guilford Street/Russell Square; and Great Russell Street/Bloomsbury Street, not just the TT corridor.

An alternative westbound route should be provided

The SoC modelling of the trial reversed concedes that there are alternative eastbound routes avoiding the TLRN and SRN but the scheme offers no alternative westbound routes if the proposals are made permanent. If so, consideration should be given to providing alternative westbound routes e.g. by making Montague Place two way with access from Russell Square or one way westbound.

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If the draft TRO is to be approved the following provision should be deleted:

“Require any motor vehicle proceeding westwards in Tavistock Place to turn left on reaching the junction with Hunter Street and Judd Street.”

The TT scheme consultation map showing alternative westbound routes included a prohibited right turn from Tavistock Place into Judd Street. (See attached Appendix taken from http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/cms-service/stream/asset?asset_id=3365683)

The draft traffic order (to which I have objected in this regard) retains this as a prohibited right turn even though there seems no justification for it, as the traffic light phasing prevents any conflicts with eastbound traffic at this junction. There is an alternative route into Judd Street via Wakefield Street and Handel Street but this requires a right turn into Hunter Street against the traffic. It is noted that in due course if the Judd Street proposals in conjunction with the North/South Cycle Superhighway are implemented this will prevent left turns from Judd Street into Euston Road, thus making this alternative route infeasible, but this does not prevent the right turn being permitted until the Judd Street proposals are implemented.

Respectfully submitted

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7 September 2017

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APPENDIX – Camden map of alternative westbound routes

