

**The Camden (Torrington Place to Tavistock Square)  
(Prescribed Routes, Waiting and Loading Restrictions and  
Loading Places) Traffic Order [2017]  
Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984**

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**STATEMENT OF CASE OF THE  
LICENSED TAXI DRIVERS ASSOCIATION**

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**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Licensed Taxi Drivers Association (LTDA) is a Cooperative & Community Benefit Society which has a membership of 10,500 members which represents the interests of licensed taxi drivers in London, more colloquially known as black cab drivers. The Association has been in existence for over 50 years and is recognised as the pre-eminent body representing London licensed taxi drivers. Examples of this recognition include The Mayor, The Mayor's Office, Transport for London, The Greater London Authority and all the London Boroughs. In terms of the Government and Government Departments, the LTDA are involved at all levels, including the All Party Parliamentary Group on Taxis (APPG), The Secretary of State for Transport and his Department, appearances before various Select Committees, including recently the Select Committee for the HS2 Proposals and, amongst others, The Department of Business Innovation and Skills. The LTDA also have regular meetings with MPs of all Parties and Department Heads, such as the Secretary of State for Transport.
- 1.2 From the perspective of London Boroughs, the LTDA have regular meetings with London Boroughs at Officer level and also Member level when required. In the central zone of London the LTDA have regular meetings at Officer level with City of Westminster, City of London and Camden Council. The engagement in those meetings has been in relation to proposed traffic schemes, taxi ranks, accessibility issues in relation to taxi passengers and, amongst other areas, bus lane accessibility.

**2 Equalities**

- 2.1 Camden Council notes in paragraph 5.8 of its Statement of Case that guidance issued to local authorities encourages local authorities to create physical environments where people choose to walk and cycle, and the public health benefits that accompany this, it further notes that Camden policies prioritise active modes of travel above others. However, this approach ignores the need to consider the abilities of different road users: the automatic prioritisation of cyclists and pedestrians above the interests of other road users fails to consider that cycling and walking are not options for many, including those with disabilities or otherwise restricted mobility.
- 2.2 The Council maintains that it has responded to the equalities implications of its scheme sufficiently through its Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA). In response to concerns

raised regarding accessibility, Camden Council installed a dedicated taxi rank along the route on the Tavistock Place/Torrington Place corridor ("the corridor"). However, as highlighted by the LTDA, this is located on the wrong side of the road for ramps to be used and for disabled passengers to be loaded and unloaded safely. Sufficient mitigation measures have therefore not been adopted by the Council.

- 2.3 An example of the manner in which Camden Council have responded to the equalities implications of the scheme insufficiently can be found in the section entitled *Freedom Pass and Taxi Card Usage Data* (Divider 6, page 10). In that section the Council indicate that the volume of trips made by Taxi Card is far lower than the number of trips made by Freedom Pass users by a ratio of 1:25. This use of data is misleading for the following reasons. The only data that is being relied on by the London Borough of Camden is that of Taxi Card users resident within the Borough. This gives a misleading impression that there are very few disabled users of taxis. The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) fails to take into account or even consider that the other Taxi Card users in the rest of London and in particular the adjoining Boroughs which are the City of Westminster, Islington, Barnet, Brent and the City of London. The EIA did not take into account other disabled users from other parts of the country or indeed the world who use taxis. In respect of this group which has not been included, they would in particular wish to use taxis for journeys to the hospitals that are concentrated in that area and which provide a facility not just for local residents but nationwide. In other words, it is more likely that there would be passengers using taxis without using the Taxi Card Scheme for Camden who would be travelling from around other areas of London and indeed nationwide, to access those hospitals. It would have been within the gift of Camden when carrying out this EIA to have conducted surveys of those arriving at those aforementioned hospitals by taxi and assessing their mobility needs through a simple survey. This clearly was not carried out and therefore the EIA does not take into account the wider general public but rather a narrow group of the general public with mobility problems, resident in Camden. Further to this, the EIA does not take into account those who are not part of the Taxi Card Scheme but may have mobility problems or indeed are not able to get around as easily and therefore would use taxis to meet their mobility needs. These individuals would generally pay for their taxi journeys out of their own funds. This would, of course, include the elderly who because of their income are not eligible for the Taxi Card Scheme, as well as people with injuries, whether they be acute injuries or non-permanent injuries. An example of this could be someone with a broken foot who is perhaps attending an outpatient's appointment at one of the aforementioned hospitals and in doing so his or her mobility issue is going to be transient but nevertheless remains live at the time of attending the hospital. In respect of these mobility issues which were not captured by way of the EIA conducted by the London Borough of Camden, it is noteworthy that all London taxis are wheelchair accessible and are equipped with other features, such as grab handles which are brightly coloured, steps and wide opening doors to assist the less ambulant. In addition to this, the visually impaired are also assisted by way of brightly coloured handles when getting in and out of taxis. It is noteworthy that these requirements do not apply to private hire vehicles whatsoever. It is also noteworthy, as has been mentioned before in this Statement of Case, that there has been no consideration of surveying passengers who have taken a taxi (or indeed public transport) to any of the aforementioned London

Hospitals, whether or not they have mobility issues. Their views, which the LTDA would submit are very important, have not been taken into account.

- 2.4 Although the LTDA is in principle supportive of measures which have the effect of increasing the take-up of walking and cycling as part of a balance of transport options, it believes that the equalities impacts have not been afforded serious consideration by the Council. Disabled residents and visitors will be adversely affected by the trial layout if it becomes permanent, in particular those who are attending the Macmillan Cancer Centre which is based on Huntley Street, a short walk from Tavistock Place. Camden Council's response to these impacts has not been sufficient, and dismisses the legitimate concerns of disabled and mobility-restricted road users. Indeed, in summarising its EIA in paragraph 7.18 of its Statement of Case, the Council argues that "the positive impacts of the Scheme upon groups with protected characteristics outweighed the negative impacts". The LTDA believes that this balancing exercise has not been undertaken in a fair way, and that the scheme ultimately comes at the expense of vulnerable road users.

### 3. Congestion

- 3.1 The LTDA is concerned by the impact that the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) has had on the local transport network, and the consequences that have been borne by the road users, local residents, businesses and other key stakeholders.
- 3.2 The effect of one-way working on the corridor has been to increase congestion and resulting journey times in the wider area significantly. The data provided by Camden Council evidences that congestion has increased in the wider area as a result of the measures, with 36 out of 73 stretches of road monitored experiencing an increase in traffic (62 out of 128 individual units).
- 3.3 Roads where significant increases have been noticed include but are not exclusive to:
- Endsleigh Gardens (east of Gordon Square) eastbound – from 50 vehicles an hour to 327 vehicles an hour between 12 noon and 1 pm (increase of 564%)
  - Endsleigh Place (east of Tavington Street) eastbound – from 24 vehicles an hour to 136 vehicles an hour between 17:45 and 18:45 (increase of 467%)
  - Grafton Way (east of Whitfield Street) westbound – from 51 vehicles an hour to 235 vehicles an hour between 08:45 and 09:45 (increase of 361%)
  - Gower Place (west of Gower Court) westbound – from 51 vehicles an hour to 187 vehicles an hour between 08:45 and 09:45 (increase of 267%)
  - Tavistock Square (north of Tavistock Place) – from 67 vehicles an hour to 285 vehicles an hour (increase of 325%)

- Tavistock Square West (south of Endsleigh Place) northbound – from 61 vehicles an hour to 305 vehicles an hour between 08:45 and 09:45 (increase of 400%).
- 3.4 This suggests that there is an unintended consequence of traffic increasing along sections of the route due to these measures. Instead of reactionary measures being brought in to address this, the LTDA is of the view that Camden Council should consider the Bloomsbury area as a whole, including Tottenham Court Road, to assess how all modes of traffic can best traverse the area safely and quickly.
- 3.5 In respect of these increases of traffic the proposed mitigations that Camden Council are putting forward (divider 6 page 32, paragraph 2) under response N12, indicates that this may include closures in some locations to access by motor vehicles to some of the effected streets. It is recognised by Camden Council that such measures could make some local journeys less direct, facilitating access by motor vehicles and reducing the dominance of the modes of traffic which are considered to be conflicting objectives. In addition to this, London Borough Council acknowledge that the problems that will exist when the construction of High Speed 2 (HS2) commences in 2017 onwards, in relation to Endsleigh Gardens which is the road which has the highest increase of traffic from 50 vehicles to 327 vehicles an hour (an increase of 554%) and the approach taken by Camden Council does not take into account the issues that will be caused by the construction of HS2 and the fact that the only entrance into Euston Station from either the south or east of London is by way of Endsleigh Gardens. In respect of this, Transport for London have researched the prospect of placing a right hand turn on Euston Road into Euston Station and they have found this to be unviable.
- 3.6 These increased journey times have affected those with health conditions the most seriously. The route previously was an important road for taxis and emergency vehicles taking people to University College Hospital, Great Ormond Street and the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital. Cutting the direct route along Tavistock Place and Torrington Place has increased the journey time for vehicles travelling to and from the hospital, potentially putting lives at risk through sending emergency service vehicles into already congested traffic corridors such as the Euston Road.
- 3.7 In terms of the Council’s proposed mitigation measures, the LTDA does not consider these to address the issues presented by the ETRO. The Council’s EIA suggests closures and reduction of through-traffic on the streets most affected by the scheme, including Endsleigh Gardens, Endsleigh Place, Grafton Way, Gower Place and Tavistock Square. The suggestion of road closures to mitigate the impact of earlier road closures is illustrative of Camden’s lack of strategic approach to traffic management. The Council has failed to consider the functionality of the local transport network as a whole.

#### 4. **Air Quality**

- 4.1 In its statement of case, the Council argues that “[t]he main impact on local air quality is a reduction in vehicle emissions”. It is unclear what the basis for this claim is, and what the Council considers to be “local air quality”. The LTDA recognises the link between the reduction of motor traffic on the corridor and the reduced levels of emissions on the immediate route. However, it argues that the Council has failed to assess and mitigate

the impact that the scheme has had on air quality in the wider area. The result of traffic being displaced from the corridor onto neighbouring streets has inevitably been to worsen congestion and air quality. As congestion in side streets and the wider Bloomsbury area has intensified, so too have vehicle emissions.

- 4.2 In respect of these vehicle emissions, it would be the LTDA's case that these vehicle emissions have increased impact markedly on other streets, such as, amongst others, Endsleigh Gardens, Endsleigh Place, Grafton Way and Tavistock Square to the south of Endsleigh Place. It is noted at tab 6, page 14 of the bundle of Camden Council that there has been a marked increase in the amount of vehicular traffic, ranging from between 267% and 554% in some of the areas outlined above. It is noted further on, at tab 6, page 15, under the section entitled Information Gathered about Air Quality Impact, that there was no air monitoring in the areas such as Endsleigh Gardens and Grafton Way and this was as a direct result of the under estimation of the traffic displacement. It is noted that in Endsleigh Gardens, Judd Street and Coram Street monitoring stations have now been established and whilst it would not be an exact science, it could be the case that emissions in those streets will have increased coterminous with the increase in vehicular traffic. In other words, without being exact science, the emissions in Endsleigh Gardens may have increased from the pre-trial level to a level now 500% or more above those levels. This would similarly be the case with the other streets outlined in tab 6, page 14, section 2, such as Grafton Way and Tavistock Square. The LTDA would submit that it would be possible to do a back calculation in respect of the air quality, given that there are now monitors on Endsleigh Gardens, Judd Street and Coram Street and that this will give the enquiry a much more accurate picture of the devastating effect of air quality in these areas.
- 4.3 As a result of the ETRO, emissions have increased on neighbouring streets such as Endsleigh Gardens, as the Council itself acknowledges in its Statement of Case. The LTDA has heard accounts from local residents which physical conditions have worsened noticeably as a result of the measures and the displacement of vehicle emissions onto those areas. Problematically, the Council has failed to measure the impact that the ETRO has had on these streets: no air quality monitoring information was gathered for Endsleigh Gardens, Judd Street or Coram Street. Although monitors have now been installed in these locations, without the availability of air quality data prior to the commencement of the trial, no meaningful comparisons can be drawn, and the impact of the ETRO cannot be properly measured. There can thus be no evidential basis to the Council's determination in para 7.12 of its Statement of Case that "the improvements to air quality in the Corridor more than offset a reduction in quality" on neighbouring streets.
- 4.4 The scheme that Camden are proposing has not taken into account whatsoever the impact of zero emission capable taxis which will be the only hackney carriages licensed from January 2018 as taxis in London.

## 5 **Safety**

- 5.1 "Collision records from before the trial indicate that some pedestrian-cyclist collisions appear to have been a result of pedestrians stepping out into the cycle track. The route

also suffered from a poor collision record, relating to collisions between motor vehicles and both cyclists and pedestrians". (Statement 4.2)

5.2 In terms of the cycle accident data that Camden rely on, at 7.9 they indicate that the removal of the bidirectional track has led to a situation where the provisional data suggests that the type of collisions have reduced to zero. It is the LTDA's submission that this is going to happen because those cyclists are now travelling in the same direction and therefore head to head collisions on the same cycle track are unlikely to occur. Given this, it is somewhat misleading to suggest that these types of collisions have reduced to zero, when they will reduce to zero. The equivalent would be comparing a road that was bidirectional with vehicles going up and down it and then making that street one-way. It goes without saying that the number of collisions head-on between vehicles will decrease to zero, because all the vehicle are travelling in the same direction. This statistic, therefore, is misleading. Turning now to section 7.5 on the statement of case, at 13, this indicates that the data available after the scheme was put in place indicates that both serious and slight pedestrian casualties have been reduced to zero. We would again suggest that this is misleading, because in section 7.8 on page 13/14 Camden indicate that the collision data now suggests an increase in the amount of accidents involving cyclists but then goes on to say that the severity of injuries has been reduced. We would suggest that this in itself is misleading, as it tends to suggest that there have been no injuries, yet given their assertions in section 7.5 some of those injuries would be described as slight. It is also the case that quite clearly the collision data is dependent on people reporting such collisions to either the Metropolitan Police or Transport for London and does not rely on other evidence of unreported accidents. In respect of this, in the feedback to the officers at tab number 6, at page 20, there is clearly, albeit anecdotal, evidence from organisations, mainly related to the elderly, that there have been accidents. For instance, on page 20 it is indicated that an elderly mother was knocked down by a cyclist and following on from that it was raised with the Council that elderly people were more at risk from being hit by a cyclist crossing the road when being unloaded from a mobility coach. Quite clearly, the collision data and the evidence gathered by Camden is not comprehensive enough to fully answer the question of whether or not this scheme has improved road safety and in particular pedestrian safety. The LTDA would respectfully submit that it has not improved road safety and that anecdotal evidence is beginning to support that stance.

- Comprehensive comparative collision data of before and after the trial to our knowledge has not been produced by Camden Council. This includes surveying local residents to ascertain whether or not in their opinion there has been an increase in particular pedestrian casualties as a result of the scheme.
- It is our view that the provision of two separate cycle lanes rather than a single by-directional lane would significantly increase average cycle speeds along the route, increasing the likelihood of collisions resulting from pedestrians stepping out into the cycle track and undermining the Council's argument that the scheme will improve safety for both cyclists and pedestrians.

- Throughout the Council’s statement of case, ‘safety’ is referenced predominantly in reference to the experience of cyclists, ignoring the impacts of the trial on pedestrians and other road users.
- Over the course of its engagement the LTDA has come across a number of local residents (including vulnerable residents) who report an adverse impact on their perception of road safety and accessibility.

## 6 Cumulative impact

- 6.1 “The impacts of this scheme have been assessed within the design development and appraisal of the Torrington Place/Tavistock Place project. Construction of the WEP is currently planned to commence in January 2018” (2.4)
- 6.2 “Additionally, as part of the approval for the West End Project (WEP), the Council agreed to bring forward proposals for a trial to reduce the impact of through traffic on local residents where initial modelling analysis of the WEP showed through traffic displacing onto the Corridor”. (4.3)
- Camden Council’s statement of case consistently refers to the scheme’s interaction with the committed West End Project, however, it is the LTDA’s view that any modelling undertaken to measure the interaction between the two schemes is now out of date. It does not take into account the possible pedestrianisation of Oxford Street and the consequent displacement of traffic.
  - The interaction between the WEP, the Tavistock Place ETRO and wider traffic measures/conditions in Bloomsbury warrants wider consideration by both Camden Council and TfL due to the piecemeal nature of the developments which have taken place.
  - The LTDA contends that question marks have been raised in recent years over the use of traffic modelling by Local Authorities. It is suggested that traffic modelling has become unreliable, particularly given that Local Authorities often interpret the figures given to them by traffic modellers to justify their scheme and then post the scheme, when the modelling has been shown to be incorrect the modellers indicate that the Councils have used the modelling in a manner which justifies their scheme and not in a way that the modellers had intended it to be used. An example of this can be found in respect of the East West Cycle Super Highway which runs along the Embankment, whereby Transport for London indicated before that the journey times between certain points for vehicular traffic would only be marginally increased, yet after the implementation of the scheme the journey times for that same traffic have been markedly increased. In other words, the use of the modelling is unreliable.

## 7 Businesses

- 7.1 The detrimental consequences for the transport network has harmed local businesses and threatened their viability. Like on Tottenham Court Road, businesses along

Tavistock Place, Torrington Place and neighbouring roads have experienced a loss of business – particularly those that rely largely on passing trade such as shops and hotels. Although a loading bay has been introduced on the south side of Torrington Place to the west of Huntley Street, this has proved to be insufficient. Over the course of its consultation with local residents and businesses, the LTDA heard several accounts from independent business owners who reported significant difficulties in receiving deliveries. In addition, the modification to the scheme fails to recognise the complex needs of businesses located further along the route along Tavistock Place, and in particular, the importance of passing trade. Given the significance of the area not just to Camden but to London as a whole, there must be robust evidence to show that the impact on local businesses has been properly considered. As it stands, the Council has failed to provide this.

## 8 Process and Consultation

- 8.1 The LTDA notes that the Council made the decision to consult with local residents on the Tavistock Place/Torrington Place scheme only after the ETRO was imposed. Had the Council consulted on the introduction of the scheme from the outset, it is likely that the measures as they were enacted would reflect a more careful balance of the various legitimate interests of different road users.
- 8.2 The Council relies heavily on the results of the consultation report it later produced to justify the scheme. However, it fails to weigh in the views of local residents – particularly those living in the immediate area – most heavily. The Council notes in para 6.3 of its Statement of Case that responses were received from road users who were not residents of the borough, but rather, those passing through the area. The LTDA considers that the views of those who are most affected by the scheme – namely local residents and businesses – should be afforded greater weight than those of passers-by, especially since they are unaffected by the harms of the scheme.
- 8.3 Further, the consultation report produced by the Council excludes 523 responses on the basis that the respondents were not “verifiable”, but does not elaborate on how data used in the consultation was verified. It is unclear whether it was verified against the electoral register, Council tax returns or another means, putting into question the integrity of the Council’s data.
- 8.4 Moreover the consultation report also excludes the 800 responses submitted by taxi passengers to a survey produced by the LTDA. This data was excluded despite the fact that the first two questions in the survey were identical to questions 3 and 4 on the Council’s survey and that questions 3 and 4 in the LTDA’s survey were added because it was felt that they were pertinent to the issue in question. To date, no satisfactory justifications for these omissions have been provided. The LTDA is of the view that the responses of taxi passengers were unfairly excluded from the consultation report and as such, the extent of support for the scheme that the Council claims is present cannot be verified.



## 9 Consideration of alternative measures

- 9.1 Throughout the design process different design options were considered. At the outset of the project the options considered included (amongst other options): a. Eastbound traffic only along the whole corridor b. Westbound traffic only along the whole corridor c. Timed closure (closed to traffic between 7 am and 7 pm) d. Widening the bi-directional track and retain two-way traffic e. Removing all traffic aside from access for residents and servicing.
- 9.2 It was considered that either enforcing a timed closure or removing all traffic aside from access would result in a significant increase in traffic on other local streets and were therefore not acceptable options.
- 9.3 The assessment of the remaining options resulted in the preferred option as set out in section 3 being identified and taken forward as the trial scheme.
- 9.4 As described in Appendix D to the Cabinet Report, and further to the above, the Council considered a number of further alternatives that were suggested by the Bloomsbury Residents' Action Group (BRAG), Imperial Hotels (IHL) and the Licensed Taxi Drivers Association (LTDA) during the public consultation. BRAG (i) Suggested Alternative that BRAG put forward an alternative layout including two-way traffic and with-flow cycle lanes. This option would enhance motor vehicle access along the corridor when compared to the trial layout, however, the layout does not meet desirable minimum standards for footway, cycle lane or carriageway widths. BRAG (ii) Suggested Alternative.
- 9.5 Subsequently BRAG suggested a further alternative which was to make a short section (from Bedford Way to Byng Place) two-way. This option does provide sufficient road width to accommodate the cycle lanes and two-way traffic. However, it does not leave any room to widen the footway in the section by Tavistock Square that currently has narrow footways and which would greatly benefit from footway widening. Trial Traffic Reversal.
- 9.6 A suggestion has also been made that the one-way vehicular traffic flow should be reversed so that it runs in a westbound direction. Broadly speaking this could achieve one objective of reducing motor traffic along the corridor, but a comparative modelling exercise indicated a greater level of reassignment to more local roads.
- 9.7 In considering the alternatives the LTDA's view is that Camden Council have only considered the negative impacts and aspects of the proposed alternatives and have not considered the positive benefits of those alternatives whatsoever. In addition to this, in respect of those positive benefits, the LTDA's view is that the alternatives will obviously have an impact on other roads, for instance in Woburn Place at the moment there are increased delays going northbound and if this was reversed, then it would follow that there would probably be increased delays going in a southbound direction. Whilst at the same time the northbound delays would decrease.

## 10 Importance of the Taxi Trade

- 10.1 The LTDA is concerned by the impact that the scheme has had on its members' continued ability to provide crucial services within Central London. In addition to the increased congestion caused by one-way working, the measures have made it significantly more difficult for licensed taxis to pick up, drop off and carry along passengers in the Bloomsbury area. There is significant demand for taxis in the area since taxis prioritise the safety, comfort and wellbeing of their customers above all else. Demand for taxis in the area is set to grow further after the opening of Crossrail next year as the increased use of Tottenham Court Road Station will increase demand for other local public transport and increase footfall. In addition to this, the current scheme has made the servicing of stations such as Euston, in particular, as well as Kings Cross and St Pancras, more difficult. In respect of this, at Euston now a taxi sharing scheme has to be implemented every weekday morning which was never the case and is in part caused by the problems with being able to service the taxi rank at Euston Station. The LTDA would also like to add that in respect of the servicing of Euston, in particular, as well as Kings and St Pancras, the scheme has not taken into account the impact over a prolonged period that the rebuilding of Euston Station will have on the local area. This building work is likely to continue for a period of up to 20 years. In addition to this, the scheme and Camden's response to it has also failed to take into account the increase expected in passenger numbers using HS2 and indeed those using the Elizabeth Line, otherwise known as Crossrail.
- 10.2 The black taxi is a London icon which plays an integral role in the capital's public transportation network, providing a door-to-door service for passengers, and it is imperative that taxis continue to have a key, strategic role in any transport scheme enacted by the Council. The current scheme which significantly limits the operational efficiency of taxis and threatens the availability of this vital form of public transport.