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Our reference: Covid-19 Safe Travel in Camden/Swain's Lane
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Responding to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

New Coronavirus (COVID-19) safety measures on Swain's Lane

Dear Resident / Business, Local group,

Summary

- **We are making changes on Swain's Lane to make it easier for you to walk and cycle in the area to reach key locations in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)**
- **We will be reducing traffic levels on Swains Lane, making it safer for pedestrians and cyclists.**
- **Work will happen between 24th June to 3rd July between 9am - 5pm**
- **You can share your comments on these changes via safetravel@Camden.gov.uk**
- **You can find out more about these changes on our website <https://www.camden.gov.uk/making-travel-safer-in-camden>**
- **Make your suggestion for locations you think need changes via <https://camdensafetravel.commonplace.is/> , email or call us using the details above**

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has created new road safety challenges in Camden that the council is taking seriously. We want to make it easier and safer for people to walk and cycle locally, shop on their local high street, reach their local green spaces, schools and NHS sites, all while maintaining physical distancing. We are also looking to tackle future challenges caused by changes in the way that people travel once lockdown restrictions are eased. This includes a predicted rise in walking, cycling and car use with people less likely to choose public transport.

This scheme is being funded by Council funding, and we are also seeking a contribution from London Streetspace programme, which you can find out more about here:

www.tfl.gov.uk/travel-information/improvements-and-projects/streetspace-for-london

The safety based changes we are implementing are supported by the Government. The Department for Transport has issued statutory guidance to Councils to rapidly reallocate road space to people walking and cycling. In addition, the Mayor of London has issued statutory guidance to London Councils in relation to the TfL Streetspace programme.

To respond to these challenges quickly we are making a series of safety-based changes to streets in Camden. Included in this letter is:

- Detail on the changes being made in your area
- A drawing showing the changes being made
- A drawing showing who we have notified
- Information on how to find out more

How are we responding to Coronavirus (COVID-19) safety issues?

We have identified a number of locations across the borough to begin to tackle the safety issues, including that proposed in your area. These initial locations have been chosen as they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- New safety issues physical distancing, walking or cycling have been highlighted to us as a result of Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Before the pandemic there had already been some local community engagement from existing projects which highlighted issues which we are looking to address
- They are areas where we can make it easier and safer for people maintaining physical distancing while walking and cycling locally, to shop, reach their local green spaces, schools and NHS sites

These safety measures include looking at widening pavements, reducing through traffic on residential streets and creating “pop-up” cycle lanes. This will make it easier for people to access amenities and to use local roads to journey to key destinations or simply for exercise while staying 2m apart.

You can tell us your own suggestions for other locations by using our dedicated website which can be found here: <https://camdensafetravel.commonplace.is/> or by emailing us at safetravel@Camden.gov.uk

Proposals to reduce through-traffic on our residential streets also help deliver one of the 17 recommendations from our Citizens Assembly on the climate crisis, which called for “promoting and trialling more car free zones and days”. And almost 60% of Camden residents responding to the Camden Transport Strategy proposals, adopted in April 2019, agreed with the principle of reducing through-traffic on our residential streets through the application of timed or permanent restrictions.

What are the challenges on Swains Lane?

Overall the number of vehicles using our roads is down but speeding has increased as a minority of irresponsible drivers take advantage of quieter roads. In London some average

speeds are being recorded at 37mph on 20mph roads. Areas of Camden which already suffered from speeding problems have seen speed increases of as much as 13%.

As the lockdown is eased there is expected to be a rise in walking, cycling and car use – as both public transport capacity decreases due to social distancing, and people choose alternative means of travel. This change in the way people travel will mean extra pressure on streets.

TfL have estimated that if all car-owning households switched their usual public transport journeys to car, some boroughs would see a near doubling in the number of private transport journeys, causing massive congestion issues. In Camden this would be an increase in private transport trips of over 90% in addition to an increase in car trips originating in other boroughs. We know however that in Camden the proportion of households without a car across the borough is 69% making walking and cycling safety and facilities crucial in Camden.

Additionally early modelling by TfL has revealed there could be more than a 10-fold increase in kilometres cycled, and up to five times the amount of walking, compared to pre-COVID levels. We have already started to see this reflected in Camden. Weekend cycle flows at our three automatic cycle count point sites have recorded an average increase of 120% in cycling levels this May compared to last. We are also aware that physical distancing requirements have meant that some areas of pavement are now too narrow for pedestrians to use safely.

We know from the Making Travel in Safer in Camden [Commonplace platform](#), that a number of suggestions to reduce through traffic on Swain's Lane have been made. One comment highlighted that "there isn't any room for social distancing. Unfortunately, it is used by drivers as a short cut to Highgate Village". This comment was 'agreed' 14 times by others. Another comment 'agreed' by eight others stated that "All of the traffic going up Swain's Lane uses it as a cut through to avoid Highgate West Hill and Dartmouth Park Hill. Cyclists going up Swain's Lane are subjected to vehicles consistently exceeding the speed limit going extremely close". Another comment, 'agreed', by four others stated that "Swains Lane has been a dreadful rat run for 20 years. It is totally needless as through route".

What will the work involve?

The changes we will be making on Swains Lane are as follows to prevent through traffic:

- Installing signage to ban a right turn at two locations on the northern end of Swains Lane
- Installing signage to ban a right turn from Swains Lane into Bisham Gardens and from Swains Lane into South Grove Place

There is a risk that the signs will not be adhered to by all motorists and therefore officers will monitor the effectiveness of the scheme and install Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) camera(s) if repeat infringements develop into a common occurrence.

Access to all properties will be maintained so you will still be able to reach your home by car and receive home deliveries but through-traffic from Highgate West Hill to Highgate

High Street via Swian's Lane will be prevented via the banned turns. Pedestrians and cyclists will be able to travel through at all times. Emergency services and bin collection teams will be able to lower the bollard for access.

How can you give your views?

We know that there is an immediate need for this safety improvement in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) so we are using Experimental Traffic Orders which once made can be brought into force relatively quickly.

We have already consulted with statutory emergency services on these changes, who have raised no objections. We are also notifying local residents, businesses and stakeholder groups within the local area and you can see the map of those notified below. You will also see information going up on the local streets and on our website.

MAP OF NOTIFICATION AREA



The experimental scheme will run for 18 months and you are able to comment at any time on the changes we have implemented. The Council would like to carry out a full public consultation after the experimental scheme has run for 12 months. A decision as to whether it can do this nearer the time, in light of the circumstances then prevailing will be taken. This consultation will then inform the Council's decision as to whether, at the end of the 18-month experiment, the changes should be made permanent. Traffic levels will also be monitored, as required, on relevant streets after the scheme is implemented.

We will be in contact with you again with more details on this closer to the time.

How can you find out more?

More information on these schemes will be added to our website shortly <https://www.camden.gov.uk/making-travel-safer-in-camden>

Where you can also find:

- The full Single Member Decision report

- The Commonplace map for Coronavirus (COVID-19) where you can make your location suggestions <https://camdensafetravel.commonplace.is/>

In the meantime if you have any further questions or comments on the measures please don't hesitate to get in touch via safetravel@Camden.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,
Camden Safer Travel Team

