

Camden Council
c/o SafeTravel@camden.gov.uk

Dear Camden Council,

Dartmouth Park Area Healthy Neighbourhood Proposal - OBJECTION

- 1) I write with regard to the recent Dartmouth Park Area Healthy Neighbourhood proposal. There are serious health and traffic issues in this area, including on Highgate West Hill, which need to be addressed. I am relieved that the Council is looking at improving the area, however I have serious concerns about the current proposals. These concerns are detailed below and specifically address the issues it would cause for Highgate West Hill.

- 2) I object to the proposals in its current format. Whilst traffic management is always going to be a contentious issue, it does need to be approached with a sense of fairness and equity for residents in and around the area in question. It needs to meet its objective, which these proposals do not. The Local Authority needs to uphold its legal obligations and duty of care to all citizens of a borough, not just a select few.

- 3) The pollution levels and volume of traffic on Highgate West Hill is a serious public health threat and needs to be addressed. There are already major congestion issues on the street, particularly at the north, south and narrow sections of the street. More traffic must not be directed towards Highgate West Hill.

- 4) The street has a weak infrastructure. It cannot sustain the volume and type of traffic it currently holds. HGVs continuously use this weight restricted street, causing major traffic blockages and damaging gas pipes, water pipes and homes. There are near constant road works and temporary traffic lights, causing major traffic jams, increased pollution and bad road rage. It is unclear where traffic, including emergency services and people needing to access medical services, would go if Highgate West Hill was one of two options to travel across the area, from west to east.

- 5) There is a dangerous level of speeding on this street by both motor vehicles and cyclists. It must be addressed.

Concerns regarding Highgate West Hill

- 6) Highgate West Hill street is a residential street in a conservation area. It is a very steep hill. For years, residents have been raising issues with Camden Council that it is unsafe and unhealthy. Regarding traffic, local residents have repeatedly complained to the Council about:
- Levels of traffic.
 - Speed of traffic.
 - Type of traffic.
- 7) There are of course other significant issues that residents have repeatedly complained of to the Council, including but not limited to:
- Parking (despite paying for permits, many residents are unable to park, particularly at specific times during the school term times at the northern end of the road, and over weekends during the summer at the southern end of the road. During school term the current parking times mean that the upper section of Highgate West Hill becomes a car park for the parents of children being dropped off and collected from St Michael's, Highgate and Channing schools. There is also an increase in litter during these periods (insufficient waste bins).
 - Antisocial behaviour between the Flask and the Gatehouse. Fly tipping (particularly at the northern section of the road). The area adjacent to the reservoir opposite the houses is vulnerable to frequent fly tipping and much litter from visitors to the pubs (again, insufficient provision of waste bins). This section of Highgate West Hill also provides a convenient pit stop and comfort break zone for taxi and Uber drivers.
 - Foxes get into public rubbish bins and then spreading rubbish around the street. This is a problem across Highgate.

Whilst these issues are ongoing and without a doubt do need to be resolved, this letter specifically addresses concerns about the impact that the recent proposal of traffic management would have on Highgate West Hill, and the way in which the traffic issues Highgate West Hill has repeatedly raised over time are totally ignored and aggravated by the proposals.

- 8) The traffic calming measures already implemented in the area, particularly in Dartmouth Park, have had a negative impact on Highgate West Hill. Highgate West Hill residents eventually reformed the Residents Association to formally liaise with the Council. This letter has been drafted in that context. Camden Council will note from its records that emails dating back to January 2023 specifically and repeatedly raise three issues: volume of traffic (causing high levels of pollution), type of traffic (HGVs) and speed of traffic. These issues

have already been set out in detail to the Council by email, including with photographic evidence.

- 9) These three issues result in serious public health risks and a lack of road safety. To date, no action has been taken to improve the situation on Highgate West Hill. They are therefore set out again here.

- i) **Volume of traffic.**

- 10) There are increasing levels of traffic on Highgate West Hill causing terrible air and noise pollution. The high levels of traffic on what is in sections a narrow road means there are traffic jams, huge traffic backlogs and high emissions. This is particularly the case at the northern and southern points of the road, and at narrow sections when vehicles cross with the much needed 214 bus and HGVs who should not be on this weight restricted road. The traffic then tails backs in both directions. At the northern end of the road, there is a roundabout, closely connected to two further roundabouts.

- 11) The traffic situation is terrible. We urge the Council to spend meaningful time at these areas before suggesting to send more traffic down the street, which would be unsustainable. The excessive volume of traffic on Highgate West Hill is evidenced on page 5 of the Camden's current proposal, which shows a data count of much higher traffic levels but makes no suggestion to address it.

- 12) High air and noise pollution levels are already unacceptable. This street is in a conservation area. Elderly people and children live on the street. Air quality remains the biggest environmental risk to public health in England, with children, the elderly and the vulnerably most affected. The residents of Highgate West Hill are those people. Residents are deterred from opening their street side windows and/or spending time street side. Pedestrians and cyclists using the street are breathing in this polluted air and have the unpleasant experience of regularly being witness to traffic disputes, including foul language and aggressive behaviour. Whilst non-resident cyclists and pedestrians may have the option of using Millfield Lane and back routes, residents do not – we have to use our street for access. The health concerns are serious and the pollution on this street needs to be addressed.

- 13) Please see photos below of regular traffic jams.





ii) **Speed of traffic.**

14) This street is used – at a huge risk – by cyclists and pedestrians, including the elderly and children, the less able and partially sighted. Some individuals may have a choice as to whether to use the street or not – residents do not; we have to use the street to access our homes. There are serious speeding problems on this street but the Council has taken no meaningful action to address these. Instead, it has been residents who have had no choice but to

act and gather evidence by engaging in volunteer speed monitoring exercises with the police. We have demonstrated most vehicles drive at over 20mph. We have caught people driving at over 40mph, mid-morning, with clearly visible police. The speeding on the street is terrifying and there continue to be major accidents as a result. Had the Council acted when concerns were raised, serious accidents could have been avoided. They were not – the Council has repeatedly failed residents. It is luck no one has been seriously injured or killed yet. In the last few months alone, four cars were written off and one flipped over. This is not the first (or even second) time a car has flipped over on the street. A post box being knocked down (and never replaced) and collisions between cars and cyclists. More “minor” accidents occur routinely: parked vehicles are regularly knocked into, with damage ranging from wing mirrors to thousands of pounds worth of damage. For years, it has been accepted that cars can park on the pavement at sections of the street (namely between Robin Grove and Millfield Lane) to avoid being knocked and to allow for the safe passage of bus 214 with the unauthorised flow of HGVs. Now, residents have been told that within one month they will have to park fully on the street. There has been no information on why this has been decided; how even further congestion will be avoided, and how parked cars will suddenly be protected (despite being further in the road).

15) Speeding cyclists are also a major concern. Many amateur cyclists use Swain’s Lane, Hillway and Highgate West Hill for speed and hill training. Residents frequently complain of near misses on the street with both motor vehicles and cyclists, including at zebra crossings. For non-speeding cyclists, the volume, type and speed of traffic makes this segment an incredibly dangerous section.

16) We have repeatedly raised these issues with the Council, including the very basic poor signage, but no action has been taken. We have pointed out specific signage issues, including signs facing buildings or hedges (not the street); being hidden behind plants and being hidden behind poles installed by the Council. It is baffling as to why it is taking so long to install proper speed signage on our street. When we have asked for speed cameras, we have been actively dissuaded from them, despite the accidents. We have most worryingly heard through local Councillors that the Council reported we have “rejected” speed cameras – for the avoidance of doubt, we repeat this is simply incorrect. We have highlighted specific sections of the road where speeding is an issue and speed cameras could help, and yet police monitoring in July took place at points where the traffic has to slow down and therefore will not accurately reflect the extent of the problem. It is a great shame they were provided with those locations and is of course a total waste of public funding and resources. The Council needs to recognise that

pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles all use this street. They will continue to use the street. Traffic needs to flow smoothly and safely.



Multiple cars written off; March 2024



Another flipped car incident; August 2022

iii) Type of traffic.

17) The volume of HGV traffic has become unacceptable despite a 7.5t weight restriction. This route has become an alternative for HGVs rather than the A1 and results in frequent traffic congestion, again affecting various sections of Highgate West Hill. Many sections of the street are very narrow. At the lower section of the street, as the Council is aware, many residents remain frustrated that the feeling that the Boris Nemstov Place/Swain's Lane roundabout was forced through with minimal consultation. Given the serious health and safety issues the street faces, it was difficult to understand why that project was being prioritised. The lack of research and consultation has had a lasting impact on locals, particularly because it is an obstruction to buses. On 7 August 2024, another bus was stuck there. This resulted in all buses terminating at Kentish Town. This was a major travel issue for people, particularly the elderly, young children and the less able.



18) HGVs going up and down the street not only cause congestion, but because of the weak infrastructure of the street – this is not an arterial road – and the volume and type of traffic has a serious impact on it. In terms of type of traffic, the HGVs cause vibrations – particularly when going over speed bumps –

damaging water and gas pipes. There are frequent visits from the utilities to “fix” yet another gas or water leak. This includes residents experiencing gas leaks due to broken pipes under the road – a huge danger which the Council needs to take seriously. This is both a public health and environmental issue. For example, in 2022, one resident at n23 Highgate West Hill checked a meter cupboard which sits under the house and its main entrance stairs. She was met with a strong smell of gas and called emergency services. After the inspection it was revealed that a gas pipe was broken under the road (in front of the house). The gas had escaped following pipe works to the house and started pulling in the meter cupboard. For the avoidance of doubt, this was a serious safety issue. The gas had to be switched off to a house with seven separate flats in the middle of the winter. Part of the street and pavement was closed off, until the gas was aired and it was safe to carry out works. It was shocking and scary for residents, who were told by British Gas it was a lucky escape as the meter cupboard was full of enough gas to blow part of the house away.

19) Gas leaks are a repeated occurrence on the street. At the time of writing, separate cable work on the street has again unveiled gas and water leaks. Services repeatedly tell residents that this is due to both the volume and heavy weight traffic that is using Highgate West Hill.

20) The damaged pipes result in near constant road works, as frequently reported to the Council, aggravating the already terrible traffic and pollution situation. There are constant pot holes on the street. Many residents (and non-residents) greatly rely on the 214 bus to get up the hill. The constant roadworks mean bus stops are regularly closed. Highgate West Hill is a steep street – for those with mobility issues or young children, the bus not working is a major issue.

21) As we prepare this letter, there are yet again temporary traffic lights and a one-way system already causing a major traffic jams, increased pollution and the 214 bus stop at Oakeshott Avenue has (yet again) been temporarily shut. (This was initially for cable work, but now gas and water leaks have been detected.) These are issues we have repeatedly raised with the Council and asked to be addressed – it is alarming that the Council’s response is to send more traffic this way. It quite simply will not work.

22) The vibrations due to the volume and type of traffic also damage homes, many of which are very old, including by cracking windows. Some residents were told that vibrations from traffic could have contributed to large pieces of masonry falling from above the second floor to the front steps. Fortunately,

this was at night, so there was no injury or worse, but this is obviously unacceptable.

- 23) The volume and type of traffic on the street needs to be managed and the infrastructure under the road requires urgent attention. We have been promised new signage since March 2024 but no action has been taken. A method for enforcing the weight restriction needs to be implemented. It is a waste of public funds and resources and is terrible for the environment that a preventative approach is not adopted.



Continuous flow of HGVs, June 2024



Further traffic jams resulting from work on pipes and temporary traffic lights, August 2024



More burst pipes, August 2020

24) Despite having directly, repeatedly and continuously raised these three issues with Camden Council – namely with Zara Khan and her predecessor Jon Legge, and also Karl Brierley – and being told that the Council will look into matters and address them, Camden’s current proposal has in no way attempted to address these public health and safety problems that residents on Highgate West Hill face. Instead, the current proposals would significantly aggravate matters as it actively directs more traffic onto the street.

25) It is unclear to residents – particularly in light of the lack of data, such as the types of vehicles, the routes they are taking, the time of day they are traveling at, congestion points or any sort of traffic projections whatsoever – why less busy roads are having calming measures or full restrictions imposed, and their traffic diverted towards boundary roads, including Highgate West Hill, where traffic volumes and pollution levels are already significantly higher. We refer you to page 5 of the proposal, for which the April/May 2024 traffic data is as follows:

Location	Direction	Current Count
Highgate West Hill average	N	5290
	S	6065
Swain’s Lane average	N	1688
	S	1312
Dartmouth Park Hill average	N	3,937
	S	2,995

26) The pollution levels are already too high on Highgate West Hill. Increased traffic would result in increased air and noise pollution, despite these already being too high. There are arguably significantly more residents living on Highgate Road and Highgate West Hill than on Swain’s Lane, Chetwynd Road or Dartmouth Park Hill. There are also more schools, including William Ellis, Parliament Hill and Sainte Union.

27) The Council owes **all residents** a duty of care regarding road safety, clean air and public health. This includes people living on Highgate Road and Highgate West Hill. There is no clear reasoning for why already congested boundary

roads should absorb the pollution and through traffic of surrounding areas. Closing the north of Swain's Lane – where there are very few residents – would displace that traffic to the residential and densely populated Highgate West Hill. **Please explain to us why less congested and less populated roads are being cleaned up at the expense of more populated and polluted streets with weak infrastructure?**

28) As stated, issues on Highgate West Hill, especially greater volumes of traffic, heavy load of traffic and speeding, became a lot worse around the same time that the initial traffic calming measurements were introduced on the Dartmouth Park Hill. Pollution has gotten significantly worse. If traffic is closed through Dartmouth Park, rather than equalised, all those who live and use (which in reality will include residents with the “healthy zone”) the boundary roads will be negatively impacted in getting to their local amenities, schools, doctor surgeries, public transport routes (including bus routes, tube networks and the overground) and the Heath. Pollution, traffic levels and traffic type on Highgate West Hill need to be addressed, not aggravated. Further traffic cannot be directed this way. Highgate West Hill is too narrow a road with too weak infrastructure to accept a further increase of traffic resulting from more traffic calming measures in Dartmouth Park.

29) The proposal openly directs traffic onto Highgate West Hill. Highgate West Hill would become the only through way for traffic, wedged between a large LTN and the Heath. Making Chetwynd one way, means that any west to east traffic has no choice but to travel around to Kentish Town or up Highgate Road and Highgate West Hill to Highgate. Closing Chester Road to east bound traffic will increase the time required for ambulances to travel to the Whittington Hospital. There are no alternative roads surrounding Highgate West Hill. If there is gridlock traffic, then aside from the devastating impact this will have on residents, how will people carry out their journeys, including on public transport, and during medical emergencies? How will people who urgently need medical attention get to their doctors or the hospitals, particularly for those for whom walking, cycling or public transport is not an option? The Raydon Street closure will mean that travel from the bottom of Highgate West Hill to the Whittington hospital will be two/three times further, increasing traffic, CO2 emissions and most importantly in a medical emergency – travel time. We note that the NHS plans to close the Royal Free maternity, which will mean significant longer journey times for expecting mothers and recent parents across the Hampstead area, including when in labour.

30) The one-way system on Chester Road and suggested changes on Swains Lane will increase traffic on Highgate West Hill. In short, the closing of the major east/west routes to vehicles other than busses will push vehicles on to the boundary roads, one, Highgate West Hill, is a narrow residential street

and which already suffers from air pollution, vibrations, overweight vehicles, speeding traffic and suicidal downhill cyclists.

31) We expect the proposal to result in an increase in traffic in boundary roads. Using the April/May 2024 traffic data:

Location	Direction	Current Count	Count post changes	Increase
Highgate West Hill	N	5,067	6,993	+38%
	S	5,075	6,603	+30%
Highgate Road above Mansfield	N	6,071	7,997	+32%
	S	6,137	7,665	+25%
Swain's Lane by Waterlow Park	N	1,348	-	
	S	1,345	-	
Chester Road	E	1,107	-	
	W	1,856	-	
Dartmouth Park Hill by Highgate Hill	N	2,504	-	
	S	1,712	-	

If Swain's Lane is closed to through traffic and Dartmouth Park Hill is closed to through traffic it is reasonable to expect these movements to transfer to the boundary roads, Junction Road/Highgate Hill and Highgate West Hill. The movements on Swain's Lane and Dartmouth Park Hill are 3,852 vehicles north bound and 3,057 vehicles southbound, the last two columns show the impact on Highgate West Hill and Highgate Hill assuming the displaced traffic is equally shared. This is a reasonable assumption particularly given that as already noted the Council has provided no data about routes taken or prepared any form of traffic projections. At recent consultations, the Council stated that it – shockingly – did not intend to conduct traffic modelling but instead enter into an 18-month experimental phase. This is quite astonishing in light of the very real impact it will have on people's lives. **Please explain that given Smart Transport Hub – which we were advised by the Council this proposal is designed in partnership with – clearly prides themselves on creating such models including traffic projections, modelling and engineering, why is this not being used on this project?**

- 32) Before electrification of the 214 bus West Hill was one of the most polluted roads in London. In addition to the noise, vibrations and general congestion the additional traffic will cause, it will also impact on the air quality for boundary road residents. **Please provide us with the data for current pollution levels on the street (not during the summer periods when traffic is significantly lower). Please provide us with the estimate for future pollution levels, if these suggested changes were made. What measures will the Council to protect the health of residents on the boundary roads, and their access to clean air?**
- 33) How will local residents who are unable to walk or cycle move around the area, particularly if the street is in gridlock traffic? Where will the traffic go when the monthly roadworks take place? Is the Council expecting the street infrastructure to get stronger with the increased traffic load or, more likely, for there to be an increase in damage to the street and the pipes below it? How will the Council protect residents from potential gas explosions?
- 34) We strongly believe the infrastructure on this street is too weak to support additional traffic. As already detailed – in this letter and previous correspondence – the street cannot support the volume and type of traffic it already receives, hence the constant roadworks. With regard weight restriction, the Council has told us there is very little if anything it can do regarding imposing weight restriction. We note a very simple act it could take would be re-instating the weight restriction signs, including (for the avoidance of doubt - on the correct side of the street, clearly visible to drivers (i.e. not behind trees, poles or on the opposite side of the street as currently the case):
- i) At the Boris Nemtsov / Swain's Lane roundabout;
 - ii) In Highgate village, at the Gatehouse and entry onto the Highgate West Hill;
 - iii) At the junction of The Grove and Highgate West Hill; and
 - iv) At the junction of South Grove and Highgate West Hill.
- 35) We need equal treatment as Dartmouth Park. This is a photo of signage at the entrance to Dartmouth Park, along with a camera. Highgate West Hill requires the same:



36) Please confirm when proper speed and weight restriction signage will be erected, in line with the signage provided on entry into Dartmouth Park.

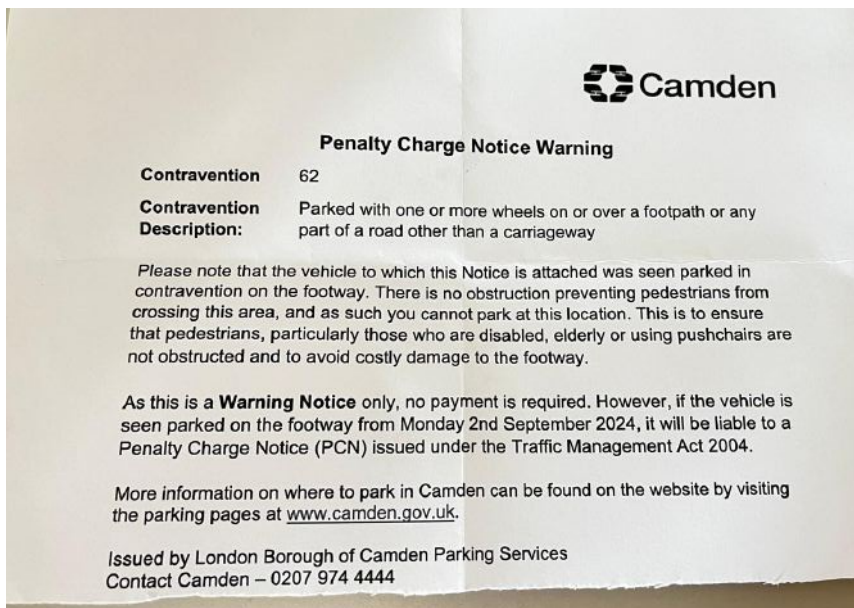
37) In an email dated 6 July 2022 from Jason Smith (Process Specialist, London Borough of Camden) to Charlotte Alderson, the Council stated as follows:

Although there is no formal agreement in place, we are aware that for some time now, parking partly on the footway along certain stretches of Highgate West Hill has not resulted in parking enforcement action. This is not to say that parking partly on the footway is permitted, however, for now we will continue with our current approach of not taking enforcement action. Regrettably we have no powers to enforce speed controls, as this is a Police matter, but I hope this provides some clarity and reassurance regarding parking a little further away from the traffic flow.

In terms of longer term solutions, while understanding the urgency of your concerns, our transport design colleagues confirm that this stretch of road is already currently under review and they are expecting to be in a position to communicate

with all residents regarding any proposed changes towards the latter part of this year.

38) No action has been taken to improve the situation on Highgate West Hill. In relation to parking, however, the Council is able to take action to penalise residents for the issues it is failing to address. On 6 August 2024, some residents received the following Penalty Charge Notice Warnings:



We are amazed that the Council takes no action whatsoever in relation to our public health risks, gas leak concerns or major car accidents, but it does spend time and resources on implementing parking restrictions, knowing full well that even when parked up on the pavement cars on the street are quite literally being written off in accidents. It is an absolute disgrace.

39) If cars are fully parked on this section of the street and HGVs keep using it, the reality is there will be further traffic jams and more noise and air pollution which are already unacceptably high and a danger to our health. HGVs continue to use the street in both directions, causing blockages with the 214 which we desperately need.

40) Our street is a steep hill and whilst we appreciate there is a push for people to cycle and walk, the Council does need to recognise that vehicle transport is important to people, including those with limited mobility, who cannot walk distances or cycle in a busy area, who are transporting children and the

elderly, who are carrying shopping and heavy materials, especially up a hill such as Highgate West Hill. When there are (frequent) roadworks, the bus stop at Oakeshott Avenue is regularly closed. When residents cannot park on the stretch of street, travel is a very real issue for people who are less mobile. Blocking people from parking, in particularly when bus stops are out of order, is completely isolating for sections of the community. The necessity of safely parking and allowing for the smooth passage of traffic has been recognised in the past and residents have been told in writing they can park there. The parking on the west side of the road is also an invaluable form of safety between pedestrians and the heavy and fast traffic flow, as well as protection - if minor - from pollution. Parking is not available on the east side, where the pavement is necessarily much wider to offer some safety. Residents agree this wide pavement is also much needed to walk safely. It is unclear why we are suddenly no longer allowed to park on the pavement. **We must be able to park safely. Like on Chetwynd Road, this should be formalised with markings.**



Parking on Chetwynd Road

41) The Council is also fully aware that there are repeated complaints that despite having paid for parking permits, residents routinely simply cannot park when the weather is favourable to a visit to the heath or around school pick up times. We note that Highgate West Hill has been banded together with residential streets either side of it for the data presented on page 4 of the proposal. **Please provide us with the data for residential access to cars/vans for Highgate West Hill specifically.**

42) The four black dots on Highgate West Hill on the local traffic management plans suggests there are as existing traffic filters. This is misleading. In reality, these are gates on the both sides of the inner streets in Holly Lodge Estate.

They are traffic filters for the Holly Lodge Estate – they are not traffic filters or calming measures for Highgate West Hill. There are no measures on the street to filter or calm the traffic at these points.

- 43) Residents have repeatedly raised how dangerous the informal crossings by the 214 bus stops going north on Highgate West Hill and near Oakeshott Avenue and Holly Lodge Gardens can be. In the former, northbound vehicles often overtake a stationary bus and are surprised by the traffic island just north of the stop and have to continue on the wrong side of the road for an additional 20m or so, near misses occur. In the latter, vehicles speed down and around the bend in the road and are surprised by pedestrians crossing.
- 44) Within the proposal, there are no real or genuine improvements for Highgate West Hill. There are vague suggestions, including Vehicle Activation Signs. On 9 April 2024, the Council stated in an email to us that these signs have shown to reduce speed by only 2% in the long-term. This therefore seems to be an empty promise of improvement, and a waste of public funds. There is reference to speed bumps. Residents have already repeatedly explained to the Council that with traffic levels as they are the continuous use of HGVs on the street, the tremors from speed bumps are damaging nearby buildings.
- 45) Highgate West Hill is within the conservation area and is a residential street. This proposal places our street (and Highgate High Street and Highgate Hill) as an extension of the north circular. Highgate West Hill will effectively be used as the only through way between one of the largest – if not the largest – LTNs and the Heath. We therefore have no choice but to vehemently object to this proposal and demand that our concerns are heard, our interests are considered and we are treated equally to other residents, as we have the legal right to be.
- 46) Traffic management in the area needs to be for everyone – this proposal is heavily weighted towards people who do not live on the boundary roads and who are able to use public transport, walk or cycle. The Council needs to address the concerns of everyone, including those living on boundary roads, elderly people, less abled people, children.
- 47) A thought-through proposal needs to consider all the issues in an area. It must not create a two-tiered society of living – those within the “healthy area” enjoying fresh air and those of us living on the boundary suffering from high air and noise pollution and extremely dangerous traffic. That raises serious concerns as to how Council decisions are being made, who is behind them and what their interests might be.

Concerns regarding the proposal in general

- 48) The title of the proposal is misleading as its impact is widespread. Its title should reflect that the area mapped out includes both Highgate and Dartmouth Park, and surrounding areas on all boundaries of the map need to be actively consulted within an appropriate timeframe.
- 49) Part of the proposal's stated objectives are to make the area safer and healthier. The council states: "We want to **make traveling by walking, wheeling and cycling easy for everyone**. We also want to **create safer streets for children to travel independently** and actively within the healthy neighbourhood" (emphasis added). This project may benefit some people within the centre of the Dartmouth Park area, but it will definitely cause more traffic and more air and noise pollution for everyone living in and using the areas around it. The goals of this proposal will not be met on Highgate West Hill. The conservation area, the Heath and local schools and nurseries will face increased pollution if these proposals are forced through. This proposal will create a two-tiered society. Highgate West Hill, Highgate Village, Highgate Hill and all those who use or live near those roads will not have safer and healthier lives - these changes will be extremely detrimental to those residents. It is noted many of those residents may not have the financial means to move to a wealthier, lower traffic areas, such as Dartmouth Park. They may not have the same influence over the Council as residents within very affluent zones. They must still be treated equally.
- 50) The "engagement phase" runs from 8 July - 18 August over the summer period when many take holidays. There has been very short notice for in person and online meetings. Leaflets have been distributed to some homes, but not all. On Highgate West Hill – a steep hill where many locals use the bus – signage has interestingly been displayed at a distance from bus stops. There appears little genuine desire for local people to engage in this process. An extension is urgently required. We note that many people go away over the summer period. It appears that having faced significant delays, the Council is now trying to rush the project through. Residents in the area have not truly been able to engage with the process even though they are the ones it will impact the most. This seems to defeat the point and is unlikely to result in a genuinely successful project. The Council recently noted that nearly 200 people have filled in the survey within the first 12 days so it is confident local residents are engaged in the process. This is laughable – literally thousands of people live in the area, so less than 200 people engaging cannot be viewed as success. We support the request signed by over 1650 people that an extension is granted given the enormity of these traffic management proposals.

- 51) The aim of the entire project appears to be to safeguard and protect the Dartmouth Park area (with the closure of the Dartmouth Park Hill and creating a lower traffic neighbourhood) and turn surrounding roads in the neighbourhood, including Highgate West Hill, into through traffic boundary roads that will connect North Circular with the Central London. This is done with little consideration of the impact it will have on the residents and businesses in surrounding areas, or indeed even within Dartmouth Park, many of whom are extremely upset by the proposals and the increase in pollution levels it will cause through longer journeys.
- 52) Under this proposal, Highgate West Hill, Highgate Road, Highgate Hill and Highgate High Street will all be exposed to more pollution, Highgate Village itself will be exposed to more pollution, more health hazards, and the continuous stress and dangers brought by off-loaded traffic from the inner Dartmouth Park area streets.
- 53) There are numerous schools and childcare facilities that would be negatively impacted by these changes. **All children have the right to fresh, clean air.** Schools include Brookfield School (only partially and incorrectly identified); Sainte Union Girls School; William Ellis School, St Michael's School, Highgate School and Channing Girls School. This proposal directs further traffic directly in front of schools and therefore there will be an increase of pollution. This is unacceptable and completely contradicts its stated purpose is to achieve a "safer and healthier" area.
- 54) Swain's Lane is a residential area and an existing hub for people. There is already too much through traffic causing serious air pollution, noise pollution and danger to pedestrians (particularly the most vulnerable such as the elderly, children, those who are less able, partially sighted or blind, cyclists, dogs. Many outdoor seating areas are located next to the Swain's Lane/Boris Nemstov roundabout. This proposal would add further traffic, congestion and pollution to that area.
- 55) We note that by directing an increased traffic volume along Highgate Road and Highgate West Hill, there will be higher pollution levels along the edge of the Heath.
- 56) Highgate High Street is a residential area and existing commercial hub, including cafes, shops, and a children's nursery. Traffic, congestion and pollution levels are already very bad on the high street. This needs to be improved, not made worse by directing more traffic into Highgate Village. It is not safe, it is not healthy and it is not green. Highgate High Street needs to be protected.

Conclusion

- 57) The proposal states it is to "reduce the ability for motor vehicle drivers to cut through the Healthy Neighbourhood area". Due to a failure to collate any data on what journeys are being undertaken it is very unlikely that this proposal will stop motor vehicles journey. What blocking traffic from one street will do is simply push existing traffic and its pollution onto another road, haphazardly designated as a "boundary road". Traffic management designs need to be based on proper data collation and analysis – this one is not. This proposal is moving pollution from Dartmouth Park onto Highgate West Hill, Highgate Hill and Highgate High Street, which are already saturated with traffic. The proposal is a brazen prioritisation of certain areas, pushing negative elements into surrounding areas. All residents of the area have a right to safe streets and a healthy neighbourhood. As it stands, this proposal completely misses an opportunity to make the genuine healthy and green improvements this **whole** area so desperately needs. The traffic in the area as mapped needs to be equalised, not offloaded onto the boundary roads (of this map), which already have their own existing pollution and traffic issues.
- 58) It is extremely frustrating, upsetting and disappointing that despite years of Highgate West Hill residents asking the Council for help with the increased volume, speed and type of traffic, we have been completely ignored. In the long term, implementing the proposal as it stands would be terrible for the environment, the local area and the residents and visitors. It will be a total waste of public funding and resources, something society simply cannot afford to do. In the short term, it will ruin lives and communities.
- 59) We have serious concerns that offloading traffic onto narrow neighbourhood streets, such as Highgate West Hill, and bad planning will result in increased air pollution in residential areas and around schools. There will be an immediate and longer term danger to lives (through higher speed, pollution and as indirect consequences of increased heavy loads traffic damaging gas and water pipes). Rapid access for firefighters, police and ambulance services would be compromised. The Council may have a mandate to reduce CO2 and plant trees, there is no mandate for exposing people to increased air pollution. There has been no projections of increased traffic loads, pollution or related consequences for residents who do not live within the lower traffic neighbourhood. There are no review stages during which it could be amended if it creates foreseen or unforeseen issues for other residents. The proposal is not presented in a format that objectively shows residents the advantages and disadvantages so there can be a genuine discussion. There is serious concern this proposal would increase traffic and air pollution for the boundary roads and surrounding areas. It therefore needs to be replanned or stopped.

60) Residents of Highgate West Hill require a traffic management proposal for the area that promotes their health and safety, including through:

- i) The management of the volume of traffic including by not directing further traffic onto the street. This includes not closing off other streets and alternative routes and also by enforcing existing traffic (including HGV) restrictions.**
- ii) The management of the type of traffic by installing adequate weight restriction signage and cameras to enforce existing restrictions, as is the case at entrances to Dartmouth Park.**
- iii) The enforcement of speed restrictions for both motor vehicles and cyclists, for example through speed cameras.**

61) Further to discussions with barristers and solicitors living on Highgate West Hill, residents reserve the right to seek a Judicial Review on the basis that there has been insufficient consideration of the legal duties of the Council towards the residents of Highgate West Hill.

The Highgate West Hill Residents Association has repeatedly suggested the Council meet with residents to discuss matters and genuinely listen to concerns so residents can provide input into how traffic in the area can be better managed. This offer remains open and we look forward to being truly engaged in the process so it can best serve the entire community.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Charlotte Alderson
(Co-Chair, West Hill Residents Association)