



9th September 2020

**The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Transport**

Dear Secretary of State

The destruction of Chiswick's community, town centre and retail economy

The nine councillors representing Chiswick's three wards in Hounslow welcome your call to local councils to stop abusing the cash given to them to implement safer and greener streets. We are writing to ask you to intervene to stop the destruction of our community, town centre and retail economy.

A hammer-blow to Chiswick's retail businesses: Hounslow Council has used Covid-19 funding from TfL and Emergency Traffic Orders to close access 24/7 to traffic on two important shopping streets: Turnham Green Terrace and Devonshire Road. The thirty-minute free parking concession so highly valued by traders and shoppers has been abolished at a stroke. This has come as a hammer-blow to many small retailers trying to get back on their feet after lock-down restrictions were eased.

Key through roads have as consequence become choked with displaced traffic: The situation has been greatly exacerbated by Ealing Council's closure of Fishers Lane to motor vehicles. New rat-runs have sprung up as residents are forced to make lengthy detours simply to return home. Hounslow's Covid-19 traffic measures have therefore also seriously disadvantaged the residents of the part of Chiswick that lies within the London Borough of Ealing.

Revival of the discredited Cycleway-9 scheme: The original scheme was abandoned when TfL's finances collapsed. A low-cost version of the scheme has now been approved by TfL and Hounslow Council without any public consultation. Over 5,500 local people signed a petition instructing Hounslow Council to reject TfL's original plans. The Council chose to ignore the petition and the protests made by local councillors.

The new so-called temporary scheme is even worse, for all local stakeholders, than the original scheme. For example, bus lanes will be abolished and traffic islands ripped out. The new scheme will inevitably add to traffic congestion and air pollution on an already heavily polluted road. No traffic modelling has been undertaken and no assessment has been made of how the other road closures will impact on the Cycleway-9 scheme and vice versa.

The South Chiswick Unliveable Neighbourhood schemes: South of the A4 TfL is funding a wide range of complex measures aimed at preventing rat running across this largely residential area from and to the A316 and the A4. Apart from the much needed school street proposals these measures will be in force 24/7 – a massive over reaction to a problem that exists for only a few hours a day. The measure will force many residents and their visitors/carers to make long unnecessary detours.

Residents are confused about the arbitrary way in which the area is being divided by road closures and the eccentric ANPR based schemes. Hounslow Council have refused to respond to detailed questions raised by local councillors in an open letter.



Hounslow Council's offer to review and modify the experimental traffic measures after they have been implemented is treated with great scepticism by residents. They have learnt from bitter experience that Hounslow's consultation processes are biased and, no matter how many residents respond, the results are never treated as conclusive if the Council disagrees with the result.

We enclose a map illustrating the measures already partially implemented in south Chiswick so that you can see how complex these plans are and why it is vital that they are fully consulted on BEFORE they are implemented. The plans for Chiswick High Road and surrounding streets are considerably more complicated and with the potential to do irreversible damage to many businesses.

This is only a summary of the main issues. We would be more than happy to provide more information if that would be helpful. We have repeatedly said that local cycling routes need to be significantly improved and have provided our own proposals and suggestions. The Council's various new schemes do not deliver greener safer streets, instead they create problems where none previously existed. It is essential that the cohesiveness of our residential areas and the dynamism of our town centre are not compromised by such poorly designed traffic schemes.

Please intervene on our residents' behalf with TfL and Hounslow Council and instruct them to reverse the Covid-19 measures that have already been implemented ensure that no further works begin until Hounslow's experimental and temporary traffic orders have all been reviewed in detail by independent professionals and a proper public consultation has been completed.

We would be extremely happy to welcome you to our wards for a fact-finding visit. It is important that you see at first hand the damage being inflicted, by these ill-considered temporary traffic schemes both on our communities and the many retail and service businesses based in Chiswick. Many thanks for your timely intervention to sort out the Hammersmith Bridge shambles.

All nine Hounslow Chiswick councillors:

Cllr Patrick Barr
Cllr Joanna Biddolph
Cllr Michael Denniss
Cllr Gabriella Giles
Cllr Ranjit Gill
Cllr Sam Hearn
Cllr Gerald McGregor
Cllr Ron Mushiso
Cllr John Todd

Copies to:

Cllr Hanif Khan – Hounslow Council Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transport
Cllr Guy Lambert – Hounslow Council Cabinet Member for Highways
Cllr Katherine Dunne Hounslow Council Cabinet Member for Communities and Climate Emergency
Heidi Alexander – Deputy Mayor of London (Transport)
Tony Arbour - GLA Assembly Member
Nick Rogers – GLA Assembly candidate