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Clapham Common
London SW4 9PT

George Wright
Project Manager
Transportation Section
Public Realm Division
London Borough of Lambeth

18 July 2014

Dear George,

Re: Consultation on Old Town East additional works

I am writing following receipt from a third party of your recent consultation leaflet outlining the further works that are now proposed for Old Town East to remedy some of the issues we discussed during our walkabout last month. In spite of the extremely short time allowed for by this exercise in consultation the proposals have been considered by the Society's Roads & Transport Sub-committee, and was discussed by the Main Committee at its meeting earlier this week.

It should be noted that I could find no reference to this consultation exercise on the Council's website, nor to the Section 14 regarding "Temporary road closures and other temporary traffic restrictions in the Clapham Old Town and Clapham Common Areas" dated 11 July and posted in the public notices section of Lambeth Weekender weekly which I picked up from the Library this week. Whilst this notice was only dated and published on the 11th July, it states "The Order will come into force on 12th July 2014 and continue for a maximum duration of 9 months" ie the day following its publication. I am advised there have been no notices displayed drawing attention to either the traffic order or to the public consultation, details of which seem only to have been made available to a very limited clientele.

It is extremely regrettable that after a year of intense disruption to the residents, traders and visitors to Clapham it is now proposed that a further programme of works is being proposed, undoing much of the excellent work already carried out. Whilst plans are not always perfect, and execution not always to the standard desired, the need to review the operation in this area of the scheme was in this case largely predictable, and results in no small measure to an ill-conceived, inadequately consulted on, and badly thought through measure to introduce a contra-flow cycle route along Old Town East. Many criticisms were levied at this proposal once it became public knowledge, but the originating consultation that was claimed for it remains obscure. It certainly was not included as part of the originally agreed plan. To attempt a redesign and expensive reworking of the highway along this stretch of Old Town East to the considerable detriment of

pedestrians, and the creation of new problems for traders in the area represents a misallocation of public resources. Far better to remove the ill-conceived cycle route East of the Polygon.

The consultation leaflet asserts that "Lambeth Council has received feedback from local residents that there is still a large amount of traffic driving through Old Town east and The Pavement. This is making it less safe for pedestrians and cyclists to use this route." We would question when this feedback was received, and the extent to which the proposed works provide an appropriate solution. Certainly on completion of the main works when there was a wide splay junction at the northern end of Old Town East this acted as an invitation to traffic to continue to use this route. From our own observations the temporary obstruction placed on the carriageway has largely stopped this, as has the tight junction to rejoin the main route at the southern end. The route along Old Town West provides a much quicker route for traffic travelling South, and Old Town East is considerably curbed in terms of traffic flow.

I understood that the splay junction was an oversight in the plan given to the contractor which was not picked up at the time, and a redesign of this now to create a proper tee entry point should be efficacious and straightforward in terms of cost and time to rectify the problem. It remains important that the junction can accommodate the delivery vehicles for traders along this stretch, especially Sainsbury as well as domestic removals etc. With a reduced entry point consideration needs to be given to how the space so released is used in future.

The removal of the loading bay outside No 1 Polygon is likely to create severe problems for delivery vehicles during the working day. Perhaps a couple of shared permit parking spaces could be provided as part of the redesign of the splay, relieving some of the pressure elsewhere along Old Town East.

A narrowing of the pavement between the Sainsbury Local and Trinity Close will be very problematic for pedestrians, especially given the extensive use made of the pavement by local businesses for external seating, and queuing - especially in the vicinity of Nardulli at weekends. This area can get very congested for pedestrians, and this is a major focal point for Clapham.

We don't consider speed bumps will make any perceptible difference to traffic speeds or potential 'rat running', and would be a waste of money in this area. We had understood that a general 20mph speed limit was to be introduced in the area, and a strong case could be made for a lower limit, say 10mph, along Old Town East and some other local feeder roads which would do considerably more to help to re-educate motorists and make the new Copenhagen crossings safer for pedestrians and cyclists alike.

We ask the Council to heed these comments, and to reconsider these over-elaborate, and costly proposals.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Leffler

Convenor Roads & Transport Sub-committee
The Clapham Society

cc Annabel Allott, Chair of The Clapham Society
Cllrs Haselden, Wellbelove, Bray
R&T Sub-committee