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Mr Boris Johnson
Mayor of London
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13th January 2015

Dear Boris

Archway Gyrotory Proposals

I am writing to provide Islington Council's formal response to the recent consultation on the proposals to remove the gyrotory at Archway. A more detailed technical response to Transport for London has also been prepared and is appended to this letter.

First, I would like to thank you for the work that your colleagues at Transport for London have done so far in terms of engaging with the local community and groups in the lead up and during the public consultation, including presentations at the local Ward Partnership meetings, and meetings with local businesses and stakeholders (such as pedestrian and cycle groups).

The removal of the gyrotory will bring significant economic, transport and place making benefits to the local area. Relocation of the bus stand will unlock an important development site at the heart of the town centre providing new homes for local people.

At this point in time, Archway is experiencing unprecedented levels of change with still further change to come as key sites in and around the town centre are developed. The planned public space and pedestrian improvements will make Archway a more attractive and inviting place to live and visit and will support its revival as a shopping centre. Islington Council therefore continues to support the removal of the gyrotory and looks forward to working with Transport for London to further refine these proposals and take them forward.

In particular, we look forward to working with Transport for London to develop detailed plans for the new public space outside the station. This is a rare and exciting opportunity to create a new public space in a densely built up urban area and it is important that this scheme makes the best possible contribution to the regeneration of the area. We expect the Council and local community to remain closely involved as the plans for the new space develop.

I am also very keen to talk to you and your colleagues at the GLA about how the development and construction of this scheme can be used to provide employment and training opportunities for local people. I would be grateful if you could let me know how I should best pursue this matter.

However, we have a number of concerns with the proposals, which we understand are shared by residents and businesses. We hope that Transport for London will address these concerns as the scheme progresses, although we recognise that in many cases this will be extremely difficult.

Displacement of Traffic into Local Streets

Residents are concerned about the displacement of traffic into local streets as a result of the proposed banning of certain traffic movements, and in particular the banning of the right turn from St John's Way to Archway Road/Highgate Hill.

Vorley Road and MacDonald Road

The banning of the above right turn will lead to increased levels of car traffic on Vorley Road and MacDonald Road. To some degree this will be mitigated by a reduction in the number of buses that will use these streets due to the removal of the bus stand. However, there are a couple of very sensitive land uses located on these streets – the Vorley Road Children's Centre and the Girdlestone Estate, and we are concerned about the impact of any increase in traffic levels, and associated impacts on air quality, on the children and residents. We are therefore asking Transport for London to investigate some options that would eliminate or mitigate against this increase in traffic.

Cressida Road, Hornsey Lane and Hazelville Road

The banning of the right turn will also lead to increased traffic levels in these streets much to the concern of local residents. Again we have suggested measures that will eliminate or mitigate against these increases. In the event that these measures are not practical, we would ask that traffic levels in these streets are monitored before and after the gyratory is removed and supplementary traffic measures are implemented if necessary. This work should be carried out in close collaboration with the residents of these streets.

St John's Grove and Pemberton Gardens

There are also concerns that more traffic may use other local roads that are already used as a cut through, such as St John's Grove and Pemberton Gardens which has a school. These roads should also be monitored, to ensure that any impacts are minimised and mitigated where necessary.

Relocation of Bus Stops

Whilst supportive of the proposals to remove all traffic from the western arm of the gyratory, we share residents' concerns about the impact that this will have on bus passengers. In particular, residents are concerned about the increased walking distance between some stops and the fact that some bus routes travelling in the same direction will be split across more than one stop (most notably for buses to Archway Road). We have asked Transport for London to examine options to eliminate or mitigate against these impacts.

Extension of Local Bus Routes

Local residents have suggested that local bus routes (routes 17, 41 and 390) could be extended northwards to serve the Whittington Hospital and southwards (routes 143 and W5) to serve Upper Holloway Station. Again we have asked Transport for London to give serious consideration to residents' suggestions – we are particularly keen to see improved bus access to the Whittington.

Cycle Facilities

The proposals provide substantial improvements for people cycling in the local area, but we think further improvements are needed. The Islington Cycle Action Group has raised concerns and has asked for further improvements to the scheme. We hope that Transport for London will carefully consider ICAG's concerns. In particular, we hope that Transport for London will explore:

- whether it is possible to extend the off-road cycle tracks further up Archway Road in both directions; and
- alternatives to the southbound cycle track through the new public space to avoid conflict between cyclists and pedestrians.

To accommodate the expected increase in cycling in the long term, and to provide alternatives for people who prefer to cycle on quieter roads, we hope to continue working with Transport for London to improve the wider cycle route network.

Pedestrians

The proposals provide substantial benefits for people walking in the local area. However, we would ask that as the scheme progresses to the detailed design stage Transport for London explores options to widen and declutter the footways particularly on Holloway Road, St John's Way and the south side of Junction Road. We also hope that Transport for London will implement a wayfinding strategy to make it easier for pedestrians to navigate their way around the newly redesigned town centre.

Traffic calming and 20mph speed limit

To further encourage walking and cycling, to make the area feel more safe and welcoming, minimise impacts on air quality, and to mitigate against any displacement of traffic in local streets, it is essential that traffic speeds are reduced and physical traffic calming measures are implemented. As Islington is an enforceable 20mph borough, we would like to see the 20mph speed limit to be extended to cover TfL's roads as well.

Air Quality

Whilst it is likely that air quality will improve in some parts of the town centre, other areas will be exposed to increased traffic levels and possibly a reduction in air quality – notably on Vorley Road / MacDonald Road and St John's Way. We hope that Transport for London will work with us to properly evaluate the impact that the proposals will have on air quality and to develop measures to mitigate against any adverse impacts where possible.

Loss of Trees and Green Space

The proposals could lead to a loss of around 25 trees in a densely built up urban area and the loss of a small area of the Archway Corner green space. We therefore hope that Transport for London will ensure that the final scheme includes a tree planting and greenspace strategy to increase the amount of green space and the number and quality of trees in the local area as the scheme is built out.

Parking and Loading

Local businesses are concerned about the potential loss of parking and loading facilities within the town centre and we look forward to working with Transport for London to examine how this can be avoided or at least mitigated.

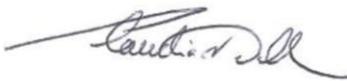
Management Arrangements

Following implementation of the scheme, we hope that we can put appropriate management and maintenance arrangements in place to ensure that the new road layout and public space is properly cleaned and maintained.

In conclusion, the council remains keen to see the removal of the gyratory go forward as we feel that the benefits of the scheme outweigh the dis-benefits by far. However, it is vitally important that local concerns about the scheme are fully and properly addressed. Whilst accepting that it may not be possible to fully resolve every concern that has been raised, I hope that Transport for London will work with us to properly consider these concerns in detail and amend the proposals wherever possible.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss any of the matters raised in this letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claudia Webbe', is positioned to the left of a vertical line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Councillor Claudia Webbe
Executive Member for Environment and Transport