

Camberwell Grove Bridge Consultation

Summary report

November 2017

Version 1.02

Highways Division- Transport projects

Introduction

Camberwell Grove bridge, near the junction with McNeil Road, has been closed to motor traffic since October 2016, due to a comprehensive load assessment that determined the bridge could not support any vehicles without potential damage being caused to the structure. Repairs to the bridge are due to be completed by Network Rail as soon as the necessary track access can be arranged, which will allow the required width restriction works on top of the bridge to be constructed, and the subsequent reopening for small motor vehicles (under 3 tonne) with traffic lights allowing alternate one-way flows to accommodate both north and south-bound traffic.

Since the bridge has been closed, the council has heard from some residents who favour retaining the closure on a permanent basis, as well as some residents who wish to see it reopened as soon as possible, principally due to the impact of additional traffic on other residential roads in the area.

The temporary traffic order for the bridge closure puts an obligation on the council to reopen the bridge once repairs are finalised. Nevertheless, the council wanted to hear your views before taking a final decision on reopening the bridge.

Traffic Monitoring and context

As part of the closure the council monitored traffic volumes in the local area in order to evaluate the impact of any traffic displacements

The council collected traffic data in November 2016 and July 2017, and compared it to data from 2015, prior to the bridge closure.

Generally we found there had been an increase in traffic on the following residential roads:

- Grove Park
- Chadwick Road
- Lyndhurst Way
- Bellenden Road
- Lyndhurst Grove
- Rye Lane

On the other hand, traffic volumes had reduced on :

- Camberwell Grove
- McNeil Road
- Grove Hill Road

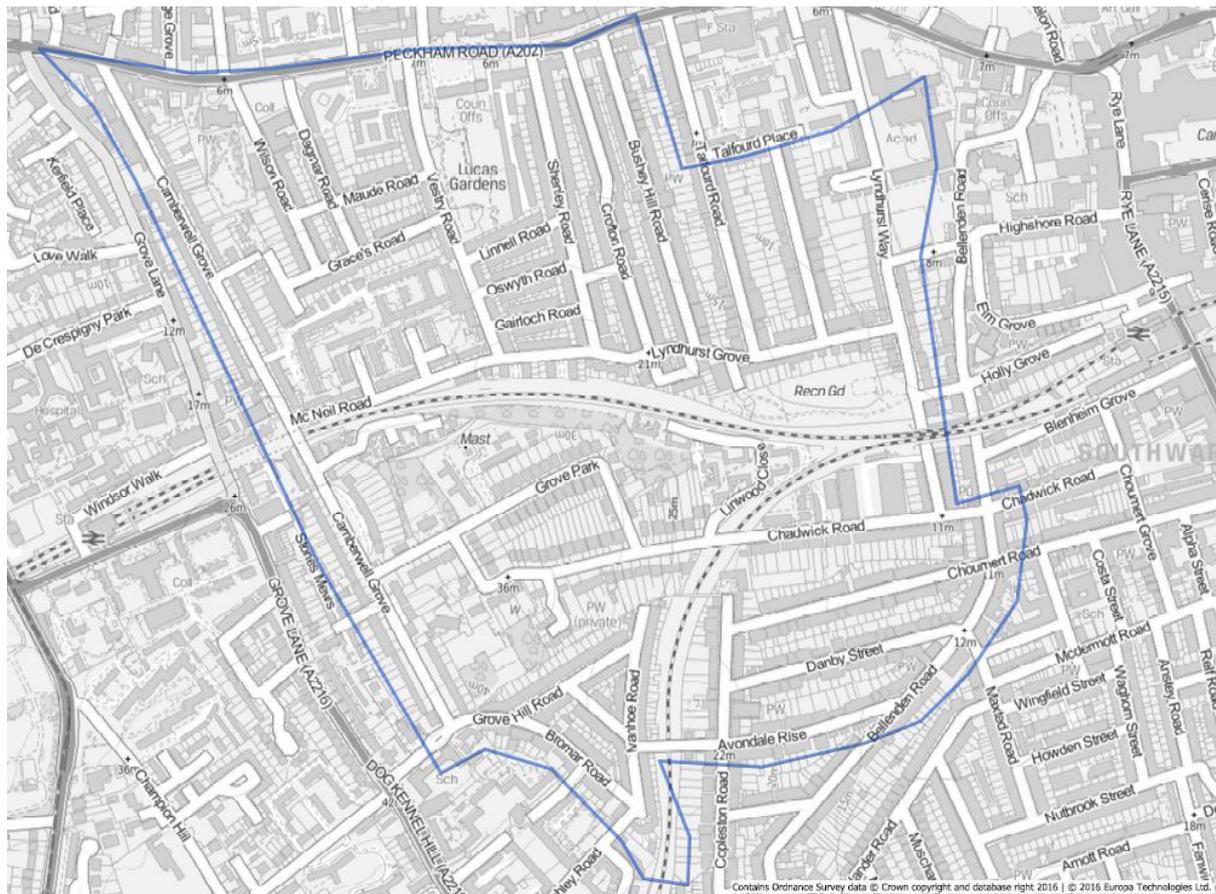
Generally there was a 15% increase in traffic volume in the area of influence compared to the 2015 baseline.

Camberwell Grove is part of cycle Quietway 7. However, the diversionary route also impacts on the proposed Southwark Spine cycle corridor. Any decision needs to consider the impact on these key cycle routes.

Consultation process

In order to find out the views of local residents and road users, before making a decision about reopening the bridge, we decided to undertake a public consultation exercise

4750 leaflets publicising the consultation were distributed on 7 October 2017. These were hand delivered to all properties in the streets marked in the map below bounded by the blue line. Whilst we had a few complaints about non-delivery, we believe that the vast majority of leaflets were successfully delivered.



An online consultation on the Southwark Council website ran from 9 October until 30 October 2017. Responses were accepted from anywhere, the respondent did not have to be resident in the area that received leaflets. Paper questionnaires were also sent out but only on request. People were invited to respond to two questions:

1. Which is your preferred option for Camberwell Grove Bridge?

Option 1: Re-open bridge to alternating one-way traffic for small motor vehicles

Option 2: Keep the bridge closed to motor traffic

2. Do you have any comments?

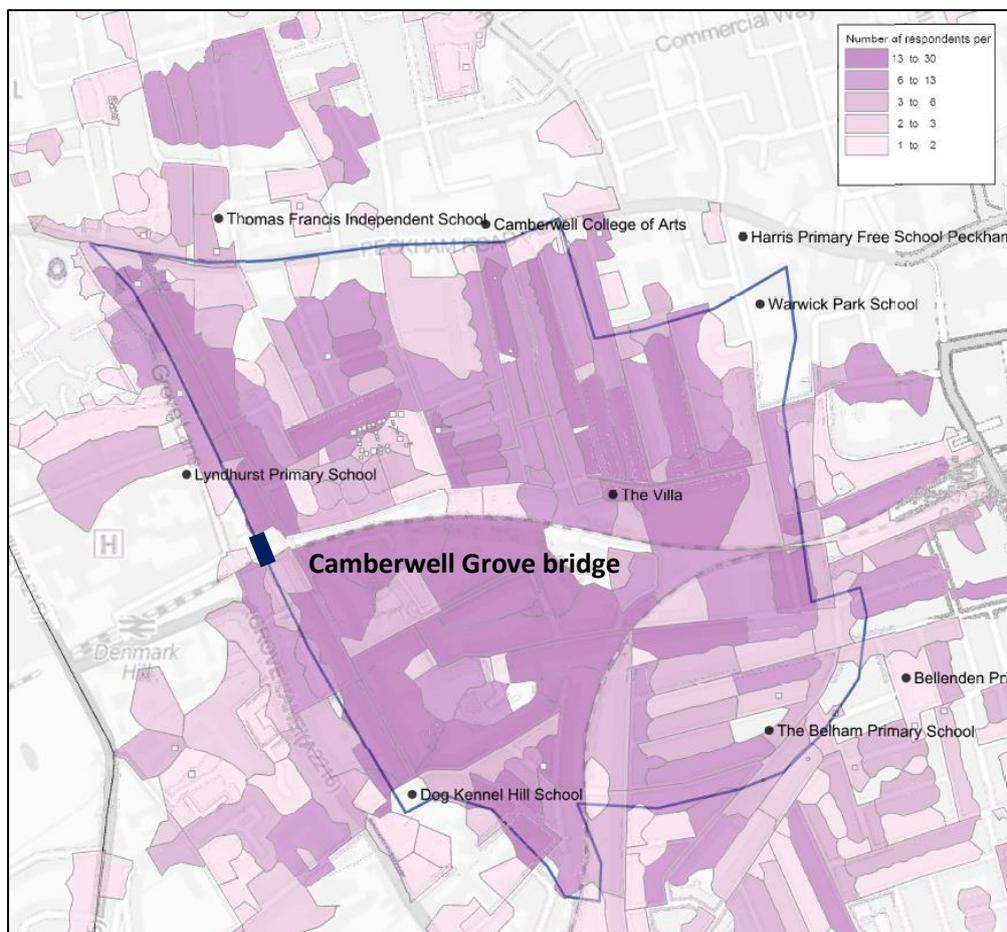
We also collected respondents' postcodes, to help understand if views differed in different locations.

Summary of consultation responses

We received 1888 responses to this consultation including 101 responses received by email. The latter were not used however in geographical analysis. 1641 questionnaire responses were identified by postcode as being from respondents within the specified consultation area (35% of the number of properties leafletted), a remarkably high number, indicating the strength of feeling around this bridge closure, and the high level of engagement of local people in issues that affect their community.

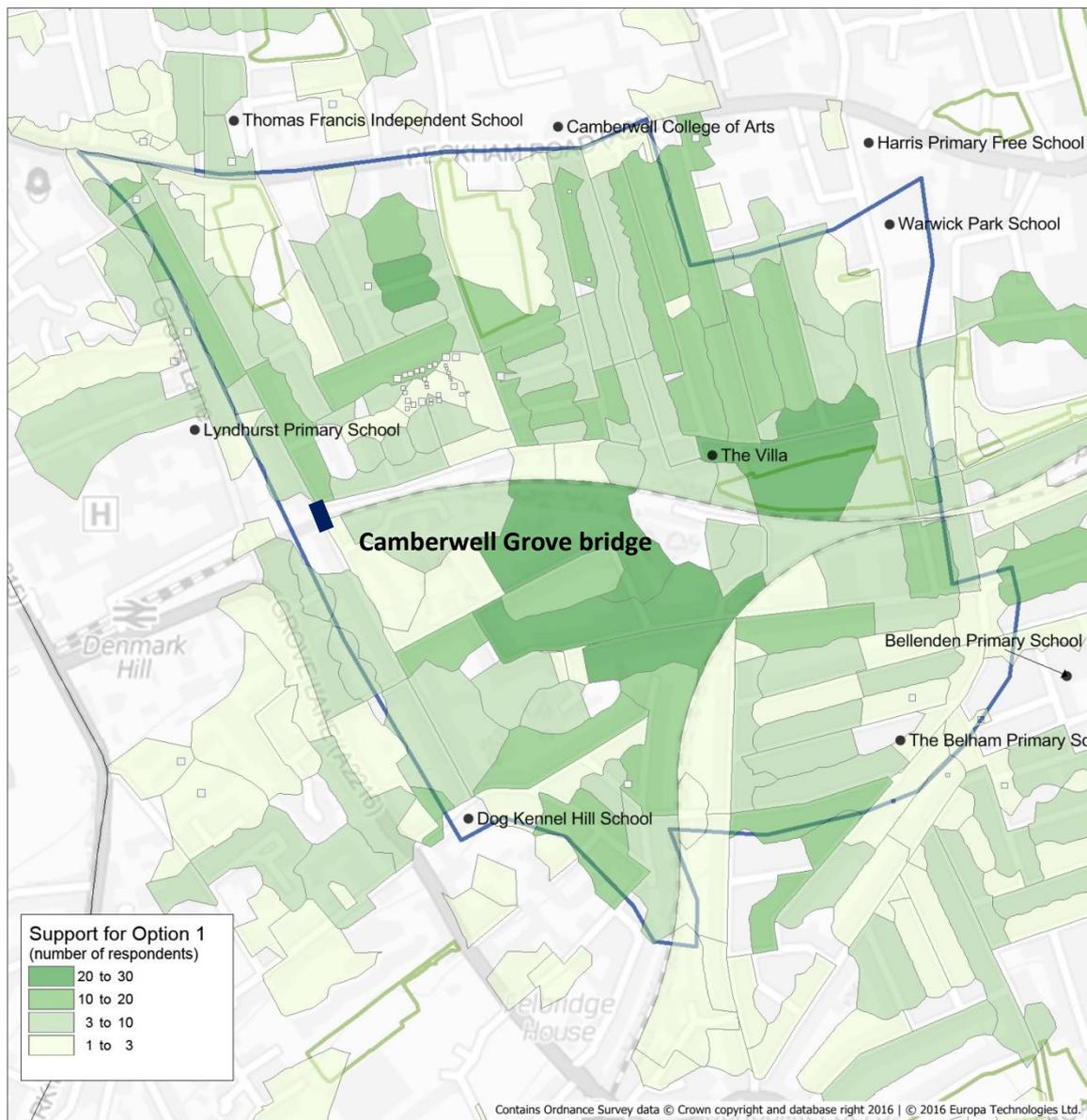
The largest number of responses was received from within the consultation area with the highest numbers in Camberwell Grove (over 180 responses), Grove Park (over 120 respondents) followed by Lyndhurst Grove (approximately 60 responses). Other roads that showed high number of respondents (approximately 30) included Shenley Road, Bushey Hill Road, Chadwick Road and Bellenden Road. Similar numbers also responded in the wider area in Adys Road to the south, and Benhill Road and Sansom Street to the north. A smaller number of respondents were also scattered throughout the borough and further afield to reflect people that worked or volunteered in the area as well as people that drove or cycled through the area.

The map below shows the concentration of responses in the area (shown by postcode area). This map is based on responses to the questionnaire only.

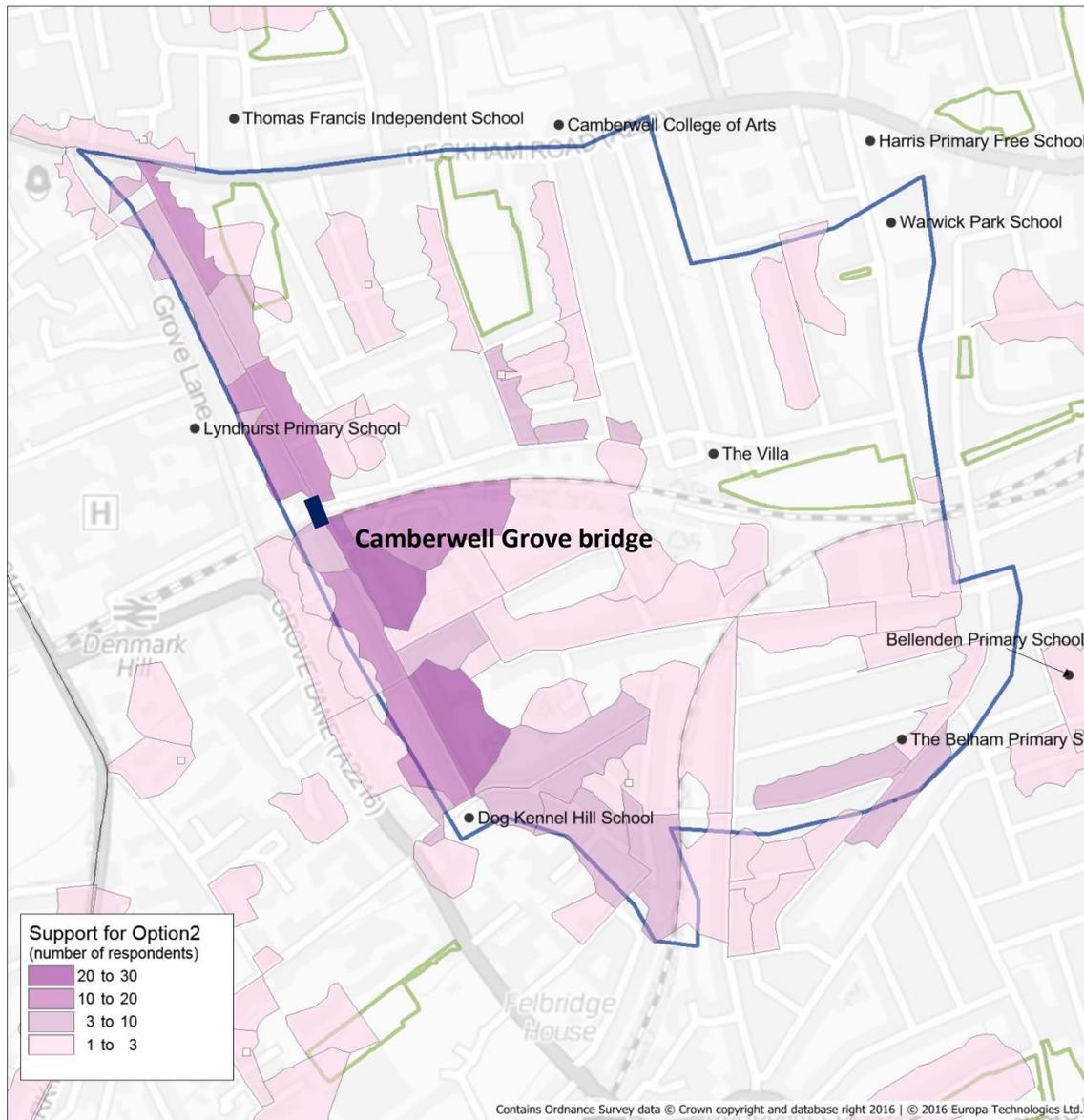


Overall, including email responses, 73% of all respondents were opposed to keeping Camberwell Grove bridge closed. Within the consultation area this figure was 75% (based on questionnaire responses). As the maps below indicate, however, there was a wide variance between the views of residents in the vicinity of Camberwell Grove, and those of some of the surrounding roads.

The map below indicates the level of support for reopening the bridge (Option 1). The darker the green the more support there was for this option. This map is based on responses to the questionnaire only.



The map below indicates the level of support for retaining the bridge closure (Option 2). The darker the purple the more support for keeping the bridge closed. This map is based on responses to the questionnaire only.



The Metropolitan Police responded to state they had no objections to either option.

We received a number of responses from organisations. All three organisations that submitted a response (Southwark Cyclists, Southwark Living Streets, and Camberwell Grove Traffic Campaign) are in favour of retaining the bridge closure. We have also included the Green Party response (also in favour of keeping the bridge closed).

Key concerns

We conducted a rigorous analysis of the free text responses to Question 2, grouping them into themes. This gave us a much fuller picture of why people responded to the options in Question 1 as they did, and also provides us with a rich source of information for any future highways improvements in the area.

Major themes that respondents raised included:

1. **Concern that the closure of Camberwell Grove bridge had led to increases in traffic, noise and pollution on a number of surrounding roads. Over one third of all respondents raised this kind of concern.**

“Your data on changes in traffic flow does not accord with our horrible experience since closure which is of traffic racing up and down Lyndhurst Grove, and accelerating past our house going up the hill, thereby belching more noxious fumes.”

2. **Concern that the closure of Camberwell Grove bridge meant that some drivers, including emergency services, were having to take major detours and longer routes.**

“Please open this bridge - many cars are undertaking massive detours increasing pollution, noise, traffic and travel times markedly through the area, including past the villa primary school.”

“In the longer term, there may be a case for closing Camberwell Grove to through traffic as part of a larger scheme for preventing through traffic using all the small local roads as short cuts.”

3. **Appreciation for the positive local impacts of the closure, and a view that these should be extended to other roads, with further closures as part of a wider traffic management plan for the area.**
4. **Concern about safety issues and air pollution on a number of surrounding roads, particularly around schools on Lyndhurst Way/Bellenden Road.**

“These roads are densely parked so that it is often impossible to see what is coming. People are stressed and angry because the route is difficult and they tend to drive more aggressively as a result. Pedestrians and cyclists are at even greater risk, as drivers are concentrating on zipping through narrow, congested places quickly before they can be blocked in.”

5. **Appreciation of the improvements in traffic, air quality and road noise on Camberwell Grove itself.**

“This has made the area around the bridge much more pleasant for walking and cycling. Also, I note that there has been an overall reduction in motor traffic. This is surely a good thing in times of air pollution and efforts to curb it.”

A number of respondents, including local organisations and Southwark Cyclists, highlighted the health benefits of the closure, and urged that it should be considered in the context of Southwark's commitment to supporting Healthy Streets, and in particular the benefits to cyclists and pedestrians from Quietway 7.

“I recommend a SoapBox derby from the closed bridge down to the bottom of the hill! It would be a great event, and would raise money for charity!”

Many respondents recognised the benefits, in terms of reduced traffic, pollution and noise, and increased safety, on Camberwell Grove itself. However, many of those not living on the road felt that these benefits were not equally shared, and that it was not fair to improve road conditions for one group of residents at the expense of another.

Some respondents, who preferred the option to keep the bridge closed to traffic but recognised that it may need to be reopened, suggested that we should consider other

“The bridge should be permanently closed. This should be shortly followed by a more holistic plan for additional filtering in the area to stop all rat-running through residential streets.”

approaches to controlling and improving traffic flow in the area, rather than just reverting to the situation before the closure. There was a wider recognition that traffic in the area had been a problem even before the closure.

Many residents in the vicinity of Camberwell Grove recognised that the benefits realised by the road closure could be extended to other streets. Overall a large proportion of respondents wanted to see a holistic approach to traffic in the area.

““For what has been a progressive borough as regards active travel in the past decade, this lack of desire to work towards a wide-area solution that benefits all residents and instead to take a short-term view of the who are winners and losers feels extremely retrograde.”

Respondents made a whole range of suggestions about the kinds of changes that could help improve traffic flow for the whole area. Some of these suggestions are included in the appendix.

Recommendations and next steps

It is clear from this consultation that the temporary closure of Camberwell Grove bridge has raised a number of very important issues about road use in this area. Many residents of Camberwell Grove itself, as well as many cyclists and some other road users, have clearly welcomed the closure, the quieter street and the opportunities for safer, cleaner journeys that it has brought. Nonetheless, these views need to be seen in the context of a very large proportion of people in the wider area wishing to see the bridge reopen, principally because of the impact of diverted traffic on other residential roads in the area.

Support for retaining the closure because of Camberwell Grove's status as a Quietway cycle route also has to be seen in the context of the adverse impact on other cycle routes in the area such as the Southwark Spine.

The benefits experienced by residents of Camberwell Grove would appear to be ones that many others in the wider area would wish to share. However, there is no quick fix to this. Our recommendation is therefore that, subject to funding being found from external sources such as TfL, a longer term holistic study of the wider area is commissioned to develop a liveable neighbourhood of healthy streets, which would allow a larger proportion of local residents to lead healthy active lifestyles and suffer from less through traffic and poor air quality.

Given the length of time any such study would take to come to fruition, in the short term, it is clear that it would not be fair on the residents of adjacent streets, given the increase in traffic volumes, and issues of pollution, noise and safety brought by the closure of the bridge, to maintain the closure once the bridge can be safely reopened.

The repairs on the bridge are tentatively planned to be carried out by Network Rail by mid-February. The bridge will only be opened once substantive works are carried out on top of the bridge to ensure the weight restriction is not exceeded. Such works are expected to take four to six weeks. The opening of the bridge is therefore expected to occur late March 2018 in a best-case scenario. We will ask the local community for feedback into the layout on top of Camberwell Grove bridge to ensure a safer and more pleasant environment in line with the Mayor's Healthy Streets approach.

Short term recommendation: re-open Camberwell Grove bridge, with input from the local community on improvements to the street environment.

Medium term recommendation: commission holistic study of the wider area, taking into account community concerns and aspirations through continued engagement. We envisage this will take three years. Although currently unfunded, we've had in principle support from the mayors' walking and cycling commissioner to undertake a wider area study. Future plans for the wider area will rely on securing such funding.

Appendices

Suggestions for improvements in Camberwell Grove

- Change the configuration of the bridge when reopened - it is constantly backlogged as the turning circle is far too tight and cars collide with the concrete barriers.
- Wider one-way treatment around Bellenden Road should be considered to reduce through traffic in the shopping area
- Signalling and traffic planning around Camberwell Green should be improved so that drivers (usually non-residents who are trying to cut through from Zone 1 towards the South Circular) do not use quiet residential roads in the area. Traffic should be encouraged to use alternative routes (e.g. past Denmark Hill station/Kings College hospital).
- Put traffic calming measures in to prevent speeding as 20mph limit regularly abused. In particular, improve the speed bumps on Chadwick Road – they are totally ineffectual, it's quite easy to drive over them in excess of 40 mph.
- Explore closing Camberwell Grove at the railway bridge and at the same time closing Grove Park and Chadwick Road at the railway bridge where the two join.
- Measures should be used to encourage motor traffic to use the A202 and not Lyndhurst Grove. This could be in the form of banned turns or point closures to prevent rat running on Lyndhurst Grove.
- Increasing direction flow restrictions on other roads with the aim of keeping motorists who do not need to enter the zone for access on the main roads which are better suited to them
- Either proper barriers or adequate signage at both ends of Camberwell Grove to ensure that large motor vehicles are no longer able to access Camberwell Grove.
- Tighten the junction of Camberwell Grove and Camberwell Church St - this is scary to cycle past.
- Close the road opposite Lyndhurst nursery, between Bushy Hill and Telford roads.
- Consider changing the Grove Lane traffic flow. This could be reworked to the benefit of surrounding streets without placing undue pressure on Grove Lane residents.
- Add zebra crossing down the bottom of Camberwell Grove as many children going to the Lyndhurst school have nowhere to cross this road safely.
- A pelican crossing should be added at the T-junction of Champion Hill to enhance the safety of pedestrians walking to Sainsbury's and children attending either Bessemer or Dog Kennel Hill school.
- Consider shutting the small streets around Bellenden road to discourage the use of the area as a cut through from Peckham Rye to Lyndhurst way/Camberwell Grove.
- Close Lyndhurst Grove at its junction with McNeil Road to stop the whole area being a rat run.
- The bridge should be landscaped with plants, flowers and public fencing as a community area. Local schools could be invited to design sculptures for the space.
- Allow cars coming along Camberwell New Road from the Oval in the direction of Peckham to make a right turn at Camberwell Green on to Denmark Hill. This would reduce traffic on Camberwell Grove and Grove Hill Road.
- A right turn from Grove Hill Road on to Grove Lane at the Dog Kennel Hill traffic lights should be permitted.
- Champion Hill should become one way with significant additional street management additions
- Cyclists would be better served by a solid white line crawler lane up the hill, or by removing parking from the western side of the hill
- The speed bumps going up the hill are poorly formed and dangerous for cyclists when they are pushed to the side of the road by inconsiderate drivers.
- Stop drivers cutting corners on the corner of champion hill.
- Prosecute people who illegally block the crawler lane on Denmark Hill.
- Stop the police parking on double yellows outside the hospital in non emergency situations.

Living Streets response

As Chair of the voluntary organisation, Southwark Living Streets which represents pedestrian concerns, I am responding to your consultation to say that we think that the bridge should remain closed to vehicle traffic for the following reasons.

The bridge closure has liberated Camberwell Grove from the stranglehold of heavy vehicular traffic and has significantly improved the quality of the public realm for pedestrians. This is particularly important as many parents and children use the street daily - there are two schools and a nursery on it. It is also an important commuter walking route to Denmark Hill Station and local bus services.

If the bridge is reopened then the volume of traffic in Camberwell Grove will return to what is an unacceptably high level for a residential street. The carriageway is too narrow for any larger vehicles to pass comfortably and, with wider vehicles driving part on the pavement, snarl ups are common resulting in frequent road rage and bad language. Pedestrians will be put at risk.

The danger of traffic to pedestrians will increase if the bridge is reopened as there will be more rat-running through the area by increasing the number of routes available. This runs against Southwark Council's policies of traffic reduction and 'Liveable Neighbourhoods'. Pollution levels are of course linked to the volume of traffic so will inevitably increase with an increase in traffic, and it will be pedestrians who will be breathing it in. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that Camberwell Grove is on a hill and vehicles will produce more pollution when climbing it, particularly when the traffic is stop and start. Also past experience is that when the bridge traffic lights are in operation that substantial traffic queues form on the bridge, again adding to the poor air quality experienced by pedestrians.

The cycle route Quietway QW7 extends along Camberwell Grove over the bridge and is intended to provide a low traffic route for cyclists. Keeping vehicle traffic volumes low is crucial to their safety and in reducing the possibilities of cyclist/pedestrian altercations as everyone tries to avoid danger. The southern part of Camberwell Grove is a particularly significant part of the QW7 route as no measures have been introduced to reduce the danger to people cycling in spite of the original recommendations for area-wide traffic reduction policies such as point closures of Camberwell Grove and Champion Hill in order to keep traffic volumes at below 2,000 PCUs day – the maximum level if segregation is not to be considered. The danger on Camberwell Grove is exacerbated by the hill and the large differential between the speeds of people cycling southbound and motor vehicles. Again, keeping volumes low (e.g. by the closure) will help to ensure that the Quietway is compliant with TfL design standards.

Keeping vehicle traffic as low as possible in this residential area is in line with Southwark's Kerbside Strategy and Sadiq Khan's Healthy Streets and Transport Policies for London. While there will be some migration of vehicular journeys to surrounding roads with this closure it puts one of the key building blocks of a low traffic neighbourhood in place and can be a starting point for other future measures which start to reduce traffic volumes in the South Camberwell, West Peckham and Bellenden Road areas all of which can begin to create a fairer balance between the needs of those who are driving and those who are cycling, walking and using public transport. The longer-term aim is to give priority to improve our streets for residents, pedestrians and cyclists. Keeping Camberwell Grove Bridge closed is an important start to show what can be achieved in Southwark in relation to the Health Street indicators and the emerging Mayor's Transport Strategy objectives.

Camberwell Grove Traffic Campaign response

Response of Camberwell Grove Traffic Campaign to Southwark Council Camberwell Grove Bridge Consultation

About Us

The Camberwell Grove Traffic Campaign (CGTC) was formed in response to the first closure of Camberwell Grove railway bridge ten years ago. Through-traffic had been diverted into Camberwell Grove because of local road closures and other traffic control measures carried out by Southwark Council, which resulted in unacceptably high traffic levels and a consequent failure of the bridge. The re-opening of the bridge with alternate one-way working and temporary traffic lights was a poor compromise which did not solve the fundamental problem of through-traffic in the local area. This has been demonstrated by the second bridge failure. The CGTC has a very large number of supporters, not just in Camberwell Grove but in the entire locality, because people can see that the problem of through-traffic needs a community wide approach to improve the quality of life in the residential streets.

The Consultation

CGTC favours option 2 - to keep the bridge closed.

This is better than option 1 which in broad terms will:

- (a) re-introduce unacceptably high levels of through-traffic, and
- (b) will not satisfactorily address the concerns of residents on the current diversion route and elsewhere in the locality.

The consequences of the two options will be discussed in more detail.

CGTC considers that option 2 is not enough, and more needs to be done to divert through-traffic from our local residential streets onto the main roads, as discussed in more detail below.

Option 2

The bridge closure has liberated Camberwell Grove from the stranglehold of heavy vehicular traffic and use of the street has been democratised, notably for:

1. Pedestrians including (but not limited to)
 - (a) Residents
 - (b) Children walking to school (Lyndhurst School, Dog Kennel Hill School and Camberwell Day Nursery)
 - (c) Children walking in groups from Dog Kennel Hill School to the Camberwell Swimming Baths
 - (c) Commuters walking to Denmark Hill station and local bus services, and
 - (d) Disabled persons on buggies.
2. Cycling

Quietway 7 (QW7) extends along Camberwell Grove over the bridge and is intended to provide a low traffic route for cyclists. The very heavy through-traffic that will occur with option 1 would make QW7 untenable whereas with the closure of option 2, the Quietway can proceed.

3. Pollution levels

Pollution levels have decreased and will remain lower with option 2. Substantial traffic queues have in the past formed at the traffic lights on the bridge, causing substantial air pollution. The pollution would be re-introduced by option 1.

Why spend money to throw away all of these desirable attributes of the bridge closure? It would be better to spend funds to deal with the bigger picture of through-traffic for the entire area.

Option 1

Reopening the bridge for alternate, one-way working has the following disadvantages:

1. The two significant rat runs through Camberwell Grove would be reopened, whereas this traffic should be directed onto the main roads. It will be recalled that the traffic previously on Camberwell Grove was at a very high level of around 4000 vehicles per day – a level corresponding to a main road and inappropriate for a residential street. Alternative routes through residential streets have in the past been closed off leaving Camberwell Grove as the main alternative. Examples of closed streets are Grove Lane (north), Daneville Road, Windsor Walk, Copleston Road, Oglander Road and Ondine Road, Rye Lane. High levels of through-traffic will therefore be channelled through Camberwell Grove and its open bridge, if option 1 is adopted.

2. Camberwell Grove is not suitable for the high volume of traffic that would use it under option 1. Previous experience has shown that with the bridge open to alternate one way working, the following issues arise:

a. Motor traffic has priority.

b. The carriageway south of the bridge is too narrow for any vehicle larger than a small car to pass, so wider vehicles ride part on the pavement and snarl ups are frequent. Pedestrians are put at risk. There is no space for cyclists.

c. There are no satisfactory pedestrian crossing points for Camberwell Grove. Build outs and crossing ramps are needed where Camberwell Grove meets the pathways at Canning Cross, Mary Boast Walk and the path to St Giles Churchyard, and the junctions with Camberwell Church Street, Grove Park and Grove Hill Road. Presently, pedestrians often have to cross from between parked cars, which is dangerous because there is no view of vehicles or cyclists. Hundreds of small children must cross Camberwell Grove on their way to school - some with parents pushing buggies and some on their own. This is an accident waiting to happen. Less spritely pedestrians also have problems.

3. Bridge design problems for option 1.

a) Traffic will continue to use the currently designated bridge diversion route and so the objections from residents along that route will not be met by opening the bridge. This is because the proposed design is stated to have a narrower one-way lane over the bridge than before. Therefore, lorries and even more vans and other large vehicles than before will be routed on the current diversionary route for the bridge closure. This will continue to cause problems in streets on the diversion route such as Lyndhurst Way which is itself narrow,

Chadwick Road and Grove Park and elsewhere where traffic has increased, such as Bellenden Road and Lyndhurst Grove.

b) Also, there is no provision for wide vehicles that cannot traverse the bridge, to turn round and follow the diversion route. This has caused significant chaos above the bridge when it was previously open to alternate one way working. There is no space for a turning circle so private service roads in Grovelands Close and Grove Crescent have been used, which is dangerous and caused extreme congestion.

c) The narrow bridge signage at the top of Camberwell Grove did not work well and some kind of physical restriction or access only signs are needed to prevent large vehicles from entering the Grove and then producing a road block when they find that they cannot traverse the narrow bridge.

d) The configuration of the cycle lane across the bridge has hitherto produced a dangerous conflict between motor vehicles travelling uphill over the bridge and cyclists travelling up and down at this point. The downhill cyclists had to pass to the right of the traffic tailback, waiting at a red signal, to reach their refuge at the front of the queue as they could not access the narrow cycle lane by the kerb. Uphill vehicles exiting the traffic lane on the bridge must then veer from right to the left of the road across the path of these cyclists. The same vehicles were then in conflict with cyclists from the uphill cycle lane on the left side of the bridge. The requirement for downhill cyclists to switch from the middle of the road downhill to enter the refuge ahead of the queue, or to mix in the bridge lane for motor vehicle traffic, was very dangerous. It forced them to divert to the uphill cycle lane or use the pavement.

e) Traffic lights

Camberwell Grove is a beautiful Georgian street of historic interest and the visual impact of the lights is hideous. There must be a better answer. Also, the lights do not provide adequate priority to pedestrians, particularly schoolchildren walking from McNeil Road across Camberwell Grove to Lyndhurst School. There was a 5 second only crossing time across Camberwell Grove below McNeil Road, where every day more than a hundred small children and parents cross to school. There are no phases for pedestrians crossing McNeil Road. Here it is difficult to see where the traffic is coming from as the traffic lights in Camberwell Grove cannot be seen.

The busiest crossing places for pedestrians in the Grove are the passage way from Canning Cross where traffic speeds to beat the traffic lights and at McNeil Road through the pathway to public transport, schools and Kings College Hospital.

The lights also cause a queue of idling, polluting traffic. The hold ups and traffic struggling through the narrow lane over the bridge, in the past, resulted in frequent road rage, hooting and bad language. This badly affected residents alongside the bridge, particularly in the flats alongside the traffic lane and queues at the lights.

All these issues would be re-introduced by option 1.

Diverting through-traffic onto the main roads

Southwark Council needs to address how to keep main road traffic out of the residential streets and back onto the main roads. Keeping Camberwell Grove bridge closed is a helpful first step, but further traffic changes will be needed.

Traffic bypassing Denmark Hill from the junction at Camberwell Green can largely be kept out by keeping the bridge closed. Also, with the bridge closed, traffic between Peckham and Dog Kennel Hill junction can no longer use McNeil Road as the way through.

The bridge closure has reduced traffic in some roads such as Grove Hill Road and McNeil Road. Some roads on the diversion route have seen more traffic but the traffic counts do not seem to add up to all the traffic being diverted from Camberwell Grove.

To restrict non-local through-traffic across the area is the main issue that must be addressed, that is, how to exclude main road traffic from our residential roads. We can offer suggestions if this would be helpful. Moreover, we believe that Southwark's Highway traffic engineers are more than capable of designing traffic schemes to exclude non-local traffic, making through-routes in all our residential roads slow and unattractive. The closure of the bridge and subsequent traffic monitoring has shown where these measures should be applied.

This has been achieved in other places such as in Hackney (<http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/news-opinion/how-hackney-became-london-s-most-liveable-borough>) and Van Gogh Walk (<http://www.vangoghwalk.org/>).

This is in line with Southwark's Kerbside Strategy and Sadiq Khan's Healthy Streets and Transport Policies for London. The aim is to give priority to improve our streets for residents, pedestrians and cyclists. Keeping Camberwell Grove bridge closed is a good start to show what can be achieved in Southwark.

Southwark Green Party's response

We support all Southwark residents who want fewer cars and trucks passing through their streets. Long-distance motor traffic through Southwark should be confined to main roads, not encouraged to use residential streets. This is essential to make residential streets safe for walking and cycling. And being able to make short journeys by foot and bike instead of car is essential for cutting air pollution - a public health emergency.

We call for a robust plan from Southwark Council to make streets right across Camberwell and Peckham safer and quieter. Quietway 7

We support the introduction of Quietways – convenient routes off main roads, suitable for people of all ages and abilities to cycle. Quietways also improve conditions for pedestrians, with changes like better crossings and wider footpaths. Reducing motor traffic speeds and reducing the number of vehicles passing through makes streets safer to cross. Local air and noise pollution is reduced too.

Quietway 1 from Waterloo to Greenwich has been a huge success with lots of people changing the way they travel to work and school. There has been a 56% increase in the number of people cycling, thanks to some fairly small interventions like signs and safer crossings.

Southwark has funding from Transport for London to create Quietway 7 from Elephant to Dulwich. Camberwell Grove is a key part of Quietway 7. But the route will only qualify as a Quietway if motor traffic is controlled on Camberwell Grove.

When motor traffic was permitted to drive straight through Camberwell Grove, the steep hill felt dangerous and intimidating to cycle at busy times: drivers passed dangerously close, tailgated and threatened cyclists.

Keeping Camberwell Grove in two sections for motor traffic will allow more children to walk and cycle to school, whether independently or accompanied, and more local people to cycle to work, as well as making more local shopping and social trips by bike.

For all our health

Expert advice from air pollution researchers at King's College London states that the only way we can reduce our immediate exposure to air pollution is to choose quiet routes. On high pollution days, children and older people, those with heart and lung problems are officially advised to stick to back streets.

Southwark Green Party monitoring in spring 2017 showed that nitrogen dioxide levels on Camberwell Grove are close to the legal maximum – even when the bridge was closed. If through traffic is permitted, with cars queuing on the hill and trucks doing U-turns when drivers realise they can't get through, there will be no safe, low pollution route to choose.

Don't pit one street against another - design all our streets for living

Our support for Quietways is in the first place about the hundreds of children who walk along or across Camberwell Grove to Lyndhurst and Dog Kennel Hill primary schools every day. It's about the older children who will be able to walk or cycle to school independently when the Quietway is finished. And about the many people living in surrounding areas who will be able to cycle safely to and from local shops, Burgess Park, Dulwich Park and central London. This will benefit us all.

We note that information about the consultation has only been delivered to Camberwell Grove itself and to an area to the east of the road. This leaves out people who live close to Camberwell Grove - to the south, on the East Dulwich and Champion Hill estates, or to the north in the streets around Brunswick Park - who could use the road as a north-south link on foot or bike. We feel that there is a risk that this definition of the consultation area could weight the consultation towards car-owners rather than people who primarily use foot or bike now, or could do in the future if Quietway 7 is completed successfully. We ask the council to consider the mobility and health of all local residents in weighing the results of the consultation.

We don't believe the council should spend more than £1million in public funds to strengthen the bridge to allow vehicles of more than 3 tonnes to drive through (something some local car owners have been calling for). This won't improve safety or air pollution anywhere in the surrounding area. The only answer is to make sure heavy good vehicles and vans crossing London use main roads not residential roads.

We don't support the idea of traffic lights allowing cars through in one direction at a time (as proposed in the council consultation). It sounds like a compromise but it wouldn't reduce motor traffic on neighbouring streets and it would create a big hole in the Quietway 7 route. This section would become too dangerous for children to ride independently, and would very probably have illegal levels of air pollution.

We call for Quietway 7 to be completed to the highest standards so that it enables people of all ages to choose to make short journeys by bike or on foot in confidence and safety.

Southwark Cyclists' response to Camberwell Grove Bridge consultation

Southwark Cyclists believes the decision on Camberwell Grove is a litmus test for the approach in Southwark to deliver healthy streets. This is the [flagship policy the Mayor of London](#) announced this summer to significantly increase physically active travel and improve air quality, through reducing car trips by 3 million per day. A permanent closure is essential, both to encourage a wider range of people to cycle but also to start to bring about a reduction of motor traffic on residential streets across Peckham, Camberwell and Dulwich.

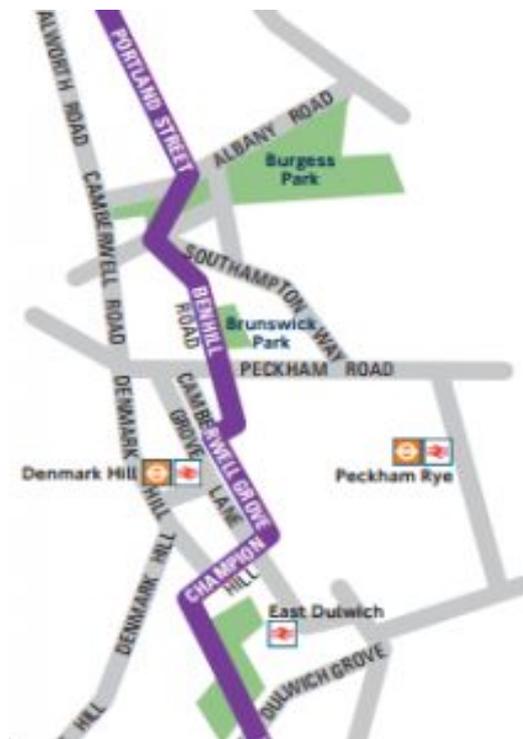
Our response covers the following issues:

1. Why continued closure of the bridge to motor vehicles is essential for a high quality, safe Quietway 7 - a route that encourages all ages and abilities to cycle
2. How other progressive London boroughs are balancing delivery of healthy streets with residents' concerns
3. The fundamental flaws of the consultation process and in particular the traffic data
4. Whether the reopening proposal is at all viable in the medium term
5. Our vision for Camberwell Grove as catalyst for a growing network of healthy streets

Because of the wider implications of this decision for public health, children and schools, equalities and business, we believe that the full Cabinet ought to take the decision whether to reopen the bridge or not.

Besides this response, Southwark Cyclists has published a [response to common issues raised](#), such as were contained in a leaflet distributed to most households in the area. Because the consultation materials were unclear and inadequate (as detailed below), a number of factual inaccuracies and misrepresentations have arisen, for example that Southwark Council is ignoring a legal duty to reopen the bridge. We are concerned these may have reduced public support for retaining the closure.

1. Continued closure essential for a successful Quietway 7



Southwark is currently investing £2m in cycle Quietway 7, which will run between Crystal Palace and Borough via Camberwell Grove, to encourage all abilities and ages to cycle. The nearest cycle route suitable for all ages to the west is Quietway 5, which is on the other side of Clapham. Closer to home in the last couple of years, a local resident and a NHS worker have lost their lives cycling on the Denmark Hill - Walworth Road corridor, tragic reminders of the consequences of failing to provide safe space for cycling.

Although cycling has continued to increase in Southwark, women, children, older people, those with BAME backgrounds and people with disabilities remain very underrepresented. That's why Southwark Cyclists was so delighted in 2015 to welcome the commitments made by Southwark Council in its award winning Southwark Cycling Strategy. In particular commitments to make cycling for everyone (principle 3) and for

Southwark to be the best cycling borough in London.

Before October 2016, Camberwell Grove suffered from heavy traffic flows, particularly during peak hours. It was simply not an inviting place to cycle for people with experience, let alone those who are particularly vulnerable, such as school children. Motor traffic flows were significantly above the requirements set in the London Cycling Design Standards (LCDS) as offering a suitable Cycling Level of Service (see chapters 2 & 4). Indeed the November 2016 decision to approve Quietway 7 highlighted the need for further motor traffic reduction along Camberwell Grove.

The unplanned closure since has transformed the street. There simply is no other practical way besides retaining it to make this Quietway a safe, high quality route. Denmark Hill is too heavily trafficked as an alternative link from the Green Dale path, while the width of Camberwell Grove precludes segregated facilities.

If the closure were to be removed, the problems would return from day one and the benefits of public investment in Quietway 7 would be severely limited by effectively a 'weakest link'. Coming around the time that major improvements on this route are about to be completed, the proposed timing of the bridge reopening could not be worse, negating the benefits of the major investment in the Quietway whether of funding or staff time. Crucially it would be the most vulnerable and those with the greatest health needs to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives, who would be most excluded from cycling along the new route.

2. How other progressive London boroughs have balanced delivery of healthy streets with residents' concerns

On 27 October 2017 [Hackney confirmed](#) it will be keeping trial road closures and even adding to them to improve a new cycle route, despite a small majority of local residents opposing them. It stated that while the 'closures have proved controversial...the Council feels that the closures have succeeded in reducing traffic on the cycle route and improving air quality and road safety near the schools'. While acknowledging the local concerns, Hackney believes that many of these can be reduced by mitigation and that there is no other practical way it can deliver on its public health and sustainable travel commitments, which respond to the needs of the majority of the borough.

This October, Camden is defending its experimental filtering of motor traffic around Tavistock Place at public inquiry. Camden believes the scheme's benefits in reducing motor traffic and air pollution while improving walking and cycling for all are worth standing up for against vocal opposition lobby. Its cabinet member for transport noted 'it was vitally important to focus on the equalities issues that were at the heart of creating liveable streets'.

Waltham Forest has undertaken the most ambitious set of measures as part of its 'Mini Holland' scheme. While residents were very much split in the consultation phases, the scheme has proved a major success and cut motor traffic overall. This October the scheme has taken the latest in a series of awards and a stream of visitors from the UK and beyond come to see the transformation of its streets and communities.

All these cases show again and again that delivering healthy streets is not easy. Local residents will have their concerns, not least where sudden changes to traffic flows in places they may have lived in for many years. These concerns will need to be listened to and responded to carefully. But if there is to be progress delivering a shift in the way we travel and improvements to the air we breath, indeed progress meeting legal duties, hard decisions cannot be dodged.

3. The fundamental flaws of the consultation process, in particular the traffic data

Southwark Cyclists are very concerned that the consultation materials presented the issue as simply between different groups of residents, when the decision has major strategic implications for cycling and through it how the borough tackles obesity, air quality and congestion, for which it has some of the worst indicators of any local authority in the country.

In order for the consultation process to be fair, consultees need to be able to provide informed comment to proposals. Southwark has legal duties that are very relevant to this consultation, such as:

- Public Health duties (Health & Social Care Act 2012)
- Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)

- Air Quality limit values (Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010)

The Southwark Cycling Strategy (2015) and Southwark Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan (2017) made important commitments to seek to respond to these duties by increasing cycling, yet no mention was made in the consultation materials of them.

While residents have had a chance to vent their feelings, informed comment was impossible in this consultation as the following information was absent:

a) Missing information about Southwark Spine consultation

Some of the greatest concerns about the bridge closure relate to displacement of motor traffic onto Bellenden and Lyndhurst Roads. Consultation on a traffic scheme, as part of plans for the Southwark Spine cycle route for these streets is understood to be imminent. The interplay of these proposals and the current consultation is clearly highly material, indeed previous communications from Southwark have highlighted the synergies.

b) Missing designation of Quietway 7

There was no information at all in the consultation materials to explain that Camberwell Grove forms part of Quietway 7 and Southwark policies regarding making cycling accessible to all. This is particularly concerning as this was the section of Quietway 7 for which there was no consultation previously. Consultees should have also been informed that the imminent completion of the Quietway could be expected to significantly increase cycling levels, as much as 50% in a year based on experience of Quietway 1.

c) Changes to weight and width restrictions if bridge reopens

The consultation materials fail to mention that the reopening would greater limits on motor vehicles than before the closure, rather than simply reopening as before. This could prevent as much as a fifth of motor traffic using the bridge, responsible for as much as a quarter of air pollution (adjusted LAEI 2013 figures).

d) Vehicle flow information

The consultation data suggests there have been significant changes - a 15% increase - but does not explain how this may have impacted on - or indeed arisen from - the bridge closure. It is therefore unclear how traffic changes on individual streets have been affected by changes in background flows versus being caused by traffic displacement.

Some residents have sought to suggest that the data provided is inaccurate, since traffic conditions during the survey weeks may not be representative. On investigation, no evidence of this was found and the Confidence Interval is very high given the sample size of about 200,000 vehicles over 5% of the period since the bridge was closed.

By contrast, we have serious doubts about the ability to make any informed conclusions about displacement from the consultation materials, since it appears to count pedal cycles and motor vehicles together. This was our conclusion having comparing Southwark data with open data from DfT (Table 1), which suggests that increases in cycling are largely responsible for the reported increase in traffic flows. For instance DfT counts on Rye Lane

provide a similar daily flow figure to Southwark’s count but clarify that 49% of the approximately 7,000 vehicles per day are pedal cycles (NB cycles are classed in law and by DfT statistics as vehicles). By contrast about 9% of vehicles on the Denmark Hill corridor are cycles: the large difference in traffic composition on different streets hinders generalisations.

DfT data for some major roads in the area suggest about a 15% increase in cycle flows in the last year compared to about a 1% increase in motor traffic. In particular the national data shows 36% higher cycling than forecast on Camberwell Church Street, a similar sized increase on Old Kent Road, but 2.5 times higher on Blackfriars Road. What seems to be happening is that very significant increases on new sections of cycle superhighway are leading to still significant increases in commuting cycling some distance away on the corridors leading to those upgraded routes.

Southwark count location	DfT : code & location if different location but same route	Southwark	DfT
Rye Lane (Peckham Rye station) - RA20	86015 - same	6298 (2016) 7423 (2017)	3555 pedal cycles (49%) 3739 motor vehicles Total: 7249 (2016)
Grove Vale (East Dulwich station) - RA13	57611: corner of Champion Park	19684 (2016) 19306 (2017)	1030 pc (9%) 11859 mv Total: 12889 NB estimate

Table 1: comparison of Southwark & [DfT traffic count data](#)

Without the traffic data broken down into transport modes, it is not possible to understand how much motor traffic flows have changed on individual streets. Nor is it possible to compare the changes in this area with the wider changes across inner London resulting from increased travel by Uber and internet deliveries. Nor is it possible to assess how cycle flows have been affected by a reduction in motor traffic on the Quietway. The deficiencies in the information provided fundamentally change all the assumptions and potential conclusions.

4. Whether the reopening proposal is at all viable in the medium term

Given the continuing structural weaknesses of the bridge, which are uneconomic to remove, the reopening option seeks to safeguard the bridge by significantly reducing the weight restriction from 7.5 to 3t, a non-standard limit. It is intended this would be made self-enforcing through narrowing the carriageway each side from 7'2 (2.18m) to 6'6 (1.98m).

The narrowing would prevent most vans from using the bridge and would slow most other vehicles to walking pace, increasing congestion and emissions. The risk of vehicles becoming stuck, particularly those turning from McNeil Road would increase significantly. But the biggest impact is likely to be an increase in weight carried by the bridge, as the reduced speeds reduce the gap between vehicles. In addition vehicle weights are increasing, as Electric Vehicles typically weigh 30% more. The combined effects of the [higher national vehicle weight limits](#) that came into force on 1 October to support alternative forms of propulsion and the T-charge that started on 23 October mean that typical vehicle weights are likely to increase. Drivers will seek to avoid daily emissions charges in central London and, from 2019, inside the south circular, by switching to heavier hybrid and Electric Vehicles.

No assessment appears to have been carried out of the serious likely impacts on the bridge if it was reopened of this greater loading. If reopened even just to cars and small vans, it is reasonably likely that the repairs will last considerably shorter than the nine years the previous repairs lasted, before emergency action is needed again.

5. Our vision for Camberwell Grove as catalyst for a growing network of healthy streets

Although it occurred by chance, the change to Camberwell Grove has had many benefits, including overall for local primary schools. That is not to say everywhere has benefitted but there is significant scope now to deliver further changes in a planned way to build on the success of the bridge closure.

School	Count location	Change in vehicles 2015-2017	5 day average daily vehicle flow 2017
Dog Kennel Hill Primary	Grove Hill Road	-29%	6427
Belham Primary	Bellenden Road (S)	+6%	11934
St John's & St Clement's Primary	Adys Road (N)	-17%	4021

Table 2: Traffic changes affecting primary schools in the local area (LB Southwark data)

NB though note caveat after table 1

Although Chadwick Road has seen the biggest increase in traffic, it is still one of the quieter residential streets in the area. The parallel Grove Hill Road still has 2.5 times more traffic, for example, even though it has a primary school on it: by contrast most of one side of Chadwick Road is an industrial estate. This appears to be an instance where some rebalancing of traffic flows between streets is justified. Mitigation measures are still needed: the speed cushions are not proving effective in discouraging excessive downhill speeds on Chadwick Road: installation of full width sinusoidal humps could help tackle this.

Bellenden Road suffered as a rat-run well before the bridge was closed. Width constraints in its central section mean the Southwark Spine cycle route will simply not be viable without filtering out private motor traffic, such as through a daytime bus and cycle gate. Action has been long awaited to tackle rat-running through this residential area, particularly on the Maxted - Bellenden Road corridor. Fortunately there are strong synergies to move forward now, with the opening of the Belham Primary School and commencement of the Peckham Rye station redevelopment both imminent.

The award winning Orford Road scheme in Waltham Forest provides a fantastic inspiration: a visit by local stakeholders should be organised to it. TfL has recognised the massive potential to increase walking and cycling in Peckham and Camberwell and could provide grants from its Liveable Neighbourhoods funding. This could also tackle the air pollution around Harris Academy, most of which comes from Peckham Road. Finally, through tackling rat-running on Camberwell Grove, proposals to improve conditions on Champion Hill could at last proceed.

The temporary arrangements over the railway bridge are confusing and obstruct visibility, they can bring different road users into conflict. The existing road markings are at the end of their life. We propose considering using the remaining Quietways budget to help deliver:

- Zebra crossing and circular feature at McNeil Road junction to calm cycling downhill but minimise hindering it uphill
- Public realm intervention on the bridge with benches, creating green space
- Creating new informal pedestrian crossings along desire lines, such as leading to Love Walk, Canning Cross and Stories Road
- Minimise traffic signs and markings, taking advantage of new national traffic sign rules that came into force in 2016, such as through designation of a restricted parking zone (which would remove signs rather than add restrictions).