



Please reply to:  
49 Wandsworth Common West Side  
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M. O'Callaghan Esq,  
Client Sponsor-Major TLRN Projects  
Road Space Management –Sponsorship  
Transport for London  
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Dear Mr O'Callaghan,

Re: Wandsworth Town Centre Consultation

We thank you and your colleague for meeting us on Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> January, at your office to discuss TfL's Wandsworth gyratory traffic plans which were the subject of a public consultation before Christmas of last year.

We thought that it may be helpful to summarise the Wandsworth Society's position which goes back many years:

1) Our Society's concern about road conditions in central Wandsworth stretch back to the time of The Society's formation in 1971, not long after the gyratory system had been opened. By 1986, The Society demonstrated with plans how to tackle the traffic problem and improve the environment for residents affected by the roads in Wandsworth town centre. At our recent meeting with you, we handed to you A3 reductions of our plans. These plans were the subject of a detailed report by WBC's technical Services Department at the time which was somewhat negative due to the criteria required to demonstrate reduced vehicle movement times and to the Council's predicted increased traffic impact on neighbouring roads, especially to the south of the town centre carrying west/east traffic – local distributors – Allfarthing Lane, Swaffield Road and Kimber Road in one group and Earlsfield Road and Penwith Road in the second group.

During the 20 years following our plans, WBC employed two consultancy practices, Buchanans and Mott Anderson, who each produced reports on how to improve the town centre traffic and connect the town to the future riverside developments just starting to emerge from the industrial belt along the Thames. It was not until the public inquiry over the Ram Brewery redevelopment in Autumn 2008 that plans for public consideration were tabled by the planning authorities. At our recent meeting we were informed that the inquiry plans had been produced several years before that. We were also informed that the latest public consultation plans were effectively the 2008 inquiry plans.

To conclude this introduction, clearly over 29 years since we published our proposals, little progress has been made to improve traffic and of further concern to us are the lost

opportunities to make tangible changes to the roads due to a failure to comprehensively replan the town centre, to integrate traffic and to follow the potential of 'desire lines' generated by future development including cycling and pedestrians, linking the town centre to the Thames. Instead, overall development of the town centre has been piecemeal site by site, led by market forces, coupled with a reactionary approach by the Council which in recent years, has effectively ignored its own design parameters. We have produced other alternative plans for the town centre which illustrate our ideas, which have been presented at public meetings at the time, to warm reception but unfortunately spurned by the Council.

2) The Society's views on resolving the traffic in and around the town centre were formed when our detailed plans were drawn up, and, as little has changed to the roads since, our views remain consistent. Our approach is as follows:

- i) As far as possible to separate through east/west A3/A205 traffic from 'local' traffic which merely wants to visit the town centre, use local High Street shops and services or shop at Southside (or the future Ram Brewery). This is broadly in accord with your proposals.
- ii) A principal objective is to retain a 'bustle' in the High Street and adjoining streets by retaining local traffic usage, which would be subservient to pedestrian, cyclists and buses by road design and speed reduction. Thus, as drawn on our original maps 4.2 and 4.3 many town centre streets could become 'part-pedestrianised'.
- iii) Local traffic would be confined to the town centre and approached principally by East Hill and to a lesser extent Allfarthing Lane from the East, and, Merton Road and Garratt Lane from the South and Buckhold Road and Merton Road from the west. Kimber Road links the two south approach roads.
- iv) Local traffic could meander 2-way through the town centre free of heavy through traffic. All three principal car parks serving the Sainsbury superstore, Southside shopping centre and the Ram site could easily be approached from any direction with casual stopping to specialist local outlets in the High Street and nearby, such as Belton and Slade.
- v) We envisage one principal point of merging of local and through traffic at the junction of Armoury Way and Ram Street. Buses to and from the Putney and West Hill direction could filter into the town centre from here and exit through Wandsworth Plain and/or the west end of the High street, or onwards up East Hill or south, and vice-versa.

The loss of opportunity to run through traffic from Armoury Way to West Hill through the police station site now forces all through traffic around the tight bends by the Listed cottages at the junction of the High Street and West Hill. The road plans at the inquiry showed that road widening would be needed to facilitate four lane traffic on these bends, causing the loss of properties to the east and south between the High Street and Merton Road. If this is the case, local traffic could be streamed south into Merton Road from the High Street to avoid mixing with through traffic. This avoids the 'short cut' of concern to TfL of local traffic 'rat-running' through the town centre to join the trunk road at the end of the western section of the High Street. Alternatively, the High Street could be stopped with a dead end and a turning head, and likewise the north end of Merton Road. The two alternatives are shown on our revised plans submitted with this letter.

This plan would allow local traffic to freely use the length of the High street for its services, shops, church, town hall and access to the Southside and Sainsbury's car parks. For pedestrians arriving by bus, all services would be available westwards from

the High Street between the two shopping centres or eastwards by the Town Hall. South routed buses would be free to use Buckhold and Merton Roads or Garratt Lane.

Our proposals envisage only two sets of traffic lights and one bus 'priority' crossing point, from Wandsworth Plain to Frogmore for west bound buses only. In addition, there would be the requirement for a user- friendly pedestrian and cycle crossing across Armoury Way – perhaps linked to the bus 'priority' lights or to the Ram Street junction lights to create a regular pattern of crossing. However we have always considered this to be very user unfriendly and the cause of another likely obstacle to the flow of traffic. Our preference remains for bridging Armoury Way into the gas works site from an amended Ram site.

(Please refer to our attached, revised, traffic plans which illustrates the above points)

### 3) The Gyratory Consultation 2014

We discussed the current consultation plans in some detail at our recent meeting and our broad points of concern are as follows:

- i. the consultation plans concentrate solely on Wandsworth town centre
- ii. there are no supporting plans to illustrate the wider impact of the consultation traffic plans on local roads
- iii. there is little differentiation between through and local traffic, which causes concern
- iv. strangely convoluted traffic movement patterns as illustrated on TfL's route maps showing projected east/west routes
- v. plans do not illustrate the potential damage to the built environment, tree loss or building demolition due to road realignments or widening for example
- vi. access to Southside and the Ram shopping complexes by local traffic will be very restricted unless approaching from the south via local distributor roads, where, at a point south of Kimber Road a choice has to be made to proceed to the west side of Southside or to the east side for thereafter there can be no movement east/west.
- vii. some proposed traffic junctions cause us concern. In particular the high number of obstacles caused by junctions would preclude ease of flow for through traffic and create congestion.

We put these points to you in the belief that they offer a viable alternative to the current proposals and would hope that they are seriously considered. We would be pleased to explain more fully at a further meeting.

We want the traffic sorted out, it has been our long term aim as we have explained, but we also want the town centre to be vibrant and simple to use by bus, on foot, by bike or by car.

Consequently, we consider that, before the next consultation when TfL is to present considered revised layout plans, the public should be made aware of the alternatives we propose unless they are absorbed into the TfL plans. The physical and environmental impact of any plans has to be emphasised also, so that early judgements can be made in principle, taking these important aspects into consideration of the plans.

Please let us know if any further information or expansion of our proposals is needed.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Whyte, Chairman Wandsworth Society cc J.Stone WBC