

# BLOOMSBURY RESIDENTS' ACTION GROUP

## PROOF OF EVIDENCE 10

### Practical problems caused for local businesses and residents

#### STATEMENT

by **ALED REES**  
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To Whom it May Concern

I am the Chairman of the Gower Street Hotel Association and I represent ten of the hotels on Gower Street.

We are writing to oppose the Torrington Place traffic scheme, implemented by Camden Council. We are all in agreement that this new traffic system is impacting on our businesses in a negative way.

There are a number of companies that deliver to us (these include Cash & Carry, laundry services and grocers who deliver fresh produce, to name but a few) they have informed us that they are now always behind schedule and that a large proportion of their delivery hours are spent sitting in traffic, trying to come West from Kings Cross. One of our suppliers, who delivers from Essex has told us that they may have to stop our deliveries as they cannot afford the time that it takes to get to us in WC1.

Many of our guests (the majority of whom are tourists) who arrive from Europe on the Eurostar or at Kings Cross, Liverpool Street etc. are shocked at the journey time from the stations to the hotel, not to mention the affect that this has on taxi fares – we had a disabled guest who spent £35.00 on a taxi from Kings Cross to Gower Street; a distance of 0.6 miles. Our regular guests are beginning to move away from Gower Street and towards the stations so as to not have to pay these increased fares or face the discomfort of sitting in traffic for prolonged periods of time. This area thrives on students and tourists, the B&B's on Gower Street have been servicing this need for accommodation for the last 70 years, and now, because of this ill-thought-out traffic scheme our businesses are under threat.

On a personal level, I was born at UCH and have lived in this area for 40 years (for the last 10 in Gordon Mansions, Torrington Place, with my wife and two children). We have found that, as residents, it is becoming increasingly intolerable to 'live' in this area. Negotiating traffic east of Torrington Place is scandalous – my father, who is old and infirm, has to be driven to the health centre on Handel Street (0.5 miles away), the return journey can take upwards of 25 minutes. My small children, who are committed to various community activities in Coram's Fields and beyond, have to allow over 40 minutes to get home. It is distressing and is having a truly negative impact on our lives.

The council have not considered the residents and small businesses when implementing this traffic scheme. **Why has there been no thought given to alternative routes (East to West) that might allow this scheme to be implemented with less disruption to the residents/businesses in this area?** At the moment, the side streets around our businesses and homes are becoming rat runs with a dramatic increase in pollution, noise and discomfort.

We do not feel that the council has properly considered the counter impacts of these road changes on the environment, let alone local businesses and/or residents.

Yours Faithfully

Aled Rees

