

To Mayor Damien Egan
London Borough of Lewisham

Via Email: damien.egan@lewisham.gov.uk

Cc: Councillor Sophie McGeevor: Cllr_Sophie.McGeevor@lewisham.gov.uk
Louise McBride, Head of Highways: Louise.McBride@lewisham.gov.uk
Lee Green Ward Councillors: cllr_jim.mallory@lewisham.gov.uk ;
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Dear Mayor Egan,

I refer to your note recently received by me and others on the Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme in Lewisham and Lee Green. You say "The vast majority of residents I speak to support the principle of LTNs, support measures to make it easier to walk and cycle in the borough and support our work to improve air quality", although you acknowledge that the current scheme is "causing problems in neighbouring areas".

The latter is a gross understatement. It is causing problems to the vast majority of people who live in Lee Green and anyone who has to travel around or through the area. You do not seem to have spoken to a representative sample of the population and your comments about residents supporting measures to walk and cycle and improvements in air quality are simplistic. Who would not support those ideals?

But in practice the road closures have increased air pollution on many roads, and added enormously to journey times. This has impacted particularly on the elderly and disabled who often rely on motor vehicles, but has caused many problems for those who provide services such as delivery drivers, social workers, medical staff and the emergency services. There is a file of many of the complaints we have received on our web site here:

<https://www.freedomfordrivers.org/Lewisham-Comments-Received.pdf> .

Please read them. Note though that only includes those received until a few weeks ago – we have simply been overwhelmed with the numbers coming in.

We also now have well over 7,750 signatures on our petition for removal of the road closures which you can see here: <https://www.change.org/p/london-borough-of-lewisham-stop-road-closures-in-lewisham> . Both the complaints we are receiving, and the signatures on the petition are growing every day.

Tinkering with this scheme, will not solve the problem, and expanding the scheme over the wider area will not help either. You cannot reduce vehicle use by just closing roads. That simplistic approach will not work.

The LTN scheme in Lee Green was essentially misconceived and unjustified by the need to respond to the Covid-19 epidemic. There are many steps that can be taken to encourage active travel such as walking and cycling, but you have ignored those in these temporary measures which are based on dogma and not science. Traffic does not “evaporate” as council staff have claimed when roads are closed as is very clear from what has happened in Lewisham in the last few weeks.

The current problems will persist while the closures remain in place. It is a vain hope that people will adapt to the road closures and stop using vehicles. They have arranged their lives on the basis that roads are accessible and that motor vehicles are the easiest way to access workplaces, schools, medical facilities and relatives for many people.

We ask you again therefore to abandon the road closures and think again about how to achieve your stated objectives, after properly consulting with all the people affected, not just a selected few.

It is important to emphasise that our campaign against the road closures in Lewisham is supported by a committee consisting solely of local residents plus myself and the vast majority of signatures to the aforementioned petition and comments received are from local residents. The ABD is only providing support to local residents. We consider it very important to listen to local residents whenever new traffic schemes are proposed.

Our committee would like to meet with you (via a web platform), or with Councillor McGeevor, so that we can get a clear understanding of your objectives and how the currently unacceptable LTN scheme can be modified to placate local residents. Please respond with acceptance of that proposal and a proposed date/time, or give reasons why this is not possible.

Yours sincerely

Roger Lawson
Campaign Director