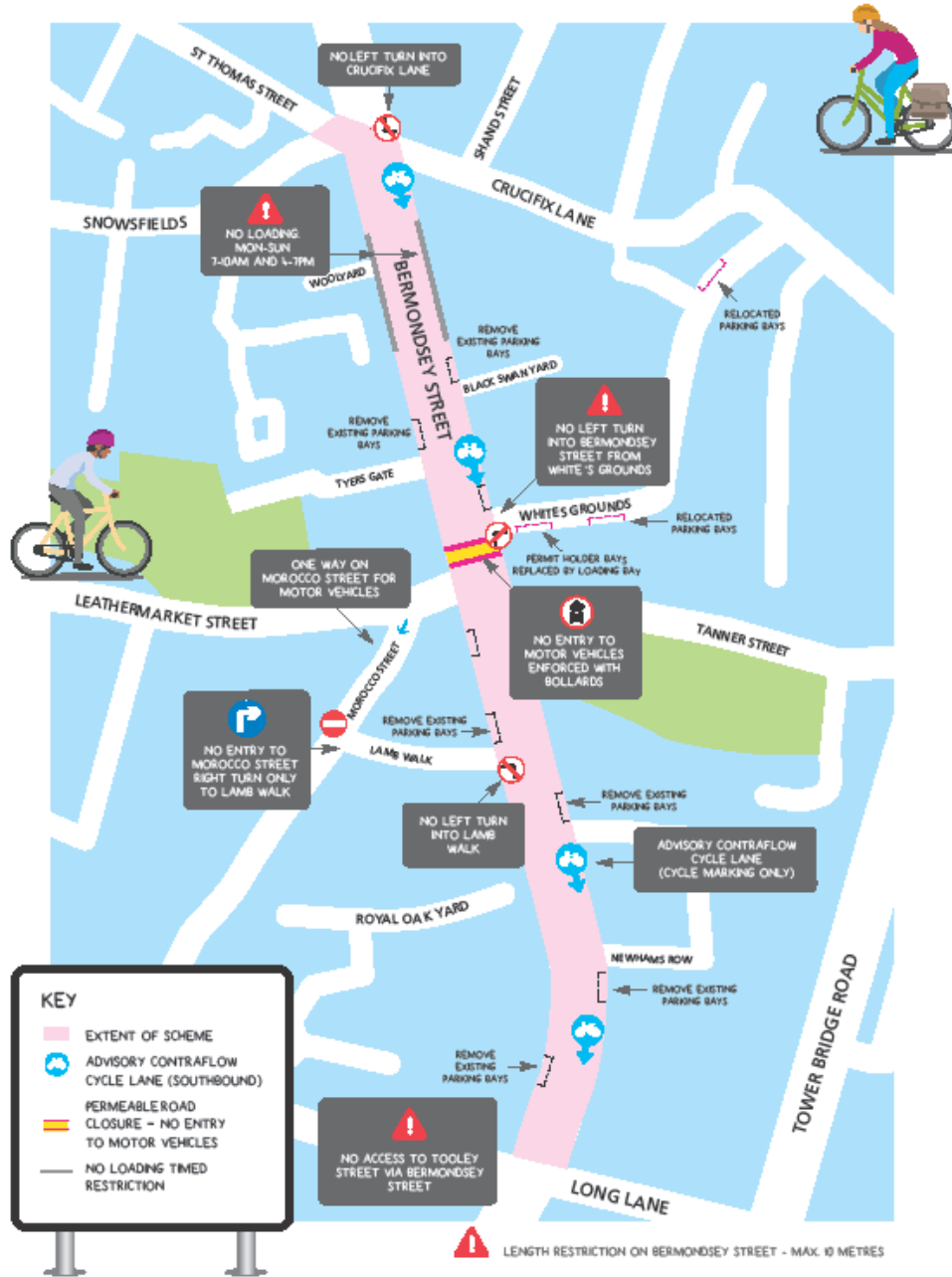


Bermondsey Street LSP

**Experimental Closure meeting on 14th October
2020 and 15th October 2020**

Q&A

Bermondsey Street walking and cycling improvement



Q&A

This Q&A document is prepared for the businesses and residents who attended or could not attend either engagement meeting to help provide a better understanding of the experimental closure on Bermondsey Street. This document also records and provides answers to the text messages from the attendees at the meeting. These answers also explain how you can respond to this experimental scheme.

The following provides some of the key dates leading up to these engagement meetings.

- September 2018 Bermondsey.Street commissions Sustrans study.
- June 2019 Sustrans study published on Bermondsey.Street website.
- Early October 2020 engagement letter posted by Southwark to local residents and businesses.

Questions and Comments by attendees on 14th October 2020

Question: Thought Tanner Street is no right turn?

Answer: The council converted Tanner Street to a no right turn for motor vehicles on to Tower Bridge Road to reduce traffic passing through the Bermondsey Street area.

Question: What happens for disabled who may need transport, i.e. taxi at the top end of Bermondsey Street?

Answer: Vehicles can still access the northern part of Bermondsey Street using Whites Grounds.

Vehicles can still drive anywhere in the area except for the short 30foot / 10m long part of Bermondsey Street for the trial closure between Morocco Street and Whites Grounds.

Question: Presumably these proposals have been tested as much as possible, i.e. by vehicles diverted the proposed route? Whites Grounds is very narrow, with small turning space right into Bermondsey Street.

Answer: A lot of thought has gone into closing a small part of Bermondsey Street closure in recent years. This work has considered how to make the right turn easier from Whites Ground into Bermondsey Street. In addition, vehicle movements along White's Grounds have been "tracked" to ensure larger vehicles, like waste vehicles, can manoeuvre through the street.

Question: I think it is wrong for Highways to 'dictate' how business should arrange their deliveries! Aren't we already under pressure to save costs at the moment and try to keep them running!

Answer: Streets have all sorts of parking and loading restrictions which are evolving as the borough regenerates and grows. For example, the council has temporarily reduced some parking and loading spaces along Bermondsey Street to widen certain pavements and

provide social distancing so these businesses can safely open and trade.

Question: Received no letter! Leathermarket Street was a rat run previously, will become one again. We have school children, mothers using the road and gardens to get to Snowfields. How will this be avoided?

Answer: We apologise that you did not receive a letter, which may be the result of the postal service not delivering to every address. Please be reassured that we do not anticipate any significant changes in traffic using Leathermarket Street, but will monitor the situation.

Question: These measures are really overdue and it's great that Southwark is taking steps to address traffic issues, AQ/noise/safety etc. on Bermondsey St. Can you tell us about how you're going to enforce the loading bay timings and also speeding along the sections of streets either side of the road closure?

Answer: The trial closure of Bermondsey Street also includes a monitoring programme. We have commissioned several traffic counts in the area so we can identify any changes to traffic volumes and speeds on Bermondsey Street after the closure. We also welcome residents letting us know of any traffic flow and speeding issues using the Commonplace website. We will also request that our enforcement teams visit Bermondsey Street to deter any loading and parking problems.

Comment: I completely welcome the scheme too. As Tim has been saying over and over, there's so much through traffic - vehicles not owned by residents or deliveries - and so many people walking and cycling along B St. that this is desperately needed as it is currently really dangerous with the amount of traffic that travels along this street.

One would think that the emergency services would really support these measures - reduced road collisions and casualties?

There is so much evidence on the benefits of walking and cycling not only in terms of health, AQ, equity etc. but also enormous economic benefits due to increased footfall. With less traffic on B St. so so many more people will flock to the Street spending in our shops and restaurants. Shops also need more space for people to go out onto the pavements to support distancing - so this needs to happen sooner rather than later!

Question: How are you analysing the CommonSpace data?

Answer: When the closure first goes in we will monitor the Commonplace webpage for the Bermondsey Street frequently so we can quickly identify and address any issues.

Comment: I would welcome the scheme - it will be great for my clients to experience a nice walk from the station to our office or to come here by bike. The one issue that matters is to deter car use in this area - people are dying through air pollution.

Question: Do the Council have any plans for a local area delivery hub which could allow trolleying from this point? They are doing this all over the world for the sake of environmental quality.

Answer: The Council is involved in a study to identify possible sites for distribution hubs to use freight bicycles, etc. Team London Bridge have also been investigating possible sites for a delivery hub, but have yet to identify any and are promoting cycle freight.

Comment: It's only a matter of time before the Mayor outlaws HGVs in central London starting with Soho.

This is what the supermarkets do i.e. stipulate standards for delivery vehicles.

Sorry have to leave now GO FOR IT SOUTHWARK.

Question: What is the criteria / benchmark for this scheme? Why haven't the criteria been published? How can we assess that this will be a success or not?

Answer: The objective of this scheme is to reduce motor vehicles, increase walking and cycling and make the street safer. We will monitor whether it is a success by referring to the comments on Commonplace and traffic counts.

Question: Ok, so what is the criteria for the traffic counts? And what increase in pollution on Tower Bridge Road and their residents will be worth it?

Answer: We will compare the traffic counts of Bermondsey Street and other side streets before and after the closure, to see whether we have reduced driving and so pollution. This is better than monitoring traffic and pollution on Tower Bridge Road because it is affected by many more factors than just Bermondsey Street.

Question: What about businesses that need deliveries on the north stretch of the road. Tower Bridge Road is gridlocked already and this will just push traffic somewhere else not reduce it.

Answer: Phone navigation apps mean that drivers are directed to the least congested route so they will approach Bermondsey Street using these roads. The aim of the scheme is to encourage more walking and cycling and less driving. Southwark has set up a monitoring programme, which will provide a good understanding of how traffic volumes have changed in the local area.

Question: So why force it through now? How can we test whether it would be sustainable in the long term?

Answer: As noted, we are currently experiencing three emergencies (the covid pandemic, climate change and air pollution) which are all largely affected by transport. Motor vehicles are a major source of air pollution, which exacerbates covid and is a major contributor to climate change. The pandemic has made these links and the need for action far clearer as well as making society more receptive and flexible to change. For the last two years the Bermondsey Street group has been talking to the council and commissioned a report wanting to change the street. The council supported the proposed road closure in the report and aims to test closing a short section of Bermondsey Street to reduce driving and air pollution. We also want to encourage walking and cycling in the area. This approach has been successfully used elsewhere, including Magdalen Street and Newcomen Street nearby.

Question: Businesses are struggling enough at the moment. Deliveries and the function of our business will be severely hampered. Notice there are no restaurants represented here. I wonder what they think?

Answer: Deliveries are still possible to all premises. In streets closed to traffic the restaurants and retailers generally do better. For example, the increasing number of food courts, in places like Flat Iron Square, and of course Borough Market which contains many successful restaurants with virtually no traffic.

Question: Deliveries, cabs for customers? Throttle the street and it will hurt restaurants particularly

Answer: The closure only prevents driving for 30feet / 10m on Bermondsey Street with the rest of the street still being open to motor vehicles. In streets closed to traffic the restaurants and retailers generally do better. For example, the increasing number of food courts, in places like Flat Iron Square, and of course Borough Market which contains many successful restaurants with virtually no traffic.

Question: I have a very specific question to ask about the middle section - where it is closed - what happens if a fire engine needs access? Or builders to maintain the structures? Or removals trucks?

Answer: The fire service will be able to access and pass through the closure during an emergency. Builders or removals companies can drop off and collect materials from the loading bay on Whites Grounds.

Comment: Supermarkets have the power to demand specific delivery vehicles. Small businesses take what they can get.

Question: Are you saying that we can apply if needed to have the barrier opened up for special reasons?

Answer: Yes.

Comment: It's excellent that the contraflow is being opened up thanks to this scheme, we have monitored around 200 [cyclists] currently doing this daily in the current configuration, this will no doubt increase, and safety increase too.

Comment: TfL looked into camera monitoring of st Thomas street, they did not think it could work because so difficult to prove is someone requires access or not.

Questions and Comments by attendees on 15th October 2020

Question: Can you cover who locally has lobbied for this. Did local cllrs ask for?

Answer: Local people have discussed improving Bermondsey St for many years. During the last two years the Bermondsey Street group funded a study by Sustrans which recommended widening the pavements or closing the road in this location. These measures have come about because of this study and the need to reduce traffic in response to the covid lockdown, air pollution and climate change.

Question: Can you please provide a link to the Commonplace Southwark website?

Answer: Link to Commonplace is <https://bermondseystreet-streetspace.commonplace.is/>

Question: it's about long vehicles/heavy goods trying to make the bend/corner part of Whites Grounds. If traffic is to be diverted into this road then there should be a sign that excludes these from trying to negotiate such a small bend in the road. This is compounded by Legally parked Cars of residents. I have witnessed many incidents when this route has been used before when there has been a crucifix lane closure and it causes jams back out of Whites Grounds, along crucifix lane and back to tower bridge road. Further more that sitting traffic causes more pollution and that's not good when residents including children get fumes coming through the open windows and/or on the balcony.

Answer: We do not anticipate an increase in traffic on Whites Grounds because the closure will prevent motor

vehicles from entering from Bermondsey Street. Whites Grounds will remain two-way and we are installing new double yellow lines to ensure that vehicles can turn at the bends on Whites Grounds. The council will also look to install signs on Crucifix Lane to discourage large vehicles from entering Whites Grounds.

Question: Will the cycle contra flow be more clearly marked on road now? its not the most visible at the moment.

Answer: The new contra-flow cycle lane will be clearly marked on the carriageway along all of Bermondsey Street and we will add more cyclist markings on the road.

Question: Large Vehicles turning on Tanner Street, it's quite dangerous. There are conflicts with vehicles coming up to the northern section of Bermondsey Street and drivers do not expect cyclists coming to the opposite direction.

Answer: The proposal is to introduce signs on Long Lane to deter vehicles longer than 10m from entering Bermondsey Street, and hence turning into Tanner Street. The scheme also aims to reduce traffic on Bermondsey Street, as well as reducing and relocating parking so there should be fewer vehicles to conflict with cyclists. We will also provide better road markings to highlight the cycle contraflow lane.

Comment: We have the same issue of large vehicles turning onto Tanner Street - my office is at No1 and we see conflict at this junction quite often

Question: Commonplace CIL proposals that asked for this were from individuals. Local residents organisations had other priorities for investment which need recognition.

Answer: CIL funding is not being used for this.

Question: No letters received from the council to Leathermarket Street, Tyers Gate and Tanner Street. (Comment: I can confirm that no letter regarding the scheme was delivered to no 3 Leathermarket St. Please provide the letter. Thanks; I also confirm no letters or notifications to Tyers Gate; No letters to Tanner Street; On Bermondsey Street the residents have not received any letters).

Answer: We are sorry that some people did not receive notification letters. We sent out letters to the businesses and residents in the early October, but it is possible that some were not delivered. Letters have been resent to the residents on 19th October 2020 after we were informed of this issue at these Zoom meetings.

Question: Restrictions between 47 and 70 Bermondsey Street - my office is at 59 Bermondsey Street, we have deliveries daily between 9am - 6pm. What provision is in place for this please?

Answer: We introduce loading restrictions between 7-10am and 4pm-7pm. The aim is to avoid deliveries during peak hours to protect the busiest times on Bermondsey Street for pedestrians and cyclists. We are hoping deliveries could be arranged during these off-peak hours, however, we will keep monitoring and reviewing these measures.

Question: Again - 59-63 Bermondsey Street offices, our Landlord has tradesmen - drainage, roofers, etc - working on site on occasions. Is the answer there will be no provision for them to get to our site between 10am and 4pm?

Answer: Vehicles are able to do loading / unloading between 10am – 4pm.

Question: The reviews through the "Trial Period" - when could we expect the first of these and who would be involved? Will there be notification by email? Post?

Answer: Once we have confirmed the date of the experimental closure, our contractor will inform residents and businesses by delivering letters. When the closure starts the council will create a new webpage for Bermondsey Street on the Commonplace website so people can comment on the trial closure. The council will make any necessary amendments to adjust the scheme throughout the trial period of up to 18 months.

Question: Will there be less parking bays with those being removed (I note there are some shown as "moved")? We have a Southwark Business parking permit (purchased in the last 2 weeks without notification there wouldn't be bays)

Answer: Permit parking bays on Bermondsey Street will be removed and a number relocated in the area, in particular to Whites Grounds. At present there are a number of empty parking spaces on streets in the area. We are also currently investigating where there is space to provide additional bays on surrounding streets.

Question: If there are problems, what do people do to get the Council to solve it and how would that be funded after the main change is complete?

Answer: If there are problems with the closure, please enter your comments on the webpage for Bermondsey Street on Southwark's Commonplace website which we will be monitoring closely. Should changes be required to resolve these issues, we have suitable provisions to ensure this can happen.

If there is a critical safety issue that requires us to immediately investigate, please email highways@southwark.gov.uk and we will arrange our inspector to quickly assess it.

Question: in what way will the footways be widened?

Answer: This scheme aims to reduce motor vehicles and parking to make it easier to walk on Bermondsey Street. This has been successful in other parts of London. The footways will be widened within the road closure and also for a short section nearby. Footways will also be cleared of many items of street furniture that are no longer considered to be required.

Question: Is there a plan to permanently expand the pavement/footways where the temp structures are at Woolpack/etc?

Answer: The temporary footway widenings are a separate project using a different funding source. This scheme aims to reduce motor vehicles and parking to make it easier to walk along Bermondsey Street. The footways will, though, be widened within the road closure and also for a short section nearby for safety reasons. Footways will also be cleared of many items of street furniture that are no longer considered to be helpful.

The Bermondsey Street report by Sustrans explains that once the contraflow cycle lane and loading bays are taken into account there is very little space to widen the footways, and so the best option is to reduce traffic by closing the road. Closing the road will also help to reduce driving and so pollution and climate change. This approach has been successfully used in Seven Dials, the Shoreditch triangle, and elsewhere.

Question: Can you make available any impact assessment that has been undertaken. Is there a feasibility study that identifies by how much air quality will improve in the area as a whole.

Answer: The Bermondsey Street report by Sustrans investigates the street, its traffic and options. It did not investigate air quality improvements because this is very complex. This is especially true at the moment because traffic levels are changing for all sorts of reasons. But the simplest indicator is fewer vehicles means less pollution.

Comment: Yes I absolutely agree with XXX. Tower Bridge Road is so busy that for residents to get onto their own street will have to sit for ages in that traffic just to get to their homes!

Comment: They use White's Grounds precisely because Morocco Street has been closed.

Comment: I agree with XXX too, as a resident on the Northern section, the idea that closing a road just makes traffic disappear is a bit silly. It gets redirected and the congestion has clearly become worse for us with each road you close.

Answer: Closing roads has reduced traffic in the area, for example Newcomen Street. Since it was closed far less traffic uses Newcomen Street and side streets. But if the council reopens Newcomen Street then taxis and private hire vehicles would find it, white vans would follow and sat

nav apps would direct more traffic down it. Residents would start to feel unsafe walking children to school or cycling and start to drive instead. Thus by reopening Newcomen Street driving will increase changing this street from a quiet lane back into a busier and more polluted road.

Question: Every time I've walked on Bermondsey street, it's been quite quiet with few cars, and many people walking in the street to begin with. Is there data about how many cars regularly drive on Bermondsey St & what proportion of local residents have cars? It seems to me that it's pretty minimal and would make it safer for peds (including families) on Bermondsey St.

Answer: The Bermondsey Street report by Sustrans requested walking improvements and contains a simple traffic survey. Southwark has commissioned traffic counts for Bermondsey Street and the surrounding area. Further monitoring will be undertaken and used to compare with these previous surveys

Question: Can you please advise where we can email comments to if the call is not going to give us the opportunity to comment fully.

Answer: At the moment, please send your email to Highways@southwark.gov.uk. The Commonplace page for Bermondsey Street (<https://bermondseystreet-streetspace.commonplace.is/>) is not yet ready, but you can register to be notified when it starts by entering your email on the website.

Comment: And we do not want the pedestrian zone to mean that restaurants and pubs are allowed to take over the street. Residents face more problems from that than the traffic noise and disturbance.

Comment: Yes we do not want any more tables outside. It is clear that residents are not in favour of this pedestrianisation and we are not being listened to.

Question: Can it be guaranteed that restaurants will not colonise the roads?

Answer: This is a trial closure and there is no automatic right for businesses to use the highway.

Comment: Please note, no part of Bermondsey Street is purely residential, it's all mixed business and residential.

Question: Can you share proof that this will improve air quality? On Tanner Street we have just had a one way system put in place, this will increase traffic. How does this help?

Answer: Air pollution is very hard to monitor as it is emitted by a number of sources, is affected by atmospheric conditions and traffic levels are currently fluctuating for a variety of reasons. Thus the best answer we can provide is that less traffic should mean less pollution.

Question: Is this a consultation or has the decision been made?

Answer: This is informal engagement before we test this experimental measure. DfT, and hence TfL, have provided funding for much less time than usual to consult residents and business before introducing any measures. Hence the Government has instructed us to install, test and then consult residents and businesses on all traffic measures. We are using these engagement meetings to obtain valuable feedback and local knowledge from businesses and TRA representatives so we can refine things during the trial and possibly later in the scheme, as necessary. After six months Southwark will consult local people on this experimental measure.

Question: Can long vehicles be blocked from Leathermarket St also please?

Answer: This proposal includes signs on Long Lane to discourage large vehicles (ie more than 10 meters long) from entering Bermondsey Street and thus Leathermarket Street.

Question: The letter was dated 7th October, sent 1st class and I received it on the 14th October.

Answer: The letter was approved on 7th October 2020. It then goes through another process to get the letters posted to residents and businesses. There may also have been further delays by the Royal Mail due to the Covid pandemic.

Question: Can long Vehicles be blocked from Tanner Street please?

Answer: We understand that some businesses have large vehicles for their deliveries and collection. We will implement length restriction up to 10metres on the southern section of Bermondsey Street in order to protect the pedestrians walking on the pavement. This is the maximum length we can only allow long vehicles to come in. Therefore, vehicles longer than 10metres will not be able to turn into Tanner Street.

Question: I live on Bermondsey Street am not in favour of this proposal. And how are the businesses on Black Swan Yard like Exmedia etc going to take deliveries?

Answer: Exmedia attended the zoom meeting yesterday and we discussed with them how they could receive deliveries. We explained that deliveries need to be better organised with loading avoiding the busiest times on Bermondsey Street. Thus we are introducing loading restrictions close to Black Swan Yard from 7am – 10am and 4pm – 7pm, with deliveries being made at other times using the double yellow lines.

Question: Will waste vehicles come below the 10m length limit?

Answer: Southwark's Waste Management vehicles are just over 10m and will be exempted from the limit as they do not have any resources to source smaller vehicles.

Question: What about commercial waste vehicles, will they be allowed into the street?

Answer: Commercial waste vehicles will be allowed into the street. So far one private commercial waste company has contacted the council about this proposal and their vehicles are shorter than 10meters, so they are not affected by the new signs.

Question: Regarding the comments blaming sat nav's for traffic in Bermondsey Street. Perhaps as part of your highways role your team could update sat nav companies regarding the street access changes you make. I have had groceries deliveries where the drivers have driven round for 20 minutes getting trapped in all the one way/no access areas?

Answer: Sat nav companies automatically identify all road closures from the information we publish to guide their users as best as possible. Therefore your delivery problem should not have occurred if the driver was using an up to date sat nav app. We are also working with TfL and the One.Network team to ensure updates to sat nav systems

Question: A lot of the highways team's comments are about reducing traffic on Bermondsey Street. Rather than forcing traffic onto entirely residential streets, can you please seek to utilise the wider main streets in the area like Tooley Street, which is very quiet and utilise St Thomas's street which TFL owns much of and which currently has very restricted access. St Thomas's St could be used instead of forcing delivery trucks for commercial restaurant's and bars on Bermondsey Street onto Leathermarket St and Tanner St.

Answer: TfL controls both streets and at the start of the pandemic it re-opened St Thomas Street to all traffic. By re-opening St Thomas Street this makes Bermondsey Street a more attractive route for more drivers to use to get to Borough High Street. This is one of the reasons why the council is proposing closing the middle of Bermondsey Street to stop through traffic from using it to get elsewhere.

Question: How will we be updated on this please? On what is suggested to be "informal meets" to discuss the trial?

Answer: We have produced these answers to resident's questions from both meetings to provide a better understanding for all those involved or who could not attend. Once the closure is introduced the council will provide a webpage for Bermondsey Street on its Commonplace website so people can provide feedback. We will also provide an email address for any urgent safety issues that require rapid inspection on site.

Question: The permeable road closure top of Bermondsey Street, what will this consist of please? Bollards?

Answer: The permeable road closure is a trial that will consist of concrete blocks and bollards and wider pavements.

Question: One of your stated aims is to reduce air pollution but your trial - for 18 months - will increase traffic generated air pollution dramatically on purely residential streets - Leathermarket St, Morocco St, Tanner St and Tanner St Park and Leathermarket Park. Do you have any plans to counteract the air pollution increase to residents?

Answer: The trial closure and long vehicles restrictions aim to reduce traffic on Bermondsey Street and encourage others to walk and cycle more and so drive less, as has happened on other streets which have been closed nearby, like Newcomen Street and Magdalen Street. Less traffic on Bermondsey Street should help to reduce traffic on Morocco Street, Tanner Street and especially Whites Grounds as a lot of vehicles turn off Bermondsey Street into it. We will closely monitor traffic flows and air pollution and can make certain adjustments because it is a trial. If there are any particular air quality issues, please provide us with your opinions on the webpage for Bermondsey Street on our Commonplace website, which will be closely monitored.

Question: It is clear that the residents are in favour but this is being forced upon us.

Answer: The Government has given us funding for much less time than normal, and so it has instructed all councils to install, test and then consult on traffic measures. Despite this early discussions have occurred on changes to Bermondsey Street. Early in the pandemic the council set up a Commonplace website to ask people what changes they wanted to streets. Commonplace shows strong support in Bermondsey Street for reducing traffic and making it better to walk and cycle. In 2019 Bermondsey.Street held some discussions with local residents and businesses to help develop the Sustrans report, which includes a road closure in this location.

Comment : *Business here*

Comment: BermondseyStreet.London discussed the idea of closure amongst other options but we concluded it was unnecessarily radical. We prefer to meet people's needs by widening pavements and reducing traffic.

Answer: The council explained that there is very little space to effectively widen the pavements along Bermondsey Street because it is not feasible to remove loading or the cycle lane, which will increase driving and pollution. Whereas closing the road helps to reduce motor traffic (as occurred in Newcomen Street) and so helps to tackle air pollution and climate change. It is also extremely expensive to widen the footways (as it requires moving the

drains) and so it was very poor value for money before the pandemic.

Comment: You are not reducing traffic, you are redirecting.

Answer: Closing roads has reduced traffic in the area, for example Newcomen Street. Since it was closed virtually no traffic uses Newcomen Street and its side streets. But if the council reopens Newcomen Street then taxis and private hire vehicles would find it, white vans would follow and phone navigation apps would direct more traffic down it. Residents would start to feel unsafe walking children to school or cycling and start to drive instead. Thus by reopening Newcomen Street driving will steadily increase changing it from a quiet street back to a busier and more polluted road.

Comment: In response to XXX's point earlier about cyclists and respecting the law. I am far more concerned with cars and lorries driving far in excess of the speed limit, as well as vehicles driving the wrong way up Bermondsey street from White's Grounds to Leathermarket Street.

Question: Can the council use Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras instead of a road closure.

Answer: The council has closed many roads across the borough without using ANPR cameras. The reasons are that it will not stop certain vehicles, especially large deliveries, such as those to London Bridge or Tooley Street. Secondly, ANPR is very expensive to install and maintain and it would require multiple cameras to identify through traffic using Bermondsey Street and various side streets. Thirdly, people will drive past them and then claim various reasons creating additional work and expense. For these reasons ANPR is not considered suitable for Bermondsey Street. It is also worth noting that TfL declined using ANPR on St Thomas Street.

