

'Camden and the CAZ' Report

Introduction

Since Easter, when the Clean Air Plan was first announced, the CRA has been very active in promulgating an awareness and a deepening understanding of the CAZ and the effect it will have on those living in Camden, for both our health and in perhaps reducing traffic to some extent.

We have sought not to add to the mis-informed 'noise' on the subject, particularly when people first hear of the proposal, but to remain in a 'learning and consideration' mode and then to assess the viability of the proposed options with particular reference to Camden and NE Bath. We have engaged as fully as possible with the Council at every opportunity and even hosted a working party session for the CAZ team, here in Camden.

We have readily accepted that to be effective the CAZ will have to involve some change for anyone used to driving into and through Bath from 2020. We are very keen to ensure that this is done fairly and, if so, we will very much support it because it should improve life in Camden and NE Bath and will be funded by central government. Many of us view this as a 'game changer' for Bath and a start to tackling traffic congestion more generally.

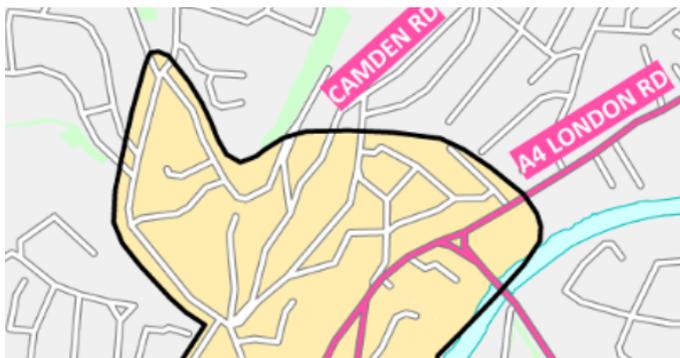
In the run up to our AGM on November 22nd the Committee made contact with most of the 400 households in our area and left them with the Council's eight-page CAZ consultation document and our 2018 newsletter which featured the current class D CAZ proposal and the Committee's perspective on it. In both the discussions we had on the doorstep and at the AGM we have gained a more representative view of our residents.

The purpose of this document

At this 11th hour, after our AGM finished on 22nd and the deadline for the consultation tonight, we would like to bring to the Council's attention the main issues affecting residents in Camden.

1. Boundary Effects

The proposed boundary for the zone cuts across Camden Road between the Gays Hill junction and the St Stephen's Road junction. The current zone suggests a possible escape route along the very narrow Belgrave Crescent. Were this availed then it could become chaotic.



Without un-ignorable signage which makes it absolutely clear that for a chargeable vehicle it is impossible to reach close to the city without escaping payment, we will be confronted with drivers forced to perform three-point turns, under pressure, in a narrow street with parked cars waiting to get knocked.

Definitive direction must be provided at the extremities of the NE Bath rat run, as described in our report from earlier this year, and all along the London Road from the main Alice Park roundabout to avoid drivers, both aware and unaware of the impending restrictions, from attempting to use the current rat run.

Going east from Lansdown, drivers taking the reverse route, will have already decided to enter the zone and will be free to take whatever route they want, as now.

2. Parking pressures

Living in the zone with a chargeable vehicle is going to be costly. Say the vehicle is moved four times per week then this will cost $£9 \times 4 \times 52 = £1872$ per annum. This is very large increase on the cost of living on Camden Road and the freedom to drive a car. The temptation will be to station any such car outside the zone so that journeys away from Bath do not attract a charge. This will put pressure on the existing limited parking. If this is now combined with the visitors and commuters who will be tempted to 'park and ride or walk' on streets close to the CAZ which are not part of a residents parking zone, then residents' parking will lose much of its value. The RPZ's must be reviewed and probably extended to protect existing residents' parking arrangements and the ratios of spaces to permits.

3. Eastern Park and Ride

It is also acknowledged that we do need to welcome visitors and workers to Bath as they contribute so significantly to the local economy. So, there must be an acceptable alternative to finding free parking close to the CAZ. The natural route from the M4 is down the A46 which has no convenient park and ride. This must be remedied in time for the CAZ introduction.

On Park and Rides more generally, the experience could be improved with better surface drainage, warm shelter with good quality C-stores / coffee shops and green taxi services for week-end guests. Newbridge and Lansdown have a dearth of local shops for their residents nearby, and Odd Down has the most users and a large amount of passing traffic.

4. Hardship

There is probably little obvious hardship in Camden, but there are younger and less well-off residents in Larkhall and Fairfield Park for whom safely driving the family members to a sequence of daily events across the city is virtually unavoidable. A progressive approach is made possible by the differing levels of NOx emanating from the same car type using different fuels. To swap a chargeable diesel-powered car for an equivalent petrol is relatively cost free. There does need to be 'swappage' scheme to encourage residents to pursue this easily and at minimal cost.

5. Bus services

There are older communities in NE Bath who are probably time rich but financially poor. If they have chargeable cars then they will increasingly rely, as non-car owners do, on regular bus services which need to convey them comfortably to the main locations including the RUH, as well as the city centre. There are significant improvements and reinstatement of previous services needed to support these people.

6. Schoolchildren's journeys

Parents have the choice, and are even encouraged, to send their schools across the city in search of the best education. NE Bath has a large number of schools, some of which act like magnets for children in other parts of Bath and the surrounding areas. We are conscious that there are several approaches to meeting this mass transport requirement. Whatever options are chosen must improve the air quality for those coming and going to school as well as during their school day.

7. Cycling

Cycling is challenge in Bath for geological as well as man-made reasons. Our residents have pointed out some simple changes that would make cycling far safer and more pleasant along the main routes through NE Bath and out westwards. These primarily seek to take cyclists away from roads on to dedicated other routes. For example:

- Rivers Road could be made legally cyclable along its length as Camden Road is dangerous and dirty for cyclists at peak times
- London Road could be avoided completely by linking up Bathampton Meadows, Kensington Meadows, via Grosvenor Bridge or a light bridge to Bathwick Estate and St John's Road and Pulteney Bridge
- Weston Road could be avoided by designating parallel routes through Victoria Park and the Botanic Gardens.

8. Vehicle Sharing

For a given vehicle journey the number of passenger journeys must be maximised:

- 50% of commuting cars could be allocated alternate days of the week to the other 50% so that drivers are encouraged to collaborate and share journeys
- School bus journeys in the mornings tend to be better utilised than the afternoon ones. This might influence the shape of services to provide dedicated buses in the morning and rely upon public transport in the afternoons.

Jeremy Labram, Chair, CRA
26/11/18