

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Friday, 12th May 2023**

**Newham BID takes Cornwall Council to court over ‘dangerous’ road scheme**

Cornwall Council is being taken to court over its decision to press ahead with a controversial road scheme that campaigners say will endanger lives.

The Newham Business Improvement District (BID), which represents businesses on the Newham Industrial Estate in Truro, has instructed solicitors to seek permission from the High Court to judicially review the Council’s decision to go ahead with the scheme.

The Council has also been put on notice of an intention to seek an interim injunction to prevent the works from continuing, pending the outcome of the judicial review application to the court.

Cornwall Council contractor CORMAC started work last week [2nd May] on a project to narrow a 350-metre section of the busy Newham Road to create a wider footpath for pedestrians and cyclists.

This was despite objections from more than 45 businesses on the industrial estate and an independent safety study commissioned by Newham BID which concluded that the controversial scheme was likely to cause “extreme danger”.

The study, by respected national transport consultants TPA, said narrowing the only road in and out of the estate would mean two heavy good vehicles would barely be able to pass one other. This could force them to mount the new shared cycle path and footway, “causing extreme danger to any cyclist or pedestrian using the path”, the report said. There are also fears that overhanging wing mirrors could strike footpath users with potentially fatal consequences.

Now the Newham BID, which promotes Newham as a business location, has instructed a barrister (via its parent company Totally Truro Ltd) to go to the High Court and seek a judicial review. And if the Council fails to halt the works in the meantime, it will seek an injunction next week to force it to do so.

**Leigh Ibbotson, Chair of Newham BID**, said: “We’ve been left with no choice but to take the Council to court. The works to narrow the road are already impacting access to the estate and forcing vehicles to straddle the centre line. There simply isn’t room to create a wider footpath and it’s an accident just waiting to happen. We believe this scheme is ill-conceived and a real threat to road users, pedestrians and cyclists in Newham.”

Among the many businesses that have objected to the scheme, which includes supermarket giants Tesco and Aldi at the entrance to the Newham estate, is tile business Tile Wise, which fronts Newham Road.

**Manager Janet Martin** said: “It’s just ridiculous that anyone could think it was a good idea to reduce the width of a busy road on a major industrial estate that is home to a wide range of businesses operating heavy goods vehicles. Now that work has started we can see just how far the new pavement will encroach onto the road and we’re really worried that someone will end up killed. Cornwall Councillors really need to come and see for themselves how dangerous this scheme is and call a halt to it now.”

Cornwall Council insists the scheme is safe because it identifies the road as ‘minor’, claiming that the majority of businesses at Newham are classed as B1, which is office use. But an audit of Newham’s 180 businesses by the BID shows that industrial and distribution businesses outnumber office users three to one by rateable value.

Many of them run fleets of large vehicles including waste trucks, delivery lorries, buses, and mobile cranes. Transport consultants TPA believe it should be classed as a major industrial access road, which would mean under the Council’s own guidance it should have a minimum width of 7.3m. Instead the Council is narrowing the road to 6.5m.

**Copy ends – 12th May, 2023**

**Notes to editors**

**Interviews:** Newham BID Chair Leigh Ibbotson and Janet Martin from Tile Wise are both happy to be interviewed.

**Photography**: shows a Macsalvors crane straddling the centre line while following the marked up line of the planned new pavement on Newham Road. This was taken on 4th May. Macsalvors are based on Newham Industrial Estate.

The other photographs shows work underway on narrowing Newham Road to accommodate the wider footpath and cycleway, with the centre line being removed. These were taken on the 11th and 12th May.