



## **Local Transport Survey**

### **Proof of Evidence**

by

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### **Public Inquiry**

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## 1.0 Bio

- 1.1 I am Shirani St Ledger McCarthy and I have lived in Chiswell Green for 28 years. I initially commuted into London to work, then stayed at home with my children, both of whom have been schooled locally.
- 1.2 I have a BA (Hons) in Management Studies with French, and was a member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development for 18 years until I retired through ill-health. I also held the ACI Financial Markets Association Dealing Certificate and worked as a sales trader for a European investment bank. However, most of my career was in Human Resources and Consulting, in which capacity I worked in a broad range of sectors.
- 1.3 In one role in particular, we devised and analysed surveys to advise our clients on the best ways of attracting, training and retaining the best graduates and young professionals.
- 1.4 I was encouraged by my neighbours to join the newly formed Keep Chiswell Green in March 2022 when Cala Homes launched its public consultation on their proposed development South of Chiswell Green Lane, which caused us to realise how extensive was the threat to the Green Belt in Chiswell Green.

## **2.0 The Survey – Terms of Reference**

- 2.1 Examination of the application proposals for the developments on the North and the South sites on Chiswell Green Lane led Keep Chiswell Green to question whether the proposed sustainable transport options included in the applications would produce the travel behaviours sought, in particular the shift away from car-based travel in favour of walking, cycling or using public transport.
- 2.2 Given the unique nature of the circumstances, we devised a survey to find answers from within the local population only.
- 2.3 This survey was initially tested, then refined, then made available online to all residents in Chiswell Green through our website.
- 2.4 Access to our website is free and available without membership. There were therefore no such limitations which might preclude respondents.
- 2.5 Having eliminated spoilt questionnaires, a total of 241 local residents responded to the survey which was intended to be answered by adults only – defined as those over 18.



2.5 Some questions were not applicable to all respondents and the response format intervened not to show questions that were not applicable.

2.6 The data results of the survey, with all identifying responses removed, are included in full in document reference CD 6.20.

### **3.0 The results**

#### **3.1 Employment status**

Of the 241 respondents to the survey, 47% were in paid employment. It must be noted that an almost equal number of respondents (45%) were retired. A surprisingly small number of respondents were at home with children (2%) or at home without dependents (1%).

#### **3.2 Employment hours**

Of the 47% (124) who are in paid employment, an overwhelming majority (83%) of respondents worked during a typical 8am to 6pm day with a further 14% working between 6am and 8pm

#### **3.3 Employment sector**

61% of respondents were in private sector employment with only 10% (13 individuals) in key worker occupations. A relatively



high proportion (11%) were in education (learning, not working in education). This may have been young people in tertiary education at home with parents while the survey was being completed.

### 3.4 Place of work

Respondents were asked where their work was based for at least 80% of the time. As might be expected since the pandemic, 24% responded that they worked from home, with 12% saying that they currently work from home but are expecting to return to office-based working for at least 50% of the time in future. 28% responded that that they worked in one location, but the highest number of respondents answered that they work in multiple locations.

### 3.5 Location of work

The greatest number of respondents (38%) work in London, with 30% working in Chiswell Green. Presumably this reflects those working from home currently since the pandemic. 24% of respondents work in St Albans with a further 10% working in Watford. Only 2% (2 individuals) work in Bricket Wood, Park Street or How Wood.



### 3.6 Method of transport for travel to work

The overwhelming majority of respondents (67%) use a private motor vehicle to travel to work. A further 21% use a private vehicle to leave home to travel and then take a train. Interestingly, while 6% walk to work, only 4% take public transport – a bus or a train. Whilst this may reflect persistent caution over taking public transport after the pandemic, it is more likely that this reflects the lack of viable train station near Chiswell Green requiring train travellers to get to the City station which is not easily accessible by public transport. More interestingly, of 126 respondents who answered this question, not one responded that they cycle to go to work.

### 3.7 Influencing method of travel to work

Respondents who had answered that they use a motor vehicle, including a motorbike, to travel to work were asked what might persuade them to permanently change their method of travel to work. The majority at 55% responded that nothing would compensate for the speed and convenience of travelling by private vehicle. This no doubt reflects the time pressures we are all under in our lives today and our search for convenience to relieve the pressure a little. However, respondents were also given a free-form response option for this question and it was noticeable that carrying tools, being disabled, or having to carry



things for clients were the primary reasons given which influence the number of people who still prefer to use the car.

10% responded a wider variety of *direct* bus routes to their destinations and 9% more frequent buses. It should be noted that one free E-bike per household only appealed to 4% or 3 people who answered from 69 responses to this question. Dedicated or separate cycle routes, safer cycle routes and lower cost of bus travel would only influence 2 or 3 people. Equally, more cycle routes, safer pedestrian routes and increased costs of parking at the work location would only influence 1% of respondents – 1 person each.

### 3.8 Peak hours

Responses reflect anecdotal evidence that the commuter rush hour in Chiswell Green is from 7am until 9am, and 5pm to 7pm, with 55% saying they leave home and return home during these times.

### 3.9 Leisure travel

Respondents were asked what method of transport they usually employ during their non-work travel. Interestingly, this was one of the most popular questions to answer with 223 responses. However, 84% of respondents travel by private vehicle for their



leisure travel. Surprisingly, only 1% use a bicycle to travel for leisure, with only 4% choosing walking or public transport.

When asked for reasons as to why their choice had been selected, the reasons were numerous and varied, including distance to be travelled, journey speed, convenience, and the buses are too infrequent, unreliable or inconvenient for their destination. Carrying heavy items, weather and disability all featured more prominently than the locations of train stations or cost of public transport. The least cited reason for not using a more sustainable travel method was insufficient cycle routes, making it clear that providing more or better cycle routes will not influence travel behaviour.

### 3.10 Going to school – primary age children

The split of children was exactly 50/50 for those walking to school compared to arriving at school by car. The reasons cited by parents for taking their children to school by car included the school being too far to walk or cycle (30%), less safe to walk or cycle due to traffic (22%) and the weather (13%).

### 3.11 Going to school – secondary age children

A larger proportion of children of secondary age travel to school on foot or by public transport. This is presumably a reflection on the increasing independence of the children, increasing





confidence of parent to allow them to travel alone, and the availability of “school buses” which do not exist for primary school children. It was also interesting that this behaviour does not change much between summer and winter, although there is some influence from poor weather.

Of those at secondary school who travel by car to school, distance, carrying heavy or numerous items, buses being infrequent or unreliable, and speed of taking a car all featured highly.

### 3.12 Alternative routes / “rat runs”

Respondents were asked whether they ever take any alternative routes to avoid traffic on the Watford Road, at the double mini-roundabout, or on Tippendell Lane. 42% said they use Stanley Avenue, 26% Ragged Hall Lane, and 23% said they use Farringford, Carisbrooke and Sunndale. 38% said they would never use an alternative route. However, 84% who do use an alternative route said they would not change their travel behaviour if their shortcut became slower or more difficult as a result of traffic calming measures such as a raised table.

### 3.13 Road congestion

78% of respondents said that they use the country lanes to get places quicker because of traffic congestion in Chiswell Green.





### 3.14 Car ownership over the next 5 years

Respondents were asked whether they anticipated their vehicle ownership increasing or decreasing over the 0-5 and 5-10 years.

The majority of them did not foresee any changes to their vehicle ownership.

### 3.15 Near miss

Of 186 people answering this question, 66% responded that they had not experienced an accident, near accident or minor collision. However, of the 34% who have, the double-mini roundabout was the location where this happened most frequently at nearly 40% of occasions.

## **4.0 Summary**

4.1 Of those residents who live in Chiswell Green and work outside of the home, London is the most popular place to work at 38%

4.2 Working nearby is not popular, but about 30% of residents are currently working at home.



- 4.3 The private car is overwhelmingly the most popular mode of transport for work and leisure travel. Most respondents said that nothing would persuade them to change to a more sustainable way of travelling because of the convenience and speed of travelling by car.
- 4.4 Incentives such as free E-bikes, separate and safer cycle routes, and cheaper bus travel will only influence about 1% of people to change their travel behaviour.
- 4.5 Incentive to influence the routes people take when travelling, such as encouraging them to avoid shortcuts, will be ineffective.
- 4.6 78% of respondents said that they already use the country lanes beyond Chiswell Green Lane due to traffic congestion in Chiswell Green village.
- 4.7 The double mini-roundabout is the source of the most accidents in the village, although the other roundabouts are also vulnerable.