

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

### **Council road project ‘paused’ over safety fears from local businesses**

A controversial project to narrow the road entering a busy industrial estate in Truro has been ‘paused’ by Cornwall Council following an outcry from local businesses concerned about safety.

Cornwall Council had been due to start work this week on widening the footway along Newham Road to create a shared pedestrian and cycle path as part of the Truro Loops project. But this meant narrowing the only road into the Newham Industrial Estate which is home to 180 businesses employing 1,200 people.

More than 40 local businesses have objected to the plans, concerned about the safety of cyclists and pedestrians along what is the only road in and out of the estate which is home to 180 businesses employing more than 1,200 people.

Following a meeting with Council representatives and local businesses organised by the Newham Business Improvement District (BID), Cornwall Council has now paused work in order to conduct a ‘formal road safety assessment’.

Although there has been no formal communication from the Council to the BID, Councillor Connor Donnithorne, who is Portfolio Holder for Transport in Cornwall Council’s Cabinet, confirmed in a post on the BID’s Facebook page on Monday evening that he had “paused this project pending a formal road safety assessment.”

The news has been welcomed by the BID which has campaigned for the Council to think again because of safety fears.

**BID chair Leigh Ibbotson** said: “We have made it very clear to the Council that reducing the width of the carriageway along Newham Road raises a number of safety issues. We have still not seen the original safety assessment for this project, despite requests, so we hope the findings of the new assessment will be published as soon as possible and that the Council reconsiders the entire scheme.”

Among the many businesses and organisations objecting to the project is charity iSightCornwall which is based in Newham and supports blind and partially sighted people.

Its chief executive **Carole Theobald**, who is also the former chair of the Newham BID and Truro Town Deal, said: “The plans are very concerning because of the close proximity of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, and will endanger people that regularly use the route to access our offices.

“As a Chair of Newham BID for four years the road improvement remained our number one priority. The proposed road alterations undo years of promises to champion Truro’s business quarter to improve transport and boost regeneration.”

Another business concerned about the changes is Conway Bailey Transport, Cornwall's largest haulage company which operates a cold store at Newham and has 44-tonne lorries accessing the site eight to 10 times a day.

In a letter to Cornwall Council, **operations director Lee Wills** said: "My major concern is that reducing the width of the road, coupled with the additional cycle and foot traffic the plans potentially will bring to the area is a recipe for disaster. The road layout in my opinion is already unsuitable and needs widening in places. Narrowing the road can only result in an increased risk to everyone involved."

Many local businesses and the Newham Business Improvement District (BID) support the Truro Loops project in principle but say narrowing the road will give heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) just 10 centimetres of clearance. And they fear that large wing mirrors of HGVs overhanging the new path could cause serious injury or a fatality to pedestrians and cyclists.

Instead they want the Council to reconsider, and are asking why it has dropped an earlier plan to make use of Newham's riverside path, away from the road.

**Copy ends – 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2023**