



HIGHWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

13 January 2015

REPORT

Subject Heading:

Existing road closures in The Ridgeway and Repton Avenue, Gidea Park – Outcome of consultation.

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The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Clean, safe and green borough	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Excellence in education and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities for all through economic, social and cultural activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value and enhance the life of every individual	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUMMARY

This report deals with the outcome of an area wide consultation in Gidea Park (south of A118 Main Road) relating to the future of road closures in The Ridgeway and Repton Avenue.

The scheme is within **Romford Town** and **Squirrels Heath** wards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Committee having considered the responses and information set out in this report recommends to the Cabinet Member for Environment that the gated road closures set out in Appendix A of this report are retained and the necessary permanent traffic order/s are made.

The closures are located at the following locations:

- 1.1 **The Ridgeway, Romford** at its junction with Lodge Avenue, gated closure to be located at a point 7.2 metres east of the eastern kerb-line of Lodge Avenue. The location of the closure is shown on drawing no. QL040-11-101 (The Ridgeway).
- 1.2 **Repton Avenue, Romford**, at its junction with Main Road, gated closure to be located at a point 9.5 metres south of the southern kerb-line of Main Road (A118). The location of the closure is shown on drawing no. QL040-11-102 (Repton Avenue).
2. Given the comments made in relation to traffic in areas away from the road closures, that the Head of Streetcare considers potential measures for Carlton Road, corridor of Glenwood Drive, Repton Drive, Repton Gardens, Stanley Avenue and Woodfield Drive subject to the availability funds and inclusion within future programmes.
3. That it be noted the cost of carrying out the works which is mainly associated with advertisement of the traffic orders and staff time is £2,000. This would be met from the Council's 2014/15 Revenue Budget for Minor Safety Improvements for Borough Roads.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Background
 - 1.1 There are existing road closures in Repton Avenue (by Main Road) and The Ridgeway (by Lodge Avenue). These were originally installed around year 2000 to overcome the impact of the traffic signals at the junctions of Main Road/Balgores Lane and Main Road/Heath Drive. The gates can be opened by emergency services only to gain access into the area.
 - 1.2 Following the installation of the traffic signals, the traffic patterns in Gidea Park area had altered significantly. Drivers immediately started to gain access into Gidea Park (area south side of A118 Main Road) via Repton Avenue mainly to by-pass the traffic congestion. Likewise, drivers also

established that it was easier to enter and exit from the area via Lodge Avenue.

- 1.3 As a consequence, Gidea Park Primary School was surrounded by 'rat-running' traffic in Lodge Avenue, Repton Avenue and Tudor Drive, thus causing unsafe situation for school parents. The traffic flows also increased in other roads such as Carlton Road, Glenwood Drive, Stanley Avenue etc on a weekly basis as drivers established alternative routes to avoid the newly installed traffic lights. Traffic speeds and noise levels also increased in predominantly residential areas as drivers tried to recover their lost time in diverting from their normal routes.
- 1.4 The local residents formed a coalition group with a view to collectively resolve the situation. Various options were designed and only few were considered would eliminate the 'rat-running' traffic in Gidea Park area. At the Central Romford Area Committee Forum held in March 2000 with the local residents, the following actions were agreed:
 - a) Removal of the traffic signals at the junction of Main Road/Heath Drive and converting it to a priority junction. In addition, provide yellow box markings to keep the area clear for traffic when entering or exiting to and fro Heath Drive.
 - b) The removal of the signals at Main Road/Balgores Lane junction was not agreed by the committee. Instead, it was decided that the traffic signals are optimised to improve the capacity.
 - c) Provision of road closures in Repton Avenue and The Ridgeway to run on experimental basis for a trial period of 18 months prior to making them permanent.
- 1.5 The Council further under took post monitoring works to check the effectiveness of the closures and changes to the traffic signals. Following a successful trial period of the gates, a decision was made by the Council's former Central Romford Committee Area Forum in September 2000 to make the closures permanent. The closures would only allow access for emergency vehicles and pedestrians. There was, however, a clear understanding that some traffic would disperse to other roads in the area which would reduce the impact on the traffic signals at Main Road/Balgores Lane junction.

2. Present position of existing road closures

- 2.1 From the time of implementing the road closures in The Ridgeway and Repton Avenue, the Council has been receiving enquiries from a resident who felt that the closures should be removed to release pressure of traffic from other roads in the area.
- 2.2 Traffic Management Orders are needed for completed schemes from time to time and in the given circumstances when dealing with a request for

their removal, it is imperative to have the traffic orders available for inspection. However, current records supporting the closures are poor and it took considerable amount of time to research the background details, with little or no success.

- 2.3 The road closure in Repton Avenue and The Ridgeway probably relied on a long lapsed of the Experimental Traffic Management Order (the legal process for closing a road) which operates on temporary basis for 18 months. As a result, the closures in The Ridgeway and Repton Avenue are not supported by permanent Traffic Management Orders of any description.
- 2.4 In light of the situation, the Council needs to decide whether or not the closures should remain and while this process proceeds, a Temporary Traffic Management Order has been imposed which allows the roads to remain closed on temporary basis while the matter is permanently dealt with.
- 2.5 The Council's Highways Advisory Committee had agreed in principle that the local residents should be consulted on the basis whether or not the closures should be retained permanently (with permanent traffic management orders) or removed permanently and the streets opened up to all traffic. As a result, the local residents of Gidea Park were consulted on two options as below:
 - i) **Option 1** - the two roads should remain closed to vehicular traffic on a permanent basis
 - ii) **Option 2** - the closures should be removed and the streets are opened up to all traffic.

3. Details of area wide consultation

The consultation area was cordoned by A118 Main Road in the north, Carlton Road in the south, Crossways in the east and Lodge Avenue in the west and this includes other roads contained within this area. A drawing is included in appendix A showing the consultation area.

- 3.1 The public consultation started on 31st October 2014 and the closing date was 28th November 2014. 1,636 letters were delivered by post in the consultation area. The proposals were also advertised in the Romford Recorder and London Gazette on 31st October 2014, thus giving an opportunity to anyone living outside the area to provide their comments.
- 3.2 Members of the Romford Town and Squirrels Heath Wards were notified prior to the consultation, with HAC members and standard consulates were provided with the same information.

Summary of consultation responses

- 3.3 Residents had provided some useful background information about the former public meetings and decisions that were made in the past. Three petitions were received, one from Gidea Park Primary School containing 55 signatures mainly by the school parents. The other two petitions were organised by local residents containing 27 and 38 signatures. All the petitioners are in the favour of making the existing closures permanent.
- 3.4 Some residents had responded by e-mails and had not included their postal addresses. Their names were not included for the data protection, therefore, these residents were given unique reference numbers (eg. 1, 2 ...10 etc) which can be cross referenced with their postal addresses respectively.
- 3.5 The responses were analysed in details and the results show that **249** responses have been received which represents a response rate of **15.2%**. Further analysis indicates **64%** of residents responded in **support for the gates to remain permanently** whereas **36%** of residents **support the gates to be removed permanently**. Three late responses were received late but these could not be included in the analysis. The comments are summarised in details and these are included in Appendix B of this report.
- 3.6 Metropolitan Police are in the favour of the gated closures to remain. If the gates are removed it would increase traffic using the residential roads in an attempt to avoid using Main Road which would result in increase of traffic accidents.
- 3.7 The comments received varied by location in the consultation area. For instance, most residents of The Ridgeway, Repton Avenue, Tudor Avenue, Tudor Drive etc. want to retain the existing gated closures. Most of them considered that the existing closures provide safety for the local residents, school children particularly when walking to schools (Gidea Park Primary School and Gidea Park College) and overcome severe congestion problems which had developed in narrow roads in the past.
- 3.8 Likewise, the residents of Carlton Road, Glenwood Drive etc. suggested that the closures are removed to reduce the pressure of the traffic in their roads. They have, however, suggested to provide traffic calming measures in their roads if the gates are removed as drivers will start to over speed and this would be detrimental for Gidea Park Primary School, Gidea Park College and the local residents.
- 3.9 Carlton Road was the first road in the borough to receive speed control humps to overcome the problems of over speeding and rat running traffic using the road. Based on the comments provided by the residents, it is clear that such problems are still persisting, therefore, some robust measures are needed to deal with the problem in the long term. The measures could vary from possible road closures to one-way systems. Such measures could also be accompanied by speed restraints to improve safety or make routes less attractive to drivers.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 It is recommended that the proposals as publicly advertised and consulted are agreed to retain the existing gate closures in The Ridgeway and Repton Avenue on permanent basis. The traffic management orders are made and sealed as appropriate. The closures will cause some inconvenience to some residents, however, this will outweigh the benefits of safety, congestion, unwanted traffic etc. in the area. The measures are shown on drawing nos.QL040-11-101 (The Ridgeway) and QL040-11-102 (Repton Avenue), attached to this report.
- 4.2 Staff realise that there are other traffic concerns associated in the wider area, but it is not in a position to consider other matters as part of the current consultation. As a result, it is recommended that the Council's Highways Advisory Committee could ask officers to consider potential measures for Carlton Road, Glenwood Drive, Stanley Avenue, Repton Drive, Repton Gardens, etc. as candidate schemes for the future.
- 4.3 Although there are speed control humps installed in Carlton Road, drivers still use the road to avoid the traffic signals at Main Road/Balgores Lane junction or the traffic in Main Road during peak periods. Potential schemes could be considered in the future, subject to the availability of funds and priority based given that there are other outstanding schemes in the borough.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial Implications and risks:

It is estimated that the cost of carrying out the works is £2,000 which is mainly associated with public advertisement of the traffic order and staff costs only. This would be met from the Council's 2014/15 Revenue budget for Minor Safety improvements for Borough Roads.

This is a standard project for Streetcare and there is no expectation that the works cannot be contained within the cost estimate. There is an element of contingency built into the financial estimate. In the unlikely event of an overspend, the balance would need to be contained within the overall Streetcare's Revenue budget.

Legal Implications and risks:

In this case, permanent traffic orders are recommended to close the relevant roads. The procedure for making an Order with Greater London

is set out in the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure), (England and Wales) Regulations of 1996. These Orders require a public consultation period of a minimum 21 days. There is also a requirement to publish a public notice known as Notice of Proposal to announce that the local authority proposes to make a traffic order. This notice must be published in the London Gazette and a local newspaper that is circulated in the area of the proposed traffic order. There is also a requirement to consult directly with certain organisations such as the emergency services (Police, Fire Brigade and Ambulance Services), public transport operators, Road Haulage Association etc.

To ensure that the public are fully aware of the proposals, the Council often places notices in the affected streets and delivers letters to residents in those streets.

Anybody has the right to make a representation to the Council regarding a proposal. This must be done in writing and state any reasons for objecting. The Council must consider any objections it receives. If the proposal proceeds, then a second public notice is published in the Notice of Making in the same publications. Once the traffic order comes into effect, any traffic signs associated with it shall be put in place.

Human Resources Implications and risks:

The proposal can be delivered within the standard resourcing within Streetcare, and has no specific impact on staffing/HR issues.

Equalities Implications and risks:

The Council has a general duty under the Equality Act of 2010 to ensure that its highway network is accessible to all users. Where infrastructure is provided or substantially upgraded, reasonable adjustments should be made to improve access. In considering the impacts and making improvements for people with protected characteristics (mainly, but not limited to disabled people, the young and older people), this will assist the Council in meeting its duty under the Act.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Scheme project file: QL040 – Minor schemes.

Appendix A

Plans showing the consultation area
and locations of road closures in
The Ridgeway and Repton Avenue, Gidea Park