

HIGHWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

11 August 2015

Subject Heading:

Proposals to close Hubbards Close at A127 Southend Arterial Road, Hornchurch - Outcome of public consultation

CMT Lead:

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Policy context:

**Havering Local Development Framework (2008).
Havering Local Implementation Plan 2014/15 – 2016/17 Three Year Delivery Plan (2013).**

Financial summary:

The estimated cost of £5,000 for the closure would be met via the Council's 2015/16 Revenue Budget allocated for Minor Safety Schemes.

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

Havering will be clean and its environment will be cared for	[X]
People will be safe, in their homes and in the community	[X]
Residents will be proud to live in Havering	[]

SUMMARY

This report sets out the responses to a consultation to close Hubbards Close to motorised traffic at its junction with A127 Southend Arterial Road on an experimental basis using an Experimental Traffic Order and seeks approval that the recommendations are agreed.

The scheme is within **Emerson Park** ward.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Committee having considered the report and the representations made recommends to the Cabinet Member for Environment that the Experimental Traffic Order to close Hubbards Close to motorised traffic be made at the following location:
 - **Hubbards Close, Hornchurch**, the northern end at its junction with A127 Southend Arterial Road, located at a point 2.8 metres from the southern kerb-line of the westbound carriageway of A127 Southend Arterial Road, Hornchurch. The location is shown on Drawing QL040/50/01.
2. That it be noted that formal objections to the Experimental Traffic Order must be made within 6-months of the date of it coming into force and that it may only be in force for a maximum period of 18 months. Staff would bring a further report forward to the Committee after 6-months so that a recommendation may be made to the Cabinet Member for Environment on whether or not the closure should be made permanent before the experimental period ends.
3. That it be noted that should the Experimental Traffic Order be agreed, staff will write to all those within the consultation area to provide an update and explain the next stage of the process going forward.
4. That it be noted that given the concerns expressed about the narrow widths of the roads in the County Park Estate and the potential inconsiderate parking, that the Head of Streetcare in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment may consider additional experimental measures for parking restrictions at those locations should the need arise.
5. That it be noted that the estimated cost of £5,000 for implementation will be met from the Council's Revenue Budget allocated for Minor Safety Schemes.

REPORT DETAIL

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Hubbards Close lies east of Hubbards Chase and it connects the westbound carriageway of A127 Southend Arterial Road via an unmade road. This section of the road has a mixed use of occupancies such as residential, riding schools, stables and small commercial units.
- 1.2 According to the Council's Highway Register, part of Hubbards Close is an adopted public highway, maintainable at public expense (between Hubbards Chase to property nos. 7 and 8) whereas the remainder of the road is unadopted highway not maintainable at public expense.
- 1.3 The problem associated with this road is that traffic travelling in the westbound carriageway of the A127 enters into the unmade road leading to Hubbards Close to avoid the traffic delays at the junction of the A127/Ardleigh Green Road/Squirrels Heath Road junction. The traffic queues and delays in the A127 are commonly associated with two problems as below:
 - The existing traffic signals at the junction of Ardleigh Green Road/Squirrels Heath Road undergo operational fault repairs, accidental damage repairs etc. at various times.
 - The existing signals at this junction have been upgraded by Transport for London to operate under SCOOT, however the junction is considered to be operating at maximum efficiency. It is the volume of traffic that limits the operation of the signals as this junction handles tidal flows during peak periods. This means there is heavy flow towards London during morning peaks and towards the M25 in the evening peaks. Furthermore, the junction is sometimes prone to being overloaded due to road works, emergencies etc. on the M25 motorway, A13, A12 and other local roads in the borough.
- 1.4 The level of through traffic using into Hubbards Close has a detrimental effect on local residents. The table below shows the traffic movements in Hubbards Close at peak periods. The data is sourced from a traffic survey carried out in 2013.

Traffic Movements in Hubbards Close

	Westbound (A127 to Hubbards Close)	Eastbound (Hubbards Close to A127)
<u>Weekday Peaks</u>	<u>vehicles</u>	<u>vehicles</u>
08:00 to 09:00	104	12
17:15 to 18:15	15	12
Daily average flow	211	110
<u>Weekend Peak</u>		
10:30 to 11:30	7	7
Daily average flow	77	79

- 1.5 From the above traffic data it can be seen that the level of use of Hubbards Close is marked in the morning peak. The through traffic has the potential to create disturbance to local residents in the County Park Estate while accessing Wingletye Lane. The northern section of Wingletye Lane suffers from speeding traffic entering from the A127. There is a speed camera installed close to Nelmes Primary School which has control over the traffic within this section of the road. Beyond Hubbards Chase there are no physical speed restriction measures which gives an opportunity to the rat-running traffic to travel fast to make up for the lost time suffered in the traffic congestion.
- 1.6 Transport for London (TfL) is currently replacing the existing railway bridge which carries the A127 Southend Arterial Road over the East Anglia Railway. TfL is investing £32 million in the scheme. The bridge has come to the end of its useful life and is beyond minor repairs and maintenance. Replacing the bridge will ensure that the new structure is safe, avoid the need to restrict vehicles with abnormal loads using the bridge and reduce the need for emergency closures for repairs or maintenance.
- 1.7 Preparatory works for the bridge replacement works have already started, however, the main works are due to commence around mid-2016 and anticipated to finish in late 2017. The main works will involve a contraflow over the bridge from late 2016 and although TfL will try and mitigate the impacts of the loss of road capacity, it is anticipated that drivers could potentially use Hubbards Close as a rat-run to avoid traffic delays in the A127.
- 1.8 Considering the problems about the on-going rat-running traffic and the bridge replacement works, it is recommended that the impact of the traffic in the area be considered for control.

2.0 **Proposals to close Hubbards Close at its junction with A127 Southend Arterial Road**

- 2.1 It is proposed that access for motorised traffic leaving the A127 to use Hubbards Close be prevented as shown on the plan. Access will be maintained for non-motorised users. Drawing QL040/50/01 shows the proposed closure point.
- 2.2 Staff have discussed the proposals with the emergency services which have confirmed no objections to the Experimental Traffic Order and that they would avoid using Hubbards Close as a matter of routine in any case.
- 2.3 The closure will be of a physical nature such as concrete barriers or manhole sections filled with concrete together with appropriate signage. In addition, advance warning signs will be installed along the westbound carriageway of the A127 to inform drivers about the road closure. This will, however, be subject to the approval by Transport for London (Road Space Management Directorate) as the A127 is under their jurisdiction.
- 2.4 Approximately 662 letters were delivered by Royal Mail in the consultation area on 29th May 2015 to those potentially affected by impact of the experimental closure. Attached is a copy of the plan showing the consultation area. The closing date of the consultation was set for 19th June 2015. Notices were also installed on site thus giving opportunity to anyone to provide their views on the proposals.
- 2.5 In addition, the ward councillors, HAC members and statutory consultees such as London Buses, emergency services (Metropolitan Police, Fire Brigade, London Ambulance Services, Transport for London (Road Space Management) and other interest groups were sent the consultation information.

3.0 **Outcome of initial consultation**

- 3.1 By the close of consultation, 26 responses were received. The responses are summarised in Appendix I.
- 3.2 The results show that 73% of respondents (19 respondents) are in favour of the closure whereas 23% are against the closure (6 respondents). One respondent did not give a preference either way (4%).
- 3.3 The comments received varied by location in the consultation area depending on the impact they experience. For instance, most residents of Hubbards Close and Hubbards Chase want a permanent closure. Many considered that permanent closure will provide safety for the local residents, school children particularly when walking to schools and overcome the long standing rat-running traffic issue. The Emerson Park & Ardleigh Green Residents' Association and the local Neighbourhood Watch expressed support.
- 3.4 Some residents responded by e-mail and had not included their postal addresses and so staff are not able to gauge their location.

3.5 Those objecting to the scheme raised a number of issues such as the problems being caused by the traffic signals at Ardleigh Green which needed changing; that the scheme would force the commercial operators in Hubbards Close to access via the Country Park Estate; that the Council has over-estimated the problem; that the closure should be somewhere else and that a gate should be provided so commercial operators could have a key.

4.0 **Staff Comments**

4.1 An experimental closure will allow a scheme to be tested and experienced “live” to see if any of the concerns prove to be a reality and staff would work with any having real issues to see if they can be dealt with during the experimental period.

4.2 It is not practical to provide a gate with access to individuals. Although a scheme is technically possible to allow access by a permit-holder system, it would be resource-heavy to administer and monitor by the Council and open to abuse. Staff would also be concerned with the potential for people to stop on the A127 to either gain access or thinking they can gain access. A physical closure is relatively simple and much safer.

4.3 Providing a closure elsewhere (even with signage) still risks attempted access by through traffic and some drivers (especially with larger vehicles) may attempt to reverse onto the A127.

4.4 Staff recommend that the experimental closure to motorised traffic be recommended for implementation.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

This report is asking HAC to recommend to the Cabinet Member the implementation of the above scheme.

The estimated cost of £5,000 for implementation will be met by the Council’s 2015/16 Revenue Budget allocated for Minor Safety Improvements for Borough Roads.

The costs shown are an estimate of the full costs of the scheme, should all proposals be implemented. It should be noted that subject to the recommendations of the committee a final decision then would be made by the Lead Member – as regards actual implementation and scheme detail. Therefore, final costs are subject to change.

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 Revenue budget.

Legal implications and risks:

An Experimental Traffic Order can remain in force for a maximum of 18-months while the effects are monitored and assessed. Changes may be made within the first 6-months of the experimental period, if necessary, before the Council decides whether or not to continue with the changes brought in by the Experimental Traffic Order on a permanent basis.

It is not possible to lodge a formal objection to an Experimental Traffic Order until it is in force. Once in force, objections must be made within 6-months of the date that the Experimental Traffic Order comes into force.

Human Resources implications and risks:

None.

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

Project file: QL040 – Minor Schemes/Hubbards Close.

APPENDIX I

Summary of Consultation Responses

APPENDIX II

Plan showing location of closure