



HIGHWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

10 December 2013

REPORT

Subject Heading:

**GEOFFREY AVENUE – PROPOSED 7.5
TONNE WEIGHT LIMIT**

Report Author and contact details:

Outcome of public 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUMMARY

This report sets out the results of the public consultation concerning the proposals for the provision of a 7.5 tonne weight limit in Geoffrey Avenue as part of measures to prevent the road being used by commercial vehicles often servicing the Church Road industrial estates.

This scheme is within the **Harold Wood** ward.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Committee having considered the representations made either;
 - (a) recommends to the Cabinet Member for Community Empowerment that the 7.5 weight limit set out in this report be implemented; or
 - (b) that the scheme be rejected.

2. That it be noted that the estimated cost of £3,000 will be met by funding from the Council's 2013/14 revenue budget for traffic signs and bollards.

REPORT DETAIL

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Geoffrey Avenue is a residential street which links the southwest bound A12 with Church Road. The street often has parking on both sides which narrows the available carriageway width.
- 1.2 It has been observed that on occasion commercial through-traffic uses the street in both directions.
- 1.3 Concerns about larger commercial vehicles using the street have been raised by residents and was highlighted to the Council in the form of 69 signature petition which was considered by the Highways Advisory Committee at its meeting of 11th December 2012 (Highways Applications, Item H3).
- 1.4 The Committee decided that the Head of Streetcare should proceed with the design and consultation on imposing a 7.5 tonne weight limit within the street.
- 1.5 A 7-day traffic survey (24 hours a day) was undertaken from Monday 8th July 2013 which recorded that out of 881 vehicles, 123 were heavy goods (over 3.5 tonnes) travelling southbound compared to 49 out of 684 travelling northbound for the period.
- 1.6 The results show approximately 99% of the HGV's entering Geoffrey Avenue from the A12 are classified as rigid 2 axle heavy good vehicles and therefore it is difficult to ascertain if these vehicles are above 7.5 tonne gross vehicle weight (GVW) as HGVs are classed as being vehicles over 3.5 tonnes.

- 1.7 Further analysis of the survey indicates that there is 30% more traffic (all vehicles) in general travelling southbound at average speeds 21.6 mph compared with 18.5 mph for northbound traffic.
- 1.8 A proposal to introduce a 7.5 tonne weight limit (with exemption for vehicles serving the street, such as refuse vehicles) was advertised on 14th October 2013, with site notices placed and 68 letters delivered by hand to residents of the street with comments to be received in writing by 8th November 2013.

2.0 Outcome of Public Consultation

- 2.1 By the close of consultation, 5 responses had been received with 3 from residents, 1 from the police and 1 from a HAC member. These comments are summarised in Appendix A of this report.
- 2.2 The police objected to the proposals as it deals with one road in isolation which would transfer the problem to parallel streets. The police suggested that the HGV route should be positively signed from the A12.
- 2.3 One resident gave full support to the proposals. One resident stated that the street should be “no entry” from the A12. One resident objected on the basis that the limit would not be enforced and would not deal with non-residential through traffic, especially where the A12 was congested and suggested that traffic be prevented from leaving the A12.
- 2.4 The HAC member sought clarification if there was rat-running in the street as parallel roads seemed to be similar.

3.0 Staff Comments

- 3.1 A 7.5 tonne weight limit prohibits vehicles with GVW in excess of 7.5 tonnes and so smaller, 2 axle lorries would be excluded as they are in the 3.5 to 7.5 tonne range.
- 3.3 According to the traffic survey almost all of HGVs recorded using Geoffrey Avenue are 2 axle lorries, therefore, it is difficult to establish if these lorries are within 7.5 tonnes.
- 3.5 It is the case that enforcement of the 7.5 tonne limit would lie with the Metropolitan Police as the Council has not taken on powers to enforce moving traffic offences.
- 3.6 As highlighted previously, the survey results show that over 50% more HGV's travel southbound on Geoffrey Avenue than northbound. This indicates that there may be an issue with drivers missing Harold Court Road.
- 3.7 The response rate from residents was low with 1 in support and 2 requesting measures to prevent all traffic leaving the A12 and so with the objection

made by the police, Members will need to decide if the weight limit is likely to be an effective treatment.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial Implications and Risks

The estimated cost of £3,000 for implementation can be met from the Council's 2013/14 revenue budget for traffic signs and bollards.

The costs shown are an estimate of the full costs of the scheme, should it 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:

Weight limits require advertisement and consultation before a decision can be made on their implementation. Enforcement of moving traffic offences on Havering borough roads (including weight limits) is carried out by the Metropolitan Police.

HR 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 2010 to ensure that its highway network is accessible to all. 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.

Weight limits can reduce traffic volumes and the risk of collisions, especially involving vulnerable users. A residential street with restricted HGV access may improve subjective safety.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Project Scheme File Ref:
QM025 Geoffrey Avenue Weight Limit

APPENDIX A

Summary of Consultation Responses:

Respondent	Comments
<p>Metropolitan Police Chadwell Heath Traffic Unit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Please be advised that Police do not support the environmental weight limit proposed for Geoffrey Avenue. ○ If the purpose of the restriction is to stop heavy vehicles gaining access to the industrial premises in Church Road via Geoffrey Avenue then this should not be set in isolation. ○ If Geoffrey Avenue is unsuitable for heavy vehicles then so would be David Drive and Court Avenue, the next two turnings along the A12, which heavy vehicles are likely to use if they cannot use Geoffrey Avenue. ○ If the accepted route to access Church Road is via Harold Court Road, then this should be signed to that effect with the use of diagram 2806 TSRGD from the A12.
<p>Resident of Geoffrey Avenue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A 7.5 tonne weight limit prohibits vehicles of a GVW in excess of 7.5 tonnes and so smaller, 2 axle lorries are excluded as they are 3.5 to 7.5 tonnes GVW. Vehicles in excess of 7.5 tonnes will be larger 2-axle lorries (7.5 to 18 tonnes) and then multi-axle lorries such as 3-axle lorries (rigid or artic) and then 4-axle lorries such as rigid grab lorries (32 tonnes) or artics (38 tonnes). Then there are other lorries with 5 or more axles up to 44 tonnes. So, the lorries which are normally seen in the street are within 7.5 tonnes and only occasionally are larger vehicles seen. ○ The real issue for the street is commercial traffic missing Harold Court Road plus through traffic using the street when the A12 becomes congested which is probably a more regular problem than large vehicles. Drivers often drive at a speed that the subjective observer would have concerns about. In addition, some local operators use the street (e.g Morrison Utilities at the Elms Estate), but using vehicles within 7.5 tonnes. ○ In our opinion, the solution is to positively sign the commercial vehicle routes to the local industrial/ commercial sites from and to the A12 and then physically prevent traffic leaving the A12 (left turn ban) such as the layout at the junction of the A12/ Somerville Road in Redbridge.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As well as dealing with the underlying concern about larger vehicles using the street, this would actually deal with the greater problem of traffic which should be keeping to the A12 and the distributor network including Harold Court Road and Church Road. ○ If a similar treatment were provided at David Drive, Court Avenue and possible Avenue Road, then the conditions for residents will be improved and additionally, the streets are used by pupils walking to Harold Court School and a reduction in traffic using the streets would be a subjective safety improvement for them, especially with the recent expansion of the school. ○ Specifically with Geoffrey Avenue, residents could access the A12 as now (outward), but returning from the M25 direction would need to use Harold Court Road and Church Road. Coming from Romford, the ability to U-turn at Harold Court Road / A12 would be lost, but technically the permitted movement is right into Harold Court Road rather than a U-turn (because of conflict with vehicles leaving Harold Court Road) and TfL has been enforcing such movements elsewhere on its network. ○ In terms of the enforcement of the 7.5 tonne limit, this rests with the Met. Police as the Council has not taken on moving traffic offences. It is unlikely enforcement by the police for what is a rare event will be a priority. ○ In summary, we object on the basis that the weight limit will do little to deal with real issue of non-residential through traffic, it is very unlikely to be enforced and limited funding would be better used to reduce the rat-running by all vehicles by preventing traffic leaving the A12 and by positively signing the route to be taken by all commercial traffic via Harold Court Road and Church Road. This would civilise the street and indeed would provide wider benefits if the other parallel streets were similarly dealt with.
Councillor Thompson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sought clarification if rat running in the street is prevalent as parallel roads seem to be very similar.
Local Resident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Suggests the Council should consider making Geoffrey Avenue 'no entry' from the A12.
Resident of Geoffrey Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is in full support of the proposals and believes sat navs are sending HGV's to Geoffrey Avenue rather than Harold Court Road.