

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 02/03/2020

Subject: Petition to Re-open Harwood Terrace

Report of: Cabinet Member for the Environment - Councillor Wesley Harcourt

Responsible Director: Sharon Lea – Strategic Director of Environment

Summary

Following the start of an experimental traffic scheme on the 21 October 2019, Harwood Terrace, a residential road in the wards of Parsons Green and Walham, was closed to through traffic. After the closure of Harwood Terrace a petition to reopen the road was started by a petition organiser. This petition has a total of 438 signatures from residents (307) and businesses (131). A rival petition to make the closure of Harwood Terrace permanent was subsequently launched, which to date has 263 signatures and was supplemented by a paper petition with 51 signatures.

Recommendations

- 1) To note the petitions
 - 2) To receive an update from the SW6 Traffic Working Party and take any decisions accordingly
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Wards Affected: Parsons Green and Walham, Sands End

Financial Impact

This is a temporary scheme, therefore, reversing the scheme early will not incur any additional costs over and above those already anticipated.

Leaving the scheme in place will not incur any additional costs over and above those already agreed for installing the scheme.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report

Contact Officer(s):

Name: Masum Choudhury
Position: Head of Transport
Telephone: 020 8753 3354
Email: Masum.Choudhury@lbhf.gov.uk

Name: Giles Batchelor
Position: Finance Manager (Public Realm)
Telephone: 020 8753 2407
Email: Giles.Batchelor@lbhf.gov.uk
Verified by Emily Hill, Assistant Director, Finance

Name: Adesuwa Omoregie
Position: Chief Solicitor (Planning and Property)
Telephone: 020 8753 2297
Email: Adesuwa.Omoregie@lbhf.gov.uk

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None

Background

1. Following road safety and traffic concerns expressed by residents of Harwood Terrace, Waterford Road and Edith Row, a decision was taken to start an experimental closure of Harwood Terrace.
2. The closure of Harwood Terrace started on 21 October 2019 under an experimental traffic regulation order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The experimental traffic order allows the council up to eighteen months to determine the implications and impacts of an experimental scheme.
3. During the experiment, there is scope to make changes, explore steps and decide on whether the scheme, should be varied, abandoned or made permanent.
4. During the initial six months of the experiment the council has a statutory obligation to consider any objections to the scheme. This statutory six-month period is also initiated if any modifications are made to the traffic regulation order.

5. Following the closure of Harwood Terrace, a resident and business petition to 'Reopen Harwood Terrace' was organised by a lead petitioner. This petition obtained a total of 438 signatures, consisting of 307 from residents and 131 from businesses respectively. The petitioner also created a web-based platform from which the Council received over 2,000 emails, although it is difficult to verify that all responses through this platform are authentic.
6. The petition to 'Reopen Harwood Terrace' was submitted during the statutory consultation period, and therefore will be considered when deciding on the future of the scheme as part of the statutory process.
7. The residents' petition request is as follows:

"We the undersigned petition the council to bring an immediate end to the experimental traffic order which has closed a portion of Harwood Terrace (SW6) to through traffic.

The partial closure of Harwood Terrace (SW6) enacted 21. October 2019 has caused SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE to local residents & businesses in Fulham: Increasing time spent in needless traffic on local roads; Increasing the amount of pollution locally caused by thousands of extra idling car engines each day; Harm to local businesses for their staff, deliveries & customers; Unsafe road conditions for all road users due to the actions of frustrated drivers and heavily congested roads; Reduced local bus service provision, worst affecting the most disadvantaged people in society; Reduction in the efficacy of vital local services and emergency services due to congestion on local roads; Financial impediment to local residents being forced through a poorly designed junction & yellow box; Incessant beeping of car horns for residents & businesses close to the top of Bagleys Lane due to driver frustration & fatigue; And much more besides!

This petition asks that LBHF Cabinet invites us to discuss this matter at its next meeting of Cabinet and to hold Councillor Harcourt, the Cabinet Member for the Environment to account for failing to reopen the road despite having received nearly 2,000 letters of objection already (more than 1,600 from LBHF addresses) and a petition asking him to do so, signed by nearly all businesses based along the Imperial Road; the Wandsworth Bridge Road and The New Kings Road.

We the petitioners recognise that residents of Harwood Terrace have raised their concern at the volume of traffic utilising the road upon which they reside and we support that a solution should be sought for their concerns in due course, if indeed one can be found which doesn't damage the rest of the local area. The closure which currently exists has however caused considerable disruption to the local area and these effects are totally non-commensurate with the problem which it set out to address. Indeed, the problem which Harwood Terrace residents outlined to the Council has simply been displaced & worsened for an (at least) equal number of other residents living toward the

top of Bagleys Lane and also adds a new problem for thousands more residents and road users.”

8. The business petition request is as follows:

“We, the undersigned business leaders of Fulham, demand that Harwood Terrace reopen to vehicular through-traffic with immediate effect.

Since Harwood Terrace closed on 21 October 2019, our businesses have suffered devastating effects thanks to the vastly increased time that our staff, customers and business partners now spend in slow moving traffic on the badly impacted surrounding roads on a daily basis.

If the road were not to reopen immediately, it is in our view that, local businesses will suffer a poor Christmas trading period and that this could do permanent damage to Fulham’s business community and to the future of our Fulham high streets.

Please Cllr. Harcourt, hear the collective voice of Fulham enterprise, in reopening Harwood Terrace with immediate effect.”

9. A petition to ‘Close Harwood Terrace permanently’ in support of the experimental road closure was also started on 14 January 2020 and ended on 19 February 2020, having received 263 signatures an additional paper petition was also received with 51 signatures supporting the permanent closure of Harwood Terrace.

10. The residents’ petition request is as follows:

“We the undersigned petition the council to urgently make the current temporary closure of Harwood Terrace permanent, as soon as possible.

The closure of Harwood Terrace has been hugely successful in closing a horrendous rat run that subjected the residents of Harwood Terrace to up to: 400 cars per hour; unhealthy levels of pollution; dangerous driving from rat runners; and, aggressive behaviour from the 'rat runners' against the residents both before and after the current trial closure. Before the closure there were also many minor, serious and near fatal accidents on Harwood Terrace itself and the adjoining intersections with Kings Road.

The traffic across the whole area has significantly reduced as a result of the closure and we expect will continue to do so as sat navs and driving apps are updated over time, alongside driver behaviour.

The closure supports LBHF's and London's environmental agendas and supports the reduction of car usage overall in the climate emergency in which we find ourselves.”

11. The petition to close Harwood Terrace permanently was submitted during the statutory consultation period and will therefore be considered when deciding on the future of the scheme as part of the statutory process.

Community Safety and Environment Policy & Accountability Committee

12. Two deputation requests were submitted to the Community Safety and Environment Policy and Accountability Committee on 28 January 2020, by the lead petitioner for the 'reopening Harwood Terrace' campaign. One of the deputation requests was on the consultation and decision-making process for the experiment. This deputation is answered in the body of this report. The second deputation request is in relation to the number of PCNs issued at the Bagleys Lane / New Kings Road junction, since the closure of Harwood Terrace.
13. A Special Community Safety and Environment Policy and Accountability Committee was called on 10 February 2020 to consider the Harwood Terrace experimental scheme and respond to deputation requests.

SW6 Traffic Working Party

14. At the Special Community and Environment Policy and Accountability Committee, residents supported a proposal to establish an SW6 Traffic Working Party comprised of people from Harwood Terrace and neighbouring streets. The group met on 17 and 24 February 2020. It considered immediate options for Harwood Terrace and principles for a long-term vision for the neighbourhood and made recommendations to the council.

Reasons for Decision

15. Under the Council's Petitions Scheme, a petition which attracts 250 valid signatures (of people who live, work or study in the borough) triggers consideration of the petition by Cabinet. This petition meets this criterion.
16. At the Full Council meeting held on 22 January 2020 the Cabinet Member for the Environment answered eight written public questions on this experimental traffic scheme. An opportunity to raise supplementary questions was also provided and responded to by the Cabinet Member.
17. An extraordinary Council meeting on 25 February 2020 will take place to consider a special motion on the re-opening of Harwood Terrace.

Equality Implications

18. It is not anticipated that continuing with the experimental closure of Harwood Terrace will have any direct negative implications on any groups with protected characteristics under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. A referral for

consideration and scrutiny by the PAC will allow for any such concerns to be subject to public debate.

Implications verified/completed by: Peter Smith, Head of Policy & Strategy, tel. 07818 402486

Consultation

19. An online consultation was carried out between 18 February 2019 and 15 March 2019 that was open to all. This was supplemented with letters delivered to all addresses in Harwood Terrace asking for residents' opinions on closing their street under an experimental traffic management order. In total 106 people from the area participated with 44 in favour, and 66 against the closure. Of the 44 respondents in favour, 31 were residents of Harwood Terrace.
20. Emergency services were notified prior to the experimental close coming into force. During the experiment, emergency services were updated that no access would be provided through Harwood Terrace until further notice. Transport for London was also informed and no objections were received, before the decision to proceed with the experimental road closure was taken.
21. Ten advanced warning signs were located around the immediate area on 4 October notifying that Harwood Terrace would be closed on 21 October. A further 1,000 road closure notification letters were distributed in the wider area on Friday 11 October 2019.
22. Objections to an experimental traffic order must be considered during the initial six-month period after it comes into force, or if any modifications are made. This serves as the formal consultation period, whereas the experimental scheme can last up to 18 months during which a decision on whether it is to be made permanent needs to be taken (but not during the initial six-months). Although the legal process allows up to 18 months, the Cabinet Member is committed to a resolution within a six-month time-frame of the closure.