

Decisions of the Chipping Barnet Area Environment Sub-Committee

16 October 2012

Members Present:-

Councillor Barry Evangeli (Chairman)
Councillor Rowan Turner (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb	Councillor Brian Salinger
Councillor Alison Cornelius	Councillor Lisa Rutter (In place of Councillor Andreas Tambourides)
Councillor David Longstaff	

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Andreas Tambourides

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that decision of the Sub-Committee meeting held on the 26 June 2012 were agreed.

2. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

- Councillor David Longstaff - Agenda Item 5a - Traffic intersection outside Foulds School (Byng Road): Personal and non prejudicial, as Councillor Longstaff is Governor at Foulds School.
- Councillor Rowan Turner - Agenda Item 7 - Hillside, Hollyfield & St John's Avenues and Queens Parade Close: Personal as Councillor Turner previously owned a property in Hollyfield Avenue in. Councillor Turner took part in the discussion but did not vote on the item.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (IF ANY)

From Vivien Kennedy

1. I am pleased to have another opportunity to take part in the process which I trust will finally lead to the closure of Hollyfield Avenue, Hillside Avenue and St Johns Avenue to through traffic as the council survey appears to support the residents' survey that the volume of daily traffic, 1500 cars southbound on St Johns Avenue and 2000 cars a day passing along Hillside Avenue, is too heavy for these small residential roads.

Closure to through traffic should also put a stop to the offensive verbal abuse received by many residents from speeding traffic as we try to park in our roads or as we try to turn from Hillside into either Hollyfield or St Johns on our way to Friern Barnet Road.

One of the matters raised at the last meeting was the changing of the traffic light sequencing at the cross-roads of Friern Barnet Lane, Friern Barnet Road and Colney Hatch Lane. We were told that this was the responsibility of TfL and changing the sequencing was under consideration.

Can the Chairman please give an update on any discussions Barnet Council has had with TfL on this matter and advise on progress which might assist the closure of our small residential roads to through traffic?

Response

Barnet officers would have approached the DTO section of TfL who look after and maintain the borough's traffic signal equipment if there was reason to believe the location could benefit from further changes in the sequencing. That liaison has happened in the past, and the resultant 'tweaks' have yielded minimal benefit. As it is now clear to officers following the surveys, further discussions with TfL are not advisable until such a time Barnet are clear on the way forward.

From Graham Kantorowicz

2. Now that the results of the Council's own traffic surveys are available and which support the residents' findings, will the Committee now accede to residents' wishes and, in accordance with Council policy to keep traffic on the main thoroughfares, close these roads to through traffic?

Response

Barnet's corporate strategy is to keep traffic moving. While the figures do indicate an underlying challenge for the side roads in the vicinity occasioned by lack of spare capacity at the Woodhouse/Friern Barnet Lane junction, it does not make sense to close off the side roads without addressing the fundamental issue of junction capacity. Doing so will exacerbate congestion and bring traffic to a standstill, and/or simply displace the problem to other less suitable roads.

From Graham Kantorowicz

3. The Council now has the results of 3 traffic surveys and will be aware of the wishes of residents from the earlier Consultation and other correspondence. The closure of the three Avenues to through traffic can be achieved at relatively low cost, a Traffic Order, 3 bollards and 6 road signs. What is stopping the Council closing the roads and improving the quality of life for the residents?

Response

While the request to close off the roads in question might make sense to the residents of Hollyfield and St John's Avenues, a wider duty is owed to all road users and officers have not deemed it advisable to do this without taking into consideration the implications on the wider network and the negative impact that this may cause.

From Michael Bernstein

4. I note from the data for the second traffic survey undertaken by Barnet Council, that the total figure of 780 vehicles per day for Eastbound and Westbound traffic in Queens Parade Close on Thursday 31 May 2012 was in excess of the figures for the comparable day in the first survey on 8 September 2011. As a narrow service road to a parade of local shops it is totally unsuitable for this increasing high traffic

volume. Within this context and with planning permission recently given for further development in Queens Parade Close, including residential accommodation with entrances abutting directly onto the roadway, will the Environmental Committee recommend the placing of a barrier in Queens Parade Close to allow access to premises but prevent through traffic?

Response

Queens Parade is a service alley that is unsuitable for through traffic. Surveys indicate a significant proportion use it mainly in the east to west direction but closing it off will present problems as Barnet Furniture Centre have indicated they will be unable to do a u-turn. They are happy for a one-way operation east-to-west to be introduced. Although this will counter the observed majority, it will not eliminate the problem of improper use associated with Queens Parade

From Mr Patrick Pugh

5. Chapter 7 of the Council's approved statutory plan deals with Movement.

Paragraph 7.2 describes the 4 strategic policies which will be applied across the Borough. Policy GRoadNet-Road Network reads "The Council will seek to ensure that roads within the borough are used appropriately according to their status in the defined road hierarchy."

Para 7.3 sets out the Detailed Policies which support the 4 Strategic Policies.

Para 7.3.22 deals with Road Hierarchy and defines a Tier 3 road as "the local distributors band access roads that make up the remainder of the road network." it goes on to state that "many access roads will be primarily for use by residents and pedestrians and often the traffic functions will be less important than environmental concerns, so traffic calming measures to displace through traffic may be required."

Para 7.3.25 is headed "Reducing Traffic Impact in Residential Areas" and reads "where necessary, and in partnership with the local community, the council will introduce measures to reduce the effects of such traffic on the environment and on residents. The council is especially concerned about the effects of through traffic."

Our small group of Tier 3 residential streets is suffering unacceptably high volumes of through traffic which should be using adjacent Tier 2 roads.

Why will the Council not work with the local community and apply the policies set out in it's Statutory Development Plan to protect the environmental quality of our neighbourhood by preventing through traffic?

Response

The report that is being tabled is proposing exactly what Mr Pugh is asking for; that officers undertake engagement with local community via a consultation exercise to gauge support for capacity improvements at the FBL & CHL junction.

From Mr Patrick Pugh

6. Chapter 14 of the Council's draft "Core Strategy" deals with "providing effective and efficient travel"

Para14.7.3 defines the Council's approach to the use of road space as "seek to ensure that roads are used appropriately according to their status in the defined hierarchy ..."

Para14.6.2 defines the Council's approach to traffic using inappropriate routes and states that "this is contrary to Barnet's approach which is to ensure that traffic uses appropriate routes, and in particular that through traffic uses the main road network."

Our small group of residential streets is suffering unacceptably high volumes of through traffic which should be using the main Tier 2 road network.

Why will the Council not work with the local community and apply the draft policies in it's Core Strategy, which closely reflect the policies in it's published UDP, to protect the environmental quality of our neighbourhood by preventing through traffic?

Response

As much as it makes sense from the residents point of view to preventing through traffic using the side roads, doing so without addressing the fundamental issue of capacity at the FBL & CHL junction will simply lead even more congestion through the junction which hosts bus routes, deny opportunities for faster reaction by blue-light services, and even simply displace the problem to other equally unsuitable roads that council will be called to address. The problem will still be there.

From Sue de Botton

7. We ,in the small residential enclave of St Johns, Hillside, Hollyfield Avenues and Queen's Parade Close N.11, can no longer tolerate the huge density of traffic passing through our roads. The council's own survey shows more than 1500 cars per day using our roads as a rat run. When is the council going to act and provide a stopping up order? Many residential roads in Barnet have been closed to through traffic and we demand the same.

Why have the residents of the above roads not been given a written analytical report of the raw traffic data collected by Barnet's own officers? Please could the committee clarify the procedures it follows when commissioning a piece of work such as the collection of traffic data and the transparency of its decision making.

Response

Copies of the survey raw data have, on both occasions, been provided to residents of Hollyfield and St John's through the representative Mr Graham Kantorowicz. The analytical report took time to develop and is available upon request if the panel agrees for this to happen.

Survey data has always been available upon request.

From Christina Moore

8. It is noted that there are several thousand cars travelling down Hollyfield Avenue, Hillside Ave and St John's Ave on a daily basis. This is evident in the data that has been collected by yourselves. Do you think this is acceptable for these roads that are considered as a quiet residential area?

Response

The side roads in question fall under Tier 3 – in general these are local distributor and access roads that are not ordinarily expected to host drivers on long distance journeys or moving across and between boroughs. In this particular occasion, the high volumes

experienced are symptomatic of a dearth of spare capacity at the nearby junction. While the high volumes are noted, it would not make sense to push more traffic onto a saturated junction. The side roads also relieve congestion and provide an emergency route.

From Elisa Bragg

9. My partner and I and 3 children moved into St John's Avenue in August 2012. We had no idea that the road was being used as a rat run or we would never have purchased here. It is so very stressful and incredibly noisy and motorists using our roads have no respect at all for the residents and their need to safely park, alight, unload, etc. Also, with 3 children, 2 under the age of 10, I feel very unsafe for the children getting in and out of our vehicle, or crossing the road, as these particular motorists seem to have no awareness or consideration at all for anyone above their own need to push on through our roads at great speed.

The use of these roads as a rat run not only pollutes the road but is extremely dangerous and stressful. It is impossible to even park in your road without drivers ramming up behind you in their haste to use *their* shortcut! They are abusive, intolerant and bully the residents. We have a disabled family in the road, and I recently witnessed them being verbally abused as they endeavored to park up and alight their vehicle with their disabled family member.

Therefore, what are Barnet going to do to prevent these roads from continuing to be used as a dangerous rat run and reduce the stress for the residents living here?

What responsibility are Barnet going to take for the inevitable accident/s that is going to occur (if not already) as the result of short cut users speeding along and congesting these roads?

What are Barnet going to do to prevent an accident from happening here?

Is it possible to at least prevent use of these roads at peak times such as between 6am and 10am and 2.30pm and 7pm and install cameras and levy fines on non resident users?

Response

No accident risk linked to speeding has been identified as the submitted data does not appear to suggest there is speeding.

It is not possible to discriminate all vehicle categories from a publicly maintained road on these grounds – on very specific and limited circumstances exceptions can be for GHVs for example.

Camera and enforcement /fines is the prerogative of the enforcement authorities. Residents may wish to engage with the SNT regarding this possibility as Barnet has no enforcement powers.

4. MEMBERS' ITEM: COUNCILLOR DAVID LONGSTAFF - TRAFFIC INTERSECTION OUTSIDE FOULDS SCHOOL (BYNG ROAD)

The Sub-Committee heard representations from Councillor David Longstaff regarding concerns about traffic speed and risk to children, when they are crossing The Avenue to attend Foulds Primary School (Byng Road).

The sub-Committee were informed that currently there is a 'traffic island' on this blind corner, which is unmonitored. The 'traffic island' is where The Avenue meets Marriot Road, and intersects with Alston Road.

The Avenue/Alston Road acts as a cut-through between Wood Street and St Albans Road, round the back of the Spires and avoiding Chipping Barnet High Street. The road is part of the TfL bus network and private cars regularly exceed the 30mph speed limit. There is no form of traffic calming or lights on this stretch of road.

The Residents and Foulds School strongly support the introduction of a Pelican crossing to enhance the Foulds School Travel Plan, improve safety and calm traffic.

The sub-Committee asked if Officers could look into the feasibility of putting in a Pelican Crossing to improve safety for children and calm existing traffic. Or if officers could bring a report a report to the sub-Committee recommending what the most viable option would be.

The Highways manager advised the Sub-Committee that whilst it was noted that the request had been specific in terms of a Pelican Crossing it would be normal practice to review all possible options, including for example vehicle activated signs. Should a more cost effect option prove to be feasible this would more likely be recommended. However, the first stage of dealing with such a request would be to review the location to determine whether any measures are justified.

The Highways manager further advised that due to the current work load and time scales involved in reviewing and meeting committee reporting timescales it would not be possible to bring full report to the next meeting in January, but instead to the meeting in March.

RESOLVED – That a progress report setting out not just the feasibility of a pelican crossing, but other options that might be viable is brought back to the next meeting of the sub-Committee.

5. RUSSELL LANE - PEDESTRIAN AND TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

The Chairman moved that paragraph 9.14 '*Officers are aware that the East Barnet Residents; Association did campaign against the measures and appear to have produced their own information material which was handed to local residents and businesses...*' is struck off and omitted from the report as it is not an accurate reflection of the work carried by East Barnet Residents Association on this matter.

The sub-Committee heard from Mr Daniel Hope, Chairman of the East Barnet Residents Association, speaking in objection the proposed scheme.

Councillor Lisa Rutter read a statement in which she informed that sub-Committee that she would be voting against this proposed scheme.

Members of the sub-Committee noted the level of objections that have been received and were in agreement that they could see no justification for this scheme.

The Highways Manager advised the sub-Committee that they could consider an option to amend the scheme and hence provide less crossing points than the three recommended if they so wished.

RESOLVED - That Officer's take no further action on the Russell Lane, proposed Pedestrian and Traffic Improvement Scheme.

6. UPDATE - HILLSIDE, HOLLYFIELD & ST JOHN'S AVENUES AND QUEENS PARADE CLOSE

The sub-Committee heard from a number of residents from Hillside Ave, Hollyfield Ave, Queens Parade Close & St Johns Avenue who now find their network of roads have become a 'rat run' for traffic to by-pass the controlled junction at the intersection of the A1003 and the B550 to get to and from Colney Hatch Lane and Friern Barnet Road. It is also used by traffic by-passing the right hand turn from Woodhouse Road into Colney Hatch Lane as there is no filter for this at the junction.

The quantity and speed of the traffic on these roads is having an adverse impact on the quality of life of the residents who are denied the peaceable enjoyment of their own homes. Minor traffic accidents are a regular occurrence, properties have been damaged by cars that have left the road and residents have been subjected to verbal and physical aggression from drivers trying to speed through the roads to beat the change of the lights at the controlled junction.

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb, seconded by Councillor Longstaff moved that a Temporary Traffic Order is put in place as soon as possible.

The Highways Manager advised the sub-Committee that the closing of some roads although it might alleviate the traffic problem in one area it would in turn push the problem onto the junction and another local roads and as such would not be resolving the concerns, just moving them. The Highways Manager further advised that in order to introduce a Temporary Traffic Order, consultation would still need to be carried out with those likely to be affected by the Order as well as consultation with TfL due to the detrimental implications this will have on the junction and surrounding roads. Although officers' could investigate the possibility of introducing a Temporary Traffic Order it may be problematic to implement. Another consideration which may be a constraint will be the costs involved in introducing such a measure.

RESOLVED – That subject to consultation and to the overall costs being contained within available budgets, officers be instructed to investigate the feasibility of imposing a Temporary Traffic Order.

7. MATTERS REFERRED FROM THE CHIPPING BARNET AREA RESIDENTS FORUM (IF ANY)

There were none.

8. ANY ITEM(S) THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none.

The meeting finished at 8.45 pm