

<p>Individual Mayoral Decision</p> <p>16 April 2021</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Dan Jones, Divisional Director Public Realm</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Liveable Streets Bethnal Green – Jesus Hospital Estate update</p>	

Lead Member	Councillor Tomlinson, Cabinet Member Environment
Originating Officer(s)	Chris Harrison/ Mehmet Mazhar
Wards affected	Weavers
Key Decision?	No
Reason for Key Decision	This report has been reviewed as not meeting the Key Decision criteria.
Forward Plan Notice Published	15/04/2021
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	Priority 2 – A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in. Priority 3 – A dynamic, outcomes-based council using digital innovation and partnership working to respond to the changing needs of our borough.

Executive Summary

This report provides the outcome of the additional Liveable Streets consultation on the Jesus Hospital Estate. It recommends that Option 2 of Appendix B of the Consultation and Results Summary is taken forward to implementation.

Accompanying the report is an updated EQIA in regard to the recommendations made. In addition, an updated overview plan has been provided to show the full scheme with changes outlined in this report.

Recommendations:

For the reasons set out in this report, and having regard to the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty the Mayor is recommended to:

1. Approve the road closure on Wellington Row/Barnet Grove and Quilter Street/Ravenscroft Street as presented in Option 2 of the Jesus Hospital Estate area Consultation Results Summary detailed in Appendix B.
2. Note the updated overview plan for the scheme (Appendix C).

3. Note the Equalities Impact Assessment and specific equalities considerations as set out in section 4 of the report and the full Equalities impact Analysis (EqIA) in Appendix A which considers the recommendation in context to the full Bethnal Green Liveable Streets scheme.
4. Approve the use of an Experimental Traffic Order for the recommended closures on Wellington Row/Barnet Grove and Quilter Street/ Ravenscroft Street to enable any objections, comments or observations to be made before a review is undertaken within 18 months of its implementation.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 In January 2020 cabinet approved the final scheme design for the Bethnal Green area as part of the Bethnal Green Liveable Streets Scheme subject to an exploration of further the technical details around the design, that arose following the receipt of representations, without fundamentally re-visiting the proposals. This included a further consultation upon the Jesus Hospital Estate. This report provides an update on the results of the consultation exercise.
- 1.2 This Liveable Streets project will make fundamental improvements to infrastructure on the street, and public spaces and further encourage active travel behaviour of residents, businesses and visitors to the area.
- 1.3 The proposed measures within Jesus Hospital Estate align with the existing Liveable Street proposals in order to fulfil its overall objectives. Therefore, it is important that all elements are implemented to ensure the full benefits of the Liveable Streets project are received across the whole area.
- 1.4 The objectives of Liveable Street proposals seek to address the following known issues in the area:
 - Air pollution which is at presently at unhealthy levels, affecting children and adults' health and life expectancy
 - The prevalence of through-traffic which equates to 57% of all vehicle journeys
- 1.5 The Liveable Streets programme aligns with the Transport Strategy (2019-41), Climate Emergency declaration, Air Quality Action Plan (2017-2022) as well as Public Health campaigns within the borough.
- 1.6 More than a third of motor vehicle journeys in Tower Hamlets are less than 1.2 miles and a large majority of these could be undertaken by walking, cycling or the use public transport, if we provide a safe alternative. There is a need to create safer environments to encourage active travel by people in the borough, without this behaviour will not change and vehicle numbers will remain high on the residential streets.

- 1.7 Tower Hamlets has the highest average daily traffic flow in the UK with a substantial proportion of motor vehicles passing through the borough. It also has one of the lowest levels of car ownership. Parents tend to determine the travel mode for their children, often the fear of traffic is one of the biggest reason people don't cycle or walk. This can be from heavy traffic flows, hostility from motorists towards cyclists and a lack of space for cycling put many residents off cycling. TfL have shown that more than 17% of people walking are being killed or seriously injured for each mile driven on residential roads than for a mile driven on a main road.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Consideration has been given to the changes required in the area to meet as far as possible the aims and objectives of the Liveable Streets Scheme while minimising any negative impacts that may result due to the scheme.
- 2.2 Appendix B outlines the range of options that were put to residents and key stakeholders. Option 2 has been recommended to be taken forward as the most supported from those responding from the consultation

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 As part of the Liveable Streets Bethnal Green public consultation, it was proposed to close the junction of Barnet Grove and Columbia Road to motor vehicles. The consultation results showed that 62% of the respondents within the scheme area were supportive of the closure at the junction of Barnet Grove and Columbia Road.
- 3.2 Although the majority of the respondents from the area were supportive of the closure, comments were raised suggesting a change in the location of the closure to better serve the market and residents in the area. It was agreed at cabinet that further public consultation should take place with the local community on the location of the closure point.
- 3.3 The public consultation began on Monday 13 July 2020 and ran until Sunday 9 August 2020. Consultation packs, which included a proposal document, survey and freepost envelope, were distributed to 1,577 properties within the agreed consultation area. The deadline for survey responses was extended to Sunday 9 August, as misinformation was shared by residential groups on social media in regard to a later consultation deadline than stated on the consultation document, and the Council wanted to ensure inclusivity.
- 3.4 Two options were provided within the proposal document and respondents could provide any additional comments within the survey by way of paper and/or online response. A total of 151 responses were received. Of those who responded the results showed a preference for option 2 with 63 people choosing this option, compared to 51 respondents choosing option 1.
- 3.5 Option 2 included:

- A road closure on Barnet Grove, north of the junction with Wellington Row and a closure on Wellington Row, east of the junction with Barnet Grove and will allow emergency vehicle access.
- A road closure and pocket park at the junction with Quilter Street, and Ravenscroft Street.
- Barnet Grove becomes two-way between Elwin Street and Wellington Row with access to market trader parking bays remain the same for Durant Street.
- Both closures allow for full pedestrian and cycle access. Access to market trader parking bays remain the same for Durant Street.

3.6 To start these measures will be implemented on an experimental basis using free standing planters. The impacts of these measures will be monitored and reviewed before being made permanent. Sufficient access for emergency services around Columbia Road will be maintained at all times.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 A full Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out for the recommendations in this report whilst taking into account the wider design of the Liveable Streets Bethnal Green scheme. The EqIA can be seen in Appendix A and obtains the full assessment for each protected characteristic.

4.2 Following the Cabinet decision in 2019, the Council has continued to engage with stakeholders over the impacts this may have on those individuals who possess one or more of the nine protected characteristics. The EqIA has been updated to incorporate the recommendations set out in this report and to reflect on the comments received through further consultation. Additionally, further evidence has also been drawn upon through existing studies, data sets, as well as data and evidence collected as part of other stages within this programme.

4.3 Overall, the EqIA shows that there are both positive and negative impacts across the project area.

4.4 The identified negative impacts of the proposal are related to the requirement for those using a motor vehicle to use alternative routes to reach their destination in the area. The greatest increase in distance has been estimated to be 1.4 miles when traveling southbound and 1.7 miles when traveling northbound. The negative impact is associated with the increased time, distance and cost for those using a motor vehicle to reach their destination. However, it should be noted that all properties remain accessible by motor vehicle and there are other travel methods which will be improved by the proposals such as access to public transport and the environment for those who walk and cycle. Therefore, the impact is outweighed by the improvements to the overall environment and health benefits to the groups identified.

4.5 The primary negative impact identified relates to individuals that are dependant upon the use motor vehicle to travel across the area to reach their

destination. As part of this assessment, it is recognised this could impact upon the disabled, elderly, mobility impaired, and those that care for a relative or friend while driving a motor vehicle to travel across Bethnal Green project area. However, as noted in section 4.7 these protected groups will be also be positively impacted by the scheme measures while not driving a motor vehicle.

- 4.6 The A-roads in which form part of the alternative route include Hackney Road were there has been a reduction in traffic over the last decade, over 7,000 vehicles, just over 14,500 vehicles recorded in 2019. On Bethnal Green Road there has had similar traffic volumes over the last decade, on average just over 14,000 vehicles, with peak of traffic volumes of over 15,800 vehicles in 2017.
- 4.7 The assessment has highlighted the potential for positive impacts on the protected characteristics (Age, Disability, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Sex, Parent and Carers, Socio-economic groups). The final proposal for Jesus Hospital Estate area provides a number of overall improvements for the environment. A key component of the measures are the full road closures which help in reducing through-traffic to offer improved safety and environments (air quality and noise) to vulnerable road users, including those who and cycle and those within the protected groups identified within this assessment.
- 4.8 For example, the borough's Transport Strategy indicated a disproportionately low take up of cycling amongst women, often in relation to fear of traffic/roads which this scheme would help to resolve by creating a safer network of cyclable roads. BAME groups are identified as more likely to be a casualty in a road collision, particularly as a pedestrian which this scheme would help improve by removing the conflict with motor vehicles and improvements to crossings and accessibility through the area. Those who are BAME and elderly are also more likely to have a respiratory condition, as outlined in the Transport Strategy and would benefit from reduced traffic levels. The elderly and young are also the most likely groups to be involved in a collision, as well as being impacted by the poor air quality, walking environment and outdoor space.
- 4.9 Further studies have shown that those who are disabled suffer disproportionately from air and noise pollution and those aged 10-15 and 80-84 are most likely as a pedestrian to be involved in a road traffic collision.
- 4.10 Overall, these measures provide greater accessibility for those who walk, cycle and use public transport across the area as well as improving the look, feel and safety of the area. Furthermore, this is likely to provide health benefits and mental wellbeing in relation to an increase in physical activity as recommended by NHS to help us continue to be independent and healthier for longer in our lives.
- 4.11 Further, it is recommended the scheme is undertaken on an experimental basis to ensure a review of the scheme is carried out. This will include the

monitoring of the potential positive and negative impacts identified through the assessment and where necessary provide a mechanism for alterations made to the scheme which will be undertaken following engagement with stakeholders. As part of this review the EqIA will be further updated with results from any surveys and feedback provided from all road users and the local community.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The proposals will require changes to the highway and therefore traffic regulation orders will need to be advertised and made. These will be advertised and consulted on in accordance with the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedures) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, or the Road Traffic (Temporary Restrictions) Procedure Regulations 1992 in respect of temporary orders.
- 5.2 As part of the design we shall consider Section 17 of the crime and disorder act 1998, to ensure that we do all that it reasonably can to mitigate the impacts of crime and disorder, substance misuse and reoffending.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 This report seeks the approval of the Mayor for the road closure on Wellington Row/Barnet Grove and Quilter Street/Ravenscroft Street for Liveable Streets project which will make fundamental improvements to infrastructure on the street, public spaces and encourage active travel behaviour of residents, businesses and visitors to the area.
- 6.2 The closure of the road however allows for full pedestrian and cycle access and gives access to market trader parking bays.
- 6.3 This project is part of liveable streets projects already in the Council's capital programme with a total approved budget of £4.48m.
- 6.4 Of this budget £4.48m, £2.7m has been allocated for Bethnal Green Liveable street project and already we have committed funding stream from S106 and CIL for this project.
- 6.5 The financial cost to the council of this part of the project is estimated at £50k and this has been factored into the £2.7m cost of the project

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The Recommendations of the report requests that the Mayor approves both the road closure on Wellington Row/Barnet Grove and Quilter Street/Ravenscroft Street as presented in Option 2 of the Barnet Grove area Consultation Results Summary, as detailed in (Appendix B), and the making of an Experimental Traffic Order to enable any objections, comments or

observations to be made before a review is undertaken within 18 months of its implementation.

- 7.2 Further, the Mayor is requested to note the updated overview plan for the scheme (Appendix C) and the Equalities Impact Assessment and specific equalities considerations as set out in section 4 of the report and the full Equalities impact Analysis (EqIA) in Appendix A.
- 7.3 As advised at paragraph 1 of the report the Mayor will note that Cabinet approved the final scheme design for the Bethnal Green area as part of the Bethnal Green Liveable Streets Scheme in January 2020. Therefore, the final scheme design has already been approved. Cabinet's approval was however subject to an exploration of further the technical details around the design, to be undertaken without fundamentally re-visiting the proposals, following receipt of representations from the public. This exploration necessitated a further consultation exercise upon the Jesus Hospital Estate, the findings of which forms the basis of this report.
- 7.4 The Council is required to adhere to the Public Sector Equality Duty in accordance with s149 of the Equality Act 2010 which must be given due regard in its decision making. Paragraph 4.1 advises that a full EqIA has been undertaken in respect of the proposals whilst taking into account the wider design of the Liveable Streets Bethnal Green scheme. The EqIA is attached at Appendix A of the report.
- 7.5 The Mayor will note that the EqIA identifies a number of positive and negative impacts upon individuals that share particular protected characteristics. Paragraphs 4.1 -4.11 of the report set out the justification and mitigations proposed in respect of any adverse effects.
- 7.6 It is noted that part of the scheme implementation has been recommended to be undertaken on an experimental basis to ensure a review of the scheme is carried out. Appendix A advises that this will include the monitoring of the potential positive and negative impacts identified through the assessment and where necessary alterations made to the scheme. As part of this review the EqIA will be updated with results from any surveys and feedback provided from all road users and the local community.
- 7.7 Further engagement with the community will be undertaken to monitor this impact and it is recommended that any necessary alterations are made within 6 months and are reviewed between 6 and 18 months after implementation.
- 7.8 The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedures) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, or the Road Traffic (Temporary Restrictions) Procedure Regulations 1992 (in respect of temporary orders) sets out the legal process to be satisfied when making traffic orders. The legal procedure includes provision for calling a Public Inquiry where appropriate. The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 section 1, 6 and Schedule 1 sets out the purposes for which a Road Traffic Regulation Order may be made. Legal services will

provide advice in relation to each such Order at the time that they are proposed to be made.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Appendix A – EQIA
- Appendix B – Jesus Hospital Estate Engagement
- Appendix C – Updated overall plan

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- Bethnal Green Cabinet pack January 2020

Officer contact details for documents:

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