

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (SURREY HEATH)****DATE:** 3 July 2014**LEAD OFFICER:** Andrew Milne**SUBJECT:** HIGH STREET, CAMBLERY – EXPERIMENTAL ROAD CLOSURE**DIVISION:** CAMBERLEY EAST**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

In response to a request from Surrey Heath Borough Council and Surrey Police, an Experimental Road Closure Order has previously been introduced for part of Camberley High Street. This Order has now expired.

The Order enabled the High Street to be closed at times when the clubs/pubs/restaurants in the High Street attract particularly large numbers of visitors.

These closures were introduced to help reduce the risk of accidents and incidents of anti-social behaviour and public disturbance.

During the experimental period a number of people have complained that the closures were implemented unnecessarily early. In addition, it was found that a small number of businesses have regularly deliveries whilst the closures are in place.

The Police have reported that the closures have resulted in a reduction in crime and incidents of anti-social behaviour/crimes in the High Street. Both the Police and Borough Council would like the closures to continue. However, they agree that the closures should be amended to reflect the issues and concerns identified during the experiment.

Rather than making the original experimental closure permanent, it is therefore proposed that a further 18 month Experimental Order is introduced. Under this Order the closures would start later in the evening and would also include an exception to allow access for loading and unloading during the closure times.

If approved, the effectiveness of the new experiment closures and the comments received in response would be assessed. Subject to the outcome of this assessment the closures may then be made permanent.

RECOMMENDATIONS:**The Local Committee (Surrey Heath) is asked to agree:**

- (i) advertisement of a further Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (for a period of 18 months) to close the section of Camberley High Street between Portesbery Road and St Georges Road (as shown on the plan attached at Annex 1) at the times and dates specified in paragraph 3.4 of this report. The Order will include an exception for vehicles for the purpose of loading and/or unloading.
- (ii) any comments received during the period of the experimental closure

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| (iii) | <p>should be considered by the Area Team Manager for Highways in consultation with the Divisional Member and Chairman; and</p> <p>approve the advertisement of a Traffic Regulation Order to make the closures permanent if no irresolvable objections are received in response to the experimental closure; and that this issue only be returned to Committee if any objections prove insurmountable.</p> |
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<u>REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:</u>
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<p>The proposed closures restrict access to vehicles along the High Street at a time where pedestrians are vulnerable. It also provides an environment where Surrey Police are able to proactively monitor and intervene in situations to reduce the amount of antisocial behaviour and/or crimes. Surrey Police have reported that the implementation of previous closures has resulted in a reduction in crimes and incidences of anti-social behaviour in the High Street.</p>

<u>1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:</u>

- 1.1 There are a number of eating and drinking venues in the section of Camberley High Street between Portesbury Road and St George's Road. As such, there are often large concentrations of people in this area in the evening and the early hours of the morning.
- 1.2 On certain busy nights of the week this can result in footways becoming congested and can lead to people "spilling" into the carriageway with the potential for conflict with vehicles. In addition, people's behaviour can also be influenced by the consumption of alcohol and a combination of these factors can increase the risk of incidences of anti-social behaviour and conflict.
- 1.3 As a result of concerns about safety and anti-social behaviour, Surrey Heath Borough Council previously requested the introduction of road closures at certain times.
- 1.4 In response to this request, the Local Committee agreed the introduction of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (at its meeting on 16 February 2012) to enable the section of Camberley High Street between Portesbury Road and St Georges Road (shown on the plan attached as Annex 1) to be closed between 1800hrs and 0400hrs on the following days:
 - Every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday evening.
 - Every evening preceding a Bank Holiday.
 - Every evening of a Bank Holiday.
 - Evening of Christmas Eve.
- 1.5 A gate was installed (at the Portesbury Road end of the High Street) prior to the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order coming into operation to enforce the closures.
- 1.6 The closures came into operation in August 2012.
- 1.7 The Experimental Order has now expired but the Borough Council have made an Order under powers available to District Councils to allow the closures to continue. However, the closures can only be maintained on a temporary basis under this Order. A decision therefore now needs to be made about whether the closures should be continued.

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 During the period of the experiment order a number of complaints were received about the following issues:
- The time at which the closures started (complainants considered it unnecessary to close the High Street as early as 1800 hours since it causes inconvenience at a time when the pub/restaurants/clubs are still relatively quiet).
 - Anti-social behaviour outside the closure area.
- 2.2 It was also found that a small number of businesses have deliveries during the closure times (the Police have assisted in allowing these to take place as a temporary solution to the problem).

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 The following options are available now the original Experimental Order has expired:
- Make the original Experimental Road Closure Order permanent.
 - Make no further Traffic Orders and open the High Street back up to traffic at all times.
 - Promote a new amended Traffic Order.
- 3.2 The first 2 options are not recommended for the following reasons:
- If the original Experimental Traffic Order was made permanent the closure times and conditions would have to remain the same. As such, this would not address the complaints about the previous closures times or the need for access for loading/unloading.
 - If the closures are removed then this would lead to the same conditions being created that resulted in concerns about safety and anti-social behaviour originally being expressed by the Borough Council and Police.
- 3.3 Due to the benefits that have resulted, Surrey Heath Borough Council and Surrey Police are both keen to see the closures continue. They therefore support the introduction of alterations to the closures to overcome the issues identified during the experimental period.
- 3.4 It is therefore proposed that a new Experimental Traffic Regulation Order is promoted which enables the High Street, Camberley to be closed from (the later time of) 2130 hours until 0400 hours over the 18 month experimental period on the following days:
- Every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday evening.
 - Every evening preceding a Bank Holiday.
 - Every evening of a Bank Holiday.
 - Evening of Christmas Eve.
- 3.5 The new Experimental Closure Order proposed would also include an exemption to allow access during the closure times for the purpose of loading or unloading. The specific process to allow access for loading and unloading has yet to be determined. However, The Mall's security staff (who

operates 24 hours a day) have agreed to open the gate for those requiring access to load and/or unload.

- 3.6 It is recommended that the Local Committee approve the new Experimental Order proposed since it would allow the Police to continue to proactively manage safety in the road during the hours of greatest risk and limits the negative impacts the closures have on retailers and residents.
- 3.7 At the time the closures are in operation, drivers can use the alternative route of Portesbery Road and Knoll Road.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 Surrey Heath Borough Council and Surrey Police have been consulted and firmly support the proposed closures.
- 4.2 Surrey Fire and Ambulance Services were contacted prior to the previous closure and had no objections to the proposal. However, they requested that access is maintained for emergency service vehicles during the closures.
- 4.3 Feedback to the previous closure showed that pubs and clubs were in favour of the closure. However, objections were received from other traders that the early closure impacted on service. To resolve these objections, the further experimental closures proposed will start later in the evening (2130 hours rather than 1800hours) and allow access for the purpose of loading and/or unloading during the hours of the closure.
- 4.4 Previous objections also identified anti-social behaviour at and around the taxi rank along Obelisk Way. Surrey Heath Borough Council are aware of these concerns and marshals have been provided to help manage activity at the rank and reduce any noise or disturbance. The Borough Council will also be undertaking a further assessment of the provision of taxi ranks in Camberley as part of wider proposals for improvements to the town centre.
- 4.5 It is the proposal that the amended closure will initially be made on an experimental basis for 18 months. Any comments received during this time will be considered before it is decided whether the closure should be made permanent.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 All costs relating to the closure, including advertising and implementation, are to be covered by Surrey Heath Borough Council.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 The Traffic Regulation Order removes access to a number of parking bays along the road. Some of these parking bays are specifically for disabled persons. Unfortunately, allowing access to these parking spaces would reduce the impact of the scheme and potentially undermine the effectiveness of the closure. However, disabled parking bays are available on St George's Road and in the High Street (directly outside the closure), minimising the additional distance disabled visitors would have to travel to access venues within the closure area.

7. LOCALISM:

- 7.1 The experimental Traffic Regulation Order reduces the number of vehicles accessing and parking on High Street, Camberley during the busy evening times. The closure not only improves the Police's ability to manage the area, but also allows other support facilities to be present during the evening. It improves the environment for pedestrians in the area and encourages persons to use sustainable methods of transport.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	Set out below.
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications arising from this report.
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report.
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report.
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report.

8.1 Crime and Disorder implications

The closure has been proposed to help address problems of anti-social behaviour and personal safety. Previous closures resulted in a reduction in crimes and incidences of anti-social behaviour in the High Street.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 9.1 The Experimental Road Closures previously implemented have resulted in a reduction in crimes and anti-social behaviour in the High Street and improved safety. The Police and Borough Council therefore support a continuation of the closures.
- 9.2 However, complaints were received about the time at which the closures started and there were also issues with access for deliveries during the closure times.
- 9.3 It is therefore proposed that a further 18 month Experimental Order is made so the closure can continue to be implemented. However, the closures would start from the later time of 2130 hours and the Order would also include an exemption to allow access for loading and unloading during the closures.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 Subject to the approval of the Local Committee, the new Experimental Traffic Regulation Order will be advertised and public notices will be displayed in the local press and on site.
- 10.2 The closure will then be implemented with appropriate measures to allow loading and/or unloading.

10.3 The effectiveness of the experimental closures and the comments received in response to them will be assessed before it is decided whether the closures should be made permanent.

Contact Officer: Peter Orchard (0300 2001003)

Consulted: Surrey Heath Borough Council, Surrey Police, Local Councillor.

Annexes: Annex 1 – High Street, Camberley – Experimental Road Closure Area

Sources/background papers:

- Surrey Heath Local Area Committee – 16 February 2012 – Item 18 – High Street, Camberley Experimental Road Closure
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