



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
(Epsom and Ewell)**

**BLenheim ROAD EXPERIMENTAL CLOSURE
UPDATE REPORT**

13 SEPTEMBER 2010

KEY ISSUE

To consider the latest results from the Blenheim Road experimental closure and decide whether the experimental closure is to carry on or be terminated.

SUMMARY

An 18 month experimental point closure was placed across Blenheim Road outside the community waste centre in June this year. Its purpose was to rationalise traffic movements within the waste site and along Blenheim Road by separating domestic and commercial users of the site. The measure was installed following concerns raised by local businesses about congestion in the road and instances of conflict between drivers attempting to enter the site at busy times.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee is asked to:

- i) Note the details of the survey recently conducted outside the site
- ii) Agree that the experiment continues for the time being

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 An experimental closure of Blenheim Road was installed in June this year and the traffic order will expire at the end of September 2011.
- 1.2 During the course of the experiment, it may be terminated at any time with the consent of then Committee Chairman, Vice Chairman and Divisional member.
- 1.3 Ideally, a decision should be given after 12 months have expired whether the closure is to become permanent in order that sufficient time is available to impose the necessary permanent measures.
- 1.4 This interim report has been prepared following receipt of petition from Seta Floyd of the Epsom Car Care Centre, 19a Blenheim Road. The petition comprises a covering letter suggesting further representations are to follow together with 32 copies of a standard letter, each with the signatory's details and scope for PS comments. The letter states:

"We have found that the new trial of the traffic flow to be causing major disruption during the course of the working day, on the Blenheim Road, Longmead Business Park.

This is causing absolute chaos as to trying to enter or leaving the depot, the build up of traffic is far greater than it has ever been before, not only for local residents like myself, but also the mayhem caused when the artic lorries have to reverse back the full length of the road to exit because they are not allowed to get through and every car has pulled up behind it has to reverse back too.

This situation is completely unacceptable and either needs to be rethought or scrapped altogether."

2 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 At the time the experiment began, a file was started so that all incoming correspondence or calls could be recorded and a history of views represented. Within the first few days 4 enquiries were received relating to increased congestion at the site and thereafter, aside from the petition received 5th August, they ceased.
- 2.2 Reports from managers of the waste site suggest that during the first few days, whilst regular visitors to the area became accustomed to the new traffic arrangements, there was an increase in delays and congestion. However, following this initial period, there has been an improvement and the view of site staff is that the new arrangement is better than before.
- 2.3 The site is managed on behalf of Surrey County Council by Sita Waste Management, a national well respected company in this field. When asked for comment, their site manager made the following statement:

“I have spoken to the lads on site and the general feeling is the barrier is working well. The latest figures we have are 26 Artics have come down the road since the scheme started, and unbeknown to me were being asked to reverse back down the road, this was totally ridiculous and when I found out I changed this so that they can now turn around inside the site.

There have also been 5 dustcarts, 3 sweepers and believe it or not 3 Epsom buses, one of which decided to go up on to the C/A site to turn around.

There are still a high number of cars that try to come in the wrong way between 18/7/10 and 23/7/10 there were 589 cars told to turn around at come in the other entrance. (We need better signage at the top of the road, and will still need the person on the gate for a while yet).

Overall the staff on site feel the barrier is a good thing and works well in respect that our artics, dustcarts and skip vehicles do not have to mix with cars anymore and the site in general runs a lot better for that.”

- 2.3 With regard to the request for better signage, all signs available under the Traffic Signs regulations and General Directions are already in place and, in the view of Council officers, additional; signs would be equally disregarded.
- 2.4 The staff on duty at the entrance to the site keep a daily log of the vehicles visiting and whether they are using the arrangement correctly. The table below is an extract form the log and illustrates the level of use and misuse taking place.

Date	Total vehicles	Cars wrong way	Lorries wrong way	Buses wrong way
9 th August	892	69	4	1
10 th August	774	59	2	
11 th August	743	114	3	
12 th August	782	38	4	1
13 th August	680	64	8	
14 th August (Sat)	520	72	4	
16 th August	574	37	5	
17 th August	729	51	3	
18 th August	765	62	3	
19 th August	749	39	6	
20 th August	824	47	6	
21 th August (Sat)	692	53	0	

- 2.5 A Council officer has attended site between 10 and 11 am each morning for the week commencing 23rd August to record traffic movements and the table below is a record of the observations made.

Day	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
1. Cars enter site correctly	110	123	133	80	74
2. Lorries enter site incorrectly	3	1	7	2	1
3. Cars attempt to enter site incorrectly	5	18	15	5	5
4. Lorries enter site correctly	15	14	16	17	13
5. Cars approach site but turn around	5	3	5	5	5

- 2.6 The plan assigned as Annex A is an illustration of the turning movements described.
- 2.7 Annex B is a drawing of the scheme installed.
- 2.8 Below are pictures of the site entrance and some of the signs drivers see when using approach routes.



Waste site entrance



Longmead Road northbound between Hook Road and Felstead Road



Longmead Road southbound approaching Blenheim Road

www.surreycc.gov.uk/epsomandewell



Longmead Road opposite Blenheim Road (double sided)

3 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None for the purpose of this report.

4 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None for the purpose of this report

5 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None for the purpose of this report

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The experimental order, after initial problems as members of the public adjusted to the new arrangements, has achieved what it set out to do. To separate the HGV commercial traffic and the general members of public using the site.

- 6.2 As with any new scheme there is a short period when people have to break their usual habits and find new arrangements difficult. Usually within a week or two the traffic settles down as people get used to the arrangements. There are still people accessing the site incorrectly but these numbers will reduce.
- 6.3 It is recommended that no change be made to the access arrangements for the time being.

7 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The arrangements at the site are working well and should be retained with the vast majority of people accessing the site correctly.

8 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 8.1 Should the arrangements not be changed there is nothing to be done. As this is an experimental order it can be revoked at any time and the arrangements would revert to how they were before the changes to the access.

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