


Decision maker and date of Leadership Team meeting or (in the case of individual Lead Member or Executive Director decisions) the earliest date the decision will be taken	Sue Harris, E&C Executive Director Date of report: 20/09/21 Date of decision (i.e. not before): 30/09/21 Forward Plan reference: ED05940	 THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA
Report title	CHELSEA GREEN STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS – FEEDBACK ON CONSULTATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Reporting officer	Director for Streets and Regulatory Services	
Key decision	No	
Access to information classification	Public	
Wards	Stanley, Royal Hospital and Brompton and Hans Town	

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. This report outlines the public consultation on proposals to improve Chelsea Green, to create a focal point for the community to enjoy. It provides officers’ comments on the consultation responses and seeks your approval to implement an amended version of the scheme which takes into consideration comments on the proposals. It also considers objections to the Experimental Traffic Orders which closed the southern section of Elystan Street between Elystan Place and Whitehead Grove, removed the resident parking bay and introduced double yellow lines on both sides of that section of the road, excluding the motorcycle bay and the cycle hire bay which were left in situ.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. It is recommended that you:
- i) approve the amended scheme, option 2, as illustrated in Appendix F and agree in principle to the inclusion of a fountain;
 - ii) instruct the Director for Streets and Regulatory Services to make permanent the experimental traffic order described in para 5.13 below;
 - iii) instruct the Director for Streets and Regulatory Services to consult, consider objections and make a decision on a permanent traffic order which

would restrict access by motorcycles to the section of Elystan Street between Elystan Place and Whitehead's Grove;

- iv) instruct the Director for Streets and Regulatory Services to consult, consider objections and make a decision on a permanent traffic order change which would remove the motorcycle bay and cycle hire bay in the section of Elystan Street between Elystan Place and Whitehead's Grove and replace them with footway/ unrestricted highway.

3. REASONS FOR DECISION

- 3.1. Option 2 achieves the original aims of the scheme and incorporates changes to address the concerns raised during public consultation.
- 3.2. A decision needs to be taken on whether to make the experimental traffic order on Elystan Street between Elystan Place and Whitehead's Grove permanent before it expires.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1. In last year's Chelsea Forum, Ward Councillors asked residents and businesses for their opinion on spaces that could be improved with alternative road layouts and various other features. The response was to ask the Council to consider increasing the amount of green space and the layout of Chelsea Green.
- 4.2. Since 25 July 2020, as part of the Council's response to the Covid 19 pandemic, the southern section of Elystan Street, between the Elystan Place/Cale Street junction and Whitehead's Grove has been closed to motor vehicles to allow cafés and restaurants to provide outdoor tables and chairs for their customers. This was done initially under a temporary traffic order and then on 25 January 2021 was transferred to an experimental traffic order. The photo below shows the current layout.



- 4.3. In response to the request for improvements to the Green, we commissioned initial designs and in the second half of 2020 we established the Chelsea Green Working Group to help develop the project. This group consists of representatives from the Chelsea Society, the Astell Street Residents' Association, St Luke's Parish, individual residents from Sutton Estate and Cranmer Court and shop owners plus the ward councillors. The Lead Member for Planning, Place and Environment chaired the working group meetings.
- 4.4. We have worked closely with the Chelsea Green Working Group to create a design for Chelsea Green to enhance the layout, tackle existing problems and make the area more attractive to residents, traders and visitors without compromising its unique character.
- 4.5. In June 2021 we consulted the local community on the proposed scheme, illustrated in Appendix A.

5. PROPOSAL AND ISSUES

- 5.1. The key features of the scheme as proposed are:
 - Permanent removal of traffic from the southern section of Elystan Street to provide more space for pedestrians and to connect directly with the green
 - Raised carriageways on Cale Street and Whitehead's Grove adjacent to the green to help reduce traffic speeds
 - New crossing points to improve pedestrian access into the central green area
 - Removal of the railings around the area and the creation of more green space
 - More trees (subject to satisfactory site investigations)
 - Repaving in natural stone to provide pedestrian routes across the green and an area for shops and restaurants to spill out
 - New seating around the green
 - CCTV to help deter anti-social behaviour
- 5.2. The permanent closure would apply to all motor vehicles including motorcycles and would also include the removal of all parking bays including the motorcycle parking bay and the cycle hire bay on this section of Elystan Street. This is necessary in order to increase the amount of green space and provide sufficient space for pedestrian movements through the area. The cycle hire bay on Whitehead's Grove would remain in place. Cycling would still be permitted.
- 5.3. The restriction of access by motorcycles and the removal of the motorcycle bay and cycle hire bay would be subject to a traffic order consultation following the usual statutory procedures.
- 5.4. To act as a focal point for the scheme, a fountain has been included in the proposed scheme, at the suggestion of the Chelsea Green Working Group.
- 5.5. Following the discussions with the Chelsea Green Working Group, we consulted the local community to seek their views. We sent out a total number of 1,351 consultation packs to all residential (1,277) and business (74) addresses within a consultation area centred on Chelsea Green (see Appendix B).

- 5.6. The consultation booklets (appendix C) include an illustrative plan showing the proposals accompanied by a summary of the key features, together with a questionnaire to be completed and returned.
- 5.7. The consultation period ran for a six-week period, ending on 24 June 2021. During this period 184 questionnaires have been returned, which constitutes a response rate of 13.5%
- 5.8. The questionnaire responses have been analysed and the full details are presented in the Analysis of Stakeholder Consultation (Appendix D).
- 5.9. In summary, 88% of consultees support the proposed scheme and 62% were in favour of including a fountain.
- 5.10. 117 questionnaires also included comments on various elements of the scheme and we have also received 21 separate emails commenting on the proposals. Ten of these were from addresses within the consultation area which did not return a questionnaire. Of these, five expressed support for the scheme, two objected and three did not specify. A further six emails did not provide an address so it is not possible to determine whether or not they had also returned a questionnaire. Two were from residents' associations rather than individuals. The totals have therefore not been added to the questionnaire totals.
- 5.11. Full details of all the comments, together with officers' responses to the points raised, are presented in Appendix E.
- 5.12. The issues relating to the fountain and the removal of the railings around the green are discussed below together with the key comments. These relate primarily to the effect of the proposals on parking and deliveries for the shops on Elystan Street and Cale Street.

Experimental Order

- 5.13. In January 2021, the Council made an Experimental Traffic Order to:
 - restrict access by motor vehicles except motorcycles to the section of Elystan Street between Elystan Place and Whitehead's Grove
 - remove a 15 metre (three space) residents' parking bay in Elystan Street between Elystan Place and Whitehead's Grove
 - introduce double yellow lines on both sides of Elystan Street between Elystan Place and Whitehead's Grove, excluding the motorcycle bay and the cycle hire bay which were left in situ

This Order is due to expire in July 2022.

- 5.14. The purpose of the order is to promote short walking and cycling journeys within the local vicinity, to support hospitality businesses and to extend the public space provided by Chelsea Green. It also contributes to the Council's response to the Public Health considerations regarding movement, exercise and social distancing in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 5.15. Since it has been in operation, we have received two objections to the order being made permanent, both from local residents. The main points raised by the objectors are summarised below with the council's response and detailed in full in Appendix G.
- 5.16. Both objectors were concerned about the loss of residents' parking bays and raised the issue of noise. Other concerns raised were the increase of traffic on Cale Street, the likelihood of attracting drinkers and other general, unspecified, environmental issues.
- 5.17. The residents' parking bay which was removed by the experimental traffic order could accommodate three cars. The last parking occupancy survey, carried out in September 2018, showed that there were between 14 and 16 spaces free in the residents' parking bays close to the residents' parking bay which was removed by the experimental order.
- 5.18. Any road closure would necessitate the rerouting of traffic, but this has to be balanced against the benefits of the road closure such as an improved walking and cycling environment and supporting local hospitality businesses. Due to the unusual circumstances, as a consequence of the pandemic, we have been unable to collect any meaningful traffic data to assess the effect on Cale Street. As the traffic flows observed previously on this section of Elystan Street were low, any displacement of traffic onto Cale Street due to the closure would have represented a relatively small increase in traffic. We have not received any other complaints about increased traffic on Cale Street.
- 5.19. Officers do not believe that any of the issues raised by the objectors warrants a public enquiry. Officers recommend that the Experimental Traffic Order outlined in para 5.13 be made permanent.

Removal of railings

- 5.20. In its current arrangement, the central area of the green consists of two separate patches of grass separated from the footways by railings. The removal of these railings is therefore an integral part of the scheme. As their removal requires planning approval we have, in tandem with the public consultation on the proposals, submitted a planning application which was also advertised locally.
- 5.21. Planning approval was approved by the Council's Planning Applications Committee at its meeting on 17 August.

The fountain

- 5.22. Although the majority of consultation responses supported the inclusion of a fountain, this was not an overwhelming majority (62%) and the fountain was the subject of a number of critical comments from those who supported the idea of a fountain as well as those who objected or had no opinion. These comments are detailed in Appendix E and relate mainly to concerns about cleaning and future maintenance. Other comments suggested a sculpture or other work of art as an alternative to act as a focal point or simply increasing the amount of soft

landscaping. There were also some concerns raised that the fountain could attract antisocial behaviour and the cost of the fountain was also a matter of concern for some.

5.23. Despite the concerns, the scheme would benefit from the inclusion of a focal point which could be provided by a fountain. Further work would be required to refine the design with the Working Group, but the general concept is shown in Appendix H and includes the following features:

- Nine spouts (representing the nine wards in the borough)
- A lion atop a pedestal
- The RBKC crest on the pedestal column
- A circular basin

With regular cleaning and maintenance most of the critical comments would be overcome. Estimated costs associated with the provision and ongoing maintenance of a water fountain are set out in paragraph 10.

CCTV

5.24. Chelsea Green has experienced some anti-social behaviour in the past and the police have identified the area as a location for a Stanley ward NCIL funded CCTV camera on a temporary basis. To address this issue, the proposals include a CCTV camera mounted on a suitably located lamp column. We consulted the community safety team and police who indicated they would welcome the installation of a camera.

Parking and Loading

5.25. Although a significant majority of responses supported the scheme, there was some concern regarding the reduction in the number of parking and loading spaces around the periphery of the green, particularly from local businesses.

5.26. In the area affected by the proposals there are currently 11 Pay-by-Phone visitor parking bays, one car club bay, five motorcycle parking spaces and eight metres of single yellow line available for loading/unloading and for overnight parking. There is also a 15 metre residents parking bay (sufficient for three cars) which has been converted to double yellow line by the current Experimental Traffic Order and a motorcycle parking bay with five spaces which is currently available for use, both on the closed section of Elystan Street and a cycle hire docking station which consists of 16 docking points on Whitehead's Grove and 11 docking points on the closed section of Elystan Street.

5.27. Compared with the current situation the proposed (option 1) scheme would result in the changes scheduled below:

type	no. spaces		change
	Pre-covid	proposed	
Residents' parking	3 (currently suspended)	0	-3
Pay by Phone	11	9	-2
Disabled parking	0	1	+1
Car club*	1	1	No change
Motorcycle parking	5	0	-5
Cycle hire docking station	27	16	-11
Single yellow line	8	1	-7

* This car club bay is now redundant as the operators have moved to a floating scheme with no fixed bays.

- 5.28. Although the scheme would require the removal of the three residents parking spaces on the pedestrianised section of Elystan Street, these are already suspended under the covid 19 related experimental order. Their removal has not raised any concern as part of this consultation although the two objections to the experimental order have raised this as an issue. There have been no adverse comments on the proposed reduction in size of the cycle hire docking station, and we have also discussed this with TfL.
- 5.29. The main concerns relate to the single yellow lines on the peripheral roads which are currently used for loading/unloading and for overnight parking. Parking on these single yellow lines would no longer be possible due to the reduction in carriageway width which is required in order to improve pedestrian links to the central green and to enable the provision of more green space.
- 5.30. We have subsequently met the local traders to discuss their concerns and to find a way to accommodate their needs, particularly for deliveries, whilst retaining the integrity of the scheme and without having a negative effect on road safety.

Proposed Trees

- 5.31. The traders were also worried that the new trees proposed along the kerb edge of Whiteheads Grove would obstruct the view of their shops and also reduce space for pedestrians, particularly when there is queuing outside the shops. They were concerned that this would result in a loss of trade.
- 5.32. We are satisfied that there would be sufficient space to accommodate the trees without obstructing pedestrians due to the width of the footways and the kerb-side location of the proposed trees. The trees would not obstruct the view of the shops any more than would a large vehicle parked outside. For a location of this nature we would select a tree with a narrow canopy in order to reduce the overhang and prevent conflict with shop canopies and prevent damage to the tree by high sided vehicles.
- 5.33. However, there are other issues relating to the tree location which need to be considered. Due to the number of services beneath the footway and the positioning of service covers it may not be possible to plant the trees at the locations proposed in the original layout.

Revised proposals

- 5.34. To address the concerns raised by the traders, we have revised the design to reduce the length of the buildout on the north side of Cale Street to provide space for loading/unloading and overnight parking on the single yellow line; convert one Pay by Phone bay on Whiteheads Grove and the adjacent car club bay that is no longer required to single yellow line, 10m in length, to allow for loading and unloading, for drop off/pick up and for overnight parking; and relocate two of the proposed trees along the kerb edge on Whitehead's Grove to the build-outs at each end. This alternative layout is illustrated as option 2 in Appendix F.
- 5.35. Compared with the current situation the revised scheme would result in the changes scheduled below:

type	no. spaces		change
	Pre-covid	proposed	
Residents' parking	3 (currently suspended)	0	-3
Pay by Phone	11	8	-3
Disabled parking	0	1	+1
Car club	1	0	-1
Motorcycle parking	5	0	-5
Cycle hire docking station	27	16	-11
Single yellow line	8	3	-5

6. OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

- 6.1. There are three options to consider:

Option 1

- 6.2. This is the original scheme on which we consulted. Although it received a high level of support from the local community, the traders were concerned about the potential effects on their businesses as a result of the changes to parking and loading. In view of these concerns this option is not recommended.

Option 2

- 6.3. This amended scheme includes most of the elements of the original scheme but incorporates the changes to the parking layout and the positioning of the trees as described in para 5.31 above. This revised proposal is illustrated in appendix F.
- 6.4. The main advantage of this option is that it addresses the main issues of concern raised during the consultation on the proposals. **This is the option that I recommend**

Option 3

- 6.5. The third option is to do nothing. Given the level of support from the local community for the proposed scheme, this option is not recommended.

7. CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 7.1. This report describes the public consultation undertaken with the local community and the previous discussions with ward councillors and key representatives of the local community. Full details of the consultation are in sections 4 and 5 above.

8. HUMAN RESOURCES AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. There are no Human Resource Implications arising directly from this report.
- 8.2. The Council has had regard to its Public Sector Equality Duty contained under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 which places a general equality duty on the Council when exercising its functions and the making of such decisions to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or other prohibited conduct; advance of equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sex orientation. The duty also applies to marriage and civil partnership but only in relation to the elimination of discrimination.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Council has had regard to its' Network Management Duty contained in section 16 of the Traffic Management Act as well as having regard to its' duty contained in section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking on and off the highway. The Council also has power to carry out the works pursuant to Part V of the Highways Act 1980. As regards making the Experimental Traffic Order permanent and making further Traffic Management Orders as outlined above, the Council will do so in accordance with the procedures laid down in The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

10. FINANCIAL, PROPERTY, IT AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. The estimated costs for the scheme are as shown below;

Option 1 public realm scheme - £610k

Option 2 public realm scheme - £600k

Water fountain – construction £120k plus £12k p.a. cleansing and maintenance

CCTV installation cost £4k

Cycle Hire docking station (relocation of terminal and removal of surplus docking points) - £11k

- 10.2. The total estimate cost for the recommended Option 2 is £724,000 plus approx. £12,000 p.a. ongoing maintenance of the fountain costs. The capital scheme

(£724,000) would be funded from the current 2021/22 Streetscene and Highways Improvements budgets. The ongoing maintenance costs of the water fountain currently estimated at £12,000 per annum, would be funded from existing Highways budgets.

10.3. There are no property or IT implications arising directly from this report.

Mahmood Siddiqi
Director for Streets and Regulatory Services

Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) – Background papers used in the preparation of this report

none

Contact officer: Lis Loebner, Senior Traffic Engineer, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, lis.loebner@rbkc.gov.uk, 020 7361 2802

Mandatory clearance requirements for all Key and Executive Decision reports

Cleared by <u>Corporate</u> Finance (officer's initials)	PS
Cleared by Director of Law (officer's initials)	LLM
Cleared by Communications (officer's initials)	LH

Appendix A - Original Scheme
Appendix B - Consultation area
Appendix C - consultation booklet
Appendix D - Analysis of Stakeholder consultation (Comms report)
Appendix E - Full details of all comments with responses
Appendix F - Revised scheme
Appendix G - Objections to the Experimental Order
Appendix H - Fountain