


<b>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</b>	Sue Harris, E&C Executive Director Date of report: 07/08/2021 Date of decision (i.e. not before): <i>[insert]</i> Forward Plan reference: ED05939	 THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF <b>KENSINGTON          AND CHELSEA</b>
<b>Report title</b>	ST HELEN'S GARDENS STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS – FEEDBACK ON CONSULTATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
<b>Reporting officer</b>	Director for Streets and Regulatory Services	
<b>Key decision</b>	No	
<b>Access to information classification</b>	Public	
<b>Wards</b>	St Helen's	

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1. This report outlines the public consultation on proposals to St Helen's Gardens to enhance the neighbourhood shopping centre, create a healthier street and to address concerns about traffic speed and road safety. 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.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1. It is recommended that you approve the amended scheme, option 2, as illustrated in Appendix G.

**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.

**4. BACKGROUND**

4.1. In its Neighbourhood Plan the St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum identified the opportunity for St Helen's Gardens to act as a focal point for the area and the local community. In 2018 there had been a serious collision at the junction

of St Helen's Gardens and St Quintin Avenue and over recent years we have also received numerous complaints about traffic speeds on St Quintin Avenue and in the vicinity of the St Helens Gardens/St Quintin Avenue junction.

- 4.2. We have therefore taken the opportunity to put together proposals to enhance the street and to address the road safety concerns to help pedestrians and to reduce traffic speeds.
- 4.3. In 2020 we presented our initial designs to ward councillors and subsequently to the Chair of the St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum and St Helen's Church, as representatives of the local community, in order to produce a scheme that would be supported by the local community.
- 4.4. Following further discussions with this group (the St Helen's Working Group) we amended the initial proposals to take into consideration their initial concerns. We then produced a revised design which the members of the group were happy to share with the local community.

## **5. PROPOSAL AND ISSUES**

- 5.1. The original proposals, illustrated in Appendix A, are aimed at enhancing the street to make it more of a focal point for the area and addressing the road safety concerns. The key features are:
  - a wider footway paved in natural stone
  - parking and loading bays in porphyry to give a hard-wearing and attractive surface
  - a raised informal crossing near the church to help people cross St Helen's Gardens and to help reduce traffic speeds
  - raised tables at all the junctions, incorporating continuous crossings, on the side roads to reduce traffic speeds and make it easier for pedestrians to cross
  - additional planting to help improve air quality
  - new cycle parking stands
  - bollards to prevent informal parking on the forecourts
  - a new raised zebra crossing on St Quintin Avenue to assist pedestrians and help to reduce traffic speeds; and additional parking bays on St Quintin Avenue to compensate for the reduced number of spaces on St Helen's Gardens.
- 5.2. Following the discussions with the St Helen's Working Group, we consulted the local community to seek their views. We sent out a total number of 1028 consultation packs to all residential (997) and business (31) addresses within a consultation area centred on St Helen's Gardens (see appendix C).
- 5.3. The consultation booklets (appendix D) include an illustrative plan showing the proposals accompanied by a summary of the key features, together with questionnaire to be completed and returned.
- 5.4. The consultation period ran for a six-week period, ending on 15 June 2021. During this period 99 questionnaires have been returned, which constitutes a response rate of 9.6%

- 5.5. The questionnaire responses have been analysed and the full details are presented in the Analysis of Stakeholder Consultation (Appendix E).
- 5.6. In summary 79% of consultees support the proposed scheme.
- 5.7. 53 questionnaires also included comments on various elements of the scheme and we have also received nine separate emails commenting on the proposals, as we also encourage comment and debate through a dedicated email address [sthelensgardens@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:sthelensgardens@rbkc.gov.uk) during the consultation period. Full details of all the comments, together with officers' responses to the points raised, are presented in Appendix B.
- 5.8. We also received a small petition opposing the scheme with 23 signatures (see appendix F). This petition stated "We the undersigned oppose the proposed scheme in its current form" but provided no further details. An analysis of the petition shows that nine of the signatures were from addresses outside the consultation area and ten from addresses within. Five of these were from addresses that returned questionnaires supporting the scheme, two were from addresses that returned questionnaires opposing the scheme and three did not return a questionnaire. For the remaining four we do not have full addresses and so cannot ascertain whether they were within the consultation area and, if so, whether or not they were in favour.
- 5.9. Although a significant majority of responses to the consultation supported the scheme, it is apparent from the comments that a small number of respondents are not happy with all elements of the proposals. The key comments are discussed below. These relate to the proposal for the central raised crossing on St Helen's Gardens and the associated changes to parking bays, and the removal of the traffic islands at the junction of St Helen's Gardens and St Quintin Avenue.

### **Central Crossing and relocation of parking spaces**

- 5.10. The most contentious element of the scheme is the central crossing on St Helen's Gardens. The purpose of this crossing is twofold. It would provide a crossing point for pedestrians midway along the shopping parade to help link the two sides of the road and to help people to cross from the residents parking bays on the west side to the shops on the east side and vice versa. Its second function is to help reduce traffic speeds in the vicinity of the shops.
- 5.11. The major drawback, as highlighted in the consultation responses and emails, is that it reduces the number of parking spaces on St Helen's Gardens. We have attempted to mitigate this loss by providing additional parking bays on St Quintin Avenue, made possible by the reconfiguration of the junction and the removal of the existing islands. Five questionnaires included comments objecting to the loss of parking on St Helen's Gardens and two specifically objected to the central crossing, primarily due to the effect on parking, but also argued that there was no need for a crossing at this location.
- 5.12. In contrast, five commented that a zebra crossing was needed on St Helen's Gardens. Traffic flow and pedestrian numbers indicate that this location would not meet the criteria for a zebra crossing. Furthermore, a zebra crossing would require

the removal of more parking spaces. Even with a zebra crossing of the minimum permitted width and the minimum number of two zig zags on each side, this would affect a 10.5 m length of the road. It would therefore be unlikely to receive sufficient local support.

- 5.13. Removing the central raised crossing from the proposed scheme would address a number of comments opposing the proposal without having a major impact on the overall viability of the scheme.
- 5.14. Without this raised crossing to act as a speed reducing feature midway between the junctions with Kelfield Gardens and St Quintin Avenue it is possible that speeds on this section of St Helen's Gardens might increase, however the borough is now a 20mph zone which will assist overall vehicle speeds.

### **Removal of existing traffic islands**

- 5.15. Four responses were unhappy with the removal of the existing islands at the St Helen's Gardens/St Quintin Avenue junction. Their view was that the islands provide a safe place for pedestrians to cross and reduce the speeds of turning traffic, particularly large vehicles.
- 5.16. The islands need to be removed in order to reconfigure the junction to accommodate the proposed new raised zebra crossing on St Quintin Avenue. This new zebra crossing was welcomed by five respondents in their comments. It is an important element of the scheme, providing a safe crossing point for pedestrians and a speed reducing measure for traffic.
- 5.17. We are also aware of a number of current problems associated with these islands. Due to the junction geometry, there are frequent occurrences of vehicles overrunning the footway or the island and damaging the paving and the street furniture on the islands. This is a safety issue and a maintenance issue. Removal of the islands would solve these existing problems and allow a better crossing provision for pedestrians.
- 5.18. On balance, given the level of support for the scheme in general and the number of favourable comments on the proposed raised zebra crossing on St Quintin Avenue, and in recognition of the current problems relating to the traffic islands it is not possible to recommend the retention of the islands.

## **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 there were some strongly held views concerning the loss of parking in the vicinity of the shops. In view of these concerns this option is not recommended.

## Option 2

- 6.3. This amended scheme removes the central raised crossing to retain the existing parking arrangements on St Helen's Gardens. This would address a number of comments opposing the proposal without having a major impact on the overall viability of the scheme. Although it removes a speed reducing feature the impact of speeds is likely to be minimal as there will be raised tables at the junctions at each end of this section of road and we will monitor speeds closely.
- 6.4. As there would be no loss of parking or loading space on St Helen's Gardens the additional parking spaces originally proposed on St Quintin Avenue are removed from the proposals and replaced by additional planting on extended buildouts in order to provide more greenery. All the areas of planting will incorporate sustainable drainage where possible to intercept rainwater and help reduce any potential for flooding in periods of heavy rain. All other elements of the original proposal are retained. This revised proposal is illustrated in appendix G.
- 6.5. 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

- 6.6. The third option is to do nothing. This option is not recommended as it would not deal with the road safety issues identified and would not be in accordance with the preference of the majority of local residents who responded to the consultation.

## 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 section 4 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 and 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 the power to carry out such works pursuant to Part V of the Highways Act 1980 and Parts 3 and 7 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The Council has had regard to the Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and Section 16 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 when exercising such functions.

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

10.1. The cost of the scheme has been estimated as approximately £750,000 and it would be funded from the Street scene and Highway Improvements budgets

10.2. 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

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#### **Mandatory clearance requirements for all Key and Executive Decision reports**

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

Appendix A - Original Scheme (GA drawing)  
Appendix B - Full details of all comments with responses  
Appendix C - Consultation area  
Appendix D - consultation booklet  
Appendix E - Analysis of Stakeholder consultation (Comms report)  
Appendix F - petition  
Appendix G - Revised scheme