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THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

COUNCIL – 11 OCTOBER 2006

REPORT BY CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING POLICY, HOUSING POLICY AND TRANSPORTATION

LEDBURY ROAD - RESPONSE TO PETITION AGAINST DIVERSION OF BUS ROUTES

This report provides information to Members in response to the petition presented to the Council meeting in June against the temporary diversion of bus routes from Chepstow Road to Ledbury Road whilst works to carry out repairs to damaged mains pipes were being carried out.

FOR INFORMATION

1 Background

1.1 At the Council meeting on the 28 June 2006, Councillor Alapini presented a petition of 71 signatures with the following prayer:

“We the undersigned residents of Ledbury Road in Colville Ward are concerned at the diversion of five major bus routes from Chepstow Road into Ledbury Road and the resulting intolerable heavy traffic noise and road safety issues being experienced – day and night. (This is as a result of the replacement of damaged mains pipes).

Ledbury Road is a densely populated residential street and home to many families with young children and vulnerable elderly people. It is used by many children walking to St Mary of the Angel’s school and Colville primary school and attracts heavy pedestrian traffic around the shopping areas with no safe crossing anywhere on the road.

- We therefore call on the Council and TFL to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment on Ledbury Road, as it is not suited to being a bus route and properties are not equipped for such heavy traffic and noise.
- Additionally, for the council to undertake a Health and Safety Assessment of Ledbury Road with a view to implementing urgent

traffic calming measures as there is no safe means of crossing the heavily trafficked street.

- Lastly we wish to discuss with the Council and TFL compensation to make up for the prolonged disruptions, relocation and loss of business. As part of such compensation, we ask for re-evaluation of our rates and Council tax as it falls within the accepted reasons listed by the Valuation Office Agency: *'if there have been physical changes in your area which could affect the value of your property'.*

2. **Temporary closure of Chepstow Road**

- 2.1 Officers attended a site meeting called by Westminster City Council (WCC) on 7 June 2006 to discuss water main replacement works along Chepstow Road, precipitated by a recent mains failure. Thames Water reported that the works would require the full closure of Chepstow Road between Talbot Road and Westbourne Grove for the duration of the works, then estimated to take six to eight weeks. Chepstow Road had only just been resurfaced by WCC as part of that Council's maintenance programme.
- 2.2 Chepstow Road is an important traffic route carrying five bus services. For the previous resurfacing of Chepstow Road, WCC went ahead and arranged a temporary diversion of traffic and buses along Talbot Road and the boundary roads of Ledbury Road and Westbourne Grove. To facilitate this, the central traffic island in Ledbury Road just south of Talbot Road was removed by WCC to allow buses to negotiate the junction. The island had not yet been reinstated and WCC proposed that the same diversion route should also be used for the water mains replacement works. London Buses were in favour of this as it provided the most efficient route for buses serving the large surrounding catchment area and re-positioned stops would be accessible to the local customer base and within easy walking distance of stops lost because of the closure. The Metropolitan Police representative at the meeting had no objection to this diversion route being used again.
- 2.3 However, officers of this Council, although agreeing that this was the most obvious diversion, were conscious of the environmental impact that it would have on residents, particularly in view of the longer term nature of the water main works. They requested time to consider other possible routes. Officers carried out a wider survey of surrounding roads, including those in WCC. However, no suitable alternative diversion route meeting London Buses' operational requirements could be agreed. Consequently WCC made a temporary traffic order under The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 authorising the closure of the Chepstow Road with the diversion

route of Talbot Road, Ledbury Road and Westbourne Grove. The water mains replacement work was completed between Monday 26 June 2006 and Sunday 16 July 2006.

3. Response to petition

Diversion route

- 3.1 The closure of Chepstow Road, which is an important bus route, was inevitably going to cause local disruption. Officers were very much aware of the likely local concerns that would be raised about the use of Ledbury Road as part of the diversion route. However, in needing to agree a diversion route, it was necessary to balance the road safety and environmental implications with the need for London Buses to maintain a service for its local customers, many of whom are residents of the Royal Borough. If a much larger diversion route had been agreed this would have meant that buses would not have been able to serve the local area during the closure.
- 3.2 Officers gave the road safety implications of the diversion paramount importance and the Metropolitan Police, who also give this the highest priority, agreed to the use of Ledbury Road for the diversion. Conditions along Ledbury Road were also kept under review during the diversion.

Traffic and road safety conditions in Ledbury Road

- 3.3 Since the petition and the completion of Thames Water's work, the Council has received a copy of a letter from a resident of Ledbury Road to the Leader of WCC concerned with traffic speeds in Ledbury Road and requesting a new zebra crossing in the vicinity of Talbot Road to replace the traffic island which still had not been properly reinstated by WCC.
- 3.4 The traffic island by Talbot Road was reinstated by WCC just before the Notting Hill Carnival, but without its illuminated bollards. WCC were informed that the reinstatement had not been carried out to this Council's satisfaction. WCC have confirmed that the island was not fully reinstated until mid September.
- 3.5 Although Ledbury Road is a boundary road there is a maintenance agreement with WCC that any traffic and road safety investigations should be dealt with by the Royal Borough. On the basis of available personal injury accident data there is no justification for any

accident remedial or traffic calming measures along Ledbury Road or for the provision of a zebra crossing by Talbot Road. However, traffic and pedestrian surveys have been commissioned at the location and the Police and Transport for London in partnership have been asked to carry out mobile speed camera enforcement in Ledbury Road. Should these investigations show that there is justification for any further action, this will be reported to me.

Compensation to residents

- 3.6 The question of a re-evaluation of council tax would involve the Inland Revenue's Valuation Office Agency (VOA), who is responsible for the banding of domestic properties for council tax purposes. The procedure for this would be for individual appeals to be made against the current bandings for the VOA to consider. Appeals can be made on the grounds quoted in the petition: *'if there have been physical changes in your area which could affect the value of your property'*. However, it is likely that the appeals would not succeed unless the capital value of the properties affected could be proven to have been permanently reduced, and that this would lead to the properties concerned falling within a lower band.

FOR INFORMATION

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Transportation**

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