

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

COUNCIL MEETING – 26 JUNE 2019

REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITIES

PETITION FOR DEBATE – SAVE THE TREES ON NOTTING HILL GATE AND HOLLAND PARK AVENUE

A petition calls for trees not to be cut down on Notting Hill Gate and Holland Park Avenue.

The report explains:

- Transport for London proposes the removal of 26 trees to accommodate a segregated cycle route on Notting Hill Gate and Holland Park Avenue.
- the Council does not support Transport for London's proposals
- the Council is the highway authority for Notting Hill Gate and Holland Park Avenue and is responsible for the trees
- the Council has no plans to remove trees from Notting Hill Gate or Holland Park Avenue

1. THE PETITION

- 1.1 There is a petition online signed by around 6,500 people addressed to the Mayor of London, Transport for London and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea:

“Save the trees on Holland Park Avenue and Notting Hill Gate. Transport for London want to cut down multiple historic trees in a heavily congested area where they are desperately needed to defend against the relentless pollution. Three billion trees must be planted by 2050 to end Britain's contribution to global warming, yet TFL seem to want to take steps in the opposite direction, in their proposal to cut down 19 trees.

Transport for London will be putting cyclists lives at risk to introduce a new cycle lane in this traffic-heavy area, chopping down trees to accommodate it. While cycle lanes are undoubtedly crucial to reduce carbon footprint, it is vital that they do not come at an environmental cost. TFL's cavalier, careless attitude towards the loss of almost twenty mature trees demonstrates that their primary concern is not the environment, revealing their project to be nothing more than a box-ticking strategy to **appear** more environmentally-friendly”.

2. PETITION GUIDANCE

2.1 The Council's Petition Guidance states:

"A petition may be referred to a meeting of the full Council for debate where:

- (i) a petition addresses a broad and current issue of interest or relevance to residents across the Borough as a whole; and
- (ii) the Mayor so agrees; and
- (iii) the petition achieves at least 1,500 valid supporting signatures."

2.2 As the above applies:

"... the lead petitioner will be asked to confirm that s/he would like the petition handled in that way and, if s/he does, will be invited to address, or nominate someone else to address, the meeting in question. Council or Scrutiny consideration of any petition will be based upon a written report from the relevant Council officer, published with the relevant agenda. The response to any petition that is considered in these ways will be given, usually by the relevant Lead Member, after they have had the opportunity fully to consider the points raised at the meeting in question."

3. THE SUBJECT OF THE PETITION

3.1 The petition relates to Transport for London (TfL)'s proposals for Holland Park Avenue and Notting Hill Gate that would create a segregated cycle route across the borough. As part of these plans, TfL proposes to cut down three trees on Holland Park Avenue and 23 trees on Notting Hill Gate. TfL has identified a number of potential planting sites to replace some but not all of the lost trees. The feasibility of the potential planting sites, which depends on the nature of proximate underground utilities, is yet to be established.

3.2 TfL consulted on its proposals between 1 May 2019 and 16 June 2019. The Council has issued a position statement on TfL's proposals (see Appendix A) that confirms the Council does not support them. Our position statement explains that we have listened to our residents and businesses, and we share their concerns: principally about the loss of trees, increased congestion and the loss of bus stops. On trees, the statement notes:

"The scheme requires the loss of the 23 trees in the central reservation on Notting Hill Gate. Since this is incompatible with TfL's Healthy Streets philosophy, which places great value on the benefits of trees, we share our residents' and businesses' concerns that even with every incentive to avoid this negative feature of proposals, TfL have not been able to produce a scheme that keeps our trees. We want to save our trees".

3.3 The Council is the highway authority for Notting Hill Gate and Holland Park Avenue and is responsible for the trees on those streets. The trees cannot be removed without the Council's approval. The Council has no plans to remove trees from Holland Park Avenue or Notting Hill Gate.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 Council invites Lead Members to note the petitioners' representations and any views expressed by councillors.

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Background papers: None

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