

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	13 SEPTEMBER 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	10
TITLE:	SOUTH STREET / SIDMOUTH STREET - RESULTS OF STATUTORY CONSULTATION		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION & STREETCARE	WARDS:	ABBEY
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JOB TITLE:	ASSISTANT NETWORK MANAGER	E-MAIL:	james.penman@reading.gov.uk

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To inform the Sub-Committee of comments and objections received in respect of the statutory consultation proposals to close South Street and The Grove, at their junctions with Watlington Street.
- 1.2 Appendix 1 provides an indicative drawing of the recommended proposal.
- 1.3 Appendix 2 provides a summary of the comments and objects that have been received during the consultation period.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee notes the report.
- 2.2 That the comments and objections noted in Appendix 1 are considered.
- 2.3 That the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to seal the resultant Traffic Regulation Order and no public inquiry be held into the proposals.
- 2.4 That the objectors be informed of the decision of the Sub-Committee accordingly.

2.5 That, should funding permit, the proposals be implemented as recommended in Items 4.7 - 4.9.

2.6 That the alterations to parking on Watlington Street and South Street be investigated as part of the 2017B Waiting Restriction Review, as per Item 4.8.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Improving road safety through the reduction of casualties is a statutory duty of the Council, as Highway Authority.

4. BACKGROUND AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 There is a continuing road safety issue on Sidmouth Street, at the junction with South Street, which is demonstrated by Police-supplied casualty data and, anecdotally, by nearby residents. Reading Borough Council, as Local Highway Authority, is required to address this issue.

4.2 It was proposed that removing the through-traffic along Watlington Street and South Street will positively affect the levels of casualties at the junction by reducing the volumes of traffic on approach. Other benefits would be a reduction in traffic volumes and a potential reduction in traffic speeds for residents of these streets.

4.3 To achieve the removal of through-traffic, road closures or similar measures will be required. A proposal that appeared to have substantial local support would be closures of the two junctions at Watlington Street/South Street and Watlington Street/The Grove. This would create a cul-de-sac in Watlington Street, served from the London Road, whilst allowing residents of South Street and The Grove to continue to use the Sidmouth Street/South Street junction.

4.4 At the June 2017 meeting of the Sub-Committee, it was agreed that this proposal (illustrated on Appendix 1) be progressed to statutory consultation.

4.5 Appendix 2 provides a summary of the consultation responses received to date. The consultation closes at 5pm on Tuesday 12th September 2017. It is the intension of Officers to provide an update of the appendix to members of the Sub-Committee as soon as practicable after consultation closes on this day and to provide printed copies at the meeting of the Sub-Committee.

4.6 At the time of writing, the Council has received no comments or objections to the statutory consultation.

- 4.7 At the time of writing, it is recommended that the closure of South Street be implemented in way that permits the 2-way movements of cyclists along the street, as the street is sufficiently wide to allow this. This could be achieved with a break in the 'obstructions' and appropriate signing, similar to the closure at Watlington Street.
- 4.8 At the time of writing, it is also recommended that the closure point at South Street be set back from the junction with Watlington Street, allowing a turning area suitable for larger vehicles that may be serving properties on Watlington Street. It is also proposed that Officers investigate any changes that could be made to parking bays on Watlington Street and South Street, which could improve the ease of vehicle turning and potentially increase parking availability, following the implementation of the closures. It is recommended that this be reviewed as part of the 2017B Waiting Restriction Review programme.
- 4.9 It is recommended that cyclists are not encouraged to pass through the closure at The Grove, as this street is narrow and will likely see more vehicle reversing and turning movements with the closure in place.
- 4.10 Should Officer recommendations need to be revised, following the closing of the statutory consultation, these updates will be distributed and reported alongside the updated Appendix 2, as per Item 4.5.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 This proposal contributes to the Council's strategic aims, as set out below:
- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 Changes to waiting restrictions will require advertisement of the sealed Traffic Regulation Order, prior to implementation.
- 6.2 Objectors will be informed of the decision of the Sub-Committee, once the meeting minutes have been agreed.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The sealed Traffic Regulation Orders will require advertisement, under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and in accordance with

the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

- 7.2 Necessary changes to Highway signing and lining will need to be implemented in accordance with the Traffic Signs, Regulations and General Directions 2016.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 8.2 An Equality Impact scoping exercise has been conducted. It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is relevant as the proposals are not deemed to be discriminatory and a statutory consultation has been conducted, providing an opportunity for objections/support/concerns to be considered prior to a decision being made on whether to implement the closure.

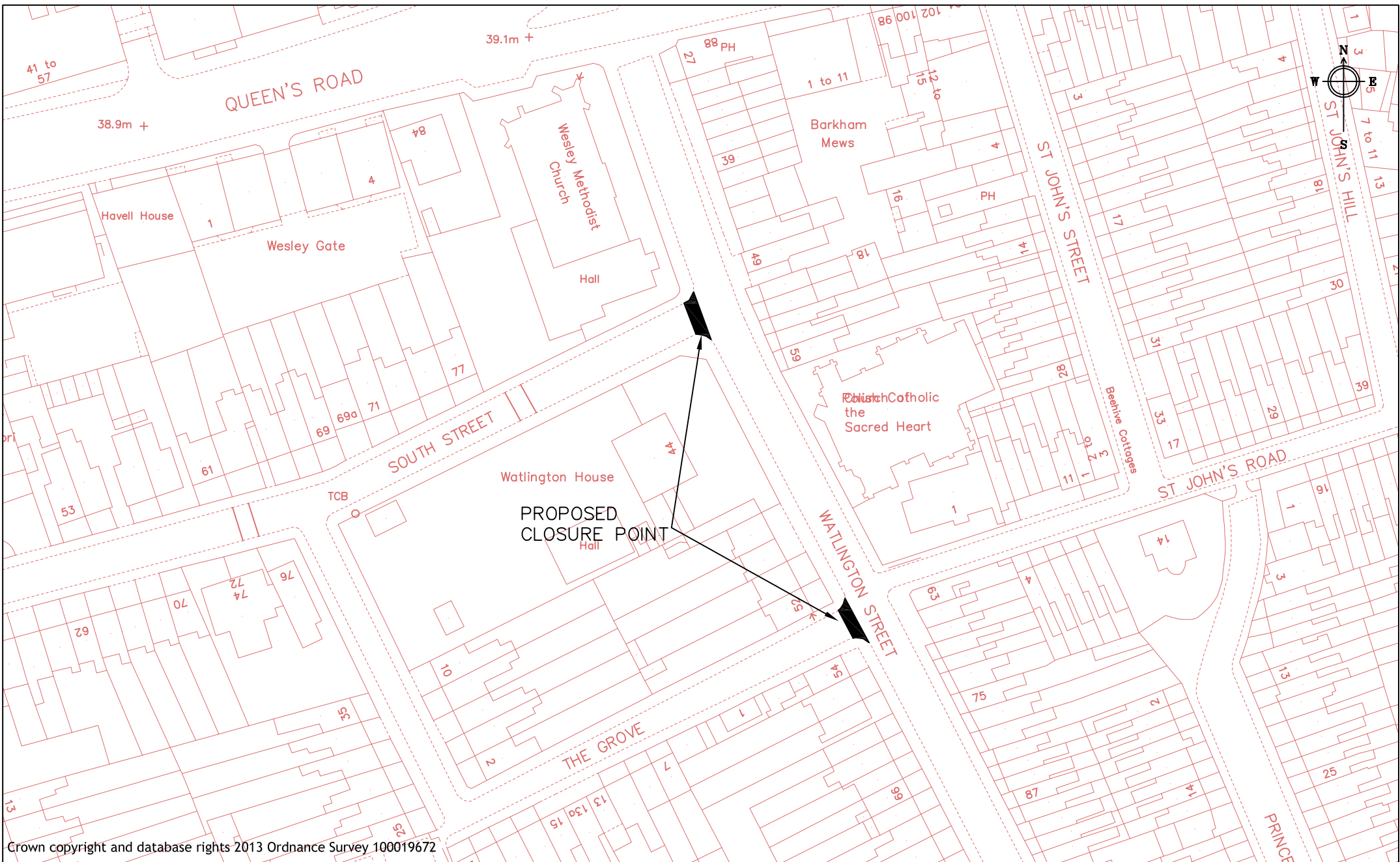
9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The required advertising for the statutory consultation will be funded from the capital Highway safety budget.
- 9.2 Implementation will need to be funded from the capital Highway safety budget.
- 9.3 Implementation costs and the likely level of ongoing maintenance costs will be factors in considering appropriate methods for implementing the road closures.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 South Street / Sidmouth Street Road Safety Update (Traffic Management Sub-Committee, June 2017).

- 10.2 Watlington Street / South Street - Informal Consultation (Traffic Management Sub-Committee, September 2016).
- 10.3 Watlington Street / South Street Informal Consultation - Update (Traffic Management Sub-Committee, November 2016).



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Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Transportation and Streetcare
Services
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
RG1 2LU

Project
SOUTH ST & SIDMOUTH ST
ROAD SAFETY UPDATE

Drawing
PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE

Scale
N.T.S
Date
JUN 17

Drawn JC
Checked JC
Approved SB

Drawing No.
APPENDIX 1

SOUTH STREET & THE GROVE ROAD CLOSURES CONSULTATION - OBJECTIONS TO TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER

APPENDIX 1 - Summary of letters of support and objections received to Traffic Regulation Order

UPDATED: 5pm, 12/09/2017.

Line No.	Originator	Objections/support/comments received.
Officer summary of responses:		
Support: 5 / Objections: 1 / Recommendation: Implement as advertised.		
1	Support, Resident	As a resident of Watlington Street and a motorist I fully support the proposals put forward closing off the above streets. The closures will stop the rat run and also lesson the possibilities of future accidents at the junction of Sidmouth St and South St. Plus the potential for someone being hit by a speeding car will have to be reduced.
2	Support, Resident	<p>I wanted to express my support for the proposal to close the road at two junctions namely Watlington Street/South Street and Watlington Street/The Grove.</p> <p>I believe that this would remove the traffic volume caused by rat-running around the traffic light at the junction of London Road and Sidmouth Street. In addition there is a fair amount of speeding down Watlington Street, also linked to racing to beat the light, and this would completely remove that issue.</p> <p>The proposal to position the road block provides a significant benefit in terms of traffic calming while minimising the inconvenience to people who live locally.</p> <p>There have been other proposals including road humps, and while this may slow down some vehicles, there are also big 4x4's and vans to which road humps are immaterial.</p> <p>Therefore, both [REMOVED] and myself are in support of the proposal to close the road.</p>
3	Objection, Community group representative	<p>We have just become aware of your proposals to close the two junctions Watlington Street/The Grove and Watlington Street/South Street and wish to raise our objection to the proposals.</p> <p>Readifolk (Reading's Folk Song & Music Club) meets in the Community Hall of Watlington House on Sunday evenings. Access to the hall and main car park is in South Street.</p> <p>Visitors to the Club (performers & audience) arriving from the East along London Road are usually directed by Satnav down Watlington Street to the front of Watlington House where signs direct them into South Street to the hall and main car park. The alternative route via Sidmouth Street would not be indicated by Satnav and does involve an awkward right -hand turn into South Street. I can foresee considerable confusion for newcomers to the club.</p> <p>Additionally, the main car park does often become full and cars are then directed to the 'overspill' car park at the front of Watlington House. This would not be possible if the South Street/Watlington Road is blocked.</p> <p>I am not sure whether the numerous community groups etc, using the hall have been advised of your proposals as they would experience the same access problems as outlined above.</p>

Line No.	Originator	Objections/support/comments received.
		I am sure that Reading Borough Council would wish to support and encourage Community groups such as Readifolk and ask that you give due consideration to our objection.
4	Support, Resident	<p>We are writing in support of the proposed road closures of the entrances to South Street and The Grove via Watlington Street. Turning Watlington Street into a cul-de-sac would stop our street from being used as a 'rat run'. Motorists often travel at high speed down the street, ignoring the 20 mph signs, creating a risk to pedestrians, this is particularly dangerous for the many school children who cut through Watlington street during rush hour. Residents are frequently tooted when trying to park their cars or even attempting to get out of their cars, by passing motorists, who are too impatient to wait.</p> <p>Also motorists drive into Watlington street using the middle lane on London Road. Sometimes residents can't even get out of the street because people are turning in before traffic in the inside lane moves into the 'keep clear' zone.</p> <p>The road closures would help to create a safe, quiet street for residents in line with many of our neighbouring streets in the conservation area.</p> <p>We are most grateful to the council for listening to the views of local residents, as expressed at residents meetings held with Tony Page.</p>
5	Support, Resident	<p>I am writing to you to voice my support for the planned road closures on Watlington Street.</p> <p>Since moving to Watlington Street just over two years ago, I have been concerned about the practice of rat racing, especially when considering the excessive speed and aggressive driving style displayed by many of those engaging in it.</p> <p>Apart from the noise and unnecessarily high traffic volumes, I am worried about safety, especially that of pedestrians. Many pupils pass Watlington Street on their way to and from school and it is also on university students' route into the town centre. On top of that, there are the Polish church and Watlington House, both of which attract visitors who may not be aware of the issue and cross the street without paying too much attention. The risk of severe accidents is substantial and it would be negligible if the opportunity to eradicate it were not taken.</p> <p>The road closures would be a solution to our problems. They would make Watlington Street a much better, safer place.</p> <p>I would be very grateful for your help in this matter.</p>
6	Support, resident	I am contacting you regarding the proposed road closures at South Street and the Grove. This is something I do support. I have witnessed many cars using the street as a rat run and a lot of them have definitely been speeding. The other issue is that people cut into the street from the middle lane of London Road which is a hazard.