

WARDS: S. James's

AGENDA ITEM

NO.

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CENTRAL DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE – 2ND SEPTEMBER 2004

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE AT MONTROSE DRIVE, RUSSELLS HALL

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider the views received in response to the advertisement of a proposed Traffic Regulation Order to introduce a road closure to vehicular traffic along Montrose Drive, on the Russells Hall Estate, Dudley.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Despite previous initiatives that have seen the introduction of traffic calming measures in the form of road humps along Scotts Green Close and a 7.5 Tonne Weight Restriction along both this road and the adjoining Montrose Drive, this Area Committee has, over a period of many years, considered reports regarding issues and concerns that have been raised by both local residents and Ward Members in relation to the problems of rat-running traffic along these roads in particular and the Russells Hall Estate in general.
- 2.2 Consequently, in order to give this matter more detailed consideration, this Committee agreed to the establishment of the Scotts Green Close Working Group which was to be comprised of residents representatives, Ward Members and officers of the Council in order to consider the options for addressing this issue.
- 2.3 Views subsequently expressed by the Working Group were reported to this Committee's meeting on the 27 October 2003 and in support of an option to sever Scotts Green Close near to its junction with Montrose Drive, the Committee resolved that consideration be given to the practicalities of putting this proposal into effect, bearing in mind that these two roads provide legitimate access for all residents of the Russells Hall Estate.

- 2.4 In order to introduce a physical closure and thereby prevent vehicular traffic using Scotts Green Close, the measures would effectively need to create 2 culs-de-sac, which in turn would require appropriate turning facilities to be maintained. Drawing No. TM 2071/1 attached to this report indicates that the most suitable location for a road closure was, however, deemed to be in Montrose Drive and not Scotts Green Close.
- 2.5 Notice of the proposed Traffic Regulation Order to prohibit driving along Montrose Drive was advertised via a press notice in the Express and Star on the 4 February 2004 and by street notices throughout the objection period between the 4 February 2004 and the 1 March 2004.
- 2.6 However, having regard to the strategic importance of Scotts Green Close and Montrose Drive in terms of access and egress for local residents, it was considered appropriate, in this instance, that street notices should be extended beyond just those streets that were directly affected by the proposals and as such the wider display of the advertisement also included some of the other nearby streets on the estate which, for reference, are listed in the attached Appendix A.
- 2.7 In addition to the formal advertisement procedures, a questionnaire was also sent out to owners/occupiers of the properties in Scotts Green Close, Montrose Drive, Cherry Hill Walk and Kenilworth Close as well as views also being sought from the two schools in the area, the emergency services and the bus companies.
- 2.8 A breakdown of responses received in 'favour' or 'opposed' to the proposals are tabled below:

	'IN FAVOUR'	'OPPOSED'
Cherry Hill Walk	7	4
Kenilworth Drive	9	1
Montrose Drive	5	7
Scotts Green Close	20	19
Residents elsewhere in the estate	-	398*
West Midlands Ambulance Service Centro West Midlands Travel The Holly Hall School		Also oppose the proposals

* in the form of 5 petitions and 5 individual letters

A summary of comments received during the consultation process is also attached as Appendix B to this report.

3.0 PROPOSAL

3.1 That on consideration of the scale of the objections received from residents within the estate and; those residents who returned questionnaires; the West Midlands Ambulance Service; Centro and bus operators, this Area Committee recommends the Lead Member for Transportation not to proceed with the making of the Prohibition of Driving Order to Scotts Green Close and Montrose Drive

4.0 FINANCE

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5.0 LAW

5.1 The power of Local Authorities to make Traffic Regulation Orders and what they may provide is contained in Sections 1 and 2 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act, 1984.

5.2 Section 111 of the Local Government Act, 1972 enables the Council to do anything that is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of its functions

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

6.1 This report accords with the policies of the Council on Equal Opportunities.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

7.1 That this Area Committee agrees the proposal contained in paragraph 3.1 of this report.

Director, Directorate of the Urban Environment - John B. Millar

Contact Officer: G.E. Isherwood – Ext.5459
I.P. Withey – Ext.4414

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN THE COMPILATION OF THIS REPORT

1. Report to the Central Dudley Area Committee meeting on the 27 October 2003.
2. Various correspondence received in response to the advertisement of a proposed Prohibition of Driving Order along Montrose Drive, Russells Hall

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APPENDIX A

LIST OF STREETS COVERED BY NOTICES

Ashenhurst Road
Bushey Fields Road
Cherry Hill Walk*
Corbyn Road
Dereton Close
Eagle Close
Falcon Way
Geston Road
Hawkesley Road
Henhurst Walk
Kennilworth Close*
Kestrel Road
Ketley Hill Road
Merlin Close
Middlepark Road
Montrose Drive*
Osprey Drive
Peregrine Close
Quentin Drive
Russells Hall Road
Scotts Green Close*
The Oval

Note: Streets marked with an * also received questionnaires

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APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK FROM ADVERTISEMENT/CONSULTATION

In addition to the statutory requirement for the Local Highway Authority to advertise its proposals to implement a Traffic Regulation Order for the Prohibition of Driving along Montrose Drive on the Russells Hall Estate, Dudley; comments and views have also been sought from the Emergency Services, Centro, Travel West Midlands, The Holly Hall School, The Sutton School and from those of residents at Cherry Hill Walk, Kennilworth Close, Montrose Drive and Scotts Green Close.

The Police and West Midlands Fire Service have raised no objections to the proposals but the West Midlands Ambulance Service, Centro, West Midlands Travel and The Holly Hall School have all raised objections to the proposals, citing their main areas of concern as the impact on response times to emergency callouts, operational difficulties in providing services to the local residents and increased levels of congestion arising from vehicles having to turn round in Scotts Green Close- particularly by parents who pick up and drop off their children at times of the highest pedestrian movements.

No comments were received from The Sutton School.

In total, 132 letters, plans and questionnaires were distributed within the above mentioned streets, with a total of 72 (54%) being returned. Of those questionnaires returned 41 (57%) were in favour of the proposals being implemented with 31 (43%) being opposed to a road closure being introduced.

A breakdown of the 41 replies in favour of the road closure and the 31 opposed to the proposals is, however, also worthy of further deliberation in that these can be categorised according to their street address as follows:

	In Favour	Opposed
Cherry Hill Walk	7	4
Kenilworth Drive	9	1
Montrose Drive	5	7
Scotts Green Close	20	19
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	41	31

It is clear that the outcome of comments from the questionnaires to residents generally are not conclusive but in relation to those which were received specifically from residents in Montrose Drive and Scotts Green Close, who seemingly suffer the most nuisance from rat-running traffic, there were 25 in favour of the road closure compared to 26 being against the proposal

Other comments and views received during the consultation period from residents elsewhere on the Russells Hall Estate were unanimously opposed to the road closure proposals with 5 individual letters and 5 petitions totalling some 393 petitioners citing their main areas of concern as:

- i) the loss of one of only four access/egress points onto one of the largest housing estates in the Borough which would lead directly to increased journey lengths and times as well as the unacceptable consequences that this would impose on the surrounding estate roads;
- ii) problems for the emergency services arising from limited access and increased levels of congestion, particularly in the vicinity of Bushey Fields Road and the access road serving the Russells Hall Hospital;
- iii) rather than reduce the levels of rat running traffic through the estate as a whole, the proposals to address one set of issues will merely result in a general shift in the patterns of traffic movements at the expense of other residents and facilities such as a children's home, 2 schools (an infants/primary and a special school), a community centre and an old peoples home.
- iv) An increased likelihood for accidents to occur along streets where traffic volumes rise as well as increased levels in traffic speeds, congestion and nuisance.
- v) A general sense of injustice that the proposals to resolve issues raised by a relatively small amount of residents would have such a negative impact on the vast majority of all the other residents on the Russells Hall Estate.