

**Body:** Cabinet

**Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> July 2014

**Subject:** Little Chelsea – Traffic Survey

**Report of:** Senior Head of Development

**Ward(s):** Meads

**Purpose:** To seek Members’ support to ask East Sussex County Council to consider the Little Chelsea traffic survey data in the work to review the ring road with a view to assisting that area to hold more temporary community events using the public highway.

**Decision Type:** Non Key decision.

**Recommendation:** To delegate to the Senior Head of Development to:-

1. ask ESCC to take into account the Little Chelsea Traffic Survey data in their work in reviewing the transport network in Eastbourne town centre, which includes the ring road.
2. Work with ESCC and otherwise assist the Little Chelsea traders to temporarily restrict traffic in the area to facilitate the holding of occasional community events, where legal grounds for doing so exist.
3. Thank the Little Chelsea traders for their initiative in undertaking the survey and publishing the results.

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## **1.0 Background**

1.1 The Little Chelsea traders have carried out local consultation with the community about traffic in their neighbourhood. This report brings the results of that survey to the attention of Cabinet and proposes a way forward.

## **2.0 The Survey Results**

2.1 The local traders carried out the survey because they perceived an increase in the speed of traffic while also noticing a high turnover in businesses and

fewer footfalls in the area. The survey had almost 200 respondents and the full results are contained in the Appendix to this report. In summary the key findings are:-

- 38 traders, 30 residents and 120 shoppers completed the surveys in total;
- around 90% of all three groups would like to see more temporary closures of Grove Rd and South St for special events;
- at least 60% of all three groups (some of the groups were even more in favour) would like traffic volumes and speeds reduced along these streets. Through traffic ought to be diverted back to Gildredge Road which has plenty of capacity and was originally designed as a two way street;
- at least 65% of all three groups think that running buses along these streets hasn't benefited them;
- some businesses and residents need vehicle access so full pedestrianisation is impractical. A 'shared space' option where pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles rub along together was the most popular;
- nearby parking remains important and more short stay loading bays are essential.

2.2 There was a public meeting on 26 June when the results were fed back to the community. During the public debate there was strong support from the local community to see more events using the highway space. There was concern that when this suggestion has been made in the past, there were difficulties obtaining temporary road closures. It was suggested that while the work on reviewing the ring road will take approximately two years to deliver its recommendations, the Borough Council, in partnership with the County Council as highway authority, will work with the local community to investigate ways that allow temporary use of the highway for special events.

### **3.0 Strategic Fit**

3.1 The views obtained by the Little Chelsea community on how they would like to see their area change in the future fits well with the overarching strategic policies for the town. There are two principle strategies that cover this subject area up to 2026 and 2027 respectively, namely the Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) and the Town Centre Local Plan (TCLP).

3.2 The high level objectives of the LTP3 are:-

- Improve economic competitiveness and growth;
- Improve safety, health and security;
- Tackle climate change;
- Improve accessibility and enhance social inclusion;
- Improve quality of life.

The relevant high level objectives of the TCLP are:-

- **Independent retail offer:** strengthen the towns independent retail offer, improving its integration with the primary shopping area and the

seafront and building on its authentic local distinctiveness;

- **Accessibility:** improve accessibility to and within the Town Centre and Seafront for all sectors of the population, through the provision of an integrated approach to all transport users particularly pedestrians, cyclists and public transport customers;
- **Public realm:** provide enhanced pedestrian and cycle links across the Town Centre ..... through improvements to the public realm ensuring that the qualitative experience for those who shop, work, visit and live in Eastbourne is improved through measures such as pedestrian access and security, provision for cyclists ..... improving the quality of public places and securing increased priority for pedestrians and cyclists within the Town Centre.

3.3 It is apparent that the ideas and suggestions generated by the Little Chelsea traffic survey could fit with both the East Sussex County Council transport strategy and the local plan for the town centre. Notwithstanding this, when considering transport proposals it is important to look at the wider impacts and the wider needs of all modes of transport. While a single street cannot be looked at in isolation without understanding the implications for adjoining areas, it is appropriate that with the on going work on the review of the town centre, which includes the ring road, this survey data is considered as part of that wider piece of work.

#### **4.0 Implications**

4.1 There are no detrimental impacts of supporting the proposals put forward by the Little Chelsea traders. It is also confirmed that there are no financial impacts on the Council as direct result of this report.

#### **5.0 Equalities and Fairness**

5.1 This specific recommendation is to feed the survey work into the review of the transport network in the town centre, which includes the ring road, being led by East Sussex County Council. That piece of work will have a full equalities assessment as part of the process.

#### **6.0 Conclusions**

6.1 The Little Chelsea community has carried out a survey which attracted almost 200 respondents and has indicated a desire to see improvements to the public space in their neighbourhood. The ideas and suggestions coming forward could fit with the strategic policy position of both East Sussex County Council and Eastbourne Borough Council. It is a timely piece of data that should be fed into the wider piece of work that is currently being undertaken on reviewing the strategy for Eastbourne town centre, including the ring road. It is also recommended that the two Councils look to support the Little Chelsea area in their desire to see more temporary road closures to allow special events take place.

#### **Lead Officer**

Jefferson Collard, Senior Head of Development

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**Background Papers:**

Little Chelsea Traffic Survey dated 26 June 2014

To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.