

**Decision Maker:** Environment and Community Services Portfolio Holder

**Date:** Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020

**Decision Type:** Non -urgent                      Non-executive                      Non-key

**Title:** Permanently close a section of Star Lane, St Mary Cray at the junction from Sweeps Lane to Sheepcote Lane

**Contact Officer:** Toby Smith, Street Enforcement Manager  
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**Chief Officer:** Colin Brand, Director of Environment and Public Protection

**Ward:** Cray Valley East

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1. Reason for report

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to permanently close Star lane to vehicular traffic between the junction of Sweeps Lane to Sheepcote Lane / Hockenden Lane.
- 1.2 This section of Star lane has been blighted with continuous fly-tipping and incidents of arson.
- 1.3 Star Lane has been closed to vehicular traffic temporarily since March 2019 Under Section 6 and 124 and Part 1V of schedule 9 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (As Amended) and all other enabling powers.

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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

The Portfolio Holder is asked to:

- 2.1 Approve the proposal to permanently close the section of Star Lane, St Mary Cray, to vehicular traffic from the junction of Sweeps Lane to the junction of Sheepcote Lane / Hockenden Lane.

### Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: Positive environmental impact on the local area.
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### Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Not Applicable:
  2. BBB Priority: Quality Environment, Safer Bromley
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### Financial

1. Cost of proposal: £6,000 installation of high security drop bollards; £3,000 purchase of concrete blocks; £2,000 road traffic signage and associated cost of the Traffic Order
  2. Ongoing costs: £ 1000
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Members Flytipping Initiative Fund
  4. Total current budget for this head: £ 250,000
  5. Source of funding: 606 300 5000 FF060
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### Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional):N/A
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
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### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None:
  2. Call-in: Not Applicable:
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### Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: Work to be commissioned through existing highway maintenance term contract
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### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): All Bromley Residents
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### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Yes
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: All three Cray Valley East Councillors have verbally expressed their full support for this proposal.

Councillor Yvonne Bear provided the following commentary:

*"I am writing to confirm that I fully support the permanent closure of Star Lane between the Traveller Site and Hockenden Lane.*

*The area has historically been used as an unofficial dump with fly-tippers coming from far and wide. There were frequent fires/burnt out vehicles causing regular LFB call outs not to mention the costs associated with clearance of the tons of rubbish dumped.*

*Efforts to catch the perpetrators met with limited success. CCTV was stolen or vandalised and vehicles spotted often had false plates.*

*The dumping was so bad that the road became infrequently used as you could never be sure that you would make it all the way through.*

*Whilst some residents regret the loss of this stretch of road, the vast majority are fully supportive of permanent closure to vehicles, though most would like to retain foot and cycle access.*

*If the road were reopened, the return to widespread fly tipping seems inevitable. Residents would much prefer a clear foot path to a rubbish strewn road.*

*It is also understood that the police and LFB are fully supportive of permanent closure.*

*For all the reasons stated above, I would not wish to see this stretch of road reopened to vehicles and fully support permanent closure."*

Councillor Harry Stranger provided the following commentary ;

*I write to confirm my entire support for the Closure of Star Lane between the Travellers Site entrance and Hockenden Lane.*

*The amount of Flytipping , arson and illegal traversing into Pauls Cray Park and adjacent fields has over a long period been a major worry and concern for local residents. If the road were to be reopened it would again become an unpassable cesspit of detritus and return to an unacceptable drain on costs and manpower to the Council. Fire brigade and the Police.*

*I have not received any email or correspondence wishing the road to be reinstated since the closure last year.*

*Regards*

*Harry Stranger  
Councillor Cray Valley East*

### 3. COMMENTARY

Background.

- 3.1 Records indicate that this section of Star lane, from the junction of Sweeps Lane to Sheepcote Lane / Hockenden Lane, has been blighted over two decades with fly-tipping and arson which blocks this narrow lane causing inconvenience and a hazard to road users.
- 3.2 The area has become a magnet for illegal activity involving enterprises who transport waste material, members of the public and tradesman who illegally fly-tip their waste because the location is off the beaten track. Star Lane is a winding lane with overhanging trees and any activity cannot be clearly seen by witnesses or by conventional surveillance methods.
- 3.3 In many instances the fly-tip waste would be set alight to conceal any evidence thus involving the services of the London Fire Brigade, who have confirmed that prior to the temporary road closure this area was ranked the third worst post code in London for small / deliberate arson incidents.
- 3.4 Proposals to identify offenders have been considered such as the installation of high security cameras to be placed at either end of the lane, however due to the winding nature of the lane and the natural cover of the overhanging trees and vegetation the cameras would not be able to capture photographic / CCTV evidence.
- 3.5 Site specific measures have been installed including covert cameras placed at specific fly tipping points, however these were soon discovered and stolen.
- 3.6 A specialist covert surveillance operator was engaged to undertake mobile vehicle patrols of the area to identify suspect fly tipping vehicles and their activities, however this proved to be ineffective as there was no trends in the occurrence of events and this method relies upon such intelligence to identify culprits.
- 3.7 On the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019 a temporary Traffic Order was approved by the ECS Portfolio Holder to close this section of Star Lane to all vehicular traffic. This was achieved by the installation of four portable two tonne concrete blocks placed at the junction of Star Lane and Sweeps Lane and another four concrete blocks placed at the junction of Sheepcote Lane.
- 3.8 Records of fly tipping incidents removed by the Council's street cleansing contractor from this area of Star Lane has shown that in the period prior to the temporary closure (between 1st March 2018 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019) there had been 649 tonnes of fly tipping removed.
- 3.9 Incidents of recorded fly tipping tonnage removed from the area of Star Lane during the period of closure (between 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019 to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020) recorded 627 tonnes of dumped waste material, a reduction of 21 tonnes.
- 3.10 In the period of 2018 to 2019 there were 116 Reports of fly tipping within the vicinity of Star Lane. During the same period of 2019 to 2020 there were 63 reports of fly tipping in the same area.
- 3.11 While it could be surmised that the current temporary closure of Star Lane has not had the significant impact in terms of a reduction in the volume of material removed, the number of reported incidents has dropped significantly. There has however been a discernible change in the volume of arson incidents related to fly tipping by the London Fire Brigade who have reported that incidents of deliberate arson / small fires have reduced in this area as a result of the temporary closure of this section of Star Lane and fully support the permanent closure of this section of Star Lane.

3.12 The proposed measures for restricting access to vehicular traffic would include at the junction of Star Lane with Sweeps Lane, installing high security drop bollards flanked by two tonne concrete blocks. The drop bollards would allow access to authorised Arquiva maintenance vehicles and engineers to service the Arquiva TV / Radio mast located approximately 80 metres into Star Lane from the junction with Sweeps Lane.

3.13 A drawing indicating the location of the removeable bollards and associated new road layout “Road Closed” traffic signage is included as Appendix A to this report. The existing (two tonne) concrete blocks located at the junction of Sheepecote Lane / Hockenden Lane would be retained as part of this proposal.

**4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN**

4.1 The reduction in fly tipping and Arson will have a positive impact on all local residents of Cray Valley East. Consideration has been given to the impact this section of road closure may have on persons with disabilities or protected characteristics and the conclusion is minimal.

**5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Contributes to the “Building a better Bromley” objectives of a Quality Environment and a Safe Bromley.

**6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Funding to be drawn from the Members Fly Tipping Initiative for the construction works to be undertaken by the Council’s highway maintenance service provider (JB Riney Ltd) obtained from their tendered schedule of rates; total estimated implementation of the scheme is £11,000.

6.2 There are ongoing costs of £1,000 for any additional maintenance costs for repairs and maintenance of the installed bollards. This will be funded from existing Street Scene revenue budget.

**7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Covered within the body of the report under Section 6 and 124 and part 1V of Schedule 9 to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (As Amended) and all other enabling powers.

**8. PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Work to be undertaken by the Council’s existing highway maintenance service provider and their supply chain.

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	Personnel Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	