



Cabinet
16 November 2015

**Report from the
Chief Operating Officer**

Wards Affected:
ALL

Play Streets

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report advises Cabinet on plans to introduce Play Streets in the borough and to close certain residential streets to allow children to play safely near to where they live. This initiative, which promotes community cohesion and a healthier lifestyle for children, has already been introduced by many Local Authorities across London since it was first introduced in London by Hackney in 2012.
- 1.2 This report considers relevant legislation and guidance for the provision of regular road closures for designated Play Streets. This is separate from the provisions which currently exist for applications for occasional ad-hoc play streets as special events as specified in the report entitled "Road Closures for Street Parties and Special Events" presented to Cabinet on 21st July 2014.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the scheme detailed in this report to support the setting up of Play Streets in Brent.
- 2.2 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Head of Transportation, in consultation with the Lead Member, upon receiving requests for regular road closures for a play street in Brent;
- (i) to decide whether to approve or reject the application or to refer the matter to the Highways Committee;
 - (ii) to undertake statutory consultation and consider any objections or representations to such requests;
 - (iii) to sign, make or revoke the necessary Traffic Management Orders;
 - (iv) to provide the associated signs required to implement the changes

- 2.3 That Cabinet agree to the use of the Local Implementation Plan budget to fund this scheme.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A Play Street is created by the regular closing (weekly or monthly) of a residential street to through traffic for specified periods, usually around three hours, so that children and families can make use of the street space to play in. This is a community led initiative with local residents arranging for road closures, placing traffic signs and cones at each closure point and providing stewards to man the closures.
- 3.2 Although Play Streets do not replace the need for green spaces, they have the advantage of:
- Allowing children to play near home while remaining the responsibility of their parents.
 - Reducing obesity.
 - Giving children the space to play energetically.
 - Increasing the sense of community by bringing neighbours together both in setting up and managing the play street but also in taking part when the play street is in operation.
- 3.3 Play Streets were pioneered in the UK in Bristol and were first established in London by Hackney in 2012. A number of London Boroughs have signed up to the initiative and Enfield, Islington, Lambeth, Camden, Croydon, Hammersmith & Fulham, and Newham all promote and fund Play Streets through their yearly Local Implementation Plan (LIP) allocations.
- 3.4 The Council already has a process in place under section 16A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTA 1984) to allow road closures for street parties and other similar events. However this only allows a road to be closed once a year unless permission is granted by the Secretary of State for Transport. Section 29 of the RTA 1984 is considered the appropriate section which allows Councils to prohibit traffic on roads on multiple occasions to enable them to be used as playgrounds for children.
- 3.5 London Play is a grant funded organisation that acts as a catalyst for the cohesive, strategic and rational development of play provision across London. Officers met with London Play in May 2015 in response to a request from residents of Kempe Road to operate a Play Street. London Play provided advice and guidance based on the experience of other Councils and it was agreed to trial Play Street in Kempe Road, as this could be used in developing the future process for Play Streets in Brent.
- 3.7 The event took place on Sunday 4th October 2015 between 2:00pm and 5:00pm. As delegated authority is yet to be approved for making an Order under s29 of the RTWA, officers made the TMO under s16A of the RTA 1984 and waived the charges. Our LoHAC contractor also agreed to sponsor the event and provided the cones and signs free of charge.

- 3.8 Feedback from the organiser indicates the event was a great success and they would now like to apply for a regular Play Street See Appendix 1 for feedback and photos of the event.

4.0 APPLICATION PROCESS

- 4.1 Once Play Streets have been approved by the Council, officers will create an online application process learning from the experience of other Councils that already provide this service. The aim will be to make this process as simple as possible for residents to use.
- 4.2 Organisers will need to provide evidence of a high level of support from residents of the street supporting the set up of a Play Street and also submit a method statement advising on how events would be managed.
- 4.2 The application will provide details of which roads will be suitable for the consideration of Play Streets as they would not be acceptable on traffic sensitive streets, i.e. bus routes, Principal classified (A) roads or non-Principal Classified (B & C) roads.

4.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council has powers to close a road for special events including Play Streets under section 16A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ("RTRA 1984") on a temporary basis. However, a road can only be closed once a year for up to 3 consecutive days under this specific legislation, unless permission is granted by the Secretary of State for Transport. Permission was sought through the Department for Transport to use this legislation for more than one closure for Play Streets, but it was refused on the grounds that the Council can technically proceed with multiple closures under section 29 of the RTRA 1984, which allows Councils to prohibit traffic on roads to enable them to be used as playgrounds for children.
- 4.2 Therefore, a permanent traffic order would need to be made under section 29 of the RTRA 1984. Streets could be closed certain times on particular days, every week or month (except for access) under a single traffic order. This is a prescribed legal process, which requires a 21 day statutory consultation and the placement of notices in the local press and London Gazette. This usually takes several months to complete. Any objections must be formally considered.
- 4.3 To ensure costs are managed efficiently one TMO will be made at the start of the year listing all roads where Play Streets will take place. This will be reviewed every 3 months and new roads added or removed subject to approved application or notification that the Play Street closure is no longer required.

5.0 COSTS

- 5.1 The cost of making a permanent traffic order under s29 of the RTRA 1984 for closing a street is approximately £2,000. This includes officer time the publication of a Notice of Proposal in both a local newspaper and in the London Gazette, and following a successful consultation, publishing a Notice of Making a Traffic Management Order. However, a single traffic order can be made to cover the closure of a number of streets on certain days and times.
- 5.2 Advertising costs can therefore be reduced by combining Play Street notices with other traffic orders notices for the area or by introducing several Play Streets in one Order. The Council could produce such orders of batched Play Streets yearly or every 3 months depending on demand.
- 5.3 As the traffic order could provide for certain streets to be closed at certain times on particular days every week or month for an indefinite amount of time, then the cost per closure would be significantly reduced. A traffic order for a group of 5 play streets would cost approximately £400 per street.
- 5.4 When a closure for a Play Street is no longer required a traffic order revoking the closure would be required, following the same process as for its installation.
- 5.5 On-street traffic management arrangements would consist of cones and a set of "Play Street Road Closed" signs which could be stored with the organisers of the Play Street. Costs for Council provided signage would approximately be £80 per sign and £15 per cone with a total one-off cost of £300 per Play Street. Our LoHAC contractor has agreed to sponsor the early set up of Play Streets and provide signs and cones free of charge. These will be shared by a group of streets in a specific area with residents providing stewards at each closure point.
- 5.6 Where members of the public are invited to participate in a staged and planned event, the responsibility or duty of the care for public safety rest with the organiser and/or the owner of the property or land where such events are staged. Public Liability Insurance to cover the risk of injury or causing accidental damage would need to be in place. The cost of a policy to cover all Play Streets in the borough is estimated to be in the region of £600 per annum. Most London Councils provide this free of charges.
- 5.7 It is intended to fund Play Streets through the Local Implementation Plan budget and a yearly budget of £10,000 will be allocated to cover the full costs of all Play Streets, including TMOs, Public Liability Insurance, administration and fees.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Councils revenue budget does not contain funding to implement Play Streets within the borough. However, some London boroughs, such as Hackney, use the Transport for London - Local Implementation Plan (LIP), which is a discretionary Local Transport Fund allocation (usually £100,000 per annum), to fund Play Streets.

- 7.2 The projected annual cost of providing Play Streets within the borough is circa £7,500. This will be funded from the 2016/17 LIP award / budget. It is also understood that the estimated cost of carrying out a trial play street in Kempe Road to be approximately £250, this can be covered from existing 2015/16 LIP budget.
- 7.3 It is worth noting that the reduction in street party income as mentioned in para 3.5 was resolved in the same year (2014/15), through budget realignment and does not pose any risk of income underachievement.

8.0 Equalities and diversity implications

- 8.1 Both Screening and a full Equalities Assessment has taken place for the proposals in this report. The proposed Play Street road closures do not have different outcomes for people in terms of race, gender, age, sexuality, religion or belief.
- 8.2 The closure of the highway for the purpose of a Play Street does take note of the special requirements of various disabilities. These will take the form of levels and grades associated with wheelchair users, for example road crossing points, and for partially sighted / blind persons at crossing facilities. The highway standards employed are nationally recognised by the Department for Transport.
- 8.3 Officers do not believe that there are negative equalities and diversity implications associated with the approval of this report. The new decision will reduce costs in the making of the necessary traffic management orders and therefore support community events and community cohesion.

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LORRAINE LANGHAM
Chief Operating Officer

Appendix 1 – Kempe Road Play Street trial

E-mail from organiser

Dear Nicolaas and Paul,
Apologies for the belated thank you! I wanted to extend our heartfelt gratitude and thanks for the first ever play street in Brent. As you can see from the photos it was a whopping success - old and young mingled and laughed and got to know each other. As one of my elder neighbours said, she'd lived on the street for 30 years and hadn't met several neighbours until that day. The children played for hours, and invented their own games and enjoyed the freedom of not stressing about cars. I knew they would love it, but I hadn't quite realised how much the adults would love it too. I've received many emails of thanks, and have acquired a long email list of neighbours who want to be included in the next one.

So yes, we are all really so grateful for your support in this, and if there is anything we can do to make the next steps run smoothly, please let us know.

Thank you so much...





