



Highways Committee
20th March 2012

**Report from the Head of
Transportation**

For decision

Wards Affected:
Queen's Park

**Petition for removing the extended parking restrictions
during Ramadan/Muharram periods at the Al Khoei Islamic
Centre in Chevening Road.**

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The Al Khoei Islamic Foundation has a centre in Chevening Road within the KQ Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ). The Foundation is a high profile, world renowned organisation and attracts visitors from a wide area.
- 1.2 The KQ CPZ operated from 8:30am to 6:30pm, Monday to Friday. For a number of years the operational times in part of the CPZ have been extended from 8:30am to 10pm Monday to Sunday during the periods of Ramadan and Muharram. The extension of these operating times mitigates the effect of the high number of visitors travelling to the foundation by car during those event periods and parking in the residential streets nearby.
- 1.3 The arrangements are implemented each year, using the Traffic Order process, and were initiated several years ago as a response to the concerns of local residents after consultation with residents' representatives, ward members, the Police and representatives of the Foundation.
- 1.4 This report advises the Committee of a petition requesting an abandonment of the current arrangements so that visitors to the area during the periods of Ramadan and Muharram would be subject to the same parking controls that exist at other times during the year.

- 1.5 The report explains that there is insufficient evidence at this time to conclude that removing the arrangements would not comprise road safety, essential access, the Councils general approach to dealing with car-borne visitors to major events or attractions and the impact on residents.
- 1.6 The report recommends that the Head of Transportation works with the Foundation, the Executive Member for Highways and Transportation, ward members and representatives of the local community to identify opportunities to modify the arrangements so that they are better targeted at the needs and aspirations of all concerned.
- 1.7 The report also recommends that, if opportunities to adjust the arrangement are identified, that they should be introduced subject to the appropriate statutory consultation being undertaken, in time for the 2012 Ramadan and Muharram periods.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the committee notes the contents of the petition and the response of officers.
- 2.2 That the committee instructs the Head of Transportation to review the operation of the current arrangements, in consultation with representatives of local residents, ward members , the lead member and the representatives of the Foundation in order to identify opportunities to adjust and improve the arrangements.
- 2.3 That the Committee agrees that where opportunities to make improvements are identified then changes should be made, if practicable and subject to proper consultation and consideration of responses to that consultation, in time for the 2012 Ramadan and Muharram periods.
- 2.4 That the Committee agrees that, if opportunities for acceptable changes cannot be identified the current arrangements should continue in place, subject to the appropriate advertising and making of Traffic Orders etc.

3.0 The petition

- 3.1 A petition has been received via e Petition. The petition has been verified to be in accordance with Standing Orders. The petition has 676 signatures.
- 3.2 The full wording of the petition is:

We the undersigned petition the council to lift the special parking restrictions imposed around Imam Khoei Islamic Centre in order for those visiting to be able to park as they would otherwise during the year.

4.0 Existing Situation

- 4.1 The Al Khoei Islamic Centre is located in Chevening Road. The area is part of an existing Controlled Parking Zone KQ therefore parking is restricted to resident permit holders and their visitors from 8.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday.
- 4.2 The existing parking restrictions are extended twice a year during periods (Ramadan/Muharram) at the Mosque that is part of the Foundation. The Foundation is a world renowned organisation and attracts visitors from a wide area especially at time of Ramadan and Muharram. These events attract a large number of visitors who take up parking spaces which are normally available to local residents.
- 4.3 Ramadan and Muharram occur at different times each year and the period of restrictions are amended accordingly.

5.0 Detail

- 5.1 The current arrangements were set up in 2006 at the request of local residents and after consulting the residents, residents association, Police and local ward councillors.
- 5.2 Following Ramadan & Muharram in 2008, a number of residents complained that they were not so adversely affected and so wished to have their street removed whilst other residents wanted to be included (Winchester Avenue).
- 5.3 A consultation was undertaken in June 2009 requesting views on a reduction in the existing area and the inclusion of Winchester Ave. The majority of respondents favoured no change, but majority of residents of Winchester Ave wanted to be included in the zone.
- 5.4 In August 2009, the new area was approved and residents were informed prior to Ramadan in August 2009. All residents are sent a letter two weeks prior to the extended restrictions to start informing them of the extended time of operations during the relevant events; Ramadan or Muharram. Approximately ten days before the start, yellow advance warning information signs are erected at the entry points to the area of Zone KQ in which the times are to be extended. The entry points are; Salusbury Road north of Winchester Ave junction and Harvist Road junction, Winchester Ave junction with Willesden Lane, Kingswood Ave, Dudley Road, Chevening Road. These locations should capture the majority of drivers entering the area.

- 5.5 A local Church and traders in Salusbury Road have complained about the extended restrictions during Sundays and the impact that the controls have on their visitors.
- 5.6 It has been observed during these events that relatively high number of visitors to the Mosque have blue badges and so the parking rules do not apply to them.
- 5.7 Over the years a number of meetings have taken place between officers, ward members, residents representatives to discuss the arrangements. Although the Foundation would have originally accepted the arrangements and the impact on their visitors, in recent times they have indicated that they are too blunt an instrument and cause visitors more inconvenience than is reasonable. This echoes the sentiments of the petition. Residents representatives on the other hand generally support the arrangements and have been critical of the council if the arrangements have been introduced late or with insufficient notice.
- 5.8 There are other locations in Brent where parking controls are introduced to mitigate the impact of relatively large numbers of visitors attending event at particular locations. The Wembley Event Day scheme is the most obvious example but the 'T' CPZ mitigates the impact of visitors to the Neasden Temple and special traffic arrangements are put in place in Brent for Diwali, the St Patricks day celebrations and for the Notting Hill Carnival.

6.0 Discussion

- 6.1 Officers are of the view that the current arrangements are not necessarily "tuned" to the variation in visitors to the area that occurs during Ramadan and Muharram. There may be times during those events where the arrangements could be adjusted so as to better respond to the potential problem.
- 6.2 However, at this time the Foundation have been unable to provide data (on timings, visitor numbers, travel choices etc.) to enable officers to recommend changing the current arrangements.
- 6.3 Officers are of the view that a working party comprising officers, ward members, residents' representatives, the lead member and the representatives of the Foundation should examine the current arrangements with a view to identifying opportunities to make changes that would satisfy all parties without compromising the council policies or obligations.
- 6.4 If the working party were to identify changes that would assuredly improve the situation during the 2012 events these could be implemented and their effect monitored. If the opportunities for improvement could not be identified in time for 2012 (July 2012) the current arrangements would have to remain in place.
- 6.5 Regardless of the way forward any arrangements would need to be implemented through the normal process of advertising, consultation and

making Traffic Orders and the appropriate consideration of any recommendations.

6.0 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report. The cost of implementing the current arrangements is approximately £3,200 per event and is met from the Environmental & Neighbourhood Service (Transportation) Revenue Budget. If all parties agree to changes the financial implications will change accordingly.

7.0 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report and its recommendations.

8.0 Equalities implications

There are no other equalities implications associated with this report. A full EIA will be carried out as part of the review of the scheme.

Background Papers

None

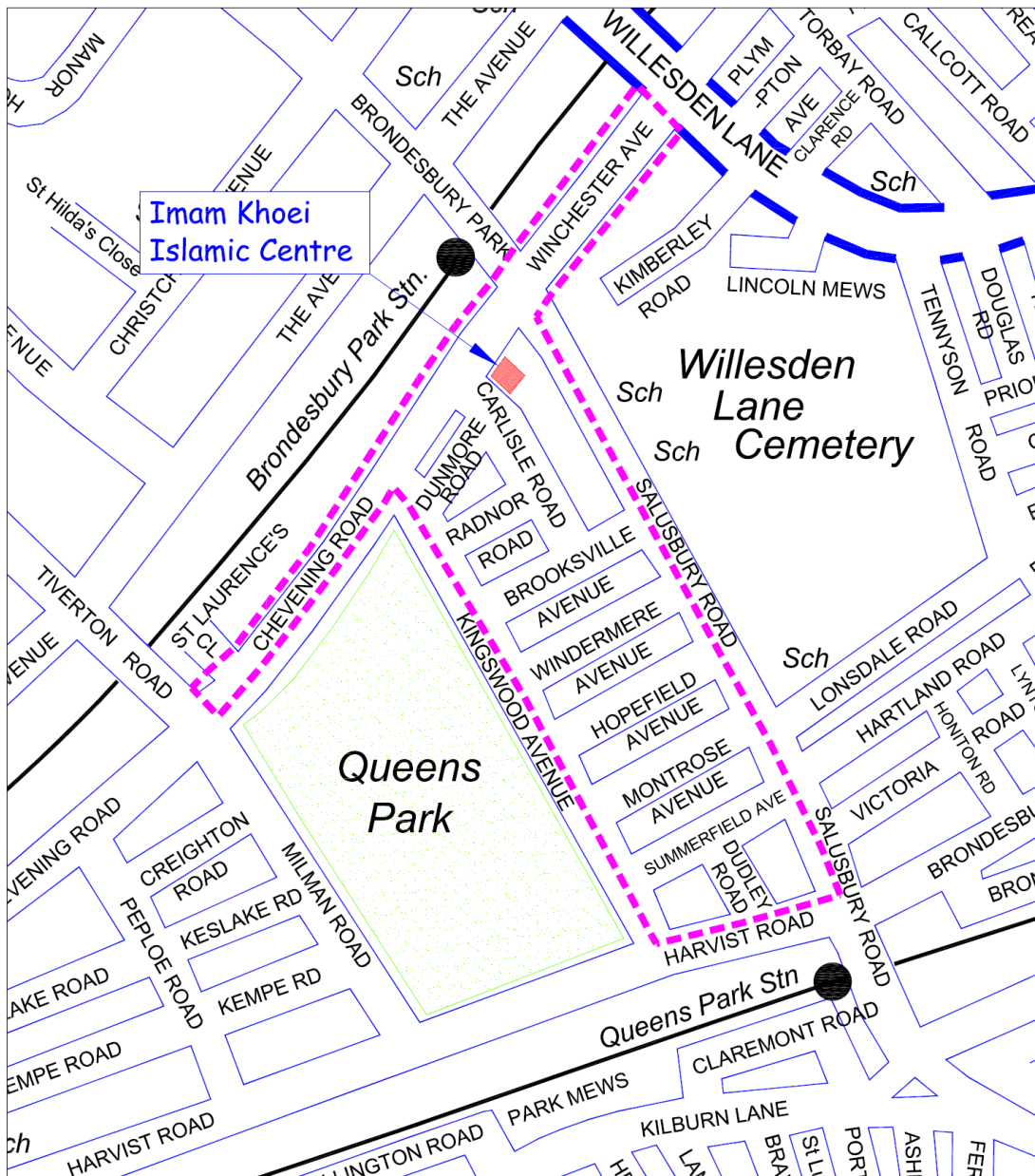
Contact Officers

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Appendix A – Location Plan

Boundary of the area with extended CPZ hours during Ramadan & Muharram



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