



Overview & Scrutiny Committee
28th July 2010

Report of the Head of Transportation

For Information

Wards Affected:
Kensal Green

Report Title: Tubbs Road Traffic Management

Summary

This report outlines activity undertaken in respect of residents' concerns about traffic conditions in Tubbs Road following a number of reports that been considered previously through the Scrutiny process.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 On 8th December 2009, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the councillor call for action (CCfA) submitted by Councillor Powney in relation to the traffic issues at Tubbs Road, Kensal Green Ward. Details of the CCfA are included within Appendix A of this report.

The CCfA was made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee because Councillor Powney wished members to consider recommending solutions that would:

- Reduce traffic congestion, in what is a narrow, largely residential street.
- Reduce the air pollution, associated with the large volume of traffic.
- Allay concerns about road safety.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee accepted the recommendations of Cllr Powney and local residents that the council should see if measures can be taken to reduce traffic congestion in Tubbs Road, but also appreciated that there is no straightforward solution to the traffic problems in the area.

The committee made a number of recommendations on this issue which it recommended should be given full consideration by the Highways Committee. Of great concern to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was that residents should be involved in developing any solutions to the traffic issues in the area.

1.2 On the 19th January 2010, the Highways Committee considered recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The report to the Committee and the summary of decisions are contained within Appendices A and B respectively.

1.3 The decisions in respect of Tubbs Road are as follows:

- i. that the concerns of residents of Tubbs Road and Nightingale Road in relation to traffic conditions in those roads be noted;
- ii. that it be noted that officers are currently undertaking work on an Area Based Scheme (ABS) for Harlesden, which if progressed, would improve the quality of the public realm in Harlesden and could address parking and traffic issues;
- iii. that the Head of Transportation be instructed to write to the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Kensal Green ward members to confirm that the scope of the Harlesden ABS includes development of proposals to address the issues identified by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including the possible introduction of banned turns and furthermore will include engagement with residents of Tubbs Road, Nightingale Road and adjacent streets to determine their preferred solutions;
- iv. that the Head of Transportation be instructed to (a) undertake a review of the signage relating to the width restriction signage and make appropriate improvements; (b) install signage to direct drivers to the A40 via Scrubs Lane (A219); and (c) contact map providers with a view to ensuring that the Tubbs Road width restriction is identified on maps and satellite navigation systems; and
- v. that the request for re-phasing the signals at the western end of Tubbs Road so as to avoid queuing in this road be acknowledged but it be noted that this is likely to encourage traffic to use Tubbs Road and that the Head of Transportation be instructed to work with Transport for London to ensure that any future changes to those signals do not increase queues in Tubbs Road.

1.6 This report reviews and addresses the above Highways Committee decisions, along with other options, aimed at improving traffic conditions along Tubbs Road and summarises progress made.

2.0 Action to understand existing traffic conditions

2.1 Existing Turning Movements

Classified peak hour turning counts were undertaken on Tuesday 20th April 2010 to establish existing vehicle turning movements at the following junctions:

- Furness Road/High Street Harlesden/ Tubbs Road
- Tubbs Road/Station Road

Vehicle turning movement diagrams and data are contained within Appendix D, Below is a summary of key movements:

Summary of vehicle movements into Tubbs Road from High Street Harlesden:

AM Peak 8am to 9am

| | | |
|--|-----|----------------|
| Turning right into Tubbs Road | 12 | (4% of total) |
| From Harrow Road, turning left into Tubbs Road | 219 | (61% of total) |
| Right out of Furness Road, left in Tubbs Road | 126 | (35% of total) |
| Total vehicles entering Tubbs Road | 357 | |

PM Peak 5pm to 6pm

| | | |
|---|-----|----------------|
| Turning right into Tubbs Road | 36 | (9% of total) |
| From Harrow Road turning left into Tubbs Road | 247 | (63% of total) |
| Right out of Furness Road, left in Tubbs Road | 107 | (28% of total) |
| Total vehicles entering Tubbs Road | 390 | |

Summary of vehicle movements out of Tubbs Road onto Station Road/Old Oak Lane:

AM Peak 8am to 9am

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|----------------|
| Turning left out of Tubbs Road | 260 | (81% of total) |
| Turning right out of Tubbs Road | 61 | (19% of total) |
| Total vehicles exiting Tubbs Road | 321 | |

PM Peak 5pm to 6pm

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|----------------|
| Turning left out of Tubbs Road | 267 | (72% of total) |
| Turning right out of Tubbs Road | 103 | (28% of total) |
| Total vehicles exiting Tubbs Road | 370 | |

Summary of vehicle movements into Tubbs Road from Station Road/Old Oak Lane:

AM Peak 8am to 9am

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|----------------|
| Turning left into Tubbs Road | 100 | (31% of total) |
| Turning right into Tubbs Road | 218 | (69% of total) |
| Total vehicles exiting Tubbs Road | 318 | |

PM Peak 5pm to 6pm

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|----------------|
| Turning left into Tubbs Road | 112 | (25% of total) |
| Turning right into Tubbs Road | 336 | (75% of total) |
| Total vehicles exiting Tubbs Road | 448 | |

2.2 Route Destination analysis

Route destination information cannot be captured without the Metropolitan Police undertaking road side surveys and is generally not undertaken in association with

local problems because of cost. In order to develop an understanding route destinations of vehicles, the surrounding road network and likely destinations were reviewed. It is envisaged that a high proportion of through vehicles using Tubbs Road are accessing either: Park Royal; North Acton; or A40 westbound. The analysis indicates that accessing the A40 eastbound through Tubbs Road would not be an attractive route.

Investigation into banned turns and alternative traffic management options to address traffic conditions

3.1 Preventing right turns out of Furness Road onto High Street Harlesden

It has been suggested that preventing right turns out of Furness Road onto High Street Harlesden would reduce the volume of traffic on Tubbs Road.

Furness Road, High Street Harlesden and Tubbs Road form part of London Cycle Network Plus (LCN+) Route 45. Any proposal to prevent right turns out of Furness Road onto High Street Harlesden would need to exempt cycles from this restriction. This movement for cycles needs to be convenient and safe and as such the signalised cyclist movement would need to be maintained. In the morning peak hour a total of 15 cyclists turned right out of Furness Road and in the afternoon peak hour a total of 6 cyclists turned right out of Furness Road onto High Street Harlesden.

The vast majority of vehicles that turn right out of Furness Road onto High Street Harlesden turn left into Tubbs Road. In the morning peak hour a total of 129 vehicles turned right out of Furness Road. From these 129 vehicles; 126 vehicles (98%) turned left into Tubbs Road and 3 vehicles (2%) carried on straight along High Street Harlesden. In the afternoon peak hour a total of 122 vehicles turned right out of Furness Road. From these 122 vehicles; 107 vehicles (88%) turned left into Tubbs Road and 15 vehicles (12%) carried on straight along High Street Harlesden.

Banning the right turn movement out of Furness Road onto High Street Harlesden would displace 126 vehicles in the morning peak hour and 107 vehicles in the afternoon peak hour that use Tubbs Road. If this measure was to be introduced in isolation, then analysis of the surrounding road network and envisaged route destinations indicates that a proportion will find their back onto Tubbs Road by either rerouting along Wrotesley Road, Harrow Road and left into Tubbs Road or U-turning on High Street Harlesden after turning left out of Furness Road. It is however anticipated that between 50 to 70 percent of those displaced vehicles would not find their way back onto Tubbs Road. Therefore, soon after the introduction of the scheme, the average reduction in the volume of vehicles during the peak hours has been estimated at 70 vehicles/hour (approximately 20 percent total reduction). The long term reduction is estimated at nil, this is due to the desirability of Tubbs Road to access Park Royal and North Acton combined with traffic finding the path of least resistance.

Traffic volumes on Nightingale Road would be unaffected.

Residents in the area bounded by High Street Harlesden, Park Parade, Wrotesley Road and Harrow Road would be directly impacted by the restriction and as such public consultation would need to include this local area. In addition Rucklidge Avenue (which is within this local area) may experience an increased volume of traffic, generated by a combination of local traffic and 'rat-running' traffic cutting the queue at the Park Lane/High Street Harlesden signalised junction.

The restriction adjoins Harrow Road and High Street Harlesden which form part of London's Strategic Road Network, and as such, scheme approval would be required from TfL's Network Assurance Team.

The cost of preventing right turns out of Furness Road (except cycles) has roughly been estimated at £120,000. This includes physical changes to the junction layout and necessary traffic signal work.

3.2 Preventing left turns out of Tubbs Road onto Old Oak Lane

It has been suggested that preventing left turns out of Furness Road onto Old Oak Lane would reduce the volume of traffic on Tubbs Road.

The majority of vehicles exiting Tubbs Road turn left onto Old Oak Lane rather than right onto Station Road. In the morning peak hour a total of 321 vehicles exited Tubbs Road, from these 260 vehicles (81%) turned left onto Old Oak Lane and 61 vehicles (19%) turned right onto Station Road. In the afternoon peak hour a total of 370 vehicles exited Tubbs Road, from these 267 vehicles (72%) turned left onto Old Oak Lane and 103 vehicles (28%) turned right onto Station Road.

Banning the left turn movement out of Tubbs Road would displace 260 vehicles in the morning peak hour and 267 vehicles in the afternoon peak hour that use Tubbs Road. If this measure was to be introduced in isolation, then analysis of the surrounding road network and envisaged route destinations indicates that a proportion would still turn onto Tubbs Road from High Street Harlesden, turn right out of Tubbs Road onto Station Road and then turn around within a junction, driveway or direct U-turn. It is however anticipated that between 40 to 60 percent of those displaced vehicles would not find their way back onto Tubbs Road. The reduction in the volume of vehicles during the peak hours has been estimated at 130 vehicles/hour (approximately 40 percent total reduction).

Traffic volumes on Nightingale Road would be unaffected.

The restriction would increase traffic volumes on Harrow Road and High Street Harlesden which form part of London's Strategic Road Network, and as such scheme approval would be required from TfL's Network Assurance Team.

The cost of preventing left turns out of Tubbs Road has roughly been estimated at £80,000.

3.3 Re-phasing of Tubbs Road/Station Road traffic lights

The traffic signals at Tubbs Road/Station Road are under Urban Traffic Control (UTC); this is a technique used to coordinate a group of traffic signals through a centrally located computer, benefits are achieved by progressing platoons of traffic in an organised fashion. The system used to co-ordinate the traffic signals by Transport for London (TfL) is called SCOOT. The current SCOOT operation plan will be requested from TfL.

In terms of increasing green time for Tubbs Road, this would allow a greater flow of traffic to exit Tubbs Road and would consequently lead to increased volumes of peak hour traffic using Tubbs Road.

If the green time for Tubbs Road was reduced, this would allow a lesser flow of traffic to exit Tubbs Road and would consequently lead to increased congestion on Tubbs Road.

3.4 Road Closure

The option of introducing a road closure on Tubbs Road or Nightingale Road has been further investigated.

To completely cut off the through movement of vehicles and provide reasonable access for large vehicles, such as refuse collection vehicles, the closure point would need to be located at some point between the Tubbs Road/Nightingale Road junction and the Tubbs Road/Station Road junction. The one-way sections would remain, with vehicles accessing Nightingale Road forced to enter Tubbs Road from High Street Harlesden.

In the morning peak a total of 345 vehicles, and in the afternoon peak a total of 354 vehicles, turned left into Tubbs Road from Harlesden High Street. A small proportion of these vehicles, say 30 vehicles/hour, would have been residents accessing either Tubbs Road or Nightingale Road. Displaced left turning vehicle into Tubbs Road would therefore be in the order of 320 vehicles/hour. From these 320 vehicles/hour, it is envisaged that at least 250 vehicles/hour would be forced through Harlesden Town Centre. The additional volume of vehicles would have a major impact on the already congested town centre, all traffic signals within the town centre would need to be adjusted under UTC, and this in effect would increase journey times and add congestion on all approaches and within the town centre.

As the restriction would increase traffic volumes on Harrow Road and High Street Harlesden which form part of London's Strategic Road Network, and as such scheme approval would be required from TfL's Network Assurance Team. It is unlikely scheme approval would be granted.

4.0 Review of the signage relating to the width restriction

- 4.1 Tubbs Road has a 6'- 6" (2m) width restriction in place to prevent HGVs using Tubbs Road and Nightingale Road as through roads between High Street Harlesden and Station Road. Although the restriction is signed at either end, it HGVs continue to travel down these roads and subsequently become stuck – adding to congestion.

- 4.2 To reduce the number of HGVs turning into Tubbs Road, it was recommended a review of the signage relating to the width restriction be undertaken. A review has been completed. Existing advance signage is shown within Appendix E. The existing advance signage is clear and signs the restriction twice from each approach.

Following the review a number of these signs will be upgraded and repositioned to add additional clarity to the width restriction on Tubbs Road.

5.0 Install signage to direct drivers to the A40 via Scrubs Lane

- 5.1 A review of the signage relating to principal (main) road route destinations in the Tubbs Road area has been undertaken. Existing signs are shown within Appendix E.

The existing principal road route destination signage does not acknowledge Tubbs Road or Nightingale Road as a principal road. Tubbs Road is in fact signed as a minor residential road with a width restriction for north-westbound vehicles on High Street Harlesden. In all other directions Tubbs Road and Nightingale Road are not detailed on route destination signage.

There are currently no existing directional signs within the Harlesden area that direct vehicles to the A40.

- 5.2 It has been recommended to install signage to direct drivers to the A40 via Scrubs Lane (A219).

From analysing the road network from this location, intending eastbound A40 vehicles would access the A40 from Scrubs Lane (A219) and intending westbound A40 vehicles would access the A40 from Station Road/Old Oak Lane (A4000). A deviation from this split would not be logical due to increased journey distances and travelling time.

The Scrubs Lane highway bridge that spans the Grand Union Canal and National Rail lines is classified as a weak bridge with an 18T weight restriction. If the A40 was signed for intending westbound vehicles at the Harrow Road/Scrubs Lane junction, then an alternative route for over 18T vehicles would need to be provided.

Signing of the A40 for intending eastbound vehicles through Harlesden Town Centre could be undertaken. The existing principle road route signage identifies Tubbs Road as minor residential road with no route destinations which would be maintained. However it is thought that adding the A40, as another destination to the principle route signage though Harlesden Town centre, would have a very minor impact on reducing traffic volumes on Tubbs Road.

6.0 Contact map providers with a view to ensuring that the Tubbs Road width restriction is identified on maps and satellite navigation systems

- 6.1 As described above, Tubbs Road has a width restriction in place to prevent HGVs using Tubbs Road and Nightingale Road as through roads between High Street Harlesden and Station Road.
- 6.2 To ensure HGVs do not turn into Tubbs Road, it was recommended that map providers be contacted with a view to ensuring that the Tubbs Road width restriction is identified on maps and satellite navigation systems.

Investigations have determined that there is no single authority, responsible “body” or agency that maintains or looks after the “data-sets” (maps etc) and the software for the HGV/Satellite Navigation industry. The Freight Transport Association advised that the main supplier of Satellite Navigation equipment to the freight industry is the company TomTom.

The width restriction and associated HGV problems have been registered with the company TomTom.

7.0 Integration of Tubbs Road issues within work on the Harlesden Area Based Scheme (ABS)

- 7.1 Work on a project to improve the public realm in Harlesden through a variety of measures is continuing. Highways Committee were advised that this project would be a suitable vehicle for capturing the issues facing residents of Tubbs Road and developing “holistic” solutions that could address them without simply moving the problem to other streets or parts of Harlesden. Representatives of Tubbs Road have been invited to meetings and workshops associated with that wider project and although the ABS scheme is yet to identify definitive proposals, Tubbs Road issues remain a part of that project.

8.0 Conclusions/recommendations

- 8.1 Tubbs Road and Nightingale Road are residential roads. However, they form an integral part of the road network in the Harlesden area. A high proportion of through vehicles will be making daily workday journeys where the drivers know the local road network well.

Initial investigations indicate that the introduction of banned turns will not prevent high volumes of traffic using Tubbs Road and Nightingale Road and will add new traffic management issues to other locations. The option of a road closure will cause unacceptable congestion levels to Harlesden town centre.

The indications are that banned turns or a road closure are not viable options – although the work of the Harlesden ABS project could result in a suitable alternative solutions as part of a wider package..

A longer green phase for the Tubbs Road signals would increase traffic volumes on Tubbs Road. A shorter green phase would decrease traffic volumes but congestion levels on Tubbs Road would be increased. Alteration of the signal timings is complicated as operation is controlled under UTC. Under the Harlesden Town Centre ABS, the group of signals in the Harlesden area (including Tubbs Road/Station Road) will be reviewed. It is hoped that a more efficient movement of traffic will be achieved through the town centre itself.

- 8.2 While the existing advance width restriction signage should be more than adequate, some of the signs will be upgraded to add further clarity.
- 8.3 As part of the Harlesden Town Centre scheme, when travelling north-west along Harrow Road into Harlesden, principle road signage will be renewed to direct drivers along High Street Harlesden for A40 access. Signing of the A40 at Scrubs Lane would be complicated due to the weak bridge, all eastbound A40 vehicles under 18T would logically take this route, signing of this is therefore not recommended.
- 8.4 The HGV/satellite navigation issue has been addressed by contacting the main satellite navigation provider for HGVs. No further action is planned at this stage.

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