

South Sea Street Emergency Access - Consultation Report

September 2016

1. Project and Objectives

There is an existing gate at the junction of Rope Street and South Sea Street in the Surrey Docks ward.

Several local residents had issued complaints to the Council alleging that the gate was continually being left open, thus providing an unintended short cut through the highway network, and the increased vehicle speeds and volumes that result from this.

The gate features a large sign stating that its use is for emergency access only. Officers understand that a gate or other physical feature has been present at this location for at least twenty years and most likely since the inception of the estate. It has since been altered and refurbished.

It is clear from the presence of the gate, and the materials used to construct the surrounding footway, that general traffic is not intended to pass from Rope Street to South Sea Street.



Figure 1 – Photograph of the gate in a locked open position.

2. Consultation Process

Ward Councillors and the Emergency Services were contacted by e-mail in December 2015 and January 2016, with no objections received. The London Fire Brigade stated that emergency access should be retained.

Formal public consultation was not carried out. A letter, describing the issues and proposals were distributed to local properties fronting the gate and turning head. Residents were invited to support or object to the proposals.

Due to a drafting error, one of the contact details on the letter was incorrect. In order to ensure that all opinions were received, a subsequent letter was issued to the same group of residents stating the correct e-mail address for objection to, or support for, the proposals. The deadline for responses was also extended by two weeks until Friday 17th June 2016.

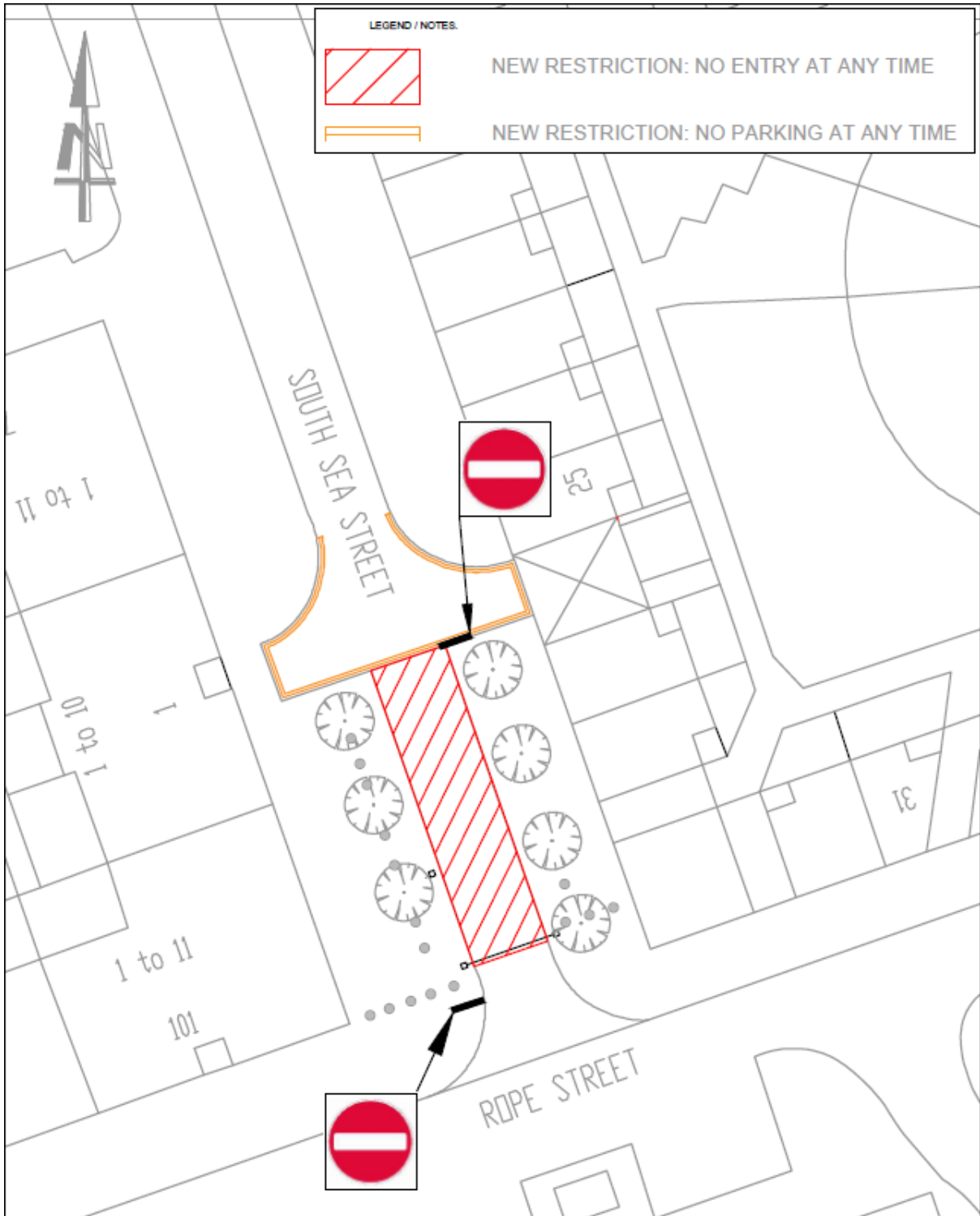


Figure 2 – Plan of the proposals included in the letter sent to local residents.

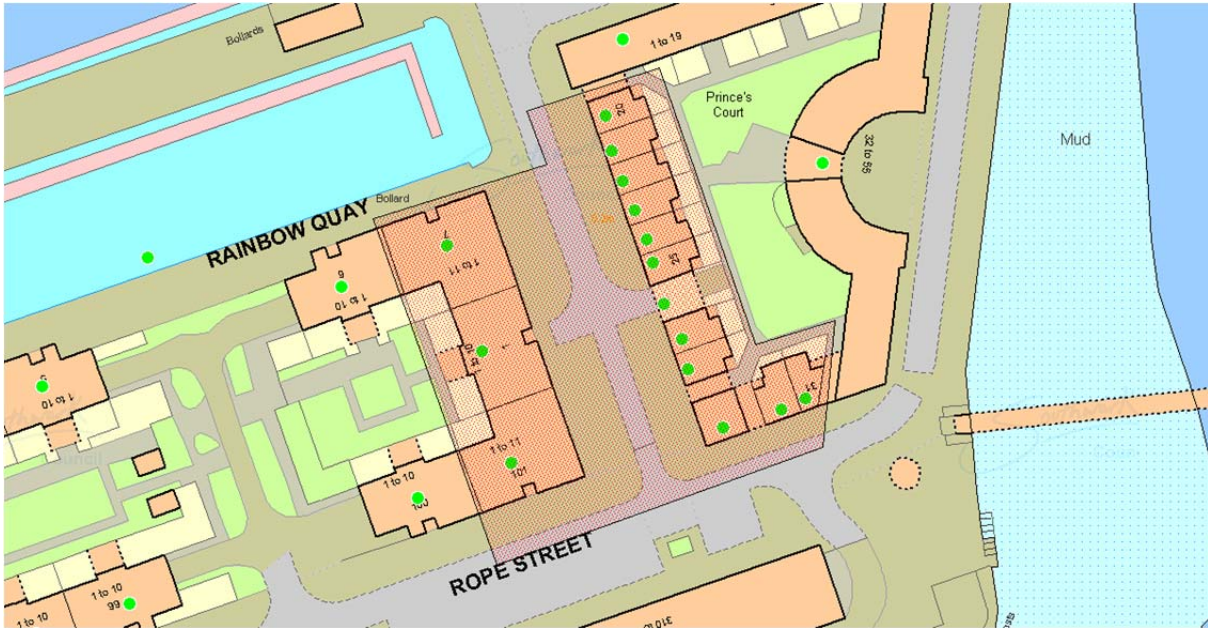


Figure 3 – Distribution map. The addresses were sourced from the Council's GIS database of addresses. A total of 44 properties received the letter.

3. Consultation Results

3.1. Response Rate

A total of 44 letters were sent to local residents. Ten of these residents responded, with a further four residents (each from within the local area but not on the distribution list) also responding. This represents a local response rate of 22.7%, and an overall response rate of 31.8%.

	Local Response*	Non-Local Response*	TOTAL
Fully Support	4 (40%)	1 (25%)	5 (36%)
Partially Support	3 (30%)	0	3 (21%)
Fully Object	3 (30%)	3 (75%)	6 (43%)
TOTAL	10	4	14

* It should be stressed that while the term "non-local" is used in the above table, all responses were from addresses located within nearby roads, and in some cases adjacent properties.

Figure 4 – Tabular representation of the responses received

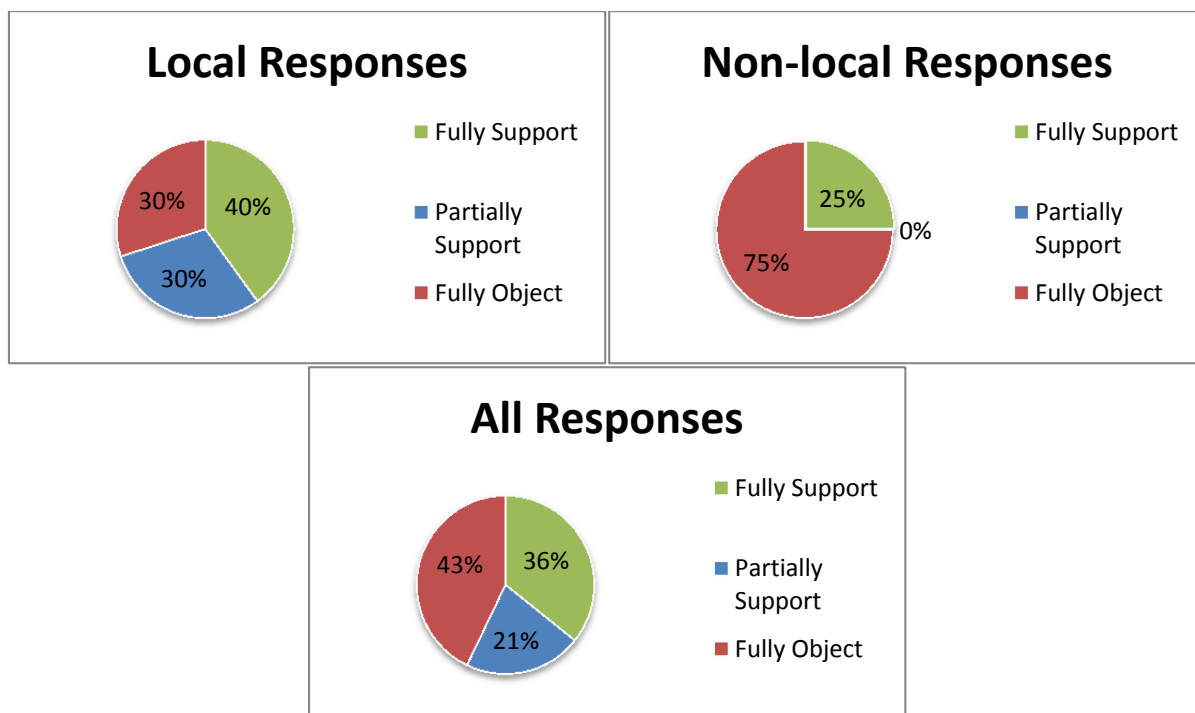


Figure 5 – Graphical representation of the responses received

3.2. Objection Analysis

The response to the proposals has been varied. The three “partially support” responses were in favour of not allowing vehicles to pass between South Sea Street and Rope Street, objecting to the additional parking restrictions and the extent of the restricted area.

The objections (in bold) and the appropriate response (in italic) can be summarised as below:

3.2.1. No-motor-vehicles restriction

Loss of amenity to local residents wishing to pass through the gate [to avoid the Lower Road gyratory]

Response: A physical barrier has existed in this location for at least ten years, possibly even since the estate was constructed. The layout of the highway suggests that the ‘turning head’ at the southern end of South Sea Street was designed to allow vehicles to safely turn around, rather than proceeding through to Rope Street. Therefore, the proposals are considered to be formalising an existing arrangement by which road users should never have been able to pass through on a consistent basis.

Local residents should be able to park in front of their properties [for a short time]

Response: The restriction may not be able to be effectively enforced if the entire area is question is not covered by a traffic order. This could render the measures redundant. Should the restricted area be made smaller, there is potential for larger vehicles to drive through too far (in the absence of signage), deem it unsafe to turn around, and proceed through the restriction anyway.

It should also be noted that residents of both Princes Court and Rainbow Quay have access to underground car parking spaces, from South Sea Street and Rope Street respectively.

Several objecting respondents were in favour of removing through traffic via some form of restriction, but on the provision that they were able to open the gate [or other measure] themselves.

Response: It should be noted that this would have significant legal implications as the road in question is public highway funded out of the public purse, rather than a private street for the use by one group of residents.

3.2.2. Double yellow line restriction

Double yellow line restrictions are not required

Response: Vehicle Swept Path Analysis has been undertaken to show a refuse vehicle undertaking a three-point-turn. While it is acknowledged that public refuse vehicles will be exempt from this restriction, similar vehicles (e.g. delivery lorries) will not. This diagram is shown in Figure 4.

Double yellow lines are unsightly

Response: The Council could consider the implementation of a “restricted parking zone” which does not feature double yellow lines. However, larger “zone entry and exit” signs would be required, as well as additional posts.

Waste of taxpayers’ money

Response: The scheme has been designed to a specified budget, with the cost of implementation kept low by reducing the amount of physical works involved.

3.2.3. Further comments, questions and suggestions

One respondent suggested the use of a retractable bollard with residents issued a “fob”.

This has the same legal implications as in point 3.2.1. Additionally, electronic bollards are costlier to install and maintain.

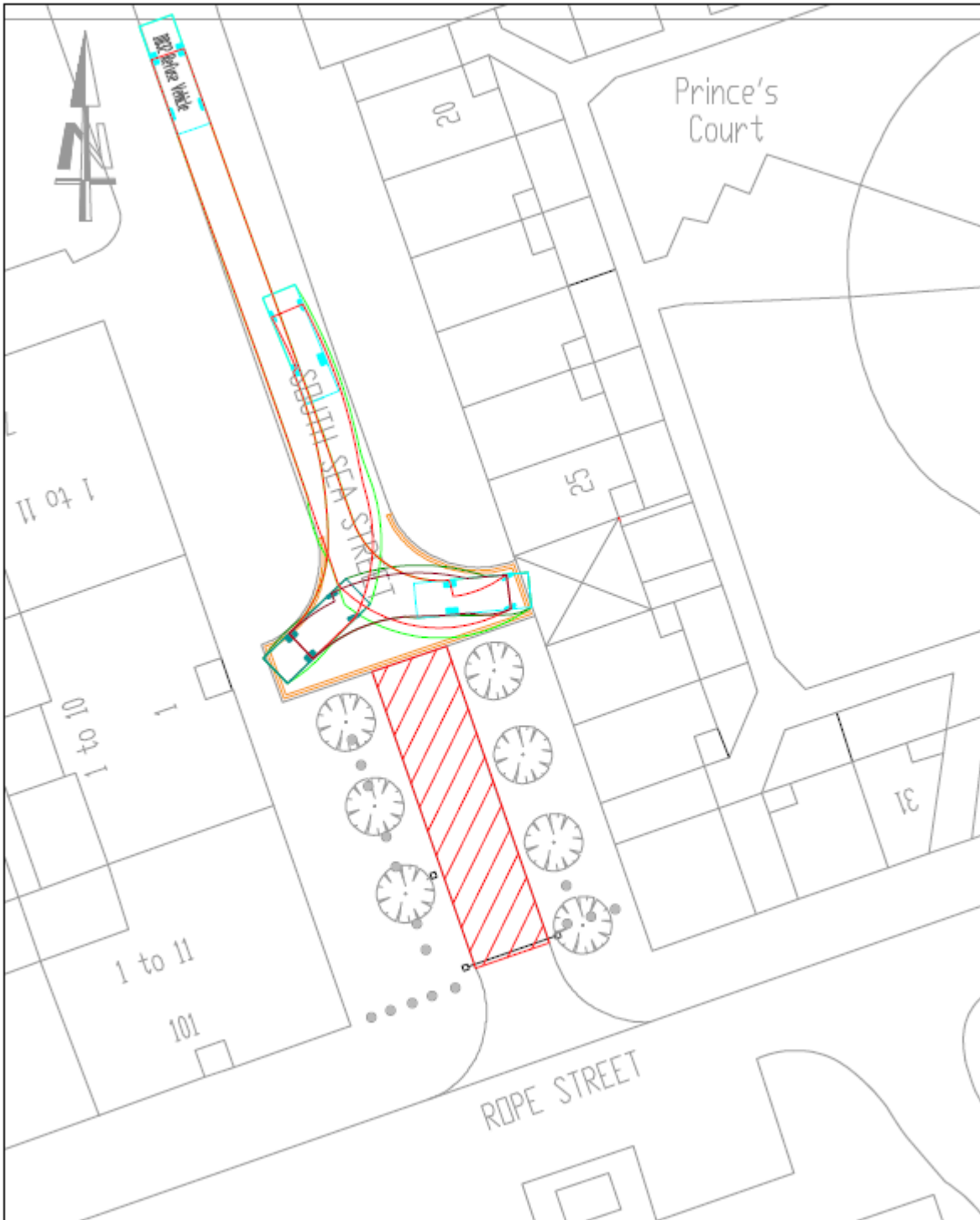


Figure 6 – Vehicle Swept Path Analysis of a standard refuse vehicle attempting a three-point-turn instead of entering the restricted zone.