

<b>Item No.</b> 6.1	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 2 November 2011	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Walworth Community Council
<b>Report title:</b>		Petition – Heygate Estate Access Route	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		East Walworth	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. That the Walworth Community Council consider a petition in respect of the Heygate Estate Access Route.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

2. A petition containing 250 signatures or more may be presented to the Walworth Community Council on 2 November 2011. A petition can be submitted by a person of any age who lives, works or studies in Southwark. Petitions must relate to matters over which the council has powers or duties, or which affect Southwark.
3. At the meeting, the spokesperson for the petition will be invited to speak for up to five minutes on the subject matter. The Walworth Community Council will debate the petition for a period of up to 15 minutes and may decide how to respond to the petition at the meeting.
4. Any relevant resource or community impact issues will be contained in the comments of the strategic director.

### **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

5. A petition containing 262 signatures has been received in respect of the Heygate Estate Access Route. The petition states:

“We the undersigned petition the council to reverse the decision to block off the Heygate estate access points at New Kent Road and Walworth Road.

Hundreds of people use the Heygate estate as an access route from Walworth Road and New Kent Road every day. This provides natural surveillance and extra security for the remaining residents on the estate. Blocking the access route is not just an inconvenience to members of the community passing through, but is also endangering the safety of those still living on the estate.”

6. The Walworth Community Council should decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. This community council has no decision making powers in relation to this issue, but could refer the issue to officers for further investigation.

## SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

### Deputy Chief Executive

7. The Heygate estate is a very large area – 22 areas in all. The estate was designed as a series of large linked perimeter blocks with boundary walls on New Kent Road/Rodney Road which separate it from the surrounding public highway. Pedestrian access was designed to take place along high level walkways rather than the ground level. As a consequence there is very little visibility into the site and there are many areas within it where potential criminals could hide after committing crimes or drag victims to. The estate is now largely empty and the area south of Heygate Street is being prepared for demolition. From a public safety point of view the design of the estate raises particular challenges and risks that the council has a duty as the landowner to consider.
8. In reaching its decision to close the access from New Kent Road the Council considered information concerning incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour provided by the Police. In addition incident reports are logged by the Housing Department from information supplied from both the community wardens and the private security company which undertakes night time and weekend patrols on the estate, and these were also considered.
9. In light of the evidence officers together with the police and emergency services reviewed the security measures on the Heygate to identify how these could be improved and this resulted in the identification of the following priorities;
  1. Demolition of walls within the estate to improve sightlines and visibility for police patrols;
  2. Improving security team effectiveness
  3. Restricting access for potential victims unaware that the estate is now nearly empty.
10. The New Kent Road entrance was identified as the key means by which the third of these priorities could be achieved.
11. Given the nature of the advice from the police and the risks highlighted by them for the safety of residents the council determined to that it should close the entrance utilising powers available to it under section 14.2 of the Emergency Traffic Order Act.
12. Since the closure of the route the Police have advised that incidents of recorded crime have significantly reduced and therefore the council considers that the closure has been justified. These official police statistics will be made available verbally at the community council meeting.
13. The safety of residents is of overriding importance for the council. However, the council does also recognise the need to make the most of the open spaces left on the Heygate before it is fully regenerated, including providing space for community gardening. With that in mind we have established a dialogue with the local community who are currently forming an organised group to properly, safely and professionally manage a formal community gardening space within the Heygate Estate.
14. As noted in 7.1 above the estate design gives rise to particular safety challenges that now need to be addressed as the estate is largely empty and is

being prepared for demolition. The council's approach will be to direct residents to use the public streets around the site [New Kent Road/Rodney Road/Walworth Road/Heygate Street/Elephant Road] rather than routes through the housing estate. The high level walkways/bridges that provide routes through the estate are progressively being closed to pedestrians. As a consequence Heygate Street will become increasingly important as a route for pedestrians. Currently it has no formal pavements. To address this, the council will be constructing a new 3m wide pavement on the north side of the road and these works will be completed before the end of March 2012.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Petition from Heygate Estate Access Route	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Gerald Gohler, Constitutional Officer 020 7525 7420

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
None.	

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Alexa Coates, Principal Constitutional Officer	
<b>Report Author</b>	Gerald Gohler, Constitutional Officer	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	24 October 2011	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
Deputy Chief Executive	Yes	Yes
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>		24 October 2011