



Committee and date

Central Planning Committee

11 December 2014

## **PROPOSED CLOSURE OF NEW COLLEGE ROAD AT WENLOCK ROAD**

**Responsible Officer** Richard Harman

Email: Richard.harman@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 255495

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### **1. Summary**

During the consideration of the now consented planning application ref 13/05044/FUL for the expansion of the Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology London Road campus, concern was expressed over a possible increase in vehicle movements along New College Road so a s106 agreement was made to provide funding to close off one end of New College Road to remove 'through traffic' movements.

A statutory 21 day consultation for the proposed Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for the closure was advertised on 24/7/14. A total of 18 responses have been received to the consultation made up of four objections, 12 notes of support and two notes of comments. Given that the reasons for objections can be considered of local importance to the affected residents under the Shropshire Council scheme of delegation for TRO's the matter is referred to the Central Planning Committee for a decision.

### **2. Recommendations**

The officer recommendation is to approve the proposed TRO and closure of New College Road for access by all motor vehicles at its junction with Wenlock Road, Shrewsbury.

## REPORT

### 3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

We consider that there are no known risks or equal opportunity issues arising for the council or our customers as a result of this proposal.

### 4. Financial Implications

Funding of £5,000.00 has been granted to the local planning authority under a s106 agreement as part of the planning consent for the expansion of Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology. The funding should be sufficient to construct the proposed scheme in its current form. If the council don't implement the proposal within a two-year time period, this funding will be returned to the college.

### 5. Background

During December 2013 Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology lodged a planning application to expand their London Road campus to relocate existing courses from their Radbrook Road campus and to provide capacity for new facilities. The application also included a substantial expansion of the on-site parking facilities and was accompanied by a transport statement. During the consideration of this application concern was raised by local residents, the local councillors and by the local highway authority over the possibility of intensified use of New College Road by people travelling to and from the campus by car.

New College Road is not considered to be suitable for through traffic movements due to its narrow width and 'Local Access' road status; a road of this type would normally form a cul-de-sac. Ebnal Road on the other hand is classed as a 'Secondary Distributor' road as it is suitably wide to safely carry traffic travelling between Wenlock Road and London Road (and vice versa), so this is the appropriate route for these movements.



Views looking due west (from London Rd) along New College Road and Ebnal Road.

The local highway authority considered that London Road is an appropriate site for the expansion of the existing campus, so no objection was raised to the planning application subject to a s106 agreement to provide funding to close off New College Road to through traffic movements between the two adjacent 'A' roads. At the time of negotiating the agreement it was proposed that the closure would be implemented at London Road by 'reclaiming' verge running along the main road, so this has been written in to the agreement. However following the signing of the agreement and the granting of planning permission the council was approached by a group of local residents who requested that the closure be implemented at Wenlock Road instead, as this would remove the risk of drivers by-passing the closure at New College Road and instead using the service road access some 100m or so further along London Road. The map below demonstrates this:



Following a site meeting with the local residents and ward members it was agreed that the proposed point of closure should be moved to Wenlock Road and the consultation has been carried out on this basis. Whilst this is strictly not fully in accordance with the s106 agreement, 'the spirit' of the agreement is to close New College Road to through traffic to mitigate against additional traffic movements arising from the expansion of the college. The college are satisfied with the proposed change and have indicated that they have no interest in being involved in the detail of the closure. Only the signatories to the agreement (the college and Shropshire Council as the local planning authority) are able to appeal the agreement, so officers are content that this change does not pose any significant risks to the council.



The image above shows the proposed point of closure at New College Road at its junction with Wenlock Road; if the proposal is approved the existing footway (with a full height kerb) will be extended across the full width of the junction. If required bollards or planters will be provided to prevent unauthorised access. A 'no through road' sign will be erected at the London Road junction. Some minor amendments to the existing 'no waiting' parking restriction were also included in the advertised proposals.

## 6. Consultation

A statutory 21-day public consultation on the proposal commenced on 24/7/14, where notices were erected on New College Road and an advert was placed in the Shrewsbury Chronical on the consultation commencement date. Details of the proposals were published on the council 'Have your say' consultation web pages and the proposals were made available for inspection at the Shirehall and Guildhall. A copy of the plan detailing the proposals can be found in Appendix A of this report.

A total of 18 responses were received to the consultation, which were made up of four (22%) objections, two (11%) responses with comments (neither supporting nor objecting) and 12 (67%) notes of support for the closure. A Summary of the responses can be found in Appendix B of this report.

Of the four objections made three were by the residents of Ebnal Road who object on the grounds of most of the traffic that is using New College Road will be directed on to Ebnal Road, if the closure is implemented. They have concerns that this will

impact safety on Ebnal Road and its junctions and request that a full review of traffic patterns should be carried out before a proposal is implemented. Concern was also raised that they were not directly consulted on the proposals.

Prior to the expansion of the college New College Road carried approximately 600 vehicles per day (7-day 24hr average), so this figure is now likely to be rising as the college expansion continues. Whilst we don't consider this figure to be overly excessive at present, this number of movements is greater than what would be normally expected for a local access road. We estimate that some 150-200 of these movements can be attributed to the local residents of New College Road, so the closure would result in around 400 movements being displaced, with this figure possibly rising by around 5-10% following the completion of the college. Some of these movements will be displaced to Thieves lane and London Rd and the remaining movements are likely to be displaced to Ebnal Road. Whilst no recent traffic figures are available for Ebnal Rd, we consider this route is currently under-utilised as a secondary distributor road and therefore has sufficient capacity for the displaced movements plus future growth as it has been constructed to a sufficient standard to deal with movements travelling between the adjacent A roads and local areas.

Given the potential number of vehicle movements affected is relatively low, we are of the opinion that traffic modelling would not be appropriate for a proposal of this scale.

The consultation for the proposal was conducted in accordance with Shropshire Council's consultation procedures and statutory requirements. As this proposal was campaigned by the New College Road residents we understand that some of the other surrounding residents were under the impression that a letter drop had been carried out, however Shropshire Council does not normally directly canvass on TRO proposals which is the case for this proposal. However we understand that some residents of New College Road have carried out some independent canvassing for this proposal.

The remaining objection was made by a resident who takes their access from the service road at the western end of New College Road, who has a Wenlock Road address. They are concerned that they may experience difficulties in receiving deliveries to their address, with some delivery vehicles choosing to park on Wenlock Road. They feel the original proposed point of closure at London Road is more appropriate and will cause less overall disruption to the residents, they suggest a trial closure here should be made. Another resident from this service road also responded with similar concerns, but did not raise an objection to the proposal. However both of these residents also raised concern over the proposed extension of the existing parking restrictions to cover the turning head that would be formed by the closure.

Whilst we accept that the closure will be of an inconvenience to these residents, they aren't directly affected by the traffic on New College Road which has concerned the local residents here for some time. Most delivery companies now rely upon satellite navigation systems for deliveries which use regularly updated digital maps, so the

closure would eventually appear on these maps. Plus the required detour is short due to other available suitable routes. Due to the number of direct frontages onto Wenlock Road, delivery vehicles being parked on street during the day are commonplace and don't cause traffic issues and if anything contribute to speed management here. We have given further consideration to the proposed changes to parking restrictions and have decided not to proceed with this part of the proposal, as this was intended to prevent parking from the college occurring here but given the level of parking being provided at the college we do not expect this to become a problem.

West Mercia Police Constabulary responded with comments stating they would only support the closure if it's reinforced by physical barriers (I.E. bollards, planters or other street furniture) and signs are provided. The closure is proposed to include a full height kerb and we intended to place planters on site to prevent unauthorised movements. 'No through road' signs will be provided at London Road.

The remaining 12 responses were all notes of support from the residents of New College Road.

## 7. Conclusions

There is a clear level of local support for the proposed closure of New College Road to through traffic and as a narrow 'local access' road this route is not suitable to carry additional traffic movements arising from the expansion of the college. The alternative routes are set out to a suitable standard to deal with these 'cross-route' movements. Officers agree that there is some merit in the argument for implementing the closure at London Road, however there is a risk this won't deal with all of the through movements and the current proposal has support of the local ward members.

Officers therefore recommend that current proposal for a closure of New College Road at Wenlock Road be approved and implemented.

<p><b>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</b></p>
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N/A
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<p><b>Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)</b></p>
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Cllr Claire Wild
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<p><b>Local Members</b></p>
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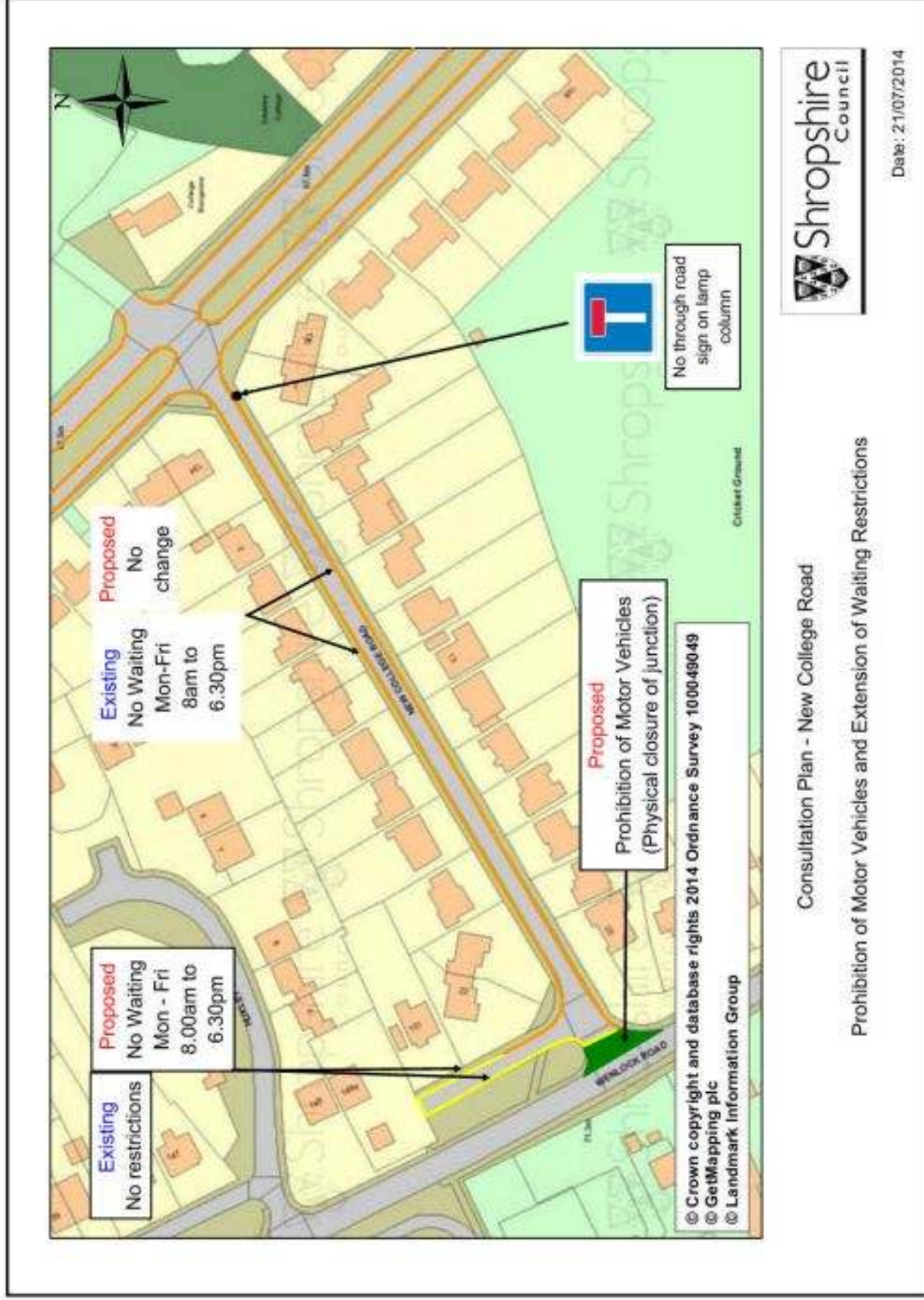
<p>Cllr Jane Mackenzie Cllr Jon Tandy Cllr Ted Clarke</p>
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<p><b>Appendices</b></p>
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Appendix A – New College Road Proposed Closure Consultation Plan
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Appendix B – Summary of Consultation Responses

Appendix A – New College Road Proposed Closure Consultation Plan



Date: 21/07/2014

Consultation Plan - New College Road

Prohibition of Motor Vehicles and Extension of Waiting Restrictions

Contact: Richard Harman (01743) 255495



## Appendix B – Summary of Consultation Responses

ref no	Objection, Support, Comment?	Summary of Response
1	Objection	Objects to closure on the grounds of having a Wenlock Rd address and would have no direct access to W-R as this would be an inconvenience for deliveries and would lead to delivery vehicles being parked on WR. Would prefer to have the closure at the original position at London Rd, with this being implemented on a trial basis. Also objects to extension of parking restrictions. Also suggested 'signed only' closure. Believes there should have been an informal consultation involving letter drops to all affected residents.
2	Support	Expresses support for closure.
3	Objection	Asks why Ebnal Rd residents haven't been consulted before. Objects to extra traffic on Ebnal Rd and this may make the road less safe, asks if a one way system has been considered. Feels the work should be postponed until the college closure is complete so the impacts can be assessed.
4	Comment	Feels the closure should be implemented at London Rd as they believe it will be difficult/hazardous to emerge from London Rd if closed at Wenlock Rd. Do not see the need for the parking restrictions due to the extra college parking and ask for residents permits if this is implemented.
5	Objection	Feel the proposal is seriously flawed, will just add extra traffic to Ebnal Rd causing a safety concern. Questions why there is no data or traffic modelling to back up this proposal. Extra traffic will be redirected to the Ebnal Rd/London Rd junction where there are lots of pedestrians. Proposal will lead to extra traffic using the service road due to congestion, this will cause a safety problem on the service road and at the crossing point so the zebra will need to be extended. Will lead to extra traffic travelling past Mereside School. Will cause difficulty for residents at the Wenlock Rd service Rd with a W-R address. No consideration has been given to where the traffic will go if the closure is made, should not be dealt with as a stand-alone proposal. Residents surrounding the college deserve a full review that considers all of the local issues, traffic surveys should be taken and a model produced. Suggests closing both Ebnal Rd and New College Rd at London Rd and provide traffic calming on the service Rd. Consider traffic calming for both roads instead, or a signed only closure with camera enforcement. Both streets need to become residential streets only, not rat-runs. If implemented the council should consider back-up measures should further issues arise.
6	Support	Very much in favour of proposal as volume and speed of traffic disproportionate to its size.
7	Support	Support proposal, as parents have been concerned over traffic here.
8	Comment	Requests vertical features such as bollards to support the closure, also requests it should be sufficiently signed. Assume that consideration has been given to the displacement of traffic.
9	Support	Fully support the closure.
10	Support	Offers support of closure to stop inappropriate through traffic. This will be an inconvenience to them but should be worth it.
11	Support	Registers their support and feels this is the most practical and economic solution.
12	Support	Expresses support for proposals.
13	Support	Fully support the closure and feel it will improve safety for residents.
14	Support	Very much support the closure, fed up with the traffic issues.
15	Support	Support the proposal.
16	Support	Registers their support for the proposal as NCR was built as a service Rd and not a distributor Rd.
17	Support	Registers their support.
18	Objection	Objects to the closure as this will have a direct impact on Ebnal Rd, which has increasing numbers of children so the outcome would be extremely undesirable. Feels the consultation should have included Ebnal Rd also as they're directly affected, so is fundamentally flawed.