

WARDS: Belle Vale

AGENDA ITEM

NO 16

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

HALESOWEN AREA COMMITTEE – 13th JULY 2004

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

TITLE: SLIMS GATE, HALESOWEN : PROPOSED PROHIBITION OF DRIVING

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek Area Committee's support for the introduction of a Prohibition of Driving Order in Slims Gate, Halesowen.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The street named 'Slims Gate' is a residential cul-de-sac forming part of the public highway. All properties in Slims Gate are owned by Dudley Council's Directorate of Housing, and all are sheltered accommodation. A qualified Warden is in charge of the development.

2.2 Slims Gate Sheltered Housing Scheme

- 2.2.1 Slims Gate comprises different sizes of Warden assisted accommodation.
- 2.2.2 There are intercoms and smoke alarms fitted in each home, and if a fire alarm sounds, the Fire Service automatically attends.
- 2.2.3 The residents of Slims Gate are all over 60 years, and the majority are in their 80's.
- 2.2.4 Slims Gate has one connection to the highway network via Richmond Street and access is needed for fire engines, ambulances, carers, doctors, nurses, chiropodists, meals-on-wheels, home helps, mobile library, social services, cleaners, ring and ride, mini-buses for day centres and visiting families.
- 2.2.5 Many residents are visited by carers 2 or 3 times each day to assist them in:-
- (1) Getting up in the morning
 - (2) Eating at meal times

- (3) Going to bed at night
- (4) Independent living

2.3 Obstructive Parking

2.3.1 Parking problems arise because Slims Gate is close to Windsor High School and Halesowen Town Football Club:-

- (1) Parking associated with the School occurs daily, and evening activities also take place.
- (2) Parking by football fans happens during evenings and at weekends.

2.3.2 Recently, obstruction has been caused by commuters who park in Slims Gate and catch buses to work.

2.3.3 Therefore, it was proposed that “no driving except for access” be introduced in Slims Gate as requested by Ward Members, residents and the Police.

2.4 Request for Scheme and Consultation

2.4.1 On 1st October, 2002, a letter was received from the Police, requesting that an “Access for Residents Only” Traffic Regulation Order be introduced in Slims Gate.

2.4.2 On 23rd October, 2002, letters were received from two Ward Members, who both requested that a “no driving except for access” scheme be introduced in Slims Gate.

2.4.3 Notices advertising a Prohibition of Driving proposal were published in the “Express & Star” newspaper on 10th November, 2003, and on-street between 10th November and 3rd December, 2003.

2.4.4 On 2nd January, 2003, a letter was sent to the Police, expressing the Council’s concerns that a “no driving except for access” order could be difficult for the Police to enforce and would require large Police resources on a regular basis.

2.4.5 Two sentences in the Council’s letter express Dudley Council’s reservations.

These are:-

- (1) “Each time Police Officers suspect that an offence has been committed, they may find it impossible to establish which property a suspect driver has or has not visited”.

- (2) "I am concerned that, if a scheme is introduced in Slims Gate, Police resources could not be used for regular enforcement".

2.4.6 On 19th January, 2003, the Police replied, "We would not agree that this is a Police generated request and the driving force behind this issue remains local residents. Should any such order be made, we would police it in line with any other enforcement of local traffic regulations. Whilst we can give no guarantees that this order will receive any primacy or undue attention we would, of course, endeavour to respond to any local requests to take action, should the problems described continue, unabated by the order".

2.4.7 On 30th January, 2003, letters describing the proposed scheme were formally sent to the three Ward Members. All three Councillors responded by telephone that they supported the proposal.

2.5 Correspondence and Objections

2.5.1 Letters and a petition containing 42 signatures, all supporting the introduction of "no driving except for access", have been received from the residents of Slims Gate. A large petition was also received from medical staff, support workers and carers, all of whom supported the scheme.

2.5.2 Area Committee will recall that the Ward Members also support the proposal.

2.5.3 Windsor High School is located in Richmond Street, opposite the junction with Slims Gate. The Head Teacher of Windsor High has written a letter in support of the proposal.

2.5.4 Two residents of Stourbridge Road, Halesowen, object to the proposal on the grounds that their house is next to Slims Gate, and they currently park their cars in Slims Gate. Parking is prohibited along the nearby section of Stourbridge Road and, if the "no driving except for access" order is introduced, these objectors consider that they would have difficulty finding parking places.

2.5.5 This objection has been given considerable consideration. However, ordinarily this scheme would be extremely difficult for the Police to enforce. To exempt residents of other streets would make the situation untenably complicated. Accordingly, it is recommended that this objection be overruled.

2.5.6 A resident of Victoria Street, Halesowen, requests that this type of scheme be considered for her own cul-de-sac. It is considered that Slims Gate has particular circumstances with regard to the need for regular access to its elderly residents living in sheltered accommodation. Victoria Street would not be suitable for a "no driving except for access" scheme, as it is unlikely to receive the regular Police attention which Slims Gate could receive.

2.6 Conclusion

2.6.1 Area Committee will recall that a “no driving except for access” Traffic Regulation Order for Slims Gate is supported by:-

- (1) Residents.
- (2) The Ward Members.
- (3) The Police.
- (4) The Head Teacher of Windsor High School.

2.7 Sustainable Transport

2.7.1 The introduction of the proposal would assist the mobility of, and access to, persons with disability.

The introduction of the proposal could encourage the use of “ring and ride” buses and other, sustainable, forms of transport.

3.0 **PROPOSAL**

3.1 That, having considered the comments made by objectors and correspondents, Area Committee supports the introduction of The Borough of Dudley (Slims Gate, Halesowen)(Prohibition of Driving) Order 2004 as shown on the attached drawing and described in 3.2.

3.2 DETAIL

THE BOROUGH OF DUDLEY (SLIMS GATE, HALESOWEN) PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) ORDER 2004

1. No person shall cause any motor vehicle to proceed in the length of road specified in the Schedule below.
2. This does not apply to motor vehicles proceeding in order to gain access to or from premises, land or the public highway in Slims Gate, Halesowen.

SCHEDULE

Roads and lengths of road in the Metropolitan Borough of Dudley.

1. Slims Gate, Halesowen.

4.0 **FINANCE**

4.1 Funds to implement the introduction of a Prohibition of Driving Traffic Regulation Order in Slims Gate, estimated at £5,000, are available in the current Highways Capital Budget.

5.0 LAW

- 5.1 Traffic Regulation Orders are made under Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 6.1 If introduced, the proposal should improve access for elderly persons, and persons with disabilities.
- 6.2 The proposal contained within this report comply with the Council's Policy regarding Equal Opportunities.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 That members support the proposal in Paragraph 3.0 of this report.

.....
.....**J. B. MILLAR – DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT**

Contact Officer: Peter Van Geersdaele, Ext. 5437

Background documents used in the preparation of this report:-

16/09/02	-	Letter and petition from residents of Slims Gate, Halesowen
28/09/02	-	Letter from Police
23/10/02	-	Letter from Ward Councillor
23/10/02	-	Letter from Ward Councillor
12/11/02	-	Letter from Head Teacher of Windsor High School
02/01/03	-	Letter to Police
19/01/03	-	Letter from Police
28/01/03	-	Letter to Police
30/01/03	-	Letters to 3 Ward Members
10/11/03	-	Notice of Proposed Order
10/11/03	-	Letter from resident of Victoria Street, Halesowen
11/11/03	-	Letter from resident of Stourbridge Road, Halesowen

