

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE – 2ND JULY 2009

EXECUTIVE – 6TH JULY 2009

Report by the Director of Technical Services in response to a petition by residents against the removal of the Danebury Avenue, SW15 (Roehampton) road traffic barrier.

SUMMARY

Background. A road barrier was installed in Danebury Avenue in 1975, in response to concerns about speed and volume along this route, which severed the vehicular link between Roehampton Lane (A306) and Priory Lane.

In December 2008, Councillor Bowes presented a petition to the Council bearing 158 votes (the petition took the form of a poll) of Roehampton, SW15 (Roehampton) residents, in the following terms: -

“Stuart King’s Danebury Avenue traffic consultation. I oppose the Danebury Avenue traffic barrier being removed for any vehicles.”

In the letter accompanying the petition the results of the ballot are provided as follows: -

- Option 1: Opposing the barrier being removed for any vehicles: 77%
- Option 2: Supporting the barrier being removed for buses only: 19 %
- Option 3: Supporting the barrier being removed for all vehicles: 4%

Policy. The Mayor of London approved the Council’s Local Implementation Plan (LIP) 2006-2011 in January 2007. This document shows how the Council is assisting the implementation of the Mayor’s Transport Strategy to the year 2011. Policy number LIP14 states: “The Council will seek to encourage through traffic to use the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN).”

Issues/Proposals. There are likely to be a range of highway issues requiring attention if the road traffic barrier was removed and through traffic permitted along Danebury Avenue. These issues include traffic congestion, queuing at junctions, higher vehicle emissions, increase in through traffic, major junction upgrades, review of parking controls and waiting restrictions, additional traffic calming measures, improved cycle facilities, improved pedestrian facilities and increased risk of pedestrian and vehicle road traffic accident casualty rate.

Comments of Director of Finance. The scale of future capital costs around this issue will depend on the option chosen: -

**Option 1 – Barrier retained preventing access for all vehicular traffic. Strengthening**

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works to the barrier would cost up to £1,000 and could be met from existing highways revenue budgets;

**Option 2 – Barrier retained preventing access for all vehicular traffic except buses.**

This would involve capital costs of up to £40,000, for which funding would be sought from Transport for London.

**Option 3 – Barrier removed completely.** This would involve capital costs of up to £275,000. It would be expected that the cost would be part-funded by the Council from LIP allocations, partly by Transport for London if they approved the proposals and possibly by contributions from the new development.

If Transport for London did not provide funding for the chosen option, there would be a call on the Council's own limited mainstream capital resources.

Conclusions. Opening the road barrier in Danebury Avenue would significantly increase traffic flows along Danebury Avenue. This would be as a result of traffic generation associated with the proposed development and reassigned traffic that would take advantage of this route to bypass the congestion in Roehampton Lane (A306). This would increase the potential for road traffic accident casualties, particularly involving vulnerable users such as pedestrians and cyclists. This is of particular concern given the location of two schools on Danebury Avenue.

There is an option to allow for buses to pass through the closure, should London Buses determine that there is a feasible route, along Danebury Avenue.

It is the view of the Director of Technical Services that this barrier should remain in place as removing it, even for short periods, would encourage through traffic diverting from a strategic route which is in direct opposition to Council policy and would also increase the potential for road traffic accident casualties.

Petitioners. A copy of this report has been sent to the organiser of the petition set out below.

#### GLOSSARY

TfL	Transport for London
TLRN	Transport for London Road Network
VPH	Vehicles Per Hour
LIP	Local Implementation Plan
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television

1. **Recommendation.** The Planning and Transportation Overview and Scrutiny Committee are recommended to support the recommendations in paragraph 3.
2. If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approve the views, comments or recommendations on the report, these will be reported to the Executive for their consideration.
3. The Executive are recommended to: -

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- (a) note the contents of the petition received from residents regarding the removal of the road traffic barrier in Danebury Avenue;
- (b) note the outcome of the investigation into the issues raised by the petition and agree that the road traffic barrier in Danebury Avenue should not be removed; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Executive and Director of Administration to inform the lead petitioner/s of the Executive's decision.

4. **Introduction.** In 1987, Wandsworth Council installed a new road barrier in Danebury Avenue that permitted use by cyclists and replaced the road barrier previously installed in 1975 that effectively severed the vehicular link between Roehampton Lane (A306) now part of the Transport for London (TfL) road network and Priory Lane. The barrier was provided in response to significant concerns from local people regarding the speed and volume of through traffic in Danebury Avenue. Since the introduction of the barrier, the only similar alternative route available for traffic is Clarence Lane, which runs parallel to Danebury Avenue to the north. The area adjacent to the library in Danebury Avenue is subject to a planning application comprising residential units, supermarket, library, primary health facility, Boys' Club, offices and associated car parking spaces. If approved, this will impact on the local transport network with a likely increase in traffic volumes and demand for additional parking space. (See plan in Appendix A).

5. In December 2008, Councillor Bowes presented a petition to the Council bearing 158 votes (the petition took the form of a poll) of Roehampton, SW15 (Roehampton) residents, in the following terms: -

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6. **Background.** Danebury Avenue is a mainly residential road with a shopping parade at its eastern end. There are several schools and colleges in the vicinity. The road has a number of pedestrian refuges but no controlled crossings. Existing traffic calming measures include speed cushions between Roehampton Lane and Laverstoke Gardens that were introduced in 2004 as part of a School Travel Strategy scheme. There are few parking restrictions in Danebury Avenue other than the TLRN Red Route returns at the junction with Roehampton Lane and a section of single yellow line on both Danebury Avenue and Holybourne Avenue which prohibits parking between 0700 and 1900, Monday to Saturday. Consequently, high numbers of vehicles park along Danebury Avenue predominantly towards the Roehampton Lane junction. Bus routes 170 and 430 have frequent stops along the road and there is a turning facility and related stand near Portswood Place.

7. A recreational area and two schools for primary and secondary school children bound the

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western end of Danebury Avenue beyond the road traffic barrier. The junction with Priory Lane has a mini-roundabout, whilst the eastern section of Danebury Avenue near the junction of Roehampton Lane is a busy area with vehicle activity and parking movements associated with the retail area. The Roehampton Lane/Danebury Avenue junction is signal controlled.

8. There is an outline planning application that has been submitted relating to the proposed regeneration of Roehampton Centre located on the Alton Estate in Danebury Avenue. The outline planning application seeks approval for the demolition and redevelopment to provide residential units, supermarket, library, primary health facility, Boys' Club, offices and associated car parking spaces. The application assumes that the road traffic barrier in Danebury Avenue remains in place.
9. This report considers the effects of opening this road barrier to permit a direct traffic link between Priory Lane and Roehampton Lane.
10. **Existing traffic conditions.** Roehampton Lane carries large volumes of through traffic expected of a primary distributor route and experiences heavy congestion, particularly in the peak periods. Queues predominantly form on the approaches to the main signalised junctions. The congestion has noticeably worsened since The Royal Parks closed Robin Hood Gate, which led to additional traffic diverting to Roehampton Lane from Richmond Park. A few years ago, TfL implemented SCOOT (a computer system for managing and controlling traffic signals in urban areas) along Roehampton Lane to assist with traffic movement along this route.
11. The route for motorists in Danebury Avenue, who are east of the road traffic barrier and who wish to access Priory Lane is to turn left into Roehampton Lane and travel 750m northwards making a left turn down Clarence Lane for 800m. Clarence Lane has single yellow lines and inset parking bays allowing free flowing traffic. A width restrictor at the western junction with Priory Lane restricts wide vehicles from entering Clarence Lane.
12. Highcliffe Drive provided a link between Danebury Avenue and Clarence Lane before a lockable barrier was introduced to prevent through traffic in 1975.
13. Currently, the junction of Danebury Avenue and Roehampton Lane operates at close to design capacity with some approaches at 90% saturation. This junction has a single lane entry to the main road junction, which accommodates a cycle lane leading to an advanced cycle stop line area.
14. Table 1 below provides details of traffic surveys undertaken in July 2008.

<i>Danebury Avenue Barrier</i>			
DANEBURY AVENUE	AM PEAK TWO WAY FLOWS (7.30-8.30 AM)	PM PEAK TWO WAY FLOWS (7.00-6.00 PM)	MEAN SPEEDS (mph)
West of Holybourne Avenue	230	282	18.1(Westbound) 21.0(Eastbound)
West of Harbridge Avenue	191	223	22.8(Westbound) 23.0(Eastbound)

*Table 1 – Existing Vehicular Volumes and Speeds – Danebury Avenue*

15. Data for the period between December 2005 and December 2008 records 9 road traffic accident casualties along Danebury Avenue (excluding the junction with Roehampton Lane). The casualties are classified as one serious and eight slight. A major concern is that three involved child pedestrians casualties aged 12 years and below.
16. Danebury Avenue and Highcliffe Drive are borough cycle routes and in 1987 cycle access through the road traffic barriers in Danebury Avenue and Highcliffe Drive was introduced. The current situation appears adequate for cyclists. However there are no particular measures to assist along the length of these routes.
17. Currently, there are high pedestrian volumes and movements across Danebury Avenue with many students and children in the area. A pedestrian survey was undertaken in October 2005 in Clarence Lane, which showed a 12-hour total of 702 pedestrians crossing the road near the college entrance.
18. **Potential traffic generation.** As part of this investigation vehicular turning movement surveys at the Clarence Lane/Roehampton Lane and Clarence Lane/Priory Lane junctions were conducted. These surveys determine the patterns of flow of the traffic between these points during peak times and have been used to predict peak flows for Danebury Avenue if the road traffic barrier were to be opened. The prediction of traffic flow relating to the proposed regeneration is based on figures provided in the Roehampton Regeneration Transport Assessment study (September 2008) that is associated with the proposed development. Combining these resultant flows provides the anticipated traffic flow volumes.
19. An origin and destination survey was undertaken in Danebury Avenue to determine the number of vehicles that use Roehampton Lane and Clarence Lane to reach Priory Lane and return. The survey was conducted at peak times. The results shown below are extracts from this survey: -

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	Percentage of total vehicles exiting Danebury Ave using Clarence Lane to reach Priory Lane.	Percentage of vehicles from Priory Lane using Clarence Lane to reach Danebury Avenue
<b>AM Peak</b>	19 of 93 vehicles =20%	31 of 802 vehicles = 4%
<b>PM Peak</b>	25 of 110 vehicles =23%	26 of 814 vehicles = 3%

*Table 2 – Existing Flows Patterns – Danebury Avenue*

20. In a joint scheme with Transport for London, Wandsworth Council has consulted on proposals to ban the right turn to vehicular traffic from Roehampton Lane into both Ponsonby Road and Medfield Street in order to address a “rat running” issue affecting Dover House Road and the West Putney area. The Director of Technical Services reported the outcome of this consultation to this Committee in January 2009, (Paper No. 09-85). Subsequently the Executive approved the recommendations to proceed with the banned left and right turn movements from Roehampton Lane into Ponsonby Road only.
21. **Anticipated traffic volume generation with road barrier removed.** Table 3 below provides the anticipated traffic volume generation with the road traffic barrier removed. The figures have been established using the base recorded traffic volume information with additions based on predictions associated with traffic generation relating to the development and reassigned traffic.

	Existing recorded traffic flows in Danebury Avenue (vph)	Predicted traffic generation due to proposed development (vph)	Reassigned traffic based on recorded traffic patterns (vph)	TOTAL resultant traffic flow (vph)	% increase from existing traffic flows
AM Peak	230	62	100	<b>392</b>	70
PM Peak	282	147	107	<b>536</b>	90

*Table 3 – Predicted traffic volumes in Danebury Avenue with road traffic barrier removed.*

22. During the morning peak period, the predominant traffic flow along Roehampton Lane is northbound. If the road traffic barrier in Danebury Avenue were removed, drivers would most likely divert to use Danebury Avenue as a shorter route with increased vehicle numbers using the Priory Lane/Danebury Avenue Junction. The current junction of Danebury Avenue and Priory Lane is a mini-roundabout. Queuing traffic would result in Danebury Avenue made up of vehicles waiting to turn right into Priory Lane.
23. During the evening peak period, southbound traffic is slightly higher in volume than (Paper No. 09-562)

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northbound flows. This volume is dynamic due to the Richmond Park Roehampton Gate being locked during the hours of darkness. Queuing would become a major issue at the Roehampton/Danebury Avenue junction. During the evening peak, more than 500vph are predicted to exit Danebury Avenue into Roehampton Lane. This would be predominately vehicles turning right and straight ahead traffic.

24. Currently, bus routes 170 and 430 terminate at Danebury Avenue. This is due to the Danebury Avenue road barrier and the width restrictor on Clarence Lane. It is considered that opening the barrier would give improved bus access to the Richmond area, if London Buses agreed to extend routes. An option could be to have the barrier open for bus use only. Automatic raising bollards are one option. However experience in other boroughs shows this to be fraught with potential maintenance and operating problems. Another option would be to have the barrier open for bus use only with Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) enforcement to deter other vehicles using it. The disadvantage of this option would be that it provides no physical deterrent to Danebury Avenue being used by through traffic.
25. Paper No. 08-705 submitted to this Committee in September 2008 reported on the outcome of a study into bus services serving the Roehampton area. It concluded that, to address the absence of a bus service to the north of the road barrier in Danebury Avenue, it might be feasible to extend an existing route via Danebury Avenue and Priory Lane. London Buses have agreed to review the practicality of establishing such a service and if a route is proposed consultation can be undertaken.
26. **Anticipated issues resulting from the removal of the Danebury Avenue road barrier.** There are likely to be a range of highway issues requiring attention should the road traffic barrier be removed and through traffic be permitted. These are summarised in the table below.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Highway issues to be resolved.</b>
<b>Traffic congestion</b>	With comparatively narrow road widths Danebury Avenue would experience increased congestion at peak times. This would create noise and air pollution for residents and inconvenience and frustration for motorists.
<b>Queuing at junctions</b>	The existing highway layout of the junctions at both ends of Danebury Avenue would not handle the predicted volumes at peak times unless they are upgraded. Queues particularly at the Danebury Avenue/Roehampton Lane junction would be significant at peak times.
<b>Pedestrian road traffic accident casualty rate</b>	With higher volumes of traffic, the risk of road traffic accident casualties involving pedestrians would be likely to increase unless additional and suitable pedestrian facilities are provided. There would be the potential for increased casualty severity particularly involving vulnerable groups such as child pedestrians travelling to and from the two schools in the area and people with mobility issues. The Roehampton development will also generate far more pedestrian activity in this area, thereby increasing the risk.

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<p><b>Vehicle road traffic accident casualty rate</b></p>	<p>An increase in traffic volumes usually results in an increase in the potential for road traffic accident casualties. Also, vehicles making turning movements from surrounding side roads on Danebury Avenue are at greater risk of accidents joining a road with increased flows, particularly at peak times. The current average speeds are slow due to the narrow widths and traffic calming measures together with road narrowing caused by uncontrolled parking. Perceived hazards due to children and high pedestrian flows may influence some drivers to keep speeds down. If the barrier were removed the vehicular volumes would rise and traffic vehicular speeds may increase. The concern would be that motorists using Danebury Avenue to rat run between Roehampton Lane and Priory Lane would be trying to save time and would be driving faster. Appropriate traffic calming and speed restrictions would assist but would probably not deter most people from using Danebury Avenue as a faster more convenient through route. The junction of Danebury Avenue and Roehampton Lane is a particular problem area associated with a high number of road traffic accidents casualties that TfL would have to address. This could become a key factor to be addressed in the Roehampton redevelopment.</p>
<p><b>Higher Vehicle Emissions</b></p>	<p>The CO<sup>2</sup> levels would increase significantly in this mainly residential environment with the higher traffic volumes. During peak times and with traffic queuing, this would be when the CO<sup>2</sup> levels are concentrated and at their highest.</p>
<p><b>Increase in through traffic</b></p>	<p>Encouraging the increase of strategic through traffic using local roads diverting off the TLRN would be in direct opposition to the Councils approved policy (LIP 14 in the Local Implementation Plan 2006-2011) to “.. seek to encourage through traffic to use the Transport for London Road Network.”</p>
<p><b>Major Junction upgrades</b></p>	<p>The necessary junction upgrades would require more lanes and alterations to the traffic signal phase timings for the Roehampton Lane/Danebury Avenue junction. This junction is the responsibility of Transport for London, which would be responsible for upgrading the junction to accommodate increased traffic volumes. It is expected that TfL would be looking for the new development to finance any upgrading required to this junction. The Priory Lane mini-roundabout would need safety upgrades to accommodate higher volumes. Estimated cost of junction upgrade - £70,000.</p>
<p><b>Review of Parking controls and waiting restrictions</b></p>	<p>New restrictions would be required that would permit traffic flow by removing obstructive parking during peak period of traffic flow as well as meeting the needs of businesses, visitors and residents in the area. Estimated cost of review and measures - £10,000.</p>
<p><b>Improved Pedestrian Facilities</b></p>	<p>As high volumes of pedestrians use the area, a controlled crossing point might be warranted near the school and the Roehampton Lane/Danebury Avenue junction. With the anticipated increases in traffic volumes in Danebury Avenue and increased pedestrian movement associated with the development a controlled pedestrian crossing facility could be justified. Estimated cost of improved pedestrian facilities - £25,000.</p>
<p><b>Additional Traffic Calming Measures</b></p>	<p>These measures would be necessary to deter drivers from using Danebury Avenue at unacceptable vehicular speeds. Entry treatments for side road junctions could be considered to reduce vehicular speeds through these</p>

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	junctions and to assist pedestrians crossing at these points. Estimated cost of additional traffic calming measures - £110,000.
<b>Cycle facilities</b>	If traffic volumes increased then improved cycling facilities would be required otherwise the risks of cyclist casualties as a result of road traffic accidents would be increased significantly. Estimated cost of cycle facilities - £20,000.

27. **Potential scheme costs.** Estimated costs for the options relating to the road barrier are provided in the table below.

<u>OPTION</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>ESTIMATED COST</u>
1. Existing road barrier to remain	No new works proposed, existing barrier to remain with locking system to be strengthened to deter vandalism	£1,000
2. Road Barrier to be removed to permit use by buses only	Enforcement measures required to ensure use by buses only, including CCTV installation and measures to accommodate new bus route along Danebury Avenue including accessible bus stops/shelters, and associated measures.	£30,000-40,000
3. Road Barrier to be removed to permit use by all vehicular traffic	A range of measures required as detailed in the report relating to junction improvements at Priory Lane and Roehampton Lane, traffic calming measures, pedestrian and cyclist improvements, improved pedestrian crossing facilities and the bus measured as detailed above.	£265,000 – 275,000

28. In option 1 above the Council would need to fund the costs associated with the measures described. As option 2 would be specifically to permit the use by buses, it would be proposed to seek the required funding from Transport for London, by submitting a bid as part of the Council's annual funding request to TfL. Given TfL's stated financial constraints this funding may not be available.
29. Option 3 involves significant works. Those measures specifically associated with improvements to the Transport for London road network would require funding by TfL, assuming that they were in favour of and had approved this option. It is expected that, for any upgrade to the Danebury Avenue/Roehampton Lane junction, TfL would seek funding from the new development. The Council would need to seek funding for measures other than those specially associated with the bus route measures as detailed in option 2.

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30. **Comments of the Economic Development Officer.** One of the key problems faced by Roehampton is its poor accessibility and one of the key strategic aims of the Roehampton Regeneration Framework is to improve the area's physical environment and transport facilities. The area's poor accessibility is exacerbated by the barrier at the end of Danebury Avenue. Moreover, if the Alton Estate were built today it is highly unlikely that it would include a cul de sac as long as Danebury Avenue.
31. Businesses in Roehampton have been suffering for some time and this is particularly true for those in Danebury Avenue and Portswood Place. Many of these businesses have suggested that either the permanent or temporary removal of the barrier would provide a significant boost to these businesses and would be a particularly welcome response given the severity of the recession which appears to be affecting Roehampton more than other parts of the Borough.
32. However, there is no direct evidence that opening the route up would lead to a direct positive economic benefit for the businesses. It is even possible that it could have the opposite effect whereby, drivers would just use it as a convenient through route (or rat run) and would not stop and shop in Roehampton. As the report notes, this would significantly increase the likelihood of accidents to pedestrians and cyclists in Danebury Avenue and it was this that led to the barrier being installed in the first place.
33. Removing the barrier may also alleviate some of the congestion experienced at the junction of Danebury Avenue with Roehampton Lane.
34. Given the sensitivity, it would be helpful to introduce a time-limited experiment (both during the day, excluding morning rush hour; and seasonal to include a school holiday) to assess the positive and negative impacts and then review the experiment. A bus only experiment would also be worthy of consideration.
35. **Comments of the Director of Finance.** The scale of future capital costs around this issue will depend on the option chosen: -
- (a) Option 1-Barrier retained preventing access for all vehicular traffic. Strengthening works to the barrier would cost up to £1,000 and could be met from existing highways revenue budgets;
  - (b) Option 2-Barrier retained against preventing access for all vehicular traffic except buses. This would involve capital costs of up to £40,000, for which funding would be sought from Transport for London; and
  - (c) Option 3-Barrier removed completely. This would involve capital costs of up to £275,000. It would be expected that the cost would be part funded by the Council from LIP allocations partly by Transport for London if they approved the proposals and possibly contributions from the new development.

If Transport for London did not provide funding for the chosen option there would be a call on the Council's own limited mainstream capital resources.

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36. The indicative costs for Options 2 and 3 relate to capital only. If the barrier was opened to bus traffic only, there would also be enforcement costs to counter other vehicular access, although these costs would be offset, at least in part, by some Penalty Charge Notice income, at least in the short term until substantial compliance was achieved.
37. **Conclusion.** It is clear that by opening the road traffic barrier in Danebury Avenue there would be significant increases in traffic flows along this road. This is as a result of traffic generation associated with the proposed development and reassigned traffic that would take advantage of this route to bypass the congestion on the A306 Roehampton Lane. With these increases, the potential for road traffic accident casualties particularly involving vulnerable users such as pedestrians and cyclists would increase and, as a result, the Council would need to consider mitigation measures.
38. It should be noted that the junction of Roehampton Lane and Danebury Avenue is currently operating at close to capacity with queue lengths approaching saturation. Should the development proceed, even with the barrier in place, it would be necessary to improve this junction to provide increased capacity. It is unlikely that these improvements would be sufficient were the barrier to also be removed.
39. There is an option to allow buses to pass through the closure, should London Buses determine a feasible route that would use Danebury Avenue and Priory Lane, following consultation. Were this to proceed, the Council would need to consider an effective way to ensure that access for non-authorized vehicular traffic was prevented. This is regarded as the only justification for considering amending vehicular access via the existing road barrier. If a route was established and agreed upon, the Council and London buses would undertake the required consultation necessary to inform residents, statutory bodies and other interested stakeholders of the proposed route and changes to the highway/traffic operations necessary to facilitate this, such as enforcement by CCTV installation. An amendment to the legal traffic management order relating to the Danebury Avenue road barrier would also be required to permit use by buses and allow the required enforcement.
40. The proposed development is predicated on the basis of the road traffic barrier remaining in place. For vehicular traffic other than buses, it is the view of the Director of Technical Services that this barrier should remain in place as to remove it, even for a short periods of time, would encourage through traffic diverting from a strategic route which is in direct opposition to Council policy. It would also increase the potential for road traffic accident casualties and, therefore, adversely affect the Council ability to meet its casualty reduction targets.

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24<sup>th</sup> June 2009

**Background papers.**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

All reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committees, regulatory and other committees, the Executive and the full Council can be viewed on the Council's website ([www.wandsworth.gov.uk/committ](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/committ)) unless the report was published before May 2001, in which case the Committee Secretary (Mr. F. de Lima – 020 8871 6488; email [fdelima@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:fdelima@wandsworth.gov.uk) can supply it if required).