

Ref: PHD 050/05

Subject: **Roxeth Green Avenue, South Harrow – Cycling, Parking and Traffic Congestion Relief – Design and Results of Consultations.**

Responsible Officer: Transportation Manager, Urban Living

Contact Officer: Paul Edwards, Principal Engineer - West Area Transportation Team

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Phil O'Dell, Environment and Transport

Key Decision: No

Urgent/Non Urgent: Non urgent

Power to be exercised: “Extraordinary Council, 28th May 2002 – item 6”
Role and Delegated Powers of Portfolio Holders – Section 8 and 16(b).

Status: Part I

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

That the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport authorises the implementation of the scheme as shown at APPENDIX D.

Reason for report

To present the proposals to the Portfolio Holder and report the results of two consultations that were carried out during the design process and to obtain the Portfolio Holder's approval to implement the scheme.

Benefits

The scheme will address an on-going, very severe, and worsening traffic congestion problem caused by resident and commuter parking.

Cost of Proposals

The cost of the congestion relief scheme is estimated at £400,000 and would be met from the council's capital budget. Whilst implementing the congestion relief works the opportunity would be taken to provide a required component of the local cycle network at an estimated additional cost of £150,000. The cost of the cycle network works would be met from Transport for London's cycling budget.

Risks

The scheme will organise on-street parking such that one clear unobstructed lane will exist in each direction. It is possible that this might lead to increased vehicle speeds.

The measures will also reduce on-street parking capacity.

Implications if recommendations rejected

The existing problems of traffic and parking congestion would almost certainly worsen beyond what is already considered to be at unacceptable levels.

Section 2: Report

2.1 Brief History

- 2.1.1 Awareness of the ever-worsening traffic conditions in Roxeth Green Avenue was raised towards the end of 2002 following the results of a MORI poll commissioned by the South Harrow Pilot Project and the receipt of a petition signed by 39 residents.
- 2.1.2 In 2003 the "New Harrow Project" invited the residents and businesses of Roxeth Green Avenue and area to a public meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to outline possible solutions to the identified problems and to increase the council's knowledge of the concerns of local residents and businesses. More than 50 members of the public attended the meeting.

2.1.3 The increasing demand for parking had led to a breakdown of the informal agreement, which had existed amongst local residents that they park only on the northwest (odd numbers) side of the road thus leaving the remainder of the road clear for a two-way traffic flow.

2.1.4 Since 2002 the traffic situation has continued to worsen. Residents continue to report a shortage of on-street parking and traffic congestion. Often, parking reduces the available road width to a single lane. This leads to much frustration and bad temper and consequent damage to soft verges caused both by vehicles parking on them and moving traffic driving onto them to pass approaching vehicles.

2.2 Options considered

2.2.1 The project team considered several options that would have required the relocation of existing kerb lines. These were discounted following careful and thorough assessment of each in turn. The main problems of these options were that they required the relocation of the existing telephone poles, the expense of this coupled with the cost of the new kerb lines outweighed any advantages.

2.2.2 The simple solution would be to reinstate the pre 2002 situation, when everyone parked on the north-west side. However since 2002 increases in the parking demand have continued such that parking on one side only would not provide sufficient parking. A solution was sought therefore that provided parking on both sides of the road.

2.2.3 The preliminary proposals as shown at **APPENDIX A** were prepared on the basis that vehicles will park on the existing northwest (odd numbers) kerb-line, except at the rail bridge and within 10 metres of road junctions.

2.2.4 At the road junctions the footway will be built out to assist pedestrians crossing Roxeth Green Avenue and vehicles turning out of the junctions.

2.2.5 New parking lay-bys will be provided on the southeast (even numbers) side of the road. These have been curtailed as necessary to avoid the prohibitive cost of relocating the existing telephone poles.

2.2.6 The formalisation of the parking and the introduction of several vehicle speed reduction features might reduce the overall parking capacity in the road. The residents of Roxeth Green Avenue will be consulted later this year to find out if they would like to be included in an extension of the existing South Harrow controlled parking zone. Representations received from some residents suggest that they will opt for inclusion. This will provide the opportunity to address any parking problems that still remain following the works the subject of this report.

- 2.2.7 The project team, in consultation with the council's arboriculture officer, formed the view that existing trees could only be retained at high detriment to the improvement proposals. It is considered that the right of residents and businesses to enjoy vehicular access to the public highway, reinforced by the desirability of off-street parking, was paramount on this occasion.
- 2.2.8 The arboriculture officer has joined the project team and will prepare a tree-planting scheme, following the completion of the construction works, when details of underground services will be known. The tree species will be chosen to be appropriate for on-street use and will display none of the problems inherent in the current tree stock.

2.3 Consultations

First Consultation

- 2.3.1 The first consultation was carried out during January and February 2005. The consultation document gave the background of the scheme and preliminary outline (conceptual) design, as shown at **APPENDIX A**, and included a comment return card and stamped addressed envelope. These were delivered to all properties in Roxeth Green Avenue and Thornley Drive, a little less than 250 in total.
- 2.3.2 A staffed exhibition was held at the Windsock Club on Eastcote Avenue from 7pm to 9pm on Wednesday 26th January 2005 where ward councillors and officers were able to answer residents' questions and address their concerns.
- 2.3.3 Twenty-four comment sheets were completed and returned. A spreadsheet attached at **APPENDIX B** summarizes the comments and provides a rudimentary analysis of the concerns of the residents.
- 2.3.4 Two of the 24 residents that responded expressed opposition to the scheme and around 14 residents were clearly in favour of the scheme. Eight residents did not express a view.
- 2.3.5 The residents listed their concerns related to the existing situation in Roxeth Green Avenue as traffic and parking congestion, "rat-running" and traffic volume, with some mention of road rage and non-resident parking. Seven residents suggested that the problem was caused or made worse by the new residential development in the area. It should be noted that Roxeth Green Avenue is classified as a Local Distributor Road and as such is a designated route for traffic between locations in the Borough and some of the surrounding area.

- 2.3.6 Six residents pointed out that the new proposals would make it easier for drivers to speed along Roxeth Green Avenue. It should be noted that:
- a) The possible increase in speed of vehicles, following the implementation of the proposals, is acknowledged as a potentially significant problem to be addressed during detailed design. Although the proposal will provide unobstructed flows in each direction the lane width will not be excessive and the road configuration might not be conducive to high vehicle speed.
 - b) Council policy does not allow the use of conventional speed reduction features (road humps, chicanes etc.) on a “Local Distributor Road” and we therefore propose to provide an additional mini round-a-bout and will investigate other possible measures during detailed design.
 - c) “Vehicle speed activated” signs will be provided. These are signs that display a ‘SLOW DOWN’ message, and include an electronic display of the speed limit roundel, which are triggered when drivers exceed a set threshold speed. The sign face would remain blank when not activated. Two signs will be provided, one on each side of the carriageway, in positions that will be finalised when the construction works are substantially complete and nearby residents have been consulted.
 - d) It will be necessary to monitor vehicle speed, and any reports of accidents, very closely during the first year of the operation of the new proposals and to respond quickly to any undesirable events.
- 2.3.7 Only three residents expressed concern about non-resident parking although this is without doubt a problem in the area and other representations have been received confirming this. Roxeth Green Avenue will be consulted later this year as part of the review of the South Harrow CPZ.
- 2.3.8 Three residents suggested that the cycle tracks are not required (one other welcomed the cycling proposals). The Council are providing cycling facilities to encourage the use of cycling as a sustainable mode of transport. Roxeth Green Avenue is part of the local cycle network and therefore the opportunity has been taken to incorporate cycling facilities in the proposals.
- 2.3.9 Three residents expressed concern about damage to grass and trees, one of the three referred to the matter more directly than the other two, expressing the hope that not too many trees would be lost. The proposals will therefore include a planting scheme and it is planned to provide more new trees than will be removed.
- 2.3.10 Although only 30 of the 250 or so residents and businesses responded to the consultation indications are that the scheme will be well received by both those who live in the area and those who travel along Roxeth Green Avenue.

2.3.11 The work carried out by the Project Team to the date of the first consultation clearly indicated that the proposals consulted upon were the most feasible and effective of available options. The design was conceptual at that stage and with the benefit of the consultation feedback the scheme was amended and the council's arboriculture officer prepared a provisional tree-planting scheme.

Second Consultation

2.3.12 The second consultation was carried out during July and August 2005. The consultation document described, and indicated on a plan, as shown at **APPENDIX D**, additional proposals to reduce vehicular speed and provide better pedestrian facilities in Roxeth Green Avenue.

2.3.13 The first additional proposal would provide pedestrian refuges each side of the proposed mini-roundabout at Maple Avenue. The refuges would cause motorists to change their direction as they enter the roundabout with a consequent decrease in speed. This would also provide a safer pedestrian crossing facility.

2.3.14 The second proposal was the provision of a pedestrian refuge near the Rayners Lane end of Roxeth Green Avenue. This would provide a vehicle deflection that would cause a reduction in vehicle speed and a safer pedestrian crossing facility.

2.3.15 The third proposal was the provision of two speed reactive signs, to be strategically placed, one each side of the carriageway.

2.3.16 The consultation document also explained why most of the existing trees would need to be removed and described a tree-planting scheme that would provide around 200 new trees.

2.3.17 Only 15 responses were received from approximately 250 leaflets distributed. The questionnaire enclosed with the consultation leaflet requested comments and did not ask if respondents were in favour of the proposals. However, six of the respondents said they were in favour of the proposals with one against; the remaining 8 did not express a view.

2.3.18 A summary of the comments received together with officer's responses is attached at **APPENDIX C**. As a result of the consultation further consideration will be given to the tree-planting scheme, particularly in respect of the numbers of trees to be provided which is now thought to be excessive.

2.3.19 The initial drafts of the consultation documents and this report were circulated to ward councillors and amended as appropriate before being finalised.

2.4 Financial Implications

- 2.4.1 The estimated cost of the new cycle track is £150,000 and would be funded from Transport for London's London Cycle Network budget.
- 2.4.2 The estimated cost of the carriageway and footway works is £400,000 and will be funded from Harrow's Capital budget.

Signature Date
Anil Nagpal

2.5 Legal Implications

- 2.5.1 The Highway Authority (the Council) is permitted to provide approved signs and road markings, on the public highway, under the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002.
- 2.5.2 Cycle tracks can be provided by resolution under Section 65 of the Highways Act 1980.
- 2.5.3 Advisory cycle routes including cycle lanes on the carriageway and signed routes can be introduced under delegated powers.

Signature Date
John Hannington

2.6 Equalities Impact

- 2.6.1 The proposals have been prepared having regard of the Council's Corporate Equality Plan.

Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents

3.1 Appendices:

- Appendix A: Initial Scheme Layout Drawing.
Appendix B: Summary of responses to first consultation.
Appendix C: Summary of results of second consultation and officer's responses.
Appendix D: Final Scheme Layout Drawing.

3.2 Supporting Information:

- 3.2.1 Copies of the consultation documents and questionnaires distributed to residents and businesses for consultation in January and February 2005 and July and August 2005.
- 3.2.2 Copies of returned consultation questionnaires.

Signature:

Steve Swain, Transportation Manager, Urban Living

Date:

FOR PORTFOLIO HOLDER

- * I do agree to the decision proposed
- * I do not agree to the decision proposed
- * Please delete as appropriate

Notification of personal interests (if any) :-
(Note: if you have a prejudicial interest you should not take this decision)

Additional comments made by and/or options considered by the Portfolio Holder

Signature:

Cllr Phil O'Dell - Portfolio Holder Environment and Transport

Date: