

**REPORT FOR: Traffic And Road Safety  
Advisory Panel**

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**Date of Meeting:** 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017

**Subject:** **INFORMATION REPORT**  
Wealdstone – Liveable Neighbourhood bid

**Responsible Officer:** Paul Walker – Corporate Director, Community

**Exempt:** No

**Wards affected:** Wealdstone, Marlborough

**Enclosures:** Appendix 1 – Liveable neighbourhood scheme plan

## **Section 1 – Summary**

This information report is presented to members to give details about the Liveable Neighbourhood bid submitted to Transport for London (TfL) in October 2017.

**FOR INFORMATION**

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **Background**

- 2.1 Members may recall that a Wealdstone Town Centre scheme Major Scheme bid was submitted to TfL in 2016. The scheme was discussed between the borough and TfL earlier in 2017 but eventually was not admitted to the Major Scheme programme because of the changes in Mayoral priorities.
- 2.2 During 2017 a new draft Mayor's Transport Strategy was published. The key objective of the strategy was to increase the proportion of travel by sustainable transport modes to 80% by walking, cycling and public transport and reducing 3 million car journeys each day by 2041. This is a significant step change from the previous strategy. The aims of the strategy are:
  - Healthy Streets and healthy people
  - A good public transport experience
  - New homes and jobs
- 2.3 The healthy streets for London initiative aims to ensure people and their health are put at the centre of decision making in London. It ultimately aims to reduce reliance on personal vehicles, in favour of walking, cycling and using public transport to create a healthy city. The Liveable Neighbourhood programme will be an important delivery mechanism for healthy streets.
- 2.4 In the summer 2017 the Liveable Neighbourhoods Programme Guidance was issued in line with the key policy drivers in the draft Mayors Transport Strategy. A deadline for bids by October 2017 was set.
- 2.5 The late issue of the guidance and confirmation of the deadline provided only a relatively short timescale to produce a comprehensive bid and the Council's engaged transport consultant was commissioned to support the work to prepare and submit a bid.

## **Wealdstone transport study**

- 2.6 Wealdstone is within an opportunity area and the Council has ambitious regeneration plans for the town and has set out an aspiration over the next 15 years for an increase of 5,500 new homes and 3,000 new jobs in the area. A significant part of the regeneration programme will also be to relocate the Council's Civic Centre into the town by 2020 to support growth. The intensification of development will place greater demands on the existing transport network and the borough recognises that the additional journeys being made in the future can only be accommodated by increasing the mode share of walking, cycling and public transport.
- 2.7 The work undertaken on the Wealdstone transport study has provided a detailed assessment of the transport and public realm issues in the town, identified opportunities and potential design options for a Liveable neighbourhood scheme in Wealdstone. The feasibility of the proposal has already been subject to transport modelling to assess network impacts. The study was included as important supporting evidence for the bid.
- 2.8 A separate item on the agenda provides more details about the transport study.

## **Existing situation**

- 2.9 The 2011 census data shows that car use is the most popular form of transport in the three postcode sectors that the scheme is in, with 38% travelled by driving a car or van, and only 11% travelled to work did so by foot or by bicycle. Levels of car use in the area are higher than both the London (30%) and North London averages (29%). Walking levels are slightly above the London average – 10% in Wealdstone compared to 9% in London, however cycling levels are a mere 1% mode share to work compared to the 4% London average.
- 2.10 The high car mode share in the area has a detrimental effect on the people living, working and visiting the town centre, not least from the knock-on effect that poor air quality has on the health of the local community. The area is designated as an Air Quality Focus Area within the borough with high levels of NO<sub>2</sub> which have a detrimental affect on health. It is therefore important to ensure that private cars are actively discouraged through reduced parking and design, and air quality is improved through the encouragement of electric vehicle usage.
- 2.11 Pedestrians are faced with a number of challenges which discourage walking completely. Crime and the fear of crime actively discourage not only the routes people choose to use but also have an impact on the evening economy. The arrangement of street clutter creating pinch points, unattractive areas under bridges and footpaths where there is no natural

surveillance creates an environment suitable for criminal activity and this is a significant barrier to walking.

- 2.12 The current cycling provision in Wealdstone is disjointed and confusing, and existing cycle parking facilities are not fit for purpose. In addition the cycle directional signage is inconsistent and the number of recorded cyclist casualties was higher than the borough average for the period assessed. In order to make cycling a mode of choice, a step-change improvement in provision for people that choose to cycle is needed.
- 2.13 The public realm in Wealdstone is very poor in several locations throughout the town centre. Poor quality and mixed paving materials contribute to the cluttered and unattractive streetscape which reduces the effective footway width at several areas within the town centre, creating pinch points and congestion. Excessive guard railing is present at several locations which results in convoluted routes for pedestrians. The area suffers a lack of identity and gateway features to highlight the town centre as a place to visit and do business.
- 2.14 The east-west links into the town centre by foot and cycle are poor and need to be further strengthened to support existing and future needs associated with a number of redeveloped sites

#### **Liveable Neighbourhood scheme**

- 2.15 The proposal to transform Wealdstone Town Centre into a liveable neighbourhood will involve significant changes to make walking and cycling the easiest and most convenient mode choice for residents, employees and visitors alike, and where the impact of driving is substantially reduced.
- 2.16 Wealdstone already has good public transport accessibility levels and it will be necessary to build on this by creating and improving crucial walking and cycle links to the public transport network from the key attractors in the town centre and surrounding residential areas.
- 2.17 To help achieve this vision and to drive modal shift, a reallocation of a significant amount of road space for people to walk, cycle and dwell in will be delivered through widening footways, removing parking from the High Street and formalising freight loading arrangements to off-peak times only to free up footway space for pedestrians during the day.
- 2.18 The benefits of the proposal will be further enhanced as the relocation of the Civic Centre to the area by 2020 is occurring within the proposed project timeframe. Footfall and cycle demand will be greatly enhanced as a result of a significantly reduced parking provision for employees of the Civic Centre and the removal of the public multi storey car park and replacement with a smaller surface level car park.

- 2.19 Key components of the scheme will include transforming the town centre into a green boulevard with expanded public realm areas, together with low kerb heights, an expansion of the 20mph zones, and the introduction of a new cycle and bus only section on the High Street and approaches.
- 2.20 The town centre will be interspersed with new 'Copenhagen' type crossings on the side streets to give greater pedestrian priority, substantially more secure cycle parking (including at the station hub, which will also accommodate electric cycles) improved lighting, CCTV coverage and up to date pedestrian wayfinding.
- 2.21 New and improved pedestrian and cycle routes into the town centre will also be introduced, including new direct crossings, by targeting critical junctions and under used spaces such as bridges. We will also introduce innovative new spaces which flex between controlled loading in the off peak to footway space at all other times. Appendix 1 provides a plan showing the proposed scheme.
- 2.22 To help strengthen the identity and civic pride of Wealdstone, the look and feel of the liveable neighbourhood proposal will be made consistent through the application of an approved materials palette from the recently developed Wealdstone Public Realm Implementation guide.
- 2.23 To further strengthen the propensity for greater participation of the local community, employees and visitors in walking and cycling, the proposed physical improvements will be complemented with a comprehensive travel behavioural change programme for Wealdstone Town Centre, which builds significantly on the existing school travel plan activities, as well as development related travel plans associated with large developments in the town centre such as the new civic centre.
- 2.24 The engagement with the community to change travel behaviours will be a very important part of the project and this is recognised by TfL who wish to see effective community engagement and ownership as a part of the proposal.
- 2.25 Currently Wealdstone is the Ward in the Borough with the highest level of multiple deprivation, particularly around income, education, skills, training and employment. Low income is a known risk factor for physical inactivity and it is evident that the Type 2 diabetes rates in Harrow are amongst the highest in the country, particularly amongst BME groups. A key aspiration of the bid would be to encourage and promote more physical activity and improve public health and wellbeing within the community as a part of the wider regeneration and modal shift. The involvement of the Public Health team would support the promotion of health benefits from the community engagement programme.

2.26 The components of the scheme are shown below:

#### Harrow and Wealdstone Station area

- Public realm improvements with seating and planting outside the station.
- A new direct diagonal crossing outside the station for pedestrians
- A brand new cycle hub outside the station, including double level secure cycle storage (complemented by other cycle parking facilities into the wider town centre)
- Innovative use of taxi bays so that they can be used as a footway when not in use by taxis

#### Wealdstone High Street

- Introduction of restricted access for vehicles for a majority of the High Street - prioritising cycle and bus only access
- Removal of all on-street parking bays
- Extension of the 20mph zone to help improve road safety
- Significant greening of the High Street, to create a tree lined boulevard
- Public realm improvements to the town square with seating and planting to complement the parallel Wealdstone Public square scheme.
- Introduction of 'Copenhagen' crossings on the side roads for greater pedestrian priority.
- Flexible spaces for which can also be used as loading bays in the off-peak and for pedestrians at all other times
- Improvements to the bus stop waiting areas and accessibility improvements
- Improved lighting and CCTV to improve personal security and safety.
- Proposed introduction of carriageway 25mm upstand throughout the area to create more of a pedestrian priority for the high street.

#### Western Approaches to the High Street (Palmerston Road/ Canning Road/ George Gange Way)

- Restricted access of the High Street for Cycles and Buses only on Canning Road
- Removal of 4 on-street parking bays
- Introduction of 2 electric vehicle parking bays to support air quality and longer term national policy
- Relocation of 3 disabled parking bays
- Improvement to lighting and appearance under George Gange Way bridge
- Shared-use facility for pedestrians and cyclists bounding the new Civic Centre site on George Gange Way

### Eastern Approaches to the High Street (Ellen Webb Drive/ Cecil Road/ Headstone Drive)

- Improvement to lighting and appearance under railway bridge
- New signalised junction with controlled crossings

### Area wide improvements

- Updated and extended pedestrian wayfinding system
- Use of a consistent palette of materials across the scheme using the Wealdstone Design Guide.
- Roll out of an extensive travel behavioural change programme to complement the roll out of walking and cycling
- Community participation in the development of the scheme.
- Build on existing community and business group engagement activities that have already been undertaken
- Tailored public consultation of the scheme to reflect the community
- Community participation in the development scheme components such as a street art competition in conjunction with local colleges.

### **Next steps**

- 2.27 The bid has been submitted as a part of the borough annual spending submission to TfL for 2018/19 and funding allocations are anticipated to be confirmed by December 2017 / January 2018.

## **Section 3 – Further Information**

- 3.1 There is no further information.

## **Section 4 – Financial Implications**

- 4.1 A Liveable neighbourhood bid for Wealdstone has been submitted to TfL in October 2017 for funding of £2 million over a three year period from 2018/19 to 2020/21. An indicative match funding is included in the bid, namely Harrow Capital of £400k which will be set aside within Highway Programme and S106/CIL funding of £660k which is to be agreed.
- 4.2 If the bid is successful, Phase 1 of the project (solely funded from TfL in 18/19) will involve the design work. The continuation of the project beyond 18/19 will be subject to the approval of design by TfL and the confirmation of the availability of match funding by the Council. A decision on the bid is anticipated by December 2017 / January 2018.

## **Section 5 - Equalities implications**

- 5.1 A programme of investment was included in the Transport Local Implementation Plan which was approved by full Council. The LIP was subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment where schemes were identified as having no negative impact on any equality groups. Positive impacts of the programme were demonstrated on some equalities groups, particularly, women, children and people with mobility difficulties.

## **Section 6 – Council Priorities**

- 6.1 The funds allocated by TfL and Harrow for transport improvements will contribute to achieving the administration's priorities:
- Making a difference for the vulnerable
  - Making a difference for communities
  - Making a difference for local businesses
  - Making a difference for families

## **Section 7 - Statutory Officer Clearance**

Name: Jessie Man



on behalf of the  
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 15/11/17

**Ward Councillors notified:**

**YES**

## **Section 8 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

### **Contact:**

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### **Background Papers:**

Local Implementation Plan 2