
REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date of Meeting:	9 th January 2020
Subject:	Wealdstone Town Centre Improvement Scheme
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Paul Walker, Corporate Director - Community
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Varsha Parmar, Portfolio Holder for Environment
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	Marlborough, Wealdstone
Enclosures:	Appendix A – Plans of proposed scheme Appendix B – Bus routes and bus journey time benefits

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the background to a town centre improvement scheme for Wealdstone and gives details of the rationale for this investment, the collaboration undertaken with Transport for London (TfL), the benefits for

public transport and the local economy and the proposed consultation and delivery programme.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Approve the Wealdstone Town Centre Improvement Scheme and funding subject to satisfactory public consultation and a separate approval of 2020/21 Capital Programme in February 2020.
2. Note the public consultation and engagement proposed for the scheme.
3. Delegate to the Corporate Director - Community following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment:
 - a) To consider the responses to public consultation and approve the final scheme to be taken forward,
 - b) To undertake statutory consultation on traffic regulation orders required to implement the scheme,
 - c) Consider representations received from the statutory consultation and agree the traffic regulation orders to be implemented for the scheme.

Reason: (For recommendations)

To approve in principle the proposed Wealdstone Town Centre Improvement Scheme and the funding to implement the scheme.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

- 2.1 Wealdstone has been identified by the Council and the Mayor of London as a priority area for regeneration and is designated in the Harrow Core Strategy and the London Plan as an Opportunity Area. The vision for the area as described in the Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan and updated in the draft Regeneration Strategy 2014 – 2026 is to deliver 5,500 new homes, a new school and health centre and around 3,000 additional new jobs.
- 2.2 The redevelopment of a number of key development sites in the area will change travel patterns and increase travel demand on the network which will have implications for transport infrastructure in Wealdstone. In order to help unlock the wider development potential of Wealdstone a transport study was undertaken in 2017 to assess the impact of all known and committed development on the transport network and to identify opportunities to enhance the transport network and public

realm to support growth. This included the three Council-owned sites in the regeneration programme, Poets corner (existing civic centre site), Byron Park (leisure centre site) and Peel House car park (potential new civic centre).

- 2.3 The study showed that the background growth in vehicular traffic would remain relatively static over the 5 year study period and that most of the expansion in journeys from the growing population would be via sustainable transport with an increasing mode share of walking, cycling and bus trips in particular. It is therefore essential that the transport infrastructure of Wealdstone is improved to accommodate these additional journeys. A large proportion of these additional trips will be by bus and so the road network will need to be designed to enable better bus journey time reliability and to facilitate future expansion of bus services.
- 2.4 The study recommended two major infrastructure initiatives to support regeneration as follows:
- A town centre scheme to improve the reliability and expansion of buses on the High Street, two options were identified for further analysis.
 - A liveable neighbourhood to create healthy streets around the town centre and enable more walking, cycling and better access to bus networks in the wider Wealdstone area. This requires a bid to be submitted to TfL.
- 2.5 Since the transport study was completed TfL have supported the review of the options for the town centre in order to develop a preferred scheme. The A409 High Street / George Gange Way corridor is part of the Strategic Route Network and so any improvements on this part of the network require the approval of TfL and the Council and TfL have therefore worked together to develop the best option. Over the last two years TfL have funded detailed transport modelling work to develop a preferred scheme.
- 2.6 The scheme developed involves some changes to bus routes and has been subjected to a detailed transport model auditing process and assessment on the basis of achieving the best network performance and scheme benefits. These have been validated by TfL. In November 2019 TfL confirmed that the expected benefits for bus services and the wider High Street were significant and agreed to take forward and fund the scheme in 2020/21 subject to satisfactory public consultation and a match funding contribution from Harrow.

Options considered

- 2.7 The transport study proposed two options for a town centre improvement scheme as follows:
- Bus routes retain their existing routes and junctions and road layouts on the network are improved to maximise performance.

- Southbound bus services are diverted along a central bus lane in George Gange Way and both southbound and west bound bus services enter the town via Canning Road and junctions and road layouts on the network are improved to maximise performance.
- 2.8 The transport modelling work demonstrated that diverting some bus routes would allow significant improvements to bus journey times and would address wider network performance issues along the A409 corridor when compared with retaining the existing routes. This was therefore the preferred option. The existing bus stops on the routes will remain in the same locations with only minor variations.
- 2.9 The scheme has a validated cost benefit ratio (BCR) of 7.8. Schemes are normally required to exceed a BCR of 2 to be considered by TfL and so the benefits of this scheme are considered very significant and will have a beneficial impact for bus passengers and for the movement of traffic generally.

Background

- 2.10 The scheme has been under development for over two years and was required to demonstrate a comprehensive business case to TfL to prove the public transport benefits. The funding being offered by TfL is intended for improving bus networks and so the business case had to show positive operating benefits for bus services to justify the proposed changes.
- 2.11 The overall cost of implementing the scheme is estimated at £2.25 million. TfL will fund £1.35 million and the remaining £900k will be funded by the borough as a match fund. A capital bid has been submitted as part of the Capital MTFS refresh process to seek Council match funding to support the delivery of the scheme. The 2020/21 Capital Programme is subject to Cabinet and Council approval in February 2020.
- 2.12 Details of the bus routes in the area and the bus journey time benefits can be seen in appendix B.

Proposed scheme

- 2.13 The proposed scheme layout plans can be seen in Appendix A. The main features of the scheme are as follows:
- The diversion of southbound bus services along a central bus lane in George Gange Way and a new traffic signal junction at George Gange Way / Canning Road. This will allow this part of the A409 corridor to flow more freely and provide a dedicated lane for buses. The new traffic signals will facilitate buses to turn right into the town centre via Canning Road and also provide a dedicated pedestrian crossing phase for pedestrians to cross George Gange Way safely. The possible future

location of a Civic Centre on the corner of this junction will benefit from improved access to buses and a pedestrian crossing facility.

- Canning Road will be made one way towards the High Street and facilitate southbound and west bound buses from the A409 entering the town centre. The existing east / west cycle route will be accommodated on the northern side of the road and a new bus stop located on the southern side.
- The bus stops arrangement outside the Wealdstone Centre, directly opposite each other, will be revised to prevent the current problem with obstruction of through traffic when buses are stopped at both stops at the same time. The southbound bus stop will be relocated to Canning Road in very close proximity to the existing stop. This will improve traffic flow in this part of the High Street.
- The High Street will be made one way between Canning Road and George Gange Way for northbound buses and general traffic. Entry into the High Street from the A409 corridor is currently restricted to general traffic and so this arrangement will have a negligible impact. Provision will be made for a future north / south cycle route that will pass along the western side of the road between Canning Road and Gordon Road. The proposed cycle route is a TfL sponsored initiative that will provide a high specification cycle route between Harrow Weald and Kenton via Wealdstone. It is important that this scheme and the proposed cycle route integrate effectively.
- All of the traffic signals on the A409 north / south corridor currently operate independently which is very inefficient for controlling traffic flow and movement. The scheme will introduce a SCOOT urban traffic control system which will link, control and optimise the performance of all the traffic signals to improve the overall throughput of traffic and reduce congestion and delay.
- Palmerston Road will be made one way for traffic entering the town from the A409 corridor. The surface level and multi storey car parks entrances and exits will operate in the same way as existing. Bus standing bays will be provided in Palmerston Road and improve the current situation in which there is no bus standing provision available in the town. Bus stands allow buses to lay over for short-term parking to allow driver changes and driver rest breaks which are important for ensuring the efficient and effective operation of bus services.
- The High Street public realm between George Gange Way and the Station will be refurbished with wider footways narrower carriageways, new street lighting and street furniture and revised arrangements for parking and loading. This will be very similar to the improvements made in Station Road in Harrow

Town Centre some years ago. This will transform the appearance of the street and provide better conditions for people passing through and shopping in the High Street.

- The station entrance area will be redesigned to provide more space for pedestrians and create an enhanced public realm that will create an attractive gateway into the town from the station.

2.14 The scheme is expected to have significant benefits for the town centre and the local economy. In particular the main benefits will be as follows:

- Faster more pleasant and reliable journeys for bus passengers and an increase in the uptake of bus travel locally.
- A greater potential to expand bus services to meet the demands of a growing population.
- An increase in bus patronage and pedestrian footfall in the High Street shopping area that will provide a boost for the local economy with a potentially beneficial impact on trade for local businesses.
- A general improvement of the movement of traffic on the A409 corridor (High Street / George Gange Way).
- An improved street environment and public realm along the High Street that will encourage more walking and cycling activity in the area and provide a more pleasant experience for people spending time in the centre and develop a sense of civic pride in the town.
- An opportunity to design out any crime from the street environment where possible in collaboration with the Police and other key stakeholders.

Public consultation

2.15 There has already been some prior engagement with regard to the outline scheme. A presentation to the Wealdstone Action Group was organised in September 2019 and provided some information about the proposal and an opportunity to explain the purpose and intentions of the scheme. This was well received at the meeting. The Economic Development team have also shared details of the scheme subsequently with the Wealdstone Traders Association.

2.16 The scheme forms an integral part of the wider Liveable Neighbourhood aspiration and bid for Wealdstone. Details of the scheme are available on the Council's online engagement portal setting out the Liveable Neighbourhood proposals. The portal was used to seek feedback on the ideas for a Liveable Neighbourhood.

2.17 Following the decision of TfL to endorse the scheme it is now proposed to undertake a more comprehensive engagement exercise with the public early in the New Year. This will include:

- A 6 week consultation using the Council’s online portal including a consultation leaflet and questionnaire.
- Organising a number of public exhibitions to provide an opportunity for more detailed information to be provided and direct contact with officers to answer queries about the scheme.
- Specific engagement with the Wealdstone Traders Association and Wealdstone Action Group.
- Engagement with local ward councillors.

2.18 TfL have indicated that they will undertake consultation jointly with the Council with regard to the proposed diversion of bus services. This will require joint branding and coordination of the consultation material to be used.

2.19 The proposed consultation and engagement process has been discussed and agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement & Accessibility.

Next steps

2.20 The scheme provides a significant investment for Wealdstone and will transform the physical environment of the High Street, provide better bus services and provide a boost to the local economy.

2.21 The table below provides an indicative time table for the implementation of the scheme:

Stage	Timetable
Public consultation (online consultation portal) and public exhibitions (6 weeks)	Jan - Feb 2020
Review public consultation results and decide final scheme	Late Feb 2020
Statutory consultation (traffic regulation orders) – 3 weeks	Mar 2020
Review statutory consultation results and agree final traffic regulation orders	Apr 2020
Implement scheme	Apr 2020 – Mar 2021

2.22 It is recommended that Cabinet authorise the Portfolio Holder for Environment, following consultation with the Corporate Director, to review the outcome of public consultation and statutory consultation and implement the scheme.

Staffing/workforce

- 2.23 The scheme will be project-managed using existing staff resources within the Traffic, Highways & Asset Management Service and also utilising the resources of the Council's engaged transport consultant and highways contractor.

Performance Issues

- 2.24 Implementing this scheme will help to meet the borough outcome indicator targets identified in the Transport Local Implementation Plan (LIP). The shorter term targets in the LIP are as follows:

Objective	Borough target	Year
<u>Overarching mode share aim – changing the transport mix</u>		
Londoners' trips to be on foot, by cycle or by public transport	50%	2021
Healthy Streets and healthy people		
<u>Outcome 1: London's streets will be healthy and more Londoners will travel actively</u>		
Londoners to do at least the 20 minutes of active travel they need to stay healthy each day	34%	2021
Londoners have access to a safe and pleasant cycle network	10%	2021
<u>Outcome 2: London's streets will be safe and secure</u>		
Deaths and serious injuries from all road collisions to be eliminated from our streets	38KSIs	2022
<u>Outcome 3: London's streets will be used more efficiently and have less traffic on them</u>		
Reduce the volume of traffic in London.	568 million annual vehicle km miles	2021
Reduce the number of freight trips in the central London morning peak.	N/A	N/A
Reduce car ownership in London.	100,600	2021
<u>Outcome 4: London's streets will be clean and green</u>		
Reduced CO ₂ emissions.	124,800 tonnes	2021
Reduced NO _x emissions.	210 tonnes	2021
Reduced particulate emissions.	43 tonnes PM ₁₀ 21 tonnes PM _{2.5}	2021
A good public transport experience		
<u>Outcome 5: The public transport network will meet the needs of a growing London</u>		
More trips by public transport - 14-15 million trips made by public transport every day by 2041.	125,000 trips	2021
<u>Outcome 6: Public transport will be safe, affordable and accessible to all</u>		
Everyone will be able to travel spontaneously and independently.	5 mins	2041
<u>Outcome 7: Journeys by public transport will be pleasant, fast and reliable</u>		
Bus journeys will be quick and reliable, an attractive alternative to the car	11.5mph	2021
New homes and jobs		
<u>Outcome 8: Active, efficient and sustainable travel will be the best options in new developments</u>		
<u>Outcome 9: Transport investment will unlock the delivery of new homes and jobs</u>		

Delivery of Section 106 agreements	100%	2021
CIL funding allocations used for strategic transport initiatives	100%	2021

Environmental Implications

- 2.25 The third transport LIP underwent a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). This indicated that there are environmental benefits from delivering the policies and programme of investment included. The main benefits on the population are in improving air quality and human health. No negative environmental issues were identified as part of the SEA.
- 2.26 The proposed scheme fully accords with the principles of LIP3 and will encourage modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport and promote healthier lifestyles, reduce accidents and improve road safety, reduce congestion, pollution and improve air quality.

Ward Councillors' comments

- 2.27 Ward councillors have been briefed with regard to the Wealdstone Transport Study and the major transport infrastructure projects recommended, including the town centre scheme detailed in this report. Regular reports have also been provided to the Traffic & Road Safety Advisory Panel. Ward councillors have provided feedback during these briefings.

Risk Management Implications

- 2.28 There are risks to delivery of the scheme associated with public acceptance of the scheme, impact on bus passengers during changes to bus services, ensuring a safe and serviceable design and a safe method of construction that mitigates hazards to the public. These risks are addressed through the established risk management procedures within the Traffic, Highways & Asset Management Service.
- 2.29 Full public consultation and engagement will be undertaken to ensure that public acceptance of the scheme is supported by a majority of the community affected.
- 2.30 Under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 a design risk assessment is required as a part of developing the scheme to assess any potential risks from proposed changes to the street environment in terms of construction, future operation and maintenance. As far as practicable, risks will be designed out of the proposed scheme.
- 2.31 At the implementation stage the Council's client team and highways contractor will develop a construction health and safety plan to ensure that any risks associated with building the scheme are fully mitigated and that there is a clear plan with construction phasing and sequencing in place which ensures public safety.

- 2.32 There will be on-going engagement with TfL in order to coordinate the diversion of bus routes and the sequencing of construction work on the highway to ensure that bus passengers are not adversely disrupted by the works.

Procurement Implications

- 2.33 Where needed, consultants and contractors will be procured to deliver some proposals. This is business as usual. The work will be procured in line with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Legal Implications

- 2.34 The proposed amendments to traffic and parking restrictions will require the appropriate legal process to be undertaken before they can be physically implemented.
- 2.35 Subject to statutory consultation requirements, the Council has powers to amend the operational provisions for traffic and parking restrictions under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, The Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 and The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016.

Financial Implications

- 2.36 The town centre and bus improvement scheme has received £300k of funding in 2019/20 from Transport for London to take forward public consultation and detailed design of the scheme. This work is on-going.
- 2.37 The cost of implementing the scheme in 2020/21 is £2.25 million. TfL will fund £1.35 million and a match fund of £900k will be required from Harrow to undertake scheme implementation. The funding for the construction phase is approved in principle by TfL subject to acceptable public consultation and a match fund. A bid for Community Infrastructure Levy of £900k is being made as part of the 2020/21 capital MTFS process. The 2020/21 capital programme is subject to Cabinet and Council approval in February 2020.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

- 2.38 LIP3 underwent an Equalities Impact Assessment and the Council has had due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it as required under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.39 It is considered that the proposed scheme will be of benefit to all and particularly the groups in the table below:

Protected characteristic	Benefit
Gender	Mothers with young children and elderly people generally benefit most from schemes that prioritise walking, cycling and public transport because improved road layouts and public realm provide improved safety, security and convenience and improved access to the town centre and facilities.
Disability	People with physical and visual impairment generally benefit most from schemes that prioritise walking and public transport because improved road layouts and public realm provide ease of access with fewer obstructions, improved safety, security and convenience to access the town centre and facilities.
Age	Young children and elderly people generally benefit most from schemes that prioritise walking, cycling and public transport because improved road layouts and public realm provide improved safety, security and convenience and improved access to the town centre and facilities. A reduction in the influx of traffic into an area will reduce particulate emissions and air pollution, to which children are particularly sensitive.

Council Priorities

2.40 The following table show the key inputs from the strategy that will support the Council priorities.

Council Priorities	Parking strategy input
Building a Better Harrow	The town centre scheme and improved bus services will help the Council's regeneration programme by supporting population growth and facilitating the increasing number of journeys on the transport network
Supporting Those Most in Need	The improved public realm will reduce obstructions to walking journeys to the town centre and public transport connections particularly for the mobility and visually impaired.
Protecting Vital Public Services	The scheme will support healthier lifestyles which will improve public health and the burden on health services and social care.
Delivering a Strong local Economy for All	The improvements to the public realm and public transport services will support the local economy and help to make the town centre a more pleasant place to spend

	time in and to do shopping.
Modernising Harrow Council	Transport control systems will be modernised with the latest traffic signal technology to improve the performance of the road network and improve road safety.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jessie Man	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the * Chief Financial Officer
Date: 04/12/19		

Name: Patrick Kelly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the * Monitoring Officer
Date: 03/12/19		

Name: Nimesh Mehta	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the * Head of Procurement
Date: 03/12/19		

Name: Paul Walker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Corporate Director
Date: 17/12/19		

Ward Councillors notified:	YES
EqIA carried out:	YES, as a part of LIP3
EqIA cleared by:	Dave Corby, Community - Equality Task Group (DETG) Chair

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: David Eaglesham, Head of Traffic, Highways & Asset Management, 020 8424 1500, david.eaglesham@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Harrow Transport Local Implementation Plan (LIP3) -

<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/downloads/file/26428/harrow-transport-local-implementation-plan>

Wealdstone Transport Study (2017) -

<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/downloads/file/26492/wealdstone-transport-study-report>

Call-In Waived by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	NO
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