

Meeting:	Traffic And Road Safety Advisory Panel
Date:	Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2004
Subject:	Petts Hill Bridge – Scheme Design & Consultation Results
Responsible Officer:	Interim Head of Environment & Transport
Contact Officer:	Hanif Islam
Portfolio Holder:	Environment & Transport
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1

## **Section 1: Summary**

### **Decision Required**

To recommend to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport that:

1. The proposed scheme and junction layout as described in the design report in Appendix A be approved for implementation.
2. Authority be given to officers to take all necessary steps under Section 6 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, to introduce a bus lane at the Northolt Road / Alexandra Avenue junction, subject to the consideration of any formal objections and that the details of the order making be delegated to officers.

### **Reason for report**

To enable officers to progress to scheme implementation.

## **Benefits**

Improved bus priority at the junction of Northolt Road and Alexandra Avenue by completion of bus priority measures in the area and removal of pinch point at Petts Hill bridge.

Improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes beneath the Chiltern Line at Petts Hill, particularly segregating vehicular traffic from pedestrians and cyclists.

Enhancements to the operation of traffic signals at Northolt Road and Alexandra Avenue junction, including provision for pedestrians.

Enhancements to the urban area of the Petts Hill bridge.

## **Cost of Proposals**

The total cost estimate at present is £4.32million to be funded by Transport for London (TfL). To date, TfL have approved the scheme and £500,000 for spending in 2004/05 and committed to a further £2.48million for 2005/06.

## **Risks**

Construction mechanism needs to be agreed with Network Rail. Network Rail's preferred mechanism is unlikely to be acceptable in terms of cost and land acquisition requirements.

Land Agreements and track possession needs to be agreed with Network Rail.

Recent revisions to the cost estimate have meant that the total scheme cost has increased by £836,000 over the original cost estimate of £3.48million. Transport for London has not yet formally approved this increase.

The scheme requires land acquisition on both Harrow and Ealing sides. Difficulties in this area could delay the scheme.

## **Implications if recommendations rejected**

Implementation of the scheme likely to be delayed. Committed funding from TfL would be at risk.

## **Section 2: Report**

### **2.1 Brief History**

The Petts Hill railway bridge carries the Chiltern Line over the road on the boundary between Harrow and Ealing, immediately south of the junction of the A312 (Northolt Road) and A4090 (Alexandra Avenue). It is well known as a 'bottleneck' for all traffic and has been identified as a source of delay to buses because of the restricted width of the carriageway under the bridge. However, remedial works constituted too big a scheme to be carried out within the limited financial and time frames set for TfL's London Bus Initiative.

Harrow has subsequently taken the lead in promoting a major improvement scheme and has obtained funding from TfL to progress a joint scheme with Ealing Council over the three years 2004/05 – 2006/07. Detailed design of the highway layout has recently been completed. Enabling works (public utilities diversions) have started on site. Actual scheme implementation is scheduled to start on site in Spring 2005 and finish in Summer 2006.

The objectives of the scheme are to achieve:

- Improved bus journey time and reliability;
- Improved pedestrian facilities;
- Improved cycle facilities;
- Local environmental improvement;
- Exploration of the potential for reducing delays to general traffic.

TfL's own consultants have produced a business case, which demonstrates significant benefits for the associated cost. The benefits include journey time savings for all traffic including buses.

Transport for London Bus Priority Team has given its support for the scheme. The London Borough of Ealing is also committed to the project.

The proposed works include:

- A new bore through the railway embankment each side of the existing bridge to provide for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Approach paths;
- Reallocation of the space released underneath the bridge to provide a third traffic lane;
- Junction modifications at Alexandra Avenue including a northbound bus lane on Northolt Road on the approach to the signals.

The proposed scheme introduces controlled pedestrian crossings at the junction of Northolt Road with Alexandra Avenue. These will enhance the safety and comfort of pedestrians crossing the junction.

In terms of traffic movement through the junction, the proposals retain the existing phasing of opposing Northolt Road – Petts Hill traffic flows running simultaneously followed by the Alexandra Avenue flows. However, the proposals introduce revised timings to assist pedestrian movement across each approach.

General traffic flow and congestion under the bridge will be improved as a result of a third traffic lane. Northbound bus flow is likely to be improved considerably, as buses will be able to utilise the less congested nearside lane to enter the short bus lane at the stop line. However, particularly in peak hours there is unlikely to be a significant improvement in traffic flow and congestion, as the increased capacity will be offset by increased time for pedestrians crossing and also by general traffic growth.

Some 8 to 10 parking spaces will be lost in the service road as a result of the carriageway widening at the Alexandra Avenue / Northolt Road junction. This loss will need to be addressed as part of the South Harrow Stage 3 Controlled Parking Zone scheduled to commence in Spring 2005.

Further details of the proposals are included in the design report in Appendix A.

Approval of the layout design is sought to enable officers to progress the scheme to implementation. The report in Appendix A contains the proposed design of the junction and explains the design approach. A copy of the plan showing the scheme requiring approval is in the report in Appendix A. A full size colour plan has been deposited in the Members' Library.

Photomontages of the proposal are included in Appendix B.

Authority is also sought to advertise draft Traffic Orders for the short bus lane adjacent to the island on Northolt Road / Alexandra Avenue junction as shown in the report in Appendix A.

A Cabinet report will shortly be prepared requesting approval to enter in to a Boundary Road Agreement with Ealing as well as authority to acquire third party land to enable the scheme to go ahead as currently designed.

## 2.2 Options considered

The current scheme has been promoted following advice from TfL that they would not be able to fund the preferred option, which is to install a new bridge at Petts Hill spanning over four traffic lanes. Transport for London has recently reconsidered the Council's preferred option, but although the Council has not received a formal decision on this, early indications suggest that TfL, as before, will not be prepared to fund this option due to the high costs.

## 2.3 Consultation

Consultation has been carried out with local residents of both Harrow and Ealing. The consultation leaflet was posted out on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2004 mainly to postcode districts UB5 4 (Ealing) and HA2 8 (Roxeth Ward) covering approximately 11000 properties. The report in Appendix C summarises the results. The majority of respondents were in favour of the scheme. However, some key issues were raised which are presented here for ease of reference:

- **Bus Lanes:** Bus lanes are the cause of traffic congestion and should be removed - Complaints about bus lanes is a long standing issue,

particularly in the Northolt Area, and is not one that can be addressed by this project, although it does increase the extent of the bus lane north bound. The rationale of this scheme is to improve bus priority. TfL's Bus Priority Team is funding the scheme. The principle of providing bus priority and bus lanes is consistent with the Council's transport strategy.

- **Flooding under the bridge:** Resolve the flooding problem - The drainage under the bridge will be improved by the scheme but this is no guarantee that it will solve the problem that is likely to be caused by surcharging sewers into which the highway drainage discharges.
- **Traffic Issues:** There were a number of different issues relating to traffic primarily saying that congestion will increase, the scheme should address wider congestion issues, lighting phases should be altered and a filter lane for right turners into Alexandra Avenue should be installed - General traffic flow and congestion under the bridge is likely to be improved as a result of a third traffic lane. However, there is unlikely to be any significant changes in traffic flow or congestion through the Alexandra Avenue / Northolt Road junction as increased stop line capacity will be counter balanced by improvements to pedestrian crossing facilities. Northbound bus flows will be improved.
- **Safety and Security:** Residents are concerned that the underpasses will attract street crime and they should be well lit - The concerns for safety and security are well understood and the scheme has been designed in consultation with the Met Police Crime Prevention Design Team and their observations and suggestions have been taken on board including CCTV and high lighting levels.

Officers have informed consultees of the outcome of the consultation by means of a leaflet drop.

Ealing officers are currently putting a Cabinet report together to advise Members of the consultation results and to confirm Members commitment to the project.

The Harrow Public Transport Users Association has been consulted and fully supports the scheme as being a positive and worthwhile scheme to assist buses.

The scheme has received strong support from TfL.

A public meeting on the scheme was held at Welldon Park Middle School on the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2004. This was well received and gave local residents an opportunity to talk about the scheme and discuss any issues.

Representations have been received from the Chair of Danemead Grove and Petts Hill Residents Association based in Ealing objecting to the current scheme and wishing to see the implementation of the Council's 'preferred option', which is to install a new bridge at Petts Hill spanning over four traffic lanes (see also para 2.2). A copy of the letter from the residents association to the Leader of the Council is attached at Appendix D.

## 2.4 Financial Implications

The scheme is to be funded by TfL who have committed £2.98million for spending in years 2004/2005 and 2005/2006. Approval from TfL for the remaining £1.34million is still being sought. An announcement from TfL is expected in November 2004.

## 2.5 Legal Implications

Traffic Regulation Orders to provide a 'Bus Lane' as shown in the report in Appendix A can be made under Section 6 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, subject to the consideration of any formal objections.

A Boundary Road Agreement with London Borough of Ealing needs to be finalised before any works within Ealing is carried out. Land Agreement with Network Rail needs to be finalized before any work on the embankments is carried out. Details of these will be outlined in a Cabinet report.

## 2.6 Equalities Impact

The proposals seek to promote movement of all road users and the designs ensure that current conditions are improved upon.

Concerns have been raised about security through the pedestrian/cycle passages. These have been dealt with in the design by ensuring that these passages are short, wide and well lit with CCTV cameras and approved by the Metropolitan Police Crime Prevention Design Team.

## **Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents**

### Appendices

Appendix A: Scheme design report

Appendix B: Photomontages of proposed scheme

Appendix C: Consultation response report

Appendix D: Letter from Danemead Grove and Petts Hill Residents Association