

Excerpt from Minutes of the meeting of Scrutiny Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee held on 12 September 2017

34/17 Fiveways Croydon - A review of the design proposals subject to public Consultation

The Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment gave the apologies for the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment and attended in his place.

The Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment informed the Committee that he lived near the Fiveways Junction and was acutely aware of the issues suffered; including delays for motorists and the dangerous conditions for cyclists, pedestrians and motorcyclists. It was agreed that these issues would worsen over the coming years and that change was necessary, however the Council's position was that a road widening option was favoured over a fly-over above Duppas Hill Park and maintaining the Waddon Hotel. While improvement works to the area had been consulted on previously in 2015, the previous consultation had not proposed any improvements to the Fiveways junction. It was stated by the Deputy Cabinet Member that the current consultation proposal had taken into account the Council's view and Transport for London (TfL) was thanked for conducting a thorough consultation process.

The Deputy Cabinet Member highlighted to the Committee that the Council's preferred option of building a new bridge next to the current bridge would minimise disruption, and the proposal to change the junction to four-ways would improve traffic flow and safety. While these were outlined to be improvements it was noted that scope remained for the scheme to be further improved, particular for cyclists.

Thomas Holmes of TfL provided the Committee with a presentation which outlined the difficulties of the junction and recognised that the A23 was a strategic route which acted as a bypass to central Croydon. Furthermore, the importance of the link to the surrounding towns of Wallington and Carshalton was recognised.

It was stated that TfL noted that Fiveways was a strategic junction in south London, but was a hostile environment in particular for pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists, and would only worsen with the anticipated growth that Croydon would experience in the coming years. In addition, TfL recognised that the bridge over the railway line needed to be replaced by 2023 as it was coming to the end of its useful life.

The key project objectives were outlined to the Committee as increasing traffic capacity, reducing journey time, upgrading the pedestrian environment, improving cycle routes, and enhancing the 'place' function to develop Waddon as a local centre. In line with the draft Mayor's Transport Strategy there had been a focus on the healthy streets approach, and the proposed scheme had been measured with the healthy streets factors and was considered to meet over half.

The Committee were informed that replacing a bridge over a railway line was a difficult procedure so TfL were looking to make the process as simple as possible, and as such they were proposing a new bridge alongside the

existing bridge which was anticipated to minimise disruption. However, it was noted that building the new bridge would require the acquisition of two commercial properties.

The proposals further sought to realign the road layout which would require the acquisition of a residential block, however would increase the length of time when the lights were green traffic and pedestrians. Furthermore the proposals included making Epsom Road two ways and introducing step cycle tracks in both directions.

TfL, it was stated, was looking to provide more green space and seating wherever possible within the scheme which would improve the pedestrian environment, including the planting of 30 additional trees in the area. In addition, improvement to cycling infrastructure were proposed including new cycling parking and advanced stop lines.

Councillor Buttinger left the meeting at 7pm.

It was anticipated that there would be additional capacity on Stafford Road which would enable people to do a left turn, and a bus lane along Stafford Road would be introduced to facilitate the movement of sustainable forms of transport.

While the deadline for consultation responses was 18 September, TfL stated they were happy to relax the deadline to receive responses from the Committee as part of the consultation. Once all responses had been received they would be reviewed and it was anticipated that a revised scheme would be released at the end of 2017.

TfL stated that it was felt that the proposals supported the council's aim to develop the Waddon area and recognised that it was not an easy problem to solve but that balance of needs had been sought. It was further stated that it hoped that the proposals could be improved in light of the consultation responses.

Mr Cheeswright, Secretary of the Stafford Road Action Committee, addressed the Committee stating that at least 20 local residents were totally opposed to the proposals. It was strongly suggested that no improvements to the junction would be experienced until the Experimental Realignment Scheme was removed as the current traffic light phasing did not align with traffic movements. Mr Cheeswright further called for Stafford Road to be left as it was and the proposals for parking bays to be removed to be scraped as local residents used them.

The Stafford Road Action Committee further requested TfL noted the statement of traffic movements which had been undertaken in 2011. In conclusion, Mr Chesswright stated he would rate the Stafford Road proposals as one out of ten only as the scheme did not address the issues that were experienced by local residents.

Mr Cooper, Croydon Cycling Campaign, stated that he was also a resident of Waddon and a cyclist. Mr Cooper drew the Committees attention to figures that suggested that overall traffic in the area was down 16% and over Waddon Bridge was down by 15% in the last 15 years, however demand for cycling was up despite the dangers posed by the junction.

It was stated that a key change to the proposals would be at the junction of Epsom Road and Duppas Hill, which would require cyclists to cross fast flowing traffic to remain in the cycle lane. It was suggested that the solution

was to have a two way cycle lane on the station side which would create a safe route into town.

With regards to the bridge, Mr Cooper noted that cycle lanes would be provided, but not in the section after the bridge and into the junction and it was suggested that there was space available that would enable cycle lanes to be provided in both directions that would enable residents to safely cycle to Waddon Leisure Centre safely. Mr Cooper concluded that it was important to provide safe cycle options across the junction to enable cyclists to feel safer. In response, TfL stated that the traffic data from the Department for Transport was that over the past five years demand had increased in the area. However, the suggestion that the cycle lanes on Epsom Road be moved to both be on station side would be reviewed as it the aim of TfL to improve cycle movement in the area.

With regards to the north/south cycle links on the A23, it was stated that it was TfL's policy to link cycle lanes to longer routes and there were no plans, at the time, to have a north/south route. Furthermore, a road safety audit had concluded that a merge location was not acceptable if there was a cycle lane on A23.

TfL further stated that due to limited highway space it would not be possible to have a dedicated bus lane, cycle lane and two lanes of traffic on Stafford Road. As such, a judgment call was required and with around 1,000 people per hour using buses through this junction it was decided that a bus lane was a more pertinent use of the highway space.

The Committee raised concerns that the omission of a north/south cycle route fulfilled the project objectives. In light of many people wanting to complete short cycle journeys, such as to the leisure centre, school, the station, and McDonalds, it was imperative that safe routes were provided otherwise people would cycle on the pavement. Concerns were further raised that many of those who would wish to cycle short routes were young people and it was the responsibility of TfL and the council to ensure safe routes were available. In response to Member concerns, TfL stated that if a person did not feel safe cycling on the roads then they should not. It was important that people cycled only when they felt safe. While TfL wanted to encourage cycling and introduce segregated lanes, a balance was required when there was limited highway space.

The Chair noted that within the proposals being consulted on there was not sufficient space, however stated that if a small slither of land from the Morrisons site was purchased then sufficient space would be created to provide a safe cycle route. The TfL representative stated that he would request the Design Team review this suggestion.

Members were informed that step track cycle facilities were at a different level to the carriageway and that introducing signal control at all junctions would ensure that all crossings would have a green man function, which was not the current case.

The Committee noted that the left turn into Epsom Road would be removed and requested that this be reviewed. In addition, it was suggested that the proposals missed an opportunity to widen Epsom Road with the removal of a electricity sub-station and small blocks of flats to provide for a wider road and development area. Concerns were further raised in regards to accessibility of Waddon Station and a request was made that the scheme was future proofed

in light of possible future works to improve accessibility.

In response, the TfL representative stated that a survey was undertaken over several days and it was found that very few people did make a left turn into Epsom Road however feedback had been received and so it was being reviewed.

In regards to the suggestion of widening Epsom Road, it was stated that the proposals sought to limit the number of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) required. To successfully apply for a CPO it would be required to demonstrate that those properties would need to be removed for the road to be sufficiently wide. In light of the proposal already providing for two way traffic and two way cycle lane it would be difficult to prove. TfL were aware that some people did do drop offs outside the station, however given that there were double red lines it should not be done and it was not proposed to introduce.

Members noted that the report did not include reference to consulting disability groups despite the necessity to ensure places, such as Fiveways, were accessible. It was further noted that the proposals included the relocation of bus stops and concerns were raised that those with disabilities may find it difficult traveling the additional distance to the bus stop.

TfL, in response, stated that they consulted everyone but did not specifically target any groups. The Head of Transport confirmed that no specific groups were consulted in regards to this consultation exercise, however a walkabout had been undertaken the previous Friday and members of Vision Croydon and the council's accessibility team were involved. This walkabout had been very useful for receiving feedback on accessibility and improvements that could be made to the scheme.

The Committee stressed the need to ensure pedestrians and cyclists were kept apart from the traffic and stated that painted cycle lanes were not sufficient as motorists often intruded in such lanes.

Mr Cheeswright noted that there had been a number of instances of cyclists using the pavement around Fiveways due to safety concerns, and further raised concerns that the nitrogen dioxide fumes had not been taken into consideration.

Mr Cooper concluded that he was concerned that TfL were looking to spend £100m on a scheme that did not encourage cycling and stressed that painted on cycle lanes were not sufficient. In addition, Mr Cooper went on to raise concerns in regards to advance stop lines which were considered dangerous as they required cyclists to take off quickly and move out of the way of traffic so as to not impede traffic flow.

The Deputy Cabinet Member concluded that the Council were keen to ensure that the best scheme was implemented, which included provisions for safe cycling. In light of the discussion, the Deputy Cabinet Member went onto note that prohibiting a left turn from Stafford Road into Epsom Road would remove the opportunity for station drop-offs and as such suggested a drop-off by Platform 1 may need to be considered ahead of possible future station improvements.

In conclusion, the Chair noted that the Committee was in broad agreement with the aims and that most of the proposals were not contentious as there was broad agreement on realigning the road and the introduction of a new bridge, which would cause less disruption and reduce conflict. Furthermore it was welcomed that the programme had been extended to include the

Fiveways junction and the addition of public realm improvements.

The Committee were encouraged that there would be a review of the cycle lanes on Epsom Road in light of the comments of the Croydon Cycling Campaign, however recognised that there was not an unlimited pot of money for the improvement works.

Members, however, raised concerns that the proposals would lead to conflict between pedestrians and cyclists due to the lack of dedicated cycle facilities on the north/south route and the safety concerns. Due to these concerns it was hoped that TfL would take into consideration the suggestion that some land be purchased from Morrisons to provide for a cycle lane as it was important to take into consideration how cyclists would access Waddon, furthermore the Committee wanted to encourage residents in the local area to use the Waddon Leisure Centre. The Committee further requested that disability groups be given an extended deadline to respond to the consultation to ensure that their views were taken into consideration and that the scheme was as accessible as possible.

In reaching its recommendations, the Committee made the following

CONCLUSIONS:

- That the overall aims of the scheme were recognised and supported;
- That most of the proposals were not contentious and supported; including realigning the road and introduction of a new bridge;
- That the extension of the proposals to include the Fiveways junction was welcomed;
- The improvements to the public realm were supported;
- But that TFL should accept that this section of the A23 is a key part of the Waddon locality, and that Waddon residents, including pedestrians and cyclists use the A23 road and pavements for vital local trips
- And the committee was concerned that the proposals failed to meet all the standards set out in TFL's new policy of Healthy Streets especially the lack of north south segregated cycle paths from Epsom Road southwards.
- That some aspects of the proposals be reviewed to improve cycle provision to ensure segregated local cycle trips and avoid cyclists having to use pavements, which would to the detriments of pedestrians.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Transport for London that:

1. To amend the proposals to ensure needs of local residents, pedestrians and cyclists are taken into account;
2. The cycle lanes on Epsom Road be reviewed to have both cycle lanes on the station side to improve cycle safety;
3. The scheme be reviewed to reduce conflict between cyclists and pedestrians;
4. Consideration be given to how cyclists would travel around Waddon safely, especially young people cycling to school, parks, the station and McDonalds;
5. A dedicated cycle lane north/south be provided south of Epsom Road;
6. The possibility of acquiring land from the Morrisons site be reviewed to provide for these segregated cycle lanes; and

7. Disability groups be approached to participate in the consultation to ensure the final plans are accessible to all.