

Decision Maker: **Environment Portfolio Holder**

For Pre-Decision Scrutiny by the Environment PDS Committee on:

Date: **1st July 2014**

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: **A222 CHISLEHURST COMMON IMPROVEMENTS**

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Chief Officer: Nigel Davies, Executive Director of Environment & Community Services

Ward: Chislehurst

1. Reason for report

In the 2008 report of the Congestion Working Group, the section of the A222 at Chislehurst Common was cited as a pinch point. This report asks the Portfolio Holder to approve funding to enable the development of a proposal to improve the A222 across Chislehurst Common by undertaking a land swap with lesser used roads across the Common. The report identifies approximate development costs and a timetable.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That the Environment Portfolio Holder

2.1 Approves the allocation of up to £60,000 of LIP funding to develop the proposals for improvements on the A222.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
 2. BBB Priority: Quality Environment:
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost: £60k for design
 2. On-going costs: Not Applicable:
 3. Budget head/performance centre: TfL Funding for Congestion Relief
 4. Total current budget for this head: £83k is allocated to this scheme, of which £60k is the uncommitted balance. Up to £570k is available for 2015/16
 5. Source of funding: TfL LIP formula funding 2014/15 and 2015/16
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 3
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: 200 hours
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None:
 2. Call-in: Applicable:
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): approximately 13,000 vehicles use this road every day.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Yes
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: All three Ward Members have given in principle support to the proposed improvements and "land swap".

3. COMMENTARY

Congestion Issue

- 3.1 The A222 across Chislehurst Common is one of the more congested routes in the borough . It is particularly congested in both the morning and afternoon peaks and journey time reliability is poor.
- 3.2 The worst location for congestion is the Centre Common Road/Royal Parade Junction (War Memorial Junction), although the Ashfield Lane and Old Hill/Watts Lane/Prince imperial Road junctions also suffer from congestion. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many drivers “rat run” either through the Common (Ashfield Lane/Prince Imperial Road) or Royal Parade/Watts Lane, in particular to avoid the War Memorial junction.

Development on the Common

- 3.3 The Common is protected land, and the Chislehurst Common Conservators, quite understandably, seek to protect the Common from development. This has meant that previous attempts to make improvements to the junction(s) have not been successful.
- 3.4 To address this issue, a “land swap” is now proposed. There are a number of roads which cross the Common, which either duplicate the function of other roads, or add little to the road network. If traffic could be focused onto one single road, the other roads could be removed and the land returned to the Common. As stated above, this would have little to no impact on traffic, but would significantly improve the amenity of the Common by making two large areas out of 5 smaller ones.
- 3.5 The proposal is, therefore, to replace the Loop Road “X” and the section of Heathfield Road from Ashfield Lane to Centre Common Road with a single carriageway road between Heathfield Road and Prince Imperial Road. Appendix 1 shows the proposed roads to be removed and an indicative location of the replacement road. The actual location of the replacement road would be subject to discussion with the Conservators and other stakeholders.
- 3.6 It is recognised that any designs need to be approved by the Conservators and must be sympathetic to the Common. However, the “land swap” would mean that the Common would still gain more land than would be required for carriageway improvements by a ratio of between 2.5:1 to 3:1.

Potential Junction Improvements and Surveys

- 3.7 The four junctions on the A222 with the worst congestion are still under consideration for improvement. In order to fully understand what the issues are, a traffic survey is being carried out before any decisions are taken on which (if any) junctions should be improved.
- 3.8 Because of the rat-running problem, it is necessary to undertake origin-destination surveys (using cameras equipped with automatic number plate recognition) to fully understand where vehicles are coming from and which routes they are taking, as well as the usual volume and turning counts. The results of the survey would be used to inform the decision on which junctions require the most attention, and also the design of the scheme.
- 3.9 As an example, one potential solution would be the addition of a flare lane at the War Memorial junction to assist turning movements, as initial observations have shown that right hand turning vehicles block traffic wanting to go forward or turn left. The survey would, therefore, show the extent of the problem. However, at this stage, no formal solutions have been designed. The surveys would not cause any disruption to traffic.

- 3.10 The junction improvements would not touch the War Memorial, but could seek to add a staggered pedestrian refuge across the west side of Bromley Road, given the vicinity of the schools. There have been several requests to do so over the years, although the impact on traffic would need to be demonstrably low. The widening should allow the pedestrian facility to be included without detriment to traffic flow.

Drainage

- 3.11 If a scheme were to progress, there are some drainage issues in the area which would need to be addressed. It would be sensible to consider improvements to drainage, again bearing in mind the local environment and the Commons Conservators' requirements.

Consultation

- 3.12 Informal discussions have taken place with Ward Members, Commons Conservators and the Chislehurst Society. All are supportive of the plans being developed further.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The draft Environment Portfolio Plan 2014/17 includes the aim "*Improve the road network and journey times for all users*" and the objective "*Look to decrease congestion and reduce journey times on priority routes, this year focusing on the A222...*" These plans aim to help deliver this objective, focussing on a route highlighted by the Congestion Working Group in 2008.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The A222 project is one of a number of potential Congestion Relief schemes identified within the existing 3 year Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funding programme.
- 5.2 The estimated cost of survey and design work is £60k. This can be funded from the 2014/15 TfL funding for Congestion Relief that has an allocation of £83k set aside for this scheme. An uncommitted balance of £60k is available to meet the initial design costs. Up to £570k is available within the 2015/16 TfL LIP funding programme for Congestion Relief to enable the implementation of the scheme.
- 5.3 Once the initial designs are complete, a further report, complete with estimates, will be brought back for Member consideration prior to any public consultation and implementation.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Development on the Common is protected. The legal status of the proposals would need full investigation during the design stages, should these initial proposals be approved.

Non-Applicable Sections:	7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	LIP funding 2014/15

