

Decision Maker: ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO
HOLDER

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

Date: Thursday 11 March 2021

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: WESTGATE ROAD AND ALBEMARLE ROAD TRAFFIC
MANAGEMENT CHANGES

Contact Officer: Stephen Oliver, Principal Project Manager
Tel: 020 8313 4717 E-mail: Stephen.Oliver@bromley.gov.uk

Chief Officer: Colin Brand, Director of Environment and Public Protection

Ward: Copers Cope

1. Reason for report

This report is to seek approval for the installation of traffic signals on either side of Westgate Road bridge and to retain and modify experimental cycle lanes on Albemarle Road, Beckenham.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That the Portfolio Holder approves:

- 2.1 The installation of traffic signals on either side of Westgate Road bridge and associated changes to traffic management.
- 2.2 The reversion of Albemarle Road back to two directional traffic between St Georges Road and Westgate Road; and the retention a cycle contraflow. The retention of Albemarle Road between Westgate Road as one directional west bound traffic and a segregated cycle contraflow. The retention of Albemarle Road between Downs Bridge Road and Bromley Road as one directional east bound traffic and the retention of a segregated cycle contraflow. Revert traffic priority to Albemarle Road at the junction with St Georges Road. Change traffic priority to Westgate Road at the junction with

Albemarle Road. These works to be completed under an Experimental Traffic Order of the Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

- 2.3 That funding for this work is allocated from the TfL Liveable Neighbourhood budget or a funding stream identified by TFL.
- 2.4 That any changes in detailed design are delegated to the Director of Environment and Public Protection.

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: This project would help protect vulnerable road users.
-

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy: In line with Borough Transport Plan: LIP3
 2. BBB Priority: Quality Environment Safe Bromley Supporting Independence Healthy Bromley :
-

Financial

1. Cost of proposal: £98,453
 2. Ongoing costs: £1,900 p.a.
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Capital Programme – Liveable Neighbourhoods
 4. Total budget for this head: £200k (subject to capital programme amendment)
 5. Source of funding: TfL Liveable Neighbourhoods Grant
-

Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 1
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: 60
-

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Non-Statutory - Government Guidance
 2. Call-in: Applicable
-

Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: The scheme would be implemented by the Council's term highways contractor.
-

Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): All local road users
-

Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Ward Councillors were consulted on the proposals on the 16th December at a Shortlands Friendly Village Liveable Neighbourhood project board and have been consulted on all consultation material.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Ward Members have historically supported the experimental scheme and will bring further comments to the PDS.

3. COMMENTARY

3.1 Background

3.2 As part of TFLs Cycleways programme, a cycle route was proposed between Lower Sydenham and Bromley Town Centre. (TFL Strategic Cycle Analysis has identified this route within the top 10% of routes in the categorisation of potential cycle demand in areas where there is a high propensity to cycle). This route received support from the Environment and Community Services Policy PDS in March 2018. A subsequent TFL funded high level feasibility study by appointed consultants Waterman identified the bridge on Westgate Road as one of the major obstacles to developing this route. This was because of the poor visibility site lines for cyclists and the width of the bridge being insufficient to introduce any form of segregation or shared surface

3.3 In July 2020 TFL awarded London Streetspace Plan funding for the introduction of cycle lanes on Albemarle Road between Bromley Road and St Georges Road Beckenham. The cycle lanes were completed in November 2020 under an Experimental Traffic Order.

3.4 In order to install the cycle lanes, Albemarle Road was filtered with wooden planters and made one directional to traffic (west to east between Downs Bridge Road and Bromley Road and east to west between Downs Bridge Road and St Georges Road). Pre-implementation consultation identified community concerns that the changes would increase the number of vehicles utilising Westgate Road bridge and consequently increasing conflicts between motorists. These conflicts have been recognised as a long-standing problem before the cycle lanes were installed. In addition, consultation revealed concerns about increased driving times between Southend Road and Bromley Road for motorists travelling east. In response to these concerns an Experimental Traffic Order was issued to make the bridge one directional to traffic travelling from The Avenue to Albemarle Road (north to south).

3.5 The current experimental temporary arrangement has proven successful in reducing traffic conflicts between motorists and has improved journey times from Southend Road towards Bromley Road. However anecdotal traffic monitoring indicates that the changes have increased peak time traffic levels on parts of Bromley Road and at the junction of Albemarle Road and High Street Beckenham. In addition, cyclists cannot travel north across the bridge without dismounting.

3.6 In December 2020 TFL allocated £200k towards the Shortlands Friendly Village Liveable Neighbourhood. TFL have confirmed that these funds can also fund improvements to the London Streetspace Plan projects to promote walking and cycling. On the 16th December 2020 The Shortlands Friendly Village Liveable Neighbourhood project board, comprising relevant Ward Members and the Portfolio Holder, approved the principle of spending some of the funding on the design and implementation of changes to Westgate Road in the section where the bridge is, with the installation of traffic signals as an option.

3.7 The project team were subsequently instructed to refine the Albemarle cycle scheme and to consult the public and stakeholders on a revised experimental cycle scheme in conjunction with the installation of traffic signals on Westgate Road bridge. (It is considered that TFL funding is unlikely to be approved for a standalone signalised scheme if the changes are not part of a wider strategic cycle route).

3.8 Appendix 1 is a revised proposal for Albemarle Road. The main changes from the currently installed experimental scheme are:

- Albemarle Road, between Westgate Road and St Georges Road will be reverted back to, two directional traffic but retaining the east bound cycle contraflow. (West bound cyclist will ride 'with' the traffic in a 3m wide carriageway).

- Traffic priority will be reverted to Albemarle Road at the junction of with St Georges Road.
- Traffic priority will be changed to Westgate Road at the junction with Albemarle Road

Albemarle Road between Downs Bridge Road and Westgate Road will remain one directional west and between Downs Bridge Road and Bromley Road one directional, east. The cycle contraflows on both sections will remain as will on street parking arrangements.

- 3.9 Monitoring of the Albemarle Road cycle scheme has not yet been carried out. Anecdotal comments from some residents have indicated that Albemarle Road west of Westgate Road has seen reduced traffic and traffic speeds and an improvement to amenity to residents, pedestrians and cyclists. On street car parking has been regularised on the southern side of the street only and no residents have subsequently raised issues about parking problems. Balanced against these benefits is a negative impact of some residents having slightly longer vehicle journeys travelling east.
- 3.10 Anecdotal evidence from other residents has indicated that the experimental changes have increased traffic on parts of Bromley Road and St Georges Road. It is anticipated that reverting Albemarle Road to two directional traffic between St Georges Road and Westgate Road will reduce the existing traffic levels on these roads. Some residents identified traffic speeds on Albemarle Road as a long-standing problem. The proposals will reduce carriageway running lanes and it is anticipated that this will reduce traffic speeds compared to those prior to the changes.
- 3.11 Due to the short spend programme and the late confirmation of the funding by TFL all the details of the proposals have not been completed for inclusion in this report. The consultation summary will be provided as a late addition.

3.12 Consultation and engagement

- 3.13 Extensive consultation has been carried out in the Beckenham area about the proposals. Initially this has been done by letter drop to the properties indicated in Appendix 2. The letter drops publicised an on-line link to a questionnaire that requested residents choose a preferred option between:

a/ The introduction of traffic signals on Westgate Road bridge and the cycle scheme in Appendix 1.

b/ The complete removal of the Albemarle Road scheme and Westgate Road bridge reverted back to the previous traffic management arrangement.

In addition interested parties who have previously corresponded about the scheme are contained on a data base have been notified of the proposals.

- 3.14 Local residents' associations, nearby schools and other identified stakeholders have also been notified of the proposals.

Early responses have been received from:

- The Police support the changes to directional traffic flows on Albemarle Road as it would improve emergency response time and stop the incidents of motorists attempting to enter Albemarle Road from St Georges Road. They support the one-way system on Westgate Road over the bridge or traffic signals on the bridge, as the narrow bridge was previously causing a number of minor road rage issues over it. Since it has become one way they have noted the number of near miss collisions has dropped immensely as vehicles used to approach the bridge at speed.

- St Marys RC Primary School have stated that “*Despite initial teething problems, the current system has worked well for the school. If the Westgate Bridge is to become two-way again, traffic lights would be welcome as that is a flashpoint at particular times of the day*”.
- Bromley Cyclists objected to Albemarle Road between Westgate Road and St Georges reverting to two directional traffic as it would extend the carriageway ‘press’ for cyclists and motorists travelling west. For Westgate Road bridge they preferred that it be filtered to stop all motor traffic. If signals are installed, they requested that a “pedestrian phase” be added.

3.15 A summary of the full consultation returns will be reported before or at Committee.

4.1 Estimated Costings

TFL signalling costs	£35,808
Civil engineering works	£29,145
Network Rail costs	£ 5,000
Total cost for Westgate Road bridge signalling	£69,953
Maintenance cost of traffic signals for 15 years	£28,500
Total Estimated Cost	£98,453

5 IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

5.1 The proposals will improve the safety of cyclists on Albemarle Road and crossing Westgate Road bridge. An Equalities Impact Assessment Statement did not identify any vulnerable groups who would be negatively impacted against.

6 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Improved cycling infrastructure on Albemarle Road and the introduction of traffic signals to Westgate Road bridge supports the Council’s objectives set out in “Building a Better Bromley” by:

- Improving the quality of the environment.
- Supporting children and young people.
- Improving Safety and Health in Bromley.

The proposed improvements also support the objectives of the Bromley Third Implementation Plan 2019 which identifies the Lower Sydenham to Bromley Quietway as a Borough objective.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 A further £200,000 has recently been awarded by TfL for 2020/21 to progress aspects of the ongoing Liveable Neighbourhoods scheme. The estimated total cost of this scheme, including 15 years maintenance of traffic signals, is £98,453 and will be met from this awarded grant. The Capital Programme will need amending to reflect the increase in expenditure on the scheme.

8 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

The project will be implemented from existing staff resources.

9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The one way system and associated measures were introduced by experimental traffic orders that were made on 15th September and 1st December 2020. The Experimental Orders were made under section 9 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, in conjunction with The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. Notice of the making of the Orders were published in both the News Shopper and London Gazette on the 23rd September 2020 for the Albemarle Rd scheme and on the 9th December 2020 for the Westgate Road scheme. Any changes approved will be made under new experimental traffic orders.

10 PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct procurement implications as the scheme is to be implemented by the Council's term highways contractor and by TfL who are the traffic signals contractor for all signals in London. This is provided for by the inclusion of this type of work, within an EU compliant tender, and therefore there is not a requirement to tender this work separately.

Non-Applicable Sections:	[List non-applicable sections here]
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	[Title of document and date]