



# Albemarle Road / Westgate Road

## Traffic Management

Consultation report - March 2021

## **Executive summary**

### **Introduction**

As part of the DfT's Gear Change policy, the London Borough of Bromley installed an experimental traffic management scheme on Albemarle Road and Westgate Road. The experimental scheme included the installation of a cycleway in both directions along Albemarle Road, with the West to East direction (Beckenham to Bromley) section of the cycleway being segregated. Albemarle Road was also made one directional to motor vehicle traffic from East to West (Bromley to Beckenham). A section of Westgate Road was also changed to be one directional, over the railway bridge, from north to south (The Avenue to Albemarle Road). The conflicts of drivers coming nose-to-nose on the bridge has long been a matter for concern – well before the new cycleway was installed.

These experimental changes were made as part of the Council's long-term ambition to improve cycling and walking links between Bromley and Beckenham. The benefit of experimental schemes is that they can be changed, improved, or removed.

Following feedback received on the initial traffic management changes, the Council are now consulting on the long term traffic management of Albemarle Road and the traffic flow over Westgate Road bridge.

The options that are being considered are:

- 1) Continue the trial with the introduction of the following 2 amendments –
  - (a) Re-introduce 2-way traffic on Albemarle Road between St Georges and Westgate Road whilst retaining the west to east segregated cycle lane and
  - (b) Re-introduce 2-way traffic onto Westgate Road bridge controlled by the addition of traffic lights (with timings to manage tidal flows) to avoid driver conflicts.
- 2) Revert Albemarle Road and Westgate Road (bridge) to their pre-trial arrangements

Detailed drawings of the proposed amendments are attached to this report (appendix 1).

## **Who we consulted**

We sought the views of residents, businesses and stakeholders. An on-line consultation questionnaire was published to capture responses, along with emails received from interested parties.

Approximately 3250 letters (appendix 2) were distributed to properties within a designated catchment area (appendix 3). A copy of the letter was also emailed to residents/businesses who had previously signed up to receive updates on the scheme.

A full list of stakeholders that received an invitation to complete the consultation survey is available later in this report (appendix 4).

## **Dates and duration**

The consultation period ran for a period of 3 weeks from the 10th February until 3rd March 2021.

## **What we asked**

The consultation asked that respondents answer 3 questions.

Question 1 asked respondents to choose from 1 of the 3 following options:

Option 1. Continue the trial with the introduction of the following 2 amendments –

(a) Re-introduce 2-way traffic on Albemarle Road between St Georges and Westgate Road whilst retaining the west to east segregated cycle lane and

(b) Re-introduce 2-way traffic onto Westgate Road bridge controlled by the addition of traffic lights (with timings to manage tidal flows) to avoid driver conflicts.

Option 2. Revert Albemarle Road and Westgate Road (bridge) to their pre-trial arrangements

Option 3. No preference

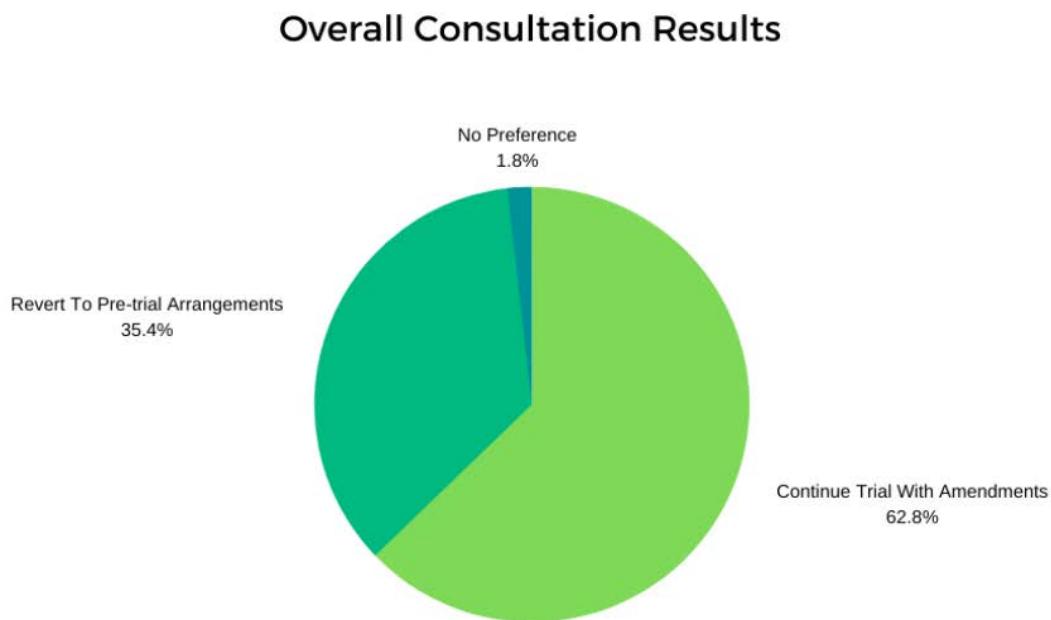
Question 2 invited them to leave further comments should they wish.

Question 3 asked them to leave their name, address and email.

## **Response to consultation**

We received 1077 responses via the consultation questionnaire. We also received a further 25 responses by way of email.

The overall breakdown of responses received is shown below:

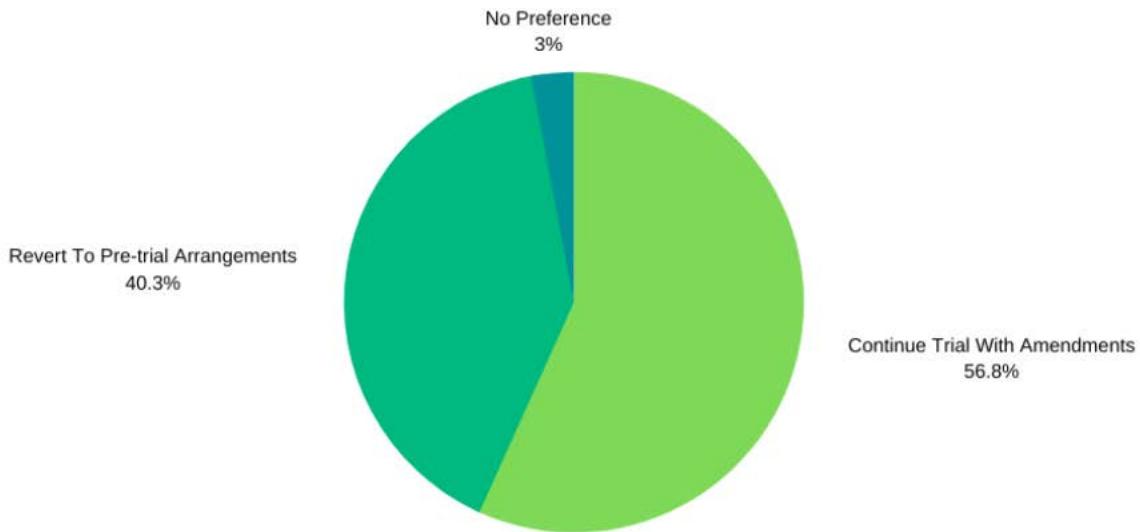


Overall result in numbers:

Continue trial with amendments - 692  
Revert to pre-trial arrangements - 390  
No preference - 20

Of the 1077 responses we received via the consultation questionnaire, 400 of these were received from residents/businesses which were inside of the letter delivery catchment area (Appendix 3). The breakdown of these 400 responses is shown below:

### Inside Letter Catchment Results

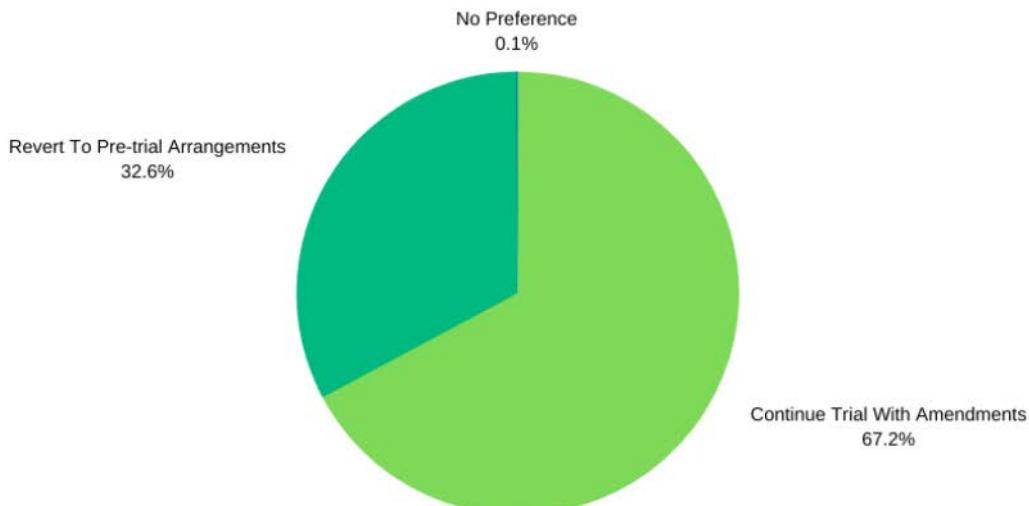


Results from inside letter catchment area by numbers:

Continue trial with amendments - 227  
Revert to pre-trial arrangements - 161  
No preference - 12

The breakdown of the remaining 677 responses via the consultation questionnaire is shown below:

### Outside of Letter Catchment Results



Results from outside of letter catchment area by numbers:

Continue trial with amendments - 455  
Revert to pre-trial arrangements - 221  
No preference - 1

## **Summary Of Stakeholder Responses To Consultation**

### **Met Police - No preference**

"Reverting Albemarle Road back to 2 way [between Westgate Road and St Georges Road] would help matter considerably. Traffic lights at the junction of Westgate Road, I don't anticipate any issues with that. The one way system on Westgate Road over the bridge can remain, as the narrow bridge was causing a number of minor road rage issues over it. Since it has become one way, the number of near miss collisions has dropped immensely as vehicles did used to approach the bridge at speed."

### **Bromley Cyclists - Preference to continue trial**

"We note that Bromley is conducting a consultation on the Albemarle Road cycle route, and is giving respondents two options, either to amend the existing scheme (in two ways) in favour of motorists, or abandon it altogether.

I am writing to let you know that Bromley Cyclists oppose Option 2 and has reservations about Option 1. I cannot help but comment the Council does not seem to have given the public a great choice.

The first amendment under Option 1 (to re-introduce 2-way traffic on Albemarle Road between St Georges and Westgate Road whilst retaining the west to east segregated cycle lane) will create a long pinch point for westward-bound cyclists. It should be noted that due to cars parked in the westbound cycle lane between Downsbridge Road and Westgate Road there is currently nowhere for motor vehicles to safely pass a person on a pedal cycle along this section, so there is already a long pinch. The introduction of two way traffic as per option 1 will just extend this pinch creating tension between motorists and people on pedal cycles.

The second amendment (to re-introduce 2-way traffic on the Westgate bridge controlled by the addition of traffic lights) just makes it more difficult for non-motorists on the narrow bridge. This will further encourage rat-running along The Avenue, Copers Cope Road, Foxgrove Road and Park Road and reduces the quality of life for anyone who is not a motorist on these roads (residents, pedestrians' people on bikes, people with pushchairs, the elderly and disabled using mobility devices).

We would prefer to see the bridge filtered to only allow pedestrians, people on pedal cycles, people on mobility devices (elderly and disability). This would allow the Council to develop the Lower Sydenham to Bromley cycling 'Quietway' and give safer access for cyclists to the Waterlink Way.

If the Council decides to open the bridge to motorists, we ask that the traffic lights include a pedestrian phase (so that pedestrians can avoid crossing the narrow bridge simultaneously in both directions) and an 'early release' feature for cyclists using the bridge.

## **Greener and Cleaner Bromley - Preference to continue trial**

"I write in response to the binary choice given in the 'Albemarle Road / Westgate Road Consultation'. Greener and Cleaner Bromley and Beyond (GCB) have given the scheme due consideration and heard from a number of our members who live on and around these roads, and also those who use the roads regularly to get from Bromley to Beckenham etc. Given GCB was originally established by myself operating out of Shortlands two years ago a good number of our 6k members are based in Shortlands and Beckenham. Our 'pinned' Facebook post on this matter, setting out thoughts and referring to the survey has reached 5.5k members and over 100 people interacted with the post and/or wrote to me directly, everyone appearing to be in support of the trial of these measures being extended.

As a group, we feel that scrapping the scheme would be a huge waste of the road safety and active travel achievements of the scheme, a waste of the funds spent to date and required to remove the scheme and potentially a waste of the opportunities for funding and improvements local to Shortlands/Beckenham and elsewhere - eg if TfL feel that our borough is not serious about active travel arrangements and will remove those which have been funded without due time for bedding in and proper evaluation in 'normal circumstances' they may be less likely to wish to partner with the borough and fund such vital measures elsewhere in the near future. It would also be also a bad signal to the residents of the borough on the council's commitment to safer walking and cycling and to reducing the carbon footprint of the borough. We believe the trial should continue with the introduction of the following two amendments suggested: (a) re-introduce two-way traffic on Albemarle Road between St George's and Westgate Road whilst retaining the west to east segregated cycle lane and (b) re-introduce two-way traffic onto Westgate Road bridge controlled by the addition of traffic lights (with timings to manage tidal flows) to avoid driver conflicts (and ideally arrangements for cyclist safety) - with further reviews to be carried out quarterly and a comprehensive review and analysis of the effectiveness of the scheme being carried out after six months of normal traffic conditions (which we imagine may be towards the end of this year or in 2022 when public transport and car sharing can be used again). It's key that a proper assessment is made of the scheme after a reasonable trial period and in 'normal' traffic/transport conditions.

This respiratory pandemic has reminded us all, as a community, to acknowledge and support the fundamentally important principle of shifting transport modes towards more sustainable and less polluting methods, reducing the congestion and pollution, for those who are able. This requires safer and more 'connected' infrastructure for cycling and walking – and to more fairly balance the ease of usage of roads and road safety between all types of road users. This is vital given the importance and urgency of addressing air quality and carbon emissions and their impact on the climate crisis and our health priorities (both in terms of the air we breathe and our daily exercise).

It would be really helpful if, going forward, the council's communications around this and other active travel interventions could perhaps refer to or reflect the government's active travel statutory guidance of May 2020 and their "Gear Change" document and the clear and positive explanations given for the need for these changes. Communication and understanding is so important for bringing the community 'along' with all the changes that will be necessary to meet our local and national sustainability and wellbeing targets. And, of course, consultation (though ideally not binary yes/no) is very helpful too, ideally alongside clear and positive communication of context and benefits.

Many thanks for all of your team's efforts (particularly Angus Culverwell and Stephen Oliver) in progressing connected active travel infrastructure for Beckenham/Shortlands and indeed the rest of the borough, we very much hope the Albemarle Road / Westgate Road trial will continue."

**Ravensbourne Valley Preservation Society** - Preference to continue trial

"In response to the binary choice, we believe the trial should continue with the introduction of the following two amendments: –

- (a) re-introduce two-way traffic on Albemarle Road between St George's and Westgate Road whilst retaining the west to east segregated cycle lane and
- (b) re-introduce two-way traffic onto Westgate Road bridge controlled by the addition of traffic lights (with timings to manage tidal flows) to avoid driver conflicts.

with a further review of the effectiveness of the scheme being carried out after six months of normal traffic conditions. "

**St Mary's Catholic Primary School** - Preference to continue trial

"Thank you for making me aware of these plans. 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."

**Copers Cope Residents Association** - Preference to continue trial

"Given the two options, of scrapping the whole scheme or extending the trial and returning Westgate Rd Bridge to Albemarle Rd between St George's Rd and Westgate Rd to two-way, our Association supports the latter option. The reasons for this are as follows:

- The scheme has been in place for 4 months, and this has been during COVID restrictions and in winter. Extending the trial will enable a full assessment of it and hopefully in circumstances not as impacted by COVID.
- The main opposition against the scheme is that the displaced traffic is creating congestion at Beckenham High Street and Bromley Rd by Shortlands, and increased journey times/distances to get around the one-way elements of the scheme. The proposed changes to return elements of the scheme back to two-way should do much to alleviate this problem and so is worth trialling before scrapping the whole scheme. We do not feel able to support the scheme as it is currently due to the significant traffic displacement at peak times.
- The extension to the trial still provides the option to scrap the scheme should residents continue to raise significant issues. We would be grateful for advice on how long the trial extension is proposed to be.
- The lack of crossings over the Beckenham Junction railway lines does cause considerable pinch points in Beckenham - the decision to close Westgate Bridge to traffic one-way increased pressure on these pinch points and returning it to two-way will significantly alleviate the problems.
- Westgate Rd bridge has been a problem for many years and our Association receives regular feedback on the issues here. Possible solutions suggested, such as widening the bridge, improving visibility, installing mirrors, cameras, traffic lights etc., have all been previously rejected by the Council, mainly on grounds of cost, or practicality. At long last there is the opportunity to have the Westgate Rd bridge problem solved with the funds provided by TfL for controlled traffic lights.
- The new proposal will remove the sharp turn from Albemarle Rd on to St George's Rd (going toward Bromley) where cars have right of way and return it to a T-Junction. Residents have complained that this new road layout has made it difficult to cross St George's Rd at its junction with Albemarle Rd."

### **Harris Primary School Beckenham Green - Preference to continue trial**

"On behalf of Harris Primary Academy Beckenham Green, our primary concern will continue to be the amount of traffic which passes by St George's Road and therefore the school gates. The increased traffic has made it dangerous for children crossing the road and increases the pollution outside the school. We have also had a number of reports of near-incidents of cars coming out of Albemarle Road which is obviously a route to and from school for a number of families who cross this junction frequently"

### **The Sloane Hospital - No Preference**

"The changes have caused confusion to many of our patients, and I'm not sure the residents have grasped the changes as I regularly see them coming out of their drives and turning right as opposed to left.

When it is refuse day, it causes issues as traffic build up with no option to go in the opposite direction. This is without school traffic, and it will only get busier with the schools about to reopen".

## **Summary of comments made by consultation respondents**

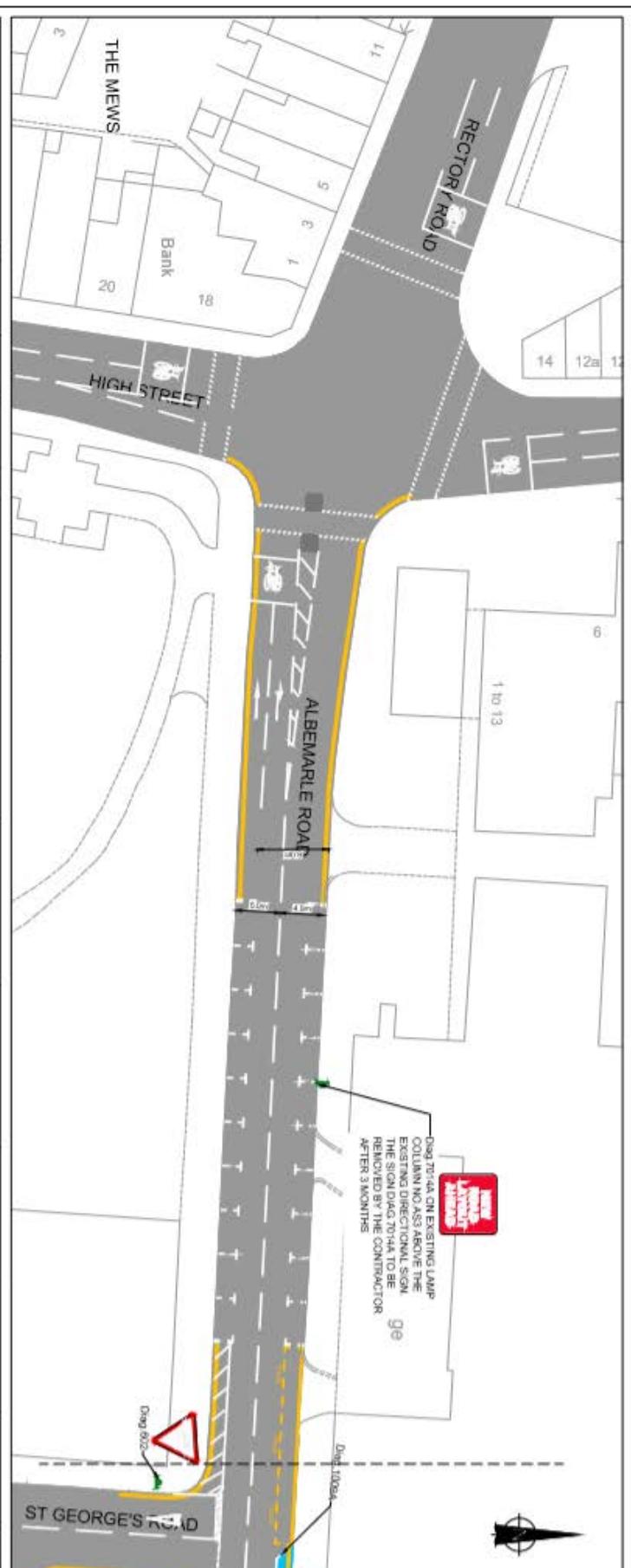
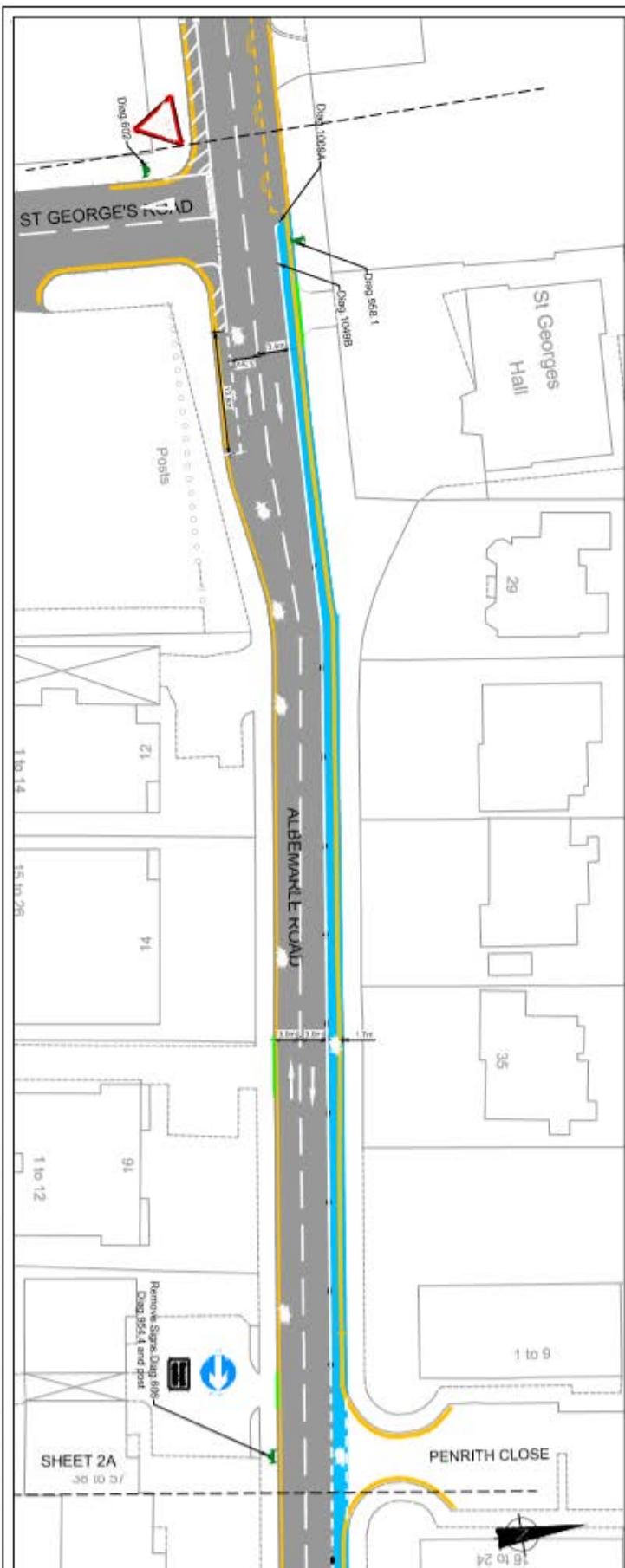
Of the 682 responses received on-line in favour of keeping the trial with amendments, there were a number of reoccurring comments. These included:

- \*Continuing the trial without making any amendments (105 responses)
- \*Filter Westgate Road bridge for pedestrians & cyclists only (84 responses)
- \*Remove parking from East to West (Bromley to Beckenham) cycle lane (16 responses)
- \*Extend cycle lane further towards Bromley (13 responses)

Of the 382 who responded wanting Albemarle Road and Westgate Road to revert to their pre-trial arrangements, the following comments were common:

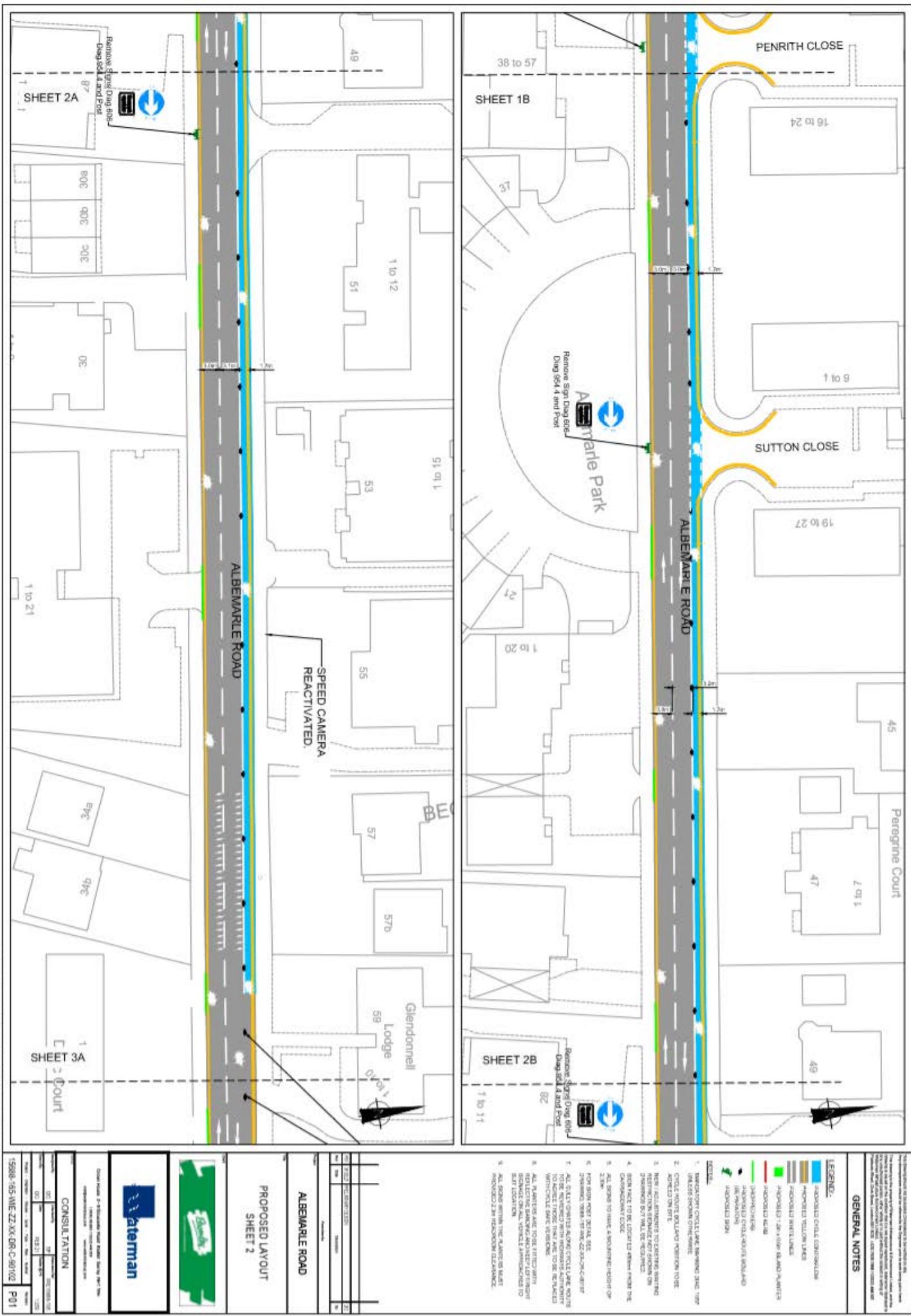
- \*Added congestion causing poor air quality (98 responses)
- \*Longer journey times (43 responses)
- \*Funding better used elsewhere (26 responses)
- \*Changes dangerous for cyclists (6 responses)
- \*Filter Westage Road bridge for pedestrians & cyclists only (5 responses)

## Appendix 1

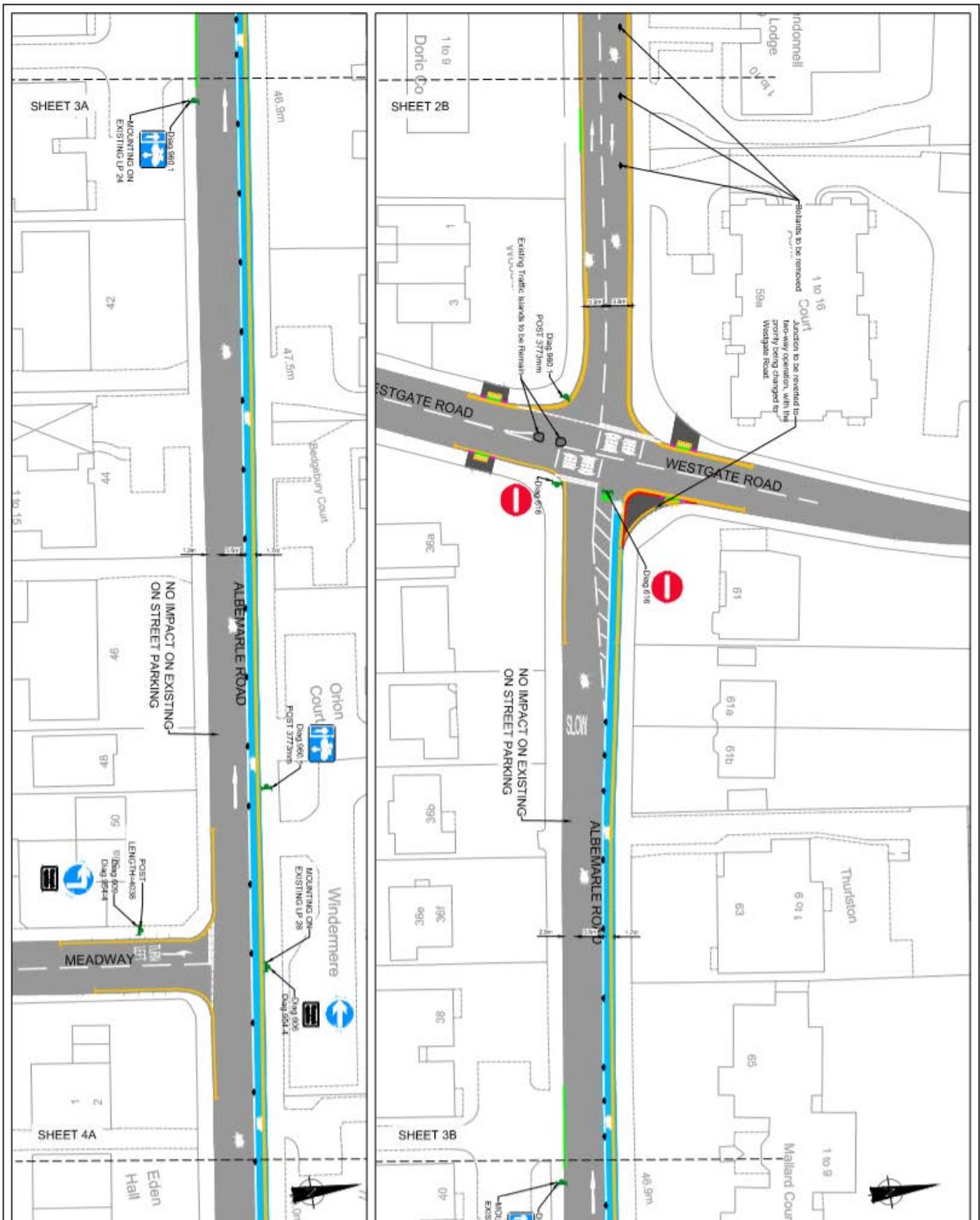


1. MANUFACTURER'S OWNER'S MANUAL  
ALL SYSTEMS
2. OWNER'S MANUAL FOR THE VEHICLE TO BE  
REPLACED
3. NEW ADJUSTMENTS TO EXISTING SYSTEMS  
MANUFACTURER'S SPECIFICATIONS NOT SHOWN OR  
CHANGED FROM THE ORIGINAL SYSTEM
4. CHANGES MADE TO THE SYSTEM SINCE  
MANUFACTURE OR USE
5. ALL PARTS USED IN THE EXISTING SYSTEM  
OR EQUIVALENT
6. NON-USED PARTS DESTROYED
7. OWNER'S MANUAL FOR THE VEHICLE TO BE  
REPLACED
8. ALL CHANGES MADE TO EXISTING SYSTEMS  
TO ACCORD WITH THE NEW SYSTEM
9. ALL PARTS USED TO BE FITTED ON  
THE EXISTING SYSTEM AND EQUIVALENT  
SOURCES, UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED  
SITUATION
10. ALL SYSTEMS WITHIN THE MANUFACTURER'S  
MANUFACTURED 24-HOUR PERIOD

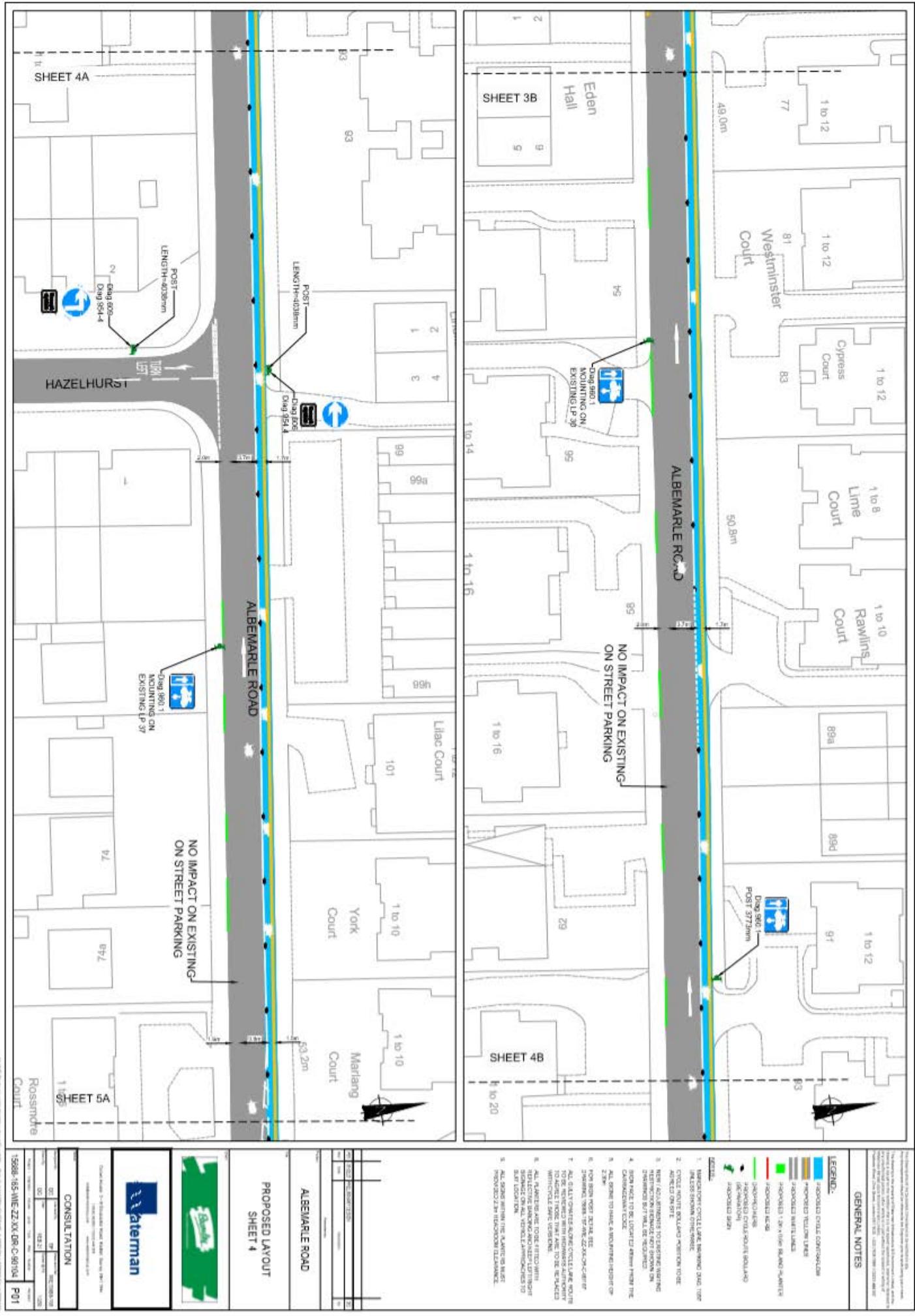
## Appendix 1 cont.



## Appendix 1 cont.



## Appendix 1 cont.







**Environment and Public Protection**  
Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH

Telephone: 020 8464 3333  
Direct Line: 020 8313 4543  
Email: traffic@bromley.gov.uk

10<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Resident,

**Re: Traffic Management on Albemarle Road & Westgate Road Bridge**

As you are probably aware, experimental measures to introduce cycle lanes and change traffic management on Albemarle Road have been implemented. Westgate Road bridge has also been made one directional to traffic, with drivers only permitted to drive north (The Avenue) to south (Albemarle Road). The conflicts of drivers coming nose-to-nose on the bridge has long been a matter for concern – well before the nearby cycle route was installed.

These experimental changes were made as part of the Council's long-term ambition to improve cycling and walking links between Bromley and Beckenham. The benefit of experimental schemes is that they can be changed, improved, or removed.

The Council is now consulting with residents on the traffic management of Albemarle Road and traffic flow over Westgate Road bridge.

The options that are being considered are:

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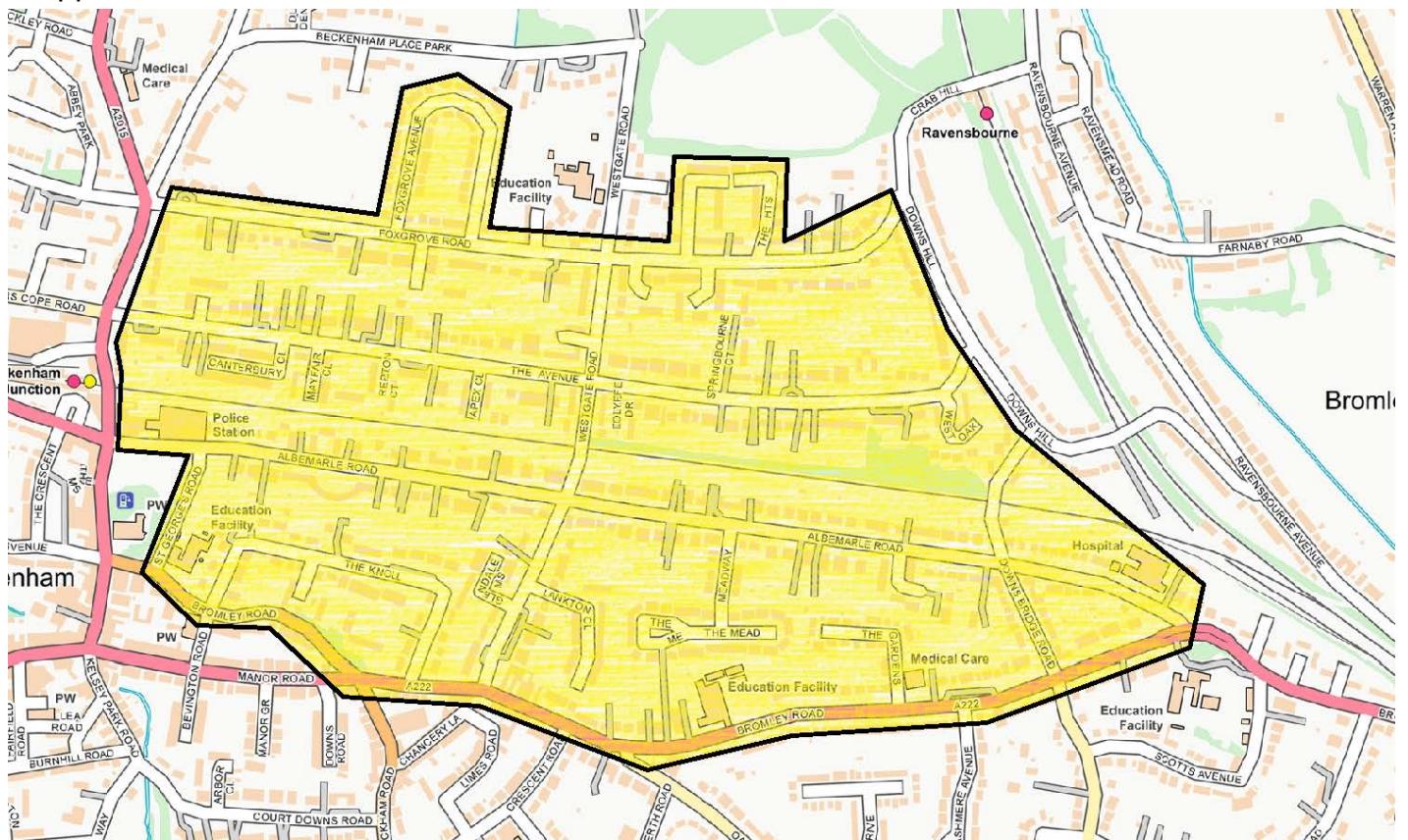
Drawings of option 1 can be found overleaf. If the decision is made to continue the trial further consultation(s) will occur once the impact of the changes has been established. If the decision is made to revert to pre-trial arrangements the changes will be removed, and the experimental project will end, and the Council will be unable to access the funding for signalisation of the Westgate Road bridge as a stand-alone scheme.

The proposed amendments are in response to feedback received and are anticipated to resolve the issues of queuing traffic towards Beckenham Junction, whilst maintaining the core objective of the scheme by providing an attractive option for pedestrians and cyclists alike. The signalisation of the bridge is being proposed to assist with traffic flow, especially at peak hours, and to prevent vehicles coming nose to nose as they cross, which in the past has led to confrontation.

Residents are invited comment on the two proposed options using the following web page – [www.bromley.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/consultations)

Comments must be received by 3rd March 2021.

## Appendix 3



## Appendix 4

### List of Stakeholders invited to complete survey:

- \*Ward Councilors
- \*NHS
- \*London Ambulance Service
- \*MET Police
- \*London Fire Brigade
- \*Greener & Cleaner Bromley
- \*Living Streets Bromley
- \*Bromley Cyclists
- \*Ravensbourne Valley Preservation Society
- \*Copers Cope Residents' Association
- \*Shortlands Residents Association
- \*Bishop Challoner School
- \*St Christophers School
- \*St Mary's Catholic Primary School
- \*Harris Primary School Beckenham Green
- \*Bob Stewart MP
- \*London Taxi Drivers Association
- \*The Sloane Hospital