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**Decision Maker:** Environment and Community Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee:

**Date:** 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

**Title:** CROFTON ROAD PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING ROUTE REVIEW

**Contact Officer:** David Bond  
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**Chief Officer:** Colin Brand, Director of Environment and Public Protection

**Ward:** Farnborough and Crofton Ward

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1. Reason for report

- 1.1 To inform Members of the completion of the project
- 1.2 To set out the rationale for the scheme and to remind Members of the objectives and the process
- 1.3 To provide a summary of the issues and feedback raised during construction
- 1.4 To comment on the timescale for delivering the project
- 1.5 To report the findings and recommendations of the Stage 3 Road Safety Audit
- 1.6 To report on the approach to the monitoring of the project and the associated data gathering, including cycle and pedestrian usage, traffic speed, volume, any injury collisions and the Stage 4 Road Safety Audit
- 1.7 The proposed awareness raising and marketing of the scheme, with particular emphasis on local schools and commuting to Orpington Station

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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 That Members note the content of the report.

## Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: Beneficial
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## Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy
  2. BBB Priority: Quality Environment Safe Bromley Healthy Bromley
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## Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Nil
  2. Ongoing costs: Any future maintenance costs will be funded from the existing highway maintenance budgets
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Capital Programme – LIP Formula Funding for ‘Cycling and Walking’ and ‘Cycle Infrastructure’
  3. Total current budget for this head: £673k
  5. Source of funding: TfL LIP Grant Funding
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## Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): Existing staff resources
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: 20
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## Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Non-Statutory - Government Guidance:
  2. Call-in: Not Applicable:
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## Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: None
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## Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): local residents and visitors
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## Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Yes
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Throughout the development and delivery of the scheme, Ward Members have shared all concerns raised by residents with the Council’s Officers. Ward Members have met frequently with residents and stakeholders, and facilitated meetings between the residents’ association and Officers from the design stage and through the course of construction.

### 3. COMMENTARY

#### Introduction

- 3.1 Following support from the Environment PDS and approval by Executive, the pedestrian and cycling improvement scheme in Crofton Road has now been completed on site, with all facilities now operational.
- 3.2 Various improvement for cyclists and pedestrians have been introduced between Orpington Station and Ormonde Avenue, as shown in photographs in Appendix A.
- 3.3 Whilst the scheme resulted in the removal of 4 trees, with only 1 of those being of any significance, 24 new trees have been planted giving a net increase of 20. The care of the trees will be subject to a maintenance contract. Rain gardens (a form of sustainable urban drainage) have been provided between York Rise and the Station, at the junction of Crofton Lane and near the junction of Crofton Avenue. They are designed to capture rain water and reduce the rapid release of excess stormwater into highway drainage systems and as well as the aesthetic and visual benefits of the associated planting of shrubs and other flora, they enhance biodiversity by creating habitat for birds, butterflies and other insects.

#### Background

- 3.4 Crofton Road had been identified in TfL's Strategic Cycling Analysis as a road with a potentially high volume of switchable short trips from car and bus to cycling if the right infrastructure is provided and is within the top 5-10% of connectors for potential cycling trips in London with the right infrastructure. These trips to the station and to local destinations will remove car trips from the road, decreasing the volume of traffic and with it congestion in the long term. The scheme also offers improvement for pedestrians and bus passengers along with public realm improvements in respect to new trees and landscaping.
- 3.5 With regard to poor health and inactivity it has been shown that the impact of people not exercising as part of their daily lives is, in the long term, far more dangerous to health than the risk of any injury potential resulting from walking, cycling or using public transport. There are also direct costs to the taxpayer of health care associated with inactivity. Projects like this are complemented by the Council's comprehensive cycle training programme.
- 3.6 The Crofton Road scheme was first reported to PDS on 12th July 2017 for initial approval and was contained within the report 'PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE ORPINGTON CYCLING AND WALKING NETWORK' (ES17050), which set out a strategy to develop a number of proposals for investing in walking and cycling infrastructure in and around Orpington over a number of years, to form a core local cycling and walking network.
- 3.7 In July 2017 the Environment Portfolio Holder gave approval to the outline proposals to enable Officers to undertake public consultation and subsequent construction of the scheme. Whilst approval in principle was given, Ward Members and the Crofton Residents' Association were concerned about the proposals and Officers therefore met with them on a number of occasions between the PDS meeting and December 2017 to try to resolve the issues raised.
- 3.8 In December 2017, the Crofton Residents Association (CRA) sent out details of the scheme in their newsletter to 2,073 households, outlining how the proposals had changed since they were first presented to PDS in response to the CRA's and local residents' concerns.
- 3.9 After further consultation with the Portfolio Holder, the Ward Councillors and the CRA, the scheme underwent a number of changes and a report went before the PDS Committee on 20th November 2018 seeking approval to take the scheme forward to formal design and public consultation.

- 3.10 The report was approved although following objections to the decision from the Ward Councillors in the neighbouring Petts Wood Ward the scheme was 'called-in' and a special meeting of the PDS Committee took place on 17th December 2018 to consider the new report in response to the objections raised. The objections were not upheld and the report was approved enabling the scheme to progress as had been the outcome of the PDS meeting of 20th November.
- 3.11 The design was progressed and two public engagement events took place in late September 2019 whereby the public were given the opportunity to inspect the scheme, clarify issues and raise concerns with Council officers. Residents were also given the opportunity to complete forms at the events, complete online forms or email the Council, an exercise that was open for 3 weeks.
- 3.12 At the end of that process a report was produced and was shared with the Portfolio Holder, the Ward Councillors, the CRA as well as being available online. This revealed that the majority of respondents were in favour with the breakdown as follows;
- # Strongly/somewhat in favour, 56%
  - # Strongly/somewhat opposed, 42%
  - # Neutral, 2%
- More details of this consultation and the comments received can be seen [online](#) at the Council's website.
- 3.13 Despite this the Council continued to receive (and has done since) a high volume of correspondence, disputing the result and remaining critical of the project, the most common objections being the cost, not accepting that there is a need to invest in such measures to reduce congestion and improve air quality, that it would be unsafe and the impact on traffic.
- 3.14 Because of the two decisions to approve the project made by the PDS Committee and the majority public support, the project progressed to detail design and was subject to a Stage 2 Road Safety Audit in April 2020. The Safety Audit process is an independent exercise carried out by individuals who have had no involvement in the design process, to check that the design is safe and that there are no issues that could cause a problem. Whilst few problems were identified those that were recorded in the report and presented to the scheme designer to respond to and address; the record made of that is called the 'Designer's Response'. These are public documents and have been made available on request.

### Implementation

- 3.15 Construction works commenced on 12th October 2020, with the project initially due for completion in May 2021. Although the contractor had originally planned to use several construction gangs working simultaneously throughout the project, delays were encountered relating to Covid-19 issues. Social distancing guidance prevented larger gangs working together, and several operatives contracted Covid-19 or were instructed to self-isolate restricting the resources available on site. Similar issues affected the contractors supply chain with construction materials, particularly concrete products, being in short supply. The programme was also delayed due to low temperatures which prevented concrete being used on site for a couple of weeks during the winter.
- 3.16 The project was quite complex and as usual a number of minor design issues had to be resolved at various stages of the project, which also impacted on progress, although the length of time it has taken to complete the project has not resulted in an increase in the cost.

- 3.17 Construction works on the cycling and walking project were substantially completed in early August 2021, with snagging works continuing during the following two week. An important part of the project were improved pedestrian crossings at various locations. While the crossings have been completed specialist high friction surfacing (HFS) still needs to be applied to the carriageway on each approach to minimise the risk of vehicles skidding.
- 3.18 Transport for London provide all London boroughs with funding for the maintenance of the principal road network (PRN) across the capital. Crofton Road was due to be resurfaced as part of the 2020/21 PRN programme, but funding was not available due to TfL's financial position. TfL recently announced a small PRN programme, and as Crofton Road was the borough's highest priority scheme funding was provided for this project. As the resurfacing has recently been completed this has allowed the permanent road markings to be laid, and the HFS is due to be applied before the winter, subject to weather conditions. In the meantime 'slippery road' warning signs have been provided.
- 3.19 Since works on site commenced, there were many enquiries raising the same issues as already highlighted in 3.13, but a significant number were also in regard to project management, as set out in 3.21.
- 3.20 One particular issue of concern that came to light once the scheme had been completed was the westbound bus stop following the narrowing of the carriageway and the delays caused by buses waiting at the stop which, inevitably, caused frustration resulting in some reported dangerous overtaking manoeuvres. On further investigation it was found that this stop was also used as a driver change over point and although the Council had consulted with TfL about the project this issue had not been raised with Council officers. Following Member and Officer lobbying, a meeting took place with TfL, the local bus operators, one of the Ward Councillors and a Council Officer on 5th July about moving the driver change overs elsewhere. TfL is currently reviewing the relocation of the driver changeover to other stops to thereby alleviate this area of concern and we hope to have confirmation of this very soon. However, as a fallback position, the Council is investigating the possibility of widening the carriageway at this point to enable two-way traffic to pass stationary buses thereby providing a permanent solution. If this proves necessary, TfL funding will be made available for this improvement.
- 3.21 Other common issues brought to the attention of Officers are described in the table below, along with the Council's response.

Issue/complaint	Response
<i>Reducing the junction widths of York Rise, Newstead Avenue and Pound Court Drive alleging that this will result in safety issues and congestion</i>	<i>The bell mouth width of all these junctions was identified as being very wide which does present difficulties for pedestrians particularly the elderly and mobility impaired. By narrowing them we have not only reduced the time it takes to cross but has also reduced vehicle entry speeds so this action has resulted in improved safety for vulnerable road users.</i>
<i>Car transporters serving the car showroom opposite the Station not always using the designated bay.</i>	<i>We are aware of a number of incidents of car transporters not using the designated bay and parking in locations which has resulted in traffic congestion and safety concerns. The car showroom has been approached as have some of the transport companies as to where they should be parking although this is clearly being ignored by some of the operators. Parking enforcement has been stepped up in the area in the hope of Parking Attendants witnessing the illegal activities taking place, allowing them to issue Penalty Charge Notices which we hope will then change behaviour.</i>

<p><i>Concerns about shared facility being moved to the road side of tree on south side of Crofton Road, west of Crofton Lane junction and proximity to traffic.</i></p>	<p><i>The scheme has been subject to a 3 stage Road Safety Audit process which has not raised this issue as a concern. The swept paths of all vehicle types turning right from Crofton Lane that pass this point heading west have not shown there to be any encroachment onto the shared facility.</i></p>
<p><i>Concerns about visibility of new parallel crossing near Newstead Avenue</i></p>	<p><i>The crossing exceeds the forward visibility standards in both directions and was not raised as a safety issue in the Stage 2 Road Safety Audit during the design process and in the post completion Stage 3 Road Safety Audit. The crossing replaced a narrow refuge, which has become well used, and is an alternative to the crossing near the Station.</i></p>
<p><i>Length of time project has taken, site management and storage of materials</i></p>	<p><i>Details to the works programme are provided in 3.15 above. The works were monitored by LBB Engineers, who worked closely with the contractor to ensure compliance with the contract and approved design. Working in an urban area always causes issues for the storage of materials, and every effort was made to provide site compounds in locations which minimised the impact of traffic and residents, although it was inevitable that some were in residential areas.</i></p>

3.22 Once the project was completed, a Stage 3 Road Safety Audit was undertaken, although this was prior to the resurfacing. This is similar to the Stage 2 Road Safety Audit and ensures that the scheme has been built in accordance with the previously safety audited drawings and that no new and unforeseen issues have come to light. The Audit also involves a night visit. No significant safety concerns were identified, with issues raised relating to remedial works and minor design issues, although these have mostly now been addressed.

3.23 Monitoring of the project has commenced and will be on-going and, initially, based on observations and feedback from users and the public. Whilst the pre-scheme cycle and pedestrian counts took place in May/June 2019 it is intended to carry out post scheme counts in March 2022 and further counts in May/June 2022 for consistency of seasonal comparison. Similarly, speed and volume surveys were carried out in July 2019 and, for consistency, further speed and volume surveys will take place in July 2022. With regards to road safety, the Stage 4 Road Safety Audit will take place once 12 months of injury collision data is available although because of the lag in receiving that information of up to 6 months, this may not be able to take place until December 2022/January 2023.

3.24 A promotion strategy is to be developed in conjunction with the local schools, the local cycling group, Southeastern and other key stakeholders to encourage more cycling and walking along the route.

#### **4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN**

4.1 Beneficial with the addition of controlled crossings and tactile paving.

#### **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Consistent with the Council's objective of delivering high quality cycling and walking routes.

#### **6. PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Not applicable.

## 7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Grant funding from TfL of £673k was available from the Council's Local Implementation Plan allocation for Cycling & Walking and Cycle Infrastructure within the Capital Programme. The final account is still awaited and until that is determined, the precise final costs are not known; however, project officers are projecting that the final costs will be within the overall budget provision. No funding from the Council's own resources has been required.
- 7.2 Future maintenance costs will be funded from the existing highways maintenance budget, although Highways officers anticipate that the new surfaces should result in reduced ongoing maintenance costs.

## 8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no legal implications.

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	PDS report, July 2017, 'PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE ORPINGTON CYCLING AND WALKING NETWORK'. PDS report, November 2018, 'ORPINGTON: CROFTON ROAD CYCLE ROUTE'. PDS report, December 2018, 'ORPINGTON: CROFTON ROAD CYCLE ROUTE: CALL-IN'. 'Crofton Road, Proposed transport improvements scheme', November 2019. Stage 2 and Stage 3 Road Safety Audit reports.

Appendix A – photographs of the Crofton Road Cycling and Walking Scheme

