

Decision Maker: **Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways & Road Safety**
For Pre-Decision Scrutiny by the Environment and Community Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on

Date: **Tuesday 23 January 2024**

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: **ALBEMARLE ROAD / WESTGATE ROAD JUNCTION RECONFIGURATION**

Contact Officer: Bukola Sobanjo
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Chief Officer: Director of Environment and Public Protection

Ward: Beckenham Town and Copers Cope

1. Reason for report

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the recommended option for the reconfiguration of the junction Albemarle Road and Westgate Road. The recommended option retains and improves the existing priority junction arrangement and introduces a contra-flow cycling facility northbound on Westgate Road.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That the Portfolio Holder approves:

- 2.1 The proposed priority junction improvement scheme, as shown in Appendix A of this report, for implementation with any minor detailed design amendments addressed under delegated authority.

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: This project would help protect vulnerable road users, pedestrians as they navigate the junction of Albemarle Road and Westgate Road.
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Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: This proposal supports priority 5 of the 2021-2022 Environment Portfolio Plan, Improving Travel, Transport & Parking
 2. Making Bromley Even Better 2021 to 2031: Continue to manage our extensive road network effectively and efficiently, keeping our roads safe and implementing strategies to improve parking in the borough, including the addition of electric charging spaces. Encourage more sustainable forms of travel, including hybrid and electric vehicles, cycling, walking and delivering the longest electric bus route in London.
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost £25,000
 2. Ongoing costs: None
 3. Budget head/performance centre: LIP Capital Programme Budget for Review of London Streetspace Plan Schemes
 4. Total current budget for this head: £25,000
 5. Source of funding: TfL LIP Grant
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Personnel

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

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

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

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

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Yes

2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Ward Councillors have been advised of the recommended option. Cllr Tickner would still like to see a mini-roundabout installed, but Cllr Ross and Cllr Connolly are supportive of the recommendation to install the right turn “pocket” for cyclists and to use refuges to help both pedestrians and cyclists whilst slowing traffic.

3. COMMENTARY

Historical Background

- 3.1 A cycle route along Albemarle Road was introduced as part of the Council's desire to install improved cycling facilities from Bromley to Beckenham and beyond. During the Covid emergency, funds were offered to Bromley to install pop-up cycle routes, so the opportunity was taken to trial a cycle route along Bromley Road and Albemarle Road.
- 3.2 The scheme, including the junction of Albemarle Road and Westgate Road, was first introduced in **September 2020**, converting two-way traffic flow on Albemarle Road to a one-way system with cycle contraflow from its junction with St Georges Road to its junction with Bromley Road. As part of this change the traffic flow over Westgate Road bridge was changed to one direction, southbound. This was in response to many concerns expressed to Ward Councillors about conflicts between opposing drivers over this very narrow bridge.
- 3.3 Although some cyclists use the cycle route the whole length of Albemarle Road, many use the bridge in Westgate Road to access relatively quieter streets to the north of the railway line for their onward journey towards Crystal Palace. (These streets are part of the established Bromley to Crystal Palace cycle route.) Cyclists southbound can ride with traffic flow over the bridge, but northbound cyclists must dismount before walking their bikes across the bridge on the narrow footway.
- 3.4 After a review of the cycle route in **March 2021**, it was decided that the one-way traffic system would be reversed back to two directions on Albemarle Road between Westgate Road and St Georges Road, retaining a segregated cycle lane eastbound. In the review it was noted that some cyclists riding northbound over Westgate Road bridge do not dismount and continue to ride in the face of oncoming traffic.
- 3.5 In **January 2022**, it was further decided that the segregated cycle lanes would be removed and two-way directional traffic reinstated on Albemarle Road between the junctions with Westgate Road and Bromley Road. A Ward Member suggested that in view of one-way traffic on Westgate Railway Bridge being often "dangerously ignored by cyclists", a 'Cyclists Dismount' sign be erected on the south side of the bridge. The Ward Member also noted that the consultation indicated that most responders thought the junction should be redesigned. The PDS report went on to say that the designs for the junction should be considered independently of the recommendations and should be approved under delegated powers. The Ward Councillor stated that he was not happy with the recourse to delegated powers in this case and he proposed an additional recommendation as follows: "Proposals for a reconfiguration of the junction of Westgate Road and Albemarle Road be submitted to the next meeting to include an option for the installation of a mini roundabout".
- 3.6 Two options were therefore presented to ECS PDS in **March 2022** in regard to the junction with Westgate Road; Option 1 – Priority Junction and Option 2 – Mini roundabout, and it was decided to progress with Option 2.
- 3.7 Subsequently, further detailed design work, road safety audits and site surveys were undertaken for the mini-roundabout proposals. However, the results of these investigations indicated that a mini roundabout is not viable for the following reasons:
- Safety – Following design comments from road safety auditors, officers concluded that a roundabout at this location is likely to increase conflicts with other road users as well as conflicting traffic movements.

- Pedestrian Accessibility – Due to the road space required to facilitate the layout of a mini-roundabout, the location of refuge island crossing points are further away from pedestrian desire lines.
- Cyclists – The introduction of a roundabout will lead to conflicts with eastbound vehicles on Albemarle Road. Traffic heading east from the western arm of the roundabout are unlikely to expect right-turn manoeuvres from the opposite direction due to ‘No Entry’ signs at Westgate Road north. The exemption for cyclist and associated Sub sign stating “Except for Cyclists” are unlikely to mitigate this risk.

Current Situation

- 3.8 The mini roundabout was approved at the March 2022 committee because of perceived speeding issues in the area, but traffic survey data results show vehicle speeds generally do not exceed the current limit of 30mph, with 85th percentile speed recorded < 23mph on Westgate Road and <28mph on Albemarle Road. In addition to the issues stated in paragraph 3.7 of this report the proposal for a roundabout do not seem to be solving any particular problem and could introduce new safety issues at the junction, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. As a result, Officers are recommending that the priority junction proposal is taken forward and implemented, as shown in Appendix A.
- 3.9 In this proposal, priority will be given to Albemarle Road while traffic from Westgate Road will have to give way, as is the case at present. The one-way traffic arrangement on Westgate Road (northern arm) will be retained and additional pedestrian crossings with refuge islands will be introduced to all arms of the junction. Cyclists will be able to access Westgate Road (northbound) via the introduction of a contra-flow cycle lane. The cycle lane will lead users to dismount onto the footway immediately south of rail bridge crest.

Benefits of this proposal

- The junction works currently well as a priority junction and the proposed enhancements are likely to benefit more vulnerable road users.
- Historical collision record shows that there are no safety issues at the junction.
- Relatively low cost of implementation.
- The proposed central hatching shown between the two refuge islands on Albemarle Road will provide a clear waiting space for cyclists wishing to access Westgate Road (northbound).
- The refuge islands will provide new crossing facilities for pedestrians in addition to the existing dropped kerbs.
- The ‘Cyclists Dismount’ sign requested by Members can be effectively utilised.

3.10 In conclusion, it has not been possible to progress a safe mini-roundabout design at this location, given the constraints described above. Therefore, Officers recommend retaining a priority give way junction with the addition of a cycle contraflow on Westgate Road (north), allowing cyclists to safely enter the cycle route northbound towards the bridge but with a ‘Cyclists Dismount’ provision prior to the bridge itself.

4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

4.1 The proposed informal crossing points and refuge islands on Albemarle Road and Westgate Road will benefit vulnerable adults and children.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Making Bromley Even Better Priority (MBEB): (1) For children and young People to grow up, thrive and have the best life chances in families who flourish and are happy to call Bromley home. (2) For adults and older people to enjoy fulfilled and successful lives in Bromley, ageing well, retaining independence and making choices. (4) For residents to live responsibly and prosper in a safe, clean and green environment great for today and a sustainable future.

5.2 Transport has a key role to play in delivering these MBEB objectives, for example, projects to enhance walking and cycling infrastructure will be used to improve the public realm of town and local centres providing a quality environment and creating places that people want to spend time in thereby supporting vibrant, thriving town centres. By providing attractive walking and cycling infrastructure, residents will be able to undertake exercise as part of their everyday routine, improving their health and reducing the chance of illness. Infrastructure such as benches and improved walking routes help to ensure that older residents can remain active, thereby supporting independence and also promoting a healthy Bromley. Above all, the safety of road users on our streets needs to be enhanced as far as is possible.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The cost of the further works set out in this report is estimated at £25k, which would be funded by TfL grant specifically allocated to review London Streetspace Plan schemes.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Traffic Regulations Order will be amended to suit the proposals for the scheme.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Personnel Implications; Procurement Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	<p>Report to ECS PDS 8 June 2020 - FUNDING SUBMISSION FOR HIGHWAY MEASURES TO SUPPORT SOCIAL DISTANCING DURING RECOVERY FROM LOCKDOWN (bromley.gov.uk)</p> <p>Report to ECS PDS 11 March 2021 - WESTGATE ROAD AND ALBERMARLE ROAD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT CHANGES (bromley.gov.uk)</p> <p>Report to ECS PDS 19 January 2022 - Albemarle Road and Bromley Road Cycle Schemes</p> <p>report to ECS PDS 21 March 2022 - Albemarle Road / Westgate Road Junction Reconfiguration (bromley.gov.uk)</p> <p>Link to the Bromley to Crystal Palace cycle route map: BROMLEY TO CRYSTAL PALACE PARK</p>

Appendix 1 – Priority Junction



