

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
- 7TH SEPTEMBER 2005

EXECUTIVE - 19TH SEPTEMBER 2005

Report by the Director of Technical Services on proposals for improved pedestrian crossing facilities on Bedford Hill, SW12 (Balham).

SUMMARY

This report outlines proposals for improved pedestrian crossing facilities across Bedford Hill, SW12. It seeks approval for implementing two schemes: a raised junction table at Bedford Hill/Sistova Road; and a junction redesign at Bedford Hill/Fernlea Road/Balham Station Road, incorporating a new pedestrian crossing on the southern arm of the junction, a kerb build out, and an all red stage for traffic to enable all pedestrians to cross. Implementation of the schemes would be subject to consultation and the satisfactory operation of the traffic signals at Bedford Hill/Fernlea Road/Balham Station Road.

1. **Recommendations.** The Regeneration and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee are recommended to support the recommendations in paragraph 3.
2. If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approve any views, comments or recommendations on the report, they will be submitted to the Executive for their consideration.
3. The Executive are recommended to:-
 - (a) approve detailed design, consultation and implementation for the raised table at Bedford Hill/Sistova Road as described in paragraph 10 and shown on Drawing Number OS/CES/766007/001;
 - (b) subject to the outcome of traffic modelling as outlined in paragraphs 14 and 15, approve detailed design, consultation and implementation for the revised junction design at Bedford Hill/Balham Station Road/Fernlea

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Road as described in paragraph 13 and shown on Drawing Number OS/CES/766007/001;

- (c) agree that any necessary amendments to the proposals in (a) and (b) above be authorised under Standing Order No. 83A procedure.
4. **Introduction.** A Community Street Audit of Balham Town Centre, SW12 (Balham, Bedford and Nightingale) was undertaken in early 2002. The audit led to a range of recommendations for improved walking routes and pedestrian facilities, which were reported (Paper No. 02-475) to the Committee and Executive in June 2002. At that time, funding had not been identified to take forward all the proposals, although some improvements have since been implemented by the Council and Transport for London (TfL). These include the diagonal crossing of Balham High Road outside the Underground Station and improvements to the route through the railway arches in Bedford Hill and Larch Close.
5. **Background.** In 2004, the Council, in conjunction with the Central London Partnership (CLP) undertook a further review of the pedestrian routes across Bedford Hill that serve a large number of people accessing Balham Station from the residential area to the west of Bedford Hill. Proposals for a new crossing in Bedford Hill and a pedestrian route through the town centre car park were reported (Paper No. 04-7) to the Committee and Executive, but these were dependent on the successful conclusion of discussions with Sainsbury's, who operate the car park. Agreement could not be reached with Sainsbury's, and, as a result, improvements for pedestrians elsewhere in Balham identified within the audit were implemented. These improvements comprised new pedestrian signing, CCTV and an entry treatment at Larch Close/Bedford Hill, and the works were completed in 2004. Before and after surveys indicate that use of Larch Close as a through pedestrian route between Balham High Road and Bedford Hill increased by 8% between April 2004 and April 2005.
6. **New proposals for Bedford Hill.** Improvements to pedestrian crossing facilities in Bedford Hill are a remaining key recommendation from the street audit. As reported to this Committee in June 2002, the audit recommended that the junction of Bedford Hill/Balham Station Road/Fernlea Road should be redesigned to provide a much safer pedestrian crossing, through the introduction of tighter radius corners, better traffic light timings for pedestrians, with crossing possible on all four arms of the junction, and enforcement of the banned right turns. It also recommended better provision for crossing Bedford Hill itself, especially in the vicinity of Rossiter Road and Sistova Road. A pedestrian survey carried out in 2004 identified that 557 pedestrians crossed Bedford Hill between the Fernlea Road and Sistova Road junctions in the morning peak hour (8.00 to 9.00 am), despite the absence of formal crossing facilities.

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7. The Council was awarded £100,000 by TfL through the Borough Spending Plan settlement to design and implement improved crossing facilities in Bedford Hill in 2005/06.
8. A site investigation was carried out in July 2005, and resulting proposals are set out below.
9. **Bedford Hill/Sistova Road.** There is a large crossing movement of Bedford Hill in this location, in part due to the direct desire line across the town centre car park between the station and Sistova Road, and also due to the proximity of the Sainsbury's supermarket entrance. Inspection of the personal injury accident statistics in the three-year period to January 2005 shows there have been two slight accidents, both involving pedestrians. A new pelican crossing at this location would provide a safe and convenient crossing on the desire line, but it is considered that it would be likely to increase traffic congestion and queues at peak times, due to the proximity to other traffic signals. In addition, the provision of a formal pedestrian facility would require significant loss of kerbside parking on the western side of Bedford Hill adjacent to local shops and businesses, which could potentially be adversely affected by loss of passing trade and deliveries/pick-ups.
10. An alternative proposal would be to implement a raised junction table at the junction of Bedford Hill and Sistova Road. The proposal is shown in Drawing Number OS/CES/766007/001 which will be on display in the Committee Room on the evening of the meeting. The scheme would provide better informal crossing opportunities for pedestrians, but would not lead to increased traffic congestion or require the loss of any parking. It would have the benefit of reducing traffic speeds in the vicinity, and thereby aid pedestrian safety for those people crossing the road at uncontrolled points along this stretch of Bedford Hill. It is estimated that the scheme could be implemented at a cost of £20,000. It is proposed to implement this scheme subject to consultation with local businesses and residents.
11. **Bedford Hill/Fernlea Road/Balham Station Road.** This junction adjacent to 'The Bedford' public house is signalised, with pedestrian crossing facilities on all arms except the southern one (crossing between Balham Station Road and Fernlea Road/The Bedford). Site observations at this junction indicate that there is a significant pedestrian desire line at this point. Many pedestrians choose to cross on this arm, taking the most direct route between Balham Station and Fernlea Road, despite there being no formal facility. The presence of extensive safety guardrailing in this area does not prevent pedestrians from making this dangerous manoeuvre.
12. In addition, the kerbspace outside The Bedford public house and opposite on the south-western side of the junction is cramped, a problem exacerbated by the presence of guardrail which restricts the useable footway width. There have been

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seven accidents at this junction in the three-year period to January 2005, two of which were serious and five were slight. Three of these accidents involved pedestrians, one being serious and two slight.

13. It is proposed to redesign the junction to incorporate a formal pedestrian signal across the southern arm. This would also involve building out the kerb on the south-west corner of the junction, and introducing an all red stage (to traffic) enabling pedestrians to cross all arms. The proposal would reduce the amount of guardrail cluttering the footway and would create more pedestrian waiting space. This scheme is shown on Drawing No. OS/CES/766007/001 which will be displayed in the Committee Room on the evening of the meeting.
14. Following the announcement of TfL funding for the scheme, Council officers met with officers from that part of TfL responsible for traffic signals to ensure that a new crossing in Balham was included within its improvement programme for 2005/06. Nevertheless, the proposals are subject to TfL's satisfactory modelling assessment of the impact on traffic and buses.
15. Subject to the agreement of TfL's signals and network assurance teams, and consultation with affected residents and businesses, it is proposed to implement the scheme as shown in Drawing No. OS/CES/766007/001, at an estimated cost of £78,000. Should detailed modelling indicate that the design cannot be implemented without unacceptable impacts on traffic, an alternative use for the funds to benefit pedestrians will be sought.
16. **Comments of the Economic Development Officer.** The Economic Development Officer (EDO) comments that the improvements to the pedestrian crossing facilities on Bedford Hill were among the recommendations of the street audit undertaken in 2002. Due to the natural desire line across Sainsbury's car park to Balham Station, a large number of commuters cross directly from Sistova Road to Bedford Hill. This has resulted in a number of minor accidents over the last few years. A raised junction table at the junction of Bedford Hill and Sistova Road would encourage the traffic to slow down and reduce this risk. Although there is no formal crossing on the southern junction of Bedford Hill, Balham Station Road and Fernlea Road, many pedestrians choose to take the most direct route between Balham Station and Fernlea Road, ignoring the extensive safety guardrailing. Therefore, the EDO supports the formalisation of this crossing route.
17. **Comments of the Director of Finance.** The cost of the measures proposed is estimated to be as follows:-

	£'000
Bedford Hill/Sistova Road	20
Bedford Hill/Fernlea Road/Balham Station Road	78
Total	98

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18. This cost can be met from the provision of £100,000 in the capital programme in 2005/06 for “Walking” projects financed by grant from Transport for London.
19. **Conclusion.** The Balham Community Street Audit has identified a lack of crossing facilities in Bedford Hill as a key problem. This acts as a barrier not only to walking, but also to the use of public transport, as Bedford Hill runs between a large residential area and the Tube/rail interchange at Balham Station. The proposals outlined in this report would improve crossing opportunities and the safety of pedestrians in the area, and, therefore, contribute to increasing walking and the use of public transport, and they are fully funded through the BSP. However, the BSP funding allocation is only available for implementation of schemes in the year 2005/06. If any necessary amendments to the schemes arise as a result of the consultation and the TfL approval process, it is proposed to seek the necessary authorisation under Standing Order No. 83A procedure in order to ensure delivery within the current financial year.

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30th August 2005

Background Papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of the report:-

1. Balham Community Street Audit (Paper No. 02-475) – Regeneration and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee, June 2002.
2. Balham Community Street Audit – Living Streets, 2002.
3. Improvements for Pedestrians in Balham Town Centre (Paper No. 04-7) – Regeneration and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee, January 2004.

If you wish to inspect any of these documents, please contact initially the Committee Secretary on 020 8871 6488.