



# Cabinet Member Report

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|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Decision Makers:</b>   | Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality   |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 30 November 2022   |
| <b>Classification:</b>    | For General Release  |
| <b>Title:</b>             | St John's Wood High Street Public Realm Improvement Scheme   |
| <b>Wards Affected:</b>    | Regent's Park  |
| <b>Policy context:</b>    | This decision contributes to Fairer Westminster in supporting improvements in air quality, cleaner and safer roads, increased access to green space, encouraging active travel, and supporting local communities.  |
| <b>Key Decision:</b>      | Yes due to significant expenditure   |
| <b>Financial Summary:</b> | <p>This report seeks approval for capital expenditure of £1,736,941 to cover costs associated with detailed design and implementation of the proposals identified in this report.</p> <p>The net expenditure is £2,017,726 and fully funded through a combination of Neighbourhood CIL, HS2 Road Safety fund, PPM revenue, s106 contributions and 3<sup>rd</sup> Party funding.</p> <p>The approved capital programme contains a budget of £1,310,000 in respect of these works, in addition to £130,000 spent in 2021/22. A bid has been proposed to add a further £560,000 to the 2023/24 capital budget, covering the full requirement.</p> |
| <b>Report of:</b>         | Amy Jones, Director of Environment   |

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the detailed design and implementation of the proposed highway improvement works for St John's Wood High Street following a public consultation held in September and October 2022.
- 1.2 Subject to approval of this report, works to proceed with implementation of these measures are scheduled to commence in Spring 2023.

## **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 The following recommendations are approved by the Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality:
- 2.2 That approval is given to proceed with detailed design and implementation of the proposed public realm improvements on St John's Wood High Street and neighbouring streets in the project scope as set out in section 5 and shown in the Background papers of this report.
- 2.3 That approval is given to commit capital expenditure of £1,736,941.00 necessary to carry out the detailed design and implementation of the proposals for St John's Wood High Street project. The project has approved budget of £1,310,000 and a request has been proposed for the 2023/24 capital programme for the additional required, as detailed in section 7.
- 2.4 That approval is given to modify and make traffic regulation orders in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, necessary to accommodate the new highways improvements for the scheme.
- 2.5 That delegated authority is given to the Acting Director of City Highways to approve minor modifications as necessary to the approved scheme, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality.

## **3. Reasons for Decision**

- 3.1 To allow completion of public highway improvement works. The improvements will help to enhance the area, by improving provisions for walking and cycling, enhancing the public realm and facilitate better and safer movement of traffic.

#### **4. Background including Policy Context**

- 4.1 St John's Wood Movement Strategy al fresco dining measures were installed in and around St John's Wood High Street in May 2020 in response to the Covid pandemic. It included one way traffic direction on the High Street (north), widened footways and outside seating for al fresco dining, installed under a temporary traffic order to provide safe space for food and beverage use and to encourage social distancing. As of November 2022, most of these measures remain in place under a Temporary Traffic Order (expiring in November 2024), using barriers, cones and planter boxes.
- 4.2 In July 2021 the Neighbourhood Forum, the St John's Wood Society, were successful in securing £1.41M Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) funding for a public realm scheme that sought to build on the success of the temporary Movement Strategy measures that provide permanent public realm benefits for pedestrians, cyclists and greening, whilst creating a calmer more vibrant atmosphere in which to provide outside dining and attract footfall to the High Street.
- 4.3 Between 17th August and 12th September 2021, a consultation was held to gauge local opinion for the principle of a permanent scheme. The consultation showed 84% (799) support for the idea of a permanent enhancement scheme for the High Street, and 86% support (820) for the retention of the current alfresco dining and one-way system until the new scheme was ready to be implemented. The general comments were that the emergency measures helped bring a new vibrancy to the High Street, attract visitors and this should be built upon, whilst considering greening and other pedestrian benefits.
- 4.4 In September 2021 WCC highways started work on feasibility design for a permanent scheme, including a traffic study, surveys and a highway engineering design at a cost of £85,000. The Highway design team is being led by WCC highways and includes representation from The St John's Wood Society (SJWS), and support from Ward Councillors.
- 4.5 Following a traffic study and completion of feasibility and initial design, in March 2021 a consultation was held on a highway design for the High Street that aimed to retain the one-way northbound traffic with permanent widened footways, greening, street trees and junction build-outs.
- 4.6 The consultation met with some resistance from local businesses stakeholders on the High Street, on not just the design, but the timing and duration of the planned works. The consultation received 349 responses with 76% objecting to the proposals. The themes of objection were that the direction of the one way should be reversed (on the basis that visitors to the High Street come in the main from the north and southbound makes this more onerous), there should be more space for outside dining, and the impact and timing of the works would have a detrimental effect on local trade.
- 4.7 Following the results of the March-May consultation, design updates were undertaken between June and August 2022 that took into account the main themes of objection

and made changes to the design. At the same time, the majority Landowner Trophaeum Asset Management submitted design proposals of their own. All the submissions from the consultation were considered and the highway design was amended in light of all the representations received. As a response to the feedback in the consultation, design amendments were developed to reverse the one-way to make the High Street south-bound, with vehicle access from the north, with additional footway widening at key food and beverage locations to provide more pedestrian space and opportunity for outside dining.

## **5. St John's Wood Highway Public Realm design**

5.1 The proposals include the following improvements (a General Arrangement drawing is included in the background papers).

- One-way Southbound traffic on the High Steet with a short section of one-way working on Barrow Hill Road.
- Footway widening along the whole length of the High Street by approximately 1 metre on both sides providing more pedestrian space and opportunities for outside dining and greening.
- Junction treatments and new pedestrian crossing points on wider build-outs situated at key sections of the length of the High Street, and at Circus Road/Cochrane Street.
- 14 new trees
- Reallocation of parking and loading, with two electric vehicle charging units
- Introduction of a 7.5 tonne lorry ban for the area to deter lorry through-movements
- Cycle contraflow access on Barrow Hill Road
- New benches
- 9 New cycle parking areas, with more than 20 new cycle stands.
- Renewal of footway paving, carriageway resurfacing, and new street lighting

5.2 The design will be updated in Detailed Design stage with an emphasis on identifying additional trees to the 14 already identified, improving the detailed design of the buildouts, and exploring the retention of planter boxes purchased for the 2020 Movement Strategy measures.

## 6. New Consultation – September/October 2022

- 6.2 A three-week consultation was launched on the updated designs from 28th September to 19th October.
- 6.3 A new website was set up [www.sjwhighstreet.co.uk](http://www.sjwhighstreet.co.uk) which included a questionnaire for consultees, key documents, and FAQs. 3640 leaflets with links to the consultation were posted to frontages in the area, 2500 flyers were distributed and scheme posters were installed in the window of a vacant shop on the High Street. Additionally, WCC digital team put out social media and Ward Councillors and SJW Society encouraged people to respond through on-street handouts of flyers, newsletters, and social media channels.
- 6.4 In the questionnaire, consultees were asked to state their position on the design, with three options to choose from: 'support', 'do not support', or 'I'm not sure', with an optional comments box to provide specific feedback. Every consultee was also required to state a post code.
- 6.5 There were 1756 valid responses to the on-line questionnaire over the three weeks. To question 4: "Do you support or not support the proposed scheme overall", the response was as follows:

### All responses

|             |     |     |
|-------------|-----|-----|
| Support     | 952 | 54% |
| Not support | 757 | 43% |
| Not sure    | 47  | 3%  |

**1756**

- 6.6 Of the 757 objections, 359 did not state any reason or grounds for objecting. Of the remainder, the main reasons are listed below, where many objections included multiple categories.

| Reason for Objection               | Responses |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Negative effect on businesses      | 170       |
| Parking issues                     | 131       |
| Request for two-way traffic        | 63        |
| Generally unnecessary              | 54        |
| Design of buildouts unnecessary    | 25        |
| Will result in congestion          | 12        |
| Issues for elderly/disabled access | 11        |
| Existing/external issues           | 10        |
| Other                              | 78        |

- 6.7 There was a general perception from many who objected that the impact of highways works will lead to disruption and that there would be a loss of parking that would result in reduced levels of visitors and that these factors would have a detrimental effect on businesses. The design team were aware of these issues arising from the previous consultation and mitigated impacts on parking by providing additional visitor bays off the High Street so that in total there would be no loss of visitor parking bays in the vicinity of the scheme compared with both 2019 and 2020 parking bay levels. Despite efforts and specific information on the website on reallocation of parking there remained a perception by some that the scheme would result in lost visitor parking, and this is reflected in the comments.
- 6.8 The impact of works will be mitigated by the duration being limited to a 7 month period (5 months on the High Street) and planned in discreet phases of closures to minimise local impacts. Additionally, a Public Liaison Officer will be on hand to help coordinate access during the works.
- 6.9 Other objection comments centred around feelings that the works were unnecessary, and that pedestrian improvements and buildouts would not bring benefits to the High Street and would generally be detrimental. The project’s proposals for increased pedestrian space and greening and additional cycle parking meet Fairer Westminster policy, and many studies including by Living Streets have shown that investment in public realm can bring significant benefits in terms of footfall to a High Street environment (<https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/3890/pedestrian-pound-2018.pdf>).
- 6.10 Geographic analysis shows a pattern of strong support in the vicinity of the scheme which declines in areas further away from the High Street. For the postcode NW8 which is the area encompassing the High Street and vicinity there were 1208 responses representing 69% of the total. For NW8 the responses to Question 4 were as follows.

**NW8 responses**

|             |     |     |
|-------------|-----|-----|
| Support     | 750 | 62% |
| Not support | 419 | 35% |
| Not sure    | 39  | 3%  |

**1208**

- 6.11 The above results show a majority in support for the scheme and a strong local support.

6.12 Of the 548 responses from outside NW8, the results to Question 4 were:

**Outside NW8**

|             |     |     |
|-------------|-----|-----|
| Support     | 202 | 37% |
| Not support | 338 | 62% |
| Not sure    | 8   | 1%  |

**548**

- 6.13 The reduction in support in outlying areas can perhaps be explained by the perceived impact on parking for those choosing to drive into the area from further out. It should be noted that access from the north (where according to the main landowner demographically a large proportion of customers originate) has been made easier by the introduction of the southbound movement on the High Street.
- 6.14 An option in the survey to provide contact details for future communications and updates received 630 email addresses.
- 6.15 As well as public consultations, internal key stage review was undertaken in January 2022 with various teams within the council including Policy, Planning, Waste, Parking, Parks etc. The review provided an opportunity for the design to be discussed and reviewed and invited any comments from the various teams. All comments received during the review were carefully assessed and incorporated within the design where appropriate.
- 6.16 Regent’s Park Ward Members were engaged with throughout the design, and before and during the consultation.

**7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The full cost of the proposals for the St John’s Wood High Street scheme is £2,017,726. This cost covers all stages of design and delivery, namely stages 1-6, where 1-3 are Feasibility Design, Initial Design and Detailed Design, 4 is Mobilisation, 5 Implementation, and 6 Defects Period and Closure. The costs for stage 1 and 2 (feasibility and initial design) have already been incurred in order to complete these stages of the project.
- 7.2 Approval is now sought to progress onto the remaining stages of the project (stages 3-6) covering detailed design and implementation. These stages are estimated to cost £1,736,941. This cost is inclusive of WCC managements costs, third party costs and risk and contingency allowance.

7.3 All costs associated with this scheme are being fully funded by contributions from Neighbourhood CIL, High Speed 2 Road Safety Fund, Section 106 contributions, and Street Lighting Planned and Preventative maintenance (a transfer of budget to cover the planned replacement of lamp columns).

| Funding                             |                   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Neighbourhood CIL                   | £1,411,777        |
| S106 Embassy Court, Wellington Road | £14,064           |
| S106 Trees (Abbey Rd)               | £20,158           |
| S106 Trees (Lord's Cricket Ground)  | £10,000           |
| Street Lighting PPM                 | £58,400           |
| HS2 Road Safety Fund                | £500,000          |
| Trophauem Asset Management          | £12,356           |
|                                     | <b>£2,026,755</b> |

7.4 Budget of £1,250,000 was approved for the 2022/23 capital programme following expenditure of £130,000 in 2021/22. A bid has been submitted to the 2023/24 capital budget setting process for an additional £560,000 to meet the full expenditure requirement.

7.5 There is a risk that current high inflation will impact on delivery costs. This has been provided for with the current year inflation factored into the Stage 5 Implementation estimates, and a further two years of inflation included in the budgeted Risk Allowance.

## 8. Legal Implications

8.1 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 provides the Council with powers to regulate or restrict traffic on roads within the Borough, in the interest of safety, including the making of Traffic Regulation Orders.

8.2 The proposed changes to parking locations and designation as part of this scheme will require a Traffic Order to be made under section 6 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Any representation the City Council receives during the Traffic Order making process should be delegated to the Acting Director of City Highways (or such other authorised officer) in line with the current Traffic Order making process.8.3 The City Council has a General Power of Competence under Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to improve the well-being of its area the former power being under section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000

8.4 Legal Services (ref Isaac Carter) has reviewed this report and is satisfied that the proposed measures are consistent with 8.1 and 8.2 above



## **8. Carbon Impact**

- 9.1 A carbon impact assessment has been undertaken using the WCC Carbon Impact Evaluation Tool on a Cost-Based Calculation based on forecast expenditure. The GHC Emissions is estimated to be 521.81 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e.
- 9.2 Wherever possible existing materials that are taken up will be recycled. New tree planting and improvement of the streetscape will not only add to the visually amenity of the streetscape, but will have a positive effect on urban heat trap and local air quality.
- 9.3 Wider footways, a generally more attractive environment and improved cycle provision will encourage people to walk or cycle to access the local shopping parade and places of work.

## **9. Equalities Implications**

- 10.1 An equalities impact assessment has been undertaken on the design at Stage 1. The scheme will improve the accessibility of the streets for persons with mobility difficulties through the installation of flush kerbs at pedestrian crossings.
- 10.2 Based on the EQIA review, there may be an overrepresentation of people within the following protected groups: women, children, disabled, pregnancy and maternity and gender re-assignment. It is anticipated that the proposed scheme will provide benefits for these groups once in operation.
- 10.3 Physically disabled people are likely to experience positive impacts as a result of the intended benefits of the proposed scheme during operation. The wider footways, flush surfaces and realigned raised table junctions are likely to be particularly beneficial to those who are physically disabled, for example wheelchair users and those with mobility limitations. The three new benches to be installed throughout the scheme would also be particularly beneficial to disabled people.
- 10.4 It is proposed that Artificial Stone Paving (ASP) is laid throughout the scheme to achieve consistency along the high street. This would benefit people who are visually impaired due to it creating a standardisation in paving pattern and colour. The reduction in vehicle presence through removal of the northbound lane could lead to lower sound levels along the high street, being of particular benefit to those who are deaf or hard of hearing, and those with certain learning disabilities such as auditory processing disorder.
- 10.5 It is likely that there will be some negative impacts experienced by protected groups on a temporary basis during the construction phase. It is considered these impacts, if sufficiently mitigated through the implementation of measures such as a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), will be reduced to a negligible level.

## **10. Programme**

- 9.1 Subject to approval of this report, works to proceed with implementation of these measures are scheduled to commence in Spring 2023 for a period of 7 months.
- 9.2 The City Council will implement the works using its service provider FM Conway Limited.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact:**

Simon Morgan – Programme Assurance Manager – City Highways

[smorgan@Westminster.gov.uk](mailto:smorgan@Westminster.gov.uk)

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 1- General Arrangement drawing outlining scheme proposals
- 2- Consultation report
- 3- Project cost summary for the proposals

## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix A:** Other Implications

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality**

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: Paul Dimoldenberg Date: 30/11/2022

NAME: Cllr Paul Dimoldenberg

State nature of interest if any .....  
.....  
(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled **St John's Wood High Street Public Realm Improvement Scheme**

Signed Paul Dimoldenberg

**Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg, Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality**

Date .....30/11/2022.....

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment: .....  
.....

If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Director of Law, City Treasurer and, if there are staffing implications, the Director of Human Resources (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.