



## Highways Committee 27<sup>th</sup> July 2011

### Report from the Head of Transportation

For information

Wards Affected:  
Harlesden, Kensal Green

#### **Briefing Report – Harlesden Town Centre Major Scheme**

#### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 This report informs members of the current progress on the Harlesden Town Centre “Major Scheme”.
- 1.2 Transport for London’s (major scheme) funding regime provides an opportunity for Council’s to develop and implement schemes to improve the operation and appearance of town centres so as to support the vibrancy and vitality of those town centres.

Officers are currently working on a scheme for Harlesden Town Centre with the aim of securing up to £4 million to deliver the proposals. The aim of the scheme is support the development of an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable town centre which contributes to the wider objectives of reducing the need to travel (by motorised means) and where travel is necessary, to maximise the attractiveness of public transport by improving its reliability and speed.

- 1.4 As a precursor to the main project funding has already been secured to implement a pedestrian accessibility scheme on Station Road linking Willesden Junction Station to the Town Centre this financial year.
- 1.5 This report sets out the background to the scheme, the progress made to date and the programme towards completion.

## 2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the contents of this report.

## 3.0 Background

- 3.1 Harlesden town centre is at the centre of its diverse community, yet like many places its' status has been progressively reduced so that it has increasingly become a place of motor traffic domination, congestion, broken pedestrian desire lines and road danger with a poor public realm.

- 3.2 An opportunity to address the challenges facing Harlesden exists through Transport for London's (TfL) funding regime.

TfL's "Major Schemes" budget (formerly the Area Based Scheme budget) affords an opportunity for Council's to develop and implement schemes to improve the operation and appearance of Town Centres so as to support the vibrancy and vitality of those town centres.

Subject to securing the necessary investment from TfL, there is an opportunity, through re-shaping the public realm, to provide a catalyst for a major shift in the commercial ranking and quality of Harlesden town centre so as to enable it to better serve and contribute to the regeneration of the residential and industrial hinterland, and to become an attractive place that people will want to visit, linger, socialise and spend money.

- 3.3 In relation to transport, there is an opportunity to create a town centre which contributes to the wider objectives of reducing the need to travel (by motorised means) and where travel is necessary, to maximise the attractiveness of public transport by improving its reliability and speed.

- 3.4 There is an increasing recognition that any proposals aimed at changing the "look and feel" need to be understood and owned by the local community. In developing proposals for Harlesden, officers have developed and are working within an engagement framework that is radically different from the approach traditionally employed for transport/public realm schemes.

At the outset of the project a community engagement consultant was appointed to help form and develop capacity of the Harlesden Town Team. The Town Team comprises: local residents, businesses, Council officers, ward members and TfL representatives. The Team is led and managed by members of the local community with support officers. The Town Team concept provides a "middle ground" where the community, the Council and other stakeholders operate as equal partners moving towards a common goal.

- 3.5 The first stage in the Town Team process was the development and publication of the "Harlesden Town Charter – A Vision for Harlesden". This document was published in August 2010 and sets out a 5 – 10 year vision for the community and the local environment and is seen as the first step in realising the potential of Harlesden. The Charter assesses Harlesden as a place and looks at its weaknesses, assets and its issues.

- 3.6 Consistent with the aspirations set out in the Charter, and with a view to utilising the opportunity presented by TfL's major schemes funding regime, an extensive multi-million pound scheme for Harlesden Town Centre is being developed in conjunction with the Town Team.

The Harlesden Town Centre Project, anticipated to be funded primarily from TfL, will improve Harlesden Town Centre by (i) making changes to the traffic and parking arrangements (which will reduce congestion and improve road safety), (ii) increasing pedestrian space and (iii) improving the quality and layout of the public space (road surface, footways, street furniture etc.)

It is anticipated that these changes will improve the "look and feel" of Harlesden as a place and contribute to improving its vitality and sustainability as a local town centre.

- 3.7 During the early development of the main scheme officers identified an opportunity to secure funding from TfL to implement a scheme, outside of the original scheme area, that would effectively enlarge and compliment the core scheme.

This (Station Road) scheme will improve pedestrian accessibility and the public realm along Station Road which forms the key walking route from Willesden Junction Station to Harlesden Town Centre. The proposals have been developed in partnership with the Town Team and funding has been secured to implement the scheme during this 2011/12 financial year.

Implementing the Station Road scheme has a number of advantages. It will (i) improve the appearance and operation of Station Road, (ii) offer the opportunity to model the "look and feel" of the core scheme in advance and (iii) send a signal to the community that the Council has the commitment and capacity to deliver the core project and hence meet local aspirations.

#### **4.0 The Core Town Centre Project**

- 4.1 The focus of the Harlesden Town Centre core project is to provide a dramatically improved pedestrian environment with reduced road danger whilst facilitating improvements for all other road users. Improvements to traffic movement are essential. To help achieve this, significant changes are expected to be made to the existing gyratory system, to Harlesden's controlled parking zones, parking enforcement, and the quality of the public realm.

- 4.2 The Harlesden gyratory (one way) system forms part of the A404 and is part of TfL's London's Strategic Route Network (SRN). Because of its importance as a traffic route, the development of proposals are subject to detailed modelling requirements (and subsequent approval by TfL) to make sure they have no negative impact on the operation of the SRN.

4.2 Options for the scheme are being developed alongside the Harlesden Town Team 2010 to ensure the scheme provides maximum benefit for the local community.

4.3 Key elements of the project currently being progressed include:

- A review of the operation of the existing gyratory and traffic signals to seek opportunities for the creation of new public/pedestrian spaces.
- Design of facilities to enhance pedestrian accessibility.
- Review of the operation and movement of buses through Harlesden
- A review of the existing parking and loading activity. One of the challenges of the scheme will be to find an acceptable balance when allocating parking space. Significant amounts of parking space along the existing retail frontage are taken up by permit holders. This restricts capacity for shopper pay & display and business loading activity. Equally, residents on the gyratory need to be provided opportunity to park.
- Developing proposals for the CCTV enforcement of parking so as to improve compliance – with a positive impact on congestion and road safety.
- Developing a Harlesden place-making guide, consistent with the Council's place-making guide. This will define the approach, material's and street furniture to be used within the public realm. Station Road will be the trial for the new public realm standards which will subsequently be rolled out to the rest of the town centre and other future work in the area.
- Ensuring mechanisms for designing out crime and antisocial behaviour and are being incorporated onto the design.
- Reviewing opportunities for improving cleansing, waste collection and recycling arrangements within the town centre in a way that supports the core project objectives.

4.4 Public consultation on the core scheme proposals is programmed to take place during November 2011.

To assist in raising awareness of the scheme in advance and during the consultation a communication plan for the scheme has been developed. A Brent website ([www.brent.gov.uk/harlesdentown](http://www.brent.gov.uk/harlesdentown) ) and dedicated email address is already in place to distribute information and receive feedback. Promotion will also take place in Brent Magazine and other media. Options for increasing awareness utilising on street advertising are also being investigated.

## **5.0 Station Road Project**

5.1 Within the Harlesden Town Charter, and although outside the area defined as for the core scheme, Station Road was identified as a key link providing pedestrian access from Willesden Junction Station to the Town Centre.

Funding has been secured from TfL to implement improvements to Station Road, as a precursor to the main town centre scheme, during the current (2011/12) financial year.

5.2 The Station Road scheme is shown at Appendix 2. The key elements of the proposal for Station Road are:

- Increased pavement widths,
- New high quality paving and street furniture,
- A new Zebra Crossing,
- New or upgraded entry treatments across Harley Road, Caple Road and Ranelagh Road,
- The relocation of the gated road closure on Honeywood Road to create an enlarged pedestrian space,
- 18 new trees,
- Reduced street clutter and renewal of any essential items,
- Upgrade of the existing lamp columns to white lighting.

5.3 Consultation with residents and businesses in the area took place during June 2011

5.4 A total of 33 questionnaires were returned. This equates to a return rate of 12%. Of the responses 58% supported the proposals, 27% opposed them and 15% expressed no opinion.

5.5 (Officer) delegated approval to the proposals has been obtained and implementation of the proposals is programmed to begin in September 2011.

5.6 All of the materials that will be used on Station Road, such as the paving slabs and street furniture, will also be used throughout the main town centre area and any other gateway roads that are improved. The materials to be used have been agreed through a number of workshops and discussions with the Town Team 2010. The materials to be used, and the design, are wholly consistent with the Council's Place-making Guide.

## **6.0 Funding arrangements**

6.1 Development of the Core Town Centre scheme is being funded during 2011/12 using a £150,000 allocation within the Council's annual, TfL funded, Local Implementation Plan (LIP) "corridors & neighbourhoods" programme. That programme was approved by Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

6.2 A "one off" allocation has been made by TfL of £340,000 through the Major Scheme's Programme to predominantly fund the Station Road scheme. This will be partly match funded with £90,000 of Developer (s106) contributions.

6.3 A provisional allocation of £3 million has been identified by TfL within 2012/13 and 2013/14 from their Major Schemes Programme to fund the core scheme.

The TfL Major Schemes Programme is separate from the annual TfL LIP regime. Success in securing funding from the Major Schemes Programme does not compromise the size of an authority's allocation under the annual LIP regime.

It is anticipated that the Major Schemes Programme allocation will be supplemented by approximately £400,000 of Developer (s106) contributions and an element of TfL LIP funding within the 2013/14 and 2014/15 financial years.

## **7.0 Programme**

7.1 The current programme sets the following key dates within the project.

- Feasibility/Preliminary of the core project Design – to October 2011
- Public Consultation on core project - November 2011
- Detailed Design on core project – to September 2012
- Implementation of core project November 2012 to September 2014
- Implementation of Station Road September 2011 to February 2012

7.2 The programme, in relation to the core scheme, set out above is dependent on success in securing funding from TfL.

TfL have provisionally allocated £3m for the scheme within their Business Plan and TfL officers have continually indicated informally that the funding will be forthcoming.

In a sense the early allocation of the £400k to implement the Station Road scheme is an indication of TfL's commitment to the Council's proposals. Nevertheless until such time that core scheme has successfully negotiated TfL's project gateway process and the funding has been secured the programme beyond 11/12 must be considered as indicative.

## **8.0 Financial Implications**

8.1 This is an information item and has no financial implications at this time.

## **9.0 Legal Implications**

9.1 None.

## **10.0 Diversity Implications**

10.1 There are no diversity implications at this time. At an appropriate stage an equalities assessment will be undertaken.

## **11.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications**

11.1 None

## **12.0 Environmental Implications**

12.1 None at this time

### **Background Papers**

Harlesden Town Charter  
Brent's TfL LIP allocation 2011/12

### **Appendices**

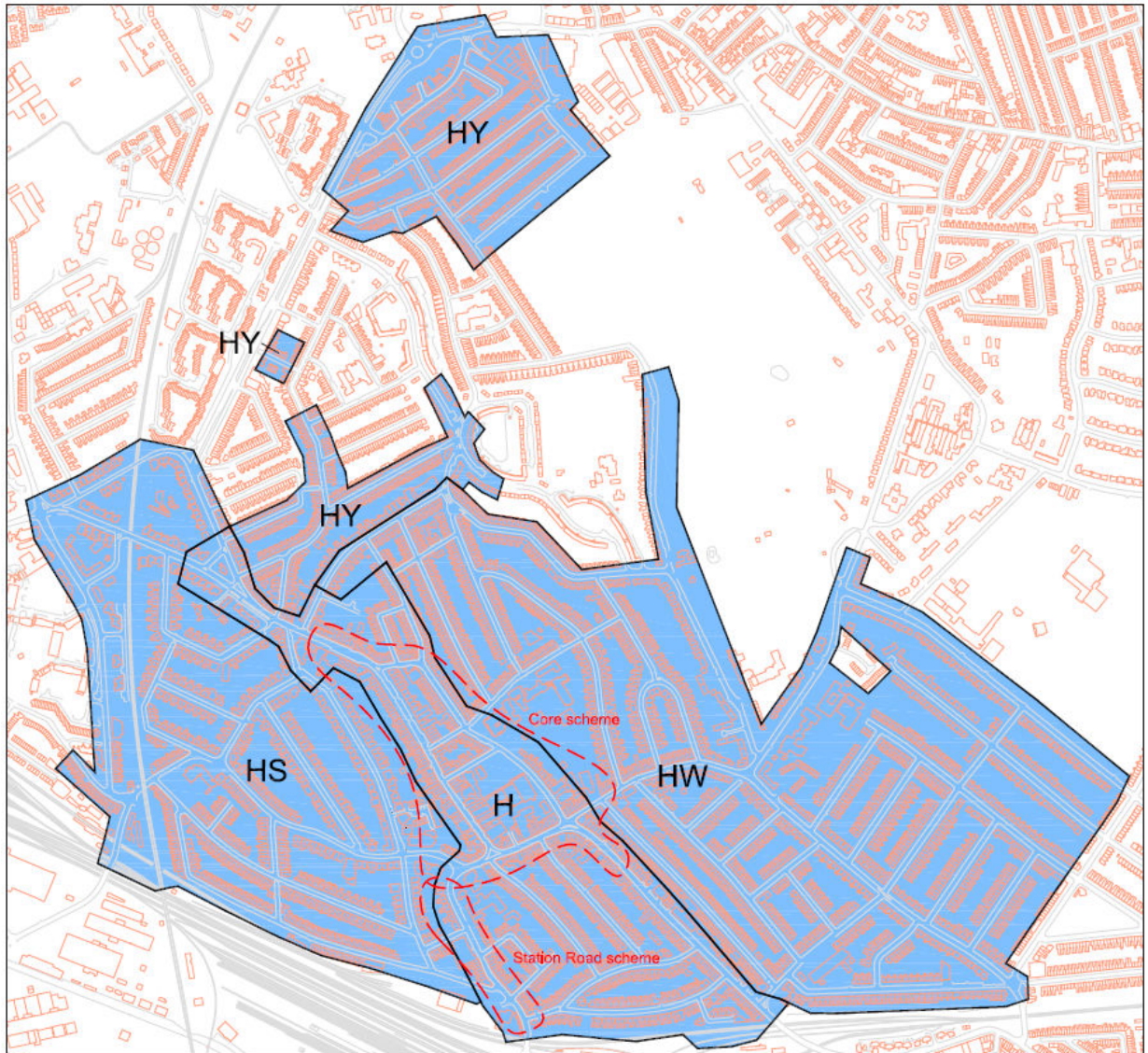
- Appendix 1 – Scheme and CPZ locations
- Appendix 2 – Station Road Scheme

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## Appendix 1: Scheme and CPZ Locations





## Appendix 2: Station Road Scheme

