

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
8th December 2003

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT

FOR ACTION

NAME OF WARDS
TOKYNTON
WEMBLEY CENTRAL

REPORT TITLE : WEMBLEY STADIUM STATION HUB FEASIBILITY STUDY

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Wembley Stadium Station Hub Feasibility Study examines the area between the High Road and land to the south and west of the New English National Stadium, at the centre of which is Wembley Stadium Station. In particular it examines the opportunities for more effective linkage between the High Road and the station regeneration area, the opportunities for making improvements to the operation and environment of Wembley Stadium Station on event and non event days and for enhancing the Station's function as a public transport interchange.
- 1.2 The study was commissioned by Brent but was guided by a steering group with representatives of the major stakeholders including Network Rail, the major landowners, the London Development Agency, and Greater London Authority and community and trader representatives.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the contents of the study and how the implementation of the link will now be taken forward.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Executive:
 - notes the contents of the report and
 - agrees the approach set out in the report for providing a link between the High Road and South Way to support the agreed Supplementary Planning Guidance, the Wembley Development Framework.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The cost of producing the study has been met from the Destination Wembley Single Regeneration Budget and from section 106 funding relating to improvements to the Wembley Stadium Station, including the undertaking of a study. There are no further direct costs relating to the study.

- 3.2 There is budget allocated to proceed with an element of the works in the Destination Wembley SRB. This initially relates to the appointment of consultants to produce a detailed design for the bridge/raft structure. The implementation of the wider Hub project is being progressed by the London Development Agency. This may involve the acquisition of land holdings and property to secure the route. The LDA and their consultants are currently in discussion with key landowners and property owners in this respect.
- 3.3 The link will provide an important part of the public realm serving the area. Although the link will cross the Chiltern Line, Network Rail have indicated that they will not take responsibility for the bridge structure, and its long term maintenance would have to be undertaken as a future liability by Brent Council. This will need to be dealt with in a separate report.
- 3.4 The Hub study report recommends the reconfiguration of Wembley Triangle junction to assist in the creation of the southern extension of the route which would connect with the High Road. Therefore, if the recommended route was implemented in full, there might be future cost implications, although these could be offset by planning obligations relating to the redevelopment of development parcels which benefit from the provision of the link.

4.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no additional staffing requirements arising as a result of the recommendations of this report.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Wembley Stadium Station Hub Feasibility study would have a number of positive environmental implications. It seeks the redevelopment of an area contaminated with Japanese Knotweed which is highly invasive and can reduce the biodiversity of a site or area. Additionally, it proposes the construction of a more direct pedestrian route, separating pedestrians from the traffic on Wembley Hill Road. The bridge link is associated with improved access to and facilities for an improved station and the provision of a bus interchange. These improvements to the public transport facilities will assist in reducing the need for car borne travel. Also, the resulting development parcels are proposed for a mix of uses, including residential, to create a sustainable development where people can live, work and find recreation within the same area, reducing people's need to travel.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The aspiration to better link the High Road with the stadium regeneration area is rooted in the Replacement Unitary Development Plan and the Wembley Development Framework Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).
- 6.2 The study demonstrates how such a link could be implemented and the document could form an important part of LDA's case at a CPO inquiry, should that be necessary.

- 6.3 To implement the link, a number of existing properties and land would need to be acquired. The future implementation of the link is being pursued by the London Development Agency (LDA) who is actively involved in discussions with key stakeholders to achieve this end. In agreeing the Hub Study, however, legal have advised that there is some possibility that the Council could be vulnerable to blight notices from property owners in the line of the route. However, it is more likely that these would be directed at the LDA which is seeking to acquire the land and property either by agreement or by exercise of their CPO powers. Therefore, the Council should seek to formalise an agreement with the LDA that they will acquire such property, and indemnify the Council against any costs arising from the possibility of blight notices.
- 6.4 The detailed procedure for blight notices is contained in Sections 149 – 171 and Schedule 13 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Essentially it allows owner occupiers (as defined in the Act) of qualifying properties of “Blighted Land” to serve a blight notice on the relevant authority, which in this case is likely to be the London Development Agency as the authority which will be acquiring the land.

7.0 DETAIL

Background statement

- 7.1 The Replacement Unitary Development Plan sets out in Policy WEM2 the need for improved pedestrian links, particularly connecting Olympic Way with the town centre. The link from the High Road to South Way is a critical part of this route. This need for improved connectivity is also outlined in the Wembley Development Framework which was approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 22nd September this year. The SPG, which sets out the principles and parameters for development in the area surrounding the stadium, outlines the broad requirements for a link. Section 5.0 of the Framework states that “the precise form of the link will need to be determined by a more detailed study”. Officers consider that this study meets the expressed need for such a more detailed study.
- 7.2 In addition to improved access to the stadium on event days, the link will also help encourage activity and vitality on non event days, spreading regeneration benefits back into the High Road.
- 7.3 In April this year, a consultant’s brief was prepared to explore the feasibility of providing such a link and in the redevelopment of the area surrounding Wembley Stadium Station. Following a tender process, Arup were chosen to produce the study. In so doing, they would consider the preferred alignment of the link, the possible cost indications, land requirements, possessions required as well as the opportunities for improving the access to and the operation of Wembley Stadium Station on event and non event days and the potential for providing a bus interchange.

Steering Group

- 7.4 Largely because of the diverse interests in the area, it was decided that the study project should be guided by a steering group. This was made up of key stakeholders including major landowners – Quintain Estates, RE International,

Network Rail, - the train operator – Chiltern Railway – the GLA Group with representatives from London Development Agency, the Greater London Authority and Transport for London, community and trader’s representatives, and representatives from the SRB and Brent Council.

- 7.5 The Steering Group met on four occasions, at each major stage of the project – baseline information, formulation of options, the preferred option development and implementation and planning stage.

Summary of study findings

A Phased approach

- 7.6 The study considered the redevelopment of the area including the provision of the link in a phased way, reflecting the likely development stages or phases.
- The first major stage would in place by the stadium opening in September 2005. By that time the basis link would need to be in situ, creating a safe route for those using the stadium on event days.
 - The second stage would depend on developer interest but would be between 2003 and 2007. At this stage, it would be anticipated that some of the development parcels created by the link would be developed, including areas adjacent to the triangle, completing the link to Wembley High Road.
 - The third phase would be linked to the current proposals being put forward by Quintain Estates Development, completing development nearest the stadium and the provision of the new station facilities and bus interchange.
- 7.7 The study proposes a new pedestrian street or boulevard ‘The Wembley Route’ between the High Road and the Stadium regeneration area, creating a visual and physical link, encouraging greater movement and physically spreading redevelopment opportunities into the heart of the Town Centre. The route would be deliverable in two years, creating a street frontage onto which previously backland development parcels can face. The proposals can be broken down into a number of components as follows:

The link

- 7.8 The report recommended an alignment for the route as set out in Appendix 1. The reasons for the proposed alignment are
- To minimise land take whilst achieving maximum regeneration in terms of potential development on land parcels either side.
 - To align with the new stadium structure, capitalising on its iconic image at every point along the route. This form of way marking has been lacking for crowds travelling to the stadium from the south west.
- 7.9 The link elements would include a north and south approach/ramps, a bridge/raft, a pedestrian crossing and a connection with the High Road.

- 7.10 The north approach crosses land in the ownership of RE International, which has been vacant for many years and is currently infested with Japanese Knotweed. There is currently a 10 metre right of way across this land which was used for crowd management purposes associated with the stadium on event days. The alignment of the route would vary this right of way and require more of the site to be given over to the route. The benefit to the site, however, would be the opportunity for frontage development where currently there is none.
- 7.11 The south approach would join Wembley Hill Road where the Network Housing building is located. It would require the acquisition of this building and its demolition to create this part of the route.
- 7.12 The width of the 'Wembley route' is approximately 18 metres which is the same as a typical Central London Street with a wider central section comprised of the raft. The width of the link is designed to combine appropriate privacy space between facing buildings with improved crowd management needs, allowing the link to become the primary route for event day crowds using the station or continuing on to Wembley High Road.
- 7.13 One of the reasons a raft is proposed because it would be easy to prefabricate and swing into position across the Chiltern Line, limiting the disruption to rail operation and so the cost. Besides facilitating north south movement, it would also provide for stepped access to the station platforms and a future allowance for a ticket hall area on its western side. This would enable paid users in the future to access both platforms, removing the need for a separate linking structure.
- 7.14 The southern section of the recommended route links Wembley Hill Road with Wembley High Road, on the western side of the Triangle. Besides removing the restrictive widths of pavements in this area, which force people into the road on event days, this extension of the route would provide the visual connection with the stadium development which is so important in regeneration terms. As part of this route, the report proposes the reconfiguration of the Triangle junction to simplify traffic movements and pedestrian movement across it. This potentially creates an open space on the western side which could act as a gateway space and also assist in crowd movements on event days. It would, however, require the demolition of existing properties on the western side of the Triangle.

New Public Transport Interchange

- 7.15 The route will include the opportunity for a new railway station, capitalising on the good access into London Marylebone. Through the provision of new stairs to the platforms for event days and the potential of creating a new ticket area and entrance hall to the north, the study demonstrates how a commuter facility can be developed serving local residents and visitors to the stadium and surrounding development.
- 7.16 The report identified an area on either side of South Way that would be appropriate for a bus interchange, enhancing the use and popularity of the station. The intention was to provide a convenient location for this facility and one which did not involve significant land take. The bus interchange is unlikely to be required until the Quintain scheme is substantially developed.

Event Management

- 7.17 Besides improving access between the High Road and stadium regeneration area, the proposal has also been designed to perform an operational function in improving the safe management and movement of crowds away from the stadium and other facilities on event days. The width of the route is sufficient to cope with increased crowd movements both to Wembley Stadium Station and beyond, to Wembley Central. The design includes an interim marshalling area to the north, which could be replaced by a public square at the southern end of the Quintain Boulevard later on in the development sequence.

Implementation

- 7.18 The Hub Study provides the basis for creating the link and promoting the redevelopment of the area between South Way and the Triangle. In order to achieve the link, particularly for stadium opening, a number of land holdings and property will need to be acquired. The alignment has been chosen to minimise the number of properties which would be affected, commensurate with the need to provide for ease of pedestrian movement and a clear view of the stadium. The acquisition of land and property is being undertaken by the London Development Agency (LDA) who are involved in discussions with key landowners and stakeholders to facilitate the link. This may involve compulsory purchase powers being used. If necessary, then this would be undertaken by the LDA using their powers.

8.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

8.1 Details of Documents:

- (i) Brent's Replacement Unitary Development Plan: Revised Deposit Draft 2000
- (ii) Wembley Development Framework: Approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance September 2003
- (iii) Wembley Stadium Station Hub Feasibility Study: Final Report, September 2003

- 8.2 Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact Robin Buckle, Brent Planning Service, Brent House, 349 High Road, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 6BZ, Telephone: 0208 937 5249
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