



Highways Committee
18 December 2012

**Report from the Head of
Transportation**

For Action

Wards Affected:
Harlesden

**Report Title:
Petition for kerbs and controlled crossings in Harlesden**

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report informs the Committee of a petition seeking to keep kerbs and provide controlled crossing points in Harlesden Town Centre.
- 1.2 The results of a public consultation on proposals to improve Harlesden Town Centre were presented to the Highways Committee on 20th March 2012.
- 1.3 Two options were consulted on and the committee resolved to proceed with Option B, including changes that were recommended in the report.
- 1.4 This report advises that the detailed design is currently underway and includes the provision of controlled crossing points throughout the town centre. It also advises that an accessibility consultant has been appointed to assess the entire scheme and consult with disability groups on the detailed design of the shared space/semi pedestrianized area in the High Street between Jubilee Clock and Tavistock Road.
- 1.5 This report seeks approval to continue with the current course of action. Given the strength of feeling and concerns that have been expressed over disabled access issues within the Town Centre, this report also provides an update on the work being undertaken by the Accessibility Consultants and their progress to date.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the committee note the contents of the petition and that the issues raised will be addressed as part of an on-going accessibility audit, the outcomes of which will be reported in full to the February 2013 Highways Committee.

3.0 The Petition

3.1 A petition has been received from residents of the Harlesden area via Patrick O'Shea of Brent Mentcap The petition has been verified in accordance with the council's procedures and has 64 validated signatures.

3.2 The full wording of the petition is:

'Petition to Keep Harlesden Town Centre Safe for Everyone'

"Harlesden Town centre has shops which are used by many people and also many people with disabilities. People with a Learning Disability live in Harlesden and need to feel safe in Harlesden, We need kerbs and controlled crossing points. Do not exclude us from Harlesden Town Centre. Make sure there are kerbs and safe crossing points. We don't want this to happen anywhere in Brent."

3.3 A copy of the petition is available for inspection by the Members of the Highways Committee.

4.0 Existing Situation

4.1 The Council's vision for Harlesden is to bring about a major shift in the commercial ranking and quality of Harlesden town centre, enabling it to better serve and contribute to the regeneration of its residential and industrial hinterland, and to become an attractive place that people will want to visit, linger, socialise and spend money.

4.2 Existing footways are cluttered with street furniture, including unnecessary signs and guard railing, poorly located bins and seating as well as shop frontages extending too far into the footway. This coupled with very busy footways makes it difficult for pedestrians, especially those with disabilities, to negotiate the footways.

5.0 Detail

5.1 The scheme approved at the Highways Committee on 20th March 2012 includes provision of a semi pedestrianized area on High Street between Park Parade and the Jubilee clock, as well changing the section of Manor Park Road between Tavistock Road and High Street from one way to two-way.

5.2 Disability groups who commented as part of that consultation expressed concerns over the safety and availability of controlled crossing points, as well as the availability of parking for disabled persons throughout the Town Centre and particularly in the vicinity of the semi-pedestrianised area.

5.3 The concept of "shared space" has also been a cause of concern, in that visually disabled persons may not be able to differentiate between pedestrian areas and vehicular areas (for buses and service vehicles). They are

concerned that the transition between the footway and carriageway would not be clear to those with visual impairment, who may be placed at risk as a result.

5.4 The committee has previously agreed that additional disabled bays be provided throughout the scheme and that consultation with local disability groups should be held during the course of the detailed design to ensure the best solution possible for all users of the town centre.

5.5 To facilitate this process, it was agreed that an independent accessibility consultant be commissioned to review the scheme details and make recommendations regarding accessibility issues.

6.0 Discussion

6.1 An independent accessibility consultant has been appointed to review the full Harlesden scheme. They have been tasked with:

- Reviewing the entire scheme and reporting back on any accessibility issues; and
- Organising workshops with representatives from disability groups to discuss options for the design in the semi pedestrianized area in the High Street to obtain a solution that will be suitable for all users.

6.2 Member's should note that disability groups were previously consulted on the Station Road element of the scheme at a site meeting held on 21st June 2012, which included the following attendees:

- Jyoti Patel of BADP;
- Patrick O'Shea of Brent Mencap plus other representatives;
- Visually impaired representative - Tom Reid of BADP and Karl Farrell of NFB;
- Cllr Janice Long;
- Vincent Cox of BADP; and
- John Quinn of BCT

A copy of the report from the outcome of this meeting and notes made by Cllr Long have been passed to the accessibility consultants for consideration.

6.3 The accessibility consultants initially familiarised themselves with the highway network in Harlesden and reviewed existing scheme proposals. This process generated some ideas, which were discussed with disability groups and other interested parties at a workshop held on 29th November. A further workshop is planned to ensure that all disability groups and individuals have an opportunity to comment.

6.4 One of the objectives of the workshops is to agree requirements for disabled parking and formal crossing points, as well as to determine a way to provide surface delineation that is acceptable to the various groups.

6.5 Based on the outcomes of the workshops the accessibility audit will be finalised. A further report will be presented to the Highways Committee in

February 2013 detailing the outcome of the audit and the progress of the scheme.

6.6 It is currently programmed to complete the detailed design by March 2013 with works commencing in April. Information on the progress and construction programme will be sent out to all residents, businesses and other interested parties in early 2013.

6.7 As regards the content of the petition received from residents of the Harlesden area, the outcomes of the accessibility audit and proposals that emerge will address the concerns raised and set out an action plan for the detailed design. The Highways Committee will receive a full report on this plan in February 2013.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from the report at this time.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report and its recommendations.

9.0 Diversity Implications

9.1 Aside from the issues of disabled person's accessibility and facilities within the Town Centre, there are no other equalities implications arising from this report. An EIA has been carried out as part of the scheme. This was presented to the Highways Committee as an attachment to the main report in March 2012. The assessment will continue to be reviewed throughout the detailed design.

Background Papers

None

Contact Officers

Naomi Barnes – Transportation Unit 2nd Floor West, Brent House, 349-357 High Road, Wembley, Middlesex, HA2 8TT. Telephone: 020 8937 5132. Email: naomi.barnes2@brent.gov.uk

H Amir Hosseini – Transportation Unit 2nd Floor West, Brent House, 349-357 High Road, Wembley, Middlesex, HA2 8TT. Telephone: 020 8937 5188. Email: hossein.amirhosseini@brent.gov.uk

