



Report of: **Executive Member for Environment and Transport**

<b>Meeting of:</b>	Date	Ward(s)
Executive	22 March 2018	Highbury East, St Mary's

<b>Delete as appropriate</b>	Exempt	Non-exempt
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## **SUBJECT: Highbury Corner Roundabout**

### **1. Synopsis**

- 1.1 The Council has a long-standing ambition to deliver improvements at Highbury Corner, which occupies a prominent, gateway location at the heart of the borough.
- 1.2 To this end, Transport for London (TfL) and the Council have developed joint proposals for the transformation of Highbury Corner.
- 1.3 In accordance with the Council's fairness aim, the proposed transformation of Highbury Corner Roundabout would prioritise people rather than vehicles, creating a lively, active public space while at the same time maintaining space for traffic and buses. It also offers the opportunity to open up access to a currently inaccessible greenspace in the centre of the roundabout ('the arboretum').
- 1.4 It is proposed to:
  - close the western arm of the roundabout to create a new public space partially opening and linking the arboretum to the new space and improved open-aspect station forecourt;
  - implement a two-way traffic system;
  - create fully segregated cycle lanes; and
  - close some local roads, and further change some traffic movements.

The proposal would entail withdrawal of the bus route 277 day-time service between Highbury Corner and Dalston (to be compensated by additional buses on route 30).

- 1.5 The Executive is asked to consider the implications of the proposals, the feedback from the public consultation, and to agree, in principle, to formally support the Highbury Corner Roundabout proposals as set out in this report.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 To note the outcome of the joint public consultation carried out by the Council and TfL in 2016 and the current proposals for Highbury Corner Roundabout, including changes as a result of feedback from that consultation.

- 2.2 To note the road layout changes including local motor vehicular traffic road closures and banned turns.
- 2.3 To note that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening opinion request will be forthcoming from TfL for consideration by the Council in its capacity as local planning authority (LPA) as part of adopting an EIA screening opinion.
- 2.4 To agree, in principle, to formally support the Highbury Corner Roundabout transformation, as described in this report and shown in Appendices 1-3.
- 2.5 To authorise the Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Transport, to make a decision on the Council's final position on the Highbury Corner Roundabout transformation once an EIA screening opinion has been adopted.
- 2.6 Subject to 2.5 above, to authorise the Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Transport, to agree the details of the design with TfL, in particular related to the new public space area.

### **3. Background**

#### **Context**

- 3.1 Changes, developed in collaboration with Transport for London (TfL), are proposed at Highbury Corner, prominently located at the heart of the borough, as part of the Mayor's Healthy Streets Portfolio focussing on reducing traffic dominance and prioritising walking, cycling and public transport use.
- 3.2 The Council has been working with TfL over the last decade on a series of proposals to transform the Highbury Corner and Highbury & Islington Station area. In February 2011 London Overground (East London Line) was extended to Highbury & Islington Station following which a new station exit was created, increasing much needed capacity to enter and exit the station. More recently, over Christmas 2017, TfL completed the critical element of the works to replace the railway bridge outside Highbury & Islington Station (part of Holloway Road); a key piece of engineering replacing an outdated Victorian structure that was in urgent need of replacement.
- 3.3 Alongside these works, TfL and the Council have been developing proposals to transform the Highbury Corner Roundabout road system and the connecting public realm outside the station, on which public consultations took place in 2007/08 and 2016.
- 3.4 The proposals are a response to a number of challenges created by the current roundabout layout. A large number of pedestrians use the area, resulting in crowding on the existing footways and around Highbury & Islington Station. The roundabout is difficult for cyclists to navigate and forms a key barrier to cycle movement in the area.
- 3.5 The greenspace (i.e. arboretum), cut off by traffic in the centre of the roundabout, is inaccessible to the public. Together with the recent removal of the former post office building outside the station, it creates an opportunity for a welcoming integrated new public space that extends from the arboretum to the entrance of Highbury & Islington Station.
- 3.6 The proposed changes would provide environmental enhancements to make Highbury Corner a more welcoming area, improve safety (13 collisions were recorded in the 36 months to September 2016), and aim to better balance the needs of all users of the area, by reallocating road space to pedestrians and cyclists.
- 3.7 This reflects the direction set out in the Mayor's Transport Strategy (March 2018), which prioritises walking, cycling and public transport within a 'Healthy Streets Approach' that seeks to increase active and sustainable travel and decrease private car use.

## **Development and delivery of the Highbury Corner Roundabout proposals**

### ***Initial consultation***

- 3.8 Between November 2007 and January 2008 following an initial appraisal exercise, TfL and the Council jointly consulted on three general road layout options as part of feasibility investigations to improve Highbury Corner Roundabout. These included:
- A. closure of the western arm to general traffic (retaining buses and cycles) and creation of a new station square;
  - B. closure of the northern arm to general traffic (retaining buses and cycles) and creation of a new station square;
  - C. minor improvements that retained the roundabout layout and creation of a new station square.
- 3.9 The results of the consultation indicated that the majority of people (51%) preferred option A, the closure of the western arm of the roundabout, while options B and C were each favoured by 22% of respondents.
- 3.10 The outcome of the consultation alongside further technical analysis led the Council and TfL to develop Option A, the closure of the western arm of the roundabout, during the next phase of feasibility design development.

### ***Second public consultation***

- 3.11 Between 5 February and 20 March 2016, TfL and the Council undertook a second joint public consultation on the further developed proposal for the transformation of Highbury Corner Roundabout. This was a continuation of the previous Option A, albeit with a number of changes, most notably removing the bus lane, bus stop and cycle lanes from the western arm to create an uninterrupted continuous pedestrian only public space extending from the station forecourt via the proposed 'closed' pedestrianised western arm of the roundabout to the arboretum green space (see Appendix 1). As a result, the 2016 consultation proposal involved the curtailment of the daytime 277 bus route at Dalston Junction, instead of Highbury Corner, to be offset by additional services on route 30 during the busy morning and evening peak periods. A fuller description of the 2016 proposals is set out below (paragraphs 3.15-3.52).
- 3.12 The consultation was publicised via a number of channels and attracted 2,823 responses, demonstrating the high level of awareness of and interest in the project. The majority of respondents felt that the proposals would improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, although there were concerns about potential bus and traffic impacts (see paragraphs 3.58-3.65 for more detail).
- 3.13 A consultation report published on the TfL website in August 2016 summarised the consultation process and the feedback received. A full consultation report, updated with responses to the issues commonly raised during the consultation, including proposed changes to the scheme as a result, is provided at Appendix 4 of this report. See paragraphs 3.56-3.72 of this report for a summary of the 2016 consultation.

### ***Progressing and delivering the project***

- 3.14 The Council and TfL will continue to work together to progress the scheme as set out in this report. Subject to the outcome of the forthcoming Environmental Screening process (paragraphs 3.53-3.54 & 4.7), construction will start after the current Highbury Corner bridge reconstruction works finish in Spring 2018 in an effort to minimise disruption in the area. Construction of the Highbury Corner Roundabout scheme is anticipated to take around 15 months to complete.

### **Summary of the current proposals and their impacts for different users**

- 3.15 The Highbury Corner Roundabout proposal aims to improve Highbury Corner for pedestrians and cyclists, encouraging a lively, active public space while at the same time maintaining appropriate vehicular space for bus and general traffic flow, and other vital functions.

- 3.16 The proposals would involve closure of the western arm of the roundabout to all motor vehicles and cyclists. This closure would enable formation of a new public space, continuing from the existing Highbury & Islington Station forecourt area and partially including the green space at the centre of the roundabout (the arboretum). The remainder of the current one-way roundabout would be changed into a two-way traffic and segregated cycle lane system. See Appendix 1. The proposed changes also include:
- A. other new and improved pedestrian and cycling facilities (paragraphs 3.24 & 3.30 respectively);
  - B. removal of the current bus stand outside of Dixon Clark Court at Highbury Corner, associated with changes to the 277 bus service (paragraphs 3.26-3.28);
  - C. local road closures in respect of Highbury Station Road, Hampton Court and Corsica Street paragraphs 3.34-3.35);
  - D. banned turns right into Canonbury Road from Upper Street and left into Upper Street from Canonbury Road (paragraph 3.33);
  - E. loading and disabled parking changes, and provision for a taxi rank outside of Highbury & Islington station (paragraph 3.48-3.50).

### ***New public space***

- 3.17 The centrepiece of the re-envisioned Highbury Corner area would be the new area of public realm created by pedestrianising the western arm and partially opening up the arboretum to public access making use of this natural asset to inspire the creation of an attractive space characterised by greenery. The new space would extend to the Highbury & Islington Station forecourt area, creating a single high quality open space around half the size of a football pitch (about 2,600 sq m) whilst significantly improving the pedestrian approach to the station (see Appendices 2 & 3). The inclusion of an arboretum within a highways scheme of this nature may well be unprecedented.
- 3.18 The Highbury Corner arboretum planted in the 1970s contains a rare collection of trees, which has been a success visually and aboriculturally but has remained cut off from the community on account of being fenced off and surrounded by a roundabout. The proposal to integrate the arboretum more closely with the new pedestrian environment would extend its reach and benefits, which include provision of:
- A. a significant area of canopy cover;
  - B. improved air quality;
  - C. a reduction in noise pollution;
  - D. a visual attraction; and
  - E. a decreased 'urban heat island effect' – the tendency of an urban area to remain warmer than its surroundings, caused by a lack of vegetation and soil moisture.
- 3.19 The new public space would include a western portion of the arboretum as a means of unlocking part of the local urban greenspace for public use, while avoiding too much extra pressure on the more sensitive eastern part of the arboretum, which would be kept closed. The green area would be extended westwards, into the 'closed' western arm helping to offset some reductions around other parts of the perimeter (north and east sides/ south east corner) needed to accommodate the new road layout/ cycle lanes. The newly publically-accessible western side would be bounded by a raised seating wall facing the adjoining pedestrianised area, and tree planting is proposed to reinforce the character of the new public space.
- 3.20 This design solution has been developed in response to various issues raised during and since the 2016 consultation on two previous options illustrating treatment of the arboretum in the wider scheme. See paragraphs 3.66-3.70 in the section on the 2016 consultation for a more detailed explanation.
- 3.21 The Council and TfL will continue to work together on developing the details of the design of the new public open space, including finalising the proposed layout and materials ensuring appropriate integration with the 'new' station forecourt, which will emerge unobstructed by the demolished former post office. The next design phase will explore strategic placement of new

trees/ planting, seating, CCTV and lighting options with the view to making the public space to the extent possible a safe, clean and pleasant place to visit, move through and wait in. TfL will be asked to keep the design of the arboretum under review to establish whether further public access to the greenspace could be provided.

### **Note on traffic modelling**

- 3.22 The below sections setting out the proposed measures and potential impacts of the changes for different users cite traffic modelling data looking at average journey time changes for a selection of journeys through the Highbury Corner scheme area at the busiest hours in the morning and evening peaks, based on fixed signal timings. However, it should be noted that SCOOT (Split Cycle Off-set Optimisation Technique) technology would be used to detect real-time traffic conditions and make real time changes to traffic light timings to optimise movement and reduce delays. The modelling data therefore represents the worst case scenario.
- 3.23 The modelling data included in the below sections compares the predicted on-street situation in 2021 with the scheme and without the scheme. The full set of modelling data also showing the current on-street situation was published on the Highbury Corner consultation website, along with an explanatory note, as part of the 2016 consultation. See Appendix 5 for the modelling data table and accompanying note. TfL is currently updating the traffic model, and the data from the updated traffic model will be used to assess the potential environmental impacts of the scheme including noise and air pollution.

### **Pedestrians**

- 3.24 The proposals would improve space and facilities for pedestrians by extending and enhancing the pedestrian environment, relocating one existing pedestrian crossing and upgrading others. Specifically, the project would include:
- A. the aforementioned new public space, including the improved open-aspect station forecourt and partial access into the arboretum, together with the new pedestrian space in place of the western arm of the roundabout to ease pedestrian over-crowding;
  - B. relocation of the pedestrian crossing at the junction with St Paul's Road closer to the junction itself, providing a more direct route for pedestrians;
  - C. widening of the pedestrian crossings at the junctions with Holloway Road, Canonbury Road and Upper Street;
  - D. change from staggered (two-stage) crossings at the Canonbury Road and Upper Street junctions to 'straight-across' (one-stage) crossings;
  - E. closure of southern section of Corsica Street to motor traffic with a continuous footway over the junction added since the 2016 consultation design to give pedestrians priority;
  - F. permanent closure to motor traffic on Highbury Station Road and Hampton Court; and
  - G. installation of 'Legible London' pedestrian information signs.
- 3.25 While the redesign of Highbury Corner would make it safer and more pleasant to navigate on foot, it would result in longer waiting times for pedestrians crossing at the various junctions as set out below and in the data table at Appendix 5 (a) (maximum wait times cited):
- A. Holloway Road/ Highbury Place junction: increase of up to 26 seconds (from 33 to 59 seconds) in the morning and 22 seconds (from 34 to 56 seconds) in the evening peak;
  - B. St Paul's Road/ Corsica Street junction: increase of up to 34 seconds (from 28 to 62 seconds) in the morning peak and 63 seconds (from 34 to 97 seconds) in the evening peak;
  - C. Crossing southern section of Highbury Corner: increase in both the morning and evening peaks of up to 86 seconds at Canonbury Road (from 27 seconds to 113 seconds) and 50 seconds (from 27 to 77 seconds) at the junction with Upper Street.

The predicted length of pedestrian wait times throughout the scheme are not considered particularly unusual for an urban environment.

### **Bus passengers**

- 3.26 The proposed changes would see bus lanes remain on all approaches to Highbury Corner and bus services would be largely unchanged (with the exception of route 277). The northbound bus shelter on Holloway Road (currently outside Tesco Metro) would be moved back to its original location adjacent to the station forecourt to benefit from a wider footway affording more space for waiting bus passengers. The location of the southbound bus stop on Holloway Road would not change.
- 3.27 Due to the closure of the western arm of the roundabout to create the new pedestrian only space, route 277 buses would no longer be able to turn around at Highbury Corner, which is their current termination point. It is therefore proposed that the day time 277 bus service from Leamouth (East London) is curtailed at Dalston Junction instead. The bus stand outside Dixon Clark Court, used by the 277 bus service at the end of its journey, is proposed to be removed. The night time 277 service would be extended from Highbury Corner to terminate at White Lion Street in the Angel (re-numbered N277).
- 3.28 Route 277 bus passengers would still be able to interchange with rail services and other bus routes at Highbury & Islington by changing to route 30 at Dalston Junction. Route 30, which is already a high frequency service would have two additional buses in the morning and evening peaks (timed to pass through Highbury Corner between 08:00 and 09:00 westbound and between 17.45 and 18.45 eastbound) to ensure sufficient capacity on buses between Highbury Corner and Dalston Junction following these changes. The majority of route 277 passengers making onwards journeys to Highbury & Islington Station would be able to transfer to route 30 at no extra cost using the Hopper ticket (introduced in September 2016), which now allows unlimited transfers within one hour.
- 3.29 Traffic modelling undertaken for the bus routes which travel through the scheme area indicates that most bus journey times are predicted to get longer at busy times, though a small number would get shorter or stay the same. The most significant delay would be to Route 271 buses **approaching from Canonbury Road** (northbound) in the morning peak, which would take up to double the time to pass through the Highbury Corner section of the route (from 3-4 minutes without the scheme to 6-7 minutes post scheme). The increase would be less pronounced (1-2 minutes) in the evening peak. Details of the expected impacts on bus journey times of all routes through Highbury Corner are contained in the data table at Appendix 5 (a).

### **Cyclists**

- 3.30 The proposals would improve conditions for cyclists by introduction of 'mandatory' (not to be entered by vehicles) and segregated cycle lanes and cyclist crossings. Specifically, the project would include introduction of:
- A. segregated cycle tracks in both directions on all three remaining arms of the redesigned road layout to accommodate most cycling movement (the exception being the absence of a direct link between Upper Street and Holloway Road through the pedestrianised western arm);
  - B. four new signalised cyclists-only crossings at the junctions with Highbury Place, St Paul's Road (x2) and Canonbury Road (x2), allowing cycle, pedestrian and vehicle movements to be separated. A toucan crossing (a crossing to be shared between pedestrians and cyclists) would be included across St Paul's Road that would allow two-way cycling to and from Corsica Street in response to comments received during the 2016 consultation;
  - C. a southbound 'mandatory' cycle lane on Holloway Road, on the approach to the junction;
  - D. advanced Stop Lines (allowing cyclists to wait in front of vehicles at traffic signals) on St Paul's Road and Highbury Place, with an early release signal for cyclists on St Paul's Road;
  - E. a northbound segregated cycle track on Canonbury Road, on the approach to the junction;
  - F. banned turns (as for motorists) right from Upper Street into Canonbury Road and left from Canonbury Road into Upper Street (see paragraph 3.33); and
  - G. retention of the large cycle parking area that has been in place on Highbury Station Road during its temporary closure as a result of the proposed permanent closure.

- 3.31 While the scheme would create a much safer environment for cyclists, the introduction of segregated cycle lanes with cyclists-only crossings would impact on wait times and journey times for cyclists. Most morning and evening peak journeys modelled are predicted to take longer by varying amounts and up to 2 minutes in the case of cyclists travelling northbound to Holloway Road from Canonbury Road in both the morning and evening peak, and from Upper Street in the evening peak. A small number of journeys would be faster, most notably Upper Street to St Paul's Road in the morning peak, decreasing from 3-4 minutes to 1-2 minutes. Details of the expected impacts on cycle journey times included in the modelling are contained in the data table at Appendix 5 (a).

### ***Motorists – road and traffic measures***

- 3.32 As set out above and shown in Appendix 1, the proposal involves replacing the Highbury Corner Roundabout with a number of conventional traffic signal controlled junctions, pedestrianising the western arm and implementing a two-way road layout. These changes to the road layout redirecting the main road to the eastern side of the arboretum would be accompanied by a number of other traffic measures.
- 3.33 To ensure the new road layout would operate effectively and to enable inclusion of the separate crossings for pedestrians and cyclists, it is proposed to implement banned turns preventing motorists from turning right into Canonbury Road from Upper Street and left into Upper Street from Canonbury Road. These movements are not frequently made (see paragraph 3.45).
- 3.34 The pedestrianisation of the western arm would mean that the adjoining Highbury Station Road and Hampton Court, both temporarily closed for the current bridge reconstruction works, would remain closed to motorised traffic on a permanent basis.
- 3.35 In addition, the southern one-way section of Corsica Street would be closed to motorised traffic. This is to allow cyclists to move through the junction safely without risk of conflict with motorists turning left into Corsica Street, and to create a safer route for pedestrians crossing Corsica Street and across St Paul's Road to Canonbury Road.
- 3.36 The above three local road closures would be implemented through Traffic Management Orders (TMOs) under Section 6 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, by authority delegated to the Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration.

### ***Motorists – traffic impacts***

- 3.37 The traffic modelling undertaken (Appendix 5) shows that the proposals would increase journey times for motorists through Highbury Corner, mainly because a roundabout is more efficient in moving traffic than traffic signal controlled junctions.
- 3.38 General traffic on most journeys modelled is expected to be delayed by up to 3 minutes, though a small number of journeys are predicted to get shorter by up to 1 minute or stay the same. Worst affected would be journeys **approaching from Canonbury Road** with the duration to Holloway Road in the morning peak predicted to increase from 2-3 minutes to 5-6 minutes, while the evening peak would see an increase from 2-3 to 3-4 minutes. The data table at Appendix 5 (a) shows the predicted changes in times for journeys through the scheme area included in the modelling.
- 3.39 As well impacting journey times, the changes to the road layout and range of traffic movements possible, particularly local road closures, and the introduction of signalised junctions is expected to lead to some reassignment of traffic to local roads.
- 3.40 Two of the proposed local road closures – Hampton Court and Highbury Station Road – have been implemented on a temporary basis throughout the current bridge reconstruction works. Traffic surveys carried out before and after these closures (2014 and 2015 respectively) provide traffic counts of resulting changes in traffic volumes on surrounding streets. The results were published on the Council's website for the 2016 consultation and are contained in Appendix 6 (a), along with explanatory note at Appendix 6 (b).

- 3.41 Since its closure, Highbury Station Road and the connecting Offord Road (near Liverpool Road) have seen significant reduction in traffic, whereas the volume of traffic on Hampton Court was negligible even prior to its current temporary closure.
- 3.42 Increases in traffic on east-west routes north and south of the closed Highbury Station Road and Hampton Court were observed between 2014 and 2015, though minimal in some instances. Some of the observed displacement is likely to be as a result of the Highbury Corner bridge reconstruction works ongoing since early 2015. See Appendix 6 for the full results.
- 3.43 The other proposed local road closure – Corsica Street south – would require the use of the remaining two access routes via Fieldway Crescent and Baalbec Road to reach the network of residential streets in the Highbury Fields area. Baalbec Road is likely to be the favoured route for most vehicles that currently use the one-way section of Corsica Street, though the closure would also eliminate a rat-run between Highbury Corner and Highbury Grove (via Baalbec Road east).
- 3.44 During the 2015 traffic count, approximately 60 vehicles entered Corsica Street in the busiest morning peak hour, increasing to 90 vehicles in the busiest evening peak hour.
- 3.45 The traffic surveys also took account of the number of vehicles making the proposed banned turns which could seek other routes through the area. Approximately 10 vehicles turn right from Upper Street into Canonbury Road and 15 turn left from Canonbury Road into Upper Street in the busiest morning and evening peak hours.
- 3.46 It is also possible that there would be some displacement of through-traffic seeking alternative routes through the area via residential roads because of an increase in journey time on the main road as a result of the changes.
- 3.47 The Council and TfL will continue to work together to monitor traffic levels on local roads once the new scheme is in operation, and will consider mitigating measures if there are significant increases in traffic flows along particular routes.

***Motorists – parking and loading***

- 3.48 There would be some changes to loading and servicing as a result of the proposed changes to the highway layout. A new 12 metre loading bay, including a night time taxi rank (to operate between 22.00 and 06.00), would be provided on the edge of the new station square (outside Highbury & Islington Station). Measures to prevent vehicles from driving/parking on the station forecourt such as strategic placement of seating/street furniture to keep the area clear for safe pedestrian movement, and serve as anti-terrorism security measures around the station will be explored in the next design phase.
- 3.49 The loading bay and disabled parking bay on the northern arm of the roundabout (in front of the Marie Curie building) would be repositioned to the new carriageway edge, to create space for the proposed segregated eastbound cycle track. The bay would be shortened by six metres.
- 3.50 The Upper Street loading bay south of the current western roundabout arm which stretches for approximately 36 metres would be shortened by nine metres to accommodate the new road layout.

**Impact of the scheme on trees**

- 3.51 The new road layout would result in the removal of 15 trees from the area including 13 trees from the edge of the central green (arboretum), one from the northern footway and one from the southern footway. Of these 15 trees, one has been classified as a tree of high quality, and three trees proposed for removal are of moderate quality. A further two trees from the eastern fringe are proposed to be transplanted elsewhere within the scheme (see the diagram at Appendix 1).
- 3.52 In line with Council policies, the loss of trees would be mitigated by new planting of a larger number of trees (26) within the boundary of the arboretum (16), on the surrounding footways and in the newly pedestrianised area, with the aim of avoiding a net loss of tree canopy cover. The location and size of trees to be planted would be determined by the suitability of underground conditions, location of underground utilities and the depth available for the pits, which will be

explored during the next design phase.

### **Impact of the scheme on air quality and noise**

- 3.53 Gyratory removal schemes of this nature are designed to improve the environmental conditions and help contribute to meet the objectives set out in the recently adopted Mayor's Transport Strategy. The changes proposed at Highbury Corner are duly expected to help provide a long-term improvement in air quality in the area by encouraging more trips to be made by walking and cycling, reducing the number of motor traffic journeys. Motor traffic is recognised as one of the major causes of air pollution in London, with vehicle exhausts and braking systems contributing to Nitrogen Oxide and particulate matter in the air. It is also recognised as a generator of noise caused by both vehicles' engines and the interaction of tyres with the road surface, which are themselves influenced primarily by traffic flow. While the proposed new road layout and range of movements possible, alongside the introduction of signalised junctions, would all have a bearing on traffic flow, the scheme is not expected to cause significant traffic congestion, which can lead to the emission of more noxious gases, and increase noise levels from queuing motor traffic.
- 3.54 Any predicted changes in air quality and noise levels as a result of these and all other relevant factors will be considered in detail as part of the forthcoming Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening opinion process as set out in paragraph 4.7. It is therefore proposed that the Executive delegates authority to the Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Transport, to determine the Council's final position on the Highbury Corner Roundabout transformation once the Council in its capacity as local planning authority has adopted an EIA screening opinion based on likely environmental impacts to be assessed as part of the EIA screening process.

### **Highbury & Islington Station façade and forecourt**

- 3.55 The Council has a long standing ambition to improve the unattractive and disjointed appearance of Highbury & Islington Station and forecourt. Work on the detailed design of the station forecourt is currently underway, with a key emphasis on prioritising routes and reducing 'pinch points' for pedestrians and station users. In addition, the design of this space will be required to accommodate queueing and pedestrian movements on Arsenal match days. The proposed environmental improvement works to the public realm around the station would have the effect of emphasising the poor quality of the existing façade. Whilst station façade improvements are outside of the scope of the Highbury Corner Roundabout project, the Council continues to lobby TfL to improve the appearance of the station.

### **2016 consultation – feedback, results and design changes**

- 3.56 TfL and the Council jointly consulted on the proposed transformation of Highbury Corner Roundabout between 5 February and 20 March 2016. A full consultation report will be published on the Highbury Corner consultation website in March 2018 and is provided at Appendix 4.
- 3.57 Information on the consultation and details of the proposals were made available online on the consultation website (<https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/highbury-corner-roundabout>), with the Council's website ([www.islington.gov.uk/highburycorner](http://www.islington.gov.uk/highburycorner)) linking to the page.
- 3.58 The consultation attracted 2,823 responses, demonstrating the high level of interest in the project, with the five most popular postcode districts of respondents being N5, N1, N7, N4 and E9. Of the respondents, 99% (2,782) were individuals, and 1% (41) were organisations.

- 3.59 The overall quantitative responses indicated that the majority of the 2,823 respondents believed the new road layout proposals for Highbury Corner would:
- A. Improve conditions for pedestrians (71%)
  - B. Improve conditions for cyclists (67%)
  - C. Improve conditions for tube/rail passengers (59%)
  - D. Make conditions worse for motorists (35%)
  - E. Make conditions worse for bus passengers (33%)
- 3.60 The overall qualitative responses in the form of comments on the proposals by the 1,805 respondents who provided comments on one or more issues were interpreted as being:
- A. 30% (849) negative
  - B. 25% (714) positive
  - C. 9% (242) neither negative nor positive
- (note: percentages given are in respect of the total 2,823 consultation responses).
- 3.61 The high proportion of negative commentary despite the overall majority support for the scheme (set out in paragraph 3.59 above) reflects a stronger focus in the comments on the motor traffic and bus impacts relative to the number of positive comments related to benefits for the other user groups.
- 3.62 **Negative comments on motor traffic impact** included concerns about: the potential for increased traffic congestion and delays due to the introduction of traffic signals; longer journey times and restricted access to Highbury Fields for residents; reduced access to Upper Street and Canonbury Road due to banned turns; and objections to the closure of Corsica Street.
- 3.63 TfL has committed to actively monitoring traffic conditions to manage demand on its roads following the completion of construction works. SCOOT technology would be used to detect real time traffic conditions and make real time changes to traffic lights timings to optimise traffic movement and reduce delays.
- 3.64 It is proposed that the Council also monitors traffic levels on local roads following construction, and considers measures to mitigate any significant increases on residential streets.
- 3.65 **Negative comments concerning the impact on bus passengers** centred mostly around the curtailment of the route 277 daytime bus service at Dalston Junction. Throughout the development of the proposal, various options were investigated to extend route 277 beyond its current terminus in order to retain a direct link to Highbury Corner. However these could not be taken forward due to significant financial burden, unacceptable impact on bus reliability and/or insurmountable physical constraints.
- 3.66 The consultation presented **two potential options for the creation of a public space**, which would be made possible by the proposed closure of the western arm of the roundabout:
- A. Option 1: Link the pedestrianised western arm to the station forecourt but keep the arboretum closed with a seating area around its western border.
  - B. Option 2: Open up a triangular section of the western side of the arboretum as a space for informal recreation and seating to be enjoyed by the public. There would be new paths running to/through the centre (south east to north west corner and south west corner to the centre) of the arboretum. A new pedestrian crossing at the top of Canonbury Road would allow access to the south east corner of the arboretum connecting with the new path to provide a direct link to Highbury & Islington Station. The other parts, making up the majority of the arboretum on either sides of the paths, would be fenced off and remain closed to the public to protect the trees in those areas.
- 3.67 Respondents were asked to select which option they preferred with the following results:
- A. 14% chose Option 1 (keep the arboretum closed to the public)
  - B. 56% chose Option 2 (open up the arboretum for public use)
  - C. 17% didn't want either
  - D. 13% did not answer the question

- 3.68 However, a number of issues were identified concerning the feasibility of Option 2 in both feedback from the consultation and ongoing engagement. These included the following:
- A. Potential for anti-social behaviour/ crime, with a particular concern about implications for crowd management plans and extra demand on staff resources for policing the space on Arsenal match days (Metropolitan Police)
  - B. Need to ensure that as many trees as possible are preserved rather than removing some trees to make way for paths, and to prevent damage to the most vulnerable trees caused by the excavation work and pedestrian footfall associated with Option 2.
- 3.69 The strong support for Option 2 (opening access to the arboretum) considered alongside the feedback above has led to some changes to the proposed design for Option 2. The area of publically accessible green would be similar in size to the consultation design for Option 2. However, public access would be provided to a newly-defined western portion of the arboretum, while removing the paths and Canonbury Road pedestrian crossing previously proposed as part of Option 2 to protect the more sensitive eastern portion of the arboretum. The proposed new public space boundary running in a north-south direction through the arboretum takes account of existing tree constraints, opportunities for new planting and ecological sensitivity. In short, the design solution is intended to preserve the integrity of the arboretum, while still providing additional green space for the public to enjoy.
- 3.70 Whilst the previously proposed pedestrian link between Canonbury Road and Highbury & Islington Station via the arboretum would not be implemented, the existing pedestrian crossing at the top of Upper Street would remain to serve the people currently taking this route.
- 3.71 Three other changes were also made in response to consultation feedback:
- A. the entrance to Corsica Street would be amended to include a continuous footway over the junction at concept design stage to give pedestrian priority;
  - B. a toucan crossing (i.e. a crossing shared between pedestrians and cyclists) would be included across St Paul's Road to allow two-way cycling to and from Corsica Street; and
  - C. the proposed segregated southbound cycle path on Canonbury Road would be extended to Canonbury Primary School to enable safer cycling to the school.
- 3.72 As the scheme progresses, the consultation website and all respondents who provided contact details will be updated.

## **4. Implications**

### **Financial implications**

- 4.1 The estimated final cost of the proposed scheme is £11.6m and would be fully funded by TfL. Officer time spent on this project would be funded through existing budgets within the Transport Planning team.

### **Legal Implications**

- 4.2 In deciding whether to support the Highbury Corner Roundabout transformation scheme, the Council must take full and proper account of the responses to the public consultation and to the information contained in this report, and also have regard to all relevant considerations (including the environment impact) disregarding irrelevant considerations.
- 4.3 The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening opinion is not yet available as environmental information (including an air and noise assessment is awaited from TfL). Accordingly, whilst the Executive may indicate whether it supports the Highbury Corner Roundabout Transformation in principle; the decision as to whether to give final approval to the scheme may only be taken once the EIA screening opinion is completed.

- 4.4 The Council and TfL may implement the Highbury Corner Roundabout transformation scheme using their highway and road traffic powers. In particular, the Council may close roads to vehicular traffic for which it is the road traffic authority by making traffic management orders under section 6 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

### **Environmental Implications**

- 4.5 The changes at Highbury Corner have primarily been designed to improve road safety and the street environment for the many pedestrians and cyclists who pass through the junction each day, with the added benefit of unlocking a new local urban greenspace for public use. Getting Londoners to reduce their reliance on driving and the health problems it creates by providing more space for sustainable, active transport modes, and better public spaces where people can interact is a prime focus of the 'Healthy Streets Approach' adopted by the Mayor of London. This approach underpins the Mayor's Transport Strategy, which seeks to achieve reduced traffic on London's streets, better air quality, an accessible and safe transport network and includes an 80% target for trips to be made on foot, by cycle or public transport by 2041.
- 4.6 Motor traffic is one of the major causes of air pollution in London, with vehicle exhausts and braking systems contributing to Nitrogen Oxide and particulate matter in the air. The scheme is generally expected to help provide a long-term improvement in air quality in the Highbury Corner area by encouraging more journeys to be made by walking and cycling and reducing the number of motor traffic journeys.
- 4.7 The Highbury Corner Roundabout scheme is a Schedule 2-type development where the area of the work exceeds the one hectare threshold as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (2017). As such, TfL is due to submit a request, including an air and noise assessment, to the Council for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening opinion. The Development Management Service will consider the submission in detail to determine whether the scheme would be likely to give rise to significant environmental effects, and thus needs to be made the subject of EIA. A further report setting out the likely environmental impacts of the scheme and the outcome of the formal determination on the screening opinion will be presented to the Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration for purposes of determining, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Transport, the Council's final position on the scheme.

### **Resident Impact Assessment**

- 4.8 The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The Council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The Council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.
- 4.9 TfL undertook an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) in August 2017. The findings were incorporated into a Resident Impact Assessment (RIA) in March 2018. The summary is included below.
- 4.10 The key findings of the assessments indicate that overall the scheme would deliver positive impacts in terms of promoting sustainable, active forms of transport and contribute to improving public health problems resulting from lack of physical activity, with pedestrian and cyclists identified as the main beneficiaries of the proposed scheme.
- 4.11 The pedestrian/ urban realm measures should enable all people living, working in and visiting the area to realise the benefits of a more pleasant, inclusive and safer pedestrian environment. There are likely to be specific positive impacts in respect of the protected characteristics of age (particularly older and younger people), disability (particularly mobility impaired people and

wheelchair users), gender (particularly women who are more likely to be travelling with pushchairs and children) and expectant mothers.

- 4.12 Creating a safer environment for cyclists and reducing the dominance of traffic could encourage more people across all groups to cycle as perception of safety has been identified as a major barrier to increased participation in London. There are likely to be positive impacts in respect of the protected characteristics which are typically under-represented including age (particularly under 25s and over 65s who currently cycle in lower proportions), disabled cyclists and gender (particularly women who statistics show are less likely to cycle than men).
- 4.13 The curtailment of the 277 bus at Dalston Junction instead of Highbury Corner cutting out the direct link it provides between Highbury & Islington and the Docklands area for all users would be offset by more services on route 30 which would be put in place to take the travelling public between Dalston Junction and Highbury & Islington. The new Hopper Fares for the general population and use of Freedom Passes for eligible disabled and older people would mitigate against the potential increase in cost. However changing buses is more likely to be a more onerous undertaking for some older and disabled people, and women with children and pushchairs, than the general population.
- 4.14 The RIA will be updated to inform the Council's final position on the Highbury Corner Roundabout transformation (delegated to the Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Transport) once an EIA screening opinion has been adopted as outlined in paragraph 4.7.

## **5. Reason for recommendations**

- 5.1 In accordance with its fairness aim, the Council has a long-standing ambition to deliver improvements at Highbury Corner for the people who live, work in or visit the prominent gateway location at the heart of the borough. The Mayor's Transport Strategy (March 2018), which seeks to create a step change in the way people move around London as a whole, prioritises walking, cycling and public transport over car use within a 'Healthy Streets Approach'. Within this changing context, the Council and TfL have been working together to develop the proposals for the transformation of Highbury Corner as set out in this report.
- 5.2 The proposed changes involving pedestrianising the western arm of the roundabout and implementing a two-way traffic system with segregated cycle lanes have been primarily designed to draw a balance between the provision of road safety measures and environmental enhancements for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, and the efficient movement of buses and general traffic.
- 5.3 The proposal presents a unique opportunity to create a new and attractive place at the heart of the borough, unlocking part of the arboretum for informal recreation and seating, whilst easing pedestrian overcrowding and reducing dominance of motorised traffic.
- 5.4 The pedestrian facilities included in the proposals, notably more convenient and safer crossings, are considered to represent a significant improvement on current conditions. The new public space would relieve the current narrow and cramped pedestrian approach to Highbury & Islington Station and would be better suited to accommodate the increased pedestrian demand on Arsenal match days.
- 5.5 Tube and rail passengers would further benefit from a more pleasant, integrated, vibrant and welcoming station environment including seating, which should enhance the experience of regular travellers and visitors arriving and/or meeting at this key borough gateway. While the 277 bus would be curtailed at Dalston Junction, bus journeys to and from Highbury Corner would still be possible on Route 30. Furthermore, making the onward journey on Route 30 should not incur an extra cost in the majority of cases due to the introduction of the Hopper ticket in September 2016 (i.e. following the last consultation).
- 5.6 Cycling would become a safer and more convenient travel option as a result of the new segregated cycle lanes and designated signalised cyclist-only crossings coupled with the large cycle parking area on Highbury Station Road.

- 5.7 The benefits of transforming Highbury Corner to promote more sustainable, active forms of transport by making it more people-friendly, pleasant and safer for pedestrians and cyclists to travel through are considered to outweigh the potential disadvantages, such as the curtailment of bus route 277 at Dalston Junction and the increased journey times for the various road users. An approach of monitoring, managing and mitigating impacts is proposed to ensure that these negative impacts do not prove significant in the longer term.
- 5.8 In conclusion, it is recommended that the Executive formally supports, in principle, the Highbury Corner Roundabout proposals, proceeding to detailed design stage, followed by construction (currently anticipated to start in Summer 2018). It is further recommended that the Executive authorises the Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Transport, to make a decision on the Council's final position on the Highbury Corner Roundabout transformation once an EIA screening opinion has been adopted. If the Corporate Director approves the Highbury Corner Roundabout transformation it will proceed to detailed design stage, followed by construction (currently anticipated to start in Summer 2018).

## Appendices

- Appendix 1: Proposed highway layout including proposed tree removal
- Appendix 2: Proposed urban realm layout (indicative - *subject to change as the public space design develops*)
- Appendix 3: Proposed public space Computer Generated Images (CGIs) (indicative – *subject to change as the public space design develops*)
- Appendix 4: Consultation report on August 2016 consultation - (March 2018)
- Appendix 5: Traffic modelling (a) Journey times data table; (b) Explanatory note
- Appendix 6: Traffic surveys (a) Observed traffic displacement data tables (AM and PM); (b) Explanatory note

## Background papers: none

Final report clearance:

### Signed by:

14 March 2018



Executive Member for Environment and Transport    Date

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