

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Epping Forest and Commons	7 July 2014
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Public</b>
Whipps Cross Roundabout Highway Dedication Scheme	
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>For Information</b>
Superintendent of Epping Forest SEF 12/14	
<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>Whipps Cross Roundabout (Appendix A) is a major element of the A104/A114 highway infrastructure on Forest Land. The land bounded by the current roundabout was the subject of a Highway Dedication agreement dated 2 June 1939.</p> <p>This report is to appraise members of large scale changes proposed by the current Highway Authority responsible for the dedicated land, the London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF).</p> <p>LBWF has been successful in securing a major grant award totalling £30 Million from the Mayor of London which involves the construction of a cycle 'Super Highway' along the Lea Bridge Road (A104) and the redesign of the Whipps Cross Roundabout with protected cycleways and priority traffic lights on Forest Land.</p> <p>The current proposals are contained within the existing dedicated land so impact on the City of London will be limited to some disruption experienced by Forest users and members of staff during the construction of the new junction. The new junction will be significantly different to the existing roundabout and is hoped will result in easier access to the Hollow Ponds and Snaresbrook areas of the Forest for both pedestrians and cyclists residing in LBWF.</p> <p>The report discusses the potential approach the Conservators should adopt to negotiations given the Conservator's previous policy position established in 2009 which resisted dedication of additional Forest Land for commuting cycling infrastructure on Forest Land.</p> <p><b>Recommendation(s)</b></p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the report</li> </ul>	

**Main Report**

## Background

1. Forest Land at Whipps Cross, Walthamstow/Leytonstone was the subject of a dedication agreement for Highways Purposes with The Mayor, Alderman and Burgesses of the Borough of Leyton in 1939. The dedication agreement was made in return for a payment of £1,178 (£73,558 at today's prices) rather than a land exchange.
2. In 1939, the Conservators acceded to a request from the Borough of Leyton, as widening the highway and improving the Whipps Cross Road/Lea Bridge Road junction was in the public interest.
3. The London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF), and CoL collaborated with the Olympic Delivery authority and Transport for London on the 'Epping Forest' Olympics Greenway Cycleway in 2009-2012, attracting £364,500 of funding improvements at Leyton Flats.
4. Following the public consultation programme for the Stratford to Epping Forest Cycle Route Inspection and Stakeholder Plan (CRISP) Report, completed in 2008 in preparation for the London Olympics in 2012, the Conservators took a strong policy view that while recreational cycling in the Forest is supported, the Conservators will not dedicate additional Forest Land to facilitate provision for cycle commuting infrastructure especially in the circumstances applicable to the cycle route proposed at that time, where the Conservators considered there was an alternative route available which did not require dedication of additional Forest Land.
5. Whipps Cross roundabout which sits at the head of the Epping Forest Cycleway is the focus of two of Transport for London's cross Borough mapped cycle routes.
6. Cycling on London's main roads has risen by 173 per cent since 2001 (as at 2013). Most of this growth has taken place in inner London, but more than half of all potentially cyclable journeys take place in outer London, according to Transport for London (TfL) research. The Greater London Authority (GLA) intends that the number of journeys made by bicycle over the next 10 years should double.
7. The GLA believe that there are numerous benefits of increasing the number journeys made by bicycle. Improvements cited are to cut overcrowding on public transport, ease congestion, slash pollution and reduce competition for parking spaces.
8. In March 2013, the GLA published, '*The Mayor's Vision for Cycling in London – An Olympic Legacy for all Londoners*'. This document outlined a number of objectives to make cycling on London's road network safer and easier and therefore an attractive mode of travel for more people.
9. On 24 April 2013, the Mayor, Boris Johnson, and TfL announced a £100m fund for which Outer London boroughs were invited to bid, to become "mini-Hollands", boroughs which, in time, aim to become every bit as cycle-friendly as Dutch equivalents; benchmarks of excellence for cycling, and that suburbs and towns all over Britain would want to replicate. The Mini-Holland title

refers to the provision of segregated and protected cycles lanes and the provision of cycle priority at roundabouts.

10. 20 Outer London boroughs were eligible for the mini-Holland competition. London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) was one of the 18 Outer London Boroughs who submitted a bid for 'mini-Holland funding.
11. In March 2014, three outer boroughs were chosen for substantial investment, with very high spending concentrated on a relatively small area for a genuinely transformational impact. The London Boroughs of Enfield, Kingston and Waltham Forest will receive a share of the £100m development fund.

## **Current Position**

12. LBWF was successful in its bid to 'dramatically improve conditions for cyclists around Walthamstow town centre, to help trigger a cycling culture across the whole borough', securing around £30M.
13. The LBWF proposals include 'a new Cycle Super Highway along the length of Lea Bridge Road, with a radical rework of the Whipps Cross roundabout; "home zone" or so called "Woonerf" or 'living street' approach to shared social space in residential areas of Walthamstow and key north-south and east-west linking routes'.
14. The Whipps Cross Roundabout is situated on Forest land dedicated to highway and a 'radical rework' potentially poses an encroachment risk to Forest land.
15. The roundabout currently presents a barrier to cyclists and pedestrians from LBWF who wish to access the Forest safely and easily.
16. Currently, there are no detailed plans for the proposed work. An initial plan for the roundabout rework was submitted as part of the LBWF bid (Appendix B).
17. The initial plan appears to contain the works within the footprint of the existing dedicated land, although there have been many changes to this area over the last 90 years, involving numerous land dedications and the boundary of the dedicated highway land will need to be carefully checked with the proposed work site.
18. The programme contained in the 'mini-Holland' bid is fairly arbitrary;
  - Phase 1 (consultation, engagement and involvement) by 2015,
  - Phase 2 (consultation, engagement and involvement) by 2016 and
  - Phase 3 (implementation) 2017/18.
19. Direct discussions with LBWF Officers indicate that the programme implementation is likely be earlier;
  - Spring 2014 - LBWF and TfL meet to discuss the next priority steps and acquire an understanding on how the funding will be released over the coming years

- 2014/15 - Developing proposals, engaging with key stakeholders and local communities. Possibly physically starting on quick wins in late autumn 2015.
  - Summer of 2016 – Implementation of Whipps Cross Roundabout rework.
20. LBWF Officers have committed to consult with The Conservators at the earliest opportunity, to ensure our support is obtained for the scheme.

### **Options**

21. The current Highway dedication agreement allows the LBWF, as the Highway Authority, the freedom to develop further Highway infrastructure within the bounds of the current Whipps Cross roundabout, subject to Planning controls, for which the LBWF is also the Local Planning Authority. The Conservators of Epping Forest will want to feed into the planning process to communicate Forest user requirements for access, thus engaging constructively with the cycling proposals.

### **Proposals**

22. It is proposed that CoL Officers work with LBWF to develop a scheme which is of mutual benefit for Forest users and cyclists in the LBWF area.
23. This will include, but is not limited to;
- (1) Reviewing our historic documents to develop a definitive plan of the land dedicated for highway purposes, at Whipps Cross Roundabout for use by CoL and LBWF.
  - (2) Assist with the advertising and marketing of the LBWF consultation via CoL web page links and social media channels, encouraging Forest users to have early input.
  - (3) Attend key stakeholder meetings and design reviews, as necessary.
  - (4) Work with LBWF to develop detailed plans for the existing dedicated Forest land and encourages local people to access the Forest by bicycle.
  - (5) Update your Committee with the final detailed plan in due course.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

24. The continued drive for promotion of sustainable transport and healthy lifestyles from the GLA and TfL meets with numerous key CoL aims and objectives.
25. The LBWF proposals address several of 'The City Together Strategy: The Heart of a World Class City 2008-14' aims;

- (1) ....supports our communities - To encourage and support services and initiatives which benefit communities within the City and City fringes, contributing to local prosperity.
  - (2) ....protects, promotes and enhances our environment - To continue to minimise noise, land and water pollution and improve air quality where this is possible.
  - (3) ....protects, promotes and enhances our environment - To encourage sustainable forms of transport.
26. The proposed option supports a number of the City's Corporate Strategy and Open Spaces Business Plan strategic aims;
- (1) Quality – Provide high quality accessible open spaces and services in accordance with nationally recognised standards for the benefit of London and the nation.
  - (2) Environment – Adopt sustainable working practices, promote variety of life (biodiversity) and protect Open Spaces for the enjoyment of future generations.
  - (3) Promotion – promote opportunities to use and enjoy the outdoor environment for health, learning and inclusion and ensure the value of Open Spaces is recognised.
27. The Forest Transport Strategy houses the objective, 'providing improved accessibility to the Forest for all users especially those arriving by public transport or on foot, bicycle or horse-back'.
28. Linked with the 'The City Together Strategy', the City of London's Sustainability Policy states;
- (1) EN 7 – Reduce the negative impact of transport on the environment
  - (2) EN 14 – Protect, maintain and enhance open spaces, and other areas with landscape, wildlife or historical interest on all the property it manages, in partnership with the local community.
  - (3) SO 1 – Enhance and encourage preventative health services, activities and education

## Implications

29. The overall 'mini-Holland' scheme is expected to cost around £30M, although much of this cost is for works not associated with the Whipps Cross Roundabout improvement.
30. It is expected that the Whipps Cross Roundabout improvements will cost £3.5M, funded by the GLA and TfL.
31. **Financial** – This report contains no financial implications for the CoL.
32. **Property** – This report contains no adverse property implications.
33. Officer time may be required to communicate messages via digital media and to attend stakeholder meetings and/or design reviews.

## **Conclusion**

34. The proposed LBWF 'mini-Holland' plans are in line with the CoL's position of both supporting recreational cycling on Forest Land and encouraging sustainable transport methods of access to the Forest, including cycling.
- 35.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix A – Location of Whipps Cross Roundabout
- Appendix B – Basic plan of proposed Whipps Cross Roundabout rework (as shown in the LBWF Mini-Holland Bid)

## **Background Papers:**

CRISP Report

Transport for London and Olympic Delivery Authority proposed cycle route – Epping Forest Route, May 2009

Waltham Forest Council Mini Holland Bid Document, December 2013

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