

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 2ND JULY 2009

EXECUTIVE – 13TH JULY 2009

Report by the Director of Technical Services on a proposed diagonal pedestrian crossing outside Southfields Underground Station, SW18 (Southfields, West Hill)

SUMMARY

Background. There is a signalised road junction outside Southfields Station, SW18 (Southfields, West Hill). The junction is asymmetrical. Owing to the road layout, pedestrians needing to cross one or more arms of the junction to get to or from the Station are required to make short detours to formal crossing points. A diagonal pedestrian crossing is proposed outside Southfields Station that, if it is possible to implement, would improve substantially the crossing facilities for pedestrians at this busy location.

Policy. A diagonal pedestrian crossing outside Southfields Station would help support the Council's policies of improving convenience and safety for pedestrians, as well as provide an opportunity for a streetscene enhancement by removing guard-rail and re-ordering other street furniture. This is project identified by the Council, Transport for London (TfL) and the Olympic Delivery Authority as potentially contributing to the Olympic legacy. A diagonal pedestrian crossing would help complement works being undertaken by London Underground to make the Station more accessible.

Issues/Proposals. There are three key issues: whether or not a diagonal crossing can be provided safely and without unacceptable impact on vehicular traffic; the Council and TfL need to devote resources to ensure an expeditious investigation and implementation; and, if feasible, implementation would need to avoid the annual Wimbledon Championships, Davis Cup ties, and an embargo on works in the lead up to the 2012 Olympic Games. The Council undertook traffic surveys at the junction last year, and submitted the necessary paperwork to TfL for assessment, which remains ongoing. TfL has allocated £100,000 to the Council in 2009/10 for the implementation of the crossing, assuming a satisfactory conclusion to their assessment and assuming the project can be programmed into TfL's signals schedule.

Comments of the Director of Finance. The cost of the measures proposed, estimated at up to £100,000, can be met from the provision of £200,000 in the capital programme for 'Walking' schemes in 2009/10, financed by capital grant from TfL.

Conclusions. The Council has produced a design for a diagonal crossing outside Southfields Station. It is recommended that the Executive approve this design. It is also recommended that the scheme be implemented, subject to the satisfactory completion of discussions between the Council, TfL and other stakeholders in respect of the impact of the proposal, and the Director of Technical Services consulting with the Cabinet Member and with ward councillors, where necessary, for authorisations under Standing Order No. 83(A) procedure.

GLOSSARY

TfL

Transport for London

1. **Recommendations.** The Planning and Transportation Overview and Scrutiny Committee are recommended to support the recommendations in paragraph 3.
2. If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approve any views, comments or recommendations on the report, these will be reported to the Executive for their consideration.
3. The Executive are recommended to:-
 - (a) approve the design of a diagonal pedestrian crossing shown in drawing OS/CES/AB/972271/002 appended to this report; and
 - (b) authorise the Director of Technical Services to resolve matters arising relating to the implementation of the pedestrian crossing, consulting with the Cabinet Member and also with ward councillors, where considered necessary, in respect of authorisation under Standing Order No. 83(A) procedure.
4. **Introduction.** The Council's Local Implementation Plan includes a proposal to consider improved pedestrian crossing facilities outside Southfields Station. This report proposes that a diagonal crossing for pedestrians be introduced outside the Station, and discusses the issues that need to be resolved before this can happen.
5. **Southfields Station – diagonal pedestrian crossing proposal.** The entrance to Southfields Station is located at the junction of Wimbledon Park Road/Augustus Road/Replingham Road (Southfields, West Hill). This is an asymmetrical signalised junction, and all arms have a pedestrian crossing facility. The entrance to the Station opens onto a corner of the junction and the instinct for many pedestrians, if it were not for the presence of guard-railing, would be to walk straight across the road at this point, avoiding having to make a detour to cross one or more arms of the junction.
6. The existing junction has an 'all red' stage, when traffic is stopped completely and the green man operates on all arms of the junction at the same time. Some pedestrians, knowing this, take the opportunity to cut corners crossing the roads when all traffic is stopped. More generally, pedestrians are often

observed as being only broadly guided by the existing crossing facilities and guard-railing.

7. Diagonal pedestrian crossings are relatively rare, but there are two in Wandsworth on the Transport for London Road Network: outside Balham Station and on Battersea Park Road. Diagonal crossings provide a more convenient facility for pedestrians, but they are considered to rarely justify the potential adverse impact on traffic. A diagonal crossing is usually only possible when vehicular traffic is stopped on all arms of a junction at the same time (an 'all red' stage). The diagonal crossing distance will normally be longer than the crossing distance on any single arm, requiring the 'all red' stage to be lengthened to allow for a corresponding longer green man. Lengthening an 'all red' stage can be disadvantageous from the point of view of managing vehicular traffic, and can lead to complaints from motorists about waiting at junctions when nothing is happening.
8. The junction outside Southfields Station has an 'all red' stage. Moreover, by virtue of the shape of the junction, the diagonal crossing distance where there is considered to be most demand (northwest to southeast) appears initially to require little, if any, need for the signal timings or stages to be lengthened. It could be that a greater concern would be whether or not a diagonal crossing could be provided safely, with the appropriate sight-lines, including for buses and cyclists, given the odd shape of the junction. There is considerably less demand for crossing the other diagonal distance (northeast to southwest) because it would not serve the Station and, in any event, is so long that it would require a substantial increase in the 'all red' stage.
9. The Council has developed a design for the junction, as shown on the plan appended to this report. This design and traffic surveys have been forwarded to TfL for assessment. TfL is responsible for the traffic signals in London. Unfortunately, the process for signals assessments and subsequent implementation takes, on average, eighteen months, and can often involve a need for further surveys and modelling. The Mayor of London's proposals to smooth traffic and the changes needed on the Olympic Route Network will place further pressure on TfL's ability to deliver amendments to traffic signals.
10. However, the potential benefits for pedestrians of an improvement at the busy junction outside Southfields Station are considered high. Many pedestrians would have a quicker and more direct journey to and from the Station, often involving crossing the road only once. The thousands of people who use the Station, including visitors to the Wimbledon Championships and the Olympics, would be confronted with a far simpler layout. A diagonal pedestrian crossing would help complement works being undertaken by London Underground to make the Station more accessible and step-free.
11. It is proposed that the Committee should support and the Executive approve the design for a diagonal crossing at Southfields Station. As the project remains subject to satisfactory traffic assessment, a safety audit, and statutory consultation, it is further recommended that the Director of Technical Services be authorised to resolve matters arising relating to the implementation of the project, consulting with the Cabinet Member and ward councillors, where considered necessary, in respect of authorisations under Standing Order No.

Southfields Station diagonal pedestrian crossing

83(A) procedure. In the event that it does not prove possible to implement the project, for whatever reason, the Committee would be advised accordingly.

12. **Comments of the Director of Finance.** The cost of the measures proposed, estimated at up to £100,000, can be met from the provision of £200,000 in the capital programme for 'Walking' schemes in 2009/10, financed by capital grant from TfL.
13. **Conclusion.** A diagonal pedestrian crossing is recommended outside Southfields Station. This would result in more direct and convenient journeys for many people, and help complement works to make the Station more accessible. Implementation is subject to the completion of several formal and statutory processes.

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Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

All reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committees, regulatory and other committees, the Executive and the full Council can be viewed on the Council's website (www.wandsworth.gov.uk/committ) unless the report was published before May 2001, in which case the Committee Secretary (Mr. F. de Lima – 020 8871 6488; email fdelima@wandsworth.gov.uk can supply it if required).