



## **SUPPLEMENTARY 1**

### **THE EXECUTIVE**

**Tuesday, 24 March 2009**

**Agenda Item 8.      Dagenham Heathway Public Realm - Greening  
Measures and Highway Modifications (Pages 1 - 10)**

Contact Officer:      Sola Odusina  
Telephone:            020 8227 3103  
Fax:                     020 8227 2171  
Minicom:              020 8227 2685  
E-mail:                 sola.odusina@lbbd.gov.uk

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## THE EXECUTIVE

24 MARCH 2009

### JOINT REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES AND THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER SERVICES

<b>Title:</b> Dagenham Heathway Public Realm - Greening Measures and Highway Modifications	<b>For Decision</b>
<p><b>Summary:</b> The shopping parade at the Heathway has been improved by works to the public realm including highway layout, new pavements, lighting and street furniture. The project has delivered some successes however there are recommendations for further works to enhance the appearance of the area and meet the outstanding Member and public concerns. This report gives a critique of the work to date and describes the range of improvements that have been suggested, a discussion about feasibility and an estimate of the costs, in order that the Executive can agree to additional works.</p> <p><b>Wards Affected:</b> Village, River and Alibon Wards</p>	
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>The Executive is asked to agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The range of works for improvement to the Heathway as described in section 3 of this report.</li> <li>2. Funding of the agreed works from the Highways Investment Programme 2009/10 to the value of £200,000 as set out in Section 4 of this report.</li> <li>3. To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Resources, in consultation with the Lead Member for Regeneration, to approve the final selection of materials.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Reason(s)</b></p> <p>To assist the Council to achieve its Community Priorities of 'Regenerating the Local Economy' and 'Raising General Pride in the Borough' and 'Putting our customers first' the new value described in the Council Plan.</p> <p>It also assists in the good planning of the area to promote social, economic and environmental well-being.</p>	
<p><b>Implications:</b></p> <p><b>Financial:</b> The estimated cost of these works amounts to approximately £200,000. At present there is not a dedicated budget to make these additional improvements but it is proposed that the works be carried out as soon as possible utilising the Highways Investment Programme (HIP) budget in order to enable early commencement. Every effort will be made to contain the HIP within the total allocation of £20m and include the Heathway Improvements within this figure. Officers will also seek additional funding wherever possible from other sources</p>	

however if this is not possible, the position on the HIP programme will need to be considered as part of future capital programme reviews. Whilst efforts will be made to keep the costs within the highways capital and revenue budgets, provision will be found if this does not prove possible. The expected quarterly profile of this element of expenditure is as follows;

	2009/10				Total
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure	120	80	0	0	200

Although there are considerable pressures on the Revenue budgets for Enforcement and Environmental Services in the coming years, every effort is to be made to absorb the cost of maintaining the new features within approved budgets.

**Legal:**

There are legal implications with respect to road closure whilst the works are taking place. Approximately £80,000 of the £200, 000 capital budget is to provide trees in planters and this will require a tendering procedure (see recommendation 3) which will be undertaken in accordance with the Council’s Contract Rules.

The works to shorten the pedestrian crossing islands (subject to appropriate liaison with TfL) and remove the paved median strip, replace with tarmac and carry out new road linings (Approximate cost £100,000), will be carried out by Highways Maintenance.

**Risk Management:**

Section 6 of this report sets out the risks involved in this project and the proposed means of minimising those risks.

**Social Inclusion and Diversity:**

The regeneration of The Heathway is aimed at improving inclusivity, by encouraging more use of the public realm and making it a more pleasant environment. The design has been carried out with this in mind and these improvements would be building on that. In particular the ‘clutter strip’ where new tree planters are proposed, has been designed to remove obstacles from the footway particularly for disabled and visually impaired people. The addition of greenery would create shade in the hot summer months and shelter in the winter. It would make the area feel more welcoming and encourage social interaction between groups that may be vulnerable to exclusion. There would be ongoing liaison with the Access Group.

**Crime and Disorder:**

The public environment is a place where vandalism and petty crime can take place. More serious violent crime can also occur. The Heathway is being designed to attract as many people as possible to minimise these risks. Trees are not likely to be large enough to obstruct the CCTV cameras (because of the technical constraints described in this report) but positioning will be carefully considered to ensure the area remains secure and well lit at night.

**Options Appraisal:**

Option 1 - No improvements

The Heathway has been completed according to an earlier design which has not satisfied everyone. No further improvements would mean people remained disappointed with the outcome of the scheme. The misuse of the median strip is probably the most serious problem because it causes traffic disruption and this would continue. The lack of greenery means that the street scene would evolve very little and there would be no future benefits to look forward to, such as the maturing of trees.

## Option 2 - Selected Improvements

Hanging baskets, works to the median strip, the installation of bollards in selected locations to prevent parking on the pavement and trees in planters are the most feasible improvements to address the concerns set out in this report. This report sets out in more detail how these improvements could be implemented.

<b>Contact Officer:</b> Jeremy Grint	<b>Title:</b> Head of Regeneration and Economic Development	<b>Contact Details:</b> 020 8227 2443 Jeremy.Grint@lbbd.gov.uk
<b>Contact Officer:</b> Darren Henaghan	<b>Title:</b> Head of Environmental and Enforcement Services	<b>Contact Details:</b> 020 8227 5660 Darren.Henaghan@lbbd.gov.uk

## 1 Introduction and Background

1.1 The public realm works at Dagenham Heathway are now largely complete. TfL are completing works to the traffic signals at both junctions which will assist with traffic flows. A number of concerns regarding the scheme have been raised by both Councillors and members of the public. This report sets out the background to the scheme, what consultation took place and what problems the scheme sought to resolve before setting out what concerns remain and proposals for how they can be resolved.

## 2 Current Position

2.1 The design concept for the Heathway was to increase and enhance the vitality and viability of the shopping centre to enable it to keep pace with the changes and opportunities in the wider Barking and Dagenham area. It is a key retail area for the Borough with substantial pedestrian flows. The scheme was primarily designed to improve conditions for shoppers and pedestrians, including reducing vehicle speeds and making additional crossing points. This was aimed at giving the Heathway a greater feeling of openness rather than a car dominated environment where pedestrians felt caged.

2.2 Living Streets undertook a Community Street Audit in 2005 and identified the problems for residents and users. The findings and recommendations contributed to the Dagenham Public Realm Strategy and improvement plans for the Heathway. The problems identified by the audit were:

- Poor state of the street, pavements and furniture,
- Too many posts, signs and randomly placed furniture,
- Illegal parking,
- No loading bays,

- No trees/lack of greenery,
- Railings that made it hard to cross the road,
- Not enough places to cross the road, and
- A general feeling the Heathway was two separate rows of shops rather than a single shopping area.

2.3 The problems identified by the Living Streets audit were addressed in a concept design consisting of the following:

- (i) Removal of guard railing to provide greater permeability between the two sides of the street and at junctions particularly addressing desire lines,
- (ii) A raised and widened central crossing from the tube entrance,
- (iii) Step free access at each end of the Heathway,
- (iv) Short term parking and loading bays on the street,
- (v) Lighting designed for the pavements as well as the road to make it feel safer after dark,
- (vi) A 20mph speed limit and changes to the design of the road to signify to drivers that this is a place where they should slow down,
- (vii) Pavement re-surfacing to make it a more attractive environment for shoppers and new street furniture to create a co-ordinated environment,
- (viii) New locations for bus stops to allow cars to pull out and around stationary buses,
- (ix) Decluttering of the footpath – all unnecessary sign posts, boards, telephone boxes removed and all necessary furniture relocated into a ‘clutter strip’ which is the area nearest the road,
- (x) Trees to soften the Heathway and make it more attractive,
- (xi) Median strip to enable vehicles to overtake stationary buses and to add visual interest and reduce the perception of the road as a barrier.

2.4 Construction of the environmental improvements to the Heathway began in May 2007 (part funded by the Council and part funded by TfL) and the main elements of works were completed by June 2008. All the above objectives were achieved apart from number 10 and unfortunately due to misuse, the benefits of number 11 have not been realised.

2.5 During the detailed design and construction stages it was established that street trees could not be provided due to the intensity and shallow depth of statutory services and objections by service and utility providers. The cost of diversions would be prohibitive. The median strip has been implemented but there are concerns as set out in section 3.

2.6 The problem with utilities also meant the short term parking and loading bays were not fully delivered as set out in the consultation design. Six bays were shown on the concept drawing but only four bays have been able to be provided due to BT's diversion costs. The parking bays that had to be excluded from the scheme were to be located outside the former Woolworths and the Post Office. There is now a short term parking bay of 1/2hr stay and no return within two hours and a loading bay area on both sides of the Heathway. It is proposed to re-designate the loading bay opposite Tesco as a short term parking bay.

2.7 The now, largely completed scheme won TfL's 'Best Walking Initiative' award and has been praised in various publications as a project which has improved conditions

for pedestrians. As a result of the changes the owners of the shopping mall are drawing up plans to carry out new investment and improvements. However, elements of the scheme including the lack of greenery, the abuse of the median strip and the traffic congestion have been the subject of strong criticisms and a high degree of concern by local people.

### 3 Report Detail

The following section sets out the issues raised by residents and Members. There is also a response outlining the key factors that may influence the decision to include these in the improvement works:

- 3.1 Issue: Concerns have been raised about the central median strip in relation to traffic flows and problems with people parking on it. The section outside Tesco in particular sees a number of people parking in it. This has caused disruption to traffic when vehicles wish to overtake stationary buses, as the scheme was designed for.
  - 3.1.1 Response: Enforcement Action has been taken against motorists who park on the central strip. 168 tickets were issued in October 2008 between Church Elm Lane and Parsloes Avenue with many of these related to the central strip. The number of tickets has remained constant since October. Despite white lining, the colour of the paving appears to give people the impression they can park in the central strip. Whilst median/central strips have worked elsewhere, this element of the design of the Heathway is not working and is subject to misuse, inconvenience and local concern.
  - 3.1.2 One option to address this would be to resurface the median strip with tarmac so the central strip matches the rest of the carriageway. When carrying out this work the two raised pedestrian islands could also be shortened and reconfigured to discourage parking. This would cause a disruption to traffic and at least partial closure of the Heathway for approximately 3 weekends. The proposal would cost around £100,000 to implement. A safety audit would need to be carried out.
- 3.2 Issue: Some residents have said that they feel that the emergency vehicles are unable to travel along The Heathway due to cars being parked in the central strip and the location of the raised islands for the informal crossing points.
  - 3.2.1 Response: All emergency services have been contacted to receive their opinions on using the Heathway since works to the highway were completed. The emergency services have stated they had difficulties during the initial construction period but there appears to be no problems at the present time, apart from when vehicles are parking in the central strip.
  - 3.2.2 Graham Harris, of the Metropolitan Police, was invited to a site visit 30th April 2008, for the Stage 3 Road Safety Audit . At that stage the scheme was substantially complete. Overall, Graham was happy with the scheme and added that he had not received any adverse criticism of it from the local Police, Ambulance or Fire Services. No adverse comments have been received from them to date.
  - 3.2.3 The proposals set out in issue 1 above would improve conditions for emergency vehicles by tackling the problem of parked vehicles. Shortening or changing the shape of the islands could also give additional scope for overtaking although this

may make it slightly less safe for people crossing the road. The safety audit will need to determine this.

3.3 Issue: The area has been prone to regular parking on the footpath.

3.3.1 Response: The area in the vicinity of the station crossing is proving particularly prone to parking – however this vulnerability would be resolved with the installation of twelve additional bollards near the station. These were specified as part of the main scheme but have yet to be installed. Other areas that are prone to illegal parking could be protected with strategically placed tree planters. This is discussed in more detail below.

3.4 Issue: Members and the public are concerned that the finished scheme does not incorporate the greening that was originally proposed.

3.4.1 Response: Given underground utilities preventing the inclusion of street trees and lack of additional funding for alternatives, the scheme did not include any greening measures. This is a deficiency in the scheme and, given the choice and colour of paving and street furniture, makes the Heathway appear austere. With additional funding available there are two key ways of adding greenery and colour to The Heathway to complement the work done: – hanging baskets and/or planters. These are discussed in turn.

3.4.2 Hanging baskets could be implemented along the length of the Heathway to add colour. There are fifteen lamp columns that could be utilised to avoid the need to introduce extra poles. It would be important that hanging baskets are of a height where they cannot be reached by the public but accessible for maintenance and watering. Hanging baskets range in cost depending on whether they need to be specially fabricated or purchased ‘off the shelf’. For under £7,000, hanging baskets similar to those shown below could be implemented along the Heathway shopping area. They would, however, have an ongoing maintenance requirement that would need to be met from Customer Services revenue budgets.

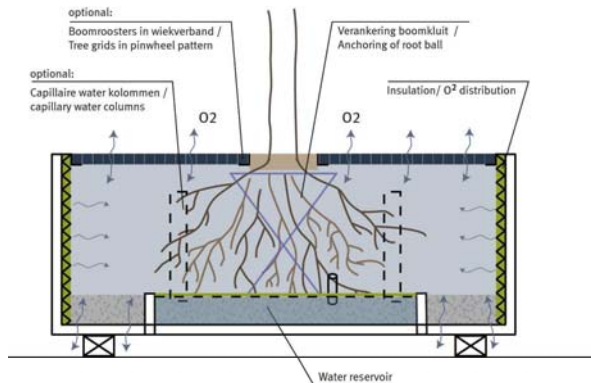


3.4.3 A further option is to introduce structural greenery by installing trees in planters. It is proposed that these should be used to hold the largest trees possible. However the need to gain regular access to services under the footway is a significant constraint. The weight of the planters needs to be limited to allow them to be lifted for access. Further exploration will determine the most appropriate size, depending on the lifting equipment available.



3.4.4 Planters would need to be located within the 'clutter strip' (saving the need for any additional bollards) and providing greening for both pedestrians and road users. They could be located where the street trees were shown in the original design thereby implementing the scheme that was well received during public consultation. It is important that the planters are not located on the granite paving as this would diminish the wide pavements central to the design, which was important in addressing equalities concerns and securing the TfL funding.

3.4.5 The following illustrations show planters that have been used elsewhere.



(Above) Technical drawing of tree planter with intergral water reservoir and lifting bars for fork lift use



(Right) Evergreen tree in purpose built planter at New York Street, Manchester

A bespoke design for the Heathway would enable various size, colour and technical features such as lifting bars etc to be combined to meet the constraints of the site.

3.4.6 The comments of the Council's tree officer and others have been taken into account to formulate the following specification. This should be applied to the selection of any tree planters to be used at The Heathway;

- Be made of steel with a black powder coating with hardwearing, shiny finish. This will give an appearance similar to cast iron.
- Have a soil volume of 3.5 - 4 cubic metres to support healthy tree growth
- Have a maximum width of 1.5 metres to fit on the 'clutter strip' and not obscure the footpath for disabled people
- Be able to be lifted so that the utility companies can access the underground services, with lifting bars etc
- Be sufficiently durable to withstand pressures from heat expansion, root growth, movement, vandalism etc
- Have a liner to prevent against soil dehydration and ideally, a water reservoir to aid healthy establishment
- Fixation brackets for rootball anchoring to prevent trees tipping over
- Adjustable feet to accommodate the slope on The Heathway

3.4.7 The tree planters are required in a bespoke design to meet the above requirements, they are not available 'off the shelf'. This would add to the cost and to the period of time it takes for delivery.

3.4.8 Trees would need to be selected for their resilience and form so they do not suffer from their artificial planting location or encroach onto the highway. Maintenance

would include watering until the trees are established as well as during any periods of hot weather. Maintenance would also include the replacement of any tree losses. It is estimated there would be approximately ten to sixteen planters, following a tendering exercise to obtain good value for money. The size of them would be dictated by the lifting capabilities/ services available to LBB.

3.5 Tree species: Lead Members for Regeneration and Environment will be asked to select an appropriate species following advice on species with the strongest survival rates for such conditions.

3.6 Issue: There is **insufficient signage** identifying The Heathway.

3.6.1 Response: A sign could be installed including a map outside of the tube station (similar in design to the one outside Barking Town Hall). It could include maps showing both the Dagenham Village Urban Trail, the route to the Thames and various local landmarks.

#### **4 Financial Implications - Capital**

4.1 From the responses above, selected measures are thought to be feasible to incorporate in this improvement programme, given the fixed budget of £200,000. This will address most of the shortcomings of the design and other items may be reviewed later. Selected improvements include:

- Shorten pedestrian crossing islands (subject to appropriate liaison with TfL) and remove paved median strip and replace with tarmac and new road linings (Approximate cost £100,000),
- Installation of hanging baskets to add colour (Total cost £7,000 not including maintenance),
- Bespoke planters, purchase of trees, topsoil, transport, installation etc. (Approximate cost £93,000),
- Bollards as originally specified and funded through the existing scheme.

4.2 Total approximate cost £200,000 and this will be funded by the current provision in the 2009/10 Highways Investment Programme.

#### **5 Financial Implications - Revenue**

5.1 The above costs are purchase and installation costs. Planters and hanging baskets would have minor maintenance cost implications which would impact on the revenue budget. Although there are considerable pressures on the Revenue budgets for Enforcement and Environmental Services in the coming years, these will absorb the cost of maintaining the new features within approved budgets

#### **6 Risk Management Analysis**

6.1 The table below shows the risks involved in this project and the proposed means of minimising those risks.

Risk	Severity 1-4	Likelihood 1-4	Combined Score 1-16	Mitigation Measures
Non-delivery	4	2	8	Non-delivery of the further improvements would create a negative impression on those that have complained. Endeavours would be made by the economic development and street management teams to put further improvements in place that meet public approval.
Achieving deadlines	4	3	12	Steps would be taken to identify suitable suppliers and materials in anticipation of the Executive's decision. Contracts would be awarded shortly afterwards.
Public dissatisfaction	2	2	4	The recommendations and selection of goods would reflect public opinion as closely as possible to minimise this risk.
Security	4	2	8	Items that relate to public safety such as the safe fixing of hanging baskets need to be completed within appropriate timescales.
Finding a suitable product	2	2	4	A significant number of technical constraints have been highlighted in the internal consultation. These particularly relate to the installation of tree planters. They include underground services, lifting requirements, weight issues, tree maintenance needs etc. There is an element of difficulty in eliminating all these risks. A tendering procedure would help minimise them so that a product is identified to meet our requirements as closely as possible.

## 7 Consultation and Project Review

- 7.1 There would be ongoing consultation with the Dagenham Village Partnership, Millard Terrace and Reede Road Tenants Residents Associations.
- 7.2 It is proposed that the organisation which carried out the consultation at the start of the scheme (Living Streets) are appointed to carry out a formal evaluation of the project to determine whether the identified problems have been addressed and what the users of The Heathway feel about the scheme. It is felt that this review should not be carried out until people have had the opportunity to use The Heathway for a number of months (post completion) so that views are related to the finished works, rather than related to issues during the construction period. The review should not be completed until any measures above are implemented with time to settle in. This would also help address the equalities impact assessment requirements.

## 8 Consultees

8.1 The following were consulted in the preparation of this report:

- Councillor McCarthy, Lead Member for Regeneration
- Councillor McKenzie, Lead Member for Street Scene and Sustainability
- David Woods, Corporate Director of Customer Services
- Bill Murphy, Corporate Director of Resources
- Alex Anderson, Group Manager Corporate Finance (Regeneration)
- Tony McNamara, Group Manager Corporate Finance (Customer Services)

- Paul Ansell, Procurement Officer
- David Robins, Group Manager Procurement and Efficiency
- Stephen Meah-Sims, Principal Policy/Partnership Officer
- Guy Swindle, Head of Policy
- Susan Lees, Head of Asset Strategy and Capital Development
- Gary Ellison, Group Manager Highways and Civil Engineering
- Steve Jones, Street Lighting Manager
- Rob Wybrow, Project Manager
- Peter Watson, Client Manager
- Keith Wilson, Valuation and Development Manager
- Michael Mavin, Interim Project Delivery Manager
- James Oaten, Group Manager Equalities and Diversity
- Philip Baldwin, Group Manager Community Development
- Heather Wills, Head of Community Services, Libraries and Heritage
- Paul Clark, Arborist
- Reg Gray, Nursery Officer
- Edith Galliers, Neighbourhood Manager
- Yinka Owa, Legal Partner Procurement Contracts
- Eldred Taylor-Camarra, Legal Partner Procurement and Contracts
- David Theakston, Park Development Manager
- Ralph Cook, Regeneration Manager Town centre
- Anthony Alexander, Project Manager
- Joe Baker, Sustainable Development Team Leader
- David Higham, Group Manager Transport Strategy
- Andy Butler, Group Manager Area Regeneration
- David Harley, Regeneration Manager
- Marcia Bryant, Regeneration Officer
- Kelley Green, Senior Professional (Area Regeneration)
- David Higham, Group Manager Transport and Traffic
- Barbara Cronin, Team Leader Safe and Sustainable Transport

#### **Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:**

- Local Development Framework: Planning for the future of Barking and Dagenham – Site specific allocations issues and options report, LBBB, 2008
- Spatial Regeneration Service Scorecard 2007/10
- Dagenham Heathway Regeneration Strategy March 2005
- Heathway Public Realm Improvement Programme