



**Copers Cope Area
Residents' Association**



5 June 2020

To: Will Harmer, Chairman, Environment and Community PDS
Michael Tickner, Copers Cope Ward Councillor
Stephen Wells, Copers Cope Ward Councillor
Russell Mellor, Copers Cope Ward Councillor
Christine Harris, Kelsey and Eden Park Councillor
Diane Smith, Kelsey and Eden Park Councillor
Peter Dean, Kelsey and Eden Park Councillor
Ian Dunn, Clock House Ward Councillor
Vanessa Allen, Clock House Ward Councillor
Josh King, Clock House Ward Councillor
Kevin Brookes, Penge and Cator Ward Councillor
Kathy Bance, Penge and Cator Ward Councillor
Simon Jeal, Penge and Cator Ward Councillor
Angus Culverwell, Assistant Director, Traffic and Parking
Colin Brand, Director of Environment and Public Protection

Dear Councillors and Officers

In regard to the 'Funding submission for highway measures to support social distancing during recovery from lockdown' to be discussed at the Environment PDS on June 8 2020, we are writing on behalf of the Copers Cope Area Residents' Association (CCARA) & the West Beckenham Residents' Association (WBRA), which between us have over 1750 paid up members across of Beckenham wards.

Our Associations wholeheartedly support the government's and the Council's commitment to transform our highways to accommodate active travel and for instruction to local authorities to make significant changes to their road layouts to give more space to cyclists and pedestrians and provide a lasting legacy of greener, safer transport. To have access to funds to progress proposals across the borough is a wonderful opportunity.

www.coperscope.org.uk & www.westbeckenhamra.org

To protect and promote the interests of residents in matters of local concern.

CCARA, founded in 1935, covering central and northern Beckenham.

WBRA, founded in 1945, covering parts of Kelsey and Eden Park, Clock House and Penge and Cator.

We have reviewed the proposals that impact Beckenham and would like to thank all those involved for picking up on the schemes for Beckenham. We would like to explicitly state our support for the following schemes:

- Pedestrian crossing at Southend/Park Road.
- All the cycle routes proposed - but what will be done to deal with the speeding issues on roads such as Copers Cope Road, especially as there will be minimal separation between cars and cyclists?
- Work to improve pedestrian safety at the Cornerways Surgery junction (Manor Road / Wickham Road / Bromley Road) - consideration should be given to a pedestrian phase to the lights at this junction.
- 20mph signs at all the schools indicated - we support additional schools requests for such.

We also provide the following for your consideration:

Beckenham Town Centre

Firstly, we are enormously pleased that we have had the recent multi-million pound reconstruction of the High Street already giving us much wider pavements.

In general, we wonder if proposed floor stickers are value for money except possibly at actual pinch points where bunching is likely to take place such as at bus stops?

Given that individuals are to be told to self isolate only if they have been closer than 6ft for more than 15 mins to a person who has symptoms, passing others in open air in the street where it is not possible to maintain 2m distance for maybe 2-3 seconds will be commonplace, and floor stickers will not be of benefit. It is highly unlikely that they will be respected as people manoeuvre along the High Street whilst doing their best to maintain social distance.

There will also likely be issues in regard to them peeling off the floor and attracting dirt/debris. Is there more effective signage that can be used to remind shoppers to be COVID safe rather than marking out 2 metres along all the pavements?

At bus stops, the main issue will be if it rains, people will want shelter regardless.

In regard to the specific Town Centre measures we provide the following feedback.

- **Proposal to add barriers to selected inset parking bays to create wider footways, such as by the post office and between The Drive and the war memorial** - it is not clear exactly what this means but we take it to mean removing parking in these places to allow use by pedestrians. The major pinch point is the bus stop at the Wimpy. It would have helped if TfL had not insisted that bus stops were located in the middle of the pavements instead of along the edge. The surface of the parking bays is uneven granite sets which aren't easy to walk on; would a smooth, temporary

surface be laid on top to prevent trips and falls? Otherwise we worry about the effect on traders, who will be struggling to re-open after lockdown as it is.

- **Beckenham High St: Beckenham Pharmacy 171-173 High St. Granite Bench on the edge of village way / High St creates a pinch point** - the granite bench is an integral part of the regeneration of the High Street. We hope this is not an intention to remove it. The pinch point is only an issue when Sainsbury's queues get to that point, and, even then, it is manageable by sensible distancing. A worse pinch point is at the entrance to the alleyway where there are large advertising panels and recycling bins which could be removed. But it would be possible for the Sainsbury's queue to go the other way, through their passage and up the walkway, as they already do when it is raining.
- **Queues outside M&S opposite church** - this is a problem only when the queue reaches those outside Fee and Brown and Deli Nene selling takeaway at their doors. Otherwise the pavement up to the notice board is wide enough. People can access M&S at the car park entrance, where there is ample space.
- **Keep left signs and floor vinyl at various points around the town centre** - see general comment above on vfm for stickers.
- **Major Bus stops - Signs / Floor vinyl / Pavement widening** - bus stops are a potential problem, but this will mostly be felt when it is raining, when people will want shelter regardless of how wide the pavement is.

In addition to the points raised above we provide the following for consideration:

- **Community toilets** - we are concerned about the lack of public toilets and the possibility that current participants in the Community Toilets scheme will be overwhelmed and reluctant to continue if there needs to be thorough cleaning after each use. We urge that LB Bromley take measures to ensure Community toilets remain available, and if necessary increase the £1000 payment to ensure continued provision.
- **Pubs and restaurants** - thinking ahead to when pubs and restaurants open, there are several pinch points, particularly those close to the railway bridge at Beckenham Junction. In some venues it is possible to use alternative entrances, and possibly one entrance and one exit. We urge the Council to proactively work with such establishments before they re-open to ensure public footpaths are managed safely and ensure no incidents occur.
- **Raised pavement at the NatWest bank / Junction restaurant** - this is also a narrow pavement, but solutions could involve a one way system which would impose a long detour and several road crossings.
- More **cycle racks** were promised on the High Street, but are not yet in situ.

Temporary Closure of Park Road

CCARA regularly receives correspondence from residents in regard to the proposal at this junction and in turn we have sought advice from Mr Culverwell on its progress. We would like to reiterate our keen interest in this proposal and would like to be kept abreast of all developments.

The initial proposal was not widely consulted on. Whilst we understand that some residents on Park Road may have been consulted, we have members on Park Road that were not consulted, as well as residents on the surrounding roads that were not consulted. We are concerned that residents will not be consulted at all if the Council move to close Park Road temporarily - this is what happened with Lawn Road.

There is significant consensus among local people that the junction at Park Road/Beckenham Place/Southend Road needs improvement, and specifically a safe pedestrian crossing. Many residents we hear from would like a Zebra crossing with lights at this junction. However, there is concern from members on Copers Cope Road and Brackley Road that the closure of Park Road will lead to increased congestion and pollution on those roads - ward Councillors and Mr Culverwell have received such feedback. Further, displacing traffic to those roads will exacerbate existing road safety problems that currently dissuade active travel:

- Copers Cope Road/Southend Road is the most dangerous junction of the three on Southend Road according to Crashmap.co.uk. The junction is synonymous with aggressive driving to make the lights, or get out of the sideroads. This is dangerous not only for drivers, but also cyclists, and pedestrians trying to cross at the refuge on Copers Cope Road or cross The Avenue. Copers Cope Road often has large tailbacks at the junction with Copers Cope at peak time, adding more cars to this junction will be of detriment to local residents and street users, and at odds with promoting active travel.
- Brackley Road is a main thoroughfare to Worsley Bridge School which is located on the junctions of Brackley and Worsley Bridge Road. Adding congestion and traffic to this road is at odds with the overall aim of making travel to school safer and greener, and encouraging active travel to school.

The closure of Park Road must not be done even on a temporary basis without mitigating the impact on Copers Cope Road and Brackley Road. If the Council do proceed with closing Park Road, we request that pollution monitoring at the junctions of Copers Cope/Southend and Brackley/Southend is undertaken by the Council and included in any assessment.

We hope this project provides the opportunity to look again at the options for this junction and find a solution that will not push increased traffic on to Brackley and Copers Cope Roads. Further if changes are made as Westgate Road Bridge it may reduce the number of cars traversing Southend Road from Copers Cope Road, Park Road and Brackley Road to use Westgate Road Bridge to avoid the lights at Beckenham Town Centre.

Initiatives to control speeding in northern Copers Cope

The most common complaint CCARA receives is that of serious speeding - speeds well in excess of 40mph (as confirmed by the Council's own report for the Quietway scheme). This issue is frequently raised at our public meetings and is an area we request our Safer Neighbourhood Team focus on. Both the Police and Fire Services will be able to confirm how often speeding has been a contributing factor to the numerous crashes on these roads.

Speeding on Copers Cope Road, Brackley Road, Park Road and The Avenue receive the most complaints.

Such speeding dissuades active travel, people do not feel safe to cycle on or walk across roads that frequently suffer from high speeds. Furthermore, the noise from speeding cars and motorbikes is a nuisance to residents (loud enough to wake sleeping children) and adds to the perception the roads in Copers Cope are unsafe, which in turn dissuades active travel.

We request that Council investigate measures to dissuade speeding on these roads. Also note that Copers Cope Road, Brackley and Park Roads will be increasingly used by cyclists to access the Quietway and it is imperative speeds are reduced to support cyclists.

Installation of a pedestrian crossing on Brackley Road for Worsley Bridge School

Parents have previously requested a pedestrian crossing on Brackley Road to access the school safely. Can this be implemented in tandem with the 20mph signs? More parents will be encouraged to walk if they can cross roads safely with children and buggies.

Installation of a pedestrian crossing on Copers Cope Road for New Beckenham Station

Local people have requested a crossing on Copers Cope Road for New Beckenham Station and for onward travel to Worsley Bridge School. We are aware a petition signed by hundreds of people was submitted to the Council previously. CCARA supports the installation of a proper crossing at this point, and note a crossing will not only provide a safer crossing point for pedestrians it will offer some roadway infrastructure to reduce speeding. We urge the Council to reconsider this request and work up a bid for funding.

Improvement of pedestrian safety at Copers Cope Road / Southend Road Junction

This is one of the most dangerous junctions in the Copers Cope Ward (according to crashmap.org.uk). Whilst we acknowledge it is a complex junction, there must be something that can be done to improve pedestrian safety at the crossing here. We strongly urge the Council to give this review this junction with priority as part of this project.

Improving pedestrian and cycling access to St Mary's School and Beckenham Place Park

Whilst we understand the Council will not adopt and make up the part of Westgate Road at its own cost, we urge the Council to make provisions to improve access to the School and park for pedestrians and cyclists. This may include installing a pavement on both sides to the park and creating a surface for cyclists (currently there is only pavement on as far as the school on one side). If there is the possibility of funding to make up the whole road there is merit in doing so to reduce the dust pollution caused from cars churning up the gravel.

Improving pedestrian and cycling access over Westgate Road Bridge

Westgate Road Bridge is a well known congestion hotspot, where frustration frequently leads to antisocial behaviour from drivers (shouting, hooting etc). The bridge is used as a cut-through to avoid the lights in Beckenham Town Centre, and facilitates increased traffic along The Avenue and Foxgrove Road that will turn on to or traverse Southend Road (these junctions are known casualty cluster sites).. The pathways over the bridge are too narrow for pedestrians (especially those with buggies/wheelchairs), and the roadway is not ideal for cyclists due to cars having to maneuver to allow other vehicles to squeeze past.

Local residents have been active in campaigning for a change to this junction; suggestions include:

- *Installing traffic lights that work at peak times*
- *Making the bridge one way to cars*
- *Allowing only pedestrians and cars to use the bridge*
- *Widening the bridge*

This project may provide an opportunity to investigate these options on a trial basis, for example by closing off Westgate Bridge to cars for all or part of the day. Increasing pedestrian and cycling access on this route to school may also encourage more families to travel this way to school and supports the active travel aims of the Government. Further, reducing car access may also have the knock-on effect of reducing the numbers of cars that need to traverse Southend Road at Copers Cope Road, Park Road, and Brackley Road at peak times - this may also negate the need to close Park Road at its junction with Southend Road.

Clock House Shops

It is not clear where the floor signs are intended to be located, Clock House Parade/ over the bridge/ the shops between the bridge and Chaffinch Road? Are floor stickers necessary, see above for general points about the value for money of floor stickers.

The pinch points are at bus stops outside Kings School, the MindCare Centre opposite, and at Clock House Parade.

Elmers End Shops

Pavements around the junction of Eden Park Avenue and Dunbar Avenue, at Goodwood Parade and opposite the Green are very wide: are vinyl floor stickers necessary? - see above for general points about the value for money of floor stickers.

Issues crossing bridge by Tesco Superstore

The pinch points are indeed at the bridge over the railway at Elmers End station (if this is what is referred to) **and** at the pedestrian crossing outside John Kirk House near The Elm Tree pub, in both cases because of safety railings. Indeed the latter is more of a problem

because of the narrower footpath and higher footfall at this location as well as people waiting in the middle to cross at the lights.

If it is proposed to make the pathways over the bridge one way, it is unlikely that this will be respected and so could lead to confrontations between residents. Also a crossing at each end of the railings would be required and most people would balk at the prospect of crossing the road twice within a few dozen metres to get to where they are going. There are already three sets of traffic lights within 500 metres. Footfall along the bridge is low enough to allow safe passing and there are two "passing places" at the access points to Gwydor Road – see above for general points about the length of time apparently needed for infection to transfer.

Eden Park Shops

In regard to the keep left signs and floor stickers, note, there is a very large area of "pavement" within the Sainsbury's Local own land in addition to the actual public pavement - see above for general points about the value for money of floor stickers.

Pedestrian crossing for Eden Park High School

Safer road crossing points are required at Eden Park High. More children will arrive in September and there is still no safe place for them to cross. Balmoral Avenue traffic at collection times is dangerous and will be more so with children and cars during the darker months. Bunching occurs and a pedestrian crossing would help. We are also aware that local families have requested pedestrian crossings on Eden Park Avenue and Upper Elmers End Road to make the journey to school safer. In general, improved access for pedestrians and cyclists need to be reviewed for the cluster of schools in Eden Park.

In general, there is likely to be increased car use as school pupils are discouraged from using public transport. Restricting car parking close to schools or designating some streets or roads as "school streets" would help to increase walking and cycling to school.

We hope that any decisions made at the PDS meeting on 8 June will not exclude taking into consideration our feedback on behalf of residents. Please do not hesitate to get in contact if our Association's may be of assistance.

Yours Sincerely

Chloe-Jane Ross, Chair, Copers Cope Area Residents' Association
Marie Pender, Chair, West Beckenham Residents' Association
Stephen Parkin, Vice-chair, CCARA
Alan Old, Committee Member for Planning, CCARA