

Crawley Borough Council

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Commission 27 November 2023

Report to Cabinet 29 November 2023

Western Boulevard Scheme - Crawley Growth Programme.

Report of the Head of Economy and Planning – PES/442

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To update Cabinet on the progress of the Western Boulevard scheme as part of the Crawley Growth Programme.
- 1.2. To inform Cabinet that an additional £1,949,419 of BSIP (Bus Service Improvement Plan) monies have been secured for allocation to the Western Boulevard scheme , subject to a funding agreement with West Sussex County Council and to Full Council approval.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To the Overview and Scrutiny Commission:

That the Commission consider the report and decide what comments, if any, it wishes to submit to the Cabinet.

- 2.2. To the Cabinet

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- a) Note the progress of the scheme to date.
- b) Delegate authority to the Head of Economy and Planning (in consultation with Head of Governance, Performance and People and the Head of Corporate Finance) to sign a funding agreement with West Sussex County Council with regard to £1,949,419 of BSIP monies. (Generic Delegation 3 will be used to enact this recommendation).
- c) Delegate the negotiation, approval and completion of all relevant documentation, including legal paperwork, to the Head of Economy and Planning, in consultation with the Head of Governance, People and Performance and Head of Corporate Finance (Generic Delegations 2 and 3 will be used to enact this recommendation).
- d) The Cabinet is recommended to ask Full Council to approve the addition of the of £1,949,419 of BSIP (Bus Service Improvement Plan) monies to the Crawley Borough Council capital programme as part of the Western Boulevard scheme, subject to a funding agreement with West Sussex County Council.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1. The recommendations will allow Crawley Borough Council to progress the Western Boulevard Scheme to the on-site delivery phase.

4. Background

- 4.1. The Crawley Growth Programme is a major regeneration programme of infrastructure improvements and physical regeneration designed to support significant increases in new homes, business investment and employment growth. The Programme is being delivered by Crawley Borough Council in partnership with West Sussex County Council (WSCC), underpinned by £49.093m of public funding and supported by a range of public and private sector organisations including Metrobus, Manor Royal Business Improvement District, the Arora Group, Network Rail and Govia Thameslink Railway.
- 4.2. One of the key objectives of the Crawley Growth Programme is to significantly improve the quality of sustainable transport infrastructure (bus, cycle lanes and pedestrian walkways) to deliver modal shift and alleviate congestion in the Town.
- 4.3. The Western Boulevard scheme is intended to deliver significant improvements to bus connectivity in the town centre alongside better sustainable transport facilities. The scheme will widen The Boulevard/ The Broadway junction, giving priority to buses turning in and out of the junction. The scheme will also improve cycle facilities in the area by continuing the segregated cycle tracks on The Boulevard completing the link from the Eastern Gateway to the existing cycle infrastructure on the High Street. Finally, the paving will be upgraded to continue The Boulevard experience that begins with the Eastern Gateway. See appendix A.
- 4.4. In April 2022 a planning application was submitted, permission was granted in September 2022. Detailed designs have been completed and a contractor appointed.
- 4.5. In April 2022, West Sussex County Council were awarded Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding by the Department for Transport -Western Boulevard has been identified as a suitable project to be funded through this award (see section 6). This will enable a further £1,949,419 of public funding to be added to the Crawley Growth programme.

5. Description of Issue to be Resolved.

- 5.1. Crawley Borough Council will be responsible for delivering Western Boulevard. West Sussex County Council is the lead authority for the Crawley Growth programme, which includes the Western Boulevard scheme and will pay Crawley Borough Council as lead delivery body for the scheme, subject to a funding agreement, which will provide a budget of up to £1,949,419 to deliver the scheme.
- 5.2. West Sussex County Council has taken on the role of lead delivery body for the BSIP Programme, and a Funding Agreement between West Sussex County Council and the Department for Transport has been signed to this effect. This sets out the obligations for overall delivery and financial management of the programme.
- 5.3. It is proposed that Crawley Borough Council enter into a funding agreement with West Sussex County Council, which confirms the programme governance, budget and delivery arrangements and the responsibilities of each authority for management of the scheme. Such an agreement would also reference the overarching BSIP

funding agreement between West Sussex County Council and the Department for Transport .

- 5.4. The Western Boulevard project has already secured planning permission and has an estimated commence on site date of late Q4 2023/24 and has an anticipated completion date of late Q3 2024/25, which would enable the project to be delivered by the Department for Transport deadline for the BSIP funding of 31 March 2025.

6. Information & Analysis Supporting Recommendation

- 6.1. Western Boulevard is a multi-modal sustainable transport improvement project. It is considered an appropriate project to be a recipient of BSIP funding as there are several features within the project that have been specifically designed to improve bus journey times and provide a more reliable service. Metrobus estimate that the proposed improvements will benefit over 10 million bus users a year. Improvements relating specifically to bus journey time improvements:
- Additional dedicated bus lane, for buses turning right into the Broadway, so they no longer have to sit in traffic.
 - Widening the junction to include a lane for ongoing traffic traveling west to east on the Boulevard, allowing the cars to keep moving whilst the bus turns.
 - Upgrade signals at The Boulevard/ Broadway junction, giving buses priority over traffic travelling east to west along at The Boulevard. Enabling buses to turn in and out of The Broadway more efficiently.
 - Extended the dedicated bus lane on The Boulevard, turning onto the High St.
 - Parking and loading will continue to be prohibited on the Boulevard, removing obstacles for buses.
 - Closing the exit from The Boulevard service road onto the Broadway, reducing conflict between cars and buses.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. These proposals require no direct additional financial revenue or capital funding commitment from Crawley Borough Council.
- 7.2. The £1,949,419 BSIP funds will be allocated to the Borough Council's capital programme, subject to Full Council approval and a funding agreement with West Sussex County Council and these funds will enable delivery in full of the Western Boulevard scheme.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1. The Council will enter into a funding agreement with West Sussex County Council, which is subject to negotiation between legal representatives from both authorities. The agreement will, where appropriate, replicate the clauses agreed between West Sussex County Council and Department for Transport.

9. Equalities Implications

- 9.1. The Council must have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and for the public sector equality duty ("PSED") under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in making its decisions and carrying out its functions.

10. Staffing

- 10.1. The appropriate project management staffing resource to oversee delivery of the Western Boulevard project is included in the project capital budgets since that resource is directly associated with a capital scheme delivery.

11. Background Papers

- 11.1 None

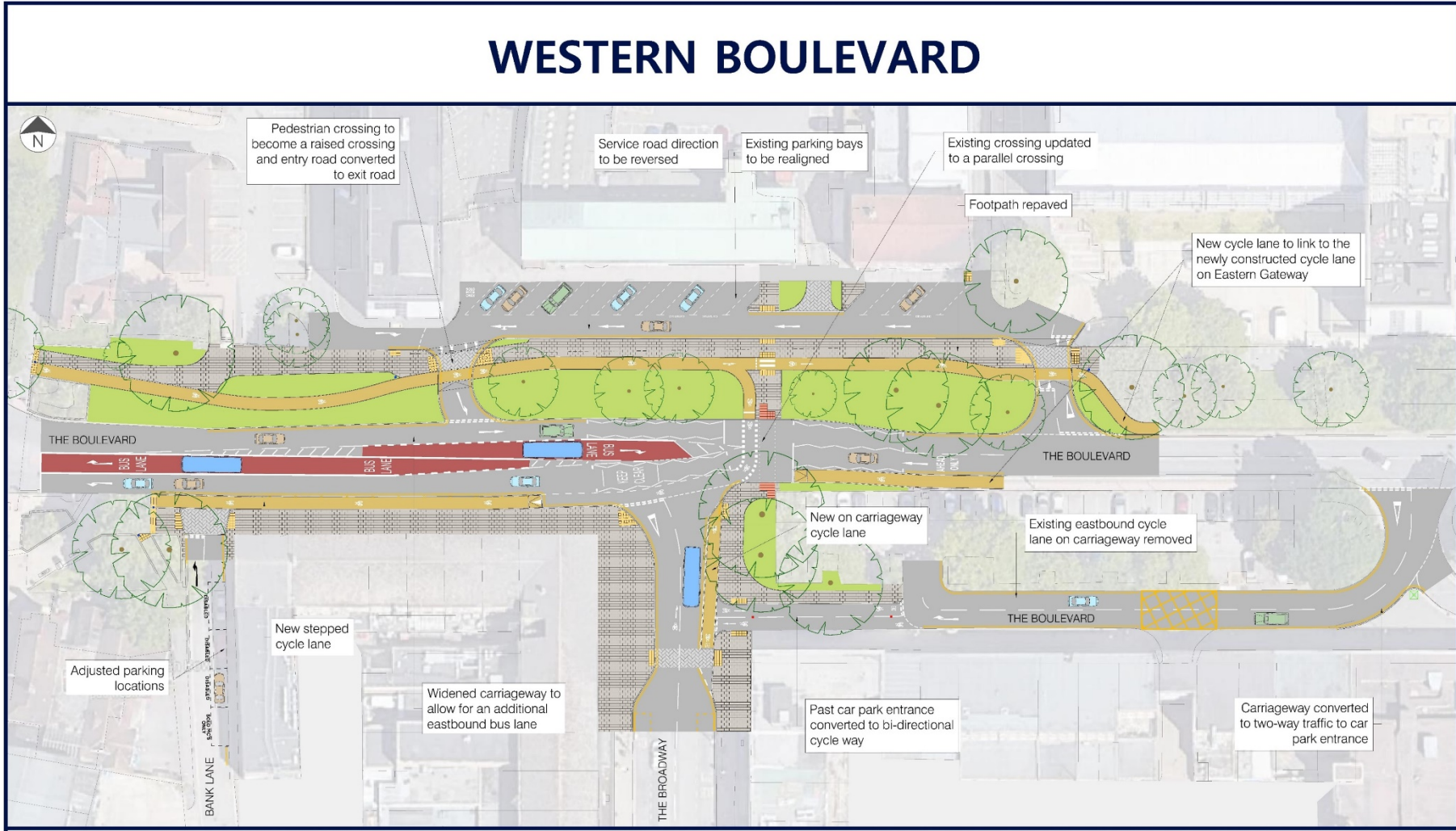
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Appendix A.

WESTERN BOULEVARD



WESTERN BOULEVARD

