Balfour Street Consultation – September 2017

1 Do you support the proposals?

No, I do not support the proposals

2 What do you like about the design?

Fill in the space provided:

Reduction in car parking

Increase in green infrastructure

3 What don't you like about the design?

Please fill in the space provided:

bad for cycling, poor design quality:

- build- out forcing contraflow cycles into path of motor vehicles

- arrangement at Rodney Road, making crossing it harder for cycles as well as those turning right off it

- ugly & excessive marking & lining at Rodney Road junction

4 Additional comments

Please use the space below for comments::

- Overview

While strongly supporting the principles of public realm improvements in this location and the reallocation of space from car parking to pavement, the poor design of the current proposals would seriously degrade cycling conditions on what is supposed to be Southwark's flagship cycle route. Southwark Cyclists therefore object to these proposals.

 - Comments and concerns

Although it forms part of the proposed Southwark Spine cycle route immediately south of Old Kent Road, there is no mention of that in the consultation, which is concerning. Although implementation of this route is delayed, in the interim any scheme on the route should be designed to provide a high Cycling Level of Service for very high cycle flows, in accordance with the London Cycling Design Standards.

The northbound right turn on parallel Rodney Street will soon be banned for motor vehicles as part of Quietway 7 scheme that is under construction. A significant increase in rat-running on this less suitable street is likely, as the main road alternative of Heygate Street can be very congested. This may create conflicts of drivers crossing the proposed two-way cycle track on Rodney Street too.

While the removal of the odd bit of contraflow where it is unclear for those cycling southbound whether they are required to use the pavement or not, immediately afterwards the sharp build-out south of Victory Place would encourage drivers to cut the corner into the path of people contraflow cycling. This would be unsettling and unsafe to say the least.

The proposals for the Rodney Road junction would not only hinder cycling movements, they would also offer a poor visual appearance cluttered with markings.

Besides creating a new dog-leg, which would make it harder to cycle across, it would be harder for people cycling to turn-right onto Balfour Street as there would be no safe space to wait in the middle of the road.

Moving the zebra crossing does appear to make sense as it is on a desire line between green space, even though it would be further away from some of the new housing.

 -Alternative proposals

1) A 'no motor vehicles except for access restriction' should be implemented at the southern end of Balfour Street to prevent an increase in rat-running.

2) The kerb line along Balfour Street should be modified so that drivers are not encouraged to cut into the path of contraflow cycles. Whether greater separation is required, which would require the carriageway not to be narrowed as much as proposed, will depend on motor traffic flows, in particular whether (1) is implemented.

3) The opportunity should be taken to designate the eastern end of Victory Place a pedestrian & cycle zone, retaining access for loading, enabling removal of the ugly markings and better reflecting the needs of the adjacent school.

4) In relation to Rodney Road junction, Stead & Wadding Streets should be realigned so they face Balfour Street (with an pedestrian island in between them then growing into pavement). The junction should be converted from give-way to a tight mini-roundabout, facilitating people cycling making a right turn along the route of the Spine.

5) An attractive surface treatment - rather than a clutter of markings - should be implemented on the Rodney Road junction. Far fewer markings would still be TSRGD compliant. A simple, cost effective buff surface treatment / circular feature would be a significant improvement and help create the feel of a public square, which is how the continentals would do it.