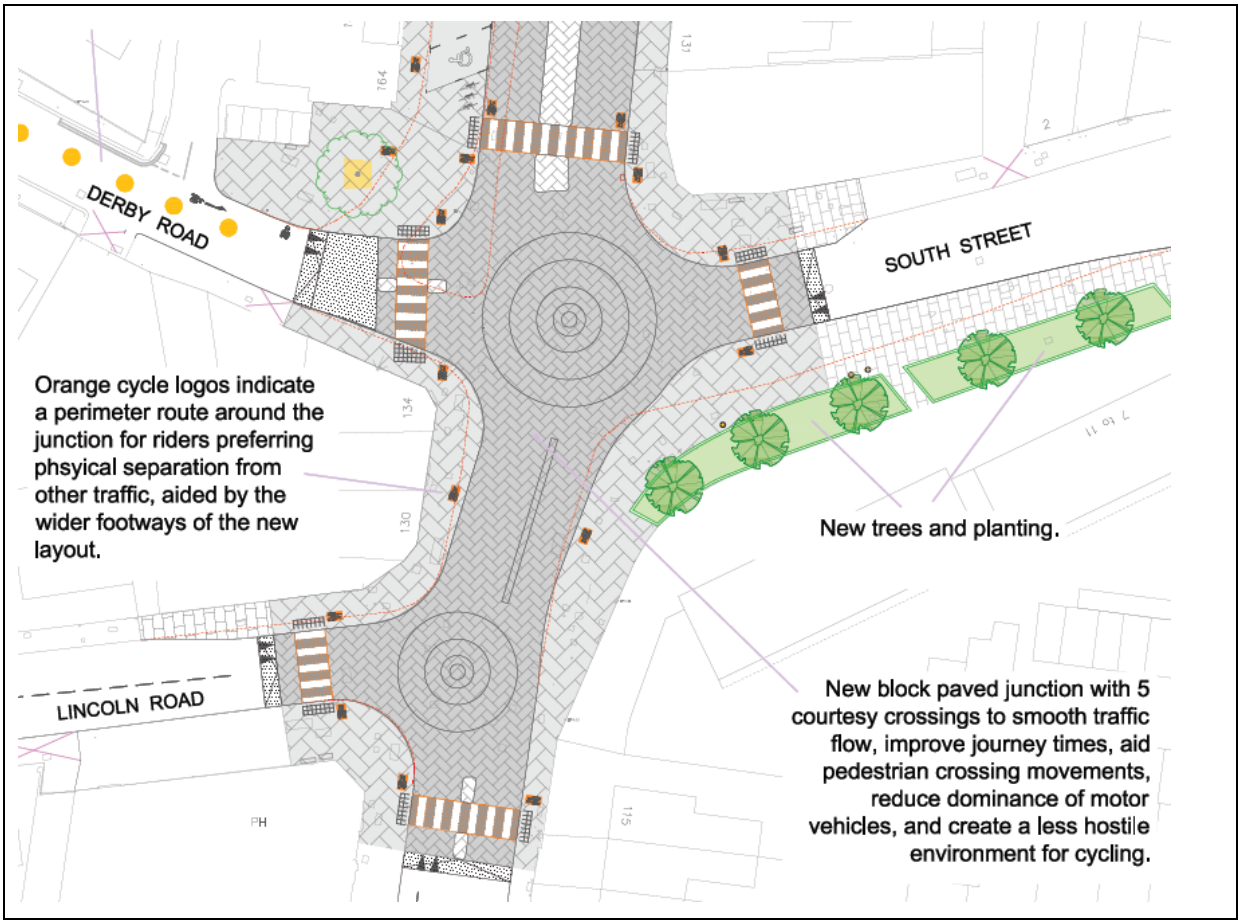
Ponders End High Street Improvement Scheme

Frequently Asked Questions – September 2017

New Junction at South Street, Lincoln Road, Derby Road

When will the junction be finished?

The junction was re-opened to traffic at 7pm on Friday 1 September 2017, ahead of the new school term starting. Further work to the perimeter footways will continue in the weeks to follow to enable the full opening of all the crossing points. Initially only the two near Lincoln Road were open for use. The final tie-in to the section of the High Street to the north cannot be finished until further construction work is completed outside the shops, including alterations to buried cables by utility companies. Some sections of temporary barrier will remain in place in the meantime.



Is the junction working properly?

Video surveys and site observations were made by traffic and highway engineers on the evening of Friday 1 September, the morning and afternoon of Saturday 2 September, and on further occasions within the week commencing Monday 4 September. Generally these suggest that the junction is operating as anticipated, with drivers and cyclists tending to treat each of the two new roundels as roundabouts – hence giving way to their right - but negotiating the space with less speed and more caution than at a typical junction, as the designers intended. Monitoring will continue in the coming weeks.

Why are the roundels not easier to see?

The final operations to complete the carriageway blocks left dust and some surplus grout on the road surface. This was seen to mask somewhat the visual contrast between the general blockwork and the roundels when the junction was first opened. (The same applied to the crossing points.) The effects of weathering and traffic appear to be reducing this effect day-by-day, but other measures to restore the intended contrast are also being investigated.

The crossings are unfinished – how do I negotiate the junction on foot?

Five new crossings will be included at the finished junction, as shown in the layout above. At the time of opening to traffic, only the most southerly two near Lincoln Road were in use.

Courtesy crossing (Derby Road arm) under construction August 2017

Junction opened to traffic - 1 September 2017

Temporary barriers will need to be left in place elsewhere around the perimeter of the junction in early September until the footway works can be completed. Footway users will need to continue to divert further away from the junction to find alternative crossing points on these arms. Temporary ramps are in place to aid crossing movements.

Are the completed crossing points safe to use? How do they work?

The pedestrian facilities are called courtesy crossings. On the wider arms, they are designed to have central islands to allow crossing in two stages; on narrower arms pedestrians cross in a single, short stage checking for traffic in both directions. This type of crossing will work effectively for pedestrians in two circumstances. The first is when pedestrians find suitable gaps in traffic flow to allow them to cross, irrespective of driver behaviour. The second is when approaching drivers register the presence of pedestrians waiting to cross and elect to yield priority.

The new crossing points are safe to use whenever pedestrians find suitable gaps in traffic, as with any other facility. However, pedestrians should exercise particular caution while the barriers remain in place, while the visual contrast remains diminished and while the junction's footways remain partially finished.

Once the crossings are fully open pedestrians waiting for a gap should communicate by their body position their readiness to cross and commit to stepping out when confident that the approaching drivers are responding accordingly, much as they would do at a zebra crossing.

This may sound as if the system relies on particularly high driving standards, or works only when drivers and pedestrians are given additional instruction. In reality, the system relies on skills and behaviours that are already familiar to pedestrians and instinctive to drivers, providing the correct conditions are in place to bring them to the fore. We have, nevertheless, contacted local schools to offer any additional explanation they feel their pupils and parents may need.

The unusual layout of the new junction, it's block-paved surfaces and its absence of traditional priority markings is already seen to cue most drivers to proceed with less speed and greater caution. The crossing points are sited at narrowed locations and where drivers are already anticipating the need to stop to yield to other traffic. These are the conditions the designers predict will bring about frequent opportunities for pedestrians to cross, even during periods of high traffic flow.

Why are there no beacons at the crossing points? What about lighting?

Belisha beacons are mandatory to help demark a zebra crossing. They are not applicable at courtesy crossings. Lighting levels have been improved at the junction under the scheme with new LED lanterns providing better illumination of the road surface and footways.

Why are there no signs and road markings to denote a roundabout?

It is a feature of the design to omit signs and road markings that convey explicit priority to one group of users or one stream of traffic ahead of any other. By leaving the junction without priority indicators it prompts drivers to adopt a more cautious driving style and attend closely to other road users entering and leaving the space. The designers believe this will facilitate smooth traffic flow whilst establishing the least hostile environment possible for pedestrians and cyclists.

How can roundabouts be better than traffic signals? How will drivers cope with the new style of the junction?

The previous five-arm signalised layout of the junction was awkward, inefficient and provided no dedicated phases for pedestrians. Changing it to two roundabouts will shorten queues and the style of the road design will encourage drivers to give priority to crossing pedestrians. Similar road layouts elsewhere in the U.K. have proved to be very successful, helping the flow of traffic and improving road safety whilst engendering courtesy towards pedestrians. A video online explains how this has helped traffic movements and reduced collisions at a similar site in Bexleyheath. (Search YouTube for Derby Road Junction - https://youtu.be/uxEomudW8rM)

What does the new junction, and the overall scheme, hope to achieve?

Our in-depth analysis shows three key benefits to the scheme: quicker journeys, enhanced pavements and public spaces and improved road safety for pedestrians and drivers. Our analysis, which is supported by Transport for London, shows that these benefits easily outweigh the costs. The journey time savings are the most significant element. The Derby Road junction carries 1,000 buses every day. The reduction in queuing time that will result from its conversion to roundabouts will amount to huge savings across the life of the scheme. The same will apply to car journeys.

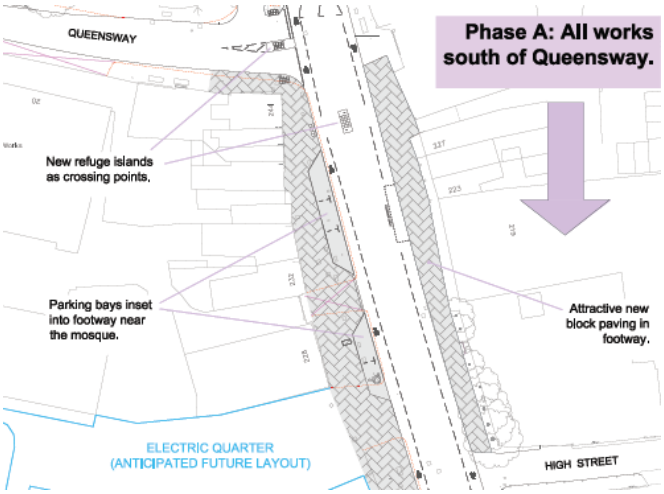
Was the road closure worth the trouble?

The closure of the road brought with it some unavoidable disruption. The Council is grateful for the patience that local residents and road users have shown. Those seeing the progress of the work during the closure will understand why it was considered essential to keep traffic off the junction during this period.

Having the closure in place has helped other project work in the area. Pipework for the Council's Energetik heat network was laid across the High Street near the park in August. A new entry route has been created at College Court Car Park to aid progress on the Electric Quarter site. We have also taken the opportunity to allow hundreds of lorry loads of spoil to be removed from Heron Hall Academy via Queensway and High Street while the main road was quiet.

Continuing High Street Improvement Works

Will construction work now continue beyond the junction?

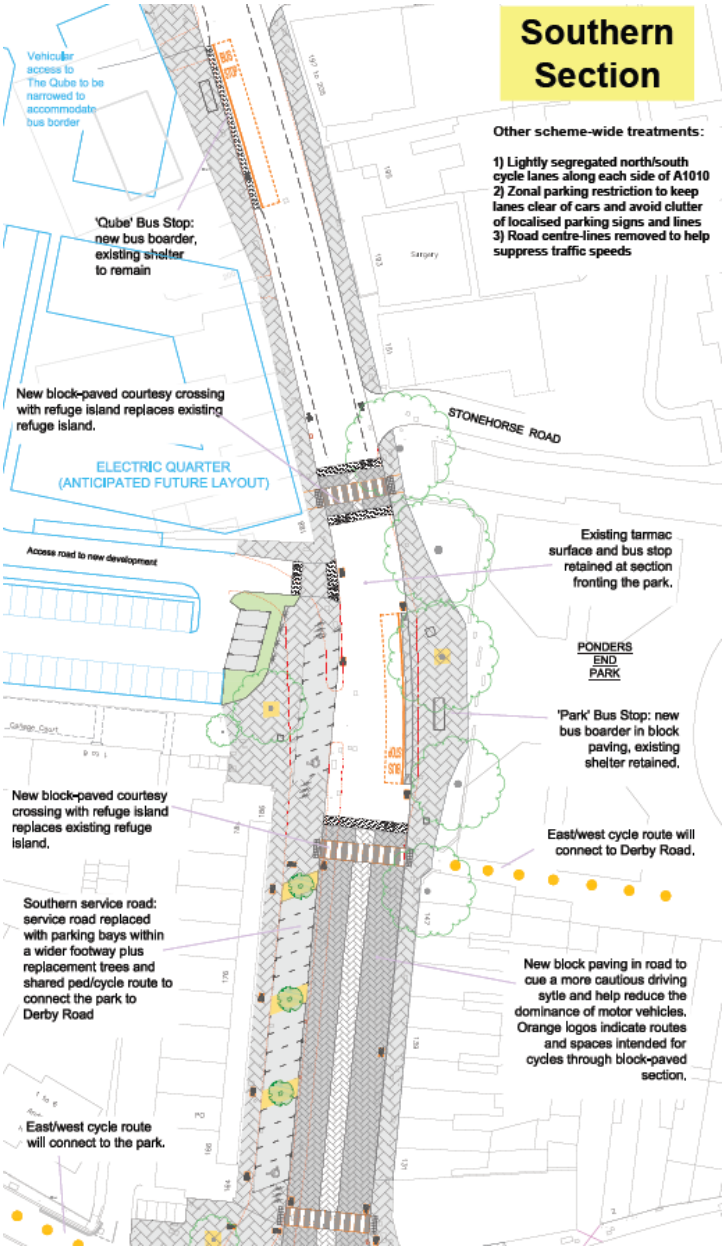


Yes, work will continue along the High Street to the north of the junction in September, October and November, as shown opposite. Minor changes will also take place at the bus stops near Garfield Road.

However, it is likely to be a number of weeks before new parking areas can be completed in front of the post office and adjacent stores.

Utility companies need to continue their works to buried cables, some of which were not found in our initial surveys, but only once digging began. We also need to dig out new tree pits along this section of the street before any finished surfaces can be laid. Opposite the park it is likely that we will need to allow access for construction traffic into the Electric Quarter site until November, with new paving coming afterwards.

In the intervening period, customers for the shops at the southern end of the High Street will need to continue to find spaces elsewhere to park.



Enquiries

How do I make day-to-day enquiries?

Our contractor continues to have a public liaison officer assigned to the project. He will be able to pass on any issues that arise and deal with **day-to-day enquiries** about access etc. The phone number for such enquiries has been distributed to residents and traders across the scheme extents and is: **0844 967 1611**.

How do I make more detailed enquiries?

Enquiries about the High Street scheme design can be directed to the traffic team by calling 020 8379 3474.

Enquiries about any changes in the High Street area (including the Electric Quarter and changes to the College Court car park) can be directed to neighbourhoodregeneration@enfield.gov.uk.