

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: Holborn and Covent Garden, Bloomsbury
REPORT TITLE West End Project, Traffic Restrictions Implementation Decision Report (SC/2021/08)	
REPORT OF Director of Environment and Sustainability	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Cabinet Member for a Sustainable Camden	DATE 22/02/2021
<p>STRATEGIC CONTEXT</p> <p>Camden 2025 is our communities' vision for Camden. The proposals set out within will help contribute to the aspirations set out by our communities through Camden 25, particularly in the following target areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2025, Camden should be a clean, vibrant and sustainable place: the proposals will help to provide a safe and pleasant environment for walking and cycling. • In 2025, everyone in Camden should be able to live a healthy, independent life: the proposals will help to improve air quality in the area and, as above, provide a more pleasant environment for residents to enjoy. <p>Our Camden Plan is the Council's response to Camden 2025. The recommended proposals will contribute to the commitments and ambitions in the way the Council works to support its citizens. The measures, if approved, will help to contribute to an environment where they can lead happy, healthy and fulfilling lives. There are benefits in terms of road safety, air quality and sustainable transport.</p>	
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>This report follows the West End Project Public Realm Improvements Report (CENV/2014/20) approved by Cabinet on 21 January 2015 to progress the West End Project to detailed design and implementation. It seeks approval for implementation of those West End Project traffic restrictions yet to be implemented and the Traffic Management Orders (TMOs) that relate to them on the basis of up-to-date information and current circumstances.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>The following documents have been used in the preparation of this report:</p> <p>West End Project, Cabinet Report, 2015</p> <p>Cycling Action Plan, 2019</p> <p>Road Safety Action Plan, 2019</p>	

[Camden Clean Air Action Plan](#)

[Camden Transport Strategy, 2019](#)

[TfL, Connectivity Assessment Guide, 2015](#)

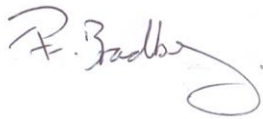
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RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet Member for a Sustainable Camden:

- Notes the report and information referenced herein and included within the appendices, and;
- Approves the recommendation (Option 1), to proceed with the implementation of the traffic restrictions (and relevant Traffic Management Orders), for the West End Project as approved by Cabinet in 2015.



Signed:

Richard Bradbury, Director of Environment and Sustainability

Date: 19 February 2021

1. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 There have been a number of previous delays in implementing the scheme, originally approved by Cabinet in January 2015. Having carried out a review of the scheme, an urgent decision by the Cabinet Member is now required in order to meet the implementation deadline of 28th February 2021.
- 1.2 This report presents a review of the proposed restrictions of traffic movements in the West End Project area. These proposals were approved by Cabinet as part of the West End Project Public Realm Improvements in January 2015. The Notice of Proposals for the Traffic Management Orders were published in April (Tottenham Court Road and Gower Street), and December (side streets and contra-flow cycling) 2020. If the decision is to proceed with implementation, the Notice of Making required to proceed with implementation would be published later in February 2021 and ahead of the 'switch-over' which would see the restrictions made live.
- 1.3 The main impact of these proposals is to make the full length of Tottenham Court Road two-way for buses, cyclists and pedestrians only from 8am-7pm, Monday to Saturday, with local access for cars, taxis and loading on short sections of Tottenham Court Road via side roads. Additionally, Gower Street and Bloomsbury Street will be made two-way for all vehicles. These changes are central to the core benefits of the West End Project, i.e. reduced traffic and pollution, improved road safety, making the area better for walking, cycling and people using buses, and creating new public spaces delivering a better area for residents, businesses and visitors.
- 1.4 Given the amount of time that has elapsed between Cabinet approval in 2015, and the date for implementation of these proposals in February 2021, the introduction of the Ultra Low Emission Zone in 2019, and a number of objections received in response to the Notice of Proposals, officers have carried out a review of the implementation of Cabinet's decision, and in particular the proposed restrictions on taxis using Tottenham Court Road, on the basis of up-to-date information and current circumstances. What follows is intended to be used to reach a decision on whether to proceed with implementation.
- 1.5 The West End Project is the culmination of years of planning and development. It represents what was at the time (and still remains), the largest public realm and transport investment that the Council has ever undertaken. Approved by Cabinet in 2015, the aims of the scheme are to reduce traffic and pollution, improve road safety, make the area better for walking, cycling and people using buses, and create new public spaces delivering a better area for residents, businesses and visitors. It is currently scheduled for completion in early 2021.
- 1.6 **Timeline.** Below is a timeline of the project's major milestones:
 - **2014, 9 June - 1 August:** Public consultation for the West End Project improvements.

- **2015, 21 January:** Approval of project proposals by Cabinet.
- **2018, Spring/Summer:** Construction works started.
- **2019, April:** Substantial completion of Tottenham Court Road public realm improvements.
- **2019, 20 April:** Switchover of buses from Gower and Bloomsbury Streets to Tottenham Court Road; Tottenham Court Road and Gower and Bloomsbury Streets reduced from three, down to two lanes of traffic during highway construction work.
- **2020, October:** Substantial completion of Gower and Bloomsbury Street public realm improvements.
- **2020, 9 October:** High Holborn two-way switch.
- **2021, February:** Planned final switch-over date and implementation of approved traffic restrictions on Tottenham Court Road.

1.7 Summarised below is a sequence of the major reports and decisions that precede this report:

- **January 2015:** Cabinet approval given for the West End Project Public Realm Improvements Report ([CENV/2014/20](#)). This gave approval for the West End Project improvements which are summarised below:
 - Tottenham Court Road:
 - Make Tottenham Court Road two-way for buses and cyclists only (from 8am-7pm, Monday to Saturday) with local access for cars, taxis and loading on short sections of Tottenham Court Road via side roads.
 - Wider pavements.
 - New public space between Percy Street and Windmill Street.
 - Raised carriageway area.
 - New loading bays for local businesses
 - Gower Street:
 - Make Gower Street and Bloomsbury Street two-way for all vehicles.
 - Protected cycle lanes in both directions
 - Move all bus routes to Tottenham Court Road.
 - Remove all parking from Gower Street and Bloomsbury Street.
 - Raised carriageway areas.
 - New Oxford Street:
 - New pedestrian crossings
 - Raised carriageway area.
 - Public spaces:
 - A new park on Alfred Place, new plaza for St Giles – next to Centre Point, and a new public space at Princes Circus – the junction of Shaftesbury Avenue and High Holborn.
 - Improved public spaces on Tottenham Court Road – Whitfield Gardens and “Windmill Square” (between Percy Street and Windmill Street) – and on Huntley Street.
 - “Mini-parks” would be created at Bedford Avenue, Bayley Street and Capper Street. These streets would be closed to all traffic

- (except cyclists) at the Tottenham Court Road end, with new seating, cycle parking and trees.
 - Cycling:
 - An additional fifteen streets would allow cycling in both directions to improve routes through the area and encourage people to cycle.
 - Buses:
 - Quicker and more reliable bus journeys for most bus routes by moving all bus routes from Gower Street to Tottenham Court Road.
 - Taxis and general traffic:
 - Relocation of taxi ranks.
 - Local access for cars, taxis and loading would only be allowed on short sections of Tottenham Court Road (via side streets) from 8am to 7pm Monday to Saturday.
 - Charing Cross Road northbound, between Cambridge Circus and St Giles Circus, would be for buses and cyclists only (except for access via side streets).
 - Bedford Avenue, Bayley Street and Capper Street would be closed at their junctions with Tottenham Court Road to all traffic (except cyclists).
 - Some side streets would become one-way, and some turns would be banned, to allow access but prevent rat-running.
 - There would be less traffic in the area as a whole but some streets would see an increase in traffic.
 - Parking and loading:
 - Some parking spaces would be removed.
 - All parking would be removed from Gower Street and Bloomsbury Street to provide the lightly segregated cycle lane.
 - Some parking would be removed from side streets or relocated to provide areas for loading, taxi ranks and cycle parking.
 - Revised loading hours.
 - Changes to directions of one-way streets and banned turns.
- **January 2017:** Non-Key Detailed Design Report signed off by (then) Director of Regeneration and Planning. This gave approval for the changes summarised below:
 - Design change on Tottenham Court Road at the junction with Howland Street, involving signalisation of the junction and provision of a median strip.
 - Design change to signalise the Tottenham Court Road and Hanway Street junction [Subsequently revoked in Detailed Design Report 2018].
 - Design change regarding protected cycle lanes on Gower Street/Bedford Square/Bloomsbury Street.
 - Design specification regarding materials for paving of footways and raised areas on Gower Street and Bloomsbury Street.
 - Design change regarding the layout of the bus stands on St Giles High Street and Earnshaw Street, as well as the waiting and loading arrangements on Denmark Street.
 - Design change regarding cycle link and pedestrian crossing between Coptic Street and Grape Street.

- Design change at Princes Circus to incorporate stepped cycle tracks. In addition, approval was given for:
 - Construction phasing.
 - Taxi rank locations and times of operation.
- **November 2018:** Non-Key Detailed Design Report signed off by (then) Director of Regeneration and Planning. This gave approval for the changes summarised below:
 - Revised loading hours for the West End Project area.
 - Design change regarding levels on New Oxford Street
 - Removal of signalised junction at Hanway Street
 - Design change regarding the raised carriageway between Torrington Place and Tottenham Street on Tottenham Court Road.

1.8 Traffic Management Orders relating to the traffic restrictions for the West End Project have already been advertised (“Notice of Proposals”) and currently await a “Notice of Making” to confirm intent to implement. As per statutory process, Notices are published in the Camden New Journal and London Gazette. Dates of publishing including links to the relevant notices are given below:

- **2020, 16 April:** Notice of Proposals published in respect of traffic movements in Tottenham Court Road, Gower Street and Princes Circus area. This is viewable here: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/notice/3551363>
- **2020, 4 June:** Notice of Making published in respect of traffic movements around Princes Circus whilst deferring the other proposals published on 16 April. This is viewable here: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/notice/3571440>
- **2020, 17 December:** Notice of Proposals published in respect of traffic movements in some side streets and contraflow cycling measures. It also re-publishes proposals for Adeline Place and Bedford Avenue which were initially published on 23 August 2018 as more than two years had elapsed without those coming into force. This is viewable here: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/notice/3699650>

2. PROPOSAL AND REASONS

2.1 Following a review of the implementation of Cabinet’s decision (see Appendix A), it is the recommendation of officers that the Cabinet Member approves the implementation of the traffic restrictions as approved by Cabinet in 2015, including the proposed restrictions on taxis using Tottenham Court Road.

3. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

3.1 There are two options available.

- **Option 1:** To implement the traffic restrictions (and related Traffic Management Orders), as approved by Cabinet in 2015.

- **Option 2:** Not to implement the traffic restrictions at the present time. A review of the scheme and potential alternative options to be presented to Cabinet for its consideration.

3.1 **Option 1 - To implement the traffic restrictions (and related Traffic Management Orders), as approved by Cabinet in 2015.** Following the review summarised at Appendix A, officers have concluded that there remains a clear rationale for the scheme's core aims which are reliant on the implementation of the traffic restrictions by the required Traffic Management Orders, that this is in accordance with current transport policy commitments contained in the Camden Transport Strategy 2019 approved by full Council and, further, that, if the matter were reviewed by Cabinet, it would reach the same decision that it did in 2015. For these reasons, it is the recommendation of officers that the Cabinet Member approves proceeding with the implementation of the traffic restrictions as approved by Cabinet in 2015, including the proposed restrictions on taxis using Tottenham Court Road.

3.2 **Option 2 - Not to implement the traffic restrictions at the present time. A review of the scheme to be presented to Cabinet for its consideration.** This option is available in particular if the original aims of the West End Project, with relation to the proposed traffic restrictions, are no longer applicable or achievable in the current circumstances. Potential new courses of action will have to be assessed and presented via a new Cabinet report for Cabinet's consideration. It should be noted that if this option is selected then there will be a considerable impact on the timetable of completion for the West End Project. The temporary traffic situation on Tottenham Court Road and other key streets will have to be extended whilst a more wide-ranging report is drafted. It is difficult to predict the extent of the delay, though this will surely be months rather than weeks.

3.3 **Recommendation:** The view of officers is that Option 1 (to proceed with the implementation of the traffic restrictions) is recommended for approval by the Cabinet Member for a Sustainable Camden.

4. **WHAT ARE THE KEY IMPACTS / RISKS? HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?**

4.1 There are some risks that apply to proceeding with Option 1, as recommended:

- **Switchover delay** – a provisional timetable has been agreed with our principal contractor, TFL, fellow Camden officers, and other parties such as stewards required to facilitate a safe switch-over. If these dates slip, then even if the report is approved then it may not be possible to implement as planned in late February. If this is the case a financial implication will result which will be funded by the scheme's contingency. This will be funded by the scheme budget. To mitigate the risk, a timetable has been outlined and every effort made to make sure that the controllable elements are delivered on time.

5. CONSULTATION/ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1 Public consultation on the whole scheme was held between 9 June and 1 August 2014. The January 2015 Cabinet report details the results (a link to this document is given at the beginning of this report).
- 5.2 The advertisement of the Traffic Management Orders has followed the statutory requirements. As stated above, the Notices of Proposals were advertised in the London Gazette and Camden New Journal.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The recommendations in this report are being considered in the Council's capacity as the Local Highway/Traffic Authority for the Borough.

Road traffic order-making powers

- 6.2 Parts I and II of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ("RTRA") empower the Council to regulate or restrict traffic on roads within the Borough by Traffic Regulation Order for a range of purposes.

Statutory duties and powers relating to road safety

- 6.3 Under RTRA section 122(1), the Council has a duty, so far as practicable having regard to the matters set out in section 122(2), to exercise its functions under the RTRA to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway. Based on case law applicable to another RTRA power, it is considered that "safe" in section 122(1) means "not at risk of accident", rather than "free from ill-health".
- 6.4 Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 requires the Council to prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety, to carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles on roads in its area, and – in the light of those studies - to take such measures as appear to the Council to be appropriate to prevent such accidents, including giving advice and practical training to road users, the construction, improvement, maintenance or repair of roads for which they are responsible, and other measures taken in the exercise of its powers for controlling, protecting or assisting the movement of traffic on roads.

Equality

- 6.5 The Council must, when carrying out the Council's functions, have due regard to the needs set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty, PSED). This duty includes having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (including people with a disability) and persons who

do not share it. The Council must consider the duty, which is personal to decision makers. In order to assist the Council to comply with section 149, an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is attached as Appendix B to this report. The relevant decision-maker must carefully consider the EQIA as applicable to the scheme they are asked to approve. In summary, the PSED requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act (which includes conduct prohibited under section 29);
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't share it;
- c) Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not (which involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding).

6.6 Under the duty the relevant protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. In respect of the first aim only i.e. reducing discrimination, etc the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership is also relevant.

6.7 In exercising its road traffic and highway powers, the Council is exercising a "public function": Under section 29 of the Equality Act 2010, it must not, when exercising a public function, "do anything that constitutes discrimination, harassment or victimisation" (section 29(6)) and it must make reasonable adjustments (section 29(7)). The duty to make reasonable adjustments arises in relation to disabled persons and under section 20 of, and Schedule 2 to, the Equality Act 2010.

6.8 The Council should also bear in mind relevant parts of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Some of those parts relate to (as regards persons with disabilities) the physical environment, transportation, personal mobility and sporting and leisure activities (UNCRC), and (as regards children) self-reliance and active participation in the community of disabled children, standards of health, dangers and risks of environmental pollution, and recreational and leisure activities (UNCRC).

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 This report seeks approval to proceed with the implementation of the traffic restrictions (and relevant Traffic Management Orders), for the West End Project as approved by Cabinet in 2015.

7.2 There are no resource implications to proceeding as recommend (Option 1), as this is the planned-for course of action.

- 7.3 If Option 2 is elected there will be financial implications in terms of officer time and potential financial costs as a result of producing a new Cabinet report and advertising revised Traffic Management Orders for Tottenham Court Road. There is also likely to be financial implications as a result of the standing down of our principal contractor during the period that a revised Cabinet report is drafted and approved, and then for the Traffic Management Order process to begin anew. This cost would need to be met from the contingency of the existing agreed budget for the West End Project.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The environmental impacts of the proposals are summarised in 2.7 of this report. To summarise; an air quality assessment carried out in 2018 has modelled the effects of the West End Project improvements and their impact on air quality. The revised traffic environment was found to provide a substantial benefit to air quality in the area. This document can be viewed in full under Appendix B, along with data from the various diffusion tubes that monitor NO₂ levels across the project area. The implications of Option 1 (to implement the Traffic Management Orders as approved), are therefore positive. Regarding Option 2 (to not implement these Traffic Management Orders), the implications are that air quality in the West End Project area will continue to remain at high levels, potentially jeopardising the Council's climate objectives set out by key policy documents such as the Camden Clean Air Action Plan and Climate Action Plan.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 9.1 Should Option 1 be approved as recommended, the next steps would be to proceed with making and the Notice of Making for the Traffic Management Orders relating to the West End Project restrictions. This will enable the 'switchover' of traffic to occur as planned in late February. Once the scheme is complete, monitoring will begin, culminating in a review 12 months later. It should be noted that the top section of Gower Street will not yet be operational as this is contingent on HS2 works in the area.

10. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Review of Implementing Cabinet's Decision

Appendix B: Equality Impact Assessment for the West End Project, 2021

Appendix C: Air Quality Data for the West End Project, including assessment and monthly reports for 2018-2020

Appendix D: Objections in response to the Notice of Proposal

REPORT ENDS