BROOK STREET / DAVIES STREET IMPROVEMENTS

REPORT ON STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

CONFIDENTIAL

DECEMBER 2016

WSP PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2016, Westminster City Council (WCC), in conjunction with Transport for London (TfL), developed a scheme to transform Brook Street from a one-way street into a two-way street. Brook Street is an important thoroughfare in Mayfair, and these improvements would mean that residents, shoppers and hotel patrons who are currently required to make long detours via New Bond Street and Grosvenor Street would no longer need to take these routes in order to travel westwards. It also coincides with the public realm improvements of Bond Street and Hanover Square, which are connected with the opening of the Crossrail Elizabeth Line.

WCC has made a concerted effort to engage with residents and businesses to inform them about, and seek their views on, the Brook Street scheme. To this end, a leaflet was delivered to almost 2,400 properties in the area around Brook Street and Davies Street at the end of October 2016 (25th). A Brook Street consultation page was set up on the Westminster City Council website in order for the wider public and stakeholders to engage with the scheme and ask any questions about the improvements. WCC held a drop-in exhibition on 1st November at Claridges Hotel which was attended by business representatives, stakeholder organisations and residents. In total, 25 people attended the exhibition. There is also an email address available on all forms of communication throughout the process for interested groups, local residents & businesses that have any questions or queries.

Exhibition attendees were emailed a follow-up questionnaire, and were encouraged to complete the questionnaire which gathered feedback on the proposed initial design of the scheme. A total of eight responses were received (32% response rate). The overall low level of response to the questionnaire indicates that the majority of those who were given the opportunity to comment on the proposals chose not to do so. Consultation exercises present the opportunity to raise concerns, and therefore typically attract responses from those who are worried about or opposed to a proposal, while those who are satisfied or have a neutral opinion are less likely to respond.

This report briefly summarises the views expressed and concerns raised during the engagement activity. It has found that there is broad support for the public realm on Brook Street to be improved, with those who are in favour of the proposed scheme recognising that it will deliver a more pleasant and attractive local environment.

Many of the outstanding concerns raised relate to matters of detail, such as parking and loading issues. Aside from parking and loading, the main issues of concern which were raised included:

- → Potential for increased traffic and congestion
- → Minicabs parking in resident's on-street parking spaces,
- → Developers lack understanding of the local situation
- → Lack of communication between WCC, attendees and the consultants.

Many of the concerns raised will be addressed by providing additional information during the Traffic Management Order (TMO) consultation and some will result in changes to the design. It should be noted that not all the concerns raised will result in design changes as there may be conflicting views (amongst a minority) on some of the fundamental principles.

The next steps in the process are to gain Cabinet Member approval to proceed with the TMOs and the associated consultation. The consultation will clearly demonstrate how feedback from the November consultation has been used to further shape the design, and where it has not been possible to change the design. The exercise will also provide further technical information where it has been requested (e.g. parking and loading arrangements).

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 Westminster City Council (WCC), in conjunction with Transport for London (TfL), has developed a scheme to convert Brook Street in Westminster, from its current one-way operation of allowing traffic to use it in an eastbound only direction, to two-way running.
- 1.1.2 Brook Street is an important thoroughfare in Mayfair, providing a connection between Grosvenor Square, Bond Street and Hanover Square, and is an important connection between major retail and cultural amenities in the area. Brook Street also connects two areas which currently have improvement proposals coinciding with the opening of the Crossrail Elizabeth Line, these being the Bond Street public realm improvements, and the Hanover Square public realm scheme.
- 1.1.3 The existing layout of Brook Street and the adjoining Davies Street means that traffic can be required to make long circuitous detours to reach certain destinations, or alternatively to use residential streets. Traffic using Brook Street can currently only travel in an eastbound direction, while Davies Street is also one way in a northbound direction towards Brook Street. This means that traffic, including residents, shoppers and hotel patrons are currently required to make long detours via New Bond Street and Grosvenor Street in order to travel westwards towards Grosvenor Square (Figure 1-1).

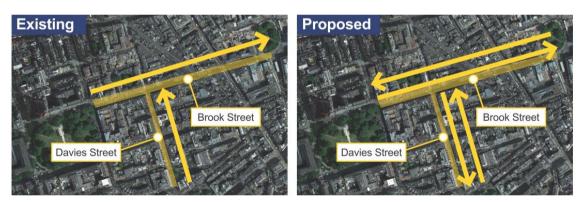


Figure 1-1: Permitted traffic flows for Brook Street / Davies Street - Existing and Proposed

- 1.1.5 Converting Brook Street and Davies Street to two-way running would increase the potential destinations that could be reached more directly, making navigating this area of Mayfair easier for shoppers, hotel guests, taxi services and emergency vehicles. It would also significantly reduce the mileage travelled on such journeys. A further benefit would be the increased network resilience, which allows a greater number of alternative routes for vehicles, at times when there is disruption such as accidents or planned roadworks.
- 1.1.6 The Brook Street two-way concept includes a reallocation and re-organisation of parking arrangements in the area. With areas being allocated for residents-only parking, pay-by-phone parking, and due to the proximity of a number of embassies, areas of diplomatic parking. Westminster City Council have appointed WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff to undertake engagement activities with local residents, representatives of local businesses and stakeholder organisations to present the proposed scheme and enable local stakeholders to provide feedback on the design and raise any concerns.
- 1.1.7 This report sets out the findings of the engagement activity. Chapter 2 presents a brief summary of the methods used to engage with local residents and businesses. Chapter 3 presents a summary of the data gathered through a post-exhibition questionnaire, which was distributed to respondents. Chapter 4 provides a summary of correspondence received throughout the project, and Chapter 5 provides a summary of the feedback received.

1.1.4

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 This chapter sets out the various channels that WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff and Westminster City Council have used in order to engage with stakeholders regarding the Brook Street and Davies Street Proposals.

2.2 CHANNELS

2.2.1 A summary of the communication channels employed is shown in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: Communications channels used in Brook Street / Davies Street engagement

Channel	Audience
Information leaflet	Approximately 2,400 nearby properties (distributed by post)
Brook Street consultation page on Westminster City Council website	Wider public, and stakeholders
Exhibition session	Interested groups, local residents & businesses
Project email address	Interested groups, local residents & businesses

- 2.2.2 A leaflet was mailed to almost 2,400 properties in the area around Brook Street and Davies Street at the end of October 2016 (25th). A copy the 2-page leaflet provided can be found in Appendix A. The leaflet contained an introduction to the proposed changes to traffic movements, parking and loading, explaining the reasons why the proposal is being developed. Existing and proposed traffic layouts were shown, indicating how Brook Street and Davies Street will go from one-way to two-way operation. The second page of the leaflet provided details of the public exhibition being held as part of the proposal.
- 2.2.3 The drop-in exhibition session was held at the Claridges Hotel on Brook Street between 4pm and 8pm on Tuesday 1st November 2016.
- 2.2.4 At the exhibition session, three large display boards were positioned in the room, two of which showed the proposed parking and loading arrangements on Brook Street and one display board showing the Bond Street public realm proposals, which also have associated changes to parking and loading arrangements. Staff from WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff and Westminster City Council were on hand to answer questions about the proposals and to discuss aspects of the scheme design. In total, 25 people attended the exhibition at Claridges, as residents, or representing businesses with interests in the area.
- 2.2.5 Of the 25 people who attended the exhibition at Claridges, many were content with the proposals and made no further comment.
- 2.2.6 The exhibition materials and engagement questionnaire were also made available online to people that were unable to attend the public exhibition. An email address was also set up to which people could provide additional feedback on the proposals (see Chapter 4).
- 2.2.7 Every effort was made to contact local residents and businesses and the venue was located within the scheme at a high profile venue. The number of people engaging with the project team was relatively low and this highlights the fact that the majority of people affected are content with the proposals.

3 POST-EXHIBITION SURVEY – RESULTS

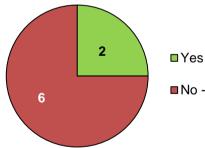
3.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

- 3.1.1 The questionnaire was a good way of finding out both relevant qualitative and quantitative feedback from the attendees of the exhibition of both the proposal in consideration but also the event itself.
- 3.1.2 A total of eight people out of 25 attendees at the Brook Street exhibition completed the questionnaire which they were sent, which is a 32% response rate. Of these eight respondents, six identified themselves as local residents, while two respondents confirmed that they were not local residents (Figure 3-1). Respondents were also asked if they were responding on behalf of a local business two respondents confirmed that they were responding as local business owners (Figure 3-2), although none of the residents were local business employees or visitors to the area.

Figure 3-1: Are you a local resident?



Figure 3-2: Are you a local business owner?

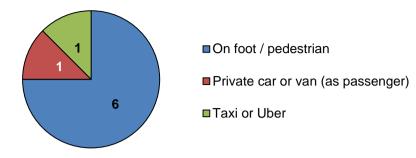


- Yes Local business owner
- ■No Not a local business owner

3.2 TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR

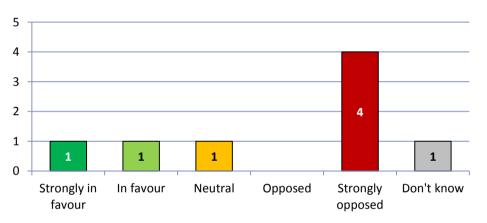
3.2.1 Respondents were next asked how they tend to travel around the Brook Street area. All eight respondents answered this question, and confirmed that the majority travel around Brook Street and Davies Street as pedestrians, while of the other two respondents, one travelled through the area using a private car / van, and another usually travelled by taxi or uber. This confirms that of the respondents to the follow-up questionnaire, three-quarters travel in the area most frequently on foot (Figure 3-3).

Figure 3-3: How do you usually travel on Brook Street?



3.3 ATTITUDES TO THE PROPOSED PARKING AND LOADING CHANGES

3.3.1 Attitudes to the proposed parking and loading changes were predominantly negative, with half of the respondents strongly opposed to these, as shown in Figure 3-4. One respondent was strongly in favour of the proposals, while another respondent was in favour, and one was neutral. Four respondents were strongly opposed to the loading and parking changes, but no respondents were opposed.



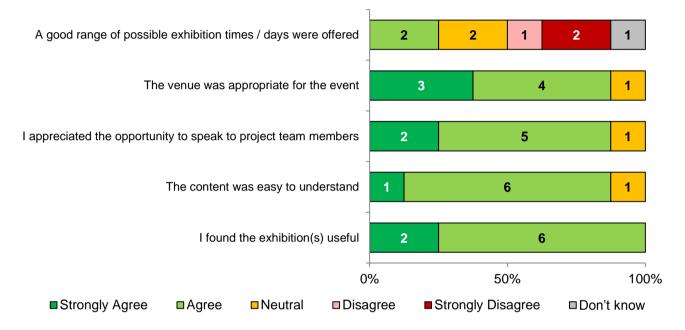


- 3.3.2 In total, four respondents strongly opposed the proposed changes. There was a mix of reasons given for the negative responses; the main argument being that the proposed changes would have an undesirable effect on the amount of traffic and congestion that would be caused by the changes.
- 3.3.3 Other comments given questioned whether the street is in any way suitable for two-way traffic of the 21st century, while a further reason given was that the proposal would increase traffic volume at a pinch point on the northern side of Berkley Square, thereby reducing traffic flow. While another respondent questioned whether the persons proposing the development had any knowledge of the local streets. An additional criticism made was that the scheme proposed made no provision for crossing of Brook Street, suggesting that the safety of pedestrians should be the paramount concern.
- 3.3.4 The two respondents that were in favour of the proposals gave no comments as to why they held this opinion.

3.4 THE EXHIBITION

3.4.1 Next, respondents were asked a series of questions about the exhibition and how they had found certain aspects of this. Figure 3-5 below shows respondent attitudes towards the exhibition with particular focus on how useful they considered it to be, and the convenience of aspects of event.





- 3.4.2 The results in Figure 3-5 show that respondents unanimously agreed that the drop in exhibition had been useful for them, while seven out of eight also agreed that the content provided at the meeting was clear and easy for them to understand. Seven respondents were also appreciative of the opportunity to speak with members of the project team. The choice of venue at Claridges was considered to be appropriate by seven out of the eight respondents.
- 3.4.3 The only negative responses given were with regard to the date and time of the exhibition. The drop in exhibition session was held between 4pm 8pm on Tuesday 1st November 2016 at Claridges a central location on Brook Street which can be easily reached by all local stakeholders and residents. The exhibition time gave attendees a four hour window to travel to the exhibition and including two hours after 6pm.
- 3.4.4 Reasons for the negative response related to the time offered for the exhibition. Holding the exhibition on a single day meant that some business owners or local residents could not attend, while late workers may have missed the exhibition due to the start time. There was the option of visiting a temporary website as part of Westminster City Councils website, however one respondent complained of this crashing and becoming unresponsive.

3.5 OTHER COMMENTS

COMMENTS ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

- 3.5.1 Two respondents felt that the developer did not fully understand the needs of businesses located in the west end of London, and therefore couldn't offer sufficient explanation for the proposal. One attendee felt that there were conflicting opinions given by WSP|PB and WCC and that they did not give good reasons for local residents to support a scheme which will deliver a 60% increase in traffic volume during peak hours.
- 3.5.2 Response: The project allows for a greater degree of choice and flexibility on route choice in the area. However, the provision of two way traffic is not expected to change the volume of traffic on the roads in the area significantly. Each of the junctions have been tested and are below levels likely to result in issues.
- 3.5.3 Two respondents reiterated the issue with the exhibition, stating that the exhibition was held on a single day. The exhibition should have been held later given the difficulties with attending early in the evening.
- **3.5.4** Response: This engagement session was part of an additional package which aimed to give local businesses and residents the opportunity to talk to the project team and influence the design. The overall number of people attending the event confirmed that only a single event (albeit for a 4 hour period stretching from work time into the evening) was a sensible and balanced approach.
- 3.5.5 Another issue which was reiterated was that the scheme continues to ignore the waiting cars (e.g. minicab drivers) who wait for late night diners in Central London. This leads to traffic backing up, and this problem will be exacerbated with the proposed conversion of the street to two way operation.
- **3.5.6** Response: The taxi provision has been carefully considered, however the design team are reviewing the exact details to ensure the best scheme is implemented.
- 3.5.7 Two respondents considered that the event had been helpful and one felt that it was good to know more about what is going on in the community.

COMMENTS ABOUT THE PROPOSALS

3.5.8 The qualitative feedback from the proposals was all negative with one respondent describing the proposals as 'unnecessary'. Again, there was feedback that WCC and its employees do not understand the area – this response going further to suggest that plans were merely about leaving a legacy which would later need to be rectified. The respondent also said that proponents should listen to the residents and local businesses who understand London.

4 CORRESPONDENCE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 An email address was set up during the project, to ensure that there was a quick and convenient way to contact WSP|PB and WCC to pose questions or raise issues. Since the email address was launched, there have been seven conversations held between interested parties, and the project team. All queries have been addressed at the time of writing.
- 4.1.2 Questions covered the following issues:
 - → How to comment or object to the proposals
 - → Confirmation of the project status
 - → Clarification of terms
 - → Objection to the proposal

4.2 WRITTEN COMMENTS

- 4.2.1 A representative of a local residents group registered an objection on the grounds that resident interests would be harmed if the scheme were to go ahead. The representative also asked WSP|PB and WCC to clarify certain benefits that were suggested as likely to accrue from the proposed development.
- 4.2.2 Response: Resident interests will not be greatly harmed by this scheme. The scheme is not expected to make the existing traffic problems (or lack of them) worse. The overall volume of traffic is expected to remain the same and so there is unlikely to be an increase in pollution. Parking has been retained within the scheme as much possible, but there is a small reduction in overall parking and loading provision. One benefit of the scheme is that it will allow for a greater degree of choice and flexibility on route choice in the area. Moreover, the objectives of the scheme are more wide reaching than simply the immediate project area. This scheme will also facilitate other schemes, such as at Hanover Square, Grosvenor Square, Berkeley Square and on Bond Street; these schemes will bring benefits to people residing in the wider area of Westminster. Without the improvements to infrastructure brought by schemes like these, the area will be ill-equipped to provide for the projected increase in pedestrians due to Crossrail in 2018.
- 4.2.3 A resident objected to the proposal on the grounds that the proposed development is not needed, and that no traffic problems have been experienced in the area. A further area of objection was the predicted increase in pollution resulting from traffic re-routing, and also from minicab vehicles parking outside restaurants and leaving their engine running to stay warm / cool. Loss of parking options for residents were also given as a reason for objecting, while the lack of cycle priority measures were also criticised as this would mean they slow traffic down which cannot pass.

- 4.2.4 Response: The objectives of the scheme are more wide reaching than simply the immediate project area. The scheme is not expected to make the existing traffic problems (or lack of them) worse. The overall volume of traffic is expected to remain the same and so there is unlikely to be an increase in pollution. Parking has been retained within the scheme as much possible. However there is an overall reduction in parking and loading provision. The surveys and assessment carried out suggest that this should not be an issue and the design team have sought to identify and mitigate any very localised issues.
- 4.2.5 A local landlord welcomed the proposed development and said that it should help to reduce congestion as well as wasted travel time and pollution as a result of travelling around the one-way system. Furthermore, the comment questioned why this hasn't been done sooner.
- 4.2.6 Another objection was received on the grounds that noise levels for residents will be increased, having already put up with six years of noise from the construction of Crossrail. A further issue was that the changes would not leave sufficient parking space for residents and visitors.

4.2.7 Response: Noise of traffic post implementation is not expected to increase noticeable from current levels, as the volume of traffic remains broadly similar.

- 4.2.8 Another resident submitted objections on the grounds that traffic would be increased on a section of route which is narrow, thus leading to accidents. Furthermore, reductions in parking for residents are unacceptable. Picking up restaurant visitors is also likely to cause traffic to back up due to double parking, and likely upset drivers leading to horns being sounded. Finally, the width of the road is suggested to be too narrow and increased traffic will put pedestrians and cyclists at risk as a result.
- 4.2.9 Response: Two way operation is not anticipated to increase traffic volumes within the area. Therefore the scheme is not expected to increase the number of collisions resulting in road casualties. The narrowness of the road is not anticipated to be a problem and the proposed lane widths are common within the area.
- 4.2.10 Another resident objection was received on the grounds that the scheme will result in the generation of additional parking problems. Issues with parking outside the restaurant are mentioned again, as in several other responses. A further objection is that increased traffic in both directions could create obstacles on the road, slowing down traffic and increasing pollution.
- **4.2.11** Response: The area is part of a thriving evening economy. This has been considered throughout the design of the project.

5 SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

5.1 SUMMARY

- 5.1.1 Westminster City Council made a concerted effort to engage with residents and businesses in October and November 2016 to inform them, and seek their views on, the Brook Street two-way traffic proposal.
- 5.1.2 To this end, an information leaflet (Appendix A) was mailed to over 2400 properties in the local area in late October 2016. A Brook Street consultation page was also set up on the Westminster City Council website in order for the wider public and stakeholders to engage with the scheme and answer any questions about the improvements.
- 5.1.3 WCC held a briefing event on 1st November at the Claridges Hotel, which was attended by business representatives, stakeholder organisations and residents. There has been an email address available on all forms of communication throughout the process for interested groups, local residents & businesses to raise any questions or queries.
- 5.1.4 The number of people choosing to engage with the project was relatively low, reflecting the overall neutral to positive stance of most people to the project.

5.2 FINDINGS

- 5.2.1 Most people who attended engaged were positive about the way in which this had been done. Reaction to the proposals were mostly negative, with four respondents strongly opposing the proposal to convert Brook Street and Davies Street to two-way traffic.
- 5.2.2 Grounds for opposition were:
 - → Streets being inappropriate for two-way traffic (i.e. too narrow) and this might pose a safety risk to pedestrian and cyclist
 - → Loss of parking for residents
 - → The presence of minicabs parking to pick up and drop off restaurant patrons on Brook Street is considered to result in pollution, noise grounds and congestion.
 - \rightarrow Increased pollution, noise and traffic for residents living near the affected area.

5.2.3 Overall, attitudes expressed appear to be negative towards the proposal. However, as noted earlier – it is likely that those with concerns or opposing the proposal are more likely to make comments and reply to engagement materials, compared to people that are satisfied or that have no concerns about the proposal. The low response rate of eight people should also be considered when examining the results reported here.

5.3 NEXT STEPS

- 5.3.1 Many of the outstanding concerns raised relate to matters of detail, such as parking and traffic congestion, which is understandable given the limited information provided to date (this being the focus of the next consultation on the Traffic Management Orders (TMOs)).
- 5.3.2 A number of the concerns raised will be addressed by providing additional information during the Traffic Management Order (TMO) consultation and some will result in changes to the design. It is, however, apparent, that not all the concerns raised will result in design changes as these may not be consistent with the scheme objectives.
- 5.3.3 The next step in the process is to proceed with the TMOs and the associated consultation. The consultation will clearly demonstrate how feedback from the November consultation has been used to further shape the design, and where it has not been possible to address certain concerns. The exercise will also provide further technical information where it has been requested (e.g. parking and loading arrangements).

Appendix A

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT LEAFLET

Brook Street and Davies Street

Proposed changes to traffic movements, parking and loading

Westminster City Council is proposing to allow traffic on Brook Street and Davies Street to move in two directions. Providing more route choice and better accessibility in Mayfair and a greater degree of network resilience in the area.

Brook Street would become two-way between Bond Street and Grosvenor Square; as would Davies Street between Brook Street and Berkeley Square.

Removing the existing one-way only restriction would also require changes to the operation of parking and loading on Brook Street and Davies Street, and their side roads.



West End.







Brook Street and Davies Street

Public exhibition

Westminster City Council will be holding an exhibition for local businesses, residents and road users where Council officers and the Council's consultants will be able to explain more about the proposed changes to traffic movements, parking and loading.

The exhibition will be hosted by Claridges at: The Kensington Room Claridges Brook Street, Mayfair London, W1K 4HR

Date: Tuesday 1st November 2016, 4:00pm - 8:00pm

Further information

Further information is available online at www.westminstertransportationservices.co.uk/brookst

If you would like additional information, to sign up for email updates or provide information about your business, you can email us at **brookst@wspgroup.com**

