

DELEGATED AUTHORITY FOR DETAILED DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Project Number: [REDACTED]

1. PROJECT

Covent Garden Neighbourhood Traffic Management Scheme Experimental Traffic Order.

2. PROJECT SUMMARY

The Covent Garden Neighbourhood Traffic Management Scheme (NTM) involves the implementation of a series of measures with the objective of reducing through traffic across the whole Covent Garden district (the district by area is located approx. 70% in City of Westminster (WCC) and 30% in London Borough of Camden (LBC)). These measures include the introduction of pedestrian and cycle zones, traffic directional changes and banned turns.

It is intended the scheme is implemented on a trial basis using an experimental traffic order (ETO) with a maximum duration of 18 months. Impacts would be monitored during this trial period and minor changes made where necessary and if a problem is identified. A final public consultation will be held towards the end of the ETO period together with a review of the scheme monitoring data. A further decision will then be sought on whether the scheme should be made permanent.

The scheme proposals have undergone extensive stakeholder and public engagement and the level of support is positive across both authorities.

WCC have obtained funding from Transport for London to cover the full estimated cost of the scheme following the approval of our funding application in December 2020. This is a WCC led project and has been developed jointly and in close collaboration with LBC.

3. ORIGINATOR OF PROJECT

I confirm that the report reflects the scheme as approved:

Signed [REDACTED]
Programme Manager

4. APPROVAL BY HEAD OF PUBLIC REALM

Signed [REDACTED]
Head of Public Realm

5. APPROVAL FOR FINANCIAL AUTHORITY

Signed [REDACTED]
Finance Manager, Highways

6. AUTHORITY SIGNED BY DIRECTOR OF CITY HIGHWAYS

Signed [REDACTED]
Executive Director Environment & City
Management

7. SCHEME APPROVAL

This report seeks approval from the Executive Director Environment & City Management to:

- proceed to the detailed design and implement the proposals identified in this report, together with capital expenditure of up to [REDACTED] necessary to implement the proposals.
- further decision making, such as detailed design and minor amendments to the ETO, that do not require further public consultation, are delegated to the Director of City Highways.

The scheme covers areas within the City of Westminster as well as within Camden and as such approval to proceed is also being sought in parallel by Camden officers with their respective decision makers. Camden members and officers have been supportive of these proposals from the outset.

8. RETURN TO: Programme Manager

CHECKLIST OF DOCUMENTS ATTACHED

1. Appendix A Briefing note to the Cabinet Member for City Management (scheme notification)
2. Appendix B Proposed scheme drawing
3. Appendix C Early engagement presentation
4. Appendix D Communications strategy
5. Appendix E Engagement / consultation report (Westco)
6. Appendix F Equalities Impact Assessment (Steer)
7. Appendix G Project cost summary

Background

In 2019 WCC commissioned its approved traffic consultant Norman Rourke Pryme (NRP) to undertake a traffic study with the aim of identifying the key traffic issues and developing traffic management strategies that seek to:

- Improve overall amenity for pedestrians and cyclists therefore promoting active travel.
- Provide opportunities for enhanced public realm.
- Improve public safety in Covent Garden Piazza and the surrounding streets.

- Reduce non-essential motorised traffic and reduce “rat-running” helping to cut carbon emissions and improve air quality.

The emphasis of the study was to gain a detailed understanding of motorised vehicle movement through and within Covent Garden, which meant strategies could be developed that allow the residents and businesses of Covent Garden to function successfully, whilst introducing measures to remove, reduce or discourage those vehicles that have no apparent purpose within Covent Garden.

Survey data was used to identify and develop a series of options to remove non-essential motorised traffic from the district (ranging from light touch interventions to a complete vehicle ban). The options were presented to the St James’s ward members and LBC ward members later in 2019 and a preference requiring moderate intervention was identified which maintained access for residents and businesses. Officers also concur with this option.

The NTM aligns closely with 2 other schemes in Westminster as follows:

Central Covent Garden security and public safety



Alfresco support for hospitality businesses

Following the success of the Councils hospitality business support measures, introduced in central Covent Garden mid-2020, coupled with a positive outcome to a recent consultation of residents and businesses across the central district as to whether support should be continued, it has been decided to retain alfresco dining in the central area. The continuation of alfresco dining in central Covent Garden relies on the road closures proposed for the NTM.

The NTM proposals support the strategies of LBC, WCC and TfL to create a sustainable and more inclusive environment for the local community, namely:

- Camdens Transport Strategy
- Westminster City for All Strategy 2021/22
- Westminster walking and cycling strategy
- The Mayors Transport Strategy – Transport for London

The scheme proposals include measures in LBC and WCC. On reviewing the preferred approach, consideration was given to proximate committed schemes including the Seven Dials traffic reduction scheme (LBC), alfresco support schemes (WCC), central Covent Garden safety and security (WCC), Strand Aldwych (WCC) and the Westend Project.

Proposals

The proposals are detailed on the Commonplace web platform (link below) and include several changes to the direction of traffic on streets as well as access restrictions across the district. This will help to reduce traffic through the area and create a safer and more pleasant environment. Essential access for residents, businesses, deliveries and servicing will still be available at the following link:

[Discover Covent Garden to Have Your Say – Commonplace](#)

The planned traffic measures are summarised below:

Westminster

A temporary traffic order (TTO) was introduced in central Covent Garden in June 2020 in response to the Covid 19 pandemic to allow the timed closure (pedestrianisation) of a number of streets from 11am to 11pm to support social distancing and alfresco dining. These arrangements have remained in place and will be captured under the new Covent Garden ETO along with the increased pedestrianisation period detailed below (the ETO will supersede the TTO that is currently in place):

- Timed closure of Floral Street, King Street, Henrietta Street, Maiden Lane, Southampton Street (north of Tavistock Street) and Rose Street, through the introduction of Pedestrian and Cycle only zones (deliveries and servicing allowed from 7am-11am).
- Timed closure of the Piazza through the introduction of a Pedestrian only zone (deliveries and servicing allowed from 7am - 11am Tuesday to Sunday and 5am - 11am on Monday).
- Tavistock Street to be two-way for traffic between Wellington Street and Southampton Street.
- Drury Lane to be one-way southbound between Parker Street and Long Acre, with two way cycling (borough boundary street).
- Timed closure of Dryden Street, through the introduction of a Pedestrian and Cycle only zone (deliveries and servicing allowed from 7am-11am).
- Two-way cycling (including contra-flow measures) on streets where changes are being made.

Camden

An ETO was introduced in Seven Dials area (wholly within the LBC Covent Garden district) during July 2020 in response to the Covid 19 pandemic, to reduce motor traffic across the area to facilitate walking and cycling post-lockdown and to create safe space for social

distancing and support local businesses. Under these proposals LBC intend to revoke the Seven Dials ETO but retain some of the measures and introduce further changes and capture under the new wider Covent Garden district ETO as follows:

- Retain the closure to motor vehicles on Monmouth Street between Tower Street and Shelton Street.
- Retain the reversal of the one-way working on Monmouth Street between Tower Street and the Seven Dials monument.
- Retain the reversal of the one-way working on Shorts Gardens between the Seven Dials monument and Endell Street.
- Reopen Monmouth Street at its junction with Shaftesbury Avenue.
- Reopen Mercer Street at its junction with Shelton Street therefore removing the staffed barrier.
- Reversal of one-way working on Mercer Street between Shaftesbury Avenue and the monument, including a right-turn ban in from Shaftesbury Avenue.
- Reversal of one-way working on Mercer Street between Long Acre and Shelton Street.
- Reversal of one-way working on Drury Lane between Parker Street and Long Acre (with contra-flow cycling).
- Change to southbound one-way working on Endell Street between Betterton Street and Shelton Street (with contra-flow cycling).
- Change to northbound one-way working on Endell Street between Long Acre and Shelton Street (with contra-flow cycling).
- Retention of the parking bay changes in Monmouth Street, Shorts Gardens, Earlham Street, Mercer Street and Tower Street.
- Two-way cycling (including contra-flow measures) wherever possible.

Traffic Implications

The NRP 2019 study identified several options to remove non-essential motorised traffic from the district and a preference involving moderate intervention was identified which maintained access for residents and businesses. This option predicted a 25-45% reduction in motor vehicles (varying depending on the time of day) but possibly some longer routes within the district for servicing and residential access. It also predicted some 400-600 peak hour vehicles reassigning to boundary Strategic Road Network (SRN) streets.

In January 2020 a section of Shaftesbury Avenue in front of the Shaftesbury theatre was permanently closed as part of the West End Project (WEP), so cutting off the southbound route from Bloomsbury Street into Endell Street and removing the majority of traffic from that entry point into Covent Garden.

The scheme proposals include measures in LBC and WCC. On reviewing the preferred approach, consideration was given to proximate committed schemes including the Seven Dials traffic reduction scheme (LBC), alfresco support schemes (WCC), central Covent Garden safety and security (WCC), Strand Aldwych (WCC) and the Westend Project.

Costs

The estimated full cost of this project is [REDACTED] (the cost estimate has been reviewed recently as the scheme has progressed). The current estimate represents an accurate full project cost outturn position (please refer to Appendix G).

An opportunity arose to apply for funding from TfL in mid-2020 for schemes which fulfilled the criteria of the London Mayors Active Travel Fund (a total of £20M was available to London boroughs). An application for funding was submitted for [REDACTED] which was based on an initial high-level estimate and before the proposals were developed in detail in 2021. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Programme

Key stages in the provisional programme for the implementation of the Covent Garden NTM are as follows:

- WCC briefing note to notify proposals to the Cabinet Member for City Management 20 Oct (approved by Cllr Spenser on 20/10/2021).
- WCC delegated authority report to Head of Public Realm to approve – 21 Oct.
- WCC delegated authority report to Finance Manager – Environment and City Management – 22 Oct
- WCC delegated authority report to Executive Director, Environment & City Management seeking decision to implement proposals – 26 Oct
- WCC decision to implement – 01 Nov (allows Executive Director, Environment & City Management 1 week to consider proposals).
- LBC cabinet member decision to implement – 02 Nov
- ETO making and statutory consultation – 09 Nov to 31 Nov
- ETO published – 01 Dec
- Implementation – 08 Dec

Engagement Consultation and Communications

Early engagement - ward members and key stakeholders across Camden and Westminster

Following the 2019 NRP traffic study, proposals based on a preferred option contained in that study have been further developed following a series of early engagement sessions in May 2021 with ward members and key stakeholders across both LBC and WCC. The purpose of these sessions was to determine whether any aspects of the proposals would cause significant issue and should be modified prior to a wider public engagement / consultation. LBC and WCC ward members have been supportive of the NTM proposals from the outset and key stakeholders (business, resident and amenity groups) have played an active role in engaging with the community to extol the benefits of the NTM during the later public engagement. The early engagement presentation is included in Appendix C.

Communications

The Westminster Comms Team developed a detailed comms strategy to publicise the NTM proposals in August 2021. The plan was approved by Cllr Spenser and Cllr Green on 13 Aug. A copy of the approved strategy is attached in Appendix D for reference.

Public engagement / consultation

Public engagement was a key part of the process to understand how stakeholders felt about the proposals before implementing a trial under an ETO.

A public engagement was managed by Westco through the Commonplace Web platform and ran for 4 weeks (16/08/2021 to 13/09/2021) and included residents, businesses and key stakeholder groups across LBC and WCC. The engagement was publicised by a district wide mail drop of approx. 9000 letters, 250 advisory notices placed on street, approx. 500 electronic communications (business groups, key stakeholders and statutory consultees known to the Westminster Comms Team). Two public events were held in Covent Garden and attended by officers from Westminster and Camden and representatives from NRP, attendees were generally supportive of the NTM proposals. Those wishing to respond to the scheme proposals were invited to complete a detailed questionnaire.

The full Engagement Report is attached in Appendix E for reference but to summarise:

- A total of 658 people responded and completed the questionnaire.
- 72% of respondents agree with the proposals and 23% disagree (5% are either neutral or don't know).
- 274 respondents were residents of Camden or Westminster. Agreement with the proposals among Westminster and Camden residents (those living nearby and those who live in other parts of the boroughs) is very similar at 67% and 68% respectively.
- Views on the proposals differ by respondent types. Support is highest among visitors/commuters (90%), followed by workers/students (76%). In contrast, while the majority of residents living nearby agree with the proposals (54%), they are less likely to do so than other respondent types.
- 188 respondents left freeform comments relating to the proposals in general, or more specifically, comments relating to either Westminster or Camden streets. Among those who agree with the proposals, many commented on their general support for the scheme, along with comments about cycling provision in the area. Among those who disagree with proposals, many comments focused on concerns about congestion and pollution, parking and accessibility of the area.

A dedicated electronic mailbox was also set up and publicised through the various communications. This provided the opportunity for people to contact LBC and WCC directly with any specific questions or comments. A total of 44 emails were received and considered and an appropriate response sent.

Hard copy questionnaires could be requested to be sent by post (with a freepost return envelope) or completed over the telephone, for those who preferred to engage with LBC or WCC in this way and to ensure the survey was accessible to all.



Steer were commissioned to undertake an independent and comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment to consider the overall impact of the scheme and its implications for those in the Protected Characteristic Groups (PCGs). The full report is attached to this Briefing Note in Appendix F.

In summary, the assessment concluded the scheme is likely to have a positive impact on reducing inequalities. This is especially the case given travel patterns to the Covent Garden area (with the largest proportion of trips made by walking and public transport), and the very limited potential for any increase in car use.

There will be some disproportionate negative impacts for those reliant on door-to-door transport, in particular the elderly and those with a disability, as journey times within the area may take longer, whilst those surrounding the area could take longer through increased congestion. A process is in place to provide dispensations for those requiring essential door to door access. Potential impacts will also be monitored during the trial.

Recommendation

This report seeks approval from the Executive Director Environment & City Management to:

- proceed to the detailed design and implement the proposals identified in this report, together with capital expenditure of up to [REDACTED] necessary to implement the proposals.
- further decision making, such as detailed design and minor amendments to the ETO, that do not require further public consultation, are delegated to the Director of City Highways.

The scheme covers areas within the City of Westminster as well as within Camden and as such approval to proceed is also being sought in parallel by Camden officers with their respective decision makers. Camden members and officers have been supportive of these proposals from the outset.

I agree to the above recommendation.

Signed

[REDACTED]

Executive Director Environment & City
Management

Date
