

Finance, Planning and Economic Development Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	9 March 2023
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Oxford Street (OS) Programme
Report of:	Bernie Flaherty, Deputy Chief Executive, Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Health Westminster City Council
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development
Wards Involved:	West End and Marylebone
Policy Context:	Fairer Economy – A reimagined and revived Oxford Street and West End that delivers a world class offer and experience to residents, businesses and visitors supporting a diverse, resilient, and successful economy that delivers growth in Westminster.
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1. Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to set out the status of the Oxford Street Programme, including planned milestones and approach to engagement, and provides an overview of the processes in place to ensure that a strong business case is developed for Spring 2023.

The Cabinet Member Report (CMR) of 1st November 2022 outlined a revised scope of works for the Oxford Street programme and gave approval for a revised business case to be developed. This scope prioritises public realm improvements along Oxford Street, and highway and traffic changes in the wider area to improve transport capacity and efficiency. Complementary schemes have been identified on James Street, Davies Street and Grosvenor Square.

To support the delivery of the Oxford Street Programme a new governance structure has been established. This structure is comprehensive and outlines various internal and external forums at both executive and projects levels.

An engagement strategy has been progressed, setting out the vision, framework and principles that will guide the consultation and engagement process for the programme. This will be supplemented by a project specific communication and engagement plan for Oxford Street to be finalised in the Spring 2023.

The programme aim is to complete construction work on Oxford Street in Spring 2026.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

2.1 The Committee's input would be beneficial on the following aspects of the Oxford Street programme:

2.1.1 To consider and provide comment on the scope of works (the design is currently being progressed and more detail will be available in Spring 2023)

2.1.2 Review and provide comment on the revised governance structure

2.1.3 Review and provide comments on the engagement approach

The Committee's feedback is valued and any feedback on other aspects of the Oxford Street Programme is welcome.

3. Background

In 2019 the Council developed plans for a district-wide approach for the investment required to address public realm, safety, transport, and economic challenges faced by Oxford Street and the surrounding neighbourhoods. A Place Strategy and Delivery Plan and a business case approving £150 million capital funding from the Council were subsequently approved for the 'Oxford Street District' programme.

Following the local elections in May 2022 the new administration considered how best to proceed with the Oxford Street District programme. In accordance with the Fairer Westminster manifesto the decision was made to focus council funding on improvements required for Oxford Street itself, along with selected side streets, rather than a whole district approach. The programme was renamed the 'Oxford Street Programme.'

A Cabinet Member Report on 1st November 2022 set out the revised scope of the programme. Approval was given to progress the Oxford Street scheme design and to develop a new business case to reflect the change of programme scope.

Additional details on design, engagement and finance will be available in April and will accompany a Cabinet Report in May 2023.

4. Programme Scope

The revised scope focuses public realm improvements along the entire length of Oxford Street from Marble Arch to Tottenham Court Road, and short sections at the mouths of selected side roads that adjoin it, delivering an environment aligning with the international status and reputation of the street. Appendix A highlights the geographical extent of the revised Oxford Street Programme. The design will include a high quality and consistent palette of materials, increased pedestrian space, and improved lighting, greening, and seating.

The side road junction areas are considered a key element of the Oxford Street scheme and provide respite from the busy nature of the main thoroughfare and further unlocks the potential of Oxford Street.

Three complementary schemes on James Street, Davies Street, and Grosvenor Square are proposed, which will further support and enhance the experience on Oxford Street. Additionally, highways interventions are proposed on streets in the wider area to provide diversion routes and improve traffic movement and capacity. An overview of the key stakeholders involved and their interest in the complementary schemes can be found in Appendix B.

Previous proposals for Oxford Circus looked at pedestrianisation, piazzas and no east-west traffic movement through the Circus. However, the Oxford Street Programme will allow designated traffic to move east-west through the Circus and north-south up and down Regent Street. Proposals are in early stages of development and will be subject to engagement and stakeholder discussions.

5. Oxford Street Programme Business Case

A business case was prepared for the Oxford Street District programme in 2018 however given the notable change to the programme scope a revised business case was deemed necessary. The original business case provides a basis for determining the new programme case for change.

This revised business case outlines the proposed interventions and the economic, financial, commercial and management case for the revised programme scope within the relevant strategy and policy context. Essential to this process is a comprehensive risk assessment.

6. Engagement Overview

An engagement strategy has been prepared for the Oxford Street Programme based on four principles: to inform, to involve, to collaborate, and to empower stakeholders, residents, and businesses. This strategy is planned to be completed in April 2023.

In advance of the Oxford Street engagement strategy finalisation, it has been critical to liaise with various stakeholders commencing with the Living Room Session in December 2022 to gather post-pandemic views of the user experience of Oxford

Street. Almost 200 people were engaged at this event and feedback was gathered on what is liked and disliked about Oxford Street and suggested improvements for the street. The majority of respondents noted that:

- They like the shopping, transport and experiences offered on the Street;
- They dislike overcrowding, difficulty in moving on the Street, and litter; and
- Improvements could include more seating and planting, and creating a public realm that is cleaner and easier to move in.

Additionally, engagement with the Youth Council has taken place, and a site visit with differently abled groups to support considerate and accessible design is planned in February 2023. Residents' groups and associations along with ward councillors have also been briefed on the new programme scope and updated on specific proposals in the Oxford Street Area. This engagement is over and above the forums outlined in the new Oxford Street Programme governance structure and approach.

Using the engagement strategy as a framework, individual and detailed project-based engagement plans will be prepared. The engagement plans will seek to build trust through transparency and ongoing communication at every step of project delivery.

8. Programme Governance

A new governance structure has been designed and implemented for the programme. This structure has been agreed with a variety of stakeholders and developed in line with best practice and learning from previous schemes delivered by the Council. An organisational diagram illustrating how governance will operate is shown in Appendix C. The structure distinguishes between project and executive levels of governance and demonstrates how external stakeholders are accommodated.

While a budget has been allocated to the programme, approval for specific projects to enter the relevant design and delivery phase need to be approved via a Cabinet Member Report and signed off by the relevant Member. In some cases, where there is a significant strategic decision, a cabinet decision will be sought.

At project level a design group comprising of key partners meet regularly with the Oxford Street Programme team to share information and discuss aspects of the emerging designs, enabling an element of co-production to occur and to ensure that all needs are considered throughout the programme lifecycle.

At the executive level, an Advisory Board has been established to provide external challenge in ensuring that the programme is delivering on joint objectives, provide partner updates, acknowledge programme progress, and consider key upcoming milestones. The Board includes residents' groups, Ward Councillors, business and landowner representatives, Transport for London, the Greater London Authority, etc. The Advisory Board membership list can be found in Appendix D. To ensure transparency in decision making, records are made of key decisions and actions for all boards and forums identified in the structure. These are used to track programme progress, manage risk, and maximise efficiencies.

9. Finance/Budget Overview

The total budget for the Oxford Street programme is £120m.

In November 2022, a Cabinet Member decision approved the new approach to investing in the programme recommended by the Oxford Street programme review, and capital expenditure of £4.58m for the continuation of design and development work on the revised scope. To date £0.613m of spend has been incurred. A further Cabinet Report is to be submitted in Spring 2023 to recommend a drawdown of funds from the overall budget once the revised Business Case is approved and Stage 1 (feasibility) design for Oxford Street is completed.

The funding proposal for Oxford Street is for external third-party funders to match fund WCC capital funding as a minimum. To this end discussions are underway with the New West End Company (NWEC) regarding funding contributions.

10. Next Steps

1) Oxford Street Business Case

The Business Case for the revised Oxford Street programme is in development. The planned completion of the Business Case is Spring 2023. The Business Case will be submitted along with the planned, forthcoming Cabinet Report.

2) Design Development

The Oxford Street design and build contractor has been instructed to progress the feasibility design for Oxford Street. The information from this design will be used as a basis for engagement and communication before the scheme is progressed further.

In parallel with progressing the Oxford Street design, there is discussion with stakeholders and scoping taking place for the complementary schemes identified in the Oxford Street programme including James Street, Davies Street, and Grosvenor Square. Detailed programmes for these projects are to be elaborated on once the designs have been instructed.

3) Public Engagement and Consultation

An engagement strategy and detailed engagement plan for the Oxford Street project will be available before the end of March 2023.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact Report Author
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APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Oxford Street Programme Area

Appendix B – Complementary Schemes Key Stakeholder Overview

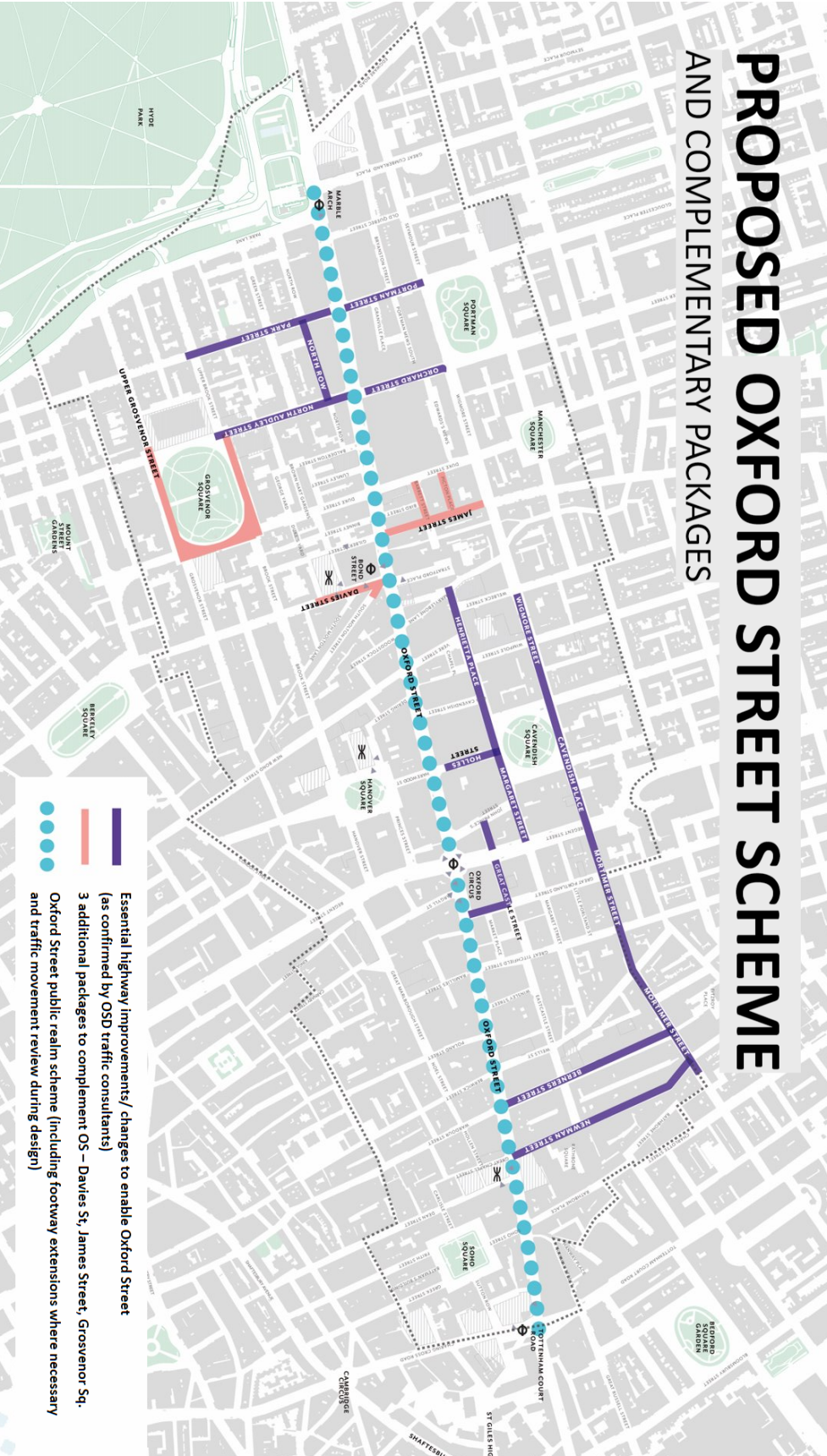
Appendix C – Oxford Street Programme Governance

Appendix D – Advisory Board Membership

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet Member Report November 2022

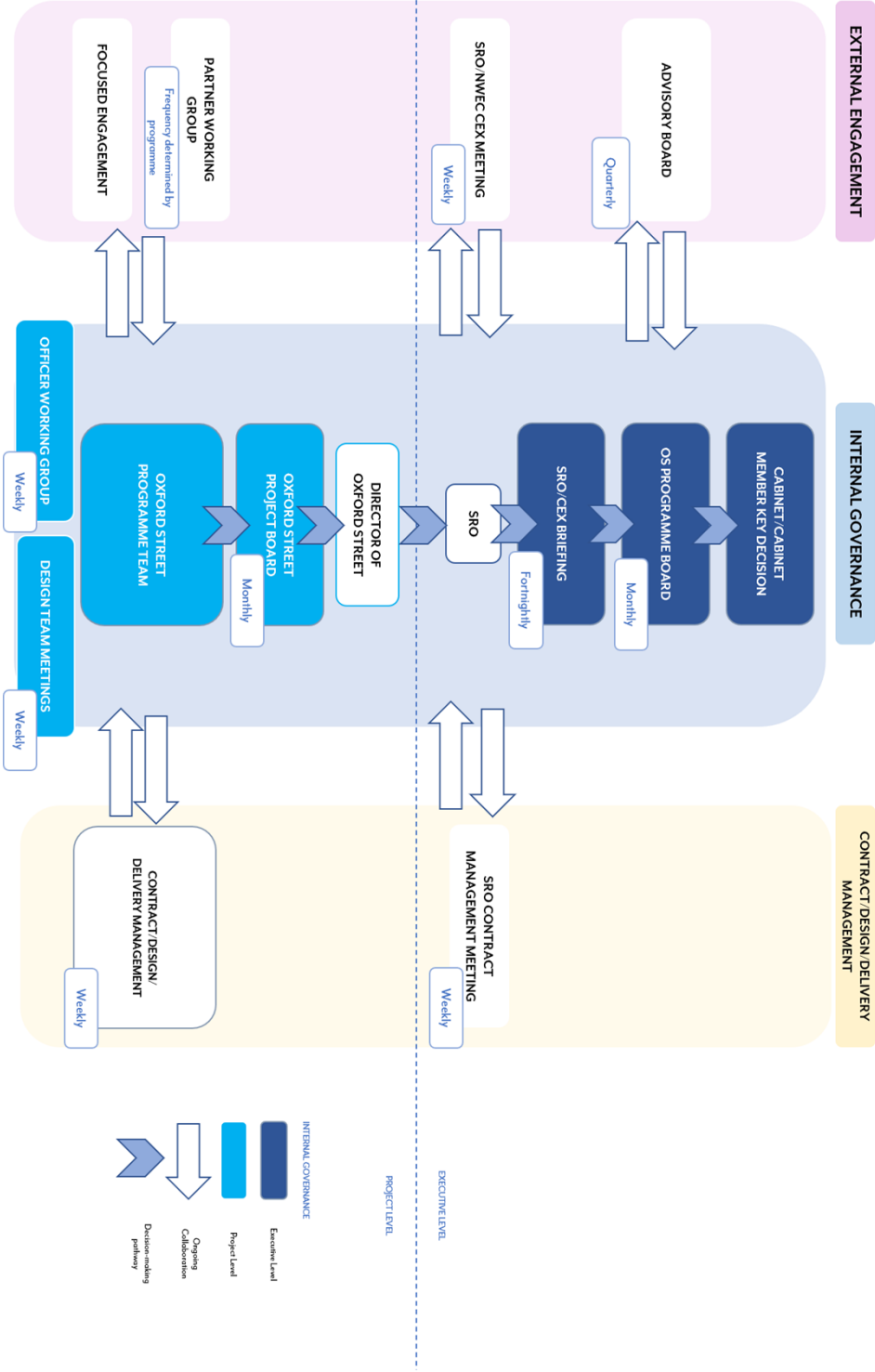
Appendix A – Oxford Street Programme Area



Appendix B – Complementary Schemes Key Stakeholder Overview

Scheme	Key Stakeholders	Interest
<p>James Street</p>	<p>BMO</p> <p>Redevco</p> <p>Reiss</p> <p>Selfridges</p>	<p>Local business owners and estate management</p>
	<p>Local residents' groups and associations</p>	<p>Representing local interests and concerns, contributing responses and solutions for proposed public realm changes.</p>
<p>Davies Street</p>	<p>The Grosvenor Estate</p> <p>Norges Bank Investment Management / British Land</p>	<p>Proposed scheme falls within The Grosvenor Estate boundary. Local building owners are to be consulted given servicing requirements and the impact on building redevelopment on the highway.</p>
	<p>Local residents' groups and associations</p>	<p>Representing local interests and concerns, contributing responses and solutions for proposed public realm changes.</p>
<p>Grosvenor Square</p>	<p>The Grosvenor Estate</p>	<p>Proposed scheme falls within The Grosvenor Estate boundary .</p>
	<p>Local residents' groups and associations</p>	<p>Representing local interests and concerns, contributing responses and solutions for proposed public realm changes.</p>

Appendix C - Oxford Street Programme Governance



Appendix D – Advisory Board Membership

Stakeholders	Members
Oxford Street Programme Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development (Cllr Geoff Barraclough) - Deputy Chief Executive of Westminster City Council - Director of Operations, Governance and Oxford Street
Business Improvement Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chief Executive, New West End Company - Chief Executive, Marble Arch BID - Chief Executive, Baker Street Quarter Partnership
Landowners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic Projects Director, The Portman Estate - Managing Director, The Crown Estate - Chief Executive Grosvenor Property UK, Grosvenor Estate
Transport for London	Director of Borough Planning
Residents' Groups	Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association (FNA)
	Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum (FitzWest)
	Marylebone Association
	Mayfair Neighbourhood Forum
	The Residents Society of Mayfair & St James's
Soho Society	
Murphy Careys Joint Venture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director of Operations, Careys - Director, Murphy
Ward Councillors	<p>Marylebone Ward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Barbara Arzymanow Cllr Ian Rowley Cllr Karen Scarborough <p>West End Ward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Paul Fisher, Deputy Cabinet Member - Licensing and Public Protection Cllr Patrick Lilley, Lead Member - Soho and LGBTQ+ Champion Cllr Jessica Toale, Deputy Cabinet Member - Culture, Heritage and the Arts and Lead Member - Animal Welfare Champion
Other Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Cara Sanquest, Deputy Cabinet Member - Community Engagement and Consultation Reform Cllr Paul Dimoldenberg, Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality
Senior Council Officers	Director of Communities, Westminster City Council
Greater London Authority	Executive Director, Good Growth