



Have your say on the transformation of Oxford Street West

About Living Streets

We are Living Streets, the UK charity for everyday walking. We want to create a walking nation, free from congested roads and pollution, reducing the risk of preventable illnesses and social isolation and making walking the natural choice. We believe that a walking nation means progress for everyone. Our ambition is to enable people of all generations to enjoy the benefits that this simple act brings and to ensure all our streets are fit for walking.

Summary

Living Streets supports the pedestrianisation of Oxford Street. The proposals for Oxford Street West are wide-ranging, with eight important areas we would like to highlight:

- Plans for the complete removal of traffic from Oxford Street, 24 hours a day are supported and are essential for the success of the scheme
- Proposals for a nearby, high quality east-west cycle route must be brought forward in tandem with the transformation of Oxford Street
- Bus service remodelling is supported
- Good provision of nearby taxi ranks and drop off points for disabled people are supported
- High quality crossings that prioritise pedestrians on north-south carriageways
- Quality of walking environment must extend to all side roads in the district as these provide a new function as pedestrian gateways
- Accessibility enhancements such as a Shopmobility scheme are supported
- Servicing of shops on Oxford Street should be accommodated using side or parallel roads.

We recognise the proposals are a realisation of the 2016 manifesto commitment of the Mayor of London ***“to turn one of the world’s most polluted streets into one of the world’s finest public spaces – a tree-lined avenue from Tottenham Court Road to Marble Arch”***.¹

¹ http://www.sadiq.london/introduction_manifesto

Question 1

Do you support our proposals for the transformation of the Oxford Street district?

Yes.

If you have any comments about our proposals, please explain them below.

Complete removal of traffic from Oxford Street, 24 hours a day

We strongly support the complete removal of all traffic from Oxford Street, 24 hours a day.

We believe this is essential for the success of the pedestrianisation of Oxford Street as a safe, first-class space for people to walk and enjoy.

This change is required to deal with the air pollution and pedestrian safety concerns highlighted in our June 2017 consultation response.²

We believe that attempts to restrict access to certain vehicles, to certain parts of Oxford Street West, and at certain times of the day will result in an incoherent and unsafe scheme.

Opening Oxford Street West to other traffic is incompatible with the need to provide hostile vehicle mitigation. Gates, bollards or other barriers cannot be guaranteed to be completely effective in restricting vehicles if they are accidentally left open, allow tailgating or fail in some other way.

The opening of Oxford Street West to certain vehicles at certain times would also have serious consequences for pedestrian safety, where the perception would be created that the street is free of traffic when at certain times it is not.

The design potential and quality of Oxford Street West environment would be restricted if the carriageway is used by conflicting transport modes. The ability to provide places to sit and rest, toilets, or other facilities would be severely restricted by this kind of scheme.

We strongly support the fundamental principle of a vehicle-free Oxford Street and warn that the success of this transformed public place as an excellent piece of urban design depends on it.

Provision of a nearby, high quality east-west cycle route

Oxford Street is currently an unsafe and unattractive place for people to cycle. There is a clear need for a direct, high quality east-west route for people to cycle through the area.

Half a million people already use Oxford Street daily and an extra 150,000 people are expected each day following the opening of the Elizabeth Line. Because of the sheer number of people walking on Oxford Street, meandering from side-to-side, sitting, playing and enjoying the public space, it is our view that people cycling would be best served by providing a high quality parallel route close-by.

However we are concerned that detailed plans for a nearby, east-west cycle route are not forthcoming. The draft Mayor's Transport Strategy proposes a high-quality cycle route within 400m of 70% of Londoners.³ Without safe provision, not only will the needs of people cycling

² <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/2860/living-streets-transformation-of-oxford-street-consultation-response.pdf>

³ https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/policy/mayors-transport-strategy/user_uploads/mayor-s-draft-transport-strategy-full-document.pdf

through the area not be met, but we have concerns that people on bikes will choose to cycle down Oxford Street regardless, increasing the likelihood of pedestrian-cyclist conflict.

Comprehensive cycle parking and storage, that includes provision for the needs of disabled cyclists and cargo bikes, should be provided at multiple locations close to Oxford Street and it must be made accessible for those using a bicycle as a mobility aid (see 'Accessibility Enhancements').

We expect Transport for London and Westminster City Council to bring forward plans for nearby, high-quality east-west cycle provision immediately.

We expect the delivery of nearby, high-quality east-west cycle provision as soon as possible and for plans to be developed in tandem with the Oxford Street pedestrianisation.

Bus service remodelling

We support the plans for remodelling the bus network around the Oxford Street district.

The phased approach taken by Transport for London is welcomed. The July 2017 reduction of 40% of buses on Oxford Street was a significant step towards removing buses from Oxford Street West.⁴ We support the further phased reduction in routes on Oxford Street.

We recognise that routes have been comprehensively remodelled and not merely displaced to adjacent streets.

We expect the quality of walking environment from relocated nearby bus stops to Oxford Street to be of a similar high standard as the pedestrianised Oxford Street West, with carriageway reallocated to footway and obstacles removed.

Taxi provision

We support the substantial provision of nearby taxi ranks and drop off points. We believe these are an important component of making Oxford Street West accessible to all, including disabled people, older people, and families with children.

Quality of pedestrian crossings on retained north-south carriageways

High quality crossings are needed on the retained north-south carriageway that prioritise pedestrians, in order to maintain safety and discourage crossing the carriageway outside of the pedestrian green phase.

The pedestrianised area should feel continuous with a design that permits vehicles to enter without breaking the continuity of the space. Wait times at signalised crossings should be minimal, with short vehicle phases.

The full width of the pedestrianised area to be maintained at crossings, with the vehicle stop line pulled back to the building line.

Hostile vehicle mitigations should be attractive as well as functional and must be placed so they do not restrict pedestrian movement.

⁴ <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2017/april/tfl-confirms-changes-to-bus-routes-in-central-london>

We expect signalised crossings to allow people walking enough time to cross, accounting for the needs of older people who cannot walk as quickly.⁵ In addition, crossings must be fully accessible to people with visual impairments, by including both tactile and audible cues.

Davies Street/Stratford Place

We are concerned that the proposals for Stratford Place are the weakest part of the scheme. The retention of vehicular access and unclear plans for the crossing of Oxford Street present a danger to pedestrian safety. This location is very close to Bond Street London Underground and Elizabeth line station, with projected high levels of pedestrian flow.

We believe Stratford Place should be pedestrianised along with Oxford Street West, with vehicle access maintained nearby. If Stratford Place remains open to traffic it must be designed to prioritise pedestrians and discourage use for vehicles, such as a private hire drop off/pick up point.

We expect careful consideration to be given to the pedestrian crossing of Davies Street/Stratford Place with pedestrian priority maintained.

Junctions of Regent Street/Oxford Street and Orchard Street/Oxford Street

The urban design at these locations must ensure that pedestrians transition safely back from the pedestrianised area onto footways at either side, where the scheme ends. Ideally these junctions will maintain the ability to cross diagonally (an all-green pedestrian phase) as is currently the case at Oxford Circus.

Side roads closed to traffic

We are concerned about the quality of the pedestrian environment on side roads that are proposed to be closed to traffic.

Some side roads will have dual function of loading/unloading and pedestrian gateway. The supplied highway designs provide insufficient evidence that high quality design and materials will be used to ensure these roads operate successfully for both purposes for their entire length.

We recommend consideration to closing further side roads to traffic where they are adjacent to significant trip generators, such as Hollies Street, which includes John Lewis frontages.

We expect to see improvement in pedestrian footway on side roads extended as far as parallel streets, in particular for roads that are providing connections to bus stops.

We expect to see wayfinding signage on all routes between bus stops and Oxford Street.

Accessibility enhancement

We support accessibility enhancements on Oxford Street, such as a Shopmobility scheme.

We would not expect to see a shuttle bus or autonomous vehicles operating on the Oxford Street footway, as it would endanger pedestrian safety. Any such scheme should be restricted to the carriageway on side and parallel roads.

⁵ Asher L. et al (2012). **Most older pedestrians are unable to cross the road in time: a cross-sectional study**, Age and Ageing 2012; 41: 690–694

Inclusive cycling

We would support a trial of an inclusive cycling 'blue badge' scheme on Oxford Street West, reflecting that for some an accessible cycle is a mobility aid.⁶

In any case, we would expect to see cycle parking and storage that includes provision for the needs of disabled cyclists.

Servicing of shops on Oxford Street

The proposals for Oxford Street West envisage vehicular traffic entering Oxford Street only in emergencies. The presence of traffic on Oxford Street would therefore become a very rare occurrence. We feel it is inappropriate for lorries and heavy goods vehicles to be an exception to this rule. Pedestrians are far more likely to suffer death or serious injury caused by a lorry or HGV collision than a car. They are particularly vulnerable when the vehicle is setting off.⁷

We believe the majority of shops on Oxford Street West are being serviced from parallel and adjacent streets. With good logistical planning, we believe that all shops currently serviced from Oxford Street West could be serviced from side roads, with goods carried along the pedestrianised street.

We therefore expect servicing of all shops on Oxford Street West to be accommodated using side or parallel roads

⁶ <http://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/v2-Nov-2017.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.rospa.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/road-safety/cyclists/hgvs-and-vulnerable-road-users.pdf>

Question 2

We have explained that we will develop proposals for the section of Oxford Street between Oxford Circus and Tottenham Court Road based on the issues of concern raised by respondents to our last consultation, which included concerns about traffic displacement, access by public transport and the management of the area. If you believe there are any other issues we should take into account in developing proposals for the eastern section of Oxford Street, or have any other comments about this issue, please record them below.

Living Streets supports the complete removal of motor traffic for the section of Oxford Street between Oxford Circus and Tottenham Court Road. We would like to see proposals developed for the eastern section of Oxford Street to include:

- A commitment to transform this section of Oxford Street into a world-class visitor and shopping destination, joining up with a pedestrianised western section
- The complete removal of all motor traffic with access to buses and taxis a short walk away
- A design that is open and accessible to all, regardless of age or disability
- A safe environment, day and night
- Provision of a close-by, parallel high-quality east-west cycle route
- Careful consideration of the impact on the wider West End, with pedestrian improvements across the wider Oxford Street district.

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