

Consultation response

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

Yes Yes, but I have some concerns about certain elements of the proposals (please tell us below) No

Yes, but I have some concerns about the certain elements of the proposals.

We broadly agree with TfL's plans for transforming Oxford Street. In particular, we welcome the removal of motorised traffic, which will drastically improve air quality and road safety - making it a more attractive and pleasant place to visit. However, we still have some reservations with the scheme, especially with regard to accessibility for disabled people, which are outlined below:

1. We welcome plans for more accessible and wider pavements as part of an overall policy of pedestrianisation; however, it is important that this does not in any way impede the mobility of disabled pedestrians and cyclists (e.g. more accommodating pavements must not result in a gradual proliferation of street clutter, A-Boards, outdoor seating, planters and kiosks etc., whilst step-free access to the street and shops must be ensured);
2. The removal of buses and taxis will adversely impact on disabled peoples' ability to access and use Oxford Street. As one way of addressing this, we recommend that a policy recognising cycling by disabled people be adopted, including that:
 - a) Cycling remains permitted for disabled people who use their cycle as a mobility aid (possibly enforced through a disabled cyclists' 'Blue Badge' scheme, which must be complimented with a public awareness campaign, as well as training for the Met Police, TfL and businesses operating along Oxford Street);
 - b) Convenient, clearly signposted, reserved cycle parking is provided on Oxford Street at regular intervals, which is designed to accommodate non-standard cycles;
 - c) As a form of mobility service for older and disabled people, the idea of an inclusive cycle 'shuttle' service should be explored, which could be modelled on Hackney's 'Ride Side By Side' cycle taxi scheme. It should also include the ability to carry wheelchair-using passengers.

3. TfL should encourage and incentivise businesses operating on Oxford Street to use cargobikes for last-mile delivery: both as a way of counteracting the displacement of motorised traffic onto the surrounding roads (which will be a likely result of pedestrianisation) and as a way of promoting a form of clean and sustainable transport;
4. We are concerned by the lack of detail on plans for cycling routes at this stage. Specifically, we feel that an area-wide strategy is needed in order to address the impact of shifting traffic elsewhere. As part of this we would recommend that:
 - Cycle parking is clearly signposted and conveniently located, with spaces designed for non-standard cycles;
 - A comprehensive surrounding cycle network must link key nodes, such as major railway stations, step-free Tube stations, hospitals (e.g. University College Hospital) and other public facilities using a mixture of quiet (<2000PCU and 20mph) or fully separated routes;
 - Parallel cycle routes - and routes linking Oxford Street to other streets - must be clearly signposted, inclusive and segregated (people will naturally head for their destination and will avoid busy and dangerous roads);
 - The failings of the Central London Grid need to be corrected – it is too often continuing to use busy roads, failing to provide safe space or time to cross over them and not leading to quiet and inclusive space to cycle in. In Westminster, in particular, the proposed network was kept sparse in part due to Crossrail and yet even now with major works complete no progress has been made in devising, planning or delivering a basic network for what could be rightly termed a Central London Grid;
 - On the map showing Oxford Street Transformation for Cycles only two broad route alignments are shown parallel to Oxford Street. This says explicitly that only the northern route is to be high quality and that the southern route is to be signed (implying lower quality and no supporting interventions to reduce traffic speed or volume to inclusive and safe levels). This is not sufficient for a usable network in Central London. All cycle routes as part of the Central London Grid must be high-quality and inclusive;
 - Even with cycle access to Oxford Street retained for disabled people, as a busy and congested corridor full of pedestrian traffic it will not provide a high quality inclusive cycle route.

Failing such measures, and assuming the transformation goes ahead as currently planned, there is a threefold risk of: (i) routes for cycling away from Oxford Street not being inclusive and not being clearly signed from Oxford

Street; (ii) cycle parking becoming intensified into hubs that are away from major routes over Oxford Street, and not being clearly signed; and (iii) cycle routes over Oxford Street being limited and of poor quality. It is therefore crucial that cycling routes linking Oxford Street and the surrounding roads are designed in an inclusive manner and are attractive for all types of people, at a range of speeds and on all types of cycle.

5. Finally, it is worth pointing out that any transformation that reduces the ability of disabled people to access and use Oxford Street will, in turn, have a negative impact on local business. Indeed, with the spending power of disabled people in the UK worth up to £249 billion a year (the 'Purple Pound'), it is almost certain that any policies resulting in the reduced footfall of disabled people will have negative consequences not only for businesses in the area, but will also reduce the social diversity of those coming to visit this historic London landmark - which is a bad thing for everyone.