



City of Westminster

Cabinet Member Report

Decision Maker:	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Built Environment Cabinet Member for City Management and Customer Services Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Parking
Date:	11 March 2016
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Baker Street Two Way Project – Response to petition
Wards Affected:	Marylebone High Street, Bryanston and Dorset Square, Regent's Park
Key Decision:	No
Financial Summary:	No financial implication
Report of:	Head of Strategic Transport Planning and Public Realm

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Baker Street Two Way project proposes to remove the one-way gyratory system and re-introduce two-way traffic flow on Baker Street and Gloucester Place while improving public realm and conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users. Public consultation on these proposals was undertaken in summer 2015 for a period of ten weeks. In response to the consultation, a petition was started on the City Council's website, to reject all proposals for Baker Street Two Way scheme. The petition was presented to Full Council on 11 November 2015 with 2,239 off line signatures.
- 1.2 This report responds to the issues raised in this petition and advises on the action taken in respect of this petition.

2. Recommendations

1. That Cabinet Members note the receipt of the petition.
2. That Cabinet Members note that responses have been provided to the issues raised in the petition. Any residual concerns will be taken into consideration while developing the next stages of the proposed design.
3. That the petitioners and Councillor Mohammad are advised of the actions to be taken in respect of this matter.

3. Reasons for Decision

Response to various issues raised in this petition was provided as part of the report to the Policy and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 9 November 2015. This report seeks to respond to those particular issues by providing detailed reasoning and analysis.

4. Background, including Policy Context

- 4.1 Baker Street and Gloucester Place are part of the one-way gyratory system. The Baker Street Two Way project proposes to remove the one-way gyratory system and re-introducing two-way traffic flow. In addition, it also proposes to improve the public realm, improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists and improve public transport accessibility. This project is being jointly funded by Transport for London (TfL), Portman Estate, Baker Street Quarter BID and others. The current projected cost of the scheme is £15 million.
- 4.2 Public consultation on these proposals was undertaken for a period of ten weeks from 26 May 2015 to 31 July 2015. This consultation process involved a leaflet drop, a website containing information about the proposed scheme, five public exhibitions and meetings with amenity societies and other local interest groups. A consultation questionnaire was provided on the website and also as a paper copy at public exhibitions, libraries and if requested by individuals or resident groups. Cabinet members' attention is drawn to the Consultation Response Report provided as Background papers in this respect
- 4.3 In response to the public consultation, a petition was presented to Full Council on 11 November 2015 by Councillor Mohammad. This petition has also been placed on the City Council's website. The online petition received 433 signatories and closed on 15 October 2015. The petition presented to Full Council had some 2,239 signatures. The detail and results of which are summarised below but not limited to the following -

*We the undersigned petition Westminster City Council to:
'reject all proposals for the Baker Street and Gloucester Place Two-Way Traffic Scheme.'*

Created by: Mr Steven Dollond

The petition's details read: We call upon Westminster City Council, the Mayor of London and Transport for London to reject all proposals for the Baker Street/ Gloucester Place Two-Way Traffic Scheme.

- 1) The proposed scheme is not needed and has not been demanded by local residents, businesses or road users.*

- 2) It would damage the quality of life for residents by diverting traffic into the residential streets of the Dorset Square Conservation Area and other residential streets on the south side of Marylebone Rd where air pollution and the risk of accidents would increase.*

- 3) It would increase journey times on Baker St, Gloucester Pl and Marylebone Rd for buses, coaches, taxis, delivery vehicles and emergency services.*

- 4) It would push up rents for shops and restaurants on Baker St, many of which may be forced out of business by higher rents and the loss of parking / unloading spaces. The existing one-way system is very successful in maintaining traffic flows, providing spaces for parking / unloading and keeping traffic out of residential side streets. The two-way scheme is being promoted by landowners and property developers who would gain enormously from this unjustifiable waste of taxpayers' money.*

5. Response to petition

- 5.1 The proposed scheme is not needed and has not been demanded by local residents, businesses or road users*

Baker Street and Gloucester Place are one of the gyratory systems that were designed many years ago to move strategic traffic around urban areas. Most one-way streets and gyratories in Westminster were developed between the 1960s and early 1990s. At that time, the general consensus was that the conversion of two-way streets to one-way was implemented because walking, cycling and using the bus and Underground was not considered a priority and it was seen necessary to increase the capacity of local road networks. To meet this objective it was considered then that the conversion of two-way streets to one-way streets would increase road traffic speeds and thus increase highway

capacity. This is believed to be the reason for the larger one-way conversion schemes such as the making of Baker Street and Gloucester Place into one-way. In current times, the pressure on the city is considerably different to the years before and this has impacted on how local and strategic traffic is managed; in how residents, workers and visitors travel; the increasing impact of transport on the economy and the environment and; how goods and services are delivered. The level of car traffic in central London has stabilised in recent years, and reduced over the past ten years and there has been a contrasting and considerable increase in the number of pedestrians, cyclists and users of the bus and underground networks.

The policies contained in Westminster's City Plan: Strategic Policies (2013) set out the need to prioritise pedestrian movement and support sustainable transport options and to reduce reliance on private motor vehicles thereby improving air quality and public health.

The proposed Baker Street Two Way scheme aims to reduce the dominance of traffic throughout the study area by removing the one-way system. It also aims to provide public realm improvements; reduce vehicle speed and thereby improve safety; reduce vehicle trip length; improve pedestrian cycling facilities; improve public transport accessibility.

The establishment of Business improvement Districts,(BID's),has led these groups in many cases to carry out studies into their local areas and along with major estates, such as Crown, Grosvenor & Portman, to promote schemes to return to two way working in the areas they have some responsibility for.

In Westminster, some conversions from one-way to two-way have already been implemented. The Piccadilly Two Way (P2W) scheme is one of the City Council's "Better City, Better Lives" initiatives and is being introduced in partnership with Transport for London and the Crown Estate. Phase 1 of the P2W scheme introduced major improvements in Pall Mall, St James's Street and Piccadilly and was completed in October 2011. It introduced two-way traffic movements on Piccadilly (where there was previously a contraflow bus lane), Pall Mall and St James's Street and significant improvements to the streetscape and public realm. Part 2 of the scheme, which covers Regent Street (south of Piccadilly Circus), Waterloo Place, Charles II Street and Haymarket involves similar improvements to the street environment and public realm, though Haymarket and Regent Street will remain as one-way streets. This scheme has successfully created a vastly improved environment which enhances the unique setting of listed buildings and heritage assets, and is easier for pedestrians to access and enjoy.

It is not unusual for major estates, land owners and developers to approach the City Council with concepts/ ideas of public realm improvements which are then

developed further by the City Council in partnership with them. These schemes, when delivered, not only provide improvements for pedestrians, cyclists and residents but also help in economic regeneration of those areas. One of the commitments under 'City for All' is '*to invest, with our partners, in new public realm schemes, including walking and cycling improvements, and road safety schemes*'.

Portman Estate and Baker Street Quarter BID approached the City Council with a concept of converting Baker Street and Gloucester Place from one-way to two-way streets. This would provide significant public realm, pedestrian and cycling benefits. A feasibility study was undertaken by the City Council to develop this concept further and is now being consulted upon.

5.2 *It would damage the quality of life for residents by diverting traffic into the residential streets of the Dorset Square Conservation Area and other residential streets on the south side of Marylebone Rd where air pollution and the risk of accidents would increase*

The scheme has been designed to be 'capacity neutral'. This means that in general there is not expected to be any significant reassignment of traffic away from the main roads onto local residential roads. A table showing changes to traffic flow, as a result of the proposed scheme, on various streets within the study area was provided as part of the consultation documents. Cabinet members' attention is therefore drawn to the Table attached as Appendix B to this report. This table shows that on most of the streets there will be no noticeable change in traffic flow. On some streets there is expected to be a reduction in traffic flow and on some a minor increase. However, this increase is unlikely to cause a major increase in air pollution, or increase the risk of accidents thereby damaging the quality of life for residents.

These changes to traffic flow have been assessed in detail using the TfL central London strategic reassignment model (CLOHAM). This is a regional model of the road network that is firstly validated against traffic turning counts and origin/destination data of baseline conditions, in accordance with national and TfL accuracy criteria. Changes are then made to the modelled road network to reflect the proposed scheme, and the model is then used to forecast if and how traffic patterns alter as a consequence of the scheme. These traffic models are then independently audited by TfL's Network Performance team. Changes in traffic patterns will inevitably occur when altering a road system from one way to two way, as new turning movements and routes are provided. Forecast traffic patterns and any wider reassignment are a function of journey time, and so the model assigns traffic to the network in a way that reduces journey times as much as possible. The modelling carried out for Baker Street Two Way Project demonstrates that, overall, the traffic on the Baker Street and Gloucester Place corridors can be reallocated between the two streets without significant

reassignment impact on the wider area, and that there are not expected to be significant changes to traffic flows on local roads.

Subsequent to these concerns raised by residents during the consultation period, various meetings have been held in recent weeks with the amenity societies and resident groups to discuss these concerns. Alternative proposals at various junctions have been developed to meet the concerns raised. Further public consultation will be undertaken on these proposed changes before any decisions are made.

In addition, a post-implementation contingency plan and monitoring strategy is being developed to monitor the effect of two-way operation on traffic on local roads. As part of this strategy, regular contact will be maintained with these groups to understand and deal with any concerns arising. Traffic surveys will be undertaken at specific junctions before and after the works are implemented. Mitigation measures have been developed and discussed with stakeholders that can be implemented if any issues of rat-running arise.

5.3 *It would increase journey times on Baker St, Gloucester Pl and Marylebone Rd for buses, coaches, taxis, delivery vehicles and emergency services.*

The journey times (existing and proposed) on Baker Street and Gloucester Place are shown in Appendix C. These show that there will be a reduction in journey times on Baker Street. On Gloucester Place, there will be an increase in journey times. This is due to the provision of formal pedestrian crossings at most junctions on Gloucester Place. Hence this will vastly improve the pedestrian facilities even though taking some time away from general traffic.

Journey times for buses (existing and proposed) are shown in Appendix D. These show that -

- Southbound bus journey times will be no worse than existing or are expected to reduce, which is a consequence of reduced traffic flow;
- Most northbound services will be transferred from Gloucester Place to Baker Street, and will either be no worse, or are expected to experience a small increase in journey time when compared to the current route (particularly during the PM peak);
- Overall, across both directions, there is not expected to be any significant change to bus journey times throughout the corridor.

5.4 *It would push up rents for shops and restaurants on Baker St, many of which may be forced out of business by higher rents and the loss of parking / unloading spaces. The existing one-way system is very successful in maintaining traffic flows, providing spaces for parking / unloading and keeping traffic out of residential side streets. The two-way scheme is being promoted by landowners*

and property developers who would gain enormously from this unjustifiable waste of taxpayers' money

To state that the existing one-way system is 'very successful' is not born out in the existing traffic conditions found in Baker Street and Gloucester Place, as the area regularly experiences long queues and delays northbound on Gloucester Place towards Marylebone Road, as well as southbound on Baker Street towards Marylebone Road and Oxford Street. The over-provision of traffic lanes at other locations means that some drivers speed away from traffic lights and the lack of crossing facilities, especially on Gloucester Place, means that pedestrians must cross in gaps without any formal control. The wide carriageways and multi-lane traffic flows can be intimidating to cyclists and weaving across the lanes can be hazardous. The proposed two-way scheme is expected to maintain the current levels of traffic flow while distributing traffic more appropriately for particular destinations, along with improving accessibility which will shorten journey distances and reduce overall journey time across the network. The traffic benefits can be achieved in addition to improving the public realm which will provide benefits to pedestrians, cyclists and bus users.

As detailed in paragraph 5.2 above, there is not expected to be any significant reassignment of traffic away from main roads onto local residential roads. The table in Appendix A shows the likely changes to traffic flow as a result of the proposed scheme on various streets within the study area.

In terms of rental rates for shops and restaurants, changes in value are driven by a variety of external market and locality factors and can alter even when no improvements have been made to the surrounding area. It is therefore not the case that a particular public realm improvement scheme may or may not result in higher rents in its own right.

Information on impact on parking and loading restrictions as a result of the proposed scheme will be provided during the statutory Traffic Management Order (TMO) consultation and will be reported more fully nearer the time. Loading and unloading requirements of local businesses are being considered while designing these proposals. Comments received during consultations so far and at subsequent stages will be taken into account when finalising the proposals.

6. Financial Implications

This report has no financial implications.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 In accordance with Part 4 of the City Council's Constitution (Council Procedures (Standing Orders), Standing Order 8 refers and the Petition Scheme approved by

the City Council on 19 May 2010, and the relevant provisions relating to executive decision-making under the Local Government Act 2000, petitions are to be referred to the appropriate Chief Officer who shall advise the petition organiser, within 3 months or sooner where possible, of the City Council's response to the lodged Petition.

- 7.2 Petition Schemes are governed by the provisions of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 ("The 2009 Act"). Sections 11 – 18 of the 2009 Act sets out the procedural requirements the City Council should have regard to when it receives a Petition. In essence, this requires the City Council, inter alia, to debate the subject matter in an open and transparent way, engage fully in the process by proper consultation with the petition organiser, and such other affected parties, and to appoint an Officer to "be called to account" (defined under the 2009 Act as a "Chief Officer" or "Head of Service") whose responsibility, it is to oversee the Petition process to ensure compliance with the 2009 Act and the City Council's Petition Scheme as provided for under the Constitution. The Petition Scheme sets out explicitly the actions and steps the City Council will undertake when a Head of Service is appointed accordingly.
- 7.3 The City Council when looking at the next stage of design for the Baker Street Two Way Project is obliged to consider the responses to the Petition in a fair, reasonable and proportionate way as part of the decision making process. This measured approach needs to be balanced against the City Council's general power of Competence under Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to improve the well-being of its area (the former power being under section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000).
- 7.4 Cabinet members during the decision making process are required to take into account fully the arguments for and against imposing such a scheme as amplified within the body of this report and by attaching the necessary weight to those considerations.

8. Outstanding issues

- 8.1 None

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

**Anju Banga, Project and Programme Manager
at 02076412666 or abanga@westminster.gov.uk**

Background papers

- 1. Baker Street Two Way Consultation: Consultation Response Report dated 30 October 2015**

For completion by the **Cabinet Member** for *Built Environment*

Declaration of Interest

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: _____ Date: _____

NAME: Councillor Robert Davis MBE DL

State nature of interest if any

.....
(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled
Baker Street Two Way Project – Response to petition

Signed

Cabinet Member for *Built Environment*

Date

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:
.....
.....

If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Director of Law, City Treasurer and, if there are staffing implications, the Director of Human Resources (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the

criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.

For completion by the **Cabinet Member** for City Management and Customer Services

Declaration of Interest

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: _____ Date: _____

NAME: Councillor Melvyn Caplan

State nature of interest if any

.....
(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled

Baker Street Two Way Project – Response to petition

Signed

Cabinet Member for City Management and Customer Services

Date

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For completion by the **Cabinet Member** for Sustainability and Parking

Declaration of Interest

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: _____ Date: _____

NAME: Councillor Heather Acton

State nature of interest if any

.....
(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled
Baker Street Two Way Project – Response to petition.

Signed

Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Parking

Date

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Appendix A

Other Implications

1. **Resources Implications** – no implication
2. **Business Plan Implications** – no implication
3. **Risk Management Implications** – no implication
4. **Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment including Health and Safety Implications** – no implication
5. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – no implication
6. **Impact on the Environment** – no implication
7. **Equalities Implications** – no implication
8. **Staffing Implications** – no implication
9. **Human Rights Implications** – no implication
10. **Energy Measure Implications** – no implication
11. **Communications Implications** – no implication

Note to report authors: If there are particularly significant implications in any of the above categories these should be moved to the main body of the report.

Appendix B

- **Traffic flow comparison list**

Appendix C

- **Existing and Proposed General Traffic Journey Times**

Appendix D

- **Existing and Proposed Bus Journey Times**