

<b>Committees:</b>		<b>Dates:</b>
Streets and Walkways Sub-Committee	For Decision	26/02/2019
Projects Sub-Committee	For Decision	22/03/2019
Port Health & Environmental Services	For Information	05/03/2019
<b>Subject:</b> Beech Street: Transport and Public Realm Improvements	<b>Issue Report:</b> Gateway 3 Complex	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of the Built Environment <b>Report Author:</b> Aldo Strydom		<b>For Decision</b>

### **Dashboard**

**Timeline:** G4 Detailed Option Appraisal (Phase 1 – Interim Scheme) ~ May 2019

**Total Estimated Cost: £12M-£15M**

**Approved budget:** £1,745,362

**Spend to Date:** £346,748

**Overall Project Risk:** Medium

### **Project Mission statement**

The Project will address air quality issues by reducing traffic that pass through the covered roadway. At the same time, it aims to deliver a vibrant street with a high-quality public realm at the centre of Culture Mile, which will also provide the opportunity to realise property outcomes.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that **all Committees** note:

- The resolutions from the previous Committee meetings (September 2018) tasking officers with investigating the feasibility of an eastbound and westbound closure, as well as exploring the option of introducing Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) restrictions along Beech Street and investigating options to accelerating the project;
- The progress and findings to date;
- The next steps, programme, key project risks & opportunities.

It is recommended that Members of the **Streets and Walkways** and **Project Sub Committees:**

- Approve an increase in the scope of the project to investigate the feasibility of a two-way closure of Beech Street (both interim and long term proposals)
- Approve the Project Objectives.

## **Report Summary**

This report is for the Beech Street Transport and Public Realm project (the Project) which aims to deliver air quality, property and public realm improvements in Beech Street through means of reducing or removing traffic. The Project builds on the work undertaken as part of the 'Culture Mile Look and Feel Strategy' and delivers the Beech Street Vision which was approved by Policy and Resources Committee in June 2018.

In September 2018 an Issues Report was approved by Members, tasking officers to investigate the feasibility of an eastbound and/or westbound closure to vehicles, as well as explore the option of introducing Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) restrictions along Beech Street. Members also expressed their desire for officers to explore ways to accelerate the project where appropriate.

The purpose of this report is to:

- provide an update on the work and findings to date
- seek Member approval of the project objectives
- seek Member approval of the options and next steps
- advise on the project risks and opportunities.

## **Work and findings to date**

### *Work to date*

Since the September Committees in 2018, officers have been completing a study to capture the existing baseline situation, which will also be used as a basis for measuring the impacts of changes and future success of the scheme. The technical data captured in this report will include up-to-date traffic and pedestrian information, as well as air quality and noise monitoring data, outcomes from the assessment of structures and information on the public realm. Activities around the baseline report also include perception surveys and collection of servicing data through engagement with local businesses. Using iBus data provided by TfL, investigations into bus journey times for a route 153 diversion via London Wall have also been undertaken.

Officers have been meeting with Transport for London (TfL) and Islington Council on a regular basis to progress the options for Beech Street, and to coordinate the Project with Islington's Old Street/Clerkenwell Road (OSCR) scheme. Islington's proposals include point closures along Clerkenwell Road to restrict traffic to buses and taxis only.

A number of meetings, attended by senior officers and Members, with TfL, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and Islington Council have also taken place to enable the Corporation to gather political support for the project.

Updated strategic traffic modelling has been undertaken by TfL for eastbound and westbound closures of Beech Street. This has produced very similar outputs to previous strategic modelling reported to members in 2016, with the majority of traffic expected to reassign to London Wall and Old Street.

Officers have, in collaboration with TfL, been exploring opportunities to progress the project in a shorter timeframe under what has been dubbed an 'interim scheme'. An interim scheme needs to deliver some or all of the expected benefits, including:

- Air quality improvements
- Public realm space/footway gains
- Opportunities for Culture Mile artwork and activities

TfL officers have agreed in principle that a closure scenario that has a 'minimal impact' on the network may be able to progress to a Traffic Management Act Notification (TMAN) application, without the need to undergo TfL's full Model Auditing Process (MAP). The outputs from the strategic modelling done to date indicate that an eastbound closure might be considered for this purpose and officers have undertaken further analyses on this scenario, with a report submitted to TfL in order to start a discussion.

#### *Key findings*

- Due to the likely reassignment of traffic onto the Strategic Road Network (SRN), any form of closure on Beech Street will require a notification under the Traffic Management Act (i.e. TMAN application), to be approved by TfL
- Islington Council is a statutory consultee on the Beech Street proposals as some traffic is expected to reassign to Islington streets
- The TfL traffic modelling team consider full traffic modelling (MAP) may not be required for an eastbound closure, however it would most likely be required for a westbound or two-way closure due to the greater volume of traffic that this will displace onto parallel streets and the SRN. This requires further analyses, and formal agreement with TfL
- Bus route 153 travels along Beech Street and any directional lane closure(s) will require the service to be rerouted (via London Wall)
- Progressing a bus change (rerouting) takes a minimum of six months due to internal TfL processes. Agreement on a route 153 diversion, from TfL buses, is also required as part of the TMAN approval process
- Initial assessment of bus journey times indicate that these are likely to increase as a result of a diversion (via London Wall), however officers are investigating possible mitigation measures

#### *Other considerations*

The level of improvement in air quality is dependent on the ability to remove as much traffic from Beech Street as possible, and Members have previously expressed a desire for a two-way closure to be investigated as this will most likely result in greater air quality improvements. The most recent available data<sup>1</sup> indicates that Beech Street has significant concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub>, of around twice the acceptable limits<sup>2</sup> as prescribed in the *National air quality objectives of the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland* (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, 2011).

#### **Project objectives**

Broadly, the Project seeks to:

- improve air quality to acceptable limits
- modernise the public realm by creation of a safer, cleaner, more comfortable and vibrant street that facilitates the delivery of Culture Mile
- contribute to the successful outcomes of the exhibition halls refurbishment project.

<sup>1</sup> Using combination of data from *London Atmospheric Emissions Inventory* and continuous monitored data from various sites.

<sup>2</sup> Currently 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup> of NO<sub>2</sub> (annual average concentration)

To align with the Corporate Plan, it is proposed that the project objectives are redefined as:

<b>Beech Street Project Objectives</b>	<b>Corporate Plan Aim</b>	<b>Corporate Plan Outcome</b>	<b>Corporate Plan High-level activity</b>
A – Improve air quality by reducing NO <sub>2</sub> levels	Shape outstanding environments	11 – We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment	a. – Provide a clean environment and drive down the negative effects of our own activities
B – Improve the quality of the public realm to create streets and public spaces for people to securely admire and enjoy	Shape outstanding environments	12 – Our spaces are secure, resilient and well maintained	a. – Maintain our buildings, streets and public spaces to high standards
C – Improve pedestrian comfort levels	Shape outstanding environments	9 – We are digitally and physically well-connected and responsive	d. – Improve the experience of arriving in and moving through our spaces
D – Ensure buildings and public spaces are protected	Contribute to a flourishing society	1 – People are safe and feel safe	c. – Protect consumers and users of building, streets and public spaces

### **Proposed next steps**

To deliver the vision for Beech Street, officers propose the following tasks:

- Finalise the baseline study so that the success of the project can be measured against the project objectives
- Continue to investigate viability of an eastbound and westbound closure and the possibility of introducing ULEV restrictions along Beech Street
- Investigate the feasibility of delivering a two-way closure (with local access only) as an interim scheme and set out the implications for this
- Investigate the feasibility of delivering a two-way closure (with local access only) as a permanent scheme and set out the implications for this
- Continue to identify ways of fast-tracking the TMAN application in order to deliver an interim scheme in the short term
- Develop public realm design options for consideration at Gateway 4

### *Forward programme*

An indicative programme is outlined below, but this is reliant on significant third-party agreements. The key dates are as follows:

- **Feb 2019 – Mar 2019** Complete baseline report
- **Feb 2019 – Apr 2019** Interim scheme: Options development and approvals
- **Mar 2019** Submit TMAN for interim scheme (Milestone)
- **Apr 2019** Receive TMAN approval from TfL (Milestone)
- **May 2019** Interim scheme: Gateway 4 Report
- **Aug 2019 – Nov 2019** Interim scheme: Detailed design
- **Sep 2019** Interim scheme: Public Engagement
- **Dec 2019** Interim scheme: Gateway 5 Report
- **Jan 2020 – Apr 2020** Interim scheme: Implementation
- **May 2020 – Jul 2021** Interim scheme: Experimental traffic order

- **Apr 2019 – Dec 2020** Permanent scheme: Traffic modelling and approvals
- **Nov 2019 – Dec 2020** Permanent scheme: Public realm and highway outline design
- **Jan 2021** Permanent scheme: Gateway 4 Report
- **Feb 2020 – May 2021** Permanent scheme: Detailed design
- **Jul 2021** Permanent scheme: Gateway 5 Report
- **Sep 2021 – Aug 2022** Highway construction
- **Autumn 2022** Highway works complete

### **Project risks and opportunities**

The main project risks and challenges remain much the same as previously reported. Recent investigations have highlighted a number of opportunities and these are included in an updated list attached at Appendix 2.

### **Appendices**

<b>Appendix 1</b>	Project Risks and Opportunities
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Finance Table
<b>Appendix 3</b>	Project Coversheet

### **Contact**

<b>Report Author</b>	Aldo Strydom
<b>Email Address</b>	Aldo.Strydom@cityoflondon.gov.uk
<b>Telephone Number</b>	020 7332 1539

## **Appendix 1: Project Risks and Opportunities**

### *Risks*

- There is a risk that TfL, residents or businesses will object to changes to the Route 153 bus
- There is a risk that rat running would occur along Fortune Street (a residential street within Islington), as a result of an eastbound closure.
- There is a risk that Islington Council, residents or businesses will object to the interim scheme (e.g. either an eastbound or full closure)
- Experience from other recent schemes would suggest that the permanent closure of any major street in the City will create a high risk of vocal, influential and prolonged opposition from single issue transport groups
- Future projects, such as Centre for Music and Museum of London at West Smithfield, will add an extra layer of complexity to the planning, management and resilience of the street network in the next 10–15 years, with any changes to the London Wall roundabout a future consideration for Beech Street
- Changes at Beech Street will require TMAN consent from TfL who are currently undergoing a significant restructure. With new resource constraints and the loss of key staff, it remains to be seen how TfL will respond

### *Opportunities*

- A viable route for delivering a temporary solution at an accelerated pace, may exist through means of eliminating the need to undergo TfL's full MAP
- Upcoming high-level meetings between Members and Senior Officers from the Corporation and Senior Politicians from the GLA is an opportunity to receive a high degree of Greater London Authority (GLA) support for the Project, through the Mayor's Transport Strategy Healthy Streets initiative and the City's own Transport Strategy
- Through continuing to engage with TfL and Islington, it is envisaged that support can be upheld at officer and project level
- Any form of closure delivered under an accelerated programme will have immediate positive impacts on air quality
- Any form of closure that will result in space gains will:
  - improve pedestrian levels
  - create opportunities for public realm improvements including potential for beautification, lighting improvements, provision of street furniture and art installations
  - create opportunities for events, e.g. related to initiatives such as 'Culture Mile Look and Feel Experiments'

## Appendix 2: Finance Table

<b>Expenditure to date Beech Street Transport &amp; Public Realm Improvements 16800068</b>			
<b>Description</b>	<b>Approved Budget (£)</b>	<b>Expenditure (£)</b>	<b>Balance (£)</b>
PreEv P&T Staff Cost	13,500	13,500	—
PreEv Fees	15,000	15,000	—
Env Servs Staff Costs	69,280	—	69,280
DBE Structures Staff	18,402	—	18,402
P&T Staff Costs	851,544	140,838	710,706
P&T Fees	777,636	177,409	600,227
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,745,362</b>	<b>346,748</b>	<b>1,398,614</b>