

Committee(s):	Date:
Streets & Walkways Sub-Committee – For decision	25 February 2020
Subject: Fann Street – Traffic Increase	Public
Report of: Director of the Built Environment	For Decision
Report author: Min Yee Cheung - Department of the Built Environment	

Summary

Long term temporary changes, including the intermittent closure of Long Lane eastbound, were made to streets around the Farringdon Crossrail site between July 2017 to August 2019. Residents had concerns that increased traffic was using Fann Street to turn around, particularly by the entrance to Bunyan Court. These concerns mainly included the perceived increase in road safety risks and air and noise pollution.

To address this problem, the banned ‘U-turn’ on Aldersgate Street/Goswell Road at its junction with Fann Street was removed on an experimental basis. The experiment, allowed the permitting of motorists to ‘U-turn’ on Aldersgate Street/Goswell Road instead of using Fann Street, to be tested, before making a final decision. It included a period of public consultation.

To assess the experiment, officers analysed a range of data including site observations, traffic counts, collision data and public feedback. This showed that the experiment delivered limited benefits. Long Lane was re-opened in August 2019, and since then traffic using Fann Street has dropped substantially. The need to make the experiment permanent is therefore not required.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

Approve the reinstatement of the banned ‘U turn’ on Aldersgate Street/Goswell Road at its junction with Fann Street.

Main Report

Background

1. To facilitate construction of the Farringdon Crossrail Station, various temporary measures, including the long-term closure of Long Lane, were put in place.
2. Despite diversionary signage, some motorists chose to use Fann Street, particularly at the entrance to Bunyan Court, to turnaround instead. This increase in traffic led nearby residents to raise their concerns to the Corporation about the increased safety risks as well as air and noise pollution.
3. Fann Street is a two-way side street serving predominately as an access street into housing estates as well as providing some on-street parking facilities. At the Aldersgate Street/Goswell Road and Fann Street junction, there is a banned 'U-turn'. See Appendix 1 for a location plan.
4. To address residents' concerns, officers explored various options. An experimental proposal to suspend the banned 'U-turn' on Aldersgate Street/Goswell Road was considered to be the most appropriate approach. This would allow motorists to turn at the junction and therefore reduce the amount of traffic needing to use Fann Street.
5. On 1 October 2018, the experiment was implemented using an experimental Traffic Management Order. This allowed the new arrangement to be tested including to ensure that the change was safe, as well to allow public consultation. The Order is valid for up to 18 months and will therefore expire at the end of March 2020.
6. During the experiment, the closure of Long Lane was no longer required and was re-opened to traffic on 23 August 2019.

Current Position

7. To assess the experiment, officers have carried out regular site observations, counted traffic flows, analysed collision data and reviewed public feedback.
8. Before the experiment
The traffic counts which were taken before the experiment had started, showed a significant number of vehicles using Fann Street to switch directions. However, some motorists chose to perform an illegal 'U-turn' on Aldersgate Street/Goswell Road junction.
9. During the experiment
The traffic counts taken during the experiment indicated the overall number of vehicles switching directions had fallen. Although there is a significant drop in motorists using Fann Street, there is also a drop in vehicles U-turning at the main

junction. This indicates that motorists have become used to the Long Lane closure and are using other routes instead.

10. When Long Lane was re-opened

Traffic counts were taken after Long Lane was re-opened to traffic in August 2019. The data showed overall traffic switching direction has declined even further and traffic using Fann Street has substantially dropped. Appendix 2 provides a comparison of the traffic flows.

11. The experiment attracted a very low level of public interest, with only one resident opposing the removal of the banned U-turn as they felt that the change increased air pollution and made crossing the street more dangerous. The count data in fact showed a small reduction in turning traffic. Analysis of the collision data supplied by City Police did not identify any injury collisions relating to the removal of the banned 'U-turn'.

12. Ward members were updated on the proposal to re-instate the U-turn ban. As part of this, Alderman Graves is concerned with the proposal to reinstate the ban as this will increase traffic using Fann Street.

Way Forward

13. The experimental removal of the banned U-turn had limited effect and the closure of Long Lane is no longer in place. The number of drivers using Fann Street to turn around is now very low. It is therefore recommended that the banned U-turn is re-instated. This can be reviewed should there be a need to close Long Lane to facilitate works in the future.

14. It should also be further noted that 'U-turn' manoeuvres are one of the most hazardous movements a driver can undertake. This is because other road users are not generally expecting such manoeuvres and that a greater level of awareness is required by the driver to do this safely. Furthermore, the Highway code advises drivers to avoid turning around at busy roads but to use quieter side roads instead. Although the experiment did not identify any safety issues, the long-term impacts are unknown. The re-instatement of the ban would therefore reduce this risk.

15. This proposal has no impact on any of the projects in the area including the Beech Street Zero Emission Street and the Public Realm Scheme associated with the development of Bernard Morgan House.

Conclusion

16. The main reason for the extra traffic using Fann Street was associated with the long-term temporary closure of Long Lane for Crossrail works. However, with Long Lane re-opened in August 2019, the problems caused by the extra traffic turning in Fann Street or at the junction has largely dissipated. If Long Lane is to

be temporary closed in the future, consideration will be given to suspending the banned U-turn.

Background Papers

Min Yee Cheung
Department of the Built Environment

T: 020 7332 1208

Appendix 1 Location plan
Appendix 2 Traffic counts data