

Committee(s):	Date(s):	
Streets & Walkways Sub	11 February 2013	
Subject: Road Danger reduction in the Shoe Lane area – Stonecutter Street & Little New Street	Public	
Report of: Director of the Built Environment	For Decision	
<u>Summary</u>		
<p>In July 2012 Members authorised Officers to initiate a project to explore how road safety and the local environment (including air quality and noise) might be further improved in the Shoe Lane area. In particular, Officers were asked to consider what benefit might be derived from the formal closure of Stonecutter Street to through traffic.</p> <p>A public consultation was conducted in September and October of 2012, with additional stakeholder engagement taking place between October and November of 2012. At the end of the consultation and re-engagement, 50% of respondents were in favour of closing Stonecutter Street at its eastern end to motorised vehicles in order to reduce unnecessary through traffic in the area and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists (Option 1), 23% were unable to decide, and 27% were against Option 1.</p> <p>At the December Streets & Walkways (Dec 11) and Projects Sub Committees (Jan 13) Members approved the recommendations within the report and authorised implementation of Option 1.</p> <p>A statutory consultation was then undertaken as part of the Traffic Regulation Order process. During the statutory consultation one formal objection was received from the London Taxi Drivers Association (LTDA).</p> <p>Officers have now reviewed the one objection received and believe that the project benefits outweigh the issue of journey time increases raised by the LTDA.</p> <p>Members are therefore asked to consider the objection and decide whether or not the measures currently proposed for Stonecutter Street should be made permanent and implemented in February 2013.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>I recommend that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members agree to the making of Traffic Orders under section 6 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, to allow the permanent closure of Stonecutter Street at its eastern end to motorised vehicles; and • The objectors are informed of your decision. 		

Main Report

Background

1. In 2012 Goldman Sachs expressed to the City their concern about the safety of vulnerable road users (including their own staff based at their Shoe Lane campus). As a result of discussions which focused on viable solutions to the road safety issues raised, Goldman Sachs agreed to fund the evaluation and design phase of the “Road Danger Reduction in the Shoe Lane area – Stonecutter Street & Little New Street” project. Goldman Sachs has already provided £100,000 of advance funding for the evaluation and design phase of the project which is now complete. All unspent funds from this phase (Gateway 1-5) of the project have been set aside for the implementation (Gateway 5) phase of the project.
2. Upon completion of the 2102 public consultation exercise whereby 50% of respondents were “in favour” and subsequent decision by Members to approve the project for implementation, Goldman Sachs agreed to enter into a S.278 agreement with the City to provide full funding for the implementation of the project at no cost to the City. Implementation of the project is currently programmed to start in early February 2013 pending approvals from Members to proceed.
3. One of the ways to improve road safety in this area and the local environment would be to remove through vehicular traffic. Stonecutter Street currently accommodates competing and conflicting transport activities. The dominant use of Stonecutter Street is as a cut through route for traffic moving south-eastbound from Holborn Circus to Farringdon Street. This conflicts with the character of the road, the local activities, and the interests of pedestrians and cyclists.
4. Growth in pedestrian and cycle numbers is expected in the area as a result of local developments and national public transport enhancements (Crossrail) as well as modal shifts to more sustainable forms of transport.
5. Locally, Transport for London (TfL) has forecast that 140,000 passengers will use the new Farringdon Station each day once Thameslink and Crossrail are fully implemented in 2018 and 2019 respectively. A proportion of these passengers will travel through the Stonecutter Street area, either on foot or by bicycle. Giving higher priority to pedestrians and cyclists on Stonecutter Street would help to accommodate these higher flows by improving both safety and the quality of the public realm in the area. Improving the priority given to vulnerable road users is entirely consistent with the nearby Holborn Circus Enhancement Scheme, which the City will implement in 2013.

Success criteria

The success criteria for this project will be:

- Reduction in traffic volumes;
- Reduction in personal injury accidents on the local streets;
- Redirection of through traffic on to more appropriate streets with limited impacts on journey times or distances;
- Effective use of the local streets for local needs, without detrimental impact on the operation of the surrounding highway network;
- Enhanced pedestrian and cycle environment;
- Maintain the effectiveness of the 'Traffic and Environment Zone' in the west of the City; and
- The ability to accommodate higher pedestrian and cycle flows, particularly to local public transport hubs where services have recently been or will soon be enhanced.

Objections

6. Since the beginning of the statutory consultation period for the Traffic Regulation Order (27 December 2012) one formal objection has been received from Richard Massett,(Executive) Licensed Taxi Drivers Association Ltd (LTDA).
7. The objection is summarised below and is appended in Appendix A.

LTDA Formal Written Objection

"We write to object to the proposal to close Stonecutter Street to Motor Vehicles."

"Our objection is on the grounds that the street is used very frequently by taxis and its closure would result in increased fares and longer journey times by many taxi passengers."

Considerations and assessment

8. The objection has been examined and considered by officers. The key issues are discussed below.

Issue: Increased journey times

Assessment:

- a. Taxi journey times have been calculated for various destinations within the City of London and the impact that the closure of Stonecutter Street to vehicular through traffic is considered to be minimal.
- b. From the decision point at the Shoe Lane roundel, the distance to Farringdon Street southbound is approximate 95m using Stonecutter Street whereas the

same journey via Holborn Circus and Charterhouse Street is approximately 735m, therefore an additional 640m in distance.

- c. The additional time taken is currently estimated at an average of 2 minutes per journey. This is predicted to improve once the Holborn Circus Enhancement scheme has been implemented and Crossrail works have been completed.
- d. The approximate additional 120 second journey time over the 640m distance equates to travelling at a little over 10mph for the journey which is in line with the estimated average speed of vehicles through London, and is therefore a robust assessment.

Financial Implications

9. Should members choose not to approve the project and Traffic Order on the basis of this objection officers will notify Goldman Sachs of the decision and outline the City's intention to close down the project and return any remaining funds.
10. There are no additional cost implications to the City if Members agree to the making the Traffic Regulation Order.

Conclusion

11. In the public consultation held in September-November 2012 the majority of respondents (50%) requested that Stonecutter Street be closed at its eastern end to motorised vehicles.
12. Officers believe that the objection raised has been mitigated for by careful and considered design. It is therefore recommended that Members note the objection but agree to the making of the Traffic Order under section 6 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, so as to make the closure of Stonecutter St at its eastern end to motorised vehicles permanent.

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