

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Planning and Transportation (For Decision) Streets and Walkways Sub Committee (For Information)	18 March 2014 7 April 2014
Subject: Mayor's Vision for Cycling – Central London Grid	Public
Report of: Director of the Built Environment	For Information

Summary

This report sets out the Mayor of London's Vision for Cycling in Central London and seeks approval 'in principle' for the Central London Grid.

The main component of this Vision for Central London is a new network of routes for a new kind of cyclist; routes for people who want to cycle slowly, in their ordinary clothes, away from most of the traffic. The network of routes is being called the 'Central London Grid'.

The Central London Grid will consist of 'Superhighways' on main roads and 'Quietways'. Within the City of London, the vast majority of the Superhighways will be on Transport for London's Roads and cyclists will be segregated from other traffic. 'Quietways' will use quieter side streets within the City of London.

The Central London Grid accords fully with the City Together Strategy and the Corporate Plan. The reduction in motor vehicles (approximately 25%) will also deliver major components of the Air Quality Strategy, the Climate Change Mitigation Strategy, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Noise Strategy. The Grid will have little impact on the ability of the City of London to deliver local services but the concentration of Quietway routes in the Smithfield area will need very careful consideration to ensure that the operation of the market fits well with greater numbers of cyclists.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

Agree 'in principle' the Superhighways shown in Annex 1

- Agree 'in principle' that some of Queen Victoria Street, all of Puddle Dock and all of Castle Baynard Street become part of the Superhighway network.
- Agree 'in principle' to a network of Quietways within the City; subject to a post consultation network being approved by the Planning and Transportation Committee.

Main Report

Background

1. The Mayor's Vision for Cycling was launched in March 2013. This vision set out four key outcomes:
 - A tube network for the bike
 - Safer streets for the bike
 - More people travelling by bike
 - Better places for everyone
2. One aspect of the tube network for the bike is a new network of cycle routes in central London. To help deliver this network of routes, City Hall, Transport for London, the seven central London Boroughs, the City of London, the Royal Parks and the Canal & River Trust are working together to oversee a programme of activity. This joint working started in May 2013.
3. Politicians and senior officers have been kept informed of progress with the Cycling Vision via events at City Hall in November 2013 and March 2014. In addition, the Mayor of London, the Deputy Mayor for Transport and the Mayor's Cycling Commissioner have engaged with the City of London at politician and officer level.
4. Formal consultation on the proposed cycle routes in central London took place from 18th December 2013 until 14th February 2014. The routes within the City are the best that meet the technical criteria for Quietways, being the least trafficked, and were agreed by officers at a joint meeting in December. However, it is clear that many of the Quietway routes within the City of London do not adhere to Transport for London's intended level of service; which is to be 'as direct as possible, minimising dog-legs and diversions from cyclist desire lines'.
5. The network of routes was to be agreed in August 2013. However, this proved impossible to achieve due to the processes adopted by Transport for London. By December it became imperative for the consultation with the public to begin. The Mayor's office needed the consultation to take place and the central London Boroughs needed to consult on the routes prior to their local elections. For this reason, Members at the City of London and Councillors at many of the Boroughs did not have the opportunity to agree the route network that was to be consulted upon. The network of routes shown to the public was basically the product of bilateral discussions that took place between the Mayor's Cycling Commissioner and politicians and/or officers in each authority. This report highlights the consultation comments received and also contains the high level implications for the City of introducing the Central London Grid.

Current Position

6. The purpose of this report is to seek approval 'in principle' for the Central London Grid.
7. The Central London Grid will consist of 'Superhighways' on main roads. Most of these routes will be separated physically from the traffic. Within the City of London, the vast majority of the Superhighways will be on Transport for London's Roads. There is a Mayoral aspiration to deliver the Superhighways within central London by December 2015. This time scale is extremely ambitious and requires Transport for London to manage the design and procurement process most effectively. In order to avoid abortive work and minimise risk to the project, Transport for London are seeking approval 'in principle' from the City of London and the other authorities. This will allow them to proceed with some confidence from their feasibility stage towards outline design. Their ambition is to have sufficient confidence in the designs to then conduct formal consultation with the public in June 2014. All construction of the Superhighways will be undertaken by Transport for London and is planned for early 2015.
8. Most of the Central London Grid will consist of 'Quietways'. These routes will use quieter side streets within the City of London. It will be for the City of London to decide on the final network of routes within the City. It will also be for the City of London to design and construct the Quietways. A budget of £54M has been allocated to deliver the Quietways within central London. The Mayoral ambition is that more than half of the network will be constructed by May 2016.
9. The purpose and detail of the proposed Superhighways within central London are easy to understand and are supported by the cycling community. The situation over the purpose of the Quietways and the best possible routes is much less clear.
10. In December 2013, Members approved that a project be initiated to deliver the City of London components of the Mayor's Vision for Cycling. The City is already in receipt of approval from Transport for London to charge for officer time and conduct feasibility work. At present, officers are gathering data to inform the design process.

Options

11. The delivery of the Mayor's Vision for Cycling will be at no financial cost to the City of London. It will however require a significant effort from officers to help Transport for London meet the timescales. It will also require timely reports to, and decisions from, the spending Committee, Streets and Walkways, and the Projects Sub-Committee.
12. A course of action has been set by the Mayor of London to deliver his Vision for Cycling, backed by a budget of nearly £1Bn. This will also require the City of London to exercise its highway and traffic powers.
13. The most realistic course of action will be to ensure that the designs for the cycling infrastructure achieve the very best outcome for the local place and local movement functions. In other words, changes to streets within the City of London should deliver the 'better places for everyone' that the Mayor states in

his Vision for Cycling and which is also contained in the Mayor's Vision for Roads and Streets in London (Roads Task Force 2013).

Proposals

14. The Central London Grid consultation document and associated videos were circulated to all members of the Court on the 18th December 2013. The complete document is attached as Annex 1.
15. Approximately 600 comments were received by Transport for London. Of this total, approximately 60 related to the City of London. The weight of opinion is that the Quietway routes need to be modified substantially, as they are not direct. Many of the comments were identical and came from existing cyclists. The points made are encapsulated in the response by the London Cycling Campaign; which is attached as Annex 2.
16. The basic concept of the Superhighways is to provide a two-way track for cyclists which is separated physically from other traffic. The track will be four metres in width and will be sufficiently wide to allow cyclists to overtake in both directions. Illustrations of both routes are contained in Annex 1.
17. The E/W outline proposal generally keeps the cycle track on the land side of Lower and Upper Thames Streets. Part of Upper Thames Street is in tunnel. This presents a major problem for the route, as it is not deemed safe to have two-way traffic operating in a single tunnel bore. However, this problem can be overcome by using Castle Baynard Street. The proposals so far allow most existing traffic movements to be maintained. They also maintain or enhance facilities for pedestrians. A document giving an overview of the design concept and both routes is available in the Member's Reading Room.
18. The N/S outline proposal places the cycle track on the western side of the bridge and Farringdon Street. Transport for London are working hard to make their proposals more acceptable for local traffic movement but also to improve the urban realm. This is a work in progress. However, further illustrations may be available to share at Committee.
19. The Quietways will have little impact on the movement of motor traffic but in some streets, where pedestrians already predominate, greater pedestrian/cyclist conflict may occur unless the Quietways are properly designed and managed. A wayfinding system will need to be introduced on all Quietways. No decision has yet been made on the form of the wayfinding system. However, an indicative system is contained in Annex 1. Improved junctions (approximately 20) will be needed to help cyclists cross over more major streets. Some streets will require physical change but this is expected to be the exception, rather than the norm.
20. The density of routes within the City is broadly similar with the rest of central London. However, the streets with the lowest volumes of motor traffic tend to be more historic, less direct and generally narrower. This has the impact of directing cyclists into areas that are often full with pedestrians.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

21. The Central London Grid accords fully with the City's strategic and corporate policy objectives. The reduction in motor vehicles (approximately 25% of all motor traffic within the City of London) will deliver components of the Air Quality Strategy, the Climate Change Mitigation Strategy, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Noise Strategy
22. The Grid also conforms with the City of London Local Implementation Plan 2011; where there was a commitment to 'provide continuous high-quality conditions for cycling on several routes through the City....' (The LIP is a statutory document which was approved by the Mayor of London)

Implications

23. The Mayor of London is now pushing his agenda to promote and improve cycling very strongly. The major political consideration for the City is whether the local stakeholders are willing to support the quantum and speed of change.
24. Overall, there will be little impact on Service delivery. Open spaces occupy a depot off Castle Baynard Street. There should be no impact on their operation but there will be many more cyclists in the area. Cleansing and other City departments occupy Walbrook Wharf. At the moment, there appears to be little impact on their ability to access and egress from Walbrook Wharf. Three of the Quietway routes converge at Smithfield. It is not yet clear how much impact that this will have on the operation of the Central market at Smithfield. All of the streets around the market, including Grand Avenue, are public highway. For many parts of the day, these streets are ideal for cycling. However, cyclists do not mix well with activity associated with the operational market.
25. There will be implications for City of London owned property. Most notably, the structures; including Blackfriars Bridgehead and Castle Baynard Street.
26. There will need to be legal agreements with Transport for London to allow them to construct and then maintain infrastructure on the City's highways. These agreements already exist for the existing Superhighway on Southwark Bridge.
27. It has been obvious from the early engagement with Transport for London that the City will have to encourage Transport for London to reach for the best quality design. This includes the requirement to not use blue surfacing, except in extreme circumstances.

Conclusion

28. The proposed Cycle Superhighways within the City will bring about a dramatic change to movement and an even greater change to the environment. It will

be necessary to work closely with Transport for London to maintain good local access and also that the proposals also 'ensure better places for everyone.'

29. The Central London Grid accords fully with the City's strategic and corporate policy objectives. The reduction in motor vehicles (approximately 25%) will deliver components of the Air Quality Strategy, the Climate Change Mitigation Strategy, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Noise Strategy. The Grid of Superhighways and Quietways will have little impact on the ability of the City of London to deliver local services but the concentration of Quietway routes in the Smithfield area will need very careful consideration

Appendices

- Annex 1 – Central London Grid Consultation document
- Annex 2 – Consultation response from London Cycling campaign

Background Papers:

Department of the Built Environment Projects Programme Report to the Planning and Transportation Committee on 26 November 2013 and the Projects Sub-Committee on the 5 December 2013

Transport for London: East – West and North – South Cycle Routes, City of London Briefing Material, February 2014

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