

Committee: Policy and Resources Committee	Date: 10 December 2015
Subject: Bank Junction Experimental Scheme	Public
Report of: Director of the Department of Built Environment	Decision

Summary

1. This report considers the current project to improve Bank junction which was considered by the 'Streets and Walkways' and 'Project' Sub Committees on the 30 November and 1 December meetings respectively. The report sets out that the junction is one of the least safe in the City and proposes that approval be given to further developing an experimental scheme that the research and modelling to date shows could help reduce the average traffic journey times across the study area (see Appendix Two) whilst at the same time delivering the majority of the objectives for the longer term project, particularly the reduction of casualties.
2. This report proposes that the benefits of restricting the whole junction to buses, cyclists and pedestrians between 7am and 7pm (with and without taxis also being permitted) be compared to those of introducing the same restrictions against each of the remaining options agreed for the main project. Further that these findings be compared to facilitate a decision on the most appropriate experimental scheme to be taken forward.
3. An experimental scheme is likely to be able to be delivered before the end of 2016. This is in contrast with the full project which would be unlikely to receive authority to start work until 2018 and be delivered until 2020.
4. If agreed work will start on the experimental scheme now and be progressed through the corporate project management process in parallel with the main project.

Recommendation(s)

Members of this Committee agree:-

- That the Policy and Resources Committee gives approval to progress an experimental scheme to Gateway 4/5 provided that further work does not demonstrate that any of the objectives for the experimental scheme will not be achieved.
- The final design of the scheme will be approved by the spending committee, namely the Streets and Walkways Sub Committee.
- That a further report setting out the funding strategy be submitted in early 2016 once more details of TfL's funding allocation are known.

Main Report

1. The Bank Junction has one of the worst safety records of any junction in the City. On average, someone is injured at Bank every two weeks. There have been two fatalities in the last five years. The Bank Area Strategy, agreed in June 2013, recognised this and as a consequence a project to explore how the junction could be made safer and more effective was initiated and agreed at Gateway 2 in December 2013. The following objectives for this project were agreed by the Planning and Transportation Committee on the 26 November 2013:

- To reduce casualties (by simplifying the junction and reducing conflict);
- Reduce pedestrian crowding levels;
- Improve air quality; and
- Improve the perception of 'place' – as a place to spend time in rather than to pass through.

It is also intended that as part of this project officers will explore the opportunities to improve traffic flow generally across the study area (see Appendix Two)

2. Five options for improving the junction have been modelled and considered; in consultation with Transport for London. The project is programmed to reach Gateway 5 (Authority to Start Work) in 2018 with any consequent build likely to complete in 2020. A recommendation, within the Gateway 3 (Outline Options Appraisal) report, to remove one option which was too detrimental to traffic movement, was agreed by both Streets and Walkways Committee and Projects Sub Committee at their November and December meetings, respectively.
3. Following the death of a cyclist at Bank in June 2015 officers have been asked to review whether the timescale for delivery of the project could be shortened and to consider radical options to improve the junction. The view of officer's, with experience of schemes at other junctions such as Aldgate and Holborn, was that the programme timelines were already challenging and could not realistically be shortened. However, the initial modelling output submitted in September 2015, suggested that, by using an 'Experimental Traffic Order', an 'experimental traffic management scheme' might be feasible. The evidence suggests such a scheme would not only deliver reduced average journey times, improved air quality and reduced road danger but that such an experimental scheme could be delivered by the end of 2016 i.e. much sooner than the main project. Further, that the experimental scheme could, in due course, be used to facilitate more meaningful consultation on the main project itself.

The Experimental Scheme

Proposal

4. The experimental scheme, included within the Bank Junction Gateway 3 report which has been presented to both Streets and Walkways and Project Sub Committees, addresses the first three objectives above. In devising the

experimental scheme it has been suggested, given 75% of all casualties at Bank junction occur between 7am and 7pm on weekdays, that during these times Bank junction traffic be reduced to include only buses, cyclists and pedestrians. Taxis and those needing to deliver to or service buildings would be able to access the closed arms of Bank junction up to the point of the junction itself; but not pass through it. Further details explaining the implications for traffic movement are set out at Appendix 1 and the full Gateway 3 report referred to above, can be found at: [Bank Junction Improvement Project Report](#).

5. It should be noted that the relatively quick delivery of this scheme, as opposed to the main project, is because Transport for London bus requirements could be readily accommodated. The experimental scheme would be laid out in temporary materials, allowing for refinement. It would achieve the objective to improve safety whilst the final scheme continues to be developed which would aim to address all the objectives.
6. Members should also note that since the Gateway 3 report, referred to above, was published there has been a meeting with representatives of the taxi trade. As a result officers have agreed to investigate the impact in terms of road danger, air quality and journey times, of, also allowing taxis through the junction.
7. Whilst the gateway 3 report referred to above considers one specific experimental scheme ie the full weekday closure of Bank junction from 7am to 7pm to all motorised vehicles other than buses, it is intended that officers will also consider two other options to see if any perform even better than the full closure option. Therefore, at this stage, the following options will be considered in developing a final experimental scheme recommendation. Each option will consider restricting motorised vehicles during the working day to buses with or without taxis. The options will include consideration of the following possible closures:-
 - A All six arms (i.e. full closure)
 - B King William Street and Princes Street (i.e. no north /south movement)
 - C Poultry and Cornhill (i.e. one east /west corridor removed)

The option of redesigning the junction to reduce all traffic flow by 50% which is being assessed as one of the longer term project options will not be considered as an option for the experimental scheme given both the amount of design work necessary and that delivery within 12 months would not be achievable.

It is proposed that in developing the final experimental scheme that options will be evaluated to explore which offers the best solution for the junction during a trial period. All options evaluated will be compared against the objectives set out above as well as assessing their impact upon traffic movement within the study area. The final design option for the experimental scheme will be agreed through the usual project gateway process.

8. What is now being sought from Members is Gateway 2 authority to progress an experimental scheme through to Gateway 4/5 of the corporate project

management process. The experimental scheme if approved will run in parallel with the main longer term project for Bank junction.

Funding

9. TfL have confirmed they will meet necessary modelling costs. They have intimated that further funding will also be available to meet staff costs and other fees (e.g. design and implementation) and a further report is proposed in early 2016 when further information is available.

10. Objectives of the Experimental Scheme

- A reduction in the number of casualties at this junction.
- Reduced pedestrian crowding levels
- Improved air quality
- Improvement in bus journey times through the centre of the City
- Maintained or reduced general journey times within the centre of the City for all traffic
- Improved consultation on the longer term project.
- Accelerated achievement of road danger reduction at this junction.

Conclusion

11. All of the research and modelling to date suggests an experimental scheme which reduces motorised traffic movement through the junction during the working day but which permits buses can deliver most of the agreed objectives for the Bank Junction project and we will explore whether the same remains true if taxis are also included. The final experimental scheme to be recommended for implementation will depend upon an assessment of the main project options on the above basis.

12. Modelling to date suggests that through an experimental scheme average journey times across the centre of the City will not worsen indeed they are expected to improve.

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