

TO: **POLICY AND RESOURCES
COMMITTEE**

15 March 2018

**PLANNING AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

FROM: **PORT HEALTH AND
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE**

8 March 2018

12. The Committee considered a report of the Director of Markets and Consumer Protection which updated Members on proposals for an ultra-low emission street. It was reported that delivery of an ultra-low emission vehicle traffic restriction in Beech Street will not be possible within the timescales of the Low Emission Neighbourhood Scheme (LEN) therefore Moor Lane is under consideration to deliver the Mayor of London's requirements for receiving the LEN funding.

Members of the Committee strongly disagreed with the proposal to substitute Moor Lane as an ultra-low emission street due to the illegal levels of air pollution within Beech Street and noting the urgency of this issue, the following points were raised:

- The reasons provided for rejecting Beech Street as the ultra-low emission street were not sufficient and the proposals to solve air quality at Beech Street as part of the Culture Mile were not a satisfactory resolution as those plans could take years to implement. Members noted the inaugural event taking place at Beech Street in March 2018 and raised the point that Members may need to query some Culture Mile proposals if they affect Beech Street and the High Walks.
- If resourcing was the underlying reason for this change, this should be addressed to achieve the original objectives. Members queried whether TfL could extend the final deadline to allow officers more time.
- There had been issues with air quality in Beech Street for years with both residents and workers affected by the levels of air pollution and with more people expected into the City with the completion of Crossrail, an urgent solution was needed.
- Moor Lane already had low pollution levels, therefore this proposal was akin to an exercise in directing traffic.
- There were options in the proposal that would not result in 80% of the traffic being diverted.
- Officers should look at a full range of options to reduce pollution in Beech Street.

In response to the points raised, officers sought to reassure Members that if a ultra-low emissions vehicle scheme was implemented, the current levels of vehicles entering Beech Street would be reduced by 80% and there was work taking place which would improve air quality in that area for 2021 onwards. The Director of Port Health and Public Protection added that due to the impact on the road network of the changes introduced at Bank Junction, another similar scheme that changed traffic flows could cause additional congestion.

The Director of Transportation and Public Realm advised that any closure of Beech Street would have a ripple impact on the neighbouring boroughs of Islington and Westminster, as well as the TfL road network. It was added that Islington Council were considering carrying out traffic modelling work to

reduce the impact of congestion, therefore it was unlikely that a recommendation could be made to close Beech Street to vehicles.

The Chairman noted the unanimity of the Committee in rejecting Moor Lane as the ultra-low emission street instead of Beech Street. As only one year of Low Emission Neighbourhood funding was left from TfL, officers should consider what steps would need to be taken to deliver the original proposal of Beech Street and this would need to be referred back to Planning and Transportation and Policy and Resources Committees. It was further suggested that options should be re-evaluated, and solutions be presented to the Port Health and Environmental Committee as to what action could be taken and what could be achieved.

The Director of the Built Environment explained that as part of the Culture Mile installation, Beech Street would be closed for a period of five days which would allow officers to assess the impact of this closure on traffic levels in the surrounding areas. A less than grid lock effect will add significant weight and evidence based support to implementing the originally intended and urgently needed air quality measures in Beech Street.

RESOLVED – That a note of the discussion and issues raised by Members be circulated to the Policy and Resources and Planning and Transportation Committees for their consideration.