

All Change at Bank

Engaging with disabled people and disability organisations

24th May 2021

1. Introduction

This report collates feedback collected between March and May 2021 by Transport for All (TfA) from disabled people and disability organisations on behalf of the City of London (CoL), in relation to:

- The specific proposals for the All Change at Bank (ACAB) project
- Wider feedback in relation to streetspace accessibility, temporary works and communications, which can be used to help shape ACAB plans

The engagement included meetings with representatives from disability organisations and workshops with disabled people.

Observations, conclusions and recommendations based on the feedback, both for the ACAB project and for future CoL projects, are also made in this report.

2. Executive summary

CoL approached TfA to discuss their ambitions to ensure the consultation process for the ACAB scheme was accessible for disabled and older people. Commissioning a disabled people's organisation to work closely with the CoL team to improve access is a forward-thinking approach to inclusion and this should be noted. TfA have worked with CoL to identify the most accessible methods to gather and collate feedback from disabled and older people, and also helped to collate and share that feedback. TfA have shared their co-production methodology with CoL and elements of this model have been included where possible, and the expectation is that CoL will continue to develop and embed co-production as a core element of their future design and consultation processes. TfA have led the process with the principle of the social model at the heart of our work and have based our recommendations with this in mind. The summaries of specific elements of the report are:

- Consultees identified recommendations relating to the design and consultation processes of streetscape projects in general, including ensuring that there is sufficient strategic planning for LTNs and a more co-ordinated approach to developing streetspace and transport provision, and designing projects using existing and emerging accessibility standards from the outset and consulting disabled people and disability organisations to identify solutions that go beyond this and / or resolve outstanding conflicts at the start of a project.
- Specific positive feedback about the ACAB proposals given was:
 - Creating a calmer pedestrian environment will be a good thing for many disabled people.
 - Based on the visuals, it looks like the ACAB improvements will make a welcoming space for pedestrians.
 - It is good to see that PCLs have been analysed as part of the project, as reducing crowding is helpful for many disabled people.

- Green spaces can help foster good mental health, so it is good to see greening being proposed.
- The 'all green' crossing phase for pedestrians is welcome.
- A number of concerns, questions and suggestions were raised about the proposals. These included (not exhaustive):
 - Impact of Threadneedle Street vehicle restrictions on disabled people, including those who need to drive, those who use faster mobility scooters and wheelchairs and those who will find additional walking distances difficult.
 - Action for CoL to take to manage cyclist behaviour includes engaging with cyclists, providing signage reminding cyclists to look out for disabled people, providing parking areas for dockless cycles, imposing a speed limit for cycle lanes and police checks in areas where cyclists consistently break rules.
 - Management of crowding from people spilling out of The Ned pub, the Royal Exchange shopping centre and the Bank of England needs to be considered.
 - Complexity of Bank junction and the need for really good signage that takes into account accessibility requirements, including visually impaired people and people with dementia and autism.
 - 'Copenhagen crossings' on the Queen Victoria Street service roads – not identifiable as crossings.
 - Provision of Disability Equality Training for contractors working on the ACAB project.
- Other areas of the City were also mentioned in relation to accessibility issues, specifically Gresham Street, outside Mansion House, outside Barbican Station and around Moorgate. Difficulties of moving between Bank Station entrances at street level were flagged. Additionally, it was noted that the City is generally problematic in relation to 'awful' pedestrian signage, 'aggressive' crossing times, lighting and the amount of street furniture.
- A wide range of general issues affecting streetscape accessibility were raised during the consultation, and it is recommended that the ACAB project take these into account when further developing proposals and designs. These included (not exhaustive):
 - Street furniture quantity, location and design, including planters and seating.
 - Impact of pedestrian crowding, behaviour of cyclists and electric vehicles on moving around safely.
 - Disabled cyclists' requirements.
 - Wayfinding, including the impact on wayfinding associated with pedestrianising road / junction areas.

- Design of ground surfaces, including texture, colour, contrast and use and design of 'special paving' – 'special paving' is a particular area of conflict around accessibility requirements and suitable solutions.
 - Delineation of cycle path and footway and use of kerbs – this is a particular area of conflict around accessibility requirements and suitable solutions.
 - Level access crossing design – this is a particular area of conflict around accessibility requirements and suitable solutions.
 - Temporary works – taking into consideration accessibility when planning and providing information about these.
 - Ongoing communications strategy, ensuring that this reflects disabled people's access requirements.
- Further engagement during the design development process is recommended, taking into account the following issues:
 - Setting up a paid ACAB Accessibility Forum for ongoing co-production.
 - Ongoing engagement with the organisations consulted to date, plus engagement with CoL's Disability Staff Network Group.
 - Greater representation of people with dementia, autistic people, people with learning difficulties and Deaf people (these groups were underrepresented, despite best efforts).
 - Site visits and the use of tactile maps to make the engagement process (which was driven by COVID-19 pandemic restrictions) more accessible to some groups of disabled people and visually impaired people in particular.
 - Specific engagement in relation to the areas where the requirements of different impairment groups conflict (outlined above).
 - It is recommended that the Project Team hold a 'lessons learned' session with TfA, and feed this into future project development.
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