

Committee(s): Streets & Walkways Sub-Committee – For information	Dated: 12/10/2021
Subject: TfL’s Bishopsgate Experimental Closure	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1. <i>People are safe and feel safe</i> 9. We are digitally and physically well-connected and responsive
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Executive Director, Environment	For Information
Report author: Sam Lee	

Summary

In July 2020, Transport for London introduced a temporary scheme along the Bishopsgate corridor to assist with Covid-19 social distancing requirements. This scheme included a temporary traffic order to restrict the corridor from being used by through traffic, as well as to allow space for pavement widening. It has improved provision for people walking and cycling and bus journey times.

Since then, the government has lifted all social distancing requirements but due to the likelihood of danger to the public if the measures were removed, TfL replaced the original temporary order with a new temporary traffic order in August 2021.

TfL are now in the process of developing an experimental traffic order (ETO) based on the current arrangements. The ETO allows a scheme to be tested before making it permanent and includes the first 6 months for consultation. Any objections must be made within this period. The ETO scheme could have implications for the City such as the ability for the City to deliver our projects. However, in principle the scheme largely aligns with the aims of our Transport Strategy and would support the delivery of the Climate Action Strategy.

If the ETO does proceed, its impacts will be monitored by and reviewed with TfL to seek mitigation of any adverse impacts. A further report will be brought back to this committee for a final decision on whether or not to object to the scheme being made permanent before the end of the 6-month consultation period.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

Note the report and that a further report will be brought to consider if the City Corporation should object to and/or make other representations in respect of the ETO being made permanent, in its current or modified form.

Main Report

Background

1. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Transport for London introduced a Streetspace scheme along Bishopsgate and Gracechurch Street in July 2020. The scheme used a temporary traffic order to introduce restrictions at a series of locations to prevent the use of the corridor by through traffic (except buses and cycles) between 7am – 7pm, Monday to Friday.
2. A plan of the Streetspace scheme is provided in Appendix 1. The main measures introduced are:
 - Banned right turn (except cycles) from Worship Street onto Norton Folgate (at all times)
 - Banned right turn (except cycles) from Primrose Street onto Bishopsgate (at all times)
 - Banned right turn from Bishopsgate onto Artillery Lane (at all times)
 - A southbound bus and cycle gate on Bishopsgate just south of Middlesex Street (7am-7pm Mon-Fri)
 - A banned left turn from Liverpool Street onto Bishopsgate (at all times)
 - A northbound bus and cycle gate on Bishopsgate just north of Liverpool Street
 - A southbound bus and cycle gate on Bishopsgate just south of Threadneedle Street
 - In conjunction with the City's Covid-19 Transport response, introduced a left turn onto Bishopsgate from Cornhill (at all times)
 - A compulsory left turn (except cycles) from Fenchurch Street onto Gracechurch Street (at all times)
 - An ahead (northbound) only maneuverer on Gracechurch Street at the Fenchurch Street junction (at all times)
 - A southbound bus and cycle gate on Gracechurch Street just south of Eastcheap left turn slip road (7am-7pm Mon-Fri)
 - A northbound bus and cycle gate on Gracechurch Street just north of Eastcheap
 - Pavement widening throughout sections along Gracechurch Street, Bishopsgate and Norton Folgate.
3. The reduction in motor vehicles has enabled the reallocation of carriageway space to widen pavements and made the street easier to cross. It has also made cycling safer and more attractive (this corridor is now the second busiest cycle route in London) and improved bus journey times. The restrictions have also resulted in some longer journeys for motor vehicles and some properties are not directly accessible during hours of operation.
4. The scheme became operational on 18th July 2020 and was due to expire on 15 January 2022 or when social distancing measures are no longer required, whichever is the sooner.

5. Since the government lifted all social distancing measures, the original temporary order no longer applies and has now been replaced by a new temporary traffic order. This new order is to address the “likelihood of danger to the public” if the original order was removed. The new temporary order can remain in place until 15 January 2022 (the date of the original order was to expire) and retains the current measures and restrictions as is.

Current Position

6. TfL are now in the process of developing an experimental traffic order (ETO) based on the current arrangement, but with the potential for some minor changes. Their aim is to have the ETO in place by late November 2021. Monitoring will take place throughout the experimental period and public consultation will be carried out over the first six months. The outputs of the monitoring and consultation will inform a potential permanent scheme. TfL will also undertake engagement with stakeholders, including briefing local CoL Members, before the commencement of the ETO.
7. Various discussions with TfL have already taken place. Officers requested that TfL carry out a wider review of the existing scheme before implementing the ETO. This has not been possible due to TfL’s timetable for introducing the ETO. TfL have confirmed that, following the commencement of the ETO, they will work with us to review the Bishopsgate measures alongside relevant City Corporation projects (current and planned) and the aspirations of our Transport Strategy.
8. It is recognised that in principle, limiting the use of the Bishopsgate corridor by cross-London traffic aligns with our Transport Strategy and street hierarchy; and that this is likely to be necessary to enable meaningful pavement widening, improve the safety and experience of walking and cycling, and improve bus journey times. These improvements also align with our Climate Action Strategy and support growth and development in this area.
9. However, indicative high-level traffic modelling has shown significant traffic reassignment onto our street network, particularly along Cannon Street, Eldon Street, New Change and King Edward Street. To a lesser degree, there are also traffic re-assignments on Eastcheap, Houndsditch, Aldersgate Street, Aldgate and Crutched Friars. The model is based on traffic trends prior to Covid-19 and predicted position in 2026. It is possible that the extent of modelled traffic re-assignments will be reduced if traffic levels do not revert to pre-pandemic levels. Additionally, changes to traffic signals have also been made and planned to mitigate against delays. Feedback and observations have so far shown that the network is coping with no significant delays, but traffic volumes have not returned to pre-pandemic levels in the City.
10. Additionally, indicative TfL modelling of some of the City’s various schemes currently in planning, have shown that traffic reassignment is largely neutral apart from following the reintroduction of Beech Street restrictions. It should be noted that previous modelling of the Beech Street restrictions showed traffic re-assignment on to London Wall and Moor Lane to be at a lower volume but with

the Bishopsgate scheme, much larger increases are forecasted. The reassignment of Bishopsgate traffic will therefore likely make it more difficult to deliver some of our projects.

11. Officers have made clear to TfL that any permanent change on the Bishopsgate corridor needs to be done in a way that ensures the best fit with our Transport Strategy and projects including the All Change at Bank, City Cluster, Beech Street, Moorgate Crossrail, St Paul's Gyratory, the Pedestrian Priority Programme and cycle network. Permanent changes also need to allow adequate access or mitigation for essential traffic that is trying to move around the City, including traffic to meet the needs of people with mobility restrictions that may require door to door transport.
12. TfL and the GLA have verbally assured us that there will be a comprehensive review following the introduction of the ETO to ensure the City's planned projects and programmes are not unduly impacted by any permanent scheme on Bishopsgate.
13. We have also asked that TfL incorporate improvements to Monument junction and the Bishopsgate/Wormwood Street/London Wall junction as part of any permanent scheme.
14. TfL are also aware of and support the City's proposals for All Change at Bank. They have assured us that the Bishopsgate scheme will not undermine our ability to deliver this project. However, it should be noted that access to Cornhill and the western section of Leadenhall will need further consideration.
15. Initial discussions with TfL haven't provided a solution to provide access to the western end of Leadenhall Street, in which case the delivery of the Leadenhall Street timed restriction which had Gateway 2 approval in July will need to be delayed in the short to medium term.
16. Restriction on taxi access may also lead to pressure to open up taxi routes along other City streets.
17. The current and proposed ETO scheme on Bishopsgate largely depend on the current temporary traffic restrictions (buses, taxis, motorcycles and cycles only, 7am – 7pm Monday to Friday) on London Bridge. This acts as a "blocker" but without it, a large volume of traffic is expected to use Cannon Street and Eastcheap as well as the wider city road network. The proposed ETO, however, does not include London Bridge but TfL have indicated that they fully intend to also progress with another ETO scheme to retain these restrictions.
18. At the time of writing we have not been provided with TfL's monitoring strategy for the ETO but expect to be given the opportunity to review this before the ETO commences. It is assumed that the strategy will include monitoring of:
 - Traffic conditions along main corridors such as Cannon Street, London Wall and Moorgate

- Traffic conditions on some minor streets, such as Middlesex Street, Moor Lane and Eldon Street
- Traffic counts along the corridor, including walking and cycling
- Bus journey time impacts on the corridor and other affected routes
- Road safety data along the corridor and on streets that traffic is expected to reassign to

19. The monitoring outputs should identify areas of concern and from this, options for mitigation could then be considered. However, based on some feedback on the temporary scheme as well as the theoretical data, mitigation measures such as street closures or other traffic reduction options might be necessary for example on Moor Lane, Eldon Street, Middlesex Street, Mincing Lane and Rood Lane.

Next Steps

20. Experimental traffic orders allow for a scheme to be introduced to test the arrangements before it is made permanent. An ETO must be in operation for at least 6 months before it can be made permanent but must not exceed 18 months. Public consultation will be undertaken in the first 6 months and any objections must be made within this period.

21. Officers will continue to work with TfL to seek to ensure the issues identified in this report are addressed, particularly to review how the measures on Bishopsgate relate to current and planned projects and the Transport Strategy, as well as any new issues which may arise. A further report will then be brought back to this committee prior to the expiry of the 6-month consultation deadline so that a final view on whether or not to object, and/or whether to make other representations can be taken by your Sub-committee and submitted to TfL.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

22. Strategic implications – Reducing general motor traffic using Bishopsgate and Gracechurch Street enables more effective and efficient use of street space. It improves conditions for people walking, cycling and using bus transport. It also reduces transport related carbon emissions, improves air quality and reduces road danger. Traffic reduction supports delivery of Corporate Plan Outcome 9: We are digitally and physically well-connected and responsive; the Transport Strategy; Climate Action Strategy and the Air Quality Strategy.

23. Financial implications – None. It is anticipated that any future mitigation measures required as a result of the scheme will need to be met by TfL

24. Resource implications – None

25. Legal implications – These are contained within the body of the report

26. Risk implications – Reducing motor traffic in the Square Mile helps mitigate Corporate Risks CR20 – Road Safety, CR21 – Air Quality and CR30 – Climate Action.
27. Equalities implications – At the time of writing, TfL is still undertaking an Equalities Impact Assessment of the proposed scheme. Although this is not yet available, officers are aware of some accessibility issues, particularly for those requiring vehicular access to some properties along the route, where no access is permitted at all, as well as through the route to access other facilities. In coming to a view on whether to object or make other representations on the scheme following the future report to your sub-committee, regard will be had to any equality impacts which may be considered to arise
28. Climate implications – Reducing motor traffic supports the delivery of the Climate Action Strategy by reducing carbon emissions and reallocating space for people walking and cycling.
29. Security implications - None

Conclusion

30. TfL's proposed ETO scheme extends the temporary scheme which has been in place since July 2020. The proposal is expected to provide significant benefits such as road safety, cycling conditions and improved bus journey times. It aligns with our Transport Strategy and the improvements support the delivery of the Climate Action Strategy.
31. The scheme however, could make it more difficult for the City to deliver some of our pipeline projects but a review of these can begin with TfL during the ETO stage to ensure the City's projects can also be delivered.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Plan of TfL's Streetspace scheme/ETO scheme
- Appendix 2: Supplementary information provided by TfL

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