

Committees: Streets & Walkways Sub-Committee – For decision Bridge House Estates Board – For information	Date: 5 July 2022 6 July 2022
Subject: TfL’s Bishopsgate Experimental Closure	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	N/A
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

On 16th January 2022, Transport for London (TfL) introduced a weekday timed closure (7am – 7pm, except buses and cycles) on Bishopsgate and Gracechurch Street to prevent their use as a through route for general traffic. The restriction was introduced using an Experimental Traffic Order (ETO) and effectively continued the temporary restrictions that were introduced in July 2020 as part of their Covid-19 transport measures. The ETO can remain in place for up to 18 months, by which time, TfL will have decided whether or not, the provisions of the Orders should be continued in force indefinitely. Statutory public consultation is undertaken in the first 6 months and any objections must be made within this period.

Officers have been working very closely with TfL to understand and address potential implications and issues. The removal of through traffic is supported as this provides significant benefits for people walking, cycling and using buses. It aligns with our Transport Strategy, Climate Action Strategy and supports growth and development in the area.

However, we are not yet able to determine whether the current arrangement is the best and most appropriate solution or know what changes to mitigate impacts on our network as well as along the Bishopsgate corridor itself may need to be made. The final assessment needs to also be informed by the outcome of public consultation and monitoring, both of which are ongoing.

It is recommended that the City Corporation’s response to the statutory consultation should be one of ‘in principle’ support for removing through traffic but objecting to the experimental scheme being made permanent in its current form. Officers will continue working with TfL over the coming months to resolve the objection.

Any decision relating the Bishopsgate ETO needs to also apply to the London Bridge ETO scheme as both schemes are inter-connected.

Recommendation(s)

The Streets & Walkways Sub-Committee is asked to:

- Agree that City Corporation's response to the Bishopsgate ETO as set out in paragraphs 36 – 38 and agree that officers will continue working with TfL to resolve the objection.
- Delegate the final wording of the response to TfL to the Director of City Operations in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of this sub-committee.
- Note that a further report will be brought back to this committee setting out the outcome of the further discussions for agreement, more details of the London Bridge experiment and to confirm the City's response to that ETO as well.

The Bridge House Estates Board is asked to:

- Note the contents of the report as relevant to its Terms of Reference.

Main Report

Background

1. In October 2021, Members were updated on TfL's proposal to introduce a 7am-7pm Monday to Friday closure (except for buses and cycles) along Bishopsgate and Gracechurch Street using an Experimental Traffic Order (ETO).
2. Members were advised that officers would continue to work with TfL to identify and address any issues and ensure the scheme did not prevent planned projects from going ahead.
3. Members were advised that a further report would be brought back to this Committee to consider if the City Corporation should object to and/or make other representations in respect of the ETO being made permanent.

Current Position

4. TfL's ETO was made operational on 16th January 2022. This effectively continued the temporary restriction that was in place since July 2020 as part of their Covid-19 transport measures.
5. An ETO must be in operation for at least 6 months before it can be made permanent and must not exceed 18 months. Statutory public consultation is undertaken in the first 6 months and any objections must be made within this period.
6. The measures introduced various bus gates and movement changes to prevent through motor traffic from using the A10 Bishopsgate corridor. TfL's statement of reason, detailed list of the measures and an overview of the proposals implemented can be found in Appendix 1 and 2.
7. 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 safety, walking, cycling and bus journey time improvements to be achieved. These improvements also align with our Climate Action Strategy and support growth and development in the area.

8. The initial monitoring data has shown significant improvements to bus journey times of up to 2 minutes per km. Traffic levels comply with TfL's levels of service for cycling (below 500 motor vehicles per hour in both directions where no protected space for cycling is provided). Cycle flows continue to be very high with 7,000 cyclists per day recorded in April 2022 using the section of Bishopsgate by Liverpool Street station. In November 2019 the flow by Liverpool Street was 5,700 cyclist per day. Taking into account seasonality and pandemic factors, TfL expects this rise to continue.
9. Reduced traffic flows help make the experience of walking and cycling much more pleasant and the route is expected to be much safer. The reduction of traffic will enable improvements such as footway widening to be made along the corridor, and when opportunities arise, may also facilitate more meaningful improvements to be made at some junctions such as at Monument and Bishopsgate/Wormwood Street.
10. Since the start of the ETO, officers have been in regular discussions with TfL to review the experiment, identify and resolve issues, explore variations and to assess compatibility with future City projects in the area.

The key issues

Review of the experimental measures

11. The experimental measures largely mirror the temporary restrictions, which were developed and introduced at pace as part of TfL's Covid-19 response. A key focus of our discussions has been to encourage a review of the current measures to ensure they are the best solution to removing through traffic while maintaining local access, and that a thorough assessment of alternatives arrangements or modifications has been carried out to help inform the potential permanent arrangement.
12. The experimental measures had several main implications, including:
 - i. Longer journey times and distances for some journeys by people who need to use taxis or other vehicles, including those requiring disabled access, to and from locations along the corridor, including Liverpool Street and Fenchurch Street stations. TfL's Equality Impact Assessment considers access issues. A copy of this is attached as Appendix 3.
 - ii. Longer journey times and distances for some local occupiers and servicing vehicles along the route, including to the closed section between Liverpool Street and Middlesex Street.
 - iii. The ability to access Leadenhall Street, should the City proceed with the Leadenhall bus and cycle gate. If that was to happen, TfL has designed an

option which involves relocating the southbound bus gate currently by Threadneedle Street to a location immediately south of Leadenhall Street. Data supplied by TfL shows average traffic flows on Leadenhall Street are 235 vehicles per hour, which is down by a third compared to pre-pandemic levels. In May 2022, Members agreed that the Leadenhall Street bus and cycle gate is no longer required since the Bishopsgate experiment had substantially reduced traffic flows. If however, the experiment does not proceed, the proposal for Leadenhall Street will be reactivated.

- iv. Displacement, impact on the surrounding network and compatibility with our projects are discussed in more detail below.

13. Apart from the alternative option for access into Leadenhall Street, TfL's initial judgement was that other variations may have significant negative implications to the scheme or to the surrounding network. However, the approach set out later on in this report will enable more time to continue these discussions, especially as more information becomes available.

Traffic displacement

14. Summary traffic monitoring data (Appendix 4) has recently been shared with the City Corporation. The summary suggests that most of the main traffic corridors appear to be performing well or better compared to the pre-pandemic period. There are however, three locations (London Wall, Moorgate and Eastcheap) which are experiencing more traffic, resulting in queuing and delays.

15. The congestion on London Wall has resulted in some traffic rat-running onto Fore Street and Moor Lane. TfL has suggested that some of the City's projects which affect east-west movements, such as the one-way working on Threadneedle Street and Old Broad Street introduced as part of our Covid response and retained as ETOs in January 2022, are adding to this displacement.

16. While this may be true to an extent, it is not possible to disaggregate impacts from various projects. However, it is considered that the City's scheme would not add much increase because access is still available from either the east or west and these routes were not an attractive corridor for through traffic. Furthermore, high level traffic modelling carried out by TfL in 2021, showed no traffic displacement to London Wall from these schemes.

17. For the delays on London Wall and Moorgate, TfL made some signal timing changes to the London Wall/Moorgate junction in May 2022. They have also, very recently, identified some traffic signal equipment failures which reduced the efficiency of the traffic signals and are now planning to undertake remedial works to rectify this as soon as possible. Although this may result in less queuing at the junction, it doesn't mitigate the impact of the increase in vehicle numbers on this street which have not been quantified yet.

18. After the temporary scheme on Bishopsgate was introduced, Eastcheap was experiencing westbound delays and long traffic queues, particularly during the morning peak. In February 2022, TfL made some traffic signal modifications to

increase capacity, but problems continue due to various direct and indirect factors including equipment (communication) failure. The equipment failure was resolved in mid-May 2022. There is currently insufficient data to confirm if this delay has been addressed or whether further mitigation is required.

19. Monitoring to date shows that average traffic flows on Rood Lane are now in excess of 100 vehicles per hour. 100 vehicles per hour is generally low but are not appropriate given the character of Rood Lane. Traffic composition has not been provided, so the extent to which Rood Lane is being used by larger vehicles or HGVs is not known. It is thought that prior to the Bishopsgate scheme, traffic on Rood Lane was minimal. Officers have asked TfL to explore allowing all vehicles to be able to proceed southbound on Gracechurch Street so that Rood Lane is not used as an alternative route. Removing this restriction could attract more traffic to Gracechurch Street, so this will need to be carefully assessed so that the benefits of the scheme are not lost.
20. With increases in traffic on Eastcheap, more traffic is also thought to be filtering through other local access streets such as Philpot Lane and Mincing Lane. However, no information or assessments on this has been provided, nor are officers aware of any issues arising as a result.
21. The start of the southbound traffic restrictions on Bishopsgate commences just south of Middlesex Street. This leave Middlesex Street as the final location for vehicles to exit Bishopsgate in order to comply with the restrictions. More traffic was therefore anticipated to use Middlesex Street but no information or assessments on this has been provided, nor are officers aware of any issues arising as a result.
22. Data or analysis about increased traffic displacement onto other streets such as Cannon Street, New Change, King Edward Street, Eldon Street, Houndsditch Aldersgate Street, Aldgate and Crutched Friars is limited or has not been provided. However, on some main routes, TfL have stated that journey times are similar to pre-pandemic levels and in some cases, faster. Officer observations support that assessment for Cannon Street, but we have not observed any other locations.

Compatibility with City projects

23. There was concern that the Bishopsgate restrictions would limit the City's ability to deliver some planned projects including the Pedestrian Priority Programme, the re-introduction of the Beech Street zero emissions restrictions, the St Paul's Gyratory transformation, Queen Victoria Street cycle route and schemes within the City Cluster.
24. Strategic planning workshops took place with key TfL personnel. Following this, TfL carried out traffic modelling to assess the likely outcomes of all the projects. To achieve this, it was necessary to provide TfL with indicative proposals. These proposals (except Beech Street) are at the exploration stage and will therefore change as the projects moves through the lifecycle.

25. The traffic modelling work has been undertaken at a high-level using a model which has not been calibrated (due to timeframes) so there are some caveats on the outputs provided. However, this work together with TfL's operational observations show that there is good potential for these projects (as well as some of TfL's) to coexist with the Bishopsgate restrictions being made permanent. While some locations are predicted to have further traffic increases others experience reductions. In some cases, some projects complement and support each other.
26. Overall, the likely impacts are not dissimilar to those modelled in 2021 (which was detailed in the October 2021 report). However, a key consideration that may need further work is to assess the implications the phasing of delivery or of some projects not going ahead and how these will be assessed/approved by TfL as projects are taken forward.

Consultation feedback

27. As part of the experimental scheme, TfL are undertaking a public consultation exercise. This commenced on 25th January 2022 and was due to close on 25th July 2022. However, in late March, TfL updated some of their consultation material and as a result extended the deadline to 26th Sept 2022. Officers had hoped that an interim summary of the responses covering the first three months would have been shared with the City but this has not been made available, probably due to the consultation material being updated in March. As a result there is currently no indication of the level of public support for the scheme or of any issues raised through the consultation.

London Bridge ETO & Tower Bridge

28. Members will be aware that TfL also implemented a similar experimental traffic restriction (buses, taxis, pedal cyclists and motorcyclists exempted) over London Bridge. The timeline is a few months behind the Bishopsgate experiment but, both schemes are inter-connected and without one or the other additional traffic is anticipated to be displaced onto the City's street network.
29. Tower Bridge has an 18T weight limit restriction. There is concern that these schemes are causing more over-weight vehicles to travel over Tower Bridge. Increases in general traffic volumes also has a cumulative impact on the bridge structure. Unfortunately, TfL has not been able to obtain any base data (before these restrictions were first implemented) to determine if there has been any displacement. Current data (see Appendix 5) indicates that approximately 100 – 150 overweight vehicles cross Tower Bridge each month, which is equivalent to three to five per day.
30. It is possible that some drivers, while trying to avoid London Bridge or Bishopsgate end up going over Tower Bridge, either because they were unaware of the weight limit, or that they felt this was their best option. In any case, displacement from London Bridge or Bishopsgate will only form part of the three to five overweight vehicles per day crossing Tower Bridge. Tower Bridge is on the Inner Ring Road and it is logical to assume that most of the over-weight vehicles crossing the bridge is from existing routes rather than from London Bridge or Bishopsgate.

31. A 2007 TfL press release (see Appendix 6) stated that up to 18 over-weight vehicles crossed Tower Bridge each day. 60% of these were foreign registered vehicles, which makes enforcement more difficult. The recent data shows that numbers have dropped by more than two thirds between these two periods.
32. The Tower Bridge weight restriction is enforced by ANPR which is very effective, in particular, at reducing repeat offenders. However, continued passage by any over-weight vehicle is undesirable and risks damaging the bridge. It should also be noted that “signed” traffic restrictions (with or without enforcement cameras), do not normally achieve 100% compliance. A recent example from the Charterhouse Square School Street restriction achieved a 90% compliance level.
33. TfL recognises that protecting the bridge is critically important and will be undertaking more work to reduce over-weight vehicles. These include investigating on-street measures, stiffer penalties (including driving licence penalty points) and engaging with freight operators.
34. A report setting out the proposed response to the statutory consultation on the London Bridge ETO will be brought to this Committee in due course.

Options

35. There are three options.
- Option 1: Do nothing. This is effectively implying that the City have no further comments regarding the experiment being made permanent.
 - Option 2: Object to the ETO from being made permanent. The reason for this would be based on the issues set out in this report.
 - Option 3: In principle support for removing through traffic but object to the ETO from being made permanent. Officers will continue to work with TfL over the next few months, to see if this objection can be withdrawn.
36. Option 3 would allow time for further discussions on outstanding issues, including:
- Whether the improvements made at the London Wall/Moorgate and Gracechurch Street/Eastcheap junctions (discussed in para 17 to 18) has addressed the congestion on London Wall, Moorgate and Eastcheap or if not, what additional mitigation might be suitable.
 - To explore mitigation measures (including whether to allow all traffic to proceed southbound on Gracechurch Street) to address displacement of traffic on More Lane, Fore Street and Rood Lane.
 - For additional data or assessments to be provided where these are not currently available.
 - For TfL to provide details of the consultation responses. This will help to inform the level of support or highlighted any significant key issues that may need to be considered.
 - On the basis of the above, to explore if the implemented scheme is the best option that delivers both TfL and City objectives.
 - To assess the London Bridge experiment. As noted above the London Bridge experiment does not appear to have significant implications but it is inter-connected with the Bishopsgate experiment

Proposals

37. Bearing in mind the outstanding items identified in this report and the benefits from the Bishopsgate experiment, Option 3 is recommended.
38. If Members agree, then officers will prepare a response to the statutory consultation that:
- States our in-principle support for measures to remove through traffic from the Bishopsgate corridor between 7am and 7pm.
 - Objects to the experimental scheme being made permanent in its current form, with the reasons as detailed in this report.
 - Commits to work with TfL to resolve this objection following further discussion around outstanding issues and results of the ongoing public consultation and monitoring.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

39. 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.
40. Financial implications – None. It is anticipated that any mitigation measures required as a result of the scheme will need to be met by TfL.
41. Resource implications – None
42. Legal implications – TfL has made an experimental traffic order under section 9 and 10(2) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. In due course TfL will be considering whether or not, the provisions of the Orders should be continued in force indefinitely. Within the period of six months from the coming into force of the Orders, or if the Orders are subsequently varied by another Orders or modified, from the coming into force of that variation or modification (whichever is the latest), any person may object to the making of an Order to continue indefinitely those provisions.
43. Risk implications – Reducing motor traffic in the Square Mile helps mitigate Corporate Risks CR21 – Air Quality and CR30 – Climate Action and Departmental Risk ENV-CR-TR 001 – Road Safety.
44. Equalities implications – TfL has acknowledged that there are equality implications as a result of the scheme. A copy of their Equalities Impact Assessment is provided in Appendix 3.

45. 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.

46. Security implications - None

Conclusion

47. Limiting the use of the Bishopsgate corridor by cross-London traffic provides significant benefits for people walking, cycling and using buses. It aligns with our Transport Strategy, Climate Action Strategy, supports growth and development in the area and therefore is supported in principle.

48. However, due to a number of outstanding issues and ongoing monitoring and consultation, it is not possible to understand if the current arrangement is the best solution or what mitigation measures are required.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: TfL's Statement of reasons and detailed list of measures implemented (*available on request to BHE Board*)
- Appendix 2: Overview plan of measures implemented (*available on request to BHE Board*)
- Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment (*available on request to BHE Board*)
- Appendix 4: Traffic monitoring summary (*available on request to BHE Board*)
- Appendix 5: Tower Bridge data
- Appendix 6: 2007 TfL press release on over-weight vehicles crossing over Tower Bridge

Background Papers

- Report of the Executive Director, Environment on TfL's Bishopsgate Experimental Closure to the S&W Sub-Committee, October 2021
- Report of the Executive Director, Environment on TfL's London Bridge Experimental Closure to the S&W Sub-Committee, February 2022.

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