

Committees: Streets and Walkways Sub-Committee <i>[for decision]</i> Projects & Procurement Sub-Committee (<i>for information</i>)	Dates: 4 February 2025 4 February 2025
Subject: Pedestrian Priority Streets Programme – Phase 1 – Cheapside Unique Project Identifier: 12269	Gateway 5 – Authority to start work Complex
Report of: Executive Director Environment Report Author: Kristian Turner – Policy and Projects, City Operations	For Decision
<h1>PUBLIC</h1>	

<p>1. Status update</p>	<p>Background: Programme implementing pedestrian priority schemes at various locations in the Square Mile to enhance comfort, safety and accessibility for people walking and wheeling, contributing to the objectives of the Transport Strategy and the Climate Action Strategy.</p> <p>The programme is on-budget. Two schemes have been completed to date, King William Street (the largest scheme) is under construction and two schemes are well advanced in the design process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • King Street (complete) • Chancery Lane (complete) • King William Street (in construction) • Cheapside (in design) • Threadneedle Street / Old Broad Street (in design) • Old Jewry (currently operating as a traffic experiment) <p>This report This report covers the Cheapside project which consists of a bus gate traffic restriction east of Bread Street and associated public realm improvements. There are two parts to the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first part is seeking a decision on making permanent the current experimental traffic order to allow taxis access through the bus gate. • The second part is for the public realm enhancement measures enabled by the bus gate, seeking authority to start work on the new planters, seating and greenery.
--------------------------------	--

	<p>RAG Status: Green (last report: green)</p> <p>Risk Status: Medium (last report: medium)</p> <p>Total Estimated Cost of Programme (excluding risk): £8.5M</p> <p>Spend to Date: On the whole programme - £4.4M (of £6.1M approved budget)</p> <p>Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £6M from Climate Action Strategy funding (OSPR) • £150K (S106) • £2M (OSPR, for King William Street major works) • £400K (OSPR, for Cheapside) <p>Costed Risk Provision Utilised: £56k. No further drawdowns since the last report.</p>
<p>2. Requested decisions</p>	<p>Next Gateway/Report – G5 Report for Old Broad Street / Threadneedle Street (May 2025)</p> <p>Next Steps (Cheapside): The next steps following approval of this report are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Notify statutory parties/consultees of intent to make a permanent traffic order for Cheapside; ▪ Make permanent traffic order for Cheapside; ▪ Publish notice of making for the permanent traffic regulation order; ▪ Engage and inform local Members, Cheapside BID of the public realm scheme design and timelines; ▪ Complete detailed design of the planters including the utilities design around the foundations and the planting approach; ▪ Complete the relocation of the phone boxes and post boxes; ▪ Procure the granite units for the planters and contractor mobilisation. <p><i>Next steps for the Old Broad Street / Threadneedle Street scheme, finalise the detailed design and network planning and Gateway 5 Report in the spring.</i></p> <p>Requested Decisions</p> <p>Members of the Streets and Walkways Sub-committee are asked to approve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making the experimental traffic order on Cheapside permanent to allow taxi access through the bus gate 2. Delegate authority to the Executive Director Environment to approve the final detailed design of the public realm enhancements

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Implementation of the construction works for the public realm scheme 4. Approve the requested budget increase of £1.295M, funded by the approved OSPR allocation (taking the overall approved programme budget to £7.45M) 5. The commuted maintenance budget of £90k for the enhanced cleansing of the space and maintenance of the planting on Cheapside 6. Delegate authority to the Executive Director Environment, in consultation with the Chamberlain, to make any further adjustments (above existing authority within the project procedures) between elements of the budget <p>Members of Projects and Procurement Sub-committee are asked to note the recommendations.</p>
<p>3. Budget</p>	<p>Existing budget and spend to date</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Pedestrian Priority Streets Programme is principally funded through the Climate Action Strategy (£6M OSPR), with further OSPR contributions of £2M for the King William Street scheme and £400k from the Cheapside Programme (which includes Bow Churchyard). 2. The overall <u>current approved</u> budget for the whole Pedestrian Priority programme is £6,159,190. 3. To date, £4,339,267 has been expended, leaving a total remaining unspent budget of £1,819,923. These unspent funds are committed to the construction works for King William Street, the development of the Old Broad Street / Threadneedle Street scheme, and the programmes costed risk. 4. An estimated budget of £1.295 M for the construction of the Cheapside scheme would take the approved budget to £7,459,190, leaving approximately over £1M of the programme budget (£8.55M) to construct the Threadneedle Street / Old Broad Street scheme. 5. The table below summarises the breakdown of the estimated budget required to finalise the design for Cheapside and construct the scheme. 6. A detailed breakdown of the line items is shown in Appendix 2. 7. The staff costs provide for project management and communication staff and Highways Engineering resource to oversee completion of the detailed design and the site supervision of the construction work. 8. The fees budget includes costs for work by external suppliers such as statutory undertakers' design tasks, the permanent traffic order and trial holes.

Item	Reason	Estimated Cost (£)
Staff costs	Staff costs (Highways, P&T, Legal)	£195,000
Fees	C3 utility fees, surveys, consultancy support, Traffic Orders	£25,000
Construction Works	Cheapside construction, C4 utility costs	£985,000
Maintenance	Cleansing and City Gardens	90,000
Total		£1,295,000

4. Design summary

TAXI ACCESS

9. In May 2023, Members of the Streets and Walkways Sub-Committee approved making the Cheapside bus gate restriction permanent following its experimental period. At the same time, Members approved a further traffic experiment to allow taxi access through the bus gate. This trial commenced under an Experimental Traffic Order on 6 November 2023.
10. The aim of the experiment was to increase taxi availability on Cheapside while considering the impact of any increase in taxi numbers on other street users. This followed stakeholder concern during the public consultation about the reduction in the number of taxis in the Cheapside area.
11. A decision now needs to be made on whether to make the change allowing taxis access on Cheapside permanent.
12. The experimental traffic order allowing taxi access is considered a successful trial as it has met the following success criteria:
- Traffic counts indicate that the number of taxis on Cheapside has increased, improving availability including for people who rely on taxis for travel.
 - Although higher, taxi volumes are unlikely to have a negative impact on people walking, wheeling, cycling and spending time on Cheapside, or on bus journey times.
 - Collision data and u-turning behaviour does not indicate any safety issues or concerns.

- While there was a limited response to the public consultation, the feedback received was largely positive and no objections were received during the statutory consultation period.

13. On this basis, it is recommended that the experimental traffic order allowing taxi access is made permanent

Evidence to support the recommendation

14. This section sets out the monitoring results to aid Members in making an informed decision on whether to make the experimental traffic order on Cheapside permanent. It covers:

- results of the monitoring of the traffic experiment
- results of the statutory and public consultation
- equality impact assessment

Traffic counts

15. Traffic counts were undertaken in September 2023 before the experiment started and then quarterly traffic surveys were carried out. The detailed counts are included in Appendix 5, and a summary is below:

Date	Taxis	Buses	Cycles
Sept-23	4	914	3,207
Feb-24	1,023	988	1,947
May-24	1,064	1,011	4,184
Sept-24	1,174	974	4,111
Nov-24	1,143	727	3,942

* 24hr volumes for busiest weekday (Thursdays)

16. Taxi volumes along the surveyed section of Cheapside in the vicinity of the bus gate were virtually zero before the taxi experiment started.

17. Since the experiment started, taxi volumes on Cheapside average over 1,000 on a typical Thursday. On average, taxis travelling westbound are 20-30% higher than eastbound.

18. Allowing taxi access has increased overall motorised traffic volumes on Cheapside, but these remain in acceptable limits for people cycling to mix with general traffic in a 20mph environment without requiring additional cycle infrastructure. The volume of taxis is also unlikely to negatively impact the experience of walking, wheeling and spending time on Cheapside, including ease of crossing, or affect bus journey times.

Collision data

19. Collision data has been analysed for the most recent available dataset during the course of the experiment from November 2023 to August 2024 to determine if there have been any registered collisions in the vicinity of the Cheapside bus gate.

20. No collisions have been recorded in the vicinity of the bus gate during this experiment. There has been one collision on Cheapside since the experiment was introduced. This was at the King Street / Queen Street junction and involved a motorcycle and goods vehicle.

21. Note that 2024 data is unverified and may be subject to change.

U-turn behaviour

22. We also surveyed the behaviour of servicing vehicles to the east of Milk Street who must undertake a three-point turn back towards King Street to determine if there was a risk of conflict between road users. The survey showed very few instances where one road user had to yield to a turning vehicle. The relatively low traffic environment means u-turning vehicles are able to find adequate gaps in the traffic to perform turning manoeuvres.

23. We have therefore concluded there is no road safety consideration related to u-turning that should prevent allowing permanent taxi access through the bus gate.

Experiment Consultation results

24. Six-month statutory consultation on the experimental traffic order to allow for taxi access was undertaken from 6 November 2023. No responses or objections were received.

25. The public consultation for the taxi trial began at the start of the experiment and 88 responses were received. Of these, 97% of respondents were fully supportive of the principle of allowing taxi access through the bus gate.

26. 78% of the respondents were recorded as being taxi drivers.

27. Most respondents felt that the changes were of a positive or neutral benefit to people walking and cycling, very few respondents felt the change was detrimental.

28. 94% of respondents felt the changes made the street more accessible.

29. 95% of taxi drivers felt that the change makes taxis more available on Cheapside.

30. While the response rate to the consultation was very low and feedback was primarily from taxi drivers the lack of feedback may suggest that allowing taxis has had little or no impact (positively or negatively) on other street users.

31. The full results of the public consultation can be found in Appendix 6.

Legal implications

32. The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA 1984) provides powers to regulate use of the highway. In exercising powers under the RTRA 1984, section 122 of the Act imposes a duty on the City to have regard (so far as practicable) to securing the 'expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians and cyclists) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway'. The measure represents a slight amendment to the existing restriction that effects the movement of certain classes of vehicular traffic which at the time of deciding to make the bus gate permanent was understood to be an indirect impediment to the expeditious and convenient movement of traffic on surrounding streets due to the displacement of traffic.

33. Pursuant to Regulation 9(1) of the 1996 Regulations, the City has considered the necessity of holding a public inquiry and has decided against holding a public inquiry in the exercise of its broad discretion under Regulation 9.

34. The decision to not hold a public inquiry is based on the following evidence:

- The measure has been in place for over 12 months as an experimental traffic order and its impacts on traffic is well understood
- No objections were raised in the statutory consultation
- Overall, the traffic changes have been assessed as having a minor impact on the traffic network

35. In light of these considerations, a public inquiry is not considered justified.

36. The recommendations within this report are within the City's powers and duties.

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

37. An EQIA was undertaken on the proposed outline design for Cheapside and the results were reported to Committee in May 2023 to help Members make an informed decision on whether to make the bus gate permanent.

38. That EQIA identified potential disbenefits for some people due to longer taxi journeys and reduced availability of taxis.

39. The disbenefit related to the availability of taxis is considered to be mitigated by the change to allow access to taxis through the bus gate.

40. Based on these findings it is recommended to make the ETO to allow taxi access through the bus gate on Cheapside permanent.

PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENTS

41. The public realm design aims to maximise the opportunities for enhancement enabled by the extra pavement space created by the bus gate.

42. To ensure a coherent approach to the public realm along Cheapside the design and materials used for this scheme are consistent with the recently completed New Change Gardens and the proposed improvement scheme for Bow Churchyard.

43. The design of the scheme can be found in Appendix 3.

44. The public realm enhancements focus on creating a high-quality space on the pavement adjacent to the bus gate. It includes four planters and new seating. The space will become a focal place for visitors and workers to meet and sit on the City's main retail street. Climate resilient planting will provide shade and cooling benefits as well as playing a role in retaining storm water.

45. The crossing point for people walking and wheeling is aligned directly with desire lines linking Milk Street and Bread Street. The carriageway will be raised to pavement level for a section to improve the accessibility of the crossing and act as a speed calming feature. The height of the planters and internal planting at designed to allow clear lines of sight so that people crossing can see, and be seen, by all vehicles and cycles.

46. Three of the planters are to be constructed using 450mm high granite planters that will be of an appropriate height and depth for people to sit on them. Wooden seating will be spaced at intervals along the length of the planters and will include backrests and arm rests, ensuring comfortable and accessible seating options. This seating will also discourage skateboarding activity.

47. The fourth planter is a lower-level planter without seating, surrounded by kerb edging.

48. The design of the planters is complicated by a number of factors:

- There is a particularly high concentration of underground utilities where Milk Street meets Cheapside as utilities are running both east-west and north-south.
- Underground tree roots must be avoided so that the existing trees can be retained within the new planters
- The planting area extends directly up to the kerbside so the design has worked to accommodate safe working arrangements for operatives maintaining the planting or picking litter.

49. The design process has been further complicated by delays from statutory undertakers who are not submitting their fees and works estimates in the timeframes stipulated in the code of practice.
50. To mitigate risks associated with utilities we have developed two different approaches to the design of the foundations for the granite planters to avoid and/or accommodate the foundations amongst the heavy concentration of cables, ducts and pipes that crisscross the area. Using either of these design approaches to the foundations will deliver the public realm vision for the space.
51. Proposal 1 is for a series of pad foundations sited amongst the utilities where the ends of the granite sections sit on a concrete pad. Under this option, some utilities will remain in place and run under the planting and granite planter, some will need to be lowered, and some will need to be relocated.
52. Proposal 2 is to utilise a product called Hydrorock which is a geofiltration membrane that can be used as the foundations for the granite. The units of Hydrorock can be cut to fit around existing utilities and can also be placed underneath the internal part of the planter to absorb stormwater as it is able to absorb 94% of its cubic volume.
53. It is likely that a hybrid design approach will be used for the planters depending on the precise ground conditions, utility locations and tree roots, which will only be truly known once we begin on site.
54. Some utilities chambers within the planters will need to be demolished and relocated otherwise there will be large gaps in the planting where nothing could grow.
55. Significant progress has been made on the detailed design and our estimate is that the detailed design will be complete by early March.
56. To avoid the main part of the construction programme conflicting with the Lord Mayor's Show, we estimate that the granite for the planters will need to be procured in advance of the next Streets and Walkways meeting. Therefore, we are seeking approval of the final design be delegated to the Executive Director Environment.
57. The cost estimate for the construction works is a robust estimate based on the design work completed to date, and we estimate the allocation sought will be sufficient to deliver the works.
58. The existing temporary street enhancements such as the orange pots will be removed. Discussions are on-going internally on utilising the existing trees in pots elsewhere.

Healthy Streets Assessment

59. The ten Healthy Streets indicators capture the elements that are essential for making streets attractive and accessible places to walk, cycle and spend time, supporting social and economic activity. The Transport Strategy includes a proposal to embed the Healthy Streets Approach in transport planning and delivery.
60. The assessment of the design shows improvements across all of the indicators. Overall, the Healthy Streets score shows an increase from 62 to 78. This is driven by a variety of factors including less noise due to reduced traffic, the narrower carriageway making the street easier to cross and the public realm measures providing things to see and do. (See Appendix 4 for full details)



Accessibility

61. To support these recommendations, Officers have assessed the designs at both locations using the City of London Street Accessibility Tool (CoLSAT).
62. CoLSAT enables street designers to identify how street features impact on the different needs of disabled people. The tool's key feature recognises that the needs of different groups of disabled people can be contradictory; that improving accessibility for one group may decrease accessibility for another. CoLSAT identifies the trade-offs that may be needed to ensure no one is excluded from using the City's streets and provides the basis for engagement and discussion to maximise the benefits for all.

CoLSAT Summary Results Table				
	Total 0 scores* – severe accessibility issue		Total 1 scores**- significant accessibility issues	
	Before	After	Before	After
Electric Wheelchair user			1	1
Manual Wheelchair user				
Mobility Scooter user				
Walking Aid user				
Person with a walking impairment			1	1
Long cane user	2			1
Guide Dog user	1		1	
Residual Sight user			2	
Deaf or Hearing impairment			1	
Acquired neurological impairment				
Autism/Sensory-processing diversity				
Developmental Impairment	1		3	2
Total	4	0	9	5

* This score means most people in this segment would be excluded by the street characteristic in the selected configuration.

** This score means some people in this segment may be able to negotiate the street characteristic in the selected configuration, but it would significantly deplete their levels of confidence and energy, and they would be likely to give up on the journey if they had to negotiate it more than once or twice.

63. The results show an overall improvement in the performance of the street design across all groups. Where '1' scores remain, this is primarily due to the increased use of tactile paving. It has not been possible to improve on some scores such as the distance to the nearest blue badge parking and changing places toilets which are outside the scope of this project. Overall, the scheme does significantly improve the accessibility of the streets within the project area.

5. Delivery Team

64. The delivery team for the project is set out below:

- Project management by the Transportation and Public Realm team in Policy and Projects.
- Construction Engineering/Design and Construction Supervision to be managed by Highways team
- Contractor – FM Conway under the highways term contract.

6. Programme and key dates

65. Programming for construction works are subject to the availability of network road space and finalising utility designs due to moving kerb lines.

	<p>Key dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2025 – complete detailed design • Chief Officer approval of detailed design • March 2025 set up budgets • April 2025 – procure granite material • August 2025 to October 2025 – construction works • November – Pause works for Lord Mayor’s Show • December to February – complete construction works • From February – planting
<p>7. Risks</p>	<p>66. As the project moves forward to construction, the risk profile is expected to be like other City highway projects.</p> <p>67. The main ongoing risk implications for the programme and associated schemes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in materials costs such as sourcing granite from quarries. • Delays to the construction programme due to bus diversions and road space bookings • Damage during the transportation of the granite blocks • Cost implications for the relocation of utilities • Timely delivery by Statutory Undertakers • Unforeseen technical/ engineering issues occurring that require additional costs to rectify <p>68. There are two telephone kiosks located on the southside of Cheapside (opposite Milk Street). These are directly in the way of the southside planter and works have been underway to arrange for their removal. The BT kiosk is advanced and will be removed by the summer. The removal of the Net World Telephones kiosk has been delayed due to a planning appeal. Whilst the risk is estimated as low that this will cause a programme delay, it remains a possibility at this stage although it would not affect works on the northern side and the construction programme can be planned accordingly.</p>
<p>8. Success criteria</p>	<p>69. Programme wide success criteria was set at the initiation of the programme.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Number of kilometres of new pedestrian priority streets and total length of pedestrian priority streets (Climate Action Strategy and Transport Strategy targets) 2) Length of street with pedestrian comfort level of A+, length of street with pedestrian comfort level of at least B+ (Climate Action Strategy and Transport Strategy targets)

	<p>3) Percentage of people rating the experience of walking in the City as pleasant (Transport Strategy target and measured through the City Streets survey)</p> <p>70. The proposed scheme on Cheapside would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve informal crossing points by narrowing and raising the carriageway, making the street easier to cross
9. Progress reporting	71. Monthly project vision reports will be made.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Project Coversheet
Appendix 2	Finance tables
Appendix 3	Cheapside General Arrangement Drawing
Appendix 4	Healthy Street assessment
Appendix 5	Traffic surveys
Appendix 6	Public Consultation Results
Appendix 7	Costed Risk Register

Contact

Report Author	Kristian Turner
Email Address	kristian.turner@cityoflondon.gov.uk