

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committees: Streets and Walkway Sub Committee - <i>for decision</i> Projects and Procurement Sub Committee - <i>for information</i> Natural Environment Board – <i>for information</i>	Dates: 16 September 2025 14 October 2025 23 October 2025
Subject: Moorgate Crossrail Station Links: Finsbury Circus Western Arm Unique Project Identifier: 12186	Gateway 6: Outcome Report Regular
Report of: Director of the Built Environment Report Author: Maria Curro, Policy and Projects, City Operations	For Decision
PUBLIC	

Summary

1. Status update	Project Description: <u>Summary</u> • The Moorgate Crossrail Station Links (MCSL) project, seeks to improve the environment for people walking and cycling along Moorgate and surrounding areas. • The Finsbury Circus Western Arm scheme (Phase 2 A) forms part of the wider MCSL works, with the aim to enhance the public realm and introduce new greening along the arm. • The Finsbury Circus Western Arm scheme is also a core project of the Cool Streets and Greening programme and, therefore, utilises some of this funding to deliver the greening elements. • This report relates to the Finsbury Circus Western Arm relandscaping scheme only, as a stand-alone project. • A Gateway 3/4 report was approved by Committees in January 2023. A Gateway 5 report was approved in March 2024, under Delegated Authority.
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	<u>Finsbury Circus Western Arm Relandscaping Project Overview</u> In 2019, Finsbury Circus Western Arm was closed to motorised traffic with the intent to create a public space once the Crossrail hoarding was removed. An enhancement proposal for Finsbury Circus Western Arm was put on hold in January 2022 due to the erection of hoarding/pit lane within the project area to accommodate the refurbishment works at 84 Moorgate. A positive outcome of this delay has been involvement of the Cool Streets and Greening Programme, leading to the preparation of a more ambitious soft landscaping design for the Western Arm. • The relandscaping project has delivered an attractive and enhanced high-quality public space at the Western Arm, leading to Finsbury Circus Gardens. • The project has introduced new greenery, with the introduction of trees and planting beds. • Green infrastructure included within the project will significantly increase the local biodiversity within the area and will help to deliver connected corridors for biodiversity. • The project has built-in climate resilient measures, supporting the City's Climate Action Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan. RAG Status: Green (Amber at last report to Committee) Risk Status: Low (Low at last report to committee) Costed Risk Provision Utilised: £19,000 Final Outturn Cost: £785,923
2. Next steps and requested decisions	Requested Decisions: Members of the Streets and Walkways Sub Committee are asked to: 1. Note and approve the content of this outcome report. 2. Authorise the Chamberlain's department to return unspent project funds to the Cool Streets and Greening Programme to be reallocated to other projects within the programme (subject to the verification of the final account). 3. Agree to close the Finsbury Circus Western Arm project, Phase 2 A of the wider MCSL project.

3. Key conclusions	The project achieved the following measures of success: • To create more space for people to stop and rest, by introducing additional seating throughout the project area • To increase the amount of greening within the Square Mile, by introducing trees and greening throughout the arm and to compliment the Finsbury Circus Gardens • To increase the amount of the climate resilient planting throughout the City, by introducing tree and planting species that require minimal maintenance and are climate resilient • To improve opportunities and corridors for biodiversity and deliver in the outcomes of the City's Biodiversity Action Plan Key learning and recommendations for the project include the following: • Identifying key design and construction risks early and mitigating these risks, including the London Underground tunnel, located directly beneath the western arm • Identifying key stakeholders to ensure that risks are identified and addressed within a timely manner. Project stakeholders included: London Underground and local businesses/occupiers, as well as several City departments including City Structures and City Highways • Early and ongoing engagement with stakeholders throughout the lifecycle of the project, to ensure opportunities are realised and risk is managed
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Main Report

Design & Delivery Review

4. Design into delivery	The City's Highways Team and Structure Team worked closely with the TfL Underground to understand and review the designs of the western arm, including location, proposed infrastructure, acceptable infrastructure load (i.e. soil weight), planting type, etc. Directly beneath the western arm is an underground subway tunnel. Design adjustments were made when required and it was agreed by TfL that the final design for the western arm was appropriate, as
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	the infrastructure and planting does not interfere with the operation and safety of the London Underground tunnel.
5. Options appraisal	Several initial design options were explored and in working closely with TfL Underground during the design process, it was identified that a reduction in planters was required due to the infrastructure load. The final design option was determined the most suitable for the western arm. Reasons for this included: • layout that provides opportunity for enhanced green infrastructure, planting and seating; • layout that ensures no disruption to underground utilities and the London Underground tunnel • layout that ensures people walking and wheeling can travel comfortably through the site. At the end of the construction, minor changes were made to the placement of benches to ensure they were positioned to account for walking routes and minor adjustments to the planter positions as a result of utilities. During the construction phase of the project, 12 cycle racks were removed and all have been reintegrated within the project area. The design for the western arm allows for the project objectives to be met, including enhancing biodiversity across the City, introducing greening and planting, as well as providing spaces for people to dwell and rest. Appendix 2 outlines the project objectives in more detail.
6. Procurement route	Standard City procurement routes were used, including the use of the Transportation and Public Realm framework for landscape architecture consultancy services. The City's Highways Team undertook the design of the western arm, and the City's term contractor, FM Conway, was used to deliver the project.
7. Skills base	The Project Team had the skills, knowledge and experience to manage and deliver the project.
8. Stakeholders	Local stakeholders, such as neighbouring buildings and businesses, were engaged throughout the lifecycle of the project and updated at key project milestones. TfL Underground were engaged throughout the design process to ensure the suitability of the design, due to the tunnel beneath the western arm. Ward Members were briefed at key project milestones, through project briefing notes.

	An online consultation for the scheme was undertaken by Commonplace as part of the wider area Healthy Streets Plan, held between November to December 2023. The majority of respondents were in favour of the project, citing enhanced green space, the addition of greenery which will enhance biodiversity within the area, and the introduction of seating within the space as a priority.
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Variation Review

9. Assessment of project against key milestones	A traffic order to prevent motor vehicles using the western arm to exit Finsbury Circus onto Moorgate was implemented in 2019, with the intent to utilise this reclaimed carriageway space to create a new public space linking to the planned refurbished Finsbury Circus Gardens. A 5-year programme delay on progressing the public space was incurred. Initially due to the delays by Crossrail in vacating the western arm. This was promptly, followed by hoarding to facilitate an adjacent development (84 Moorgate) using the area as a pit lane until August 2024. As such, an enhancement proposal for Finsbury Circus Western Arm was put on hold in January 2022. A positive outcome of this delay has been involvement of the Cool Streets and Greening Programme, leading to the preparation of a more ambitious soft landscaping proposal for the Western Arm. Other positives include the extended timeframe to engage with TfL Underground and local businesses. The highway works were completed within a five-month schedule, with ongoing communication with local stakeholders updating them on project progress.
10. Assessment of project against Scope	The landscaping project met all the objectives listed in Appendix 2. A brief summary of achieved objectives are as follows: • Attractive and enhanced high-quality public space, leading to the Finsbury Circus Gardens • Introduction of new greening, including several trees and planting beds to enhance local biodiversity, as well as seating and benches • Work to implement and deliver the outcomes of the City's Biodiversity Action Plan
11. Risks and issues	At the initiation of the project, it was identified that the central project risk was the London Underground tunnel, located beneath the western arm. In identifying this issue early on within the project

	lifecycle and design process, provided the Project Team the opportunity to mitigate the risk by closely working the City's Structure Team and London Underground in design feasibility. Other risks and issues identified included the use of the western arm as a pit lane to accommodate the development at 84 Moorgate and the delays associated with the Crossrail compensation.
12. Transition to BAU	The project is now complete and has been passed over to the City's Highways Maintenance Team and City Gardens to manage. The scheme was designed and built to the City's specifications and approvals, and the City will claim the required commuted maintenance sum at the time of the final account verification.

Value Review

13. Budget

<i>Estimated Outturn Cost (G2)</i>	At the Gateway 2 stage of the project, there was no consideration of any relandscaping at the Finsbury Circus Western Arm. Relandscaping proposals were considered at the Gateway 3/4 of the wider Moorgate Crossrail Station Links project, following confirmation of funding for the landscaping from the Cool Streets and Greening programme.	
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	<i>At Authority to Start work (G5)</i>	<i>Final Outturn Cost</i>
<i>Fees</i>	49,045	46,033
<i>Staff Costs</i>	140,955	86,528
<i>Works*</i>	510,464	498,080
<i>Maintenance**</i>	155,282	155,282
<i>Costed Risk Provision</i>	98,000	
<i>Costed Risk Provision Drawdown</i>		-19,000
<i>Total</i>	953,746	785,923

The Final Account for this project has not been verified.

The final outturn cost further includes project maintenance post-project completion.

14. Investment	Not applicable.
15. Assessment of project against SMART objectives	The Finsbury Circus Western Arm relandscaping project achieved its SMART objectives of: • Create more space for people to stop and rest, supporting the objectives of the Transport Strategy • Increase greening within the Square Mile, through an enhanced space within the western arm • Increase the amount of the climate resilient planting throughout the City, by introducing green infrastructure and planting species that are appropriate for the local environment • Improve opportunities and corridors for biodiversity and deliver the outcomes of the City's Biodiversity Action Plan, by planting tree and plant species that are biodiverse Within the project area, 11 new benches were introduced providing space for 60 people to sit. Nine new trees and 134 sq.m of planting.
16. Key benefits realised	The relandscaping project implemented measures that improve the public realm and the experience of walking, wheel and spending time on the street; and introduce greening that increased local biodiversity. In 2019, Finsbury Circus Western Arm was closed to motorised traffic with the intent to create a public space. This change allowed for maximum space within the western arm to be utilised for the relandscaping project.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

17. Positive reflections	The project was subject to a 5-year programme delay to ongoing Crossrail works and delays in vacating the western arm. This was followed by further delays due to the western arm being used a pit lane for the development of 84 Moorgate. A positive outcome of this delay has been involvement of the Cool Streets and Greening Programme, leading to the preparation of a more ambitious soft landscaping proposal for the Western Arm. This has resulted in a diverse array of planting, which has increased the biodiversity and local environment at the western arm. Throughout the project, the project team collaborated early within the project lifecycle and effectively with TfL Underground and City's Structure Team when developing proposed design options for the western arm. Regular
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	communications and engagement have resulted in a final design that meets the project objectives. The City Highways Team effectively managed the construction programme and proactively addressed any construction issues, including working with City Gardens to ensure appropriate tree planting depth taking into consideration the underground tunnel structure. The new public space at the western arm was opened in May 2025 already appears to be well liked and used.
18.Improvement reflections	The key lesson identified is the importance to work closer with local/adjacent developers to better understand their planned needs for use of the public highway during their construction. 84 Moorgate was constrained with options for facilitating their refurbishment, but there has been a delay to the public of the delivery of a new public space. There were cost increases incurred by the project because it was delayed, which were not directly attributable to the actions of the project. The project was not able to recover the costs from the developer at 84 Moorgate. Planned enhancement schemes need to be better highlighted to colleagues dealing with construction logistic plans, so that earlier visibility of issues of conflict for space can be identified.
19.Sharing best practice	Dissemination of information through team and project staff briefings has taken place.
20.AOB	None

Appendices

Appendix 1	Project coversheet
Appendix 2	Project objectives
Appendix 3	Final project costs
Appendix 4	Before and after photos

Contact

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