

Committee(s):		Date(s):
Streets & Walkways Sub Committee	- For Decision	21 May 2018
Subject:		Public
Oversight & Communications for Major Highway Activities		
Report of:		For Decision
Director of the Built Environment		
Summary		
<p>The Department of the Built Environment (DBE) permits & co-ordinates all major activities on the City's highway, and given the volume & technical complexity of those activities, Members have previously agreed a series of delegations to enable DBE to effectively manage the decision-making process behind this.</p> <p>General Member engagement currently focuses on the use of social media to inform them of upcoming works and events, but a case can be made for a more structured political engagement process to ensure appropriate and proportionate oversight of DBE's delegated authority for the most significant activities.</p> <p>In order to provide that enhanced focus, it is intended to brief the Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of the Streets & Walkways and Planning & Transportation Committees in advance of such major activities being agreed. The vast majority of requests will continue to be managed by DBE's Business as Usual protocols under its existing delegations, but this process will ensure a greater degree of political oversight for those activities judged to have the greatest likelihood of impacting City stakeholders.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>Members are recommended to agree this approach.</p>		

Main Report

Background

1. The Traffic Management Act 2004 placed a Network Management Duty on the City of London Corporation to effectively manage its highway to ensure the 'expeditious movement of traffic' on both its road network and the road networks of its neighbouring authorities.
2. To help deliver that statutory function, the Highways team within the Transportation and Public Realm Division of the Department of the Built Environment (DBE) permits and co-ordinates all major activities on the City's highway, including:
 - Road closures and diversions;
 - Major building site operations, including Construction Logistics Plans, loading bays and mobile crane works;

- Special events, including the Lord Mayor's Show;
 - Street works by utilities;
 - Highway works by the City's term contractor, JB Riney;
 - Works by major transport infrastructure providers, such as Crossrail, Transport for London and Thames Tideway;
 - Parking permissions & suspensions for major deliveries, removals and filming operations.
3. DBE's approach is to enable applicants to safely deliver works that are the lifeblood of the Square Mile, but to balance this against the need to minimise their individual and cumulative impact on City businesses, residents and the public at large.

Current Position

4. The City exercises its authority to control these on-street activities by issuing licences, permits, planning approvals and traffic orders under various items of primary legislation, such as:
- London Local Authorities Act 2007
 - Road Traffic Act 1991
 - Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984
 - Highways Act 1980
 - City of London (Various Powers) Act 1967
 - New Roads and Street Works Act 1991
 - Electricity Act 1989
 - Local Government Act 1972
 - Traffic Management Act 2004
 - Crossrail Act 2008
5. Given the sheer volume of applications being made under these powers, the technical complexity involved, and the need to expedite the decision-making process, the authority to consider these applications has been delegated over time from the Court of Common Council and the responsible Committees to officers within DBE.
6. To illustrate the volume of applications requiring some form of consent, the number of activities considered under existing delegations in 2017 included:
- 383 road closure applications
 - 96 road closures requiring bus route diversions
 - 82 building developments or major refurbishments
 - 15 major special events
 - 3,500 utility excavation permits
 - 4,900 highway maintenance permits for JB Riney

- 505 scaffold & hoarding licences
 - 3000 parking dispensations
 - 1020 parking bay suspension applications
7. Given this volume, current Member engagement tends to be focused on the major activities that either have the most impact on traffic, or that affect key premises, with the extent of that engagement dependent on the nature of the issue.
 8. For example, briefings on the large scale Cadent gas works at Gracechurch St were e-mailed to all Members of the Court, but contact on the localised gas leak in Tudor St focused on updates to Ward Members for Castle Baynard and Farringdon Without.
 9. More general updates for Members are regularly provided through DBE's social media channels, such as the @squarehighways Twitter feed for live updates (with around 3,650 followers), and the weekly Traffic Management Bulletin (1,160 recipients) that covers major highway activities, events and road closures for the week ahead.
 10. More structured annual reports are written by DBE for Streets & Walkways Sub Committee, Planning & Transportation Committee and Policy & Resources Committee, the last of which was in Nov / Dec 2017. These reports reflect on the activities of the last 12 months, and outline the major schemes & projects likely to take place in the coming year.

Proposal

11. With this high volume of activity likely to continue for the foreseeable future, it is still appropriate for the vast majority of requests to be managed through the existing delegated process.
12. However, for those activities with the greatest potential to cause disruption, a case can be made for a more structured political engagement process to ensure appropriate and proportionate oversight of DBE's delegated authority.
13. Such activities that might be examined could range from a significant utility excavation to a prolonged piece of work by JB Riney, or involve a third-party scheme on the TfL Road Network, such as Thames Tideway. It could also be a Construction Logistics Plan submitted as a condition to a major development's planning approval, setting out how that development will be serviced for the next 2-3 years.

Recommendation

14. Given that DBE derives its delegations from the Planning & Transportation Committee and / or the Streets & Walkways Sub Committee, it is proposed to brief in advance the Chairmen & Deputy Chairmen of those two committees on those major activities likely to cause disruption or to be particularly controversial.
15. This will afford those senior Members the opportunity to have oversight of those proposals, to suggest in principle whether such proposals are acceptable, and whether changes might be sought from the applicant to minimise their impact.

16. Such a process would be similar in approach to the current arrangement for engaging with the Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of Policy & Resources, Streets & Walkways and Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committees over new applications for major special events. That process has also established a protocol for proportionate Member oversight & engagement covering an approval process that had previously been delegated to DBE.
17. Considering road closures as an example of how this would work, Appendix 1 sets out the six types of *planned* road closure managed by DBE, and the three types of *unplanned* road closures that DBE responds to. Each is categorised depending on its level of impact, importance and timing.
18. It is proposed that this enhanced Member oversight is instigated for those closures highlighted in **Red**, namely those with the greatest impact or importance (A*, A and B for planned closures, and types 1 and 3 for unplanned / emergency closures). This would typically cover around 20 road closures a year out of the 400 applications usually received.
19. Appendix 2 sets out a wider communication strategy that DBE will now adopt for each type of closure, covering not just engagement with Members but also the broad approach to communicating with the public and TfL.
20. Various forms of communications (eg direct contact, on-street information and new & existing media channels) are readily available as proportionate approaches depending on the scale, nature and notice of the individual road closure.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

21. Following the start of works by Cadent Gas to replace their gas main at Gracechurch St, a moratorium on non-essential work has been placed across much of the City, resulting in several proposed activities being deferred until at least Q4 2018.
22. Therefore, in the short term, the focus for this proposed additional oversight will be on delivering actions that might alleviate the localised congestion caused by Cadent, and any essential works that DBE believe cannot be deferred until Cadent complete in September.

Conclusion

23. The above approach is intended to retain the existing protocols for keeping Members well informed of major activities on-street, but also to provide an enhanced focus via those key Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen responsible for public highway activities, road safety and building development.
24. The intention is to adopt a proportional approach where the vast majority of requests continue to be managed by DBE's Business as Usual protocols under its existing delegations. However, it will also seek to deliver a greater degree of political oversight for those activities judged to have the greatest likelihood of impacting City stakeholders.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Road Closure Categorisation
- Appendix 2 – Communications Matrix

Ian Hughes

Assistant Director (Highways)

T: 020 7332 1977

E: ian.hughes@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Road Closure Categorisation

Criteria	Planned						Unplanned/Emergency		
Category	A*	A	B	C	D	E	1 Major	2 Minor	3 Security
Network	Special	Weekday Bus Route SRN	Weekday Bus Route Non-SRN	Weekend Bus Route	Weekday Non-bus route	Weekend non-bus route	Any	Any	Any
Anticipated disruption	Any	Severe	Serious	Moderate	Moderate	Minimal	Severe / Serious	Moderate / Minimal	Any
Anticipated customer impact	Critical	Severe	Serious	Moderate	Moderate	Minimal	Severe / Serious	Moderate / Minimal	Any
Geographical scale of impact	City Level	Widespread across / outside City	Across a wide part of the City	Diversion route	Localised Area	Localised Area	More than a localised area	Localised Area	Any
Reputational importance	Critical	Extremely High	High	Reasonable	Some	Minor	High	Some	High
Example	Tower Bridge repairs	'Major' bus route (eg Cannon St / Bloomberg)	'Minor' bus route (eg New Fetter Ln)	Any weekend bus route closure	Goring Street (for 60-70 St Mary Axe)	Any non-bus route closure	Cannon St gas leak	Broken down bus	Suspect package / ATTRO
Communications responsibility	Director	Assistant Director	Traffic Manager	Network Manager	Traffic Management Officer	Traffic Management Officer	Traffic Manager	Network Manager	Police / Traffic Manager
Approx No	2	8		90	270		5	25	5

SRN: Strategic Road Network (major bus routes where TfL have strategic oversight over the City's highway authority powers)

Appendix 2: Communications Matrix

Comms activity	Project Category								
	A*	A	B	C	D	E	1	2	3
Members									
All Members	■	■		■		■	■		
Ward Members			■	■		■			
Chairmen / Deputy Chairmen	■	■	■	■		■	■		■
Chief Officer / Director	■	■	■	■		■	■		■
Applicant Engagement									
Area leaflet drops by applicant	■	■	■	■		■			
Works notification letters	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Local exhibitions/events	■			■		■			
Contact Centre briefing	■	■	■	■		■	■		■
Face to face (businesses, community)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■
Emergency services	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Environmental Health	■	■	■	■		■	■		■
Other Boroughs	■	■		■		■	■		■
On-site Customer Information									
Variable Message Signs	■	■		■		■			
Advance warning signs	■	■	■	■		■			
Road closure information notices	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Works information on site hoardings	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Traffic diversion signage	■	■	■	■		■	■		
Media									
Press release	■			■		■			
Radio	■			■		■			
Press interview	■			■		■			
Traffic order press advert	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Social Media									
Web site page	■	■	■	■		■	■		
Facebook	■	■	■	■		■			
Weekly Traffic Management Bulletin	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Twitter	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■
TfL									
Traffic Management Act consent	■	■	■	■		■			
Network management	■	■	■	■		■	■		■
London Buses	■	■	■	■		■	■		■
Traffic signal timing team	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■
ATTRO protocol				■		■			■