

Committees:	Dates:	
Policy and Resources Committee Barbican Centre Board – for information	07/06/2018 18/06/2018	
Subject: Beech Street Transformation	Issue Report: Complex	Public
Report of: Town Clerk Director of the Built Environment Report Author: Simon Glynn		For Information

Summary

Culture Mile seeks to redefine the City of London as a global leader in both commerce and culture, where creativity is the most valuable currency. This initiative represents a significant opportunity to deliver transformative change in a way that meaningfully improves and enriches people's lives.

Beech Street is the main access route for visitors to the Barbican Centre from the west, and forms part of a critical east-west axis (including West Smithfield, Long Lane and Silk Street) along which some of the major cultural destinations (the new Museum of London at West Smithfield, the Barbican Centre and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama) are located. The Barbican Exhibition Halls 1 and 2 are located on the northern side of Beech Street.

The property vision is to refurbish these buildings into modern and attractive accommodation suitable for retail, cultural and learning uses, creating brand new frontages onto Beech Street that will fundamentally change the vibrancy, activity and experience of this street.

Essential to maximising the success of the property refurbishment will be the widening of the northern footway along Beech Street to provide generous pedestrian space adjacent to new retail, cultural and learning frontages.

Finally, the vision for Beech Street also includes a vastly changed look and feel of the street through more vibrant treatment of the walls and roof of the covered road, enhanced lighting and opportunities for public art and way-finding. Overall, the experience of being in Beech Street will be much improved.

In presenting this vision for Beech Street, initial research, consultation and investigation has been undertaken. Assessment of the Barbican Exhibition Halls has identified viable commercial options for the management of new retail, cultural and learning spaces. In transportation and public realm terms, an eastbound traffic closure of Beech Street, together with a widening of the northern footway would result in the smallest area of impact on the traffic network and supports the vision for property refurbishment. Establishing the feasibility of restricting traffic in Beech Street is critical in determining the viability of the overall programme.

The work to date has identified the opportunities for property refurbishment and transportation and public realm enhancement. To deliver this exciting transformation, Members' endorsement for the overall vision is required. Departments leading on the individual workstreams will now need to set out for Members their proposed programmes for delivery and the ways in which these work-streams will be coordinated effectively into a single cross-departmental programme.

To maximise the efficiency of delivery and reduce risk, each work-stream will be progressed within a single programme (Beech Street transformation programme). The appointment of a programme manager to coordinate these work-streams is desirable but an appointment will only be made once Members have greater certainty regarding the viability of the property, transportation and public realm changes.

Two reports will now be prepared for the next Committee cycle; one in relation to the transportation and public realm changes and one in relation to the property refurbishment; both reports will be subject to Member approvals through the project gateway process. Phase Two of the current Barbican Estate maintenance project (podium waterproofing works), will continue for now in accordance with the programme last reported to the relevant Committees.

Recommendations

Members of the Policy and Resources Committee are recommended to:

- Approve the vision for the transformation of Beech Street.
- Approve the development of Gateway reports; those relating to transportation and public realm and those relating to property refurbishment, which are subject to Member approvals through the project gateway process.

Main Report

<p>1. Vision</p>	<p><u>Vision for Culture Mile</u></p> <p>Culture Mile seeks to redefine the City of London as a global leader in both commerce and culture, where creativity is the most valuable currency. This initiative presents a significant opportunity to deliver transformative change in a way that meaningfully improves and enriches people's lives.</p> <p>The City of London Corporation, together with the Barbican, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London Symphony Orchestra and Museum of London, are working together to create a major destination for culture and creativity in the Square Mile with creative exchange, cultural collaboration and learning at its core.</p> <p>This transformation is beginning and Culture Mile, which stretches just under a mile from Farringdon to Moorgate, will take 10-15 years to fully develop.</p> <p>Over the next decade and beyond, the five partners, led by the City of London Corporation, will transform the area through:</p>
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- better transport links with the arrival of Crossrail
- improving their offer to audiences with imaginative collaborations, outdoor programming and events.
- improved links between venues and major enhancements to the streets and wider public realm which will enliven the area as Culture Mile expands and flourishes.

Crossrail will be transformative for this area. Nearly 1.5 million additional visitors a year are expected from late 2018 as Crossrail opens new Elizabeth Line stations at Farringdon, Moorgate/ Liverpool Street and the North-South Thameslink line is also upgraded. Farringdon interchange will provide direct access to three major London airports with journey times from Heathrow around 30 minutes; it will be the only station where Underground, Thameslink and Crossrail all interlink and will be one of the busiest stations in the UK making the area more connected than ever.

Three building projects, the new Museum of London, the transformation of Beech Street and the proposed new Centre for Music are envisaged within Culture Mile and their success would make a significant contribution.

The City and its partners are just at the start of this long term 10-15 year project. By 2028, the outcomes for Culture Mile, as expressed in the draft Culture Mile Strategy are that:

- People enjoy spending time in the area and participating in activities that enrich their lives
- People have equal access to creative, cultural and learning activities, to develop their skills and experiences – making them more socially and economically mobile and included.
- Visitors, learners, businesses and residents engage and collaborate positively with us to transform the area and realise the aims of Culture Mile.
- Culture Mile is delivered in an economically and environmentally sustainable way.

Vision for Beech Street

Beech Street is the main access route for visitors to the Barbican Centre from the west, and forms part of a critical east-west axis (including West Smithfield, Long Lane and Silk Street) along which some of the major cultural destinations (the new Museum of London at West Smithfield, the Barbican Centre and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama) are located. Beech Street already has a similar footfall to a successful retail high street and pedestrian usage of the route will increase following the opening of the new Crossrail stations. Beech Street will become an important connector between these transport links.

	<p>The Barbican Exhibition Halls are located on the north side of Beech Street. These venues have been modified over the years and are currently used for a range of back-of-house activities and commercial lettings. The vision, however, is to comprehensively refurbish these buildings into modern and attractive retail, cultural and learning accommodation. This will create brand new frontages onto Beech Street that will fundamentally change the vibrancy, activity and experience of this street. The Mayor of London's Cultural Strategy has identified the importance of property assets in cultural districts which, through careful physical redevelopment and equally careful leasing and management, can play a major role in defining the character of cultural districts. The use and appearance of these assets influences the overall experience of people in the area, which is vital in encouraging visitors to visit, remain and return. The opportunities in Beech Street are a microcosm of those opportunities referenced in the Mayor's Cultural Strategy, as well being key to the overall success of Culture Mile.</p> <p>Complementary to the property refurbishment will be the widening of the northern footway along Beech Street to provide generous pedestrian space adjacent to new retail, cultural and learning frontages. This footway widening will require the removal of the current eastbound vehicular lane. Beech Street will therefore provide for westbound vehicular movement only. Air pollution within the street remains a significant problem and the partial removal of traffic will be an important step towards reducing traffic emissions and creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment.</p> <p>In addition, the re-design of Aldersgate Street junction will improve safety and encourage pedestrian movement, particularly east-west. Finally, the vision for Beech Street also includes a vastly changed look and feel of the street through more vibrant treatment of the walls and roof of the covered road, enhanced lighting and opportunities for public art and way-finding. Overall, the experience of being in Beech Street will be much improved.</p>
<p>2. Work to date</p>	<p><u>Work to Date</u></p> <p>In presenting this vision for Beech Street, initial research, consultation and investigation has been undertaken.</p> <p><u>Barbican and Golden Lane Area Strategy (2015)</u> This Strategy involved extensive consultation with residents and other stakeholders. The majority of respondents expressed a desire to see changes to Beech Street. Air pollution was consistently identified as a major negative factor of the area, and improvements in this regard were strongly encouraged. The removal of traffic and pedestrianisation of Beech Street also emerged as a common theme.</p>

Culture Mile Look and Feel Strategy (draft, due 2018)

In addition, recent work to develop a Look and Feel Strategy for Culture Mile has identified four key aims in delivering public realm change; to create a culture spine, to take the best cultural experiences within the institutions into the public domain, to encourage discovery and exploration of hidden gems in the area, reinforcing greener and more reflective spaces and, for the area to be easily recognisable as Culture Mile through the adoption of innovative and responsive approaches to place-making. Beech Street forms a key part of the east-west axis through Culture Mile, which has been identified as the 'culture spine'.

Property Feasibility Study

In 2016 a Beech Street Property Feasibility Study was undertaken to assess the architectural, structural and commercial implications of introducing units for retail, cultural and learning uses along the frontages of Beech Street. The study explored the viability of such proposals and whether these would result in a level of change that is beneficial for the wider area.

Two specific approaches were considered:

- A commercial approach – seeking to maximise income from the retail and cultural and learning spaces that could be provided
- An alternative approach – requiring Corporation and Barbican active management of the letting of these spaces to be in a strong position to respond to opportunities and the strategic priorities of Culture Mile as it develops.

Gross annual rental forecasts for each approach have been estimated at £1.3m (commercial) and £1.1m gross of operating costs (alternative), however these approaches represent points on a spectrum of rental value that could be rebalanced depending on strategic priorities and business need. Based on this initial research, both approaches appear financially viable, however the 'alternative' approach would more strongly support the vision for Culture Mile and the aims of the draft Culture Mile Look and Feel Strategy.

Potential layout options for a refurbished Barbican Exhibition Hall 1 and 2 have been assessed as part of the Property Feasibility Study. All options require further consideration and further details will be presented in a separate report on property matters to the relevant Committees.

Another consideration for the property refurbishment will be the physical condition of the Barbican Exhibition Halls in relation to structural integrity, drainage, ventilation and other mechanical and electrical matters. Recent on-site observations have indicated that

these elements may require significant improvement as part of the comprehensive refurbishment.

High level traffic modelling

An initial, preliminary impact analysis (using the Transport for London (TfL) ONE Model for Central London) was produced in 2016 as part of a study to identify the geographical area that would be affected (i.e. the area to which traffic reassigns) by different options relating to the restriction or removal of traffic from Beech Street.

The options for testing were:

- Option 1- An eastbound closure of Beech Street to vehicles;
- Option 2 - A westbound closure of Beech Street to vehicles;
- Option 3 - A full closure of Beech Street in both directions.

Option 1 to close Beech Street eastbound would allow the footway on the northern side of Beech Street to be significantly widened with the least amount of change to Aldersgate Street junction and would maximise the potential for retail and other uses within the refurbished Barbican Exhibition Halls.

The output from the analysis shows that each of these three scenarios would cause a significant reassignment of traffic within the City (particularly on London Wall and Moorgate) and onto the TfL Network (Old Street) and streets of neighbouring boroughs.

As expected, Option 3 had the widest area of impact with traffic implications across most of the Square Mile, and into the London Boroughs of Islington and Hackney.

The area of traffic reassignment between Options 1 and 2 varied significantly, with an eastbound closure of Beech Street affecting a smaller area than a westbound closure, though still affecting TfL and LB Islington streets.

The impact areas are presented visually in Appendix 1.

Whilst the scope of the area of impact is now understood, the scale or severity of the impact on individual junctions is yet to be determined. For Option 1, which affects the smallest geographic area, it is estimated that traffic in the area will need to be reduced by approximately 20% to limit the impact to streets within the City. As a comparison, both the Aldgate and Bank on Safety schemes required much lower levels of traffic reassignment and their impact was contained within the City. A greater understanding of the impact of changes to traffic movement in Beech Street on the resilience of the street network is also required.

	<p>This scale of change to Beech Street would present a significant challenge for the City Corporation and would require a step-change in the Corporation's approach to managing traffic, including the process by which the City obtains necessary approvals from Transport for London (TfL) and the London Borough of Islington. Both TfL and LB Islington have parallel aspirations to reassign traffic from Old Street roundabout and Clerkenwell Road, with impacts likely to be felt within the City.</p> <p>The proposals for an eastbound closure and northern footway build out must be caveated with two specific concerns. Firstly, detailed traffic analysis and the impact on the resilience of the network may be found to be such that the necessary approvals from TfL can not be obtained. Secondly that the northern footway widening will be subject to confirmation following detailed surveys to establish that the sub-structure is able to safely take the additional loading.</p> <p>In summary, an eastbound closure would result in the smallest area of impact on the traffic network and would support the ambition to transform the Barbican Exhibition Halls. A west-bound closure would have greater traffic impact and would not be able to support the desired property changes on the northern side of Beech Street. Full pedestrianisation would have the largest area of impact on the traffic network, whilst supporting the desired property changes.</p>
3. Summary of Issue	<p><u>Summary of Issue</u></p> <p>The work to date has identified the opportunities for property refurbishment and transportation and public realm changes in Beech Street. To deliver this exciting transformation, a single vision, endorsed by Members, is required for the property and public realm in Beech Street. Departments leading on the individual workstreams will need to set out for Members their proposed programmes for delivery and the ways in which these work-streams will be coordinated effectively into a single cross-departmental programme.</p>
4. Proposed way forward	<p><u>Proposed Way Forward</u></p> <p>There are three main areas of work in delivering transformation in Beech Street:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation and Public Realm – the delivery of changes in Beech Street, including statutory processes, Traffic Management Act scheme approval from TfL, structural assessment, highway re-design, changes to the walls and roof of Beech Street, lighting and public art. • Property – the refurbishment of the Barbican Exhibition Halls in Beech Street and associated structural and M&E improvements

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbican Estate Maintenance – works including the podium waterproofing above Beech Street to enable the subsequent refurbishment of the Barbican Exhibition Halls. <p>An indicative programme to deliver each of these work areas will be provided in the proposed reports on transportation and public realm and on property refurbishment as described in Recommendation Two.</p> <p>Clearly these work-streams have significant inter-dependencies. To maximise the efficiency of delivery and reduce risk, each work-stream will be progressed within a single programme (Beech Street transformation programme). The appointment of a programme manager to coordinate these work-streams is desirable but an appointment will only be made once Members have greater certainty regarding the viability of the property and public realm changes.</p> <p>To this end, further detailed investigation, including the production and testing of a detailed traffic model, is required regarding the full impact of an east-bound traffic closure in Beech Street on the wider transport network and on network resilience, both inside and outside the City boundary. In addition, the integrity of the structures above, to the side and below Beech Street are not fully known and need to be determined at an early stage. These investigations, the details of the next steps required, together with the proposed funding approach, will be set out in separate gateway reports on the transportation and public realm changes and on the property refurbishment. Officers propose to liaise with Chamberlains regarding the funding approach to be set out for each workstream. The highways and public realm and the property refurbishment workstreams will be managed as stand-alone projects initially, albeit coordinated in due course by a programme manager.</p>
5. Next steps	<p><u>Next Steps</u></p> <p>Two reports will be prepared for the next Committee cycle; one in relation to the transportation and public realm changes and one in relation to the property refurbishment and will be received by the relevant Spending Committees. The existing Barbican Estate maintenance project, in relation to the waterproofing around Beech Street, will continue for now in accordance with the programme last reported to the relevant Committees.</p>
6. Funding	<p><u>Funding</u></p> <p>The cost envelope for the Beech Street transformation programme is estimated at £30m. This includes £12m for transportation and public realm changes and £18m for property</p>

	refurbishment. The podium water-proofing project is separately funded and has previously been approved by Members. The funding approach will be different for each work-stream and will be described in detail in the separate reports proposed. Officers are instructed to liaise with Chamberlains regarding the funding approach to be set out for each workstream.
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Appendices

Appendix 1	Indicative geographic areas of impact in relation to Beech Street traffic changes
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Appendix 1

With Beech Street closed, traffic will reassign to other east/west routes, primarily the London Wall / Aldersgate St alignment or the Old Street / Moorgate alignment. To a lesser extent other traffic will reassign from further back in the routing to choose routes to avoid this congestion, which means additional traffic on streets such as Newgate Street, Gresham Street, South Place. Traffic queues develop at junctions where the additional vehicle units are added to the existing queues. This can lead to growing traffic queues in the peak hours, i.e. at the London Wall / Moorgate junction which does not have spare capacity in the AM peak.

Option 1 - Zone of Impact (Eastbound Closure)



