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Date: May 21, 2019

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| Strand Aldwych Consultation: Consultation Response Report |
|  |
| Research Team: INTERNAL REPORT |



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# Introduction

This report summarises the responses to an extensive public consultation on draft concept designs for the Strand Aldwych area.

The ambition of the Strand Aldwych project is to transform this location from a polluted, traffic dominated gyratory to a pedestrian focused destination with strong links to the surrounding districts. The new public realm will balance the needs of the everyday for the local community with a world-class scheme.

The vision is for the area to become a global creative and cultural quarter which will be an international beacon for creativity, enterprise and learning.

**The project objectives are:**

• Encourage exemplary collaboration within and between a cluster of world-class cultural and educational institutions, SMEs and students enabling high end research, innovation and a public showcase

• Nurture and promote skills, entrepreneurship and economic growth in the knowledge and creative sectors

• Reduce congestion, improve air quality and journey times, with associated positive impacts on health and associated economic benefits

• Create an inspirational, safe and secure destination that offers a meeting place for workers, students, visitors and residents.

**The objectives of the public consultation were to:**

* Ensure that everyone in the area has the opportunity to review the plans and feedback their comments
* Build awareness and support for the project through a meaningful engagement process
* Seek feedback on the concept design and to highlight any issues to be taken forward into the next design stages.

# Executive Summary

**Overview**

The public consultation on Strand Aldwych opened on 30 January 2019 and ran for 6 weeks until 13 March. The council chose a consultation period of 6 weeks to enable a broad range of views to be gathered.

Reponses to the consultation have generally been positive, with the majority respondents supporting the overall objectives for the area (73%).

* Levels of overall support and opposition for the objectives are similar across different respondent groups, with the exception of business respondents
* The most common reasons cited for supporting the plans related to the perceived improvements to air quality, support for going further/doing more for cyclists and improvements for pedestrians
* The most common issues raised in opposition to the objectives related to traffic, especially increasing congestion elsewhere, cyclist safety and air pollution/quality.

A broad range of responses were received across different audiences and mainly via the consultation questionnaire – which was hosted online. Paper copies of the questionnaire were also available on request and at the exhibitions.

* There were 1,424 responses to the consultation survey
* The largest proportion of responses to the survey came from regular visitors to the area (796), followed by workers (680), residents (137) and business owners/representatives (45)

As the council has received over 1,400 responses to the consultation questionnaire we are confident the survey has captured all the major issues which need to be considered.

In addition, responses were also received via the following channels:

* Exhibitions: 188 people attended the exhibitions held during the consultation period.
* Face to face distribution: 481 engagements
* Email responses: 118 emails were received to the consultation inbox, from a mixture of audiences including stakeholder, organisations and businesses.

The consultation received high interest from cyclists and cycling lobby groups. From analysing the data, there were some duplicated responses to the consultation which addressed concerns about safety for cyclists regarding potential conflict with pedestrians and vehicles, and the need for segregated cycling space. It is clear from the analysis of open comments below that findings have been influenced by these respondents.

**Consultation Survey Findings**

The consultation survey listed the six objectives for the Strand/Aldwych project, of which over seven in ten consultation respondents (73%) are in support of (with 55% expressing strong support), while around a fifth (22%) oppose the objectives (16% strongly oppose).

Levels of overall support and opposition for the objectives are similar across different respondent groups, with the exception of business respondents. Sixty per cent of business respondents support the objectives, while 36% are in opposition; indeed, levels of opposition in this group are significantly higher than those among residents (20%) and visitors (21%)[[1]](#footnote-1).

The most common topics raised in support for the objectives centre on improvements to air quality (16%), support for going further/doing more for cyclists (14%), and improvements for pedestrians (12%). The most common issues raised in opposition to the objectives concern traffic, especially increasing congestion elsewhere (27%), cyclist safety (14%) and air pollution/quality (12%).

Seven in ten (69%) of those responding to the consultation made comments about how the plans would impact air quality. The largest proportion of people (42%) acknowledge that air quality is poor and improvements are needed, but they are non-committal about the plans.

Just under half (46%) of those responding to the consultation provided a comment in relation to improving spaces and places. While 31% of respondents support the plans, feeling that they will make the area more pleasant/healthier, a similar proportion (29%) raise concerns about mixing cyclists and pedestrians.

A quarter of respondents to the consultation (25%) provided a comment in relation to culture, education and innovation. A third of respondents (34%) feel the plans will generally improve the area in this respect.

A third of respondents to the consultation (34%) provided a comment in relation to the local economy. The comments err towards positive themes, with around a quarter of respondents (23%) expressing general, non-specific support for the plans in terms of the local economy.

The consultation invited respondents to make further suggestions to improve the proposals; around a quarter (23%) chose to answer. The most popular theme relates to cycling, with 41% of those answering suggesting improvements (e.g. to cycle lanes/routes, segregation of cyclists and cycle parking). A fifth (19%) make positive suggestions about the pedestrianisation of the area, while 18% of suggestions relate to the removal of all vehicular traffic/ a ban on through traffic/ allowing no parking in the area.

**Email and Other Responses**

54 emails were received via the consultation mailbox from individuals who wished to comment on the draft concepts via this channel. Each were read and have been coded for themes. The most common themes concerned: general including non-specific likes of design/idea, concerns about traffic and concerns that air quality will move to surrounding areas.

62 responses came from those who were responding on behalf of a stakeholder or organisation, these responses came via email or via the survey. The list of these respondents in Alphabetical order can be seen in the table in section 6.

# The Consultation

The consultation communications programme covered online, print and face-to-face channels to encourage maximum participation from different groups.

## **Communications Programme**

In order to widely publicise the consultation, a range of online and offline communications channels were used.

These included:

* Project website
* Consultation leaflet – visual of Strand Aldwych, event locations and dates (A5)
* Brochure – 12-page summary of Strand Aldwych proposal
* Exhibition display boards summarising the proposal (6 different boards at A1 for display and A2 sized for presentation portfolios)
* Direct Mail to 18,497 Council Tax and Business Tax addresses in St James’s ward
* Media / press programme
* Promotion and engagement on social media

**Website**

All information about the consultation was hosted on the strandaldwych.org website. All of the above printed material was also made available in libraries, community centres and at the exhibitions.

## Consultation Programme

The consultation programme covered both online, printed and face-to face channels in order to encourage a broad range of responses from different groups including residents, visitors to the area and those who work or have businesses in the area.

### Early Engagement

The project has been developed in a very collaborative way with stakeholders and many have been involved in the development of the concept designs. For example, a series of design workshops were held in April/May 2018 to set the design parameters for the new civic space on Strand which were attended by over 70 stakeholders in total. The project has a Joint Project Board comprising representatives from all stakeholders which meets regularly to advise on project progress and issues.

Individual meetings were also held with stakeholders to discuss specific issues prior to the formal consultation, including:

* **TfL** – A number of constructive meetings were held with TfL busses and with TfL taxis through the concept design stage, discussing detailed aspects of the scheme. The Aldwych is part of the Strategic Bus Network and TfL busses were keen to see an overall improvement in bus journey times as a result of the scheme, which has largely been achieved. Representatives from TfL attend the Joint Project Board and have taken the scheme to TfL’s Healthy Streets Board where it was well received.
* **Metropolitan Police** – various meetings have been held with Designing Out Crime officers and officers from the Counter Terrorism Unit to discuss the levels to which the project should address issues such as HVM and will remain involved with the project through detailed design stage.
* **London Cycle Campaign** – a meeting was held with representatives from LCC on 01/11/18 to discuss the concept designs.
* **Theatre Royal, Drury Lane** – a meeting was held on 26/11/18 to discuss issues relevant to the theatre.
* **City of London** – a meeting was held with officers on 29/11/19 to discuss the concept designs .
* **Society of London Theatres (SOLT) –** A meeting was held with SOLT on 11/12/18 to discuss issues around the concept design. Previously, meetings were held with representatives from all the theatres in the immediate vicinity to discuss design development and issues relevant to the theatres.
* **Royal National Institute for the Blind and Transport for All** – a meeting was held on 11/12/18 to discuss the concept proposals. Both organisations welcomed ongoing discussions through the detailed design stage.
* **London Borough of Camden** – a meeting was held on 17/12/18 to discuss the concept proposals.
* **Shafesbury plc** – a meeting was held on 18/12/18 to discuss the concept design.
* **Novello Theatre** – a meeting was held on 17/01/19 to discuss issues relevant to the theatre.
* **One Aldwych Hotel and Waldorf Hilton Hotel** – a meeting was held on 25/01/19 to discuss issues relevant to the hotels.
* **St Clement Dane’s School** – a meeting with the Head Teacher was held on 05/03/19 to highlight the main design elements and discuss issues relevant to the school.
* **Heritage England** – a meeting was held on 11/03/19 to discuss the concept designs.
* **180 Strand/Store Studios** – a meeting was held on 14/03/19 to discuss issues relevant to 180 Strand.

### Consultation Questionnaire

The consultation questionnaire consisted of mainly open questions in order for respondents to comment on the various concepts in their own way.

Survey themes included:

* + - Support for the overall objectives of the project
    - Comments on:
      * the overall concept designs
      * air quality
      * spaces and places
      * culture, education and innovation
      * supporting the local economy
      * Suggestions which respondents feel would improve the area
      * How respondents found out about the consultation

The consultation questionnaire was accessible online via the project website. Additionally, paper copies of the questionnaire were made available at all exhibitions, in libraries and community centres. Completed hard copies could be returned to Westminster City Council via Freepost or could be handed in at one of the exhibitions. The consultation brochure and questionnaire could also be requested in other languages and large print.

The questionnaire link was included on the consultation materials and via online newsletters as well as on social media throughout the consultation.

### Email

A dedicated email address ([strandaldwych@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:strandaldwych@westminster.gov.uk)) was provided to allow members of the public to request paper copies of the questionnaire, ask questions and put forward their views and comments.

### Face to face Engagement

**Exhibitions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **A person standing in a room  Description generated with high confidence** | **A group of people standing in a room  Description generated with very high confidence** |

Six exhibitions were held throughout the consultation period where members of the project team were available to speak about aspects of the scheme.

1. Thursday 7th February – London School of Economics – 12 to 2pm – 14 visitors
2. Saturday 9th February – St Mary le Strand church – 11am to 3pm – 41 visitors
3. Tuesday 12th February – King’s Student Union shop – 12 to 2pm – 26 visitors
4. Monday 18th February – London School of Economics – 4 to 8pm – 32 visitors
5. Tuesday 26th Feb – King’s Student Union shop – 4 to 8pm – 47 visitors
6. Thursday 7th March – St Mary le Strand church – 12 to 3pm – 42 visitors

188 people visited the exhibitions between 30th January to 13th March.

**Distribution engagement**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

Two on street engagements were held, the first primarily targeted workers and businesses, and the second event targeted King’s College and LSE students:

**Wednesday 6th February – 8 to 9.30am and 12 to 2pm**

Morning locations: Waterloo Bridge, Temple Tube, Somerset House, Kingsway/Holborn Tube.

Afternoon locations: Roaming the ‘D’, into the Royal Courts of Justice, Kingsway into Drury Lane/Royal Opera House, to Long Acre, and Covent Garden to Strand and Victoria Embankment.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Number of leaflets Distributed** | **Number of leaflets left at local places** |
| 3870 | 1795 |

**Monday 25th February – 8 to 10am and 12 to 2pm**

Morning locations: LSE John Watkins Plaza/Houghton Street, King’s Strand and Bush House buildings

Afternoon locations: LSE New Academic Building/Houghton Street, King’s Strand and Bush House buildings

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Number of leaflets Distributed** | **Number of leaflets left at local places** |
| 2640 | 40 |

The purpose of using a professional Face-to-Face distribution service was to ensure the workers entered into conversation with the public, businesses and students in the above locations. The distribution company provided a feedback report summarising frequently asked questions, and general comments.

The distribution team visited small business shops to make them aware of how to feedback into the consultation and left them with leaflets for their customers.

### Window displays

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A group of people standing in front of a building  Description generated with very high confidence |  |
|  |  |

On display at the King’s College Student Union shop on the Strand, the whole front window was dedicated to two vinyl banners of the six exhibition boards on display throughout the 6-week consultation period.

### Libraries

Visitors were able to visit Westminster Reference and Charing Cross libraries and see a dedicated space to take away the summary brochure and paper survey to complete.

### King’s College competition

King’s College is one of the top universities in the world, the fourth oldest university in England, research-led and based in the heart of London. King’s has over 31,000 students (including more than 12,800 postgraduates) from some 150 countries, and over 8,500 employees.

[[2]](#footnote-2)[[3]](#footnote-3)

Arranged by King’s College London, students had a unique opportunity to develop ideas to potentially influence a major new space in the heart of the university’s Strand campus during the first phase of the Strand Aldwych consultation. This was intended to raise awareness of the public consultation as well as encouraging students to put forward their ideas.

In the form of a 200-word (or less) competition students were asked; *‘What is your vision for the Strand Aldwych area?’* 36 students took part and a selection of their innovative responses included:

* Several clear 'domes' so that people can enjoy being outside and absorb what’s going on around them, with different domes for studying with access to laptop charging and seating and other domes for yoga or relaxation; combining the indoors - outside. Lighting used to make the area look magical, fun and safe for the evenings.
* Redefine the Strand Aldwych as an 'academic boulevard'. We could make the most of the proposals by focussing on three elements: nature, human interaction, and public engagement. The absence of cars is a chance to leave behind the noise and pollution of today's traffic and fill the place with natural wonder. The existing trees give the road a clear sense of rhythm. Bushes and shrubbery around St Mary le Strand would embellish the place with an inviting sense of mystery - picture here an English garden!
* Outlandish water fountains for people to drink from and refill bottles could further aid the minimisation of plastic use. The ideal transformation would add, for me, some green spaces, sitting benches or tables, terraces and fountains. The area could adopt a less urban vibe and give pedestrians a refreshing walk through the contrastingly busy Strand of today.
* On the outer rim of the park, the footpaths can be widened to allow for market style food stalls to be set up and a dedicated market day could be introduced. Behind the church to the East, an amphitheatre could be created that would allow for live music, screenings and other cultural activities and performances, taking inspiration from Federation Square in Melbourne. This area could be mosaiced adding to the aesthetic, using coloured bricks. This public square could be used to host exercise classes in the park area to the West of the Church, as well as wellbeing activities, such as lunchtime mindfulness. The focus is on calming the noise of the city, facilitated by the greenery. The amphitheatre is an attempt to foster community participation and designate the area as an events hub.
* Anything that could improve the biodiversity to the area should be considered, e.g. living walls, trees, allotments, bird boxes. Increased green space (including vertical green space) would help improve the climate conditions there, reducing the urban heat island effect. A community garden would be a wonderful way to use the space, either for students and staff and nearby workers and/or for outreach schemes such as the Putting Down Roots project run by St. Mungo’s which used horticultural therapy to help homeless people and give them gardening skills.

### Additional events

An invitation only stakeholder event was hosted by the Northbank BID at Somerset House on Monday 4th March from 5.30 to 7.30pm. The project team, and external consultants responded to questions on the designs. Cabinet Member Cllr Richard Beddoe gave a welcoming speech along with Jonathan Reekie, Director, Somerset House. There were 22 stakeholder visitors.

## Consultation Response

A broad range of responses were received across different audiences and mainly via the consultation questionnaire – which was hosted online. Paper copies of the questionnaire were also available on request and at the exhibitions.

* There were 1,424 responses to the consultation survey
* The largest proportion of responses to the survey came from regular visitors to the area (796), followed by workers (680), residents (137) and business owners/representatives (45)

As the council has received over 1,400 responses to the consultation questionnaire we are confident the survey has captured all the major issues which need to be considered.

In addition, responses were also received via the following channels:

* Exhibitions: 188 people attended the exhibitions held during the consultation period.
* Face to face distribution: 481 engagements
* Email responses: 118 emails were received to the consultation inbox, from a mixture of audiences including stakeholder, organisations and businesses.

### Cyclist Responses

The consultation received high interest from cyclists and cycling lobby groups. From analysing the data, there were some duplicated responses to the consultation which addressed concerns about safety for cyclists regarding potential conflict with pedestrians and vehicles, and the need for segregated cycling space. It is clear from the analysis of open comments below that findings have been influenced by these respondents.

## Analysis Methodology

Some of the questions in the consultation questionnaire allowed the respondent to tick multiple answers. Therefore, in some of the analysis the sum of the response to a question may be higher than 100%. In other cases, the total response to a single answer question may add up to slightly over 100% due to rounding of decimal points. Questions are based on the total number of respondents per question, as not all respondents answered every question.

All the open-ended questions in the consultation questionnaire were coded into themes to allow the responses to be quantified. This encompassed reading every response to these questions and creation of a code frame.

# Questionnaire Response Analysis

This section details the response received to the consultation questionnaire. 1,424 responses were received via this channel.

## Respondent Types

Over half of those responding to the consultation questionnaire (56%) identify themselves as a regular visitor to the Strand/Aldwych area, while 48% self-identify as a worker in the area. Ten per cent of respondents are Westminster residents, while 3% are business owner/representatives[[4]](#footnote-4), 1% are organisation/stakeholder respondents and 1% self-identify as being from a campaign group.

***Q. Are you completing this questionnaire as a…?***

*Base: all answering (1,414).*

## Support for objectives

The consultation listed the six objectives for the Strand/Aldwych project, as detailed below:

1. *Better movement of traffic – improved journey times and safety for many routes by removing the gyratory, having two-way traffic in Aldwych and removing it from part of the Strand*
2. *Improve the public realm – creating an attractive public space on the Strand and a better pedestrian experience on Aldwych*
3. *Improve links for walking and cycling – providing better connections to the surrounding area and improving safety for the 14 million people who visit each year*
4. *Improve air quality – addressing air quality across the whole project area, reducing traffic in some areas, mitigating the effects of traffic in other areas and working with partners to influence, lobby and explore opportunities for positive change*
5. *Support culture, education and innovation – creating opportunities to showcase the area’s wealth of cultural and educational talent and encouraging opportunities for collaboration*
6. *Support the area’s economy – enhancing its vibrancy, productivity and creativity by celebrating its unique character*

Over seven in ten consultation respondents (73%) are in support of the objectives (with 55% expressing strong support), while around a fifth (22%) oppose the objectives (16% strongly oppose).

***Q. To what extent do you support the objectives for this project?***

*Base: all respondents (1,424).*

**Analysis by respondent type**

Levels of overall support and opposition for the objectives are similar across different respondent groups, with the exception of business respondents. Sixty per cent of business respondents support the objectives, while 36% are in opposition; indeed, levels of opposition in this group are significantly higher than those among residents (20%) and visitors (21%).

***Q. To what extent do you support the objectives for this project?***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | Resident | Worker | Visitor | Business |
| *No. of responses* | ***1,424*** | *137* | *680* | *796* | *\*\*45* |
| Strongly support | **55%** | 58% | 60% | 50% | 47% |
| Tend to support | **18%** | 15% | 13% | 23% | 13% |
| Neither support nor oppose | **4%** | 4% | 3% | 4% | 2% |
| Tend to oppose | **6%** | 4% | 6% | 7% | 9% |
| Strongly oppose | **16%** | 17% | 18% | 14% | 27% |
| Don’t know | **2%** | 2% | 1% | 1% | 2% |
| NET: support | **73%** | 73% | 73% | 74% | 60% |
| NET: oppose | **22%** | 20% | 24% | 21% | 36% |

\*\* denotes very small sample size (<50 responses)

Respondents were asked if they would like to make any further comments about their support or opposition of the objectives and 50% chose to comment. The most common topics raised in support centre on improvements to air quality (16%), support for going further/doing more for cyclists (14%), and improvements for pedestrians (12%). The most common issues raised in opposition to the objectives concern traffic, especially increasing congestion elsewhere (27%), cyclist safety (14%) and air pollution/quality (12%).

***Q. If you wish to comment on your answer, please do so here.***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Themes of support** | % | **Themes of concern** | % |
| *No. of responses* | *718* | *No. of responses* | *718* |
| Better for air quality | 16% | Traffic, especially increasing congestion elsewhere | 27% |
| Could go further, do more for cyclists | 14% | Cyclist safety, not good enough/do more | 14% |
| General support, non-specific | 13% | Air pollution/ air quality | 12% |
| Better for pedestrians | 12% | Pedestrian safety | 10% |
| Support the objectives | 11% | Disruption | 7% |
| Better for traffic reduction | 9% | Other comments in opposition | 5% |
| Better for cyclists | 8% | Managing the project properly | 3% |
| Like the open space/ greener areas | 8% | Criticism of the question (multiple objectives) | 2% |
| Could go further, do more for pedestrians | 6% | Do not like designs | 1% |
| Other supportive comments | 3% |  |  |
| Like the designs, more attractive areas | 1% |  |  |
| Apply to other areas (Drury Lane, Strand, West End, etc) | 1% |  |  |

## Overall Concept Design

Asked whether they wished to comment on the overall design concept, 71% of respondents chose to do so.

The comments are split into supportive themes, neutral comments and concerns/critical themes, as summarised in the following chart. Around a quarter of respondents (26%) mention general, non-specific support for the overall design concept, with more specific mentions of liking the open/green spaces/trees/pedestrian access/public realm (9%), liking the design for pedestrians (7%), liking the appearance/attractive design (6%) and liking the design for traffic reduction (6%).

There is a clear theme of criticism for the design in relation to cyclists, with 53% of respondents who chose to answer the question mentioning at least one cycling-related issue. More specifically, 37% of respondents wanted to see more done for cyclists in terms of cycle parking, physical separation/protection of cyclists (including mentions of a ‘Dutch style’ approach), while 27% think cyclists should be separated from pedestrians, and 12% mention separating cyclists from traffic/ having cycle lanes. Other criticisms include concerns about traffic/congestion/pollution in surrounding areas (11%); need to do more/extend plans further (6%); have less parking/discourage cars (4%); concerns about antisocial behaviour/rough sleeping (1%); and better taxi access (1%).

***Q. Do you have any views on the overall concept designs?***

*Base: all respondents answering (1,017). Note: green bars show support, amber bars show neutral comment, red bars show concern/criticism.*

**Analysis by respondent type**

This analysis compares resident, worker and visitor responses to the question – the sample for business respondents was less than 30 cases.

Some differences in opinion are evident. While residents and workers are more likely than visitors to mention liking the open/green spaces/trees/public realm (16% and 12% versus 6% respectively), they are also more likely to express concerns about traffic/congestion/pollution in surrounding areas (20% and 14% versus 8% respectively).

Concerns about cycling are significantly more prevalent among visitors than other types of respondent: 67% of visitors mention at least one concern relating to cyclists versus 20% of residents and 39% of workers.

### Getting around the area

Around two-thirds of respondents (64%) made a comment in relation to how the plans would affect getting around the area, and comments voicing concern outweigh those voicing support. This is due to the large number of comments submitted by cyclists.

The overriding issue is concern about safety for cyclists in relation to conflict with pedestrians and motor vehicles – due to a lack of segregated space for road and pavement users (53%). Around one one in ten would like more traffic reduction (12%), better/more pedestrian crossings (9%), and improved/clearer plans (8%). Other concerns related to bottlenecks on the perimeter/side roads (5%); a need for public transport to work better (5%); dangerous turns, junctions, crossings (3%); taxi access concerns (2%) and a desire for all motorised traffic to be removed from the area (1%).

In terms of support, 16% of those answering think that the design is an improvement, while 8% think it is good for pedestrians and 4% while supportive wish for more pedestrianisation/wider pavements.

***Q. Do you have any comments on getting around the area?***

*Base: all respondents answering (912). Note: green bars show support, amber bars show neutral comment, red bars show concern/criticism.*

**Analysis by respondent type**

The analysis compares resident, worker and visitor responses to the question – the sample for business respondents was less than 30 cases and is not displayed in the following table.

In terms of the key concern, namely cyclist safety, visitors to the area and workers are more likely than residents to express this concern, with visitors significantly more likely to do so than the other two groups (65% of visitors and 43% of workers versus 26% of residents).

Residents and workers are more likely than visitors to express concerns about:

* Needing to do more to reduce traffic levels (18% of residents and 14% of workers versus 9% of visitors)
* Needing better/more pedestrian crossings (12% of residents and 14% of workers versus 5% of visitors)
* Bottlenecks on perimeter/side roads (13% and 7% versus 3%)

Residents are significantly more likely than other respondent groups to make other negative comments about getting around the area (17% versus 4% of workers and 6% of visitors).

***Q. Do you have any comments on getting around the area?***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | Resident | Worker | Visitor |
| *No. of responses* | ***912*** | *\*78* | *409* | *556* |
| Concerns about cyclists, need separation, protection, cycle lanes | **53%** | 26% | 43% | 65% |
| It is an improvement (non-specific) | **16%** | 12% | 17% | 17% |
| Need to do more to reduce traffic level | **12%** | 18% | 14% | 9% |
| Needs better/more pedestrian crossings | **9%** | 12% | 14% | 5% |
| Good for pedestrians, safer | **8%** | 13% | 10% | 7% |
| Need to improve plans, make clearer | **8%** | 6% | 6% | 8% |
| Other negative comment (e.g. disabled access not considered) | **6%** | 17% | 4% | 6% |
| Bottleneck concerns on perimeter/side roads | **5%** | 13% | 7% | 3% |
| Make public transport work better | **5%** | 6% | 7% | 3% |
| Leave things as they are, this is no better | **5%** | 10% | 7% | 4% |
| Needs more pedestrianisation, wider pavements | **4%** | 3% | 5% | 2% |
| Dangerous turns, junctions, crossings | **3%** | 5% | 4% | 3% |
| Taxi access/turns concerns | **2%** | 3% | 3% | 1% |
| Air quality improvements/green spaces | **2%** | 4% | 1% | 1% |
| Remove all motorised traffic from area | **1%** | 1% | 2% | 1% |
| Other positive comment | **1%** | 1% | 2% | 0 |

\* denotes small sample size (<100 responses)

### Air quality

Seven in ten (69%) of those responding to the consultation made comments about how the plans would impact air quality. The largest proportion of people (42%) acknowledge that air quality is poor and improvements are needed, but they are non-committal about the plans. This is followed by 34% thinking that more is needed in terms of reducing traffic levels by discouraging motor vehicles/limiting parking.

Thirteen per cent of respondents think that air quality is poor and the plans will improve the situation, while a similar proportion (12%) think that the plans will make air quality worse as they will encourage congestion. A tenth (10%) feel that the plans will shift air quality problems to surrounding areas such as Drury Lane. Other concerns/criticisms relate to the need to encourage other environmental schemes (7%); and stop/start traffic being more polluting than moving vehicles (6%).

***Q. Do you have any comments on air quality?***

*Base: all respondents answering (984). Note: green bars show support, amber bars show neutral comment, red bars show concern/criticism.*

**Analysis by respondent type**

Views about the impact of the plans on air quality are generally similar when the comments are analysed by respondent type.

However visitors are significantly more likely than resident, worker or business respondents to feel that traffic levels need to be reduced further (43% versus 27%, 24% and 19% respectively). Residents are more likely than workers and visitors to mention a wish to encourage other environmental schemes (19% versus 5% and 8% respectively) and to make any other negative comment (14% versus 5% of both workers and visitors) [[5]](#footnote-5).

***Q. Do you have any comments on air quality?***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Theme** | **Total** | Resident | Worker | Visitor | Business |
| *No. of responses* | ***984*** | *\*96* | *473* | *555* | *\*\*31* |
| Welcome improvements to air quality, non-committal about current scheme | **42%** | 41% | 45% | 41% | 45% |
| Must reduce traffic levels further | **34%** | 27% | 24% | 43% | 19% |
| Air quality is poor, proposals will improve | **13%** | 14% | 15% | 13% | 19% |
| Might make it worse, scheme causes more congestion | **12%** | 9% | 16% | 11% | 13% |
| Concerns that air quality problem will move to surrounding areas | **10%** | 11% | 14% | 7% | 10% |
| Encourage other environmental schemes (electric cars, ban diesel, more planting) | **7%** | 19% | 5% | 8% | 6% |
| Stop/start traffic (esp. buses) more polluting than moving vehicles | **6%** | 8% | 8% | 6% | 6% |
| Other negative comment | **6%** | 14% | 5% | 5% | 10% |
| Air quality ok now most of the time | **2%** | 4% | 2% | 2% | 6% |
| Other positive comment | **1%** | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

\* denotes small sample size (<100 responses); \*\* very small sample size (<50 responses)

### Spaces and places

Just under half (46%) of those responding to the consultation provided a comment in relation to improving spaces and places.

While 31% of respondents support the plans, feeling that they will make the area more pleasant/healthier, a similar proportion (29%) raise concerns about mixing cyclists and pedestrians. Indeed, when all mentions are considered, 34% relate to cyclist concerns, while 27% relate to a concern about vehicular traffic.

***Q. Do you have any comments on improving spaces and places?***

*Base: all respondents answering (651). Note: green bars show support, amber bars show neutral comment, red bars show concern/criticism.*

**Analysis by respondent type**

This analysis compares resident, worker and visitor responses – the sample for business respondents was less than 30 cases.

The analysis shows that similar proportions of respondents in different groups comment on the individual themes, with the exception of cyclist concerns: visitors are significantly more likely than residents or workers to mention these (at an aggregate level, 41% of visitors mention at least one concern about cyclists versus 12% of residents and 28% of workers).

### Culture, education and innovation

A quarter of respondents to the consultation (25%) provided a comment in relation to culture, education and innovation.

A third of respondents (34%) feel the plans will generally improve the area in this respect. Thirteen per cent feel that it will be good to have many venues in the same area, 11% comment on the plans being good for students/colleges and a further 11% of comments relate to the plans being good for galleries such as Somerset House and the Courtauld Institute.

A fifth of those responding to the question (19%) feel that the plans are not needed and that they will not add anything to the area in terms of culture, education and innovation.

***Q. Do you have any comments on culture, education and innovation?***

*Base: all respondents answering (352). Note: green bars show support, amber bars show neutral comment, red bars show concern/criticism.*

**Analysis by respondent type**

This analysis compares resident, worker and visitor responses to the question – the sample for business respondents was less than 30 cases.

Similar proportions of respondents in different groups comment on the individual themes, with the exception of feeling that the scheme is not needed and will not add anything in terms of culture, education or innovation to the area: residents are significantly more likely than workers or visitors to express this view (31% versus 17% and 16% respectively).

### Local economy

A third of respondents to the consultation (34%) provided a comment in relation to the local economy.

The comments err towards positive themes, with around a quarter of respondents (23%) expressing general, non-specific support for the plans in terms of the local economy, and 19% feeling that walkers/cyclists are more likely to stop than motorists and this spending power will be positive. A further 9% of comments refer to outdoor seating/markets/independent places to eat as positives for the local economy.

Some respondents are conditionally supportive: 10% feel the plans support the local economy if safe cycling and cycle parking is provided, while 9% feel the plans support the local economy if there is good access to the area (for cycles/buses/pedestrians).

In terms of critical views, 8% do not feel that the plans will benefit the local economy, while 7% raise concerns that fewer people will visit if access is reduced.

***Q. Do you have any comments on supporting the local economy?***

*Base: all respondents answering (487). Note: green bars show support, amber bars show neutral comment, red bars show concern/criticism.*

**Analysis by respondent type**

The analysis compares resident, worker and visitor responses to the question – the sample for business respondents was less than 30 cases and is not displayed in the following table.

Similar proportions of respondents in different groups commented on the individual themes, with the exception of:

* If safe cycling and cycle parking provided: significantly more likely to be mentioned by visitors (14%) than residents (2%) or workers (7%)
* Other positive comment: significantly more likely to be mentioned by residents (21%) than workers (8%) or visitors (5%)

***Q. Do you have any comments on supporting the local economy?***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | Resident | Worker | Visitor |
| *No. of responses* | ***487*** | *\*52* | *224* | *301* |
| More pleasant place to visit with no vehicles/less pollution so more people spend money | **28%** | 29% | 26% | 29% |
| Supportive of plans (general, non-specific) | **23%** | 25% | 25% | 23% |
| Walkers/cyclists more likely to stop/spend than motorists | **19%** | 12% | 15% | 23% |
| If safe cycling and cycle parking provided | **10%** | 2% | 7% | 14% |
| Outdoor seating, markets and good independent places to eat | **9%** | 10% | 11% | 6% |
| If there is good access (cycle, bus, pedestrians) | **9%** | 12% | 11% | 8% |
| Other positive comment | **8%** | 21% | 8% | 5% |
| Do NOT think local economy will benefit | **8%** | 4% | 8% | 7% |
| Concern that fewer will visit if access reduced | **7%** | 12% | 10% | 6% |
| Other negative comment | **6%** | 12% | 8% | 7% |
| Allow taxi access | **2%** | 2% | 3% | 1% |
| Depends on the definition of 'local' | **1%** | 0 | 1% | 1% |

\* denotes small sample size (<100 responses);

### Further comments

When asked if they would like to make further comments on any of the previous themes, 17% of respondents did so.

There is a widespread desire for better provision for cyclists: 42% of those responding express wishes to do with cyclist safety, separate cycle lanes and cycle parking. Other themes, mentioned by 10% or more of those responding, include criticism of the plans and the need to further reduce motor traffic (17%); pollution/air quality (17%); a general desire for the plans to do more/ include more innovation (10%); and more focus on pedestrians (10%).

***Q. Are there any themes you would like to comment upon?***

*Base: all respondents answering (242). Note: green bars show support, amber bars show neutral comment, red bars show concern/criticism.*

**Analysis by respondent type**

The analysis compares resident, worker and visitor responses to the question – the sample for business respondents was less than 30 cases and is not displayed in the following table.

Similar proportions of respondents in different groups commented on the individual themes, with the exception of:

* Better provision for cyclists: 52% of visitors responding to the question mention this theme, and this proportion is significantly higher than that in the resident group (13%) or worker group (38%).
* Retain residents’ parking: 8% of residents who responded mention this, compared with 1% of workers and 1% of visitors.
* Other negative comment: these are significantly more likely to be made by residents (26%) compared with workers (12%) or visitors (13%).

***Q. Are there any themes you would like to comment upon?***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | Resident | Worker | Visitor |
| *No. of responses* | ***242*** | *\*\*38* | *106* | *143* |
| Better provision for cyclists: safety, separate lanes, parking | **42%** | 13% | 38% | 52% |
| Pollution/air quality | **17%** | 16% | 17% | 15% |
| Motor traffic needs to be reduced | **17%** | 21% | 14% | 17% |
| Other negative comments | **13%** | 26% | 12% | 13% |
| Pedestrians - greater focus required | **10%** | 8% | 9% | 11% |
| Could do more/more innovation | **10%** | 13% | 12% | 5% |
| Other positive comments | **6%** | 5% | 6% | 6% |
| Supportive of plans (general, non-specific) | **6%** | 5% | 5% | 7% |
| Green spaces | **5%** | 8% | 4% | 3% |
| Extending/ linking the scheme to other nearby areas | **4%** | 5% | 4% | 3% |
| Keep buses and taxis out - too many buses | **3%** | 3% | 4% | 3% |
| Retain residents' parking | **2%** | 8% | 1% | 1% |
| Leave area as it is, no change | **2%** | 3% | 4% | 2% |
| Pedestrians - general positive comments | **2%** | 0 | 3% | 2% |

\*\* denotes very small sample size (<50 responses)

## Suggestions for Improvements

The consultation invited respondents to make further suggestions to improve the proposals; around a quarter (23%) chose to answer.

The most popular theme relates to cycling, with 41% of those answering suggesting improvements (e.g. to cycle lanes/routes, segregation of cyclists and cycle parking). A fifth (19%) make positive suggestions about the pedestrianisation of the area, while 18% of suggestions relate to the removal of all vehicular traffic/ a ban on through traffic/ allowing no parking in the area.

Other suggestions relate to concerns about traffic flow in the area (11%); the need for substantial investment in trees/plants (9%); positive suggestions around air quality (8%); making links with other nearby areas (7%); and the importance of buses to the area (3%).

As seen at other points in the consultation response, a small minority of respondents (5%) suggest that the area should be left as it is.

***Q. If you have any suggestions on the themes listed above, which you feel would improve the Strand Aldwych area, please write them in here***

*Base: all respondents answering (332).*

**Analysis by respondent type**

This analysis compares resident, worker and visitor responses to the question – the sample for business respondents was less than 30 cases.

Similar proportions of respondents make the various suggestions for improvements. The exception is in relation cycling: again, visitors are significantly more likely than residents or workers to mention suggestions for improving cycling provision (49% of visitors mention at least one suggestion versus 15% of residents and 34% of workers).

## Communications Channels

The top sources of communication about the consultation were word of mouth (26%), social media (20%) and community forum/group (18%).

***Q. How did you find out about this consultation?***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Channel** | **%** |
| *Base (all answering)* | *1,059* |
| Word of mouth | 26% |
| Social media | 20% |
| Community forum/group | 18% |
| Leaflet | 10% |
| E-newsletter | 8% |
| strandaldwych.org website | 8% |
| WCC website | 5% |
| Letter from the council | 4% |
| Newspaper | 4% |
| Open Forum website | 1% |
| Other | 17% |

# Email responses

In addition to feedback through the online and paper questionnaires, respondents were able to respond to the consultation via letter or email to Westminster City Council and via [strandaldwych@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:strandaldwych@westminster.gov.uk).

54 emails were received via the consultation mailbox from individuals who wished to comment on the draft concepts via this channel. Each were read and have been coded for themes. The most common themes concerned: general including non-specific likes of design/idea, concerns about traffic and concerns that air quality will move to surrounding areas.

**Positive Comments**

The most common positive themes supporting the scheme include general, non-specific likes of the design/idea, traffic reduction in the area and better provision for cyclists and pedestrians.

**Negative Comments**

The most common negative comments centred on opposition regarding perceived increased congestion, air quality issues moving to the surrounding areas and concerns about pedestrian safety.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Theme** | **% of mentions** |
| General, non-specific likes of design/idea | 39% |
| Concerns about traffic, especially increasing congestion | 35% |
| Concerns that air quality problem will move to surrounding areas | 22% |
| Concerns about pedestrian safety | 15% |
| Like for traffic reduction in the area | 15% |
| Better for cyclists | 11% |
| Better for pedestrians | 11% |
| Concerns about disruption | 9% |
| Like the green and open spaces/pedestrian areas | 7% |
| More can be done for cyclists: improve cycle lanes, routes, segregation, more parking | 7% |
| Negative – general, non-specific | 6% |
| Would like further information on plans | 6% |
| Suggestions | 6% |
| Concerns about the concept/objectives | 4% |
| Concerns about cyclist safety, not good enough, do more | 4% |
| Retain resident’s parking | 4% |
| Better for air quality | 2% |
| Keep buses and taxis out, too many buses | 2% |
| Should do more/revisions-general | 2% |

# Stakeholder Responses

62 responses came from those who were responding on behalf of a stakeholder or organisation, these responses came via email or via the survey. A list of these respondents in Alphabetical order can be seen in the table below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Australian High Commission | 32 | London Living Streets |
| 2 | 20's Plenty for Us | 33 | LSE & Political Science |
| 3 | BDO Remit Bank | 34 | LSE Cities |
| 4 | Campaign for Better Transport London | 35 | LSE Directorate |
| 5 | Capco (Capital and Counties) | 36 | LSE Student’s Union |
| 6 | City of London | 37 | LW Theatres |
| 7 | Confederation of Passenger Transport UK | 38 | National Federation for the Blind UK |
| 8 | Covent Garden Area Trust | 39 | North and East London General Branch of Equity |
| 9 | Covent Garden Community Association | 40 | Northbank BID |
| 10 | The Delaunay Restaurant | 41 | Peter Stewart Consultancy |
| 11 | Delfont Mackintosh Theatres | 42 | Phipps PR |
| 12 | DRIVE | 43 | Ramblers Inner London Area |
| 13 | Duchy of Lancaster | 44 | Rowan Asset Management |
| 14 | Farebrother | 45 | Royal National Institute of Blind People |
| 15 | Heneli Minerals Ltd | 46 | Shaftesbury Estates |
| 16 | Historic England | 47 | Society of London Theatres |
| 17 | Illuminated River Foundation | 48 | Somerset House Trust |
| 18 | Kerman & Co LLP | 49 | St Clement Dane Church |
| 19 | King’s College London Estates & Facilities | 50 | St Mary le Strand |
| 20 | King’s College London Student’s Union | 51 | Strandlines |
| 21 | L’Avenue Int’l Holdings Ltd | 52 | Theatres Trust |
| 22 | Lewisham Living Streets | 53 | Transport for All |
| 23 | Licensed Taxi and Driver’s Association | 54 | Transport for London |
| 24 | London Ambulance Service | 55 | Transport for London Taxi Private Hire |
| 25 | London Anglican | 56 | The Vinyl Factory – 180 Strand |
| 26 | London Borough of Camden | 57 | Vision Zero London |
| 27 | London Cab Drivers Club | 58 | Waldorf Hilton |
| 28 | London Cycling Campaign | 59 | Westminster BIDS |
| 29 | London Farmers Market Ltd | 60 | Westminster Cycling Campaign |
| 30 | London Fire Brigade | 61 | Wheels for Wellbeing |
| 31 | London First | 62 | Whittard Trading Ltd |

## Key Stakeholders

45 key stakeholders responded to the consultation. Below is a summary of the responses from these organisations and groups.

### Businesses and business groups

***Capco (Capital and Counties)***

Broadly supportive of the proposals. Feels this will assist in enhancing the pedestrian linkage between Covent Garden, Somerset House and the University by providing a high-quality, pedestrian friendly, public space for visitors. Physical changes will significantly enhance the setting of the church and the high-quality buildings which surround the pedestrian space.

***The Delaunay Restaurant***

Support the proposal. No Queries.

***LW Theatres***

Support the objectives, however they would like that the potential significant benefits delivered a more holistic approach to better understand the issues and opportunities of the area impacted by the proposals. Concerned that the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane will be placed at the centre of a revised localised road system that could potentially exacerbate problems whilst also failing to capitalise on the opportunity to enhance this area. The challenges identified as the background to the proposals for the Strand Aldwych area – poor public realm; traffic congestion; difficulty in moving through the district - apply equally to Drury Lane/Russell Street/Catherine Street, areas immediately surrounding a landmark theatre. They find it unfortunate that the draft design concepts for Strand Aldwych appear to impose potentially significant negative consequential impacts on this locality as a result of it being considered peripheral to the main area of the study.

***London First***

Strongly support the objectives and welcome the overall concept designs. Many positive comments.

***Northbank BID***

Support the proposals for the Strand Aldwych, to develop a new public realm, reduce congestion, improve air quality and journey times, and contribute to health and economic benefits in the area. Would like to continue working collaboratively with WCC. All positive comments.

***Rowan Asset Management***

Pleased with Aldwych refurbishment designs and Strand to be cycle-friendly. Concerned about increased traffic and pollution on Aldwych once the traffic becomes two-way. Hopes the buses turning from both directions on Aldwych into Melbourne Place, directly opposite Aldwych House, will not be disruptive to people crossing there and that this doesn’t increase the level of pollution. Would like more details on measures to reduce noise pollution during construction work. More attention given to cycle routes through the area/city.

***The Vinyl Factory – 180 Strand***

Supportive of the concept, though they think there are areas of detail that need to be developed, reviewed and amended. Initial concerns and comments relate to: whether there will be bus stops or bus stands in front of 180 strand; if 180 Strand does not become pedestrianised, ensure it doesn’t become viewed as a ‘service or bus terminal area’; the “Boris” bikes and public toilet pavement at 180 Strand should be relocated west on proposed pedestrianisation area of the Strand (declutter pavement area); management plan need to developed for the area.

***Waldorf Hilton***

Understands that new ways of moving around the city are needed but has many comments and concerns:

* Concerned about increase in traffic in front of the hotel during arrival and departure times.
* Changing direction of flow will divert guests on a long route to reach the front doors.
* Increased traffic on Tavistock St could affect hotel deliveries, suggests staggered access timings for general traffic to be encouraged.
* Existing cycle route on Catherine St is a concern for pedestrian safety.
* Coach and Bus parking is already an issue and sees this as only making it worse.
* Hotel requires safe drop off area - will the black taxi rank on Aldwych remain?
* Feels the the ‘D’ is going to be made busier with a real disruption to guests, increased pollution and congestion.
* Moving bus stops to opposite the Waldorf will increase noise and affect guests.
* Increase in buses directly affects the pollution levels in the area - confirm when pollution free buses will be used in the area.
* Removing RV1 will affect the guests who benefit from being able to get from Aldwych over to the London Bridge area and beyond.
* Better management/enforcement of coaches and tour buses is needed.
* Pedestrian feel unsafe competing with coaches, commuters, guests arriving/leaving.
* Proposals are that there will be no taxi rank outside, during events up to 40 or 50 taxis can be flagged.
* Needs reassurance that proposals won’t make it worse for guests to get to hotels.
* Guest perception is key - wouldn't want to spend £15 more to get to the front door.
* Balanced view of journey times - Not all journey times will be longer. Some will be improved.
* Detouring the guests to take a right turn down Kingsway will cause traffic and delays.

Worried about accessibility for guests and vehicles that may be needed e.g., coaches, taxis, buses and how the area may be heavily congested during busier times.

***Westminster BIDS***

Support the addition of widened pedestrian crossings as well as dedicated cycle lanes, and the reintroduction of two-way traffic operations. Dedicated bus, cycle and taxi access only lanes are welcomed. They ask WCC to consider the effect proposals will have on increased traffic in the surrounding areas. Welcome provision of a pedestrian-friendly area by St Mary and the new green space which will tackle poor air pollution and provide safe space for residents. They ask WCC to consider how their proposals for a pedestrian-friendly area would impact local businesses that operate near the Lancaster Place Junction.

### Charities and not for profit organisations

***Covent Garden Area Trust***

Welcomes ambition of proposals and enhancement of the public realm. CGAT cannot ignore the issue of the traffic displacement with regards to the new proposed traffic flow outlined in TN07. The proposed traffic flow will feed directly into Covent Garden area. CGAT appreciates the consideration that Westminster has put into the design of the Strand Aldwych.

***Historic England***

Support proposals but sees the consultation as a welcome opportunity to address the traffic which blights this important historic route. Encourages us to look beyond the boundaries of this scheme and to the relationship with the wider setting (e.g. St Clement Danes, Royal Courts of Justice etc). The Church of St Mary-le-Strand, its repair and future use within this new space should be at the heart of the proposals and they are happy to provide advice to the church. There is the need for a careful balance between the proposed space as an urban park and the city townscape. Function, future-proofing and materials will be key, as identified during our discussion. Planting is particularly important, especially new trees. Necessary barriers and security to safeguard those using the space. Also interested to see how the scheme will work holistically with the Aldwych, the associated changes with this road and the setting of the grand Beaux Arts buildings that line the street.

***National Federation for the Blind UK***

Requested a meeting to discuss proposals as the use of shared space road designs have been paused by the Government. Requests plans of the design to be accessible to the visually impaired. Asked for advice on what access cyclists will be given and how this is being designed

***Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)***

Unable to support any shared spaces schemes, the removal of signal-controlled crossings and the incorrect use of tactile paving guidelines. Blind or partially sighted individuals use a white cane which is not consistently visible and mixing pedestrians and cyclists presents not only the blind or partially sighted pedestrian with a problem, but cyclists too. Bicycles and eBikes produce extremely low noise levels effectively rendering them 'invisible' to a blind or partially sighted person. Cyclists may be unable to avoid a collision if they aren't aware that a pedestrian is visually impaired. Footways allow blind and partially sighted people to assume a very low probability of collision with a moving mode of transport. Problem of shared use paths: they are by definition not a dedicated footway and so the accessibility provisions afforded by dedicated footways are lost and there are many issues listed that shared use paths create for blind and partially sighted people.

***St Clement Dane Church***

Welcomes the proposed development in the Aldwych but have some concerns. Requested clarification on: access to and from St Clement Danes Church; whether staff, disabled, contractor and delivery vehicles will still be able to enter the church forecourt; cobbled area to the front and west of the Church is not materially changed.

***St Mary le Strand***

Supportive of the proposals but asks for the following considerations: requested occasional vehicle access for weddings/funerals, noise monitoring, construction works mess to be cleaned away from church, access to the crypt to be maintained.

### Cultural and arts organisations/representatives

***Delfont Mackintosh Theatres***

Welcomes the desire to improve this area in traffic terms and for pedestrians, with improved desire lines, air quality and public realm admirable and timely objectives. Has concerns about the scheme as currently presented as outlined further. Provided data that shows air quality improvement benefits will only be seen on the Strand and not on the Aldwych and asks for further work to look at solutions and interventions that will improve the figures for all areas of the scheme for the creation of the substantial new public realm area. Suggested improvements to the footways on the north side of Aldwych are welcomed, and safety considerations around Catherine St are long overdue and necessary. Concerns around pedestrian crosses that may have affected the front of the theatre have been addressed. Have an issue with the proposed taxi bays on Catherine Street as up to 8 taxi bays will be lost and there is a need to relocate these within the immediate area. Worried about the potential removal of the bus stand/stop on Catherine Street and replacement with taxi bays. Engine idling and congestion around the bays mean the potential for fumes impacting the internal air quality for performers, staff and the visiting public as well as noise impacts.

***Society of London Theatres***

Supportive of the scheme and welcome aspirations of this proposals. Made general observations on behalf of our theatres; in regard to traffic, air quality, mixed use bays, street furniture and pedestrian access – supports the scheme but would like to ensure needs of theatres are taken onboard.

***Somerset House Trust***

They believe the designs are very strong but there is much more detail to be added. Specific areas to be looked at further are the curtilage of the pedestrian area, especially on the northern side of the area - this scheme is much more than just the pedestrianised space; the junction on Drury Lane and the traffic up Drury Lane particularly in relation to the school; the provision for cyclists and the management of a shared space for pedestrians and cyclists. There are also important discussions to take place about the future management and curation of the space.

***Theatres Trust***

Supportive in principle of what these proposals seek to achieve. Acknowledges that pedestrian permeability through the area is challenging and the public realm is in need of improvement. To address these deficiencies, it is essential that alterations to highways and the public realm are carefully planned with full consideration of the unique challenges associated with individual uses within the area. In their case, this means preserving the ability of theatres to function and ensuring highway safety is not compromised where vehicles are diverted. Unclear whether air quality will be improved with Aldwych becoming a two-way rather than one-way system as in theory Strand pedestrianisation would be doubling traffic levels in this area. Strongly encourages that final draft designs take into account the ability for large vehicles to be parked, sometimes for prolonged periods and safeguards appropriate bays and space for servicing and deliveries.

### Land and property owners

***BDO Remit Bank (owner Strand Bridge House)***

Have numerous comments; How will the works be phased and will we see the proposed finishes before construction begins? Impact on public transport will be top priority. Impact to the entrance deliveries and facilities to Strand Bridge House. Rough sleepers urinating in public – how would the new design address / mitigate this? Is CCTV system included in the proposed scope of works? With the proposed traffic re-routing, what would be the impact to rubbish collection or cash pick-up? Once the new public spaces are complete, it will need a stricter regimen for upkeep and cleaning. What are the proposals?

***Duchy of Lancaster***

Have a series of concerns: Want to see further details on the proposals for the management of the conflict of traffic, pedestrians and cyclists. How will the public realm area be managed? Will cafes/restaurants be permitted to put tables/ chairs in the area? Is there a separate Food and Beverage officer in the area? How will traffic/cyclists be separated along the Aldwych and will cyclists be permitted to use the pedestrianised areas? What works are to be undertaken at the eastern end of the Strand to ensure this area fits with the proposals on Aldwych? Are TfL supportive of the changes and what will this mean for the bus routes in the area? The existing traffic flow on Strand means it is often no better than a bus car-park: how will the proposals affect the flow of traffic on Strand and what measures are being taken to improve this?

***King’s College London Estates & Facilities***

Supportive of WCC's rational and objectives which will benefit the entire King's community with improved air quality and safety for students and staff, and opportunities to showcase their research and education in an accessible and unique way.

***Shaftesbury Estates***

Strongly support the objectives for the project. They also support the traffic proposals but welcome the opportunity to discuss the next stage of design. Proposed one-way traffic southbound only to the entire length of Catherine Street.

### Local authorities and public sector organisations

***City of London***

Supportive of proposals in principle, it is in line with their aims to make streets healthier and safer. Thy noted proposals could have an impact on westbound journey times. Congestion could increase pollution, noise and road safety risks so they ask that opportunities to reduce this impact are explored.

***London Ambulance Service (LAS), Westminster***

No major concerns about the traffic routing proposals. They will make a nicer place to congregate. Concerns from LAS centre on emergency access given the difference in height down to the Victoria Embankment which makes access to that location more difficult than it is currently - useful to provide further input to the detail around plans for emergency access.

***London Borough of Camden***

Supportive of the scheme in principle. Vital that the benefits for pedestrians and cyclists are maximised by any scheme. London Borough of Camden has been successful in securing TfL Liveable Neighbourhood funding for the transformation of the Holborn area - important that the two authorities continue to work together to co-ordinate these two projects and ensure delivery of one does not compromise the ability to deliver the other. Officers consider that there could be benefit in taking a wider look at the cycle routes in the area, particularly in relation to how they connect to Central London Cycle grid routes.

***London Fire Brigade***

Would like to discuss the consultation in more detail with the council.

### Resident associations and civic societies

***Covent Garden Community Association***

Support the aims of the project, namely significant improvements to the public realm in the area, especially along the Strand, but they are unable to support the scheme. This is because they have serious concerns around the traffic modelling and the potential for congestion with resulting damage to residential and business amenity – Aldwych will become more congested and this congestion will spread to Covent Garden area. They fear that this will move poor air quality into residential area and areas densely populated by tourists. They think that the main consultation documents do not address the issue of traffic displacement at all. They are not confident that all the relevant roads are taken into account, and they have specific questions regarding volume of and capacity for traffic flow.

### Transport organisations/representative groups

***Confederation of Passenger Transport UK***

Welcome balanced proposals and support the broader aims, but there are issues in the Strand/Aldwych area which can be addressed. They ask that changes will not disadvantage visitors to other facilities in the area, the theatres in Drury Lane, Covent Garden etc. CPT asks that when considering the coach service needs in the area, it should be noted that these coaches provide environmentally friendly, practical and affordable transport to visitors. The A4 is a key artery and alternatives are limited. If the route capacity is restricted, the impact could be hugely significant.

***Licensed Taxi and Driver’s Association***

Supportive of general objective and remain committed to collaborating with public bodies and key stakeholders. However, it is pivotal that taxi access to critical locations is maintained; to retain access for those with limited mobility. Discussed a few points: a) Charging points: of vital importance to this transition are the location and number of charging points. Encourages Westminster to consider incorporating charging infrastructure targets into the scheme and would urge parties to be given the opportunity to confer over their location. b) Accessibility: some transport users, due to limited mobility or injury, simply cannot move to other transport modes and rely on taxis to get around. Taxis provide a vital service to these passengers, providing a fully wheelchair accessible and guide-dog friendly door-to-door service. c) Taxi Ranks: the reduction of rank capacity is highly contestable. As Westminster have affirmed designation of rest and working ranks are not yet finalised, LTDA would welcome the opportunity to confer over alternative measure during the post-consultation design process.

***London Cycling Campaign***

Opposed to the proposals, but the principle of removing through motor traffic from The Strand in this area is supported. However, they commented this scheme risks locking in motor traffic dominance on Aldwych and ensuring cycling in this area remains an utterly hostile, dangerous experience for decades. Noted that the scheme documents are unclear and contradictory with regard both to parking/loading and provision for cycling. It is difficult to assess the scheme fully from the documents provided.

***London Living Streets (responded via consultation survey)***

London Living Streets is overall supportive of proposals and in particular the Strand East closure to all through vehicular traffic. They believe this scheme has the opportunity to be a significant location for London both for those who work and study around this area and the huge numbers of visitors to Somerset House, St Mary-le-Strand, Covent Garden and the river. They are pleased that the City of Westminster has taken this opportunity to create a people friendly space and undertaken the removal of almost all vehicular traffic and access from the East Strand area. Their concerns largely relate to the road around the Aldwych. They feel there are opportunities to align proposals for those roads better with Vision Zero and Healthy Streets policies and most importantly to create a slower and safe environment for people on bicycles and on foot. The omission of a safe segregated route around the Aldwych for people on bicycles is regretted and believe that such a facility can be created; the omission of fully protected space for cycling on Aldwych has the capacity to seriously reduce the amenity of the scheme owing to the likelihood of building in potential conflict between people on foot and people cycling on Strand East.

General support for improved highway initiatives that improve access for pedestrians and cyclists. However, they do not understand how the scheme and proposals comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) in ensuring the north side of Aldwych will improve facilities for cyclists because the north side would appear to pay the penalty for enhancements to the south side.

***North and East London General Branch of Equity***

Trade union representing performers and practitioners in Strand Aldwych theatres: Lyceum, Aldwych, Novello, Delfont Mackintosh and Peacock. Concerns over lack of cycling provision.

***Transport for All (response via consultation survey)***

Transport for All have mixed view on the overall concept designs. On the positive side, they welcome the prioritisation for pedestrians. They state the designs will make the streets and pavements in the areas more accessible for wheelchair and mobility scooter users, as well as other people who use mobility aids or simply require more space to walk safely. Improved pedestrian crossings and reduced vehicle speeds will further enhance safety for disabled and older people travelling around the area. With regard to the negative aspects, the partial pedestrianisation of the Strand is a concern for them. The restriction of vehicle access will make visiting the area a lot more difficult for people who use assisted travel services, such as Dial-a-Ride, and those who rely on taxis to get them as close to their destination as possible. They are concerned to see plans for a shared space scheme in the concept designs and would like to see more detailed plans for the pedestrianised area, including whether cycling infrastructure will be segregated and clearly demarcated from pedestrian space.

***Transport for London***

TfL is in support of the proposal and its objectives. They recognise the impact the improvements will have on the area and visitors as they mention the changes proposed will provide an improved area for people to spend time and create a welcoming space for the public. The changes are in line with Mayor’s Transport Strategy (MTS) and delivery of Healthy Streets.

Areas for further consideration:

* Some elements of design concepts need to be considered further. Representations have been made by representative bodies of the taxi trade for a greater allocation of space for ranks in the area, e.g. Surrey Street. The visibility between the 2-space rank outside The Waldorf Hilton and the proposed rank on Catherine Street is not suitable, with the proposed arrangement likely to result in over-ranking outside the hotel
* Further consideration is needed to ensure the proposal provides good quality links with the current wider network as well as future improvements. This should include, at the least, much better provision on Aldwych for people cycling between Kingsway and Waterloo Bridge. Enhancing the links for people cycling through and to the area needs to be given further consideration to ensure that they provide better, high quality connections with the wider network. The proposals need to ensure easy and safe movement throughout this part of central London into the wider cycle network, including future improvements.
* It is important that a balance is maintained between decluttering street space to make movement easier and ensuring that there are still an appropriate level of facilities or amenity for people too.
* It is essential that an appropriate level of bus waiting facilities remain for passengers. This includes bus shelters being well located, that there is clarity as to where different services stop, and that the layout does not result in causing unnecessary delay.
* The current proposals for the north side of St Clement Danes Church and Melbourne Place are for access and not as a through route for taxis. It is important that access is maintained through project delivery and any further design changes.

TfL welcomes the opportunity to continue to engage with Westminster City Council on the comments that have been raised through this response.

***Transport for London Taxi Private Hire***

Feels the scheme doesn’t work operationally for taxis as the feeder rank on Catherine St needs a sightline to the rear of the main rank. Would not accept a 3rd party running from the hotel to Catherine St to call taxis forward, this isn’t practical and will mean taxis over-ranking during peak periods. TPH also have concerns about a consultation going through without taxi access and ‘possibly’ being amended later. Issues around the loss of rank space and TPH hold the Rank Orders for each site which can only be revoked by TPH. The taxi trade have already been vocal in their requests for these orders to remain in place until a viable alternative can be agreed. Asks for further clarification. Concerned about the proposal on buses and bus stops and whether it is practically safe. Would like to discuss the operational values from a taxi prospective.

***Westminster Cycling Campaign***

Opposed to the proposals and cannot support unless safe space for cyclists is provided. Strand and Aldwych are currently cycle-unfriendly with 5+ lanes of weaving traffic. The areas covered by the proposals lie in cycle routes and it was highly disappointing for them to see that the proposal doesn't include attractive cycle routes. It should be provided protected space for cycling on Aldwych or segregated space for cycling along the Strand. Bus stands and private parking are not good use of space here. Diplomatic bays should be limited to pick up/set down, not parking. The proposals fail to cater for future increases in cycling.

***Wheels for Wellbeing***

Oppose this scheme. No real improvement in provision for Disabled cyclists in scheme, does not sufficiently help link destinations in to the area into a truly inclusive cycle network. Motor traffic has been allowed to take precedence over other considerations. The concept of 'informal access' to the Strand is not a realistic option for Disabled cyclists. Feel disappointed that when the council were drawing inspiration from Dutch design practice it seems it is solely to reduce the level of provision for cycling in your scheme, as at 4.4.5 in TN07. There is also the question of the access into this precinct area – the access from Quietway 1 and Waterloo Bridge is via a toucan crossing from the foot of Wellington St. No clarity or confidence on how this can then incorporate a shared use area for satisfactory access into the Strand. Would like a much stronger, more inclusive approach at this junction

### University groups and societies

***King’s College London Student’s Union***

Support the Strand Aldwych project's objectives to address challenges: improve public realm, links for walking and cycling, and air quality; support culture, education and innovation; support the area's economy.

***LSE Cities***

Support the notion of improving the environment and traffic flow around Aldwych. Highlighted concerns relating to the design, negative air quality, noise, congestion and amenity, especially to the north of the Aldwych.

***LSE Directorate***

Supportive of proposals to create a better environment. Have a number of concerns: unconvinced that the proposals to divert all vehicular traffic around the north side of Aldwych will improve environmental quality; increased traffic, air pollution and noise; number of buses will add to congestion and create a visual barrier to views; Bush House/Aldwych/Kingsway crossing is already congested and these proposals will exacerbate this; junction between Houghton St and Aldwych prioritises vehicles and will be a meeting point for pedestrians; removal of Aldwych bus stop a retrograde step; the pedestrian flows haven't been addressed; trees should be reinstated; potential impact on cyclists using the north side of the Aldwych.

***LSE & Political Science***

Supports pedestrianisation in principle, concerned about the diversion of traffic to Aldwych. It will create more traffic, air pollution, noise, risks to pedestrians and cyclists. Request clear evidence is made publicly available before plans proceed. Until it's clear, we will strongly oppose the proposal.

Concerned about diversion of traffic to Aldwych: increasing congestion and air pollution, and risks to pedestrians and cyclists. Requesting clear evidence on how air pollution and traffic issues will be mitigated in order to support the proposal.

***LSE Student’s Union***

General support for improved highway initiatives that improve access for pedestrians and cyclists. However, they do not understand how the scheme and proposals comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) in ensuring the north side of Aldwych will improve facilities for cyclists because the north side would appear to pay the penalty for enhancements to the south side.

### Other stakeholders

***Illuminated River Foundation***

A member of the Cultural Advisory Group that reviewed the design. Felt that it was not appropriate to respond to the consultation. Supportive of how plans are developing.

***Australian High Commission***

Supportive of improvements to pollution and traffic flow and provide the following additional comments on the proposed design: prefer to not have a bus stop on the perimeter of Australia House; want clarification on proposed traffic flows; how will vehicles gain access to, and be prevented from entering, Melbourne Place; bus stands on Melbourne Place could present logistical difficulties for deliveries; with more footfall we presume greater police presence and cleaning; who would maintain the green verge; want to be consulted on placement of trees that are to be planted.

1. Business responses should be treated with caution due to the low number of responses - 45 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Credit for image: David Tett. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. QS World University Rankings, 2018/19 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Analysis throughout this report compares the views of residents, workers, visitors and businesses. The sample of business owners/representatives is small (n=45) so caution should be exercised around the findings for this group. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The differences between the views of residents and businesses are not significant at the 95% confidence level on either of these themes. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)