



# Cabinet Member Report

**Meeting or Decision Maker:**

Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development

**Date:**

01 December 2023

**Classification:**

Part Exempt – Appendix B is exempt from publication under paragraphs 3 and 5 (information relating to Financial or Business Affairs and Legal Privilege) Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and the public interest in applying this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**Title:**

Oxford Street Programme – Wigmore Street and Mortimer Street Schemes

**Wards Affected:**

West End and Marylebone

**Policy Context:**

Fairer Economy – A reimagined and revived Oxford Street and West End that delivers a world class offer and experience to residents, businesses and visitors supporting a diverse, resilient, and successful economy that delivers growth in Westminster.

**Key Decision:**

Yes, Significant Expenditure

**Financial Summary:**

The Capital Strategy was approved by Full Council on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and includes an expenditure budget of £124.4m for the Oxford Street programme from 2022/23 onwards.

The capital cost estimate for delivering the Wigmore Street and Mortimer Street is £7.178m.

**Report of:**

Bernie Flaherty, Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Health and Deputy Chief Executive, Westminster City Council

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Cabinet Member Report (CMR) of 1 November 2022 set out a revised scope of works for the Oxford Street Programme (OSP), which includes the design and delivery of traffic improvement schemes on Wigmore Street and Mortimer Street. These schemes form part of the Marylebone/Fitzrovia Traffic Scheme.
- 1.2 The projects aim to deliver a simplified road network and proposes converting Wigmore Street and Mortimer Street into two-way streets. This offers an opportunity to rebalance road space and traffic signal timing for the benefit of pedestrians while maintaining appropriate traffic capacity and discouraging high speeds.
- 1.3 The design for these schemes has progressed into Stage 3 (detailed) design since the previous Cabinet Member Report (CMR) was approved in July 2022. To progress to the construction of these projects, a drawdown is requested from the previously approved capital funding budget allocated to the programme. These funds will allow for scheme delivery and will cover other identified programme overheads.

## **2. Recommendations**

That the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development agree the recommendations in 2.1 and 2.2.

- 2.1 To approve the progression of the Wigmore Street and Mortimer Street projects to construction.
- 2.2 Approval of capital expenditure of £7.178m to progress the items in 1.4 above.

## **3. Reasons for Decision**

- 3.1 The Wigmore Street and Mortimer Street projects have been progressed as part of the OSP and aim to improve traffic movement in the Fitzrovia and Marylebone area and are integral to the overall improvements creating calmer and safer streets.
- 3.2 Expenditure is required to progress the Wigmore Street and Mortimer Street schemes to construction in 2024.

## 4. Background

4.1 In 2019, Westminster City Council (WCC) developed plans for a district-wide approach for the investment required to address public realm, safety, transport, and economic challenges faced by Oxford Street and the wider area. A Place Strategy and Delivery Plan, and a business case approving £150 million capital funding from the Council, were subsequently approved for the 'Oxford Street District' programme.

4.2 Following the local elections in May 2022 the new administration considered how best to proceed with the Oxford Street District programme. In accordance with the Fairer Westminster manifesto the decision was made to focus council funding on improvements required for Oxford Street itself, along with selected side streets, rather than a whole district approach. The programme was renamed the 'Oxford Street Programme' (OSP).

4.3 The vision of the Oxford Street Programme (OSP) is to:

*“Ensure that Oxford Street is a great place for shoppers, tourists, workers and local residents through the creation of a dynamic and sustainable environment and an enhanced public realm that strengthens the global status of the street”.*

4.5 The revised programme scope focuses public realm improvements along the entire length of Oxford Street from Marble Arch to Tottenham Court Road, along with traffic schemes in the wider area to allow vehicles to travel shorter, more direct routes and consequently create calmer streets by reducing the dominance of vehicle traffic. Appendix A outlines the proposed highways schemes, including the extent of the Wigmore Street and Mortimer Street projects.

4.6 Wigmore Street and Mortimer Street currently allow for one-way traffic. The proposals seeks to convert Wigmore Street and Mortimer Street to accommodate two-way traffic between Wimpole Street in the west and Great Titchfield Street in the east, and includes:

- a. Widening of footways;
- b. New and upgraded pedestrian crossings including the introduction of pedestrian countdowns;
- c. Provision of advanced stop lines for cyclists;

- d. Rationalise bus turnaround loops, reducing the lengths of these loops and relocating bus stand locations;
  - e. Great Titchfield Street (between Margaret Street and Mortimer Street) will accommodate northbound traffic only; and
  - f. Proposed kerb buildouts to the corners of the junction of Margaret Street and Great Titchfield Street.
- 4.7 Wide, multi-lane streets in one direction encourage high traffic speeds, particularly during quieter periods of the day. These changes offer an opportunity to rebalance road space and traffic signal timings to provide greater benefit to pedestrians, while maintaining appropriate traffic capacity and discouraging high speeds. Across London, many similar one-way road systems are being successfully transformed into community friendly, safe and well-planned two-way streets, including on Baker Street.
- 4.8 The design for these streets has been progressed in partnership with Murphy Carey Joint Venture (MCJV), the design and build contractor procured to support the delivery of the OSP. To enhance traffic capacity and provide appropriate diversion routes during construction, it is proposed that two-way streets on Wigmore Street and Mortimer Street are created in advance of works commencing on Oxford Street. Consequently, works on Wigmore Street and Mortimer Street are planned to commence in February 2024.

## **5. Financial Implications**

### *Budget allocations*

- 5.1 The total OSP expenditure budget approved by Full Council in March 2023 was £124.4m for 2022/23 onwards. The total budget allocation is £127.592m taking into consideration costs incurred prior to 2022/23, which can be utilised by the revised programme. The budget was based on the delivery of the historic district wide programme and there was a recognition that this would need to be revised based on new delivery workstreams and more aspirational funding expectations.
- 5.2 The budget allocation is expected to cover works on Oxford Street and Oxford Circus, as well as highways works in adjacent streets and complementary schemes (on the condition of 50% funding being received where appropriate).
- 5.3 A high level WCC funded budget of £16.8 million was earmarked for highways works, which are essential for the delivery of the programme. This was referenced in the Full Business Case and the Oxford Street and Oxford Circus

CMR - both of which were endorsed by Capital Review Group in July 2023 and approved by Cabinet in September 2023. There is no external funding for this Capital spend and all costs will be met by the existing approved Capital budget.

- 5.4 Spend approval of £7.178m against the £16.8m highways works allocation is now sought to deliver improvements at Wigmore Street and Mortimer Street as outlined in 4.6.
- 5.5 Further spend approvals for works relating to other highways schemes will be brought forward as required.

### *Spend Summary and Profile*

Table 1 below provides a summary of the project costs. These costs reflect information provided by MCJV. A full cost breakdown is available in Appendix B.

**Table 1:** Total Funding Request for the Wigmore Street and Mortimer Street Projects

Cost type	Wigmore Street scheme	Mortimer Street scheme	Total
	£000's	£000's	£000's
Design costs	406	329	735
Preliminaries	508	488	996
Construction*	1,566	1,288	2,854
Third party costs**	893	786	1,679
WCC costs	143	120	263
Risk and contingency	622	536	1,158
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,138</b>	<b>3,547</b>	<b>7,685</b>
Design costs paid from previous approval	267	240	507
<b>Total Funding Request</b>	<b>3,871</b>	<b>3,307</b>	<b>7,178</b>

\*Construction costs include site clearance, drainage, pavements, kerbs and footways.

\*\*Third party costs include TfL junctions and TfL temporary traffic signals.

The table below reflects the spend profile commencing in Q4 2023/24 and completing in Q4 2024/25.

**Table 2:** Project Spend Profile

Cost type	2023/24	2024/25	Total
	£000's	£000's	£000's
Design costs	228	-	228
Preliminaries	-	996	996

Construction	200	2,654	2,854
Third party costs*	-	1,679	1,679
WCC costs	38	225	263
Risk and contingency	-	1,158	1,158
<b>Total Funding Request</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>6,712</b>	<b>7,178</b>

### ***Revenue implications***

5.6 The Council currently manage and maintain Wigmore Street and Mortimer Street within the existing city-wide Highways and Cleansing contract. Due to the use of standard pallet materials for these works there will be no increase in maintenance costs to the Council.

### **6. Legal Implications**

6.1 The City Council is the highway authority for Oxford Street and the side roads and junctions with it that form part of the revised OSP. The Highways Act 1980 provides the Council with the statutory powers to carry out works to improve highways and pedestrian facilities. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended provides permitted development rights that allow highway authorities to carry out necessary work to maintain or improve roads and pedestrian facilities and undertake necessary or incidental work outside but adjoining road boundaries without the need for planning permission.

### **7. Carbon Impact**

7.1 Westminster City Council declared a Climate Emergency and has committed to becoming a carbon neutral council by 2030 and a carbon neutral city by 2040 and adapting its built environment to be more resilient to climate change. One of the key ways it will deliver this is through the creation of more sustainable streets and the improvement of carbon impact through design and construction. This includes considering the impact of material selection, sourcing, and transportation, drainage and providing the conditions to encourage active modes of transport.

7.2 A desktop carbon estimate has been undertaken on the proposed projects using scheme cost as a basis for this calculation. The carbon impact of the Wigmore Street scheme is estimated as 1174.30 CO<sub>2</sub>e and Mortimer Street as 1062.27 CO<sub>2</sub>e. This impact is relative to other, similar highways projects

and every effort has been made to mitigate carbon impact through project scope, use of standard council materials and delivery.

- 7.3 MCJV is committed to reducing the carbon impact of their construction activity and propose to use electric tools and vehicles during construction where practicable. Commitments have been made to divert 98% of waste from landfill and reuse 95% of materials.
- 7.4 Sustainable travel will be supported through a strategy focussed on widening footway space on Wigmore Street and Mortimer Street and the introduction of new and upgraded pedestrian crossings and countdowns. Advanced stop lines for cyclists will also be accommodated to improve the visibility and therefore safety for these road users.

## **8. Equalities Implications**

- 8.1 All projects delivered through the OSP will embed accessibility and inclusion principles from design up to delivery. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is being carried out for all projects to be delivered through the OSP. The assessment indicates the proposed public realm improvements will have an overall positive impact on multiple protected characteristics. The EqIA will continue to be enhanced and developed as the projects progress.

## **9. Consultation**

- 9.1 The OSP seeks to create inclusive opportunities for engagement and consultation with all interested stakeholders and is committed to open and transparent communication. This is at the core of the programme engagement and consultation strategy which outlines the following key principles:
  - a) Inform – Informing people of what is happening, when and why.
  - b) Involve – Enabling everyone to have their say and building relationships.
  - c) Empower – Inspiring people to play an active role in influencing outcomes.
- 9.2 On 14 March 2023, a meeting and site walk was held with resident groups to discuss OSP highways proposals including those for Wigmore and Mortimer Street. Concerns were raised regarding pedestrian safety at the junction of Great Titchfield Street/Margaret Street along with potential vehicular traffic impact on Great Titchfield Street. Consequently, the design was reviewed to

include kerb buildouts of the corners of the Margaret Street and Great Titchfield Street junction to provide safer crossing areas for pedestrians.

9.3 The OSP team delivered a public consultation campaign for over six weeks in Summer 2023. This consultation sought views on the following projects:

- a. Oxford Street
- b. Oxford Circus
- c. Marylebone Fitzrovia (including Wigmore, Mortimer Street, Henrietta Place and Margaret Street)
- d. Oxford Street West (including Park Street, North Audley Street, Orchard Street and Portman Street)
- e. East Castle Street junction improvements

All engagement and consultation on the programme and individual projects are reviewed by and supported through the Council's Communications and Communities Teams.

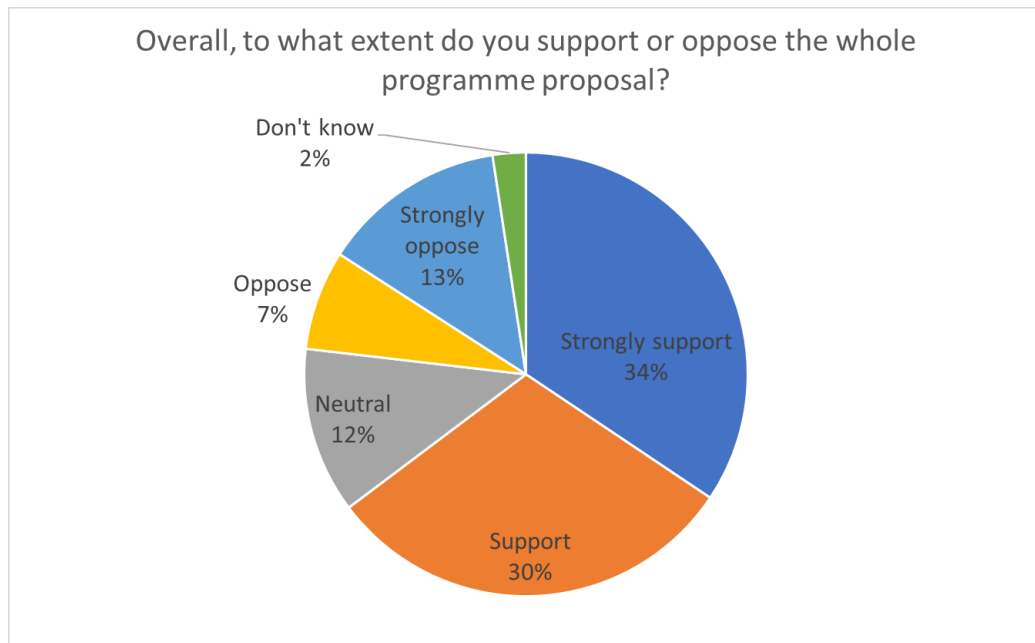
9.4 The public consultation and engagement activities used various techniques and tools including a dedicated webpage, newsletters, questionnaires, meetings, postcard drops and public consultation sessions. The feedback from consultation and engagement will be used, where applicable, to amend and influence the designs as they progress.

9.5 Full results of the consultation will be compiled, analysed and published in Autumn 2023. However, in advance of this reporting being finalised, the following results summary can be presented:

- a. 1612 questionnaire responses were received
- b. 27 direct emails of written feedback
- c. 180+ attendees of in person meetings
- d. 500+ people engaged at three local markets
- e. 12,800 postcards delivered to local residents
- f. 20,755 views of the OSP website

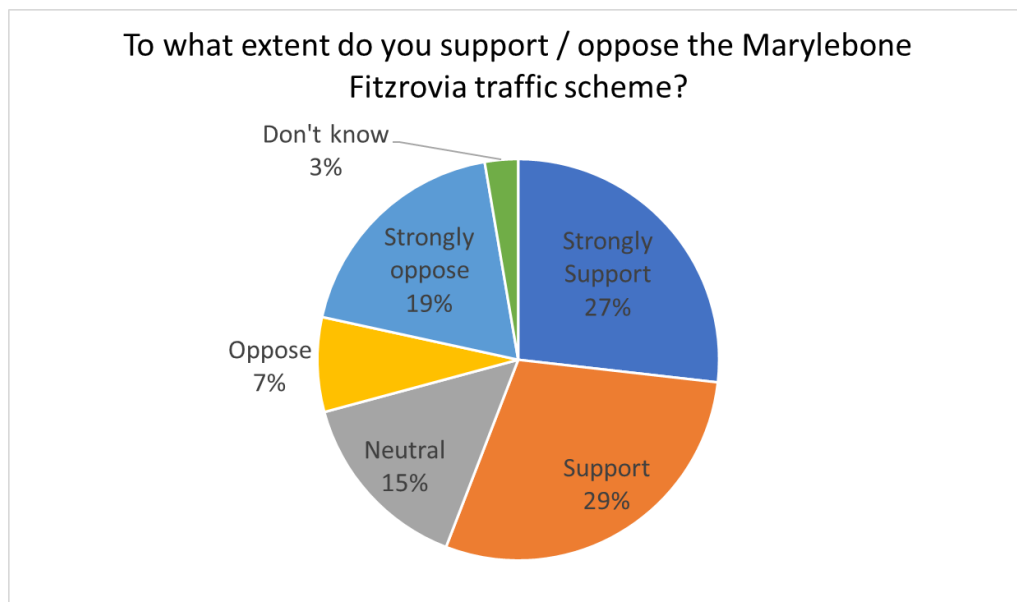


9.6 Participants were asked a number of questions relating to different projects within the OSP. To the question relating to the overall programme, 'Overall, to what extent do you support or oppose the whole programme proposal?', most responses, totalling 64%, were in favour. The results are summarised in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1** – Summary of Response to the OSP

9.7 A total of 711 respondents provided their input on the Marylebone/Fitzrovia Traffic Scheme and corresponding projects. A large proportion, comprising 29% of respondents (206 individuals), expressed their support for the scheme and 27% (190 individuals) indicated that they strongly support it. Contrastingly, there were 8% (54 individuals) who opposed the scheme and 19% (134 individuals) who strongly opposed it. Refer to Figure 2 for a summary of responses to the proposed projects in this area.



**Figure 2** – How respondents felt about the proposed Marylebone / Fitzrovia Traffic Scheme

- 9.8 Specific comments on the proposed projects were received from a number of local stakeholders including the FitzWest Neighbourhood Forum, Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association, The Fitzrovia Partnership, the Marylebone Association, the Harold de Waldon Estate and The Westminster Property Association. This feedback is contained in Appendix C along with the Council’s responses.
- 9.9 Meetings were held with resident groups/forums in Fitzrovia on 4 July and 31 October 2023 to discuss the scheme proposals in detail. Comments provided have resulted in the design for Great Titchfield Street being updated to include measures to improve conditions for pedestrians and introduce a calmed street environment with expected reductions in vehicle speeds. The Council is committed to monitoring traffic volumes following construction completion.
- 9.10 In September 2023, a Traffic Management Order (TMO) consultation was carried out detailing the changes to parking, loading and traffic flow direction in the Marylebone/Fitzrovia Traffic Scheme area. There were no objections to the scheme highlighted through the TMO. However, the United Cabbies Group (UCG) responded regarding taxis and cycles not being exempt from the banned right turn for eastbound vehicles from Mortimer Street into Great Portland Street (it is proposed that buses only are exempt from the banned right turn). This movement is prohibited under the proposals due to insufficient space for vehicles waiting to turn right without blocking traffic. Buses are permitted to turn right but this will not form part of their scheduled route and will only be

used on diversion plans. Vehicles wishing to access the southern section of Great Portland Street can instead travel south on Regent Street and use Great Castle Street (which is proposed as eastbound) to access that same area.

- 9.11 A Key Stage Review (KSR) was carried out with WCC internal colleagues in 2019 for the Mortimer and Wigmore Street schemes and a subsequent follow up review was undertaken in May 2023. No comments were received.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact:**

Bernie Flaherty, Deputy Chief Executive, Westminster City Council

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## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix A:** Geographical extent of the Wigmore and Mortimer projects in the Marylebone/Fitzrovia Traffic Scheme area

**Appendix B:** Restricted Appendices – Detailed Cost Breakdown

"Not for Publication" on the grounds that it contains exempt information within paragraphs 3 and 5 (information relating to Financial or Business Affairs and Legal Privilege) Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and the public interest in applying this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**Appendix C:** Consultation Responses

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development**

**Declaration of Interest**

I have no interest to declare in respect of this report

Signed:



Date:

01 December 2023

NAME:

**Councillor Geoff Barraclough**

State nature of interest if any:

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*(N.B: If you have an interest, you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)*

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled

Oxford Street Programme – Wigmore Street and Mortimer Street Schemes and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed:



Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development

Date:

01 December 2023

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:

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If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Director of Law, City Treasurer and, if there are resources implications, the Director of People Services (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.