

Cabinet Member Report

Meeting or Decision Maker:	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development
Date:	20 December 2023
Classification:	Part Exempt
Title:	Oxford Street Programme – Oxford Street West 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:	<p>The Capital Strategy was approved by Full Council on 8 March 2023 and includes an expenditure budget of £124.4m for the Oxford Street programme from 2022/23 onwards.</p> <p>This report requests approval of £2.442m to progress the design for the projects in this area including Park Street, North Audley Street, Orchard Street, Wigmore Street, and Portman Street all associated costs.</p>
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 in the area west of Oxford Street.
- 1.2 The Oxford Street West schemes aim to improve traffic capacity and resilience in Marylebone and Mayfair and comprises of:
 - a. Traffic reversals on North Audley Street and Park Street;
 - b. The introduction of a right hand turn off Orchard Street onto Wigmore Street;
 - c. The introduction of a right hand turn off Portman Street onto Portman Square; and
 - d. The reversal of southbound traffic on Orchard Street for buses, taxis and cycles only from Portman Mews South to Oxford Street.
- 1.3 A drawdown of funding is requested from the previously approved £150m capital funding budget allocated to the programme to progress the design for the Oxford Street West schemes. On completion of this design work, a further CMR will be submitted to request the finalisation of design and to proceed to construction. The latter is planned to commence in 2025.
- 1.4 The proposed OSP projects, including those in Oxford Street West, were subject to a public consultation in Summer 2023. This report outlines the outcome of this consultation with specific reference to the feedback received on the proposed changes outlined in 1.2 above.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development is recommended to:
 - 2.1.1 Approve the scope and proposals for the Oxford Street West Scheme area and the investment required to design the corresponding projects.
 - 2.1.2 Approve capital expenditure of £2.442m to progress the design for the items outlined in 1.2 above.

3. Reasons for Decision

- 3.1 The projects proposed within the Oxford Street West Scheme area are being progressed as part of wider OSP initiatives and are complementary to the Oxford Street design. The interventions aim to reduce traffic reduction in Marylebone and Mayfair and enhance traffic resilience in the surrounding network through the introduction of right-hand turning movements at two junctions to the north of Oxford Street resulting in shorter vehicular journeys.
- 3.2 Expenditure is required to progress the design of the Oxford Street West projects to allow for their construction in 2025.

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".
- 4.4 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 extent of the projects included in the Oxford Street West Scheme area.
- 4.5 In Marylebone, the introduction of right turns onto Portman Square/Wigmore Street from Portman Street and Orchard Street respectively seek to add capacity and resilience into the traffic network by offering drivers more options and more direct routes. However, only buses, taxis and cycles will be permitted to run south on Orchard Street from Portman Mews South, this will help to minimise delays to buses.

4.6 North Audley Street and Park Street’s traffic reversal will lead to a general traffic reduction in North Mayfair. The proposals aims to remove through traffic in the area which will be re-allocated to larger-capacity roads, such as Park Lane and Edgware Road. Less vehicular traffic in North Mayfair will enable more time for pedestrian crossing at Oxford Street junctions resulting in a reduction in pedestrian and vehicular conflict and improve the safety.

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 (CRG) 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 £2.442m against the £16.8m highways works allocation is now sought to deliver improvements in the Oxford Street West area as outlined in 1.2 above. These costs are forecasted to be incurred between Q4 2023/24 and Q3 2024/25.

5.5 Further spend approvals for other highways schemes will be brought forward as required.

Cost Summary

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

Table 1: Project Total Funding Request

Cost type	North Audley Street	Portman Square	Total
	£000's	£000's	£000's

Design costs	353	301	655
Third party costs*	617	407	1,024
WCC costs	35	31	66
Risk and Contingency**	402	296	698
Total Funding Request	1,407	1,035	2,442

* Third party costs include utility diversion costs, TfL junctions and TfL temporary traffic signals.

**Risk and contingency of 40% has been applied which is consistent with other Council projects at the design stage.

Revenue implications

- 5.6 The Council currently manage and maintain the streets noted in the Oxford Street West project area within the existing city-wide Highways and Cleansing contract. Due to the usage of standard palette of materials for these projects there are no expected 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. A carbon impact assessment will be prepared for these projects once a design has been developed.
- 7.2 Sustainable and active travel will be supported through:
- a. Reduced northbound through traffic through Mayfair creating a better environment for walking and cycling while also improving the air quality within the neighbourhood;

- b. Improved pedestrian crossings and all-green pedestrian stages at junctions to improve the walking provision;
- c. Bus priority measures on Orchard Street to help minimise bus journey times; and
- d. The delivery of a large micro mobility hub on Orchard Street for dockless e-bikes and scooters

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.

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. An EqIA is a process designed to ensure that a policy, project or scheme does not unlawfully discriminate against any protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010. 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 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 Internal and external engagement is pivotal to the programme and has involved a number of activities to date:
- a) Meetings with Ward Councillors, TfL, resident associations, landowners and the GLA to provide an outline on the status of the programme and look ahead.
- 9.3 The OSP consultation strategy provides the framework for the development of an engagement plan for all projects. As part of this, the OSP team delivered a

public consultation campaign for six weeks in Summer 2023. This consultation sought views on the following projects:

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

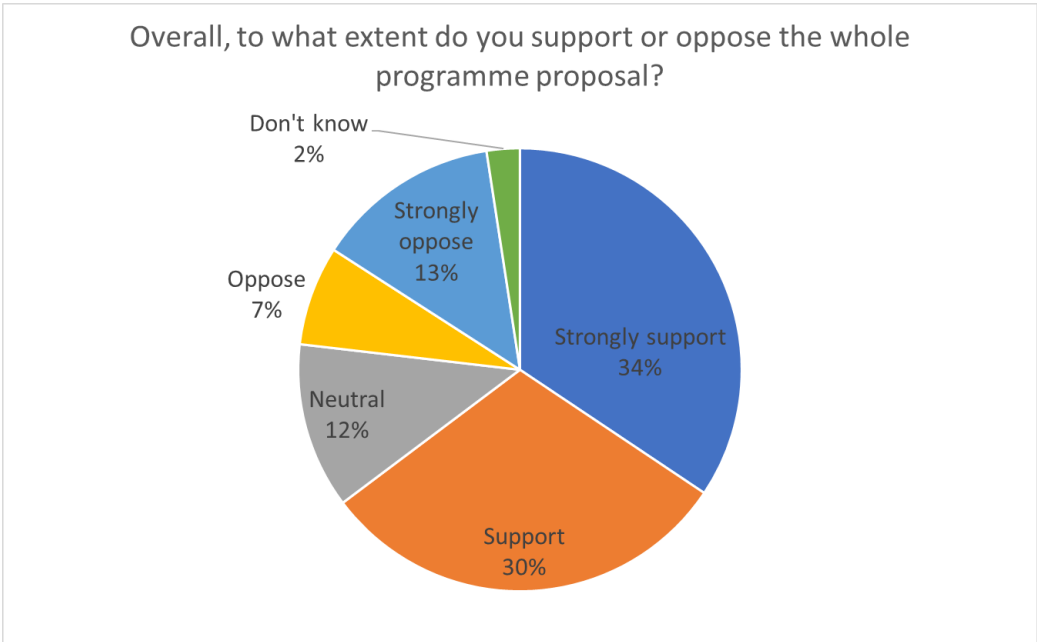


Figure 1 – Summary of Response to the OSP

9.7 There was a total of 842 responses to questions on the Oxford Street West scheme proposals. These findings demonstrate overall support for the scheme, with combined support totalling 58% compared to collective opposition totalling 24%. A summary of the response is shown in Figure 2

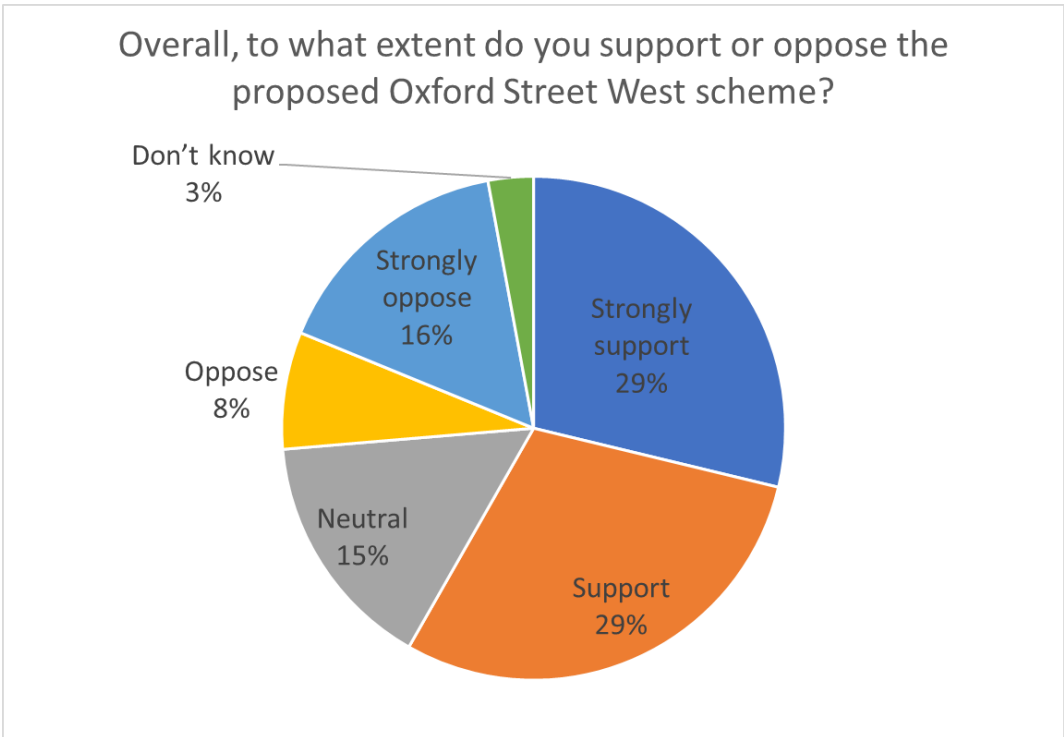


Figure 2 - Summary of Responses on Oxford Street West

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

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Geographical extent of the Oxford Street West 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 Results

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: 12 December 2023

NAME: **Councillor Geoff Barraclough**

State nature of interest if any:

(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 – Oxford Street West Schemes and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed:



Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development

Date: 12 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:

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.