

BARBICAN, BUNHILL AND GOLDEN LANE HEALTHY NEIGHBOURHOOD CONSULTATION

RESPONSE FROM THE BARBICAN AND GOLDEN LANE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

DECEMBER 2024

1.0 BACKGROUND

The first City of London (CoL) Transport Strategy (2019) identified a problem with air quality and traffic in the area and proposed a neighbourhood strategy to deal with it. This area-wide approach gained broad support but was then rejected by CoL in favour of simply closing Beech Street to all but zero-emission vehicles, without dealing with the displaced traffic or addressing the access needs of people in the neighbourhood. This 18-month pilot scheme, launched with little to no consultation in 2020, was challenged and then abandoned.

The Barbican and Golden Lane Neighbourhood Forum is pleased, therefore, to now see an area-based analysis of the issues and a whole Healthy Neighbourhood Plan for resolving them, in line with the promises made in the City's Transport Strategy.

2.0 FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Forum notes that funding is not guaranteed to implement this Plan, over and above those projects with existing funding (such as Moor Lane and the Moorgate/Ropemaker St junction). If funding is not forthcoming it risks, yet again, raising hopes of a "whole area" approach only to dash them. We seek early assurance from the City of London that a reasonable, phased funding package will now be made available to allow swift progress with improving air quality and the environment.

3.0 EXISTING TRAFFIC, CYCLING AND WALKING

The Forum acknowledges that the City of London survey data, for typical weekdays, indicates the following:

Beech St	Over 8,000 vehicles use the Beech Street / Chiswell Street corridor
	60% of Beech Street traffic is eastbound (from Aldersgate Street to Chiswell Street)
	1,300 vehicles enter Beech Street from Golden Lane
	80% of the vehicles are driving straight through the area and not stopping.
	Over 11,000 people walk along Beech Street
	Over 3,500 people cycle along Beech Street
Golden Lane	Over 2,000 vehicles a day use Golden Lane
	Most is "through traffic" travelling to Beech Street and Chiswell Street, not stopping.
	Some vehicles exceed the 20mph speed limit.
Moor Lane	Around 1,500 vehicles a day use Moor Lane
	More traffic travels north than south
	c60% of the vehicles drive straight through the area without stopping.

4.0 SUMMARY OF THE CITY'S PROPOSALS

The consultation, which closes on 20th December 2024, is based on ten sub-areas, the proposal for which are summarised here.

Beech Street and Chiswell Street

Option 1 - traffic restrictions in both directions to widen pavement on both sides

Option 2 – traffic restriction in the westbound direction (only) with pavement widening on south side

Golden Lane, Fortune St, Fann St, Bridgewater St & Brackley St

- Closing the junction of Golden Lane with Beech Street to through traffic – and introducing an associated right turn ban at the eastern end of Fortune Street at the junction with Whitecross Street. If Beech Street was closed to through traffic, Bridgewater Street would also need to be closed to motor vehicles to stop it becoming a 'alternative route' between Beech Street and Old Street.
- Fann St – explore improving the existing traffic restriction gate at the junction with Viscount Street?
- Explore making Brackley Street one-way to traffic west bound?

Bunhill Row

- The proposal is for a camera enforced traffic filter on Bunhill Row, between Lambs Passage and Dufferin Street – vehicles are restricted, but there is no physical barrier, thus allowing two-way cycling.

- In addition to the traffic filter, Errol Street and Lambs Buildings would be one-way for motor traffic

Moor Lane

Option 1 - Make Moor Lane one-way southbound between Silk Street and Fore Street for motor vehicles.

Option 2 - Moor Lane closed to through motor traffic at the junction with Fore Street with a permanent physical closure

Option 3 - Moor Lane closed to through motor traffic at the junction with Silk Street with a permanent physical closure.

Option 4 - Retain existing traffic movements including the existing timed gate restriction.

Milton Street

- Explore closing the section of Milton Street to all traffic between Silk Street and The Heron access road to introduce a public space that could include trees, planting and seating?

Moorgate junction with Ropemaker Street

Crossing distances for people walking and wheeling are to be shortened and a new diagonal crossing introduced. Pavements will be widened. The left-hand turn from Moorgate into Ropemaker Street would be banned - vehicles would instead turn left into Chiswell Street. (People cycling can turn left into both Chiswell Street and Moorfields). This scheme is expected to be implemented in 2025. The City consulted on these plans in 2023 as part of the Liverpool Street Area Healthy Streets Plan and there was broad support for it.

Fore Street, Wood Street, Silk Street and Ropemaker Street

- Explore making pavements wider without changing traffic access or movements?

Moorfields

- Moorfields north of Moor Place - making it one-way southbound to motor traffic (two-way for cyclists)

Aldersgate Street & Goswell Road, London Wall, Moorgate, Old Street and City Road

- Explore opportunities to improve the existing crossing points for people walking and wheeling and cycling at the junctions of:
 - Moorgate with London Wall.
 - Aldersgate Street with Beech Street and Long Lane and
 - On Goswell Road we will explore the introduction of a new crossing near the junction with Fann Street

Other Islington Improvements

- Potential locations for some new trees in the area:
 - Banner Street, near the junction of Whitecross Street
 - Whitecross Street
- Potential locations for some new low-level planting:
 - Golden Lane near junction with Fann Street
 - Whitecross Street (near junction with Old Street, and south of Fortune Street)
 - Fortune Street (eastern end)
 - Banner Street (near junction with Whitecross Street)

5.0 BARBICAN AND GOLDEN LANE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The Forum is in favour of reducing through traffic in our Neighbourhood Area, in the interests of cleaner air, wider pavements, safer cycling, better accessibility and much greener streets.

In particular, we support;

- Traffic restrictions on Beech Street, preferably limiting traffic in both directions (Option 1), and at least limiting eastbound traffic (Option 2) – provided that measures to limit and deter displaced traffic from using Golden Lane, Moor Lane and Fore Street are implemented before or at the same time.
- Limiting traffic on Moor Lane in such a way that greening can be maximised. Options 2&3 should be analysed together as they both represent a preference for closing the street to through traffic.

- iii) Closing Golden Lane to all traffic at the junction with Beech Street, together with the associated changes to turning at Fortune Street, and closing Bridgewater Street to through traffic (to avoid rat-running).
- iv) Improving the Aldersgate Street junction by Barbican tube, and the associated bus stops, to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, and to deter traffic displaced by making St. John Street one-way northbound.
- v) A more ambitious approach to Aldersgate St/Goswell Road to reduce traffic, widen pavements and increase greening and support stronger connections in the neighbourhood; reducing the barrier effect that this road currently has.

We are unconvinced of the merit of:

- i) Making Moorfields one-way
- ii) A traffic filter (ie just a sign and a camera) on Bunhill Row - will this be sufficient?

We would like to see further proposals for:

- i) Improving pedestrian crossings and the public realm along the whole of Aldersgate St/Goswell Road. This stretch of street is a major barrier for anyone not in a car and routes through to important services such as Barts, the GP surgery and the new London Museum are poor. The opportunity for improvement, such as limiting and “straightening” the carriageway by Crescent House to move traffic away from homes and green an important retail street, deserve further consideration.
- ii) Improving the pedestrian crossings, possibly with raised tables, at the junctions of Chiswell St and Whitecross St, and Chiswell St and Bunhill Row. Both serve high footfall, yet both are currently designed to favour vehicles rather than pedestrians.
- iii) Reducing traffic on Aldersgate Street once Islington’s proposals for St. John Street are implemented.

6.0 ALDERSGATE STREET/GOSWELL ROAD

Bearing in mind the City of London’s other road-related schemes (such as altering the current St Paul's gyratory flow and the road layout at the Rotunda), the Barbican and Golden Lane Neighbourhood Forum questions the validity of classifying Aldersgate St and Goswell Road as arterial through roads. Anticipated future traffic flows indicate that this stretch of road should be redesignated as local access, allowing buses, taxis, local residents and businesses but not high volumes of through traffic. There is no need for high volumes of vehicular traffic coming from the north when the inner ring road (A501) and Clerkenwell Road / Old Street (A5201) is more appropriate, and the congestion charge was partly implemented to avoid this.

Having talked to officers at Islington we understand that they would support a reduction of the carriageway in the Goswell Road section; to move traffic away from people’s homes, to improve the public realm, and to support the important local shopping centre.

There is the potential for a significant open space right along Goswell Road and Aldersgate Street, as explored by the Culture Mile BID Public Realm Vision. There is the potential to plant dozens of trees along Goswell Road and Aldersgate Street, which will mitigate pollution and noise.

7.0 ON STREET PARKING

The Forum is disappointed to see no proposals for limiting on-street parking in the consultation.

Road space allocated to on-street parking limits the opportunity to widen pavements and plant trees, or to put in crossings and dropped kerbs to improve accessibility. It also encourages on-street deliveries, as this is quicker than driving into the internal loading bays in commercial buildings (as currently happens on Moor Lane, for example).

For most road users in the City there are ample spaces in public car parks. And in our Neighbourhood there are under-used off-street car parks, such as those under London Wall, the Barbican Arts Centre, and Smithfield – all of which generate revenue.

Our view is that there is little justification for keeping on-street parking in most of the locations in the Neighbourhood. Blue badge users visiting residents or the Arts Centre can use off-street parking, so local demand for accessible spaces is low. Motorcycles can easily park under London Wall.