

Bethnal Green Liveable Streets

Appendix E – Alternative Considered

At each stage of the engagement process we have taken on board the feedback and views of residents and businesses. Throughout the eight-month engagement process we have received and responded to over 250 emails from community members. The council has developed and amended the proposals at every stage to represent the feedback and views of residents.

This report considers the most common suggestions, recommendations and alternative proposals received during public consultation.

1.1 Scheme 1

There was overall support for Scheme 1. Responses from those with addresses in the Scheme 1 area showed that 66% were supportive and 18% unsupportive. However, there were a number of alternative ideas and concepts put forward which have been reviewed below.

Arnold Circus

(i) Bus Gate - Representation was presented by residents to remove the bus from using Arnold Circus. The bus service is maintained and operated by Transport for London (TfL) and so it is not possible for the council to make this change. We have sent a request to TfL for a review of the bus movements and standing point, however, this continues to be outside of the council's control.

(ii) Further Traffic Movements - We received an alternative proposal to include additional movements on Arnold Circus between Rochelle Street and Club Row. The alternative proposal has been put forward to help reduce the needs for turning heads, reduce vehicle movements going back and forth on the same route and increase vehicle movements for residents.

Officers have reviewed this option and found that by opening up another side of Arnold Circus there would be a reduction in the benefits of providing a safe space for pedestrians and cyclists, especially for those travelling north/south through the area. In addition, this change will likely increase vehicle numbers using the road and may encourage inappropriate use. With existing concerns over ASB in the area, this will create an easier circuit that drivers can use to race around and encourage others from outside the area to travel to this area for parking, particularly late at night.

Question 3a in the public consultation survey relates to the concept of closing Arnold Circus and 64% were supportive and 26% not supportive.

It is recommended that the current proposal is taken forward due to the reasons above and support from the public consultation.

Redchurch Street

During the public consultation the Liveable Streets team received concerns about the proposals and an alternative proposal by residents for Redchurch Street. The main concerns were with the closures of Arnold Circus and Old Nichol Street drivers would change their routes and use Redchurch Street instead as a cut through to Boundary Road.

Having reviewed the concerns, officers agreed there is a possibility that this could happen although the one-way restriction would limit the use of the road to east-west movements only. Shoreditch High Street is likely to continue to be the main route for drivers and therefore will limit the number of users on Redchurch Street.

Officers are aware of an on-going design process with businesses in Redchurch Street which is looking to make improvements.

It is recommended that the situation is monitored once works in the Bethnal Green area have been completed. Further to this, the Liveable Streets programme will work with and support businesses on Redchurch Street to make more improvements to the area.

1.2 Scheme 2

There was overall support for Scheme 2. Responses from those with addresses in the Scheme 2 area showed that 67% were supportive and 21% unsupportive. However, there were a number of alternative ideas and concepts put forward which have been reviewed below.

Barnet Grove closure

During the public consultation, the Liveable Streets team received comments through the survey and from community groups relating to the closure point at the junction of Columbia Road and Barnet Grove.

There were three main concerns with the proposed closure point:

- 1) Access for the Columbia Road Sunday Flower Market – Concerns were raised that the closure would create issues for the set-up of the market, including getting to Columbia Road and access to current dedicated trader parking bays.
- 2) Access to Hackney Road – Concerns were raised that residents just south of the closure point were closer to Hackney Road and therefore this should be their main access point into and out of the area, instead of Bethnal Green Road which is further away.
- 3) Access to parking – For those north of the closure point the amount of parking available is reduced, especially on a Sunday.

This closure was a direct question within the consultation and both residents and businesses within the Scheme 2 and Scheme 3 areas supported the closure. This was 69% supportive and 29% unsupportive in Scheme 2 and 59% supportive and 31% unsupportive in Scheme 3.

We have reviewed the scheme, considered the concerns raised and identified a potential alternative that will allow for the scheme to meet the objectives of Liveable Street while keeping the junction of Barnet Grove and Columbia Road open.

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This alternative would mean:

- A closure at the Wellington Row junction with Barnet Grove
- A closure at the Quilter Street junction with Wellington Row

It is recommended that further engagement is undertaken with residents in the surrounding area and asked to comment on the two options; the original and the alternative option provided above. Due to the large support already provided for the objectives of Liveable Streets, this engagement will be specifically on the location of the closure and not on the whether the scheme is taken forward.

Ropley Street

The Liveable Streets team received a petition from residents of Ropley Street and Peabody Nags Head Estate. During the consultation period we met with the lead member from the petition to discuss the issues brought forward.

The petition outlined two main concerns with the proposed scheme:

- 1) New rat-run - By blocking access from Columbia Road to Gosset Street and Barnet Grove, there is a possible 'rat-run' which will develop from West to East, through Columbia Road into Ropley Street. The concern is that this rat-run would be used to avoid delays and traffic lights on Hackney Road leading to increased traffic coming down Columbia Road, notably heightening emissions around Columbia Primary School and Columbia Market Nursery School, attended by the children of many local residents.
- 2) Road safety at Ropley Street junction with Columbia Road - Since the council installed new cycle lanes down Columbia Road there has been an increased number of accidents at the junction of Columbia Road and Ropley Street involving cyclists being hit by vehicles. It is suggested that the new proposal would increase the use of this road and also increase the number of collisions at this junction.

With regards to the issues highlighted in the petition, it is agreed that there is potential for rat-running vehicles to travel along Columbia Road via Ropley Street to Hackney Road. Although, this is likely to be only an east to west movement due to the one-way on Columbia Road, there is potential for impact to residential areas, key walking and cycling routes and outside the school entrance.

Having examined the junction of Columbia Road and Ropley Street there is no police recorded collisions at this time, however, it was noticed on site that the design of the junction does mean that there is potential for vehicle and cycle conflicts due to the exiting angle and poor visibility.

The petition provided an alternative solution to close Ropley Street. It is agreed this would help to resolve the highlighted issues, however, one note of concern is access for the market traders on Sundays.

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Is it therefore recommended that Ropley Street is closed subject to access for the market traders on a Sunday.

1.3 Scheme 3

There was overall support for Scheme 3. On average, from those with addresses in the scheme 3 area only, 66% were supportive and 22% unsupportive. However, there were a number of alternative ideas and concepts put forward from residents, businesses and community groups which have been reviewed below.

Squirries Street/Warner Place

During the consultation period, an alternative proposal was submitted to the Liveable Streets team that included the option of leaving the junction open to traffic travelling north/south via Squirries Street and Warner Place. This would require further closures of the side roads to ensure there is no additional rat-runs created, however, this would negate the purpose of the proposal - to enable a shorter distance for residents travelling north or south rather than using Cambridge Heath Road.

In addition, several issues have been identified in regard to the alternative proposal that make it a non-viable option.

The current level of traffic on this route is 9,311 on Squirries Street and 6,308 on Warner Place. These two roads form key walking and cycling routes in the area and a crossing with high footfall (at the junction of Squirries Street, Gosset Street and Warner Place) which is the point where vehicles travelling east/west and north/south meet. There is also a school entrance on Warner Place. If this route remains open it is likely to attract further traffic on top of the unacceptably high level of traffic on a residential street leading to a further reduction of air quality and road safety.

The results of the survey showed that 66% supported the closure overall and 68% of those living within Scheme 3 area also supported it.

It is recommended that the current proposal is taken forward due to the reasons above and support from the public consultation.

1.4 Scheme 4

There was overall support for Scheme 4. On average, 66% of those with addresses in the Scheme 4 area were supportive and 18% unsupportive. However, there were several alternative ideas and concepts put forward which have been reviewed below.

Elizabeth Selby Infant School – School Street

The Liveable Streets team received support for the scheme from many schools in the area. During a coffee morning with parents and teachers at Elizabeth Selby School a road safety issue was raised on Pollard Street outside the school entrance. Subsequent representation from the school supported the project overall although requested further measures on Pollard Street due to road safety concerns.

It is recommended that as part of the Liveable Streets and School Streets programme a design be developed for outside the school entrance on Pollard Street. This could be, but not limited to, school keep clear markings and a road closure or temporary road closures during school peak times. Once designs have been developed a local consultation in partnership with the school will take place before implementation.

Clare Street

Concerns have been raised by The Chair of Glacier Point Residents Association, a democratically constituted body representing the interests of approximately 100 social housing and private residents of the Glacier Point development and Ward Councillors regarding through movements from Cambridge Heath Road to Bethnal Green Road via West Street and Clare Street. Concerns have also been raised about ASB and drug related issues in the area associated with the traffic movement.

In light of these concerns raised we recommend including a modal filter/road closure on Clare Street south of the junction with West Street. The existing one-way will be maintained on West Street and Clare Street will remain two-way.

Local engagement will take place and minor changes to the parking layout may be required to provide a turning head for vehicles in the southern link of Clare Street between Old Bethnal Green Road and West Street.

Shahporan Masjid Mosque

During the consultation period, a drop-in session was held at Shahporan Masjid Mosque and a subsequently request was made for changes outside of the Mosque that would help to achieve the aims of the project. This was for changes to the footway outside the main entrance on Tredway Street, additional lighting on the nearby walking routes, increased cycle parking and changes to the parking layout.

Tredway Street didn't feature within the original proposal as it is an existing cul-de-sac, however, given the high footfall in the area, inclusion aligns with the project objectives to encourage walking and cycling for short trips.

It is recommended that the final scheme includes changes to increase the width of the footway, additional street lighting on the walking routes and increased cycle parking.

Signalised junction on Bethnal Green

Some concerns were raised about the junction of Squirries Street, Bethnal Green Road and Vallance road. It is understood that there is an existing issue with the signals at the junction for those turning right from Vallance Road and stopping for the red light for those heading across Bethnal Green Road to Squirries Street. This causes delays at the junction and noise from excessive use of the vehicle horn from frustrated motorists.

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With this road closure stopping the north movement through to Hackney Road via Squirries Street there is concern it will increase the number of vehicles turning right and increase existing issue.

Officers have reviewed the junction and it is correctly laid out and meets regulations and guidance. It was noted that drivers could be confused and stop when they have the right to proceed. Additionally, as Squirries Street to Vallance Road is a key cycling and walking route the junction could also be improved with new crossing facilities closer to the desire line.

It is recommended that this signalised junction is reviewed with TfL, who run the signals, and improvements made to the north/south movement for cyclists and pedestrians while also improving the layout of the signal heads to remove driver confusion.

1.5 Overall Projects

Resident only gates

At the drop-in sessions and community meetings an alternative proposal was put forward to use residential gates. These were suggested instead of road closures allow residents with a permit to drive through an area but all others denied access. It was suggested that this can be administered using Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras.

One of the key objectives of the programme is to reduce short trips and encourage those that can to walk, cycle and use public transport. One in three journeys in the borough are less than 1.2 miles and it is these car journeys that the scheme will help to reduce by making the environment more convenient, safer and pleasant.

This alternative solution would reduce the number of vehicle movements from those outside the area rat-running in local streets but with quieter streets it would also encourage residents to use vehicles to make shorter trips.

It is recommended that this alternative option is not agreed and to continue with the original proposal.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

A number of community groups raised concerns over ASB and the potential for increased ASB in public areas. Although the objectives of the scheme are not to fully resolve ASB, a by-product of reducing the barriers of high traffic movement and improving the public realm can be a reduction in ASB.

We have already involved the safer neighbourhoods teams and will continue to work with them as part of the design process. This will include both the borough and police designing out crime officers.

It is recommended that as part of the process that designs be discussed with relevant and appropriate departments to ensure that the design does not encourage or create ASB.

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Contra flow – cycling on one-way streets

Several organisations, visitors to the areas and residents suggested that all one-ways restrictions should allow two-way travel for cyclists. This is to ensure that cyclists can use the shortest and safest routes through the area.

Officers have reviewed each of the proposed one-ways within the schemes and agree with this proposal based on the expected low level of vehicle movements and ample width of carriageway.

As part of the design process an independent team will carry out a road safety audit to assess each of the contra flow proposals to ensure it meets safety requirements.

It is recommended that contra flow cycling is allowed on all one-ways with the undertaking of a road safety audit.