

# A Better Brick Lane

Public consultation  
on changes to traffic  
restrictions on Brick Lane



TOWER HAMLETS



### Mayor's Foreword

The transport network is a vital part of everyday life. It enables people to make their regular journeys to and from home for work, study, leisure, socialising or shopping and provides essential means of access to healthcare and welfare services. Businesses rely on transport to bring employees and customers to their premises and convey their goods and services. It enables family to travel to vulnerable relatives and provide a network of community and support. An efficient and sustainable transport system is vital for addressing issues relating to public health, air quality, accessibility and growth.

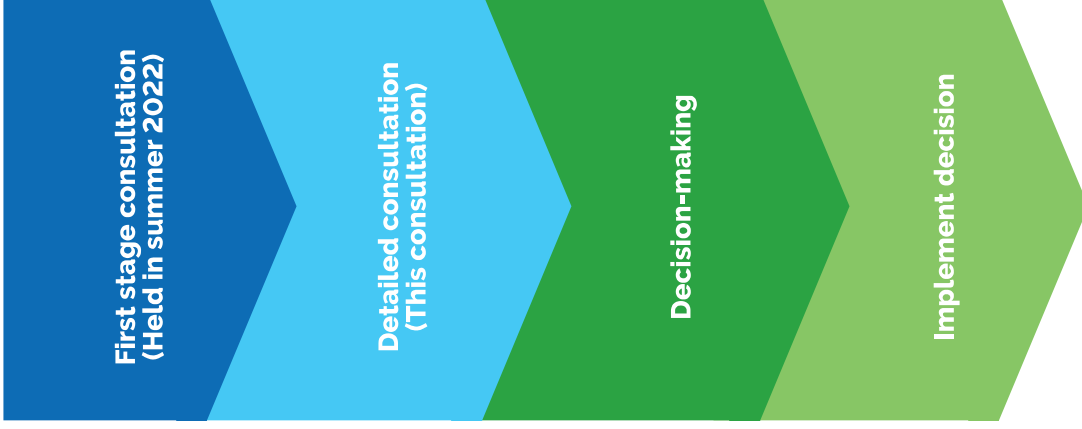
When the Liveable Streets scheme was first implemented in Brick Lane, concerns were raised around the impact on local businesses and access for residents. Now that the scheme is in place, we have received strong feedback from residents and stakeholders reporting adverse impacts

from the scheme, particularly on business and trade. This feedback has allowed us to develop our proposals further.

I am pleased to present this document which is the next stage in consulting on our proposals. Our key objective is to create healthier streets, with improvements to accessibility and road safety, while restoring access for businesses who rely on Brick Lane to bring employees and customers to their premises and convey their goods and services. All residents and other stakeholders are encouraged to have their say and respond to this consultation and help us shape our proposals.



**Mayor Lutfur Rahman**



### This consultation

We are consulting on whether to remove the weekend camera closures on Brick Lane. This proposal has been developed following feedback from residents and engagement with local businesses. This is set out in more detail in this document.

### Structure of this document

**Part 1** Introduction to the current scheme

**Part 2** The Options

**Part 3** The Data

**Part 4** Guidance on responding to this consultation

## Part 1: Introduction to the current scheme

The Liveable Streets closures on Brick Lane. These currently operate at the following times and locations.

- Hanbury Street to Woodseer Street from 12pm-11pm on Saturdays and Sundays.
- Buxton Street to Taylor's Yard entrance from 11am-11pm on Saturdays and 8am-11pm on Sundays.

The scheme is implemented as an experimental traffic order following the reduction of cameras closures on Brick Lane in March 2022. This order involved the reduction in camera closures on Brick Lane to from five to two. This change was due to significant opposition to the closures from local businesses.



Camera closure locations

## Part 2: The Options

The council has undertaken an evaluation of the closures by gathering and analysing data from various sources and feedback from the first-round consultation (see Appendix).

We have set out two options to consider. Option 1 is for removal of the two camera closures on Option 2 is for retaining them.

**Option 1: The full removal of the camera closures on Brick Lane**  
Feedback from that first stage consultation, shows strong feedback from residents and businesses supporting the removal of the closures. Key themes were displaced traffic, increased journey times for those dependent on the use of a car and impact on Businesses.

### Increased journey times

Responses in the first stage consultation showed concerns around the increased journey times. This disproportionately impacts on residents who rely on the use of motor vehicles.

### Impact on businesses

Initial engagement with businesses showed that many felt the closures were adversely impacting on their trade. In this stage of the consultation, we will undertake more detail engagement with businesses to gain a better understanding of the issues they are experiencing.

### Sunday Market closure

Option 1 would not impact on the existing Sunday market restrictions that operate on Brick Lane north of Hanbury Street from 8am to 4pm. These restrictions would remain.

**Option 2: Retaining the camera closures**  
Feedback from the first stage of the consultation showed support for the benefits of the closures. The key benefit is the improvement to safety for pedestrians through the removal of traffic during closure times.



### Section of brick lane north of Hanbury Street closed to traffic

The closures apply to two parts of Brick Lane which experience significant pedestrian demand during the closure times over the weekend. This is primarily due to increased activity in and around the Truman Brewery and movement between Brick Lane and Spitalfields to the west. Traffic movements are still possible inbetween the two pedestrianised spaces through a diversion using Woodseer Street.



Area closed to traffic during closure times



Route open to traffic during closure times

Traffic movements during closure times

## Part 3: The Data

This part of the consultation sets out the data which will allow residents and stakeholders to consider the options. It includes:

- Data gathered directly by the council
- Feedback from stakeholders

### Air Quality Data

Air pollution is associated with several adverse health impacts; it is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions.

The UK Clean Air Strategy released in 2019, provides the overarching strategic framework for air quality management in the UK and contains national air quality standards and objectives established by the government to protect human health.

The strategy objectives take into account EU directives that set limit values which member states are legally required to achieve by their target dates. UK legal limits for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) are 40ug/m<sup>3</sup> (micrograms per cubic metre) annual mean. NO<sub>2</sub> data from within the scheme and boundary roads was collected and compared with similar roads and streets in other parts of the borough. The data

showed significant reductions between 2019 and 2022 across the borough, including the area around Brick Lane.

### Improved air quality across the area

Average NO<sub>2</sub> levels reduced by 23% on Whitechapel Road and 21% on Commercial Street compared to 20.93% for other comparable A roads in the Borough. The nearest monitoring station to the closures is Brick Lane/Princelet Street which saw a 23% reduction in NO<sub>2</sub> levels.

### Conclusions

The data is therefore inconclusive as to whether the introduction of the closures on Brick Lane has had a significant impact on air quality levels. Comparing local air quality data with the rest of the borough, there is an indication that most of the reductions in NO<sub>2</sub> emissions are due to ULEZ and cleaner vehicles as significant reductions have also occurred elsewhere in the borough.

Reductions in NO<sub>2</sub> across the borough should address concerns around the impact on air quality resulting from the removal of closures.

### Boundary road traffic data Travel time delay data

Department of Transport data<sup>1</sup> has been gathered on the delay times for the main boundary road for of the scheme, Commercial Street. The data shows a 21% decrease in delays from 2019 to 2021. These are the main roads that would be expected to see diverted traffic during the closure times on Brick Lane.

Road Name(s)	2019	2022	Change	2019- 2022 percentage change
Whitechapel High St. (KFC)	47.8	39.6	-8.2	-17%
Whitechapel Rd./Adler St	40.3	30.9	-9.4	-23%
Brick Lane/Princelet St	32.2	24.9	-7.3	-23%
Toynbee St/Commercial St	45.1	35.7	-9.4	-21%

### Changes in NO<sub>2</sub> levels in the scheme area (2019-2022)

Road Name(s)	Average delay (second per vehicle per mile)			Change on 2019
	2019	2020	2021	
Commercial Street	275.7	219.9	215.6	-21.80%
Hackney Road	136.0	207.1	218.7	60.81%
Bethnal Green Road	164.0	156.5	186.1	13.48%
Whitechapel Road/ Bow Road	155.0	137.8	169.7	9.48%
Commercial Road	158.0	179.0	167.6	6.08%
Cambridge Heath Road	172.9	165.4	171.1	-1.04%

1: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/average-speed-delay-and-reliability-of-travel-times-cgn>



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## Part 4: Guide to responding to this consultation

A paper survey has been sent with this document as part of this consultation. Your views are important to us and we want everyone to have their say.

### Using your response reference number

All paper surveys sent out to residents within the consultation boundary will have a response reference code. These are to be used for online responses if that is your chosen method of response. This code is for the household and can be used for responses from each member of the household.

### Have your say by contributing by:

**1**

Paper survey (sent with this leaflet) sent via post in the freepost envelope provided.

**2**

Online via **talk.towerhamlets.gov.uk/LSBricklane**. The online survey is open for all to respond to. Residents and businesses who have received a paper copy of the survey should use the response reference code on the survey.

Please provide your feedback by **11.59pm on Sunday 19th February 2023**. Visit our website **talk.towerhamlets.gov.uk/LSBricklane** for more information on the plans

# Appendix : How you responded to the Brick Lane first stage consultation

First round public consultation results  
 The public consultation was conducted between Wednesday 6th July and Sunday 7th August 2022. A public online/paper survey was launched on Wednesday 6th July 2022. Consultation packs were delivered to 6525 residential and business addresses within the consultation area shown below.

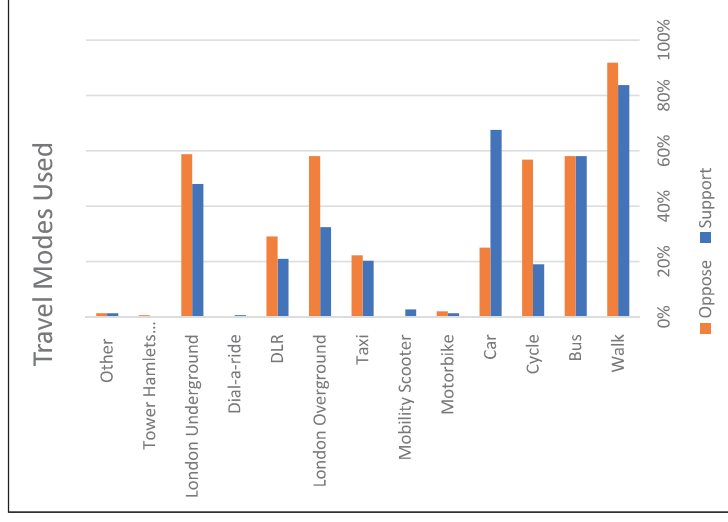
A total of 1345 responses received. 500 (37%) were from within the consultation area. Responses which used the resident code sent out across the scheme area totalled 317 or 23% of all responses. .

A total of 1345 responses were received from outside the scheme area. These include other parts of Tower Hamlets with high concentrations in Bow and the Isle of Dogs. Responses were also received from other London borough with high levels of responses from Hackney, Waltham Forest, Islington and Lambeth.

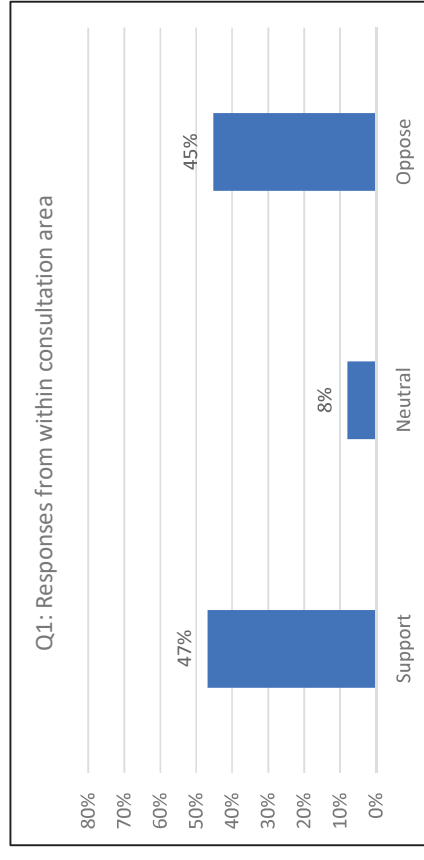
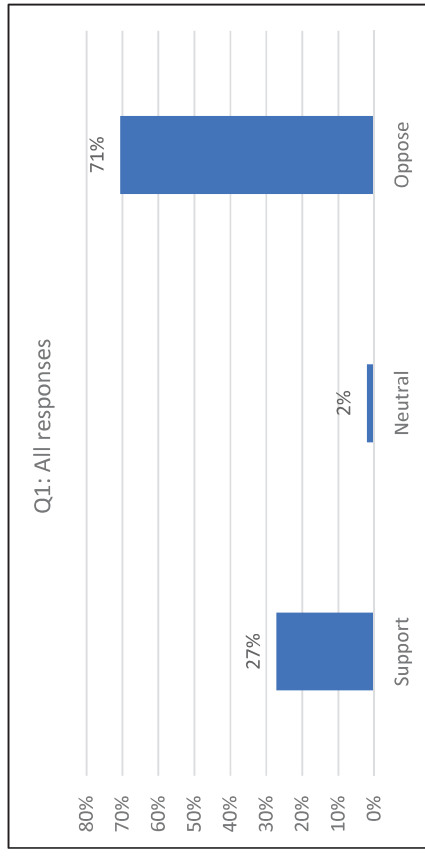


Distribution of responses

**Responses from within the scheme area**  
 This page sets out responses to the travel mode question and the key questions around each of the traffic management changes set out in the first-round consultation document. These responses are from residents that used the resident reference code.



**Question 1: How supportive are you of the proposed removal of the closures on Brick Lane from Hanbury Street to Woodseer Street and Buxton Street to Taylors Yard**



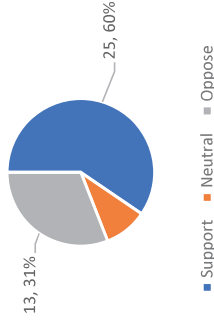
# Appendix : How you responded to the Brick Lane first stage consultation

## Demographic information

### Age

The age profiles differed in terms of responses from those from younger and older respondents. For those opposed to the removal of closures 27% were over 45 and 13% over 65. This compares to those in support of closure removal where 48% were under 44 and 13% over 65.

Responses from people with disabilities

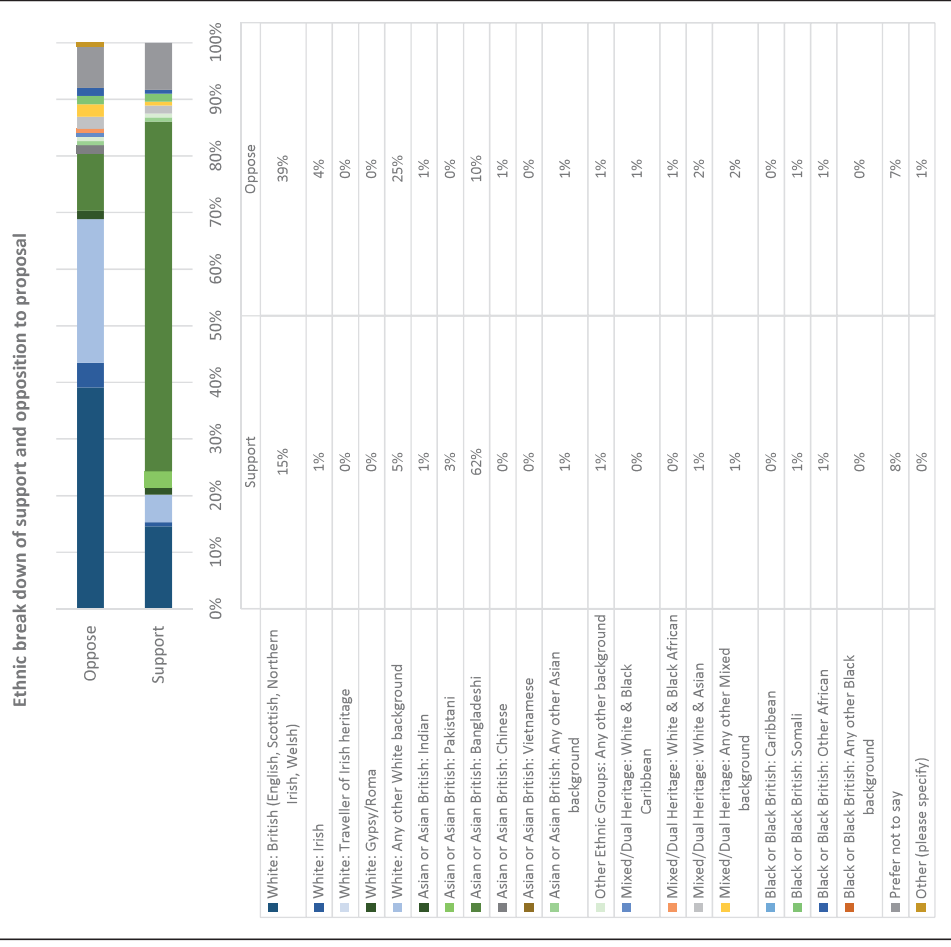
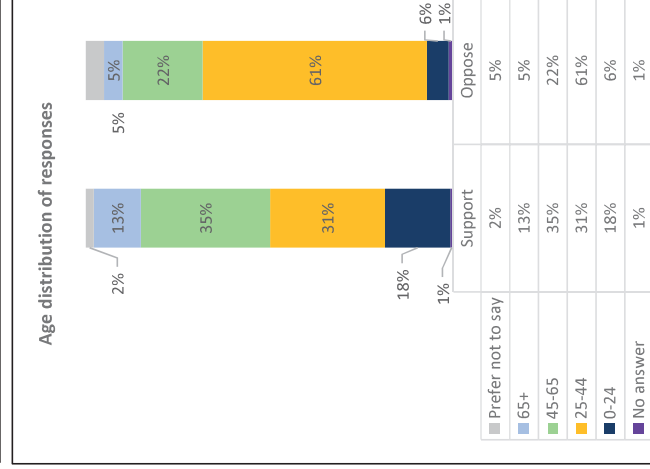
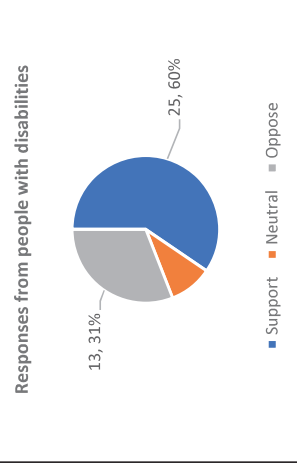


### Ethnicity

The ethnicity profiles differed in terms of responses from a white background and those from a Bangladeshi background. Those from a white background represented 64% of responses opposed to the removal of the closures compared to 21% in support. Those from a Bangladeshi background represented 5% of responses opposed to the removal of the closures compared to 67% in support.

### Disability

From the 500 respondents, 42 stated they have long-standing illness or health condition. The chart below shows the distribution of support and opposition to the proposal. Analysis of these responses indicates a majority of respondents with disabilities showed support for the removal of the cameras closures on Brick Lane (60%).





# Appendix: Consultation feedback from the Brick Lane first stage consultation

## Consultation feedback

For the first stage of the consultation, we received over 1345 responses both in support and opposed to the proposals to remove the Liveable Streets closures.

We also engaged with key stakeholders including the emergency services, TfL and local businesses.

## Response text analysis - Key themes from those in support to the proposals

This section sets out the key themes coming from respondents supporting the proposals.

### Increased journey times for those dependent on the use of a car

Respondents who felt they were reliant on the use of a car support removal of the closure on the grounds of reducing their journey times.

Example responses which illustrate this key theme are as follows:

*"Exceptions should be made for people with disability, but the street can remain closed to general public"*

*"I need a car most of the time due to long term chronic pains on my joints. Find it very hard to walk longer than 5 minutes."*

*"Please remove these so called livable streets, you've in fact put people in danger when in emergency by blocking these roads, and also by restricting these areas I am unable to enter my residential area*

*which is inconvenient for everyone in our locality"*

### Displaced traffic and pollution

The most predominant key theme from respondents supporting the removal of closures related to the displacement of traffic to the wider area.

Example responses which illustrate this key theme are as follows:

*"The closures lead to more vehicle traffic on side streets where more residents live"*

*"The road closures cause vehicles to take longer routes along the diverted routes which in turn increases congestion./traffic on the more residential side streets and also increases emissions on the longer journeys"*

*"I'm a regular cyclist / pedestrian on Brick Lane as I work in the area and have done for four years. The closures only divert vehicles part of the way and aren't a meaningful solution. The existing road closures divert traffic onto the side streets where people live. They also send vehicles on longer journeys around the block, increasing the vehicle time on the road, increasing congestion and increasing emissions and pollution"*

### Impact on Businesses

Some business within and close to the camera closures felt they discouraged customers from visiting Brick Lane through fear of

Example responses which illustrate this key theme are as follows:

*"The closures are confusing and customers and delivery vans have received tickets. Its puts off people from visiting the area"*

*"It would be better for Brick Lane to be restored to how it was. These closures have impacted on trade"*

Response text analysis - Key themes from those opposed to the proposals

This section sets out the key themes coming from those opposed to the proposals.

### Traffic impact

The main theme around the opposition to the proposals relates to concerns around increasing traffic levels. Many feel that restricting traffic on Brick Lane during the closure times makes it safer, cleaner and more pleasant to live in and use as a public space. The following adverse impacts of high traffic levels are mentioned in the responses.

- Air pollution
- Noise
- Safety

Example responses which illustrate this key theme are as follows:

*"We are in the middle of a climate emergency, and our air quality is horrible. We need to be limiting motor traffic, not encouraging it"*

*"I would prefer Hanbury street with no traffic, it is excessively noisy."*

*"Brick Lane is safer with the road closures in place, and as a parent of young children who walks with them through the area every day, I am concerned about their safety when cars start speeding through again"*

### Cost of proposals

There is another key theme around concerns regarding the costs of the proposal. It is felt that a significant amount of money has been spent on the closures and the money to reverse them could be better spent elsewhere.

Example responses which illustrate this key theme are as follows:

*"A good amount of money was spent putting them in place only less than a year ago. Tower Hamlets council should be encouraging less use of personal cars and encouraging alternative means of transport"*

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