

A Better Bethnal Green

Public consultation
on transport
changes in the
Old Bethnal Green
Road Area



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, concerns were raised for people reliant on vehicle use and emergency service vehicles. There were also concerns regarding the impact on local bus services, access to families and support networks, and of displaced traffic on areas surrounding the scheme's locations.

The scheme has been in place for nearly 18 months, and this has allowed for an analysis against its key objectives and consideration of the impacts on all residents and stakeholders. For parts of the scheme, it has reduced some traffic levels and improved the public realm in a way that makes it safer for walking and cycling. The public realm schemes on Old Bethnal Green Road and Columbia Road have resulted in reductions in traffic levels in the areas around them.

However, we have received strong feedback from residents and stakeholders reporting adverse impacts from the

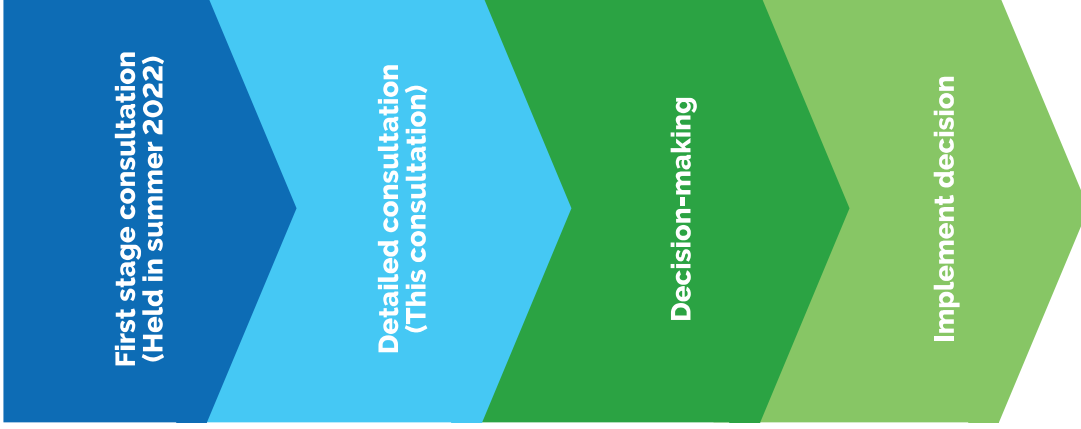
scheme. Data shows that there has been an adverse impact on local bus services and displaced traffic on local and boundary roads. Concerns regarding access to vital familial and social networks, as well as an economic impact on small businesses – ranging from shops to taxi drivers, market stallholders to delivery men and women – have also repeatedly been raised with the council. Working with stakeholders such as the emergency services has shown there have also been adverse impacts on access. In the summer of 2022, the council undertook a first stage consultation to gain a better understanding of public opinion on the Liveable Streets scheme. We have received strong feedback from residents and stakeholders which has allowed us to develop our proposals further.

I am pleased to present this document which is the next stage in our consultation on proposals to address matters that have been raised regarding the Liveable Streets scheme and make transport changes across the Bethnal Green area. This second stage consultation provides more detail on our proposals and the data which supports them.

Our key objective is to create healthier streets, with improvements to accessibility and road safety while restoring access for key services and residents reliant on their cars. 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 implement a series of changes that have been developed following engagement with key stakeholders and data analysis (see part two of this document).

The proposed changes are focused on the following:

- Improving access for all
- Improving conditions for active travel across the whole area
- Improving the conditions for public transport use through improved performance and access
- Reduced traffic on unsuitable roads
- Ensuring local businesses and keyworkers are not adversely impacted
- Improving access for emergency Vehicles
- Contributing to improved air quality through encouraging active travel and public transport use

Structure of this document

Part 1 of this consultation sets out the course of action the council is considering.

Part 2 sets out the data that has been considered in developing the options in the consultation. It presents a combination of data and feedback from the first stage of consultation held in the summer.

Part 3 provides guidance on responding to this consultation.

Introduction

In 2019, The London Borough of Tower Hamlets launched the Liveable Streets Programme. The key objective of the scheme was to improve the look and feel of the area by upgrading the public realm and enhancing conditions for walking and cycling.

The Liveable Streets scheme in Bethnal Green involved a series of road closures and directional changes to traffic. It also included a series of public realm enhancements to Columbia Road and Arnold Circus and a new pocket park on Old Bethnal Green Road.

The map opposite shows the full set of interventions which were approved under the scheme which was not completed. The following elements were yet to be implemented.

- Warner Place and Squirries Street to made one way northbound
- Road closure on the junction of Gosset Street and Warner Place
- Road closure on the junction of Virginia Road

The Liveable Streets scheme was implemented in phases and these final elements were delayed due to a review of the scheme which was announced in September 2021. Further engagement was undertaken with residents and other stakeholders and as well as additional traffic counts. The council considered completing the scheme but has decided not to proceed with this due to the likely impact of displaced traffic. This is covered in more detail in the next page of this document.



Original Bethnal Green Liveable Streets scheme map

The Options

The council has undertaken an evaluation of the Liveable Streets scheme by gathering and analysing data from various sources and engaging with key stakeholders.

Below we set out options which have been developed for respondents to consider. Option 1 sets out a series of changes which seek to address issues that have been identified. Option 2 is for retaining the current scheme and its benefits. We also set out below other options that were considered and the reasons they were not taken forward.

Option 1: Remove the Liveable Streets closures and implement a series of areawide improvements to encourage active travel

This option would seek to strike a balance between traffic restrictions and essential access for disabled residents, the emergency services and various council services such as maintenance and street works coordination. It would also seek to address traffic congestion and bus service delays on Hackney Road (see page 13).

Option 2: Retain the current scheme

This option is for no changes to be made to the area. For some parts of the area, the Liveable Streets scheme has largely been successful in reducing traffic levels and improving the public realm in a way that makes it safer for walking and cycling. Traffic levels shown on page 15 of this document show the streets in the area which have benefitted from reduced traffic. These include streets that are close to

some of the schools in the area. The data also shows that traffic levels have fallen for the area as a whole.

The pocket park on Old Bethnal Green Road and new public realm on Columbia Road have resulted in significant improvements to the look and feel in those areas with new planting, trees and seating.

Other options considered

The council has considered other options which will not be taken forward. These are completing the originally approved scheme with more closures or replacing physical closures with cameras. These are discussed below.

Completing the Liveable Streets scheme by installing the two remaining closures

Some of the issues with displaced traffic on local roads are due to an incomplete approved scheme. The original approved scheme included further closures on Virginia Road and Gosset Street.

In April 2022, daily traffic flows were 5,142 on Swanfield Street and 6,495 on Warner Place. Some of these are local resident trips, but the majority would be through traffic. Closing these two roads with physical closures would effectively divert most of these 11,500 vehicle trips onto Hackney Road and Bethnal Green Road, which would exacerbate the issues we have seen on Hackney Road, particularly the impact on bus services.

This approach would also worsen the access issues that have been shown to be experienced by the emergency services and disabled residents.

Replacing physical closures with cameras

This would address the access issues that come with the above option but the issues of displaced traffic would remain.

The benefits of each option

Option 1: Remove the Liveable Streets closures and implement a series of areawide improvements to the public realm to encourage active travel	Option 2: Retain the current scheme
Benefits	Benefits
Improved access for those reliant on car travel including key workers and those who use car travel as their main source of income	Lower traffic levels on Old Bethnal Green Road and Gosset Street
Improved access for emergency vehicles, deliveries and council services	Better for cycling: There is existing segregated westbound cycling provision on Old Bethnal Green Road between Clarkson Street and Mansford Street. This would be removed if option 1 was to be implemented
Improved road network resilience	There are four schools along Old Bethnal Green Road and Gosset Street which currently benefit from reduced traffic levels from the closures
Improved access for businesses	
Improved bus service performance through less congestion on Hackney Road and Bethnal Green Road	Air quality has improved within the scheme area at a higher rate than in other comparable areas in the borough
Lower traffic levels on Swanfield Street, Virginia Road and Ropley Street	
Increased planting, trees and seating in the area as result of the new pocket park and other public realm improvements across the area	

Option 1: Changes in the Old Bethnal Green area

Option 1

Option 1 has been developed following consideration of the available data and engagement with stakeholders.

The key principles behind option 1 are:

- Improved access
- Addressing the impacts of displaced traffic
- Improving conditions for active travel for the whole area

Removal of closures

For Teesdale Street, the closure would be replaced with a continuous crossing which prioritises pedestrians over motor vehicles. The junction would also be near a new zebra crossing which would improve crossing options for pedestrians.

The Old Bethnal Green Road closure would be replaced with a new zebra crossing and the nearby junction with Temple Street would also benefit from a new continuous crossing.

The Punderson's Gardens, Canrobert Street and Clarkson Street closures would also be removed.

New loading bay and pedestrian space outside shops

Changes to the space outside the shops on Old Bethnal Green Road include a new loading bay and wider pavements for pedestrians.

Two way operation of Old Bethnal Green Road

The proposals include changing Old Bethnal Green Road to two-way traffic between Pollard Row and Clarkson Street.

Pollard Row and Pollard Street

The proposals include the removal of the Pollard Street and Pollard Row closures and public realm enhancements to improve pedestrian space and increase planting and trees.

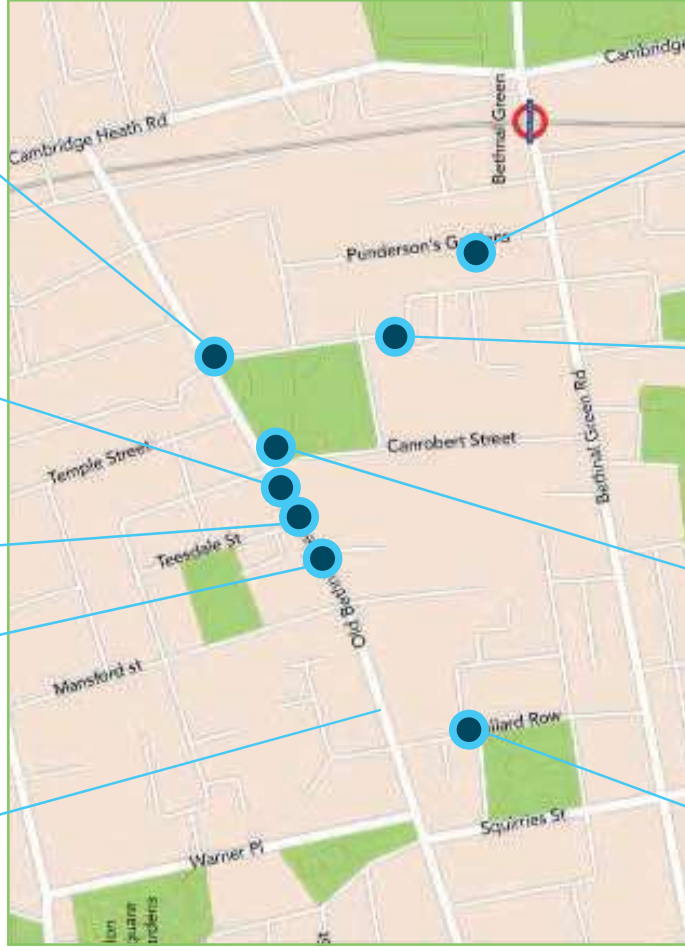
Two way operation of Old Bethnal Green Road from Pollard Row to Clarkson Street

New zebra crossing

Removal of closure on Teesdale Street

New parking bay and footway space outside shops

Removal of pocket park on Old Bethnal Green Road and replacement with new zebra crossing and planting



Footway improvements and new planting on Pollard Street and Pollard Row

Removal of closure on Canrobert Street

Removal of closure on Clarkson Street

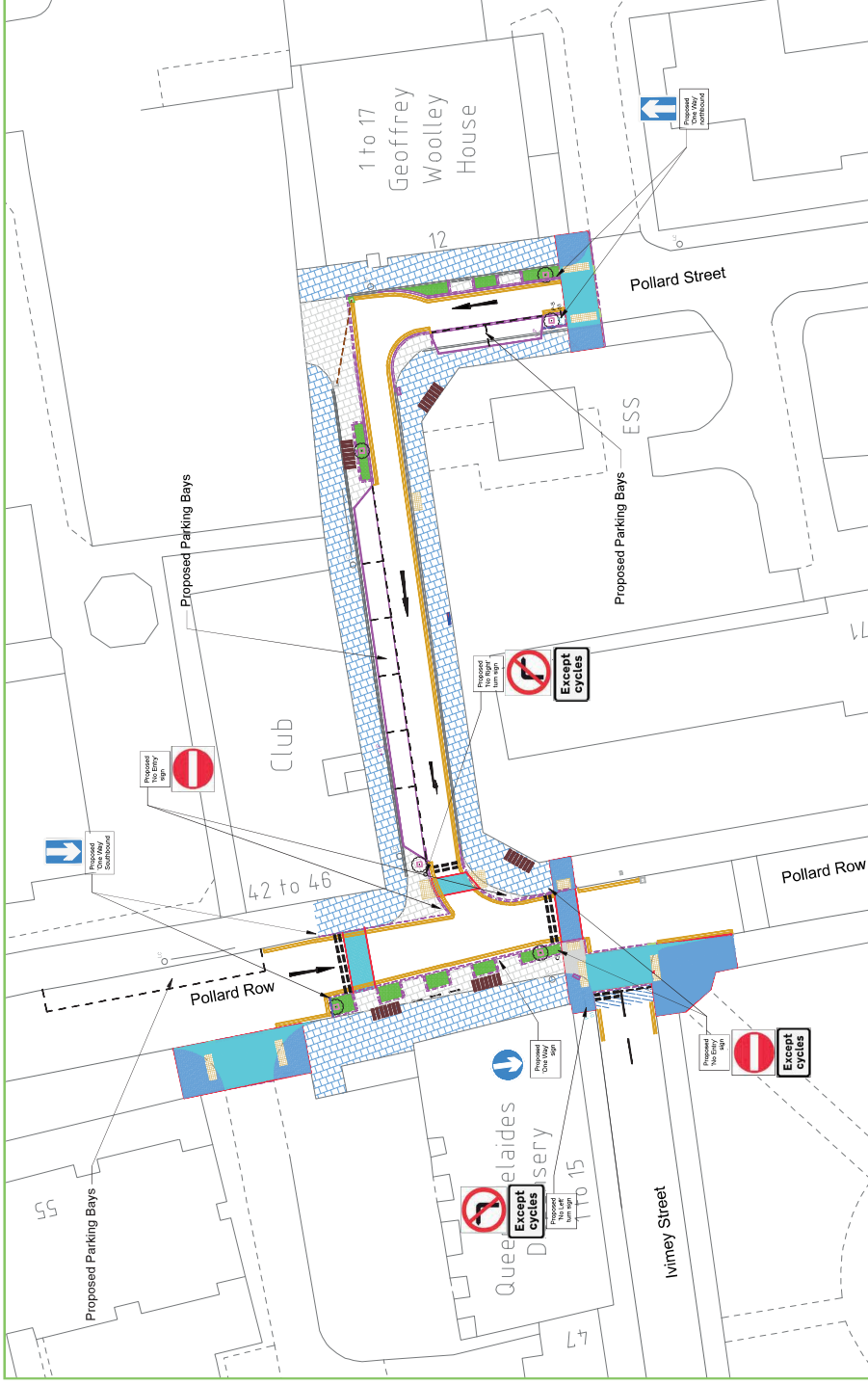
Removal of closure on Punderson's Gardens

Option 1: New public realm improvements

Pollard Row and Pollard Street

Option 1 includes the removal of the Pollard Street and Pollard Row closures and public realm enhancements to improve pedestrian space. The designs include:

- New planting and seating on Pollard Street
- More footway space on Pollard Street outside the school entrance
- New one-way southbound operation on Pollard Row



Option 1: Improving conditions for public transport use and active travel for the whole area

Improving conditions for public transport

In 2018/19, the two bus routes serving Hackney Road provided over twelve million passenger journeys. Through option 1, we are seeking to contribute to meeting one of the council's key strategic transport objectives to encourage public transport use. We will do this by improving bus service performance and improving access to public transport services.

Improving bus performance

One of the most important factors influencing bus use is service reliability. Traffic congestion can significantly impact on reliability and therefore adversely impact on efforts to encourage increased bus use. By reversing the diversion of traffic onto Hackney Road from the Liveable Streets road closures we will seek to improve bus journey times particularly on the section between Warner Place and Cambridge Heath Road.

Improving access to stations and stops

Half of all walking in London takes place as part of a longer public transport journey¹. Buses are the most accessible form of public transport, and they provide the widest and most comprehensive network of travel options for distances that are too long to walk. High quality and accessible walking routes to stations and stops are therefore integral to encouraging public transport use.

In this document, we set out a series of walking improvements which improve access to public transport across the area.

Improving conditions for active travel

In terms of encouraging active travel, Option 1 seeks to improve conditions across the whole Bethnal Green area.

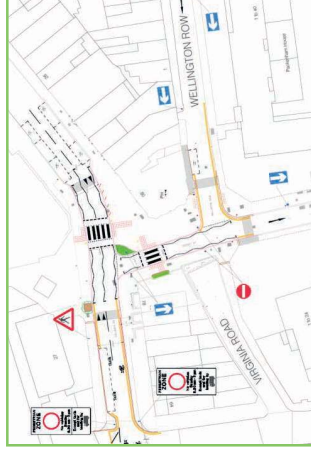
As well as addressing the issue of diverted traffic onto some smaller residential streets, these proposals also seek to make public realm improvements across the area rather than concentrating them in certain areas. All new designs would be in-line with the Healthy Streets approach principles developed by Transport for London (TfL). These are set out in the Healthy Streets diagram shown below.



Improved crossing options

Option 1 includes plans for five new crossings in the scheme area (on Old Bethnal Green Road, Columbia Road and Ravenscroft Street).

Our streets need to be easy to cross for everyone. This is important because people prefer to be able to get where they want to go directly and quickly, so if this is made more difficult, they will get frustrated and give up or choose another way to travel.

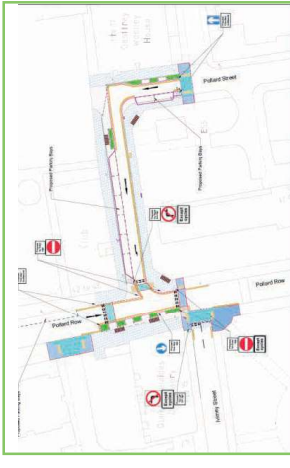


New crossings on Columbia Road and Gosset Street

More planting and trees

Trees and planting can provide multiple benefits to local communities. This includes reducing the impact of climate change and improving the look and feel of the area.

Designs for all changes in the area would seek to result in more trees and planting across the area. Planting and new trees are included in designs for the new public realm scheme on Pollard Row and Pollard Street.



New seating and planting on Pollard Street

Places to stop and rest - more public seating

Seating is essential for creating environments that are inclusive for everyone as well as being important for making streets welcoming places to dwell. Option 1 includes public realm improvements on Old Bethnal Green Road, which would seek to retain seating in the area and the new scheme on Pollard Street would increase in public seating in the area.

Option 1 is therefore focused in improving access to and around shops in the area. This includes public transport and car access, but also pedestrian access through improved walking links to the shops from the wider area.

1: Mayors Walking Action Plan - <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/mts-walking-action-plan.pdf>

Option 1: Creating an accessible network of streets

Accessible routes across the area
 A walking network that is accessible can be very effective in encouraging physical activity back into our everyday lives. The lack of physical activity is one of the biggest threats to our health, increasing the risk of developing a range of chronic diseases including diabetes, dementia, depression and the two biggest killers in London – heart disease and cancer.

For informal crossing, there are many examples across the area where it is difficult to cross, particularly for wheelchair users. Level or flush access between the pavement and road is essential for most wheelchair users. We would improve crossing points either through dropped kerbs or raised crossings to avoid the need for wheelchair users to make lengthy detours to cross the road.



Lack of dropped kerb on Columbia Road

Furthermore, walking is an integral component of using public transport services. Improving walking routes and making them accessible is key to encouraging the increased use of public transport services for all residents.

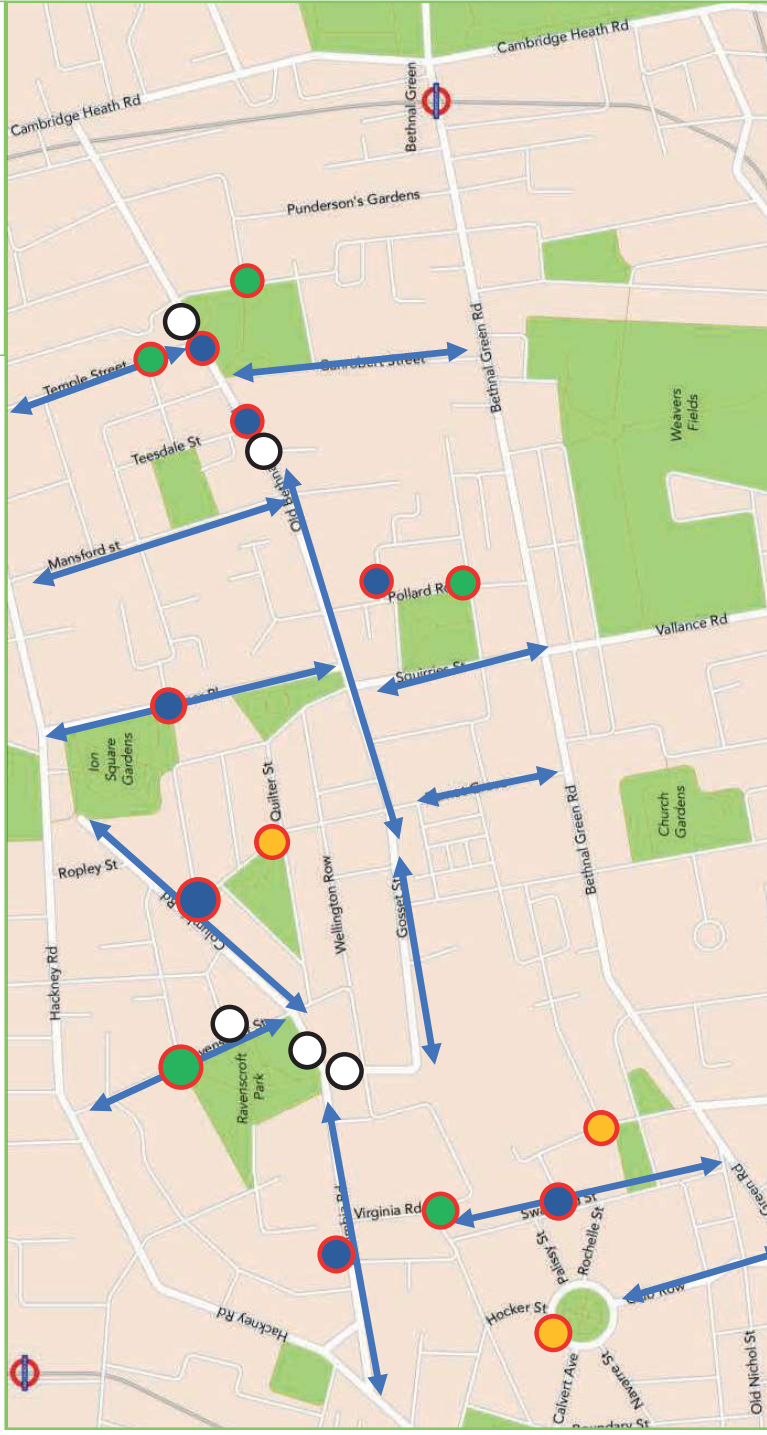
Accessible footways

Option 1 includes plans to create a network of accessible walking routes across Bethnal Green. Creating this network would make it easier for residents to access important services including doctors' surgeries, shops and public transport.

The map on this page identifies a first phase of pedestrian improvements we are considering. These improvements include formal crossings such as zebra crossings, which will be located on Columbia Road, Gosset Street and Old Bethnal Green Road;

Route identified for pedestrian improvements

- Route identified for pedestrian improvements
- Raised table
- New continuous crossing
- New dropped kerbs
- New zebra crossing



Option 2: Retaining the scheme

For some parts of the area, the Liveable Streets scheme has largely been successful in reducing traffic levels and improving the public realm in a way that makes it safer for walking and cycling.

Reduced traffic levels

Traffic data shown on page 15 of this document shows the streets in the area which have benefitted from reduced traffic. These include streets that are close to some of the schools in the area.

The data also shows that traffic levels have fallen for Bethnal Green as a whole with a reduction of over 9700 vehicle trips.

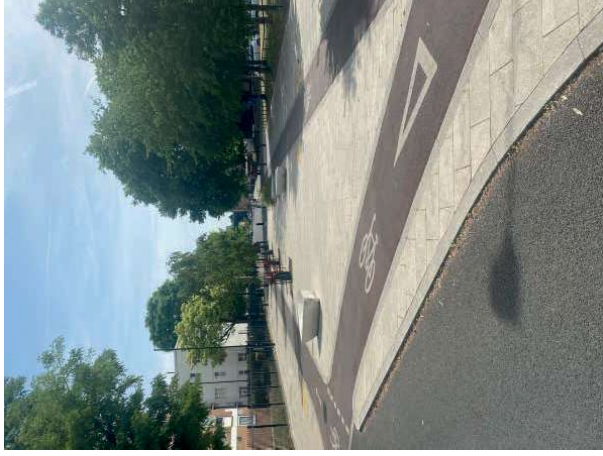
	Change in traffic from 2019-2022
Ravenscroft Road	-455
Horatio Street	346
Ropley Street	284
Temple Street	-1227
B118 Old Bethnal Green Road	-6437
B108 Warner Place	187
B108 Squirries Street	-1862
Columbia Road	-522
B118 Columbia Road	-4807
Virginia Road	1544
Swanfield Street (North)	3253
	-9715

Traffic changes from 2019-2022

Public Realm
The Liveable Street Scheme has resulted in significant improvements to the public realm in various locations in the area. This has often complimented the reductions in traffic and introduced increase planting, trees and seating and facilities for walking and cycling.

Old Bethnal green Pocket Park

The pocket park on Old Bethnal Green Road has resulted in significant change to the area with reduced traffic, more planting and more seating. The makes it easier to cross and cycle in and through the area.



Old Bethnal Green Road Pocket Park

Old Bethnal Green Road cycling route
The scheme includes the provision of segregated cycling from Clarkson Street to Mansford Street. This provides segregated cycling for approximately 200 metres providing safe cycling.



Cycle lane on Old Bethnal Green Road

Part 2: Data considered in developing the options

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
- Data provided by stakeholders

The sections are as follows:

Part 2a: Impact on disabled residents

This covers the impact on disabled residents.

Part 2b: Access for emergency service vehicles, streetworks and council services

This covers access for various groups including the emergency services and council services.

Part 2c: Congestion on boundary roads

This covers data on congestion on boundary roads and bus services.

Part 2d: Displaced traffic on local roads
This covers data on displaced traffic in the local area and on local residential streets.

Part 2e: Air quality

The provides an overview of the air quality data in the area before and after the Liveable Streets closures.

Part 2a: Impact on disabled residents

The implementation of the Liveable Streets programme in Bethnal Green resulted in fundamental changes to the road networks ability to serve the local community. This was primarily due to the closure of a series of B roads which served to enable access between the main boundary roads and smaller residential streets.

Under section 122 (part a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTA), it is the duty of every highways authority to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians). For part a) of section 122, this includes the desirability of securing and maintaining reasonable access to premises.

Weavers and Bethnal Green West are two densely populated wards in Tower Hamlets, which is London's most densely populated borough. These densities place

a high level of demand for access and the road network is therefore required to meet the access needs generated at these densities.

These needs include access for the emergency services, residents reliant on car use, deliveries and council operations such as a refuse collection and highways maintenance. As B roads, Old Bethnal Green Road and Gosset Street were integral to meeting these needs before their closure.

The Bethnal Green Liveable Streets scheme was ambitious in this regard as most examples of low traffic neighbourhoods tend to restrict access from larger roads to address through traffic on smaller residential streets.

Under its public sector equality duty, the council is required in the exercise of

its functions, to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. It also involves taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.

Access for disabled residents

By its design, the Bethnal Green Liveable Streets scheme sought to encourage active travel by prioritising spaces for walking and cycling, while increasing journey distances for motor vehicles. This disproportionately impacts on residents who rely on the use of motor vehicles and this is recognised in the equalities

impact assessment drafted alongside this consultation process.

Impact of traffic on disabled residents

The removal of the traffic measures and reintroduction of through-traffic may impact disabled people in several ways. It is recognised that disabled people are more at risk from road danger, noise, and air pollution. For people with mobility impairments, the reintroduction of vehicle traffic may reduce their confidence in walking, cycling, using a mobility scooter or accessing public transport. Furthermore, evidence suggests regular exercise to be highly beneficial to those with impairments.

Part 2b: Access for emergency and council services

Access for emergency service vehicles

Since the implementation of the Liveable Streets scheme, there have been multiple incidents across the area where closures have hindered ambulance service and fire brigade access¹. Certain adaptations have been made where removable bollards have been installed replacing permanent closures. However, these are only accessible by the London Fire Brigade using a special key. Access issues remain for ambulances.



Ambulance on Old Bethnal Green Road

The three emergency services were consulted on the measures. The ambulance service and London Fire Brigade support the removal of physical closures.

"I wanted to inform you of an incident that has been reported to the LAS from a concerned relative of a patient, where the ambulance response car was delayed

reaching the scene of an incident due to the hard physical closure present on Old Bethnal Green Road between Clarkson Street and Temple Street, E2.

The incident occurred on Sunday 13th February 2022 at approximately 19:50. We had raised the incident on our incident reporting system Datix.

Could I request that the incident is logged by the council against the scheme as part of the ongoing review of LTNs in the area."
Emergency Planning and Resilience Officer
–London Ambulance Service

"We attended a 'smoke issuing' call today at Sandford House, Arnold Circus. The appliances attending entered via Club Row and had difficulty siting the appliances correctly due to the LTN zone and plant pots in place. Luckily, this turned out to be a false alarm but if the incident escalated and an aerial appliance was required it would have proved very difficult, if not impossible, to site it and use it effectively, essentially some residents would not be able to be rescued via the aerial if they are unfortunate enough to be cut off by the LTN."
Station Commander–London Fire Brigade

In their response the police safer neighbourhood team raised concerns on proposals to remove the Liveable Streets closures. This was on the grounds of anti-social behaviours benefits of the scheme particularly in the west of scheme area.

"I consider the road management measures that were brought in to have had a positive effect. Of particular concern are the proposed amendments to the roads

further west. Prior to the changes there was an enormous level of car-enabled ASB. This was due to the spill-out from the Shoreditch night time economy"
– Safer Neighbourhood Team

Access for operational council service vehicles

The network management, highways maintenance and refuse collection services were consulted for the first stage consultation in the summer of 2022. They each raised concerns regarding the Bethnal Green Liveable streets closures.

Network Management: The council has a duty to coordinate street works while ensuring network resilience is maintained and that there is efficient and expeditious movement of traffic, as far as possible.

The implementation of the Liveable Streets scheme has presented challenges to effective street works coordination due to the reduction in possible alternative routes. This is particularly critical at the eastern area of the scheme around Old Bethnal Green Road. Residents and businesses in this section can only be accessed through Mansford Street and Temple Street. This presents challenges for re-routing options for planned works and is more concerning when emergency works are involved.

Highways maintenance: There are constant demands placed on the council to temporarily close roads whether it be for its own maintenance operations or for other parties, such as utilities. These closures always require traffic management arrangements to be made in a way that minimises disruption.

This has proven to be more challenging following the implementation of the Liveable Streets scheme. Consultation with the council's highways team has shown that more routine maintenance tasks require temporary road closures due to the reduction in road space and increase in one-way roads. This not only increases disruption but means greater maintenance costs for the council.

Refuse collection services: The council's refuse collection service was also consulted on the scheme. In their response, they supported the removal of the closures as it would improve their ability to undertake their operations. Key concerns are the increased route distances and the requirement to often reverse vehicles at long distances which creates safety issues.

"Where physical barriers are in place, we ask that these be removed as it has affected how we access properties to make collections. The service's general view is that if Liveable Streets are to be achieved successfully, physical barriers are to be avoided."

Senior refuse collection services officer

¹ Full incident log available in the documents section of the Bethnal Green Liveable Streets web page

Part 2c: Congestion on boundary roads

This section will analyse three datasets to understand if congestion has increased on the two main boundary roads of the Bethnal Green Liveable Streets scheme.

The data shows congestion on Hackney Road, particularly east of Warner Place, has increased significantly since the introduction of the Liveable Streets scheme. The data also shows that between 2019 and 2022 there has been no significant increase in congestion on Bethnal Green Road.

This increase in congestion on Hackney Road is attributed to diverted traffic from both sides of Hackney Road where low traffic neighbourhoods have been implemented.

The three sets of data used are:

- DfT travel time delay data
- iBus delay data
- TRL Astrid database data

Travel time delay data

Department of Transport data¹ has been gathered on the delay times on the main boundary roads of the scheme. The data shows a 60% increase in delays on Hackney Road from 2019 to 2021 and 13% increase in delays on Bethnal Green Road. These are significantly higher than delay increases on Whitechapel Road and Commercial Road, which are the two other east west A roads in the borough (see table below).

Impact on bus services
In 2018/19, the two bus routes serving Hackney Road provided over twelve million passenger journeys. One of the council's key strategic transport objectives is to encourage public transport use and one of the most important factors influencing bus use is service reliability. Congestion can significantly impact bus reliability and can therefore adversely impact bus use.

Data provided by the TfL network team shows an increase in bus journey times on Hackney Road and Bethnal Green Road between 2019 and 2022. The latest data for 2022 shows Bethnal Green Road bus journey times did increase in 2021 but they are now down to pre-closure levels. For Hackney Road east of Warner Place,

the increase in congestion and bus journey times remains in 2022 and this is throughout the day.

More detailed iBus data is available in the documents section of the Bethnal Green Liveable Streets web page.

Road Name(s)	Average delay (second per vehicle per mile)			Change on 2019
	2019	2020	2021	
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%
Commercial Street	275.7	219.9	215.6	-21.80%
Highway/ Limehouse Link	120.7	74.8	75.3	-37.61%



2022 compared with 2019/20
- AM Peak (0700-1000)



2022 compared with 2019/20
- Inter Peak (1000-1600)



2022 compared with 2019/20
- PM Peak (1600-1900)

Journey Time per KM change



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

Part 2c: Congestion on boundary roads

TRL Astrid data for boundary roads

This data is not derived from traffic counts but from detectors on traffic signals which calculate an approximate number of vehicles based on how long the detector is occupied. They can be at risk of inaccuracies during busy times when static vehicles but provide a useful comparison of data from before and after the implementation of the liveable streets scheme.

The three locations the council has obtained data for are:

- Hackney Road/Queensbridge Road
- Hackney Road/Cambridge Heath Road
- Bethnal Green Road and Vallance Road

The data shown on this page is for the PM peak (4pm-7pm) at all three locations.

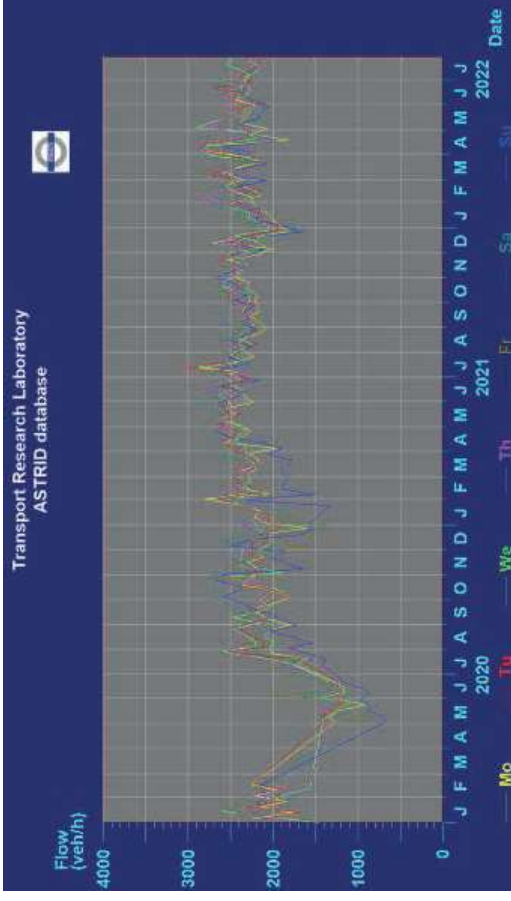
It shows the following trends:

Hackney Road/Cambridge Heath Road: Data shows a significant increase in traffic flows with all flows below 5000 in early 2020 compared to nearly all flows close to or exceeding 6000.

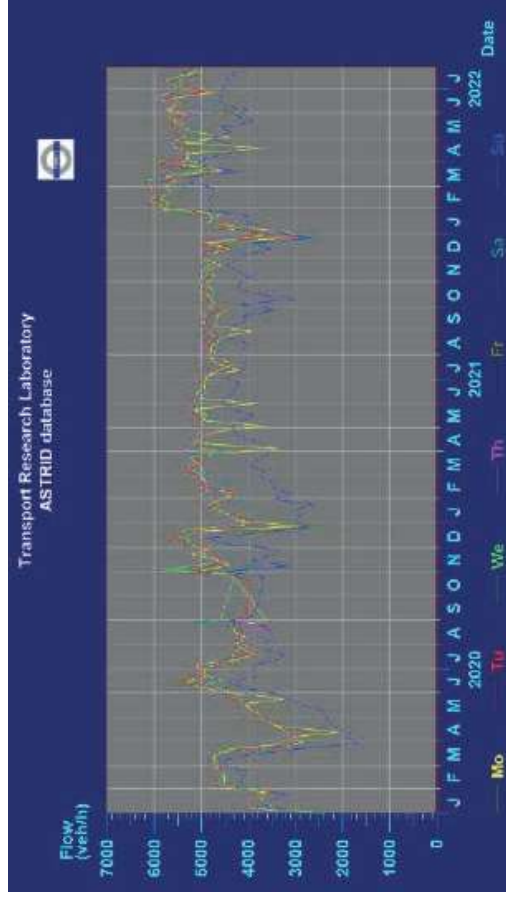
Hackney Road/Queensbridge Road: February 2020 flows were concentrated around 2000 in February. These flows were more concentrated around the 2500 level in February 2022.

Bethnal Green Road/Vallance Road: Traffic levels have largely remained the same with some negligible reduction.

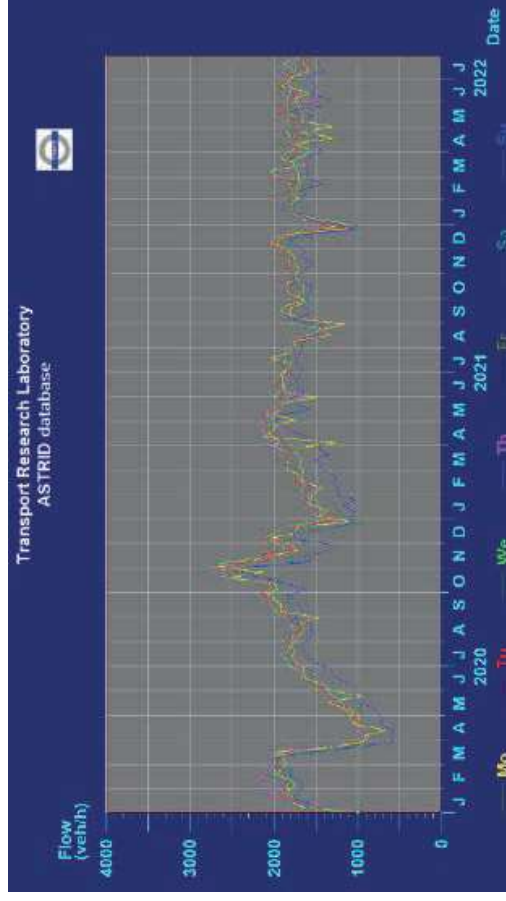
The full set of data for all three junctions is available in the documents section of the Bethnal Green Liveable Streets web page.



Hackney Road/Queensbridge Road: Total vehicle flows 4pm-7pm



Hackney Road/Cambridge Heath Road: Total vehicle flows 4pm-7pm



Bethnal Green Road/Vallance Road : Total vehicle flows 4pm-7pm

Part 2d: Displaced traffic on local streets

Traffic flows on local streets

Traffic count data¹ from 2019 and 2022 shows reductions and increases in traffic flows at various locations across Bethnal Green.

Traffic has reduced significantly on Old Bethnal Green Road which saw an 86% reduction in eastbound flows and 70% reduction in westbound flows. The western end of Columbia Road also saw a significant reduction in traffic of 53% in the eastbound and 59% in the westbound. There were also reductions on other streets including Squirries Street, Temple Street and Ravenscroft Street.

There were however streets which saw increases in traffic. The most significant roads from this list are Swanfield Street and Virginia Road which saw northbound traffic flows increase 209% and 55% respectively. Smaller densely populated residential roads such as Horatio Street and Ropley Street have seen increases in traffic of 70% and 89% in the northbound direction. These are directly attributable to the closures of the junction of Gosset Street and Columbia Road.

1: Traffic count data is available in the documents section of the Bethnal Green Liveable Streets web page

		Traffic flow changes between 2019 and 2022			
		Direction	Change in traffic	Direction	Change in traffic
Ravenscroft Road	NB		-9%	SB	-48%
Horatio Street	NB		70%	SB	278%
Ropley Street	NB		89%	SB	-11%
Temple Street	NB		-28%	SB	-76%
B118 Old Bethnal Green Road	EB		-86%	WB	-70%
B108 Warner Place	NB		12%	SB	-9%
B108 Squirries Street	NB		-16%	SB	-24%
Columbia Road	EB		18%	SB	-43%
B118 Columbia Road	EB		-53%	WB	-59%
Virginia Road	EB		55%	WB	20%
Swanfield Street (North)	NB		209%	SB	80%

Part 2e: Air quality

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 (NO₂) are 40µg/m³ (micrograms per cubic metre) annual mean.

NO₂ 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 roads on the boundary and within Bethnal Green.

Improved air quality on boundary roads

Average NO₂ levels reduced by 20.13% on Bethnal Green Road and 23.29% on Hackney Road compared to 20.93% for the comparable A roads in the Borough.

For Hackney Road average NO₂ levels have reduced at a higher rate than the other A roads in the borough. For Bethnal Green Road they reduced at a lower rate than the other A roads in the borough. These differences are negligible and it

shows the increase in the congestion on Hackney Road and reduction in traffic on Bethnal Green Road not having a significant bearing on NO₂ levels.

Improved air quality on local roads

Average NO₂ levels reduced by 28.01% from the three NO₂ monitoring sites in the scheme area. This is higher than comparable locations in other parts of the borough which have not had road closures.

Comparing the two sets of data, there is an indication that most of the reductions in NO₂ emissions are due to ULEZ and cleaner vehicles as significant reductions have also occurred elsewhere in the borough. But the difference between the two can be attributed to the traffic reduction observed around each of the monitoring sites. It is however important to note that the monitoring stations in the scheme area are located where there have been significant reductions in traffic. There are no NO₂ monitoring stations on Swanfield Road, Virginia Road or Horatio Street where there have been significant increases in traffic.

Conclusions

The data is therefore inconclusive as to whether the introduction of the closures in the Bethnal Green area have had a significant impact on air quality levels. The data suggests ULEZ and cleaner vehicles have been far more effective in reducing emissions than the closures and in some areas, air quality has improved despite increases in congestion and traffic. Council action on air quality will need to focus on addressing congestion particularly on

high trafficked roads, encouraging less car use through encouraging the take up of alternative modes and the adoption of cleaner vehicle technology.

These reductions in NO₂ across the borough should address concerns around the impact on air quality resulting from the removal of closures. The increase in traffic levels in areas such as Bethnal Green Road and Gosset Street are unlikely to have a significant impact on air quality. To address these concerns, the council is committed to establishing a framework for monitoring any air quality impacts from option 1.

A new air quality monitoring framework

NO₂ is not the only pollutant from traffic that is of concern, Particulate matter (PM) is everything in the air that is not a gas and therefore consists of a huge variety of chemical compounds and materials, some of which can be toxic. It will be important to measure the fractions of PM where particles are less than 10 micrometres in diameter (PM₁₀) and less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter (PM_{2.5}) based on the latest evidence on the effects of PM to health. PM is not currently monitored by the council in the area but if option 1 is implemented, we will develop a robust monitoring framework to assess the impact of option 1 on NO₂, PM_{2.5} or PM₁₀ levels. This will include new and more accurate monitoring equipment where required.

All values are in NO₂ micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m³)

Bethnal Green Road				
Location	2019	2022	Percentage Change	Absolute Change
Buckfast St/Bethnal Green Rd	32.48	23.8	-26.72%	-8.68
Paradise Row/Bethnal Green Rd	36.01	28.4	-18.36%	-6.61
Bethnal Green Rd/Brick Lane	36.58	30.98	-15.31%	-5.6
Average			-20.13%	-6.95

Hackney Road				
Location	2019	2022	Percentage Change	Absolute Change
Warner Place/Hackney Rd	35.44	26.7	-24.66%	-8.74
Queensbridge Rd/Hackney Rd	35.26	27.53	-21.92%	-7.73
Average			-20.13%	-6.95

Comparable east-west A roads elsewhere in Tower Hamlets				
Location	2019	2022	Percentage Change	Absolute Change
Whitechapel High St (KFC)	47.84	41.31	-13.65%	-6.53
Whitechapel Rd/Adler St	40.33	30.75	-23.75%	-9.58
Whitechapel Market	53.51	41.1	-23.19%	-12.41
Harford St/Mile End Rd	36.11	29.49	-18.33%	-6.62
Globe Rd/Mile End Rd	42.28	36.38	-16.32%	-5.9
Phesa St/Commercial Rd	34.76	24.45	-29.66%	-10.31
Chrisp Street/E India Dock Road	38.73	32.22	-16.81%	-6.51
Average			-20.63%	-7.91

Bethnal Green scheme area local roads				
Location	2019	2022	Percentage Change	Absolute Change
Columbia Rd/Gosset Street	32.74	23.4	-28.53%	-9.34
Calvert Ave/Boundary Street	34.66	25.9	-25.27%	-8.76
Squirrels St/Gosset St	37.55	26.2	-30.23%	-11.35
Average			-28.01%	-9.82

Comparable east-west A roads elsewhere in Tower Hamlets				
Location	2019	2022	Percentage Change	Absolute Change
St Stephen's Rd/Treedegar Rd	38.66	30.73	-20.51%	-7.93
Brick Lane/Princes St	32.17	25.5	-20.73%	-6.67
Roman Rd/Globe Road	34.13	28.52	-16.44%	-5.61
Average			-18.23%	-6.74

Part 3: 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/LSBethnalGreen**.

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 12th February 2023.

Visit our website **talk.towerhamlets.gov.uk/LSBethnalGreen** for more information on the plans

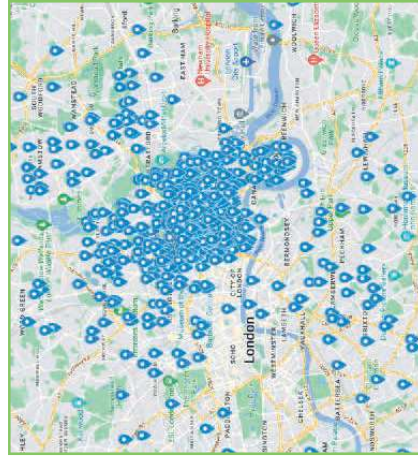
Appendix : How you responded to the Old Bethnal Green first stage consultation

First round public consultation results

The public consultation was conducted between Wednesday 6th July and Sunday 7th August 2022. Consultation packs were delivered to 4,615 residential and business addresses within the consultation area shown below.

A total of 4,145 responses were received and 34% (1,408) of these were from within the scheme area. Responses which used the resident code sent out across the scheme area totaled 974 or 24% of all responses.

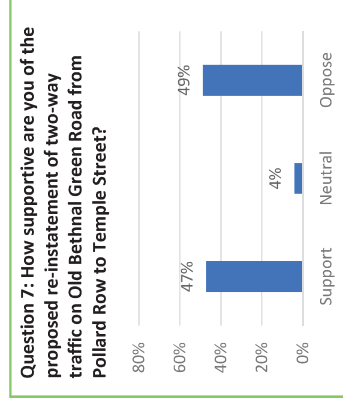
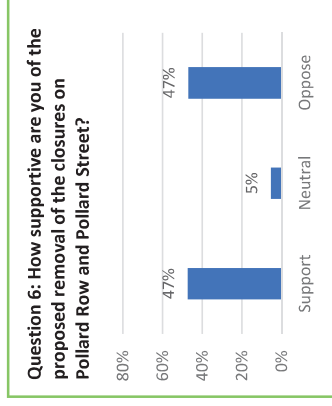
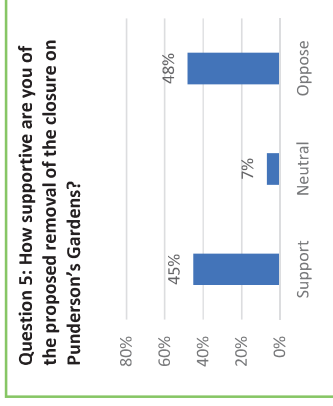
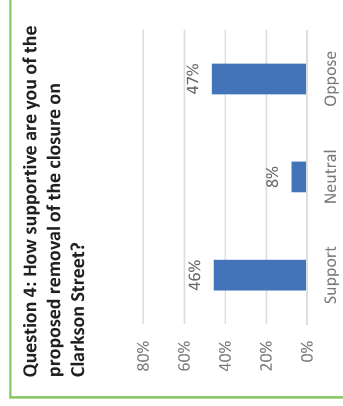
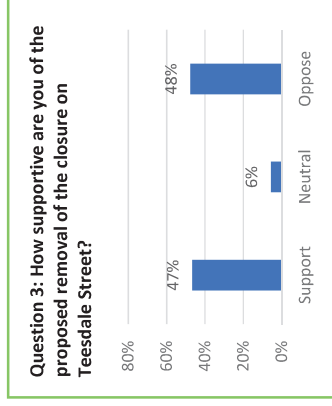
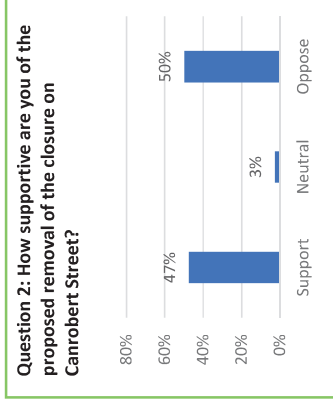
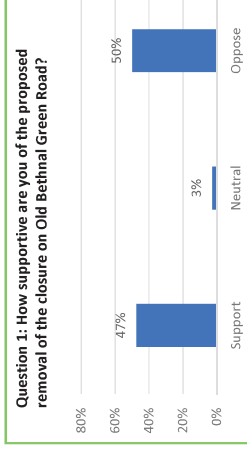
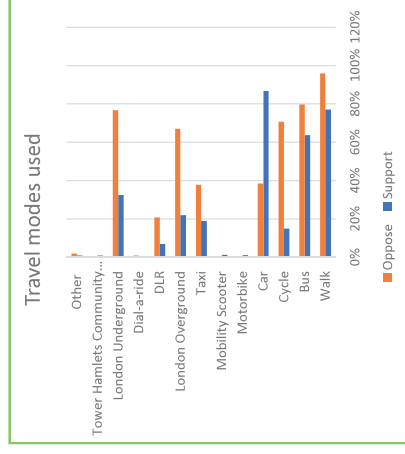
A total of 2,727 responses were received from outside the scheme area. These include other parts of Tower Hamlets with high concentrations in Bow and the Isle of Dogs. Responses were also received from other London borough with high levels of responses from Hackney, Waltham Forest, Islington and Lambeth.



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.



Appendix : How you responded to the Old Bethnal Green first stage consultation

Demographic information

The responses to the questions were almost always consistent with each other. Those who were in support of the proposals in one location were almost always also in support of the proposals in other locations. Analysis of the demographic information from the responses received for Question 1 as an indicator of broad support or opposition for the wider set of proposals to remove the closures.

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 5% over 65. This compares to those in support of closure removal where 48% were over 44 and 13% over 65.

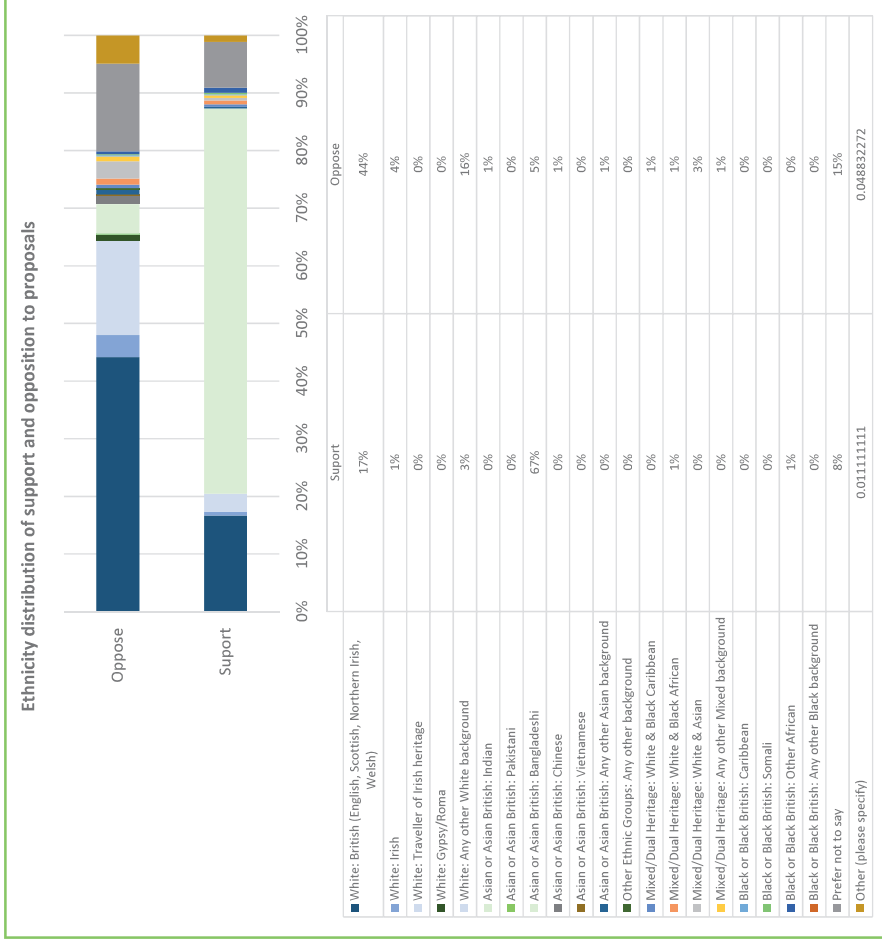
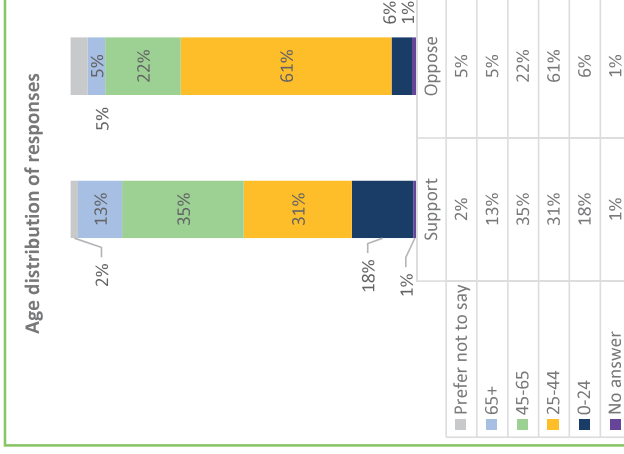
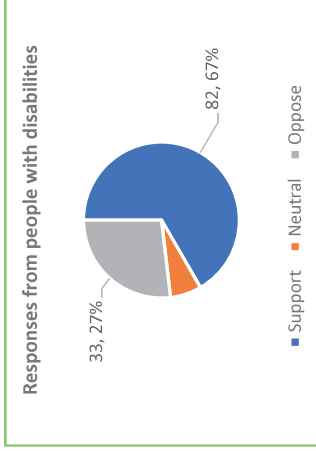
Ethnicity

The ethnicity profiles differed in terms of responses from a white background and responses 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 1408 respondents, 123 stated they have long-standing illness or health condition. The chart below shows the distribution of support and opposition to the proposal set out in Q1. (How supportive are you of the proposed removal of the closure on Old Bethnal Green Road?).

Analysis of these responses indicates a majority of respondents with disabilities showed support for the proposals (67%).



Appendix : How you responded to the Old Bethnal Green first stage consultation

Consultation feedback

For the first stage of the consultation, we received over 2,800 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, local businesses, TfL, market traders and local schools. Below are a series of key themes from the responses received from stage one of the consultation.

Key themes from those opposed to the removal of closures set out in stage 1 of the consultation:

- Traffic impact: The main theme around the opposition to the proposals relates to concerns around increasing traffic levels. Many feel that by reducing traffic levels, the area has become safer, cleaner and more pleasant to live in due to the reduction in the adverse impacts of high traffic levels. These are repeated frequently through the responses but are predominantly air pollution, noise and road safety.

- Antisocial Behaviour (ASB): Respondents opposing the proposals also state that ASB has reduced since the road closures were installed and this is particularly the case around Arnold Circus where there are concerns the ASB issues relating to nighttime activity will return if Arnold Circus is reopened to traffic.

- Cost of proposals: There is another key theme around concerns on the costs of the project. 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.

Key themes from those in support of the removal of closures set out in stage 1 of the consultation:

- Increased congestion and pollution: The most predominant key theme from respondents supporting the removal of closures related to the increased congestion in the wider area.

- 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 and reliance on the use of congested boundary roads, particularly Hackney Road. These included parents, those providing care and residents whose occupations required the use of a car such as private hire and delivery drivers.

- Feel unsafe at night: There are a few responses which refer to the in impact of safety perception in the area due to the reduced natural surveillance available when there is general traffic flow.

- Access to services/mobility: Another key theme is concerns around loss of access

to essential services for those who access them by car. This can be either through their own car or through a care giver or taxi. This is predominantly access to health services including GP and hospital appointments.

- Impact on emergency vehicle access and response times: Respondents supporting the proposals raised the issue of emergency service vehicle access

- Antisocial behaviour (ASB): Respondents supporting the proposals raised concerns about the increase in anti-social behaviour since the road closures were installed. This refers to the increase in drug dealing and other criminal behaviour.