

To - consultations@tfl.gov.uk

The Mayor's Transport Strategy Supplementary response by New West End Company

New West End Company fully supports the responses to this consultation made by both the combined Westminster Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and the Inner London BIDs. These respond to each of the questions asked in the consultation paper.

In addition, we would like to stress one overriding point that is particularly relevant to the West End and which we would ask to be taken into account when considering the Mayor's Transport Strategy.

The West End is one of the major drivers of London's economy. The Mayor recognises this and appreciates its importance both as a major contributor to job creation and income generation but also to the attractiveness of London to worldwide businesses, investors, tourists and students. The Transport Strategy needs to support the successful operation and good growth of this unique and vital district for the continued benefit of the whole of London.

New West End Company

New West End Company is the Business Improvement District for the major shopping streets of London's West End. Comprising an Occupier BID and a Property Owner BID, we represent over 600 retail, hotel and property companies in and around Oxford Street, Regent Street and Bond Street. We are a leading business partnership in London's West End.

New West End Company has worked closely with Westminster City Council (WCC) and Transport for London (TfL) over 12 years to promote the growth of the West End and to address many of the issues that our district faces. In particular, we three organisations are all members of the West End Partnership (WEP) which brings together representatives of all the major communities and interested parties in the West End to plan for its successful and sustainable growth. We are currently working closely with WCC and TfL and on proposals to transform the Oxford Street district in response to the imminent opening of the Elizabeth Line West End stations.

The importance of the West End to London's economy

The West End is the cultural and economic powerhouse for the UK economy.

- It creates GVA of £51bn pa, compared with the City at £43.9bn and the whole of Wales at £52bn.
- The West End generates more taxes than other part of the UK - £17 billion.
- It is London's biggest employment zone (650,000 people) compared to the City of London (438,000) and Manchester (338,000).
- The West End is the world's top shopping destination with over 200 million visits annually, 25% of which are international visitors (spending over £3bn in West End shops alone each year) and 25% are domestic visitors.
- West End retailers generate sales of £11bn and contribute more than £2bn in tax.
- 600,000 people visit Oxford Street every day – the population of Leeds or Glasgow.
- The Elizabeth Line will bring 60 million additional visitors and we need to maximise the economic benefit of this investment.
- The West End Partnership believes that up to half of the 77,000 new jobs target by 2030, agreed by the Mayor and Westminster City Council, can be created in the newly transformed Oxford Street district.

The imperative of enhancing the appeal of the West End

When Britain leaves the EU, by leaving the Single Market and Custom's Union, it will lose an important factor that encourages so many businesses to locate in London as a European base. If London is to retain existing businesses and attract new international investment it must work hard to replace this loss by enhancing the appeal of its other attractions. The West End, with its world beating mix of retail, entertainment and cultural offerings, is one of the most important of London's attractions. We believe that all of the Mayor's strategies should aim to enhance further the appeal of the West End for the benefit of all London and the wider UK economy.

Transport Strategy issues to enhance the appeal of the West End

Air Quality (pages 87-113)

Poor air quality has an impact, not just on the health of people working, visiting and living in the West End but also on the economic attractiveness of the district.

Investors, employees and visitors are increasingly aware of the importance of air quality. If the West End is to continue to attract investors and visitors from around the world, against increasing competition from other major global shopping and commercial centres, it needs to compete well in every area, including good air quality.

This is why we support recommendations made by the combined BIDs response that the Mayor's proposals to improve air quality, such as the aim of making all buses zero emission by 2037, should be more ambitious. We believe that, in recognition of the importance of the West End, these targets should be far more immediate to meet the immediate imperatives of the West End.

Traffic reduction (Page 83)

We support the Mayor's ambitions to reduce traffic congestion in central London. Congestion has a negative impact on air quality, pedestrian safety and the attractiveness of the West End as a global visitor and employment destination.

We would ask for more detail on how the total volume of traffic would be reduced so that measures to remove the number of buses and freight vehicles in the West End (which we strongly support) do not simply result in that freed space being taken by taxis, minicabs and private vehicles.

Oxford Street transformation (page 50)

We are working with TfL on the detail of the transformation of Oxford Street.

At a strategic level we believe that the Mayor should make clear the global importance of the West end and the need to ensure that the quality of the transformation reflects and enhances that positioning.

Place management (Pages50, 83)

The transformation of the Oxford Street district is a once in a generation opportunity to create a world class centre to the West End, complementing work already being undertaken on Regent Street and Bond Street.

But once the capital work is completed there needs to be ongoing management of the public space to ensure that it operates in ways that enhance the West End. New West End Company is working with TfL and Westminster City Council to create a management plan but this will need resourcing beyond that currently provided by Westminster City Council and the BID levy.

We ask that the Transport Strategy includes mention of the need to manage effectively the public space in the West End and suggest ways that this might be financed. It could be that a fund is created out of developer contributions which, over time, provides an annual revenue budget to fund enhanced management services.

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