

# WCC Strand Aldwych Consultation Response

March 2019

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## About us

Collectively, we represent most of the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in the City of Westminster through our seven constituent organisations:

- **Baker Street Quarter Partnership**
- **Heart of London Business Alliance**
- **Marble Arch Partnership**
- **New West End Company**
- **PaddingtonNow**
- **Victoria BID**
- **Victoria Westminster BID**

On behalf of our members, we are making a joint response to Westminster City Council's (WCC) consultation on the Strand Aldwych proposals.

## Our response

### Traffic + walking and cycling links

We welcome WCC's proposals to change the existing one-way Aldwych gyratory. We note that the existing streetscape is overwhelmingly dictated by the one-way gyratory, which prioritises vehicular traffic at the expense of all other users.

We support the addition of new, widened pedestrian crossings as well as dedicated cycle lanes, which will help to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists over vehicular traffic and reduce the existing inadequate conditions for both groups in the Strand/Aldwych area.

Our members support the reintroduction of two-way traffic operations and note that this will help to reduce vehicle speeds and congestion by providing a better traffic management solution for this area.

The addition of dedicated bus, cycle and taxi access only lanes at the Aldwych/St Clement Danes Junction and Surrey Street/Strand East are welcomed and we note that this will encourage public transport use, as a result of the loss of the Strand/A4 connection between Waterloo Bridge and Arundel Street.

We would ask that Westminster City Council consider the affect that any proposals will have on increased traffic in the surrounding area, especially on the A40 towards Oxford Circus and Oxford Street. This street is already heavily congested, with high levels of pollution, and is the natural route people would take to avoid the new pedestrian friendly proposals for the Strand. Whilst the overall proposals seek to improve traffic management on the Strand, traffic displacement is likely to occur on neighbouring streets. Therefore, we would ask that any proposals are brought forward in tandem with other borough wide initiatives that seek to reduce traffic and encourage more walking and cycling.

### **Public Realm**

We welcome Westminster City Council's proposals to provide a pedestrian friendly area by St Mary Le Strand Church. We note that this will help to tackle and reduce pollution and provide a safe amenity space for local residents, visitors and workers. We welcome the measures that Westminster City Council has taken to protect this new space from vehicle-borne threats with the addition of new bollards. We would ask that Westminster City Council consult with the Metropolitan Police Service to ensure that these bollards are able to mitigate all vehicle-borne threats, thoroughly protecting this new amenity space.

Our members welcome the addition of 1300M2 of new green space and note that this will assist in tackling poor air quality in Westminster and provide valuable amenity space for residents, visitors and workers to spend time and relax. We would ask that Westminster City Council consider how the additional green space in this area will be maintained and upheld, especially in the summer months when it will require more consistent up-keep.

We welcome the opportunity for the new public space to create additional footway space on the west side of Aldwych, to celebrate the life of the theatres located here, improve pedestrian comfort levels and improve connections to Covent Garden and its theatres. Our members would ask that WCC ensure that all theatres in the area that will be directly impacted by the proposals are properly consulted and that their comments are incorporated into the final proposals.

We would welcome WCC to provide further information about the possibilities for additional disabled access in the Strand/Aldwych area.

### **Air quality**

We welcome Westminster City Council's commitment to tackling and improving the record of poor air quality in the Strand Aldwych. We note that traffic and congestion is a major contributory factor to this issue in Westminster, especially in the Strand area. We are pleased to see that the air quality assessment of the concept proposals has highlighted a vast reduction in annual mean NO2 air pollution and would ask that Westminster City Council ensure that their final proposals deliver on this assessment.

## **Servicing**

We would ask that Westminster City Council consider how their proposals for a pedestrian friendly area by St Mary Le Strand would impact local businesses that operate near the Lancaster Place Junction. Whilst we note that access will be permitted for loading in this area, we would like to see further evidence of a comprehensive servicing strategy accompanied with proposals for servicing consolidation and timed servicing. We note that this will help to further reduce congestion and air pollution in this area, whilst maintaining the operability of local businesses.

## **Conclusion**

Our members welcome this consultation and support the principles of Westminster City Council's proposals for the Strand Aldwych. We would request that the above considerations be included in the consultation process, and look forward to engaging with you further as the proposals progress, including clarification from the Council that these proposals will be brought forward in line with additional borough wide traffic reduction proposals.