

Response to TfL consultation on Oxford Street Transformation

Key information

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Response to TfL consultation on Oxford Street Transformation Caroline Russell, Green Party member of the London Assembly

Caroline Russell AM has responded to the consultation run by Transport for London (TfL) on the creation of a Mayoral Development Area (MDA), a Mayoral Development Commission (MDC) and the pedestrianisation of Oxford Street.

Londoners are welcome to use the response below as a basis to help shape their own responses to the consultation.

The consultation is hosted by TfL at: <https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/oxford-street/>

1. The Mayor has proposed the designation of a Mayoral Development Area (MDA) and the establishment of a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) to help regenerate Oxford Street in line with his vision for the street. We would like to know your views on this.

The proposal to designate a Mayoral Development Area (MDA) and establish a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) is unusual in an area like Oxford Street, which is not obviously in need of 'regeneration'. However, the MDC model could have a role to play in delivering a vision for Oxford Street that better fulfil its function as London's destination high street, while protecting and promoting the interests of small and creative businesses and the local community.

The Mayor has said that the plans will be based on the principal purposes of the Greater London Authority (GLA) which are:

- Promoting economic development and wealth creation in greater London.
- Promoting social development in greater London.
- Promoting the improvement of the environment in greater London.

However, there is very little detail about the purpose and objectives of the MDA or MDC, so my comments are made on the understanding that the pedestrianisation of Oxford Street is based on the principles, objectives and policies set out in the Mayor's Transport Strategy, and that the economic and cultural rejuvenation of the area is based on the principles, objectives and policies of an inclusive economy set out in the Mayor's Economic Development Strategy for London, both published as statutory strategies in 2018.

Oxford Street is currently down-at-heel and struggling to find its place in our city in a post-pandemic retail world. If the MDC can provide an inclusive structure to support creative activity and independent retail and food outlets, then there is scope for Oxford Street to become more than a shopping street, it could become an attractive destination where people enjoy visiting and spending time.

While this online consultation is welcome, many Londoners have told me they do not feel consulted and are unsure of what is being proposed. It is vital that the GLA provides face-to-face opportunities for people to discuss the proposals and their implications.

If the MDA and the MDC are approved, Londoners will rightly expect ongoing consultations (not just online) on the details of the proposals, and co-production with representative groups to ensure inclusive input into the final plans, designs, and layouts for pedestrianisation, as well as proposals for the MDC's workplan.

Residents have raised concerns about the changes in local accountability if the MDC has planning powers over the MDA and the risk that the MDC could prioritise the interests of large property developers over those of the community. In particular, they have highlighted the loss of the connection to locally elected councillors. It is important that the MDC is set up to protect public purpose and allow engagement with residents and the relevant council in planning processes, while also enabling the MDC to take a long-term view regarding the future and upgrading of Oxford Street.

Local organisations have raised concerns about public investment in Oxford Street generating substantial returns for corporate interests, for example through pavement tables and seating. The MDC must ensure that enjoyment of Oxford Street as a public space is not dependent on people being able to spend money in expensive cafés and restaurants.

At the Planning and Regeneration Committee meeting on 2 April 2025, I was concerned to hear Will Norman, Walking and Cycling Commissioner, mention advertising revenue a number of times. In particular, he said: *"This is about creating a public space and the buildings and how you create that public space - whether that includes trees, planting, [or] advertising space for activations/events to bring people in to make the street as attractive as the surrounding areas."*

Any physical advertising spaces, walls or venues proposed for Oxford Street should be carefully considered, particularly given the residential nature of the MDA, the [electricity consumption by electronic billboards](#) and the need for pleasant green oases like the transformation of the Strand in central London.

Across London we have seen recent developments by private developers, e.g. King's Cross, where private-public space has been created. It is important that the MDC protects the interests of Londoners by ensuring Oxford

Street remains a genuinely public space available to everyone.

The use of CCTV and surveillance can be intimidating, and make a space less inclusive. People should be kept safe in a welcoming, reassuring and inclusive way. For example, during the 2012 Olympics rather than being greeted by security guards, visitors were welcomed to the Games by ambassadors to help with wayfinding. There is emerging best practice in the nighttime economy with 'bouncers' being replaced by people, trained with skills like first aid, who welcome visitors while helping keep them safe.

The power to grant discretionary relief from non-domestic rates should be used to support small, independent food and retail businesses and emerging creative industries to have a foothold on Oxford Street, adding to the diversity of the offer to visitors.

The composition of the MDC's Board and Planning Committee should reflect the diversity of Londoners, have local connections, and support the inclusive values of the GLA.

2. The Mayor considers the pedestrianisation of Oxford Street would help to deliver his vision for the area and support its regeneration. What are your views on the principle of pedestrianising Oxford Street?

Green London AMs have always supported plans for pedestrianisation of Oxford Street. I welcome the Mayor's ambition to make Oxford Street a world-class, safe, accessible and traffic-free street for all Londoners and I am only surprised he hasn't used the powers he has to act sooner to make this happen.

Oxford Street would benefit from having more open spaces, freely accessible to all with plenty of trees, benches, and free-to-use public toilets.

Removing traffic from Oxford Street has been made more possible with the recent advent of the Elizabeth Line bringing step-free access to Bond Street and Tottenham Court Road stations.

It is vital that Oxford Street and the surrounding streets are safe for people to walk, wheel and cycle confidently. Removing traffic and reducing overall traffic volumes in the West End – to help meet the Mayor's Transport Strategy targets – must be a priority in the plans for pedestrianisation.

Shifting as much freight and delivery to sustainable modes will be necessary. Underground and business car parking could be repurposed to delivery hubs to help with this. Delivery hubs could also provide bike and vehicle charging along with wellbeing facilities for delivery workers such as bus drivers, postal workers, PHV drivers, black cab driver and pedicab drivers.

There are currently no indicative plans for how access to Oxford Street by bike, bus or black cab will work after pedestrianisation. These plans will need to provide safe conditions for walking and cycling, and clarity about how people will access buses, and realistic provision for taxi access to support disabled people. All of these need to be co-produced with disabled people's organisations, and then widely publicised and consulted on, so the views of all stakeholders can be accounted for. It will be interesting to see the solutions transport planners suggest.

Safe secure cycle parking will be essential for people accessing Oxford Street by bike. Regardless of what happens with cycling on Oxford Street, parallel and neighbouring streets must be made safer for walking, wheeling and cycling.

Over the years people have discussed the possibility of an accessible low-speed (<10mph) bus, tram or cycle service that could help people with more limited mobility to travel along Oxford Street after pedestrianisation. It would be very helpful at an early stage for TfL to outline what options might be practical against design options, and learn lessons from delivering the Silvertown Road Tunnel Cycle Shuttle which had to fit within existing bus regulations.

I recognise that many local associations representing residents and businesses are worried about traffic being displaced to surrounding roads. There has been successful pedestrianisation in the West End before, such as at Leicester Square and Carnaby Street, and there are also more recent examples across London from which to learn. TfL will need to provide clear data and evidence, as well as modelling, to demonstrate the impact of the proposed plans on both traffic volumes and road danger reduction in the wider area.