

# OXFORD STREET PROGRAMME

## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

### a. What is the Oxford Street Programme?

The Westminster City Council (WCC)'s Oxford Street Programme aims to ensure that Oxford Street is a great place for shoppers, tourists, workers, and local residents through the creation of a dynamic and sustainable environment and an enhanced public realm that strengthens the global status of the street.

The Programme comprises a series of five public realm and traffic schemes, as well as three complementary schemes on Oxford Street and in the surrounding area.

These include:

- Oxford Street
- Oxford Circus
- Marylebone / Fitzrovia
- Oxford Street West
- Eastcastle Street

The complementary schemes include:

- Grosvenor Square
- Davies Street
- James Street

These projects will work together to deliver a more inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable Oxford Street and surrounding area.

### b. Who is leading and delivering the Oxford Street Programme?

The Oxford Street Programme is under the leadership of Councillor Geoff Barraclough and Deputy Chief Executive, Bernie Flaherty.

WCC will partner with private sector organisations to deliver the schemes within the programme area.

The New West End Company (NVEC) is partnering with WCC to deliver the Oxford Street Scheme and uphold the street's distinct identity as the nation's high street.

Funding partnerships are in development with other local institutions such as the NWEC, Grosvenor Estates, Transport for London, Greater London Authority, and others.

## 2. ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

Please find information regarding the Oxford Street Programme's public consultations at the [Westminster City Council's Consultation Hub](#).

### a. Was the community consulted on these plans? If so, what takeaways were gained through that consultation?

Yes, we are undertaking extensive and varied engagement on each of these proposals with residents, businesses, and visitors to Oxford Street. All stakeholder and community feedback has and will continue to be the driving force behind the design, implementation, and maintenance of the programme.

In July and August 2023, the Programme team ran a public consultation on Stage 1 feasibility design (the stage at which a project's key aspects are identified and defined) for the five public realm and traffic schemes for Oxford Street and its surrounding areas. The results have been collected and thoroughly analysed. An Executive Summary can be found [here](#), and the full results and analysis of results can be found [here](#).

The results from the Summer 2023 consultation were clear and in support of the Programme and its proposals for Oxford Street, Oxford Circus, and the highway changes in Marylebone / Fitzrovia, Eastcastle Street and Oxford Street West. With support from the public, Cabinet has granted the Programme approval to continue each scheme. The Programme will continue to engage local residents, businesses as well as young people across the borough on the Programme and potential enhancements to Oxford Street and Oxford Circus, highways enabling schemes and complementary schemes that are progressed.

### b. How can I share my thoughts on the Programme, and how can I receive updates?

The Programme is always open to hear your thoughts. You can also send questions or request translation services to the Oxford Street Programme Team at [oxfordst@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:oxfordst@westminster.gov.uk).

Our next formal engagement will take place in Spring 2024, following the pre-election period, and ask for the public's views on small, proposed changes in a few areas near Oxford Street. All future consultations for the Oxford Street Programme and Westminster City Council will take place through the Commonplace Hub found [here](#).

The Programme will post updates regularly on our website [www.oxfordstreetprogramme.co.uk](http://www.oxfordstreetprogramme.co.uk) and you can receive all updates for the Programme through our online newsletter. Sign up [here](#).

### 3. IMPORTANCE OF THE PROGRAMME

#### a. Why is the Programme needed?

Oxford Street, the heart of London's West End, is the local high street for Westminster's residents, the nation's economic engine and an international tourist destination. In 2019, Oxford Street generated approximately £22.75 billion in Gross Value Added (GVA) annually.

As a leading iconic retail destination visited by millions year after year, Oxford Street and its surrounding area has a unique and diverse offer. It boasts flagship stores for established brands such as Selfridges and John Lewis, and is home to diverse leisure, cultural and creative enterprises. The concentration of employment is estimated to be higher than that of London and the rest of the country, with the office sector playing a key role to the local ecosystem.

This blend of retail, cultural, commercial and leisure opportunities scattered throughout charming residential neighbourhoods of a European megacity is uniquely significant because of its high concentration of retail, hospitality, and professional service employment. It attracts approximately 200 million visitors annually and is ranked one of the top shopping destinations in Europe based on recorded footfall. The Oxford Street area contains distinct, historic, and residential areas such as Fitzrovia, Marylebone, Mayfair and Soho, whose character and vibrancy is matched only by their residents' pride for their local neighbourhoods.

However, Oxford Street's success is at a crossroads, and it faces significant challenges that must be urgently tackled to retain and enhance its status. These recent and ongoing challenges include:

- Poor-quality public realm and associated negative perceptions of Oxford Street as a place to visit.
- Insufficient areas and spaces on Oxford Street and Oxford Circus for visitors to move through and socialise within.
- Climate change and the sustainability and resilience of high streets including Oxford Street.
- Escalating business costs and a challenging retail environment with increased competition from online retail and large retail complexes like Westfield alongside the legacy and recovery from the Covid pandemic.
- Bottlenecks in the transport network, such as Oxford Circus, which consistently experiences some of the highest demand across the London Underground.
- Lack of safe environment for those using sustainable transport modes.

WCC recognises the need for a combination of public realm and strategic interventions that adequately addresses immediate community and economic needs, lays the foundation for a sustainable recovery, as well as supports the area and the West End to remain globally competitive in the years ahead.

**b. Who will benefit from the Oxford Street Programme?**

Residents, visitors, workers, and businesses alike will benefit from the Oxford Street Programme. Our vision is to ensure this through the creation of a dynamic and sustainable environment and an enhanced public realm that strengthens the global status of the street.

Visitors and residents will benefit from additional amenity space, an enhanced shopping experience, a more comfortable and safer pedestrian experience, and improved bus journey times. Residents will also benefit from less disruption to residential side streets.

Oxford Street boasts a higher job density than London and Great Britain on average, due to its high concentration of retail, hospitality, and offices. Workers will benefit from a safer and more comfortable public realm with added amenities, while businesses will benefit from an improved perception of the area, drawing more visitors to the area.

These are just a sample of the many benefits that the Oxford Street Programme will bring to the area.

**c. Where can I find more information on the benefits of the Programme?**

A Full Business Case (FBC) has been developed that outlines the importance of the proposed Oxford Street and Oxford Circus projects and confirms that they are good value for money, considering direct and indirect benefits. This appraisal is done with reference to the strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management cases and an identified business as usual (BAU) option, which is the result of proceeding without delivering the identified proposals.

The Oxford Street and Oxford Circus Business Case was reviewed and [accepted by Cabinet on 11 September 2023](#). The full business case can be found [here](#).

**d. How much will the programme cost and how is it funded?**

Scheme	Total Costs	Funding
Enabling Highway Schemes – Marylebone / Fitzrovia, Eastcastle Street, Oxford Street West.	£16m	These schemes will be fully funded by Westminster City Council.
Oxford Street	£90m	In September 2023, WCC and the NWECC formally signed an agreement setting forth an ambition to joint fund the Oxford Street scheme. NWECC, which represents 600 businesses and property owners across the West

		End, will aim to contribute 50% of the full cost of the project.
Oxford Circus	£26m	A funding agreement has not yet been set for Oxford Circus; however, the Council is in conversation with key stakeholders that will benefit greatly from the scheme's delivery. The Council aims to have an agreement by late Spring 2024.

The complementary schemes – Davies Street, James Street and Grosvenor Square – are currently in the early stages of discussion with key funding partners. Once the scope of work is defined, this part of the Programme will have a much better idea of costs and funding breakdown to share.

#### 4. LOGISTICS/TIMING

##### a. When will the programme start? When will it end?

The Oxford Street Programme began, and design commenced in May 2022 and is comprised of several projects in the Oxford Street area.

Part of the Marylebone/Fitzrovia scheme will be the first scheme to start construction in March 2024. The construction of the remaining enabling highway and the complementary schemes to be confirmed and will be shared with the public in due course with information available on the Programme website. The Oxford Street scheme is expected to start construction in Autumn 2024.

##### b. Will there be much disruption to residential side streets and areas during construction?

The works will be phased to minimise impact and allow for necessary public and emergency access, and servicing. Great care will be taken in considering the impact on traffic and network performance including buses and taxis.

A comprehensive construction phase plan will be developed during design to ensure that the requirements of residents and business, for example servicing and waste removal, are accommodated.

#### 5. DESIGN

##### a. What are amenity spaces and why/where are you adding them?

Amenity spaces seek to enhance existing spaces on side roads off Oxford Street through planting and seating, providing more inviting places for rest and play.

**b. Will this scheme improve greening?**

The Oxford Street scheme aims to increase planting to enhance character, support biodiversity, provide shade, and reduce heat impacts.

Proposed planting will aid in the creation of green corridors, creating a network of green infrastructure that can support biodiverse nature between garden squares and parks in the Oxford Street area and adjoining neighbourhoods (including Grosvenor, Manchester, Hanover, and Cavendish Squares). This also supports the Wild West End initiative, with species selected to provide a rich, colourful, and diverse vegetation, helping to attract beneficial birds and pollinator species.

Additional greening and pedestrian spaces along selected side streets will also benefit residents, workers, and visitors alike, by improving the pedestrian experience and creating places for respite and enjoyment.

**c. Will the Programme include public toilets?**

The OSP will not be installing new public toilets as part of the Oxford Street Scheme. However, New West End Company is working to facilitate how their members' existing toilet provision can be made available to the public.

**d. How will the Programme address antisocial behaviour in and around Oxford Street?**

The Oxford Street scheme seeks to improve the quality of space, attractiveness, and perception of the street. Its plans include enhanced lighting and improved CCTV coverage and sightlines at road junctions, amenity spaces, tube stations, and bus stops. The Programme is also using this opportunity to review the approach to maintenance and management on Oxford Street such as cleansing and waste removal.

**e. How will the programme improve accessibility along Oxford Street?**

The proposals include features to improve accessibility and inclusivity, and the general layout of the Oxford Street scheme will be consistent, simple, and legible. Proposed changes include:

- Footways will be widened, creating less congestion, and offering more space for people to move and spend time.
- Pedestrian crossings will be improved and include accessibility features to ensure safe and easy crossing for all visitors to the street
- Amenity spaces will be added, including a significant increase in seating, creating space for people to rest and enjoy Oxford Street.
- Street furniture will be arranged in zones, ensuring there are no unexpected obstacles in the footpath.
- Additional bus stops are proposed on Oxford Street, helping to reduce the gaps between stops.

- Wayfinding will be improved using Legible London standards and intuitive wayfinding principles.

**f. Will Oxford Street be pedestrianised?**

The Programme will not pedestrianise Oxford Street; instead, additional space for pedestrians is proposed on footways while maintaining access via bus and taxi. This will improve accessibility options for Oxford Street users, thereby addressing challenges that visitors, businesses, and residents currently experience in the area.

The scheme proposes the following restrictions along Oxford Street between Gloucester to Baker St (eastbound only), Baker Street to Davies Street, New Bond Street to Great Portland Street and Rathbone Place to Tottenham Court Road (both directions), permitting bus, taxi, cycle, and goods vehicles only between 7am to midday and busses, taxis, and cyclists only between midday and 7pm. All vehicles will be permitted on Oxford Street between 7pm and 7am.

These traffic restrictions will allow for the narrowing of the carriageway, maximisation of pedestrian space, and improved road safety for all.

**g. How will the proposed changes affect Oxford Circus, and will there be any changes made to the Oxford Circus station?**

The changes to Oxford Circus focus on increasing space for pedestrians to relieve crowding and increase safety for all. The scheme proposes 40% more footway space within the Circus including increased pavement space outside all four underground entrances. This additional pedestrian space is gained by removing central medians and traffic islands. Currently, the traffic islands are used to hold traffic signals and other highway infrastructure. By removing these, we can create wider footways, which help ease congestion and crowding at busy times.

The Programme does not include changes to Oxford Circus Station, which falls under the jurisdiction of Transport for London (TfL); instead, the programme improves the environment around the station access points to help reduce crowding and improve the public realm and security. WCC are actively working with TfL to ensure alignment and cooperation for the design of Oxford Circus and all stages of construction.

Detailed information about the current planned changes to Oxford Circus can be found [here](#).

**h. How will you prevent pedicabs, rental e-scooters and rental e-bikes from parking on pavements and causing obstructions?**

Rental e-scooters are currently being trialled in London with regulated operators. Users pay a penalty if they do not park in a designated bay. WCC are increasing the number of e-scooter bays across the borough and the Oxford Street Programme area includes a sixfold increase in the bay capacity. This includes large hubs immediately off Oxford Street that will be attractive and convenient for users and help encourage responsible use.

Rental e-bikes providers are not currently regulated and although Westminster City Council are working with operators to encourage them and their users to also use the e-scooter bays for parking, though there is currently no method to enforce this; however, regulation is expected to be possible following the enactment of the Transport Bill, which is due in the next parliamentary term and has cross-party support. The large number of bays for rental e-scooters proposed by the Oxford Street Programme will also be available for use by rental e-bikes.

[The Pedicabs \(London\) Bill](#) (currently with the House of Lords) will give TfL the ability to regulate pedicabs. This will allow for the control and enforce where they wait as well as a range of other items to improve the service and safety for the public.

**i. What cycling infrastructure will be provided? Will there be a cycle lane on Oxford Street?**

The scheme proposes new crossings for people cycling which create north-south routes across Oxford Street. These are proposed on James Street, Gilbert Street, Holles Street-Harewood Place, Regent Street, Berners Street, Newman Street-Great Chapel Street, and Rathbone Place-Soho Street, linking cyclists to the wider network of cycle routes that is being developed under separate Westminster City Council projects.

Also in development are high quality cycling routes parallel to Oxford Street which will provide a safe, convenient, direct, and pleasant alternative to Oxford Street. Cycling will still be permitted along the length of Oxford Street but providing dedicated space and protection for people cycling is not feasible without critically impacting on footways and generating other safety issues. The parallel routes will connect to the wider network and provide a good alternative route.

The general approach to bicycle parking is to locate it on the side roads of Oxford Street and there will be no loss of capacity.

**j. Will Santander Cycles be affected?**

The exact number of Santander Cycle docking stands along or near Oxford Street has not yet been determined; however, we anticipate that there will be no impact the Santander Cycle Hire.

**k. How will the Programme impact bus stops along Oxford Street?**

Bus stops will be more evenly spaced across the street, and two new bus stops will be added near to Bond Street Underground Station (one west-bound and one east-bound stop, located between Stratford Place and New Bond Street).

Bus stop lay-bys on Oxford Street (east of Orchard Street) will be removed allowing buses to stop in-line with other vehicles. This enables the creation of wider footways, bigger and more comfortable passenger waiting areas, and greater safety for pedestrian crossings. The overall impact of the Programme proposals is an improvement of bus journey times.



More information bus operation changes can be found [here](#).

## 6. TRAFFIC/VEHICLES

### a. Will this scheme increase congestion or affect traffic in the neighbourhoods around Oxford Street?

The changes are designed to reduce traffic flow and congestion, primarily. Modelling suggests that that Regent Street, north of Oxford Street will have the greatest change in congestion with less than three additional vehicles per minute. There are four areas – Regent Street south of Oxford Street, the southern side of Cavendish Square, Great Marlborough Street between Argyll and Ramillies Street, and Berners Street between Eastcastle and Oxford Streets that will gain less than two vehicles per minute. The remaining streets within the area are expected to see less than one vehicle per minute which is minor change, and even represents a reduction in traffic in parts. More detailed information on traffic modelling is available [here](#).

During the public consultation in Summer 2023, some concerns were raised regarding the impact of the programme on road congestion and rat running within the neighbourhoods surrounding Oxford Street, and in particular to the nominal raise in congestion expected on and around Great Titchfield Street. As a result, the OSP team worked with local stakeholders to develop a solution to prevent the through movement of vehicles. The Programme team intends to consult on a new proposal at the Great Titchfield Street junction with Foley Street in Spring 2024.

### b. Why are you changing some streets to two-way traffic?

The goal of these changes is to create a calmer and safer street scape for all users. Roads with two-way traffic are proven to have slower moving traffic compared to roads that are one-way. Additionally, two-way traffic allows vehicles to take more direct routes throughout the network resulting in shorter journeys, reducing traffic circulating and noise.

### c. What are the proposed vehicle access restrictions and how will they be enforced?

The proposed vehicle restrictions allow for more simple and robust enforcement of the traffic access restrictions on Oxford Street to help ensure the motor traffic flows are minimised during the busiest times for pedestrians and cyclists. Please see a map of vehicle restrictions on Oxford Street [here](#).

Taxis will not have additional restrictions for this project; instead, taxis will benefit from more direct routes along two-way streets and a new bus, taxi, and cyclist only section eastbound on Margaret Street.

An enforcement strategy will be developed during later design stages.

### d. Are you closing off vehicle access to side roads? Why?

Vehicle traffic will be closed for Binney Street and Gilbert Street, which will be converted to a cul-de-sac arrangement. Benefits include:

- Improved walking environment on Oxford Street with less vehicle crossings and entry
- Reduced traffic flow in north Mayfair and along James Street
- Potential for new amenity spaces

**e. Will the street and traffic changes affect emergency vehicle access?**

Large sections of the street are already a single lane in each direction (from Selfridges to John Prince’s Street), and there have been no reports of issues with emergency service vehicles passing along the street. The scheme proposes removal of the kerbed median and traffic islands, which would allow emergency vehicles to pass vehicles using both lanes (which they currently cannot do), and traffic flows are sufficiently low to allow for this. Emergency services have been engaged as part of the design process and continue to be involved.

The only streets where emergency access routes will change are North Audley Street/Park Street and Gilbert Street, where traffic will be reversed. There, emergency vehicles access will be reversed in line with the traffic direction changes. Gilbert Street will no longer be accessible via James Street but will maintain access from Davies Street and St. Anselm’s Place.

**f. How will this scheme effect business deliveries and loading around Oxford Street?**

Based on thorough loading analysis, the proposals encourage more loading activity on Oxford Street at times when footfall is lowest, thereby reducing activity in side streets. To enable this, the proposals provide a significant increase in loading space on Oxford Street, with morning loading times extended up to lunchtime. This allows for more flexibility for supplier delivery requirements, while reducing impacts on side streets.

**g. How does the programme effect parking?**

There are very few changes to parking across the Oxford Street Programme. Overall, there will be a small net gain of parking bays in the Oxford Street area including resident parking bays.

There are no existing disabled bays on Oxford Street with no changes proposed. However, additional bays are included across the overall programme, with four new disabled parking bays proposed around Cavendish Square and three additional bays on Berners Street.

## 7. OTHER QUESTIONS

**a. Will this scheme do anything about the candy shops or current retail offer on Oxford Street?**

The Oxford Street Programme aims to “ensure that Oxford Street is a great place for shoppers, tourists, workers and local residents through the creation of a dynamic and

sustainable environment and an enhanced public realm that strengthens the global status of the street.” These improvements will ensure the area is able to attract innovative and high-quality brands and potential investors, whilst providing the best environment for success for the existing retailers on the street.

Separately, through our "Meanwhile On:" programme, the Council is working in partnership with NVEC, property owners and commercial agents on Oxford Street to look at the current retail offer and find opportunities to introduce the most exciting up-and-coming stores, all of whom have the potential to become the future of the high-street.

**b. What is the ‘temporary Regent Street’ scheme and is it connected to the Oxford Street Programme?**

The temporary Regent Street scheme installed wider footways and planting as a pandemic response measure. A permanent public realm project is now in development by WCC. More information on the future of Regent Street can be found [here](#).

**c. How does the Oxford Street Programme support wider health and sustainability initiatives?**

The Oxford Street Programme includes sustainability measures that support achieving a net zero city by 2040. This means mitigating climate impacts by reducing carbon emissions throughout the design and construction process, as well as implementing resilience and adaptation measures, such as biodiverse greening and tree planting, which provide shade, reduce the urban heat island effect, and support the existing ‘Wild West End’ network.

**d. What about other local high streets that need investment?**

In 2023, the Council launched the Westminster High Streets Programme and committed £10 million of capital funding to improve local High Streets outside of the West End. The vision is to embrace High Streets as the backbone of thriving neighbourhoods where goods, services and green spaces are a walking distance from residents’ doorsteps.

The first location to apply the Westminster High Streets Framework is Paddington-Bayswater, north of Hyde Park. After a rigorous context analysis, The Westminster High Streets Programme conducted a 3-month public engagement exercise in Summer 2023 to identify the local communities’ priorities and aspirations.

Since the conclusion of the public engagement in autumn 2023, Council officers have been busy working behind the scenes to analyse and translate the feedback into a strategic delivery plan for projects that will range in size, scope, and speed of delivery. The Council will announce the delivery plan for projects in the summer of 2024. More information can be found about the High Streets Programme [here](#).

The Council is also delivering further improvements to the North Paddington Area. This includes a shop improvement scheme, which is currently live for businesses on the Harrow Road to apply for grants [here](#).