‘You Said, We Did’ – Cycle Permeability Strategy: Blomfield Road Informal Public Consultation.

Introduction

As part of Westminster City Council’s cycling strategy, new contraflow routes have been proposed to connect previously disconnected cycling corridors, allowing cyclists to travel safely against one-way traffic.

The Blomfield Road Cycle Permeability Scheme will enable two-way cycling between Westbourne Terrace Road Bridge and Warwick Avenue, with clear signage and road markings to improve safety and reduce collisions. By offering a more direct and accessible route, the scheme aims to encourage cycling for all and supports the Council’s vision for a more sustainable, liveable city.

The consultation ran for 3 weeks from the 27th February to the 20th March 2025.

The consultation activities and materials were available on the council's Consultation Hub, including FAQs and an online survey link here: Have Your Say Today - Blomfield Cycle Permeability Scheme - Commonplace

A letter drop was made to 61 addresses (Properties within 50m of the route), and an email was sent to 74 identified key stakeholders including statutory consultees, ward members, and resident groups.

Feedback was gathered through the online survey and emails received during the consultation period.

Consultation Results

Commonplace contained a survey that sought people’s views on what effect the proposals will have on the way people choose to travel with an option to comment.

Overall responses showed that the scheme was expected to have a very positive effect on walking and cycling numbers, and that there would be a corresponding but less significant drop in private motor vehicle usage. The perceived change in how people travel through Blomfield Road generally aligns with the goal to make cycling a more attractive alternative in line with the Councils Fairer Westminster Strategies.

Extracting the underlying themes of the responses via the open text comments and emails received provided a stronger understanding of concerns and suggestions raised from the public consultation. This allows the Council to address the concerns and progress the scheme in an informed and targeted way.

Main objection & suggestion themes

1. **You Said (Total 28 Respondents):** *Concern that car doors opening onto cycle lane is unsafe with a suggestion to move location of cycle lane to the kerb with floating parking.*

   WCC Response: The current design has undergone a safety audit and is developed to LTN120 standards. The design includes a 0.5m buffer between parked cars and the cycle lane / cycle logos to account for the door zone, and guide cyclists away from this area.

   The Floating parking option has been investigated and discounted in this instance as it would result in a significant loss of parking around the bend and towards the north east end where there is parking on either side of the road. We have parking data for this street, which highlights that parking here is highly utilized and removal of any parking spaces would have significant impacts on the residents here.

2. **You Said (Total 18 Respondents):** *Suggested alternative or additional infrastructure within the project area, including segregated cycle lanes and additional changes to the Warwick Avenue signalised junction.*

   WCC Response: The current design has undergone a safety audit and is developed to LTN120 standards. As per above, a segregated cycleway is not feasible in this instance.

   The request for an additional cycle signal on Blomfield Road / Warwick Avenue intersection for cyclist traveling east- west is not required as cyclists are able to safely travel through this intersection using the existing traffic signals.

3. **You Said (Total 17 Respondents):** *General support for proposals, including the improved cycle connectivity that the scheme would facilitate.*

   WCC Response: Support noted.

4. **You Said (Total 16 Respondents):** *Raised concerns that proposals will negatively impact pedestrian safety.*

   WCC Response: Improving cycle infrastructure will encourage cyclists to use the carriageway instead of the footpath reducing the risk of pedestrian cycle conflict. A Road Safety Audit has also been carried out on this scheme and no pedestrian safety risks have been raised.

5. **You Said (Total 15 Respondents):** *Raised concerns that proposals will increase traffic congestion due to the narrow carriageway width and the additional traffic light phase.*

<u>WCC Response</u>: Based on an Imperial College London study in 2021, it's considered that cycling infrastructure does not generally cause congestion; instead, contributing to the overall reduction in traffic. Cycleways encourage people to choose sustainable and space-efficient modes of transportation, so decreasing reliance on motorized vehicles. This leads to a more efficient use of road capacity and a reduction in traffic volume, particularly for short journeys.

In regards to the concerns for the narrow corridor, Blomfield road carriageway width is approximately 7.8m which is sufficient for contra flow cycling based on LTN 1/20 guidance which states a minimum 6.6m width is required when there is parking on both sides. Around the bend we have proposed a 1.5m cycle lane with a 0.5m buffer from the parking bay resulting in a running lane of 3.2m - 3.5m which is also suitable.

Also upon install of the Traffic Signal changes TFL will conduct a signal timing review to embed the new design and staging into the network strategy. As part of this they will observe the junction operation at all times of day, fine-tuning the stage sequence and signal timings to suit the new layout and flow patterns and demands.

6. **<u>You Said (Total 12 Respondents):</u>** *Were in opposition to the contraflow cycle lane due to insufficient space or confusion this would create however positive or indifferent towards other aspects such as the dedicated right turn pocket or "no loading" zone.*

   <u>WCC Response</u>: Opposition noted, as stated above in response no.5 there is sufficient space for contra flow cycling along this corridor. Road signs and markings will be installed to ensure the route is clear and legible to all road users. Support noted for other elements.

7. **<u>You Said (Total 12 Respondents):</u>** *Proposals will reduce safety (non-pedestrian specific)*

   <u>WCC Response</u>: The current design has undergone a safety audit and is developed to LTN120 standards. The scheme aims to improve safety along the corridor by formalising and improving the current road layout to enhance driver awareness of cyclist travelling contra flow along this corridor.

8. **<u>You Said (Total 11 Respondents):</u>** *Council should reallocate funding elsewhere / waste of money*

   <u>WCC Response</u>: Cycling infrastructure can offer great value for money due to economic, environmental, and health benefits and are a cost-effective way of reducing traffic congestion and improve mobility and air quality. There are also long-term health benefits associated with increased cycling, such as reduced healthcare costs and improved wellbeing. By promoting a sustainable and environmental mode of transportation they also align with the Council's Fairer Westminster Delivery Plan. Relatively low construction and maintenance costs compared with infrastructure associated with other transport modes make cycling a cost-efficient investment, making it excellent value from both short-term and long-term perspectives.

9. **<u>You Said (Total 9 Respondents):</u>** *Opposition to the low-level traffic signal button (but positive or indifferent towards other aspects)*

WCC Response: The cycle push button is being proposed to ensure cyclists can safely travel through the Blomfield Road / Warwick Avenue junction. We have investigated a range of cycle detection options and that the push button is the preferred option in this instance due to the site constraints.

10. **You Said (Total 8 Respondents):** *Concern for cyclist safety at the right-turn pocket on Westbourne Terrace road into Blomfield Road.*

    WCC Response: Based on the feedback received we have updated the designs to include a traffic wand to further protect cyclists wating in the right turn pocket on Westbourne Terrace road.

11. **You Said (Total 6 Respondents):** *Suggestion to expand the scope (e.g. into neighbouring streets and other areas)*

    WCC Response: Westminster city council is investigating future schemes in the area to continue to improve the cycle connectivity through the borough.

12. **You Said (Total 5 Respondents):** *Proposals will improve safety.*

    WCC Response: Noted.

13. **You Said (Total 4 Respondents):** *General opposition to proposals (no further details given)*

    WCC Response: Opposition noted.

14. **You Said (Total 3 Respondents):** *Support for contraflow cycle lane (but negative or indifferent towards other aspects)*

    WCC Response: Support noted.

15. **You Said (Total 2 Respondents):** *Proposals will have no impact on safety (questioning justification)*

    WCC Response: Please refer to response no.7 above.

16. **You Said (Total 2 Respondents):** *Perception that the proposals will reduce traffic*

    WCC Response: Please refer to response no.5 above.

17. **You Said (Total 1 Respondents):** *Support for low-level traffic signal button*

WCC Response: Support noted.

18. **You Said (Total 1 Respondents):** *Support for the 'no loading' zone*

WCC Response: Support noted.

19. **You Said (Total 1 Respondents):** *Opposition to the right-turn pocket*

WCC Response: The right turn pocket is proposed to allow cyclist to safely wait and turn into Blomfield Road. Based on the feedback received we have updated the designs to include a traffic wand to further protect cyclists wating in the right turn pocket on Westbourne Terrace road.

20. **You Said (Total 1 Respondents):** *Other / no statement of support or opposition (comment is a statement)*

WCC Response: Noted.

Next Steps

Following the feedback from public consultation, the Council will continue to develop and refine the proposals incorporating the feedback received, where applicable into the Blomfield Road Permeability Scheme designs.

Subject to agreement with WCC Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality, statutory Traffic Management Order (TMO) consultation will be carried out at the end of the next design stage