Appendix E: Options considered

Different options for improving the streets and reducing traffic were considered prior to selecting the consultation option. All options that were considered had to take account of Camden's Transport Strategy, the project objectives, the characteristics of the street and current and future travel demand. The streets in the project area must work for people that walk, cycle, take public transport, use taxis and for businesses that need deliveries. The area is currently congested, it's unattractive to walk or cycle and bus journeys are slow and unreliable. To make these streets work better, as well as being safer and more attractive, not all of the journeys that currently take place can continue do so unrestricted. Improvements are clearly required and these will necessarily involve compromises to get the best solution.

Tottenham Court Road (TCR) is an important mass transit corridor with over 4,000 people an hour getting on and off buses and thousands more travelling through. The street serves some of London's busiest bus routes; including 24, 29, 134, and 73 and these routes carry tens of thousands of passengers an hour. To put these numbers into perspective, these routes alone carry more passengers than the Croydon Tramlink or the whole of the Manchester Metrolink system.

Walking and cycling are Camden's priorities and some increases in bus journey times would be acceptable to achieve our objectives. However, the interests of bus passengers cannot be ignored as a very large proportion of our residents use buses every day. Many of our residents can't afford the tube and are unlikely to walk or cycle. To impose additional long delays on bus passengers on a daily basis would not be appropriate and would undermine the prioritisation of sustainable transport modes.

The consultation option would make buses more reliable and 3 minutes quicker as well as allowing people to arrive and leave the area from Tottenham Court Road. With the arrival of Crossrail in 2018, the number of pedestrians on TCR is set to grow further to an estimated 48,000 pedestrians an hour and need to be catered for in a safe and welcoming manner. There is a strong case for wider pavements, better crossings, less traffic and more public space. Cycling is growing in popularity and the Council is developing a network of safe and convenient routes to integrate with the proposals for this project. There are currently 250 cyclists an hour at peak times on both Gower Street and TCR and the project would introduce high quality, safe and attractive cycling facilities on both streets that would cater for many thousands of new cyclists.

The proposals are intended to provide a good balance between all users whilst carefully prioritising walking, cycling and buses. The proposals would see traffic reduce on TCR by up to 75% and on Gower Street by 30%; these are by no means insignificant reductions. This traffic reduction would be the single biggest change in the West End for some time, helping to improve air quality and boost businesses. These changes would make a profound shift in encouraging people to walk, cycle and use public transport more.

Appendix E: Options considered

Camden Council worked with the Greater London Authority (GLA) to examine a number of alternative options for cyclists on Tottenham Court Road and Gower Street. In addition to Camden's preferred proposal (Scenario A), three other options were put forward:

- Scenario B: Keep the one-way system and introduce one-way cycle lanes; one on the east side of TCR and one on the west side of Gower Street.
- Scenario C: Keep the one-way system and introduce one-way contraflow cycle lanes (i.e., against the direction of traffic flows); one on the east side of TCR and one on the west side of Gower Street.
- Scenario D: Keep the one-way system and introduce two-way segregated cycle lane on the east side of TCR.

Early on in this assessment, the GLA accepted the need to provide more space for pedestrians on TCR. The need to provide more space for pedestrians provides clear justification for ruling out options that would decrease pavement widths on Tottenham Court Road. On that basis the GLA asked for scenario D to be discounted.

The assessment included looking at Pedestrian Comfort Levels (PCLs) to classify the level of comfort based on the level of crowding pedestrian experiences on the street. Whilst this showed that scenario B and C would provide wider pavements and less congestion in some areas PCLs do not provide any indication of other important factors such as the difficulty crossing a street with segregated cycle lanes. The full assessment on the scenarios B and C looked at impacts on all users compared to the consultation option, this showed:

- Cycle journeys would be up to 3 minutes slower and little quicker than walking speed
- Bus journeys would be up to 15 minutes slower
- Significant traffic would be displaced to Southampton Row, Russell Square and Great Portland Street

The assessment using TfL's approved traffic model showed that the GLA scenarios would be worse for bus passengers and provide very limited benefits for cycling. The table below highlights the key options that were considered and, following our detailed assessment, why they were not progressed any further.

Appendix E: Options considered

Option	Description	Reason for Rejection
1	Make Tottenham Court Road and Gower Street two-way for all vehicles with buses serving both streets two-way.	Compared to the consultation option, allowing all vehicles to use Tottenham Court Road would make this street less safe and attractive for walking and cycling as there would be more vehicles which would likely lead to more collisions and pollution. Having all the bus routes on Tottenham Court Road rather than on both streets would lead to quicker journeys and take more people to an important shopping street and other key destinations.
2	Make Gower Street two-way for all vehicles and Tottenham Court Road two-way for buses, cycles and taxis only.	Compared to the consultation option, allowing taxis on the whole length of Tottenham Court Road would make this street less safe and attractive for cycling and pedestrians as there would be more vehicles which would likely lead to more collisions and pollution. Allowing taxis would result in up to 160 extra vehicles in an hour in certain sections on Tottenham Court Road. Allowing taxis on Tottenham Court Road would be not lead to a significant reduction in the amount of traffic on side roads.
3	Remove one-way system and introduce protected cycle lanes in both directions on Tottenham Court Road	To provide two 2m wide cycle lanes, two 3m traffic lanes, a 2.5m island bus stop and a 0.5m separation between cyclists and other traffic would require a road width of at least 13m. This would require significant narrowing of the pavements along the whole length of the street. In some sections Tottenham Court Road has a width of 9m. Therefore, this option would require losing up to 4m of pavement and this would be unacceptable due to the very large number of pedestrians on Tottenham Court Road
4	Close either Gower Street or Tottenham Court Road to all traffic except cycling.	This would lead to an unacceptable amount of traffic diverting onto surrounding residential streets, other main roads and unacceptable delays to buses.

Appendix E: Options considered

The remaining options explored retention of the one-way system and providing segregated cycle lanes:

5	Keep one-way system with two 2m wide protected cycle lanes in each direction on Tottenham Court Road	One-way systems have some undesirable impacts e.g. speeding, longer journey times and difficulty crossing the road. To provide two 2m wide cycle lanes, two 3m traffic lanes, and a 0.5m separation between cyclists and other traffic would require a road width of at least 10.5m. In some sections Tottenham Court Road has a width of 9m. Therefore, this option would require losing up to 1.5m of pavement and this would be unacceptable due to the very large number of pedestrians on the street.
5a		If only one traffic lane were provided there would be sufficient space but buses would be delayed by other traffic, by up to 15 minutes per journey, as there would be no space for overtaking. This amount of delay to buses would not be acceptable
6	Keep one-way system, with one 2m wide protected cycle lane in one direction on Tottenham Court Road, and one 2m wide cycle lane in the other direction on Gower Street	One-way cycle routes offer fewer benefits than two-way cycle routes and they are more difficult to navigate. To provide one 2m wide cycle lanes, one 4.5m traffic lanes, and a 0.5m separation between cyclists and other traffic would require a road width of at least 7m. There would be sufficient space for this option which would also allow pavements to be widened. However, if only one traffic lane were provided there would be sufficient space but buses would be delayed by other traffic, by up to 15 minutes per journey, as there would be no space for overtaking. This amount of delay to buses would not be acceptable.