

## **Important- Public Consultation**

This is your opportunity to comment on the Council's plans

This is a postal and on-line consultation

February 2018

# **Holborn junctions Road Safety and Public Realm proposals**

We are consulting you on proposals to improve safety and the quality of the public realm at key junctions in Holborn. The proposed changes are located at:

- The east and west sides of Bloomsbury Square where it joins the Bloomsbury Way- Vernon Place corridor;
- Vernon Place/Southampton Row junction; and
- Southampton Row/High Holborn/Kingsway junction.

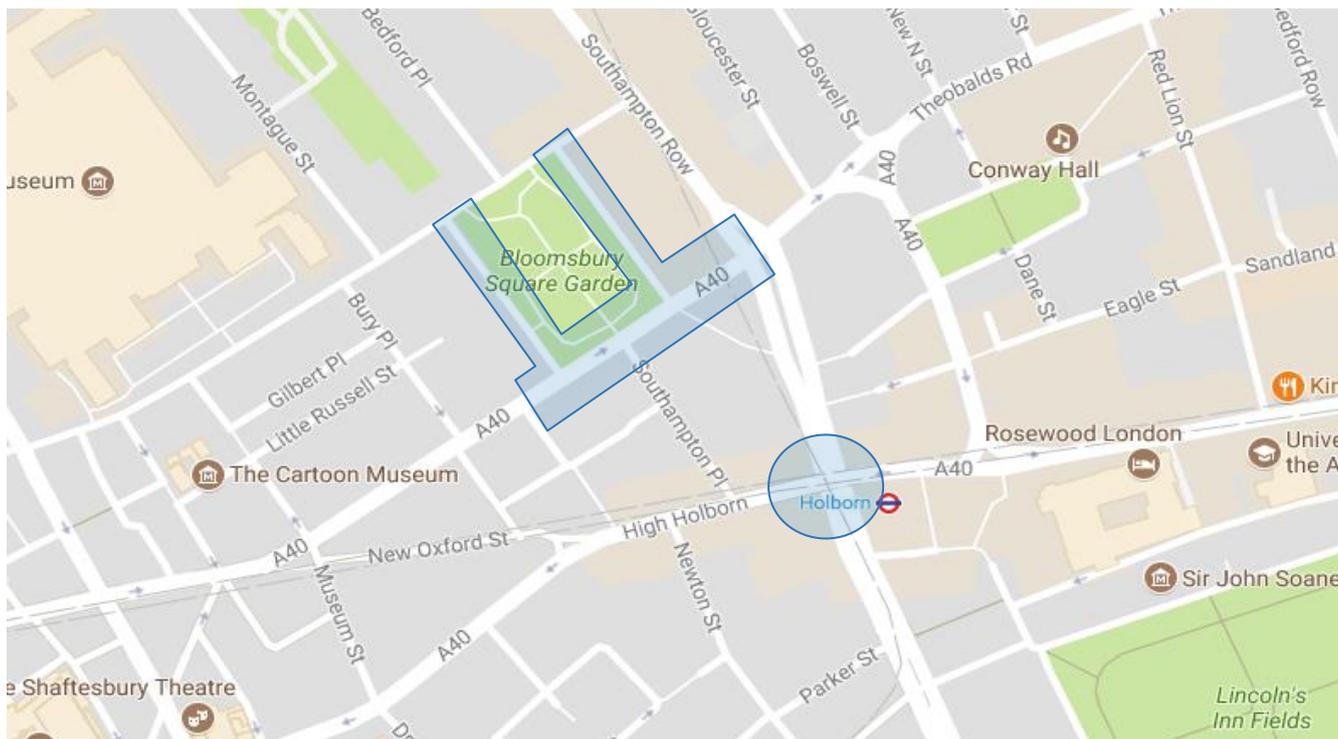
This leaflet provides you with information on what the issues are at these locations and what changes we are proposing to address these, the funding for this has been secured from Transport for London. It discusses our long-term goal for improvement to this area and provides more detail on how we are hoping to deliver this in phases. The first phase is to address safety at junctions whilst we continue to develop proposals for the wider area.

You may be aware that there will be a significant increase in people coming to the area with the opening of the Crossrail Station in 2018 at nearby Tottenham Court Road and a 50% predicted increase in the number of passengers using Holborn underground station by 2026. A new second entrance to Holborn underground station is planned to be built in Procter Street by London Underground, between 2021 and 2025, with a planned opening date of 2026. This has been consulted on separately by Transport for London.

Camden needs to make sure the area is prepared for these changes, as well as improve conditions for the existing high numbers of people using the area.

Our long term plan for Holborn seeks to improve streets for walking and cycling, reducing collisions and traffic congestion, making Holborn a better place to live, visit and do business in. The area is currently congested and dominated by motor traffic, with a high number of traffic collisions, a high number of pedestrians, indirect and inconvenient crossing facilities and inadequate footway space. There are high numbers of cyclists using the area; however, the facilities provided for cycling are currently insufficient for the current and future demand. In addition, bus routes and general traffic movements are indirect due to the Holborn gyratory system operating along Bloomsbury Way/Vernon Place (two way for buses), with Procter Street, High Holborn and New Oxford Street one way for all traffic. We want to remove the gyratory and make it better for walking and cycling, but recognise this will be challenging to deliver it all in one go. We will therefore continue to work with Transport for London to ensure we arrive at a scheme that addresses the problems taking into account the competing demands placed by different road

users in a limited road space. In the meantime, we want to address safety and make improvements at key locations; these are highlighted in the plan below.



Google 2017

## **Bloomsbury Square and the Vernon Place junction with Southampton Row**

### **Issues**

- There have been a high number of serious traffic collisions (accidents) between vulnerable users and motor vehicles. A total of 29 collisions were recorded at the Vernon Place/Southampton Row/Theobalds Road junction in the three year period between 2013 and 2016. Of these collisions 25 resulted in injury to a pedestrian or cyclist, with two resulting in cyclist fatality. Both fatal collisions involved a left turning vehicle from Vernon Place, one into Southampton Row and the second into Bloomsbury Square.
- High volumes of traffic use Bloomsbury Square, especially the west side (over 200 vehicles per hour in the morning and evening rush hour) making the public space less attractive and generating noise from motor vehicles waiting and queuing on Bloomsbury Square. This traffic often backs up to Great Russell Street causing further impact on residents and traffic flow.
- The area is an unpleasant route for pedestrians and cyclists (on average 260 cyclists travel through the Vernon Place / Southampton Row junction in the morning peak).
- Buses experience delays at the eastbound approach to the junction with Southampton Row.

In order to address the problems, we have considered a number of changes; these are detailed below and shown on the plan included in this consultation.

### **Proposed changes – Vernon Place/Southampton Row junction**

- Banning the left turn from Vernon Place into Southampton Row to all vehicles except cyclists, to prevent collisions between left turning vehicles and cyclists travelling straight ahead at this location.
- Extending the bus lane on Bloomsbury Way-Vernon Place to the traffic signals with Southampton Row to improve bus journey times and cyclist safety. Taxis would continue to be permitted to use the bus lane as well as the adjacent traffic lane.

## Proposed changes – Bloomsbury Square

- Closing Bloomsbury Square at both southern accesses where it joins Bloomsbury Way-Vernon Place to restore Bloomsbury Square to a public space that can still be accessed by motor vehicles from the north and by foot from both ends; creating a more pleasant route to walk between Holborn and the British Museum. Bloomsbury Square on each side of the gardens would become two way for vehicles in order to allow motor vehicles to turn around.
- The closure will be through the means of a lockable bollard placed in the centre of the road at each side of Bloomsbury Square where it joins Bloomsbury Way-Vernon Place. Access for all vehicles to the square will be from the northern end via Great Russell Street-Bloomsbury Place. As the southern end will be closed, all vehicles in the square will have to turn around and exit onto Great Russell Street-Bloomsbury Place. For this reason, we are proposing to ban all vehicles over 7.5T to access the square. The exception to this will be emergency, refuse and other authorised vehicles who will be permitted to enter the square from Vernon Place to avoid turning around. Cyclists would be permitted to access both sides of the square from the north and south.
- The above proposals will require small changes to be made to the parking and waiting and loading provisions at both sides of Bloomsbury Square. The result of the changes will be the loss of one residents' parking space. The access to the private car park below Bloomsbury Square remains unaffected. The loss of parking will be compensated by converting two paid for parking bays on Bloomsbury Place into shared use with those who hold a residents' permit to park.

The table below shows the changes to the length of kerb space available for parking and loading around Bloomsbury Square.

### Changes to approximate length of kerb space available for different uses

	Existing (m)	Proposed (m)	Difference between existing and proposed
Residents' parking spaces	108	100m	-8m. A reduction of one residents' parking space, from east side of the square.
Paid for parking spaces	10m	0m	-10m. Paid for bays converted to shared use paid for/residents bays.
Motorcycle bays	16m	16m	No change (but relocated).
Loading bays	0m	17m	17m additional loading space.
Blue Badge Disabled bays	26m	26m	No change
Green Badge Disabled bays	11m	11m	No change
Single yellow lines	181m	83m	-98m
Double yellow lines	426m	472m	+46m. Conversion of single yellow to double yellow with double kerb blips to stop waiting and loading.
Shared use paid for and residents bays	0m	10m	+10m. Existing paid for bay converted to shared use bay.

We appreciate that the loss in single yellow lines will mean a reduction in parking provision overnight and loading opportunities, however this has been removed to allow vehicles the space to turn around safely. Overall we consider closing the through route via the square to bring wider benefit in terms of less traffic and a more pleasant area for the walking and cycling especially as it is a popular route for walking between the British Museum and Holborn underground station.

## **Southampton Row / Kingsway/ High Holborn junction (outside Holborn Underground Station)**

### **Issues**

- This junction suffers from a poor casualty record with a total of 23 collisions in a 36-month period between 2013 and 2016. Of these 21 resulted in an injury to a pedestrian or cyclist, with one resulting in a cyclist fatality.
- It is dominated by traffic with 2000 motor vehicles (mainly cars, taxis and light goods vehicles) travelling through the junction in the morning peak hour compared to over 700 cyclists and 200 buses.
- Buses are currently subject to delays caused by other motor vehicles, which also create congestion and air pollution.
- The narrow pedestrian crossings and cluttered footways cannot safely accommodate demand at peak times with thousands of pedestrians exiting the underground station in the morning rush hour. Pedestrians are often seen spilling out onto the road as the footway outside the station is too narrow for the large number of pedestrians waiting to cross.

In order to address the above, we have considered a number of a number of changes; these are detailed below and shown on the plan.

### **Proposed changes**

- Installing a diagonal crossing to make it quicker, easier and more convenient to cross the road in all directions. It will help meet demand for the high number of people crossing at the junction.
- Giving space back to pedestrians along High Holborn, by removing the less used right-turn traffic lane on the eastern approach to the junction allowing the footway on both sides to be widened.
- Removing redundant street furniture to create more space at Holborn underground station entrance, to help with the predicted increase in passengers. This includes minor reconfiguration of the Street Trading Kiosks on Kingsway.

### **How the proposals will affect the area**

#### **Effect on Walking**

- Reduced waiting times due to the addition of the diagonal crossing at Holborn Station.
- Wider footways with less clutter which will make the walking easier and more comfortable
- Improved access around Bloomsbury Square and more pleasant walking route to the British Museum from Holborn Underground Station.

#### **Effect on Cycling**

- Cyclists will be able to cycle eastbound through the area without the risk of collision with left turning vehicles at Bloomsbury Square and Southampton Row junctions.
- Extension of the eastbound bus, cycle and taxi lane on Vernon Place will allow cyclists to approach the junction more easily.
- Removal of a traffic lane on High Holborn between Procter Street and Kingsway, reducing conflicts for cyclists who currently have to cross up to 3 lanes to enter the right turn lane; this will be reduced by one, with only one lane for right turning.

#### **Effect on Buses**

- The results for the morning rush hour show the biggest increase in average journey times is for southbound routes 98 on Southampton Row, with an increase of 44s. The next highest is for routes 1 and 171 eastbound/southbound with an increase of 34s, and all other journey times have under 20s increase or a decrease. The evening results largely show a decrease

in average journey times, with a saving 58s for route 512 westbound and of 55s for routes 8, 25, 242 and 521 in the westbound direction. The southbound route on Southampton Row shows the largest increase in journey times of 34s.

- Improved journey time due to extension of the Bus, Cycle and Taxi lane going east at Vernon Place to the Southampton Row junction.
- The proposed road closure at Bloomsbury Square east makes it easier for buses on Vernon Place to stop close to Bloomsbury Square.

### **Effect on General Traffic**

- No direct access to Bloomsbury Way-Vernon Place from Bloomsbury Square west.
- No direct access to Bloomsbury Square east from Bloomsbury Way-Vernon Place
- No left turn from Vernon Place into Southampton Row.
- The removal of the through route along Bloomsbury Square west may result in more drivers using alternative routes such as Bury Place or remain on Bloomsbury Place until it joins Southampton Row.

Some journeys by motor vehicles may result in delay of around 5-10minutes in the morning and evening rush hour. However we consider the changes necessary to improve safety in key areas and make the area more pleasant to walk and cycle in. The removal of the less well used right-turn traffic lane between Procter Street and Southampton Row will allow a simpler alignment through the junction and reduce conflicts between all road users.

Further details of the impacts on buses and general traffic is available on the website, please use link below.

### **This is your opportunity to comment**

The Council will be pleased to hear your views on the proposals we are consulting upon as well as any alternative suggestions or objections you may have to any aspect of the scheme. Details of how you can send us your views are provided below.

#### **YOUR RESPONSE:**

**Please submit your response to this consultation no later than 02.03.18 via one of the following three options below:**

**Option 1 Online:** submit your response by answering a series of consultation questions and providing your comments on an online form, which can be found using this link:

<https://consultations.wearecamden.org/supporting-communities/holbornjunctions>

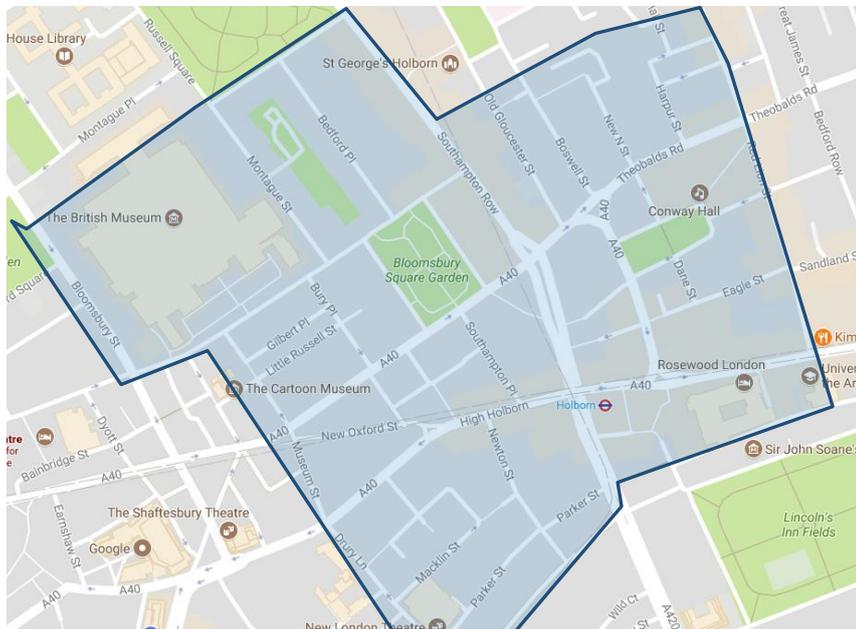
**Option 2 Email:** submit your responses to the questionnaire overleaf via email to: [Anthony.christofi@camden.gov.uk](mailto:Anthony.christofi@camden.gov.uk)

**Option 3 Post** – submit your responses to the questionnaire overleaf using the following free post address (no stamp required) to **Transport Strategy Service, 5th Floor 5PS, Freepost RSLT-RJBR-TXAA, London Borough of Camden, Town Hall, London, WC1H 9JE.**

**Please Note:** If you are responding on behalf of an organisation only one reply will be accepted. You must give your full postal address when responding to this consultation if you want us to consider your views.

An equality and diversity form has been included it is voluntary for you to complete and you may send it to us via email or using the above free post address along with your consultation response. Any information you provide will help us in making an informed decision on the proposals.

While it will not be possible to reply to you individually, all comments will be taken into account. At the end of this consultation exercise, a report will be prepared analysing the comments received and officers' recommendations. This report will be presented to The Cabinet Member for Improving Camden's Environment who will make a decision whether or not to proceed with the scheme. Under the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, your response is available for public inspection; however your personal details will remain confidential. Please only write to us about the consultation issue.



**Who is being consulted?**

The following are being consulted:  
All properties within the consultation area outlined in blue on the plan, Local and Statutory Groups, Emergency Services and Ward Councillors.

If you would like further information then please contact the following:

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