

'You Said, We Did' – Cycleway 43 – Informal Public Consultation

Introduction

Westminster City Council is proposing to deliver a new cycle route, Cycleway 43 (C43), connecting Hyde Park with the existing facilities at Gloucester Place. The C43 route is proposed to run via Stanhope Place, Connaught Square, Connaught Street, Porchester Place, Kendal Street and George Street. The proposed route is part of the Westminster cycle route programme and would become part of the London wide Cycleway network (previously known as Cycle Superhighways and Quietways).

In December 2021, Westminster City Council's Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality approved the route of Cycleway 43 between Bayswater Road and Gloucester Place. We originally consulted on the route in 2016 as 'Quietway 7'. Since then, proposals along the route have been updated to meet up current cycling standards.

The scheme aims to enhance cycle safety and connectivity between Hyde Park and Marylebone with improvements to nine junctions. It will benefit all people who want to walk and cycle in the area. Proposed changes include:

- Wider and less cluttered footways;
- Shortened pedestrian crossing points;
- Improvement of cycle facilities;
- Introduction of traffic calming features;
- Reallocation of parking to make the route safer;
- Clear cycle route wayfinding signs;
- Additional trees and benches.

In May - June 2023 we asked for your views on the updated proposals during this initial design stage to refine and improve them further.

Consultation Results

The consultation website contained a link to a survey that sought people's views on the proposals, including a question whether they support or do not support the proposals and an option to leave their comment. All responses required a post code to be entered. Below is a summary of the responses:

Cycleway 43 Proposals:

	No. of Responses	Support		Do not support		Not sure	
		%	Number	%	Number	%	Number
All Responses	1374	60%	823	36%	500	4%	51

Extracting the underlining themes of the responses via the open text comments provided a stronger understanding of concerns and suggestions raised from the public consultation. This allows the Council to address the concerns and refine the proposals in an informed and targeted way.

From all the responses received, 55 [3%] did not include a comment.

Main Themes of Concerns Raised

1. **You Said (Total 96 [5.3%] Respondents):** Comments on the disruption to school buses and parents' pickup.

WCC Response: There is currently over 150m of single yellow line on George St that the local schools utilise for school pickup and drop off operations, incentivising doing so by private car. The proposals retain 25m of single yellow line to allow for two coaches or three minibuses. It is anticipated that, with minor adjustments to the school travel plan, school transport operations will be able to take place as they do now, with improved crossing points at side roads between drop-off and the school. Also, the addition of a high-quality cycle route and improved pedestrian facilities (narrow and at-grade crossings at side roads between bus drop-off and the school) will incentivise active travel school-runs.

Whilst the Council is proposing to retain proposals for removal of single yellow line on George Street, it will work directly with local schools, including Wetherby Preparatory School and Connaught House School and the WCC School Officer to mitigate impacts on school travel and ensure pupil safety is not compromised.

2. **You Said (Total 81 [4.5%] Respondents):** Oppose removing on-street parking across the proposal.

WCC Response: George Street and the surrounding area falls within parking zone F of the borough, which has car ownership of 28% (ONS Census) and average resident parking occupancy of below 70% (WCC Parking Occupancy Survey, 2022). Even with the removal of parking on George Street, it is not anticipated that average occupancy rates in the area increase beyond 80% based on availability of alternative parking nearby. All parking that is proposed to be removed along the street would have an alternative location within 40m.

Whilst the Council is intending to continue to develop route proposals that include reassignment of kerbside space to incorporate sustainable and active travel rather than private motor vehicles, it intends to undertake a further parking and loading survey to make a more detailed assessment of the impacts.

At the same time as the above, the Council will investigate alternative E-W route options that enable cycling across Edgware Road and through Marylebone that do not require substantial changes to George Street. The alternative alignment will still look to achieve connectivity to surrounding routes and an east-west cycle route through the Marylebone ward.

3. **You Said (Total 75 [4.1%] Respondents):** Proposals will cause congestion and/or worsen traffic.

WCC Response: 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. By providing a dedicated space for cyclists, 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. There is evidence to suggest that cycleways can lead to a reduction in roadside concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) by 10-25% based on traffic reduction (traffic evaporation) and modal shift as they can encourage people to switch from cars to cycling, which also helps reduce pollution.

Relating to specific concerns about a general traffic filter at Stanhope Place causing traffic to relocate to neighboring side roads between Connaught Street and Bayswater Road, It is generally anticipated that southbound traffic using Stanhope Place as a cut through will remain on Connaught Street and turn right onto Edgware Road, or remain on Seymour Street and turn right on Great Cumberland Place to continue south.

Journey times are seldom quicker to use Albion Street as traffic will either use main routes to the east or is already using possible cut throughs via Hyde Park Street. Traffic currently using Stanhope Place is likely looking to avoid Edgware Road and as such cutting through the Hyde Park village towards Park Lane. It is therefore not expected to go back west to Albion Street to then go east towards Marble Arch. This would increase their journey by about 600m and face any congestion on Bayswater Road.

Whilst the Council is proposing to retain proposals for the general traffic filter at Stanhope Place, it intends to undertake an additional traffic assessment to make a more detailed assessment (including the Council's proposals for Connaught Village Green) of the impacts.

4. **You Said (Total 74 [4.1%] Respondents):** Concern over safety of school children.

WCC Response: The Council takes pupil safety incredibly seriously and will work with local schools and the Council Schools officer to address specific concerns.

Specific to proposals at Stanhope Place, currently over 2000 vehicles a day (traffic surveys from June 2023) cut through Stanhope Place going south to reach Bayswater Road (often at high speeds due to the straight run from Connaught Square), less than 10% of these are doing so to access Connaught Place/Mews. Therefore, the conflicts with vehicles adjacent to Connaught House school would be greatly reduced with a modal filter (where the movement of motorised traffic is banned through the junction but cycles are able to pass through) at Stanhope Place / Bayswater Road removing 90% of general traffic going across the junction. As a result of the traffic reduction, protected cycle facilities are not needed on Stanhope Place and no parking/loading changes are required adjacent to the school. It is therefore considered that road safety in the vicinity of Connaught House School will improve.

Specific to George Street, proposals retain 25m of single yellow line to allow for two coaches or three minibuses. It is anticipated that, with minor adjustments to the school travel plan, school transport operations will be able to take place as they do now, with improved crossing points at side roads between drop-off and the school. Also, the addition of a high-quality cycle route and improved pedestrian facilities

(narrow and at-grade crossings at side roads between bus drop-off and the school) will incentivise active travel school-runs.

Additionally, the council has conducted a Road Safety Audit of proposals to ensure that safety concerns are identified and addressed. The audit did not identify any concerns relating to schools in the area.

5. **You Said (Total 61 [3.4%] Respondents):** Comments suggesting cyclists misuse current facilities/won't respect new proposal.

WCC Response: The Council agrees that a minority of cyclists do not follow the highway code (and provides free cycle training to educate residents and help them cycle safety), but this is not true for the majority and the Council works with the Police to identify and enforce in areas where there is an issue.

A key method of prevention for poor behaviour is the provision of good quality cycle infrastructure that provides safe and direct routes by bike such that people cycling don't feel they need to cycle illegally to be safe as safety and comfort is improved for all vulnerable road users.

6. **You Said (Total 61 [3.4%] Respondents):** Comment that route is unnecessary / not needed / little benefit.

WCC Response: The Council proposes and develops new cycle route proposals based on a number of factors; an annual London-wide analysis of current and future trips made by cycles (analysed by Transport for London), opportunity to unlock local journeys by cycling and other forms of active and sustainable travel, connection into existing and future cycle routes across London, and opportunity to improve road safety and accessibility for everyone.

Considering the downward trend of car ownership in the borough (<30%) and reduction in residential bay usage locally (based on WCC Parking Occupancy Surveys between 2018 and 2022), plus the increasing uptake of cycling in the borough and London wide- a rebalance of kerbside allocation is in line with the Council's Cycling Strategy and the Mayor's Transport Strategy to increase the proportion of trips made by cycle. Proposals have been developed in line with national cycling infrastructure design guidance.

The Council therefore considers that proposals will be of benefit to multiple road user groups.

7. **You Said (Total 43 [2.4%] Respondents):** Comment that proposals are not good value for money.

WCC Response: 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.

8. **You Said (Total 42 [2.3%] Respondents):** Concerns over displaced traffic.

WCC Response: No traffic operation changes are anticipated beyond the proposed traffic filter at Stanhope Place. Please see the Council's Response to Item 3 above.

9. **You Said (Total 40 [2.2%] Respondents):** Negative effect on local residents.

WCC Response: Whilst a degree of kerbside space allocated to residents' parking is proposed to be reallocated (see Council's Response to Item 2), the net effect in the local area is anticipated to be positive. Traffic dominance through the area is anticipated to reduce, space and accessibility for pedestrians will improve and access to safe, direct and pleasant cycling facilitates increase. This has been shown to be the case in numerous comparable areas across London where sustainable transport infrastructure has been introduced.

10. **You Said (Total 35 [1.9%] Respondents):** Comments highlighting existing safety issue or safety concerns for cyclists.

WCC Response: The route has been designed taking into consideration accident statistics across the area and we have sought to incorporate proposals to make the highway safer such as the footway buildouts around Connaught Square that will slow down turning traffic and improve conditions for pedestrians. Additionally, the council has conducted a Road Safety Audit on proposals to ensure that safety concerns are identified and addressed.

11. **You Said (Total 33 [1.8%] Respondents):** Concern of reduced road space / road narrowing / widening path.

WCC Response: Road widths within proposals have been designed in accordance with national infrastructure guidance to allow oncoming vehicles to safely pass each other, and in liaison with TfL Buses to ensure George St can still be safely used as a diversion route as it currently is. Additionally swept path analysis (calculation of the space required when a vehicle makes turning manoeuvres) has been undertaken to ensure movements can be made safely.

12. **You Said (Total 33 [1.8%] Respondents):** Concern that proposals favour cyclists.

WCC Response: The route proposals align with the Mayor's Transport Strategy to increase the share of trips made by walking and cycling while decreasing reliance on private motor vehicles; WCC's Fairer Westminster Strategy to create a city where it is easy to walk and cycle; and the Council's Cycling Strategy to raise participation in cycling. The rationale for the route itself is further explained in Item 6.

13. **You Said (Total 29 [1.6%] Respondents):** Opposition to closing access to Bayswater Road at Stanhope Place

WCC Response: Proposals at Stanhope Place have several intended benefits beyond cycling improvements, this includes improvements in road safety by reducing traffic by 90% and removing a rat run through the area onto Bayswater Road which currently results in speeding vehicles cutting across Seymour St creating safety issue. For further details on our response to traffic changes resulting from the proposal, please see Item 4.

14. **You Said (Total 29 [1.6%] Respondents):** Concerns over safety of pedestrians.

WCC Response: Proposals are designed in accordance with national infrastructure guidance, informed by site surveys, and road safety audited to ensure they are safe. Additionally, specific concerns and local knowledge gathered at public consultation are further being used to refine proposals.

15. **You Said (Total 26 [1.4%] Respondents):** Concerns over safety of cyclists.

WCC Response: Proposals are designed in accordance with national infrastructure guidance, informed by site surveys, and road safety audited to ensure they are safe. Additionally, specific concerns and local knowledge gathered at public consultation are further being used to refine proposals.

16. **You Said (Total 24 [1.3%] Respondents):** Concern that existing traffic is an issue.

WCC Response: The design of proposals is in line with national cycle infrastructure guidance that recommends protected space for cycling on 20mph roads with greater than 4000 vehicles per day. For this reason, the stepped track has been proposed on George Street.

The Council is proposing to retain the stepped track on George Street as without it facilities are not suitable for most people and are likely to discourage potential cyclists from using the route.

17. **You Said (Total 21 [1.2%] Respondents):** Oppose relating to raised cycle tracks.

WCC Response: Please see the Council's Response to Item 16 above.

18. **You Said (Total 21 [1.2%] Respondents):** Concerns over access to properties.

WCC Response: Whilst kerbside restrictions may change across the route, private access to properties off the route will not be affected by the proposals. Where the proposed stepped track crosses private accesses, it drops to carriageway level to permit access across the track.

19. **You Said (Total 16 [0.9%] Respondents):** Concern that junctions will not increase safety.

WCC Response: Proposals are designed in accordance with national infrastructure guidance, informed by site surveys, and road safety audited to ensure they are safe. Additionally, specific concerns and local knowledge gathered at public consultation are further being used to refine proposals.

20. **You Said (Total 15 [0.8%] Respondents):** Proposals do not go far enough and/or more is needed.

WCC Response: Please see the Council's Response to Item 19 above.

21. **You Said (Total 14 [0.8%] Respondents):** Concern of vehicles speeding or poor driver behaviour.

WCC Response: Whilst speeding offences are ultimately enforced by the Police, and the Council works with them to enforce in areas where there is an issue, proposals include several footway buildouts (e.g. Connaught Square, Bryston Square) to calm traffic through the area and make it safe for pedestrians and cycles.

22. **You Said (Total 14 [0.8%] Respondents):** Enforcement issues raised.

WCC Response: Council works with the Police to identify and enforce in areas where there is an issue and also has a team of Parking Marshals who enforce parking offences. Whilst additional initial enforcement activities are anticipated following implementation, it is not expected that there will be a greater enforcement requirement once the scheme is bedded in.

23. You Said (Total 14 [0.8%] Respondents): Accessibility issues with the proposals.

WCC Response: To ensure that the proposals do not adversely affect people with disabilities or other protected characteristics under the Equalities Act, an Equalities Impact Assessment is undertaken at the early and detailed design stages to consider potential impacts and mitigate them. Specific and sensitive issues raised at public consultation will be addressed via a detailed evaluation of responses flagged as accessibility issues and the Council encourages residents to write to us directly via AskHighways@westminster.gov.uk to discuss the concern in detail.

Whilst the route is proposing changes to residents parking (see the Council's Response to Item 2 above), kerbside access for pick-up and drop-off is not affected. However, the Council will add dropped kerbs at strategic locations to ensure wheelchair access is possible, in particular across the stepped track. Also, proposals already feature numerous accessibility improvements such as flush footway across junctions, reduced crossing distances and new dropped kerbs.

Where it proposed to relocate Disabled Bays, the Council will engage directly with the bay users to ensure they are relocated to a convenient location.

24. You Said (Total 12 [0.7%] Respondents): Concern over amount of cycle routes in the area.

WCC Response: Within the City of Westminster there is currently only one Cycleway route on borough highway, Cycleway 27. In order to achieve meaningful growth in cycling and active travel, a network of interconnected routes that are safe, comfortable, direct, coherent and attractive are required. The Council is being targeted in its approach to this. Please see the Council's Response to Item 6 above.

25. You Said (Total 12 [0.7%] Respondents): Concern that proposals won't encourage active travel and/or can't always use active travel.

WCC Response: Evidence has shown that good quality cycle infrastructure can increase cycle journeys by 20-50% when located and designed appropriately. The route alignment for Cycleway 43 was selected based on current and future demand for cycle and active travel journeys through the area as well as connection into existing (Cycleway 27, Cycleway 5) and proposed (Cycleway 51, Marylebone to West End) routes, which is anticipated to result in a significant increase in active travel journeys.

26. You Said (Total 10 [0.6%] Respondents): Concern that scheme discriminates against disabilities.

WCC Response: Please see the Council's Response to Item 23 above.

Themes of Support and Suggestions

27. **You Said (Total 122 [6.7%] Respondents):** General support for proposals (No specific reason given)

WCC Response: Support is noted.

28. **You Said (Total 76 [4.2%] Respondents):** Suggestion for more segregation and protected cycle lane measures.

WCC Response: To ensure the proposals are proportionate and cost effective, the design of the route is in line with national cycle infrastructure guidance that recommends protected space for cycling on 20mph roads with greater than 4000 vehicles per day. For this reason, a stepped track has been proposed on George Street, but is not required on Connaught Square.

29. **You Said (Total 63 [3.5%] Respondents):** Comments and suggestions on walking and cycling opportunities such as cycle storage, alternative routes, signage improvements.

WCC Response: Suggestions received will be considered on a case-by-case basis at the next stage of design by the design team where they are within the scope and budget of the scheme. Where proposals are considered feasible not within the scope of the scheme, they will be passed to respective team within the Council to be considered separately. Where suggestions require additional consultation, they will be incorporated into the traffic management order consultation should the scheme progress.

30. **You Said (Total 62 [3.4%] Respondents):** Other minor design suggestions.

WCC Response: Please see the Council's Response to Item 29 above.

31. **You Said (Total 53 [2.9%] Respondents):** Support for improvements to safety for cyclists.

WCC Response: Support is noted.

32. **You Said (Total 39 [2.1%] Respondents):** Support for segregated cycle paths.

WCC Response: Support is noted.

33. **You Said (Total 34 [1.9%] Respondents):** Support for continuous crossings / more crossings / raised crossings.

WCC Response: Support is noted.

34. **You Said (Total 31 [1.7%] Respondents):** Comment that proposals are needed/overdue/improvement.

WCC Response: The Council has an ambitious cycling programme that aligns with the Mayor's Transport Strategy to increase the share of trips made by walking and cycling while decreasing reliance on private motor vehicles; WCC's Fairer Westminster Strategy to create a city where it is easy to walk and cycle; and the Council's Cycling Strategy to raise participation in cycling.

35. **You Said (Total 23 [1.3%] Respondents):** Suggestion for two way cycling Connaught Square and Portsea Place

WCC Response: The Council a rolling programme of two-way cycling connection initiatives to more directly connect cycling routes across the borough. These connections, or cycle permeability, initiatives like this can include exceptions for cyclists on quiet one-way streets. Subject to checks of sufficient road width and traffic volumes, cycle permeability schemes are very cost effective as they are inexpensive to install.

Subject to the above checks, the Council is proposing to incorporate two way cycling Connaught Square and Portsea Place to provide new convenient and safe cycling connections.

36. **You Said (Total 15 [0.8%] Respondents):** Support for closing access to Bayswater Road for general traffic at Stanhope Place.

WCC Response: Support is noted.

37. **You Said (Total 12 [0.7%] Respondents):** Support connectivity to other schemes / other areas.

WCC Response: Support is noted.

38. **You Said (Total 12 [0.7%] Respondents):** Support for raised cycle tracks on George Street

WCC Response: Support is noted.

39. **You Said (Total 12 [0.7%] Respondents):** Suggestion for speed limit reductions.

WCC Response: The Council has introduced a 20mph speed limit on all roads in the borough as part of our commitment to making our streets safer, healthier and cleaner for everyone. Slowing down traffic speed reduces the severity of accidents and makes it safer to walk and cycle – helping improve public space and encourage healthier, more active lifestyles.

All roads within the proposed route currently have a 20mph speed limit. The Council is not proposing to further reduce speed limits in the borough.

40. **You Said (Total 9 [0.5%] Respondents):** Support that proposals will encourage more active travel / decrease car use.

WCC Response: Support is noted.

41. **You Said (Total 6 [0.3%] Respondents):** Support for new signalled crossing proposals.

WCC Response: Support is noted.

42. **You Said (Total 6 [0.3%] Respondents):** Support for improving / maintaining existing infrastructure.

WCC Response: Support is noted.

43. **You Said (Total 5 [0.5%] Respondents):** Comment that proposals are good for environment / will improve air quality.

WCC Response: Please see the Council's Response to Item 3 above.

44. **You Said (Total 5 [0.3%] Respondents):** Comment that proposals will have positive effect on local residents.

WCC Response: Please see the Council's Response to Item 9 above.

45. **You Said (Total 5 [0.3%] Respondents):** Support removal of on-street parking.

WCC Response: Support is noted.

46. **You Said (Total 4 [0.2%] Respondents):** Support for reduced road space / road narrowing / widening path.

WCC Response: Support is noted.

47. **You Said (Total 3 [0.2%] Respondents):** Suggestion to reduce on-street parking further generally.

WCC Response: Whilst the Council is seeking to reduce reliance on private motor vehicles, active travel proposals look to be proportionate to levels of demand for residents parking and other kerbside uses.

48. **You Said (Total 3 [0.2%] Respondents):** Support for more removal of parking on George Street

WCC Response: Support is noted.

Next Steps

Following the feedback from public consultation, the Council will continue to develop the permanent proposals for Cycleway 43 to address the concerns raised at consultation, taking actions the actions described above to address the specific concerns. The team will incorporate the feedback received, where applicable, into the updated proposals and they will be presented to the Cabinet Member for City Management & Air Quality for agreement to proceed to detailed design.

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.