



Cllr Rachael Robathan
Leader of the Conservative Group
Westminster City Hall
18th Floor 64 Victoria Street,
London SW1E 6QP

Nickie Aiken MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

25 Sept 2023

Dear Nickie,

Re: TFL Park Lane cycle lane

As you know, TfL installed the Park Lane cycle lane in June 2020 using powers granted by the government during covid to make it easier for people to move around safely. There was no engagement in advance with either Westminster City Council, of which I was Leader at the time, nor with Westminster residents. During all my time as Leader this was the issue on which I received most correspondence from people. They were angry that they had had no say in this, pointing out that they saw very few cyclists using the lane and that it was causing heavy congestion and therefore increased vehicle emissions in the heart of our City and also rat running into surrounding residential streets. At my regular meetings with WASF, attended by the Chairs of all Westminster Amenity Societies, this was always raised and the same concerns expressed.

It was, therefore, to be welcomed that TfL finally held a consultation earlier this year on the scheme so that the people of Westminster could have their say. Although the results were presented as a whole, following a Freedom of Information request I now have the results for the 919 people living in Westminster and 293 businesses based in the City who responded to the consultation. These are the people and organisations most affected by the scheme every day, so their views are critical and I wanted to make sure that you were aware of them.

What were the responses of the 919 residents 'living close to Park Lane'?

	Many more people would choose to travel in this way	A limited number of extra people would choose to travel in this way	I am unsure what effect the proposals might have	Fewer people would choose to travel in this way	The proposals would have no effect	Responses
Walking	15%	12%	4%	22%	46%	883
Cycling	22%	19%	3%	16%	39%	880
Using motor vehicles for personal journeys	9%	5%	5%	43%	39%	877
Using motor vehicles for business journeys	9%	5%	7%	32%	47%	871
Using public transport	14%	13%	4%	30%	39%	874

NB the line totals do not add up exactly to 100% due to the numbers being slightly rounded up or down.

What were the responses of the 293 businesses 'located close to the proposed route'?

	Many more people would choose to travel in this way	A limited number of extra people would choose to travel in this way	I am unsure what effect the proposals might have	Fewer people would choose to travel in this way	The proposals would have no effect	Responses
Walking	11%	12%	3%	26%	48%	285
Cycling	16%	16%	2%	23%	43%	283
Using motor vehicles for personal journeys	10%	6%	5%	39%	40%	287
Using motor vehicles for business journeys	12%	9%	5%	29%	45%	283
Using public transport	12%	14%	3%	40%	30%	284

NB the line totals do not add up exactly to 100% due to the numbers being slightly rounded up or down.

As you will see, 58% of Westminster residents who responded said that the scheme would do nothing to encourage people to cycle, in fact quite the reverse. For walking it was even more stark at 72%. So almost three quarters of total responses from Westminster people said that it will actually be pointless or discourage active travel. As you will see from the second table, the results for businesses based here were even more negative. On top of this a massive 947 people expressed concern about the traffic congestion and the fact that it was displacing traffic and rat running into surrounding streets.

I believe strongly that we are elected to represent the views of the people of Westminster whom we serve. It was, therefore, disappointing that the City Council's

new Labour administration in their submission supported the retention of the scheme rather than reflecting the view of the majority of Westminster people who opposed it.

As you will be aware, further cycle lanes are planned for Westminster, notably the C43 and the C51. We all want to make it easier and safer for people to walk and cycle around our City, however, we believe that these schemes can only work when they are designed in conjunction with the people living nearest to them and most affected by them. It is the local residents who know the area best who should agree that they will encourage more people to cycle and walk. So I am calling for the views of local people in consultations on cycle schemes to be given priority and that they should only go ahead when and if the majority of people who live in Westminster support them.

When I was Leader of the Council I made a public commitment when designing all fresco dining schemes that these would only go ahead if supported by the majority of local people. I am calling on this new administration to do the same. At present, as has been shown by the Park Lane cycle lane, the views of Westminster residents in decisions on schemes in our City can be drowned out by those of people living elsewhere. I believe that is fundamentally unfair.

I would welcome meeting you to discuss this further.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachael Robathan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Cllr Rachael Robathan
Leader of the Conservative Group

CC: Cllr Tony Devenish AM