

Banking on safety

The City of London Corporation voted to make a 16-month experimental safety scheme at Bank junction permanent, says **Iain Simmons**, Assistant Director of Local Transportation in the City of London Corporation's Department of the Built Environment. The decision was supported by planners, the property and transport sector and the public



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Bank junction is one of the City's most iconic places. The Bank of England, the Mansion House and Royal Exchange make it an instantly recognisable place. However, those who would try and pass through – whether on foot, on bicycle or by vehicle, have experienced an incredibly busy junction, especially at peak travel times, for decades.

That is why, the City of London Corporation launched 'Bank on Safety', an experimental safety scheme in May 2017, limiting vehicle journeys through the junction between the hours of 7am and 7pm during the week.

Before the implementation of this scheme, many just wanted to get through the junction as quickly as possible, rather than taking the time to stop and enjoy it. On top of this, it was the most dangerous spot in the City for road users.

Sixteen months later, in September 2018, it was decided to make this experiment permanent. Only buses and cyclists will be able to travel through the road junction during these times. This was a well-supported decision, not only by those involved in the planning, but also by members of the property and transport industries, the GLA and TfL. The public and the business community openly expressed its support through workshops, exhibitions, a statutory consultation and extensive additional engagement. Of the 4,300 responses to the consultation, three-quarters of survey respondents said they supported the scheme.

As well as public support, it has been a delight to see the scheme continue to meet its criteria relating

to safety, air quality, bus journeys and traffic congestion. The decision to make it permanent was made after careful consideration.

The professional work behind this has been a joy to lead and we were honoured to be awarded 'Transport Team/Partnership of the Year' at the 2018 London Transport Awards and presented with a special award for innovation at the 2018 London Cycling Awards based on the work at Bank. Large scale infrastructure projects are hard to deliver but such schemes continue to succeed within the City of

London. We have seen ground-breaking safety improvements at Holborn Circus and, most recently, with the transformation of Aldgate Square.

In 2016, 18,000 people were using Bank junction during rush hour. Since the implementation of the scheme, we have seen the number of cyclists and pedestrians using the junction increase significantly. Therefore, in addition to a focus on vehicle compliance, the City Corporation's dedicated Road Danger Reduction team are actively working with cyclists and pedestrians to make sure these two groups safely travel together cohesively in this hotspot.

So, what's next for the junction? It is time to reinvent the 'All Change at Bank' project to deliver a world-class public space. Proposals for further work to the junction will be presented to elected members in December 2018. We want to do all we can to make sure we don't see a fatality at this junction in the future, and will seek to make further small changes in the coming months which might include widening footways and bringing more colour to the streets to influence behaviour change and further improve compliance.

The City of London Corporation is always looking to the future. While the roads around Bank have become a more efficient part of the City, transformative plans are in the pipeline which will cover the entire Square Mile. In line with the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy, a progressive vision of the City of London Corporation's own Healthy Streets agenda will emerge in the City's Transport Strategy which will be out for consultation in November and December of this year. We look forward to continuing to working with those dedicated to a better, safer, cleaner Square Mile.

Iain Simmons will be taking part in the **Healthy Streets** conference on 12 October, an event kindly supported by the City of London.



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