

King's Cross Development Forum A Strategy for Traffic and Communications in and around King's Cross Central February 2011

Summary

Responding to the Camden Traffic Plan – which, in turn, aims to implement the Transport for London strategy document – the King's Cross Development Forum (KXDF) considers that the **King's Cross Central area and its immediate surroundings should appear as a discrete item in the Camden Transport Strategy document**. Its implementation requires a clearly identified programme of work, supporting specific projects in and around the area. This programme should bring together all the factors which will affect all those who live, work, use, pass through or visit the area as it develops over the next ten years.

Many of these subjects are briefly addressed below but the strategy must include:

- Identifying the Sources of Traffic, including that generated locally
- The Development of the Traffic Hubs, serving local as well as national and international users, particularly the new Maiden Lane Overground station
- The Pedestrian Environment, particularly in crossing into and out of the area and between the East and West of the area. The South-East and Southern crossings needing special attention
- Arrangement for Cycling, including an integrated approach to routes and storage.
- Organisation of Bus routes and stops, to allow easy transfers for both London-wide and local users
- Arrangements for Taxis
- Facilitating Commercial Vehicles servicing the site
- Minimising unnecessary journeys by Private Cars by providing suitable set down and turning arrangements.

Aim of the Strategy

Any strategy for the King's Cross Area must support and be supported by those of Camden and Islington, TfL and the Department of Transport. All these agencies must contribute and be coordinated if the King's Cross transport arrangements are to service people living, working, passing through and around and visiting the area. The aim must be to ensure that the facilities are put in place to allow all users to exploit the full potential of the developing King's Cross Central site.

Scope of This Paper

This paper **calls for a dedicated, single point of contact for defining and monitoring transport developments in the King's Cross area**, through which interested parties can make their expertise available and their views known.

This paper only highlights the transport issues which have to be addressed in and around the King's Cross Central site. Apart from the problems around the 'Clock

Tower' site to the South-East, it does not attempt to address any issues which may result from satisfying the needs of users of this central area and its immediate surrounds.

The paper addresses the various areas in turn: those internal to the site, then along the East, South, West and Northern edges.

Background

Traffic flow models were produced at the Outline Planning stage of the King's Cross Central site. Since then some development of the communications network and traffic flows have taken place: The KX Station eastern access and road have been closed, some work has been carried out on York Way. It seems that the proposal to bridge the railway north of the station for pedestrians has finally been rejected but no official pronouncement of this has been located. **This must be clarified and justified.**

No information is available concerning the proposed study of a new Maiden Lane station on the North London Line, to the north of the site. The internal access arrangements are being refined as detailed designs are developed for each block within the area. With the Eurostar, Javelin and Thames Link stations now fully operational, the pedestrian traffic flows have built up. The Northern Ticket Hall is being built and the temporary Olympic traffic is being modelled. The University of the Arts will generate traffic starting in September 2011. Activity associated with the increasing tempo of the main building programme, both on the site and to the west of Midland Road is beginning to make its self felt. **The various traffic models must be kept up to date and published.**

Internal Flows

The internal flows within the area have been modelled. Layouts are being modified as buildings are subject to detail design. Care has to be taken to update the models to ensure that the original concepts are not compromised. The major concern is the lack of clarity concerning the quality of the implementation of the public domain and the lack of the application of modern traffic calming measures, such as integrating pedestrian and vehicular surfaces and ideas to de-clutter the public realm, integrated in the basic design of trafficked areas. **These internal design issues have to be addressed.**

Eastern Border

The Eastern border of the King's Cross site is York Way – apart from in the North where the 'Triangle Site' is located to its East, within Islington. This road carries heavy traffic, has tall solid walls and narrow pavements, punctuated by many bus stops next to the station and cluttered with street furniture and signage. This makes a most unpleasant and hostile environment for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

Proposals have been made for modification to York Way but no satisfactory solutions have been proposed by TfL, Camden or Islington for the traffic flows at the junction with the Euston Road and Caledonian Road. Although the pavements have been widened, the lampposts have not been moved and now stand in the centre of the

walkway, obstructing foot traffic. **These lights, notices and the CCTV camera posts should be mounted on the buildings to de-clutter the pavement.**

The Camden strategy speaks of improving pedestrian links between Euston and St Pancras stations by Brill Place. **The links require enhancement to serve the users of the stations coming from the east of the area along Goods Way.** This is particularly so if the footbridge across the King's Cross lines, present in the outline planning permission, is not actually to be built.

Further to the South-East (and, strictly, outside the KX Central area), the interaction between pedestrians and vehicles around the Clock Tower site is unacceptable. The whole area is a confused mass of frustrated movement. No one wants to rest there and everyone is thwarted in their attempts to traverse or escape from the area. **The whole geography and flow logic of this South-East corner must be redesigned.**

Southern Border

The situation on the Euston Road is also hostile, particularly to pedestrians crossing this road from North to South. Also, when moving along the north pavement to the East across York Way and Caledonian Road or transiting with luggage between St Pancras and Euston stations. This is well documented in the 2008 Walkability study, prepared for TfL and released under a Freedom of Information request (www.King'scrossenvironment.com/files/kx_walkability.pdf).

This is an awful experience for people either working on the site or transiting through. As a first impression to international visitors to our capital city (and potentially a major tourist destination) – **this pedestrian environment is totally unacceptable.**

Short of bridging the Euston Road opposite the stations, the practical solution is to adopt the international practice of **installing very wide crossings** (say 20 meter) so that people can cross en-mass, rather than being penned up in narrow centre-street folds, with heavy traffic passing on both sides.

People with small-wheeled luggage are the common users of the transit route on the North side between St Pancras and Euston. **This should be widened and be given a very smooth finish.**

Western Border

The area between the St Pancras and King's Cross stations seems likely to serve the various traffic demands. The set down and pick up areas are however inadequate and insufficient. To the West of St Pancras however there are two serious problems:

- Cars coming from the north currently have no way of dropping off passengers and turning around to return to the north. They have to enter Euston Road, thus adding to its congestion, wasting time and increasing pollution in the area. **A drop-off and turning area should be provided opposite or near the St Pancras western entrance.**

- For pedestrians coming from the north, along the western side of Camley Street extension there is no way of crossing Goods Way except via a double crossing. Users invariably cross the street by dodging the barriers. **A crossing should be installed on the western side to service people walking down from the north.**

Areas to the North

The outline planning permission included a commitment to study the building of a new station on the North London Line overground at Maiden Lane. It was agreed by the Camden Planning Committee at the time that this station would make a major contribution to connecting the site to areas to east and west; and to the attractiveness of the site to potential employers and their employees. **This Maiden Lane Station study should be commissioned and its findings released for public consultation.**