



WAPPING BUS GATE – CONSULTATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Residents have raised many issues about the Bus Gate Consultation. The Ward Panel have compiled the following explanations, as far as we have been able to. Any unanswered queries you may have should be addressed to the Highways Officials from LBTH (London Borough of Tower Hamlets) at the Drop-In sessions on 23rd March.

[THE WARD PANEL URGES YOU TO “HAVE YOUR SAY” – FOLLOW THE LINK TO THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT: www.pclconsult.co.uk/towerhamlets](http://www.pclconsult.co.uk/towerhamlets)

Why is a Bus Gate being Proposed?

When the Ward Panel started discussions with the Highways Officials at the LBTH, in the Autumn of 2017, we had measured vehicles leaving the Highway down Glamis/Wapping Wall at some 700 per hour. The vast majority of these vehicles exit Wapping at Vaughan Way or Thomas Moore Street, behind Waitrose, onto East Smithfield. Since 2017, that number of vehicles has increased significantly partly due to the closure of the Rotherhithe Tunnel to all vehicles except Cars, which requires more vehicles to travel along the Highway to Tower Bridge to cross to the South Bank. This unprecedented level of traffic and in particular the large 32 Tonne Tipper Trucks are causing damage to the cobbled sets, banging over the speed humps and generally making it very difficult to safely cross our streets. The buses are not able to manoeuvre through our narrow streets due to endless oncoming vehicles. Hence this consultation to stop the Commuter Rat-Run through Wapping.

Preferred Location:

Everyone on the Ward Panel and the Council agrees with the recommendation (Point 2 – Option 1) of the residents' survey – available here: www.pclconsult.co.uk/towerhamlets - that the Bus Gate should be located at the West end of Wapping High Street near the junction with Sampson Street as this reduces the impact on Local Residents with fewer road closures, but at the same time allows full vehicular access to all premises in Wapping, either through the approach down Vaughan Way, for access to the West of the Bus Gate, or down Glamis/Wapping Wall, Garnet or Wapping Lane for access to the East side of the Bus Gate.

Bus Gate – Time in Operation:

The option suggested by the Council is 24/7. Highways Dept at LBTH told us that it is much easier to reduce the operational time-limits than to increase them. By setting the highest limit at the outset, downward adjustments can more easily be made to the operation time of the Bus Gate once the impact on traffic, Residents and inconvenience factors are better understood. The Ward Panel therefore supports this recommendation (Point 3a of the survey) at the outset of the operation of the Bus Gate, subject to a review after say 6 months

where the Ward Panel will invite Residents to give us feedback to discuss with the Highways Dept. as to any timing changes that the majority of Residents support.

Who should go Through the Bus Gate?

When the Ward Panel initiated these discussions, there was never any intention that Local Residents should be inconvenienced and the only issue for us was to make our roads safer for all Residents, Pedestrians and to enable Buses to move freely. Contrary to the Council's recommendation (point 4a in the survey), the Ward Panel therefore does **not** support the recommendation that only Buses and Cycles should be able to pass through the Bus Gate but recommend that All Residents of Wapping, south of the Highway should always be able to have free access through the Bus Gate and would therefore encourage you to select Point 4b in the survey. If that is your preference, then it is important that you respond to the Survey by 8th April. **PROVIDED the majority of** Residents opt for Point 4B on the Survey, it is envisaged that those who register their vehicle number plate will be able to commute unimpeded within the area. Point 4B opts for a system where residents south of the Highway are always granted full access through the Bus Gate, along with Buses and Cycles.

Should Motorcycles and Mopeds be allowed through the Bus Gate:

Those belonging to Residents, would we expect be able to register their number plates and get access to the Bus Gate as any car owner might.

Should Taxi's be allowed through the Bus Gate?

The Ward Panel agrees that Taxi's should have access through the bus gate. Taxis are a vital form of transport for many residents, especially because there is no step-free access at Wapping Station, and are also vital to the trade of many local businesses. Point 6 in the Survey gives this option.

OUR RESPONSES TO RESIDENTS COMMENTS SO FAR:

1) " The consultation was not requested to inconvenience the residents of Wapping by forcing them onto The Highway for a journey to and from Wapping. The proposed solution would do just that for residents either side of the bus gate, UNLESS local residents are permitted to use the bus gate."

Answer: **PROVIDED the majority of Residents** opt for Point 4B on the Survey, it is envisaged that those who register their vehicle number plate will be able to commute unimpeded within the area. Point 4B opts for a system where residents south of the Highway are granted full access through the Bus Gate, along with Buses and Cycles.

2) "For developments on Wapping Wall, I'd be concerned that the currently proposed location/s for the bus gate will result in no improvement to the flow of traffic down Wapping Wall"

Answer: We are informed by LBTH that although there will be an initial period of commuter traffic still coming into Wapping via this route, this will fall away with time as they learn of the inability to cut through to East Smithfield due to the Bus Gate. Currently, most of the traffic entering Wapping down Glamis/Wapping Wall exits at East Smithfield. We also anticipate signage of the bus gate well in advance warning vehicles of no-through access will further discourage commuter drivers from entering Wapping.

3) "I foresee traffic continuing to come into Wapping down Glamis and then be forced up Wapping Lane to avoid the bus gate. This will displace traffic onto Pennington Street".

Answer: In the short term that is certainly a likely scenario. However, Wapping Lane is congested with 2 bus routes (D3 & 100) operating in both directions, with 4 bus stops. It is

unlikely to cut journey time to any meaningful extent. We understand Pennington Street is designated for traffic calming measures (in 2020) in plans under the Love Your Neighbourhood scheme to improve road safety and design. Meanwhile, it may be an issue Residents would like to raise at the Drop in Sessions on 23rd March, with a view to restricting traffic turning left off Wapping Lane during the hours of 6am-10am.

4) “A large majority of Residents are elderly. My mother for one. The idea that she would be forced to use any form of public transport is inconceivable at her age and with her disability”

Answer: The Ward Panel always promoted full access to residents. We understand that Wapping is diverse in age groups and with 2 primary schools, road safety is of significant concern given the increase in traffic and speeding in recent years. Road safety is of paramount concern to the Ward Panel. The Bus Gate will deliver a reduction in commuter traffic currently by-passing the Highway and address these road safety concerns. Within the survey, point 4B offers residents the option of full access through the Bus Gate. Taxis are also an important and dependable part of transport for residents and businesses. Point 6 on the survey refers to Taxi’s having access.

5) “What are the costs of installation including signage, communication to residents and ongoing administration? Who pays for the cameras, issuance of fines and collection thereof?”

Answer: Tower Hamlets will be funding the installation and ongoing running costs. We would presume Tower Hamlets will be collecting any fines and offsetting against the installation and on-going running costs.

6) “Who is really allowed to go through the bus gate? Does it apply to holiday coaches and mini buses? What about Police cars, licensed black cabs or private hire?”

Answer: All Emergency vehicles will certainly have access through the bus gate. Taxi’s is a question within the survey, Point 6. Holiday coaches and mini busses is a good question (to which we have not yet agreed a solution) and perhaps one for the drop-in sessions on the 23rd March.

7): “Local homeowners, shopkeepers/publicans - postmen, Tesco/Ocado type delivery vans, AA/RAC vehicles, other repair trucks, ambulances, home helps, meals on wheels, other delivery vehicles, visitors coming to see local residents, or visit pubs or restaurants. There are cost implications to restrictions and I am guessing that one particular category of resident will suffer as a result, namely the elderly.”

Answer: All areas of Wapping will be accessible to non-resident traffic and deliveries etc. From the East, down Glamis/Wapping Wall; Garnet and Wapping Lane, all buildings are accessible to visitors up to the bus gate. Non-resident traffic wishing to reach any residences/businesses West of the Bus Gate would need to leave the Highway at Vaughan Way.

8) “As you’re no doubt aware, we’ve had several, serious car accidents in recent years – all, I believe, due to speed. One destroyed a bus stop, another badly damaged the exterior wall of Merchant Court and another destroyed a lamp post. So besides the volume of traffic, speed is certainly an issue to consider.

Answer: The Bus Gate proposals are stage one of LBTH’s highways plan. To follow are other traffic calming measures to improve safety for pedestrians and residents. Deeper understandings of particular locations and trouble spots are invaluable pieces of information for Residents to put forward.

9) “If residents/owners are no longer able to use their cars in the area then this shall have a huge impact on the property prices.”

Answer: If Point4B is accepted, then Residents will still be able to use their vehicles to commute within the area. Point 4B opts for a system where residents south of the Highway are granted full access through the Bus Gate. Property values are unlikely to be negatively affected by a bus gate and arguably we could see the opposite as eliminating the traffic rat run would make Wapping a safer and better place to live and work returning Wapping to the village Hamlet on the doorstep of the City.

10) “The bus gate may reduce traffic on Wapping High Street but could force more local vehicles onto Wapping Wall, e.g. vehicles that can no longer move freely East to West if residents are not permitted to use the gate.”

Answer: Point 4B opts for a system where residents south of the Highway are granted full access through the Bus Gate. Non-Resident vehicles visiting addresses West of the Bus Gate will need to leave the Highway at Vaughan Way. All other addresses East of the Bus Gate are accessible from Glamis/Wapping Wall, Garnet & Wapping Lane.

11) “The questionnaire is designed to support the bus gate, ie do you want it placed east or west, or do nothing. These should not be the only choices. A bus gate on each tributary into Wapping, including Glamis Road, Garnet St, Wapping Lane in addition to the recommended location on Wapping High St would be more effective. I would favour this north of the bridges on Glamis Rd, Garnet St and Wapping Lane.”

Answer: Tower hamlets conducted a traffic survey in February 2018. This was followed by a process of analysing the data to understand the problem locations and the best possible solution. Of course, multiple bus gates would be far more costly both in installation and running costs and may not necessarily deliver anything more than a single bus gate in the right location. For this reason, the Ward Panel recommend Option 1 – Western Location for the bus gate.

12) “If local residents are not permitted to use the gate then a routine trip to Waitrose would force residents of Wapping Wall onto The Highway and into heavy traffic, adding more congestion, pollution, let alone time and inconvenience to a routine local journey. Similarly for access to John Orwell Sports Centre. The return journey will add hazard due to the dangerous right turns from The Highway into Garnet St or Glamis Road.”

Answer: Residents will still be able to use their vehicles to commute within the area if Point 4B is adopted, allowing Residents south of the Highway full access through the Bus Gate.

[THE WARD PANEL URGES YOU TO “HAVE YOUR SAY” – FOLLOW THE LINK TO THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT: www.pclconsult.co.uk/towerhamlets](http://www.pclconsult.co.uk/towerhamlets)