

Bloomsbury Vision Steering Group

First meeting 18 April 2008

Presented by Stephen Nice of Burns and Nice.

About 16 people attended:

Camden Officers included John Fatcher, Chris Nicola and Liz Halsted (Clear Zone and Velib feasibility study)

Councillors Paul Braithwaite and Penny Abraham

Peter McBride from TfL head of Cycling, Walking and Accessibility

Representatives of British Museum, UCL, Coaches and 2012.

Jim Murray of Bloomsbury Assoc – but NO students, the predominant user group.

Introduction

Stephen Nice, with Ros Flint, made much the same presentation as at the first workshop at the British Museum (2nd April) and then summarised the main comments from the brainstorm. He promised:

"cycle routes that are safer to navigate and better cycle parking".

JD asked him to add "with at least as much capacity".

Discussion

Byng Place - Stephen Nice showed three options, all with cycling on two sides of the road, varying from 'just narrow the road' to 'shared space'. He stated that of course all the adjoining sections would need changing too, but they don't know how.

JD reported that a thorough discussion by the CCC had concluded that with the flow cycle paths of 1.5m would be inadequate and unacceptable

Paul B said changing the whole of the SSL just in order to improve Byng Place was like the tail wagging the dog. The SSL is "the M1 of cyclists".

He suggested a 100m wide Santa Monica-style pedestrian crossing replacing the existing three. And he suggested a Vélib station could be sited in Byng Place and the hire scheme be integrated into the Bloomsbury Vision

JD said the solutions discussed so far were all inadequate because they do not maintain capacity in what is an already overloaded cycle route.

John F. Referred to the study promised by Sam Monck.

Peter Mc Bride suggested a solution in which cyclists and pedestrians have priority.

Vehicle traffic reduction. Paul B asked why it was not an overt objective, but Penny A said it would go into residential areas as well.

PB pointed out that Cambridge's centre restricts vehicle traffic 10 am - 4pm.

Peter McBride agreed it would be a potential solution and asked where Camden stands on that issue.

People movements should be considered as equally important.

John F. Recent studies show roads now tight on capacity.

Walking Routes. Liz H spoke about Legible London, Map typesigns etc.

Malet Street.

Retain as quiet street (don't allow increase in traffic)

RADA - build out, street activities. Cycle racks located near need (Birkbeck, RADA etc)

No need for kerb on contraflow track. No need for with flow cycle lanes.

Potential conflict with massed busses south of Keppel St with cycle contra flow.

Montague Place.

The coach presence is unavoidable.

Depends on what happens in Russell Square

John F. Mentioned pedestrian origin-dest study.

Brit Museum want to encourage more people to use north entrance. Scope for a real feature to elevate visual significance.

PB suggested two-way bus and coaches only (plus bikes)

JD asked for 2-way cycling on north side of Bedford Square and said 2-way working in Russell Square would be very useful and emphasised the need for a relief lateral route as SSL is now full.

Great Russell Street

Large table or pedestrian crossing the width of the Museum.

PB suggested that the perimeter should be New Oxford St/Bloomsbury Way and not Great Russell Street

Next Steps

Report back on discussions so far.

Another workshop in June/July

Another Steering Group meeting after that.

Observation

The study is convergently focussed with blythe lip service to "of course it'll have ramifications which will have to be carried through outside.

It doesn't start from any assumption of reducing vehicle movements.

Those who don't ride bikes may far outnumber the cyclists present but they simply aren't qualified to impose solutions on cyclists. Camden's officers do seem to "get it".

JD PB

18th April, 2008