

Hans Crescent Public Realm Scheme

Analysis of stakeholder consultation

January 2025

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Introduction

Background

Kensington and Chelsea Council is considering proposals to improve the public realm on Hans Crescent, with funding for the changes provided by local landowners, including Harrods, and from the Council, through a Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy contribution. This is an opportunity for an improved amazing space in our borough, with an improved pedestrian experience and a welcoming environment for everyone who lives, works, or visits Hans Crescent.

Thousands of people pass through Hans Crescent every day, many on their way to visit Harrods or to use the Underground. The street is often crowded with people and can be frenetic at times.

The proposed layout would introduce additional planting and public seating in the middle part of the street. The proposals would include high quality materials and more attractive lighting. The intention is to create calmer, safer and inclusive areas for resting and pausing in the centre of the street. The redesign aims to more clearly distinguish between parts of the street intended for pedestrian movement and parts of the street in which to spend time. The layout would continue to afford street space for tables and chairs to be licensed adjacent to shopfronts. The scheme would remove the potential for hospitality terraces to be positioned in the central part of the street.

The main features of the proposed scheme are:

- A new palette of paving down the centre of Hans Crescent replacing the central zone of small unit paving and circular patterns with paving consistent with that on the remainder of Hans Crescent. A banded paving pattern (perpendicular to the direction of Hans Crescent) is to be introduced.
- Six areas of planting in raised planters with integrated seating on the walls surrounding the planted area.
- Five freestanding natural stone seats for sitting on.
- The removal of one tree, the retention of four trees (set within grilles, situated within the raised planters) and the planting of three trees towards the Basil Street end.
- The replacement of the existing lampposts with a new lighting scheme using heritage style lamp columns.
- An area for taxis and other vehicles to drop off passengers adjacent to Basil Street.
- An area of paving would be kept clear to allow for the potential installation of artworks in the future (subject to due approval processes).



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Introduction

Consultation methodology

The consultation sought residents, businesses and stakeholders' views on the proposals. The exercise opened on 29 November 2024 and closed on 12 January 2025. The online consultation was promoted through a letter drop to the area, e-newsletters and via the Council's website.

Report

A total of 20 surveys were returned by the deadline. This report contains an analysis of survey responses. Where graphs are shown, they show actual numbers of responses, as percentages can be misleading when there is a relatively low number of responses.

Acknowledgements

The Council would like to thank all residents and stakeholders that took the time to feedback their views.



Consultation analysis

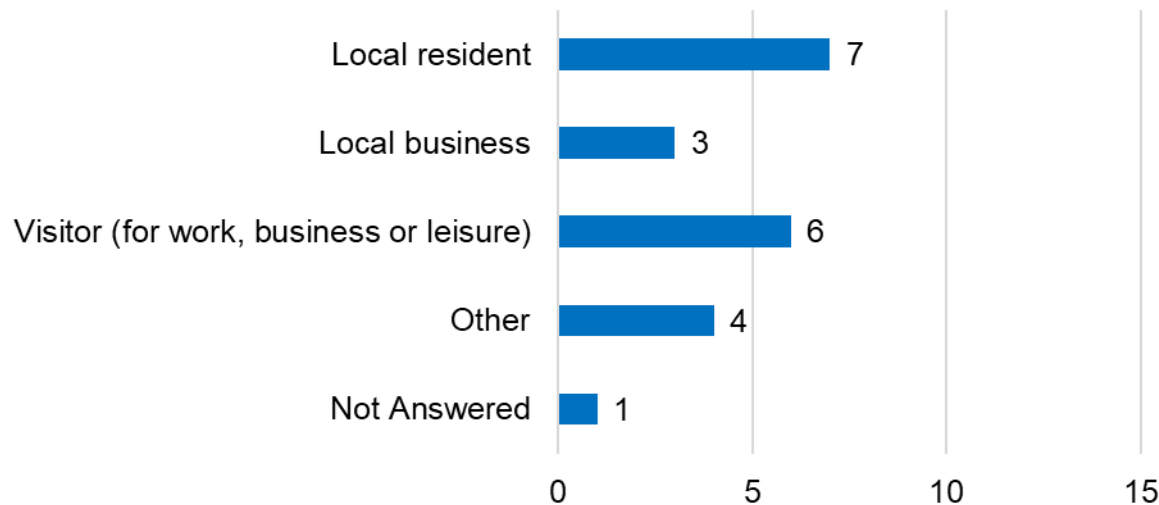


Capacity in which responding

Respondents were asked to indicate in which capacity they were responding to the survey.

- Seven respondents are **local residents**
- Six responses were from **visitors**
- Three responses came in from **local businesses**
- Four respondents indicated they were responding in an **other** capacity and five went on to describe. Two were from taxi drivers, one from membership organisation representing taxi drivers, one from the local Business Improvement District and one from a representative of Harrods Limited and Carraig Investments Sarl (owners of the Knightsbridge Estate).

Are you a...

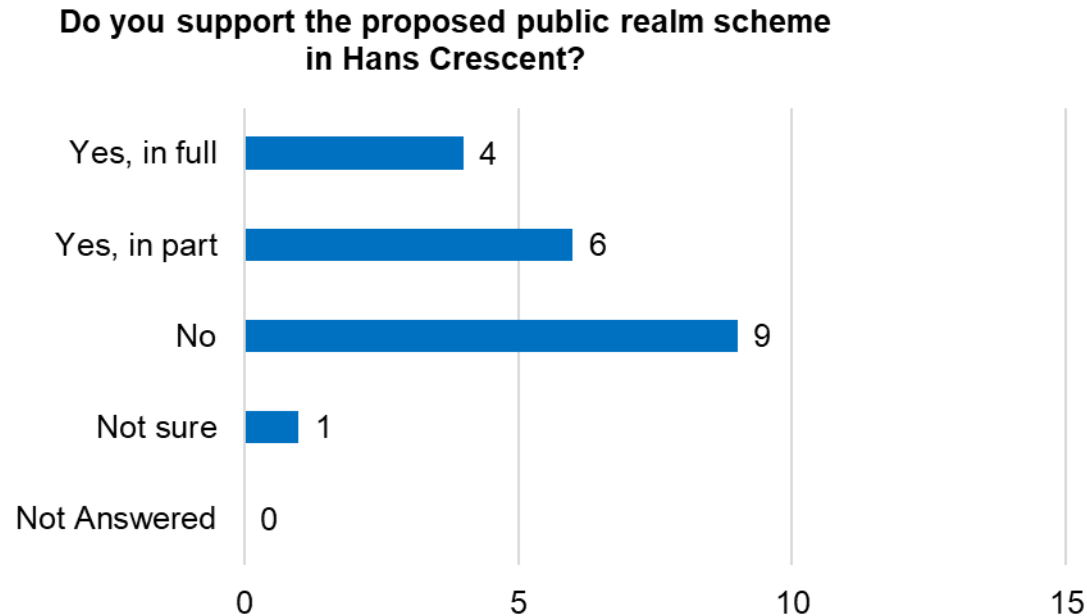


Base: All respondents (20)

Support for the proposed public realm scheme

Respondents were asked to indicate if they supported the proposed scheme.

- In total, half of respondents either supported the scheme ***‘in full’*** (four respondents) or ***‘in part’*** (six respondents)
- However, almost half (nine) indicated that they ***did not support the proposals***
- One respondent was ***unsure***



Base: All respondents (20)

Comments on the proposals

Respondents were invited to explain their answer further, or to add further comments they had about the proposals

Comments made have been themed and those with two or more comments can be found in the table below. The most common themes related to ***'in favour of the proposals/improves the area'*** (five comments) and ***'concern about traffic congestion/flow'*** (five comments).

Examples of comments made can be seen on the next page with the full list of themes and comments found in the appendix one.

Theme	Count
In favour of proposals/improves the area	5
Concern about traffic congestion/flow	5
Pedestrian congestion/safety	3
Against proposals	2
Enforcement of parking restrictions	2



Supportive comments on the proposals - examples

“Because it's a great improvement. You should do the same for Portobello Road, which is much more unique.”

In favour of proposals/improves the area

“...Overall, the scheme will deliver a high quality public realm befitting its location as part of the internationally renowned retail offering within Knightsbridge and London. The development will encourage ongoing retail footfall in this recognised shopping destination and contribute to the vitality and viability of the area whilst preserving the setting of Harrods as a listed building and enhancing the Conservation Area.”

In favour of proposals/improves the area

“Will enhance the whole area.”

In favour of proposals/improves the area



“We are supportive of public realm and safety improvements as it becomes congested when trying to enter or exit to pick up and drop off passengers at Harrods or at the Capital hotel. The area is often full of parked up chauffeurs or super cars which are condoned in some way by Harrods door staff...”

In favour of proposals/improves the area

...“We are fully supportive of the public realm proposals for Hans Crescent and delighted to see these being taken forward as one of the projects which are part of the Knightsbridge Place and Public Realm Strategy, which aims to recreate “A luxury global destination that rebalances the needs of people and nature, inviting people to spend time in its historic streets and places and to return again and again...”

In favour of proposals/improves the area

Please note some comments have been shortened to fit on the page, but full comments can be seen in appendix one



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Comments expressing concerns - examples

"It will cause more congestion around the area as it is having Hans Crescent open we have the traffic flowing so it's a big NO from me."

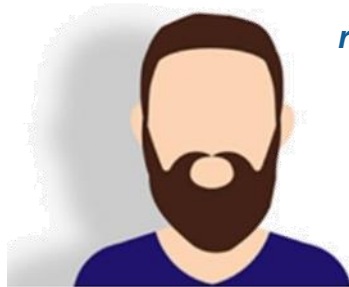
Concern about traffic congestion/flow

"...Our concern arises around what taxi rank space will remain as the current taxi rank on Basil Street feeds into the 3 first spaces of the rank being on Hans Crescent to be situated kerbside by the door of Harrods. This kerbside space enables us to safely load and unload passengers in wheelchairs. We would like further clarity on the future proposals for the taxi rank and how these plans mean we can still take passengers with luggage to the Capital Hotel and access popular locations like Sale Pepe on Pavillion Road and the taxi rank for the Millennium Hotel Knightsbridge."

Concern about traffic congestion/flow

"Like all others good in theory. Rubbish in practice. Take a look at Sloane Street, two years for what."

Against the proposals



"This is a busy pedestrian thoroughfare at the moment which gets very congested. The proposed planting islands, when linked to the outdoor seating arrangements, will increase that congestion. while the plans may look very nice with nobody there, as soon as the usual flow of people happens, the street will look awful and be very hard to navigate. Especially for people in wheelchairs and as soon as Lime bikes get abandoned there it will become a blockage. Currently there are central seating locations, which cause blockage. any plan should see a reduction in the scale of anything in the centre. it would be best to remove all planting entirely or keep it to an absolute minimum."

Pedestrian congestion/safety

"The system works well now if you'd only enforce the parking restrictions which already apply."

Enforcement of parking restrictions

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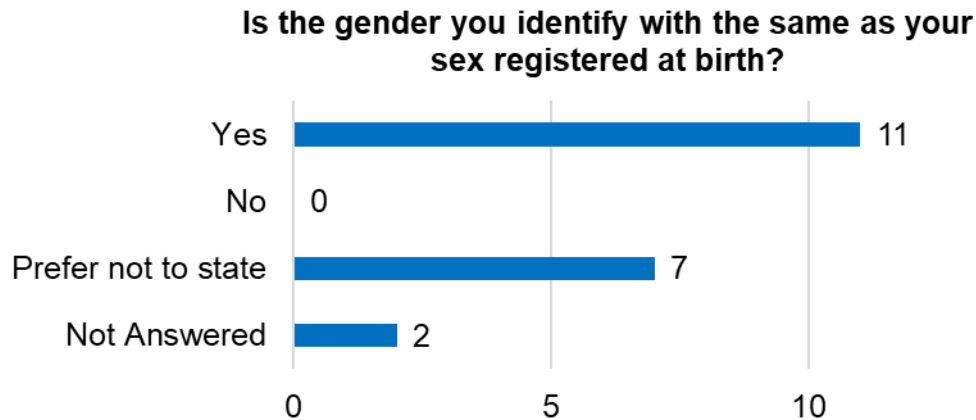
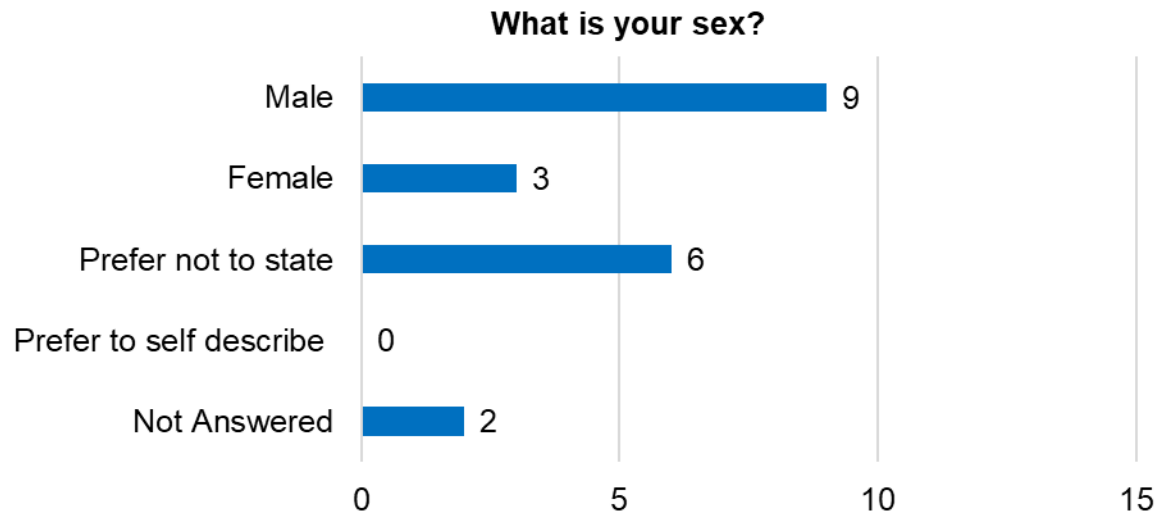
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Profile of respondents



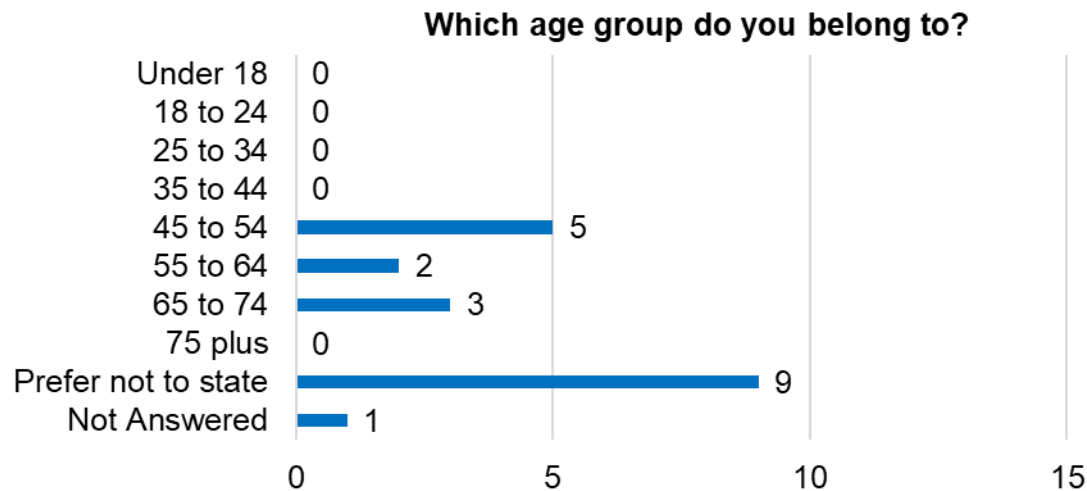
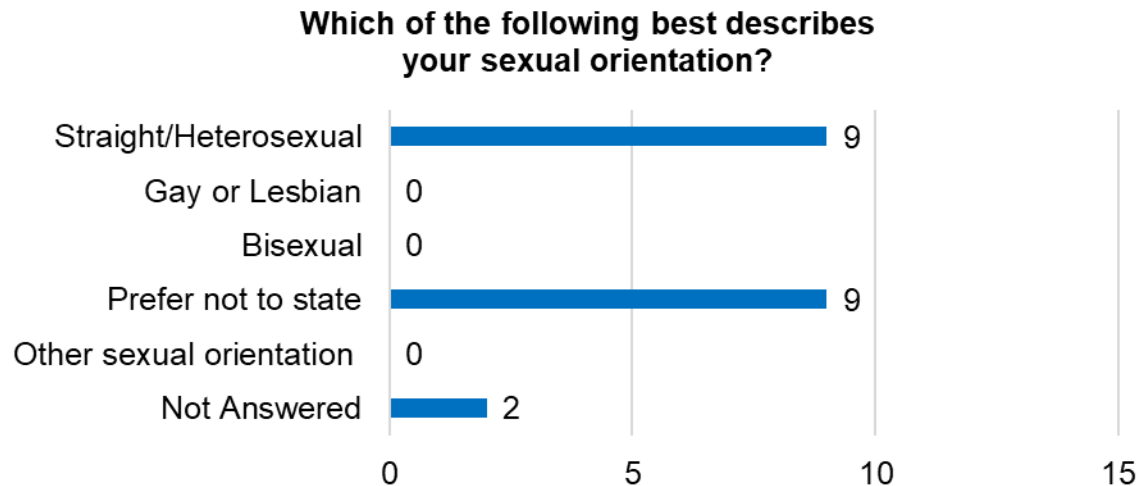
Profile of respondents

Respondents were asked a series of questions about themselves, to understand who had responded to the consultation.



Base: All respondents (20)

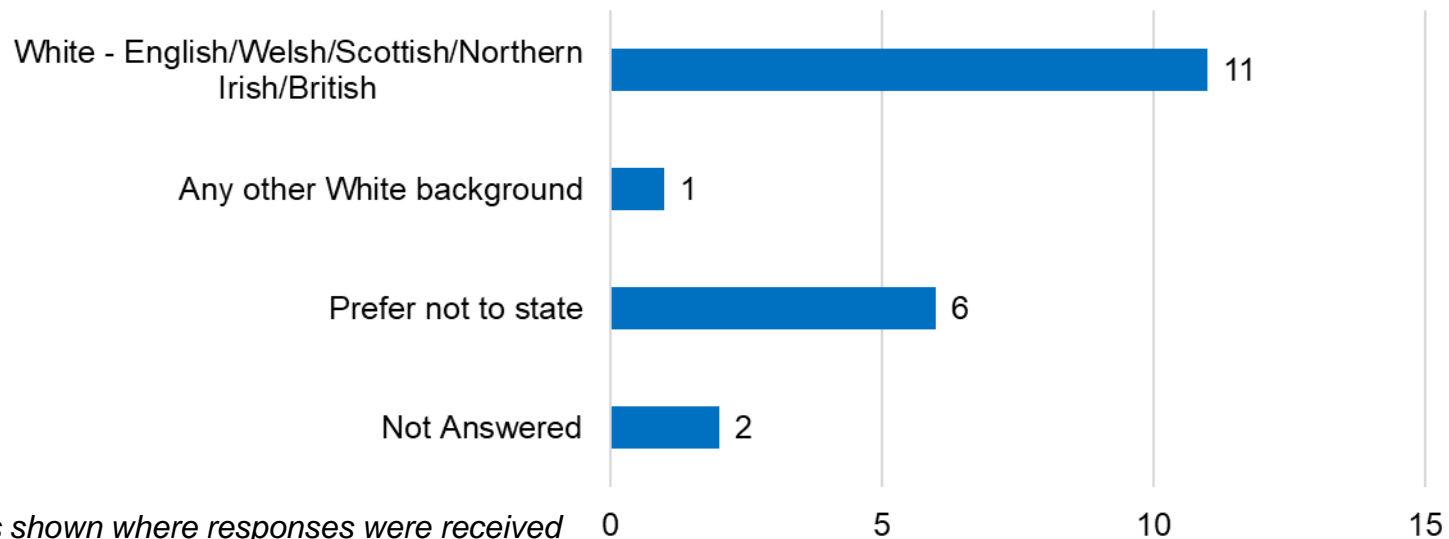
Profile of respondents



Base: All respondents (20)

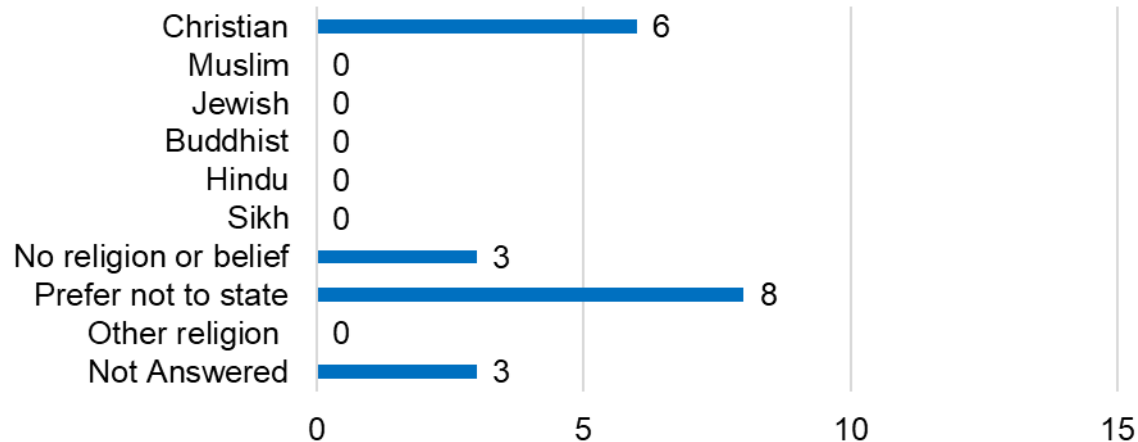
Profile of respondents

How do you describe your ethnic origin?



* Only ethnicities shown where responses were received

What is your religion or belief?

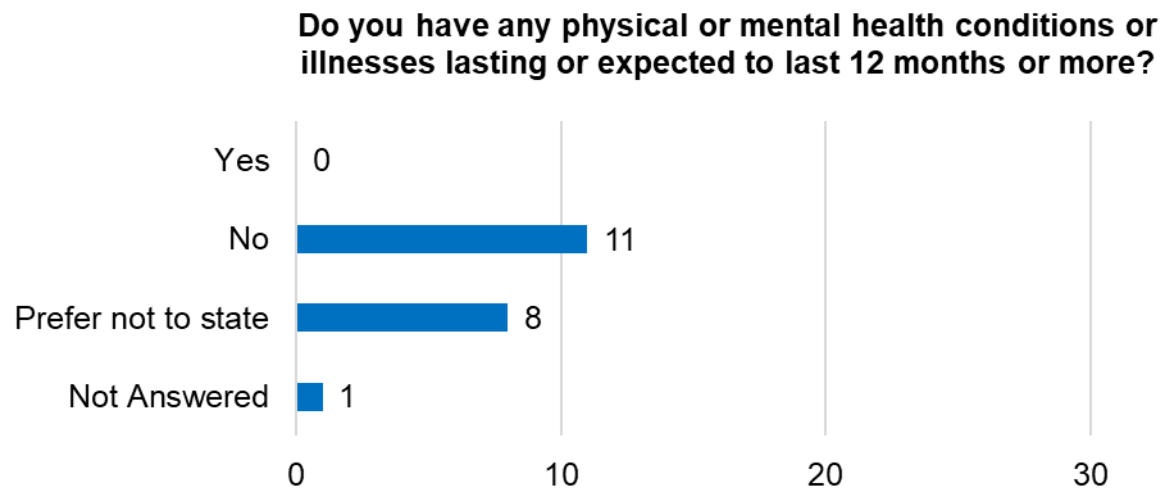


Base: All respondents (20)



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Profile of respondents



Base: All respondents (20)



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Appendix One:

Comments



Appendix One: Comments

This section of the report includes all comments made to the open question within the survey ***‘Please use the space below to explain your answer to the above question, or for any other comments you have about the proposals.’*** Comments have been themed and therefore may appear more than once, against each of the themes they relate to.

Theme	Count
In favour of proposals/improves the area	5
Traffic congestion/flow	5
Pedestrian congestion/safety	3
Against proposals	2
Enforcement	2
Community safety/anti-social behaviour concerns	1
Council should not be funding	1
Ensure bio-diversity is maximised in scheme	1
Equality concerns, e.g. disabled residents	1
Impact on residents	1
Keep existing arrangements	1
Other areas a priority	1
Suggestions for other locations to do similar	1
Supportive of plans if funded by Harrods	1



Appendix One: Comments

Comments

Against proposals

- It will cause more congestion around the area as it is having Hans Crescent open we have the traffic flowing so it's a big NO from me.
- Like all others good in theory. Rubbish in practice. Take a look at Sloane street, two years for what.

Community safety/anti-social behaviour concerns

- I am concerned that the seating/dwelling spaces will increase pick pockets. Beggars and crime. It's bad enough currently with swarms of beggars waiting daily outside Harrods. We need more police protection in Hans Crescent. I don't feel safe in my own street!

Council should not be funding

- The Council should not be paying for this. The public realm in other areas (including increasing enlarging the pavements on the Fulham Road (especially near the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital where people in wheelchairs struggle to pass) and the Kings Road is much more needed. If this is funded by Harrods then the plans make sense and are a slight improvement on what is here already (which is a very nice pedestrianised place - which the Borough needs more of).

Enforcement

- At Present Visitors view the dropping off point as a space for them to park without restriction. No enforcement is carried out whatsoever, presumably because Harrods see this as more profitable for the store. If this is being paid for by local businesses then this will only get worse. You have been warned!
- The system works well now if you'd only enforce the parking restrictions which already apply.



Appendix One: Comments

Ensure bio-diversity is maximised in scheme

- Please ensure biodiversity is maximised through native and wildlife-friendly species, and insect hotels. Water features suitable for wildlife if possible.

Equality concerns, e.g. disabled residents

- This is a busy pedestrian thoroughfare at the moment which gets very congested. The proposed planting islands, when linked to the outdoor seating arrangements, will increase that congestion. While the plans may look very nice with nobody there, as soon as the usual flow of people happens, the street will look awful and be very hard to navigate. Especially for people in wheelchairs and as soon as lime bikes get abandoned there it will become a blockage. Currently there are central seating locations, which cause blockage. Any plan should see a reduction in the scale of anything in the centre. It would be best to remove all planting entirely, or keep it to an absolute minimum.

Impact on residents

- As usual you are not considering cars or the residents at all. Far from making more space for pedestrians there will be less because of overcrowding. We will have people who want to be Harrods Tourists but not pay Harrods coffee shop prices sitting eating their sandwiches on the planters and littering the road. No peace for the poor residents.

Keep existing arrangements

- The system works well now if you'd only enforce the parking restrictions which already apply.

Suggestions for other locations to do similar

- Because it's a great improvement. You should do the same for Portobello Road, which is much more unique.



Appendix One: Comments

In favour of proposals/improves the area

- Because it's a great improvement. You should do the same for Portobello Road, which is much more unique.
- Harrods and Carraig Investments Sarl have been working with RBKC for five years now to seek improvements to the pedestrianised stretch of Hans Crescent. The street is a busy and important pedestrian thoroughfare but its current layout and design is not fit for purpose, nor does it reflect the prestige of the buildings located on either side or provide the right sense of arrival as people exit the station.

The problems with the street have been further exacerbated since the Pavement Licence Scheme was introduced in response to the Covid pandemic which has resulted in much of the street being occupied by outdoor dining. As a consequence, the street is cluttered and untidy, lacks character and prevents the free movement of pedestrians.

Harrods and Carraig Investments Sarl have appointed Andy Sturgeon Design (landscape architects for the Sloane Street improvements and winners of 9 Chelsea Flower Show Gold medals and 3 times Best in Show) to design a scheme to transform this part of Knightsbridge. The team has engaged with officers at RBKC (Planning and Highways) and local stakeholders such as the Knightsbridge Partnership and Knightsbridge Association, resulting in planning permission being granted for the public realm scheme. The scheme will be fully funded by Harrods and Carraig Investments Sarl with a contribution from the NCIL fund which was successfully approved following the grant of planning permission.

The scheme seeks to achieve the following:

- Enhancing Hans Crescent: Building on the Hans Crescent pedestrianisation in order to bring out its full potential as a public space. The ambition is to create a space with distinct character reflecting its prestigious setting in the Knightsbridge Shopping District as well as its historic origins;
- Redistributing pedestrian traffic: The north end of Hans Crescent is prone to overcrowding while, in contrast, the south side of the street is currently filled with ad hoc external seating introduced as a result of Covid.

(Continued on next page)



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The Proposal seeks to address these issues by enticing pedestrians through the street and providing fixed homogenous seating around the tree planters amongst the additional landscaping provided;

- Creating legible public space: The street furniture is reconfigured in clear zones in order to define a space for people to sit and enjoy the space and direct pedestrian movement towards the building facades, where it would have been historically when the street pavements existed. New heritage lighting design will reinforce legibility in the hours of darkness whilst creating a more atmospheric and intimate public space in keeping with the historic context;
- Improving the quality of the public realm: New benches and lampposts will be purposely designed to respond to the surrounding area materiality while being easier to maintain. Enhancements to the soft landscaping with increased vegetation including three new trees at the junction with Basil Street completing the row of existing trees;
- Improving public safety and security: A new drop off at the Basil Street junction creating a safe car bay off the road and away from the nearby taxi rank; and
- Art: An art zone is proposed in place of the approved flower shop near the southern end of Hans Crescent acting as the focal point of the Proposal. A rolling art programme will animate the public space helping to drive footfall and create a prime focus particularly upon exiting Knightsbridge Station.

Overall, the scheme will deliver a high quality public realm befitting its location as part of the internationally renowned retail offering within Knightsbridge and London. The development will encourage ongoing retail footfall in this recognised shopping destination and contribute to the vitality and viability of the area whilst preserving the setting of Harrods as a listed building and enhancing the Conservation Area.

• We are supportive of public realm and safety improvements as it becomes congested when trying to enter or exit to pick up and drop off passengers at Harrods or at the Capital hotel. The area is often full of parked up chauffeurs or super cars which are condoned in some way by Harrods door staff. Our concern arises around what taxi rank space will remain as the current taxi rank on Basil Street feeds into the 3 first spaces of the rank being on Hans Crescent to be situated kerbside by the door of Harrods. This kerbside space enables us to safely load and unload passengers in wheelchairs. We would like further clarity on the future proposals for the taxi rank and how these plans mean we can still take passengers with luggage to the Capital Hotel and access popular locations like Sale Pepe on Pavillion Road and the taxi rank for the Millennium Hotel Knightsbridge .

- Will enhance the whole area



Appendix One: Comments

- The Knightsbridge Partnership is the Business Improvement District for the Knightsbridge area, representing over 200 businesses and property owners and managing the International Centre, which attracts over 40 million people a year. We are fully supportive of the public realm proposals for Hans Crescent and delighted to see these being taken forward as one of the projects which are part of the Knightsbridge Place and Public Realm Strategy, which aims to recreate “A luxury global destination that rebalances the needs of people and nature, inviting people to spend time in its historic streets and places and to return again and again.”

The key features of the Hans Crescent public realm scheme will include additional planting and trees to create a more pleasant environment and also support nature recovery, new high-quality footway materials, informal seating, a plinth for art and decluttered routes on both sides to improve pedestrian movement through the public space. We are confident that they will also make the area safer for visitors, workers and residents.

Other areas a priority

- The Council should not be paying for this. The public realm in other areas (including increasing enlarging the pavements on the Fulham Road (especially near the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital where people in wheelchairs struggle to pass) and the Kings Road is much more needed. If this is funded by Harrods then the plans make sense and are a slight improvement on what is here already (which is a very nice pedestrianised place - which the Borough needs more of).

Supportive of plans if funded by Harrods

- The Council should not be paying for this. The public realm in other areas (including increasing enlarging the pavements on the Fulham Road (especially near the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital where people in wheelchairs struggle to pass) and the Kings Road is much more needed. If this is funded by Harrods then the plans make sense and are a slight improvement on what is here already (which is a very nice pedestrianised place - which the Borough needs more of).



Appendix One: Comments

Pedestrian congestion/safety

- As usual you are not considering cars or the residents at all. Far from making more space for pedestrians there will be less because of overcrowding. We will have people who want to be Harrods Tourists but not pay Harrods coffee shop prices sitting eating their sandwiches on the planters and littering the road. No peace for the poor residents.
- I have concerns that the raised planting areas is going to cause bottlenecks with the amount of pedestrians using that area. The area is already squeezed with the restaurants in the middle and causes difficulties in navigating through that area. The proposals look good but I think it needs more consideration for pedestrians.
- This is a busy pedestrian thoroughfare at the moment which gets very congested. The proposed planting islands, when linked to the outdoor seating arrangements, will increase that congestion. While the plans may look very nice with nobody there, as soon as the usual flow of people happens, the street will look awful and be very hard to navigate. Especially for people in wheelchairs and as soon as lime bikes get abandoned there it will become a blockage. Currently there are central seating locations, which cause blockage. Any plan should see a reduction in the scale of anything in the centre. It would be best to remove all planting entirely or keep it to an absolute minimum.

Traffic congestion/flow

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- It will cause more congestion around the area as it is having Hans Crescent open we have the traffic flowing so it's a big NO from me.
- We are supportive of public realm and safety improvements as it becomes congested when trying to enter or exit to pick up and drop off passengers at Harrods or at the Capital hotel. The area is often full of parked up chauffeurs or super cars which are condoned in some way by Harrods door staff. Our concern arises around what taxi rank space will remain as the current taxi rank on Basil Street feeds into the 3 first spaces of the rank being on Hans Crescent to be situated kerbside by the door of Harrods. This kerbside space enables us to safely load and unload passengers in wheelchairs. We would like further clarity on the future proposals for the taxi rank and how these plans mean we can still take passengers with luggage to the Capital Hotel and access popular locations like Sale Pepe on Pavillion Road and the taxi rank for the Millennium Hotel Knightsbridge .



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- When roads get closed, it just creates traffic issues on the adjoining roads, so do you propose to close the adjacent roads, when they inevitably become congested with displaced traffic, and also create more pollution
- Your plan shows 1 taxi and 1 pedestrian sitting down. In reality the back of Harrods is chaos down the entire stretch of Basil Street from Hans Road to Hans Crescent, in particular the area around Basil Street and Hans Crescent due to the sheer number of vehicles either dropping off then trying to turn around, vehicles double parked while waiting for passengers to come out of Harrods, or just simply passing through this area to access the western part of Basil Street. A nicer public realm is a good idea in principle, however Chelsea Council needs to get a grip with reducing or improving traffic flow down Hans Road towards Basil Street from Brompton Road and from Basil Street from Hans Road to Basil Street. You need to enforce no parking zones on at least 1 side so traffic can move around cars stopped to pick up or drop off passengers and stop vehicles illegally parked up whilst waiting for passengers. The same principle applies on the western section of Basil Street to Walton Street as 2 way traffic is impossible when cars are parked on both sides of Basil Street. Parking enforcement either by increased wardens or cameras needs to take place in order to enforce any new parking restrictions.

