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**Secretariat memorandum**

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Agenda item: 8

Ref: LTW568

Drafted: 13.11.17

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**Oxford Street bus changes associated with pedestrianisation**

**1 Purpose of report**

1.1. To update members regarding the consultation on the closure of part of Oxford Street to bus services and propose a response.

**2 Background**

2.1. Oxford Street is a key street for the central London bus network. It is proposed to pedestrianise it in three sections. The first stage would be between Oxford Circus and Orchard Street (the extension of Baker Street, at the junction between Selfridges and Marks & Spencer). This section is known as Oxford Street West. This would be followed by the section east of Oxford Circus to Tottenham Court Road, then finally the section between Orchard Street and Marble Arch. The current focus is on Oxford Street West, with detailed plans for East following next year and Marble Arch the year after.



Figure 1 Oxford Street is planned to be pedestrianised in three phases.

- 2.2. There are various estimates as to the number of bus passengers using Oxford Street (and it depends which section is being considered), but the numbers are huge: of the order of 100,000 passengers per day boarding and alighting buses, with more travelling through the area. If Oxford Street were a bus station, it would be the largest in Europe.
- 2.3. There have been changes in demand for bus services in central London, because of increased Underground capacity. For example, improvements to the Jubilee line have led to a considerable modal shift away from buses along the Edgware Road and Finchley Road corridor. There has also been a reduction in bus demand due to the recent poor performance of bus services, particularly in central London and associated with TfL's 'Roads Modernisation Programme'. In 2018, when Crossrail (the Elizabeth line) opens, there will be a further drop in demand for bus services. This latter change has been planned for, for a long time. That said there will still be a considerable demand for bus services in central London.
- 2.4. Earlier this year the section between Orchard Street and Regent Street had 13 bus routes running along it. There are now eight routes. Those changes were in response to the reduction in demand, but also a pre-cursor to the present proposals to pedestrianise Oxford Street. When these changes were proposed TfL had forecast that 17,000 passengers a day would be affected, i.e. 17,000 bus passengers would have had to change buses to complete their bus journey. It should be noted that these passengers will not necessarily change buses. Some will, but others will walk, travel by a different route or mode or not travel at all.
- 2.5. The latest proposals deliver the Mayor's aspiration to pedestrianise Oxford Street. They essentially close Oxford Street to bus services (and bicycles) between Orchard Street and Regent Street. Private motor vehicles, taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs) will still be able to travel north and south across Oxford Street and there will be an enhanced taxi rank arrangement on Oxford Street's side roads. Improvements for pedestrians are planned, including along walking routes to and from relocated bus stops.
- 2.6. London TravelWatch has previously made proposals to substantively improve the pedestrian environment along Oxford Street, maintain cycle access and improve bus services. However, this would fall short of closing Oxford Street to buses. London TravelWatch has stressed how important it believes an area-wide approach would be.
- 2.7. The consultation opened on 6 November 2017 and closes on 19 December 2017. This is quite a short timetable for consideration of such a fundamental change to the central London bus network.

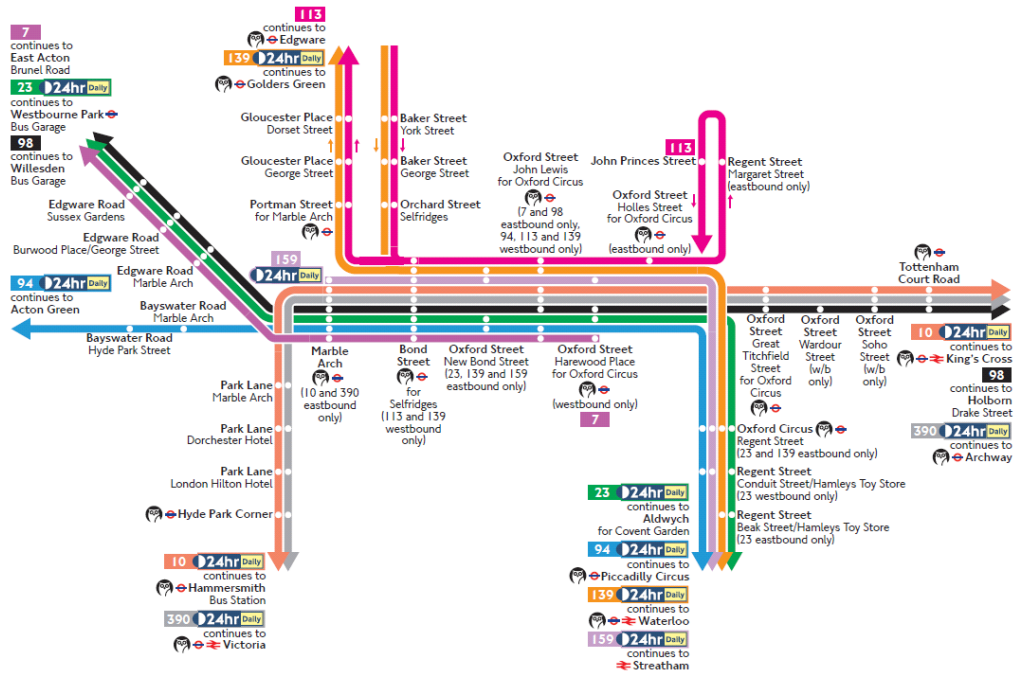
### **3 Bus proposals**

- 3.1. The nine routes that will no longer run along Oxford Street have generally been either curtailed or redirected. Passengers of these routes will have changed buses, walked to their destination, stopped travelling or chosen an entirely different route or mode. Some will have transferred to PHVs or taxis. Earlier this year there were several other changes to the central London bus

network that would have meant passengers changing buses to continue their journey. For example, the 242 was curtailed from Tottenham Court Road to run only as far as St Paul's Cathedral.

- 3.2. Two services are to be diverted from Oxford Street to serve Wigmore Street and Henrietta Place between Orchard Street and Regent Street. Night buses will no longer serve Oxford Street. The two spider maps below show the changes to the nine Oxford Street bus services, but do not show all of the routes in the vicinity.

Bus routes serving Oxford Street West (existing)



Bus routes serving Oxford Street West area (proposed)

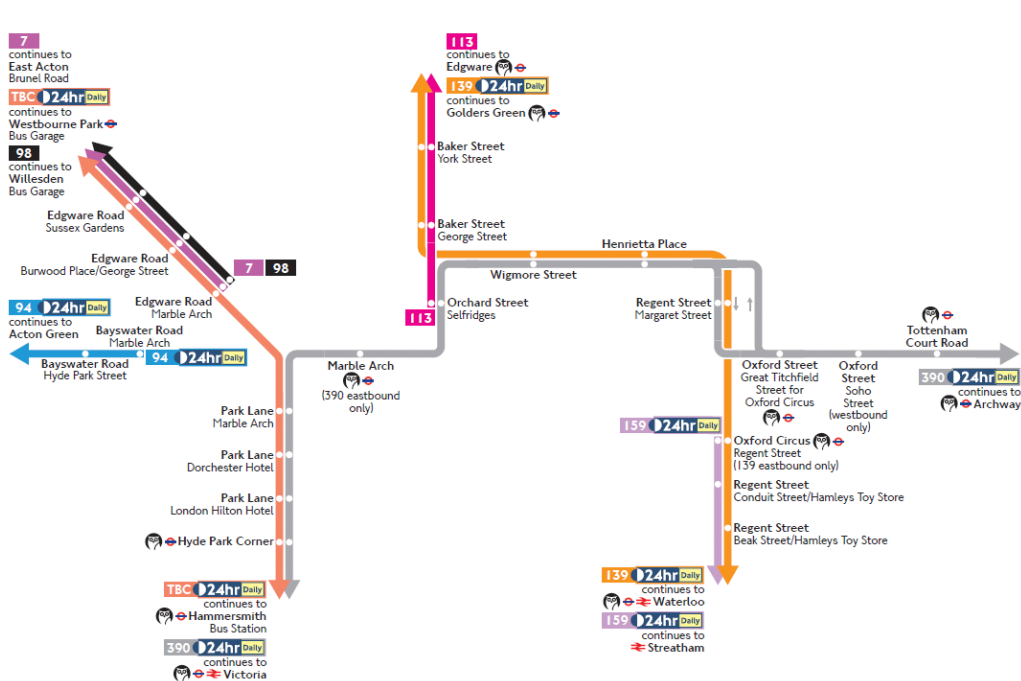


Figure 2 Bus services will generally be curtailed, but with two services running parallel to Oxford Street

- 3.3. In November 2016, **bus service 7** ran between East Acton and Oxford Circus. There were no changes earlier this year, but it is now proposed to curtail the route at the Marble Arch end of Edgware Road. Bus passengers from the west will have to walk between Edgware Road and Oxford Street, or change to the new route or use the 16, 36, 414 or 436 that run between Park Lane and Edgware Road and then interchange with bus route 390 and travel via Wigmore Street and Henrietta Place.

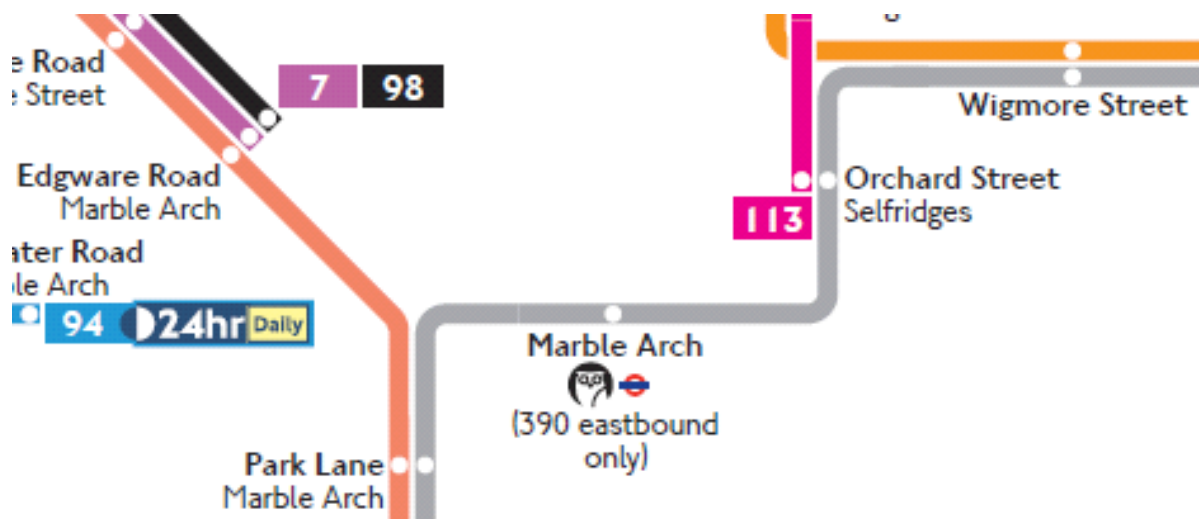


Figure 3 Passengers from the west now using bus route 7 will have to change onto the new route (salmon pink)

- 3.4. In November 2016, **bus service 10** ran between Hammersmith and King's Cross via Oxford Street. No changes were proposed then. **Bus service 23** ran between Liverpool Street and Westbourne Park via Oxford Street. It was curtailed at Aldwych. It is intended to curtail this further and redirect it to Lancaster Gate.
- 3.5. These routes will no longer run under the present proposals. A new service will run between Hammersmith and Westbourne Park. Passengers from the west will have to use the new service and walk to/from either Edgware Road or Park Lane to Oxford Street or interchange with bus route 390 at Park Lane and travel via Wigmore Street and Henrietta Place.
- 3.6. Passengers travelling east from Oxford Street will be able to travel on an extended bus service 3 to Russell Square, but have no replacement for bus service 10 to King's Cross beyond Russell Square.

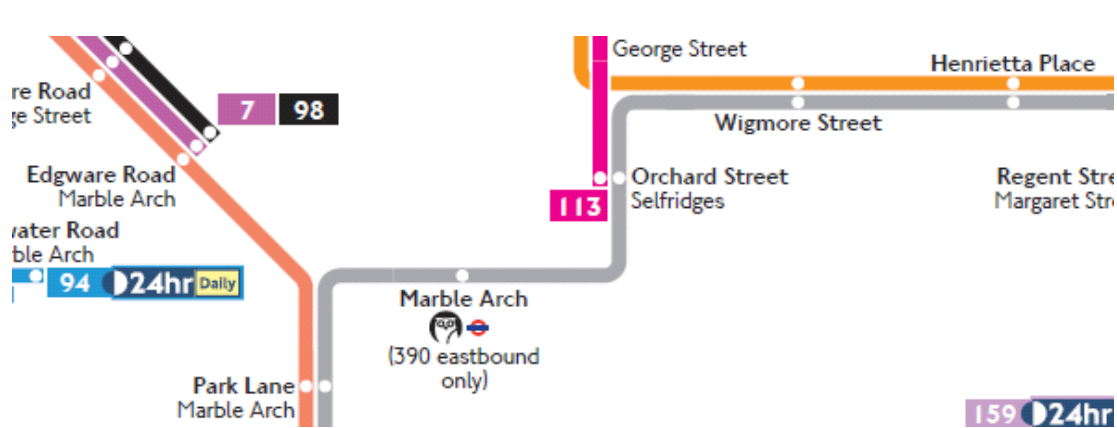


Figure 4 Passengers from the west now using bus routes 10 and 23 will have to use a new route (Salmon pink) and change at either Edgware Road or Park Lane.

3.7. In November 2016, **bus service 94** ran between Acton Green and Piccadilly Circus via Oxford Circus. This routing was maintained until the present proposal that curtails the service at Bayswater. Bus route 94 passengers from the west will have to walk between Bayswater Road and Oxford Street, or change to either route 274 or 148 and then change again onto bus route 390 at either Park Lane or Orchard Street (Selfridges) and travel via Wigmore Street and Henrietta Place.

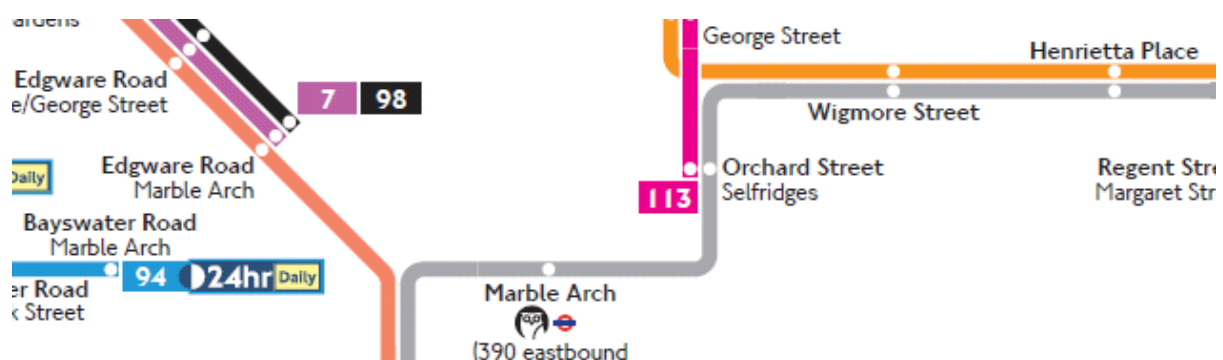


Figure 5 Passengers from the west now using bus route 94 will have to use either the 148 or 274 and then interchange with route 390

3.8. In November 2016, **bus service 98** ran between Holborn and Willesden via Oxford Circus. There were no changes made this year, but it is now proposed to curtail the route at the Marble Arch end of Edgware Road. Bus passengers from the west will have to walk between Edgware Road and Oxford Street, or change to the new route or use the 16, 36, 414 or 436 that run between Park Lane and Edgware Road and then interchange with bus route 390 and travel via Wigmore Street and Henrietta Place.



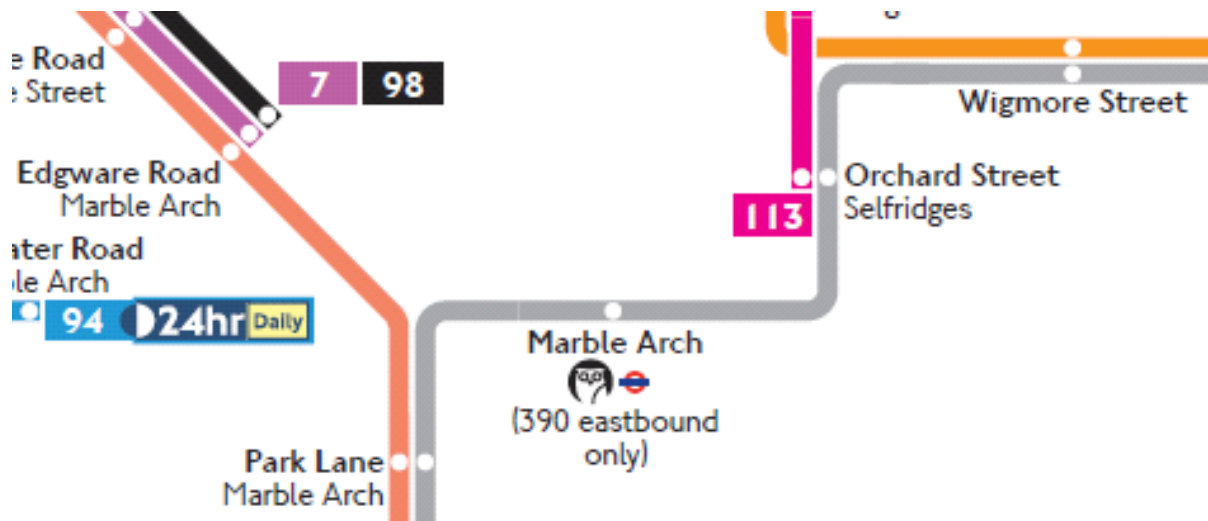


Figure 6 Passengers from the west now using bus route 98 will have to change onto the new route (salmon pink).

- 3.9. In November 2016, **bus service 113** ran between Edgware Road and Marble Arch. It was then extended along Oxford Street to Oxford Circus. It is now proposed for curtailment at Orchard Street. Passengers from the north will have to walk between Orchard Street and Oxford Street or interchange with bus route 390 and travel via Wigmore Street and Henrietta Place.

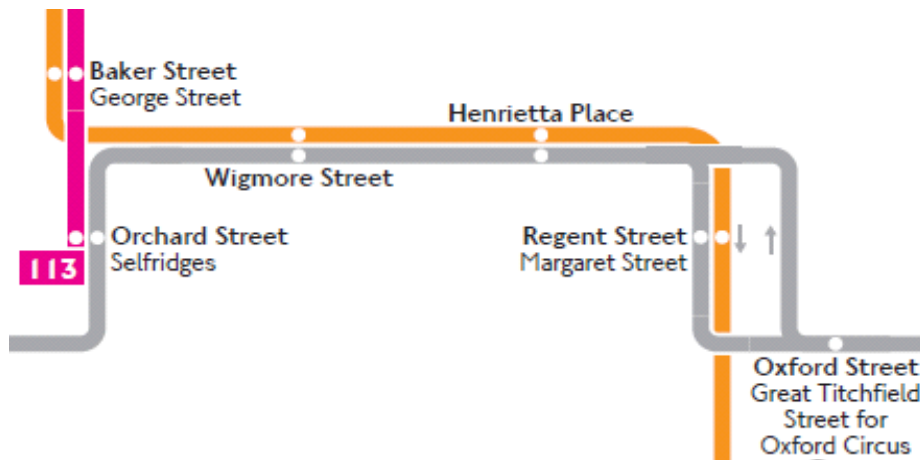


Figure 7 Passengers from the west using bus route 98 will have to walk or change buses

- 3.10. In November 2016, **bus service 139** ran between Waterloo and West Hampstead. It was extended to Golders Green earlier this year. It is now one of the two routes that are to be maintained in parallel to Oxford Street, using Wigmore Street and Henrietta Place. Passengers will have to walk to their destination on Oxford Street. It is planned to operate 7.5 buses per hour in the weekday peak hours.

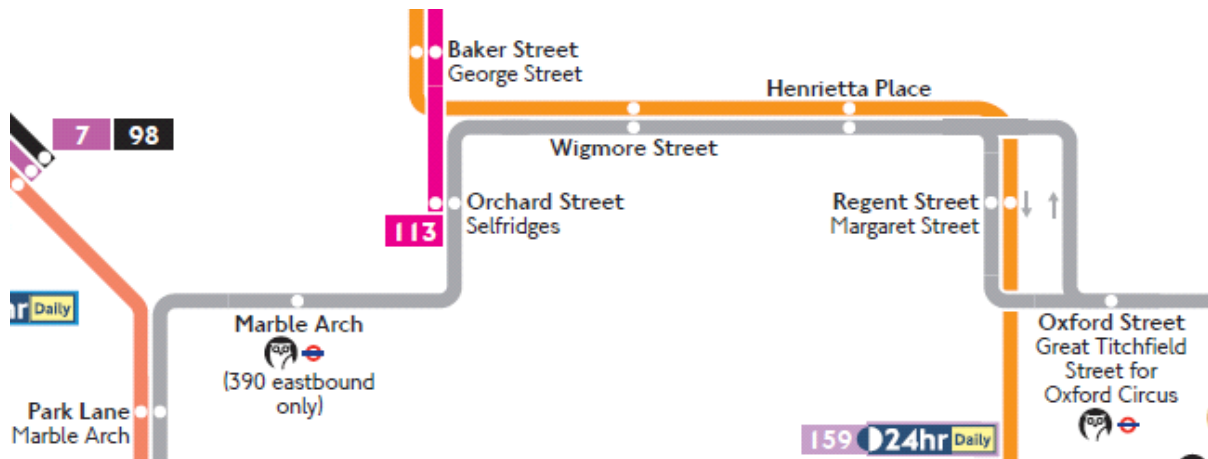


Figure 8 Passengers from the north and south using bus route 139 (orange) will travel along Wigmore Street and Henrietta Place

3.11. In November 2016, **bus service 159** ran between Marble Arch and Streatham. This is still the route. It is now proposed that the service will terminate on Regent Street. Passengers will have to either walk between Regent Street and Oxford Street, or change on Regent Street for the 139 and travel via Wigmore Place and Henrietta Place.

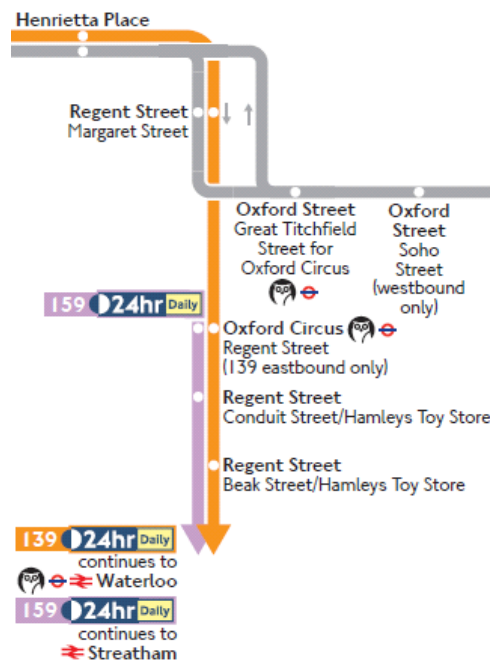


Figure 9 Passengers from the south of Oxford Circus using bus route 159 will have to change on Regent Street and travel along Wigmore Street and Henrietta Place

- 3.12. In November 2016, bus service 390 ran between Notting Hill Gate and Archway. It was redirected at its western end to Victoria station earlier this year. It is now one of the two routes to be maintained in parallel to Oxford Street running along Wigmore Street and Henrietta Place. Passengers will have to walk to their destination on Oxford Street. It is planned to operate 10 buses per hour in the weekday peak hours.

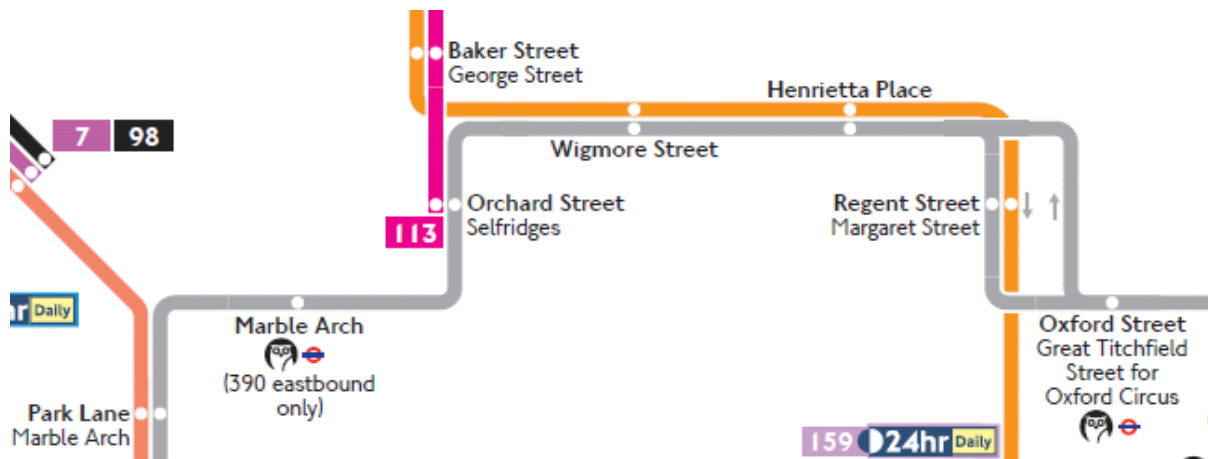


Figure 10 Passengers from the east and west using bus route 390 (grey) will travel along Wigmore Street and Henrietta Place

- 3.13. TfL have assessed the number of ‘broken links’, i.e. how many passengers would have to change bus to complete their journey. This is shown in the table below. It should be noted that passengers will not necessarily change buses. Some will, but others will walk, travel by a different route or mode or not travel at all.

Route	Broken links Oxford Street West	Broken through trips
7	6,500	0
10	7,600	2,600
94	4,200	4,900
98	12,200	3,400
113	2,300	0
139*	0	0
159	2,600	0
390*	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,100</b>	<b>10,700</b>

\* It is assumed that these trips would not be broken as it's a short walk through from Wigmore Street and Henrietta Place to Oxford Street

- 3.14. Members should note that in any normal circumstance changes affecting this number of passengers would not be contemplated.
- 3.15. Night buses will also no longer use Oxford Street. Similar curtailments and diversions will apply as described above.



## 4 Discussion

- 4.1. Whilst there is no in-principle objection to improving the pedestrian environment of Oxford Street, these changes should be balanced against the considerable detriment to many tens of thousands of bus passengers for whom the bus service provides access to central London and along Oxford Street.
- 4.2. Passengers do not like changing buses because it adds time, reduces reliability and is less convenient. For example, at present passengers of bus route 94, say, could have boarded their bus outside John Lewis with their shopping or as a worker and travel home to Acton. In future, they will walk to Henrietta Place and catch a route 390 to Park Lane (Marble Arch) and cross Marble Arch to Bayswater Road (Marble Arch) which involves an unpleasant crossing of Marble Arch junction to catch the 94. Alternatively, passengers could walk all of the way to Bayswater Road. This will be a long walk and include crossing Marble Arch junction.
- 4.3. Most journeys are not quite as problematic as the one described above, but all will be less convenient than at present, and particularly unpleasant where the crossing of Marble Arch junction is involved or if the weather is inclement. As a further example, the bus stops presently used by passengers outside Selfridges will be relocated 300m onto Orchard Street.
- 4.4. TfL have considered the various interchanges and walking routes. They will be improving signing and accessibility with wider pavements, step free routes, signs etc. Nevertheless, access will be considerably worsened for those that have particular mobility issues because of the interchanges and walking distances introduced. Some passengers will find these changes very inconvenient and/or unpleasant. Some will no longer be able to undertake their journey because of the walking distances involved. Some will stop travelling or find another public transport route or mode. Some may well switch mode to taxi or PHV causing greater congestion in the area.
- 4.5. Buses travelling along Wigmore Street and Henrietta Place will be part of the general traffic along with private vehicles, taxis, PHVs, deliveries, loading and parking. TfL have estimated the additional journey times for buses. The longest of which is 5 to 6 minutes for bus service 390. This will be dependent upon how much private vehicle, taxi and PHV activity there will be around the area and the delays that they cause for these bus services.
- 4.6. Support or otherwise for this scheme will mean a balanced judgement by members. There will clearly be benefits for Underground and the new Elizabeth line passengers by virtue of the improved pedestrian environment. Cyclists will have to take a different route. Bus passengers will be greatly inconvenienced because they will have to change buses or walk, sometimes a long way and in an inhospitable pedestrian environment. It is unclear how much additional journey time and unreliability there will be for bus passengers using Wigmore Street and Henrietta Place. Private vehicles, taxis and PHVs will be able to maintain cross Oxford Street journeys.

## **5 Recommendation**

- 5.1. Members should consider the response they would like to make to this consultation.
- 5.2. TfL and Westminster should review what more can be done to prioritise bus services and reduce the delays to bus services generally in central London and specifically on the two new routes.

## **6 London TravelWatch priority**

- 6.1. There are more bus journeys in London than any other public transport modes

## **7 Legal powers**

- 7.1. Section 248 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) a duty to consider - and where it appears to the Committee to be desirable, to make recommendations with respect to - any matter affecting the functions of the Greater London Authority or Transport for London which relate to transport (other than of freight).

## **8 Equalities and inclusion implications**

- 8.1. The bus provides access to central London for very many Londoners. The bus is used so much because it is the most affordable and the only public transport mode that is truly accessible and serves all parts of London. Whilst TfL are mitigating some of the impacts, many of these users will have been disadvantaged by these further changes.

## **9 Financial implications**

- 9.1. There are no financial implications.