# Sadiq Khan confirms swift pedestrianisation of Oxford Street despite safety concerns



London’s iconic Oxford Street is set to undergo a transformative pedestrianisation scheme, with Mayor Sadiq Khan confirming plans to close the 0.7-mile stretch between Oxford Circus and Marble Arch to all vehicular traffic. This bold move aims to reinvigorate the world-famous shopping district, which draws around half a million visitors daily and contributes an estimated £25 billion annually to London’s economy. The mayor insisted that the majority of Londoners support the scheme, citing a recent consultation where approximately 66 to 70 percent of respondents, including local businesses, expressed approval. City Hall plans to implement the changes swiftly, emphasising the creation of a vibrant, accessible public space established on the model of successful pedestrianised areas such as Times Square in New York and La Rambla in Barcelona.

The pedestrianisation initiative is positioned as a crucial part of Oxford Street's recovery from economic challenges linked to the COVID-19 pandemic and the growing dominance of online shopping. Business leaders from key establishments such as Selfridges, John Lewis, and IKEA have publicly welcomed the plans, viewing them as necessary to secure the street’s future as a top retail destination. According to City Hall’s economic analysis, the pedestrianisation could increase Gross Value Added by nearly £82 million annually and support the creation of an additional 781 jobs. It may also generate a VAT uplift of between £30 million and £40 million, alongside an increase in business rates estimated at £10 million to £20 million, offering substantial benefits both locally and nationally.

To oversee the redevelopment of this strategic commercial artery, the Greater London Authority will establish a Mayoral Development Corporation this year, partnering with local authorities and the government to ensure smooth delivery. Notably, Westminster City Council, which previously opposed similar plans in 2018 over concerns of traffic congestion and disruption, now appears inclined to collaborate, albeit with reservations. Councillors have voiced worries that the pedestrianisation may exacerbate crime rates and could render the street a more attractive target for terrorist activity. The council has spent the past two years developing its own £150 million regeneration proposal, which would keep the street open to some traffic, and there is talk of potential legal challenges to Mr Khan’s plan.

Concerns about safety and policing have been raised by various stakeholders, including the London Taxi Drivers’ Association. Drivers have reported diminished confidence in police responses to the street’s ongoing issues with street crime such as phone snatching. Similarly, local resident groups caution that removing vehicles like buses and taxis might reduce natural surveillance and deterrents, increasing vulnerability especially for evening visitors and women. Accessibility is another critical concern; existing narrow pavements challenge disabled users and elderly residents, who fear the changes may limit their mobility and access to homes. The redevelopment will require diversion or removal of up to 16 bus routes currently serving the street, prompting calls for improved public transport alternatives and enhanced policing to maintain safety.

Environmental groups have welcomed the pedestrianisation plan for its potential to reduce the heavy pollution and noise that currently plague Oxford Street, creating a more pleasant atmosphere for shoppers and residents alike. Supporters argue that removing traffic will reduce carbon emissions and allow for the planting of trees and the creation of green spaces, contributing to London’s broader environmental goals. The mayor’s office stresses that the pedestrianisation is not just a commercial upgrade but a chance to craft a world-class public venue for leisure, shopping, and cultural events that Londoners can take pride in.

Despite the enthusiasm from the mayor and many in the business and environmental communities, the scheme remains controversial. It follows shortly after Sadiq Khan was knighted for political and public service, an honour that some Conservative politicians have criticised given ongoing concerns about crime in the capital. Mr Khan expressed pride in his background growing up on a council estate, framing the pedestrianisation as part of his broader vision to build a "fairer, safer, greener and more prosperous London for everyone."

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14819877/Oxford-Street-close-cars-Sadiq-Khan-fears-crime-hotspot.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/5313d5ec-d5e2-4e0c-910f-ca1aa55e7091), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/londons-oxford-street-go-traffic-free-shopping-area-makeover-says-mayor-2025-06-16/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[4]](https://fitzrovianews.com/2025/03/02/interview-sadiq-khan-answers-questions-on-oxford-street/), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/5313d5ec-d5e2-4e0c-910f-ca1aa55e7091), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/londons-oxford-street-go-traffic-free-shopping-area-makeover-says-mayor-2025-06-16/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[6]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/oxford-street-westminster-council-terror-target-pedestrianised-b1182954.html), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/5313d5ec-d5e2-4e0c-910f-ca1aa55e7091), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14819877/Oxford-Street-close-cars-Sadiq-Khan-fears-crime-hotspot.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14819877/Oxford-Street-close-cars-Sadiq-Khan-fears-crime-hotspot.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/oxford-street-westminster-council-terror-target-pedestrianised-b1182954.html), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14819877/Oxford-Street-close-cars-Sadiq-Khan-fears-crime-hotspot.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 5 – [[7]](https://www.bigissue.com/news/environment/london-oxford-street-traffic-cars-sadiq-khan/), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14819877/Oxford-Street-close-cars-Sadiq-Khan-fears-crime-hotspot.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/5313d5ec-d5e2-4e0c-910f-ca1aa55e7091)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14819877/Oxford-Street-close-cars-Sadiq-Khan-fears-crime-hotspot.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.london.gov.uk/mayor-launches-public-consultation-biggest-transformation-of-oxford-street-history), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14819877/Oxford-Street-close-cars-Sadiq-Khan-fears-crime-hotspot.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14819877/Oxford-Street-close-cars-Sadiq-Khan-fears-crime-hotspot.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/5313d5ec-d5e2-4e0c-910f-ca1aa55e7091> - London Mayor Sadiq Khan has confirmed plans to pedestrianise Oxford Street, following strong public and business support. A consultation between February and May revealed that 66% of 6,642 respondents endorsed the proposal. Major retailers, including Selfridges, John Lewis, and Ikea, support the initiative. The plan aims to transform approximately a mile of the roadway into a pedestrian-friendly area, from Orchard Street to Great Portland Street. To implement this, City Hall will establish a Mayoral Development Corporation within the year, collaborating with businesses, local authorities, and the national government. The move seeks to revitalise the area, which has faced economic challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of online shopping. Westminster Council, which previously blocked similar initiatives in 2018, now intends to work cooperatively to ensure the redevelopment benefits both locals and visitors. Business groups, such as the London Chamber of Commerce and UKHospitality, have praised the proposal as a significant opportunity to reinvigorate one of the UK's most important commercial streets.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/londons-oxford-street-go-traffic-free-shopping-area-makeover-says-mayor-2025-06-16/> - London Mayor Sadiq Khan has announced plans to pedestrianise Oxford Street, aiming to revitalise the area into a world-class hub for shopping, leisure, and outdoor events. The proposal, which has been in development for two decades, received majority support from Londoners and businesses during a recent public consultation. Inspired by successful transformations like Times Square in New York and La Rambla in Barcelona, the initiative seeks to rejuvenate the mile-long stretch of Oxford Street. Despite attracting around 500,000 visitors daily, the area has faced challenges, including the closure of major retail stores and competition from online shopping. The pedestrianisation plan is expected to create a beautiful public space, improve tourism, attract investment, and generate employment. To implement the project, Khan will collaborate with the government to pass the necessary legislation and identify alternative routes for the numerous buses currently using the street. The changes will be introduced as swiftly as possible.
4. <https://fitzrovianews.com/2025/03/02/interview-sadiq-khan-answers-questions-on-oxford-street/> - In an interview, Mayor Sadiq Khan discussed the potential economic impact of pedestrianising Oxford Street. According to the Greater London Authority's estimates, the transformation could lead to an increase of nearly £82 million in Gross Value Added annually, compared to a non-pedestrianised Oxford Street, while supporting an additional 781 jobs. City Hall's analysis predicts that, on average, pedestrianisation could raise an additional £30 million to £40 million in VAT receipts and £10 million to £20 million in business rates, depending on the scenario and assumptions. Oxford Street currently welcomes approximately 120 million visitors a year and contributed an estimated £25 billion to London's economy in 2022, equating to one percent of the UK's total economic output that year.
5. <https://www.london.gov.uk/mayor-launches-public-consultation-biggest-transformation-of-oxford-street-history> - Mayor Sadiq Khan has launched a public consultation on proposals to transform Oxford Street into a pedestrian-friendly area. The initiative aims to rejuvenate the street, which has faced challenges due to the pandemic and the rise of online shopping. The plan includes creating a Mayoral Development Corporation to oversee the regeneration, with the goal of increasing visitor numbers, creating new jobs, and boosting retail and economic growth for London and the UK. The consultation encourages everyone to have their say on these proposals before 2 May 2025.
6. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/oxford-street-westminster-council-terror-target-pedestrianised-b1182954.html> - Westminster Council has expressed concerns that pedestrianising Oxford Street could increase crime and make it a potential terrorist target. The council's leader, Adam Hug, issued a letter to Mayor Sadiq Khan and Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, warning that the plan could worsen crime and accessibility issues. The council has spent two years working on its own £150 million plan to regenerate Oxford Street, which seeks to improve the street scene while keeping it open to traffic. The council is considering legal action to block the proposals.
7. <https://www.bigissue.com/news/environment/london-oxford-street-traffic-cars-sadiq-khan/> - Experts have welcomed the proposal to pedestrianise Oxford Street, claiming it will reduce pollution and boost footfall. Barbara Stoll, director of the Clean Cities Campaign, described the current environment as 'very loud, very polluted, very crowded,' and believes pedestrianisation will reinvigorate the area. The plan is also expected to reduce air and noise pollution. However, there are concerns about accessibility for disabled people, as the narrow sidewalks currently offer limited space for movement.