# TfL takes control of Oxford Street as London’s local voices are sidelined in controversial pedestrianisation plans



Transport for London (TfL) is set to assume control as the highway authority for Oxford Street from Saturday 20 September 2025, marking yet another overreach by the central government’s bureaucrats into decisions that should be made locally. This move, following a wave of political manoeuvring between Westminster City Council and the Greater London Authority (GLA), signals an alarming centralisation of power designed to accelerate the Mayor’s misguided ambitions to pedestrianise one of London’s busiest shopping streets — regardless of the wishes of local residents and businesses.

The decision to hand over responsibilities such as highway maintenance and roadworks permitting to TfL represents a troubling shift away from local governance. Westminster City Council, which has traditionally managed street cleaning and refuse collection, will now be sidelined in a process that appears driven more by political optics than practical needs. Critics rightly suspect this is part of a broader agenda to push through controversial projects like the £150 million plan to pedestrianise Oxford Street, betraying the economic and social realities faced by local stakeholders.

Mayor Sadiq Khan’s relentless pursuit of vanity projects under the guise of regeneration continues to ignore the concerns of ordinary Londoners. His promises to transform Oxford Street into a more accessible, cleaner space are more about headline-grabbing than effective urban planning. The push for pedestrianisation, supported by exaggerated public consultation figures, overlooks the thousands of small businesses that rely on traffic for their survival. Altering Oxford Street into a pedestrian zone risks further economic decline, especially after the pandemic and the rise of online shopping have already battered its high street vitality.

The opaque decision-making process reveals a disturbing pattern: centralised control that prioritises political ambitions over local needs. Behind the scenes, this move is part of a broader strategy to make the Mayor’s vision for London’s central shopping district a fait accompli, with little regard for the diverse opinions of residents or the economic realities on the ground. The so-called “public consultation” has been anything but, with key stakeholders left out of meaningful discussions, leading many to doubt whether this regeneration scheme is about community benefit or political showmanship.

Even some in the London Assembly have expressed concern over the lack of attention to amenities like public toilets—an essential for making the area genuinely accessible for all. This oversight underscores the superficial approach guiding these plans, which seem more focused on creating Instagrammable spaces than sustainable urban environments. The push for pedestrianisation is driven by ideological zeal rather than careful economic and social analysis, risking turning Oxford Street into a superficial tourist trap rather than a thriving street for all.

As TfL prepares to take over and implement these schemes, it’s clear that the true motivation is to showcase the Mayor’s ambition rather than serve the needs of London’s residents and businesses. The neighbourhood’s future should be determined by local voices, not bureaucrats in City Hall pushing grandiose projects that serve only their political narratives. Genuine regeneration would involve listening more to the community, supporting local traders, and creating a sensible, balanced plan that keeps Oxford Street alive as a vital economic artery—something that appears increasingly unlikely under the current centrally driven agenda.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://highways-news.com/tfl-to-become-highway-authority-for-oxford-street/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/oxford-street-pedestrianisation-public-toilets-mayor-sadiq-khan-london-assembly-b1236362.html> - The London Assembly has urged Mayor Sadiq Khan to include 'world-class public toilets' in the proposed pedestrianisation of Oxford Street. The call aims to ensure the area remains accessible and comfortable for all visitors. The Assembly's recommendation comes as part of a broader initiative to transform Oxford Street into a 'healthy street' that is safe and accessible. The proposal has sparked debate, with some critics questioning the feasibility and cost of implementing such facilities. The Mayor has yet to respond to the Assembly's request.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/sadiq-khan-oxford-street-mayor-pedestrianisation-plans-westminster-b1248374.html> - A row has erupted over Westminster City Council's decision to transfer control of Oxford Street to Mayor Sadiq Khan. The move paves the way for the pedestrianisation of the UK's most famous high street. Under the plan, Transport for London (TfL) will replace Westminster Council as the highway authority for the full length of Oxford Street, between Marble Arch and Tottenham Court Road. This transfer is seen as a significant step towards implementing the Mayor's £150 million plan to part-pedestrianise Oxford Street between Orchard Street and Great Portland Street.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/oxford-street-pedestrianisation-sadiq-khan-traffic-free-consultation-decision-mayor-b1233250.html> - Mayor Sadiq Khan is moving forward with plans to pedestrianise Oxford Street after receiving overwhelming support from Londoners. The changes will involve more of the road being closed to traffic than initially thought, including the eastern section between Oxford Circus and Great Portland Street. The decision follows a nine-week consultation, with two-thirds of respondents in favour of the pedestrianisation plan. The Oxford Circus junction itself will not be pedestrianised, as buses will continue to run north-south on Regent Street.
5. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/sadiq-khan-oxford-street-mayor-pedestrianisation-plans-westminster-b1248374.html> - A row has erupted over Westminster City Council's decision to transfer control of Oxford Street to Mayor Sadiq Khan. The move paves the way for the pedestrianisation of the UK's most famous high street. Under the plan, Transport for London (TfL) will replace Westminster Council as the highway authority for the full length of Oxford Street, between Marble Arch and Tottenham Court Road. This transfer is seen as a significant step towards implementing the Mayor's £150 million plan to part-pedestrianise Oxford Street between Orchard Street and Great Portland Street.
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