



Michael J Keane

Chair of Vauxhall Society

Telephone 07795 835205

VauxhallCS@gmail.com

15 November 2015

Mike Brown

Transport Commissioner for London

Cc Leon Daniels, Head of Surface Transport
Kate Hoey, MP Vauxhall
Councillor Lib Peck, Leader of Lambeth Council
Martin Worthington

Vauxhall Cross

I am writing to draw your attention to likely serious problems with the forthcoming Vauxhall Cross consultation, and to seek correction of misleading statements currently placed on the TfL website: <https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/vauxhall-cross>

Prior Consultation

Contrary to the assertion on TfL's website, there has not been "*strong support (65%) at initial consultation for converting the gyratory to two way operation on all four arms*". There has of course been consistent strong support for 'removal of the gyratory' in the expectation that it would improve road safety but none of the preliminary consultations have spelt out in any detail what was meant by this phrase. In particular, it was not made clear that removal of the gyratory would;

- (i) be limited to introducing two-way traffic in part of the Vauxhall gyratory system,
- (ii) require substantial reconfiguration of the bus station.

Even the 65% figure is misleading. The survey referred to showed 26% strong support, not 65%. I understand that the majority of more thoughtful and lengthy responses expressed serious concern about the possible consequences of two-way working, particularly for pedestrians and bus passengers. Furthermore, and contrary to what the website states, closing off one arm can improve traffic flow through Vauxhall and this option should have been properly modelled and put to the public as should full two way working.

E-mail: VauxhallCS@gmail.com
Website: <http://www.vauxhallcivicsociety.org.uk/>
Twitter: @VauxhallSociety

Review of alternative proposals

Your website refers to a commitment made by TfL to meet with two individuals. They were Martin Worthington and myself, Michael Keane. That meeting took place in March as reported.

Both Martin and I made clear, when we met officials at that meeting and repeatedly since, that TfL's review has not modeled the alternative proposal which is now referred to as '*Our Vauxhall*'. Any claims to the contrary are false.

What TfL did model, we believe, was Martin's scheme which was very different. However, in spite of many requests, we were never given the actual model outputs to back up the statements being made about Martin's scheme let alone *Our Vauxhall*.

As information promised at the March meeting and since was not forthcoming, Fol requests were subsequently made. In the last few days, following a further Fol request, we received a partial response which included the traffic modeling (LinSig) file supposedly used to model Martin's scheme. We now doubt whether even Martin's scheme was accurately modeled as the model supplied appears to be different in some respects from what Martin had intended. We appreciate how complex junction design and traffic modeling can be and were therefore surprised that at no point did anyone contact either Martin or myself to seek clarification on any technical points.

To date, we have not been supplied with any technical evidence that refutes what we are saying. It appears to us that *Our Vauxhall* performs better than TfL's proposal on a range of measures. In particular, *Our Vauxhall* has

- Fewer overall left/right turns
- Shorter overall distance travelled
- Fewer banned movements (no left/no right turns)
- Fewer traffic light controlled movements
- All 6 key junctions in the Vauxhall gyratory system appear to have higher capacities.

Any proposal which had a few of the above benefits would be worth looking at closely. *Our Vauxhall* has all five. In addition, there are benefits over and above what TfL are currently proposing such as the proposed new public space, further environmental, economic and safety improvements etc. Equally importantly, we think it offers far better value for money.

Our Vauxhall approach works with a range of bus station configurations including retention of the existing bus station structure and something similar to what TfL are proposing. The approach allows changes to the road network to be implemented with relatively simple changes to the bus station entrances and exits. We have mapped out the existing and proposed bus routes. We believe that *Our Vauxhall* is more flexible and in the long run will help TfL maximize the development potential of their land holdings.

Impact on Surrounding Roads

Summarising the ‘review’ mentioned above, the TfL website claims that “*whilst removing traffic may help to improve the environment for pedestrians on South Lambeth Road between Kennington Lane and Parry Street, it would have the opposite effect on Wandsworth Road, Kennington Lane and Parry Street, which would have to be widened to accommodate the vehicles that would have been using South Lambeth Road.*”

Again, this is false and misleading. Under our proposal;

- Wandsworth Road would remain the same width as at present. TfL are proposing to reduce the width of this road whereas Our Vauxhall retains the existing capacity but optimised for 2 way working
- Kennington Lane would not be widened. I understand that the next TfL proposal may have to reinstate the 5th lane in the Kennington Lane viaduct crossing in which case it would be wider than what we propose
- Parry Street will not be widened.

Impact on Access to the transport interchange, district centre and river

The TfL website also claims that the alternative proposal “*would ... weaken links to the river and the massive volume of development to the south and west*”. This is absolutely and obviously wrong. *Our Vauxhall* strengthens links not only to the river but to the transport interchange and proposed district centre.

- For the first time, thousands of local residents (in the area bounded by Clapham Road, South Lambeth Road and Harleyford) would be able to reach the proposed district centre and transport interchange without having to cross a single main road.
- Those same residents would be able to reach the river by crossing only one main road (6 lanes). In contrast, under TfL’s plans, those same residents would have to cross one main road to reach the transport interchange and a further main road to reach the river – typically 3 + 5 = 8 lanes.

Comment

We are not, of course, asking that TfL abandon its own proposal. All we ask is that the forthcoming consultation is carried out in a fair and professional way, so that the public are allowed to comment on a range of proposals including

- TfL’s introduction of two-way traffic around part of the Vauxhall gyratory system
- *Our Vauxhall*’s full two-way traffic plan, including a new public shared use space on South Lambeth Road.

We appreciate that TfL have put a lot of effort into developing its own ideas for the road network. However, it is unhelpful if a public body chooses to pursue its own ideas to the exclusion of others, particularly when dubious claims are made to reject them. This is a once in a generation

opportunity to sort out Vauxhall and it is more important to find the right solution. There is no merit in rushing ahead with a solution when there is potentially a much better one.

I have a deep respect for what TfL do for London but on this occasion the community-led *Our Vauxhall* initiative appears to be a very strong contender and must be given a fair hearing.

Next Steps

As matter of urgency, **Martin Worthington and I would like you to arrange a meeting with someone senior in TfL who is not personally committed to the current Vauxhall project.** We will take them through the evidence in support of *Our Vauxhall* approach and if necessary deploy detail, which could not sensibly have been included in this letter.

Separately, **we would ask that you arrange for the misleading web page to be removed or rewritten.** We would gladly contribute to the drafting if that would be helpful.

We also ask that great care is taken to ensure that the forthcoming consultation includes no faulty assumptions (of the sort described above) and includes sufficient detail for local residents, and all others who use the Vauxhall Cross interchange, to fully understand the consequences of what is proposed. Failure to do this would inevitably lead to the consultation – and hence the whole project – being challenged and badly delayed.

It is more important to take time now and make the effort to find the correct solution of Vauxhall. We wish to work with TfL in this regard. The public and future generations will thank us for taking the trouble.

Yours sincerely

Michael Keane
Chair of Vauxhall Society