

What changes are planned for Portobello road in the near future?

After investigating how Portobello road was like 10 years ago, how it is like today and why these changes have occurred, there is a noticeable land use pattern that is changing as technology develops and more improvements are proposed by the council. One of the main goals for the government is to bring down the unemployment rates to below the average in inner London (see figure on page) in order to achieve the goal, the council are going to offer a grant up to a maximum of £300 to each person aged 25 and over, this will enable them to purchase any items which are required in their job descriptions such as tools or clothes for interviews. The royal borough are also planning to organise a youth training centre which delivers NVQ levels 1 and 2, literacy, numeracy and key skills qualifications, and are hoping to offer skills training to 16- 18 year olds, many of whom have no educational qualifications. Although these solutions may tackle the problem of unemployment, it is not guaranteed that everyone will use the grant given, to purchase work items, and as a result a lot of money will be wasted.

The council also want to offer the royal borough a better quality of life, by making the area cleaner, safer, healthier and more attractive as a place in which to live and work. One of the ways in which to do this would be to for the council to keep its own detrimental impacts on the environment to the lowest practical levels. The environmental services department are also aiming to improve street cleansing and improve trade waste collection services. It aims to get 60% of businesses involved in recycling by 2003. It is also piloting a cycle delivery scheme in Portobello road. All these improvements will improve the quality of life for residents and will also increase tourism, which will be financially, a benefit to the trade on Portobello road.

Above were the general improvements being proposed for the whole borough, but is more useful to study the improvements being proposed for the 3 main sections of Portobello road.

Proposed improvements for the Northern section of Portobello road (Goldbourne ward)

One of the proposals for this area is to make this part of the road a one way southbound in order to avoid congestion, heavy traffic, noise pollution and gas emissions, and so reducing the number of accidents, and therefore increasing the safety for pedestrians. Hopefully this proposal will attract more visitors and there will be more trade. The council also intend on improving the maintenance of shops, so they look more attractive and visible, and therefore gain more passing trade (mostly from tourism). However this approach may prove to be a disadvantage, as the increase in tourism would result in conflict between local residents and tourists and so resulting to high crime rate. The third proposal that will be put forward by the council, concerning this part of the road is to improve street lighting and ensure that brighter lighting will reduce the number of car accidents and bring crime rates to a minimum. Finally, improving direction signs and providing simple market maps near tube stations and shops, should encourage more tourists, and allow them to feel more comfortable finding their way around the area.

Proposed improvements for the Central section of Portobello road (Colville ward)

The central section of Portobello road is also in need for improvement, and therefore a number of proposals have been made, taking into account that this part of the road is dominated by the fruit market and so remains active all week. The first proposal being made to the central section is the removal of on street parking, because the continual presence of traders' vans prevent easy access to the shops on the Westside of the street and also provide an additional cover for an on street

crime. Also on weekdays pedestrian flows are higher in this section than anywhere else on the road, (as shown in the flow chart fig. 2.11) so the removal of on street parking on these days at least would provide a more relaxed and attractive shopping environment, which would turnover the general appearance of the area for the better. Another proposal being suggested is to revise a one-way system to reduce traffic, and so avoiding accidents and providing a safe environment for the visitors and pedestrians. In order to encourage more midweek trading the council have also proposed for large eight feet by nine fit pitches to trade upon. The council have also made a proposition to start a customer complaint system, as in the black cab trade, this should hopefully allow the customers to come forward about any queries involving the market trade, i.e. reporting tatty shop fronts, to generally improve the appearance of the area, etc.

The main problems caused in this section are linked to the arrival of major chain stores such as Tesco and Woolworth's, which are inevitably continuing to raise standards in their search for more market share, and therefore continuing to grow in number, both in terms of floor space and profits. However any expansion of these major stores must be at the expense of retailers elsewhere, such as small family businesses. One of the reasons why chain stores are successful is because their range of goods are continually expanding, quality control standards are high and customers are allowed to select items of their own choice under a spacious, convenient and comfortable environment. In order to match up to these standards, small businesses will be encouraged to improve the range of goods on offer, provide a high standard of display, increase shopper comfort, introduce a customer complaint system and reduce the level of rubbish on the street. The council will also provide a larger pitch for local stores to trade upon.

Proposed Improvements for the Antique section of Portobello road (Pembroke ward)

This section of Portobello road remains active all weekend, and benefits largely from tourism. Therefore the propositions being put forward by the council have been modelled so that they would not result in a significant reduction in the retail function of this area. The 1st proposal being put forward concerns the issue of on street parking which is usually illegal, this need to be removed in order to relieve pedestrian congestion on Saturdays and give Saturday antique traders the chance to unload and load directly from Portobello road, this should hopefully reduce conflict between drivers and pedestrians, however this would result in parking difficulties for most residents as their spaces would get occupied by the large number of customers who wish to park their cars.

Restrictions to vehicle access to residents between 10-2pm needs to be enforced in order to remove any possibility of vehicle –pedestrian conflict on Saturday to provide visitors with a spacious, relaxed, car free environment. The council have also proposed to have better pedestrian crossing facilities at Portobello road and west borne grove junction, in order to increase the safety of visitors and other pedestrians. Widening the pavements across the road would provide visitors with a single large through fare with attractive displays of goods on both sides.

The council have proposed improvements to street lighting in all three sections of the road, in order to keep crime rates at a minimum and increase the levels of safety. Direction signs and street maps are also up for improvement in order to make them clearer and allow customers to move around freely and so to encourage trade. Promotion and advertisement on all parts of the road have been encouraged, in order to publicise the road and gain more passing trade.

