



City of Westminster Cabinet Member Report

Decision Maker:	Councillor Robert Davis DL Cabinet Member for Built Environment
Date:	26 January 2015
Classification:	General Release
Title:	St James's Neighbourhood Forum Designation
Wards Affected:	St James's Ward
Better City, Better Lives Summary	Contributes to the achievement of a 'Connected City', whereby residents and businesses have a greater role in decision making through the establishment of neighbourhood forums and production of neighbourhood plans.
Key Decision:	This report does not involve a Key Decision
Financial Summary:	The City Council can claim £5,000 for each neighbourhood forum designated up to a maximum of five designations in a single financial year. This maximum has already been reached within the current financial year.
Report of:	Director of Communications, Policy and Performance

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 enable communities to undertake neighbourhood planning. In particular, this includes the opportunity to establish a neighbourhood forum, and produce a statutory neighbourhood plan and/or a neighbourhood development order.
- 1.2 To be able to undertake neighbourhood planning, a local community group has to firstly apply for a neighbourhood area to be designated by the local authority; and then secondly apply to be designated as the representative neighbourhood forum in that area (unless there is a parish council in operation).
- 1.3 The St James's Neighbourhood Area was designated in April 2013 (see Background Paper to this Report). Due to the predominance of business uses

within the area, St James's was designated as a 'business area'. Therefore, any Forum that is established in St James's should fairly represent both those who work or have a business or represent a commercial organisation that operates within the area with those who live in the area. The nascent 'St James's Neighbourhood Forum' applied for neighbourhood forum status in May 2014.

- 1.4 This report enables a designation decision to be made in relation to the proposed St James's Neighbourhood Forum. This application was subject to a formal period for representations from 1st July to 12th August 2014. Thirteen responses were received; of which the majority were supportive of the proposed neighbourhood forum. No objections were received.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Cabinet Member is requested to consider the representations received in response to consultation on the proposed St James's Neighbourhood Forum the subject of this report, as summarised in paragraph 4.7.
- 2.2 For the reasons set out in Section 3 (and in more detail in Section 5) of this report it is recommended that the Cabinet Member makes the following decision:
 - i. Designate the proposed St James's Neighbourhood Forum as the neighbourhood forum for the St James's Neighbourhood Area.
- 2.3 It is recommended that a formal designation notice is published under delegated authority of the Director of Communications, Policy and Performance, following the Cabinet Member decision in relation to the St James's Neighbourhood Forum application.

3. REASONS FOR DECISION

- 3.1 The proposed St James's Neighbourhood Forum is considered to meet the requirements of the neighbourhood planning legislation. The Forum's written constitution clearly states that it has been established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic or environmental well-being of St James's, whilst it also has a membership of more than 21 persons and is open to individuals who live or work in the area. Section 5 of this report sets this out in more detail.
- 3.2 The St James's Neighbourhood Forum has a membership that is considered to be appropriate for a designated business neighbourhood area. It is also considered that the purpose of the neighbourhood forum – to be supportive of development that enhances the unique character of the built environment, preserves the architecture and the environment and considers the wellbeing of all, including visitors to the area, throughout the year – appropriately reflects the character of the St James's Neighbourhood Area.

- 3.3 The City Council received thirteen responses from across the St James's area; and no objections.

4. BACKGROUND

Neighbourhood Planning

- 4.1 The Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 enable communities to undertake neighbourhood planning. In particular, this includes the opportunity to develop a statutory neighbourhood plan that will become part of the development planning framework for their area, and also establish 'permitted development' rights for certain types of new development (through a 'neighbourhood development order'). To be able to undertake neighbourhood planning, a local community group has to firstly apply to designate a neighbourhood area; and then secondly apply to be designated as the representative neighbourhood forum.

Neighbourhood Forums

- 4.2 The legislation states that neighbourhood forums should consist of a minimum of 21 individuals who live or work (or are elected members of the local authority) within the area and have 'open' membership. The forum should represent the diversity and character of the community, with a wide range of members including residents, businesses, amenity societies, local interest groups, and voluntary sector members. Neighbourhood forum applications should contain a 'written constitution' setting out how the neighbourhood forum intends to operate as well as a statement setting out how the forum meets the legislative requirements (minimum of 21 members etc – see paragraph 7.1). Once a neighbourhood forum application has been received, the City Council has to publicise the application for a six week period to enable representations to be made before the neighbourhood forum can be formally designated.

Neighbourhood Plans

- 4.3 Once a neighbourhood forum is in place, it can formally undertake neighbourhood planning, and begin to formally prepare their neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood development order. The neighbourhood development plan is a community-led framework which sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in the whole or any part of a particular neighbourhood area specified in the plan.
- 4.4 Whilst it is up to the community (represented by the 'neighbourhood forum') to decide upon the content of the neighbourhood plan, there are a number of principles that a neighbourhood plan must adhere to. The neighbourhood plan must:
- be 'in general conformity' with the City Council's strategic planning policies, currently contained in the City Plan: Strategic Policies (adopted 2013) and the London Plan;
 - have regard to national planning policies;
 - contribute to the achievement of 'sustainable development'; and

- not breach and should be compatible with EU obligations, Human Rights etc

Beyond the above principles it is clear that a neighbourhood plan should also address *local*, neighbourhood issues; and should also be concerned about shaping the development of a local area in a *positive* manner, rather than be used to prevent development.

- 4.5 As the neighbourhood plan will be a statutory planning document there are a number of formal stages that have to be completed in its production. The government is clear that it is the neighbourhood forum that produces the neighbourhood plan (not the local planning authority) following community involvement and information gathering. Once submitted, it is the local planning authority's responsibility to undertake a statutory period of formal consultation, and to submit the plan for examination by an independent examiner. Following successful completion of the examination, the neighbourhood plan is subject to a referendum whereby all those on the electoral register within the neighbourhood area are eligible to vote. A majority 'yes' vote in the referendum will require the City Council to formally 'make' the neighbourhood plan.

St James's Neighbourhood Forum Application

- 4.6 The St James's Neighbourhood Forum application was made to the City Council in May 2014. This followed the formal designation of the St James's Neighbourhood Area in April 2013 (see background paper to this report). The Neighbourhood Forum application was assessed to be 'valid'. As specified by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, the application contained:
- the name of the proposed forum;
 - a copy of the written constitution of the proposed neighbourhood forum;
 - the name of the neighbourhood area to which the application relates and a map which identifies the area;
 - the contact details of at least one member of the proposed neighbourhood forum; and
 - a statement which explained how the proposed neighbourhood forum meets the conditions contained in section 61F(5) of the 1990 Act (i.e. minimum of 21 individuals who live or work in the area).

- 4.7 The City Council undertook the formal period for representations between the 1st July and 12th August 2014. A total of thirteen representations were received, which included eight representations of support. No objections were received. The supportive representations originated from a combination of local residents and local businesses, including a historic wine merchant and the Association of Art and Antique Dealers. There were five 'neutral' representations from a number of agencies, including the Environment Agency, English Heritage, and Transport for London, amongst others.

5. ASSESSMENT OF THE ST JAMES'S NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM APPLICATION

5.1 The submitted St James's neighbourhood forum application (attached in Appendix B) has been reviewed against both Section 61F (5) and (7) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted into the Act by the Localism Act 2011, Schedule 9), as set out below. This assessment also takes into account amendments made to the written constitution by the applicants in November 2014 and January 2015.

Assessment against Section 61F (5) (Town and Country Planning Act 1990)

5.2 Section 61F (5) of the legislation sets out the conditions that a neighbourhood forum must meet. In some respects this is a 'tick box validation exercise'. There is little requirement on the applicants to give more than the basic information. The legislation states that a local planning authority may designate an organisation or body as a neighbourhood forum if the authority is satisfied that the following four conditions have been met:

i) Established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic or environmental well-being of an area

Response: The neighbourhood forum application (see Appendix B) clearly specifies that the proposed St James's Neighbourhood Forum has been established with the express purpose of promoting and improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of St James's.

ii) Membership is open to individuals who live or work in the area? (or are elected members of the City Council)

Response: Section 4 of the written constitution provides details in relation to forum membership. It clearly states that the forum membership is open to residents, individuals running businesses or working in St James's, and elected local authority councillors whose ward includes the St James's Neighbourhood Area.

iii) Membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom lives or works (or is an elected member) in the area

Response: The applicants submitted a list of members (alongside the neighbourhood forum application) which specified the membership of a total of 28 individuals, each of whom lives or works or is a ward councillor within the area.

iv) The neighbourhood forum has a written constitution

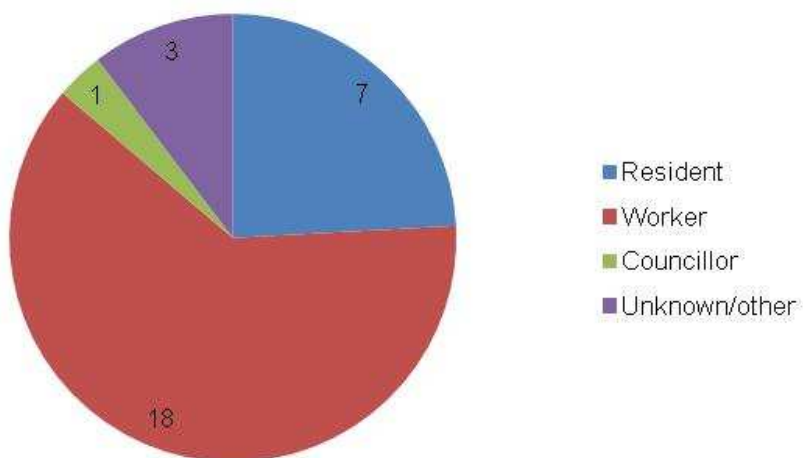
Response: The application made to the City Council includes a written constitution and this is attached within Appendix B of this report.

Assessment against Section 61F (7) (Town and Country Planning Act 1990)

5.3 Section 61F (7) of the Act sets out the detailed considerations that a local planning authority must have regard to when determining an application for the designation of a neighbourhood forum. This includes an assessment of the representative nature of the proposed forum and whether its purpose reflects the character of the area, and is therefore a more thorough assessment of the proposed forum.

i) The desirability of designating an organisation or body which has secured (or taken steps to secure) membership from each of the required categories (i.e. people who live, work or are elected members).

5.3.1 **Response:** Based upon a list of members submitted to the City Council alongside the St James’s Neighbourhood Forum application, the chart below demonstrates that membership originates from a combination of those who live and work in the area, as well as an elected member of the local authority (this chart does show one instance of double counting. Classification as a ‘worker’ or ‘resident’ was based upon the information supplied to the City Council). This balance of membership is considered to be appropriate for a neighbourhood forum operating within a designated *business* neighbourhood area (see background paper Cabinet Member Report – St James’s Neighbourhood Area Designation April 2013).



5.3.2 The revised written constitution sets out how the proposed forum intends to operate and involve its members in its decision making. It states that individuals can sign up as members at any Forum public meetings, or by contacting the Forum via its website or through any steering group member. The neighbourhood forum will meet at least four times per year. All members can attend meetings, including the AGM, and can volunteer for the forum and receive forum documents. The applicants revised their written constitution in November 2014 removing the restriction previously placed on business members’ ability to vote at the annual general meeting. In January 2015 the written constitution was further revised to make it clear that all qualifying individuals having equality of membership (regardless of whether business or residential membership).

5.3.3 Like most neighbourhood forums, the intention is for the St James's Neighbourhood Forum to have a steering group, who will coordinate and implement the work of the forum. The written constitution makes it clear that the steering group will be representative of the neighbourhood area's residential and business community. The steering group will consist of six Neighbourhood Forum members, including a Chairman, Treasurer, Minute Secretary and Membership Secretary and four other members. The steering group may also set up task groups or working groups of forum members to undertake specific tasks or projects.

ii) Whether membership is drawn from different places in the neighbourhood area concerned and from different sections of the community in the area.

5.3.4 **Response:** The proposed neighbourhood forum includes representation from a range of organisations, associations, and businesses, from across the geographical area of St James's, including:

- St James's Conservation Trust
- Mayfair and St James's Safer Neighbourhood Panel
- The Crown Estate
- Heart of London Business Improvement District
- The Ritz Hotel
- Sofitel St James
- The London Library
- Chatham House
- Army and Navy Club
- Royal Over-Seas League
- St James's Church

iii) Whether the *purpose* of the neighbourhood forum reflects (in general terms) the character of the area.

5.3.5 **Response:** The St James's Neighbourhood Forum application (Appendix B) sets out the aim to be supportive of development that enhances the unique character of the built environment; preserves the architecture and the environment; and considers the wellbeing of all, including visitors to the area, throughout the year. In addition, the Forum's main priorities are:

- to promote a sustainable approach to development in the St James's area by reconciling economic development with conservation and investment in the local community and the environment;
- to main the character and atmosphere of the area, with its social fabric, collection of ancient shops and private member clubs;
- to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest in the area;

- to support initiatives that will future-proof the area and help St James's maintain its important position in the economy and attraction of the West End.

The above objectives are considered to generally reflect an area of Westminster that is characterised by its historic eighteenth century street pattern, a mixture of commercial visitor and residential uses, and a number of specialist uses including art galleries, auction houses, tailors and private members' clubs.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The high level of interest in neighbourhood planning in Westminster, coupled with the statutory obligation to support neighbourhood planning clearly has financial implications for the City Council. The Government have developed a financial assistance package to enable and incentivise local planning authorities to provide support for neighbourhood planning. In relation to the designation of a neighbourhood forum, the City Council can claim £5,000 for each neighbourhood forum designated, up to a maximum of five neighbourhood forums within a financial year. This maximum has already been reached within the current financial year, and therefore the City Council is unable to claim for any additional funding in relation to the designation of the St James's Neighbourhood Forum.
- 6.2 The DCLGs 'Locality Network' and their 'Supporting Communities in Neighbourhood Planning' initiative have offered support to *emerging* neighbourhood forums in the form of either grant payments (up to £7,000 to contribute to costs incurred) or through direct professional advice and support, tailored to individual needs. Since November 2014 the government have made available a new 'bridging grant' (of up to £7,000) to cover further expenditure needed by forums, from November 2014 to March 2015. These bridging grants are available to qualifying groups who have not previously received a grant or who have received less than the maximum £7000 in grant during 2013-15. Any previous grants from the programme must have been fully spent before applying for the bridging grant. In addition, the Government have committed to the provision of a new neighbourhood planning grant from 2015 to 2018.
- 6.3 The City Council is currently establishing a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for Westminster. The 2013 amendments to the CIL Regulations (2010 and as amended) put into legislation a duty to pass a proportion of receipts arising from developments within a local parish council's area onto the relevant parish council (there is only one local parish council in Westminster; the Queen's Park Community Council). Whilst there is no regulatory requirement to pass on a proportion of CIL funding to areas outside of a parish council, the regulations state that:

The charging authority may use the CIL... to support the development of the relevant area by funding –
 (a) *the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or*

(b) anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area”

6.4 Government guidance advises that in areas outside a local parish council, the charging authority will retain the Levy receipts but should engage with the communities where development has taken place and agree with them how best to spend the neighbourhood funding.

6.5 The proportion of CIL receipts that should be ring fenced for the areas within which they were derived is therefore dependent upon (i) whether the area has a Parish Council and (ii) whether there is a neighbourhood plan in place. The figure below summarises how the regulations should work in practice:

		Neighbourhood Plan?	
		Yes	No
Parish Council?	Yes	25% of CIL receipts uncapped, paid to Parish	15% of CIL receipts capped at £100 / dwelling, paid to Parish
	No	25% of CIL receipts uncapped, local authority consults with community	15% of CIL receipts capped at £100 / dwelling, local authority consults with community

6.6 Officers are currently working on options for the governance arrangements that will be put in place to oversee collection, spending and monitoring of CIL, which will include how decisions should be taken on application of the ‘neighbourhood proportion’.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Section 61F (5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011 (‘the ‘Act’) states that a local planning authority may designate an organisation or body as a neighbourhood forum if satisfied that it meets the following conditions:

- i) It is established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic or environmental well-being of an area;
- ii) Its membership is open to individuals who live or work in the area (or are elected members of the City Council and the area falls with the neighbourhood area concerned);
- iii) Its membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom lives or works in the neighbourhood area concerned;
- iv) It has a written constitution; and
- v) Such other conditions as may be prescribed.

7.2 Section 61F (7) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) also states that in determining whether to designate a neighbourhood forum, the local planning authority must have regard to the desirability of designating an organisation or body which has:

- secured (or taken steps to secure) membership from each of the required categories (i.e. people who live, work or are elected members);
- membership that is drawn from different places in the neighbourhood area concerned and from different sections of the community in that area; and
- a purpose that reflects (in general terms) the character of the area.

7.3 Regulation 10 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations states that as soon as possible after designating a neighbourhood forum, the City Council must publish the following on our website (and in such other manner considered likely to bring it to the attention of those who live, or work in the neighbourhood area):

- the name of the neighbourhood forum;
- a copy of the written constitution of the neighbourhood forum;
- the name of the neighbourhood area to which the designation relates; and
- contact details for at least one member of the neighbourhood forum.

7.4 If deciding to 'refuse' to designate a neighbourhood forum then the City Council has to publish a statement setting out the decision and the reasons for making that decision, as well as details of where and when the refusal statement may be inspected.

7.5 It is intended that a formal designation notice will be published under the delegated authority of the Director of Communications, Policy and Performance following the Cabinet Member decision in relation to the St James's Neighbourhood Forum.

7.6 Section 61F (8) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) states that a neighbourhood forum designation ceases to have effect five years after the date that the designation was made. At this point an organisation or body would be able to reapply for neighbourhood forum status.

7.7 A designated neighbourhood forum can also give notice to the City Council that it no longer wishes to be designated as the neighbourhood forum for a neighbourhood area. In this instance the City Council would have to withdraw the formal designation of the neighbourhood forum and must publish a statement setting out the details of the withdrawal (and details of where this statement can be inspected).

7.8 In addition, Section 61F (9) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) states that a local planning authority can also withdraw a neighbourhood forum designation if it is considered that the body is no longer meeting the conditions to which it was designated or any other criteria that the City Council had regard to in making the designation.

8. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are implications on staff resources in respect of carrying out the City Council's duty to support neighbourhood planning, in terms of managing the

neighbourhood area (and forum) application process, but also providing support to the prospective neighbourhood forums. In addition the City Council will be obliged to carry out the legal compliance assessment of any neighbourhood plans produced, support the examination (by independent examiner), and undertake the referendum. The City Council's obligation to support will be intensified by the comparatively large number of neighbourhood areas and forums within Westminster. There is currently one full time officer and one part time officer supporting the neighbourhood planning process in Westminster.

9. RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The designation of additional neighbourhood forums will have resource implications for the City Council in terms of the 'duty to support', including the completion of the statutory stages of neighbourhood plan production.

10. BUSINESS PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The City Council's Built Environment Business Plan includes a specific reference to *"Improve the quality of life, health and well-being of Westminster's communities"*.
- 10.2 The ability to enable and empower others to take responsibility for themselves and their neighbourhoods is one of the key tenets of the City Council's 'Better City, Better Lives' five year plan. In particular, it meets the City Council's aspirations of 'A Connected City', whereby residents and businesses have a greater role in decision making through the establishment of neighbourhood forums and production of neighbourhood plans.

11. CONSULTATION

- 11.1 As required by the legislation, the St James's neighbourhood forum application was formally published on the City Council's website for a six week period between 1st July and 12th August 2014. In addition, approximately 200 letters were sent to residents' groups, societies, community groups, businesses, landowners within and adjacent to the St James's Neighbourhood Area to inform stakeholders of the Neighbourhood Forum application and how to respond if they had any comments. The City Council's 'Planning Consultation Database' was used to identify many of these consultees.
- 11.2 The City Council also publicised the application by displaying posters in the Westminster Reference library, Charing Cross Library, and Mayfair Library, and Marshall Street Sports Centre, and relevant CityWest Homes offices. Posters and flyers were also given to the applicants to distribute. Further publicity was carried out through the use of social media (Twitter) and the City Council's ebusiness newsletter and 'MyWestminster' newsletter, as well as the 'West End Wiki'.

11.3 Ward Councillors within the St James's Ward were also notified of the neighbourhood forum application.

12. COMMUNICATIONS IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There is a need to ensure that the any designation decisions are clearly communicated to those who live and work within the respective neighbourhood areas – in line with the City Council's legal obligations set out in Section 7 of this report.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact:

Tom Kimber

City Planning Delivery Unit

tkimber@westminster.gov.uk

Telephone 020 7641 3478

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Localism Act 2011
- Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012
- Westminster City Plan: Strategic Policies; adopted November 2013.
- Cabinet Member Report – St James’s Neighbourhood Area Designation April 2013.

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Built Environment**

Declaration of Interest

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: _____ Date: _____
NAME: **Councillor Robert Davis DL**

State nature of interest if any
.....

(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled 'St James's Neighbourhood Forum Designation' and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed

Cabinet Member for Built Environment

Date

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:
.....
.....

If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, City Treasurer and, if there are resources implications, the Director of Human Resources (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.

Other Implications

1. Risk Management Implications

- 1.1 The recommendations in this report do not have any significant Risk Management Implications

2. Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment including Health and Safety Implications

- 2.1. The recommendations in this report do not have a significant impact on health and well-being.

3. Crime and Disorder Implications

- 3.1 The recommendations in this report do not have any significant crime and disorder implications.

4. Impact on the Environment

- 4.1. The recommendations in this report do not have any significant impact on the environment.

5. Equalities Implications

- 5.1. The recommendations in this report do not have any significant equalities implications.

6. Staffing Implications

- 6.1 Key staffing implications are set out in the main body of the report.

7. Human Rights Implications

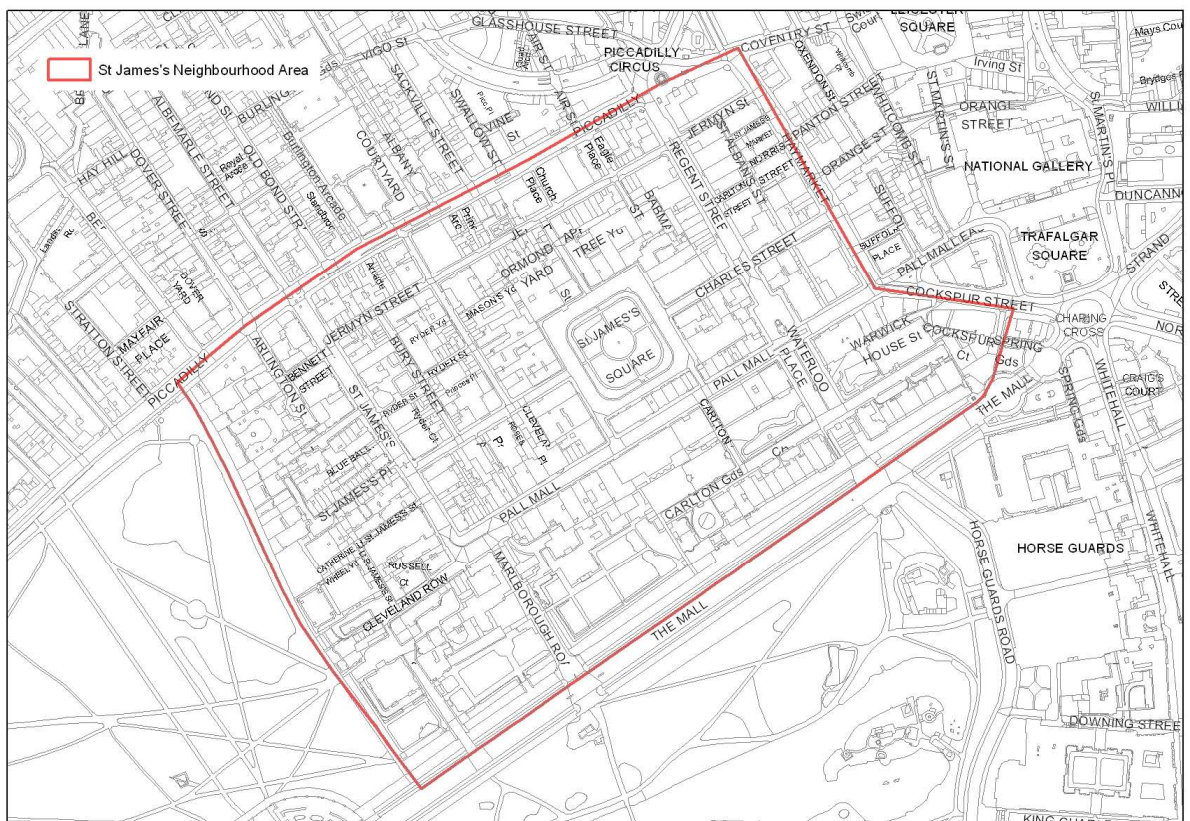
- 7.1. The recommendations in this report do not have any significant human rights implications.

8. Energy Measure Implications

- 8.1. The recommendations in this report do not have any significant energy measure implications.

St. James's Neighbourhood Forum Application

- 1) **APPLICANT** : [on behalf of the proposed] : St. James's Neighbourhood Forum : Peter Heath RIBA MRTPI – Advisor and Administrator to the St. James's Conservation Trust, Chairman Mr Andrew Love/TRUSTEE : Mr Nicholas Turner.
- 2) **CONTACT DETAILS** : PETER HEATH RIBA MRTPI
Atkins Ltd., Euston Tower 30th floor,
286 Euston Road, London NW1 3AT
Tel: +44 (0)20 7121 2376 | Fax: +44 (0)20 7121 2806 | Mob: +44 (0)7803 260700
Email: peter.heath@atkinsglobal.com
- 3) **AREA** : St. James's, London SW1 – (boundary consistent as St. James's Special Policy Area, agreed with local landowners and adjoining NPF proposed areas, as well as relevant Conservation Areas' boundaries, to include also Haymarket to Regent Street from Piccadilly Circus south) – All as Agreed existing Plan Area (as existing City Council designated approved boundary for St. James's Neighbourhood Area).
- 4) **MAP** : as described above see map below.
- 5) **WRITTEN CONSTITUTION** : as attached.



TO: Strategic Director for Built Environment, Westminster City Council

APPLICANT: St James's Neighbourhood Forum.

CONTACT DETAILS: As above.

AREA: As above.

MAP: As attachment.

The proposed St James's Neighbourhood Forum will represent businesses, residents, community organisations and local elected members that have a strong connection to the St James's area. The forum will represent the area identified by Westminster City Council (WCC) as St James's which is not governed by a parish council.

The neighbourhood forum was formed in response to the Localism Act with the express purpose of promoting and improving, economic and environmental wellbeing in St James's.

Its members will be fully committed to developing a Neighbourhood Plan that will address issues of importance for the residents, business community as well as visitors to the area.

The Forum has at its core, Trustee and advisor representatives of the St James's Conservation Trust, which has been representing the area of St James's since 1999 on all matters relating to architecture, design and heritage preservation, community wellbeing, environment and pollution, as well as the preservation of the popularity of the area as a unique destination in the West End. The St James's Trust has long collaborated with Westminster City Council, The Crown Estate and The Metropolitan Police, therefore its involvement in assisting in setting up the Neighbourhood Forum will contribute to the continuation of the strong partnership that has been created over time.

NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM AIMS AND ASPIRATIONS

The Forum aims to develop a plan focusing on a positive and constructive partnership with the City of Westminster. The successful collaboration that the St James's Conservation Trust has established with The Crown Estate, a major landowner in the area (52% of the freehold land in St James's), businesses as well as residents of the area is a strong basis for the new Neighbourhood Forum.

The Forum like the Trust is expected to be supportive of development that enhances the unique character of the built environment, preserves the architecture and the environment and considers the wellbeing of all, including visitors to the area, throughout the year.

MAIN AREAS OF INTEREST

The Forum can be a mechanism for identifying a series of local, St. James's priorities in the development of any Neighbourhood Plan. The main priorities are also likely to reflect the objectives of the St James's Conservation Trust, already developed and supported locally, including some or all of the following:

1. To promote a sustainable approach to development in the St James's area by reconciling economic development with Conservation and investment in the local community and the environment.

2. To maintain the character and atmosphere of the area, with its social fabric, collection of ancient shops and private members clubs.
3. To secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest in the area.
4. To support initiatives that will future-proof the area and help St James's maintain its important position in the economy and attraction of the West End.

DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION ASPIRATIONS

The St James's Conservation Trust has already conducted a series of studies relating to the opportunity sites around the area and the Forum will have these documents as a basis for discussion in finalising any Neighbourhood Plan. The aim of the Forum is to produce a plan that will not only look at the Conservation needs in the area but can also propose sites that the Forum as a representative of the local community, would like to see redeveloped.

MEMBERSHIP AND COMPOSITION OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

The proposed Neighbourhood Forum can be formed of 21 members (already 30 proposed members have been identified and have agreed in principle to be members when designated) part of this group are also representatives of the St James's Conservation Trust. The Forum is a diverse group that comes from a broad range of backgrounds, with significant knowledge of the area and its history, its residential and commercial character and networks.

The Forum will also benefit from professional planning, architectural and heritage support from Atkins Ltd., through the collaboration with Mr Peter Heath, Design Director, Atkins Public Realm and also St James's Conservation Trust Administrator, together with Mr Ken Sabel, Atkins Heritage. The Trust also receives supports from licensing, planning and legal advisors, in addition to Chartered Accountants and therefore, may be able to contribute to the Neighbourhood Forum in terms of relevant assistance in professional resources.

Other members of the Forum represent local businesses, many of them with hundreds of years of history in the area, members of the local council and residents.

The Forum may also wish to expand or rotate its membership, therefore in order to achieve this while still remaining relevant for the neighbourhood, a communication strategy will be required to make sure the Forum stays well informed and its decisions are transparent and accessible for all stakeholders in the area.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The forum has put together a list of all its proposed (30 No.) members, with full contact details and the preferred way of communication is via email. Following each Forum meeting the meeting minutes will be circulated to all Forum members, to maintain trust and disseminate information efficiently.

The Forum may intend to communicate through a website where all information regarding the Forum, the Constitution, ways of joining as a member, areas of interest and options for communicating with the members, will be available. The Forum will also have a schedule of meetings that will be placed on the

website and a format for communicating with the members of the Forum, including topics of relevant interest and issues for residents or businesses and for meeting agendas.

The Forum may also make use of relevant social media to communicate with its members and the general public interested in the projects and issues of the Neighbourhood Forum addressed at its meetings.

The Forum may also ask for the support of the Crown Estate to include a link to the proposed St James's Neighbourhood Plan website, possibly on the Regent Street website.

WRITTEN CONSTITUTION

The Forum has already consulted on and prepared a written constitution (copy as attached) which has been discussed with the proposed initial members of the Forum.

The FIRST DRAFT Forum Constitution

The Constitution of the St James's, Westminster Neighbourhood Forum

1. The St James's Neighbourhood Forum in Westminster has been established by key stakeholders and individuals in the St James's Ward of the City of Westminster for the purpose of promoting and improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area [having regard to the need to conserve and enhance its unique heritage]. The Forum will consider the possibility of meeting these objectives through the preparation and implementation of a Neighbourhood Plan.
2. The Forum shall exist for 5 years from its formal designation by the City of Westminster and at its AGM at the end of year 4 the AGM will give consideration to a continuing or successor organisation to maintain and monitor the St James's Neighbourhood Plan.
3. The Forum's ultimate authority comes from its Annual General Meeting but it may delegate all or part of that authority to a Steering Group.
 - a) The AGM, and any other public meetings held, will elect the members on and confer the powers of the Forum (as defined in 5e) and the plans they or Forum task or working groups may develop.
 - b) If there is more than one public meeting in any one year, one (in May or June) will be designated as the AGM.
 - c) The AGM will be called with at least 15 working days' notice, once per year, by giving notice to all relevant persons in the Neighbourhood Area by written communication to the last known communication address.
 - d) The AGM has the power to elect and remove by a vote of no confidence, any member of the Steering Group.
 - e) At each AGM the Chairman will provide a written report, the Treasurer will provide a set of accounts for the previous year and the Minute secretary will record the proceedings and also the proceedings of the Steering Group.
 - f) The neighbourhood forum will meet at least four times per year.

4. Forum Membership

- a) Forum membership is open to all qualifying individuals including:
 - i) residents of the St James's Neighbourhood Area.
 - ii) Individuals running businesses or working in St James's with an interest in St James's.
 - iii) elected local authority councillors whose Ward includes the St James's Neighbourhood Area.
- b) Individuals can sign up as members at any Forum public meetings or by contacting the Forum via its website or any Steering Group member.
- c) All members can attend meetings, including the AGM, and can volunteer for the Forum and receive Forum documents.
- d) Members may be contacted by the Steering Group from time to time to act as a litmus test for ideas and proposals or to be invited to participate in other activities related to the work of the Forum.
- e) If the Membership of the Forum should fall below the minimum of 21 individuals, the Membership Secretary should inform the Chairman, in order to take such steps to raise membership back to the minimum number.

5. Forum Steering Group

- a) The Steering Group (SG) exists to co-ordinate and implement the work of the Forum and will prioritise and schedule such work including, if thought appropriate, developing a Neighbourhood Plan for St James's. The Steering Group is responsible for giving publicity to the work of the Forum.
- b) The SG is a working committee made up from Forum members elected at the AGM. The Steering Group will be representative of the neighbourhood area's residential and business community.
- c) SG members with specialist skills may be co-opted onto the SG and the SG may set up Task or Working Groups of Forum members for specific projects or tasks to be undertaken.
- d) The SG will liaise with all relevant bodies and all relevant interests within the St James's Ward.
- e) Steering Group Members to be elected at the AGM, are: Chairman, Treasurer, Minute Secretary and Membership Secretary plus 4 other members.
- f) SG decision making can be by consensus or after a vote – the Chairman will have the casting vote.
- g) The SG has the power to remove any member by majority vote but if more than one such removal occurs in any year, a General Meeting of the Forum must be called within 6 weeks.
- h) Membership of the Forum Steering Group is open to all Members and should be nominated by a Member.
- i) Representatives of all relevant organisations on the SG are responsible for communicating between the Forum and their group/association.
- j) The Steering Group will receive and consider reports from relevant project groups and panels.

6. Forum Funding

The Forum can raise funds for its activities by one or more of the following methods:

- a) Charging membership fees on an individual and/or associate member basis – level of fees to be agreed at an AGM or extraordinary general meeting.
- b) Submitting applications to grant awarding bodies for appropriate funds.
- c) Working in partnership with organisations which have funds to spend in the St James's Ward.
- d) By other means in keeping with the role of the Forum, including revenue from the website, donations, and proceeds from events.

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