



Environment & Customer Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee Briefing

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Briefing of: Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Parking

Briefing Author and Contact Details: Sion Pryse x2228
spryse@westminster.gov.uk

1 Biodiversity and Open Spaces

- 1.1 Work is progressing on the Open Space Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan. Groundwork London has completed a study, which is the culmination of all the background survey and consultation work undertaken over the last year and which will underpin the new Strategy. They presented their findings to an officer group on 5th November and to a wider stakeholder group on 7th December. Alongside Groundwork at the stakeholder event there were presentations from Grosvenor and Crown Estates on the “Wild West End” and from Cllr Katie Cowan of the Queen’s Park Community Council. A workshop was held to define key priorities and establish existing initiatives, partnerships, and future programmes for inclusion in the refreshed Strategy’s Action Plan. It is anticipated that a draft strategy will be presented at the March Policy and Scrutiny Committee before formal consultation begins.

- 1.2 The “Making a B-Line for London Partnership” is running a regional project to promote habitats for bees and other pollinating insects by forming a “B-line” across London, running north to south. It is their aim to create a line with no more than 500m between each habitat to support pollinators. The line runs through Westminster and we were approached to support a Heritage Lottery bid for funding to implement the project. Of particular interest is the creation of the green spine in Church Street, which would help to achieve their aims. The partnership would provide advice on pollinating plants and habitat creation as well as run workshops/events to promote the project and engage the community. A letter of support for inclusion with their bid has been sent. The

initiative is also being taken up by City West Homes with work planned on some of their estates.

2 Public Health (PH) / Sustainability Projects

- 2.1 The “Tackling Childhood Obesity Programme” (TCOP) funded food growing programme continues to progress at the pilot sites. The Hammersmith Community Gardener’s Association (HCGA) is running sessions at Gateway and King Solomon Academies until the end of the summer term 2016 and holding a series of five “keeping in touch” sessions at Fisherton Estate over the winter. Five sites will be established as part of Phase Two and two contracts will be let early in 2016 to create the plots and to run community gardening support workshops at the sites for the life of the TCOP funding. A paper will be prepared to set out how a food growing programme for Westminster could be sustainable beyond the life of the TCOP funding.

3 Air Quality Bids

- 3.1 During recent months a number of bids for air quality related funding have been submitted. We were successful in obtaining seed funding from the Mayor’s Air Quality Fund (MAQF) to compile a full bid for a Low Emission Neighbourhood (LEN) in the Marylebone area. We are now engaging consultants to help develop a scheme design to submit in April 2016. Should the bid be successful we will receive up to £1 million funding to introduce measures in the proposed LEN to improve local air quality.
- 3.2 We are still waiting decisions on another funding bid to the MAQF for £400K for a Westminster based Innovation Fund to support local schools and businesses to implement air quality improvement measures. Our recent bid to the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Air Quality Fund for £50K to develop a Low Emission Vehicle procurement guide to support decision making in local authorities and businesses was not successful.

4 Air Quality Lobbying

- 4.1 At the launch event held for the Greener City Action Plan, it was agreed that a joint letter would be sent to each prospective Mayor asking them to consider the reduction of diesel vehicles in Central London and to elaborate as to how this reduction can be achieved. The letter was co-signed with Nigel Hughes (Victoria BID and Grosvenor Estates), Andrew Love (the Ritz London), Simon Birkett (Clean Air in London) and Luke Nicholls (edie.net). A follow up meeting with

BIDs will be organised in March to discuss progress and set targets on the Greener City Action Plan.

5 Residential Electric Vehicle Recharging Proposal

- 5.1 Officers are finalising scheme details to pilot a residents-only electric vehicle recharging network. Three areas have been identified (based on requests from residents and on-street availability): Vincent Square, Belgrave Square and Sussex Gardens. Other locations are being considered where points are already installed but malfunctioning.
- 5.2 Access to the charging will be shared by residents who are members of the residential recharging scheme, live within the local residents' parking zone and hold a residential parking permit. Users will pay an annual fee to use the points.

6 Blue Point London (Source London)

- 6.1 Officers are due to meet with Blue Point London (BPL) to discuss key points of their proposal for the scheme they have taken over from Source London to ensure it is suitable for Westminster. The Greater London Authority (GLA) and Transport for London (TfL) have made it clear that there is no obligation for London boroughs to remain in the Source London/BPL scheme, so all options are being explored before contracts are signed.

7 Zip Car (car club) Electric Vehicle Charging points

- 7.1 42 car club bays have been identified as locations for the installation of double head Electric Vehicle charging points to support the operation of Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEV) supplied by Zipcar. Installation will be in two phases, with the first phase planned for the end of February and the second the end of March.
- 7.2 Steer Davies Gleave has been appointed to prepare our Car Club Strategy, which will go out to consultation later in the year.

8 Parking Operational Update

- 8.1 Key service levels and KPI's remain on track and stable. A number of improvements to the parking website and online portal continue to be delivered to simplify processes. Most recently improvements to the uploading of documents to support the use of iPads in the libraries have been implemented. Overall levels of parking compliance have remained very high at 98.81%, based on the last survey taken in October 2015.

9 Parking Annual Report

- 9.1 The Parking Annual Report for 2015 has been published online and it outlines exactly where money collected through parking payments and fines is spent. It also highlights some of the continuing development work with technology and traffic marshals in relation to parking to keep the city moving and tackle air quality in the City.

10 City Survey

- 10.1 The result of the survey noted a fall in levels of satisfaction from 69% in 2014 to 60% in 2015. It is likely that this decrease is directly linked to the implementation of the new parking permit portal, which saw customers having to re-register to renew their permits online, due to the changes in technology and back office provider. This did cause confusion for some customers and will have had an impact over the full year to November 2015. However I am confident that the changes will result in a more efficient application system in the long run.

11 Operation Neon

- 11.1 Operation Neon is the joint multi-agency, high visibility enforcement operation between TfL, Met Police and Westminster City Council Parking Services that focuses on Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) within Westminster, concentrating on issues such as vehicle idling, parking contraventions, as well as the legality and use of PHVs. The operation involves 4 marshals and a supervisor every Thursday and Friday evening and continues to help address issues in the taxi/PHV hotspots.

12 White Disabled Badge Bay - Electronic Permit Trial

- 12.1 The trial of electronic permits at 64 White Badge Disabled bays is underway and has had positive feedback from customers and positive media coverage. The trial's aim is to enable a more effective and efficient management of disabled bays and help improve customer access to the dedicated parking space. The scheme is being supported and part funded by TfL as part of their Street Incubator initiative. A full evaluation of the outcomes of the trial will take place later this year.

13 Vehicle Idling

- 13.1 Marshals continue to take action against vehicles idling and advising drivers to switch off their engines with 718 drivers (to 13/12/15) having been spoken to. Only 6 refused to do so or had suitable reasons for needing the engine on. Marshals have the ability to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to drivers who fail to comply but none have been issued to date.

14 Bay Sensor Phase One Evaluation

- 14.1 An evaluation of Phase One has been completed and the summary of findings outlines that the expected benefits have been realised. The Park Right App has resulted in a positive effect on redistribution of occupancy and paid for revenue. Officers are currently conducting an in depth review, taking into consideration new technological developments in this area and the potential opportunities that could be realised from a wider roll out.
- 14.2 The next version of the ParkRight app is being developed to include a new improved interface to make it simpler to pay. Payment by Smartphone application now accounts for nearly half of all cashless parking transactions.

15 Parking Occupancy Survey and Strategic Parking Policy Review

- 15.1 The 2015 Parking Occupancy Survey was completed in July and the results of the survey have shown that many areas of the City are subject to high levels of parking stress and demand.
- 15.2 Linked to this, we undertook a review of kerbside permissions, including suspensions. A demand management model of increased charging by suspension duration was implemented on 16th November. Results will be monitored and reported in due course.

- 15.3 The adoption of the linked 2015 Westminster SurveyMap system is almost completed and this data will be invaluable for officers in the Parking, Planning and Transportation departments when developing schemes or assessing local planning applications.
- 15.4 Cabinet Member approval for pay-to-park tariffs to increase across the city has been granted. Subject to consultation it will be implemented in a phased programme from the end of January. The increases are based on demand management principles to address a number of issues that have become evident following the 2015 Parking Occupancy Survey. These include:
- The need to address high occupancy levels, demand and parking ‘stress’ in paid-for bays during controlled hours across the city, especially in zones B (Bayswater & Maida Vale South), E (Mayfair & St. James’s) and F (Hyde Park, Marylebone & Fitzrovia).
 - The need to mitigate cross-boundary migration where parking in Westminster is cheaper than in the adjacent boroughs of Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London Borough of Brent, London Borough of Camden and the City of London.
 - The need to align sub-zone tariffs within F zone to address cross zone vehicle movement.
 - The need to harmonise the E zone tariff where a trial set a pre-and post-13.30 differential, has contributed to high occupancy in the afternoon.
- 15.5 Tariffs have not increased city-wide since 2009. In the meantime, tariffs in neighbouring boroughs have increased, as have public transport fares. Unchecked, this has the effect of making it more attractive to drive into and park in Westminster, as opposed to parking in a neighbouring borough or using a more sustainable mode of transport such as walking, cycling or public transport. The increases are therefore based upon the following:
- A 1.9% increase across the city to reflect the weighted average increase in occupancy in paid-for bays since the last city-wide occupancy survey in 2011.
 - A further parking ‘stress’ mitigation measure in the zones of the highest occupancy levels, namely B, E & F.
 - Ending the trial of the lower post-13.30 tariff in E zone.
 - F zone tariff alignment.
 - A cross-boundary mitigation measure in C zone.

- 15.6 The Policy & Scrutiny Sustainable Travel Task Group will meet again to consider longer-term strategic parking policies. I thank members for their time to date, as their views have been invaluable.

16 The Walking Strategy

- 16.1 Consultants from Steer Davies Gleave (SDG) and WCC officers had a productive meeting with the Sustainable Travel Task Group on the 24th November. Again the views of the members that took part are greatly appreciated in helping draft the strategy. Following on from the meeting, the consultants have prepared a 'final' draft strategy that will be issued for public consultation in late January/early February.

17 Cycle Schemes

- 17.1 The bike loan pilot continues to run at the Beethoven Centre and the new site at the Learning and Development Centre in Woodhouse.
- 17.2 Given the success of the themed rides last year a new series have been determined for 2016.
- 17.3 In conjunction with Public Health, officers are developing a smartphone app providing an incentive scheme to encourage walking and cycling. A pilot is expected to be launched in WCC in March and Tri-borough after that.

18 Central London Cycle Grid

- 18.1 Since November there have been six more Quietway routes that have gone out for consultation. These include St John's Wood to Marylebone, The Regent's Park to Gladstone, Bayswater Road to Edgware Road, Hyde Park to South Kensington, Fitzrovia to Pimlico and Green Park to Marylebone. A further consultation will launch on Friday 22nd January for the Quietway route Hyde Park to Fitzrovia. Details of the proposals are available online at <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/cycling-consultations>
- 18.2 Consultation on Cycle Superhighway 11 (CS11) (Avenue Road, Outer Circle and Portland Place) is being led by TfL. Public consultation has been postponed whilst TfL undertakes further design and modelling on the route outside Westminster. TfL is expecting to start consultation on 8th February 2016, though this is subject to approvals.
- 18.3 Cycle Superhighway 5 (CS5) between Oval and Pimlico has been constructed by TfL on the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) along Vauxhall

Bridge Road, to Regency Street. The route was formally opened in November. WCC is awaiting modelling results from TfL to help identify an extension of this route towards Belgravia, which we expect to receive in mid February.

- 18.4 Consultation on Cycle Superhighway East West Phase Two (Westbourne Terrace, Westbourne Bridge and the Westway) is being led by TfL. TfL is expecting to start consultation on 8 February 2016, though this is subject to approvals.
- 18.5 East West Cycle Superhighway Works started in November 2015 in Parliament Square, initially in Broad Sanctuary and St Margaret Street. Works are continuing to programme, with works now also being undertaken in Bridge Street. TfL has advised that they plan to open the Victoria Embankment section of the route in mid April.
- 18.6 East West Cycle Superhighway Works at the Lancaster Gate Gyratory are due to start at the end of February and will be completed by autumn 2016. Works in Hyde Park started on the 2nd November 2015 (in West Carriage Drive) and will be completed by summer 2016.

19 Nine Elms to Pimlico Bridge

- 19.1 Wandsworth Council's Nine Elms to Pimlico Bridge Design Competition concluded last autumn with the selection of the design team led by Bystrup as the winners. The scheme's promoters are now considering how to take the project forward but a petition has been handed to the Council by local resident group leaders opposing the proposed bridge. An inquiry is now being launched by the Council's Policy and Scrutiny Committee to gather information about the project and local concerns. A full report on the Nine Elms Bridge has been provided by officers for January's Environment and Customer Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee.