

Appendix 2



City of Westminster

Business, Planning and Transport Policy and Scrutiny
Committee Briefing

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Briefing of: Cllr Robert Davis MBE DL, Deputy Leader and Cabinet
Member for Business, Culture and Heritage

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1. Apprenticeships

- 1.1 From 1 April 2017, Westminster City Council will pay 0.5% of its total annual pay cost as an apprenticeship levy. The levy fund can be used to pay for apprenticeship training and assessment against an approved apprenticeship standard for both existing staff and for new apprentice recruits.
- 1.2 People Services will support each Directorate to identify how their levy contribution can be used to pay for the professional development of existing staff and to offer apprenticeship opportunities to new recruits to help fill future skills gaps and tackle recruitment and retention issues.

Westminster City Council Apprenticeships

- 1.3 Entry level apprenticeships will continue to be offered for new starters, The focus is on making opportunities available for Westminster residents, including the long term unemployed, young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and care leavers.
- 1.4 The first cohort of entry level opportunities will be advertised in June for a September start. The aim is to ensure that a minimum of 30% of all new internal apprenticeships are awarded to Westminster residents.

2. Berwick Street Market

- 2.1 The application process for street trading licences for vacant pitches on Berwick Street Market was opened to new traders on 6th April 2017 and closed on the 24th April; officers have been supporting existing temporary traders to make fully completed applications for permanent licenses.
- 2.2 Berwick Street Market has 34 pitches, with 9 traders currently operating under permanent licences. To date 7 traders who currently hold temporary licenses have been successful in applying for permanent licenses.
- 2.3 The Licensing Team are currently reviewing applications received for permanent pitches on Berwick Street Market. The licensing team received 46 applications from new applicants before the deadline of 28th April.
- 2.4 The team also received four applications from existing traders who wish to vary their street trading licences either to add additional pitches, add days or change commodities.
- 2.5 I am currently working with officers to consider the options available for Berwick Street Market and will subsequently address other markets.

3. Westminster Business Unit

- 3.1 The Westminster Business Unit aims to make it easier for businesses to navigate their way through council services and get the information, advice and guidance they need.
- 3.2 On the 30th May the Business Unit held its first drop in session took place at Church Street Library with advice on sources of finance, networking opportunities, further sources of business advice and support and business mentoring being given to those attending. The next drop-in session is scheduled for the 27th June at Paddington Library.

4. Business Rates

- 4.1 Following the announcement of targeted business rates help for pubs and small businesses in the Spring Budget officers have written to all businesses potentially affected to advised that further information will be forthcoming once the government has confirmed how these reliefs will work in practice.

5. Employment

- 5.1 The Westminster Employment Service (WES) provides free help to unemployed residents who need help training for and finding a job.
- 5.2 The website for WES went live at the end of March; the site has already received over 2,000 views.

Recruit London

- 5.3 Recruit London is a free local recruitment service for businesses. Workplace Coordinators train and place out of work residents into jobs across central London.
- 5.4 The service is delivered in partnership by the City Council, Cross River Partnership, and other local stakeholders.
- 5.5 Recruit London continues to liaise with some of its most significant partners including the New West End Company, the Crown Estate and Heart of London Business Alliance to fully capture new employment opportunities for local residents.

6. Enterprise Space

- 6.1 Councillor Peter Freeman, Deputy Cabinet Member for Business Culture and Heritage has been appointed as Chairman of the Impact Hub Westminster Board. Formal monthly board meetings will take place from the end of the month.

7. Baker Street and Gloucester Place Two Way project

- 7.1 I am pleased to advise that I have signed the final Cabinet Member Report approving the implementation of the Baker Street Two Way Project.
- 7.2 Works are scheduled to commence at the end of July and are programmed to take 18 months.
- 7.3 Work is being undertaken to coordinate these works with other major projects in Central London during this period to ensure network resilience.
- 7.4 Once complete the Baker Street Two Way will remove the one-way gyratory system and re-introduce two-way traffic flow on Baker Street and Gloucester Place while improving public realm and conditions for pedestrians, cyclists, and bus users.

8. Bond Street Public Realm Improvement Scheme

- 8.1 The public realm improvements on Bond Street commenced in April and are programmed to be completed by July 2018 ahead of the arrival of Crossrail 1 in December 2018.
- 8.2 The aim of the scheme is to improve the public realm throughout Bond Street and provide a safe and secure environment for pedestrians. Wider pavements will improve accessibility, while the use of natural materials in a high quality design will emphasise the importance of Bond Street as a destination.
- 8.3 A temporary works compound has been sited on the south west of Berkeley Square to ensure the delivery of the improvements to Bond Street along with the adjacent works in Brook and Davies Street and the north side of Berkeley Square itself. The placing of the works compound at this site has not resulted in any loss of parking.

9. Brook Street and Davies Street Two Way Project

- 9.1 I am pleased to advise that works are underway to convert Brook Street and Davies Street into a two-way system. The works are scheduled to be completed by August 2017.
- 9.2 When completed the two-way will improve accessibility, allow easier traffic movement and provide some shorter journey times.

10. Hanover Square

- 10.1 I continue to work with officers and local stakeholders to develop design proposals for public realm improvements in Hanover Square.
- 10.2 The scheme proposes the pedestrianisation of the western side of Hanover Square to provide enhanced pedestrian circulation space outside the new Crossrail Station in the north-west corner of the Square from December 2018, with controlled / timed access for delivery vehicles into Tenterden Street to avoid clashes with the heavy pedestrian flows that Crossrail is expected to bring.
- 10.3 Further design and survey work has been carried out to assess the feasibility of the proposals. The project will be designed to allow for delivery in phases to accommodate construction and operation of the Crossrail Station and neighbouring major development schemes. The cost of this project will be borne by contributions from the private sector.
- 10.4 Public consultation events were held by officers in April to update stakeholders and the wider community on the proposed public realm scheme, specifically on the proposed highway and gardens layout and parking and loading arrangements.

11. City Hall refurbishment and decant

- 11.1 Over the past 12 months, colleagues from across the council have received regular communications to keep them informed of the progress of the City Hall refurbishment programme.
- 11.2 The phased movement of staff from City Hall began in March and the vast majority of staff members were moved by the end of May.
- 11.3 Electoral Services, the Coroner's Office and NSL will be the last to vacate the building in mid-June.
- 11.4 The 17th floor meeting rooms at City Hall closed at the end of May but the canteen will remain open until the end of June.

11.5 The refurbishment works are programmed to start in July 2017 and staff are expected to begin moving back into the newly refurbished City Hall in December 2018.

12. Victoria Area Schemes

12.1 The Victoria Palace Theatre is currently closed for refurbishment works until November 2017.

12.2 Discussions are on-going between Council officers, London Underground, Transport for London and Crossrail 2 regarding the future of Terminus Place at the front of Victoria rail station. Officers are working with the various stakeholders to ensure that all work still to be carried out, including Network Rail improvements to the main station, London Underground upgrades to the District and Circle line and Crossrail Line 2 development work from 2022, are co-ordinated in order to minimise disruption.

12.3 Network Rail continue to develop their improvements within Victoria Station to ease way-finding and congestion although recent changes in funding mean that some of these may be delayed until after 2020.

13. Oxford Street Consultation

13.1 The City Council, Transport for London (TfL), and the Mayor of London are working together to transform Oxford Street and the surrounding streets.

13.2 A first round of consultation was launched on the 24th April which aims to hear from as many people as possible, who live, work, run a business or visit the district and will close on the 18th June.

13.3 Over five thousand responses have been received to the consultation at the time of submitting this report.

13.4 As part of the consultation a series of public road show events will be held with officers from TfL and Westminster City Council available to discuss the consultation with any interested residents and other stakeholders. To ensure that as many people can attend as possible these events will also be held at the weekend.

13.5 The consultation can be viewed at www.tfl.gov.uk/oxford-street.

14. Westminster World Heritage Site

14.1 As Chairman of the Westminster World Heritage Site Steering Group I welcomed a UNESCO delegation to Westminster in February to look at the World Heritage Site (WHS). Three days were devoted to presentations and visits to all the buildings within and around the site. The inspectors were particularly interested in and concerned over the amount of tall buildings granted across the river at Nine Elms amongst other places.

14.2 The UNESCO report has been made available to the City Council and Officers are currently analysing the report the initial recommendations and findings are as follows:

- The Mission is concerned that the WHS is vulnerable to incremental changes, in particular to its setting, and is facing threats from the effects of development projects across the river such as Elizabeth House, the Shell Centre, and the Nine Elms project.
- If the concerns expressed in the report are not addressed and changes made to protect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the WHS it may be placed on the World Heritage List in Danger. In order to avoid this the report suggests that the Government needs to ensure that mechanisms are in place to reinforce the protection of OUV in the planning and decision-making process.
- The Mission recommends that planning policies be reconsidered to provide a clearer, more concrete guidance for developers and decision-makers, and that the notion of balance between protection of OUV and the other benefits of the development projects be much more weighted towards the requirement to protect OUV, in keeping with the World Heritage Convention.
- The Mission recommends the Government should reconsider the role of Historic England and the advice that it provides when making decisions on development projects. The Mission believes Historic England, as the national heritage advisor, is best placed to be able to provide balanced and useful advice in regard to decisions that have a potential to affect OUV.
- The Mission believes the Government should consider calling in all planning applications that may have impact on the OUV of the property, especially in the event that Historic England has advised on such a possible impact.
- The new Management Plan should be completed as soon as possible, and the Steering Committee with active participation of the Greater London Authority be strengthened to ensure more effective implementation.
- UNESCO should be consulted over the proposed restoration and renewal project for the Palace of Westminster, in accordance with the Operational Guidelines to the World Heritage Convention.

- The Government should consider establishing links between the site management teams of each of the four London World Heritage properties. Such a link would enhance the possibility for communication and finding innovative solutions to common problems. This is also true for the World Heritage properties in the United Kingdom as a whole. A stronger network of World Heritage properties would provide benefits for all.

14.3 The report will be considered by UNESCO next month where the recommendations are expected to be ratified.

15. City Promotions, Events and Filming

15.1 The last month has brought with it the usual variety of events and filming activity being successfully managed by the team.

15.2 Significant filming for the new series of The Crown took place on St. Georges Drive in Pimlico along with filming in multiple locations for the motion picture Collateral and Stan and Ollie.

15.3 The Westminster Mile and Vitality 10k took place on the 28th and 29th May respectively, all road closures and clear up operations took place within the time agreed by event organisers.

West End Live

15.4 West End LIVE, the annual festival showcasing world-class productions on offer in the West End will be returning to Trafalgar Square for its 13th year on the 24th and 25th June.

15.5 Acts from Aladdin, Half a Sixpence, School of Rock, An American Paris plus many more will entertain thousands of theatre fans for free over the course of the weekend.

16. Green Plaque Scheme

16.1 There are now 119 green plaques around Westminster to celebrate the life and works of individuals and organisations that have made contributions that have, in many cases, extended well beyond our borders.

16.2 On the 16th May I was delighted to be asked to unveil a plaque to William Henry Hudson in Leinster Square, Bayswater. Hudson authored the acclaimed romance novel 'Green Mansions', as well as being an accomplished naturalist and founding member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

16.3 Upcoming unveilings:

- John Gatti on Villiers Street to mark the bicentenary of his birth (1817-78), Gatti introduced the penny ice cream to the UK as well as founding many restaurants and theatres; his son, Sir John Gatti was Mayor of Westminster in 1911. The unveiling of this plaque will take place on the 4th July.
- Captain Colyer-Fergusson VC was born in Portman Square in February 1896 and was a recipient of the Victoria Cross, the highest and most prestigious award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces. A plaque adjacent to Portman Square is scheduled for installation in summer 2017.
- William Somerset Maugham at 2 Wyndham Place. Somerset Maugham was a novelist and playwright and lived at the property from 1919 until 1923.
- Gold Brothers at 43 Carnaby Street to commemorate the site of their Lord John Boutique. The shop was an instant success and is considered as one of the main factors in Carnaby Street enduring popularity and fashionable reputation and is also famous for its psychedelic mural. Currently scheduled for installation in autumn 2017.
- Anthony Powell at 9 Shepherd Street where he lived and worked. Powell was the author of the acclaimed twelve volume work 'A Dance to the Music of Time', as well as working as a celebrated critic and reviewer. Installation and unveiling to be confirmed.