

# WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL

## STATEMENT OF DECISION

**SUBJECT: BELGRAVIA NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM RE-DESIGNATION AND CHELSEA BARRACKS NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA APPLICATION**

Notice is hereby given that the Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning, has made the following executive decision on the above mentioned subject for the reasons set out below.

### Summary of Decision

That the Cabinet Member agreed to:

- a) re-designate the Belgravia Neighbourhood Forum for a further period of 5 years and a formal designation notice be published under delegated authority by the Director of Policy, Performance and Communications;
- b) maintain the existing boundaries of Belgravia Neighbourhood Area and Ebury Bridge Neighbourhood Area; and
- c) reject the proposal to designate a new Chelsea Barracks Neighbourhood Area and a formal decision document be published under delegated authority of the Director of Policy, Performance and Communications.

### Reasons for Decision

#### Re-designation of Belgravia Neighbourhood Forum

Section 61F (7) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted into the Act by the Localism Act, Schedule 9) sets out the conditions that a neighbourhood forum must meet, as well as the considerations that a local planning authority must take into account, when determining an application for the designation (or re-designation) of a neighbourhood forum. The legislation states that a local planning authority may designate an organisation or body as a neighbourhood forum if the authority is satisfied that a number of conditions are met as set out in the report.

The City Council is required to have regard to whether membership is drawn from different places in the neighbourhood area concerned and from different sections of the community in that area. The application submitted by Belgravia Neighbourhood Forum states that membership stands at over 300 members who live or work in the neighbourhood area. It further states that membership has been drawn widely from the designated area and the list of members have also been provided by the Forum. Post-code mapping the addresses provided confirms wide membership across the neighbourhood area, as shown in Appendix 4 of the report. Notably this includes a significant number of members within the area proposed for inclusion in the application for a new Chelsea Barracks Neighbourhood Area.

In determining the application for re-designation, the City Council is also required to assess whether the *purpose* of the neighbourhood forum reflects (in general terms) the character of the area. The application submitted by Belgravia Neighbourhood Forum states that the Forum was established in response to the Localism Act with the express purpose of promoting and improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Belgravia. It also states that this is being addressed through the production of a neighbourhood plan that addresses matters of importance to residents and workers.

As set out in the report, consultation responses on the re-designation of the Belgravia Neighbourhood Forum were largely supportive, albeit a small number of objections were received (some of which were submitted outside of the consultation period).

### Chelsea Barracks Neighbourhood Area application

Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted into the Act by the Localism Act, and supplemented through the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017) sets out that:

- applications for neighbourhood areas must be made by an organisation that is or is capable of becoming a neighbourhood forum
- neighbourhood areas cannot overlap with one another;
- that in determining any neighbourhood area application, the local planning authority can modify existing designations;
- that in determining an application, the local planning authority must have regard to the desirability of maintaining the boundaries of existing neighbourhood areas; and
- that if the application is refused, the local planning authority must give their reasons to the applicant.

The Chelsea Barracks Neighbourhood Area application refers to the establishment of a minimum 21 representatives from a broad mix of residents, local businesses and other key stakeholders. However, at the time of writing (12 weeks since the Neighbourhood Area application was submitted) no evidence has been provided to support this - despite officers encouraging the applicant to also put forward a Neighbourhood Forum application concurrent with the Neighbourhood Area application to support its case. It is therefore currently unclear if a representative, open and inclusive group exists to take forward neighbourhood planning in the area.

As shown at Appendix 1 of the report, the proposed Chelsea Barracks Neighbourhood Area would result in an overlapping of neighbourhood areas with the existing Belgravia Neighbourhood Area. If supported, it would therefore necessitate amendments to the boundary of Belgravia Neighbourhood Area – an area where an established group with an open and inclusive membership already exists to take forward neighbourhood planning matters.

In terms of the desirability of amending neighbourhood area boundaries, regard needs to be had to existing planning designations in the proposed area, and the progress Belgravia Neighbourhood Forum have made on neighbourhood planning matters. Importantly, all of Belgravia Conservation Area, and all of Pimlico Road Local Centre, fall within the existing Belgravia Neighbourhood Area. The proposed Chelsea Barracks Neighbourhood Area application would result in both designations being split across separate neighbourhood areas, therefore risking inconsistent policy approaches coming forward through separate neighbourhood plans. Furthermore, as set out in section 9 below, protecting the heritage of the area and enhancing Pimlico Road as a retail and community hub, have both been identified by Belgravia Neighbourhood Forum as key priorities that they intend to address in the Belgravia Neighbourhood Plan.

As was the case when Belgravia Neighbourhood Area and Ebury Bridge Neighbourhood Area were originally designated, it is maintained that the permitted plans for the Chelsea Barracks site are of a character and orientation that is in keeping with that of the wider Belgravia Neighbourhood Area. Finally, consultation on the Chelsea Barracks Neighbourhood Area application has generated only one letter of support, and a number of objections, as set out in the report.

For all these reasons, the Chelsea Barracks Neighbourhood Area is rejected and no changes to the boundaries of the existing Belgravia Neighbourhood Area or Ebury Bridge Neighbourhood Area are considered necessary.

**Stuart Love, Chief Executive,  
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**Publication Date:** 13 January 2020

**Implementation Date:** 13 January 2020

**Reference:** CMfPS&P/11/2019/20