



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

# MINUTES

## Environment and Customer Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Environment and Customer Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Monday 9th November, 2015**, Rooms 5, 6 & 7 - 17th Floor, City Hall.

**Members Present:** Councillors Ian Adams (Chairman), Julia Alexander, Thomas Crockett, Louise Hyams, Guthrie McKie, Karen Scarborough, Cameron Thomson and Jason Williams

**Also Present:** Councillor Heather Acton, Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Parking and Councillor Melvyn Caplan, Cabinet Member for City Management and Customer Services

#### 1 MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg. Councillor Guthrie McKie replaced Councillor Dimoldenberg at the meeting. Councillor Julia Alexander was welcomed as a newly appointed Member of the Committee.

#### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 Councillor McKie declared that he is a Patient Governor of the Royal Brompton Hospital and that the Hospital could potentially be affected by the possible location of a Crossrail 2 station in Kings Road, Chelsea. Councillor Karen Scarborough declared that Baker Street and Gloucester Place, featured in the Baker Street Two Way Project proposals, are located in the ward she represents, Marylebone High Street.

#### 3 MINUTES

- 3.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 8 September 2015 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record of proceedings.

## 4 UPDATE FROM CABINET MEMBERS

4.1 The Committee received written updates from the Cabinet Member for the Built Environment, the Cabinet Member for City Management and Customer Services and the Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Parking on significant matters within their portfolios.

4.2 The Chairman welcomed Councillor Heather Acton and Councillor Melvyn Caplan to the meeting. Councillor Caplan had recently been appointed as the Cabinet Member for the newly combined portfolio of City Management and Customer Services. This change had been reflected in the amended name of the Committee. The Committee firstly put questions to and received responses from Councillor Acton on a number of matters that were relevant to the Sustainability and Parking portfolio. These included the following topics:

- What was the impact on the owners of parked vehicles which it was proposed would be relocated to alternative parking locations, including for example during special events? The Cabinet Member replied that any vehicle moved in this instance would be taken to an alternative safe place and the owner would be able to find out by telephone where the vehicle was located. Ten days' notice would be given of any proposed parking changes. Residents' permits did advise that owners of vehicles needed to be aware not to leave them unattended for more than a week.
- What areas do the four marshals and supervisor visit every Thursday and Friday evening under Operation Neon? Councillor Acton replied that they went to specific hotspots where traffic issues arose, largely in the West End. If Councillors advised her or officers that there were any specific hotspots they were able to liaise with Transport for London ('TfL').
- What are the numbers of people participating in the cycle schemes particularly the bike loan pilot and adult cycle training? Councillor Acton agreed to provide the Committee with the specific numbers involved.
- Had the joint coach marshalling pilot resulted in a decrease in problems in coach parking use in Buckingham Gate and the Aldwych? The Cabinet Member believed there had been a slight improvement although the biggest impact was likely to be during the summer when tourist coaches used the area. It was intended that the operation would be expanded for next year's summer period. Discussions were taking place with the Royal Parks so that the coaches could use a designated area there. Motorists and taxi drivers were becoming more aware of issues relating to vehicles idling but there was still a long way to go in terms of educating motorists.
- Were there any plans to expand the pilot such as in Ebury Bridge Road? Councillor Acton informed Members that the Council was working across Westminster on addressing vehicle idling. If there were problems but the coaches were moving the Council would not be able to take action.
- What was the position with the configuration issues affecting the portal for parking permit applications when iPads were used within libraries? Councillor Acton replied that currently iPads could not access this system because of the protections Apple had placed on the iPads which were designed to prevent misuse.

- Were there any plans to engage residents who had gardens or window boxes to make use of them as biodiversity habitats? Councillor Acton responded that it was one of the areas being looked at in more detail in the Biodiversity Plan which would be published in draft shortly. Under the Green City Action Plan there were a number of measures being taken forward. The Council was working with small landowners and Business Improvement Districts on projects such as the Wild West End. The Biodiversity Plan would set out how projects would be joined up.
- The Cabinet Member was asked to provide more detail on seeking funding from the Mayor's Air Quality Fund for a Low Emission Neighbourhood in the Marylebone area and the nature of the stakeholder support. She clarified that this was a grant to develop a bid as nine local authorities were seeking funding and only two projects would obtain this. There was great support from stakeholders including Portman Estate who were very keen to assist the Council in preparing a bid. The project was likely to include increasing electric vehicle use and reducing pollutants such as from buildings. She looked forward to working with ward councillors on developing the bid.
- What progress was the Council making in partnership with the Mayor and TfL on reducing air pollution, particularly in Marylebone Road? Councillor Acton stated that the Council was working on a number of initiatives with them. The road was the responsibility of TfL. The Council's response to the TfL's consultation on the Ultra Low Emission Zone expressed concerns about it not being implemented until 2020 and not taking greater action in relation to diesel vehicles. TfL and Central Government were looking together at central scrappage schemes. By 2020 all single deck buses operating in central London would be zero emission (either electric or hydrogen) and all double deck buses would be hybrid. The Council was also working with the Business Improvement Districts on freight consolidation and reducing vehicular use.

4.3 The Committee then put questions to and received responses from Councillor Caplan on a number of matters that were relevant to the City Management and Customer Services portfolio. These included the following topics:

- Councillor Caplan stated that he would add to his workload list examining solutions in respect of parking permit applications when iPads were used within libraries.
- Would the remote monitoring system or 'smart lights' encompass all the street lights in Westminster? The Cabinet Member replied that it was the intention to roll the system out across the City.
- Councillor Caplan was asked whether there was scope in working with other boroughs in respect of the waste disposal contract re-let. He replied that he very much supported economies of scale where there was the potential to do so. However, in this case, the Council's specifications for collecting refuse were not the same as neighbouring boroughs.
- The Cabinet Member was asked what the factors were behind the increase in refuse collection complaints in January and March 2015 in comparison to the year before. He responded that the increases statistically were not significant. Overall the current performance was

reasonable given the number of collections that were made in the borough. The overall complaints were down 15% in 2015 compared to 2014.

- How was the Council progressing with encouraging residents to recycle and would collections be made from residential basements? Councillor Caplan replied that it would be necessary to look at different solutions for different parts of the borough and he would be looking at these in order to improve the levels of recycling. Continued publicity was important. He supported the idea of collections from residential basements. He and the Chairman as ward councillors for Little Venice had provided ward budget money for a second collection during the week.
- Concerns were expressed regarding some timescales for e-mail responses from the customer contact centre. He replied that three days responses to emails received at the end of the week were not acceptable. One approach he was examining was emails being directed more centrally to those officers who were able to provide the response.
- What was the Council doing regarding fly tipping, particularly large dumps of waste? Councillor Caplan replied that it was a high priority to deal with the problem. City Inspectors were able to play their part in combating this. There were more patrols of regular blackspots. Fines were able to be imposed when there was evidence of people fly tipping. It was more difficult when there was no evidence of who the perpetrators were.

4.4 **ACTION:** The following action arose:

- That the Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Parking provide the statistics for the numbers of people participating in the cycle schemes particularly the bike loan pilot and adult cycle training (**Councillor Acton, Jayne Rusbatch, Project and Programme Manager (Public Realm) and Toby Jacobs, Cycling Projects Officer**).

4.5 **RESOLVED:** That the contents of the Cabinet Member Updates be noted.

## 5 **BAKER STREET TWO WAY PROJECT**

5.1 The Chairman referred to the Committee having previously held a public meeting in June 2015 at the University of Westminster Campus in Marylebone Road where the details of the Project were scrutinised. This meeting had been well attended by members of the public, residents' groups and local Ward Members. A verbal update had then been provided by Graham King, Head of Strategic Transport Planning & Public Realm, at the meeting in September 2015. A report had been provided for the current meeting with a further update on the Project including the results of the public consultation and also the proposed next steps.

5.2 Mr King introduced the report. He referred to the matters raised in the consultation responses, many of which had been outlined at the September meeting prior to the results being published and also what the proposed next

steps were. The report summarised the responses to the public consultation at Appendix A and then provided the officers' comments in respect of the key issues raised in the consultation at Appendix B. He made the point that this had been the biggest response to any Westminster consultation exercise in terms of numbers received and it had always been intended to be one of a number of consultations. Before any report to the Cabinet Member for the Built Environment was provided, recommending a decision on the Project, there would be a report on the detail of traffic management, loading and parking. This was of particular concern to a large number of small businesses, particularly to the south of the area set out in the proposals.

- 5.3 Mr King reported that an e-petition had recently been received against the Baker Street Two Way project which had been published on the Council's website with 433 signatories. Another petition was also understood to have been presented for the full Council meeting on 11 November by Councillor Adnan Mohammed. Mr King stated that officers were not able to see this petition before the Council meeting on Wednesday. However, the two petitions would be taken account of before any final recommendations were provided.
- 5.4 Mr King stated that there were a number of stakeholders, including residents' groups and associations and schools, who were in communication with officers about the Project. Dates were in officers' diaries to meet stakeholder groups towards the end of November. A report for Cabinet Member consideration was due to be submitted after the end of the consultation period with the stakeholders. It was anticipated that the Cabinet Member report was likely to lead to a further round of consultation to be undertaken in early 2016.
- 5.5 The Chairman thanked the St Marylebone Society and North Marylebone Traffic Group for the papers they had provided which were circulated to the Committee ahead of the meeting. He also invited Councillor Brian Connell, the Council's Cycling Champion, to address the Committee. Councillor Connell commented that the one way traffic status quo was unacceptable. However, people needed to be encouraged to cycle that do not currently do so and one of the obstacles to this was safety. If there was not to be physical segregation between cyclists and other road users in Gloucester Place, an ambitious stance was required in respect of the hours operated for the mandatory cycle lane. He also requested that officers continue to consult cycling groups. Mr King advised in response to Councillor Connell's points that the hours for the cycle lane were being examined and officers were continuing to consult cycling groups.
- 5.6 In response to questions from the Committee, Mr King made a number of additional points. These included that there was not sufficient room to segregate cyclists and other road users in Gloucester Place, there was scheduled to be a separate TfL consultation on Cycle Superhighway 11 through Regent's Park early in 2016 and discussions would take place with TfL about a 20 miles per hour speed limit for the scheme.
- 5.7 The Chairman commended the work of the Evaluation and Performance Team who had created the consultation response report in Appendix A of the

report detailing the results of the extensive consultation process. He stated that it was likely the Committee would revisit this topic in early 2016. It was clearly a contentious, controversial and high profile issue which had received a huge public consultation response and had been prominent in the recent Bryanston and Dorset Square Ward election. He was reassured that officers now had access to an extensive database which enabled them to contact residents and other groups who had a specific interest in the Project. He encouraged officers in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Built Environment to have a further round of public dialogue on the proposals that would be put before the Cabinet Member, using the database.

- 5.8 **RESOLVED:** The Committee recommended that officers in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Built Environment proceed with a further round of public consultation on the proposals that are due to be put before the Cabinet Member.

## 6 CROSSRAIL LINE 2

- 6.1 Graham King, Head of Strategic Transport Planning & Public Realm, introduced the report. He referred to the current Crossrail 2 consultation which was being held between 27 October 2015 and 8 January 2016 which focussed on the stations and the best route alignment. TfL were expected to formally seek powers to construct the scheme from 2017. The Mayor had stated that the project should be completed by 2030. Crossrail 2 was scheduled to be a feature in two areas in Westminster, Victoria and Soho.
- 6.2 The Committee heard evidence from Gabrielle Coyle who is the Consents & Environment Manager for Crossrail 2 at TfL. She informed the Committee that the Crossrail 2 proposals were very fluid and this was a real opportunity to influence them. It was very beneficial working with officers at Westminster (particularly taking into account Mr King's experience of projects) as putting together proposals to squeeze the infrastructure into very busy areas of the borough such as Soho was very challenging. Ms Coyle stated that she had also worked on Crossrail 1 and there had been a number of lessons learnt. A number of TfL staff had worked on multiple projects, including the construction process and had experience of the issues that might arise. Crossrail 2 would benefit from updated technology. Ms Coyle stated that there was more flexibility for Crossrail 2 on use of land as in the case of Crossrail 1, a lot of the engineering had taken place a long time ago. Crossrail 2 would also take into account a number of factors such as biodiversity and the needs of cyclists to a greater extent than Crossrail 1. Ms Coyle urged Members to encourage their constituents to attend the consultation events at Victoria Station on 18 November and Victoria DoubleTree Hilton Hotel on 19 November, and at St Giles Square on 30 November and 1 December. She had provided Members with a report entitled 'Crossrail 2 and the environment' which gave an early view of the scheme, its evolution, the key environmental issues relevant to its development, and the principles that will be applied in addressing them.
- 6.3 In response to questions from the Committee, Mr King and Ms Coyle made a number of additional points. Ms Coyle advised that funding of specific aspects of the project was her key concern. She stated that Soho was a

difficult location for Crossrail 2 because there were a lot of listed buildings. Work sites had to be of a certain size to be viable. Curzon Soho Cinema was well loved but the lease was coming to an end and it was possible that the cinema would not remain at the site regardless of whether the Crossrail station was located there. There were problems moving the station further south as there would potentially be the need for a further vent shaft site which would require further land take and infrastructure to fit into a tight knit community. There would also be greater problems regarding travel distances and making the station work. The whole purpose of the consultation would be to shape the final form of the scheme. If the Council and community submitted proposals that were improved and effective, TfL would look closely at these. Mr King added that he was very concerned about the listed buildings north and south of Shaftesbury Avenue. The Curzon Cinema was not a listed building but the use was one that the Council would wish to protect. It could potentially be relocated and this would be the subject of further discussions. The Council definitely wished to avoid the Palace Theatre being removed as part of the Crossrail 2 proposals. Mr King also advised that for Crossrail 1 Network Rail was a contractor, for Crossrail 2 Network Rail is a partner. This would make a significant difference. There would also be an opportunity with Crossrail 2 to balance the impacts of terminal railway stations, notably Victoria and Waterloo.

- 6.4 The Committee considered that one of the challenges was to ensure that residents were aware and were able to respond to the shaping of the scheme. Local representatives, including ward councillors, had their part to play in this process.
- 6.5 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the latest proposals for Crossrail 2 and the implications for Westminster.

## 7 CYCLING STRATEGY

- 7.1 The Council adopted the Westminster Cycling Strategy in November 2014, which was approved by Councillor Acton, in response to the Mayor for London's 'Vision for Cycling in London' published in March 2013. The Committee had played a key role in the development of the Strategy, including establishing a Task Group to scrutinise this. The Committee received a report on the progress made on implementing actions and meeting the Strategy's Core Targets to date, one year after the Cycling Strategy was adopted.
- 7.2 Councillor Acton wished to put on record that officers had worked particularly hard on meeting an intense cycling programme schedule, particularly in respect of the Cycle Superhighway schemes. Barry Smith, Head of City Policy & Strategy, introduced the report. He stated that the Strategy had always been viewed as a living document that would be updated regularly to reflect emerging priorities and funding streams. The Strategy covered the period up to 2026. The adoption of the Strategy had taken place in November 2014, this current meeting one year later was taking place eight months into the 2015/16 financial year so there remained another four months of potential spend for the year and further actions would be taken forward. Some

measures were easier to implement in the short term than others. There were approximately forty actions in the Strategy with four high level objectives, 'to create safer and more legible routes', 'to improve road user interaction, education and enforcement', 'to facilitate bicycle ownership/access and parking' and 'to raise awareness and participation in cycling'. Actions designed 'to create safer and more legible routes' were more complex and challenging to deliver as they encompass physical infrastructure works on the public highway. Mr Smith referred to the flowchart submitted with the report at Appendix 1 which showed how it was intended that the vision would be delivered in the form of actions. Appendix 2 was a detailed action tracker which had an entry against each of the forty actions. Appendix 3 was indicative of the Westminster Cycling Grid.

7.3 In response to questions from the Committee, Councillor Acton, Jayne Rusbatch, Project and Programme Manager (Public Realm) and Toby Jacobs, Cycling Projects Officer made a number of additional points:

- Councillor Acton identified that one of the main areas of difficulty was to manage the limited kerb space and avoid conflict between cyclists and pedestrians and cyclists and motorists. It was difficult to deliver Cycle Quietways routes so that they were satisfactory for people to use (who were not used to cycling) without there being the necessary segregation.
- Councillor Acton stated that people needed to be persuaded in certain cases not to park their car right outside their homes or close by. Car ownership was going down quite significantly in Westminster. The car club membership was increasing.
- The Cabinet Member had met with TfL and their modelling indicated that the proportion of vehicles at certain junctions on the East-West Cycle Superhighway would reduce significantly. Traffic flows had already started to improve over the last month. As part of the negotiations with TfL in respect of the Superhighway, the Council had made it conditional that in addition to ensuring the Active Traffic Management system worked successfully so that traffic was flowing through Westminster properly, it would be subsidised for managing the road network. Some of the compensation received in respect of costs incurred included the displacement of coaches. Alternative coach parking had been found.
- Mr Jacobs advised that there had been a promotional campaign in respect of the annual cycling training programme and the numbers who had become involved were up approximately 20% on the previous year. The training was for cyclists at different stages of proficiency and included considerate road use and awareness of pedestrians.
- Ms Rusbatch explained that the strategy for secure cycle parking across estates had commenced in 2012. There were five estates that officers had been working with initially. Officers had also been working with CityWest Homes and the Peabody Estate. Planning permissions were approved or in progress for eleven further sites being funded in 2015/16. Locations for secure cycle parking were being identified with Churchill Gardens Estate. Councillor Acton also advised that on street cycle parking was increasing and she was speaking with car park operators to encourage more off-street cycle parking. Cycle parking was being requested for new developments. Ms Rusbatch added that the West End

was where many wanted to park their bicycles but was where there was most pressure on the kerb side. There was cycle parking in developments for visitor purposes and officers were not fully aware of all of these. They needed to be mapped and work undertaken with key landowners.

- Ms Rusbatch stated that as part of the proposals for Cycle Superhighway 11 through Regent's Park, officers had engaged with cycling groups. The groups were encouraging other cyclists, including sports cyclists to behave in an appropriate fashion. The Council was working with TfL to take this matter into account in the consultation and implementation of the proposals. Councillor Acton added that the Royal Parks Police were now going to specific areas of the Parks where there were issues and had fined 29 cyclists. In the five months prior they had fined 44 cyclists.

7.4 **RESOLVED:** That there would be regular monitoring by the Committee of the progress made regarding the actions in the Strategy.

## 8 PRESS RELEASES

8.1 The Committee decided not to produce a press release in relation to the items on the agenda at this time.

## 9 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER

9.1 Mark Ewbank, Scrutiny Manager, introduced the item. He referred to the topics scheduled on the Work Programme that had been published in the papers. These included the Open Spaces Strategy, scheduled for the next meeting of the Committee on 18 January 2016. The Committee was content with the items as currently set out although there was the potential for an update on the Baker Street Two Way item in January. The Chairman made the point that there was the option available to Members to schedule the next meeting, with the Open Spaces Strategy currently the lead item on the agenda, in a venue outside City Hall. Mr Ewbank drew Members' attention to the fact that the next meeting of the Sustainable Travel Task Group, which was examining the development of a strategy relating to sustainable travel which included but was not limited to pedestrian experience and parking, was scheduled to take place on 17 November 2015.

9.2 It was agreed that in order to ensure Cabinet Member availability, the meetings of the Committee previously scheduled for 29 February 2016 and 12 April 2016 would now be held on 7 March 2016 and 18 April 2016 respectively.

9.3 Mr Ewbank was congratulated by Members on having been selected for a secondment to be a senior member of the scrutiny team in the House of Commons.

9.4 **RESOLVED:** That the meetings of the Committee previously scheduled for 29 February 2016 and 12 April 2016 be held instead on 7 March 2016 and 18 April 2016 respectively.

**10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMEN CONSIDERS URGENT**

10.1 There was no additional business for the Committee to consider.

The Meeting ended at 9.44 pm

**CHAIRMAN:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_