



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

# MINUTES

## Cabinet

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the **Cabinet** held on **Monday 19th April, 2021**.

**Members Present:** Councillors Rachael Robathan (Chairman), Heather Acton, Timothy Barnes, Melvyn Caplan, Matthew Green, David Harvey, Tim Mitchell and Paul Swaddle OBE.

#### 1 WELCOME

1.1 It was noted that there were no changes to the membership.

#### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### 3 MINUTES

3.1 **RESOLVED:** The Leader, with the consent of the Members present, signed the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2021 as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

#### 4 OXFORD STREET DISTRICT - UPDATE

4.1 Councillor Melvyn Caplan, Cabinet Member for City Management, introduced the item. He explained that the update delivered on a previous commitment to provide Cabinet with an update on the Oxford Street District (OSD) Project.

4.2 Councillor Caplan advised that the council had been successful in progressing a range of strategic projects during the pandemic. This included the Oxford Street District Scheme. Delivery of the first phase of the Oxford Street temporary public realm improvement scheme had been progressed in time for hospitality and retail reopening on the 12 April 2021 following the easing of the national lockdown. The temporary public realm improvements include widening footways and an extensive increase in greening. He stated that another key delivery for 2021 is Marble Arch Hill which is expected to open in the summer.

- 4.3 Debbie Jackson, Executive Director Growth, Planning and Housing, addressed the committee. She explained how project plans for the OSD had been reviewed to address the rapidly changing retail environment and the new challenges as well as opportunities posed by the Covid-19 pandemic with some actions brought forward to 2021.
- 4.4 Councillor Matthew Green, Cabinet Member for Business, Licensing and Planning, outlined the business case for improving the retail experience in the OSD to meet the challenges of competing with online retail and how this had become even more pressing since the outbreak of the pandemic. He also referred to the importance of providing a mix of 'must-visit' activities to complement the retail offer. These included a range of cultural experiences and highlighted the work that had just begun to deliver the Soho Photography Quarter as an example.
- 4.5 Councillor Acton, Cabinet Member for Communities and Regeneration, highlighted the environmental benefits being delivered through the scheme which would help to deliver on the council's commitment to cleaner air. She also set out how the project will seamlessly integrate smart-city solutions to enhance the overall experience of the district. She advised that good progress was being made with feasibility work underway for various waste, mobility, freight and other smart solutions for the district.
- 4.6 Councillor Barnes, Cabinet Member for Young People and Learning, referred to the fact that the council's investment in the OSD was encouraging businesses and other organisations to both move into the area as well as to undertake major refurbishment of buildings which would deliver additional jobs.
- 4.7 **RESOLVED:** Cabinet endorsed the Oxford Street District (OSD) framework and delivery plans for 2021, acknowledging the significant progress made over the past 6 months.

## **5 CHILDREN'S SERVICES UPDATE ON KEY ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENTS**

- 5.1 Councillor Tim Barnes, Cabinet Member for Young People and Learning, introduced the item which was intended to provide an update on activity and progress on Children's Services commitments set out under the Vibrant Communities Strand of City for All.
- 5.2 Sarah Newman, Executive Director Bi Borough Children Services, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the recent practice developments in Children's Services and updated Members on progress of important current projects. The presentation covered key issues and developments over the last 12 months setting out what had been done, what was achieved for Westminster children and families, and up and coming challenges.

- 5.3 Councillor David Harvey, Cabinet Member for Housing, congratulated officers in Children’s Services for their excellent work during the pandemic. He commented on the particular challenges for children during the pandemic especially those living in small flats including those living in social housing. He highlighted how the council had provided packages and activities to children through the holiday periods and worked with City Lions and cultural centres to mitigate the limitations posed by the pandemic.
- 5.4 Councillor Barnes highlighted the range of indoor and outdoor activities that had and would be provided to promote well-being amongst children, improve their social skills and to provide parents and carers with a break.
- 5.5 **RESOLVED:** That the updated be noted.

The Meeting ended at 7.24 pm

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

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