



City of Westminster

# Committee Agenda

Title: **Finance, Smart City and City Management Policy and Scrutiny Committee**

Meeting Date: **Wednesday 3rd February, 2021**

Time: **7.00 pm**

Venue: **This will be a virtual meeting**

Members: **Councillors:**

Gotz Mohindra	Murad Gassanly
Susie Burbridge	Adam Hug
Lorraine Dean	Pancho Lewis
Paul Dimoldenberg	Emily Payne

**This meeting will be live streamed and recorded. To access the recording after the meeting, please revisit the link.**

**If you require any further information, please contact the Committee Officer, Artemis Kassi, Senior Committee and Governance Officer or Elizabeth Barrett, Scrutiny Officer**

**akassi@westminster.gov.uk; Tel: 07810 754991**

**[ebarrett@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:ebarrett@westminster.gov.uk);**

**Corporate Website: [www.westminster.gov.uk](http://www.westminster.gov.uk)**

**Note for Members:** Members are reminded that Officer contacts are shown at the end of each report and Members are welcome to raise questions in advance of the meeting. With regard to item 2, guidance on declarations of interests is included in the Code of Governance; if Members and Officers have any particular questions they should contact the Director of Law in advance of the meeting please.

## **AGENDA**

### **PART 1 (IN PUBLIC)**

**1. MEMBERSHIP**

To note any changes to the membership and to elect a Chairman.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive declarations by Members and Officers of the existence and nature of any pecuniary interests or any other significant interest in matters on this agenda.

**3. UPDATE FROM THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CITY MANAGEMENT**

**(Pages 3 - 8)**

Councillor Melvyn Caplan, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for City Management, to provide a verbal update and outline of his portfolio to the Committee on current and forthcoming issues in his portfolio and to answer questions from Members.

**4. UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND SMART CITY**

**(Pages 9 - 14)**

Councillor Paul Swaddle, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Smart City, to provide a verbal update and outline of his portfolio to the Committee on current and forthcoming issues in his portfolio and to answer questions from Members.

**5. WORK PROGRAMME REPORT FOR 2020 - 2021**

**(Pages 15 - 16)**

To review the work programme for this committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

**Stuart Love  
Chief Executive  
29 January 2021**



City of Westminster

## Finance, Smart City and City Management Policy and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date:</b>	3 February 2021
<b>Report of:</b>	Councillor Melvyn Caplan
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for City Management
<b>Report Author and Contact Details:</b>	Gemma Stanton, Cabinet Officer gstanton@westminster.gov.uk

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### Overview of Portfolio

City Management is a new Cabinet portfolio responsible for:

- public realm;
- environmental and waste matters except air quality;
- parks, open spaces and biodiversity;
- street cleansing;
- waste and recycling;
- highways and transport;
- parking and sustainable transport;
- road safety;
- walking and cycling strategies;
- public mortuary; and
- physical activity, leisure and sport.

### Public Realm

The public realm programme continues to be delivered, with a forecast circa £47million of improvements this financial year, with over 150 schemes in the stages of development or delivery.

A major junction improvement scheme at Harrow Road and Ladbroke Grove was substantially completed before Christmas which improved the green man crossing, new street lighting, bus accessibility and footway paving.

Work continues on the temporary footway widening scheme on Regent Street, due to complete in February 2021. The scheme creates approximately 5,000 square meters of additional space for pedestrians, to improve visitor experience, support social distancing and improve accessibility.

Two key schemes have started work on site including phase one of the Green Spine from Bell Street to Samford Street, creating a wide, pedestrian-focused route with trees and planting areas enabling water attenuation and aiding sustainable drainage systems. The work is due to complete by mid-2021.

Works at Stand Aldwych have also begun, to enable the Strand to become traffic free in front of Somerset House and King's College London by August 2021. This will immediately create much needed space to support the local economy and enhance pedestrian experience.

## **Parks, Open Spaces and Biodiversity**

In line with Government requirements, all outdoor gyms, sports courts and table tennis tables have been closed.

The outdoor gym at Westbourne Grove caused some issues with people breaking through the security fencing to continue using the site, but all equipment has now been dismantled, which has resolved the issue. There are currently no problems reported at other sites.

Playgrounds remain open with additional disinfecting of play equipment taking place on a daily basis.

Patrols of parks by City Inspectors and Parking Marshalls have also been introduced to enforce social distancing requirements.

## **Physical Activity, Leisure and Sports**

All indoor leisure centres were ordered to close from 20 December 2020 as part of the Government's further COVID-19 restrictions under Tier 4. Whilst this remains to be the case, further restrictions announced in early January 2021 also required all outdoor sport facilities and outdoor gyms to close, allowing just parks and playgrounds to remain open.

Our service users are able to benefit from the 'pivoted' ActiveWestminster digital offer, featuring a range of online activities and programmes to help residents get and stay active, which is aligned with Sport England's national campaign #StayInWorkOut.

Everyone Active staff are in place at Paddington Recreation Ground to keep this large open space maintained and accessible.

### ActiveWestminster Awards 2020

On Thursday 17 December, the Council hosted the 2020 ActiveWestminster Awards as a virtual event that was streamed via the ActiveWestminster YouTube channel. This year's event was particularly needed, as it is important to recognise and celebrate the tremendous efforts of our residents, athletes, volunteers, clubs and ActiveWestminster partners, who have continued to provide their high quality services and provision to those that have required them the most throughout the pandemic.

### Jubilee Community Leisure Centre (Jubilee Phase 2)

Good progress continues to be made and the contractor, Boshers, is confident that despite minor delays caused by COVID-19, the scheme is likely to be complete by Spring 2022.

### Luton Street Community Leisure Centre

Main site works are still making good progress on site with the sports hall roof due for completion later this month.

The current forecast for practical completion of this leisure centre is July 2022.

## **Street Cleansing, Waste and Recycling**

All waste and cleansing services continue to operate normally. Bulky waste continues to be only collected from outside properties but arrangements are in place to provide internal collections from elderly and vulnerable residents.

## **Highways and Transport**

The Highway Inspectors are maintaining a physical presence daily on the network and carrying out their statutory duties as required. The network is naturally quieter with the national lockdown, so both pedestrian footfall and vehicle volumes are a lot lower. This has contributed to both a lower number of defects being reported by customers via reactive enquiries and the number of defects being picked up, requiring remedial action on routine inspections.

Temporary Structure license applications are substantially down, which have directly coincided with the national lockdown. Code of Construction Practice sites are operating as normal and financially we are on track to meet targets.

Work continues with FM Conway on carbon reduction trials after the success of the King Street scheme.

Delivery of the Light Emitting Diode installation project remains on track to be completed by March 2022.

## **Movement Strategy**

### Phase 1 Movement Strategy – walking and cycling

The extended pavements to support people to move in a socially distanced manner, implemented using barriers were mostly removed in September 2020. The exceptions were Oxford Street, Regent Street and Piccadilly. Regent Street has seen the implementation of an intermediate scheme which widened the pavement with temporary materials and removed the barriers. A similar scheme is currently being

developed for Oxford Street. There are still some barriers along Piccadilly although they have been rationalised.

Phase 1 saw the introduction of 14 temporary cycle lanes which all used just signs and lines to demark them. The temporary cycle lanes are currently all under review. They are being assessed, based on usage and connectivity, and recommendations will be made as to whether they should be removed, remain in place until the temporary order expires or made permanent.

### Phase 2 Movement Strategy – Hospitality support

Support was provided to clusters of hospitality businesses through the provision of outside space for dining, using Mass barriers or street closures. The first tranche of support was provided for 3 months until the end of September 2020. The scheme was then extended for a further month and then winterised schemes were considered and pavement licenses granted until 30 April 2021. However, following London moving into Tier 4, and subsequently another national lockdown, hospitality businesses are currently not open for dining. The Council is exploring options on sustained hospitality measures for when they re-open.

Some barriers to support outdoor dining have remained in place and could operate again when the next lockdown is lifted, though some barriers have been removed on Warwick Way momentarily.

## **Parking and Sustainable Transport**

Parking continues to operate as close to a normal service as possible despite the pandemic. The contact centre in Dingwall is closed due to Scottish Government regulations but staff are delivering their duties from home.

On street deployments are being targeted at areas of most need but there has been no reduction in enforcement levels due to COVID-19 in the second wave.

Officers are also working to deliver significant extensions of the Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and ensure the car-share provision is appropriate and effectively targeted.

### Electric Vehicle Charging Points

The Council is currently in the process of significantly increasing the number of electric vehicle charging points, both generally available to EV drivers and also specifically available to residents. By the end of the financial year the Council has committed to have, and is on track to deliver, 1,000 charge points on the public highway in Westminster. Over 800 of these will be exclusively for the use of residents.

In addition, we are also doubling the number of rapid charge points currently on the public highway to over 30, offering further support to commercial EV drivers in the City. This provides an unprecedented charge point representation for a local authority, especially when considering the constraints upon space and trying to accommodate the infrastructure in a medieval street scape. By the end of the financial year the Council will have, according to figures from the Department for Transport, more public charge points than Wales and Northern Ireland do combined currently.

The table in Figure 1 shows the current and proposed breakdown of charge points, with the hourly power output in each case. Slow chargers are charge points retro fitted into lamp columns for residents; fast chargers are alongside publicly available EV only bays, with a four-hour maximum stay, and rapid charge points deliver a 50 kilo-watts (kW) per hour charge and are either publicly available or exclusively for taxis.

**Figure 1**

<b>Date</b>	<b>3-5.5kW slow charger</b>	<b>7kW fast charger</b>	<b>22kW fast charger</b>	<b>50kW rapid charger</b>	<b>Total charge points</b>
<b>15 January 2021</b>	462	153	16	14	645
<b>31 March 2021</b>	802	153	16	32	1,002

## **Public Mortuary**

Westminster mortuary still continues to receive non-COVID deaths during the pandemic and lockdown.

Systems and processes are in place to ensure safe practice by the mortuary staff during the pandemic and resilience within the staff has been achieved by the operation of a two-team system.

Currently there has not been a need to reinstate the temporary mortuary facility due to the availability of the London mass storage site and management of the London wide demand by the Mortality Management Group. There continues to be daily monitoring of the storage facility at the mortuary to ensure the capacity does not exceed 70% to take into account any unplanned events resulting in fatalities.

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City of Westminster

## Finance, Smart City and City Management Policy and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date:</b>	3 February 2021
<b>Report of:</b>	Councillor Paul Swaddle OBE
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	Cabinet Member for Finance and Smart City
<b>Report Author and Contact Details:</b>	Gemma Stanton, Cabinet Officer gstanton@westminster.gov.uk

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### Overview of Portfolio

Finance and Smart City is a new Cabinet portfolio responsible for:

- financial management (strategic finance)
- financial asset administration;
- corporate property and major projects within council-owned buildings;
- procurement and contract management;
- legal services;
- customer services;
- smart city and digital transformation;
- broadband and connectivity;
- culture and tourism; and
- public art and city of sculpture.

### Financial Management (Strategic Finance)

The 2020/21 financial year has been extremely challenging for the Council, both operationally and financially. The global COVID-19 pandemic has put considerable strain on the Council's finances and it is forecast that there will be a gross budget variance of between £55-65million for 2020/21. The primary reason for this large variance is due to reduced income from sales, fees and charges following various government restrictions which has led to a significant drop of activity in the city. However, the Council has been compensated for a large proportion of income losses through the Government's income reimbursement scheme and has also received nearly £30million in general COVID-19 grant funding.

We are working towards a combination of savings, pressures and additional funding which will contribute towards a balanced budget for 2021/22. The week commencing the 25 January 2021, the Budget Task Group meetings will take place to review the Council's proposed medium-term financial plan and capital strategy. The capital

strategy will deliver a range of benefits which aim to achieve the Council's City for All objectives, including:

- New and replacement affordable homes;
- Improvements to existing housing stock;
- Improved public realm, transport and pedestrian environment;
- Green initiatives in line with the Council's Climate Emergency programme; and
- Well maintained and efficiently managed operational property.

The Council's budget for 2021/22 will be announced at the Council meeting on Wednesday 3 March 2021.

## **Financial Asset Administration**

As part of the Government's national response to COVID-19, the Council implemented financial assistance to the Borough's claimants with their rent, as well as increasing Council Tax Support awards by up to £150 (applicable in scenarios where a resident was already in receipt of this support but had a remaining Council Tax balance to pay) to schedule.

The Revenue and Benefits team have also set-up a new scheme to make payments to residents that had lost income through having to isolate. This was required in a very short timescale. This was achieved and has successfully operated on a daily basis since implementation. The Council has to date made 294 payments to residents that would lose money through having to isolate.

For businesses, the government has asked local authorities to introduce nine different complex grant schemes. The Council is currently paying grants to businesses as part of the second round of grants made available for the period of the November national lockdown. To date, 3,000 grants have been paid to businesses as part of the second round. The second stage of grant administration for the Council, will be to use the data from the first grant scheme to calculate the eligibility for each business under each scheme for each period (i.e. Tier 2, Tier 3, Tier 4 and national lockdowns). This will include the new top-up grant recently announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

## **Corporate Property and Major Projects within Council-owned Buildings**

At Lisson Grove, the completely refreshed public meeting room suite is nearing completion. This is the final phase of the refurbishment project that has seen large areas of Lisson Grove brought up City Hall standards. The meeting room suite will be a showcase for the council and feature advanced venue management for staff and clients with accessibility needs, specialist autism-friendly rooms, hearing loops and advanced meeting room technology for conferencing and remote working. The facility is expected to be open for use for council-staff from the beginning of March 2021.

The Council's Climate Emergency Declaration reflects the importance of tackling the rising impact and cost of carbon emissions. Public buildings are a significant contributor to the UK's carbon emissions; coupled with estimates that up to eighty percent of existing buildings are likely to be in use in 2030, means retrofitting the

current building stock is a vital part of meeting our emissions reduction targets. The Property Energy Team, have commenced engagement with the Greater London Authority's 'RE:FIT Procurement Framework' to deliver what will be an extensive programme of energy efficiency retrofit projects across our built estate. The programme of works will contribute to the Council's Climate Emergency response and our pathway to net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.

The Corporate Property team also continue to progress projects across the Council's estate:

- The Portman Children's Hub  
The extension and refurbishment works are progressing as planned and due to be complete by June 2021.
- Seymour Leisure Centre  
Fire safety works were completed in December as planned, and will now be followed with further enhancements to the fire alarm system.
- East Finchley Cemetery  
Tender documents for the boundary wall work (demolition and rebuild) will be issued in January 2021.
- St John's Gardens  
Demolition and rebuild of the boundary wall on Page Street is required due to structural issues. Construction commenced on-site in December and is expected to complete in March 2021.
- Old Marylebone Town Hall  
The refurbishment of the Registrars area within the Town Hall commenced in early January and is expected to be complete at the end of February 2021.

The Huguenot House options consultation ended on 15 January 2021 and sought comments on a range of options from significant refurbishment through to demolition and redevelopment. The feedback received from the consultation is now being assessed to determine the way forward for the project.

## **Procurement and Contract Management**

The new Procurement and Commercial Service 'centre of expertise' is now established and following an extensive recruitment process the leadership team and most of the specialist posts have been appointed. With the new 'Business Partner' led operating model in place the focus is now on building strong relationships internally and with the market to create a clear forward program of initiatives and priorities to maximise our contribution to City for All priorities and help mitigate the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the coming months the key priorities are to;

- Enhance the early visibility of new commissioning and change initiatives, as well as maintaining support for over 300 active procurement projects;
- Replace our procurement and contract management systems;
- Bring forward plans to promote and embed 'net zero carbon' and 'diversity and inclusion' across our supply chains;
- Continue to monitor the economic impact of Brexit and COVID-19 and work to improve the resilience of key suppliers and supply chains that provide essential public services.

## **Customer Services**

A key commitment within our City for All Vision and Strategy for 2020/21 is to create a best-in-class council website making it easy to find information and complete online transactions. Soon we will be launching our new and improved council website which puts users first, providing an intuitive online experience. Visitors will be able to find exactly what they need, faster, and enjoy a bright, seamless, and contemporary design. When our new council website launches, redirects will be put in place to ensure anyone using expired links will be sent to the most appropriate place on the new council website to aid a smooth transition.

In December 2020, our contact centres experienced a lower volume of calls compared to November 2020 with data comparable to the same period for previous years. We therefore anticipate this reduction to be a result of the holidays.

## **Smart City and Digital Transformation**

As highlighted in my previous report to the Community Services, Business and Planning Policy and Scrutiny Committee, with the events of 2020, recognition emerged that there were gaps in our overall smart vision and strategy that needed to be addressed at pace to deliver and maximise customer benefits long term. In November last year, I reported that we have procured PwC as a consultant for six months until March 2021 to support the Council on a new smart vision, smart roadmap and capturing early wins. We have worked with PwC to identify and outline four thematic smart city programmes:

- 1) Extraordinary experiences;
- 2) Innovative Economy;
- 3) Empowering People; and
- 4) CleanTech City.

These four thematic smart city programmes are underpinned by three guiding principles: inclusive, innovative and participatory. Once our work with PwC concludes, we plan to share our smart city vision and roadmap widely to demonstrate our commitment and ambition to delivering a world-class city.

In parallel with this, as part of our City for All Vision and Strategy for 2020/21 we have been exploring options for enabling responsive technology to transform the future of care and support in Westminster. Discovery work is underway to inform a roadmap for delivery of early adoption pilots.

In addition, officers across the Council have been working with our Library Service to explore new ways to bring experiences to library users through our council website and creating touch points between the physical and the digital libraries services with the expansion on events, communities and more.

## **Broadband and Connectivity**

Our City for All Vision and Strategy for 2020/21 set out our mission for Westminster to be one of the best connected cities on the planet.

Westminster has the highest full-fibre availability in London and the thirteenth highest borough in the United Kingdom. In the recent Connected Nations report dated December 2020, Westminster was reported to have connected 56.1% of properties to full-fibre broadband.

In the Connected Nations report dated December 2019, Westminster had connected 31.8% of properties to full-fibre broadband, meaning an additional 40,334 properties have been connected in 2020 despite the global COVID-19 pandemic. This constituted to the fastest deployment rate in London.

This rapid rate of deployment over the past year is due in part to our providers' commitment to the Council's City-wide Wayleave Agreement to deploy full-fibre to the Council's housing stock by the end of 2021. Currently we have 65% of our housing stock connected, equating to 12,291 properties. We have providers on site now working to connect a further 656 properties connected by the end of the month.

As the national lockdown has meant more people are remote-working, accessing online learning, and adopting digital technologies, we have worked with our partners to both offer and signpost residents and businesses to the many offers available to ensure our communities are able to access broadband or mobile networks to get online.

## **Culture and Tourism**

The global COVID-19 pandemic has only reinforced the need for cultural engagement. It has shown us how in difficult times our common humanity and its creative expression through the arts can be a vital source of inspiration, resilience and healing. The Council is, now, more than ever, committed to doing all we can to enable Westminster's world class cultural and creative sector to prosper.

Throughout the pandemic, the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Business, Licensing and Planning, Councillor Angela Harvey and I have held regular conference calls with key cultural institutions to hear first-hand their concerns to help us to lobby the Government and to work together to support the sector reopening.

In early February, we plan to launch our Cultural Strategy 2021-2025 with a virtual event with our Cultural Network. The strategy has been developed in consultation with over 100 stakeholders across the sector and communities across the city. In launching

the strategy, we are aiming to empower the sector to rise to the challenges that the global COVID-19 pandemic has unexpectedly placed at our door step and use arts and culture to leverage the creative expression, healing and sharing of common humanity that is so vital in these times.

Our Cultural Strategy 2021-2025 set out four key priorities:

- 1) Culture for All;
- 2) Resilient Communities;
- 3) Open for Business; and
- 4) Creative Placemaking.

We look forward to launching our Cultural Strategy for 2021-2025 in the coming weeks and hope that you will take the time to digest our commitment to culture.

## **Public Art and City of Sculpture**

As part of the City of Sculpture, we have recently commissioned an independent advisory board to review sculpture submissions before planning application is sought in April ahead of the installation of new sculptures at locations across the city in Summer 2020.

Our green plaque scheme currently has one approved green plaque awaiting installation. Once lockdown is lifted, we plan to install the green plaque commemorating polish artist and owner of Drian Galleries, Halima Nałęcz.



## Finance and City Management Policy & Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date:</b>	3 February 2020
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	2020/21 Work Programme
<b>Report of:</b>	Richard Cressy, Head of Cabinet and Committee Services
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio:</b>	Cabinet Member for Finance and Smart City and Cabinet Member for City Management
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	All
<b>Policy Context:</b>	All
<b>Report Author and Contact Details:</b>	Lizzie Barrett x 3103 ebarrett@westminster.gov.uk

### 1. Executive Summary

1. Following the changes that were agreed at full Council on 20 January 2021, this committee has a new terms-of-reference. This report asks the committee to discuss topics for the remaining 2020/21 work programme. The committee might also want to ask the Cabinet Members and officers present at the meeting if they have any suggestions for topics for the committee's work programme.

### 2. Remaining meeting dates for the 2020/21 year

- 2.1 The remaining meeting dates for the 2020/21 year are:
  - 10 March 2021
  - 29 April 2021

### **3. Suggested topics**

3.1 The Committee is asked to discuss topics for the remaining 2020/21 work programme. Some suggested topics are:

- Green financing
- Waste management strategy
- Parking policy and connection with climate strategy
- Rationalisation of council buildings

**If you have any queries about this report or wish to inspect any of the background papers, please contact Lizzie Barrett.**

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