



Environment Policy and Scrutiny Committee Briefing

Date: Monday 19th January 2015

Briefing of: Cabinet Member for Parking and Sustainability

**Briefing Author and
Contact Details:** Heather Acton x5614
hacton@westminster.gov.uk

1. Parking

- 1.1 The new contracted Parking Service is now fully operational with NSL. Following the Pay to Park switch-over in July, customers quickly adapted to the change. Differences in the payment system from the previous pay by phone system were noted by a few customers but any inconsistencies were quickly rectified with just a handful of complaints received against tens of thousands of daily transactions.
- 1.2 The new Business Processing and Technology contract was implemented in November. Careful and detailed planning ensured that the transition occurred without major problems and immediate remedial steps were taken as necessary in line with the pre-planned contingency measures. Resourcing levels for agents manning the telephones were increased and, whilst call volumes and wait times were initially high, they were brought back to acceptable service levels within a few days.
- 1.3 A few people experienced difficulties using the new on-line resident permit service and some disabled badge holders also faced delays. Manual intervention ensured that permits were issued quickly and applicants were contacted (by telephone where possible) to be given reassurance. The service is now operating as expected and further improvements to the self-serve web portal will be implemented over the next few months.
- 1.4 The Marshalling approach continues to be positively received by members of the public. The feedback from Marshals is that we are already seeing a positive shift in customer attitude and behaviour and this is supported by the fact that we have seen a significant reduction in the volume of complaints and the number of physical/verbal assaults against Marshals. Under the contract, Marshals were issued with new handheld technology to support their role, and have quickly adapted to the new equipment. Performance has returned as anticipated to pre-implementation levels within a few weeks. Further enhancements will be delivered in the coming months and Marshalls will be authorised to take action on engine idling.

- 1.5 The bay sensors and the new ParkRight app were fully implemented in October and the team is already working on a new version of the app for release in the spring/summer

2. The Environmental Sustainability Strategy

- 2.1 A final draft of the strategy was reviewed by EMT during December. Minor alterations are being made and a copy will be sent to this committee for information. The strategy will then be submitted to Cabinet for adoption in February. The Cabinet Member would like to place on record thanks to this committee for its valuable role in helping to draft the strategy.

3. Nine Elms & Westminster Bridge

- 3.1 Wandsworth Council are keen to progress a proposed pedestrian/cycle bridge between Nine Elms and Pimlico to the build stage. Although not yet a live project, they launched their bridge design competition on 8th December in order to identify a team capable of producing a viable design: www.nepbridgecompetition.co.uk. They plan for Stage 2 of the competition to be launched in March, which would then specify preferred landing sites in both Wandsworth and Westminster.
- 3.2 Whilst WCC officers and local ward councillors have expressed their strong opposition to the proposed bridge and its landing in Pimlico Gardens – Wandsworth's current preferred landing site – we shall continue to work with Wandsworth and their Nine Elms Development Partners to try to identify an alternative solution, which, should the scheme go ahead, would have a potentially less detrimental impact in Westminster.

4. Residential Lead Electric Vehicle Recharging Proposal

- 4.1 Cabinet Members have been asked for their views on trialling an electric vehicle recharging service for residents. This would be designed for an area with low parking pressure and a high demand for electric vehicle users.
- 4.2 Currently the Council has a waiting list of 22 residents asking for an electric vehicle recharging space. Two residents have decided not to buy an electric vehicle due to lack of supporting infrastructure.

5. Blue Point London (Source London)

- 5.1 Blue Point London are the operators of the Source London Network (a pan London electric vehicle recharging network). The City Council has agreed to the change of operators, but has concerns over the proposed changes to the Source London's scheme. Negotiations are on-going to resolve these concerns.

6. Biodiversity and Open Space Update

- 6.1 A team comprising of landscape architects and ecologists has undertaken surveys of our green and open spaces, and interviewed the users. More than 200 sites are in the audit programme, including amenity green space within housing areas and private communal gardens.
- 6.2 Results are currently being analysed and will be used to frame the Council's Biodiversity and Open Spaces Strategy.

7. Code of Construction Practice (CoCP)

- 7.1 EMT requested that officers continue to work with services to determine potential revenue savings that can accrue from moving to a pro-active charging model, and this remains underway.
- 7.2 Legal advice is being sought from Counsel on the enforceability against basement and other developments which are at the smaller end of the construction scale.

8. Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ)

- 8.1 TfL is currently consulting on its proposals for the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), a scheme proposed by the Mayor to reduce levels of pollution in central London. The ULEZ will be beneficial for local air quality and public health, but may have economic impacts for owners of vehicles required to comply with the new emission standards. The Council has responded to the consultation. Key issues are:
- Concern that the proposals of the ULEZ standard will fail to achieve predicted emission savings while still having economic impacts;
 - No formal evaluation of the ULEZ is proposed - limited ability for businesses to plan and no link to ULEZ achieving air quality aims;
 - Impacts on WCC residents and businesses; and
 - Public realm implications from predicted move to electric taxi and bus fleets.

9. Cycle Strategy and Projects

- 9.1 **Abandoned Bikes** – A bike building scheme has been identified as the recipient of the abandoned bikes that the City Council collects. A venue is being sought that will allow secure storage of the bikes and tools. It is expected that this will be resolved by late spring.
- 9.2 **Promotion of bike marking/security** – The police will be attending our regular Cycle Station events (see below) and will be providing bike marking. We are also promoting Bike Marking events via social media and the new website.

- 9.3 **Bike Loan Scheme** – We are delivering 80 places to loan out bikes with support measures. There will be 60 places at our Bike it Hub schools and 20 places for users of the Beethoven centre near Queens Park.
- 9.4 **Marketing and social media** – The cycling pages of the WCC site have been revised. Branded material (flags, leaflets and cards) are being produced to enhance the branding at cycling events. Production of short videos will begin next month when the weather improves and tibia planned to include cycle trainees who are happy to be interviewed.
- 9.5 **Ride Leader training** - This is being offered to community groups who want to ride together.
- 9.6 **Big Spring Event** – We are awaiting comments from a number of venues about the possibility of staging a Big Spring Cycling Event in April 2015.
- 9.7 **Westminster Cycle Station** – This launched on the 12 January 2015 at Paddington Station and will run on the first four Mondays of each month at this and three other locations.
- 9.8 **Bike Building Course** – This will be run within the abandoned bikes programme once we have a suitable venue.
- 9.9 **Incentive Scheme** – In conjunction with Public Health, we are developing a smartphone app that will help people increase their activity levels.
- 10. School Travel Plans**
Another three schools have submitted their travel plans for students and staff. This means that 45% of all schools in Westminster now have active travel plans in place. We are on target for 50% of schools with a travel plan by March 2015.