



Environment Policy and Scrutiny Committee Briefing

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Briefing of: Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Parking

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1 Greener City Action Plan

- 1.1 A final draft has been agreed and a formal launch event is being developed, (potentially organised in conjunction with Victoria BID) and the plan will be published online. Progress on the associated action plan will be reported annually to P&S.

2 Biodiversity and Open Spaces

- 2.1 All site audits have been completed, over 200 of the City's public and private open spaces have now been assessed and the database containing all collated data is being finalised and data checked. The database forms part of the Open Space Study, which will underpin the Strategy. The study is being finalised by consultants and should be available shortly, followed by a revision of the Biodiversity & Open Space Strategy. This will be based on the findings and recommendations of the study and databases and will, for the first time, incorporate green infrastructure.
- 2.2 Officers and Historic England are working with the Northbank BID on their Tree Strategy. This will include an "iTree survey"; an assessment of the current situation in terms of tree cover and health, and will propose a future strategy. It will also address issues such as the the Garden Bridge approach and the succession of the London Planes on Victoria Embankment.

3 Residential Electric Vehicle Recharging Proposal

- 3.1 The Council is developing a possible scheme to pilot a residents-only electric vehicle recharging network. This project would provide two or three residential-only recharging bays. This trial would be intended to cover issues such as

parking priorities in residential areas, street management and charging regime in order to identify a sustainable market model. We have identified three potential areas for the pilot (based on current electric vehicle owners, general parking pressures, and residents' requests). We are meeting with potential investors to discuss the scope and terms of the pilot to ensure it is acceptable for the City Council.

4 Zip Car (car club) Electric Vehicle Charging points

- 4.1 A number of car club bays have been identified as possible locations for installation of an Electric Vehicle charging point to support an electric car club vehicle. The feasibility work for fully determining which sites are suitable has begun and the intention is for 25 double posts to be installed to service 50 car club bays.

5 OLEV Bid

- 5.1 Last year, the Office for Low Emissions Vehicles (OLEV) committed £35m to the 'Go Ultra Low City Scheme', a competition which will see 2 to 4 cities (with private sector partners where appropriate) share the funding. The primary objective of the scheme is to drive the uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs). Earlier this year, a screening bid was submitted by GLA, TfL and London Councils, on behalf of 22 boroughs, including WCC. London has been announced as one of 12 cities invited to prepare a full bid during the next phase of the competition. The scheme proposed in the screening bid included innovative residential charging infrastructure, working with car-clubs to increase EV uptake and the installation of rapid charge points aimed at commercial fleet and freight vehicles.
- 5.2 Officers from a number of the interested boroughs, including WCC, have formed a working group, along with London Councils, GLA and TfL officers to develop the full bid.

6 Blue Point London (Source London) / Point to Point (Car Club)

- 6.1 The City Council continues to meet with Blue Point London to discuss key points of their proposal. Blue Point London has agreed to take on the maintenance and energy costs for the recharging points. The new contract proposal from Blue Point London is being reviewed to ensure the scheme is suitable for Westminster. RBKC, Greenwich, Hackney and Southwark have now agreed to join the scheme.

7 Energy

- 7.1 Following the completion of our District Energy (DE) Masterplan last year, officers have been working on concluding the business case for a proposed DE network as part of our Church Street Regeneration plans. Officers are meeting colleagues from DECC in late July to explore potential Heat Network Delivery Unit (HNDU) funding for a feasibility study.

8 Air Quality Lobbying

- 8.1 At the last Environment Policy & Scrutiny Committee (2nd March) it was agreed that a letter be sent to the Mayor/TfL from the Cabinet Member for Sustainability & Parking and the Chairman of the Committee lobbying for more action to improve air quality and this letter has been sent. A response has been received from the Mayor outlining the array of Mayoral initiatives being undertaken to improve air quality in the capital which has now been acknowledged. A WCC and Corporation of London joint lobbying letter has also been sent to Defra asking for more Government action to improve air quality in the capital.

9 Air Quality Monitoring

- 9.1 The Oxford Street air quality monitoring station has been upgraded to ensure better operational capability.

10 Public Health (PH) / Sustainability projects (for information)

- 10.1 A food growing project in Church Street with links to schools is a pilot project with potential to expand across other estates in Westminster. Fisherston Estate will be the first site, and a list of interested residents has been compiled. King Solomon and Gateway schools are involved.

11 Retrofitting the Westminster Archives Centre

- 11.1 A building retrofit project for the Archives Centre is to be funded from the carbon offset fund (£164,000) as a pilot project to demonstrate new technologies. Future building retrofits with similar economic payback periods (<7 years) would be funded from Growth, Planning and Housing budgets. Assuming in full proposals are approved, work would begin in late September/early October and be completed by March 2016.

12 Code of Construction Practice

12.1 The draft costs and schedule of services associated with applying the CoCP to basement development will be consulted on within the consultation on our draft City Plan “Basements Revision”.

13 Walking Strategy

13.1 The revision of a Westminster Walking Strategy has been put out to tender to 4 highly regarded and experienced transport consultancies with responses due mid June. Once appointed the consultants will begin work on the strategy with the involvement of P&S through the Task Group. Public consultation will encourage interested stakeholder involvement. Pre-consultation meetings have already taken place with 20's Plenty, Westminster and London Living Streets.

14 Operation Neon

14.1 Operation Neon is a partnership between Transport for London, Westminster City Council's Parking Services, The Metropolitan Police Service and the City of London Police, supporting the licensed taxi and private hire trade by deterring and disrupting illegal cab activity. During May, multi-agency, high visibility enforcement operations have been held at intelligence led hotspots within Westminster, focusing on issues such as:

- Tackling touting and illegal plying for hire
- Taking action against parking and idling contraventions
- Protecting taxi ranks

14.2 Six teams have been patrolling identified areas in Westminster, during the night and a total of 1875 actions have been taken by the teams, including the issuing of penalty charge notices. Further operations will be planned throughout the year.

14.3 The chart below details the actions taken to the 30th May.

15 Vehicle Idling

- 15.1 Marshals are taking action against stationary vehicles parked by the roadside with their engines idling. Initially starting with a driver education programme, Marshals ask motorists to turn off their engines explaining about the impact of leaving the engine running in terms of air and noise pollution.
- 15.2 From 1st June 2015, formal enforcement of the idling legislation began with Marshals empowered to issue a £20 fixed penalty notice for vehicles found in contravention of this regulation, when drivers refuse to turn off their engine.
- 15.3 A communications programme will continue to support the idling work. Widespread support has been received for this new policy following a successful media campaign, including from the Westminster BIDs, resident associations, the Mayor of London, Clean Air in London and other green campaigners. Explanatory cards will be distributed to all Councillors.

16 Occupancy Survey

- 16.1 The 2015 city-wide Parking Occupancy Survey is well underway and the 'Stage 4' report should be ready for the Committee to consider after the project's June deadline. In the meantime progress is summarised as follows:
- Stage 1 - An updated 2015 inventory of all parking signs and lines on all streets across Westminster. Completed.
 - Stage 2 - Occupancy survey beats across 11 distinct timeframes. We have teams of approximately 20 enumerators working on the streets

each day/night and all of central Parking Zones E and G have been surveyed. Completed.

- Stage 3 – Transference of the occupancy data onto the new 2015 base inventory. This work has commenced.

16.2 It is too soon to reveal any preliminary trends that may result from the 2015 Parking Occupancy Survey but variance from the previous 2011 survey across Westminster is anticipated, given the increase in pedestrian, cycling, delivery vehicle and bus usage in central London and the impact of this on our kerbside.

16.3 Once the report is received, a careful evaluation of its findings will be undertaken which can then be reported to the Policy and Scrutiny Committee.

17 Cycle Schemes

17.1 The Westminster Cycle Station offering bike checks, information and access to training, is now established at four regular locations and is making appearances at local events organised by the BIDs and others. This programme has driven a substantial increase in participants on our adult cycle training scheme.

17.2 We have launched a bike loan scheme in which local residents who are interested in beginning to cycle are loaned a folding bike and given a programme of support. This is modelled on successful schemes being run in other boroughs.

17.3 The Bike it scheme, delivered by Sustrans, is running in 12 schools alongside our regular school cycle training programme and is proving very popular.

17.4 A refreshed programme of themed led rides has been developed and is now being rolled out. These typically run on the weekend but there are plans to promote them via the BIDs as an after work activity.

17.5 We are also working with Westminster Academy to establish a bike building programme using the many abandoned bikes Westminster City Council collects.

17.6 Short videos are being produced that will promote and inform the public about our cycle training programme as well as messaging to all road users about good practice.

17.7 In conjunction with Public Health we are developing a smartphone app that can be used within an incentive scheme to encourage walking and cycling. We expect to pilot it on Tri Borough staff in the autumn.

18 East-West Cycle Superhighway

- 18.1 Discussions continue at Member and Officer level regarding the East-West Cycle Superhighway, particularly with regard to Parliament Square and the Lancaster Gate gyratory.
- 18.2 On 4 June 2015 Transport for London (TfL) published a consultation response for the Northumberland Avenue changes proposed as part of their consultation that finished on 29 March 2015. We expect TfL's consultation response on the Lancaster Gate gyratory to be published in July 2015.
- 18.3 Construction has started on some sections on the route within the City of Westminster, with the first works starting on 11 April at Hyde Park Corner, and on Victoria Embankment on 27 April 2015.
- 18.4 Councillor Robert Rigby and I met with Selina Lavender, the new Chair of the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) on 8th June with officers to discuss items of mutual interest. On the subject of the East-West Cycle Superhighway concerns were raised about the "armadillo" delineators also known as Zebra Traffic Separators that have been used by Camden London Borough Council. These can cause problems for road users and especially pedestrians and powered two wheeler riders. The replacement of hooped traffic signs with a sign that is more passive if hit by vulnerable road users such as powered two wheeler riders was raised.
- 18.5 There was also a discussion on parking and the possibility of more shared service space being introduced for motorcycles/motor vehicles.

19 Central London Cycle Grid

- 19.1 Design development is continuing on the ten quietway cycle routes within the City.
- 19.2 Consultation on the first three quietway cycle routes will start on Thursday 18 June for four weeks. Details of the proposals are available online at www.westminster.gov.uk/cyclegridconsultation
- 19.3 Consultation is expected to start for Cycle Superhighway 11 (Avenue Road, Outer Circle and Portland Place) at the beginning of August for 8 weeks, with support from The Royal Parks for the introduction of a 20mph zone in Regent's Park.

20 Nine Elms to Pimlico Bridge

- 20.1 Stage 2 of Wandsworth's Pedestrian/Cycle Bridge Design Competition launched on 18th May and is presumed to have asked the 4 remaining design teams to develop their proposals for Wandsworth's preferred landing site in Pimlico. Officers are expecting an update from Wandsworth on 22nd June; however the selected Residents' Panel members are not expecting to meet again until 15th July, 6 weeks later than originally planned. Further public exhibitions are currently planned for 21st to 24th July, ahead of the winning team being announced in late September/October. The bridge remains an unfunded concept scheme and officers continue to reiterate the Council's concerns over the project.