



# Environment & Customer Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee Briefing

**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015

**Briefing of:** Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Parking

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## **1 Greener City Action Plan**

- 1.1 On the 19<sup>th</sup> October the Greener City Action Plan was launched. The event was well received with a lively debate from a diverse panel that included Cllr Heather Acton, Nigel Hughes (Grosvenor and Interim Chairman of the Victoria BID), Andrew Love (Chairman at the Ritz Club) and Simon Birkett (founder Clean Air in London). It was chaired by Luke Nicholls, editor of edie.net, a major environmental publication. The panel discussed the environmental impacts affecting London, including issues of energy security, air pollution and reducing waste, and debated how the private and public sector would need to cooperate and work together to achieve our shared objectives and outcomes.
- 1.2 Progress on the plan will be reported annually to Policy and Scrutiny, and the Cabinet Member thanks the Policy & Scrutiny Task Group for their valuable contribution in getting this Action Plan underway.

## **2 Biodiversity and Open Spaces**

- 2.1 Work is progressing on the Open Space Strategy and Biodiversity Action. Groundwork London is completing a study, which is the culmination of all the background survey and consultation work undertaken over the last year and which will underpin the new Strategy. They are presenting their findings to an officer group on 5<sup>th</sup> November and to a wider stakeholder group to be organised in December. Meanwhile the framework for the Strategy itself is being developed by officers.

- 2.2 The “Making a B-Line for London Partnership” is running a regional project to promote habitats for bees and other pollinating insects by forming a “B-line” across London, running north to south. It is their aim to create a line with no more than 500m between each habitat to support pollinators. The line runs through Westminster and we have been approached to support a Heritage Lottery bid for funding to implement the project. Of particular interest is the creation of the green spine in Church Street, which would help to achieve their aims. The partnership would provide advice on pollinating plants and habitat creation as well as run workshops/events to promote the project and engage the community. A letter of support for inclusion with their bid has been drafted.

### **3 Public Health (PH) / Sustainability Projects**

- 3.1 The “Tackling Childhood Obesity Programme” (TCOP) funded food growing programme continues to progress at the pilot sites. The Hammersmith Community Gardener’s Association (HCGA) will run sessions at Gateway and King Solomon Academies until the end of the summer term 2016 and hold a series of five “keeping in touch” sessions at Fisherton Estate over the winter. The next sites will be identified soon and a consultant commissioned to provide support at future sites for the life of the TCOP funding (until March 2017). Work is underway to propose ways in which a food growing programme for Westminster could be sustainable beyond the life of the TCOP funding.

### **4 Church Street District Heating Project**

- 4.1 The proposal for a District Heating scheme in Church Street has been developed and a strategic outline business case went to the Commercial Opportunities Review Board in June and was presented to the Major Projects Review Group in September. The preferred option is for the scheme to be owned and managed by the council in a similar way to Westminster City Council’s (WCC) heating scheme in Pimlico and the scheme would be built and maintained by a specialist district heating firm. A budget of £200,000 is needed for the next phase of work to progress designs and submit a planning application. It is anticipated that external funding will be available to cover half the costs with half coming from the Carbon Offset Fund.

### **5 Air Quality Bids**

- 5.1 During recent months a number of bids for air quality related funding have been submitted. Our bid for seed funding from the Mayor’s Air Quality Fund (MAQF) to compile a full bid for a Low Emission Neighbourhood (LEN) in the Marylebone area was ultimately successful. Our submission for a Neighbourhood for the Future (NoF), based on rapid charging of electric taxis at Westminster’s transport hubs, was not selected to be included in the London-wide bid for funding from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV).

- 5.2 We are awaiting decisions on two further funding bids. One to the MAQF for £400K for a Westminster based Innovation Fund to support our local schools and business to implement air quality improvement measures. The other outstanding bid is to the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Air Quality Fund for £50K to develop a Low Emission Vehicle procurement guide to support decision making in local authorities and businesses. Results are expected in the New Year.

## **6 DEFRA Air Quality Consultation Plans**

- 6.1 DEFRA is undertaking a public consultation on its revised plans to meet EU standards for NO<sub>2</sub> and we shall be submitting our views.

## **7 Residential Electric Vehicle Recharging Proposal**

- 7.1 The Council is in the final stages of developing a scheme with a potential investor to pilot a residents-only electric vehicle recharging network. Three areas have been identified (based on requests from residents and on-street availability): Vincent Square, Belgrave Square and Sussex Gardens.
- 7.2 Access to the charging will be shared by residents who are members of the residential recharging scheme and live within the local residents' parking zone. Users will pay an annual fee to use the points.

## **8 Blue Point London (Source London)**

- 8.1 WCC continues to meet with Blue Point London (BPL) to discuss key points of their proposal to ensure the scheme is suitable for Westminster. It has now been made clear by Greater London Authority/Transport for London (TfL) that there is no obligation for London boroughs to remain in the Source London/BPL scheme, so all options are being explored before we sign any long term contracts.

## **9 Zip Car (car club) Electric Vehicle Charging points**

- 9.1 A number of car club bays have been identified as potential locations for the installation of Electric Vehicle charging points to support the operation of Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEV) supplied by Zipcar. This will both promote EV use within Westminster and also complement the Council's Greener City Action Plan. The feasibility work to determine which sites are suitable is underway and the intention is for approximately 20 double posts to be installed. A timetable for installing the charging points has been agreed with Zipcar and a two phased

approach, in January and March next year, is planned. Installation is phased to enable relocation of some bays to sites that can accommodate the EV infrastructure, predominantly in the congestion zone.

## **10 Parking Operational Update**

- 10.1 All key performance indicators are on track, including telephony which has made significant improvements in the last quarter. In September, over 80% of calls were answered within 30 seconds.

## **11 Ipad issue at Libraries**

- 11.1 The recent introduction of iPads within libraries has raised a few configuration issues with the portal for permit applications and this is currently being investigated. The team continues to work with Libraries and the Digital Team to support.

## **12 Print and Fulfilment**

- 12.1 A new corporate contract with Ricoh commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> October and this involved detailed work with Ricoh by the team in the preceding months in order to provide a successful transfer of the contract.

## **13 Parking Compliance**

- 13.1 A high overall level of parking compliance (98.81%) is reported within Westminster (based on the last survey taken in April'15). The introduction of the marshalling approach to enforcement and easier ways to park via mobile applications has contributed to this higher level of compliance and customer behaviour continues to change. The next survey is carried out on-street in October, with results due in December.

## **14 Parking Occupancy Survey and Strategic Parking Policy Review**

- 14.1 The 2015 Parking Occupancy Survey was completed in July and the results of the survey have shown that many areas of the City are subject to high levels of parking stress and demand.
- 14.2 Linked to this, we undertook a review of kerbside permissions, including suspensions and a demand management model of increased charging by suspension duration has been approved for implementation.

- 14.3 The adoption of the linked 2015 Westminster SurveyMap system should be completed in November and this data will be invaluable for officers in the Parking, Planning and Transportation departments when developing schemes or assessing local planning applications.
- 14.4 A Policy & Scrutiny Task Group has been established to consider longer-term strategic parking policies including a city-wide on-street tariff review with proposals anticipated in December.

## **15 Operation Neon**

- 15.1 Operation Neon is a joint multi-agency, high visibility enforcement operation between TfL, Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and WCC Parking Services that focuses on Private Hire Vehicles within Westminster. It concentrates on issues such as vehicle idling and parking contraventions, as well as the legality and use of Private Hire Vehicles (PHV). The operation now involves four marshals and a supervisor every Thursday and Friday evening. It has been successful in removing illegal PHVs from the street and improving congestion and reducing pollution from idling.
- 15.2 It also helps by increasing the levels of visible enforcement in central London, potentially combating touting and other illegal activity. It is keeping ranks clear to support legitimate taxi and private hire drivers and has received positive feedback from the taxi trade associations.

## **16 White Disabled Badge Bay - Electronic Permit Trial**

- 16.1 A 'Proof of Concept' of Electronic permits at 70 White Badge Disabled bays is currently in the final testing phase. Permit holders have been issued with Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) tags and sensors have been installed in their dedicated disabled bays. The system transmits real-time bay status reports to Marshals so they know if the RFID vehicle is occupying the space and this should lead to improved access to the permit holders dedicated parking bay.
- 16.2 Communications with permit holders has been carefully managed to emphasise the benefits that the system should bring. As part of the installation, officers met with permit holders to explain the system and its benefits, and to manage expectations regarding enforcement. On the whole, reception to the trial has been very positive. The scheme is being supported and part-funded by TfL.

## **17 Dedicated Relocations Vehicle for Special Events**

- 17.1 Parking Services' now offer an enhanced relocations service for those requesting a dedicated relocations vehicle for a key activity such as filming.

This service is provided in conjunction with the Special Events Team, at a break-even cost to the event organiser.

## **18 Vehicle Idling**

- 18.1 Marshals have been taking action against vehicles idling and advising drivers to switch off their engines. To date over 500 drivers have been spoken. To date no Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) have been issued by Marshalls as drivers respond well to the request to switch their engines off. There has been one instance in the last month where a Marshall was prevented from issuing a FPN because the driver refused to provide details.

## **19 Joint Coach Marshalling Pilot**

- 19.1 As part of a joint Coach parking initiative, we have worked in partnership with TfL to deal with two main coach parking areas that are an issue over the summer months, caused by tourist coaches arriving at key venues.
- 19.2 Over a two week period in June-July Marshals and Supervisors were posted to Buckingham Gate and the Aldwych, where seven PCN's were issued and over 230 soft actions (moving coaches on) were carried out. TfL with WCC are looking to expand this operation for next year's summer period to help with coach parking issues.

## **20 Bay Sensor Phase One Evaluation**

- 20.1 An evaluation of Phase One has been completed and the summary of findings is that the expected benefits have been realised. The ParkRight app has been widely adopted, and by making it easier for customers to find parking, has had a positive effect on redistribution of occupancy, and paid-for revenue.

## **21 The Walking Strategy**

- 21.1 Steer Davies Gleave (SDG) have completed their initial engagement sessions with the stakeholders. This included members from Westminster's property association, resident amenity associations, Business Improvement Districts and relevant campaigners. SDG also had a productive meeting with the Environment Policy & Scrutiny Task Group. It is proposed that a draft strategy will be developed in early November in anticipation for the Policy & Scrutiny Task Group on 17<sup>th</sup> November with a view to it going for public consultation by the end of the year.

## **22 Cycle Schemes**

- 22.1 The bike loan pilot to lend local residents interested in learning to cycle a folding bike and provide support has been successful. The scheme will run again at the Beethoven Centre and a City West Homes' site to be determined.
- 22.2 The refreshed programme of themed led-rides has proved successful and all rides are now fully booked to the end of the year.
- 22.3 In conjunction with Public Health, officers are developing a smartphone app providing an incentive scheme to encourage walking and cycling. A pilot is expected to be launched with Tri Borough staff by the end of the year.

## **23 Central London Cycle Grid**

- 23.1 Consultation on the first five quietway cycle routes has been completed and Cabinet Member reports will be presented with a view to implementing the routes as amended to take account of responses. Over 1,000 responses were received for the last quietway consultation (Edgware Road to Fitzrovia and Bloomfield to Southbank) which is a tenfold increase on previous consultations.
- 23.2 Consultation on further routes is due in November. Details of the proposals will be available online at <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/cycling-consultations>.
- 23.3 Consultation on Cycle Superhighway 11 (CS11) (Avenue Road, Outer Circle and Portland Place) is being led by TfL. Public consultation has been postponed whilst TfL undertakes further design and modelling on the route outside Westminster. TfL is expecting to start consultation later in November though this is subject to approvals. As part of CS11, WCC supports the introduction of a 20mph zone in The Regent's Park, with camera enforcement technology.
- 23.4 Cycle Superhighway 5 between Oval and Pimlico is being constructed by TfL on the Transport for London Road Network (TRLN) along Vauxhall Bridge Road, to Regency Street. Works should be completed soon and TfL expects to formally open this route in early November. WCC is awaiting modelling results from TfL to help identify an extension of this route towards Belgravia.
- 23.5 East West Cycle Superhighway Parliament Square works started in Parliament Street on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> October and will stop ahead of Remembrance Sunday. The legal agreement for approval of the main

Parliament Square works has been signed, with works programmed to start in Broad Sanctuary and St Margaret Street in November. Westminster Planning Officers confirmed last week that planning permission is not required for proposed works on Parliament Square Gardens.

- 23.6 Officers are reviewing the designs for the Lancaster Gate gyratory and works are due to start early 2016 and will be completed by summer 2016. Works in Hyde Park are programmed to start from 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015 (in West Carriage Drive) and will be completed by summer 2016. TfL has agreed to fund and implement the proposed zebra crossing in Stanhope Terrace at its junction with the south west corner of Sussex Square and also changes to the layout on the south east corner of Sussex Square.

## **24 Nine Elms to Pimlico Bridge**

- 24.1 Stage 2 of Wandsworth's Nine Elms to Pimlico Bridge Design Competition asked four selected design teams to develop concept proposals for a bridge between Nine Elms and Pimlico Gardens. Final submissions are expected to be made to Wandsworth's appointed design competition organisers any time now. A Jury Panel will consider these submissions before a decision is taken by Wandsworth Council on their winning design team later this year, slightly later than originally planned. Decisions on what happens next will be taken by Wandsworth Council and other members of the Nine Elms Vauxhall Strategy Board (members of which include Wandsworth and Lambeth Councils, TfL and major landowners on the south side of the river only) after the design competition closes.
- 24.2 Whilst no further meetings have been sought by Wandsworth Council or other Board Members with Westminster on this subject, we continue to reiterate that Westminster has significant concerns regarding the bridge's likely impact, including but not limited to, the loss of trees and public open space, impact on the highway and on residential amenity.
- 24.3 A local residents' group set up an online petition against the planning and construction of the bridge which has so far attracted over 760 signatures.

## **25 Lambeth Bridge Roundabout**

- 25.1 A meeting took place with TfL to discuss the proposals for the Lambeth Bridge Roundabout. WCC expressed strong preference for a 'Dutch Roundabout'. Modelling is currently being undertaken by TfL which would give fully segregated cycle lanes and pedestrian zebra crossings. Following modelling results, public consultation is due to commence on 14<sup>th</sup> December.