



City of Westminster

Environment Policy and Scrutiny Committee Briefing

Date: Monday 18th January 2016

Briefing of: Cllr Robert Davis MBE DL, Deputy Leader and
Cabinet Member for the Built Environment

Please contact: Matt Greet ext. 2852
mgreet@westminster.gov.uk

1. Neighbourhood Planning

Designated Neighbourhood Forums

- 1.1 The Mayfair Neighbourhood Forum was designated in January 2014. The steering committee held a workshop on 19th November to discuss likely breadth, topics, and timetabling for their proposed neighbourhood plan.
- 1.2 The Soho Neighbourhood Forum was designated in July 2014. The forum held two public workshops on 26th November 2015 to explain neighbourhood planning further and encourage forum members to become involved in working groups.
- 1.3 The Westbourne Neighbourhood Forum was designated in July 2014. The forum has engaged with AECOM, the consultants appointed by the Government neighbourhood fund known as Locality, to assist with their drawing up of a neighbourhood plan.
- 1.4 The Church Street Ward Neighbourhood Forum was designated in July 2014. The forum are continuing to use a vacant unit on Church Street as a 'pop-up' consultation space to help engage with the local community.
- 1.5 The Belgravia Neighbourhood Forum was designated in October 2014. The forum has requested statistics in relation to the number of residents, shops, offices and restaurants within their neighbourhood area in order to help inform their drafting process.
- 1.6 The Notting Hill East Neighbourhood Forum was designated in October 2014. The forum held an event on 18th November 2015 to discuss planning issues across the neighbourhood.
- 1.7 The St. James's Neighbourhood Forum was formally designated on 5th February 2015. The steering committee are currently developing their website and looking to hold a community consultation event early this year.
- 1.8 The Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum was formally designated on 5th February 2015. The forum have requested a wide range of statistical information to support the production of their neighbourhood plan and are holding a briefing on the proposed Fitzwest Neighbourhood Plan on Monday 11th January.
- 1.9 The Victoria Neighbourhood Forum was designated on 20th July 2015. Following the election of the committee on 4th November 2015, the committee are due to meet and elect specific roles, such as chairman, vice chair and secretary, in early 2016.
- 1.10 The Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forums was designated on 20th July 2015. The forum has recently requested background information and statistical information which will be provided to them to support the development of their neighbourhood plan.
- 1.11 The Marylebone Neighbourhood Forum was designated on 7th September 2015. The forum held a neighbourhood planning workshop on 26th November 2015.

- 1.12 The Maida Hill Neighbourhood Forum was designated on 7th September 2015. They have begun discussions of a forward programme with our team.
- 1.13 The Pimlico and Churchill Gardens Estate Neighbourhood Forums were designated on 9th October 2015.

2. Westminster's City Plan

Basements and Mixed Use policy

- 2.1 The Examination in Public for the City Council's new Basements and Mixed Use has been agreed for the 8th-10th March. The Inspector has issued his preliminary report to the City Council and we will be responding in advance of the examination.

Special Policy Areas

- 2.2 On 25th November, I signed the Cabinet Member Report ratifying our proposed revisions to our Special Policy Areas framework. This forms the latest element of our City Plan to be codified and will be consulted on up until 7th February.
- 2.3 Special Policy Areas work in a variety of ways to protect sectors and industries which are unique to Westminster. Chief amongst the measures they bring with them are formal protection of specific uses, encouraging the expansion of the industry in question and close working with local landowners to help develop appropriate retail strategies for the respective areas.
- 2.4 The Special Policy Areas framework covers
- Harley Street (renowned centre for medical excellence)
 - Portland Place (cluster of institutional and diplomatic uses)
 - Savile Row (internationally recognised centre for bespoke tailoring)
 - St James's (the world's largest concentrated art and auction market, as well as a well-known hub for private members' clubs)
 - Mayfair (mostly focussed on the Cork Street cluster of art galleries and antique traders)
- 2.5 One previous Special Policy Area covering East Marylebone and its former wholesale showroom industry has been recommended for removal. This is in response to the on-going decline in such showroom uses in East Marylebone itself, as well as the city as a whole.

Non-Immediate Article 4 Directions

- 2.6 The consultation on an Article 4 Direction protecting changes of use from A1 (shops) to A2 (financial and professional services) ended on 14th December 2015. Supportive responses were received from various stakeholders, partners and agencies, as well as a small number of objections. A Cabinet Member Report will be

prepared shortly for me to review the consultation responses and make a final judgement on 'confirming' the Order, which is due to come into force after 30th October 2016.

Westminster City Plan

- 2.6 Our single local plan document entitled the Westminster City Plan, which will unify all those different policies we have proposed, is expected to be ready for consultation early this year.

3. Development of a Westminster Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 3.1 On 12th January I signed the Cabinet Member Report approving the City Councils Charging Schedule for the implementation of our Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

- 3.2 That report represented the final stages of our work towards adopting a CIL for Westminster. A CIL can be charged on developments in a local authority's area, with the money raised being used to pay for the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure that is needed as a result of development. Infrastructure funded through a Westminster CIL will be directed towards projects that the City Council, local community and neighbourhoods consider are required to help accommodate development. These CIL rates are formally set through the charging schedule.

- 3.3 Whilst I have approved the charging schedule, in order to implement Westminster's CIL it must also be ratified at a formal Council meeting. This will take place on 20th January, when the CIL charging schedule will be presented to the City Council for approval.

- 3.4 I would like to take this opportunity to commend the work of the officers within our City Planning team who have worked very hard to deliver the Westminster CIL within the time frame stipulated, as exemplified by the positive report received from our independent examiner following the hearing held just before Christmas. It is thanks to their efforts that we have been able to avoid some of the pitfalls and re-writes suffered at other local authorities and I am very grateful for their hard work.

4. Crossrail

Crossrail Line 1

- 4.1 Schedule 7 (planning) Applications for Crossrail's public realm reinstatement works at Bond Street and Tottenham Court Road are expected this spring, slightly later than originally planned. The proposals are currently subject to internal review by Crossrail Limited.

- 4.2 At Hanover Square, the public realm proposals will form part of a wider programme of works to improve the overall setting of the station and surrounding square and gardens.
- 4.3 Great Portland Estates' (GPE), who are developing above the Crossrail station, have commissioned concept designs for public realm improvements here and these were endorsed by the Hanover Square Project Board on 14th December. Governance of the scheme has now passed from GPE to the Council to take forward and implement the scheme ahead of Crossrail's opening in 2018. Public consultation on the proposed designs will follow later this year.

Crossrail Line 2

- 4.4 The latest Crossrail 2 public consultation took place between 27th November 2015 and 8th January 2016. An officer level response was submitted. Members have been briefed about the consultation and leaflets and information sheets were circulated to residents living within close proximity to the proposed Crossrail 2 stations in Westminster at Victoria and Tottenham Court Road.
- 4.5 The City Council welcomes the provision of Crossrail 2 in principle and acknowledges the need for this new rail line to help alleviate severe overcrowding on existing rail networks and the London Underground and the opportunities it provides for regeneration and job opportunities.
- 4.6 I am however concerned about various aspects of the proposal. At this early stage of the scheme promotion the City Council will be seeking assurances on a wide range of concerns to protect residential amenity, the operation of businesses and protection of the local environment. In particular construction impacts, including the impact of works at Victoria Coach Station, the loss of the Curzon Cinema in Soho for which there is strong local opposition, as well as the likely impact of the operational stations on existing communities. These concerns were reflected in our response to the latest Crossrail 2 public consultation.
- 4.7 Responses regarding the Crossrail 2 scheme have also been submitted to the Crossrail 2 Growth Commission and the National Infrastructure Commission, setting out the City Council's priorities for transport, and housing and regeneration. Associated meetings will concur in the following weeks. The Leader will meet the Chair of the Crossrail 2 Growth Commission, Sir Merrick Cockell, on 1st February, officers will attend.

5. Victoria Area Schemes

- 5.1 London Underground's Victoria Station Upgrade works are still progressing as planned, with the new northern ticket hall due to open in 2016, alongside Phase 1 of Land Securities' Nova scheme and the expanded southern ticket hall due to open in 2018. Future London Underground upgrade works will focus on the District and Circle Line Station at Victoria.

- 5.2 In December last year the original pedestrian crossing at the junction of Bressenden Place and Victoria Street was brought back into use and separate analysis was carried out on the temporary crossing at Cathedral Piazza which indicates that the current arrangements could be maintained subject to further detailed investigations and funding.
- 5.3 TfL are still reviewing options for the relocation of Victoria Coach Station to make way for Crossrail Line 2 works in the early 2020s. Separately TfL are also considering improvements to Terminus Place at the front of the mainline station to remove at least some of the buses and make the space more pedestrian friendly, and the future of the Inner Ring Road in this area. Meanwhile, Network Rail continue to develop their masterplan for improvements within the Station to ease way-finding and congestion.
- 5.4 Given these adjacent and overlapping proposals the City Council is pressing all parties to fully cooperate and coordinate their proposals in order to minimise impact and maximise benefits.

6. Proposals for Introducing a Two-Way Operation to Baker Street

- 6.1 Subsequent to the comprehensive public consultation carried out during the summer of 2015, a full report on the overall response was presented to the Committee on 9th November. Since then, meetings have been held with various residents' groups and amenity societies to discuss possible design changes in response to concerns and issues raised during the consultation.
- 6.2 On completion of these meetings, alongside further discussion with TfL and the City Council's funding partners, a further round of public consultation is planned on proposed changes to the scheme consulted upon last year leading to a decision on the scheme later this year.

7. West End Partnership Place Task Group

- 7.1 Following last year's successful conclusion of the West End Partnership Public Realm Working Group's programme of work and the publication of the Partnership's vision and delivery plan, the Place Task Group has been established and will hold its first meeting on 20th January. The Place group joins the other three task groups which cover People, Prosperity and Marketing.
- 7.2 Made up of a range of representatives of the private sector, public sector and our residents and chaired by myself, the first meeting of the Place Task Group will discuss the overarching public realm programme for the West End, as well as a specific item looking at proposals for Oxford Street West.

8. Events and Filming

- 8.1 Among various other high profile events, the team have worked closely to facilitate the Lumiere London festival of light event which ran between 14th-17th January. The festival represented the biggest light show ever seen in the capital and attracted significant footfall into London. Whilst produced by Artichoke and sponsored by the Mayor of London, it is quite clear that none of it would have been possible without the expertise of our City Promotions, Events and Filming team.
- 8.2 The festive period also saw the successful running of the internationally broadcast Star Wars: The Force Awakens Premiere in Leicester Square, a second year of effective partnership with the GLA on the New Year's Eve fireworks display, and more income generated from the temporary advertising at Eros, as well as providing added protection to the statue during this busy period.

9. Green plaques

- 9.1 There are now 113 green plaques around Westminster to celebrate the life and works of individuals and organisations who have made contributions that have, in many cases, extended well beyond our borders.
- 9.2 Our current programme of green plaques is as follows:
- William Shipley at 25 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden. As well as being a celebrated drawing master, in 1754 at site of Rawthmell's Coffee House Shipley founded an arts society which went on to become The Royal Society of Arts.
 - Cecilia Vajda at 105 Hallam Street, W1. Throughout a long and distinguished career in music as a teacher, conductor, performer, lecturer, writer and scholar, Vajda also become the foremost authority on the work of Hungarian composer Zoltán Kodály and his famed teaching methods.
 - Anthony Powell at 9 Shepherd Street where he lived and worked. Powell was the author of the acclaimed twelve volume work 'A Dance to the Music of Time', as well as working as a celebrated critic and reviewer.
 - William Henry Hudson at 14 Leinster Square in Bayswater. Hudson authored the acclaimed romance novel 'Green Mansions', as well as being an accomplished naturalist and founding member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.
 - Austria Centre at 124 Westbourne Road, W2. The centre provided support for several thousand Austrian refugees escaping occupation during World War II.