



Environment Policy and Scrutiny Committee Briefing

Date: Monday 7th March 2016

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

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1. Neighbourhood Planning

Interest in Neighbourhood Forum status

- 1.1 The St John's Wood Society formally submitted their application for designation as a neighbourhood forum on 16th December 2015. This application is now out for public consultation until 1st April.

Designated Neighbourhood Forums

- 1.2 The Mayfair Neighbourhood Forum was designated in January 2014. The steering committee are currently formalising the outcome of the workshop held before Christmas.
- 1.3 The Soho Neighbourhood Forum was designated in July 2014. The forum held two public workshops before Christmas and has now requested background information from which to base their neighbourhood plan.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 The Church Street Ward Neighbourhood Forum was designated in July 2014. The forum are currently undertaking engagement and are drafting policy themes.
- 1.6 The Belgravia Neighbourhood Forum was designated in October 2014. Cllr Robathan as ward member met with the forum in February, along with officers, to provide further information on the Community Infrastructure Levy process.
- 1.7 The Notting Hill East Neighbourhood Forum was designated in October 2014. The forum are currently formalising the outcome of the workshop held before Christmas and will present a timetable for their proposed neighbourhood plan.
- 1.8 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 in the coming weeks.
- 1.9 The Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum was formally designated on 5th February 2015. The forum met with officers to discuss statistical information to support the production of their neighbourhood plan. They held a briefing on the proposed Fitzwest Neighbourhood Plan on Monday 11th January.
- 1.10 The Victoria and Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forums were designated on 20th July 2015.
- 1.11 The Marylebone Neighbourhood Forum was designated on 7th September 2015. The forum held its first AGM on 28th January.
- 1.12 The Maida Hill Neighbourhood Forum was designated on 7th September 2015. The forum is in the process of setting a forward programme of meeting dates.

- 1.13 The Pimlico and Churchill Gardens Estate Neighbourhood Forums were designated on 9th October 2015.

2. Westminster's City Plan

Code of Construction Practice

2.1 The City Council is currently carrying out a consultation on its revised Code of Construction Practice, which will enable a more proactive management of construction, starting with basements. This new service will be provided for a fee, payable by the applicant or developer, to minimise the impact that basement developments have on local residents. The new charges will cover the cost of delivery of the service only.

2.2 Council officers will be able to provide liaison and neighbour services, inspect sites, and require construction companies to liaise with neighbours. The public consultation closed on 22nd February 2016 but late submissions on minor issues will be accepted up to the 27th March 2016. For more information please visit:

www.westminster.gov.uk/code-construction-practice.

Basements and Mixed Use policy

2.3 The Examination in Public for the City Council's new Basements and Mixed Use is taking place on 8th-10th March. The Inspector has issued his preliminary report to the City Council and we have responded in advance of the examination.

2.4 This is a public meeting but participation in the session is by invitation only from the Inspector and is only for those who have previously responded to the Council's consultation. After this the Inspector will issue his report and the council will adopt the policy.

Special Policy Areas

2.5 On 25th November 2015, 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 public consultation concluded on 7th February.

2.6 No significant objections to the SPA policies were received with several submissions of support being presented on the Mayfair and St James's SPA.

Non-Immediate Article 4 Directions

2.7 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. It has now been submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government for their ratification and a Cabinet Member Report is being prepared for me in order to 'confirm' the Order, which is due to come into force after 30th October 2016.

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 The charging schedule was formally adopted on by the City Council at its full meeting on 20th January, with a start date of 1st May codified as part of the report put forward to members.
- 3.4 Attention has now turned to finalising the governance arrangements covering collection, monitoring and spending of the Westminster CIL. A suite of policy documents are in draft for my approval to ensure we are ready to begin operation on 1st May.
- 3.5 I am also moving forward with the draft Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document consultation in parallel to the introduction of our CIL.

4. Crossrail

Crossrail Line 1

- 4.1 I was delighted to see the new Crossrail line officially named in honour of our longest reigning monarch on 23rd February. From December 2018, the Elizabeth Line will link Heathrow with Paddington, the West End, the City and Canary Wharf.
- 4.2 Schedule 7 (planning) Applications for Crossrail's public realm reinstatement works at Bond Street and Tottenham Court Road are now in draft. The proposals are currently subject to internal review by Crossrail Limited.
- 4.3 Great Portland Estates' (GPE), who are developing above the Hanover Square/Bond Street Crossrail station, have commissioned concept designs for public realm improvements here and these were endorsed by the Hanover Square Project Board before Christmas. Governance of the scheme has now formally 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 City Council's formal response to the latest Crossrail 2 consultation was submitted this month. This submission reflected the City Council's support in broad terms for the infrastructure, regeneration and job opportunities that the new line would create, but also outlines the concerns I have over various aspects of the current proposals. We are seeking assurances on a wide range of concerns to protect residential amenity, the operation of businesses and the local environment. This is in addition to the likely construction impacts, including the 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.
- 4.5 The Crossrail 2 Growth Commission stakeholder session took place on 28th January and the commission's chair has also held individual meetings with senior figures at the City Council. Letters have now been submitted to the Commission setting out the City Council's priorities for transport, and housing and regeneration.

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 this summer, 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 Officers are currently consulting on making the Cardinal Place temporary pedestrian crossing a permanent installation. The current installation has been in place since alterations were made to the junction of Bressenden Place and Victoria Street in early 2013, in order to accommodate the construction works for the new ticket hall under the highway. The crossing at the main junction was reinstated in December 2015 and so it is appropriate to review to temporary installation. This would be in conjunction with the resurfacing of the carriageway of the entire section of Victoria Street between Bressenden Place and Palace Street under our planned preventative maintenance programme led by Cllr Caplan.
- 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 On Sunday 28th February, TfL reinstated the iconic 'Little Ben' on the pedestrian island at the Bressenden Place, Victoria Street and Vauxhall Bridge Road junction. This followed a joint City Council and TfL project to restore this scale model of Elizabeth Tower, which was first placed in Victoria in 1892. I am delighted that this key piece of local heritage is back in its rightful place.

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

- 6.1 Last year the City Council widely consulted on proposals to replace the one way traffic system on Baker Street and Gloucester Place with a two way traffic operation. The proposals were put forward to address the current dominance of traffic in the area, whilst also delivering a combination of public realm improvements to benefit pedestrians and cyclists.
- 6.2 We received a huge number of responses and, whilst there was clearly a degree of concern in the local area regarding the original proposed scheme, a high proportion of the issues raised centred upon a core set of key issues in specific locations.
- 6.3 Since the consultation closed on 31st July 2015, the project team have spent a great deal of time reviewing the responses and looking at alternative options, whilst also engaging with the community and amenity groups that have shown an interest in the scheme.
- 6.4 I have committed myself and the project team to ensuring that the concerns raised during the consultation are fully addressed before the project can be reconsidered. As such, I previously announced that a number of specific alterations to the design would be put forward and that a further consultation would be undertaken. Amongst others, these changes include:
- The left turn from Gloucester Place onto Marylebone Road being reintroduced
 - York Street retaining its current two way operation west of Gloucester Place
 - A review of the designs for Ivor Place, as well as those covering Dorset Square and across the Conservation Area
- 6.5 This second round of consultation started on 22nd February and will finish on 20th March 2016, during which time we will hold two public exhibitions on 27th February and 9th March. As with the previous consultation, full details of the revised proposals, as well as the consultation questionnaire, can be found at www.bakerstreetwoway.co.uk

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 a series of meetings through the year. The Place group joins the other three task groups which cover People, Prosperity and Marketing.
- 7.2 The most recent meeting of the group was on 25th February and discussed the most up to date modelling for the Oxford Street West public realm improvements, as well as the latest proposals for the public realm projects at Hanover Square and Bond Street.

8. Events and Filming

- 8.1 The key special event managed by the team since the Committee's previous meeting was the Chinese New Year celebrations which began on 14th February. It was the largest such celebration outside Asia and saw the West End filled with music, acrobats and pyrotechnics, as well as a grand parade with 10 lion dance teams.

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 remains as detailed in my previous report to the Committee:

- 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.