



# City of Westminster Cabinet Member Report

<b>Date of Report:</b>	<b>18 May 2016</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>General Release</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Addressing the Needs of Pedestrians – A Draft Westminster Walking Strategy (2016-2033)</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Head of City Policy &amp; Strategy</b>
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	<b>Sustainability &amp; Parking</b>
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Policy Context:</b>	<b>Westminster City Plan: Strategic Policies, Westminster Air Quality Action Plan; City for All; Greener City Action Plan; Mayor’s London Plan, Transport Strategy and Air Quality Strategy</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>This is a Non- Key Decision. The relevant notice has been given on the Council’s website.</b>
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	<b>There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.</b>
<b>Report Author and Contact Details:</b>	<b>Barry Smith, Head of City Policy &amp; Strategy, Policy, Performance and Communications, Tel: 020 7641 2923. Email: bsmith@westminster.gov.uk</b>

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The City of Westminster has encouraged and supported walking, as a primary method of transport through policy and strategy for many years. The Council’s first Walking Strategy was adopted in 2004 and sought to encourage walking through a range of initiatives and measures. The Council remains committed to walking and active travel in line with its overall vision for Westminster to be a vibrant city with a great quality of life – a ‘City for All’.
- 1.2 Since 2004 much has changed at a national, regional and local level and with the opening of Crossrail 1 in 2018 and potentially Crossrail 2 in 2033, the pressure on the City’s infrastructure, particularly in the West End and Central Activities Zone (CAZ), will increase. Therefore, it is timely to revise and update the 2004 Strategy. The 2016 strategy aims to set out how the Council can

deliver improvements to enhance the City's walking environment and promote more and safer walking. The Westminster Walking Strategy is not just about creating an environment in which more people can walk for more or for longer journeys, but also making existing walking conditions better.

- 1.3 This Cabinet Member report seeks approval for the draft Westminster Walking Strategy (2016-2033), attached as Appendix 1, to be published for formal public consultation.

## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member approves the draft Westminster Walking Strategy (2016-2033), attached in Appendix 1 to this Cabinet Member report, for public consultation.

## **3. REASONS FOR DECISION**

- 3.1 The City Council is committed to producing cycling and walking strategies under its Better City Better Lives programme. The approval and delivery of this draft strategy fulfils this commitment, as well as the policies set out in the Westminster City Plan: Strategic Policies which support sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling.

## **4. POLICY CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Central Government and the Mayor for London/GLA/TfL all support sustainable modes of transport and walking and cycling in particular. In March 2016 the Government published the first 'Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy' (CWIS). Under the Infrastructure Act 2015, the Government is required to publish a CWIS for England that sets out a long-term vision for walking and cycling to 2040. At the heart of the CWIS is a desire for walking and cycling to become the norm for short journeys or as part of a longer journey. The Government intend that the CWIS will be progressed through a series of shorter term, five-year strategies and are consulting on the CWIS until 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016.
- 4.2 The Mayor's London Plan, Transport Strategy, the Roads Task Force Report and a number of related strategies dealing with road safety, health and wellbeing, air quality and road safety all emphasise the importance of walking in terms of sustainable travel, modal shift and health and wellbeing. Officers and the Cabinet Member have met TfL's Principal Strategy Planner for Walking who is preparing a draft vision and high level actions to inform TfL's strategic approach to walking under the new Mayor. This has been helpful in gaining an early insight into TfL thinking which is closely aligned to the Council's proposals in this draft Strategy.
- 4.3 Westminster has encouraged and supported walking as a primary method of transport, through policy and strategy for many years. In addition to the 2004 Walking Strategy, the Council's adopted City Plan - Strategic Policies (November 2013) sets the policy context for improving walking and cycling. The West End Partnership was established in 2013 to deliver a joint strategic

vision and delivery plan for the West End to 2030. In the West End alone, there are almost 150 individual public realm/transport projects being promoted by different parties. All will have an impact on our streets over the next 15 years.

- 4.4 A revised and updated Walking Strategy must reflect Westminster's unique characteristics, challenges and opportunities. Westminster is home to around 230,000 residents, over 50% of whom also work in Westminster. 47% of residents walk as their main mode of travel and car ownership is relatively low (in 1991 42% of households in Westminster had access to a car and this decreased to 37% in 2011). Around 20% of residents walk to work but this has dropped 11% between 2001 and 2011. There are around 600,000 jobs within Westminster, substantially higher than any other London borough. Public transport accessibility is very high with the majority of Westminster categorised as having Good to Excellent public transport links, for which walking is the first and last part of the journey.
- 4.5 Westminster also has the highest number of tourists and visitors of anywhere in the UK and it is estimated that 95% of all London's annual visitors visit Westminster. The Oxford Street, Regent Street and Bond Street area alone generates 3.5m trips every week. This scale of tourist activity is incomparable with other parts of London or the UK. The pressure on the City's transport network is only going to increase, with a growing residential population likely to approach 250,000 by 2030 and an increase in employment of around 14% by 2036.
- 4.6 All this activity takes place within a long established street pattern that has a legacy of historic and unique buildings and spaces that combine to create an unrivalled public realm – almost 80% of Westminster is designated as Conservation Area. This is an essential component of what makes the City such a successful city for living, working and visiting. Unsurprisingly, therefore, many of Westminster's streets, particularly around key transport hubs, business and tourist attractions are at capacity from pedestrian activity, competing with street trading, street entertainment and street furniture. A balance needs to be struck between the important public realm function of our streets; the priority for pedestrians and the safe and efficient movement of transport which supports residents, businesses and visitors.
- 4.7 There is clear evidence that walking and cycling have key roles to play in creating a healthy, accessible and vibrant city. Westminster's 'Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy' sets out the priorities and actions to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in, working in and visiting Westminster. The Strategy specifically sets out to *"identify actions through the Council's walking and cycling strategies to encourage more active travel to work (which offers a healthier and more economical alternative to public transport)."* The built environment and use of this through walking is important in supporting residents, workers and visitors to lead healthier lives.
- 4.8 Walking is also a key mechanism to support the delivery of the Council's Westminster Air Quality Action Plan. Objective 5 seeks to encourage people to

walk or cycle more instead of making vehicle trips. The Council has held events such as the 'in town without my car' day and 'Walk once a week' and works with schools to promote walking. Westminster and the Central London Air Quality Cluster Group boroughs were involved in the development of less polluted walking routes on the website Walkit.com.

- 4.9 The Council appointed consultants Steer Davies Gleave (SDG) in July 2015 to assist with the drafting of an updated Walking Strategy. This included a first phase of: background data gathering; meetings with the Cabinet and Deputy Cabinet Members for Sustainability & Parking, meetings with key council officers from the main departments of: Growth, Planning & Housing, City Management & Communities and Public Health. Then meetings were held with key walking and cycling stakeholders, including Westminster Living Streets, London Living Streets, Vision Zero London, the Westminster Cycle Campaign and 20s Plenty for Us, TfL, a breakfast briefing session was hosted by the Westminster Property Association with the Great and Landed Estates and major developers, a similar session was hosted by the NVEC with our Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) and a presentation was made to the Westminster Amenity Societies Forum (WASF).
- 4.10 The Environment & Customer Services Policy & Scrutiny Committee has played a key role in helping to develop the draft Walking Strategy. An outline of a draft Walking Strategy was reported to the Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015 and the Committee resolved that a Sustainable Transport Task Group be established to contribute to and scrutinise the Strategy as it develops. The Task Group met on two occasions (21<sup>st</sup> September and 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015) and has had an input into the draft Strategy.

## **5. A DRAFT WALKING STRATEGY FOR WESTMINSTER (2016- 2033)**

5.1 The overarching principles of the draft Walking Strategy are to:

- Invest in walking as a main mode of transport;
- Improve the attractiveness and safety of Westminster's streets;
- Encourage walking in Westminster in balance with all users of our public space and roads, and;
- Make any changes with the support of the community

5.2 The Vision for the draft Walking Strategy is:

***“A world-class walking environment to transform the walking experience for all users and to enhance the quality of life and wellbeing of our residents, workers and visitors”***

5.3 Six objectives have been developed for the draft Walking Strategy to:

1. Provide the capacity to support current walking demand and to accommodate future growth;
2. Improve the quality of the walking environment and public realm to make walking more comfortable;

3. Make walking more intuitive by increasing the legibility and permeability of walking options;
  4. Ensure walking is a safe option for everyone;
  5. Make the pedestrian environment more accessible for all users, and;
  6. Enable behaviour change to realise the potential of walking.
- 5.4 Each objective is then split into (i) challenges, (ii) opportunities and, (iii) suggested measures. The draft Strategy is structured around these six objectives. It then deals with Funding Opportunities and Delivery. A draft Action Plan based around the six objectives is included and the Council is keen to hear from all its stakeholders, ideas, suggestions and proposals that would help deliver the Strategy's vision. Following public consultation the Council will assess the ideas and proposals it has received and include a revised Action Plan with timelines, indicators, monitoring and evaluation criteria. The final Walking Strategy should, therefore, be viewed as a living, iterative, document that will be kept under review.
- 5.5 There is growing interest and use of 20mph (30km/h) speed limits across the UK and in London in particular. For example, in the UK in 2007 there was one 20mph limit, in 2016 there are 75 20mph limits, in London 25% of all roads are now subject to a 20mph speed limit and within the Central London Congestion Charging Zone (i.e. Inner Ring Road) 50% of all roads are subject to a 20mph limit. Only two central London Boroughs (Westminster and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea) do not have most roads subject to 20mph limits. At the strategic level, TfL has implemented experimental 20mph speed limits on some of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN). Two schemes in Bishopsgate and Farringdon in the City of London have already been made permanent. TfL will soon publish its findings on other trial sites that may be made permanent and is also considering the introduction of a 20mph limit on Westminster Bridge.
- 5.6 Unsurprisingly, therefore, a number of stakeholders such as Westminster Living Streets, Living Streets, 20's Plenty for Us, the Cyclists' Touring Club and the London Cycling Campaign are lobbying for the implementation of 20mph zones or borough-wide coverage and have also been robust in lobbying the Council on this matter during preparation of the Council's Cycling Strategy, during the development of the Central London Cycle Grid and this draft Walking Strategy.
- 5.7 As part of the development of the draft Walking Strategy, SDG were asked to review the literature and evidence for and against 20 mph and concluded that, *“while there is a lack of a coherent evidence base which could be used to inform future 20mph policy in London, it is clear that—all other things being equal—slower vehicles speeds result in fewer and less severe collisions. This is because lower speeds give more time to avoid a collision, whilst impact speeds are lower for those collisions that still occur, meaning that any injuries are likely to be less severe. However, implementing a 20mph speed limit does not automatically reduce actual vehicle speeds”*.

- 5.8 SDG concluded that the challenge is to find ways to achieve reductions in vehicle speeds in signed-only 20mph limits, so that safety benefits are realised, traffic can move at a steady pace so that air quality is not worsened. Enforcement is only a partial solution and behaviour change is required so that drivers view 20mph as the appropriate speed in urban areas. There are, therefore, opportunities to learn from the implementation of 20mph zones and speed limits from our neighbouring and other London boroughs in order to identify how they could be applied within Westminster. SDG recommended that the Council should keep this under review and consider the potential for a pilot 20mph zone that should be carefully monitored and the impacts analysed.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The production of the draft Walking Strategy has been fully funded from the Council's Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funding from Transport for London (TfL). The value of the funding for 2015/16 – 2016/17 is £200,000 and has been secured. The risk that the costs incurred to produce the draft Walking Strategy is greater than the funding secured is, therefore, low.
- 6.2 When adopted, later this year, the Walking Strategy will inform and be used to set out the case for funding with and from partners including TfL, the private sector, GLA, Defra, Westminster's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and relevant s106/s278 agreements.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. There is no legal obligation for London boroughs to have a Walking Strategy in place.

## **8. COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT**

- 8.1 Pre-consultation on the content, objectives and aspirations of the draft Walking Strategy took place throughout the latter part of last year. This included meetings and briefing sessions with key walking and cycling stakeholder groups and an initial scoping meeting with Transport for London.
- 8.2 Formal public consultation on the draft Strategy will now be undertaken with residents, businesses and visitors through all of the council's communications channels, including meetings, publications, online, e-newsletters and social media.

## **9. HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPACT ASSESSMENT INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Encouraging more people to walk more often has a key role to play in enabling people to lead healthier lifestyles through physical activity and staying more active and independent for longer. The vision for the Walking Strategy is to make it safer and more attractive for a greater number of people, from all backgrounds, to walk more frequently.

## **10. IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

- 10.1 Westminster has some of the poorest air quality in the country. Transport is a major contributor to poor air quality and accounted for over 70% of PM10 emissions and just over half of NOx emissions in Westminster in 2015. If more people can be encouraged to transfer from buses, taxis and private vehicles to walking, particularly for short trips this has the potential to improve local air quality.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact:**

**Barry Smith, Head of City Policy & Strategy, Policy, Performance and Communications, Tel: 020 7641 2923. Email: [bsmith@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:bsmith@westminster.gov.uk)**

## **APPENDIX**

1. Draft Westminster Walking Strategy (2016-2033), May 2016

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

1. Westminster's City Plan: Strategic Policies (November 2013)
2. Westminster Air Quality Action Plan (2013)
3. Westminster's Greener City Action Plan (2015)
4. Westminster Unitary Development Plan (2007)
5. Mayor's Air Quality Strategy (2010)
6. Mayor's Transport Strategy (May 2010)
7. Mayor's London Plan (March 2013)
8. Setting the First Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, December 2015
9. Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, March 2016

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Parking**

**Declaration of Interest**

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

State nature of interest if any .....  
.....  
.....

*(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)*

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled 'Addressing the Needs of Pedestrians – A Draft Westminster Walking Strategy (2015-2030)' and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Parking  
Date .....  
Signed .....

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Director of Law, Chief Operating Officer and, if there are resources implications, the Director of People Services (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Members: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.