

<b>Date:</b>	29 <sup>th</sup> November 2016
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	<b>West End Partnership Update</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Charlie Parker, Chief Executive
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	Leader of the Council
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	All
<b>Policy Context:</b>	City for Choice / Heritage / Aspiration
<b>Report Authors</b>	Steve Carr / Anne Pollock

## 1. **Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The West End is one of the most celebrated and exciting city centre districts in the world. Comprising just 2.5 few square miles of Westminster and Camden, it nevertheless generates £51 billion annual gross value added (GVA). This is some 15% of London's economic output and 3% of that of the UK – larger than the City of London's contribution. It has one of the largest and most diverse concentrations of jobs anywhere in the UK, hosting 650,000 jobs in 120,000 individual enterprises across a huge range of sectors. It is a magnet for tourism, providing the main attractions that brought 31.5 million international and UK visitors to London in 2015, who spent £11 billion between them. At the same time the West End is home to 59,000 people, several schools and many civic amenities supporting both a local communities and a wider London population.
- 1.2 The West End Partnership (WEP) was formed in 2013, on the recommendation of the West End Commission chaired by Sir Howard Bernstein. It brings together senior public service and private sector leaders, academic experts, cultural bodies and resident representatives. It was created to be the catalyst to enable the West End to support and accommodate growth, whilst at the same time to strengthen its unique cultural character, amenities and sense of openness. The body has been chaired by the Leader of Westminster City Council and also includes member representation from the London Borough of Camden and the Mayor of London. The WEP programme is supported by working groups, staff and expertise seconded

from the partners' bodies. The business improvement districts have created a West End network to better collaborate and coordinate their involvement in the WEP programme. Westminster Property Association is also very supportive of the programme. Resident groups are also actively engaged through the West End Community Network. Other representatives include the Metropolitan Police, academic and cultural advisors and London First.

- 1.3 As a Partnership body WEP has no legal basis of its own but instead coordinates and initiates action and delivery through its partner bodies encouraging growth through new policies, plans and actions in order to benefit residents, communities, businesses and visitors alike. The governance arrangements are set out in **Appendix A**.
- 1.4 In the face of fierce international competition, the West End's historical success cannot be taken for granted. Although there have been recent improvements to the West End's infrastructure such as the Elizabeth Line, there is much to do to alleviate the growing pressures on the area from increased footfall, high levels of vehicle traffic and startling gaps in basic infrastructure such as energy and broadband. Indeed, without more investment, the improvements that have already been made will not benefit the West End and it could risk sliding back as an economic and cultural powerhouse within London and the UK.
- 1.5 Viewing such pressures as an opportunity to act, in July 2015 the West End Partnership launched a fifteen year vision (see **Appendix B**) - an early delivery plan to support growth, meet rising demand to enhance the quality of life for all users of the West End. The vision and delivery plan seeks to secure the West End's future as an economic powerhouse, iconic destination and great place in which to live, work and visit.
- 1.6 The West End Partnership vision sets out the Partnership's aims to unify the purpose and plans of many voices and partners with a stake in the area. The WEP's vision is that over the next 15 years the West End will remain or become:
  - Vibrant, productive, resilient, creative and surprising
  - Playing a pivotal role in London's continued economic success
  - Providing new jobs and skills opportunities
  - Easy to reach, with less congestion and better air quality
  - Safe and secure as well as open and relaxed
  - Renowned for the quality, interest and extent of its public spaces, helping to differentiate London from other world cities
  - Inspiring a sense of common purpose
  - More self-reliant

- 1.7 To ensure that this vision for the West End becomes reality, WEP's delivery plan is focused on three core areas:

**People:** Improving the lives of those who work, live and visit the West End such as through better air quality and better compliance with noise and other regulations.

**Place:** Maintaining the West End as a place of vital importance in the UK's capital city by improving public places and attracting quality property development.

**Prosperity:** Increasing the economic prosperity of the West End, London and the UK for all, including access to jobs, skills and business opportunities.

- 1.8 All of the Partnership's work since the launch of the vision has been focused on delivering these objectives. It has done this through joint work at the level of the main WEP Board, through working groups covering the three themes and via project boards established to deliver key projects such as for Oxford Street and improved air quality and improved freight traffic management.
- 1.9 The Partnership also agreed a broad delivery plan in June 2015 aimed at ensuring the successful delivery of its vision. The delivery plan sets out a core programme of projects amounting to just under £1bn. Around half of the programme is expected to come from public sources, matched by significant private sector co-investment and leading to further private investment down the line in development and business activity. Major improvements to the quality of life of residents, workers and visitors achieved by growth in the West End are envisaged.
- 1.10 The update paper below in Section 2 outlines the achievements since the WEP's West End 2030 vision was launched in June 2015; provides a review of the delivery arrangements created for the Oxford Street project; and gives an update on the Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) proposal submitted to HM Treasury to support the programme.

## **2. Achievements**

- 2.1 The Partnership's approach to delivery is founded on establishing effective relationships between a wide range of partners and stakeholders. A genuine coalition has formed within the West End Partnership - a coalition that is wider than has previously been the case - and that is beginning to tackle the Partnership's priority projects and programmes. It is doing this from a strong evidence base and a deeper understanding of the challenges facing the West End than ever before.
- 2.2 Across an area from Marble Arch to Tottenham Court Road and Euston to Aldwych, plans are now underway to encourage investment and jobs and create the new places of business and work needed to accommodate them; deliver radical improvements to the public realm; capture the benefits of Crossrail 1 and 2; reduce traffic; and improve air quality. Several infrastructure improvements in Westminster such as those to transform Baker Street,

Tottenham Court Road, Bond Street and Hanover Square either have already started or are due to start in the next few months as outlined below:

### **3. Major Programme Updates**

- 3.1 **Baker Street:** The West End Partnership and the Baker Street Quarter business improvement district, has championed plans for improving Baker Street, recognising its potential as a commercial district able to accommodate up to 17,000 more jobs. A two-way traffic scheme funded by TfL and private partners, delivered by Westminster City Council, will draw in new investment and improvements to benefit local residents and businesses alike. Landowners and businesses have since pledged to bring forward major development in the area as a result of this project, reversing the 20% decline in office space and employment it has experienced in the last ten years. Following extensive public consultation, Cabinet Member approval has been given to proceed with detailed design and Traffic Order consultation.
- 3.2 **Bond Street:** Funding commitments have been secured to further enhance the positioning of this iconic street as a world-class retail area of luxury goods, by improving connections and places for people to walk and spend more time on the street. Due for completion in 2018, the public realm scheme will see reduced traffic speeds, shared access for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists, repaved roads and footways, a new 'town square' and create employment opportunities. The scheme is already tackling air pollution – waste companies servicing the street have been reduced from over forty seven firms to five. This major scheme is a partnership project between Westminster City Council, TfL, New West End Company, Bond Street Management and the Crown Estate. Funding from TfL and businesses including section 106 has been secured toward the £8.9m total cost with the £2m gap to be covered by a loan from the GLA repayable by the Council.
- 3.3 **Hanover Square:** This square is set for a major facelift that will showcase its striking historic features in the best light possible and also cope with the major increase in pedestrians that are expected on the arrival of the Elizabeth Line in 2018, which will have one of its Bond Street stations located on the square. Driven by a partnership between Great Portland Estates, Crossrail and Westminster City Council, plans include the pedestrianisation of the west side, de-cluttering street furniture, installing new lighting, public art and better traffic management. The plans for the square were approved by the Cabinet Member for Built Environment in December 2015 and are now being implemented. Improvements to the gardens of this historic London Square will be a priority and we are working closely with the Heritage Lottery Fund on supporting this element of the project. The total cost of the scheme is £13.8m which has largely been secured from private sources, section 106 payments and TfL with a small gap to be funded by the TIF bid to HM Treasury.
- 3.4 **Strand/Aldwych:** The WEP is supporting the Northbank Business Improvement District (BID) to drive significant public realm improvements to the Aldwych gyratory. Improved traffic flow, reduced air pollution and new pedestrian areas are on the horizon for an area that is home to over 20 listed

buildings and monuments. The improvements are also set to achieve at least 159,000 additional square metres of new floor space and 6,700 additional jobs. It is hoped that in 2016/17, the Northbank BID vision submitted for Strand/ Aldwych will be transformed into a full programme of improvements. The plans drawn up by Publica consultants for Northbank's partnership body includes pedestrian access between St Mary Le Strand and Somerset House. Major investment in this historic church could be achieved on the back of the public realm scheme. The BID is now working up a fully costed plan to demonstrate how it will benefit business in the area and to investigate options for improved traffic flow in this congested area. This will be submitted to WEP and the Council in 2017.

- 3.5 **Broadband:** There are endless benefits to superfast broadband – bringing the West End even closer to its global audiences and increasing business efficiency. Having led the call for the West End's broadband deficit to be addressed with improved connectivity, WEP is delighted that BT Openreach has agreed to increase fibre broadband availability and is now installing new connection cabinets. In addition, other providers, some new to the West End, have also stepped up their broadband roll-out. In addition, our public realm projects such as Oxford Street and Bond Street will have modern ducting to enable faster rollout of fibre based broadband by all providers and deliver the best superfast broadband network to become top of the table for connectivity in the UK. The Board is currently examining possible initiatives to address the remaining gaps in provision, including by delivering a new connection voucher scheme for small firms and including telecoms ducting plans in all future public realm projects to avoid need for individual premises connection works on those streets in future.
- 3.6 **Employment and Skills:** The West End continues to play a pivotal role in London's economic success and has one of the largest and most diverse concentrations of jobs anywhere in Europe. The Partnership's vision to provide new jobs and skills is successfully linking unemployed people with opportunities within a wider range of business sectors. By March 2017, 259 local unemployed people in Westminster will have been recruited to West End jobs as a result of the WEP promotion through Recruit London. In addition, engagement is taking place to link up Camden residents to job opportunities in the West End and surrounding areas.<sup>1</sup>
- 3.7 **Enterprise:** Higher levels of economic growth need to be matched by sustainable creation of new office capacity. The Partnership is working to ensure the West End maintains its diverse mix of businesses – both large and small – and attracts a new breed of entrepreneurs. The shortage of affordable workspace for small and start-up firms is being tackled. New sites are being considered for business incubation and workspace as a direct result of the West End Partnership's work with Westminster City Council: this includes Somerset House Studios which is soon to complete and Ingestre Place in

---

<sup>1</sup> *These commitments include 63 different employers including Veolia, Boots, New Look, Matalan, Ted Baker, Shake Shack, St Martins in the Field – Café in the Crypt, various hotel groups i.e. The George, The Edwardian and Doubletree by Hilton, Not Just Cleaning and Amey.*

Soho, with a potential 12,000 square feet for creative firms with plans to start on other projects in the next few months.

- 3.8 **Air Quality:** Levels of NO<sub>x</sub> and particulate matter in the air are unacceptably high in the West End. This issue is the number one concern of residents and many businesses. The West End Partnership is committed to measures which reduce traffic volumes in the West End and will look to set a target for this, in consultation with the Mayor and TfL. We aim to design West End roads and public realm schemes in a way which helps to reduce pollution, introduce more green space and encourage walking and cycling. An excellent example of partnership working right across the membership is the new Freight Group, which is chaired by the New West End Company and is commissioned to deliver a West End freight plan while seeking to reduce waste and servicing and better manage freight movement mainly through voluntary action by retailers, businesses and the logistics industry. The West End Partnership supports Westminster City Council's successful summer Marylebone Low Emission Neighbourhood (LEN) bid. This is a much-needed scheme in a part of the West End chronically suffering from poor air quality. Over the next year WEP will continue to develop further initiatives to tackle air pollution and congestion – specifically looking at targets to reduce traffic volumes in the West End and identifying more green space within WEP supported public realm projects.

#### 4. **Tax Incremented Finance (TIF) Bid**

- 4.1 Without coordinated investment in its public spaces, transport and other infrastructure, the West End could fall behind its international competitors. That is why the WEP has been working with HM Treasury officials to help secure the future of this vital district which is the engine for London's and the UK's economy.
- 4.2 By retaining 6.5% of local business rates, rather than the current 4%, Westminster City Council would be able to invest into the West End an additional £40 million of the £1.8 billion that the area generates in business rates. By creating investment certainty, the Partnership can attract major co-finance from the private sector. If approved, this agreement ultimately could create £12.3 billion of additional economic output (GVA) over the fifteen years of the WEP programme, as well as a further £3.8 billion in tax revenue for the Exchequer. Further detail of this bid can be found in 'The Case for the West End' (see **Appendix C**).
- 4.3 At the time of writing, the WEP has put a case to the Government ahead of the Autumn Statement on 23 November and / or the budget for March 2017. Several papers have been tabled by the WEP team and private sector partners to HMT to demonstrate the role that the West End plays in the UK economy, supporting investment that cannot be achieved anywhere else other than in London and supporting jobs and economic capacity around the country. The importance of the West End to the capital's economic welfare has been supported by the Mayor of London and around 100 businesses have so far written to the government in support of the programme. This case-making

exercise has included a guided tour of the West End for HM Treasury and DCLG Officials on 10 October, as well as a WEP Stakeholder event at the House of Commons in September and on in Leicester Square 8 November, 'The West End – the Nation's Powerhouse'. Both events were opportunities to demonstrate to HM Government and the wider West End stakeholder group that there is a coalition of private and public partners who want to maintain the West End's status as a national and international destination of choice and that back the Treasury bid. Public and private sector stakeholders and partners have also written to the Chancellor, and DCLG Secretary of State in support of the bid.

- 4.4 The Westminster Scrutiny Commission will receive a verbal update on the TIF Bid's progress in the Autumn Statement during the Committee Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November.

## 5. **Oxford Street**

- 5.1 The West End Partnership vision for Oxford Street is that it should be '**the world's best outdoor street shopping experience**', complementing Regent Street and Bond Street by offering an unrivalled mix of flagship and branded stores. More than this, there is opportunity to integrate with a wider network of retailers, office occupiers, leisure and cultural attractions across the surrounding streets to create a retail and business district. Currently Oxford Street employs half as many people as does Regent Street so the potential to unlock opportunities from the project are immense. The arrival of the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail 1) from December 2018 provides a further catalyst to improve the quality of the area and position it as the world's best outdoor shopping street.

- 5.2 The Partnership, supported by the property owners on Oxford Street, has drawn up a cross-cutting vision that will join with, and build on, complementary projects to transform the street and wider area:

### **Reducing Traffic**

- A comprehensive reduction in vehicles of all types with improved freight management.
- Improvements in the public realm and prioritisation of pedestrians to create the right ambiance for a successful trading environment.
- Radically improve the street's air quality and additional measures to reduce traffic accidents.

### **Creating Modern Retail Spaces**

- Improvements to the scale and design of buildings with appropriately redeveloped stores.
- A renewed mix of new and established retailers to provide a compelling shopping and visitor experience.
- A seamless and intuitive system of shopper information online to guide visitors.
- Greater investment in marketing to cement Oxford Street's brand position both internationally and in the UK

### **High Quality Public Realm**

- More space for pedestrians including ‘oasis’ spaces both on Oxford Street and side streets.
- More robust management and maintenance to provide a safe, clean and welcoming environment with less street furniture and other clutter.

- 5.3 Discussions about the West End and the WEP continue with the Mayor and his representative on the Board, Val Shawcross, Deputy Mayor for Transport. The Mayor has been clear about his ambition to make Oxford Street a world class destination and to demonstrate that London is open to the world post the EU referendum.
- 5.4 The West End Partnership has therefore created an Oxford Street Strategic Board and an Oxford Street Project Board to further this work (see **Appendix D**). They in turn make recommendations to the WEP Board the partners. Both of these Boards have met twice since the summer. This is where technical work is shared, processes are agreed, and actions recommended to the partner bodies responsible for making the ultimate decisions and delivering changes – principally the local authorities as highway and planning authorities and TfL and the GLA. The Oxford Street Strategic and Project Boards have also agreed a consultation framework and have begun an initial dialogue with residents and local businesses which will continue into the New Year. There are planned to be two formal consultation exercises in 2017, the second being a statutory process for the local authority in relation to the highways and planning consents it would need to give to enact a final scheme once designed. TfL will also engage in statutory consultation on bus route reductions on Oxford Street and related streets, the first of which is scheduled for the end of November 2016.
- 5.5 The WEP Board has recently endorsed a programme of public consultation on the final shortlisted options to improve Oxford Street West and the surrounding areas, as well as completing the complex technical work required on buses, taxis, freight and pedestrian movement in 2017/18.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Steve Carr 0207 641 6551 [scarr@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:scarr@westminster.gov.uk)

### **APPENDICES**

For any supplementary documentation; especially from external stakeholders or documents which do not fit this template.

**Appendix A:** West End Partnership Board and Governance arrangements

**Appendix B:** WEP West End Vision 2030 (July 2015)

**Appendix C:** The Case for the West End (August 2016)

**Appendix D:** Oxford Street Project - governance arrangements (September 2016)