

Economic Development, Education and Place Shaping Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Monday 3 rd February 2020
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Victoria Place Plan
Report of:	Deirdra Armsby, Director of Place Shaping and Town Planning
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Councillor Richard Beddoe, Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning
Wards Involved:	Warwick, Tachbrook, Churchill, Vincent Square and St James's
Policy Context:	Bringing forward objectives linked to the Westminster City Plan
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information on progress and emerging work related to the Victoria Place Plan and to note the appointment of Allies and Morrison who are leading a multi-disciplinary team to develop a new concept masterplan for the area immediately around Victoria Station. This piece of work is known as Future Victoria.

3. Victoria Context

- 3.1 Victoria faces unique pressures and challenges given its enviable position as a busy transport interchange, key economic centre, place of tourism and leisure, and home to a growing residential population.
- 3.2 The last ten years has seen a major increase in mixed-use development and investment in the transport network, but there is still significant room for growth. The new London Plan has identified Victoria Station, the airspace above its tracks and approaches, and nearby sites to have significant potential for mixed-use intensification. In addition, Victoria Station itself needs renovation and investment, presenting the opportunity to create a 21st century service and bring forward improvements of a quality that align with recent works seen at other London Stations such as Kings Cross and London Bridge.
- 3.3 WCC have identified Victoria as an Opportunity Area in its revised City Plan that will deliver the following priorities between 2019 and 2040:
 - At least 1,000 new homes and 4,000 new jobs
 - Improved integration between public transport modes
 - Safeguarding of CR2 sites and consideration for the future of Victoria Coach Station
 - Public realm and environmental improvements to enhance the areas capacity, legibility and permeability, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists
 - Enhanced walking routes to Pimlico, Belgravia and nearby visitor attractions
 - Additional and enhanced social and community facilities

4. The Victoria Place Plan

- 4.1 The Victoria Place Plan is a strategic document being developed by WCC's Place Shaping team to describe the issues and priorities in the area and provide a consolidated and wide-reaching vision for Victoria over the next 20 years.
- 4.2 The Place Plan is non-statutory and a 'live' or evolving strategy that will help to realise the area's optimal potential. It will help deliver on the priorities of Westminster's City Plan whilst acting as an evidence base for future planning policy changes or development that is needed to help facilitate this.
- 4.3 The Place Plan takes a holistic and wide-reaching view of the area, considering not only key areas such as the spaces in and around Victoria Station area, but also considering Victoria's connectivity to neighbouring destinations such as Buckingham Palace, the future of Victoria Street and the area's relationship with its adjacent neighbourhoods including Pimlico, Belgravia and Vincent Square. It is a framework that will help manage conversations such as the potential arrival of Crossrail 2 and help maximise the value outside work and efforts by key stakeholders such as a recent Public Realm study commissioned by the Victoria Business Improvement District.
- 4.4 There are currently two key areas of focus that the remainder of this report will focus on:

- 1) The 'Future Victoria' project
- 2) Victoria Place Plan quick-win projects

5. Future Victoria

- 5.1 In October 2019, the Victoria Partnership, formed of Westminster City Council, Victoria Business Improvement District, Network Rail, the Greater London Authority, Transport for London and landowners, appointed Allies and Morrison to lead a multi-disciplinary team tasked with delivering the 'Future Victoria' project - formerly known as the Victoria Stations Environs Strategy.
- 5.2 Alongside Allies and Morrison, the consultant team includes Weston Williamson and Partners, Mott Macdonald, Snapdragon and Avison Young. This provides us with the diverse range of specialisms needed to deliver this project including relevant expertise in master planning and urban design, transport and movement, engineering, economic impact and viability, sustainability and community and stakeholder engagement amongst others.
- 5.3 The core objective of this commission is to develop a concept level masterplan that ensures the challenges linked to the station area are considered as a whole, that current missed opportunities are reviewed with refreshed eyes, and a framework can be agreed that guides development for the benefit of all. The projects key aims are:
 - Make the station and interchange easier to use
 - Improve the quality of the streets and spaces around Victoria Station
 - Set out a framework which guides good growth so that it brings benefits to the area
 - Enhance perceptions of Victoria, making it a place that you want to go to
- 5.4 This commission is expected to provide a step-change in current understanding, setting out the physical and spatial design principles, an overarching framework for transport and movement and viability alongside deliverability considerations which will be essential to understanding any potential development context.
- 5.5 It is expected the consultant team will demonstrate how new homes, jobs, commercial, social and leisure facilities can be provided across the various property assets held by the Victoria Partnership whilst considering critical aspects such as the areas heritage value. They will also need to show how the various transport modes that converge on Victoria can form part of a transformative, integrated and fully accessible interchange that is able to accommodate the possible delivery of future routes such as Crossrail 2 or improvements to station infrastructure that can facilitate more efficient and sustainable services.
- 5.6 The consultant team are expected to articulate the symbiotic relationship between viability and density whilst considering the multitude of other elements (transport, social infrastructure, affordable housing, engineering or economic development etc) that are integral to a successful place. It is also critical that the support of the residential, business and political community alongside other

key stakeholders is secured.

- 5.7 The strategy is expected to be completed in July 2020. Proposals arising from this work will be supported by a delivery plan, setting out what needs to be done, by who, how and when. Whilst This is expected to align with the timescales of Westminster City Council's new City Plan, providing a 20-year timescale, it is expected that the delivery plan will set out short, medium and longer-term opportunities within this period.

6. Future Victoria – Public Engagement

- 6.1 Public Engagement is central to the successful delivery of this project and the consultant team have experienced engagement professionals working alongside them to develop and deliver robust public engagement. This will allow those who work, live, and visit the area to have their views and ideas considered at key stages in the process; giving them an opportunity to input meaningfully into the project and emerging ideas.
- 6.2 The first Public Engagement Workshop will be held on Wednesday 15th January 2020 between 6pm – 8pm at St Peter's Church, Eaton Square. WCC have been working to ensure the widest possible audience is aware of this and can register to attend. The broad engagement programme for 2020 has been summarised below.
- 6.3 **Workshop 1 Wednesday 15th January 2020** - The engagement event is at a very early stage when we will ask the community to have their say on aspirations and opportunities for the area.
- 6.4 **Workshop 2 February 2020** - Workshop two looks to ask those being engaged how physical spaces in the urban realm should be addressed. We will be exploring the physical links in the area and where important routes and connections are. We will have identified a number of constraints and opportunities and will be seeking views on them. We will be looking for ideas for how the future of Victoria looks, particularly in terms of the mix of uses in the area. We would also like to hear ideas of what the drivers of change could be and for those engaged to begin to envisage a sense of place.
- 6.5 **Workshop 3 April 2020** - The third workshop will outline the approach to development and where potential development sites are. We will set out suggestions of balances of different users, potential scale and massing, and potential improvements to the public realm, open space and community facilities. We will look to set out and seek views on the trade-offs and choices in terms of what benefits development can bring. In that we can begin to understand the priorities of those who use and experience the area.
- 6.6 **Exhibition Late May 2020** - We will present our findings and our concept masterplan and seek final thoughts and comments for integration. While this is

the final stage in this project, this is only one phase of the development of the Place Plan, so discussions and conversations on the area are far from over.

7. Future Victoria - Governance Arrangements

- 7.1 The Place Shaping Team have worked with the Project Management Office to put in place a governance process to ensure effective management of the project across the council and the 'Victoria Partnership'. At a strategic level, Cllr Matthew Green represents WCC's interests on the Future Victoria Steering Group.
- 7.2 This group will provide high-level strategic guidance and decision making and is chaired by Sir Peter Hendy, Chairman of Network Rail. The group is scheduled to meet three times during the duration of the project.
- 7.3 Discussions will be informed by the above-mentioned engagement events and briefings from a Strategic Working Group made up of senior representatives from the Victoria Partnership whose remit is to exercise oversight and management of the programme, agreeing project deliverables while ensuring alignment with strategies and priorities.
- 7.4 A Client Team Group made up of members from across the Victoria Partnership will be responsible for effective day to day liaison, review and running of the project. We are confident this model will ensure alignment with the commercial and operational requirements of key stakeholders and provide all Council Members, officers, local residents and stakeholders with a platform for continuous engagement.

8. Victoria Place Plane – Quick-wins

- 8.1 As part of the wider Place Plan, the Place Shaping team are also working with Ward Councillors, Neighbourhood Forums and community groups to develop other important projects that have been identified in the local area. These include Victoria Street Piazza, Kings Scholars Passage, the public realm around Victoria Street and the key retail areas in Pimlico and improvements to the green spaces around Tachbrook Estate and Lillington and Longmore Community Centre. A Capital Programme Submission Request was submitted for 2020/21 to help develop these projects.
- 8.2 A Victoria Place Plan website will soon be developed to provide a central reference point for local people and stakeholders on all of the above.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact Adam Summerfield
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