



Cabinet Member Update

Committee date: 7 October 2020

Report Of: Councillor Andrew Smith

Portfolio: Cabinet Member for Environment & Highways

Report Author and Contact Details: Amy Just
ajust@westminster.gov.uk

1. Parking dispensations and income

The Council continues to offer free parking to those frontline key workers in Health and Social Care. Applications are made via the employers with only patient-facing frontline workers in essential roles eligible for the dispensation. The current scheme has been extended monthly since July and was due to end on Friday 3 October, but a three-month extension has been agreed by the Cabinet Member. The Council also offers discounted on-street parking for non-frontline Health and Social Care workers. This equates to a daily rate of £15 and can be bought on the day or in advance. Up to six days can be bought at one time. Current numbers are:

Health and Social Care	Free Parking Dispensations	Discounted Parking Permissions	Grand Total
Total	1,567	131	1,698

The Government continues to offer a national dispensation scheme of anyone working in the NHS which makes unilateral removal by an Authority difficult. Officers are working on plans over the next month to reduce the total number of dispensations, and NHS Trusts are being asked to review their current numbers to remove anyone who has moved locations or changed roles.

Officers are liaising with colleagues at RBKC to facilitate joined-up development of the permissions given the cross-over of services and NHS Trusts between the boroughs. While officers from RBKC report complaints about the impact of the dispensations, there are fewer complaints in Westminster and figures from on-street staff show capacity pressures but not overcrowding in the vicinity of major medical facilities.

No other sector receives dispensations from the Council. Dispensations for teachers were limited to 5 per school and expired at the end of the summer term. They have not been reintroduced in the new school year.

Income

Income levels within Parking have increased over recent weeks with strong recoveries in paid-for-parking and PCN issue-rates. This has seen projected end-of-year outturns increase to a shortfall of

£15.4m (17.5% on full year); a reduction in the shortfall projection of £2m in two months. This improved picture is mainly due to high demand and focused use of Marshalls.

Paid-for-Parking is now routinely back to above 90% of pre-COVID levels with trends increasing. Week 25 saw paid-for-parking at 95% of the pre-COVID levels. The issue rate of PCNs has increased to above 100% of pre-COVID levels through reviews of staff deployment models. Paid-for motorcycle parking is also showing strong figures with payment rates 50% higher than pre-COVID levels. Overall income in Week 25 was above that seen in Week 25 in 19/20; a first for this financial year. Resident parking payments are tracking above projections and look set to outperform even pre-COVID expectations.

2. Low carbon initiatives

Lighting

The installation programme remains on track despite COVID-related supply chain challenges. 5,628 LEDs had been installed across the City as of July, which is a third of the total with two years of the programme remaining.

Electric Vehicle Charge Points Installation

The Council is on track to meet its target of 1,000 charge points by the end of the financial year, principally through the procurement of a new shared power supply contract and a further rapid charger contract. The shared power supply contract was let to Siemens once again through the GULCS framework, where 450 in-column charge points have been procured along with 30 satellite posts for those areas where the lamp column type is not convertible. Introduction of other “Electric Avenue” streets will be explored following the success of the launch in March.

	4-5kW trickle charger	7kW fast charger	22kW fast charger	50kW rapid charger	Total
Current provision	322	153	16	6	488
31 March 2021	802	153	16	33	1,004

The Council has also commissioned work to look at the viability of providing charging solutions for Council estates, schools and other Council-owned land again through the Highways’ contractor.

The aim is to look at eight potential sites where there is an established demand, with the aim of introducing charging before 31 March 2020. As part of this, a broad range of alternative solutions are being looked at in order to consider solutions that best complements the parking behaviours of users, the power output capability from the property as well as the cost and revenue implications of the available arrangements.

In addition, City Highways is working with the Highways contractor (FMC), to introduced charging infrastructure to support scheme works. This will result in the introduction of charging points to support FMC using electrically powered machinery, rather than diesel, to allow them to complete the works, with the charge point remaining as a legacy point to be incorporated into the wider publicly accessible network of chargers in the City.

3. Highway Installation Programme – Borough-wide 20mph scheme

The rollout of signs is now 95% completed and completion is ahead of schedule. Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) Programme locations are to be determined based on historic speeding data held by the Council and via Councillor/resident complaints of occurrences of speeding. VAS currently installed on the highway will also contribute to the historic speed data held and will be collated and analysed.

The installation programme is being supported by a full communications programme to alert residents, visitors and other highway users that the speed limit is changing. For example, plans for the erection of Lamp Column banners are progressing well and should be on the street within four weeks. Other communications projects include 20mph roundel stickers on Veolia refuse vehicles and use of sustained social media engagement is also progressing.

4. Movement Strategy

The council's Movement Strategy response to coming out of lockdown to support residents, workers and businesses was split into two phases.

Phase 1 focussed on strategic walking and cycling routes, transport hubs and high streets to support the opening of non-essential retail in mid-June. Approximately 50 schemes were delivered that focused on footway widening to enable the public to have enough space to socially distance on the pavements, and the introduction of key cycle routes to enable people to travel safely and not have to use public transport.

The schemes were introduced on a temporary basis (three months) and were reviewed mid-August. The footfall had not increased at the pace that was originally predicted and the decision was taken to remove many of the footway widening schemes. The exceptions are Oxford Street, Regent Street and Piccadilly. The cycle schemes (all signs and lines only) have remained in place and are subject to further review.

An interim scheme for Regent Street is being developed to replace the barriers with temporary tarmac and kerbs ahead of Black Friday. The scheme resolves some outstanding issues with kerbside access and accessibility and is fully funded by The Crown Estate. The scheme will be installed under experimental traffic orders and will be monitored closely before a decision is taken on whether to install the scheme permanently.

Phase 2 focused on hospitality and supporting businesses by providing outdoor dining. Outdoor dining was provided on 80 streets through either timed closures or footway extensions. This element of the Movement Strategy has been very successful. Schemes are planned to be removed at the end of October.

The Movement Strategy has been funded by the council, with funding sought from TfL, DfT and landowners to offset some of the council expenditure.

5. Public Realm

The council's capital programme for public realm has continued to be delivered over the summer and autumn. The soft and hard landscaping scheme at Christchurch Gardens was completed in September, which has opened up this green space with new seating greenery and water fountain. Schemes at Portman Square and Rupert Street were also completed which included upgraded paving, and lighting at Rupert Street.

Works commenced on junction improvements at Ladbroke Grove and Harrow Road in September, with the aim to complete in December, alongside cycling facilities at the Strand and Savoy junction. Other schemes completed at 20 Grosvenor Square and Beechcroft House on Shirland Avenue.

The team are continuing to deliver the capital programme which includes Strand Aldwych and the Royal Albert Hall. Following the success of the Movement Strategy, Low Traffic Neighbourhoods are being explored for the Hyde Park Estate, Pimlico and Covent Garden.

6. Rental E-scooter Trial

A Cabinet Member report on Westminster’s participation on the TfL-led pan-London rental e-scooter trial is expected for a formal decision in October. TfL is the lead authority and will lead on the proposal, administration and centralised monitoring of the scheme. Officers from various London boroughs have been involved in the development of the proposal and specification for the London pilot to ensure consistency throughout the trial area, which will cross between multiple boroughs and will avoid a patchwork and failure of the existing dockless cycle hire schemes. Regulatory issues are to be resolved by the DfT and it is anticipated the earliest start date for London will be February 2021. TfL will be publishing tender material in October, once the London pilot receives DfT approvals and individual boroughs will have the opportunity to call-off contracts with the successful operators of the scheme.

The trial has a duration of 12 months and will only allow DfT type-approved rental e-scooters to be temporarily legally used on the same road space as a standard push-cycle. Private e-scooter remain to be illegal over the course of the trial and enforcement of any illegal behaviours will be exercised by the MET Police under the Road Traffic Act 1988.

7. Waste

As detailed in the graph below, 121 complaints were received in August. This was down for the third month in a row and was also lower than the number of complaints recorded in the same month in 2018 and 2019.

Refuse Complaints by Month and Year



Officers continue to work closely with Veolia to resolve the root cause of these complaints. It is considered that complaints are low due mainly to the fact that far fewer collections are taking place. There is also additional capacity in the service due to the decrease in tonnes of waste being collected, meaning that the crews are less stretched than in normal times.

Waste tonnages are down overall as a result of the impact of the pandemic on businesses. Household waste levels have slightly increased, but not to levels seen in other London boroughs. As a result, some collection resource has been diverted to residential areas to help maintain the streets cleanliness.

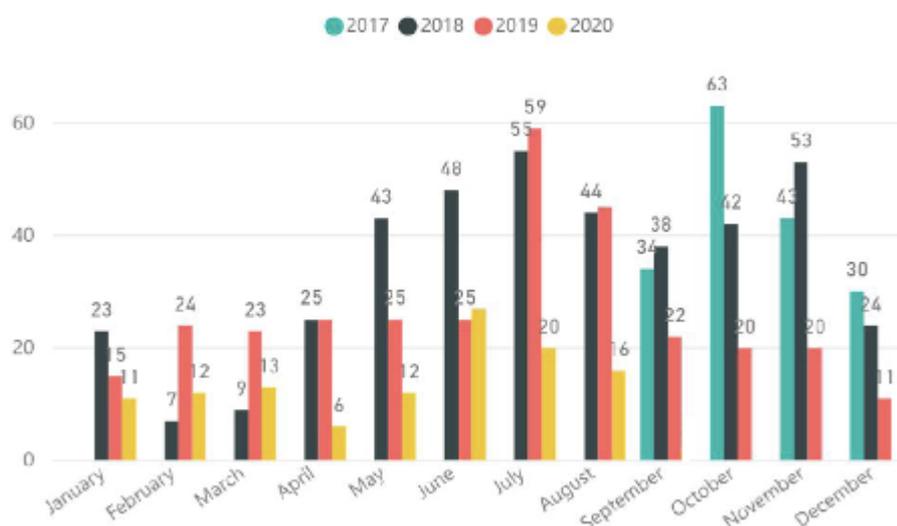
Food Waste

The results from the food waste trial have exceeded expectations thus far. More food is being separated by environmentally conscience residents than anticipated, and the reduction in rubbish collections to once a week has not impacted negatively on the cleanliness of the streets. Residents have also found that the reduction in rubbish collections has not been as disruptive as anticipated.

8. Street Cleansing Performance

As detailed in the graph below, 16 complaints were received in August which continues the trend this year for consistently low levels of complaints against the service.

Streets Complaints by Month and Year



9. Animal Warden Service

Westminster is the first authority in the country to achieve awards in all four categories of the RSPCA's Pawprints scheme. This recognises good practice from local authorities, housing providers and contingency planners in relation to animal welfare. The PawPrints Scheme celebrates good practice by rewarding those organisations exceeding basic and statutory service requirements with the aim of achieving higher animal welfare standards. It covers four areas of service provided by the public sector that has some impact on animal welfare:

- Stray dog services – gold award
- Housing – gold award
- Licensing – gold award
- Contingency planning – bronze award