



# City of Westminster

## Communities, City Management and Air Quality Policy and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date:</b>	20 July 2023
<b>Portfolio:</b>	City Management & Air Quality
<b>The Report of:</b>	Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg
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### **1. Key decisions made in the preceding period since my last Policy & Scrutiny report:**

- Contract award for the cleansing and maintenance of public conveniences
- Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract with Veolia ES Ltd
- Parking Fee Structure Review

**The following report includes my priorities and delivery progress to date on:**

## **2. City Management**

### **2.1 Parking**

#### **2.11 Mobilisation Update**

The mobilisation of the contracts across, 5 different lots, including a new technology provider, progressed smoothly and on time. Since going live there, has been a constant effort by all to ensure the technology is stabilised and that providers can operate the contracts as required and meet their KPIs. Officers are currently in the process of mobilising the Parking Suspension system which for the first time will be a system fully integrated into the wider suite of software. This is due to go live on 10 July and is the final piece of the mobilisation. Following this a full roadmap for the next 18 months will be produced and agreed with software supplier, FGL.

#### **2.12 Back-Office backlog and actions taken to fix it**

While the transition to the new software has been substantially successful there has been a knock-on effect on back-office processing times for Parking appeals, correspondence and Permits caused by a short-term increase in processing times for historic items. When combined with increases in calls due to questions over how the new system works this has led to increased call wait times and slower responses to appeals, correspondence and Permit applications. Officers have produced FAQ videos that are now shared on the Council website and NSL are providing short-term additional resources to bring down the spike over the coming couple of months.

#### **2.13 Move to Electric Scooters**

NSL have now completed transition of their moped fleet to one that is fully EV, taking 15 petrol mopeds out of use and replacing them with clean vehicles with zero tail-pipe emissions. The petrol mopeds are being donated by NSL to the City Council's partners to support deliveries for local food banks. Delays in the international supply chain for EV cars means they have not been able to swap their half dozen cars used for the Parking service from petrol to EV as expected but this is on track for a change by mid-summer.

#### **2.14 Virtual Permits**

The City Council has now moved to virtual Permits for our residents. This model, as already seen in all neighbouring Boroughs, will apply to any new or replaced Permits issued from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. It will save the Council money on administration and reduce paper waste.

#### **2.15 EV update**

Expansion and improvement of the network of EV charge points in Westminster is continuing. The fourth round of Lamp Column Charge Point (LCCP) installations for residents nears completion and we are around 50 LCCPs away from the planned 1,000 intended from the round 4 programme. Upon completion, there will be approximately 2,250 LCCPs in total throughout the City of Westminster at a ratio of 3.5 resident owned EVs to each LCCP. The programme to upgrade our legacy fast charging points continues and this will result in large scale upgrade from 7kW units to dual socket 22kW charge points. The programme will increase the number of EV bays in this network by approximately 30, resulting in a fast charger network of 228 bays in total upon upgrade completion, of which 75% will deliver a 22kW output. Rapid charge point expansion in the city continues too and we now have 28 on the public highway with 3 more planned for introduction in the summer. The Cabinet Member has approved the Action Plan for 2023/24, where the focus is upon the further expansion in the number of rapid chargers available on the highway. The aim is to procure up to 40 as these units are in high demand and are underrepresented in the city by comparison with other charge point types. Funding opportunities are being explored, including through the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund made available by the government, where an Expression of Interest has already been submitted by the City Council.

#### **2.16 Concern Over Cashless Parking Trends**

There has been much recent media attention focussing on the practice of local councils nationwide withdrawing their cash payment options for on-street parking. This is due to the discontinuation of 3G networks and the resultant cost to the authorities of updating their existing on-street payment machinery to accommodate this. WCC was one of the first local authorities (if not *the* first) to withdraw its on-street cash payment facilities back in 2009. Because of this we have been subjected to many of the recent press enquiries on the subject and mentioned in some of the media coverage. However, despite the media's narrative that cashless systems may discriminate against the elderly or those without a smartphone, this has not been borne out by our experience. In fact, since the initial cutover period we have seen very few complaints and objections in this regard, although it should be noted that since 2009 we have continued to support the on-street transactions with the ability for customers to pay via phone-call rather than relying solely on use of Apps. The City Council also has the option to use scratch cards as a payment method which can be purchased by cash via WCC libraries.

#### **2.2 Food Waste Recycling Update**

The city-wide roll-out of a food waste collection service has now been completed with 68,000 households having direct access to the service. The on-street food waste bins in areas where residents could not have a 'doorstep collection' have been a particular success and bin collection frequencies have been increased to 2-3 times per week to manage the large quantities of food waste being deposited. An additional 8 new food waste neighbourhood bin

sites were installed at start of July based on suggestions from residents and Members bringing the total to 39 neighbourhood sites across 16 wards.

A new 'on-demand' food waste service is also being launched during w/c 31<sup>st</sup> July. This new service is being launched in **St James's, West End and Marylebone** wards for residents who can only place their food bin directly onto the pavement due to a lack of external space. Residents will be able to book a 2-hour slot for food waste to be directly collected from the communal front door of their property to minimise the time that bins are left out. This is the first time the council has operated an 'on demand' service and officers are currently exploring further potential uses for this technology (e.g., collecting hazardous household waste, small electrical appliances etc.).

### **2.3 Electric Waste and Recycling Fleet**

Building works at the council's new 'Electric Waste & Recycling Depot' at Landmann Way near Bermondsey have now been completed and the site officially opened on 19<sup>th</sup> July. Forty new fully electric waste and recycling trucks are currently being received in batches of 5 vehicles per week from the manufacturer in Warwick and put into service immediately. All forty vehicles will be fully operational by the end of August.

The electric vehicles will charge their batteries by drawing electric power from an adjacent energy recovery facility which uses the waste collected from homes and businesses in Westminster. Westminster's fleet completes 50 million collections every year and each electric vehicle saves up to 89% CO<sub>2</sub>e compared to a diesel-powered vehicle. Smart charging will allow the site to support the National Grid by receiving power to charge the vehicles at non-peak times to maximise local resources and strengthen the Grid's resilience.

### **2.4 Dockless Bikes**

To address the growing issues caused by dockless bikes on our footways, a mandatory parking bay model is being proposed across our highway network. The foundation of the scheme proposed is built upon the provision of at least one parking bay per 300m, with additional bays being implemented in higher demand areas. The proposal for the initial network is for between 200-220 bays to be established for both dockless bike and e-scooter parking. This will offer approximately 3,000 parking spaces for both rental e-scooters and dockless bikes moving forward, with the e-scooter capacity likely to increase from 850 to 1,200, and capacity for dockless bikes being approximately 1,800.

A two-tranche delivery is proposed with parking zones G, E, F and D (West End, St James's, Marylebone and Victoria area) estimated to commence in operation by late August 2023, and parking zones A, B and C delivered in tranche 2, by late October 2023.

We have just commenced an informal consultation with ward members and amenity societies which ended on 11 July and at the time of writing seven have responded with outline questions about the proposed locations. A full summary of member comments will be produced. At Informal Cabinet on Monday 10 July it was agreed that the proposed scheme should progress to implementation on the street, subject to a Cabinet Member Decision being taken and the dockless bike and rental e-scooter companies agreeing to proposed robust Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) agreements which include a position that relates to them contributing towards our costs.

### **2.5 Westminster Bus Network Changes**

The 29 April Central London Bus Changes programme was implemented by TfL. To date officers have not realised any network concerns and that no concerns have been raised for their attention.

There are no immediate TfL Bus Network changes proposed for the City of Westminster. Proposals to greatly develop outer London bus services are being developed by TfL including its 'Superloop' network of outer radial/ and some express routes.

## **2.6 Regent Street**

The visioning and objective setting work steam for the permanent scheme for Regent Street is underway, launched on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> July. The engagement phase includes opportunities for residents, workers, businesses and visitors to have their say, including a series of workshops over the next three weeks, alongside eight pop-up events across Westminster during July and August. An online survey will also capture the views of residents and businesses in Westminster, as well as those from across London, the UK and internationally.

The current engagement is the start of a conversation around the future of Regent Street, alongside what we are learning about the street today, as well as what residents, workers, businesses and visitors tell us as part of this first round of engagement, to shape the future vision and scheme for Regent Street.

This process will culminate in a final vision and set of evidence-based project objectives for consideration and approval in the autumn 2023.

## **2.7 Proposed Cycle Schemes**

Non cycle route projects that have advanced include the signature of our new Cycle Services contract for our cycle training, Dr Bike and other activities to promote cycling. This will last a two-year period and a 'Value for Money In-housing' of our service will commence in September. We continue to implement Cycle Stands and Residential Cycle Hangars on the street with the conclusion of public consultation on 60 new secure cycle parking locations in July 2023. Associated installation starts in August 2023. Additionally, one new Santander Cycle Docking Station was opened in Maida Vale with four more to follow over the next two years.

The Cycle Route Programme continues to progress with 18 proposed routes in development. This includes consultation on proposals to make over 12km of temporary 'covid' cycle lane permanent starting with the recent 'Paddington Area' consultation and continuing in July with Buckingham Palace Road and Lupus Street consultations. Consultation of Cycleway 43 took place between May and June 2023 (see below) and Cycleway 51 (southern section) and Abingdon Street is scheduled to start in September 2023.

## **2.8 C43 Cycleway Update**

In early 2023, Cycleway 43 proposals were reviewed against the latest cycle infrastructure guidance (LTN1/20) to revise and then consult on updated proposals. Public consultation took between 15<sup>th</sup> May and 25<sup>th</sup> June following a period of 'pre-engagement' with key local stakeholders including Ward Cllrs and Residents Associations. The consultation received over 1400 feedback responses following promotion via local postcard drop, in-person and online Q&A sessions, lamp column wraps along the route and social media & e-newsletter engagement. Analysis of responses is underway and expected to conclude in early August 2023.

## **2.9 CCTV**

We appointed Vodafone (and Idefigo) to provide us a 12-month pilot of overt Waste CCTV in late 2022. This followed an earlier trial with another company in 2019. The attraction of the offer from Vodafone was the use of AI to 'learn' what was flytipping/incorrect presentation of waste versus correct waste practices. The project went live from the first week of February 2023. We were clear from the outset that these cameras were likely to be most useful if vehicles were identified being used to commit the flytipping offence as it would potentially

give us the registered keeper (assuming the registration number was captured) – we were also clear that CCTV was unlikely to assist with other offences from people dumping waste when there was no vehicle involved as we would be unlikely to be able to identify them. Flytipping is a criminal offence and therefore must be the criminal standard of evidence.

When the cameras were initially installed, we were flooded with notifications which was to be expected. Since that initial 'go live' date, the Artificial Intelligence has been learning what represents a fly tipping event. This is a somewhat slow learning process because it has to identify different types of items being taken to sites i.e., bags, fridges, mattresses etc. However, the library of fly tipping items is building up and as a result, we are now receiving more accurate triggers around events. Unfortunately, we also get a lot of messages where waste has been in situ for some time and a vehicle has passed the site creating a new trigger, so officers are having to review the footage to find the original offence. We have no dedicated resource to review footage, this is done by City Inspectors in the relevant Wards.

Warlock Road is the most prolific site for fly tipping with images showing people taking items to the bins at all times of the day and night. Unfortunately, the majority of these events do not include vehicles and relate to persons carrying items to the bins, so it is not possible to identify the offenders. We have do however have one 'live case' ongoing where the alleged offender was caught on CCTV and the vehicle registration checked via DVLA. The owner of the vehicle has named the 'user' who has agreed to attend an interview under caution. We have recently (5/7/23) identified a further potential offence where a vehicle has been used and a registration number captured.

Between 09.02.23 and 26.06.23 we have had a number of 'false triggers' as below:

Denbigh Place	138 triggers
Foley Street	21 triggers
Warlock Road	123 triggers

In terms of Denbigh Place and Foley Street both locations have historically had issues, but it would appear that behaviours have changed reducing the incidences of fly tipping. As a result, these cameras are in the process being relocated to new hotspots due to lack of activity. The CCTV in Warlock Road in particular has identified a number of actionable fly tipping events, however they do not all include vehicles or where we suspect they have used vehicles the vehicle has not been parked within the camera arc, so we have not been able to pursue those cases.

We will undertake a review of the pilot towards the end of the pilot lifecycle. Consideration will also be had of inclusion of fly tipping in the scoping of wider CCTV provision in Westminster.

### **3. Air Quality**

#### **3.1 Air Quality Action Plan**

Air pollution levels across Westminster continue to improve. We have very recently ratified the data from our real-time monitoring network for 2022, which shows that we meet the annual legal objective levels for particulate matter at all our automatic monitoring stations, while we meet annual nitrogen dioxide targets at eight of our 10 automatic monitoring stations.

#### *Five year trends in Westminster's nitrogen dioxide emissions*

Of the 10 automatic monitoring stations that measure Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), seven have continuous data since 2018. For these stations, the five-year trend shows an overall

reduction in annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> of 45%. The largest reductions were seen at our Strand and Marylebone Road sites, with a 60% and 51% reduction in NO<sub>2</sub> levels respectively.

For the same time period, in 2018 there were 78 exceedances of the one-hour NO<sub>2</sub> objective (reflecting serious short-term spikes in pollution levels). However, in 2022 there was only one such exceedance.

#### *Five year trends in Westminster's Particulate Matter emissions*

For the same 2018-2022 five-year period, annual Particulate Matter (PM) emissions also reduced across Westminster, although at a smaller rate than NO<sub>2</sub>. There was an average 18% reduction in PM<sub>10</sub> emissions for monitors covering this five year period, and an 8% reduction in PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions (albeit from a sample size of only two monitors for PM<sub>2.5</sub>).

#### *London and national context*

Directly comparing Westminster's progress on air quality to that of London as a whole is difficult due the availability and accessibility of data across the London as a whole. While not directly comparable, a study produced by the GLA in 2021 showed that overall, London's NO<sub>2</sub> levels decreased by 21% in the five year period 2016-20. Recent work by the GLA has focused on the impact of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) and of the Covid pandemic on emissions in London. It is estimated to that NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations are 21% lower than they would have been in inner London (and 46% in central London) without the ULEZ.

Nationally, Defra produces statistics showing overall UK trends. For the comparable five year period 2018-22, nationally NO<sub>2</sub> levels in urban areas reduced by an average of 25%, and national PM<sub>10</sub> levels in urban areas reduced by an average of 7.5%. This shows that emissions in pollution levels in Westminster far exceed those being seen on average across the UK.

#### *Forthcoming Air Quality Action Plan*

However, as a council we have committed in our Fairer Westminster strategy to meeting the much more stringent World Health Organisation guidelines for air quality, and so there is much more work to be done to improve the quality of the air we all breathe. As part of this, we are currently producing a new Air Quality Action Plan, which will go to public consultation in the autumn, and which will guide our actions in this important area over the next five years. While continuing to focus on important sources of pollution from transport, the built environment, and from construction and development, the new Action Plan will include brand new areas of focus, from reducing commercial cooking emissions, to tackling indoor air quality, to finding new ways to empower and engage with our communities, businesses and schools.

### **3.2 Clean Air Day**

Cllr Dimoldenberg visited St Mary's Bryanston Square Primary school (one of our School Streets) where they had arranged a mini street festival with music, games and scooters to play with. Paul then hosted an assembly for 65 children aged 6 – 11 about pollution and what the council has done to improve air quality. This went very well as the children were highly engaged. The Communications team prepared a WCC branded colouring in sheet with our 5 new Air Quality Action Plan priorities on the reverse, for parents to read when the children take it home. They also updated the Air Quality webpage with the new 5 priorities and created an animation for social media highlighting some of our key achievements for air quality over the past year. They produced a video of Paul at the school event for social media and newsletters to show that air quality is a key priority and that we want to engage with the community. The posts got very high engagement with the video getting over 700 views. Cllr Dimoldenberg also visited an event hosted by Northbank BID on Strand Aldwych.

### **3.3 Anti-Idling in Westminster**

Following engagement between Officers and local groups (such as Clean Air Bayswater) action will be taken over the coming months to arrange walkabouts with on-street enforcement teams and resident groups. We are also investigating the potential for informal signage schemes across the borough, which will be focused on awareness raising rather than enforcement, due to the ongoing statutory constraints and restrictions that exist around idling enforcement. Officers are also investigating the potential for formal DfT approved anti-idling signage in highly localized hotspots: a part of Tothill Street by Harris Academy Sixth Form is one option being explored.

### **3.4 School Streets Programme**

All 11 trial School Streets have now been made permanent through the Traffic Management Order process. The Road Safety Officer is now drafting new criteria for the Design and Implementation of five new School Streets each year. These criteria will be considered by Cllr Dimoldenberg from September onwards ideally through the holding of a workshop with officer colleagues. Funding is secured through the Capital Programme for this ongoing delivery.

### **3.5 Air Quality delivery projects**

The council is also continuing to deliver a number of air quality related projects, several of which are the result of our successful leveraging of external funding:

- Clean Air Walking Routes: a Defra funded project aimed at producing a new navigation tool / app to help residents reduce their exposure to poor air pollution while encouraging active travel throughout the city. We are currently in a user research phase for this project to create the specification to go out to procure a developer to work with us in creating the navigation tool / app.
- London-wide wood burning project: a Defra funded project we are a partner on that is conducting research on indoor emissions caused by wood burning stoves. There is major communications activity for this project planned for the autumn to coincide with increased wood burning during the colder months.
- Smarter Greener Logistics: a Defra funded project, led by Westminster but delivered by Cross River Partnership with 26 partner organisations, which is focusing on urban logistics hubs, cargo bike and walking delivery services, and other aspects of reducing emissions associated with logistics.
- Indoor Air Quality Monitoring pilot: we are in the process of procuring a number of indoor air quality monitors, which we will be providing to a wide variety of stakeholders (including residents, schools and businesses) on a loan basis. Feedback on the ease and usability of these monitors will inform the second stage of the project, which will be to produce guidance on reducing indoor air pollution in different environments.

### **3.6 No Mow May**

Plantlife's 'No Mow May' campaign called for green spaces to not be mowed for the entirety of May to provide a space for nature to thrive in the height of Spring. The council supported the campaign this year by not mowing grass on all housing estates and a selection of parks to allow plants to grow and pollinators to flourish.

Many residents across the borough have provided positive feedback commenting on the increase in diversity of plants and flowers in their local green spaces. Working with partners, including Continental Landscapes, the council is now exploring ways to prolong the biodiversity benefits.