



City of Westminster

Committee Agenda

Title: **Children, Environment and Leisure Policy and Scrutiny Committee**

Meeting Date: **Monday 18th September, 2017**

Time: **7.00 pm**

Venue: **Room 3.1, 3rd Floor, 5 Strand, London, WC2 5HR**

Members: **Councillors:**

Andrew Smith (Chairman)
Rita Begum
Iain Bott
Melvyn Caplan
Peter Cuthbertson
Nick Evans
Aicha Less
Robert Rigby

Elected voting representatives

Aki Turan, Parent Governor
Annie Ee, Parent Governor

Co-opted Voting Representatives

Brenda Morrison, Church of England
Diocese Representative
Vacant, Roman Catholic Diocesan Board
Representative

Co-opted Non-voting Representatives

Eugene Moriarty, Headteacher,
St Augustine's High School
Ann Townshend, Headteacher, St
Barnabas Primary School



Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussion Part 1 of the Agenda. Admission to the public gallery is by ticket, issued from the ground floor reception at City Hall. If you have a disability and require any special assistance please contact the Senior Committee and Governance Officer, (details listed below) in advance of the meeting.



An Induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter. If you require any further information, please contact the Committee Officer, Sarah Craddock.

**scraddock@westminster.gov.uk; 020 7641 2770
Corporate Website: www.westminster.gov.uk**

Note for Members: Members are reminded that Officer contacts are shown at the end of each report and Members are welcome to raise questions in advance of the meeting. With regard to item 2, guidance on declarations of interests is included in the Code of Governance; if Members and Officers have any particular questions they should contact the Head of Committee and Governance Services in advance of the meeting please.

AGENDA

PART 1 (IN PUBLIC)

1. MEMBERSHIP

The Director of Law to report that Councillor Gotz Mohindra was substituting for Councillor Robert Rigby.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of interest by Members and Officers of any personal or prejudicial interests.

3. MINUTES

To agree the minutes of the meetings held on 21 June 2017.

(Pages 1 - 6)

4. TRACKERS AND WORK PROGRAMME

a) To note the progress in implementing the Committee's Recommendation and Action Trackers.

b) To provide comment and input into the Work Programme for 2017/18.

(Pages 7 - 16)

5. CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, SPORTS AND COMMUNITY

Councillor David Harvey (Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community) to update the Committee on current and forthcoming issues in his Portfolio.

(Pages 17 - 24)

6. CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES, YOUNG PEOPLE

Councillor Richard Holloway (Cabinet Member for Children, Families, Young People) to update the Committee on current and forthcoming issues in his Portfolio.

(Pages 25 - 32)

**7. VOLUNTARY & COMMUNITY SECTOR SUPPORT -
RECOMMISSIONING OF THE SERVICE AND WIDER
STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

(Pages 33 - 68)

To review and contribute to the draft Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy and the relet of the Voluntary and Community Sector support contract.

**8. OPEN SPACES AND BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY: DRAFT
FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

**(Pages 69 -
110)**

To review and input into the draft strategy.

9. REPORTS OF ANY URGENT SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

Verbal Update (if any)

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS
URGENT**

**Charlie Parker
Chief Executive
8 September 2017**

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CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

**CHILDREN, ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE
POLICY & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
21 JUNE 2017
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children, Environment and Leisure Policy & Scrutiny Committee** held on Monday 21 June at 7pm at **Westminster City Hall, 5 Strand, London WC2 5HR.**

Members Present: Councillors Andrew Smith (Chairman), Rita Begum, Iain Bott, Melvyn Caplan, Nick Evans, Aicha Less and Robert Rigby.

Co-opted Members: Louise McCullough and Ann Townshend.

Also present: Councillor David Harvey (Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community) and Councillor Richard Holloway, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Young People.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Peter Cuthbertson, Eugene Moriarty, Brenda Morrison, Annie Ee and Aki Turan.

1. MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 It was noted that there were no changes to the Membership.
- 1.2 The Chairman welcomed Councillor David Harvey (Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community) and Councillor Richard Holloway (Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Young People) to the meeting.
- 1.3 The Chairman advised that Councillor David Harvey (Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community) was at the meeting to observe and participate in the Committee's discussion. Any questions that Members had regarding his portfolio would be placed on the Committee's Action Tracker.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

2.1 No further declarations of interests in respect of items to be discussed were made, other than those noted in the circulated schedule as set out below in paragraph 2.2.

2.2 Table of Member's interests tabled at the Committee Meeting was as follows:

Councillor/Member of the Children, Environment and Leisure P&S Committee	Organisation	Nature of Interest
Iain Bott	Paddington Academy	Governor
	One Westminster	Non-Voting Member of the Board
Melvyn Caplan	Local Area Board for Career Academy at Paddington Academy	Board Member
Louise McCullough,	St Vincent de Paul Primary School	Governor
	St Matthews CE Primary School	Governor
	Renaissance Foundation, E2	Trustee and Mentor for Young People
Robert Rigby	Our Lady's Secondary School, Hackney	Governor
	Local Authority Governor Appointment Panel	Member
	London Marathon Charitable Trust	Trustee
Ann Townshend	St Barnabas' CE Primary School	Headteacher

3. MINUTES

3.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2017 be approved for signature by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

4. ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKERS AND COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

4.1 ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKERS

4.1.1 **RESOLVED:** That the Action and Recommendation Trackers be noted.

4.2 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

4.2.1 **RESOLVED:** That the Westminster Voluntary Sector Strategy and the Review of the draft Open Spaces and Bio-Diversity Strategy be reviewed at its next meeting.

5. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION: CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, SPORTS AND COMMUNITY

5.1 The Committee received a written update from the Cabinet Member which covered current and forthcoming issues in his Portfolio.

6. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION: CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE

6.1 The Committee received a written update from the Cabinet Member who responded to questions on the following topics:

- the commitments made that no school and nursery will lose funding as a result of the National Funding Formula.
- the importance of maintaining excellence in schools and the forthcoming consultation with schools regarding their funding and budgets.
- the Young Westminster Foundation and the possible start date for the 'needs analysis' to better understand the needs of young people.
- the positive school attendance figures of Westminster schools.
- the positive on-going work to reduce the number of young people whose education status was 'not known'.

7. UPATE ON THE MARYLEBONE LOW EMISSION NEIGHBOURHOOD

7.1 The Committee received a report providing an update on Year 1 progress, the governance of the project and how monitoring and evaluation of the key projects was taking place. The Committee noted the key areas of work completed in settling up the Marylebone Low Emission Neighbourhood (LEN) and that it was established with a central focus on improving air quality.

7.2 The Committee heard how the partnership programme was managed, how the various stakeholders were responsible for delivering select programmes and how it would allow stakeholders, businesses and individuals to play a part in improving air quality for resident and those who work and visit the area. The Committee discussed that many of the programmes would be trialled in London for the first time such as the emissions-based parking pilot scheme and that the project gave the opportunity to pilot a variety of different projects. The Committee urged that marketing be used to raise awareness of the Marylebone (LEN) and that it was important to measure and evaluate the success of the projects both inside and outside of the Marylebone (LEN). The Committee noted that action was required on a London wide and national basis to have a significant impact on the air quality in the area.

7.3 **RESOLVED:** The Committee made the following comments which would be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community for consideration:

1. The Committee welcomed the report and recognised the force of local as well as national and international steps to impact on behaviour change and air quality.
2. The Committee welcomed the opportunity for experimentation and innovation in the Marylebone Low Emission Neighbourhood (LEN).
3. The Committee urged that marketing be used to raise awareness of the Marylebone Low Emission Neighbourhood (LEN) with businesses, visitors, residents, faith communities and schools in the area.
4. The Committee recognised that action was required on a London wide and national basis to have any significant impact on air quality; and that TfL may need to take bold action to address air quality on Marylebone Road.
5. The Committee highlighted the need to plan for the future for the initiative in the area and neighbouring areas following the three year term of this pilot project.
6. The Committee recognised the need to hold regular events to sustain the programmes and urged the Council to consider a regular programme of play streets.

8. ACTIVEWESTMINSTER: AN ACTIVE CITY FOR ALL: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, LEISURE AND SPORT STRATEGY 2017-2021

8.1 The Committee were given a presentation on the draft Physical Activity, Leisure and Sports Strategy which had emerged through a review of national, regional and local policy and strategy and an assessment of the key issues in

Westminster. The Committee noted that it had been designed around three key thematic areas and that the previous Strategy had resulted in a number of positive improvements and had sought to position Westminster as a genuine 'City of Sport'.

- 8.2 The Committee discussed the importance of outreach work and the promotion of everyday activities by finding venues to hold sport and leisure activities nearer to resident's homes/communities. The Committee then discussed the wider use of open spaces and the possible conflict between partners such as using parks for sport versus using the park as a quiet place for relaxation. The Committee noted that Westminster had significant sport and leisure areas and that these facilities needed to be utilised and effectively communicated and marketed to young people.
- 8.3 The Committee considered the importance of promoting health and well-being in schools and increasing the participation on informal opportunities for exercise. The Committee then noted the success of the Westminster Mile, the use of data to raise awareness of the local offer and the ambition to be the most active borough in London.
- 8.4 **RESOLVED:** The Committee made the following comments which would be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community for consideration:
1. The Committee welcomed the draft strategy and the opportunity to contribute to it in draft form.
 2. The Committee welcomed the ambition to be the most active borough in London.
 3. The Committee highlighted the importance of the range of opportunities for physical activities and not just sport.
 4. The Committee welcomed the focus on the localities and the barriers to participation and the use of data to raise awareness of the local offer.
 5. The Committee agreed the three key thematic areas of the strategy and requested that there be a broad representation of community representation as well as stakeholders on the Active Westminster Board.
9. **UPDATE ON SAFEGUARDING ISSUES** (verbal update – see agenda item 10)
- 9.1 The Chairman advised that there was nothing to report.

10. TERMINATION OF MEETING

10 .1 The meeting ended at 8.50pm

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____



Children, Environment and Leisure Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Monday 18 th September 2017
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Update on work programme and action tracker
Report of:	Julia Corkey-Director of Policy, Performance and Communications
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	All
Report Author and Contact Details:	Aaron Hardy x2894 ahardy1@westminster.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

1. This report presents the current version of the work programme for 2017/18 and also provides an update on the action tracker.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
 - Note comment on and where necessary prioritise items on the work programme
 - Note the action tracker

3. Changes to the work programme following the last meeting

- 3.1 The key change has been the rescheduling of the Libraries Advisory Board and the re-tendering of the waste, recycling and street cleansing contract items. These items have been rescheduled to more appropriate dates on officer advice.

- 3.2 A Task Group investigating the life chances of young people in Westminster has been suggested. Work is in hand on establishing an evidence-base through a mapping exercise with the evaluation and performance team looking at characteristics of and outcomes for children in Westminster. It is proposed that a Task Group would begin its work in November.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Aaron Hardy x2894

ahardy1@westminster.gov.uk

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1- Work Programme 2017/2018

Appendix 2- Action Tracker

ROUND SIX 15 TH MAY 2017		
Agenda Item	Recommendation/Action and responsible officer	Update
Item 4.1 Work Programme	That an item on the Low Emissions Neighbourhood (LEN) in Marylebone be added to the Work Programme (Muge Dindjer- Policy and Scrutiny Manager)	Completed. On the work programme for June 2017
Item 5- Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community	That the possibility of extending the opening hours of St Marys Church Yard be investigated.	The opening and closing times of parks are set by the Parks Bye-Laws so changing them is not easy as this would require a change to the bye-laws. St Marys is currently open until 9.30pm until the end of July and officers would not recommend extending this time as there is not sufficient lighting within the park once it gets dark.
	That a briefing note on future proposals for outdoor gyms including a list of where they are located in Westminster be sent to Committee Members.	Completed
	That officers contact Councillor Aicha Less to find out which outdoor gyms needed to be repaired	Completed on 7 th June 2017.
Item 7 – Review of Youth Services and Young Westminster Foundation.	That the Committee’s comments be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Young People for consideration	In Progress
Item 8- Report of the Air Quality Task Group	That the report be sent to the relevant Cabinet Members for decision, this will be primarily the Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community (but also others for some of the recommendations) for consideration and that a launch be held to inform key	The report has been finalised and was launched alongside the Council’s ‘don’t be idle’ campaign.



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	stakeholder of the recommendations and act as a call to action.	
Greener City Action Plan (2015-2025)	The Committee agreed to receive an annual update on the Greener City Action Plan.	To be programmed for June 2018.
	Members requested that the report be aimed at engaging partners in delivering outcomes and sharing best practice with the Council and that it focus on providing details on working partners and how they play a key role in delivering services.	Requested from lead officer.
	The Committee highlighted the need to prioritise issues where the Council could play a real leadership role in delivering solutions.	Requested from lead officer.

ROUND FIVE 2016 (13 MARCH 2017)		
Agenda Item	Recommendation/Action and responsible officer	Update
Item 5 – Cabinet Member Update (CYP)	That the percentage improvement of the uptake of the two year old places be sent to the Committee.	Requested
	That officers contact Councillor Less to discuss identifying hard to reach groups to make them aware of the free 2 year old child places.	Officers have been in contact with Cllr Less and additional posters have been provided to her. In addition, officers will also be attending one of the Councillors identified coffee mornings to discuss the offer with local residents.
	That the target for the uptake of the 2 year old places for 2016-2017	The target for the uptake of the 2 year old places, for



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	be sent to the Committee.	2016-2017, was 70%
	That historical data as well as statistics be taken into consideration when projecting future pupil numbers for all schools.	The GLA projections used by Westminster Council do take account of historical data when projecting future pupil numbers’.
	That an update on the progress of the Council’s FGM programme be sent to the Committee.	Requested
	That the amount of money claimed using the Payment by Results (PbR) claim system for the Troubled Families Programme be sent to the Committee.	The total monies that will be received by WCC from PBR claims for 2016/17 is £243,200 (£36k not as yet received)
Supporting Volunteering across the City	That officers get in touch with Baker Street Quarters to see how they manage their various projects using volunteers. (Ezra Wallace, Head of Corporate Policy)	Officers have made initial contact with Baker Street Quarter, but have had minimum success in getting a full response, but will continue pursue this and will update at a later meeting.
School Organisation and Investment Strategy 2017	That a briefing note be sent on the measures being taken regarding the vacancies of primary school places and the possibility of schools sharing staff. (Alan Wharton, Head of Tri-borough Asset Strategy)	This was sent to committee on 27.4.17

ROUND FOUR (6 FEBRUARY 2017)		
Agenda Item	Recommendation/Action and responsible officer	Update
Item 5 – Cabinet Member Update (CYP)	The Committee requested that the Cabinet Member agree to make securing future funding to tackle FGM one of his priorities.	Requested
Item 7 - Future Delivery of Library Service	That the terms of reference and timetable for the Westminster Libraries Commission be sent to the Committee Members. (Mike Clarke, Tri-borough Director of Libraries and Archives)	ToR have just been completed and will be circulated shortly.



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Item 8 – School Performance Report 2016

That a briefing note be sent on the possible reduction in pupil numbers in primary schools and the difficulty in projecting the necessary pupil places needed in schools.
(Ian Heggs, Tri-borough Head of Schools Commissioning)

This will be covered under the Schools Organisation Strategy item on 13 March



ROUND ONE - 21 JUNE 2017

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by:
Cabinet Member questioning	To hold to account and give 'critical friend' challenge to the portfolio holder.	Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Young People
An Update on the Marylebone Low Emission Neighbourhood	To inform the Committee of the LEN's objectives and progress in year 1 of the three year programme	Barry Smith Maria Curro
An Active City for All	Review and contribute to the development of the draft strategy	Andy Durrant Richard Barker

ROUND TWO – 18 SEPTEMBER 2017

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by:
Cabinet Member questioning	To hold to account and give 'critical friend' challenge to the portfolio holder.	Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community
Review of draft Open Spaces and Bio- Diversity Strategy	This earlier date would give committee more opportunity to contribute to earlier draft but consultation should just have closed	Rebecca Fuhr Richard Barker Mark Banks
Westminster's Voluntary Sector Strategy	To review and contribute to the draft Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy and/or VCS support contract relet.	Ezra Wallace

ROUND THREE – 20 NOVEMBER 2017

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by:
Cabinet Member questioning	To hold to account and give 'critical friend' challenge to the portfolio holder.	
Safeguarding Children Report	To review the implications of the woods review on LSCB and to examine the work of the Safeguarding Board in the last year and plans for the forthcoming year	New LSCB Chair
Looked after Children Report	Examination of the work undertaken as Corporate Parent for LAC and Care	Helen Farrell, Assistant Director for Looked After Children and Care Leavers
Review Health Visiting (jointly with AH & PP)-this could be a one off joint task group with AHPP?	To contribute to the service redesign of health visiting	
Therapy Support and early identification pathways. (Part of SEN local offer review)	To receive a report back of service review and comment on proposed redesign.	Justine May Head of Commissioning
The Libraries Commission?	Subject to appointment of Chairman. Contribution to the work of the Libraries Advisory Board	Mike Clarke

ROUND FOUR – 5 FEBRUARY 2018

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by:
Cabinet Member questioning	To hold to account and give 'critical friend' challenge to the portfolio holder.	

ROUND FIVE – 19 MARCH 2018

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by:
Cabinet Member questioning	To hold to account and give 'critical friend' challenge to the portfolio holder.	
School organisation and Investment Strategy	To review the SOIS-Annual item	
Education Report- Annual item-hold the meeting in a school	To evaluate the key areas of success and areas to be developed in the Annual Education Report	

ITEMS TO BE SCHEDULED

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by:
Re-tendering strategy for the next Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract (from Sept. 2020)?	For committee to be briefed on early thoughts for this strategy and provide feedback.	Mark Banks
The Libraries Advisory Board	Evaluation of the work of the Libraries Commission	Mike Clarke

TASK GROUPS

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by:
Life Chances- Potential Task Group-TBC	To consider the life chances of young people in the City and how they are affected by their characteristics.	

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Children, Environment and Leisure Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Monday 18th September 2017

Report of: Cllr David Harvey

Portfolio: Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community

Report Author and Contact Details: Cllr David Harvey
davidharvey@westminster.gov.uk
020 7641 2228

1. Sports and Leisure

Paddington Recreation Ground- improvement works

1.1 As part of the Council's leisure contract, Everyone Active is investing approximately £1.7m in a variety of works at Paddington Recreation Ground. Works include:

- Extended and improved fitness facilities with new equipment, which is now completed and open for business
- New public toilet facilities, which are now open
- An extended external seating area has now been completed
- An improved café entrance, for which quotes are now being reviewed

1.2 Officers have also commissioned a separate programme of works to create a new wildlife and environmental area. This will accommodate educational programmes for local children as well as an enhanced tranquil space for park users. The works are progressing well and are due to finish in September, with launch events being considered.

Active Westminster Strategy

1.3 Following the discussion on the strategy at the previous Committee meeting, the proposed timeline for a finalised strategy and publication for the new 'Active City for All' strategy is as follows:

- Cabinet Member report and decision – September 2017
- Website and Communications plan agreed – September/October 2017
- Strategy launch events – Dec 2017/Jan 2018

The Active Queen's Park Project: Redevelopment of Moberly & Jubilee Sports Centres

- 1.1 The Active Queen's Park project is continuing to progress well and works are on schedule for both the Moberly site and Jubilee phase 1, which includes the re-provision of 12 affordable homes. 'Phase 1' of the new residential homes at the Jubilee site will be completed later this summer and the works to deliver the new Moberly Centre are scheduled to be completed in spring 2018. The existing Jubilee Centre will remain open until Moberly is opened to the public in June 2018.

Seymour Leisure Centre

- 1.2 An extensive programme of improvement works have now commenced at Seymour Leisure Centre, which will be delivered by the Council's new leisure management contractor including:

- An extensive gym refurbishment
- Relocated and improved exercise studios
- A new health suite
- A new hot yoga studio
- Improvements to the changing rooms

The works commenced 7th August and are due for completion on 22nd Sept and at this early stage everything is progressing well and are on-track.

Improvements works at Porchester Spa

- 1.1 As previously reported, a £750,000 investment is planned at Porchester Spa as part of the new leisure contract. Following a public consultation, these plans have been revised and a stakeholder group has been created to engage regular users in the design development. The group will meet again in September to review design and cost options and it is anticipated that the improvement works to the Spa will be delivered in January 2018.

London Youth Games

- 1.1 Westminster finished in 23rd place at London Youth Games this year out of 33 London boroughs with a total of 879 points. This year's points total firmly consolidates the finishing position of 2016, which was the best for over 10 years. If the teams had scored an extra 13 points the finishing position would have been 19th, demonstrating how close the points totals were amongst the London boroughs.

Year	Points	Place
2017	879	23 rd
2016	871	22 nd
2015	771	27 th
2014	621	30 th

Summer Holiday Programmes

- 1.2 A variety of summer sports, leisure and physical activity programmes have taken place across the City including the popular 'Edutain' programme at Academy Sport, Churchill Gardens and St. Andrew's Youth Club which has been running very close to capacity. Other sports camps include hockey, multi-sports, basketball and tennis. A summary evaluation report will be provided to the Committee at its next meeting.

New Football Facilities at Paddington Green and Willberforce Schools

- 1.3 Officers are working closely with Paddington Green and Willberforce Schools to create two new synthetic football facilities available for community use.
- 1.4 The new facilities will provide enhanced opportunities for PE and School Sport and will help to meet a need for new community facilities. The procurement process for the works is progressing and it is anticipated that planning applications will be submitted when the schools return from the Summer break.

National Fitness Day

- 1.5 The Council's appointed leisure management operator, Everyone Active, has partnered with UKActive to lead on the launch of National Fitness Day which will take place on Wednesday 27th September at Paddington Recreation Ground. The event will include a 'mass participation workout' on the main green which will be led by Darcy Bussell CBE. Local schools will also be invited to take part in a variety of activities throughout the day which will be led by a high profile sporting star/champion.

2 Libraries

Libraries Advisory Board

- 2.1 The board, chaired by Chris Cotton, former CEO of the Royal Albert Hall, had its initial plenary meeting on 27th July 2017. The board is considering a draft terms of reference and work programme. Its first business meeting will be on 26th September preceded by a tour of libraries in Westminster. The board is tasked with advising and supporting the Council in developing a long-term (10 year) strategy for its library service, taking account of external development and Westminster's needs and priorities aligned to City For All. Cllr McKie and I are observers.

Registration Services

- 2.2 The Registration Service will be returning to Old Marylebone Town Hall in late November 2017. Over 800 couples have registered their interest in having a ceremony at the Town Hall and the service anticipates opening the booking diary in September 2017 for bookings from January 2018 onwards.

3 Parks, Open Spaces and Cemeteries

Green Flag and London in Bloom awards

- 3.1 Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries have retained all 23 Green Flag awards presented at the awards ceremony in Reading on the 20th July. The London in Bloom awards will be announced in September.
- 3.2 Further significant improvements have been introduced by Continental Landscapes (CLL) for the grounds maintenance contract; these are live time maintenance reporting via the CLL web portal allowing officers to see where maintenance schedules are per location. All supervisors are now inputting data via handheld PDF equipment so will be eliminating all paper records.

Hanging baskets

- 3.3 A total of 1,280 summer hanging baskets have been installed across the City with residents and businesses contributing to 500 of them.

Open Spaces and Biodiversity Strategy

- 3.4 A consultation draft of the strategy has been produced and was recently reviewed by myself and the Deputy Cabinet Member. Both the content and proposed procedural arrangements for consultation were discussed in detail. It was agreed that the strategy will be subject to full public consultation through September and into October, with an emphasis on inviting open dialogue and allowing respondents to shape the focus points of their own submissions, rather than any attempt to provide strong steer by way of highly consultation questions. In line with the aim of enabling a wide audience to engage with the document in a relatively informal way, it is intended that the consultation will be made available through Open Forum, as well as on the council website, with an email invitation to respond going to all key stakeholders.
- 3.5 Next steps will be to finalise the final 'look and feel' of the document with the Design team. This will involve commissioning some additional photography. Although this will take a little extra time, it is important that the document is visually engaging and represents the ethos of the strategy itself. This means projecting inclusivity and strongly promoting the quality, variety and myriad benefits of Westminster's open space and wildlife assets.
- 3.6 Alongside launching the strategy for consultation, contact is being made with key partners to initiate a focused discussion on biodiversity. After some loss of emphasis in this area in recent years, the council is now suggesting bringing together a multi-stakeholder 'biodiversity task group' which could work together to identify key priorities and a realistic and impactful plan of actions for the next two years. This would tide us over until the issue is due for review at on a London-wide level (at the expiry of the GLA's current plan, 'Biodiversity 2020').

4 Volunteering And Voluntary Sector

The Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) Support Service (provided by One Westminster)

- 4.1 The Procurement exercise for a new longer-term contract is in progress. A Bidder Engagement day took place on 8th August, with an open invitation to all potential bidders through Capital Resourcing. The deadline for submission of tenders closed on the 16th August and at present, officers are on target for the new contract to commence on 1st October 2017.
- 4.2 Only one tender for the contract was received, from the current provider One Westminster. Obviously we would ideally have chosen to see more competition than this, but the scenario is not all that surprising given the highly specific nature of the contract and the niche market to which it gives access. The tender is now being evaluated and scored – this process will of course be every bit as detailed and rigorous as it would have been regardless of the number of competing tenders achieved. Detailed analysis of the contents of the bid at this stage will also be instrumental in helping us to develop, with the provider if and when appointed, their plans for delivering the service against the much enhanced and expanded specification.
- 4.3 Moderation of scores took place on 23rd August, and at the time of writing a reward proposal was due for presentation to the Gate 2 panel at their 5th September meeting.

Team Westminster Do-It local website (Provided by Do-it Trust)

- 4.4 The Do-It Westminster site continues to run successfully. As at 17th August, there were 454 live opportunities in Westminster. In the week prior to that, 28 people registered their interest, 22 opportunities and 111 organisations were added. Overall, 1,578 hours have now been logged by volunteers for opportunities in Westminster.

Westminster Advice Service Partnership (WASP)

- 4.5 Citizens Advice Westminster has reported that performance for the period April to June 2017 shows that the contract continues to perform well.

This quarter saw 1,426 people access gateway advice, a 27% increase compared to the same period last year. During this quarter all contract targets were exceeded.

As a result of the continuing strong performance, officers have completed the extension of the contract to its full term - ending in mid-September 2018.

5 Community Engagement

- 5.1 The next public Open Forum will take place on 18th October. Further details will be published on the website in due course.

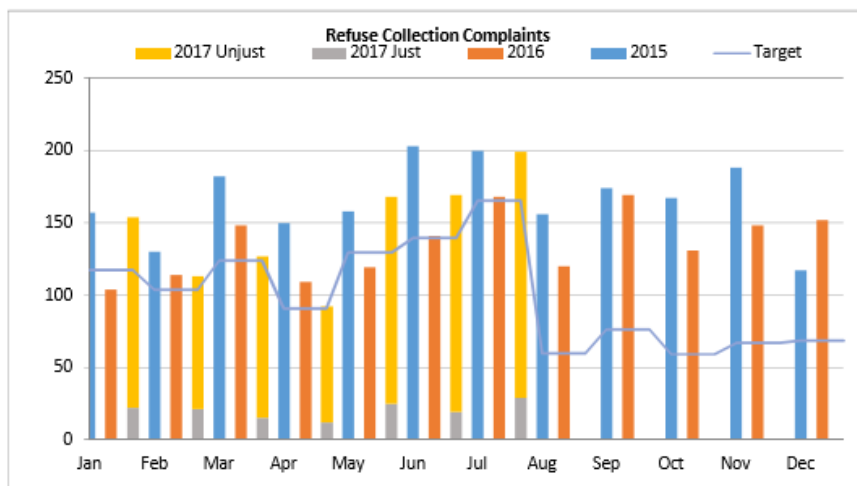
6 Waste

Street Cleansing

6.1 At the time of writing, preparations are well advanced for the Notting Hill Carnival clean-up plan. An estimated 200 tonnes of waste will be collected during the Carnival weekend, following an operation which will involve 170 workers and 60 vehicles. Although well practiced in clearing up after this event, it remains a real challenge, working through the night to return this area to its pristine condition.

The waste collected will be converted into energy that will go back into the National Grid. The 200 tonnes will generate enough energy to power 80,000 hot showers or travel 84km on the Tube – four times the length of the Victoria line.

Waste and Recycling



Refuse	
This Month	
Jul-16	168
Jul-17	199
% Var	18%
Target	165
Status	Behind
YTD	
2016	903
2017	1027
% Var	14%
Target	869
Status	Behind

6.2 As shown in the above table, complaints were up in July against the same month in 2016. here have been a little over 100 additional complaints made between January and the end of July in 2017 against the same period last year. The reason for this increase in complaints is not clear, as there has been no change to service levels. It is most likely to be due to an increased use of the Report It online tool, which makes reporting issues much easier for our customers.

6.3 Westminster carries out more than one million waste and recycling collection per week. The 199 complaints in July equates to 4.38 complaints per 100,000 collections made successfully. However, the team will continue to investigate possible reasons.

6 Environment

Greener City Action Plan (GCAP)

6.1 The second year update will come to the Committee in October 2017.

- 6.2 Two public consultations are about to begin on our long-term flooding strategy and our strategic flood risk assessment which will contribute to the revision of the city plan (currently underway).
- 6.3 At the time of writing, we were about to run a high-profile thought leadership event at the House of Lords on 5th September to further explore the issue of what more can be done to promote better air quality in Westminster (building on this committee's Air Quality Task Group report published in June). I will feed back in due course.
- 6.4 The Mayor (Greater London Authority) has recently published his "Integrated Environment Strategy" and we will be compiling our response by November 2017. If any member of the committee would like to feedback on any specific area I would welcome this; otherwise we will ensure that this is linked to the GCAP moving forward.

Engine Idling

- 6.5 On 26th June the Council launched the #DontBeldle air quality campaign, centring on a school assembly at St Edward's Catholic Primary School, chosen due to its location in Marylebone within our Low Emission Neighbourhood. Along with 200 Key Stage 2 (7-11 year olds) pupils, the event was attended by the Leader, Marylebone LEN stakeholders, TfL and GLA representatives, the actor Nigel Havers who publicly supported the campaign, and myself.

The launch attracted nationwide attention and featured on BBC Radio 4's PM programme, ITV's Good Morning Britain, and a number of national newspapers.

An ongoing social media campaign encourages those most likely to idle and those most likely to suffer as a result of idling to pledge their support and to sign the #DontBeldle pledge. To date, a number of high-profile backers have shown public support for the campaign, including F1 driver Valtteri Bottas and the Defra Minister Jesse Norman.

- 6.6 With the support of the parking team, the Council is running a calendar of anti-idling action days where volunteers engage with drivers and passers by spreading the campaign messages. The list of forthcoming anti-idling action days are outlined on the following page.
- 6.7 From September the Council will run a series of outreach events with schools where school children will be encouraged to create their own pollution free route to school based on the latest data from Kings College.

Low Emission Neighbourhood (LEN)

- 6.8 Following the LEN Stakeholder meeting in July 2017 there is continued progress on all aspects of the LEN's project delivery. Communications is going well, with the Twitter account doubling in followers since July; banners commissioned to go up in Marylebone High Street; George Street and Paddington Street and planned updates to the website.

- 6.9 A successful anti-idling action day for the LEN took place on 31st July. The next LEN anti-idling action day will take place on 22nd September.
- 6.10 The second Play Street with St Vincent's Primary School took place on 10th July. Over 200 children attended, with 30-50 pupils receiving cycle training for the first time and/or learning to ride a bike. Marylebone LEN planters were featured at the event, with encouraging feedback on how they educate young children on the importance of planting and air quality.
- 6.11 Feasibility studies are complete for the three urban realm schemes on Marylebone High Street; George Street and Paddington Street. A de-scoping meeting is being set up shortly
- 6.12 Engagement with businesses on deliveries and servicing by Cross River Partnership has commenced; led by Baker Street Quarter Partnership, with New West End Company, and Marble Arch BID all promoting through communication channels.
- 6.13 World Car Free Day is on 22nd September. A Community Green Street, for all residents, visitors, workers, businesses and schools will take place in Luxborough Street. The street closure is proposed to be from 3-6pm, when activities and organisations including Don't be Idle; Click. Collect. Clean Air.; temporary greening; LEN seed planting; Active Westminster; LEN partner organisations will take over the street. Engagement has begun with LEN stakeholders, neighbouring residents, and the university.
- 6.14 At of time of writing, the following events were being prepared; or aligned with; to raise awareness about the LEN:
- Cycle to Work Day 13th September
 - World Car Free Day 22nd September (as part of European Mobility Week)
 - Community Green Street 22nd September
 - Anti-Idling Action Day Day 22nd September
 - LEN Stakeholder Group 22nd September
 - Anti-Idling Action Day 31st October– Marylebone Station
 - Anti-Idling Action Day 11th December – Oxford Street and surrounding roads
 - Anti-Idling Action Day 28th February 2018 – Baker Street/ Harley Street
 - Anti-Idling Action Day 25th April 2018 – Lisson Grove
 - Anti-Idling Action Day 25th June 2018 – Marylebone High Street



Children, Environment and Leisure Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Monday 18 September 2017
Report of:	Cllr Richard Holloway
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Young People
Report Author and	Cllr Richard Holloway
Contact Details:	rholloway@westminster.gov.uk 020 7641 5772

1. Children Services

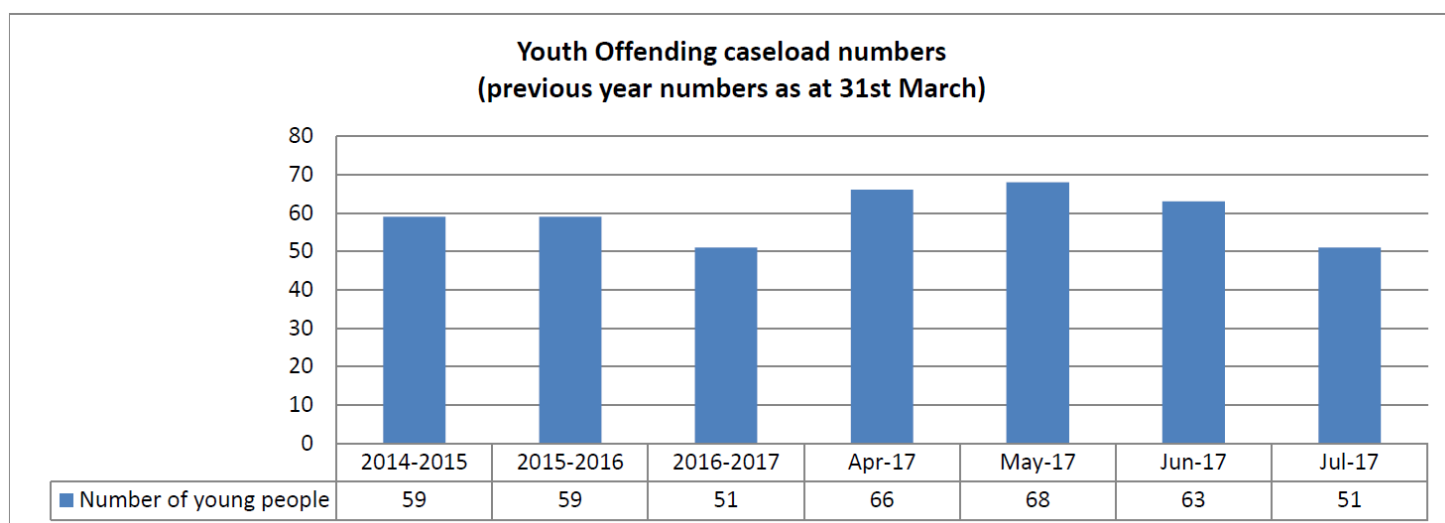
London Crime Prevention Fund Changes

- 1.1 The London Crime Prevention Fund (LCPF) will be allocated according to a new 'need and demand formula' from 2018/19. In addition, 30% of the overall LCPF will be allocated to 'co-commissioning services', rather than direct to local councils between 2018/19 and 2020/21. The effect of these changes on our LCPF funding is a 56% cut between 2017/18 and 2018/19. Further discussions are taking place on the impact of these changes on those services currently largely funded by the LCPF, most notably the Integrated Gangs Unit.
- 1.2 Westminster, in conjunction with Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham and Brent Council have led on three expressions of interest which have been submitted as bids for Co Commissioned Funding. These expressions of interest are focussed on Early Help - looking at providing intensive support for year 6 and 7 children at risk of exclusion, The Integrated Gangs Unit - aiming to extend the work of the unit to Brent, Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham, and child sexual exploitation looking to partner with Barnardos to provide specialist therapeutic services to children who display harmful sexual behaviour. We will also be supporting 7 further bids on a range of issues, led by other organisations and councils. MOPAC will advise which expressions of interest have been successful on 29 September 2017.

Social Care

- 1.3 As of 30 July 2017 there were 1,290 social care cases allocated to teams. As of 31 July 2017 there were 192 children in care in Westminster, an increase of 12% on July 2016. mainly due to the rise in Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (now 52). Our numbers of UASCs have doubled over the last 2 years significantly impacting our overall care population. At same time the number of children for which there was a Child Protection plan in place was 85. This has remained stable over the last year. The Youth Offending Team were actively working with 51 young people. We usually see a small caseload fluctuation over time.

**Youth Offending caseload numbers
(previous year numbers as at 31st March)**



Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child Refugees

- 1.4 The Council now has 52 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) in the care population. The Council's National Transfer Scheme Threshold (0.07%) is currently 28 UASCs, thus, the Council is 24 UASC over its threshold. This UASC total includes 48 legacy cases (cases held before 1/7/16). Although the Council are currently over their threshold number, Family Services are still required to assess and accommodate as Looked After Children, UASCs who present in Westminster, whilst they wait to be placed outside Westminster on the National Dispersal Rota. While Westminster remains over their quota they will not receive any direct referrals from the Home Office.

Female Genital Mutilation

- 1.6 The Council continues to work with communities affected by the practice of FGM, primarily through FGM maternity clinics and community engagement. Together with partners we provide trauma therapy to victims, and work with mothers or expectant mothers who have suffered FGM to ensure the practice is not perpetuated. We promote inter-agency and cross borough sharing of information to provide a holistic approach to combatting this problem.

- 1.7 The project has been active in maternity clinics at St Mary's hospital, Queen Charlottes hospital and, most recently, Chelsea and Westminster hospital. This activity is part of a clinic-led approach which delivers a comprehensive offer of care and protection. In accordance with mandatory reporting requirements, all concerns related to FGM are reported to Family Services where they are triaged and a decision is made as to whether a social work assessment is required.

SEN Provision

- 1.8 Under the Children and Families Act Westminster's Special Education Needs (SEN) service has a statutory requirement to produce Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) for children with special educational needs. The time limit to complete these plans is 20 weeks. The Act also requires that all SEN Statements be converted into EHCPs by May 2018. On both of these targets Westminster continues to perform below the London average.
- 1.9 In response to this we have introduced a Service Improvement Plan and provided additional funding and staff to the service. Recent Department for Education data shows that our service has improved but there is still much more to do if we are to meet our targets. The new Bi-borough Executive Director of Children's Services will chair the new SEN Progress Improvement Board which commences in September and will sit monthly to monitor the progress. In addition, in recognition of the Tri-Borough complexities of the arrangement, the DfE have provided a consultant who will offer additional support to the service.

2. Schools and Education

Examination Results

- 2.1 Our primary schools have performed exceptionally well this year. The reception cohort with a good level of development was provisionally 71% up from 69% in 2016. This mirrors the national average which also rose 2 percentage points to 71%.
- 2.2 At Key Stage 1 (7 year olds) the pupils working as expected remained stable, with a 1% increase in writing maths and 1% decrease in reading compared to 2016. The percentage of pupils assessed as working at greater depth improved in writing by 2% on 2016, the proportion of students working at this level in maths remained at 22% although reading did fall one percentage to 25%, equal to the national average. Westminster schools continue to perform above the national average in writing and maths at Key Stage 1.
- 2.3 The percentage of Key Stage 2 pupils working both as expected and at greater depth has increased compared to last year. Westminster pupils now perform above the national average in both of these categories for all subjects.

Key Stage 2
Tests (reading and mathematics) and teacher assessments (writing)

	Westminster				National			
	reading	writing	maths	RWM	reading	writing	maths	RWM
Working as expected 2017	77%	80%	84%	68%	71%	76%	75%	61%
Working as expected 2016	66%	79%	76%	58%	66%	74%	70%	53%
Working at greater depth 2017	26%	21%	31%	10%	25%	18%	23%	9%
Working at greater depth 2016	18%	19%	22%	6%	19%	15%	17%	5%

2.4 At GCSE level, it is important to note two factors. First, the results are currently provisional, incomplete and subject to re-marking and additional checks by the Department for Education. Second, further reforms to the GCSE grading system, which replaced grades A*-G with grades 9-1 limit comparability with previous results. Grades 9-4 are deemed equivalent to A*-C ('a standard pass'). The Department for Education has also introduced a strong pass measure (grades 5-9). The result we currently have are mixed, some schools have increased their standard pass percentage while others have seen a drop. However, based on provision results it does appear Westminster schools will continue to perform above the national average.

2.5 At A Level, results have remained stable overall, there has been a slight decrease in the number of pupils achieving the highest grades and slight increase in the numbers achieving passes. Again, these results are provisional and subject to change.

**A Level
Exam Results (provisional estimates)**

	Westminster		National
	2017	2016	2016
A*	9%	10%	8%
A* - A	28%	31%	26%
A* - B	59%	58%	53%
A* - C	82%	80%	77%
A* - D	95%	94%	92%
A* - E	99%	99%	98%

Pre-school Education Provision

2.6 We have successfully increased our early education capacity to facilitate the additional free 15 hours early education places for 2 year olds. All capital projects have now been completed; the latest being the creation of additional 22 spaces at Hallfield School. We are confident these changes, which leave us with 400 spaces available, have left us with enough capacity to meet demand. The take up of these places has significantly improved (from 56% in the Autumn Term last year to 82% in the spring term this year) and is now above national average. We continue to advertise early education places through our website, leafleting campaigns and the children's centre outreach team. We are currently checking the uptake figures for the summer term and are waiting to hear back from providers.

School Funding

2.7 Since the General Election the Department for Education have confirmed further details about the implementation of the National Funding Formula. In particular, the Secretary of State has confirmed that every school will receive a real term per-pupil increase in their budget. We believe that these changes mean that, in addition to guaranteeing there will be no schools in Westminster that lose out, it is likely that Westminster will see a greater increase in overall school funding than set in out in the original NFF changes. There remain some details that require clarity before these changes are introduced between 2018 and 2020. I believe these details must be confirmed as soon as possible in order to give schools the ability to plan for the coming financial years.

- 2.8 Despite these welcome NFF changes, our schools will continue to face pressures on their budgets. I am determined to ensure that we, as a council, help schools to innovate and cooperate to meet these challenges. To this end officers organised a 'Good Practice Workshop' on 'making best use of your school budget and raising income'. At this meeting schools were able to share examples of ways of raising money and sharing resources to deliver efficiencies while minimising the impact on our children's education. We will continue to facilitate this sharing of best practice by supporting schools to set up a Business Managers Forum. We are urging schools to engage with this process and are making sessions as accessible as possible with details communicated to all Westminster schools.

St Georges School Expansion

- 2.9 I have approved a decision to provide funding for the construction of a new extension at George's School. I have authorised the award of a contract to this effect to ARJ Construction Limited for an amount not exceeding £5,892,577.80. This expansion will allow us to better meet the increased demand for secondary school places in Westminster and meet the Department for Education's recommended 5% surplus in school places. In order to fully meet our secondary school place needs we also intend to further increase the capacity of other Westminster schools over the next five years, as set out in our School Organisation and Investment Strategy.

3. Children's Commissioning

Young Westminster Foundation

- 3.1 At the previous P&S Committee in March I brought an update on developments with the Foundation, primarily this focused on the undertaking of a borough wide 'needs analysis' of young people. Funded by Children Services Commissioning, Economic development, Leisure services and Public health it will both meet a range of departmental agendas, and allow the Foundation to better understand the needs and preferences of young people across Westminster. This will then inform the Foundation's fundraising strategy and allow it to focus resources in service areas and on funding opportunities that are most relevant to young people.
- 3.2 A young intern is undertaking a 10 week placement with the foundation, who has recruited 16 young people aged 14-18 who have been trained as peer researchers by the consultancy partner Rocket Science. To date over 120 interviews have been carried out with their peers. These surveys will be complemented by three focus groups in September: one with school practitioners, one with youth practitioners and one with businesses. The primary research will be complete by the end of September.
- 3.3 In addition to this work, the Foundation is in the process of broadening its Trustee base and thereby bringing in additional expertise and capacity. Recruitment for

additional trustees is underway currently and at the date of this update Cllr Karen Scarborough and Neil Daily from EDF Energy have been co-opted onto the board. It is envisaged further appointments will be made in the coming weeks.

- 3.4 The Foundation has appointed a Development Manager, starting in early September to focus on a range of key priorities including the development of a Big Lottery consortium bid and a wider fundraising strategy. In the meantime however, the Foundation has participated in an Expression of Interest, part of a £1million consortium Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime fund across 7 boroughs and led by the Young Harrow Foundation.
- 3.5 An Events Working Group has been formed to oversee the delivery of a fundraising event and a formal launch for the foundation. Representation on this group includes Councillor Scarborough, the Head of Events for the Broadgate Estates and Aziz Saiq, the Westminster Youth MP.
- 3.6 The marketing and communications workstream has also been started with a creative agency called Regency Creative being commissioned to deliver a marketing and branding package at 50% market rate. Initial branding designs are out for consultation and filming and photography has taken place coinciding with a summer party at Fourth Feathers. A Marketing & Communications Working Group has also been formed.

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City of Westminster

Children, Environment and Leisure Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	18 September 2017
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Voluntary & Community Sector Support – Recommissioning of the Service and Wider Strategic Context
Report of:	Julia Corkey, Executive Director of Communications and Strategy
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Environment, Sports and Community
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	City for Choice City of Aspiration
Report Author and Contact Details:	Rebecca Fuhr 0207 641 2342 rfuhr@westminster.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Voluntary and Community Sector Support Service is a commissioned service which acts as a conduit and coordinator between the council and the large and complex range of organisations that make up Westminster's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).
- 1.2 As outlined in this report, the Support Service has recently been subject to a full process of competitive procurement, which is now in its closing stages. This is a pre-existing service in the sense that Westminster has commissioned some form of dedicated support for the local Voluntary and Community Sector for some years now. However, the future shape of the service, under the contract now being procured, will be quite unlike that which we have had in the past.
- 1.3 The City Council is committed to enabling a strong, empowered and sustainable charity sector in Westminster. We want a true partnership with the sector and see it taking an increasing role in delivering many of our core strategic objectives. This means charities need to be able to increase their capacity, make their voices heard, and work ever more effectively together with the council, the private sector and each

other, to take their role as an equal partner in delivering the services local people need.

- 1.4 Effective recommissioning of the externally-provided VCS Support Service is part of our strategic approach to enabling the sector to achieve its potential in this way. However, executing a successful re-let process is in itself not really the key. The degree to which we are able to achieve our strategic aims, using this contract as a vehicle, will hinge on the ongoing process of service development and co-design which will unfold through the life of the contract. The service has been recommissioned on the basis of a much expanded service scope and specification, but this only sketches out broad expectations. The finer details of how the service will look in the long term are ours – in collaboration with the appointed provider – to shape.
- 1.5 This Committee's views are sought at this critical point, therefore, to help us better understand how to get the greatest benefit possible out of this contract and the opportunity it presents for transforming local VCS support.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- 2.1 The following questions are suggested for the Committee's consideration:
 1. What are the Committee's views on the overall strategic approach currently proposed for developing our relationship with the VCS? In particular, does the Committee agree with our increasing emphasis on cross-sector collaboration, leveraging Corporate Social Responsibility and demonstrating Social Value?
 2. Does the Committee feel that the externally commissioned support service, as outlined in the new service specification (attached as Appendix 1), will effectively underpin our wider strategic aims in respect of working with the VCS? What else may be needed to complement this contracted element?
 3. How might the council best support delivery of Lot 3 of this contract, relating to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)? What specific opportunities might exist to further support and reinforce our CSR aims in other areas of council service delivery and transformation?
 4. Whom, aside from the provider of the new support contract itself, would the Committee see as our key partners in cementing and delivering our aspirations for an empowered, effective and sustainable VCS in Westminster?
- 2.2 The Committee's responses will form the basis of recommendations that will be incorporated into a short report that will be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community for a response.

3. Background

Existing Contract

- 3.1 The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Support Service is a commissioned service, managed within the council by the Policy, Performance and Communications team. The provider of this service acts as a conduit and coordinator between the council and the large and complex range of organisations that make up Westminster's Voluntary and Community Sector.

The contract is currently held by One Westminster and, broadly speaking their role is to support local VCS organisations in terms of:

- Information provision
- Infrastructure support (linking charities up with training, practical skills etc) that they may need in the course of their operations
- Advocating for the sector and influencing other key stakeholders
- Providing a focal point for identifying key issues affecting the sector and seeking solutions
- Supporting the networks where VCS organisations in Westminster come together
- Holding events and producing materials to promote the work of the VCS and raise profile/awareness.

3.2 A previous contract ran with One Westminster until 31st March 2017 and a short-term contract extension was put in place with the incumbent, which will end in September 2017. Officers are therefore currently in the latter stages of a full procurement exercise which will secure a new, longer term contract to last at least 3 years.

Connection to Wider Strategy

3.3 Recognising the critical role that the VCS frequently – and increasingly – has in public service delivery and meeting the needs of the people of Westminster, the council aims to facilitate a thriving, resilient, empowered and more sustainable sector. We want to ensure VCS organisations can work effectively across sectors, alongside the council and with each other, to deliver services to local people and contribute to the full range of City for All objectives. We are keen to see the VCS operate as a strong and increasingly self-sufficient partner.

3.4 This thinking is at the heart of the overall strategic approach the council wishes to take the VCS. Work is being undertaken to develop a 'policy framework' which would facilitate and give shape to this, supporting a new way of working with the sector. The framework will look at many aspects of the council's future working relationship with the VCS, including infrastructure support, future use of council buildings by charities, identifying and demonstrating social value, and potential connections to the use of ward budgets. Consideration of this policy framework is in its very early stages and the subject areas it touches upon will each be will be discussed and worked on in much greater detail in due course, independently of the procurement process for this contract. However it is important to view these pieces of work in context with each other, as the VCS Support Service provider will have a central role to play in enabling the necessary capacity growth within the sector.

3.5 So, as the new contract arrangements will be instrumental in delivering our wider strategic goals for the VCS, care has been taken to ensure these aims are reflected and borne out in the contract specification.

Expanding the Scope of the Service

- 3.6 Re-procurement of the service obviously gave us the opportunity we needed to drive the required changes forward. A brand new service specification was developed, setting out a considerably expanded and reframed service scope, with particular emphasis in some new areas of delivery which extend far beyond what the service provider has previously done. The most notable changes are outlined below.

a) Network Support

The specification expands the existing support and coordination functions provided by the contractor for VCS networks. Formal networks are a vital mechanism through which VCS organisations can meet, discuss common issues, share learning and represent themselves with a more unified and coordinated voice. The holder of this contract has historically coordinated and supported the main network of VCS organisations in Westminster, the Westminster Community Network (WCN). In addition to the main WCN there is a health and wellbeing-specific VCS network which was previously been coordinated separately by the Public Health team. To take a more strategic, efficient and coordinated approach, support for this network has been incorporated into the new service specification so that it will be managed directly alongside the WCN. By Cabinet Member decision, funding to support this aspect of the service will transfer from Public Health to PPC.

b) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

A significant new service element has been developed, focusing on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The proposed CSR 'brokerage service' is designed to facilitate more effective joint working between the VCS and private sector businesses, increasing our ability to leverage the benefits of CSR locally. This aspect of the specification has been designed to align fully with the council's wider CSR strategy and to, ensure it gets the profile and resource allocation it needs, it constitutes an entire lot of the new contract in its own right. The detail of what this new element of service will include has been outlined in broad terms in the service specification attached at Appendix 1, which states that the contractor will be responsible for promoting and facilitating CSR and business support for the VCS in a wide range of forms. It is expected that in practice this will mean that, at a minimum the contractor will:

- Act as the go-to organisation for businesses who want to get involved with small local charities. This will mean helping businesses to understand where and how they can contribute to make the greatest impact, know what issues to tackle, and find out who it would be best for them to partner with; and
- Ensure investment into the community has the biggest impact by promoting the Council's priorities framework as set out in City for All opportunity.

However, our precise expectations in this area of the specification are still to be established, as it is very much part of the undertaking for the new contract provider to work with the council in co-designing what a good Corporate Social Responsibility brokerage service would look like. This will need extensive, detailed discussion between the council and the contractor as part of contract mobilisation, and thereafter. This co-design process will also involve engaging with wider partners, too, seeking their feedback and insights, and to benefit from the experience of others. Significant work is already underway under the 'Heart of the City' initiative – the largest responsible business network in the country – spearheaded by City of London. There is much we can learn from existing good practice examples such as

this, as we design our own CSR brokerage service to be fit for purpose for Westminster's needs.

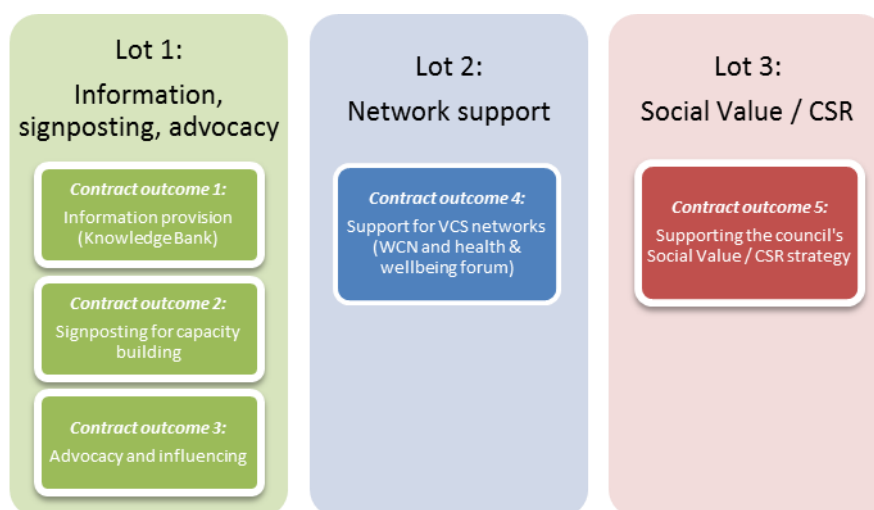
c) Social Value

The new service specification and scoring criteria place significant emphasis on the provider showing their own social value, while also helping other VCS organisations to effectively demonstrate theirs. In practice this means helping other charities to identify, understand and clearly articulate what tangible impact they are having for Westminster's residents. This is crucial to promoting the importance, contribution and wider potential of VCS service provision across all sectors, and winning support in the form of funding, access to commissioning opportunities, and CSR.

Focusing on demonstrable social value ties in with the council's Responsible Procurement agenda, which requires all parties directly commissioned or contracted by any part of the council (including, of course, the provider of this very contract) to demonstrate the Social Value delivered by their own day to day operations. Providers are required to show their positive impact in respect of our three social value priority categories: opportunity, neighbourhood, and environment. (Further information on Westminster's Responsible Procurement approach is provided at Appendix 3). So, aside from the aspects of the service specification which relate furthering our strategic social value aims for Westminster as a whole, bidders for this contract were required to submit their own social value statements as part of the agreed scoring criteria.

Structuring the Contract

- 3.7 The redrafted service specification is therefore ambitious and represents a significant change to current provision. In the interests of clarity the contract has been restructured into three lots, as follows:



- **Lot 1** – general support, information, signposting and advocacy services for VCS, based on existing service. Includes, critically, the ongoing management and maintenance – plus proactive work to optimise – existing VCS 'directory'.
- **Lot 2** – support for VCS networks, including health and wellbeing focused network, as outlined in expanded scope above.
- **Lot 3** – supporting delivery of Social Value. Incorporates CSR brokerage function for VCS organisations.

Developing the ITT

- 3.8 Full ITT documentation for the new contract, including the service specification and details of how tenders were to be scored and evaluated, was developed with input from key internal stakeholders, including colleagues in Public Health. (Their participation was particularly important in view of the decision to incorporate support for the health & wellbeing-focused VCS network into the new service scope). ITT documentation was finalised earlier this summer and, following Gate 1 sign off, the OJEU notice was issued and the tender period opened, running from late July into the middle of August.

Key Challenges

- 3.9 It is worth noting at this point that customised support for the VCS is a very niche, specialist area of service which, in many areas outside Westminster, barely exists in any formalised way. This presents particular challenges in respect of the contract procurement process, as it makes for a very limited market of potential providers. This restricted market, along with the level of ambition captured in the service scope and the application of TUPE rules in this case, unavoidably presents a number of potential obstacles to prospective new providers.
- 3.10 To attempt to mitigate this, great emphasis was placed on engagement with potential providers throughout the procurement process. Just one part of this was the open invitation 'Engagement Day' which was held halfway through the tender period. This event was actively promoted to all providers via Capital ESourcing, in hopes of instigating interest in the tender and providing any clarification that might be needed. The event also offered a networking opportunity, which could support partnership discussions between providers with a view to potential consortium bids. Detailed information was provided before the event and a full write-up was produced and shared openly afterwards, making it as easy as possible for any potential bidder to access the information even if they would be unable to attend on the day. This was all done with the aim of diversifying the mix of interested bidders.

Next Steps

- 3.11 The tender period ended in mid-August and the detailed process of evaluation and scoring followed. The scoring matrix was based on the six contract outcomes outlined above, with additional elements focused on bidders' commitment and ability to transform the service during the life of the contract, to meet with the City Council's ambitions for the future of Westminster's VCS. Ordinarily some element of service development capability might be assumed as part of the service requirements and resulting scoring criteria for a standard contract. With the importance of ongoing service development and growth being so great in this case, though, it was decided that we would require the provider to demonstrate both the ability and the inclination to be a driving force in that process. Explicit inclusion of this in the evaluation criteria effectively makes the provider's plans for transforming the service over time a specific condition of their winning the contract.
- 3.12 The scoring process has also had an important role to play in establishing our baseline understanding of existing strengths and weaknesses, which in turn informs plans for how the necessary service transformation will be taken forward. Key findings have been captured in an early draft action plan which will begin implementation when the new contract commences, on 1 October 2017. To further develop and flesh out this plan we seek the views of this Committee, with the aim of benefitting from its objectivity and fresh perspective. Feedback from the chair and

members of the Children, Environment and Leisure Policy & Scrutiny Committee at this stage will therefore provide vital additional input which will directly influence how, together with the contract provider, we co-design and deliver a VCS support service which is fit for Westminster's future.

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

Rebecca Fuhr (Principal Policy Officer) 0207 641 2342 rfuhr@westminster.gov.uk

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Service Specification - VCS Support Service (2017)

Appendix 2: Examples of local authority work with VCS

Appendix 3: Explanatory note on WCC Responsible Procurement

**Specification and Requirements for
the VCS Support Service
for Westminster City Council
(WCC)**

VCS Support Service

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1. Overview of project

1.1. Vision

1.1.1. The City Council has a vision for a Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Westminster which:

- Has strong capacity to network, advocate and influence.
- and
- Can be more financially sustainable continuing to become more independent and resilient over time.

1.2. Aim of the Service

1.2.1. The Voluntary and Community Sector have a unique and essential role in supporting local communities and delivering services that they need. The City Council sees the partnership between us as Local Authority and the local VCS as absolutely critical in the achievement of our collective aims and aspirations for the city of Westminster and all those that live, work and visit here. We therefore want to work in close partnership with a strong, resilient and empowered VCS to maintain and improve the quality, range and sustainability of voluntary and community sector services in Westminster and to improve the ability of Westminster's VCS to deliver the strategic objectives of the City Council. This is what we hope to achieve through the Voluntary and Community Sector Support Service.

1.2.2. The service is therefore made up of a number of components which are aimed at supporting and strengthening the VCS in Westminster. The core responsibilities of the contract provider include: providing information; connecting organisations by providing a fora / focal points for joint working and discussion; advocating and profile raising on behalf of the sector; and driving forward the council's vision for delivering social value in Westminster by acting as a conduit and learning source.

1.2.3. What the City Council seeks to achieve by procuring the service at this time and with this specification is to strengthen and develop the nature of support available to the VCS in Westminster. To deliver our vision of a strong, active, resilient, connected and sustainable Voluntary and Community Sector which plays a critical role in achievement of the council's core aims, we hope to provide it with an effective and continually improving support service which meets its current and future needs. This is the thinking **behind the ambitious specification which we are now using to shape the service.**

2. Current service

2.1. **The existing VCS Support Service has historically been built upon three intended outcomes:**

- **Outcome 1** - Strong knowledge, both within Westminster City Council and the VCS, about the VCS in Westminster and the needs and expertise of the different types of VCS organisations in Westminster.
- **Outcome 2** - Strong quality and sustainability of VCS service provision and community activities through tailored signposting to capacity building services to meet the different needs of the different types of VCS organisations

- **Outcome 3** – A VCS that has strong capacity to network, advocate and influence.
Strong networking capacity of the VCS to meet a wide range of local VCS organisations, to discuss local and national issues and new ways of working, from which to form shared views, priorities and strategies

2.2. Service Scope

2.2.1. The council now intends to expand the scope of the existing service in a number of ways, to facilitate an enhanced offer to Westminster’s voluntary and community sector, in line with its core priorities under the council’s City for All vision. It is intended that the degree and value of support offered to the voluntary and community sector in Westminster will continue to develop and improve yet further over time. Key changes to the existing service scope under the contract now being procured will be as follows:

2.2.2. Expand scope to include support to the North Westminster Community Network and South Westminster Community Network. Both these networks provide a similar function to the WCN at a neighbourhood level but in the past commissioned separately. Bringing the support of these local networks in alongside the broader, city-wide VCS support offer will enable greater coordination and more effective use of resources overall.

2.2.3. The addition of a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) brokerage service as part of a wider role in supporting the council’s ambitions for a more strategic approach to Social Value and the role of the private sector in delivering VCS priorities.

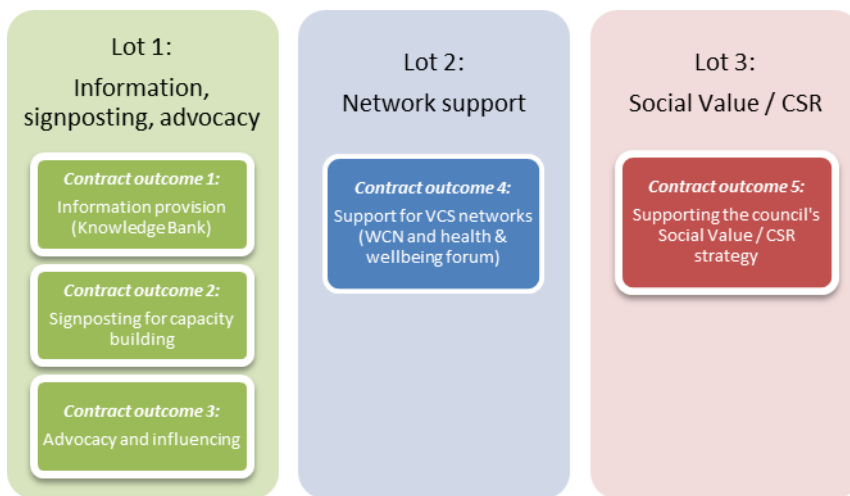
2.2.4. Although the intention is to bring these new elements in to a single contract, the contract is structured into three distinct lots to enable the best and most effective delivery of each element. Nonetheless, the City Council is determined to ensure that the contract outcomes as a whole are taken forward in a coordinated way, in line with one clear vision and a coherent strategic direction. To that end, the council does not intend to let the three lots of the contract separately, but will instead evaluate and score bids on the basis of all three lots together.

2.2.5. We recognise, though, that this specification would represent a On this basis we do not require that all outcomes across all three lots of the contract are necessarily delivered by a single provider in isolation. The council will welcome ‘consortium’ bids which put forward specific proposals for delivery of the three lots via structured partnerships of two or more providers, each contributing according to their areas of strength and expertise, led by a ‘lead tenderer’ (arrangements as outlined in the ITT documentation). It must be noted that in any bid – whatever the proposed delivery arrangements, single bidder or consortium – all outcomes across all three lots must be covered.

2.2.6. The contract will therefore be structured as follows:

- **Lot 1** – general support, information, signposting and advocacy services for VCS, based on existing service. Includes, critically, the ongoing management and maintenance – plus proactive work to optimise – existing VCS ‘directory’.
- **Lot 2** – support for VCS networks, including health and wellbeing focused network, as outlined in expanded scope above.
- **Lot 3** – supporting delivery of Social Value. Incorporates CSR brokerage function for VCS organisations.

2.2.7. The contract in its entirety can be broken down into 5 outcomes, which will distribute across the three lots of the contract in the following way:



2.2.8. In some of the newer areas of the service specification where we invite innovation from potential providers (this includes much of Lot 3), we recognise the degree to which we will be breaking new ground. The council's vision in these areas is ambitious and we look forward to the opportunity to work closely with the future contract provider and Westminster's wider VCS to put ourselves collectively at the cutting edge of emerging agendas, such as Corporate Social Responsibility brokerage, building VCS capacity for future sustainability, and maximising social value. At this stage we don't necessarily expect to see expertise on the part of tenderers in these new areas. Rather, we hope to see a clear demonstration of their intent and commitment to working in partnership with the council and the sector itself throughout the life of the contract, to shape and co-design those new functions in line with a shared vision.

3. Service requirements

Lot 1: General Support and Information Services

- **Contract Outcome 1 – Information provision (Knowledge Bank). The Contractor acts as a central source of information and knowledge for Voluntary and Community Sector organisations in Westminster. This is primarily achieved by way of the VCS 'Knowledge Bank' – a directory and information portal for VCS organisations.**
- **Contract Outcome 2 – Signposting and capacity building. To drive quality and sustainability within the sector, the Contractor provides tailored signposting for VCS organisations, connecting them to capacity building services, training and other resources to meet their various needs.**

- ***Contract Outcome 3 – Advocacy and influencing. The Contractor provides strong advocacy support to the VCS in Westminster, actively promoting the sector and its work and exerting influence across partner sectors to drive forward VCS priorities.***

3.1. Outcome 1 – Information provision (the VCS ‘Knowledge Bank’)

3.2. To fulfil this outcome the provider will need to develop and maintain a strong and comprehensive knowledge about the VCS ‘landscape’ in Westminster and the needs and expertise of the different types of VCS organisations within that landscape.

3.3. The contract provider will be responsible for the effective day to day management and maintenance of the existing VCS ‘directory’ database. The council wishes to increase the quality, value and usefulness of this directory, with the aspiration that it becomes a well-used and trusted, primary source of information for all VCS organisations in Westminster. To this end, in addition to regular management and maintenance duties in respect of the directory, the contractor will also be expected to undertake a number of actions to improve and refine this resource, developing it into a more sophisticated ‘Knowledge Bank’, during the course of the contract.

Day to day management / maintenance

3.4. The City Council will provide the Contractor with access to the existing VCS directory (sometimes known as the Westminster Community Network (WCN) database). For the avoidance of doubt the directory will remain in the City Council’s ownership but is maintained and updated by the Contractor.

3.5. The Contractor shall be responsible for the management of the directory in order to develop a strong knowledge of the sector. In order to do this, the Contractor shall:

3.6. Within the first 3 months of the commencement of the contract, undertake a thorough cleanse of the existing directory to ensure that all information is up-to-date, only relevant organisations (those that are currently operating and whose work connects in some way with council concerns / priorities) are included, and unnecessary duplication of information is eliminated. As part of this exercise the contractor will work with all relevant sections of the council to get all currently commissioned VCS organisations onto the directory.

3.7. Ensure that information about organisations on the directory includes as a minimum (but is not limited to) the following details:

- Organisation name, size (turnover & number of staff employed) , type, contact details, name of Chair or similar, name of Chief Executive or similar
- The types of communities served by the organisations or groups receiving support by issue area such as children and families or older people;
- The type of activity undertaken by the organisation, e.g. a short paragraph describing the aims, or the objectives, or the mission statement of the organisation. Any specific current connections with the council should also be noted, e.g. commissioning relationships or particular direct partnership arrangements.

3.8. Ensure that the directory is accessible to the City Council throughout the contract term and returned to the City Council at the end of the Term.

- 3.9. Ensure the directory is accessible to all those organisations and groups listed on the directory and encourage organisations and groups to use the directory to communicate with each other, so that it acts as an information portal resource to the local VCS.
- 3.10. Ensure that the directory is kept up-to-date and accurate. This will include adding new organisations and groups to the directory and deleting organisations and groups that no longer exist. Each quarter the Provider shall provide to the City Council the details of new organisations and groups that have been added to and the organisations and groups that have been deleted from the directory, so that the Council remains up-to-date on the make-up of the VCS in Westminster.
- 3.11. Conduct an annual survey of VCS organisations in Westminster to gather in-depth organisational information to supplement details already on the directory including, without limitation, where the organisation works, with whom, their main activities and aims, staffing, governance structures, main sources of income, use of volunteers, influence on and involvement in key services in Westminster, infrastructure support needs and perception of infrastructure support available at a pan-London or national level. The Contractor shall achieve a minimum response rate of 60% from VCS organisations registered on the directory to this annual survey/information request and ensure a representative sample.
- 3.12. In order to fulfil the requirements outlined above and to deliver outcome 1 effectively, the Contractor must utilise existing and continued daily contact with Westminster's VCS. The Contractor, particularly if external to Westminster, must demonstrate robustly how they will achieve this.

Development and Improvement – Evolving the Directory into a Knowledge Bank

- 3.13. As outlined above, the Contractor will be expected to enhance and improve the existing directory over the course of the contract, developing it over time into a more sophisticated and functional 'Knowledge Bank' for VCS organisations in Westminster. The Contractor will be required to build and develop the directory so that it reflects the council's vision for a resource which is:
- **Comprehensive.** Includes as much information as reasonably possible about VCS provision and activity within Westminster, including all VCS providers commissioned by the council. The contract provider will also look to develop and enrich the data set. As a priority this would include linking to any available information on performance or demonstrable impact of VCS organisations' work (evaluation reports / reviews etc.). Where possible organisations' logos or branding should be included to give visual recognisability alongside other details.
 - **Accurate.** The information is maintained, kept up to date and checked for accuracy on a regular basis. As outlined above, there should be a full review/data cleanse exercise within three months of commencement of the contract and as an enhanced version of the existing responsibility to report all additions or deletions on the directory on a quarterly basis, the Contractor will conduct a refresh and accuracy check with that same regularity throughout the life of the contract. The contract provider should establish clear mechanisms by which VCS organisations can inform them of any changes/updates to their own information, in order that the directory can be continually updated in an ad hoc way outside of the regular full review processes.
 - **Useful.** Holds the right information in sufficient detail to help businesses find charities they can work with and VCS bodies themselves make connections across their sector and areas of thematic interest. The directory will have adequate search functionality to enable users to

extract relevant information by theme (e.g. homelessness, or substance misuse) or by geographic area, and possibly other factors such as organisation size or level of resources. This should connect to a 'Get Involved' section, providing information on opportunities to support organisations with sponsorship or donations, as well how to get involved in volunteering.

- **Accessible.** The contractor actively promotes the directory and raises its profile among VCS organisations and any other interested parties, to increase its reach and usefulness. The directory is made available via the council website, where it is centrally hosted. It may additionally be linked / provided in other places as appropriate, so that it can be accessed by as wide a range of users as possible. Although the directory is ultimately owned and hosted by the council, it is fully managed by the contract provider and presented externally by the provider to support its credibility and accessibility to the VCS sector.

Insight

3.14. In addition to management and development of the Knowledge Bank for the benefit of VCS organisations in Westminster, the Contractor will have a role in generating insight into the views and priorities of those organisations, to increase understanding of what the key issues are for the sector at any given time. To this end the Contractor will use the Knowledge Bank directory and the annual survey of VCS organisations outlined in section 3.11 above, to achieve this. The existing annual survey must be 3 months of the contract developed / enhanced as necessary in order to support the monitoring of contract KPIs (see section 14 below). The City Council will work with the Contractor as required to design the surveys, the results of which will be reported back to the council so that they may feed into future policy development and decision making. The precise mechanism for this will be discussed and agreed between the Contractor and council in the early stages of the new contract implementation.

Outcome 2 - Signposting for Capacity Building

3.15. The Contractor shall actively seek out information on – and direct VCS organisations to – existing infrastructure support available locally, at a pan-London level and nationally, on topics including, without limitation:

- Governance
- Finance
- Fundraising, including:
 - corporate donations,
 - tendering for contracts; commissioning and procurement processes
 - social investment
 - demonstrating impact
- Management and Organisational Development, including marketing and communications
- HR, including, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and safeguarding training, signposting to shared payroll services and Disclosure and Barring (DBS) services
- IT & Telephony, including social media
- Energy efficiency, including low carbon foot print policies
- Premises, including signposting to websites which list available community premises such as the 'My Community Space' website
- Networking and partnerships, including consortia and merges

- 3.16. It is possible that the Contractor themselves may be in a position to act as direct provider of some of these services. If they have capacity and capability to offer organisational development support to VCS organisations, there will be scope for this within the contract, although it is not considered an essential contractual requirement.
- 3.17. In relation to the above areas of infrastructure support, the Contractor will have knowledge of this provision in a wide range of formats, such as one-to-one, group support and online resources. Different formats of support will suit different organisations, and organisations should be signposted in a way that recognises and responds to this.
- 3.18. The Contractor will direct organisations to existing online funding hub resources, and provide information on funding opportunities. Organisations could be signposted to (at a national level) NCVO Funding Central and funding advice websites such as KnowHowNonProfit.org. At a local level, organisations will be directed towards CapitalEsourcing and any other local resources/funding channels as appropriate.
- 3.19. The Contractor should use knowledge and understanding of organisations that is gained through managing the 'Knowledge Bank' to establish how to customise their support by signposting organisations more effectively within the network.
- 3.20. If the Contractor identifies gaps in the capacity building support available to signpost people to, or if gaps are highlighted by the sector through the VCS survey, the Contractor shall report this back to Westminster City Council.

Outcome 3 - Advocacy and Influencing

- 3.21. The council want to see a VCS that has strong capacity to network, advocate and influence. The Contractor will be central to furthering this aim by enabling:
- 3.22. Strong and coherent advocacy of the views of local voluntary and community sector organisations with which to engage other sectors;
- 3.23. Strong influence of local VCS over partner sectors' policies, decisions and services that affect the VCS and their interest groups or that could be improved through partners' collaboration and partnership working with the VCS

Advocacy

- 3.24. The advocacy outcome involves maintaining the VCS thorough understanding of national and local issues that affect them and the strategic environment in which they work, to improve their capacity to develop clear, coherent and shared views on these issues with which to engage other sectors.
- 3.25. The council would welcome ideas and innovation from the Contractor, on an ongoing basis through the life of the contract, on how the advocacy role could best be fulfilled. The Contractor's responsibilities in relation to this outcome are therefore considered to include, but by no means be limited to, the following.
- 3.26. The Contractor will work with the WCN advisory board and, where relevant, the City Council to identify local and national issues that will be relevant for discussion by the WCN. This will involve providing information regularly to the advisory board from a range of sources of information including, but not limited to:

- Key national or Pan-London funders and organisations:
- National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)
- National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)
- Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO)
- Volunteering England
- Big Lottery Fund
- Social Investment Business
- London Councils
- London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC)
- Do-it Trust

3.27. Key local organisations, structures and partners:

- NHS commissioning
- WCC's Adult Social Care and Public Health services
- WCC's Children and Young People's services
- WCC's Community Safety services
- WCC's Corporate Policy and Strategy Unit and the Team Westminster services commissioned by this unit and delivered by external providers, such as Groundwork and Spice Innovations.
- HealthWatch and Hub Westminster

3.28. On an ad hoc basis, the Contractor will share local and national issues of interest to the sector and partners using the WCN website, the Contractor's website and social media, including blogs, or any other media that are appropriate and effective.

3.29. The Contractor will work with the Advisory Board to distil discussed information and issues into organised and useful content for a series of WCN events through the year. This may involve coordinating a series of planning meetings with advisory board members before and during the series of WCN events.

3.30. The Contractor will use discussions, opinions and resolutions resulting from the WCN events to develop shared and representative views of the local VCS to distribute amongst and engage the sector and other partners.

Influencing

3.31. The influencing outcome builds on the advocacy role, to forge meaningful cross-sector partnership working. It will enable the statutory sector to develop, at an early stage, targeted partnerships with the VCS sector regarding particular commissioning projects to enable the sector to bid effectively for the available funding. It will also encourage a relationship between the statutory sector and the VCS that goes beyond the commissioner/supplier relationship to enable the VCS to become a strategic partner in the design and delivery of public services and to look beyond the statutory sector to establish new sources of funding from the private sector. In this area, too, the City Council is keen to see innovation from the contact provider in the 'influencing' area of delivery. The Contractor's responsibilities in relation to influence shall therefore include, but not be limited to the following.

3.32. Acting as a conduit of information and collaboration between the statutory sector and VCS regarding specific commissioning activity and more strategic public service delivery planning. This could include:

- Organising statutory sector commissioners or other key representatives to attend WCN events to discuss key commissioning intentions or projects at an early, planned stage, and to discuss in a comprehensive manner how the sector could produce strong bids.
- Developing positive relationships with statutory sector commissioners and other key representatives to encourage them to engage the VCS thoroughly in commissioning decisions, policy development and service transformation plans on a broad, in-depth and continuous basis and outside of WCN events. This could be delivered by working with statutory sector organisations to identify VCS representatives to attend and represent VCS views at key partnership meetings, including without limitation, those created by the local organisations, structures and partners listed above.

3.33. For the avoidance of doubt, the cost of preparation for and attendance at such meetings is included in the Contract Price.

3.34. Distributing the representative views of local VCS amongst the sector and partners through the WCN website, the Contractor's website, blogs, twitter and other forms of social media and partner's communication channels where agreed with partners. The intelligent distribution of positive, representative views of the local VCS could be particularly effective in engaging corporate, private sector funders or members of the public to secure new sources of revenue for the local VCS.

Lot 2: Support for VCS Networks

Contract Outcome 4: Network Support. The Contractor provides comprehensive and effective support to VCS networks, specifically the Westminster Community Network (WCN) and the additional existing network which is specifically health and wellbeing focused.

3.35. The council recognises and wants to facilitate the strong networking capacity of the VCS. Creating structured and suitable opportunities for a wide range of VCS organisations to come together and discuss local and national issues and new ways of working, enabling them to form shared views, priorities and strategies, can yield major benefits for the sector and the council. So we want to see active, strong and well-coordinated VCS networks, run by the VCS for the VCS in Westminster.

3.36. A key part of the Contractor's role in this area is support for the existing Westminster Community Network (WCN). The WCN provides an invaluable 'route in' to the Voluntary and Community Sector in Westminster and this contract performs as the council's conduit into the sector. Two additional networks – currently operating locally with one based in the north and one in the south of the city – provide a similar function but with a specific health and wellbeing focus. Recognising the importance of these structures, it will be one of the core responsibilities of the Contractor under this contract to work to sustain and develop VCS networks as fora for information sharing, disseminating good practice and discussing shared priorities and strategies.

The Westminster Community Network (WCN)

3.37. In order to deliver the benefits of the WCN it is envisioned that the network will facilitate and, in collaboration with the WCN advisory board and the City Council, develop the content for:

- Quarterly WCN forums, which will be key for general networking and advocacy purposes.
- Thematic networks to strengthen the sector's targeted advocacy, influence of and collaboration with partner sectors on certain topical areas, e.g., Social Care, Housing, Children's and Health services. Thematic networks should include, but not be limited to:
 - Quarterly Meet the Commissioner events
 - Bi-annually Meet the Funder events
 - Quarterly targeted networking events

3.38. Facilitation of the network by the Contractor means delivery of tasks relating to event organisation and administration of the WCN including, but not limited to: hire of spaces and equipment, scheduling of events and event planning sessions, arranging speakers, distribution of invites and agendas etc.

3.39. Strong networking capacity will be an outcome of the WCN. The Contractor's contribution to delivery of this outcome are included but not limited to the following.

3.40. The Contractor is responsible for promoting the work of the WCN and WCN events to VCS organisations in Westminster. All organisations engaged with in the course of adding information to the VCS Knowledge Bank should be invited to join the WCN and the Contractor should highlight any relevant thematic networks to them.

3.41. The City Council will provide the Contractor with access to the WCN website. The Contractor shall maintain and update the website and maintain the WCN brand to encourage as wide a range of VCS organisations as possible engage with the WCN. For the avoidance of doubt the WCN website, like the Knowledge Bank, will remain in the City Council's ownership but will be maintained and updated by the Contractor. The Contractor shall link the WCN website to their own website, if they have one.

3.42. The Contractor will directly support the WCN to carry out its functions in a structured and effective way. This entails ensuring adherence with their manifesto, mission and values. Governance structures and mechanisms for the network will be clarified / confirmed at the start of the contract. Within the first 90 days of the contract term the Contractor will be expected to conduct a review of any existing Terms of Reference for the WCN and work with the City Council to develop and agree updated ToR as needed/appropriate.

3.43. It is envisaged that the network could have a central role in helping us understand how the social value strategy will be implemented on the ground. We also see significant scope for the network to support organisations within the sector to understand the social value they themselves deliver, and assist them in their endeavours to use this information to good effect in bidding and procurement processes. The City Council would welcome ideas on how the network could be supported to focus on this as a priority in the early stages of the new VCS Support Service contract, in order that it can contribute significantly and meaningfully to shaping future Social Value work, including how Lot 3 of this contract will be delivered.

Health and Wellbeing Network

- 3.44. The voluntary sector plays a key role in delivering the council's objectives and outcomes in respect of health and wellbeing, particularly addressing the factors which contribute to people's health its widest sense. As outlined above, the City Council has historically commissioned support for two local community networks, one in the north and one in the south of the city, which bring together VCS organisations engaged in a wide range of health and wellbeing issues. This has until now been managed separately by the council's Public Health teams.
- 3.45. As part of bringing support for the health and wellbeing networks in under this contract (as outlined in the Service Scope' section of this specification) the existing division between the two local networks will be dissolved. Instead there will be one health and wellbeing network, with a city-wide reach, but which will meet alternately at venues in the north and the south of the city and which will retain scope within meeting agendas and resources to dedicate to locally specific issues as needed. This arrangement aims to reap the benefits of better coordination, reduced duplication, a more strategic approach and the strength of numbers across the two existing networks, while at the same time retaining the degree of nuance and local specialism required to provide an effective response to particular priorities.
- 3.46. The Contractor will have a key role in helping to embed this new structure and we would welcome suggestions on how this could be incorporated as part of the Contractor's implementation plan for the early stages of the new contract. In general terms, in respect of supporting the health and wellbeing VCS network in Westminster throughout the life of the contract, the Contractor will be expected to:
- Support and enable the sector to be proactive in embracing the Public Health agenda. This will involve skilling up organisations and better evidencing impact on identified priority outcomes, and additionally may entail the Contractor directly commissioning / funding of services by VCS organisations to feed into Public Health priorities.
 - Facilitate and take a direct, active role in sharing of information and good practice specifically relevant to local and national Health & Wellbeing issues across the sector.
 - Provide a link between the Health & Wellbeing network and the wider WCN, ensuring they can benefit from each other's expertise, membership, influence and 'reach'.

Lot 3: Supporting and Driving Forward the Social Value Approach in Westminster

Contract Outcome 5: Social Value and CSR. The Contractor will take a key role in delivering the objectives of the council's Social Value strategy, 'Get Involved: CSR', by providing a Corporate Social Responsibility 'brokerage' function.

- 3.47. The City Council is looking to increase its focus on leveraging the benefits of Corporate Social Responsibility and private sector involvement in working with the VCS to deliver on priority outcomes. The council's 'Get Involved: CSR' strategy envisages a brokerage process which would assist businesses to get involved in the responsibility agenda and offer help to businesses to participate in new opportunities in areas such as cleaner air, tackling inequality and support for our most vulnerable residents. The overall aim is to make community investment easier, more effective and more rewarding for business members by:

- Making it easy for all businesses to get involved (know where to go to ask questions, know what issues to tackle, who to partner with)
- Ensuring investment into the community has the biggest impact by promoting the Council's priorities framework as set out in City for All – this further ensures that efforts are focused where they can make a meaningful difference.
- Giving the VCS a channel to promote their work to business and find partners to support them/develop projects with.

3.48. The private sector can provide support to VCS organisations in a wide variety of ways. In some cases businesses can offer assistance or expertise around governance, marketing and PR, funding and finance, business planning, commissioning, measuring and evaluating impact, demonstrating social value. Often there are opportunities to provide direct training and skills development. In other cases businesses are in a position to offer support with fundraising and income generation, or 'in kind' support such as provision of space for events or donations of goods/equipment.

3.49. To help unlock this range of benefits for Westminster's Voluntary and Community Sector, the council's 'Get Involved: CSR' strategy envisages a brokerage service which would assist businesses to get involved in the responsibility agenda, offering them structured opportunities to play a part in supporting our most vulnerable residents. This will help businesses to contribute as fully as possible to VCS aims and operations, better aligning the 'private sector contribution' with strategic council outcomes and meeting local needs by connecting businesses and local VCS organisations more effectively. It is intended that strengthening the business/VCS relationship will, as an additional benefit, promote sustainability within the VCS, by diversifying approaches to sources of funding beyond grants and commissioning.

3.50. In its brokerage role, therefore, the Contractor will be responsible for promoting and facilitating CSR and business support for the VCS in a wide range of forms. The council would welcome suggestions and innovation from prospective contract providers as part of the tender process on precisely how this service could look, and we would look to work in partnership with the Contractor, once appointed, to further develop, shape and refine the offer. However, the council would at this stage expect that the basic service would consist of at least – but not limited to – the following service aspects:

3.51. Being the go-to organisation for businesses who want to get involved with small local charities. Helping businesses to understand where and how they can contribute to make the greatest impact, know what issues to tackle, and find out who it would be best for them to partner with.

3.52. Ensuring investment into the community has the biggest impact by promoting the Council's priorities framework as set out in City for All – this further ensures that efforts are focused where they can make a meaningful difference. Keeping in mind three social value priorities specifically identified by the council:

- i. Opportunity (ensuring Westminster's residents benefit from the prosperity of the city);
- ii. Neighbourhood (providing a visible commitment to the local area); and
- iii. Environment (directly tackling issues like air quality/emissions).

3.53. To take this further, developing and delivering a bespoke matching service for business to local projects and organisations that need support both on an ad hoc basis and for longer

term strategic relationship. This should give the VCS a channel to promote their work to business and actively support them to find partners to support them and develop projects. The VCS Knowledge Bank may provide a critical resource to support this work.

- 3.54. Supporting and reinforcing the matching service with active follow-up to help VCS/business partnerships get off the ground will also be important. This is likely to involve direct support by the Contractor for newly formed partnerships in the early stages.
- 3.55. In addition, supporting businesses to develop their own community projects in a guided way.
- 3.56. Providing learning and networking opportunities for partners on both sides of the equation (within the Voluntary and Community Sector and the business sector), separately or together as appropriate, to help them understand how to work in partnership to best effect.
- 3.57. Provide networking opportunities specifically aimed at making strong links between the two sectors. The Contractor may choose to make use of the WCN and/or health and wellbeing VCS network as part of this.
- 3.58. The council's intention is that the CSR brokerage/support function would be available at zero or low cost to businesses who are based in or have an office in Westminster and are keen to work with Westminster VCS, but who have limited or no experience of working with the VCS or on community initiatives and are not able to dedicate any resource specifically to do this. However, there could certainly be a chargeable model for other businesses, possibly membership based in its nature.
- 3.59. The City Council would suggest that there may be significant benefit in the creation of a board or forum which is made up of representatives from WCC, the Contractor, VCS organisations (perhaps from the Charity Leaders Forum) and representatives from businesses in Westminster (whether individual business or possibly via the BIDs).
- 3.60. It is intended that the CSR brokerage/support services provided under Lot 3 of this contract would connect with and complement the City Council's objectives around Responsible Procurement (focusing on Social Value through our own contracted services). The Contractor will support this by acting as the critical connection between the council's contracted suppliers/providers and VCS organisations locally. In this way the Contractor will support the City Council's other contracted suppliers/providers to deliver on the contractual requirements we routinely apply, in respect of delivering social value. This will enable the council to maximise its own social value impact through those contracting and procurement relationships.
- 3.61. It should be noted that this contract is itself subject to the council's standard requirements in respect of demonstrating social value through the tender process, as all our procured services are. Obviously social value forms an inherent part of this contract and runs through its core objectives and deliverables. Nonetheless, in line with the City Council's commitment to responsible procurement and the standard requirements that gives rise to, a demonstration of the specific social value offered by the Contractor will be asked for and scored as one of the specific award criteria. This will require completion of the council's standard Responsible Procurement Delivery Plan, as detailed in the tender scoring information.

3.62. The Contractor will also have a critical role in helping Westminster's VCS organisations to demonstrate the social value they deliver. This has been identified as a key area of development currently so the council would be very keen to see how the Contractor would contribute to addressing this knowledge/skills gap.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Ongoing Service Review and Development

3.63. The Contractor will be expected to take an approach of continual improvement to the VCS Support service during the course of the contract. In practice this will mean keeping abreast of all significant changes and developments in the Voluntary and Community Sector environment, at both a national and a local level. This will specifically include but by no means be limited to:

- A clear and ongoing awareness of developments surrounding the 'Look Ahead' project and work with the Heart of the City around Corporate Social Responsibility, ensuring strong networking with all relevant partners to ensure duplication is minimised and roles and remits are clear.
- Strong joint working with the new Young Westminster Foundation and the Simon Milton Foundation to make the best use of collective resources and capability to meet the needs of Westminster's communities.
- A strong awareness of ongoing technological developments relevant to the VCS - ideas such as crowd funding, webinars and other online systems and resources.

3.64. A suitable degree of flexibility is to be retained within the contract terms to enable the VCS Support Service and the contracted provider to respond to developments in the wider context within which it operates. This is in line with the broadening of the scope of the VCS support service and the general approach of innovation and ongoing service development referenced throughout this specification.

Advertising the Services, including the WCN

3.65. All services provided by any organisation on behalf of Westminster City Council must be delivered using the council's corporate identity. At the outset of the contract Westminster City Council will approve templates for any marketing materials and designs for any written publications, vehicle, livery or uniforms required for the operation of the contract to ensure Westminster City Council's identity is represented appropriately and in accordance with the City Council's policies on corporate identity, marketing and advertising.

3.66. The Contractor shall:

- Proactively promote the Services, including the WCN, to the diverse range of VCS organisations in Westminster, using a variety of methods and media to ensure a wide distribution of information to maximise awareness and take-up of the Services;
- Ensure that all promotional material and the Website are clearly branded with the City Council's full logo or 'supported by' logo and other City Council corporate branding. Such branding is to be previously agreed by the City Council and subject to the City Council's policies on corporate identity, advertising and marketing.

Other Contractual Obligations

3.67. The contractor shall:

- promptly and accurately distribute information on behalf of Westminster City Council, the local NHS and other statutory sector partners via email, social media, newsletter or other regular publications for the VCS in Westminster; where reasonable the Contractor may, with the prior agreement of the contributor, edit copy;
- provide all services in this Specification free of cost to Service Users;
- deliver a professional and courteous service that is welcoming and respectful to all VCS organisations in Westminster and consider the needs of VCS organisations;
- promote cohesion and collaboration between VCS organisations and groups;
- network, collaborate and work jointly with other third sector organisations at local, regional and national level, including without limitation to HealthWatch, Hub Westminster and the providers of the Team Westminster services, such as the Volunteer Outreach and Development Service and the Time Credits Programme;
- work in close partnership with the City Council and be open to new ideas for development throughout the Term;
- be flexible as the needs of Service Users may change over the Term;
- ensure that all communities are able to engage in the Services and proactively seek to include hard-to reach groups and communities.

Access to Information

3.68. The Contractor shall:

- Ensure that information held in relation to Service Users is made available to the City Council or their representatives in the form of a database and in accordance with Legislation including without limitation:
- Organisation name, size, type, name, contact details, name of Chair or similar, name of Chief Executive or similar.
- The types of communities served by the organisations or groups receiving support by issue area such as children and families and older people.
- The type of activity undertaken by the organisation, e.g., a short paragraph describing the aims, or the objectives, or the mission statement of the organisation.
- Be accessible to the Authorised Officer and other relevant City Council staff between the hours of 9am and 5pm on working days (52 weeks per year).
- Respond within 48 hours to ad-hoc requests for information and updates on progress from the City Council in between quarterly monitoring meetings.

Confidentiality

3.69. The Contractor shall recognise the need for confidentiality within the content of a clear operational policy having regard to the Data Protection Act 1998, the Human Rights Act 1998 and any information sharing agreements that the City Council may expect the Contractor to enter into from time to time.

Contractor's Policies

3.70. The Contractor shall have a clear policy on the following topics at a minimum, but without limitation:

- Complaints
- Confidentiality
- Equality and Diversity
- Health and Safety
- Supervision of staff
- Training of staff
- Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures
- Recruitment Procedures
- Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policy
- Raising Issues of Concern/Whistleblowing.

Service Availability

- 3.71. The Contractor shall provide the Services and be contactable by Service Users between the hours of 10am to 4pm on working days (Monday to Friday excluding Public and Bank Holidays) including without limitation having email, the Website, WCN website and telephone presence for the Services and provide some services in the evenings or at weekends if required to meet the Service Users' needs, bearing in mind that many VCS organisations are run by volunteers.
- 3.72. The Contractor shall acknowledge within 48 hours and respond to all requests for support in a reasonable timeframe and provide on-going support to organisations where it contributes to meeting the outcomes specified.

4. Mobilisation and timing

- 4.1 As part of mobilisation we expect the incoming provider(s) to work with the outgoing provider(s) as relevant to ensure the transfer of all data and necessary resources for the provision of the service. This will include, of course, the existing directory/database which form the basis of the VCS 'Knowledge Bank'. We acknowledge that some aspects of the service will be developed and phased in over time, during the life of the contract. This will be particularly applicable in newer areas of service such as many elements of Lot 3. However, as part of mobilisation all aspects of the contract we have identified as essential must be in place from day 1.
- 4.2 Recognising this spec represents a significant change to existing services the successful provider will be expected to provide an implementation plan for the first 90 days demonstrating how they will deliver priority action in the early stages of the contract to ensure all requirements of all 3 lots of this new specification will be met.

5. Exit Provisions

- 5.1. At the end of this contract we will expect the outgoing provider(s) to fully cooperate and work with any incoming provider(s) to ensure a smooth and effective handover. This will include but not be limited to ensuring effective data transfer, satisfaction of any TUPE obligations and reasonable support of any other aspects of mobilisation as necessary.

6. Management information and governance

- 6.1. The Contractor's provision of the Services shall be monitored on a quarterly basis, with an additional annual review.
- 6.2. The Contract Manager shall attend quarterly and annual monitoring meetings as required by the City Council.

Annual Service Review

- 6.3. The annual review will look not only as contract performance over the preceding 12 months but also development opportunities and potential amendments to service scope for the future. This review will bring into consideration the wider VCS context within which the service operates to maximise impact and reduce potential duplication. Adequate flexibility will be retained in the contract to enable the City Council, working with the Contractor, to make adjustments to meet with the results of the annual service review.

Quarterly report

- 6.4. The Contractor shall prepare a quarterly report for each quarterly monitoring meeting which shall include the following:
 - Quarterly statistical report on the signposting support services provided by the Contractor under this Specification broken down by:
 - Number of Service User contacts
 - Name and Type of each organisation
 - Purpose of each organisation/key client group(s)
 - Nature of each organisation's contact
 - Outcome achieved for each organisation's contact;
 - Findings from Service User satisfaction surveys which can be used to assess the quality and effectiveness of the Services in achieving the KPIs and service outcomes. Service User satisfaction surveys should be created to align to the KPIs listed in Section 14, so that data captured through the survey can highlight achievement of KPI targets and service outcomes.
- 6.5. The Contractor shall send the reports to the City Council for each quarterly meeting within 30 days after the end of the relevant quarter.
- 6.6. The City Council may request the Contractor to submit the original user survey returns referred to above and the Contractor shall provide the original survey returns as requested.
- 6.7. The City Council may audit the Contractor's financial systems and procedures and the Contractor shall implement any changes to its financial systems and procedures that the City Council may reasonably require.
- 6.8. Key performance indicators which will provide the basis for performance monitoring of this contract are outlined below under the Performance and Management section.

7. Constraints and dependencies

- 7.1. It should be noted that Lot 2 of this contract represents the incorporation of an existing commissioned service, currently managed separately, into this broader overall service. That existing commissioning arrangement will therefore expire at the point of mobilisation of this contract.

8. Premises and assets

- 8.1. The Contractor shall be responsible for arranging for their own building accommodation. For the avoidance of doubt these premises do not necessarily have to be in Westminster. However, all face to face services, relating to any aspect of the requirements outlined in this Specification, including, but not limited to WCN events, shall be provided at a location or locations in Westminster and in such premises or locations that are accessible for Service Users. The Contractor must be able to demonstrate how this would be achieved.

9. Staff

- 9.1. **The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/246) (TUPE) will not apply in respect of the procurement of this contract.**

10. Performance and measurement

- 10.1. As outlined throughout this specification, the City Council is looking for significant innovation and service development through this contract, to continually strengthen and improve the support provided to Westminster's VCS. In addition to a general approach of continual improvement which will gradually enhance some aspects of service (such as the Knowledge Bank), there are some elements (most notably Lot 3 around Social Value and CSR), which are 'new', going substantially beyond the scope of the existing contract.
- 10.2. With this in mind it is expected that the metrics by which we measure success will develop over time. This will enable the way in which we evaluate delivery against the contract specification to evolve and grow alongside the service itself.
- 10.3. It is expected that the Contractor will work together with the council to develop appropriate and meaningful measures and KPIs for the newer aspects of service delivery under the contract as they develop and come into effect. The council does not wish to attempt to pre-empt the future shape of these service elements by being overly prescriptive at this time, although it is anticipated that specific metrics would probably be developed within the following broad framework to cover the three key aspects of Lot 3:
- 10.4. CSR brokerage function - Measure or measures to demonstrate success of the brokerage / 'matching' function, likely to include but by no means limited to: Number of VCS organisations matched/connected with a local business via the CSR Brokerage mechanism. Suggest this could be measured quarterly, to provide a baseline and show trend over time as the service develops and embeds.
- 10.5. Supporting council suppliers to deliver on their contractual requirements in respect of Social Value. Measure or measures to evaluate Contractor's actions to improve the connection between the council's contracted suppliers/providers and VCS organisations in Westminster.
- 10.6. Demonstrating social value. Measure or measures to evaluate Contractor's actions to improve VCS organisations' ability to demonstrate their own social value.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Outcome	What we want to measure	KPIs	Target
LOT 1			
Outcome 1 – Information provision (Knowledge Bank). <i>The Contractor acts as a central source of information and knowledge for Voluntary and Community Sector organisations in Westminster. This is primarily achieved by way of the VCS ‘Knowledge Bank’ – a directory and information portal for VCS organisations.</i>	‘Reach’ of the Knowledge Bank database	1. Percentage of ‘new’ groups / organisations added to the database	5%
	Use of the annual survey for insight	2. Percentage of Westminster VCS completing the annual survey to gather in-depth organisational information	60%
	Value added by the Knowledge Bank	3. Percentage of service users stating they have used the Knowledge Bank to find out about other VCS organisations in Westminster	40%
	Positive impact of work to improve and enhance the Knowledge Bank	4. Percentage of service users stating that they find the Knowledge Bank ‘more useful’ than previously (measured from first annual survey after commencement of the contract, onwards)	25%
Outcome 2 – Signposting and capacity building. <i>To drive quality and sustainability within the sector, the Contractor provides tailored signposting for VCS organisations, connecting them to capacity building services, training and other resources to meet their various needs.</i>	Benefits of signposting in terms of service quality	5. Percentage of service users stating they have improved the quality of the service they provide as a result of effective signposting to capacity building services	80%
	Benefits of signposting in terms of operations	6. Percentage of service users who state that their organisation is more sustainable (e.g. they are better prepared for changes in the market place or have been enabled to proactively attain new sources of revenue) as a result of effective signposting to capacity building services	80%

Outcome 3 – Advocacy and influencing. The Contractor provides strong advocacy support to the VCS in Westminster, actively promoting the sector and its work and exerting influence across partner sectors to drive forward VCS priorities.	Benefits of advocacy work to enable an aware and informed VCS	7. Percentage of attendees stating they have increased awareness of the local and national issues affecting them and the strategic environment in which they work	80%
	Benefits of advocacy work in developing and representing shared views for the VCS	8. Percentage of attendees that state that the WCN develops shared and representative views of the local VCS	80%
	Enabling VCS influence in commissioning processes	9. Percentage of attendees that state that, at WCN meetings, they were involved, at an early stage, in commissioning projects that are of relevance to their organisation, and that discussions with commissioners make them more able to submit robust bids	70%
	Benefits of WCN to connect organisations with each other	10. VCS representatives attending key partnership meetings with statutory sector.	8 annually
	Effective use of communication channels	11. Use of new communication channels through which to distribute the representative messages relating to the local VCS, particularly to corporate funders	5 annually
LOT 2			
Outcome 4: Network Support. The Contractor provides comprehensive and effective support to VCS networks, specifically the Westminster Community Network (WCN) and the additional existing network which is specifically health and wellbeing focused.	Quality of WCN events	12. Percentage of attendees rating the quality of WCN events as good or excellent	90%
	Benefits of WCN events in raising awareness	13. Percentage of WCN attendees stating they are more aware of other VCS organisations and more able to start partnerships and undertake new ways of working with other VCS organisations	80%
	Effective support for the health and wellbeing network	<i>To be developed:</i> 14. <i>Suitable measure of effective support for health & wellbeing network</i>	TBC
LOT 3			
<i>Measures of efficacy of the Social Value/CSR functions will be developed jointly with the council. Likely to include the following at a minimum:</i>			
Outcome 5: Social Value and CSR. The Contractor will take a key role in delivering the objectives of the council's Social Value strategy, 'Get Involved: CSR', by providing a Corporate Social Responsibility 'brokerage' function.	Effectiveness of CSR brokerage function	15. <i>Number of VCS organisations connected with a local business via the CSR Brokerage mechanism</i>	TBC
	Support for WCC's responsible procurement priority	16. <i>Measure or measures to evaluate Contractor's actions to improve the connection between the council's contracted suppliers/providers and VCS organisations in Westminster</i>	TBC
	Effectiveness of work to help organisations demonstrate their social value	17. <i>Measure or measures to evaluate Contractor's actions to improve VCS organisations' ability to demonstrate their own social value</i>	TBC

11.Flexibility and additional services or transformation

- 11.1. As outlined in this Specification the council's intention is, through this new contract, to drive innovation and excellence in relation to the way the VCS is supported in Westminster. This is an ambitious specification which additionally incorporates an emphasis on continuous improvement throughout the life of the contract, to help deliver the empowered, sustainable and increasingly resilient Voluntary and Community Sector that we wish to see in Westminster. In line with this we anticipate a degree of service transformation and change during the life of the contract.
- 11.2. Under the council's procurement code we have the flexibility to amend the total contract value during the life of the contract. We can increase total contract value by up to 50% of the original value without re-procurement. This would always be done as per our standard clauses in our terms and conditions.
- 11.3. To support the innovative approach and continuous service improvement referred to throughout this specification, we would look to work together with the provider(s) to develop and agree a structured change mechanism for agreeing service developments within the terms of this contract. We expect that working with us to develop this mechanism may feature within the provider(s) implementation plan for the first 90 days.

APPENDIX 2

Local Authority Approaches to working with the Voluntary Sector

What Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Support is commissioned by Local Authorities?

Over the past five years the relationship between local authorities and the local voluntary sector has changed radically. Whereas traditionally local authorities often held a close direct relationship with a few local Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations, providing them with set grant funding every year, today almost all of these grant funding schemes for the VCS have been replaced by commissioning for the services which were provided by the local VCS. This change affects the type of support services local VCS organisations need (such as fundraising support, HR and IT support, brokerage and funding application advice), as organisations respond to the fact they are required to go through the commissioning cycle.

The purpose of these types of 'infrastructure' support services for the VCS is to empower the sector locally, to collectively represent them to the local authority, and to provide them with the practical support and advice they need to manage their finances, support the work they do and achieve maximum impact.

The number of local authorities procuring externally provided contracts to provide infrastructure support for the VCS is large, having grown significantly over the last few years. Examples include Cambridgeshire County Council, Kingston Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council, North Yorkshire County Council and Cheshire East Council. This reflects the highly specialised nature of these services and the value of securing specific expertise and resources to provide them, as a strengthened VCS can pay dividends for public service provision in the local authority area overall.

Detailed Example 1: Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

Kingston has long had a diverse and thriving VCS, but the sector has suffered from being fragmented. Traditionally the VCS was provided with infrastructure support services by the organisation Kingston Voluntary Action (KVA), which provided services ranging from floating IT and engineering support, through to financial and fundraising advice, support securing premises, and managing a secondary organisation which maintained a database of all volunteering opportunities in the borough, called Go Kingston Volunteering. In turn KVA was supported by the Council through an annual grant fund. However, following internal changes in the Council as well as changes to the commissioning landscape, the council moved to phasing out all grant funding programmes and commissioning the services out instead. Consequently, in May 2017 the Council went out to tender for a 5 year contract to provide the key infrastructure support previously offered by KVA, but with that added scope for a second organisation to provide volunteering support and volunteering brokerage services. This represents a more sophisticated and comprehensive range of services overall, with a growing emphasis on cross-sector working and better coordination.

Detailed Example 2: Cheshire East Council

Similarly to the above example, in Cheshire East support services for the VCS have historically been provided by a grant funded (by the council) organisation, Community and Voluntary Services Cheshire East (CVS). The range of services they provide emphasises helping the local VCS diversify their funding streams, helping them to achieve Quality Assurance certificates, giving them access to peer support networks, and representing the VCS sector at the local and national level. There is also an element of promoting volunteering and volunteer brokerage. Again, the council recently made the decision to contract these services out by going through a formal tender process. A three year

contract was let in 2017 – in the event the existing provider, CVS, won that contract and is now working to develop its service offer further.

Both of these examples demonstrate the clear overall trend away from direct grant funding and towards formal, external commissioning of specialist VCS support services, with the aim of supporting the increasing role of the sector in local service provision in partnership with local authorities.

What are Local Authorities doing around Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Value?

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a broad term covering a range of actions which an (private sector) organisation can carry out to promote long-term benefits to the community in which it is based. The particular interest of local authorities in CSR tends to focus on connecting local private businesses with VCS organisations in the area, enabling them to participate in the process of commissioning and carrying out their work in the community.

Social Value, meanwhile, can be defined as the wider financial and non-financial impacts of programmes, organisations or interventions on the wellbeing of individuals and communities, social capital and the environment. The local authority interest in this tends to be around looking – and striving to demonstrate in a tangible way – the specific, positive impacts of the work being done by all sectors in the local area to benefit the place and its people. Like many councils, Westminster is very interested in how it can maximise the Social Value it delivers in its own work (either directly or from commissioned services), but also the work of the many VCS organisations that operate locally.

One major key to this can be bringing in the private sector, helping businesses to link with charities, support them and work together to increase the potential Social Value that can be delivered overall. In practice this can mean brokering volunteering arrangements so that staff at local businesses can offer their time to help out local charitable work. However, it can also involve businesses offering VCS organisations a range of other types of assistance, from free training or straightforward funding support, to practical help in the form of providing building space, equipment or staff time in specialist skill areas (e.g. financial management) which they might otherwise lack.

The legislative background to all of this is the Social Value Act 2012, which requires procurement officers at councils to take into account the social and environmental impacts of their approach to procurement and impact that bidder's proposals may have upon the wider community (this also underpins our Responsible Procurement approach – please see Appendix 3).

Detailed Example: London Borough of Croydon

Croydon Council was one of the first local authorities to develop a comprehensive social value toolkit and to give careful thought to how social value could be integrated into the commissioning cycle. The council developed a Corporate Social Responsibility programme and launched the toolkit in 2012, to enable commissioners to find more creative ways of integrating social benefit into the procurement process. As well as providing a variety of ideas for beneficial projects which (private sector) bidders could incorporate into their offer, such as providing work experience opportunities or integrating social enterprises into the supply chain, the toolkit also explains how to make the Council's commitment to social value clear throughout procurement. Officers are encouraged in the toolkit both to make social issues part of the award criteria for bidders, and also to make it part of the performance obligations for the provider throughout the life of the contract. There is also support for council officers to use the Competitive Dialogue procurement process in order to maintain a

dialogue open with bidders and push them to develop more creative offers of social benefit. This drives innovation and fresh ideas in terms of how all sectors can work together to deliver maximum social benefit to the local community through their operations.

This is just one example (there are many more across the London and nationally) to demonstrate the growing emphasis on increasing the Social Value being delivered within local areas. As we begin to think more creatively about how the public, private voluntary/community sectors can all work together in a coordinated way, we are carving out what the local authority's role in facilitating this can be.

APPENDIX 3

Westminster City Council Responsible Procurement Approach

Introduction

Westminster City Council spends approximately £460 million on goods, services and works per annum and therefore has a significant opportunity to leverage its supply chain to deliver additional benefits to residents, businesses and communities.

The opportunity is realised by paying careful attention to how goods, services or works will be delivered, who may be delivering it and what else they can do to deliver added value where it will make the biggest impact for Westminster. This document sets our ambition to work proactively and collaboratively with our supply chain partners in order to achieve this.

At Westminster the process of identifying the added value through our purchasing activities is termed Responsible Procurement.

Responsible Procurement forms part of our overall social value strategy which sets out the priority areas that the Council has developed.

Westminster is committed to delivering Responsible Procurement in order to:

- Help the Council deliver its key strategic documents such as [City for All](#), [Enterprise Programme 2015-19](#), [Employment Programme 2015-19](#), [Air Quality Action Plan 2013-18](#), [Greener City Action Plan 2015-25](#)
- More effectively target the existing CSR programmes of its supply chain to support the Council's priority areas
- Comply with legislative obligations such as the [Public Services \(Social Value\) Act 2012 \(Appendix 7\)](#), Equality Act 2010 and the Public Contract Regulations 2015
- Meet the expectations of internal and external Council stakeholders including local businesses, the Third Sector and residents

Public Sector organisations like Westminster City Council have an obligation under the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 (SVA) to consider how a proposed procurement might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area. This supports the Council's ambitions to proactively work with its suppliers to ensure that every pound spent can be maximised to bring wider benefit to the local community.

Responsible Procurement Implementation

When considering economic, social and environmental well-being the Council will strive to work with suppliers who can help us to achieve benefits in the following areas. The examples below do not form an exhaustive list but are given to provide a steer.

- Employment & Skills:
 - Identify opportunities for residents and school leavers who are seeking training and skills with the aim of securing permanent employment. This will include apprenticeships, traineeships, work placements and internships.
 - Identify skills and employment opportunities for individuals in under-represented groups including those with a history of homelessness, mental

health issues, mental & physical disabilities and ex-offenders who are looking to re-enter the jobs market.

- Encourage our supply chain to consider how they can engage with schools to empower and encourage young people through mentoring, career talks and work experience opportunities
- Local Economic Development & Growth:
 - Identify and communicate procurement opportunities within their supply chains that would be suitable for small, local suppliers and VCS groups
 - Identify enterprise space for individuals starting a new business in the Borough
 - Provide skilled support through volunteering activities to small local businesses/start-ups and VCS groups on topics including finance, management and leadership skills, HR, legal, procurement
- Environmental & Ethical:
 - Identify innovative practices that can help minimise the environmental impact of the suppliers operations, reduce overall waste produced and increase reuse and recycling
 - Adopt practices that will lead to an increase in air quality within the Borough for example by using the least polluting vehicles, investigating the use of consolidation centres, optimising times and routes for vehicles when operating in the Borough
 - Adopt the 9 principles of the Ethical Trading Initiative's Base Code as the minimum we expect from our supply chain

In practice this will mean:

- Westminster City Council will investigate every opportunity to add Responsible Procurement outcomes to all tenders that it runs with a total contract value over £100k. Our KPI is 90% of contracts awarded to include social value outcomes
- Category Managers will have specialist training, guidance and support from the Responsible Procurement Lead in order to facilitate this process
- The Responsible Procurement Lead will form part of the Procurement governance board
- Tenders where social value asks are included will have a minimum 5% weighting applied as part of the overall quality evaluation. Suppliers will be asked to complete a Responsible Procurement Delivery Plan as part of the tender submission to facilitate the capture of outcomes
- Suppliers will be able to request guidance and support from Council officers and teams in order to help them achieve the social value outcomes and will be provided with information and links to external organisations that can provide additional support.

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Children, Environment and Leisure Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	18 September 2017
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Open Spaces & Biodiversity Strategy: Draft for Public Consultation
Report of:	Barry Smith, Head of City Policy & Strategy
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Environment, Sports and Community
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	City for Choice City of Heritage City of Aspiration
Report Author and Contact Details:	Rebecca Fuhr 0207 641 2342 <u>rfuhr@westminster.gov.uk</u>

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Work has recently been undertaken to develop an updated strategy for Open Spaces and Biodiversity for the council, combining these two topics for the first time in a single strategic approach (historically they have been handled separately).
- 1.2 The draft strategy aims to recognise the range and value of Westminster's impressive network of 'green assets', including parks, gardens and green infrastructure such as living walls and roofs, and looks at the importance of protecting the city's rich and diverse wildlife. The strategy reflects the full range of assets – those that are owned or managed by the council and those that are not, such as the Royal Parks and private spaces. The strategy narrative and the Action Plan which accompanies it aim to capture the role of the council among a wider team of partners in protecting, enhancing and making the most of the city's open spaces and biodiversity. This 'wider team' includes the contribution that Westminster's residents themselves can make and with this in mind the document seeks to present the issues in a way that non-specialists and the general public will find engaging and accessible.

- 1.3 The draft strategy, attached at Appendix A, is very shortly due to undergo public consultation, with responses being welcomed until November 2017. The Children, Environment and Leisure Policy and Scrutiny Committee is invited to provide its comments and feedback on the draft strategy alongside this wider consultation process, so that a final document may subsequently be developed which reflects all of these views and perspectives.
- 1.4 The draft Open Spaces and Biodiversity Strategy is a recently developed piece of work and has not previously been discussed by this Policy & Scrutiny Committee or any other.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

2.1 As outlined in this report, the draft Open Spaces and Biodiversity Strategy is currently undergoing public consultation. Through this process we want to encourage interested parties to join us in an open discussion which can take shape based on their own perspectives on what the key issues are. The Committee's views are sought in relation to a similar set of broad lines of enquiry.

1. What are the Committee's views on the overall approach currently being taken to delivery of a combined strategy for Open Spaces and Biodiversity?
2. This is a very broad and cross-cutting area of work with multiple connections to other areas of council service. Synergies with Sports, Leisure and Wellbeing (and especially the refreshed Active Westminster Partnership strategy, 'An Active City for All') have been highlighted in particular, along with a range of other strategic connections noted in the 'Policy and Legislative Context' section (page 5) of the consultation draft. Are there any further key linkages which we may have missed – any connections to additional areas of council service delivery, or current or forthcoming strategic approaches or publications – which the Committee would see as particularly relevant?
3. The Action Plan associated with the draft strategy references the council's own commitments and also some specific contributions by key partners. Does the Committee have any further suggestions it would like to make in respect of:
 - a. Further actions to which the council itself should commit?
 - b. Additional, particularly significant, partner contributions which we would seek to recognise?
4. Is there anything further, in any aspect of the draft document and proposed approach overall, which the Committee feels we may have missed and which should be brought into the post-consultation review process as we finalise and publish the strategy to begin implementation?

2.2 The Committee's responses will form the basis of recommendations that will be incorporated into a short report that will be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community for a response.

3. Background

Open Spaces and Biodiversity in Westminster

3.1 Westminster has an impressive network of 'green assets' with everything from large open spaces such as Paddington Recreation Ground and the Royal Parks, to small

parks and ornamental gardens, waterways, 'pocket parks' and green infrastructure such as living walls and roofs. In fact, over 20% of the land in Westminster is made up of green or open space.

- 3.2 The city also supports a rich and varied range of wildlife. Nearly one quarter (more than 500 hectares) of Westminster's total area is protected because of its value in terms of biodiversity, and part of the city (in St John's Wood) has formal designation as a Local Nature Reserve under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949). It is particularly noted as a rich and important habitat for birds and a wide range of bird species can be found across the rest of the city also. Robins, dunnocks, blackbirds, song thrushes, starlings, blackcaps, chaffinches, coal tits and goldfinches are all regular visitors to Westminster's parks. Within the Royal Parks, there are various waterfowl including herons and pelican. The tawny owl, stock dove and great spotted woodpecker are all known to breed and nest in some Royal Parks locations within Westminster, and even peregrine falcons have been spotted. Westminster also supports a number of invertebrate species, including the stag beetle – a species which is in steep decline across Europe. There are small mammals, including hedgehogs, foxes, grey squirrel as well as five different species of bats. Our waterways are also important sites for supporting wildlife, with a range of fish and other aquatic species to be found in our canals and in the Thames.
- 3.3 143 specific locations in Westminster are formally recognised as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) by the Mayor of London and GLA. This offers them extra protection to acknowledge their particular role in supporting the biodiversity of London as a whole. The spread of SINCs across the city have been mapped and can be found at Appendix B.
- 3.4 The wealth of natural assets within the city, taken collectively, are extremely popular and highly valued. They deliver a wide range of specific benefits for Westminster, both as a place and as a community, including:
- Benefits to physical health and wellbeing, encouraging and providing opportunities for people to get physically active
 - Mental health and wellbeing, by offering respite from the city in spaces of relative tranquillity and enabling people to have contact with nature
 - Environmental benefits, impacting positively on air quality, noise pollution, flood risk and urban cooling
 - Supporting biodiversity by providing essential habitats for a wide range of animal, bird, insect and aquatic species and giving people a chance to connect with, learn about and experience that wildlife in the very heart of the city
 - Economic benefits, including impact on land values and property prices, while of course attracting tourism and enhancing the visitor experience
 - Supporting strong and resilient communities, providing places where people from all sections of the community can come together for recreation, volunteering or to take part in communal activities
 - Contributing to local identity and heritage, providing a backdrop for events and filming as well as simply adding to the sense of place in specific neighbourhoods and Westminster as a whole.

- 3.5 We want to work to protect, enhance and promote Westminster's open spaces and local wildlife, making the most we can of them to help us realise these benefits. Work has therefore been undertaken to develop an updated strategy for open spaces and biodiversity for the council, combining the two topics for the first time in a single strategic approach (historically they have been handled separately).
- 3.6 The intention has been to produce an accessible and engaging document which will be able to reach a wide audience and generate interest in the issues among local people and non-specialists. The document closely references but does not seek to replace or replicate the existing documents which support it and provide it with its policy context. It focuses not on Planning Policy (discussed in much greater detail later in this report) but rather on why the City Council considers our open spaces and wildlife to be so important and what we and others will do to ensure they are maintained for future generations and that we continue to get the best out of them.

The Importance of Partnership

- 3.7 The draft strategy highlights how vital it is that key partners and the local community work with the council, all playing their own part in protecting Westminster's green assets and biodiversity. Several partner organisations are highlighted as being of particular importance in helping us achieve our shared aims in this area. These include the Greater London Authority, Royal Parks, the Rivers and Canals Trust and ZSL London Zoo, among others. Early, informal engagement has taken place with some of these partners, and they will all naturally be included in the formal consultation process. We hope to benefit from their unique expertise and perspectives, while also giving them an opportunity to highlight additional work their agencies are doing which complements the council's own efforts.
- 3.8 We also recognise that local people themselves can be an essential partner in helping us achieve our aims in relation to Westminster's green assets and wildlife. The strategy points out how, with even the smallest amount of outside space of their own, residents can do their bit by choosing pollinator-friendly plants or installing bird boxes in their gardens.
- 3.9 We have also explored different ways of encouraging residents, especially young people, to take an interest in 'greening' their local area. In June this year the council partnered with the School of Architecture and Built Environment to run a student competition, seeking design ideas for pocket parks and planters within the Marylebone Low Emissions Neighbourhood Area. A number of greening initiatives have also been supported via the council's Ward Budgets programme in recent years. This is another way in which Councillors, council officers and local people have historically worked together to bring extra greenery into Westminster's neighbourhoods, and support local wildlife.
- 3.10 This all serves to underline the central role that working in partnership has in our ability to make the most of Westminster's green assets and support biodiversity. To reflect this the Action Plan that accompanies the draft Open Spaces & Biodiversity strategy has been structured in such a way that the reader can see, alongside the council's own commitments, several examples of the work of various key partners (the general public included), which complements our efforts and contributes to shared outcomes.

Policy Context

- 3.11 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that our “planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision” and, in respect of biodiversity we must “have regard to conserving biodiversity as set out in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)”. To this end, preservation and enhancement of Westminster’s ‘green assets’ features prominently in the City Plan, with a number of specific policies to protect existing open space and to support the provision of new and improved spaces and green infrastructure.
- 3.12 Westminster’s City Plan is currently undergoing a process of extensive revision and updating. By collaborating directly with the officers working on the redraft it has been possible to ensure that the priorities of the draft Open Spaces and Biodiversity Strategy are underpinned and fully supported by specific and targeted policies within the refreshed City Plan, with all the legal weight that provides. This frees up the Open Spaces and Biodiversity Strategy from needing the status of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) in itself. This gave us the desired scope to create a more ‘plain English’ document outlining the council’s purpose and commitments in relation to open spaces and biodiversity, without needing to duplicate the policy rigour and more technical tone of the statutory planning documentation.

Evidence Base and Emerging Priorities

- 3.13 In 2014-15 significant work was commissioned and undertaken by Groundwork to audit all of Westminster’s open spaces. The study noted size, topology, biodiversity data and a range of other details in respect of each open space. Green infrastructure installations were also looked at. To complement this, qualitative and quantitative customer insight and consultation work was done, to understand how our existing green assets are used by the public and what the current perception of them is among within the community.
- 3.14 From this evidence base a few key priorities began to emerge. These are areas where the available information indicates the City Council has scope to deliver particularly beneficial impact, either by building on existing strengths and successes, or by tackling areas of specific challenge. The emerging priority areas are:
- **Green infrastructure** – Through our planning policies and working with developers and other partners, driving the delivery of additional green infrastructure such as living walls and roofs, especially in areas where the opportunities for other green space are limited. Thinking innovatively about how greening can be introduced into the urban environment is critically important with pressure on available land in Westminster so great. A big part of achieving this is working effectively with developers, using our planning policies and our strong working partnerships to drive the delivery of new green initiatives wherever possible.
 - **Space for play** – Boosting the city’s offer in terms of play space by facilitating new sites where possible, but also by exploring alternative solutions such as ‘Active Streets’. This is particularly important as the Groundwork survey data shows that Westminster continues to be deficient in play space. Given aforementioned pressures in land this is not necessarily surprising, but again by approaching the problem creatively it can be possible to deliver real benefits to Westminster’s children and young people by giving them opportunities for play. Encouraging physical activity in this way also has, of course, implications

for a range of our public health and other priorities, such tackling childhood obesity.

- **Walking in and around open spaces** – Ensuring we closely align with the council's draft Walking Strategy. Consultation with the community shows that a majority of people using Westminster's parks and open spaces tend to travel there on foot, and we know that high quality green spaces encourage people to walk more. With all the benefits in terms of health and wellbeing, traffic congestion and impact on air quality that this can bring, it is more important than ever that we use our open and green spaces to best effect in encouraging people to explore the city on foot.
- **Biodiversity** – This area has received less emphasis in recent years, with the discontinuation of the London-wide Biodiversity Partnership framework. However, as outlined in the strategy preserving a diverse range of wildlife and offering people easy access to experience it first hand can have a wide range of benefits. So, to complement our strong focus on offering 'wildlife education' opportunities, we want to take a strategic approach to protecting Westminster's biodiversity. We aim to work with key partners at a borough level to re-establish some momentum around the topic, developing a realistic set of local priorities and agreeing a targeted two year action plan to address them.

Developing our Action Plan

- 3.15 The evidence-based priorities outlined above have fed directly into the detailed Action Plan which accompanies the draft strategy. The Action Plan sets out the specific actions which we propose to take and, by incorporating responsibilities which fall across a broad range of council service areas, we are able to reflect the truly 'whole council' approach we take to this cross cutting issue. To ensure we accurately capture and reflect our collective efforts the Action Plan has been developed with direct input from a wide range of council teams, including Public Health; Sports, Leisure & Wellbeing; Growth, Planning & Housing; and Adults' Social Care.
- 3.16 As noted above, the Action Plan also seeks to reflect the crucial contributions being made by some of our key partners, such as Royal Parks and the GLA. The result is a cross cutting Action Plan which articulates the multi-faceted approach which will allow us to achieve our shared objectives.
- 3.17 For clarity the draft actions have been structured into three broad themes:
- **Quantity:** Increasing green space and infrastructure wherever possible (driving this through the City Plan, neighbourhood plans and planning decisions, and as part of our own local area regeneration schemes such as Church Street)
 - **Quality:** Delivering high quality open spaces and green infrastructure which deliver our priority outcomes, including all biodiversity objectives but also all those which have resonance across the full range of City for All outcomes
 - **Impact:** Enabling access and engagement across communities to ensure benefits are felt as broadly as possible.

Focus on Biodiversity

- 3.18 During the course of early engagement with some key partners while the draft strategy was being developed, it became clear that a specifically focused approach may need to be taken to the biodiversity agenda. This is an area which has arguably suffered from some loss of emphasis and momentum in recent years, with the discontinuation of the pan-London Biodiversity Partnership framework due to lack of funding in 2013. A meeting with the Central Royal Parks Wildlife Group (CRPWG) earlier this summer demonstrated the strength of interest in protecting and preserving Westminster's wildlife among key partners, but also a sense that greater understanding of, and support for, the priorities of these stakeholders was needed from the council.
- 3.19 The draft Open Spaces and Biodiversity Strategy therefore does not seek to preempt the views and specific priorities of those who specialise in this area and carry out this type of work day to day, on the ground. So instead of setting overly prescriptive, specific actions around biodiversity at this stage, and in the absence of a formal London-wide framework to slot into, the strategy proposes that we establish a local (borough-level) working party which will discuss issues relating to Westminster's biodiversity and develop for itself a targeted plan of actions. It is suggested that this plan would look at realistic actions which would contribute to an agreed set of priority outcomes over the next two years. After this point the nationwide approach to biodiversity will be due to for review, so the matter can be looked at once again in that context. An invitation is to be sent out to key partners identified through the CRPWG, seeking to initiate this process with a first meeting with the Cabinet Member.

Next Steps

- 3.20 As outlined above, the draft strategy will be launched for public consultation very shortly, with responses sought until November. All consultation materials and details for submitting responses will be available on the council website. The consultation is taking place primarily online, through the dedicated web page and via Open Forum.
- 3.21 After the consultation period closes, all responses will be reviewed individually and in detail. Feedback and recommendations from this committee will be brought in as part of that process. The draft strategy will be further discussed and amended as appropriate on the basis of consultation responses, and a final draft will be developed. The aim is to achieve this in December. Following Cabinet Member approval and final sign off, the Open Spaces and Biodiversity Strategy will then be launched and formally adopted.

<p>If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Report Author Rebecca Fuhr (Principal Policy Officer) 0207 641 2342 rfuhr@westminster.gov.uk</p>
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APPENDICES:

- Appendix A: Consultation draft of the Open Spaces and Biodiversity Strategy (word format)
Appendix B: Map of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in Westminster

WESTMINSTER OPEN SPACES AND BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

Draft for consultation
September 2017

FOREWORD

The open and green spaces sprinkled across Westminster are remarkable. We are fortunate to be custodians of some of the most recognised and valued areas in London and almost one quarter of Westminster's 8.9 square mile area is open and green space. These spaces provide important opportunity for respite in the centre of one of the world's most vibrant cities, as well as helping to improve local air quality across the city.

We know residents, workers and visitors alike value these areas immensely. Our green and open spaces provide opportunity for recreation, sports and contemplation for us all. The green areas of the city also provide an important home to the rich and diverse wildlife that live or visit the city each year.

Our partners across central London are also very important. The Royal Parks provide a large proportion of the green open space in Westminster and provide a unique draw for tourists and visitors in particular. Meanwhile our numerous private squares and gardens provide a great refuge for the near quarter-of-a-million residents of the City of Westminster.

The City Council is determined to protect, enhance and promote our many parks, open spaces and other green infrastructure, as well as acting to conserve the City's rich and diverse wildlife, so that we can all continue to benefit from them. We are committed to encouraging and facilitating new greenery wherever possible across the city – whether in the form of new green spaces, living walls and roofs, or other innovations.

I look forward to working with everyone that values these outstanding assets.

Councillor David Harvey
Cabinet Member for the Environment, Sports and the Community

1. Introduction: Pressures and priorities

Westminster has an impressive open space and green infrastructure network – in fact it is a much ‘greener’ place than many people tend to expect. Almost one quarter of Westminster’s 8.9 square mile area is open and green space, and the number and range of other ‘green assets’ such as living walls and roofs, is increasing.

Over half of the city’s open spaces have a heritage designation, with over 70 London Squares and 21 Historic England registered parks and gardens, including the five Royal Parks. These unique landscapes are assets that can reinforce a sense of place and identity, improve health and wellbeing, boost environmental resilience and make the city a more attractive and prosperous place. Westminster is also home to a thriving and diverse range of plants, animals and micro-organisms. Over 600 different kinds of flora and fauna have been recorded in Westminster and St John’s Wood has formal designation as a Local Nature Reserve under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949). In fact, nearly one quarter of Westminster’s total area – more than 500 hectares – is protected because of its wildlife value.

Nonetheless, there are challenges associated with providing green and open space in the very heart of central London. Westminster is a truly ‘24 hour city’ and its population of over 233,000 residents is boosted on a daily basis by a further 674,000 workers and 176,000 visitors, which swell the overall population to an estimated around 1.1 million. With the impending opening of Crossrail and other infrastructure improvements, these figures are only set to rise. Population growth adds additional pressure on existing green space, but conversely it also further intensifies the value of green infrastructure and other interventions to help relieve the intensity of the urban built environment.

User surveys and feedback from the public highlight just how highly valued by the local community Westminster’s open spaces are. Access to, and contact with, nature are important for individual and collective wellbeing, and our parks, open spaces and green infrastructure provide opportunities for people to be physically active and do things which benefit all aspects of their health and wellbeing. We want to capitalise on this, helping as many people as possible feel the benefits. Meanwhile, as the local authority we have a statutory responsibility to have regard to Westminster’s biodiversity. We need to make clear plans to prevent the decline of - and improve conditions for – the species and habitats that make up the city’s wildlife. We can achieve this by working together with key partners, to maximise our impact with constrained resources.

Given these pressures there will be challenges in ensuring that we reap all the benefits of having high quality, well maintained open spaces and green infrastructure. The City Council has therefore developed this draft combined strategy for Open Spaces and Biodiversity, to help us meet these challenges head on.

2. Policy and Legislative Context

The importance of open and green spaces and the role of Local Authorities in protecting, managing and enhancing them, is recognised in the **National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF). Noting that “access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities” (paragraph 73), it advises that councils conduct up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, and opportunities for new provision, while also working towards the protection and enhancement of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure (paragraph 114). Open and green spaces are also protected by some specific legislation – for Westminster this includes the **London Squares Preservation Act (1931)** which offers statutory protection to a number of squares and enclosed gardens across the city.

The NPPF is supported by **Planning Practice Guidance**, which advises local authorities to prepare green infrastructure strategies, which should including an assessment of current green infrastructure provision and opportunities for improvement (Natural Environment section, paragraph 29). The assessment can inform the role of green infrastructure in local and neighbourhood plans, infrastructure delivery plans and community infrastructure schedules. Planning Practice Guidance also recognises the need to take account of biodiversity (Biodiversity and Ecosystems section, paragraph 7) as set out in the **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006** (Section 40). This Act places a duty on all public authorities in England and Wales to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Assessment of the local ecological network, particularly the distribution of protected and priority habitats and species, is important in planning for biodiversity.

The Mayor of London’s **London Plan** aims to protect and promote London’s open spaces and green infrastructure, with a number of policies giving shape to the contribution local authorities are expected to make to this. Key relevant policies include the requirement for planning authorities to audit, manage and protect existing green spaces and infrastructure and develop priorities for addressing deficiencies. This strategy directly responds to this, and the expectation that councils will “set out positive measures” for achieving those goals. Additional key relevant policies in the London Plan relate to play and recreation space, urban greening, sustainable drainage and biodiversity and access to nature. Meanwhile, the Supplementary Planning Guidance document on the All London Green Grid, published in 2012, added extra emphasis in respect of connecting and integrating London’s green infrastructure network. Any future iterations of this strategy will also have regard to the new Mayor’s Integrated Environmental Strategy, which is due for consultation in autumn 2017.

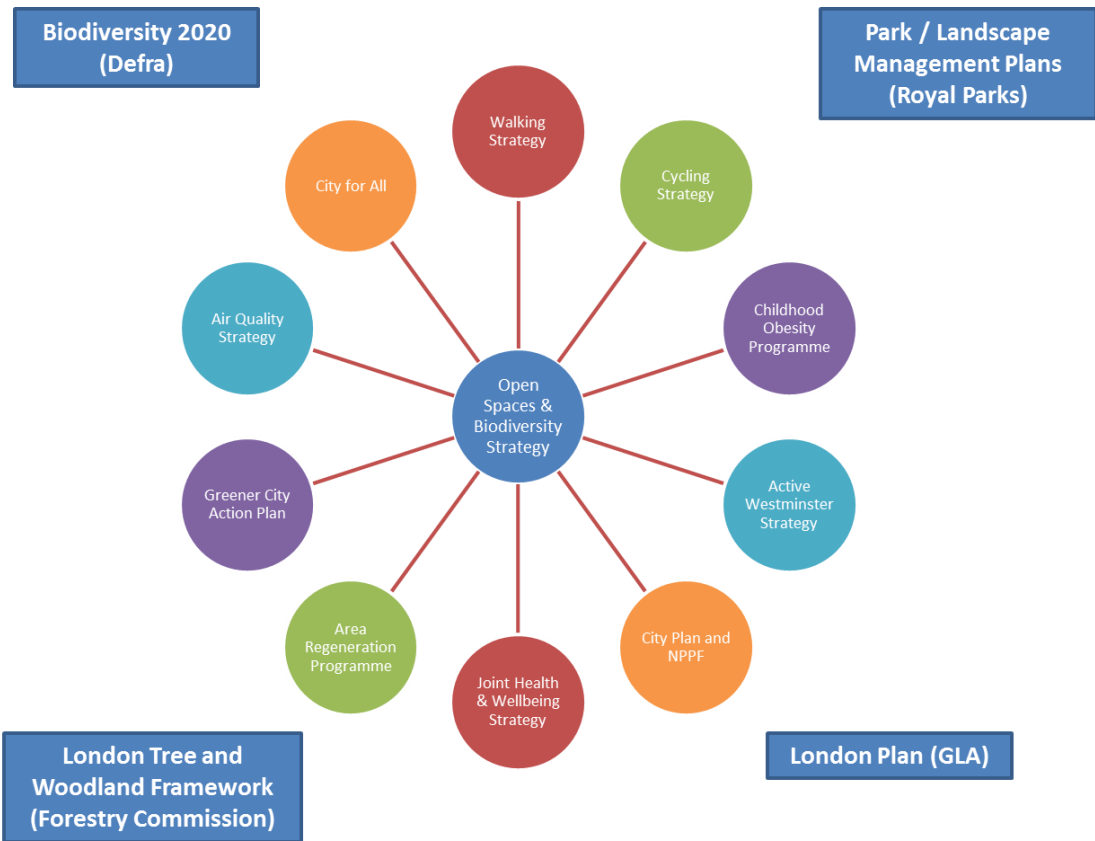
The City Council reflects the aims of the Mayor’s London Plan in its own planning policy, with a clear strategic objective within Westminster’s City Plan to: “protect and enhance Westminster’s open spaces, civic spaces and Blue Ribbon Network, and Westminster’s biodiversity; including protecting the unique character and openness of the Royal Parks and other open spaces; and to manage these spaces to ensure areas of relative tranquillity in a city with a daytime population increased every day to over one million workers and visitors.” Key policies within the City Plan include: S35

Open Space; S36 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation; S37 Westminster's Blue Ribbon Network; S38 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure; and S32 Noise; although additional policies on flooding, design, heritage and health are also all relevant.

The City Council is currently in the process of refreshing and updating its City Plan and a fresh look is being taken at the aspects which pertain to open spaces and biodiversity as part of this. The careful drafting and application of the relevant planning policies within our City Plan will provide the necessary legal backbone and this strategy aims to capture the practical actions and commitments, which combined together will enable us to protect, develop and enhance Westminster's open spaces and wildlife.

Our priorities around green infrastructure and protection of Westminster's wildlife are further supported and reinforced by the council's Code of Construction Practice, which was published in July 2016. This document helps us to monitor, control and manage construction impacts on sites throughout Westminster. It sets out a range of requirements for developers whose proposals may have implications for the city's green assets or local ecology, to ensure negative impacts are managed and mitigated.

In addition to this statutory planning context, the council's strategic approach to open spaces and biodiversity shares important connections with a wide range of its **other policies and strategies**. By looking at how we can work with partners to maximise the benefit of the city's green assets for the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities, to protect the environment and biodiversity and to support the character and prosperity of Westminster as a whole, this strategy also aligns directly with our City for All vision.



3. The Importance of Open Space and Green Infrastructure

The benefits of open space and green infrastructure to individuals and communities are broad ranging and widely recognised. Providing green spaces and spaces for nature improves the health and well-being of individuals, increases resilience to climate change, improves air quality and enhances biodiversity, while also delivering economic benefits and driving local growth and prosperity.

However, our understanding of the precise impacts is growing all the time and there's always more we can learn about the benefits of protecting and investing in 'green assets'. In 2016 a Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) committee recommended that more work was needed to specify the real value of the contribution of green spaces to wider public agendas. So research and exploration of these issues is ongoing and the ever increasing body of evidence has been brought into consideration in the development of this strategy.

Health and Wellbeing benefits

Our network of green and open space has many benefits for physical and mental health and well-being – the connections between the two are well documented and further work is being done all the time to understand the specific impacts of access to green space and wildlife on people's health. Among the most recent evidence are findings from a research study by Fields in Trust, which indicate that proximity to, and more frequent use of, local green space produces corresponding increases in health and wellbeing scores across all four of the Office of National Statistics wellbeing indicators (life satisfaction, sense of worth, happiness and anxiety) along with general health.

Physical health

Insufficient physical activity is among the ten most important risk factors for the health burden in England, costing the NHS over £1 billion a year. In Westminster specifically, over 58% of adults aged 16 and over engage in moderate physical activity only once a week or less and the percentage of children who are overweight is higher than the national and London average¹.

Access to parks can and should promote more active lifestyles by default, by providing space for recreation, physical activity, leisure, sport and play. Public Health England² recognise that increased access to green space is directly linked to increased levels of physical activity, which is then directly connected to maintaining mental and physical health and preventing illness. This is supported by a wealth of scientific evidence which demonstrates a positive impact in terms of reductions in long-term conditions including heart disease, cancer, and musculoskeletal problems.

Westminster's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy recognises the value of our network of open and green spaces, not only in encouraging physical activity but also in providing opportunities for relaxation and interaction, which can impact on other concerns such as loneliness and social isolation. These connections point to a direct

¹ Tri-borough Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on Physical Activity (2014)

² Improving Access to Green Spaces (2014) Public Health England

alignment between making the best use of Westminster's green spaces and infrastructure and those strategic health objectives.

One of the ways in which the City Council encourages people to use our green and open spaces to get physically active is through our Park Makers scheme. Under this initiative local people can volunteer to run free health and fitness activities in Westminster's parks. There are opportunities for them to improve their skills and expertise while opening up access to organised physical activity opportunities to the whole community. This initiative was recently highlighted to the Department of Communities and Local Government as a 'best practice' approach and it marks an important link between promoting open spaces and their positive impact on physical health with our commitment to support volunteering. This is a connection the council would like to explore even further in the future.

CASE STUDY: TAI CHI AT PADDINGTON RECREATION GROUND

Paddington Recreation Ground is somewhat unique in Westminster, as our largest open space area with multiple recreation, physical activity, leisure, sport and other facilities, outside of the portfolio of Royal Parks. The City Council works to make the most of this valuable asset, especially in terms of its potential to provide opportunities for people to get physically active. Over 1.3million people visit the site annually and it offers a wide range of different activities, including non-traditional activities such as the mass Tai Chi session held in July 2017, this can encourage many who might otherwise be less likely to participate in sport or structured physical activity to give something new a try. Over 50 people took part in the session and enjoyed shiatsu massages and other wellbeing activities on the day. The success of events like this, along with the positive feedback from the local community, supports our aims to use Westminster's green and open spaces to help people look after their physical health and wellbeing in ways they really enjoy.

Mental health and wellbeing

Green spaces also influence people's wider well-being. They can offer tranquil spaces in the heart of the city, helping to reduce stress and improve mental health³. Supporting and improving the mental health of Westminster's residents and visitors is a high priority for the council. Our Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy recognises that "poor mental health can affect quality of life, life expectancy and the ability to participate in and contribute to society", while also noting that Westminster has a higher prevalence of self-reported anxiety and depression than neighbouring London boroughs. Studies have shown that people value green spaces as important for their happiness and wellbeing⁴ and local data reveals that in Westminster a large proportion of people who use our parks and open spaces do so in order to enjoy the peace and quiet.

Communities

In addition to the physical and mental benefits which may be felt by individuals, green spaces and infrastructure can contribute to the collective wellbeing, resilience and cohesion of whole communities. Our green assets can help foster a sense of

³ Gardens and Health (2016) The Kings Fund.

⁴ The Value of our Green Spaces (2016) The Land Trust - a perceptions survey found that 9 out of 10 feel that green spaces play a positive part in their happiness and well-being

community – whether through community growing projects like the one in Church Street or simply by providing a focal point where local people can gather together, offering opportunities to socialise, learn and volunteer.

Environmental benefits

The environmental benefits of open and green space are broad ranging and well documented, and are drawn into particularly sharp focus in intensively developed, highly populated urban areas like the centre of London. They provide a vital role in supporting urban wildlife, can help improve resilience to climate change, improve air and water quality, and are an integral part of the historic townscape.

Wildlife and biodiversity

Both open spaces and green infrastructure, such as green roofs and walls and trees, can provide habitats for wildlife and support pollinators⁵. There are 32 locations in Westminster that have a designation as Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC). This total has remained unchanged for almost ten years and underlines the major contribution that green spaces and infrastructure within our borough make to supporting wildlife and biodiversity across London and more widely. The majority of these sites incorporate a number of different habitat types, enabling them each to benefit a range of species. However, most recent audit data shows that of the total land area assessed, only 39% was found to have ‘average to rich’ or ‘rich’ species diversity⁶. This is something we would look for opportunities to improve through this strategy.

The majority of our green spaces also have a good mix in size and species of trees. We hope to build on this by continuing to enhance Westminster’s public places with trees, via our planting programme for street trees on the city’s highways, as well as within parks and open spaces. This is part of how we hope to generate as much opportunity as possible for supporting biodiversity within the urban landscape.

Access to nature

As well as providing for wildlife, green spaces and infrastructure allow people to experience a closer relationship with nature. There is a significant weight of evidence connecting a lack of contact with nature with a range of negative impacts on people’s wellbeing, including higher incidences of depression, stress and anxiety, and greater susceptibility to allergies. There is a particular significance for children and young people growing up in predominantly urban environments, with studies indicating that spending time in the natural environment can improve children’s cognitive development, mood and self-esteem, and may even reduce the symptoms and need for medication among children with ADHD⁷. This underlines the importance of providing opportunities to interact with nature for those living and growing up in Westminster.

The London Plan encourages boroughs to ensure people can walk to areas with significant wildlife value (no more than 1km from their homes). The city council aims to respond to this by continuing to maintain high quality green spaces all over the

⁵ The National Pollinator Strategy (2014) DEFRA

⁶ City of Westminster Open Space audit (March 2016) Groundwork London

⁷ Natural Childhood (2012) – Report of the National Trust

city, and in view of the known benefits in terms of health and wellbeing we will be particularly keen to increase opportunities in places where there is less easy access to nature currently. Our priorities will be guided by audit work which has identified specific areas of potential deficiency, as outlined in [Appendix X](#).

Partly due to pressures on land use, Westminster is characterised by a large number of smaller sized parks, open spaces and gardens. We intend to make the most of these smaller green spaces. This can come with challenges as there is a balance to be struck between private and public access, however it is important that we take all available opportunities to enable people to connect with nature within their immediate neighbourhoods. This recognises that the majority (58%) of the people using Westminster's open spaces have been found to have travelled less than one mile, usually on foot, in order to get there⁸. We will also continue to support and build upon the success of initiatives such as Forest Schools, which provide vital opportunities for Westminster's residents to interact with and learn about nature⁹.

CASE STUDY: FOREST SCHOOLS

The Forest Schools programme has been operating out of Paddington Recreation Ground for over 2 years. It has become extremely popular with local primary and infant schools, which send their pupils to enjoy the custom-built Environmental Area – an 'outdoor classroom'. Children learn about wildlife as well as, through planting herbs and vegetables, gaining an understanding of where their food comes from, which can have additional benefits in line with the council's commitment to helping tackle childhood obesity. This year we aim to engage more children than ever in the programme – our target for 2017/18 is 5,000 and we are on track to exceed before the spring. Furthermore, we're looking to develop the offer to create more opportunities for other sections of the community to learn about nature. Among the areas being explored are working with Special Educational Needs (SEN) schools and a home school, as well as looking at how we could open up more opportunities for adults and whole families to learn together.

Climate change and urban cooling

Green spaces and planting have a crucial role to play in helping manage the effects of climate change. They help to cool the city, lowering both surface and air temperatures by providing shade and through evapotranspiration. A well-known effect of urbanisation is the warming of the local climate relative to surrounding rural areas, creating a phenomenon known as the 'urban heat island' (UHI)¹⁰. Planting in urban locations helps to mitigate this. Green roofs and walls can also provide insulation, reducing the need to cool and heat buildings mechanically¹¹. This further benefits the environment in terms of energy efficiency, in line with the aims of the City Council's Greener City Action Plan.

⁸ Westminster Open Spaces Community Consultation (2014) Groundwork London

⁹ A marvellous opportunity for children to learn – a participatory evaluation of Forest School in England and Wales (2010) Forestry Commission England and Forestry Research

¹⁰ Air temperature regulation by urban trees and green infrastructure (2013) Forestry Commission

¹¹ Green Capital: Green infrastructure for a future city (2016) CRP/GLA

Flooding

Green spaces also help to reduce flood risk. Intense rainfall can cause localised flooding as rainwater is unable to soak into the ground or drain away, but vegetation can slow down and reduce the flow of rainwater to the drainage system. Westminster has identified areas that are susceptible to surface water flooding so the city council would look to preserve and where possible enhance planting in these regions as a priority. Small areas can also contribute, such as the John Lewis Rain Garden in Victoria which provides permeable surfaces that help to manage rainwater flow. The key role that green infrastructure like this can play in reducing surface water flooding is recognised in the London Sustainable Drainage Action Plan¹².

Air Quality

Westminster has some of the poorest air quality in the country and has been designated an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) since 1999 for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulates (PM₁₀). Air pollution damages human health causing an increased risk of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, an increased risk of cancer, and exacerbating asthma. The number of additional deaths in Westminster attributable to air pollution was estimated at 9,400 in 2010.

Vegetation can help improve air quality, by absorbing pollutants such as ozone, nitrogen dioxide and particulates. The London i-tree study¹³ found that larger trees were of particular benefit, estimating that a 75cm diameter tree can intercept 10 times more air pollution than a 15cm diameter tree. It also found that trees are particularly effective in storing carbon, estimating London's trees store almost 2.5 million tonnes of carbon each year. In recognition of this and other benefits, this strategy supports and will coordinate with the council's Greener City Action Plan commitment to planting 1,000 trees by 2020. Green walls can also play a role, so the City Council will always push for the incorporation of this type of green infrastructure in all school-based developments, especially on heavily trafficked roads where air quality is an additional driving factor.

Green planting and well maintained open spaces have the additional benefit of making the city more attractive to pedestrians and cyclists. This contributes to the council's and others' aims around increasing carbon neutral travel. In 2016 the council successfully established the area around Marylebone as a Low Emission Neighbourhood and as part of this has focused on creating attractive streets for pedestrians, mitigating local air pollution.

Water Quality

Most of Westminster is served by combined sewers designed in the 1860s. These receive both waste water and rainwater, and during rainy periods may overflow into the River Thames. Open space and green infrastructure can reduce the amount and speed of rainwater entering the drainage network, and thereby reduce the polluting overflows from the combined sewers into the river.

Heritage and townscape

¹² London Sustainable Drainage Action Plan: Draft for public consultation(2015) GLA

¹³ Valuing London's Urban Forest (2015) Treeconomics/ Forestry Commission

Open spaces are an integral part of Westminster's historic fabric, they allow for views and provide the setting for buildings and contribute to the character of conservation areas. The Royal Parks and River Thames provide the setting for iconic landmarks, such as the Palace of Westminster and Buckingham Palace. Open spaces can also be heritage assets in their own right, with 21 registered parks and gardens¹⁴ and 85 London Squares¹⁵ in Westminster. Many parks and gardens also contain listed buildings and structures including statuary and railings.

Economic benefits

There is a growing evidence base to support the economic benefits of green infrastructure. As well as the potential savings to health care¹⁶, social¹⁷ and environmental¹⁸ costs, there are benefits to local businesses and a positive impact on tourism. Investment in our open spaces and green infrastructure can therefore help to drive our City for All ambitions by helping to encourage the right kind of economic growth in Westminster¹⁹.

Land and property value

A greener environment can increase land values²⁰ and can attract investors. In an assessment of London house prices by the GLA Economics in 2010, it was found that property prices were boosted by quality green spaces. The study estimated that property located less than a kilometre from quality urban parks benefitted from an up to 3% boost in total property value. These impacts are reflected in action taken by Westminster's Business Improvement Districts and major landowners, in undertaking green infrastructure audits and prioritising and resourcing greening improvements in Westminster's public realm.

CASE STUDY: WILD WEST END

Wild West End is a partnership initiative by a group of the area's largest property owners which seeks to "encourage birds, bees and bats back into this iconic area of London, and create greater connections with nature for residents, visitors and

¹⁴ Compiled by Historic England

¹⁵ Defined by the London Squares Preservation Act 1931

¹⁶ The RIBA published a report in 2014 that demonstrated how vital green space in cities is to public health. 'City Health Check – How Design Can Save Lives and Money'. This compared three major health issues: diabetes, obesity in children, and physical activity in nine cities, and reported that England's obesity epidemic could be eased if better public spaces and green infrastructure were prioritised.

¹⁷ The Land Trust's, "The Value of our Green Spaces" (2016) estimates that every £1 it invests in its parks and nature reserves contributes £30 towards health and wellbeing benefits and £23 towards crime reduction and community safety.

¹⁸ Valuing London's Urban Forest (2015) estimated the financial value of London's trees at £132.7 million – estimate reached by assigning value to the benefits they bring such as in providing storm water attenuation, improving air quality and storing carbon.

¹⁹ A City for All (2014) Westminster City Council

²⁰ The Landscape Institute's, "Profitable Places" (2014) notes that investment in the public realm can potentially double average values of flats in parts of London.

workers to enjoy”²¹. The aim is to achieve this by creating “green stepping stones” between existing green assets, to increase the sense of connection and collective impact between them. This can take various forms – street trees, planters, living walls and roofs, or other infrastructure. This is all done with the support of partners including the London Wildlife Trust and the GLA, and in recognition of the potential for urban greening to improve the health and wellbeing of local people, enhance local environment quality and support biodiversity. An example of the type of work facilitated by Wild West End is the creation of ‘Pocket Meadows’ at 25 Castlereagh Street. This sequence of green roofs has added interest, visual appeal and support for local wildlife within this housing development in Marylebone, which is a geographic area of priority for the council in terms of greening. The project was short-listed for a Civic Trust Award in 2016.

Tourism and events

Westminster’s green spaces are a significant draw in their own right, for visitors from around the world. Research by Visit Britain has found that of the 31 million people who visit Britain each year, around a third (11.1 million) enjoy a park or garden, while data from the Royal Parks shows that typically well over a third (37%) of people visiting Hyde Park, for example, have come from outside the UK. So by focusing effort and resources on providing high quality green spaces, we can help drive the local tourism economy, support local businesses and contribute to Westminster’s continued reputation as top global destination.

A number of our open spaces can also provide unique and attractive venue for a wide range of special events. In recent years Westminster’s Royal Parks and council-managed green spaces have played host to large scale concerts, international sporting events, and even film premieres, as well as many smaller scale commercial and community events. Many of these events are enormously popular with the public but they can also generate litter, noise and wear and tear, as well as potentially restricting access to spaces for a limited amount of time. This means that using our parks and open spaces for these purposes can be a sensitive issue. We need to manage the competing demands, carefully considering what might be appropriate in terms of the nature, duration and frequency of events, and recognising that this may well vary depending on the precise open space or locations. We intend to develop some specific guidelines, which will help event organisers work with the council to achieve this.

This strategy joins a number of other documents and policy materials, most notably the council’s City Plan, in supporting us to balance the conflicting demands for open spaces as ‘venues’. The City Plan creates scope for events in our parks and open spaces that will be beneficial to the local area and to Westminster’s communities and enterprises, provided that they do not unreasonably compromise or damage the quality, amenity and accessibility of our open spaces or green infrastructure for the public. This means protecting planting, habitats and biodiversity and controlling the potential negative impacts of noise, litter and so on. This policy backdrop, in conjunction with this strategy, aims to ensure that the city and its communities benefit from the positive impact of appropriate events while preserving the other key benefits of our green assets.

²¹ www.wilwestend.london/vision

Corporate Social Responsibility

Our green spaces and infrastructure can also provide opportunities for the private sector to get involved in improving and looking after the city, for the benefit of local people. The City Council is committed to helping private business to invest in their local community. By supporting them to connect up with Westminster's charities and community sector organisations, as well as linking in with the council's volunteering schemes, we can help all sectors work together on a wide range of activities, from day-to-day parks maintenance, to community growing or educational programmes on wildlife and biodiversity. This type of work helps us to further increase the social and economic benefits of our green and open spaces, while working together across sectors like this help ensure that our green infrastructure network can continue to thrive in these times of constrained resources.

4. Our assets

Parks and open spaces

Westminster has over 200 identified parks and open spaces across the city, ranging from large, multi-functional areas such as Paddington Recreation Ground to small ornamental gardens, squares, 'pocket parks' and other. Westminster's 'blue ribbon' waterways are also included – canals and of course the Thames. These assets are supplemented by the five Royal Parks that fall within Westminster - in fact Royal Parks land accounts for around 80% of our total green space. Both the city council's spaces and the Royal Parks are at times used for special events and a range of organised activities, but their primary purpose is to provide places for local people and visitors to relax, gather, engage in physical activity and connect with nature.

Green infrastructure

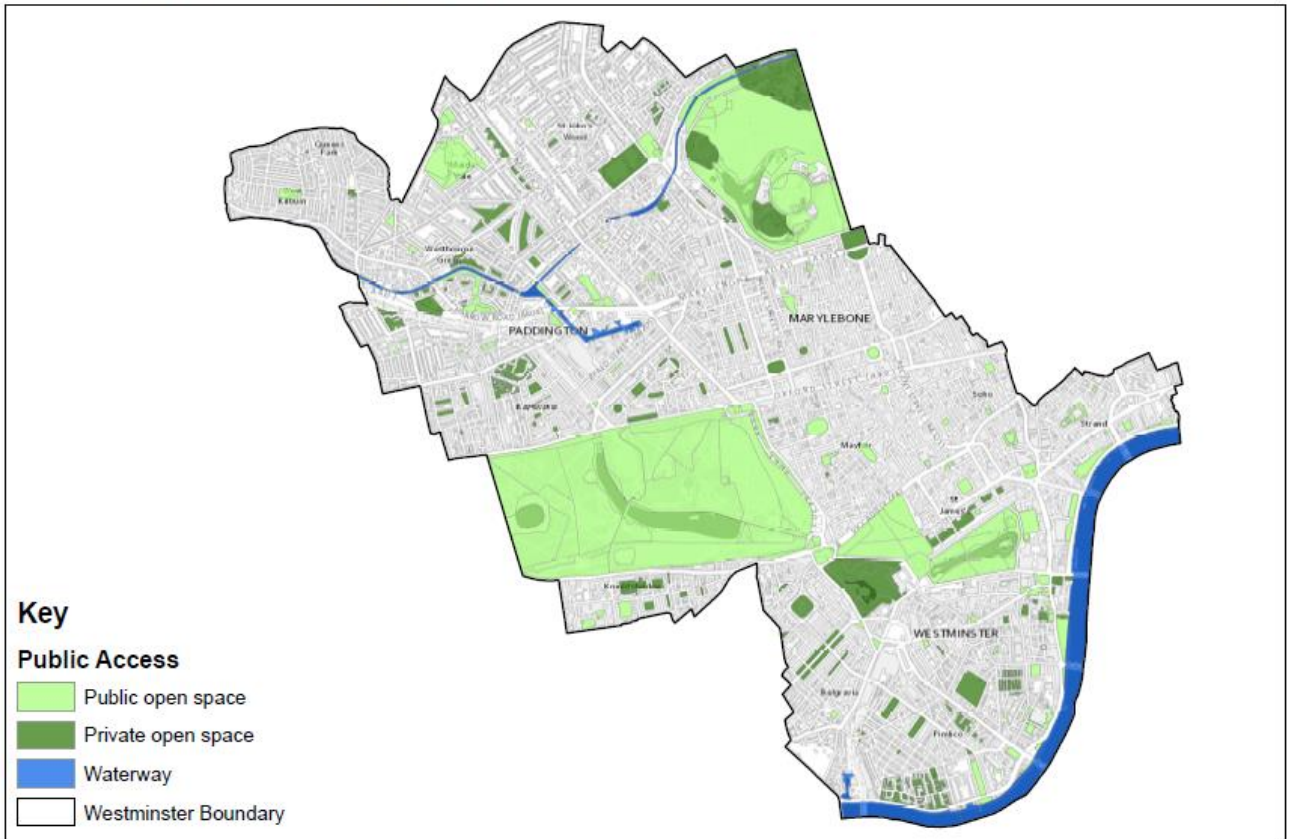
The term 'green infrastructure' refers to a wide range of interventions which bring plants and nature into the urban environment. Westminster has an impressive network of greening in the built environment which includes green walls, landscaped roofs, food growing and wildlife 'installations' such as beekeeping sites. Some of these are owned and managed by the council, although many are privately held assets which the council has helped to encourage, enable and facilitate through in its role as planning authority.

Further assets

In addition to the open spaces and greening within Westminster, the city council has some further assets which provide opportunities for people to access nature, get active and enjoy the outdoors. The council operates three cemeteries outside of the borough – at East Finchley, Hanwell and Mill Hill. These spaces are valuable open spaces in their own right, reflected by the fact that they have all individually attained Green Flag status. The council also owns and operates the outdoor education and activity centre at Sayers Croft in Surrey. This is an important asset for enabling and encouraging many kinds of physical activity, leisure, sport and has a big role to play in wildlife education and contact with nature, offering activities such as pond dipping, nature walks and wildlife themed creative workshops while actively supporting our Forest Schools programme and wildlife education which takes place at Paddington Recreation Ground and across the city. Westminster is also part of the consortium of Local Authorities which support and help fund the 26 mile long, 10,000 acre, linear Lee Valley Regional Park. In these ways the City Council taps into additional green assets in order to increase access to green spaces and nature and make a positive contribution to the broader greening and biodiversity agenda, both within and beyond the city itself.

The city council's aim, through this strategy, is to enhance and make the best use of the entirety of our 'green network', ensuring we maximise their benefit to those that live in, work in, or visit Westminster.

GROUNDWORK OPEN SPACE MAPPING



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City of Westminster/LA1001691 City Planning Delivery Unit Policy Note 2/10 City Planning Group/300open Space Strategy/GROUNDWORK DATA/APPL 2016/GROUNDWORK ACCESS MAP/APPL 2016/142

5. Working in Partnership

Maintaining and improving Westminster's network of green spaces and infrastructure is something the City Council does not, should not and cannot do alone. Our efforts combine with those of an extended team of partners and it is through this collaboration that we are able to achieve our shared aims in respect of the quantity, quality and positive impact (for both people and local wildlife) of our green assets.

This strategy seeks to recognise the collective efforts of this partnership. With a range of key partners lending their efforts and expertise in various specialist areas, the City Council aims to articulate the specific commitments and contribution it will make to achieve goals that we all have in common. The timing of this strategy, too, reflects the wider partnership context – our two year action plan mirrors the life span of central government's 'Biodiversity 2020' strategy.

In the area of biodiversity in particular there is an opportunity to build upon past good practice to deliver things in partnership. In previous years a collaborative approach has been driven by the former Westminster Biodiversity Partnership, which brought together 33 organisations and groups to ensure a healthy future for wildlife in Westminster. This local arrangement operated within the context (and with the support) of the wider London-wide biodiversity partnership. Unfortunately the London-wide partnership structure folded in 2013. However, many of the partners that were previously involved continue to be instrumental in working to support and protect Westminster's rich and diverse wildlife, and the City Council continues to recognise the benefit of providing opportunities for agencies to come together and work jointly in this area. It is with this in mind that we will propose, through this strategy to work to re-establish some form of structured partnership around biodiversity at a borough level. Through this mechanism we hope to explore how we can make the most of our collective resources and expertise to achieve some key biodiversity priorities locally. This is discussed in greater detail later in this strategy document, and in the Action Plan which accompanies it.

Across the biodiversity and broader open spaces and greening agenda, then, our key local partners can therefore be seen to include:

- Greater London Authority
- Royal Parks
- Major landowners, including Grosvenor and Crown Estates
- BIDs and the wider business community
- Neighbouring boroughs, including Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
- Zoological Society of London (ZSL)
- Canals and Rivers Trust

This is by no means an exhaustive list, and is in addition to partners in central government and elsewhere, that work at a national level (including the Environment Agency, Historic England, RSPB and Defra).

This strategy has been developed with consideration of the roles of all of these partners, and will be delivered in collaboration with them. We can succeed in our

ambitions for open spaces and biodiversity in Westminster only with the help of their contributions.

6. Evidence Base and Priorities

The London Plan states that local authorities should periodically audit the green spaces and wildlife in their area and in 2015 the City Council commissioned Groundwork London to carry out such an audit in Westminster. This detailed audit had the purpose of assessing the level of provision of open space and facilities within the city, highlighting any changes to provision since the last audits were carried out and identifying opportunities for improvement. As well as establishing a solid basis of information about the geographic area, typology and physical features of open spaces and green infrastructure, strong emphasis was also placed on understanding our local on biodiversity, looking in detail at the specific habitats and species that those spaces are home to.

Alongside this audit a community consultation and engagement exercise was undertaken, to gather views about our green spaces from those that use them. User surveys were carried out at 14 of the city's parks and open spaces, as well as online, to ascertain usage patterns, levels of satisfactions and priorities for improvement. The results can only provide a snap shot of course, but a mix of spaces (some large areas such as Paddington Recreation Ground as well as several smaller gardens) and over 800 respondents in total were included in the study, with the aim of gathering a useful and representative range of insights.

The results of the spaces audit and the community engagement exercise are provided in more detail at [Appendix X](#). Mapping for Areas of Deficiency for access to public open space and access to nature – which will inform future planning decisions to drive greening where it is needed most – is at [Appendix X](#). However the key headline findings can be summarised as follows:

Green spaces audit - key findings

- A total number of 203 'parcels' of open space in the City of Westminster were audited.
- Westminster offers 2.17 hectares of space per 1,000 resident population. This overall level of provision has not changed significantly since the last full audit, a decade ago.
- However only a little over half (57%) of the audited spaces are openly accessible to the public.
- That said, on account of their smaller average size, the private spaces account for only 24% of total green space.
- Contrary to some perceptions, the central area of Westminster is actually the best off area for green space, thanks in no small part to the Royal Parks. There are geographical variations within this though, with some neighbourhoods being identified as particularly deficient in open space.
- Areas of lower provision include Abbey Road and Warwick wards, as well as some very central areas like the West End.
- Areas with particular deficiencies in terms of access to nature include Warwick ward and Bryanston and Dorset Square.
- Marylebone is an area of comparative deficiency in respect of both open space and wildlife. These findings, alongside the area's Low Emissions Neighbourhood (LEN) status suggest it should perhaps be a priority area for greening.
- Green infrastructure (GI) was also audited - 30 living walls / roofs were included in the study. There is a mix of new build and retro-fitted infrastructure and the majority has a lengthy life span of 25 years or more.
- However only about a quarter of green infrastructure is open to access other than for maintenance. Only one GI location was found to involve the community or volunteers in maintenance.

Community engagement -key findings

- Satisfaction with Westminster's green spaces is high - 87% of people rate open spaces as "excellent" or "very good".
- The majority reach open spaces on foot and stay for less than an hour. Most visit regularly (at least weekly) and year round.
- The majority of respondents also visit Royal Parks in the borough. Compared to open spaces generally, respondents tend to visit Royal Parks less frequently, but tend to spend longer when they are there.
- Open spaces are highly valued assets, and those engaged particularly appreciate their ease of access and convenience.
- Main reasons for visiting are to get fresh air, to get away from the hustle and bustle of the city and to spend time in a natural environment.
- Planting arrangements, a high standard or maintenance, cleanliness and seating were of great importance to those questioned.
- Quiet, informal recreation was by far the most popular way in which people use open space. Walking was the most popular active pursuit.

What the Evidence Tells Us: Key Emerging Priorities

From these findings it has been possible to identify some specific emerging priorities. The action plan accompanying this strategy will therefore look to focus the efforts of the council and its partners in the following areas:

1. **Green infrastructure** – There are some excellent examples of living walls, roofs and other green infrastructure across the city, however a number are private and not many are accessible other than for maintenance. We want to drive the delivery of more green infrastructure, with a particular emphasis on

public access and visibility wherever this is achievable. We will support this through our planning policies, set out in the Westminster City Plan. We're particularly keen to encourage green infrastructure in areas at the very heart of the city, such as the West End, where there is little currently and where people have fewer opportunities to have contact with nature. We're looking to learn from and build upon successful work with and by partners to achieve this. Initiatives such as Wild West End demonstrate the instrumental role local land owners can play, while we're keen to also work with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and community groups.

- 2. Space for play** – Based on the evidence collected to support this strategy we are conscious of an overall lack of play provision in Westminster, with a particular shortage of facilities geared towards older children. Geographically there are some areas of the City which have both deficiencies in play space and higher concentrations of resident children, such as Church Street, Pimlico, Little Venice, East Marylebone and Soho. We will be especially keen to take opportunities to add play space in these areas. Recognising the challenges such as pressures on available land, we will ensure targeted policies are built into the refreshed City Plan, which will create scope for all different types of play opportunities to be pursued, including informal play and play in more natural environments. This will help enable us to take full advantage of any opportunities to offer additional play space, whenever and however they arise.

As we are committed to pursuing all opportunities to enable safe play for children and young people in Westminster, we will also be exploring other options, for example through our Active Streets initiative. Based on legislation passed in 1983, local authorities may restrict or prohibit vehicular access to specific streets at designated times, to create a 'Play Street' which offers a safe opportunity for children to play. Westminster was, in fact, one of the first in London to create permanent Play Streets in the 1950s and with concerns about air quality as well as our commitment to provide more play space in the city, we're keen to focus on the idea once again – as detailed in the Active Westminster strategy, 'An Active City for All'. The City Council is proposing a new pilot scheme of permanently designated Play Streets. The current suggested location is Luton Street and Fisherton Street in Church Street ward, which is an identified priority area for additional play space (see [appendix x](#)). These streets would have restricted traffic and be available for play Monday to Friday, from 3pm until dusk and from 10am until dusk at weekends. The initiative would be further supported by structured local activities delivered through our Active Streets programme, and a team of volunteer 'StreetMakers' who will help people to get involved in those activities to facilitate a sense of community ownership of the Play Streets.

- 3. Walking in and around open spaces** – Most people (63%) using our green spaces get to them on foot and 30% said they were using the space specifically for walking or as a through route. We want to focus on walking routes through and around parks, recognising how things like raising awareness of available green space locally and effective signage can help with this. These aims align directly with the council's developing Walking

Strategy, which outlines a number of specific actions including working in partnership with The Royal Parks to improve the pedestrian experience and access into the Royal Parks, reducing any conflict between pedestrians and cyclists, continuing to drive the greening of Westminster's streets to provide a pleasant walking environment and offer people contact with nature, and introducing pocket parks and plazas where possible to offer additional opportunities and incentives for people to get about and experience open spaces on foot. These two strategies are therefore entirely complementary and mutually supportive, both highlighting the council's overarching commitment to encourage and facilitate the continued enjoyment of our open spaces by people on foot.

- 4. Biodiversity** – The momentum of some biodiversity partnerships and initiatives has perhaps decreased in recent years. Historically there has been a dedicated partnership covering all of London and coordinated by the Greater London Authority, but this ceased to operate in any formal sense in 2013. Nonetheless, the City Council continues to appreciate the importance of protecting and enhancing biodiversity and there are some recent examples of the issue of biodiversity being brought more to the fore at a wider level than just Westminster. Notably, in June 2017 the Greenspace Information for Greater London Partnership (GiGL) wrote to all London Local Authorities, citing a recent GLA research publication and highlighting the finding that “approximately 18% of planning applications have the potential to impact adversely on nature in the capital”²². Earlier in the same year the London Assembly drew attention to “a risk that London will see its biodiversity being squeezed or reduced” and highlighting the importance of balancing pressures to deliver housing with impacts on nature in the way that housing developments are delivered²³.

In the absence of a London-wide framework at the present time, but recognising the continued importance of working to protect and improve Westminster's biodiversity, the City Council is interested in drawing together key partners at a local (borough) level to explore how some work on priority outcomes in this area could be driven forward. With all partners, including the council, operating with limited resources, we're keen to take a pragmatic approach and look at how we can make the greatest impact within current constraints. Drawing a borough-level group together on the back of this strategy, with the specific task of developing a two year action plan (which will take us up to the point when biodiversity will be looked at again London-wide, as the existing Biodiversity 2020 approach comes to a close), is the way that we intend to this.

There are already a number of bee keeping sites in Westminster and continuing to support pollinators is something we are keen to do through this Open Spaces and Biodiversity Strategy. Based on expert advice from partners such as the London Beekeeping Association we are keen to look at

²² 'Planning for Biodiversity?', Greater London Authority, September 2016

²³ 'At Home with Nature - Encouraging biodiversity in new housing developments', London Assembly, January 2017

what we could do not necessarily to encourage more bee keeping, but rather to ensure we support the bees that London already has. This is about driving the right kind of planting in both public and private spaces. This is one of many areas we'd like to explore in detail as part of developing our biodiversity plans.

Alongside these proposals for developing a strategic approach for the next two years, the council and its local partners will continue to deliver a number of projects and initiatives which support Westminster's biodiversity. Wildlife education is a big part of this. The City Council is continually building on the success of our Forest Schools scheme, with an ambitious target for the number of children participating this year. With the ongoing support of our Sayers Croft facility, work is being done to offer additional drop-in learning opportunities in the school holidays which allow whole families to get involved, and we're looking at potentially offering sessions for adults and 'Continuing Professional Development' learning opportunities for teachers. With the completion of works to expand the 'bluebell glade' area at Paddington Recreation Ground, too, it will soon be possible for more people than ever to take part in outdoor activities and learning about Westminster's wildlife.

In the meantime the City Council continues to recognise the importance of Westminster's open spaces and green infrastructure as habitats for a number of priority species, as referenced in existing Biodiversity Action Plans.

ACTION PLAN

Recognising the depth and breadth of impact that our green spaces and infrastructure are able to have on not only the environment but also the health, wellbeing and enjoyment of all those who live, work or visit in Westminster, we have developed this strategy to help us - with our partners - to get the very best we can out of these assets. The following plan outlines the priorities that have been identified on the basis of our audit and consultation work, and the specific actions that the council will undertake to deliver them over the course of the next two years. Many of these specific commitments will be delivered in collaboration with our partners in any case, but as part of this action plan we also recognise some further examples of additional work being done by other agencies and organisations, all of which supports our common aims of protecting, improving and maximising the benefit of Westminster's open spaces and biodiversity.

This action plan structures our priorities and proposed action in a way that reflects our intention to secure and increase the:

1. **QUANTITY** of green assets across the city
2. **QUALITY** of our open spaces and green infrastructure
3. **IMPACT** of our green assets, delivering a range of benefits to individuals, communities and the environment.

QUANTITY

Our priorities	Our commitments	The council will:	Wider Context – examples of partners' work
Protecting existing green assets	We will robustly protect and preserve existing green space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure planning decisions strictly align with our policies, with particular reference to the City Plan including latest revisions, to protect, preserve and where possible increase open space. • Incorporation of specific policies in the council's City Plan to protect residential private garden space. Specific reference in the refreshed version to preserving green infrastructure and maintaining ecological value. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gardens Trust and Historic England are consulted on all development proposals affecting registered parks and gardens. They maintain the inventory of London's green spaces of local historic interest. • Garden for Living London campaign (London Wildlife Trust)
Increasing green spaces and infrastructure	We will drive and support developers to deliver new green infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt robust planning policies to encourage the provision of living roofs / green infrastructure as part of Westminster's City Plan. Include specific target that major development should aim to provide an area equivalent to 100% of the building's footprint in living roofs, living walls and ecologically sensitive landscaping. • Continue to support BIDs and major land owners to deliver greening • Provide advice, information and guidance on ways to incorporate greening in development proposals (potentially using council website and/or signposting to additional information or third parties who can help) • Provide opportunities for developers to see good practice examples of greening • Maximise opportunities to fund greening, including using CIL contributions if and where those funds are available for the purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BIDS and land owners' initiatives, e.g. Wild West End • Private developers who introduce innovative green infrastructure within developments and in the public realm • Other major development / infrastructure projects – developers work with the council to ensure impact on open spaces and biodiversity is considered and steps are taken to appropriately manage
	We will directly contribute to the expansion of Westminster's green network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore 'green spine' proposals as part of the Church Street regeneration project, with a view to maximising the delivery of green assets • Deliver our ongoing programme of tree planting, in green spaces and on streets • Plant 1000 trees by 2020, striving for a mix of species and sizes (GCAP commitment) • Use ringfenced council capital funding to implement open space and green infrastructure projects. Commitment within the capital fund for FY 2017/18 will be £200k. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major landowners and developers will work with us on jointly funded projects to deliver new (or improve existing) green infrastructure. • Work between with the council and CityWest Homes to facilitate greening on housing estates • The Greater London National Park City Initiative - campaign to have London recognised as a National Park City.

Our priorities	Our commitments	The council will:	Wider Context – examples of partners' work
	<p>We will focus our efforts where they are needed most</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use planning policies (including latest/ongoing revisions to the City Plan) to drive delivery of green infrastructure. Prioritise identified 'deficiency areas'. • Support and facilitate innovative greening solutions including pocket parks and private 'greening' activities by residents and businesses. • We will add much needed play space, with targeted policies in the refreshed City Plan to ensure we can pursue all different types of play opportunities wherever they exist. • Complement existing play space by pursuing our Active Streets initiative, aiming for the establishment of at least one Play Street in a priority area (based on current deficiencies and location of the Marylebone Low Emissions Neighbourhood). Support this with the Street Makers scheme which will involve local people and drive participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the objectives of the 'Play Strategy: 2015-2020' (Royal Parks) • Driving greening initiatives with private developers, especially in identified areas of deficiency • Finalise and implement with partners our refreshed Active Westminster Strategy, making the connections through to this strategy in recognition of the large number of common objectives.

QUALITY

Our priorities	Our commitments	The council will:	Wider Context – examples of partners' work
Biodiversity and wildlife	We will work to protect important habitats and species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look to establish a local (borough level) 'task force' for biodiversity, working jointly with key partners to develop specific actions for the next two years to 2020. • Conduct review / updated audit of open spaces and biodiversity in the final year of this strategy (2020) • Build in specific biodiversity requirements and training when procuring key services (incl. new WCC Grounds Maintenance contract) • Raise residents' awareness of the need for friendly planting in gardens, window boxes etc, to support Westminster's existing population of pollinators. Use various communications channels to do this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement by various partners (particularly via Royal Parks wildlife group) in borough level local biodiversity task force. • Volunteering opportunities orchestrated by various providers, focusing on parks and environment education (e.g. One Westminster, London Wildlife Trust and many others). • Private developers can incorporate wildlife-friendly features in their designs, e.g. planting creepers, creating vertical habitats or introducing 'bird bricks' or spaces for bats within new or converted buildings.
	We will enable people to access and learn about nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide and update information on the council website about how people can get involved in enjoying and supporting Westminster's biodiversity. • Continue to deliver our successful Forest Schools scheme and, using use the newly extended facility at Paddington Recreation Ground, pursue opportunities to extend the scheme e.g. with SEN schools and a home school. • Alongside this, look to offer more learning opportunities for adults and whole families. • Deliver targeted communications which encourage people to support biodiversity (bird boxes, bee friendly planting in gardens, etc) • Extend the range/programme of wildlife learning activities at Paddington Recreation Ground and Sayers Croft • Provide details and links to wide range of activities and opportunities via the council website. • Signpost to the Greenspace information available on the GiGI website to encourage people, especially children, to record the wildlife they see in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal Parks continue to offer wildlife talks at the wildlife garden in Regent's park • ZSL continue to deliver range of nature and conservation learning opportunities to schools and individuals at London Zoo • Thames Explorer Trust offer opportunities to bring people closer to nature living in the Thames foreshore •

		Westminster.	
High standards	We will deliver and maintain clean, safe and award winning green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective management of the re-commissioned Grounds Maintenance contract, with explicit requirements around biodiversity built in. • Maintain our success in Green Flag awards (currently 23). Explore additional opportunities in relation to Heritage Green Flag Site Accreditation. • Continue and build upon Westminster's success in London in Bloom awards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracted grounds maintenance provider will work with the council to maintain consistently excellent standards and high levels of customer satisfaction among users of open spaces. • Contractor also committed to helping us achieve awards and maintain Green Flags • All those who use and enjoy Westminster's open spaces play their part in keeping standards high. Disposing of litter properly and taking care not to damage plants and infrastructure all helps enormously.
Managing and balancing demands	We will work to ensure Westminster's green assets can be used for a range of purposes, without jeopardising people's enjoyment of them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a specific approach to facilitating events in some of our parks/open spaces, ensuring successful events can be hosted for the benefit of the local area, but that other's enjoyment of these spaces is not unduly compromised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event organisers and private businesses will collaborate with the council to operate in a way that minimises negative impacts for the spaces and wildlife, and people's enjoyment of them.

IMPACT

Our priorities	Our commitments	The council will:	Wider Context – examples of partners' work
<p>Health & wellbeing</p>	<p>We will make good use of our green spaces to encourage physical activity and support mental wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the WCC Walking Strategy. Actions particularly relevant to open and green spaces include improvement of parks and street scene with planting, signage and wayfinding to attract people into open spaces. • Deliver our Park Makers scheme, recruiting and providing training opportunities to local volunteers in order to drive participation and open up access to organised physical activity opportunities. • Ensure physical activity is built in by default at our open spaces, supporting people to be physical active where, when and how they choose. • Look to review 'no ball games' and other prohibitive signage and potentially trial positive signage, to help facilitate physical activity, making our open spaces 'active by default'. • Explore how we can achieve build the benefits of access to open and green spaces into targeted provision for Older People, via WCC's older people's service hubs. • Alongside this, look at potential to strengthen referral links including at looking at connections with physical activity 'by prescription'. • Through robust application of our City Plan policies, protect our open and green spaces as spaces of relative tranquillity, offering opportunities for rest, calm and reflection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with our Active Westminster partners to deliver the new Active Westminster strategy. Use the connections and momentum it offers to promote open spaces to drive participation in physical activity, leisure and sport. • Targeted plans and strategies to encourage and enable physical activity and sport at Royal Parks. • Various partners including CCGs and local Voluntary and Community Sector partners will continue to offer structured physical activities in Westminster's parks/open spaces, e.g. weekly walking groups
	<p>We will use our green assets to help support people to eat healthily</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create 7 new horticultural spaces bringing people together in schools and community spaces to grow their own food. • In line with our Greener City Action Plan published in 2015, we will also offer community gardening and education at 11 additional sites, demonstrating the clear link between nature and a healthy life. • Continue to deliver – and expand - food education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal Parks with Capital Growth offer open days, food growing training and sessions for schools at Regents Park allotment garden

		as part of the Forest Schools learning offer.	
Social Value	Our green assets will bring people together and enable them to contribute to their communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align this strategy and Action Plan with the plan associated with Westminster's Community Cohesion Commission, ensuring actions and projects that positively impact both areas can be driven forward in a coordinated way. • Facilitate appropriate community events in parks, using the rigorous events planning and applications process to manage impact of events • Encourage volunteering in work areas that support and help us make the most of our green assets. This includes our Park Makers and Street Makers to facilitate physical activity. • Explore and take advantage of connections with Time Credits and other ways of rewarding volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteering scheme delivered by and through partners (One Westminster and other VCS) • Intergenerational activities - e.g. Open Age and other VCS providers • Grounds Maintenance contractor to contribute to the council's civic responsibility priorities, e.g. by facilitating apprenticeships, volunteering and community involvement.
Information and access	We will promote our green spaces and raise awareness of their benefits to increase access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the Mypark website, encouraging use by residents, workers and visitors, to make information about green assets accessible and appealing • Actively promote Westminster vast array of open and green spaces and all the uses and benefits they can have, through the council's regular communications channels • Connect with relevant public health campaigns (obesity, stress etc) delivering coordinated communications and a coherent messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing promotion and engagement encouraging the use and enjoyment of Royal Parks. • Ongoing promotion and information provision to general public, by London Parks and Gardens Trust and many other organisations • Research, lobbying and other work by health partners, including Public Health England and academic institutions, to highlight benefits of open spaces and contact with nature for mental and physical wellbeing. • Parklife London interactive online mapping tool, provided by City Bridge Trust/City of London.
	We will share and use data effectively to raise awareness and increase understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct fresh audits of open spaces and biodiversity in the final year of this strategy (2020) and analyse results in light of partners' data • Carry out a review of Westminster's contribution to the mayor's Green Grid strategy – identify where we can do more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide data through GiGL to open up / maximise access to information on Westminster's habitats and biodiversity (GLA) • Work with GLA to ensure our data access agreement with GiGL is maintained after the current arrangements formally expire in 2018

APPENDICES:

APPENDICES 1-3: Deficiency maps

1. Open space
2. Biodiversity / access to nature
3. Play space and demographics

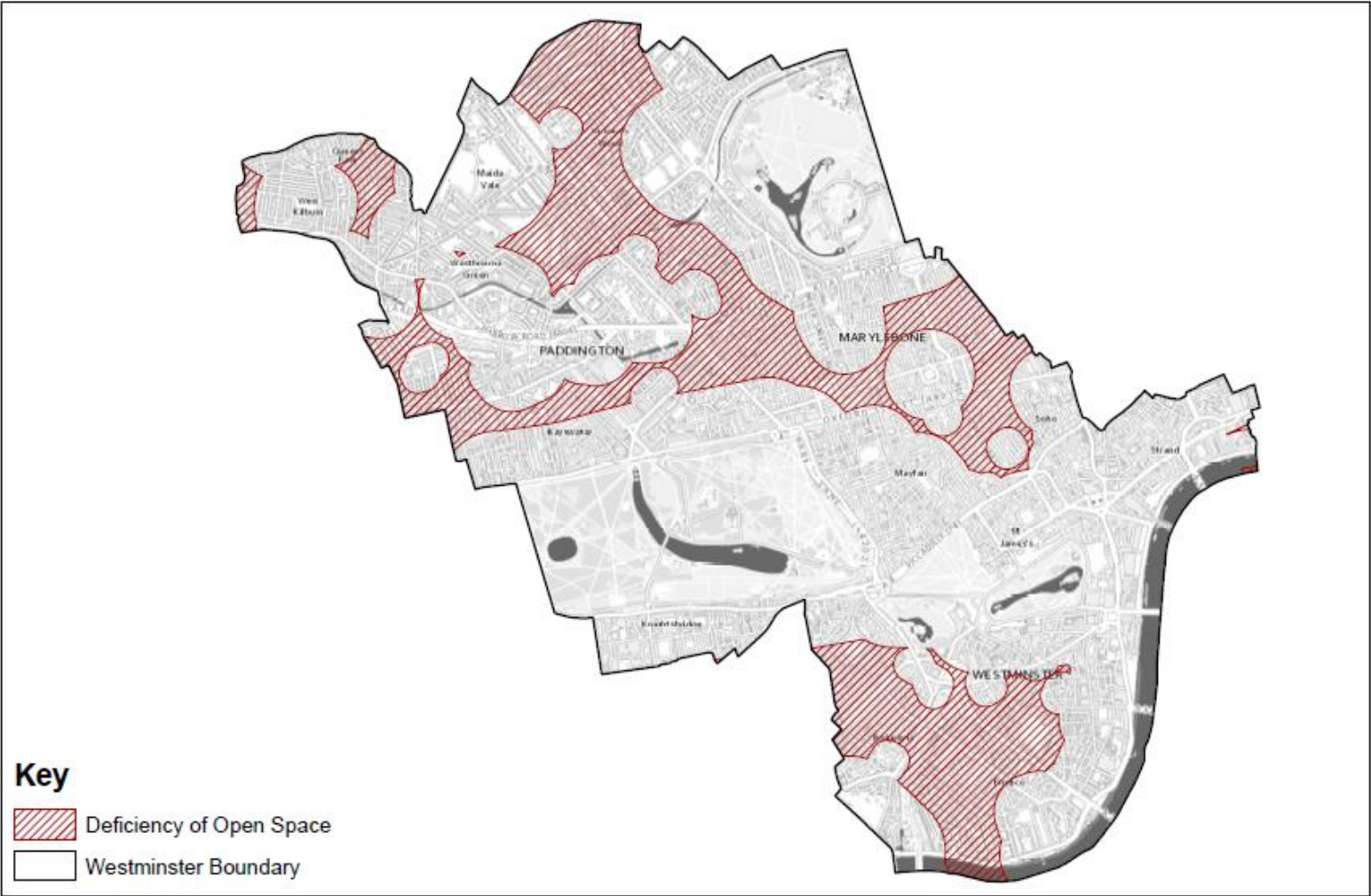
APPENDIX 4: Further information / reading / document links

- GiGL
- Draft London Environment Strategy (under consultation as of August 2017)
- Westminster City Plan
- Royal Parks plans
- London Biodiversity 2020
- Tri-borough Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on Physical Activity (2014)
- Improving Access to Green Spaces (2014) Public Health England
- Gardens and Health (2016) The Kings Fund.
- The Value of our Green Spaces (2016) The Land Trust
- The National Pollinator Strategy (2014) DEFRA
- Air temperature regulation by urban trees and green infrastructure (2013) Forestry Commission
- Green Capital: Green infrastructure for a future city (2016) CRP/GLA
- London Sustainable Drainage Action Plan: Draft for public consultation(2015) GLA
- Valuing London's Urban Forest (2015) Treeconomics/ Forestry Commission
- Other partner plans (ZSL?)
- www.wildwestendlondon/vision

APPENDIX 1 – MAP OF OPEN SPACE DEFICIENCY AREAS

GROUNDWORK OPEN SPACE MAPPING

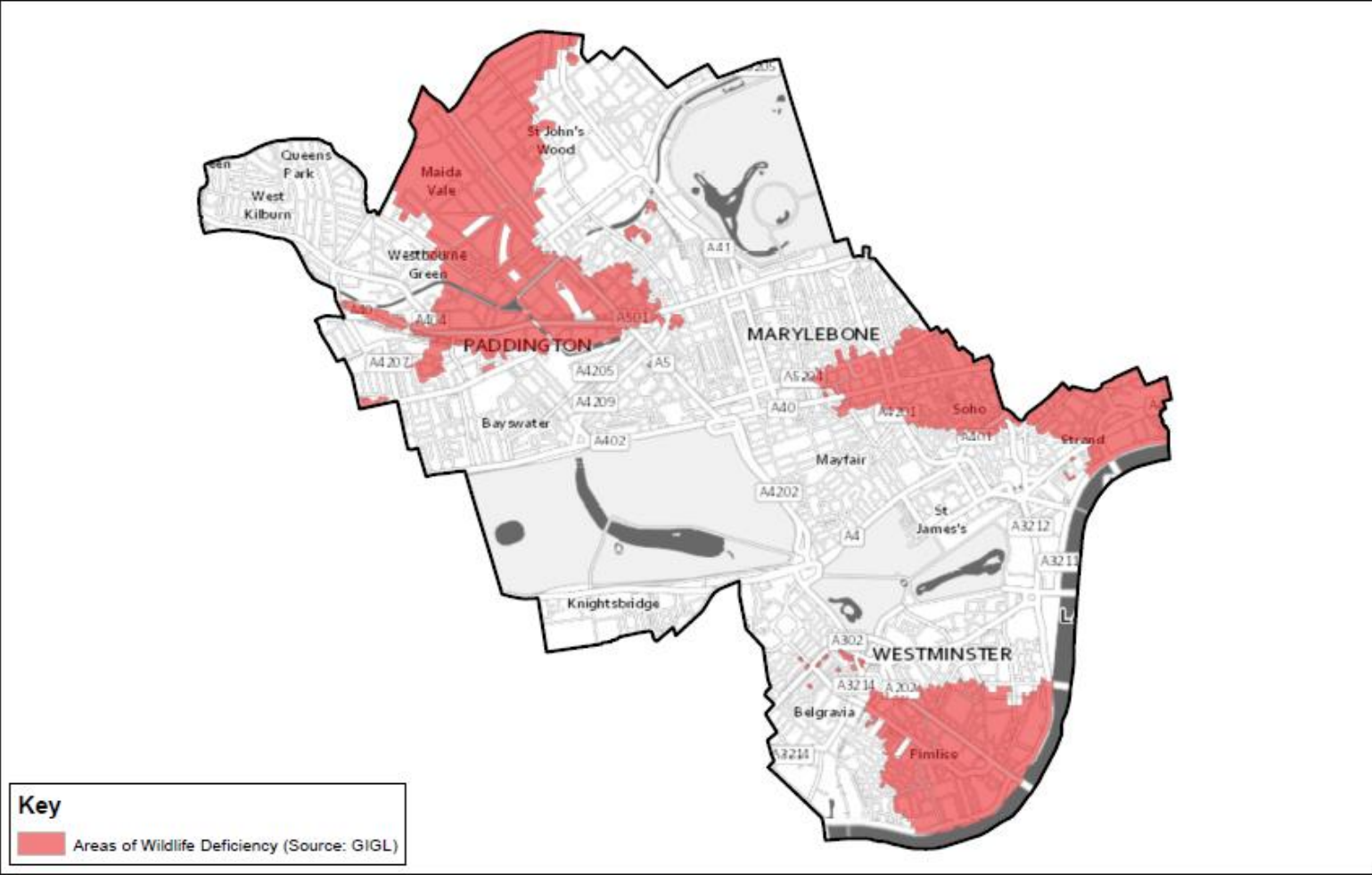
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APPENDIX 2 – MAP OF ACCESS TO WILDLIFE DEFICIENCY AREAS

Deficiency in Access to Wildlife Map



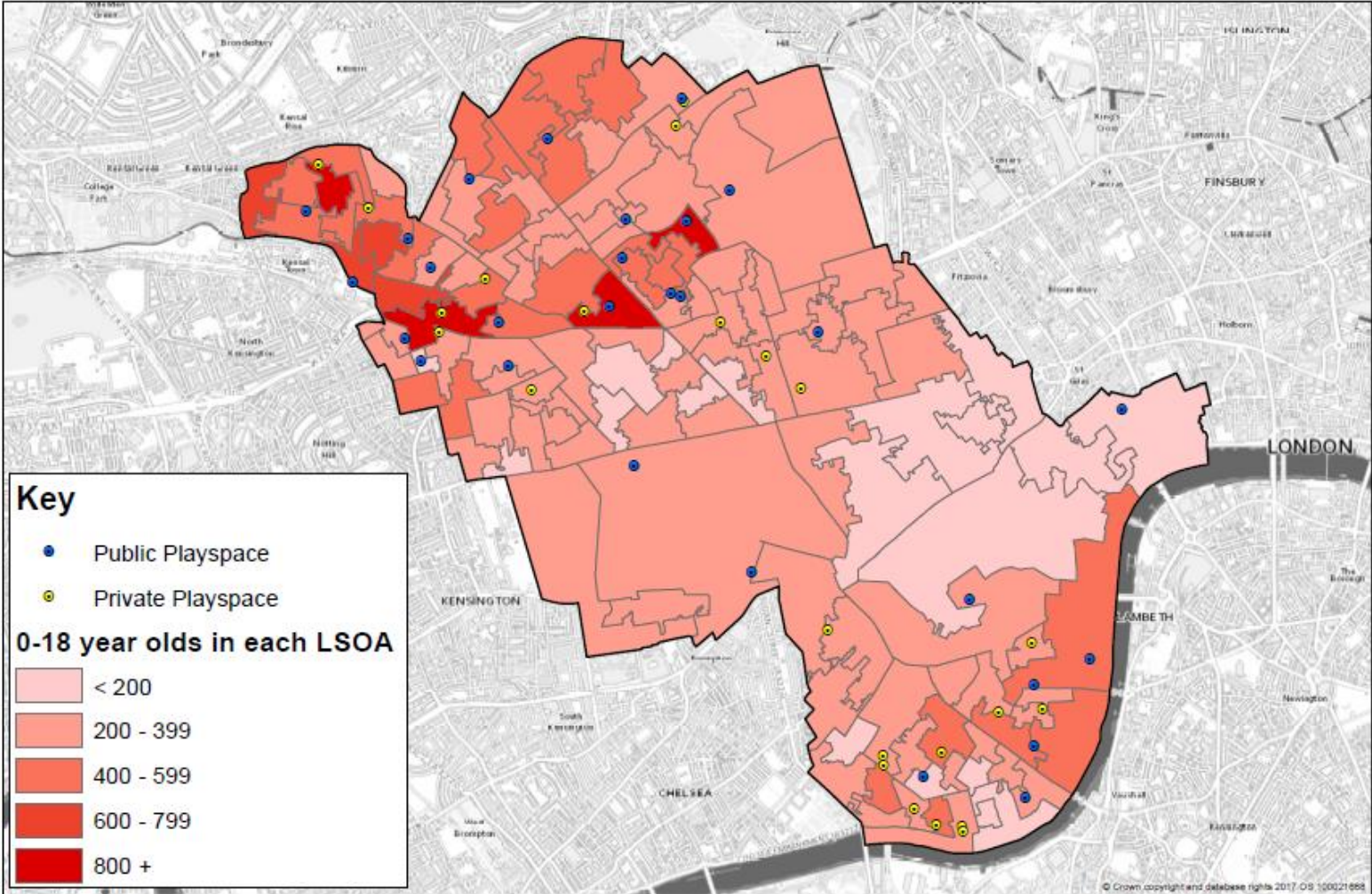
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J:\D_City Planning Group\H drive group data\Ali Kirk\OPEN SPACE

APPENDIX 3 – MAP OF CURRENT PLAY SPACE PROVISION AND LOCAL CHILD POPULATION DATA

GROUNDWORK OPEN SPACE MAPPING

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APPENDIX B: Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Westminster

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