

Appendix I



City of Westminster

Business, Planning and Transport Policy and Scrutiny
Committee Briefing

Date: Friday 10th March 2017

Briefing of: Cllr Robert Davis MBE DL, Deputy Leader and Cabinet
Member for Business, Culture and Heritage

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1. Apprenticeships

- 1.1 A council-wide apprenticeship & work related learning working group has now met twice. The latest meeting took place on the 20th February. Progress will be driven forward by a new co-funded shared Apprenticeship Development Officer post which has now been agreed between Economy and Children's Services.
- 1.2 A collection of local apprentice and trainee case studies of both employers & employees who currently participate in apprenticeships has been produced. This will be disseminated internally and to local businesses, including through the BIDs.
- 1.3 On the 1st March a work and careers advisor event for apprenticeships took place at City Hall. Staff from Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) and the City Council delivered a presentation and workshop on the Apprenticeship Levy and the implications for the City Council, WAES and the wider business community.
- 1.4 The Economy Team and Victoria BID are working on partnership to run a series of science and technology focused activities for local schools as part of British Science Week. The events will be held between the 10th and 19th of March and four local schools, Quinton Kynaston, Westminster City School, St George's Catholic School and St Augustine's, are sending students to these events.

2. Westminster Business Unit

- 2.1 Westminster Business Unit aims to make it easier for businesses to navigate their way through council services and get the information, advice and guidance they need.
- 2.2 So far in the current financial year, 262 enquiries from businesses have been handled by the Business Unit, with a problem resolution rate of 94%.

3. Enterprise Space

- 3.1 Earlier this month I visited Westminster's enterprise spaces including the Great Western Studios, Hub Paddington, Somerset House and Hub Westminster.
- 3.2 In February I signed the Cabinet Member Report recommending the resourcing of Hub Paddington.
- 3.3 This new enterprise space will provide an additional 16,265 square feet of affordable, flexible, co-working space and business support for 400 entrepreneurs. It is estimated that sixteen thousand people a year will receive training, networking and access to conferences delivered and hosted at the space. There will be a particular focus on disadvantaged residents

4. Business Improvement Districts

- 4.1 I have now met with all the Chief Executives and Chairmen of the BIDS on an individual basis and individual and will meet with them collectively later this week.
- 4.1 Officers have been working with the Heart of London Business Alliance (HOLBA) to finalise arrangements for the renewal ballot, voting will close at 5pm on the 23rd March.

4.2 To ensure neutrality, the BID ballot is administered by the City of Westminster Returning Officer and their Electoral Services staff. The results of the ballot will be returned on 24th March.

4.3 The Baker Street Quarter Partnership has begun planning for their upcoming BID renewal ballot which will take place in March 2018.

5. Broadband

5.1 The Economy Team applied to the Greater London Authority for European Regional Development Funding to deliver a connection voucher scheme for Westminster. The project will support over 1,000 businesses to get connected to ultrafast broadband connectivity.

5.2 The Greater London Authority has now issued the grant agreement to the council for the £2.8m Connect Westminster scheme. The grant will support 1,000 SMEs to connect to superfast or ultrafast broadband.

5.3 The Grosvenor Estate has decided to deploy its own fibre network on their estate and at neighbouring estates. The network is to be open to other companies and will enable multiple operators to deliver services over the new broadband infrastructure.

5.4 The Council is working to co-ordinate public realm and street works taking place near Grosvenor developments to support this roll out.

6 Employment

6.1 By the end of March 2017 it is projected that the total number of long-term unemployed (LTU) residents supported into jobs in the past year will 400. This would represent an increase of 110% compared with the last financial year when the number of LTU residents supported into employment was 190 residents.

7 Website & digital offer

7.1 The Westminster Employment Service's new digital offer is progressing in tandem with the web presence for the Business Unit. It will go live by the end of March.

7.2 The website will provide one-stop information and support for residents, delivery partners and local business. To ensure the site meets the needs of the respective audiences, a number of focus groups will be convened to feedback on the content over the course of the next month.

7.3 Clients will be able to set up accounts and view their individual action plans, CVs and job applications through the new website.

8. Westminster Jobcentre Plus - consultation response

8.1 Earlier this month a response was submitted to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) consultation on proposals to close the Westminster Jobcentre at Chadwick Street.

8.2 In summary, the response recommended that DWP should consider extending the consultation period to facilitate a better understanding of local impact, particularly on the part of those who will find other centres difficult or distant to access.

9. Baker Street and Gloucester Place Two Way project

- 9.1 In 2016 a second round of public consultation took place for the Baker Street and Gloucester Place Two Way project. The consultation sought views on the proposed changes to the initial designs that were originally consulted on in 2015.
- 9.2 Over 500 responses were received on a range of topics including perceived traffic congestion, impact on residential streets, air quality and the proposed cycling facilities.
- 9.3 In October 2016 following the consultation's completion and the feedback gathered on several proposed alterations to the initial design, I along with other responsible Cabinet Members took the decision to proceed with a detailed design and traffic order consultation.
- 9.4 The project will bring significant benefits to the local area, not only in improving traffic flow, but ensuring a safer travelling experience for all. Areas of Westminster which have historically been difficult to traverse will be opened up, creating a more connected and welcoming area for residents, businesses and visitors.
- 9.5 Transport for London has completed their own assessment of the project and confirmed their funding commitment.

10. Brook Street and Davies Street Two Way Project

- 10.1 I am currently working with my fellow Cabinet Members to finalise the Cabinet Member Report to approve this scheme.
- 10.2 The current one-way operation of Brook Street and Davies Street forms part of a network of one-way streets within the West End area. Converting Brook Street and Davies Street into a two-way system will improve accessibility, allow easier traffic movement and provide some shorter journey times.
- 10.3 The aim of the scheme is to make Brook Street and Davies Street a two-way system, through minor changes to kerb lines and road markings at the junctions and crossings.
- 10.4 The scheme will also upgrade the streetscape to provide a safe and secure environment for pedestrians. This includes:
- Wider crossings and improved pedestrian comfort, improved accessibility and safety through installation of upgraded traffic signal controls and countdown,
 - improving street lighting, and

- improvement of the public realm through the use of quality design and a refresh of materials.
- 10.5 The two-way system on Brook Street and Davies Street should be ready for the commencement of the works to Bond Street in May/June 2017.
- 10.6 There have been early and continuing discussions with key stakeholders including Claridges and the Grosvenor Estate who are supportive of the proposals and discussions will continue with them because of their own development proposals in this area.

11. Bond Street Public Realm Improvement Scheme

- 11.1 I am currently working with my fellow Cabinet Members to finalise the Cabinet Member Report to approve this scheme.
- 11.2 The aim of the scheme is to improve the public realm throughout Bond Street and provide a safe and secure environment for pedestrians. Wider pavements will improve accessibility, while the use of natural materials in a high quality design will emphasise the importance of Bond Street as a destination.
- 11.3 The scheme is crucial to meet the pedestrian demands resulting from the opening of the Elizabeth Line in December 2018. The project programme is therefore set to ensure completion prior to the Elizabeth Line's opening.
- 11.4 In mid-2015 a concept design was identified for Bond Street by the City Council, in conjunction with NVEC and Transport for London.
- 11.5 In June 2016 Cabinet the Feasibility Design and funding arrangements for the project were agreed by Cabinet.
- 11.6 Initial stakeholder engagement took place at 3 exhibitions held during 2016. All events were well attended and there was strong support for the project with the majority of attendees recognising the need for improvements and being in favour of the scheme.
- 11.7 Feedback provided by stakeholders during the initial engagement has resulted in minor amendments being proposed to the Feasibility Design. These are:
- the repositioning of the zebra crossings at the Bond Street and Maddox Street junction; and
 - the provision of a small kerb build out on the northern side of Grosvenor St to improve pedestrian crossing opportunity.

- 11.8 The proposed parking and loading arrangements have been designed to provide greater management of kerbside activity and better pedestrian space through the provision of time-controlled shared loading and parking pads provided on the footways that provide pedestrian space for part of the day.
- 11.9 The Bond Street programme proposes that main works will commence in spring 2017 and will finish in November 2017. However, the works phasing programme, which is currently under development, will ensure that the north section of the Bond Street scheme is phased early to support the opening of the Elizabeth Line.
- 11.10 The next stage will be to produce a detailed schedule of the works phasing along with an outline of the stakeholder engagement activities that will begin prior to the works and carry on during for the works, which will follow in the coming months.

12 Hanover Square

- 12.1 Plans are currently being finalised for Hanover Square post Crossrail and we are currently securing private sector funding.

13 Crossrail

Crossrail Line 1 – the Elizabeth Line

- 13.1 From December 2018, the Elizabeth Line will link Heathrow with Paddington, the West End, the City and Canary Wharf.
- 13.2 Officers have been liaising with Crossrail on the delivery of the public realm works across the route including in the West End, around the Dean Street, Tottenham Court Road station sites and the Bond Street sites at Davies Street and Hanover Square.
- 13.3 In each case attention is being paid to ensure these schemes fit with associated and adjacent projects and the over site developments above the Crossrail station sites. The aim remains to have all works complete by the lines opening. Regular meetings with Crossrail and the respective development partners are taking place in order to coordinate the works in line with the opening of the Elizabeth Line in December 2018.
- 13.4 Great Portland Estates' (GPE), who are developing above the Crossrail station at Bond Street, Hanover Square station commissioned concept designs for wider public realm improvements here in response to the City Council's planning brief. Those public realm proposals now form part of a wider programme of works to improve the overall setting of the station and surrounding square and gardens. Governance of the scheme has now passed from GPE to the Council to take forward and implement the scheme in association with Crossrail's opening in December 2018. Public consultation on the proposed designs will follow later this year.

Crossrail Line 2

- 13.5 Crossrail 2 (CRL2) will serve stations throughout the South East, linking south west and north east London, as well as destinations in to Surrey and Hertfordshire.
- 13.6 Further CRL2 public consultation was originally expected in November but has been postponed. Transport for London (TfL) has confirmed that a business case and funding plan for the scheme will be submitted to the Government in March 2017 before further formal public consultation takes place, the City Council is therefore waiting for the next phase of consultation and expects positive responses on the issues it has already raised in terms of the projects impacts at Victoria and Soho.
- 13.7 Construction dates for CRL2 are currently being reported as being 2023-2033, subject to the bill receiving Royal Assent in 2019.

14. City Hall refurbishment

- 14.1 WCC took possession of the temporary decant space (Portland House, Victoria and 5 Strand, Whitehall) on 31st Jan 2017 and fit out works commenced soon after.
- 14.2 Staff and Members based at City Hall will be moving into these two buildings between March and May 2017 and will stay there for the period of the refurbishment. The aim is to return to a new and improved Westminster City Hall between December 2018 and January 2019.
- 14.3 The temporary buildings will include meeting room facilities, as well as space to appropriately accommodate the continued operation of all committee meetings and the work of the Lord Mayoralty.
- 14.4 This refurbishment programme will put the foundations in place to enable us to become a more flexible and dynamic organisation, giving our staff a modern base from which to meet the City Council's future challenges.

15 Victoria Area Schemes

- 15.1 Phase 1 of Land Securities' Nova development to the north of Victoria Station is nearing completion, with the restaurants, shops and offices due to open on the western side of Allington Street from later this year. London Underground's new Northern Ticket Hall is also due to open at the end of the year.
- 15.2 The Victoria Palace Theatre is currently closed for refurbishment works until November 2017.
- 15.3 Discussions are on-going between Council officers, London Underground, Transport for London and Crossrail 2 regarding the future of Terminus Place at the front of Victoria rail station.
- 15.4 Officers are working with the various stakeholders to ensure that all work still to be carried out, including Network Rail improvements to the main station, London Underground upgrades to the District and Circle line and Crossrail Line 2 development work from 2022, are co-ordinated in order to minimise disruption.
- 15.5 Following an officer meeting, TfL are still considering options for public realm improvements at the front of the mainline station, to remove at least some of the buses and create additional pedestrian circulation space.
- 15.6 Network Rail continue to develop their improvements within Victoria Station to ease way-finding and congestion although recent changes in funding mean that some of these may be delayed until after 2020. The works to strengthen the Eccleston and Elizabeth Bridges will commence later this year.

16 Special Events and Filming

- 16.1 The last few months has seen the usual variety of events and filming activity being successfully managed by the team including multiple Christmas light switch on events across the City, including Oxford Street and Regent Street.
- 16.2 Christmas in Leicester Square was completely rebranded and featured the hit West End show La Soiree, hosted in a 1920's spiegel tent, complemented by Santa's Grotto and a Festive Market. Over 1.6m people visited the site, with over 20,000 tickets bought for the grotto – many of which were Westminster residents who benefitted from a 10% discount.
- 16.3 The New Year kicked off with the annual New Year's Day Parade; with Westminster City Council's Mary Poppins inspired float coming first. The events team also managed the celebrations and events for Chinese New Year throughout the city.

16.4 Last month the annual London Winter Run kicked off the mass participation sporting event season in Central London and the BAFTA Awards took place in their new home at the Royal Albert Hall.

16.5 A new temporary theatre will be built at Marble Arch and will stage a production of Cameron Mackintosh's 'Five Guys Named Moe' from April 2017 until December 2017.

17 City of Sculpture

17.1 'Moving Forward' by Jill Berelowitz was installed and unveiled on Park Lane at the end of January. Cast in bronze, Moving Forward combines varying numbers of sleek human forms; each of the figures is cast individually with no two alike.

17.2 Marble Arch is now home to Danse Gwenedour' 'by Bushra Fakhoury which was installed earlier this month March and unveiled on Saturday 11th March.

18 Green Plaque Scheme

18.1 There are now 117 green plaques around Westminster to celebrate the life and works of individuals and organisations that have made contributions that have, in many cases, extended well beyond our borders. The most recent unveiling was The Ivy Restaurant at 1-5 West Street, Covent Garden to commemorate the centenary of the establishment.

18.2 Upcoming unveilings:

- William Henry Hudson at 14 Leinster Square in Bayswater. Hudson authored the acclaimed romance novel 'Green Mansions', as well as being an accomplished naturalist and founding member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Currently scheduled for installation in spring 2017.
- William Somerset Maugham at 2 Wyndham Place. Somerset Maugham was a novelist and playwright and lived at the property from 1919 until 1923. Currently scheduled for installation later in 2017.
- Anthony Powell at 9 Shepherd Street where he lived and worked. Powell was the author of the acclaimed twelve volume work 'A Dance to the Music of Time', as well as working as a celebrated critic and reviewer. Currently scheduled for installation in early 2017.
- Gold Brothers at 43 Carnaby Street to commemorate the site of their Lord John Boutique. The shop was an instant success and is seen as a major reason why Carnaby Street retains its popularity and fashionable reputation today and is also famous for its psychedelic mural. Currently scheduled for installation in early 2017.

- John Gatti on Villiers St to mark the bicentenary of his birth (1817-78), the effective founder of the Ticinese colony in London. He is also the man who introduced the penny ice cream to the UK as well as restaurants and theatres between him and his family. Currently scheduled for installation in July 2017