



**City of Westminster**

# Cabinet Member Report

<b>Decision makers:</b>	<b>Councillor Richard Beddoe, Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning</b>  <b>Councillor Tim Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Environment and City Management</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>28 August 2018</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>For General Release</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Strand/Aldwych project – vision, objectives &amp; next steps</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>St James’s Ward</b>
<b>Reason for the Report</b>	<b>This report seeks the approval of the Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning and the Cabinet Member for Environment and City Management:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• for the vision and objectives of the project</li><li>• for the emerging concept design and its development to the next design stages</li><li>• to undertake public consultation on the concept design</li><li>• to proceed with Initial and Detailed Design following consultation</li></ul>
<b>City for All Summary</b>	<b>The subject of this report and its recommendations respond to the City Council’s commitments to: setting the standards for a world class city attracting visitors, students, employees and investors to the institutions and businesses of the area; creating opportunity and fairness by enhancing the openness and access of our great universities and cultural centres, and working in an open partnership with those organisations to deliver a long-term sustainable new enhanced space.</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	<b>The report seeks the approval from the Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning and the Cabinet Member for Environment and City Management for approval to develop the design to Initial and Detailed design stages at a cost of £775,000.</b>

**Summary of the  
Recommendations  
contained within this  
report**

**That formal approval is given by the Cabinet Member  
for Place Shaping and Planning:**

- **for the vision and objectives of the project**
- **for the emerging concept design and its development to the next design stages**
- **to undertake public consultation on the concept design**
- **to proceed with Initial and Detailed Design following consultation**

**That the Cabinet Member for Environment and City Management notes the potential for future consideration of highways changes and notes that relevant decisions will be needed at the appropriate time.**

**Report of:**

**Director of Place Shaping**

**Report Author:**

**Rebecca Cloke, Place Shaping Coordinator**

**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report sets out the vision and objectives for the Strand/Aldwych project and seeks approval for the design approach, to consult the public on the designs, and then to proceed with the concept design to the next design phases. The ambition of the project is to transform this world famous location from a polluted, traffic dominated gyratory to a pedestrian focused destination with strong links to the surrounding districts. The new public realm will balance the needs of the everyday for the local community with a world-class creative thinking quarter in London, showcasing cultural and educational activity that happens within the institutions in the immediate area. Significant highway changes enable the new public realm on Strand and aim to reduce congestion, improve air quality and journey times, and contribute to health and economic benefits in the area.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That formal approval is given:

- for the vision and objectives of the project
- for the emerging concept design and its development to the next design stages
- to undertake public consultation on the concept design
- to proceed with Initial and Detailed Design following consultation

### 3. Reason for Decision

- 3.1 A Cabinet Member decision is required to move forward with the project to the next stages. A concept design has been developed through the Feasibility Stage of the project and, whilst validated by the technical studies undertaken to date and stakeholder involvement, the design must now be shared with a wider audience and feedback sought from the community. This is key to informing the next design stages.

### 4. Context, vision and objectives

- 4.1 In 2015 Northbank BID published a document, “A Vision for Aldwych” which explored a range of improvements to the Aldwych and the section of Strand from Lancaster Place to Arundel Street. The main objective was to address the traffic dominated public realm and poor air quality in an area where the global cluster of learning and cultural institutions should come together in the public domain and be celebrated as a unique location in its own right in London.
- 4.2 The City Council progressed the project early in 2017, leading development of the two most favoured options from the Northbank study: removing the gyratory and creating two-way traffic around Aldwych and either (1) creating a pedestrian focused space with no through traffic on the Strand between Lancaster Place and Surrey Street, or (2) allowing busses only along the Strand as a through-route. Studies undertaken not only validated the feasibility of option (1) above, but galvanised widespread stakeholder support and elevated the public realm project to one which also embraced the extraordinary cluster of cultural institutions in the immediacy.
- 4.3 Cabinet Member approval from the Cabinet Member for Business, Culture and Heritage was secured on 14 September 2017 for the City Council to proceed with the Feasibility stage of the project.
- 4.4 An advisory Joint Project Board was established at the outset of the project, chaired by the Director of Somerset House and comprising representatives from the key stakeholders in the area including Kings College London, London School of Economics, Courtauld Institute, TfL, High Commissions, theatres, restaurateurs and hoteliers. The board agreed a vision and a set of objectives for the project.
- 4.5 The **vision** for the project adopted by the board is of “***a new creative thinking quarter for London***” to be:
- *a dynamic new model of a civic space inspiring people to learn, contemplate, discuss, mingle, play, and rest;*
  - *an international beacon for creativity and learning*
- 4.6 The **Objectives** of the project are to:
- *nurture and promote skills, entrepreneurship, economic growth in the knowledge and creative economies;*
  - *create an inspirational, safe and secure destination that offers a meeting place for workers, students, visitors and residents;*

- *encourage exemplary collaboration within and between a cluster of world-class cultural and educational institutions, SMEs and students enabling high-end research, innovation and a public showcase;*
- *reduce congestion, improve air quality and journey times, with associated health and economic benefits.*

4.7 The vision for the space has been further refined through scheme development during Feasibility. The intention is that the project will enhance the public realm to benefit its world-class status and benefit the surrounding neighbourhood. It will balance the needs of the everyday for residents, workers and visitors with a cultural focus on “maker space”, unlike anywhere else in Westminster. It will be a dynamic space where art is made and not displayed, where performances are rehearsed, not performed. The creativity that currently evolves within the surrounding institutions will have an opportunity for demonstration in the public realm. The management of the space will be key to its success and, while it will remain public highway and the responsibility of Westminster Council, the stakeholders in the area are keen to be involved in the programming and management aspects. It is intended that a management plan is developed alongside the next stages of design to understand costs and explore opportunities for added value.

## **5. Concept Design**

- 5.1 An existing plan of the area showing the traffic gyratory and images of the traffic dominated public realm can be seen in appendix 1.
- 5.2 The concept design that has been developed during the Feasibility Stage can be seen in appendix 2. It allows for 2-way traffic around Aldwych and no through traffic (access only) on Strand between Lancaster Place and Surrey Street. The Aldwych is a part of TfL’s Strategic Bus Network and some routes terminate at this point. The scheme allows for a bus loop by allowing busses to turn along Strand between Arundel Street and Surrey Street and to re-join Aldwych in the opposite direction turning left out of Melbourne Place. The bus stops and stands have been relocated where necessary and allow for the same provision as exiting.
- 5.3 The proposals reduce the amount of carriageway and so kerbside space is at a premium. Kerbside use has been carefully balanced in the proposals, incorporating bus stops and stands, taxi ranks and stands, parking bays, motorcycle bays and single yellow lines. Where possible, the existing provision has been retained. The most significant change is in the amount of single yellow line provided, a reduction of 92 metres overall. A plan of the proposed kerbside use and a table outlining changes to provision can be found in appendix 3.
- 5.4 The revised traffic movements enable a new public space to be formed on the Strand between Lancaster Place and Surrey Street. Access must be maintained to a resident’s underground car park accessed from India Place and for deliveries/access to the businesses and institutions along that section of Strand. It is anticipated that deliveries will be limited to early morning/night time wherever possible and that the new public realm will be a pedestrian priority space.
- 5.5 A robust design process was followed through the Feasibility stage of the project. The highway and technical design was undertaken by WSP/FMC through the Westminster Highway Term Contract. The concept design for the pedestrian space was undertaken through Landscape Architectural consultants, LDA Design. They led

a series of stakeholder engagement workshops which helped to shape the design. The process and the concept design for the new public space is outlined in appendix 2.

- 5.6 Public consultation is planned for autumn 2018 and all proposals will be reviewed in the light of feedback received. It is expected, therefore, that the next design stages will allow for further refinement and will follow a similarly robust design process including an element of artist involvement.

## **6 Public consultation**

- 6.1 Subject to Cabinet Member approval, public consultation will be undertaken in autumn 2018. There has already been a great deal of work with stakeholders in the immediate area. This consultation will provide the first opportunity for residents and the wider public to view the concept proposals and offer feedback.
- 6.2 It is anticipated that the public consultation exercise will run for a period of 6 weeks in Autumn 2018. It is proposed that the public consultation will include:
- A project page on the Council's website with links to proposals, advertising the events, opportunity for leaving feedback, and contacts for further discussion;
  - A press release from the City Council in collaboration with the stakeholders
  - 3 events to be held at a venue around the site – one mid-week, one early evening, and one at a weekend. The events will follow a “market stall” approach with members of the project team available, focusing on different aspects of the scheme, eg traffic and highway, air quality, design elements, activation programme, etc. It is also anticipated there will be displays of plans and sketches with clear annotation in a gallery-style format;
  - Resident leaflet drop to raise awareness of project and consultation events and to encourage feedback;
  - Targeted invitations to local groups, societies, stakeholders, etc to come to the events and/or leave feedback and/or discuss specific issues further;
  - There is also the possibility of a display in Kings College shop front on the Strand/Surrey St junction while plans for refurbishment are underway. This has been tentatively offered by Kings College but will be dependent upon their timescales.
- 6.3 All feedback received through the public consultation will be recorded and reviewed at the start of the next design stage. Further refinement of the design will be undertaken as necessary. A Member Briefing at the end of the consultation period will summarise the process and outcomes from the consultation process.

## **7 Financial Implications**

- 7.1 Following public consultation, the project will proceed to the next design stages - Concept and Detailed design, as set out in the Highway Term Contract. It is anticipated that this stage will take approximately 9 months and is estimated to cost £775,000.
- 7.2 £775,000 has been secured from the following sources:
- TfL Local Implementation Plan (LIP) 18/19 - £105,000
  - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - £670,000

Approval for the expenditure against this project has been secured through the governance arrangements for each source of funding.

- 7.3 There is no funding currently secured for any future phases or for implementation. A fundraising strategy will be developed with partners during the next phase of the project.

#### **Revenue implications:**

- 7.4 There are minimal revenue implications directly as a result of the impacts of this report.
- 7.5 It is likely that the cost for maintenance and management of the new public realm will be more than for the existing highway. An approach to maintenance and management will be developed in the next stages of the project. It is recognised that any uplift in maintenance costs will need to be found outside of existing revenue streams and secured and in place by completion of the public realm works.

#### **Key financial risks:**

- 7.6 There is minimal risk involved in the approval of the secured funds to proceed with the next design stage.

### **8 Legal Implications**

- 8.1 The Director of Law has considered the contents of this report and does not have any additional comments.

### **9 Ward Member Consultation**

- 9.1 St James's Ward Councillors have been briefed on the proposals. They will be kept informed of the project and its progress and will be fully consulted as part of the consultation.

### **10 Appendices**

- 10.1 The following documents are appended to this report:
- Appendix 1 – Existing plan and images of the Strand/Aldwych area
  - Appendix 2 - Design Update on completion of RIBA Stage 2 including proposed concept design
  - Appendix 2 – Plan of proposed kerbside use and table detailing changes to existing provision

### **11 Background Papers**

- 11.1 The following background papers are available on request:

- LDA Design's RIBA Stage 2 Design Report
- Cabinet Member Report, "Strand Aldwych Scheme: Funding for Next Steps", September 2017
- Northbank BID's paper, "A Vision for Aldwych", 2015

## **ANNEX 1: Other Implications**

### **1. Resources Implications**

The body of this report is concerned with the resource implications

### **2. Business Plan Implications**

This project supports objectives in City For All, as follows:

**World Class City:** The Aldwych area is home to the sixth most visited attraction in the UK, its premier art-history institution and two top-35 universities alongside two High Commissions. The area is a unique global cluster of high-value learning and culture split apart by its appalling public realm. Removing the gyratory to create a new extraordinary space and true campus enhances and strengthens London's role as a long-term attractor of talent, creativity and excitement on a global level.

**Civic leadership:** the City Council is taking a strong lead on this project at the specific request of partners in private, third and public sectors, within a robust partnership framework.

**Opportunity:** the project will enormously improve access to collaborations, projects, research and cultural experience from the institutions and companies around the Aldwych, setting a new standard in opportunities to encourage local residents, workers and students to take up opportunities for learning, inspiration and participation.

**Strong communities and neighbourhoods:** this is currently an area of relatively low residential development, with new properties emerging at Arundel Great Court and 190 Strand. However it is the working and study home for thousands every day, and the educational home for many thousands more, who graduate from its universities. Strengthening their attachment and long-term cultural and academic community will benefit the City and London. (The OBC to Government references important research on the connections between educational and cultural communities to benefit the UK economy.)

**Partnership:** this project is founded on a robust partnership with businesses and institutions. The first steps were taken by Northbank BID using money from TfL routed through WCC. The next stages have been funded by both TfL and WCC. The project is overseen by a joint board chaired by Somerset House and including the BID, all three HEIs, the area Freeholders Association and TfL. In turn this sits under the West End partnership.

### **3. Risk Management Implications**

A detailed risk management plan was prepared in the early project stages. A risk register is also being maintained as part of the project management. The key risk facing this decision is the revenue impact should the project not proceed.

### **4. Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment including Health and Safety Implications**

The project has significant health and well-being impacts, most particularly through addressing an area of high pollution, congestion and collision risk.



**5. Crime and Disorder Implications**

No specific crime and disorder implications have been identified. The Designing Out Crime officer will be consulted on the proposals and any comments addressed in the next design phase.

**6. Impact on the Environment**

The project will create a major new public space, and considerably enhance air quality and the overall environment of key cultural, educational and economic organisations, their students, workers, tenants and residents.

**7. Equalities Implications**

Improving this environment will make it much more friendly and accessible for people with disabilities.

**8. Staffing Implications**

No specific staffing implications have been identified.

**9. Human Rights Implications**

No specific human rights implications have been identified.

**10. Energy Measure Implications**

No specific energy implications have been identified although ensuring adequate power supply in the area is an important element of the project.

**11. Communications Implication**

Stakeholders have been widely consulted through the design process so far. A public consultation exercise is planned in Autumn 2018 as outlined in the report. Comments will be taken into account in the next design stages.

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed:

Date:

NAME:

Councillor Richard Beddoe, Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning

State nature of interest if any .....

.....  
(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled **Strand/Aldwych project – vision, objectives & next steps** and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed .....

Councillor Richard Beddoe, Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning

Date .....

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment: .....

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If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Director of Law , Strategic Director Finance and Performance and, if there are resources implications, the Strategic Director of Resources (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed:

Date:

NAME:

Councillor Tim Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Environment and City Management

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Signed .....

Councillor Tim Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Environment and City Management

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