

Oxford Street and Oxford Circus Projects

Full Business Case - Policy Alignment Annex

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1. National

1.1 Build Back Better (2021)

The UK Government plans to support economic growth through significant investment in infrastructure, skills and innovation as set out in the 'Build Back Better' strategy aimed at redressing Britain's historic underinvestment in infrastructure.

In pursuing economic growth, the Government is focusing:

- Uniting and levelling-up the country, by helping people access jobs and opportunities through ensuring digital and transport connectivity;
- Green growth, via support of the transition to net zero; and
- A 'Global Britain', with at least one globally competitive city in every region.

The strategy states that high quality infrastructure is crucial for economic growth, boosts productivity and competitiveness, and is at the centre of communities. Infrastructure helps connect people to each other, people to businesses, and businesses to markets, forming a foundation for economic activity and community prosperity. Well-developed transport networks allow businesses to grow and expand, enabling them to extend supply chains, deepen labour and product markets, collaborate, innovate and attract inward investment.

The schemes will first promote unity and levelling-up the country by ensuring that there is a transport system that provides equal access to jobs and opportunities available in Oxford Street Wider Area which is one of the biggest employment hubs in the UK. It further supports green growth by promoting walking and cycling while reducing motorised traffic flows which will reduce emissions and air pollution. Improving pedestrian access to the area will attract more people to the Oxford Street area and the West End promoting the revitalisation of the UK economy and maintaining the competitiveness of the high street in Europe.

1.2 DfT Outcome Delivery Plan (2022)

The Government has published priority outcomes for each Government department, which together capture the government's long-term policy objectives, from maximising employment and improving skills, to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. These priority outcomes have been developed and set out in Outcome Delivery Plans for each government department, including the Department for Transport (DfT).

The DfT's Outcome Delivery Plan identifies three priority outcomes:

- Outcome One: Improve connectivity across the UK and grow the economy by enhancing the transport network, on time and on budget;

- Outcome Two: Build confidence in the transport network as the country recovers from the Covid-19 pandemic and improve users' experience by ensuring that the network is safe, reliable, and inclusive; and
- Outcome Three: Tackle climate change and improve air quality by decarbonising transport.

The Plan also supports priority outcomes for other departments, including:

- The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) goal to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050; and
- The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) plan to raise productivity and empower places so that the whole country benefits from levelling up.

The schemes will ensure that there is a better connectivity of transport systems for pedestrians within the wider area as expected of Outcome One. It further builds confidence in the transport system, especially for pedestrians, by reducing intermodal friction thereby improving safety of all the road users in line with Outcome Two. Finally, by better providing for pedestrians and active travel modes generally, the schemes will also contribute to the efforts aimed at containing climate change and improving air quality.

1.3 Decarbonising Transport (2021)

“Decarbonising transport: a better, cleaner Britain” sets out the government’s commitments and the actions needed to decarbonise the entire transport system in the UK. It sets out a very wide range of specific commitments, including:

- Delivering a bold vision for cycling and walking, with the aim that half of all journeys in towns and cities will be walked or cycled by 2030;
- Delivering a world class cycling and walking network by 2040;
- Delivering the National Bus Strategy’s vision of a transformed bus industry and a green bus revolution;
- Supporting the delivery of 4,000 new zero-emission buses and the infrastructure needed to support them;
- Improving rail journey connectivity with walking, cycling and other modes of transport;
- Ensuring the UK’s electric vehicle charging infrastructure network meets the demands of its users;
- Supporting decarbonisation by investing in local transport systems, enabling local authorities to invest in local priorities – including those related to decarbonisation such as reducing congestion and improving air quality;
- Driving decarbonisation and local transport improvements by making quantifiable carbon reductions a fundamental part of local transport planning and funding; and
- Embedding transport decarbonisation principles in spatial planning and across transport policymaking.

The document includes similar commitments related to freight, railways, maritime transport and aviation, and support for initiatives designed to encourage mode-switch and sustainable transport behaviours. They demonstrate a strong commitment to decarbonisation of transport, with action required from both local and national government to ensure success.

The schemes aim to promote active modes of transport and will contribute to the achievement of a net zero city by 2040. The Oxford Street and Oxford Circus projects will seek to create a sustainable high street through the improvement of its carbon impact through design and construction including the impact of material selecting and sourcing, greening and drainage.

1.4 National Infrastructure Strategy (2020)

The National Infrastructure Strategy sets out the Government's plans for investing in the infrastructure needed to support economic growth, levelling-up and the transition towards net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, as well as recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, and covers all forms of infrastructure, including energy, transport, water, and digital communications.

The strategy draws attention to, "the importance of strong regional cities as the 'vital organs' of the UK economy", emphasising that, "cities drive economic growth through agglomeration effects; they encourage specialisation, drive competition and spread ideas and innovation faster than other places", although acknowledging problems like congestion which can inhibit productivity.

The strategy notes that, "Transport needs to work hand in glove with skills, education, housing, culture and environment policies to deliver the step change in quality of life and economic performance the government wants to see".

As well as decarbonising private vehicles, the government wants to increase the share of journeys taken by public transport, cycling and walking, and decarbonise buses and trains. Supporting greener buses is another key part of the government's agenda for achieving net zero and tackling air pollution.

The objectives of the schemes and of the National Transport Strategy are both premised around economic growth, improved people experience and improved environment. The schemes localise the objectives of the national transport strategy by identifying inadequate active mode transport infrastructure as one key factor affecting the full revitalisation of the economy within the area, the levelling-up strategy and the transition towards net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Considering the notable contribution of visitors to the economy of Oxford Street, support for active travel, and the subsequent improvements to the urban realm, will promote social and economic activities, which is expected to have a beneficial impact on the

economy of the area. As an economic hub, the schemes will promote agglomeration effects while providing means of containing the negative impact of the influx of businesses and visitors.

1.5 Gear Change (2020)

“Gear Change” sets out a plan to create a step-change in cycling and walking, with the UK Government envisaging an England that is a ‘great walking and cycling nation’, with cycling as a mass form of transit and a target that half of all journeys in towns and cities should be cycled or walked by 2030.

To facilitate this, actions are grouped into four central themes:

- Better streets for cycling and people – thousands of miles of safe, continuous, direct routes for cycling in towns and cities, physically separated from pedestrians and volume motor traffic;
- Cycling and walking at the heart of transport, place-making and health policy – significantly increasing dedicated cycling and walking funding, and creating long-term cycling and walking programme and budget;
- Empowering and encouraging local authorities – by increasing funding for local authorities, but also ensuring that Government funding is only granted to schemes that meet new standards. No funding shall be given to schemes that do not meet the new standards and principles established; and
- Enabling people to cycle and protecting them when they do – introducing new laws and safety standards.

The design guidance to support Gear Change is set out in Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20, as issued in July 2020. It reflects current best practice, and states that, for schemes where the main element is not cycling or walking, there will be a presumption that they must deliver or improve cycle infrastructure to the standards set out in the LTN, unless it can be shown that there is little or no need for cycling in the particular scheme.

The scheme proposals seek to improve the quality of the urban realm within the Oxford Street area. This will be reflected in the creation of a sustainable transport environment promoting road safety and active modes of transport.

1.6 Levelling Up White Paper (2022)

The Levelling Up White Paper sets out the government’s plans to spread opportunity more equally across the UK. It seeks to tackle the regional and local inequalities that unfairly hold back communities. It says that the answer to inequality is not to, “hobble those areas that are doing well”, but to deliver “more growth, more jobs and higher wages right across the UK” to level up the country and close the productivity gap between areas.

The White Paper launches a number of clear and ambitious medium term, “levelling-up missions”, designed to serve as an anchor for policy across government, as well as catalysing innovation and action by the private and civil society sectors. The missions are rolling decade-long endeavours and will be reviewed periodically by the government.

Under the theme of boosting productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, the White Paper notes that “Transport can boost productivity by connecting people to jobs and businesses to each other. It also supports wider quality of life, positive health outcomes and local pride by helping to regenerate high streets and town centres, supporting people to increase their physical activity, socialise and access shops and services.”

Specific interventions supported by the White Paper include zero-emission buses and improvements to bus routes, as well as improvements for cycling and walking.

The scheme proposals will support the economic and social prospects of the Oxford Street area, along with the creating an environment that is attractive for both businesses and residents. In line with the levelling up strategy, the schemes also aim to improve the general well-being of residents and visitors by reducing traffic flow which will have an impact on air quality and the quality of life.

2. Regional

2.1 The London Plan 2021

The Greater London Authority’s (GLA) New London Plan sets out the economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the strategic and sustainable development of London over the next 20 to 25 years. It sets out the Mayor’s vision for Good Growth. Relevant policies include:

- Policy T2 – states new development should adhere to the Healthy Streets principles;
- Policy SD4 (The Central Activities Zone (CAZ)) – states that ‘the vitality, viability, adaptation and diversification of the international shopping and leisure destinations of the West End and Knightsbridge together with other CAZ retail clusters should be supported’, and also ‘The attractiveness of the CAZ to residents, visitors and businesses should be enhanced through public realm improvements and the reduction of traffic dominance’.
- Policy D1 – states that Development Plans, area-based strategies and development proposals should address the form and layout of a place (for example, using land efficiently; facilitating an inclusive environment; having clearly defined public and private environments; provision of active frontages and reciprocal relationships between the buildings and public realm; and facilitate active travel) and the development design should respond to local context, be of high quality and sustainable, respect heritage assets, provide urban greening, and achieve comfortable and inviting environments, inside and outside buildings.

- Policy D3 – states that development proposals are required to achieve the highest standards of accessible and inclusive design.
- Policy D8 – specifies how the public realm should be designed, for example:
 - Safe, accessible, inclusive, attractive, and easy to understand;
 - Relating to the historic context;
 - Ensuring it encourages active travel;
 - Being based on an understanding of the role of the public realm in an area;
 - Balancing ease of movement with the creation of a place;
 - Ensuring a mutually supporting relationship between the space, surrounding buildings and uses;
 - Ensuring buildings activate and define the public realm;
 - Good management and maintenance arrangements;
 - Incorporation of green infrastructure;
 - Creation of shade and shelter;
 - Engaging for people of all ages;
 - Non-continuous / non-dominant on-street parking; and
 - Provision of free drinking water.

The schemes support London’s Good growth objectives of building strong and inclusive communities, making best use of land, creating a healthy city, growing a good economy and increasing efficiency and resilience. The proposals adopt the healthy streets (Policy T2) principle set out in the London Plan. It aims to enhance the attractiveness of the area by improving the public realm, a concept that is also found in the London Plan for designated central activities zones such as the West End. The scheme further adopts Policy D8 principles of public realms which are also aligned to Policy D3 statement.

2.2 Central Activities Zone (CAZ), Supplementary Planning Guidance (2017)

The GLA’s supplementary planning guidance sets out specific policy details for the CAZ, within which the OSD sits. It builds on the policies contained in the London Plan, adding detail on how to support and enhance the special nature of this area, by:

- Protecting London’s vibrant commercial heartland and ensuring it can remain a key driver of the UK economy for decades to come;
- Striking an appropriate balance between office and new residential development including the removal of office to residential permitted development rights when the current exemption expires in May 2019;
- Managing the attractions of the area as a global destination for culture, entertainment, shopping and tourism;
- Outlining the potential for additional housing capacity in central London without compromising the business, culture and other key functions of the zone. This could be done by building new homes in specific parts of central London, including the Opportunity Areas and by renewing existing housing;
- Promoting movement by walking and cycling and encouraging investment in existing and new transport infrastructure to support development; and

- Recognising the value of central London's unique heritage and supporting a quality of environment that befits the core of a world city.

The schemes contribute to the enhancement and promotion of London as a healthy city and global tourist destination. It further reinforces the role of West End designated as a key driver of the UK economy.

2.3 The Mayor's Transport Strategy (2018)

The Mayor's Transport Strategy promotes prioritising human health and experience and changing London's transport mix so that it works better for everyone. Key policies and proposals include:

- Policy 1 states that the Mayor will 'seek to make London a city where people choose to walk and cycle more often by improving street environments';
- Proposal 2 states that the Mayor, through TfL, will work with the central London boroughs to transform the experience of the walking and cycling environment in central London by reducing the dominance of vehicular traffic, including by transforming Oxford Street;
- Policy 7 states that transport schemes should protect existing and provide new green infrastructure to deliver a net positive impact on biodiversity; and
- Proposal 15 intends to improve the efficiency and safety of freight, an issue that is likely to affect the Oxford Street District, given the delivery and servicing needs of Oxford Street.

The objectives support the healthy streets approach and prioritises health and experience for the London residents and visitors. The scheme objectives fully adhere to Policy 1, 2, 7 and 15 of the Strategy and seek to create an environment that is accessible by all, encourages walking and cycling, is safe and promotes a green environment.

2.4 Healthy Streets for London (2017)

Healthy Streets for London prioritises walking, cycling and public transport to create a healthy city, supplemented by the 2018 Walking Action Plan. The ten Healthy Streets indicators are:

- Pedestrians from all walks of life
- People choose to walk, cycle and use public transport
- Clean air
- People feel safe
- Not too noisy
- Easy to cross
- Places to stop and rest
- Shade and shelter

- People feel relaxed
- Things to see and do

The schemes support the creation of healthy, vibrant and successful London environment as envisioned by Healthy Streets for London. By improving the public realm, the scheme objectives are aligned to all the ten healthy streets indicators.

2.5 Walking Action Plan (2018)

The Walking Action Plan sets out the Mayor's aim to make London the world's most walkable city, with '80 per cent [from a base of 63 per cent in 2015] of all trips in London to be made on foot, by cycle or using public transport by 2041.'

The schemes support the envisioned improvements in walking experiences and the consequent reduction of car dependency.

2.6 Vision Zero Action Plan (2018)

The Vision Zero Action Plan sets out the Mayor's aims 'for no one to be killed in or by a London bus by 2030, and for all deaths and serious injuries from road collisions to be eliminated from London's streets by 2041.'

The schemes aim to improve pedestrian safety through the enhancement of existing pedestrian crossings and the introduction of additional crossings along Oxford Street. It is envisaged that the achievement of this objective will contribute to a reduction in the number of accidents and incidents along Oxford Street and therefore facilitate the effectiveness of the Vision Zero Action Plan.

2.7 Mayor of London's Draft Culture Strategy (2018)

The Mayor's Draft Culture Strategy sets out the Mayor's programmes for investment in London's cultural offer, with a focus on inclusivity and community engagement. The strategy remains at draft stage following a public consultation in spring 2018.

The OSP is cognisant of the importance of culture as one driver of economic and social activities within the area and therefore aims to improve the attractiveness of Oxford Street through the improvement of the pedestrian experience, along with providing the conditions for night time taxi access.

2.8 Culture and the Night-Time Economy Supplementary Planning Guidance (2017)

The Mayor of London's supplementary planning guidance for culture and the night-time economy sets out how London can move towards a 24-hour city model. It emphasises the need to support existing venues in the face of widespread closures. The CAZ is given particular prominence; the country's largest concentration of night-time activities should be

recognised, improved and managed by the Mayor, boroughs and other agencies. The West End's special characteristics should be promoted, enhanced and protected as a Strategic Cultural Area.

The guidance supports extending the opening hours of existing daytime facilities like shops and cafés and integrating leisure and other uses to create bridges between the day and night-time economy and diversify the range of activities and promote access for a range of audiences. Licensing should balance the interests of residents with the functions of the night-time economy.

The document also emphasises the need for safe, convenient and accessible public transport throughout the day and night, and a public realm where the fear of crime does not undermine the quality of the experience.

The improved pedestrian experience and environment brought about by the scheme will enhance the outlook of the night-time culture and support the objectives of the Mayor of London's supplementary planning guidance for culture and the night-time economy.

3. Local

3.1 Westminster City Plan 2019-2040 (2021)

The Westminster City Plan was formally adopted in April 2021. The city plan aims to enable Westminster's high streets to adapt to changing circumstances and to thrive in the future. The new policy includes a change in approach to how high streets are managed and would aim to create a lot more flexibility for change of use in response to the changing nature of retail.

It will seek to make Westminster's high streets a destination for leisure and entertainment as well as shopping, whilst still maintaining the retail focus of the area, which will help shopping centres face the unprecedented challenges posed by online retail, falling sales figures and customer expectations for exciting destinations and experiences. Oxford Street is an international shopping centre and expectations for the quality and range of retail and entertainment offers are that they should be world class.

The transformation of the OSD is seen as a key component of creating an improved retail and leisure experience that responds to innovation and change in the sector. The Plan identifies the aspiration for Oxford Street to include 'a more diverse and interesting mix of uses and better-quality public realm that prioritises pedestrians, enhances the shopper experience, and makes it a more attractive place to visit and enjoy.' As part of achieving this vision, the Plan emphasises the need for comprehensive proposals for the future of the area to respond to the changes facing the retail sector, with a key focus on user experience.

Westminster City Council's ambition to create a 'Fairer Westminster'.

The City Plan sets out its approach to the West End in Policy S7: West End Special Retail Policy Area (WESRPA). This states that the unique status and offer of the WESRPA as a global shopping destination should be maintained and enhanced through:

- Improved retail space;
- Appropriate retail growth throughout the WESRPA, including provision of A1-grade retail space along the primary shopping frontages at (at least) basement, ground and first floor levels;
- Improved pedestrian environment to manage the significant pedestrian flows and address the adverse impacts of pedestrian congestion;
- Improved public transport provision and access to it, including Elizabeth Line stations at Tottenham Court Road and Bond Street;
- Development of oasis areas of rest, including seating areas, and café and restaurant uses where appropriate to support the main retail areas;
- Improved linkages to and from surrounding retail areas and visitor attractions; and
- Provision of appropriate service uses where they complement the shopping environment.

Similarly, Policy S5 concerning the Tottenham Court Road Opportunity Area requests A1 - grade retail use at basement to first floor level for all frontages onto Oxford Street within the opportunity area, due to its role as the eastern gateway to the OSD.

The projects operate within the framework of the Westminster City Plan. It operationalises the themes and objectives set out in the City Plan and contributes to the creation of an inclusive environment promoting economic growth.

3.2 Fairer Westminster 2022-2026 (2022)

The Fairer Westminster strategy aims to directly work with local people to, “build a more inclusive city that celebrates its diverse communities, and where residents, workers and visitors from all backgrounds will feel welcome and safe”. The strategy has five main ambitions including creating fairer communities, housing, economy, environment, and governance. Incorporated within these includes ambitions to:

- Ensure Westminster remains economically successful, with a diverse, sustainable, resilient economy that delivers growth and benefits for all residents today and in the future;
- Reimagine and revive Oxford Street and the West End, safeguarding their position in the national economy, and ensuring they deliver a world class offer and experience to residents, businesses, workers and visitors.

The scheme aims at maintaining the status of the Oxford Street Wider Area as one of key economic hubs in the country by ensuring that the proposed improvements attract businesses, residents, and visitors. It supports the creation of an inclusive environment that promotes sustainable and diverse economic growth.

3.3 Climate Emergency Action Plan (2021)

The Westminster Climate Emergency Action Plan outlines a comprehensive list of actions aimed at achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2040. It encompasses a range of interrelated council policies that collectively drive environmental improvements across Westminster. The vision for the City Council is to work in partnership with all organisations and everyone who lives, works, studies or visits Westminster to tackle climate crisis urgently.

The Westminster Climate Emergency Action Plan aims to accelerate carbon emission reductions and associated improvements in air quality across the city through a comprehensive set of actions across five themes.

The priority of the first theme, which is Efficient Buildings, is to improve building efficiency and deliver energy cost savings, with the goal of maximising the retrofitting of buildings to cut their energy demand and new developments achieving best practice standards to minimise energy demand and waste.

Clean and affordable energy is the second theme and its priority is to increase availability, affordability and use of low and zero carbon energy and the goal is to harness opportunities for the local generation and distribution of renewable energy.

The sustainable travel and transport theme prioritises cutting transport-based sources of emissions and air pollution with a goal to cut vehicle trips and increase sustainable and active travel and accelerate the transition to electric vehicles across Westminster.

Under reduced consumption and waste theme, the priority is to reduce waste, increase recycling, and promote sustainable consumption with a goal of adopting sustainable purchasing practices and products; drive reductions in waste and a step change in rates of recycling and fully embed resource efficiency and the re-use of materials as part of an established low carbon circular economy.

Finally, the priority for the green and resilient city theme is to enhance the natural environment and ensure the city is resilient to climate change impacts with the goal to protect and enhance Westminster's green space

The Oxford Street Programme realises the urgent need to contain the negative impacts of climate change. It sets out how pedestrian access will be improved and made more comfortable and safer. Additionally, the Oxford Street and Oxford Circus projects will assess and seek to mitigate carbon impact through design and construction.

3.4 Air Quality Action Plan, 2020

Air quality is a priority for people in Westminster, and the Council has therefore developed an action plan to help tackle this problem, identifying the following priorities to keep air clean:

- reducing or cleaning dirty journeys and create better infrastructure for electric and low emission vehicles;
- placing emissions and pollution at the forefront of decision making on public spaces and buildings and encouraging all those who shape spaces and buildings to do likewise;

- making environmentally friendly options easier for everyone; and
- moving the air quality agenda forward through thought leadership and innovation.

The Air Quality Action Plan provides a comprehensive overview of how the Council will continue to make progress on this agenda from 2020 to 2024, and includes monitoring air quality, reducing emissions from buildings and new development, reducing emissions from transport, raising awareness of air quality and lobbying and partnership working.

The proposed project proposals takes into the consideration the impact of design on air quality and seeks to mitigate it. Specifically, active travel will be supported and delays at Oxford Circus reduced to reduce dwell time for stationary traffic.

3.5 A Partnership Approach to Open Spaces and Biodiversity in Westminster, Westminster City Council (2019)

In March 2019 the Council published their strategy concerning open spaces and biodiversity – A Partnership Approach to Open Spaces and Biodiversity in Westminster. The importance of open and green spaces along with the role of local authorities in protecting, managing and enhancing them is recognised in a range of local policy documents as framework.

However, the Strategy is the first dedicated document to open space and acknowledges the value of the wealth of green assets to the district – from parks and gardens to green infrastructure including living walls and roofs – and recognises the myriad benefits they bring to Westminster as a place and as a community. In aligning with existing policies and frameworks, the Strategy sets out how the Council, along with partners will seek to protect, promote, enhance and make the most of their green assets.

Though there are several priorities outlined in the Strategy, those which the Oxford Street and Oxford Circus projects particularly well-placed to contribute to include:

- Prioritising greening by creating new green infrastructure – committing to the expansion of Westminster’s green network including the Wild West End;
- Biodiversity and wildlife – committing to protect important habitats and species; and
- Managing and Balancing Demand - committing to ensure Westminster’s green assets can be used for a range of purposes, without jeopardising people’s enjoyment of them.

The Oxford Street project is committed to promoting biodiversity through greening. While designs are still being developed, the tree species selected seek to create a mosaic of green canopies for an increased biodiversity gain and extended periods of colour and interest. Greening will support the creation of green corridors to support a biodiverse ecological connection between green spaces.

3.6 Cultural Strategy (2021-2025)

Through its Cultural Strategy, Westminster envisions a city that welcomes visitors and residents to experience Westminster’s extraordinary cultural heritage alongside

contemporary creative innovation and enterprise. The strategy seeks to deliver four key priorities:

- Culture for all: To increase access to culture for all, with a specific focus on reaching residents that encounter physical, social and economic barriers;
- Resilient communities: To support health and wellbeing programmes, deepening relationships between the council's Families, Public Health, Adult Social Care, and Libraries services, and cultural partners and health providers;
- Open for business: To nurture the creative economy we will attract new business and investment by increasing opportunities to engage in creative enterprise and the local cultural offer; and
- Creative placemaking: To ensure creative placemaking, so that cultural infrastructure, creative workspaces and resident programmes are integral to planning and regeneration schemes.

The programme and proposed projects seek to improve the visitor experience through a number of public realm changes including supporting night-time taxi access. The schemes' objectives and outputs complement the Cultural Strategy (2021-2025) and fall under its four key priorities.

3.7 Economic Development Strategic Framework (2015)

Note: a new strategy is currently under development

Westminster City Council's Economic Development Strategic Framework sets out how Westminster aims to encourage long-term investment in infrastructure, skills and knowledge, thereby promoting a resilient and dynamic local economy.

The framework places an emphasis on supporting local businesses, creating employment and directing investment towards the West End in order to secure its status as a leading destination within both London and the wider UK.

The framework also sets out a number of partnerships with relevant partner organisations which act as key links for the Council, including:

- Individual firms & entrepreneurs
- Further and Higher Education institutions
- Business and sector representation organisations
- Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)
- West End Partnership
- Central London Forward
- Cross River Partnership
- Greater London Authority (GLA), including GLA-affiliated organisations

As part of the 'Places' theme, the framework focuses on ensuring that Westminster's individual places remain distinctive, vibrant, accessible and commercially attractive, which should be achieved through:

- Working with partners to champion and shape Westminster's key economic locations;

- Ensuring the council’s commercial property strategies aligns with economic development objectives;
- Investing in and rejuvenating Westminster’s high streets and street markets through securing external funding and partnerships;
- Secure the infrastructure appropriate to the heart of a global city; and
- Delivering the workspaces needed by a broad range of businesses, particularly in the West End and designated opportunity areas.

The schemes offer opportunities of achieving some of the goals set out in the Economic Development Strategy. The Oxford Street area is a part of the West End which is one of the key economic locations of Westminster with the proposed interventions supporting the shaping of the West End as an economic location and the delivery of infrastructure that is appropriate for the social and economic context of the area.

3.8 Walking Strategy (2017)

Westminster City Council’s latest Walking Strategy seeks to provide ‘an opportunity to enhance Westminster’s excellent quality of life and its historic environment.’ It advocates environmental improvements that ‘make walking easier and more attractive, which can improve air quality and thus the health and lives of residents, workers and visitors and the local economy.’ The strategy states Westminster City Council’s target to ‘increase the number of walking trips by residents from 84% to 92% of all potentially walkable trips’.

The objectives of the strategy are stated as:

- Providing capacity to support current walking demand and accommodate future growth;
- Improving the quality of the walking environment and the public realm to make walking more comfortable;
- Making walking more intuitive by increasing legibility and permeability of walking routes;
- Ensuring walking is a safe option for everyone;
- Making the pedestrian environment more accessible for everyone; and
- Encouraging behaviour change to realise the potential of walking.

The objectives of the Oxford Street and Oxford Circus projects support the key tenets of the Walking Strategy through the creation of a more accessible and inclusive pedestrian environment.

3.9 Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Westminster, 2017-2022 (2017)

The Strategy sets out how people, public services, businesses, and voluntary and community groups in Westminster will all play a part in creating a city in which everyone has access to opportunities to be healthy, stay well, and live well, supported by a collaborative and cohesive health and care system.

Westminster experiences unique challenges due to its central location and its position as a hub for business, culture, and tourism. The borough also has an ageing population and a high prevalence of childhood obesity.

The key priorities are:

- Providing support for children, young people and their families to live healthier lives;
- Helping people to prevent the onset of long-term health conditions such as dementia and heart disease;
- Improving mental health services through prevention and self-management; and
- Improving the way we work to offer better health and social care.

The proposed projects complement the ambition of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy through the creation of better-quality public realm, which will have an impact on the physical and mental wellbeing on people of users of the street. The enhanced public realm is expected to, among other broad objectives, promote safety and active travel which is aligned with the Strategy and is beneficial for health and well-being

3.10 Greener City Action Plan, 2015-2025 (2015)

The Greener City Action Plan is designed to ensure that all of Westminster's services and policies work together to create a more sustainable and liveable city, while adapting to the challenges of a changing climate and increased population.

The 11 policy priorities for the ten-year strategy are:

- Addressing noise pollution across the city
- Making better use of the city's waste resources
- Delivering affordable, secure and low-carbon energy supplies
- Improving local air quality
- Supporting a sustainable transport system for Westminster
- Making the best use of open and green spaces
- Ensuring that sustainability is delivered through economic development
- Supporting a sustainable growth
- Managing water use
- Addressing flood risk
- Communicating and encouraging people into environmental action

The principles driving the projects are consistent with the policy priorities of the Greener Action Plan. Active travel and connectivity is to be supported and the improved public realm is expected to, among other Greener Action indicators, make the environment greener and facilitate the realisation of a sustainable transport system for Westminster as envisioned.

3.11 Trees and Public Realm (2011)

The Trees and Public Realm SPD (2011) outlines the Council's strategy for planting trees within the public realm. The document establishes the Council's ambition to maintain or increase the level of tree cover within the city. It is also intended to act as a basis for collaboration with other relevant organisations (including TfL and the Royal Parks survey). This document is supported by the councils pre-existing guidance outlined in 'Trees and other planting on development sites' (2004).

The Oxford Street project will support the strategy by increasing greening with regard to biodiversity enhancement.

3.12 Conservation Areas

The Oxford Street area falls across several different conservation areas, designated by Westminster City Council on the basis of 'special architectural and historic interest.' Additional planning permissions apply in these areas in order to protect their unique characteristics. These are:

- Portman Estate
- Stratford Place
- Mayfair
- Harley Street
- Regent Street
- East Marylebone
- Hanway Street

The projects will support the conservation of areas of specific architectural and historic interests by improving transport access which then enhances the attractiveness of areas.