

WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF DECISION

SUBJECT: NNDR LOCALISM RELIEF TO SUPPORT MEANWHILE USE ACTIVATIONS AS PHASE 3 OF THE ACTIVATIONS AND MEANWHILE USE PROGRAMME

Notice is hereby given that the Cabinet Member for Finance and Council Reform and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development have made the following executive decision on the above mentioned subject for the reasons set out below.

Summary of Decision

1. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development has approved the strategy and in principle approach for meanwhile activations of eligible premises as part of phase 3 of the programme.
2. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Council Reform, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development, has approved the application of the Business Rate NNDR "Localism" allowance of a 100% of the net business rate liability under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, as amended by the Localism Act 2011 and the allocation of a maximum of £2.45m from the Stimulating the Economy budget and Thriving Economy budget.

Reason for Decision:

1. Phase 3 will require a change in direction from a short-term enlivening activity that looked at tenancies for a period of up to three months into a meanwhile use activation strategy that seeks to attract and support the transition of brands from pop-up occupiers into long-term, rent paying tenants; creating a pipeline of high-quality occupiers. A curation process will ensure that activations are driven by the most innovative up-and-coming, independent UK brands (businesses which otherwise could not afford the costs of operating in Westminster). The process will also prioritise local brands and those with a clear association with the borough whilst still meeting the calibre of activation required. This process will also ensure that well established businesses that could afford to pay full commercial rates are not awarded the NNDR Localism Relief.
2. This change of direction is an opportunity to tackle the rapid growth of low-quality occupiers along Oxford Street in particular, as well as other key high streets across the borough. This repetition and proliferation of such businesses are impacting upon the attractiveness of the borough and have, in many cases, been found to be evading the payment of business rates or undertaking illegal activity. Some property owners agree to leases with such businesses as part of a rates mitigation strategy, but the subsequent non-payment of business rates shifts the burden from the private sector to the public purse.

**Stuart Love, Chief Executive,
Westminster City Hall,
64 Victoria Street
LONDON SW1E 6QP**

Publication Date: 21 September 2022

Implementation Date: 29 September 2022

Reference: JCM22-08