

Environment Policy & Scrutiny Committee

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Classification:	General Release
Title:	Addressing the Needs of Pedestrians – a draft Walking Strategy for Westminster (2015- 2030)
Report of:	Director of Policy, Performance and Communications
Cabinet Member Portfolios	Sustainability & Parking and City Management
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	Better City, Better Lives, Westminster City Plan: Strategic Policies, Mayor’s Transport Strategy
Financial Summary:	This report seeks Policy & Scrutiny Members views on the context and suggested structure and contents of ‘Addressing the Needs of Pedestrians – a draft Walking Strategy for Westminster (2015-2030)’. There are, therefore, no financial implications as a result of this report.
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 There is considerable impetus within the country, and particularly in London, to improve the attractiveness, safety and facilities to encourage more people to walk and cycle more. Westminster has a strong track record of improvements for both pedestrians and cyclists over the past few years which we can be proud of, but we believe that we can and should do more as a city to support walking and cycling. In November 2014 the City Council adopted its Cycling Strategy (2014-2026), which was developed with help from this Policy & Scrutiny Committee, including a Cycling Task Group.
- 1.2 It is now timely to prepare the Walking Strategy. The Council will not be starting from afresh, as in 2004 the Council published a ‘Walking Strategy for Westminster’ (Appendix 1) – that succinctly set out the importance of walking in the City and why such a strategy was needed. More recently the Council has

adopted its City Plan - Strategic Policies which sets the policy context for improving walking and cycling, produced a series of City Plan consultation booklets that seek views on the future planning of the City and supplementary guidance such as the Westminster Way and created the West End Partnership as a means to deliver a joint strategic vision for the West End to 2030 and beyond to secure the West End's success for future generations. In the West End alone there are almost 150 individual public realm/transport projects being promoted by different parties and these will all impact on our streets; none more so than Crossrail 1 and Crossrail 2.

- 1.3 Therefore, the proposed Walking Strategy is about *addressing* the *needs* of pedestrians up to 2030 – the proposed date for Crossrail 2 - rather than encouraging more people to walk to achieve modal shift. As with the Cycling Strategy the strategy will set out Westminster's vision for walking, the policy and strategy frameworks at national, regional and local level, the links between walking as the main mode of transport and other modes, the challenges involved in delivering improvements to our streets and public realm, a series of schemes and initiatives to be delivered and finally details of proposed targets, monitoring and evaluation.
- 1.4 This report seeks the views of the Policy and Scrutiny Committee; prior to a draft strategy being produced. To aid discussion there is a suggested structure/ contents of the proposed Walking Strategy for Westminster (as was provided for the Cycling Strategy) affording Members the opportunity to make suggestions on the proposed topics covered before its structure is formalised. Proposals for the vision, ambition and principles that should guide the Strategy have been included for comment by Members.
- 1.5 It is important to make clear that this is a set of hypotheses and ideas to stimulate feedback from colleagues which will be taken in to account in finalising the structure prior to the working up of a complete draft by early summer. At this stage it is envisaged that, with the Chairman's permission, the Committee will be consulted on the draft, as will the wider public / interested parties, with an agreed draft strategy published in mid-2015. It is intended that the Strategy will be a 'living document' that will be reviewed and updated regularly as appropriate.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's consideration

- 2.1 Some key questions on which the Committee may wish to provide a view are as follows:
 - i. What is the Committee's view on the proposed structure of the Walking Strategy for Westminster?
 - ii. Are there any issues additional to those of the Mayor, TfL and the City Council in relation to walking which the draft Strategy needs to highlight and address?
 - iii. Are there any additional interventions that could help to address the issues that are identified in the draft Strategy?
 - iv. Which actions should be prioritised for implementation?
 - v. What core targets are considered to be realistic to monitor outcomes and delivery of the Strategy?

- 2.2 Whether the Committee wish to establish a Task Group to provide input and scrutiny of the Walking Strategy for Westminster as it develops.

3. Addressing the Needs of Pedestrians – a draft Walking Strategy for Westminster (2015- 2030) - Context

- 3.1 There is considerable impetus within the country, and particularly in London, to improve the attractiveness, safety and facilities to encourage more people to walk and cycle more. Westminster has a strong track record of improvements for pedestrians and cyclists over the past few years which we can be proud of, but we believe that we can and should do more as a city to support walking and cycling. It was for this reason that as part of its Better City, Better Lives corporate strategy in March 2012 the City Council announced that it would develop a single walking and cycling strategy. This, however, became two separate strategies in recognition that they are different modes of transport which can conflict. The fact that the Mayor for London published his Cycling Vision in March 2013 with major implications for the City meant that work on the Cycling Strategy was prioritised.
- 3.2 In November 2014 the City Council adopted its Cycling Strategy (2014-2026). The draft Strategy was developed with help from this Policy & Scrutiny Committee, including a Cycling Task Group, the lead Member for Cycling, attendance and Q&A with the Mayor's Cycling Commissioner and a public consultation exercise that resulted in almost 2,000 responses – one of the highest ever for a Council consultation.
- 3.3 The walking strategy will now be drafted. In 2004 the Council published a 'Walking Strategy for Westminster' – that succinctly set out the importance of walking in the City and why such a Strategy was needed. It remains as relevant today as it was 10 years ago:

“Walking has a key role to play in establishing a city that is accessible and vibrant. Historically, walking has attracted little attention in terms of policy and funding...”

A culture where walking in Westminster is favoured by all age groups and all abilities needs to be established, and an environment created that provides pleasant surroundings in which to undertake walking trips. Consequently, our urban fabric needs to be transformed to improve the 'ambience' and quality of life of pedestrians.

The Walking Strategy for Westminster seeks to encourage walking, change existing attitudes to walking and publicise new and existing facilities by coordinating a series of initiatives and measures that the City Council is already committed to delivering. This will also contribute to achieving a number of other corporate aims and objectives.....(such as those included in the “Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan” of April 2000).”

- 3.4 As the earlier Strategy points out, all journeys made by people in their everyday lives involve some element of walking. Walking is the form of transport that has the least damaging effect on the environment and is most beneficial to our health

and wellbeing. It can be done virtually anywhere, over short or long distances, alone or with others. It does not require any equipment and costs nothing. However, it is not always a pleasant experience for a number of reasons, including conflicts with other transport users, concerns over safety and personal security and a lack of adequate pedestrian facilities to name but a few.

- 3.5 In Westminster and the West End in particular, the pedestrian experience is greatly dependent on the day-to-day management of the street environment. The quality of the pavement, drainage, lighting, obstructions on the pavement such as tables and chairs, 'A' Boards, bollards, scaffolding, poles and hoardings, a street trading kiosk, fly tipping and litter/waste can all impact on our daily use of our streets and all require attention and investment along with the more, higher profile/schemes and initiatives such as Legible London, Oxford Circus Diagonals, Whitehall Security Measures, Exhibition Road, Piccadilly Two-Way and Leicester Square.
- 3.6 The biggest impact, however, on the pedestrian experience in parts of Westminster is the sheer number of people using the streets. This situation will be more pronounced with the opening of Crossrail 1 in 2018 and potentially Crossrail 2 in 2030 along with numerous other changes to our streets and road network as London continues to grow in population, employment and visitor numbers. At the heart of London, Westminster will face these issues first and foremost and will have to develop policies and strategies to manage their impacts. A walking strategy in Westminster's context is about addressing the needs of pedestrians rather than encouraging more people to walk to achieve modal shift and provides a valuable opportunity to debate and set a vision for our streets and how we and our key stakeholders can play their part in delivering that vision over the next fifteen years.

4. Addressing the Needs of Pedestrians – a draft Walking Strategy for Westminster (2015- 2030) - Suggested Structure

- 4.1 As with the Cycling Strategy, the Walking Strategy for Westminster will set out Westminster's vision for walking, the policy and strategy frameworks at national, regional and local level, the links between walking as a mode of transport and other modes, the challenges involved in delivering improvements to our streets and public realm, a series of schemes and initiatives to be delivered and details of proposed targets, monitoring and evaluation. It will build on the Strategy agreed in 2004 and will learn from best practice – nationally and internationally – since then. ¹
- 4.2 The suggested structure/contents set out below is to stimulate feedback from Policy & Scrutiny Members which will be taken into account in finalising the structure prior to the working up of a complete draft early this summer. With the Chairman's permission, the Committee will be consulted on the draft, as will the wider public / interested parties, with an agreed strategy published for consultation in mid-2015 and a final strategy by the end of the year. It is intended

¹ Examples of international best practice include Melbourne and Toronto and closer to home, Camden and Bristol

that the Strategy will be a 'living document' that will be reviewed and updated regularly as appropriate.

1) **Vision & Ambition**

- **Vision** - *To make Westminster a place that is safer and more attractive for more people to walk more often.*
- **Ambition** - *To see a step change in the attractiveness of and provision for walking in Westminster over the next fifteen years.*

2) **Principles:**

- To improve the attractiveness and safety of Westminster's streets and to encourage walking in Westminster without causing unacceptable problems for other road users;
- To invest in walking as a main mode of transport;
- To make any changes with the support of the community;

3) **Westminster & Policy Context**

- Policy and strategy evidence base (national, regional and Westminster policies and relevant strategies – London Plan, Mayor's Transport Strategy, Mayor's Roads Task Force, Cycling Strategy, Westminster City Plan; Strategic Policies, UDP, a Walking Strategy for Westminster, Cycling Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Active Westminster Strategy, Westminster Way, etc.);
- Statistical evidence base (national, regional and Westminster statistics relating to walking, pedestrian numbers, road accidents/figures for those killed or seriously injured (KSIs) and qualitative research benchmarked against other boroughs and relevant cities);
- Context of Westminster as a city, a place, its differing dynamics – the importance of the West End and Central Activities Zone (CAZ) to the London and national economy, our unrivalled public transport links and the importance of walking as the primary means of travel – whether as a journey in itself or a linked trip, the projected growth in jobs, population, visitors and major transport and other infrastructure that will impact on our City and its 'walkability', e.g. Crossrail 1 and Crossrail 2, the Garden Bridge; the appropriateness of 20mph Zones/Streets in a city like Westminster – the evidence for and against;
- Analysis of why people walk and where to (for work, shopping, leisure and recreation, health and wellbeing reasons), utilising pedestrian counts collected for transport and public realm improvements schemes and existing quantitative and qualitative surveys;

- What we and our partners such as TfL, the Great Estates, landowners and BIDS have achieved in the past, what we wish to do in the present with our partners and key stakeholders and what challenges we face in the future, linked to the West End Partnership (WEP) and emerging WEP Delivery Plan.

4) The 'Pedestrian Experience'/safety/enforcement/interaction with other users

- Enforcement of 'A' Boards, tables and chairs, highway obstructions, etc.;
- More effective enforcement against pavement cycling and dangerous driving;
- Training and Awareness (School Travel Plans; Legible London promotion, working with BIDS and landowners);
- Continued de-cluttering of our streetscape, guard rail removal - where no safety need is identified;
- HGVs/ Buses (Trixi mirrors, sensors, advanced training – as applicable to pedestrians as cyclists);

5) Challenges and Opportunities

- Keeping the City moving/ nature of WCC historic street plan and street widths – potentially constraining uses and other modes where and when walking takes precedence;
- Constrained budgets;
- Tourist awareness of the 'rules of the road' and crossings;
- Current high levels of walking with increased demands on our streets arising from more pedestrians, more on-street activity and increasing demands for more structures and events on our streets;
- Balancing walking with other road and footway users' needs;
- Opportunity to set the agenda and take people with us;

6) Infrastructure

- Streets, routes, squares and signage - review of existing....
- Walking and cycling considerations designed within all schemes;

- Wayfinding and signposting – building on Legible London to move to next generation of signage and move to greater use of social media, Apps and mobile technology;
- Junctions (Full junction review of all major junctions identified by GLA/ times and budget for improvements);
- State of the pavements and highway – routine maintenance, utilities works;

7) Health, wellbeing and air quality (walking for health and recreation)

- To improve health and wellbeing and the environment - links to NHS, public health, active travel and air quality strategies;
- Walking Tours/Apps/City of Sculpture and Green Plaque routes;
- Sports provision around an active life;

8) Finance

- Actions detailed within the Strategy will require funding and staff resource to implement;
- Any actions that are agreed following consultation with stakeholders and the public will be funded through a combination of the following sources:

the Council's Local Implementation Plan (LIP) allocation from Transport for London (TfL);

TfL and GLA funding opportunities such as those relating to air quality, town centres/high streets, Innovation Fund, the Roads Task Force, etc.

the Council's Capital Programme and funding sources such as public health,

the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL - from 2015)

third party/developer funding from s106 and s278

DEFRA and EU funding

9) Communications, Engagement & Promotion

- The draft Strategy provides an ideal opportunity for the Council to set out what it has done previously to encourage walking and ease of movement around the City and to engage with a wide range of stakeholders who have an interest in this issue. Engagement has already begun with Westminster Living Streets, amenity societies and business groups;
- Officers will work with colleagues across the Council to ensure that the draft strategy is effectively communicated to as wide an audience as possible and to seek their input to the strategy;

- A communications plan for delivering the Strategy will be developed in due course.

10) Implementation & Monitoring Plan

- A detailed implementation programme and monitoring plan will be put together and included within the draft Strategy;
- This will include SMART targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for effective measurement and monitoring.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Barry Smith, Operational Director City Planning, bsmith@westminster.gov.uk, 020 7641 2923

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Westminster City Plan: Strategic Policies, November 2013
2. The vision and direction for London's streets and roads, Roads Task Force, July 2013
3. London Plan, May 2011
4. Mayor's Transport Strategy, May 2010
5. Unitary Development Plan, July 2007

Walking Strategy for Westminster