



Meeting or Decision Maker: *Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for City Management*

Date: *28/06/2021*

Classification: *General Release*

Title: *Villiers Street Public Realm – TMO, Detailed design and Implementation*

Wards Affected: *St James'*

City for All Summary *Vibrant Communities/Renewal - Improving key areas - inclusive for all communities e.g. public realm; Restarting and revitalising the local economy following lockdown and lead on facilitating recovery/encourage economic growth*

Key Decision: *This is a Key Decision; has been included in the Forward Plan for Forthcoming decisions*

Financial Summary: *This report seeks approval for capital expenditure of £4.640 million for the implementation of the proposals identified in this report. The scheme is included in the approved capital programme*

Report of: *Raj Mistry, Executive Director, Environment and City Management*

Contact Details: Westminster City Council, City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Villiers Street is in a poor state of repair and requires urgent maintenance. It has extremely high footfall connecting people who live and work in the area as well as visitors and tourists. It is therefore proposed to undertake public realm improvement of this road to provide a safe and high-quality pedestrian environment.
- 1.2 In line with the City Plan 2019-40, consideration of appropriate counter-terrorism measures was given as part of the public realm improvement proposals. A Threat and Vulnerability Risk

Assessment and a Vehicle Dynamics Assessment were commissioned. As a result, the proposed public realm scheme includes additional security measures in order to reduce the vulnerability of Villiers St to a terrorist attack. This includes measures to allow the closure of the street during high footfall periods.

- 1.3 Feasibility design, initial design and public consultation have been undertaken. Stakeholders are broadly supportive of the proposed measures with some concerns raised about the restrictive hours when Villiers Street is proposed to be open to traffic. These concerns have been addressed by proposing changes to hours of restriction and providing extra loading facilities on Embankment Place. Consultation report is attached as Appendix B. Further Traffic Management Order (TMO) consultation will be undertaken and any decision on timed closure will be made after that.
- 1.4 This report seeks approval to undertake Traffic Management Order (TMO) consultation, detailed design and implementation of the proposed measures.

2. Recommendations

That approval be given by the Cabinet Member for City Management for the following matters:

- 2.1 For the carrying out of a Traffic Management Order (TMO) consultation.
- 2.2 To proceed with detailed design and implementation of the proposed scheme as outlined in General Arrangement drawings in Appendix C and to make traffic orders to facilitate this implementation.
- 2.3 For the Director of City Highways to enter into a management agreement with JLL to operate the bollards.
- 2.4 For the Director of City Highways to enter into a Section 8 agreement with Transport for London (TfL) to install bollards on their land to protect the Embankment tube station and Villiers Street.
- 2.5 For capital expenditure of £4.640 million necessary to implement the scheme.
- 2.6 That authority be delegated to the Director of City Highways, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for City Management, to approve minor modifications to the scheme should they become necessary and as a result of the TMO consultation.

3. Reasons for Decision

- 3.1 Villiers Street is in a poor state of repair and requires urgent maintenance. As a highway authority, it is our duty to maintain a safe pedestrian environment.
- 3.2 Including security improvements within the public realm scheme, will reduce the vulnerability of Villiers St to a terrorist attack utilising certain attack methodologies.
- 3.3 A public consultation has been undertaken and the results show that more than 50% respondents are in favour of the public realm improvements, pedestrianisation and timed closure of the road. A TMO consultation will be undertaken later in the year on the specific changes to parking and loading restrictions and on the timed closure.
- 3.4 Various concerns raised during this consultation have either been addressed by making changes to the proposed scheme or responses provided. Most concerns raised were

regarding the timed closure and its impact on deliveries to businesses and residents on the street. This is being addressed by changing the proposed opening hours to **5am to 11am** Mon-Sun, although the exact hours are still subject to further consultation with local residents, as well as providing extra loading bays on Embankment Place. These proposed changes will be part of the Traffic Order consultation to be undertaken later this year. Stakeholders will have another opportunity to respond then and any decision on timed closure will be taken after this consultation.

4. Background, including Policy Context

Policy Context

- 4.1 The Protect strand of CONTEST, the UK's national Counter-terrorism Strategy, aims to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack in the UK or against our interests overseas, and so reduce our vulnerability. One objective of Protect is to *'Improve security at crowded places through closer, more effective working with a wider range of local authority and private sector responsible partners.'*
- 4.2 The Westminster City Plan 2019-2040 includes reference to security measures in high-risk developments and the public realm. It states that *'All security measures will be designed and implemented to take account of the functionality of the area and the needs of its users, and will be sensitively designed to respect the surrounding context and public realm.'*

Threat

- 4.3 At the time of writing the threat to the UK from terrorism is at SUBSTANTIAL meaning an attack is likely. The National risk register indicates that there will be an attack on crowded places in the next five years.
- 4.4 A Threat and Vulnerability Risk Assessment highlighted areas by which Villiers St was vulnerable to a terrorist attack.
- 4.5 Villiers Street is in a poor state of repair and requires urgent maintenance. It has extremely high footfall connecting people who live and work in the area as well as visitors and tourists.
- 4.6 The proposed measures will improve the public realm and placemaking of Villiers Street; improve the route for pedestrians by making it more pedestrian friendly and increase the safety of the street. It is proposed to pave the street with Porphyry setts and the two footway sections at each end with Yorkstone paving. It is also proposed to remove the steps in front of Victoria Embankment Gardens to create a wider footway and to install planters in front of the garden. These proposals contribute towards the City for all vision of 'Vibrant communities/ Renewal by improving the public realm and helping to restart and revitalise the local economy'.
- 4.7 Any security measures will conform to the national guidance on public realm security measures and will be proportionate to the risk and vulnerability of the vehicle and pedestrian access points around Villiers Street.
- 4.8 The proposed timing for closure was based on the pedestrian footfall data (2019) which indicated that AM peak is the lowest with peak volumes increasing throughout the day including night time peak. Based on this data, it was proposed to close Villiers Street to traffic from 7am to 10am and 12 midday to midnight, Mon-Fri and from 10am to midnight, Sat and

Sun. This timed closure formed part of the public consultation undertaken in November last year.

5. Public Consultation response

- 5.1 Public consultation was undertaken for these proposals from 3rd November to 1st December 2020. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this was undertaken online. All information was hosted on a project website and letters were distributed to 820 addresses. Consultees were asked to fill in a questionnaire that was available online. 57 responses to questionnaire and 6 emails were received.
- 5.2 The responses have been analysed and presented in detail in the consultation report as Appendix B.
- 55% of respondents support the overall objectives of the scheme
 - 60% of respondents support the public realm improvements
 - 54% of respondents support the pedestrianization of Villiers Street
 - 58% of respondents support the timed closure of Villiers Street
- 5.3 Meetings were held with Northbank BID, residents of Kipling House, emergency services and taxi representatives from TfL. Both businesses and residents raised concerns that the time when Villiers Street will be open is very restrictive. Emergency services and residents raised concerns about proposed seating in front of Victoria Embankment Gardens.

6. Proposed Changes to Scheme details

- 6.1 Having gone through all the consultation responses and listened to concerns raised at various meetings, the following changes are proposed to the public realm improvement scheme –
- Granite setts to be replaced with Porphyry – concern was raised that the proposed granite setts mix was light in colour and would get stained easily. It has therefore been replaced with Porphyry that is richer in colour.
 - Due to concerns raised by emergency services and residents, proposed seating in front of the garden has been removed
 - Dedicated loading bays on Embankment Place – four loading bays will be provided on Embankment Place to help businesses and residents during the time when Villiers Street will be closed to traffic. Some taxi bays will be moved to Whitehall Place to accommodate this change
 - Timed closure – based on the responses received, the timing of road closure has been changed. Subject to further consultation with local residents, it is now proposed to close Villiers Street to traffic from **11am to 5am**, Mon-Sun.

7. Programme and next steps

- 7.1 Subject to cabinet member approval, it is proposed to proceed with detailed design of the scheme; undertake Traffic Management Order (TMO) consultation for proposed changes to parking and loading restrictions and timed closure and to enter into a management agreement with PwC/JLL to operate the bollards. Works are expected to start on site in October 2021 and will take around 15 months to complete.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The report seeks approval of £4.640m for the implementation of the proposals identified in this report and WCC funding has been secured for this scheme and is included in the approved Capital Programme.

8.2 Budget provision of £4.680m exists in the current approved capital programme as below:

Financial Year	£ 000
2021/22	£2.100m
2022/23	£2.580m
Total	£4.680m

8.3 Any future maintenance of this scheme will be carried out as part of the Highways maintenance budgets.

9. Legal Implications

9.1 Westminster will enter into an Agreement with Transport for London (TfL) under Section 8 legal Highways Act 1980 for the installation of security bollards on TfL land to protect the Embankment tube station and Villiers Street.

9.2 Westminster will enter into a management agreement with JLL to operate the sliding bollards on Embankment Place and John Adam Street.

10. Conclusion

10.1 Following public consultation and various meetings with stakeholders, the proposed scheme as set out in Appendix C is recommended for implementation on site

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact:

Anju Banga, Programme and Contract Manager

at 07811679242 or abanga@westminster.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

NB: For individual Cabinet Member reports only

For completion by the **Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for City Management**

Declaration of Interest

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

Signed: _____ Date: _____

NAME: **Councillor Melvyn Caplan**

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

.....and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for *City Management*

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:

.....

.....

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 Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Chief Operating Officer and, if there are resources implications, the Director of Human 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.

Appendix A

Other Implications

1. **Resources Implications** – The scheme will require ongoing maintenance arrangements for movable bollards. Access management will be undertaken by third party under a management agreement
2. **Business Plan Implications**
3. **Risk Management Implications** – there are potentially significant reputational and legal risks, if, following a terrorist attack, the Council is not seen to have taken reasonable steps to give consideration to protecting areas of the public realm for which it is responsible.
4. **Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment including Health and Safety Implications** – the scheme will have a beneficial impact on health and wellbeing by improving public safety in Villiers Street. Disruption during any works will be carefully managed so as to minimise negative impacts such as dust and noise.
5. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – reducing vehicular access to Villiers Street has the potential to reduce the opportunities for certain types of crime. Improved public realm and lighting has the potential to help in reducing anti-social behaviour
6. **Impact on the Environment** – no implications
7. **Equalities Implications** – EQIA attached as Appendix D
8. **Staffing Implications** – see paragraph 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 of guide – no implications
9. **Human Rights Implications** – no implications
10. **Energy Measure Implications** – no implications
11. **Communications Implications** – proactive and reactive media messaging should be agreed in advance of the implementation of security measures so as to provide reassurance to the public as to the measures that are being taken to improve public safety and also to avoid unnecessary fear or alarm.

Note to report authors: If there are particularly significant implications in any of the above categories these should be moved to the main body of the report.

Appendix B

- **Public consultation report**

Appendix C

- **General Arrangement drawings**

Appendix D

- **Equality Impact Assessment**