

Date:

Portfolio: City Management & Air Quality

The Report of: Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg

**Report Author and Contact
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1. Key decisions made in the preceding period since my last Policy & Scrutiny report dated 31/05/2023:

- Contract award for the cleansing and maintenance of public conveniences

2. The following report includes my priorities and delivery progress to date:

3. City Management

3.1 King's Coronation

Operation Golden Orb/Kings Coronation was carried out without any issues or concerns. Most of the key highway's assets that were removed have been put back in, apart from two islands. There are ongoing discussions with FM Conway on whether these islands are going to be put back as originally installed or as flush islands. Final costings have yet to be submitted until a decision has been made with the islands. Over 100 operatives across 8 teams from Veolia began working at 3am to cover the event area and procession route in preparation for Saturday. Once the celebrations wrapped up and the crowds departed Whitehall and the Mall, council teams got straight to work on the clean-up operation. By the time they finished, at 6pm, each member of staff on foot had walked about 25 miles, collectively with a total of 300,000 steps taken, covering about 1,500 miles. That equivalent to walking from Land's End to John O'Groats and almost all the way back again. A particular highlight was the sweepers being warmly applauded by the crowds as they completed preparations along Whitehall immediately before the event started.

The team were also responsible for laying and clearing over 50 tonnes of sand on the route ahead of the ceremonial procession. This was laid over metal grates and drain covers along the ceremony route to prevent the horses from slipping as they marched from Westminster Abbey to Buckingham Palace.

3.2 Food Waste Recycling Update

The city-wide roll-out of a food waste collection service has now been completed with nearly 60,000 households having direct access to the service. The team are now working back across the city to contact managing agents at residential mansion blocks which didn't

positively engage with the initial roll-out. The on-street food waste bins in areas where residents could not have a ‘doorstep collection’ have been a particular success and bin collection frequencies have been increased to 2-3 times per week to manage the large quantities of food waste being deposited. Residents have also suggested new locations where on-street bins would be popular and these are being assessed by the team.

Number of properties with access to a kerbside food service	34,678
Number of properties with access to a communal food service	15,920
Number of properties with access to the neighborhood on-street food bin service	9,137
Total	<u>59,735</u>

3.3 Public Conveniences Update

The Automatic Public Toilet in Broadwick Street, Soho, has now re-opened following a complete modernisation of the unit with new fixtures and fittings installed. Compliance checks are also continuing across all public toilet assets, and these will then inform the strategy to modernise public toilets across the city.

3.5 Tree Pits in Westminster

As aligned with our Fairer Westminster vision of community participation, improving the appearance of streets, enhancing biodiversity, and promotion of well-being, officers have been working on guidance for residents regarding community gardening in Tree Pits. We define this as introducing flowers, grasses, or shrubs into existing tree pits on public highway by individual residents or groups of residents. Guidance and examples of community gardening in tree pits is now available on the Council’s website <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/leisure-libraries-and-community/tree-pit-gardening-advice>.

3.6 Dockless Bikes

We have developed the details of the bay network proposed as part of our approach to effectively manage dockless bikes on our streets, proposed for implementation later this Summer.

We have identified some 146 proposed new ‘micromobility bays’ which if/when combined with our existing 68 trial E-Scooter rental bays would represent a proportionate number of controlled bays for users of the current LIME, TIER, DOTT and Human Forest rental e-bikes. We will be discussing the proposed bay network with operators in order to get agreement on the locations and financial contributions from operators.

We will be sharing the details of the proposed network of bays with all Councillors and residents’ groups for their comments prior to the network being implemented.

3.7 Westminster Bus Network Changes

TfL’s substantial Central London Bus Network change was implemented smoothly on Saturday 29 April. The spread of TfL’s on-bus and Bus Stop timetable case Communications notices were patchy in coverage across central London but its website advised prominent

details about the changes and a very effective use of its Oyster card journey records enabled TfL to directly email and text regular passengers on affected services before the changes were made. This latter means of communication has been well received by a wide range of passengers and stakeholders alike.

To date officers have knowingly received no concerns, complaints etc from residents and stakeholders resultant from the Central London Bus Network change even where there are now few instances where a forced change of bus routes is now necessary for a small number of passengers eg for Route 11 passengers from Sloane Square now having to change to route 24 in Victoria for any through journeys to the Strand area etc.

To gauge the outcome of the change on passengers, officers are meeting TfL in early June and a request will be raised to receive its feedback on passenger numbers, whether there are any pinch point bus stop concerns etc. Thereafter, officers will email the independent London Travelwatch organisation to determine if it has any concerns resultant from the recent changes. Any resultant concerns will be raised with Cllr Dimoldenberg.

3.8 Warwick Way and Churton Street Consultation

Warwick Way Town Centre Highways Scheme proposes public realm and accessibility improvement on Warwick Way and Churton Street. An informal public consultation was undertaken for 8 weeks from 15th Dec 2022 to 9th Feb 2023. 717 responses were received, 74.76% are supportive of the Warwick Way proposal and 71.97% are supportive of the Churton Street proposal. Following the consultation outcome and cabinet member’s steer, the main design change will be incorporating two-way cycling into both designs. Once a Stage 2 initial design is developed, a statutory Traffic Management Order (TMO) consultation will be carried out.

3.9 Connaught Village Green

The Connaught Village Green Public Realm Project proposes highway improvements to Connaught Street, Kendal Street and Titchborne Row to improve pedestrian space and accessibility, traffic management, greening, whilst providing space for continued al fresco dining.

A consultation on the current highway design was held between 13th March and 2nd April 2023, including a scheme website, letter drop and drop-in event on Connaught Street. There were 352 responses to the on-line questionnaire over the three weeks, with 302 comments. The overall result was:

Support	188	53%
Oppose	139	40%
Neither support nor oppose	25	7%
	352	

Of the comments in support, the majority (97 comments) centred around the design providing community cohesion, vibrancy, and a safer and more welcoming environment from the increased pedestrian space, seating and planting. People also supported calmer traffic in the vicinity of the scheme with 46 comments seeing this as a positive aspect of the design.

In terms of objection, 84 comments raised the concern about the potential for displaced traffic from Kendal Street onto Connaught Street, Porchester Place as the result of a section of one-way traffic. Most of these comments raised concern of increased safety risk and congestion on Connaught Street, and how existing problems on Connaught Street would be exacerbated by increased traffic.

Officers will develop further the preferred design and in the coming weeks re-engage with stakeholders to alleviate concerns about traffic impacts and promote the benefits that the pavement widening will bring to active travel, pedestrian safety and a more attractive public realm.

3.10 Regent Street

The traffic management order (TMO) for the Temporary Scheme was approved on 6 May 2023, and the traffic order went live on 22 May 2023. The TMO consultation report responded to all the comments received during the statutory consultation. These responses were supported by the data collection and monitoring by WCC, TfL and The Crown Estate (TCE). The data collection and monitoring on the Temporary Scheme will continue, helping to support the design development and engagement process for the permanent solution for Regent Street.

The visioning and objective setting work stream for the permanent scheme for Regent Street is underway. A series of workshops in June with officers from WCC, TfL and TCE will help to plan and shape the forthcoming key stakeholder engagement in July 2023. This process will culminate in a final vision and set of evidence-based project objectives for consideration and approval by the Cabinet Members for the City Management and Air Quality, and Planning and Economic Development in late September.

The Communications and Engagement (C&E) Plan for the project was presented to the Quality Improvement Board on 21 April 2023. WCC will lead all the stakeholder engagement exercises with residents and key stakeholders. WCC and TCE have adopted the “you said, we did” approach so residents and key stakeholders can understand how they have shaped this early stage of the project.

3.11 Proposed Cycle Schemes

The enhanced Cycle Routes Programme includes route development to retain the 11 post-2020/21 temporary routes in a permanent capacity. The routes will be consulted on a location by location basis, starting with the Paddington area in early June, followed by Buckingham Palace Road later that month. Four key temporary routes, Abingdon St, Portland Place, Bayswater Road and Westbourne Terrace have identified for a higher level of intervention due to the high present and future cycling demand. Abingdon St is planned for public consultation in late July 2023.

Cycleway 51, St John's Wood to Marylebone, will go to public consultation in June 2023 having been reviewed against current national cycling standards updated.

Beyond the cycle routes programme, our new two year Cycle Training Contract has been signed and we are to commission a Value for Money study into 'In-housing' our service thereafter; Our Cycle Stands Programme continues to grow and we have commissioned the first ever comprehensive GIS mapping and occupancy survey; We continue to upscale our Residential Cycle Hangars programme; We have launched our trial four site Cargo Bike rental scheme in the north west and in Tachbrook; We continue to work with schools on implementing increased cycle and scooter spaces; We continue to support our Women's Cycle Group and are seeking new locations to grow this scheme, and supported a large display and demonstration stand at the recent Ford Ride London Cycling weekend event at Trafalgar Square.

3.12 C43 Cycleway Update

Public consultation on Cycleway 43 between Hyde Park and Gloucester Place commenced on 15th May. An in-person drop in event was held on Tuesday 23rd May at the Victory Services Club on Seymour St to which over 60 attended and a further online Q&A took place on Tuesday 30th May.

To date, over 300 responses have been received to the online questionnaire and six hard copies have been sent via request. Support for the proposals is currently at 65% with two further weeks to run on the consultation period. Over 70% of respondents identify walking or cycling as their primary mode of transport around Westminster.

From the open text responses, the main issues being raised with the proposals are the proposed modal filter at Stanhope Place and the stepped cycle track (as associated removal of parking) on George Street.

3.13 Dog Fouling Enforcement

Cleaning up dog mess remains a priority for City Inspectors. Since 1 January 2023 however, there have been no fixed penalty notices issued for issues of dog fouling. Two public complaints have resulted in City Inspectors erecting dog fouling warning notices, on Chesham Street, Knightsbridge, and St Michael's Street, Hyde Park. 142 reports have been made by City Inspectors requesting that dog waste be removed.

Little Venice	98
Abbey Road	16
Pimlico South	14
Regent's Park	7
Pimlico North	3
Church Street	2
Hyde Park	1
Knightsbridge & Belgravia	1

4. Air Quality in Westminster

4.1 Air Quality Action Plan

Internal work is progressing on the council's emerging Air Quality Action Plan, to replace the existing 2019-24 AQAP. A public consultation on the new Action Plan is expected to take place in the summer of this year.

4.2 External Funding Award: Clean Air Walking Routes

The council has been awarded £70,000 from Defra's Air Quality Grant programme to deliver the development of a Clean Air Walking routes to support users in reducing their exposure to air pollution in central London. This project is made possible by the ongoing development of the Council's Air Quality Data Platform as part of the Operating System being managed by Digital and Innovation. This will be updated on in the next version of this report.

The City Council is also to commission the 'Footways' organisation to produce a new Westminster digitised map that will encourage residents, commuters and visitors to consider pleasant and quieter walking routes across Westminster. Hard copy maps are proposed to be produced if sufficient funding is identified later this year. Officers are working to ensure the Footways map will greatly complement the clean air walking routes project.

4.3 Anti-Idling in Westminster

Officers continue to work with partners and community groups to discourage idling on the highway. New advisory signage is being considered by the Council's Comms team.

Workshops with Clean Air Bayswater involving managers from NSL, who employ the Marshals who engage with the public regarding idling, are scheduled for the coming weeks. These will help share best practice and help understand local pressures.

4.4 School Streets Programme

The trial School Streets scheme has successfully concluded, and all are now permanently implemented by replacement Traffic Management Order. Seven are currently monitored and enforced using CCTV and the others are not. The success of this trial has led to Cllr Dimoldenberg approving the implementation of five per year over the next two to three years.

4.5 No Mow May

Westminster City Council supported Plantlife's "No Mow May" campaign for the first time this year. This annual campaign calls for gardens and green spaces to not be mowed for an entire month, providing a space for nature to thrive in the height of Spring. We performed a multimedia campaign which involved posters going up in all participating parks, open spaces and housing estates, a press release on our website and ongoing social and e-newsletter content. Videos and photos on location in Westminster performed particularly well with some social posts alone attracting over 12k views. After many positive comments from residents, the Council is now exploring how to continue the campaign to keep on encouraging more biodiversity in the borough