

Meeting: Annual General Meeting
Date & Time: Monday 13th May at 6pm
Location: Sainsbury Wellcome Centre, 25 Howland Street, London, W1T 4JG

Those Present:

Lukas van der Steen (“LVS”) - Principal Policy Officer (Planning) Westminster City Council (“WCC”)
Adam Webber –Principal Policy Officer (Air Quality) WCC
All councillors from West End Ward: Tim Barnes (“TB”), Pancho Lewis (“PL”) and Jonathan Glanz (“JG”).

Executive Committee:

Nick Bailey (Secretary)
Sharon Banoff
Yoram Blumann (Treasurer) (“YB”)
Barbara Corr
Gwilym Harbottle (Membership) (“GH”)
Julia Haythorn
Ian Johnstone
Chris Shaw (“CS”)
Wendy Shillam
Dan Johnson

A total of approximately 40 people representing local business and residents attended the meeting.

1. Welcome and Introduction

Gwilym Harbottle, chair, welcomed those attending and thanked Sainsbury Wellcome Centre for venue and refreshments. He gave a short account of the Forum and its activities over the last year: development of the Neighbourhood Plan (see below), campaigning on local planning issues (primarily the WCC plans for Oxford Street) and improving the Neighbourhood Area (running or supporting projects at Market Place, Holcroft Court, Riding House St and tree planting).

2. Nick Bailey (Neighbourhood Plan)

Nick gave an overview of the draft neighbourhood plan, explaining that we are at the informal consultation stage before the formal consultation. The plan cannot deal with issues such as idling or refuse but the Forum can work on closing streets and establishing delivery consolidation centres and the application of CIL.

After that the consultation it will be necessary to have the plan examined and it will then be put to residents and business rate-payers in a referendum. He gave an overview of its contents (see the full draft on the Fitzwest website [LINK]).

3. Q&A: Forum and Plan

Support and funding for localised greening project on Carburton St. GH suggested the questioner apply for ward funding and it was pointed out that it was possible to obtain damaged products (damaged stock, part opened) from B&Q.

Electric charging points for vehicles and a possible electric tram to facilitate access to bus stops for those with mobility issues. PL mentioned that new lamp post chargers were being introduced for slow charging. JG mentioned a longer term plan for introducing fast chargers to existing car parks and parking areas. LVS said that it was written in the City Plan that any new building must provide electric charging as part of the scheme.

Implementation of Neighbourhood Forum policies. LVS said that WCC was updating policies to improve Forums' involvement. WCC policy will allow neighbourhood plans to interact. TB said Forums should be invited to speak at WCC forums. JG said that all ward councillors supported the Forum.

Time scale for Play spaces. It was pointed out that the Forum has pressed WCC for them. PL said that play streets are being rolled out in smaller schemes, rather than one big scheme.

Delivery by the Forum. CS noted that we need to deliver on what we are consulting the FitzWest neighbourhood members on. The purpose of having the FitzWest neighbourhood plan is to effect the changes we want in our area,

4. Adam Webber ("AW")

AW outline the serious problems and presented on WCC policy on Air Quality in 5 key areas [LINK]:

- # Don't be idle

- Marylebone LEN (Low Emission Neighbourhood)
- Diesel Parking Surcharge
- Oxford Street District
- Schools Clean Air Fund

5. Q&A Air Quality

Maintenance and operation of new buildings. AW acknowledged that WCC's ability to deal with this was not as it should be. There are regulations in place to act as guidance, but they can be ignored and control is lost once the building is occupied. WCC make recommendations where possible.

Consistency of measuring air quality across all wards. AW noted that this was limited by budgets, and WCC often used model data/extrapolation.

Reporting of engine idling to WCC. A resident complained that he had reported idling via the website at least 20 times without effect. TB said WCC was working on a new app-based system to improve reporting with a tracking feature. DJ pointed out that NWECC had introduced single source freight delivery to reduce idling and improve air quality in New Bond Street and there was a plan to do the same in Fitzrovia. Currently there are 40 different companies collecting rubbish and this could be rationalised and reduced.

Monitoring traffic flow. AW said that WCC measures project specific and general traffic flow counts. The trend of pollution is downward. WCC produce annual status reports (available on WCC web site).

Does slow moving traffic cause more pollution? AW said that stop start traffic is the biggest pollutant.

Is there compensation for poor air quality? AW said that a case was going through the EU courts to hold the UK to account for poor air quality.

Air quality issues raised in the Neighbourhood Plan (caused by air conditioning of offices and traffic). Would councillors support this? TB said he supported a borough wide scheme for central delivery. He noted that the boundary roads of Fitzrovia are 'RED ROUTES' (Main Arteries). These are difficult to redirect or reduce traffic flow on.

Anti-idling leaflets. AW said these can be requested online. There was an information pack with stickers and flyers.

6. Elections to the Executive

GH pointed out that in accordance with the constitution, NB, SB and BC were standing down and putting themselves forward for re-lection. In addition, DJ of NSWEC (New West End Company) was standing down Henry Gregg was standing in his place.

The meeting decided to vote for the candidates as a group, rather than individuals. All were re-elected without objection.

7. Accounts

YB presented a copy of the accounts and explained key points. He thanked local Councillors for their support for grants and funding.

8. General

NB thanked ward members for their help, Chris Martin for documentation and planning of FitzWest greening proposals, and Tony Burton for assistance with the draft plan.

9. AOB

No issues raised

10. Close

Meeting closed at 7:45