FOREWORD

CLLR ROBERT DAVIS

In a densely developed place like Westminster, open and green space will always be at a premium. It makes a huge contribution to making urban life and work bearable, both because of the contribution it makes to the quality of our townscape and to the well-being of those living, working and visiting here and because of the often under-appreciated wider contribution it makes to quality of life and the environment.

Our open spaces have many roles. They provide habitats for wildlife, often have wider cultural or historic importance (and some attract millions of visitors for this reason), provide places for sport and play and help people live healthy lifestyles. They also play a vital role in our urban ecology, helping cope with the consequences of a changing climate by helping keep the city cool and help reduce flood risks by allowing surface water to drain away. Many of these benefits arise from spaces even where they are not generally accessible to the general public.

There is one open space – the River Thames – which is truly integral to the City of Westminster. It too serves a range of purposes, including transportation, leisure and tourism.

This booklet deals with policies being proposed by the council to ensure we protect our open spaces and make the most of them. They recognise these spaces as being as much part of the essential urban infrastructure as transport or utilities.

It is particularly important we get these policies right, and I hope this booklet provokes a good response. I look forward to seeing comments on a range of issues so integral to civilised urban life.

Councillor Robert Davis DL
Deputy Leader
Cabinet Member for Built Environment
Westminster City Council
Introduction

This booklet sets out the council’s proposed planning policies dealing with open space and green infrastructure which will be included in the Westminster City Plan. References to “the City Plan” mean the completed local plan, integrating Strategic and detailed City Management policies which will be adopted as a result of the current review process.

Specific policies covered include:

Strategic Policy S35: Open Space and Green Infrastructure Network
City Management policies CM35.1 – New Open Space and Green Infrastructure and Addressing Deficiencies
CM 35.2 – Existing Open Space and Green Infrastructure

Strategic Policy S38 – Biodiversity

Strategic Policy S37 - Westminster’s Blue Ribbon Network
City Management policies CM37.1 – Access Along the Blue Ribbon Network
CM37.2 – Transport on the Blue Ribbon Network
CM37.3 – Development built into or over the Blue Ribbon Network
CM37.4 – Moorings on the Blue Ribbon Network

Other policies relevant to open spaces and green infrastructure can be found in booklets dealing with Basements and Housing: Need, Delivery and Design (already published) and those on Health, Well-being and Personal Safety; Planning and Pollution Control; Design; and Public Realm and Advertising.

We would welcome your views on proposed new policy wording, which is shown as underlined or identified as entirely new policy. Adopted policy is shown in **bold** and is not intended to be altered as a result of this consultation.
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**INSIGHTS**

**OPEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

Westminster has a unique open space and green infrastructure network. The Royal Parks and River Thames form the setting for world famous landmarks such as the Palace of Westminster and Buckingham Palace. Over a half of the City’s open spaces have a heritage designation, with 85 London Squares and 21 English Heritage listed parks and gardens, including the five Royal Parks. Other open spaces also provide vital community resources and relief from the densely built up nature of the city.

Green Infrastructure is a catch-all term applied to the network of green or water spaces and other green features within the urban environment, that together deliver a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits. This infrastructure is essentially either or both ‘green’ in appearance or in function (see page 6). Green Infrastructure includes the “Blue Ribbon Network” of waterways, but excludes solely hard-surfaced public realm.

The NPPF defines Green Infrastructure as: “A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.”

This booklet covers open and green spaces, and the Blue Ribbon Network. Other elements of green infrastructure such as living roofs and walls, and trees also contribute to Westminster’s character. These are covered in the Design Booklet.
OPEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE: FUNCTIONS AND BENEFITS

Westminster’s open space and green infrastructure network delivers a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits. It can increase the attractiveness of the urban environment, and improve people’s amenity, health and well-being. The provision, protection and improvement of parks, play facilities and other green spaces, are central to encouraging more everyday activity.

It can also help to tackle climate change, and improve resilience to a changing climate.


“Green spaces are also known to contribute to the psychological and social well-being of communities, having a positive effect on stress levels, mental health and community cohesion.”

“The various and unique landscapes and open spaces of London are assets that can reinforce a sense of place and of identity, improve health and well-being, boost environmental resilience and make the capital a more attractive and prosperous city”

The council’s Open Space Strategy (2007) identified the City’s open spaces and outdoor play provision. These comprised 172 open spaces, 87 of which had public access; 85 had private access only.

The Strategy applied London Plan standards for access to different types of open space to identify parts of the City deficient in public space. It also identified priority areas for new provision taking into account households without access to private gardens and child densities.

The council is intending to update the Open Space Strategy, and may revise the deficiency and priority areas accordingly to reflect changes in provision and population.

**Legend**

- Proosals Sites
- Areas of Open Space Deficiency
- Priority Areas for Additional Open Space
- Areas of Playspace Deficiency
- Priority Areas for Additional Playspace
- Priority Areas for Informal Play Areas
- Areas of Wildlife Deficiency
- Westminster Boundary

Wildlife deficient areas are those areas more than one km from an accessible Metropolitan or Borough Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.
PRIVATE GARDENS

Private and communal gardens can provide great amenity value, can be of significant biodiversity value and are valuable for natural drainage. They can contribute to local context and character of an area. The gaps in built frontages created by side spaces and gardens provide openness and glimpse views between buildings and across rear gardens.

Westminster’s dense urban environment and high land values mean that there is constant and increasing pressure on available space for living accommodation. Development on or under garden space can compromise the quality and usability of any remaining amenity space or that of neighbouring properties through overshadowing and loss of privacy. The introduction of home offices, garages, studios and outbuildings can also have an impact on the collective value of gardens, particularly in areas with large gardens, such as St John’s Wood.

“Local planning authorities should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens”
National Planning Policy Framework (2012, paragraph 53)

About 77% of Westminster lies within a conservation area. In some areas, private gardens are a key element of the character of the area, such as in St John’s Wood and Maida Vale.

“Boroughs may in their LDFs introduce a presumption against development on back gardens or other private residential gardens where this can be locally justified.”
London Plan (2011) Policy 3.5 Quality and Design of Housing Developments

Loss of garden space is of particular concern in areas of open space deficiency, where even modest development may be considered to have an adverse impact, by itself or considered in terms of cumulative impact.
“The Blue Ribbon Network is multi functional. It provides a transport corridor, drainage and flood management, a source of water, discharge of treated effluent, a series of diverse and important habitats, green infrastructure, heritage value, recreational opportunities and important landscapes and views. The starting point for consideration of development and use of the Blue Ribbon Network and land alongside it must be the water.” *London Plan* (2011)

“The Blue Ribbon Network affords many iconic views. Many buildings and structures adjacent to the Blue Ribbon Network are listed, including the World Heritage Site of the Palace of Westminster and Westminster Abbey.

Water-based recreational opportunities include swimming in the Serpentine and boating on the Thames and canals.

A proposed site for the Thames Tideway Tunnel on Victoria Embankment should reduce the amount of Combined Sewer Overflows into the river Thames and improve water quality.

The Thames Path National Trail is nearly complete in Westminster.

“Around 6.5 million passenger journeys were made on the River Thames during 2011/12.” *River Action Plan TFL*, 2013
RECOMMENDATIONS

OPEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

Open spaces include the Royal Parks; other parks and gardens; the Thames and canals; hard surfaced civic spaces; playgrounds; sports pitches; and green spaces on housing estates.

The Westminster City Plan: Strategic Policies glossary defines the “open space network” as ‘open space’ and ‘green infrastructure.’ The addition of ‘green infrastructure’ and consequent changes reflect this. The City Management policies that follow in this booklet deal with both existing and new open space and green infrastructure. These terms encompass all the spaces in Westminster designated as Metropolitan Open Land.

POLICY S35: OPEN SPACES AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

As well as green open spaces, green infrastructure includes private residential gardens, trees, living roofs and walls, green landscaped areas.

Adopted policy: Westminster City Plan: Strategic Policies S35

Establishing connections between open spaces and green infrastructure can help to ensure local access to green spaces, maximise environmental benefits and enable greater connectivity across the City (particularly by cycling and walking). It also enables coordinated approaches to management.

Adopted policy: Westminster City Plan: Strategic Policies S11

Royal Parks also applies to Westminster’s Metropolitan Open Land, recognised as strategically important open space in the London Plan.

The council will protect and enhance Westminster’s open spaces and green infrastructure network, and will work to develop further connections between them. The council will seek to address existing public open space deficiencies, including active play space deficiency, and current and future open space needs by:

- Protecting and enhancing all open spaces, and their quality, heritage and ecological value, tranquillity and amenity;
- Mitigating additional pressure on open spaces by securing new improved public open space in new developments; space for children’s active play; and seeking public access to private spaces; and
- Securing contributions to improving the quality, ecological value and accessibility of local public open spaces and delivering new open spaces, particularly from under-used land.

Change required to ensure policy reflects likely changes to the use of section 106 agreements as a result of the Community Infrastructure Levy – which may be used to improve or extend Westminster’s green infrastructure.
NEW OPEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Management plans for public space should include how the management arrangements are to be funded, and provide details for tackling crime and anti-social behaviour. Proposals for private management of publicly accessible spaces will be broadly welcomed.

The need to provide public open space will depend on the extent and nature of the development concerned and what is needed to ensure a sustainable development. The space that can be accommodated and is deliverable needs to be considered in each case depending on the circumstances. The Proposals Sites listed in Appendix 1 of Westminster City Plan: Strategic Policies include those where public open space is sought as a preferred use. The large scale major development sites (defined in the Strategic Policies glossary) provide a starting point for considering whether public open space is necessary and achievable on-site.

New public open spaces provided must be supported by funds for appropriate maintenance in perpetuity, secured by conditions in planning permissions, undertakings or agreements.

Private amenity space is also sought for new residential development, see the policy on Housing Quality in the Housing: Need, Delivery and Design booklet.

This can be addressed through provision of new public space or providing public access to existing private space.

The Design Booklet includes a specific policy on incorporating landscaping, living roofs and walls within new development.

The Health, Well-being and Personal Safety Booklet includes a policy on playspace.

Playspace is also sought for larger new residential development schemes providing family accommodation outside the CAZ, see the policy on Housing Quality in the ‘Housing’ booklet.

This Appendix lists the major development sites in the City.
EXISTING OPEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Open spaces are valuable and familiar features of the townscape and it is vital they are protected for their full value and the enjoyment of all. They fulfil a variety of needs for residents, workers and visitors to Westminster and it is important to ensure that no open space of amenity, heritage, townscape, recreational or nature conservation value is lost or its value reduced through development on, over, under or adjacent to it.

Underground structures can diminish the quality of the land above, and can significantly limit and restrict the opportunities for greening at ground level.

The council has identified a number of Tranquil Open Spaces it aims to protect, Policy S32D sets out appropriate noise levels. This is included in the Planning and Pollution Control Booklet.

The Health, Well-being and Personal Safety Booklet includes a policy CM35.2 on playspace.

NEW POLICY CM35.2: EXISTING OPEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

(A) DEVELOPMENT WITHIN OPEN SPACES:

Development on, over or under any open space identified by the council as being of amenity, heritage, recreational or nature conservation value will not be permitted, except where it is demonstrated to be essential to maintaining or managing that land as valuable open space, enabling appropriate enhancement of the open space, and has no adverse impact on:

1. significant designed landscapes, planned estates or street layouts;
2. heritage assets or their settings;
3. ecological value;
4. existing recreational activities;
5. amenity value, and
6. the level of flood risk, particularly beyond the boundary of the site.

The council will encourage proposals that enhance the quality and attractiveness of other open spaces including in particular:

1. improving access to, and accessibility within, open spaces;
2. enhancing their recreational value, interest and diversity for all users;
3. enhancing biodiversity; and
4. ensuring landscape design that is suitably robust and fit for purpose.

(Policy continued on next page)
EXISTING OPEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

NEW POLICY CM35.2: EXISTING OPEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
(Continued)

(A) DEVELOPMENT WITHIN OPEN SPACES (Continued):

Re-development and/or demolition of existing buildings within open spaces will only be permitted where this demonstrably enhances and complements the open space and its context. Any replacement structure must not exceed the footprint area or the height of the existing structure, unless exceptional circumstances making such an increase essential can be demonstrated and it is ancillary or complementary to the use of the space. Replacement structures must be sensitively designed, incorporating living roofs and walls and sustainable urban drainage where appropriate.

Wherever possible, buildings no longer necessary for maintenance of the open space should be removed and their former area returned to open space use.

(B) DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT TO OPEN SPACES:

Development adjacent to any open space must safeguard its appearance and wider setting, and have no adverse impact on:

1. views;
2. the daylight, sunlight and/or microclimate;
3. access to the open space;
4. flood risk, or surface water run-off to or from the open space;
5. amenity value of the open space; or
6. ecological value of the open space.

(Policy continued on next page)
EXISTING OPEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Protection of private residential gardens raise particular issues in Westminster requiring a distinctive policy approach.

See also the retention of undeveloped garden land under proposed policy CM28.7: Basement Development. Policies CM 28.6 - Alterations and extensions (see the Design booklet) and CM41.10 Vehicle Parking (see the Transport booklet) – will also be relevant

This includes green landscaped areas, living walls and roofs and trees.

The Design Booklet includes a specific policy on incorporation of landscaping, living roofs and walls within new development, and a specific policy on trees.

NEW POLICY CM35.2 EXISTING OPEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
(Continued)

(C) PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL GARDENS:

Private residential gardens will be protected from inappropriate development. In particular, development must:

• protect existing garden character, particularly where this contributes positively to the local townscape and the setting of heritage assets;
• protect natural habitats;
• retain sufficient amenity space;
• not occupy a significant proportion of garden land;
• not result in the loss of trees of townscape, ecological or amenity value;
• be subordinate and ancillary to the main dwelling; and
• be sensitively designed, incorporating living roofs and walls and sustainable urban drainage systems where appropriate.

(D) OTHER GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE:

Other existing green infrastructure will be protected and enhanced, or where necessary replaced with a similar amount and diversity of green infrastructure of good ecological value.

Key Question
This does not address the building of a new house in a rear garden as an entirely separate unit. Should we have a policy on this? If so, what should our policy approach be?

“Amount” can refer to number, size or extent. The requirement to maintain “diversity” protects against risk of homogenisation (for example 2m² of vegetation containing a wide range of plant species cannot be replaced with 2m² of a single plant species).

The supporting policy application text in the City Plan will state recommendation from a Competent Ecologist is required. This will ensure green Infrastructure provision is both well-designed and appropriate for the location.

Priorities and choice of plant species improvement or replacement of existing green infrastructure will necessarily be site specific. For example, plant species selected to improve air quality may differ from those selected to be of most benefit to local wildlife.

See also policy CM 14.1 - Housing Quality regarding amenity space provision
It is proposed to move this policy to directly precede S38 Biodiversity in the finalised City Plan.

Minor amendment to make meaning clearer

POLICY S36 SITES OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) will be protected and enhanced. Development proposals, both temporary and permanent, will need to demonstrate that they do not have a detrimental impact on the habitats or populations supported in these sites.

SINCs will be protected and managed for their ecological value as the priority.
Increasing biodiversity is just one of the possible functions of green infrastructure. Green infrastructure now covered in policy S35 and new CM policies, and in a design policy.

**POLICY S38 BIODIVERSITY AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

Biodiversity and green infrastructure will be protected and enhanced throughout Westminster and opportunities to extend and create new wildlife habitat as part of development will be maximised.

Proposals within Areas of Wildlife Deficiency should include features to enhance biodiversity where appropriate, particularly for priority species and habitat.

Where developments would significantly harm an impact on species or habitat, especially where identified in the relevant Biodiversity Action Plan at national, regional or local level, the potential harm should firstly be avoided, secondly be adequately mitigated, or finally appropriate compensation will be sought. Where harm cannot be prevented, sufficiently mitigated against or adequately compensated for. Where these steps do not adequately address the harm involved, permission will be refused.

Developments must identify and minimise potential adverse effects on local flora and fauna. This may include species that are not resident all year round. Where local flora and fauna include Protected and Priority Species and Habitats, developments must ensure their protection and make provision for their ongoing survival, whether they remain in situ or are transferred to newly created sites.

Developments should incorporate design features for biodiversity, drawing on actions set out in Biodiversity Action Plans, the plans of Local Nature Partnerships and those for landscape-scale Nature Improvement Areas, particularly for creation of new habitats and habitat links.

All developments, whether new build or conversion, on or affecting open spaces of 0.5 hectares or more, are expected to create, restore or enhance areas of Priority Habitat, where opportunities exist.

The NPPF states planning policies should promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of Priority Habitats, linked to national and local targets. Opportunities for significant habitat re-creation start with (small-scale) major developments.

Nature Improvement Areas are the Government’s response to the “Ecological Restoration Zones” recommended by the 2010 “Making Space for Nature” report. There are currently 12 in London, the closest to Westminster being Greater Thames Marshes.

Biodiversity Offsetting is currently being piloted across the UK by Natural England. It is not yet known whether losses can be compensated for in a measurable way.
THE BLUE RIBBON NETWORK

POLICY S37 WESTMINSTER’S BLUE RIBBON NETWORK

The Blue Ribbon Network will be protected and improved by:

- Enhancing biodiversity and waterside habitats;
- Protecting and enhancing the character, appearance, heritage and landscape value of the Blue Ribbon Network and its setting; and
- Enhancing the linear qualities of the Blue Ribbon Network, particularly in relation to heritage, landscape and views, biodiversity, and modes of sustainable transport;

and, where consistent with these priorities:

- Improved access for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Use for leisure, sport and education especially for local communities; and
- Water-based transport.

Development alongside the Blue Ribbon Network must address the waterside, with a focus on enhancing the waterside location and improving access to and enjoyment of the waterfront. The provision of water-dependent and waterfront-enhancing uses along the Thames and in appropriate locations along the canals will be encouraged, subject to ensuring there is no adverse impact on residential amenity or the character of the area. Loss of such uses will be resisted.

Developments within the Thames Policy Area will need to demonstrate that they have particular reference to their riverside location and local architectural references, including long views of the riverside.

Water-dependent uses are those which need a waterside location to work, for example boat moorings, piers and watersports centres. These could make use of existing steps, stairs and the purpose-built pier recesses along the Victoria Embankment. Waterfront-enhancing uses are those which attract people to the waterside, for example restaurants and cafes, museums, galleries and parks.

Both types of uses will promote enjoyment of the Blue Ribbon Network for all.

There are parts of the Blue Ribbon Network, particularly those lying outside the Central Activities Zone, in places more residential in character and where potential for these uses will be limited. Vehicular access and servicing sites by the Thames can be difficult as the riverside roads form part of the Greater London Road Network.
THE BLUE RIBBON NETWORK: ACCESS

Pathways along and access to the Blue Ribbon Network can improve public enjoyment of the water.

Paths must be accessible to people with disabilities, appropriately-lit and be of an adequate width.

Improvements such as signing, seating, public art, information boards, planting, safety measures and surfacing may be sought in association with developments.

The council is working with the Canals and River Trust to introduce Legible London, a wayfinding system coordinated by Transport for London (further details are given in the Transport Booklet), along the canal and to adjacent public highway.

To reduce potential conflict between pedestrians and cyclists. The Council will work with the Canal and River Trust on their Alternative Routes Project which seeks to find attractive alternative routes for cyclists that run parallel to the canal.

NEW POLICY CM37.1: ACCESS ALONG THE BLUE RIBBON NETWORK

For sites next to the River Thames or Regent’s and Grand Union Canals:

- Where there is a riverside path or canal towpath, developments will where appropriate be required to extend or improve paths. They must not remove, narrow or adversely affect the existing path or its use. Public access to existing riverside steps and stairs will be maintained.
- Where there is no riverside path or canal towpath, developments will where appropriate be required to provide a public riverside path or canal towpath to an acceptable standard. This should not create boardwalks or other solid or overhanging projections over the river or its foreshore, or the canal.

The council will support improvements to riverside paths and canal towpaths that enhance their convenience, connectivity, attractiveness and safety. Pedestrians will be given priority along Blue Ribbon Network paths and, where consistent with this, the council will support improvements or initiatives that permit and encourage responsible cycling. The council will also support schemes on the highway adjacent to the Blue Ribbon Network providing a safe, direct and viable alternative to the Blue Ribbon Network for cyclists.

Access to the canal towpath or Thames Path from adjacent new developments will be encouraged.

Development along the Blue Ribbon Network will be required to include appropriate safety features on riverside paths or canal towpaths where appropriate.

The Thames Path is a National Trail. There are some stretches of riverside in Westminster where the Thames Path is incomplete. Where opportunities arise next to the Thames, or to the canals, the council aims to increase access to waterside and remove the gaps in linear walking routes.

The Blue Ribbon Network is a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation, and should be protected from cantilevered extensions that could damage its ecology.

Development should be oriented to face the water and provide public access to the waterside.
THE BLUE RIBBON NETWORK: TRANSPORT

NEW POLICY CM37.2: TRANSPORT ON THE BLUE RIBBON NETWORK

The council will encourage the use of the River Thames and Regent’s and Grand Union canals for the transport of passengers, freight, construction spoil and waste, including movement of building materials between waterside suppliers and development sites, and of material/fuel required in connection with biomass energy generation.

The council will oppose any developments involving or promoting greater use of any craft, or the handling of goods, which would cause adverse impacts to the environment or amenity, or environmental nuisance, particularly with regard to noise and traffic congestion.

The City Council recognises the need to protect the waterways and adjoining areas from noise, air and water pollution, and will balance the benefits of waterborne transport against the impacts on the local environment.

Waterways can provide a sustainable mode of transportation. The increased use of the River Thames and canals for the transportation of freight could help to reduce the number of lorries using Westminster’s streets.

Greater use could also be made of the River and canals for carrying construction spoil, although there are no sites in Westminster for landing facilities. The Mayor of London published his "Safeguarded Wharves Review in March 2013, which did not include any sites in Westminster. A potential canalside site was initially considered but not included in the final recommendations because of constraints relating to access, impact on amenity and loss of public open space.

Proposals for transport related structures such as piers will be considered by policy CM37.3

Sustainable transport modes are also supported by strategic policies CS36 Westminster’s Blue Ribbon Network, CS40 Pedestrian Movement and Sustainable Transport, CS42 Major Transport Infrastructure
Use of the Blue Ribbon Network for transport is supported by strategic policies S37, S41 and S43.

Works for water-related infrastructure can help to improve water quality of the Blue Ribbon Network. The National Policy Statement for Waste Water (2012) sets out the justification for the Thames Tunnel project, a sewage collection and transfer scheme. The project will help to reduce and limit pollution necessary to comply with the EU Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (1991), and will contribute towards meeting the EU Water Framework Directive. It is also supported by adopted Strategic Policy S45 Flood-related Infrastructure.

The Blue Ribbon Network provides a respite from the built-up nature of the city, and provides the setting for many historic buildings and landmarks.

Residential accommodation, offices, shops or other non-water-dependent structures will normally not be allowed.

NEW POLICY CM37.3: DEVELOPMENT BUILT INTO OR OVER THE BLUE RIBBON NETWORK

Development that builds into or over the River Thames or its foreshore, or the Regent’s and Grand Union canals, will not normally be acceptable. Transport related structures, projects of strategic importance to London or major water-related infrastructure may be acceptable where an appropriate strategic justification (such as an approved National Policy Statement or support in the London Plan) exists, and subject to appropriate measures to mitigate environmental and amenity impacts.

New or replacement crossings will only be allowed where they:

1. increase or improve pedestrian access, including people with disabilities, and make safe provision for cycle access;
2. are designed to minimise obstruction to:
   i. views across and to maintain the open aspect of the River Thames or the setting and views of a canal; and
   ii. views and setting of heritage assets
3. are of a bulk and height that are appropriate to the location;
4. do not have an adverse impact on land side functions or amenity, and minimise congestion and clutter;
5. do not include non-water-dependent structures; and
6. do not provide new access for motor vehicles.

(Policy continued on next page)
Greater use of the River for transport broadens the choice of transport modes and can help ease congestion elsewhere.

The impact of piers on land side functions include amenity, traffic and parking. Piers should only provide access, and not include development such as cafes.

The Embankment Wall is listed downstream of Westminster Bridge. This means that the Council has a statutory duty to have special regard to its protection. Inappropriate structures for access will be resisted, particularly where this would adversely affect its character and appearance.

The council will consult on development proposals with neighbouring boroughs, English Heritage, the Environment Agency, the Port of London Authority, the Canals and Rivers Trust, Cross River Partnership and transport providers as appropriate in each case.
THE BLUE RIBBON NETWORK: MOORINGS

The riverfront is a finite resource. The number of permanently moored vessels on the Thames must be limited and be of high quality in terms of appearance, in order to protect its character, to protect views, the settings of listed buildings and structures, to ensure that river navigation is unaffected, and to protect the river as a continuous wildlife corridor.

Moorings that encourage more public use of the river, include galleries, exhibition areas or recreation and education facilities. Unacceptable uses include residential, offices and other business uses.

The council will have regard to the National Register of Historic Vessels www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk when considering whether vessels are of national importance.

Inappropriate structures for access, and other ancillary structures such as ticket kiosks, will be resisted particularly where this would adversely affect the character and appearance of the listed Embankment wall.

Given the prominence of Westminster’s riverside, the council will impose conditions to ensure vessels are properly maintained.

The provision of moorings and facilities for boaters on the Regent’s and Grand Union canals will be encouraged in locations where these will not hinder navigation and can be satisfactorily serviced, and where they will not adversely affect the canal environment.

Floating commercial uses, such as offices and hotels, will not be appropriate. Moorings should be against the canal wall, and not extended through the use of pontoons. Suitable locations for moorings are at Paddington Basin, Little Venice and Lisson Grove.

PROPOSALS FOR PERMANENTLY MOORED VESSELS ON THE RIVER THAMES WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED WHERE THEY:

1. are open to the public and help them to enjoy the river, including people with movement or sensory impairments;
2. are of national importance, having some special association with Westminster or the Thames or some special maritime interest, and whose external appearance is retained as far as possible in its original condition;
3. do not compromise views of the river and the setting of heritage assets;
4. do not jeopardise the long term use of existing purpose-designed pier recesses for their original purpose;
5. have an external appearance that enhances the character and appearance of the riverside; and
6. do not hinder navigation.

Relocation of permanently moored vessels from the purpose-designed pier recesses will be welcomed, as this will enable the pier recesses to be used for their original purpose.
This booklet is part of the informal consultation for developing the statutory policies in Westminster’s local plan. It builds on previous consultation on the City Management Plan. Further information can be found at westminster.gov.uk/planning-policy.

This booklet only includes the proposed policy. However, Westminster’s local plan will include supporting text based on text within this booklet. This includes:

- Introductory text, setting out the background to the topic.
- Policy application: guidance as to how the policy will be applied, including details of how things will be measured or calculated etc.
- Reasoned justification: this is an explanation required by law to accompany a policy, setting out why a policy is applied.
- Glossary definitions: the statutory definitions used for terms that are included in the policies.

If you wish to discuss the issues raised in this booklet, please telephone 020 7641 2503.

To comment on anything in this booklet, please email planningpolicy@westminster.gov.uk or write to us at:

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Your comments will form part of the statutory record of consultation and will be made available on our website and to the public. Your contact details will not be made available, but we will use them to stay in touch with you about future policy development. If you do not want us to stay in touch, please let us know in your response.

Reading List

London Plan (2011) Mayor of London
National Planning Policy Framework (2012) Department for Communities and Local Government
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)