

WORKSHOP 11: WELLBEING

Wednesday 5th August 2009, 17th Floor, Committee Rooms 6&7 Westminster City Hall

Chairman: Councillor Summers

Facilitator: Lisa O'Donnell

Officer Panel: Helena Merriot, Sara Dilmamode, Mike LeRoy, Mike Chatten

1. Should we do more to provide better access to healthy food for example:
• By restricting the concentrations of A5 uses – hot food takeaways within district centres (setting a percentage threshold and preventing clustering) and/or supporting proposals for these uses in close proximity (400m) of schools, youth facilities and parks?

Simon Birkett
(Knightsbridge
Association/
Campaign for Clear
Air)

Keep hot food takeaways out of residential areas

Cllr Bush

Keeping these away from schools is sensible, but in terms of residential areas it is in a way better to encourage shop keepers to clear away / better management.

Liz Frimstone
(Chairman of
Cathedral area
residents group and
representative for
Victoria Interchange
Group)

This is a significant issue for residents – it is the smell more than anything. There is a need for stricter conditions on this.

• Do you support the continued use of UDP policy SS 6. This policy protects retail centres from a concentration of non-retail units (this includes A5 uses) in any individual frontage or parade?

Comments from
attendees

• How can we support existing / new street markets that provide opportunities for people to access to affordable fresh food?

Matthew Bennett
(Soho Society)

In the case of Berwick Street market this has declined due to the growth of supermarkets providing good food and veg. The problem is that the lack of good facilities (in the market) they can't provide special meats and cheeses because they are unable to keep fresh. In order to provide a wider range the quality of stalls needs to be improved. Consideration should be given to making them permanent. On the continent quality of markets reflects the quality of the facilities.

Cllr Bush

Agrees with above comments but also comments on the importance of good signage.

Peter Bourne
(Crown Estates)

Support street markets but not individual traders, such as those found on Oxford Street. These isolated pitches should not be supported.

Liz Frimstone
(Chairman of
Cathedral area
residents group and

In Tachbook street we have a good fish stall but the market suffers from a lack of infrastructure. It has to be recognised that continental markets are in close proximity to sources. Also, it is important that the council does not harass stallholders with petty rules. This will

representative for Victoria Interchange Group))	help them survive.
Margot Bright (Westbourne Park Villas)	There are examples of other markets without the infrastructure that manage very well – e.g. Portobello Road in Kensington and Chelsea.
Simon Birkett (Knightsbridge Association/ Campaign for Clear Air)	Kensington and Chelsea have a successful market in Bute Street and we should contact them to find out more information.
<p>• Where appropriate should we require community gardens in some new developments or contribute towards provision elsewhere in the vicinity?</p>	
Matthew Bennett (Soho Society)	In new housing development in the CAZ there are lots of terrace – open spaces and roof gardens which could be used. These hard spaces could be designed to provide roof gardens. Even proper window boxes may contribute.
Liz Frimstone (Chairman of Cathedral area residents group and representative for Victoria Interchange Group))	Yes, we should have more of them. Churchill Gardens are splendid.
	Nods from several attendees in support
<p>2. Do you support the continued use of existing policy DES 1 part (B) ? Should this be supported with a more detailed set of set of counter terrorism design principles and other aspects of safety to create safer buildings and public realm? See Appendix 1 for more information</p> <p>• Are there specific counter terrorism measures that you think should not be incorporated into developments in Conservation Area?</p> <p>• Strengthening our working relationships with Crime Prevention Design Officers.</p> <p>• Other safety measures – Should we have specific design measures to improve river safety and road safety to reduce the number of annual accidents.</p>	
Cllr Lewis	I am currently chairing a task group looking at design principles for Crime in residential locations. Work has already been undertaken successfully in Mozart estate. Fundamental point is about lesson learnt – what have we learnt about what will be the most appropriate response. The task group is trying to draw up firmer conclusion and are looking for help potentially from academics at Westminster University. A key issue is about defining space – there needs to be clear ownership over spaces.
Gordon Semple (Crime Prevention Design Officer)	Westminster has worked hard with the police in the area of antiterrorism (versus anti-social behaviour). More input is required with the National Council on Terrorism and Protection of National Infrastructure agencies.
Matthew Bennett (Soho Society)	Public urination is a real pain. Better lighting in darker corners might deter some.
David Pullan (Crime Prevention	Convincing the MPA that Crime Prevention Design work is of value is a difficult job. Support from the council is important and valuable.

Design Officer)	
Katheryn Smale (Westminster City Council)	We already have a sophisticated neighbourhood approach around crime reduction and fear of crime issues including detailed statistics and analysis. This existing work should be the driver
Road Safety	
David Pullan (Crime Prevention Design Officer)	Bus lanes are a particular issue for tourist both in contraflow lanes but also when just looking in the wrong direction. An early warning mechanism would be helpful
Simon Birkett, (Knightsbridge Association/ Campaign for Clear Air)	There should be a 20mph speed limit in residential areas
Liz Frimstone (Chairman of Cathedral area residents group and representative for Victoria Interchange Group))	There are plans for a contraflow bus lane in Victoria which will be dangerous. There are also issues with crossing times which are too short at present for the young and elderly people and those with disabilities.
Simon Birkett (Knightsbridge Association/ Campaign for Clear Air)	On Brompton Road the traffic light bulbs blow frequently so all the wait signs are unclear for pedestrians. Area is known for high accident rate.
Teresa Kearney (Portman Estate)	Concern about short crossing times on Portman Street.
Brigadier Noel Nagle (The Knightsbridge Association and Chairman of Neighbourhood Watch)	Near the Albert Hall there is a narrow street with a nursery on it. We have tried for traffic calming measures but were refused and are concerned about criteria used by Westminster – advice was that it would only be considered if any children were killed or injured.
Cllr Bush	Safe cycling must be a consideration – a solution needs to be found.
Unknown Resident from Ashley Gardens	If cyclist not pottering they're on pavement and the old and young suffer. There is no interest from the Police or Community Support Officers.
River Safety	
Liz Frimstone (Chairman of Cathedral area residents group and representative for Victoria Interchange Group))	Don't jump in!
3. Do you agree that gating public streets or permitting gated communities should generally be resisted? Are there any circumstances where gated communities should be allowed? What criteria should be applied to these schemes?	
Simon Birkett	It should only be a last resort but the policy should not stop this

(Knightsbridge Association/ Campaign for Clear Air)	entirely in appropriate circumstances
Margot Bright (Westbourne Park Villas)	[They may be appropriate] to protected pedestrians and cyclist it is anti-social to have traffic speeding along so children can't play.
Liz Frimstone (Chairman of Cathedral area residents group and representative for Victoria Interchange Group))	Can foresee more demand unless more robust policies are put in place to maintain a quiet amenity and control noise, light and smells. We live close to a day care centre with 32,000 visits per year leading to an increase in anti-social behaviour. Suggest a thinning out of welfare services to avoid concentration. If these issues are not addressed there will be an increased demand; this would be regrettable.
Gordon Semple (Crime Prevention Design Officer)	We have always been about permeability but as a last resort after all crime reduction measures have been considered they may have a role. Avenue Gardens Estate in North Westminster is a good example.
Cllr Audrey Lewis	This is part and parcel of the task force. It is a particular issue where ownership is unclear. In parks there is a regulated defensible space – the other side of this is open space definition. People need to instinctively know the nature of the area.. the rules and regulations that govern the space.
Derek Howard-Budd (Ashley Gardens RA)	They send a message that there is no control e.g. you have such development in places like Manilla where there is no control. There is an example on Warwick Street
4. Do you consider that for reasons of health and wellbeing the council should restrict amusement arcades and betting shops?	
Liz Frimstone (Chairman Cathedral area residents group and representative for Victoria Interchange Group))	These must be controlled it is gambling. One response is to not allow bright and glamorous frontages or coffee bars. Keep them "seedy" and in minority use.
5. Should we require developers to submit an emissions reduction strategy linked to floor space of the development, as part of an air quality assessment to be paid for by the applicant?	
6. How can we better integrate air quality considerations into the design and construction of buildings to ensure it is an initial consideration in any planning application?	
7. Should planning obligations be sought to abate or reduce air pollution? In what circumstances would it be appropriate and how could an appropriate tariff be identified?	
Simon Birkett (Knightsbridge Association/ Campaign for Clear Air)	Before turning to the detailed question and micro issue it is useful to look at the macro issues: (1) I have sent 65 suggested measures to deal with Air Pollution to the Mayor and Westminster (2) Important there is no biomass burning on the gas grid to avoid a great smog. (3) The Clean Air Act – it is important to ensure that planning

	<p>and environmental health are joined up.</p> <p>(4) Application of guidance on construction is something that the city signed up to. This (non vehicular) machinery is responsible for 20% of dangerous particles emissions</p> <p>(5) Westminster should make a public commitment to achieve compliance with the limit values. There is a significant disjunct between the standards the government is requirement to meet and the standards that Westminster and the Mayor are working towards.</p>
Margot Bright (Westbourne Park Villas)	In a busy transport corridor like the Westminster railway where levels are already exceeded more stringent amelioration measures are required,
Simon Birkett (Knightsbridge Association/ Campaign for Clear Air)	These laws are there to prevent danger to public health. Even if the UK gets a time extension on its targets from 2010-15 a condition is to keep below 60mg a condition of which means (referring to the maps) changing the dark brown strips to orange. There are around 3000 premature death per annum due to air borne particles. On average these people are dying 10 years early. This needs to be looked at in perspective and considered in the council's air quality strategy.
Councillor Bush	I note that there is nothing about air quality in the "what you told us" section of the briefing note. Developers need to be thinking about this at an early stage
Peter Bourne (Crown Estate)	Surprised by the degree of pollution from gas boilers – could this be a planning condition.
<p>8. Should we introduce additional measures/design guidance to reduce light pollution for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prevent flood lighting on certain buildings and conditions. • Establish design guidance to limit light pollution for exterior lighting units similar to that detailed by the Institution of Lighting Engineers? 	
Liz Frimstone (Chairman Cathedral area residents group and representative for Victoria Interchange Group))	<p>Residents are significantly affected particularly by offices with large footplates. We need the working regimes to take the issue of lighting into the evening and night seriously. This is causing a significant level of harassment.</p> <p>Cardinal Place have toned it down we are unclear about Selbourne House. I hope the message is going out to developers locally. That this is a serious problem for residents and is also affecting bird life.</p>
Cllr Bush	Also need to look at the impact of street lighting. The safer neighbourhood police say they are looking to get night as bright as day – but there are issues around this effecting residents sleep.
Cllr Summers	Just to reiterate this point when new lighting went in the response was not this will help reduce crime rather it brought a high level of complaints.
<p>9. Should we change our current policy approach to contaminated land?</p>	
Comments from attendees	No Comment
<p>Noise Pollution</p>	

10. The UDP requires WHO guidelines to be met in residential development; these are 35dB LAeq16 indoors during the day and 30dB LAeq8/ 45dBLAMAX during the night. A consequence of these guidelines is that it is very difficult to provide residential in some locations. Are there locations in the city where this requirement should be applied more flexibly? If so, how can we ensure development incorporates adequate protection against noise?

No comments.

11. Should there be additional controls on plant and machinery on the basis of noise pollution and other adverse environmental effects? For example, should there be general presumption against air conditioning, in particular for residential properties or listed buildings and what, if any, would be the exceptions? For example only accept units located over a set distance of operable windows in residential properties.

Liz Frimstone
(Victoria Interchange Group)

Residential noise should be restricted.

Brian Woodham (St James's Conservation Area Trust)

In St James there has been a 5 year case. WHO standards are illogical 10 decibels below. Increasing noise levels is a curse a mechanism to reduce should be put in place. New air conditioning units will have an impact on noise levels.

Matthew Bennett
(Soho Society)

Not all parts of the city are same. In some areas like Soho people need to realise they are not living in a quiet area. There needs to be a trade off. People can put up with some noise pollution. But in some areas windows cannot be opened due to noise levels. However residents do not want streets closed off. There is a need for balance

Liz Frimstone
(Victoria Interchange Group)

At night 'Party Animals' are the worse. The Noise Strategy promotes the concept of tranquil areas. This concept and labelling areas in this way is a break through for residential areas. Conservation Areas should be designated in this way. This way will ensure that the sensitive townscape of these areas is protected.

Mike Le Roy
(Environmental Policy Manager Westminster City Council)

The origins of this approach come from the European Noise Directive. These tranquil areas relate to open spaces, as they provide respite from the dense urban area. Areas of tranquillity are for the protection of Conservation or residential areas.

Cllr Bush

More should be done to tackle to the source of noise pollution. The Planning Sub Committee should take a stronger stance on air conditioning units which create noise. Why are these required in so many schemes could more be done to reduce the number in developments

Liz Frimstone
(Victoria Interchange Group)

Noise limits should be set on these air conditioning units. Units deteriorate over time. Are these units maintained, they should be checked regularly.

Margot Bright

Priority should be to tackle areas which are already noisy. Great Western Road and densely populated parts of Bayswater. The noise levels in this area mean that you should not be able to build new residential units in these locations. Concerned as legislation seeks to improve and build new transport projects. Not sure Westminster is addressing the noise issues around these new

	transport projects. Concern also relates to railway projects as well.
Liz Frimstone (Victoria Interchange Group)	The Inspectors views in the report following into the Victoria Station public inquiry gave no support to residents relating to noise. The Council did not support residents. We wanted to reduce noise levels. We feel the contractor appointed to do the works was the cheapest not the best at mitigating noise levels. 20 decibels was the level of noise for the area – Margot Bright – That’s huge! The Noise Strategy is not yet included in Westminster’s policy approach when it is there will be a big difference.
Simon Birkett, (Knightsbridge Association/ Campaign for Clear Air)	Air quality and noise strategy need to be aligned. Limiting building work between 8 – 6 pm also a noise blanket is required at the weekend. There needs to be a further step change. Noise levels from construction sites should be licensed. Also helicopters fly around at night waking people up. These issues can and should be reported through the noise line so they can be monitored. Enforcement conditions on air conditioning units, however it is noted that this will take forever. On construction sites equipment is not being use correctly. Workers are using power saws for stone work without water or shields, which increases the noise levels also these workers are not wearing ear or eye protection. Dust also has a negative impact on the wellbeing of workers.
Michael Voggenauer	The Council did very little to help on the Victoria Transport Interchange application. We have had a meeting with Cllr Astaire with regards to Noise Abatement Zones. Westminster City Council did seem to like the approach. Rupert Taylor advocate raised these zones in his evidence at the select committee. This was raised again 2 years ago however there is a lot of bureaucracy surrounding this approach. Suggest Westminster designates a small noise abatement zone as a test. These zones should be used in residential areas.
Liz Frimstone (Victoria Interchange Group)	As we are in the middle of an economic downturn this is the opportunity to create tighter planning regulations. Development currently feels like it comes to the end, thankfully for residents. Developers have done well in the past; we are not allowed to let noise levels get this loud again. This is the opportunity now to try out a new policy approach, get the framework in place ready for developers to start building again.
Lisa O’Donnell	There should be some criteria for nursing homes? What alternatives there are in light of the urban heat island problem in Westminster?
Simon Birkett, (Knightsbridge Association/ Campaign for Clear Air)	There should be some criteria for nursing homes. Not sure what alternatives there are to the urban heat island problem in Westminster.
Matthew Bennett (Soho Society)	In reality the answer is to apply technologies which do not intensify the effects of climate change. These technologies will be required to improve the quality of life of people. Intense periods of heat will follow. We should never have sought air conditioning in flats. People should stop being so selfish. There are many examples in

	St James I passed a man driving a Rolls Royce whilst on a mobile phone. There needs to be an attitude shift by people.
Cllr Bush	There needs to be a big push in designing spaces without air conditioning. This would meet the needs of vulnerable groups in care homes.
12. Where permitted, the current UDP requirement is for new plant to demonstrate that maximum noise emissions will be 10dB-15db below the minimum background noise levels in areas exceeding WHO guidelines and 5-10dB where noise levels do not exceed WHO guidelines. Should these standards be carried forward into the City Management Plan? Should there also be a requirement be made for post completion testing to be paid for by the applicant to ensure the maximum emission standards are achieved?	
Lisa O'Donnell	Should developers report back on maintenance regimes in the longer term?
	No comments
13. Should noise standards be changed/and/or enhanced by specific policy requirements on site layout and other broader acoustic measures for example:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting the quieter rears of properties; • requirements for residential development, when part of mixed use developments, be located and oriented to the quietest part of the site; • introduction of specific measures to limit noise intrusion in open spaces which provide areas of relative tranquility, such as parks, public squares and their environs? 	
Liz Frimstone (Victoria Interchange Group)	Hierarchy of needs including hospitals. Offices should have windows that open.
Margot Bright	Hierarchy regarding the mitigation of noise pollution. Non residential uses should front onto streets.
Liz Frimstone (Victoria Interchange Group)	Planning briefs play an important role working with communities to resolve these issues. This site layout requirements are important, separation created by mixed use schemes can lower noise levels. Noise shadows and important as I learnt when I worked in Newham.
Matthew Bennett (Soho Society)	In some cases housing should not be provided on site, examples include a public house or a café. People will be outside smoking and talking this would have a negative impact on residents upstairs who have their windows open. The location of development is important. The City Management Plan plays an important role in identifying criteria to prevent impacts on residential amenity.
Lisa O'Donnell	The City Management Plan will also provide the criteria for land use swaps.
Margot Bright	Flat single aspect flats with natural ventilation would help to overcome these issues.
14. How can we better integrate noise quality considerations into the design and construction of buildings to ensure it is an initial consideration in any planning application?	
Simon Birkett, (Knightsbridge Association/ Campaign for Clear	Through a new set of policies on noise pollution, ensuring that large scheme take into consideration noise criteria. These could be linked to service agreements.

Air)	
Margot Bright	This is a very specialist area, very few people around are experts on noise issues. Rupert Taylor is an expert in this area. Air conditioning equipment should be subject to a certification process. Owners of any faulty air conditioning units should face a penalty.
Simon Birkett, (Knightsbridge Association/ Campaign for Clear Air)	Next years EU law will require step free access to be applied. The City Council will need to apply these principles. Flooding of Victoria drains is another important issue currently drains cannot support the amount of flood water. Those that suffer the most are people who live adjacent to busy roads. Living in Westminster creates high noise level, there needs to be a balance between the needs of residents, workers and visitors. The Council's policies need to meet the needs of all residents.
	Agreement and nods of agreement from several people.
Liz Frimstone (Victoria Interchange Group)	People are bothered by noise and dust. Regularly new buildings get pulled down. We have no sympathy for the loss of Victoria stock. It is important to stop pulling down building that could be re used. Often these are just pulled down to make room for more shopping.
15. Are there any other issues that have not been covered above?	
16. Are there issues that the Council should be aware of in its lobbying process?	
Liz Frimstone (Victoria Interchange Group)	VAT / TAX regime relating to demolition and incentives for refurbishment. London Underground signs should not be illuminated these make a contribution towards creating heat islands in Westminster.
Other questions	
END	