

Dear Resident,

Thank you for contributing to our various consultations on decisions affecting our local area, especially if you attend South Area Forum meetings. Set out below are reports from last month's Forum meeting, and further information on these workshops and ward budgets is available by contacting our Area Forum Team or visiting www.westminster.gov.uk/neighbourhoods

The Big Green Agenda

Our Energy Manager told us that:

- Westminster's average home produces 5.3 tonnes of carbon. The government aims to have an 80% reduction by 2050.
- It was explained that as 90% of the homes within Westminster are flats, long term decisions must be made by local communities, perhaps using combined heat and power (CHP) in order to improve energy efficiency for all.
- Simple ways to reduce energy usage and bills today include turning down the thermostat by 1%, boiling only as much water in a kettle as needed, not leaving appliances on standby, installing energy efficient bulbs.

Our Biodiversity Officer also attended the forum to talk about the habitats and species of conservation concern in Westminster and provide tips to help improve wildlife.

We will take forward your suggestions to contact land owners regarding bee hives, investigate the Belgrave Road area to identify the reason why the wildlife is thought to be diminishing and pass on a query to the Arboriculture Team related to street tree health in Pimlico. For more information about wildlife in Westminster please visit www.westminster.gov.uk/wildlife

In our Recycling Workshop residents asked questions about recycling services including what can and can't be recycled. Interest was expressed in new services including food waste collection services and doorstep recycling other materials including tetrapak and other plastics. For answers to your questions about recycling services, including what can and can't be recycled visit www.westminster.gov.uk/waste; email recycling@westminster.gov.uk telephone 020 7641 2000 or write to Recycling Team, Waste and Parks, 8th Floor North, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

London Mayor's Transport Strategy

The Mayor's Transport Strategy was published in spring this year, and we will begin to develop the Local Implementation Plan (LIP). The LIP will set out Westminster's transport needs over a five year period beginning 2011. Concerns at the Forum included: parking, illegal riding of cycles on footways, pros and cons of the Mayor's Cycle Hire Scheme, proposed removal of the Congestion Charge Western Extension zone and impact on residents' discounts, and the need to better regulate road works. We will ensure that your views are fully taken into account when work commences on the LIP. For more information contact: hbrennan@westminster.gov.uk or acoley@westminster.gov.uk.

Value for Money

We sought your views on the Council's approach to value for money. You stated that value for money is getting the best competitive price for each contract and keeping costs low without compromising service quality. Some recent examples of improving value for money include the Council's reorganisation which reduced 220 back office jobs and vacancies, and a new cleansing contract which will save costs and improve service quality. The tightening of public finances will be a key challenge this year. Westminster currently has the second lowest council tax in the country and we have a 3 year financial plan to ensure we have enough money to provide a good service. The

Council currently provides over 150 legally prescribed services and discretionary services to residents, businesses and visitors.

You asked about services provided to help people during the recession under the Westminster Economic Recovery Plan. For more information on the Council's services and approach to value for money please see: The A-Z of services, Westminster Reporter, Annual Statement of Accounts and www.westminster.gov.uk/beattherecession

The Work of CivicWatch and Safer Neighbourhoods Teams

Along with our police colleagues we explained the work of the CivicWatch process in reducing crime and disorder within local communities. We have passed on the details of those who expressed interest in being involved in the Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel and Neighbourhood Watch to the local police team. If you would like to report any non emergency low level disorder please use the Metropolitan police's non urgent contact number on **0300 123 12 12**. In an emergency or if a crime is currently taking place always call 999.

Drug and Alcohol

Our Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) asked for your thoughts on the proposal to open an addiction counselling service for recovering drug and alcohol users on 2 Old Queen Street. You raised concerns about both the potential impact on the immediate vicinity, and the amount of support services in the Victoria area. Once the planning application is submitted and the application is made public DAAT will be in contact with residents who wish to provide formal feedback.

£100,000 for your Area – Ward Budget Updates

Churchill councillors have funded yoga classes, equipment for the Christmas lights on Pimlico Road and a greenhouse and seating for the local gardening club.

Knightsbridge & Belgravia, the Hyde Park senior playground is due to be opened in March and work will begin over the next few weeks on the double yellow lines in Knightsbridge.

Tachbrook councillors have funded equipment for the Lillington and Longmoore mini-fitness centre and jiu jitsu mats for classes starting after Easter.

Vincent Square councillors are supporting free day trips for older residents, an inter-generational community history project around the Millbank Estate and a tree planting event to celebrate Vincent Square's bi-centenary.

Warwick councillors funded improvement works at Abbots Manor nursery, the setting up of a Business Watch in Warwick Way, Safer Neighbourhoods lanyards for residents of Glastonbury House and anti-loitering devices on utility boxes on Longmoore Street.

To find out which electoral ward you are in visit www.westminster.gov.uk/wardfinder or contact the team.

Your next South Area Forum

I look forward to welcoming you to the next South Area Forum on Tuesday 25th May 2010, from 6.30-8.30pm, agenda and venue to be confirmed. For more information, please contact the Area Forums team using the contact details on the front page of this letter.



Cllr Angela Harvey
Chairman of the South Area Forum

Contact your ward councillors by calling 020 7641 2322 or email:

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tachbrook@westminster.gov.uk vincentsquare@westminster.gov.uk warwick@westminster.gov.uk