
South – 11th May 2011

Ward Budgets

Councillors are currently seeking ideas about how to spend this year's ward budgets. If you would like to find out about how ward budgets were spent last year, please go to www.westminster.gov.uk/wardbudgets To find out which electoral ward you are in, please visit www.westminster.gov.uk/wardfinder or contact the team.

Suggestions can be emailed to areaforums@westminster.gov.uk.

Customer Services

Jan North and Rob Henchy, Customer Services

Jan North explained that the One Stop Shop in Victoria is closing in September and asked for residents' opinions on the plans to relocate. A pilot scheme is taking place at Pimlico Library and a potential service is being considered for Churchill Gardens Estate Office.

Q: Where will residents from Knightsbridge go for their service?

A: To Pimlico Library. The scheme may also be widened to all libraries eventually.

Q: Will there be cashiers in libraries?

A: The intention is for cash and cheque payment for services to be available in locations across the City. The City Council is the middle of procuring a 3rd party provider to deliver this service. Online transactions will be needed in the new "Your One Stop" locations

Q: It is the local knowledge that is valuable - some Westminster call centres are in Scotland. Some people prefer a face-to-face service as they find it easier.

A: It is better to address why people need to go to the One Stop Shop than to give a service in alternative locations, Improving services online will save people a journey. The council is looking at what services people need and allowing services from the One Stop Shop to be delivered at more places across the City so it is more convenient rather than being a One Stop service and in 3 locations.

Q: Is this about saving money?

A: To some extent, but it is also about putting services in to local buildings, such as libraries. Research has shown that not many people in the South of the borough go to the One Stop Shop on Victoria Street.

Q: What staffing and resources will the new service have?

A: This is not confirmed yet as the council is still working on service standards, such as use of the telephone and internet, to change the way the council delivers services. A freephone will be available in the libraries where residents can contact the council. Staff in libraries are already trained to deliver customer services and council information.

Q: The staff in the One Stop Shops are currently not specialists and the council needs to ensure that residents have access to specialist knowledge.

A: Agreed. However, some council forms that need specialists to assist in completing them are to be rewritten to make them better and easier to fill in without help.

Q: What will happen to the premises on Victoria Street?

A: These are leased so will go back to the landlord.

Changes to the NHS

Tom Stevenson, Head of Public Affairs for the Inner North West London Primary Care Trust, told you about the changes the Health and Social Care Bill would make to the NHS.

The government is planning to abolish Primary Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities. The work they do to commission services will be transferred to groups of GP practices called consortia and local authorities will take on their public health function. This new public health role for council's includes health promotion – campaigns to reduce smoking, promote healthy eating and increase exercise as well as health protection – dealing with outbreaks diseases like flu. Local authorities will also be responsible for establishing Health and Wellbeing Boards, which will be led by councillors and should increase the accountability of decision making.

To support the development of GP consortia and manage the transition until their abolition, the PCTs have grouped together within North West London. Westminster will be in a sub-cluster with Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham. This makes sense as the PCTs in these areas already do a lot of joint working. The three boroughs have similar populations and face similar health problems. There are four approved pathfinder GP consortia in the sub-cluster area. One will serve most of Hammersmith and Fulham, one will serve all of Kensington and Chelsea and some parts of North West Westminster, one will serve central Westminster and the Victoria Commissioning Consortium will serve south Westminster.

The government has paused progress on the Health Bill to hold a listening exercise. The Westminster Local Involvement Network is hosting an NHS listening event and you would be welcome to attend to find out more about the changes and ask how they will affect you.

The event is on Tuesday 17th May from 2:30-5pm at:

St Anne's Church
Soho
55 Dean Street
London

W1D 6AF

For more information visit the Westminster LINK website at <http://www.westminsterlink.org.uk/>

Resident: Will these reforms mean some GP surgeries will close?

TS: There is no intention to affect front-line services. However, the reforms will open up patient choice and people will no longer face restrictions on which practice they will register with. If a surgery loses a large number of its patients, closure may be a possibility.

Resident: What proportion of GPs in Westminster have signed up to the consortia?

TS: All GP surgeries have signed up to one of the four consortia, apart from two in Hammersmith and Fulham and two in Westminster. This is a strong indication of support in the three boroughs, although individual GPs will have differing opinions.

Resident: Will the reforms mean more admin work for GPs and therefore less time with patients?

TS: GPs will take the lead in determining what services are needed for their communities. However, the reforms are not asking them to become accountants or managers. There will still be back office staff to deal with this and consortia will employ staff to manage with administrative side of the work.

Tachbrook Market

Overview

Council officers suggested that the main issue concerning Tachbrook market was a lack of footfall. They sought ideas from residents about how to make the market more popular.

Issues

Residents raised a number of concerns with the market.

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- Overall quality
 - Lack of variety of sellers
 - Difficult to know on which days sellers would be present
 - Appearance of the market
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Residents wanted good quality stalls at the market, and a variety of stalls. They complained about "Mr Spicy" who many thought did not fit in with the general ethos of the market, but council officers argued that he had one of the most popular stalls.

Council officers also said that they were unable to keep a number of high quality sellers because they had not proved popular enough to sustain.

Council officers said they would be putting up signage to inform people which sellers were present on particular days.

Residents requested more chairs at the market for people to sit on when the weather was nice. Council officers agreed.

Most residents were happy with the appearance of the market but one in particular was very vocal about the colour scheme and general atmosphere calling it "completely unexciting." Council officers said they would be adding a mosaic or mural to the street.

Conclusion

Some useful points were raised but conversation became a bit circular both times as residents complained about quality of stalls and officers said they needed to increase footfall to keep stalls.

Parking Policy Review

Cllr Lee Rowley, Cabinet Member for Parking and Transportation
Barry Smith, Operational Director City Planning, Built Environment
Hugh Brennan, Principal Transport Planner, City Planning, Built Environment

The findings of the Westminster Parking Policy Review 2010-11 recommendations were gone through and discussed. Barry Smith alerted the Workshop to the 9th May Cabinet report and Background Papers/research reports and informed attendees that the consultation on the Cabinet's recommendations had begun informally and that it would close on 23rd June. He then informed them that a report would go back to Cabinet in July recommending final policy proposals for implementation. Cllr Rowley confirmed that the Review was about controlling and managing traffic, and not about raising revenue.

Barry Smith referred to the eight draft policy proposals and requested feedback with regard to their support or otherwise:

1. Introduce extended Hours of Control in the West End on Weekday Evenings (Zones E & G) on an experimental basis. Consider options where resident permit holders and blue/white badge disabled drivers only can continue to park on single yellow lines during these extended hours of control.
2. Introduce controlled parking in the West End on Saturday and Sunday (Zones E, G & F3) on an experimental basis. Consider options where resident permit holders and blue/white badge disabled drivers only can continue to park on single yellow lines during these extended hours of control.
3. Work will take place in the West End with private hire/taxis to improve provision through marshalled taxi ranks/hubs.
4. To increase charges for second, third or more residents' parking permits within the region of 100% increase for second, third and subsequent permits granted
5. To provide a mechanism to permit the review of controlled hours in other areas of the City. The council proposes, where there has been a change in traffic management, development etc within a neighbourhood to review zone boundaries in consultation with individuals, Amenity Societies, Local Businesses etc
6. To introduce a Visitor Permit Scheme, where residents may be able to issue scratchcard permits to their visitors to park in resident bays
7. To improve loading and waiting provision in the West End Zones F and G; and finally

8. To review the provision of Green Transport schemes and projects that include Electric Vehicle Charging, the Car Club and Barclays Cycle Hire Scheme

One resident said that he wanted more residential parking bays. Cllr Rowley said that whilst over 1,000 have been delivered over the last two years the Council was prepared to consider requests for more bays in the future. The resident also wanted PayByPhone to be chargeable by the actual time used rather than by blocks of time as LB Wandsworth are believed to operate. Cllr Rowley said that the contract is due for renewal next year and this could be considered as part of the renewal. Better marking of parking bays was also suggested. How a household's second or third resident permit is allocated was also questioned. Another resident questioned whether all Zone A-H residents should be allowed to park in the West End Zones at night if Options 1 and 2 were implemented. It was explained that this concession, if agreed by Cabinet, would apply to only those residents in the affected Zones.

One resident said she particularly liked the car club scheme and has given up her car as a result. Another resident commented that they would like evening and weekend controls in their sub zones (A4/A5).

A final comment was made that no concessions have apparently been made for people who work in the West End, particularly late at night, thus supporting business and tourism.

A member of the Cycle Touring Club requested that he was added to the proposed 1 June 2011 Parking Summit event.

Coordinated Crime Reduction

The Neighbourhood Crime Reduction Service work in partnership with police and other partners to improve public safety and community confidence by tackling anti-social behaviour, reducing fear of crime and improving the local environment. They provided examples of how the partnership working has been effective locally to resolve concerns from resident and local businesses.

Keith Keiller and Miranda Jude ran through some basic details about what the Neighbourhood Crime Reduction Service did including outlining the partnership working they do with the Safer Neighbourhood Team and the Metropolitan Police in general and the service that the Westminster Wardens provide.

They then provided some specific examples of where the initiative had made a difference to the area. Within Vincent Square and St James's south, specifically around the Piazza there have been operations to help street drinkers move away from the area.

A resident asked about powers which the team and the Wardens might have to dissuade people coming over from other countries who do not have jobs or places to live. Although the team do not have these powers there are operations held with the Border Agency which address these issues.
