

Appendix 1 Background to Bringing Forward the Regeneration of Westbourne Green

Appendix 1(a) – Summary of initiatives which have brought forward the regeneration of Westbourne Green.

Appendix 1(b) – Local Area Needs Study Key Findings

Appendix 1(a) – Summary of initiatives which have brought forward the regeneration of Westbourne Green.

The North West Westminster Special Policy Area (NWWSPA) is a new Special Policy Area appearing for the first time in the City Council's Second Deposit Unitary Development Plan, published in October 2001. The principal aim of the designation is to foster local regeneration and employment opportunities and to improve the environment. The City Council, has recognised the need to address the planning and regeneration policy as it affects this distinctive area, and has formulated policies to address the problems and issues found in the area. The policies for the NWWSPA are discussed in more detail in Section 4 of this brief.

In addition to the designation of the NWWSPA this area has also been subject to a number of recently completed or ongoing regeneration initiatives, which have particular emphasis on tackling economic and social issues. This includes the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) 5 Programme 'New Life for Paddington' which is a seven year programme, culminating in 2006, with grant funding of £13.5 million (total programme £62 million). This programme covers a number of wards in the NWWSPA, including Westbourne, and is the largest grant ever given to a voluntary sector Community Trust led SRB programme. The programme's main aim is to reduce and remove barriers preventing local communities from accessing opportunities arising from the redevelopment's at Paddington and the general London economy.

NWWSPA adjoins the Paddington Special Policy Area (PSPA). This is one of the largest development sites in London and is currently subject to proposals which, in total, would see the creation of approximately 17,000 new permanent jobs and 8,500 (1 year Full Time Equivalent) construction jobs, 3000 new homes, hotel, retail, hospital and leisure facilities. The physical development of the PSPA and the delivery of works and benefits under related planning agreements bring major changes to the local area and present opportunities for the regeneration of North West Westminster.

Over the last few years Westbourne Green has therefore been influenced by a number of wider regeneration initiatives. These programmes, in association with the designation of the NWWSPA and the opportunities arising from the developments within the PSPA set the strategic context for the renewal Westbourne Green. At a more local level, a number of additional initiatives have influenced the proposals to bring forward the regeneration of the site. These include:

- the Council's priorities for Civic Renewal including in particular the City Investment, Clean Streets and Education Guarantee programmes;
- the Council's ongoing Secondary Schools Review
- the Housing Feasibility Study / Cost Benefit Analysis

These initiatives are discussed in more detail below and provide the context in which the Westbourne Green Renewal Framework has been developed.

CIVIC RENEWAL PROGRAMME

In September 2001 the City Council launched its Civic Renewal agenda. This sets out the Council's corporate guiding principles and targets for regenerating the City of Westminster and building a strong, vibrant community. The principles of Civic Renewal most relevant to this brief are:

Customer First

Improving customer access to Council services and information
(Customer Services Initiative)

City Investment

Improving the City's physical infrastructure

Education Guarantee

Improving education facilities, teaching standards and exam results

Clean Streets

Carrying out frequent, efficient street cleansing

City Guardian

Working with police on community safety and crime reduction initiatives.

In February 2002 the City Council's Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment and Leisure which set out proposals for the redevelopment of Westbourne Green. The report was submitted in the context of the Civic Renewal City Investment Programme and Cabinet approved the inclusion of two schemes in a preliminary community and stakeholder consultation exercise. Following approval by Cabinet, the City Council carried out consultation on the two options for the redevelopment of Area 1, the site bound by Harrow Road, the railway lines and Alfred Road. He also commissioned environmental (including traffic) and health impact assessments based on the proposals and an area needs study based on the wider area. On the 24 March 2003 the findings of these studies were reported to Cabinet and it was agreed that, in principle, support be given to the proposal for the provision of a new secondary school, in the form of an Academy (Area 1), and the development of a civic centre on the Stowe Club site (Area 2). Cabinet considered that this proposal offered the most comprehensive benefits to the local community and wider area. This decision was further supported by Cabinet on 21 July 2003 where, following public consultation, it was agreed that the preferred option for the future organisation of secondary schools in Westminster included the development of proposals for two Academies, one of which would be located on the Westbourne Green site.

On 24 March 2003 Cabinet further agreed that a unified approach to the project management should be developed to oversee all of the redevelopment activity relating to Westbourne Green. The City Council and key partners (including DfES, Westminster Primary Care Trust, Harrow Road Health Centre, Stowe Youth Club, Paddington Development Trust) have subsequently been working together to draw a definitive picture of a range of proposals that have been developed over the last few years and to ensure co-ordinated delivery.

The proposals have attempted to address the key findings of the Local Area Needs Study (LANS) for Westbourne Green as well as take into consideration the outcome of the environmental (including traffic) and health impact assessments, that were carried out on the initial two proposals. The LANS was an extension to the Westminster Local Area Study (March 2002) and the key findings are set out in Appendix 1(b). The environmental and health impact assessment was commissioned in order to establish, and quantify as far as possible at that particular stage of design, the potential negative and positive impacts of the two proposals and identify ways to mitigate and enhance these respectively. Members of the Westbourne Green Consultative Group, consisting of chairs of the local residents associations, attended meetings with the consultants and the City Council to ensure that all areas of concern to residents were included in the scope of the study and that these areas had been addressed before the assessment was finalised. The study itself relied on

consultation with local residents and service providers. In summary, the assessment concluded that the potential benefits on the environment, health and well-being of local people and the wider community of Westminster are greater, for proposals 1 (new depot) and 2 (the provision of an Academy) than for the 'do nothing' option. In addition, the assessment showed that all issues or problems identified could be satisfactorily addressed or mitigated through good design and project management. The study also recommended that effective channels of communication before, and throughout redevelopment are set up with local residents and that a co-ordinated regeneration package is put forward which addresses concerns effectively.

Through taking on board the outcome of these studies and drawing together the proposals, the City Council has developed a draft Westbourne Green Renewal Framework. This draft brief forms part of that process. This framework has been designed to ensure that there is synergy between the key proposals and that core services are tailored to tackle some of the long-term issues relating to health, crime, educational attainment and environmental quality. The framework marks the start of a series of steps towards implementation of the core proposals and is intended to form the basis of an ongoing dialogue between all stakeholders to develop trust, commitment and partnership.

As stated in Section 2 of this report, this framework comprises a number of core components, each with a geographical focus. Figure 4 illustrates the geographical distribution of these core components which are grouped under the following headings:

- Community, learning and sports
- Health, well being and childcare
- Housing improvements
- Public realm and green space
- Future development

The individual proposals are discussed in more detail in Section 5 of this report. The proposals have been developed by the City Council working closely with other organisations including City West Homes, Stadium Housing Association, Harrow Road Health Centre, the Stowe Club, Paddington Development Trust, Chelsfield, local Police and the Westminster NHS Primary Care Trust.

Fundamental to the framework is the need to demonstrate that issues raised by the community have been taken into consideration. A community engagement strategy has therefore been developed to complement separate statutory consultations focused on individual proposals. The intention of the strategy is to develop engagement around the renewal framework by informing all sections of the local population, acknowledging previous consultation responses, providing the opportunity to seek further information and increasing community ownership of the proposals. The community engagement programme is scheduled to take place during the months of November and December 2003. It is intended that the outcome of the community engagement will be incorporated into a revised renewal framework for the area, which will then be presented back to the community acknowledging their input.

THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS REVIEW

The secondary school review is a key part of the 'Education Guarantee' programme within Civic Renewal. It also forms a key part of the City Council's School Organisation Plan. On 16 December 2002, Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Education which set out a preferred option for the future organisation of secondary schools in Westminster as a basis for public consultation to take forward the Secondary Schools Review. A key element of the preferred option involves the re-provision of the school places currently provided at the twelve-form entry North Westminster Community School into two six-form entry schools, one of which would be the new 'Westminster Academy', at Westbourne Green, sponsored by Chelsfield plc under the DfES Academies programme. In January 2003, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) confirmed that Education Ministers had approved feasibility funding for the Westminster Academy and it is anticipated that a new school could be opened on the site by September 2006.

Public consultation on the preferred option was launched on 5 June 2003 with the publication of 'Westminster's Secondary Schools Review' and questionnaire. The outcome of this was reported to Cabinet on 21 July 2003 where it was concluded that there were no significant objections brought forward to suggest that the planned changes should be reconsidered albeit, the consultation did help to crystallise specific issues and concerns. The proposed closure of the North Westminster Community School will now be the subject of the publication of statutory notices in November 2003, followed by a six-week period for consultation and opportunity for objection. This will lead to a decision being made by the Schools Organisation Committee in February 2004. Implementation of the changes is scheduled for September 2006 and the provision of the Westminster Academy at Westbourne Green and the Paddington Academy at Oakington Road are dependent upon the closure of this school.

The final decision regarding the provision of the Westminster Academy will be taken by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills however, the designation of Westbourne Green as a site for education is a specific issue for the City Council as the Secretary of State has no powers to requisition sites not currently in educational uses for Academies. This planning brief therefore responds to the proposal of developing a new school on the site and the associated planning and property implications that this would have, including the requirement to relocate facilities currently housed on the site. In order for the Westminster Academy to open at Westbourne Green in September 2006, it is necessary for the City Council to start developing proposals now. Therefore the Westbourne Green Renewal Framework has been developed in advance of the final decision of the Secondary School Review and Secretary of State.

The brief does however, also provide a wider policy context for schemes in the area should this proposal not go ahead.

HOUSING

The Local Area Needs Study and the Environmental and Health Impact Assessments have shown that the housing and local environment are in need of repair and improvements. Through consultation it has also become apparent from discussions with residents that they are also in full support of this view.

The Housing Department has made provision for the future refurbishment of Brinklow, Oversley and Polesworth Houses through an agreement with Stadium Housing Association subject to a successful tenants ballot to allow the transfer of the blocks to Stadium. In addition it is currently preparing maintenance strategies for the Warwick Estate towers and will also take the opportunity to review the plans for Brinklow, Oversley and Polesworth Houses once those strategies have been developed. Plans are also being developed to ensure all tenanted properties meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard by 2006, which will include the provision of new kitchens, bathrooms, repairs and a review of services.

Major Works on the tower blocks, independent of those to meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard, will however be of major expense and are currently dependent on several sources of funding. Such works include the provision of new windows, overcladding on the outside of the buildings, roof renewals and major repairs including the provision of new lifts. The cost of these works go well beyond the funding received from the Decent Homes Standard. Nevertheless, it is considered that the provision of the Westminster Academy at Westbourne Green will contribute to unlocking the potential for regeneration in the area and bring forward funding through the disposal of the North Westminster Community School site which could offer the opportunity to invest the sale receipt into the refurbishment and upgrading of the tower blocks. This coupled with the recent bid for Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) funding from the Government would enable the complete major works package to be carried out to the Warwick estate tower blocks. The funding for the Brindley Estate tower blocks will be generated through the proposed transfer to Stadium subject to a successful tenants ballot.

In the meantime works will start early in 2004 to provide the low-rise blocks to the east with new windows, repairs to the roofs and new kitchens and bathrooms where needed.

Appendix 1(b) – Local Area Needs Study Key Findings

Source: Extract of a report to Cabinet by the Director of Environment and Leisure, dated 24 March 2003

- There appear to be cultural and language difficulties resulting from the high proportion of ethnic minority communities resident in the neighbourhood
- ... which has implications for translation, advocacy and integration services
- There is a large number of single parent households indicating the importance of childcare provision, which is currently under provided for in the neighbourhood
- Youth provision has an important role to play, serving a high proportion of vulnerable young people
- There is a high proportion of the Council's 'vulnerable client groups' resident in the neighbourhood, with above average numbers of Children in Need, Vulnerable Families and Older People in Need, which has implications for social care provision
- Unemployment and inactivity rates are high and many residents face barriers to accessing good quality work
- Many residents fear for community safety, largely attributable to poorly lit and designed public spaces
- Poor levels of health exist indicating a culture of unhealthy lifestyles and high demand for primary and specialist health care
- School results and adult basic skills are below local and national averages indicating the need for improvements to neighbourhood learning services
- Housing and the local environment are in need of repair and improvements.