

Minutes of the Fitzwest Executive Committee

Date: Monday 3rd December 2018, 6.00 p.m.

Venue: NVEC Offices, Heddon House, 149-151 Regent Street, W1

Attending:

Nick Bailey (NB)
Yoram Blumann (YB)
Barbara Corr (BC)
Gwilym Harbottle (GH)
Julia Haythorn (JH)
Dan Johnson (DJ)
Ian Johnstone (IJ)

Consultant: Tony Burton

Apologies:

Sharon Banoff
Chris Shaw
Wendy Shillam

1 BC chaired the meeting, NB agreed to take minutes

2 **Welcome and introductions**

All were warmly welcomed to the meeting.

3 **City Plan**

WCC have recently publicized their draft City Plan:

<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/cityplan2040>

There are a number of exhibitions and it is the subject of public consultation until 21 December. The Plan now includes all of FitzWest in the Central Activities Zone and emphasizes the delivery of housing. The target for affordable housing is now 35% for developments over 10 units and additional housing is required if new commercial floor space is provided.

TB said that there was little direct guidance on the preparation of neighbourhood plans although strategic policies had been listed in an

appendix. He suggested we should focus particularly in our NP on: the protection of active shopping parades (effectively A1, A2 and A3 uses), unlisted buildings of merit, and how we relate to and add value to strategic policies.

There was a discussion of alternative uses for vacant floor space in Oxford Street, resulting from the growth of online shopping. Leisure activities might be more prominent and there was some debate about whether residential was also suitable.

ACTION:

There is a meeting for forums on **Thursday 6th December, 5.30 p.m., at WCC, 5 The Strand, to be briefed on the City Plan.**

WCC has also released a report on ways of involving the public and forums more in planning policy and decision-making. Details here:

<https://committees.westminster.gov.uk/documents/s29550/Cabinet%20Report.pdf>

4 Oxford Street Proposals

YB reported on meetings he had attended regarding the Oxford Street proposals. There was considerable discussion about the feasibility of the pedestrianisation of the streets at Oxford Circus and whether buses and taxis could be accommodated on John Prince's Street, Margaret St and Great Castle Street (going W-E and E-W). BC argued that all traffic should remain on Oxford Street as the principal highway.

YB did not support converting Little Portland Street into a play street and others felt that there was a lack of detail about the 87 street improvement projects listed in the consultative document.

There was also no information about the proposed E-W cycle route; access and timing of deliveries and whether private vehicles will be able to access parts of Oxford St and at what times; whether all 87 projects will be implemented and how the identified 1-3 priority ratings would apply.

ACTION:

There is a meeting with WCC officers to discuss the proposals on **10 December, 5.30 p.m., at 5 The Strand.**

Those attending will meet afterwards to discuss a collective response.

AGREED:

We should welcome the proposal in principle but be actively involved in discussions about the implementation, including ensuring that our

Greening Strategy proposals are included. NWECC have also welcomed the plans.

5 **Neighbourhood Plan**

NB reported that the draft NP was available on Dropbox. Informal feedback had been received from WCC he and TB attended a meeting with WCC officers at which this was discussed as well as the implications arising from the new draft City Plan. A number of issues had been flagged up for further work such as active retail frontages. The Greening Strategy was welcomed by WCC officers.

TB highlighted in particular: adding value and not duplicating WCC and the Mayor's strategic policies; stressing the local context and adding a key diagram illustrating our key policies.

Timing: agreed that a revised draft will be produced in January, discussed by the Forum and sent for WCC comments before a formal consultation begins around April.

Please send any further comments on the draft to NB.

We need to think ahead about how we engage residents and businesses ahead of the referendum in late 2019 or early 2020. A flexible, user-friendly website for gathering public comments will be essential.

6 **Any Other Business**

DJ reported on plans for improving Market Place commissioned from Urbanflow. Budget approval is expected shortly from NWECC resources and support from BID members and CIL. Implementation is planned for Summer 2019 and it may begin with a temporary scheme and changes to traffic flows. DJ agreed to circulate the plan.

YB reported on a meeting the Mayor's Night Czar about the development of the night-time economy between 23.00 – 06.00. It was noted that many workers earn less than the living wage and that small businesses were largely excluded from the discussion.

7 **Date of Next Meetings**

The following dates had been proposed and agreed (?) by email:

3 January Facilitator IJ Minutes CS

4 February F GH M JH

7 March F NB M YB

1 April F SB M BC
9 May F WS M JJ

All meetings at NWECE Offices **at 6.00 p.m.**

AGREED: The Facilitator circulates an agenda a few days before each meeting.

The meeting ended at 7.45 p.m.