

Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum

EXECUTIVE MEETING THURSDAY 4 MARCH 2021 BY ZOOM

MINUTES

Present: Nick Bailey, Sharon Banoff, Yoram Blumann, Gwilym Harbottle, Julia Haythorn (Chair), Ian Johnstone, Edward Kellow, Jace Tyrrell (Notetaker), Cllr Tim Barnes (Ward Councillor), Mark Dillon.

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Pancho Lewis (Ward Councillor)

2. **Minutes of the last meeting** (available on FitzWest website) These were approved.

3. **Greening Ideas – Presentation from Scott Marshall, The Crown Estate – experience of Regent Street Greening & Temporary Scheme**

Scott presented to the Steering Group setting out their main objectives around creating a greener and safer Regent Street along with wellbeing aims for people that live, work and visit (once re-open) in and around the Regent Street neighbourhood.

The presentation outlined The Crown Estates approach to developing their strategy, concept development, designs, character zones around the area, specific types of planter spaces with approach to green specimens and trees that would be most appropriate in an urban environment.

Gwilym asked around the permissions for Temporary Traffic Orders and Scott explained the conditions around the temporary scheme and what was the liability of the City Council and that of The Crown Estate.

Gwilym also asked specific details around insurance (City Council liability), Policing (provision for anti-social behaviour and counter terrorism) and also pricing. The pricing varied but broadly was

Large (no tree)	£2,7000	(with tree)	£4,900
Medium	£1,900		
Small	£1,650		

There were also costs around the management and maintenance ie watering circa £900 for 18 months (£600pa). For The Crown Estate and Regent Street there are 365 temporary planters circa £220,000 for 18 months.

ACTION: The Steering Group to consider options for management & maintenance by volunteers, local business owners as this cost will not be covered by the CIL funding.

Barbara asked why the scheme was temporary. Scott and Cllr Barnes explained the temporary traffic order stipulates this time. The Crown Estate may seek a more permanent scheme depending on results and feedback from local residents, workers and visitors on the temporary scheme.

Cllr Barnes said there were considerations the City Council would be monitoring including any major traffic disruptions to wider area, impact from loss of any road space, access for cyclists & pedestrians and future of the bus network in the area. Also future cycling and e-scooter routes to be considered.

Nick asked if The Crown Estate would consider outdoor trading for food & beverage operators. Scott confirmed this was not part of the temporary scheme. There were already businesses with pavement licenses and food quarters around Regent Street including Heddon Street.

Jace commented that some Regent Street businesses including The Café Royal maybe seeking outdoor trading this summer. Cllr Barnes confirmed that the current emergency COVID Government Legislation favours outdoor trading and there had to be major issues of concern for local authorities not to support this as part of COVID recovery.

Edward asked if there were any examples in the UK and/or overseas that The Crown Estate studied. Scott commented this was a unique response to COVID and public realm temporary greening that it was an exemplar. Edward cited Nice in France as a similar example of a permanent nature.

Yoram provided feedback on certain locations and impact to pedestrian access. Scott explained the security measures that were required for aspects of the Regent Street temporary scheme.

Julia asked about the landscape architects and Scott confirmed it was BDP and this was a bespoke project and above the capital costs fees would be around 10 -25% of this depending on scale and scope of project.

Jace suggested an option for design to be covered by Strategic CIL. Cllr Barnes commented that either Strategic CIL or a central fund with the three main Forums looking at greening (Mayfair, Marylebone & Fitzwest).

ACTION: Jace to seek input from other Forums on appetite for some shared funding on design.

Nick raised the Oxford Street District (OSD) greening and options around a central design for OSD greening projects with a potential local neighbourhood embellishment. The Steering Group agreed to keep this under consideration.

Cllr Barnes reiterated that CIL funding is **only** for capital scheme and any revenue costs need to be funded through other City Council departments and/or local funds ie BIDs, business. This was clarified following inaccurate information shared with Forums in February.

The Steering Group thanked Scott for his presentation and running through the Regent Street greening experience and he asked **for any additional input/observations from Fitzwest members to be shared with him directly.**

4. Tesco Greening Project - update - Gwilym & Barbara

Gwilym and Barbara confirmed the greening money from Tesco to Riding House Street (as the Great Titchfield St/Clipstone Street application has ground to a halt as reported as the last meeting). There is a meeting with Westminster City Council Officer (Jerry) to progress the scheme.

ACTION: Invitation to the meeting to discuss Riding House Street to be sent to Cllr Barnes and Barbara by Gwilym. Cllr Lewis is convening this session.

5. CIL - Community Infrastructure Levy - update on ideas and discussion of greening locations – Julia

Julia has circulated a list of locations for planters. A couple were eliminated due to location and feasibility. A list is on the Fitzwest website for members and local residents & businesses to review. One additional option discussed was outside Villandry on Great Portland Street.

Cllr Barnes suggested a cluster approach to prove concept and measure behaviour change for dumping of rubbish. This was supported by the Steering Group.

ACTION: Julia to select a cluster based on Steering Group feedback and publish this on the Fitzwest website for any local resident/business input.

Jace suggested that Fitzwest could purchase a bulk buy of planters as 'infrastructure' which local businesses and resident blocks could take ownership of by watering and maintaining. **This idea was to be kept under consideration.**

6. Oxford Street District – Update – Nick & Yoram

Nick and Yoram attended a recent meeting with Cllr Caplan (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member lead for Oxford Street) where the 18-month temporary scheme was discussed. Works will commence on 8th March with majority of temporary works aimed to be completed by April with the re-opening of non-essential retail. The aim was similar to the Regent Street scheme to create safe and greater pedestrian space.

Barbara made the point around objecting to diversion of traffic from Oxford Street. Julia and the Steering Group agreed a shared position that no one supports diversion, but we do support overall traffic reduction to the area.

Yoram updated that the temporary works from Dean Street to Tottenham Court Road would be limited due to major developments in the area, the Elizabeth Line station and there are still works being completed to improve this part of Oxford Street. He also said there would be limited works from Oxford Circus down East Oxford Street due to limited space and issues around attracting pedicabs.

Details of the temporary scheme can be found at www.osd.london

ACTION: A walk around with Yoram and the Oxford Street District team has been offered and if Steering Group members wish to attend to contact Yoram directly.

7. Bellaria Licensing Appeal – Yoram

Should Steering Group members wish to object to the scheme they are asked to confirm via Yoram that Richard Brown can represent their position.

8. Open Spaces Greener Places Funding – Nick

Nick raised the Westminster City Council total funding pot is around £300k and the Steering Group agreed that Neighbourhood CIL would be the route to secure fund for Fitzwest greening projects.

9. AOB

Nick updated the Steering Group that our Neighbourhood Plan had received a positive response from the Planning Inspectorate and a Decision Statement was expected within five weeks. Once this is received, we can use the agency Jace suggested to produce a designed-up version with final copy for May. Referendum likely to take place in June/July this year.

Jace Tyrrell 4 March 2021