



MARYLEBONEFORUM

MINUTES

MARYLEBONE FORUM COMMITTEE MEETING

8.30 – 9.30 Thursday 23 September 2021

On Microsoft Teams

Attendees

1. Penny Alexander (PA)
2. Michael Bolt (MB)
3. Alan Bristow (AB)
4. Sarah Buttleman (SB)
5. Kay Buxton (KB)
6. Hanna Corney (HC)
7. Sheila D'Souza (SD)
8. Canon Stephen Evans (SE)
9. Rosa Han (RH)
10. Ann-Marie Johnson (AJ)
11. Christian Lock-Necrews (CL)
12. Ian Macpherson (IM)
13. Andrea Merrington (AM)
14. Yael Saunders (YS) (Chair)
15. Steve Wong (SW)

Minute taker

1. Kate Rayner (KR)

Apologies

1. Guy Austin
2. Amanda Feeny
3. Mark Gazaleh
4. Simon Loomes

MINUTES

Welcome and recording of meeting

YS welcomed all to the meeting, announced apologies and confirmed that all are happy for the meeting to be recorded.

Minutes of last meeting 13 July 2021

IM suggested an amendment. In the Neighbourhood Plan section, change 'protecting all small businesses' to 'protecting all small business premises'

MB highlighted that his name appeared in the attendance list but he didn't attend the meeting.

The minutes were approved.

Draft Neighbourhood Plan update (Andrea Merrington)

AM updated the group on progress made with the Neighbourhood Plan. The sub-committee, made up of residents and business representatives, has been meeting regularly and working on finalising policies, based around the theme of sustainability. This encompasses everything from air quality to greening and more. Drafting more detail within these policies is yet to begin and planning consultant support (the next agenda item) will be required to ensure that policies are relevant and fit into existing planning structures.

No further updates have been made to the Plan slides. Recently, the group has been trying to understand the data sets required to establish the policies. These are crucial for both the drafting and evidencing and for engaging WCC. There is support available within WCC that can be tapped into to help with the process. KB added that a recent email from council officers offered to attend Forum meetings. YS did not receive this. KB will forward on.

IM commented that Plan sub-committee minutes have not been circulated. YS confirmed that these are uploaded to website. SE agreed that this is the best way to engage people at this stage. MB added that it is a legal requirement for all minutes to be uploaded to the website.

SE reiterated that a commitment is needed to deliver the plan in a suitable timeframe. Too much progress has been made and important work done to drop the baton now.

ACTIONS:

- KB to forward WCC email offering officer support for plan-making to YS and AM
 - Plan sub-committee to continue to meet to further develop policies.
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Planning Consultant support - Neighbourhood CIL application (Kay Buxton and Andrea Merrington)

KB and AM presented the draft CIL application to fund specialist planning consultants to add detail to plan policies and assess them against Westminster's City Plan and the London Plan as well as review supporting evidence. The application would be submitted to the next CIL round in January.

Following this, quotes will be sought from at least two planning consultants with final appointment in March and a view to commencing pre-submission consultation in June 2022.

The CIL application is for £10,000 with a further £10,000 of match funding (agreed in principle with The Portman Estate and Howard de Walden Estate).

AJ asked if the process of applying for CIL has changed alongside other amendments that WCC has recently made. KB responded that there are changes due to be adopted at the next cabinet meeting in October. These changes stipulate the types of projects that will and won't be accepted.

AJ commented that, with the WCC election scheduled for May 22, the first half of next year will be a busy time for councillors. Is there information that can be given to them in advance? SE responded that the CIL application and the development of the Plan is more likely to sit with officers rather than the councillors.

AB asked how big the gap is between the draft policies and the final plan. AM responded that while there is a long way to go, having now made progress with the seven policies, the Forum is in a better position than has been achieved previously. AB asked if it would be possible to bring in the match funding earlier to get the process started sooner. SE understands the frustration and impetus to get started but there is a need to follow the correct process and to avoid appearing to be over-reliant on funding from the estates.

AM stated that she is having an initial discussion with Gerald Eve today to talk through what is needed and will feedback to the sub-committee. AM has also approached CBRE and will contact Montagu Evans. MB commented that the costs may be higher than those being requested in the CIL application. KB responded that the purpose of getting discussions underway is to assess whether costs are realistic for what is required. Spends in other areas have varied greatly. AM added that the Forum can also adjust the requirements to bring costs down if necessary.

KB added that the next step in the process would be to connect with amenity societies and ward councillors to get their support for the CIL application. SE highlighted that this support will be needed from all five Wards within which the Forum area sits.

YS thanks KB and AM for their ongoing efforts.

ACTIONS:

- AM and KB to continue to develop the CIL application.

WCC Design Code for Edgware Road (Kay Buxton)

KB gave a background to the Edgware Road insight study that was funded by a CIL application supported by Marylebone Forum, as well as by Hyde Park Paddington and a contribution from Marble Arch BID. The study assessed commercial performance and opportunities on the street and provides an evidence base to demonstrate the need for Edgware Road-specific design policies. The summary report is available on Marble Arch BID's website and KB has sent it to YS to upload onto the Forum's site.

The report highlighted that the only way to control some of the more problematic aspects of the streetscape is to introduce a design code through the neighbourhood plan. WCC's Neighbourhood Plan team is applying to take part in a trial pilot introduced by the government as part of its planning

overhaul. If successful, Marble Arch BID, in partnership with WCC, would produce a design code, dividing the street into sections to create bespoke policies, with a particular focus on shop fronts. WCC would then adopt the code as an SPD (supplementary planning document).

PA commented that this initiative is exciting and positive.

ACTION:

- KR to add the Edgware Road Insight Study: final report to the website.

Website update and next steps

YS thanked KR and others that have worked on the website so far. YS expressed concern that the design and layout hasn't been addressed and this will have to be paid for. A quote was sought from a web design contact provided by PA that has come in at £2,500. SL has confirmed that The Portman Estate will be willing to contribute £1,000 towards the website development if match-funding is achieved. Marylebone Association have a committee meeting coming up at which it will be discussed. NWEA and BSQ are looking at budgets and Marble Arch BID are happy to contribute. KB suggested that another quote should be sought. AM agreed that this is essential if Howard de Walden are to commit to contributing.

KB suggested that having a reserve of money would be a practical way to move forward. Marble Arch BID has a budget set aside for neighbourhood planning so can contribute £1,000 to update the website. KB thinks that it would be good to have a pot of around £3,000 - £4,000 for ongoing updates as well as hosting costs etc.

SE expressed frustration that information isn't yet available on the site. We shouldn't be waiting longer for a new design – information can be uploaded in a variety of formats in the meantime. KR showed the group webpages that she has designed so far. YS felt that these needed to be more interactive and engaging. Could they be used as a temporary measure? The pages are ready to go and updated with the latest approved content. SE suggested that the new pages be made live with a plan to tweak and redesign further down the line. The committee agreed.

KB asked if invoices will be raised for the contributions to be made.

MB expects difficulty in convincing Marylebone Association to commit to funding improvements to the website. It is more likely to contribute to more general purposes to progress the work of the Forum. YS suggested the website will need to be developed into a more engaging design for the neighbourhood plan consultation and to attract more CIL applications. SE suggested that there is a wider funding need to ensure that engagement with the local community is achieved and the Marylebone Association can play a significant role in this. SD agreed that more engagement with the community is essential for which the website is an important tool.

YS thanked those that have offered to contribute.

ACTIONS:

- KR to make new webpages and content live.
 - YS to proceed in getting a second quote for web design.
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Forum Limited Company structure

YS followed up on discussion that took place at the previous meeting with regard to the Forum's limited company set up. Current directors are SE, SL, AM, YS, MB, IM. Is a limited company the best structure for this organisation?

AM asked what the alternative would be. SE suggested a CIO but it costs time and money to set up. MB commented that long discussions took place to decide on a limited company status. It gives a corporate shield unlike other options. With the progress being made with the neighbourhood plan, now isn't the right time to reconsider. SE agreed that the focus needs to remain on delivering the plan and possibly revisit this further down the line.

KB commented that Hyde Park Paddington is incorporated with contracts and funding going through either Marble Arch BID, Paddington Partnership or Paddington BID. This could be an option in future but it should not be a distraction from developing the plan. SE iterated that the limited company structure gives independence.

SD asked KB about the changes being made to how WCC pay CIL grant money, giving it directly to the Forum and passing on responsibilities of due diligence. Is this relevant to the context of organisation structure? KB confirmed that there are changes underway, largely due to the VAT gap that currently exists.

The committee agreed to keep the current limited company structure.

Seymour Leisure Centre consultation

YS gave a background to WCC's project to redevelop the Seymour Leisure Centre and library, with a confirmed budget of £25m. Previous plans that went to pre-consultation earlier in 2021 received universal support throughout the community, featuring an impressive mezzanine level structure. However, revised plans have recently emerged without the mezzanine design and WCC is hosting an online questionnaire on these, with the deadline soon approaching. YS encourages all to either complete this questionnaire or contact the council directly to ensure that the project in its original form can move forward.

AM agrees that this project is important to Marylebone. A link should therefore be added to the Forum's website to promote the questionnaire as well as demonstrate that we are engaged in the community.

KB asked MB what the views are within the Marylebone Association. It was included in the last Marylebone newsletter – what was the response? MB agrees with YS that it is disappointing that the plans have been changed. Added that WCC need to look at their consultation process to ensure that more engagement is achieved. KB agreed and commented that there needs to be a central portal for all consultations.

AJ added encouragement to fill in the survey, highlighting that there is an opportunity to add comments to refer to previous plans.

ACTIONS:

- YS to send previous plans to MB and SD so that they can encourage Marylebone Association and Marylebone Society members to send comments to WCC.

AOB

- SE asked about forthcoming meetings. The committee agreed that two meetings can be fitted in before Christmas. YS and KR to circulate dates.
- MB added congratulations to two fellow local forums in their recent success in their neighbourhood plan referendums:

FitzWest Forum

Resident voters: For 236, Against 62

Business voters: For 26, Against 4

Soho Neighbourhood Forum:

Resident voters: For 237, Against 24

Business voters: For 40, Against 6

These are great results with large majorities but the turnouts were lower than expected, despite great efforts in engaging with residents and businesses in the lead up to the referendum. This is something that the Forum needs to bear in mind as our own Plan is developed and engagement begins.

- RH updated the group on the George Street pocket Park. The Portman Estate and BSQ were successful in applying for a grant under WCC's Open Spaces Greener Places. As a result, improvement works will be completed in next couple of weeks and plans are being made for a temporary mural on the wall. RH will provide an update at the next meeting.
- IM confirmed that there is £622 in the Forum's bank account.

ACTION:

- KR to circulate dates for next meetings.

MINUTES:

Welcome and apologies

SL chaired the meeting in YS absence and welcomed all to the meeting.

Minutes of last meeting – 25 May 21

Actions from the last meeting were as follows:

- SL to investigate directors' insurance and come back to the group at the next meeting.
 - o SL confirmed that this is in progress.
- Neighbourhood Plan sub-committee to meet to discuss progressing the plan with an aim for public consultation in September.
 - o Meetings have taken place and policies in the process of being drawn up.
- CIL sub-committee to meet to discuss the process for submitting CIL applications.
 - o The sub-committee met and discussed applications. RH to look at Hyde Park Paddington's CIL application process.
- KB to circulate Hyde Park Paddington's CIL funding application process.
 - o KB sent web link to Yael. [PMN: Yael did not receive]
- PA to speak to Baker Street Quarter's Smarter Giving Manager regarding the possibility of getting volunteers from the business community to support smaller groups with pricing up applications.
 - o PA suggested this wait for the new website to be launched and community groups approached.
- Committee members to respond to KR with their profile information.
 - o Thank you to those that have sent them so far. KR reminded those that haven't to forward on their information.

The minutes were approved.

ACTION

- **RH to look at Hyde Park Paddington's CIL application process.**
-

Neighbourhood Plan update (Andrea Merrington)

AM presented the draft plan policies to date. The sub-committee has met twice to progress the development of these policies, focussing attention on what the communities within Marylebone would like to see. Minutes are circulated to the main committee. As a result of these discussions, sustainability has been highlighted as a core theme that can be woven throughout the plan. This would complement the work being undertaken by Westminster City Council to develop a climate action plan, currently under consultation, and air quality and sustainability initiatives.

The following four themes will form the basis of the Neighbourhood Plan, with sub policies:

1. Sustainability – including policies on greening, trees, biodiversity and protecting open space.
2. Sustainable growth – will include encouraging sustainable travel such as cycling and walking, as well as promoting the use of redundant parking spaces to contribute to the public realm.
3. Enhancing experience – protecting all small businesses (retail and other) with focus in areas such as Edgware Road.
4. Celebrating Heritage – detail is yet to be developed but would look at ways to improve the sustainability of the area's buildings while acknowledging the heritage.

AB asked if it would be possible to include speeding up the installation of electric vehicle charging points. SB added to this by asking if policies could encourage the use of consistent design of chargers. AM responded that it would be difficult to create a policy around those but could add wording in support of charging points being installed.

KB highlighted an article she had heard on the radio about future proofing cities from a planning perspective – for example using policies to encourage double glazing and electric charging points. The programme used Bath as a case study. KB wonders if it would be good to take look at their policies to see if appropriate in Marylebone. The programme featured examples of helping residents in listed buildings to make improvements within the scope of planning. AM agreed that this may be useful for the Celebrating Heritage theme and will take a look and feed back to sub-committee.

SD supports the idea of helping residents to make changes to buildings, particularly in the transfer to heat pumps away from gas boilers. AM agrees but the wording will need to be supportive of council policy and 'encourage' rather than 'police' such developments.

MG highlighted increased rainfall as an issue and asked if improved drainage should be considered for the plan, for example, increasing the number of SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems). SL responded that The Portman Estate had commissioned a flood report, off the back of which they are paying Westminster City Council to increase the clearing of drainage gullies to twice a year in certain vulnerable locations across the estate. Maybe this could be considered across the wider Marylebone area. AJ agreed that Westminster City Council needs to improve the clearing of drains and storm gullies however MG doesn't believe that the drains can handle the volume of rainfall that we are now seeing on a regular basis in the capital. SE added that there is a tendency in new road layouts to remove kerbstones and create a flatter, shared pedestrian and vehicle streetscape – this means that there is reduced channelling towards the drains. SL responded that while kerbs create a natural dam

for surface water, he is assured that engineers are working towards regulatory codes. Perhaps some resilience is lost though.

AM highlighted that the Plan sub-committee would like to invite more residential representation to ensure balance is achieved with plan policies. AM asked that interested people get in touch and suggested that SD would be a good candidate given her knowledge and passion for air quality improvements. SD suggested she read through minutes of the previous meetings to decide if she could make a worthwhile contribution.

KB commented that following a recent visit to Marble Arch BID by the Leader of Council, there was a suggestion that the planning department engage in discussions alongside cabinet members to ensure that there is a coordinated approach to developments and that support is available to organisations looking to make improvements in the district. AM agrees and would like to get Westminster City Council involved in the development of the Plan policies earlier in the process to ensure that time isn't wasted pursuing policies that won't be accepted.

SL thanked AM for taking on the Plan development and moving the project forward and encouraged members to read through the notes that are circulated from the sub-committee.

ACTION

- **Plan sub-committee to meet again to finalise draft policies.**
 - **SD to respond to request to join Plan committee.**
-

CIL fund applications (Rosa Han)

RH gave the following updates on CIL fund applications following the recent CIL sub-committee meeting (at which SB and SD also co-chaired).

- The sub-committee decided not to remove the current £100k cap on applications as it was felt that more work was needed to communicate with smaller community groups and organisations. SD added that it was discussed about developing a list of community groups to contact but would hold off on this until the revised website is launched.
- The sub-committee agreed that all successful CIL applications should be made available on the website to attract further applicants from the community.
- An application for £100,000 from St Marylebone Church, to install a fully accessible lift and staircase to access the Crypt, was approved.
- The sub-committee requested more information on the St Marylebone School's application for their Green Roof Project on their sixth form building and this has since been approved.
- The group discussed how air quality monitoring could be supported by CIL funding and whether this could be aligned with the Breathe London programme. RH has since got in touch with a contact at WCC to find out existing and upcoming air quality monitoring initiatives – will report back to the group.

SD stated that she contacted St Edward's, on Lisson Grove and in the Forum Area, and spoke to a member of staff who was unaware of CIL. They were pleased to learn that there was an alternative source of funding that the school may be eligible for and will be considering which of their capital projects to prioritise for an application in the autumn and may then seek help to prepare their bid.

SB added that the recent refurbishment of the science labs at the St Marylebone School funded by CIL has since led to a further financial grant being received from the Wolfson Foundation – demonstrating the growth effect that CIL funding can have. CIL committee to feedback to WCC.

SD asked about air quality monitoring and what the plans were for the new Oxford Street District. It would be good to look at matching activity on Marylebone Road. SL responded that Oxford Street has moved down the list of London's most polluted streets. Marylebone Road would be a better location for this but with each monitor costing around £15 – £20k it may be a challenge to put in place to gather meaningful data. [PMN: note TfL station on Marylebone Road – is this operational with public data?]. SE commented that research into air quality in the area has been done a lot over the years and while some rain gardens have appeared, there is very little to show for all of the research and data that has been collected. SL agreed and responded that in order to make the case for measures to improve air quality, there has to be an understanding of how bad the situation is first - evidence that air quality fails against the legal limits is more likely to get the attention of the council, Mayor and TfL. SE added that the biggest issue is the amount of traffic crossing the capital east/west. ULEZ might have an impact but unless road layouts are changed, there is very little that can be done. SD responded that TfL gave WCC £1m to create the LEN which paid for rain gardens but didn't reduce emissions and she has since been calling for more monitoring to highlight this problem. There is a need to channel the traffic away from where people and the community spend their time, such as in schools and public places.

SL asked if the committee currently has the opportunity to comment on applications made for strategic CIL? And if not, can we request this? AM agrees that this would be beneficial to try to coordinate community CIL applications with those being made to the strategic CIL pot. This would ensure a bigger impact. AM was going to ask the council about this on behalf of HDWE so will feedback the outcome. SE advised that the only way for this to currently happen is to read the minutes from the council's CIL meetings. It is useful to do this anyway as the criteria for strategic CIL applications has recently changed. KB added that BIDs were recently advised that applications are being made incorrectly and that more advice will be given – KB will feed back any information if relevant. It was also highlighted that funding will no longer be granted for area research studies, like the one recently completed for Edgware Road. These will only be considered if a clear action plan is drawn up to follow.

ACTION

- **RH to feedback on AQ monitoring**
- **RH to check feedback to WCC of success of science lab grant in leveraging further funding.**
- **RH to check how we might comment on strategic CIL applications**
- **AM to feedback on outcome of request to see/comment on strategic CIL applications.**

Website update (Kate Rayner)

KR updated the committee on the website. The web pages are currently waiting for the draft neighbourhood plan policies to be finalised so that they can be incorporated.

KR reminded all those that haven't already to send across their biography information to be added to the committee page.

ACTION

- **KR to send reminder to those that haven't yet sent their biography info.**
-

Accounts (Ian Macpherson)

IM confirmed that accounts were submitted for period ending August 2020.

AOB

IM highlighted that there are now two fewer Directors since the resignation of Kevin and Richard. Is it possible to ask for volunteers to take on the director role? SE asked if it was necessary to continue being a company - can the Forum exist in a different capacity without the expense and admin it currently requires.

SL proposed that this be discussed at the next meeting given limited time. Important point for review.

ACTION

- **KR to add to the next meeting's agenda.**
-

Date of next meeting: TBC

SL commented that Yael has requested that meetings take place on a Thursday.

ACTION

- **KR to circulate a Thursday date in September.**