

Monitoring report: 21 February 2020

Overview

- The government has committed to £3 million in additional funding to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in Westminster. The announcement was gratefully received by Westminster MP Nickie Aiken, who also called for a shift in focus toward preservation of life, and tackling the causes of homelessness.
- Private developments are becoming increasingly frequent in traditional retail areas such as Oxford Street as local businesses struggle against an increasingly tough trading environment.
- Westminster City Council continued to promote their ongoing consultation on busking, interviewing a local business about their thoughts on increased regulation for street performers across Westminster.
- Businesses in Chinatown have continued to see a decline in trading following the outbreak of the coronavirus, with a decrease in Chinese tourists to the area given as one of the main reasons for this trend.
- Conservative Mayoral candidate Shaun Bailey has pledged to re-open the 38 police stations closed by current Mayor Sadiq Khan since 2016, using a cut in City Hall's budget to fund this policy.
- A short documentary on the life and work of world famous artist Pablo Picasso was shown in Piccadilly Circus, 47 years after the painter's death.

Monitoring

| Overview | Detail |
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| <p>A government grant to tackle homelessness in Westminster was welcomed by Nickie Aiken.</p> <p>(19 February Tweet)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pledge of an additional £3million grant from the government for the purpose of tackling homelessness and rough sleeping across the Cities of London and Westminster was gratefully welcomed by constituency MP, Nickie Aiken. • Aiken stated that the complex issue needs urgent attention, particularly addressing the causes of homelessness, and see a change in focus towards the preservation of life and “turning people’s lives around”. • Aiken stated that she was working with the government to repeal the Vagrancy Act which is “not fit for purpose”, and develop new legislation to help people get off the streets. • West End ward Councillor Timothy Barnes, amongst others, expressed his support for this new funding and shift in attitude. |
| <p>Plans to “transform Oxford Street into a residential area” have been reported in the Retail Gazette.</p> <p>(21 February Article)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Retail Gazette published an article outlining several developments due to deliver almost 500 new homes on or near Oxford Street. • It is argued that this shift towards residential development is in reaction to an increasingly tough trading environment, as the high street loses customers to online shopping. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The private developments, totalling approximately £1 billion, will see a significant shift away from the high street’s traditional focus on retail, as residential properties become increasingly more profitable investments. |
| <p>Westminster City Council continued to promote their consultation on busking and street performers.</p> <p>(17 February Tweet)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westminster City Council has continued to promote their consultation regarding reform to busking and street performances in Westminster. • An interview was conducted with Hippodrome Casino CEO Simon Thomas, asking for his views on the matter. • Thomas expressed his appreciation for the positive impact that many street performers have in the area, but did note that some cause significant unwanted disruption. • Thomas drew parallels with the need for strict regulations on entertainment services such as gambling, ensuring that the impact of street performers on the community is “measured”. • This is part of a series of interviews with local businesses and residents on the topic of busking which are being conducted by Westminster Council. |
| <p>Businesses in Chinatown have continued to suffer a downturn in sales following the outbreak of the coronavirus.</p> <p>(18 February Article)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurants and other businesses in Chinatown have continued to see up to a 50% decrease in trade in the weeks following the emergence of the coronavirus. • A number of reasons have been given for this decline in sales, including a significant reduction in the number of Chinese tourists visiting the area. • The recent report of the first known cases of coronavirus in London last week has also been cited as a cause of the decline. |
| <p>Shaun Bailey announced that as Mayor of London, he would re-open 38 police stations.</p> <p>(19 February Article)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservative Mayoral candidate Shaun Bailey pledged to re-open 38 police stations closed since 2016 in a move to “boost public safety and confidence” if elected Mayor of London, including a number in Westminster. • Bailey argued that police station visibility was key to the safety of the city, and stated that this pledge could be achieved by the end of his first term in office. • City Hall funding would be cut by up to £15.4 million in order to fund at least two police stations in every London borough, with some having more. • Liberal Democrat Mayoral candidate Siobhan Benita has also pledged to re-open police stations shut by current Mayor Sadiq Khan. |

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| <p>Piccadilly Circus played host to a short documentary on the work of artist Pablo Picasso.</p> <p>(20 February Article)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A short documentary on the life and work of renowned artist Pablo Picasso was displayed on screens at Piccadilly Circus. • The documentary, originally filmed in 1956, was shown publically for the first time 47 years after the artist's death. The feature focussed on Picasso's work in his studio in the early 1950s. |
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Consultations

| Deadline | Consultation | Location |
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| 24 February 2020 | Street performance consultation – Westminster City Council | Link |
| 26 February 2020 | Air quality action plan consultation – Westminster City Council | Link |

Events forward planner

| Date | Organisation | Event | Tickets |
|------------------|---------------------------|--|---------|
| 26 February 2020 | New London Architecture | Dissecting the new London plan This half-day conference presents the key aspects that the industry will need to consider when planning for the future of the city. | £202 |
| 26 February 2020 | Women In Business Network | Women in business networking lunch Come along to this monthly networking lunch to make new connections and network with other local business women in Piccadilly. | £34 |
| 18 April 2020 | New London Architecture | West End & Soho photography tour Join architectural photographer Grant Smith on a bespoke photography tour of the West End and Soho. | £14 |