

Monitoring report: 6 March 2020

Overview

- Westminster Council leader Rachael Robathan has launched a new 'City for All' plan which will see significant investment in environmental, digital, and public infrastructure and policy in the city.
- Heart of London's statues celebrating the 350th anniversary of Leicester Square have been well received in the national media, and by local councillors.
- The government is preparing to move into the second phase of its coronavirus action plan, which may include measures such as the banning of large events and gatherings, to delay the effects of the virus on the UK. For the latest updates, visit our [COVID-19 Hub](#).
- The successful conviction of a council property leaseholder for listing their home on short-term letting websites has set a precedent for Westminster City Council in their commitment to combat abuses of short-term letting in the city.
- A Singaporean student visiting London's West End was violently assaulted in a racially motivated attack, linked to the outbreak of the coronavirus.

Monitoring

Overview	Detail
<p>Westminster City Council have committed to a new 'City for All' vision.</p> <p>(5 March Press release)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council leader Rachael Robathan has outlined the new 'City for All' plan, signalling a change in direction for the city. • The plan includes three pledges that will ensure that Westminster is ready for the future: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Becoming carbon neutral by 2040 2. Becoming a world leader in digital communication with residents 3. Building vibrant communities with an unprecedented £2.5bn investment programme • These measures are in addition to Westminster City Council's current action on climate change including declaring a climate emergency in 2019 and the development of a new air quality action plan. • Digital communication initiatives, such as improving Wi-Fi coverage across the city, have been proposed to make Westminster one of the "most technologically advanced cities in the world". • The £2.5 billion investment programme will cover improving and extending current infrastructure as well as public spaces over the next 15 years.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was reflected in Westminster Council’s 2020/21 budget announcement which saw £5 million set aside for environmental projects.
<p>Heart of London’s statues celebrating Leicester Square’s 350th anniversary have been well received.</p> <p>(28 February Article)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statues depicting numerous icons of cinema from the past 100 years have been well received by the public, gaining widespread media coverage. • Several national newspapers reported on the statues’ unveiling, as well as several Westminster Councillors sharing their support for the installation on social media.
<p>The government’s response to the coronavirus outbreak is moving towards the ‘delay’ phase.</p> <p>(5 March Article)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the number of coronavirus victims grows in the UK, the government are preparing to implement the second ‘delay’ phase of their efforts to slow the spread of the virus. • Features of the delay strategy include the banning of large events and gatherings, closing of schools, encouraging individuals to work from home, and discouraging the use of public transport. • Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has ruled out the potential closure of the London Underground system, and government advice for the moment is that it is “business as usual”, with no need for individuals to stockpile supplies. • The intent of the delay strategy is to push the peak of virus cases as far away from winter as possible to reduce the burden on health services. • For the latest updates, visit our COVID-19 Hub.
<p>Westminster City Council have set a precedent against abuse of short-term letting in the city.</p> <p>(2 March Press release)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westminster City Council have successfully prosecuted a leaseholder found guilty of advertising a council property on short-term letting websites. • The leaseholder was found to be in breach of their lease agreement by using a council property as a business, setting a precedent for future cases. • Cllr David Harvey, Cabinet Member for Housing Services, stated that he was pleased with the result, and hoped that this sent a message that Westminster Council were taking the issues associated with short-term letting very seriously. • MP for the Cities of London and Westminster Nickie Aiken, also shared her support for the ruling, stating that it was a “vital win” for the authority. • Approximately 1,500 properties across Westminster are currently under investigation for breaches of lease agreements, and Westminster Council are calling on the Government to introduce a compulsory registration scheme for property owners.

<p>A racially motivated assault occurred in London's West End in relation to the recent coronavirus outbreak.</p> <p>(4 March Article)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Singaporean student was violently assaulted whilst visiting the West End, with the assailants shouting "I don't want your coronavirus in my country" before physically attacking the man. • This comes amongst reports of increased prejudiced and racially insensitive behaviour towards Asian members of the public in the wake of the virus which has been used by some as an excuse to perpetrate "further hatred for people different from them". • The West End has already seen a significant decline in visitors from South East Asia, with the governor of the Bank of England warning that the coronavirus may result in a "large but temporary hit" to the UK economy.
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Consultations

Deadline	Consultation	Location
30 March 2020	Westminster City Council website survey	Link
5 April 2020	Westminster City Council Cultural Strategy 2020-24 Heart of London will be responding, follow the link or contact corporateaffairs@heartoflondonbid.co.uk for more information	Link

Events forward planner

Date	Organisation	Event	Tickets
15 March 2020	Greater London Authority	<p>Saint Patrick's Day Festival</p> <p>Taking place in Trafalgar Square, Saint Patrick's Day Festival is the largest celebration of Irish culture and community.</p>	Free
16 March 2020	Westminster City Council	<p>Open forum public meeting</p> <p>These regular public meetings provide an opportunity to discuss your issues about life in Westminster. The Leader of the Council and Cabinet members will also be present to answer your questions.</p>	Free
24 March 2020	WCC	<p>Air Quality Action Day</p> <p>We welcome anyone who is interested to come along and help educate more drivers about engine idling. Joining</p>	Free

		an action day is a great way to make a difference to air quality on your community.	
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