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Sent Via Email: rtailor@westminster.gov.uk

27 January 2020

Dear Rikin,

Consultation on Westminster City Council Budget 2020/21

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Westminster City Council's draft budget. We have just three main comments.

Capital Strategy 2020/21 to 2024/25

Growth, Planning and Housing

We note the inclusion of the Oxford Street District – Phase 2 project at £137.5 million.

We fully support this project and look forward to agreeing a mechanism to encourage and enable additional capital expenditure from public and private sector partners. We have previously raised with the Leader and Chief Executive of the City Council proposals, to develop commercial revenue streams in the district and hypothecate the income to be re-invested back into the area for ongoing management and maintenance. We await the formal response to this suggestion and stand ready to support the City Council in its aims here.

We would seek assurances that this budget figure can roll forward into future years if not fully spent within the time period. We hope the proposals for Oxford Street District will also ring-fence a sinking fund for high quality maintenance of the enhance public realm in the decades that follow the transformational works.

Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2022/23

Growth, Planning and Housing – General Fund

We note the expected increase in planning income which is forecast to generate an additional £1.250 million over three years. In our response to the draft City Plan we highlighted our concern that proposed policies on affordable housing provision in major commercial developments, may have the effect of slowing down the number of these developments in Westminster with a consequential impact on planning fees. We would like to discuss ways of ensuring that there are sufficient resources to ensure a fully functioning Planning Department, that meets the needs of a growing International Centre.

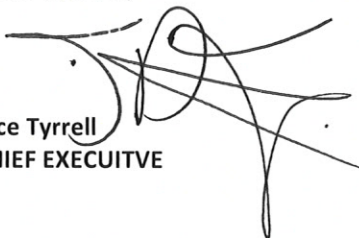
City Management and Communities

We note that future city management will generate efficiency savings of £2.445 million over three years following a review of front-line services and design. A further three-year saving of £0.487 million is identified as a result of a review of street cleansing.

We believe that both street management and street cleansing services in the International Centre are already inadequate and are concerned at proposals for further funding cuts. New West End Company has not been informed of these efficiency saving measures. We would like to see more information on funding proposals for issues such as street cleaning, waste collection, managing homelessness, dealing with anti-social behaviour and other street management concerns, to which New West End Company is contributing to raise standards.

In all cases, we would seek assurances that these savings are not being made at the expense of the quality of city management in the International Centre, where a range of street services need to be delivered at a level that reflects and enhances the international status for businesses, visitors, employees and local residents.

Yours sincerely



Jace Tyrrell
CHIEF EXECUTIVE