**Westminster City Council**

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City of Westminster

Highways Operations
**www.westminster.gov.uk**

Date: 19 October 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: Upgrading Westminster's gas street lighting**

I am writing to update you concerning Westminster City Council's Street lighting upgrade programme and the electrification of gas lights, that was paused earlier in the year pending a review.

As part of the review, we want to hear from our residents and interested parties to ensure the upgraded lights maintain the heritage look and feel as accurately as possible. As a result, we will be seeking input to the review in the weeks ahead.

The process of upgrading the existing lighting will focus on preserving our heritage and streetscape appearance. The planned review will give us the time to receive and consider your feedback to ensure we deliver that objective.

As part of the review, we will be undertaking a 4-week stakeholder engagement period between 20th October to the 20th of November 2022. We invite you to join us at one of three site visits, at Queen Anne's Gate near St James Park station, to discuss the extensive works undertaken to date in developing the gas mimics, gain feedback and see first-hand a gas effect LED lantern in operation.

The proposed dates for the visits are below. Please click on your preferred date which will lead you to Eventbrite where you can register to attend:

1. **Tuesday 25th October at 7:30pm**
2. **Wednesday 2nd November at 7:30pm**
3. **Thursday 10th November at 7:30pm**

Following the meetings, officers will review feedback ahead of a review report to the cabinet member.

Please be reassured we are committed to ensuring that the special character of the existing lighting on the impacted streets are retained. By way of background to the project we have worked closely with a specialist lighting manufacturer to develop a solution which replicates the look and style of our heritage lanterns without significantly changing the appearance. These works are part of a series of measures to help us become a carbon zero council by 2030 and

electrifying our gas lighting will reduce carbon emissions by 85% from the current 200 tonnes a year the gas lights produce. The embodied carbon in the work required to electrify our lights is just under one year's gas emissions.

Around 300 of our 14,000 street lightings in Westminster are gas powered, and some are listed structures. Whilst this is a small amount of the overall number of lights, they proportionally produce 8 times as much carbon emissions yet provide only a quarter of the light as a much lower energy modern LED lantern.

Gas lighting is increasingly difficult and costly to maintain, and it does not provide suitable lighting levels for our residents and visitors. The heritage of our city is incredibly important, and we want to make sure we can preserve as much of that heritage as possible. Our legacy of historic lights is just one of the reasons residents love Westminster and people want to visit here. However, our streets must also be fit for the demands we place on it and the safety of those who live, work and visit our city.

Streetlights are there to serve a purpose – to ensure people on our streets, especially those more vulnerable, feel safe at night. We need to ensure that our streetlights deliver on that primary objective regardless of their style or history. Personal safety becomes a concern when there are long delays in our ability to repair historic gas lights, leaving them out of light and areas in darkness is something we must avoid. Our whole approach to this work is focused on preservation – that's why our partnership with the likes of Historic England is so important.

Grosvenor (Kingsley) Windsor (Dickens) Rochester (Chesterton)

The above pictured lanterns are representative of the newly manufactured LED versions of the gas lanterns. The attention to detail including the pipe work, brass clock and replica mantles all look and give the appearance of a gas lantern. The output of the LEDs can also be adjusted during the night appropriate of level of people on the highway.

If you would like to attend one of the three site visits, please register for your chosen date by clicking on one of the links listed above. For more information, **please visit our website here.** If you have any questions, please email us at: lighting@westminster.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully,

Westminster City Council