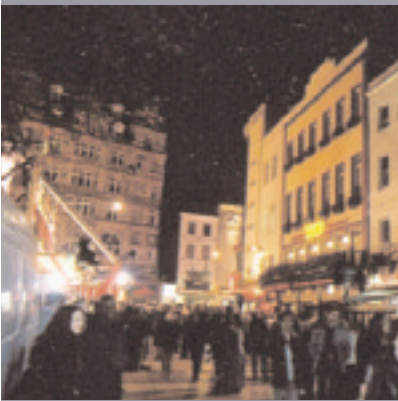




City of Westminster

# Leicester Square Action Plan Summary






# Introduction

By **Simon Milton**



At the heart of one of the busiest world cities, Leicester Square should be a place everyone is proud of. In recent years, the pressures of keeping the Square safe, clean, and attractive have mounted. As part of our Civic Renewal Programme, we have developed the Leicester Square Action Plan, an important step in reclaiming the Square's world class city status.

This Action Plan was developed together with the Leicester Square Association (representing local residents and businesses), the Police, and the Piccadilly Circus Partnership (a voluntary Business Improvement District on the edge of the Square). We consulted you on our plans to improve the Square, and indeed on many questions there was strong support for our approach. As a result of the consultation, Cabinet approved the final action plan. This document is a summary of the action plan, it provides a snapshot of the consultation responses, and on the back page is a timetable with more than 80 specific proposals. I look forward to working with our partners, so that we can once again make Leicester Square the jewel in Westminster's Crown.



Simon Milton  
Leader of Westminster Council





We have already taken steps to improve the feel of the gardens as they are, including re-turfing worn out grassed areas, restoring the fountain and commencing a programme of cleaning and upgrading the statues and monuments.





**Vision** With 7 cinemas and nearly 50 premieres a year, Leicester Square should be promoted as the home of cinema in Britain. We want to complement this with a family friendly setting and pleasant, well-managed alfresco dining. We will look to use imaginative lighting and public art schemes to make the Square more attractive and entice people down from the busy north terrace. A strong image will be promoted by drawing support from the media and the London Tourist Board.

**Physical Environment** As part of improving the physical environment, we are already reviewing street clutter, and will look to improve pedestrian flow with better signage.

To enhance the feel and safety of an area, lighting is very important and it is at the top of our agenda. General lighting in the Square is being improved and a new scheme of fixing floodlights to properties is being developed. Our new wardens will report any new lighting faults on a daily basis.

The gardens in the centre of the Square are an important part of London's heritage. We have already cleaned and repaired the fountain, returfed the gardens, and pruned the trees. We intend to open the gardens later and make them more attractive and safer by moving the stars' handprints inside and improving the lighting.

With Leicester Square Wardens, a new CCTV system, and changed entry and exit arrangements we aim to do more to control vehicles in the Square.

**Life of the Square** At present, the liveliness in Leicester Square too often occurs by default, as people make their way through, to and from clubs and bars. Our vision for Leicester Square is of a place lively for the right reasons. We will proactively design a programme of special events that fills the Square not only with film premieres, but also with family friendly fairs, festivals and exhibitions.

We will pilot schemes to extend the provision of tables and chairs outside premises, around the gardens, and beyond the current limit of 11 pm. Any extension of current alfresco dining would be in line with the highest standards of safety and cleanliness, and subject to consideration of detailed proposals.

**A Clean and Safe Environment** Leicester Square is a difficult place to keep clean and safe. As part of our Civic Renewal Programme we have already initiated a programme of clearing flyposting and graffiti. We are also providing more litter bins and better cleansing, and will provide wardens 24 hours a day. Through regular patrolling and use of the CCTV system these wardens will keep a watchful eye on noise, litter, faulty lighting or cracked paving, busking or illegal street trading, as well as vehicular access in the Square.

**Management** We already have a multi-disciplinary project group for the West End that has concentrated its activity on Leicester Square. An area manager, who supervises the wardens, will be the face to face contact for residents and businesses in the Square. We will continue our close liaison with the Leicester Square Association, the Metropolitan Police, and the Piccadilly Circus Partnership. With support from the Cross River Partnership, using the London Development Agency's Single Regeneration Budget, we will foster our working relationships with other organisations to achieve a common vision for this London landmark.

**The Next Stage** We are now concentrating on delivering our proposals, and will be meeting regularly with our partners to review progress. If you would like a full copy of the Action Plan, or any other information on Leicester Square, please contact the West End Team on 020 7641 2261 or email [leicestersquare@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:leicestersquare@westminster.gov.uk)

## Responses to the consultation, February – March 2002

We delivered questionnaires to all residents and businesses within a half a mile radius of the Square and to many stakeholder organisations. We received over 300 written responses and in addition held 13 meetings with various local groups. 39% of respondents were residents and 61% were visitors or employees in Westminster.

Here is a summary of the results.

Q1. Cinema vision	Residents	Visitors/Employees	All	
	87%	82%	84%	are in favour of our vision for the Square as the home of cinema
	4%	5%	4%	are opposed to our vision of the Square as the home of cinema
	9%	14%	12%	do not know
Q2. Family vision	Residents	Visitors/Employees	All	
	82%	76%	78%	are in favour of our vision of a family friendly atmosphere
	9%	8%	8%	are not in favour of Leicester Square being for families
	9%	16%	13%	do not know
Q3. Alfresco vision	Residents	Visitors/Employees	All	
	75%	71%	73%	are in favour of the Square as an area of alfresco dining
	12%	16%	14%	are against the alfresco dining vision for the Square
	13%	13%	13%	do not know
Q4. Gardens hours extension	Residents	Visitors/Employees	All	
	78%	82%	81%	support the gardens being open later into the evening*
	21%	18%	19%	are opposed to the gardens opening late
	1%	0%	0%	do not know
Q5. Vehicles restrictions	Residents	Visitors/Employees	All	
	85%	94%	90%	agree with more stringent controls over vehicle entry
	12%	6%	8%	do not support more control of access
	3%	0%	1%	do not know
Q6. Events programme	Residents	Visitors/Employees	All	
	84%	82%	82%	feel there should be more events other than premieres**
	15%	18%	17%	think no more events are necessary
	2%	1%	1%	do not know
Q7. Funfair	Residents	Visitors/Employees	All	
	50%	57%	54%	support the current arrangements for the funfair
	45%	35%	39%	feel that changes need to be made
	5%	8%	6%	do not know
Q8. Increased alfresco provision	Residents	Visitors/Employees	All	
	75%	76%	76%	are in favour of extending the provisions of alfresco dining
	25%	22%	23%	think no more outdoor dining is needed
	0%	2%	1%	do not know
Q9. Alfresco hours extension	Residents	Visitors/Employees	All	
	53%	68%	62%	support extending outdoor dining in the Square beyond 11pm
	45%	30%	36%	are against later outdoor dining
	2%	2%	2%	do not know
Q10. Late night entertainment restriction	Residents	Visitors/Employees	All	
	66%	54%	59%	are in favour of reducing late night entertainment in the Square
	34%	44%	40%	do not support reducing late night entertainment in the Square
	0%	2%	1%	do not know
Q11. Busking management	Residents	Visitors/Employees	All	
	75%	83%	80%	agree with properly managed street entertainment in the Square***
	25%	15%	19%	are against properly managed street entertainment
	0%	2%	1%	do not know

\* qualifications were made that gardens should only open late in summer,

\*\* qualifications were made that the events are not too late or too loud,

\*\*\* qualifications were made that buskers do not use amplification

# Action Plan Timetable

Set out below is the timetable for action, based upon the proposals in the action plan.

Period	Action
Already completed, underway or to be completed June 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• planning brief for the north west of the Square</li> <li>• planning brief for the north east of the Square</li> <li>• programme of repair to lighting</li> <li>• regular joint inspections with the LSA and the Police</li> <li>• scheme of fixing lights to properties around the Square</li> <li>• get fountain working</li> <li>• re-turfing worn out grassed areas</li> <li>• tree lopping</li> <li>• programme of cleaning and upgrading statues and monuments</li> <li>• interim surfacing works</li> <li>• parking discount scheme for theatre-goers and cinema-goers</li> <li>• mobile pissoirs in two locations at weekends</li> <li>• special screenings of animated films produced by local children</li> <li>• strict enforcement against breaches of tables and chairs licences</li> <li>• increased provision for clearing litter in the gardens</li> <li>• upgrading litter bins</li> <li>• new, more powerful street cleansing machine</li> <li>• coordinate commercial waste collections to specific time zones</li> <li>• require occupiers to keep clean the space outside their premises</li> <li>• coordinated programme of flyposting and graffiti removal</li> <li>• introduce a uniformed City Council presence</li> <li>• radio link system for wardens</li> <li>• multi-disciplinary project group targeted on Leicester Square</li> <li>• one-stop point of contact for key organisations</li> <li>• City Council attendance at LSA committee and PCP board meetings and community safety forum</li> <li>• regular seminars with interested organisations</li> <li>• regular trading standards inspections of ticket vendors</li> <li>• scheme to licence busking</li> <li>• make portrait artists scheme permanent</li> <li>• public art facilitator/lighting consultant</li> <li>• use licensing powers to press for larger venues to break down into smaller parts</li> <li>• encourage late-night venues with waiter service, and discourage alcohol-led activities</li> <li>• review funfair in 2002</li> <li>• seek changes in the training of door supervisors</li> <li>• amend rules of management to cover queuing and behaviour outside premises</li> <li>• introduce temporary parking barriers during some evenings along Whitcomb Street</li> <li>• use planning powers to discourage new nightclubs and take-aways</li> <li>• noise nuisance review</li> <li>• monthly round table with key organisations</li> </ul>
July to September, 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• draft planning guidance for the Square</li> <li>• designate the square as an area of High Duty and High Amenity</li> <li>• coordinate activity of utility companies</li> <li>• bring together management of access with new CCTV scheme</li> <li>• scheme for charities to manage planter boxes</li> <li>• extend licenses for tables and chairs later into the evening</li> <li>• voluntary agreement where films with a U or PG certificate are available in the Square on any given evening</li> <li>• set lower capacity limits for venues</li> <li>• gather detailed evidence of licensing breaches or poor management</li> <li>• establish a 24-hour warden scheme</li> <li>• bring in to operation the CCTV scheme</li> <li>• Leicester Square manager</li> </ul>
October to December, 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• completing scheme of fixing lights to properties</li> <li>• disabled/parent and toddler access to toilets scheme with local businesses</li> <li>• public transport discount scheme for family theatre and cinema-goers</li> </ul>
January to March, 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• open up a vista through trees from north to south</li> <li>• discuss options for introducing new street furniture</li> <li>• proactive programme of events, including more family-orientated events</li> <li>• work with LTB in establishing strong image of Leicester Square with potential visitors</li> <li>• work to improve routes in tourist guidebooks</li> <li>• introduce new arrangements for vehicle access</li> <li>• develop scheme for taxi collection from venues at night</li> <li>• change traffic entry and exit arrangements along Leicester Place and Leicester Street</li> <li>• replace entrance barriers with bollards</li> <li>• introduce scheme for control of street drinking</li> </ul>
April to June, 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attractiveness and security of smaller side streets</li> <li>• better use of signs</li> <li>• create two disabled parking bays</li> <li>• open air "tasters" for upcoming shows</li> <li>• introduce scheme for tables and chairs around the centre of the Square</li> <li>• open gardens later into the evening</li> <li>• establish considerate business schemes</li> </ul>
July to September, 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clear the streetscapes of clutter</li> <li>• move handprints to gardens</li> <li>• set designated parking areas</li> <li>• encourage improvements to building frontages</li> <li>• pilot scheme for a "chill out" period</li> </ul>
October to December, 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reinforce identity of ticket booth</li> <li>• radio link scheme for businesses</li> </ul>
January to March, 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review pedestrian safety at Cranbourn St/Charing Cross Road junction</li> </ul>
Timetable subject to further discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• re-surfacing (subject to further consultation, costs, and programming of works)</li> <li>• new ground level public toilet facilities into new developments in the area*</li> <li>• a new entrance to the Leicester Square underground station*</li> </ul> <p><small>*subject to this being provided as part of a new development</small></p>