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Royal Borough News

Councils lead radical reform of public services

Three west London councils have proposed major public service reform to save local taxpayers' £80 million-a-year while putting economic growth at the heart of the proposals.

Hammersmith & Fulham, The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council say that if the proposals are adapted and implemented in other areas they have the potential to save the UK billions of pounds by reducing dependency on the state while providing better public services, more jobs, and more affordable homes.

The three councils, which have led the way in local government by combining services, are one of just four areas in the country to be given special 'Community Budget pilot' status by the Government to develop seven radical plans for public service redesign.

Phillipa Roe, Leader of Westminster City Council, said: "Our proposals will stimulate our local economies, create the affordable housing we need, improve the lives of our residents and ensure that taxpayers get better value out of every pound spent."

The plans, which have been submitted to Government, include:

Putting employment prospects at the heart of the school day

Young people would be given a 'jobs passport' when they leave school which demonstrates to employers their skills, experience and aptitude. An employment programme running from the first year of secondary school through to sixth form and Further Education would complement academic learning by preparing young people for the realities of the jobs market. Young people will be taught about the local jobs market, they will be encouraged to volunteer and the work experience placement offer will be overhauled.

Every young person will receive a graded 'jobs passport' when they leave education which provides potential employers with evidence of their skills, experience and aptitude. Pupils who are identified at an early stage to be struggling will receive more intensive support.

The trial is set to run in six schools across Tri-Borough over two years, benefitting 3,500 pupils and potentially saving between £1.5 and £2.5 million annually.

Councillor Nicholas Botterill, Leader of Hammersmith & Fulham Council, said: "This will bridge the disconnect between what is taught in schools and what is required from employers. Our aim is to ensure that every young person leaving education is ready for employment."

Boosting house building and creating more jobs

Existing local authority housing stock should be used to finance the construction of new homes that are targeted at middle-income

earning families, under the proposals.

The three councils have asked for greater financial freedoms to use their £2.4bn of assets to borrow £50million needed to build 300 homes, creating 700 construction jobs in the process. They also want new flexibilities to charge fairer rents for had working middle-income families who are being squeezed out of central London housing markets. The proposals would eventually generate a surplus of £500,000 a year, part of which will be used to help 270 existing unemployed social housing tenants find jobs.

Councillor Sir Merrick Cockell, Leader of The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, said: "Using our existing housing assets to give us the financial capability to build more homes makes perfect sense. We want to create a housing ladder of opportunity, using the revenue this creates to help people further down the ladder."

Integrating health and social care to help more people stay in their own home

Plans have been submitted to save around £66 million per year by integrating health and social care support to enable more people to stay independent in their own home.

The integrated model will provide targeted support to 20 per cent of people who are currently responsible for 77 per cent of health and social care cost. They will be given help and support to be cared for in their own homes, reducing demand for more expensive institutionalised care either in a hospital setting or residential home.

Nationally the NHS needs to save £20 billion by 2014/15 in order to manage rising demand, particularly the pressure from a growing elderly population.

"We will focus more on prevention and providing the right support for people in their own homes which is much more effective for the individual and their family and much better for the taxpayer," said Cllr Roe, Leader of Westminster City Council.

"This is about changing the way primary health and social care services are delivered, with acute or residential care becoming the last resort not the first destination."

Extending care proceedings pilot nationally

Results from a care proceedings pilot launched by the three councils in April to dramatically speed up the majority of children's care cases have been submitted to Government in the hope it will be rolled out more widely across London.

The pilot is intended to achieve targets set out by the Government for children to have a permanent care plan resolved by the court as soon as possible, and for court proceeding to last no longer than six months.

Indications show the pilot, which started on 1 April, has dramatically reduced the duration of care proceedings cases from a previous average of 58 weeks to just 26 weeks. The scheme is

expected to save £1.9 million a year from the public purse and has the potential to save tens of millions of pounds nationally.

The pilot involves a new way of working between the three local authorities, family court judges and Cafcass, in which the councils' social workers agree to deliver their assessments promptly and to a set standard, and judges place the child's timescales at the heart of their decision making.

Reducing adult reoffending

Proposals to shift resources and support to short sentenced prisoners will cut reoffending by 10 per cent and deliver economic benefits and savings for taxpayers of up to £25 million over five years.

The councils want to create a Tri-Borough Custody Referral Team to engage with all offenders at the earliest point, testing for all drugs and providing preliminary screening for alcohol issues, mental health and learning difficulties. A dedicated Reducing Reoffending Team will provide bespoke support around the needs of short sentenced prisoners, within custody, through to release into the community. The support package will be based on a contract of active engagement and the service will work closely with the police to enforce against those who continue to offend.

Figures show that short sentenced prisoners are more likely to reoffend than longer term prisoners. The prolific nature of their offending has a significant impact on local communities, including violence, theft and burglary. By providing more targeted help earlier and focussing on a cohort who receive very little support or supervision currently, it has the potential to deliver economic benefits and savings for tax payers of up to £25 million over five years, while reducing local spend on reoffending by between £1.2 million and £6.1 million over five years.

Expanding support for families with complex needs

The Government is being asked to support and incentivise local investment to help more families whose lives are in danger of spiralling out of control.

The three councils want to extend and expand the Government's current approach around helping troubled families beyond the current 2014/15 funding period. However, to make this work they are asking the Government to provide a fair funding solution, which rewards greater local investment.

Putting economic growth at the heart of infrastructure projects

Billions of pounds worth of economic growth would be generated if Whitehall departments

worked more closely with local authorities on major infrastructure projects, say the three councils.

Multi-billion pound schemes - like High Speed 2 (HS2)—are often planned in Government 'silos' limiting their potential.

The £32 billion rapid rail link between London and Birmingham will see a new generation of high speed trains, running at speeds of up to 250mph, stopping at a major new interchange station just north of Wormwood Scrubs.

However, there are currently no firm HS2 plans for 'over-site' development at the station and the local councils argue that HS2 would be capable of delivering many more new jobs and homes than currently envisaged if Government departments worked more closely with them.

If the railway design was optimised to facilitate development above and around the HS2 hub station, as well as the Kensal Green Crossrail station, the area could deliver 21,000 new homes and 196,000 new jobs.

Cllr Nicholas Botterill, Leader of Hammersmith & Fulham Council, said: "HS2 has the potential to unleash the creation of a new business hub bigger than Canary Wharf but only if Whitehall start seeing this as a regeneration project, which needs local input and expertise, rather than just a railway project."

The community budget proposals

The proposals were submitted to Government on 31st October. In many cases there are 'asks' of Government to help implement the plans. The three councils are calling on Whitehall and government agencies to work closer with local government and their partners, providing new financial freedoms, breaking down budgetary silos and sharing data.

Cllr Botterill, Leader of Hammersmith & Fulham Council, said: "We have submitted a series of reforms which will reduce the burden on the public purse, attract new economic growth and improve the lives of our residents. Many people may see these proposals as plain old commonsense, but the fact is that we need Government to join the party to make much of this work."

Cllr Roe, Leader of Westminster City Council, added: "As three of the country's leading councils, we are eager to get on and deliver but as things stand councils are not always beneficiaries of the savings. Councils cannot afford to put in the upfront investment if the dividends are reaped by Whitehall depts. This is why it is essential that Government helps us pool resources and give us the freedoms to do our jobs."

Cllr Sir Merrick Cockell, Leader of The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, said: "Local Government is the most efficient arm of government in this country, through these proposals we are proving that we are the most innovative."



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Major changes in the Royal Borough with creative policing?

On the 29th of November, the Community and Police Engagement Group held a meeting Chaired by Wilson Hinson (Colville Ward Tenant's Action Group) at Kensington Town Hall. The attending audience comprised mainly of resident senior citizens who are concerned about policing and safety in the Royal Borough and inter alia issues ranging from busking to cycling.

The Mayor's Office for Policing and Community (MOPAC) plans to create a Safer Neighbourhood Board in each London Borough to oversee local policing and set priorities and replace the existing structure on local policing. Board members will be recruited from local residents.

Superintendent Neil Evans and Royal Borough's

Chief Community Safety Officer spoke on policing and setting priorities. A MOPAC representative also spoke on how the Safer Neighbourhood Board will function. A volunteer from Victim Support also spoke on the many ways victims and witnesses receive help from the independent national charity.

Superintendent Neil Evans stated that because the Metropolitan Police has had its budget cut by £500 million pounds it is now looking at alternative ways to policing. Police stations will close and police constables may operate from supermarkets.

The Chief Community Safety Officer attempted to reassure the audience that despite the huge budget cut, no matter what, the Metropolitan Police will do everything it can to continue maintaining safety, law and order.

800 camera CCTV hub unveiled

A new state-of-the-art closed-circuit television (CCTV) control hub - with access to cameras covering virtually the whole of west London - was opened on Wednesday 5th December.

The new CCTV hub, which can stream images from around 800 cameras, will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week and utilises the latest high definition, infra-red and LED technology.

Councillors from Hammersmith & Fulham and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea unveiled the new facilities, which were described as the 'eyes and ears' of law-abiding residents, in Hammersmith. This is another example of the groundbreaking initiative between the two boroughs to improve services through more cooperative working; rather than paying for a control room in each borough the two councils will consolidate their CCTV operations within one.

High definition digital surveillance cameras, surpassing many used by professional photographers, now cover large parts of west London and the two local councils are now joining forces to create a fully integrated system.

Using a combination of fixed and pan-tilt-zoom (PTZ) cameras, nearly 7 million hours of footage a year, or 134,000 hours a week, will be streamed from the councils' 798 cameras into the CCTV control room - which cost £80,000 to upgrade.

Some of the high definition PTZ cameras can zoom hundreds of metres and come equipped with infrared night vision technology and even windscreen wipers to combat the elements.

Live images can be beamed direct to command centres in police stations or downloaded at the touch of a button to be used in criminal investigations or as evidence.

Inside the control room, ten 47 inch LED screens

form a video wall that beams live images from around the two boroughs to a team of five operators who work around the clock to keep the boroughs safe. Council operators are poised to instantly respond to live situations and alert the police, or other appropriate authority, as events unfold.

From high speed pursuits and violent assaults and other crimes in progress including people acting suspiciously, CCTV staff can track incidents as they are happening -increasing the chances that criminals will be caught red handed.

Councillor Greg Smith, H&F Council Deputy Leader, said: "CCTV is a fantastic way to deter, catch and convict criminals. This new CCTV hub is the eyes and ears of law-abiding residents and we now have cameras covering every nook and cranny of our patch. Any criminal stupid enough to try something in west London needs to know we have the capability to track them down and bring them to justice. Criminals can run but they cannot hide."

A recent examination shows the councils' camera network is capturing around 500 incidents a month.

Councillor Rock Feilding-Mellen, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's Cabinet Member for Civil Society said: "This new system is boosting our ability to create safer environments and combat crime and disorder. By combining our control room with our neighbours in Hammersmith & Fulham we will have state of the art tools to monitor incidents and this will help us provide a more improved community safety."

In November council CCTV operators tracked a prolific robber to a secret hideout where he was arrested. A drink driver who failed to stop after an accident was snared after CCTV cameras followed him home and the owner of a stolen bike was reunited with their property after the thief was caught red-handed on CCTV.

Earl's Court woman charged with tax fraud

A Kensington and Chelsea resident has been charged under the Theft Act 1968 with making a false claim on an estate valued at £2.5 million.

Ayse Akgun (37) a Turkish national was charged at Notting Hill Police Station on Tuesday 4th December, following an investigation

by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC).

The estate included properties in London and Spain and bank accounts holding substantial funds.

Akgun has been released on bail until 20th December 2012 when she will appear at Hammersmith Magistrates Court. Investigations are ongoing.

World's End and Lots Road celebrate £1m lottery grant

Chelsea's World's End and Lots Road area are to receive £1million in lottery funding to strengthen community links and make the neighbourhood an even better place to live.

The Big Local programme will start in April 2013. A representative from the programme will work with residents, local community organisations and businesses and ward councillors to develop a plan for the area.

Cllr Gerard Hargreaves, a local Cremorne ward councillor said: "This will be a huge boost to residents and is a great opportunity to strengthen and develop the community. The scheme will be completely resident-led and it will be up to local people to decide how to spend the money to improve their area." Cabinet Member for Civil Society, Cllr Rock Feilding-Mellen said: "We are very pleased that the Big Local has chosen the World's End estate and Lots Road area to receive this funding. The Council has already been promoting community led

development projects through its City Living, Local Life wards grants which are very well received by residents. I know that local people will be keen to work with Big Local programme to get the best out of this award."

Big Local is funded by the National Lottery with the funding spread over ten years. It is about bringing together all the local talent, ambitions, skills and energy from individuals, groups and organisations who want to make their area an even better place to live.

The World's End Estate consists of seven high rise tower blocks. The part of Lots Road included is a community made up of mainly social housing. Asburnham primary school, Chelsea Theatre and Chelsea Wharf (offices and design studios) are also within the vicinity.

Other London boroughs which are receiving Big Local funding include Newham, Tower Hamlets, Westminster, Waltham Forest, Camden, Islington and Brent



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THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

Food

Lidgate's owner teaches Jamie Oliver and Jimmy Docherty the secrets of super sausages



Danny Lidgate, owner and head butcher of Lidgate Butchers

A Royal Borough butcher has been teaching two television celebrity chefs the best ways to make traditional British bangers for upcoming series Jamie and Jimmy's Food Fight Club.

As part of the programme, Jamie Oliver and Jimmy Docherty will be taking on our European neighbours to see if their cooking can match up to the local delicacies.

Danny Lidgate, owner and head butcher at Lidgate Butchers in Holland Park, met with Jamie and Jimmy to teach them his secret sausage recipes in preparation for their challenge in Germany – to see if Britain's sausages can measure up to the Germans'.

The competition will see them going up against a respected German sausage maker to try and persuade the Prince of Bavaria to put their sausages on his menu instead.

Danny decided to show Jamie and Jimmy his award winning Victoria and Albert Sausage, which is made using fresh free-range pork, mustard, horseradish and a little seasoning. He demonstrated how this is made and gave the boys the inside scoop on what he and his customers think makes a good sausage.

Danny said: "It was great being able to show Jamie and Jimmy what we know about sausages. I'm the fifth generation of our family to run the shop, so the knowledge we have has been passed down over the last 150 years.

"I'm confident that the tips we gave them will give them a good chance against the Germans and am looking forward to seeing who wins!"

The amusing televised programme was aired on, 13th December 2012 on Channel 4 with the British pair making a resounding impression on the good natured Germans.

Stallholder Ibrahim cooks up a winner

Golborne Road stallholder Ibrahim Siteri's Moroccan Soup Stand has won the best Street Food and Takeaway category in the coveted BBC Radio 4 Food and Farming Awards 2012.

Ibrahim who started his stall in 2001, with his friend Mohammed, serving soups, tagines, grilled meat and fish wowed the BBC judges Valentine Warner and Charles Champion with the large range of tagines on display - all bubbling away on the heat and smelling delicious.

The BBC judges commented that the stall, which has just four stools at the front, could be dismissed as unassuming because of its looks except for the buzz of activity around it which indicated it was very well established in the community.

Most of the ingredients are purchased from local suppliers, meat from Le Marrakech, halal butchers at 64 Golborne Road, fish from Golborne Fisheries at 77 Golborne Road and spices from the Golborne Cash & Carry at 84 Golborne Road.

A delighted Ibrahim told the BBC that winning the award made an incredible difference. He said: "I am so pleased to have this, it is extra motivation to keep on in this business and try to expand."

Later Ibrahim paid tribute to the Royal Borough's Street Trading Office and markets manager Nick Kasic, in particular, who he said has been very helpful and supportive over the years.

Congratulating Ibrahim and his partner Mohammed, Cllr Nick Paget Brown, the Royal Borough's Deputy Leader, said: "Well done to Ibrahim and Mohammed for their dedication and hardwork over the years and for consistently producing such wonderful and tasty fare with ingredients sourced locally. The popularity of the stall shows that market regulars and visitors have long regarded the Moroccan Soup Stand as simply the best. This view is also now clearly held by the BBC's food experts who have given them this very prestigious award."

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Dining Out

El Pirata Detapas and tea

El Pirata Detapas, a Spanish cuisine restaurant, located at 115 Westbourne Grove, Notting Hill, is highly praised by Gordon Ramsay and deservedly so however, no parade square bashing 'F' word is included in the menu.

The new tea and tapas menu available demonstrate the achievement of El Pirata Detapas Spanish culinary creativity in combining classic Detapas dishes that are specifically matched and ritually served with the various fragrant tea leafs grown at breathtaking high altitudes together with newly added introductions to etiquette rules, glass and tableware design.

The combination of tapas being presented are as yet not included in the main printed table menu, such is the novelty, but are appended on separate folio. The types of exclusive tea on the special menu are grown and the leaves hand picked at three select tea plantations in India and Nepal.

The whole leafed teas are ceremoniously served at the table in cylindrical teapots together with miniature hourglasses timed to let the sand drain in three and five minutes to indicate as to when the tea has been brewed to perfection and ready to be poured into large brandy styled tumblers, indeed the parabolic curvatures of the glasses retain the heat and flavour of the tea. The first tea should be consumed prior to eating to allow the cleansing, detoxification, and desired relaxing effect to take place.

The Spring Reserve from the LaKysiew Garden grown at an altitude of 4,200ft from the Meghalaya region in India compliments the tapas of Seared Tuna, Ajo Blanco, Marinated Almond Prawn Tartare with Egg Yolk Citrus Sauce, Roasted Fig with Cheese Foam and Crispy Ham.

Again from the same garden, the Silverleaf Green tea blends well



with an array of dishes of Seared Scallops, Cauliflower Puree and Grilled Mandarins with Fresh Cod in Pil Pil Sauce.

Further north in the Himalayas, the Hile region of Nepal produces Jade Oolong this is grown and picked from the Jun Chiyabar Garden at an elevation of 6000ft and is best

drank with the following tapas of Langoustine and Ceps Risotto, with Idiazabal Cheese Emulsion with Serrano Ham Croquettes.

The dessert of Ganache of White Chocolate with Jelly Mint and Cookie Dash also proved to be a delight.

The Tea & Tapas pairing evening being promoted by El Pirata Detapas

and Lalani & Co will be available at the restaurant for dinner only until Friday 21st December at £39 per person.

At seven o'clock on Thursday evening the restaurant was relatively empty however, an hour later the establishment was packed including the basement with all tables seemingly occupied and as I later exited I held the

front door open to allow a huge surge of arriving diners enter the restaurant. I hope they all managed to be seated at tables.

El Pirata Detapas
115 Westbourne Grove
London W2
Tel: 020
www.elpiratadetapas.co.uk

Memories of China



Menus in Chinese restaurants can sometimes equal the length of the I Ching, pages of dishes that map the length and breadth of that great country.

The menu at Memories reads like the greatest hits of Chinese cuisine; under the starters, soups, seafood and meat sections one will find the

customary regional classics.

Beyond the a la carte section lie a series of set menus—if you are feeling suitably regal you might like to try the "Imperial Banquet in the traditional Mandarin Style" or simply the "Mandarin Tale".

For the regionally inclined set meals with "bias towards Peking" and North West China are available. Those of a pastoral persuasion are invited to sample the pleasures of the "Fragrant Garden". It is said that a menu can embody the anthropology of a culture; it can be a cultural history, a lexicon or a Tao. This one certainly reads as such.

Unsurprisingly, Memories of China has been a mainstay on Ebury Street for nearly three decades.

The décor is suitably restrained, in keeping with the Belgravia location. The staff are warm and inviting and the service is winningly efficient. Wearing the whites is Kam Po Bul. And what of the food; wonderfully crisp Prawn Toast, the Steamed Dumplings are a comfort food nonpareil, the Mixed Vegetable Tempura are uncommonly tasty.

The Sichuan Crispy Aromatic Duck is mercifully light of the greasy undertow one finds in lesser establishments.

Surprisingly the Cantonese dishes were as equally achieved as the Sichuan and Mongolian.

The wine list contains customary French classics alongside a number of New World favourites. What to say! This review is as satisfied as I felt after leaving the restaurant, and justly so! The abiding memory is of a culinary conquest.

Memories of China
65-69 Ebury Street
London SW1W 0NZ
Tel: 020 7730 7734

Property

Oscar Wilde's Chelsea home for sale



The family home of Oscar Wilde on Tite Street

Commemorated by a blue plaque part of Oscar Wilde's family home on Tite Street in London's Chelsea where he lived with his wife and two sons for eleven years is for sale through Savills for £1.15 million.

It was here, in his library, that Wilde wrote some of his best known works including *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Wilde's library is now a bedroom and forms part of the one bedroom flat that is available to buy, which also includes an elegant reception room with high ceilings and an open plan kitchen.

In the late 19th century Chelsea was home to London's bohemian quarter. Popular with painters and poets famous neighbours on Tite Street would have once included artists John Singer Sargent and James McNeill Whistler. Wilde moved into the property with his new wife Constance in 1884 and left after his fall from grace and imprisonment in 1895 when the Marquis of Queensberry accused the famous playwright of homosexuality due to his affair with his son Lord Douglas.

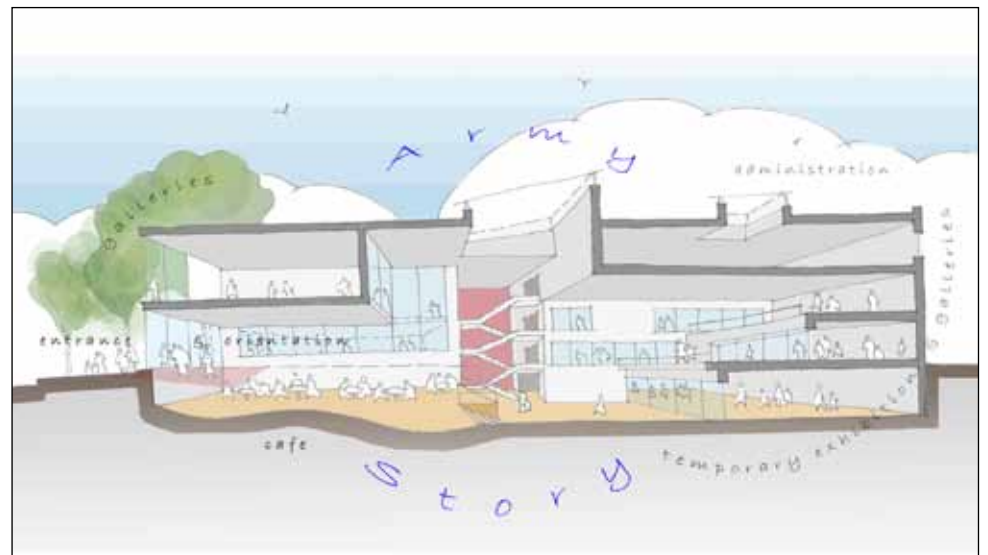
Tom Wilson, Savills Sloane Street, said: "Tite Street is ideally situated in the heart of

Old Chelsea, between the Kings Road and the River Thames and would make the ideal pied-à-terre or first time buy. The link with Oscar Wilde makes it a very special property, especially as you would get to sleep in the very same room where he wrote some of his famous books and plays. The property has also been beautifully decorated and would allow someone to simply move in and enjoy the flat."

"Chelsea is now one of London's most desirable residential locations and prices for a family home can start from £4 million upwards. We forecast that prime central London will outperform all other markets over the next five years with a 25% increase in prices by 2017."

The property has recently undergone an extensive renovation by the current owner Myce Lee, an interior designer: "The property was originally a two bedroom apartment when I bought it but I wanted to create an open living environment with rooms that flow into each other without feeling constricted. During the works everything was stripped back whilst being sympathetic to the history of the building, particularly in the bedroom which is where Wilde would have once written some of his most important work."

The National Army Museum Awards Redevelopment Project Contracts



Artists impression-Section Perspective

The National Army Museum (NAM) is undertaking a radical transformation of its Chelsea site to provide its visitors with an enhanced museum experience. To help the Museum realise its Building for the Future renovation project, it has appointed a team to be led by interdisciplinary designers BDP and accompanied by exhibition designers, Event Communications. The project will be managed by project managers and cost consultants, Focus Consultants.

BDP and Event Communications will bring their expertise together to reconfigure the building to provide greater public access and facilities, improved learning spaces and create innovative and exciting new gallery spaces. The team will work alongside NAM's internal team to update and reinterpret the story of the British Army and to present the Museum's collection. Focus Consultants will be working with all partners to oversee and ensure the smooth running of the venture.

Janice Murray, Director-General of the National Army Museum, said: "We are excited by this collaboration and I am confident that we will produce a world-class museum development, which will deliver a fresh, informative and exciting visitor experience for all."

Tim Leach, Architect director, said: "The creative adaptation of this major UK museum presents a wonderful opportunity to reorder the building, re-present the collections and communicate to a wider audience the significance of the Army Story. BDP has an established expertise in the design of museum environments and visitor destinations together with the creative, adaptive reuse of existing

buildings developed over many projects and with recently completed projects at Kelvingrove in Glasgow, Shetland Museum and Archives, as well as ongoing refurbishment work at the British Museum in London."

James Alexander, CEO of Event Communications, comments: "We are absolutely thrilled to be able to continue our relationship with the National Army Museum and excited at the prospect of collaborating with the team to breathe new life into this important museum. It has an enormous story to tell at an important time in the army's history."

Richard Aston, Partner at Focus Consultants, said "This is a prestigious and important development. The team at Focus Consultants is delighted to be involved in such an exciting and inspirational project."

The National Army Museum opened on its current site in 1971 to house the national collections of the Land Forces of the Crown, and now receives in excess of 270,000 visitors a year. With no major building work undertaken since 1980, the project provides the NAM with the opportunity to upgrade the existing site to meet the needs of its growing audiences.

During the redevelopments the Museum will deliver a diverse outreach programme of travelling exhibitions, Collection loans, informal and formal learning sessions and will be supporting the 2014 commemorations and the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo.

The Building for the Future project is being supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The Museum has received initial support towards its £11.3m HLF bid, including £350,000 development funding.

Beaney-Pearce comment on the Chancellor's Statement

As George Osborne sat down you could hear a collective sigh of relief that the much talked of "mansion tax" has not been tabled. Hardly surprising, given the prospective costs of administering such a tax. The fact that many people throughout the country are asset rich and cash poor also needed to be considered before embarking down that road.

Treasury statistics, compiled from the Land Registry, must have shown the Chancellor what those operating in the housing market already know which is that, post the introduction of

the 7% stamp duty in his Spring Budget, the effect has been a drop in Revenue as transaction volumes were negatively impacted immediately.

Of potentially greater interest to the prime housing market is the long awaited Treasury statement (now due on 11th December) about the way in which any taxes on non natural UK property buyers are to be levied.

In the meantime, the Chancellor has sent a very wise message that London needs overseas investment and a booming housing market to help the UK's economic recovery.

Gold standard approval for residents' association

Four residents associations reflecting the diverse and varied nature of the Royal Borough received Gold Standard Awards for their work to improve the quality of life in their communities and make the borough a better place in which to live.

Gold Standard Awards were presented to Edwardes Square Scarsdale & Abingdon Association (ESSA), Chelsea Association of Tenants (CATS), Stable Way Residents' Association and Beaufort Gardens Knightsbridge Residents' Association at a ceremony in Kensington Town Hall by the Council's Cabinet Member for Civil Society, Cllr Rock Feilding-Mellen.

ESSA's good practice in consulting and communicating with its members was singled out for special mention, while the Stable Way Residents' Association's work to achieve a Grassroots Grant that funded laptops and internet access was commended.

The 100-year-old CATS association was praised for the varied number of community activities it organises, including putting on a coach trip to the seaside in summer and pantomime in winter. The newly formed Beaufort Gardens Knightsbridge

Residents' Association, which was only set up in autumn 2011, was commended for the speed that it established itself as a strong local voice and for achieving a number of important improvements to long-standing problems, including forming a partnership with the nearby McDonalds to significantly reduce rubbish and litter.

Congratulating all the winners, Cllr Feilding-Mellen, said: "Your work undoubtedly helps improve the quality of life in your communities and also in the borough. Recognising and rewarding the good work that residents' and tenants' associations do continues to be one of my priorities and I want to actively encourage all tenant and resident associations in the borough to seek and attain the Gold Standard."

As well as the award each association gets a grant of £500 to spend on a project it feels would benefit the association or its local area.

Since the scheme was established five years ago some 26 associations have reached the Gold Standard. The associations that are awarded the standard show a strong commitment to seeking residents' views and ensuring they are heard, demonstrate best practice and are fit for purpose in relation to the association's size and aims.

Join the Kensington Academy and Leisure Centre Public Art Panel

The Royal Borough is commissioning a work of art for the Kensington Academy and leisure centre site and is now recruiting for its Public Art Panel.

The panel members will join representatives from the academy, leisure centre and the Council to help select the artist, decide the work of art, where it should be positioned on the site and involve the wider community in the decision-making progress. Panel

members should have some art knowledge and be able to commit to regular meetings.

To register your interest in joining the panel, please email kalcenquiries@rbkc.gov.uk with a short summary of your interests and skills and who you represent in the community.

For latest updates on the Kensington Aldridge Academy and leisure centre scheme visit www.rbkc.gov.uk/kalc

Tell us your views about basement development in the borough

Basement extensions are common in the Royal Borough and the Council is now consulting on its revised planning policy towards this type of development.

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea was probably the first local authority to produce a comprehensive set of planning policies to control basement development and over recent months the Council has been reviewing these.

In Kensington and Chelsea extending homes upwards or rearwards may not always be acceptable. Extending homes downwards is, therefore, seen by some residents as a practicable option.

The 'Basement Extensions: Issues' paper was the first stage in reviewing basement development policy and following consultation last April and May a final draft policy has now been produced for consultation. This consultation runs until Thursday 31 January 2013 and the Council expects to adopt its new basement policy by the end of 2013.

Councillor Tim Ahern, the Royal Borough's Cabinet Member for Planning, said:

"The Royal Borough is one of the most densely populated parts of the country and basement extensions are often chosen by homeowners as a way of increasing the size of their property.

"We are determined to get this aspect of development right and want residents to have their say on our revised basement policy."

The paper is available to view on the Council's website www.rbkc.gov.uk/planningandconservation.aspx or at all Council libraries and in the Planning Information Office at Kensington Town Hall.

Email the Policy Team at planningpolicy@rbkc.gov.uk for copies of these documents or with any queries you may have.

If you wish to send your comments in writing send them to:

The Executive Director of Planning and Borough Development
Policy Team
The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Kensington Town Hall
Hornton Street
London W8 7NX

Major New Year roadworks at Shepherds Bush

Residents, commuters and road users are being warned about a series of major, essential roadworks in Shepherds Bush early in the New Year.

A month-long closure of a westbound section of Shepherds Bush Green is planned from Monday 28 January so that National Grid, working with Skanska, can replace aging metal gas mains with tough new plastic pipes on the eastern far corner of the Green.

It means the road will be closed to westbound traffic from Monday 28 January to Monday 25 February, with diversions in place and the potential for serious traffic disruption across Shepherds Bush and into neighbouring Kensington and Chelsea.

The project will take place in three phases, beginning on Monday 14 January 2013.

Phase one: 14 to 28 January

Preparatory work will be carried out in Shepherds Bush Green with one single lane closed outside W12 Shopping Centre.

Phase two: 28 January to 25 February

The westbound carriageway of Shepherds Bush Green will be completely closed between Holland Park Roundabout and the W12 Shopping Centre.

Signed diversions, up to the A40 and down Old Oak Road then Askew Road, will be in

place and engineering teams will be working extended hours, seven days a week, to get the job completed as soon as possible.

The bus stops on Shepherds Bush Green, near the W12 Shopping Centre, will be suspended and some local bus services will change during this time.

Phase three: from Monday 25 February for approximately eight weeks

Single lane closures will continue on both Uxbridge Road (opposite Shepherds Bush station) and Shepherds Bush Green (outside W12 Shopping centre) as further gas main replacement work is carried out.

Computerised signs will give road users up-to-date information on how the work is progressing and there will be clearly signposted diversions during the project.

The diversion route takes motorists travelling from Holland Park Avenue and Holland Road up to West Cross, the A40 Westway, Old Oak Road and Askew Road. The bus lane from Uxbridge Road to Shepherds Bush Green will remain open to all traffic while the closure is in place. National Grid will be sending letters to local residents and businesses at the start of the New Year and will regularly update them throughout the project. Local bus passengers will also be updated about any changes to their bus routes.

Growth of community kitchen gardens

A north Kensington community kitchen garden has been selected as the 2,012th site by the Mayor of London as part of his food growing initiative Capital Growth.

The Mayor initiated the scheme in 2008 with the aim of creating over 2,012 community gardens across London.

To celebrate St Charles community garden's selection ten fruit trees were planted last Friday 14 December by members of community groups with plots in the garden. Deputy Leader of the Royal Borough, Cllr Nick Paget Brown; Chair of London Food, Rosie Boycott and representatives from Capital Growth were on hand to help with the planting.

In addition to receiving ten fruit trees the St Charles garden was also awarded a £1,000 grant and a selection of horticultural tools.

The project has transformed an underused courtyard into a green open space which allows 15 community groups to grow fruit and vegetables. The groups include Second Half Centre, Age UK, Baraka Youth, Dalgarno Neighbourhood Trust, St Charles School, Blenheim Project, Open Age, the Oremi Centre, St Charles Health and Wellbeing staff, WAND and Living Well.

Cllr Nick Paget Brown said: "I am sure that residents who use the St Charles Health and Wellbeing Centre will be delighted to be able to enjoy the 2,012th community kitchen garden. The Royal Borough has been working with local communities for many years to

create community gardens, often in unusual or underused places, and they have proved to be very popular and a real community asset. I would like to thank Capital Growth for helping with this latest venture which will benefit 15 local groups. In addition to developing thriving vegetable plots, projects like this are also nurturing community links and a sense of neighbourliness."

Rosie Boycott said: "I want to say a huge thank you to London Food Link, our many sponsors and partners as well as all the wonderful volunteers who have rolled up their sleeves to transform forgotten, unloved spots across the city. There are some truly inspiring stories of communities coming together to green their local spaces, reaping a wide range of dividends not least cheaper, healthier food. Capital Growth has played a major role in the revival of urban gardening in London, placing us in the top rank of cities who are seeking to reconnect with the pleasures of food growing."

Sarah Williams, part of the Capital Growth team based at London Food Link, said: "Capital Growth has been able to help so many amazing and inspiring people, across London and from every walk of life, but it is the people running the projects that have made the real difference. We are looking forward to celebrating this huge achievement with them and to building on the success of the network in the New Year."

Out & About

Grosvenor Chapel welcomes new priest, Rev'd Dr Richard Fermer



Parishioners and local residents congregated at Grosvenor Chapel (located in the heart of Mayfair) on the 7th November to celebrate the Licensing of the Rev'd Dr Richard Fermer as the Priest-

in-Charge, by the Bishop of London, The Rt Rev'd and Rt Hon. Richard Chartres KVCO DD FSA. Following the formal ecclesiastic ceremony, hymns and prayers, the clergy including the Bishop of London and the new priest

relaxedly intermingled with the pious laity while an abundance of delicious canapés were served and wine too was mercifully available in generous quantities.

Outside in the late autumn evening on South Audley Street,

Grosvenor Chapel in its classical architecture, glowed in the mist, redolent of incense and blessed Christian sanctity.



Grosvenor Chapel
South Audley Street
London W1K 2PA

For further information please visit: www.grosvenorchapel.org.uk

Merlin Holland, Oscar Wilde's Grandson, is to become Patron of 'The National Centre for Citizenship and Law (NCCL)'



An event on the 21st November was held in the magnificent architectural surroundings of the Royal Courts of Justice in London.

The evening began with a courtroom performance of Oscar Wilde's trial (25th May 1895) with Clive Anderson as Mr Alfred Wills the presiding Judge, Merlin Holland as Oscar Wilde and Charles Gill prosecuting played by Roy Amlot QC. The re-enactment was humorous as guests seated in the public gallery laughed loudly and applauded at the transcribed cross examination between Roy Amlot QC and Merlin Holland standing in the dock.

The comical courtroom theatric's was followed by a drinks reception in The Painted Room and a book signing session by Merlin Holland of 'The Wilde Album: Public and Private Images of Oscar Wilde' and 'Irish Peacock and Scarlet Marquess: The Real Trial of Oscar Wilde' including an auctioning of a facsimile of 'Wilde's de Profoundis'. All of the signed copies were sold and the proceeds went to the Oscar Wilde Education Project.

Merlin Holland, had spoken passionately about his grandfather, the unknown Oscar Wilde's pioneering work through education, rehabilitation and charity after his release from Reading Gaol in 1897.

The synergy of his work fits well with that of 'The National Centre for Citizenship and the Law (NCCL)' as NCCL inspires young people by delivering law and justice education programmes at national heritage sites across the UK.

Tim Desmond, Chief Executive Officer of NCCL, further explained: 'We have been introduced to Merlin who is now helping us to provide a legacy for his grandfather through the Oscar Wilde Education project which we will be delivering at the Royal Courts of Justice, London, The Galleries of Justice Museum, Nottingham and the Sessions House in Northampton. Merlin was the perfect choice to be invited to become patron of NCCL.'

Nicola Burley, Director of Enterprise and Operations said: 'We are honoured and proud that Merlin Holland has agreed to become patron of NCCL. We are also very grateful for the support given by our sponsors, without whom the event would not have been possible.' This groundbreaking event was sponsored by 6 Kings, Bench Walk, whose barristers provide the very best advocacy and advice across all areas of practice. Their generosity and willingness to support the NCCL has helped to boost the total profits donated to the charity to almost £4000 which will go towards the setting up of a new project to teach young people about tolerance and anti-discrimination.

Education

Kensington and Chelsea College joins National Skills Academy network



Kensington and Chelsea College is delighted to announce that it has been recruited by The National Skills Academy for Creative & Cultural as a new Associate College member.

We will collaborate closely with North Hertfordshire College, one of the Skills Academy's 24 Founder Colleges, in one of four newly-formed regional cluster groups in the eastern and south eastern regions.

The new cluster group will work with the Skills Academy's education and industry network, together with local employers and education services to deliver improved training, skills, education and advice to students seeking careers in the creative and cultural sector.

As a college, we are committed to maximising the benefits from the abundance of creative and cultural organisations across London

We recognise that there is predicted to be significant growth in the sector over the coming years - up to 40% by 2020, based on research by the National Skills Academy 2012 - and as quoted in the Cultural Metropolis 2012, produced by the Greater London Authority "the future of London's cultural sector will depend heavily upon the talents and skills of its workforce"

Over the coming year we will continue to develop our courses and apprenticeships to ensure that we equip our learners with the right skills for this exciting and dynamic sector.

Monica Box, Kensington and Chelsea College Principal, says: "Learners at Kensington and Chelsea College have long benefited from our strong tradition of programmes within the creative and cultural field and from our location within a renowned UK creative and cultural location - our associate college status within the National Skills Academy for Creative & Cultural now provides a third benefit for learners. Industry specific skill development is essential to economic success and becoming an associate college will keep us right at the heart of business thinking."

Pauline Tambling, Joint CEO, Creative & Cultural Skills and Managing Director, National Skills Academy for Creative & Cultural, says: "We are thrilled to welcome these new members to our National Skills Academy network. Our ability to deliver successful programmes depends entirely on the collaboration between industry and education partners. With the support of the new colleges, we can help

Footwear Designer Emma Hope helps launch Cordwainers at London College of Fashion 125K Campaign



London College of Fashion launched a season of fundraising activity last night, marking the 125th anniversary of Cordwainers at LCF. In an event hosted at the College's Golden Lane site, guests were able to catch a glimpse of the specialist workshops where some of the world's most successful footwear and accessories designers learnt their craft.

The fundraising campaign aims to raise a minimum of £125,000 to maintain Cordwainers at LCF as the world's premier destination for emerging designers, and support the future of the British footwear and accessories industry.

Footwear designer and Cordwainers alumna, Emma Hope, talked about her time at the College saying: "The fantastic thing about Cordwainers at LCF is the 'making' ... from pattern cutting to working with leather, (the course) was very practical. I am always thanking Cordwainers for the practical skills it gave me - it gives you everything."

Emma also thanked the incredible staff that taught her and talked about their 'hard won knowledge in industry'. Talking about the 125K fundraising campaign she commented, "Let's try hard to do as much as we can to help the next generation."

With the removal of Government provision across University funding, support is needed to

provide life-changing scholarships for those who might otherwise not be able to study. It will also enable the College to invest in new, state-of-the-art equipment.

MA Fashion Artefact alum, Christina Hamilton, received vital scholarships from the Worshipful Companies of Cordwainers and Leathersellers throughout her course. Christina said:

"Receiving the funding was a huge weight off my mind - without their help I could not have done what I've done and bought the leathers that I used in my collections. Staff support and how they guided me was also invaluable."

The College's specialist workshops, which were in use by current students just hours before the event, were transformed into a magical space for the evening and displayed work from the latest cohort of MA Fashion Artefact and MA Fashion Footwear talent. The alumni roll call of Cordwainers at LCF reads like the Who's Who of the footwear and accessories industry, from footwear heavyweights Jimmy Choo, Patrick Cox, Linda Bennett and Emma Hope to more recent stars, Rupert Sanderson, Charlotte Dellal, Joanne Stoker, Camilla Skovgaard, Nicholas Kirkwood, Kat Maconie, Beatrix Ong and Una Burke.

Give a gift that reveals new talents!

Treat someone special to one of hundreds of exciting experiences that could inspire a new start for 2013!

Kensington and Chelsea College's Christmas gift vouchers are back by popular demand and promise to take the stress out of Christmas shopping this year.

The vouchers can be redeemed against hundreds of fun, short courses at the college ranging from art, yoga, percussion workshops and Spanish to screen writing, barbering, photography and how to apply make-up!

With classes based in great West London locations, those attending a course will find

they are just a stones throw from the boutique and café lined streets of historical Chelsea to the vibrant and artistic quarters of Notting Hill.

So whether it's for a singing sibling, design mad dad, fashion crazy friend or a language loving partner, give a Kensington and Chelsea College voucher this Christmas and watch someone special discover a new side to them!

Vouchers can be purchased up to the value of £100. For more information, terms and conditions or to purchase a gift voucher visit www.kcc.ac.uk/secure/voucher.php

For more information about the college visit www.kcc.ac.uk or call 0207 573 3600

New Middle Row Primary School clears the last hurdle

Planning permission was secured on Thursday 6th December for a new Middle Row Primary School at a meeting of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's Planning Committee.

The decision means that work can now begin on a modern school on the site of the old nursery building. Opening in September 2014, the new school will increase capacity from 256 to 450, helping with the growing demand for places in the borough and provide a specialist centre for up to 16 pupils with severe speech and language difficulties.

Welcoming the decision Councillor Elizabeth Campbell, Cabinet Member for Education, said: "I'm delighted that planning permission has been given for this much needed redevelopment of Middle Row Primary School. The buildings that the school has been using are no longer able to meet the demands of modern teaching and I am sure the children and staff will enjoy the new facilities they will have in 18 months time."

You can keep up-to-date with what is happening with the school at www.rbkc.gov.uk/midlerow



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Comment on the Chancellor's Autumn Statement from Mike Fleming

Mike Fleming CTA, TEP. Tax Director of Straughans Chartered Accountants commented:

Pensions

- “The lowering of the current £50,000 cap on annual pension contributions eligible for tax relief to £40,000, and the reduction of the lifetime allowance from £1.5m to £1.25m is both short sighted and short-termist.”

- “What the economy needs more than anything is stability – by delving into the pensions pot in such an erratic way, the treasury is effectively stealing from its future – not a recipe for sustained growth in my book.”

Corporation tax

- “on a positive note I am encouraged to hear that corporation tax will be cut by a further 1%, falling to 21% in 2014, creating the most favourable

conditions for business in any western economy”

Fuel tax

- “Rural businesses and sole traders who rely on cars or vans for their livelihood will be heartened by the cancellation of the proposed 3p per litre rise in fuel tax. I am glad to see the government demonstrating their commitment to supporting SMEs through this decision.”

Universal Credit and Real Time Information

- “while I cannot argue with the government's aim of creating a system where it ‘always pays to work’, I have deep concerns about the way Universal Credit - and the Real Time Information (RTI) system which will feed into it through PAYE - will operate.”

- “HMRC have been tasked with implementing RTI across the UK in time for the launch of Universal Credit in October 2013,

which in my view is a dangerously tight timescale and could cause widespread systemic errors.”

- “The requirement for employers to submit employee information each time an individual is paid could prove hugely time-consuming and disruptive to business for employers. RTI may help to launch Universal Credit, but it could wreak havoc for SMEs.”

Tax avoidance/evasion

- “In my opinion the announcement of £77m of funding for HMRC to expand their anti-avoidance and evasion activity is political, not practical.”

- “We clearly have a problem with tax avoidance but I would suggest HMRC's time and money would be better spent on the still-bigger problem we have with VAT fraud.”

- “The amount of tax at risk from tax avoidance is dwarfed by the scale of the problem we

have with VAT and other direct taxes which make up over 60% of the £35 billion ‘tax gap’.”

- “It would have been nice to hear that HMRC would at last be investigating all of the money laundering/proceeds of crime reports that they currently have at their disposal. After all, is it not more important and more rewarding to investigate suspected crime as opposed to suspected tax avoidance. Low hanging fruit, Chancellor!”

The GAAR

- “The Chancellor's proposal of a ‘General Anti-Abuse Rule’ or GAAR is intended to be a harbinger of fairer times, but this ignores the danger that it will operate more like a purse seine net rather than a specialist fisherman.”

- “The GAAR could in fact actively disadvantage the less well off and could prove particularly detrimental for SMEs engaged in hitherto

legitimate tax planning behaviour such as the transfer of business assets between husband and wife or between partners in business.”

- “As the GAAR relies on a judge's opinion of what is ‘reasonable’ tax planning behaviour, the richer the individual (perhaps due to the scale of their tax avoidance) the more likely they are to be able to engage a top class lawyer to get them off the hook.”

IHT

- “I was pleasantly surprised that the Chancellor chose to increase the nil rate band on IHT and even more surprised that he chose to carry on with the transferability of the nil rate band between married couples. Well done Chancellor!”

Divorce: till the new tax year do us part

While families across the country prepare for the traditional festivities of Christmas, there will be some couples who, despite their best efforts, feel that separation in 2013 is the only way forward. Divorce patterns generally show a spike in January, when the pressures of one family Christmas are too far and the natural turning point of the new year drive people to file for divorce. But there are cogent tax reasons - not least in terms of the division of property assets - why people should in fact be waiting until the new tax year in April to go their separate ways.

Due to the way the tax year is organised, couples who separate in January could be liable to higher tax bills than those who prepare for separation but do not announce it until April. A couple who separated in January and then began the business of transferring property from one spouse to the other would not be eligible to take advantage of the exemption from Capital Gains

Tax (CGT) which normally applies to married couples. This is because any transfer of property between spouses after the end of the tax year in which they separated is not exempt from CGT. However, if a couple planned to split on or after 6th April, but - while still officially together - organised a transfer of property from one party to the other in that year, this would not be chargeable to CGT. While an extra three months may seem a long time to wait once the decision to separate has been made, it's clearly worth bearing in mind the huge savings to be made in terms of CGT in taking the time to allocate your property assets as desired before heading down the path to divorce.

Obviously many couples may not want to simply allocate the family home or other property assets to one party in this way. There are many other ways of dividing property on divorce, all with their own tax implications.

Fortunately for the stability and protection of families, the rule regarding the non-exemption from

CGT of property transfers between separating/divorcing couples is waived when the property in question is the family home. This is due to the fact that if the property can be classed as a ‘Principal Private Residence’ (PPR) - which usually requires the family to have lived there the majority of the time since the acquisition of the home - it is then not chargeable to CGT on transfer.

If a couple own a main property, which they would class as the ‘family home’ but have actually been living elsewhere for up to 36 months, they should still be eligible to the exemption from CGT as long as they can prove it has been their main home in the past.

It's also possible to secure further extensions on PPR relief during divorce proceedings, which are usually conditional on the partner who has moved out agreeing not to claim a new property as a principal private residence, and relinquishing any financial interest in the family home to the spouse who continues to live there. This is obviously all dependent on the partner who

was retained the family home continuing to live there.

While this sounds sensible, it can create an uncomfortable period of limbo for the partner who moves out. Retaining the family home as their official principal residence essentially discourages the purchase of a new home, as that would automatically become their PPR instead, which could leave them liable to capital gains tax on the sale of the family home. In the case of a ‘Mesher’ order being granted, which prevents the home being sold until an agreed point such as a child reaching a certain age, this limbo period can last years, unless the partner who moved out accepts the CGT implications and buys a new property regardless. Am I the only one in thinking that this is a bitter penalty to pay for graciously (or indeed ungraciously) offering to move out of the family home?

This ‘delayed penalty’ effect could be one reason why many divorcing couples opt to sell the family home. As the legal position on the division of assets

on divorce is to split everything 50:50, this can often feel like the fairest and least complex way to do things. In reality couples often finally decide on a less even split, usually weighted in favour of the partner who will take on primary care of the children, but putting the family home on the market at least releases capital which then can be allocated as the couple - and their lawyers - see fit.

It is clear that the issues surrounding property and divorce are complex, especially when the implications for tax are taken into account. This is another reason why buying some time in waiting for the new tax year may not be a bad idea. Not only does this give a couple time to transfer any property or other assets tax-free before the 6th April, it also presents an opportunity to consider the other available options for the disposal or allocation of property on divorce. This could be one step towards ensuring that, while inevitably emotionally draining, the divorce need not be financially crippling too.



It's no longer enough simply to select a whole outfit or a complete room setting from the pages of a glossy magazine; the most stylish wardrobes—and homes—are filled with a mixture of classic, contemporary and made-to-measure to create a truly personal look.

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The biggest breakthrough in propulsion since the jet engine



THE SKYLON SPACEPLANE

Reaction Engines Ltd. announced on 28th November the biggest breakthrough in aerospace propulsion technology since the invention of the jet engine. Critical tests have been successfully completed on the key technology for SABRE, an engine which will enable aircraft to reach the opposite side of the world in under 4 hours, or to fly directly into orbit and return in a single stage, taking off and landing on a runway.

SABRE, an air-breathing rocket engine, utilises both jet turbine and rocket technology. Its

innovative pre-cooler technology is designed to cool the incoming airstream from over 1,000°C to minus 150°C in less than 1/100th of a second (six times faster than the blink of an eye) without blocking with frost. The recent tests have proven the cooling technology to be frost-free at the crucial low temperature of -150°C.

The European Space Agency (ESA) has evaluated the SABRE engine's pre-cooler heat exchanger on behalf of the UK Space Agency, and has given official validation to the test results:

"The pre-cooler test objectives have all been successfully met and ESA are satisfied that the tests demonstrate the technology required for the SABRE engine development."

Minister for Universities and Science, David Willetts said: "This is a remarkable achievement for a remarkable company. Building on years of unique engineering know-how, Reaction Engines has shown the world that Britain remains at the forefront of technological innovation and can get ahead in the global race. This technology could revolutionise the future of air and space travel."

Well over 100 test runs, undertaken at Reaction Engines Ltd's facility in Oxfordshire, integrated the ground-breaking flight-weight cooling technology and frost control system with a jet engine and a novel helium cooling loop, demonstrating the new technologies in the SABRE engine that drive its highly innovative and efficient thermodynamic cycle. This success adds to a series of other SABRE technology demonstrations undertaken by the company including contra-rotating turbines, combustion chambers, rocket nozzles, and air intakes and marks a major advance towards the creation of vehicles like SKYLON a new type of reusable space vehicle that will be powered by SABRE engines, designed primarily to transport satellites and cargo into space. Wednesday 28 November 2012 Alan Bond, who founded Reaction Engines to re-build the UK's rocket propulsion industry and has led the research from the start, said:

"These successful tests represent a fundamental breakthrough in propulsion technology. Reaction Engines' lightweight heat exchangers are going to force a radical re-think of the design of the

underlying thermodynamic cycles of aerospace engines. These new cycles will open up completely different operational characteristics such as high Mach cruise and low cost, re-usable space access, as the European Space Agency's validation of Reaction Engines' SABRE engine has confirmed. The REL team has been trying to solve this problem for over 30 years and we've finally done it. Innovation doesn't happen overnight. Independent experts have confirmed that the full engine can now be demonstrated. The SABRE engine has the potential to revolutionise our lives in the 21st century in the way the jet engine did in the 20th Century. This is the proudest moment of my life."

Dr Mark Ford, ESA's Head of Propulsion Engineering, said:

"One of the major obstacles to developing air-breathing engines for launch vehicles is the development of lightweight high-performance heat exchangers. With this now successfully demonstrated by Reaction Engines Ltd, there are currently no technical reasons why the SABRE engine programme cannot move forward into the next stage of development."

Retirement boosts physical and mental well-being

More men retire in December than any other month and many people are reporting that retirement has improved their physical and mental well-being leaving them more fulfilled. Research by Saga Health Insurance shows that half of people (49%) take up a sport after retiring, a third (32%) say they feel more fulfilled and another third (31%) say they are more physically active than when they were working.

Perhaps the most positive change is people's mental well-being - over a quarter (27%) say they feel more mentally active since leaving work, compared to just 16% who say they are less so. This could be due to the number of people who take up new hobbies or embark on learning new skills in retirement.

Stress levels also drop dramatically upon retirement. Over half (52%) say they feel less stressed than when they were at work, with men more likely to say this (58%) than women (42%).

Interestingly, it seems that women find it harder to mentally adjust to life after work. Over a quarter (28%) of women report that their stress levels got worse after retiring, compared to 13% of men, women are also more likely to say that they are less fulfilled - 28%, compared to 20% of men.

Walking is the most popular new exercise people take up in retirement, with a quarter (26%) saying they take it up as a sport, swimming is the next most popular new activity, with one in ten retired people taking the plunge.

Roger Ramsden, chief executive, Saga Services, commented: "Some people approaching retirement may have concerns about what life after work may mean for them, but the truth is that for a great many people, retirement is a chance to get active, both mentally and physically and enjoy new activities they didn't have time for before."

The free online Saga Health Club can help over 50s monitor the benefits of a healthy and active lifestyle. By joining at www.sagahealthclub.com people can access a health assessment which provides an accurate and scientific evaluation of their lifestyle and looks at their future risk of developing diseases such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes. All people have to do is fill out a simple questionnaire about their health, family history, eating and exercise habits. The health club can then provide them with a 12 week action plan and regular updates with useful information such as exercise and nutrition tips to help them improve their health.

Whooping cough outbreak continues

According to figures published by the Health Protection Agency (HPA) last month, 1,322 cases of whooping cough (pertussis) were reported in England and Wales in September 2012,

bringing the total number of cases so far this year to 6,121.

The total number of cases so far in 2012 (up to end of September) is more than five times higher than the annual total number

of cases reported in 2011 (1,118) and almost seven times higher than the total in 2008 (902) – the last 'peak' year before this current outbreak. In September there was one pertussis-related death in an infant under three months of age, bringing the total number of deaths in this age group so far this year to ten.

At the end of September, the Department of Health announced that pregnant women would be offered the whooping cough vaccination to protect their newborn babies, who are not usually vaccinated until between two and four months. The introduction of the vaccine programme in pregnant women will help to boost the short term immunity passed on by women to their babies while they are still in the womb.

Dr Mary Ramsay, head of immunisation at the HPA, said: "We have been very concerned about the continuing increase in whooping cough cases and related deaths and welcome the urgent action recently taken by the Department of Health to introduce a vaccine for pregnant women."

"The introduction of a vaccine for pregnant women will not have an immediate impact on serious infection in infants so vigilance remains important. Working with

the Department of Health we will continue to regularly monitor figures to evaluate the success of the programme.

"All parents should ensure their children are vaccinated against whooping cough on time, even babies of women who've had the vaccine in pregnancy – this is to continue their baby's protection through childhood. Parents should also be alert to the signs and symptoms of whooping cough – which include severe coughing fits accompanied by the characteristic "whoop" sound in young children but as a prolonged cough in older children or adults. It is also advisable to keep babies away from older siblings or adults who have the infection."


Whooping cough, also known as pertussis, affects all ages. Young infants are at highest risk of severe complications and death from whooping cough as babies do not complete vaccination until they are around four months old. In older children and adults whooping cough can be an unpleasant illness but it does not usually lead to serious complications. Whooping cough is a highly infectious bacterial disease which spreads when a person with the infection coughs and sheds the bacteria which is then inhaled by another person.

Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia


In one booklet, everything you want to know about this debilitating illness:

- Discover how to spot the symptoms.
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Gardening

Start planning for the gardening year ahead



Primula

It may be cold outside but there is plenty of gardening you can do with your feet up inside at this time of year. Now is the best time to see the overall structure and shape of your garden which means you can assess what you already have and plan on how to improve it.

You don't have to spend a fortune and your garden can be any size whether in the country or in a town. Have a good look through the seed catalogues for summer flowers you can grow from scratch and flick through gardening books and manuals for ideas and easy to implement garden tips. If you're thinking of growing your own fruit and veg then it's a great time to plant seeds indoors for some early crops such as lettuces, summer brassicas such as cabbages and cauliflowers, spinach and salad onions. A job for January is to get seed beds ready and now is also the time to prune currant and gooseberry bushes.

A simple garden solution for January is to bring colour to container evergreens. It's a good idea to invest in a basic collection of container evergreens – box, conifer, holly and bay – that you can customise through the seasons by adding bedding plants around the base of each bush. With just one £50 National Garden Gift Voucher you can create a mix of containers that look great grouped together or scattered through the garden with a variety of colourful plants decorating them such as white cyclamen for winter, lavender blue pansies in spring and white and pink daisies in summer.

Another plant great for instant winter-

spring colour and perfect for containers, window boxes and borders is the Primula. The majority bloom in the spring, but they have been known to flower through mild winters. There is a wide range of colours available from bright yellow to pastel reds and blues and they can grow in most soil types and be planted in sun and semi shade. They can be used very effectively in bedding schemes with tulips and other winter-spring bedding plants or planted alone in blocks of colour. When planting Primula in containers, use multi-purpose compost and ensure that they never dry out – and remember to dead head the plants regularly as this will encourage a longer flowering period.

January's garden checklist ...

- Clean and oil garden tools
- Scrub pots so they are disease free and don't infect new plants
- Sharpen secateurs
- Take the lawnmower in to be serviced
- If it snows, shake it off evergreens, hedges and conifers to stop the weight causing any damage
- Treat timber fences, archways and sheds with wood preservative
- Bring mature shrubs to life by pruning older branches as close to the stem as possible
- Keep container plants protected from frost and check to see if they need watering
- Remember to put out food and water for birds



National Garden Gift Vouchers can be bought and redeemed at over 2,000 outlets in the UK, with more than 90,000 garden plants and products on offer. Visit www.thevoucher garden.co.uk to view details of all the outlets that sell and accept them or call 0871 384 3237 for more information. You can also buy them online.

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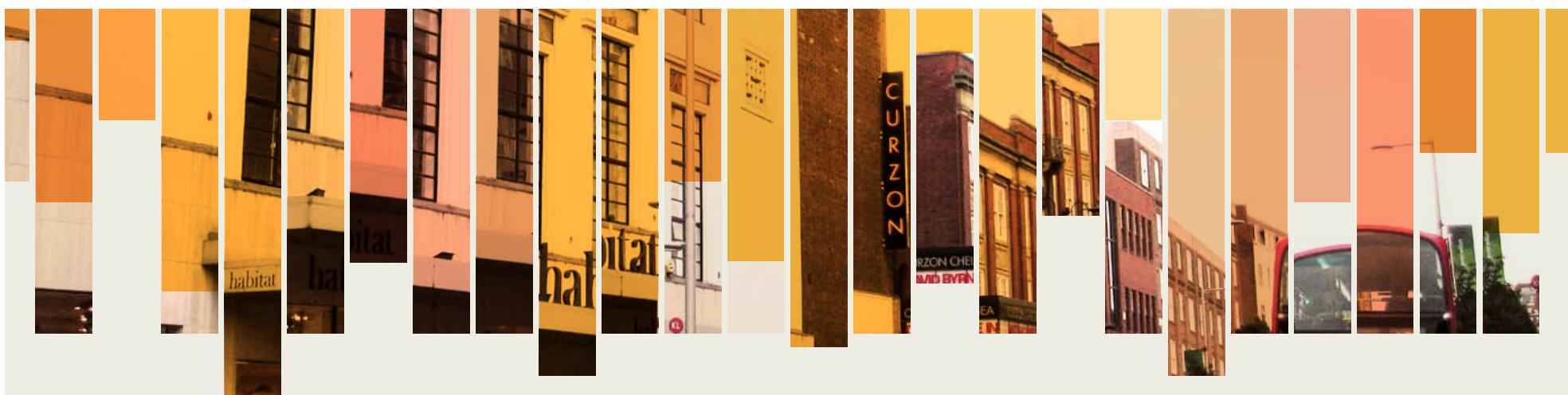
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Cadogan staff or members of the design team will be available during the exhibition to discuss any questions you may have.

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200-222 Kings Road is part of Cadogan's estate. It is on the corner of Kings Road and Chelsea Manor Street. It currently comprises the Habitat store, Chelsea Cinema and Trafalgar Public House. Cadogan are proposing to create a new mixed-use development, including providing a new cinema and pub on the site.

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