

## 5. Objectives for the Management Plan

### 5.1.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1.1 The objectives set out below reflect the concerns and aspirations of all those organisations represented on the Steering Group regarding the issues raised in the evaluation of the management issues of the site. The objectives flow from: an understanding of the 'living' and diverse nature of the component parts of the site as places of work, prayer, education and residence; from the pressures on the universal values of the site; understanding its opportunities, and from the vision for its future.
- 5.1.1.2 The objectives begin with the overall objective of the Management Plan. This is followed by objectives raised by the management issues and from the vision for the future which is to the benefit of all those who visit, worship, work, learn and reside within the site. Some objectives, for example those which address the need to safeguard the views of the site, reflect the need for further understanding of the WHS before firm management proposals can be developed.

### 5.1.2 The objectives

#### *The overall objective*

#### **Objective 1**

To safeguard the outstanding universal values for which the Westminster WHS was inscribed which are embodied in the buildings, spaces, monuments, artefacts and archaeological deposits within the site, the setting and views of and from it, its iconic status and the activities which take place within the WHS. [Section 2] The Management Plan should seek to guide, influence and advise those who are managing the organisations involved in the site.

*The adoption and implementation of the Management Plan: Achieving appropriate coordination across the WHS*

- 5.1.2.1 Three principal organisations – Parliament, Westminster Abbey and Westminster School - occupy the WHS. While their histories are intertwined, each is independent in its mission, function, administration and requirements. There are also a number of other bodies, such as the GLA, Westminster City Council and English Heritage, that also have an interest in parts of the site. There are a number of issues on the WHS, such as maintaining the working autonomy of the individual institutions, conservation, visitor management and traffic, where the interests of the organisations potentially complement each other or clash.
- 5.1.2.2 There is a desire for a more coordinated approach to those issues of common interest. The Management Plan provides the approach to achieve this.

### Objective 2

To have an effective, accurate and workable Management Plan which will be capable of support by all the organisations represented on the initial Steering Group.

### Objective 3

To establish a Group, on which the principal organisations represented on the initial Steering Group with an interest in the management of the WHS are fairly represented, to review progress of the implementation of the Management Plan, to assist in developing Action Plans, and to review the Management Plan at appropriate intervals to be agreed.

### Objective 4

To consider the most effective means of coordinating the implementation of the Management Plan and associated projects and initiatives.

*A living, sustainable place, where the outstanding universal values and architectural, symbolic, historic and other significances are safeguarded*

*Achieving a coherent World Heritage Site within a boundary that reflects its outstanding universal values*

- 5.1.2.3 The existing WHS is contained in two separately bounded areas, on either side of a major traffic route, St Margaret Street/Abingdon Street. This route follows the historic route through the Palace of Westminster, albeit slightly re-aligned for the construction of the New Palace buildings. The road overlies archaeological deposits related to the early periods of the Palace and Abbey.
- 5.1.2.4 In addition, key parts of the Palace of Westminster, notably Portcullis House, are currently excluded from the WHS. Portcullis House is a working part of the modern parliamentary complex, housing the offices of MPs and committee rooms etc. In keeping with the rest of the Palace, the building was designed by internationally renowned architects and was built to last for several centuries. Both Abingdon St and Portcullis House therefore share the outstanding universal values of the WHS.
- 5.1.2.5 Other key spaces, which, in addition to their intrinsic significance as historic places, share the outstanding Universal Values of the WHS, are also excluded from the current WHS boundary. They are Victoria Tower Gardens, Parliament Square, Abingdon Street Gardens and part of Old Palace Yard.

**Objective 5**

To seek the immediate integration of St Margaret's Street, Abingdon Street and Old Palace Yard within the boundary of the WHS in order to ensure their protection and to create a single unified site.

**Objective 6**

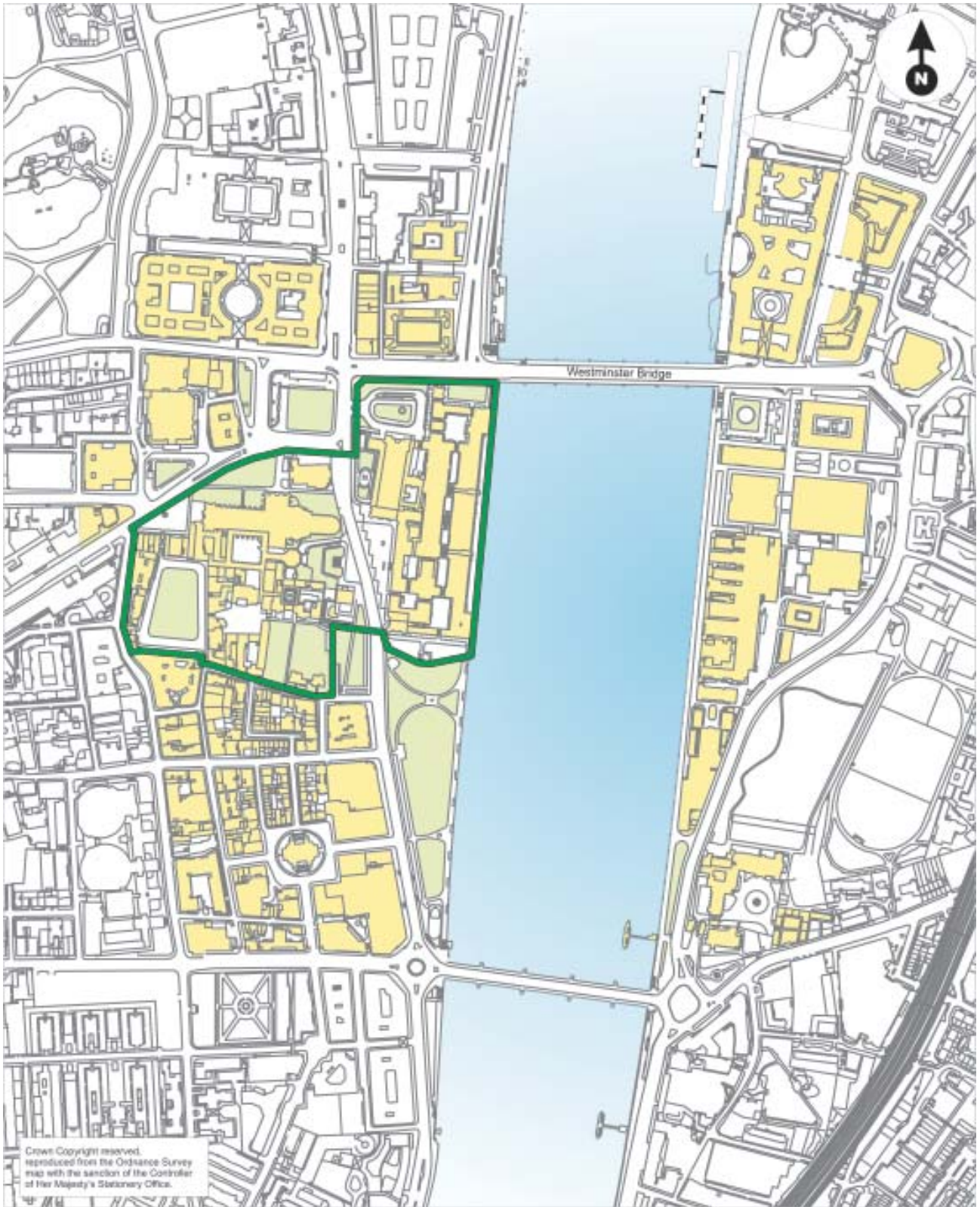
In the medium term, to consider an enlargement of the WHS in order to include, and therefore protect, those buildings and spaces associated with the Palace of Westminster, Westminster Abbey including St Margaret's Church, which share the Outstanding Universal Values. Such elements would include buildings spaces and archaeology of particular importance.



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 **Proposed Area**

*Proposed Area for Inclusion in the World Heritage Site as addressed in Objective 5*



Proposed revised Westminster World Heritage Site Boundary linking both parts of the designated area

### *Safeguarding the Outstanding Universal Values of the WHS from beyond its boundary*

- 5.1.2.6 The appearance of the site, particularly from outside the WHS boundaries, is a key contribution to the symbolic significance of the WHS and its iconic status. The fine views, from many directions, and from within the site as well as from outside, also enable appreciation of its architectural significance. Moreover, the buildings, streets and spaces which surround the Palace of Westminster, Westminster Abbey and Westminster School form the historic and urban context, of which the WHS is an integral part. It is important that the WHS is not seen in isolation from this context, since it has shared in the history and development of this part of London.
- 5.1.2.7 Many World Heritage Sites are surrounded by a designated buffer zone. These zones reflect the sensitivity of the areas within them, both in terms of the importance of buildings and spaces which is increased by their proximity to the WHS and in terms of the need for careful management of change in order to ensure that the universal values of the WHS are not diminished by development or activities which take place close by. The establishment of buffer zones allow development and other proposals to be assessed with regard to their potential impact on the WHS, including the setting and views of it.
- 5.1.2.8 There is currently no buffer zone for the Westminster WHS. The identification of a suitable zone is a challenge, not least because so much of the surrounding area and indeed much of London is itself historically important. Moreover as a dynamic world city, it is inevitable that London and its skylines and panoramas will change in response to social and economic needs. However, it is important that the universal values of the Westminster WHS are protected from beyond its boundaries. Its iconic status, which derives from its distinctive appearance, needs particular attention to ensure that it is safeguarded.

5.1.2.9 Both the Westminster City Council's Unitary Development Plan and the London Plan address World Heritage Sites, views and skylines, as well as the conservation of the historic environment. Policy 4B.13 of the London Plan protects World Heritage Sites and states that settings should be safeguarded and enhanced, where appropriate. There is a list of strategically important London Views within a framework of London panoramas, river prospects, townscape views and linear views. Policy 4B.15 states that this list will be kept under review. It may be appropriate to consider adding key views of the Westminster WHS to the list as part of that review. Policy 4B.8 includes a provision for London Boroughs to identify areas of specific character which may be sensitive to tall buildings. It may be appropriate for WCC to identify the WHS and a designated zone around it, as such an area of specific character.

5.1.2.10 It is clear that further study needs to be undertaken not only to understand the views and setting of the WHS but also to determine how best to establish a buffer zone or similar designated area which will protect the outstanding values of the WHS from beyond its boundary.

## Objective 7

**To assess the feasibility of establishing a Buffer Zone, or similar designated area, within the context of the policies contained in the London Plan and the Westminster City Council Unitary Development Plan, as well as national policies. Development proposals could be reviewed by the Steering Group with regard to the need to safeguard the setting of the WHS and its significances and values, as well as to maintain and enhance views, where appropriate.**

### Objective 8

To inform, influence and advise on the development of a Buffer Zone or similar designated area and reactions to development proposals in the short term by considering undertaking an assessment of the key views of and from the WHS, and the characteristics of the setting of the WHS. Such an assessment could include the wider setting, key long views, the variety of scales of adjoining buildings, the River Thames corridor and approaches from all sides, and views especially to and from south of the river.

### Objective 9

To safeguard the Outstanding Universal Values of the WHS, any proposed developments which might affect these values whether by an impact on its setting or views may be commented on by the Westminster WHS Steering Group.

### Objective 10

To consider undertaking a study of the current and potential effects of tall buildings on the Outstanding Universal Values of the WHS. The study could build on the work of assessing views and setting of the WHS and would help to inform reaction to development proposals.

### *Conserving the historic fabric and the archaeological resource*

- 5.1.2.11 The conservation of the historic fabric is well managed at present, by the relevant authorities. While significant developments are unlikely to take place without formal appropriate archaeological assessment and fieldwork, minor groundworks, for example, the installation or repair of utilities, street furniture or associated with traffic management may well encounter fragile archaeological resources. Similarly, while visitors and tourists are welcomed to the WHS, at times this visitor pressure can lead to general wear and tear of the historic fabric.

### Objective 11

To seek to develop a means of monitoring the impact of visitors on the physical fabric of the key aspects of the site, taking account of established best practice.

### Objective 12

To encourage and if possible enhance the existing conservation, maintenance and repair regimes for the buildings, monuments, artefacts and archaeological deposits within the WHS. Changes to the regime may be assessed against the objectives of the WHS Management Plan.

#### *Maintaining the architectural significance of the WHS*

- 5.1.2.12 The buildings of the WHS are individual examples of outstanding design and they exemplify the best of the period in which they were conceived and created. The buildings also comprise a magnificent ensemble, formed by the unique variety of scale, styles and materials but unified by the close interrelationship of the Palace and Abbey.
- 5.1.2.13 The sometimes-urgent need for security measures can lead to unplanned installation of features which can be detrimental to the fabric and appearance of the buildings. Likewise the accumulation of sometimes-small additions such as signs or street furniture can over time be detrimental to the visual quality of the building or the surrounding spaces.

### Objective 13

To consider the feasibility of developing a coordinated response to temporary changes or additions which impact unfavourably on the overall visual qualities of the site or its environs.

### Objective 14

To continue the practice, through those organisations represented on the steering group, of achieving, wherever possible the highest standards of architecture, design and craftsmanship and the use of high quality materials and

finishes, when considering proposals for new buildings, in order to ensure that they enhance and not diminish the architectural ensemble of the WHS.

### Objective 15

To seek to ensure that the relevant authorities and agencies will sustain the Outstanding Universal Values of the WHS and adhere to the objectives of the WHS Management Plan, and ensure that these are seen as important material considerations in the determination of planning applications and other proposals.

#### *Sustaining and complementing the existing uses*

5.1.2.14 The current life and use of the buildings and spaces maintains the continuity and thus the authenticity of the heritage. These intangible significances are as essential to the Westminster WHS as the historic fabric. The outstanding values of the WHS include the very long continuity of the working history of the site, as the seat of British Parliament, scene of national ceremony, worship and learning at the Abbey and its precincts and the host of formal public events and gatherings.

### Objective 16

To maintain wherever possible and, where practicable enhance, the present use and activities within the buildings and spaces of the WHS, which relate to the Outstanding Universal Values of the site. Wherever possible or practicable, new activities and uses should be compatible with the individual institutions represented in the site and the existing significance and use characteristics of the WHS.

#### *Preparing for risk*

5.1.2.15 Both the Abbey and the Palace of Westminster address risk preparedness as part of the day to day management of the buildings within the WHS. This activity includes staff training on risks and security the preparation of risk registers, emergency planning and other mitigation measures.

## Objective 17

To ensure that the current arrangements for emergency planning and emergency preparedness within the WHS continue, addressing, where appropriate, the risks to the significances and values embodied in the fabric of the WHS.

*'To be set within a public realm that is attractive and sensitive to the universal values and significance of the site'.*

### *Improving the public realm within and around the site*

- 5.1.2.16 The existing public realm is characterised by a variety of paving, street furniture, soft landscape and lighting treatments and security features, which have developed in a piecemeal fashion and are of variable design quality, specification and maintenance. The busy traffic dominates much of area and there are a number of kiosks and stalls, catering particularly for visitors, scattered around the site, which, arguably, detract from the architectural significance of the WHS and its dignity.
- 5.1.2.17 The public spaces in and around the WHS are important in themselves. In addition to being the places from which the great buildings can be appreciated and photographed, they are and have been over the centuries, the site of organised and spontaneous public gatherings related to the functions of Westminster Palace and the Abbey. Their management also is addressed in a number of policies related to the public spaces of London.
- 5.1.2.18 It is important to ensure that the public realm context of the WHS exemplifies the outstanding values and dignity of the WHS.

### Objective 18

To consider the appropriateness of establishing an overall spatial strategy for the landscape and streetscapes of the site which would address

- Maintenance, renewal and replacement of trees
- Maintenance and desirable improvement of open spaces
- Desirable improvement to hard landscaping
- Environmental aspects of green spaces
- Physical and visual clutter
- Street furniture and signs
- A design guide to suggest materials and forms to be used within the WHS, which would be sensitive to the outstanding universal values

### Objective 19

To consider assessing the overall impact of current street and forecourt trading, stall locations, and their designs and associated equipment, to ensure that they are sensitive to the outstanding values and significances of the WHS, whilst meeting the trading needs of the relevant organisations.

### Objective 20

To seek to ensure that the Steering Group scrutinises proposals for landscape, transport, traffic management, street furnishing or significant infrastructure projects, within or close to the WHS, in order to encourage such proposals to take into account the significances and value of the WHS and addresses and realises the objectives of the World Heritage Site Management Plan.

### Objective 21

To consider the feasibility of assessing the overall security needs of the site, in so far as they impact on visible spaces and buildings, in order to identify ways, where practicable, of meeting security needs in the short and longer term, which are

sensitive to the outstanding universal values of the site.

## Objective 22

To seek to ensure that future reviews of the City of Westminster Unitary Development Plan or its replacement and the London Plan take account of the significance and values of the WHS and the objectives in the WHS Management Plan.

*'To be a place where people can come to work, learn, worship and visit in comfort and safety'*

### *Balancing traffic and pedestrian access and safety*

5.1.2.19 The 'doorstep' to the WHS is Parliament Square, a major intersection of east-west and north-south routes through central London, and the head of an important crossing of the River Thames. The area is a busy hub of cars, buses, taxis, delivery vehicles and underground trains, which pass through, and occasionally park, within the World Heritage Site. Whilst much of this movement brings people to the WHS, the traffic also vies for space and attention: with visitors; with those who work, learn and worship within the WHS; and with the historic building and spaces. The conflict, between traffic and pedestrians in particular, within the WHS needs to be reduced.

5.1.2.20 Westminster City Council intend to commission a study of signalling in Parliament Square, which will identify long-term potential pedestrian traffic movements.

## Objective 23

To assess how the profile of traffic issues in and around the site can be raised and how the particular needs of the WHS can be fed into wider traffic management strategies in order to develop sustainable traffic management strategies for the site, balancing the needs of the WHS with the needs of residents, workers and visitors.

## Objective 24

To assess the feasibility of establishing an overall pedestrian movement strategy for the whole site including; the provision of safe walking routes around the site, especially from public transport nodes, to reduce the dominance of motor traffic in Parliament Square, Abingdon Street, Old Palace Yard, St Margaret Street and possibly Bridge Street, Parliament Street and Broad Sanctuary, as well as to encourage visitor dispersal away from pressure points.

### *Improving Access for All*

- 5.1.2.21 All historic sites and buildings provide particular challenges for ensuring that people of all abilities can access and enjoy them. The buildings of the Westminster WHS, with their changing levels and other obstructions are no exception. The provision of aids, facilities, communication and training will be required to overcome physical barriers to access but wherever possible, rather than separate those with special needs from the able-bodied, facilities should be accessible for all.

## Objective 25

To assess an integrated approach to sustainable tourism and improved facilities and developing an access strategy for the site. The strategy should assess existing access, consider the constraints on buildings and look at the optimum ways to assist, if necessary, in providing access arrangements within the WHS, for those with special needs and disabilities to ensure that wherever possible they can use and enjoy the heritage of the place in the same way as the able bodied or be given alternative offerings.

### *Improving visitor amenities*

- 5.1.2.22 Tourism is not the primary mission of Westminster Abbey nor the Palace of Westminster. In the Abbey's case, although visitors are a principal source of income, two thirds of those coming to the Abbey come for its spiritual offering - to attend a church service or to pray. However, the architectural, symbolic and historic significance of the site attracts large numbers of visitors and many come to see the

WHS as a whole, to see and understand something of the related history, status and monumentality of the Abbey-Palace complex.

5.1.2.23 The aim should be to provide a high quality experience for visitors, that is also sensitive to the working elements of the site, including the dignity and primary functions of the buildings, as well as to the variety of people who visit the site and their purpose. Depending on the different visitor profiles it may be appropriate to consider how visitor management and provision can be co-ordinated between the Abbey and Palace.

Good visitor management and attractive facilities might generate increased revenue, a lessening of wear and tear of the fabric and greater educational insight.

5.1.2.24 The Palace of Westminster has recently prepared the document *Improved Access for Visitors*, which sets out a number of proposals. These include improved access for those with special needs and disabilities, the reduction of security ‘clutter’ on important areas of historic fabric, plans for Westminster Hall to become the general public point of arrival to the Palace, improved information facilities and signage, as well as the provision of public lavatories. The report refers to the continuing need to identify additional accommodation for a visitor centre, shop and associated retail provisions for the Palace of Westminster to be sited beyond the Palace complex. At present no site has been identified.

5.1.2.25 The potential impacts of the provision of a New Visitor Centre to serve the Houses of Parliament need to be carefully considered. A single new free admission visitor facility, focusing only on the Houses of Parliament, but in the heart of the WHS will raise many visitor management issues that should be fully explored before any final decision is made. There may be merit in the concept of a focal visitor information point, or series of points, serving the whole WHS.

5.1.2.26 The WHS would benefit from clear, accessible and more extensive signage and orientation plans that encourages visitors to explore the area. Visitors would gain a greater appreciation of the variety of the character areas that make up the WHS and as it is a relatively compact area, they would quickly acquire an understanding of the

relationships and linkages between the individual sites. Visitors could also be encouraged to explore the publicly accessible but slightly 'hidden' areas of the WHS that are less crowded.

- 5.1.2.27 For the organisations within the site, managing their main missions whilst recognising the popularity of the WHS as a tourist destination is highly challenging.

### Objective 26

To continue to ensure that visitors to the WHS, whatever the purpose of their visit, find their experience to be enjoyable, accessible, inclusive and comfortable. To this end, from time to time it may be appropriate to study the range, type and number of visitors to the different parts of the WHS, as well as to assess the quality of their experience.

### Objective 27

To consider the areas and aspects where it may be appropriate to coordinate visitor management and provision across the WHS, including the development of some information for visitors and tourists, which addresses the whole of the site. Such information would enable many visitors to plan their visit to the WHS and make good use of their time.

*'To be a place where people of all nationalities and abilities can to be inspired by the unique character and beauty of the place and appreciate and learn about its rich living history'*

### *Enhancing intellectual access to the architecture and history of the site*

- 5.1.2.28 Interpretation consists of revealing meaning and making connections. Better explanation of the links between the constituent parts of the WHS would enable greater understanding of the interlocking histories of Westminster Palace and Abbey. Although the WHS comprises distinct elements, it may be helpful to provide a

unified approach to common themes and selected interpretive media, to reinforce the importance of the site's inscription and its core values.

- 5.1.2.29 The WHS is very complex and requires an overall Interpretation Strategy that builds upon the Statement of Significance and which aims to promote a holistic understanding of entire site in a unified and coherent manner. The strategy should integrate with and be complementary to other recommended plans for tourism issues, such as access, audience development, education and marketing.
- 5.1.2.30 The WHS is an outstanding educational resource, especially for the topics of history, democracy and citizenship, spiritual celebration, and national ceremony, providing an exemplar of excellence in life long learning provision.
- 5.1.2.31 There is an outstanding opportunity for the WHS operators to work together to provide an exemplar of educational excellence to broaden understanding of Westminster's international significance and its continuing role on the world stage.

### Objective 28

To consider how a strategy could be developed to optimise and coordinate intellectual access for tourists, school children and other interest groups, as well as for people who live and work in Westminster and its surroundings.

### Objective 29

To consider how an overall Education strategy can be developed for the site that is in line with UNESCO Education Policy.

