

To whom it may concern

21st July 2014

The City of Westminster is unique. It arguably generates a huge proportion of the national wealth and GDP, it has huge numbers of visitors, tourists and commuters and a significant residential population. Quite rightly it aspires to be a world class city. It also has by far the largest number of rough sleepers, nearly ¼ of the total number of people who sleep rough nationally at any one time. Huge strides have been taken to manage and reduce this figure together with addressing the massive flow of transient people into Westminster and the City contains some of the best homelessness agencies in the country. In addition Westminster has a history of innovation both on the business side (through its early support of Business Improvement Districts) and on the homelessness side with its emphasis on early intervention and reconnection and for example its use of Street Buddies to work alongside outreach teams. Westminster is also rightly enormously proud of its public space and public realm.

Westminster now has the chance to be at forefront of further innovation bringing together the possibility of finding new life for iconic red phone boxes (now often little more than photo opportunities) with a social enterprise approach which can either generate income for homeless charities or lead to the employment/engagement of homeless people. This is clearly a win win situation.

Many red phone boxes in Westminster are treated and seen as items of heritage which cannot be removed yet they have no purpose and are often in poor condition. Thinking Outside the Box provides a vehicle for giving an exciting new life and purpose to these phone boxes, giving them a new identity whilst preserving their iconic visual identity.

The Connection at St Martins is delighted to be a partner of Thinking Outside the Box and strongly supports their application to Westminster City Council for planning consent.

Colin Glover

Chief Executive