



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Young People, Learning and Employment Policy and Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Young People, Learning and Employment Policy and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Tuesday 30th July, 2024**, 18.06 – 18.07, 18th Floor Meeting Rooms. Westminster City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, SW1E 6QP.

Members Present: Councillors Angela Piddock (Chair), Lorraine Dean, Sara Hassan, Patrick Lilley, Ellie Ormsby, Ralu Oteh-Osoka, and Karen Scarborough (virtual).

Also Present: Councillors: Geoff Barraclough (Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development) and Cara Sanquest (Cabinet Member for Communities). Officers: Stella Abani (Director of Economy and Skills), Coreen Brown (Head of Sport Leisure and Active Communities Services), Francis Dwan (Policy and Scrutiny Advisor), Debbie Jackson (Executive Director, Regeneration, Economy and Planning), Gillian James (Head of Strategic Delivery), Frances Martin (Executive Director of Environment and Communities) and Serena Simon (Director of Communities). Expert external witnesses: Deryn Bath (Head of Physical Activity at Open Age), Helen Mann (Chief Executive Officer of Young Westminster Foundation) and Henry Nicholson (Chief Executive Officer of Rebel Business School).

1 MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 The Committee noted that Councillor Patrick Lilley was substituting for Councillor James Small Edwards.
- 1.2 The Committee noted that Councillor Karen Scarborough was attending the meeting virtually.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 The Committee noted Councillor Sara Hassan declared that in respect of Item 5, The North Paddington Programme, she is the Deputy Cabinet Member for Equalities and Skills.
- 2.2 The Committee noted Councillor Angela Piddock declared that in respect of Item 5, The North Paddington Programme, she held an interest given the programme falls within the ward she represents, Westbourne.
- 2.3 The Committee noted the following standing declarations of interest.

Councillor/Member of the Children & Community Services P&S Committee	Organisation	Nature of Interest
Councillor Angela Piddock	Westminster Academy	Governor
	Queen's Park Federation	Governor
	Paddington Arts The Floating Classroom	Trustee
	National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)	Trustee
Councillor Karen Scarborough	St Vincent's School	Member
	St Mary of the Angels	Governor
	The Young Westminster Foundation	Trustee
Councillor Lorriane Dean	The City of Westminster College	Employment as a Learning Support Assistant

2.4 The Committee noted that there were no other declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

3.1 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2024.

RESOLVED:

3.2 That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2024 be signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

4 WORK PROGRAMME

4.1 The Committee noted the new Work Programme for the 2024-25 municipal year and received an overview of the forthcoming plans.

4.2 The Committee discussed its tracker and importance of deadlines.

4.3 The Committee questioned why an update on Children's Services had not been provided as part of the Committee papers and asked that their disagreement be

noted.

- 4.4 The Committee noted the new approach to Policy and Scrutiny resulting from a review conducted by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CFGS) and understood that this review recommended the switch to a thematic approach at each meeting with the agreed substantive items being looked at and scrutinised in depth with the relevant Cabinet Member/s present. The Committee noted that the Work Programme is flexible and the importance of both making and ensuring that the recommendations made by the Committee are followed up.
- 4.5 The Committee's attention was drawn to the importance of the planned update on Leisure Services contracts at its next meeting in October.
- 4.6 The Committee requested the Work Programme for the remainder of the municipal year make clear which items are the substantive focus for each meeting and which may be supplementary, as has been done for October 2024.
- 4.7 The Committee discussed the purpose of the Libraries Transformation item scheduled for March 2025.

ACTIONS:

- 4.8 To make clear in the Work Programme which items are the substantive focus and which items are supplementary.
- 4.9 To ensure the purposes of items listed are clear, particularly the Libraries Transformation item scheduled for March 2025.

5 THE NORTH PADDINGTON PROGRAMME

- 5.1 The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development, Councillor Geoff Barraclough, introduced the report outlining the skills and employment initiatives within the North Paddington Programme and how they fit into the Council's Fairer Economy Plan. The Cabinet Member drew attention to the significant prevalence of those working in the Westbourne area of North Paddington that are paid below the London living wage and the work of the education and skills board to increase opportunities for residents in the area.
- 5.2 The Chief Executive Officer of the Young Westminster Foundation, Helen Mann, gave an overview of the grants programme, the range of projects that had been funded for young people up to the age of 25, and the importance of securing sufficient funding for the second year of the programmes, including, the importance of linking the voluntary sector to funding.
- 5.3 The Chief Executive Officer of the Rebel Business School, Henry Nicholson, outlined his involvement in the programme, what the programme seeks to achieve and the community activities that have taken place for young people, the need for enterprise space, gaps in the support for businesses on the Harrow Road, and the work carried out for the Digital Dash initiative with partners.
- 5.4 The Director of Economy and Skills, Stella Abani, and Head of Strategic Delivery,

Gillian James, outlined the employment and skills elements of the programme and the continued determination to match good employers with potential employees, the need for local people to have access to jobs, and the importance of improving the skills of residents, in particular, those in areas of deprivation and facing disadvantage. The Cabinet Member, supported by officers answered questions on the following topics:

- **Communication:** The level of communication between pre-existing parties in the area and the involvement they might have in the design of the programme looking forward, including, ensuring there is no duplication of programmes and that the key immediate priorities are the focus, such as crime.
- **Skills:** The degree to which the skills of young people and their networks had been considered in delivering improved outcomes, offering wider training and opportunities, and that this be a consideration going forward.
- **Successful projects:** Understanding the reasoning behind moving away from earlier successful projects in making future funding decisions and ensuring that available funding is spent wisely and covers the needs in the area that have already been acknowledged.
- **Evaluation framework:** More detail on the proposed consultant report on evaluating proposed plans for years two to four of the programme.

Core themes: Understanding the importance of the seven core themes of the programme and questioning the degree to which this was manageable, how these would be monitored and delivered within the project life cycle, grouping of the theme groups and implementing working groups for individual projects, and whether in light of the consultant's report that identified the same questions if some programmes would be taken out of the delivery.

- **Funding splits:** Helping Hands Westminster Foundation and the notable costs referenced. Members questioned the amounts attributed to administration costs, which included a £70,000 project with administrative costs accounting for £40,000 of the total.
- **Rebel Business School:** What additional projects or support the school could benefit from either the Council or other partners.
- **Partnerships:** Whether the programme works with multiverse or with pop-up brands.
- **Green skills:** The plans to expand and promote green skills work, including, apprenticeships and influencing access to programmes of interest and opportunities.
- **Inclusion:** How marginalised groups such as the Learning Disabled would integrate with the programme and services such as the Westminster Employment Service and whether North Paddington might be a potential location for the Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) when it is to move out of Lisson

Grove, as scheduled.

- Skills: Members sought reassurance that skills and the process of upskilling was still a priority.
- Measuring success: Members asked how numbers engaged in the projects compared to initial targets and expectations and how the Council considers some users might enjoy programmes informally and reflect that in the baseline expectations and targets for future assessment.
- Connection and adaption: How the programme can continue to connect suitable employers to would be employees and how the scheme could be versatile to meet the potential skills of the future in the area.

INFORMATION REQUEST:

- 5.5 To provide the RealWorth framework for evaluating the year two-four plans once it has been published (October/November 2024).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 5.6 The Committee recommended that the Council considers engagement with young people to determine what skills might exist within their networks or by their parents, which may be of use to the programmes aims.
- 5.7 The Committee recommended that the Council considers, as recommended within the RealWorth report, reducing the key seven themes to a more manageable number.
- 5.8 The Committee recommended that going forward, the Council, when detailing previous projects, contextualises the numbers of attendees and beneficiaries. It would also be useful to see initial targets to allow a more objective measure of success.
- 5.9 The Committee recommended that the Council continue to pursue connecting young people to employers and employment opportunities that can enhance their lives and develop their skills.
- 5.10 The Committee recommended that the Council does not needlessly duplicate work and instead continues to support successful projects that have had a positive impact.

6 ACTIVEWESTMINSTER STRATEGY

- 6.1 The Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Cara Sanquest, and Head of Sport Leisure and Active Communities Services, Coreen Brown, introduced the item supported by the Executive Director, Environment and Communities, Frances Martin, and outlined the Council's plans in light of the #2035 initiative and the Fairer Westminster agenda to improve physical activity, healthy lifestyles, and access to leisure for residents. The Committee was invited to offer its views on the draft strategy and for future leisure opportunities for the Council.

- 6.2 The Committee was shown footage of Step Change Studios and the work they carry out that aims to get older and disabled residents more active.
- 6.3 The Head of Physical Activity, Deryn Bath, outlined the work of Open Age, who work with the Council to provide services for older residents to reduce loneliness and isolation and subsequent health issues. It was noted that Open Age are grateful for the support they receive from the Council and specifically the forward plans for the ActiveWestminster strategy. It was suggested that if the Council were to decrease the hire rates charged to the VCS (Voluntary Community Sector) for venues, this could enable more activities to take place for residents.
- 6.4 The Chair, offered thanks to officers for the recent site visit and commended its usefulness in contextualising the strategy in real terms, including the importance of incorporating physical activity into everyday activities. It was noted the gym equipment had been taken out of Salisbury Street and it was discussed this should be reinstated or an alternative location found for the equipment previously used. The Cabinet Member, supported by officers, answered questions on the following topics:
- Working with young people: Dance initiatives like the example the Committee had been shown on the site visit operating in schools and other available locations specifically for young people, including special schools.
 - Outside gym equipment: How many outdoor gyms will be available in each ward of Westminster by the end of 2025 and end of the programme, how the need for outside gym equipment is being considered, and how beneficial outside gyms are for residents that cannot afford the fees for physical activity.
 - Publicising the activities on offer: Whether the Council could produce literature outlining all the classes available and ongoing activities coming up each month. The Committee recommended the usefulness of this and suggested that Councillors could distribute it to residents in their wards.
 - Enabling walking: Members suggested that one barrier to walking, particularly for those less mobile and the elderly, was the lack of public benches in the public realm to allow residents the opportunity to rest. It was recommended that the Council consider looking into the possibility of increasing the number of benches along popular walking routes.
 - Joined-up working: How the strategy ensures that it does not work separately to other local initiatives, such as the North Paddington Programme, how it will ensure collaboration, that aspects that might overlap are aligned, and how the strategy will incorporate into wider Council initiatives.
 - Skills development: How skills development was qualified an outcome of the strategy and could be measured effectively and the skills and training programme that has been launched as part of the strategy.
 - Lessons learnt: How the proposed strategy had learned from previous leisure and

active-based strategies of the Council, how this strategy differs from previous strategic attempts to get people active that Westminster City Council has implemented, and the governance and accountability of the strategy across the Council.

- **Measuring equity:** How outcomes and take-up of the initiatives would be quantified in terms of equity and the overarching inclusive aims of the strategy including, how participation, technology, feedback and social value calculators will be used.
- **Evidence base:** The starting baseline levels of usage and how the strategy could determine if it has reached more people and different demographics.
- **Outdoor equipment and gyms:** Ways of teaching people how to use outdoor equipment correctly and safely and whether part-time staff at certain times should be considered to encourage residents.
- **Youth benefit:** Understanding how the ActiveWestminster strategy will benefit children and young people specifically, for the evidence of the work with children to be shared with the Committee, and the potential opportunities for extra-curricular school activities that focussed on physical activity and targeted workshops around nutrition.
- **City-wide:** Whether the strategy would consider the whole of the City of Westminster and ensure that areas would not be forgotten.
- **Tackling obesity:** Understanding the role of health and diet within the strategy, particularly for young people in relation to after school activities that might encourage snacking or fast-food.
- **Acknowledging differences:** What effort would be made to breakdown potentially catch-all terminology such as the 'global majority,' given the large degree in variation to levels of sports engagement, obesity, healthy diet, and other indicators across demographic groups that would be included within the 'global majority'.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 6.5 The Committee recommended that the Council considers reinstating the exercise equipment, currently in storage, to Salisbury Street. If this cannot be done, then an alternative location should be found so that residents can use them once again.
- 6.6 The Committee recommended that the Council publishes a timeline for upcoming events, activities and playgrounds as part of the strategy in one easy to read format that can be shared, possibly by Councillors to residents.
- 6.7 The Committee recommended that the Council considers the possibility of providing more benches in public areas along known walking routes.

The meeting ended at 20:29.

CHAIR: _____

DATE _____