



# Westminster Scrutiny Commission

<b>Date:</b>	Tuesday 20 April 2021
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	Climate Emergency Programme: Progress update and proposals for a Climate Action Plan
<b>Report of:</b>	Raj Mistry, Executive Director for Environment and City Management
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio:</b>	Cllr Rachael Robathan, Leader of the Council
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	All
<b>Policy Context:</b>	City for All
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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In September 2019, Westminster City Council's Full Council meeting declared a climate emergency and committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2030 for the Council and by 2040 for the wider City. In addition, by 2050 the Council committed to be a zero-carbon emitter, without needing to offset any of its emissions.
- 1.2 We have now determined the baseline carbon emission levels for the Council and for the city. From April 2018 to March 2019, the Council generated 44,619 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e)<sup>1</sup> (see Appendix A, Fig 1). This means we will need to reduce emissions by 8.3% per year to achieve our 2030 net zero target. Meanwhile, during 2017, the City of Westminster generated approximately 2,267,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e (see Appendix A, Fig 2). The largest proportion of city-wide emissions came from non-domestic buildings (71%), followed by domestic buildings (15%), transport (11%), and waste disposal and industrial processes (c.1.5%).

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<sup>1</sup> Emissions data include all greenhouse gas emissions and not just carbon dioxide. 'Carbon dioxide equivalent' (CO<sub>2</sub>e) is a term for describing different greenhouse gases in a common unit. For any type and quantity of greenhouse gas, CO<sub>2</sub>e signifies the amount of carbon that would have an equivalent warming impact.

- 1.3 Modelling work has been undertaken using SCATTER<sup>2</sup> to explore how we might achieve our goal of a net zero carbon city by 2040. On this basis, it is proposed that the city follows a 'high-ambition pathway' trajectory, in which emissions are reduced by 84% by 2040 compared to the 2017 baseline, and the remaining 16% of emissions are offset (Appendix A, Fig 3). This is the maximum level of reductions that is technically feasible for the city by 2040 and represents a reduction rate of approximately 3.7% of the baseline (c. 83,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e) every year up to 2040. Achieving this level will require dramatic and timely interventions and consideration of the current real-world economic, political and social circumstances facing the city.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to invite the Commission's views and feedback on:
- The Council's approach to responding to the 2019 Climate Emergency declaration, progress made in tackling emissions from council assets and in engaging stakeholders on Westminster-wide emissions
  - Proposals for engaging our residents, businesses and communities on the creation of an ambitious city-wide action plan and roadmap for achieving our 2040 net zero goal.

## **2. Key Matters for the Commission's Consideration**

- 2.1 Commission members are asked to give views on the following questions regarding the Council's overall approach to the climate emergency:
- *Given that 98% of the city's emissions are not under the Council's direct control, how do we ensure we are ambitiously using all possible levers for empowering or leveraging stakeholder action to achieve the 2040 net zero target?*
  - *Where are there existing areas of innovation or best practice on climate sustainability across Westminster (or beyond) and how can we support these further through the action plan?*
- 2.2 In addition, the Commission is asked to give an overall steer on engagement plans for co-creating the city-wide climate action plan with external partners. In particular, the Commission is asked to consider:
- *What partners and groups should we work with on the co-creation of the external action plan and its subsequent implementation (especially any groups with relevant expertise that the Council currently does not currently directly engage with)?*

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<sup>2</sup> SCATTER is a tool used to set emission baselines and reduction trajectories. It incorporates emissions data from BEIS with other sources to give a more nuanced picture of local emissions.

- *How do we ensure our engagement is inclusive and fully representative of the full range of circumstances of our residents and businesses, and that everyone has an opportunity to contribute?*

### **3. What has happened so far: Climate Emergency Programme Development**

3.1 The Council recognises that in order to lead on tackling climate change across the city, we need to be setting a strong example in reducing our own carbon emissions. We have therefore been working over the past year to fully embed the climate agenda across all parts of the organisation and drive a supportive culture change. We are achieving this through a robust framework of programme governance, by supporting staff with information and training and by underpinning this effort with better carbon impact data and a toolkit to monitor our emissions performance.

3.2 We also recognise that progress towards our net zero emission targets will be essential to delivering the Council's 2021-22 City for All strategy. The climate emergency programme is a centrepiece of the Greener and Cleaner pillar of City for All but is also embedded throughout the other pillars. The co-benefits for our residents of tackling the climate emergency will be widespread. Aside from helping to prevent the impacts of a catastrophic rise in global temperature, it will enable us to deliver local improvements in air quality, address fuel poverty, promote business resilience, and support health and wellbeing, to name just a few co-benefits.

#### **3.2 *Our 2030 net-zero Council target***

3.3 Although there is a lot more work to do in reducing our own emissions, a strong start has already been made across the following priority areas (this list is not exhaustive):

- **Improving the energy performance of WCC housing stock**  
We have ascertained the cost of raising the energy efficiency levels of all our social housing stock to EPC Band B. We have allocated £20 million from the Housing Revenue Account for initial improvements.
- **Designing and building to zero-carbon standards**  
We have incorporated the Passivhaus design standard into several existing regeneration schemes and are applying it to all new schemes.
- **Decarbonising the Pimlico District Heating Undertaking (PDHU)**  
We have carried out a feasibility study of engine upgrade options to reduce emissions from PDHU. We are seeking to halve emissions at a cost of £10million and are exploring funding for this via the BEIS Heat Network Investment Project.
- **Improving the energy performance of WCC assets and Leisure Centres**  
We have secured £13 million from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to decarbonise 48 sites across the corporate estate. We are also installing LED bulbs across all our streetlights, which will reduce their carbon emissions by 56%.

- **Cutting the impact of WCC transport and travel**

We have piloted a low carbon highway maintenance project on King Street, which delivered a 79% reduction in operational carbon, and we have achieved our target of installing 1,000 EV charging points in the city. We are also considering the electrification of our large vehicle waste fleet, dependent on the new Waste Strategy.

- **Reducing the impact of outsourced services**

We have put in place a green investment strategy for the Pension Fund as part of the Fund's wider Responsible Investment Strategy policies. We are also developing a Responsible Procurement Strategy to reduce emissions in our supply chain.

3.4 We will monitor progress towards our 2030 target annually using our greenhouse gas emissions toolkit and are currently streamlining the process for gathering future Council greenhouse gas emissions data.

3.5 ***Our 2040 net-zero City target***

3.6 The Council's own emissions only account for around 2% of Westminster's total emissions. Therefore, it is essential that the Council works through strong partnerships with a range of key actors to tackle the remaining 98% of emissions. The proposed process for co-creating a city-wide action plan aims provide an opportunity to strengthen these partnerships and harness the contributions of a wide range of stakeholders through a collaborative approach to tackling climate change. In the meantime, we have already launched some key influencing and communications activity. This includes:

- Raising awareness through the launch of a regular Environment newsletter for residents and stakeholders and accompanying social media, web-based information and branding
- Collaborating with the Westminster Property Association on the launch of a white paper for zero-carbon buildings in November 2020, and since then working with the WPA on the next steps for implementing this
- Developing an Environmental Supplementary Planning Document (ESPD) which will give material weight to environmental issues in planning decisions, along with online Environmental Guidance to act as a bridge to the ESPD
- Hosting seven business workshops on the opportunities and challenges of addressing emissions across the city to support the development of our approach
- Signing up to the national [UK100 pledge](#) and to the international '[Cities' Race to Zero](#)' pledge (supported by the UN Committee on Climate Change), that will link Westminster with similarly ambitious cities around the world and showcase our efforts to innovatively reduce emissions

- Starting to co-design with Great Estate partners a Westminster Charter of ‘green lease clauses’ to achieve emission reductions from the commercial rented sector
  - Championing proposals, including with Government, to reduce emissions associated with commercial waste, freight and delivery services, working with landowners and Business Improvement Districts.
- 3.7 We are working with the Westminster Urban Lab (WCC’s partnership work with universities) to improve our evidence base regarding city-wide emissions and the feasibility and effectiveness of different interventions we could make. Given the high proportion of emissions from the built environment, we are particularly interested in investigating opportunities to work with academic partners on developing a more detailed picture of local building typologies and their associated emissions.
- 3.8 ***Developing evidence-based recommendations to achieve our 2040 target***
- 3.9 We have worked with external consultants Anthesis to develop a report with a set of evidence-based recommendations to make progress towards the 2040 net zero target (see Background Paper). The recommendations are broken down into the six sectors of domestic buildings, non-domestic buildings, energy supply, transport, waste and green space. These recommendations are not the final actions that will form the city’s Climate Action Plan, but will inform the plan as it is developed with communities (see section 4 below).
- 3.10 To achieve the maximum emission reduction with minimum costs, the report recommends that interventions for buildings and energy supply should be taken in the priority order below:
1. Reducing energy demand (e.g. retrofitting buildings)
  2. Switching to low-carbon energy systems (e.g. electrifying heat)
  3. Decarbonising energy supply (e.g. installing PV panels)
  4. Offsetting (e.g. purchasing carbon credits)
- 3.11 The recommended actions are based on this hierarchy, with offsetting residual emissions as a last resort. We intend to develop a Westminster offsetting strategy to ensure that offsetting projects bring direct benefits to the local economy rather than lose this investment to projects outside of the borough boundary.
- 3.12 The report sets out three kinds of actions for each emissions sector: enabling actions, city-wide carbon reduction actions, and Council-specific carbon reduction actions. Enabling actions are essential to prepare the groundwork for implementing carbon-saving actions but are less likely to deliver direct carbon savings themselves. The report recommends taking enabling actions first, followed by city-wide carbon reduction actions, and finally Council carbon reduction actions.
- 3.13 The largest emissions savings potential for the wider city are in the buildings and energy supply sectors. However, since the Council does not directly control most buildings in the city, we will need to work closely with a wide variety of external partners. It is therefore essential that we have a comprehensive,

adaptable and innovative set of levers at our disposal to influence positive city-wide action on the built environment. These levers could include:

- **For new buildings:**  
Planning policy or clean energy networks
- **For retrofits of existing buildings:**  
Financial levers; building control; licensing policy; publicity and awards; private investment
- **For reducing building energy consumption:**  
Behaviour change campaigns; consolidation schemes; green leases

### 3.13 ***Climate Resilience***

3.14 Alongside taking action to achieve our net zero emission targets, we are also beginning to develop a strand of work on enhancing the resilience of Westminster to the future impacts of climate change. Central London is prone to a variety of environmental threats that will be exacerbated by climate change, even if swift action is taken to reduce emissions. These include flooding, heatwaves and water stress. We have consciously prioritised our work around reducing emissions, but we will be increasing our capacity around climate resilience during 2021.

## 4. **What next: Proposals to create a city-wide Climate Action Plan**

4.1 We want to ensure that we develop a climate response for Westminster in a manner that cements local ownership of the challenge. There is already a very high level of interest amongst many of Westminster's communities in reducing carbon emissions and mitigating the worst impacts of climate change. For example, in 2020 Westminster residents formed the Westminster Citizens Climate Action Network (WeCCAN), which brings residents together to act on halting the progress of climate change. The Council intends to build on this existing momentum to bring residents, young people, voluntary organisations, businesses, faith groups and other communities together to feed into and take collective ownership of a city-wide public-facing Climate Action Plan.

4.2 We have drafted a plan for engaging external stakeholders and co-creating an action plan (see Appendix B). This will be supported by accessible material on our climate emergency approach which will set out the journey so far, the challenges we face and the importance of working together. The materials will explain the current evidence and our proposed action areas and will invite ideas on how we might collectively address them. Proposed actions will be presented under the simplified thematic headings of People and Communities, Organisations and Economy, Buildings and Energy and Movement and Places, which aim to be easier to relate to and better aligned with our City for All priorities (rather than emissions sources). To complement this work, we are also producing a series of 'how-to' guides, which will provide simple and accessible tips on how changing day to day behaviour can have a positive impact on emission reductions under a range of circumstances.

- 4.3 To ensure high levels of community engagement, we recommend commissioning an engagement consultancy with experience in climate change to help shape and deliver a programme of activity to promote collaboration on the development of the action plan. This will also help position this as a Westminster-owned plan rather than a Council-owned one. Our approach includes both targeted events with community groups, youth groups and businesses to gain meaningful and considered feedback as well as mass engagement through an online portal and survey. This will be supported by attendance at community events and market stalls throughout summer 2021, where it is safe to do so, hosted by the Climate Emergency team.
- 4.4 We have already begun discussions with key business stakeholders on opportunities to align our communications strategies and to build momentum around the action plan in the context of COP 26 in Glasgow in November. We will be looking at all opportunities to build on COP associated events and activities this year.
- 4.5 Over the longer term, we aim to develop a behaviour change campaign and support programme with Voluntary and Community Sector groups who deliver outcomes which tackle the climate emergency. This could involve developing and promoting a platform of support for local projects, building on existing resources and services, as well as providing facilitation tools to bring residents and community groups together over structured discussions on selected climate projects. We are also considering how to bring some structure to our ongoing engagement with businesses around delivery of the city plan, building on lessons learned by other Local Authorities and beyond.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact  
Amy Jones [ajones9@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:ajones9@westminster.gov.uk)**

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Emissions data for the Council and City

Appendix B: Proposed engagement to support the development of the city Climate Action Plan

## **BACKGROUND PAPER**

- Climate Pathways and Action Plan Report (Anthesis)

### Appendix A: Emissions data for the Council and City

Figure 1: Council Emissions Breakdown (2018)

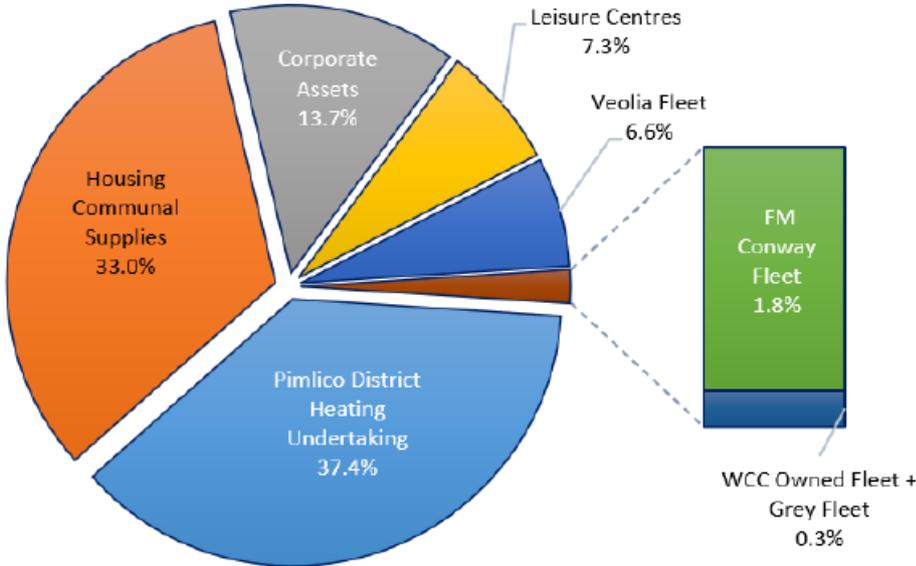


Figure 2: City-Wide Emissions Breakdown (2017)

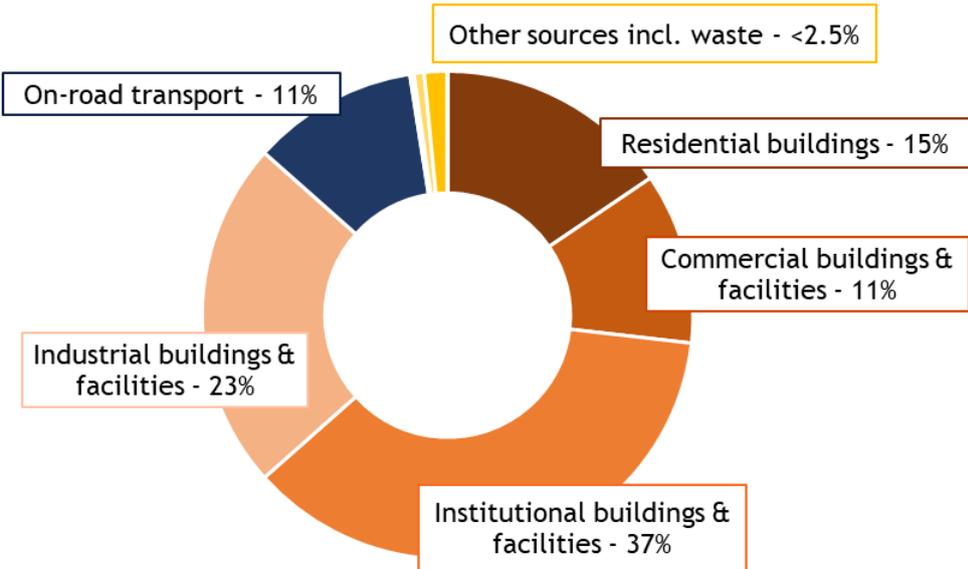
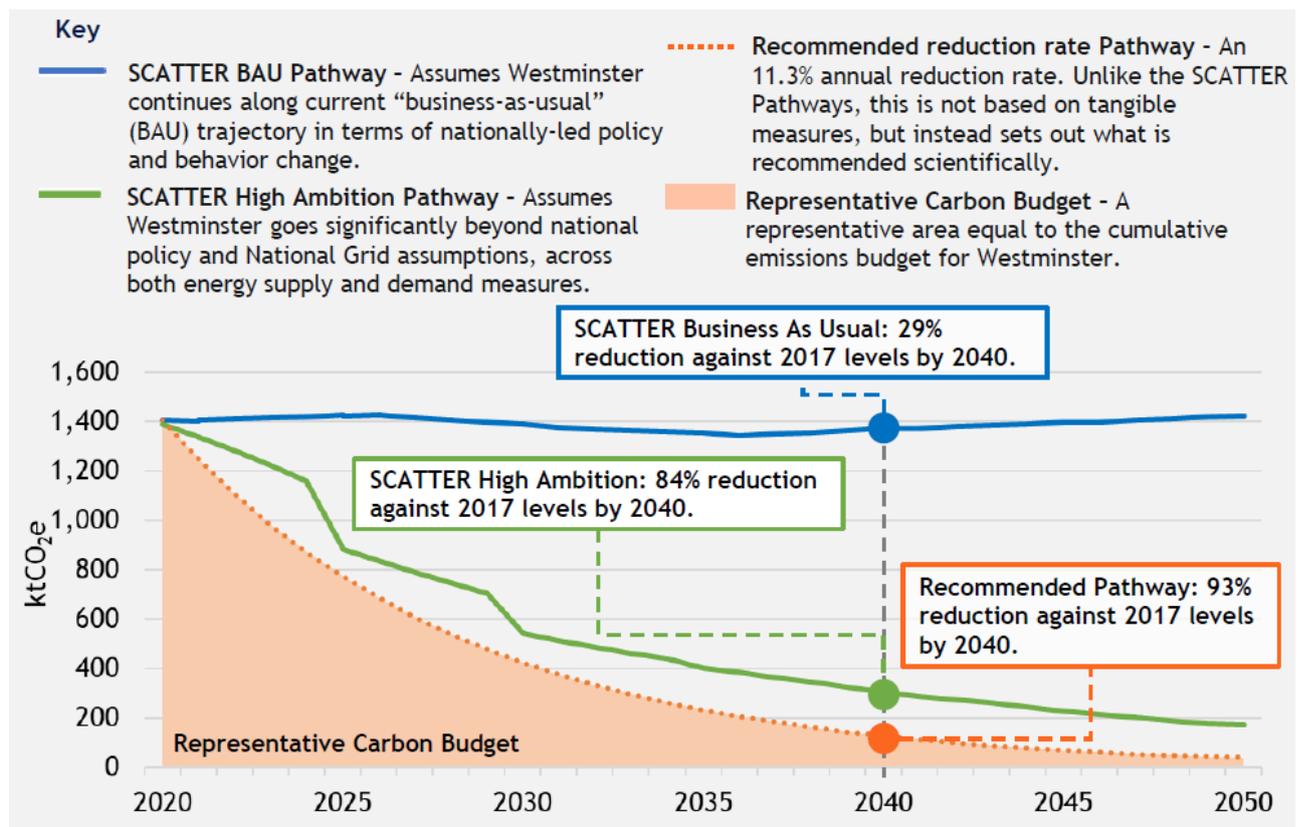


Figure 3: Emissions reduction trajectory to 2040 for City emissions



## Appendix B: Proposed engagement to support the development of the city Climate Action Plan

(attached)