



City of Westminster Cabinet

Meeting or Decision Maker:	Cabinet
Date:	11 July 2022
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Future of Westminster Commission
Wards Affected:	All
Policy Context:	Creating a fairer Westminster
Cabinet Member:	Leader of the Council
Key Decision:	Yes
Financial Summary:	A budget of £150k is proposed to be established to fund the costs of administering the Commission. This will be funded from reserves.
Report of:	Stuart Love, Chief Executive slope@westminster.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The establishment of a Commission on the Future of Westminster is a key commitment of the new administration. The Commission will seek to review and make recommendations on the delivery of key council services to help deliver a fairer Westminster for residents.
- 1.2. The Commission will hold no formal decision-making power and will be purely advisory to the bodies of the Council, most notably the Cabinet.
- 1.3. The Commission will be made up of a core Commission Group with four dedicated work streams, each of which will have its own group of expert advisers to help develop new ideas and policy proposals.
- 1.4. Each workstream will be supported by the appropriate teams within the Council. These teams and the lead Executive Directors will work closely with the Commission and will brief the relevant Cabinet Members on emerging thinking, dynamically handling feedback and flows of information between the Commission and the Cabinet.
- 1.5. This report asks Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out below to enable the work of the Commission to commence.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the Cabinet:
 - Approve the terms of reference for the Future of Westminster Commission as set out at Appendix A, thus establishing the Commission as an advisory body to the Cabinet.
 - Approve the creation of a budget of £150k for the administration of the Commission to be funded from reserves.
 - Delegate authority to the Chief Executive to make appointments to the Commission, including agreeing any associated costs and reasonable changes to the agreed budget, subject to the Council's Financial Regulations, Procurement Code and Human Resources Policies. Appointments will be made on advice from the Leader of the Council, and subsequently the Chair of the Commission.

3. Reasons for Decision

- 3.1. The new administration has made a public commitment to establish a Commission on the Future of Westminster with senior independent leadership and board members to help develop new ideas and policy proposals.
- 3.2. The Commission needs to be formally established with a term of reference and a budget allocated to support its administration.

4. Background, including Policy Context

- 4.1. A cornerstone of the new administration's public commitments was the establishment of a Commission on the Future of Westminster.

- 4.2. The Commission will bring together senior independent advisors, drawing on their expertise to review key service areas and to develop new ideas and policy proposals.
- 4.3. The Commission will take ideas and evidence from a range of organisations and individuals who display best practice in their area of expertise, as well as engaging and consulting with residents.
- 4.4. The Commission will have four strands of enquiry, namely:
- Housing:** – Advise on increasing the supply of genuinely affordable housing to meet housing need in the city. As a priority advise on options for improving: the way the Council responds to homelessness and housing need and the quality of services provided to the Council’s own tenants and leaseholders.
- Fairness and Equality:** – Advise on policy approaches and initiatives that will enable and deliver a fairer, more equal and inclusive city.
- Economy and Employment:** Advise on how the Council enables more Westminster residents to share in the economic successes of the city.
- Energy and Green Transition:** – Advise on ways to enhance and accelerate climate action supported and delivered by the Council to achieve the objective of achieving net zero Westminster by 2040.
- 4.5. The Commission will be structured as follows:
- A core Commission appointed to provide expert external input and challenge the thinking emerging in each workstream to improve outcomes, introduce new ideas, and maximise opportunities by joining up thinking across the range of the Commission’s responsibilities.
 - Neale Coleman will chair the Commission
 - Drawn from the core Commission there will be four work stream leads:
 - Claudette Forbes – Economy and Employment
 - Syed Ahmed – Energy and Green Transition
 - Karen Buck MP – Fairness and Equality
 - Steve Hilditch – Housing
 - Each work stream will in turn be advised by a range of individuals with subject specific expertise.
- 4.6. The individuals nominated to the Commission and each individual work stream have been recommended based on their skills and expertise. A full list of Commissioners is set out at appendix B.
- 4.7. The Commission is designed to be advisory to the core decision making processes of the Council, informing the future of service design and policy with final decisions reserved to the Executive or other bodies as necessary, and according to the Council’s Constitution.
- 4.8. Neither the Commission, nor its members, will have any authority to direct Council resource without the approval of the person or body within the Council which has

delegated authority to direct such resource. The Commission and its Members may however, request information which would otherwise be freely available or to request for information to be compiled to inform emerging thinking, subject to the agreement of the relevant Executive Director and, where the Executive Director deems it appropriate, the relevant Cabinet Member.

- 4.9. It is proposed that each workstream reports back to the appropriate Policy and Scrutiny Committee during 2022/23 and the work of the overarching Future of Westminster Commission will be reviewed by the Westminster Scrutiny Commission. This will be subject to the agreement of each Committee.
- 4.10. A small team will be established from existing Council staff. This team will exist to handle the business of the overarching Commission, including organising meetings, disseminating information to commissioners, quality assuring and managing linkages between work programmes and ensuring flow of information back into the Cabinet and ELT.
- 4.11. The Commission will be supported directly by the Chief Executive. Each work stream will be supported by the appropriate lead council department with senior responsible officers at Executive Director level as follows:
 - Economy and Employment – Executive Director of Growth, Planning and Housing
 - Energy and Green Transition – Executive Director of Environment and City Management
 - Fairness and Equality – Deputy Chief Executive and, Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health
 - Housing – Executive Director Growth Planning and Housing, and Executive Director Finance and Resources.
- 4.12. The Council's core Policy, Strategy and Intelligence, Communities, Communications and Governance functions will also be deployed in support of the work of the Commission and individual workstreams.
- 4.13. Officers working on individual work streams will be expected to work in a dynamic and flexible manner, keeping Cabinet Members briefed on their work, seeking appropriate authority where necessary, while also enabling the Commission to develop radical, new, and implementable ideas to improve outcomes for our communities.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. It is proposed to establish a one-off budget of £150k to cover the administrative costs of the Commission and this will be funded from reserves.
- 5.2. There may be other costs associated with each work stream to support the work of the services including research and advice. This will be funded from within existing budgets in the appropriate service areas

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1. The Council has the power to establish the Commission under the Localism Act 2011 general power of competence. It will have no decision-making powers, its purpose being to advise the Council on the exercise of its functions.

7. Carbon Impact

- 7.1. There are no direct carbon implications because of the establishment of the Commission.
- 7.2. The Commission itself will investigate the extent of the Council's ambitions to tackle the climate emergency and this decision will therefore enable a range of work which we reasonably expect to have a net positive impact on carbon emissions in the city.

8. Equalities Implications

- 8.1. There are no direct equalities implications because of the establishment of the Commission, although due consideration has been given as to the make-up of the Commission in terms of the protected characteristics of Commissioners.
- 8.2. The Commission itself will investigate action taken by the Council to tackle inequality and will therefore enable a range of work which we reasonably expect to have a positive impact on equality and diversity both for internal Council staff and our residents.

9. Consultation

- 9.1. No public consultation on the establishment of the Commission has been undertaken. It is however a core commitment of the administration to establish the Commission and was set out in advance of the local elections which contributes to a democratic mandate for this decision.
- 9.2. The Commission and the supporting work streams will work to engage with communities and the public to inform their work and their approach to engagement will be reported back in subsequent reports to Council bodies.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact:

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Future of Westminster Commission Terms of Reference

Appendix B – List of Commissioners

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None