

# OUR STRATEGY FOR A **FAIRER** WESTMINSTER 2022-26



City of Westminster



## Our strategy for a Fairer Westminster

A Fairer Westminster is one in which our residents are at the heart of our decision-making, helping determine the city's future because their voices are heard. By working directly with you, we can build a more inclusive city that celebrates its diverse communities, and where residents, workers and visitors from all backgrounds will feel welcome and safe.



We can translate this document into the following:

- Arabic (عربي)
- Bengali (বাংলা)
- Portuguese (Português)
- Kurdish (کوردی)
- Spanish (Español)

If you have any other questions, please email us at:  
[communications@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:communications@westminster.gov.uk)



With its cultural activities, learning opportunities, high-quality public spaces and a housing offer that puts residents first, Westminster will be recognised as one of the best places to grow up and live.

Our council services will be more transparent, easily accessible and effective, ensuring people are safe and can get the support they need. Our social care, leisure and public health services, in partnership with the voluntary sector, will help residents to live well for longer in their community.



We will ambitiously tackle the climate emergency, targeting a net zero Council by 2030 and working with partners to become a net zero city by 2040. Efficient buildings will be at the forefront of our climate action, working with residents and businesses to ensure our homes, shops and offices use less energy and rely on cleaner sources. We will promote active travel and sustainable transport to support these efforts and deliver greener neighbourhoods, cleaner air and healthier lives.



We will nurture a sustainable and strong economy that delivers inclusive growth and increases residents' share in the city's economic success whilst supporting Westminster's unique role in London and the national economy. Local businesses and high streets will be supported through challenging times, benefitting local communities, and we will work to reduce inequalities and support our residents and businesses with the rising cost of living.





## The outcomes we want for Westminster

We want everyone to understand our key ambitions, which will be used to inform decisions at the Council.

### Fairer Communities



- Poverty and inequality are reduced, making Westminster a healthier and more equitable place.
- The city is a safe place where all discrimination is tackled and everyone feels welcome.
- Westminster provides excellent public health and social care services, and physical activity opportunities that ensure all adults can stay healthy and thrive as they age.
- Westminster is a great place for children to grow up, with its cultural and learning opportunities, active communities, and excellent schools.
- Community and voluntary sector organisations are empowered to prosper in Westminster.

### Fairer Housing



- The housing needs of residents, families and social care users are met through the provision of greener and more genuinely affordable housing, the majority of which is for council rent, aiming for 70% on council-owned developments.
- Homelessness is reduced due to increased support.
- Private rented sector properties are well managed.
- Our tenants and lessees are consistently satisfied with our housing services, and the improved condition and energy efficiency of our housing stock.

### Fairer Economy



- Westminster remains economically successful, with a diverse, sustainable, resilient economy that delivers growth and benefits for all residents today and in the future.
- Oxford Street and the West End are reimagined and revived, safeguarding their position in the national economy, and ensuring they deliver a world class offer and experience to residents, businesses, workers and visitors.
- Small businesses are supported to grow and remain, whilst our local high streets are prepared to face the future, becoming more vibrant and accessible, at the heart of communities.
- Residents have the right skills to take advantage of the city's employment opportunities and develop fulfilling careers.

### Fairer Environment



- The Council takes ambitious action on climate change with the aim of becoming a net zero Council by 2030 and a net zero city by 2040.
- The city matches World Health Organization guidelines to limit residents' and visitors' exposure to air pollution.
- Westminster's streets are cleaner and safer, our services use clean technology, and recycling is increased.
- People have access to high-quality green spaces, shops, voluntary, community, health and leisure services within a 15-minute distance from their home.
- Residents, workers and visitors are enabled and are encouraged to travel through Westminster in more active and sustainable ways.

### Fairer Council



- People can more easily find the information and services they need to improve their lives.
- We make decisions more transparently in a way that makes residents feel listened to.
- We are financially sustainable so that we can continue supporting residents and businesses.
- Our procurement is responsible and ensures ethical treatment of people, and our investment activity takes account of environmental impacts.

# How we are building a Fairer Westminster

Creating a Fairer Westminster is not just about what we want to achieve. It is also about why these outcomes matter, and how we build our future, together. We want to create a Fairer Westminster because we want everyone to thrive and benefit from our city.

To do this, we will commit to the following values and enshrine them in our Charter of Community Participation. The Charter will outline the ways council officers will work to involve residents in decision-making.

Openness and transparency

Partnership and collaboration

Diversity and inclusion

## Openness and Transparency

It is critical that our communities trust that the Council has their best interests at heart. By being honest and by working together on creating solutions to the issues that face us, we can achieve this. Some of the ways we will be open and transparent are:

- Publishing easily accessible performance information so that you can hold us to account on how we are performing against our commitments.
- Sharing data we hold – and encouraging others with vital data about London to do the same – to enable analysis, understanding and innovation.



## Partnership and Collaboration

Our community, public, voluntary and private sector partners have expertise and in-depth knowledge of their communities that will help ensure our work is as effective as possible. Some of the ways we will work collaboratively are:

- Establishing a Climate Assembly, giving local people a say in how climate change should be tackled in the city.
- Using and expanding our recently established Resident Research Panel to robustly test new ideas.

## Diversity and Inclusion

We can only really create a Fairer Westminster if we ensure a wide range of views are heard. We will celebrate and promote diversity and ensure decisions about residents are made with them. Some of the ways we will foster diversity and inclusion are:

- Acting as a supportive employer of a workforce that represents Westminster's communities and is committed to diversity and inclusion.
- Tackling inequality by developing new equality objectives for 2022-24 and by being transparent about how we measure their impact.





# What changes have we already made?

## Fairer Communities



Introduced digital social care accounts so that residents can manage personal budgets and purchase care services online



Committed £3m to address health impacts exposed by the pandemic, including mental health, homelessness and physical inactivity



Supported the families of 770 children with the cost of a new school uniform through our new School Uniform Support scheme



Provided free period products at our libraries to remove the financial barriers to accessing them



Introduced a £1.35m package to support over 8,000 children and young people, which includes 5,900 places for them to access free food, activities and Free School Meal vouchers over the holidays



Launched the Bi-borough School Inclusion Strategy that addresses the factors that lead to specific groups of children and young people being disproportionately affected by exclusion



Welcomed 140 new arrivals from Ukraine and provided information about how they can settle into the city

## Fairer Housing



Championed the Community Thursday walkabouts, where we've visited 1,900 of our homes, to find out what issues residents are facing



Temporarily stopped the policy of moving homeless households into the private rented sector without their agreement



Immediately paused the Council's programme to sell off council homes on the open market and commissioned an urgent review into the policy



Created a dedicated role in the Council to tackle empty homes in Westminster

## Fairer Economy



Ran a competition for local students at Maida Hill Market to gain real-life business experience



Led the candy store crack down that is blighting Oxford Street and other areas



Applied to the Mayor of London to designate Harrow Road as a Creative Enterprise Zone, to protect and grow the creative and cultural economy and provide more opportunities for residents



Successfully lobbied the government to protect important local high streets, such as Harrow Road, from indiscriminate conversion of retail shops to residential accommodation



Completed the construction of 470 Harrow Road for the social enterprise Rebel Business School to use as its first physical and completely free business school

## Fairer Environment



Delivered the energy savings show home to demonstrate practical energy efficiency improvements to residents and landlords in the borough



Spread awareness of the impacts of air pollution through our air quality sensor pilots and the SmogMobile



Lobbied the Government for more funding for TfL and launched a campaign to make residents aware of the proposed changes to bus routes



Met with local cycling groups and TfL to identify and plan new safe cycling routes



Identified over 100 illegal rubbish dumping 'hot spots' for targeted local action



Targeted an initial £5.6m package of support to help families in Westminster that are struggling with rising costs of living



To date, issued the £150 council tax rebate to 50,213 households



Led on the London-wide campaign to protect funding for our city that could be impacted by the latest Census results



Introduced the food waste recycling service to 6,500 households to improve recycling rates



Spoke to nearly 30 residents at our July Climate Action Day in Ebury Bridge to showcase the ways they can help tackle the climate emergency



Signed the Green Finance Institute's Local Climate Bond Pledge bringing the Council a step closer to meeting our net zero carbon commitments



Set up a Retrofit Taskforce to advise the Council and building owners on decarbonising commercial and residential property in Westminster

## Fairer Council



Launched the innovative Future of Westminster Commission that will focus on bringing new ideas and perspectives, to deliver a fairer Westminster for residents and businesses



Funded four additional Citizens Advice Westminster workers to meet the rise in demand for this service as the cost of living crisis continues



Started on our commitment to have members of the public participate in council meetings, the first being on Windrush Day with Peter Straker addressing Full Council



# Making Fairer Westminster a reality

A Fairer Westminster will require a lot of work, and it won't happen overnight. But we will make it happen, together. Here are some of the projects we'll be working on over the next six months:

## Fairer Communities

- Combatting child hunger through extended holiday activity and food programmes and strengthening our local breakfast club offer.
- Launching the new ActiveWestminster Strategy to outline how we will continue supporting people to lead active and healthy lives.
- Developing Westminster's Night Safety Programme to improve safety for women and girls in the city.
- Making physical activity more accessible through our refurbished community leisure centres, playgrounds and outdoor gyms.
- Exploring how we can enhance services available at Bayswater Children's Centre to give children the best start in life.
- Making improvements to our public toilets including re-opening the ones at Maida Hill Market, upgrading Broadwick Street's auto toilet and reviewing the West End's temporary toilets.



## Fairer Housing

- Reviewing the proportion of affordable housing in our developments in progress, as part of our efforts to increase the availability of affordable housing and reduce housing waiting list times.
- Conducting MOT tests across our properties to ensure our surveyors identify and fix any issues.
- Retrofitting 360 council homes to make them more energy efficient.
- Working on an agreement with Justice for Tenants to take rent repayment order cases, reclaiming rent for tenants where houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) have not been licensed.

## Fairer Economy

- Launching a corporate work experience policy at the Council to help young people build their employment skills.
- Adopting a gambling policy to protect vulnerable residents and visitors from gambling harm.
- Connecting even more properties in Westminster with full fibre broadband to improve internet access for people across the city.
- Publishing a new economic development strategy to show how we will make Westminster's economy fairer, more sustainable and successful for future generations.
- Stop providing recruitment support for employers that won't commit to paying at least the London Living Wage.
- Expanding the pop-ups programme to bring vacant units in the West End back into use.
- Launching the Made in Westminster scheme so that residents over the age of 16 can gain a qualification and experience to help start their own business.

## Fairer Environment

- Introducing an additional 600 secure cycle parking spaces by the end of March 2023 to encourage more people to cycle.
- Installing 1,000 more electric vehicle charge points by 2024 to make low emission travel more attractive.
- Launching the Sustainable City Charter, a joint commitment to help drive action across the city to address the carbon impact of our buildings and to secure their sustainability.
- Completing an Environmental Justice Measure to understand how we can remove the barriers residents face to accessing green spaces, sustainable transport and recycling.
- Launching a Community Municipal Investment Bond, so residents can invest in projects that tackle climate change.
- Engaging with communities and residents on greening projects across the city.

## Fairer Council

- Continuing to help residents access the cost of living support available to them.
- Refreshing our Responsible Procurement and Commissioning Strategy to ensure our contractors and suppliers support our Fairer Westminster strategy.
- Publishing our Modern Slavery Statement to outline the ways we will reduce the risk of slavery occurring in our supply chain.
- Signing the Fairer Tax pledge, through which we will ask our suppliers to pay the right amount of tax in the right place at the right time.
- Launching our new in-house Corporate Contact Centre to improve our customer service, reduce costs and create eight employment opportunities for residents.
- Consulting on a new Statement of Community Involvement setting out how communities will be involved in planning matters.





## Get involved

Every single one of us has a part to play in creating a Fairer Westminster. Here are some of the ways you can get involved and be heard:



For the latest news and events, visit our website or sign up to receive our newsletters:  
[www.westminster.gov.uk/news](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/news)



Upcoming decision-making council and committee meetings:  
[www.westminster.gov.uk/committees](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/committees)



Consultations or proposals that are likely to impact our residents and businesses:  
[www.westminster.gov.uk/about-council/consultations](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/about-council/consultations)



Sign up to be a member of our Resident Research Panel – a pool of residents who are invited to review and feedback on council policies and projects:  
[www.westminster.gov.uk/resident-research-panel](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/resident-research-panel)



Get involved and have your say at our Open Forum:  
[www.westminster.gov.uk/about-council/open-forum](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/about-council/open-forum)



Join your local amenity society to connect with neighbours and contribute to planning decisions in your area: [www.westminsteramenitysocietiesforum.org](http://www.westminsteramenitysocietiesforum.org)



Build community spirit on your estate and represent your neighbours by joining your local Residents' Association:  
[www.westminstercommunityinfo.org/subjects/residents-associations.html](http://www.westminstercommunityinfo.org/subjects/residents-associations.html)