



City of Westminster

Young People, Learning and Employment Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting:	Tuesday, 30 th July 2024
Classification:	General Release
Title:	North Paddington Year 1: Employment + Skills
Report of:	Director of Economy & Skills
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development
Wards Involved:	Queens Park, Harrow Road and Westbourne
Policy Context:	<p>The Fairer Economy Plan 2023-2026 sets out the Council's strategic framework and ambition for a strong and sustainable economy that delivers inclusive growth.</p> <p>A key workstream of the North Paddington Programme aligned to the Fairer Economy Plan is to ensure that targeted support helps residents to develop that right skills to take advantage of the city's employment opportunities and develop fulfilling careers.</p>
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to outline the Council's Strategies and plans to improve employment opportunities, training, and qualifications in North Paddington. It will highlight the ambition of the Fairer Economy Plan and the establishment of an Education, Employment and Skills Board as well as a specific look at North Paddington Year 1 and proposed next steps.
- 1.2. The North Paddington Year 2-4 Programme Plan has been discussed at Cabinet on Monday 15th July.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- 2.1. Comment on the ambitions on the Fairer Economy Plan and the key priority to create employment opportunities for all.
- 2.2. Provide feedback and views on the strategic direction and activities delivered in North Paddington in Year 1 of the North Paddington Programme to support local hiring, employability and skills.
- 2.3. Provide feedback and comments on the planned activities as part of Years 2 -4 of the North Paddington Programme. The proposed plan has been discussed at Cabinet on the 15th of July.

3. Background, including policy context

- 3.1. In line with the Fairer Westminster and Fairer Economy plan, we are focused on creating a fairer, more sustainable and inclusive economy that provides opportunities and support for our local residents. The newly formed Education, Employment and Skills board will provide strategic direction, whilst the North Paddington Programme enables us to test and trial projects on a local level. Collectively the learning will shape the required systems change to better serve communities.
- 3.2. The North Paddington programme encapsulates a series of interlinked initiatives and plans that collectively drive the vision of Fairer Westminster.
- 3.3. The Fairer Economy Plan has a key objective of creating employment opportunities for all. This work includes the creation of an Employment, Education and Skills Board and establishing a network with major local employers – the Westminster Anchor Alliance, to amplify activities which support local hiring, skills development and employability. Each of these elements plays a pivotal role in addressing economic disparities, fostering inclusive employment opportunities, and promoting sustainable skills development.

- 3.4. The **Fairer Economy Plan 2023-2026** is a strategic framework, our ambition is a strong and sustainable economy that delivers inclusive growth. Our objectives are to create:
- *Resilient Businesses and High Streets* – where small businesses are supported to grow and where communities thrive.
 - *A Vibrant West End* – providing a world class offer and quality experience to residents, businesses, workers and visitors.
 - *Employment Opportunities for All* – so that residents have the right skills to take advantage of the city’s employment opportunities and can develop fulfilling careers.
- 3.5. To achieve the employment objective, there is a focus on creating equitable opportunities for all residents, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds with a focus in Pimlico and North Paddington. By addressing economic disparities, the plan aims to reduce poverty and enhance social mobility. Key elements include supporting local businesses, promoting fair wages, and ensuring that economic growth benefits everyone in the community.
- 3.6. The **Education, Employment and Skills Board** was established in 2024 to help the council develop a strategic skills framework that will help deliver a sustainable, inclusive, and diverse local economy. Where residents have the skills needed to access opportunities to achieve their potential and where businesses play an active role in shaping provision, so they find the talent they need to innovate and thrive.
- The Board is independently chaired by Jessie Buscombe, ensuring impartial oversight and guidance in all its deliberations and decisions.
- Additional Board members include Joe Dromey, Central London Forward, Ann-Marie Soyinka, Greater London Authority, Ola Badamosi, Paddington Development Trust, Ruth Duston, South Westminster BIDs & London HQ, Linsey Cole, University of Westminster, Oliver Latham, Pearson PLC, Professor Alex Hughes, Governing Body of Westminster Adult Education Service, Debbie Jackson, WCC and Sandra Kelly, UK Hospitality.
- 3.7. Due to the lack of effective mapping, communication, and awareness of skills provision available, the current skills landscape, consisting of multi-players, is complex, fragmented, and difficult to navigate.
- 3.8. The Board will act a leadership forum to build sound partnerships (education, training, business, and the local authority) tasked with determining how best to use our respective finite resources - through playing to respective strengths, adopting a systematic approach and the utilisation of evidence and evaluation to deliver programmes that will deliver maximum impact. As outlined in the Terms of Reference the Board will

conduct a comprehensive analysis of education and training and furthermore, develop a clear strategy aimed at closing current and future skills gaps so that all can benefit from an improved local skills system.

- 3.9. Following the inaugural Board meeting in February 24 and a further meeting in May 24 activities are now focussed on research and data mapping to ensure that the Board is presented with sufficient information to determine what skills gaps exist both current and future, against both employer skill demand and the educational provision on offer across the City.
- 3.10. The **Westminster Employment Service (WES)** supports unemployed and economically inactive Westminster residents into sustainable employment, adopting a strength -based, coaching approach and working holistically to find work and or training most sustainable to build independence.
- 3.11. Through strong mutually beneficial relationships with employers WES also maximises employment opportunities for residents via a free job brokerage service. Whilst undertaking a range of activities to engage with community organisations and education, training, and employment (ETE) providers.
- 3.12. The service has a network with over 120 organisations and works to bring organisations together to build strong relationships & connections; helping professionals to understand the everchanging landscape whilst using insights from the network to influence new provision e.g. Work & Health Provision; Pioneer Programme.
- 3.13. The **Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES)** is the cornerstone of the Council's skills development offer for adults. WAES offers a wide range of courses aimed at upskilling residents and preparing them for the job market. From basic literacy and numeracy to advanced vocational training, WAES ensures that everyone has the opportunity to acquire skills needed to succeed in a competitive economy. WAES operates from purpose-built accommodation and offers industry relevant facilities to over 7000 learners each year, with 50% Westminster residents. They deliver apprenticeship programmes, community learning working with community partners, classroom-based learning and work-based learning including upskilling in the workplace. WAES is Ofsted rated as Good with outstanding features and has two on site nurseries for learners rated as Outstanding and Good.
- 3.14. A key part of the Economy & Skills team's function is to harness relationships with businesses and employers to amplify support for residents. Our activities include encouraging local employers to recruit locally, support local employability and skills programmes and careers initiatives with schools. See examples below:

The Westminster Anchor Alliance

- Established in 2023, the Alliance is a voluntary partnership of major local employers that are committed to improving access to local jobs. Our learning from elsewhere is that these networks can drive greater impact through

collaboration whilst supporting skills shortage through localised employment strategies.

- The focus of the Alliance in 2024 is to demystify careers and support the progression of local residents into green jobs; property and real estate, and life sciences, working with the Paddington Life Sciences Partnership.
- Members of the Alliance are the City Council, The Crown Estate, British Land, Grosvenor, Octavia Housing, ZSL (London Zoo), Microsoft, Imperial Health Care Trust and Kings College London.

Social Value from Council suppliers and developers –

- We work with c60-70 council suppliers and developers with local hiring and employability commitments which are negotiated as part of Social Value and planning (s106 agreements). We host community recruitment events for suppliers and developers in North Paddington and insist that all of the roles advertised are at London Living Wage. Vacancies, work experience and training opportunities are shared each week with a network of community providers operating in North Paddington and residents are connected to roles through the WES Jobs and Training team.

3.15. North Paddington Programme –

- Wards in North Paddington area are among the most disadvantaged in the City, facing significant income and health inequalities compared to neighbouring wards within Westminster.
- Census and LIFT data show the North Paddington wards, Westbourne, Queen's Park and Harrow Road, have a poverty rate of 22% compared with the Westminster average of 14%, higher rates of economic inactivity and a 17% rate of residents on low-income benefits compared with 11% in the rest of the borough. In relation to low income households we also see a difference of 3% between the North Paddington wards and the rest of Westminster.
- Adopted in April 2021, **Westminster Council's City Plan (2019-2040)** outlines that '*North Paddington has long contained some of Westminster's most deprived areas, with lower levels of qualifications, earnings and health, and higher levels of worklessness, than elsewhere in the city. It is an area requiring coordinated intervention to tackle persistent levels of inequality.*'
- In February 2023, when the North Paddington Programme was formally approved, it adopted 2 key workstream commitments. The first, (Year 1 workstream, 2023-24), was an initial programme, with the aim of building momentum and impact in collaboration with strategic North Paddington community stakeholders.
- This allowed the Council to kickstart delivery and create its Year 1 Programme of works, centred on year 1 priorities, which were developed in

collaboration with the external stakeholders who form the North Paddington Partnership Board and internal services.

- In addition, at the heart of the North Paddington Programme was the Council's ambition to create meaningful change, reflecting the wants and needs of wider North Paddington communities.
- To develop the year 2-4 programme of work, North Paddington created Strategic Delivery groups across seven themes to bring together Council Officers, Partners, VCS, Community Leaders and residents.
- **The Money, Local Economy, Jobs + Training** theme group created the vision: To increase levels of qualifications, earnings and wealth, and bring about economic vitality. Membership of the delivery group consisted of representatives from, Paddington Development Trust, Paddington Partnership, Department of Work & Pensions, Queen's Park Community Council, Ada Digital College, Westminster Adult Education Service, Ingeus, The Rebel Business School.
 - Theme objectives:
 - Identifying local, good jobs which offer career pathways and have low barriers to entry
 - Helping residents to access relevant further FE and HE education, training and upskilling
 - Understanding and tackling barriers which prevent residents from participating in education, training and upskilling, and/ or accessing good jobs
 - Connecting residents to local employers with good job openings/career pathways.

3.16. Aims & Objectives

- NP vision – *A place-based partnership approach to help those living within the Northwest of the borough live safer, healthier and more financially secure lives.*
- NP objectives –
 - To test and trial new ways of working and gather evidence, which leads to improving outcomes for NP residents.
 - To complement or add value to the Councils existing work and new initiatives, being a catalyst to creating systems change within business-as-usual systems
 - Increase well-being in North Paddington area, measured by a reduction in the indices of multiple deprivation
 - To ensure the programme leaves a positive legacy of change and improvements in the area

- Appendix B shows the full year 1 programme of work. Appendix C shows the proposed Year 2-4 Programme of work.
- We are currently in the midst of the decision-making process following Cabinet's approval of the years 2-4 programme, which was finalised on July 15th. The call-in period, during which any decisions can be reviewed and potentially challenged, will extend until July 26th. Upon the conclusion of this period, we will be in a position to advance with the implementation of the programme, pending no further interventions.

3.17. **Stakeholder Engagement**

- Years 2-4 planning and engagement has taken many forms (over the last 8 months) within the NP programme. There are dedicated engagement officers on the ground within each ward, attending local meetings and events, also regularly attending community groups and meeting with individuals. Strategic theme groups (1/3 officers, 1/3 partners, 1/3 VSC/Community) have been established as a forum to tackle some of the challenging issues and create a collective vision and plan. The officers on the ground have fed information into the Strategic Leads, and the Strategic Theme Groups to ensure input is broadly captured. Collectively the groups created and shaped the proposed year 2-4 programme of work, in line with the overarching objectives.
- A Strategic Partnership Board, Programme Board + Leadership Forum has oversight and provides steer on the NP Programmes direction of travel.
- The NP Programme is about to publish its 3rd edition newsletter, it is issued quarterly to all households across the three wards. The NP team has developed a bespoke Common Place platform to host online consultations.

3.18. **Investments to date and future investments**

- Appendix B shows the Year 1 investments, and Appendix C shows the proposed programme of work for Year 2-4. The NP Programme has commissioned RealWorth to undertake a year 1 evaluation and develop a year 2-4 evaluation framework (due Sept 24).
- Additional to the listed Programme of work, there is an engagement team working with the community to rebuild trust and amplify voices, and Strategic Delivery Leads creating structure, consistent conversations, transparency and accountability across the directorates and community partners when developing and delivering projects.

3.19. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- A variety of mechanisms have been utilised to monitor the progress of the programme. Within year 1, Strategy and Intelligence undertook an

evaluation of the Digital Dash Competition, where grants were issued, partners were required to complete monitoring forms and attend review meetings. Strategic Delivery leads also complete bi-monthly highlight reports, capturing progress, risk and issues, which is overseen by the Programme Board.

- The Council commissioned RealWorth, a social value consultancy to conduct a review of the whole North Paddington Programme to date, and to provide a framework for monitoring and evaluating the programme in years 2-4. The evaluation provides the Council an independent perspective on the work carried out in year 1, and suggestion recommendations for strengthening the programme going forward. RealWorth are currently developing a framework for evaluating the year 2-4, which should be available in within the next 3 months.

3.20. Influencing strategic change

- The NP Programme has initiated several individual projects in year 1 (Appendix B) to build capacity and trail new initiatives. Digital Dash supported young people develop softer skills that are vital on the pathway to employment. Other projects have delivered careers taster sessions, direct engagement sessions linked to employment, employer engagement events and early intervention work with young people at risk of joining gang. The programme has also delivered NP job fairs and will continue to do so through NPOP in September, October and November. There is also additional job fairs through WES in the surrounding areas and communicated through to NP residents through the communities and engagement team.

3.21. Lessons Learned

- Recently the NP Programme team shared highlights of the successes and challenges across the programme with extend SLT, to inform their planning and thinking. A similar session will take place at loop-live in July to share learning more widely. In particular the NPOP pilot will serve as a pilot project and produce an evaluation where we intended to review and potentially progress through to year 2-4 programmes.
- The NP Team works closely with the Pimlico Programme to ensure joint learning and a streamlined approached when possible.
- High-level summary of NP Programme successes/challenges.

Successes	Challenges
<p>Consistent WCC representation and engagement at established community events and regular meetings</p> <p>Senior Community Development Officers based within each ward, on the ground and visible.</p> <p>Strategic Theme groups - in-person, hybrid, online. Representation 1/3 WCC officers, 1/3 Partnership (RP/NHS/MET), 1/3 Community Rep/VSC – collective designing the Year 2-4 Programme of work.</p> <p>Newsletter – 3rd issue published to 16000 household. Sharing information about local events and organisations.</p> <p>Launch Common Place</p> <p>One off specific engagement events</p> <p>Getting comfortable with uncomfortable conversations – <i>just because we don't like what someone has said, or they way they have said it, doesn't make it wrong!</i></p>	<p>Scale of the task – 7 cross cutting theme groups</p> <p>Number of stakeholders + variety of relationships. (Internal and external)</p> <p>Timescale for delivery vs co-design</p> <p>Not branding the programme – people don't always understand all the elements of the programme and how it sits together.</p> <p>Raising expectations and managing limitations</p> <p>Balance of power – who makes the final decisions.</p>

3.22. RealWorth Year 1 evaluation makes the following recommendations of consideration when determining next steps:

-Look to **streamline the delivery theme groups** – effectively manage resource and maximise output/impact

-**Engagement with stakeholders** – some blocks in information flow, streamline number of meetings, reduce bureaucracy, be clear on roles, responsibilities and governance.

-**Flexibility, responsiveness & consistency** – ensure there is a clear understanding of the current services available within NP, to create a 'no wrong door' approach. Establish a consistent grants policy to ensure fairness and build a coalition of participants.

-**Branding + Positioning** – will help communicate the progress to the community and engage partners to engage.

-**Transparency in decision making** – need to provide greater clarity to reduce tension and frustration

-Building capacity over time – need to think about bringing co-design closer to WCC systems change

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. A capital budget of £20m was allocated for the North Paddington Programme from 2023/24 to 2026/27 to be profiled evenly. Of this there was an agreement to have an allocation to revenue which was £1m per annum. Allocations to the Year 1 Programme (including underspends) have been approved and include allocation for the Economy workstream. Of the overall revenue allocation these amounted to £0.488m; and £0.277m within the Capital allocation projects were identified.

5. Legal and Governance Implications

- 5.1. The Council has appointed the Young People, Learning and Employment Policy and Scrutiny Committee to discharge the functions conferred by section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations under section 32 of the Local Government Act 2000 in relation to the matters work of the Council and others in the City to:

- Safeguard children and young people
- Provide education, learning and skills development services and opportunities both at school age and beyond
- Provide support for people to find and sustain work
- Provide library services
- Provide leisure services.

- 5.2 Terms of reference for Young People, Learning and Employment Policy and Scrutiny Committee is set out in Part 3 of Chapter of the Constitution.

6. Carbon Impact

- 6.1. Whilst there is not a need for a specific carbon assessment on Year 2-4 Economy & Skills North Paddington strategy & delivery. It is important to highlight that in Years 2-4, the Fairer Economy Plan will focus on creating green job opportunities and fostering a Green Economy and Green Skills in the North Paddington area. These initiatives will be pivotal in helping the Council achieve its net zero 2040 target. Key components will include leveraging procurement contracts for social value, collaborating with WAES on the Green Live Learning Lab and the Retrofit Skills Classroom, and identifying avenues for green job creation within the community.

7. Equalities Impact

- 7.1. The Programme aims to foster openness between the council, community organisations and residents within the area; take a person-centred and relational approach to our engagement; encourage a breadth of participation from across North Paddington communities, including reaching those demographic groups whose voices have been traditionally less heard, and those who may have barriers to access.

All Community members from across the 3 wards are intended to benefit as this programme will offer more residents and community members the platform to input their views and pledges investment and resource to help those within North Paddington live safer, healthier, and more financially secure lives.

Based on data we have collated from the census and LIFT data we have aimed to tackle employment barriers to enable residents such as those with English as a second language, those with limited personal networks and also those with lower educational levels to create pathways into good jobs. Our year 2-4 programmes of work will undergo Equalities assessments in once the projects have been scoped and mobilised.

8. Consultation and Engagement

- 8.1. Consultation includes the Westminster City Survey 2023 with specific North Paddington related extension and North West Westminster Programme resident research report.

North Paddington Programme specific engagement consisted of resident and community stakeholder workshops and street engagement in October and November 2023 in Harrow Road, Queen's Park and Westbourne. Engagement also continued with the Money, Local Economy, Jobs and Training delivery groups with various stakeholders including VCSE organisations, grass roots community organisations and other stakeholders.

The Community engagement team, comprising of 3 wards-based community development officers, are consistently present and liaising with residents and community groups, collecting key community insights to inform our programme development and investment decisions.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact Report Authors, Gill James gjames1@westminster.gov.uk; Theodora Otoo-Quayson totooquayson@westminster.gov.uk

Background Papers

1. Cabinet Member Report – North Paddington Year 2-4 Programme of work:
[North Paddington Programme Years 2-4.pdf \(westminster.gov.uk\)](#)
2. Cabinet – Monday 15th July 2024 Printed Decisions:
[Decisions 15th-Jul-2024 18.30 Cabinet.pdf \(westminster.gov.uk\)](#)
3. Fairer Economy Plan
[A plan for a Fairer Economy | Westminster City Council](#)
4. Education, Employment and Skills Board Webpage
[Education, Employment and Skills Board | Westminster City Council](#)
5. Westminster Employment Service
[Westminster Employment Service | Westminster City Council](#)
6. Westminster Adult Education Service
[Westminster Adult Education Service - Vibrant Learning Community \(waes.ac.uk\)](#)
7. Helping Hands Programme Impact Films
[Helping Hands Programme Impact Films - Young Westminster Foundation](#)
8. Brighter Futures Fund
[Over £380k awarded by Westminster Brighter Futures Fund 2023 - Young Westminster Foundation](#)
9. Westminster Anchor Alliance
<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/introducing-westminster-anchor-alliance#:~:text=The%20Westminster%20Anchor%20Alliance%20brings,pressing%20challenges%20to%20our%20communities.>

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Community Insights Quotes

Appendix B – Notable Projects

Appendix C – Proposed Programme of Work (Local Economy)

Appendix D – RealWorth one year review report