



# A Year of Delivery 2022/23



City of Westminster

One year ago, a new administration was elected to Westminster City Council. Since then, we've listened to your voices and developed our Fairer Westminster strategy, a plan to tackle inequalities, shape local neighbourhoods for the better and create a sustainable economy that benefits everyone.

We've achieved a lot in one year, but we know there's still a lot to do. This document outlines all the ways we're working with you across our five key pillars to deliver a true Fairer Westminster.



# Fairer Council

A Fairer Westminster begins with a Fairer Council, and that means putting our residents at the heart of all our decision-making. We want every action we take to result from listening to your needs.

We want to make it easy to find the information and services people need, and for everything we do to be transparent, ethical and responsible. This includes the partners we work with to provide services. Every step of the supply chain must ensure ethical treatment of people and a sustainable attitude to the environment.

We also want to continue being a financially sustainable council, always able to support residents and businesses with all their needs. A Fairer Council is one people can trust to make the right decisions for your needs.



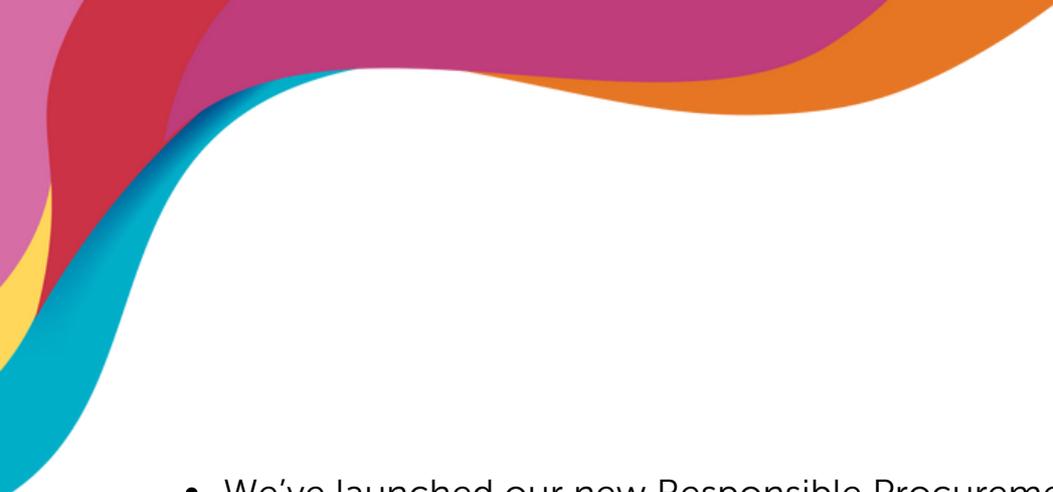
# We've delivered...

- We launched the Fairer Westminster strategy and accompanying delivery plan, outlining our priorities for financial year 2023/24. Regular updates against a suite of key success measures are being published on our website, which is a first for the council.
- We are the first local authority in the UK to launch a “dirty money” campaign in a bid to combat the capital’s reputation as the European centre for money laundering. This includes a new charter that is supported by business groups representing London’s biggest retailers, hospitality venues and property owners.
- We have signed the Fair Tax Pledge – aligning itself with major companies and public sector organisations in the UK committed to ensuring transparency in tax.
- We froze the Westminster City Council part of council tax, which means Westminster has the cheapest Band D rate in the country.
- We are lobbying government to allow us to introduce a new registration system for short-term lets which can cause such a nuisance for residents and negatively affect neighbourhoods.
- We have led on the Candy Store crackdown that is blighting Oxford Street and other major centres, working constructively with landowners, law enforcement and government to tackle this scourge.



- We're introducing a right for members of the public who live, work or study in Westminster to speak at Full Council meetings to get more people involved in local democracy.
- We have led on the Lost Londoners Count, a cross-party campaign of the capital's inner city local authorities calling for fair funding in light of newly released Census data.
- We elected our first Muslim Lord Mayor and its youngest ever incumbent, Cllr Hamza Taouzzale, born and bred in Westminster.
- We set up the Future of Westminster Commission that called on residents, community groups, businesses and those with relevant expertise to share their ideas on how to improve life in the heart of the capital. It will begin reporting in May 2023.
- We led a successful local campaign to keep many of our vital local bus routes following a TfL consultation.
- We delivered an independent review to learn lessons from the previous Oxford Street District programme.
- We launched a crackdown on empty homes in the capital and vowed to free up more property for private rent and affordable homes, introducing a range of measures focused on properties vacant for more than six months.
- We launched Westminster Green Investment, in partnership with ethical crowdfunding platform Abundance Investment, giving residents a chance to invest in sustainable projects and green initiatives. The target of £1 million was raised within ten days, the fastest for any bond of this type.



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- We've launched our new Responsible Procurement and Commissioning strategy that sets a clear framework to guide our work with suppliers on community wealth building to deliver responsible business and sustainable development.
  - We launched a public consultation and as a result have made a series of improvements to our online reporting tool, Report It, that allows our residents to let us know about any street problems in Westminster, such as fly tipping, potholes, abandoned vehicles or graffiti.
  - We issued a £150 council tax rebate to 50,213 households.
  - We are embedding our Digital Inclusion programme that works across council services, and across sectors with our external partners to offer support to our residents and businesses. We have been able to offer a digital cost of living support package worth over £23,500 to help over 150 households initially. We have been able to offer devices and internet connections to residents as part of the cost of living support package.
  - We've held over 70 Community Fibre Digital Ambassador sessions held across three libraries, with over 250 appointments booked by residents.
  - We have established a Digital Skills for Employment working group to close the digital skills gap through partnership working and effective referrals. Over 250 people attended 16 events during Get Online Week.
  - We are embarking on a zero based budget review, which will see every item of spending assessed based on how effectively it is serving the needs of residents.
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# Fairer Communities

Cities such as Westminster are built on its people – the distinctive communities that breathe life into their neighbourhoods and provide each area with identity and character. This can only happen when we coordinate our services to recognise and meet local communities' specific needs and everyone feels able to contribute to improve local outcomes. For us, a Fairer Westminster is one in which we do everything we can to reduce inequalities at every turn, from closing the life expectancy gap to tackling discrimination everywhere we find it.

Fostering a safe city will help these communities thrive. Families can raise children knowing excellent learning opportunities are within easy reach, and that the voices of young people will inform how the council makes decisions. Effective health and social care services, along with engaging physical activities and inspiring cultural activities, will help people live a good life.



# We've delivered...

- We formally declared a local cost of living emergency, stating that the scale of the challenge needs “urgent and substantial action” from the council, government and others with the ability to help.
- We launched a £14m cost of living strategy – including £4m of council investment – to support those most at risk. This included a cost of living information support hub, debt and energy advice services, employment advice, and various grants and funds to support those on low incomes.
- We funded 30 organisations within the borough to provide weekly free hot meals and activities as part of their cost of living support.
- Our Winter in the City initiative saw incredible uptake, with 1,200 people participating in more than 100 events around Westminster.
- We are delivering the most ambitious expansion of the free school meals programme in the capital, with Westminster children aged three to 14 able to receive a free school lunch. Our additional investment of £2m will complement the existing government free school meals offer and recent additional Greater London Authority funding to make 14,000 children eligible for free school meals.
- We launched a school uniform fund to support pupils with costs of school uniforms.
- We expanded mental health support in schools, including a new We Got U, U Got This information and support campaign.
- We've launched the Bi-Borough Inclusion Strategy that addresses the factors that lead to specific groups of children and young people being disproportionately affected by exclusion.
- We've reopened the Bayswater Children's Centre site with a new Stay and Play service. Our city-wide Family Hubs Network provides support for up to 4,800 families each year with locations in Pimlico, Church Street and Queen's Park.

- We're providing additional funding of activities and food for young people and children during school holidays, including half terms in addition to the main holidays and providing more funding over the summer to reach more children.
- We launched our new Bi-Borough Children and Young People's Plan 2023-2026, that sets out the vision for Children's Services to improve the lives of our young people.
- We launched a new £1.8 million budget to fund cultural projects in the city to help a range of projects that will make culture more accessible to residents and visitors.
- We took pride in our communities with events to celebrate Eid, Windrush Day, Pride, Jubilee weekend and the Notting Hill Carnival.
- We are working hard to tackle the scourge of pedicabs with sustained enforcement operations, resulting in successful court prosecutions. Our City Inspectors join police officers patrolling known hotspots.
- We were successful in bidding for the largest grant in London from the Home Office to tackle women's safety concerns in the night-time economy. The local authority was awarded £289,600 to deliver six crucial initiatives that aim to reduce the rates of sexual harassment. This includes our recently launched It's Her City Too campaign where the key message is for all to take responsibility for everyone's safety.
- We are tackling anti-social behaviour issues in Westminster with our new ASB strategy. The strategy, which is the first of its kind, sets out a community-led approach, known as a Coordinated Community Response (CCR), which asks everyone to play their part and requires the council to work together with other organisations.



- We cracked down on street urination problems in Soho, with the installation of anti-pee paint that gained worldwide interest.
- We are becoming a more inclusive council, more representative of the communities we serve, addressing gender and ethnicity pay gaps and publicly stating we are committed to being an anti-racist organisation.
- We have remodelled support for vulnerable residents as part of the Changing Futures programme. A new specialist team provides a fully wraparound service for residents aged 18-25 who are facing multiple disadvantages and who often find themselves failing to get support.
- We have introduced a new ground-breaking policy approach for gambling premises that will help reduce the risk of people who may be vulnerable to gambling and protecting those most at risk.
- We renamed a section of Bayswater Road as Kyiv Road to mark the first anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and as an act of solidarity with its people.
- We've helped to match 733 recorded Ukrainians to local hosts as part of the Homes for Ukraine initiative.
- We have allocated funding to food banks and food pantries to help tackle the cost of living crisis.
- We are investing over half a million pounds towards a mental health community centre and wellness scheme supporting residents to learn new skills, rebuild their self-confidence, integrate back into daily life and achieve their personal goals.
- We have signed UNISON's ethical care charter setting out our commitment for greater dignity for care workers and those in their care.



- Public Health's healthy winter grants provided funding for 30 organisations to provide residents with 556 healthy activity sessions and 6,767 hot meals.
- Public Health has managed the local response to health protection threats including COVID-19, Mpox, Polio, Diphtheria, Scarlet Fever and Invasive Group A Strep. Throughout the year, we have managed 25 COVID-19 outbreaks, supported 87% of care home residents to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and our Mpox response supported the delivery of nearly 20,000 vaccinations within Westminster-based sexual health services.
- Successfully received Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) funding to deliver a COVID-19 vaccination engagement programme, working with 42 partners to deliver nearly 500 initiatives and engage with almost 8,200 residents.
- Community Champions engaged in a year-long neighbourhood level campaign in support of a wider NHS initiative aimed at reducing high intensity use of A&E and Urgent Treatment Centres. Across the north of Westminster, Champions reached residents through hundreds of events and activities. The campaign also focussed on local promotion of the role of Community Pharmacists.
- Westminster become the first borough in London to successfully enable market traders to accept and promote Healthy Start vouchers.
- As part of our £3.75m investment in addressing health inequalities, we have invested over £1m in active spaces, made active travel easier through a new Santander bike hire scheme in the north, a new e-cargo bike scheme in Harrow Road and new cycling infrastructure, outdoor gym installation and reactivation of disused spaces.
- Westminster was one of two London boroughs to receive funding for a test and learn approach to housing support for people in drug and alcohol treatment under the Drug Strategy.



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- We have distributed the Household Support Fund to support vulnerable residents, as part of our targeted approach to support those most at risk of extreme hardship.
  - We have successfully piloted a new Mental Health Reablement service. The service supports people with mental health needs for up to 12 weeks to recover and gain independence after a crisis or a hospital admission. Over the year, the service has supported more than 150 residents with mental health needs.
  - We are preparing to launch a new Engagement Assessment and Triage team that will work with the police and health partners to help people on the street suffering from mental health issues.
  - The Health and Wellbeing Board has approved for the draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy to proceed to consultation. The aim of the 10-year strategy is for our residents to have 'Happier and Healthier Lives'.
  - We lead a consortium of 18 London boroughs to provide community equipment that keeps people safe and well in their homes. This new service includes better value for money, improved delivery speeds, a refreshed catalogue of equipment available, and a new fleet of fully electric vehicles operating from three major depots across London.
  - We received an award for the 'most improved council for action on root causes of food poverty', highlighting that more residents have more access to affordable and healthy food.

# Fairer Environment

One of the toughest challenges for any major city is tackling the climate emergency. As part of our aim to create a Fairer Environment, we want to take ambitious action to become a net zero council by 2030 and a net zero city by 2040.

This means reducing air pollution throughout the city to meet the World Health Organization's guidelines. It also means making sure our streets are cleaner and safer, increasing recycling rates, and using cleaner technology.

Westminster will always be a city in which people travel, so we can do everything possible to encourage the use of sustainable and active modes of transport for residents, workers and visitors.

But we also want to have a local focus. By ensuring residents have access to high-quality amenities and services all within 15 minutes of their homes, we can make a real impact in lowering emissions, improving air quality and bettering lives now and for future generations.



# We've delivered...

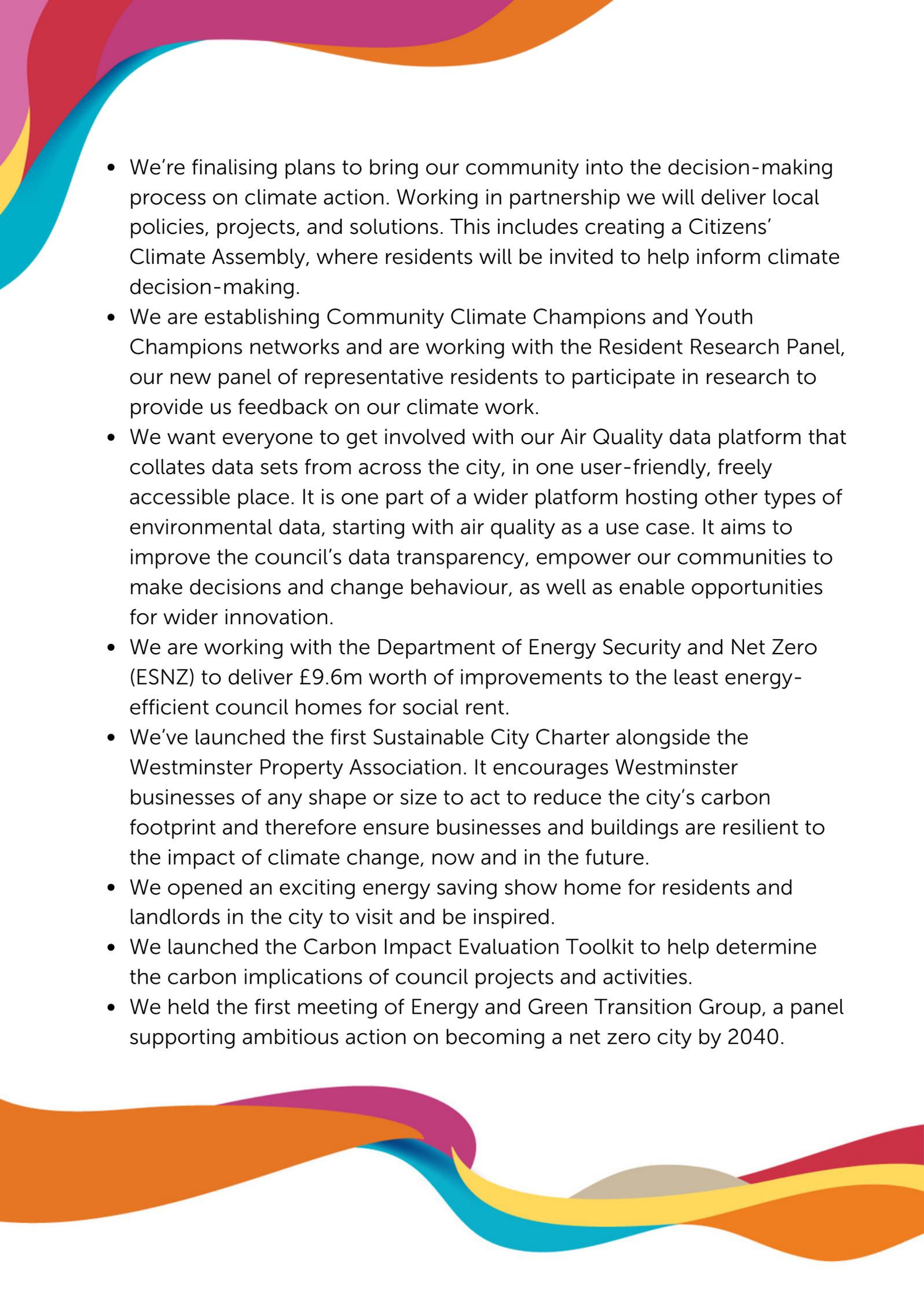
- We've invested £35m in active travel and sustainable transport by improving infrastructure and safety for journeys by public transport, foot and cycle. This will help to improve air quality and bring us closer to a carbon neutral city, contributing to our Fairer Environment target of becoming a net zero council by 2030 and a net zero city by 2040.
- We've launched a trial for a new six-month micro-logistics hub in Pimlico to tackle the issue of high numbers of vehicles on the streets delivering online purchases direct to residents' homes and to offices, in a bid to reduce congestion and improve air quality.
- We have more than 1,800 electric vehicle charge points installed, exceeding our target of 1,500 charge points for use by the public.
- We launched our Waste Action Squads, working in partnership with Veolia to deep cleanse 50 dumping hotspots. These Squads have carried out 209 waste interventions, as well as answered questions from members of the public about waste.
- We're leading the fight against inconsiderate dockless bike companies who allow their bikes to be dumped on the pavement.
- We've banned the use of the weed killer glyphosate in Westminster parks and housing estates. This is one of several methods to improve green spaces and encourage native wildlife to flourish in the city.
- We've consulted with local people who have voiced their support in making the Covent Garden Traffic Management Scheme permanent, following a joint consultation hosted jointly with Camden Council.



- We have been trialling the use of AI technology and CCTV cameras to catch fly tippers in the act.
- We're supporting safer cycling, for example by working in partnership with the Camden Council to deliver a new cycleway in central London on Cleveland Street, between Maple Street and Mortimer Street. This will help reduce traffic, improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and increase local air quality.
- We listened to heritage bodies, gas lamp enthusiasts and residents, deciding to halt the proposed conversion of 174 gas lamps to LED.
- We installed the first electric School Street sign in the country, making it more visible for drivers to know when there is a pedestrian and cycle-only zone during school drop-off and pick-up times. This is part of our important School Streets programme to improve safety.
- We have installed energy conservation measures in 61 council buildings, cutting our corporate property emissions by around 1,700 tonnes of CO2 equivalent per year.
- We've published our innovative Environmental Justice Measures, to show how we measure inequality in relation to the environment and to help people understand the situation in their local areas.
- We've improved 450 council homes with energy efficiency measures and clean heating.

- We invested £58m from the council pension fund into renewable energy infrastructure and launched our Responsible Procurement Strategy to emphasise on sustainability within supplier contracts.



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- We're finalising plans to bring our community into the decision-making process on climate action. Working in partnership we will deliver local policies, projects, and solutions. This includes creating a Citizens' Climate Assembly, where residents will be invited to help inform climate decision-making.
  - We are establishing Community Climate Champions and Youth Champions networks and are working with the Resident Research Panel, our new panel of representative residents to participate in research to provide us feedback on our climate work.
  - We want everyone to get involved with our Air Quality data platform that collates data sets from across the city, in one user-friendly, freely accessible place. It is one part of a wider platform hosting other types of environmental data, starting with air quality as a use case. It aims to improve the council's data transparency, empower our communities to make decisions and change behaviour, as well as enable opportunities for wider innovation.
  - We are working with the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (ESNZ) to deliver £9.6m worth of improvements to the least energy-efficient council homes for social rent.
  - We've launched the first Sustainable City Charter alongside the Westminster Property Association. It encourages Westminster businesses of any shape or size to act to reduce the city's carbon footprint and therefore ensure businesses and buildings are resilient to the impact of climate change, now and in the future.
  - We opened an exciting energy saving show home for residents and landlords in the city to visit and be inspired.
  - We launched the Carbon Impact Evaluation Toolkit to help determine the carbon implications of council projects and activities.
  - We held the first meeting of Energy and Green Transition Group, a panel supporting ambitious action on becoming a net zero city by 2040.

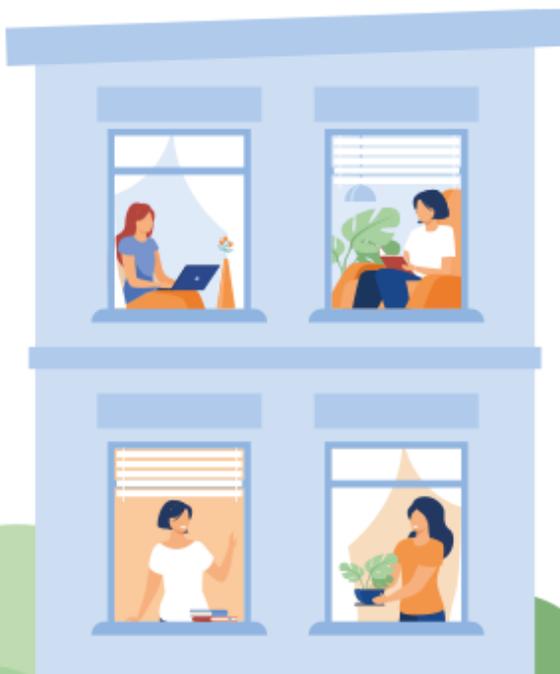
# Fairer Housing

Home is where the heart is, and in a Fairer Westminster we want to make sure the housing needs of everyone from residents and families to social care users are met. Whether in council housing or privately rented accommodation, your homes should be well managed, environmentally sound and, most importantly, genuinely affordable.

Fairer housing also means that everyone has access to these opportunities. We want to increase the number and quality of affordable housing available and we want to reduce homelessness in the city by providing the support individuals need.

With improved housing also comes improved housing services and we want our tenants and lessees to be consistently satisfied

not only with the service our teams provide, but with the condition and energy efficiency of the homes we offer.



# We've delivered...

- We've worked closely with the local community in and around Church Street on development proposals that have now received formal planning permission to proceed with the delivery of 1,200 new homes, with over half of these as affordable tenure. This milestone also unlocks the potential for £29m of GLA funding once construction starts.
- We worked closely with the local community at Ebury Bridge where the development scheme received a successful resident ballot outcome with 91% of residents voting in favour, across a turnout of 67%. This unlocks GLA funding of £41m.
- We've completed infills projects across the city in Maida Vale, Regent's Park and Church Street, providing brand new family-sized council homes for social rent.
- The Lisson Arches project will initially provide modern supported living accommodation for elderly residents living in Penn House. Once fully occupied, 59 older Westminster residents will benefit from the scheme.
- We've started construction at the Churchill Gardens, Torrison House and Carlton Dene and Westmead development sites. This means that the projects have successfully met the GLA's 31 March funding deadline, and that over £23m grant funding has been claimed and received.
- We celebrated the topping out of 300 Harrow Road, which will see 112 new truly affordable homes created, a mix of council homes for social and intermediate rent.



- We have a new Empty Property Officer who has been working on relevant parts of the Interim Empty Property Strategy Statement, including setting up a reporting tool on the council website for residents to report empty homes.
- We supported residents, the homeless and rough sleepers during hot weather in July and August and freezing weather over the winter.
- We have championed Community Thursday walkabouts on our housing estates, to find out what issues residents are facing directly.
- We're working with our repairs contractor to improve the service our tenants receive – part of our continuous journey of improvement.
- We've introduced a new engagement process so we can better understand our tenants' and leaseholders' wants and concerns.
- We have invested in specialist ventilation systems and air quality sensor installations to tackle mould and condensation in social homes. As part of this, we're investing in additional Stock Condition Surveys.
- We've also launched an information campaign to encourage council tenants suffering from any mould or damp issues to let us know.
- We set aside £1m to support council tenants not entitled to Universal Credit or Housing Benefit who may need support with paying their rent.



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- We announced that the building of low-cost social rent homes across Westminster is our priority. Since then, more than 300 social rent homes have been added to Westminster's house-building programme.
  - We're acquiring hundreds of temporary accommodation properties with an additional investment of £85m. On top of the existing budget, it means we have now allocated nearly £170m to acquire temporary housing – the largest ever single investment to help those waiting for a home to meet their needs. The investment is expected to provide 270 additional properties in or near the borough over the next three years.
  - We completed construction on the Luton Street development as part of our Church Street Regeneration programme. The area includes new affordable housing, a leisure centre, and the first section of the 'green spine', a pedestrianised route connecting Church Street and Marylebone.

# Fairer Economy

Westminster's economy is rightly seen as being successful, diverse, resilient and sustainable. Supporting these values is vital to creating a Fairer Westminster that provides benefits for all residents.

We want our city to cater for and support businesses big and small. Whether in a reimagined and revived West End and Oxford Street that delivers world-class experiences to everyone, or on local high streets that are well prepared to face the future and form the heart of their communities.

Through this work residents will be able to gain the right skills to benefit from the employment opportunities that come from a Fairer Economy.



# We've delivered...

- We have ensured that all jobs brokered by the Westminster Employment Service are now at the London Living Wage.
- We have launched consultations and reviews of planning policy including a partial review of the City Plan which looks at increasing the amount of social housing and, mindful of the climate emergency, a tighter definition of when building demolition will be permitted.
- We will also be reconsulting on the Affordable Housing and Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to see intermediate rents at the lowest possible levels. Other consultations include a new Public Realm SPD, a local planning enforcement plan and a new Statement of Community Involvement.
- We launched a 'retrofit taskforce' bringing together building owners, housing associations and technical experts to advise us on making historic buildings fit for the future. The taskforce has produced 'how to' guides for people thinking of installing double glazing or heat pumps in listed buildings or conservation areas.
- We have revised the Oxford Street District Programme to focus on Oxford Street itself. We have rejected the previous administration's plans for pedestrianisation. Instead, we will be widening pavements, upgrading lighting, installing seating and trees, and putting in place improved pedestrian crossings. The plans rely on part-funding from the traders and landowners. Stage 1 designs will be completed shortly and we will be consulting with residents, shoppers and businesses during the summer. A stakeholder board is being formed to provide advice.
  - We will shortly be expanding the pop-ups programme to bring vacant units in the West End and elsewhere in the city back into use.



- We welcomed the return of big-name brands to Oxford Street, including HMV and IKEA, as part of the wider partnership to revive the fortunes of the nation's high street, working closely with NWEK and others.
- We've been developing a new approach to reviving much-loved high streets and neighbourhoods which we will be piloting in the Paddington/Edgware Road/Queensway area. This place-based approach will coordinate all council activity in defined areas to ensure that all interventions will improve the area, the lives and livelihoods of the local community. At the heart of this fresh approach is involving and listening to the real experts – those that live and work in that area.
- We have relaunched the Paddington Place Plan which includes a series of potential public realm investments to make it easier for people on foot and bicycles to get across the Westway, canal and railways.
- We have set up a new North Paddington programme, bringing together local residents, voluntary sector organisations and businesses to work with us on a series of projects aimed at improving the well-being of residents in three of our most deprived wards. The programme is backed with £750,000 of revenue and £5m of capital funding. We hope to start work on three public realm projects later this year – Westbourne Green Open Space, Harrow Road Open Space and Maida Hill Market.
- We have launched the £350k Greening Westminster fund which supports community groups looking to improve their neighbourhoods.



- We have distributed Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy grants to improve local neighbourhoods, encouraged a wider group of community organisations to apply for this this funding and extended the definition of 'infrastructure' on which it can be spent.
- We are launching a Design Review Panel to provide expert, independent advice on major developments. It is the first time this local authority, one of the busiest planning authorities in the country, has set up such a group.
- We will be launching the Westminster First Economy and Skills Plan which will be focused on maintaining the West End's engine of economic growth, supporting our small businesses – especially in the context of local high streets – and equipping our residents with the skills they need to get the well-paid, fulfilling jobs with prospects on offer. The plan includes setting up Westminster's first ever Employment and Skills Board which will bring together employers, educational institutions and training providers.

