



City of Westminster

# Committee Agenda

Title: **Westminster Scrutiny Commission**

Meeting Date: **Wednesday 25th November, 2020**

Time: **6.30 pm**

Venue: **This will be a virtual meeting**

Members: **Councillors:**

Karen Scarborough (Chairman)  
Iain Bott  
Nafsika Butler-Thalassis  
Tony Devenish  
Gotz Mohindra  
Adam Hug

**This will be a virtual meeting and members of the public and press are welcome to follow the meeting and listen to discussion to Part 1 of the Agenda.**



**This meeting will be live streamed and recorded. To access the recording after the meeting please revisit the [link](#)**



**If you require any further information, please contact the Committee Officer, Sarah Craddock, Senior Committee and Governance Officer.**

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Corporate Website: [www.westminster.gov.uk](http://www.westminster.gov.uk)**

**Note for Members:** Members are reminded that Officer contacts are shown at the end of each report and Members are welcome to raise questions in advance of the meeting. With regard to item 2, guidance on declarations of interests is included in the Code of Governance; if Members and Officers have any particular questions they should contact the Head of Legal & Democratic Services in advance of the meeting please.

## **AGENDA**

### **PART 1 (IN PUBLIC)**

**1. MEMBERSHIP**

To note any changes to the membership.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive declarations by Members and Officers of the existence and nature of any pecuniary interests or any other significant interest in matters on this agenda.

**3. MINUTES**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2020.

**(Pages 3 - 8)**

**4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE**

To receive an update on current and forthcoming issues from Stuart Love (Chief Executive).

**(Pages 9 - 14)**

**5. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS UPDATE**

Report of the Executive Director of Environment and City Management

**(Pages 15 - 24)**

**6. WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER**

Report of the Head of Cabinet and Committee Services

**(Pages 25 - 30)**

**7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Stuart Love  
Chief Executive  
17 November 2020**



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

## MINUTES

### Westminster Scrutiny Commission

#### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Westminster Scrutiny Commission** held on **Thursday 1 October 2020 at 6.30pm**, via TEAMS.

**Members Present:** Councillors Karen Scarborough (Chairman), Iain Bott, Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Tony Devenish, Adam Hug and Gotz Mohrindra.

**Also Present:** Councillor Rachael Robathan (Leader of the Council), Gerald Almeroth (Executive Director of Finance and Resources), Lee Witham (Director of People Services), Anne McCann (Head of Property Delivery), Aaron Hardy (Policy and Scrutiny Manager), Lizzie Barratt (Policy and Scrutiny Officer) and Sarah Craddock (Senior Committee and Governance Officer).

#### 1 MEMBERSHIP

1.1 There were no changes to the membership.

#### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3 MINUTES

3.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meetings held on 1 July 2020 were approved as a correct record of proceedings.

#### 4 LEADER'S UPDATE

4.1 Councillor Rachael Robathan (Leader of the Council) provided a verbal update and responded to questions on matters of corporate interest, which included:

- the local incident rate of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 population in Westminster that had been consistently below the London and National averages. (On the 1 October the local incident rate had declined to 24.3% per 100,000 cases against a London average of 36.3% and a national average of 59.2%).

- the location of the three new testing sites at **Greenside Community Centre and the Central Area Housing Office, Lilestone Street, Lydford Tenants Residents Hall and Grosvenor Hall** and the mobile testing unit at **Paddington Green**. The Committee noted that the Hyde Park testing site was currently testing around 200 people per day.
  - the encouraging news that the positive testing rates had dipped again with 4% per 100,000 population being tested positive within Westminster compared to the London average of 4.5% and the national average of 5.6% per 100,000 population. The Committee noted that the positive testing rates were used as an indicator of the likely future direction of the virus.
  - the Council's continued support for the Hospitality Industry to remain open whilst maintaining the right balance for residents and the environment.
  - the progress of the Climate Emergency Programme and the possibility of encouraging central government to allow appropriate solutions around glazing to be installed in heritage/listed buildings to reduce the 86% emissions from buildings.
  - the future direction of the Movement Strategy which allows people and traffic to move around Westminster safely.
  - the importance of the West End in terms of an economic driver for Westminster as well as the national economy, the measures being taken to encourage visitors back to the West End such as the Sight See Crowd Free Campaign and the Government's short-and long-term response to business rates.
  - the importance of identifying and working with hard to reach/vulnerable communities to promote the public health messages regarding COVID-19.
- 4.2 Other issues discussed were the clustering of people outside of licensed venues after the 10pm curfew and Westminster Connects,
- 4.3 The Commission noted and thanked the Leader for the Council's support for the residents, the hospitality industry and the economy in Westminster during these exceptional times and for the additional testing sites which would give residents confidence that they could obtain a test if they need one.
- 4.4 **ACTION:** That the list of additional COVID-19 test sites be sent to Members.

## 5 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1 The Committee received a report proposing how Policy and Scrutiny Committees and Task Groups could take advantage of technology and digital platforms to carry out further engagement with the public. The Committee heard that Parliamentary Select Committees in the UK were regular users of social media and that each Select Committee had its own Twitter account that regularly tweeted about its work.
- 5.2 The Committee discussed ways in which effective engagement could be carried out more generally such as using data to understand what the public thinks and carrying out more in-depth research with face to face engagement outside of meetings. The Committee further discussed the different ways scrutiny could be promoted using platforms such as Twitter and Facebook and the advantages of using the Council's in-house communication team which already had an active audience. The Committee considered that scrutiny could get involved and fit into the council's wider consultation process which would inspire residents and stakeholders to get involved with scrutiny as the consultation topics would be relevant and of interest to them that would conclude with an outcome and implementation. The Committee further considered that the future use of technology such as ZOOM and TEAMS would further encourage people to take part in meetings and that it was important to actually send out invitations to stakeholder to attend scrutiny meetings.
- 5.3 **ACTION:** That the data on how many people watch Policy and Scrutiny meetings by forwarded to the Commission.
- 5.4 **RESOLVED:**
1. That the scrutiny officers work with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to develop Westminster's scrutiny function.
  2. That the four Policy and Scrutiny Chairman meet with senior officers to discuss the future direction of scrutiny in the Council.

## 6 USE OF COUNCIL OFFICE SPACE POST COVID 19

- 6.1 The Council received a report outlining the response and actions taken by the Corporate Property and People Services teams to support the response to COVID-19.
- 6.2 The Committee heard how the Council had responded to the immediate impact of the pandemic and the resulting lockdown which included: supporting services to safely close their buildings, ensuring public conveniences remained open and free, implementing new arrangements to support the directive for staff to work from home and converting the 18<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall as an operational centre for the BECC and the production and distribution of hot meals to the homeless and PPE to staff and care homes.

6.3 The key themes that emerged from the Commission discussion were:

- the actions taken to support staff working from home such as supplying them with office furniture and IT equipment and the initiatives such as weekly town hall meetings, counselling and internal communication that had been introduced to promote the importance of the well-being of staff.
- the importance of acknowledging that some officers were unable to work from home because of sharing accommodation with other young professionals, lack of space, poor band width and mental health issues and the importance of having and maintaining Covid-19 safe offices.
- the importance of investing and reviewing the future working patterns of individuals and teams and their accommodation/office/IT requirements for efficient agile working.
- the possibility of doing a piece of work on mapping where officers live/travel in to work from by the People Services Team.
- the opportunity for the Council to provide a range of services using shared spaces and maximizing public buildings including City Hall and Lisson Grove.
- the corporate property review programme of all Council's assets including the Council's current accommodation at City Hall and Lisson Grove and the proposal for a new Health and Well Being Hub at Lilestone Street.
- the valuable support that the Council had given the voluntary community sector during the pandemic.

6.4 Other issues discussed were the Parliamentary Estates renting City Hall office space and the staff survey that would inform the Council how it was doing regarding the well-being of its staff.

6.5 **ACTION:** That mapping of where Westminster City Council's staff live/travel in to work from be carried out by the People Services Team.

6.6 **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Council offices had been adapted and set up to comply with government guidelines for Covid-19 secure buildings be noted.
2. That the results/data from the staff survey be sent to the Commission.
3. That regular updates on the Corporate Property Review Programme be sent to the Commission.

## 7 WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER

### 7.1 ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKERS

7.1.1 **RESOLVED:** That the Action and Recommendation Trackers be noted.

**7.2 COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME**

**7.2.1 RESOLVED:**

1. The Commission agreed to review Emergency Planning and Business Continuity in Westminster at its November meeting.
2. The Commission agreed to meet four times a year (instead of twice) and five times if required.

**8. TERMINATION OF MEETING**

- 8.1 The meeting ended at 8.04pm.

**CHAIRMAN:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

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## City of Westminster **Westminster Scrutiny Commission**

<b>Date:</b>	25 November 2020
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Chief Executive's Update</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Stuart Love, Chief Executive
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	Leader of the Council
<b>Policy Context:</b>	City for All

### **1. Executive Summary**

This report provides Westminster's Scrutiny Commission an update on the following:

- COVID-19 and the Council's Response
- Staff Survey Results

### **2. Key Areas for Commission's Consideration**

2.1. The Commission is asked to note the report.

### **3. COVID-19 and the Council's Response**

3.1. Westminster City Council has adapted its services and way of working at pace to respond to COVID-19. Within a short space of time we have seen majority of our workforce demonstrate resilience and high levels of dedication, either in performing critical front-line services or working from home to support our communities.

3.2. COVID-19 has resulted in numerous challenges for Westminster. As an organisation, responding to COVID-19 had required changes to the way that we work internally and with our partners.

#### *Adult Social Care*

3.3. Supporting our care homes and care home providers through the pandemic has been a key focus. To minimise exposure to COVID-19, Westminster asked the care homes to cocoon from 9 March, which was 12 days before cocooning was became national guidance.

- 3.4. We continue to make sure all staff working in care homes are fully supported in tackling the impact of COVID-19. This includes ensuring all care homes have adequate testing and PPE provisions, supporting care home providers to implement government guidance, and providing mental health and wellbeing support for residents and staff.
- 3.5. To support with infection control in care homes, we funded testing for all Care Home residents and staff in July, when testing was difficult to access through the national portal.
- 3.6. Westminster Council has also supported care homes with the purchase and supply of iPads to enable video calling, so that care home residents can maintain relationships with friends and family throughout cocooning.

### *Schools*

- 3.7. Supporting our schools through the various government COVID-19 restrictions has been a key priority. The outbreak control process is working well and all schools have a process in place to support children continuing to learn remotely should they need to self-isolate.
- 3.8. We have established a regular meeting with head teachers to share latest issues and address concerns.
- 3.9. The various lockdown measures have meant an increased reliance on technology. To help keep children digitally connected, Westminster gave out 750 devices in total (laptops and notebooks) to vulnerable families and children in need.
- 3.10. We continue to work with schools to ensure children have access to devices should they need to access on-line learning platforms when self-isolating. We have established a project, 'digital futures', to continue to supply schools with devices. 750 devices are currently on order and they are expected to be delivered over the Christmas holiday period.

### *Westminster Connects*

- 3.11. When the Government announced its shielding scheme, local authorities were asked to ensure that those deemed as clinically vulnerable were supported in their self-isolation. To meet this need we created Westminster Connects which has been incredibly successful in enthusing and directing the efforts of volunteers in Westminster to meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents.
- 3.12. With the help of volunteers, community groups and businesses, Westminster Connects has supported more than 6,000 residents, and continues to reach out and offer support to those who are vulnerable.

### *Rough Sleeping*

- 3.13. In April and May, Westminster had a record number of rough sleepers. We housed up to 266 rough sleepers in commercial accommodation (hotels and serviced apartments) and 400 in hostels and other council supported accommodation.
- 3.14. Finding a sustainable medium and long-term solution to avoid these individuals returning to the street and to return those with no Westminster connection to their home local authority continues to be a challenge.
- 3.15. As we head into the winter, the focus continues to be on supporting those who are sleeping rough on our streets into the appropriate pathways to have their needs met.

### *Engaging with Community*

- 3.16. At a time when government advice changed rapidly, we established new forums to engage with our key stakeholders. The aim of these forums is to give updates, discuss challenges and collaborate on solutions so that the Council can best support the city, its businesses and its residents.
- 3.17. Separate forums have been established with Great Estate & Landowners, Business Improvement Districts, Amenity Societies, Cultural Institutions and Faith Leaders.

### *Economy and Business*

- 3.18. There were a number of financial support and relief schemes for businesses that were made available in response to COVID-19, which the Council facilitated. The Council was the first local authority in the country to utilise 100% of its initial Government funding allocation of grants for businesses. By mid-September, the Council paid out 5,570 grants totalling £98million, which were fully funded by Government.
- 3.19. A Discretionary Grant scheme was also devised to align with the Government's priority areas. This scheme offered 492 grants of £10,000 that were fully funded by Government. The Council received nearly 1,500 applications, and we have now paid out all of the 492 available grants to business across Westminster.
- 3.20. In April, the council offered an initial 3 month rent-free period to businesses in our commercially owned property who were effectively unable to trade and have no income as a result of COVID-19.
- 3.21. To help support our businesses through these uncertain times, we established our Movement Strategy. Our Movement Strategy focused on how to give greater flexibility to businesses to use their outdoor space for tables and chairs, in order

to meet the social distancing requirements and help keep their businesses running whilst also balancing the needs of residents.

### *Disproportionate Impact on BAME Community*

3.22. As it became evident that the pandemic was having a disproportionate impact on Black, Asian and other minority ethnic communities, the Council in partnership with the BAME Staff Network lobbied Government to ensure that ethnicity data is recorded as part of death certification so that the true impact of COVID-19, and the disparities are recorded at a local and national level.

### *Working with Other Local Authorities and Agencies*

3.23. Throughout COVID-19, pan-London structures have been established to help ensure coordination across London local authorities and key stakeholders.

3.24. Westminster City Council has participated in a variety of these structures, to ensure that Westminster is represented at a pan-London level and is able to collaborate with key partners. This has taken the form of convening and chairing sub-regional meetings.

3.25. In preparation for the second wave of COVID-19, Westminster City Council has taken a leadership role to help coordinate across London. I chair the London Delivery Coordination Group, which was established on 12 October. This group focuses on identifying system-wide risks for London and coordinating partners to work in collaboration to mitigate these risks. The aim of this group is to ask the question of whether London is okay, and to escalate to the London Strategic Coordination Group where there may be risks identified that cannot be resolved.

3.26. From 24 September, Westminster City Council in conjunction with the London Borough of Camden has taken the lead on the Mortality Management Group for Wave 2 of COVID-19. This group is responsible for the management of temporary mortuary capacity on a London-wide level.

### *Organisational Changes*

3.27. There have been several changes in Westminster's executive leadership team.

3.28. Debbie Jackson joined Westminster Council in July as our new executive director of growth, planning and housing and Raj Mistry joined in September as our executive director of environment and city management.

3.29. As we turn our attention to the phase of recovery, innovation and transformation, there are opportunities to capitalise on the positive changes made in response to the crisis.

3.30. To help drive this change, a new role of executive director of innovation and change has been created and Pedro Wrobel has been recruited to this role, to begin in late November.

3.31. The focus of this role will be to redefine what the 'new normal' operating model is for the council. The role will also entail a strong external-facing element, working with key stakeholders to help shape the City for All agenda. There are no financial implications of this decision as the role will replace the deleted executive director policy, performance and communications role.

#### *Staff Wellbeing*

3.32. Within a short space of time, majority of our workforce had to work from home. The wellbeing of our staff has been a priority. We established Loop Live sessions which are a weekly touchpoint for staff to hear updates and changes from the Executive Leadership Team first-hand.

3.33. Staff working from home were also given the option to have a work chair delivered to them, as well as a personal budget to ensure that they are equipped to perform their roles from home.

#### **4. Our Voice Survey**

4.1. The change in the last two and a half years has been significant. Our staff engagement scores have increased by 12% (as highlighted in our most recent staff survey).

4.2. This is the second year running that we have seen record levels of staff engagement. Staff are telling us how much more positive the organisation feels. The number of staff saying Westminster is "a great place to work" has increased from 53% to 76% since 2017.

4.3. The 2020 staff survey results put Westminster comfortably in the top quartile of public sector organisations. In 2020, 17 questions have scored 5 or more points above the local government benchmark, compared to 9 questions in 2019.

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City of Westminster

## Westminster Scrutiny Commission

<b>Date:</b>	25 November 2020
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Emergency Preparedness Update</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Raj Mistry, Executive Director of Environment & City Management
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	Leader of the Council
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	All
<b>Policy Context:</b>	City for All
<b>Report Author and Contact Details:</b>	Mark Chalmers Operational CONTEST Manager x6032 <a href="mailto:mchalmers@westminster.gov.uk">mchalmers@westminster.gov.uk</a>

### 1. Executive Summary

1.1. This report provides an update for the Westminster Scrutiny Commission on the following items:

- Covid-19 Pandemic Response:
  - how the pandemic has tested the council's emergency preparedness
  - Partnership working in response to the pandemic
  - Lessons learned and their implementation
- Key areas of ongoing work:
  - Overview of current core activity
  - Implementation of standardisation programme for emergency response capabilities in London
  - Resilience Standards for London

### 2. Introduction

2.1. An update was provided to the Scrutiny Commission in 2018 providing an update of the council's current activity in relation to emergency preparedness and resilience. The report also addressed specific areas of interest to the Commission.

2.2. Alongside updates on key elements of core activity in relation to emergency planning and preparedness, the report provides an update on how the Covid-19 pandemic has tested the Council's emergency preparedness and the lessons learned as a result. The report also details how the Council has worked in partnership in response to the pandemic.

#### **4. How the pandemic has tested the council's emergency preparedness**

4.1 As an emergency, the COVID-19 pandemic presented an unusual challenge. Westminster's Major Incident and Emergency Plan, in line with other local authorities and services, is primarily designed to manage the response to an acute problem which may have long-term consequences. Command and control structures were not principally designed to manage a chronic problem with acute phases. This, combined with the scope and scale of the impact on both Council services and our communities, created organisational challenges, including inconsistency in member and staff engagement.

4.2 The pandemic has shown how resilience across the organisation is mixed, as is awareness of command and control arrangements. One lesson learned is that resilience needs to be embedded in all service delivery. It is key to the organisation that processes and structures are in place that are not reliant on individuals but in which a range of staff can deliver.

4.3 Arrangements were made to ensure that the Council was prepared to respond to a secondary major incident or emergency. This included redrafting the Emergency Centre plans to allow for social distancing, infected and clinically extremely vulnerable persons and retaining resilience in terms of the technical, staffing and other capacity. Whilst it was fortunate there was not a secondary incident of significant scale, the Council demonstrated its ability to respond to concurrent major incidents and emergencies, to the usual standard.

4.4 A challenge throughout the pandemic was that it was rare for the Council to receive notification of Government guidance or decisions ahead of their publication or announcement. It was not unusual for initiatives to be publicly announced or guidance published shortly before their implementation. This created pressure on the Council to respond very rapidly.

4.5 Capacity in both the homecare and reablement markets has been a challenge, added to by staff sickness and self-isolation. However, the Council has been able to sustain prompt discharge. Winter will bring further pressure and the Council is working closely with its partners to ensure that services are in place to support timely and effective discharges.

4.6 The Council has a relatively small number of dedicated community engagement professionals and these are often roles focused on engagement relating to specific areas of Council activity. A pre-existing dedicated team or professional network would have assisted in gathering community intelligence

and in extending the Council's reach beyond core communications channels. Work on establishing a community engagement hub is underway.

- 4.7 Often caused by late-notice changes in guidance or short-notice announcements, there were a number of occasions where the Council was insufficiently prepared for situations that were foreseeable, resulting in the need for a rushed and reactive response. In order to address this in future a greater and more consistent focus on short to medium term horizon scanning is required. Work is underway to establish processes for requesting and capturing future risks and opportunities from services should be established. This should be combined with embedding the regular review of strategic objectives and tactical plans in to meeting structures.

## **5. Partnership working in response to the pandemic**

### Regional and Sub-regional Governance Arrangements

- 5.1 From the outset of the Pandemic, a pan-London Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG) was established. The purpose of the SCG is to provide strategic co-ordination and direction across agencies in order to ensure an effective response across London. London local authorities were represented on this group by London Local Authority Gold. Shortly after this, sub-regional Chief Officer groups were established to provide an opportunity to co-ordinate approaches, discuss matters of concern and to provide a single point of escalation. Westminster was part of the Central London sub-group chaired by Stuart Love.
- 5.2 Whilst there were areas of weakness within the arrangements, detailed below, one strength of the arrangement was to provide a forum to discuss, challenge and co-ordinate local pandemic responses and to provide a more direct route of communication between local authority chief officers and the SCG.
- 5.3 Thematic SCG sub-groups were established covering areas including: Mortality Management, Food, Health & Social Care Oversight, Communications and Accommodation. The work of some of these sub-groups had significant benefit. For example, the faith cell provided key messages on very sensitive topics from a centralised point to support local authorities communicating consistent messages to residents during this time. They established good links to the Council's communications team and community engagement officers.
- 5.4 The London Local Authorities Co-ordination Centre was also opened in order to both collate information from and disseminate it to local authority Covid Borough Emergency Co-ordination Centres. Situation reports were required from the Council as frequently as daily in the height of the first wave of the pandemic.
- 5.5 Changes have since been made to pan-London governance and co-ordination arrangements and are detailed below.

## Health & Public Health

- 5.6 Public health on a national level is directed by Public Health England (PHE) and their advice has been central to England's COVID response. They have also taken responsibility for the operational delivery of key components of the COVID response, including the testing regime and that of the national contact tracing programme. In London, PHE delivers its functions through the London Coronavirus Response Cell (LCRC).
- 5.7 LCRC supply a daily summary of all cases, exposures and outbreaks that have occurred in the City. Depending on the nature of an outbreak, LCRC will form an Incident Management Team, including the local authority Public Health department, particularly in the event of a Situation of Interest (SOI) or significant outbreak. Other outbreaks are managed by the local authority Public Health team, in line with the Council's Outbreak Management Plan.
- 5.8 PHE also holds weekly briefings with Directors of Public Health across North-west London and also regionally and nationally as well as other ad hoc meetings on matters of significance.
- 5.9 Coordination across Public Health and health and social care partners has been crucial to the Council's pandemic response. Directors of Public Health operate a London-wide network through the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH). Through the network, the DPHs share regular daily and frequent information on best practice, intelligence and training.
- 5.10 The DPH is also in regular contact with other health partners, notably local CCG, NHS Trusts and the primary care network via regular sub-regional and pan-London meetings many of which are part of the formal governance structure for the London COVID response.
- 5.11 In line with national guidance a permanent discharge hub model is operating in all three of the acute sites across Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham. The 'discharge to assess' pathway is still preferred and the Council have been conducting the majority of our discharges through this pathway.
- 5.12 Planning has also been undertaken across the health and social care system to reduce the risk of avoidable hospital admissions and ensure timely, safe hospital discharge. As we head into the winter period it is highly likely that there will be increased admissions to care homes and pressures on community providers. Therefore, the plan focuses on ensuring the sustainability and resilience of these key services alongside robust infection control processes.

## Emergency Planning

- 5.13 The Borough Resilience Forum, which brings together emergency planning professionals from across partner agencies has met with increased frequency

throughout the year. The core membership, including police, fire brigade and health partners were meeting as regularly as fortnightly in order to share information and coordinate local activity.

- 5.14 Partnership working with the business community was maintained throughout, with weekly pandemic conference calls held with operational representatives of landowners and Business Improvement Districts. Alongside updates on the Council's response and activity, updates were provided by public health and police colleagues. Feedback received was very positive, with stakeholders grateful for a forum to receive regular updates and ask questions.

### Mortality Management

- 5.15 In our response to excess deaths the Council developed a new approach to delivery across the death management process, bringing together the five key services within the death management process, alongside Communications and Strategy and Intelligence, to ensure a single overall picture of flow through the process system and to identify any potential pinch points across each function. In addition, we have developed strong working relationships across the IWL coronial district, working in collaboration and unity with RBKC, Wandsworth and Merton leads.

## **6. Lessons learned and their implementation**

- 6.1 The Covid-19 pandemic requires an ongoing response to a long-term crisis and lessons have been, and will continue to be, learned throughout, by individual services and by the Council as a whole. Some of the key lessons learned are below.
- 6.2 The need to have *accurate and meaningful data* on a regular basis was integral to being able to make the right decisions. The need to capture this information led to the creation of the Gold Dashboard, which reflected the key metrics that drive decision making. This ensured that there was a 'single version of the truth' upon which decisions were based.
- 6.3 Co-ordination between chief executives and the integration with the Strategic Co-ordination Group was limited, resulting in a feeling that the SCG was too removed as an entity. London Local Authorities, whilst being the mechanism for much of the local delivery of the response to COVID-19, were often not afforded the time required to escalate, discuss and resolve issues they encountered. In light of this, a pan-London Delivery Co-ordination Group has been established to develop plans to deliver the SCG's objectives; facilitate collaboration and mutual support and to take a collective approach to resolving multi-agency risks and issues, escalating these where appropriate.
- 6.4 Pan-London situation reporting was typified by frequent and short-notice changes to information requests which placed a significant burden on Council services. Whilst providing a useful opportunity to benchmark Westminster

against other local authorities, the utility of the information collected was not always proportionate to the demands on services.

6.5 A full lessons learned exercise was completed for the Council's temporary body storage facility at Horseferry Road. Improvements in co-ordination of death management processes across Council services and the coronial district will be retained. There is also greater confidence in the Council's ability to identify risks and possible blockages in the death management process. Work worked across the Coronial district to develop more accurate trigger points for escalation than were available in March. Work was delivered ahead of an anticipated second wave to establish closer working relationships with the Funeral Directors in Westminster to ensure they can meet future demand.

## 7. Overview of current core activity

7.1 The table below highlights some of the core business as usual activity that the Emergency Planning team undertake. The Pandemic has caused disruption to much of the team's core activity, as a result of both staff abstractions and changed demand. This includes planning for and testing ahead of large scale events, almost all of which have been cancelled.

7.2 Alongside this, there has been a notable reduction in the number of major incidents and emergencies, compared to previous years. The majority of these have been small in scale.

Performance Indicator	2019/20 Total	2020/21 Qtr 2 Update	Comments
External Business Continuity Engagement Events	32	0	<i>Sessions delivered with businesses or BIDs, typically done in conjunction with MPS colleagues.</i>
External Business Continuity Engagement Event Attendees	1042	0	
Incidents Responded to	40	8	<i>This represents a significant reduction on the usual number of incidents.</i>
EP Tests or Exercises	19	8	<i>Outbreak Management test exercises</i>
Training Sessions Delivered	23	0	<i>Since the end of Quarter 2, 5 training sessions have been held with a further 5 booked.</i>
Number of People Trained	124	0	<i>This includes 'Gold' and 'Silver' training sessions to be held.</i>

7.3 The nature and extent of protests in the City continue to place additional demand on the emergency planning team. The Borough Emergency Control Centre was initially activated for the extended period of Extinction Rebellion protest, but was scaled back as the impact of the protest was significantly lower than previously.

7.4 The bi-borough Humanitarian Assistance Board was refreshed and agreed a new terms of reference in late 2019. The Board has direct responsibility for the bi-borough Humanitarian Assistance Plan; the extreme weather plans; the

identification of vulnerable people and also information sharing agreements. It also has responsibility for overseeing other plans which have a humanitarian assistance element. The Board typically meets twice yearly, but owing to recent work pressures, is scheduled to meet for the first time this year in early December.

- 7.5 The Council's emergency centre (typically rest or reception centres) plans have been reviewed in light of the requirements for social distancing and the protecting the health of clinically extremely vulnerable individuals. This has significantly reduced capacities across the identified rest/reception centre locations. As part of this, personal protective equipment has been included the emergency centre kits. These were tested following a gas leak in October. While the feedback received has positive, the team have identified and implemented further improvements.

## **8. Westminster EP2020 Implementation**

- 8.1 Previously, the Scrutiny Commission was updated on the implementation of EP2020. The aim of EP2020 is to standardise LLA response capabilities across six areas of work: Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC); Local Authority Liaison Officer (LALO); Rest Centres; Friends and Family Reception Centres; Survivor Reception Centres and wider Humanitarian Assistance. This includes standardising ways of working (Concept of Operations), roles and staff training.
- 8.2 Elements of the standardisation programme, particularly those relating to Humanitarian Assistance, have been delayed significantly but are anticipated to be received by the Council in 2021.

## **9. Resilience Standards for London**

- 9.1 Work at a pan-London level to enhance the assurance of London local authorities' preparedness and capability to provide a response in support of members of public to, and lead the recovery of the community from, emergencies, has been completed. Following this the new Resilience Standards for London were launched in 2019 and will be the way in which the organisation is assessed for resilience and preparedness around Emergency Planning for the foreseeable future.
- 9.2 The eleven standards are designed to both provide assurance and also to drive continuous improvement across the full range of this area of work: from senior leadership and organisational culture to emergency response to recovery and building community resilience. The Council's Executive Leadership Team are the accountable body for these standards and good practice is that appropriate services, departments and teams take ownership of standards that are most relevant to them.

- 9.3 The assurance process itself involves a self-assessment, which was completed in December 2019, followed by a sub-regional challenge process early in the new year. Of the eleven resilience standards the Council assessed itself as 'Established' in nine areas, 'Advanced' in one area and 'developing' in one area. Appendix A shows the eleven standards and the self-assessment against those standards. A full copy of the Resilience Standards for London is available on request. The self-assessment process this year has been replaced by an interim assurance process specifically related to Covid-19.
- 9.4 The pandemic has led to a number of developments, such as the Council's capacity to support convergent community volunteering, that will result in changes to the above self-assessment. An external review has been urgently commissioned in order to review our preparedness against the Resilience Standards.
- 9.5 A Local Government Association led peer challenge process, involving an external panel of reviewers interviewing staff and reviewing evidence over a three day, is expected every three years. The date for Westminster's peer challenge has not yet been set.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Mark Chalmers x6032  
mchalmers@westminster.gov.uk**

## APPENDIX A: Overview of Resilience Standards for London Self-Assessment

The table below gives an overview of each standard, the council's self-assessment response and the summary classification. A brief summary of the outcome aim is provided under each standard for reference.

	Standard	Good Practice	Leading Practice	Summary
1	<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Yes	No	<b>Established</b>
	<i>Outcome: The council has a robust and collectively understood assessment of the most significant risks to the local area.</i>			
2	<b>Political Leadership</b>	Yes	No	<b>Established</b>
	<i>Outcome: The council operates with effective political governance enabling the organization to meet their duties under the Civil Contingencies Act.</i>			
3	<b>Managerial Leadership</b>	Yes	No	<b>Established</b>
	<i>Outcome: The council that operates with managerial leadership driving the emergency planning and resilience agenda across the organisation.</i>			
4	<b>Organisational Engagement</b>	Yes	No	<b>Established</b>
	<i>Outcome: The council has a positive organisational culture towards Emergency Planning which is seen as 'everyone's business'. Capacity and resilience are developed across the organisation.</i>			
5	<b>Capabilities Plans and Procedures</b>	Yes	No	<b>Established</b>
	<i>Outcome: The council has risk-based emergency plans which are easy to use and have clear arrangements to reduce, control or mitigate the effect of emergencies in response and recovery.</i>			
6	<b>Resources, Roles and Responsibilities</b>	Yes	Yes	<b>Advanced</b>
	<i>Outcome: The council has sufficient resources to support emergency planning and resilience arrangements. The council is able to maintain the delivery of business critical services during a response.</i>			
7	<b>Partnerships</b>	Yes	No	<b>Established</b>
	<i>Outcome: The council demonstrates a high level of partnership working and interoperability between itself and all emergency responder and supporting organisations.</i>			
8	<b>Training, Exercising and Evaluation</b>	Yes	No	<b>Established</b>
	<i>Outcome: Members and officers across the organisation are competent to fulfil their roles in an emergency. The council develops and assures their resilience through a risk-based exercise programme.</i>			
9	<b>Business Continuity</b>	Yes	No	<b>Established</b>
	<i>Outcome: The council is able to demonstrate a high level of resilience in their priority functions and emergency response and recovery capabilities.</i>			
10	<b>Community Resilience</b>	No	No	<b>Developing</b>
	<i>Outcome: The council has a strategic and coordinated approach to activity that enables individuals, businesses, community networks and voluntary organisations to behave in a resilient way.</i>			
11	<b>Recovery Management</b>	Yes	No	<b>Established</b>
	<i>Outcome: The council has robust recovery management arrangements in place to support the rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitation of the community following an emergency.</i>			

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Resilience Standards for London Local Government, 2019. Unpublished. *Copy available on request.*



## Westminster Scrutiny Commission

<b>Date:</b>	25 November 2020
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	<b>2020/21 Work Programmes</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Richard Cressy, Head of Cabinet and Committee Services
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	Cllr Rachael Robathan, Leader of the Council
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	All
<b>Policy Context:</b>	City for All
<b>Report Author and Contact Details:</b>	<b>Lizzie Barrett</b> <b>ebarrett@westminster.gov.uk</b>

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report asks the committee to agree topics for the 2020/21 work programme and note the committee's action tracker.

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

- 2.1 The Commission is asked to:
- Review and approve the draft work programme (appendix 1) and prioritise where required
  - Note the Actions Tracker (appendix 2)

### 3. Work Programme

- 3.1 The proposed list of topics (appendix 1) takes in to account comments by the committee at its previous meeting.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the background papers, please contact Lizzie Barrett.

[ebarrett@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:ebarrett@westminster.gov.uk)

**APPENDICES:**

**Appendix 1** – Westminster Scrutiny Commission work programme

**Appendix 2** – Action Tacker

**WORK PROGRAMME 2020/2021**  
**Westminster Scrutiny Commission**

<b>ROUND THREE</b> <b>25 NOVEMBER 2020</b>		
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Reasons &amp; objective for item</b>	<b>Represented by</b>
<b>Chief Executive Q&amp;A</b>	To receive an update	Stuart Love (Chief Executive)
<b>Emergency Preparedness</b>	To review Emergency Planning and Business Continuity in Westminster.	Stuart Love (Chief Executive)

<b>ROUND THREE</b> <b>TBC</b>		
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Reasons &amp; objective for item</b>	<b>Represented by</b>
<b>Leader Q&amp;A</b>	To receive an update	Rachel Robathan (Leader of the Council)
<b>Staff Survey</b>	To consider the results of the staff survey and the council's approach to responding to concerns raised.	Lee Witham (Director of Human Resources)

<b>ROUND FOUR</b> <b>24 March 2021</b>		
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Reasons &amp; objective for item</b>	<b>Represented by</b>
<b>Chief Executive Q&amp;A</b>	To receive an update	Stuart Love (Chief Executive)
<b>Annual report</b>	To review the annual scrutiny report.	
<b>City for All</b>	To review the progress against the delivery plan for City for All in 2020/21	

**Unallocated**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Reasons &amp; objective for item</b>	<b>Represented by</b>
<b>Impact of COVID-19 on Council Finance</b>		Gerald Almeroth (Executive Director of Finance and Resources)
<b>Update on fair funding review</b>		Gerald Almeroth (Executive Director of Finance and Resources)

**ACTION TRACKER 2019/20**  
**Westminster Scrutiny Committee**

ROUND ONE 10 JUNE 2019		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Item 4: Leader of the Council Q&A	Provide list of additional COVID-19 testing sites.	Completed
Item 5: Public Engagement	Number of members of the public who watch live broadcasts.	In Progress
Item 6: Use of Council Office Space	Map of where Westminster employees live	Completed

**New local COVID-19 testing sites (as provided on 2 October)**

- Greenside Community centre and the Central Area Housing Office – Lilestone st
- Lydford Tenants & Residents Hall
- Grosvenor Hall

**Mobile Testing Units (as provided on 2 October)**

- Hyde Park
- Paddington Green

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