

Community Services, Business and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee

Date: Monday, 14 September 2020

Portfolio: Place Shaping and Planning

Title: Update from the Cabinet Member for Business and Planning

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COVID-19 Response

1 Business response

- 1.1 Since mid-March, the Council has been proactive and thorough in providing support to local businesses. This has included upscaling the support offered by the Westminster Business Unit. The number of enquires handled by this service has now exceeded 3,400 cases and the Business Unit has also conducted 30 bespoke one-to-one appointments for businesses with nuanced and complex cases.
- 1.2 As reported in June, the City Council quickly mobilised to administer the top up discretionary grant scheme announced by Government, launching this on 27 May, ahead of any other London Borough. The fund was open exclusively to businesses in shared offices/flexible workspaces, bed & breakfasts which pay Council Tax instead of business rates, charity properties and market traders.
- 1.3 Since July, the Business Unit has been supporting the Business Rates team, screening applications for Hardship Rate Relief to ensure that businesses are eligible to submit an application and to also make sure they have received any other support they are eligible for. Since 20 July, 269 appointments have been conducted with businesses, and we have been able to identify several businesses eligible for other financial support. So far, as a result of these appointments, £1,065,001 worth of alternative support has been identified and awarded to Westminster businesses, with an additional £456,632 waiting to be confirmed. This alternative financial support is a combination of government grants, small business rate relief and expanded rate relief.

2 Planning response

- 2.1 The Planning Department has continued to function effectively throughout the pandemic, with staff working remotely using pre-existing digital processes to validate, assess and determine applications. Pre-application planning advice and guidance has continued to be

provided using virtual tools, which has worked well to ensure minimal impact on the operation of the Council's development management function.

- 2.2 Planning committees continue to be held remotely on a bi-weekly basis using Microsoft Teams, and has been incredibly effective, drawing larger audiences than pre-COVID-19.

3 Westminster Employment Service (WES) response

- 3.1 During lockdown, the WES team rapidly adapted to community need, playing a leading role in the Westminster Connects programme. Over half the team were involved in setting up, managing and supporting the delivery of the programme, mobilising volunteers, connecting business to local projects and establishing the weekly Intelligence Forum.
- 3.2 There was an evident need for financial capability scale up in response to the pandemic. The Financial Capability Officer in WES supported the formation of a team of redeployees from the Libraries Service by training them up to respond to and assist Westminster businesses affected by the pandemic, many of whom have no recourse to public funds.
- 3.3 Throughout this period, WES has continued to deliver its core business of supporting clients in need through regular welfare and check-in calls. Recruitment activity by most employer partners has been minimal, however 38 residents have still been helped into jobs during this period. A particular focus for the team has been to work with Housing colleagues, local hostels and charity partners to help the street homeless, who had been housed in local into employment, as illustrated below.
- 3.4 MO was referred to WES on 03/04/2020 and was assigned to work with a coach in the HELP Team (Homeless Employment Learning Project – Westminster Employment Services). This team offers support and works holistically with clients to help them into employment and assist with housing matters and other issues that they may have that are barriers to gaining employment. MO is a single homeless man from Romania, and he has been working in the UK on and off since 2015. He was unable to afford his accommodation and became street homeless. St. Mungo's approached him whilst he was sleeping rough on the streets and he was subsequently provided temporary accommodation in a hotel in Paddington. WES has supported the client by helping him to secure a full-time role in Decontamination in Westminster's Parks for 3 months with effect from 06/07/2020. He is currently in temporary accommodation in Dagenham and WES has provided him with travel costs to enable him to get into work. His coach is currently supporting him by looking at affordable private rented accommodation and securing more sustainable employment. The service has also provided him with a top-up for his mobile phone, Tesco vouchers and PPE. A referral has also been made to our Financial Capability Officer to assist him with his appeal on his Universal Credit claim, as his application was unsuccessful.

4 Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) response

- 4.1 Following the announcement of lockdown, WAES mobilised 3000 learners and staff body off-site to remote learning from a classroom-based model. Using Microsoft Teams, WAES has maintained learner engagement, with approximately 75% of learners continuing to study, equating to 2,250 learners. Working with the most disadvantaged communities, feedback from learners indicated that home study conditions are not fit for purpose, however despite these conditions, learners have demonstrated their desire to learn and continue their journey of improvement, regardless of lockdown restrictions.
- 4.2 At a Pan-London level, WAES was central to establishing the "*Keep London Learning*" initiative, which started off as collaboration of central London local authority adult education providers and later expanded to cover all London boroughs. This initiative, supported by

the GLA and Central London Forward, helped raise awareness of all online learning opportunities available to residents throughout lockdown.

4.3 To bolster morale, WAES also conducted a series of online events, showcases and awards to celebrate achievement and success in a time of unsettlement and uncertainty. These events included;

- *Family Learning Festival July*: this involved a series of workshops and seminars on a range of creative and wellbeing matters, engaging over 400 participants;
- *The Show Online*: this was a celebratory exhibition of work for the fashion, hairdressing and make-up learners, championing green themes and inspiring creativity whilst in lockdown;
- *Virtual Private View*: this annual event was held via Zoom, for the Graphic Design, Ceramics and Fine Art learners;
- *Annual Learner Awards*: this event celebrated success across the WAES service. There were over 70 nominations and of those, 25 learners were also given the WAES to Success Award, recognising contribution to studies and achievement;
- *Staff Awards*: this celebrated the exceptional work of the WAES staff;
- *South West Fest Online*: WAES delivered 3 online workshops as part of this annual event.

5 Movement Strategy

5.1 The movement strategy successfully delivered multiple schemes across the borough to support walking, cycling and the reopening of non-essential retail post lockdown. The strategy focused on transport hubs, key walking and cycling routes and high streets. Schemes were developed to widen footways to allow people to feel safe and mobile, with adequate space to socially distance. Strategic cycle routes were also developed to enable people to travel safely without using public transport and enjoy Westminster on two wheels.

5.2 The programme was developed to support residents and workers coming out of lockdown to give them the assurance that it was safe to move around the city using preferred, sustainable modes of transport. The programme was planned to be in place from June to August, and the process of reviewing the schemes and planning for their removal has commenced.

5.3 The Council also facilitated contact between Q Park, WCC's car park provider and BIDs to help provide secure bicycle parking places for businesses.

6 Hospitality Reopening

6.1 The second phase of the Movement Strategy was focused around the opening of the hospitality sector in the City. Temporary measures to facilitate outdoor dining were implemented across the city around clusters of hospitality venues from July for a period of three months. The design and delivery of the scheme was integrated with the licensing process to reflect a "One Council" approach to business recovery. The scheme has been widely covered by media and has received positive feedback across the community, businesses and stakeholders. Measures will be in place until the end of September and are currently in active use. These areas are being monitored to provide quantitative and qualitative data to inform decision making in these areas in the future.

7 Sightsee Crowd Free Campaign

- 7.1 A promotional campaign for the West End has been launched to encourage visitors from surrounding London boroughs and the home counties to come to the West End and boost the local economy. The aim of the campaign is to support businesses by reassuring visitors it's safe to enjoy the West End, by promoting the unique blend of attractions that cannot be found in any other locality, and how this is a great opportunity to explore the area while it's quieter. The campaign went live the week commencing 10 August 2020 and was covered by BBC Radio London, BBC Radio Essex and the Evening Standard. Details can be found here <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/sightseecrowdfree>

COVID-19 Recovery

8 Westminster Employment Service (WES) recovery

- 8.1 At a time of increasing need, the WES ambition for this year is to support more residents through the service and into jobs. The level of need will be greater, and we will help more residents to access the service through harnessing volunteers to work alongside our coaches and employer engagement managers and strengthening outreach and collaboration with the Westminster Adult Education Service. This year, we aim to have 1,000 residents access the service compared to 778 last year, and to support 400 residents into employment (last year 390).
- 8.2 During lockdown there was virtually no recruitment and a number of sectors have been significantly reducing their workforce, with our clients impacted by both cuts and a higher volume of newer, more skilled job-seekers chasing vacancies. Our recovery plans therefore include strengthening collaboration with the Adult Education Service and others to reskill clients, including in new and emerging sectors, such as digital skills and green jobs.
- 8.3 WES has increased its provision for NEET (not in education, employment or training) young people through securing funding from 'Invest to Save', in anticipation of an expected increase in this cohort as a result of the pandemic. With effect from August 2020, 2 Specialist Youth Development Coaches will be focusing on this cohort. This adds to our offer for young people and is in addition to a Senior Employment Coach working in the Integrated Gangs and Exploitation Unit and a Senior Housing and Employment Coach working with Looked After Children's Leaving Care Service. We will also look to secure additional funding for two more NEET workers through the Department for Work and Pensions' Community Budget Funding.

9 Westminster Wheels

- 9.1 Building on the remarkable response of the community during the pandemic and as a front line offer to support greening initiatives, vibrant communities and digital access and skills, we are developing an ambitious new community project, *Westminster Wheels*. This programme aims to refurbish 2,000 bikes per annum delivered by 30 unemployed residents including care leavers.
- 9.2 The initiative will divert unwanted bikes from becoming waste to provide affordable refurbished bikes, focusing on low income families impacted by COVID-19. The ambition is to build a sustainable business through the sale of bikes. In addition, it will donate circa 20% bikes every year to encourage young people from vulnerable families to cycle and help them attend work and training.
- 9.3 Throughout August, the Economy Team has liaised and set up a steering group made up of colleagues from Highways, Transport and Road Safety teams as well as external partners such as Groundworks, Unity Kitchen and Cycle Confident. The group is working towards

identifying locations to set up bike repair shops, including Church Street and Tachbrook Street Markets.

- 9.4 The development of pitches for funding and resources from various sources, such as the Government's 'Kickstart' initiative, are in train. The Team aim to start the project in September 2020, including cycle training for school children, and jobs and training taster days in September for young people, leading to pre-employment training in October.

10 Business Community Partnership

- 10.1 The Responsible Economy Team has established the Business Community Partnership function, aimed to more effectively connect businesses with community programmes. It will include a regular business network, providing consistent communication between the Council, Great Estates, Developers, Suppliers, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and FTSE100 companies. The aim is to make networking more accessible with community groups and to encourage collaboration and resource to address shared priorities aligning with recovery.

11 Economic Recovery & Prosperity Programme

- 11.1 The Economic Recovery and Prosperity Programme will look to support the city's economic recovery whilst increasing economic prosperity of residents and creating opportunities for future generations. The programme will assist those most affected by the recession, whilst building a future with sustainability, and will influence and shape the post-COVID-19 economic system to build wealth and prosperity.
- 11.2 The workstreams that the initiative will focus on will include 'Building Business Resilience', 'Reskilling for Recovery', 'Stimulating and Accelerating Economic Recovery' and 'Championing a Green Economic Recovery.' An overview and detailed list of initiatives for each workstream to date can be found in appendix 1 to this report.
- 11.3 To date, workstream officer groups have been convened, drawing representation from across the Council, and work has started on all four workstreams. The Building Business Resilience workstream is well underway as the Council's business support offer quickly shifted to support businesses at the start of the pandemic, and some early initiatives have been implemented to mitigate the impact of the recession.
- 11.4 In recent weeks, the Re-skilling for Recovery workstream has gained momentum, having agreed their priority groups (Women, BAME, Children and Young People, Older Workless, Vulnerable and those financially impacted) and undertaken a 'mapping and gapping' exercise for proposed projects. Work is now commencing on developing the initial tranche of project proposals. Green Economic Recovery and Stimulating and Accelerating Economic Recovery workstreams are both at an early stage of development.

12 Planning recovery

- 12.1 The Planning Department has been looking to implement new ways of working. Following a risk assessment of officer site visits in early August, a new site visit protocol for officers has been implemented. This has enabled site visits to be recommenced where necessary to enable complex and controversial planning applications to be determined. However, in view of the ongoing impact of COVID-19, officers continue to be encouraged to use other digital means to assess the impact of development proposals where appropriate.
- 12.2 Since June, Government has introduced a number of measures aimed at assisting the development sector to recover. These include an application process to enable developers to seek extended construction hours, increasing permitted development rights for markets

run by local authorities, temporarily removing the need for planning permission for tables and chairs on the highway (relying instead on a temporary licensing regime until September 2021) and automatically extending permissions and consents due to expire between 23 March 2020 and 31 December 2020 to 1 May 2021.

- 12.3 Government has also permanently amended the Use Classes Order to allow greater flexibility between certain uses, with the aim that this aids economic recovery from the impact of COVID-19.
- 12.4 The implications of these changes to national planning regulations on application numbers and the townscape, environment and vibrancy of the city will be monitored following the dates they come into force, between July and September 2020.

13 Virtual Planning Committees and Inquiries

- 13.1 Officers are reviewing the options for how Planning Committees are held. Currently the plan is for planning committees to revert to a conventional office-based committee meeting with the possibility for online contributions from members, officers and speakers.
- 13.2 The Planning Inspectorate have introduced virtual planning inquiries following changes to planning regulations in response to COVID-19 impact. Initial responses indicate this approach has worked well and will serve to minimise delays at the appeal stage of the planning process.

14 Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) recovery

- 14.1 WAES is contributing to business recovery through successfully gaining additional GLA funding to support training with skills and employment focus for residents and businesses. The service is currently running distanced learning programmes in health and social care to enable upskilling of existing employees and new entrants to the sector, engaging over 100 learners, and has also commenced online employability programmes in construction, engaging 40 new learners. The service is seeking to train furloughed staff and those at risk to gain additional skills in a smaller recruitment market. Additionally, WAES are running digital skills summer school offer in August and September and bespoke programmes in Commercial Cleaning to be delivered in October.
- 14.2 WAES has embarked on a programme to transform the course application and enrolment process to online; this work was commenced prior to the pandemic but was accelerated as centres closed. September marks the new academic year, and as such WAES has reviewed and repositioned all business processes to ensure they can maintain COVID-19 safe enrolment and admissions processes. So far, 600 learners have enrolled for September, a positive figure in the context of the pandemic.
- 14.3 In preparation for the new academic year, WAES has submitted a bid to the GLA to support IT upgrades needed to ensure the service can continue to deliver remotely and physical adaptations to maintain COVID-19 secure learning and working environments. Modifications have been made across WAES sites, including signage, shielded reception areas and sanitisation stations to keep learners and staff returning to sites secure, and management team have implemented a 1-metre-plus principle to ensure site capacity can be managed.

15 City for All refresh

- 15.1 A refreshed delivery plan for City for All is in development. The Business and Planning Portfolio will be committing to several new priority actions over the course of the next year and beyond to stimulate recovery and rebuild communities in the wake of COVID-19. The City for All programme has been refreshed to accommodate and respond to the changes

and challenges Westminster has faced over the course of the pandemic. Whilst several commitments remain the same as the initial strategy, several have been introduced to meet these new challenges and rebuild Westminster's economy and communities.

- 15.2** The refreshed strategy will reset priorities and provide a milestone timeline to keep the Council and portfolios to task. Further updates on the work being undertaken under City for All will be provided in future reports.

Operational issues

16 City Plan

- 16.1** The City Plan is currently being examined by two independent Inspectors, appointed by the Secretary of State. Their role is to interrogate policies and their evidence base to determine if the Plan is 'sound'. Two weeks of public hearings are scheduled to take place virtually in the Autumn.
- 16.2** The Inspectors have recently issued a formal question to the Council to understand the implications the changes to Use Classes Order (coming into effect on 1 September) will have on the draft policies. These changes merge several 'use classes' and remove the need for planning permission for certain uses, such as changing a shop to an office or office to restaurant. Several draft policies are affected by this change, namely those seeking to protect office floorspace in the Central Activities Zone and retail floorspace at ground floor in Westminster's town centres. A response to the Inspectors setting out the policy changes the Council feels are necessary will be published on the Council's website by 4 September.
- 16.3** The Government recently published a White Paper, *Planning for the Future*, which set out proposals for a radical reform on the English planning system.

17 Neighbourhood plans

- 17.1** Westminster's Neighbourhood Forums continue to work on their neighbourhood plans. Soho and Fitzrovia West are the most advanced, having recently completed the formal Regulation 16 consultation on their draft plans. The next stage will be examination undertaken by an independently appointed examiner, most likely taking place via written representation rather than public hearings.
- 17.2** Under normal circumstances once these plans have been through examination (and assuming they meet the 'basic conditions' required by such plans) the next step would be to proceed to referendum. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that it is not possible to hold referendums and new guidance issued by the Planning Inspectorate sets out that neighbourhood plans which have been through examination can be attributed significant weight in planning decisions.

18 Planning Review

- 18.1** The operational impacts on the planning service of the Planning Review are set out in a separate full report on this Committee agenda.

19 Ongoing public realm projects

- 19.1** The public realm programme has continued to be delivered throughout this period. There have been some minor delays in delivery due to staff resources being diverted to the delivery of the Movement Strategy and a pause in the private sector schemes coming forward. It is

anticipated that this will be rectified across the second half of the year. A developing risk is the lack of engagement from Transport for London (TfL) on project delivery outside their London Street Space programme. This will have delivery impact on schemes requiring signal change and modelling work. Discussions with TfL are ongoing.

- 19.2** Regarding specific schemes, we are on site at Queensway making improvements to the pedestrian environment by providing wider footways and removing loading from the road at peak times. We are also improving lighting, planting new trees and introducing cycle parking.
- 19.3** The renovation of Christchurch Gardens is scheduled for completion in early September. The park will have new planting, new seating opportunities, SUDS, new lighting, new natural stone and feature paving, a drinking water fountain and new trees.
- 19.4** Rupert Street public realm improvements are complete. The scheme involved widening the eastern footway and restricting loading to the morning.

20 Ongoing place shaping projects

- 20.1** The Place Shaping Team are currently seeing our priorities and projects for delivery in the short and medium term across focus areas.
- 20.2** Harrow Road was successful in obtaining £900,000 from the GLA's Good Growth Fund. Work on projects is under way with delivery around Maida Hill Market, High Street and improvement to canal routes programmed for delivery by August 2021.
- 20.3** The original programme for delivery of Strand Aldwych was impacted by COVID-19. The programme has been revised to bring forward the delivery of a meanwhile version of the scheme, moving forward with the traffic changes along Aldwych. This will facilitate wider business and cultural recovery efforts in the area and provide the opportunity to test components of the management model towards the final scheme. It is to be noted that given the signalling changes and modelling work required around this scheme, the approval of traffic changes along Aldwych are reliant on TfL resource availability.
- 20.4** In regard to the Future Victoria project, whilst technical work has continued throughout lockdown, public engagement and engagement with TfL has been challenged as a consequence of the pandemic. The project ambition and intent to place public engagement at the heart of the design process remains intact. The programme has been revised to ensure that a robust engagement strategy is in place as lockdown lifts. Alternate means to engage and ensure community representation are currently being explored.

21 Markets

- 21.1** The Peter Street Storage unit came into the Council's possession in December 2019. The storage unit has had no investment for over 20 years and was in need of modernisation and a series of interventions to ensure the unit is fit for purpose.
- 21.2** The unit has been designed in collaboration with trader requirements and works have begun on improving facilities for both Rupert and Berwick Street traders. To date the works have included building secure cabinets to house individual refrigerated units so traders can store items safely. Each individual cabinet has been built and now has a secure fridge within each unit which is lockable and secure for traders.
- 21.3** The fees and charges associated with storage for Berwick and Rupert Street traders have been suspended until 1st January 2021. This decision was made by the Cabinet Member for Business and Planning to further support traders during the pandemic.

Traders have been receiving free storage since Westminster took back ownership of the storage unit in December 2019.

- 21.4** The lighting and emergency lighting in the unit has been greatly improved. A new roller shutter has been fitted to the entrance which is extremely quiet and robust providing the security required by traders. There are ongoing works to be completed such as the laying of new flooring which will make a big improvement in terms of noise reduction to residents and assist traders in having a level flooring in place to wheel their carts. This is currently planned to be undertaken on 4 and 5 September. We are also putting in place pest control measures.

22 Digital Street Markets

- 22.1** In July 2020 the Council entered a grant agreement with the GLA to secure ERDF funding to deliver the Digital Street Markets Project. The project is match funded by the Council. The Digital Street Markets Project seeks to deliver free wi-fi in the six Council operated street markets whilst also delivering free digital training to small and medium sized enterprises to ensure they have the skills to utilise this improved connectivity.
- 22.2** Following the approval of the project we have started the procurement of a Wi-Fi operator and an invitation to tender was published on Capital E-Sourcing on the 17th August. The procurement approach for the digital training provider is being finalised and the opportunity will be published shortly.

23 Westminster Adult Education Service

- 23.1** WAES now has an offer in four different vocational pathways – Graphic Design, Health and Social Care with Childcare, Business and Digital for young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). In addition to the main vocational programme these programmes will offer English and maths as well as work experience. Learners will receive mentoring and have a full tutorial and pastoral programme to support them to achieve their qualifications and end goals. This is currently being promoted through our website and via the WCC SEND team.
- 23.2** The GLA is funding an innovative and bespoke programme, *Positive Pathways Project*, to reduce crime, which will be focused on the Church Street ward. Working in partnership with Goals UK, WAES are targeting intervention with young people (19-23) involved in or at risk of involvement in crime and offering resilience and change programmes, as well as working with the community leaders and families to develop awareness. Appropriate ESOL support as well as employability programmes will be targeted to help individuals into work.
- 23.3** The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is funding WAES to deliver a project to support residents who have English as second Language and help them to develop English language skills, encourage social relationships between different communities and improve community integration. This will involve short ESOL courses to develop language skills, but also a programme of conversation clubs to develop deeper skills and an understanding of speaking and listening in general communication and social contexts to enable those engaged to become more self-confident and independent.
- 23.4** Supported by WAES staff and through their own hard work and determination, many learners have achieved their learning goals. This year, WAES had 74 adults studying GCSE English, of these 69 (93.3%) passed and 44 (60.8%) achieved high grades. For maths GCSE, there were 69 adults in total, 54 (78.3%) passed and 41 (60.9%) achieved

high grades. These results are a significant improvement from last year, a testament of the rigorous process put in place to support learning in lockdown.

- English overall achievement
- 93.3% – up from 73.3% last year
- English 9 – 4 (A*– C) grades
- 60.8% – up from 55.6% last year
- Maths overall achievement
- 78.3% – up from 76.4% last year
- Maths 9 – 4 (A*– C) grades
- 60.9% – up from 57.3% last year

23.5 Below are three learner stories that illustrate the importance of this achievement to the learners.

23.6 A mother of three originally from Morocco who achieved a Grade 5 for English and a Grade 7 for maths GCSE. She started at WAES as an ESOL student and became interested in teaching assistant roles in order to support her own children's schoolwork, as she was aware that the methods she had learned at school in Morocco were different from how the boys were being taught in London. She started by volunteering and her managers at the school suggested that she take GCSEs. Although initially lacking in confidence, she has progressed to qualifying as a teaching assistant and now works in a local primary school. Having these GCSEs will support her further career development and will enable her to progress to her next qualification.

23.7 A learner who started at WAES in 2010 from entry level started by studying ESOL but has since passed GCSE maths and has completed her teaching assistant qualification at WAES. The final piece to complete was a re-take of GCSE English to improve the grade that she received in 2018. The learner was interviewed for a teaching assistant job at a local primary school just as lockdown was starting and having now gained a Grade 4 at GCSE will be able to move on in her ambition to assist children in the classroom.

23.8 This learner gained a Grade 4 for English GCSE. This was her second attempt at GCSE English having taken the qualification at another college last year and not achieving the grade she needed to become properly qualified for the workplace. Despite challenging personal circumstances this year, she completed the course and scored the grade she needed, which will enable her to enter the workplace. Moving from being a volunteer to an employee.

Appendix 1: Economic Recovery and Prosperity Programme Workstreams

Building Business Resilience

- Business Survey – Live: Rapid Summary of results available, full analysis available shortly, next Survey scheduled for September 2020
- Scaled-up Business Unit - Live
- Successful & Timely Administration of the Government's COVID-19 Business Grants Schemes - Live
- Local 'Open for Business' Map - Live
- 'Shop Local' Campaign - Live
- Building Confidence Campaign – Live (phase 1 'sightsee crowd free')
- Proactively support businesses with 'smart compliance' so they can re-open safely - Live
- Resilience Themed Pop-Up Business School - Delivered
- Adapt-Survive-Thrive: Resilience for future growth Pilot - Live
- Digital Street Markets & Digital Skills Training - funding secured, procurement process initiated
- Rapid Response Digital Skills Training for High Street Businesses - approved for delivery
- Expert Professional Panel & Helpline to support Westminster businesses in crisis - approved for delivery
- Business Preparedness – in development
- Hardship Rates Relief Screening Appointments - Live

Reskilling for Recovery

- Westminster Employment Service - Live
- Scaled-up Financial Capability & Wellbeing Support – Live (sustainability subject to external funding bid)
- On-line preparation for work classes delivered with WES, WAES and our employer partners – Live: There is currently an online construction course that is being delivered fortnightly
- City Lions Virtual Offer - Live
- Westminster Wheels: Cycle Maintenance & Repairs Service with a social enterprise partner - In development
- Tech Talent Accelerator & Sponsored Jobs Scheme for BAME Westminster YP in partnership with Whitehat & Generation – In development (subject to external funding bid)
- Bi-borough Careers Cluster – In development (subject to external funding bid)
- Support for Bi-borough schools to achieve the Quality in Careers Standard and progress towards the achievement of the Gatsby Benchmarks – In development (subject to external funding bid)
- Create the right conditions for women to start up a business, set up a knowledge hub, connect with female entrepreneurs, role models and mentors etc - proposed
- Partner with an appropriate organisation to deliver Diversity & Unconscious Bias training for local businesses – proposed

- Cities of Learning – approved for delivery
- Work with employers to build a fairer flexible local labour market. Developing more sustainable flexible working across a range of industries will be key to enabling many to stay in work and balance work, care and health – proposed
- Assess the impact of the pandemic on early years childcare provision in Westminster to ensure it is sufficient for those wishing to go to work/retrain etc - proposed
- Education piece - stories of womens' experience of COVID-19 raising awareness and understanding of issues specific to women - proposed
- Reduce barriers to growth for ethnic minority owned businesses – proposed
- Education piece: Diversity & bias training for business and our partners – proposed
- Broker opportunities in sectors where BAME are under-represented and with organisations with a commitment to increase diversity and inclusion – proposed
- Tailored support for 50+ workless and work with employers to reduce discrimination against older workless when applying for jobs – proposed
- Intergenerational project where over 50's made redundant/lost livelihood support mentor NEET young people – proposed
- Westminster Work Grant subsidised job creation scheme for older unemployed residents that need to continue working in the context of older working lives but will struggle to compete for jobs particularly during a recession – proposed
- Expand the number and range of employers providing Supported Internship opportunities to SEND young people – proposed
- Disability Awareness training/information sessions for Westminster employers to ensure accurate understanding of disability to tackle the disability employment gap – proposed
- Provide a dedicated SEND Specialist employment coach within WES for young people with SEND/autism that do not meet the threshold of WCC statutory provision – proposed
- Reduce in-work poverty by working with the business community to communicate the business benefits demonstrated by the Living Wage Foundation and encourage more businesses to offer at least the London Living Wage – proposed
- Influence the provision of education and training providers operating in the borough to ensure it meets employers' needs in view of evolving economic priorities and provides the best platform for Westminster residents to compete effectively for jobs once employers start re-hiring – proposed
- Increase the number of women and girls studying STEM subjects and entering STEM careers where females are currently underrepresented – proposed
- Scale up support for NEET young people in order to meet the anticipated increase in demand as a result of the recession and impact of the disruption to academic studies, Apprenticeships and first employments as a result of the pandemic – proposed
- Address the gap in the local offer for young people with SEND who do not have Education & Health Care Plans – proposed

Stimulating and Accelerating Economic Recovery

- Invest in Westminster service - proposed
- New Business Development Programme – proposed
- Maximising opportunities through Procurement to stimulate the recovery (i.e. infrastructure projects, the potential to focus on Westminster businesses and direct our funds to them, providing the infrastructure to maximise business to business opportunities and influencing the spending power of the borough's anchor institutions) - proposed

Championing a Green Economic Recovery

- Support the business community to improve efficiencies, reduce their energy use and explore innovative low carbon solutions to promote sustainable growth including targeted support for SMEs - proposed