



Westminster Scrutiny Commission

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Title:	Climate Emergency Programme: Climate Action Plan Implementation & Next Steps
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Cabinet Member Portfolio:	Cllr Rachael Robathan, Leader of the Council
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	City for All
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In September 2019, Westminster City Council's Full Council meeting declared a climate emergency and committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2030 for the Council and by 2040 for the wider City. In addition, by 2050 the Council committed to be a zero-carbon emitter, without needing to offset any of its emissions.
- 1.2 The Climate Emergency team presented in April 2021 to the Westminster Scrutiny Commission on how the Council was planning to achieve these targets. The Commission welcomed the presentation but emphasised the need for ongoing stakeholder engagement and collaboration, noting in particular the need to engage in pan-London collaboration and to include under-represented groups in future engagement.
- 1.3 Over the course of 2021, the council's Climate Emergency team have engaged with internal delivery teams, businesses, residents and community groups to co-create a Climate Emergency Action Plan for the city. A series of evidence-based recommendations was published for consultation as '[Co-Creating a Climate Action Plan for a Zero-Carbon City](#)' in July 2021. During the summer over 350 people provided feedback across a series of face-to-face and online engagement events, and an online survey. Building on this feedback, a live

[Westminster Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) was developed and published on 3 November 2021.

- 1.4 The new Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) for Westminster sets out a framework for partnership action on climate change across the borough. It sets out 67 ambitious actions across five themes of Efficient Buildings, Clean and Affordable Energy, Sustainable Travel & Transport, Reducing Consumption & Waste and Green & Resilient City. These represent the key sources of emissions for Westminster and the actions aim to kick start activity, with many of the actions having deadlines within the next five years. The Plan is intended to be a living document with certain elements being regularly reviewed, and the whole plan being fully reviewed after three years.
- 1.5 The Plan includes actions the council will take to reduce its own emissions as part of a citywide response. In addition, the Council has also committed within the Plan to:
 - Publish its own emissions and progress on the Plan every year
 - Launch a Westminster Climate & Air Quality Alliance, which will bring together representatives from across residents, businesses and the third sector to oversee and support implementation and evolution of the Plan

2. Progress towards the 2030 target (Council emissions)

- 2.1 As set out in the CEAP, the council has so far achieved an 11.6% reduction in emissions across its estate and operations in the two years from 2018-19 to 2020-21. However, this is not enough; we need to accelerate this reduction and cut our emissions by 8.3% (3,700 tonnes CO₂e) each year to meet our 2030 net zero target. It is also likely that some reductions during the financial year 2020-21 are down to reduced activity during the pandemic, and that these will rebound in the following year's data.
- 2.2 It is anticipated that the rate of emissions reduction should increase over the next five years as the effect of our actions to decarbonise (for instance through retrofitting our social housing and corporate estates) begins to be reflected in the emissions data.
- 2.3 Over the past two years, we have started to make progress towards our 2030 target, including through the following actions:
 - We have purchased 100% renewable electricity for all Council-owned sites and social homes since 2020
 - We have nearly completed our LED streetlight replacement programme, replacing over 14,000 lights and saving 50% on energy consumption
 - We have reduced the carbon footprint of our Pension Fund equities portfolio by 60% and are exploring routes to further reduce the carbon impact of future investment activities
 - We are embedding carbon impact analysis in our capital bid process from 2022 onwards

- We have committed £110 million from our Pension Fund towards renewable energy infrastructure
- We have rolled out carbon literacy training to over 50 staff and have added climate action to staff induction and performance frameworks
- We have delivered our first tranche of upcycled electric waste collection and street cleansing vehicles for the West End, powered by energy from the city's waste
- We will have delivered eco-friendly retrofits to 100 of our social homes and 70 of our corporate properties by the end of March 2022
- Our Highways team have developed a Carbon Management Tool as part of the King Street Low-Carbon Roadworks pilot, which will now be shared with other local authorities as a best practice tool for measuring and reducing carbon emissions from highways projects

3. Spotlight on key actions to help achieve the 2040 target (City-wide emissions)

- 3.1 Although the Council does not control the 98% of Westminster emissions that do not come from our own assets and operations, it does have influence over local businesses, residents and visitors. The CEAP sets out ways that the Council will use this influence to spur others to progress towards a net zero city by 2040. A deeper dive into a handful of these city-wide actions is provided below. For a full list of actions, please refer to the published CEAP document.
- 3.2 *Efficient Buildings: Spotlight on targeting emissions reductions from the city's commercial buildings*
- 3.3 Emissions from non-domestic buildings are the number one climate challenge for Westminster, responsible for 71% of the city's overall greenhouse gas emissions. Many of the city's non-domestic buildings were constructed pre-20th century, and the Westminster Property Association (WPA) estimate that over 90% of these buildings will require retrofitting before 2030 just to meet statutory requirements. This presents an opportunity to ensure that emissions are substantially reduced through the retrofit process. However, since many buildings are listed or in conservation areas, landowners will need to prioritise sensitive methods of upgrade that avoid harm to heritage aspects wherever possible.
- 3.4 We have started to work in partnership to find ways of reducing emissions from non-domestic buildings, but recognise the need to accelerate this work. The key area of focus is supporting commercial landowners to plan and deliver retrofits to their properties that reduce operational emissions to net zero, whilst minimising embodied emissions from demolition and rebuild.
- 3.5 Work on this objective is partly being driven through the development of the Sustainable City Charter. This is a pledge which commits commercial landlords and tenants to work together to reduce emissions from buildings, particularly through the introduction of 'green lease' clauses into building rental contracts.

- 3.6 Whilst work with the larger landowners will be key to this area, it is recognised that there are many smaller commercial landowners whom we have not engaged with in the past and who will be much harder to reach. Further work needs to be carried out both to improve the granularity of our data on emissions from individual buildings, and to identify smaller property owners.
- 3.7 *Clean and Affordable Energy: Spotlight on Low Carbon Community Fund*
- 3.8 Westminster's current installed renewable energy capacity is low, and at 2,396kW, is less than half the inner London average. Solar power (in the form of photovoltaic panels or thermal panels) is the main viable source of renewable energy for Westminster. However, to date installation of solar panels in Westminster has been slow due to a combination of costs, complexity and a lack of available roof space on many Westminster properties.
- 3.9 To start to tackle this, we will be ringfencing a portion of the Carbon Offset Fund to create a Westminster Low Carbon Community Fund. This £1 million fund will provide grants to residents, community groups and SMEs to improve the energy efficiency of properties and to establish community energy projects.
- 3.10 *Sustainable Travel and Transport: Spotlight on EV charging rollout*
- 3.11 Westminster already leads the way in the provision of EV charge points, currently accounting for 4% of all EV charging points across the UK. In 2020 the Council published its Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy, which outlined how this progress will be expanded over the coming years. By April 2022, we are committed to having 1,500 charge points across the city, including 30 rapid charge points. The distribution of these additional charge points is being done to ensure an equal distribution to meet demand across the city, considering current and anticipated volumes of EV ownership by ward. At the end of the roll out programme, we anticipate that there will be a ratio of resident owned EVs to charge points of 3.5:1 in all wards across the city.
- 3.12 However, going forward, we recognise the need to provide more EV charge points for commercial vehicles, particularly small traders. Whilst residents can charge vehicles overnight using trickle charge points, providing around 3-5kW of power, commercial operators require rapid charge points that provide over 50kW of power and can charge vehicles in less than an hour. We are committed to hitting the 30 rapid charge point target for this year; however, we are facing additional challenges to installing rapid charge points as there are many dependencies associated with installation, especially considering Westminster's medieval road network. We are looking at options to better support commercial operator transition, notably a further installation programme for rapid chargers next year. As part of the next programme, we will be looking to have larger bay sizes to accommodate a broader range of vehicle types as well as exploring options for pre booking of the charge points.

3.13 *Reducing Consumption and Waste: Spotlight on Food Waste Collection Roll-Out*

3.14 At present nearly 80% of Westminster's waste is sent for incineration to produce energy, with the majority being processed at the Southeast London Combined Heat and Power (SELCHP) facility in Lewisham. Whilst this process does provide heat for nearby homes, it also creates greenhouse gas emissions, and we are committed to reducing the proportion of our waste sent for waste-to-energy incineration.

3.15 One key step that we will be introducing across the city by the end of 2022 is a separate food waste kerbside collection service for residents. At present about 30% of Westminster's waste is food waste. The new service will divert any food waste collected away from incineration and will instead send it for anaerobic digestion at the Biogen plant in Hertfordshire, creating biogas which can be used to generate electricity and heat. It is anticipated that this service will divert approximately 3,000 tonnes of food waste per year away from incineration, saving about 291 tonnes of CO₂e per year in the process. We already offer a food waste collection service for local businesses and will look for ways to expand the take-up of this service alongside rolling out the resident offer. Since the resident food waste offer will be voluntary, we are developing improved communications to residents to encourage as many as possible to participate.

3.16 *Green & Resilient City: Spotlight on Improving Resilience to Extreme Weather Events*

3.17 It is recognised that, even with rapid reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, rising temperatures in the coming decades will have a major impact on Westminster's people and infrastructure. Risks include river, surface and groundwater flooding, heatwaves, and the introduction of new diseases, with surface flooding and heatwaves likely to be the most immediate threats.

3.18 Due to the highly built-up nature of Westminster and its limited drainage capacity, surface water flooding is the most likely cause of flooding within Westminster. Current guidance from the Environment Agency suggests that extreme rainfall intensity is likely to increase by between 20% and 40% over the next 100 years. The Westminster Initial Assessments Study has calculated that in the event of a 1 in 100-year rainfall event taking place, some parts of Westminster could be flooded to a depth of 1.5 metres.

3.19 In July 2021, parts of north Westminster experienced severe surface flooding when 3 inches of rain fell across parts of London in 90 minutes and local flood defence systems failed. Initial assessments show the sewer capacity was inadequate to cope with the volume of surface water generated by the rainfall event and sewers recharged into some basement properties.

3.20 Regarding heatwaves, The UN Committee on Climate Change UK Risk Assessment from 2017 states that heatwaves in the UK on the scale experienced in 2003 are expected to become the norm in summer by the 2040s. Climate projections show that London will experience warmer, wetter winters

and hotter, drier summers. As a city, London is particularly vulnerable to heatwaves due to the Urban Heat Island effect, and Westminster will be heavily impacted by any increases in the duration, intensity and frequency of heatwaves.

- 3.21 Climate resilience is already incorporated to a degree through Westminster's planning system. For instance, Westminster's new City Plan requires all new developments to incorporate measures to mitigate against overheating using natural ventilation methods. The City Plan also requires new developments to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems such as permeable paving and rainwater harvesting systems, and requires Flood Risk Assessments to be submitted for any developments within Surface Water Flood Risk hotspots. Furthermore, as a lead Local Flood Risk authority, Westminster already has a statutory responsibility to work with key stakeholders to manage the impact of flooding.
- 3.22 We want to develop a holistic plan which addresses all aspects of climate adaptation, including the range of future risks to people, businesses, green space and infrastructure, and that sets out a comprehensive picture of how the Council is proactively managing these risks. We aim to address this by working with stakeholders on the development and publication of a Climate Adaptation Plan for the city by 2023.

4. Future Partnership Working

- 4.1 We will continue to grow the climate action partnerships that have been established this year with key external stakeholders. This includes our partnership with local schools which we've developed through our Climate Action Classrooms competition and our piloting of climate change workshops for primary schools. We will be offering all primary schools in the city the chance to participate in a climate action workshop from 2022.
- 4.2 We will also strengthen these partnerships through the development and launch of the Westminster Climate and Air Quality Alliance. The Alliance will help shape our delivery approach to climate and air quality action and will oversee implementation of the Climate Emergency Action Plan. Where possible, the Alliance will make use of existing partnership structures, and will combine climate and air quality issues in reflection of the fact that many of the relevant stakeholders will be consistent across both themes.
- 4.3 The Alliance approach will be based on:
- Westminster's stakeholders working together and with the council in strong and impactful collaboration of climate change
 - Ongoing engagement and involvement throughout the lifetime of the Plan
 - Representation of the full range of our diverse stakeholders and their social and economic circumstances, including the most vulnerable, from across the borough

- Embedding climate conversations into all of our existing groups and networks, drawing on their local experiences, expertise and leadership
- A flexible approach using different channels of communication and engagement to accommodate different audiences, needs and circumstances.

4.4 We will also work closely with other London boroughs to deliver climate action on a pan-London level. This will include supporting the implementation of the Retrofit London Action Plan and co-leading the London Councils Climate Programme workstream on Low-Carbon Transport with the Royal Borough of Kingston. We also recognise the need for increased funding and support from central Government to enable the implementation of many of the actions in the CEAP, and we will make use of the opportunity for pan-London lobbying offered through the London Councils Climate Programme.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the
Background Papers, please contact**

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

In the Climate Emergency Action Plan, we have specifically committed to deliver the following actions by the end of December 2022:

- Retrofit up to **70 corporate properties**, targeting 20% emissions reductions.
- Pilot a new combined support and enforcement approach to improve **minimum energy efficiency standards** in the Private Rented Sector.
- Implement our new **Environment Supplementary Planning Document** and review it in 2022 to identify opportunities to go even further.
- Publish our new Planning Obligations SPD, raising the **local cost of carbon**.
- Establish a **dedicated online platform** for residents, providing information and advice on climate change, energy efficiency and wider sustainability.
- Develop and agree a Clean Energy Strategy for the **Pimlico District Heat Undertaking** (PDHU).
- Mobilise our **Council pension fund** to increase investment in renewable energy infrastructure, targeting £110 million investment.
- Expand the roll-out of **EV charging infrastructure** to 1,500 charge points in total across the city (including 30 additional rapid chargers for delivery vehicles).
- Deliver **charging infrastructure** at our Landmann Way Depot to enable electrification of our waste fleet vehicles.
- Upgrade our residential waste vehicle fleet (40 vehicles) **to electric**.
- Promote the adoption of **zero tailpipe emissions vehicles** for deliveries to and from licensed premises through the new Licensing Charter.
- Pilot **e-cargo bike** share schemes across Westminster.
- Ensure the use of cleaner **hybrid-powered trains** at Marylebone Station.
- Adopt and implement our new Responsible Procurement Strategy to cut **supply chain emissions**, prioritising those from our top 10 highest-spend contracts.
- Expand the residential **food waste collection** across the whole borough.
- Develop a **Green Economy Strategy** to help accelerate the transition to a low carbon circular economy.
- Create a Public Realm SPD setting out detailed guidance on **greening within public realm schemes**.
- Establish a Westminster Climate and Air Quality **Alliance**.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Westminster Climate Emergency Action Plan](#)