



City of Westminster

Cabinet Report

Meeting or Decision Maker:

Cabinet

Date:

11 September 2023

Classification:

General Release

Title:

Recommendations of the Westminster
Citizens' Climate Assembly

Wards Affected:

All

Policy Context:

Climate Emergency

Key Decision:

Non key

Financial Summary:

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The recommendations in Appendix A will be subject to the standard financial planning and budget setting process.

Report of:

Frances Martin, Executive Director
Environment, Climate & Public
Protection

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Westminster City Council has set an ambitious target to be a net zero council by 2030 and a net zero city by 2040. To facilitate resident participation and input into achieving this, in June 2023, the Council launched its first ever Citizens' Climate Assembly ('the Assembly'). The Assembly explored the questions: 'How can we overcome the main barriers to Westminster becoming a net zero city by 2040 together? How do we ensure this is delivered in the fairest way?'
- 1.2. The Assembly comprised a group of 47 demographically representative residents from across Westminster. The Assembly met over two weekends to consider these questions and make recommendations on key areas of activity to help support and strengthen the Council's climate action response.
 - 1.1 This report sets out the recommendations produced by the Assembly.
 - 1.2 All Assembly recommendations will be considered and acted on wherever possible, whether directly, in partnership with wider stakeholders, or through external engagement and lobbying where actions sit outside of the council's direct control. The council will consult on further action relating to the implementation of recommendations, as appropriate. Where required, further financial and legal consideration will have to be undertaken before implementation.
- 1.3. For full details on the Assembly findings, please see the list of recommendations set out in Appendix 1 of this report and the Westminster Citizens' Climate Assembly Report published in August 2023 and listed in the background papers to this report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - a) Notes the final recommendations from the Westminster Citizens' Climate Assembly, as set out under Appendix 1 of this report.
 - b) Approves the initiation of a programme of cross-council work, led by individual Cabinet Members, to develop responses to each recommendation of the Climate Assembly, identifying what action is possible or where the Council may need to influence stakeholders to take them forward.
 - c) To agree that all recommendations brought forward for implementation will be subject to further financial and legal consideration and, where necessary, individual Cabinet or Cabinet Member decisions will need be undertaken.

3. Reasons for the Decision

- 3.1 The Westminster Citizens' Climate Assembly was commissioned as part of the Council's efforts to address climate change, strengthen the citywide

response to the climate crisis and improve representation of residents' views on how to tackle the climate emergency. The Assembly has now delivered its final recommendations, please see Appendix 1 of this report.

- 3.2 The Council has committed to working together with Westminster residents to respond to the climate emergency. The Assembly forms part of this process. The Council will continue to work in partnership with Assembly participants to review progress in addressing the outputs of the Assembly and collectively develop further work to help tackle the climate emergency in Westminster.
- 3.3 All Assembly recommendations will be considered and assessed individually with a view to determining a response. This will have due regard to the council's ability to deliver on recommendations directly, in partnership with wider stakeholders, or via external engagement (where actions sit outside of the council's direct control). Where required, further financial and legal consideration will have to be undertaken before implementation.

4. Background, including Policy Context

- 4.1 Westminster City Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, setting out its ambitions to be a net zero carbon council by 2030, and to work with partners and communities to become a net zero city by 2040. These targets remain a key ambition under the Council's Fairer Westminster Delivery Plan.
- 4.2 The City of Westminster has some of the highest carbon emissions by local authority area across the UK. Achieving the target of net zero emissions by 2040 will require ambition action across all parts of the city.
- 4.3 The Assembly was commissioned as part of the Council's work to address climate change, strengthen its climate action response by improving the representation of residents' views on how to tackle the climate emergency and facilitate resident participation and input into achieving our net zero targets. Running a citizens' assembly on climate change is a key deliverable set out in the Council's Fairer Westminster Delivery Plan.

The Assembly Process

- 4.4 A citizens' assembly is a deliberative democratic process that brings together a randomly selected, diverse, and representative group of people to explore a given topic and then make recommendations about what should happen and how things should change.
- 4.5 The design and facilitation of the Westminster Citizens' Climate Assembly was supported by Involve, a public participation charity specialising in deliberative processes that help involve citizens in decisions that affect their lives. The selection of Assembly participants was led by the Sortition Foundation, a non-for-profit organisation that specialises in recruiting and selecting people by lottery to take part in Assembly events, ensuring they are broadly representative of the wider population.

- 4.6 An independent advisory group, comprising council representatives and external experts, was established to oversee the design and implementation of the Assembly. Their role was to provide advice and guidance to ensure the assembly plan, evidence and materials were accurate, balanced, and unbiased.
- 4.7 The Assembly also brought together subject matter experts from a wide range of academic, private, and voluntary sector organisations to help participants explore some of the biggest barriers and opportunities for local climate action, to share their professional and/or lived experience, and to act as a sounding board for participants as they formulated the Assembly recommendations.

Westminster Citizens' Climate Assembly

- 4.8 Westminster's Citizens' Climate Assembly brought together a diverse group of 47 residents from across Westminster over two weekends and three online micro group sessions to consider the questions: *'How can we overcome the main barriers to Westminster becoming a net zero city by 2040 together? How do we ensure this is delivered in the fairest way?'* and make recommendations on key areas of activity to help support and strengthen the Council's climate action response.
- 4.9 Over four days, the Assembly in-person sessions covered:
- Day 1: Set out what the assembly was trying to achieve and provided Assembly participants a better understanding of the climate emergency and the common barriers to delivering local climate action.
 - Day 2: Focused on climate justice, and how to tackle the climate emergency fairly and equitably. Members created a vision statement and a set of guiding principles.
 - Day 3: Invited participants to develop ideas for recommendations and test these with a range of external experts.
 - Day 4: Helped participants refine and finalise their recommendations before presenting their final agreed recommendations from the assembly to a panel of councillors and council officers.
- 4.10 The Assembly micro groups provided a chance for small group discussions that supported people to ask questions, raise issues, make new connections and for relationships to grow between Assembly participants.

Summary of Recommendations

- 4.11 The final recommendations of the Assembly were agreed upon by participant vote on the final day of the Assembly. The outcome was:
- Eight majority recommendations: those recommendations achieving a minimum of 80% support among Assembly participants
 - Five minority recommendations: those achieving less than 80% support but more than 40% support of participants

- 4.12 Any draft recommendations that failed to receive the support of more than 40% of the participants were not included in the list of final recommendations.
- 4.13 A summary of the Assembly recommendations, and the level of support each recommendation gained, is set out in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 4.14 The Council is continuing to liaise with Assembly participants, via Involve, to clarify some aspects of the recommendations and ensure the Council's interpretation is consistent with the intended ask of the Assembly. This is part of an on-going process of working together with Assembly participants to explore progress on the recommendations and formulate wider activity to respond to the climate emergency.

Post-Assembly Process

- 4.15 A delegation of Assembly participants will present the Assembly recommendations and the final report (delivered in August 2023 by Involve) to the Leader of the Council and his Cabinet Members at the Climate Leadership Group meeting on 7 September.
- 4.16 All Assembly recommendations will be considered and assessed individually with a view to determining a response. This will have due regard to the council's ability to deliver on recommendations directly, in partnership with wider stakeholders, or via external engagement (where actions sit outside of the council's direct control). Further financial and legal consideration may have to be completed and individual Cabinet or Cabinet Member decisions will need to be undertaken to support a further response and/or implementation.
- 4.17 A celebration event will be hosted by the Council on 28 September as an expression of thanks for all of those involved in the delivery of the Assembly.
- 4.18 The Council will continue to work together with Assembly participants to review progress in addressing the outputs of the Assembly and collectively develop further work to help tackle the climate emergency in Westminster.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Agreed recommendations aligned with existing workstreams within the climate programme will be delivered from the climate emergency programme's agreed budget. Recommendations that are agreed but sit outside the scope of existing work streams or programmes will be subject to further financial review and scrutiny and, if pursued, taken through the formal budget setting and approval process.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 Pursuant to Chapter 3, Item 15 of the City Council's constitution entitled 'Terms of Reference – Delegations to All Cabinet Members', the Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters has the authority "to

set policy and strategic direction for the City Council's response to the Climate Emergency and the Council's role and response to cross-cutting sustainability issues, such as reducing carbon emissions, improving resource efficiency and developing sustainable energy".

- 6.2 Appendix 1 contains the Assembly's findings, including the list of recommendations the Cabinet Member is asked to note.
- 6.3 Legal Services and other corporate services will be engaged at an early stage, as appropriate, as recommendations are taken forward. Where necessary decisions will be taken to Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members and follow the agreed governance process that all decisions are subject to.

7. Carbon Impact

- 7.1 The Assembly was commissioned as part of the Council's efforts to address climate change and strengthen the citywide response to the climate crisis. The recommendations will inform the update of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan to help drive emissions savings across the city in line with the Council's net zero 2040 target.
- 7.2 The specific carbon implications (savings) to be derived from the Assembly recommendations addressed in this report are still to be determined. Individual carbon assessments will be carried out on a case-by-case basis as recommendations are implemented through new or existing programmes of work.

8. Equalities Implications

- 8.1 Invitation letters were sent to 10,000 households across Westminster to select 50 Westminster residents via random stratified sampling to broadly represent the demographics of the borough. The demographics of the participant onboarded to the Assembly are included in Appendix 2.
- 8.2 Given the Assembly's focus on fairness, we worked with Sortition Foundation to slightly oversampled minority groups including people with disabilities, young people, those who live in the north of the borough and those who have indicated that they are struggling financially.
- 8.3 Consideration will be given to the requirement to undertake consultation and Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) to ensure the Council considers its Public Sector Equality Duty on an ongoing basis for any response/implementation of recommendations.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 By nature, a citizens' assembly is a deliberative democratic process that brings together a randomly selected, diverse, and representative group of people to collectively explore and make recommendations on local issues. The Westminster Assembly brought together 47 residents from across the city to consider how Westminster should better respond to the climate crisis.

- 9.2 Resident and Member consultation will be undertaken through the adoption of new and existing programmes of work arising from the implementation of the Assembly recommendations, in line with current organisational practices.

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

Damian Hemmings, Head of Climate Emergency

dhemmings@westminster.gov.uk

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Final Recommendations of the Citizens' Climate Assembly
- Appendix 2: Demographic Data of the Assembly

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Westminster Citizens' Climate Assembly: Recommendations Report (August 2023)
- Westminster Citizens' Climate Assembly: Recommendations Executive Summary (August 2023)

NB: For individual Cabinet Member reports only

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters**

Declaration of Interest

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: _____ Date: _____

NAME: **Councillor Matt Noble**

State nature of interest if any:

(N.B: If you have an interest, you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled **Final Recommendations of the Westminster Citizens' Climate Assembly** and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed: _____

Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters

Date: _____

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:

If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Director of Law, City Treasurer and, if there are resources implications, the Director of People Services (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.

Appendix 1: Final Recommendations of the Citizens' Climate Assembly

Majority recommendations

Recommendations that achieved at least 80% support from participants in the Assembly vote.

No.	Recommendation	Level of Support
Majority Recommendation:		
1	To fund and support greening initiatives and projects. Both in terms of increasing biodiversity and developing green infrastructure and technologies.	91%
2	Building and introducing renewable energy technology on new and existing infrastructure, while also supporting current initiatives.	89%
3	Energy efficiency rating on any organisation, whether for profit or not, which owns, manages, or occupies one or more non-residential buildings in Westminster. Provide incentives and assistance and improvement for/and/or hitting targets. Publish this data for transparency for the council website and promote through WCC communication channels.	87%
4	It should be mandatory for all types of businesses to ensure that developers re-use and recycle materials and minimise energy use. This should be complimented by the revised one-stop circular construction website, that offers easy access to all.	97%
5	Make climate action the top priority when updating planning policies and documents and giving approvals. Pay particular attention to prioritizing climate action in listed buildings.	85%
6	Develop an educational programme for the community (including schools) which builds green skills. Green skills include: active lifestyle, living sustainably, growing food, recycling, cooking, gardening, and nature.	85%
7	Recycling needs to be scaled up by all stakeholders to include a wider variety of waste streams. Information should be provided in simpler, easy to understand language, and multiple languages most appropriate to Westminster's diverse community and visitors	80%
8	Review, Adapt & Act We expect WCC to reconvene the citizen's assembly annually, regardless of political affiliation and independent of the election cycle, to account for its progress and to re-state goals in light of any shortfall	87%

Minority recommendations

Recommendations that achieved between 40-79% of support from participants in the Assembly vote.

Minority Recommendations		
1	Create a WCC climate and related health support team. A home visit scheme run by WCC that is either voluntarily requested or recommended by health and other social services. Giving guidance advice and offering affordable improvements on health and climate efficiency.	76%
2	Ensure WCC 'business community partnership scheme' is tailored towards achieving net zero.	76%
3	Lobby the government to introduce legislation to limit / restrict the availability of carbon credits to all businesses, whilst also incentivising with funding for abiding businesses	67%
4	Council provided carbon calculator for SMEs (small medium enterprises) with integrated advice. Resources (they will use) and that provides measured tax breaks for carbon reductions that reflects the size and budget of the organisations.	65%
5	Reprioritise residential and commercial areas to favour sustainable transport. Reduced reliance on private vehicles in favour of alternatives - walking, cycling etc.	46%

Appendix 2: Demographic Data of the Assembly

