



Greener City Action Plan Summary 2015-2025



City of Westminster
westminster.gov.uk #CityforAll

Executive Summary

Westminster's environment is a vital ingredient in the ambitions for the City and for the quality of life of residents, workers and visitors. Better air quality improves health; a low carbon, locally produced energy supply enables businesses to grow; and sustainable transport systems connect people and jobs.

The Greener City Action Plan (2015-2025) sets out the ten year vision for how we will maintain and improve the environment for our residents, businesses and visitors. Westminster's attractive green spaces and clean environment are often quoted as factors encouraging inward investment, and economic success, through tourism, business location and somewhere people want to live.

The City Council has a reputational and leadership responsibility to protect and improve the environment for future generations. Work will continue to ensure Westminster complies with statutory requirements and also to showcase our ambition to pilot and champion high profile, innovative projects and to share best practice.

The Greener City Action Plan prioritises action across eleven work themes. This is a summary of the vision and sets out where we need your help. The full Greener City Action Plan (<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/greener-city>) details what we intend to do, working with communities and partners to achieve our common goals and objectives.

 1

Addressing noise pollution across the city

2

Making better use of the city's waste resources

3

Delivering affordable, secure and sustainable energy

4

Improving our local air quality

5

Providing a sustainable transport system for Westminster

6

Making the best use of our open and green spaces

7

Ensuring that sustainability is delivered through economic development

8

Supporting sustainable growth

9

Water as a resource

10

Managing Flood Risk

11

Communicating and encouraging people into environmental action

1. Addressing noise pollution across the City

Did you know?

The top five “noisiest” wards in Westminster show an increase of 30% in complaints in the last 4 years. The main source was from construction sites.

Issue	Westminster’s noise pollution is a serious environmental issue. Every year Westminster receives the most noise complaints in London and, in 2014, 17% of residents felt that noise impacted their life in a negative way. Road traffic is the main source alongside plant and machinery, construction work, neighbourhood noise, commercial premises and aircraft.
Challenge	Increasing amounts of development and construction and 24 hour tube extensions will impact on noise in Westminster.

COMMITMENTS

Top 3 actions for us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce a ‘no unnecessary engine idling’ policy for all vehicles within Westminster; • Investigate new road surfaces to reduce the impact of noise from road traffic; • Deliver new noise policy in planning documents, and ensure new homes are constructed to higher noise insulation standards.
What you can do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses need to be aware of the impacts that the noise they create and vehicles contributing to their business has on their neighbours; • Businesses using loud machinery need to keep it in good working condition and does not add unnecessary noise to the local environment; • Try and be considerate of noise yourself and if there is a noise problem, report it.

2. Addressing Westminster's waste resource

Did you know?

The cost of disposing a tonne of waste is:
 £102 if sent to landfill
 £92 if used in energy from waste
 £32 if recycled. ¹

Did you know?

The UK hospitality sector (hotel, pubs, restaurants and quick service restaurants) could save £724 million a year through tackling food waste. ²

Some parts of Westminster have a waste collection 3 times a day.

Issue	Westminster produces 180,000 tonnes of municipal waste per year. The City Council manages this volume of waste with over 1 million collections per week, and with over 23,000 households having access to daily waste collection services and some parts of the West End requiring 3 collections a day. 14% of our municipal waste is recycled, with the rest going to energy from waste recovery centres, where 83% of our waste is burnt generating electricity for local use, and 3% is landfilled. As well as domestic waste streams, 10% of our municipal waste comes from street litter through our 1,500 litter bins servicing the million people who come into Westminster every day. Many of Westminster's streets are swept 24 hours a day, requiring 250 street sweepers.
Challenge	Under the London Plan, we are expected to manage more of our waste locally under the proximity principle and will need a waste plan in place on how to achieve this by 2026. Increasing amounts of residential development generates more waste during construction and while occupied, which is a further challenge.

COMMITMENTS	
Top 3 actions for us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a new Municipal Waste Strategy and long term waste infrastructure plan; • Use planning policies to work with the development industry to increase recycling and responsible waste management. • Achieve zero growth in household waste, recycle 35% and increase energy created from the waste we throw away to 65%.
What you can do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste reduction is the first step – do you really need plastic shopping bags? • Businesses can work with suppliers to address excess packaging; • If you have the opportunity, buy recycled goods; to close the loop. • Always use bins and recycle waste as much as possible.

3. Ensuring local energy security and delivering carbon reduction

Did you know?

Westminster's Business Community spent £244,293,000 during 2012 on their electricity consumption.

Westminster City Council spent £4,287,029 in 2012 on its gas and electricity bills.

Did you know?

The Energy Saving Trust calculate that a typical household could save up to £90 per year just by turning off appliances left on standby. The UK could save £1.7billion if we all did this.

Did you know?

The Pimlico District Heating Undertaking's (PDHU) is the UK's first combined heat and power network and provides heating and hot water services to 3,256 homes, 50 commercial premises and three schools in the area.

The network was the first major initiative to combat London's air pollution, ahead of the Clean Air Act of 1956.

PDHU local generation of electricity reduces transmission losses as its electricity is produced close to the user. It saves up to 11,000 tonnes of carbon emissions per year by displacing coal fired electricity generation. This incredible saving is the equivalent of taking just under 4,000 cars off the road per year.

Issue	<p>Action is needed to address rising energy costs and manage supply and security against of the threat of climate change. The government and the Mayor of London are seeking to change the UK's ageing energy infrastructure and improve energy efficiency. Westminster must lead by example in supporting these ambitions. Improved energy efficiency standards will reduce carbon emissions from heating and lighting.</p> <p>Westminster is amongst the largest power consuming authority areas in the UK with nearly 9,000GWh of energy used annually. The City of Westminster uses more energy (GWh) per year than the City of Newcastle or Liverpool or Cardiff. ³ This is due in part to our heritage, high density living, 675,000 jobs, and 24 hour transport.</p>
Challenge	<p>Energy costs are predicted to rise year on year by 5% for the foreseeable future. Increasing densification in Westminster is also putting considerable pressure on the exiting energy infrastructure network.</p> <p>The City's power demands and carbon emissions mainly come from the built environment, with approximately 75% from commercial buildings. The majority of this power demand and carbon emissions are from offices, hotels and shops. Through strong planning policy and ambitious retrofitting projects within commercial and residential properties we can significantly reduce our power need and carbon emissions, and mitigate against future energy price increases.</p> <p>The level of implementing local energy generation and low carbon technologies must improve significantly if Westminster is to ensure a secure energy supply over the long-term. Demand for growth particularly in the West End is close to outstripping current supply infrastructure. Energy resilience is a growing concern for businesses.</p> <p>In December 2011 a 10 hour power cut forced theatres across Soho to cancel shows and businesses to close, with some restaurants estimating losses of more than £10,000. ⁴</p>

³ DECC - Energy statistics for local authorities (2013)

⁴ BBC News - Soho power cut: Shops, bars and restaurants closed

COMMITMENTS

Top 3 actions for us

- Deliver measures to reduce light pollution, naturally cool the City and reduce reliance on air conditioning which stresses the energy network in summer;
- Deliver a district energy masterplan and build a business case that will start the delivery of a community heating network as part of the Church Street regeneration programme;
- Introduce green leases for all new lettings in the City Council's investment properties to promote responsible occupancy and ensure our properties are energy efficient.

What you can do

- Minimise energy use at home and at work by switching off lights, computer and stand-by devices when not in use;
- Lower thermostat settings, layer up and reduce heating bills;
- Make sure vulnerable neighbours are winter-ready and keep an eye out for them during periods of extreme heat or cold.

4. Improving local air quality

Did you know?

The National Air Quality Strategy estimated that the health impact of particulate pollution cost the UK between £8.5 billion and £20.2 billion a year in 2005. This is almost twice that of physical inactivity, and is comparable to the cost of alcohol misuse.

Issue	<p>Air pollution in Westminster is a result of chemicals and dust pollution from heating boilers and other plant and from the millions of vehicles that travel through the City.</p> <p>Poor air quality increases the demand on health and care services as it affects lung development in young people and increases risk of early death, lung cancer, strokes, and respiratory conditions; especially in older people. The London Air Quality Strategy stated that the number of premature deaths due to air pollution in London was estimated to be 4,267 in 2008 and this number can only have risen. Public Health England research states that 8.3% of all deaths in 2010 in Westminster were attributed to long term exposure to air pollution - the highest percentage in London.</p>
Challenge	<p>Our actions to improve air quality have helped reduce pollution levels but, given predicted increases in population and associated urban densification, including pressure on the transport network, more needs to be done to meet the EU air quality objectives.</p> <p>The EU has started legal proceedings against the UK government, which could lead to annual fines of £300m for its failure to cut levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). Emissions from buildings are set nationally through Building Regulations and transport issues such as buses, taxis, and major road management is delivered through Transport for London and the London Mayor. Westminster needs to work with these parties to reduce the high levels of emissions in the City.</p>

COMMITMENTS

Top 3 actions for us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where appropriate, strengthen links between public health interventions to improve air quality to improve health and well-being; • Work with TfL and property owners in air quality hot spots e.g. Oxford Street to reduce vehicle numbers and emissions from vehicles which service the area; • Complete the delivery of our 2013 AQAP and deliver an Ultra Low Emission Zone.
What you can do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When walking take less busy side roads; • Walk and cycle around Westminster to avoid adding to the problem; • Protect existing gardens and when possible plant living walls or roofs.

5. Supporting a sustainable transport system for Westminster

Did you know?

The shortest distance between two stations on the underground network is only 260 metres. The journey between Leicester Square and Covent Garden on the Piccadilly Line takes about 20 seconds, costs £2.30 and is the most popular journey with tourists.

Did you know?

The Council's Parking Service is the largest in the UK, our on-street parking facilities include 33,000 residents' parking bays, 4,150 Visitor Pay by Phone bays, 2,600 other Paid visitor bays, 3,250 Shared use residents' bays, 6,150 Pay by Phone bays for motorcycles, 220 White Badge disabled bays, 480 Blue Badge bays, 185 Car Club bays, 154 taxi ranks, 55 Coach bays, over 50 Electric recharging bays and specialist bays such as Diplomatic bays.

Issue	<p>Westminster is one of the best served locations by public transport in the world. There are four main rail stations, three with direct connections to London's principal airports; new Crossrail stations are due to open in 2018; 32 underground stations with 10 of the 12 tube lines running through the City; 4 river bus piers; 157 daytime bus routes and several 24 hour bus routes; and national and international coach services.</p> <p>Given the numbers of people in Westminster the transport network and public realm can struggle to cope with the demands. With this intensity of use, there are issues such as overcrowding, poor air quality, social isolation, noise and road safety.</p>
Challenge	<p>As the population rises in Westminster there will be increasing pressure on the safe and efficient movement of people.</p> <p>The City must adopt appropriate technologies to maintain its competitive edge. New technologies such as electric and hydrogen fuelled vehicles will require new infrastructure as they increase in popularity.</p> <p>With increasing levels of childhood obesity in London schools, the City Council will need to work with students to encourage sustainable transport options for students, teachers and parents.</p>

COMMITMENTS

Top 3 actions for us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise School Travel Plans in all schools of Westminster by the end of 2016; • Work with TfL to deliver a central London cycle grid and improve safety at a number of key junctions and gyratories, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists such as Marble Arch, Great Portland Street/Marylebone Road, Vauxhall Bridge roundabout; • Ensure that by 2020 the required infrastructure for taxi and freight electric recharging is in place and extend residential schemes.
What you can do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about the form of transport you need to get to your destination. Can you walk or cycle there, and get fit while you travel? • Have you thought about joining the Westminster car club? • Consider car sharing on essential car journeys or switch to a hybrid/EV?

6. Making the best use of our open and green spaces

Did you know?

In the last 5 years, 58 living roofs have been granted planning permission and constructed in Westminster.

Did you know?

In an assessment of London house prices by the GLA Economics in 2010, it was found that property prices were boosted by quality green spaces. The study estimated that property located less than a kilometre from quality urban park added up to 3% to the total property value.

Issue	Westminster has an impressive open space and green infrastructure network. The Royal Parks and Westminster's green spaces form the setting for world famous landmarks such as the Palace of Westminster and Buckingham Palace. Over half of the City's open spaces have a heritage designation, with 85 London Squares and 21 English Heritage listed parks and gardens, including the five Royal Parks. These unique landscapes are assets that can reinforce a sense of place and of identity, improve health and well-being, boost environmental resilience and make the City a more attractive and prosperous place.
Challenge	<p>Maximising greening opportunities within new development helps to cool ambient temperature, improve air quality, reduce the risk of surface water flooding, provide habitat for a diverse range of species and improve attractiveness of the urban environment.</p> <p>The provision, protection and improvement of sport and play facilities, and use of these facilities in parks and green spaces, are central to encouraging active lifestyles. Green spaces are known to contribute to the psychological and social wellbeing of communities, having a positive effect on stress levels, mental health and community cohesion. There will be challenges in ensuring that our public spaces are maintained to this high standard during a time of reduced resources and with increasing population.</p>

COMMITMENTS

Top 3 actions for us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update and adopt our Biodiversity and Open Spaces Strategy; • Deliver a "green spine" within the regeneration of Church Street; • By 2020 plant an extra 1,000 new trees.
What you can do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support biodiversity by hanging a bird feeder and planting bee-friendly flowers; • Water communal plants and street trees with your waste water during drought; • Encourage your workplace or school to include a living roof, wall or vegetable growing; • Buy locally produced honey; • Educate yourself on Westminster's wildlife by visiting open spaces such as the parks

7-8. Ensuring that sustainability is delivered through economic development

Did you know?

Leading global cities recognise climate change as a threat to business. 76% of them report that climate change will impact on business. The sectors affected range from food services to tourism. ⁵

Issue	<p>Westminster is a powerhouse for the UK economy. Environmental sustainability also provides an opportunity for economic growth. London's green economy continued to grow between 2008 and 2013 in contrast to national growth trends. Over 9,200 green businesses in London (18% of the national total) now employ over 163,500 people. This sector was worth approximately £25.4bn to London's economy in 2011/12, and has grown by more than 5 per cent over each of the last two years,⁶ one of the quickest growing sectors in London. The same study shows that this growth is predicted to continue to the end of the decade by approximately 6% per year. Within London this sector includes financial institutions trading on carbon, consultancies, small start-up energy efficiency companies. It is a high value sector which requires a range of skills.</p>
Challenge	<p>The growth of the environmental sector will bring opportunities and there will be competition as to where the "environmental sector" will be based. Attempts have been made to base the sector in east London, but it has tended to be industrial processes rather than the high tech end of the sector. Westminster can offer space for the City to create such a cluster. Westminster's location in the heart of London, together with world class universities and partnerships mean that Westminster is already the world leading location for an "Enviro-City".</p> <p>The City's heritage is an economic threat as commercial properties cannot be rented out if they fail to deliver energy standards after 2018. This challenge provides opportunities for a local workforce to deliver retrofitting but requires legislative changes to simplify this.</p> <p>A changing climate will bring change to the economic growth of the City. Warmer summers will increase the number of visitors to our attractions, and to on-street cafés. Risks include an urban heat island effect which will impact on air quality, and increased electricity demand for air conditioning. Westminster City Council will have to manage these effects.</p>

⁵ Protecting our Capital, 2014

⁶ London's Low Carbon Snapshot' Report, GLA 2013

COMMITMENTS	
Top 3 actions for us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a business case to develop an “Enviro-Hub” in Westminster, to be a centre of excellence for new environmental start up companies; • Work with business to develop two freight consolidation schemes; • Work with the national grid to deliver new sites for energy generation and new sub-stations.
Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to work with organisations to ensure that rented commercial units achieve the minimum energy standards required by law, which could deliver local employment opportunities; • We will work closely with the local business community to help them undertake their Corporate Social Responsibilities projects in Westminster. One way of doing this is to work with the Business Improvement Districts to deliver their environmental needs as set out in their business plans; • We will support businesses in delivering shared objectives around issues such as air quality and transportation.
What you can do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses can join BIDs to share best practice and resources; • As a business, close doors to keep heat during winter and cool air in summer; • Use your purchasing choices to buy responsible goods and services.

9-10. Managing water use and addressing flood risk

Did you know?

By law restaurants/cafes have to be able to supply you with tap water, so you can ask for it rather than pay for bottled.

Issue	<p>The Environment Agency and Thames Water recognise that London is an area where demand for water exceeds supply. They highlight the South East of England as 'seriously' water stressed, meaning that the demand for water is having a negative impact on the environment.</p> <p>Londoners use more water than the national average (167 litres per person per day in 2010 compared to 146 litres per person per day nationally), largely because we live in small households, which are not water efficient.</p> <p>Westminster has modelled flood risk in the City and is investigating possible options to manage that risk in the future. The City Council supports development and infrastructure which incorporates sustainable drainage systems, and will continue, in its role as Lead Local Flood Authority, to ensure that surface water drainage flow routes, and the City's gullies are managed properly.</p>
Challenge	<p>With Westminster's population expected to rise from 225,000 in 2014 to 254,600 in 2030, so will our demand for water.⁶ A changing climate will increase the need to be efficient with water usage. Westminster will lobby Thames Water to ensure that water leaks are minimised and water efficiency is improved and promoted.</p> <p>The introduction of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs) will become increasingly important in the management of surface water flood risk in the future. SUDs help reduce peak water runoff from a site, which allows time for water to percolate into the ground, reducing the amount of surface water entering the drainage network. SUDs in Westminster could include: green roofs, 'rain gardens' (planted areas designed to capture water), permeable paving, and rainwater harvesting.</p>

COMMITMENTS	
Top 3 actions for us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put in place higher standards for water efficiency in new developments, recognising that Westminster is an area of water stress due to high demand; • Promote water efficiency on building and construction site, through our Code of Construction Practice; • Work with Thames Water to promote their campaigns to reduce water use and ensure that waste products are disposed of responsibly. Work with Thames Water to roll out their water meter programme to all.
What you can do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order and install your free water saving devices from Thames Water http://freebies.thameswater.co.uk/; • Don't buy bottled water but use re-usable containers to drink tap water; • Install a water butt at home to water plants with collected water; • Only fill your kettle with the water you need; • Report leaks.
Top 3 actions for us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and risk maps, working in partnership to ensure flood risk management objectives are in the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Management Plan; • Investigate possible options for surface water flood risk management for north west, central and south Westminster through externally funded studies; • Support implementation of the Thames Tideway Tunnel Development Consent Order, and ensure that impact on Westminster is managed and minimised.
What you can do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't pour materials including waste oils and fats down drains, recycle it; • Report any blocked drains to the Council; • Don't cover gardens with water resistant hard surfaces; • Plant areas for water absorption.

11. Communicating and encouraging people into environmental action

Issue	<p>Effective communications plays a vital role in helping to achieve the Council's vision for a sustainable Westminster. It demonstrates the Council taking the lead, and strengthens the Council's position when lobbying central government. Our communications encourage those in Westminster to adopt more environmentally-friendly behaviours and take steps to protect and improve their health, and everyone's environment.</p>
Challenge	<p>It is vital that the Council promotes a clear vision for City in delivering the environmental agenda. This vision will be delivered not just by the Council, but also by the wider Westminster community. We need to show leadership when required, and support the community to take ownership and deliver action when needed.</p> <p>Westminster City Council must ensure that the Council's messages are reaching the right audiences and make best use of digital technology and social media in order to achieve this. Market analysis and targeted communications campaigns will save time and effort and deliver better outcomes.</p>

COMMITMENTS	
Top 3 actions for us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with our businesses to ensure they have access and deliver their electric vehicles needs following the introduction of the ultra low emission zone; • Switch the paper publications produced to 100% recycled paper content; • Work with the rental market to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities to deliver energy efficient buildings.
What you can do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to people in your community about the local areas and its environment; • Take part in environmental schemes and initiatives run by local businesses and the Council; • Report issues such as fly tipping and antisocial behavior to the Council; • Suggest improvement ideas in your neighbourhood to your ward councillors.

City
of

ASPIRATION

CHOICE

HERITAGE



City of Westminster

westminster.gov.uk #CityforAll

Ceridwen John

Principal Policy Officer.
Policy, Performance and
Communications x1021

Cjohn@westminster.gov.uk