



A Civic Contract for Westminster

*'Everyone doing their bit for the
good of the city'*

A Green Paper consultation on the future direction of
public services in Westminster

December 2011

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Executive Summary

Our mission is to create a clean, safe and vibrant city for those who live in, work in or visit Westminster. Over the past three years we have **delivered this through our Living City programme** which has helped improve exam results, tackle problem families and devolve and bring services closer to communities.

The new Localism Act with its General Power of Competence, the anticipated results of the government's Resource Review, the impending Olympics and Paralympics, the need for greater economy in public spending and other social and economic changes demand a new approach from local government. We see this as being guided by **a new sense of civic responsibility, fairness and opportunity**.

Our principle of **responsibility is about recognising the value of public contributions** to our city, and making clear our expectation that everyone who comes to the city should contribute to making it a successful place.

Our focus on **fairness will continue to be on caring for and supporting the neediest in our society** because we believe that to be the mark of a civilised society.

We will do this by offering our citizens **a ladder of opportunity to help them better themselves**. Much of this will focus on the need to give everyone the opportunity of work, education or training by working with local employers.

Our fundamental role is to deliver services to people and business. In choosing our priorities we are guided by the principles that **interventions have to be evidence based, must be targeted at those who need them most, using the best provider we can commission**, in partnership where we can, and increasingly through our Tri Borough arrangements.

The council is proud of the contribution that young people make to the city. However, serious youth violence is a significant issue and **we have to engineer a reduction in gang activity** so that young people and residents can live without the fear of such violence.

The council has a duty to ensure that the city is well managed. We want to develop a **stronger role for residents and businesses in the management of the public realm**, by involving them in the delivery of services and creating a mutual sense of civic ownership. We will consider stronger enforcement action against people who break the rules and cause inconvenience or disruption to others.

The night time economy in Westminster is a major contributor to the excitement of central London, but to some it has a negative effect on the environment through noise and fear of crime. The creative industries could help the council with this tricky balancing act by taking a proactive approach to mitigating the adverse effects of their businesses on communities and taxpayers. We are considering creating a **West End Commission** to look, for example, at what types of business the West End should be hosting and looking to attract and whether specific policies could be tailored accordingly.

We are seeking a **housing allocation system which encourages work and citizenship**. We intend to amend tenancy agreements to include more explicit reference to behaviour

expected of a responsible citizen in Westminster, making clear that contravention of such agreements will be treated extremely seriously by the council.

From 2013, it is anticipated that the government will give local authorities the freedom to levy full rate Council Tax on second homes and long term empty properties. **We are considering charging those who can afford to run a second home**, or leave empty a property in Westminster, the same rate of Council Tax as paid by those families who live here all year.

Modern infrastructure is crucial in supporting enterprise and business. This approach should include providing not just basic physical infrastructure, but also access to superfast broadband and wireless technology. To develop an infrastructure fit for an expanding economy Westminster will consider the options for **installing utilities conduits** to support growing business.

The council wants to see an **expansion in the number of Business Improvement Districts** (BIDs) and will explore the viability of supporting a 'Tourism BID' or 'Late Night Economy BID'. This would allow local businesses with the same priorities (but not necessarily concentrated in the same particular postcode) the opportunity to invest in their future prospects.

We want to increase opportunities to work for the long term unemployed and individuals with multiple problems and a lack of skills. So we are considering a **new civic contract with local businesses to support opportunities** for local residents including apprenticeships, jobs, work experience and commitments to investing in skills. And we are consulting on whether we should expect benefit claimants to do more community based work to help other residents whilst they're in receipt of benefits.

We want to take a more **family centred approach** to the services we already deliver across the council. For example, instead of just working with gang members, Westminster's new 'Your Choice' programme is adopting a 'Think Family' approach by working with a selection of families, to tackle the wider family issues that can make young people vulnerable to criminal behaviour.

In Westminster, we want school leavers equipped with the skills to play a full role in society and in the local economy. But increasingly our education role is likely to be one of influence and partnership with schools. We want to see schools build on the success of recent years, with **more schools adopting Academy status**.

We are seeking greater control and powers for communities across Westminster to manage local services. We will also seek to promote opportunities for residents to make the best use of new freedoms where these are in the best interests of the city. The council is asking for views on the **future running of the city and neighbourhoods**, so residents and stakeholders can take a greater stake in the management of their area. This might mean residents running local public services, such as libraries, parks or care for adults.

This document is for public consultation which will take place **between 12th December 2011 and 10th February 2012**. The council will then set out a programme of work to take forward these ideas in early March 2012.

Full details on how to respond to this consultation are set out in Section 7 on page 43.

1. Introduction



Cllr Colin Barrow CBE

Our mission is to create a living city that is clean, safe and vibrant, a better place for families to live and businesses to thrive. Over the past three years we've seen strong delivery of core services, illustrated recently by the assessment of our Children's Services as 'Excellent'. We've pioneered new policies such as Family Recovery, neighbourhood budgets and housing renewal, and made major improvements to landmarks like Piccadilly and Oxford Circus, alongside local regeneration in Maida Hill and Tachbrook markets, all in a context of low tax and efficient delivery.

Making Westminster the greatest city in the world for residents, business and visitors has been at the heart of what we have done for the past decade. In 2001 we launched the groundbreaking Civic Renewal Programme and, in 2005, in response to the London bombings, our One City programme sought to bring people closer together by building and renewing the fabric of our communities. Since 2008, the Living City programme has tackled some of the toughest challenges our city faces, including everything from congestion in the West End to family breakdown.

This is not just our view but more importantly the views of our residents. Evidence shows that Westminster performs well above average of service performance, trust and communications in comparison with cities across the world.

Westminster is at once a world-leading tourist destination, a home to 250,000 people and a business centre. This success is partly due to the unique character of the city, with its vibrant mixture of communities and its range of attractions from ancient monuments to cutting edge entertainment and cultural institutions. However, the characteristics which help the city to thrive also present their own challenges. Westminster's status as an international gateway means that around 30% of our population moves each year, whilst its 24-hour economy sitting alongside its historic built environment requires sensitive management. The council also estimates that it spends £50m more than it receives to look after this unique environment. The role of the council is to lead the city in a way which maximises these benefits, whilst mitigating the impact of the challenges that this entails.

Westminster is a global city, but it is also a living city of many different communities. One of the main themes of this paper is to identify ways for people from different backgrounds to help one another live and do business in the centre of London. But the council has a fundamental responsibility to help people who need care, who are vulnerable or need help in their everyday lives. We are proud of our social services which look after the most vulnerable and enable them to live in Westminster and we will continue to work to offer both equality of opportunity and targeted help to people who lack the advantages and attributes that enable people to make a success of life in the city.

Whilst our goals have remained the same, the situation over the past decade has changed substantially. New financial pressures, public expectation, the digital revolution and a new

understanding of what makes our city work mean that we cannot afford to stand still. We also know that there are still areas of Westminster that struggle with deprivation, crowded homes, and low levels of employment.

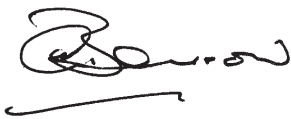
But we simply cannot do everything that we've done in the past, although we want to continue to offer sound leadership of public services delivered in the city. Our Green Paper sets out our views on developing our Living City agenda with a new civic contract with the people, businesses and communities that make up the city.

We think that a new civic contract should be guided by three principles:

- **Responsibility** – those that live, work or visit the city should take responsibility for their actions and behaviours.
- **Fairness** – the days of something for nothing are over. We believe that everyone should contribute, whether paying for the services that they receive or becoming part of their local community. We also think its fair to support and protect the most vulnerable in our city but this will mean that we will need to take difficult decisions with the limited resources we have.
- **Opportunity** – we believe that those with an interest in Westminster should work together to provide opportunities for those that live here.

Our paper explains in greater detail what these principles look like, the approaches we will take to working with others to commission or deliver our services, and finally how we think this might work on the ground.

This paper is not a plan for services. Instead, this document is a consultation to seek your views on our principles and our ideas for the future. To move forward we need your views and your ideas. Working together we can overcome the challenges we face and secure the future of Westminster for the coming years.



Cllr Colin Barrow CBE
Leader, Westminster City Council

Shape the future of your city

Our civic contract for residents, businesses and stakeholders

In the future our contract with you has to be based on a fair deal which works for both parties: keeping taxes low and services good. We would welcome your views on the core propositions set out throughout this document, including:

- If you help others in your community we will support your efforts.
- If you're a business that understands its obligations, plays its part and supports philanthropy and social responsibility then we'll back you.
- If you help local residents get back to work and save us money we'll look at ways of reducing your council tax or business rates.
- If you're out of work, we will expect you to take advantage of the support and opportunities available to help yourself.
- If you're a provider or community group interested in running our services, let's talk, particularly if you can do it better and cheaper than us.
- If you're visiting the city we think it's right that you share in the costs of maintaining Europe's finest capital together with our residents and businesses
- If you come to live in our city we expect you to learn the language, play a role in the community and fit in.

Key questions to consider with more detailed questions on specific service areas included at Section 5.

The Civic Contract for Westminster is your chance to tell us how we can shape the city that you live in.

We would like to hear your views on the following eight questions and there are also further questions in the document that you may wish to answer.

This document, and questions, can also be found online at www.westminster.gov.uk/civiccontract

Please consider the following key questions to help us shape our future services.

1. What public services might be better delivered by others?
Local community groups already look after some of our green spaces and local businesses operate recycling schemes. What else might work?
2. What public services should always stay with the council?
For example, should we continue to be directly responsible for delivering social housing?
3. How far should we go in prioritising services when we have less money?
Are there services that we should simply stop doing ourselves?
4. What conditions should we put on people receiving public services?
Social tenants already have tenancy conditions, but could this approach be extended elsewhere or strengthened?
5. How should we be rewarding people and businesses who behave in ways that benefit the city?
For example, should volunteers receive discounts or other benefits?
6. Should we seek to support specific sectors of the local economy to drive growth, or, in a successful city, leave the market to drive growth?
The council currently offers special support to the creative industries in Westminster, including the 'Hub' project for business start-ups. Is this favouritism or sensibly targeted support? What else should we do?
7. Have we got the balance right with enforcement of local rules and obligations?
For example, we can take enforcement action against noisy pubs and licensed premises. However a simple warning on the door that the local area is residential may be sufficient. Do such approaches have wider applications across the city?
8. Are there new ways of funding our services?
Could we do more to make the most of the wealth in our city to benefit those who live or work here?

2. Context – a council for changing times

Westminster City Council has a track record of developing and delivering ground-breaking programmes in response to changing public attitudes and governments, social change and economic circumstances. A consistent theme has been excellent, value for money services which have balanced the needs of a global centre with the daily expectations of our local residents.

| Setting the scene | Westminster services and innovation |
|--|---|
| Civic Renewal 2001-2005 – Regenerating the social and physical infrastructure of the city. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congestion Charge introduced by the Mayor of London • The Local Government Act 2000 sees old committee structures replaced and community strategies (Westminster City Plan) produced | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council's Customer First programme introduced, setting new standard in customer services • The landmark Golden Jubilee Bridge (supported by the council) opens • Westminster becomes one of the first councils to attract new capital funding for housing programmes and estate renewal by establishing CityWest Homes |
| One City 2005-2008 – Strong communities and excellent services. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • London bombings & renewed focus on renewing communities • Lyons Inquiry into the role of local government which calls for a new partnership between central and local government and greater local flexibility but... local targets and inspection regimes remain | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic Watch devised to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime via a new partnership between the council, the police and local partners • Council's first Economic Development Strategy and over £20M of business rates invested in pro-growth programmes which continue to support enterprise and job creation • Independent Housing Commission established to identify new and creative ways to combat the city's shortage of affordable housing |
| Living City and City Recovery 2008-2012 – Responsive services, renewal and responsibility. Support for residents and businesses via supplementary City Recovery programme | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic downturn followed by the biggest recession since the 1930s • Greater commitment to devolved, localised services and pooling of public money via Localism Act | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,300 residents and 1,300 businesses supported through the down turn via the council's City Recovery programme • Multi-agency Family Recovery Programme launched by the council to support families at risk of losing their children, home or liberty • Magna Carta for localism co-authored by the Leader of Westminster City Council influencing an important shift in the way in which the government connects with neighbourhoods and local authorities |
| Living City and a Civic Contract for Westminster 2012 – A city where everyone contributes to its success; the council as a guarantor of public services. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-recession stagnation and high levels of public debt; major Welfare Reforms • New relationships between local government, residents and businesses as providers and consumers of public services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government's plans for business rate retention are enacted • Tri-borough teams established to deliver services across Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham including libraries which will keep every library open and provide access to over a million books |

3. Our principles

Responsibility

The council and its partners are responsible for making the city a success, but everyone who lives, visits, or works in Westminster has a part to play.

Westminster works because of the positive involvement of the people who compose our city. From clearing the snow on the pavement to checking in on an elderly neighbour, these small actions demonstrate a wider citizenship and contribute positively to the life of the whole city. Our principle of responsibility is about recognising the value of these contributions, and making clear our expectation that everyone who comes to the city should contribute to making it a successful place.

In the past citizens were required to pay their taxes and then too often expected to sit back and passively receive services. Our experience has shown that this has produced services which do not actually meet people's needs and which disengage people and organisations from their responsibilities as citizens and stakeholders. In the future, a range of providers will deliver services in Westminster, and we will be clear that everyone has a role to play in supporting the success of the city. This might mean changing the way in which services are delivered so that there is an onus on people to play their part. It also means being clear about what behaviours are not acceptable and seeking more actively to promote a sense of urban citizenship.

RESPONSIBILITY

Previous approach

- Support council services by paying your tax on time
- Support local democracy by voting or running for office
- Observe local regulations and don't break the law
- Give us your views
- Recycling

What this means now

- Look after your local area by supporting the delivery of services or keeping your area tidy and free from litter
- Help someone on your street and help more vulnerable people live successfully in the community
- Stand up against activities, such as anti-social behaviour, that undermine your neighbourhood
- Get involved in deciding what the future of the city will look like by taking part in consultation and discussion
- Reducing unnecessary consumption

Fairness

A fair society is one in which people who need support get what they deserve, and what they deserve depends on how they behave.

Westminster has always been a place of many neighbourhoods in which hardworking people can prosper and families who do the right things are welcomed into the community whatever their race, religion or background. Along with our partners and the wider city community we will make you welcome, we will make sure you get help when you need it, and we will help you help your children to get on in life. These are not, however, inalienable rights, they are privileges conferred by a fair and compassionate community and if you want to be a part of it you must contribute to its wellbeing.

Our focus will continue to be on caring for and supporting the neediest in our society because we believe that to be the mark of a civilised society. But we now want to go a step further and develop a series of common rules or a civic contract to ensure that in the future our citizens will receive the services that they need to lead fulfilling, productive lives. A culture of 'something for nothing' is no longer financially possible and is not the kind of society we wish to foster.

FAIRNESS

Previous approach

- A wide range of council services supported by public spending
- Public services provided unconditionally
- Services offered to a broad spectrum of needs

What this means now

- Something for something, not unconditional and indefinite support
- Those who live from benefits and state support also have duties to society
- Services will be targeted at those with greatest need

Opportunity

We will create the conditions for a thriving Westminster that produces opportunities for our citizens, and we will help them to make the most of these opportunities.

Westminster is a city of opportunity with over 4,000 business starts-ups each year, thousands of active volunteers and 550,000 people employed across a range of the UK's most productive sectors clustered in the West End, Mayfair and Paddington. Yet many residents in the city are either unable or unwilling to take advantage of these opportunities, costing the tax payer £300m a year.

We want to make sure that everyone in Westminster has the opportunity to lead a fulfilling and productive life, by offering our citizens a ladder of opportunity to help them better themselves. Much of this will focus on the need to give everyone the opportunity of work, education or training by working with local employers. The council will encourage growth and entrepreneurship in the private sector so that more opportunities are opened up to local people. We will also make sure that, whoever is responsible for delivering them, services such as support for adults and young people are delivered in ways that help them make the most of the opportunities presented in the city.

OPPORTUNITY

Previous approach

- Long term benefits and support regardless of ability to work and contribute to a civic society
- Relatively higher numbers of entry level and higher skilled vacancies
- Paddington First and council commissioned employment services.
- Chasing grant funding for local projects from the London Development Agency and government
- Council led area action plans to improve high streets

What this means now

- Something for something, not unconditional and indefinite support, benefits and state support are associated with duties to society
- Services will be targeted at those with greatest need
- Preparing young people to compete for entry level jobs and developing a cross borough jobs and skills commitment with employers
- Targeted business rate discounts
- Partnerships to support clean and safe high streets

4. Our approach to delivering services

This is how we propose to deliver services to ensure tax-payers' money is being used in the most efficient way on the things that matter most. All of our interventions seek to promote independence and greater prosperity.

1. **Targeted localised services** – services should be targeted at those who need them most. In recent years we have already done this, particularly in adult social care. It may be necessary to increase targeting in other service areas, in response to the financial situation we face. We will of course continue to be mindful of our responsibility to provide universal services in statutory areas, for example providing an adequate and efficient library service.
2. **Evidence based interventions** – we need to base our interventions on evidence of what works, while leaving room for innovation in our approaches. We simply won't gamble taxpayers' money on interventions that are not supported by evidence.
3. **Engaging the best provider** – providing services ourselves is no longer the core role of the council. Over recent years we have shifted to the commissioning of services, by tendering for the best provider of a service in the open market. It is time to take this further by proactively diversifying the market to engage new providers who haven't traditionally delivered public sector services. These providers include social enterprises and mutuals. Where we can, we want to make the people of Westminster the commissioners of services, through the greater use of personal budgets. They can then choose to spend their budgets on the services they actually want to receive.
4. **Proportionality** – our interventions need to be proportionate to their end goal. We will be more stringent on asking ourselves whether the level of our response is actually needed. For example, when we provide regular door-to-door rubbish collections, do we also need to provide facilities on the street for people to dispose of their household waste?
5. **More effective partnership working** – we don't want to do things in silos. We acknowledge that we need to get better at working with our partners – the local health services, the police, businesses and the voluntary sector. We can create greater efficiencies if we do this well. In those areas where we have less responsibility or no responsibility at all, we think we can add value by being an 'honest broker' – that is working with other providers of public services to ensure the quality of all public services in Westminster, not just those where we are directly responsible for delivering.
6. **Combining services** – we will combine services in specific areas to tackle common problems, improve lives and make public money go further. The ambitious Tri-Borough programme is already combining Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Library Services and some parts of Corporate Services across Westminster, Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington & Chelsea councils. Where services are shared, each local authority will retain its sovereignty over shaping how combined services are tailored to the needs of local communities.

Towards financial self-sufficiency and new ways of funding services

We want to be financially self-sufficient and we could comfortably achieve this through locally-collected business rates and still contribute more than £1 billion per year to help fund other local authorities around the country. The present inefficient and complex system of financing local government means that each year the council collects taxes on behalf of central government only to then join the queue, begging bowl in hand, to ask for a small fraction back in the form of a grant. The coalition government is committed to reforming the system and correcting these perverse incentives and is supported by the council. Businesses should be able to see where their money goes and residents ought to know that local businesses are making a contribution to the area.

In our strive for self-sufficiency we will also look to new ways of funding services including:

- Social Impact Bonds – which allow investors and philanthropists to invest in bonds which then fund intensive services to help vulnerable people. If they are successful the taxpayer will repay the investments with a decent return. If not, then the taxpayer won't pay.
- Cost recovery – where it is appropriate, we will look to recover costs from the people who directly use a service, for example appropriate fees for planning applications, or recovering the costs of servicing a city visited by millions of tourists on a daily basis.
- Philanthropy & corporate social responsibility – we will encourage and facilitate philanthropic giving to good causes by private donors and businesses in Westminster.

5. Modernising our services

The examples below set out what these principles look like and how we think this might work on the ground.

Responsibility

Safe city – addressing serious youth violence

Westminster has seen an escalation of serious youth violence and gang-related activity in the past two years. Last year there was an increase of 49% in serious youth violence incidents and these have increased in frequency and gravity into 2011/12, up a further 36% so far this year.

The issues

Let's be clear. The council is proud of the contribution which the vast majority of young people make to the city as budding entrepreneurs, students and hard working citizens looking to make a mark. A small minority chose to disrupt local communities, impacting on residents' feelings of safety.

Serious youth violence is a significant safeguarding issue and it is the council's role to ensure that our young people are able to grow up in a healthy and safe environment. Westminster has a strong partnership approach to addressing serious youth violence with a clear and shared understanding of the activity we undertake in relation to prevention, diversion and enforcement. However, over the summer, it was recognised that more needed to be done to address the escalation of serious youth violence. It is for this reason that we launched the 'Your Choice' programme, placing the council in a clear leadership and co-ordinating role in tackling serious youth violence.

The outcomes we're seeking

- A reduction in serious youth violence, both within Westminster, and in incidents involving Westminster young people in Kensington & Chelsea and Brent.
- To identify and disrupt specific gangs that operate in Westminster and reduce the number of young people 'associated' with gangs.
- To raise awareness amongst the community of the work underway to tackle gangs and to reduce levels of community concern.
- To secure funding over a three to five year period to provide a sustainable programme for young people and to ensure that services working with individuals and families involved in gang violence can be given a fair chance to achieve shared local and national outcomes.

Our ideas for change

The council's 'Your Choice' programme is an early example of how we have designed a programme which is underpinned by our key principles. The programme involves focusing resources that are targeted to those causing the biggest problem in our communities and is built on the principle of promoting personal responsibility. We believe that all young people have choices to make in life and it is part of Westminster City Council's role to work with parents and guardians to help young people choose a positive path.

Case study: Daniel's story

16 year old Daniel grew up in North Westminster with his mother, step-father and younger brother. There is a history of domestic violence in the home, as well as mental health issues. Daniel had sporadic attendance at school and has recently dropped out. He has been hanging around in a gang and has been involved in incidents with a rival gang, where he was caught with a replica weapon, arrested for possession of a weapon and given a Referral Order.

The 'Your Choice' programme will provide a number of opportunities to engage with Daniel and help support him to turn his life around, whilst reducing the negative impact of his behaviour on the wider community. Workers will engage with Daniel and his peers to provide gang mediation with the cross-border rival gang in order to reduce conflict. As part of the Referral Order, it will be mandatory for Daniel to participate in the gang exit programme which will involve intensive one-on-one support, assistance with debt and finance, help with housing, as well as signposting to an employment and training programme and substance misuse service.

An established Gangs Unit in Westminster will be monitoring Daniel's activities and will provide a strong set of enforcement consequences if Daniel refuses to engage and take on board the extensive support being offered. In addition, Daniel's family could also be eligible for wider support through the Family Recovery Programme. His younger brother will also benefit through available programmes, such as targeted early intervention work in schools with year 6 and 7 pupils.

This case study is based on a number of real-life scenarios but has been anonymised in order to prevent identification of the individual involved.

Young people who are at risk of involvement in gangs and serious youth violence will be offered targeted and tailored interventions from an early age, in order to discourage their involvement in gangs. For those young people entrenched in gangs, we will offer them a real choice – to take the services on offer to support them out of gangs and become upstanding members of our community, or to face a range of enforcement options and sanctions, led by the police and council working in partnership, which will include the possibility of eviction, parenting orders, anti-social behaviour orders and gang injunctions.

Consultation questions

9. Should the council take a 'zero-tolerance' approach to persistent gang offenders and what should this approach look like? For example, should those in social housing be faced with possible eviction as a consequence of offending behaviour?
10. Building on our family-centered approach in dealing with crime and social issues, should we provide targeted support to families with children who are problematic gang offenders? How can we support parents to identify their child's potential gang involvement?
11. Could businesses and philanthropists play a greater role in helping the police and council to tackle gangs by offering programmes such as work experience, internships, or supporting innovative financing models?
12. Should we seek to help over-18s with dedicated support to leave gangs, or is it more appropriate for this to be led by the criminal justice system?
13. How should we promote positive views of young people in the city?

A role for all in managing the city

In Westminster we have 206 miles of public highway; we collect 250 tonnes of waste a year and the council spends £52 million a year on managing the city. This includes collecting waste, street enforcement and repairing the roads.

The issues

The council has legal duties to ensure that the streets are kept clean and tidy, and that the city is well managed. This is important to ensure that the city remains a great place to live, work and visit. Through services from waste collection to parking, we aim to create a city that supports the success of our local businesses and residential communities.

We are currently consulting on a City Management Plan which sets out our long term policies for managing the city in areas as diverse as transport policy, lighting, and public toilets. The draft City Management Plan sets out what our public realm should be like to support our broader goals for the city. In this paper, we want mainly to look at how our services are delivered in a way that supports the success of the city.

We often deliver these services in an intensive way to minimise any possible negative impacts on the city. For example, in some parts of the city we collect household waste several times a week and provide additional on-street bins for household waste. However this approach can mean that there is less of a call on residents and visitors to play their part in managing the city, by keeping it clean and helping to ensure that it works well. We are therefore also seeking to change behaviour and encourage people to bin their rubbish through novelty litter bins and education campaigns.

The outcomes we're seeking

- A stronger role for residents and businesses in the management of the public realm, by involving them in the delivery of services and creating a mutual sense of civic ownership.
- The taxpayer doesn't have to spend as much public money in keeping the city clean and tidy because people are playing their own part.

Our ideas for change

We want to provide the opportunity for others to get more involved in running the public realm in a way that suits them. Business Improvement Districts¹ (BIDS) already contribute to the management of some parts of the city and we will consider how these arrangements can be expanded. For example, there could be scope to further commission out the management of the public realm so that those organisations with the greatest stake in a well-managed streetscape get greater influence over how this is delivered. This could build the civic connection between business and their local area, whilst helping to further diversify the provision of services.

We also want to consider whether our public spaces could be managed in a way that makes clear the responsibilities of residents and visitors to contribute to a well managed city. Part of this approach will be to involve our communities in managing the public realm, building on existing pilots with our parks and open spaces. The ActiveWestminster model is one example where

¹ There are five BIDS in Westminster.

services are already being managed in partnership with local communities, and we could investigate whether similar approaches can be used more widely.

There is also the opportunity to consider how we could use our approach to managing the city to support our broader priorities. For example, the draft City Management Plan proposes improving conditions for pedestrians to make walking safer, quicker and more convenient. Were this policy agreed, we could seek to deliver shared surface or pedestrian schemes that would contribute to the economic wellbeing and physical health of our residents.

At the same time we must ensure that the public realm remains welcoming to all. Whilst local people or businesses may have a particular interest in an area, we need to support the existence of public spaces. Similarly, we need to ensure that the people retain accountability for the overall management of their city.

Background: The ActiveWestminster Board

The ActiveWestminster Board comprises representatives from the council, NHS, and local sports and activity groups. Its role is to improve the wellbeing of Westminster's residents and visitors by encouraging the take up of sporting activities.

The board does this in a number of ways. It provides advice and guidance to the council and other organisations who deliver sporting activities, and seeks to raise the profile of these activities. However the board also commissions sporting projects itself. The close and positive involvement of the council, NHS, and other organisations means that a wide range of work is effectively monitored and co-ordinated.

Consultation questions

14. Do we need to change the way we manage the public realm so that there is a greater responsibility on everyone to play their part? For example, should we target more resources on discouraging littering rather than just focusing on cleaning it up?
15. How can we use the way in which we manage the public realm to encourage other positive behaviours? For example, is it more important to implement pedestrian schemes that encourage people to use local high streets, or to provide casual parking so that people can drive there?
16. Are you concerned that giving groups of residents and businesses more control over public spaces might reduce accountability and lead to a less accessible city?

Making the city work for all

Managing the city effectively is a balance of enforcement and encouragement. For example, we can take enforcement action against noisy pubs and licensed premises. However a simple warning on the door that the local area is residential may be sufficient. This section considers whether such approaches have wider applications across the city.

The issues

One of Westminster's most distinctive characteristics is the way in which different communities of people live together in close proximity and generally get on. The council has an important role in promoting responsibility and community by supporting positive behaviours and enforcing against conduct that undermines the ethos of strong communities.

The outcomes we're seeking

- Enforcement action against people that break the rules and cause inconvenience or unpleasantness to others.
- Strong, unified neighbourhoods where civic responsibility prevails.

Our ideas for change

We want to do more to consider what behaviours are vital in making Westminster a successful place where people generally get along with each other. We want to look at how we carry out enforcement and whether our powers and resources are targeted properly. Our aim will be to ensure that enforcement fairly reflects the impact of poor behaviour on the wellbeing of the city, that we have the right powers and that these are used in the right way.

For those people who regularly use Westminster's services, there are clear methods that we can use to influence behaviour – from incentives to targeted communications. However there is a further cohort of people who use Westminster's services only minimally, if at all. The prompts and encouragements that influence our residents, businesses, and regular visitors are not effective for those who only come to Westminster for a night out, but whose impact on the city can be just as significant.

We will therefore also consider whether there are new ways that we could adopt to encourage people to act in responsible ways, whether they are long term residents or just visiting for the evening.

Consultation questions

17. Are we targeting the right problems in the right way with our enforcement services, or would you support more enforcement in some areas and less in others?
18. How far should we go in accepting that some behaviours are a normal by-product of life in the centre of a global city? For example, do you think that some disruption in the centre of London is reasonable given the West End's contribution to the Westminster and UK economy?
19. Should we seek to make short-term visitors more aware of their responsibilities to the city? If so, should we do this by publicising the outcome of enforcement activities or by more subtle approaches to encourage good behaviour?
20. How do we improve and support sustainable behaviours that encourage and incentivise people to reuse material, recycle and reduce unnecessary consumption?

Responsible business at the heart of our communities

Westminster prides itself on being one of the most pro-business councils in the country. We know that business, not government, creates jobs and prosperity. However, we also believe that businesses should play an active role in the communities in which they operate – many already do. We also know that certain types of business have a greater impact on the city than others. This section considers how the council should address these issues.

The issues

With our eight and a half square miles generating more than two per cent of the national income, Westminster is a special place to do business. Despite being one of the most expensive locations in the world, more new businesses choose to base themselves here each year than in Manchester, Birmingham and Cardiff combined. The enduring appeal of our city is testament to the hard work and commitment of residents and businesses supported by the council.

Nine in every ten visitors to London come to Westminster. The image of our city is often a tourist's lasting impression of London as a whole. When people visit Westminster we want to give them the very best impression of our city and encourage them to come back again and again. Managing a city that showcases the best of Britain's commerce, entrepreneurialism and heritage while remaining an attractive place to live and raise a family is a continual challenge. In return for being part of this unique economy, residents and existing businesses expect everyone to make a contribution and all businesses to uphold minimum standards to keep the city running effectively.

We appreciate that current residents, businesses, councillors and council officers are temporary custodians of this great city and recognise that our duty to preserve and enhance the built environment of Westminster is balanced with our desire to see the city and our residents prosper. That is why, despite being pro-development, we expect high standards of design and work to protect local heritage assets. With more than three-quarters of Westminster within a designated conservation area, the uniqueness of the city is worth protecting.

We expect the very highest standards from local restaurants and takeaways and will never hesitate to take action against premises that compromise the safety of patrons or staff. The Premises Earned Autonomy Scheme (PEAS) already focuses attention on those who fail to comply with these standards while keeping out of the way of business with a strong track record of operating with high standards.

The outcomes we're seeking

- Businesses playing a part in the communities in which they operate.
- An understanding and acknowledgment that certain types of business have more of an impact and cost on the environment in which they operate.
- Effective management and stewardship of the West End; meeting the challenges of the future and the expectations of all those that live, visit or work there.

Our ideas for change

The night time economy in Westminster is a major contributor to the vibrancy of central London and undoubtedly makes the city almost unrivalled for entertainment around the clock. Indeed,

footfall in some areas is greater at 3am than it is at 3pm while traffic can be heavier at 10pm than 10am. Again, a balancing act is required; whilst supporting the growth of the late night economy and the jobs it provides, we want to encourage responsibility amongst licensees. They must recognise their responsibilities and the negative impact that their actions could have on Westminster and its residents, not just those in the immediate vicinity but also those who subsidise the late night economy through the necessary additional street cleansing, bin collections and licensing enforcement required to ensure the city remains safe and clean for all.

This is the principle that underpins our licensing policy and new powers contained within the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act will see licensing authorities given the ability to recover more of their own costs from those in possession of licences. These would only be implemented in Westminster with the necessary degree of sensitivity that is commensurate with our desire for the West End to remain the entertainment capital of Britain. The industry could, however, help the council with this tricky balancing act by taking a proactive approach to mitigating the adverse effects of their businesses on communities and taxpayers.

Many of our local businesses go above and beyond compliance, actively becoming integral parts of their communities, engaging with residents and supporting programmes that limit the negative effects of their business or helping local residents. We want to make it easier for those businesses to support communities in Westminster and have a standing offer to help those that wish to discharge their corporate social responsibilities in their area.

Many of the issues discussed above are of specific relevance to the West End. We could look to address some of these issues by establishing a group that brings together all of those with an interest in how the West End operates, how it should be run and what policies should operate within it. We also know that it is not possible to look at one area in isolation – one area will have a direct impact upon another. For example, we know the provision of night buses and licensing arrangements have a direct impact on the levels of anti-social behaviour.

The creation of a West End Commission, led by the council, could look, for example, at what types of business the West End should be hosting and looking to attract and whether specific policies could be tailored accordingly. The commission could bring together businesses, residents and numerous government agencies including the Mayor, Transport for London and Metropolitan Police, alongside the council, to play a role in managing this most unique of areas. However, we would not want this to create a mere 'talking shop'. We could therefore consider what powers the council could potentially devolve to this group and whether other parts of government could do the same so that it has a real ability and capacity to help manage the West End.

Consultation Questions

21. What expectations should the council and residents have of local businesses?
22. Do you believe that the current balance between development and preservation of the heritage of Westminster is broadly right?
23. What rewards and penalties should the council consider using in relation to businesses that succeed or fail to uphold the standards expected of them?
24. Do you think there is merit in looking at creating a West End Commission; if so, who should sit on it, what do you think its remit should be and what powers do you think it should have?

Fairness

A fair housing deal for responsible tenants

Social housing is a privilege, not a right, and it is only fair that we expect certain behaviours of those who wish to take advantage of this privilege. In an era of financial constraint and limited public resources this matters more than ever.

The issues

Whilst priority will always be given to those with real and immediate needs, when rationing such a scarce and valuable resource, we should consider the kind of community that residents wish to promote. Central London is an expensive place to live. Those who work hard to pay bills and raise families in Westminster expect others to play by the same rules and we support this view.

Background: CityWest Homes

CityWest Homes was created by Westminster City Council in 2002 as an 'Arms-Length Management Organisation' to manage, maintain and improve its estates and the 21,700 council-owned properties in Westminster.

The government has provided local authorities with greater flexibility on which households are, and are not, eligible to join the social housing waiting list and how prioritisation between those households operates. The council has already amended its housing allocation system to provide additional points to households that are in employment or actively seeking work and those with a longstanding connection to the area. This fosters a stronger bond with the area, rewards hard work and ensures that all areas of the city retain a reasonable proportion of economically active citizens.

The outcomes we're seeking

- A housing allocation system which encourages work and citizenship.
- A fair and transparent housing allocation policy that leaves those who play by the rules safe in the knowledge that they will have an advantage over others who do nothing to help themselves, or who wreak havoc in their communities.
- Secure neighbourhoods where all residents feel safe and confident to walk the streets.

Our ideas for change

We will look to amend tenancy agreements to include more explicit reference to the behaviour expected of a responsible citizen in Westminster, making clear that contravention of such agreements will be treated extremely seriously by the council. Every member of the community has a right to expect a minimum level of courtesy from their neighbours – refusal to comply will put tenancies at risk.

We will also take advantage of greater flexibility of tenures (in some cases for two-year periods) to allocate tenancies in line with proposed new standards; the continuation of these tenancies could be conditional on unemployed applicants making a real and concerted effort to find a job. The message would be simple: we will help people help themselves and support them

every step of the way, in the expectation that they will take opportunities that are presented to them. We will consider whether specific groups should be eligible for longer tenancies, for example older people and those with severe disabilities living in specially adapted homes.

We will investigate scaling more rents to income so that tenants earning above average local incomes pay a fairer share of their housing costs. We have already successfully argued that social housing tenants who earn six-figure salaries should pay closer to a market rent and reduce the need for public subsidy of housing costs for the richest people in our society. This would raise additional revenues for the construction of new affordable homes and the maintenance of existing ones.

Case Study: Responsible tenants

Westminster is one of the most exciting places to live anywhere in the world, but on some occasions the behaviour of a minority of individuals or families can greatly disrupt a community, ruin the lives of their neighbours and give the neighbourhood a bad name. When other people are working hard, with rising costs of living, to keep a roof over their heads, feed their families and raise their children, they do not deserve to have their lives blighted by selfish neighbours. When this occurs, the council will always be on the side of those in our communities who do the right thing and will seek evictions if such crimes are committed by our own tenants. We will maintain our legal obligations in respect of all members of the community but where possible we will recognise and reward the people who put something back into their communities, and encourage other local registered housing providers to ask the same of their tenants.

We will aim to use the housing allocations system to allocate more points to households that work hard and make a difference to our city. The council has already agreed to reward those with longstanding commitments to the area and those in employment or actively seeking work but we will consider going further.

This could include:

- prioritising certain people and groups, for instance, Special Constables, nurses, members of the armed forces including those returning from overseas tours or those in the Territorial Army, and others who make a wider contribution to the local community
- allocating additional points to applicants that have agreed to adopt or foster a child in need of a home
- allocating additional points to applicants that have volunteered a certain number of hours through a recognised volunteer brokerage service
- docking points for acts of anti-social or criminal behaviour committed in the six or twelve months prior to the application
- docking points for households where children are found to be persistently truanting.

Consultation questions

25. Should Westminster City Council and CityWest Homes amend new and existing tenancy agreements to make more explicit reference to what is, and is not, expected of a resident of Westminster?
26. Could we introduce flexible tenancies which would be dependent on a sustained and committed effort to use local support programmes to find employment and/or compliance with agreements on expected behaviour?
27. If a household is earning more than the local average income, should it pay a greater proportion of their housing costs?
28. Westminster could decide to look beyond traditional 'key worker' groups and prioritise other people who make a strong and active contribution to our community. Which groups of people might we prioritise in this way?
29. Will rewarding and penalising behaviours through the housing allocation system as set out above help to create a fairer city?

Fairer taxes, fairer benefits

There are 7,500 second homes or empty properties in the city which are currently exempt from full rate Council Tax. 22,000 households in the city are in receipt of Council Tax Benefits and the council could use new freedoms and flexibilities to create a fairer local tax and benefit regime.

The issues

Council Tax exemptions & Council Tax Benefit

To maintain strong and cohesive communities it is essential that in the future everyone pays their fair share depending on their means.

At present Council Tax Benefit (CTB) is administered by local authorities according to rules and eligibility criteria set by central government. In Westminster, 23,633 households are in receipt of this benefit with more than 16,000 receiving CTB equivalent to the full Council Tax bill on their home. From 2013, councils will be asked to design their own benefit schemes with a 10% reduction in the overall local CTB budget provided by the Department for Work and Pensions and on the condition that pensioners are completely protected from any reductions in their benefit payments.

As of 2013, it is anticipated that the government will give local authorities the freedom to levy full rate Council Tax on second homes and long term empty properties. Current legislation dictates that such dwellings are afforded a minimum 10% relief on their Council Tax bill.

Background: Did you know?

- 23,633 households in Westminster are currently in receipt of Council Tax Benefit (CTB)
- The average benefit is £563 per household per year

The outcomes we're seeking

- Ensuring that the best off pay their fair share in local taxes.
- Giving all residents a better understanding of the true cost of public services.

Our ideas for change

Proposals could include charging those who can afford to run a second home, or leave empty a property in Westminster, the same proportion of Council Tax as paid by those families who live here all year. This would affect approximately 9,000 properties and could raise an additional £1.25 million to fund affordable housing programmes, support the vulnerable or to provide services vital to an effectively functioning city.

As well as introducing a ceiling on individual household Council Tax Benefit, the council could introduce qualifying criteria for the benefit. This could include:

- actively seeking a job if out of employment but fit to work
- reductions in benefit for people convicted of persistent acts of anti-social behaviour or criminality.

Consultation questions

30. If someone can afford to have a second home in Westminster, or to leave one empty, should they pay full Council Tax on that property?
31. Should we make Council Tax Benefit dependent on certain behaviours such as obeying the law and actively seeking work? Are there other behaviours that we should incentivise or deter through the Council Tax Benefit regime?

Opportunity

Encouraging business growth, enterprise and work

A strong community will always benefit from a thriving local economy and the council should use all available levers to promote growth and employment opportunities for local residents. Greater localisation of business rates should forge the way to develop new relationships between the council and the private sector.

The issues

Central London's infrastructure, including its road network, much of which dates from the 19th and early 20th centuries, is creaking under the pressures of 21st century demands. These deficiencies pose a threat to the capital's long-term growth prospects because as globalisation accelerates and technological change continues to make the world seem smaller, attracting businesses to expensive cities will become more difficult. Reliable infrastructure, including roads free from congestion, is likely to become increasingly important when making business investment decisions. We want to create a secure and reliable infrastructure for long-term economic growth in central London.

In recent years some areas of the city have experienced power outages which present a less than satisfactory image of London as a whole and the West End in particular. Already, developers are being forced to consider alternatives to existing power sources because of a lack of reliability but there is a risk that fewer developments will remain viable or, at the very least, higher rents will be charged to central London businesses. The issues for electricity supply derive not just from a lack of power but from a lack of capacity on the National Grid to get power to new developments. This is a heavily regulated part of the energy sector and making new connections is often a complicated process. Network companies like UK Power Networks (the operator in London) have some statutory obligations but it often falls to developers to pay for upgrades, reinforcements and often even new substations.

Modern communications are crucial in developing a world-class infrastructure for supporting enterprise and business. This approach should include providing not just basic physical infrastructure, but also access to superfast broadband and wireless technology.

The outcomes we're seeking

- Prevent power outages in the future.
- Ensure that businesses within Westminster have access to the very latest in modern and reliable communication infrastructure.
- An infrastructure and road network free from the worst excesses of congestion fit for an expanding local economy so that London can compete effectively with other great cities around the world.

Our ideas for change

Working with the Greater London Authority and other central London boroughs and relevant government departments, Westminster could work with the operator of the London electricity

network to explore the options for installing utilities conduits. The principle of conduits is simple – a pre-prepared duct through which services can be run and accessed without the need to dig trenches or disturb the surface of the road. They also allow for the installation of further utilities at a later date – an important consideration given the profusion of new forms of telecommunications such as fibre optics.

Short of creating tunnels and rerouting utilities at immense cost, this approach seems applicable in London only where there are pre-existing tunnels or where major new construction is taking place. There may be scope in engaging public sector owners of existing tunnels through central London in an effort to keep any costs to a minimum.

To ensure that businesses have access to modern, fast communications such as superfast broadband and wireless technology, the council could look to develop a coherent set of priorities and policies that the Mayor, regulators and providers agreed to stick to when working in the city.

Consultation questions

32. Do you believe the council should play a role in developing a strategy for the delivery of future infrastructure requirements?
33. If you agree that this would be a useful approach, on which utilities in particular should the council seek to work with the Mayor and the private sector?
34. What should the council do to ensure that businesses have access to and rely upon modern communications such as superfast broadband and wireless technology?
35. Do you think its right that we set out measures to control congestion?

Sector specific business support

The issues

Westminster's support for specific sectors, including the nationally recognised Creative Industries Programme, has yielded enviable results and will continue. But at a time of extreme funding constraints, the council must look closely at less traditional means of funding such support.

The tourism sector is worth £85 billion to the national economy and with around 90% of London's 14.6m annual visitors coming to Westminster, it is a market extremely important to the economic wellbeing of our residents. It also illustrates the unique position that Westminster City Council, its residents and its businesses have in portraying the capital in a way that encourages people to come back again and again. Tourists might see a show in the West End or visit the National Gallery and dine out in Covent Garden and may choose to stay in Paddington or Bayswater.

The outcome we're seeking

- A successful local economy with strong and distinctive local sectors.
- A local economy that provides opportunities and jobs to local residents.

Our ideas for change

Combining neatly the desire to recognise and nurture sectors important to the overall local economy with Westminster's successful implementation of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) across the city, the council could explore the viability of supporting a 'Tourism BID' or 'Late Night Economy BID'. This would allow local businesses with the same priorities but not necessarily concentrated in the same particular postcode, the opportunity to invest in services and products that support their future prospects. In the case of tourism-focused businesses, this could provide an additional resource with which to promote the area and its attractions to potential visitors at home and abroad. These organisations would be entirely business-led with local firms voting on their establishment and setting their priorities.

A Tourism BID – how it could work

With the exception of a few city-wide Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) that cover an entire local authority area, most BIDs in the UK are created around a distinct and discrete area of a few streets. In an economy like Westminster's, however, a business might have more in common with another from a different electoral ward. Tourism-focused businesses across the city have an interest in promoting the area to tourists from home and abroad. Pending a positive response from such businesses to the possibility of a mandated levy, a contribution would be able to establish a promotional fund to reinvest, for example in marketing BID members to potential visitors. Members would set the priorities of the BID, elect its board and hold the organisation to account.

Lobbying for powers to introduce sector-specific levies could also be considered. A tourist levy could raise revenues which would then be ploughed back into the sector locally in the form of further tourism promotion, training for staff or local people who could form the future workforce. These more ambitious schemes could be funded through a more innovative form of financing using the future tourist levy income to borrow against initially.

Councils such as Cornwall, for whom tourism is an integral part of an economic development strategy, have recently raised the possibility of introducing a tourist levy on visitors to the area. The practice is also long established in many cities across the United States. As an illustration, a £1 per night tourist levy could raise approximately £22 million per annum from foreign visitors alone.

Consultation questions

36. Should the council support specific sectors that it believes are key to local economic growth?
37. Do sector-specific Business Improvement Districts, financed and managed by the industry itself, represent an attractive alternative to the imposition of taxes?
38. Should the council seek the power to introduce a levy on tourist visitors? Would this be an appropriate way of delivering ring-fenced funding for improvements to public spaces and additional services in the city to the benefit of all?
39. The government has recently consulted on reforms to local government finance around greater local retention of business rates. It is anticipated that measures will shortly be introduced to establish a direct link between growth in the taxbase and the financial fortunes of a local authority. If this happens, how should the council ensure business representation within its existing and future structures and decision-making processes?

Jobs and skills

Key issues

Despite being the most productive local economy in the country, there are over 21,000 residents out of work claiming benefits and rising numbers of residents (4,000+) not claiming benefits and looking for work. The government's focus is on reducing the numbers claiming benefits through major new initiatives which include the Work Programme and Jobcentre Plus.

In Westminster there are particular problems which need to be addressed to reduce dependency and ensure that Government programmes meet challenges which include:

- childcare – on average there are three children aged 0 to four years for each available registered childcare place in the city (i.e. both filled and unfilled places). Supply is a particular issue for low income and unemployed parents
- young people – there is a squeeze on opportunities for young people that are most difficult to place as the number of graduates looking for work increases together with job-ready school leavers who are taking up apprenticeships and non-university pathways
- skills – there are over 42,000 residents of working age with English language needs impacting on their ability to find work and progress.

The outcomes we're seeking

- Increasing opportunities to work for the long-term unemployed and individuals with multiple problems including debt, childcare, substance misuse and lack of work based skills.
- Increasing opportunities to work for those with long-term disabilities and health problems.
- A new civic contract with local businesses to support opportunities for local residents, including apprenticeships, jobs, work experience and commitments to investing in skills.

Our ideas for change

The council will explore how it can use its relationships with suppliers and developers to increase access to local employment opportunities for residents. In any one part of the city, publicly funded contractors alone employ hundreds of people in a range of jobs including customer services, highways and facilities management, cleaning, greening, care and housing. Employing local people is not only a good thing to do but in many instances will ensure a far greater connection between where people live and work. It negates hotlines and irritating switchboards through a more personal connection with the people delivering services in your neighbourhood.

We will explore ways of using business rates more effectively to support local employers that actively promote apprenticeships, jobs and work placements for the long-term unemployed. For example devising a points based system which would translate into business rate discounts for sustaining employment and supporting local growth.

The council continues to have an important leadership role in co-ordinating national programmes locally and commissioning specialist provision where there are gaps in support for the most vulnerable. However, with less funding available to fund discretionary back to work programmes and more services being delivered by government contractors, the council's position will need to be more facilitation and honest broker rather than as a funder of programmes.

Five ways we will help you get into work

1. We will work with **contractors and local developers** to create employment and training opportunities. This will include working with dedicated workplace co-ordinators to connect local people with employment and training opportunities created in the West End and on the largest developments, such as Chelsea Barracks.
2. We will provide **specialist support for vulnerable residents that fall out of mainstream provision**, including young offenders and jobseekers with mental health needs, physical disabilities and behavioural complexities.
3. We will continue to help **families access flexible employment opportunities** that offer progression by extending the range of support we offer through Children's Centres and Family Recovery.
4. We will look to build on the success of Westminster Works by continuing to provide **accessible, neighbourhood-based support** in partnership with Registered Social Landlords.
5. We will **increase the range of affordable housing options available to help economically active households** who contribute to the Westminster economy to live locally. This will include sub-market rent schemes to help people save to buy, equity stake options in properties, and low-cost home ownership schemes.

Consultation questions

40. Should we expect benefit claimants to do more community based work to help other residents whilst they're in receipt of benefits?
41. What do you think the council should be doing in addition to the support offered by the government through Jobcentre Plus and the Work Programme?
42. What are your views on what the council could do to best support young people into sustained jobs?

Think Family

There are over 12,000 children living in poverty in Westminster and a smaller number of families that have chaotic lifestyles and face multiple problems including alcohol and drug misuse, anti-social behaviour and poor parenting skills. Our team around the family approach has been successful and we'd like to expand this approach to families with less severe needs and problems.

The issues

Keeping working families of moderate means living in Westminster is important to the fabric of our communities. Westminster has a role to play in supporting the growth of our residents from children into active citizens, ensuring that they have the support and opportunities that they need to thrive and play an active part in civic life in Westminster. Westminster's Family Recovery Programme (FRP) has been successful because it acknowledges the role of a positive family environment in supporting a child's development and that in order to create that environment, parents' own needs must be addressed in a timely and flexible manner.

FRP consists of a multi-agency team that can intervene and support the most troubled families that are at risk of losing their children, their home or their liberty. FRP is centred on the work of the Team Around the Family (TAF), a single unified team consisting of professionals from a wide range of services including the police, housing, adult mental health, substance misuse, domestic violence victims and perpetrators, employment, debt, benefits, education, and health visiting. The team can build a detailed picture of a family's involvement with services and devise a single care plan to take into account the varying needs and problems of each family member. With current funding, FRP can take on 60 family cases each year for around 12 months. Following evaluation of 50 'closed cases', it was found that roughly £2 public sector expenditure was avoided for every £1 spent on the programme. It has been noted that in Westminster, far more families with children will benefit from this approach.

The outcomes we're seeking

- We want to extend this 'Think Family' approach further, using evidence of what works from FRP to put in place new interventions to help families with lower levels of need to move on from their problems and contribute positively to their community.

Our ideas for change

One of the main problems we face in achieving positive outcomes for this cohort of families who are just shy of FRP eligibility is finance. Our current Children's Services budget enables us to meet our statutory duties to a high standard but if we were to re-assign funding from children's workers to adult workers, we would be likely to see waiting lists develop and diminish our high standard of work.

Options we are already exploring with the Cabinet Office are innovative financing options such as Social Impact Bonds to put similar interventions to FRP in place. These would be the first Social Impact Bonds to tackle families with multiple problems.

Less costly interventions such as peer mentoring and family befriending volunteer schemes which involve both parents and young people could also form a useful element of the offer for families with these complex issues.

Volunteering schemes of this nature:

- provide unique and effective interventions through peer relationships unavailable from traditional services provided by the state
- enhance community cohesion in looking for the solutions to social problems from within the community
- provide experience to those seeking employment.

Case Study: Giving families a fair start: Sarah's story

"I'm a lone parent, with one adult son at university and a 7-year-old daughter. Both live at home and I struggle to get by. At its worse, I had debts worth more than £112,000 built up throughout a previous relationship and its subsequent breakdown. My partner made a big contribution to racking up this debt but it was all in my name, and he's gone now.

"I tried to get on top of things before by talking to solicitors and other debt agencies. But they all charged for their services and couldn't help.

"When I first talked to the debt adviser in the Children's Centre I was really demotivated. I broke down in tears – I had such low self-esteem and was so ashamed of the situation I got myself in. I was frightened to speak to the creditors who were constantly attempting to contact me and I was worried anyone who tried to help would charge me.

"My adviser at the Children's Centre really understood my situation and was able to give me specialist advice. With their help I was able to apply for a Debt Relief Order. They came with me to the appointment and, with their help, I was able to clear all my debt and begin afresh.

"Now with my debt cleared I've got my family's life back on track. I've got my motivation and self-esteem back and am completing a childcare course."

However we need to be mindful of our duties to protect children, so it is important that we satisfy ourselves that we have the right structures and safeguards in place, if this type of approach is to be successful.

We might also be able to achieve the outcomes we are seeking, though greater partnership working between the council; the health services – in particular engaging the Clinical Commissioning Groups, including General Practitioners who may have contact with families with complex needs; the police; and probation services. Or some form of realignment of budgets or functions might be necessary. We need to think more about what we could do here, and whether it would actually lead to better outcomes.

At a minimum we could think about how we can take a more family centred approach to the services we already deliver across the council. For example, instead of just working with gang members, Westminster's new 'Your Choice' gang diversion programme is adopting a 'Think Family' approach by working with a selection of families, to tackle the wider family issues that can make young people vulnerable to criminal behaviour.

Consultation questions

43. Should we be providing more support to troubled families, who do not meet FRP eligibility?
44. What types and level of problems should families have if they are to qualify for extra support?
45. How do you think we can best improve the offer of support to troubled families who might qualify for extra support during a time of financial restraint?
46. What other services, programmes or initiatives that the council offers, could take a more family centred approach to the way they do things?

A healthier Westminster

Westminster has a significantly greater burden of mental illness than national and London averages. Life expectancy can vary by up to 13.5 years depending where you live in the city and childhood obesity in Westminster schools is significantly higher than national averages. From 2013, the council will have greater responsibilities for public health and this is an opportunity to connect the council's influence and services with this agenda.

The issues

From 2013 the council will be responsible for the commissioning of a number of public health services including sexual health services, the National Child Measurement Programme, NHS Health Check Assessment and elements of the Healthy Child Programme.

Local authorities are likely to have flexibility to take action on other public health issues such as tobacco control, alcohol and drug misuse, obesity, physical activity, workplace health, social exclusion, behavioural and lifestyle campaigns, public mental health services and dental public health services.

Background: Westminster Health and Wellbeing Board and Clinical Commissioning Groups

From 2013, we will take on responsibility for public health, likely to include commissioning services and the flexibility to take action on a wide range of public health issues. A local 'field force' of the National Commissioning Board of the NHS will have responsibility for commissioning primary health services including GP surgeries. Through the Health and Wellbeing Board, we have a responsibility to join up local health services, social care and health improvement services, and assume the role of guarantor of these services in Westminster.

In Westminster, we have established a shadow Health and Wellbeing Board. Membership of the board includes two Westminster Cabinet Members, the Director of Public Health, the Directors of Adult and Children's Services, representatives from Clinical Commissioning Groups in Westminster and the chair of the local LINK (Local Involvement Network, a patient involvement service). The main functions of the Board will include assessing the needs of the local population and developing a strategy to tackle those needs.

A health premium will be available as an incentive payment and will depend on the progress made in improving the health of the local population and reducing health inequalities.

The outcome we're seeking

- A fit and healthy Westminster with everyone able to play a full role in society and in the workplace, and where ill health is not a barrier to advancement or opportunity.

Our ideas for change

The council will take on new responsibility for public health from 2013. This will enable the council to respond more effectively to locally variable social and health care needs by building stronger links between public health and other areas of service that directly affect health such as housing, economic development, education and the environment. The council could also look to influence, for example, the work of GPs, shaping acute services and sharing information to allow a far more integrated health and social care service.

Consultation questions

The government will be setting out further details soon. In the meantime:

47. What role do you think the council should play in improving public health?
Should we target a few specific issues of concern or adopt a broader approach?
48. Are the public health needs of the city currently met? If not, what are we missing?
49. What role should the council play in the wider health service so that it is responsive to the needs of those that live in Westminster allowing specific issues to be targeted and addressed?

Education in Westminster

There are 40 primary schools and 10 secondary schools in Westminster. Seven schools in Westminster are Academies, five of which are secondary schools and one Free School. In Westminster's state schools only 23% of children speak English as their main language. The council's role is changing as new freedoms for schools are introduced.

The issues

The council is responsible for co-ordinating school admissions and ensuring that there are enough school places to meet local needs, as well as providing support for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN). However, the council's role in education is changing, as more schools become academies or open as free schools, and the independence of all schools is increased.

Academies must comply with legislation on SEN, admissions and pupil exclusions; however they have more freedom around curriculum delivery, term dates and length of the school day. The council cannot approve Academies' admissions policies, or direct that a child is given a place at an Academy. In addition, the Education Act 2011 gives all schools responsibility for their own improvement and changes the way they will be inspected, for example stopping the routine inspection of schools judged outstanding.

Westminster also has the highest number of short-term migrants of any local authority in England and Wales (2009 data). This creates an annual population churn of 25%, presenting unique and complex service pressures. The impact on schools is huge, including pressure for places as well as support requirements around languages and children with identified needs. Migrant pupils can also face specific issues including psychological stress as a result of significant trauma (e.g. leaving a war-torn country), learning difficulties due to a language barrier or problems integrating in school if the family has no previous experience of the English education system.

The current level of funding received to deal with these pressures is insufficient. Some schools in Westminster have a much higher number of migrant pupils and with insufficient funding, it is difficult for these schools to be on a level playing field, achieving similar results to schools that do not face these challenges.

Case Study:

Paddington Primary School – the effect of migration on results

30% of the school's pupils are not born in the UK. Most do not speak English. There is a high level of churn, with 43% of the pupils arriving in the school after Key Stage 1. Of these 69% were not born in the UK. The school's results show a downward trend, significantly below both national and Westminster averages. 49% of pupils achieve Level 4 in English and Maths compared to 77% of all pupils in Westminster, and 73% of pupils nationally.

Those pupils born in the UK perform considerably better with 55% achieving Level 4, compared to foreign born students where only 30% achieve Level 4. However, the results of all pupils are lower than both the Westminster and national averages, highlighting the additional pressures of coping with such large numbers of recently arrived pupils and the impact that it has on overall levels of attainment for a school.

The outcomes we're seeking

- High quality schools and attainment.
- School leavers equipped with the skills to play a full role in society and in the local economy.

Our ideas for change

In Westminster, two of 40 primary schools and five of 10 secondary schools are Academies. Our role is likely to increasingly be one of influencing and partnership working with schools. It is therefore timely to consider our role in education, to carefully manage the transition to a new system of education provision.

Within this role, we must also consider how to address the pressures on schools presented by high population churn, ensuring that limited resources are used effectively to meet the needs of all pupils in Westminster.

For newly-arrived migrant pupils and their families we propose a range of early intervention support that addresses the specific issues they face to ensure continued improvement in their educational attainment. Such support could include:

- addressing pupils' educational needs, specific to their age group, for example targeted support for pupils who arrive during a GCSE year
- addressing pupils' emotional wellbeing
- supporting pupils to learn English in the school environment
- supporting and signposting families to the most appropriate services based on their needs, including language support.

Consultation questions

50. How far should the council go in acting as a guarantor of local educational quality, and how far should we expect parents and governors to fulfil this role?
51. Could we do more to support the development of a market in local education?
52. Should the council consider an early intervention service for newly arrived migrant pupils and their families to address the barriers they face?
53. How can such a service be delivered during a time of financial constraints?

Civic Communities – putting power in people's hands

Over 45 years ago Westminster City Council was formed by the merger of Paddington, St. Marylebone and Westminster. It is now time to reconfigure the notion of the council as the sole supplier and manager of local services and for residents and groups to seize the opportunity presented by changes to legislation. This will allow for far greater control and management of local assets and services.

The issues

The council recognises that there is no one size fits all solution for managing an area. From the more affluent areas surrounding Regent's Park, to the commercial centre of the West End, to the centre of government, to areas of deprivation, Westminster has many communities with a wide range of interests and characteristics.

Recent legislation has opened up more opportunities to get involved in the running of local areas. This may be through the establishment of Parish (Community) Councils with tax raising powers and their own elected members to provide a range of local services. Alternatively, this may be through the creation of Neighbourhood Forums which can be designated by the council and are expected to bring together businesses, residents and local councillors to further the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the area and promote business.

Other measures which have recently passed into legislation include extended rights for individuals or groups to bid to deliver services and support for the community to bid to take over facilities and the service operating from that building if they believe it to be an asset to the local community. The localist provisions will also be extended over the coming months and years with the establishment of Community Budgets and the Community First programme enabling local service providers to come together, pool resources and agree how services can be better delivered and targeted.

The outcomes we're seeking

- Greater control and powers for communities across Westminster to manage local services.
- New community governance structures which reflect Westminster's character and diversity.

Our ideas for change

The council wants to make the most of the new freedoms and opportunities delivered through developments such as the Localism Act. We will also seek to promote opportunities for residents to make the best use of new freedoms where these are in the best interests of the city.

Prescribing how residents or local groups should respond to the opportunity is not our approach and runs counter to the principles of localism. Westminster City Council is therefore asking for your views on the future running of the city and how residents and stakeholders can take a greater stake in the management of their area. This is through a separate Community Governance Review which closes on 3 February 2012.²

² <http://www.westminster.gov.uk/services/councilgovernmentanddemocracy/councils/civiccommunity/communitygovernance/>

Consultation questions

54. Would you welcome the opportunity to have more influence over the way in which local public services, such as libraries or care for adults, are delivered by managing or helping to design these services?
55. What services could be most improved if they were delivered locally? Are there public services that you think we should definitely continue to deliver as a council?
56. Would you still be interested in more opportunities to manage or deliver public services locally if this required a small additional financial contribution, perhaps to pay for a community council or to enable services to be delivered in a tailored way?
57. Do you think that it is fair that there are potentially different types of governance operating across the city with possibly different responsibilities and powers?

6. Conclusion

These proposals are for public comment and debate. They illustrate how we could develop a city where people would work together to shape their futures.

Over the last decade we have tended to rely on the government to do things for us, because we believed that public spending was there to solve problems and there was sufficient money to fund virtually any scheme designed to solve a social problem. That approach was unsustainable and was probably not the most effective way to tackle some of the deep seated issues around managing a city. Despite spending of vast amounts of public money, many problems remain.

In the context of a renewed Living City programme our Civic Contract sets out a new path where the council would focus more strongly on targeted interventions, working with all the agencies in an area to improve the lives of troubled families, help workers with affordable housing, get people with a history of worklessness into jobs and allow older people to live more independent lives. This emphasis on opportunity is built on what we have learnt from our existing policies.

We would also ask for more from communities and local businesses. We want them to work together to improve their area; sometimes through voluntary work, occasionally through sponsorship or other forms of funding and perhaps by taking on the running of facilities or even the government of an area, as set out in our Community Governance Review. These policies highlight our belief that we are all responsible for building a strong community, something we learned through our One City approach.

Finally, we have a new focus on fairness because we think that this should be central to our approach to living in Westminster. We think it's fair and right that people should be helped to learn our language, asked to abide by the rules that govern a complex city and given benefits and rewards for behaving in a way that helps themselves and the wider community. The council's contribution to fairness means that we take as little money as we need to from people to run the city, and make that contribution work as effectively as we can to produce the maximum social good.

Together this focus on fairness, responsibility and opportunity produces a civic contract that we believe would build a stronger community for everyone living and working in the heart of London, able to tackle the problems we face and knowing that local government is their ally in their desire to build a better future for themselves, their family, neighbourhood and business.

7. Your Views

Your views are important to us. This document is a public consultation and is designed to provide you with an opportunity to comment on the proposals that we have set out in this paper.

Your input will feed into a listening exercise and become part of an ongoing dialogue about the future of public services in Westminster.

Following this listening period, which will take place between December 2011 and February 2012, the council will set out a programme of work to take forward these ideas in early March 2012.

You can send your responses to the council in a number of ways.

Email:

civiccommunity@westminster.gov.uk

Post:

Strategy Unit
Westminster City Council
17th Floor
Westminster City Hall
64 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6QP

Call:

020 7641 2412

Visit:

www.westminster.gov.uk/civiccontract

In person:

We are happy to meet groups, bodies or other interested parties to discuss these proposals in person. Please contact us to arrange a meeting.

The closing date for responses is 10th February 2011.

We are happy to make available a copy of this document in alternative formats.

Westminster City Council

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City of Westminster

