

# CREATING A **FAIRER** WESTMINSTER

Delivery Plan April 2023 - March 2024



City of Westminster



## Delivering a Fairer Westminster

Last year we shared our vision of how we would build a Fairer Westminster that supports and celebrates all of its communities; a council combining social justice with efficient services. This is our chance to work with you to create a more inclusive Westminster, where our residents are at the heart of our decision-making, feel listened to and can work with us to shape the future of our city.

We have big ambitions to tackle the deep inequalities that exist in Westminster and are seeking to reduce the poverty that restricts both the life expectancy and opportunities for too many. That's why we've already invested over £10m in tackling the cost of living crisis, in addition to rolling out free school lunches across early years settings, primary and secondary schools.

We are committed to building more council homes and other truly affordable housing; improving our housing services; tackling homelessness; addressing the climate emergency with urgency; and creating a city where it is easy to walk, cycle or take public transport.

Working in partnership with our businesses will be absolutely key to a successful economy – but all our residents can benefit from that success, and we want to see opportunity shared across our city so that both the local high streets at the heart of

our communities and the West End go from strength to strength.

Our ambitions are realistic and achievable, but we are clear that not everything can be done overnight, particularly as we face enormous challenges as a country from an inflation and cost of living crisis that puts a squeeze on all budgets, from every household to City Hall.

That's why we want to be upfront with you about our approach to creating a fairer city, by publishing this plan which transparently sets out what we have planned for the next year, and beyond. This includes the measures that you can use to hold us to account and ensure we are keeping our promises and commitments to you.

This approach has not been done in Westminster before, and it is part of our commitment to be as open and transparent with you as possible about the work we do on your behalf. It is our intention to update this plan every year, both to remain accountable to you and to ensure that we're constantly considering and reflecting the priorities of our residents and businesses as we build a Fairer Westminster together.

The Leader and Cabinet  
of Westminster City Council

## Fairer Westminster is made of five key ambitions

### Fairer Communities

Making Westminster a healthier and equitable place for all our residents.

### Fairer Housing

Increasing affordable housing and making sure our tenants and lessees are satisfied.

### Fairer Economy

Building a strong, diverse and growing economy that benefits all residents and businesses.

### Fairer Environment

Working to become a net zero council by 2030, and a net zero city by 2040.

### Fairer Council

Having our council become more transparent and visible to our residents.



We can translate this document into the following:

- Arabic (عربي)
- Bengali (বাংলা)
- Portuguese (Português)
- Kurdish (کوردی)
- Spanish (Español)

If you have any other questions, please email us at:  
[communications@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:communications@westminster.gov.uk)

☎ **020 7641 6000**

Or write to us at:  
Fairer Westminster  
Westminster City Council  
Westminster City Hall  
17th Floor, 64 Victoria Street,  
London, SW1E 6QP

Westminster is a unique place, and we have included some important facts that show this...



205,087 people live in Westminster. 13% of the population is 0-15, 75% is 16-64, and 12% is 65+



40 schools are maintained by the council



Life expectancy is lower in Westbourne than in Knightsbridge & Belgravia



The council manages 20,788 homes – 11,769 tenanted and 9,019 leasehold



Westminster has more than 53,300 businesses



There are 11,000 listed buildings and structures including the Westminster World Heritage Site



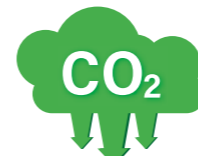
Around 5% of the population identifies as gay, lesbian, bisexual or other non-hetero sexual orientation



74% of residents use English as their main language



25% of children live in poverty



The council's buildings and operations emit an estimated 41,413 tonnes of carbon dioxide



## The Council's Budget for 2023/24

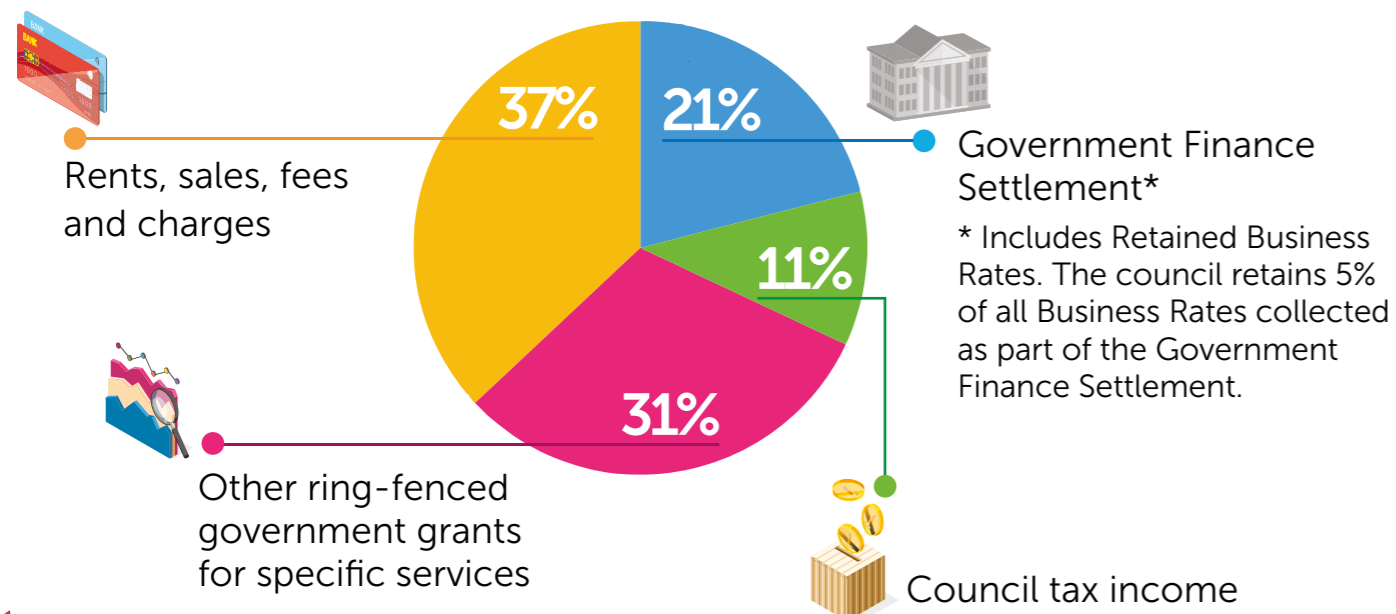
Every year we agree council tax charges and budgets for individual council services for the next 12 months. For the period from April 2023 to March 2024, the council has a gross budget of over £880m, called the General Fund, which will be used to deliver services for residents, businesses and visitors. It includes a freeze in the Westminster City Council part of the council tax for the next year, which means Westminster will continue to offer the cheapest Band D rates in the country.

The council also has a ring-fenced fund for its social housing stock, called the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), that is separate from the General Fund and is fully funded by rents and service charges from tenants and leaseholders.

Because Westminster is a home for residents as well as a destination for workers and visitors, our budget and the services it funds have a significant and positive impact on the borough, London as a whole, and the wider United Kingdom.

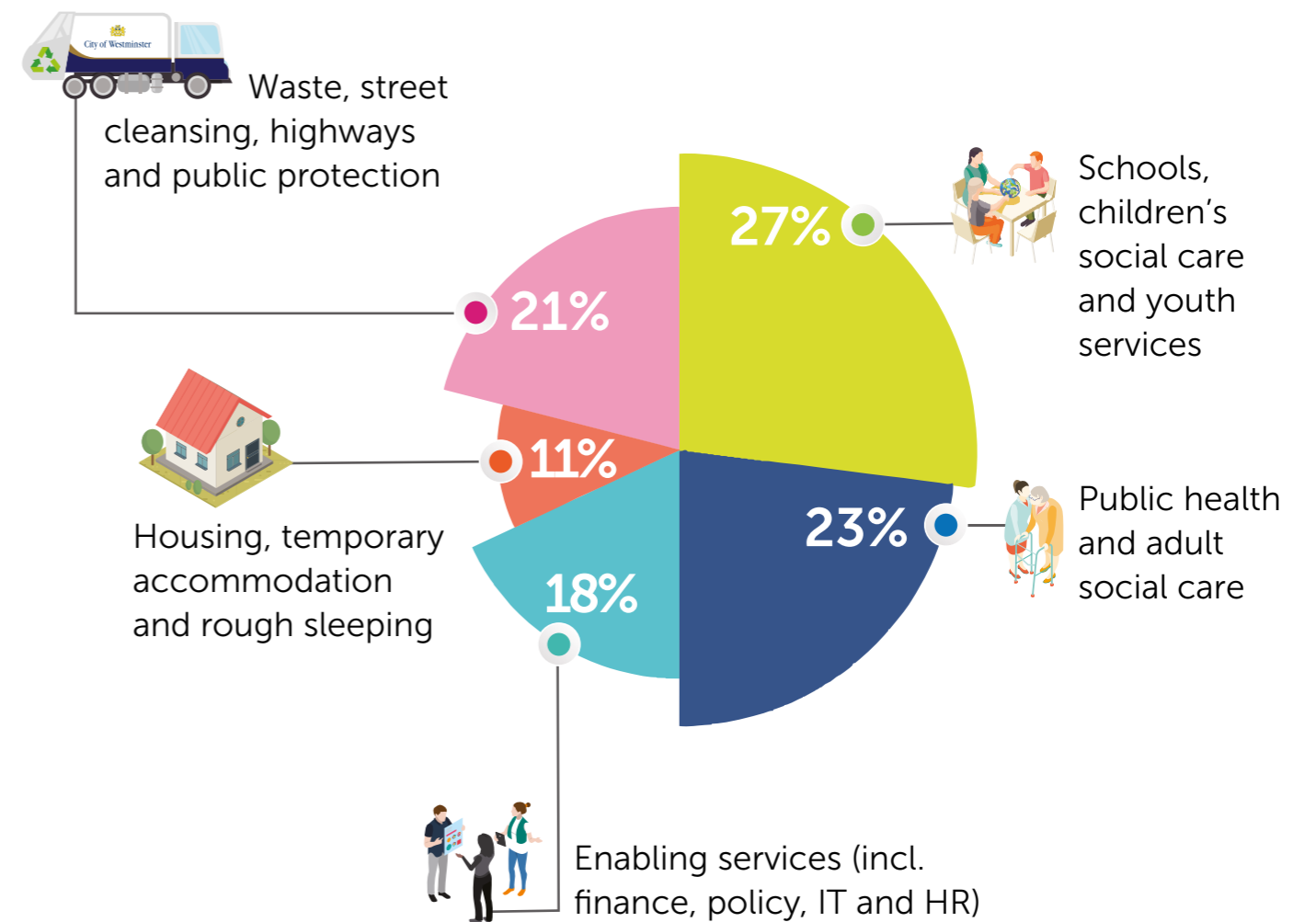
## Where our funding comes from

Council tax only makes up a portion of the council's overall income each year. The full breakdown is as follows:



## How we invest in our services

All money raised is invested in council services across Westminster (excluding social housing, which has its own ring-fenced fund, funded by rents from leaseholders and tenants). Here is a breakdown:



We also have a large multi-year capital programme, spending £2.8bn on public realm, highways and communities. In addition to this, we have a further investment of £2.5bn in delivering housing services and homes within the Housing Revenue Account.

# Fairer Communities

Cities such as Westminster are built on its people – the distinctive communities that breathe life into their neighbourhoods and provide each area with identity and character. This can only happen when we coordinate our services to recognise and meet local communities' specific needs and everyone feels able to contribute to improve local outcomes. For us, a Fairer Westminster is one in which we do everything we can to reduce inequalities at every turn, from closing the life expectancy gap to tackling discrimination everywhere we find it.

Fostering a safe, welcoming city will help these communities thrive. Families can raise children knowing excellent learning opportunities are within easy reach, and that the voices of young people will inform how the council makes decisions. Effective health and social care services, along with engaging physical activities and inspiring cultural activities, will help people live a good life.

But any community is only as good as the people that help build it, and we want to make sure our voluntary organisations and community groups have everything they need to thrive. It's only by building and nurturing these strong community foundations, through engaging and listening, that a fairer, more inclusive Westminster can truly grow.



## This year we will:

- Use our services, investment and community engagement to make North Paddington's public spaces and communities healthier, wealthier and safer. We will test this place-based approach in other areas of the borough such as Queensway, Pimlico and Edgware Road.
- Support our schools to be more inclusive for our most vulnerable young people with free school lunches for early years settings, primary and secondary schools, more breakfast, holiday and after-school clubs, fewer exclusions and by helping more young people into further education, training and employment.
- Reduce health inequalities faced by our Global Majority communities with a new Health and Wellbeing strategy and a wide-ranging review from our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
- Help families access services that tackle inequalities and strengthen the multi-agency support provided by our Family Hubs sites. We will also use our libraries to promote services that are available in local communities.
- Find new and better ways of working together with our communities to improve people's health and wellbeing, particularly for our most disadvantaged residents.
- Establish five 'Safe Haven' spaces to improve safety for women and girls. We will also increase the number of Night Star volunteers active in the West End.
- Further invest in mental health services across our communities to provide much better personal and local support.
- Adopt Unison's 'Ethical Care Charter' that sets high employment standards for care workers. This will result in better working conditions for care workers and provide higher quality, more dignified care.
- Create more opportunities and strengthen the support provided to children in care and care leavers when transitioning to adulthood. This includes increasing accommodation choices, identifying education, employment or training options, and improving access to physical and mental health services.
- Tackle youth violence and offending by providing change programmes that support our young people and their families with our communities and partners.



# Fairer Housing

Home is where the heart is, and in a Fairer Westminster we want to make sure the housing needs of everyone from residents and families to social care users are met. Whether in council housing or privately rented accommodation, your homes should be well managed, environmentally sound and, most importantly, genuinely affordable.

Fairer housing also means that everyone has access to these opportunities. We want to increase the number and quality of affordable housing available and we want to reduce homelessness in the city by providing the support individuals need.

With improved housing also comes improved housing services and we want our tenants and lessees to be consistently satisfied not only with the service our teams provide, but with the condition and energy efficiency of the homes we offer.



## This year we will:

- Develop new housing and care for older people at Carlton Dene, while adapting the homes of others so they can live independent lives.
- Rehouse more people on our waiting list by building (and purchasing) more truly affordable homes.
- Make the way we allocate social housing as fair as possible by reviewing our current policy.
- Make contacting our housing staff much easier by increasing the number of officers by a third.
- Ensure our tenants are living in good quality homes by conducting monthly housing condition surveys and work with them to create a Repairs Charter that outlines the repairs process and service quality they should expect.
- Work to improve the Pimlico District Heating Undertaking's performance and reduce its carbon footprint.
- Renovate council homes to help lower our tenants' energy bills, improve their homes' energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.
- Give our tenants better face-to-face contact with our housing staff by increasing the locations our officers can work from across the city.
- Improve the quality of service provided when you call our staff by using better customer service technology.
- Ensure the quality of privately rented homes is suitable for tenants by making sure landlords are properly licensed and encouraged to be accredited.
- Improve privately rented property standards and remove hazardous conditions. We will also explore if selective licensing for landlords is appropriate to improve standards.
- Launch a Leaseholders' Charter so that our resident leaseholders can easily understand what support is available and how they can be involved in decision-making about major works to their properties.



# Fairer Economy

Westminster's economy is rightly seen as being successful, diverse, resilient and sustainable. Supporting these values is vital to creating a Fairer Westminster that provides benefits for all residents.

We want our city to cater for and support businesses big and small. Whether in a reimagined and revived West End and Oxford Street that delivers world-class experiences to everyone, or on local high streets that are well prepared to face the future and form the heart of their communities.

Through this work residents will be able to gain the right skills to benefit from the employment opportunities that come from a Fairer Economy.



## This year we will:

- Improve our high streets, such as Harrow Road, Praed Street and Queensway, as part of our place-based approach to delivering services.
- Make Oxford Street a more desirable shopping destination with upgrades to lighting around the area, more seating and wider pavements where possible along with more greenery to improve the overall environment.
- Explore the future of retail by supporting the growth of small, independent businesses and reducing empty business premises across the city.
- Enhance the experience of shopping in the West End and Oxford Street by reducing 'low-quality occupiers' (such as candy shops), and improve safety for residents and visitors by tackling dirty money in Westminster – including the sale of illegal, counterfeit and hazardous items.
- Deliver a targeted programme of support to enable access to affordable, inclusive workspaces for underrepresented artists and creatives, providing them with routes into creative industries.
- Tackle the problems residents face from pedicabs, e-scooters and dockless bikes by lobbying government for appropriate regulation.
- Publish our Fairer Economy plan which aims to create a fairer and more sustainable economy, where businesses will be supported to grow, and residents will be supported to access opportunities this great city has to offer. Part of this will include an increasing range of courses available through the Westminster Adult Education Service, such as digital and sector-specific courses.
- Improve digital inclusion in our community by offering free or low-cost communications packages to those who need it most.
- Launch our Tech Lions 2.0 apprenticeship scheme to encourage young people to pursue careers in technology and management.
- Work with our supply chains, landowners and developers to ensure they do more to benefit local communities.



# Fairer Environment

One of the toughest challenges for any major city is tackling the climate emergency. As part of our aim to create a Fairer Environment, we want to take ambitious action to become a net zero council by 2030 and a net zero city by 2040.

This means reducing air pollution throughout the city to meet the World Health Organization's guidelines. It also means making sure our streets are cleaner and safer, increasing recycling rates, and using cleaner technology throughout our own services.

Westminster will always be a city in which people travel, so we can do everything possible to encourage the use of sustainable and active modes of transport for residents, workers and visitors. But we also want to have a local focus. By ensuring residents have access to high-quality amenities and services all within 15 minutes of their homes, we can make a real impact in lowering emissions, improving air quality and bettering lives now and for future generations.



## This year we will:

- Reduce carbon emissions and support the sustainability of the city by promoting the Sustainable City Charter for businesses.
- Continue the journey of switching to sustainable heat sources across our council buildings and housing stock.
- Improve representation of residents' views in how we tackle climate change through our Citizens' Climate Assembly.
- Help build the city's resilience by understanding and reducing the risks of climate change to Westminster's communities, businesses and services.
- Improve air quality and make it easier for our children to walk, cycle or scoot to school by installing more school streets with resident support.
- Encourage more active forms of travel by developing cycle routes, installing 250 more cycle stands and at least 60 secure hangars.
- Reduce carbon emissions by electrifying our waste and street cleansing vehicles.
- Keep our streets clean by taking targeted action around dumping hot spots.
- Increase canopy cover with 150 more trees planted across the city.
- Help community groups improve their local green spaces through more funding and project support.
- Encourage the use of more environmentally friendly cars for those unable to travel by foot, bike or public transport by adapting our parking policies and expanding our electric vehicle charging network.





# Fairer Council

A Fairer Westminster begins with a Fairer Council, and that means putting our residents at the heart of all our decision-making. We want every action we take to result from listening to your needs.

We want to make it easy to find the information and services people need, and for everything we do to be transparent, ethical and responsible. This includes the partners we work with to provide services. Every step of the supply chain must ensure ethical treatment of people and a sustainable attitude to the environment.

We also want to continue being a financially sustainable council, always able to support residents and businesses with all their needs. A Fairer Council is one people can trust to make the right decisions for your needs.



## This year we will:



- Improve how we listen to our residents and incorporate their views into our work, which will be informed by the Charter for Community Participation.
- Continue helping our residents through the cost of living crisis by distributing at least a further £2million in addition to government schemes, £1m of which comes from our Housing Revenue Account's Rent Support Fund for tenants who need help with their rent.
- Make it easier for residents to shape the planning policies that influence development and explain how they can engage with live planning applications, by adopting a new Statement of Community Involvement.
- Introduce public speaking at Full Council meetings to get people more involved in local democracy. We will also schedule more time for public participation in policy and scrutiny meetings.
- Make it easy for everyone to access different services in one place by starting to create community 'hub' spaces throughout neighbourhoods.
- Make our own workforce more representative of our communities and reduce pay gaps within the council.
- Use people's feedback to make reporting street issues easier with a redesigned tool on our Report It webpage.
- Ensure eligible residents who are not registered to vote receive information on how to register.
- Increase investment in our communities by expanding the community priorities grant programme to other parts of the city where need is highest and develop a longer-term core grants approach for our voluntary and community sector.
- Make it easier for our communities to stay informed and engaged by launching a Smart City online platform that gives access to the right council data and improves transparency and decision-making.
- Set up a Design Review Panel of independent experts that provides advice to planners and the planning committee on the design of major developments.





## Measuring our impact

Understanding progress is important for creating a Fairer Westminster. Here are some of the measurements we will be using to determine how we are doing:

### Fairer Communities

Increase the number of people taking part in sport and physical activity and using council leisure and sport facilities

Increase the take-up of free early education entitlements for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds

Improve achievement at Key Stages 2 and 4 for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and those eligible for Free School Meals

Improve Progress 8 scores for secondary school pupils at Key Stage 4 (GCSE)

Ensure all of the council's contracted home care providers are paying their staff at least the London Living Wage

Increase the total amount of funding (through contracts and grants) to the voluntary and community sector

### Fairer Housing

Deliver on our affordable housing programme

A higher percentage of tenants satisfied with the housing repairs service

More tenanted homes improved to meet Energy Performance Certificate B ratings

Improve more houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)

Increase the number of cases where homelessness has been prevented



We will be open and transparent, and make information on our progress more accessible, so that you can see how we're doing. We will share more detail about our progress on our Open Data page.



This can be accessed here:  
[www.westminster.gov.uk/about-council/data](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/about-council/data)

### Fairer Economy

Increase the number of businesses supported through Westminster Works and the employment opportunities they provide to our residents

More residents supported into training and skills opportunities

Increase the number of properties with access to full fibre broadband

A high percentage of residents who agree the council is making their local area a better place to live

### Fairer Environment

Reduce the council's carbon emissions

Increase the number of on-street cycle parking stands and secure hangars

More of the council's parking permits are for electric or green vehicles

Increased proportion of waste and street cleansing fleet that is electric

More businesses signed up to the Sustainable City Charter for reducing carbon emissions



### Fairer Council

A workforce that is representative of our communities

More users of publicly available council datasets

A high percentage of residents who agree the council involves them in decisions about their local areas

More residents choosing to go online to resolve their queries

## Get involved

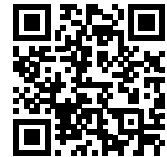
Every single one of us has a part to play in creating a Fairer Westminster. Here are some of the ways you can get involved and make your voice heard:



Find out who your elected representatives are and when they meet to make decisions  
[westminster.moderngov.co.uk](http://westminster.moderngov.co.uk)

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Sign up to receive our email newsletters  
[www.westminster.gov.uk/newsletters](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/newsletters)



Read and respond to consultations or proposals  
[www.westminster.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/consultations)

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Join our Resident Research Panel to review and feedback on our policies and projects  
[www.westminster.gov.uk/resident-research-panel](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/resident-research-panel)



Join our Youth Council  
[www.westminster.gov.uk/about-council/youth-council](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/about-council/youth-council)

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Join your local amenity society to contribute to planning decisions in your area  
[www.westminsteramenitysocietiesforum.org](http://www.westminsteramenitysocietiesforum.org)



Build community spirit on your estate by joining your local Residents' Association  
[www.westminstercommunityinfo.org/subjects/residents-associations](http://www.westminstercommunityinfo.org/subjects/residents-associations)

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If you have any other questions, please email us at:

✉ [communications@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:communications@westminster.gov.uk)  
or write to us at the address on page 2.

☎ **020 7641 6000**