



City of Westminster

WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL
REVIEW OF THE CITY PLAN

FINAL REPORT APRIL 2006

Creative Cultures

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of the Review

In March 2006, the Central Policy Unit of Westminster City Council commissioned a report from Creative Cultures into the achievements of the first Westminster City Plan in order to:

'identify the progress that has been made in achieving the outcomes set out in the City Plan and assessing the extent to which the City Plan priorities have been reflected in the activities of the WCP partner organisation and networks.'
(Client Brief)

The Overall Result

Overall, the review has been a positive one. The table below shows that the great majority of targets has been achieved across the seven themes of the City Plan since its initiation in 2002, with a number of ongoing projects due for completion beyond the timescale for the Plan, particularly in the area of reductions in health inequalities.

Theme	Achieved	Ongoing	Not achieved
Customer first	12	1	1
City investment	12	1	
Housing + neighbourhood	10	4	1
Education	12	3	
Cleaning + greening	12	3	
Guarding the city	16	1	
Healthier Westminster	9	8	

A number of targets recorded achievements above the planned expectations, for example:

Customer first:

Westminster Ethnic Minority Needs Audit completed, and a dynamic cross-agency partnership is now reviewing the Action Plan - following progress in addressing a number of key issues

City investment:

very high customer satisfaction levels recorded with the improvements to Leisure Centres

Housing and neighbourhood:

the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund supported a wide range of important community projects in response to needs identified by local people

Education:

attendance figures for secondary schools and teacher retention now amongst the best in London

Cleaning and greening:

exceeded targets for improvements to children's playgrounds and in prosecuting companies which are persistent fly-posting offenders

Guarding the city:

exceeded performance in reducing offensive prostitute carding by partnership working to close down related phone-lines

Healthier Westminster:

achievements better than planned in increasing the numbers of problem drug users in treatment programmes and in supporting adults with mental health needs to live in their own homes.

Gaps in performance

Whilst acknowledging this success, the Council is keen that the Westminster City Partnership is made aware of challenges to the delivery of the City Plan programme - in the context of striving for continuous improvement, the development of the new City Plan and the Local Area Agreement, and the need to take forward key programmes such as One City.

Although most targets were met, challenges remain in a number of areas including:

- addressing the high demand for affordable housing in partnership with other boroughs
- completing the programme of library refurbishment
- increasing the profile of childcare and Early Years provision
- recognising and building on the contribution that cultural provision and activities can make to the quality of life of Westminster residents
- building on the excellent work done on the environment to tackle increasing pressures, for example from rising noise
- combating crime across the Westminster area when 80% is committed by non-residents
- improving access both in terms of fully meeting the requirements of disability legislation and in overcoming language barriers in accessing medical services
- working to address the health needs of a large transient population.

The Partnership Perspective

An important question for the review was how the City Plan had worked for the partners involved in its delivery through the Westminster City Partnership. On the whole, the Plan was welcomed by stakeholders as a positive first attempt to create a strategic approach to meeting the needs of a complex and diverse city.

Particular praise for work was expressed in some areas including diverting young people from crime and anti-social behaviour, the development of Healthy Living Centres, and investment in education.

Progress and achievement were acknowledged by partners who expressed a willingness to participate in future joint work and who particularly praised:

- the One City Vision and the leadership of the Council

- the work and competence of Council officers and departments in supporting partnership work
- the development of the Local Area Agreement
- improving relationships between the community and the Metropolitan Police.

Constructive criticism was voiced by stakeholders, signalling a clear intention to share responsibility for further improving how the Partnership worked to meet local needs and aspirations. These included:

- ensuring a more open process in strategic planning for the new City Plan
- giving recognition to the work of partners, particularly those working closely with local communities in deprived areas
- ensuring adequate devolution of decision-making within the new local/neighbourhood agenda.

A number of issues has emerged since the first City Plan as significant for the Council and its partners and these include:

- meeting the very different needs of its diverse communities
- engaging with the London-wide agenda driven by the Mayor of London and GLA family of agencies
- reflecting more strongly the inclusion agenda including training and capacity-building in communities and the voluntary sector.

The Review also identifies and sets out the many changes in the working context for the City Plan since 2002 and proposes a range of key lessons for consideration in developing the new Plan.