

Wandsworth Cost of Living Commission

1.1 The Terms of Reference outlines the context for this Commission, further defining the objectives and how the Commission will achieve these objectives. It also defines the scope of this project, the methods of working to be used, the membership of the group, and the supporting role of the secretariat. The terms of reference for the Commission will also set the expectations and constrain the scope of this project. The terms of reference can be referred back to in future decision-making situations.

1.2. The contents of this terms of reference aims to provide all Commissioners and stakeholders with a common understanding of the project. It is based on the approach taken in similar local government Commissions and inclusive of all key details of this Commission.

Draft: Terms of Reference

1. Context

1.1 In response to the current cost of living crisis the Council has made a public commitment to supporting residents who are impacted by the cost-of-living crisis and immediate action is being taken. This will be followed up with further support throughout 2022, with the Council creating a Cost-of-Living Crisis Reserve Fund of £5m to underpin further work in conjunction with partners, to support residents and businesses through the crisis.

1.2 However, the Council is clear that it does not have all the answers and that long term change and action is required to support residents with this and any future crisis. Therefore, the Council has decided to hold an independent Cost of Living Commission, which will listen to residents and local organisations as well as looking at all available data and research, in order to identify potential actions that the Council its partners, the wider community and regional and national government may be able to take.

2. Core task

2.1 To determine what actions Wandsworth can take to mitigate the cost-of-living crisis for borough residents.

3. Objectives

1. To examine and define the multiple factors which are driving the cost-of-living crisis in Wandsworth.
2. To review a national and local evidence base of literature, studies and Commissions looking at the causes and impacts of the cost-of-living crisis.
3. To engage with local Wandsworth communities using a Place based approach to gather views, information, and solutions at a community level.
4. To consider the whole system drivers and impacts and develop system-based solutions.
5. To develop a series of long- and medium-term recommendations which can be used to inform systemic changes in Wandsworth.
6. Where appropriate, to use these recommendations as the basis for representations to regional and national government policy and civil society measures and interventions which would support Wandsworth citizens impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.

4. Scope

- a. The Commission will focus on the four key elements of the cost-of-living crisis:
 - Food
 - Housing

- Fuel
 - Transport
- b. The Commission will not look at specifically levels of income as this aspect falls outside the area of influence for the Council, however the Commission will consider the impact of work and worklessness on the overall programme of work.
- c. The Commission will focus on medium to longer term solutions and interventions as immediate action is being taken by the Council and partner organisations to support Wandsworth communities.
- d. The work of the Commission will be grounded in the Wandsworth community using a Place Based approach to target the specific circumstances in Wandsworth, to engage the community and a broad range of local organisations from different sectors as active participants.

5. Method of working

5.1 There will be an initial meeting of the Commission which will review the evidence and data by the Council and partner organisations to inform the development of the scope and the programme of work. This session will cover the Terms of Reference for the Commission, and review of evidence and data and use this as the basis for setting and approving the programme of work.

5.2 The Commission will meet regularly holding a number of evidence gathering sessions in community venues across the borough, these sessions will have a thematic and/or geographic focus. At each of the sessions the Commission will gather evidence from witnesses and review the area under consideration. This evidence will then be collated and analysed and will then inform the development of recommendations made by the Commission.

5.3 Through basing recommendations on the evidence heard and reviewed by the Commission, the Commission will be able to propose solutions that are specifically aligned to the intricate issues facing all our residents.

5.4 The Commission will follow a consensus based decision-making approach, allowing the group to find and propose solutions which Commissioners actively support. This ensures that all opinions, ideas and concerns are considered when developing recommendations.

5.5 The meetings will be held in public, and the detail of discussions and the lived experience examples along with the findings will be documented by the Commission. The Commissioners will then review and consider the evidence collected and use it to inform their findings, reports, and the recommendations from the Commission.

5.6 As part of the Place Based approach, the Commission will also develop a consultation and engagement approach that will enable it to seek the views of the community on key elements of the Commissions programme. This may include independently facilitated and

commissioned focus groups held in community venues across the borough. In addition, the Commission can run an online survey alongside the independently facilitated focus groups to widen the net and add robustness and scale of the views collected.

5.7 Gathering the views of the community is extremely important in order for the Commission to propose recommendations that are both realistic in terms of achievement by the Council, its partners and our residents and reflective of the specific challenges faced by our community. To further support this aim, the Commission will seek to bring the community into the conversation at each stage and will set out a sense-checking process which will be overseen by community stakeholders to ensure the work of the Commission and its recommendations are appropriate.

6. Outputs

6.1 The Commission will provide an interim report early in the lifecycle of the programme which highlights the key findings from the research and engagement and the emerging findings in terms of actions, interventions, and initiatives to address the issue.

6.2 The development of the final report will be led by the independent Joint Chairs and will be independently authored and agreed by the members of the Commission, it could focus on whole system aspects of the cost-of-living crisis with recommendations which address issues in Wandsworth and if appropriate at a regional and national government level.

7. Timescale

7.1 The Commission will last for one year, concluding its work by Winter 2023.

8. Workplan

8.1 The Commission will agree a workplan, a schedule of evidence gathering sessions and associated meetings to cover the key elements of the scope.

9. Membership

9.1 The independent Cost of Living Commission will consist of both experts in particular elements of the work and those who live and work in the borough, this will ensure that they are able to contribute local context, knowledge and understanding to the work and findings of the Commission. The Commission will include the following members.

| Name | Organisation |
|------------------------------|---|
| Ian Tattum - Joint Chair | Vicar of St Barnabas, Southfields |
| Dorian Leatham - Joint Chair | Independent Consultant & Ex-Senior Director, Local Government |

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| Councillor Kemi Akinola - Vice Chair | Deputy Leader of Wandsworth Council, Lead on voluntary sector, business engagement and culture. |
| Professor Tim Lang | Professor of Food Policy, City, University of London |
| Professor Alex Colas | Professor of International Relations, Birkbeck, University of London |
| Lauren James | Senior Consultant, Smarter Travel Consultancy |
| Kath McDonnell | Officer, Battersea and Wandsworth Trade Union Council |
| Arshad Daud | Community Leader, Balham and Tooting Mosque |
| Cathy Warwick | Non-Executive Director, Kingston Hospital, NHS Foundation Trust |
| Gillian Norton | Chair of St George’s University Hospital, NHS Foundation Trust. |
| A young person who is a member of the Youth | Wandsworth Youth Council |
| Tylor Maria Johnson | Senior Policy and Data Analyst, Policy in Practice |
| Beverley Corson | CEO, Wandsworth Chamber of Commerce |
| Toby Costin | Director, Crewe Energy |
| Liz Moreton | Senior Producer, Battersea Arts Centre |

10. Observers

10.1 Invitations to observe will be offered to representatives from London Councils and the Local Government Association to ensure that the wider London and national perspective is considered from their ongoing work on cost-of-living interventions along with a representative for the Wandsworth Integrated Care System.

10.2 The Commissioners may also consider representations from other organisations or individuals who wish to observe Commission meetings.

11. Secretariat

11.1 The Council's Policy and Review Team will provide the secretariat and support function for the Commission collaborating with other council teams. The Commission can also make use of the Council's Insight and Analytics team's capabilities throughout the process. This is most likely to be used during the evidence stage of proceedings where they could use their skills to assimilate various data sources to create a single picture of life in the borough for each subject matter.

12. Data Handling and GDPR

12.1 The secretariat will take a number of steps to ensure responsible handling and storage of any data provided for the Commission. In particular, as Council officers, the staff of the secretariat will abide by the Council's policies and procedures in relation to Data Protection and Records Management more details on which can be found on the Council's website at [Wandsworth Council privacy notice - Wandsworth Borough Council](#).