



**City of  
Westminster**

# Committee Agenda

Title:

**Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee**

Meeting Date:

**Monday 26th March, 2018**

Time:

**7.00 pm**

Venue:

**Room 3.1, 3rd Floor, 5 Strand, London, WC2 5HR**

Members:

**Councillors:**

Brian Connell (Chairman)  
Nick Evans  
Peter Freeman  
Murad Gassanly

Adnan Mohammed  
Jacqui Wilkinson  
Tim Roca  
Guthrie McKie



**Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussion Part 1 of the Agenda**

**Admission to the public gallery is by ticket, issued from the ground floor reception from 6.30pm. If you have a disability and require any special assistance please contact the Committee Officer (details listed below) in advance of the meeting.**



**An Induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter. If you require any further information, please contact the Committee Officer, Reuben Segal; Senior Committee and Governance Officer.**

**Tel: 020 7641 3160; email: [rsegal@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:rsegal@westminster.gov.uk)  
Corporate Website: [www.westminster.gov.uk](http://www.westminster.gov.uk)**

**Note for Members:** Members are reminded that Officer contacts are shown at the end of each report and Members are welcome to raise questions in advance of the meeting. With regard to item 2, guidance on declarations of interests is included in the Code of Governance; if Members and Officers have any particular questions they should contact the Director of Law in advance of the meeting please.

## **AGENDA**

### **PART 1 (IN PUBLIC)**

#### **1. MEMBERSHIP**

The Head of Committee and Governance Services to report any changes to the membership.

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive declarations by Members and Officers of the existence and nature of any personal or prejudicial interests in matters on this agenda.

#### **3. MINUTES**

To sign the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record of proceedings.

**(Pages 1 - 10)**

#### **4. WORK PROGRAMME**

**(Pages 11 - 26)**

#### **5. UPDATE FROM CABINET MEMBERS**

**(Pages 27 - 38)**

An update from the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Corporate Services on key areas within his portfolio is attached.

The update from the Cabinet Member for Housing is to follow.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Corporate Services will be in attendance to answer questions from the Committee.

#### **6. STAFF SURVEY 2017 HEADLINE RESULTS**

**(Pages 39 - 76)**

Report of the Director of People Services

#### **7. CITYWEST HOMES - IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW OPERATING MODEL AND REPAIRS SERVICES**

**(Pages 77 - 84)**

Report of Chief Executive, CityWest Homes

**Stuart Love**  
**Chief Executive**  
**16 March 2018**



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

## MINUTES

### Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee

#### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Monday 15th January, 2018**, Room 3.1, 3rd Floor, 5 Strand, London, WC2 5HR.

**Members Present:** Councillors Brian Connell (Chairman), Peter Freeman, Jacqui Wilkinson, Tim Roca and Guthrie McKie

**Also Present:** Councillor Rachael Robathan (Cabinet Member for Housing), Councillor Barbara Grahame, Councillor Aicha Less, Councillor Aziz Toki, Steve Mair (City Treasurer), Martin Hinckley (Head of Revenue and Benefits), Barbara Brownlee (Interim Executive Director of Growth, Planning and Housing), Robert White (Lead Commissioner for Supported Housing and Rough Sleeping Strategy), Petra Salva (Director of Rough Sleeper and Ex-Offender Services, St Mungos), David Eastwood (Services and Commissioning Manager, Housing and Land, GLA), Phil Triggs (Tri-Borough Director of Treasury and Pensions), Deirdra Armsby (Director of Place Shaping), Aaron Hardy (Scrutiny Manager) and Reuben Segal (Senior Committee and Governance Officer)

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Paul Church, Councillor Nick Evans and Councillor Adnan Mohammed

#### 1 MEMBERSHIP

1.1 There were no changes to the membership.

#### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3 MINUTES

3.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2017 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record of proceedings.

## **4 WORK PROGRAMME**

### **4.1 RESOLVED:**

1. That the agenda items for the next meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> March to include an item on staffing within the City Council anchored around the results of the annual staff survey and a report from CityWest Homes (CWH) on their engagement with residents.
2. That the responses to actions and recommendations as set out in the tracker be noted.

## **5 UPDATE FROM CABINET MEMBERS**

- 5.1 The Committee received written updates from the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Corporate Services and the Cabinet Member for Housing on the key issues within their portfolios.
- 5.2 Councillor Rachael Robathan, Cabinet Member for Housing, wished to put on record her thanks to Kevin Day, CityWest Homes Manager at Little Venice Towers, for his work in keeping residents updated on fire and gas safety issues and measures associated with the blocks following the Grenfell Tower Fire.
- 5.3 The Committee then submitted questions to the Cabinet Member for Housing.

### Retrofitting sprinklers within CWH flats over 10 Storeys

- 5.3.1 The Cabinet Member was asked whether a feasibility study had been fully developed. Councillor Robathan stated that it had. She confirmed that retrofitting sprinklers was technically feasible and the study had taken into account matters such as potential low water pressure. She explained that the feasibility study has considered a range of issues including which type of sprinklers would be best to install and how best to retrofit them. The committee heard at its meeting on 11 September there are regulatory limitations on freeholders to require leaseholders to undertake certain works within their properties. She explained that leaseholders accounted for 71% of the flats in one of the Little Venice Tower blocks.
- 5.3.2 Councillors asked about the insurance implications if only some flats within a block have sprinklers installed. Jonathan Cowie, CEO, CityWest Homes, advised that such a scenario could also have implications for obtaining fire safety approval from the London Fire Brigade, Building Control and building regulations. It was an issue that the Council intended to lobby central government on.
- 5.3.3 The Cabinet Member was also asked about the retrofitting of sprinklers in high rise private residential dwellings. She advised members that local authorities have been tasked to undertake full surveys of all privately clad buildings in their areas. The Council had almost concluded this work. The Council is required to ensure that the freeholders of these buildings comply with

regulations including any subsequent changes to them. The Council will lobby the Mayor of London and central government to take on some of this responsibility.

- 5.3.4 The Cabinet Member asked the committee to consider establishing a task group to examine on the various options for retrofitting sprinklers in CWH properties that will be worked up and ranked, based on need and risk. The committee agreed to the suggestion.

#### Intermediate rent levels in new WCH affordable housing schemes

- 5.3.4 Westminster Community Home's (WCH) new affordable housing scheme at Ladbroke Grove provides intermediate homes for rent for local Westminster workers and residents. Weekly rents on 2 bed homes are £285. The Cabinet Member was asked about the household income required to be eligible for such a home, affordability and how this matched against the salaries of people living in Westminster who are in housing need. Councillor Robathan advised that a family would need to earn approximately £39,000 to qualify for the scheme. Under the Mayor of London's intermediate housing policy households are eligible for intermediate housing schemes as long as annual earnings do not exceed £60,000. She stated that the Council wants to make intermediate housing available to families on much lower than the maximum qualifying figure. She explained that while the Council need to deliver more social rented housing there is little intermediate housing in the Borough and more needs to be delivered to achieve mixed communities

#### CityWest Homes Call Centre

- 5.3.5 Members asked when the problems at CityWest Home's new call centre would be resolved. The Cabinet Member acknowledged residents' frustrations with delays in calls being answered. She was confident that the teething problems had almost been resolved.

- 5.4 **ACTIONS:** Establish a task group to consider the range of options for retrofitting sprinklers in CWH residential properties over 10 storeys, submitting recommendations to Cabinet. (**Action for: Aaron Hardy, Scrutiny Manager**)

## **6 UPDATE ON ROUGH SLEEPING**

- 6.1 Robert White, Lead Commissioner for Supported Housing and Rough Sleeping Strategy, introduced a report on issues relating to rough sleeping in the City of Westminster alongside an update on the recently published 2017 - 2022 Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- 6.2 Westminster sees the highest number of rough sleepers in the UK. Reducing rough sleeping and addressing the associated behaviours of the daytime Street population is a priority for the Council in a time where many local authorities are seeing an increase of people on the streets.
- 6.3 The new strategy will operate in the context of the national focus on reducing the numbers of people finding themselves on the streets following a tenancy ending and implementing the new Homelessness Reduction Act from 1 April.

- 6.4 The committee heard from Petra Salva, Director of Rough Sleeper and Ex Offender Services, St Mungos and David Eastwood, Services and Commissioning Manager, Housing & Land, GLA, who had been invited to the meeting as expert witnesses.
- 6.5 Ms Salva provided a brief summary of her career background which incorporated more than 25 years experience. She had over the last couple of years fed into the development of the Council's Rough Sleeping Strategy, shaping how the local authority responds to rough sleepers.
- 6.6 Mr Eastwood explained that he oversees the Mayor of London's rough sleeping services and rough sleeping policy for the GLA. He advised that the Mayor of London had recently published a draft rough sleeping strategy.
- 6.7 Whilst recognising that Westminster has a unique set of challenges when it comes to rough sleepers, members asked the witnesses how the City Council compares with other London local authorities in terms of the services it provides. Both witnesses had worked with most, if not all, London local authorities and considered that the Council was a trailblazer in this field and supported a great deal of innovation. Ms Salva commented that Westminster is often a testing ground for new approaches and that if a new offer worked in Westminster it would likely work everywhere. She also thought that the Council's strategy was well thought out but stated that the authority could not address all the issues it faced on its own. She stated that the factors that draw rough sleepers to Westminster are the same today as they were a hundred years ago.
- 6.8 Members commented on the importance of the Mayor's strategy incorporating a pan- London approach to rough sleeping with the provision of good mental health support and a range of hostel provision with facilities spread across London. Mr White commented that rough sleeping was a national issue and that it is hard to manage such an issue within the context of localism. He stated that there are national policies which should be drawn upon and developed such as housing provision and addiction. The GLA should galvanise local authorities to do more. Ms Salva stated that it was important to offer rough sleepers the right kind of services based on need and which address the complexities which lead people to sleep rough or return to the streets after being helped.
- 6.9 The Committee was pleased to note that of the 273 new individuals rough sleeping in Westminster during July-September 2017, 77% had no second night out and 96% had no more than two nights out. Mr Eastwood stated that whilst the response for new individuals rough sleeping was good getting people out of the three No Second Night Out hubs, which is designed as a rapid response, remains a challenge. This is due to the limited availability of affordable or supported housing which is much scarcer than it used to be.
- 6.10 Ms Salva stated that whilst it was encouraging that a high proportion of new people coming onto the streets are helped quickly there is a need to focus on

long-term rough sleeping where people are helped but later end up back on the street.

- 6.11 The Committee asked about the number of long-term rough sleepers in Westminster and the average length of time they had been rough sleeping. Mr White explained that help for entrenched rough sleepers is managed by two teams. One is Westminster Compass which is delivered on behalf of the Council by St Mungo's. A 4-year scheme which recently concluded had an original cohort of 190 long term rough sleepers. Not all of the participants had been rough sleeping at the start of the project but would have had ongoing complex needs. The project had a number of clear parameters and outcomes which included the number of contacts made by rough sleepers with services over the four-year project's lifespan. Of the original cohort only 16 are still rough sleeping which is a significant achievement. The new contract will deliver services to a slightly smaller cohort of approximately 100 individuals due to a reduced demand.
- 6.12 The secondary team is the GLA Social Impact Bond (SIB). Mr Eastwood informed the committee that the new GLA SIB will help 350 of the most entrenched rough sleepers in London, 127 of which are from Westminster. This will see each identified long-term rough sleeper receive dedicated support from a member of St Mungo's or a Thames Reach SIB worker to sustain a route away from the streets. This project will also for run for 4 years. It will have a different cohort of entrenched Westminster rough sleepers than the Compass Team so it will not be duplicating the service offer. To qualify for the SIB each rough sleeper has to have lived and worked in the UK and be in receipt of Housing Benefit. While the majority will be UK nationals there will be some foreign nationals who will qualify for the scheme. Given these requirements the scheme would not prove helpful in addressing the number of foreign nationals sleeping rough in Westminster.
- 6.13 Members asked about the street population numbers in the day and the evening. Mr White stated that there were approximately 200 people sleeping rough in Westminster per night although the figure fluctuates seasonally. The street population during the day is slightly higher at 250. He explained that the day and evening populations were made up of different people. The Westminster Street Engagement Team are looking to undertake four day counts to establish the composition of the street population during the day and their circumstances.
- 6.14 Mr White was also asked about rough sleeping in the Royal Parks. He explained that those people bedding down in parks at night do so because they do not wish to be found or engaged with. Due to safety concerns counting them at night would only be undertaken in conjunction with the Metropolitan police. The Council has greater control over rough sleeping in open spaces for which they are directly responsible. Addressing the behaviour of the street population within the Royal Parks during the day falls to the Royal Parks.
- 6.15 Whilst the committee welcomed the news that rough sleeping numbers are declining the perception from residents and visitors is that the problem in

Westminster is growing. Members of the public are also unsure of how best to help rough sleepers which they may encounter. Mr White explained that the Council had last year launched a Real Change campaign to explain to the public how it could help rough sleepers. This had a minimal impact due to the limited budget available. The Council hoped to relaunch this in conjunction with providing Ward Councillor briefings.

- 6.16 Mr Eastwood advised that the first ever campaign by the Mayor of London on how people can help rough sleepers had been launched. It provides links to specific organisations where people can report rough sleeping issues, promotes services available to those on the streets while a One London portal funding stream will distribute donations to identified homeless charities.
- 6.17 Members asked about the impacts on service levels where budgets across the public and charitable sectors are reducing. Barbara Brownlee clarified that savings in service had been achieved through the re-contracting process. Any bed spaces that had been reduced have been re-provided elsewhere although they may be used differently. Ms Salva was asked about the impact of budget reductions for St Mungo's. She stated that the organisation has had to rethink its focus and look at other opportunities for raising funding. It has also had to access income through selling properties and taking out mortgages which it had not had to previously. Some activities such as helping rough sleepers to access employment could no longer be provided although these were being offered through other organisations.
- 6.18 The Committee was then updated on a High Court ruling on Home Office policy regarding the questioning, detention and removal of EEA nationals currently rough sleeping who cannot demonstrate that they are exercising their obligations under free movement. Officers explained the impacts of this for the City Council. Mr White advised that in the absence of such powers it will be challenging for the Council to counter this problem. Ms Salva clarified that the use of these powers could be justified where rough sleepers were engaging in criminal activity. Mr Eastwood stated that in light of the judicial ruling public sector bodies would need to look at what incentives can be offered to EEA nationals to remove them from the streets. He referred the committee to the fact that there had also been a reduction in the number of EEA rough sleepers in boroughs that had not used such enforcement.

## **7 CALL IN OF: CHURCH STREET MASTER PLAN DECISION**

- 7.1 On 4 December 2017 the Cabinet made executive decisions in respect of the Church Street Masterplan. The Church Street Ward Councillors subsequently exercised their right to call in the decision for scrutiny by the committee.
- 7.2 The committee received a report that included details provided by the Church Street Ward Councillors for calling in the decision. It also included responses to the issues they had raised.
- 7.3 At the Chairman's invitation the Cabinet Member for Housing made some opening remarks in response to the call-in request. Councillor Robathan stated that the committee had reviewed the Church Street Masterplan



consultation process and output at its last meeting on 6 November 2017 where it had commended the wide range of consultation approaches that had been used and concluded that the consultation process had been well thought out and implemented.

- 7.4 Councillor Robathan clarified that the Masterplan did not seek to provide detailed plans for each site but to set a framework for the regeneration of Church Street. Each site would be the subject of much more detailed analysis of what can be delivered and any subsequent plans would require further approvals including planning permission. These would be the subject of public consultation. The Council recognised that there is a significant amount of overcrowding in this part of Westminster and wished to build the type of provision that residents want.
- 7.5 Barbara Brownlee, Interim Executive Director for Growth Planning and Housing, then responded to each of the issues of concern that had been raised by the Church Street Ward Councillors.

Height of Buildings - there is nothing in the Masterplan that states that the Council will build any tall buildings. The Council will be sensitive to such an issue. There will be detailed individual consultations on each site and the Council will have regard to both its own and the GLA's planning policies at the time. She undertook to re-examine proposals to demolish Kennett House.

Retention of Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) - this would be re-provided and the Council had discussed this with WAES.

Demolition on such a large-scale versus renovation - the proposals at this stage are based on increasing the number of affordable housing in the Church Street area. These numbers are based on what the architects state, at this point, could exponentially be delivered if additional homes are demolished than in the future's plan. Detailed analysis had yet to be undertaken and would also need to be costed.

Housing Tenure - the proposals will meet the City Council's housing policies and those of the GLA at the time. The current proposed master plan will deliver 50% affordable housing. If fewer buildings are demolished less affordable housing will be achieved.

Demolition of Supported Housing - if the Council intends to demolish any supported housing it will speak at length with residents beforehand. Such housing will be re-provided in Church Street. Individual people's housing needs will be taken into account.

Protection of Historic Buildings - little was mentioned by consultees regarding protecting historic buildings. The Council has an exemplary record of protecting heritage and will have regard to buildings of historic value.

Effectiveness of the Regeneration Base at 99 Church Street - the effectiveness and output of the regeneration base is considered by officers to have the resources, support and expertise required. She had only in the last

month been made aware about Future Steering Group meeting papers not going out in time. This was being picked up by the Director of Place Shaping.

Co-ordination between Ward councillors and City Hall - since taking over the portfolio a year ago the Cabinet Member had attended Church Street Futures Group meetings, which include the Church Street Ward councillors, consultation events and had been up and down Church Street.

- 7.5 Councillors Barbara Grahame and Aicha Less addressed the committee. Councillor Grahame stated that residents in Church Street were unhappy at how the regeneration process was going. She also raised concerns at the lack of engagement by the Council with Ward councillors. Councillor Less stated that it was unclear who the Masterplan was being developed for. Residents feel like they are being treated as an inconvenience. Their comments provided as part of the consultation seemed to have been put aside. Ward councillors would like the Council to reconsider and take note of their comments and incorporate them in the Masterplan. Ward councillors had not received a detailed account of all the responses received at the Regeneration Base and would like to be provided with these.
- 7.6 In response to the last point, Barbara Brownlee advised that the papers submitted to the Cabinet meeting on the 4 December 2017 included the Church Street Masterplan Consultation Report. This included an analysis of completed feedback forms, comment cards and other responses, the comments received and how the Masterplan has responded. She offered to take the Ward councillors through them.
- 7.7 The Committee considered the issues raised and asked and received responses to a range of questions.
- 7.8 Members asked about the level of affordable housing that will be delivered under the current proposed Masterplan and about the level that rents will be set. Barbara Brownlee clarified that 50.7% affordable housing will be delivered overall across the regeneration scheme which meets the Mayor of London's guidelines. Rents will be set at the same level as those for Council tenants. No other type of affordable rents are being proposed. She also advised that where a Council tenant has to move to facilitate the regeneration they would only have to do so once within the area. This commitment would not extend to those in temporary accommodation.
- 7.9 Members asked about the viability and impact of increasing the level of affordable housing. Barbara Brownlee advised that this could only be achieved at the expense of providing other community benefits including public realm. The Council did not want to create a ghetto but an area with good public realm for the benefit of local residents.
- 7.10 The Committee referred to the financial implications in the report. This set out that it is a condition of the £23.5m Greater London Authority Edgware Road housing zone funding that the City Council are in contract with the GLA by 31 January 2018. This had been confirmed by the GLA. Members asked what the funding was earmarked for. Barbara Brownlee explained that this was a

focused fund to buy leaseholders out of their properties. Deidra Armsby, Director of Place Shaping, explained that the GLA housing zone fund is finite. Based on her previous experience of overseeing regeneration in the London Borough of Newham there are likely to be other local authorities waiting to access this fund and that if the funding was not taken up by the Council it could be offered to other authorities.

- 7.11 The Chairman stated that the call in had provided an opportunity to re-air the decisions taken by Cabinet on the 4 December 2017. It was noted that each site will be the subject of further detailed consultation before any decisions on them are made.
- 7.12 **RESOLVED:** Having considered the matter, the committee endorsed the decision made by the Cabinet.

Councillors McKie and Roca dissented to the decision.

## **8 DRAFT TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018-2019 TO 2022-2023**

- 8.1 Phil Triggs, Tri-Borough Director of Treasury and Pensions, introduced a report that set out the Council's proposed Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for the period 2018/19 to 2022/23, and Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) for the year ending 31 March 2019, together with supporting information.
- 8.2 The TMSS and AIS form part of the Council's overall budget setting and financial framework, and will be finalised and updated as work on the Council's 2018/19 budget is progressed in January and February 2018.
- 8.3 The Committee asked about the risks to the strategy of slippage in the capital programme. Members also asked whether the City Council had formed a view on its borrowing position subsequent to the Bank of England increasing interest rates and the likelihood that they will rise again over the next couple of years.
- 8.4 Steve Mair, City Treasurer stated that the City Council is a large and complex business with a budget of over £800 million per annum and a large and significant capital programme. Therefore, it is not unusual given its complexities for slippage to occur in the capital programme. Effective forecasting relied on a combination of leadership and project management skills. He advised that the finance team does robustly challenge the assessments from those leading on capital projects.
- 8.5 With regards to forward borrowing, the City Treasurer advised that the Council was not currently borrowing to finance capital expenditure. The finance team had put together a borrowing matrix based on a range of borrowing scenarios. A decision on the Council's approach would be taken in the next few months once a new Chief Executive was in post.

- 8.6 The Committee asked about the rationale behind the decision to reduce the credit rating limit for investments in Supra-national banks and European agencies from AA+/Aa1/AA+ to AA/Aa/AA. Mr Mair explained that the slightly lower credit rated institutions were still in a highly recommended band. This would provide the Council with opportunities to potentially invest liquid balances at improved returns with limited risks that will contribute to the Council's saving targets.
- 8.7 **RESOLVED:** The Committee noted the various elements of the proposed TMSS and AIS prior to the submission to Cabinet on 19 February 2018.
- 8.8 **ACTIONS:** Provide the committee with a briefing note on the forward borrowing arrangements once a decision on this has been made. (**Action for: Steve Mair, City Treasurer**)

The Meeting ended at 9.23 pm

**CHAIRMAN:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_



## Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Policy & Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date:</b>	26 March 2018
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	<b>2017/18 Work Programme and Action Tracker</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Policy, Performance & Communications
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	Cabinet Member for Housing Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	All
<b>Policy Context:</b>	All
<b>Report Author and Contact Details:</b>	<b>Aaron Hardy x 2894</b> <b><a href="mailto:ahardy1@westminster.gov.uk">ahardy1@westminster.gov.uk</a></b>

### 1. Executive Summary

1. This report presents the current version of the work programme for 2017/18 and also provides an update on the action tracker.

### 2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
  - Note the action tracker
  - Note any items it wishes to recommend to its successor committee

### 3. Changes to the work programme following the last meeting

- 3.1 This is the committee's final meeting before the local elections in May 2018. The committee is asked to note any topics it would like to recommend to its successor committee.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the  
Background Papers please Aaron Hardy**

**[ahardy1@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:ahardy1@westminster.gov.uk)**

**APPENDICES:**

**Appendix 1-** Suggested work programme

**Appendix 2-** Action Tracker

# Work Programme



Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

## ROUND ONE – 12 June 2017

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by:
<b>Cabinet Member Q&amp;A</b>	A Q&A session	
<b>Digital Transformation Programme</b>	To receive an update on current delivery via digital channels and review progress on the Council's digital transformation programme (including website and Report It)	Robin Campbell Maria Benbow
<b>CityWest Homes Transformation</b>	To review the assessment of demand and consultation methodology for estate office closures	Jonathan Cowie Martin Edgerton

## ROUND TWO – 11 September 2017

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by:
<b>Cabinet Member Q&amp;A</b>	A Q&A session	Cabinet Member for Housing
<b>Supply and Allocation of Affordable and Social Housing</b>		Barbara Brownlee
<b>The Fire Safety of CityWest Homes Housing Stock</b>	To ascertain the position of our stock and ensure that CWH complies with legislative and best practice requirements	Barbara Brownlee Jonathan Cowie

## ROUND THREE – 6 November 2017

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by:
<b>Cabinet Member Q&amp;A</b>	A Q&A session	Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Corporate Services
<b>WESTCO</b>	To understand the activities of Westco and their impact on Westminster City Council	Ian Farrow

# Work Programme



## Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

<b>Church Street Master Plan</b>	An update on the Church Street regeneration programme.	Eleanor Hoyle
<b>Treasury Performance Half Year Statutory Review</b>	A statutory review of treasury performance	Steve Mair

### ROUND FOUR – 15 January 2017

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by:
<b>Cabinet Member Q&amp;A</b>	A Q&A session	Cabinet Member for Housing
<b>Rough Sleeping</b>	An update on the rough sleeping strategy	Jennifer Travassos and Robert White
<b>Draft Treasury Management Strategy</b>	A statutory assessment of the draft treasury management strategy prior to submission to Council for approval.	Steve Mair
<b>Church Street Masterplan (call-in)</b>	To consider the Church Street masterplan decision called-in by the ward Councillors.	Barbara Brownlee

### ROUND FIVE – 26 March 2017

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by:
<b>Cabinet Member Q&amp;A</b>	A Q&A session	Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Corporate Services
<b>Staff Survey</b>	To consider the results of the staff survey and the council's approach to responding to concerns raised.	Lee Witham
<b>City West Homes Resident Engagement</b>		Jonathan Cowie

### Unallocated Items

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by:
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# Work Programme



## Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

<b>CityWest Homes-Transformation Programme</b>	The committee would like to receive regular updates on the performance of and resident satisfaction with the new operating model and new repairs/major works contracts.	Martin Edgerton
<b>Housing Regeneration programme Progress-report/site visit</b>		Barbara Brownlee

### Other Committee Events & Task Groups

Briefings	Reason	Date
Budget T/G	Standing task Group to consider the budget of Council	October 2017
Sprinklers	To examine the legal and practical issues surrounding retrofitting sprinklers in buildings	March 2018

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# Action Tracker



## Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

### ROUND THREE 6<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2017

Agenda Item	Action and responsible officer	Update
Item 5 – Cabinet Member Update	Establish a task group to investigate the legal and practical issues surrounding retrofitting sprinklers to tall buildings (Aaron Hardy)	Ongoing
Item 8 Draft Treasury Management Strategy 2018-2019 To 2022-2023	Provide the committee with a briefing note on the forward borrowing arrangements once a decision on this has been made (Steve Mair)	Requested

### ROUND THREE 6<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2017

Agenda Item	Action and responsible officer	Update
Item 5 – Cabinet Member Update	Provide a briefing on the Council's approach to writing off debt and working across teams to ensure vulnerable residents were dealt with sympathetically.	Circulated on 16/01/18
	More information on the contingency plan for the ASC work stream of the digital plan	Circulated on 03/01/17
	Provide a briefing on why CityWest Homes took a different approach to Southwark Council regarding disconnecting the gas supply to large panel system building.	Circulated on 12/12/17
	Send Cllr McKie a previous HFCS report on the investment portfolio strategy (his specific concern was rent for small businesses)	Circulated on 13/11/17

# Action Tracker



## Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

	How much has been spent on DHP from general reserves over past two years?	Circulated on 12/12/17
Item 6 - Westco	Provide a briefing on how costs are apportioned/recharged between Westco and the Council	Circulated on 12/12/17
	Why have Westco's liabilities risen sharply in the past year?	Circulated on 12/12/17
	What is the nominal value of Westco?	Circulated on 12/12/17
	What evidence is there that the Westco model helps recruitment and retention?	Circulated on 12/12/17
Item 7 - Church Street	Circulate results of Church Street Consultation.	Requested
	Circulate the breakdown of Church Street funding committed by the Council	Requested

# Action Tracker



## Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

Item 8 – Treasury Management	Share model of how the Council’s approach to risk in investment is affecting it financially – specifically focusing on the possible effect of reducing credit rating limit.	Requested
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### ROUND TWO 11<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017

Agenda Item	Action and responsible officer	Update
Item 4 – Work Programme and Action Tracker	Provide the committee with a note on where the responsibilities for scrutinising rough sleeping lie. (Action for: Barbara Brownlee, Interim Executive Director for Growth, Planning & Housing)	Response e-mailed on 3rd October 2017
Item 5 – Cabinet Member Update	Provide the committee with an update on the current position regarding the regeneration of Ebury Bridge. (Action for: Barbara Brownlee, Interim Executive Director for Growth, Planning & Housing)	
	Provide Councillor Church with confirmation of when a new fire safe door will be replaced in a tenant’s residence at Kemp House. (Action for: Sarah Stevenson Jones, CWH Head of Health and Safety)	Response e-mailed w/c 9 <sup>th</sup> October.
	Provide Councillor Roca with an update on the consultation programme for the Church Street Masterplan. (Action for: Barbara Brownlee, Interim Executive Director for Growth, Planning & Housing)	Response e-mailed on 5 <sup>th</sup> October 2017
	How many applications have been received for funds from the small business rate relief scheme and for the £1000 allowance for public houses with a rateable value below £100,000? (Action for: Martin Hinckley, Head of Revenue and Benefits)	Response e-mailed on 14 <sup>th</sup> September 2017

# Action Tracker



## Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

	What is the difference in staffing levels at the Council compared to the previous year? (Action for: Lee Witham, Director of People Services)	Response e-mailed on 3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2017
	Provide Councillor Williams with further details regarding the property management contract to GVA. (Action for: Guy Slocombe, Director of Property, Investments and Estates)	Completed
Item 6 - City West Homes and Westminster City Council's Response to Fire Safety Within Council Housing Stock in Light of The Grenfell Disaster	The committee wishes to review on an annual basis the concerns that residents have raised regarding fire safety in the Council's housing stock and how these have been investigated and responded to.	
	That a letter be sent to the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Housing expressing concerns over the regulatory limitations of freeholders to monitor and enforce fire safety reviews. The note to also highlight the impact of the additional fire safety costs on the HRA Business Plan (Aaron Hardy, Policy and Scrutiny Manager)	Completed – 13 <sup>th</sup> October.
Item 8 - Deputation From the 'Save Our Ebury' Group	That a record of the deputation be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Interim Executive Director for Growth, Planning & Housing with a request that they provide an update to the committee on their plans to meet and engage with stakeholders(Aaron Hardy, Policy and Scrutiny Manager)	Record sent (09/10/17) and response requested

ROUND ONE 12<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2017

Agenda Item

Action and responsible officer

Update

## Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

<p>Item 5 – Cabinet Member Update</p>	<p><u>High Value Voids Levy</u> - Inform Members when the government consultation on the formula to determine the payment will take place</p>	<p>Officer advice is that this is now likely to be quietly dropped as there has been a change of Housing Minister.</p>
	<p><u>Shared Ownership Sales at North Wharf Road</u> - the committee would like to know how many of the shared ownership properties have been sold. (Action for: Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing &amp; Regeneration)</p>	<p>Response emailed to Members on 31/7/2017</p>
<p>Item 6- Update on the Digital Service and Future Plans</p>	<p>Provide the committee with the plan for the delivery of the 'My Account' programme including key milestones. (Action for: Maria Benbow, Commercial and Digital Transformation Director)</p>	<p>Response emailed to Members on 1/9/2017</p>
	<p>Following the completion of the feasibility phase of the programme in the Committee would like to consider and provide feedback on the outline business case and design solutions prior to these being considered by Cabinet. (Action for: Maria Benbow, Commercial and Digital Transformation Director/Aaron Hardy, Scrutiny Manager)</p>	<p>Ongoing. The feasibility study continues until the end of December. A workshop with members of the Committee can be organized to review some of the findings. The suggested timing for this is Autumn.</p>
<p>Item 7-CityWest Homes-Transformation Programme</p>	<p>The committee would like to receive regular updates on the performance of and resident satisfaction with the new operating model and new repairs/major works contracts. (Action for: Jonathan Cowie/Martin Edgerton, CWH)</p>	<p>This item has been placed on the Committee's work program</p>
	<p>Provide Councillor Church with a note on actions that CWH and the Council are undertaking to protect the residents of Kemp House on Berwick Street from the impact of building works being undertaken beneath the building by a private sector developer. (Action for:</p>	<p>Response emailed to members on 17/08/18</p>

# Action Tracker



## Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

	Jonathan Cowie/Martin Edgerton, (CWH)	
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### ROUND SIX (10 APRIL 2017)

Agenda Item	Action and responsible officer	Update
Item 5 – Cabinet Member Update	<i>Provide Councillor Roca with details of Westminster's external legal spend. (Action for: Tasmin Shawkat)</i>	Response emailed on 17/01/2018
	How will the Council identify the skills gap in each directorate to determine how they should spend their 0.5% contribution on apprenticeships? (Action for: Lee Witham, Director of People Services)	Response emailed to Members on 27/4/2017
Item 5- Cabinet Member Update	The committee requested an assessment of the likely impact of the Homelessness Reduction Bill on the Council. (Action for: Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing & Regeneration)	Response e-mailed on 24 <sup>th</sup> October 2017

### ROUND FIVE (6 MARCH 2017)

Agenda Item	Action and responsible officer	Update
Item 5 – Cabinet Member Update	The committee would like details about the Council's IT security strategy to mitigate the threats to the organisation. Members wanted to know whether cloud computing provides the same security as the existing server infrastructure. Action for: Ben Goward, Head of Digital Information)	Awaiting response



# Action Tracker



## Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

	Members would like a note on any changes to business rates and any impact on the Council following an amendment on transitional relief expected to be announced by the Chancellor in tomorrow's spring budget. (Action for: Steve Mair, City Treasurer)	Emailed to members on 13 March 2017
Item - Estate Regeneration Review	Councillor Roca asked about how many homes (social/affordable) the Council will have delivered between 2014 and 2018, i.e. Between the last and next local election. (Action for: Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing and Regeneration)	Emailed to Cllr Roca by BB on 14.03.2017
Item – HRA Business Plan Review	As the 2017/18 Plan anticipates borrowing to peak in year 7 to £334 m which is equal to the HRA debt cap and reserves reducing to around a minimum level of c £11m for 20 years the committee would like to include a regular update on the HRA Business Plan to its work programme. (Action for: Tara Murphy, Policy & Scrutiny Officer)	Considered as part of 2018/19 budget task group

### ROUND FOUR (9 JANUARY 2017)

Agenda Item	Action and responsible officer	Update
Item 5 – Cabinet Member Update	Provide Members with details of the current and projected year-end underspend in the Council budget and the reasons for this (Action for: Steve Mair, City Treasurer/Martin Hinckley, Head of Revenue and Benefits)	Response emailed to members on 17/08/18
	Provide an analysis of the likely impact of the new business rateable values for West End businesses. Will this require any changes to the Council's Discretionary Rating Appeals scheme and what changes are	Emailed to Members 06.03.17

# Action Tracker



## Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

	<p>anticipated in the number of hardship applications this year? (Action for: Steve Mair, City Treasurer/ Martin Hinckley, Head of Revenue and Benefits)</p>	
Item 6 – Luxborough Street Development	<p>The Committee has requested information on whether any other schemes with similar sized costs have been aborted in the last 4-5 years. (Action for: Guy Slocombe, Director of Property, Investment and Estates)</p>	<p>Sent to Members on 02.03.17</p>
	<p>Subject to his views, Members would like sight of the Programme Management report commissioned by the Chief Executive. (Action for: Guy Slocombe, Director of Property, Investment and Estates)</p>	<p>Sent to Members on 02.03.17 (confidential paper)</p>
Item 7 – Treasury Performance Half Year Review	<p>That a task group should be established to consider the previously specified Treasury opportunities. Other Treasury opportunities not covered in the TMSS should also be presented for consideration as well as a review of the policy on the countries in which deposits/investments can be invested. (Action for: Tara Murphy, Scrutiny Officer)</p>	<p>Confirming appropriate timescale with officers</p>

### ROUND THREE (7 NOVEMBER 16)

Agenda Item	Action and responsible officer	Update
Item 7 – Re-commissioning the housing options service	<p>RESOLVED: Following careful consideration, the Committee endorsed the overall strategic approach to the reshaping and procurement of the Housing Options Service. It has requested that a further update be provided to the committee as the procurement moves forward.</p> <p>(Tara Murphy identify suitable time for an update to be received by</p>	<p>Listed on 2017/2018 work programme</p>

# Action Tracker



Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

committee)

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City of Westminster

Housing, Finance & Corporate Services  
Policy and Scrutiny Committee Briefing

**Date:** Monday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2018

**Author:** Councillor Tim Mitchell

**Portfolio:** Cabinet Member for Finance, Property &  
Corporate Services

**Please contact:** Daniella Bonfanti  
[dbonfanti@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:dbonfanti@westminster.gov.uk)

## 1. Corporate Finance

### Accounts

1.1 The City Treasurer's department is in the middle of its year-end closedown and is on course to deliver a clean set of accounts by 1st April and complete the audit within two weeks as planned. This will be a local government, public, private and voluntary sector record and is undertaken to ensure the service can focus on looking forward rather than backwards in the current challenging financial circumstances and to act as a catalyst for change, transformation and improved quality in financial management

1.2 The Interim Audit, which took place at the end February progressed well and completed on time. The bulk of transaction testing is done with a number of notes from the financial statements also finalised and passed to the auditors. This will save time at the final audit and help us to meet the Audit and Performance Committee target date in April.

## **Fair Funding**

- 1.3 The LGA and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have established a joint technical working group to consider local government “fair funding.” This will put in place a new methodology of allocating core funding to councils.
- 1.4 The current system of allocating funding is very complex and lacks transparency. A significant part of the agenda is therefore to review and simplify this.
- 1.5 However, Westminster is also an outlier in a range of areas including:
- High area cost;
  - High daytime population of non-residents;
  - Low band D Council Tax rate with limited ability to increase;
  - Relatively high fees and charges but high related costs which are not all recovered in full;
  - Increasing population and other changing demographics;
  - High cost of social housing;
- 1.6 While simplification may be desirable, given the high level of potential outlying indicators Westminster has, the concern is that an over simplification would not recognise these and the City Council would suffer a reduction in funding which would not take account of its circumstances and pressures.
- 1.7 Simplifying the funding formula should not come at the cost of fairness. Including fewer variables and concentrating more on the important cost drivers is reasonable, however it is determining what the ‘important’ cost drivers are that will really matter.
- 1.8 The City Treasurer’s team attended a consultation workshop on 5 March 2018 and has sent a response to the government’s formal consultation.

## **Business Rates**

- 1.9 The City Council, along with all other local authorities in London, has recently completed an annual national non-domestic rates return (NNDR) to central Government. The NNDR1 provides a forecast of NNDR income for 2018/19. The

NNDR1 returns for the London boroughs indicate an increase in London Councils' previous forecast of 2018/19 NNDR income. In turn, this could mean an increase on the previous forecast of additional income for the City Council resulting from the London Council's Business Rates Pool. As reported in the last update to this committee, the previous forecast was for an additional income of £3.8m and will not be certain until well into 2019/20.

- 1.10 The 2017 Spring Budget introduced three legislative changes relating to NNDR, one of which was a new NNDR Discretionary Scheme to compensate businesses most adversely affected by the Revaluation in April 2017. The City Council has so far awarded £8.1M of our £11M 2017/18 funding. The City Council is aiming to award the full value of our relief by 31 March 2018; however, the Government has recently confirmed that local authorities have until 30 September 2018 to make awards relating to the government's 2017/18 funding allocations.

### **Universal Credit**

- 1.11 Universal Credit (UC) is the Government's replacement scheme for a number of existing benefits. One of the benefits being replaced is Housing Benefits (HB), which is currently administered by local government.
- 1.12 The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has not amended their transition plan for Westminster's HB caseload since the last report to this committee. The Marylebone Job Centre will provide a UC Full Service from June 2018, with the Kensington Job Centre following in December 2018. This will mean that from the point of transfer new claims from eligible residents will move from HB to UC. The existing HB caseload for non-exempt claimants will not transfer in full until 2022.
- 1.13 The above transition means that our HB caseload will reduce in a phased approach over the next 5 years (subject to any further government timetable changes). The UC exempt categories and the fact that the City Council needs to continue to determine Council Tax Support claims will mean that the City Council will retain only a slightly smaller caseload, although the removal of the HB element for non-exempt claims will reduce the complexity of the calculation process.
- 1.14 Our officers are continuing to work with the DWP to ensure that our claimants experience as smooth as possible transition from HB to UC. To assist with the

transition, the City Council has provisionally agreed to fund a HB Officer and a Citizen Advice Bureau Officer to work at the Marylebone Job Centre for a year from the point of implementation in 2018.

### **Westminster Voluntary Community Contribution**

- 1.15 At the end of 2017, a consultation questionnaire was sent to all of the City Council's 15,000 Council Tax Band H residents seeking their views on the proposed Voluntary Westminster Community Contribution.
- 1.16 The consultation produced a high response rate for a consultation exercise, with around 1,000 residents responding with around 50% in favour of the scheme.
- 1.17 The City Council has subsequently decided to progress with the scheme and letters will be sent to all Band H residents alongside their normal Council Tax annual billing mailing.
- 1.18 The scheme will be administered by the City of Westminster Charitable Trust. The Trust will receive any donations and will determine how the income should be spent.

### **Sundry Debtors**

- 1.19 The direct contact project, whereby the City Council are supporting service areas to follow-up unpaid invoices by contacting the largest value (non-Adult Social Care) debtors, continues. As at 31 January 2018, approximately £73.5m has been received/or corrected since 1 April 2017.
- 1.20 Monthly debt challenge sessions with service areas also continue, focussing on areas of highest debt. The largest debtors are the NHS bodies whose invoice payments are subject to strict cash draw-down rules.
- 1.21 The pilot exercise with a third party provider to take further action on a small number of lower debts from across a number of service areas commenced mid-October. Debts of approximately £260k were referred, representing 89 customers and, as at 28th February 2018, approximately £54k had been recovered. The pilot will be reviewed in the new financial year to assess its success and value for money.



- 1.22 The route to County Court, which is a last resort action against unresponsive debtors, has been established and will be co-ordinated and managed centrally.
- 1.23 The data cleansing strategy has been agreed and activities commenced in preparation for data migration to a new finance system (SAP).

### **Accounts Payable**

- 1.24 Service area compliance with the City Council's No PO No Pay policy, which became compulsory from 1st June 2017 (with a few exceptions, which are paid manually), is showing significant improvement with some service areas achieving full compliance for all invoices paid during Period 10 (up to 31/01/18). The overall compliance rate at Period 10 (P10) was 99.3%.
- 1.25 The team continues to work with service areas to drive improvement in supplier payment performance, which remains above 92%. At the end of P10, approximately 92.3% of invoices were paid within 30 days and 95.7% paid within 60 days.
- 1.26 A suite of data cleansing activities has commenced as part of the preparations for data migration to a new provider for the main finance system (SAP), such as closing purchase orders that are no longer required. Supplier accounts to be migrated have been identified and mandatory data fields to meet new operational requirements have been established.

## **2. Corporate Property**

### **Investment**

- 2.1 The new property management specification and form of contract has taken longer than envisaged to finalise, in part due to the incorporation of City Hall as it moves from an operational asset to a hybrid operational and investment asset. The aim is that all documentation will be issued before Easter to the eight firms who have expressed an initial interest in submitting a proposal. Final proposals will then be received towards the end of April 2018 with interviews and the final selection to take place over the subsequent 4-6 weeks. The existing contract with GVA is to be extended until the end of July in order to ensure a smooth handover. Gate approval

to this extension has been obtained, subject to final Cabinet Member sign-off.

- 2.2 Asset management of the investment portfolio continues. As at the end of January 2018, the portfolio consisted of 363 assets - 21 are vacant, representing 1.87% of the estimated rental value of the portfolio. This continues to be well within acceptable limits. Thirteen of these vacant units are not being actively marketed since they are earmarked for redevelopment or form part of regeneration schemes.
- 2.3 Since the start of the financial year, an additional annual income of £685,275 has been secured by way of completing lease renewals and rent reviews.
- 2.4 The acquisition of 14-20 Orange Street completed on 10 January 2018 at a purchase price of £15 million, which added a further £585,747 to the annual rent roll.

### **City Hall**

- 2.5 The City Hall programme remains on budget and programme with practical completion expected by December 2018. Stone cleaning and window replacement has commenced. Offers have been received for a letting of floors 1-10 in advance of practical completion which is being considered and the CAT B fit out plans and recant plans/programme are being formulated in consultation with EMT/Refurbishment Programme Board and member Steering Group.

### **Operational Property**

- 2.6 The development programme at Seymour Leisure Centre to include the new Marylebone Library is moving ahead. A public consultation meeting was held at the leisure centre on 17 February 2018 to formally announce the City Council's plans.
- 2.7 Officers have notified the nursery that its occupation will terminate on 31 December 2018. The Council has no legal or contractual obligation to relocate the nursery, but officers are providing support.
- 2.8 The Registrars Service opened for business mid-January following completion of the refurbishment of Council House/Old Marylebone Town Hall and encouraging levels of wedding bookings indicate that it is already proving to be a popular venue.

- 2.9 The external refurbishment works to Mayfair Library are expected to be completed in June 2018. The internal refurbishment works to the Central Reference Library are expected to be completed in March 2018.

### **3 Corporate Services**

#### **Legal Services**

- 3.1 The go-live date for the Alternative Business Structure (ABS) has been paused. At their meeting on 19 February, the LGSS Board suggested an incremental approach to implementation of the project. This approach to implementation not only has significant cost and staff implications but it is complex from a technical, information governance and business perspective. We propose to revisit the project in the autumn if conditions are right.
- 3.2 In the interim, Legal Services will proceed with implementing a new Case Management System, which will deliver greater efficiencies, enabling us to improve our billing processes and provide management information.
- 3.3 We will proceed with implementing a system of gatekeeping legal work that is outsourced, so that we can continue to do more work in-house and increase our capacity, capability and resilience and reduce the overall spend on Legal Services.
- 3.4 We will continue to meet with departments to reinforce the message that all legal work should go through Legal Services even if it is to be externalised.

#### **People Services**

- 3.5 Our first group of internal apprentices enrolled in the Level 4 Public Commercial Officer apprenticeship programme. One element of this new skills programme is to offer existing staff within contracts/procurement/commissioning roles the opportunity to develop their commercial skills.
- 3.6 A development day was delivered to our existing group of apprentices. The event was attended by the Chief Executive, the Director of People Services and former apprentices who are now employed in full time roles in the City Council.

- 3.7 Work is taking place to remodel the new performance management process for Westminster with our chosen supplier, 3c Performance. Engagement sessions took place earlier this year and work continues over the coming months to change how we manage and improve performance through our people.
- 3.8 The Hampshire project implementation team started work on 8 January and People Services have been working to backfill the posts left vacant where necessary.
- 3.9 We have launched a new benefit platform for staff working at the City Council, which is more competitive and offers a comprehensive range of discounts and schemes. It allows employees as well as the City Council to be able to access a number of savings and operate more cost effectively.
- 3.10 A follow up 'pulse' survey to Our Voice 2017 staff survey will take place from 16 April 2018 to understand how engaged people are feeling and how much they think they have been included in the actions taken. Directorates will have access to meaningful, easy-to-consult data, which can be used to devise an action plan locally to address areas of concern. It will also give us an organisational perspective and focus on where we might need to focus any additional actions.
- 3.11 The first group workshops for both the Executive and Senior Leaders Talent Programme have taken place and received great feedback. The first modules were on the topic of personal leadership style and impact on others. Module 2 will take place in March 2018.

## **ICT**

- 3.12 The Multi-Factorial Authentication (MFA) pilot kicked off on 5 February 2018. Users were asked to test the MFA procedure and provide feedback of their experience. This two-step verification provides an extra layer of security that will ensure users are connected to a secure network when using Office 365 applications. The official roll-out commenced mid-February 2018 and over a 1000 users already have received this extra layer of security.

## Procurement Services

- 3.13 The Small Cell Wireless Concession contract has been awarded to a concessionaire for an exclusive period of 5 years with the provision to extend this to them for another 5 years. The total expected revenue to the City Council over the 10-year period is in the region of £22m. This is broken down into a guaranteed fee of £15m and 20% of the concessionaires estimated revenue over the 10 years. The contract will also enable improved mobile connectivity to residents and visitors to the borough by utilising street assets.
- 3.14 Small Cell devices will be installed on top of street lights to enable Mobile Network Operators (e.g. O2, Vodafone, Three 3, EE etc.) to improve their network and service throughout the city. They would pay a nominal fee to the concessionaire to use each small cell device.
- 3.15 Over the last two years, the Housing Options Service (HOS) has been re-designed and re-procured. The HOS will now have greater emphasis on effective frontline advice, triage and prevention services, joint working with other providers and will ensure appropriate management of those accepted as homeless and temporary accommodation.
- 3.16 Places for People Group, a managed provider was appointed, bringing together the experience of the incumbent provider Residential Management Group (RMG) and the specialist knowledge of respected third sector providers, Shelter, and the Passage.
- 3.17 Shelter have 50 years' experience of providing housing advice services in London and are a trusted voice in the housing sector that will lend weight and reassurance to those seeking frontline housing advice from the HOS.
- 3.18 The Passage already has specialist facilities in place for the Lot 2 Single Person Homeless Service at The Passage Resource Centre. The Passage have delivered a 12-month pilot with the existing HOS. Their service proposal integrates resources from all three partners in the delivery of the assessment hub and related support services for single homeless people. The new contract started on 1 October 2017 and savings of £2.095m were made overall, achieving the MTP savings target.

- 3.19 The Project Board approved the tender documents for the re-procurement of the Revenues and Benefits Services on 4 January 2018. It is anticipated that the new contract will commence on 1 November 2018.
- 3.20 The Contract Management Programme focusing on improving contract management across the whole of the Council has begun. The programme includes 16 projects that develop different aspects of contract management including clarity on the role of a contract manager, better contracts, standardisation and improvement of performance reporting and classification of contracts to ensure the appropriate level of rigor is applied. The Programme is currently in the planning phase.
- 3.21 In response to the profits warning issues by Capita, Procurement Services have been working with colleagues to identify existing contracts with Capita. The current Revenues and Benefits contract with Capita is out to tender. Discussions are ongoing with Finance and Legal Services to mitigate risks via potential performance bonds, bank guarantees or strengthened financial criteria.
- 3.22 The new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) that come into force in May will have a significant impact on the City Council's contracts. It is anticipated that most contracts will require reviews and amendments. A working group has been established to focus specifically on this element of the GDPR programme, which is formed of Procurement Services, ICT (Information Management/GDPR team) and Legal Services to ensure that contract managers are informed and supported in order to comply with the regulations and to ensure the Council is not exposed.

## **MSP**

- 3.23 Currently, we are aiming to join the Hampshire Partnership as a replacement for BT for the provision of Finance, Payroll and HR Services by Autumn 2018 . The transition programme continues to proceed to plan. To date the main focus has been on:
- Completing the necessary legal documents and the Project Initiation Document;
  - Preparing for and then attending the Fit Gap workshops;
  - Developing a communications strategy and plan;
  - Developing a data migration strategy and plan;
  - Detailed payroll design;

- Confirming the technical solutions for the elements not provided by Hampshire e.g. Middleware, Income Manager and an Archive Solution;
- Agreeing a Project Initiation Document for the Learning Management Solution;
- Completing Exit planning with BT.

3.28 Risks to the programme are being closely monitored and reported to the SRO and key stakeholders weekly.

3.29 Completing the activities agreed with BT to provide a good enough service has become more challenging because the actions, which have still to be completed are now the most problematic. However, progress continues to be made and since January a further four actions have been delivered bringing the total achieved to 76% (22 out of 29 actions). Two of the remaining actions are on target to be completed by their agreed deadlines and five are behind schedule.

### **Former Chief of Staff Teams**

3.30 In January 2018, a number of areas that previously reported to the Chief of Staff moved into the Corporate Services Directorate.

3.31 The Committee and Governance team, Coroner's Service, Electoral Services team and the Local Land Charges team moved under the Legal Services umbrella and now report to the Director of Law.

3.32 The Corporate Complaints team report directly to the Director of Corporate Services.

### **Digital**

3.33 The Digital Programme has completed the first stage of the feasibility phase, As-Is mapping and data capture activity. This will enable us to address a set of process maps and transactional volume for the services and directorates.

3.34 The Customer Contact Strategy has been delivered. A cross directorate team collaborated on the collation, analysis and evaluation of contact data from across the organisation.

- 3.35 The MyWestminster account was launched in January. The portal will better connect our residents to the services they require, by asking them to create an online account where they will be given access, initially, to a host of electronic forms, dedicated to a relevant service area. In the first month approximately 450 residents have created an account.
- 3.36 The forms range from common issues such as reporting a noise complaint to a missed waste collection. By completing the relevant "ReportIt" form online, the information will be sent directly to the relevant service area, improving efficiencies and ensuring the issue is resolved quickly. Residents can still fill out a form as a 'guest' so that creating a MyWestminster account is not mandatory.
- 3.37 Over the past few months, the Digital Programme have been working closely with CMC and the City Council's Contact Centre to ensure the new portal and forms meet customer requirements. This is the first phase of a wider programme focused on using technology to give the best possible experience to our customers.
- 3.38 The following forms are now live: missed waste collection, overflowing street bins, dumped rubbish, graffiti or flyposting, food safety problem, noise, and smoke and odours.

### **Complaints**

- 3.39 Since 1 January 2018, we have recorded 202 Stage 1 complaints across all service areas. At Stage 2, 30 complaints have been received. A pattern has developed over the last 4 years in which the last quarter of the financial year receives the most volume of complaints and this year is no exception. However, as the complaints come from all service areas it is difficult to determine why this part of the year is so busy.

ENDS





## Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date:</b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> March 2018</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>General Release</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Staff Survey 2017 Headline Results</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>John Quinn, Director of Corporate Services</b>
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	<b>Councillor Tim Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property &amp; Corporate Services</b>
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Report Author and Contact Details:</b>	<b>Lee Witham, Director of People Services &amp; Aruj Haider, Senior Organisational Development Adviser Telephone: 02076413224 <u><a href="mailto:lwitham1@westminster.gov.uk">lwitham1@westminster.gov.uk</a></u></b>

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. A staff survey has been carried out annually across Westminster City Council (WCC), the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) and Hammersmith & Fulham in the recent past. This year to coincide with the move towards Bi-Borough working, the survey was a joint project for both Westminster City Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea only.
- 1.2. A significant departure has been made from the previous old fashioned, manually intensive survey that was managed in-house by RBKC and took up to 3 months to produce full results. The new 'Our Voice' is a professional, digital survey managed by a leading external expert. It provides timely results containing detailed, actionable analysis down to team and individual managers at head of service level.
- 1.3. The survey is shorter, more user friendly and contains updated modern language that better reflects external best practice. The new survey and its content means that comparisons to previous years is limited and not relevant for the headline engagement scores. There are a limited number of questions that have been retained and comparisons are available in these cases. This new survey and the results provides a better, more relevant and accurate baseline for the Council.
- 1.4. The power of the new survey is the reporting capability down to individual manager and team level. We are preparing and equipping managers to take detailed follow-up actions with their teams that hopefully will lead to real and sustained improvement.

- 1.5. The survey took place in September / October at a time of significant change for the Council and its employees. These changes include 'Trexit' in shared services; reorganisations such as those in Libraries and ongoing change in IT and Legal Services. The survey also took place in the months following the move from City Hall and more importantly Grenfell. These changes will have impacted on the results in the services affected.
- 1.6. The overall response rate for WCC was 62% in 2017 compared to 68% in 2016. Although the response rate has dropped compared to last year, it is still above the Local Government Benchmark. The response rate for RBKC reached 57%.
- 1.7. The Engagement Index of 6 key questions measures headline staff engagement. Westminster's Engagement Index for 2017 is 66%. The Engagement Index is a new baseline for the Council because it is made up of a new set of questions. Any comparisons to previous years would be misleading. Results can be compared to RBKC (57%) and, where the data, exists against external benchmarks. Westminster's engagement score in 2017 is average when compared against other local authorities.
- 1.8. This paper provides a summary of the accompanying slide deck (Appendix 1) and highlights the headline results from the staff survey Our Voice 2017 and actions that have taken place to create a culture of action.

## **2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration**

- 2.1. Westminster's engagement score is average when compared against other local authorities. We aim to be a top quartile employer, where do members think we should focus to achieve this?
- 2.2. What role should members play in the employee engagement process and our aim to be a top quartile employer?

## **3. Background**

- 3.1. Prior to 2017, the annual staff survey ran for the three councils; London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council from 2012-2016. This approach was old fashioned with a lengthy and manually intensive survey and took up to 3 months to produce full results.
- 3.2. The data was held internally by the team in RBKC who processed the survey and produced the reports. On occasions, there were errors in reporting of the results due to a lack of a robust quality check process.
- 3.3. Furthermore, because it took a considerable amount of time in producing the reports following the close of the survey, by the time it came to the creation of action plans, not only had the attention moved away from survey but the plans were inconsistently produced and not followed up throughout the year. This meant that engagement was seen as a one off event linked to a moment in time.
- 3.4. As a result, the councils wished to review the staff engagement survey in 2017 and deliver a modern approach which would enable them to have a more user friendly platform, quicker access to results and access to external expertise and best in class practice. In line with our move away from Tri-borough to Bi-borough for a number of services (in particular Adult's and Children's), we have moved from a Tri-borough survey to a Bi-Borough survey (Westminster City Council and Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea).

- 3.5. Following a joint procurement exercise across the two councils, the contract was awarded to ORC International, a UK based, international company with experience in business intelligence; including providing employee research to a wide range of organisations.
- 3.6. ORC put forward a set of recommendations based on best practice and following feedback from a range of stakeholders through face to face and telephone interviews and focus groups. Based on these recommendations, there has been a substantial revamp of the staff survey process. The new survey is a professional, digital survey which provides timely results containing detailed, actionable analysis down to team and individual managers at head of service level. It has fewer questions, looks and feels simple and modern and contains language that better reflects external best practice.
- 3.7. Comparisons to previous years is limited but available where the questions have been retained. Comparisons with headline engagement scores are not available due to change in the engagement index. This new survey and the results provides a better, more relevant and accurate baseline for the Council.
- 3.8. Details of the changes are listed below.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Lee Witham x02076413224 [lwitham1@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:lwitham1@westminster.gov.uk)**

## **APPENDICES:**

Appendix 1: Key results

Appendix 2: Summary of actions within each directorate

#### 4. Key changes to the previous survey

- 4.1. **A new name: 'Our Voice':** This replaces the previous 'Your Voice'. Although only a small difference, the new name reflects the survey's shift in emphasis, focusing more on how all employees can work together to make the necessary changes that will improve staff engagement at the Council, rather than it being solely the responsibility of management.
- 4.2. **Modernised language:** The content and tone of the questions has been updated to better reflect a modern, agile workplace.
- 4.3. Shifting the tone has limited the number of comparable data points to previous years which means we are not able to provide a historical trend on each question therefore the comparison with previous years is not like for like.
- 4.4. **Length of survey:** The length of the survey has been reduced to make it more user friendly and accessible. We now have 36 questions (excluding local questions) and 1 targeted open comments question. Note the previous survey contained 59 questions.
- 4.5. **Updated Engagement Index:** The refresh of the survey provided an opportunity to update how we measure engagement. The engagement index is now made up of a basket of 6 questions. As an example we have changed the reference of 'good' to 'great' within the question of whether staff will recommend the council. This reflects best practice and it draws out whether people are 'settling' or feel that the council is truly an employer of choice. Changing the engagement index means it will not be directly comparable to previous years however, it will provide us with more meaningful information on engagement going forward.
- 4.6. **Council specific questions:** This year we also introduced local questions for each council. Local questions have provided the opportunity to explore council specific initiatives and issues. For WCC for example these were about exploring the connection that colleagues have with City for All and the Westminster Way. For RBKC these related to how colleagues perceived the council to be prepared for challenges ahead and trust in leadership following the Grenfell incident.
- 4.7. **Individual access to survey:** Previously staff were sent a generic link to complete the staff survey which involved people self-selecting their directorates and teams. This year we changed this to a unique link approach where each individual received their own personal invitation. Responses were anonymised and teams of less than 10 individuals or where there were less than 10 responses did not have a separate report to protect the confidentiality of individuals.
- 4.8. **Intuitive reports and faster reporting timescales:** This year there was faster reporting of results with the headline metrics being available within a week of the survey closing. This was followed by manager reports, benchmarking and open comments reports and access to the online reporting tool being available within three weeks of the survey's close. Previously managers had to wait for up to 3 months for the full reports to be available.
- 4.9. A total of **167 high quality manager reports** were produced across both Councils. These reports included in-depth information on teams including their overall results, engagement index and team comparisons. It also includes individual analysis for each manager recommending key areas to focus on to increase engagement in their teams. This 'key driver analysis' is a significant step forward in facilitating local action and improvement.

4.10. **Pulse surveys:** In addition to the annual staff survey, we have the functionality of conducting pulse surveys throughout the year. Pulse surveys allow us to conduct a temperature check at a moment in time on key themes/topics and have no more than 5 or 6 questions. These pulse checks link in to the approach used in the Annual Staff Engagement survey and going forward will enable us to have engagement as an on-going discussion item as opposed to once a year event.

**5. Employee Engagement:** Employee engagement is a workplace approach resulting in the right conditions for all members of an organisation to give of their best each day, committed to their organisation's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organisational success, with an enhanced sense of their own well-being.

5.1. David Macleod from Engage for Success describes it as "This is about how we create the conditions in which employees offer more of their capability and potential".

5.2. Employee engagement is based on trust, integrity, two way commitment and communication between an organisation and its members. It is an approach that increases the chances of business success, contributing to organisational and individual performance, productivity and well-being. It is measured by the engagement index.

5.3. According to research conducted by Engage for Success:

- 5.3.1. Companies in the top quartile of employee engagement scores had 18% higher productivity than those in the bottom quartile.
- 5.3.2. 59% of engaged employees said that their job brings out their most creative ideas against 3% of those less engaged.
- 5.3.3. Companies with high levels of engagement show turnover rate 40% lower than companies with low levels of engagement.
- 5.3.4. Organisations with engagement in the bottom quartile average 62% more accidents than those in the top.
- 5.3.5. Companies with top quartile engagement scores average 12% higher customer advocacy.
- 5.3.6. Companies with engagement scores in the top quartile had twice the annual net profit of those in the bottom quartile.

## **6. Summary Highlight of Our Voice 2017**

6.1. The survey ran from 18th September to 6th October 2017 across both councils. The timing of the survey coincided with very significant amounts of change across the Council which will have impacted on employees' perceptions. These include: Grenfell, major security activity, reorganisations for services such as Libraries & Archives and IT, the move from tri-borough to bi-borough services and the decant of staff from City Hall.

6.2. **Response rates:** The overall response rate for WCC was 62% in 2017 compared to 68% in 2016 and 72% in 2015. (The survey was managed by RBKC in 2015 and 2016). Although the response rate has dropped compared to last year, it is still above the Local Government Benchmark. (The response rate for RBKC reached 57%).

6.2.1. Feedback from the focus groups conducted by ORC prior to the revamp suggested that people had concerns about anonymity and confidentiality. Furthermore, they had concerns over the post-survey process and limited confidence in actions

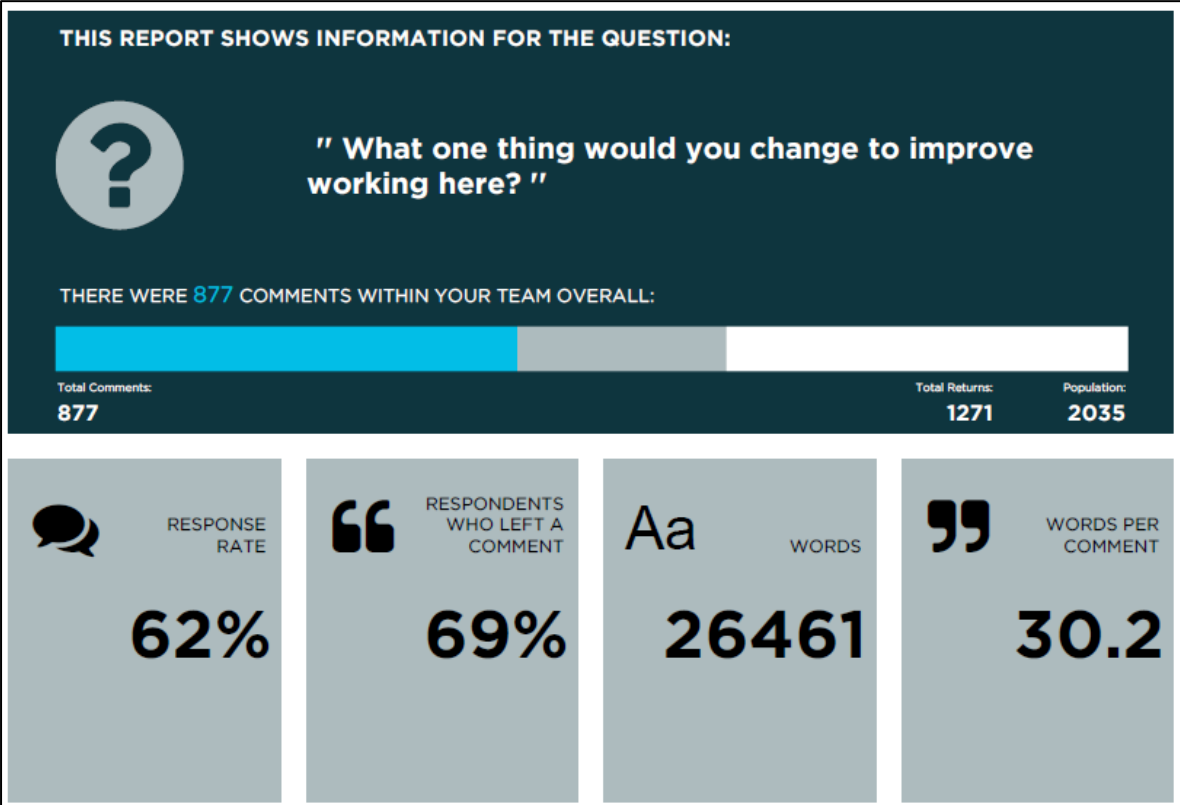
following the close of the survey which could have impacted on the response rates as evident by the decline since 2015.

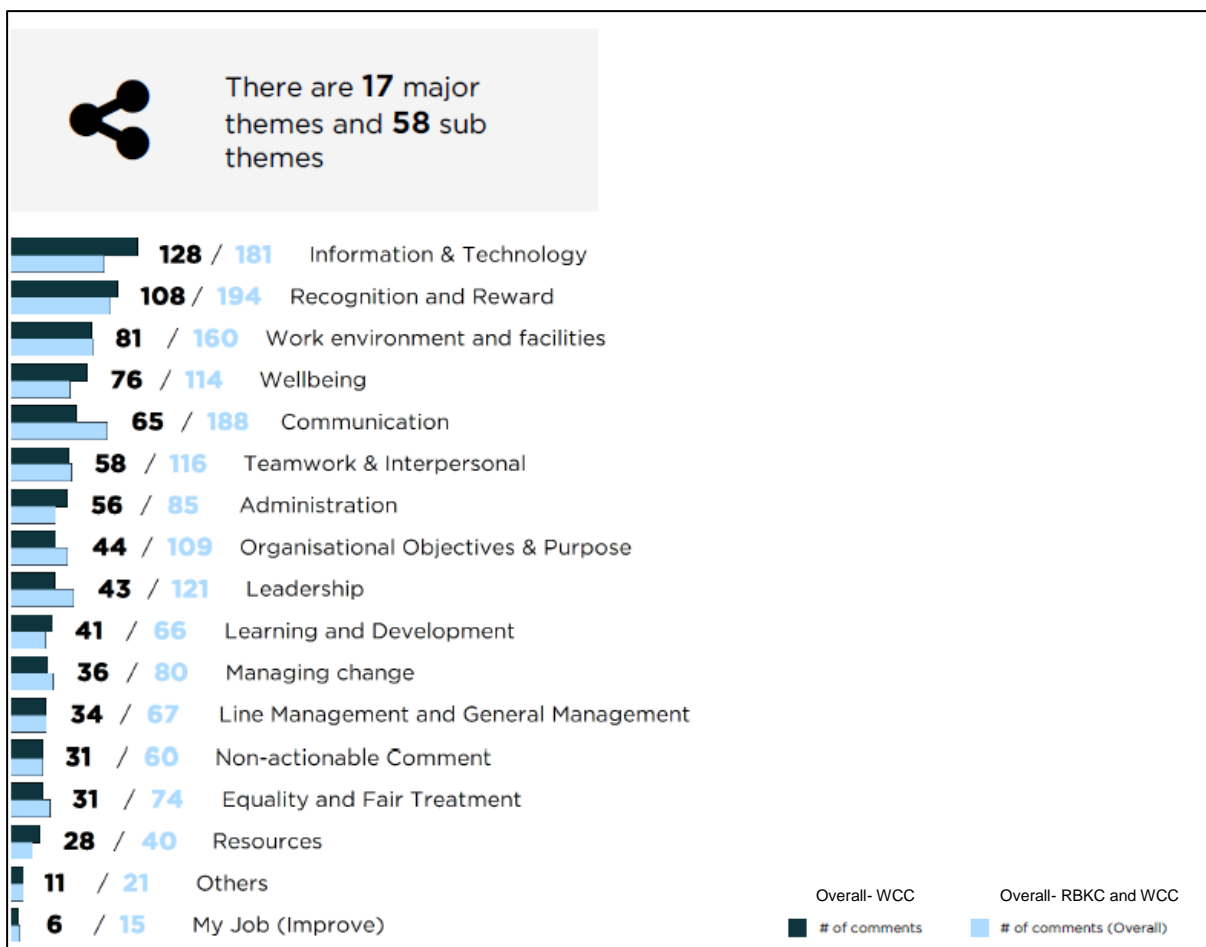
- 6.2.2. In addition with the move to the unique individual access to the survey, in previous years' managers could send out a simple link to all people in their teams asking and reminding them to fill in the survey. This year people needed to respond to their individual email from ORC. There were a number of reminders sent but none of these came directly from their line manager so could have been overlooked or deprioritised. In addition, some teams had more than 100% response rate in 2016 which suggests people could have filled in more than once.
- 6.2.3. Feedback from the staff network following the close of the survey in 2017 further highlighted that people still had concerns about anonymity and confidentiality.
- 6.2.4. Response rates broken down by each directorate are provided below:



- 6.3. **Open comments:** There was one open comments question “What one thing would you change to improve working here?”

6.3.1. There were 877 comments for the council overall which were divided into 17 major themes as shown below:





- 6.4. **Engagement Index:** There is a basket of 6 questions within the Engagement Index that measure staff engagement. This gives an average score out of 100% in terms of engagement. Westminster's Engagement Index for 2017 is 66%. The Engagement Index is a new baseline for the Council because it is made up of a new set of questions. Any comparisons to previous years would be misleading. Results can be compared to RBKC (57%) and, where the data, exists against external benchmarks.
- 6.4.1. The highest engagement score this year is for City Management and Communities at 70% followed by Growth, Planning & Housing at 67%.
- 6.4.2. The graphs below show questions that make up the engagement index and differences in engagement index by directorate.



# Employee Engagement



Employee Engagement is measured through the Engagement Index which is made up of a basket of 6 questions. This gives an average score out of 100% in terms of engagement.

**‘Say’** refers to the **pride and advocacy** employees have for the council

**‘Stay’** refers to the **commitment and attachment** an individual feels towards the council

**‘Strive’** is about how **motivated and inspired** employees are to help the council achieve

Say		Response Scale				% Positive	Trend	Variance from BM
Q30	I am proud to work for the Council	24	46	23	5	70%	-2	-1
Q31	I would recommend the Council as a great place to work	16	37	34	9	53%	-	-6
Q32	If I were a member of the public contacting the Council, I would be confident of a good service	12	44	33	8	56%	-	-

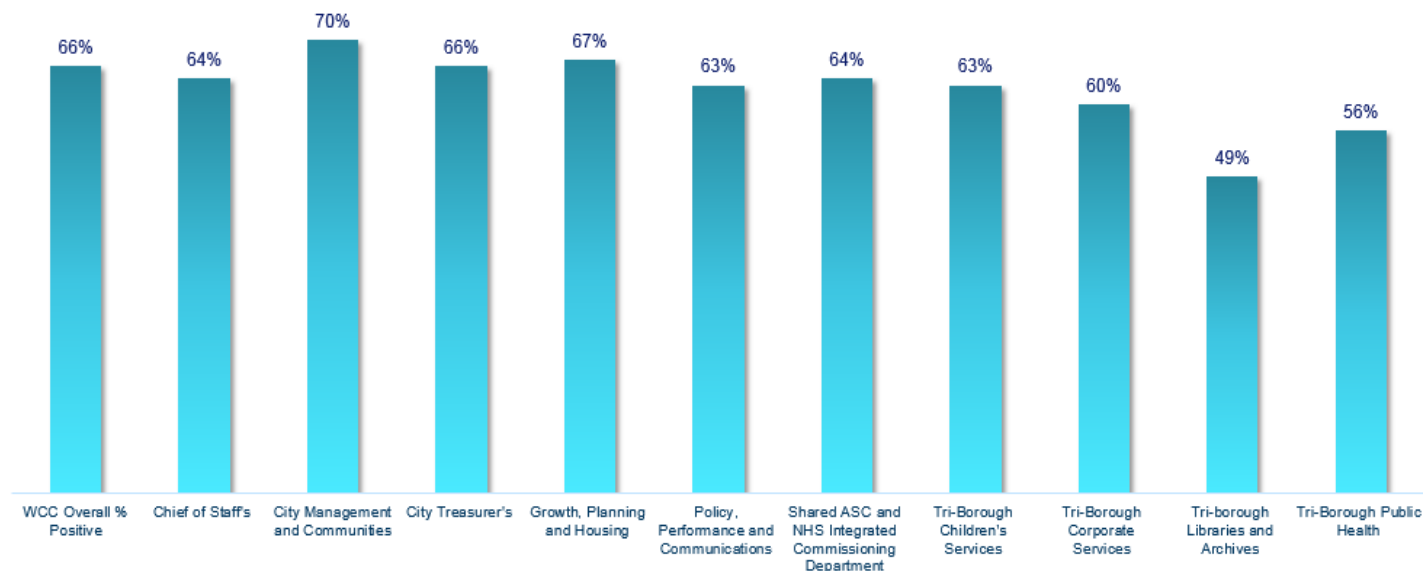
Stay		Response Scale				% Positive	Trend	Variance from BM
Q33	I feel a strong sense of belonging to the Council	13	38	34	11	50%	-4	-4

Strive		Response Scale				% Positive	Trend	Variance from BM
Q34	I am committed to helping the Council meet its goals and objectives	30	59	10	1	89%	+2	+3
Q35	Working here makes me want to do the best work I can	28	49	19	4	68%	+2	+2



## Engagement Index- By directorate



6.5. **Comparison with 2016 results:** Half of the 36 questions in the survey were asked previously and therefore trend data is available for these 18 areas. The highlights are:

6.5.1. On 4 questions, WCC findings have increased by five percentage points or more compared to 2016.

6.5.2. On 5 questions, WCC findings have decreased by five percentage points or more compared to 2016.

The table below highlights that collaboration scores have dropped significantly compared to last year. This may be due to the move out of City Hall to other locations as suggested by the comment below:

*“Mixed feelings about the agile working. Whilst it is true that the random nature of seating can lead to interesting, unexpected interactions, it is difficult to nurture a sense of team if the team is scattered”*

Comparison with 2016 (5+ point rise)		Comparison with 2016 (5+ point fall)	
When changes have been made which affect my job, I have felt supported	+5%	I am treated with fairness and respect by the people I work with	-5%
I believe that senior managers understand the challenges facing our service	+5%	Considering my duties and responsibilities, I think my pay is fair	-5%
I think it's safe to speak up and challenge the way things are done	+8%	My line manager keeps me informed about issues that affect me directly	-6%
I have the equipment and resources I need to do my job	+22%	Senior managers are sufficiently visible where I work	-6%
		There is a great sense of collaboration in my team	-15%

6.6. **Highest and lowest scores:**

- The following three questions had the highest positive scores:
  - I am committed to helping the council meet its goals and objectives: 89%
  - I am treated with fairness and respect by the people I work with: 82%
  - In the last year, whilst working for the council, I have personally experienced bullying and/or harassment: 11% (this is 81% positive)

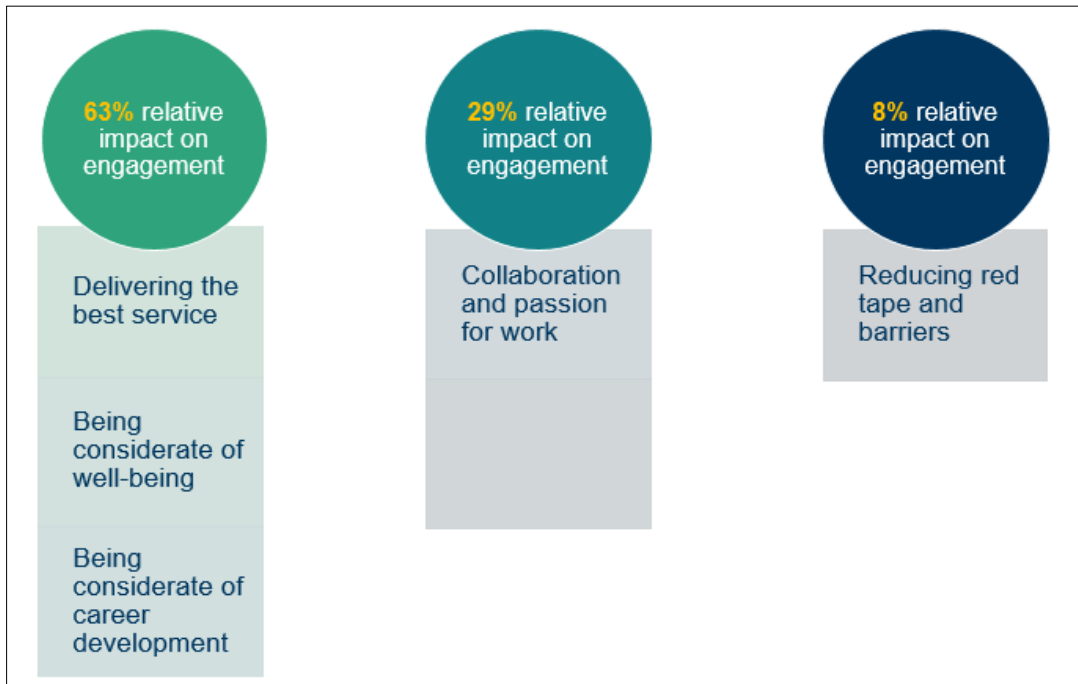
Commitment to helping the council meet its goals and objectives comes out very strongly and highlights the passion staff have for working in the council.

*“I feel very much a part of a strong team that are moving in the right direction, new innovative projects are on going and upcoming and I very much enjoy being part of that. Communication between the team both on-site and off-site has improved greatly over the past few years and really goes some way to ensuring the sense of belonging to a larger team. I am not sure of anything major I would change currently”*

- The following three questions had the lowest scores:
  - I am optimistic about my opportunities for career development: 36%
  - I feel the council is well prepared to meet the challenges of the future: 36%
  - Changes that impact on me are well managed: 37%

6.7 **Drivers of Engagement:** One of the key improvements this year is the introduction of a ‘key driver analysis’ for all teams. This investigates the relationships between questions and their relative impact on engagement and therefore enables managers and teams to focus on improving the right things within their service context. The analysis for the Council as a whole has revealed that key factors are the council delivering its promises on the best service and being considerate of the well-being

and careers of our staff (see image below). This has directly led to a corporate focus on the way we manage staff performance (see section 7.3).



Career development is clearly very important as suggested by the comment below.

*“We need more flexibility to developing the people we have in the organisation to meet the future skills needs. E.g. more ways of identifying and developing talent and the ability to move them where they are needed within the organisation”*

6.8 **Team Comparisons:** In the main, staff in shared services are less positive than those in sovereign services particularly around trust in senior managers, feeling prepared for the future and involvement in next steps. The wider context of shared services currently is clearly impacting scores. Although staff in sovereign services are more positive, there is opportunity for further improvement particularly around the key drivers of engagement. The work currently being done in Children and Adults services to launch the new Bi-Borough services with RBKC have taken into account the feedback from the staff survey. This has led to a number of workshops being run with staff to engage them fully in the process and allowing them to shape key areas of focus.

# Team Comparisons



The questions on the survey are broken down into the following key themes and the overall score for each theme has been used for the break-down analysis by directorate below.

Roles and Responsibilities	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health
Informed and Equipped	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health
Support and Development	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health
Your Line manager	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health
Senior Managers	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health
Preparing for the future	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health
Next Steps	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health

Key	+ 5pp or more above WCC overall	-5pp or more below WCC overall
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6.9 **Comparison with Local Government (LG) benchmark:** The survey has continued to be benchmarked by ORC which provides a number of benchmark comparators from its global survey database. We continue to use the LG benchmark as our prime comparator. In Westminster there are 3 questions above, 12 questions in line and 4 questions below the LG benchmarks. Again in contrast, in 2016 there were 13 questions above, 38 questions in line and 3 questions below the LG benchmarks.

Above benchmark		In line with benchmark		Below benchmark	
I am treated with fairness and respect by the people I work with	+5%	I feel a strong sense of belonging to the council	-4%	There is a great sense of collaboration in my team	-14%
I have the equipment and resources I need to do my job	+8%	Considering my duties and responsibilities, I think my pay is fair	-4%	The council cares about my health and wellbeing	-9%
I think it's safe to speak up and challenge the way things are done	+9%	My line manager gives me regular and constructive feedback on my performance	-3%	I would recommend the council as a great place to work	-8%
		In the last year, whilst working for the council, I have personally experienced bullying and/or harassment	-3%	In my opinion the council is committed to delivering the best we can for our service users	-5%
		Changes that impact on me are well managed	-1%		
		I am proud to work for the council	-1%		
		My line manager motivates and inspires me to be more effective in my job	+1%		
		Working here makes me want to do the best work I can	+2%		
		My roles gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment	+2%		
		I am satisfied with the overall benefits package (e.g. annual leave, pension, season ticket loan, etc. )	+3%		
		I am committed to helping the council meet its goals and objectives	+3%		
		Senior managers are sufficiently visible where I work	+4%		

6.10 **Comparison with other benchmarks:** In addition to the LG benchmark, we also compared our results to other benchmarks such as private sector, central government, charities/not-for-profit etc. Some findings from these comparisons are below:

Where other sectors can learn from WCC:

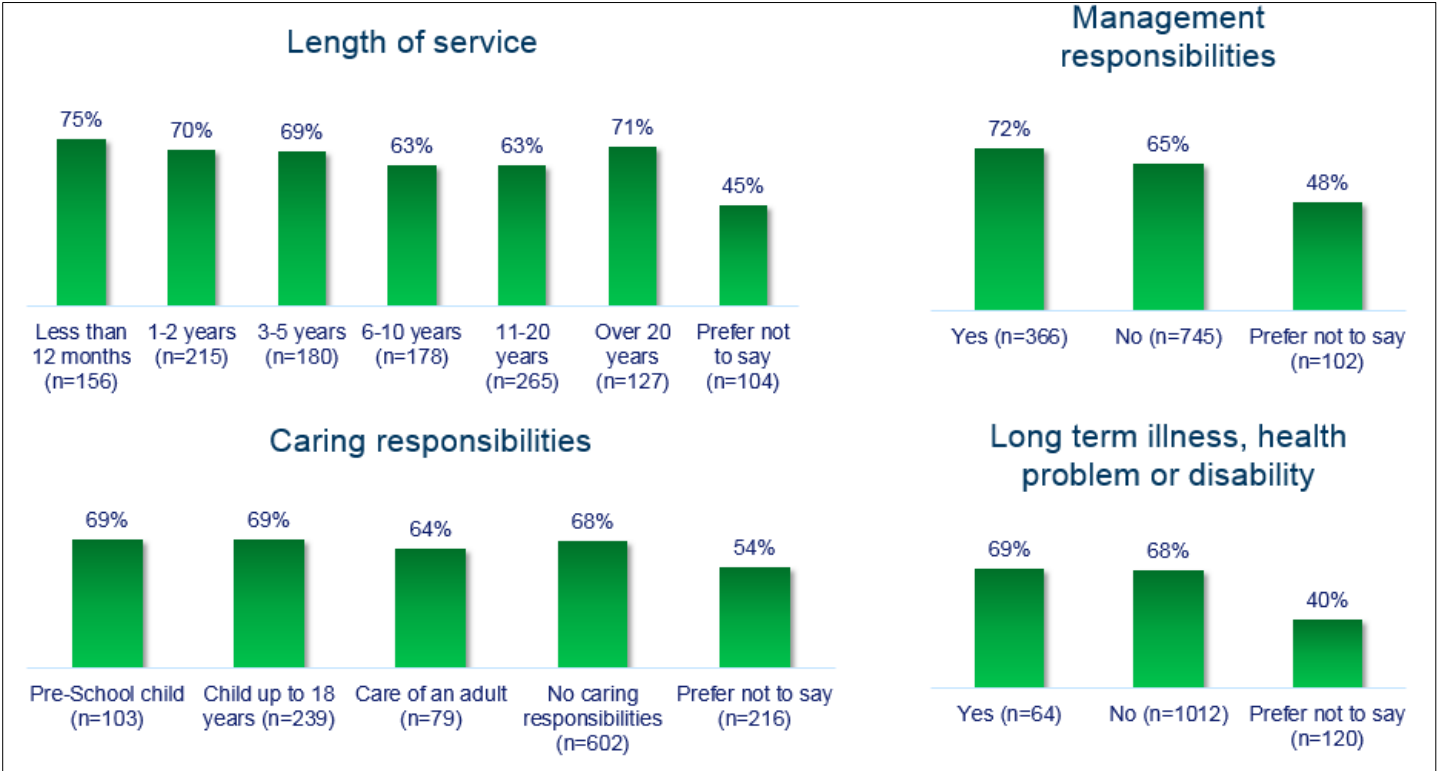
- On the question “I am committed to helping the council meet its goals and objectives”, whilst WCC scores are in line with local government benchmark, they are ahead of private sector, central government and charities/not-for-profit sectors.
- Similarly on the question “I am treated with fairness and respect by the people I work with”, WCC scores are at par with charities/not-for-profit and above central government, local government and private sector.

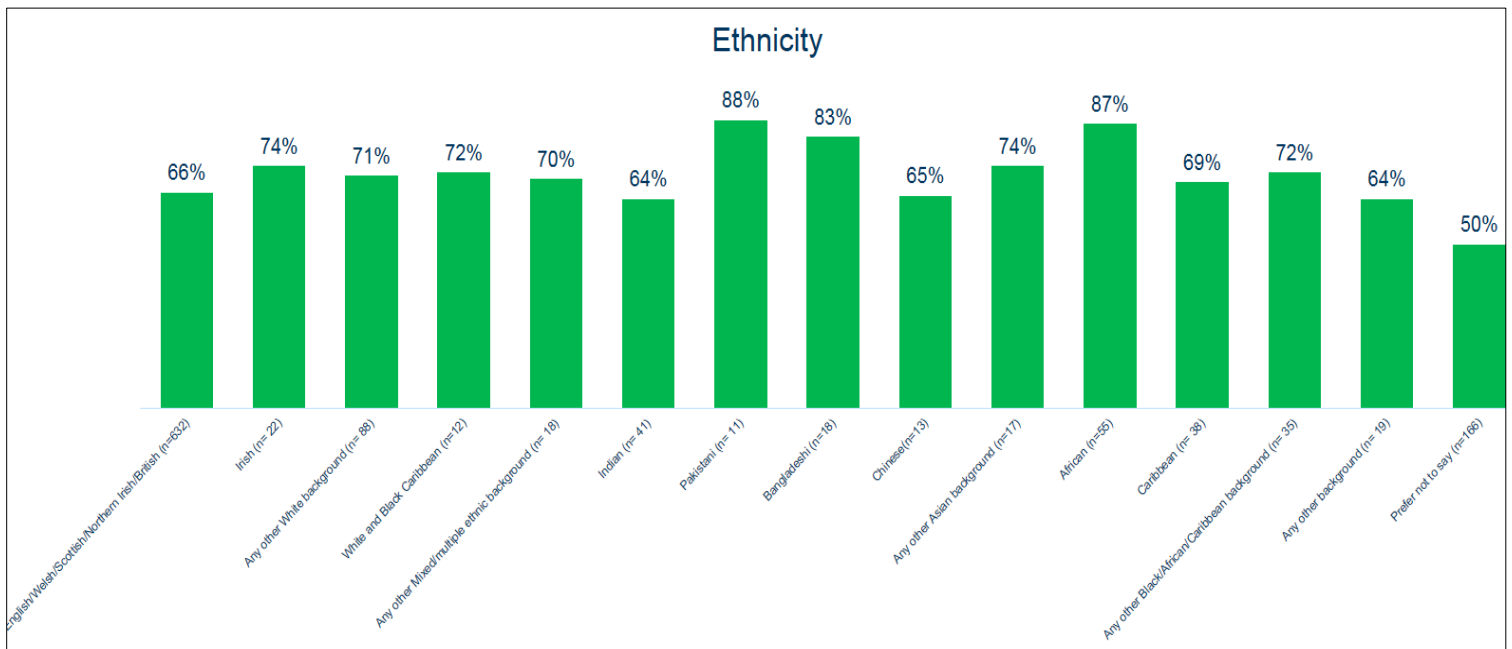
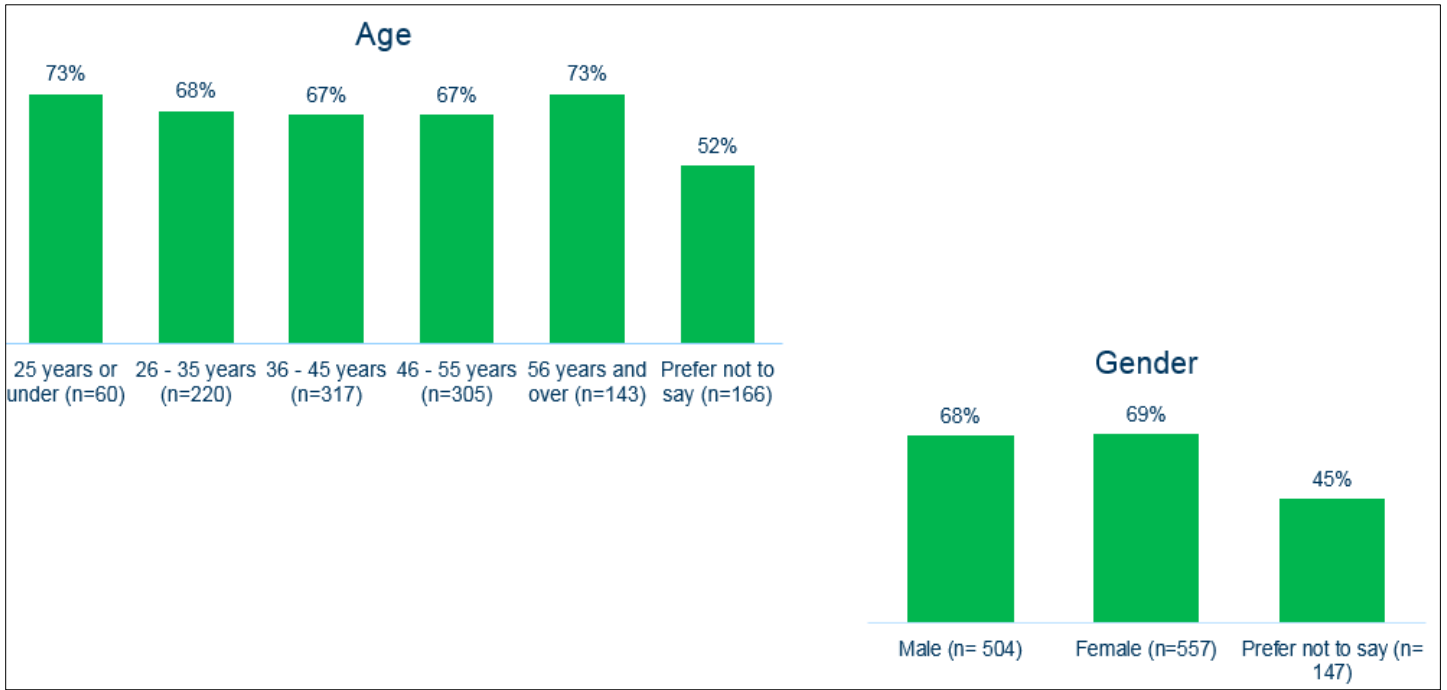
Where WCC can learn from other sectors:

- On the question “My organisation cares about my health and well-being”, WCC is 18% below private sector.
- WCC is 17% below private sector on the question “In my opinion the organisation is committed to delivering the best we can for our service users”.
- WCC is 15% below charities/not-for-profit and 14% below private sector on the question “I would recommend the council as a great place to work”.
- With regards to sense of belonging, the council is 15% below the private sector.
- WCC is 14% below charities/not-for-profit and 9% below private sector on the question “I am proud to work for the organisation”.
- WCC is 10% below private sector on the question “Changes that impact me are well managed”.

6.11 **Demographics:** The demographic data revealed the following:

- 6.11.1 Employee engagement is highest amongst staff who have worked in the council for less than 12 months at 75%. Engagement levels drop as the length of service increases and is lowest for staff who have been working in the council between 6-10 years and 11-20 years at 63% and increases significantly once people have been in the council for over 20 years at 71%.
- 6.11.2 Employee engagement is highest amongst staff who are 25 years or under and 56 years or over at 73%. However, between these two age groups, the level decreases as employees get older.
- 6.11.3 People with caring responsibilities of children are slightly more engaged (69%) than those with no caring responsibilities (68%). This is an area for Westminster City Council to celebrate as it is not typical of other organisations where the engagement scores of those with caring responsibilities are lower.
- 6.11.4 Similarly, people with disability are nearly as engaged (68%) as those with no disability (69%). Again an area for the council to celebrate as it is not typical of other organisations.
- 6.11.5 There is no significant difference in employee engagement between males (68%) and females (69%).
- 6.11.6 The most engaged ethnicity is Pakistani (88%) followed by African (87%). The lowest score on engagement is 64% for the Indian ethnicity but there is no significant difference from the average score (66%) and English/Welsh/Scottish/Norther Irish/British (66%).





## 7. Approach to Action planning and next steps

- 7.1. In previous years typically a date was set for action plans to be completed and sent back to HR. We found that in some cases this resulted in action plans being completed as a compliance exercise which lost momentum after submission. In addition, the staff survey audit report that followed the 2016 survey revealed that the action planning process was not only inconsistent but also weak at the lower levels. Furthermore, the Our Voice 2017 survey revealed that only 42% of staff believed they will have the opportunity to be involved in the actions following the survey. This shows that a fresh approach is required to following up on results.

- 7.2. To signify a change and to create a culture of action, we have changed the focus of our approach from policing action plans to facilitating on-going engagement and involvement of staff in actions following the results. This has meant that actions are led locally by directorates which are more targeted and based on the key focus areas identified in their reports. More specifically this has involved the following:
- Following publication of all manager reports on 16th November, each EMT member has held a meeting with their senior management team to discuss their directorate specific results and to use the survey and outcomes of it to inform work over the coming year for their service areas.
  - Culture of Action workshops facilitated by ORC's support have also taken place to equip leaders on tools and best practice that have helped them involve their teams and take action to improve the results both locally and across the council.
  - Following on from this, there have been extended management team sessions and discussions with staff through all staff drop ins or team meetings. Some directorates have held additional focus group sessions to explore the results further.
  - Key focus areas have been identified including areas that are both being celebrated and need improvement.
  - A follow up EMT discussion item was held in January where the EMT directors shared the actions and engagement activities from their service areas. (Appendix 2 provides a summary of key actions within each directorate).
  - Regular review meetings both at Senior Management team and individual team level have been planned over the next few months.
- 7.3. In addition to local actions, the biggest corporate response to the results will be to change the way we performance manage staff. Through this change, the council intends to move away from box-ticking appraisal form completion to regular forward-looking conversations where employees are in charge of driving their own performance and the manager's role is to provide coaching and feedback to help their employees improve their performance. This approach will encourage a stronger emphasis on the drivers of engagement by focussing on delivering the best service we can as a council and ensuring ongoing career development and well-being of our staff members is a higher priority within the organisation. The proposed changes to performance management is being developed and will be brought forward for Members to shape, consider and review.
8. **Next Steps:** It has been agreed that a pulse survey will take place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April to get a sense of how engaged and involved staff are feeling in having opportunities to be involved in action following the results. This is part of our new approach to create a culture of action and to ensure engagement is a rolling agenda item instead of an annual event based around completion of a box ticking action plan.



# Our Voice 2017

## Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee

26<sup>th</sup> March 2018



# About the survey

## Ambition to reinvigorate approach to surveys:

- New survey partner, ORC
  - *Engagement experts*
  - *Strong benchmarking*
  - *Flexible approach*
- New name, 'Our Voice'
- New question set

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ORC run over 200 employee research programmes each year across all parts of the economy. Clients include:



Isle of Man  
Government  
*Kyillyn Eilan Vannin*



Civil Service



GREATER  
LONDON  
AUTHORITY



Essex County Council

## A more relevant and action focussed questionnaire:

- Desk review
- Executive interviews
- Stakeholder engagement
- Locally relevant questions

## Intuitive reports and data mining tools

- Concise manager reports
- Industry standard reporting scales
- Online reporting tools

# Executive Summary

- **Context of 2017 'Our Voice' survey:** jointly carried out across Westminster City Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.
- The new 'Our Voice' is a **professional, digital survey** managed by an external provider (A significant departure from the previous survey that was managed in-house by RBKC).
- **Key Changes:**
  - **Shorter** and more **user friendly** and contains updated **modern language**.
  - **New, more relevant and accurate baseline** for the Council (comparisons to previous years is limited).
  - **Timely results** which contain **detailed, actionable analysis** down to team and individual managers at head of service level.
- The survey took place in September / October at a time of **significant change** for the council. These changes include:
  - 'Trexit' in shared services.
  - Reorganisations such as those in Libraries services and ongoing change in IT and Legal Services.
  - Move from City Hall.
- **Ability to carry out detailed follow-up actions:**
  - Based on reporting capability down to individual manager and team level that will lead to real and sustained improvement.
  - Changed focus of our approach from centrally coordinating and policing action plans in HR to facilitating on-going targeted engagement led locally by managers in directorates.

# WCC Response rates

2,035

colleagues were invited to take part in the survey

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62%

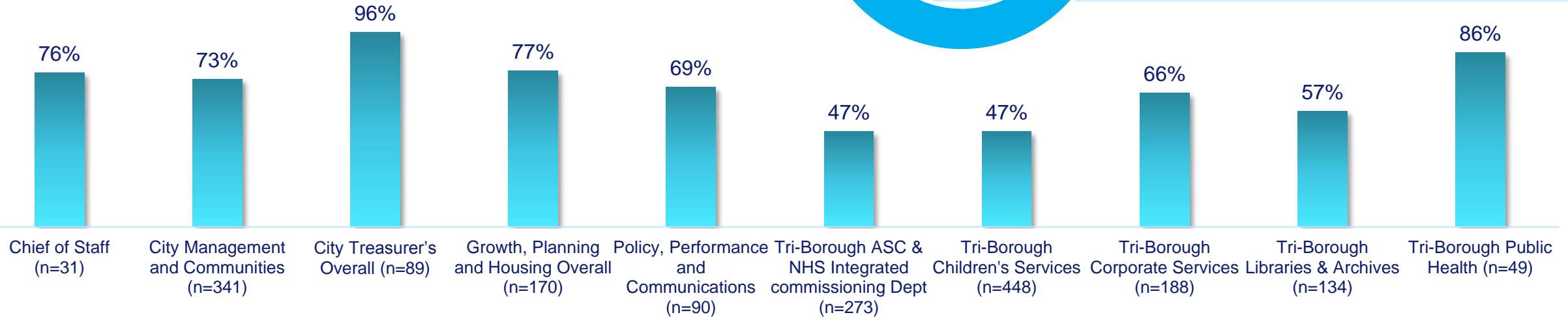
1,271 responded

-5

Vs. 2016

+3

Vs. Benchmark



# Employee Engagement



Employee Engagement is measured through the Engagement Index which is made up of a basket of 6 questions. This gives an average score out of 100% in terms of engagement.

‘**Say**’ refers to the **pride** and **advocacy** employees have for the council

Page 5

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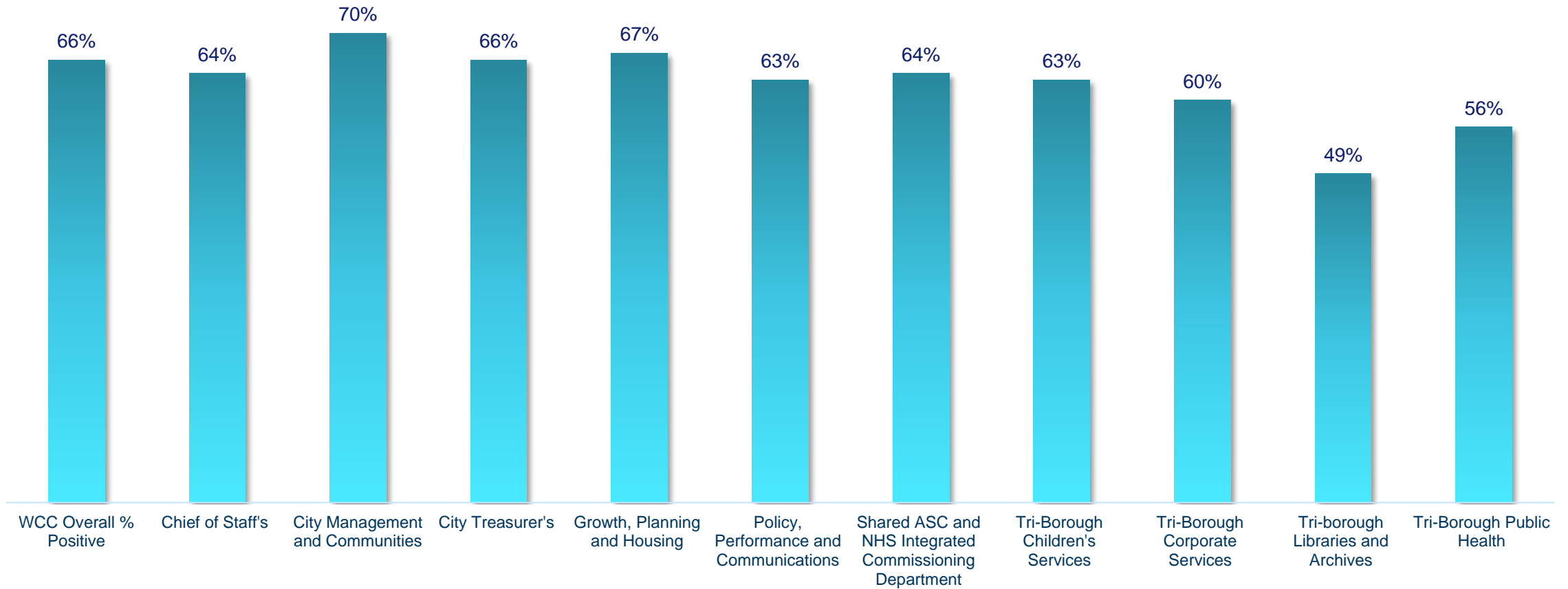
Say		Response Scale				% Positive	Trend	Variance from BM
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Stay		Response Scale				% Positive	Trend	Variance from BM
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# Engagement Index- By directorate

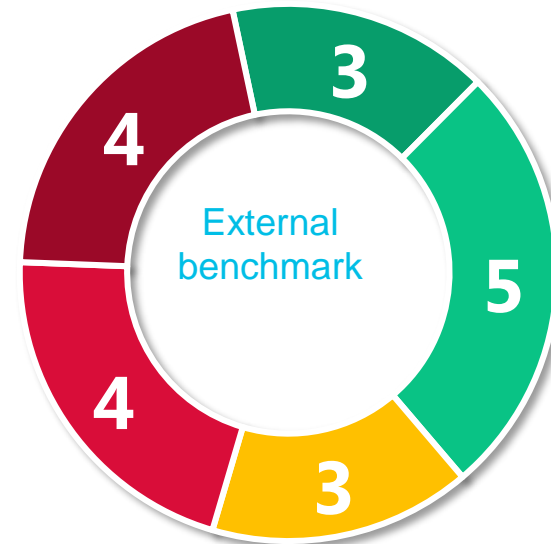


# Results overview

WCC Engagement index: **66%**

(RBKC Engagement index: **57%**)

How the questions compare to comparative data



+5pp or more above

+2 to +4pp

In line (+/-1)

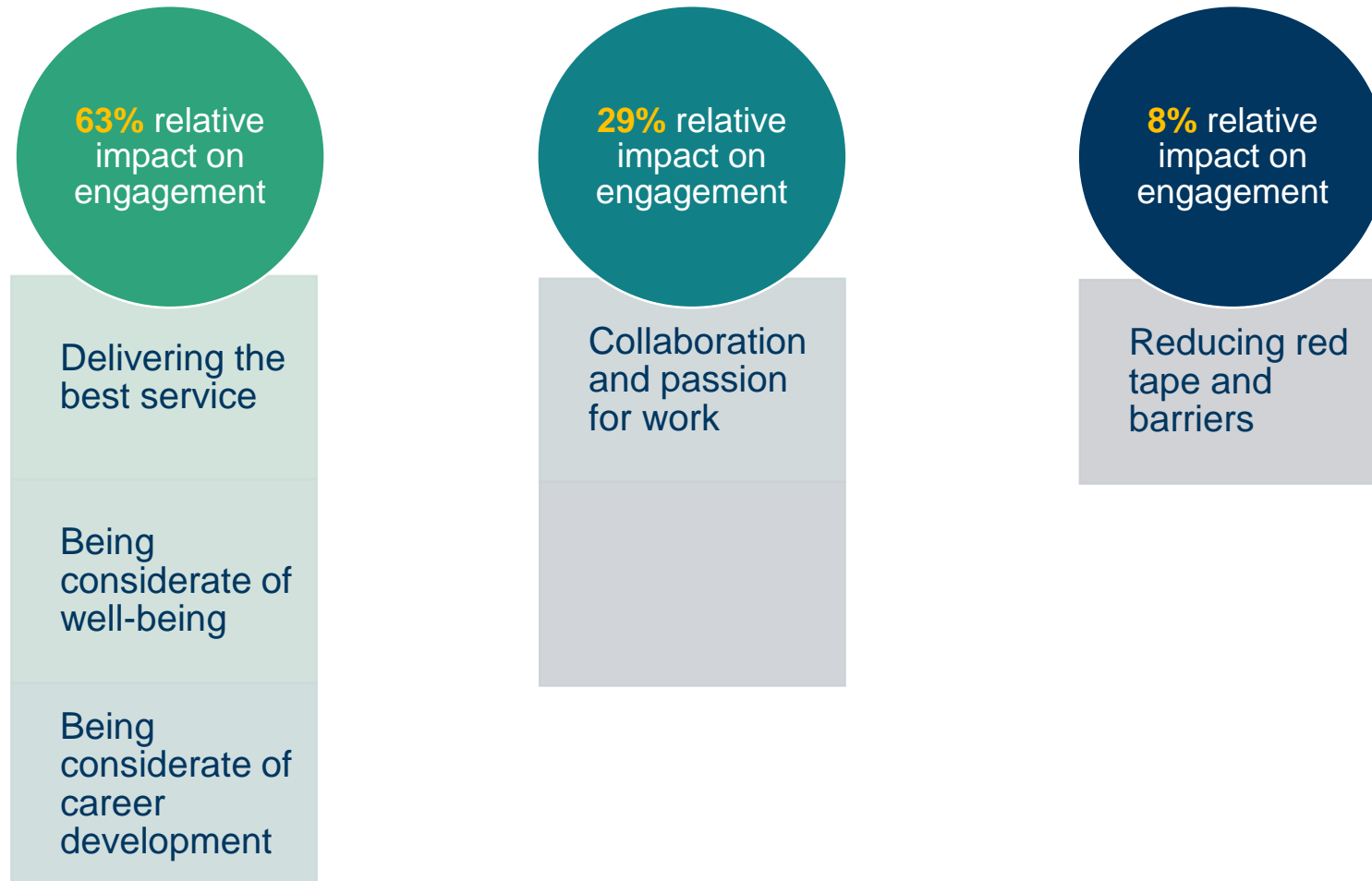
-2 to -4pp

-5pp or more below

# Drivers of engagement

Key driver analysis highlights areas to focus on to increase engagement in the council. This analysis is a significant step forward in facilitating action and improvement both at the council and at the local team level. The key driver analysis for Westminster City Council has revealed that the following factors have the strongest relative impact on engagement.

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# Team Comparisons

The questions on the survey are broken down into the following key themes and the overall score for each theme has been used for the break-down analysis by directorate below.

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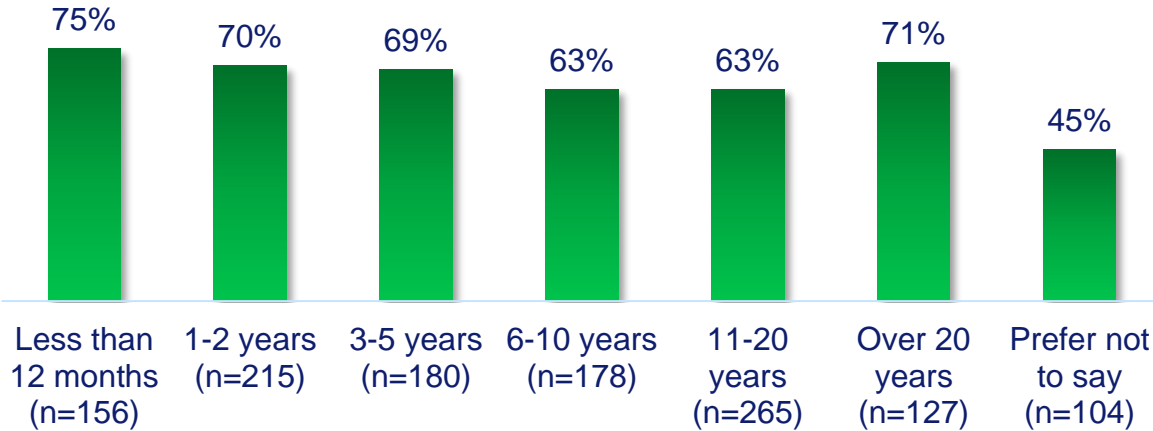
<b>Roles and Responsibilities</b>	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health
<b>Informed and Equipped</b>	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health
<b>Support and Development</b>	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health
<b>Your Line manager</b>	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health
<b>Senior Managers</b>	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health
<b>Preparing for the future</b>	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health
<b>Next Steps</b>	Policy, perf & comms	City Treasurers	Chief of Staff	Grow. Plan. & Housing	City Man. & Commun.	Shared ASC & NHS ICD	Tri-borough Children's	Tri-borough Corporate	Tri-borough Lib&Archive	Tri-borough Pub.Health

Key	+ 5pp or more above WCC overall	-5pp or more below WCC overall

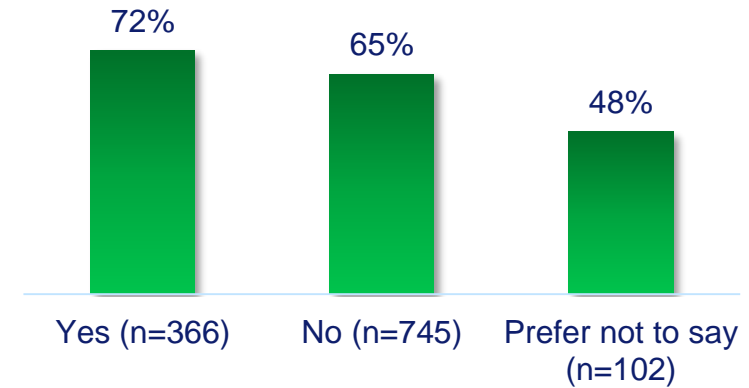
# Engagement Index- Key demographic differences

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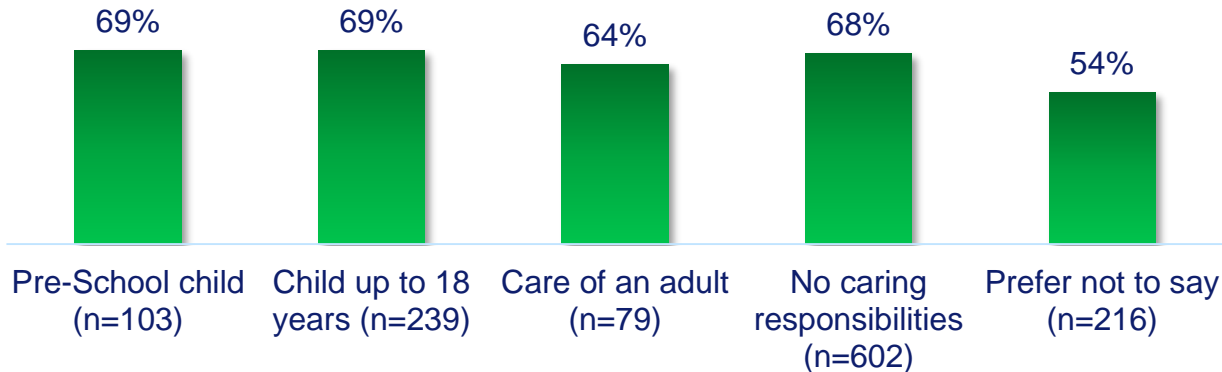
### Length of service



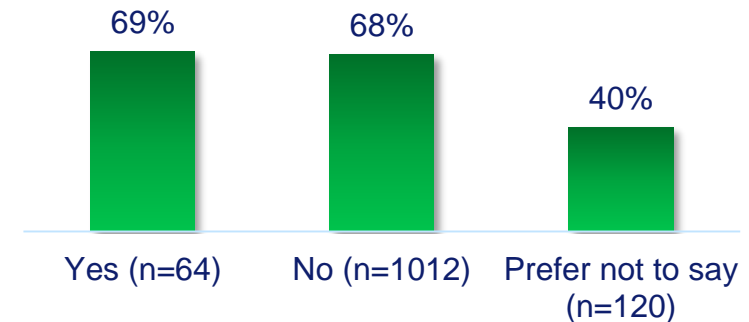
### Management responsibilities



### Caring responsibilities



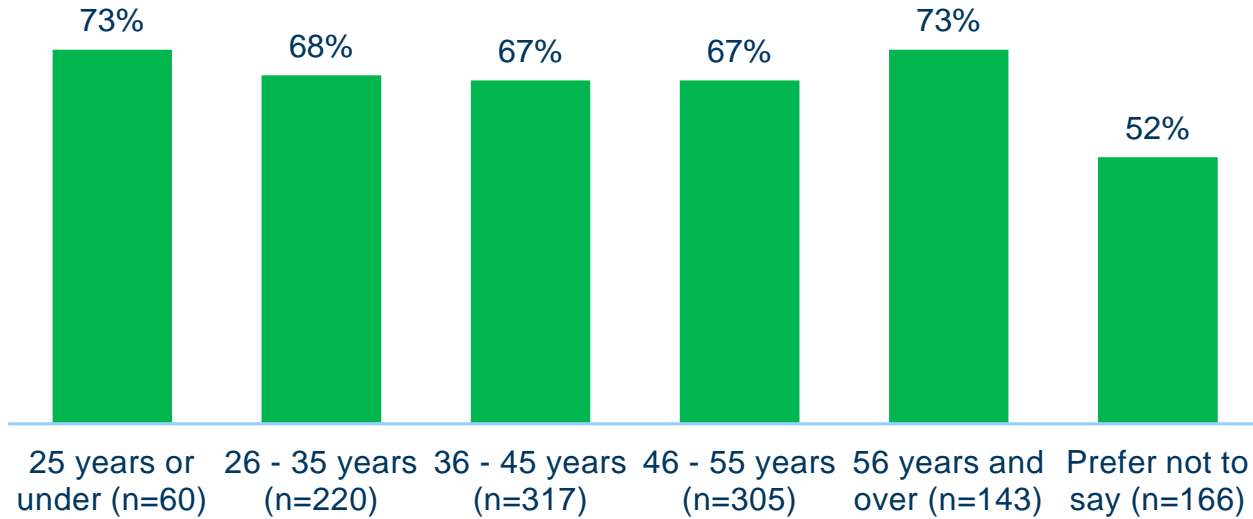
### Long term illness, health problem or disability



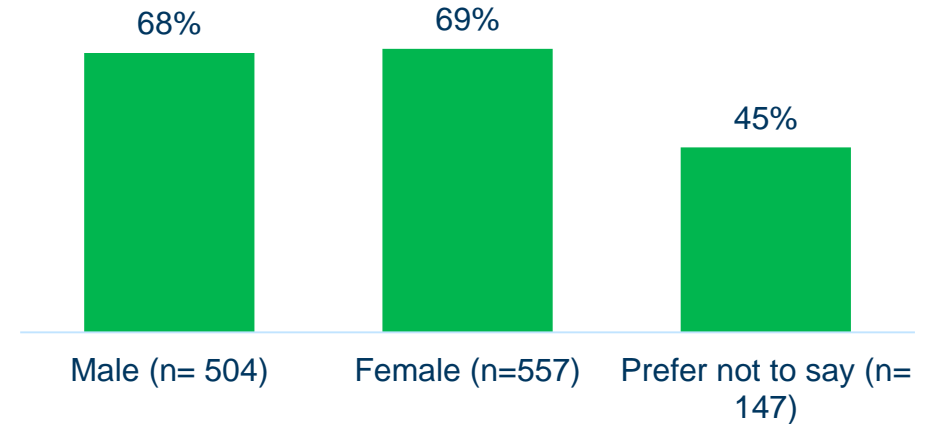
# Engagement Index- Key demographic differences

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## Age



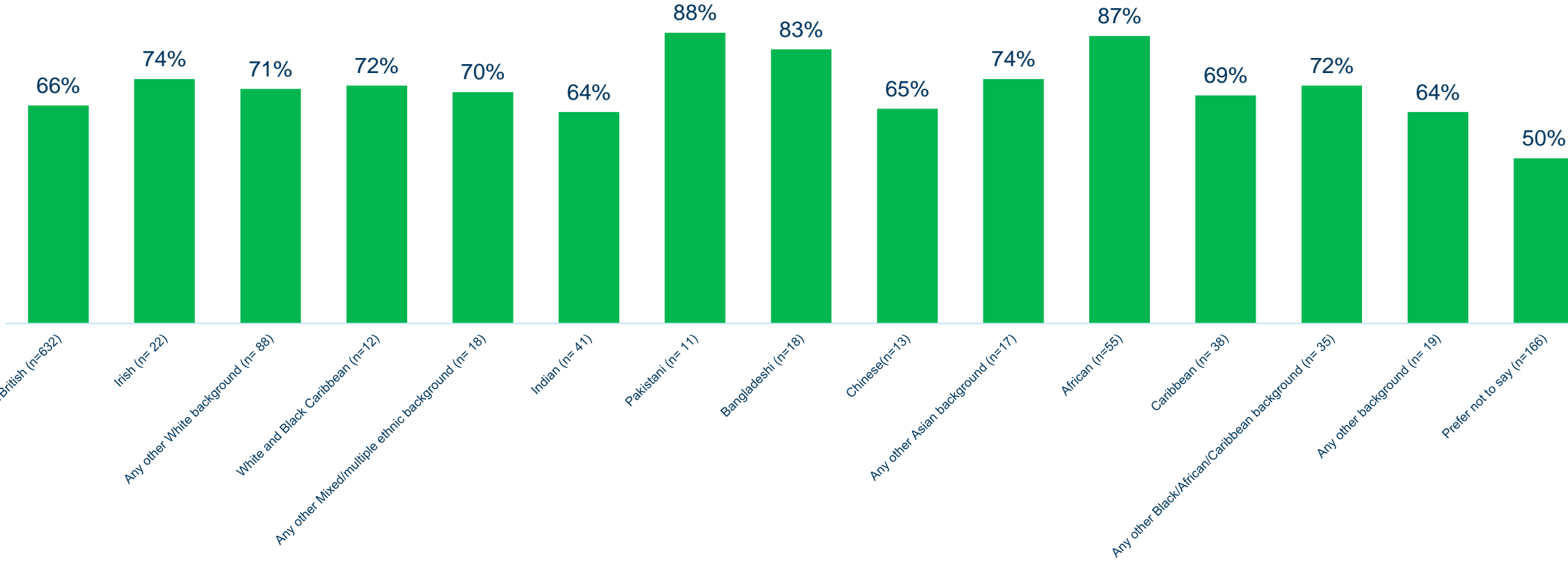
## Gender



# Engagement Index- Key demographic differences

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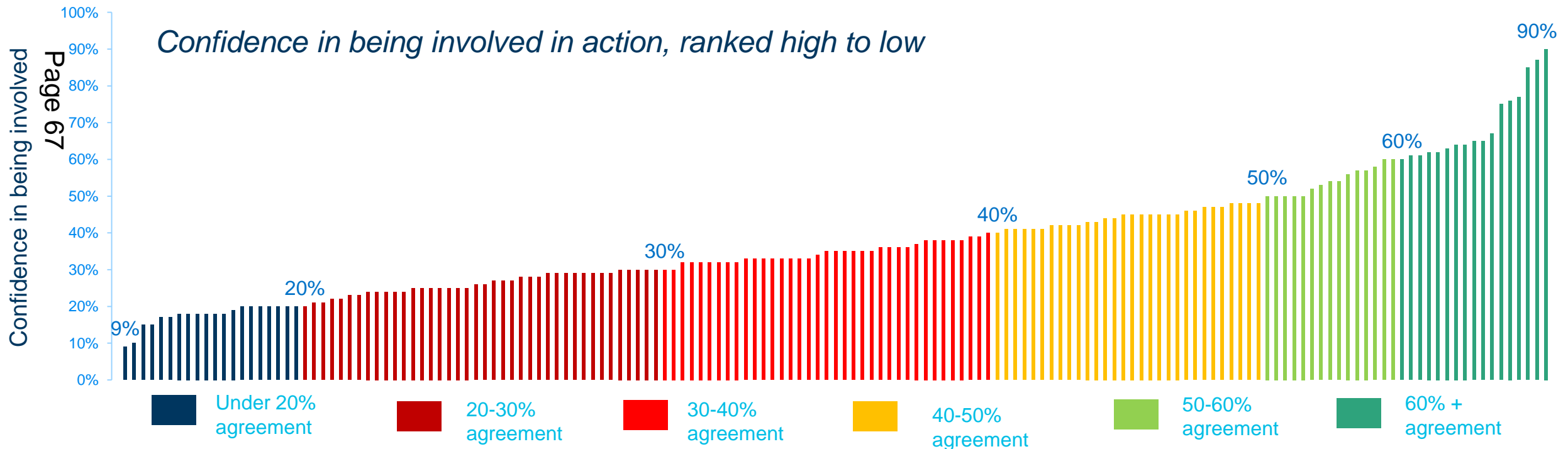
## Ethnicity



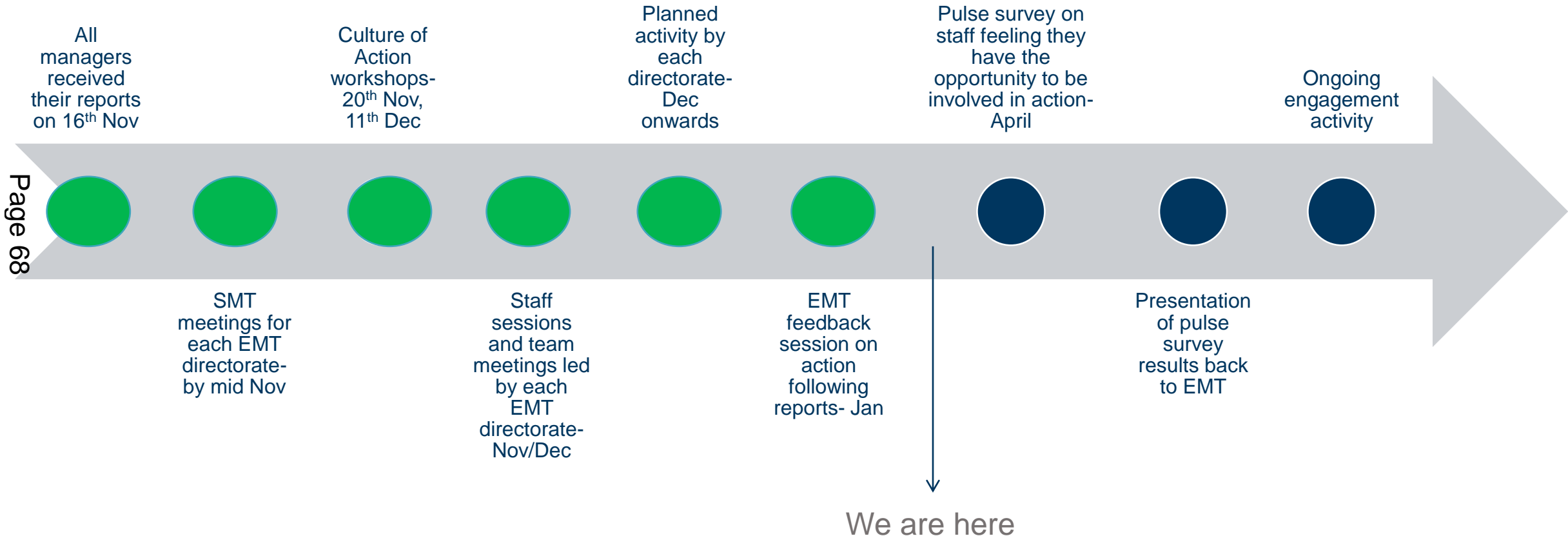
# Taking the survey forward

42%

believe they will have the opportunity to be involved in the actions following the survey



# Approach to Action Planning and next steps



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# Thank you. ■

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	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Children's Services	Policy, Performance and communications	Growth, Planning and Housing	City management and communities	Corporate Services	City Treasurer's	Libraries and Archives
<p><b>Communication and involvement</b> -Approach taken to communicate the results to the rest of your team. -Approach taken to involve your teams and managers, in particular sharing and exploring feedback.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 71</p>	<p>SMT have discussed the results and DMT meetings have taken place. The 'Our Voice' results are being intertwined with the preparation workshops in relation to Trexit and constantly reviewed throughout the new Bi-Borough model.</p>	<p>Results have been cascaded and action plans are in place in all service areas. Key themes have been included in the Children's Services Bi-Borough Vision workshops which is being attended by all Bi-Borough Children's Service staff and managers. Further opportunities are being explored in these facilitated workshops.</p>	<p>SMT have discussed the results and undertaken further focus group with each team. This has led to an action plan being developed by the Staff Sounding Board in collaboration with SMT. Team action plans have also been developed in parallel for teams which had their own results (more than 10 staff).</p>	<p>SMT have discussed the results and continue to have this on the SMT agenda. In addition, GPH held an away day which solely focused on the 'Our Voice' results, which has led this to be linked to the wider GPH strategy. DMT meetings have also taken place and is continuously being fed back to SMT.</p>	<p>All CMC CLT Managers attended Culture of action workshops &amp; discussed as a senior management team separately. This was followed by CMC manager away day where 43 managers were engaged who have been working with their teams to work through their own service results. Teams have agreed top priorities. Directors have briefed cabinet members. CMC wide priorities &amp; actions have been published, staff development network in place to deliver together. Further away days are in the diary and will include linking actions into business planning / performance management setting priorities.</p>	<p>Results have been cascaded and action plans are in place in all service areas.</p> <p>Various activities have taken place in each service area including facilitated workshops to define specific solutions to issues and to celebrate success.</p>	<p>'All team' briefings were held by City Treasurer's SMT on 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> November. Results have been shared widely with each staff member and Individual Our Voice sessions were held for each City Treasurer sub-team with team specific results discussed where available.</p> <p>Staff members have been kept up to date with progress primarily through the City Treasurer Newsletter however we intend on including regular updates in monthly team meetings going forward.</p>	<p>Same as CMC but in addition: Libraries SMT have discussed the results and are incorporating the key themes in the wide-ranging cultural change programme. Managers and staff will have the opportunity to participate through planned workshops.</p>
<p><b>Key areas of focus for each directorate</b> -Areas that are being celebrated and plan to do more of?</p>	<p><b>Integrity</b> (keep promises, open, respectful), better commitment &amp; transparency. <b>Collaboration</b> Working Together (bring their best to work). Work closely with our service users and cross departments</p>	<p>Key areas identified for action are as follows: Change, Collaboration, Sense of belonging to council, Health and wellbeing – workload, Grenfell, stress, Council well prepared to meet future challenges – tri</p>	<p>The action plan identifies 5 key areas for PPC 1) management and allocating time. 2) comprehensive oversight of work and progress 3) strategic planning. 4) communication and feedback. 5)</p>	<p>The key focus is engaging with staff to understand GPH's purpose and how all the components fit together. GPH is currently developing a 3-5 year business plan in collaboration with its officers and</p>	<p>A sense of belonging to the council (and CMC), communication/ engagement, collaboration/ working together (cross team / in service &amp; beyond), being well-equipped to meet the challenges of the future, pay &amp;</p>	<p>Focus areas of improvement:  Management &amp; Leadership, change Management, pay and benefits, career development, performance management, tools and</p>	<p>Key areas identified for action are as follows: Agile working, ICT – technology and equipment, health and wellbeing - deadlines/ workloads / stress, communication, pay and benefits, career</p>	<p>Key areas of focus are: A sense of belonging to the council (and CMC), cross-team collaboration (in-service and beyond), being well-equipped to meet the challenges of the future, supporting people through change,</p>

<p>-Focus areas for improvement</p>	<p><b>Enabled</b> (reduce red tape). Westminster Way and new model in RBKC</p> <p>We know if our staff trust their leaders then we will have increased confidence and staff will hopefully feel more motivated and reassured.</p>	<p>to bi borough and Brexit etc.</p> <p>The Our Voice themes have been incorporated into the Bi-Borough Vision workshops so that staff are involved in exploring options around problem solving and have a better understanding of the future challenges and how they can shape them.</p>	<p>development and engagement.</p>	<p>management team. So far a combination of away days, surveys and discussions have led to a draft business plan, which will be discussed at the GPH away day on the 21/3. This seeks to reflect the issues identified in the survey and plan a way forward.</p>	<p>overall benefits, people development including career development, being involved in actions as a result of Our Voice, supporting people through change and health and well-being.</p> <p>After further review: Additional priorities to address include tackling bullying &amp; harassment; and getting performance management right &amp; consistent.</p>	<p>resources, One Corporate Services, culture, credibility, work environment, ways of working, vision and the future, communication and capacity.</p> <p>There has been growth in the number of apprentices however more to be done on communicating opportunities for existing staff to be apprentices. Health and wellbeing is being promoted particularly the Mind and Mental Health themes. Collaboration and team working examples are being teased out to encourage best practice and what great looks like.</p>	<p>progression and cross-team collaboration.</p> <p>Focus areas remain the same given that they were borne out of a prioritisation exercise with each team and amalgamated to form team priorities. We however continue working on the non-prioritised areas as well.</p>	<p>giving people opportunities for career development, being involved in actions as a result of Our Voice, health and well-being.</p>
<p><b>Specific Actions taken since October</b> -Specific actions taken since October for focus areas.</p>	<p>SMT and DMT meetings and discussions. Linking 'Our Voice' with the wider Bi-Borough' model and ensuring there is a golden thread through all aspects of the communication.</p>	<p>Developed Bi-borough vision and incorporated key headlines to link to the Our Voice. Consultation from that change has had good feedback so builds on the feedback on change and communication in the Our Voice results.</p>	<p>In addition to the departmental and team action plans other action has been taken which includes; a new PPC newsletter; departmental training offer and open door 1:1 sessions with the Director.</p>	<p>See above.</p>	<p>Comprehensive culture change programme within Libraries &amp; Registration Service, change, well-being, culture areas being addressed as part of ENW &amp; Highways project, career development proposals being discussed with People Services, Secondment opportunities in place &amp; management experience being "shared out".</p>	<p>Various approaches taken by each business area, two such examples: 1) presenting in December full team meeting, compared results for this year with the key action areas of last year and 2) held sessions in the form of 'staff conversations' where individuals were encouraged to discuss issues that they were having within the department or things</p>	<p>Output from the individual team sessions collated into draft action plan and distributed before Christmas.</p> <p>Agile working - liaised with Ti to identify "extent of need" to inform agile working strategy currently in development; open desk comms developed and queued for release; ICT – Director assigned to address Capita drop-</p>	<p>Comprehensive culture change programme within Libraries which will benefit all staff across three boroughs. The programme will seek to define a cohesive culture for the library service, dedicated to supporting the priorities and outcomes for the council they serve as well having a shared identity and sense of belonging with</p>

				<p>Significant reorganisations planned in PPL and Highways as part of the Neighborhood Working programme and minor Reorg in Sports &amp; Leisure also planned.</p> <p>Published CMC staff structures and CMC service descriptors and republished staff communications on WIRE. Managers are owning actions and working in their areas.</p> <p>Further management away day held Feb18 with 50 managers across CMC to review priorities from our voice, determine further actions required to address priorities, share best practice (culture change piece by the Libraries) and the links within our Directorate objectives.</p> <p>Staff briefing run by Richard Barker - discussions started around Our Voice &amp; next steps.</p>	<p>that have not gone well.</p> <p>Since then, focus groups have taken place with facilitators leading the session and service areas have held staff conferences reinforcing the Our Voice themes and progress.</p>	<p>out issues currently liaising with IT and testing the first proposed fix; health and wellbeing: developed an early stage implementation of 80/20 staff motivational initiative; developed City Treasurer tailored mindfulness course in conjunction with corporate service provider; communication – updated internal newsletter; improved forward planning communication in development; MSP/SAP communication plan in development; updated induction process; In the process of updating and transferring, pay and Benefits – liaised with OD’s benefits lead concerning issues raised on benefits in individual Our Voice sessions, career progression – developed and began rolling out tailored Finance of the Future training course in conjunction with CIPFA; provided training opportunities for staff members to up-skill; ongoing work in developing a talent database as part of the succession planning process;</p>	<p>across the shared library service.</p>
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							<p>comprehensive transformation project underway in one of our service areas aimed at service improvement which includes individual staff consultation, role and process review and cross team collaboration – introduced a short term rotation scheme currently in the early implementation stage.</p> <p>Since the identification of focus areas, the following progress has been made: Agile Working – arranged for an extra bank of desks to be introduced, drafted an agile policy to be reviewed by FLT, working with IT to introduce training sessions on digital collaboration platforms; ICT – Capita issue resolved, formed an 0365 working committee with IT to progress the implementation of leading edge 0365 applications; Health and Wellbeing – Completed mindfulness course, it was well received, induction process updated; Career Progression – completed the roll-out of the finance of the</p>	
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							future course, excel based skills courses introduced with staff members attending at various dates over the coming months, transformation project near completion, short term rotation program underway	
<p><b>Next steps and ownership within directorate</b></p> <p>-Solutions identified and planned next steps.</p> <p>-Action owners.</p> <p>-Approach being taken to ensure this is an on-going discussion item both within the management team and the wider team.</p>	<p>Bi-Borough workshops have taken place, with Directors / Executive Director / OD Officer – co-ordinator at each of the 7 workshops.</p> <p>The workshops allowed for ASC and PH staff to debate and discuss departmental priorities and the principles and elements aligned with Our Voice priorities to reach outcomes.</p> <p>Bi Borough departmental and our voice priorities presented will be presented on 16th April in Bi Borough launch.</p> <p>Monthly communication thereafter reminding of the priorities and illustrating milestones. Notify comms to illustrate where we are performing on the milestones.</p> <p>Continuous feedback – loop.</p> <p>October Adults/PH conference to re-establish priorities and celebrate success working</p>	<p>Each Business area has an action plan and it is reviewed at SLT. It is regularly visited at team meetings.</p> <p>Following the Bi-Borough Vision Workshops SLT will review the outputs and follow through with the solutions to support the feedback.</p>	<p>SMT is taking responsibility and leading on individual elements of the action plan.</p>	<p>See above.</p>	<p>Establish a CMC Staff Our Voice network - to work together to take action and ownership of the action plan along with support of CMCB; utilise the Reward Contribution scheme to acknowledge exceptional work 'real-time'</p> <p>CMCB SMT away day scheduled for 16Mar to further develop actions from extended management session in February, agree approach to further implement and allocate responsibilities for delivery. Also looking at business priorities and principles linked in with action plan.</p>	<p>Action plans have been developed and are being refined via staff focus group sessions. These will be finalised end of March 2018 and will be reviewed at SMT monthly. Action Owner/ leads include the EMT Member and all SMT members. Quarterly feedback sessions with individual teams have been planned.</p>	<p>Continued refinement of action plan – Strategic Finance Manager (SFM) Continuous Improvement, Implementation of Action Plan – SMT and continued engagement and workshops throughout the year – SFM continuous improvement.</p>	<p>As for CMC but in addition: work with staff across the piece to develop meaningful engagement and a culture of transparency, empowerment and opportunity. Staff workshops have taken place in February to develop team charters based on a service-wide "Our Commitment". Ownership is by service leadership and SMT. For the registration service, the priorities are team building and communications in a dispersed workforce, and action planning to improve these is underway. Ownership is with service management team, supported by the director.</p>

	together, solutions to potential challenges. HR BPs attending weekly SMT's. OD officers attending monthly.							
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City of Westminster

## Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date:</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> March 2018
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	CityWest Homes – implementation of new operating model and repairs services
<b>Report of:</b>	Jonathan Cowie, CEO, CityWest Homes
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	Housing
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	All / Specific
<b>Policy Context:</b>	Building Homes And Celebrating Neighbourhoods
<b>Report Author and Contact Details:</b>	Andrea Luker aluker@cwh.org.uk

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Since June 2017 CityWest Homes (CWH) has changed its operating model for service delivery and mobilised new contracts for repairs and maintenance. This report explains why the changes were necessary and how the quality of services to residents has been impacted. It also explains arrangements for on-going service improvements.
- 1.2 The changes to the operating model were designed to simplify how residents contact CWH whilst improving service quality and consistency. They were structured to make better use of the resources available to provide support to residents. The new repairs contracts were designed with residents, to be easy for customers to use, to deliver value for money and provide a reliable service.
- 1.3 The changes implemented impacted on all parts of CWH and combined, represented the greatest level of change to the Westminster housing service in 20 years.
- 1.4 Initially, both customer contact handing and repairs performance dropped to unacceptable levels. A backlog of repairs created during the handover of contracts pushed call volumes upwards and resourcing levels both within the new customer services centre and the incoming repairs contractor were insufficient to cope.

- 1.5 A recovery plan was put in place in November but it has taken time for the issues to be worked through and performance was poor between September and January. The new arrangements have now been bedded in and performance levels are improving.
- 1.6 The benefits of centralising call handling on housing management teams can be seen in new ways of working. The new structures allow more time to work with tenants who need more support to sustain their tenancies and live independently. The new specialist teams are also adding value, with increased joint action plan between CWH specialist ASB team, the police and relevant WCC teams.

## **2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration**

The committee is asked to consider:

- What further reassurance is required that performance is improving
- What service improvements should CWH prioritise in the year ahead
- How would they wish to review progress over the year ahead?

## **3. Background**

### **3.1 CityWest Homes operating model and reasons for changes**

- 3.1.1 In 2014, Westminster City Council (WCC) commissioned Altair, a specialist housing consultancy, to carry out an independent review of CityWest Homes (CWH). The findings (February 2015) included that our service was good but the operating model was dated and the cost of service was high in comparison with other housing organisations.
- 3.1.2 We commissioned a further review by Altair for January 2016), which confirmed that CWH delivered a high quality service but through a fragmented, expensive and resource intensive operating model, which was not aligned to how customers interacted or wanted to interact with CWH.
- 3.1.3 At that time CWH was providing its services through 4 area service centres and 10 estate offices, with a central call centre for repairs, plus a head office at 21 Grosvenor Place. The estate offices provided a limited service, with some specialist functions available at area offices.
- 3.1.4 In a typical week, 94% of customer interaction was by telephone or email yet the operating model was still largely based on the provision of face-to-face contact via front facing offices.
- 3.1.5 Customer facing offices required a minimum staffing level of three people for Health and Safety reasons resulting in small teams being unable to leave the office to undertake proactive home visits, or estate inspections. As a result, service quality was inconsistent with inefficiently deployed staff.



## **3.2 CWH strategy**

3.2.1 The CWH strategy 2015-2020 was approved by our Board and WCC in December 2015 and set out to address the issues identified with the operating model, specifically:

- Simplifying how we deliver services to make it easier for customers to contact us and for us to deliver right first time

And

- Continuing to offer services by phone and face to face and introducing online services to increase choice

3.2.2 The strategy explained that these objectives would be achieved by:

- Changing our service delivery structure and establishing new roles and responsibilities to simplify customer access
- Providing a full range of online services for tenants and lessees to use quickly and easily, anywhere and at any time
- Continuing to provide face to face services locally and offering greater support to vulnerable residents
- Working with tenants and lessees to update our service standards to align with their changing needs

3.2.4 Through reducing the network of estate offices, relocating some of those staff to a customer service centre (to handle first line enquiries by phone and e-mail), and others to area offices, it would be possible to improve the consistency of service delivered to customers whilst freeing housing management staff to spend more time in the community, visiting residents and managing estates.

3.2.4 It was also expected that over time, the provision of reliable, secure online services would reduce face to face and phone contact. This would reduce service costs and provide the opportunity for savings to be reinvested. Our expectation remains that those savings will be used to help residents sustain their tenancies and live well in the community, and also be invested in the housing stock with the overall ambition of improving health and wellbeing.

### **3.3 Repairs and Maintenance Services**

3.3.1 CWH strategy 2015-2020 also covered the provision of repairs services. The contracts for the provision of those services were due to expire in rapid succession and a project was established to review and repackage works into new contracts to:

- deliver new repairs services that are easy for customers to use, deliver value for money and provide a reliable service.

3.3.2 The timetable for procurement allowed little flexibility, with limited opportunity for extending contracts and the need to comply with both EU procurement regulations and those for lessee consultation and charging.

3.3.3 Consequently, CWH was faced with a need to implement a more efficient operating model whilst re-letting a full suite of repairs and maintenance contracts, exiting contractors and mobilising new arrangements. These transformation projects were implemented simultaneously in 2017.

## **4. Changes since June 2017**

4.1 In June 2017 CWH centralised customer services to simplify contact for residents whilst offering more choice by:

- establishing a central contact centre and replacing 450 phone numbers with one number for all resident enquiries
- replacing 280 email addresses with a single customer services email address
- improving online services including a new website and development of online accounts, to provide an alternative way for residents to contact us and access services 24/7
- launching regular 'drop-in' sessions providing surgeries for residents across its estates in place of under used estate offices
- identifying vulnerable residents and providing home visits when needed
- providing staff with mobile working technology to improve effectiveness when working out of the office, on visits and inspections
- simplifying delivery of services and reducing inefficiency to save £5 million over the next 5 years
- refurbishment of 4 area service centres to provide a consistent welcoming environment

4.2 At the same time, CWH appointed two long term major works contractors and five new repairs contractors:

- to deliver all planned maintenance and refurbishment works across Westminster's estates
- to deliver services to standards agreed with residents through long term partnering arrangements

- with significant social value benefits, including apprenticeships and training for Westminster residents
- new contracts will save around £60 million over the next 10 years

## 5. Performance since June 17- March 18

### 5.1 Implementing the customer service centre

5.1.1 The new operating model has now been in place for 8 months. Following the launch of the new customer service centre in June, call waiting times were much longer than acceptable as the volume of calls received exceeded expectations when planning staffing levels. The number of staff in the service centre has now been addressed to manage the workload. It took time to grow the team sufficiently to cope with the volume of calls and provide them with the skills and tools needed. Regrettably call handling performance was poor from September to January.

5.1.2 Call handling performance has improved week by week since January and we are actively managing staffing levels in the customer services centre to maintain performance. We have also introduced technology to automatically call residents back in line with their place in the queue so they don't have to wait on the phone during peak times. During February 72% of calls were answered within 30 seconds and the following table illustrates the positive direction of travel in call handling performance.

Total for period spec	Nov Total	Dec Total	Jan Total	Feb Total
Call volume	28814	22150	23414	18652
Average wait time (minutes)	8:40	4:22	2:21	1:17
% Calls abandoned (calls under 60 secs)	19.9%	15.3%	6.1%	3.7%

5.1.3 Two events contributed most significantly to the increase in call volume compared with steady state: heightened interest in fire safety following the Grenfell Tower tragedy and the demobilisation and mobilisation of repairs contracts.

5.1.4 Our fire safety communication campaign has addressed frequently asked questions regarding fire safety and continues to provide information to residents. Calls reduced to a minimum in this area relatively quickly.

### 5.2 Mobilising the repairs contracts

5.2.1 7 new contracts providing responsive repairs services commenced between June-August 2017 and performance was good across 6. The largest contract providing general building repairs services experienced problems, and performance dropped below target levels during the mobilisation phase. The

exiting contractor had left a backlog of approximately 2000 outstanding jobs (representing 2 week's work) which, regardless of contractual issues needed to be completed. This placed an additional pressure on the new contractor while establishing its workforce. Regrettably the workforce of the main repairs contractor was insufficient to manage the volume of work received. This generated increased call volumes to the customer service centre from residents who understandably, wanted to know when their repairs would be completed.

5.2.2 During November an overarching action plan was put in place to improve the call centre and repairs service, which included:

- Improving customer service centre performance on handling and ordering repairs
- Embedding performance management arrangements with new contractors, increasing the workforce and clearing the repairs backlog
- Improving IT interfaces so that CWH and contractors have access to one set of data and systems are updated in real time.

5.2.3 Since increasing the workforce, response times have improved and the initial backlog of repairs has been cleared. Performance on completion of repairs in priority improved from 79.65% in December to 87.94% in February. In addition, 87% of emergency repairs were responded to within 24 hours and 100% within 48 hours.

5.2.4 In February we introduced a repairs diagnostics tool, 'Locator Plus', which enables the call centre agents to more accurately diagnose repairs. This has improved the accuracy of information passed to the contractor and should ensure more repairs are completed at the first visit.

5.2.5 Good working relationships continue to be forged with contractors and the main repairs contractor, Morgan Sindell have transferred 6 of their work planners into the customer service centre, to work alongside the main call centre, which is enabling issues to be resolved far quicker and efficiently.

5.2.6 The new contracts include some customer care features that previous contracts were unable to offer and customers now receive a text message to confirm the appointment and give confidence in the service, which has started to reduce the number of follow-up repairs calls to the contact centre. Morgan Sindell now also text customers on completion of work to measure satisfaction.

5.2.7 Our own monitoring of customer satisfaction with the repairs service showed an improvement from 68% in January to 77% for February 2018. There is still some way to go to reach target and the feedback provided from the surveys is helping to inform improvement plans.

5.2.8 A large proportion of repairs are related to plumbing and drainage and a 'leak detection' project has been established to review and identify how best to

tackle the issues presented by the stock in a pro-active way. The project is progressing well, with a wide range of solutions being formulated which will assist immensely in our future response to dealing with leaks and drain blockages.

- 5.2.9 Our people and our contractors responded magnificently to the sub-zero temperatures in early March. We have learned a lot about our housing stock and how it performed throughout this weather which will enable us to put in preventative measures which will serve us well in future years

### **5.3 Changes to housing management services**

The new structures allow our housing teams to spend more time out with residents and have pro-actively visited over 1000 tenants to identify ways in which CWH in partnership with WCC and other agencies can support them better. The advice and assistance is designed to help tenants to sustain their tenancies and live independently. Over 200 interventions have been carried out, including:

- Money advice and debt counselling
- Signposting to befriending services
- Assisting with property downsizing and moving closer to family
- Referrals for OT assessments and adaptations to enable tenants to live independently for longer

The new specialist teams are also adding value, with increased joint action plan between CWH specialist ASB team, the police and relevant WCC teams.

## **6. Next steps**

The foundations of our new operating model are in place and we have agreed clear priorities for the year ahead with WCC which will be monitored as part of our performance review regime. Those priorities include:

- Supporting City for All
- Getting the basics right – embedding the new operating models
- Fire safety
- Communications
- Digitalising services

We are working closely with WCC to further develop our plans to improve services to residents through our new operating models and will update the committee on progress over the course of the year.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Report Author Andrea Luker  
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