



City of Westminster

Housing, Finance and Customer Service Policy and Scrutiny Committee Briefing

Date: 6th January 2016

Briefing of: Head of Cabinet Secretariat

Portfolio: Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration,
Business and Economic Development

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Please find below an update on key areas of activity from the Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development portfolio since the committee last met.

Housing

1. Delivering Housing Renewal

In the period since the last committee meeting there has been particular activity around Tollgate Gardens and Church Street.

Tollgate Gardens

The Development Agreement is on track to be signed with Affinity Sutton before April 2016 and following vacant possession we are hoping to achieve a start on site in April 2016.

Ebury Bridge Estate

Acquisitions, both voluntary and compulsory, will continue over the coming quarter. In December the Cabinet gave permission for the development team to progress the Compulsory Purchase Order and the team will be escalating this in the New Year.

2. Church Street

Lisson Arches

FM Conway are meeting with United Living (main contractors) and CityWest Homes to work together on the design of the enabling works to ensure they are completed to the correct designs for the main build work. United Living are working towards a final design and cost plan for May 2016.

Luton Street

Detailed design discussions are continuing with the working group. Developers are seeking to submit a planning application by April 2016 with a view to start on site in September 2016. Legal agreements to be finalised by February 2016 and a further Cabinet Member Report will be submitted to me on the final design and base case (commercials) in due course.

Venables Street

Planning was granted and tender documents were issued out. We are now awaiting bid responses. Work is looking to start onsite February 2016 with completion date May 2016.

Tresham Crescent

Practical completion occurred on 16th December 2015 and the facility will open spring 2016 following OFSTED inspection/approval.

Penn and Lilestone

Work will continue with the communities and colleagues to identify appropriate additional services to co-locate in this building.

District Energy Scheme

Discussions are under way to finalise design, access to and delivery of the proposed district energy scheme plant under the Lisson Grove road bridge. This is being coordinated with the Lisson Arched development.

3. Church Street: Regeneration:

Barbara Brownlee continues to provide focus to the delivery of Church Street Regeneration. This has been supported by the appointment of a programme director, Tony Hutchinson. An Engagement Officer for Business post has also now been created and will be recruited to in the New Year.

The new strategy for Communications and Engagement will be implemented from January 2016 working with Vital Regeneration.

At the Futures Steering Group 7th December the officers set out that there would not be a further vote or votes on the delivery of Church Street, and that we are providing additional resources and direction to the programme. This includes a refocused community engagement strategy, as noted above.

Plans are advancing with creation of regeneration team base in Church Street. There will be sharpened focus on governance, delivery and social/economic transformation to complement the physical changes.

Since the last meeting we have continued to move forward with regeneration:

- Employment coaches to be recruited in January 2016
- Business engagement coordinator to be recruited Feb 2016
- Neighbourhood upkeep procurement issued on 11th December 2015

4. Affordable Housing

Since 1 April 2015, 111 new build affordable homes have been completed in Westminster and made available for occupancy. These new homes delivered include 75 social housing units and 36 intermediate homes. The most significant of these schemes is at the former Middlesex Hospital site which has delivered 40 social housing units and 14 shared

ownership homes. Trenchard House which is due to be delivered after Christmas will deliver 65 sub-market rent homes right in the heart of Soho. In addition to these new build homes a further 22 spot purchases have been secured for affordable housing use.

5. Housing Strategy Update

The Direction of Travel Document was finalised in December 2015 and can be found on the Council's website. As mentioned in previous updates, the document shows the general direction we want to take in the light of the various national policy changes and announcements. However we will go ahead with those draft Housing Strategy proposals that are unaffected by the national policy changes and these will be incorporated into work streams.

6. CityWest Homes

The CityWest Homes Strategy has now been out to consultation and has been signed off by myself and the CWH Board. A draft Target Operating Model has been developed; including delivery plans to save over £5m and detailed planning for a 2 year roadmap will be in place by the end of January. Joint plans between WCC and CWH are also in development, especially around the use of office's, adult care and the area plans.

Benchmarking is taking place with other organisations on the Housing Bill impacts (especially around the 1% reduction) and further options to support the General Fund are being assessed. A new Service Director is at the final stages of recruitment and an offer is expected to be agreed in December, with start date for April 2016.

7. Rough Sleepers' accommodation services

The Rough Sleeping team and Policy team will begin the process of writing the 2016-19 strategy in January 2016, with a focus expected to be on solutions for economic migrants, addressing street based activity and setting out the commissioning strategy for all Rough Sleeping services over the coming years.

Officers are to begin working with commissioned providers on undertaking a comprehensive audit of quality, delivery models and to assess value for money in all contracts in Quarter 4 of 15/16. This will enable a thorough review of each contract and the progress made since the remodelling of many of the services therefore enabling a clear procurement strategy.

Economic Development and Growth

8. Economic Development Strategy

I signed off the draft Economic Development Strategy in principle in November. Minor final amends are now being made (primarily to the maps and visuals) in response to feedback in order to finalise the document which can then be launched at a suitable opportunity in the New Year.

9. Work & Employment

Officers have drafted a 'pledge' for key partners in the City to commit to reducing long term unemployment with a view to signing in February following senior level agreement in January. This will include Jobcentre Plus, the Clinical Commissioning Groups, Work Programme Primes and Colleges. As part of the pledge, officers are negotiating with Jobcentre Plus about managing local funding to reduce the number of residents that become long term unemployed. A pitch for this will be finalised in January for consideration / approval by Jobcentre Plus.

Work to reduce the 'stock' of long term unemployed residents – the majority of which have health conditions and are attached to the Government's *Work Programme* – is focussing on designing a programme to discuss with the Work Programme contractors. Our aim is clear; we want more residents completing the Work Programme to be in sustained employment. We will advocate our 1-2-1 coaching model and explore opportunities to more effectively collaborate to deliver our City for All ambition.

Our pan-central London, Working Capital programme went live in October 2015. The employment case worker is supporting Long Term Unemployed residents with health conditions. Those that have finished the Work Programme without a job are embedded within our existing suite of services to help the long term unemployed.

WAES, Skills & Area Reviews

As London negotiates a skills devolution deal with central government, the Mayor and the boroughs are preparing to play a leading role in a series of area reviews of post-16 education and training across London which will begin in March 2016 (Westminster will be part of the first phase of the reviews). Part of a national programme of reviews designed to deliver a rationalised and more responsive Further Education (FE) sector, London's area reviews are an opportunity to secure a more resilient and sustainable base of providers to deliver the skills outcomes that London needs.

Community Adult Education services will also be within scope of Area Reviews and in preparation for the formal review process, I have asked for a strategic review of Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) to be undertaken, with the Service and input from a peer review group in January. The review has been approved by the Governors of WAES.

The Strategic Review of WAES is also part of the Council's vision for integrating employment and skills provision, incorporating services within the Council as well as with other agencies including Jobcentre Plus and Further Education / Adult Skills Provision – a 'one public service' approach. This will support delivery of the *City for All* ambition of reducing long term unemployment and prepare the Council / Central London Forward for future re-commissioning of the Work Programme in 2017.

Half-year performance – overview (April-September)

The total number of residents supported into paid employment opportunities from all Council projects and commissioned is 406. This figure includes the additional contributions from Westminster Adult Education Service (216) and City West Homes (26).

Overall, projects are currently performing at 82% success rate against profiled job starts and following delays which projects have encountered with recruitment earlier in the year, we anticipate projects delivering their year-end targets.

10. Westminster Enterprise Week

The delivery of the inaugural Westminster Enterprise Week was completed on the 20th November 2015. The table below indicates the target outputs we were looking to achieve and the actual numbers we did achieve during the week.

KPI	Target number	Actual numbers	Percentage of target
Number of young people engaged	1120	963	86%
Number of enterprise learning hours	1220	1462	120%
Number of dedicated enterprise activities, events or workshops organised	20	26	130%
Number of business and enterprise volunteers engaged	50	56	112%
Media coverage**			
Twitter reach	30000	343,804	146%

Overall the target outputs were significantly overachieved and the only target falling short was the number of young people engaged. Although this target was not met the number of learning hours achieved by these young people exceeded the target by 20%.

I have written to all organisations involved to thank them in making the week such a great success. I also encouraged them to participate and be involved with next year's event.

A final report is currently being produced to highlight the lessons learned from 2015 to help inform the development of 2016. In January a debrief session is being held with everyone involved in the event to see how we can improve the event in 2016, raise sponsorship and promote the opportunities to the businesses and young people.