

Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee Briefing

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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. Church Street renewal:

The refurbishment of 99 Church Street, led by CityWest Homes, was completed last month with handover to the council taking place a few weeks later. Fit out is being undertaken with a view to the office being open for use by the end of this month.

The new base will have space for eight officers and an informal meeting space for residents and stakeholders to drop in and meet the team on a daily basis. In the first instance, Vital Regeneration, the Employment Coaches and the Business Engagement Officer will work from 99 Church Street. The base will be a starting point for the team to move out into the community, as well as for the community to come to the team.

- The Neighbourhood Upkeep procurement process is complete with a preferred supplier in place.
- The recruitment of a new Chair for the Future Steering Group (FSG) is underway with a view to having someone in post later this month. Two candidates met FSG members on 3rd June and final interviews with Ed Watson, our Executive Director of Growth, Planning and Housing, are due to take place on 10th June.
- A review of the FSG and its working groups is underway to ensure efficient monitoring and scrutiny is in place to support the progress and development of Church Street projects over the coming years. The review will also allow for better use of stakeholder volunteer time and officer time.

- A business case for Cosway Street should be completed within the next fortnight.
- Green Spine – the contract to develop the green spine has now been awarded and are initial ideas are being worked up for discussion with residents.
- Recruitment to community volunteer posts will begin in July.
- The Arts and Culture Fund has now been launched, giving grants for community projects in the Church Street ward. The first two awards have been made.

2. Delivering Church Street renewal

Tresham Crescent: Both nursery operators are now in occupation. The temporary use of the upper floors by the church relocated from Dudley House has commenced, with little adverse comment.

Lisson Arches: The main contract works are now scheduled to commence in October 2016 allowing for the enabling works to be completed, which have increased in scope.

Luton Street: A number of key meetings have taken this month along, including dialogue sessions with Cllr Graeme and Carole Spedding in her role with the Working Group. A planning application is expected to be submitted in October 2016, with start on Site scheduled for March 2017.

Venables Street: Conways are carrying out the enabling works, along with managing the construction of the market traders' storage units. The storage units are being manufactured, delivered and installed by a separate company. This work will be complete by September 2016. Start on site has been delayed due to UKPN in regards to their substation and a party wall issue. A surveyor has been appointed, but this has added 4 weeks to the start on site date. Nevertheless, other activities have been taken place during this time in order to reduce the delay incurred on the programme.

A drop-in session has been held between the council, our contractors and the market traders. This was an opportunity to further discuss the traders' design requirements and as such the architects are submitting to planning for minor requested amendments.

Orchardson Street: Handover of the completed properties will be achieved this month. The homes will then be available for residents to view via open sessions held over three weeks in July.

Penn and Lilestone: Work continues on developing both the content of the building, in line with the commitments set out in 2013, to provide a new health facility and office accommodation for the council. Dialogue is continuing with NHS London over their requirement to replace Gateforth Street health centre and meet the needs of the expanding population of the ward.

District Energy Scheme: Work continues on the development of an outline business case for the project and a clear preferred technical and commercial option for delivery.

3. Housing Zone:

Following detailed discussions with the GLA and including their agreement to a significantly reduced degree of scrutiny and control the Overarching Borough Agreement has been accepted.

The first funding agreement for the Lisson Arches site (sheltered housing) has been the subject of negotiation over recent weeks and is close to being finalised. Discussions are ongoing with the GLA on the financial pressures in the HRA and lobbying for the second tranche of funding to be a grant rather than a soft loan continues.

4. Ebury Bridge:

A second meeting was held with residents on 11th May to discuss the revised timetable for delivery of the estate regeneration programme. This will involve revision of the phasing and changes to the planning consent. The proposed timetable is;

Start refurbishment of Rye, Victoria, Bucknill, Westbourne and Doneraile Houses	– by April 2017
Complete refurbishment	– by January 2018
Complete Phase 1	– by January 2020
Complete Phase 2	– by March 2022

A further meeting with ward members and residents is scheduled for 6th July to discuss the project further. Discussions are also being held with the Department for Communities and Local Government about securing financial support for a programme of social and economic activities to reduce worklessness, improve skills and address causes of ill health.

5. Affordable Housing

In 2015/16, 180 new build affordable homes have been completed in Westminster and made available for occupancy. These new homes delivered include 79 social housing units and 101 intermediate homes. In addition, a further 33 spot purchases were secured for use as affordable housing.

Schemes that have recently secured planning consents that will deliver on site affordable housing include:

- Dudley House W2 - 197 affordable homes;
- 221-235 Lanark Road - 44 affordable homes;
- 32 Buckingham Palace Road SW1 (Grosvenor Estates) - 23 affordable homes;
- 32 34 Great Peter Street SW1 (Qatari Diar) - 6 affordable homes;
- 206 -216 Marylebone Road NW1 (Marylebone Properties Ltd) - 16 affordable homes;
- 10 Broadway sic New Scotland Yard (Northacre) - 10 affordable homes;
- 21-23 Farm Street W1 - 14 affordable homes;
- First Chicago House, 90 Long Acre, London WC2 - 10 affordable homes;
- West End Green NW8 (Berkeley Homes) - 126 affordable homes,

Those planning applications pending that will deliver affordable new homes include:

- Dora House, St. John Wood Road NW8 (Central and Cecil) – 156 modern sheltered affordable homes (heard by planning committee on 8th March and deferred).

6. Housing & Planning Act update

The Housing and Planning Act has now received Royal Assent. Much of the detail about how the various policies will operate will be set out in regulations, which have yet to be published and are expected summer or autumn this year for many areas. The regulations are to come back to both Houses of Parliament for dialogue, so we will have opportunities to continue to shape them. Once more details are available, further work will be done to identify impacts and prepare for implementation.

7. CityWest Homes

CityWest Homes performed well against targets set by the council for 2015/16 and a new performance framework is in place for 2016/17.

Selection of the new resident engagement structure is complete and a launch event was held on 21st May, which was very well attended. As per one of with the key goals of the new structure, it has produced an even split of leaseholders and tenants, along with 47% BME and 17% registered with a disability. We are confident that this gives an accurate representation of our wider resident base and I look forward to seeing the new structure progress.

I am delighted that Tom Keevil has been appointed as the new Chairman of CityWest Homes, having recently retired from Barratt's Plc. Tom officially takes up the post from 8th June and I am sure that the Committee will join me in welcoming him into his new post. Following Cllr Rampulla standing down from the council and his subsequent resignation from the CityWest Homes Board, Cllr Aicha Less has been nominated to succeed him.

The annual tenant and lessee satisfaction survey is complete, with an excellent sample pool of over 4000 surveys returned. 89% of tenants and 70% of lessees reported satisfaction with landlord services, which compares favourably with other landlords and is an improvement on the 2015 position.

Work is also on-going in aligning CityWest Homes's overarching strategy even more closely to the Council's. Joint working is underway on projects including:

- environmental services;
- parking options;
- public health (entitled 'Keeping tenants in their home for longer');
- digital and service transformation, including joint IT procurement and sharing of technology infrastructure;
- employment;
- and homelessness from CWH households and rough sleeping on estates.

CityWest Homes is also continuing to support the Council's regeneration and development programme, with 13 active projects worth £378m. The profile for major works for 2016/17 is currently being finalised. CityWest has been successful with the acquisition of 95 affordable homes so far this year, with a planned 135 additional in the pipeline.

8. Rough Sleepers' accommodation services

Highlights in Quarter Four 2015/16 include:

- 60 people moved into the rough sleeping pathway this quarter, with 50 of those directly from the streets. The council accommodated one rough sleeper every two days in the period.
- 13 people moved into their own tenancies across London.
- Four people in the pathway successfully entered rehabilitation services. 74% of those demonstrating a primary drug need receiving drug support services.
- The Common Health Assessment Tool was completed in this quarter, producing some valuable information around homeless health engagement across our service.

332 forms have been completed and returned, giving us the best health profiling of this client group that has ever been completed. This research will go some way to supporting commissioners and health authorities to target the right interventions for our client group. Key findings include:

- Almost 100% of clients are GP registered
- Clear high levels of health needs, giving the council a baseline to discuss with CCG's & NHS England

Priority areas for discussions will include: dental care, respiratory care, podiatry and mental health.

Economic Development and Growth

9. Markets

The council has been engaged with the local community and traders with regards to the procurement of a market operator for Berwick Street. In a consultation conducted with the Soho Society, we received over 120 responses from local residents, businesses and workers giving their views on what they would like to see from the market.

The existing temporary licenses for Berwick Street market traders are being extended until the end of March 2017, with the new operation of the market set to launch in April 2017.

10. Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)

Planning has commenced for the next BIDs Round Table scheduled for 21st June. The Economy Team and the City Management and Communities Department continue to work closely together in developing the council's approach to working with BIDs.

It has been announced that the current Chief Executive of the Heart of London Business Alliance (HOLBA) is stepping down. A succession plan is in place to ensure a new Chief Executive is in place by the autumn.

BIDs have shared footfall data with the council in order to assist with an exploratory piece of work that our Business Intelligence Team is undertaking around the impact of the soon to be launched night tube. During 2016/17, the Economy Team will identify an opportunity with each of Westminster's BIDs to collaborate on delivery of our enterprise and employment programmes.

11. Employment & Skills

The Council is to be directly involved in commissioning the new Work Programme (Work & Health Programme) through Central London Forward. The programme will be commissioned on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions over the next 6 months and, from 2017, will focus on long term claimants with health conditions.

Another significant change to the support available for local jobseekers will be delivered through new services supported by European Social Fund. More than 20 separate schemes will operate in Westminster. The council is not the direct commissioner of European Social Fund and in most cases will be seeking to influence providers, connecting with local priorities and suppliers including our own in-house employment services.