



Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee Briefing

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1. Regeneration

Church Street Renewal

- 1.1. Efforts are being made to accelerate the utility and infrastructure works for the housing scheme at Lisson Arches. Preparation work with the new build contractor is underway to ensure commencement as soon as possible following the completion of enabling works towards the end of 2017.
- 1.2. The masterplanning team are refining proposals and will be engaging with members, resident representatives and other stakeholders in the coming months to review proposals and delivery mechanisms for the commitments from the Futures Plan. This will be followed by a period of public consultation and engagement.
- 1.3. The Church Street employment coaches continue to build a client base and are being successful in securing work or volunteer opportunities for their clients. Funding has been extended for a further 12 months.
- 1.4. The Luton Street contract has now been signed and a planning application is expected in late March. Site preparation works are likely to commence in late 2017 with building work commencing in early 2018.
- 1.5. Opportunities to bring additional jobs to Church Street and to make best use of retail and commercial space both within and adjacent to development sites are being explored through relocation of commercial and public sector organisations.

Ebury Bridge

- 1.6. The project team has concluded a detailed review of the Ebury Bridge project. Proposals will be put to members in April on how to implement a viable and affordable scheme based on the 2013 vote.

Housing Zone

- 1.7. The Borough Investment Agreement for Lisson Arches has been signed by the GLA. Once this has Cabinet Member agreement, the document will release £2m towards the cost of infrastructure works.

Tollgate Gardens

- 1.8. There has been an incident on site where excavation works disrupted a gas pipe serving 12 flats, emergency works have been carried out to restore services. Progress continues to be good, which can be tracked through two webcams on site¹.

Infill programme

- 1.9. Work on the first group of schemes is continuing, the first sales will take place in February and March and new homes for rent will be available in late 2017. A second tranche of projects is being worked up with a view to increasing the pace of delivery. This will include the use of non-traditional building techniques for new build sites in the programme.

2. Affordable Housing

- 2.1. Octavia Housing is due to take handover of 27 new build affordable homes located in Paddington at the end of February 2017. This s106 scheme, located at North Wharf Gardens and built by Taylor Wimpey, will contain a mix of social housing, intermediate housing for rent and shared ownership units. Westminster will have 100% nomination rights to these new affordable homes.
- 2.2. In March 2017, Westminster Community Homes are due to take handover of 8 *2bed and 3bed social housing units that have been built on an infill site located within the Mozart Estate to which the City Council will have 100% nomination rights.

3. Housing Policy

Housing White Paper

- 3.1. The Government published its white paper "Fixing Our Broken Housing Market" on 6th February. It set out a large number of proposals covering all stages of housing delivery to:
 - Plan for the right homes in the right places;
 - Build homes faster;
 - Diversify the housing market; and
 - Help people now.
- 3.2. Key announcements include:
 - The government are not intending to require a proportion of the "Starter Homes" home ownership product brought forward in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 on development sites – instead they are proposing that councils should seek 10% of units

¹ <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/tollgate-gardens-estate-renewal-overview> - the webcams can be located through a link on this page

suitable for affordable homeownership. There are discussions to be had with government about what housing products could qualify – traditional shared ownership housing does not work well in places like Westminster where even small shares of ownership are too expensive for those on average incomes. Therefore, rent-based products that allows people to build savings in order to move into ownership, such as the “Accelerator” we have worked on with Dolphin Living, might be a more effective model here.

- Ministers have invited councils to come forward with plans for additional housing delivery and make “bespoke deals” which might include flexibilities around things like Housing Revenue Account borrowing caps. We will be considering the opportunities for Westminster to propose a deal of this kind.
- The 1% per annum rent reduction in social housing was confirmed; government will consider a new rent policy for social landlords beyond 2020 to “help them borrow against future income”. We will be looking at looking at options and starting discussions with departmental officials.
- There is to be a green paper on supported housing later in the Spring; we will be making sure that our views on this issue are made known as this document is being prepared.

3.3. The White Paper also deals with a range of detailed planning issues. It asks for comments on 38 detailed questions dealing with proposed changes to national planning policies, strategic planning and the handling of planning applications. We are currently considering these proposals and will respond by 1st May.

Homelessness Reduction Bill

- 3.4. The Bill has now completed its Commons stage and moves to the House of Lords, where it receives its second reading on 24th February.
- 3.5. Ministers have announced that they will make £48 million available to local authorities to meet the additional burdens arising from the Bill (£35.4 million in 2017/18 and £12.1 million in 2018/19 - after that “It is estimated that offsetting savings to local authorities will mean there are no costs thereafter”. We are doing our own modelling to estimate the additional costs that will arise from the Bill in its current form.

4. CityWest Homes (CWH)

Performance

- 4.1. CWH continued to perform well against Management Agreement targets and are on track to achieve targets for income collection and savings.

Board Changes

- 4.2. Following the Council’s Cabinet re-shuffle, Cllr Barbara Arzymanow and Cllr Susie Burbridge have joined the CWH Board. Cllr Angela Harvey has taken on the role of Chair of Customer Services Committee, previously held by Cllr Ian Adams. The Board has thanked Cllr Ian Adams and Cllr Richard Holloway for their significant contribution to the company.

Service Transformation

- 4.3. Work continues on the development of a new service delivery target operating model, supported by a digital programme.
- 4.4. Development of a multichannel contact centre is on track for full implementation in June 2017. The contact centre will be the first point of contact for customers phoning CWH. The aim is to resolve 75% of calls on first contact. More complex calls will be triaged to specialist teams.
- 4.5. A review of the current use of estate offices is underway. Where customer visitor levels are low, or visits are about issues the local housing teams cannot deal with, we are working through how the service offer can be redesigned and improved. This includes offering home visits for vulnerable residents, and using other community facilities such as WCC Hubs and libraries.
- 4.6. The new model impacts on a number of teams and staff consultation on the supporting structures is in progress. The transition is being phased to reduce and manage any disruption to the business and service to customers.
- 4.7. Housing management services currently provided through Pinnacle will transfer to CWH from June 2017.

Creation of a Subsidiary Company

- 4.8. CWH is working to establish a subsidiary company. A joint report from the Director of Housing and CWH was discussed at Cabinet Meeting on 20th February 2017. The target date for the company to 'go live' is April 2017 and all new staff from that date will be employed by the new company.

Repairs and Major Works Procurement

- 4.9. The letting of new repairs and major works contracts is on track for phased implementation between April-July 2017.
- 4.10. Consultation on staffing changes to support the new contracts is in progress. The changes are designed to improve the quality and accountability for stock investment decisions and to strengthen contract management arrangements.

5. Rough Sleeping

Assessment Centre

- 5.1. Following the announcement at the last P&S Committee of DCLG grant money being awarded to the Westminster Rough Sleeping Team, we are pleased to announce that we are working with the Passage to deliver a unique assessment centre to work with individuals found rough sleeping in Westminster. Development and delivery plans are being worked on at present and we are beginning the process of resettling current residents into more appropriate accommodation. Both the Passage and Westminster are committed to ensuring that a solution is found for each current resident and nobody returns to rough sleeping.

Edward Alsop Court

- 5.2. Edward Alsop Court in Victoria continues to develop after a new contract was awarded to Look Ahead in 2016, they are operating at capacity with impressive levels of progression with some of the most challenging individuals. The project now works with two distinct groups, over 50's complex needs and younger low need individuals who require some support before living independently. In the last quarter an individual moved on positively from the project into more independent living at a rate of almost one per week, a huge achievement from the team.

Service users with Mental Health Issues

- 5.3. In the last quarter 319 (74%) clients across the accommodation pathway were identified as having a mental health support need, 244 (76%) of those having received a diagnosis. With continued support from EASL and the Homeless Health Co-ordinator, we have seen a rise in referrals and acceptances from mental health teams to support individuals in our pathway. However, we continue to struggle to encourage engagement with mental health support and we are looking at innovative ways of trying to encourage those with an identified need to make use of a range of support available.

6. Hubs

- 6.1. Following the Cabinet Reshuffle, I remain the lead on the Council's Hubs Programme.
- 6.2. The Health and Wellbeing Hubs Programme was born out of a desire to develop new models of care that provide better access to preventative services and make more effective use of our assets to improve people's quality of life and reduce reliance on costly public services.
- 6.3. We have initiated three areas of work within the programme which focus on older people (Older People Hubs), children and young people (Family Hubs) and adults with complex needs (Newman Street) to test new models of care for these groups with a view to informing the wider strategic intentions and planning underway through the North West London Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP).
- 6.4. Regular updates are taken to the Health and Wellbeing board on the progress made delivering these areas of work and I will also update the P&S Committee.

7. Specialist Housing Strategy for Older People (SHSOP)

- 7.1. Following the Cabinet Reshuffle, I also remain the lead on the SHSOP programme.
- 7.2. SHSOP is an ambitious programme to transform current care provision for Older People to meet the changing needs of this client group and address anticipated future demand. It is a joint programme with NHS Central London Clinical Commissioning Group (CLCCG) and NHS West London Clinical Commissioning Group (WLCCG).
- 7.3. The Programme includes two component parts, i) Procurement of a new care service provider and ii) redevelopment of nursing and residential care homes in Westminster to provide improved, modern, state of the art facilities that are linked in with local communities and amenities and enable flexible specialist care services for older people that better meets the future needs for this client group. Phase One is complete with the new care provider, Sanctuary Care, now in place.

- 7.4. In Phase Two, the Council is progressing with the redevelopment of Beachcroft House to provide 84 bedrooms suitable for a variety of types of care for older people and 31 private residential units that will be sold on the open market to cross fund the development.
- 7.5. The design of the care home has progressed well and resulted in a planning application being submitted in November 2016. It will be discussed at Planning Committee on 14th March. Residents were consulted prior to the submission of the planning application and further consultation events are proposed for early 2017.