



City of Westminster

Committee Agenda

Title:

Housing, Finance and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Date:

Wednesday 5th June, 2019

Time:

7.00 pm

Venue:

Rooms 18.01 & 18.03, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP

Members:

Councillors:

Melvyn Caplan (Chairman)
Antonia Cox
Richard Elcho
Adam Hug

Pancho Lewis
Matt Noble
Mark Shearer
James Spencer



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. 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, Toby Howes, Senior Committee and Governance Officer.

**Tel: 020 7641 8470; Email: thowes@westminster.gov.uk
Corporate Website: 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 Head of Committee and Governance Services in advance of the meeting please.

AGENDA

PART 1 (IN PUBLIC)

1. MEMBERSHIP

To note any changes to the membership.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the Housing, Finance and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18 March 2019.

(Pages 5 - 12)

4. CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PROPERTY AND REGENERATION UPDATE

Councillor Rachael Robathan (Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration) to update the Committee on current and forthcoming issues in her portfolio.

(Pages 13 - 28)

5. CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING SERVICES UPDATE

Councillor Andrew Smith (Cabinet Member for Housing Services) to update the Committee on current and forthcoming issues in his portfolio.

(Pages 29 - 38)

6. WESTMINSTER HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

The report is attached.

(Pages 39 - 46)

7. PROVISION OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS

The report is attached.

(Pages 47 - 60)

8. WORKSHOP PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER

(Pages 61 - 66)

Report to follow.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

To consider any other business which the Chairman considers urgent.

**Stuart Love
Chief Executive
24 May 2019**

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CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Housing, Finance and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Housing, Finance and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Monday 18th March, 2019**, Room 18.01, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

Members Present: Councillors Melvyn Caplan (Chairman), Antonia Cox, Richard Elcho, Pancho Lewis, Guthrie McKie, Matt Noble, Mark Shearer and James Spencer

Also Present: Councillor Rachael Robathan (Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration), Councillor Andrew Smith (Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services), Gerald Almeroth (Executive Director of Finance Resources), Tom McGregor (Director of Housing and Regeneration), Fergus Coleman (Head of Affordable Housing), Ian Farrow (Westco Manager), Aaron Hardy (Policy and Scrutiny Manager) and Toby Howes (Senior Committee and Governance Officer).

1 MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 It was noted that Councillor Guthrie McKie was replacing Councillor Adam Hug.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 In respect of item 7, Councillor Melvyn Caplan declared that he had been a previous chairman of Westco.

3 MINUTES

3.1 RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 14 January 2019 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record of proceedings.

4 CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PROPERTY AND REGENERATION UPDATE

- 4.1 Councillor Rachael Robathan (Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration) presented the report and advised that the Council was putting forward its case in respect of the Fair Funding Review and the Business

Rates Reform. Turning to regeneration, Councillor Robathan informed Members that the Church Street regeneration scheme was currently subject to a Section 105 options consultation, whilst plans were progressing well regarding phase 1 of the Ebury Bridge scheme which would double the number of homes.

- 4.2 During discussions, the Chairman sought details concerning the timescale for the Fair Funding Review and what would be the likely effects if the Council's funding was reduced as a result of this. He also asked if there would be further consultation on this.
- 4.3 Members raised their concerns about the possibility of reduced funding and the impact it would have in tackling deprivation and homelessness. It was asked whether Westminster could be treated differently in view of the unique circumstances it faced. Members also enquired whether a preferred option had been identified in respect of the Church Street scheme and what were the timescales for this scheme. Members asked if local authorities could appeal against the outcome of the Fair Funding Review.
- 4.4 A Member commented that a number of properties at Ebury Bridge had remained empty for up to three years and he suggested that these could have been used to provide temporary accommodation. He also stated that there did not seem to be much space for members of the public for committee meetings. Another Member asked how much the Council would keep after the business rates reforms and whether the Council's pension fund was in sound shape. A Member expressed concern that of the 2,000 affordable homes to be built, only 700 would be social housing and he sought details of how the sales of social housing would be re-invested. Members also requested cost details in respect of the Coroner's Court.
- 4.5 In reply to issues raised, Councillor Robathan advised that the Fair Funding Review was likely to be concluded at the end of 2019 and the special circumstances the Council faced, such as homelessness and deprivation, were being raised to strengthen the Council's case. Deprivation was one of a number of areas at risk and every avenue was being pursued to try to minimise the impact following the review. It was possible to appeal against the Funding Review outcome, but it would be too late to prevent the initial implications of this.
- 4.6 Councillor Robathan advised that a preferred option in respect of Church Street was yet to be identified whilst it was subject to consultation. With regard to Ebury Bridge, residents had indicated that they did not want the empty properties to be used for temporary accommodation and the clearing of this site was ideal for 'meanwhile' use which presented a number of opportunities. She also advised that money raised from the sales of social housing, which only related to studio units, was put back into the Housing Revenue Account and she emphasised the importance of needing to build more new homes and every effort was being made to move this forward.
- 4.7 Councillor Robathan advised that the Council was unlikely to retain more than 4% of the business rates and Members noted that the Pension Fund was 94%

funded and was due to undergo a triennial review. The Coroner's Court's costs were shared with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the London Boroughs of Merton and Wandsworth and Councillor Robathan agreed to provide Members with further costs details.

4.8 ACTION:

Information to be provided on costs in respect of the Coroner's Court. **(Action for: Councillor Robathan and Gerald Almeroth (Executive Director of Finance Resources.)**

5 CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING SERVICES UPDATE

- 5.1 Councillor Andrew Smith (Cabinet Member for Housing Services) presented the report and commented that the Resident Listening Programme had been a useful exercise. The performance of the Contact Centre had continued to improve, whilst satisfaction with handling anti-social behaviour currently stood at 74%. Councillor Smith also advised that the Compliance Team for Estate Services had gone live with a new mobile working solution in November 2018 and this was working well.
- 5.2 The Chairman asked when ward councillors would be told of parking proposals in respect of implementing traffic management orders (TMOs). He commented that investigations into anti-social behaviour often involved the Noise Team as well as CityWest Homes and he asked whether there would be steps taken to integrate this when the housing management function went in-house.
- 5.3 In noting that around 2,000 new homes were planned, Members noted that this would affect market forces and asked what implications this may have on temporary accommodation and the budget for temporary accommodation. Views were also sought as to how many residents would exercise their 'right to return'. A Member noted that whilst Council Tax rates were low, the level of deprivation and housing should play an important role in addressing this. He added that housing assessments should take into consideration residents' income.
- 5.4 A Member commented that anti-social behaviour was likely to increase in the summer and residents were expressing an interest in streets becoming gated, which was a complex process in undertaking and he asked if this could be streamlined. Another Member welcomed the improved performance of the Contact Centre, however he queried what the nature of the complaints were that were still being received. Members asked what funds from the sale of social housing were used and what steps was the Council taking in respect of residents who were in rent arrears as a result of the bedroom tax and Universal Credit. It was also noted that there had been nine evictions this year due to rent arrears and it was queried if the Council could show more patience in such situations. Clarification was also sought in respect of the parking 'red notices'.
- 5.5 In reply to issues raised, Councillor Smith advised that there were detailed

plans being drawn up for implementing TMOs and he would get back to Members in respect of informing ward councillors on these. He stated that the move to bring the housing management function in –house would provide potential for integration across a number of areas, including working with teams such as the Noise Team to tackle anti-social behaviour. Councillor Smith acknowledged that housing played a vital role in tackling issues such as deprivation and the plans for new homes would help tackle this, along with the need to provide housing for public sector workers such as the police and teachers through an appropriate housing mix. In respect of gating, this could be difficult because of the architectural challenges involved, however this could be looked at further. Work was ongoing in respect of the implications of the bedroom tax. Councillor Smith advised that support was available for residents in rent arrears as a result of the introduction of Universal Credit and the Council was also working in partnership with the voluntary sector on this. He added that evictions were only used as a last resort. With regard to the Contact Centre, Councillor Smith advised that some of the complaints received were legacy ones, including a backlog of repairs that needed to be undertaken, and a process was in place to tackle this. Members also noted that the red parking notices do not have legal strength by themselves, but helped in prosecution cases. Councillor Smith agreed to circulate the timetable for Planned Preventative Maintenance to Members.

5.6 Tom McGregor (Director of Housing and Regeneration) added that there was a full timeline in respect of implementing TMOs and there was an indicative timetable. Whilst there was a need to build new homes, he acknowledged that this would place more pressure on the temporary homes budget and creative ways of delivering were being looked at. Tom McGregor anticipated that the proportion of residents taking up the ‘right to return’ would be large, however there would be a significant number who would not.

5.7 Fergus Coleman (Head of Affordable Housing) advised that money from property disposals was ring fenced primarily for two to three bedroom houses.

5.8 **ACTION:**

1. Members to receive further information in respect of implementing TMOs and to confirm when ward councillors would be advised of this. **(Action for: Councillor Smith and Tom McGregor.)**
2. Members to receive information on Planned Preventative Maintenance timetable. **(Action for: Councillor Smith and Tom McGregor.)**

6 UPDATE ON TRANSITION STREAMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE TRANSFER OF THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING MANAGEMENT PREVIOUSLY DELEGATED TO CITY WEST HOMES BACK TO THE COUNCIL

6.1 Fergus Coleman (Head of Affordable Housing) presented the report and advised that 861 survey forms had been received in the respect of the Resident Listening Programme. There had also been a number of listening events for residents to provide feedback. Key issues raised included the Repairs Service, the Contact Centre, security, anti-social behaviour on

estates and communications. Fergus Coleman also advised that Group consultations with CityWest Homes staff in respect of the transition back to the Council were taking place. Members heard that current contracts to carry out various services and works had been assessed.

- 6.2 Tom McGregor added that meetings with CityWest Homes staff had been taking place and the responses overall were positive.
- 6.3 During discussions, the Chairman asked what the new management structure would be and how would this be communicated. He requested that these details be communicated clearly to Members and officers. The Chairman also emphasised the importance of engaging with residents more frequently than what was currently undertaken.
- 6.4 Members noted the number of contracts that were in place and queried whether this was an unnecessary surplus. It was noted that 17 contracts were currently rated 'red' and views were sought as to how confident officers were that these would be agreed. Another Member queried why some services had been contracted out. He suggested that the Council could engage more widely with residents on housing by using other Council facilities such as libraries and more opportunities should be explored. With regard to 'listening events', he felt that efforts should be made to reach out to a wider audience. Members expressed an interest in hearing more about the governance structure for housing and how Policy and Scrutiny Committees would monitor this.
- 6.5 In reply to the issues raised, Tom McGregor advised that TUPE restrictions meant that he could not elaborate in great detail on the management structure at this stage, however Members would be informed of communications relating to the transition once these were available as per the Committee's request.
- 6.6 Fergus Coleman advised that many contracts were not active and had been dormant for some time, whilst others were due to expire soon in any case. He updated Members on the contracts that were still rated as 'red' which was now down to nine and he was confident that this issue would be resolved by the end of the financial year. In respect of governance, structures were being tested and there would be a full structure in terms of governance relating to accountability to residents. There would also be improved feedback to Cabinet Members and the Policy and Scrutiny Committees.
- 6.7 Councillor Smith acknowledged that there was a need for a formal structure in respect of resident engagement and a more representative demographic/tenant/leaseholder mix was sought. In respect of the Resident Listening Programme, he stated that this had been a success and other residents as well as those who often communicated with the Council had attended. Other ways of engaging with residents were also being considered, such as digital services
- 6.8 The Chairman requested that all relevant communications in respect of the transfer of the housing management function to the Council be circulated to

councillors.

6.9 ACTION:

All relevant communications in respect of the transfer of the housing management function to the Council to be circulated to councillors. **(Action for: Tom McGregor and Fergus Coleman.)**

7 UPDATE ON WESTCO COMMUNICATIONS

7.1 Ian Farrow (Westco Manager) presented the report and advised that Westco was an independent trading arm of the Council which wholly owned it. Westco was forecast to exceed £4m turnover this year, with a net target profitability of £200,000. Westco had developed a number of initiatives, including developing a Westco Academy and Council Futures training programme that had trained around 60 communications professionals within the Council's own teams and also around 50 professionals from other councils, in partnership with Ogilvychange, a behaviour change specialist agency.

7.2 Members asked what the benchmark for profit margins were and what steps were being taken to reach out with residents, including young people. The Chairman suggested that offering work experience to young people would be a useful exercise. A Member also asked what local news exposure had Westco generated.

7.3 In reply to issues raised, Ian Farrow advised that Westco achieved profit margins of around 6%, although a more usual profit margin in this industry would be around 10%. However, he stressed that Westco's primary aim was not profitability but on improving communications and the income generated was more about cost recovery. He agreed to Members' request to provide benchmarking information against other comparable types of agencies in respect of profit margins and other objectives in future reports. Ian Farrow advised that steps were also being taken to reach out to local residents and steps were being taken to look at arranging apprenticeships.

7.4 ACTION:

Future Westco reports to show benchmarking against other comparable agencies **(Action for: Ian Farrow.)**

8 WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER

8.1 Aaron Hardy (Policy and Scrutiny Manager) referred to the Work Programme and welcomed further suggestions from Members. It was agreed to add an item on Finance and Regeneration for the September 2019 meeting.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

9.1 There was no other business.

10 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

10.1 RESOLVED:

That under Section 100 (A) (4) and Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information on the grounds shown below and it is considered that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

11 MINUTES

11.1 RESOLVED:

That the confidential minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 14 January 2019 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record of proceedings.

The Meeting ended at 8.52 pm.

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE _____

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Housing, Finance and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Committee date:	5th June 2019
Author:	Councillor Rachael Robathan
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration
Please contact:	Gemma Jones gjones1@westminster.gov.uk Ext. 3411

Finance and Resources

1. Outturn

- 1.1 The General Fund revenue position has seen a net outturn of £3.916m underspend against an approved budget of £187.641m. This compares to a Period 10 (January 2019) forecast underspend of £4.141m. The revenue underspend will increase the Council's general reserves to £62.783m. This will increase the Council's financial resilience and ability to withstand any short-term funding shortfalls that may result from the Fair Funding Review and the Spending Review.
- 1.2 The HRA revenue outturn is a surplus of £4.678m, against a budgeted surplus of £6.993m. HRA General revenue balances, after the funding of the capital programme, have reduced to £17.234m in line with expectations within the HRA business plan approved in March.
- 1.3 The General Fund capital outturn represents a gross expenditure underspend of £54.858m against budget and a net underspend of £44.571m. This compares to a gross expenditure budget of £279.078m and income budget of £108.870m.
- 1.4 The HRA capital outturn has a variance of £12.305m (in year underspend) against a revised budget of £113.329m

2. Fair Funding, Spending Review and Business Rates Reform

- 2.1 The Government's Fair Funding Review and Spending Review may have an adverse impact on the Council's resources. The outcome of this is still uncertain, but Council officers are proactively working with Central Government to ensure that the needs of Westminster and London are considered as part of this review.
- 2.2 The Council are also currently part of the London Business Rates Pilot Pool which allowed 100% retention across London in 2018/19 and 75% this year. However, moving forward the Government are yet to decide on the new model for Business Rates and the Council will be working closely with other London Boroughs and Central Government on the reformed model.

3. SAP Implementation (Integrated Business Centre)

- 3.1 Now the launch is complete further work will be progressed to ensure new ways of working are embedded and benefits are realised in full.

4. Revenues (Council Tax and NNDR (Business Rates))

- 4.1 The Council Tax 2018/19 In-Year collection percentage was 96.7%, which is the highest rate achieved by the Council to date. Unfortunately, the NNDR (Business Rate) collection rate dropped by 0.4% to 98.0% compared with the high collection percentage achieved in 2017/18. This is primarily due to the number of company insolvencies in the borough last year. However,

a full review of our collection processes is being undertaken to seek to deliver further collection improvements in 2019/20.

5. The Transition from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit

- 5.1 All new claims, from non-exempt categories of claimant, have now moved to Universal Credit.
- 5.2 The City Council continues to work with the DWP on a regular basis to ensure that the future transition of existing Housing Benefit claimants (who are not from an exempt category) to Universal Credit will be as smooth as possible. This transition is called the DWP's Managed Migration and is due to start in 2020. The migration rollout will follow a DWP pilot in 2019 with a single local authority area (Harrogate).
- 5.3 The requirement to provide personal budgetary support and digital assistance has, from 1 April 2019, transferred from a local authority responsibility to a national DWP contract with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). Details of the services being provided by the CAB are currently being sought by the DWP and the Council. At this stage, there remains a concern regarding the level of support to be provided to claimants when they complete their on-line Universal Credit application.

6. Community Contribution

- 6.1 The Community Contribution has raised £841,103 (including gift aid) to date.
- 6.2 The scheme has proved to be very popular with other local authorities, with around 20 Councils contacting the City Council for information and four local authorities confirming publicly that they will introduce similar schemes (The Royal Borough Kensington & Chelsea and the London boroughs of Lambeth, Richmond and Islington).
- 6.3 The City of Westminster Charitable Trust controls the Community Contribution Fund, including how much is allocated and which local projects are supported. The Trust is independent of the Council.

Treasury and Pensions

7. Treasury

- 7.1 Investment balances as of 31 March 2019 stood at £729.0m. The weighted average return on the 31st March 2019 was 0.95%. This compared to an average investment balance of £1.009bn in Period 11, which generated an average return of 0.94%.
- 7.2 Treasury investments at 31 March 2019 consisted of bonds, cash notice accounts, money market funds and fixed interest investments (cash lent to banks and local authorities for a fixed duration). All Prudential indicators to 31 March 2019 have all been complied with and all investments are within the limits as set out in the 2018/19 Treasury Management Strategy Statement approved by Full Council on 7 March 2018.

8. Pensions

- 8.1 The valuation of the Westminster City Council Pension Fund as at 31 March 2019 was £1.408bn. The estimated funding level for the Fund as assessed by the actuary at 31 December 2018 was 94.5%. The position is an improvement on the 31 March 2018 of funding level of 92.2% and is significantly up on the funding level of 80% that was calculated at the triennial valuation of 31 March 2016. An up-to-date funding level will be provided by the actuary once they have completed the triennial review as the actuarial assumptions and membership data are due to change.
- 8.2 The value of pension fund investments managed by the LGPS pool, London Collective Investment Vehicle (LCIV), at 31 March 2019 was £989m. The LCIV holdings represents 70% of the pension fund investments of £1.408bn at 31 March 2019.

9. Corporate Property

From 1 April 2019 Corporate Property moved from GPH to the new Finance and Resources Directorate.

Corporate Property Projects

9.1 Portman Children's Centre

The design team consultants were appointed in January 2019. The design team have been working closely with the key stakeholders to produce the design. The design will be finalised and put out to tender for contractor appointment by June 2019. The estimated start date is September 2019 with an estimated completion date of September 2020.

9.2 Coroner's Court

The scheme has been ongoing since 2012 and was revisited in 2016 when an Architect and Cost Consultant were engaged to work on a design. Funding has now been secured from the consortium partners (WCC, RBKC, LBB Merton & LBB Wandsworth) and now the design can be finalised in conjunction with the Coroner. The Architect and Cost Consultant are in place, but additional design team members will need to be procured. An outline programme is currently being worked on and we are looking at an estimated construction start date of 30th March 2020 and an estimated completion date of March 2021, but this will need to be confirmed as the scheme progresses.

9.3 Facilities Management Transition

The service agreement with The Link is will cease on 31st May. The contract with Amey is due to end on 31st May and a weekly demobilisation meeting is being undertaken up to contract end. The contract from the new service provider, Bouygues, will commence on 1st June and weekly mobilisation meetings are in place to ensure a smooth transition

9.4 City Hall Refurbishment

The refurbishment works have been completed, in time for the Council to commence the reoccupation on 4th February 2019. The final account is agreed with the contractor ISG, and outstanding snagging has been substantially completed. The letting of floors 1-10 has been

agreed and lease documents have been issued for sealing. The short term lease at Portland House was terminated on 24th March 2019 and the lease on 5 Strand is to expire on 24th June 2019.

9.5 Public Conveniences

An ongoing review is being completed of future service provision in respect of Public Conveniences. At present surveys of key sites are being finalised to provide improved information in respect of each site to advise of the condition of the buildings, understand future repair liabilities, consider any future alternative use and to provide a basis for commercial discussions with the market. It is envisaged that a property lease will be offered to the market with a view to identifying a tenant for viable public convenience sites.

10. Investment

- 10.1 For the 2018/19 financial year, the total gross annual income increase generated from the Council's investment property was broken down as follows:

Increase from Rent Reviews	£1,210,517
Increase from Lease Renewals	£113,178
Increase from New Lettings	£119,400
Total	£1,443,095

- 10.2 The new Managing Agents' appointment with Avison Young awaits the finalising of the legal documentation before commencement.
- 10.3 The year-end valuation exercise completed and reported as directed by Finance with sufficient input and challenge from Property to ensure a robust set of figures.
- 10.4 The total increase in the gross annual income generated by the Portfolio at the end of the 2018/19 Financial Year as reported by Avison Young was £1.443 million.

Regeneration and Development

11. Church Street

- 11.1 Following approval of the Church Street Masterplan in December 2017, the Church Street Regeneration Programme has been working with consultants and the community to create more detailed plans for Sites A, B & C and Gayhurst House on the Lisson Green Estate.
- 11.2 The programme developed a set of spatial options for the regeneration/renewal of residential and commercial property within these urban blocks. These options were put to the community for their views between 7 March – 30 April 2019.

11.3 During this time, the Council utilised 35-37 Church Street as a consultation base from which it hosted, an exhibition with models and visualisations of the options, workshops, drop in sessions and events. As well as being open every day from 10am to 4pm, it opened for evening and weekend events. The consultation team also visited local schools and community organisations. A meeting was held with the Committee of the Church Street Ward Neighbourhood Forum. The Council also undertook door knocking for all blocks in Sites A,B & C.

11.4 The four options for sites A,B & C were as follows:

- Maintenance
- Refurbishment
- Part refurbishment, part redevelopment
- Full redevelopment

11.5 The options for Gayhurst House were as follows:

- Maintenance
- Refurbishment
- Full redevelopment

11.6 A total of 310 members of the community visited the exhibition, responded to door knocking or participated in events. Of that number 236 people attended the exhibition and 75 people attended the themed drop-ins and workshops. A total of 145 people provided written feedback, including 90 respondents living on Sites A, B & C.

11.7 As well as public consultation, the Options were also assessed against the community's priorities and corporate objectives. The criteria included; Viability, Homes, Health and Wellbeing, Market and Enterprise and Movement.

11.8 The team also undertook soft market testing with developers to discuss their views on the options and if they would be interested in development partnership to deliver the scheme.

11.9 A Cabinet Member Report summarising the results of this phase of engagement and assessment of the evaluation matrix is being developed.

11.10 The report asks for the Cabinet Member to agree the recommended option for both schemes and permission to progress to the next stage of development planning. The preferred options will be developed into more detailed plans with the intention of presenting an Outline Business Case (OBC) to the Council towards the end of this year.

11.11 These plans will be reflected back to the community for their input prior to finalising the OBC designs.

11.12 As Sites A, B & C adjoin the weekday market the plans include the future development of the whole of the Market, including welfare facilities, storage and parking for traders.

11.13 An update on progress on the medium-term development sites will be provided in the next update paper.

12. Ebury Bridge

12.1 The Ebury Bridge renewal project is continuing to progress and Cabinet Member approval has been provided for the self-delivery of phase one of the renewal scheme. This phase will see 216 new homes built across two blocks of which a total of 175 will be affordable homes. This phase will also see the development of the first new public square and will set the design standards for the rest of the project.

12.2 All existing residents have been informed about the anticipated phasing of the scheme. Enabling work will start in October 2019 with construction work commencing on site from May 2020. The first new homes are expected to be delivered by 2023. This enlarged first phase will enable the majority of residents to have the opportunity to move once, straight in to their new home on the estate. All residents have been invited to drop-in sessions where the support they will receive through the move was outlined.

12.3 The Council have announced that they will shortly be looking for a contractor partner to deliver a design and build contract on the first phase of the scheme. The contract will be managed directly by the Council with close support from our design team. This is one in a number of different procurement streams that are being undertaken to progress the delivery of the scheme.

12.4 The project team have commenced pre-application design consultation primarily with estate residents on designs for the new estate. Sessions have been held looking at public realm, and the key design principles such as aspect, space between blocks and amenities. We will shortly commence consultation with both local people living close to the estate and recognised amenity groups within the proximity of the estate. To support this programme we are establishing a pop-up consultation space in a shop unit on Ebury Bridge Road.

12.5 The Community Futures Group are currently meeting every two weeks and are focusing on both key design decisions and the development of key resident documents. The group continue to play a key role in the project governance providing guidance and approvals to decisions around the project.

12.6 The re-housing team are continuing to work closely with estate residents to source appropriate homes in order to secure vacant possession of blocks involved in the initial phases of the scheme. This work has been successful in enabling land assembly ahead of work commencing later this year.

12.7 Consultation around the Meanwhile Use project on the vacant Edgson House plot is continuing. In June we will submit a planning application for the project and will share designs with residents and local consultees. There are also plans for specific Christmas meanwhile events such as Christmas markets and children's activities.

13. Paddington Green (Parsons North)

13.1 The Parsons North construction works are progressing well, with the main demolition near completion. The contractor is now preparing the site for piling. The preparation works involve

compacting crushed concrete which has resulted in vibrations. We have agreed a pattern of working with residents and neighbours which will reduce excessive vibrations and noise.

- 13.2 The overall completion date for the scheme remains Spring 2021. On completion the scheme will deliver 19 affordable homes, 41 private homes and improved landscaping.

14. Tollgate Gardens

- 14.1 Clarion, the developer of the scheme, are advising a late Summer 2019 finish for the overall scheme. Progress continues on- site, with key upcoming activity to include the installation of a new communal entrance to Tollgate House, landscaping of the new green areas, removal of the crane from the site and completion of the underground car park.
- 14.2 Consultation with residents on the process of allocating the new homes has recently completed. First priority for the new homes remains for residents of Tollgate Gardens who temporarily moved off the estate to enable the development to take place. We will confirm the lettings process in advance of the new homes becoming available for let. The scheme will deliver 86 affordable units on completion.
- 14.3 We have now agreed the appointment of the independent surveyor via a selection process that involved residents. This is to provide further assurance to the residents of Tollgate House following their request to understand the impact of the construction programme may have on the block. Tollgate House was retained and improved as part of the regeneration scheme.

15. Tenant Policy for Housing Renewal Areas

- 15.1 The Policy was consulted on from late November 2018 to 8th February 2019, and in summary it involved:
- Summary leaflet with feedback form in the regeneration bases and housing offices
 - A letter, summary leaflet and feedback form to all affected tenants
 - Details on the website
 - Evening and weekend drop-in sessions for Ebury and Church Street tenants of all tenures
 - Discussion at the Residents' Council
 - A range of ways to respond i.e. email, free post and with help at the drop-ins and from officers at the regeneration bases.
- 15.2 A further drop-in session was held for Church Street residents in April. A total of 26 responses were received, of which 21 were from residents. The final Policy will be published in June.

16. Carlton Dene, Peebles House and Westmead

- 16.1 Following approval of the report authorising the closure of Carlton Dene and Westmead, as

well as the demolition of Peebles House residents and tenants are being contacted to discuss their options and aspirations. The aim is to offer all residents of Carlton Dene and Westmead the chance to move to Beachcroft. Tenants at Peebles House will also be offered rehousing with the right to return to new council flats at Carlton Dene should they wish.

17. Beachcroft

- 17.1 Progress continues to be good: remaining on track for completion of the development and occupation in summer 2020. The site team won an internal award within their company (Durkan) for health and safety. As well regular monitoring our professional team members have visited the site to review progress. Arrangements are in hand for a topping out ceremony in the next weeks, dates will be shared when available.
- 17.2 Interest in the 31 flats for sale continues to be good and no difficulties are anticipated in securing sales.
- 17.3 Work is in progress on negotiating the care contract with Sanctuary and establishing effective estate management processes.

18. The Infill Programme

- 18.1 The Council has recently received planning permission for 6 new infill homes on multiple locations. The sites, which comprised of former office, utility and undercroft spaces, can now be used for much needed affordable homes.
- 18.2 Planning submissions are ready on a set of schemes currently being used as garage sites in Maida Vale, Regents Park and Westbourne wards. Subject to receiving planning permission, the sites will deliver 21 family sized homes which will be retained by the Council and let at social rent. We have committed to enabling local residents in priority need to have the first opportunity to bid on the new homes.
- 18.3 We have an active pipeline of new Infill schemes that we are progressing. Consultation events take place to understand the views of local residents and stakeholders on our proposals.

19. Wholly Owned Company

- 19.1 Approval of budget allocation for funding from the Council to support the Plan was approved by full Council in March 2019 as part of the Council's overall budget approval.
- 19.2 The Board is now considering the future pipeline of schemes for the WOC. This is being done as part of the Council's consideration of the overall regeneration and development pipeline and the funding available within the HRA and from other sources to support that pipeline together with assessment of the most appropriate delivery options. It is expected that the WOC will play an increasing role as more mixed tenure schemes come forward and especially in these times of economic uncertainty and a challenging housing market.

- 19.3 Work has commenced considering the development of a brand and communications programme for the WOC. Following an initial series of workshops a mission statement is being developed and procurement of a marketing and branding agency to begin the process of establishing the concept and name for the WOC.
- 19.4 The WOC will utilise Council staff to carry out its activities under a Service Agreement to be drawn up between the Council and the WOC. This would provide for re-charge of costs for the services provided. This Agreement together with the basis for re-charging services provided is currently in the process of development in readiness for the commencement of the first scheme in 2019/20.
- 19.5 In other operational matters, e.g. procurement of any direct services, the Board has agreed that Council processes will be followed. The intention is that the Company should operate so far as possible without creating the need for additional processes and procedures.
- 19.6 A bank account has been set up and a funding agreement is being drawn up between the Council and the WOC to record the arrangements and terms and conditions for the funding which the Council will provide to the WOC in support of its Business Plan. The funding will be finalised as the details for individual schemes are agreed.

Business and Enterprise

20. Business Westminster Website

The website has had 21,563-page views of which 17,149 were first time visitors. This equated to 79% of visits. The Connect Westminster broadband and connectivity pages remain the most visited, accounting for 5,426 (25%) of all site visits.

21. Street Markets

- 21.1 The new Street Markets Strategy is based on the findings of an intensive 12-week public consultation. The new plan sets out a range of improvements to public realm, onsite facilities and promotion.
- 21.2 The Strategy also includes tailored local plans for each of the individual markets. There is significant resident and trader support for improved sustainability, opportunities for young people, improved online and social media promotion and more extensive seating.
- 21.3 The London School of Economics has developed a methodology to measure the health of the Markets. Masters students have created a snapshot of how Berwick Street Market impacts on the local businesses, residents, workers and visitors. The students also undertook a comparison of how well Berwick Street performs in comparison to London's other Street Markets.
- 21.4 A sustainability audit of the markets has been undertaken. With this information, an accurate representation of pricing and products can be realised. A lifecycle analysis is also being conducted to understand how we can reduce the markets' carbon footprint.

- 21.5 A new trader handbook is now on Westminster's website, providing up-to-date information on each market, alongside fees and charges. Prospective traders can now see the whole process – from the initial application to securing a pitch.
- 21.6 The first dedicated trader newsletter was issued in April, providing traders with information on current market developments. The newsletter also informed on how Westminster is delivering the Market Strategy.
- 21.7 Local creatives are to be offered the chance to launch their products in the heart of Soho at Westminster City Council's first ever craft market in connection with Love your Local Market, a national campaign. New businesses are being given a free street trader pitch for the pop-up event at Berwick Street which took place on Saturday, 18th May. The aim was to give budding entrepreneurs an opportunity to run a market stall to experience how it could work for their fledgling businesses.
- 21.8 The rollout of new gazebos at Church Street progresses well. Traders have been enthusiastic and supportive of the initiative. A total of 98 new gazebo's will be on the Market by the end of May.
- 21.9 Finally, new ERDF funding will see the deployment of WIFI networks on all our street markets. This will be accompanied by a three-year programme of digital skills training for traders and local businesses to enable them to make the most of the new superfast connectivity in what will be the first fully digitised street markets in London.

22. Enterprise Spaces Network

- 22.1 This spring will see the launch of the Westminster Enterprise Space Network. The aim is to strengthen, enhance and grow the flexible workspace industry in the City of Westminster.
- 22.2 The network will enable businesses to be assisted through various support opportunities. Workspace providers who wish to become members of the network can do so at no cost. The providers will however be required to deliver several commitments including offering flexible, low-cost workspace - or other activities which have a direct positive impact on the local community. The benefits for members will include direct access to delivery organisations offering business support in: skills, finance, mentoring, talent and markets. Members will also see their workspaces promoted through numerous council channels and media platforms. There will be new opportunities for networking and collaboration with other like-minded experts. We are at the phase of communicating with our database of workspace providers to raise awareness of the programme and secure the first members for the network.

23. Enterprise Space

- 23.1 In summary, 172,000 square feet of enterprise space has been catalysed by the council, with 145,000 square feet in the pipeline, of which 35,000 square feet is forecast to be delivered in 2019-20 at the libraries, 470 Harrow Road, Ingestre Court and with the Crown Estate.

- 23.2 A WCC graduate programme officer, Lucia Ive, has commenced her six-month placement at the Paddington Works enterprise space. In addition to assisting to connect Paddington Works with creative industry organisations, we will seek to develop a plan for how WCC and Paddington Works can use the space as a community enterprise resource in North Westminster.
- 23.3 A London Councils' event on enterprise space took place at Paddington Works. The council was a panellist and presented its approach to securing enterprise space and its vision for a supporting small businesses and start-ups through fostering a network of enterprise spaces.
- 23.4 The launch of Pop Hub Leicester Square took place on 16th May, from 5pm-7pm, at 41 Whitcomb Street. The event celebrated the official opening of the new enterprise space and will highlight Westminster's commitment to supporting small enterprises. Pop Hub welcomed some 60 guests.
- 23.5 Plans to commence the trial of libraries enterprise space at Westminster Reference Library are afoot, with the roll out of six hireable desks between June and August.

24. Youth Engagement

- 24.1 Creative Industries Week will run from 8th to 12th July. Several employers who participated in STEAM week last month have also expressed their interest in Creative Week. The programme of events will be shared closer to the time.

25. Apprenticeships

- 25.1 A meeting was held on 24th April with the Apprenticeship Coordinator at Camden Council. The aim was to explore a collaboration aimed at increasing the uptake of apprenticeships by residents. In 2017/2018 there were 2,380 apprenticeship starts in Camden and 4,030 in Westminster respectively. However, in both cases, fewer than 10% of these apprenticeships were taken up by residents. Therefore, the apprenticeship providers will be invited to a roundtable to explore how we can work together to promote opportunities and increase the number of starts for residents.

Westminster Employment Service

26. Coaching

- 26.1 The Westminster Employment Service was invited again to speak at the coffee morning at St. Mary's Primary School. These coffee mornings bring parents together to discuss local issues. The Service has been attending these for the last couple of years to promote the project and lead discussions on the benefits of employment.
- 26.2 The team promotes the Service. Three recent job fairs which the team has either organised or attended include the Abbey Centre Spring Fair (9th April), the West London Jobs Fair, (10th April, picture below of the Lord Mayor opening) at the Beethoven Centre in Queen's Park and the Westminster Employment Service Job Fair (30th April) at Land Securities.



26.3 One of the managers of WES attended a Supported Internship Open Day for those with special educational needs and disabilities. A supported internship is a full-time work-based education programme, which is delivered over 11 months. Each intern's work placement is centred around their skills and career interests. Most of the placements will be within Westminster City Council, with some external employers providing other places. There will be 12 opportunities available for September 2019. The event was very well attended by potential interns who were also given a tour of 64 Victoria Street and introduced to prospective teams.

27. Performance & evaluation

- 27.1 The Westminster Employment Service has exceeded its 2018/19 target of supporting 750 residents into employment. The actual figure is 989 of which 343 are long term unemployed. A total of 453 residents have also been supported with work placements and volunteering to assist them to progress into work. The current average time our clients have been unemployed before starting our programme is two years.
- 27.2 The Service is developing an Evaluation Framework, this has been informed by our key stakeholders through a workshop held on 22nd May. This is to help shape how we evaluate and improve our services. The team will pick up on the suggestion of a longitudinal element to our evaluation following feedback from the CM Scrutiny Committee regarding the tracking of beneficiaries.

28. Partnerships and Innovation

- 28.1 The tender for the WES Greener Jobs Project has now gone live. This opportunity is an open tender available to any suitable bidder. The project will support 41 Westminster residents into work over a two-year period. This is through horticultural training, mentoring, employability support and accreditation. The horticultural activity will take place within the Paddington Opportunity Area. The closing date for applicants was 17th May, an assessment panel will then work through the submitted bids with the hopes of appointing a provider in June.

- 28.2 An opportunity to regenerate an old plinth in Victoria embarkment has arisen. The Economy Team has developed an initial options appraisal with input from Derwent London, Northbank and Silverfleet and will now draft a project plan to transform the area into a more valuable space.

29. Employer relations & Social Value

- 29.1 Council suppliers that have partnered with WES over the past month include RMG, Marston, Matix, Morgan Sindall and Oakray. All have committed a significant number of volunteering hours for the MyWestminster Day in June. The Employment Service will take a stall there on the day.
- 29.2 The Westminster Employment Service held a responsible business breakfast event on the 4th April 2019 at the Lord Mayor's Parlour at City Hall. The event was attended by council partners, including our suppliers (Everyone Active, United Living, Matrix and many others), local developers (Crown Estate, Landsec) and contractors (including Balfour Beatty, Sir Robert McAlpine, Multiplex). The aims were to celebrate joint social value successes with partners, to highlight the council's priorities connected to social value over the next 12 months and to encourage businesses working with the council.
- 29.3 Feedback from our recent survey will be used to inform our plans for the year ahead, the headlines include:
- The clear majority of businesses interested in a council contract said they would like to engage with the Economy team at the pre-tender stage to gain a better understanding of social value priorities in Westminster
 - 90% of businesses would like ongoing support from the Economy team to deliver social value outcomes in Westminster
 - 90% felt they would benefit from regular social value networking events where they could share ideas and best practice
 - 28 businesses requested a meeting with a member of the Economy team
- 29.4 The team has put in considerable work to design a social recruitment offer for hospitality businesses. Our design is summarised below. Insight sessions have been held with a wide range of businesses including hoteliers, restaurateurs and retailers with the support from BIDs and Westminster Kingsway College. Our emerging ideas for the service have been very well received by stakeholders and the Cabinet Member will be briefed in due course.

Service Design Inputs



29.5 **Section 106 and local benefit.** The Westminster Employment Service and colleagues in the Policy Team have completed working on expanding and tightening up guidance on an existing s106 policy. This is with the aim of increasing local benefit resulting from developments in the City. This new policy was approved by Cllr Beddoe in April and comes in to practice from May. <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/westminsters-city-plan-strategic-policies>

CASE STUDY



Mary Therese-Nangle is a Personal Caseworker for the Homeless, Employment & Learning Project (HELP) within the Westminster Employment Service (WES), working with those residents who are at risk of homelessness.

Mary-Therese helps clients move into sustainable employment and intermediate opportunities, i.e. placements, training, qualifications and voluntary work. This service involves providing advice and support to help clients achieve financial stability and sustain accommodation, where there is a threat of homelessness. Individuals are empowered to keep track, budget, choose financial products, plan and stay informed.

Please find below a case study detailing some of Maria Therese's recent work. Please note that the name of the client has been changed to protect her privacy.

Mary-Therese, HELP Personal Caseworker

HELP support empowers a client to have a brighter future

Kiya was referred by Housing Services, having been registered homeless with her boyfriend at the time. Kiya and her boyfriend has been asked to leave her boyfriend's mother's house following

several arguments. Following this, they were both sofa-surfing at a friend's house and even slept in her boyfriend's work van, at which point their relationship ended.

In 2016, Kiya came to the UK to study. She was told by her family that after her studies she should return to Dubai to have an arranged marriage. Kiya refused the marriage proposal and is now estranged from her family. She therefore applied for indefinite leave to remain in the UK after her course finished and was granted this last year.

Kiya graduated last year with an MSc in Structural Design, Construction Management with Sustainability and Mary-Therese referred her to our construction brokerage lead - Soyful Alom - to assist her in finding a job within her studied field. Kiya was subsequently offered a job as a graduate structural engineer.

As Kiya had not yet claimed any benefits, Mary-Therese assisted her with a one-month travelcard, to enable her to get to work until she received her first pay check. Kiya was also referred to Smart Works, as she had no work clothing due to most of this being left behind at her previous residence (her ex-boyfriends mother's house).

Kiya is enjoying her new job role and requires no further assistance. However, Mary-Therese will be checking in with her on a regular basis. Thanks go to Mary-Therese and our best wishes to Kiya. She has an exciting future ahead of her.



City of Westminster

Housing, Finance and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny
Committee

Committee date:

5 June 2019

Author:

Councillor Andrew Smith

Portfolio:

Cabinet Member for Housing Services

Priorities for 2019

- Develop and improve engagement between Westminster City Council and our housing residents.
- To continually ensure improvements in performance, particularly on repairs and customer services with our housing stock is maintained.
- Ensure the new robust and stringent parking enforcement system is implemented across the Westminster City Council housing estates as a priority.
- Ensure fire safety programmes are implemented to the Council's housing stock.
- To improve and expand on services around homelessness prevention.
- To ensure our strategic policy goals reflect our commitment to affordable, safe and attainable housing provision and standards for our residents.

1. Westminster Housing Services

1.1 Resident Services

Contact Centre

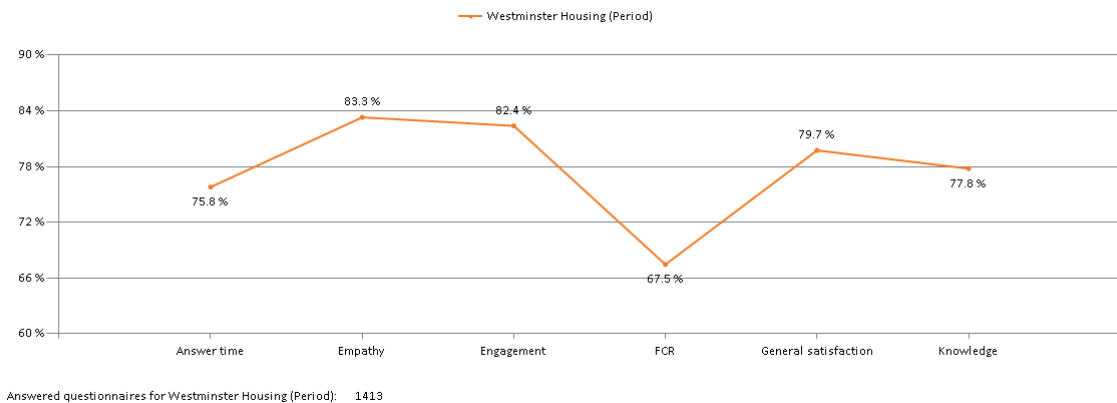
The steady improvement in call handling performance achieved in Q3 continued into Q4 and the highest levels of performance to date were recorded. Customer contact volumes declined over the same period with a total of 56,230 calls offered in Q4, a reduction of 6,854 compared to Q3.

The seasonal nature of repairs demand has had an impact on call volumes but the reduction in volumes can also be attributed to improvements delivered in both the Contact Centre and Repairs teams.

84% of calls were answered within 30 seconds – above the target of 70%, and 96% of all calls offered were answered. Average waiting time was 30 seconds.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	April-June	July-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-March
Calls Offered	58,988	59,751	63,084	56,230
Calls Answered	55,313	50,543	51,692	54,098
Answered %	94%	85%	82%	96%
Answered %	94%	85%	82%	96%
SLA (70/30)	68.00%	47.90%	50.10%	84%

A total of 1,413 Customer Satisfaction Surveys were completed on contact centre performance and satisfaction and engagement levels remained very positive. Every negative comment is tracked and acted on to drive further improvements in satisfaction and to resolve any on-going customer concerns.



A total of 13,544 customer enquiries were received via email with 99% of these responded to within 48 hours.

Whilst there has been a sustained improvement in performance across the Contact Centre team, the focus now is on improving the quality of customer interactions. A new quality framework has been implemented and the Team Managers' focus in Q1 will be driving the quality of calls and further improving Customer Satisfaction. This will be complemented by a Speech Analytics project that will help us to identify further opportunities for improving the Customer experience when engaging with our teams across channels.

Complaints performance also improved in Q4 with 193 complaints logged and 98% responded to within target.

The highest volume service is repairs and 69% of all complaints were in relation to that service.

As part of the integration of housing services back into the council, the housing complaints team has adopted iCasework, the council's complaints management database. This went live in April and early results are very positive.

As part of improving the service to our residents, we have also developed and rolled out a new customer engagement channel via Twitter (@WCC Housing) to handle any queries our residents may have about their home – e.g. repair issues. Early anecdotal feedback suggests this has proved useful for residents with an overall positive response.

1.2 Anti-Social Behaviour Services (ASB)

Satisfaction with case handling satisfaction was recorded as 74% for 2018/19 against a target of 83%. In March the team achieved 93% case handling satisfaction, with 14 out of 15 survey responses being satisfied.

The top three issues making up the ASB caseload at the end of the year were:

1. Noise – 65 cases
2. Drug dealing/misuse – 32 cases
3. Verbal abuse/harassment – 31 cases

Noise nuisance complaints make up over a third of ASB cases and can be time consuming to resolve. They are often caused by differences in lifestyle which can be resolved by residents without the need for ASB services. The ASB team have worked hard to reduce the number of noise cases which require intervention and where appropriate, residents have been encouraged to communicate with their neighbours when noise becomes an issue. An external mediation service is also available to help residents to resolve difficult situations to the satisfaction of both parties.

The team have increased their visibility on estates through ongoing work which has included attending "Westminster on Wheels" and through conducting multi-agency initiatives such as joint door knocks, walkabouts and weapon sweeps. This has helped residents to report ASB and gain access to specialist services.

For residents who prefer to report ASB electronically, the online reporting form has been made more user friendly and is being tested prior to launch in June.

1.3 Rent collection

At the end of March 2019, current tenancy rent arrears stood at £1,040,622 which represents just 1.28% of the debit.

This performance is achieved through helping tenants to sustain their tenancies and just 11 evictions were carried out in 2018/19 due to rent arrears. The income management team works in partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to ensure tenants have access to money management advice, debt counselling and help with claiming benefits.

At the end of March 2019, 688 tenants were in receipt of Universal Credit (UC), an increase from 605 cases at the end of February 2019. The arrears for UC cases at the end of March 2019 totalled £341,190.74 with 59.74% of UC cases in arrears.

A total of £229,485 was collected in former tenant income against a target of £150,000, exceeding the target set by £79,485.

1.4 Estate Services

The compliance team were out and about on estates completing 780 site visits in April 2019 and achieving 100% completion of block/estate inspections due. The standard of cleaning was scored at 97.20% and 96.25% for grounds maintenance.

A programme of works to ensure playgrounds managed by the housing service across the borough are safe and in good condition is progressing well.

A programme of works has also started on the welfare facilities across the borough for estate services contractors to ensure the conditions are fit for purpose.

1.5 Local Offer

The project to pilot a 'local offer' on the Brunel Estate has now moved into business as usual phase and we are updating residents on all the issues that were raised that made it into the offer. This will take place during June. The local offer is a framework of targets and priorities agreed with residents locally. Performance against the framework is then monitored and reported to the local neighbourhood.

The process has been adapted in response to residents' feedback to focus better on their priorities. This includes establishing an ASB specific action plan for the Brunel estate.

Members will be invited to a closing presentation on the Local Offer in June on how it worked in practice, and the plans for rolling the framework out across the rest of the estates this year.

The Brunel local offer will continue with a set of agreed targets and priorities, and a monthly monitoring regime in place. An update to all residents of the estate will be provided shortly. Longer term we will be looking at the resources needed to address the priorities identified on estates.

1.6 Tenancy Reviews

The purpose of the reviews is to ensure residents receive the support they need to sustain their tenancies as well as to identify potential cases of tenancy fraud. 500 tenancy reviews were completed in 2018/19, of which 32 were statutory, flexible tenancy reviews.

This year the housing management teams will continue to work with vulnerable tenants through a range of projects. A sample of tenants who are not in regular contact with housing services will also be contacted to ensure they receive the support they need and also to identify any cases where non-engagement might be an indication of something less positive, such as tenancy fraud or other wrongdoing.

1.7 Parking

Work to implement Traffic Management Orders remains on track, with Phase 1a at Churchill Gardens now in force. Road markings and signage are currently being snagged, and patrols are enforcing throughout controlled hours.

As part of the standard roll-out process, warning notices (PCNs without a fine attached) are being issued, targeted primarily at vehicles not displaying any permit at all, or parking on double yellow lines.

Letters were sent to residents and an up-to-date FAQs is on the Westminster Housing website. Full PCN issue (with fines) started on Tuesday 21 May.

At the time of writing, statutory consultation is also in progress for Phase 1B (Brunel, Wessex and Little Venice estates) with a closing date of 28 May 2019. Drop-in sessions were held at the West Area Service Centre for a week from the 20 – 24 May 2019.

Statutory consultation for the next Phase 2, including Church Street and St Johns Wood is currently scheduled for the end of May/beginning of June, subject to the volume of representations received for Phase 1B, which may require additional resources to complete.

The current estimated completion date for the project, with enforcement in place through the TMO is September 2019.

1.8 Resident Engagement

Work is underway to reinvigorate resident engagement ensuring we increase the diversity of resident voices to reflect the makeup of our residents. We will do this by improving communication with and between the Resident Associations, Resident Council and Area Forums as well as launching an online group where residents can comment and feedback. Following positive feedback, we will undertake a listening programme annually and will organise Meet the Cabinet member sessions for residents to ask questions.

A programme of work to improve the quality of community spaces has made great progress. The Lydford estate has two community halls including the underused Portgate Hall which has been transformed into a construction training centre for Westminster residents. Linked to apprenticeships and jobs with housing contractors, the new centre is already assisting residents to gain experience

with gaining employment. This year 23 pre-apprenticeships and 20 apprenticeships were provided through social value commitments in construction contracts.

St Jude's Hall in Queens Park is also undergoing renovation. The works will ensure that the hall continues to be a vital community resource for local Westminster residents. This follows renovation work to Queens Park Court hall which was done as part of a housing contractors' commitment to social value.

Work continues with residents' groups across the city. Achievements include the launch of Vale Royal Residents Association; a new gardening group at Townsend estate and work towards new residents' groups on Grosvenor and Regency estate and for west street properties.

Residents at Charfield Court have entered into a Local Management Agreement for cleaning and grounds maintenance. This means that they will manage these parts of the housing service themselves.

Service improvement plans have been issued to four Tenant Management Organisations that have failed to complete audit recommendations in time. Two further plans will be issued in May. Ward members have been briefed.

2.Fire Safety

2.1 Fire doors

All inspections have been completed and a programme of remedial has been being developed and members and residents will be kept fully advised of progress. Around 10,000 doors need to be replaced or upgraded in blocks six- storey and above. Around 47% need to be upgraded (a combination of door closers, strips, seals and letters boxes) and the remaining 53% replaced. Residents remain safe in their homes as up-to-date fire risk assessments are in place and work is being prioritised. An overarching communication strategy has been drafted and covers how residents will be kept informed including updating the website and the options available to leaseholders.

As a result of the prioritisation work so far, doors across Warwick and Brindley estate towers have been identified as requiring action first and work is expected to start in spring 2019.

All other buildings will be addressed as required and, in most cases, in conjunction with planned major works over the next three years with the highest risk blocks completed in the first 12 months (April 2019 – March 2020). The inspection programme for lower rise buildings (five storey and below) will commence once the three-year programme has been delivered.

Leaseholders are responsible for ensuring that their own fire doorsets are to standard. We have been writing to them individually to ensure we have confirmation that doors meet current performance requirements.

We can offer leaseholders the opportunity to opt-in, via written agreement, to have their fire doorset replaced by the same manufacturer, in buildings where we are also replacing tenanted doors as part of planned major works.

In cases where we cannot offer opt-in, we will suggest leaseholders contact the manufacturer directly, or make their own arrangement as long as the doorset is compliant.

2.2 Warwick and Brindley estate towers

Following extension consultation, the decision has been taken to change from external cladding panels to external wall insulation. Work is expected to start in the spring and complete by December 2019. Balcony work started in January and the doorset replacement programme is expected to start in late spring.

2.3 Glastonbury House and Glarus Court

The precautionary cladding replacement work at Glastonbury House remains on hold whilst alternative insulation options are considered. In the meantime, we are moving forward with the other important fire safety work, including the retrofit of sprinklers to flats (pilot installations have been completed) has been and the provision of mobility scooter storage facilities. This work remains on track for completion by December 2019.

In addition, Glarus Court (low rise, extra care scheme) will also have sprinklers retrofitted to its 20 flats, within the next 12 months. Works are likely to start in the spring following resident consultation and complete by the end of 2019.

2.4 Sprinklers

It is recommended that any lessons learnt from the two installations mentioned above are incorporated into the wider roll-out across council stock. It is proposed to prioritise the remaining sheltered housing (community housing schemes) ahead of the tall buildings. The full cost of installation to the remaining sheltered and tall buildings is £28m. This is made up of £6m to complete the sheltered housing schemes and £20m for tall buildings. Funding will need to be considered and agreed as part of the HRA business plan from the 2020/2021 financial year. The £2m for Glastonbury House and Glarus Court sprinklers is already included in the business plan for 2019/2020.

Leaseholders in tall buildings will be surveyed to establish their views on the sprinkler roll-out and to understand whether the costs of installations will be an inhibitor. A communication and implementation plan has been drafted and the survey will commence in late spring. The results will feed into the lessons learned from the Glastonbury House and Glarus Court installations.

2.5 Fire Safety Improvement Plans

As part of our ongoing building safety communication plan project to increase building safety

awareness, we ran a pilot from October - December 2018, providing residents with a copy of their buildings Fire Safety Improvement Plan (FSIP), which outlines the findings from their most recent fire risk assessment (FRA) and our plans to address the findings and to improve building safety.

Residents were involved in the design of the strategy, plan template and supporting communications, via a themed service review group in August 2018.

The pilot plans were built from fire risk assessments and sent with a cover letter and fact sheet, via post to residents in 3,738 flats, and via email to 1701, across 41 high rise residential buildings.

Overall the feedback from residents was positive and constructive:

- 67% of residents said they now feel extremely or well informed, compared to 49% before receiving their FSIP. Likewise, the number of people who feel that they were poorly informed reduced by 50% after receiving their FSIP.
- 56% feel safer after receiving their FSIP.
- 70% agree that the FSIP is helpful however they want to know when actions will be completed, what is happening with sprinklers, see results from other inspections (i.e. monthly housekeeping) and receive more information about what they should do in the event of a fire.
- 60% would access their FSIP if it was available online.

Proposals for the wider roll-out across council stock will be in place by summer 2019.

3.Homelessness prevention

3.1 Housing Solutions Service

Our frontline statutory homelessness services provided by the Housing Solutions Partnership of Places for People, their subsidiary RMG Ltd, Shelter & Passage have successfully delivered the first year of statutory services since the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 in April 2018. The first year of the Act has seen increased demand on the service so to ensure that they continue to transform, develop and meet the expectations of our residents, the Partnership has a put in place a three-year strategic service delivery programme with a wide range of commitments.

These include:

- securing accreditation for the service through recognised bodies such as Customer Service Excellence, Investors in People, and the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation;
- improving customer experience through a range of activities including mystery shopping, co designing the service standards, quality checks and customer experience groups; and
- a focus on workforce development, ensuring that partnership develops and grows into a mature delivery model with experienced resilient staff through continued training, benchmarking and good practice with partners and other local authorities and giving staff the opportunity to shape the service through regular engagement and staff sounding boards.

3.2 Commissioning

Following from the last P&S Report dated 18 March 2019, we can now confirm a successful contract start for both our Domestic Abuse Services and our ambitious Mental Health Support Housing re-procurement, the new contracts began on 1 April and 1 May respectively.

The Commissioning Team have been working to develop a clear and coherent plan to ensure that all our contracts are working as effectively and efficiently as possible. We will be producing a timetable of re-procurement over the Summer and will look to launch at an event with stakeholders and partners. During the event we will showcase our work to date, outline our upcoming workplan and explore new ways of working and new opportunities for supported housing commissioning.

Over the past quarter Westminster City Council have released several market leading toolkits and reports including the Autism Toolkit, Victimisation Report and online training for the sector to improve their understanding of psychologically informed environments. The Autism Toolkit outlines the prevalence of Autism in the homeless population and gives ideas and advice on how to better support people in that situation. The work has received national media coverage and continues to shine a light on an important subject.

3.3 Trailblazer

Since the start of the project, we have worked with 229 households to prevent those that are risk of homelessness in the private rented sector. We continue to target those who have Assured Shorthold Tenancy to manage their existing tenancies and instances where it is not practical due to affordability or living conditions support households to explore their options.

The specialist caseworkers explore cases as a team, sharing best practices and supporting one another to maximise the outcomes for service users. The team provide advice and information to all that access the service, even if it is to signpost to the most suited service for an individual's needs. Support with welfare and benefits continues to be a major factor that has an impact on our service user's ability to maintain their tenancies, and staff have supported the recovery of more than £150,000 in entitled benefits.

We are still committed to upskilling our local community groups and connectors and have a graduate who has joined the team to support the development of training materials for residents and partnership agencies. Recognising the value in developing new skills and employment the Trailblazer project will be working with HELP project to strengthen the offer for our residents in the private rented sector help to maximise their incomes.

4. Local housing policies

4.1 Local Lettings Plan for the Tollgate Gardens Estate

In March/April 2019 the council consulted on a Local Lettings Plan proposing how the new additional social and intermediate homes, developed through the regeneration programme, would be let. A leaflet setting out the proposals and how to respond was sent to local residents and their feedback was also taken at a drop-in session. The final Plan will be published in early summer.

4.2 Tenants Policy for Tenants in Housing Renewal Areas

The Council consulted on this updated policy until 8 February 2019 and held a further drop-in session for Church Street tenants to give their feedback in April. The proposed policy sets out the rehousing rights and options, financial compensation and general support for council tenants where the Council wants to acquire their homes to enable housing renewal to go ahead. The updated policy will be published in early summer.

4.3 Homelessness Strategy

A new homelessness strategy is being drafted and it will be consulted on in the summer.



Housing, Finance and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Wednesday 5 th June
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Westminster Homelessness Strategy
Report of:	Executive Director for Growth, Planning and Housing
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Housing
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	To promote the quality of life for Westminster citizens by working with all our partners to improve the housing experience of our residents and the safety and social care of vulnerable people and their families
Report Author and Contact Details:	Jennifer Travassos – 020 7641 6572 jtravassos@westminster.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

Government introduced new homelessness legislation in April 2018 following a Private Member's Bill, led by Bob Blackman MP. It is called the Homelessness Reduction Act and has significantly changed the way all local authorities prevent and relieve homelessness. The legislation change is welcomed by the council and foreseeing the change that was required in how we work, initiative was taken to recommission our new Housing Solutions Service as a partnership between the private, voluntary and statutory sector.

The Act is welcomed but due to significance of the change, particularly around new administrative requirements, training, cultural change and new IT system requirements, it has taken a year to embed itself in delivery.

A key element of the new Act is that all local authorities are required to publish Homelessness Strategies. We have a Rough Sleeping Strategy in place and

this covers the unique challenges we face in central London and therefore, the homelessness strategy will not cover rough sleeping.

The Committee will hear the details of some of the proposals prior to going to consultation.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

The report describes the Homelessness Reduction Act's detail and reads alongside the accompanying report on Temporary Accommodation which demonstrates the challenges of supply and demand. Questions for the Committee's consideration in order to help the council develop its Homelessness Strategy are:

- What more can be done to prevent homelessness in our communities
- How best to communicate to residents in areas where people tend to gain information via family and community networks
- How we as a council can work as a unit together to prevent homelessness

3. Background

The purpose of this report is to provide background in order for the Committee to feed into the council's new Homelessness Strategy, which is being developed and will be consulted on shortly, by:

- Describing the new Homelessness Reduction Act and its implications for the council and our offer of support
- Summarising the new front-line homelessness contract and accompanying community based prevention services
- Providing indicative levels of presentations to the service post-Act coming into place
- Highlighting the differences in how we address rough sleeping and why we separate this from statutory homelessness
- Highlighting key current initiatives.

The Homelessness Reduction Act

- 3.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 fundamentally changed councils' legal duties towards homeless households, which in summary now are:
- 3.2 **A duty to provide free advisory services** to anyone in the local area about a range of things, such as preventing homelessness and securing accommodation when homeless. These services should be designed to meet the needs of people using them.
- 3.3 Certain public bodies, which includes local authorities, have a **duty to refer** any users or their services who may be homeless or threatened with homelessness to the relevant service within the council.
- 3.4 **A duty to assess homeless applications and agree a personal housing plan** with anyone that is eligible and threatened with homelessness, or that is homeless. The plan should set out the actions, both the applicant and the council will take, to help address their homelessness.
- 3.5 **A duty to prevent homelessness** when someone is threatened with it within 56 days. It applies to anyone that is eligible for assistance and is regardless of whether they have a 'priority need', they are found to be intentionally homeless or have a local connection to the area (see 3.8 for more information on priority need and local connection). The duty continues for 56 days, unless it is brought to an end by suitable accommodation being available for the person or household or they actually become homeless.

- 3.6 **A duty to relieve homelessness** when it could not be prevented, through the local authority taking reasonable steps to help an applicant secure suitable accommodation. This duty lasts for 56 days and can it can generally only be brought to an end during this period if suitable accommodation is found which is available for at least six months. If the local authority has reason to believe a homeless applicant may be eligible for assistance and they also have a 'priority need', then they must be provided with interim or temporary accommodation at this stage.
- 3.7 **A duty to provide housing** if homelessness could not be successfully prevented or relieved. This is known as the 'main housing duty' and is only owed to applicants who are eligible, have a 'priority need' for accommodation, have some local connection to Westminster and are not homeless intentionally (see 3.8 for more information). This duty is generally only brought to an end by the offer of a 'suitable' home, which is defined as a social rented housing provided by a council or a registered provider for those that were accepted as homeless before 9th November 2012. For those accepted after this date it can also include the offer of a private rented tenancy for at least 12 months.
- 3.8 **Eligibility, priority need and local connection.**
A full housing duty is owed where the applicant's immigration status entitles them, and they are:
- Homeless with no alternative accommodation that is reasonable to occupy
 - In priority need and this focuses on those: who are pregnant; have children; are vulnerable in some way, such as because they are elderly, have a mental or physical illness or disability, have been in prison or care, are a young person or have become homeless due to domestic abuse
 - Have a local connection (or no local connection elsewhere). Local connection generally means a residency connection, such as having lived in the local area for 6 out of the past 12 months or for 3 out of the past 5 years, but other factors can also be taken into account, such as local employment or family associations.
- 3.9 Alongside the main housing duty is also a duty to **provide interim or temporary accommodation**, if more permanent accommodation is not available immediately. All accommodation offered to homeless households has to be 'suitable' and statutory guidance and secondary legislation sets out what this means and the factors that have to be considered when making an offer. For example, it is unlawful for households with children to be offered emergency non self contained accommodation, a bed and breakfast hotel for example, for more than six weeks.

- 3.10 Local authorities also have a range of duties to provide the applicant with **written details of the decisions they have made** and applicants have the right to request a review of these decisions made at various stages of the process.
- 3.11 There is also a general duty on every local authority to **safeguard and promote the welfare of children** within their area who are in need and this can sometimes include the provision of accommodation, even when some of the other duties above don't apply.

4. Our Homelessness Services and Prevention Offer

In October 2017, the council introduced its new statutory homelessness service. This comprises of a partnership between RMG (Places for People), Shelter and The Passage. RMG are responsible for the statutory element of decision making, family homelessness, allocations and procurement of accommodation supply. The Passage provide the single front door for all single applicants and provide the additional added value of delivery of holistic services such as healthcare, employment/training and welfare benefits advice. Shelter are responsible for prevention activity in the community.

- 4.1 Moreover, we have introduced a service that is focused on engaging in community-based locations. Shelter embeds workers across 9 sites in the community; this includes co-location in the Family Hub, Advice Plus sessions, co-location with our Housing Management Services income teams and libraries. They tend to work with households who are 'pre-56 days' (e.g. those who are not imminently threatened with homelessness but are identified as being 'at risk').
- 4.2 Westminster also has a Trailblazer service that was previously funded by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Upon the ending of that grant, we have made the decision to continue to fund this for an additional 18 months of delivery to enable us to seek more sustainable funding. This service has developed a specialism in working with households in the private rented sector (PRS) and in its 18 months of operation, had worked with 220 households and 99% did not go on to make a homelessness application.
- 4.3 The Trailblazer service commissioned ethnographic research and we have found that there are areas of Westminster that do not understand the ways to approach the council for support.
- 4.4 Finally, we are funding the HELP Employment Project for a further 18 months to target those households in our communities where employment is a tool to

reduce the risk of homelessness and to increase resilience in our communities. The service has been incredibly successful in introducing community meetings, for example a HELP café and this has enabled people to build social networks and get past some of their confidence issues. Equally, by providing bespoke coaching for those who are not currently in work and may face barriers such as childcare, we believe this will assist households to remain in their homes.

5. Rough Sleeping in Westminster

Westminster continues to see the highest numbers of rough sleeping in the country; we are dealing with both a national and international issue in the centre of London with non UK/Irish nationals numbers rising. We spend c.£6.5m every year and have been successful in securing additional investment of £1.45m for 2019/20 which has enabled us to continue to innovate, add to project capacity and continue successful projects such as Housing First (20 units), psychological support for those on the streets and Passage House Assessment Centre.

- 5.1 We conduct street counts every quarter at present but will be moving to bi-monthly counts; this is to enable us to track what are now very fast moving demographic changes alongside strategic planning alongside the MHCLG.
- 5.2 On average each year, only 4% of people who end up on the streets have identified Westminster as their last settled base. This indicates that individuals are coming to central London from all over the UK and indeed, all over Europe
- 5.3 A significant challenge that we, alongside many other areas of London and cities across England, are experiencing is the ongoing rise of EEA nationals. Unfortunately, unless these individuals can be supported to demonstrate that they have been in work (self sustaining) for 5 years continuously, they have no recourse to public funds. This presents an issue of what we can offer; we can offer support to gain employment and entry into the PRS or a voluntary reconnection to their home area. The council is actively engaged in discussions across both local and central government on this issue.
- 5.4 We commission over 400 beds in specialist hostels and supported accommodation for rough sleepers, upwards of 100 night centre and emergency bed spaces for every night; although when severe weather occurs, we activate SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol) and this facilitates an additional 100+ places for people to sleep.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Jennifer Travassos (020 7641 6572) jtravassos@westminster.gov.uk

APPENDICES:

For any supplementary documentation; especially from external stakeholders or documents which do not fit this template.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

This section is for any background papers used to formulate the report or referred to in the body of the report.

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Housing, Finance and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	5 th June 2019
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Provision of Temporary Accommodation for Homeless Households
Report of:	Executive Director for Growth, Planning and Housing
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Housing Services
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	To promote the quality of life for Westminster citizens by working with all our partners to improve the housing experience of our residents and the safety and social care of vulnerable people and their families
Report Author and Contact Details:	Gregory Roberts – 020 7641 2834 grobert2@westminster.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

The Council has a duty under the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 to ensure that accommodation is made available for homeless applicants who are owed a full housing duty by the Council. There are 2740 households in Temporary Accommodation (TA), just under half of which is within Westminster with the great majority of the remainder within London. The majority provides housing for families, with the principal requirement for 2 and 3 bedroom properties.

The level of Temporary Accommodation reflects demand for affordable housing is outstripping the available supply. This is a common issue across London but is more acute in higher value areas such as Westminster. In response the Council is seeking to increase the use of private rented sector properties both to prevent homelessness and as an alternative to long waits in TA.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

The report describes how the provision of TA is a reflection of high levels of demand which has led to the current volume of TA. Questions for the Committee's consideration are:

- How can the needs of households living in TA best be met e.g. securing employment, help meeting support needs?
- What more can be done to promote the private rented sector as an alternative to homelessness and TA?
- How can pan London work best be delivered given the issue is common to most London boroughs

3. Background

The purpose of this report is to:

- Describe the factors that drive levels of Temporary Accommodation
- Summarise the current total level of Temporary Accommodation and how this has changed in recent years
- Provide a detailed breakdown of Temporary Accommodation by location, size, type, household composition, supplier with comparisons to pan London levels
- Set out the routes out of Temporary Accommodation, including future recommendations for increasing moves into the private rented sector in 4.11
- Describe the financial structure of the commissioning of TA
- Highlight key current initiatives

Statutory duties to provide Temporary Accommodation

3.1 The Council has a duty under the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 to ensure that accommodation is made available for homeless applicants who are owed a full housing duty by the Council.

3.2 A full housing duty is held where the applicant's immigration status entitles them and they are:

- Homeless with no alternative accommodation that is reasonable to occupy
- In priority need (which includes for example any household with children and people vulnerable due to mental or physical ill-health)
- Have a local connection, defined as resident in the local area for 6 months out of the previous 12 or 3 years out of the previous 5 (or no local connection elsewhere)

The Council is required to offer suitable Temporary Accommodation (TA) to accepted homeless households pending allocation of suitable longer-term housing whether affordable housing or through the private rented sector

- 3.3 The suitability of accommodation is governed by the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 1996 and by the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities. This includes that when discharging its housing duties the Council must, so far as reasonably practicable, secure that accommodation in their own district. The Council is also under a general duty under the 2014 Children Act, to have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area
- 3.4 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 placed a new duty on Local Authorities to intervene earlier to help prevent homelessness and take reasonable steps to relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants, not just those in priority need and place households into TA where there is no alternative accommodation available
- 3.5 The Council's homelessness policy framework was approved in January 2017, reviewed in summer 2018 and introduced a suite of new homelessness policies:
- A Private Rented Sector Offers (PRSO) Policy which sets out that the Council may make homeless households the offer of a private rented tenancy rather than TA and then social housing
 - An Accommodation Placement Policy which prioritises homeless households for TA and PRSOs in three location Bands (Band 1 is Westminster and adjoining boroughs, Band 2 is Greater London and Band 3 is anywhere outside Greater London)
 - An Accommodation Procurement Policy which sets out the challenges in obtaining enough TA and PRSO properties to meet demand, and which are affordable to households (within benefit levels) and to the Council (within TA subsidy levels). It includes an action plan to provide enough accommodation to meet demand and the principles the Council will follow when procuring private properties for TA and PRSOs. It was underpinned by independent research which indicated where properties may be available.
- 3.6 The above framework reflects the challenges in securing accommodation that is affordable to households on low incomes both in Westminster and across London, whether to prevent homelessness, to discharge the Council's housing duty into the private rented sector or to provide Temporary Accommodation. The overall strategy remains to increase the supply of good quality accommodation available for households in housing need, maximising the availability of this in Westminster and then across London. Private sector properties procured are affordable for a sustained period of time, guaranteed

for two years where the housing duty is secured and inspected by officers in advance of moving

- 3.7 Currently homeless applicants requiring housing are placed into Stage 1 (emergency accommodation) before being moved on to longer-term leased accommodation. The stay in this type of accommodation allows for a comprehensive assessment of the household circumstances so that the Council can confirm whether it has a full statutory housing duty under the legislation. If a housing duty is confirmed the household is then moved into longer term accommodation and or offered private rented sector accommodation.

4 Provision of Temporary Accommodation

- 4.1 The table below sets out current and previous levels of homeless applications, acceptances and TA since 2011 under the previous legislative framework, before the implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act. This highlights how TA has fluctuated, although with an overall increase, despite the homeless prevention work reducing numbers of accepted cases since 2013.

Demand Profile	31.3.11	31.3.12	31.3.13	31.3.14	31.3.15	31.3.16	31.3.17	31.3.18
Applications (p.a.)	1170	1445	1338	1002	1053	954	878	729
Acceptances (p.a.)	430	539	813	705	617	511	496	443
Households in TA	1726	1910	2450	2283	2397	2423	2518	2521

- 4.2 The current level of TA is 2740 and the table below breaks down the change over the past 12 months at month end.

April	May	June	July	August	September
2546	2548	2560	2578	2592	2627
October	November	December	January	February	March
2681	2701	2728	2724	2733	2740

- 4.3 This increase of c. 194 over the past year is reflective of the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act that has had the effect of requiring Councils to provide housing under the duty to relieve homelessness and has thus seen an increase in levels of single homeless applicants where the Council has a duty to provide accommodation to relieve homelessness.
- 4.4 It should be noted that as decisions regarding a household's longer-term housing are being taken, this has led to the rate of increase seen at the start of

the year reduce and the level at mid-May was 2736. The changes introduced through the Homeless Reduction Act has also meant that it is not possible to compare directly applications and acceptances against previous years with applications under the HRA being an average of c. 200 per month in the year.

5 Temporary Accommodation Location and Property Type

- 5.1 Having set out in the opening section that a Council has a duty to secure accommodation within its local boundaries wherever possible, in practice the local Westminster housing market means that whilst all attempts are made to maximise the level of in-borough accommodation, in practice just over half of TA is located outside of Westminster. This is broken down by borough in appendix A
- 5.2 Using the policy framework above, the council assesses in detail the suitability of every offer of accommodation that is made to individual homeless households, in line with legal requirements, including legislation and regulation, associated case law and statutory guidance. This leads to a comprehensive assessment of each placement made and takes into account factors such as:
- The accommodation available in borough or surrounding boroughs
 - Support by Adults or Children Services and whether the transfer of care would put the individual at risk
 - Size and location of the property and the availability of support networks
 - Health e.g. regular attendance at specialist healthcare services
 - Education, including whether children have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan, are receiving education or educational support in Westminster and where it is demonstrated that a placement elsewhere would be seriously detrimental to their well-being
 - Employment including the location and working hours of households
 - Other special circumstances, for example where there is a particular reason why the household should not be housed in an area (for example, due to a risk of violence), this will be taken into account when assessing suitability.

5.3 Provision of support to households placed in Temporary Accommodation

Once placed into TA, The Housing Solutions Service, having completed the detailed assessment above, offers a range of support to households outside of the borough, which includes:

- A dedicated officer supporting families to ensure that all children have a school place in the local area
- Information and advice on the local amenities and services
- A floating support service to support vulnerable households with tenancy sustainment and intensive support to link into appropriate specialist services, including mental health support.
- A specialist homeless mental health team to support clients with higher support needs; this will include making recommendations for moves back into the borough where appropriate and linking in to services in the host authority.
- Drop in rent surgeries to assist clients in managing their finance and paying their rent
- Homeless employment team supporting individuals move into employment or training
- A TA lettings team responsible for ensuring that contact is maintained; managing concerns and transfers into alternative accommodation where appropriate.

5.4 A monthly Multi-agency Partnership meeting (made up of representatives from Housing, Floating Support Services, Adult and Children Services) has been introduced to manage concerns presented by households in TA, both inside and outside the borough, to ensure that households are appropriately supported and where possible that eviction is prevented. Referrals are made to the panel from the Housing Solutions Service, through TA suppliers and other agencies working with households.

5.5 Whilst the increase since the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act over the past year has been driven by the increase in single person applications, the majority of households in TA are families, reflecting the lower availability of family size housing available for households on low incomes in Westminster compared with studio and one-bedroom housing. The breakdown of TA by property size is as follows:

Size	Units
Studio/ 1	574
2	1340
3	609
4	191
5	24
6	2
Total	2740

Single Person Provision

- 5.6 The profile of single person homeless households, is predominantly people with histories of unstable housing, living with mental health problems, personality disorder, histories of substance misuse etc. Whilst there is a wide range of supported housing options available for vulnerable households, in practice this accommodation provides for particularly vulnerable households. As a result the single person accommodation used for TA should be suitable for this group, providing a safe and secure environments. Officers work with providers of single person accommodation to ensure that individuals are safeguarded, any incidents are appropriately managed, 24 hour cover is provided and clients are able to access the specialist mental health and substance misuse services available.
- 5.7 This supply of single person accommodation means that properties are available within the borough for the more vulnerable households in line with placement protocols, whilst ensuring there has been a supply of suitable accommodation to meet presenting demand

Provision of Family Accommodation

- 5.8 Similarly with accommodation for families in housing need there is both a need to ensure that emergency accommodation is available for households in immediate need, together with a supply of longer-term suitable accommodation. By law no household with children can be placed in accommodation for more than 6 weeks which is not-self-contained. To meet this requirement and to reduce the number of moves families have, placements into non-self-contained accommodation are now very rare and then for very short periods of time.
- 5.9 Short-term accommodation is provided whilst household applications are assessed, prevention work undertaken and where appropriate longer-term accommodation is provided. Whilst self-contained, stays in such accommodation can become extended where applications are complex to complete, reviews of decisions are submitted or offers of suitable accommodation are challenged.
- 5.10 Across the portfolio of c. 2740 properties, officers aim to have 60 – 100 vacant properties, 2-3% of stock, balancing the need to manage void costs with having a supply of accommodation for households to move through emergency housing into longer term accommodation, whilst ensuring suitable accommodation is available at short-notice for particularly vulnerable households presenting as homeless on the day.

- 5.11 In order to ensure that there is available supply of accommodation to meet presenting need a dashboard of weekly information is collected, that includes numbers of placements into emergency TA, second stage placements, by singles and families, any placements of families in non-self-contained accommodation, any high cost placements, vacancies in emergency accommodation, total TA usage, number of new properties secured, number of property relets etc. in addition to routine monthly performance monitoring and daily monitoring of placement numbers and accommodation availability.

6. Moving from TA: Affordable Housing and Private Sector

- 6.1 The length of stay in TA, assuming that an application is accepted and the Council has an ongoing duty to provide suitable accommodation varies due to a variety of factors, in particular, the size of property required.
- 6.2 For households where an ongoing duty is not owed, depending on individual circumstances, the emergency accommodation booking is ended with reasonable notice. Where households are particularly vulnerable and request a review of the decision, then accommodation can continue to be provided pending the outcome of the review and where decisions are upheld households can access advice services and be supported with moving into the private sector as required. Ending of duty creates a degree of churn in the available emergency stock and enables properties to become vacant for further use.
- 6.3 For accepted households the principal route away from TA is either through allocations into available social housing or into the private rented sector as a discharge of duty (PRSO.)
- 6.4 For social housing the projected number of lettings for homeless households for 2018/19 is (subject to final year end reconciliation and confirmation):

Waiting List	Studio	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed +	Total
Homeless	44	125	68	49	4	290

Whilst the majority of available lettings are made to homeless households, there are clearly other households who are prioritised for available housing such as overcrowded tenants and those requiring moves as a result of the regeneration programme.

Moves into the Private Sector

- 6.5 In the past year over 230 private sector prevention placements have been made. Not all of these households will have been living in TA prior to the move but the placements do prevent the longer-term use of TA.

- 6.6 Partly in response to the long waits most applicants currently have for a social housing tenancy a Private Rented Sector Offers Policy (PRSO) was introduced in 2017, to offer households a private renting tenancy, rather than them waiting in TA for social housing. 82 private sector discharges of duty (including qualifying offers where accepted households in TA agree to move into the PRS) have been completed in the year to date with a further 10-15 properties offered and households waiting to move. All properties are thoroughly inspected, are principally 2 bed with some 3 bedroom family size units, inspected and viewed before letting and are let at or close to LHA levels, guaranteed for at least 2 years and thus are affordable to households on low incomes. Follow-up visits by officers are completed and should any tenancy break down through no fault of the tenant within 2 years then the Council will rehouse the household.
- 6.7 A positive source of supply of properties has been through the St Mungo's Real Lettings scheme which the Council has invested in to secure a pipeline of good quality housing with support.
- 6.8 This total number of private sector discharges of duty compares above with the 68, 2 bed social housing lettings made to homeless households over the same time period. This shows that this scheme has almost doubled the total amount of settled, good quality family sized accommodation available for homeless households

Barriers to increasing private sector moves

- 6.9 The Court of Appeal case into whether Westminster's discharging of its housing duty into a property in Worcester Park, was successful in demonstrating in the court that such an offer was suitable and reasonable. At the same time the case papers did highlight the detail required when completing a PRSO to show that specific properties are suitable for particular households. In particular the affordability assessment can be complex, where households are in employment, on low incomes. In practice to secure the volume of lettings described above, has required HSS to work with c. 200 households to complete individual assessments of suitability.
- 6.10 The Housing Solutions Service is in the process of reviewing all cases living in TA to assess long-term housing options. The effect of this will be to increase greatly the knowledge of households and increase the pool of households properties can be offered to in line with policy.
- 6.11 Increasing the supply of good quality suitable and affordable private sector supply can be met through existing the existing procurement framework. This includes for example the Council's £30m investment into the Real Lettings

scheme where properties are purchased for use as private sector discharge of duty with follow-on support provided by St Mungo's; working with London Councils, MHCLG and 13 London boroughs through establishing the Capital Letters company to procure accommodation across London as well as working with the established network of private landlords.

- 6.12 However to increase the number of actual lettings and moves requires households to make a positive choice to
- Working with households to emphasise the positive aspects of greater London areas, schools, employment, available property size, transport links etc.
 - Increasing the level of support provided after moves to ensure households are settled into their new homes
 - The potential for using households who have moved as a form of peer mentors to support other households to move
 - Improved advertising of private sector properties available for letting in order that households can see what is available and ideally make a positive decision to move into the properties available
 - Being robust in the response to households who in officers' view do not accept properties for valid reasons

7. Temporary Accommodation Procurement Structure

- 7.1 Councils are expected to lease properties from the private sector to provide Temporary Accommodation. Payments are made to property owners or managers (principally Registered Providers) and Councils are able to charge homeless households to live in properties. The level of charge is set by a central government formula of 90% of 2011 LHA, with a management fee now paid through a separate grant.
- 7.2 This formula has remained unchanged since 2011 and in effect means that the Council's income per property has not increased for 8 years, whilst the private sector market has increased during this time. In addition homeless numbers have increased principally through reduced availability of private sector housing for households on low incomes and it is this market that is reducing that Councils are expected to use to secure properties to meet their statutory obligations.
- 7.3 As a result of pressures on supply the Council since 2016 has been purchasing properties directly as TA, completing over 175.
- 7.4 The market advantage that Councils do have is that rents are guaranteed as the Council is the landlord and thus makes payments directly to landlords and undertakes to manage the properties and in practice, with the directly

purchased units, means that the Council can secure the majority of properties at or close to the formula rents.

- 7.5 There are c. 35 suppliers of Temporary Accommodation to the Council. These vary from Registered Providers who lease properties directly from landlords and then to the Council and manage the properties, RP's that own properties purchased originally for use as TA, private property owners with a portfolio of various properties or that own one block, voluntary sector suppliers of TA that own or lease specific units.

8 Pan London working

- 8.1 Most London boroughs have similar issues in meeting housing demand. This has led to various pan London initiatives, e.g. agreeing capped rates of emergency nightly-booked accommodation, the inter-borough TA agreement aimed at giving host boroughs priority for housing in their local area and the creation of the Capital Letters company.
- 8.2 The table at appendix B (taken from the most recent MHCLG published data in 2018) lists those authorities with total TA greater than 1000. It should be noted that although Westminster has focussed on maximising in-borough availability, the total number is less than other boroughs and generally the majority of Westminster's out of borough accommodation is not in neighbouring boroughs.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Gregory Roberts (020 7641 2834)
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Appendix A: Location of WCC Temporary Accommodation

Borough	Units
BARKING AND DAGENHAM	160
BARNET	57
BEXLEY	2
BRENT	134
BROMLEY	3
CAMDEN	6
CROYDON	2
EALING	109
ENFIELD	79
GRAVESEND	1
GREENWICH	24
HACKNEY	64
HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM	11
HARINGEY	35
HAVERING	30
HERTSEMERE	1
HILLINGDON	86
HOUNSLOW	18
HARROW	20
ISLINGTON	21
KENSINGTON & CHELSEA	22
LAMBETH	4
LEWISHAM	8
MERTON	3
NEWHAM	259
NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE	1
REDBRIDGE	96
SLOUGH	7
SOUTH END ON SEA	10
SOUTHWARK	45
TOWER HAMLETS	13
THURROCK	69
WALHAM FOREST	75
WANDSWORTH	15
WCC	1248
Grand Total	2740

Appendix B: Boroughs with more than 1000 units of Temporary Accommodation

Borough	Total TA	In borough	Out of borough	% out of borough
Newham	4949	3184	1765	36%
Enfield	3466	2817	649	19%
Hackney	3026	2090	936	31%
Haringey	2962	1745	1217	41%
Barnet	2689	1589	1100	41%
Westminster	2561*	1229	1332	52%
Kensington and Chelsea	2477	706	1771	71%
Southwark	2442	1386	1056	43%
Brent	2345	2211	134	6%
Redbridge	2295	1068	1227	53%
Waltham Forest	2269	1092	1177	52%
Tower Hamlets	2210	2103	107	5%
Lambeth	2153	879	1274	59%
Ealing	2108	1247	861	41%
Lewisham	2036	1474	562	28%
Barking and Dagenham	1857	1323	534	29%
Croydon	1838	1506	332	18%
Bromley	1630	605	1025	63%
Hammersmith and Fulham	1421	604	817	57%
Harrow	1028	847	181	18%

* of the total less than 4% are outside London

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Housing, Finance and Regeneration Policy & Scrutiny Committee

Date:	5 th June 2019
Classification:	General Release
Title:	2019/20 Work Programme
Report of:	Director of Policy, Performance & Communications
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration Cabinet Member for Housing Services
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	All
Report Author and Contact Details:	Aaron Hardy x 2894 ahardy1@westminster.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

1. This report presents suggested topics for the committee to consider when deciding its 2019/20 work programme.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Review and approve the draft list of suggested items (appendix 1) and prioritise where required
- Note the action tracker (appendix 2)

3. Topic Selection

- 3.1 The proposed list of topics (Appendix 1) has been compiled by policy and scrutiny officers in collaboration with services.

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

ahardy1@westminster.gov.uk

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 - Suggested topics

Appendix 2- Action Tracker

WORK PROGRAMME 2019/2020
Housing, Finance and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

ROUND ONE 5 JUNE 2019		
Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Andrew Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing Services
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Rachel Robathan, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration
Draft Homelessness Strategy	To review the approach to developing the draft homelessness strategy	Jenny Travassos, Head of Prevention
Temporary Accommodation	To review the provision of temporary accommodation and services provided to residents in temporary accommodation	Greg Roberts, Head of Supply

ROUND TWO 12 SEPTEMBER 2019		
Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Andrew Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing Services
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Rachel Robathan, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration
Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy	To review and contribute to the draft strategy. Link with Economic Development, Education and Place Shaping P&S Committee	Greg Ward, Director Regeneration and Economic Development

**ROUND THREE
18 NOVEMBER 2019**

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Andrew Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing Services
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Rachel Robathan, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration
Housing Management Services	Update on housing management services following transition in house	Director of Housing

**ROUND FOUR
30 JANUARY 2020**

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Andrew Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing Services
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Rachel Robathan, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration
Corporate Property	Review the council's approach to corporate property. Possible focus in use of property by third parties at discounted rates	

**ROUND FIVE
11 MARCH 2020**

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Andrew Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing Services

Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Rachel Robathan, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration
Development	Investigate the council's development and delivery of the capital program. Item should include a site visit to Dudley House or Beachcroft.	

**ROUND SIX
23 APRIL 2020**

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Andrew Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing Services
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Rachel Robathan, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration

**ROUND SEVEN
TBC**

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Andrew Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing Services
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Rachel Robathan, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration

**ROUND EIGHT
TBC**

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by
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Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Andrew Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing Services
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Rachel Robathan, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration

UNALLOCATED ITEMS		
Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by
Universal Credit Rollout	Review the impact on Residents of the rollout of universal credit (link with Family and People Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee)	
Housing strategy	Review the approach to developing/updating a housing strategy	
Domestic Abuse	Review of women's refuge provision. How have changes in funding been implemented and how will it affect services?	
Empty Properties	Review the approach to developing an empty properties policy or strategy	
Business rates	Review the impact of business rates changes on local businesses and the Council's finances	

TASK GROUPS AND STUDIES		
Subject	Reasons & objective	Type
Budget Task Group	Annual review of budget setting	Task Group
Anti Social Behaviour	Review of ASB on housing estates and integration of former CWH ASB team in to the Council.	Task Group