



City of Westminster

Committee Agenda

Title: **Housing, Finance and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee**

Meeting Date: **Thursday 30th January, 2020**

Time: **7.00 pm**

Venue: **Rooms 18.01 and 18.02, 18th Floor, City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP**

Members: **Councillors:**

Melvyn Caplan (Chairman)	Matt Noble
Nafsika Butler-Thalassis	Emily Payne
Antonia Cox	Mark Shearer
Guthrie McKie	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 of interest by Members and Officers of any pecuniary interest or any other significant interest 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 November 2019.

(Pages 5 - 12)

4. CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PROPERTY AND REGENERATION UPDATE

Update to the Committee on current and forthcoming issues for this portfolio.

Report to follow.

5. CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING SERVICES UPDATE

Update to the Committee on current and forthcoming issues for this portfolio.

(Pages 13 - 22)

6. FIRE SAFETY UPDATE

The report is attached.

(Pages 23 - 32)

7. WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER

The Work Programme for 2019-2020 and the Action Tracker are attached.

(Pages 33 - 40)

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

To consider any other business which the Chairman considers urgent.

**Stuart Love
Chief Executive
22 January 2020**

This page is intentionally left blank



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 November, 2019**, Rooms 18.01 & 18.03, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

Members Present: Councillors Melvyn Caplan (Chairman), Antonia Cox, Adam Hug, 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 - Growth, Planning and Housing), James Green (Director of Development), Neil Wightman (Director of Housing), Jon Lock (Acting Head of Housing Operations), Aaron Hardy (Policy and Scrutiny Manager) and Toby Howes (Senior Committee and Governance Officer).

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Guthrie McKie and Councillor Emily Payne

1 MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 It was noted that Councillor Emily Payne had replaced Councillor Richard Elcho as a substantive member of the Committee.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

3.1 RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 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) introduced the report and confirmed that the Council had now

obtained London Living Wage (LLW) employer accredited status. The Council was ahead of a number of other London boroughs in implementing the LLW. Councillor Robathan added that the LLW offered staff fair wages and also motivated staff to deliver the high quality services expected

- 4.2 The Committee sought an update on the Fair Funding Review and the Spending Review and the approaches the Council was taking towards these matters. Members asked whether there would be any consultation or technical debates this year for the local government finance settlement, in view of the short timescales involved.
- 4.3 Members noted that the Community Contribution rates in the first half of this year were down compared to the last year and asked what steps were being taken to increase contributions. Further details were requested regarding the breadth of the procurement review. Members sought updates with regards to the Beachcroft, Church Street and Lisson Arches regeneration schemes. With regard to Dudley House, a Member expressed concern that there was no longer to be social housing on site, even though this had been initially proposed. In respect of tenants in renewal areas, clarification was sought as to what constituted under-occupancy.
- 4.4 A Member commented on the successful consultation on Infill schemes in his ward which had the support of residents. The Local Lettings Policy was also welcomed, however it was asked how this could be made to benefit residents more who already lived locally in that area. With regards to the Coroner's Court, Members sought an explanation as to how the costs were covered.
- 4.5 In reply to issues raised by Members, Councillor Robathan informed the Committee that a robust financial planning process was in place to address all scenarios in respect of the Fair Funding Review and the Spending Review. With regards to Community Contributions, she advised that two letters were sent to the relevant residents and brochures would also be sent out detailing the charities that had received funds and what they were doing with them. Councillor Robathan stated that an important review of procurement was taking place and it would align procurement in all service areas and the procurement of Adult Social Care and Children's Services would be brought together. Turning to Beachcroft, Councillor Robathan advised that work was taking place in respect of the internal fit outs with the contractor, and construction was on target. Engagement was ongoing with regards to the Church Street scheme and consideration was also being given as to how to engage with residents whose first language was not English. There were challenges to overcome at the Lisson Arches site, however every effort was being made to make progress with this site.
- 4.6 In respect of the Local Lettings Policy, Councillor Robathan advised that how this was implemented was dependent on the circumstances of the particular locality and the input of ward councillors was welcomed. She emphasised the importance of keeping local people within their community and in identifying and prioritising families who were in high need. Councillor Robathan had visited Dudley House and had looked at affordable homes on the site. She commented that the studio flats were spacious, whilst the two-bedroom flats

consisted of two separate units with a shared living room. Members heard that applications for flats in Dudley House were oversubscribed, with 300 applications for 197 units. With regards to the tenant policy in renewal areas, there had been extensive debate on this matter. Although in some cases, there would be instances where people would be re-housed in properties that had less space than they were used to, there was flexibility within the policy to provide an additional bedroom in some circumstances. Turning to Coroner's Court, Councillor Robathan advised that the Council shared the costs with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the London Boroughs of Merton and Wandsworth and the cost allocation between the four councils had been agreed. The Council was the lead partner and work on the Coroner's Court was due to take place soon.

4.8 Gerald Almeroth (Executive Director – Finance and Resources) advised that the local government finance settlement had been due to be announced in the first week of December, however because of the General Election, it was due to follow shortly after the Election. The Government was aware of the implications for local authorities in not receiving the settlement until later than planned and the Council's budget for the next year had been designed to soften the blow. Gerald Almeroth advised that the Government would undertake a technical consultation with local authorities after the first year spending round, whilst consultation on the Fair Funding Review was due to commence in the New Year.

4.9 James Green (Director of Development) advised in respect of Lisson Arches that lessons had been learnt and that an update could be provided on this at a future meeting.

4.10 The Committee requested a breakdown of types of housing units for developments in future reports, to be provided with a definition of under-occupancy for housing renewal areas and an update on Lisson Arches.

4.11 **ACTIONS:**

1. Information on development schemes to include a breakdown of how many housing units are social/intermediate and how many are new/provided (Action for: Neil Wightman, Director of Housing Services).
2. Definition of under-occupancy in housing renewal areas to be provided (Action for: Neil Wightman, Director of Housing Services).
3. Update on Lisson Arches to be provided (Action for: James Green, Director of Development).

5 CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING SERVICES UPDATE

5.1 Councillor Andrew Smith (Cabinet Member for Housing Services) introduced the report and advised that there had been improvements in performance in respect of the Contact Centre. Changes had also been made in respect of billing for leaseholders, following suggestions by the Committee and this was due to take effect from 1 April 2020. A new adviser had also been appointed

in the Homeless Prevention Team.

- 5.2 The Committee commented that some leaseholders were still confused about service charges for major works and protection works and sought details as to what steps were being taken to explain to leaseholders what was being asked of them. It was remarked that residents preferred evening surgeries to discuss this. The importance of explaining the financial terms of payment of these works was emphasised and it was asked whether different financial terms depending on the type of leaseholder were offered. Members welcomed the achievements of the Housing Solutions Service, however it was commented that there were capacity issues and it was queried if any additional resources could be made available. An explanation was also sought as to why there had been a drop in the number of full homelessness duty acceptances.
- 5.3 Members welcomed the progress made in implementing traffic management orders (TMOs) on housing estates and they asked when this was likely to be completed. An update on fire safety works was also sought and it was asked whether the Council was satisfied that there were no buildings that had flammable cladding.
- 5.3 In reply to issues raised by the Committee, Councillor Smith advised that improvements were being made in respect of Section 20 explanations to leaseholders concerning major works and protection works, however more effort could be made to ensure the information was clearer in future and resident surgeries on this matter were also available. There were also a range of payment options available for leaseholders. Councillor Smith acknowledged that the Housing Solutions Services were dealing with a number of cases and discussions needed to take place with regard to resource pressures. There was a substantial focus on fire safety and Councillor Smith felt reassured that there were no flammable cladding or materials on Council homes. In respect of implementation of TMOs, Councillor Smith stated that further details could be made available. In some of the remaining areas where the TMOs were yet to be implemented, some residents had stated that they were preserving parking spaces by using bollards, however in such cases they had been advised that this was not legally enforceable without a TMO being in place.
- 5.4 Jon Lock (Acting Head of Housing Operations) added that 60 sites had gone through the process of TMO implementation to date and there had been a re-consultation in some areas. He confirmed that enforcement was taking place where TMOs had been implemented.
- 5.5 Neil Wightman (Director of Housing) stated that evening surgeries for leaseholders in respect of major works and protection works could be offered. There had also been consultation with leaseholders on this matter and a YouTube feature explaining how it worked and the options available was shortly to be released. Neil Wightman stated that there had not been significant negative feedback from residents on this issue. Steps were being taken to improve the Housing Solutions Service and there were some temporary additional resources available. With regards to the drop in full homelessness duty acceptances, Neil Wightman stated that no particular reason for this had been identified, however this could be looked at in more

detail and it was possible that the drop may be partly attributable to the effectiveness of frontline homelessness prevention services. Neil Wightman also stated that checks could be undertaken to ensure there was no flammable cladding on new developments.

5.6 **ACTIONS:**

1. Investigate as to why there had been a drop in full homelessness duty acceptances (Action for: Neil Wightman, Director of Housing).
2. Provide information on what has been done to ensure that new developments do not have flammable cladding and are complying with fire safety regulations (Action for: James Green, Director of Development).
3. Update in early 2020 to be provided on the rollout of TMOs and enforcement where this has been undertaken (Action for: Jon Lock, Acting Head of Housing Operations and Kevin Goad, Director of City Highways).

6 **HOUSING MANAGEMENT SERVICES UPDATE**

6.1 Neil Wightman (Director of Housing) gave a presentation on Housing Management Services, including progress made since the Task Group recommendations and the strategic priorities of the department. Neil Wightman advised that his priorities were:

- Responsiveness and quality of repairs service
- Better Service for leaseholders
- Support vulnerable residents
- A new housing services offer and increase resident involvement
- Prevent homelessness

6.2 Neil Wightman explained that the 'Our Voice' survey had identified the desire to provide the right culture to deliver services and to be customer focused. Improvements to the service included the introduction of 'Gober' customer care training, a Members enquiry team, the 'Your Voice' newsletter and there was also continuous learning and immediate satisfaction monitoring. In future, speech analytics data would be used to drive improvements. Neil Wightman also set out the improvements to the repairs and maintenance performance and for leaseholders.

6.3 Members noted the improvement in the repairs performance but commented that there was still a relatively large number of responses that were dissatisfied with repairs carried out. The Committee welcomed the improved culture and the willingness in taking ownership of matters raised by residents. Members asked what steps were being made to ensure more staff were visiting estates and identifying problems. Details were sought about the timescales involved for the ongoing improvements to Housing Management Services. Monitoring of follow-on work where jobs had not been completed was also necessary to prevent residents having to make multiple calls and it was asked what escalation process was in place where multiple calls had to

be made. Members asked why there had been a recent spike in calls from residents. Information was sought on the processes in place for self-evaluation of the service. Members also asked if there were any other ways of measuring residents' satisfaction other than through post-call surveys. The Committee commented that whilst the Westminster on Meals service had been successful, it was not the answer to all issues residents may encounter.

- 6.4 In reply to issues raised by the Committee, Councillor Smith acknowledged that the number of repairs reported as unsatisfactory was still too high, however a better relationship between the Contact Centre and the Repairs Team was being developed to ensure that the appropriate worker was allocated to the repair job. There was also software in place to capture more in-depth feedback from residents. Councillor Smith emphasised that ownership and presence on estates was at the heart of the service's priorities and an estate action plan would embed this. The Westminster on Wheels service was also being reviewed to make it more flexible. Councillor Smith added that there were a number of ways in which customer satisfaction was measured and the speech analytics project would provide further means once it was completed.
- 6.5 Neil Wightman advised that complaints often arose in respect of communal repairs and a re-organisation of Estate Services was taking place so that more simple repairs could be carried out there and then, rather than going through the reporting process first. The Committee heard that a new mobile working solution for staff was due to be launched in mid-December. With regards to the recent spike in calls, Neil Wightman advised that this was common at this time of year. Where there were multiple calls concerning a particular job, this would be internally looked at. Neil Wightman informed Members that the new management structure would go live on 1 December and the next phase would involve improving customer access to frontline staff and increasing post repair inspections. Turning to self-evaluation of service, Neil Wightman stated that this involved looking at complaints data and managers had the authority to undertake an internal call-in of a particular case.
- 6.6 The Committee noted that there were still a number of performance indicators rated 'amber' as opposed to 'green' and requested an update on Housing Management Services in six months' time.

7 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ON ESTATES TASK GROUP REPORT

- 7.1 The Chairman welcomed the contributions made during the course of the Task Group's work and commented on the worthwhile meetings that had taken place, which had raised a number of questions and issues about how the process of tackling anti-social behaviour on estates operated. He felt that a number useful and challenging recommendations had been made. It was recognised that residents had not received enough support on some matters and there were a number of complex issues and cases to address. There also needed to be more work done to ensure that the right decisions were made for residents and also for specific individuals.

- 7.2 Members welcomed the recommendations of the Task Group and emphasised the need to take up a more joined-up approach to tackle this issue. It was asked if there would be more integration of teams, such as working more closely with the Council's Noise Team and Children's Team.
- 7.3 Councillor Smith welcomed the report and advised that there will be more joint working to tackle this issue, adding that anti-social behaviour occurred not only on estates. Consideration was also being given as to whether additional resources could be brought in.
- 7.4 Neil Wightman also welcomed the report and the recommendations of the Task Group which he felt were challenging, however every effort needed be made to fulfil them. He commented that implementing some recommendations may involve bringing in additional resources and that improving enforcement was a key objective, including the timescales in which it was undertaken. Neil Wightman added that there were already steps being taken to integrate services more to tackle this issue and a meeting with Children's Services to discuss this would take place on 22 November.
- 7.5 Jon Lock stated that working closely with other teams was important to ensure that anti-social behaviour was tackled more effectively and a relationship with the Noise Team was being developed.

7.6 The Committee agreed the recommendations of the Task Group.

8 WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER

- 8.1 Members had before them the Work Programme and Action Tracker.
- 8.2 In response to a query from a Member, Aaron Hardy (Policy and Scrutiny Manager) was to consider when the Housing Revenue Account business plan could be considered.
- 8.3 The Committee noted the Work Programme and Action Tracker.

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 item 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:

Item 11.

11 MINUTES

11.1 RESOLVED:

That the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 2019 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record of proceedings.

The Meeting ended at 8.41 pm

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE _____



City of Westminster

Housing, Finance, and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Committee date:	30 January 2020
Report Of:	Councillor Andrew Smith
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member for Housing Services
Report Author and Contact Details:	Amy Just <u>ajust@westminster.gov.uk</u>

Westminster Housing Services

Customer Experience and Digital

The third quarter and start of the winter period delivered approximately 75,000 customer enquiries into the contact centre. This included over 61,000 calls and 12,000 emails. Despite an increase in volumes of over 26% on the previous quarter, the contact centre delivered its best performance for this time of year with 92% of calls answered and 68% within 30 seconds.

Contact centre performance year to date continues to be within target. From April to December 2919, 75% of calls were answered within the 30 second SLA and 93% of all calls were answered.

A total of 4,169 Customer Satisfaction Surveys have been completed year to date and overall 83.6% of residents were satisfied with the services delivered by the contact centre. 72% of residents believed their query to be resolved and both engagement and empathy levels remain above 85%.

As a result of the insight provided in the speech analytics report, additional training has been planned for the contact centre teams. This training is scheduled until the end of March 2020 and will align with each of the five service priorities and with the training previously delivered in November (345 training hours). It will focus on leasehold refresher training, listening and soft skills, and domestic violence. Training in January will focus the repairs improvement plan with both classroom-based training and coaching planned to embed the changes to the repairs processes and embed new ways of working.

Scoping of the Housing Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution has commenced. This will include the introduction of a knowledge base to support the quality of advice given to residents across the customer service teams.

Repairs

The repairs service has performed well over the autumn, with no impact on year to date performance from a seasonal increase in responsive repair requests.

Satisfaction with the quality of repairs increased slightly to 83% (year to date 81%) and 87% of repairs were completed on the first visit (year to date 85%). 99% of all emergency repairs were completed on time during November (year to date 99%).

Speech analytics work completed in September 2019 has provided a valuable source of insight into performance of the repairs service from the customer perspective. Several areas for service improvement are currently being addressed, including:

- Improving the accuracy and quality of orders raised to reduce abortive calls and the need for call backs through:
 - Contact centre staff training
 - Enhancements to Locator Plus (order diagnostic tool)
 - Automatic warnings to staff to avoid raising duplicate jobs
- Providing area office staff with up-to-date information on repairs status through:
 - Access to MSi - the main repair contractor's database for live access to job statuses.
- Better management of repairs appointments service through:
 - Greater availability of slots
 - Quicker appointment booking & rebooking

A significant proportion of all repairs calls are plumbing related. The management of leaks has improved in the last year through establishing a dedicated team and introducing a planned preventative maintenance programme. Work has now started to handle plumbing related calls differently at the point of first response. This is at an early stage and a further report will be provided with the next update.

Statutory compliance figures for gas, electricity and water testing remains strong. For November the KPI's were:

- Gas in-flat compliance – 99.8%
- Gas communal boiler compliance – 100%
- Water Tank - testing 98%
- Electrical testing communal – 100%

Voids

The project to improve void management and reduce the time taken to repairs and re-let properties is taking effect. The average time taken to repair and re-let properties in November was 28 calendar days, with an average time of 11 days to complete works.

Fire Safety

The programme of fire door upgrades and replacement is underway with work completed at Glastonbury House. Work at Warwick & Brindley is due to commence in February, with samples due to be presented at resident meetings and pilot installations. Works are also due to commence in February at Semley House and Hyde Tower. Hall and Braithwaite and Brunel have been delayed

pending stakeholder authority to progress. The full fire door upgrade and replacement programme is expected to be completed by 2022.

The impact of fire safety on the scheduling of the major works is currently being considered and further information will be provided verbally at the HFR Policy & Scrutiny Committee meeting on 30 January 2020.

As leaseholders are responsible for ensuring that their own fire doors are to standard, they have been contacted individually to request confirmation that doors meet current performance requirements. Furthermore, leaseholders have the opportunity to opt in, via written agreement, to have their fire doors replaced by the same manufacturer in buildings where tenanted doors are being replaced as part of planned major works. The first pilot for leaseholder opt-in for fire doors is Warwick and Brindley. The leaseholder offer is subject to receiving final costs from service providers.

Warwick and Brindley Estate towers

The external wall insulation work is due to complete in July 2020.

Glastonbury House and Glarus Court

Works at Glastonbury House, such the retrofit of sprinklers to flats, new fire doors, fire stopping and the provision of mobility scooter storage facilities were signed off as complete in December 2019, with a few minor snagging items remaining.

Glarus Court (low rise, extra care scheme) was also identified as a pilot for sprinkler installation last year. This is now under review to ensure the best solution for the building and residents.

Torridon House

A new non-combustible façade is being designed for the block, as a result of issues identified during the installation at the pilot flat in the block.

Works to install individual fire alarm systems (LD2s) within each flat have been completed. Design work in respect of the proposed new façade has been complex, but the design is well advanced. Detailed internal surveys will commence this month and will enable conclusion of the design. Our Health & Safety team are comfortable with the mitigation measures undertaken to date.

Estimated service charges 2020/2021

The new annual service charge invoices will be served in March 2020 for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. The new mailing will include a 'Your service charge explained' leaflet to explain the basis of the service charge and the associated methodology for the calculation of the heads of charge.

Revised templates and letters will shortly be circulated for comment from residents and colleagues. The newly formed Leasehold 100 will be asked for their views on the revised templates and feedback will be taken into consideration where possible. The move to annual billing provides more clarity to residents and allows for one sum to be paid over 12 equal monthly instalments. Residents will be able to budget for the whole financial year ahead and the actual service charge adjustment (a credit or a debit) will be a standalone document, making it easier for residents to scrutinise.

A new and improved leasehold guide is currently with the communications team to provide a well-designed online document. The purpose of the document is to enable residents to 'self-serve' and to obtain as much information as possible at a time and place convenient for them.

The new right to buy offer from January 2020 will offer a bespoke service to residents looking to purchase their property. They will be offered a full interview to discuss the implications of becoming a homeowner and to provide a detailed explanation of the basis of the service charge calculations, as well as any major works planned for the property. It will also provide an opportunity to discuss the obligations under the terms of the lease for both the residents and the council.

Topics such as subletting, insurance, short letting, alterations, permissions and help and assistance will be discussed at length to ensure prospective lessees are provided with as much information as possible before they complete the purchase of their property.

Leases will also be granted for a full 125 years from the date of completion, which will end the issue of the co-terminus lease date for our residents. This change will delay the need for lease extensions for where the first lease in the block was sold in the 1980s.

Rent collection

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 November 2019 current tenancy rent arrears stood at £1,199,279 which represents just 1.48% of the debit. This performance is achieved through helping tenants to sustain their tenancies and just 5 evictions have been carried out in 2019/2020 due to rent arrears.

At the end of December 2019, 1,151 tenants were in receipt of Universal Credit (UC), an increase from 688 cases at the end of March 2019. The arrears for UC cases at the end of December 2019 totalled £437,421 with 59% of UC cases in arrears.

There have been 5 evictions carried out due to rent arrears this year. To tackle the increasing debt caused by the roll out of UC, an outreach team has been created to work with those in receipt to help them sustain their tenancy. This team started in January 2019. A review of the function is being undertaken to place the role within the income officers' duties.

A total of £144,597 was collected in former tenant income at the end of November 2019 against an annual target of £177,600. The team are on track to surpass the annual target.

Tenancy reviews

Tenancy reviews continue to ensure residents are receiving the support they need to sustain their tenancies, and to identify potential cases of tenancy fraud. As at the end of December, 466 tenancy reviews had been completed for the year ending 31 March 2020 against a target of 500.

Residents receiving these visits were selected from reports indicating those who had not been in contact with the Housing Service for some time, and those appearing on our local emergency plans as needing support.

Estate Services

The current performance for our Estate Services contractors is as follows:

- Cleaning: 95.78%
- Grounds maintenance: 96.14%

For the month of November the team completed 92% of its monthly estate inspections, which resulted in over 339 communal repairs orders being raised to deal with health & safety issues noted during the inspections. The team also completed 100% of weekly playground inspections, ensuring that any defects noted were recorded, logged and passed to the contractor to carry out the work required.

Performance scores are based on national Housemark scoring standards widely used by councils and RPs. Blocks are scored monthly across a range of elements (e.g.; stairs, lifts, windows, litter levels etc.) against agreed standards set out in picture format. Higher standards have generally been met across the stock, but deficiencies have been raised with the contractor to address.

In November the team completed 92% of its scheduled monthly estate inspections, which resulted in over 339 communal repairs orders being raised to deal with both health & safety issues and repair issues noted during the inspections. The team also completed 100% of weekly playground inspections which are carried out in line with Royal Society for the Protection of Accidents (RoSPA) industry standards, ensuring that any defects noted were recorded, logged and passed to the contractor to carry out the work required.

Phase 1 of the mobile working technology is due to be rolled out to housing operations by the end of January 2020. It will enable staff to raise a wide range of estate-based issues including repairs which will go instantly to the relevant team to undertake the required actions and negate the need for staff to come back into offices to raise requests, freeing them to spend more time on other duties.

An internal Communal Repairs Service pilot on 26 estates (239 blocks) is launching in the final week of January running until the end of May 2020 to coincide with the launch of the new mobile working technology. As part of the service, a range of simple to resolve communal repairs which have previously taken a long period of time to complete will be managed locally. This service will be provided through a dedicated multi-skilled team, and members of the existing compliance team who will be trained to fix problems on estates as they find them, rather than having to raise orders to contractors.

Antisocial Behaviour

Task Group recommendations

Since the circulation for the Task Group recommendations, the ASB Housing team have been working with other departments to improve customer satisfaction and to streamline the customer journey. The work in progress includes creating a defined list of ASB categories, Housing services categories and Compliance categories based on common reports to the customer services team. The list has been created between the teams and the contact centre will receive briefing sessions on how to respond to common customer reports and where the report needs to be sent to ensure the customer receives the right response the first time.

Good progress has been made with increasing the functionality of the online customer reporting platform to make ASB reporting online easier, reduce the time taken to triage cases, provide more advice on ASB and community issues and allow customers to update live cases. The new functionality is due to go live at the end of January 2020.

Noise Campaign

The ASB housing team have been working closely with environmental health officers from the noise service and the communications team to look at how the two services can work jointly to respond to issues. Noise is the highest reported issue from customers, and it is important that they are aware of how they can report noise and how they may be able to resolve the issue independently with a neighbour. Actions in the campaign include a workshop for the staff from the ASB and housing management teams to gain knowledge on noise and environmental health and feel more confident when receiving reports, establishment of regular meetings between the noise service and the housing ASB team to discuss cases and how best to resolve them together, and updated information on the difference between statutory noise and general living. A drop-in event is planned for April for residents to gain information and speak to professionals.

Rough Sleeping

Since legal action was taken against rough sleepers on the Hallfield estate, the problem has eased considerably. Where there have been sporadic reports, we have arranged a prompt enforcement response to address this. We are in continuing discussions with Legal Services to ensure that if the problem returns on a significant scale, that we remain ready to act swiftly to respond.

Joint Walkabouts and working

To increase visibility on estates and put into practice holistic approaches to ASB and nuisance, the ASB team have been conducting and arranging a series of joint walkabouts with internal and external partners. A large walkabout took place in December with the ASB team alongside CCTV engineers, housing service advisors, compliance officers, local police officers and building surveyors. The walkabout was in the West area and was in response to youths loitering, drug dealing, and access being gained into a building. The group visited ASB hotspots and shared departmental knowledge on how to jointly respond to ASB and options for prevention and safety improvement in the community. Further joint walkabouts are being planned and will continue to take place each month.

Estate priorities

Following the launch of the new Housing Services Offer in October 2019, the following progress has been made on strands of re-engagement:

- **'My Estate Walkabouts'** - nine My Estate Walkabouts have been carried out across various estates in the borough. These are continuing according to the published programme for this year.
- **'My Estate Action Plans'** - completed 23 My Estate Action Plans by the end of 2019
- **Resident engagement** - five new resident groups (Dufours Place, Warwick Crescent sounding board, Mozart, Queen's Park, Ascot and Windsor Gardens) have been set up
- **Online resident engagement** - 215 residents (both tenants and leaseholders) have signed up to be part of 'Westminster Connected', our online engagement group. Lessees have already been engaged in consultation activities and the consulting with the wider group will begin early in the new year on areas that need to be improved.

- **Housing Surgeries** - have been increased to 14 including Marylebone and Church St libraries, providing residents with access to housing staff close to where they live and already receive other services
- **Westminster on Wheels** - over 1600 residents visited Westminster on Wheels, with 95% of them saying that they were happy that the service was on their estate
- **Mobile working** - piloting new technology in January 2020 to allow reporting of minor communal repairs more efficiently, as well as a dedicated repairs team that will be on hand to respond to minor communal repairs quicker

This initiative will be built on by creating a web page for the My Estate Action Plans so that residents can track our progress online.

Parking

Consultation on the final set of Orders incorporating amendments identified during earlier consultation phases has now concluded and these are being reviewed at the beginning of January.

A solution for residents of the Wharnclyffe Gardens and Hallfield estates is being sought, where some concerns were expressed by the respective Residents Associations on the proposals.

Enforcement has begun across the City with most areas now covered by Orders. Progress continues to be made on updating permits and completing lining and signage installation.

Resident engagement and Halls

Over 50 residents joined Westminster City Council staff to help with bulb planting across 12 estates over the autumn period. Since holding the events, three existing resident groups have sought help to set up community gardening projects. This initiative helped with the drive to raise visibility of staff on estates and achieved positive coverage in the press.

Four new residents' groups were set up this quarter at Dufours Place, Queen's Park Court, Ascot and Windsor, and Warwick Crescent. We have continued to provide assistance with the new residents' groups at Grosvenor and Regency, and West Streets and Oaktree. At Grosvenor, residents have been supported to produce governance documents and hold an away day to focus on their estate priorities.

A Westender's Residents Network is being re-established in the Soho and Covent Garden area to ensure the smaller blocks spread across the area have a way of coming together as there are no halls available locally.

19 annual reviews were undertaken of residents' associations to ensure they had good governance and to identify any support they may need. Assistance was also provided with recruitment drives and grant applications.

Tollgate Hall, a brand-new hall for residents, was handed over in December and a launch is being planned for January / February. A party for nearly 100 residents on the Tollgate estate was held in the new hall as a thank you to residents for being patient whilst their estate was being redeveloped.

In Queens Park over 30 elderly residents enjoyed festivities and activities to establish a social network and help prevent social isolation.

Both Barrow Hill and Dryburgh Hall have been refurbished this quarter and are now much more attractive venues for residents to use.

Community Development and social value

Churchill Gardens Youth Club has now been refurbished with a full new kitchen being provided by United Living as part of their social value commitment.

Other social value examples include United Living redecorating the Warwick Lounge at Glastonbury House for elderly residents, as well as donating Christmas tree, lights and decorations. They also decorated and put up new shelving for Pimlico Toy Library including painting.

All construction partners continue to provide social value to our Westminster residents and 61 residents have been supported into employment or apprenticeships since April.

Tenant Management Organisations

TMO 5-year review (Audits)

The TMO audit review is now nearing completion. Odhams Walk TMO has completed all outstanding actions and only 17 actions remain to be closed across the remaining TMOs. It is the intention to get all remaining actions closed by the end of March 2020. However, it is anticipated that a Warning Notices will need to be served on a few TMOs early in the new year to ensure compliance with these target dates.

If TMOs do not comply with the audit requirements, further enforcement action will be agreed, which could involve removal of services or potential closure.

TMO Health & Safety Audit

The City Council has recently carried out H&S audits on all eight TMOs. The audits have recommended better systems of work for both the individual TMOs and the City Council. Two of the eight TMOs are working through the audit recommendations with their health & safety advisor. The remaining six TMOs are currently appointing a H&S advisor collectively to review the recommendations and provide on-going H&S support. TMOs have a compliance deadline of the end of March 2020.

Temporary Accommodation: Meeting Demand from Households in Housing Need

Demand for housing has been in line with the projections set out in previous reports to the Committee, with current Temporary Accommodation numbers remaining in the circa of 2,740 and an average of approximately 220 applications per month being made under the new Homeless Reduction Act legislation.

Local authorities have a legal requirement to provide suitable temporary accommodation if there is reason to believe that an applicant may be homeless, eligible for assistance and have a priority need. Westminster acquire some of our temporary accommodation by leasing properties from the private sector for both emergency and longer-term use. In Westminster we have an arrangement with around 30 organisations including registered providers.

The Council is required to offer suitable Temporary Accommodation (TA) to accepted homeless households pending allocation into longer term accommodation.

Westminster continues to deliver a wide range of support to homelessness families who occupy temporary accommodation which includes;

- Support to households to access employment and move into work
- Debt advice and money management
- Outreach support to where people live in temporary accommodation



There is a focus in 2020/21 to achieve the targets set within the Homelessness Strategy 2019 – 2024. Supporting the plan to achieve:

- A clear, effective focus on preventing and responding effectively to homelessness
- Prioritising settled housing by developing a well-functioning housing system – availability and choice, homes people can afford, growth of supply
- Partners working together, bringing insight, creativity and determination to build on success and go further to reduce homelessness

Currently 44% of temporary accommodation is within the Westminster borough and 56% is outside.

Housing Solutions Service

The Housing Solutions Service (HSS) delivered in partnership by RMG, Shelter and Passage, continues to work hard in achieving positive prevention outcomes with families and single adults who present as homeless. Last month, the service achieved a prevention outcome in 88% of cases, which were owed a prevention duty. These have been through a range of methods such as our private sector Lettings team, Westlets, mediation work to secure a return to family or friends, or to prevent evictions and repossession, and financial assistance to households who found their own accommodation in the private sector.

As part of the continuous improvement and development of the service, and following feedback from customers and consultation with various stakeholders, there has been a review of the effectiveness of Personalised Housing Plans (PHPs) over the last quarter with a focus on improved customer engagement with the plan, individualised content, including wider categories and activities. The new plans will come into effective as of January 2020 and will enable both staff and customers to agree

and work to plans that have more tailored information, providing clearer and more defined activities which will enable the plans to be more meaningful and increase positive outcomes.

The WCC HSS contract continues to be one of the highest performing contracts in delivering its social value commitments throughout Westminster. Through the contracts comprehensive social value programme, they have delivered activities focusing on; employment, supporting economic independence, having a positive impact on quality of life, as well as creating capacity for resilient communities. Some recent activity and highlights are the RMG sponsorship during December of a Christmas market stall on Tachbrook for start-ups and community groups, and the award RMG's community grants to the three selected charities; MEWSO, who work hard on tackling social isolation amongst Middle Eastern Women, the Connaught Opera who arrange and perform concerns for older people across Westminster and the Door Step Library who provide opportunities for children to read and learn outside of schools and libraries, who may be in areas of disadvantage. The cheques were presented by RMG Managing Director Hugh McGeever at an afternoon tea an afternoon tea event hosted by Westminster council at in City Hall.

The contract has had an additional staffing resource for the financial years 18/19 and 19/20 of an additional 40 posts (financial commitment of £1.5m per year), this resource commitment is being reviewed for 2020/21, a benchmarking exercise with other local authorities has been completed and a further review of the services requirements is being completed with a final decision on the additional resource needed by end of January 2020. It is anticipated that this commitment will reduce for 20/21 following the delivery model changes that have been implemented through December and January and as processes further improve following the initial change and impact of demand following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018.

Homelessness Strategy 2019 – 2024

The draft Strategy was consulted on between July and September and 180 responses have been received which are being analysed. The final Strategy will be published in January. Overall the ten-point plan was well supported by respondents and aims to:

- Prevent more people from becoming homeless in the first place – for example, by reaching more people at risk of homelessness at an earlier stage by building a network of prevention and support, working with partners and communities. Proposals include holding events and training in the community to raise awareness about our services and making them more visible through campaigns.
- Improve our services and response when people do become homeless by making our housing services more transparent, accountable and accessible and by setting up a new Partnership Boards to hold them to account and carrying out mystery-shopping exercises.
- Meet the challenges ahead and have a homelessness system fit for the future by becoming a leader in the field of homelessness prevention. We want to use the learning from the Early Intervention Trailblazer Service and make the case to Government on how the welfare system could work better in central London.



Housing, Finance and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Committee date:	30 January 2020
Title:	Fire Safety in New Developments and Current Housing Stock
Report Of:	James Green, Director of Development and Neil Wightman, Director of Housing
Report Authors and Contact:	Paul Choat and Jim Patterson

Fire Safety in new developments

This note aims to inform the committee regarding the measures currently being taken and measures currently under consideration in respect of promoting fire safety in new developments.

1. Introduction

Although Grenfell Tower was an existing, refurbished block there are many lessons that can be applied to our new developments. WCC's Employers Requirements have always called for a high standard of fire protection to be incorporated into the design and construction, but they have been enhanced following the immediate recommendations of the Hackitt Inquiry and will continue to be enhanced as new considerations emerge.

This report focuses on our new buildings; the development team are currently to track to delivery 1850 new affordable homes by 2023, and it is anticipated that a similar quantity of new homes will be delivered between 2023 and 2028. The WCC development programme also includes ?? private-sale homes. WCC's approach to fire safety in new buildings takes no account of tenure type, the fire safety measures incorporated into each building are entirely based upon the buildings location, configuration and levels & type of occupancy.

In general, the construction and housing industries are anticipating significant changes to the building regulations in terms of design requirements and the processes and protocol's for approval. The development team have worked with external experts to anticipate the requirements and incorporate the necessary changes. Whereas the tragedy at Grenfell has been a catalyst for the industry-wide review of fire safety, the development team have endeavoured to take a wider view of fire safety rather than just focus on the key headlines of the report by Dame Judith Hackitt.

This briefing will focus on changes key building components as well as the management of the design, and the management of the building once it is inhabited (in-use).

2. Key Building Components

The key building components are divided into two key areas: building fabric and building services, each of these areas play important roles in delivering safe buildings.

2.1 Building Fabric

The primary consideration when designing a safe building is the fabric of the building; careful design of the fabric will minimise the opportunity for fires to start and will restrict the fire's ability to spread. The key elements of the fabric are the internal walls, external walls, doors, windows and service routes.

External Walls

We have changed our Employer's Requirements documents to ensure that combustible materials are not included in the composition of the external walls, irrespective of the height of the building. Because the non-combustible materials are generally heavier and bulkier, this has required significant redesign of a number of buildings that were already in an advanced stage of design or construction (such as Dudley House, Parsons North, Cosway Street and Ashbridge Street). Structures have been updated to account for the increased weight, in some cases minor amendments to the planning consent have been sought, to account for the slight increase in the size of the building.

It should be noted that the infill schemes at Melrose & Keith, Ordnance Mews and Helmsdale House, contain foam insulation. The insulation is an integral part of the building's structural system and could not be omitted, however steps have been taken to ensure that the insulation is fully encapsulated within non-flammable materials (masonry and concrete panels externally, and fire-rated plasterboard internally), in addition these properties all benefit from sprinkler protection.

Internal Walls

The internal walls are constructed in accordance with the requirements of building regulations, with fire resisting compartments constructed to suit the fire strategy. Where services penetrate fire compartment walls, they are "fire stopped" as appropriate, WCC require the Main Contractor to run a stand-alone Quality Assurance process for the fire stopping element of the project.

Doors

All front doors are FD30s compliant, they are supplied as part of a certified door set, any glazing such as fan lights or side panels is required to be fire rated glass.

2.2 Building Services

Sprinklers

Sprinklers are included in all new multi-occupancy developments irrespective of the height of the building. Concealed sprinkler heads and pipework are installed into each dwelling.

Dry Risers

Dry Risers are installed in accordance with building regulations and Fire Officer requirements.

Automatic Detection and Alarms

All new blocks require a LD2 level of fire alarm system; this means that all communal areas are covered by manual “break-glass” call points, as well as automatic mains-powered smoke detectors. All dwellings have mains-powered automatic smoke detectors in each room where a fire may start (excludes kitchens and bathrooms).

The call-points and smoke detectors in the communal areas are connected to AOVs (Automatic Opening Vents) in the communal areas, which assist in clearance of smoke, thus providing a safer escape route for residents and a safe working environment for firefighters.

The communal fire alarm system interfaces with the building’s management systems, to allow for automatic dial-out to the emergency services in the event of activation. The fire alarm also interfaces with the lifts to ensure that the lifts return to ground floor and inoperable thereafter in the event of a fire.

We are currently reviewing the viability of installing a “repeater panel” to the ground floor of every building. The panel will allow the firefighters to identify the source of the alarm upon arrival at the building.

We are currently reviewing the viability of installing a Fire Brigade-operated evacuation alarm system. Currently the only way for the fire brigade to notify residents of the need to evacuate, would be for them to knock on every door. This system would enable firefighters to make an assessment upon arrival at the scene and trigger a sounder in every dwelling to alert residents of the need to evacuate.

Emergency Lighting and Signage

All communal areas are covered by mains-powered, battery backed emergency light fittings, with illuminated escape signage at key locations. Floor / Level Numbers will be displayed on photoluminescent boards on each landing.

We are currently reviewing the viability of installing photoluminescent strips to the stair nosings in communal areas, and also the installation of low-level photoluminescent dwelling number signs.

Lifts

A firefighting lift is installed in all dwellings over 18m tall.

3. Building and Design Management

BIM (Building Information Modelling)

The Hackitt report identified major issues with the way in which technical design information for buildings is stored and updated, the report made recommendations for the wider adoption of BIM. All of WCC's new build developments are already designed using BIM, the development team have established robust protocols for the external designers and contractors to follow when designing and constructing new buildings.

BIM allows designers to work collaboratively to produce information using a 3d model, there are numerous benefits in terms of the accuracy of design and programme. The BIM model stays "live" throughout the lifespan of the building, all of the key components are tagged with information regarding provenance, composition, warranties and required maintenance.

The next challenge is to procure a data environment, to store and effectively communicate the as-built information. The common data environment will be a central repository for all building models which will be accessed and updated by anyone undertaking works to the building during its lifetime. The development team are in the early stages of this procurement currently.

Home User Guides

All residents of the new homes are issued with a Home User Guide, the home user guide includes information on the life safety systems in the building and how to use them, the fire strategy, advice on prevention of fires and clear instructions regarding what to do in an emergency. The Home User Guide is discussed with every resident as part of the hand over.

Handover from Development to Housing

The development team work closely with the Westminster Housing Services to ensure that the buildings are handed-over properly; ensuring that the in-use officers are fully appraised in respect of the safe operation and maintenance of the new buildings. The volume of new properties being delivered is rapidly increasing each year, and the process for handing-over develops as lessons are learned from each project.

Next Steps

In the absence of new legislation and guidance from central government, and in the face of varying advice from industry we believe that the current processes and designs provide Westminster residents with safe and secure buildings.

The Employer's Requirements (ER's) are currently being rewritten and will incorporate the measures scheduled above*. The ER's will be revisited to account for any new legislation that arises, but in the interim the Development Team will continue to review industry advice and liaise with peers in respect of emerging best practice.

* Excludes items currently noted above as "under review": repeater panel, evacuation system, photoluminescent stair nosings

Fire Safety in current social housing stock

4. Fire doors

Following the last P&S committee good progress has been made to many of the recommendations. Below is a summary on progress and other issues relating to fire doors

Front entrance fire door regulation	A front door regulation criterion has been defined as per the British Standards and this is captured by the comprehensive fire door inspection regime which is in place. Major works has included this on a scheme by scheme basis from November 2019
Recording the inspection of front entrance fire doors in tall buildings	This is in place and is completed on a monthly basis
Major works inspections of front entrance fire doors (both tenants and leaseholders).	This is now included within all major works client briefs
Data and reports on fire safety matters	Monthly fire statistics are reported on a monthly basis to Health & Safety committee which are reported quarterly to the Cabinet Member and will be incorporated in dashboard to A&P.
Number of staff who can be trained as fire inspectors	14 staff are progressing through the Fire Door Inspection Programme, similar to 2018-19
Timeline for all fire doors to be inspected.	
Lobby for appropriate bodies to dedicate resources to support local authority building owners to train the staff and carry out the inspections in accordance with the London Fire Brigade's expectations.	Ongoing

In addition, the Director of Housing has put in place a more formal reporting structure, by establishing a monthly Health & Safety committee, fire prevention forms an important part of this agenda.

Below this committee, the Divisional Head of Property has created a monthly Fire Working Group where all aspects of fire prevention, including tracking the completion of

FRA's, ensuring that these are transferred into completed works e.g. inclusion on work programmes, raising of repairs.

Some of these programmes will take several years to complete e.g. fire door programme, and therefore will be included within a comprehensive programme to be developed to ensure that all these works can be done in a timely manner.

5. Sprinklers

The task group agreed the following recommendations in relation to sprinklers

Install sprinklers in all properties regardless of tenure, seeking to recover costs from post-1987 lessees only. (option A)	This work has commenced. We have installed a full sprinkler system to Glastonbury House
Work to establish a legal agreement for the right of access in to lessee properties and for charging post-1987 lessees	Currently being reviewed.
Carry out section 20 consultation for post-1987 lessees and then undertake the installation of the system to a block, deferring demanding the service charge until completion.	Our Media team is undertaking online surveys with leaseholders regarding the installation of sprinklers – results are pending.
Installation of option 1 (Boxed in plastic pipework with concealed heads) sprinklers	As part of the above Leaseholder are being asked on the aesthetics of sprinklers
Work with the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and key industry bodies to develop a comprehensive programme of ongoing dialogue and communication with all leaseholders to obtain access to their properties and to document all such individual engagements.	In Progress
Prioritise sheltered housing over tall buildings and establish budget for doing so within the HRA business plan	We prioritised Glastonbury House, and we are reviewing Glarus Court.
Ensure comprehensive records of fire safety works on each property are kept, including work and inspections undertaken by others	Records are kept, we are intending to transfer all records onto a central database – SHINE. This will commence February 2020 and will

such as the fire brigade, as per the recommendations of the Hackitt report.	provide a comprehensive and user-friendly database across the directorate.
Communicate advantages of sprinklers to private freeholders of tall buildings and to maintain a record of all such communications.	
Lobby Government (through LGA and London Councils were appropriate) on funding for the retrofitting of sprinklers, especially in cases where the Housing Revenue Account is having to fund such works.	This is being done via the monthly Housing Director Fire Safety meetings.
Lobby the government to amend regulations ensure retrofitting sprinklers is easier for social landlords.	
Continue to lobby the Mayor of London so that LFEPA provide specific guidance on the installation of sprinklers to mixed tenure blocks, specifically where leaseholders are able to decide (as is currently their right) whether or not to allow access to their properties for works to be done and to be maintained in the future. Also, lobby government for any changes that can be made to regulations to permit the council to enter (by appointment) such properties to carry out the works.	

Fire Safety in temporary accommodation

6. Fire risk assessments and spot checks

Temporary Accommodation (TA) comprises two forms of accommodation. Emergency accommodation (called stage 1), for use whilst a household's homeless application is being assessed. Secondly, there is longer-term, (stage 2) accommodation. This accommodation is for households where the council has accepted a housing duty to them and is provided until suitable longer-term accommodation is available.

WCC ensure that all properties secured for vulnerable people to use as temporary accommodation meet a suitable and safe property standard. WCC acquisition of properties for the purpose of TA requires all surveys to include a fire risk assessment as part of the condition survey of the property.

Providers of TA are required through contracts to meet suitable and safe property standards. WCC operate an annual inspections regime. All inspections include a fire risk assessment and the Housing Solutions Service engage their own environmental health consultant to inspect and review the conditions of all emergency (stage 1) accommodation.

WCC Housing Supply team also complete spot checks and inspections of TA accommodation to ensure that consideration is given to potential risks and hazards to health and safety. These officers have been trained to the national Health & Safety Standards for Rented Homes (HHSRS). Officers of this team inspect accommodation leased from private landlords.

7. Cladding

WCC have completed a review of TA accommodation that has ACM cladding. Of the 32 providers who work with WCC, none identified ACM cladding on any of the TA accommodation we use. One provider highlighted 6 units that have cladding of a different specification to ACM. We are currently reviewing the specification detail of this product with officers in WCC asset team.

8. Setting the standard

WCC are about to start work with the pan-London programme 'Setting the Standard' (STS) to develop a London wide standard in Stage 1 accommodation across all local authorities. The STS programme is scheduled to go live during 2020 and requires an annual Housing Health and Safety Rating System inspection of all accommodation and includes;

- Developing a centralised pan-London inspection service to guarantee that inspections of accommodation are carried out annually and that the records are uploaded to the web-based referencing system. Satisfactory properties would maintain their status on the STS list and properties requiring works withdrawn and referred to the host borough for enforcement action.
- Create a central team of Inspectors overseen by qualified environmental health practitioners who would be dedicated to the task of inspecting and rating of nightly paid B&B and studio accommodation used by all London Boroughs.

Fire Safety in private sector housing

9. Building Safety Programme

- Following Grenfell and in response to Central Government's Building Safety Programme, work has been undertaken to inspect and assess privately-owned

residential high-rise buildings with unsafe ACM (Aluminum Composite Material) cladding across the City. Since identification of affected buildings, officers have been closely engaged with relevant parties, including building owners and leaseholders, to bring about any necessary remediation. This work has included inspections and obtaining certain information regarding building construction and fire risk assessment.

- This work has identified 13 high-rise, privately-owned buildings providing residential accommodation in Westminster which have hazardous cladding. It is important to note that interim fire safety measures which meet LFB approval are in place in these buildings pending full remediation. Officers have been fully engaged with the building owners and relevant partners to secure remediation. This has resulted in one building being fully remediated, and substantial remediation of three further buildings with completion expected shortly.
- Following consultation with LFB and our Building Control department, enforcement action has now commenced under the Housing Act 2004 through the service of Hazard Awareness Notices on building owners. These notices have provided building owners with a 3-month window in which to provide details of how any hazardous cladding is to be removed and replaced.
- Pre-enforcement notification letters were sent to affected leaseholders two weeks prior to this, which provided them with a range of advice and support on this issue. This included a new section on the Council's website to provide further information and a dedicated mailbox to answer any specific queries. This exercise has proved very successful in minimizing queries from affected parties.
- Responses by building owners to the Hazard Awareness Notices will be reviewed and consideration will be given to the need for any escalation of enforcement action with the expiry of the Hazard Awareness Notices this month.
- Officers have encouraged building owners to apply to the Government's Private Sector Remediation Fund to assist with funding necessary works. This has resulted in all bar one of the owners of buildings with hazardous cladding submitting applications for funding. The remaining building has received confirmation that remedial works will be funded through insurance arrangements.
- In addition, MHCLG issued a request to local authorities across the country to undertake a data collection exercise regarding high rise residential buildings in their area towards the end of 2019. Westminster contains one of the highest number of such buildings nationally, and work has commenced to undertake this exercise. This work has attracted funding from the MHCLG in accordance with New Burdens rules

10. Housing Standards Task Force

- The Housing Standards Taskforce continues to enforce against rogue landlords and agents. In the current financial year, we have issued 15 Civil Penalty notices and have collected £61,500 in penalty charges. There is an appeal pending at

the First Tier Tribunal in respect of a £20,000 penalty for the operation of an unlicensed House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) property in Shirland Road.

- Not all cases are prosecuted and where the landlord is cooperative the Council, at its discretion, may decide to take less formal action. In one case in Third Avenue, a student house was found to be unlicensed and following intervention by the HST, the owner (who was not a portfolio landlord) quickly licensed the property, installed a new fire alarm and had the electrics overhauled. Taskforce action has resulted in the discovery of 20 unknown and unlicensed HMOs in the current year.
- The Metastreet report into Houses in Multiple Occupation (compiled with data from the HST analysts) has now been finalised and shows clear correlation between Houses in Multiple Occupation and housing hazards, particularly those relating to fire safety and excess cold hazards. The results of this analysis will form part of the background documentation for the proposed Additional HMO licensing scheme, which will come before members shortly.
- External funding for the Housing Standards Taskforce finishes in March 2020. The team are looking to secure further funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy/Section 106 planning contributions as a means of continuing the project beyond March.

Short Term Lets (STL)

- A meeting was had with the CEO of AirBnB and the STAA (Short Term Accommodation Association) on how the sector could be better regulated, the proposal from the company being a voluntary registration system that could be implemented locally. The City Council would rather a statutory registration scheme but welcome any further steps by the sector.
- AirBnB would like us to consider a joint communications campaign to provide information for hosts, and to work together to develop case studies to inform a proposed AirBnB white paper to Government. That work is ongoing.
- Since 2015, there have been 1987 STL cases, and there are currently 1406 active cases. To date, 482 of those cases have related to Planning Contravention Notices and 24 related to enforcement notices. There have been 166 cases to do with noise, 18 related to anti-social behaviour and 208 cases on waste related STL.



Housing, Finance and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	30 th January 2020
Classification:	General Release
Title:	2019/20 Work Programme
Report of:	Director of Policy, Performance and 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:	Lizzie Barrett x 3104 ebarrett@westminster.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

1. This report presents the 2019/20 work programme to the committee for its consideration.

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) takes in to account comments by the committee at its previous meeting.

**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 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
Fire Safety	Update on fire safety.	Barbara Brownlee, Executive Director for Growth, Planning and Housing

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
Housing Management Services	Update on housing management services following transition in house	Director of Housing
Housing Revenue Account Business Plan	Review the HRA Business Plan	Director of Housing

**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
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
Major works		Task Group

This page is intentionally left blank

ACTION TRACKER 2019/20
Housing, Finance and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

ROUND THREE 18 NOVEMBER 2019		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration	In future when providing information on development schemes can we have breakdown of how many housing units are social/intermediate and how many are new/re-provided	In progress
	Provide the definition for under-occupancy in a housing renewal areas.	Completed
	Provide an update on Lisson Arches	Completed
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Housing Services	Look in to why has there been a drop in full homelessness duty acceptances	Completed
	Check what’s being done to make sure that new developments do not have flammable cladding and are complying with fire safety regulations	Completed
	Send an update early 2020 on rollout of TMOs and enforcement in areas where it’s been done.	In progress

ROUND TWO 12 SEPTEMBER 2019		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Housing Services	Provide an update on how much parking enforcement has been rolled out on former CWH estates to date and what is the completion date for the rest?	Completed
	Provide Councillor Noble with a note on s20 process	Completed
	In the next cabinet member update provide an update on the change of approach in the council’s asset strategy to use	In progress

	temporary accommodation as a source of capital investment.	
Regeneration Update	What were the specific reason the Council did not apply for GLA funding for regeneration schemes? (the funding that was £100k per unit)	Completed
Call-In	Provide an update on Does Westminster have any Temporary Accommodation with ACM cladding on it?	Completed

ROUND ONE 5 JUNE 2019		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Finance Property and Regeneration	Circulate details of which officers are responsible for which services in the new housing management team	Completed
	In Councillor Smith’s next update include the details of fire door inspections	In progress
	Reply to Cllr Elcho’s query regarding the use of drop keys	Completed
Cabinet Member Q&A – Cabinet Member for Housing Services	Provide a briefing on the council’s apprenticeship scheme	Completed
	Provide a note on the number of homes the council has started/completed year by year as well as a list of schemes on site	Completed