



City of Westminster

Committee Agenda

Title: **Climate Action, Housing and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee**

Meeting Date: **Wednesday 19th July, 2023**

Time: **6.30 pm**

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

Members: **Councillors:**

Concia Albert
Gillian Arrindell
Robert Eagleton
David Harvey

Elizabeth Hitchcock
Ed Pitt Ford
Hamza Taouzzale



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.

If you require any further information, please contact the Committee Officer, Linda Hunting, Policy and Scrutiny Advisor.

Email: lhunting@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 the existence and nature of any pecuniary interests or any other significant interest in matters on this agenda.

3. MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the Committee's previous meeting held on the 20th June 2023.

(Pages 5 - 12)

4. PORTFOLIO UPDATE - CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING SERVICES

To receive an update from the Cabinet Member for Housing Services, Councillor Liza Begum.

(Pages 13 - 16)

5. PORTFOLIO UPDATE - CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE ACTION, REGENERATION AND RENTERS

To receive an update from the Cabinet Membership for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters, Councillor Matt Noble.

(Pages 17 - 24)

6. PROCESS FOR ALLOCATING SOCIAL HOUSING

To receive a report of the allocation of available social housing during 2022/23 in line with the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme.

(Pages 25 - 34)

7. FUTURE OF WESTMINSTER COMMISSION: HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS & COUNCIL RESPONSE

To receive a report on the recommendations proposed by the Future of Westminster Commission in relation to housing services and the Council's responses to those recommendations.

(Pages 35 - 52)

8. WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

(Pages 53 - 64)

To discuss and shape the Committee's work programme for the municipal year 2022-2023.

**Stuart Love
Chief Executive
10 July 223**

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CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Climate Action, Housing and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Climate Action, Housing and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Tuesday 20th June, 2023**, Rooms 18.08, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

Members Present: Councillors Concia Albert (Chair), Gillian Arrindell, Robert Eagleton, David Harvey, Elizabeth Hitchcock, and Ed Pitt Ford.

Also Present: Councillor Matt Noble (Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters), Councillor Maggie Carman (Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing Services), Debbie Jackson (Executive Director Growth, Planning, and Housing), Neil Whiteman (Director of Housing), Dr. Amy Jones (Director of Environment), Damian Hemmings (Head of Climate Emergency), Anthony Jones (Head of Housing Sustainability - Growth, Planning and Housing), Linda Hunting (Policy and Scrutiny Advisor), Nikki Costain (Cabinet Portfolio Advisor for Councillor Matt Noble) and Nicholas Porter-Ch'ng (Cabinet Portfolio Advisor for Councillor Liza Begum).

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

- 1.1 Nominations for the post of Chair were invited.
- 1.2 One nomination was received by Councillor Arrindell.
- 1.3 This nomination was seconded by Councillor Eagleton.
- 1.4 There were no further nominations.
- 1.5 **RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Albert be appointed as Chair of the Climate Action, Housing and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee.

2 MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 The Committee received apologies from Councillor Sanquest.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 The Committee noted there were no declarations of interest.

4 MINUTES

4.1 The Committee approved the minutes of its meeting held on 19 April 2023.

RESOLVED:

4.2 That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2023 be signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

5 PORTFOLIO UPDATE - CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING

5.1 The Committee received an update from Councillor Maggie Carman (Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing Services), on priorities for the portfolio and any updates that have arisen. The Cabinet Member responded to questions on the following topics:

- Rough sleeping and why particular areas have a high street count, the involvement of BID's (Business Improvement District), including the challenges with rough sleepers being transitional and the data around rough sleeping.
- The Rental Support Allowance and how much funding has been allocated, including, the average payments per household, the criteria for an application and the advice support available for residents, the purpose of the fund, the length of time the funding will continue and the available financial support for leaseholders, and how Westminster's scheme has been reviewed in line with other Council's.
- Housing performance data updates for the Committee.
- How Westminster housing can assist the mental health hospitals with accommodation, housing residents that are mental health patients, and what funding is available for the mental health housing provision, including those residents that are homeless whilst suffering from mental health conditions.
- ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour) cases and how data is captured, how many are investigated and resolved, and how the research is obtained.
- Housing repairs and resources to ensure work is completed and residents having the ability to sign off on repairs and the current pilot scheme on this initiative.
- The Corporate Housing Improvement Programme.
- Fire safety in Westminster and the Council's relationship with the Fire Brigade, with leaseholders, and residents in maintaining and improving fire safety standards.
- Housing for vulnerable residents and their families and how suitability checks and inspections are carried out of properties by the Council and by housing providers, including temporary accommodation, and the involvement of the allocations team.
- Relief duty households and how they are housed.

- Community Thursdays, the timing of the sessions, and what has been the most effective to capture resident engagement.

ACTIONS:

1. That housing performance data will be supplied to the Committee.
2. That the Committee be updated on information about the Council's fire safety standards and what is being done to support residents in fire safety.
3. That information about how the data for ASB cases is obtained be provided for the Committee.
4. That information about the possibility of extending the pilot on Supporting Vulnerable Residents and their families with housing needs be supplied to the Committee.
5. That the breakdown of rough sleepers for each ward and information about the accommodation that is offered to rough sleepers be provided to the Committee.
6. That information about the Rental Support Fund, how it is promoted, and what support is offered leaseholders be provided to the Committee.
7. That information about Relief Duty Households and how many are housed privately, including the effect this has on the housing register be supplied to the Committee.

6 PORTFOLIO UPDATE - CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE ACTION, REGENERATION AND RENTERS

- 6.1 The Committee received an update from Councillor Matt Noble, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters, on priorities for the portfolio and any updates that have arisen. The Cabinet Member responded to questions on the following topics:
 - The Climate Assembly and Climate Assembly Advisory Group, including the constitution of the advisory group, their recommendations, how these are tested and taken forward, and how the Assembly will make informed plans.
 - The plans to deliver the Climate Emergency Action Plan, further plans to include resident views and engagement - including overcoming any barriers, and the ongoing consultation and recommendations.
 - The Balmoral and Darwin House development, how decisions have been made, and how funding has been achieved from the GLA (Greater London Authority).
 - The overall predicted estimated costs of retrofitting properties towards net zero, the decarbonisation energy network projects that have been earmarked, larger investment projects such as the (PDHU) Pimlico District Heating Unit,

and advances in technology that may increase additional funding opportunities for the Council.

- The extent to which solar energy is being incorporated as part of the retrofitting and climate change plans across Westminster, how this is funded and how this is prioritised.
- The Renters Reform Bill 2023, how this may affect tenants and issues that may be more prevalent in Westminster.
- The extent of the increases for private rented accommodation, the difference between the costs of renting and the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), how many tenants of private rented sector properties would work and not be entitled to Discretionary Payments, as issues around rough sleepers who don't qualify for assistance with accommodation are advised to register for private accommodation.
- How the challenges of retrofitting properties with landowners, such as disruption and loss of space, has and will be communicated to residents, including the benefits of the show home and further education initiatives for residents.
- How the energy crisis has increased the interest in retrofitting across Westminster.
- The timeline of the projects that will be funded by the Green Bond.
- The Ebury Bridge development and the number of social tenant residents that are now confirmed as returning in Phase 1.

ACTIONS:

1. Information on the specific projects that have been shortlisted for the Green Bond funding and the details of the expected timeline for these to commence / conclude to be provided to the Committee.
2. That information about how many of the total number of social rent properties in Phase 1 at Ebury Bridge are being taken up by returning residents to be provided to the Committee.
3. That the Committee be kept updated on the Council's net zero approach and offsetting measures.
4. That the Committee be informed of the total estimated cost of the Council's plans for hitting net zero.

7 RETROFITTING IN WESTMINSTER

- 7.1 The Chair welcomed Dr. Amy Jones (Director of Environment), and Damian Hemmings (Head of Climate Emergency) to introduce the report on the Council's activities to retrofit buildings across Westminster, a key priority of the Climate Emergency Action Plan and provide an overview of the report. The Director of Environment and the Head of Climate Emergency responded to questions on the following topics:

- The built environment and emissions that have informed upgrading the Council's properties and decarbonising properties.
- The stakeholders involved and the initiatives being introduced to progress the Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- Working with residents to support them in understanding and reducing their energy demands and improving their properties.
- The Retrofit Task Force and the challenges of the different types of properties in Westminster.
- Consultation with the National Grid around capacity and how the Council delivers the Local Energy Plan in line with the needs of Westminster and the challenges and changes to energy usage.
- The net zero approach and off-setting measures to drive down emissions.
- Retrofitting across the corporate estate.
- The Climate Programme that exists across London Council's and how off-setting may be considered collectively.
- The Climate Emergency Action Plan and the Council's approach to off-setting, including mitigation.
- Networking and drawing on expertise outside of the Council to inform and future-proof the Climate Plan, including Universities, organisations and consultants.
- The MEE's (Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard) pilot and the Council's powers to monitor and enforce residents to adhere to achieving the minimum standard in properties.
- The Retrofit First initiative and assessments for properties to be demolished over retrofitting, carbon offset payments as part of the planning applications to achieve net zero, and incentivising retrofit with residents.
- The MEE's Plus Pilot Scheme and what is being done to encourage take-up of the scheme, ability to expand the scheme, and how this will be tracked and monitored.
- The progress of the Climate Action Programme since October 2022 and the Yearly Emissions Report that will be published in June 2023.

ACTIONS:

1. That further information will be provided to the Committee about the Council's ability to enforce the minimum standards set out in the MEE's pilot.

8 COUNCIL OWNED HOUSING STOCK RETROFITTING PLANS

- 8.1 The Chair welcomed Anthony Jones (Head of Housing Sustainability - Growth, Planning and Housing) to introduce the report on the progress the Council has made retrofitting its housing stock in order to meet its objective to a Net Zero standard by 2040, and provide an overview of the report. The Head of Sustainability responded to questions on the following topics:

- Changes in technology and pilot schemes to inform future plans, including possible grant funding.
- Fabric improvements to properties and the challenges with changing fully to electrification in properties.

- Working with other councils to share ideas and solutions for the skill set shortages.
- Responses from resident surveys and how residents have engaged with the Council to act as champions to encourage other residents towards retrofitting.
- The barriers to retrofitting uptake communicated from residents such as loss of space in properties and timing of the completion of works to a high standard.
- The challenges with heat pump installation and the possible alternatives such as storage and infra-red heating systems and how these systems compare in terms of disruption, cost, and space, including compatibility with SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) for installation.
- The challenges with retrofitting in listed buildings.
- Housing Associations and how they can be encouraged and supported towards retrofitting.
- The Retrofit Show Home and how this has encouraged retrofitting across Westminster and showcased the work the Council is doing.
- The trade skills that will be required to carry out the Council's plans and how the Council will plan to acquire the necessary skill sets, including promotion with WAES (Westminster Adult Education Service) to plan for the gaps in the market and working with organisations such as MCS (The Microgeneration Certification Scheme) to plan for ways to train people in the roles that will be required in teams as retrofitting schemes progress.
- How the Council is planning for a future electricity crisis.
- Relying on outside expertise and consultancy to inform the Council's plans.
- Void properties and the plans to retrofit these prior to them being tenanted, including prioritising properties below EPC C rating, and how this is being tracked to 2040.
- The minimum EPC standard across housing stock that is the target for the Council and retrofitting to the MEE's minimum standard.

9 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

9.1 The Chair invited the Policy and Scrutiny Advisor to introduce the Committee to the Work Programme and provide an overview and updates.

9.2 The following points regarding the Work Programme were noted by the Committee.

- Possible site visits to the Retrofit Show Home.
- That the Green Bonds and Community Energy Projects item scheduled for July Committee will now be provided as a written update for Members between September and December 2023 and a further briefing session held for Members, if required.
- The Committee Action Tracker is progressing well and is up to date.
- Alternative housing providers and the role the Council plays with providing accommodation to our residents through these providers, as a possible item for the 2023/ 24 Work Programme.
- The Corporate Housing Improvement Programme – the Committee to review the recommendations made.

9.3 The Committee agreed that future potential items for 2023/24 would be considered by the Committee prior to the next Committee meeting.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 The Committee acknowledged possible changes to the scrutiny process following the recent Scrutiny Review of Westminster Council.

10.2 The Committee discussed and agreed the format and purpose for the forthcoming pre-meeting to be held at 6.00 pm, 19 July.

ACTIONS:

1. Policy and Scrutiny Advisor to arrange a pre-meeting and re-schedule the start time of the forthcoming Committee to 6.45 pm.

11 TERMINATION OF MEETING

11.1 The meeting ended at 8.46 pm.

CHAIR: _____

DATE _____

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City of Westminster

Climate Action, Regeneration and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	19 July 2023
Portfolio:	Housing Services
The Report of:	Councillor Liza Begum, Cabinet Member for Housing Services
Report Author and Contact Details:	Nick Porter-Ch'ng nporter-ch'ng@westminster.gov.uk

The following report includes my priority and delivery progress to date:

1.1 Improving our Housing Services

The Corporate Housing Improvement Programme (CHIP) was established in April 2023 to deliver a step change in the delivery of housing services, however, the Council has found that the challenges the housing service face require swift action and more focused attention.

From June 2023, the Housing Department has moved out of the Growth, Planning and Housing Directorate into a new Housing and Commercial Partnerships Directorate, led by Strategic Director Sarah Warman.

The improvement in housing is a priority for the Council and has the support and involvement of the entire Cabinet and Executive Leadership Team. The focus over the next twelve months will be on enabling all relevant teams to deliver the best possible services to residents and communities. The experience and feedback received from residents and staff will be central to the improvement journey.

1.2 Corporate Housing Improvement Programme - Activity Update

Given the size and scale of the service, the programme has been divided into four workstreams which will enable a phased approach to the work. An early improvement plan has been developed for these focus areas which set out the programme priorities. The plan will also include a performance framework to ensure there is oversight of whether the actions are making the impact we want to see. To date the programme has focused on four areas:

1. Communications & Engagement
2. People & Culture
3. Customer Experience
4. Repairs

1.2.1 Communications & Engagement

We are building on and improving participation in and engagement with residents, testing new methods of engagement, including deploying a new engagement platform (together with the communities' team) to increase visibility and put residents at the heart of improvement. This includes:

- Working with residents on a re-design on the Housing Section of the WCC website.
- Offering communications in a range of community languages.
- Engaging with residents identified as being vulnerable and working with them to determine the best to maintain on-going communications.

1.2.2 People & Culture

Work is underway to design and implement an orientation session to roll out to all staff, whether in-house or as part of contracted services, which will focus on vision, values (including empathy and cultural awareness), customer experience and service standards.

There will be a continued focus on learning and development for staff including new housing induction programmes, shadowing/mentoring opportunities.

1.2.3 Customer Experience

We are reviewing the customer experience for residents and how we can improve the interactions between residents and the Council. This will mean looking into our contact centre processes and how we can better use technology to create a smoother process for residents and officers. As part of this work, we'll be looking into the resident experience with complex cases and coming up with options on how to we can improve the experience with complaint resolution.

1.2.4 Repairs (CHIP Focus)

It is vital that as part of the improvement programme we build a shared culture with our contractors focused on residents and our values of empathy and cultural awareness, customer experience and service standards.

We want to see improvements to the planning and resource scheduling for repairs and a focus on productivity and performance and customer experience including improvements to the follow-on process for booking repairs with residents.

1.3 Rent Support Fund

The Rent Support Fund exists to help our council tenants struggling with rent payments during the cost-of-living crisis.

Since its establishment in February, the one-million-pound fund has been created specifically to help those in financial difficulty. The money is being used to cover some or all of the upcoming rent increases for households who are not entitled to full housing benefits. Tenants who are eligible for full benefits will receive the increase in their Housing Benefit or Universal Credit payments.

We want to make sure that tenants know about the fund which is why we are contacting our residents by text, phone, letters, and house calls. We are also reaching out to faith networks, libraries, and schools to ensure the message is received right across the city.

To date we have awarded 496 rent support payments, totalling £206,233. The average award is around £400. All wards have residents who have been supported through the fund (see Table 1 below).

Table 1:

Row Labels		Sum of Award (£)	#Wards
Abbey Road	£	7,105.54	16
Bayswater	£	5,932.94	13
Church Street	£	23,110.36	58
Churchill	£	2,390.70	5
Harrow Road	£	2,642.90	6
Knightsbridge and Belgravia	£	11,211.46	27
Lancaster Gate	£	2,836.08	9
Little Venice	£	11,677.37	29
Maida Vale	£	10,174.32	23
Marylebone	£	279.76	1
Out of Borough	£	1,612.78	5
Pimlico North	£	50,646.70	114
Pimlico South	£	43,091.94	98
Queen's Park	£	38,268.62	92
Regent's Park	£	8,439.08	21
St James's	£	1,855.36	5
Unspecified Ward	£	12,547.08	30
Vincent Square	£	18,538.52	44
West End	£	4,207.32	13
Westbourne	£	35,252.36	83
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Grand Total	£	291,821.19	692

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City of Westminster

Climate Action, Housing and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	6 July 2023
Portfolio:	Climate Action, Regeneration & Renters
The Report of:	Councillor Matt Noble
Report Author	Nikki Costain
Contact Details:	ncostain@westminster.gov.uk

1. Key decisions made in the preceding period since my last Policy & Scrutiny report dated June 2023:

- No decisions have been made

2. The following report includes my priorities and delivery progress to date.

3. Climate Action

3.1 Westminster Green Investment 2028

Westminster City Council, in partnership with ethical crowdfunding platform Abundance Investment, launched the Westminster Green Investment Bond in March 2023 to help fund a range of green projects within the local community. The bond achieved the £1m target within nine days of launch. A list of investment opportunities has been identified and confirmed (see further information in the table in Appendix 1). To date, energy conservation measures have been installed in 7 sites at a value of £71k. Further measures (including solar PV and an air source heat pump) will be delivered across 7 sites by the end of 2023, bringing the total investment to £1m.

3.2 Green Doctors

As of the 30 June 2023, the Green Doctors service has delivered energy advice and support to a total of 281 Westminster households (116 home visits, 165 telephone consultations). These figures are split between three funding sources: Public Health (allocation now complete); Westminster Carbon Offset fund (£45k allocated to support 400 households – currently active); GLA-funded Warm Homes Advice Service (support for up to 75 visits – funding has now expired).

Officers have been exploring with Groundwork how to determine customer satisfaction with the current support offer. Groundwork currently conducts satisfaction surveys on a random sample of residents that receive their service across London. They do not currently have any data on Westminster residents so we have asked that this is addressed.

Separate to this, Officers are planning customer surveys and resident engagement to determine satisfaction with the service and will use this to inform the re-scoping and retendering of the service ahead of next winter.

3.3 Sustainable City Charter

The Sustainable City Charter was launched in 2022 and is an innovative, business-led climate action pledge for organisations, containing eight commitments for reducing carbon emissions from non-domestic buildings. The Charter has now attracted expressions of interest from over 100 organisations, of which 35 have become full signatories. Upcoming activity includes ongoing promotion, targeted engagement with signatories to design a new expanded Charter toolkit and delivering a programme of knowledge-sharing events for signatories throughout the rest of 2023. Both the Technical Working Group and the Steering Group for the Charter are now at full capacity with a good range of signatories represented on each.

3.4 Citizens' Climate Assembly Update

A citizens' assembly is a public engagement method, which involves a reflective sample of the population coming together to learn about an issue, discuss it, and reach a set of conclusions. The Westminster Citizens' Climate Assembly will bring together a randomly selected group of 50 residents who will be broadly reflective of the population of Westminster. Together, they will consider the remit question: 'How can we overcome the main barriers to Westminster becoming a net zero city by 2040 together? How do we ensure this is delivered in the fairest way?'. The Assembly will be supported by specialist organisation Involve, who will facilitate the sessions.

The first weekend of the Assembly took place at the University of Westminster on Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 June. In the sessions, participants heard from a series of expert speakers to introduce the process of an Assembly, understand the context of climate change and explore some of the barriers and opportunities for local climate action. Days 3 and 4 of the Assembly will take place on Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 July. Participants will develop ideas and prototype recommendations over Day 3 and have an opportunity to test these with external experts, before refining them. Participants will finalise and present their recommendations at the close of Day 4.

Following completion of the Assembly weekend, Involve will produce a full report of the Assembly process which, alongside the formal recommendations, will be presented to the Leader of the Council and his Cabinet Members in September. Officers will use those recommendations to help consider additional ways to address the problem of climate change and inform the update of the council's Climate Emergency Action Plan later in the year. The members of the Assembly will be updated as the council does this. Officers are considering further routes for continued engagement and opportunities for residents to be involved as part of the legacy of the Assembly.

3.6 Environmental Justice Measure

The Environmental Justice Measure (EJM) is an interactive data tool that covers a broad range of indicators to present transparent information for residents to better understand how environmental change impacts their local ward. Westminster is the first local authority to create an interactive framework to enable residents to make informed decisions and act to reduce negative environmental impacts in their area. The tool has recently been used to help assess the Greening Westminster funding applications that came in, and to consider possible future locations for community air quality monitoring demand.

The EJM was presented with the Excellence in Local and Regional Public Sector and the Overall Award at the Geography on Government awards at the Royal Geographical Society on 14th June. Cllr Jude and Pedro Wrobel are also presenting the EJM the LGA Annual Conference on 5th July at the Climate Change session.

4. Regeneration

4.1 Church Street Programme Update

The Procurement process of a Development Partner for the delivery of Site A is progressing well. Bidder briefings and negotiations took place w/c 19th June. Initial Phase 1 demolition (Storage areas to the rear of Site A) has been completed and 'Fairer Westminster' branded security hoarding to be installed on the Broadley Street entrance.

As we prepare for the construction work to begin at Site A of the regeneration scheme, significant progress has been made in assembling the land. Although only ever used as a last resort, Compulsory Purchase Order powers may be necessary to ensure the scheme can progress. A report has been submitted for a decision at the July Cabinet meeting to determine whether the Council will proceed with making a CPO.

We received a hugely Positive GLA Stage 2 Planning report on 13th June. This is the culmination of the Planning Process following approval of the scheme by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). Detailed discussions with the LPA, Transport for London (TfL) and the Greater London Authority (GLA) will now take place on the s106/107 agreement, once approved the final planning decision notice can be released.

4.2 Ebury Bridge

The construction of the first two buildings in Phase 1 is continuing at pace. The frame construction is in place and the exterior façade work is underway. Weekly design sign-off meetings implemented to speedily progress design drawings and technical submissions. The internal 'first fix' internal fitout on lower levels of the Block 7 and 8 has commenced.

The Scheme was recently recognised at the Planning Awards where it successfully took home two awards. Nominated in the 'Planning in Affordable Housing' category the scheme also scooped the top prize chosen by the editor of Planning News.

The Ebury Bridge regeneration scheme also featured heavily in a recent Evening Standard article detailing how the project is challenging the 'Lights Out' super prime developments in central London. Delivering over 380 council homes for social rent in addition to new homes for market sale the scheme will deliver a vibrant alternative to neighbouring luxury apartments that are not always occupied all year round.

116 Secure Tenants and 21 Resident Leaseholders are returning to Ebury – 60% and 51% respectively

4.3 Balmoral & Darwin House Update

Construction of phase 1 continues with good progress on site and completion expected early 2025. During June the crane has been erected and the PDHU was successfully diverted. A residents notice board has been installed in Darwin House and the contractor Wates has been briefed on content. Phase 2 is forecast to start in 2025 following completion of phase 1.

We continue to engage with residents around Churchill Gardens and Darwin House specifically to manage construction disruption appropriately. A recent 'Groundbreaking' event signified the start of the formal construction work and a 'topping out' ceremony will follow towards the end of the year/early 2024.

Our contractors, Wates, have deployed their Wellness bus as part of their social value commitments while working in the city. The bus recently visited Church Street where residents received treatments

such as massage and engaged in wellness activities such as meditation. The bus will visit other sites over the course of the year.

4.4 Lisson Arches

Practical Completion of the building is forecast June 2023 with residents expected to move into 'Davenport House', a name selected by the neighbouring Penn House residents, from August 2023. The external landscaping and public realm works will continue, and completion is expected in September. Resident viewings are complete and all Penn House residents have selected their new homes. Support is also being provided to Penn House residents around the rehousing process with rents kept at the same levels as their existing homes.

The discharge of planning conditions continues in addition to final building testing work. The procurement of the Enterprise Zone operator is now live with a selected operator likely to be in place in the coming months.

4.6 Melrose and Keith, Ordnance Mews, Helmsdale House completion

All the new properties are fully occupied, and residents have reported how much they are enjoying their new homes during face-to-face engagement visits. Using the Structural Insulated Panel construction method, the homes are highly energy efficient and are an attractive addition to the local street scene in these areas.

4.7 Ashbridge, Ashmill and Cosway

Ashmill reached Practical Completion in February 2023, providing 2 family sized homes. Ashbridge is reached Practical Completion on 23 June 2023, providing 26 social rent homes. A ceremony marking the completion of the event took place on Monday 25 June.

Cosway Street is expected to complete in August 2023. This project will provide 49 market sale homes to cross subsidise affordable delivery across the programme. As of 23 June, good sales progress has been made with 23 homes exchanged, 7 reserved or under offer, and 19 available.

4.8 Carlton Dene and Westmead

Demolition works at Carlton Dene are reaching a conclusion with all asbestos removal now complete. Stage 1 award for main works has advanced with Lovell being recommended to Cabinet Members at CRG on 20 June 2023 and CGRB on 28 June 2023. Pre-app date secured for the proposed design changes i.e. tenure change (100% social rent), podium roof reduction and AECB energy standard reduction.

At Westmead demolition is also progressing well. Main contractor procurement continues with decision and contract execution by August. FBC is being drafted and reviewed with Legal, Finance and Procurement. Appropriation Cabinet Member Report issued to CM for decision.

4.9 Luxborough

With piling works now complete, construction activity began on 3rd July to deliver the water attenuation tank excavation. This work requires an addendum to the enabling works party wall award and negotiation with neighbouring party wall surveyors is in underway.

A significant milestone in the project will see a tower crane delivered to site and is due to be erected 8th/9th July. Communication/Engagement with residents is taking place to inform them of plans. A meeting is scheduled with the Chair of the Luxborough Tower Residents Association to approve the installation of the door entry panel.

4.10 291 Harrow Rd

Acquired by WCC in 2022, 291 Harrow Road & 1-2 Elmfield Way comprise 18 Learning Disability (LD) Care Home beds managed by several providers. The Redevelopment of this site is part of the Adult Social Care LD Capital Strategy but also provides an opportunity for delivery of new affordable homes in the area.

Procurement of a multi-disciplinary consultant team including PM, architect and cost consultant is underway and expected to conclude in September. A 'Report on Title' has been submitted by WCC Legal team.

4.11 Adpar, Queens Park Court, Torrington

Construction continues across all three sites with good progress being made. A topping out ceremony is planned for end of July. The ceremony will take place at Queens Park Court but will also cover the Adpar and Torrington projects. Appropriation reports for all three sites have been approved by Cabinet Member.

At Queens Park Court Piling works are complete and works have progressed to the fourth floor, with works now starting on roof. At Torrington Piling works and the structural frame are complete, the block work for the townhouses is underway and has progressed to the fourth floor for the structure. At Adpar Groundworks and the substructure are underway and the crane has now been installed. Close working with Major Works team due to proximity of Brathwaite Tower.

All three schemes are expected to complete Spring 2024.

4.12 Lisson Grove Programme

Extensive community engagement has taken place with local voluntary sector organisations in order to develop initial proposals for the scheme. This work has been captured in a scoping document which will be communicated with local residents during forthcoming consultation on the scheme.

Meetings between Adult Social Care, Corporate Property and Development have taken place to discuss options. A meeting with Directors from ASC took place 13th June and Head of Corporate Property on 15th June, to discuss options to be explored. Joint Cabinet Member briefing scheduled during July. Cost consultant and architect services procured.

5. Renters

5.1 Private Rented Sector Strategy 2021 - 2025

We are now in year four of the five-year Strategy. Key work this year is to develop a Private Rented Sector Charter to raise awareness of tenants' rights, the required standards in the sector and inform tenants and organisations about accessing advice and support.

The Private Rented Sector Strategy Group, which includes members from the advice and landlord sectors, continues to meet regularly to help ensure the Strategy is delivered and to better understand the market.

Work continues to develop a Private Rented Sector Charter, with the full involvement of the Strategy Group. Following initial feedback, the draft charter is being amended and enhanced to provide better information on emerging priorities such as evictions, and to ensure it informs and empowers tenants, at the same time as supporting landlords and mobilising partners in a signposting capacity. A revised version of the charter will be reviewed by the Strategy Group at a meeting after the summer break.

5.2 Private Rented Sector Market

The current picture of the PRS market is challenging with rising mortgage rates and interest for property owners, combined with rising rental rates for tenants.

- By the end of June, 4.2 million households in Britain are expected to see their mortgage rate change since the Bank of England started increasing rates in December 2021. This is over half of all mortgaged households (56 per cent), with the remaining 3.3 million households (44 per cent) yet to see their fixed-rate deal expire. Those renewing their property loans next year will end up paying out on average an extra £2,900 annually.
- By the end of 2026, almost all British households with a mortgage (7.5 million) will have moved on to a higher rate and are set to end up with annual mortgage bills that are £2,000 higher on average compared to December 2021.

Impact of rising interest rates:

While the direct impact of interest rate rises on homeowners within Westminster may be somewhat limited, it is essential to consider the broader implications for the local housing market and rental sector:

- **Housing Market Stability:** Interest rate rises can affect the overall stability of the housing market in Westminster. While a smaller proportion of properties may be directly impacted by mortgage rate increases, changes in interest rates can influence buyer sentiment, affordability, and demand for properties.
- **Rental Market Dynamics:** Interest rate rises can indirectly impact the rental market in Westminster. Higher borrowing costs for landlords may limit their ability to invest in and maintain rental properties. This could lead to a tightening of the rental supply and potentially result in increased competition among renters, driving rental prices upward.

The council's Cost of Living response:

Work is underway to ensure private renters are aware of the support available across the city such as:

- Targeted communications in areas that are likely to have a high proportion of private renters
- Putting information about rent increases and what to do on the Support Hub and highlighting Discretionary Housing Payment (which can temporarily help where Housing Benefit or LHA doesn't meet rent)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Green Bond – Planned Works

ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURE	Phase 2 - Programme of Works To Be Funded by Green Bonds									
Site	Draught Proofing	Pool Covers	Pipework Insulation	Pumps and Valves	BEMS	Cooling / AC	Heat Pumps	LED Lighting	Solar PV / Battery	Cost of Measures £ Exc VAT
Beachcroft House Care Home			Y		Y				Y	£88,142
Mayfair Library	Y		Y		Y			Y		£46,985
Marshall Street Leisure Centre		Y								£48,190
Porchester Leisure Centre		Y								£47,179
Queen Mother Sports Centre		Y								£99,975
Robinsfield Infant School									Y	£133,250
Queen Elizabeth Jubilee II School						Y				£5,070
Queens Park Primary School						Y				£8,751
The Tresham Day Centre							Y			£516,443
Dementia Centre - 42 Westbourne Park Rd					Y					£2,990
Soho Estate Office, Broadwick Street, 60-62					Y					£2,990
Westminster Central Reference Library					Y					£2,990
										£1,002,956

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City of Westminster

Climate Action, Housing and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	19 July 2023
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Process for Allocating Social Housing
Report of:	Neil Wightman, Director of Housing
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Councillor Liza Begum, Cabinet Member for Housing Services
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	A review of the allocation of available social housing during 2022/23 in line with the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme
Report Author and Contact Details:	Sally Nott sanott@westminster.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 All Local Authorities are legally required to publish their Housing Allocations Scheme which sets out how they prioritise and allocate social housing to those with a priority need. Westminster council is about to undertake a wider review of the current Allocations Scheme and work on this will commence shortly. The review of the Housing Allocations Scheme will require a full and broad consultation, will identify the impact of any changes on households currently waiting for social housing and ensure the new scheme is implemented fairly.
- 1.2 Each year the council publishes a Supply and Allocation of Social Housing Report which projects the proportion of lets that are estimated to each of the

c. 30 groups (c. 4,300 households) with priority for social housing, taking into account the likely supply for that year and the Council's legal duties and strategic priorities. The annual report is part of the Allocations Scheme and the 2023/24 report is currently being developed.

2. Policy Context

2.1 The Housing Allocations Scheme sets out who is eligible for social housing and how properties are allocated, either through Choice Based Lettings (CBL) or via a direct offer.

2.2 The Allocations Scheme must be read in conjunction with the annual Supply and Allocation of Social Housing Report which sets out, for the year ahead, the proportion of lets that are projected to each of the different groups in need of social housing.

2.3 The aim of this approach is to enable some lets across most of the 30 different groups, instead of having a purely priority-based approach, where only those with the highest needs are successful. It also enables flexibility and for the Council to respond to different priorities on an annual basis.

2.4 There are three main groups;

- Homeless households where the council has statutory rehousing responsibilities.
- Existing Council tenants needing to transfer because they are overcrowded for example and for other reasons.
- Other applicants (known as the housing register and usually people living in the private sector that need to move for health/welfare reasons).

2.5 Within each group, there are subgroups (approximately 30 in total) making up the different housing lists.

2.6 In deciding the proportion of lets to all groups the following factors are taken into account:

- a) the Council's statutory obligations
- b) the Council's strategic priorities
- c) the varying and competing demands for social housing (increasing the proportion of lets to one group inevitably impacts on others).

2.7 The Council has a legal duty to assess and register households that meet certain criteria known as 'reasonable preference' groups. However, the Localism Act 2011 also gives local authorities flexibility in prioritising those groups according to local supply and demand issues. There is no requirement for one group to have priority over another, although the council must have regard to the Equality Act 2010 and ensure that allocations are fair and not disproportionate.

2.8 The Scheme was recently updated to include those being assisted under the Relief Duty of the Homeless Reduction Act.

3. Points

3.1 The Scheme also sets out the number of points each of the priority groups for social housing are awarded.

3.2 Highest priority is given to those living in Renewal areas and need to be decanted elsewhere in order for the development to progress. Second priority is to those living in properties too large for their need (under-occupiers). The council gives a cash incentive to those moving to a smaller property in order to free up much needed family sized homes. Money is offered for each bedroom released ie those moving from a 3-bed to a 2-bed will release one bedroom.

3.3 In general, an applicant's position on the list will be determined by the number of points they have and how long they have been waiting on the list (the date they registered for that priority group).

3.4 Additional points for some eligible groups include;

- **Residence** - Applicants with a ten-year residency connection to Westminster at the time of approach receive an additional 50 points and is discussed with all applicants at this point.
- **Employment** - Applicants currently employed and working a minimum of 16 hours per week for the last two years receive an additional 50 points.

3.5 For overcrowded applicants with all adults in their household, 10 points will be deducted from their application. This is because we recognise the challenges faced by overcrowded families and we want to prioritise those with children.

3.6 Appendix A provides a full breakdown of the points for each priority group. There are two tables, one for those that require family sized accommodation and another for those that require studio or 1-bedroom accommodation. The main difference between the two tables is that those registered for a studio or 1-bed property are not subject to the employment or residence points. This is because most applicants registered for this property size are either older or vulnerable in some way. In addition, we have a better supply of this property size.

4. Mobility Category

4.1 In addition to points and length of time waiting to determine an applicant's position on the list, each household (and property) is given a mobility category which reflects the type of property required.

Mobility Category - Applicants

Category 1	Applicants who have been assessed by a NHS doctor as having a diagnosis which requires them permanently to use a wheelchair all the time
Category 2	Applicants who have been assessed by a NHS doctor as having a diagnosis which requires them permanently to need a home which is wheelchair accessible but may not need to use it inside the home
Category 3	Applicants with severe mobility problems who require a ground floor or lifted property with level access and no internal stairs
Category 4	All other applicants

Mobility Category - Properties

Category 1	Property is fully wheelchair accessible
Category 2	Property is suitable for a person who needs a wheelchair outside the home but can manage in the home without a wheelchair.
Category 3	Property with no more than 3 steps to access property and no internal stairs. May be lifted.
Category 4	All other properties

4.2 Those who require a level access property (mob cat 3) will be prioritised for a mob cat 3 property ahead of those who are assessed as needing a mob cat 4 property, even if the mob cat 4 applicant has more points or has waited longer. This is to ensure that properties are allocated to those who need them the most.

4.3 Properties suitable for wheelchair users are not advertised via Choice Based Lettings (CBL), instead they are allocated via a direct offer. This is because households requiring this type of property have specific needs.

5. Choice Based Lettings

5.1 Applicants participating in Choice Based Lettings must place bids via the CBL website (managed by Home Connections). Bidding opens every Wednesday and applicants have until midnight the following Sunday to place their interest in a property. It doesn't matter when households bid during the week as their position will be determined by their points, date registered and where applicable, their mobility category, as described above.

5.2 Applicants with rent arrears will be unable to bid.

5.3 During the year some lists will be suspended from bidding to allow other groups the opportunity of bidding successfully and to deliver the target projections for the year.

5.4 Once bidding closes, HSS will shortlist the top 3-5 households and invite them to view the property later that week. Viewings for properties managed by Registered Providers may take place at a later date. Properties are offered to the highest placed applicant that accepts the property. If the applicant in position one refuses the property, it is offered to the next applicant down. This process is repeated until an applicant accepts the property.

6. Demand

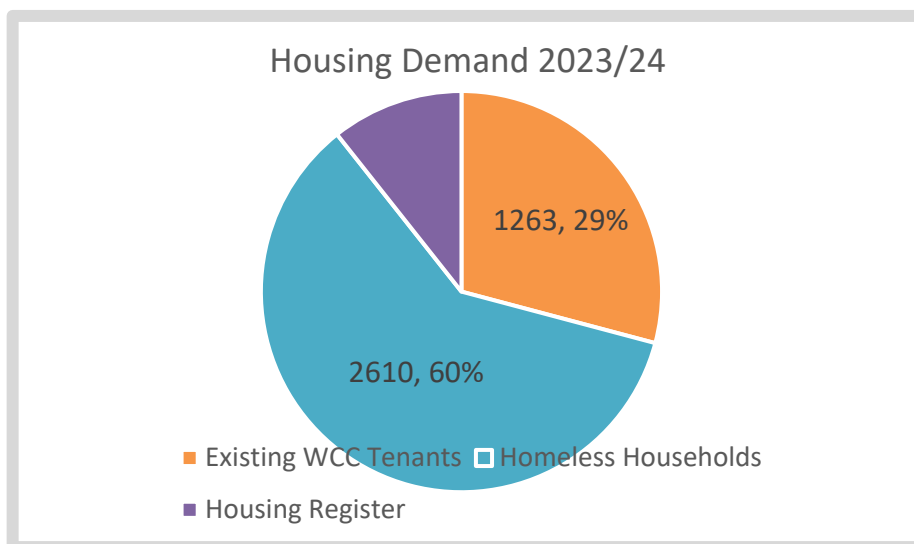
6.1 There are currently 4,336 households registered for social housing, of which 97% require a general needs property and 3% require Community Supportive Housing (CSH) for older people.

Demand 31.03.23	Studio	1-Bed	2-Bed	3-Bed	4+ Bed	Total	%
Homeless	235	11	1222	889	253	2610	60%
WCC Tenants	56	264	397	424	122	1263	29%
Housing Register	293	43	50	43	34	463	11%
Total	584	318	1669	1356	409	4336	
%	14%	7%	39%	31%	9%		

6.2 The highest demand is for 2-bedroom properties (40%, 1,668), followed by 3-bedroom properties (32%, 1,356). Of the 4,336 households registered for

social housing, 3% (117) require a property suitable for a wheelchair user. The main groups registered are;

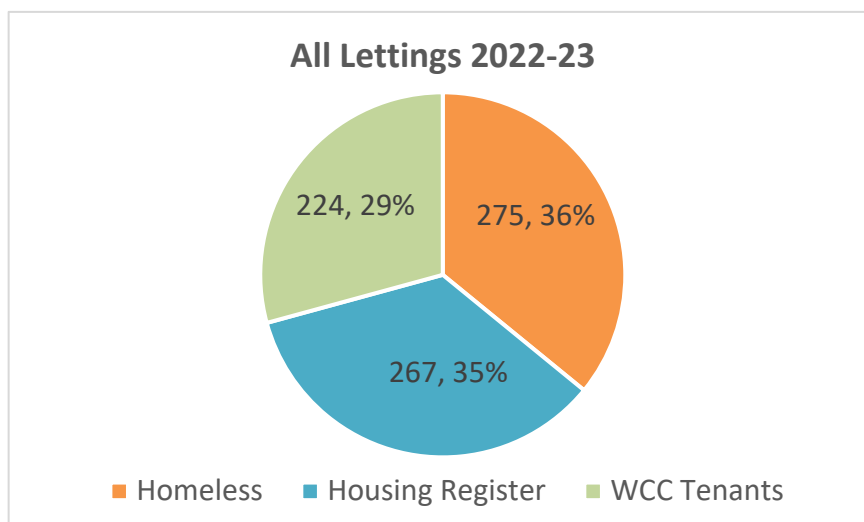
- Homeless households - 60% (2,610)
- WCC council tenants - 29% (1,263)
- Housing Register applicants - 11% (462)



7. Lettings 2022/23

- 7.1 The council achieved 766 lettings in 2022/23 across all priority need groups. Of the 766 lettings, 36% (275) were to homeless households. Appendix B sets out the total lettings by each of the priority groups. This illustrates in particular the low level of availability of lettings of 2 and 3 bedroom properties when compared to the demand set out in paragraph 6.1.
- 7.2 11% (31) of studio and 1 bed general needs properties were let to young people leaving care reflecting the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities and who are assessed by Children's Services as being ready to manage a tenancy.
- 7.3 In addition, 89 units at Grace House, a CSH scheme managed by Central & Cecil Housing Trust (CCHT), became available for those eligible for sheltered housing.

Lettings 2022-23	Studio	1-Bed	2-Bed	3-Bed	4+ Bed	Total	%
Homeless	57	82	85	43	8	275	36%
Housing Register	104	142	13	8		267	35%
WCC Tenants	11	106	60	36	11	224	29%
Grand Total	172	330	158	87	19	766	



8. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- 8.2 The Committee is asked whether they think the balance between homeless lettings and other priority groups in 2022/23 was reasonable (note that increasing lets to one group means they are reduced for another)?
- 8.3 The Committee is also asked to consider the points weighting between the different groups?
- 8.4 How would the Committee like to be involved in the review of the Allocation Scheme?

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact Sally Nott

sanott@westminster.gov.uk

Appendix A:

Tables 1 & 2 below are subject to the exceptions to be found within this scheme

Table 1 - Points for Family Sized Accommodation

				Additional Points					Points Deducted
Priority Group		Priority List	Priority Points	Workers	Residence	Stage 2 Lease End	Armed Forces	Local Connection Criteria on Renewal Estates	All Adult Household
Renewal Tenants*		Returning Tenants	605	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Renewal Tenants (Permanent) with high local connection	600	-	-	-	-	4	-
		Renewal Tenants (Temporary) with high local connection	600	-	-	-	-	3	-
		Renewal Tenants (Permanent) with medium local connection	600	-	-	-	-	2	-
		Renewal Tenants (Temporary) with medium local connection	600	-	-	-	-	1	-
Under-occupation (including flexible tenancies)	Transfer List	Cash Incentive and under-occupying flexible tenants	550	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pressing Housing Need	Transfer List	Management Transfer, Decants/Major Works, Community Care Nominations and Children Act Panel	450	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Waiting List	Succession/Assignment, RP Decants, Discretionary Lessee Renewal Tenants, Reciprocal, Community Care Nominations and Children Act Panel	400	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Learning Disabilities	400	-	-	-	10	-	-
Medical (people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds including grounds relating to disability)	Transfer List	Category A Medical	250	50	50	-	-	-	-
	Waiting List	Category A Medical	200	50	50	-	10	-	-
Overcrowding (People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions)	Waiting List	Registered Provider Quota	300	-	-	-	-	-	-
		HHSRS band A Hazard or Part X Housing Act 1985	250	50	50	-	10	-	-10
	Transfer List	HHSRS band A Hazard or Part X Housing Act 1985	300	50	50	-	-	-	-10
		Lacking 3 bedrooms	300	50	50	-	-	-	-10
		Lacking 2 bedrooms	200	50	50	-	-	-	-10
	Lacking 1 bedroom	100	50	50	-	-	-	-10	
Homeless (Main Housing Duty)			150	50	50	200	10	-	-
Homeless (Others)			20	50	50	-	10	-	-

*includes tenants of Huguenot House, see Cabinet Member Report January 2022

Table 2 - Points for Studio and 1-Bedroom Accommodation

			Additional Points				
	Priority List	Priority Points	Stage 2 Lease End	Subject to LHA Cap	Armed Forces	Local Connection Criteria on Renewal Estates	High Priority Medical/Welfare Points
General Needs	Returning Tenants*	605	-	-	-	-	-
	Renewal Tenants (Permanent) with high local connection*	600	-	-	-	4	-
	Renewal Tenants (Temporary) with high local connection*	600	-	-	-	3	-
	Renewal Tenants (Permanent) with medium local connection*	600	-	-	-	2	-
	Renewal Tenants (Temporary) with medium local connection*	600	-	-	-	1	-
	Under-occupying Flexible Tenants and Cash Incentives	550	-	-	-	-	-
	Decants/Major Works, Management Transfers	450	-	-	-	-	-
	Social Services Nominations (Tenants) including Community Care Nominations, Children Act Panel and Children Leaving Care	450	-	-	-	-	-
	Social Services Nominations (Waiting List) including Community Care Nominations, Children Act Panel and Children Leaving Care	400	-	-	-	-	-
	Learning Disabilities Quota	400	-	-	10	-	-
	RP Decant and Discretionary Lessee Renewal Tenants	400	-	-	-	-	-
	Reciprocals	400	-	-	-	-	-
	Succession/Assignment	400	-	-	-	-	-
	Medical (Transfers)	250	-	-	-	-	-
	Medical (Waiting List)	200	-	-	10	-	-
	Homeless (Main Housing Duty)	150	200	-	10	-	-
	Pathway Housings	150	-	-	10	-	-
	Tenants (Studio to 1-bed)	100	-	-	-	-	-
	Mental Health Hostel Move-On Quota	150	-	-	10	-	-
	Hostel Move-On/Street Homeless/Drug Alcohol Action Team (DAAT)	150	-	-	10	-	-
Homeless (Other)	20	-	-	10	-	-	
Community Supportive Housing (CSH)	Cash Incentive	550	-	-	-	-	50
	Decants (Tenants)	450	-	-	-	-	50
	RP Decants and Discretionary Lessee Renewal Tenants	400	-	-	-	-	50
	Succession/Assignment	400	-	-	-	-	50
	Council Tenants	200	-	-	-	-	50
	Homeless (Main Housing Duty)	150	200	-	10	-	50
	Hostel Move-On	150	-	-	10	-	50
	Pathway Housings	150	-	-	10	-	50
	Waiting List Applicants	50	-	50	10	-	50
	Incoming Nominations	50	-	-	-	-	50
	Homeless (Other)	20	-	50	10	-	50

*includes tenants of Huguenot House, see Cabinet Member Report January 2022

Appendix B: All Lettings 2022-23

Lettings 2022-23	Studio	1-Bed	2-Bed	3-Bed	4+ Bed	Total
Homeless incl CSH	57	82	85	43	8	275
Housing Register						
Category A Medical Priority	2	5	9	3		19
Vulnerable Singles Quota (incl Hostel Move-On, CSH, Pathways)	12	11				23
Social Services Quotas	23	8	1			32
Community Supportive Housing	59	84	1			144
Succession/Assignment		23	1	2		26
Other, incl Overcrowded	8	11	1	3		23
Housing Register Total	104	142	13	8		267
WCC Tenants						
Under-occupiers (Cash Incentive), incl CSH		12	13	4		29
Category A Medical	1	6	9	13		29
Children's Act CAAP			1			1
Community Supportive Housing (CSH)	6	41	1			48
Decant incl Renewal Decants and Returners		5	6	3	2	16
Overcrowded		1	23	16	9	49
Management Transfer	4	6	7			17
Studio to One-Beds		35				35
WCC Tenants Total	11	106	60	36	11	224
Grand Total	172	330	158	87	19	766



City of Westminster

Climate Action, Housing & Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	19 July 2023
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Future of Westminster Commission: Housing Recommendations & Council Response
Report of:	Debbie Jackson, Executive Director of Growth Planning & Housing
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Cllr Liza Begum, Cabinet Member for Housing Cllr Matt Noble, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration & Renters
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	Fairer Housing – Ensuring the housing needs of our residents are met by improving our housing services.
Report Author and Contact Details:	Angela Bishop abishop@westminster.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the headline recommendations (**Appendix A**) proposed by the Commission and outlines the Council's responses to those recommendations, which have since been adopted by Cabinet on 15 May 2023.
- 1.2 On 11 July 2022, Cabinet agreed to implement the Future of Westminster Commission ("the Commission") with a scope to review and make recommendations on the delivery of key council services to help deliver a Fairer Westminster for residents.
- 1.3 The Future of Westminster Commission convened a core group and established four workstreams with additional Commission members (Housing, Economy & Employment, Energy & Green Transition, Fairness & Equality).
- 1.4 Within the Housing Review, three lines of enquiry were created for the Commission to advise on:

- increasing the supply of genuinely affordable housing to meet housing need in the city;
- advise on options for improving the way the Council responds to homelessness and housing need; and
- the quality of services provided to the Council's own tenants and leaseholders.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

The committee is asked to consider and provide a view on:

- To note the Council's responses to the headline Future of Westminster Commission's recommendations.
- To note the role of the Corporate Housing Improvement Programme (CHIP) in operationalising the actions from the recommendations of the Future of Westminster Commission.
- To provide feedback on the Council's responses, and resulting actions, to the Future of Westminster Commission's recommendations.

3. Background

- 3.1 Bringing together experts from Housing Associations, Housing Standards, Law, Civil Service and Academic Institutions, as well as a newly formed Residents Panel to review existing work of the Council, the Housing Review covered some of Westminster's biggest challenges.
- 3.2 The Housing Review strand of the Commission was led by Steve Hilditch (*former Director of Policy Shelter; former Director of Housing at London Borough of Haringey*) as Chair, to deep dive into three areas of work:
- Housing Management
 - Housing Supply
 - Housing Homelessness & Need

Housing Management

- 3.3 The Housing Management Review utilised a Residents Panel comprising of 20 of the Council's own tenants and leaseholders who had volunteered to sit on a panel and who advised the Review.
- 3.4 The Panel primarily focused on improving responsive repairs and major works performance, local service delivery and responsiveness to residents, discussing solutions to better value for rent and service charge payers, and how the Council can deliver more effective engagement with tenants and leaseholders to give them more say over decisions that affect their homes and estates.

Housing Supply

- 3.5 The Housing Supply review sought to examine and analyse the factors that limit the Council's ability to deliver sufficient social and truly affordable housing in

Westminster and to advise and make recommendations to the Council on strategy and measures to meet Westminster's housing needs.

- 3.6 As set out in the Commission's report, the Housing Supply work reviewed three key priorities for the Council; maximising the number of homes available at social rent, provision of intermediate housing (targeting mainly key workers at moderate incomes) and increasing the supply of good quality temporary accommodation to meet the Council's homelessness statutory duties.

Housing Homelessness & Need

- 3.7 The main purpose of the Housing Homelessness & Need review was to analyse and challenge the Council's current strategy to better meet housing needs and identify better ways to support residents who need a home. This review focused on four specific areas: prevention and decision-making, temporary accommodation, allocations, and rough-sleeping.

4. Review of Recommendations

- 4.1 The Council welcomes the Commission's insight and appreciated the opportunity to explain and explore the challenges and opportunities for housing supply, management and homelessness, meanwhile receiving expert opinion on areas for improvement or change.
- 4.2 The Commission's report (delivered during April 2023) has been well received, with majority of the recommendations being agreed. The Council's response to the headline recommendations is set out in **Appendix A**.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that many of the resulting actions will now be taken forward by Cabinet Members and senior officers as part of existing and planned programmes of work, which will in turn be monitored and reported to Policy and Scrutiny and other committees as appropriate. Where there are initiatives requiring statutory consultation or formal decision making, these will require separate reporting to Cabinet, the relevant Cabinet Member or senior officer for approval.

5. Corporate Housing Improving Programme (CHIP)

- 5.1 The Housing Review findings will help steer the change to be undertaken in delivering housing services in Westminster. As a next step we are now establishing a Corporate Housing Improvement Programme (CHIP) to support the drive and ambition of delivering the best possible service for our residents.
- 5.2 The programme will bring together leadership and support from across the Council, ensuring maximum collaboration and benefit from the expertise and resources of the wider Council, in delivering future housing services for our residents.

- 5.3 The CHIP will be working alongside the Director of Housing and other colleagues to lead the programme. The programme will be overseen by a Corporate Housing Improvement Board comprised of cross Council leadership, accountability, and support. The Chief Executive will oversee this work.
- 5.4 As the CHIP gets underway it will be addressing three immediate priorities that align with the Commission's recommendations:
- prioritising communications with residents, which include continuous improvements with the call centre;
 - implementing a proposed improvement plan for the Repairs Service as soon as possible and;
 - developing an action plan to improve front line services particularly focused on Housing Needs.
- 5.5 Given the size and scale of the service, the programme has been divided into different workstreams which will enable a phased approach to the work. To date the programme has focused on four areas:
- Communications & Engagement
 - People & Culture,
 - Customer Experience
 - Repairs

An early improvement plan has been developed for these four areas which set out the priority actions that will be taken to drive this work forward. This will include a performance framework to ensure there is oversight of whether the actions are making the necessary impact to the service.

6. Work Underway – Delivering the Fairer Westminster Strategy

- 6.1 Upon receiving the Commission's recommendations it was noted that several key workstreams have already started or are due to start in 2023/2024 as a part of the delivery plan for the Fairer Westminster Strategy and business-as-usual improvement work of the Housing Service.
- 6.2 Programmes of work already underway or set to begin are outlined below in accordance with the three Review Reports.

Housing Management

- 6.3 The value of the contributions from the Resident's Panel giving their first-hand experience in engaging with the service should be noted. This allowed the Council to gain holistic insight into both perceptions and impacts of the Housing Service. Noting the Commission's recommendation to re-appoint the panel for the remainder of the financial year, officers have already begun discussing this with the panel following receipt of the Commission's report.
- 6.4 Taking on feedback from residents on how housing officers and services can be more accessible to the community, the Council is working to increase frontline

housing officers by one third and give our tenants better face-to-face contact with our housing staff by increasing the locations our officers can work from across the city. To this end, a new service centre will be operational from Bruckner Street on the Mozart Estate in May 2023. Further locations will be established through the cross-Council Community Hubs Programme where Housing Services will have a prominent presence.

- 6.5 The creation and adoption of two separate Charters focused on Repairs and Leaseholders continues at pace, in line with Fairer Westminster Delivery Plan targets for 23/24.

Housing Supply

- 6.6 Through the adoption of the Truly Affordable Housing Strategy, the Council has been working to maximise affordable units through our Regeneration Programme. As a result of the policy change, the Council has undergone a robust formal planning process to 'flip' at least 160 new homes originally designated as private rent to Council housing for social rent, to support affordable housing in Westminster. This takes our total stock to at least 1,362 affordable units in the current development pipeline. This work is a key component of the Fairer Westminster Strategy and has already been integrated into the existing service delivery framework.
- 6.7 It should be noted that the City Plan review is also currently underway with formal consultation taking place in October / November 2022 and adoption anticipated in 2025, along with work on the forthcoming Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document looking to address issues such as the affordability of intermediate housing for new supply.

Homelessness & Housing Need

- 6.8 As a key priority for the Council, commitments have already been made to improvements in this service area and the Council has been working closely with stakeholders to achieve this aim. Work is already underway to identify the best delivery route for the Housing Solutions Service in the future, which includes consideration of insourcing options for all or part of the service as part of the corporate Insourcing Programme approach. Officers are working to ensure funding is in place to cope with additional service pressures as a result of any increases to homelessness in Westminster.
- 6.9 In supporting residents who reside in Temporary Accommodation (TA), the Council already has an inspection regime for Council-owned self-contained TA, with arrangements remaining under constant review.
- 6.10 To overhaul service delivery in this area and meet the needs of our residents, two key pieces of work are set to start in 23/24. A top priority will be to review the existing Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan in line with the current refresh set for 2024, and the full review of the Supply and Allocations Scheme is set to begin imminently.

7. Monitoring and Future Analysis

- 7.1 For recommendations that fall within the remit of CHIP, progress will be monitored and managed through the CHIP governance. Recommendations that sit outside the scope of the CHIP will be taken forward through the respective services' business plans and through monitoring of the Council's Fairer Westminster Delivery Plan and other corporate delivery and reporting mechanisms.

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

Angela Bishop, Head of Stakeholder Engagement & Transformation,
Growth, Planning and Housing (abishop@westminster.gov.uk)

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - Future of Westminster Commission Housing Review – Council Response to Headline Recommendations
- Appendix 2 - Future of Westminster Commission – Housing Review

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- [Future of Westminster Commission – report to Cabinet – 11 July 2022](#)



Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	15 May 2023
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Council Response to the Future of Westminster Commission's Housing Review
Wards Affected:	All
Fairer Westminster:	Fairer Housing – Ensuring the housing needs of our residents are met by improving our housing services.
Key Decision:	Non-key.
Financial Summary:	There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. The recommendations in Appendix A will be subject to the standard budget cycle, i.e. Medium Term Financial Plan, HRA Business Planning and Capital Strategy.
Report of:	Debbie Jackson, Executive Director of Growth, Planning and Housing

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 On 11 July 2022, Cabinet agreed to implement the Future of Westminster Commission (“the Commission”) with a scope to review and make recommendations on the delivery of key council services to help deliver a Fairer Westminster for residents.
- 1.2 The Future of Westminster Commission convened a core group and established four workstreams with additional Commission members (Housing, Economy & Employment, Energy & Green Transition, Fairness & Equality).
- 1.3 Within the Housing Review, three lines of enquiry were created for the Commission to advise on:
 - increasing the supply of genuinely affordable housing to meet housing need in the city;
 - advise on options for improving the way the Council responds to homelessness and housing need; and
 - the quality of services provided to the Council’s own tenants and leaseholders.
- 1.4 The Commission will report on the other three workstreams separately in the coming months and this will represent a conclusion of the Commission’s work.
- 1.5 **Appendix A** sets out the headline recommendations proposed by the Commission and outlines the Council’s responses to those recommendations.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the proposed responses to the Commission’s Housing Review headline recommendations (**Appendix A**) and instruct officers to integrate the resulting actions within the Housing Service and other relevant services’ work programmes.

3. Reasons for the Decision

- 3.1 The Council commissioned a review of Housing Management, Housing Supply and Housing Homelessness & Need through the Future of Westminster Commission. Upon review of the Commission’s report, each of the headline recommendations have been considered individually (as outlined in **Appendix A**), with a view to accepting, rejecting, modifying or otherwise considering each. The proposed responses are put forward on the basis that they align with the strategic ambitions of the Council.

4.1 Background, including Policy Context

- 4.1 Bringing together experts from Housing Associations, Housing Standards, Law, Civil Service and Academic Institutions, as well as a newly formed Residents

Panel to review existing work of the Council, the Housing Review covered some of Westminster's biggest challenges.

- 4.2 The Housing Review strand of the Commission was led by Steve Hilditch (*former Director of Policy Shelter; former Director of Housing at London Borough of Haringey*) as Chair, to deep dive into three areas of work:
- Housing Management
 - Housing Supply
 - Housing Homelessness & Need

Housing Management

- 4.3 The Housing Management Review utilised a Residents Panel comprising of 20 of the Council's own tenants and leaseholders who had volunteered to sit on a panel and who advised the Review.
- 4.4 The Panel primarily focused on improving responsive repairs and major works performance, local service delivery and responsiveness to residents, discussing solutions to better value for rent and service charge payers, and how the Council can deliver more effective engagement with tenants and leaseholders to give them more say over decisions that affect their homes and estates.

Housing Supply

- 4.5 The Housing Supply review sought to examine and analyse the factors that limit the Council's ability to deliver sufficient social and truly affordable housing in Westminster and to advise and make recommendations to the Council on strategy and measures to meet Westminster's housing needs.
- 4.6 As set out in the Commission's report, the Housing Supply work reviewed three key priorities for the Council; maximising the number of homes available at social rent, provision of intermediate housing (targeting mainly key workers at moderate incomes) and increasing the supply of good quality temporary accommodation to meet the Council's homelessness statutory duties.

Housing Homelessness & Need

- 4.7 The main purpose of the Housing Homelessness & Need review was to analyse and challenge the Council's current strategy to better meet housing needs and identify better ways to support residents who need a home. This review focused on four specific areas: prevention and decision-making, temporary accommodation, allocations, and rough-sleeping.

5. Review of Recommendations

- 5.1 The Council welcomes the Commission's insight and appreciated the opportunity to explain and explore the challenges and opportunities for housing supply, management and homelessness, meanwhile receiving expert opinion on areas for improvement or change.

5.2 The Commission's report (delivered during April 2023) has been well received, with majority of the recommendations being agreed. The Council's response to the headline recommendations is set out in **Appendix A**.

5.3 It is anticipated that many of the resulting actions will now be taken forward by Cabinet Members and senior officers as part of existing and planned programmes of work, which will in turn be monitored and reported to Policy and Scrutiny and other committees as appropriate. Where there are initiatives requiring statutory consultation or formal decision making, these will require separate reporting to Cabinet, the relevant Cabinet Member or senior officer for approval.

6. Corporate Housing Improving Programme (CHIP)

6.1 The Housing Review findings will help steer the change to be undertaken in delivering housing services in Westminster. As a next step we are now establishing a Corporate Housing Improvement Programme (CHIP) to support the drive and ambition of delivering the best possible service for our residents.

6.2 The programme will bring together leadership and support from across the Council, ensuring maximum collaboration and benefit from the expertise and resources of the wider Council, in delivering future housing services for our residents.

6.3 The CHIP will be working alongside the Director of Housing and other colleagues to lead the programme. The programme will be overseen by a Corporate Housing Improvement Board comprised of cross Council leadership, accountability, and support. The Executive Director of Growth, Planning and Housing will oversee this work.

6.4 As the CHIP gets underway it will be addressing three immediate priorities that align with the Commission's recommendations:

- prioritising communications with residents, which include continuous improvements with the call centre;
- implementing a proposed improvement plan for the Repairs Service as soon as possible and;
- developing an action plan to improve front line services particularly focused on Housing Needs.

7. Work Underway – Delivering the Fairer Westminster Strategy

7.1 Upon receiving the Commission's recommendations it was noted that several key workstreams have already started or are due to start in 2023/2024 as a part of the delivery plan for the Fairer Westminster Strategy and business-as-usual improvement work of the Housing Service.

7.2 Programmes of work already underway or set to begin are outlined below in accordance with the three Review Reports.

Housing Management

- 7.3 The value of the contributions from the Resident's Panel giving their first-hand experience in engaging with the service should be noted. This allowed the Council to gain holistic insight into both perceptions and impacts of the Housing Service. Noting the Commission's recommendation to re-appoint the panel for the remainder of the financial year, officers have already begun discussing this with the panel following receipt of the Commission's report and pending the decision of Cabinet.
- 7.4 Taking on feedback from residents on how housing officers and services can be more accessible to the community, the Council is working to increase frontline housing officers by one third and give our tenants better face-to-face contact with our housing staff by increasing the locations our officers can work from across the city. To this end, a new service centre will be operational from Bruckner Street on the Mozart Estate in May 2023. Further locations will be established through the cross-Council Community Hubs Programme where Housing Services will have a prominent presence.
- 7.5 The creation and adoption of two separate Charters focused on Repairs and Leaseholders continues at pace, in line with Fairer Westminster Delivery Plan targets for 23/24.

Housing Supply

- 7.6 Through the adoption of the Truly Affordable Housing Strategy, the Council has been working to maximise affordable units through our Regeneration Programme. As a result of the policy change, the Council has undergone a robust formal planning process to 'flip' at least 160 new homes originally designated as private rent to Council housing for social rent, to support affordable housing in Westminster. This takes our total stock to at least 1,362 affordable units in the current development pipeline. This work is a key component of the Fairer Westminster Strategy and has already been integrated into the existing service delivery framework.
- 7.7 It should be noted that the City Plan review is also currently underway with formal consultation taking place in October / November 2022 and adoption anticipated in 2025, along with work on the forthcoming Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document looking to address issues such as the affordability of intermediate housing for new supply.

Homelessness & Housing Need

- 7.8 As a key priority for the Council, commitments have already been made to improvements in this service area and the Council has been working closely with stakeholders to achieve this aim. Work is already underway to identify the best delivery route for the Housing Solutions Service in the future, which includes consideration of insourcing options for all or part of the service as part of the corporate Insourcing Programme approach. Officers are working to

ensure funding is in place to cope with additional service pressures as a result of any increases to homelessness in Westminster.

- 7.9 In supporting residents who reside in Temporary Accommodation (TA), the Council already has an inspection regime for Council-owned self-contained TA, with arrangements remaining under constant review.
- 7.10 To overhaul service delivery in this area and meet the needs of our residents, two key pieces of work are set to start in 23/24. A top priority will be to review the existing Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan in line with the current refresh set for 2024, and the full review of the Supply and Allocations Scheme is set to begin imminently.

8. Monitoring and Future Analysis

- 8.1 For recommendations that fall within the remit of CHIP, progress will be monitored and managed through the CHIP governance. Recommendations that sit outside the scope of the CHIP will be taken forward through the respective services' business plans and through monitoring of the Council's Fairer Westminster Delivery Plan and other corporate delivery and reporting mechanisms.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. The recommendations in Appendix A will be subject to the standard budget cycle, i.e. Medium Term Financial Plan, HRA Business Planning and Capital Strategy.

10. Legal and Equality Implications

- 10.1 **Appendix A** contains a number of initiatives Cabinet is asked to approve, some of which will require adherence to statutory provisions in order to implement, to include statutory consultation.
- 10.2 Consideration will also be given to the requirement to undertake consultation and Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) to ensure the Council considers its Public Sector Equality Duty on an ongoing basis for each initiative.
- 10.3 Legal Services and other corporate services will be engaged at an early stage, as appropriate, as the mobilisation of recommendations are taken forward.

11. Carbon Impact

- 11.1 There are no direct carbon implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Individual carbon assessments will be carried out as needed on a case-by-case basis as recommendations are adopted through new or existing programmes of work, in line with current organisational practices.

12. Consultation

- 12.1 Resident and Member consultation will be undertaken through the adoption of new and existing programmes of work in line with current organisational practices.

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

Angela Bishop, Head of Stakeholder Engagement & Transformation, Growth, Planning and Housing (abishop@westminster.gov.uk)

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - Future of Westminster Commission Housing Review – Council Response to Headline Recommendations
- Appendix 2 - Future of Westminster Commission – Housing Review

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- [Future of Westminster Commission – report to Cabinet – 11 July 2022](#)

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Appendix A - Future of Westminster Commission Housing Review – Council Response to Headline Recommendations

Headline recommendations from the Housing Review and the Council's response to those recommendations can be found below. Detailed recommendations in other Commission reports will be considered as we move forward in adopting strategies and delivering projects associated with programmes such as the Fairer Westminster Strategy and the Corporate Housing Improvement Programme (CHIP).

Headline Housing Strategy			
	Housing Review Recommendation	Council Recommended Response	Headline Response
	The Council should publish a new Housing Strategy, together with a Delivery Plan and an Equalities Impact Assessment, in 2024 looking 3-5 years ahead.	Agree	The Council will propose a framework strategy to situate and complement planned strategies for Homelessness and Rough Sleeping and the Strategic Asset Management Plan (building and environmental sustainability), set to launch in 2024. In line regulation, the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy will have a full statutory consultation in addition to an equalities impact assessment.
Housing Management Report			
	Housing Review Recommendation	Council Recommended Response	Headline Response
1.	Re-appoint the Residents Panel for the remainder of the year, appointing a permanent panel in 2024.	Agree	Officers have met with the Resident's Panel in late April and are currently setting the work programme for 2023/24.
2.	Support and grow local Residents Associations to (1) put them on a stronger footing and (2) incorporate them within the Residents Panel.	(1) Agree (2) Agreed in part	(1) A new dedicated resource is in place to support and enable Resident Associations (RAs). This aims to facilitate representation and enable more RAs so all residents have a voice. (2) The Resident's Panel was created through a transparent process with the aim to ensure a wide representation of residents across the borough. RA members should be part of the Panel and going forward we will actively promote participation in the Panel by RAs. We will examine appropriate mechanisms for doing this. The overall priority will remain to achieve a representative Panel and proposing strengthening RA engagement to enable stronger networking between RAs and the Resident's Panel.
3.	Negotiate the new Repairs Charter with the Panel by 2024, in good time to influence the specification and procurement of new repairs contracts.	Agree	The Fairer Westminster Delivery Plan states a commitment to create a Repairs Charter due to be released in 2023/24. Work is already underway on a draft Charter; this will be discussed with the Resident's Panel before a wider consultation is undertaken.
4.	Note the pressures in the repairs system, which might require additional funding in 2023/24 and subsequently, extending and implementing the proposed improvement plan as quickly as possible.	Agree	This programme of work will be taken forward through the Corporate Housing Improvement Programme (CHIP).
5.	Develop an asset management plan for the council's housing stock, including addressing the Ombudsman's recommendations for damp and mould and implementing <i>Awaab's Law</i> . Government to deliver Awaab's Law - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)	Agree	A new Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) will be developed with the intention to launch in 2024/5. As of Winter 2023, a new operating model has specifically been in place to manage damp and mould cases.
6.	Negotiate the new Leaseholders Charter to launch in 2024.	Agree	A draft Charter is in currently production and will be discussed with the Residents Panel and then consulted on at the Westminster Leaseholder conference later this year.
7.	Continue to prioritise improvements in communications with residents and continuous improvement at the call centre, reviewing progress in Autumn 2023.	Agree	This programme of work will be taken forward through the Corporate Housing Improvement Programme (CHIP).

			The Fairer Westminster Delivery Plan 2023/24 has already committed to delivering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a 1/3 increase in frontline Housing Officers; • giving our tenants better face-to-face contact with our Housing Officers by increasing the locations our officers can work from across the City; and • improving the quality of service provided when you call our staff by using better customer service technology.
8.	Implement as soon as possible the proposed increase in local service points with a new 5 th Service Centre at Mozart Estate, other estate offices where possible, and an expansion in the number of surgeries.	Agree	A new service centre will be operational from Bruckner Street on the Mozart Estate in May 2023 and further announcements on this issue will be made in due course. There is a cross-Council Community Hubs programme currently underway where Housing Services will have a prominent presence and will ultimately expand the number of face-to-face surgeries we operate across the City.
10.	Develop a management action plan aimed at improving the consistency of frontline service delivery designed to build satisfaction with services.	Agree	This programme of work will be taken forward through the Corporate Housing Improvement Programme (CHIP).
11.	Continue to develop practical ideas to support residents facing hardship like the rent support fund.	Agree	Officers note the next tranche of Housing Support Fund, and the new Rent Support Fund, are imminently going to be signed off and will be rolled out and monitored to inform future ideas.
12.	Consolidate the 2023/24 cost of service improvements into HRA base budgets.	To be considered.	This will be considered as part of the yearly budget setting process.
13.	Continue to review recharges to the HRA from the rest of the council to ensure they are reasonable and justifiable.	Agree	This is in progress and will feed into this year's budget setting process (as well as taking any early opportunities to reduce recharges into the Housing Revenue Account).
Housing Supply Report			
	Housing Review Recommendation	Council Recommended Response	Headline Response
1.	Retain high level political support for and oversight of the Truly Affordable Homes Strategy.	For Cabinet consideration.	The Truly Affordable Homes Strategy has been adopted by Cabinet and our current work programme is in line with the Strategy along with set commitments in the Fairer Westminster Strategy 2023/24.
2.	Adopt a 'whole council' approach as set out in the report to maximise truly affordable housing, embedding the three priorities of a) social rent homes, b) intermediate homes for key workers, and c) high quality temporary accommodation in all related programmes across the whole council; and publish an annual delivery plan covering all supply initiatives.	Agree, with detail to be developed.	One of the recommendations from the housing review carried out by external consultant <i>31Ten</i> is an annual Plan/Strategy for housing supply which will provide the framework for the Council's and its delivery bodies' delivery programmes. The scope of this recommendation will need further development as for the supply of Temporary Accommodation may sit better within the Housing or Homelessness Strategy outlined above.
3.	Increase the priority given to the acquisition of homes for permanent social rented housing and for high quality temporary accommodation.	Agree, subject to budget allocation.	There is currently funding in the budget for the accelerated and augmented Temporary Accommodation Acquisition Programme. There is no future programme for spot purchases of social rent homes but work is being undertaken to explore potential opportunities that might facilitate this.
4.	Develop a new 'Housing Compact' with Registered Providers (RPs) in the city setting out all the areas where the council and RPs should collaborate.	Agree, subject to identifying/allocating resources.	Work is underway to identify resource needed from the General Fund for this activity. Any structured collaboration with RPs deemed to be appropriate for agreeing a 'compact' with should seek clear commitments on improving service standards and stock retention alongside discussions around future supply.
5.	Look to augment council resources by investigating a flexible range of new partnerships with institutional finance (eg pension funds), registered providers,	Agree, to the extent necessary.	Partnerships with other social and intermediate housing providers will be considered through the 'Housing Compact' action above.

	especially those with a commitment to Westminster, intermediate homes providers, and community-based housing organisations.		
6.	Develop the role of Westminster Community Homes (WCH) as a flexible vehicle to innovate and problem solve difficult cases.	Agree	The role and purpose of the Council's housing delivery vehicles is a key consideration in the housing review report recently completed by external consultant <i>31Ten</i> . The Council's response to this report will be developed shortly but will include identifying a clear purpose for the vehicles and when best to deploy each.
7.	Affirm its commitment to achieving as a minimum the current City Plan target of 35% affordable housing in developments across the city, with 50% on public land, and press on with the revision of the City Plan to reflect the council's housing priorities.	Agree	A full review of the City Plan has already been initiated with formal consultation on policy change taking place in October/November 2022 with adoption anticipated in 2025.
Homelessness and Housing Need Report			
	Housing Review Recommendation	Council Recommended Response	Headline Response
1.	Establish an overarching Westminster Homelessness Board chaired by a senior politician.	To be considered.	The Council notes the work of the existing Westminster Partnership Board for homelessness and should consider this recommendation for reform in that context of work already underway.
2.	Ensure that services have secure funding and plans in place to cope with a likely increase in homelessness over the next few years.	Agree	To be considered as part of the annual budget setting process and in the context of the emerging strategy work.
3.	Prioritise additional resources for prevention of homelessness and early intervention.	Agree	As above.
4.	Lobby government to make Local Housing Allowances realistic in relation to Temporary Accommodation costs and to increase homelessness grant.	Agree	Work will soon be underway to focus on future sustainable funding approaches, in regards to Homelessness and Rough-sleeping service delivery.
5.	Agree and implement a 'Westminster Offer' to households in Temporary Accommodation setting out the services and support that will be provided.	Agree	Work is underway to identify the resource needed to implement this recommendation.
6.	Rigorously monitor and enforce standards in Temporary Accommodation.	Agree	Officers note we currently have our own inspection regime for our self contained Temporary Accommodation and these arrangements remain under constant review.
7.	Press on with the allocations review taking account of our agenda of issues;	Agree	The Supply and Allocation Review is being initiated shortly.
8.	Develop a management action plan to improve the consistency of frontline service delivery and decision-making, focusing on learning from experience, feedback from complaints and casework, and a better understanding of the customer experience of the service;	Agree	This programme of work will be taken forward through the Corporate Housing Improvement Programme (CHIP).
9.	Agree a tendering strategy for the Housing Solutions Service, identifying any parts of the service that would be better delivered in-house, with a clear specification on early intervention, casework management, and getting decisions right first time;	Agree	Work is already underway to identify the best delivery route for the Housing Solutions Service in the future, which includes consideration of insourcing options for all or part of the service as part of the Corporate Insourcing Programme Approach.
10.	Press on with the revised rough sleeping strategy, co-produced through a new Rough Sleeping Partnership, making leadership on rough sleeping a political priority for the council.	Agree	Proposal to be put forward as part of a potential Rough Sleeping Partnership being delivered via the Homelessness Partnership Board as per the recommendation above.

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Climate Action, Housing and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	19 July 2023
Classification:	General Release
Title:	2023/2024 Work Programme
Report of:	Head of Governance and Councillor Liaison
Cabinet Member Portfolios:	Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	All
Report Author and Contact Details:	Linda Hunting lhunting@westminster.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

1. This report asks the Committee to discuss topics for the 2023/2024 work programme. The proposals set out in Appendix 2 have been developed in consultation with Members, senior officers and members of the Executive (Cabinet) on their plans for the year ahead to ensure scrutiny is focused on those areas where it may have most impact.

2. Meeting Dates for the 2023/2024 Municipal Year

- 2.1 The Committee is advised that the next scheduled meeting dates for the 2023/2024 year are:
 - 12 September 2023;
 - 30 November 2023;
 - 12 March 2024; and
 - 22 April 2024.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Policy and Scrutiny team has been supporting the Chair and Committee Members to consider the work programme for the next municipal year. The process for this included; consultation with the Cabinet Members, consultation with Executive Directors and relevant Heads of Service, following up on previous items and commitments from previous meetings, consideration of forward plans in the Cabinet Portfolios and challenges identified across the Directorates.
- 3.2 The aim of this process has been to culminate in a work programme which:
- Focuses on what is important;
 - Focuses on areas where performance might be improved;
 - Focuses on services which are important to residents;
 - Focuses on where scrutiny can make a difference and add value;
 - Proactively feeds into policy development by contributing to pre-tender considerations or strategy development for example; and
 - Uses the insight of backbench Members to act as critical friend to services of the City Council and our partners thereby enabling good governance and excellent services.

4. Work Programme for 2023/24

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to consider the work programme for the municipal year, 2023/2024, set out in Appendix 2. The Committee is requested to discuss the proposed topics listed as well as provide comments and suggestions.
- 4.2 When considering the work programme, and agreeing an overall programme of scrutiny activity, the Committee should have regard to whether the work programme is achievable in terms of both Officer and Member time, taking into account that the Committee is scheduled to meet six times per year. Members are also reminded that it is advisable to hold some capacity in reserve for any urgent issues that might arise.
- 4.3 Each Committee has discretion to establish Task Groups to examine key issues in more detail and also to commission Single Member Studies. The Committee is asked to consider whether they would like to establish a Task Group or commission a Single Member Study. The Committee should be advised that both Members and Officers will only be able to successfully take part in and support a finite number of Task Groups at any one time.

If you have any queries about this report or wish to inspect any of the background papers, please contact Linda Hunting
lhunting@westminster.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference
Appendix 2: Work Programme
Appendix 3: Action Tracker

CLIMATE ACTION, HOUSING AND REGENERATION POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COMPOSITION

7 Members of the Council (4 Majority Party Members and 3 Opposition Party Members).

TERMS OF REFERENCE

(a) To carry out the Policy and Scrutiny functions, as set out in Chapter 4 of the Constitution in respect of matters relating to all those duties within the terms of reference of the Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Housing Services and the Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters.

(b) To carry out the Policy and Scrutiny function in respect of matters within the remit of the Council's non-executive Committees and Sub-Committees, which are within the broad remit of the Committee, in accordance with paragraphs 18.2 and 18.3 as well as section 19 of Chapter 4 of the Constitution.

(c) Matters within the broad remit of the Cabinet Members referred to in (a) above which are the responsibility of external agencies.

(d) Any other matter allocated by the Westminster Scrutiny Commission.

(e) To have the power to establish ad hoc or Standing Sub-Committees as Task Groups to carry out the scrutiny of functions within these terms of reference.

(f) To scrutinise the duties of the Lead Members which fall within the remit of the Committee or as otherwise allocated by the Westminster Scrutiny Commission.

(g) To scrutinise any Bi-borough proposals which impact on service areas that fall within the Committee's terms of reference.

(h) To oversee any issues relating to Performance within the Committee's terms of reference.

(i) To have the power to scrutinise those partner organisations under a duty to that are relevant to the remit of the Committee.

(j) To consider any Councillor Calls for Action referred by a Ward Member to the Committee.

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**Appendix 2 - Climate Action, Housing and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme 2023/24**

ROUND 3 12 September 2023		
Agenda item	Purpose	Responsible Cabinet Member and Executive Director
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the Committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities.	Councillor Matt Noble, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters Debbie Jackson, Executive Director of Growth, Planning and Housing Amy Jones, Director of Environment
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the Committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities.	Councillor Liza Begum Cabinet Member for Housing Services Sarah Warman, Executive Director of Housing and Commercial Partnerships
Rough sleeping, homelessness, and the use of hostel accommodation across Westminster.	To review the Council's approach to rough sleeping, homelessness, and the use of hostel accommodation. To include: recommendations, strategies, trends, lessons learned, outreach, and data.	Councillor Liza Begum Cabinet Member for Housing Services Sarah Warman, Executive Director of Housing and Commercial Partnerships
Work programme	To review the work programme in light of events and recent discussions.	Linda Hunting, Policy and Scrutiny Advisor

ROUND 4 30 November 2023		
Agenda item	Purpose	Responsible Cabinet Member and Executive Director
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the Committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities.	Councillor Matt Noble, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters Debbie Jackson, Executive Director of Growth, Planning and Housing Amy Jones, Director of Environment
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the Committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities.	Councillor Liza Begum Cabinet Member for Housing Services Sarah Warman, Executive Director of Housing and Commercial Partnerships
The Private Rented Sector Charter	To review the Council's plans to improve property and management standards in the private rented sector, increase opportunities for low-income households,	Councillor Matt Noble, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters

	and improve communications across the sector.	Debbie Jackson, Executive Director of Growth, Planning and Housing
The Climate Emergency Action Plan	To review progress of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, including, actions for reducing carbon emissions across Westminster, and working with businesses and residents.	Councillor Matt Noble, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters Debbie Jackson, Executive Director of Growth, Planning and Housing Amy Jones, Director of Environment
Work programme	To review the work programme in light of events and recent discussions.	Linda Hunting, Policy and Scrutiny Advisor

ROUND 5 12 March 2024		
Agenda item	Purpose	Responsible Cabinet Member and Executive Director
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the Committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities.	Councillor Matt Noble, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters Debbie Jackson, Executive Director of Growth, Planning and Housing Amy Jones, Director of Environment
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the Committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities.	Councillor Liza Begum Cabinet Member for Housing Services Sarah Warman, Executive Director of Housing and Commercial Partnerships
The Infill Programme	To examine the Council's plans for underused and empty areas on our estates and the redevelopment and building of new properties.	Councillor Matt Noble, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters Debbie Jackson, Executive Director of Growth, Planning and Housing
Church Street Regeneration Programme	To review the Church Street programme of regeneration the planning, procurement, and delivery.	Councillor Matt Noble, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters Debbie Jackson, Executive Director of Growth, Planning and Housing
Work programme	To review the work programme in light of events and recent discussions.	Linda Hunting, Policy and Scrutiny Advisor

ROUND 6 22 April 2024		
Agenda item	Purpose	Responsible Cabinet Member and Executive Director
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the Committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities.	Councillor Matt Noble, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters Debbie Jackson, Executive Director of Growth, Planning and Housing Amy Jones, Director of Environment
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the Committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities.	Councillor Liza Begum Cabinet Member for Housing Services Sarah Warman, Executive Director of Housing and Commercial Partnerships
Supported Housing and Sheltered Housing	To review the current supported housing provision and the Council's policies for sheltered housing and identify the shortfalls and consider what can be done to address these and what interventions will be required in the future for Westminster residents.	Councillor Matt Noble, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters Sarah Warman, Executive Director of Housing and Commercial Partnerships
Work programme	To review the work programme in light of events and recent discussions.	Linda Hunting, Policy and Scrutiny Advisor

Unallocated items – this may either be substituted in for a substantive item elsewhere in the year or may be rolled over for future municipal years.

Councillor Liza Begum Cabinet Member for Housing Services	Councillor Matt Noble, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters
Housing Anti-Social Behaviour - An update on the review of housing Anti-Social Behaviour procedures.	Westminster Builds - The Budget Scrutiny Task Group recommended the Committee review this in more detail and provide comments.
Housing Solutions Service.	The Climate Assembly – To review the progress which has been made by the Assembly.
	The Biodiversity Strategy - To consider climate action education in schools.
	The Carbon Impact Evaluation Toolkit
	To consider the Council's procurement of contracts that have a direct impact on climate action and regeneration.

Proposed Briefing Sessions:

Councillor Liza Begum Cabinet Member for Housing Services	Purpose	Proposed Date
Mould and Condensation	To review the Council's plans to address mould and damp in properties and considering these issues, also	TBC

	receive feedback from Housing Associations and RA's how this is being tackled.	
RAPID App Technology	To review the new technology RAPID introduced by the Council to manage tenant information and communication.	TBC Sep /Oct 2023
Councillor Matt Noble, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters	Purpose	Proposed Date
Green Doctors	To provide Members with a briefing session or a Member Development Training session to gather information and review the service.	Oct - Dec 2023

Forthcoming Written Reports/ Updates:

Councillor Liza Begum Cabinet Member for Housing Services	Purpose	Proposed Date
Fire Safety Regulations	To update the committee on the current regulations.	Sept 2023
Intermediate Housing Regulations	To update the committee on the current regulations.	Nov 2023
Housing Repairs Improvement Progress Review	To review the actions taken to improve housing management and the delivery of an effective and responsive repair system	April 2024
Councillor Matt Noble, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters	Purpose	Proposed Date
Green Bonds and Community Energy Projects	To review the Green Bonds initiative. To include the annual emissions performance reporting of the Council, case examples, resident engagement, community energy projects that benefit residents, and the delivery of the Carbon Offset projects.	Oct - Dec 2023

Appendix 3 - ACTION TRACKER
Climate Action, Housing and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

ROUND 2 18 October 2022			
Agenda Item	Action	Status/ Follow Up	Comments
Item 7 Work Programme	The formation of a Biodiversity Task Group.	In progress / Member led	Chair put task groups on hold in Dec 22 until the 2023/ 24 year.
ROUND 3 4 November 2022			
Agenda Item	Action	Status/ Follow Up	Comments
Item 5 Cabinet Member Updates Policy and Scrutiny Portfolio Overview: Cabinet Member for Housing Services	That information will be provided to the Committee regarding the number of additional properties that will be required as a result of the waiting lists and the Allocation Policy.	Completed	This item and below will come to scrutiny in July 23.
	That information will be provided to the Committee about how the Allocation Policy is currently working for the 10-year residency point scheme and how residents are informed, would apply, and are granted points at 10 years and how the waiting list for housing stock may be affected following the legal challenge of WCC Allocations Scheme.	Completed	This item will come to scrutiny in July 23.
	That information be provided to the Committee on how much Government Local Authority (GLA) funding is expected for the Queen's Park Court infills site and	In progress	

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	if there is any further funding available for other infill projects.		
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**ROUND 5
2 March 2023**

Agenda Item	Action	Status/ Follow Up	Comments
Item 5 Cabinet Member Updates Policy and Scrutiny Portfolio Overview: Cabinet Member for Housing Services	Information to be sent to the committee about the opening of the office at the Community Hubs Programme.	In progress	Officers to send once the community hubs programme is finalised.
	That details be provided to the Committee (once available) about Leaseholder Service Charges	In progress	Officers will distribute when released.
	Details to be provided of RAs and contact details of their specific Housing Officers for Members.	In progress	
	Committee to be briefed about how the mobile security pilot went, the lessons learned, and the intelligence gathered, after the pilot is completed and before the possible extension is up for further consultation.	In progress	Neil Whiteman has agreed to update the committee when the pilot has ended, and officers can evaluate the data and lessons learned. Estimated September 2023.
	Information to be shared with the committee about the Councils plans to ensure the delivery of the Truly Affordable Housing Strategy over the next 10 years.	In progress	Members were provided with some information during the February meeting and will be updated in due course with developments by the CM. This item will come to Committee in July as part of the FoWC Strategy.

**ROUND 6
19 April 2023**

Agenda Item	Action	Status/ Follow Up	Comments
Item 4 Cabinet Member Update	That information be provided on the Relief Duty Households and the effects on the housing register	In progress	

Policy and Scrutiny Portfolio Overview: Cabinet Member for Housing Services	regarding allocations if a resident is housed privately		
	That information about the Rental Support Fund and about leaseholders and their inclusion in that fund or support for them, including information on the funds that had been paid out, be provided.	Completed	Members updated in the June CM report and updated 5 July.
	That further information about No Mow May and the initiatives to improve community cohesion and greening in estates be provided.	In progress	

**ROUND 1
6 June 2023**

Agenda Item	Action	Status/ Follow Up	Comments
Item 4 Cabinet Member Update Policy and Scrutiny Portfolio Overview: Cabinet Member for Housing Services	That housing performance data be supplied to the Committee.	In progress	This will be provided by officers for the Sep 2023 meeting.
	That information about the Council's fire safety standards and what is being done to support residents be provided to the Committee.	In progress	This item is on the Work Programme and will be presented as a written update in Sep 2023.
	Requested information about how the data for ASB cases is obtained	In progress	
	Requested information about extending the pilot on Supporting Vulnerable Residents with housing needs and their families.	In progress	
	That a breakdown of the rough sleepers for each ward and information about the accommodation that is offered to rough sleepers be provided.	In progress	

	That information about Relief Duty Households and how many are housed privately and the effect, if any, on the housing register be provided.	Completed	Members emailed 10 July
	That information about the Rental Support Fund, how it is promoted, and what support is offered leaseholders be provided.	Completed	Members updated 30 June & 5 July and in the July CM report.
Item 5 Cabinet Member Update Policy and Scrutiny Portfolio Overview: Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration & Renters	That information on the specific projects that have been shortlisted for the Green Bond funding and details of the expected timeline for these to commence / conclude be provided.	Completed	Members updated 6 July.
	That information about how many of the total number of social rent properties in Phase 1 at Ebury Bridge are being taken up by returning residents be provided.	In progress	To be provided in the July CM report.
	That Members will be kept updated on the Council's net zero approach and offsetting measures.	In progress / ongoing	Officers confirmed this will be actioned with updates in the CM report, as appropriate.
	That the total estimated cost of the Council's plans for hitting net zero be provided to the Committee.	In progress / ongoing	As above
	That information about the Council's ability to enforce minimum energy standards (as set out in the MEE's pilot) are provided to the Committee.	In progress	