

# Housing, Finance and Corporate Service Policy and Scrutiny Committee Briefing

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**Briefing of:** Head of Cabinet Secretariat

**Portfolio:** Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration,  
Business and Economic Development

**Please contact:** Jeremy Day x 5772  
[jday@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:jday@westminster.gov.uk)

Please find below an update on key areas of activity from the Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development portfolio since the committee last met.

## Housing

### 1. Delivering Housing Renewal

In the period since the last committee meeting there has been particular activity around Tollgate Gardens, Ebury Bridge and Church Street.

#### **Tollgate Gardens**

Since my last update the Compulsory Purchase Order has been confirmed by the Secretary of State and officers have instructed Resident Engagement to start finding alternative accommodation for the Temporary Accommodation residents (approx. 50) currently in situ. The Council will be serving notices to treat and the General Vesting declaration on the remaining tenant and leaseholder in November.

The Development Agreement is on track to be signed with Affinity Sutton towards the beginning of December, and following vacant possession we are hoping to achieve a start on site date of March 2016.

#### **Ebury Bridge Estate**

The focus of activity is still progressing the decanting of those parts of the estate that are required to facilitate the regeneration scheme to go ahead. This process is ongoing and proceeding well.

To date the Council has purchased 31 leaseholds (out of the 66 due to be purchased) and moved 36 tenants (out of the 39 due to be moved) to facilitate the development, officers have also progressed negotiations with Soho Housing Association and agreed Head of Terms for the purchase of one of their housing blocks on the estate.

Acquisitions, both voluntary and compulsory, will continue over the coming quarter.

## **2. Church Street**

### **Lisson Arches**

Enabling works are progressing with surveys to the ground to ensure all utilities can be diverted to the agreed plan.

Ground works for the UK power network, diversions started in September 2015 and will be ongoing until May 2016.

Officers are also meeting with Thames Water to agree diversion path.

### **Luton Street**

Having presented the options for the Luton Street Community Space and put forward a recommendation, the decision made was to use the space for a 3 court sports hall for the community.

The detailed designs for the project are being worked on currently including discussions around play-streets, green spine and tenure blind buildings.

### **Venables Street**

Planning was submitted in beginning of August to decant the market trader's sheds from site, with a view to start on site in November and complete construction by February 2016.

### **Tresham Crescent**

The Council is on track to complete by the end of November 2015. Discussion and negotiations with the three occupiers now close to completion.

### **Penn and Lilestone**

The Council has re-run viability following revised massing study.

## **3. Church Street: Regeneration:**

### **Background**

At the last Committee meeting members met the new Director of Housing and Regeneration, Barbara Brownlee. Since she has joined the Council Church Street has become a key focus for her. I have seen the current Communications and

Engagement Plan and am working with officers to ensure we support Church Street and have officers on the ground..

I have recently recruited a key senior regeneration coordinator and we are opening a regeneration office on the High Street. To be fully functioning by the end of 2015.

Since the last meeting we have continued to move forward with regeneration:

- Green Spine landscape architect procurement launched
- Neighbourhood upkeep procurement now finalised and ready to issue
- Tresham Crescent (nursery) due to be complete end this month
- Luton Street Design now well progressed with planning application likely to be in January 2016
- Venables Street planning consent achieved
- Blackwater House now in for planning
- GLA contract negotiations underway for Housing Zone Bid

Looking forward to our Next Quarter Activity, we plan:

- To Launch of Neighbourhood upkeep procurement
- ITT to go out to short listed parties for Green Spine Landscape Architect
- A Decision on Cosway Street Disposal
- Public Consultation at Luton Street
- Completion and Launch of Tresham Crescent

#### **4. Housing Strategy Update**

A Direction of Travel document has been compiled and I have already worked with officers to draft the document which will be finalised shortly.

The document is intended to show the general direction we want to take in the light of the various national policy changes and announcements. However we will go ahead with those draft Housing Strategy proposals that are unaffected by the national policy changes and these will be incorporated into work streams.

The Statement will be in a similar design format to the draft strategy but more of a “booklet”.

#### **5. CityWest Homes**

A link to CWH draft strategy was included in the WIB on Friday 23rd October. The new document re-aligns the ALMO’s objectives to those of City for All, as well as taking on board the recommendations of the Council’s own review of CWH through the Altair report, and reflecting the organisation’s own ambitions for service delivery. Over the life of the strategy CWH is working on saving £5.2M of its operating costs.

Responses to the consultation are now coming in. The deadline for feedback is next week on 20th November 2015.

## **6. Rough Sleepers' accommodation services**

The tender exercise for an over 50's complex needs housing support service is underway with bids due back by 13 November 2015. The new service (due to start on 1 April 2016) will meet gaps in service provision for the rough sleeping pathway, housing options and adult social care. The tender exercise has proceeded smoothly to date and the contract award recommendations will be with me by the end of the year.

Two large scale refurbishment projects have been completed in hostel accommodation with Montfort House returning to their new building in September 2015 and King George's launched their new building on 4 November 2015. Montfort House now features excellent mobility access, further enhancing their ability to successfully accommodate the most challenging to work with long term rough sleepers and a long term female rough sleeper with a zimmer frame is due to move in shortly.

Officers have been working on a range of initiatives to support the development of 'psychologically informed environments' in hostel accommodation. A Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE) can be defined as one that takes into account the psychological makeup – the thinking, emotions, personalities and past experience - of its participants in the way that it operates. It is an approach to supporting people out of homelessness, in particular those who have experienced complex trauma or are diagnosed with a personality disorder.

## **Economic Development and Growth**

### **7. Employment**

#### **Work and Skills Group**

A cross departmental Work and Skills Group met on 9<sup>th</sup> September and provided an overview of all Employment and Skills projects within the Council. The Group have since reported to me and will report to the Growth Board. Work underway includes a mapping of provision with colleagues from Adult Social Care and Public Health; a review of European Social Fund opportunities with a view of sustaining services beyond 2016 and, a review of Further Education (adult) skills provision in Westminster.

The work of the Work and Skills Group will be driven by the Employment Programme which sets the direction for the City Council's activities on employment and skills for the next four years incorporating the City for All aspiration of reducing long term unemployment.

#### **Key Employment Programme projects**

Recruit London has recently filled six roles to support delivery of the project including a new Delivery Manager, a full time Specialist Workplace Co-ordinator and a new Workplace Coordinator role established with Capco.

### **FACES**

The project is on track with recruitment of new advisors in progress and first quarter performance shows that 5 residents were supported into employment. A wider referral network is being developed with the service engaging with likely sources of candidates including local schools. It is anticipated this activity will lead to a consistent and reliable flow of referrals to the project.

### **LEST**

This project is supporting long term unemployed residents who have completed the work programme without a job. The two employment coaches are on track with performance and have supported 7 residents into work since April 2015, with a further 20 being referred and starting training or other progressions.

### **Young People's programmes**

WCC Apprenticeships - The council has set itself a target of securing 100 apprenticeships in 2015/16 both internally, with our supply chain and with our network of partners such as local schools and developers via Section106. Outreach will be targeted at Westminster residents in the first instance, then tri-borough and then pan –London. To facilitate this uplift in performance, a dedicated Organisational Development Advisor has been recruited to lead on this ambition and develop the apprenticeship offer.

### **Tools for Our Future**

Development of the new web pages are in progress as is sourcing of written content. Planning for how the theme of the project – “for young people and by young people” can be extended to the promotion, embedding and evaluation of the resources is in development.

In the final 6 months of the Employability Passport project the Economic Development team has been in discussion with local Further Education College to take on the project management and coordination of the project for final stages of school engagement, close and evaluation.

## 8. Westminster Enterprise Week

Running from the 16<sup>th</sup> till the 20<sup>th</sup> November, Westminster Enterprise Week coincides with Global Entrepreneurship Week and engages over 1100 young people, schools, colleges and businesses in enterprise promotion activities.

Enterprise and youth stakeholders in WCC have been approached and have committed to contribute to the week's activities including Bright Ideas Trust (Tim Campbell and Margaret Mountford), The Prince's Trust, Impact Hub Westminster, Soho Create, Microsoft Lift Studios, The Mill, Somerset House Trust, Maida Hill Place, Vital Regeneration (#Venture382 and HELP Enterprise), Capital Enterprise, and Truemark Retail.

The Economic Development Team is leading on delivery with One EBP and the Communications Team. The Youth Council is also involved in planning, communicating and delivering the week.

The programme will comprise:

- **Workshops**- Pop-up Economy and Food Entrepreneurship (Maida Hill Place); My Lightbulb Moment (held by Bright Ideas Trust, includes a "pitch corner" with Margaret Mountford); Dragon's Den Style Pitches;
- **Inspiring Enterprise Assemblies** in 11 secondary schools
- **Breakfast roundtables**
- **Guided visits** in the City's Enterprise and co-working spaces (Impact Hub Westminster, Great Western Studios, TrueStart Retail, Somerset House Trust)
- **Inaugural Reception Ceremony (19<sup>th</sup> November)**- awards ceremony hosted by myself

## 9. Markets

The council will be tendering the opportunity for a new market operator for Berwick Street and Rupert Street markets. This is the first stage of a wider strategy that will look at introducing the operator model for some of our markets. The procurement strategy will commence shortly and the new operator(s) will be in place by April 2016.