



City of Westminster

Housing, Finance and Customer Service Policy and Scrutiny Committee

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Author: Councillor Rachael Robathan

Portfolio: Cabinet Member For Finance, Property and
Regeneration

Please contact: Verity Farnham
vfarnham@westminster.gov.uk Ext. 5371

1. Finance (City Treasurer's Department)

Budget 2018/19

- 1.1 The Budget and savings for 2018/19 were presented to the Budget & Performance Task Group in October 2017 with an update issued in January 2018.
- 1.2 The scrutiny sessions reviewed the budgets presented by each directorate, looking at revenue expenditure and capital projects planned, as well as the savings initiatives proposed to be undertaken to meet the reducing funding and pressures encountered in service areas as well as contract and pay inflation.
- 1.3 Full Council approved the budget at its meeting in March 2018. The Council has already begun work on developing its budget for 2019/20 and beyond.

Revenues and Benefits: Benefits Service

- 1.4 Council Tax & NNDR collection is on target to meet our year end collection targets, which would match the highest collection rates previously achieved by the City Council. The Council continues to lobby for improvements to the Business Rates Retention Scheme, including the removal of the risk of reduction in local authority funding due to successful rateable value appeals. The Council is represented on both of the central government working groups looking at the future of the Retention scheme.

The Transition from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit.

- 1.5 The transition of new claims for Universal Credit is being implemented to schedule, with the main Marylebone Job Centres having gone live in June. The remaining job centres, including the Kensington Job Centre, remain on schedule to implement new claims for Universal Credit for their associated postcodes by December 2018.
- 1.6 The City Council continues to meet with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on a regular basis to ensure that the transition to Universal Credit is as smooth as possible for our residents. This has included the provision of a Housing Benefit officer and a Citizen's Advice Bureau representative on site at the Marylebone Job Centre to deal with resident queries.
- 1.7 The City Council, along with London Councils, has recently responded to a Central Government consultation on the future process for moving existing Housing Benefit claimants, excluding the exempt categories, (e.g. pensioners and temporary accommodation claimants) from Housing benefit to Universal Credit between 2019 & 2022.

Community Contribution

- 1.8 The Community Contribution has raised £390K so far. Officers are currently considering options for a further mailshot in the autumn to Band H residents who have not yet made a contribution.
- 1.9 The Council has received a number of enquiries from other Local Authorities interested in the scheme, with the London Borough of Islington committing to a similar scheme in 2019/20.
- 1.10 The Community Contribution scheme has also been shortlisted for a national “Innovation” award (IRRV – Institution of Rating, Revenues & Valuation). The Council is one of 3 finalists with the winner being the announced in October.

2. Corporate Services

IBC Onboarding

- 2.1 The programme to replace the BT Managed Services with the IBC Solution from Hampshire County Council is progressing well with the build of the core system and payroll proceeding as planned.
- 2.2 Before going live on 1st December 2018, the new system will be tested to ensure a smooth transition. User testing is currently underway with volunteers from both Westminster City Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea with initial feedback being very positive
- 2.3 The Business Deployment activity, which has been underway since the Spring, will now gear up to ensure that all staff are fully briefed and, where appropriate, trained to use the new solution when it goes live.

Reorganisation and Key Staff Changes

- 2.4 John Quinn, Executive Director for Corporate Services will be leaving at the end of September. As a result, Lee Witham, Director of People Services and Tasnim Shawkat, Director of Law will report directly to the Chief Executive. The remainder of Corporate Services will report to the Director of Finance and Resources once appointed with interim arrangements currently in place.
- 2.5 David Hodgkinson, Assistant City Treasurer has replaced John Quinn as Bi-borough Senior Responsible Officer for the IBC Implementation.
- 2.6 Maria Benbow, Head of Digital and Interim Chief Procurement Officer leaves Westminster in October. As a result, Ben Goward, Chief Information Officer will assume responsibility

for Digital and, as an interim measure, Kevin Goad, Director of City Highways will take responsibility for Procurement.

3. Regeneration

- 3.1 The Growth, Planning and Housing team is responsible for delivering the Council's target of 1,850 affordable homes by 2023.
- 3.2 This target will be met through the delivery of an estate regeneration programme, high-level estate reviews and an infill programme on the Council's own land.

Church Street

- 3.3 The regeneration of the Church Street area is a key priority for Westminster City Council. Building on the progress made so far, and working with the local community, we now have an ambitious masterplan for the Church Street area. This will be delivered over the next 15-20 years.
- 3.4 Officers have been working with residents in masterplan sites A, B and C over the summer to understand their housing needs and to recruit more residents who wish to play an active role in the next phase of the regeneration programme. The options analysis phase for those sites, along with more detailed work on the Lilestone Street site, will commence in Autumn 2018. To support this work, a Multi-Disciplinary Design Team, led by Arcadis, has been appointed.
- 3.5 A Commercial Consultant and an Independent Resident Advisor are also being appointed. All of the appointments have included community representation throughout the appointment process, with the Resident Advisor panel having a resident majority. All community members were supported through the process with training and advice.

Ebury Bridge

- 3.6 After extensive consultation with residents on the future of the Ebury Bridge Estate, plans to build 750 new homes were approved at a meeting of Cabinet in July. At least 342 of these new homes will be affordable.
- 3.7 The decision to approve the plans makes the estate home to the largest single delivery of new council homes in the heart of London for over fifty years. In total, the scheme will more than double the number of homes on the estate. This includes:
 - replacing the existing 198 social rented homes with new high quality social rented homes; and
 - the provision of at least an additional 144 affordable, family-sized homes (consisting of around 87 social rented and 57 intermediate homes).

- 3.8 The Council's ambition is to create a range of affordable housing that addresses all needs from accessibility to overcrowding and which offers low cost opportunities to rent or buy across the estate. Officers' will be working to further develop these options over the next two months.

Key Pledges

- 3.9 As part of the Ebury Bridge development the Council has made the following key pledges to residents:
- A right of return for residents is guaranteed for all secure tenants and resident leaseholders;
 - there will be a full replacement of all council homes;
 - in addition, 35% of any new homes provided will be affordable for social and intermediate rent;
 - Ebury Bridge will remain a council-owned estate;
 - addressing overcrowding is a top priority;
 - good local shopping that serves local communities is central to any scheme;
 - residents will be at the heart of developing a viable new scheme;

Paddington Green (Parsons North)

- 3.10 The scheme was granted planning consent last year and will consist of 60 new homes, of which 19 will be affordable. The project also includes associated landscaping, providing amenity space for residents and public realm works to enhance the local area.
- 3.11 Prior to the new affordable homes becoming available to occupy, a Local Lettings Plan will be developed; this plan will set out who will be prioritised for the new homes with the aim of helping to address local housing needs.
- 3.12 The Council has recently appointed Osborne as the main contractor who will build the new development on the land adjacent to Parsons House. Works are expected to start on site toward the end of this year. Building work will last just over two years and is expected to be completed in early 2021.
- 3.13 A "Meet the Contractor Event" has been organised for the 27th September. This will provide residents with the opportunity to meet representatives from Osborne and the Council's project team prior to the works commencing.

Tollgate Gardens

- 3.14 The developer is reporting a completion date of May 2019, which is subject to the conclusion of discussions with their main contractor. The developer has a show apartment open, and has sold 14 units already, they will be launching their help-to-buy product in October and this has a waiting list. The WCC social show apartment is currently being de-

snagged and is anticipated to be open to residents from November. The next meeting with all residents will be 27th September.

Leaseholder Policy for Housing Renewal Areas

3.15 The council has published a new Leaseholder Policy for Housing Renewal Areas 2018, which replaces the Policy published in 2014.

3.16 The new policy differs in a number of ways including:

- There is an option to buy one of the new homes on a shared equity basis as well as with an equity loan.
- Flexibility may be applied to the eligibility criteria to buy one of the new homes with the equity loan/shared equity option, where leaseholders cannot raise another mortgage again to the same value (which is part of the criteria).
- There is more ability for leaseholders to pass on the equity loan/shared equity arrangement to their heirs. This can be passed on, once, to resident family members and to non-resident family members for five years.
- Leaseholders buying one of the new homes as shared owners can now sub-let the properties if any lender agrees.
- Where it is agreed that leaseholders can become tenants, they may become social or intermediate tenants. Intermediate tenancies have higher rents than social ones, although they are still discounted and below market rents and they will only be offered where they are affordable.

4. Strategic Housing Options for Older People (SHSOP)

4.1 SHSOP is driving forward an ambitious programme in order to meet the anticipated demand for care provision for older people in Westminster and provide services to meet changing and often complex care needs.

Carlton Dene, Peebles House and Westmead

4.2 The first round of consultation with residents at Carlton Dene, Peebles House Westmead has taken place. The response to date has been positive. Discussions at Carlton Dene and Westmead centred on what the new care home at Beachcroft will offer. A further round of consultation will take place with residents later this month focusing on the facilities that will be available at Beachcroft.

4.3 As part of the consultation officers are holding weekly surgeries on site at Carlton Dene and Westmead to address any questions that residents and their families may have. All residents will also be invited to a 1-2-1 session during September.

4.4 Residents at Peebles House will also be invited to attend fortnightly surgeries on site and a further event is planned for mid-October.

- 4.5 The consultation exercise closes on 14th November and outcomes will be reported as part of the business case.

Beachcroft

- 4.6 The Beachcroft House development in Maida Vale forms an integral part of the SHSOP programme. Once complete the development will provide 84 care bedrooms care home and 31 apartments for private sale.
- 4.7 Planning permission for the redevelopment was granted in March 2017 and following a competitive tender, Durkan Ltd, were appointed as the contractor.
- 4.8 The development will be ready for occupation in the spring of 2020.

5. Westminster Community Home Awards

- 5.1 The Council have invested £5.5 million in the Victoria Wharf (Ladbroke Grove) scheme which overlooks the Grand Union Canal and is adjacent to Ladbroke Grove in north Westminster. In partnering with CGL, Westminster Community Homes has created 22 affordable apartments for intermediate rent.
- 5.2 This scheme has been nominated for two awards:
- The Sunday Times Best British Homes awards for Solving the Housing Crisis category
 - The Inside Housing Awards for Best British Affordable Homes scheme (under 25 Homes) category