

Date: Monday 15 March 2021

Report Of: Councillor David Harvey

Portfolio: Cabinet Member for Housing

Report Author and Contact Details: Alexandra Deolinda Severino
adseverino@westminster.gov.uk

1 Summary

As per the new agreed Cabinet Member report structure, this update provides highlights on my City for All priorities which drive the medium-term objectives of the portfolio, plus areas of current focus in the housing portfolio and pertinent performance information. I have made no key decisions to update the committee on since my last report.

2 City for All – Housing Priorities

Cleaner and Greener

Leverage Energy Efficiency Measures in Housing

- 2.1 £20m over the next 4 years has been allocated in the HRA Capital programme to begin this programme.

Activities for the next period include:

- Further modelling of investment required in housing stock.
- Void standard to include Insulation.

Vibrant Communities

Develop a New Approach for Major Works for our Buildings

- 2.2 Budgets for 21/22 have now been confirmed.

Supporting Vulnerable Housing Residents

- 2.3 We are working with partners to establish a multi-agency framework to deal with mental health issues. We aim to pilot this approach by the end of March 2021.
- 2.4 A high-level review of the current floating support contract has been completed. Referrals from the Housing teams increased during Q3/Q4 of 19/20 as a result of awareness sessions that were provided to staff during that period. Those sessions will

be repeated in March and then periodically throughout the year to ensure awareness remains high.

Redesigning Our Service Model Through Shared Space and Maximizing the Use of Our Public Space

- 2.5 The housing led element of this initiative is our pilot at Churchill Gardens. A survey has been designed to identify items such as activities and services residents currently use or would like to access locally, ideas for the use of the Churchill Gardens Community Hall and the perceived impact of housing on health and wellbeing. The responses to this survey will help to determine the priorities for the project. We are at the beginning of developing a survey to consult younger people.

Smart Cities

Trial Smart Homes Technologies

- 2.6 The project is progressing through the discovery stage. The initial pilots will cover sensors to detect leaks and open fire doors, drones to view hard to reach places, and digital noticeboards to explore how we can improve the accuracy and timeliness of information to residents. Market research is complete, and products have been selected for testing for the above pilots. Data analysis is underway to identify the best scenarios in which to test the technology and the best locations.

3 Areas of Focus

Major Works Updates

- 3.1 Performance of delivery is in line with expectations with strong commitments from our Service Providers. Positive news on Glastonbury House with Cladding works (not combustible ACM, but an older type) will commence at Glastonbury house on March 1st. Under Axis Europe, Little Venice Towers is close to practical completion and has been an impressive delivery model, as is the Queens Park and Hallfield Estates, respectively. Axis has also committed to starting a new roofing project at Downfield Close.

ASB on Housing Estates

- 3.2 In January 2021 we implemented a new approach to ASB enforcement. The first change is to make more use of *Notices of Seeking Possession* where there has been a breach of tenancy agreement. In February we issued 8 notices. The second change is to make more use of *Community Protection Notices* to tackle persistent ASB. The ASB team have received additional training in relation to the agreed referral pathways.

Housing Contact Centre

- 3.3 The project to replace the Housing Contact Centre telephony platform with our new digital system, which will provide residents with additional channels to contact the council, is in the final phase of delivery with the introduction of inbound SMS and Webchat.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

- 3.4 During the recent cold weather, we activated our Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) over 25 days and offered accommodation to more than **250** people who needed our support and were sleeping rough in Westminster.
- 3.5 MHCLG will provide a 'Surge Winter Capacity' fund to Westminster with a baseline allocation of £210,000 in 2020/21 and agreement of an additional £100,000 to be allocated to winter pressures funding in February 2021.
- 3.6 There are currently **2728** households in Temporary Accommodation.

4 Major Decisions

- 4.1 **Since my last update, there have been no major decisions undertaken in the Housing portfolio.**

5 Performance Updates

Housing Contact Centre

- 5.1 A total of **16,476** calls were received in January with **93%** of calls handled and **65%** handled in the 30 second service level achieving our minimum standard for this target.
- 5.2 A total of **5,298** emails were received in the Contact Centre in January with **99%** responded to in target, Customer Satisfaction and First Contact Resolution remain above target at **91%**.

Satisfaction with Repairs Service

- 5.3 We have met our target standard in Q3, at a position of **82%**. **1598** respondents out of **1945** reported to be very or fairly satisfied with their repairs service.

Satisfaction with ASB Case Handling

- 5.4 Our position at Q3 is on target at **65%**. **167** out of **256** complainants reported to be very or fairly satisfied with how their case was handled.