

Date:	06 June 2023
Portfolio:	Housing Services
The Report of:	Councillor Liza Begum
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1. Key decisions made in the preceding period since my last Policy & Scrutiny report dated 19 April 2023:

No decisions have been made.

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

2. Rough Sleeping Update

The Council's Rough Sleeping Service delivers a range of services to vulnerable people in Westminster that support them in a route away from the street; services provide a trauma-informed approach in psychologically informed environments to support individuals who have faced severe and multiple disadvantage to recover, move into independent housing and be safe from harm.

The street count was 243 rough sleepers in May 2023 on the streets of Westminster. A further street count will be completed on 23 May 2023.



There is a significant and continual flow of rough sleepers on the streets of Westminster. The vast majority have no local connection to Westminster, and some are only seen for one night. The nature of rough sleeping means individuals are often transient, crossing boroughs, and countries regularly.

Westminster are predicting an increase in the street numbers in May of over 25% In 2022 we saw a 36% increase between March and June.

Romanian nationals we predict an increase in our total Roma & Romanian numbers.

Currently the sense from our hotspots and flow recording is the cyclical migration of such groups is trending overall higher than 2022.

Hot Spot Tracker

Hot Spots are small footprint areas that have 4 or more rough sleepers recorded in a period bedded down when our outreach teams are out and about.

Street Site	% increase
Edgware Road	+22%
Adelphi Terrace	+/-0%
Holles Street (John Lewis)	+33%
Oxford Street	+10%
Oxford Street 260-315	+25%
Covent Garden – St Pauls	+30%
Hallfield Estate	+25%
1 Strand (Waterstones)	+26%
Seaforth Place	+/-0%
St James Park	+/-0%
Victoria Street	+/-0%
Abermale Street	+/-0%
Howick Place	+20%

Regents Park (Macclesfield Bridge)	+20%
Victoria Piazza	+20%
Temple Gardens	+100%
Mount Street	+100%
Dover Street	+100%

Positive work and planned outcomes from the Assessment & Triage Pathway achieved since the March 2023 Street Count

The table below represent the dedicated accommodation spaces for new and returning rough sleepers and the short, medium, and long-term accommodation options achieved across the month of April.

Outcomes	Emergency Short Term Options	Women's respite Rooms	Assessment Centres	Assessment & Triage Service	TOTAL
People currently placed in assessment-based accommodation to relieve their rough sleeping as of 30 April 2023	48	20	72	17	157
How many of the 157 listed above were newly accommodated in the month of April 2023	31	8	22	12	73
People who have successfully been moved on into medium or long term supported accommodation in April via options that include supported housing or PRS during the month of April	28	5	13	5	51

Our work continues with providers and our faith and voluntary sector professionals to reach those most entrenched to achieve more outcomes during 2023.

Complex support needs and histories for rough sleepers in Westminster continues to be our challenge for those who often face severe and multiple disadvantage (substance misuse, domestic abuse, contact with the criminal justice system, mental ill health, poor physical health, removal of children to name a few) with complex histories often involving trauma. These interrelated needs often contribute to homelessness, make it difficult to access or navigate mainstream services and sustain accommodation.

2.1. Anti-Social Behaviour Update

Open ASB Cases	Total – 150 cases West – 35 cases North – 46 cases South – 39 cases Central – 30 cases
Top 3 Categories	Noise – 44 cases.

(No. of cases)	Drug use / dealing – 38 cases. Verbal abuse / harassment – 36 cases.
Top 3 Wards/Estates	Mozart / Lydford & Avenue Gardens – 21 cases Church street – 11 cases Little Venice – 11 cases
ASB Case Handling Resident Satisfaction	Year to date - 63% (as of May 2023)
Number of Legal Cases	58 (including cases waiting for court hearing dates)

2.3 Repairs Service Update

Unfortunately, the repairs data was not available at the time of publication.

2.4 Rent Support Fund

The Rent Support Fund has been advertised through the following channels

- Web page
- Media release
- Housing newsletter, MyWestminster
- Organic social media across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Next Door
- Posters on housing noticeboards and in libraries
- Video with Liza and housing staff in top 5 languages - also used across social media platforms as above
- Paid social media ads on Instagram/ Facebook
- It will also go into the printed housing magazine, which is currently in production
- Targeted text messages have been sent out to residents
- Promoted via LinkedIn
- Distributed via housing offices
- Relayed to Westminster CAB
- Relayed to SHELTER

As at 12/05/2023, we are assisting 160 residents with their live applications, and we have granted 38 awards totalling £19,992.44.

We will be arranging a mini campaign with our communication colleagues in the next 2 weeks to promote the fund across all channels.

2.5 Additional Estate Offices

Bruckner Street

We are opening the Queens Park Housing Service Centre on Tuesday 30th May.

The office space will be shared with the Housing Solutions Service who run a family centre here. We will be opening to local residents Mon-Fri 9-5pm.

2.6 CHIP

The findings and recommendations from the Housing Review 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.

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.

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.

The programme will agree priorities and develop an improvement plan which will be monitored in order to measure impact. The experience and feedback we receive from residents and staff will be central to the approach. We will want to hear about what is working well and also about the opportunities we have to improve further.

2.7 Community Thursdays

Stats update on our connecting with the community and the future schedule perhaps?

Community Thursdays has been running for nearly one year, and we have knocked on <9391 different doors, of which <3381 were opened and we spoke to the resident. There have been 237 different members of Council staff that have attended Community Thursdays, including 17 different councillors and 12 back-office contractor staff. We have visited 102 of our 119 recognised estates.

We are also currently exploring the feasibility of offering Council staff across the council the ability to attend Community Thursdays. The latest schedule of Community Thursdays can be found on our website at [Community Thursdays – Bringing Housing Services to Your Door | Westminster City Council](#)

2.8 FOW Commission Housing Review

Last July, Cabinet agreed to create the Future of Westminster Commission (The Commission) to review and make recommendations on the delivery of key council services to help deliver a Fairer Westminster.

The Commission established four workstreams Housing, Economy and Employment, Energy and Green Transition, Fairness and Equality.

The Housing Review was led by residents and professionals from a range of housing related services with decades of industry experience.

Within the Housing Review, there were three lines of enquiry:

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

The Council's [response to the recommendations contained within the Housing Review were considered by Cabinet on 15th May](#). Following on from Cabinet many of the resulting actions will now be taken forward by myself and other relevant Cabinet Members and senior officers and incorporated into 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.

A separate substantive item on the response to the Commission's Housing Review Report will come to this Committee in July.