

WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF DECISION

SUBJECT: PURCHASE OF INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES FOR USE AS TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION UNDER PART VII, HOUSING ACT 1996

Notice is hereby given that the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development, has made the following executive decision on the above mentioned subject for the reasons set out below.

Summary of Decision

- 1.1 That the report be exempt from disclosure by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part 1, paragraph 3, in that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
- 1.2 That the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development:

Approved the use of up to £12.5m provided from the Council's Affordable Housing Fund (AHF) to support the £30 million cash reserves previously agreed for the purchase of approximately 50 individual units of 2-bedroomed and 3-bedroomed properties within Westminster for use as Temporary Accommodation. This will increase the budget to £42.5m. This will include a contribution of up to £250K per property from the AHF at a maximum cost of £550K per property
- 1.3 Delegates authority to effect individual purchases to the Executive Director of Growth, Planning and Housing.

Reasons for Decision

- 1.1 This decision is necessary in order to fulfil the Council's statutory duties to house persons who are defined as homeless under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and reduce the costs of fulfilling that duty.
- 1.2 Increasing the level of Affordable Housing Fund contribution per property will increase the number of TA properties that can be purchased in Westminster at a time of increased demand and provide properties available at rents affordable to households on benefits.
- 1.3 To date under the direct purchase scheme we have considered over 100 properties, offers have been made on over 86 properties, accepted on 59 of which 27 (25 completions and 2 exchanged) have progressed to completion and 22 were ceased due to issues with the properties; in line with the original report officers have reviewed the operation of the scheme and will continue to work towards the purchase of total of 150 properties to be completed by September 2015 (with 60 by April 2015); however analysis of the property market in Westminster highlights that very few properties are available to purchase at £300K (and this has meant that no properties have been purchased in borough to date through the scheme. This analysis however shows that there are currently over 70 2 and 3 bedroom properties available for purchase at £550K or less within Westminster.

**Peter Large, Head of Legal & Democratic Services,
Westminster City Hall,
64 Victoria Street
LONDON SW1E 6QP**

Publication Date: 10 March 2015

Implementation Date: 17 March 2015, 5pm

Reference: CMfHRB&ED/30/2015