

# **WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL**

## **STATEMENT OF DECISION**

### **SUBJECT: EBURY BRIDGE ESTATE**

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

### **Summary of Decision**

That the Cabinet Member for Housing:

1. Delegated authority to the Director of Housing and Regeneration to enter into negotiation with leaseholders in order to acquire properties by agreement without compensation, in the blocks known as Bucknill, Rye, Westbourne, Victoria and Doneraile.
2. Approved the purchase of 22 Rye House, 3 Victoria House and 26 Victoria House, properties held by Westminster Community Homes which were acquired for the Council.

### **Reasons for Decision**

1. The approvals sought in this report are required to facilitate the engagement of all leaseholders across the estate. Lessees in blocks which could be part of a future scheme, believing that their housing situation would not change following scheme approval, are now faced with uncertainty and possibly hardship. It is important that they be presented with options. The Council will establish the criteria upon which will acquire properties.
2. Uncertainty surrounding current scheme may put potential buyers off and therefore disadvantage Lessees attempting to sell their property on the open market. Lessees in retained blocks should be able to sell their property now, at market value should they choose to do so pending a Cabinet decision on the options and way forward.
3. Leasehold acquisitions will continue to take place on a completely voluntary basis. Leaseholders in retained blocks will not be targeted but will have the safety net of a willing buyer (the Council) This is an act of goodwill to leaseholders who may need to sell but are unable to await for the outcome of the Cabinet decision on the options and the way forward. The offer to buy sends a positive message to lessees in retained blocks that the Council appreciates the impact of not proceeding with the previous scheme and the possibility of regeneration in the future
4. To buy back the Westminster Community Homes (WCH) properties referred to in the decisions, bought in good faith by WCH on behalf of the Council. These properties are incurring ongoing expenses which WCH is having to bear.

5. Acquisitions by the Council will prevent speculative investors from purchasing properties on the Estate with the intention of holding the Council to ransom if vacant possession is required for a possible future scheme.
6. Purchases made now, without the statutory compensation package could present significant savings to the Council as these lessees do not qualify for disbursements and compensation.

**Charlie Parker, Chief Executive**  
**Westminster City Hall**  
**5 Strand**  
**LONDON WC2N 5HR**

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**Implementation Date:** 15 December 2017, 5.00pm

**Reference:** CMfH/2017-2018/16