



City of Westminster

Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee

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Title: Supply and Allocation of Social Housing 2016/17

Report of: Executive Director for Growth, Planning and Housing

Cabinet Member Portfolio **Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration,
Business and Economic Development**

Wards Involved: All

Policy Context: To promote the quality of life for Westminster citizens by working with all our partners to improve the housing experience of our residents and the safety and social care of vulnerable people and their families

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1. **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the issues that will influence the allocation of social housing in 2016/17.

Part A: Affordable Housing Supply and allocation projections

This section sets out the level of available affordable housing in 2015/16 and how this is being allocated and the projections for new supply in 2016/17. Key points are:

- Social Housing allocations for the first 9 months of 2015/16 show high levels of homeless rehousing reflecting the demand from this group
- Total social housing lettings for 2015/16 (including tenants' transfers) are estimated to be c. 805 which is an increase of c. 40 from 2014/15 and are projected to increase in 2016/17 to c. 840, reflective of increased supply from registered providers and fewer regeneration area decant transfers.

Part B: Projections for demand for housing from homeless households in 2016

This section sets out the issues that will influence the numbers of households in Temporary Accommodation (TA). In summary key points are:

- The principal factor that is driving the high levels of homelessness continues to be the availability of private sector housing for households on benefits. Homeless acceptances are forecast to be just under 550 in 2015/16 a reduction of over 200 from 2012.
- A co-located service involving officers from Job Centre plus, Benefit Services and housing officers continues to respond to households in housing need as a result of the Benefit cap by supporting households into employment, assisting with finding alternative private sector accommodation, supporting claims for Discretionary Housing Payments and providing financial advice
- Total homeless acceptances during 2016/17 are forecast to continue at the same level of c. 550 and the total requirement for TA will remain between 2300 – 2500 during the year

Part C: Update on the delivery of the Temporary Accommodation Commissioning Strategy

The implementation of the TA Commissioning Strategy has succeeded in ending the use of B&B accommodation for families over 6 weeks, reduced unit costs, increased supply and made best use of Council resources. However challenges of sourcing sufficient private sector accommodation suitable and affordable for households in housing need continue.

Part D: New Housing Allocation Policy Proposals

This section sets out the recommendations to be made to offer access to affordable housing for low income working households and updates and clarifications to the Allocations Scheme

Part E: Provision of housing for vulnerable groups

A range of services are commissioned to support the delivery of Council priorities for housing vulnerable people. This section provides a brief update on work in these areas

Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

How can the demands for social housing in Westminster from different groups best be managed during this period of high demand?

Does the allocation of social housing appropriately balance the various demands for housing in Westminster?

The recommendations set out in section D, in particular the proposal in paragraph 5.1 to building on the success of the scheme to offer additional points to working households living in Temporary Accommodation to establish a target quota of 10 letting for working households with total gross income of £20k or less who would not otherwise have priority for social housing under the Housing Allocations Scheme.

What are the key messages we need to communicate to residents about the current housing pressures?

Is the support for vulnerable households in housing need appropriate?

Part A: Affordable Housing Supply and Allocation Projections

2. Housing Supply and Allocation in 2015/16

2.1 Allocation of Social Housing 2015/16

2.2 All social housing is let according to the authority's Housing Allocation scheme. The following table sets out allocations in the year to date. At the end of December 2015 the total number of lettings was 660. The table below sets out the allocations in the year to date and reflects high levels of homelessness:

2015/16 Lettings Year to date (December)		
Tenant transfers	Year to Date	Full year estimate
Decants/Major Works including Returning Decants	11	15
Cash incentives to downsize	30	41
Community Care Nominations	0	0
Children Act Rehousing	1	1
Accommodation for the elderly	11	15
Overcrowded tenants	72	96
Transfers from studio to 1 bed properties	17	23
Category A medical for people with disabilities	22	29
Management Transfers	14	19
SUB TOTAL	180	239
Waiting list		
Homeless (inc older persons and Pathways)	359	385
Category A medical for people with disabilities	21	25
Accommodation for the elderly	40	55
Assisting Cash Incentive moves	13	17
Children Act Rehousing	12	16
Street Homeless and hostel move on quota	1	1
Second Succession	22	22
Staff Rehousings	1	1
Learning Disability Quota	5	7
Reciprocal nominations with other boroughs	8	11
Mental health hostel quota	7	17
Statutory overcrowded	0	1
Registered Providers severely overcrowded	2	4
Right to move scheme	0	2
Pan London moves scheme	1	4
SUB TOTAL (HR)	492	566
GRAND TOTAL TTL/HR	672	805

The above figures represent 9 months of the full year and the forecast is that the lettings profile for the full year will generally reflect the above allocation

2.3 2016/17 Supply Projections

2.3.1 Initial projections for the supply of new lettings of affordable rented accommodation for 2016/17 is c. 840 an increase of c. 35 against the total number of lettings forecast for 2015/16. This comprises the sum of casual voids from City West Homes, Registered Provider (RP) relets, RP first lets and tenant transfers and can be broken down as follows:

Supply by bedsize - 2016/17	Studio	1	2	3	4+	Total
CWH Casual voids	84	167	74	20	12	357
Return from rehab	0	2	4	5	2	13
RP First Let Nominations - Affordable Rent	0	9	27	28	2	66
RP First Let Nominations - Social Rent	0	5	10	15	0	30
RP Relet Nominations - Affordable Rent	8	34	17	2	0	61
RP Relet Nominations - Social Rent	30	74	35	13	2	154
Total Net Voids	122	291	167	83	18	681
WCC Transfers	45	92	21	26	0	183
Less Decants for major works	-2	-10	-9	-3	0	-24
Total	165	373	204	121	23	840

2.3.2 The number of new affordable homes currently projected to be delivered by Registered Providers or directly by the Council during the period 2016/17 and 2017/18 is 385 units, made up of 335 new build or converted units plus 50 spot acquisitions. However it may be possible to increase beyond the current projected figure of 50 through City West Homes or Westminster Community Homes in order to meet the temporary or permanent re-housing needs of residents affected by the Council's Housing Renewal programmes.

2.3.3 Of the 385 new or converted homes, 48 are anticipated to be provided for social rent at target rents, 112 homes for affordable rent, and 3 homes for those with learning disabilities. 192 homes will be provided as intermediate housing either at sub market rents or as shared ownership, and a further 30 spot acquisitions are anticipated to be provided for varying affordable housing types.

2.3.4 These projections are based upon affordable housing developments that are currently under construction or have secured planning permission and are due to commence building works shortly. Significant schemes making up these supply projections during 2016/17 and 2017/18 include: Clelland House (67), Westbourne Park Church (32), Former North Westminster School (27), Ladbrooke Grove (22 units), Rathbone Place (20 units) Chiltern Street (16 units), Clarges Street (11).

2.3.5 In addition to the 385 affordable homes anticipated to be delivered during the period 2016-2018, an additional pipeline of new housing developments exists that has the capacity to deliver c.1,700 additional affordable homes over a 5 year period starting from April 2018. This additional affordable housing supply will come from a mixture of sources including the Council's Housing Renewal areas and S106 development sites. Whilst some of the pipeline supply is under construction a number of schemes are yet to go on site or get planning consent.

2.3.6 Social Housing Relet supply from City West Homes and Registered Providers

Relet supply from City West Homes stock for 2016/17 is estimated to be 370. An anticipated 215 relets from existing registered provider social housing stock is anticipated to be provided to the City Council during 2016/17. This projection is based on the average level of relets received by the City Council over the previous three years. 72% of relets to be provided during 2016/2017 are anticipated to be provided at rents equal to or below target rent levels, with the remainder at affordable rent levels

2.3.7 In addition to other factors mentioned above, there is the uncertainty of the impact of the Housing and Planning Bill upon future supply of affordable housing within Westminster. Both WCC HRA and RP housing stock in Westminster could be reduced under the extension of the Right to Buy to RP's and the requirement for WCC's HRA to make an annual payment to government, based on the number of High Value voids that are likely to become vacant. Details of the policy relating to the sale of high value voids are unclear at present and it is not known how many High Value voids may need to be sold. An amendment has been proposed to the Housing and Planning Bill that every High Value void sold in London another two are developed, but the issue for Westminster is likely to be that shortages of land and its high cost will mean this new supply is not in borough.

Part B: Projections for demand for Temporary Accommodation from 2016

3. Background Information

3.1 The Housing Options Service (HOS) provides the Council’s statutory housing assessment and advice function. Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide housing under homelessness legislation, where the applicant’s immigration status entitles them and they are:

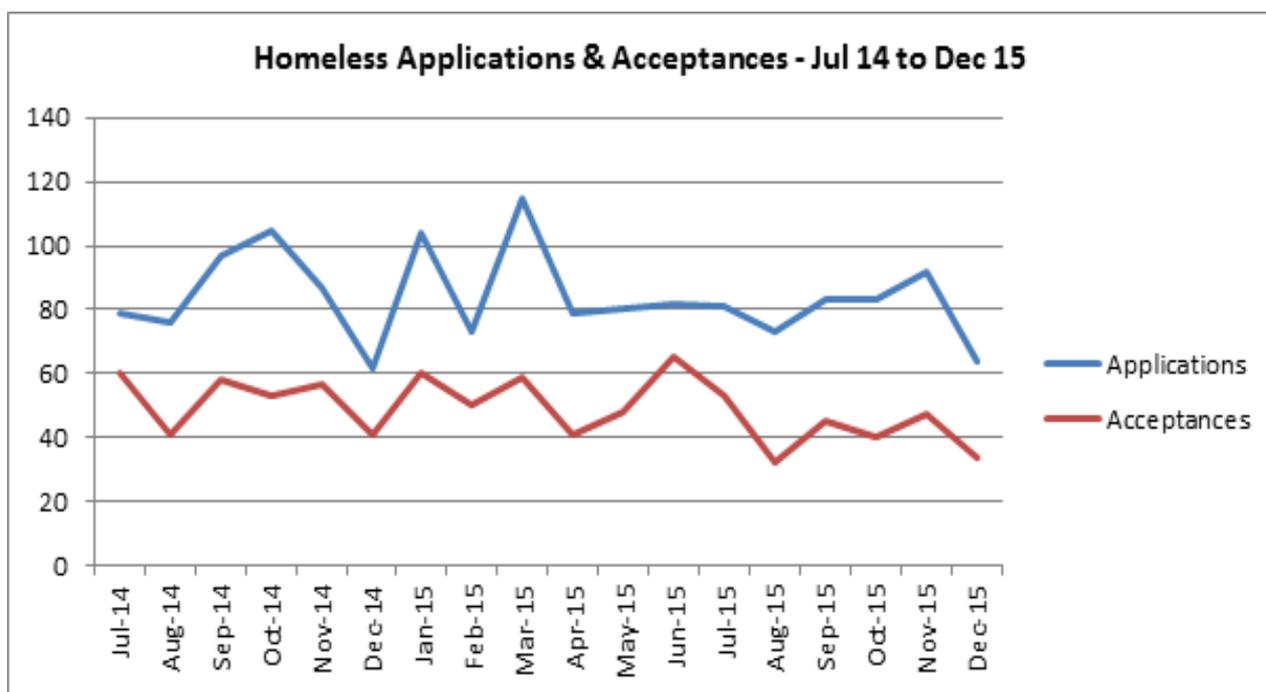
- Homeless with no alternative accommodation that is reasonable to occupy
- In priority need
- Has a local connection (or no local connection elsewhere.)

When the supply of suitable affordable accommodation is not available, the Council is required to procure Temporary Accommodation (TA) to provide housing until social housing is available.

3.2 The following table summarises the numbers of homeless applications and acceptances over the last five years and a more detailed monthly summary over the past 18 months

Demand Profile	31.3.11	31.3.12	31.3.13	31.3.14	31.3.15	YTD 31.1.16
Homelessness Applications (p.a.)	1170	1445	1338	1002	1053	793
Homelessness Acceptances (p.a.)	430	539	813	705	617	451
Households in Temporary Accommodation	1726	1910	2450	2283	2397	2414

3.3 The monthly homelessness and welfare reform updates circulated to Members highlight that whilst there are short-term fluctuations, homeless acceptances continue to be more than 70% higher than in 2010. There is a small difference between the 3 and 12 month average for homeless applications (80 and 84) and acceptances (40 and 48) indicating that there has been a reduction in demand for housing over the past 12 months:



3.4 Private Sector Local Housing Allowance Claims

The number of households claiming Local Housing Allowance (LHA) in the private sector has reduced since the introduction of the original LHA caps in 2011 (see table below.) However the effects of the caps are still being felt and loss of private rented sector tenancies remains the primary driver of housing need in the borough increasing TA demand.

Bedsize	Claim numbers before 2011 Cap	Current total claim numbers	Reduction
1 Bed	3099	1858	1241 (40%)
2 Bed	1743	935	808 (46%)
3 Bed	766	375	391 (51%)
4 Bed	304	155	149 (49%)
TOTAL	5912	3290	2589 (44%)

In addition, in 2011 there were 761 Shared Room claims and there are now 476. It should be noted that the above figures will also include new LHA claimants since 2011 (with most London boroughs showing an overall increase as a result.)

3.5 A system has been set up to respond directly to those households in TA whose claims are capped and households in the private sector who made a DHP application, involving a co-located team including Job Centre plus, Housing Options and Benefit Services officers. All households in TA affected are contacted initially by the Council, a review of each case is completed and interviews are arranged with each household to agree the best way forward in

the short and medium terms. Over 880 interviews have been held with households affected by the Benefit Cap in TA agreeing over 1100 action plans, and almost 300 households have moved into employment.

Homeless Prevention and Forecasts

- 3.7 Homeless prevention remains the central focus of work with households in housing need, whether challenging illegal evictions, debt advice, supporting families to remain together and assisting with moves into the private rented sector. In the past 12 months 218 private sector prevention placements have been completed, 68 into properties in Westminster, 147 into other London boroughs and 3 outside of London. Over 100 moves into the private sector have been of accepted households living in Temporary Accommodation.
- 3.8 Most applicants currently wait 7-10 years for a social housing tenancy and we now intend to start identifying more households for whom the private rented sector would be suitable and start making offers to them to bring our duty to an end. To support this we have commissioned a study of the affordability of the private rented sector to identify areas where suitable and affordable properties are available and this will inform the project to increase the numbers where we discharge of duty into a suitable property in the private sector.
- 3.9 Given the pressures on homeless acceptances during 2015/16, the forecast for 2016/17, the continued pressures in securing properties for Temporary Accommodation and the uncertainty around the funding regime the percentage of total rehousing made available to homeless households (currently over 60%) are to be retained, in particular for larger units.
- 3.10 The principal factor that is driving the high levels of homelessness continues to be the availability of private sector housing for households on benefits. As set out above homeless acceptances are forecast to be c. 550 in 2015/16 a reduction of over 200 from 2012 and this trend is expected to continue. As a result total homeless acceptances during 2016/17 are forecast to continue at c. 550 and the total requirement for TA will remain between 2300 – 2500 during the year

Part C: Update on the delivery of the Temporary Accommodation Commissioning Strategy

4.1 The central assumptions within the strategy that a TA portfolio of at least 2000 units will be required until 2020 and that increasing the supply of units through the traditional model of leasing from the private sector at the government set TA subsidy rates would not meet this requirement are still valid. This is supported by the recent budget reports that highlighted the impact of high rental costs within the private sector. Taking each of the strategy areas:

- **End the use of bed and breakfast accommodation over 6 weeks for families**

This has been achieved, as few families are placed in B&B now and these are for short periods of time. Maintaining this remains a very high priority (at a time when other London authorities are reporting increased use of B&B including for families for more than 6 weeks)

- **Reduce unit costs**

Costs have reduced significantly since June 2013 with total numbers remaining at more than 2400. However the rate of cost reduction has slowed during 2015/16, reflecting the continuing high costs of the private rented sector and the challenges in finding affordable private sector housing.

- **Increase supply**

c. 300 new self-contained properties have been sourced since June 2013; this has largely been within the nightly booked sector which is now c. 430 properties; c. 150 new long-term leased properties have been secured but c. 90 leased properties have been returned to landlords as leases have ended and the landlord has not renewed these

- **Deliver new ways of sourcing accommodation, making best use of the Council's resources**

The Council has made use of its own properties that are temporarily vacant through the regeneration programme and currently make use of c. 85 units. Whilst clearly not a long-term solution this has provided a source of in-borough accommodation.

The Council has entered into a programme of purchasing properties for use as TA outside the borough. The Council has made offers on 349 properties for purchase and this has led to completions on 75 and these are now occupied or being refurbished for letting. In addition a programme of in-borough purchases has commenced with 6 being completed towards a target over the next 2 years of 100.

- 4.2 The above strategy will continue to deliver a reduction in unit costs of TA across the portfolio as a whole and ensure properties are affordable to households on benefits. At the same time the strength of the private market means that it is extremely challenging to maintain the existing properties when alternative markets are available and identify for purchase properties which are economic to purchase and rent to households on benefits.
- 4.3 To deliver a TA portfolio that meets budget targets is dependent upon a central government set funding regime both for TA subsidy and to purchase properties directly that allows such activity to be economic and demonstrates clear value for money. Further announcements regarding the future of TA subsidy are expected during 2016 (in light of the introduction of Universal Credit.)
- 4.4 Current TA levels are c. 2450 and are expected to continue at between 2300 – 2500 during the year, depending on flows of homeless households. This represents an increase of a third since 2012. Before the increase 75% of TA was located in-borough with the remainder in East London. Since the increase whilst the in-borough stock has largely been retained, TA properties are now located in over half of London boroughs with c. 100 properties outside London, principally in Essex.
- 4.5 Legally TA is to be suitable (in terms of size and location) and affordable, with the majority of households in receipt of benefits, and where accommodation is required to be in-borough this is very challenging to deliver and/ or can only be provided above subsidy levels.
- 4.6 The TA Commissioning Strategy will be updated during the first 2016 to reflect changes in the private sector housing market and the impact of legislative and welfare reform changes

Part D: New Policy Initiatives and Amendments to the Housing Allocations Scheme

This section sets out the recommendations to be made in the full year Supply and Allocation of Social Housing report to offer access to affordable housing for low income working households and updates and clarifications to the Allocations Scheme

5.1 Affordable Housing for Low Income Working Households

Building on the success of the scheme to offer additional points to working households living in Temporary Accommodation it is recommended that a target quota of 10 lettings is established for working households with total gross income of £20k or less who would not otherwise have priority for social housing under the Housing Allocations Scheme. Allocations would be to studio and 1 bed properties, reflecting the high level of supply of these size units. Tenancies will be limited to a fixed period of three years (an introductory tenancy followed by a two year fixed term tenancy which would not be renewable).

The aim of the quota is to assist a broader range of low income working households who have few housing opportunities in Westminster to access social housing. It will also help improve the economic diversity of estates, enable people to remain in Westminster and to live near to their work. The take-up of the projection will be reviewed in the 2017/18 report and new recommendations made regarding its future use.

Westminster's draft Housing Strategy was consulted on during June and July 2015. It included a proposal to let some social housing to low income working households who would not ordinarily have priority for it. There was support for this proposal and the intention to go ahead with this objective was set out in the Housing Strategy Direction of Travel Statement published in December 2015.

The City Council is required to allocate housing in accordance with its allocation scheme pursuant to the Housing Act 1996. Pursuant to section 166A of the 1996 Act it is possible for the City Council's allocation scheme to make provision for accommodation to be allocated to persons who fall outside the reasonable preference groups provided the scheme as a whole gives reasonable preference to those in the specified groups.

There are currently few affordable housing options for this low income group as the cheapest single room can cost c. £181 per week which requires an income of c. £31k. There are also no intermediate rent properties available for households in this income bracket. As a result the quota will provide new opportunities for working households to remain in Westminster, to live close to their work if it is in central London and will also help to improve the economic diversity of estates where currently c. 71% of social tenants receive housing benefit.

The exclusions in the Housing Allocation Scheme set out in paragraph 1.6.1 will apply to the quota and within this the following criteria will apply and applicants must have:

- A household income from paid employment of £20k or less
- Lived in Westminster for three years
- Proof of employment and income for 12 months and be in employment at point of offer of accommodation

Applicants meeting the criteria will be awarded 300 points and will be directly offered suitable properties. The tenancies offered will be for up to three years. A successfully completed one year introductory tenancy will be followed by a fixed term or flexible tenancy of two years. The tenancy will be non-renewable as it is offered to help households save for other forms of housing and is intended to help the maximum number of households. During their tenancy households will receive advice on how to move into forms of intermediate housing and home ownership before the end of the 3 year period.

The scheme will be marketed through Home Ownership Westminster who maintain the register of working households seeking affordable accommodation in Westminster. Priority will be given to adult members of overcrowded households, location of work and length of time in Westminster.

5.2 Impact on Tenancy Policy

The above proposal requires an amendment to the Tenancy Policy to allow the offer of an Introductory Tenancy before the non-renewable flexible tenancy. It is proposed the Tenancy Policy is changed to enable discretion to be exercised on whether to issue an Introductory Tenancy generally before a non-renewable tenancy, and that the length of the non-renewable being offered is the basis for deciding this.

The policy as a whole is consistent with the Tenancy Policy which sets out that in certain circumstances, where the supply of housing stock allows, the Council will offer Non Renewable flexible tenancies. These are intended to provide short term accommodation to people without priority for housing under the City Council's Housing Allocations Scheme. In these cases, the tenancy is offered to provide short term housing either to address a specific need or issue or to help the maximum number of people. They will be offered in the following circumstances:

- Where they are intended to provide some transitional housing following a bereavement for discretionary successors, under the discretionary succession policy for flexible tenants (see 7.19).

- Where they are offered to low income working households as part of an annual quota for households that do not have priority for housing under the Allocations Scheme. The aim of the quota is to assist low income working households that have few housing choices in Westminster as intermediate rent is too expensive to help them save for other forms of housing.

Tenants that have been issued with Non Renewable flexible tenancies will not be eligible for Cash to Move payments

5.3 Discretionary Succession

It is recommended that the Tenancy Policy is amended so that households with discretionary succession who have been living in Community Supportive Housing for older people are required to move to alternative housing, if they are not eligible for the Community Supportive Housing in their own right.

The decision is needed in order to enable the City Council to make the best use of its stock for the client group and allocate it to the client group for which is intended. In the case of discretionary successors in Community Supportive Housing, they will only be able to remain in the original home if the applicant would otherwise qualify to be housed in this form of housing. If the discretionary successor is required to move they will be able to bid for an alternative property for six months after which one direct offer will be made. If the offer is refused the City Council will start proceedings to repossess the property.

5.4 Mutual Exchange

It is recommended that the Tenancy Policy is amended so that mutual exchanges are not agreed where the proposed assignee moving into the Westminster Council property would be under occupying the property as defined by the City Council's Housing Allocation Policy. Currently the City Council's policy allows a proposed assignee to have one bedroom more than they require under the Allocation Scheme. This does not make the best use of the stock and it is out of line with national welfare policy which restricts Housing Benefit where tenants are under occupying.

5.4 Workers Points

It is recommended that the additional points for working homeless households scheme is amended to seek formal confirmation that the household is in employment at point of tenancy offer. The onus remains on households to inform the Housing Options Service of any change in circumstances, including changes in employment status, and this check will confirm these details

Part E: Provision of housing for vulnerable groups

A variety of services are commissioned to respond to rough sleeping, to support in particular the delivery of Council priorities to increase the numbers of people with learning disabilities and mental health problems living in settled accommodation and respond to incidents of domestic violence

6.1 The Westminster Learning Disability Housing and Support Plan

6.1.1 The Increasing numbers of young people with a physical disability and a learning disability are living into adulthood. There is also an aging population of people with learning disabilities and ageing carers. Dementia and increased physical frailty amongst the aging population means that there is an increased need to provide more accessible and supported accommodation. Increasing numbers of young people with a physical and learning disability, and those with challenging behaviours, and autism are transitioning into adult social care.

6.1.2 Current Supply

In Westminster we have 160 supported housing properties for exclusive use for people with learning disabilities: 16% are in registered care homes; 84% are now supported living reflecting a move to increasing the availability of supported housing which offers more choice and control for people living there than registered care. The registered care units provide high needs support to people with complex needs and autism. The supported housing units offer a range of support, 43 of the supported housing units offer 24hr support which could be a waking or sleeping night “cover. There are also a further 21 units of floating support which can offer support to those who move on from home or a step down from the building based services.

6.1.3 The 2016-19 Learning Disability Housing and Support strategy will encompass the following priority areas:

- People with a learning disability and/or autism and those who display behaviours that challenge experience more choice and control in the range, quality and supply of local supported housing available as an alternative to out of borough residential care.
- People will have more access to new and improved high quality housing and support services that are fit for future needs.
- There will be robust data on needs and clear housing pathways and information on the range of accommodation and support available
- Housing and support services will maximise the opportunities for all people with learning disabilities to live ordinary lives in the community, in their own home. This is to include those with autism, complex and challenging needs.
- We will work alongside people with learning disabilities, families and carers when developing services

- We will work with our providers to ensure quality and that the work force development opportunities are taken up and we are in agreement with providers of the future workforce requirements.
- Regular inspection and monitoring of supported housing will be undertaken.

6.2 Housing Allocation and Domestic Violence

- 6.2.1 Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) remains a major focus for the department. The Housing DV lead was part of the Evaluation Panel which appointed the Integrated Support Service provider for the Tri Borough, which is part of the new Tri Borough Service. The new service was formally launched in September 2015 and a new governance structure has been implemented. As a result Housing sits on the VAWG strategic group, executive group, risk and review group and communications and media group in order to ensure that its departmental objectives fit with the strategic and operational response to DV across the three boroughs.
- 6.2.2 The Housing DV lead is Co-Chair of the Westminster Domestic Violence Forum (WDVF) and continues to support the development of both the Phoenix group for DV survivors and the Butterfly Group, a peer mentoring programme for those who have/ are experiencing domestic violence, which is coordinated by the refuge provider Hestia.
- 6.2.3 The department fully supports the operational work and development of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and continues to act as an example of good practice to other MARACs in respect of their housing input. The housing lead was a contributor to the MARAC self- assessment process in December 2015 which gave MARAC agencies the opportunity to examine the performance of the MARAC against the Safelives criteria for a successful MARAC.
- 6.2.4 The effectiveness of the response to VAWG issues at HOS continues to be monitored through an annual mystery shopping exercise of the call centre. The most recent exercise was conducted by survivors from the Phoenix Group and a service user from Stonewall Housing, which provided an overview of the response from our customer's perspective. Further VAWG training for HOS staff was identified as a result of this exercise and subsequently the Housing lead and a trained member of HOS staff has provided DV Awareness training to over 55 staff. The housing DV lead continues to represent Westminster on the Tri Borough Housing Operational Group (HOG), which monitors the housing sector's response to violence against women and girls. The Westminster lead has continued to work with HOS to assess their response against a set of Service Standards formulated by Standing Together against Domestic Violence (STADV).

6.3 Mental Health and Housing

- 6.3.1. In Westminster we have developed a wide variety of housing related support services for people who experience severe and enduring mental health issues. There are 372 units of supported housing, ranging from high support 24 hour schemes to semi-independent units with visiting support. The schemes are managed by 10 housing providers. In addition there are over 550 units of floating support for people living in their own independent accommodation who require support to prevent the loss of tenancy.
- 6.3.2 The range of supported housing services has been expanded since the beginning of the Supporting People programme by opening six new mental health schemes and redeveloping a rough sleepers scheme to work with people with low level mental health problems. A new 24 hour high support service to cater for people recovering from severe and enduring mental illness opened in 2012 and is operating effectively in providing additional cost effective options to out of borough residential care. A women only 24/7 high supported commissioned service has been extensively reconfiguration to include self-contained units. Referrals into these units will be for those clients who are highly functioning but with complex needs who ordinarily would be placed in a more specialist scheme out of the borough. Additional clinical support will be offered by the relevant Mental Health team.
- 6.3.3 Westminster Supported Housing is jointly commissioned by Housing, Adult Services and NHS Westminster. Individuals are supported to move from supported housing into independent living along a pathway of care and support as a joint process with the housing provider and the allocated Mental Health team care coordinator.
- 6.3.4 Access to the range of supported housing provision is via the Single Access referral Panel [SARP] The SARP has a multi-disciplinary membership including housing providers; the Housing Options service; floating support; ward managers; senior practitioners from the Mental Health team including an Occupational Therapist and the Commissioner for Mental Health accommodation. The SARP works to prevent homelessness and where possible avoids using out of borough expensive placements. This is achieved by ensuring that there is a steady flow of people through all of our in borough supported accommodation. Referrals are received for clients already living in supported who require a step down to less supported, occasionally a like for like move; directly from the wards; from out of borough projects, tenancy breakdowns and family homes.
- 6.3.5 The SARP also agrees the Move-on Quota applications which agree access to independent accommodation for those service users currently in supported accommodation. Mental health services receive an annual quota of independent housing units from the City Council for people with mental health problems living

in supported housing who are able to live independently. Readiness for independent accommodation is assessed robustly by care coordinators and housing providers and then again by the SARP that accepts or rejects MSHH quota applications. The panel only accepts applications for people where there is clear evidence about the service user's readiness for independent living. Once accepted onto the quota the SARP liaises closely with the Housing Options Service who have the capacity to restrict and delay bidding where it is felt that a situation has changed and people can be removed from the quota when necessary. Once people have moved there are a range of community support services available including floating support services that are able to support the person through the move, to settling in and establishing themselves in the community and other support provisions including flexi care, befriending and day services.

6.4 Supported Housing for Young People

- 6.4.1 138 units of supported and hostel accommodation are commissioned, managed by 4 different organisations for young people up to the age of 25. Services prioritise looked after children, care leavers, young parents and young people at risk of homelessness, and that services respond effectively to meet the needs of this client group improving life chances and opportunity.
- 6.4.2 The Young Persons Supported Housing Pathway continues to be an effective means of support and housing provision and the number of planned moves through the pathway remains above the target of 75% averaging at 91% and the number of Children Services placements have increased annually and a review of the pathway is underway to consider the commissioning arrangements.
- 6.4.3 Over the last year there has been an increase in the numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children entering the Country aged under 18 becoming Looked After under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 and therefore eligible for services. Many of these young people aged 16/17 are being placed in the Young Persons Supported Housing Pathway and Children Services and Housing are working in partnership to ensure an enhanced package of support to this cohort.
- 6.4.4 Improving Health & Well-being for young people within supported accommodation is a key priority and an action plan was developed to increase the take up of primarily health services by young people; increase access to health interventions and improved recording of health outcomes. A number of specific initiatives have been undertaken and these include:
- Free Dental screening and a general health and well-being workshop held
 - Young People have taken part in a Dental Health Survey commissioned by NHS England

- Improving the partnership arrangements with Westminster substance misuse teams has led to a 50% increase of referrals and screening
- Training for supported housing staff on substance misuse particularly around ‘legal highs’
- More access to preventative services and healthy activities Joint work with Public Health colleagues to increase access to preventative services and healthy activities
- A health and well-being training day was held for commissioned supported services supported by Public Health to develop health questionnaires templates, defining and evidencing health outcomes and reporting which has led to services taking a more robust approach in monitoring performance.

6.4.5 The second Brighter Futures Event jointly sponsored Children Services for young people aged 15-25 within supported accommodation, at risk of homelessness or coming into statutory care was held. The aim of the event was to advise and manage expectations on provisions available, to promote health and well-being and to increase employment and training opportunities particularly for those who are not in employment, education and training. Just over 40 young people attended and a range of Organisations supported the event either leading on workshops or providing an information stall and a number of young people were awarded achievement certificates. The feedback from both young people and Organisations was extremely positive.

6.4.6 There continues to be a strong track record of involving young people in service commissioning and 2 young people were invited to attend the Young Persons Supported Housing Forum and supported the delivery of the Brighter Future Event.

6.4.7 Safeguarding continues to a high priority for all housing related support services and a questionnaire is being drafted for young people on safety particularly in relation to internet safety and safeguarding awareness to support the wider work on sexual exploitation and cyber bullying.

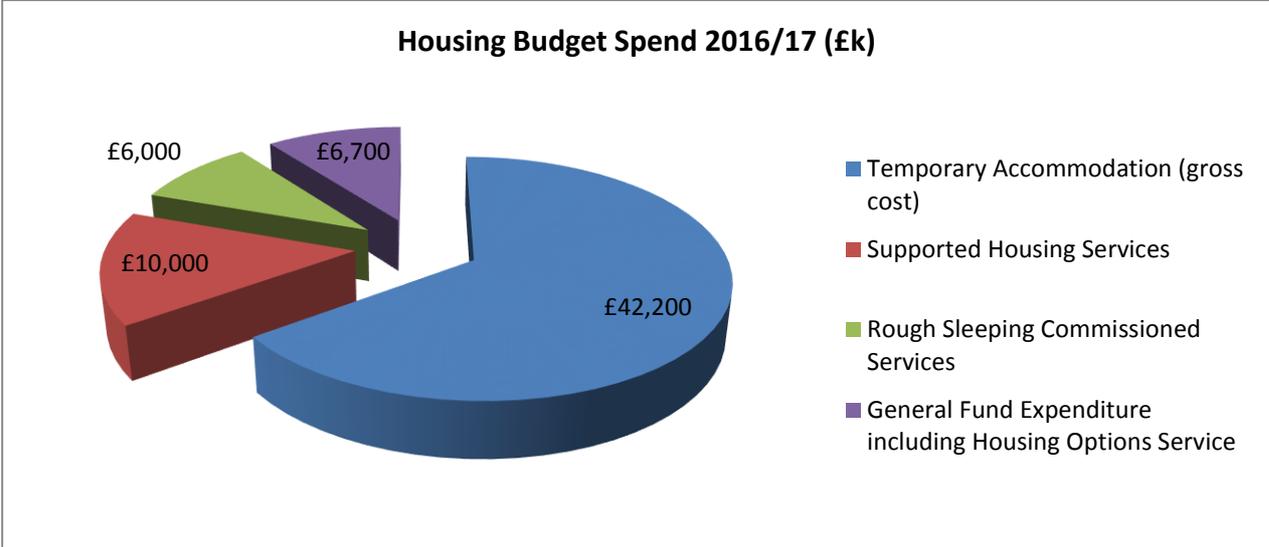
7. Health and Wellbeing Implications

The proposals contained in this report set out the issues related to the development of allocation projections of the supply of social housing for 2015/16. This promotes the Health and Wellbeing of vulnerable groups in housing need through meeting the Council’s statutory housing obligations, meet the varying demands for social housing from different vulnerable groups and to reduce the numbers of people living in Temporary Accommodation

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Housing Expenditure

8.1.1 Total Housing Expenditure can be summarised as follows:



8.1.2 In addition, there is capital funding within the 2016/17 Capital programme that will eventually increase the supply of affordable housing within Westminster by circa 327 units over a period of time

	£m
Grants to organisations to provide Affordable Housing.	32.7
Acquisition new affordable housing by WCC	18.8
Total	51.5

9. Legal Implications

9.1 The Council has a general duty under the Housing Act 1996 (Part VII), as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 to ensure that accommodation is made available for homeless applicants who are owed a full housing duty by the Council.

9.2 The Council also has a duty to maintain a housing register under the Housing Act 1996 (Part VI) as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

9.3 By virtue of Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 many Housing Authorities are required to prepare and update a homeless strategy. However, being an excellent authority, the City Council is exempted from that requirement by virtue of Article 3 of the Local Authorities' Plans and Strategies (Disapplication) (England) Order 2005. This is a non statutory report prepared outside the homelessness regime