



City of Westminster

# Follow On Agenda

Title: **Climate Action, Housing and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee**

Meeting Date: **Monday 18th July, 2022**

Time: **6.30 pm**

Venue: **Rooms 18.01 & 18.03, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP**

Members: **Councillors:**

Gillian Arrindell	Patricia McAllister
Robert Eagleton	Alan Mendoza
David Harvey	Cara Sanquest
Elizabeth Hitchcock	

**Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussion Part 1 of the Agenda**

**Admission to the public gallery is by ticket, issued from the ground floor reception. If you have a disability and require any special assistance please contact the Committee Officer (details listed below) in advance of the meeting.**



**An Induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter. If you require any further information, please contact the Committee Officer, Artemis Kassi, Lead Policy & Scrutiny Advisor.**

**Email: [akassi@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:akassi@westminster.gov.uk)  
Corporate Website: [www.westminster.gov.uk](http://www.westminster.gov.uk)**

**Note for Members:** Members are reminded that Officer contacts are shown at the end of each report and Members are welcome to raise questions in advance of the meeting. With regard to item 2, guidance on declarations of interests is included in the Code of Governance; if Members and Officers have any particular questions they should contact the Head of Committee and Governance Services in advance of the meeting please.

## **AGENDA**

### **PART 1 (IN PUBLIC)**

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| <p><b>4. CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING SERVICES - PORTFOLIO UPDATE</b></p> <p>To receive an update from Councillor Liza Begum, Cabinet Member for Housing Services on priorities for the portfolio following the local elections in May 2022, any major issues arising and to answer questions from Members.</p>   | <p><b>(Pages 3 - 6)</b></p>  |
| <p><b>5. CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE ACTION, REGENERATION AND RENTERS - PORTFOLIO UPDATE</b></p> <p>To receive an update from Councillor Matt Noble, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters on priorities for the portfolio following the local elections in May 2022, any major issues arising and to answer questions from Members.</p> | <p><b>(Pages 7 - 10)</b></p> |

**Stuart Love**  
**Chief Executive**  
**11 July 2022**



## Climate Action, Housing and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date:</b>	18 July 2022
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Housing Services
<b>The Report of:</b>	Councillor Liza Begum
<b>Report Author and Contact Details:</b>	Alexandra Deolinda Severino <a href="mailto:adseverino@westminster.gov.uk">adseverino@westminster.gov.uk</a>

**The following report includes priorities and delivery progress to date of the new administration.**

### **Reducing Carbon Emissions**

As part of our commitment to decarbonise the Pimlico District Heating Undertaking (PDHU) this time of year (summer months) enables planned maintenance to take place on the network whilst the heating is switched off during the summer months. A strategic options paper is currently being prepared which will address the carbon reduction challenges PDHU presents, being the single largest emitter of carbon under the management of the council.

### **Rough Sleeping and Homelessness**

Westminster City Council invests c. £7m annually (not including Government funding or other external funding sources) in services designed prevent rough sleeping, provide a wide range of high-quality accommodation with support, develop and deliver pathways out of rough sleeping services into the community.

The homelessness and rough-sleeping team has recently gone through a restructure will go live in August and is equipped to deliver high quality customer-centred services that tackle and prevent homelessness. To create a culture of collaboration across the service and a team with the range of expertise to optimise the very best outcomes and delivery by providers and commissioned services.

During the Westminster Street count completed in partnership with St Mungo's on 14 June the teams saw 229 people up from 178 during the previous street count in March. The high number of individuals seen on the street continue to be from the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland.

In Mid-May the Council was notified that our bid for funding 22 – 25 had been successful in securing £21,529,188 from DLUCH which we plan to use to tackle homelessness and rough-sleeping as a top priority of the new administration.

## **Anti-Social Behaviour**

We are committed to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) in all forms in conjunction with the Council's general ASB teams and well as the police. The Housing team has planned for ASB Awareness week which is taking place this week with multiple opportunities for residents to be involved.

As part of ASB Awareness Week, the Minister for Safeguarding, Rachel Maclean MP will be visiting Westminster City Council on the 19th of July.

The Safer Westminster Partnership (SWP) will sign up to the 5 Key Principles of ASB. The principles are there to act as best practice for Community Safety Partnerships, ensuring that victims of ASB are receiving the best support from Local Authorities and Community Safety Partnerships.

## **Empty Homes**

Reducing and identifying the number of empty homes in Westminster is commitment currently underway with the recent decision to create a new officer post at Council dedicated to this issue. More details will be available at the next Committee meeting.

## **Major Works**

We have made an excellent start to the new financial year with both our partnering contractors Axis Europe and United Living performing well.

We currently have 30 projects on site, with up to 50 further projects commencing during this financial year. This volume of projects represents historic highs for the Council and will deliver the right major works to the right buildings across the city and improving the built environment for huge numbers of residents.

We believe that the Term Partnering Contract allows the flexibility required to ensure Value for Money continues to be achieved for residents and the Council alike. We are, however, actively exploring ways to achieve better value from our Service Providers, such as through Social Value initiatives, and the introduction of further control measures into the partnership.

## **Repairs**

We are working towards 400 voids this year being improved with retro fit works including secondary insulation, Secondary glazing, in home sensors to monitor damp, mould and humidity and provide early alerts for our residents. This includes the installation of smart technology, heating systems to bring our homes energy ratings down to an B or C.

We are starting a new programme of In Home M.O.T. surveys, commencing with whole house surveys and condition reports on 250 community supported homes. We will also be carrying out 250 surveys of the highest and lowest repair demand across our properties to support families.

As part of our new repairs service each surveyor will have a target to visit 250 homes per year per to pre inspect and case manage in dwelling repairs and support residents in patches and areas. Smart App technology is available to case manage repairs and provide live updates to residents on existing repairs and issues with a single point of contact for escalations

## **Communicating with Residents and Leaseholders**

Working on how we communicate effectively with residents and leaseholders and how we implement technology to best deliver services continues to be a top priority of the administration. As part of our new Resident First initiative, we have launched Community Thursdays where all the extended Housing Management Team along with local based staff will undertake one or two estate walkabouts each week.

A letter is shortly to be posted to all residents to introduce their local Housing team. We have recruited a full complement of Housing Officers and increasing the number of surveyors. Resident reps have direct email and mobile numbers for their local Housing team. A review of Housing web pages is also underway which will consider their accessibility and content to ensure residents can access local information as well as at a Citywide level.

The Housing Contact Centre which handles Housing Repairs and Customer Services enquiries has undergone several introductions of enabling technology to support service delivery such as: our omni-channel solution called 8x8 allows our customers to engage with us via their channel of choice. Our customer relationship management system known as CRM captures all levels of customer contact in one system to allow a clear history and sight of the customer journey. CRM sits as an overlay on top of Orchard. Knowledge Base on dynamics which is a reference guide used to support staff and boost their knowledge. Our customer portal (Self-appointed Repairs) has been developed to enable residents to raise and manage repairs. Moving forward we plan to continue to introduce new channels as we evolve.

This page is intentionally left blank



City of Westminster

## Climate Action, Housing and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date:</b>	18 July 2022
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Climate Action, Regeneration & Renters
<b>The Report of:</b>	Councillor Matt Noble
<b>Report Author and Contact Details:</b>	Alexandra Deolinda Severino <a href="mailto:adseverino@westminster.gov.uk">adseverino@westminster.gov.uk</a>

**The following report includes priorities and delivery progress to date of the new administration.**

### Climate Action

Tackling climate change is a key priority for this administration. Work is already underway to ensure that climate impacts are taken into account for all major decisions taken by Cabinet Members and as part of our sustainable procurement strategy.

To support this, from July the Climate Impact Evaluation Toolkit (CIET) will be introduced, allowing officers to assess on a consistent basis the carbon implications of their projects/proposals. The CIET will be incorporated into Finance Capital Bidding programme, with all capital bids requiring a carbon assessment to be submitted in order to be considered.

To support embedding of climate priorities internally, Carbon Literacy Training will continue to be rolled out to WCC staff with sessions planned for July and September. More than 101 Council staff have completed the training to date.

Also this month, in partnership with the Westminster Property Association, we are delivering a roundtable with key business stakeholders to help finalise the Sustainable City Charter and associated implementation framework. This will be a key tool in helping to drive sustainable building use across the city.

This work is part of a broader set of actions in the Climate Emergency Action Plan to address building emissions including establishing a retrofit task force, launching a retrofit show home and developing our advice offer on energy savings in the home.

We are also finalising a specification for a Local Area Energy Plan to assess our renewable and energy decarbonisation opportunities, which we are aiming to procure over the summer.

We are actively considering opportunities for mobilising funding to support our climate goals. This includes a community municipal investment product (also known as a local climate bond) to mobilise local investment in climate projects in Westminster.

The Bond will enable residents to support local climate action and receive a small interest payment in return. It is intended the investment will be offered using the investment partner, Abundance, on their platform. Abundance has carried out a number of successful investment launches for other Council's including Berkshire and the London Borough of Camden. Projects included are yet to be finalised but will need to credibly assist the Council's net zero ambitions to qualify.

Officers are currently carrying out due diligence on the investment paperwork with external legal services and hope to commit to a capital raising process of around £1m - £3m. This will be the launch in the next 12 months and involve signing a 'climate pledge', committing to the process. Councillors and officers will be promoting the idea to residents as part of the Community Climate Action Day on 16 July at Ebury Edge, Ebury Bridge Rd, and registering initial expressions of interest.

### **Regeneration**

Delivering social housing and lower rent homes in Westminster is one of our top policy objectives. Building private housing should only be justified by the funds it raises to pay for more social and lower rent units.

### **Church Street**

- All social rent tenants have been decanted from Site A. There are only 12 residential leaseholders (with 6 under negotiation) and 14 commercial tenants remaining.
- The Procurement Strategy for a Development partner to deliver the scheme on Site A through a Corporate Joint Venture was finalised with documents prepared to launch on the 16th May 2022 but this has subsequently been paused.
- The Green Spine Phase 1 construction is ongoing, from Bell Street to Samford Street and will create a new pedestrian-focused green route through the heart of the Church Street regeneration area. Works are focused on Broadley Street Gardens currently, linking up two parks to make one larger and more accessible open space.
- Phase 2 of the Green Spine (from the Carrick Yard development to the canal) is at Feasibility/Concept Design stage.

### **Ebury**

- Hybrid planning consent was achieved in April 2022. 781 new, high quality mixed tenure homes, open space and community infrastructure. 50% affordable provision, mixed tenure cores with horizontal distribution.
- Demolition of Phase 1 site plus additional site enabling works has been successfully delivered by JF Hunt. 99% of demolition material treated and re-used on site avoiding landfill and vehicle impacts.
- Phase 1 delivery is underway and will deliver 226 new mixed tenure homes and first open public square and is due for completion in Summer 2024. This phase is a key milestone in meeting our Ebury re-housing commitments.
- The Compulsory Purchase Order for remaining phases commenced with hearing scheduled for August 2022.
- The scheme's viability for future phases is a real challenge given market pressures. Project levers include tenure mix, tenure distribution, programme and value engineering of the design.
- Ground source and air source heat pump strategy for heating and cooling delivers a sustainable solution on this major regeneration scheme with the new estate being 90% less carbon than the existing estate.



## Developments

Luton Street: Construction is progressing well with completion forecast later this summer. The external works activity is very busy in the courtyard and on the green spine. Highways works are progressing well as per the construction programme.

Lisson Arches: Construction continues with completion now anticipated in December 2022. Brickwork has been completed all floors and lift installation is underway. Additional grant of £1.8M has been secured under the GLA's 'Care and Specialist Supported Housing' programme.

Ashbridge, Ashmill and Cosway: Construction continues with completion anticipated early 2023. The contractor is completing the external envelope and progressing with the internal fit out activities. The air source heat pump designs are reaching completion, for integration at Ashmill Street.

Balmoral/Darwin House: Enabling works in progress and main works contract negotiations and pricing well advanced. All Pre-Commencement Planning Conditions submitted for discharge.

## Renters

We aim to do the most we can under the current government regulations to protect tenants in the private rented sector (PRS) while campaigning to do more.

The Private Sector Housing service within Public Protection & Licensing regulates Westminster's PRS. As well as delivering work around property licensing, the service also receives complaints concerning poor conditions in the residential sector.

Last year the service received over 1600 service requests, and the figure for 2022/23 stands at 233 in June 2022. Work has also been carried out to collect additional information on external wall systems amongst all high-rise residential buildings within Westminster for onward reporting to DLUHC, and to aid risk prioritisation moving forward. In delivering this work we are in close contact with key partners including central government, the LGA's Joint Inspection Team, London Fire Brigade and local authority colleagues across London to ensure relevant sharing of information and best practice.

## A Fairer Private Rented Sector - White Paper

The White Paper, published on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June, sets out a 12-point plan for the Private Rented Sector (PRS), and the government's long-term vision for a PRS that is fit for delivering a better deal for tenants. There is no timetable for all the measures, although some will be subject to consultations and legislative change, so will take time and further detail will emerge.

The 12 points in summary:

- 1) A first time Decent Homes Standard (consultation to follow) and completion of the review of the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System in the Autumn
- 2) Pilot schemes with local authorities to explore ways of enforcing standards
- 3) Abolition of Section 21 (no fault evictions) taken forward through legislation. To achieve this a new periodic tenancy will be developed replacing other tenancy types. Six months' notice will be given for implementation
- 4) Reform of possession grounds, to strike a fair balance between landlords and tenants. This includes a new mandatory possession ground for serious rent arrears
- 5) Restriction of rent increases to once a year – taken forward through legislation

- 6) A mandatory single Ombudsman that landlords must join
- 7) Work to speed up court proceedings
- 8) Property portal for tenants, landlords and councils so everyone has all the relevant information
- 9) Strengthening of local authority powers to address criminal landlords – by strengthening fines etc.
- 10) Making it illegal for landlords / agents to have blanket bans on renting to families or those in receipt of benefits
- 11) Giving tenants the right to request to have a pet
- 12) Work with the industry to develop ways to passport deposits.

#### Next steps / implications

Officers are working with the PRS Strategy Group (which includes representatives from across the sector) to consider its implications. Initial analysis is:

- The plan aligns well with our Private Rented Sector Strategy.
- Evictions from the PRS is a leading cause of homelessness and the abolition of Section 21 should help to address this (although Local Housing Allowance rates not reflecting market rents is a big issue in Westminster and isn't addressed and affordability of the PRS will remain a core issue for low-income households).
- Our data confirms rising rents in Westminster and stakeholders have also reported they are seeing some rent increases which are excessive, so the forthcoming legislation should have an impact.
- Shortages of supply in the PRS are already being reported, with some speculation that landlords left the market during the pandemic. Some elements of the plan could deter new landlords i.e. 'accidental' ones from entering the market.