

WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF DECISION

SUBJECT: PENN HOUSE AND REGENERATION AREA TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY

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

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Approval to use the vacant properties within Penn House and the wider Regeneration Area for Temporary Accommodation (TA) for homeless households prior to demolition and commencement of construction. The use of Penn House and other vacant properties for Temporary Accommodation is in line with the Fairer Housing pillar to tackle homelessness within the Borough.
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1. Summary of Decision

1.1 That the Cabinet Member delegated authority to the Executive Director of Environment, Climate and Public Protection to:

- (a) Approve the use of Penn House, Gayhurst House and 6-12 Lilestone Street for TA under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.
- (b) Review the rent levels for lettings and decide how these are split between the Housing Revenue Account and General Fund ("GF").
- (c) Award and approve necessary funds to accommodate and refurbish Penn House to comply with TA letting standards, as well as for Gayhurst House and Lilestone Street once these costs are known.
- (d) Enter into a leasing arrangement with a Registered Provider that will then lease Penn House, 6-12 Lilestone Street and Gayhurst House back to the Council for use as TA.
- (e) The Cabinet Member also noted this report provides an assessment of the financial viability for operating Penn House as TA. This is because a quote has been sought for the refurbishment, and the timescales for operating the block as TA are known. This information is less readily available for the units at Gayhurst and Lilestone Street. Nonetheless, an identical viability test would be undertaken when those units are ready to be converted, and authority delegated to the Executive Director of Finance & Resources to approve the allocation of the capital funds required to proceed.

2. Reason for Decision

2.1 This report seeks to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Environment, Climate and Public Protection to use vacant properties at Penn House, Gayhurst House and 6-12 Lilestone Street as TA.

TA is sought for a period of at least three years for the above blocks prior to demolishing and commencing the development of the Lilestone Street site. Residents of Penn House recently completed a successful relocation to Daventry House. Gayhurst House currently exhibits a small number of voids. As development plans cement, a void strategy will also be required for these homes if more homes are purchased or sold. In addition, vacant social homes will need to be outlined to understand wider renewal impacts.

By way of this decision, the Council aims to make best use of its assets whilst Penn House, Gayhurst House and 6-12 Lilestone Street are vacated. This council also aims to tackle key issues around homelessness, in line with the Fairer Housing pillar of the Councils Fairer Westminster Vision.

All three blocks will provide good quality in-borough accommodation available for vulnerable single homeless people and larger homeless families. Throughout the period, provisions at Penn House will have staff on site 24 hours per day, with additional support provided to residents depending upon need.

**Stuart Love, Chief Executive,
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Implementation Date: 26 April 2024

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