



City of Westminster

Committee Agenda

Title: **Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee**

Meeting Date: **Monday 11th September, 2017**

Time: **7.00 pm**

Venue: **Grosvenor Hall, Vincent St, Westminster, London SW1P 4HB**

Members: **Councillors:**

Brian Connell (Chairman)	Adnan Mohammed
Paul Church	Jacqui Wilkinson
Nick Evans	Adam Hug
Peter Freeman	Tim Roca

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 at Grosvenor Hall is available from 6.15pm. 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, Reuben Segal; Senior Committee and Governance Officer.

**Tel: 020 7641 3160; email: rsegal@westminster.gov.uk
Corporate Website: 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 Director of Law in advance of the meeting please.

AGENDA

PART 1 (IN PUBLIC)

1. MEMBERSHIP

The Director of Law is to report any changes to the membership.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations by Members and Officers of the existence and nature of any personal or prejudicial interests in matters on this agenda.

3. MINUTES

To sign the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record of proceedings.

(Pages 1 - 12)

4. WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER

(Pages 13 - 24)

5. UPDATE FROM CABINET MEMBERS

(Pages 25 - 30)

An update from the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Corporate Services on key areas within their portfolios is attached.

Update from the Cabinet Member for Housing to follow.

6. CITY WEST HOMES AND WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO FIRE SAFETY WITHIN COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK IN LIGHT OF THE GRENFELL DISASTER

(Pages 31 - 46)

Report of the Interim Executive Director of Growth Planning and Housing

7. SUPPLY AND ALLOCATION OF SOCIAL HOUSING 2017-18

(Pages 47 - 60)

Report of the Interim Executive Director for Growth Planning and Housing

Charlie Parker
Chief Executive
1 September 2017



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Monday 12th June, 2017**, Room 3.1, 3rd Floor, 5 Strand, London, WC2 5HR.

Members Present: Councillors Brian Connell (Chairman), Paul Church, Nick Evans, Peter Freeman, Jacqui Wilkinson, Adam Hug and Guthrie McKie

Also Present: Councillor Rachael Robathan (Cabinet Member for Housing), Barbara Brownlee (Director of Housing & Regeneration), Steve Mair (City Treasurer), John Quinn (Bi-Borough Director of Corporate Services), Robin Campbell (Head of Campaigns and Customer Engagement), Maria Benbow (Commercial and Digital Transformation Director), Matthew Cain (Head of Digital, London Borough of Hackney), Jonathan Cowie (CEO, CityWest Homes), Martin Edgerton (Executive Director of Customer Services, CityWest Homes), Muge Dindjer (Scrutiny Manager), Artemis Kassi (Policy and Scrutiny Officer) and Reuben Segal (Committee & Governance Services)

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Adnan Mohammed

1 MEMBERSHIP

1.1 It was noted that Councillor McKie had replaced Councillor Roca.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest made.

3 MINUTES

3.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2017 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record of proceedings.

4 WORK PROGRAMME 2017-2018 AND ACTION TRACKER

4.1 **RESOLVED:**

1. That the agenda items for the next meeting on the 11 September be agreed
2. That the responses to actions and recommendations as set out in the tracker be noted.

5 **UPDATE FROM CABINET MEMBERS**

- 5.1 The Committee received written updates from the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property & Corporate Services on the key issues within their portfolios.
- 5.2 Councillor Rachael Robathan, Cabinet Member for Housing, provided a brief verbal update to her paper in the agenda. As per her initial presentation to the committee following her appointment to the portfolio she reiterated her recognition that there was a need to accelerate the delivery of housing in the borough. She advised with regards to the regeneration of the council's estates that a consultation on the masterplan for Church Street would run between the 21 July and the 4 August. A public meeting with residents at Ebury Bridge to explain the current status of the project and outline options would be held on 28 June. Feedback received would be taken away and used to develop the consultation options which would be consulted on in September.
- 5.3 Councillor Robathan explained that the regeneration programme is ambitious and complex. There were people living on many of the sites. As a consequence it will be a long and detailed process.
- 5.4 With regards to the infill programme, Councillor Robathan reported that the Council had identified more sites upon which additional housing could be built. To assist with the programme's objectives she would be asking all councillors to help identify any potential sites in their wards. Officers were also working at opportunities to speed up the delivery process including obtaining planning permission.
- 5.5 The Cabinet Member for Housing then responded to questions from the Committee.
 - 5.5.1 Regeneration - The Cabinet Member was referred to the fact that the decision to regenerate Ebury Bridge and Tollgate Gardens had been taken in 2013 and 2014 respectively. She was asked when the acceleration of the housing delivery on the sites was likely to be seen. The Cabinet Member was also asked given the delays, whether a different model of regeneration was likely to be considered, which other boroughs were adopting, whereby the Council enters into a partnership with developers. Councillor Robathan sought to assure the committee about the amount of work being undertaken to move forward the programme. She acknowledged that evidence of progress

needed to be seen by residents. With respect to the regeneration model, she stated that the Council was looking at how other local authorities were undertaking regeneration and the lessons that could be learned from that. However, she highlighted that Westminster has acute housing issues which are different to other local authorities.

- 5.5.2 Tollgate Gardens - the Cabinet Member was asked whether the decision taken in 2016 to deliver 76 social housing units as part of the wider regeneration of the site had changed. Councillor Robathan advised that 195 new homes would be delivered on the site. She believed that this would include 86 new affordable housing units. [Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing & Regeneration, has confirmed that the number of social rented properties being delivered remains as originally promised at 76. There is, in addition 10 affordable intermediate rental units.]
- 5.5.3 Affordable Housing - Members were informed that Octavia Housing is currently marketing 11 intermediate homes for sale and rent at their new development located at North wharf Road in Paddington. The Cabinet Member was asked about the affordability of the shared ownership homes and whether any had been sold. Councillor Robathan acknowledged that due to the higher property values in Westminster it was harder to make shared ownership work than elsewhere. As a consequence the Council was looking at developing more intermediate rental homes. This will provide residents with the option to save money from the discounted rent which they could then use at a later date as a deposit on purchasing a home in the private market.
- 5.5.4 Empty Homes - The Cabinet Member was informed that the Council had commissioned a report from Radimus Consulting Ltd in 2013 on the impact of the prime residential market in Westminster following concern that the balance of new housing supply in the borough might be reducing the council's ability to meet all housing needs. The Cabinet Member was asked for her view on this, the notion that many properties are being left empty and the possible impact of these on homelessness in the borough. Councillor Robathan shared members concerns regarding 'buy to leave'. She stated that there was no point in providing additional housing if the properties are left sitting empty. She advised that a number of countries have rules where people cannot buy a home unless they have been resident for a period of time. She stated that the Council needed to ensure as far as it was able that any flats it is developing will be lived in. Members considered that the planning and housing departments need to work together to address this issue. The Cabinet Member was referred to the fact that a planning policy applied to a scheme in Islington requires homes to be kept in regular use.
- 5.5.5 Officers were referred to the fact that the problem of empty homes did not apply exclusively to high-value market properties. Concern was raised that during canvassing in Pimlico a high number of CityWest Homes as well as those owned by Registered Social Landlords appeared to be empty. Jonathan Cowie, Chief Executive Officer, CityWest Homes, advised that the organisation has no more than 500 voids for one month across the city at any given time. He undertook to take members who were interested through the data to reveal where at any given time there are voids.

- 5.5.6 Homelessness Reduction Act - the Cabinet Member was asked whether the Council had undertaken any modelling to estimate the additional costs that will arise from the Act. Councillor Robathan advised that this was being progressed. She explained that the government have announced that they will make £61 million available to local authorities to meet the additional burdens arising from the Act over 3 years. However, ministers have not announced how the funding will be split.
- 5.5.7 Specialist Housing Strategy for Older People - The Cabinet Member was asked what steps had been put in place to ensure the provision of excellent specialist housing for older people. Councillor Robathan stated that the main contractor tender returns for the new Beachcroft Care Home have been assessed and officers have formally issued the recommendation to appoint their preferred contractor. The new care home will be a state of the art facility which will provide 84 nursing care beds for people with dementia. The enabling work will begin in June and will be completed by the end of 2019. This will allow the council to redevelop Carlton Dene and Westmead. The Cabinet Member highlighted that there is a need for replacement accommodation and extra capacity in the North of the city for older people with complex needs. There is a desire to incorporate flexibility on sites so that residents do not have to move as their needs change. The new home at Carlton Dene will hopefully provide this. 60 extra care beds were being provided in the south of the borough around Chelsea Barracks.
- 5.4 The Committee then submitted questions to the City Treasurer on the corporate finance related elements of the update from the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property & Corporate Services.
- 5.4.1 Final Accounts 2016/17 - The City Treasurer was asked about the increased underspend by £2 million between Period 10 and the end of the financial year. He advised the committee that the Council has an annual budget of between £850m and £900m per annum and that it was inevitable given the scale of such a budget and the size of an organisation such as the council that an underspend of this kind could occur.
- 5.4.2 Discretionary Housing Payment Funding - In response to questions the City Treasurer advised that the council's discretionary housing payment policy was being revised and would be completed in a number of weeks. The committee asked about the opportunity to scrutinise the revised policy before it was submitted to the Cabinet Member for approval.
- 5.5 **ACTIONS:**
1. High Value Voids Levy - Inform Members when the government consultation on the formula to determine the payment will take place.
 2. Shared Ownership Sales at North Wharf Road - the committee would like to know how many of the shared ownership properties have been sold. **(Action for: Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing & Regeneration)**

6 UPDATE ON DIGITAL SERVICE AND FUTURE PLANS

- 6.1 The Committee received a report that provided an update on the current level of digital service delivery available to residents and others and how they currently perform. It focused primarily on the website and apps through which residents can engage with the Council and access its services or report issues to them. The report also informed the committee of the direction of travel of the Council's emerging Digital Strategy. This is put in context with the provision of some benchmarking information and best practice.
- 6.2 The committee was asked to comment on current service delivery and note the direction of travel for the Council's emerging Digital Strategy and consider any recommendations for the Cabinet member to consider before the strategy is finalised.
- 6.3 Matthew Cain, Head of Digital, London Borough of Hackney, addressed the Committee as an expert witness. He informed Members that he had taken up his current position in January. He had previously worked in a slightly different role at Buckinghamshire County Council for 18 months and prior to this had worked in the private sector. Whilst working at Buckinghamshire County Council he had delivered a project which saw Members go paperless which had saved £30,000 per annum and in the last year had implemented 27 projects which had saved the Council £985,000.
- 6.4 Mr Cain provided the following observations of lessons learned in delivering digital transformation.
- There is a need for a broad definition of digital: He considered that it was important to harness the methods and culture of the digital era which was greater than websites or the use of apps particularly as the latter can quickly become obsolete.
 - Taking risks should become a cultural norm: The solutions for Westminster City Council will be different than for other public sector organisations. He considered that digitally maturing organisations are more comfortable taking risks than their less digitally mature peers. To make their organisations less risk averse, business leaders have to embrace failure as a pre-requisite for success. The Council should not worry about developing perfect solutions.
 - Communication must be built around the citizen: What customers need will start before they contact the Council and end long after. It can be a challenge for the Council to understand what its customers need and due to the size and range of the local authority and its services these priorities can take time to align within the organisation.
- 6.5 Mr Cain then highlighted some of the lessons learned whilst working at Buckinghamshire County Council. Based on his experience working at the BBC and Sky, he set out to digitise the highest volume of transactions across the organisation. However, whilst this was desirable at the BBC and Sky this was not the case in Buckinghamshire. The majority of staff did not notice the

change and he reflected that to be beneficial changes should be relevant and visible to those working on the front line.

6.6 The Committee discussed the current service delivery and made the following observations:

- Residents had reported that the website is not user friendly or intuitive at present. Members considered that this de-incentivises citizens to engage with the Council.
- The “report it” function has limited functionality. Residents are frustrated at not being able to upload photographs of issues, it is cumbersome to use on a mobile device as access is gained from the Council’s website rather than an app and feedback is rarely provided on the issue reported. The latter was also the experience for some Committee members.
- The Committee noted that there are references on the Council’s website to services that are provided by partners rather than the Council but that links or contact details to these bodies are not included and should be.
- That the Open Forum Microsite was launched in 2016 in order to host major Council consultations, promote the public open forum meetings with the Leader and Cabinet and to provide a way for people to get involved with local decision making. This has not been as effective as it could be. There needs to be greater coordination between the consultations on the Council website and the ward element within the Open Forum micro site in order to engender better engagement from local residents.

6.7 Robin Campbell, Head of Campaigns and Customer Engagement, acknowledged that Westminster’s digital offer including its website has some considerable distance to make up against many other local and central public bodies and to meet the needs of customers. He advised that there is a desire to improve the design, content and functionality of the Council’s website so that it includes greater capability as well as introducing features that are more mobile responsive.

6.8 Maria Benbow, Commercial and Digital Transformation Director, explained that the front facing capabilities are not fully supported by back-office systems where there is a lack of inter-connectivity and integration. She explained that the Council has circa 75 microsites/third party platforms and a significant number of these are not linked together. She advised that transitioning to the next step of the Council’s digital progression starts with classifying and mapping key user journeys which will help the Council to simplify, automate, rationalise or eliminate processes. This will include a more online transactional experience for users, in line with best practice across sectors. To achieve the latter the Council has recently procured Microsoft Dynamics to implement a new “My Westminster Account” which will be launched through a phased approach later this year. Every effort will be utilised to motivate users to adopt online services by creating and registering their new account. The

“My Account” software has already been successfully tried and tested in other local authorities.

- 6.9 Maria Benbow thanked the Committee for their feedback on the current service delivery which will be reflected upon when developing new services.
- 6.10 The Committee then discussed the Council’s emerging digital transformation strategy and put forward suggestions on the digital end-to-end services, processes and platforms that it believed would enhance the customer experience. This included:
- A more intuitive “Report It” tool so that non-compliance/breaches of Planning, Parking, Licensing and Noise conditions or rules can be addressed.
 - A “notify me” tool where residents are informed about Planning and Licensing applications submitted in their vicinity which they can then make representations on.
 - Ensuring that links on the Council’s website remain static so that they can be accessed at a later date from an email notification.
 - Developing more online transactional opportunities for users which, in addition to improving the range of tasks available to users, can also generate income for the Council.
- 6.11 Maria Benbow advised that the Council was already working with the Environmental Health Noise team to provide a digital solution for people to report noise issues. In response of comments on Planning and Licensing, the Council intended to map the customer journey to understand the current user experience and the touch points including the interconnectivity or lack thereof. This will involve consultation with a cross section of stakeholders. The Council will also look at payment opportunities and the best solutions on the market. She agreed with the principle of ensuring that links on the Council’s website remain static.
- 6.12 Officers were asked how digital services would be prioritised as part of the development of the digital strategy; Whether this will be based on what users want or where the most savings can be delivered? They were also asked whether there is a risk that improving the digital experience will result in much greater reporting of issues which the Council may struggle to react to. John Quinn, Bi-borough Director of Corporate Services, explained that while the main focus of the strategy will be to improve the customer journey, the need to bridge the £18 million budget gap for 2018-2019 and reduce costs will influence priorities.
- 6.13 A feasibility study will run until the end of the summer. Each directorate had been asked to second a “Champion” to support the project as the Council’s staff are some of the best placed to identify where the current limitations are.

6.14 John Quinn explained that Members will naturally have their views on the priorities for the strategy which will be submitted to the Cabinet for decision in September.

6.15 The Committee noted that the perceived barriers to success such as apathy, resistance to change and the ability to deliver the supporting mechanisms to facilitate the change can be overcome with strong organisational leadership. In response to questions, John Quinn explained that while support for aspects of the digital transformation both at member and officer level was not universal (such as the use of Amazon Alexa - a voice activated personal assistant that can answer phone queries) the Council was working to overcome this through education and developing the right level of skills and experience.

6.16 **RESOLVED:**

1. Members noted that there are raised expectations from residents and councillors for improved, enhanced and consistent digital end-to-end Council services, processes and platforms which are easy and quick to use and provide a more holistic customer service approach.
2. The committee acknowledged the importance of improving the 'Report It' function and delivering an enhanced use of automated web forms to support customers. It also highlighted the importance of residents receiving feedback on issues that they have reported.
3. The Committee welcomed the examples of new digital solutions being developed in conjunction with the Council's Noise, Planning and Licensing Services but stressed that these should be developed in consultation with councillors and residents.
4. The Committee considered that where there are references on the Council's website to services that are provided by partners rather than the Council, such as the NHS, police and Transport for London, the website should include signposts to these bodies.
5. It was recognised that there is an opportunity to develop further the Open Forum micro site to improve engagement with local people.
6. The Committee also recognised the need for strong organisational leadership and sponsorship at member and officer level to enable the successful delivery of the digital transformation.

6.17 **ACTIONS:**

1. Provide the committee with the plan for the delivery of the 'My Account' programme including key milestones. (**Action for: Maria Benbow, Commercial and Digital Transformation Director**)
2. Following the completion of the feasibility phase of the programme in August, the Committee would like to consider and provide feedback on the

outline business case and design solutions prior to these being considered by Cabinet in September. **(Action for: Maria Benbow, Commercial and Digital Transformation Director/Muge Dindjer, Scrutiny Manager)**

7 UPDATE ON CITYWEST HOMES TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

- 7.1 The committee received an update from Jonathan Cowie, Chief Executive Officer of CityWest Homes, and Martin Edgerton, Executive Director of Customer Services, on CityWest Homes (CWH) Transformation Programme.
- 7.2 The committee was asked for feedback on what they saw as the highest priority from residents; where they saw the most opportunity for greater joint working across CWH services and which aspects of the service was most in need of modernisation.
- 7.3 The committee asked questions and received responses on a range of issues including:
- 7.3.1 How performance and resident satisfaction with the new operating model and repairs and major works contracts will be assessed? Mr Cowie explained that this would be achieved through monitoring key performance indicators that are set by the Council. These are reviewed by various boards both within CWH and the Council. Resident satisfaction will also be captured through the independently run annual resident satisfaction survey.
- 7.3.2 Members were keen to ensure that there are more holistic approaches to addressing the needs of vulnerable residents with links between CWH and other Council services and partner organisations such as the NHS. Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing and Regeneration, advised that one of the Council's top priorities is to ensure that CWH is closely integrated with the hubs programme which aims to make better use of the Council and partners assets to improve access to preventative services. In response to further questions Barbara Brownlee stated that the estate offices that were due to close could possibly be used as hub offices or alternatively CWH may be provided with space alongside other services in alternative hub spaces. Mr Cowie stated that he would welcome the development of coordinated plans to address residents' needs.
- 7.3.3 The Committee asked how CWH was engaging with the Council's emerging digital strategy. Mr Cowie reported that the chief executive had asked him to sit on the Council's Digital Board. He explained that in the future residents would be able to see the collective data held about them by the two organisations through their 'My Account' facility. He explained that in advance of this a significant amount of work would need to take place to clean up the current resident data held by CWH. Additionally the data held by each

organisation would need to be accessible from a single point. He believed that it would take approximately 2 years to implement this.

7.3.4 Members asked for an update on the CWH out of hours call centre which was currently being operated by the Council. Mr Edgerton acknowledged the challenges for CWH to provide this service. He stated that when CWH takes back the service from the Council it will look at the hours over which the service is provided. Mr Cowie advised that CWH's ambition is to be proactive and update residents on issues that they have reported so that they do not have to contact the out of hours call centre.

7.3.5 Officers were asked what mitigation CWH was taking to protect residents from noise, dust or fumes as a consequence of building works being undertaken underneath Kemp House on Berwick Street. The committee was informed that the development was being undertaken by a private sector developer rather than CWH. CWH and the Council were looking at how they could be more forceful in dealing with third parties impacting on CWH tenants. This included asking the CWH development team to look at opportunities to pursue party wall agreements to avoid leaks into residents' properties as well as asking a City Council structural development surveyor to look at opportunities to address issues caused by the developer.

7.4 **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

7.5 **ACTIONS:**

1. The committee would like to receive regular updates on the performance of and resident satisfaction with the new operating model and new repairs/major works contracts. (**Action for: Jonathan Cowie/Martin Edgerton, CWH**)
2. Provide Councillor Church with a note on actions that CWH and the Council are undertaking to protect the residents of Kemp House on Berwick Street from the impact of building works being undertaken beneath the building by a private sector developer. (**Action for: Ed Watson, Executive Director of Growth Planning and Housing, in consultation with Jonathan Cowie, CWH**)

8 CITY HALL REFURBISHMENT TASK GROUP REPORT

8.1 The committee received a report that set out the role, responsibilities, scope and impact of the work of the City Hall Refurbishment Task Group since inception on 27th June 2016. The report highlighted the role of the Task Group as a critical friend and described the process and outcomes as a consequence of the insight of the group.

8.2 The committee noted the areas in which the task group had challenged proposals and provided useful insight.

8.3 **RESOLVED:**

The committee agreed that as the decant of the Council's operation and staff from City Hall to temporary locations has been successfully completed and the award for the construction contract for the refurbishment of City Hall is in its final stages the role of the task group has been completed and that it should now be closed down.

The Meeting ended at 9.25 pm

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE _____

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Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Policy & Scrutiny Committee

Date:	11 September 2017
Classification:	General Release
Title:	2017/18 Work Programme and Action Tracker
Report of:	Director of Policy, Performance & Communications
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Housing Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	All
Report Author and Contact Details:	Aaron Hardy x 2894 ahardy1@westminster.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the current work programme for approval based on discussion at the last meeting and with senior officers. It also presents an update on the action tracker.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
- Review and approve the draft list of suggested items and prioritise where required
 - Note the action tracker at Appendix 2

3. Current Work Programme

- 3.1 This work programme takes from work programme agreed at the Committee's last meeting and incorporates changes based on the modified agenda for this meeting. It is presented here for Committee to review and amend as appropriate.

- 3.2 A joint Task Group to review the City Council's approach to investments has been agreed with the Audit and Performance Committee. The Task Group will meet on 13th September and will consider all of the Council's investments.
- 3.3 A joint Task Group with members of the Audit & Performance Committee to contribute to the re-procurement process for the managed services contract has been agreed. Work is on-going to plan this Task Group with a view to working with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea where possible. The Task Group will meet in September.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please Aaron Hardy

ahardy1@westminster.gov.uk

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1- Suggested work programme

Appendix 2- Action Tracker

ROUND ONE 12th JUNE 2017

Agenda Item	Action and responsible officer	Update
Item 5 – Cabinet Member Update	<u>High Value Voids Levy</u> - Inform Members when the government consultation on the formula to determine the payment will take place	Officer advice is that this is now likely to be quietly dropped as there has been a change of Housing Minister.
	<u>Shared Ownership Sales at North Wharf Road</u> - the committee would like to know how many of the shared ownership properties have been sold. (Action for: Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing & Regeneration)	Response emailed to Members on 31/7/2017
Item 6- Update on the Digital Service and Future Plans	Provide the committee with the plan for the delivery of the 'My Account' programme including key milestones. (Action for: Maria Benbow, Commercial and Digital Transformation Director)	Response emailed to Members on 1/9/2017
	Following the completion of the feasibility phase of the programme in the Committee would like to consider and provide feedback on the outline business case and design solutions prior to these being considered by Cabinet. (Action for: Maria Benbow, Commercial and Digital Transformation Director/Muge Dindjer, Scrutiny Manager)	Ongoing. The feasibility study continues until the end of December. A workshop with members of the Committee can be organized to review some of the findings. The suggested timing for this is October.
Item 7-CityWest Homes-Transformation Programme	The committee would like to receive regular updates on the performance of and resident satisfaction with the new operating model and new repairs/major works contracts. (Action for: Jonathan Cowie/Martin Edgerton, CWH)	This item has been placed on the Committee's work program

Action Tracker



Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

	Provide Councillor Church with a note on actions that CWH and the Council are undertaking to protect the residents of Kemp House on Berwick Street from the impact of building works being undertaken beneath the building by a private sector developer. (Action for: Jonathan Cowie/Martin Edgerton, CWH)	Response emailed to members on 17/08/18
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ROUND SIX (10 APRIL 2017)

Agenda Item	Action and responsible officer	Update
Item 5 – Cabinet Member Update	<i>Provide Councillor Roca with details of Westminster's external legal spend. (Action for: Tasmin Shawkat)</i>	Response requested
	How will the Council identify the skills gap in each directorate to determine how they should spend their 0.5% contribution on apprenticeships? (Action for: Lee Witham, Director of People Services)	Response emailed to Members on 27/4/2017
Item 5- Cabinet Member Update	The committee requested an assessment of the likely impact of the Homelessness Reduction Bill on the Council. (Action for: Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing & Regeneration)	Work is ongoing on producing this information. A new costings template has been released and officers are working on completing this.

ROUND FIVE (6 MARCH 2017)

Agenda Item	Action and responsible officer	Update
Item 5 – Cabinet Member Update	The committee would like details about the Council's IT security strategy to mitigate the threats to the organisation. Members wanted to know whether cloud computing provides the same security as the existing server	Awaiting response

Action Tracker



Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

	infrastructure. Action for: Ben Goward, Head of Digital Information)	
	Members would like a note on any changes to business rates and any impact on the Council following an amendment on transitional relief expected to be announced by the Chancellor in tomorrow's spring budget. (Action for: Steve Mair, City Treasurer)	Emailed to members on 13 March 2017
Item - Estate Regeneration Review	Councillor Roca asked about how many homes (social/affordable) the Council will have delivered between 2014 and 2018, i.e. Between the last and next local election. (Action for: Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing and Regeneration)	Emailed to Cllr Roca by BB on 14.03.2017
Item – HRA Business Plan Review	As the 2017/18 Plan anticipates borrowing to peak in year 7 to £334 m which is equal to the HRA debt cap and reserves reducing to around a minimum level of c £11m for 20 years the committee would like to include a regular update on the HRA Business Plan to its work programme. (Action for: Tara Murphy, Policy & Scrutiny Officer)	Listed on 2017/2018 work programme

ROUND FOUR (9 JANUARY 2017)

Agenda Item	Action and responsible officer	Update
Item 5 – Cabinet Member Update	Provide Members with details of the current and projected year-end underspend in the Council budget and the reasons for this (Action for: Steve Mair, City Treasurer/Martin Hinckley, Head of Revenue and Benefits)	Response emailed to members on 17/08/18

Action Tracker



Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

	Provide an analysis of the likely impact of the new business rateable values for West End businesses. Will this require any changes to the Council's Discretionary Rating Appeals scheme and what changes are anticipated in the number of hardship applications this year? (Action for: Steve Mair, City Treasurer/ Martin Hinckley, Head of Revenue and Benefits)	Emailed to Members 06.03.17
Item 6 – Luxborough Street Development	The Committee has requested information on whether any other schemes with similar sized costs have been aborted in the last 4-5 years. (Action for: Guy Slocombe, Director of Property, Investment and Estates)	Sent to Members on 02.03.17
	Subject to his views, Members would like sight of the Programme Management report commissioned by the Chief Executive. (Action for: Guy Slocombe, Director of Property, Investment and Estates)	Sent to Members on 02.03.17 (confidential paper)
Item 7 – Treasury Performance Half Year Review	That a task group should be established to consider the previously specified Treasury opportunities. Other Treasury opportunities not covered in the TMSS should also be presented for consideration as well as a review of the policy on the countries in which deposits/investments can be invested. (Action for: Tara Murphy, Scrutiny Officer)	Confirming appropriate timescale with officers

ROUND THREE (7 NOVEMBER 16)

Agenda Item	Action and responsible officer	Update
Item 7 – Re-commissioning the housing options service	RESOLVED: Following careful consideration, the Committee endorsed the overall strategic approach to the reshaping and procurement of the Housing Options Service. It has	Listed on 2017/2018 work programme

Action Tracker



Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

requested that a further update be provided to the committee as the procurement moves forward.

(Tara Murphy identify suitable time for an update to be received by committee)

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Work Programme



Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

ROUND ONE – 12 June 2017

Agenda Item	Reasons & objective for item	Represented by:
Cabinet Member Q&A	A Q&A session	
Digital Transformation Programme	To receive an update on current delivery via digital channels and review progress on the Council's digital transformation programme (including website and Report It)	Robin Campbell Maria Benbow
CityWest Homes Transformation	To review the assessment of demand and consultation methodology for estate office closures	Jonathan Cowie Martin Edgerton

ROUND TWO – 11 September 2017

Agenda Item	Agenda Item	Agenda Item
Cabinet Member Q&A	A Q&A session	Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Corporate Services
Supply and Allocation of Affordable and Social Housing		Barbara Brownlee
The Fire Safety of CityWest Homes Housing Stock	To ascertain the position of our stock and ensure that CWH complies with legislative and best practice requirements	Barbara Brownlee Jonathan Cowie

ROUND THREE – 6 November 2017

Agenda Item	Agenda Item	Agenda Item
Cabinet Member Q&A	A Q&A session	
WESTCO		Ian Farrow
Treasury Performance Half Year Statutory Review	A statutory review of treasury performance	Steve Mair

Work Programme



Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

HRA Business Plan Review		Barbara Brownlee
CityWest Homes-Transformation Programme	The committee would like to receive regular updates on the performance of and resident satisfaction with the new operating model and new repairs/major works contracts.	Martin Edgerton

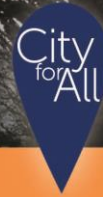
ROUND FOUR – 15 January 2018

Agenda Item	Agenda Item	Agenda Item
Cabinet Member Q&A	A Q&A session	
Draft Treasury Management Strategy	A statutory assessment of the draft treasury management strategy prior to submission to Council for approval.	Steve Mair
Housing Regeneration programme Progress-report/site visit		Barbara Brownlee

ROUND FIVE – 26 March 2018

Agenda Item	Agenda Item	Agenda Item
Cabinet Member Q&A	A Q&A session	
Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer Pilots		

Work Programme



Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

Other Committee Events & Task Groups

Briefings	Reason	Date
Managed Services Re-procurement T/G	Joint task group with members of the Audit & Performance Committee to contribute to the re-procurement process for the managed services contract.	September 2017
Budget T/G	Standing task Group to consider the budget of Council	October 2017

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City of Westminster

Housing, Finance & Corporate Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee Briefing

Date: Monday, 11th September 2017

Author: Cllr Tim Mitchell

Portfolio: Cabinet Member for Finance & Corporate Services

Please contact: Richard Cressey x3403
rcressey@westminster.gov.uk

1. Corporate Finance

Business Rates

- 1.1 In the Spring Budget, the government announced several changes to Business Rates, including:
 - A supporting Small Business Rate Relief scheme;
 - A £1000 allowance for public houses with a rateable value below £100,000;
 - A Discretionary Fund for local authorities to assist businesses adversely affected by the Revaluation rateable increases.
- 1.2 The Council has now billed the 171 Public Houses that may be entitled to the Public House Allowance and the 97 businesses that could be entitled to the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme. The Council is now consulting with local businesses and other stakeholders on the Discretionary Relief Scheme.
- 1.3 It was expected that the Queen's Speech would contain the Government's intentions to amend Business Rates legislation, however no announcement was made. DCLG have issued a statement confirming that the Government is still committed to Business Rate reform. It is now unclear if or when any significant changes will take place.
- 1.4 The Council achieved "in year" collection rates as at the end of July of 42.05% for NNDR (42.37% at the same point in July 2016) and 47.63% for Council Tax (47.76% at the same point in July 2016). In both cases this is very slightly down on last year's collection, however, it is expected that collection by year end will match or exceed last year's performance.

Discretionary Housing Payment Funding

- 1.5 The Government has announced the Council's Discretionary Housing Payment Funding for 2017/18. The funding of £1.4M represents a 47% reduction on our 2016/17 funding however for 2017/18 an additional £1m has been allocated from the Council's General Reserves. The Council's revised Discretionary Housing payment policy has been completed and is now awaiting approval from Legal Services and the City Treasurer.

Sundry Debtors

- 1.6 The automated invoice reminder process continues to work well, with BT providing a daily report of reminders issued the previous day. The direct contact project has resumed whereby we are supporting service areas to follow-up unpaid invoices by contacting the largest value debtors (exceeding £50k). Centrally, the pilot exercise with a third party provider to take further action on a small number of unpaid debts has been slightly delayed, but is now expected to be underway in September. The results will inform our strategy on debt recovery.

Accounts Payable

- 1.7 No PO No Pay became compulsory from 1st June 2017. Suppliers are now required to quote valid WCC purchase order numbers on all invoices. Invoices that do not comply are being deleted from Agresso. A few items continue to be exempt from this policy, such as utility bills, precepts and levy payments, compensation and refund payments. The compliance rate with No PO No Pay for non-exempt items was at 98.3% in Period 4. Efforts are being made by the Accounts Payable Team and service areas to achieve full compliance.

Final Accounts 2016/17

- 1.8 The Council's 2016/17 accounts were published and sent for audit in 4 working days – 3 days earlier than last year. The external auditors provided a draft opinion on these accounts on 9th May and a full opinion on 18th July. The Audit and Performance Committee has also approved the accounts
- 1.9 There were two objections to the 2016/17 accounts, made during the public inspection period related to lender's option borrower's option (LOBO) transactions taken out many years previously. Resolution of these is anticipated by the end of August and a verbal update will be given at the meeting. All objections relating to prior years have now been cleared. There were no objections to the 2015/16 accounts.

Budget 2018/19

- 1.10 The Council is progressing with its planning for the 2018/19 budget which will be reported to Scrutiny, Cabinet and Council in due course.

2. Corporate Property

Investment

- 2.1 The property management contract to GVA expires in May 2018. Preparation of procurement of a new property manager is underway. Active asset management of the investment portfolio continues. Of 368 assets that make up the portfolio, 19 are vacant, representing 1.75% of estimated rental value of the portfolio. This is well within acceptable limits. Of the 19, 12 are not in the market, owing to redevelopment or regeneration programmes. Income has increased since the beginning of the financial year by £516,000. No further acquisitions have been made pending completion and ratification of the Council's updated overarching investment strategy.

Operational Property

- 2.2 The savings target for 17/18 of £597,000 from rationalisation of the corporate estate has been met. Work is on-going to deliver next year's savings and to develop a hub based corporate estate to encourage co-location, better accessibility to Council services and to generate further savings.

City Hall Refurbishment

- 2.3 All Council staff and Members have successfully vacated City Hall and moved to either Portland House or 5 Strand. The moves were well managed and staff reported positively on their experience. City Hall was handed over to our Contractor, ISG, on 24th July when the soft strip began. We now have a working relationship with Land Securities and obtained their consent for the external temporary works. Scaffolding is therefore being erected and the refurbishment works remain on programme and budget. Practical completion is due in November 2018 and staff will start to move back in December/January.

3. Corporate Services

People Services

- 3.1 On the 8th June, People Services hosted a graduate assessment day for 12 potential candidates. A range of senior leaders across all services took part in supporting the day and carrying out interviews. As a result four graduate places have now been offered this year.
- 3.2 The Westminster Way staff awards were held on 22nd June 2017 to celebrate the achievements of our staff. The winners were:
- PACE Award - Individual Aruj Haider (People Services – Corporate Services)
 - PACE Award Team – Registrars (Libraries – City Management & Communities)
 - 'City for All' Outstanding Achievement Award Individual - Kiran Malik (Public Protection – City Management & Communities)
 - 'City for All' Outstanding Achievement Award Team - Team Two City Inspectors (Public Protection – City Management & Communities)
 - Team of the Year - Trading Standards Financial Investigations Team (Public Protection – City Management & Communities)
 - Leader of the Year - Anabel Lopez (Libraries – City Management & Communities)

- Partner of the Year - Konstantinos Vlachakis, Centrepoint (Housing – Growth, Planning and Housing)
- Young Person of the Year - Charley-Mae Foster (Operations – Policy, Performance and Communications)
- Volunteer of the Year - Policy Performance and Communications
- Staff Choice Award - Greta Kurkuzinskaite (Procurement – Corporate Services)

3.3 Also highly commended:

- Outdoor Learning Unit for Team of the Year Award (Sports – City Management & Communities)
- Jamie Shah for Young Person of the Year Award (City Treasurer)
- Beth Coyne for PACE Individual Award (Employment Team – Growth, Planning and Housing)
- Jennifer Travassos for Leader of the Year Award (Rough Sleeping Team – Growth, Planning and Housing)

3.4 Following consultation with staff, the new and refreshed staff survey will be called “Our Voice” and is set to launch on the 18th September 2017. The Council has also commissioned ORC (the new supplier) to conduct shorter pulse surveys, the first of which was carried out in July with a pilot group, in order to understand how people are getting on with agile ways of working following decant. The results of the pulse survey have been shared with the agile working group and will be presented to senior management teams of September.

Procurement

- 3.5 CityWest Homes have completed the procurement of five term contracts for maintenance services for the next ten years. They are; Mechanical Services, Domestic Heating, Voids, Responsive Repairs and Electrical Services. Cabinet Member approval has been received and the contract award process commenced.
- 3.6 Following the judging of the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply UK Supply Management Awards 2017, we are delighted to confirm that Westminster City Council has been shortlisted for Delivering Social Value through Responsible Procurement in the Best Contribution to Corporate Responsibility category. The Awards night will be held on Wednesday 13th September 2017 at the Grosvenor House, Park Lane.
- 3.7 In addition, Westminster City Council has been shortlisted for the 2017 London Borough Apprenticeship Awards in the category Best Work with Supply Chains.
- 3.8 Westminster Procurement Services was awarded its first engagement with the procurement of a works contract for Sion Manning School, north Kensington.
- 3.9 Belfast City Council has confirmed its intent to award Westminster Procurement Services with a contract for the delivery of key procurement services. The first two phases which will run in parallel are a review of Belfast’s current operating model for procurement and the appointment of an interim Head of Procurement. Two further phases (Delivery of Programme of sourcing and contract initiatives and the Implementation of recommendations from phase 1) are under consideration subject to

the outcome of phase 1. Phase 1 is a 10 week engagement and phase 2 is a six month engagement.

ICT

- 3.10 The major programme of IT works to support the City Hall decant have now been completed. The final stages included migration/decommission of City Hall Mezzanine floor datacentre and provision of new IT services in Strand and Portland House. This work was completed within budget and on time to give vacant possession of City Hall in July 2017. It is the culmination of a wide ranging programme which included also the implementation of new flexible working software such as Office365.
- 3.11 A new customer digital technology platform (MyAccount), which is based on the Microsoft Dynamics 365 platform, has been undertaken with partners Pythagoras and a team of IT developers. The initial MyAccount capability and customer journeys, integrated into legacy Council systems have been developed, and will be implemented during Autumn 2017.
- 3.12 The team have been providing critical services in support of Grenfell response, such as provision of IT services to support RBKC and WCC's response and humanitarian aid teams and dealing with the major additional data security workloads arising from the public response and legal action. The Shared ICT Service has also led on the logistical response to Grenfell donations processing, working with a variety of commercial and charitable agencies to ensure that donated items were processed efficiently and in support of the victims.
- 3.13 Development of a new strategy, leadership and sourcing approach for the Shared IT Service has now commenced. This will establish a single shared ICT service for RBKC and WCC following expiry of current BT, Agilisys, VMB and Ericsson contract terms. This will help to ensure a strong digital capability to support Council transformation.

Digital

- 3.14 All roles on the post-reset Digital Programme are being filled by appropriately and we are now close to completing the team. In addition, we have been successful in appointing a CWH secondee into the programme, working with GPH. This will provide an excellent opportunity for us to gain access and data into otherwise unknown areas.
- 3.15 A feasibility study is currently underway to explore options for the Digital Programme and provide recommendations for delivering savings, efficiencies and improvements to services, whilst ensuring the continued development of the ambition to support the Customer journey.
- 3.16 Whilst the timelines of the study have been impacted by Grenfell, in that secondees and access to data has been delayed, the team is working hard to mitigate the impact. Opportunities have already been identified and the latter phase of the feasibility study will push to explore opportunities across the organisation.
- 3.17 Data mapping continues to be a challenge; some progress is being made but remaining work to truly understand the organisation's data quality and architecture should not be underestimated.

Managed Services

- 3.18 **MSP Commercial Negotiations:** Following on the successful conclusion of the commercial negotiations, the team have continued to work with BT to define what constitutes a “good enough service” until the end of the contract. This is being shared with the Finance and HR Directors of all three boroughs, with a view to completing a formal Change Control Note by the end of August.
- 3.19 **MSP Re-procurement:** At a meeting with the Chief Executives of both WCC and RBKC on 15th August, agreement was reached that both boroughs would continue to work together and that they would, by the end of October, develop a business case with Hampshire CC to join the Hampshire Partnership, with the aim of implementing a replacement for BT Managed Services by the end of September 2018.

Legal Services

- 3.20 Senior managers and officers in Legal Services have been extremely busy following the major incident at Grenfell Tower. External Solicitors, counsel and a number of QCs have been appointed. The service has had to bring in additional staff to assist with the day to day work.
- 3.21 Legal is progressing detailed due diligence work on the business case for an ABS (Alternative Business Structure), where the services are shared with three other authorities under a wholly owned company. The business case was well received by Cabinet Briefing on 17th July and the aim is to bring the final Report to Cabinet for approval on 9th October. If the Tri-borough Councils go ahead, this will give the service greater resilience.



Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	11 September 2017
Classification:	General Release
Title:	CWH & WCC's Response to Fire Safety within WCC's Housing Stock in light of the Grenfell Tower fire
Report of:	Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing & Regeneration
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Housing
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	City for Choice, Heritage & Aspiration
Report Author and Contact Details:	Martyn Jones, Executive Director for Asset Strategy & Development, CityWest Homes Tel: 020 7245 2496 / Email: mjones@cwh.org.uk

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report considers the work undertaken by CityWest Homes (CWH) and Westminster City Council (the Council) in light of the Grenfell Tower fire on 14/15 June 2017. It focusses on the work associated with maintaining and enhancing the safety of the Council's housing stock, as opposed to the wider work undertaken by the Council and CWH supporting the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC).
- 1.2. CWH and the Council have engaged fully with the Government in response to various requests for information and tests.
- 1.3. Following the Grenfell Tower fire, there has been significant engagement with residents by CWH and the Council. Information regarding CWH' regime for maintaining fire safety of the housing stock was shared with and explained to residents, to provide reassurance. The tower blocks at Little Venice on the Warwick and Brindley estates have cladding similar to that at Grenfell Tower and a bespoke communications plan was put in place for those residents.

- 1.4. All tower blocks over ten stories were visited within the first few days following the fire, to carry out visual checks and to ensure all fire related signs and guidance was up to date and appropriate. Independent and/or scheduled Fire Risk Assessments with London Fire Brigade (LFB) have been put into place. CWH' fire safety team are working closely with LFB to ensure the safety of the stock.
- 1.5. CWH has identified 22 initial projects covering all aspects of fire safety. Some of the resulting recommendations will be considered by CWH Executive and Board, whilst others will be referred to the Council for policy decisions.
- 1.6. CWH is in consultation with LFB on proposals to remove the cladding at Little Venice towers.
- 1.7. Although there is no requirement to retrospectively fit sprinklers, the Council has committed to provide sprinklers in all its housing stock over 30 metres. Independent experts have been commissioned to provide advice and options for installation.
- 1.8. CWH's Executive Team meets twice weekly to review progress of identified fire safety actions and the Board has been kept updated. At least weekly up-dates have been provided to the Cabinet Member for Housing, WCC's Chief Executive and Director of Housing & Regeneration.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- 1) How effective has WCC/CWH been in responding to the concerns raised by tenants about fire safety?
- 2) What approach would the committee like to see taken with regard to ensuring leaseholder compliance with legal and contractual responsibilities
- 3) Are there any further actions that the Committee would like to see WCC/CWH take?

3. Background

- 3.1. This report provides a summary of the key issues arising for the Council following the Grenfell Tower fire on 14 June 2017. It concentrates on matters relating to maintaining and enhancing the safety of the Council's own housing stock, as opposed to the significant response and assistance that the Council and CWH provided to the RBKC.
- 3.2. Fire safety management and a focus on the safety of social housing is now in the national spotlight, and is likely to remain so over the coming years. There is the potential for the Grenfell Tower Inquiry to lead to new regulations governing the management of fire safety, new/revised building regulation standards for the stock and for co-ordinating responses to major emergencies.

4. Government Advice & Engagement

- 4.1. CWH as the responsible person under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (RRO), is responsible for fire safety management across the Council's housing stock. In accordance with the duties under the RRO, CWH has completed risk assessments for all properties, which fall within the scope of the order (i.e. single family homes/ dwelling houses are excluded). Fire risk assessments are completed by in-house fire risk assessors, who hold the relevant professional memberships and third party certification to be deemed competent, in accordance with current Competency Council guidance.
- 4.2. Any deficiencies identified with the physical precautions within blocks or the management regime are dealt with by CWH and through the term repair and maintenance contracts or the capital work programme. The current fire improvement programme across the stock has been budgeted at circa £45 million pounds. Works are programmed according to risk and full delivery is scheduled over a ten year period.
- 4.3. Immediately after the Grenfell Tower fire, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) contacted local authorities to identify buildings that might have cladding of a similar nature to that at Grenfell Tower – known as Aluminium Composite Materials (ACM) panels. CWH and the Council have generally responded to each information request from DCLG within a 24 hour period.
- 4.4. The six tower blocks on the Warwick and Brindley estates (the Little Venice towers), have similar but not identical ACM cladding panels to that understood to have been on the Grenfell Tower. In addition, Parsons House just off the Edgware Road has an aluminium cladding system, although this is not ACM.
- 4.5. Shortly after the Grenfell Tower fire, the Government announced that it wanted local authorities to send samples for testing of the ACM panels; testing was being done by its Building Research Establishment (BRE). CWH provided a sample of the Little Venice towers cladding. These initial tests were widely reported as universally 'failing' across the Country.
- 4.6. In light of this, DCLG advised that local authorities engage with their local fire brigades, to assess whether there were significant risks. CWH's work with the LFB re-confirmed that they were satisfied with the works and fire risk assessments undertaken by CWH.
- 4.7. In light of the 100% failure of the first round of tests, DCLG announced that a second, more comprehensive round of tests were being undertaken by the BRE. This would test not just the outer panels, but also the insulation and fire breaks between floors. A series of six tests were planned, based on two types of insulation and three different types of outer cladding panels.
- 4.8. The Little Venice towers' cladding system was assessed under Test 2, namely where there is non-combustible insulation and a Category 3 cladding panel. The results of Test 2 were confirmed to the Council as having 'failed' early evening on Wednesday 2

August. The DCLG stated that it would be publishing the results the following day, and the Council should inform its residents as a matter of urgency.

- 4.9. Later that evening, DCLG released the test results for a number of councils to the press and regrettably, some residents learnt of the failure prior to being notified by the Council. DCLG released an apology the following day.
- 4.10. Following the outcome of Test 2, the Council immediately re-confirmed its plans to remove the existing Category 3 cladding at Little Venice, and replace it with Category 1 cladding (the highest safety-rated version). The removal of the cladding at the Little Venice towers is due to start in October, with all of the buildings scheduled for re-cladding by April 2018.

5. Fire Safety Management review, post Grenfell Tower fire.

- 5.1. Following the Grenfell Tower fire CWH instigated a full review of fire safety management. In conjunction with LFB, they commenced an immediate joint audit across all blocks over ten storeys, to review the existing fire risk assessments. In addition, CWH fire risk assessors visited the Little Venice tower blocks with members of LFB's central task force and engineering team to review fire safety at the blocks, given the presence of ACM cladding.
- 5.2. Subsequently an external certified consultant has been commissioned to undertake Type 4 (In-flat intrusive) fire risk assessments within all blocks over ten storeys, with enclosed communal parts.
- 5.3. In the isolated instances where the joint audits have identified deficiencies with a block's fire precautions, CWH has shared LFB's findings with residents, and CWH's subsequent response to ensuring matters are addressed.
- 5.4. CWH is also currently reprogramming the fire risk assessment review programme to ensure that all risk assessments on blocks over six storeys are reviewed within the next six months. Additionally, the scope of the fire risk assessments on purpose built blocks has been extended from Type 2 (communal) to Type 3 (In-flat, non-destructive). Additional competent in-house assessors have been appointed to enable completion of this escalated programme.
- 5.5. CWH has created and recruited (pre Grenfell Tower fire), a new post whose function is to ensure that fire improvement works are prioritised and delivered in accordance with best practice standards.
- 5.6. CWH are currently reviewing the ten year capital fire safety investment programme, to identify areas where works can be brought forwards and delivery timescales reduced.

6. Resident Engagement

- 6.1. The immediate priorities following the Grenfell Tower fire were to reassure residents, particularly those living in the 41 blocks of 10+ storeys across Westminster, and to check that effective fire safety measures were in place and managed rigorously.
- 6.2. A single point of contact was publicised for residents with fire safety related enquiries through which common concerns and issues were identified & monitored. The insight provided was then used to produce communications for all residents with answers to frequently asked questions.
- 6.3. In the first four weeks following the Grenfell Tower fire, over 430 enquiries were received. All were automatically acknowledged at the point of receipt with a standard fire safety message and each received an individual response. The themes that have come out of the enquiries include:
 - requests for copies of fire risk assessments
 - dates and proof of testing regimes for alarms, emergency lighting etc.
 - specific cladding testing & composition
 - safety of gas installations & testing
 - parking and arrangements for emergency services
 - removal of fire hazards from the common parts of buildings
 - fire doors and door closers
 - advice on leaseholder responsibilities
 - alterations and enforcing leaseholder responsibilities
 - requests for fire alarms, extinguishers, sprinklers etc.
 - fire action notices and the 'stay put' policy
- 6.4. Since 15 June, the residents of Little Venice have received eight letters and citywide, residents have received a minimum of three letters, with some blocks receiving more. Tailored letters were provided to specific blocks, for example, blocks undergoing major works, other tower blocks and to residents in community supportive housing.
- 6.5. There were unprecedented call volumes to CWH through the new contact centre following the Grenfell Tower fire. CWH had anticipated c.4.5k calls per week, and at its peak, call volumes reached c7.6k calls per week. Additional resources were put in place to deal with the increased call volumes.
- 6.6. Understandably, the tower blocks have generated more enquiries than low rise blocks, with most enquiries coming from the Little Venice tower blocks. One of the most common questions was 'why is there a stay put policy?' This has been covered in answers to frequently asked questions, sent to all residents in July and provided as Appendix 1 to this report. CWH has repeated the advice from LFB, which has not changed since the Grenfell Tower fire.

- 6.7. Guidance from LFB for most purpose built blocks is to 'stay put', unless the flat is being affected by fire or smoke. There is a Fire Action Notice in all blocks in the main building entrance explaining the action residents should take in the event of a fire.
- 6.8. Purpose-built maisonettes or blocks of flats are built to give some protection from fire and the structure is designed to hold back flames and smoke for 30 to 60 minutes.
- 6.9. Fire drills are not held as they would contradict the 'stay put' policy and create confusion amongst residents. In the event of an emergency which requires the phased evacuation of a block of flats, LFB would manage and direct the evacuation.

7. Little Venice Towers

- 7.1. A bespoke communications strategy has been established for the 750 homes in the Little Venice towers.
- 7.2. The estate office for the Little Venice area closed in early June, and was re-opened following the Grenfell Tower fire. A housing management team have remained on-site to provide fire safety advice and support to residents. This is not envisaged to continue indefinitely, but will be retained for the time being.
- 7.3. 24 hour security guards have been employed to monitor the six blocks.
- 7.4. The Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Housing, Director of Housing & Regeneration, senior CWH staff and the LFB Borough Commander held an open meeting with residents on the estate on 24 July 2017. Concerns were raised, including cladding, and the timber decking installed on balconies, which it was agreed will be replaced, as explained at Section 10.

8. CWH Governance & Risk Assessments

- 8.1. On Wednesday 15 June, CWH Executive Team met and agreed a Disaster Response Strategy. This was shared with the Cabinet Member for Housing and WCC's Chief Executive and Director of Housing & Regeneration.
- 8.2. Since then, CWH's Executive Team has continued to meet twice weekly to review progress of fire safety actions identified.
- 8.3. CWH's Board has been kept fully informed and an open meeting for Board members was held on 28 June to provide an up-date and answer any questions. CWH's Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (FARC) received a detailed report at their July meeting, setting out the fire safety work programme and associated risk management. FARC will continue to receive regular updates as the programme is delivered. A full review of fire safety will be reported to the Board's next Health & Safety committee and the Board will receive a further presentation at the September meeting.
- 8.4. At least weekly up-dates have been provided to the Cabinet Member for Housing and WCC's Chief Executive and Director of Housing & Regeneration.

9. Fire safety Projects

- 9.1. 22 projects have been identified covering all aspects of fire safety. The programme is scheduled for delivery by May 2018. Follow-on projects may arise from these initial 22 projects. Further work is also expected following the public enquiry and coroner's enquiry. The initial findings of the public enquiry are expected to be published by Easter 2018.
- 9.2. Each project has specific timescales, a project manager, project sponsor and a risk register. Some of the projects are strategic reviews that will lead to recommendations for implementation. Some of those recommendations will be considered by the CWH Executive and Board, whilst others will be referred to the Council for policy decisions.
- 9.3. Where reviews of the stock are needed, work is being prioritised on a risk basis. This means starting with blocks of ten storeys or more, then six to nine storeys and then low rise blocks.

The projects include:

Property-related reviews of:

- fire safety management in high rise blocks
- fire risk assessment inspection strategy and procedures
- testing and solutions for cladding
- provision of gas supplies in tower blocks
- installation of sprinkler systems.

Information / education/training:

- designing and implementing an education program for residents in fire safety
- reviewing training for staff in fire safety and block inspections.

Estate management & tenancy/lease reviews of:

- enforcement of fire safety related leaseholder responsibilities
- leaseholder charging for fire safety works
- emergency plans to incorporate lessons learnt from the Grenfell Tower fire.
- the allocations policy relating to tower blocks and housing of residents who may be vulnerable in the event of a fire (WCC)

10. Little Venice Towers Projects

- 10.1. Following the results of the DCLG's cladding tests, CWH has been working with an independent cladding engineer; a main contractor and cladding installer to review the

options to effectively and efficiently remove the existing cladding, and replace it with a cladding system that has passed the Government's recent tests.

- 10.2. Prior to the installation of the cladding, the blocks suffered water penetration, particularly during driving rain, so replacing the cladding is essential.
- 10.3. LFB are developing their advice for tower blocks with cladding which has failed testing. CWH are in discussion with LFB regarding the timescales for removal of the cladding.
- 10.4. Residents expressed concern that there is wooden decking on balconies at Little Venice. Whilst the decking itself is considered to be relatively low risk, there is concern that debris could accumulate under it, which could be a fire hazard. Therefore, the Council has committed to removing the decking in tenants' homes, with the option for leaseholders to also have it removed if they wish (the decking is part of the leaseholder's demise and so the Council cannot enforce its replacement).
- 10.5. An alternative decking solution involving non-combustible tiles has been trialled at three empty properties, and residents have been invited to view them. The comments have been generally positive and are being used to inform the client brief.
- 10.6. There is no requirement to retrospectively fit sprinklers, however the Council has committed to provide sprinklers in its 22 housing blocks over 30 metres. This is broadly in line with building regulations which currently apply to new-build. Independent experts have been commissioned to review the 22 blocks and provide advice and costings for installation. This report will advise on the pros and cons of the options for installation.
- 10.7. There could be a different sprinkler system recommended for each building, as the system will need to deal with the bespoke nature of each block. Based on current benchmarks from retrospectively installing sprinklers elsewhere in the country, it is estimated that the programme could cost in the region of £12-15million.

11. Key Risks Identified

- 11.1. A number of risks have been identified, particularly around resourcing, expertise and financing for the additional fire safety related work. The combined risks are reviewed by CWH Executive regularly.
- 11.2. The HRA Business Plan is currently being reviewed to take into account the additional costs of fire safety works. To maintain the Council's ambitions of delivering more housing, other capital projects may need to be deferred.
- 11.3. Securing competent, suitably qualified staff and contractors, to deliver fire safety related work is a current issue. CWH has acted quickly to secure resources where possible, but there may be cost and time associated consequences.
- 11.4. The third area of resource-related risk is to CWH's 'business as usual' (BAU). Given the diverse programme of work being delivered by staff across CWH, there is a risk

that some BAU activities could be impacted by the requirement to undertake fire safety works.

- 11.5. CWH continue to work closely with the Council so that the impact of the additional fire related work is properly understood and informed decisions can be made together to use resources appropriately and maintain performance.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact:

*Martyn Jones, Executive Director for Asset Strategy & Development,
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APPENDICES:

Appendix 1. Frequently Asked Questions sheet

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

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Fire alarms

All tenanted flats are fitted with in-flat fire alarms, which will alert you to a fire in your home.

If you are a leaseholder, you are responsible for providing a fire alarm in your property. You can contact London Fire Brigade and request a home fire safety visit during which the crew will fit free fire alarms for you. If you sublet your flat you are legally required to have both fire and carbon monoxide alarms inside your property.

Purpose-built blocks, or tower blocks, are not fitted with communal fire alarm systems. Unless your flat is being affected by fire or smoke, the current guidance is that you are safe to stay put, as the fire protection provided in the building should protect you for at least 60 minutes. This has been the case for many decades and, although fires in flats unfortunately occur throughout the country every day, the fire usually only affects the flat on fire.

Testing your fire alarm

We test in-flat fire alarms in tenanted properties every year. We also recommend that you test your alarm weekly by pressing the 'test' button. If the detector does not sound for a few seconds or starts to beep intermittently this shows there is a fault. If you are a tenant, please let us know by calling 0800 358 3783.

Sprinklers

We are confident our buildings across Westminster are safe but we want to make them safer. Westminster Council has announced that sprinklers will be fitted in all existing buildings above 30 metres, managed by CityWest Homes, across the city (this is typically blocks of over twelve storeys). This includes the six Little Venice towers. A detailed report is now required to consider what the different options could be. Once this has been completed, we will consult with you on the recommendations, and will also be looking for independent endorsement of any plans.

Cladding at Little Venice tower blocks

The results of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)'s so called 'end to end' or 'whole system test' indicate that the cladding system at Little Venice Towers and other local authority areas, do not meet the government's current interpretation of building regulation requirements. However, residents do not have to

evacuate their blocks. This is because of the additional fire safety measures we have put in place.

CityWest Homes have been working to identify ways to make buildings safer. In particular we have looked at how we could replace the outer ACM cladding layer rather than the whole cladding system. This could be done much more quickly and at less inconvenience to residents and would retain the fireproof Rockwool insulation in place.

CityWest Homes are working with an independent cladding specialist to look at the current structure. The feedback is that it could support the highest rated cladding panel, with some minor additional works. The final report from the specialist is due back later in August.

CityWest Homes have already started the process of purchasing replacement cladding. This cladding is of the highest safety specification (with Rockwool) having been tested already, and passed, by the government's testing agency. The current cladding will be removed and replaced as quickly as possible and we will confirm the timescales the details have been finalised. The replacement of cladding will be at no cost to leaseholders.

Housekeeping

Items in communal areas

You are permitted to keep only a door mat in your corridor.

Please keep corridors free of any obstruction. We will remove all items in stairwells, including at the bottom of staircases, during our regular checks.

If you see personal items being kept in communal areas or are concerned about any obstruction including rubbish or fly-tipping please call us on 0800 358 3783.

Items on balconies

Our housekeeping policy does not cover private balconies or gardens but we ask that you consider the fire and safety risks posed by storing items on balconies.

BBQs on balconies

Please do not use BBQs on roofs, balconies (including private balconies) and in communal gardens as this is strictly prohibited.

If you see someone using a BBQ on their balcony please call us on 0800 358 3783.

Smoking on balconies

Smoking on private balconies is not prohibited but we strongly advise against it. If you do smoke on your balcony, make sure all smoking materials are fully put out before disposing of it in a safe manner. Please do not throw any cigarettes or smoking materials off the balcony.



Smoking in communal areas of blocks is prohibited and also a breach of current UK legislation.

We strongly advise that you smoke outside of your building and dispose of all smoking materials carefully.

Emergency lighting

Emergency lighting is installed in your block and is checked monthly.

Fire safety advice

Guidance from London Fire Brigade is to 'stay put', unless your flat is being affected by fire or smoke. This has been the case for many decades and, although fires in flats unfortunately occur throughout the country every day, the fire usually only affects the flat on fire.

There is a Fire Action Notice in your building adjacent to the lifts. The notice lets you know what you should do in the unlikely event of a fire.

If your flat or maisonette is being affected by fire or smoke and your escape route is clear:

- Get everyone out, close the door and walk calmly out of the building.
- Do not use the lift.
- Call 999, give your address, the number of your flat and state which floor the fire is on.

If there is a fire in another part of the building:

- You are usually safer staying put and calling 999.
- Tell the fire brigade where you are and the best way to reach you.
- If you are within the common parts of the building, leave and call 999.

Purpose-built maisonettes or blocks of flats are built to give you some protection from fire. Walls, floors and doors can hold back flames and smoke for 30 to 60 minutes.

Fire drills

We do not have fire drills in your building, in line with London Fire Brigade guidance to 'stay put' unless your flat is being affected by fire or smoke.

In the event of an emergency which requires the phased evacuation of a block of flats, London Fire Brigade would manage and direct the evacuation.





Fire extinguishers

We have fire extinguishers in 'high risk' areas such as boiler rooms, electrical and gas intake rooms and service cupboards. These appliances are for the use of contractors undertaking maintenance work on service equipment and who have received the appropriate training.

In the Kitchen

Many fires begin in kitchens. You can do the following to help prevent them:

- never leave pans unattended when cooking
- don't cook if you are tired, have been drinking alcohol or taking medication that might make you drowsy.

If the pan does catch fire:

- don't tackle the fire yourself or try to move the pan
- never throw water onto it as this can create a fireball
- if you can do so safely – turn off the heat.

Candles and electrical fires

Candles, incense and oil burners are one of the biggest causes of fire within the home. You should never leave them unattended in order to keep you and your home safe. London Fire Brigade advises that you:

- always use a heat resistant holder on a stable surface, which won't be knocked over
- keep these items away from materials that may catch fire such as curtains, furniture, clothes and hair
- make sure you put out any candles, incense and oil burners when you leave the room and especially before bed
- keep out of reach of children and pets.

Many electrical fires can be avoided by some simple actions:

- don't use imitation electrical chargers as they may be unsafe
- make sure electrical appliances have a British or European safety mark when you buy them
- keep electrical appliances clean and in good working order
- unplugging appliances and chargers when you are not using them or when you go to bed helps reduce the risk of fire
- hair straighteners can get extremely hot. Always switch them off and leave them to cool on a heatproof surface
- for plugs that do not come fitted to the appliance, always check you're using the right fuse





- keep to one plug per socket
- remember: scorch marks, flickering lights, hot plugs and sockets, fuses that blow or circuit-breakers that trip for no obvious reasons could be signs of loose or dangerous wiring
- carry out a visual check of your electrics such as an appliance lead near a hot surface or an overloaded socket
- never use water on an electrical fire

Electrical product recalls

You can check the safety of electrical products by visiting [the Government's product recall site](https://www.productrecall.gov.uk) at [productrecall.campaign.gov.uk](https://www.productrecall.gov.uk) which lists which white goods have been recalled due to fire risk.

You can also visit [electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/product-recalls](https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/product-recalls), the electrical safety charity, to search for electrical products that have been recalled since 2007.

Always ensure new electrical items are registered, so manufacturers can contact you in the event of any problems. Go to [registermyappliance.org.uk](https://www.registermyappliance.org.uk) for more information and to register your electric products.

If you are concerned about a product that doesn't appear on the recall list, stop using it immediately and make your concern known to the retailer, manufacturer or local Trading Standards office.

Further information on fire safety at home is available at [london-fire.gov.uk/SafetyAtHome](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/SafetyAtHome)

Leaseholder responsibilities around fire safety

If you are a leaseholder, you have a vital role to play in fire safety, including ensuring the entrance door to your property meets building regulation requirements.

If you would like further guidance on door standards, you can download our information leaflet at [cwh.org.uk/leasehold-fire-safety](https://www.cwh.org.uk/leasehold-fire-safety) or pick up a copy from the Little Venice estate office. Information about your responsibilities as a leaseholder is also included in your leaseholder handbook and available at [cwh.org.uk/leaseholder-handbook](https://www.cwh.org.uk/leaseholder-handbook)

Leaseholders are required to apply for Building Control and CityWest Homes consent before you make any changes to your property including changing your flat entrance door. As part of our fire risk assessment process we will identify any doors that do not meet the required standards.

If you are a leaseholder and you sublet your property, you are required to comply with the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations to ensure your property is fitted with a working carbon monoxide detector and a working fire alarm on every habitable floor of the property.





You must ensure you have undertaken a gas safety inspection of any gas appliances fitted and provided a copy of this to your tenant.

If we identify that your flat or secondary means of escape doors through the risk assessment process appear to not meet the required standard then we will write to you asking for any evidence that demonstrates the replacement door does meet the standards.





City of Westminster

Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	11 th September 2017
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Supply and Allocation of Social Housing 2017/18
Report of:	Executive Director for Growth, Planning and Housing
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Housing
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
Report Author and Contact Details:	Gregory Roberts grobert2@westminster.gov.uk 020 7641 2834

1. Executive Summary

1.1 All The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the issues that will influence the allocation of social housing in 2017/18.

1.2 Part A: Affordable Housing Supply and allocation projections

1.3 This section sets out the level of available affordable housing in 2016/17 and how this is being allocated and the projections for new supply in 2017/18. Key points are:

- Social Housing allocations during 2016/17 show high levels of homeless rehousing reflecting the demand from this group
- Total social housing lettings for 2017/18 (including tenants' transfers) are estimated to be c. 770

1.4 Part B: Projections for demand for housing from homeless households in 2017

1.5 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 were under 500 in 2016/17 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 2017/18 are forecast to continue at the same level of c. 500 and the total requirement for TA will remain between 2300 – 2650 during the year

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

1.7 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.

1.8 Part D: Provision of housing for vulnerable groups

1.9 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

1.10 Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

1.11 The report describes how the available affordable housing is allocated to different priority groups and how homeless prevention is the key focus of the work with households in need. The Committee is asked to comment on the work being undertaken to prevent homelessness.

Part A: Affordable Housing Supply and Allocation Projections

2. Housing Supply and Allocation in 2017/18

2.1 Allocation of Social Housing 2016/17

2.2 All social housing is let according to the authority's Housing Allocation scheme. The table below sets out the allocations in 2016/17 and reflects high levels of homelessness:

2016/17 Lettings	
Tenant transfers	Full year
Decants/Major Works including Returning Decants	10
Cash incentives to downsize	32
Community Care Nominations	0
Children Act Rehousing	1
Accommodation for the elderly	25
Overcrowded tenants	53
Transfers from studio to 1 bed properties	25
Category A medical for people with disabilities	31
Management Transfers	25
SUB TOTAL	203
Waiting list	
Homeless (inc older persons and Pathways)	355
Category A medical for people with disabilities	25
Accommodation for the elderly	54
Assisting Cash Incentive moves	5
Children Act Rehousing	13
Street Homeless and hostel move on quota	4
Second Succession	17
Staff Rehousings	0
Learning Disability Quota	2
Reciprocal nominations with other boroughs	8
Mental health hostel quota	11
Statutory overcrowded	0
Registered Providers severely overcrowded	1
Right to move scheme	0
Pan London moves scheme	2
SUB TOTAL (HR)	498
GRAND TOTAL TTL/HR	701

2.3 2017/18 Supply Projections

2.3.1 The initial projection for the supply of new lettings of affordable rented accommodation for 2017/18 is 770. This comprises the sum of casual voids from City West Homes, Registered Provider (RP) relets, RP first lets, spot purchases by WCH and CWH, delivery of infill schemes and tenant transfers. This is broken down as follows:

Supply by bedsize - 2017/18	Studio	1	2	3	4+	Total
CWH Casual voids	110	149	60	27	6	352
Return from long-term works	0	1	2	1	1	5
RP First Let Nominations - Affordable Rent	0	9	11	14	0	34
RP First Let Nominations - Social Rent	0	0	6	2	0	8
RP Relet Nominations - Affordable Rent	3	36	18	1	0	58
RP Relet Nominations - Social Rent	11	81	37	13	1	143
WCH/ CWH Spot purchases - Social Rent	0	0	10	3	0	13
CWH Infill schemes - Social Rent	0	1	5	12	8	26
Total Net Voids	124	277	149	73	16	639
WCC Transfers	43	64	27	9	1	144
Less Decants for major works	-2	-7	-3	-1	0	-13
Total Supply	165	334	173	81	17	770

2.3.2 The number of new affordable homes currently projected to be delivered by Registered Providers (RP) or directly by the Council during the period 2017/18 and 2018/19 is 565 units, made up of 515 new build or converted units plus 50 spot acquisitions. However it may be possible to increase this 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 Included within the 565 new or converted homes during 2017 - 19, 37 are anticipated to be provided for social rent at target rents, 181 homes for affordable rent, 26 on City West Homes infill sites and 45 sheltered homes. The figures for social and affordable housing projected during 2017/18 are included in the table above.

The remaining homes will be provided as intermediate housing either at sub market rents or as shared ownership, and a further 50 spot acquisitions are anticipated to be provided for varying affordable housing types. 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. There is a possibility that some of the schemes that are scheduled to complete towards the end of quarter 4 2018-19 are likely to slip in to the following year 2019/20.

2.3.4 Significant new schemes that will contribute towards these 565 new affordable homes are:

- Ladbroke Grove, W10 a section 106 development being provided through Westminster Community Homes delivering 23 intermediate rent homes
- Lisson Arches, NW8 a council sheltered scheme delivering 45 homes on a housing renewal site
- Sentinel House, NW1 a section 106 development delivering 41 affordable rent homes
- North Wharf Gardens in Paddington, also a section 106 scheme where Octavia Housing will deliver 16 affordable rent and 11 intermediate homes

- 2.3.5 In addition to the 565 affordable homes anticipated to be delivered during the period 2017-2019, an additional pipeline of new housing developments exists that has the capacity to deliver c.1,300 additional affordable homes over a 5 year period starting from April 2019. 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 is estimated to be 352 based on analysis of previous years' numbers.
- 2.3.7 An anticipated 201 relets from existing registered provider social housing stock is to be provided to the City Council during 2017/18. This projection is based on the average level of relets received by the City Council over the previous three years. 71% of relets to be provided during 2017/2018 are anticipated to be provided at rents equal to or below target rent levels, with the remainder at affordable rent levels

Part B: Projections for demand for Temporary Accommodation

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.)

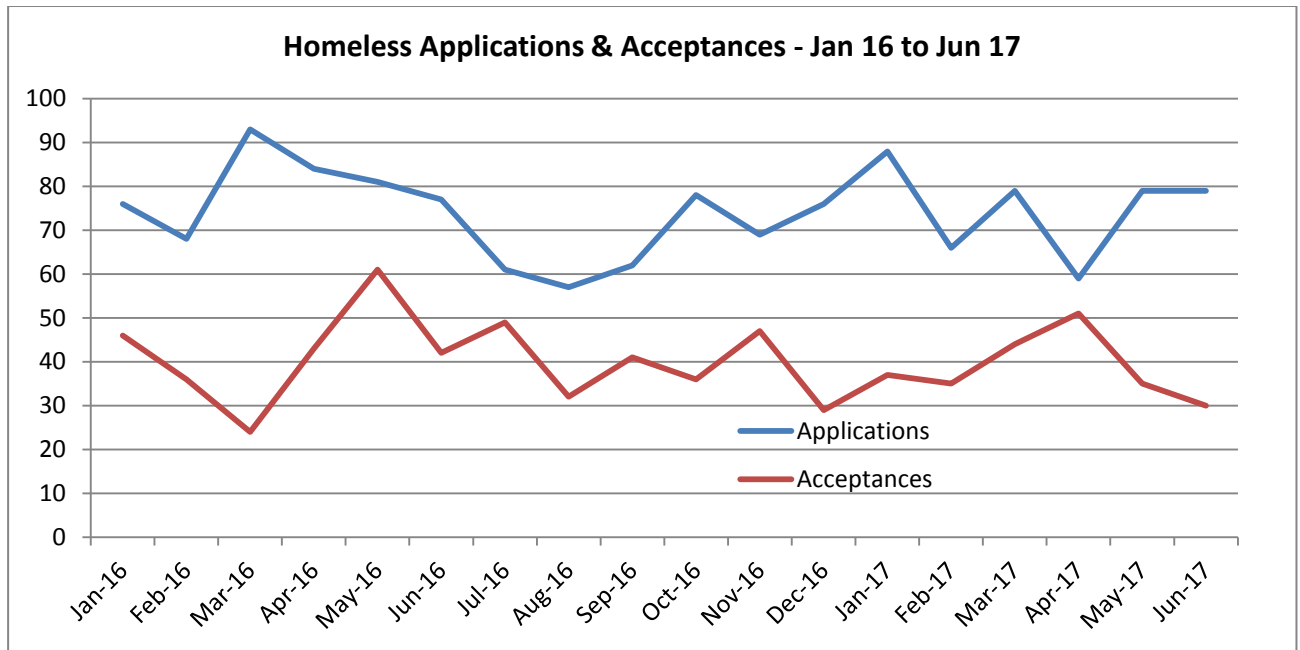
When the supply of suitable affordable accommodation is not available, the Council is required to procure Temporary Accommodation (TA) to provide housing until social housing is available.

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	31.3.12	31.3.13	31.3.14	31.3.15	31.3.16	31.3.17
Homelessness Applications (p.a.)	1445	1338	1002	1053	954	878
Homelessness Acceptances (p.a.)	539	813	705	617	511	496
Households in Temporary Accom.	1910	2450	2283	2397	2423	2518

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, providing debt advice, supporting families to remain together and assisting with moves into the private rented sector. In the past 12 months 216 private sector prevention placements have been completed, 76 into properties in Westminster, 128 into other London boroughs and 12 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 a new policy framework has recently been introduced to identify more households for whom the private rented sector would be suitable and we have successfully started making offers to them to bring our duty to an end. To support this we commissioned a study of the affordability of the private rented sector to identify areas where suitable and affordable properties are available and this is informing the project to increase the numbers where we discharge of duty into a suitable property in the private sector. The study has highlighted however the challenges in sourcing private sector properties at or close to LHA rates and which would remain affordable for at least 2 years.
- 3.9 Given the pressures from homeless acceptances during 2016/17, the forecast for 2017/18, 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. Homeless acceptances are 496 in 2016/17 a reduction of over 275 from 2012 and this level is expected to continue. As a result total homeless acceptances during 2017/18 are forecast to continue at c. 500 - 525 and the total requirement for TA will remain between 2300 – 2700 during 2018

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

- 4.1 The TA Commissioning Strategy was updated during 2017 as part of the wider update of homeless placement policies to reflect changes in the private sector housing market and the impact of legislative and welfare reform changes
- 4.2 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 remain valid. This is supported by the recent budget reports that highlighted the impact of high rental costs within the private sector.

- 4.3 Few families are now placed in non-self-contained accommodation 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)
- 4.4 Increasing supply of properties that are affordable and sustainable for households on low incomes, whether for use as Temporary Accommodation, for private sector discharge of housing duty or to prevent homelessness remains very challenging within the current housing market. This is particularly the case for family sized accommodation.
- 4.5 The Council continues to make use of its own properties that are temporarily vacant through the regeneration programme and currently makes use of c. 55 units. Whilst clearly not a long-term solution this has provided a source of in-borough accommodation.
- 4.6 The Council has entered into a programme of purchasing properties for use as TA outside the borough and has completed 100 purchases within Greater London and 45 within Westminster and these purchase programmes will continue during 2017/18.
- 4.7 The above strategy will continue to aim 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.
- 4.8 To deliver a TA portfolio that meets budget targets remains 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 2017/18 (in light of the introduction of Universal Credit and the understanding of the challenges of short-term housing placements of all types within the Universal Credit framework.) The Council will continue to set rents for TA properties in line with the maximum amount eligible for HB subsidy within this formula.
- 4.9 Current TA levels are c. 2518 and 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 less than 100 properties outside London, principally in Essex and half remains within Westminster.
- 4.10 There are legal criteria for the suitability of TA, taking in its physical aspects, location and considerations of affordability amongst other matters. The majority of households requiring TA are in receipt of benefits, and where accommodation is situated in-borough, this presents a financial challenge and/ or can only be provided above subsidy levels.

Part D: 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 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 behaviors, and autism are transitioning into adult social care.

Moving forward, there will be an increased need to develop purpose build, well designed accommodation to take into account the increased complexities of needs and ensure future accommodation continues to be fit for purpose.

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.

There are 7 priority nominations for people with a learning disability to access main stream housing, which enables people to maximize their independence with minimal support.

In 2017, a new scheme, shared lives, will start to offer people with a learning disability the opportunity to live with a 'shared lives carer'. This scheme will suit people who may benefit from a 'family type' support. By the end of 2017 there will be 5 shared lives schemes operating within Westminster.

Work is currently going on to convert a building in the north of the borough into 3 1-bedroom flats for people with a learning disability. These will be completed by August 2017 and will add to the supported living scheme provision within the borough.

6.1.3 The updated Learning Disability Housing and Support strategy will encompass the following priority areas:

- People with a learning disability and/or autism and those who display behaviors 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 maximize 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 continues to sit on the VAWG strategic group, executive group, and Housing Operational Group. Progress this year in the Housing Operational Group has focussed on working in partnership with Rough Sleeping team colleagues and commissioned services to ensure the needs of vulnerable VAWG victims who are street or hidden homeless are addressed. The Housing Operational Group has also begun working on developing a Housing First model and bringing together housing providers and support services 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 the Butterfly Group, a peer mentoring programme for those who have/ are experiencing domestic violence, which is coordinated by the refuge provider Hestia. Joint work has already begun to examine the needs of refuge provision across the boroughs which will inform the re-commissioning process in 2017/18.
- 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.
- 6.2.4 The Housing DV lead was actively involved in the recent Local Safeguarding Children Board Multi-agency perspective on Practice; examining the housing role in relevant cases.

6.2.5 The effectiveness of the response to VAWG issues at HOS continues to be monitored and quarterly statistics are provided to the Housing Operational Group for evaluation. Service Standards formulated by Standing Together against Domestic Violence (STADV) continue to be followed. The recent ITT for the new HOS contract includes the provision of an IDVA role within the front-line HOS service; a role that will also support staff training. The ITT also requires the new provider(s) to work towards the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation; an accreditation that very few Local Authorities have or are currently aiming to achieve.

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 6 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. 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 from a wide variety of sources including for clients already living in supported who require a step down to less supported; directly from the wards; from out of borough projects; from individual's whose tenancy is breaking down for reasons related to mental health 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 MHS 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 85% and the number of Children Services Placements continues to increase annually.
- 6.4.3 Following a Pathway review a number of recommendations were put forward and the principle decision approved is to undertake competitive tendering of the current contracts to allow for the new remodel Pathway to commence from April 2018. A project group has been established made up of representatives from Children Services to inform and be involved in the competitive tendering process. As part of the process officers will consult directly with young people who will be invited to participate in the process.
- 6.4.4 Over the last year a number of initiatives have been developed with Children Services to support the numbers of numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children who have been placed in the Young Persons Supported Housing Pathway and these include:
- UASC support worker offering enhance support for up to month for all new UASC moving in the Young Persons Supported Housing Pathway. The primarily focus is to offer practical support accompany them to appointments and to help the young person to feel less isolated and to increase their confidence. During the year a review was undertaken and the feedback was positive from both young people and Children Services and it was recommended that funding be made available to extend the support provision for a further 6 months.
 - Recognising that UASC moving into a hostel need to develop their English language skills funding was made available to Cardinal Hume Hostel to extend their current offer to accommodate Westminster's UASC. A part time tutor has been recruited and supports the young people to progress English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and citizenship towards settlement. Children Services have agreed to continue funding this service for a further 6 months.

6.4.5 Supporting the City Council's wider agenda to increase the numbers of young people into Education, Employment and Training, the EET Pilot a strengths based programme was delivered in partnership with Children Services through the Young Persons Supported Housing Forum. The Programme runs for six months and each young person has a triangle of support, including a mentor, attendance at monthly workshops and workbook to complete. Themes explored include core self, belonging and learning. As part of the programme all young people also have to undertake research into their chosen career path, numeracy and literacy assessments, engage in volunteering in the hostels or in the local community and develop a new skill through undertaking a six week art project. A total of 13 young people not in education, employment and training attended the monthly workshops and it is anticipated that 8 young people will complete the programme and also achieve a Duke of Edinburgh Certificate.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 Housing Expenditure

7.1.1 The latest revised budget is as follows:

Service Area	Expenditure	Income	Total
Homelessness	7,248,344	(2,413,339)	4,835,005
Temporary Accommodation	45,865,951	(41,540,410)	4,325,541
Grand Total	53,114,295	(43,953,749)	9,160,546

7.1.2 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 The Council has a 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.

8.2 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.

8.3 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

8.4 As a public authority, the council must take account of the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and not act in a way which is incompatible with a Convention right. Under Article 8, any interference with the right to respect for a person's private and family life and home must be proportionate and Article 14 requires that there must be no unjustified discrimination within the scope of human rights on any grounds, such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, or other status.

8.5 The Equality Act 2010 introduced a public sector equality duty which requires the City Council when making decisions to have due regard to the need to

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.6 The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The City Council is required to act in accordance with the equality duty and have due regard to the duty when carrying out its functions.