



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

# MINUTES

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

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Climate Action, Housing and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Monday 14th November, 2022**, Rooms 18.01 & 18.03, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

**Members Present:** Councillors Gillian Arrindell, Robert Eagleton, David Harvey, Elizabeth Hitchcock, Patricia McAllister (Chair), Alan Mendoza and Cara Sanquest

**Also present:** Councillor Liza Begum (Cabinet Member for Housing Services), Councillor Matt Noble (Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters), Linda Hunting (Policy and Scrutiny Advisor) and Clare O'Keefe (Temp Joint Lead Policy and Scrutiny Advisor).

#### 1. MEMBERSHIP

1.1 The Chair advised Members there were no changes to membership.

#### 2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

2.1 The Chair welcomed the Members of the Council and Cabinet Members Councillor Matt Noble (Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters) and Councillor Liza Begum (Cabinet Member for Housing Services) to the meeting.

2.2 The Chair informed the Committee of the order of the meeting, which was that due to Councillor Liza Begum (Cabinet Member for Housing Services) being unwell, Councillor Begum would provide her Cabinet Member update first, virtually and would not attend the rest of the meeting.

2.3 The Chair requested that Members of the Committee introduce themselves when speaking and to provide responses in a clear and sufficient volume for the recording.

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 3.1 The Committee noted that Councillor Cara Sanquest made a declaration of interest. Councillor Sanquest declared that in respect of Item 7, she resides at one of the properties to be discussed under the Management of Capital Programme (Housing) report.

### **4. MINUTES**

- 4.1 The Committee approved the minutes of its meeting held on 18 July 2022.
- 4.2 The Committee approved the minutes of its meeting held on 18 October 2022.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- 4.3 That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July be signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.
- 4.4 That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October be signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

### **5. CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING SERVICES**

- 5.1 The Committee received an update from Councillor Liza Begum, Cabinet Member for Housing Services, on priorities for the portfolio and any updates that have arisen. The Cabinet Member responded to questions on the following topics:
- Housing surgeries open to all residents in an area, how often they are held, what residents are attending, how they are communicated, and how many have taken place to date in each Ward.
  - Queens Park – Mozart Estate Housing Surgery drop-in surgery. How that will be communicated to residents, the start date, and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) involvement. Use of the Beethoven Centre and the Housing Solutions Office sites and accessibility for residents.
  - Community Thursdays and how local Councillors are kept informed about these. How many have been operated and the Wards where they have been carried out.
  - Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) including drugs, noise, verbal abuse, and intimidation and how these are these types of ASB are prioritised for response by the Estate Patrol Service. How the service works with the police and the pilot schemes that have been run in different estates for controlling ASB with the use of dogs.
  - The review of the Allocations Policy. In particular, whether any prioritisation will be considered for certain groups, such as NHS workers, living in the City and the timetable for the review of the policy, including, current waiting lists and the expectations of residents, how the point system is used, and potential mismatches in the system.

- The measures of success for the interventions that have been used for ASB, such as reductions in complaints, and how the various activities will be managed going forward.
- Developing an in-housing major and minor repair works function, the planning carried out to date to enable this, what evidence is being used to develop the ideas, and how these services have been delivered to date.
- Estate security and the plans to cover security outside of office hours and the intended pilot scheme to 11 pm.
- The resident food recycling pilot scheme on estates, in particular, within taller properties.
- The turnaround time of voids, including, larger properties for families that are 3 bedrooms, the length of time properties are left vacant, and how retrofit work is being carried out and prioritised.

5.2 Other issues noted were live complaints regarding major works, the noise team and what issues they cover, and a request for the Committee to receive briefings on the following topics, when available, intermediate housing, fire safety and building regulations.

### 5.3 **ACTIONS**

1. That information will be provided to the Committee regarding the number of additional properties that will be required as a result of the waiting list and allocations policy.
2. That information will be provided to the Committee about how the Allocation Policy is currently working for residents that are living +10 years in the borough.
3. That information will be provided to the Committee about which organisation has been procured to cover the security patrols on the estates.
4. To provide to the Committee information about the criteria that is used for the food recycling scheme on estates that determines whether the scheme is working.
5. That Officers will consider and feedback to the Committee, information regarding the prioritisation of retrofitting voids that are larger, 3-bedroom properties for families and how many will be available.
6. That briefings will be provided to the Committee in due course for intermediate housing, fire safety and building regulations.

## 6. **CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE ACTION, REGENERATION AND RENTERS**

6.1 The Committee received an update from Councillor Matt Noble, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters, on priorities for the

portfolio and any updates that have arisen. The Cabinet Member responded to questions on the following topics:

- Green Bonds and how much revenue could be achieved.
- The City Charter and future plans for building expansion in Westminster, including looking at other pilot schemes.
- The proposal of potential sites, 'call for sites' in Wards that are available for purchase and development and the City Plan planning policy.
- The development of affordable housing additional to the current stock available.
- Green Doctors and energy advice available to residents and how this is communicated.
- The impact as a result of the boiler replacement on Lillington Estate.
- Climate change planning and the Climate Citizens Assembly, including the views, involvement, and cooperation of residents on topics such as, domestic heating and waste and when the Assembly will take effect.
- Government Local Authority funding and the development of more social or affordable housing, including infill schemes.
- The waiting lists for temporary housing due to overcrowding and whether properties for affordable housing are matched based on the needs and size required.
- Reforms within the private-rented sector, including, supporting landlords and tenants.
- Queen's Park infill funding and the source of it.

6.2 Other issues noted were the replacement of the Pimlico District Heating Unit (PDHU), whether WCC manage all of its properties, support for private renters, Section 21 evictions, and the current development at Carlton Dene Estate and the surrounding area.

### 6.3 **ACTIONS**

1. That information will be provided about the effect on emissions following the replacement of the boiler at the Lillington estate.
2. That information be provided to the Committee on how much Government Local Authority (GLA) funding is expected for the Queen's Park Court infills site.
3. That information will be provided about the height and size of the development at Carlton Dene Estate.

## 7. **MANAGEMENT OF CAPITAL PROGRAMME (HOUSING) UPDATE**

7.1 The Chair welcomed Neil Whiteman (Director of Housing), Jim Patterson (Divisional Head of Major Works and Sustainability & Housing) and Jeff Tourmentin (Senior Construction Manager, Housing) to introduce the report on the management of the Capital Programme (Housing) in relation to the Council's housing and provide an overview of the report, including, its service

areas, priorities for the year ahead and key service updates and issues. The Director of Housing responded to questions on the following topics:

- Complaints from residents in relation to major works being carried out on the Millbank Estate, including, safety monitoring, issues with staffing and service providers, and timescales for works to be carried out.
- The recourse available for contractors that don't provide the correct or respectful service when carrying out major works on estates and the difficulties finding cost-effective suitable contractors to carry out major works.
- The process by which housing stock is assessed and the cycle of major repairs works that is planned and prioritised.
- Long-term tenure of contractors, the benefits to the Council and how the tenure works, the tendering process, how performance is scrutinised, key performance indicators and training, penalties and incentives, and what measures are in place to support all parties.
- The factors which create delays, additional costs, materials, and how they come about, including the standard of the finished work by contractors.
- The length of time between items on the major works schedule being reviewed and revisited, such as, lifts in blocks and what occurs with disruption to residents.
- Sub-contractors and potential variations in quality and gaps in the service as well vetting checks prior to contractors starting work with the Council.
- Tenant and leaseholder satisfaction and methods that could be deployed for these rates to be improved.
- General planning procedures in relation to commissioning, such as, planning, surveyors, and engineers.
- The amount of expenditure incurred with contractors in the last 12 months, over and above what had been budgeted, under each repair head.
- The level of engagement, process, and statutory obligations with lessees, when major works are carried out and what happens when a lessee does not agree with the planned process.
- The 10-year contracts with Access Europe and United Living and if the costs within these will increase with the Consumer Price Index (CPI), such as labour and materials.
- Whether a sinking fund is held to assist leaseholders with the costs involved with major works, particularly, with the current cost-of-living considerations.

7.2 Other topics discussed were the improvements made in communications with residents, the quantity of ongoing major works between the north and south of the borough, and the reasons for the differences.

### 7.3 **ACTIONS**

1. That the complaints that have been made by Millbank residents in the last three months will be looked in to and an update fed back to the Committee.
2. That figures will be provided to the Committee for the amounts the Council has spent over and above budget in relation to repairs carried out by contractors, under each head.

## **8. COMMUNAL, COMMUNITY AND ENVIROMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS**

8.1 The Chair welcomed Debbie Jackson (Executive Director Growth, Planning, and Housing) and Chris Shoubridge (Divisional Head of Housing Neighbourhood) to introduce the paper and provide an overview of the report.

8.2 The Committee discussed elements of this report as part of discussions on topics within the Major Works (Housing) report. Topics which were discussed included:

- Communication with residents and how this can be improved.
- Food waste and recycling.
- Estate security across the borough.

## **9. 2022/2023 WORK PROGRAMME**

8.1 The Committee reviewed potential items to be prioritised for the 2022/23 work programme.

8.3 The Committee agreed there were no additional items to be included on the Work Programme and future potential items would be considered at the next Committee meeting.

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

9.1 The Committee agreed there were no other business items to be discussed.

## **10. TERMINATION OF MEETING**

10 .1 The meeting ended at 9.16 pm.

CHAIR \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_