



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 Tuesday 18 October 2022 at 7.00pm at Westminster City Hall, Room 18.01, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

Members Present: Councillor Melvyn Caplan, Councillor Robert Eagleton (Acting Chair), Councillor Elizabeth Hitchcock, Councillor Patrick Lilley, Councillor Patricia McAllister (virtual), Councillor Alan Mendoza and Councillor 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 Tristan Fieldsend (Senior Committee Councillor Coordinator).

MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 Linda Hunting advised Members that Councillor Patricia McAllister was unable to be present to chair the meeting due to illness.
- 1.2 Councillor Patrick Lilley, as an individual Member, proposed Councillor Robert Eagleton as Chair for the meeting.
- 1.3 The Committee confirmed that Councillor Robert Eagleton would act as Chair for the meeting.
- 1.4 The meeting was handed over to Councillor Robert Eagleton as Chair.
- 1.5 The Committee noted that Councillor Patrick Lilley was attending as substitute for Councillor Gillian Arrindell.
- 1.6 The Committee noted that Councillor Melvyn Caplan was attending as substitute for Councillor David Harvey.

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 advised Members the Committee was due to have a meeting on 19 September and that had been postponed due to Queen Elizabeth's passing. This meeting will now take place on 14 November 2022.
- 2.3 The Chair welcomed Linda Hunting (Policy and Scrutiny Advisor) to this committee and Alistair Hyde, on a six-month placement at the Council carrying out work on how governance and public engagement can be improved with council meetings.
- 2.4 The Chair advised the Committee of the order of the meeting, which was that the Cabinet Member update Items would be followed by the substantive Item relating to that portfolio.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING SERVICES

- 4.1 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:
 - Funding under the Right to Buy Scheme.
 - The Housing Solutions Contract and a review of the service currently offered and the present cost implications.
 - Social Housing and the Supply Allocations policy, including the number of properties that will be available under this scheme in 2023/24.
 - The importance of representation across different areas of the borough in relation to the Tenant and Leaseholder Plan and the relevant criteria.
 - Bringing housing service repairs in-house, or a hybrid service, versus using the current external contractors, and the issues.
 - Tenant service and satisfaction of the current repairs service, including, how data is captured and the differentiation between minor and major housing repair works.
 - The resident uptake for Retrofit activity in the borough.
 - The current figures of anti-social behaviour in social housing within the borough.
 - The figures of homelessness and rough sleeping and any recent changes or issues.

- Provisions available in the borough to support extreme weather conditions in the community.
- Supporting residents through the cost-of-living crisis, including how residents are kept informed.
- Communicating with residents via email, mobile app, mobile texts, and the Community Thursday's, including the updating of residents contact information.
- The availability of on-site Housing Officer's and the effectiveness of the Housing Surgeries.
- The Key Lessee Scheme and resident participation.
- Housing points for residents (Housing Residency Points scheme) in the borough (+10 years) in relation to the allocation of social housing.
- The provision of family sized properties in the borough (+3 bedroom) for residents on the long waiting lists, including the building of new properties and the Council's future provision to increase social rent housing (+2 bedroom) properties.
- Housing Surgeries and improving resident communication and engagement.
- The timing of Major Works minutes and consultation information to residents, including the Council website being updated.

4.2 Other issues discussed were the Council's future plans for the vacant property on Broadwick Street, Soho, and the updating of the Tenant Handbook to include information about community engagement.

4.3 **ACTIONS**

1. That the criteria and details of representation of the Tenant and Leaseholder Plan be provided to the Committee.
2. That further details be provided to the Committee about the use of temporary accommodation in the borough and when services need to be provided out-of-borough.
3. To provide the Committee with the anti-social behaviour figures in the borough for the previous five years.
4. Homelessness and rough sleeping statistics to be provided to the Committee for the period from August 2022 to present.
5. That information be provided to the Committee on emergency weather conditions support for homeless and rough sleeping in the borough.
6. An update to be provided concerning how housing officers inform residents about the support and services that are available with the cost-of-living crisis.
7. That an update on the Pimlico District Heating Undertaking scheme (PDHU) will be provided to the Committee in due course.
8. That an update on The Tenant Handbook will be provided to the Committee in due course.
9. To provide the Committee with information regarding the timing of updates to residents about Major Works, including on the Council website.
10. That the Corporate Property Team will provide information to the Committee about the intended plans for vacant property on Broadwick Street.

5. REPAIRS, MECHANICAL, AND ELECTRICAL SERVICES OVERVIEW PAPER

5.1 The Chair welcomed Neil Whiteman (Director of Housing) and John Hayden (Divisional Head of Repairs and Planned Maintenance) to introduce the report on the management of the Capital Works Programme (CWP) 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 Divisional Head of Repairs and Planned Maintenance responded to questions on the following topics:

- The efficiency and quality of the current housing repair service for residents.
- The forward plans to take the Council's repair service for residents in-house.
- Emergency repairs and non-urgent repairs, including the issues around working with residents to complete repairs fully, rates of access, and the implications around multiple repair appointments.
- Working with repair contractors, the pricing of materials and repairs, and the level of service that is provided to residents.
- The Leakage Prevention Strategy in tower block estates, gaining access to properties, and the effect on residents.

5.2 Other issues discussed were engagement with residents, future plans for the overall repair service, including, looking to other Councils for ideas around what works and good practice.

5.3 ACTIONS

1. That information be provided to the Committee on the breakdown of and the nature and extent of repairs for individual Wards, as requested.
2. To provide information to the committee on the Leakage Prevention Strategy and how these issues are being managed in tower block estates.
3. That information will be provided to the Committee about the steps that are being taken to increase communication with residents about housing issues.
4. That information be provided to the Committee on what is being done to improve the level of communications with residents, such as via text messaging and community noticeboards.
5. That information be provided to the Committee about the metrics used to monitor contract improvement in relation to the Residential Management Group (RMG) contract.

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:

- The interest rates applicable for Green Bonds, the process being used, and when the launch will take place, including the advantages of the offer to residents.
- Environmental Justice and the measures used to explain areas within the Council and what this means, including what measures could be taken to improve standards.
- The Infills Programme and what the challenges and implications have been.
- Enforcement measures by local authorities.
- Air quality in Council areas and the extent that the issues such as the effect on health and housing and span many policy areas and policy and scrutiny committees.
- The Climate Emergency Action Strategy, plans for this to be updated, including information on the Council website.
- Forward plans for replacing the PDHU, the costs involved, the impacts on the carbon emissions, and the impacts on the costs of energy, housing and communication with residents affected.
- The Ebury Bridge scheme, including the availability of family-sized accommodation, affordable housing and returning residents.
- The future plans to increase the use of Solar PV (Solar Photovoltaics), including on corporate premises.
- The future plans for biodiversity, including additional greening across the Council.
- How carbon off-setting works with property development in the borough.
- The Adpar Street ongoing works and when the programme will be completed.
- The Ebury Bridge and Church Street developments, the intended ballot system for residents, including timing and GLA funding.
- The agreement with tenants in the Justice for Tenants (rent repayment) scheme, what has been agreed with tenants, and how information is provided to occupiers.
- The Balmoral and Darwin House Development Scheme, the intended intermediate and social rent offers and availability of family sized properties.
- Food wastage schemes and the plans to extend to additional Wards in the borough.

6.2 **ACTIONS:**

1. That an explanation be provided to the Committee on carbon offsetting, to include payment required by developers.
2. That a list of minor infill schemes that are no longer progressing will be shared with the Committee.
3. That information will be provided on when work will continue at Adpar Street.
4. That information on Justice for Tenants will be provided to the Committee such as, what information or data has the Council given them and how are they acting on the Councils behalf.
5. That information will be provided to the Committee about the length of tenure on Green Bonds and the applicable rates.

7. CLMATE ACTION PROGRAMME UPDATE

7.1 The Chair welcomed Amy Jones (Director of Environment) and Damian Hemmings (Climate Emergency Programme Director) to introduce the paper and provide an overview of the report. The Director of Environment and Programme Director responded to questions on the following topics:

- The Council Climate Emergency Action Plan and when that will be updated.
- The Citizens Assembly and engagement with citizens, including climate engagement posts and making information for residents more accessible.
- Funding streams to enable delivery of the programme, such as carbon offsetting, the capital programme, the public sector decarbonisation scheme, and external and grant funding.
- The Green Economy Strategy, including specific skills required within the Retrofit programme and utilising employment opportunities in the borough.
- The inward investment in low-carbon industry and building business resistance to climate emergency and supply issues.
- The plans to increase tree planting and canopy cover and cycle hangers across the wards in the borough.
- Electric vehicle charging points in the borough.
- The economic challenges around the PDHU and the complexity around replacing systems and avoiding vast expenditure to residents.
- City Wide Emissions and meeting the Council's targets for 2030.

7.2 ACTIONS

1. That information will be provided to the Committee about the steps taken to review the tree planting and greening programme in line with the manifesto commitment.
2. That information be provided to the Committee about cycle hangers and what steps are being taken to increase the roll out of these, in line with the demand.

8. 2022/2023 WORK PROGRAMME

8.1 The Chair invited the Policy and Scrutiny Advisor to update the Committee on items on the Work Programme.

8.2 The Committee reviewed potential items to be prioritised for the 2022/23 work programme, which included focusing on:

- The Regeneration Programme review
- Biodiversity
- PDHU Update
- Church Street Regeneration update
- The Allocations Policy

8.3 ACTIONS:

1. Work Programme items remain the same for the rescheduled meeting 14 November.
2. The creation of a Biodiversity Task Group - Councillor Cara Sanquest to lead this work.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 Members requested that actions on the Action Tracker be updated from the July meeting.

10. TERMINATION OF MEETING

- 10.1 The meeting ended at 9.31 pm.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____