



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 12th September, 2023**, Rooms 18.06 - 18.08, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

Members Present: Councillors Concia Albert (Chair), Gillian Arrindell, Robert Eagleton, David Harvey, Elizabeth Hitchcock, Ed Pitt Ford, and Hamza Taouzzale.

Also Present: Councillor Liza Begum (Cabinet Member for Housing Services), Councillor Matt Noble (Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Regeneration and Renters), Debbie Jackson (Executive Director Growth and Planning)(virtual), Sarah Warman (Strategic Director of Housing and Commercial Partnerships), Frances Martin (Executive Director for Environment and City Management), James Green (Director of Development)(virtual), Neil Whiteman (Director of Housing), Chris Shoubridge (Divisional Head of Housing Neighbourhoods), Rochelle Largan (Anti-Social Behaviour Services Manager), Jon Lock (Head of Housing Management), Damian Hemmings (Head of Climate Emergency)(virtual), Heather Clarke (Divisional Head of Housing Needs), Linda Hunting (Policy and Scrutiny Advisor), Nikki Costain (Cabinet Portfolio Advisor for Councillor Matt Noble) and Nicholas Porter-Ch'ng (Cabinet Portfolio Advisor for Councillor Liza Begum).

1 MEMBERSHIP

1.1 No apologies were received.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 The Committee noted there were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

3.1 The Committee approved the minutes of its meeting held on 19 July 2023.

RESOLVED:

3.2 That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2023 be signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

4 FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY REGULATIONS WRITTEN UPDATE

4.1 The Committee received a written update and questions were answered by officers on the following topics:

- Regular checks of fire safety doors and ensuring they are suitable for elderly residents to use.
- The Council's relationship with the Fire Brigade and Borough Commander, any recent checks they have carried out for the Council, and feedback raised by the Brigade on any matters of concern.

5 PORTFOLIO UPDATE - CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE ACTION, REGENERATION AND RENTERS

5.1 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 structure of the Climate Assembly.
- How the Council is performing in relation to the carbon emissions targets, where there are reductions, how specific projects are tracked, and how the results compare to last year.
- The Westminster Green Investment plans.
- The gap that exists between the lower end of the private rented sector market accommodation and the local housing allowance, the priority for housing families and the support available, and whether the Council has an obligation to assist in housing residents under the 'affordability' test'.
- How the housing service uses the homelessness criteria when considering issues of affordability and advising residents.
- The Council's regeneration projects, how they are performing to budget and within desired timelines, which projects are delayed and the reasons, and issues created with workforce and inflation.
- The Private Rented Sector Charter and improving the overall standards of properties, what sorts of matters this will cover, and how the Council will be able to respond to issues going forward under the Charter.
- The Ashbridge, Ashmill, and Cosway Regeneration projects and the Council's planning for affordable and social housing.
- Planning and forecasting regeneration projects in light of changes in the market, and how reassessment of the costs are appraised and managed and at what point once the projects have commenced.
- The ways that the Green Doctors have advised residents on how to reduce their energy bills, including Smart Metres, the residents that have taken part in providing feedback on the service, and how the assessment of the service is being carried out with residents.
- The Westminster Green Investment completion date at community buildings across Westminster.
- The ability of the Council to enforce minimum energy standards (MEE's).
- The Green Bond and how the fund is managed.

ACTIONS

1. To provide the Committee with an update of the Council's tracking and performance of the carbon emissions reduction programme.
- .2. To provide the Committee with a list of the projects that have been funded by the Westminster Green Investment.
3. To provide the Committee with information about how the Council's regeneration projects are reviewed and reassessed, by whom, and at what stage in the project.
4. To provide the Committee with the details that answer the outstanding actions from previous Committee's by the next Committee meeting.

6 PORTFOLIO UPDATE - CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING SERVICES

- 6.1 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:
- How far the remit of the Lillington and Longmore Ombudsmen service centre extends.
 - The late running of Council major works that may incur additional costs to residents, and how the Council may be able to take responsibility for that cost and assist leaseholders.
 - The PDHU (Pimlico District Heating Undertaking) and how the project may be funded, the strategies and options, how payments may be spread out for residents, and what the plans are for engagement with affected residents and resident associations.
 - The Council's contract with Morgan Sindell and how their service is managed, how improvements can be made with housing repairs, and other contract options.
 - Temporary Accommodation and out of borough placements, support for residents that are displaced out of borough, how the placements are assessed under the Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy, and the challenges the Council faces to provide suitable accommodation in-borough.
 - The use of hostels for temporary accommodation and how the Council keeps a tab on the use of hostels for longer term homelessness, residents in transition, or other housing matters.
 - The strategies in place for the review of temporary accommodation and supported housing. How the services may be recommissioned over the next 12 months in order to meet the increasing needs for accommodation for residents that may have been in another form of social housing previously.
 - How the quality of temporary accommodation housing and the facilities is inspected and signed off by the Council and to what standards.
 - What the Council is doing to prevent homelessness in the borough, when the Council accepts they owe a legal duty to house a homeless person, the investigation process that takes place, how the Council manages emergency

housing situations, discussions with landlords, support for alternative accommodation,

- The Relief Duty with homelessness, what occurs when the 56-day timespan comes to an end, the review process and process of appeals to decisions, and where residents would be directed for support if there is no duty for accommodation owed by the Council.
- Rough sleeping initiatives and pan-London outreach and support services for rough sleepers.
- Service charges for leaseholders, estimated charges, and methods of payment for residents.
- Sub-contractors that are employed by Council contractors, where the responsibility and quality of the work lies, and how much say the Council has in relation to resource chosen.
- An update on CHIP (The Corporate Housing Improvement Programme).
- The details of repair data that will be provided to the Committee in future updates.

ACTIONS:

1. To provide the Committee with information about how the Council may be able to assist when major works run over the intended schedule and increase the costs to residents.
2. To provide the Committee with an update to the question raised at July Committee about leaseholder service charges.
3. To provide the Committee with a complete update on all facets under CHIP - The Corporate Housing Improvement Programme.
4. To provide the Committee with the details of what type of contextualised data for repairs will be provided to the Committee going forward.

7 HOUSING ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

7.1 The Chair welcomed Chris Shoubridge (Divisional Head of Housing) and Rochelle Lorgan (Anti-Social Behaviour Services Manager), to introduce the report and provide an overview. The Divisional Head of Housing responded to questions on the following topics:

- The work carried out with Housing Associations (HA) in terms of the enforcement of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), the relationship and liaison officer employed by the Council, how responsive the HA's are, and how interventions such as case reviews assist in building relationships with HA's.
- The work that will be undertaken by the Council in conjunction with the CEO's (Chief Executive Officer) at HA's to establish better ways of working, sharing operational issues, and more effective ways to manage neighbour and community challenges.
- How the regulatory roles for landlords and enforcement around ASB are changing and the need for the Council to work with partners across the borough, including, officers in PPL (Public Protection and Licensing).

- The current security pilot scheme across 4 estates that runs until the end of November this year, the inclusion of Mozart Estate in the pilot, and the previous use of a dog on the patrol.
- Designing Out Crime (DOC) reports and the types of recommendations made to the built environment on estates by a DOC police officer, such as Lillington and Longmore Estates and the forthcoming reports being compiled for Mozart and Lyntford Estates.
- The types of areas that the Council are considering hold a high risk of aiding or concealing ASB on the Estates, how that is being addressed, and the challenges in the implementation of DOC officer recommendations.
- Neighbour to neighbour issues on the Mozart Estate and the improvement to 56% of reported cases since the injunction has been in place.
- Why injunctions have been used, how they operate and the area they cover when there has been an effect to residents by nuisance and ASB in communal areas, and what happens if there is a breach.
- The complexities around evictions and the processes for giving new tenants and longer standing tenants notice for a breach of tenancy.
- Possession / forfeiture proceedings against leaseholders when ASB is an issue and what occurs when problematic tenants are moved on from a premises.
- The satisfaction rate of ASB case handling which is carried out at the closure of a case, and the difficulties in obtaining high rates of satisfaction due to residents' knowledge about ASB.
- The use and purpose of the two different types of CCTV on estates and sheltered accommodation. The complexities and justifications (the appropriateness test) that are required under GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) in installing cameras and how they can aid in resolving ASB issues.
- The TMO's (Tenant Management Organisations) and how far they go in investigating low-level ASB behaviour, Millbank Estate's own TMO officer, and the long-running dissatisfaction with Millbank residents TMO.
- Why a breach of tenancy agreement is not used to evict tenants where they are causing nuisance by ASB to others, especially in long-running cases, the powers of the Council such as a notice of seeking possession, and how long the notice lasts.
- The needs of vulnerable victims and the needs of vulnerable perpetrators, how each are supported, and how the Courts / Judges view vulnerability in light of ASB, in particular, when they feel a perpetrator's vulnerability has not been properly addressed.
- How the injunctions operate and the limits of these regarding some recent events in local areas near estates where injunctions are in operation.
- Serious drug crime on the estates, in particular those involving young people, serious violence, gangs, issues with county lines, risks of grooming, identification of the young people, and which partner officers the Council work with to manage these issues on the estates.
- Tenants or leaseholders that sub-let and how this is managed by the Council in relation to ASB.
- The options open to a tenant if they are unhappy with how the Council have managed an ASB case.

- Reflective practice carried out by officers and how this is embedded through a system approach to improving services around ASB for residents and dealing with difficult situations.
- Mental Health concerns and the changes coming into effect with the Police under the Right Care, Right Person (RCRP) partnership and how the Council will work with other services going forward for interventions that may be required with residents when dealing with mental health in ASB cases.
- Communication with residents about ASB behaviour to improve understanding and the limits in information in more serious or complex cases and how the Council works with Resident Associations.
- Free of information requests around ASB, what types of requests the Council receives, and how the Council satisfies these requests.

ACTIONS:

1. To provide the Committee with the information about the Designing Out Crime Reports and recommendations that have been completed by DOCO's (Designing Out Crime Officers) on Estates in Westminster such Lillington and Longmore.
2. To update the Committee in due course about the changes the Council will make because of the Right Care, Right Person (RCRP) operational model of the police when attending ASB cases where mental health is a concern arises.

8 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

- 8.1 The Chair invited the Policy and Scrutiny Advisor to introduce the Committee to the Work Programme and provide an overview and updates.
- 8.2 The following points regarding the Work Programme were noted by the Committee.
 - The planning of the Work Programme for this Committee is currently on hold due to forthcoming potential changes in the way in which Policy and Scrutiny will be carried out in the Council from October.
 - A suggestion for future consideration by Councillor David Harvey was an item on the use of hostels for housing and how this is monitored by the Council, including what types of supported housing is available for vulnerable residents (aside from hostels), and what the Council's plans are to address the shortfalls in housing options for vulnerable residents.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 The Chair advised Members this would likely be the final meeting for this Committee as it is presently constituted.
- 9.2 The Chair advised that Members would be briefed about the changes to Policy and Scrutiny following the meeting of Full Council on 20 September.

9.3 The Chair thanked Members and officers for their work on the Committee since its formation.

10 TERMINATION OF MEETING

10.1 The meeting ended at 9.05pm.

CHAIR: _____

DATE _____