

Date: 6 July 2021

Report of: Councillor David Harvey

Portfolio: Cabinet Member for Housing

Report Author and Contact Details: Alexandra Severino (adseverino@westminster.gov.uk)

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**1. City for All Vision and Strategy (2021 – 2022) – Housing Services Priorities**

***1.1 Greener and Cleaner***

***1.1.1 Leverage Energy Efficiency Measures in Housing***

Progress is underway to test new low carbon heating systems and explore opportunities to install PV and solar thermal systems in our housing stock. Currently the procurement of sustainability engineers to model and test heating systems is in progress, insulation upgrade installation is being tested in a small test group of empty properties and internal wall insulation and storage heater upgrades are in progress throughout our housing stock.

***1.2 Vibrant Communities***

***1.2.1 Supporting Vulnerable Residents***

Work is progressing well on our pilot between Housing and Children’s Services which aims to work with our partners to establish multi-agency frameworks to manage complex Housing management cases including those needing interventions. A referral process and membership of the panel has been agreed for this pilot, and the panel will meet monthly to discuss cases requiring escalation. To date there have been two meetings of the panel and we have seen several positive outcomes. A similar pilot is in the works for cases where there is overlap with Adult Social Care.

***1.2.2 Redesign of Service Model Through Shared Space and Maximising the Use of Public Buildings – Churchill Gardens Pilot***

This pilot seeks to strengthen partnerships, co-ordinate council and community services with better use of local assets. The project intends to review how services are currently delivered, and how we can improve experiences for our residents, eventually rolling out successful initiatives across the city. Results of our survey that ran at Churchill Gardens from March – April showed that respondents expressed the need to access a wider range of local activities such as exercise classes and access to advice services regarding housing, welfare, and wellbeing. The project is now in the design phase and we are beginning to look at several interventions, including better utilization of the Churchill Gardens Community Hall.

### ***1.2.3 Resident Engagement – Survey Results***

We began this initiative after a significant rise was seen in community outreach and engagement during the pandemic. This project seeks to enhance participation and involvement using a bottom-up approach by tailoring our services to meet residents needs. It also ensures residents are empowered to address local issues, establish a consensus on neighbourly behaviour, and better tailor services to residents' needs. We received 1677 responses (overwhelmingly positive) to our survey which ran for four weeks and closed on May 21<sup>st</sup>. Our next steps include communicating our findings to residents, following up on complaints/service requests raised in survey returns, and establishing a co-ordinating policy and performance group of members, residents and officers.

### ***1.3 Smart City***

#### ***1.3.1 Trial Smart Homes Technologies***

The housing service is looking to test a range of technology to improve service effectiveness. Due diligence has been completed for the installation and testing of the following in a small number of estates during June and July: drones to survey upcoming major works, digital noticeboards, fire door closure sensors, damp and mould sensors and smart tags.

#### ***1.3.2 Facilitating Broadband Connections***

80% of council homes are now covered by the citywide wayleave and now have access to gigabit capable broadband with 15% of homes now having access to a choice of broadband provider. Works currently on site will see a connectivity rise to 86% by July 2021.

## **2. Cabinet Member Decisions (May – June 2021)**

Since the last report was made, no notifiable decisions have been made by the Cabinet Member for Housing.

## **3. Areas of Focus**

### ***3.1 Housing Contact Centre***

As part of the Housing Services restructure the contact centre will see a phased reduction in the overall number of Customer Service Adviser posts from 77 to 55. The impact of this has been mitigated by basic repair calls being handled by Agilisys (the Councils Corporate Contact Centre). System improvements via the 8 by 8 phone system, whereby front-line officers will be able to have direct connections with residents who will no longer need to go through the call centre and by having the flexibility to recruit an additional 10 staff over the winter months.

### ***3.2 Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation***

Homeless approaches to the housing solutions service during April and May 2021 were 14% higher than the same period in 2020, with homeless applications up 17%. This increase is due to the significantly lower demand the service had in Q1 2020 due to the impacts of COVID-19. Placements in Temporary Accommodation have seen an 8% increase so far, this financial year compared to the same period the previous year, this increase also being correlated to the impacts of COVID-19.

### ***3.3 Major Works Update***

New reporting systems for our major works projects means that simplified ward by ward data should be available for members this autumn. Presently all 11 active major works projects, are broadly on schedule, allowing for some of the supply and labor issues emerging as the economy moves out of the pandemic.

#### **4. Key Performance Indicators**

##### ***4.1 Housing Management Contact Centre***

**70%** of calls were answered within 30 seconds (performance in target range), with the longest call waiting time 22 minutes during the April reporting period. **68%** of calls were resolved during first contact and resident satisfaction with call handling is at **91%** which is above target.

##### ***4.2 Satisfaction with Repairs Service***

Overall tenant satisfaction with repairs has remained steady at **79%** in April 2021. **72%** of repairs in this period were completed on the first visit, and positively **79%** of tenants were satisfied with their repairs.

##### ***4.3 Overall satisfaction with Housing Services***

Tenant satisfaction that WCC provides a safe and secure home remains steady at **79%** for tenants and **64%** for leaseholders in April. Satisfaction with cleaning of communal areas is at **87%** for tenants and **66%** for leaseholders, while satisfaction with grounds maintenance is above target at **91%** for tenants and **81%** for leaseholders.