

Housing Business Plan

2009-10



City of Westminster

Message from the Director of Housing

Housing Business Plan 2009/10

Last year housing services delivered a number of notable achievements. Despite challenging housing market conditions we continue to reduce the number of households living in temporary accommodation and the number of people sleeping rough on our streets. We assisted more than 300 families living in overcrowded conditions, and launched a new charity which will bring much needed new homes and other improvements to many of our estates.

In response to changes in the housing market we have introduced a new support package for homeowners who need assistance. We will continue to monitor the market and we will ensure that appropriate advice and assistance is made available. We are also making it easier for those who want to access affordable homeownership with the introduction of a new, customer centred service, Homeownership Westminster.

We are pleased that for the 7th successive year we secured the top possible score of 4 from the Audit Commission. We are particularly pleased that CityWest continues to enhance overall customer satisfaction levels, and we will work with CityWest to address those areas where satisfaction can be further improved.

Next year promises to be a significant challenge for us and we will focus on the following key issues:

- Continuing to tackle overcrowding,
- Further reducing temporary accommodation and rough sleeping
- Ensuring our financial position remains sound
- Launching Homeownership Westminster
- Bringing forward regeneration plans for estates
- Introducing 'Westminster Works on Estates' to help tenants into work
- Expanding the provision of accommodation for people with learning disabilities
- Supporting CityWest Homes to make further service improvements

I am pleased to present you with the Housing Business Plan for 2008/09.

**Rosemary Westbrook
Director of Housing**

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1. INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY

Introduction

The Housing Business Plan sets out the key strategic priorities for the council's housing service for the 2009/10 financial year. Alongside the priorities for improvement, the Business Plan details the resources and activity that will enable us to achieve our priorities efficiently and effectively and the risks that will need to be managed along the way.

Housing leads on and contributes to a wide range of plans aimed at improving quality of life in Westminster. Our priorities for improving our services are derived from these plans, Government policy and through listening to our residents, customers and communities.

All staff contribute to meeting our priorities and will have related individual actions and targets contained within their own performance management arrangements.

Business planning helps us to focus on the future and identifies a clear course of action to meet future objectives. It is the process by which we set priorities and objectives for the ensuing year - the strategic and financial processes running in tandem.

Progress against each action and outcome will be reported to members quarterly or as appropriate, depending on the timing of the Committee meetings. Key performance indicators, including those which contribute to the achievement of our LAA Improvement Priorities and financial performance, will be reported monthly to the Corporate Performance Board and to the Cabinet Member for Housing.

Key Priorities for 2009/10

The key priorities for 2009/10 are:

- Increasing the supply of homes
- Regenerating our Neighbourhoods
- Community Build
- Economic Recovery
- Tackling high demand and improving housing advice
- Tackling overcrowding
- Tackling worklessness
- Providing support for vulnerable people
- Maximising the benefit of Private Sector Housing
- Supporting CityWest Homes to deliver excellent services

2. OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND

Westminster Housing in Context

- **Population** – approximately 234,000.
- **Number of households** – 113,000.
- **Diversity** – 26% of Westminster's population are from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups.
- **Dwellings** – 118,716 homes in total.
- **Tenure:**

Owner-Occupier	44%
Council	11%
RSL	11%
Private Rented	34%
- **Homelessness** – 2,462 households live in temporary accommodation.
- **Other housing demand** – there are 700 households on the housing register in priority groups and a further 5,200 registered but without priority for housing. There are 1,963 WCC tenants awaiting a transfer.
- **Overcrowding** – 1112 Westminster Council tenants overcrowded
- **Rough sleeping** – 86 rough sleepers plus 25 Accession State Nationals were recorded at the official full count in March 2009.
- **Affordability of home ownership** – the average house price in Westminster is £611,000. It is estimated that households need an income of nearly £80,000 in order to purchase a home.
- **Average rent for a council home** – £99.30
- **Benefit Dependency** - 67% of Westminster Council tenants are in receipt of Housing/Council Tax Benefit
- **Empty Properties** – there are estimated to be approximately 3,000 empty properties and nearly 10,000 second homes. It is estimated that at least 3,000 dwellings are used as short-term lets.

The Housing Service

As a strategic housing authority with a small core team, commissioning a wide range of services, partnership working and the ability to influence, remain central to delivering the City Council's housing objectives. A partnership framework is provided by the Housing Network, a sub-group of the Westminster City Partnership, and a strong partnership working culture cuts across each specific policy area.

The Housing Service leads in setting the framework for housing in Westminster and commissions the delivery of services through a range of client functions and partnership activities.

The **Housing Options Service** offers a range of housing information and advice. The priority is to prevent homelessness but, where this is not possible, it deals with homeless applications, provides support for homeless households, manages moves in temporary accommodation and operates the choice based lettings system for permanent housing as well as the various housing registers.

The **Housing Needs Team** commissions and monitors the performance of this contract and works in close partnership to ensure the service continually improves as well as leading on rehousing policy development.

The **Supporting People Team** leads and coordinates partnership working between Housing, Adult Social Care, the Primary Care Trust and Probation Service to commission high quality housing related support services that deliver the city's priorities through the Supporting People programme.

The **Rough Sleeping Team** is responsible for co-ordinating strategy and commissioning services to reduce rough sleeping and associated street activity.

The **Community Partnerships Team** co-ordinates the development and delivery of renewal programmes and has been successful in securing external funding against a range of service specific and renewal priorities.

The **Housing Supply Team** delivers new permanent and temporary affordable housing in partnership with housing associations, private sector landlords and other agencies.

The **Strategy and Performance Team** leads on the development of housing strategies, policies and initiatives, develops strategic partnerships and manages the performance framework and data analysis functions across housing services.

The **Private Sector Housing Team** focuses on improving standards in private sector accommodation, bringing empty properties back into use and promoting energy efficiency initiatives.

Housing Business Plan 2009/10

The **Housing Finance Team** provides a fully joined-up and integrated finance and accountancy service for both the Housing General Fund and the HRA.

Since April 2002, management and maintenance of the council's housing stock has been the responsibility of **CityWest Homes**, our Arms Length Management Organisation. Its aims and activities are set out in the annual Delivery Plan, which is agreed by its Board and by the Cabinet Member for Housing and represents a key element of our overall strategy.

2009/10 is the third year of the revised Management Agreement with CityWest Homes. Regular reviews of its performance take place, with bonus payments being paid in addition to the core management fee, if certain stretch targets are met.

During 2009/10, the City Council will undergo major transformation. This will clearly have an impact on the service and may require revisions to the business plan during the year. The need to retain a focussed and coherent service, bringing together all the housing services activity, has been agreed within the developing plans for transformation.

3. KEY PRIORITIES

Corporate Priorities

Building a Living City

Following the success of the One City programme, in March 2009, the new Leader of the Council has set out his vision of a living city of opportunity for Westminster residents and local businesses including an ambitious programme to renew the heart of London in time for the 2012 Olympic Games.

The Living City initiative is also the Council's response to the current economic crisis. The Living City ambitions will focus on increasing personal responsibility, renewing our city and building responsive services.

Tackling overcrowding is a key theme of Living City – including the following pledge for 2009-10:

- provide housing for the 40 most overcrowded families in Westminster by the end of 2009/10 and aim to end overcrowding in the borough altogether by 2014

Overcrowding is a key housing priority and forms one of our LAA targets.

Organisational Change

The Chief Executive has announced a re-organisation with the aim of developing services that work together more effectively to address our customers' needs, whilst also addressing the severe financial constraints faced by the Council as a result of the economic downturn.

A small Executive Board has already been created which will set the strategic direction of the council's operation in response to the priorities set out by Members. It will also translate those priorities into the measurable outcomes for the council to achieve.

Delivery units will be developed, built and shaped by the activities they are responsible for and designed for speed of decision making and delivery.

Support functions such as policy, finance, performance, project management and procurement are to be unified to avoid duplication of processes.

Delivery Units will agree their support needs annually with their Strategic Director and the support functions.

In addition, new hub buildings will be created around the city where customers can get everything done in a single visit.

Housing will fall under the remit of the Deputy Chief Executive, aligned with Economic Development, Neighbourhoods and Regeneration. It is anticipated that the housing service will continue its focus on commissioning a range of services, building new programmes and initiatives by looking outwards across the city at current and future need and translating that into an effective response.

Equalities

Following a review of its approach towards equalities and diversity, the City Council will over the coming months, be developing a small number of evidenced based equalities priorities. This will be the core of the new single equalities scheme, replacing current individual schemes. Alongside this Housing will be developing its own set of service outcomes based on performance data.

Neighbourhoods

Strengthening neighbourhoods is seen as one of the City's key challenges in Westminster's Local Area Agreement. The aim is that neighbourhoods are given a greater voice in decision-making and that partners move towards providing services that are integrated at a level which is meaningful to local people and brings together everything government does in Westminster.

The Housing Department can make a significant contribution by encouraging housing providers to take a more holistic approach to the neighbourhoods in which they operate. We already play a leading role in many of the City's Local Area Renewal Partnerships (LARPS) and work closely with the key RSLs and CityWest Homes on their role in contributing to neighbourhood services.

Westminster City Partnership Priorities

City Plan 2006-2016

The Westminster City Plan is our Community Strategy which aims to improve the quality of life and well being of Westminster residents, visitors and businesses. The plan is the responsibility of the Westminster City Partnership (WCP). The WCP brings together representatives from Westminster City Council, other public sector agencies and the voluntary and community sectors, local businesses, regeneration partnerships and residents' groups.

The WCP's shared vision for Westminster is that by 2016 it will be the best city to live in, work and visit in the UK, a vibrant city with great quality of life, strong, united communities and excellent services, offering real opportunities for everyone to achieve a better future.

A new City Plan for 2006-2016 was published following extensive consultation. The new City Plan sets out a vision for:

- an improving environment;
- better life chances;
- strong, united and engaged communities;

- customer tailored services.

The City Plan 2006-2016 is available from

<http://www.westminster.gov.uk/councilgovernmentanddemocracy/councils/partnerships/>

Local Area Agreement 2008-11

Together with local partners on the Westminster City Partnership, we have signed a new 3-year Local Area Agreement (LAA) with central Government. This includes a set of improvement targets, drawn from a national set of 198 indicators, and a number of locally developed indicators.

The LAA comprises a range of strategic priorities, which sit above the national and local performance indicators. LAA strategic priorities relating directly to housing are:

- To meet housing need and tackle the consequences of housing shortage
- To increase access to good quality affordable housing
- To enable people to live longer and healthier lives

We have agreed the following LAA targets with the Government Office for London:

- Number of households living in temporary accommodation
- Number of affordable homes delivered
- Number of intermediate housing opportunities (local indicator)
- Local Authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services
- Number of households assisted to relieve pressures of overcrowding (local indicator)
- Proportion of habitual rough sleepers suitably accommodated (local indicator)
- Time taken to resolve the needs of persons needing major adaptations in the private sector (local indicator)

Westminster Housing Network

The Housing Network is a thematic sub group of the Westminster City Partnership which brings together partners and key agencies to take forward strategic housing priorities for Westminster. The Housing Network seeks to address the following crosscutting issues around housing and sustainable neighbourhoods including:

- creating & maintaining sustainable neighbourhoods,
- adding to the supply of housing,
- managing & maintaining the current supply of housing,
- delivering decent homes,
- providing support for vulnerable people and
- effective communication on housing options.

In response to changes to the LAA which sees the inclusion of funding for Disabled Facilities Grants and Supporting People, the Housing Network has

reviewed its membership and will be expanding to reflect its wider responsibilities and to broaden its reach.

Local Area Renewal Partnerships (LARPS)

The delivery of the local/neighbourhood elements of the LAA is achieved through Local Area Renewal Partnerships. The LARPs' aims are to improve the quality of life of people who live and work in Westminster's most disadvantaged areas and areas with pockets of deprivation (West End, South Westminster):

- Church Street
- Harrow Road
- Queen's Park
- South Westminster
- Westbourne
- West End

LARPs receive funding through the Local Area Agreement (LAA) to coordinate partnership working at a neighbourhood level and to deliver programmes to reduce deprivation.

They bring together service providers (including the council, Police, the Primary Care Trust and voluntary sector) and residents, to identify and address key local issues across a range of areas (crime, health, housing, education, employment and environment).

National and Regional Policy Context

2008/9 has seen the Government working towards its national housing priorities, set out in the Government's five-year plan for housing – 'Sustainable communities: Homes for all', which was published in January 2005.

The Housing and Regeneration Act received Royal Assent in July 2008. The main provisions of the Act are as follows:

- The setting up of the new Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) with a national role as the investment vehicle for social housing and regeneration.
- The establishment of a new regulator, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA), and a new regulatory framework.

The HCA and TSA will provide a platform to help deliver the Government's plans to reform rented housing, to be set out in the housing reform green paper later in 2008.

The Tenant Services Authority

The TSA will be of key importance to CityWest Homes, as an independent regulator charged with promoting and championing tenant's interests. It became the regulator for housing associations and accredited private

landlords on 1 December 2008 and – subject to the completing the necessary parliamentary process – will do the same for local authorities and ALMOs from 2010.

The TSA will establish a national standards framework to which we will need to adhere. Tenants will be given more choice and a voice in how their homes are managed, through the reforming of social housing regulation, giving tenants a stronger say in stock transfer decisions by making a tenant ballot mandatory, and by giving local authority tenants greater powers over options for the future management and ownership of their homes.

The Homes & Communities Agency

The HCA has committed to holding a 'single conversation' with local authorities and other partners on the specific housing and regeneration needs of their individual areas..

With an investment budget of over £5 billion per year, the HCA's scale and resources means it will bring about a step change in the delivery of new housing supply (both affordable and within the private sector) and the creation and regeneration of sustainable communities within which these homes are built.

The HCA London Board will be responsible for setting strategic priorities for the investment of funding to deliver affordable housing in London and the South East. The Board is chaired by the Mayor of London, with the chief executive of the HCA as vice-chairman. London Boroughs are represented. The new Board will be responsible for meeting the Government's and the Mayor's objectives to:

- deliver a significant increase in the total number of homes in a way that is environmentally sustainable;
- significantly increase the number of affordable, family-sized homes; and
- create communities in which people want to live by targeting and regenerating the most deprived areas of London.

Mayors Draft Housing Strategy

The Mayor published his draft housing strategy in November 2008 which was followed by a period of consultation with the London Assembly and functional bodies. Statutory consultation with the public will commence in the summer of 2009.

Key areas within the Mayor's Draft Strategy include proposals to:

- Replace the 50% affordable housing London wide target with affordable housing targets to be agreed with individual local authorities
- Provide more 3bed family homes for both social rented (42%) and intermediate housing (16%)
- To deliver a first steps housing programme for Londoners composed of a range of intermediate and discounted sale housing to be offered to

households with incomes up to £72,000. Eligibility for intermediate housing no longer to be restricted to employment categories such as key workers

- To provide 50,000 new affordable homes over the next three years
- To promote a more vibrant and attractive private rented sector through the promotion of institutional investment
- To promote high quality design in 21st Century London to match its historical heritage
- Homes to be delivered with public funding will deliver higher quality in line with the forthcoming London Housing Design Guide.
- To promote greening of all new developments
- Work with Local Authorities and other Public Land owners to bring forward land for development and to align HCA investment with land opportunities

The current economic downturn is clearly having a major impact on housing in London, is already affecting investment decisions and will influence the final version of the strategy due to be published for formal consultation in May 2009.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Review

In March 2008 the Government commenced a review of the HRA subsidy system (HRA). It is building on the work of the pilots conducted with six local authorities, which looked at the costs and benefits of councils operating outside the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system.

The review is considering evidence about the need to spend on management, maintenance and repairs. It is considering rent policy, including the relationship between council rents and rents set by other social housing providers. It is also considering how the self-financing model developed in the pilot exercise would fit with the aims of the review and, if it is consistent with these, how it could be implemented.

The review is still expected to report to Ministers in Spring 2009.

In addition to this, in January 2009, the Government issued a consultation paper on changes to rules for building new council housing. Specifically, this looks at excluding newly built council properties from the HRA subsidy system and capital pooling requirements, in order to remove financial disincentives to the provision of new council housing. In responding to this consultation, the council argues that these changes, while welcome, do not go far enough. Our experience of setting up the Settled Homes and Community Build schemes has shown that the subsidy and pooling arrangements of the existing HRA system are serious impediments to the development of new council housing. The proposed changes will address this, but it is fundamental reform of the HRA subsidy system that is required, so that local authorities can plan for the longer term with certainty about their income and expenditure.

Comprehensive Area Assessment

From April 2009, Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) replaces Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA).

CAA will be a forward looking assessment of the prospects for the future achievement of shared outcomes by the council and other local partners.

There will be 2 new annual assessments:

- an area assessment (covering council and partners) - a qualitative assessment of prospects for improvement, focussing primarily on the LAA outcomes. It will be reported as a narrative and flags will be used to draw attention to performance issues and innovative practice
- a scored organisational assessment for all councils (alongside organisational assessments for other partners), covering use of resources and performance management arrangements
- The LAA and National Indicator Set will be key evidence sets for both assessments.

The first assessments will be made in November 2009. They will be joint assessments made by the Audit Commission, Care Quality Commission, HM Constabulary and Ofsted.

Westminster Housing Strategy 2007 – 2012

This business plan covers the third year of the current 5-year housing strategy, published in July 2007. The Strategy was informed by the Westminster Housing Commission, plus consultations with residents and partner organisations, and analysis of extensive data sources that demonstrate housing need and pressures in Westminster. The Housing Strategy has the following four priorities:

- increasing the supply of homes
- tackling high demand and improving housing advice
- improving neighbourhoods and quality of life
- developing the Council's role as a strategic housing authority

4. PERFORMANCE, RESOURCES & RISK MANAGEMENT

Key Achievements in 2008/09

In 2008/09 we:

- achieved the highest possible score for Housing as assessed by the Audit Commission under its Comprehensive Performance Assessment regime
- reduced temporary accommodation to the lowest level since 2002 and bed & breakfast numbers to the lowest level since the 1990s.
- achieved provisional budget savings of £4.175m
- made significant progress on the new Temporary to Settled housing initiative for homeless households with 79 purchases having been completed by the end of 2008/09
- achieved a record low number of 69 rough sleepers in the September 2008 including significantly reducing the number of habitual rough sleepers
- launched the new charity, Westminster Community Homes, to channel investment into new homes and other improvements on our estates
- assisted more than 300 families living in overcrowded conditions
- introduced a new initiative to assist home owners who are facing difficulties paying their mortgage
- introduced a new service to offer advice to for those who want to access affordable homeownership
- achieved improved tenant satisfaction levels
- well exceeded our 3-year LAA stretch target of 690 households being prevented from becoming homeless
- held an employment fair for rough sleepers and hostel residents, the first of its kind for a local authority
- were awarded the Highly Commended trophy in the 'Improved Delivery Through Greater Third Sector Involvement' category At the Government Opportunities Excellence in Public Procurement Awards 2008.
- received a runner-up award in the Andy Ludlow Homelessness Awards for the Westminster homeless services' Behavioural Therapies Action project.
- Successfully rolled out flexible working procedures and a new telephony system across the Housing Service.

Financial Summary

Housing Revenue Account Financial Summary

Capital

Expenditure

As part of the Star Chamber process in August 2008, Tribal Consulting were commissioned to produce a 30 year business plan for the HRA. This demonstrated that the HRA had sufficient resources to finance its capital programme for only 8 years. Westminster City Council (WCC) asked CityWest Homes (CWH) to re-visit the proposed capital programme and submit proposals which were more reflective of the predicted available resources and which guaranteed a sustainable, balanced budget for a 15-year period.

Subsequent changes introduced to mitigate the funding shortfall were as follows:

- The average annual spend over the 30 year period has been restricted to less than £30m (down from £40m)
- The approved capital programme is cash-limited
- The Council advised CWH that slippage of capital spend was to be discontinued with effect from 2008/09

Financing

With the cessation of new subsidised HRA borrowing approvals (from 2008/09), HRA capital financing is now available from only 3 sources:

- Major Repairs Allowance
- Major Works Lessee Contributions
- Revenue Contributions

In recent years, the amount owed to the HRA by lessees for major works has risen sharply and, given the impending shortage of capital resources, WCC has asked CWH to develop a strategy to improve collection rates and reverse this trend.

It is likely that the current economic climate will have a negative impact on recovery. Whilst all debts will eventually be recovered (a Notice of Charge can be placed on the properties of lessees unable to settle), the critical medium-term cash flow position of the HRA means that a further amendment to the capital programme in future years cannot be ruled out.

Revenue

Rents

On 6th March 2009, in light of the current adverse economic conditions, the Housing Minister took the extra-ordinary step of re-visiting (for 2009/10) the annual, government prescribed calculation of local authority rents.

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As in previous years, the rate of inflation used in determining rents had been the prevailing Retail Price Index (RPI) figure at the previous September. In September 2008, RPI stood at 5.0%, and this produced a national average increase of 6.2% for rents.

However by January 2009, RPI had fallen to 0.1%. The Housing Minister agreed with representatives from local authorities, including Westminster, that it was unfair to charge tenants in line with the 6.2% increase and agreed to both halve the national average increase to 3.1% and introduce a mechanism to pay additional subsidy to local authorities that agreed to lower their rents in accordance.

The timing of this decision means that considerable work is required to repeat the annual rent setting process and that this is unlikely to be implemented until June 2009. The real impact on Westminster City Council's HRA - whilst not expected to be significant - will only be known once guidance on the changes to the 2009-10 Housing Subsidy determination are finalised (expected in late March 2009).

Budget

HRA

The delegated revenue expenditure budgets for the 3 year period 2009/10 – 2011/12 are now cash-limited and CWH have been advised that where overspends against individual budget-heads are forecast, they will need to identify compensating savings.

The City Council's HRA is required to make payments back to the Government as the income CLG assumes it generates through rents is more than the subsidy paid by CLG to cover the costs of managing and maintaining the housing stock. A further capital subsidy is also received from CLG to help fund major works. At present, this major works subsidy is greater than the payments the council is required to make, so there is a net gain to the HRA, but this net gain has been steadily decreasing year on year. It is anticipated that (subject to the ongoing review of the HRA subsidy system) 2010-11 will be the last year that Westminster's HRA is a net receiver of housing subsidy.

CWH are currently undertaking a review of income from Garages and Sheds with a view to producing a standard schedule of charges which reflects size, location and demand of units and maximises income for the HRA.

CWH and WCC are jointly undertaking a full review of Heating & Hot Water charges, with the aim of standardising charges and ensuring that the costs of running all City Council district heating systems are fully recovered from the service users.

Housing Business Plan 2009/10

General Fund

The Gross Housing General Fund revenue budget for 2008-09 is £291m and the net budget after government grant, fees and charges is £23.7m. In addition there is a Housing General Fund capital programme of £15.4m.

The Net General Fund budgets are:

£11.8m	Homelessness
£5.9m	Housing Benefit Administration
£1.2m	Support for Registered Landlords
£2.4m	Housing Services, Private Sector
£2.4m	Other Services

The capital programme in 2008/09 mainly consists of investment in affordable housing and a temporary to settled homes scheme. All are externally funded.

Our allocation of Homelessness and Supporting People grant of over £24.2m is carefully managed to provide value for money services to reduce rough sleeping and support people with a range of housing and support needs.

Adverse changes to Housing Benefit subsidy for temporary accommodation, introduced in 2007/08, have led to a further reduction in government subsidy for temporary accommodation. This will continue to require extremely close budget management to ensure planned savings can be achieved.

Risk Management

Risk management enables us to identify and manage key obstacles to the achievement of objectives. It is a strategic tool that is an integral part of effective and efficient management and planning.

Risks that have been identified for the 2009/10 financial year are:

- Impact of the credit crunch on the Westminster housing market
- Failure to meet Government targets on Homelessness
- Changes to the Housing Benefit regime
- Operational performance of Housing Benefits service
- Financial position of the HOS contractor
- Reliance on outsourced service for housing IT system

These and any other risks arising during the year are included in a departmental risk register which is considered by the Housing Services Board quarterly. Any significant risks (as defined by a corporate assessment procedure) are also included in the strategic risk register.

Business Plan Monitoring and Review

Progress against each action and outcome will be reported to the Health & Community Services Policy & Scrutiny Committee quarterly or as appropriate, dependent on the timing of the Committee meetings.

Key performance indicators are reported monthly to the Housing Services Board, corporately and to the Cabinet Member for Housing; and quarterly to the Health & Community Services Policy & Scrutiny Committee.

5. HOUSING KEY PRIORITIES

1. Increasing the supply of homes

During 2009/10, we anticipate the completion, by RSLs, of 266 new affordable rented homes in the city. These include the next phase of Grosvenor Waterside off Ebury Bridge Road and Peel House in Regency Street - a total of 127 units. In addition, RSLs will deliver 28 new housing units for special needs clients, including 21 units of extra care at Leonora House, Lanark Road.

Four intermediate housing schemes will also be handed over during 2009/10 delivering 38 homes for shared ownership and intermediate rent.

New affordable housing opportunities in Westminster have, in the main, been delivered as a consequence of privately-led residential developments where a proportion of housing is required by planning policy (S106 agreements) to be provided as affordable housing. As a consequence of the downturn in the economy, it is possible that there will also be a downturn in the number of residential planning applications coming forward or delays to the implementation of those residential schemes which have secured planning permissions.

While we will continue to support the delivery of new affordable housing via S106 agreements, we will also seek to supplement new affordable housing supply through:

- Community Build – bringing forward affordable homes on land owned by the City Council and delivering a mixture of social rented and intermediate housing.
- Hidden Homes – working with RSL partners to identify opportunities to deliver additional affordable homes on land and estates owned by them. We will encourage them to bring forward planning applications to deliver new homes on infill sites and to extend existing properties through conversions and extensions.
- Purchase and Repair – We will work with Westminster Community Homes Ltd towards the purchase of privately owned properties and to convert these properties into affordable homes for social rent and intermediate housing. We will target the purchase of family-sized accommodation to be made available to existing tenants who are overcrowded.

In view of the current economic downturn, RSLs will be able to rely less on the proceeds of sales of shared ownership and outright sales properties to cross-subsidise social rented housing developments. The City Council will be working closely with the Homes and Communities Agency to ensure that the levels of grant required to deliver affordable homes in the city reflect the

changing economic environment and consequently that the grant rates available for social rented development increase.

Intermediate housing

We will formally launch the City Council's new Intermediate Housing Service to be run by Catalyst Housing Group. The new 'Homeownership Westminster' will provide a single gateway to advice and information on the variety of products available in the intermediate housing market and reduce confusion over eligibility for these schemes and how to apply for them.

The major responsibilities for of the new service will be to promote intermediate housing opportunities in the city, increase the number of Westminster residents registered for intermediate housing and to work closely with our housing association partners to ensure that intermediate opportunities are maximised for Westminster applicants.

We will simplify the eligibility criteria to join the intermediate housing register by enabling residents and those working in the city to register. We will also simplify prioritisation criteria for intermediate housing.

We are working to develop a range of housing products for low and middle income earners. This will assist those households who cannot afford full market housing to remain in Westminster and help to create more mixed-tenure, mixed-income communities in the city.

In the current economic circumstances we will support applications from RSLs to convert shared ownership units to Rent to Homebuy where there is evidence of difficulties being experienced by buyers in securing mortgage finance due to requirements by lenders for significant deposits to be provided by buyers. Rent to Homebuy will enable potential shared owners to instead rent these properties at sub market levels for 3 to 5 years while saving for a deposit. At the end of this period the tenant has the option to buy the property on a shared ownership basis.

We will continue to work with RSLs and Dolphin Square to bring forward intermediate housing opportunities that will help Westminster households to access affordable home ownership and other intermediate housing products, and will enable us to meet our target of 1,000 intermediate housing opportunities by 2012.

Temporary to settled housing

In 2009/10, we will complete the purchase of the remaining properties under the Temporary to Settled housing programme, offering homeless households a speedier route to permanent homes at affordable social rents. The original aim was to complete 200 properties. However, because we have managed to acquire a higher proportion of larger dwellings than anticipated, 125 units is expected to enable us to rehouse the equivalent number of people and meet HCA requirements.

LAA Target and GLA Affordable Housing Target

The City Council has agreed with GOL an LAA delivery target of 594 new build affordable homes over the period 2008/09 to 2010/11. We have subsequently agreed a target with the GLA of 925 homes, which also includes Temporary to settled housing, existing affordable housing units brought back in to use and Open Market HomeBuy units.

Local Development Framework

Housing will continue to work with colleagues in Planning towards the adoption of the new Local Development framework. We have put forward a proposal to adopt a floor area calculation for affordable housing requirement, to replace the current policy based on a proportion of units to be provided. This is now the preferred option within the 'Issues and Options' proposals within the LDF.

1. Increasing the supply of homes

Key areas of activity in 2009/10

- Increase the supply of affordable homes
- Hidden Homes – working with RSL partners to identify opportunities to deliver additional affordable homes on land and estates owned by them.
- Purchase and Repair – work with Community Homes Westminster to purchase privately owned properties, to be converted into affordable homes for social rent and intermediate housing.
- Lobby the Homes and Communities Agency for increased grant rates for social rented developments in order to deliver more affordable homes.
- Formally launch the City Council's new Intermediate Housing Service
- Continue to deliver the Temporary to Settled housing programme.

Performance Indicators	Target
• Number of affordable homes delivered (LAA target) (Numbers subject to negotiation with the Mayor)	335
• Number of intermediate housing opportunities (LAA target)	175
• Achieve nominations to new affordable rented homes	266
• Deliver the Temporary to Settled housing programme 2007-08 to 2010-11	125 homes purchased

2. Regenerating our Neighbourhoods

Estate Renewal

The housing stock on some of our estates is in need of significant investment if it is adequately to meet residents' housing needs in the years to come. This year we will begin a programme to review estates in some of our more

deprived areas and develop options for their renewal to give them a long term future.

We will commission consultants to prepare a master plan to guide the physical regeneration of an area centred on Church Street and Edgware Road, creating a high quality, sustainable, mixed use urban neighbourhood that is attractive to residents and visitors alike, that is full of life and enterprise, and that integrates successfully with the surrounding areas.

With the support of London's regional housing pot, we will also begin studies to guide the future renewal of other estates in Westminster such as Ebury Bridge, Brunel, Tollgate Gardens and Hallfield.

Partnerships:

We are active partners in a number of neighbourhood regeneration initiatives, most notably through our involvement with Local Area Renewal Partnerships (LARPS) across the city.

LARPs will be crucial as we engage local communities and other stakeholders in our regeneration plans and the delivery of our Community Build programme.

Community Build

In 2009/10, the council will be completing the first units commissioned as part of the Community Build programme – housing-led regeneration of Westminster's estates. The first ten homes are being developed for rent and four will be suitable for disabled households.

Working with Westminster Community Homes Ltd (a new Charity), we plan to develop an initial phase of approximately 250 new homes over the next three years, in and around the council's estates. These new homes will be for a variety of tenures and will be aimed at existing residents, their families and key workers in and around Westminster. Existing local residents will be given priority for the new rented and home ownership units on each estate. Further phases will follow in 2012 and 2013 and the mix of these later schemes will be determined by both the tenure splits in the initial programme and the demand issues at that time.

The Housing Corporation (now replaced by the "Homes and Communities Agency" - HCA) has allocated grant funding for the initial phase of the programme. Further work is on-going to finalise the appropriate mix and financial models to support this development programme, which will require additional investment on top of the HCA grant input.

In 2009/10 we will also continue the consultation programme with local residents and other key stakeholders on the allocated sites. Architects have now been selected to develop the designs for Luxborough Street and Dudley House, with a view to submitting planning applications for both of these schemes by the autumn of 2009. An architects' selection panel will also be progressed to appoint consultants for the scheme at Avenue Gardens.

Housing Business Plan 2009/10

The other scheme to be progressed in 2009 is on the Warwick Estate, where we will be working alongside residents to provide a range of new homes, together with replacement community and nursery facilities. The target date for submission of the planning application for this scheme is late 2009.

Other sites will be reviewed throughout the year and these will form the basis of a further bid for HCA grant funding to support the programme from 2010 onwards.

2. Regenerating our Neighbourhoods

Key areas of activity in 2009/10

- Commission consultants to prepare Church St Master Plan
- Community Build
 - complete the first units commissioned as part of the Community Build programme
 - continue the consultation programme with local residents and other key stakeholders on the allocated sites
 - submit planning applications for Luxborough Street and Dudley House
 - appoint consultants for the scheme at Avenue Gardens
 - submit planning application for Warwick Estate.

Performance Indicators

Target

- Develop new homes over 2009-12, in and around the council's estates.

250

3. Economic Recovery

The current economic situation poses a great challenge and is likely to result in more households having difficulties in paying rents and mortgages. Through the council's City Recovery Programme, we aim to help alleviate the worst effects of the recession, by assisting people to stay in their homes and helping them to find new ones if they are evicted or their homes repossessed.

Mortgage rescue

We are participating in the national mortgage rescue scheme, which helps eligible households facing repossession to stay in their homes, and are working with Westminster Citizens Advice (WCA), CHAS and Metropolitan Housing Association to run the scheme. Due to the high property prices in Westminster, the national property cap of £295,000 will prevent many Westminster residents from being eligible, so we are also developing a local scheme with Dolphin Square.

Raising awareness of advice and assistance

Housing Business Plan 2009/10

Mortgage rescue schemes are one of a range of options for people struggling with their mortgages. Other measures include: agreements with the lenders, claiming Support for Mortgage Interest; and the newly announced Homeowner Support Scheme, where the homeowner can defer part of their interest payments for up to two years. During 2009/10 we will be working with partners and stakeholders to raise awareness of the range of assistance available and to promote the national and any local schemes. The Housing Options Service will also be a key referral agent into the council's newly established **debt management and benefit advice project**, which will provide up to 1,000 advice sessions on debt management, mortgage arrears and benefit entitlements over the coming year.

The private rented sector

With Westminster's large private rented sector (36% of the stock), private tenants may be particularly vulnerable in the current economic climate if their landlord's lender forecloses. Where eviction is inevitable we will help private tenants find alternative accommodation through the Homefinders and Landlord's Incentive Schemes. We aim to develop a further scheme with landlords which is more cost effective for the Council, and make this available to a broader group of people.

Economic recovery	
Key areas of activity in 2009/10	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the national mortgage rescue scheme with partners 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop local scheme with Dolphin Square Foundation, the Homes and Communities Agency and Metropolitan Housing to help homeowners ineligible for the national scheme 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a Hardship Fund to prevent eligible homeowners from becoming homeless through short term loans or grants 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with stakeholders and partners to raise awareness of the range of options available for struggling homeowners 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a new, more cost effective Landlord scheme to help a greater number of people find new homes in the private rented sector 	
Performance Indicators	Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer all applicants who meet the criteria of the mortgage rescue scheme to WCA for assessment. 	100%

4. Tackling high demand and improving housing advice

Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation

Housing Business Plan 2009/10

In 2008/09, we made good progress in reducing numbers in TA as a result of prevention measures, including greater use of the private sector for those newly threatened with homelessness and for those in TA wanting and able to make a fresh start. The settled homes scheme, providing qualifying offers for those in TA, has been hugely popular.

All the TA reduction measures in place will continue, with additional promotion of the private sector and increased rehousing to the homeless. However, there is some risk of an increase in the number of homeless households presenting due to the economic downturn.

We will work intensively with single vulnerable people in our temporary accommodation to prepare them to move on to permanent homes.

Take forward findings of housing advice review

We will take forward the recommendation to develop a housing advice strategy. We will map the advice provided by the different voluntary sector advice services to establish what level of housing advice is available and to whom. We will work with all the providers to get best value by sharing up to date information across all the providers, possibly web-based. We will look at how to maximise services, for example by making better use of interpreters across agencies. We will identify gaps in provision and by the end of the year take a view on whether additional services are required and how and where they should be provided.

We will also aim to increase the help offered to single and non priority homeless people presenting to Housing Options by offering private sector tenancies through the low cost landlord incentive scheme set out above in the Economic Recovery section.

Advice on intermediate products will be significantly improved with the introduction of our new service – Homeownership Westminster, which will provide a one-stop shop for Westminster residents and workers who are priced out of the local housing market. We will also work with corporate colleagues to ensure that a comprehensive advice service strategy is developed across the city.

Tackling High Demand and Improving Housing Advice	
Key areas of activity in 2009/10	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Continue to undertake activity to reduce homelessness through prevention, advice and better use of private sector housing.	
Performance Indicators	Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reduce the number of households in Temporary Accommodation (LAA national indicator)	1,788
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Permanent homelessness rehousing in 2009/10	686

Tackling High Demand and Improving Housing Advice	
Key areas of activity in 2009/10	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households prevented or delayed from becoming homeless through active homelessness case work. (of which 250 from private sector schemes) 	400
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homelessness duty discharged to 150 applicants by arranging qualifying offers 	150
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through a variety of measures to successfully move on single vulnerable people in TA 	40

5. Tackling overcrowding

Addressing the needs of overcrowded households

We will continue the programme of visiting the most overcrowded Council tenants to look for housing solutions for them and, where they are likely to be waiting a considerable time before moving, we will offer space saving options such as additional cupboards, bunk beds and sheds. This will continue until the £100,000 funding provided by CLG for overcrowding initiatives is spent.

In addition, we will visit the 44 households identified in January 2009 as either statutorily overcrowded or with a Band A hazard for overcrowding under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. We will make an offer of housing to each of these families and aim to rehouse 80% of them.

We are committed to rehousing 1,000 overcrowded families into social housing over the next 5 years. The proportion of lettings to overcrowded households will increase once the temporary accommodation reduction target is achieved but we will map what elements of the future supply of WCC and RSL stock will go to meet the 1000 housings.

Tackling Overcrowding	
Key areas of activity in 2009/10	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing the needs of overcrowded households, including health needs Assist households to relieve the pressures of overcrowding. 	
Performance Indicators	Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of households assisted to relieve pressures of overcrowding (LAA target) 	435
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rehouse a minimum of 80% of the 44 most seriously overcrowded households 	35
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to visit overcrowded families and achieve at least 1 positive outcome for 90% of families visited 	90%

Tackling Overcrowding

Key areas of activity in 2009/10

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the supply of larger homes by achieving 90 cash incentive scheme rehousing 	90
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6. Tackling Worklessness

There is a strong correlation between social housing and worklessness. Together with partners across the housing sector we have developed a range of initiatives to tackle worklessness and enhance housing opportunity through employment.

Last year we successfully led a consortium of housing sector partners to secure funding from the European Union and the Dolphin Square Charitable Foundation for a programme called Westminster Works on estates. Westminster Works will be the flagship employment initiative in the city, and the housing sector will be delivering a key component of it.

Over the next two years we aim to support over 1,000 Westminster people into employment or training through Westminster Works, a stretching target given the economic climate. Housing providers will employ a network of advisers who will commission support such as English language training, interview skills and job brokerage. We will use our network of estate based staff and facilities to ensure the programme is easy to access and widely promoted across Westminster estates.

We will continue to deliver a range of other training and worklessness related initiatives:

- We support Notting Hill Housing Trust to deliver a construction & training initiative, providing training and apprenticeship opportunities in the construction industry
- The Homelessness, Employability and Learning Project (HELP), which provides training and employment opportunities for homeless households, will be expanded.
- Through the LAA we fund a Local Labour Initiative which provides apprenticeship opportunities for young people living on our estates
- We will expand activity to support Rough sleepers and hostel residents into employment.
- We will work with Home Connections to provide people with links to employment and training opportunities when they are browsing our choice based lettings website.

Tackling Worklessness

Key areas of activity in 2009/10	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with housing partners to Introduce Westminster Works on estates • Expand the Homelessness, Employability and Learning Project 	
Performance Indicators	Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of residents into training, volunteering, employment and sustained employment through the HELP project 	80

7. Providing support for vulnerable people

Family Recovery Project

The Family Recovery Project (FRP) is a DCSF (Department for Children, Schools and Families) funded project, working with the most disadvantaged families who have remained disengaged from support services. It involves creating a team around the family of all key agencies including the Police, Health, Adults' and Children's Services

Housing will contribute to the project to resolve the issues faced by families who have multiple problems. We will provide 17.5 hours per week to the FRP for a further 6 months and will keep this provision under review as the numbers of families referred to the project increase and then plateau.

Older People

In 2007, a framework for the provision of housing and care services for older people for the next 20 years was published. Considerable progress has been made against the targets in the strategy as outlined below:

- CWH have made a substantial investment in 08/09 on delivering significant improvements to Rayne House and Hardy House. These improvements include works to bring the properties up to the decent homes standard in addition to "new look" which was delivered in consultation with residents and has upgraded and refreshed the communal areas.
- Information has been gathered from RSLs on whether or not their schemes meet the Westminster Standard. In addition concrete proposals are under development for 6 schemes with 3 different RSLs where the standard was not met.
- Modifications are being made to the JAPE procedures and assessments resulting from the move to one category of housing for older people.

Building on this work we will continue to work with RSLs to develop the plans identified above. In addition, CWH will undertake upgrading work including the "new look" to a further 4 schemes.

We will continue to explore options to develop a state of the art scheme for older people in the north of the city and to reassess our requirements for extra care housing

Supporting People

The development and implementation of Westminster's Supporting People Medium Term Financial Plan has enabled a balanced budget to be set at a time of reduced grant levels in real terms, whilst commissioning new developments, particularly for people with learning disabilities and ensuring that services, predominantly provided by the voluntary sector, are financially sustainable. We will continue implementation of the plan, update this during the year and set a balanced and sustainable budget for 2010/11.

During 2009/10, we will also competitively tender for two large rough sleeping and substance misuse services where it is felt that improved service quality, performance and value for money can be secured through competition in the market. As with the recent successful tendering of the Mary Seacole House sheltered housing service, tenants will be at the heart of this process. We will also continue to work closely with providers of homeless hostel services to ensure services are fit for purpose, meet the needs of priority groups and support the delivery of Westminster's homeless, rough sleeping and other complementary strategies.

Expanding provision and improving move-on

The implementation of the Learning Disability pathways plan will enable delivery of our ambitious targets for increasing supported housing provision for people with learning disabilities by 13 during 2009/10, increasing the ratio of people in settled accommodation and reducing the number of out of borough residential placements. The learning disability housing pathway maps the movement of people from high care placements into more independent accommodation and we anticipate delivering 16 such moves in 2009/10.

Similarly for people with mental health problems we will build on the successful remodelling of the Medway Street into a high support project by assessing the feasibility of further remodelling to enable more people to live more independently. To support this we will further develop the use of the mental health move-on quota and develop a pathway through the full range of mental health services, increasing the numbers of people moving into more independent accommodation from residential care and hospital. We will also focus on supporting single vulnerable people currently living in temporary accommodation to move into the home of their choice.

Floating support service review

Westminster was the first London borough and one of the first nationally to tender for its floating support services. This initiative successfully increased the capacity of the service, its quality, range and performance. In 2009 we will comprehensively review the service, consulting with services users, former

service users, stakeholders and other boroughs to develop the service specification prior to tendering again for all floating support services in 2010.

Young People and Domestic Violence

We will shortly publish our Young Persons Housing Strategy and this will set out our plans for ensuring that housing and support services meet the wide range of needs of young people including homeless 16/17 year olds, young offenders, young people at risk of sleeping rough and young parents. In particular the remodelling of Berwick Street hostel will improve the quality and range of independent housing for young people and will form a central part of the young persons housing pathway.

We will build upon the partnerships developed with a wide range of housing and support providers to improve the response to domestic violence by housing agencies. The domestic violence housing forum will continue to develop best practice and we will continue to support actively the work of the MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conference), producing high quality information on the housing circumstances of households most severely affected by domestic violence resolving housing issues as part of the multi-agency response to each case.

Programme Governance

From 2009/10, Supporting People Grant will be paid directly to the council as a named grant through the Area Based Grant. The established structure of the Commissioning Body, provider forum and specific housing and support client group for a and service user involvement mechanisms will remain. Performance against the national indicators has improved each year since data was fully collected in 2005 and we will set a target for positive move-on from short term services of 74% and maintain long-term service placements at over 95%. To support this we will continue to produce comprehensive move-on reports across each client group as part of the strategy to improve move-on performance across all services.

We will continue to prioritise the safety and security of residents in supported housing services by ensuring that there is a strong focus on safeguarding policy and procedures in the training programmes to be provided on the updated Quality Assessment framework.

Reducing rough sleeping

Our approach towards tackling rough sleeping is making a real impact. In 2005 we adopted a new model of provision for rough sleepers, with services moved from the streets to a number of building based locations. This has encouraged many rough sleepers to come in from the streets.

The last three full independently verified rough sleeping counts have all recorded numbers of below 100. We had the lowest ever street count in September 2008 – 69, and at the last street count in November this increased slightly to 79.

Housing Business Plan 2009/10

Overall, our objective is to maintain the number of rough sleepers at below 100 and to sustain this reduction to as close to zero as possible.

We count people from the new EU accession states separately because they have no recourse to public funds and therefore cannot be accommodated. Most are not categorised as vulnerable adults, for whom our services are designed, but are *en route* from Victoria Bus station to other parts of the country. We continue to raise this issue with the Government, while recognising the considerable success of our core rough sleeping strategy.

In 2007, we published a revised Rough Sleeping Strategy (2007-10). Our strategy encompasses a range of new initiatives that will contribute to a continued reduction in the level of rough sleeping in Westminster, enabling more individuals to move away from an unhealthy and dangerous life on the streets.

We will prevent the emergence of tomorrow's rough sleepers by stemming the flow onto the streets and, where appropriate, reconnecting individuals new to rough sleeping back to their last settled address and facilitating the support of friends and family and local services there.

Long term rough sleepers will continue to be targeted and pathways into accommodation expanded to break the cycle of rough sleeping and restore health and well being. A target for this area has been included in Westminster's LAA.

We will work to promote employment, training and volunteering opportunities to our client group both in day centres and in hostels.

Addressing fuel poverty

Fuel poverty, which is commonly defined as where households spend more than 10% of their income of keeping warm, disproportionately affects vulnerable people on low incomes, particularly as energy prices have risen considerably. We are setting up a new cross tenure fuel poverty advice line giving advice and information on all aspects of fuel poverty and which will be supported by a caseworker.

Providing support for vulnerable people

Key areas of activity in 2009/10

Older People

- Work with CityWest Homes to deliver on plans to improve older peoples housing
- Continue to work with RSLs to achieve the Westminster Standard for older people within housing association stock

Family Recovery

- Contribute to the FRP to resolve the issues faced by families who have multiple problems.

Supported Housing Services

Providing support for vulnerable people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop 13 new units of supported housing for people with learning disabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable 16 people with learning disabilities to move into more independent accommodation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move 12 people with mental health problems from supported housing services into independent accommodation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensively review floating support provision city wide and develop a service specification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a competitive tender for a rough sleeper hostel service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a competitive tender for a rough sleeper and alcohol service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a young persons housing pathway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with providers of homeless hostel services to plan major remodelling of their services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce detailed housing histories for each case presented to the MARAC and implement any recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver training on the new Quality Assessment Framework to supported housing provider organisations, with a strong focus on safeguarding policy
<p><i>Rough Sleeping</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain the reduction in the number of rough sleepers on the streets of Westminster.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek funding through the PCT for a project to utilise psychological therapies for rough sleepers with mental health problems below the severe and enduring level, following a successful pilot project.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop integrated accommodation and treatment pathways for rough sleepers with substance misuse support needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to seek and promote ways to increase move-on from hostels, for example to the Private Rented Sector (current schemes in place include the contract with Hope Worldwide and a Rent Deposit scheme through Housing Options)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot a scheme in one hostel to provide short-term accommodation and advice to A10 nationals prior to either employment, reconnection or referral to the Ollalo

Providing support for vulnerable people

Project in Euston for destitute A10 nationals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek resolutions to the problem of excessive soup run provision that hampers the strategy to reduce the numbers of rough sleepers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobby central government to make provision for rough sleeping foreign nationals who are not entitled to access public funds.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote employment, training and volunteering opportunities, in conjunction with a multi agency steering group. This will include a Jobs Fair, and the establishment of a shop to be run by service users selling goods produced by service users.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners to tackle anti social behaviour, and reduce the impact on residents, businesses and the public of such behaviour.

Addressing fuel poverty

- Establish fuel poverty advice line with supporting case worker by 31 July 2009.

Annual Delivery Indicators	Target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living 	73%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living 	98%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver 28 new housing units for special needs clients, including 21 units of extra care at Leonora House 	28
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people sleeping rough on a single night in Westminster (LAA target - local indicator) 	79
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of habitual rough sleepers suitably accommodated (LAA target) 	60% (42 rough sleepers)

8. Maximising the benefit of Private Sector Housing

At around 36%, the private rented sector in Westminster accounts for a significant proportion of Westminster’s housing stock. In 2009/10, we will continue to engage with landlords and owners to make better use of this sector, to tackle homelessness and meet other housing needs in the city.

Improving Energy Efficiency

The nature of Westminster’s housing stock makes it a particular challenge to improve the energy efficiency of residential premises.

- The large number of leasehold flats makes it difficult to secure funding and improvements to common parts, such as roofs.
- Many buildings are constructed of solid brick walls, and planning rules restrict the installation of energy efficient components such as double glazing.

Housing Business Plan 2009/10

- In the large private rented market, there is little incentive for landlords or tenants to make energy efficient capital investment.

We have recognised this particular challenge, and plan to undertake a range of activity to improve the energy efficiency of Westminster's private sector stock.

- Sub-regional Decent Homes funding is being used to deliver energy efficiency improvements to several hundred homes and we are awaiting the outcome of the 09-12 funding round.
- We are working in partnership with DSCF (Dolphin Square Charitable Foundation) to pilot an energy efficiency advice service, aimed at buildings comprised of leasehold flats, building on the Mayor of London's 'concierge' advice service for home owners in London. We will use the findings of this pilot to lobby for national policy changes. The tendering process has begun and the pilot will begin in 2009.
- We will continue to engage with the numerous funding regimes for energy efficiency improvements to ensure that our residents can access these funds, and are well-advised on the best routes to financial support.

Bringing empty homes back into use

We will continue our work to bring empty properties back into permanent residential use, using Compulsory Purchase Orders as a last resort. We aim to bring approximately 200 units back into use in 2009/10.

Stock Condition

In 2009/10, we will complete the work on the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey. The results will provide improved information on decent homes and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), introduced in 2006/07, and energy efficiency. We will also carry out a study of the private rented sector with a focus on how this sector can best contribute to meeting the needs of households in housing need.

The substantial work routinely carried out to improve housing conditions through enforcement work will continue. Approximately 1,500 service requests are actioned by the reactive Residential Environmental Health service each year.

The proactive service will continue to focus primarily on improving the condition of houses in multiple occupation (HMO), in particular those subject to mandatory licensing. We aim to comprehensively improve 65 HMOs this year through proactive enforcement action and maintain standards in previously improved HMOs.

We will consider the benefits of applying to the Secretary of State to approve an 'additional' and/or 'special' licensing scheme in respect of certain categories of property that fall outside the mandatory licensing regime, yet present management and risk issues. An example of such a property type is accommodation above commercial premises, particularly public houses. We will consult on any proposals in this area.

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The Residential Environmental Health Service will deliver an expanding programme of neighbourhood activity in 2009/10. Work will continue on:-

- improving housing conditions on the Harrow Road in the vicinity of the Prince of Wales Junction;
- the Healthy Futures project
- the Vulnerable persons project

Our programme here consists of a mixture of financial assistance and advice to owners, backed with enforcement action if necessary.

Maximising the benefit of Private Sector Housing	
Key areas of activity in 2009/10	
• Review the work of the Westminster Home Improvement Agency	
• Review Westminster's Empty Homes and CPO policies	
• Better promote the success of energy efficiency work in the private sector	
• Complete the sub-regional house condition survey.	
• Establish a 'proactive' handyperson service	
• Pilot an energy efficiency advice service aimed at leasehold blocks.	
Annual Delivery Indicators	Target
• Time taken to resolve the needs of persons needing major adaptations in the private sector (LAA target)	17 weeks
• Deliver capital expenditure programme for disabled persons and on other forms of assistance	£750,000 – adaptations £700,000 – other
• Homes where HHSRS category 1 hazards removed (or prohibition orders made).	330
• Number of non-local authority-owned vacant dwellings returned to occupation or demolished during the financial year as a direct result of action by the local authority.	200
• Number of HMOs improved.	65

9. Supporting CityWest Homes to deliver excellent services

CityWest Homes (CWH) is now in the third year of its second five year management agreement with the City Council. Our strategic priorities for CityWest are as follows:

- Improving Customer Satisfaction
- Providing Better Value for Money
- Improving the housing stock
- Improving neighbourhood working

In addition to the performance framework indicators detailed below, Overall satisfaction with CityWest Homes' services increased last year. Enhancing resident satisfaction continues to be a key priority for us. In particular we are keen that CityWest addresses the needs of the minority of residents who remain dissatisfied with services.

We will work with CityWest's new Chief Executive to deliver a number of key initiatives including the implementation of a 'Customer Excellence Programme' to revitalise the delivery of housing management services across our neighbourhoods and the major works programme of improvements to the housing stock.

We will also work with CityWest on a number of joint initiatives, notably delivery of our Community Build and Settled Homes initiatives and initial masterplanning for the regeneration of estates most in need of investment.

With continued pressure on the subsidy system for council housing, we will support CityWest Homes to ensure that finances for our landlord services are sustainable in the longer term. We will monitor the outcomes of the national review of the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system, which is due to report early this year. Westminster is fully involved in this process, with representation on both the Government's and the LGA's working groups.

We will work with CityWest Homes to focus on value for money in the delivery of services to tenants and leaseholders. A VFM Task Group, consisting of officers of CWH and the City Council, has been set up with the aim of improving service quality and cost effectiveness.

Supporting CityWest Homes to deliver excellent services	
Key areas of activity in 2009/10	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with CityWest to improve resident satisfaction and reduce dissatisfaction in a range of areas 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist CWH to develop a revised 5-year capital programme 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the review of estate offices, support implementation of the 'Customer Excellence Programme' 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support CityWest to deliver its contribution to the Community Build, estate regeneration and Settled Homes programmes 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the work of the VFM Officer Task Group to achieve improvements in value for money in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Procurement and delivery of Major Works and Capital Programme ➢ Leaseholder Service Charges ➢ Heating and Hot Water Charges 	
Annual Delivery Indicators	Target[†]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authority tenants' satisfaction with landlords services (LAA target) 	70%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Framework 2009 -2012 Indicators 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant satisfaction with neighbourhood as a place to live 	78%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant satisfaction with neighbourhood as a place to live 	50%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant Satisfaction with services provided by landlord 	73%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessee Satisfaction with services provided by landlord 	53%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in Stage 3 Complaints 	41
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenants Satisfaction with Repairs and Maintenance 	88%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of properties kept or made decent (and maintain 100% decent homes at year end) 	348
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average weekly management cost per property 	TBA*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average cost of a repair 	TBA*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major works charges collected as a percentages of major works charges billed to lessees 	TBA*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent collected by the local authority as a proportion of rents owed on HRA tenanted dwellings 	TBA*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of tenants dissatisfied with services provided by landlord 	<11%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of leaseholders dissatisfied with services provided by landlord 	<26%

[†]A stretch target is also agreed with CityWest, achievement of which results in the payment of a bonus on top of the core management fee.

**Being developed as part of the CityWest Homes Performance Framework*

SCHEDULE 1: 2009/10 BUDGET - SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS FOR CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING

	Funded FTE's	Staffing Costs	Contract and External Payments	Operational Costs	Gross Expenditure	Grant Income	Trading and Other Income	TOTAL INCOME	Net Recharges	Total Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
GENERAL FUND										
HOUSING										
LAA - NRF	0.0	0	0	416	416	0	0	0	0	416
Homelessness	0.0	0	78,342	5,634	83,976	(37,558)	(40,096)	(77,654)	3,325	9,647
Rent Allowances & Rent Rebates	0.0	0	160,495	0	160,495	(158,365)	0	(158,365)	3,058	5,188
Support for Registered Social Landlords	0.0	0	111	13,831	13,942	0	(4)	(4)	167	14,105
Housing Services, Private Sector	43.0	2,700	0	2,344	5,044	(237)	(124)	(361)	446	5,129
Housing Policy & Strategy	0.0	0	193	400	593	0	0	0	562	1,155
Supporting People	0.0	4	16,801	75	16,880	0	(17,051)	(17,051)	654	483
TOTAL GENERAL FUND ESTIMATES	43.0	2,704	255,942	22,700	281,346	(196,160)	(57,275)	(253,435)	8,212	36,123

SCHEDULE 2: CHANGE IN REQUIREMENTS FOR 2009/10 FROM 2008/09 HOUSING

This schedule shows the reasons for increases/reductions from the 2008/09 budget.

	£000	£000
GENERAL FUND ESTIMATE BASE 2008/09		39,091
TRANSFERS TO/FROM OTHER BUDGETS		
Transfers between Portfolios/Services		435
INFLATIONARY INCREASES		
Pay Awards	53	
Price Increases (including contracts)	1,122	
Income inflation	-2	
Inflationary Increases	<u>1,173</u>	1,173
SERVICE PLAN CHANGES		
Existing business plan GROWTH items (agreed Feb 08 Cabinet)	3,543	
Changes and new business plan GROWTH items (agreed Dec 08 Cabinet)	-3,031	
Discretionary Growth	<u>150</u>	662
Existing business plan SAVINGS items (agreed Feb 08 Cabinet)	-4,845	
Changes and new business plan SAVINGS items (agreed Dec 08 Cabinet)	<u>2,515</u>	
See Schedule 3 for details		-2,330
OTHER VARIATIONS		
<i>Growth items agreed since December Cabinet (detailed on 'Sch3c Changes post Dec list):</i>		
Business As Usual Growth	<u>327</u>	
New Growth items Total	327	
<i>Savings items agreed since December Cabinet (detailed on 'Sch3c Changes post Dec list):</i>		
BAU Savings	-1,250	
Supplies & Services Savings	-25	
Salaries	-9	
New Savings items Total	<u>-1,284</u>	
<i>Capital charges & other capital financing changes (please specify)</i>		
I IMPROVEMENT GRANTS - DEFERRED CHARGES	-8	
II OTHER GRANT - DEFERRED CHARGES	-141	
Total Capital Financing Charges	<u>-149</u>	
<i>Changes in expenditure funded by Government Grants and Other External Contributions: (Not Covered in growth above)</i>		
I Additional Homelessness Grant Spend	620	
II Homelessness Grant	-620	
III LAA Grant	<u>191</u>	
	191	
Other Changes		
I Recharges In	-2,919	
II Recharges Out	773	
III Voluntary Grants	123	
IV Supporting People Saving Foregone	<u>30</u>	
Other Changes Total	<u>-1,993</u>	-2,908
GENERAL FUND ESTIMATE 2009/10		<u>36,123</u>

SCHEDULE 3: GENERAL FUND BUSINESS PLAN CHANGES 2009/10 TO 2011/12 - TOTAL
Includes Sch 3a) Existing, Sch 3b) Changes & New and Sch 3c) Changes Post december Cabinet

This schedule shows a summary of the growth, savings items and net position agreed by each Cabinet Member during the business planning and budget strategy processes.

CABINET MEMBER	GROWTH			SAVINGS			NET		
	2009/10 OVER 2008/09	2010/11 OVER 2009/10	2011/12 OVER 2010/11	2009/10 OVER 2008/09	2010/11 OVER 2009/10	2011/12 OVER 2010/11	2009/10 OVER 2008/09	2010/11 OVER 2009/10	2011/12 OVER 2010/11
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
HOUSING	839	26,082	-501	-3,614	-10,770	38	-2,775	15,312	-463
Totals General Fund Growth & Savings	839	26,082	-501	-3,614	-10,770	38	-2,775	15,312	-463

NOTES:

Please show separately all Department/Service Area elements comprising the Cabinet Member portfolios

Please show growth/shortfall in income as +ve and savings/additional income -ve.

SCHEDULE 4: SUMMARY OF CAPITAL BUDGET - HOUSING GENERAL FUND**TO BE COMPLETED BY CORPORATE FINANCE**

This summary of the Capital Budget is based on the 5-year capital programme considered by the Cabinet in December 2008

The Planned Capital expenditure includes the acquisition, construction or enhancement of land, roads, buildings; the acquisition of plant, machinery and apparatus, and vehicles; and the making of advances or grants to persons for capital purposes.

CABINET MEMBER	Net Capital Budgets						Total Capital
	2008/09 Forecast	2009/10	20010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
HOUSING GENERAL FUND	1,261	1,566	1,010	17,913	1,017	0	22,767
Approved December 08 Cabinet	1,261	1,566	1,010	17,913	1,017	0	22,767
Post December Cabinet Changes							0
NET GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME	1,261	1,566	1,010	17,913	1,017	0	22,767

SCHEDULE 5a: REVENUE BUDGET SUMMARY

This Schedule compares the 2009/10 Budget for each main service with the Original Budget and Forecast Outturn for 2008/09 and the actual net expenditure in 2007/08.

	2007/08	2008/09	2008/09	2009/10
CABINET MEMBER	Actual	Original Budget	Forecast Outturn	Budget
GENERAL FUND:	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
HOUSING				
LAA - NRF	2	226	226	416
Homelessness	3,618	11,838	9,903	9,647
Rent Allowances & Rent Rebates	4,593	5,932	3,878	5,189
Support for Registered Social Landlords	3,098	14,753	14,753	14,104
Housing Services, Private Sector	3,671	4,166	4,131	5,130
Housing Policy & Strategy	744	1,416	1,526	1,155
Supporting People	308	760	760	482
General Fund Total	16,034	39,091	35,177	36,123

NOTES:

Please show separately all Department/Service Area elements comprising the Cabinet Member portfolios

Please show expenditure/recharges IN as +ve and income/recharges OUT as -ve.

Appendix 1

SCHEDULE 5B: HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

SUMMARY OF BUDGETS 2009/10

DIVISION	2007/08	2008/09		2009/10
	ACTUAL	ORIGINAL BUDGET	FORECAST OUTTURN	ORIGINAL BUDGET
Housing Revenue Account Income and Expenditure	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
HRA Income				
Dwellings Rents(gross)	(59,828)	(58,963)	(58,855)	(62,554)
Non-dwellings Rents (gross)	(956)	(1,018)	(990)	(985)
Tenants' Charges for Services and Facilities	(4,119)	(7,654)	(9,280)	(8,819)
Leaseholders' Charges for Services and Facilities	(8,745)	(9,080)	(9,049)	(8,870)
Other Charges for Services and Facilities	(8,667)	(8,665)	(8,430)	(9,230)
HRA Investment Income	(3,854)	(2,853)	(4,177)	(746)
HRA Subsidy Receivable	(10,697)	(6,897)	(6,897)	(4,800)
Total HRA Income	(96,865)	(95,129)	(97,677)	(96,003)
HRA Expenditure				
Repairs and Maintenance	16,780	17,038	15,022	15,799
Supervision and Management	24,188	28,422	27,270	28,895
Special Services	6,501	7,313	9,850	8,044
Rents, Rates, Taxes and Other Charges	491	452	612	464
Increase/(decrease) in Provision for Bad or Doubtful Debts	(2,317)	500	500	500
Debt Management Cost	108	111	111	110
HRA share of interest payable and similar charges including amortisation of premiums and discounts	13,598	13,916	13,845	13,845
Sums directed by the Secretary of State that are expenditure in accordance with UK GAAP	755	0	0	0
Total HRA Expenditure	60,104	67,752	67,210	67,657
Indirect Charges				
Support Services (Recharges In)	6,183	7,180	6,403	6,974
Depreciation and Impairment of Fixed Assets	11,508	11,400	11,246	12,013
Amortisation of Deferred Charges and Intangible Assets	855	0	0	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay	2,122	50,134	19,898	14,116
Total Indirect Charges	20,668	68,714	37,547	33,103
Total HRA Expenditure	80,773	136,466	104,757	100,760
HRA net surplus() or deficit+	(16,092)	41,337	7,080	4,758

MOVEMENT IN HRA RESERVES				
Balance Brought Forward	(-57,399)	(-74,148)	(-74,148)	(-67,124)
HRA Net Surplus() or Deficit+ for the year	(-16,092)	41,337	7,080	4,758
Difference between any other item of income and expenditure determined in accordance with the SORP and those determined in accordance with statutory HRA requirements	(-936)	(-56)	(-56)	(-915)
Citywest Earmeked Business Transformation Fund	279			
HRA Balance Carried Forward	(-74,148)	(-32,867)	(-67,124)	(-63,282)

SCHEDULE 6: STAFFING BUDGETS

This table shows the staffing resources, in full-time equivalent, and budget for each Cabinet Member over the Medium Term Plan period compared with the current year's budgets position and actual position in the previous year.

CABINET MEMBER	2007/08 Actuals		2008/09 Budget		2009/10 Draft Budget		2010/11 Draft Budget		2011/12 Draft Budget		Net Difference in FTEs
	Funded FTEs	Salaries £000	Funded FTEs	Salaries £000	Funded FTEs	Salaries £000	Funded FTEs	Salaries £000	Funded FTEs	Salaries £000	
HOUSING											
LAA - NRF		0		0		0		0		0	0.0
Homelessness		0		0		0		0		0	0.0
Rent Allowances & Rent Rebates		0		0		0		0		0	0.0
Support for Registered Social Landlords		0		0		0		0		0	0.0
Housing Services, Private Sector	34.5	2,041	35.0	1,941	43.0	2,591	43.0	2,643	43.0	2,696	8.5
Housing Policy & Strategy		0		0		0		0		0	0.0
Supporting People		0		0		0		0		0	0.0
General Fund Total	34.5	2,041	35	1,941	43	2,591	43	2,643	43	2,696	0.0

N.B. Staffing budgets should only include direct employee costs on the 1000 to 1099 range plus agency staff in the 1100 range where they are filling substantive posts. The salaries figures shown above for 2009/10 should be lower than those in schedule 1 for total employee expenses (i.e. as training costs etc are excluded). FTEs should represent the full time equivalent staffing establishment to be approved for the service.

Appendix 2 – Westminster LAA Housing Performance Indicators

LAA Priority	Indicator	Baseline (06/07 unless stated)	Target 08/09	Provisional Outturn 08/09	RAG	Target 09/10	Target 10/11
LAA 7 To increase access to good quality affordable housing	Ni 155 - Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (national indicator) ¹	76	122	289	G	335	137
	NI 160 - Local Authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services (national indicator)	69%	70%	71%	G	70%	72%
	LI 5 - Number of intermediate housing opportunities (local indicator) ²	170	164 (revised)	197	G	155 (revised)	99 (revised)
LAA 8 To meet housing need and tackle the consequences of housing shortage	NI 156 - Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation	2,865 (31/03/08)	2,433	2,454	A	1,788	1,573
	LI 6 - Number of households assisted to relieve pressures of overcrowding (local indicator)	410 (07/08)	420	479	G	435	450
	LI 7 – Proportion of habitual rough sleepers suitably accommodated.	70 (April 08)	30% (21)	47% (33)	G	60% (42)	90% (63)
LAA 10 To enable people to live longer and healthier lives	LI 9 - Time taken to resolve the needs of persons needing major adaptations in the private sector (local indicator)	45 weeks	18 weeks	22 weeks	R	17 weeks	16 weeks

¹ Agreed with GoL to freeze this target due to housing market downturn. Position to be reviewed during 2009/10.

² Target amended due to housing market downturn as agreed with corporate Policy & Performance team.