

## Evidence submitted by the PNF in relation to housing policies

### HOUSING STOCK ISSUES IN PIMLICO: MOVING UP AND DOWN THE HOUSING LADDER

1. The draft NP has two policies which are intended to help address issues with the existing market (primarily owner occupied) stock in Pimlico and the ability for people at varying stages of the housing ladder: PIM 13 on Conversions and PIM 14 on new build. This note supports these policies.
2. Discussion with local people, discussion with an experienced local estate agent and sampling the plans of buildings which come up for planning permission, suggests strongly that people cannot easily move to family-sized housing or downsize to housing on one or at most two levels.

### Housing Needs Analysis and City Plan

3. We have looked at the technical analysis on housing needs that was produced to support the City Plan <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/planning-building-and-environmental-regulations/planning-policy/evidence-and-monitoring/housing-evidence> (Housing Needs Analysis and Technical Appendix). This analysis is very largely concentrated on the needs for affordable housing (comprising social housing and intermediate housing) but notes that some households may have needs met in the market sector (i.e. owner occupation or private renting).
4. The only conclusion that appears to relate to the market sector is at para 5.6 of the Needs Analysis "*A target of at least 25% of all homes, across all tenures, being family sized (defined as having 3 bedrooms or more) would help towards rebalancing Westminster's stock and in providing opportunities for residents that want to remain in the city when they have families.*" (We note that the family home need is for 3-bedroom plus, rather than the City Plan definition of 2-bedroom plus).
5. Our contention is that an issue/failing with the existing market stock in Pimlico is:
  - Shortage of family-sized houses for owner occupiers, especially 3-bedroom
  - Shortage of flats for downsizing owner occupiers especially from 4- and 5-bedroom houses
6. The market housing stock in Pimlico falls very largely into distinct areas:
  - Pimlico conservation area

The historic stock was built, almost entirely, as houses, and is now either houses, or converted into flats. Almost all the historic stock is in owner ownership or private renting (with the limited exception of affordable housing in street properties owned by L&Q, Sanctuary HAs and Westminster City Council).

The non-historic stock here consists of a few infill modern houses (e.g. Lupus Street) and a few small blocks of flats on the site of 1 or 2 historic houses each (e.g. 4 x house sites on Warwick Way, 2 x Westmoreland Terrace, Winchester/Clarendon Street corner, Cumberland/Sussex Street corner, Clarion Court in Moreton Place). These are all in owner occupation. (There is a terrace of post-war houses/flats owned by a housing association in Winchester Street opposite Holy Apostles church).

There is a medium-sized modern block of flats on Gloucester Street and one on the junction of Vauxhall Bridge Road and Warwick Way.

A key point is that, within the market sector, modern flat blocks amount to no more than 5% of the units in the Forum Area and that the large number of other flats have arisen through conversions and are typically on more than one level.

- Bessborough Gardens 1990s development: great majority owner occupied. Mostly houses and 2-bedroom flats.

- Dolphin Square: all private renting, almost all short-term assured lets
- Hindon Court: mix of owner occupation and private rented flats
- Lillington and Longmoore: those homes sold under the Right to Buy are now in owner occupation or privately rented, but the majority of units are in the affordable sector; For completeness we note that some areas are almost entirely in the affordable sector:
- Peabody Avenue: entirely purpose-built flats almost exclusively social housing.
- Peabody Tachbrook Estate: all purpose-built flats almost all (if not all) social housing

### **Housing growing families in the owner-occupied sector**

7. Growing families will typically want to move to 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom units. Table 2 (2011 census, that Westminster recommended we used when we asked them for an analysis of residents and housing in the Pimlico area) shows that the proportions of 2- and 3-bedroom properties are lower in the Pimlico area than in Westminster as a whole (and 3-bedroom plus properties are under 20% of Pimlico stock compared with 25% in Westminster as a whole).
8. In the historic stock that dominates the market sector, 2-bedroom properties are generally single floor conversions of Pimlico Grid properties with small second bedrooms. Note that single floor conversions of Pimlico Grid properties do not meet the NDSS standard for 2 bedrooms. 2-bedroom units in Pimlico are unlikely to be suitable for families with 2 children. Thus, family-sized housing in the market sector in Pimlico (i.e. meeting NDSS for 2 bedrooms) will be currently described as '3-bedroom plus', which is under-provided in Pimlico.
9. Thus, as well as a shortage of units with the right number of bedrooms, the historic nature of the stock suggests strongly that much of that stock will not meet the needs of growing families.
10. So, with the present stock, we should expect growing families to move out of Pimlico. This is borne out by Table 1 (age distribution) which shows lower percentages of children at each age band in Pimlico compared with Westminster as a whole and reductions in the population at each age up to 18 and suggests that families leave Pimlico at key ages for children (5 and 11).
11. The City Plan says nothing about the desirability of people housed in the market sector being able to stay in their local area as their families grow, but that objective lying behind PIM 13 seems to us an entirely reasonable one for these households (it is accepted as reasonable in the affordable sector throughout the Housing Needs Analysis). PIM 13 has been consulted on twice and has had support from the local community. Policies in Chapter 3 on upward extensions also offer some way for 3-bedroom units to be provided and have been supported by Councillors when planning applications have been made.

### **Housing suitable for downsizers/people with mobility needs in the owner-occupied sector**

12. The discussion in the City Plan and the Housing Needs Analysis does cover some of the needs of older people, but exclusively in the supported housing extra care sectors (and emphasising the affordable sector).
13. The historic stock in Pimlico of family homes comprises houses typically on 4 or 5 main floors, generally with extensions at the rear at the half storey level. Family sized flats will be duplexes on 3rd and 4th floor or ground and lower ground floors, again with half storeys at the rear. These historic family homes are highly unsuitable for those who are less mobile.
14. We discussed with a local estate agent where there were homes that people would downsize to or move to that were more convenient. He considered that there was very little historic stock on one level suitable for downsizing from a family-sized property. It was more likely that house owners would move to a duplex flat. There are almost certainly no single-level flats meeting the NDSS for 2 double bedrooms or more in the Pimlico Grid. This is because a typical house width is 16ft, originally with a depth of 26ft so the modest back extensions will not enable it to meet the

NDSS floor space on one floor. (There are some larger lateral flats in Warwick Square, but these are the great exception.)

15. There were a few suitable flats on one level in the modern development in Gloucester Street, in Bessborough Gardens and in Hindon Court but these are the great rarity. This lack of single-level flats accessible from street level (either on the ground floor or accessible by lift) is consistent with the property adverts on Primelocation.com.
16. For these reasons we support in PIM 14 the provision of market sector flats on a single level of 2- or 3-bedroom size to enable downsizing from larger family properties while staying in the Pimlico area.
17. We do not draw any conclusions in respect of the affordable sector, but any development of market flats under PIM 13 and PIM 14 would need to make the appropriate provision of affordable housing in City Plan policies.

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**Table 1: Age distribution (2011 census)**

Age	Population – usual residents		% Population by age	
	Westminster	Pimlico Forum	Westminster	Pimlico Forum
All usual residents	219,396	17,523		
0 to 4	12,617	785	<b>1.15%</b>	<b>0.90%</b>
5 to 7	6,071	397	<b>0.92%</b>	<b>0.76%</b>
8 to 9	3,655	240	<b>0.83%</b>	<b>0.68%</b>
10 to 14	8,665	463	<b>0.79%</b>	<b>0.53%</b>
15	1,576	90	<b>0.72%</b>	<b>0.51%</b>
16 to 17	3,374	162	<b>0.77%</b>	<b>0.46%</b>
18 to 19	5,047	197	<b>1.15%</b>	<b>0.56%</b>
20 to 24	17,490	1,302	<b>1.59%</b>	<b>1.49%</b>
25 to 29	27,498	2,484	<b>2.51%</b>	<b>2.84%</b>
30 to 44	64,114	5,072	<b>1.95%</b>	<b>1.93%</b>
45 to 59	35,570	3,067	<b>1.08%</b>	<b>1.17%</b>
60 to 64	9,205	878	<b>0.84%</b>	<b>1.00%</b>
65 to 74	13,207	1,288	<b>0.60%</b>	<b>0.74%</b>
75 to 84	8,207	818	<b>0.37%</b>	<b>0.47%</b>
85 to 89	2,042	187	<b>1.62%</b>	<b>2.38%</b>
90 and over	1,058	93	<b>1.74%</b>	<b>2.34%</b>

18. Table 1 indicates that there are fewer children compared with Westminster as a whole and indicates that families leave the area when their children are aged 5 and between 10 and 14. This is consistent with Table 2 that shows that Pimlico has disproportionately fewer 3+ person households: 81.7% of households in Pimlico are 1- or 2-person compared with 74.9% for Westminster as a whole.

**Table 2: Distribution of sizes of households**

Number of people in household	Number of households		Percentage of households	
	Westminster	Pimlico Forum	Westminster	Pimlico Forum
All	105,772	9,588		
1	47,893	4,824	<b>45.3%</b>	<b>50.3%</b>
2	31,340	3,012	<b>29.6%</b>	<b>31.4%</b>

3	12,507	910	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>
4	8,301	498	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>
5	3,580	228	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
6	1,542	88	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
7	345	18	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
8+	264	10	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>

**Table 3: Sizes of properties (in terms of numbers of bedrooms)**

Number of bedrooms	Number of households		Percentage of households	
	Westminster	Pimlico Forum	Westminster	Pimlico Forum
All	105,772	9,588		
0	876	120	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
1	40,692	4,444	<b>38.5%</b>	<b>46.3%</b>
2	38,127	3,125	<b>36.0%</b>	<b>32.6%</b>
3	18,210	1,386	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>14.5%</b>
4	5,239	348	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
5+	2,628	165	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>