

Date of Full Council meeting	Question	Response
Wednesday 20 September 2023	<p>If parking of dockless hire bikes is a concern, why are we not converting car parking spaces into additional parking zones for them and other bikes? One transit mode is clearly growing while the other is flat to down, it would make sense to re-allocate parking to reflect usage patterns.</p>	<p>We aim to do exactly as you ask. The Council is providing around 220 designated bays for rental dockless e-bike and e-scooter parking across Westminster. A further 100+ virtual bay locations around underused cycle stands will also be provided. These locations are where there is less than 35% occupancy as revealed by the recent cycle parking occupancy survey. Implementation of the first phase in central areas of the city is underway as we speak and will be operational in two weeks' time.</p> <p>There are currently around 3,000 e-bikes in operation in Westminster. This scheme will be one of the densest in London in terms of parking coverage. It will provide residents and visitors easy access to dockless e-bike hire, encourage active travel, and promote responsible e-bike usage. Using geo-fencing technology, all e-bike parking bays will be monitored by the operators to ensure that any bikes parked outside of dedicated bays are identified and removed. Working in collaboration with the three current bike operators and two further e-scooter operators, the Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality was pleased to say the Council has been able to deliver this scheme on an entirely cost neutral basis. In the initial roll-out, there will be an e-bike parking bay within a five-minute walk from every household in Westminster. We will look to expand the network in the future where there's a clear demand for further parking provision.</p> <p>Finally, we will continue with colleagues at Transport for London, London Councils, and other local authorities to lobby the Government for appropriate legislation that enables the regulation of dockless e-bikes across London.</p>
Wednesday 20 September 2023	<p>I have been living at the Palace Court Hotel for almost 3years. I would like to ask you why people on the Homeless Waiting List for housing with Mobility Category 3, who can prove that they need additional space for other reasons that may require them to need a little more space than a studio can offer, cannot also bid for 1 bedroom properties?</p> <p>Currently, the only people who can access 1 bedroom properties on the Homeless waiting list are those who are in wheelchairs, use walking sticks or have 24/7 assistance. There are many other disabilities and needs that vary from person to person apart from solely as mentioned. As you can see there are people in Mobility Category 3 who also need additional space due to health problems and/or for work apart from those who are currently allowed to bid for 1 bedroom properties</p>	<p>The Cabinet Member for Housing Services apologises that the resident has had such a terrible experience. They acknowledged that the resident was right when then said that not all disabilities are visible and that the question was a timely one because the Council are currently working on a review of the existing allocations policy. As things stand, any household in Westminster can apply to the Council as homeless and depending on their particular circumstances be accepted onto the Waiting List for social housing as homeless and continue to live in their current accommodation. Households can then bid for available social housing properties; the size of the property being based on their current requirement. For single person households this is often a studio property. However, if, in individual cases, there are particular needs that require a larger property households can request that their circumstances be reviewed. Of course, personal circumstances can change, and through taking physical and mental health support into consideration, it may be that a larger property is required. The Cabinet Member agreed to speak to housing officers about the situation to determine what else the Council can do to better support the resident. The review of the existing Housing Allocations Scheme will cover all aspects of the scheme and the Council will look to consult widely with residents and other stakeholders on issues such as mobility categories and medical needs.</p>

<p>Wednesday 20 September 2023</p>	<p>London has the highest number of rough sleepers in the UK, with Westminster having a higher proportion than other areas. Given the current housing crisis including the rise in Section 21 evictions (+41% YoY), the fact half of Tennant's are struggling to pay their rent according to government data and that rents are rising (5.3% increase in 2023) at the highest rate in a decade both in the private and social housing sector what is the council doing to deliver their 2019 Homelessness Strategy in line with their commitment to "improve our services and response when people do become homeless" alongside your goal "to have a homeless system fit for the future", given the poor perception of Westminster Housing Solutions Services and RMG (Residential Management Group) and the ongoing complaints of maladministration and lack of service.</p> <p>Please include in the answer how you are measuring success and what role technology if any is being used to improve the service.</p>	<p>Westminster has always been faced with a disproportionate number of people sleeping rough and in response, the Council spends roughly £25 million a year to deliver a wide range of homelessness prevention, rough-sleeping support and accommodation-based services.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Housing Services agreed that the current climate is challenging, and the Council have seen this with approaches to Westminster's Housing Solutions Service (HSS) increasing by roughly 30% between April and August this year compared to the same period in last year.</p> <p>The Council's Homelessness Strategy has a strong focus on prevention and in the past year the Council has prevented 651 households from becoming homeless.</p> <p>This includes moving just over 350 of those households into alternative accommodation.</p> <p>The current Homelessness Strategy runs until 2024 and the Council are already working on an engagement plan to support the development of a new strategy which will combine both the Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Strategies.</p> <p>The Council measure success through a variety of ways from qualitative measures of success from engagement sessions like community Thursdays, as well as quantitative success metrics and internal KPIs for ourselves and contractors. As part of the Housing Improvement Programme the Council is exploring ways to make those measures more readily available to the public.</p> <p>Technology is also key to developing and improving the service. Homeless applications can be made online via the self-service portal and households on the waiting list can also bid via an online portal.</p> <p>Further tech improvements and enhancements to the digital offer will form a key part of the development of the new Homelessness/Rough Sleeping Strategy in 2024.</p>
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