



City of Westminster

# Cabinet Member Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Housing
<b>Date:</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> May 2014
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	Supply and Allocation of Social Housing and Low Cost Home Ownership 2014/15
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	The total net housing budget for 2014/ 15 is £26.8m and includes the costs of the Housing Options Service, supported housing and Temporary Accommodation
<b>Report of:</b>	Strategic Director Housing, Regeneration and Property

## Executive Summary

This annual report reviews the demand for and supply of social rented housing and low-cost home ownership in 2013/14, and considers supply and demand projections for 2014/15.

The report also makes proposals for the allocation of the supply of social housing in 2014/15 to meet the Council's statutory obligations, meet the varying demands for social housing and to reduce the numbers of people living in Temporary Accommodation.

In particular the report sets out:

- Projected supply and the proposed allocation of social housing for 2014/15.
- An update on the supply of future temporary and social housing
- How new flexibilities relating to the allocation of housing will be made use of, in particular the power to discharge duty into the private rented sector

## **1. Background Information**

- 1.1 The supply and allocation of social housing report reviews the demand for and supply of social rented housing and low-cost home ownership in current year, and considers supply and demand projections for the following year.
- 1.2 The report also makes proposals for the allocation of the supply of social housing in 2014/15 to meet the Council's statutory obligations, meet the varying demands for social housing and reduce the numbers of people living in temporary accommodation.
- 1.3 In particular the report sets out:
  - Projected supply and the proposed allocation of social housing for 2014/15.
  - An update on the supply of future temporary and social housing.
  - The factors that impact on numbers of requests for housing advice, homeless applications and acceptances
  - A review of the changes to the Cash Incentive Scheme
  - The initiatives in place to meet the needs of vulnerable tenants.

## **2. Recommendations**

- (i) The projected supply and proposed allocation of rented housing, as discussed in paragraph 3.1 and set out in Appendices A, B and B1, be noted
- (ii) The TA placement policy criteria for prioritising moves to longer term 'section 193' temporary accommodation are updated and simplified as set out in paragraph 5.1
- (iii) The Westminster Tenancy Policy is amended as set out in paragraph 5.2 to reflect policy changes regarding the offer of secure tenancies, renewing flexible tenancies where the tenant is in prison, discretionary succession and the rent level charged following an exchange of property
- (iv) The Housing Allocations Scheme that relates to the size of Accommodation Offered for Decant Applicants is amended as set out in paragraph 5.3

### **Reason for Decision**

The proposals contained in this report set out the issues related to the development of allocation projections of the supply of social housing for 2014/15 to meet the Council's statutory obligations, meet the varying demands for social housing and to reduce the numbers of people living in Temporary Accommodation who are waiting for social housing

### 3. Social Rented Housing Supply and Allocation Projections

3.1 The following table summarises the position regarding the demand for and allocation of social rented housing over the past four years.

<b>Demand Profile</b>	<b>31.3.10</b>	<b>31.3.11</b>	<b>31.3.12</b>	<b>31.3.13</b>	<b>Year to date (30/12/13)</b>
Homelessness Applications (p.a.)	1125	1170	1445	1338	784
Homelessness Acceptances (p.a.)	378	430	539	813	523
Households in Temporary Accommodation (Total)	2041	1726	1910	2450	2340
Category A Transfer Applicants	46	69	66	71	79
<b>Allocation Profile</b>	<b>31.3.10</b>	<b>31.03.11</b>	<b>31.3.12</b>	<b>31.3.13</b>	<b>Year to date (30/12/13)</b>
Homeless Households	589	662	391	425	270
Tenant Transfers (includes Cat A, OC, Man Tran, CSH)	204	233	175	151	93
Children Act Panel (WL and TL)	13	11	19	20	11
Mental Health Hostel Move On	11	24	13	13	9
Cash Incentive	47	48	38	58	38

#### 3.2 Demand for Social Housing

3.2.1 The demand for social housing in Westminster continues to outstrip the supply of available accommodation to let, whether as a result of homelessness, overcrowding, priority needs or demand from vulnerable groups. This is particularly the case for units of two bedroom or larger, reflecting the make-up of Westminster's social housing stock.

3.2.2 Applications from households, who are either homeless or threatened with homelessness, have decreased during 2013/14 in comparison with the numbers received in 2012/13. The number of acceptances is c. 70% of applications due to thorough investigation of applications and work to prevent homelessness or divert applicants into other options.

### 3.3 Supply Projections

3.3.1 The number of new affordable homes projected to be delivered by Registered Providers during the period 2014/15 and 2015/16 is 478 units, made up of 422 new build or converted units plus 56 spot acquisitions.

3.3.2 Of the 422 new or converted homes, 42 are anticipated to be provided for social rent at target rents and a further 166 homes for affordable rent. 214 homes will be provided for intermediate housing either at sub market rents or as shared ownership.

3.3.3 The projected year of delivery and number of new affordable homes to be delivered by tenure are shown in the table below

Year	Tenure	Number and Mix of dwelling sizes					
		No of units	Studios	1beds	2beds	3beds	4bed s+
2014/15	Social Rent	12	0	5	3	2	2
	Affordable Rent	81	0	1	40	36	4
	Intermediate Rent /shared ownership	44	0	40	4	0	0
	Various tenures - Spot Acquisitions by WCH and the HRA linked to Housing Renewal decanting	39 - 21*WCH and 18* HRA	To be provided by WCH and the HRA .A mix of dwelling sizes based on household requirements				
2015/16	Social Rent	30	0	2	14	14	0
	Affordable Rent	85	0	9	40	31	5
	Intermediate Rent /shared ownership	170	20	71	65	12	2
	Various tenures - Spot Acquisitions linked to Housing Renewal decanting	17 - 17*HRA	To be provided by WCH and the HRA .A mix of dwelling sizes based on household requirements				

3.3.4 These projections are based upon affordable housing developments that are currently under construction or have secured planning permission and are due to commence building works shortly. Significant schemes making up these supply projections include Merchants Square (42 units), Middlesex Hospital (54 units) Cleland House (67 units), Trenchard House (65 units) Elgin Estate (36 units) and 242 Vauxhall Bridge Road (25 units)

- 3.3.5 Of the 478 new build or spot acquisition affordable homes to be delivered, 98 homes are expected to be provided for social rent with tenancies provided on assured/secure or fixed/flexible terms. 51 of these are anticipated to be delivered in 2014/15. Much of the new social rented units to be delivered in 2014/15 (51 of 98) will be delivered by either Westminster's charity Westminster Community Homes (WCH) or by the HRA. WCH will deliver 33 social rented homes in 2014/15 through various infill and conversion developments on former Council land and properties and through spot acquisitions of market housing to be converted to social rented use. These WCH spot acquisitions will assist the Council with its housing needs linked to Housing Renewal programmes. Further spot acquisitions (c 18) for social rented use will be purchased directly by the City Council in 2014/15. These acquisitions will also assist the Council with Housing Renewal programmes
- 3.3.6 All of the remaining 47 social rented housing units are expected to be delivered in 2015/16 through a mixture of WCH infill and new build development and further spot acquisitions secured by WCH and the HRA
- 3.3.7 81 Affordable Rent (AR) homes generally with fixed term tenancies will be delivered by Registered Provider (RP) partners in 2014/15 with a further 85 AR homes to be provided by RPs in 2015/16.
- 3.3.8 214 affordable homes will be provided on an intermediate housing tenure basis, either as shared ownership or at submarket rents. 44 intermediate homes are anticipated to be delivered in 2014/15 and 170 in 2015/16

#### Social Housing Relet supply from Registered Providers

- 3.3.9 An anticipated 216 relets from existing registered provider social housing stock is anticipated to be provided to the City Council during 2014/2015.
- 3.3.10 This projection is based on the average level of relets received by the City Council over the previous three years.
- 3.3.11 It is also projected that 56% of total RP relets provided to the City Council will be as social rent with the remainder provided as affordable rent
- 3.3.12 The table below summaries the number of relets projected to be received by Westminster in 2014/15 by dwelling size and whether these will be for social rent and affordable rent

Tenancy Type	Number and mix of relets projected in 2014 - 2015					
	Studios	1bed	2bed	3bd	4bed	5bed
Social Rent	61	26	24	7	3	0
Affordable Rent	28	30	35	2	0	0
Total	89	56	59	9	3	0
<b>Total All</b>	<b>216</b>					

### 3.4 Housing Renewal and Community Build (to be updated)

3.4.1 The Council's Housing Renewal Strategy was approved by Cabinet in February 2010. Plans for the four renewal areas are at varying stages:

3.4.2 **Tollgate Gardens** - is the most advanced scheme. The planning application was approved in November 2013 and a developer is expected to start on site in December 2014, subject to a Compulsory Purchase Order and vacant possession. Sixty tenanted properties are due to be demolished and all tenants have moved or agreed to move.

3.4.3 **Ebury Bridge** - residents voted for the master plan proposals in May 2013. The planning application was submitted in February 2014 and a decision is expected by May 2014. Approval was given by the Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Housing in March 2014 to end the Right to Buy, give decant status to 86 secure tenants and end permanent new lets on the estate.

3.4.4 **Church Street** - residents voted for phase 1 master plan proposals in May 2013 and planning applications for 3 sites were submitted in November 2013 and a decision is expected in April 2014. Approval was given by the Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Housing in May 2013 to acquire 14 tenanted properties owned by Genesis. Half of these tenants have been rehoused and work is underway to rehouse the remaining tenants.

3.4.5 **Paddington Green (linked to Church Street)** – residents voted for a 45 unit scheme on Parsons House North podium in November 2013 which is currently is being worked up.

3.4.6 **Westbourne** – residents will vote in June 2014 on master plan proposals.

#### **Decanting tenants**

3.4.7 All tenants have been given the option to return to a new home on renewal estates which meets their needs and are supported by a dedicated offer to move. The majority of tenants at Tollgate and Church Street have moved into general needs housing stock, and a small number into Westminster Community Homes properties. All tenants have had their housing needs met through the move so overcrowding and under occupation has been resolved.

3.4.8 The majority of Tollgate tenants (68%) currently wish to return to the estate but only 1 Church Street tenant has so far expressed an interest in returning.

### **New homes**

3.4.9 The Housing Renewal Programme will deliver in the region of 250 additional affordable homes, and significantly improved homes to replace the 400 social and private homes that will be demolished, plus refurbishment of many hundreds of homes that will be retained.

3.4.10 The new homes will be built to modern space and design standards, providing improved accommodation and reducing energy costs for residents, while reducing ongoing maintenance and repair costs for the City Council. The new homes for returning tenants and leaseholders will be designed to meet their specific needs and the new additional homes will better match the requirements of homes needs by households on the waiting list. Currently 75% of households on the waiting list need family sized homes and 49% of the stock are studio's or one bedrooms.

3.4.11 Once any existing tenants have returned to the renewal estates, local overcrowded tenants will then have priority to move into the new homes that meet their housing needs. Following this, the new homes will then be available to all people on the City Council's waiting list.

3.4.12 Local lettings plans are being developed for each renewal area and are being consulted on. It is proposed that local people in each renewal area registered with Westminster Home ownership (for intermediate housing) will have first priority for the new intermediate homes<sup>1</sup>.

## **3.5 Homelessness Projections and Prevention**

3.5.1 The Housing Options Service (HOS) provides the Council's statutory housing assessment and advice function. Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide housing under homelessness legislation, where the applicant is:

- Homeless with no alternative accommodation that is reasonable to occupy
- In priority need
- Has a local connection.
- Has a legal right to social housing

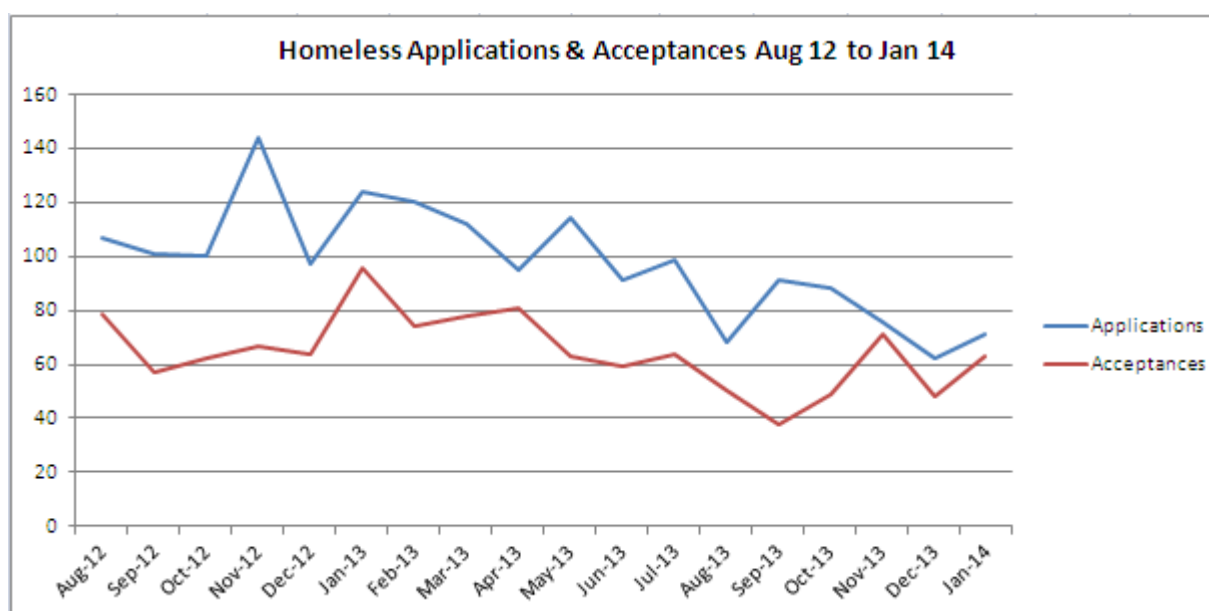
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<sup>1</sup> This is with the exception of social housing tenants registered for intermediate housing as it is proposed they will have high priority for the new homes regardless of where they live in line with the Mayor's rules

When the supply of suitable affordable accommodation is not available, the Council is required to procure Temporary Accommodation (TA) to provide housing until social housing is available.

3.5.2 The following table summarises the numbers of homeless applications and acceptances over the last five years and a more detailed monthly summary covering the past 18 months

	31.3.08	31.3.09	31.3.10	31.3.11	31.3.12	31.3.13	31.3.14 (f-cast)
Homelessness Applications (p.a.)	1380	1153	1125	1170	1445	1742	1075
Homelessness Acceptances (p.a.)	522	446	378	430	539	815	720



3.5.3 The principal driver of homelessness has been the ending of private sector tenancies to households on benefits. The strength of the private rented sector market within Westminster has meant that, following the introduction of caps on benefits, there is less availability of affordable private sector housing affordable to households on benefits.

3.5.4 To respond effectively to the implementation of Welfare Reform we have a steering group chaired by the Strategic Director of Housing, Regeneration and Property and with senior membership from Adults Services, Children’s Services, Benefits Services and Health; the function of this group has been to ensure that all households are informed of the changes, the options open to them and the support available, identify vulnerable households through for example the updated Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) policy and



developing protocols for its use. It is envisaged that this group will continue to oversee the Council's response to the wider benefit changes

### Welfare Benefit Caps

3.5.5 821 residents in Westminster were affected by the overall benefit cap (£500 for families, £350 for households with no children) when it was introduced during late summer, 2013) The breakdown by tenure and by total reduction was as follows:

Tenure	CityWest Homes	LHA (Privately rented)	Private (other)	Registered Providers	Temporary Accommodation (WCC)	Temporary Accommodation (RP)	Total
Household numbers	17	296	37	49	313	108	821
Total annual reduction	£57,564	£1,182,948	£357,084	£211,328	£2,455,440	£867,204	£5,131,713

3.5.6 The total affected is currently 850 with 167 Households no longer on the list of capped cases in Westminster, 196 new cases and 654 Households have remained capped in Westminster.

3.5.7 To respond to the impact of the caps, the Council has received an allocation of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) and this will be £4.9m in 2014/15. As part of ensuring that this allocation is used appropriately and effectively a system has been set up to respond directly to those households in TA and the private rented sector whose claims are capped and are at risk of homelessness, involving a co-located team including Job Centre plus, Housing Options and Benefit Services officers.

3.5.8 The Housing Options Welfare Reform Team (WRT) that leads the housing element of this work have been contacting residents and have held 350 interviews to date with households affected by the Benefit Cap, agreed 281 Action Plans to support applications for DHP, and 36 households have entered employment

3.5.9 Where a DHP application is made applicants will be expected to make a contribution to any shortfall where this is affordable, any DHP payments will be short term and will include conditions around searching for and engaging with training and securing employment. The focus is on using DHP to enable

households to move into work, support vulnerable households and give households time to move into cheaper accommodation as appropriate.

3.5.10 Homeless prevention remains the central focus of work with households in housing need, whether challenging illegal evictions, debt advice, supporting families to remain together and assisting with moves into the private rented sector. In the past 12 months 271 private sector prevention placements have been completed, 114 into properties in Westminster, 140 into other London boroughs and 17 outside of London.

3.5.11 Given the pressures from homeless acceptances during 2013/14 and 2014/15 and the continued pressures in securing properties for Temporary Accommodation and the uncertainty around the funding regime the percentage of total rehousing made available to homeless households (currently c. 73%) is to be retained, in particular for larger units.

3.5.12 Forecasts for applications and acceptances are currently being made and will reflect that numbers are anticipated to reduce to c. 600 acceptances during the year with a larger reduction forecast for later in the year as the effects of welfare reform are completed.

### **Procurement of Temporary Accommodation**

3.5.13 Councils are expected to lease TA from the private sector to provide temporary housing. However as homeless numbers increased during 2013, the strength of the private rented sector across London meant it was not possible to procure sufficient units of TA at subsidy levels and this led to use of (expensive) B&B during 2012 and 2013. To respond to this required a new approach to commissioning TA reflected in the TA commissioning strategy

3.5.14 The above strategy will continue to deliver a reduction in unit costs of TA and ensure properties are affordable to households on benefits. At the same time the strength of the private market means that it is extremely challenging to maintain the existing properties when alternative markets are available and identify for purchase properties which are economic to purchase and rent to households on benefits.

3.5.15 To deliver a TA portfolio that meets budget targets is dependent upon a central government set funding regime both for TA subsidy and to purchase properties directly that allows such activity to be economic. Announcements regarding the future of TA subsidy are expected during 2014 (in light of the introduction of Universal Credit.)

3.5.16 Current TA levels are c. 2350 and are expected to continue at between 2300 – 2500 during the year, depending on flows of homeless households. This represents an increase of a third since 2012. Before the increase 75% of TA was located in-borough with the remainder in East London. Since the increase whilst the in-borough stock has largely been retained, TA properties are now located in over half of London boroughs with c. 100 properties outside London, principally in Essex.

3.5.17 Legally TA has to be suitable (in terms of size and location) and affordable. With the majority of households on benefits, and where accommodation is required to be in-borough this is very challenging to deliver and/ or can only be provided above subsidy levels.

3.5.18 This is also reflected in how the numbers of reviews of homeless decisions have increased. From April to Dec 2013 Housing Options (HOS) carried out 432 reviews, an increase of 186 on the same period in 2012. The most common decisions being reviewed was that the temporary accommodation offered was unsuitable (usually related to location.)

### **3.6 Alternative Housing Options for Social Housing Tenants**

3.6.1 There are several options for Westminster tenants and housing applicants to find alternative accommodation:

3.6.2 **Homeswapper:** Westminster subscribes to this mutual exchange scheme which enables WCC tenants to register for free to find another social tenant in or outside Westminster to swap with

3.6.3 **Housing Moves:** is the Mayor of London's pan-London mobility scheme. Each London borough puts forward a small number of units every year and social tenants can bid for them through a choice based lettings scheme. Priority is given to downsizers, those wanting to move for reasons of work or because they are providing care to another person

3.6.4 **Seaside and Country Homes scheme:** a large number of properties all over the country are available to London social housing tenants over the age of 60

3.6.5 **Homefinder:** is a new national mobility scheme which Westminster has joined. Social landlords put properties they find hard to let onto the scheme which are open to social tenants and those in temporary accommodation from member boroughs. The scheme is designed to complement local choice-based lettings schemes and mutual exchange schemes. We will be publicising the scheme in 2014/15.

3.6.6 **House Exchange** is a not-for-profit service that can be accessed by social tenants under any landlord. It currently has 280,000 properties registered. People can swap homes with any council tenant or Registered Provider tenant in the UK providing they have the right to mutual exchange and both parties want to do so.

### 3.7 **Discharge of Duty into the Private Rented Sector Update**

3.7.1 As previously reported in previous Supply and Allocation Reports the Localism Act 2011 gave housing authorities the ability to discharge the main housing duty to the homeless by an offer of an assured shorthold tenancy for at least 12 months of a suitable private rented sector (prs) home without the agreement of the applicant.

3.7.2 Until now we have not enforced a private sector offer but have been working with applicants who are willing to go down the prs route. To date this year 214 have been housed into the private sector to prevent homelessness and a further 54 have moved out of temporary accommodation into the prs that they have either found for themselves or HOS has helped them to find.

3.7.3 Most applicants currently wait 7-10 years for a social housing tenancy and we now intend to start identifying more households for whom the prs would be suitable and start making offers to them to bring our duty to an end. It is also anticipated that as a result more households threatened with homelessness will be more open to accepting help to find a prs to prevent homelessness.

3.7.4 To strengthen this message to applicants and to give Housing Options time to assess whether applicants will be able to manage in the prs and to find them a suitable property it is proposed to stop homeless households being able to bid for social housing for 12 months after the date that we accept a duty. We aim to start this as soon as administratively possible after 1<sup>st</sup> April.

3.7.5 This will not apply to applicants accepted before the start date or to older applicants who are assessed as suitable for Community Supportive Housing, or to applicants who are assessed as needing a wheelchair accessible property. For those for whom the prs is not suitable (e.g. very vulnerable households) the one year delay in bidding will not affect the overall waiting time. Some applicants who have extra points for employment and 10 years residence in Westminster can be rehoused very quickly and the 12 month suspension may have a marginal impact on this group.

3.7.6 Because the households with the fewest needs, especially those coming out of the private sector, are the ones who are most likely to be able to move

straight into a private sector tenancy, the long term effect may be that those waiting for a social tenancy are more vulnerable than those who currently hold social tenancies.

3.7.7 Housing Options will continue to try to prevent homelessness where possible but once an applicant makes a homeless applicant an assessment of whether the PRS is suitable will be made. If so, the Westlets team will aim to find a suitable property for the household.

3.7.8 The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order sets out that in determining whether accommodation is suitable for a person the housing authority must take into account the location including:

- Where it is outside the district of the housing authority the distance from the district
- The significance of any disruption to employment, caring responsibilities or education of the person or his/her household
- The proximity and accessibility to medical facilities and other support which are currently used by or provided to the person or household and are essential to their well being
- The proximity and accessibility to local services amenities and transport.

3.7.9 We will for now continue to seek properties in and close to London, unless applicants ask to move elsewhere, though we will promote to applicants the advantages of moving further away in terms of cheaper rents, larger homes and gardens.

3.7.10 Our experience in offering temporary accommodation even in locations as close as Milton Keynes is that most of our applicants would see this as unsuitable and we would have to defend a decision to discharge our duty in the courts. We are liaising closely with other boroughs in our sub region and as yet none of them have enforced an offer outside London.

3.7.11 The ultimate success of the scheme will be dependent on finding properties affordable to households on benefits who make up the great majority of households in housing need, in a very strong private rented sector market..

#### **4. Service Issues that impact upon the supply and allocation of housing**

4.1 The following sections set out the issues that impact upon the recommendations made for the supply and allocation projections set out in appendices A and B. These cover affordable rent tenure, housing and physical disability, supporting adolescents in housing need and the work with Children's Services and the equalities review.

4.1.1 Sections covering issues related to allocating housing and providing support for different priority groups such as people with mental health problems, learning disabilities, households escaping domestic violence etc. are included in appendix C.

4.1.2 In October 2014 The Council will publish a new Housing Strategy. The overall crosscutting theme will be 'the affordable Housing Ladder' through creating "ladders of opportunity" in affordable housing to help people into economic independence and enable them to make independent housing choices. The four core areas of focus will be the Westminster Housing market, Economic Wellbeing, Housing and health and a review of the progress on regeneration schemes. The strategy is likely to impact on future allocations issues and this will be included in the recommendations for the 2015/16 report.

#### **4.2 Affordable Rent Tenure**

4.2.1 Affordable Rent is part of a package of measures announced by the Government in Autumn 2010 to create a more flexible social sector and to create a new funding regime for social housing development.

4.2.2 From 2011/12, Registered Providers of Social Housing (RPs) who have entered into new affordable housing delivery contracts with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for the investment period 2011-2015 have been able to let new rental properties and convert a proportion of existing vacant social rented properties as Affordable Rent (AR) where gross rents charged can be up to 80% of local market rent levels for an equivalent property of that size and location. In future only new Affordable Rent proposals and some shared ownership provision linked to projects also including AR will be eligible to be considered for grant funding by the HCA. Social Rent will only be considered for grant funding if provision is linked to the regeneration of existing housing and it is necessary to be provided in order to meet the needs of existing tenants who are to be decanted as a result of regeneration activity.

4.2.3 The HCA has also confirmed that as a rule affordable housing delivered through S106 planning conditions will not be eligible for grant funding. However, where it can be evidenced that additional affordable housing can be delivered on these S106 sites with grant, beyond the number of affordable

units that can be delivered without grant, applications for grant funding may be considered.

- 4.2.4 Since 2012, the responsibility for Investment decisions in affordable housing in London has devolved from the HCA England and Wales to HCA London which now forms part of the GLA.
- 4.2.5 Currently there are no affordable housing projects in Westminster that form part of an RPs agreed 2011-2015 delivery programmes with the GLA that are in receipt of grant funding.
- 4.2.6 In order to guide RPs operating the AR tenure in Westminster, the City Council published an Affordable Rent Statement in September 2011 approved by the Cabinet Member for Housing, setting out affordability guidance and gross rental ranges appropriate for various dwelling sizes provided on an Affordable Rent tenure. The affordability guidance set out in Westminster's Affordable Rent Statement is linked to lower quartile and median income levels of households registered with the City Council for intermediate housing opportunities. This guidance will be updated from time to time to reflect any changes in the profile of Westminster's Housing waiting list and household incomes. Housing's support for RP's as the affordable housing partner on S106 development sites, delivering new affordable housing will be dependent upon Westminster's Affordable Rent guidance being adopted.
- 4.2.7 The AR rent and income thresholds set out by the City Council in the Affordable Rent statement of September 2011 are as set out below.

<b>Beds</b>	<b>Gross Affordability Threshold*</b>	<b>Weekly Gross Affordable Rent Range</b>
1	£25k-32k	£135 - £172
2	£27.5-£36k	£148 - £194
3+	£29k-£39k	£156 - £210

\*Based on net being 70% of gross and housing costs not exceeding 40% of net

### 4.3 **Housing and Physical Disability**

- 4.3.1 The CityWest Homes budget for 2013/14 for major adaptations is £850K. Expenditure on adaptations was £804,515 as at 30th November 2013. Works are prioritised for those tenants who have been assessed as having an urgent and high priority need.
- 4.3.2 CWH had received 126 major adaptations referrals from April 2013 to December 2013 and 58 minor adaptations requests; a total of 123 major adaptations are practically complete in this financial year. There have been 15

cancellations and 2 requests on hold awaiting for clients' decisions regarding transfers to other adapted properties rather than adapting their homes. There were 68 cases still in progress or waiting for adaptations.

- 4.3.3 The target set is to complete as many cases as possible with an average of 6 weeks for Urgent works and 12 weeks for High and Standard priority works from date of receipt of OT recommendation to work commencement. This target has been met to date.

#### **4.4 Supporting adolescents in housing need: Children Leaving Care**

- 4.4.1 Under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that young people leaving care have access to suitable housing.

- 4.4.2 During 2013 / 14, Housing Commissioning and Westminster Leaving Care Team (LCT) worked together to re-develop the procedures for managing final stage accommodation offers for care leavers. The new process allows all qualifying young people to be registered for housing and allocated an appropriate housing option following discussion at the quarterly Leaving Care Accommodation Panel (LCAP). The new guidance gives greater clarity on how LCAP makes decisions and a new appeal process ensures disputes are managed appropriately. A key objective of the new procedure is to ensure that expectations regarding the types of final stage accommodation available are managed. Training and leaflets have been produced to support the implementation of the new procedures.

- 4.4.3 The breakdown of re-housings to young people owed duties by Westminster Leaving Care Team (LCT) team during 2013 / 14 is as follows:

- 11 into general needs studios and one beds via designated LCT quota
- 1 into general needs 2 bed via LCT quota
- 3 into the Single Person's Housing Pathway

#### **Joint working with Children's Services**

- 4.4.4 Housing has continued to work jointly with Children's Services to identify households where housing issues are impacting on the efficacy of a Child Protection Plan (CPP) or Child In Need (CIN) Plan. The Children Act Accommodation Panel, comprised of senior officers from Children's Services and Housing, considers the full range of housing options available to such households and manages an annual quota of properties to be allocated to those in the greatest need.



- 4.4.5 Where a child is moved out of Westminster, responsibility for social care involvement or the costs of a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN) are transferred to the receiving borough and the family is encouraged to change their child's school. However, this is impractical when their longer term TA is likely to be in another area again.
- 4.4.6 Housing Commissioning and Children's Services have developed a new procedure for managing TA placements for families with the most vulnerable children; those with a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN) and those deemed a Child In Need (CIN) or on a Child Protection Plan (CPP) by Children's Services.
- 4.4.7 Children's Services will retain social care and SEN responsibilities, plus pay 'travel to school' costs for this group when placed in nightly booked, out of borough placements, for up to one school term (usually 12 weeks). All children falling into this cohort will be identified before or at the point of placement. HOS will seek to move the family to suitable longer term TA in line with the recommendation of Children's Services during this period. Where a household has very specific accommodation requirements (e.g. requires adapted or 4-bed+ accommodation) it may not be possible to meet the target timeframe for the move. If this is likely, HOS will ensure that Children's Services are informed of this, to manage expectations with the family and consider other options.
- 4.4.8 An Education Link Officer has been recruited to work with these families to support them through the process of moving and to help them access school places in their new areas, where appropriate.

## **4.5 Cash Incentive Scheme**

- 4.5.1 Last year following the introduction of the Government's under-occupation cap on Housing Benefit the Cash Incentive Scheme payments were amended to fund an equivalent incentive to those affected by the cap who found another tenant to exchange homes with.
- 4.5.2 37 households have downsized to date this year (April – Feb). Of these 18 were affected by the cap. A further 9 were below pension credit age and therefore potentially subject to the cap if on HB. 10 were older. There was a reduction in the number of older tenants downsizing this year because a number of the more desirable properties went to households being decanted from the Tollgate renewal area. 11 households affected by the cap downsized by mutual exchange.

## 4.6 Equalities extract for supply and allocation report

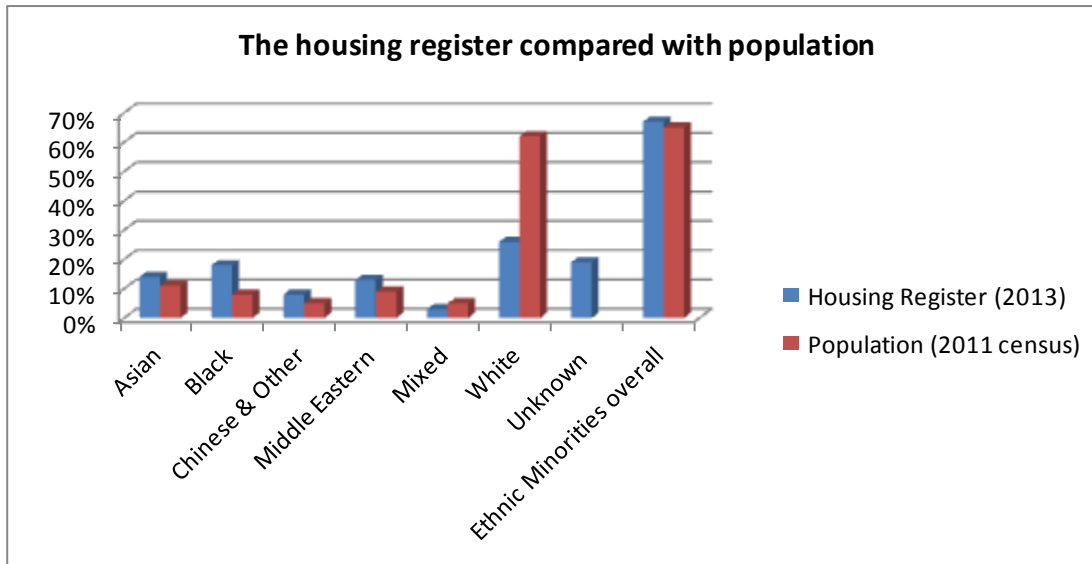
4.6.1 Annual equalities analysis looks at demand for social housing so we understand our customers, and also at social housing lets to help ensure our policies are not discriminatory.

### Demand for housing

4.6.2 Only households with priority for housing under the Allocations Scheme are registered, so the profile of the housing register is driven by the eligibility criteria.

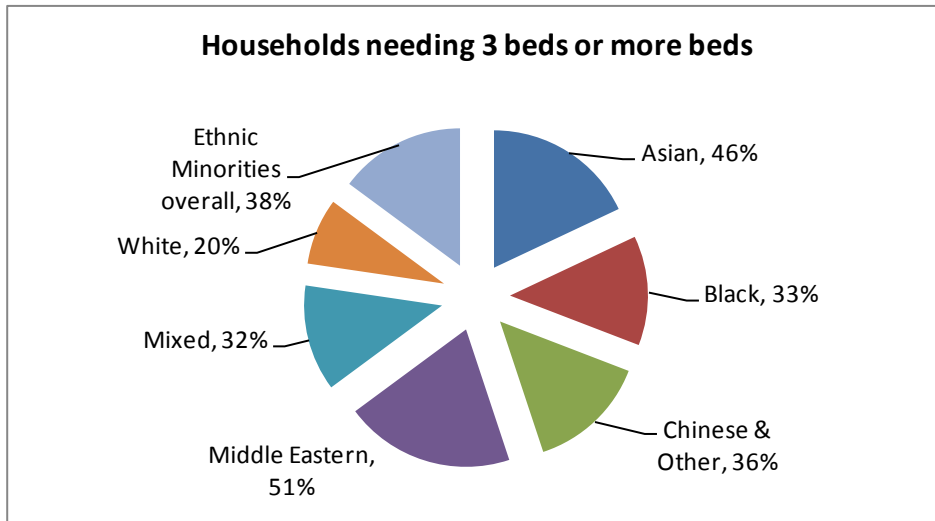
### Ethnicity

4.6.3 Ethnic minority<sup>2</sup> households continued to have higher levels of housing need during 2012/13 compared with their share of the population. Black groups are the most over represented making up 18% of the register and 8% of the population. Middle Eastern groups made up 13% of the register and 9% of the population and Asian groups made up 14% of the register and 11% of the population. White groups are under-represented, making up 26% of the register and 62% of the population.



Thirty four per cent of households need larger home (3 bedrooms or more) and ethnic minority households have a higher than average need for them at 38%. Asian and Middle Eastern groups have a significantly higher need for larger homes.

<sup>2</sup> Ethnic minorities are defined as all non White British group.



### Age

4.6.4 The majority of applicants (68%) are between 25-44, which is higher than their 42% share of the Westminster population. Older people are under-represented making up 2% of the register and 15% of the population. Young people (16-24s) are also under represented making up 8% of the housing register and 12% of the population

### Physical disability

4.6.5 Less than 1% of households need a fully wheel chair adapted property which is the same as the 2006 housing needs survey estimate for the overall Westminster population.

### Lets

4.6.6 The proportion of lets to different groups during 2012/13 is unlikely to reflect the profile of the register at 2013 as:

- The make up of the register changes over time and there is considerable delay between registering for a property and a let due to supply shortages
- There is a particular shortage of family sized units and certain groups have a higher need for larger properties
- Households are prioritised for properties in line with their need
- The majority of lets are through choice based lettings (CBL) so applicants can choose whether to bid for properties which impacts on lets.

However comparing lets in 2012/13 with the profile of the register is still useful to ensure there are no major discrepancies.

## Ethnicity

4.6.7 Fifty eight per cent of lets in 2012/13 were to ethnic minority groups which is lower than their 67% share of the housing register in 2013. Lets to Black, Asian and Middle Eastern groups were also lower than their proportions on the register. Lets to White groups were higher by 8% which is due to them having less need for larger bedroom homes which are in the shortest supply. White groups also made up a larger proportion of the housing register in the past – making up 39% of it 2010 and 26% in 2013.

4.6.8 The majority of groups actively participated in CBL – with Black and Chinese/Other groups making particularly high numbers of bids per let. White groups made below average bids per let which is similar to previous years.

	% Register 2013	% Lets 2012/13 (including direct offers)	Bids per let
Asian	14%	11%	94
Black	18%	14%	100
Chinese & Other	8%	7%	116
Middle Eastern	13%	11%	99
Mixed	3%	2%	93
Unknown	19%	20%	92
White	26%	35%	41
Ethnic Minorities	67%	58%	90
<b>Average</b>			<b>77</b>

## Age

4.6.9 There was a similar proportion of lets to young people (16-24) compared with their proportion on the register in 2013 and a significantly lower proportion to the 25-44 age group which is likely to be due to the shortage of family sized units. The proportion of lets to older people was higher than their proportion on the register. Younger and older groups made below average bids per let, with older groups making particularly low levels of bids per let.

## **5. New Policy proposals**

### **5.1 Allocation of Part VII Temporary Accommodation**

- 5.1.1 The housing allocation scheme sets out the legal position on providing temporary accommodation (TA) to homeless households, both 'interim' accommodation (eg before a decision is made on our duty or when we have made a negative decision) and longer term 'section 193' or main housing duty accommodation. It sets out our placement policy, and criteria for prioritising moves into alternative sec 193 accommodation.
- 5.1.2 There is no proposal to change the placement policy that while most applicants will be offered accommodation outside Westminster because it is not possible to do otherwise, the most vulnerable will when possible be offered section 193 accommodation in Westminster.
- 5.1.3 Most applicants will initially be placed in nightly booked accommodation and will not be placed in borough. Nightly booked accommodation can be B&B or self contained accommodation. It can be offered as interim or sec 193. When possible we will move applicants to whom we have a housing duty to sec 193 accommodation on a leased arrangement which is known as stage 2.
- 5.1.4 Where we previously had several categories who were to be prioritised over others if accommodation in Westminster was available and a further 11 levels of priority to be transferred into other TA when possible it is proposed to simplify this by creating four bands to show the relative priority for transferring applicants to appropriate TA. Except for the most vulnerable, it is not expected that stage 2 accommodation will be in Westminster but will be settled accommodation so that households can transfer their arrangements to a new area.

The aim will be to offer Band A accommodation within 12 weeks.

<b>Priority Band</b>	<b>Stage 2 Temporary Accommodation In Westminster</b>	<b>Stage 2 Temporary Accommodation Outside Westminster</b>
<b>A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children whose circumstances come under the new protocol arrangements set out in paragraphs 4.4.4 to 4.4.7</li> <li>• Children at a special school in Westminster</li> <li>• The household is receiving extraordinary levels of support from extended family which would not be possible if the family or vulnerable adult moved away, such that transferring them elsewhere will create significant risk to the safety and sustainability of the caring arrangements</li> <li>• Families or vulnerable adult with complex needs, who have recently begun to engage with services and where a move out of borough may severely disrupt this engagement thus creating significant risk to the safety and sustainability of the caring arrangements</li> <li>• Family or vulnerable adult is receiving such a significant package of care, from a variety of providers, that transferring them elsewhere will create significant risk to the safety and sustainability of the care</li> <li>• Households where at least one member is suffering from a life threatening illness or is severely disabled and is receiving regular (at least fortnightly) treatment at a hospital in Westminster which would not be available elsewhere? TA could be outside Westminster but within travelling distance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Households with a child or pregnant woman in non-self contained accommodation</li> <li>• Households in high cost emergency accommodation</li> <li>• The family is receiving services but support could be transferred to another area, if it was clear where the longer term TA would be</li> <li>• Travelling long distances to school etc will place / is placing undue pressure on a family who could otherwise be safely transferred to another area, causing their needs to significantly increase</li> <li>• The household is receiving support from extended family, but this could continue if the family was settled out of the borough (caveats on suitable distance or area could be recommended)</li> <li>• Households with one or more child(ren) aged 15-17 who are undertaking studies, in a Westminster School, which lead to public examinations. TA to be within reasonable travelling distance of the school.</li> </ul>
<b>B</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Households with a member working anti-social hours (e.g. shift-work which starts or finishes when no public transport is available) and this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants who have been found to be in unsuitable accommodation on review or in Court or to avert or settle legal action likely to</li> </ul>

	<p>employment will be lost should that member live far from Westminster. The job must be permanent, and the Council will have regard to the past and future length of time of the employment when deciding whether this category should be applied to a household. TA could be outside Westminster but within travelling distance.</p>	<p>be successful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Households who need to be moved for management reasons, e.g. threatened or actual violence, racial harassment. The assessment will be similar to that used for Management Transfers, and the household's circumstances will be reviewed every 3 months.</li> <li>• Households who need to be moved for property related management reasons eg disrepair.</li> <li>• Clients who are living in statutorily overcrowded conditions (Housing Act 1985 )</li> </ul>
<b>C</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Households who need to be moved to make best use of the stock for example under-occupation.</li> <li>• Applicants in TA where the lease is ending</li> </ul>
<b>D</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other households requesting to be moved – it is unlikely that stock will be available for this group.</li> </ul>

## 5.2 Changes to the City Council's Tenancy Policy

5.2.1 Flexible, or fixed term tenancies, have been offered to most new City Council tenants from September 2013. This was enabled through the publication of the City Council's Tenancy Policy in June 2013.

5.2.2 A review of the transition of flexible tenancies has been conducted and the following amendments and additions are needed to the Tenancy

### Report

	Amendment/Addition	Reason for Amendment/Addition	Tenancy Policy Reference
<b>The offer of secure tenancies</b>			
1	All people moving into, or within, community supportive housing to be offered a secure tenancy (rather than this being limited to those 60 and over)	Generally people moving into community supportive housing are 60 or over and the current policy reflects this. However in some circumstances this type of housing is offered to younger people	3.11
2.	Joint tenants bringing a secure tenancy to an end by serving a Notice to Quit to be offered a further secure tenancy if either: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The property is appropriately sized for the household or</li> <li>2. The current property is under occupied and the secure tenancy is granted when the tenant downsizes</li> </ol>	The law allows one tenant (in a joint tenancy) to end their tenancy by serving a Notice to Quit. Where the council agrees to grant a sole tenancy to the remaining tenant, the current policy implies this tenancy will be flexible in all circumstances. The change removes the disincentive to downsize (loss of security of tenure) where the tenant agrees to downsize and helps free up much needed larger properties	3.11
<b>Renewing flexible tenancies where the tenant is in prison</b>			
3.	The review meeting (held to decide if a new flexible tenancy should be offered) to also consider if the tenant is in prison. Decisions about the offer of a further tenancy to be made on a case by case basis, taking into account; the remaining household occupants, the length of sentence and any other factors considered relevant	The policy already enables flexible tenancies not to be renewed if there have been serious breaches of the tenancy agreement. The offence committed by the tenant may not however be housing related, and there may be remaining members of the household still in occupation and paying the rent. The change enables discretion to be applied in deciding whether a further tenancy should be	4.67 4.11 4.13.4



	<b>Amendment/Addition</b>	<b>Reason for Amendment/Addition</b>	<b>Tenancy Policy Reference</b>
		offered depending on the circumstances of the case	
<b>Discretionary succession</b>			
4.	In assessing whether eligible family members meet the 5 year residency test to qualify, other City Council tenancies will be taken into account, as long as the applicant had lived with the deceased tenant continuously	Certain eligible family members can succeed to a secure or flexible tenancy, if they had lived with the tenant at the time of their death, for 5 years. The policy currently doesn't make it clear whether this means at the current address only, or whether previous addresses count	7.12 7.17.2
5.	Remove references to "second" succession	All tenancy successions are either 'statutory' or 'discretionary' and the historic reference to 'secondary' succession can be removed.	7.10
<b>Clarifying rent levels following an exchange</b>			
6.	Highlight that where an exchange takes place by way of assignment the same rent will be charged at each property	To clarify that where an exchange takes place by way of an assignment, each tenant takes on the tenancy on the same terms	7.36 - 7.50
7.	Highlight that where an exchange takes place by one tenancy being ended and another being offered target rent will be changed	To clarify that as there are now different tenancy types an exchange cannot always happen by an assignment, and where this alternative procedure is needed, target rent will be charged in line with the City Council's rents policy	7.36 - 7.50

### **5.3 Amendment to the Allocation's Policy for Decant Applicants**

- 5.3.1 It is proposed to amend the Allocation Scheme to clarify the number of bedrooms offered to households registered with Decant priority. Decanting is necessary where the Council proposes to carry out major modernisation or rehabilitation works, to blocks or individual homes, which cannot be undertaken with the residents in occupation or where demolition is proposed as part of wider redevelopment.
- 5.3.2 The current policy needs to be clearer regarding the size of accommodation offered to applicants to take into account the supply of suitable properties at the time of offer and to reflect similar principles as for Management Transfer (5.1.7 of current Scheme) cases.

5.3.3 The current Allocation Scheme (5.2.2) states;

*'Offers of accommodation will be dependent on supply and according to the assessed bedroom need of the household'.*

5.3.4 Applicants may not be re-housed into a property the same size as they currently occupy, for example those in accommodation too large for their needs will be offered a smaller property and those in overcrowded accommodation may not necessarily be offered larger accommodation. It would be unfair on other priority households that have been waiting longer if Decant applicants were re-housed into larger accommodation ahead of those that have been waiting longer.

5.3.5 Therefore it is proposed to amend the current wording for Decants at 5.2.2 in the current Allocations Scheme with:

*'Where a tenant is awarded Decant status they will only be offered accommodation larger than their current tenancy if they are overcrowded by two bedrooms or more. The size of accommodation offered will be dependent on the available supply.'*

*Where a tenant is in a property too large for their needs, the tenant will be offered a property according to their assessed need.*

*The size of property to be allocated is determined at the point of registration, but will be revised should the size of property needed increase/decrease. NB specific policies may apply to Decants for renewal areas. See section 5.2.11'.*

## **6. Financial Implications**

### **6.1 Homelessness**

6.1.1 The gross Housing General Fund homelessness budget for 2014/ 15 is about £42m. Of this sum about £34m relates to the provision of temporary accommodation.

### **6.2 Homelessness Prevention**

6.2.1 As part of its Formula Grant, for 2014/15 the City Council receives revenue grant of about £8m for reduction in the use of bed and breakfast accommodation, homelessness prevention and rough sleeping services aimed at reducing the numbers of rough sleepers. Budgets exist in the Housing directorate of the equivalent sum to fund these activities.

### 6.3 Capital Expenditure – Affordable Housing

- 6.3.1 Within the Housing General Fund capital programme for 2014/15 there is a budget of £13m for the funding of new affordable housing supply via registered providers. This is combined with HCA Funding and Section 106 opportunities to maximise the supply of affordable homes.

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The Council has a general duty under the Housing Act 1996 (Part VII), as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 to ensure that accommodation is made available for homeless applicants who are owed a full housing duty by the Council.
- 7.2 The Council also has a duty to maintain a housing register under the Housing Act 1996 (Part VI) as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.
- 7.3 By virtue of Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 many Housing Authorities are required to prepare and update a homeless strategy. However, being an excellent authority, the City Council is exempted from that requirement by virtue of Article 3 of the Local Authorities' Plans and Strategies (Disapplication) (England) Order 2005. This is a non statutory report prepared outside the homelessness regime

## **8. Staffing Implications**

- 8.1 There are none

## **9. Consultation**

- 9.1 Ongoing consultation on housing supply and allocations issues is also carried out with key stakeholders both within and outside the Council, through meetings with RP's, the Housing Options Service Improvement Group and Partners Forum

## Appendix A

### SUPPLY OF RENTED ACCOMMODATION PROJECTIONS 2014/15

	<b>2014.15 Projection</b>
<b>WCC Stock</b>	
Casual voids and returned from major works	358
Returned from conversion/rehab.	8
<b>Registered Provider Stock</b>	
First Let Nominations - Affordable Rent	12
First Let Nominations - Social Rent	81
Relet Nominations - Affordable Rent	121
Relet Nominations - Social Rent	95
<b>Regeneration related additional supply</b>	
Additional supply for regeneration tenant decants - WCH	11
Additional supply for regeneration tenant decants - HRA	18
<b><u>Total Net Voids</u></b>	<b>704</b>
<b>WCC Stock</b>	
Transfer (Existing WCC Tenants (non regeneration schemes))	124
Less Decants for Major Works (regeneration)	-68
Less Decants for Major Works (non regeneration)	-18
<b><u>Total Gross Voids</u></b>	<b>742</b>

## Appendix B

### Supply of Rented Accommodation 2014/15 – projections by property size

2014.15	Bedsizes					
Supply	Studio	1	2	3	4+	Total
CWH Casual voids	99	149	62	44	4	358
Return from rehab	0	1	5	2	0	8
RP First Let Nominations - Affordable Rent	0	5	3	2	2	12
RP First Let Nominations - Social Rent	0	1	40	36	4	81
RP Relet Nominations - Affordable Rent	61	26	24	7	3	121
RP Relet Nominations - Social Rent	28	30	35	2	0	95
Additional supply for regeneration tenant decants - WCH	4	2	3	1	1	11
Additional supply for regeneration tenant decants - HRA	6	3	6	1	2	18
<b>Total Net Voids</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>704</b>
WCC Transfers	37	44	22	17	4	124
Less Decants for major works (non regeneration)	-6	-8	-3	-1	0	-18
Less Decants for major works (regeneration)	-19	-14	-21	-9	-5	-68
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>742</b>

## Appendix B1

### Allocations projections of rented housing 2014/15 by property size

All allocations will be made via the City Council's Choice Based Letting Scheme except for those individuals who are identified for direct offers of accommodation. The following tables form a projection only but include all groups who access social housing; the actual allocation will be made after considering all the relevant issues relating to any applicant and his/ her household and will depend upon the bidding preferences of individuals under Choice.

<b>Existing Tenants</b>	<b>Studio</b>	<b>1 Bed</b>	<b>2 Bed</b>	<b>3 Bed</b>	<b>4 Bed +</b>	<b>Total</b>
Decants/Major Works including Returning Decants	2	8	3	1	0	14
Decants regeneration works	19	14	21	9	5	68
Cash incentives	3	27	15	2	0	47
Community Supportive Housing for the elderly	11	13	0	0	0	24
Overcrowded tenants	0	1	22	19	2	44
Studios to 1 beds, Cat A's, Management Transfers	4	15	8	7	1	35
<b>SUB TOTAL (Tenant Transfers)</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>232</b>
<b>Waiting List</b>						
Homeless (including community supportive housing)	79	90	83	54	5	311
Homeless split households	0	0	0	0	0	0
Category A Medical	3	8	3	3	1	18
Community Supportive Housing ( excluding homeless)	56	16	0	0	0	72
Cash Incentive (split households)	1	12	0	0	0	13
Community Care Nominations	1	0	2	0	0	3
Children Act Rehousing	0	0	5	2	0	7
Leaving Care Quota	8	5	0	0	0	13
Street Homeless and hostel move on quota	6	1	0	0	0	7
Second Succession	2	15	3	0	0	20
Staff Rehousings	0	1	0	0	0	1
Learning Disability Quota	0	3	0	0	0	3
Reciprocals	2	4	4	3	0	13
Mental health hostel quota	8	1	0	0	0	9
Statutory overcrowded	0	0	1	0	0	1
RP severe overcrowded	0	0	1	2	1	4
Pan London Housing Moves (GLA scheme)	5	5	5	0	0	15
<b>SUB TOTAL (Housing Register)</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>510</b>
<b>TOTAL TENANT TRANSFER/ HOUSING REG.</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>742</b>

## **Appendix C**

Issues related to allocating housing and providing support for different priority groups such as people with mental health problems, learning disabilities, households escaping domestic violence.

### **10.1 People with Learning Disabilities**

10.1.1 The Westminster Learning Disability Partnership “Big Plan” identified the need to develop more local housing and support services particularly for people with complex needs. There had been an over reliance on the use of residential care models and an insufficient supply of housing and support models within the borough. Westminster Learning Disability Partnership had to place most people with a complex need out of borough in expensive resources. Service users, families and carer’s demonstrated anxieties around their future and how needs would be met. In particular, older parents were very concerned about the future support options for their adult children.

10.1.2 There has been significant progress in delivering these objectives such that in 2007 there were 83 placements of residential accommodation and 73 placements of supported living in the borough. In 2014 there are 24 placements of residential accommodation and 170 placements of supported living in the borough demonstrating how the map of provision has changed significantly.

10.1.3 This change has been delivered through initiatives such as:

- In the last three years Westminster remodelled 69 units of accommodation from residential (registered) care to supported living models.
- there has been an increase of 32 newly developed units of supported placements in the borough e.g. Kilburn Park Road, Francis St. 161 Shirland Rd
- 74% of people are now living in their own home or with their family.
- In the last four years 26 people with a learning disability have moved into independent flats through the Westminster Learning disability quota
- Dolphin Sq Foundation has provided 5 two bed properties into which people with complex learning disabilities have moved creating further savings and providing a hub model of support in the Queens Park area
- Campus funding has been utilised to part fund the remodeling of Johnson Place which has five flats (four one bedroom and one two bedroom self contained flats). This new development provided significant savings to the Adult Care budget

## **10.2 Housing Allocation and Domestic Violence**

- 10.2.1 Domestic Violence (DV) continues to be a major focus for the department. Housing sits on both the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategic group, and recently introduced operational group, to ensure that its departmental objectives fit with the strategic and operational response to DV borough-wide. The Housing DV lead is also the Co-Chair of the Westminster Domestic Violence Forum (WDVF).
- 10.2.2 Housing has worked closely with the VAWG group to design the tri-borough DV training needs assessment and also had input to the initial interviews undertaken by external consultants as part of the assessment for the tri-borough DV needs analysis, which will inform the upcoming cycle of DV commissioning across the tri-borough.
- 10.2.3 The department fully supports the operational work and development of the MARAC and continues to act as an example of good practice to other MARACs in respect of their housing input. The housing lead was a major contributor to the recent MARAC self- assessment process which gave MARAC agencies the opportunity to examine the performance of the MARAC and suggest ways in which it could improve.
- 10.2.4 Westminster's weekly Domestic Abuse drop in surgery held at Bayswater Children's Centre has now been running for over a year. A trained officer from HOS who specialises in Domestic Violence attends the surgery in person once a month and provides telephone support the rest of the time.
- 10.2.5 The effectiveness of the response to domestic violence issues at HOS continues to be monitored through an annual mystery shopping exercise and case audit. Westminster Housing continues to be part of the North London Reciprocal agreement for DV victims who need urgent re-housing. The reciprocal agreement was re-launched in November 2013 to ensure that staff and support agencies across the six boroughs (Enfield, Barnet, Haringey, Islington, Camden and Westminster) are aware that this is an option for secure tenants who cannot be moved via management transfer in their own borough.

### **10.3.1 Mental Health and Housing**

- 10.3.1 In Westminster we have developed a wide variety of housing related support services for people who experience severe and enduring mental health issues. There are 372 units of supported housing, ranging from high support 24 hour schemes to semi-independent units with visiting support. The



schemes are managed by 10 housing providers. In addition there are over 550 units of floating support for people living in their own independent accommodation who require support to prevent the loss of tenancy.

10.3.2 The range of supported housing services has been expanded since the beginning of the Supporting People programme by opening six new mental health schemes and redeveloping a rough sleepers scheme to work with people with low level mental health problems. A new 24 hour high support service to cater for people recovering from severe and enduring mental illness opened in 2012 and is operating effectively in providing additional cost effective options to out of borough residential care. A women only 24/7 high supported commissioned service is currently going through extensive reconfiguration to include self contained units. Referrals into these units will be for those clients who are highly functioning but with complex needs who ordinarily would be placed in a more specialist scheme out of the borough. Additional clinical support will be offered by the relevant MH team.

10.3.3 Westminster Supported Housing is jointly commissioned by Housing, Adult Services and NHS Westminster. Anyone accommodated within the supported housing provision should be allocated to a Central and North West London (CNWL) Mental Health Trust team and be on the Care Programme Approach (CPA). Individuals are supported to move from supported housing into independent living along a pathway of care and support as a joint process with the housing provider and the allocated MH team care coordinator. It should be based on assessment of need and regular placement reviews by the allocated MH team.

10.3.4 The Kensington and Westminster Placement Review panel is used as the basis for sharing information across the joint commissioners about those clients that potentially may require a placement move back to the borough into MH supported accommodation. This forum ensures that any financial savings implicated in accommodation costs are monitored and recorded for the respective commissioners of the services

10.3.5 Access to the range of supported housing provision is via the Single Access referral Panel [SARP] The SARP has a multi disciplinary membership including housing providers; the Housing option service; floating support; ward managers; senior practitioners from the MH team including an Occupational Therapist and the Commissioner for MH accommodation. The SARP works to prevent homelessness and where possible avoids using out of borough expensive placements. This is achieved by ensuring that there is a steady flow of people through all of our in borough supported accommodation. Referrals are received for clients already living in supported who require a step down to less supported, occasionally a like for like move; directly from the wards; from out of borough projects, tenancy

breakdowns and family homes. It is essential that all clients who access MH supported housing have housing related support needs that cannot ordinarily be managed in the community.

10.3.6 The SARP also agrees the Move On Quota applications which agrees access to independent accommodation for those service users currently in supported accommodation. MH services receive an annual quota of independent housing units from the City Council for people with mental health problems living in supported housing who are able to live independently. Readiness for independent accommodation is assessed robustly by care coordinators and housing providers and then again by the SARP that accepts or rejects MSH quota applications. The panel only accepts applications for people where there is clear evidence about the service user's readiness for independent living. Once accepted onto the quota the SARP liaises closely with the Housing Options Service who have the capacity to restrict and delay bidding where it is felt that a situation has changed and people can be removed from the quota when necessary. Once people have moved there are a range of community support services available including floating support services that are able to support the person through the move, to settling in and establishing themselves in the community and other support provisions including flexi care, befriending and day services. In addition there have been several referrals from supported housing placements through the panel onto the single homeless housing pathway, into independent accommodation

10.3.7 Quarterly training on housing issues for the MH teams and the housing provider is provided by Westminster. The training programme incorporates all aspects of housing and access via the relevant housing pathway including the Move On Quota, the Single Persons Homeless Pathway as well as the SARP processes into supported housing,

10.3.8 Monthly housing surgeries are held in all of the Mental Health teams facilitated by the SARP coordinator, a senior practitioner in the JAS team and the Commissioner for MH Accommodation. The surgeries reinforce the information shared at the housing training and for mental health practitioners specifically to discuss service users' housing needs and to pre-empt future placements that may be required within the Supported Housing services.

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Housing**

**Declaration of Interest**

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

State nature of interest if any

.....

.....

*(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)*

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled **Supply and Allocation of Social Housing and Low Cost Home Ownership 2013/14** and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed .....

**Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Housing**

Date .....

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:

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If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Director of Finance and, if there are resources implications, the Director of Human Resources (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.