Westminster’s Retrofitting Challenges and Opportunities

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Population and Society

- 224,000 residential population.
- Population projected to rise to 238,000 in the next five years (GLA Estimates 2012).
- 120 languages spoken.
- 55% adult population educated to degree level but 13% of residents have no educational qualifications. (Census 2011).

- Westminster is the 87th most deprived out of 326 local authority districts in England (IMD 2010).
- Has the highest deprivation rate for children living in income deprived households.
Development Activity

- Busiest planning authority in UK – over 12,000 applications received 2013/14
- £149m secured as financial contributions through signed planning agreements (2011/12)

Housing

- Stock: 115,600 residential units - split 35% owner occupied, 36% private rented and 29% social housing (Westminster Housing) – 30% churn each year.
- 9,446 new housing units built since 2000, with 25.9% of these being affordable housing.
- Ageing stock of buildings; three quarters built before 1915, with half prior to 1870.
- Average house price in Westminster is £908,800 (Land Registry 2014).
- Lower quartile house price average is £400,000 and the lower quartile house price-to-earnings ratio is 15:1, highlighting issues of affordability for residents.
Westminster’s built heritage and archaeology is of national and international importance, such as the Westminster Abbey World Heritage Site.

Over 11,000 listed buildings and structures, more than any other local authority in the UK.

Approximately 75% of Westminster lies within its 56 Conservation Areas.

21 registered historic parks and gardens, including the Royal Parks.
Carbon Emissions

• While nationally buildings account for around 45% of carbon emissions, in Westminster the figure is much higher.

• Security of energy supply is a priority for developers and businesses.

2011 CO2 emissions by source, City of Westminster:

- Commercial and Industrial
- Housing
- Transport
Options to tackle carbon emissions: Solid Wall Insulation or District Energy?
Energy efficiency: historically difficult to access funding streams like CERT

- % of homes improved by CERT funding: **378/379**
- Number of PV systems installed per dwelling funded by Feed in Tariff: **380/380**
- Warmfront funding per dwelling (designed to tackle Fuel Poverty between 2008 and 2012): **322/326**
- Over the last 8 years, the council has implemented £20m+ of energy improvements in housing. But it would need to do this every year for the next 40 years if Westminster is going to deliver in line with government targets.
- The council’s work in this area has largely been limited to projects affecting council housing and has been mostly driven by external grant funding.
Energy Efficiency route: Key issues are

- **Funding**
- **Assembling projects** – Complexity of signing up all occupiers in flats, or all properties in a row of terraces within a conservation area, required to preserve a unified character and for planning permission.
- **Recharging** – leases often silent on the freeholder’s ability to recharge for improvements.

**However**

- **The Energy Company Obligation (ECO)** is designed to target ‘hard to treat buildings’ (e.g. those with solid walls) and deliver district heating. It is therefore better suited for Westminster.
- **As a landlord the Council has a lot of post-war purpose built flats with improvement clauses, which have greater potential subject to availability of funding.**
District energy route: opportunities and issues

- **Funding** - The cost of delivering district energy is high, but our masterplan shows that the scheme would generate revenues meaning it could attract investment by the private or public sector and highlights that there are existing external funding streams that could be used to subsidise delivery. Likely to be more economic than large scale energy efficiency.
- **Relatively easier to coordinate** compared to energy efficiency (although implementing a new utility is a considerable endeavour);
- **High carbon savings** – due to the much greater efficiency of gas combustion in CHP
- **Having a less intrusive design** and therefore continues to preserve heritage and visual amenity;

**However**

**Impact against wider objectives** - Doesn’t necessarily deliver so well against fuel poverty, health and energy efficiency as a widespread programme of energy efficiency measures which would deliver results more quickly.
Opportunities: Policy and pre-app discussion

Westminster’s City Plan: Strategic Policies, S28 Design - ‘Exemplary Standards of Sustainable and Inclusive Design’

Policy development focused on bringing together heritage and environmental considerations. London Plan policy 5.2 – 40% carbon reduction target – or offsetting via local authority.

Typically major development – exceeds BREEAM Excellent/Code Sustainable Homes level 4

LSE Saw Swee Hock Student Centre, BREEAM ‘Outstanding’
Opportunities: Westminster’s Local Carbon Fund

Abbay Centre, Westminster
• Energy Bills are currently approx £19k p.a.
• Investment of £90k will deliver savings of approx £8k on bills
  - Boiler upgrade
  - Increased insulation
  - Renewable Energy
  - Lighting upgrade
  - New equipment on cooling
  - Education programme and signage

Steve Biko Court, Westminster
• Residential leaders wanted to deliver a community solar project.
• London and Quadrant Housing undertook a feasibility study and costings.
• Westminster City Council will fund the solar panels and L&Q to funding installation.
• Power and Feed In Tariff payments will go to shared areas and the resident group.
Grosvenor’s London Estate Retrofit Programme

• Energy efficiency of 250 units improved to date
• 763 solar panels installed (this increased the number of panels in Westminster by 55%)
• 5% reduction in CO$_2$ across the portfolio in 2013
• Will deliver 5 of London’s first Passivhaus EnerPHit in Private Rented Sector

• Goals for the next 10 years:
  1. 50% reduction in the portfolio CO$_2$
  2. £ zero common parts bills
  3. 90% EPC ratings A, B or C
  4. Wellbeing – 100% improvement
  5. 100% compliance for 2018 (i.e. No EPC ratings F/G)
Grosvenor properties in Passmore Street...

Two of the 5 planned Passivhaus EnerPHit projects are on Passmore Street.
Passmore Street properties thermal imaging, taken on the same day. Number 9 on the left without energy improvements, and number 21 with energy efficiency improvements.
FUTURE DIRECTION..?
• Councils will not be able to set planning policy relating to **energy** for residential developments.

• Allowable Solutions will be the route to zero carbon (with on site delivery set at the equivalent of CSH level 4, with offsetting allowed up to the level of CSH 5).

• ‘Smaller sites’ will be exempt.

• Planned introduction of CIL from April 2015, with associated scaling back of S106 planning obligations.’

• Carbon Fund and price of carbon
Operational Carbon, covered by energy strategies is only part of the overall ‘whole life’ carbon emissions picture.
What next for Westminster?
Westminster City Council

• Continuing to working with industry

• Policy development

• Enlarging Pimlico District Heating Undertaking

• DE Masterplan

• Undertaking carbon reduction projects

• Local carbon fund