

21 September 2023

To: All Members of the Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel

Dear Member,

Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel - Wednesday, 20th
September, 2023

I attach a copy of the following reports for the above-mentioned meeting which were not available at the time of collation of the agenda:

7. HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE (PAGES 1 - 14)

Yours sincerely

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HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE:

Housing, Planning &
Development Scrutiny

Haringey
LONDON

Introduction

- The purpose of this presentation is to provide a progress update on the two-year Housing Improvement Plan agreed by Cabinet in April 2023
- New Governance structures have been established in Housing Services to oversee delivery of the plan, with five priority boards established specifically to oversee delivery (Repairs, Housing Management, Building Safety & Compliance, Capital, and Housing IT).
- Three new senior programme managers are being recruited to coordinate delivery of the plan, with two started in Sept 23 (and interviews for final role also scheduled in Sept).
- The Plan includes approximately 180 actions being delivered across 13 housing teams / areas in Housing Services and Building Safety.
- The delivery of the 180 actions across the 13 housing teams are monitored and managed through a new project management tool which allows the teams in Housing Services to focus on executing tasks, projects, and process efficiently and achieve shared goals at scale.
- The programme is currently reporting as green overall, as while 3 of the 13 areas are currently amber. there has been good progress across the majority of areas and this presentation will summarise progress across all areas.

Overall summary

RAG SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME

| Programme status | R/A/G | Comments |
|--------------------|-------|--|
| Overall RAG | GREEN | Plan currently evaluated at green overall, as while 3 of the 13 areas are currently amber (repairs, voids, and policies & procedures) there has been good progress across the majority of areas and planned actions set out in the Cabinet report. |
| Schedule | GREEN | Some slippage against individual milestones across 180 plus actions in plan – all seen as recoverable in overall schedule of plan. |
| Budget | GREEN | Budget agreed and allocated to Heads of Service as set out in Cabinet report. Spend understood to be in line with plan up to the current time. |
| Risks / Issues | AMBER | Risk re: impact of the work required to deliver Housing Ombudsman recommendations drawing resource from the programme. Issue re: need to assign temporary resource to cover repairs programme but recruitment in progress for two year FTC resource. |
| Resources (people) | AMBER | Recruitment in progress for new repairs programme manager. |
| Benefits | GREEN | Plan benefits at green as seen as achievable, and new programme managers being brought in will help strengthen team capacity to track and report on benefits being achieved. |

Tenancy Management

- A new permanent Head of Tenancy has been appointed and is in post.
- Introductory Letters from Housing Officers and Housing Liaison Officers have been issued to all residents explaining their role and providing contact details and setting out our service standards.
- Notice Boards have been updated with cleaning and grounds maintenance specification and frequency, estate walkabout and contact details. (*To note, a small number of noticeboards remaining outstanding due to staffing issues. These are programmed in for completion by the first week of October).
- Work to ensure all estates have a Neighbourhood Improvement Action Plan is in progress and on track.
- Work to update vulnerability policy and associated approach to vulnerability in progress and staff training is planned for coming months.
- Options re: establishing tenancy support / sustainment team being assessed.



Income Management

- A new permanent Head of Income Management has been appointed and is in post, and additional income officers have been recruited. Income figures improved in August and are now above target.
- The Income Recovery process was previously manually driven - a move to automation has been delivered with target dates for automation weekly. This includes Letter 1,2 automated. Notice Seeking Possession, Notice to Quit letters are now also automated.
- A Policy in Practice LIFT dashboard is now being used to identify households with unclaimed welfare benefits such as Pension Credit (PC) and Attendance. It is estimated that there are 277 households who are entitled to PC but not claiming and 90 households not claiming Attendance allowance.
- These targeted campaigns will be rolled out by Financial Inclusion in September. Financial Inclusion will also be hosting a Downsizing Event on Tues. 26th Sept – which will target the 489 tenants who are under occupying and are affected by the bedroom tax.
- Proposal re: new rent analytics tool being prepared for IT board in October.

Homeownership Services

- A new permanent Head of Homeownership Service has been appointed and is in post.
- The Implementation of property purchase and service charge module project went live with the Project team on 15 July 2023. As part of this work:
 - Benchmarking has been undertaken with First Choice Homes Oldham, who have used the service charge module for 10 years and Thurrock Council, who implemented in 2017 and who have used various upgrades - learning from this benchmarking will inform our approach to implementation.
 - An 'As is' assessment for income management processes is also in progress and an NEC consultant is undertaking further scoping work in September.
- Leaseholder 'Continuous Improvement Group' finalised and first meeting to be held in late October.
- Recruitment of staff to Home Ownership Service underway.

Estate Services

- Weekend cleaning is now in place - focus is on properties with lifts and chutes, Post Tottenham Stadium event cleaning.
- We are also at the early stages of the recruitment process to launch a deep cleaning programme across the borough.
- Work to better communicate our Service Standards and Cleaning schedule is in progress,
 - Our standards photo guide is published/available on the website and links to the estate grading carried out by the Estate Services Team Leaders.
 - Cleaning schedules/frequency of tasks carried out by the officers has been developed and is part of our current noticeboard refresh project, which is also nearly complete.
- Estate Watch is being expanded to additional estates.



Resident Led Engagement

- We have now recruited around 50 residents to form the groups within the new engagement structure. This is part of the milestone to create resident-led continuous improvement groups to co-design improvement plans.
- The Resident Voice Board will hold its first meeting on 21st September. This meeting will be to discuss the TOR and Code of Conduct and to seek nominations for the chair.
- We are also in communication with councillors to ensure we have representation from the Turkish and Kurdish Communities as these are currently the groups not represented in the structure.
- We have also now completed 12 new estate surgeries, including one specific to the Sudanese Community, and one for Broadwater Water Farm focussed on anti-social behaviour. Feedback on these has been positive and we are currently compiling a report on the outcomes and many other areas are asking for surgeries in the autumn, including evening ones for working residents.



Repairs

- Whilst most of the repair milestones related to the repairs service are not yet due, we are noting a challenge in the job market for skilled trade operatives with neighbouring boroughs offering higher rates for agency workers with competing demands and an overall shortage in the labour workforce, making recruitment of skilled staff challenging.
- Recruitment to the Repairs Backlog Team is progressing, with more than 50% of roles filled. The repairs backlog has started to reduce with a downward trajectory in recent months.
- Surveying capacity is due to be increased imminently due to a successful tender to supply surveying resources.
- Impressed van stock has been completed with electricians, plumbers and carpentry to be completed in September.
- Total Mobile development work in progress with an Insights module and a Dynamic Scheduling capability planned for introduction.



Building Safety & Compliance

- A draft Building Safety Strategy has been developed and is in the process of being peer reviewed.
- A new compliance system went out for tendering on 4th September with a 30-day tender period and we will evaluate in October with a view to award the contract by the end of October.
- The milestone to ensure gas safety records for communal boilers are displayed in communal areas is now complete.
- We have developed a detailed catch-up programme project plan, with appropriate milestones, to clearly show how we will achieve the target date with the Regulator of Social Housing.
- A data validation exercise which includes downloading the full asset list from Northgate into a data validation workbook is now complete. The team are now conducting further checks to confirm properties that are outside of the programme have a valid reason for it. E.g., Right to Buy Properties or stock disposal.
- All FRAs completed by internal fire risk assessors are now 100 per cent quality checked to provide assurance around the quality and consistency of FRAs.

Asset Management

- Our 23/24 programme has been agreed and our Asset Management strategy is being revised as part of the Housing Improvement Plan.
- The draft Asset Management Strategy is due to be reviewed by resident panel in September.
- An associated review of our Asset Management IT systems is underway. This has already identified the need for greater integration of data and current systems are not fit for purpose in meeting future requirements, particularly in light of the additional building safety data requirements of the 'golden thread'.
- A business case for the new Asset Management System has been developed and is going to Housing IT Board for agreement with Digital Services colleagues.



Policies and Procedures

- A delay to the recruitment of a new policy officer resource to the Policy and Strategy team, identified in the Housing Improvement Plan, is likely to impact on timelines for this area; which is why it has been given an amber rating.
- However, work is underway on key housing policies including safeguarding and vulnerability.
- Other policy development work includes the former tenant arrears policy which is due to be reviewed by the Resident Voice Board.
- The Mutual procedure was reviewed by Housing Management SMT and is due to go to Housing Management Performance Improvement Board for approval.
- Three Housing Management (Tenancy) policies, namely Assignment, Succession and Surrender of Tenancy have been reviewed and are pending sign-off. These involve relatively minor alterations pending a full review of the Tenancy Management Strategy later in the year when a more detailed review will take place. It is proposed that the strategy document will incorporate all these three policy document within it.
- Various H&S policies currently being reviewed by the interim Head of H&S in Housing Services.



Culture

- The first new Quarterly Housing Leadership Forum took place on 8th August. The event was attended by approximately 80 managers who all participated in the forum and heard the latest updates from our housing leadership team, Andy Donald, David Joyce, Cllr Sarah Williams, James Bulmer from the Housing Regulator, and Richard Blakeway, the Housing Ombudsman.
- Project planning in progress and discussion underway for Housing Service all staff conference in January 2024. Conference taking place over two days to ensure service cover is maintained to residents.
- Conference seen as a valuable opportunity to revitalise the service and promote the culture of excellence needed to drive sustained housing improvement.
- Project underway to introduce a new housing staff survey with a target of a minimum 60% response rate in order to establish a base line and follow it up with 'climate surveys' to monitor improvements.



THANK YOU

Any questions?

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