



1.3 Such challenges include the following:

- the effectiveness of strategies for communication, engagement and liaison between housing providers
- differences in the way in which the local housing stock is managed
- variations in the housing standards experienced by local tenants.

1.5 This report provides a proposed Cabinet response to recommendations made by an Scrutiny Review of Registered Housing Providers in Haringey.

1. Cabinet Member introduction

2.1 I welcome the recommendations in this Scrutiny Review and I thank the members of the Scrutiny Panel for the time and effort they have put into the Review.

2.2 Some excellent joint working is already being undertaken by the Council, Homes for Haringey and Registered Providers. However, there is still a lot more we can achieve by pooling expertise and resources, and by working more collaboratively.

2.3 The intense pressure on the Council's budgets means that the Scrutiny Panel's recommendations can only be implemented within existing resources. The response to the recommendations (detailed in Appendix 1) reflects this.

2. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet notes the Overview & Scrutiny Report recommendations and agrees the proposed actions set out in Appendix 1.

3. Reason for Recommendation

4.1 The Scrutiny Review heard evidence from a wide range of stakeholders, including local Registered Providers, and its recommendations are based on a thorough and considered analysis of the varied responses it received. This report provides a response to those recommendations.

4. Other options considered

5.1 All options are considered in the report.

6. Response to Overview and Scrutiny Panel recommendations

6.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Panel has identified five recommendations. These are listed in Appendix 1 together with a service response. Most of the recommendations have been accepted, but only where these can be implemented within existing human and financial resources.



- 6.2 **Recommendation one** sets out the need to develop and improve engagement between the Council and local RPs. There are currently three regular liaison meetings between the Council and RPs.
- 6.3 The Haringey Housing Forum (which has replaced the Integrated Housing Board) will contribute to the shaping of the overall strategic framework within which the Council and its partners operate, and is in the process of establishing new terms of reference. The Registered Providers Lettings Forum brings together the lettings teams from the Council and local RPs to provide regular updates and share good practice. These groups are administered by Community Housing Services.
- 6.4 The Registered Providers Developers Forum affords the Council and local Registered Providers the opportunity to discuss matters relating to new build and the provision of new affordable housing in the borough. Since Rethinking Haringey and the separation of the Council's housing enabling function from Community Housing Services, this forum has been administered by the Planning, Regeneration and Economy Service.
- 6.5 Community Housing Services and the Planning, Regeneration and Economy Service agree that the terms of reference of these three fora should be updated in order to avoid duplication and focus more on outcomes. A yearly calendar of meetings will be published in advance and all relevant papers, including those for the Haringey Housing Forum, will be circulated to RPs.
- 6.6 There is currently no forum dedicated to estate management issues. While there are undoubted benefits of establishing a management forum to provide a joined up approach on multi landlord estates, establishing such a liaison meeting will be difficult. As the Haringey Housing Forum, RP Lettings Forum and the RP Developers Forum all operate at a strategic level with a single point of contact within the Council and RPs, they have only minimal resource implications.
- 6.7 However, localised estates issues involve a lot more teams, especially within the Registered Providers that may have different management teams across their various estates. Resourcing a management forum is likely to prove more difficult as there is no resource within the Council to co-ordinate such a forum. In view of the Scrutiny Panel's concerns, this matter will be discussed at the Haringey Housing Forum and the views of RPs sought on the benefits of such a forum and the resources that will be required to administer it.
- 6.8 The current Partnership Agreement was adopted in 2010 and is due to be revised in 2012/13 following changes to legislation and regulation. Although the Council cannot oblige local RPs to become signatories to the Agreement, more effort will be made to promote the Agreement, particularly among those RPs who are seeking to develop new housing in the borough.



- 6.9 **Recommendation two** seeks to improve liaison and partnership working, and assist local officials in local scrutiny and performance management of RPs. To assist this, a full list of RPs and contact details will be issued to all Councillors and the local Ward Councillors will be notified of stock owning RPs in their wards.
- 6.10 As Registered Providers are independent of the Council, the Council cannot compel them to liaise with local officials or Councillors or, indeed, insist that estate/street walkabouts are synchronised. Although all appropriate efforts will be made to encourage the RPs to make this happen – and many of them have indicated a willingness to do so – this has significant resource implications and the Council no longer has any Officers whose responsibilities include such a role.
- 6.11 Members will be briefed (and receive formal training) on the implications of the Localism Act 2011. Consideration will be given to how the Council can encourage ward surgeries to be held, on a periodic basis, on multi-landlord estates.
- 6.12 **Recommendation three** asks that options for re-commissioning the STATUS survey be explored, possibly in partnership with other neighbouring authorities, or within the North London Sub Region.
- 6.13 In collaboration with other ALMOs, Homes for Haringey has already introduced a replacement for the STATUS survey.
- 6.14 **Recommendation four** sets out the need to support and develop partnership work across the housing sector.
- 6.15 The issue of multi landlord estates will be discussed at a future meeting of the Haringey Housing Forum in 2012/13 and the findings and best practice emerging from the Campsbourne Project will be disseminated as part of this.
- 6.16 As part of Rethinking Haringey, the Housing Enabling Team was transferred to the newly formed Housing, Design and Major Projects Team within the Place and Sustainability Directorate. The work of this team focuses on delivering new affordable housing and estate renewal and regeneration.
- 6.17 Limited mapping information already exists in relation to the social housing stock in the borough. In order to ensure accurate up-to-date records, regular updating is required to take into account the homes that are built, or disposed of, during the year. As this is likely to become resource intensive, the frequency with which the data is updated and disseminated will need to be considered at a future meeting of the Haringey Housing Forum.
- 6.18 Effective engagement across all stakeholders is essential to the creation of long term sustainable communities. However, Registered Providers are not the only stakeholders with an interest in the local area and issues relating to any specific area of concern (such as environmental health, anti social behaviour or domestic violence) can be addressed through the Haringey Housing Forum. At present, no resources have been identified to co-ordinate this activity.



- 6.19 Homes for Haringey works closely with all stakeholders that operate on, or close to, the Council's housing estates. There are good relationships between Homes for Haringey and the Council's Housing Enabling Officers to ensure a joined-up approach. Resources limit the scope for Homes for Haringey and/or the Council to become actively involved on estates where there is no council housing stock.
- 6.20 As RPs are independent of the Council, they cannot be obliged to share information with the Council. However, the liaison meetings currently in place (Haringey Housing Forum, RP Lettings Forum and the RP Developers Forum) encourage the sharing of information and good practice between organisations and are effective vehicles for improving partnership and collaborative working.
- 6.21 **Recommendation five** proposes that the Council adopts a lead role in the rationalisation of social housing stock and supports those RPs that are considering the rationalisation of local housing stock.
- 6.22 Stock rationalisation across the borough could bring benefits by providing a more joined up and coherent approach to estate management and is an issue that Community Housing Services and the Planning, Regeneration and Economy Service are keen to support.
- 6.23 Stock rationalisation of RP stock is a matter for the individual organisations concerned; the Council cannot require RPs to rationalise their stock but it will support, and work to enable, any proposal where it is proven to benefit the community. The Haringey Housing Forum is the arena to consider individual matters of stock rationalisation, including the Council's role in the process.
- 6.24 The appropriate time to consider a formal stock rationalisation policy is following the Council's stock options appraisal which will be reported to Cabinet later this year. This would allow the policy to be framed within the context of the Council's plans for its own housing stock.
- 6.25 Consideration is already being given to establishing an annual conference of housing providers and developers as part of the annual action plan for the Housing, Design and Major Projects Team.

7. Comments of the Chief Finance Officer and financial implications

- 7.1 There are no new resources available for the implementation of these recommendations and the Housing Service has recently reduced its staffing to make HESP savings. In responding to the recommendations the service has taken account of these resource constraints and so the financial implications of the proposed actions are minimal.



Haringey Council

- 7.2 If consultation with other providers under **recommendation one** does identify a need and clear benefits of a management forum, then some staffing resources will be required. This may need to be found by reprioritisation of other work.
- 7.3 The minimal actions set out in response to **recommendation two** can be managed within existing resources. If further work is needed in this area, then it would require more resources.
- 7.4 The replacement for the STATUS survey mentioned under **recommendation three** is already in place and so the costs are already in the Homes for Haringey financial plan. No further resources are required.
- 7.5 The minimal actions set out in response to **recommendation four** can be managed within existing resources. If further work is needed in this area, then it would require more resources. It should also be noted that active involvement in estates where there is no council housing would be regarded as a general fund activity and could not be charged to the HRA even if the work was undertaken by Homes for Haringey.
- 7.6 The implications of **recommendation five** for the Council's Housing stock will need to be considered as part of the overall business plan for the HRA. A full analysis of the financial implications, benefits and risks will need to be carried out before any decision to rationalise stock.

8. Head of Legal Services and legal implications

- 8.1 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted on the content of this report which does not raise any legal issues at this stage. The Council does not have any powers to compel any of the Registered Providers to participate in any of the activities set out in the recommendations.
- 8.2 Any contractual arrangements required as a result of any of the recommendations would require separate legal advice.

9. Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments

- 9.1 There are no direct equalities issues relating to this report. The aim of the recommendations in the Scrutiny Review is to improve community cohesion by ensuring that the Council and its local RP partners work more closely together to effectively manage social housing in the borough.

10. Policy Implications

- 10.1 There are no specific policy implications stemming from this report.

11. Use of Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix 1: Table of recommendations and service comments