

NOTICE OF MEETING

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

TUESDAY, 12TH SEPTEMBER, 2006 at 19:00 HRS - .

MEMBERS: Councillors Bull (Chair), Bevan, Davies, Winskill, Cooke, Jones, Newton and Dobbie

Co-Optees: Mr B. Aulsberry and Mrs. I. Shukla (REJCC non-voting representatives), Ms. C. Bhagwandeem plus 2 Vacancies (parent governors), L. Haward plus 1 Vacancy (church representatives)

AGENDA

5. LETTINGS POLICY (PAGES 1 - 52)

(Report of the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny)

6. EXECUTIVE MEMBER QUESTIONS (PAGES 53 - 56)

Questions to the Executive Member for Children and Young People

8. HORNSEY HOSPITAL UPDATE (PAGES 57 - 60)

(Update from the Haringey Teaching Primary Care Trust) **To Follow.**

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THE EXECUTIVE**On: 12 SEPTEMBER 2006**

Report Title: Overview and Scrutiny Report - Allocations and Lettings

Report of: Chair of Overview and Scrutiny – Cllr. Gideon Bull

Wards(s) affected: **All**

Report for: **Key Decision**

1. Purpose

1.1 To report to the Executive the outcome of scrutiny involvement in the development of the new Housing Lettings Policy and to make recommendations on issues where scrutiny desire the policy to be extended, improved or more detail included. This report to be considered in conjunction to the report of the Director of Social Services.

2. Recommendations

Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend that:

1. **Subject to the incorporation of the changes recommended by the Scrutiny Review, the Lettings Policy be commended to the Executive for adoption.**
2. **The Action Plan arising from the Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA), be monitored in order to inform future policy and service development and to ensure that services are in step with the needs of communities and that all users or potential users have fair and equal access to allocations and lettings.**
- 3a. **Subject to the results of the modelling impact assessment and further legal advice, the Executive consider awarding a greater weighting to the local connections aspects of the new lettings policy, with a view to increasing the level of points (75) currently proposed.**
- 3b. **Local connection points be awarded only to applicants who have lived in Haringey for the two years immediately preceding their application.**
- 3c. **It is made clear in the policy that where applicants are placed in temporary accommodation outside the borough, they will be awarded Residency points, as long as they fulfil the residential qualification.**

- 3d. The policy state that Local Connection points will not be given to the following:**
- Those placed in Haringey in temporary accommodation by another council.
 - Those placed in Haringey in residential accommodation by another council.
 - Secure tenants of another council unless reciprocal arrangements have been agreed.
- 4. Subject to the results of the modelling impact assessment and further legal advice, the Executive consider awarding a greater weighting than the 50 points currently proposed, as a way of rewarding “good neighbour” transfers. Thereby increasing the points for those applicants who have abided by the terms of their tenancy conditions and have no rent arrears.**
- 5a. Greater incentive be given to achieve an increase in under-occupation transfers; consideration be given to increasing the financial reward and introducing other forms of assistance to tenants.**
- 5b The under-occupation scheme be re-launched with an enhanced publicity campaign to ensure greater public awareness of the scheme.**
- 6. The Council consider each case of succession under-occupation on its merit and where appropriate, use the legal powers available to address the issue of under occupation of properties, when a succession to the tenancy has taken place.**
- 7a The Re-housing Service ensure that an overall publicity and education campaign is undertaken with staff and residents to launch the policy. Also that a leaflet is produced and made available in major community languages. The leaflet should include a ready-reckoner to enable applicants to calculate their housing points. The leaflet should signpost where general advice and practical assistance on homelessness and prevention of homelessness is available. The leaflet should also explain the Choice Based Lettings schemes.**
- 7b. Support staff be fully trained/briefed in the policy as part of the implementation process. Training to include legal briefings on a regular basis, to ensure staff are knowledgeable and up to date with all relevant legislation.**
- 7c. The leaflet be produced and distributed at the same time as the Homes Connection scheme is launched.**
- 7d. The Scrutiny Review Panel would welcome the opportunity to comment on the draft leaflet produced.**

- 8a. At the signing of the tenancy, if applicable, the applicants' housing benefit application form also be completed. This will allow the applicant to have benefits quickly assessed and in place and is likely to reduce the incidences of rent arrears and to assist in maintaining their tenancies. Vulnerable new tenants will be assisted by staff ensuring that housing benefit applications are completed correctly.**
- 8b. The Re-housing Service improve the administration of Housing Benefit and homelessness application processes, by ensuring that the application form for housing, when completed, gives all the necessary permissions required to carry out relevant data checks, including legal access to electronic databases.**
- 8c. The housing application form be redesigned to enable applicants to state whether they are likely to apply for Housing Benefit, so that officers are able to be better prepared to assist applicants with their claims.**
- 8d. An application be cancelled if the applicant has failed to provide documentary evidence or other information reasonably required by the Council, in order to validate the applications, including Housing Benefit.**
- 8e. The Re-housing Service, IT Department and Legal Services work in collaboration to develop a protocol that achieves a balance between the needs of the Council to alleviate homelessness and rent arrears, and the rights of applicants under the Data Protection Act.**
- 9a. The Lettings Policy be reviewed between at least twelve and eighteen months interval to ensure that it remains in keeping with current regulations and practices.**
- 9b. An action plan including the operating instructions (procedures) and progress report be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2006. That the Action Plan include feedback from Connexions Direct.**
- 10a. The review of the Housing Register be undertaken as a matter of urgency and the Re-housing Service ensure that the register is reviewed on a regular basis.**
- 10b. A modelling impact assessment of the applicants on the Housing Register be carried out before implementation of the policy, ensuring that applicants are re-pointed using the new lettings policy, to ascertain whether the aims of the new policy have been achieved.**
- 11. An explanation regarding Homes for Haringey be included in the Lettings Policy, to enable applicants to distinguish clearly between the Council's Strategic Housing Services and Homes for Haringey.**

Report Authorised by: **Gideon Bull**

Contact Officer: Sharon Miller. Principal Scrutiny Support Officer, Tel. 489 2928

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 At the request of the Council the Audit Commission looked at specific areas of the Strategic Housing Service (SHS). These areas were allocations and lettings, resident involvement and supported housing. When the SHS received the Audit commission report they began work to develop a new lettings policy. At the same time the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had identified the allocation and lettings service as an area where scrutiny involvement was likely to have a tangible and positive outcome. In June 2006 it commissioned a Scrutiny review Panel to look at this area.
- 3.2 It was apparent from the outset that a radical and pragmatic approach was required with a highly focussed review, to ensure that it concluded and complied with the timescales required. Initial discussions with management resulted in agreement that it would be productive if the Scrutiny Review Panel was involved in the development of the new Lettings Policy and would also form part of the consultation process necessary before the new policy was endorsed by the Executive.
- 3.3 Therefore during the course of the review many positive scrutiny suggestions to improve the policy have been incorporated into the latest version of the policy put before the Executive. These suggestions are not repeated in any detail in this report, which concentrates on making recommendations on issues that remain outstanding and requiring Executive decision.

4. Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development (if applicable)

- 4.1 A new policy reflecting the legal requirements placed on the Council and the Councils preferred, but limited, Lettings priorities and the need to work with private sector partners to tackle homelessness and overcrowding, was required.

5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 5.1 Background information report – Scrutiny Review Panel July 2006
- 5.2 Homelessness Prevention – a guide to good practice (DCLG)
- 5.3 Haringey Homelessness Strategy 2003 -2008
- 5.4 L B Islington, LB Barnet, LB Waltham Forest, LB Camden and, LB Enfield Allocations and Lettings schemes.

6. Overview and Scrutiny Report – Attached

7. Legal and Financial Comments

7.1 There are no financial implications as a result of recommendations in the report.

7.2 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.3 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report save for recommendations 3a and 4.

7.4 Recommendation 3a, suggests greater weighting be given for local connection above the 75 points currently allocated. Local connection points are lawful but should not be pitched at a level that fails to preserve the reasonable preference categories which reflect housing need and give priority to overcrowding, homelessness, medical need etc. The 75 points currently proposed is proportionate to the points awarded for housing need and to increase the local connection points beyond this level would increase the risk of successful challenge by way of judicial review.

7.5 Recommendation 4 suggests an increase in the good neighbour transfer points, however the policy behind the Homelessness Act 2002 is that transfer applications should be treated the same as new applicants. The level of points should not therefore be increased to a level that gives this category of applicants a significant advantage over new applicants or other transfer applicants. The above comments regarding the preservation of the reasonable preference categories also apply.

8. Equalities Implications

8.1 Contained in the body of the report.

9. Use of Appendices

9.1 Overview and Scrutiny Report



**REPORT ON THE SCRUTINY REVIEW
OF
HOUSING ALLOCATIONS AND
LETTINGS POLICY**

September 2006



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SCRUTINY REVIEW OF HOUSING ALLOCATIONS AND LETTINGS POLICY

1.0 BACKGROUND.

- 1.1 The letting of council and housing association homes is an important role for Haringey Council. This Scrutiny Review of the Lettings Service has concluded that the proposed new policy should be adopted subject to the Executive fully considering the results of public consultation and the recommendations of this review. The Review Panel have investigated the proposed new Lettings Policy as part of the comprehensive consultative process.
- 1.2 The Government's strategy for tackling homelessness aims to expand housing opportunities, including for those who need additional support and for disadvantaged sections of society by offering a wider range of preventative measures and increasing access to settled homes. The government want to see "local authorities taking an increasingly powerful strategic role on housing as they are ideally placed to take an overview across all tenures using their planning powers as well as housing policy to deliver mixed communities"¹.
- 1.3 Housing is essential to the delivery of many of the Council's overall objectives and in particular the development of sustainable communities. However there are significant housing needs in Haringey with over 5,500 households living in temporary accommodation and many more living in poor or overcrowded homes. The Council has been working to deliver more options for those most severely affected. This includes work to deliver high quality affordable homes, work with landlords to make private renting a viable option and bringing empty properties back into use.

1.4 Sub-regional and regional context

1.5 Choice based lettings

- 1.6 Local authorities are encouraged to work together and with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) partners to develop sub-regional choice-based lettings schemes that provide maximum choice and flexibility to applicants. In line with the government's objectives for increasing choice, Haringey has joined Home Connections, Choice Based Lettings (CBL) systems. This has linked the CBL systems of Haringey, Barnet, Enfield, Camden, Islington, and Westminster and many RSL partners in the North London sub-region. The government believes that CBL schemes can contribute to the aim of halving the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation by 2010, by enabling households to access suitable settled housing more quickly than may have been the case through a traditional bureaucratic system of allocation. More efficient and transparent access to social housing through choice-based schemes has the potential to reduce the incidences of homelessness. Additionally, when developing CBL, local authorities and their partners should ensure that households in temporary accommodation are given sufficient priority within schemes and are not disadvantaged compared with other vulnerable groups.

¹ Ruth Kelly MP - 2006

1.7 The local context

- 1.8 Haringey is in an area of high demand for all types of housing, especially social housing and Haringey faces the increasing challenge of homelessness. House prices are increasing at a rate far greater than increases in incomes, making it harder for all households, and particularly those with a single wage earner, to buy their own homes. Rent levels are high and many people experience problems finding and securing private rented accommodation. The problem is particularly acute for residents on a low income or in receipt of benefits. All these factors impact on the high demand for social housing that the Council is currently facing. Homeless families and existing tenants are being placed in competition for allocation of a scarce resource, especially in the supply of larger housing units.
- 1.9 The Council provides its Landlord service through an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) called Homes for Haringey. This company is owned by the Council and is governed by an independent Board and regulated through its Management Agreement with the Council. Haringey retains direct responsibility for homelessness, allocations and lettings as well as wider strategic housing responsibilities. Together these services form the Council's Strategic Housing Service.

1.10 The Housing Act 1996

- 1.11 Under the Housing Act 1996 all local authorities are required to produce and publish a housing lettings policy. The policy should reflect the duties, powers and obligations placed on local councils and others towards homeless people, including regulations, guidance and good practice.
- 1.12 In February 2006 the Audit Commission was asked by the Council to undertake a 'Voluntary Improvement Work' Inspection, taking a look at the areas where both the Council and the ALMO had concerns. The ALMO faces an inspection and has to reach a two star level before it can access resources to invest in the housing stock. Allocations and Lettings were identified as areas where improvements could be made.
- 1.13 The Audit Commission stated that the Council's Allocations Policy was not compliant with current legislation and government guidance in some areas. This requires every local authority to provide information about all aspects of the allocations process in an up to date document. It requires the Council to offer some choice to applicants and to give reasonable preference to people who are homeless, overcrowded or suffering from medical conditions.
- 1.14 Haringey's Re-housing Service therefore undertook to develop a new Lettings Policy that would address the weaknesses identified by the Audit Commission.
- 1.15 The prime driver for the proposed new policy is to make the letting of council and housing association homes fairer, clearer and more focussed upon the severe needs of the Borough whilst introducing choice into the process.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Scrutiny had already decided that allocations and lettings was an area it wished to review and commissioned a Scrutiny Review Panel in June 2006. It has been anything but a typical scrutiny review, mainly due to the timescales imposed to allow scrutiny to contribute to the development of the new lettings policy, which must be agreed by the Executive at their meeting on 12 September 2006.

2.2 Experience has shown that issues identified early on in a scrutiny review will often be resolved by the time the review has been completed. This is to be welcomed. The scrutiny process is designed to enable constructive dialogue between Members, and officers, with the aim of identifying any problems, their causes and possible solutions. Such a process is central to ensuring that local policy and practice is fine-tuned to fit changing local needs. **Joint working is an essential element in seeking improvement and scrutiny wish to congratulate the Re-housing Service for their approach to this review. It demonstrates that the Council is serious about the involvement of scrutiny in policy development.** It enables the Service to build on the work already in place to develop processes and procedures for implementing the policy. It offers a real prospect of improving the capacity of the Council to achieve the two stars necessary to secure the £228 million of borrowing needed to achieve its objectives of bringing the quality of the housing stock up to standard and to deliver the government's Decent Homes standard by 2010.

2.3 Therefore the approach taken by scrutiny has been pragmatic and the Panel responded positively to difficult circumstances. The Scrutiny Review does not address all the issues raised in the Audit Commission's report, some of which were operational issues.

2.4 Early issues identified by the Panel

2.5 Following consideration of the initial draft lettings policy (version 6), it became clear early on in the review that the document in its initial composition was not acceptable to Scrutiny Members. **Members felt strongly that the design, layout and detail of the draft policy was not transparent enough to address the comments made by the Audit Commission and that the policy must enable applicants to fully understand the system for allocating properties in Haringey.** Comparisons were made with other boroughs and particularly those where government borrowing had been achieved and whose policies demonstrated best practice and procedures in developing their options and prevention strategies. Members wanted to see the proposed policy presented in a more accessible form.

2.6 The Panel is pleased to report that following the series of frank and open discussions, the Re-housing Service has agreed a significant redrafting of the policy. This has enabled the creation of an improved lettings policy including the points allocation; clearer explanation of the categories and criteria for allocating housing in Haringey; explanation of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme, and ensuring that this was highlighted earlier on in the policy and definitive timescale

for reviewing the policy. The issue regarding the Equality Impact Assessment also needs to be addressed. (This is covered in detail further on in this report). Notwithstanding the above, the Panel concluded that in overall terms version (11) of the policy has successfully adopted the key principles and priorities and unanimously agreed to commend the new lettings policy subject to incorporation of the recommendations from the Panel.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS	
It is recommended that:	
1	Subject to the incorporation of the recommendations by the Scrutiny Review, the Lettings Policy be commended to the Council Executive for adoption.
2	The Action Plan arising from the equalities impact assessment (EIA) be monitored in order to inform future policy and service development to ensure that services are in step with the needs of communities and that all users or potential users have fair and equal access to allocations and lettings.
3	<p>(a) Subject to the results of the modelling impact assessment and further legal advice, the Executive consider awarding a greater weighting to the local connections aspects of the new lettings policy, with a view to increasing the level of (75) points currently proposed.</p> <p>(b) Local connection points to be awarded only to applicants who have lived in Haringey for the two years immediately preceding their application.</p> <p>(c) It is made clear in the policy that where applicants are placed in temporary accommodation outside the borough, they will be awarded Residency points as long as they fulfil the residential qualification.</p> <p>(d) The policy state that Local Connection points will not be given to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those placed in Haringey in temporary accommodation by another council. • Those placed in Haringey in residential accommodation by another council. • Secure tenants of another council unless reciprocal arrangements have been agreed.
4	Subject to the results of the modelling impact assessment and further legal advice, the Executive consider awarding a greater weighting than the 50 points currently proposed, as a way of rewarding “good neighbour” transfers. Thereby increasing the points for those applicants who have abided by the terms of their tenancy conditions and have no rent arrears.

5	<p>(a)</p> <p>(b)</p>	<p>Greater incentive be given to achieving more under-occupation transfers; consideration be given to increase the financial reward and introduce other forms of assistance to tenants in order to achieve this.</p> <p>The Under-occupation scheme be re-launched with an enhanced publicity campaign to ensure greater public awareness of the scheme</p>
6		<p>The Council consider each case of succession under-occupation on its merit and where appropriate to use the legal powers available to address the issue of under occupation of properties when a succession to the tenancy has taken place.</p>
7	<p>(a)</p> <p>(b)</p> <p>(c)</p> <p>(d)</p>	<p>The Re-housing Service ensures that an overall publicity and education campaign is undertaken with staff and residents to launch the policy. Also that a leaflet is produced and made available in major community languages. The leaflet should include a ready-reckoner to enable applicants to calculate their housing points. The leaflet should signpost where general advice and practical assistance on homelessness and prevention of homelessness is available. The leaflet should also explain the Choice Based Lettings schemes.</p> <p>Support staff must be fully trained/briefed in the policy as part of the implementation process. Training should include legal briefing on a regular basis to ensure staff are knowledgeable and up to date with all relevant legislation.</p> <p>That the leaflet be produced and distributed at the same time as the Homes Connection scheme is launched.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Review Panel would welcome the opportunity to comment on the draft leaflet produced.</p>
8	<p>(a)</p> <p>(b)</p> <p>(c)</p>	<p>At the signing of the tenancy, if applicable, the applicants' Housing Benefit application form also be completed. This will allow the applicant to have benefits quickly assessed and in place and is likely to reduce the incidence of rent arrears and to assist in maintaining their tenancies. Vulnerable new tenants will be assisted by staff ensuring that Housing Benefit applications are completed correctly.</p> <p>The Re-housing Service improve the administration of Housing Benefit and homelessness application processes, by ensuring that the application form for housing, when completed, gives all the necessary permissions required to carry out relevant data checks, including legal access to electronic databases.</p> <p>The housing application form be redesigned to enable applicants to state whether they are likely to apply for Housing Benefit, so that officers are able to be better prepared to assist applicants with their claims.</p>

	<p>(d) That an application be cancelled if the applicant has failed to provide documentary evidence or other information reasonably required by the Council, in order to validate the applications, including Housing Benefit.</p> <p>(e) The Re-housing Service, IT Department and Legal Services work in collaboration to develop a protocol that aims to achieve a balance between the needs of the Council to alleviate homelessness and rent arrears and the rights of applicants under the Data Protection Act.</p>
9	<p>(a) That the Lettings Policy be reviewed between at least twelve and eighteen month interval to ensure that it remains in keeping with current regulations and practices.</p> <p>(b) An action plan including the operating instructions (procedures) and progress report be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2006. That the Action Plan include feedback from Connexions Direct.</p>
10	<p>(a) That the review of the Housing Register be undertaken as a matter of urgency. That the Re-housing Service ensures that the register is reviewed on a regular basis.</p> <p>(b) A modelling impact assessment of the applicants on the Housing Register be carried out before implementation of the policy ensuring that applicants are re-pointed using the new lettings policy to ascertain whether the aims of the policy have been achieved.</p>
11	That an explanation about Homes for Haringey be included in the Lettings Policy to enable applicants to distinguish clearly between the Council's Housing Strategic Service and Homes for Haringey.

4.0 THE SCRUTINY REVIEW

- 4.1 This scrutiny review was commissioned by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee as part of its work programme for 2006/07 with the following aims and objectives:

To examine the proposed allocations policy to ensure it addresses weaknesses identified by the Audit Commission in their report “Voluntary Improvement Work – May 2006”.

4.2 Membership of the Review Panel

Councillor John Bevan - Chair
Councillor Charles Adje
Councillor Caroline Baker
Councillor Gideon Bull
Councillor Laura Edge
Councillor Patrick Egan
Councillor Catherine Harris

- 4.3 The Panel wish to thank everyone who spent their valuable time responding to questions and helping the Review Panel to reach its recommendations.
- 4.4 In order to comply with the demanding timeframe necessary scrutiny decided that it would report any recommendations arising from the review of the new Lettings Policy to the Executive meeting on the 12 September 2006. In order to achieve this the Scrutiny Review Panel work continued through the August Council recess period.
- 4.5 The Panel has considered both an initial submission from the Re-housing Service and a current report on the Services’ response to the Voluntary Audit Inspection Report. Officers from the Re-housing Service have been interviewed extensively and Members have visited the Re-housing Service to learn more about the systems currently in operation.
- 4.6 The Scrutiny Panel decided that the best way to report to the Executive would be by exception, meaning that it would only report on areas where there was a lack of agreement. **All other scrutiny input had therefore been accepted and included in the new Lettings Policy, put before the Executive.**

5.0 THE REVIEW PROCESS

- 5.1 The Review used a combination of visits and evidence gathering through interviews and consideration of bench marking information to look at the Council’s new draft Lettings Policy. Panel members visited London Borough of Islington and spoke to the Re-housing Manager and a number of staff in addition to comparing a number of lettings policies of other authorities and Housing Associations.

- 5.2 Scrutiny Panel Members also had a number of meetings with officers working on the revised policy; legal services and the Director of Housing & Social Services, to discuss issues raised.
- 5.3 The Panel learned that in compiling its allocations policy, the Council must give priority to applicants who fall within the categories of need defined by law. The priorities should reflect local needs and legal requirement to give:
- Reasonable preference
 - Additional preference
 - Local preference
- 5.4. Haringey has elected to give priority to the following four main groups:
- Families and children
 - Property
 - Care & Health
 - Stable communities

6.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The following sections outline the areas where agreement has not been reached and where scrutiny wish to make specific recommendations.

7.0 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 The effectiveness of the Council's Allocations and Lettings Service has major implications for residents from the most disadvantaged communities in the Borough.
- 7.2 Given the Council's stated commitment to reflecting the full diversity of the community it serves and to promoting equality of opportunity for everyone, the Panel wanted to ensure that an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) of the policy had been undertaken. The Senior Development Officer (Equalities) was invited to attend a meeting in order to inform the Panel on the implications that an EIA would have on the development of the policy and service delivery. Members heard that the assessment had been developed as a tool for ensuring that equality, social inclusion and community cohesion issues can be considered when drawing up policies or proposals.
- 7.3 The Panel learned that a timescale has been agreed with the Re-housing Service and the Equalities Unit to carry out the assessment. However Members felt that the EIA should have been carried out earlier on in the process, they received a commitment from the Service that the EIA will be completed as a matter of urgency. The Panel was keen to ensure that this should not be a data collection exercise which will be of little benefit. They therefore wish to ensure that any action plan arising, identified how the Service will go about monitoring the policy following the assessment, including any changes or proposals to be made. It is important that monitoring is able to tell a story in the future of how

the policy impacted on communities, customers or employees in order to improve service delivery.

RECOMMENDATION TWO

That the Action Plan arising from the equalities impact assessment (EIA) be monitored, in order to inform future policy and service development to ensure that services are in step with the needs of communities and that all users or potential users have fair and equal access to allocations and lettings.

8.0 LOCAL CONNECTIONS/RESIDENCY POINTS

8.1 Haringey Residency points

8.2 Points are used as the primary currency to rank re-housing applicants. Points are awarded for housing needs and these points are added together. The needs of all individuals in the applicant's household are taken into consideration when residency points are awarded. The Panel spent some time deliberating the issue of Haringey residency points. They were particularly keen to ensure that sufficient weighting was given to people living in the borough for a reasonable length of time. The views of officers in the Re-housing Service was that the level of points proposed have been pitched at an appropriate level and ensured a degree of balance against other priorities, for example against homelessness.

8.3 The Panel sought legal advice and consulted with the Housing Policy Lawyer on the legal implications arising from giving higher weighting for local connections (See section 8.6). The Panel was of the opinion that the local connections scheme operated by LB Barnet closely reflected what they wish to see contained in Haringey's policy. The Panel heard that Barnet's scheme was challenged in the High Court and the matter was decided on 11 May 2006.

8.4 The High Court decided that the only grounds for criticism was that the scheme was unlawful to the extent that it awarded a certain number of points to all transfer applicants, whereas the purpose of the Housing Act (1996) was that all transfer applicants and new applicants should be treated the same. By awarding additional points to transfer applicants the scheme failed to preserve the reasonable preference categories. **The Court found that the transfer points were justifiable irrespective of colour race or creed and did not discriminate, but nevertheless did deem their scheme unlawful. The Court also found that there was no evidence that points awarded for length of residence were discriminatory.**

8.5 Lettings Consultation Conference

8.6 Members of the Panel were invited to and attended the Council's recent lettings consultation conference and workshops on 'Shaping Haringey's lettings policy'. The event was originally organised for members of Haringey Association of Voluntary and Community Organisations and BME groups from the Supported People's Scheme. The invitation was extended to Homes for Haringey, Resident

Associations and Advocates. On consulting local residents on the new policy, Members reported that local connections was one of the main areas of concerns raised by residents attending the event. The legal advice given to the Panel was that there would be a greater risk of judicial challenge to the Council if the proposed points allocated under local connections were increased. Notwithstanding legal opinion the Panel remain dissatisfied with the current level of points proposed for local connections and given the strength of resident's views they wish to recommend an increase in the weighting attached to this factor. It should be noted that whilst acknowledging the legitimate concerns of local residents Councillors Harris and Edge felt that action was needed at national level to address the issue of local connections and in recognition of legal opinion did not support this proposal.

8.7 The Panel therefore made the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION THREE

- a) **Subject to the results of the modelling impact assessment and further legal advice, the executive consider awarding a greater weighting to the local connections aspects of the new lettings policy, with a view to increasing the level of (75) points currently proposed.**
- b) **Local connection points to be awarded only to applicants who have lived in Haringey for the two years immediately preceding their application.**
- c) **It is made clear in the policy that where applicants are placed in temporary accommodation outside the borough by Haringey, will be awarded Residency points, as long as they fulfil the residential qualification.**
- d) **The policy should state that Local Connection points will not be given to the following:**
 - **Those placed in Haringey in temporary accommodation by another council.**
 - **Those placed in Haringey in residential accommodation by another council.**
 - **Secure tenants of another council unless reciprocal arrangements have been agreed.**

9.0 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & HARASSMENT

9.1 Relationship breakdown is a major cause of homelessness for 20% of households accepted as homeless and in priority need in 2004/05 and of these cases, two thirds (13% of all homelessness acceptances) involved violence.²

9.2 In Haringey in 2001/02, 100 homeless approaches were made where domestic violence was the reason for homelessness. Eighty-seven per cent were

² DCLG Homelessness Prevention a guide to good practice – June 2006

women,³ it is suspected that this is an under representation of the real situation and this has been identified by the Re-housing Service as an area for further work both in terms of research and service delivery developments.

The Panel raised concerns that domestic violence and harassment was not a priority within the policy and wish this to be included as a 5th priority. It also required that the Service ensure, that appropriate homelessness prevention support for households at risk of domestic violence, is in place and delivered in a coordinated approach, both at operational and strategic level. Members recognise the importance of tackling domestic violence and the excellent record of the Hearthstone Service. The Panel was pleased to note that after detailed discussion with the Service it was proposed to make this the fifth key priority in the policy.

10.0 MANAGEMENT TRANSFERS

10.1 Good neighbour transfers.

10.2 The Panel sought legal advice about the inclusion of “good neighbours” transfer in the policy and was informed that this is a legitimate aim of the Council. Those applying for a transfer must be treated on the same basis as other applicants, in accordance with the provisions set out in the allocations scheme. It must reflect a sensible balance between meeting the housing needs of existing tenants and new applicants, whilst ensuring the efficient use of the housing stock. To qualify for the “good neighbour” factor when a tenant applies for transfer they must be meeting their tenancy conditions and have a rent account that has not been in arrears for the previous 3 years, must not be the subject of possession proceedings for rent arrears and not been the subject of possession proceedings for anti-social behaviour. However the Panel want a greater degree of weighting given in this category in order to acknowledge and reward those tenants who have abided by the terms of their tenancy agreement.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR

Subject to the results of the modelling impact assessment and further legal advice, the Executive consider awarding a greater weighting than the 50 points currently proposed, as a way of rewarding “good neighbour” transfers. Thereby increasing the points for those applicants who have abided by the terms of their tenancy conditions and have no rent arrears.

10.3 Under occupation scheme

10.4 Tenants who are under occupying Council homes are eligible to join the under occupation scheme, which aims to free up larger family units. Currently a small financial incentive is given which is unattractive.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE

³ Haringey Homelessness Strategy 2003-2008

a) **That greater incentive be given to achieve more under-occupation transfers; consideration be given to increase the financial incentives and introduce other forms of assistance to tenants in order to achieve this.**

b) **That the under-occupation scheme be re-launched with enhanced publicity campaign to ensure greater public awareness of the scheme.**

10.5 Succession to tenancies

10.6 The Panel recognised that succession to a tenancy is a legal right. A person can succeed to a Council tenancy on the death of a tenant if they are the tenants' spouse, civil partner or they are another member of the tenant's family and lived with the tenant for a qualifying period preceding the tenant's death. The spouse or civil partner takes precedence over another family member. However where there is evidence that the property is under occupied as a result the Council has the powers to take legal action and to offer smaller accommodation. The Panel heard that these powers cannot be applied in all cases as each case must be considered on its own merits. The Panel are of the opinion that the powers available to the Council must be used in **all appropriate cases** where succession to a tenancy has resulted in under occupation.

RECOMMENDATION SIX

The Council consider each case of succession under-occupation on its merit and where appropriate, use the legal powers available to address the issue of under occupation of properties, when a succession to the tenancy has taken place.

11.0 COMMUNICATING THE NEW POLICY

11.1 To some extent the success of the policy will be dependent on its transparency and the ease with which the local community can understand it. It is essential therefore that it is communicated clearly, in various formats, including the website and community languages and that adequate support is available to give advice when required. Applicants must have access to sufficient information to enable them to make informed choices. It is the view of the Panel that the Service should ensure that appropriate literature about the policy is available and that an overall publicity and education campaign should accompany the launch of the policy with staff and residents. The Panel also wish to see the production of a leaflet in all major community languages, available to Members and the public that explains the new lettings policy with a ready-reckoner so that applicants can calculate their housing points in a format that is quick and convenient to use. The Service should regularly remind customers/service users of the policies, processes and procedures through newspapers and the website.

RECOMMENDATION SEVEN

- a) **The Re-housing Service ensures that an overall publicity and education campaign is undertaken with staff and residents to launch the policy. Also that a leaflet is produced and made available in major community languages. The leaflet should include a ready-reckoner to enable applicants to calculate their housing points. The leaflet should signpost where general advice and practical assistance on homelessness and prevention of homelessness is available. The leaflet should also explain the Choice Based Lettings schemes.**
- b) **That all support staff be fully trained/briefed in the policy as part of the implementation process. Training should include legal briefing on a regular basis to ensure staff are knowledgeable and up to date with all relevant legislation.**
- c) **That the leaflet be produced and distributed at the same time that the Homes Connection scheme is launched.**
- d) **That the Scrutiny Review Panel would welcome the opportunity to comment on the draft leaflet produced.**

12.0 IMPROVING ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS, INCLUDING DATA PROTECTION TO REDUCE RENT ARREARS AND MAINTAIN TENANCIES.

- 12.1 The Panel is keen to ensure that the Council is taking steps to address weaknesses in the administrative systems to tackle and manage homelessness in the borough more efficiently.
- 12.2 It was reported that 69.5% of tenants experienced rent arrears after just one year of occupying their property. (for the calendar year 2005). Rent arrears can arise from delays in the calculation and payment of Housing Benefit. For example delays in applying for, calculation and payment of Housing Benefit to tenants, inefficient processing of homelessness cases, a failure to provide information, advice and practical assistance and solutions for preventing homelessness all result in delay. It is therefore in the Council's interest to employ systems for the payment of Housing Benefit in order to avoid the risk of homelessness arising as a result of such delays. Where the administration of Housing Benefit and the provision of housing assistance are dealt with by different departments of the Council, it will be necessary for the Services to ensure that effective liaison arrangements between departments are in place.
- 12.3 Efficient Housing Benefit payments systems can also help increase the confidence of private sector landlords in letting accommodation to tenants who may rely on benefits to meet their rents. The Panel is of the view that where possible Housing Benefit application forms should be completed and signed simultaneously with the signing of any tenancy agreement.

- 12.4 In respect of data protection issues and obtaining information electronically held in various databases, the Panel expressed strong concerns regarding insufficient sharing of customer information between council departments. The Panel heard from the Data Protection Officer that in order for the Housing Service to have access to databases held by other Services / Departments or procure disclosures of personal information held within those databases at least one of the below specific conditions must be met:
- The individual has consented to the disclosure
 - Processing is necessary for performance of a contract with the individual
 - Processing is required under legal obligation (the legislation, section, subsection etc needs to be quoted)
 - Processing is necessary to protect the vital interests of the data subject
 - Processing is necessary to carry out public functions, such as the administration of justice
 - Processing is necessary in order to pursue the legitimate interest of the data controller
 -
- 12.5 If the disclosure/data sharing is related to “sensitive” personal data at least one of several extra conditions would also need to be met. These include:
- Having the “explicit” consent of the individual
 - Being required by law to process the information for employment purposes
 - Needing to process the information in order to protect the vital interests of the individual or another person
 - Dealing with the administration of justice of legal proceedings
- 12.6 The Housing Service needs to identify which conditions it is relying upon to enable access to, or the procurement of (sensitive) personal information held by other Council Services Departments for the purpose of cross referencing information provided by individuals who are requesting Council Housing. The Housing Service should then approach Legal Services to confirm the conditions they are relying upon carry sufficient enforcement to authorise the disclosure/sharing of such data for the purposes stated.
- 12.7 It is the strong view of the Panel that Housing Officers should have sufficient access to electronic databases to enable them to carry out their Housing Benefit duties, whilst ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act. It is essential that the Re-housing Service, IT Department and Legal Services work in collaboration to develop protocol that aims to achieve a balance between the needs of the Council to alleviate homelessness and rent arrears and the rights of applicants under the Data Protection Act.

RECOMMENDATION EIGHT

- a) **At the signing of the tenancy, if applicable, the applicants’ Housing Benefit application form also be completed. This will allow the applicant to have benefits quickly assessed and in place and is likely to reduce the incidence of rent arrears and to**

assist in maintaining their tenancies. Vulnerable new tenants will be assisted by staff ensuring that Housing Benefit applications are completed correctly.

- b) The Re-housing Service improve the administration of Housing Benefit and homelessness application processes, by ensuring that the application form for housing, when completed, gives all the necessary permissions required to carry out relative data checks, including legal access to electronic databases.
- c) That the housing application form be redesigned to enable applicants to state whether they are likely to apply for Housing Benefit, so that officers are able to be better prepared to assist applicants with their claims.
- d) That an application be cancelled if the applicant has failed to provide documentary evidence or other information reasonably required by the Council, in order to validate the applications including Housing Benefit.
- e) The Re-housing Service, IT Department and Legal Services work in collaboration to develop a protocol that aims to achieve a balance between the needs of the Council to alleviate homelessness and rent arrears and the rights of applicants under the Data Protection Act.

13.0 TIMESCALE FOR REVIEWING THE POLICY

13.1 In order to ensure that this policy is successful a comprehensive monitoring process should be established. The policy should be reviewed regularly as part of the monitoring process. In the first instance, the Review Panel recommends that a progress report be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2006. Also that the policy be reviewed at least between a twelve to eighteen months interval, to ensure that it remains in keeping with current regulations and practices.

RECOMMENDATION NINE

- (a) That the Lettings Policy be reviewed between at least twelve and eighteen month interval, to ensure that it remains in keeping with current regulations and practices.
- b) An action plan, including the operating instructions (procedures) and progress report, be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2006. That the Action Plan include feedback from Connexions Direct.

14.0 OTHER ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE REVIEW

14.1 16 and 17 year olds

14.2 Under legislative changes made in 2002, homeless 16 and 17 year olds have a priority need for accommodation under the homelessness legislation, with certain exceptions. These mainly apply to cases where Social Services have responsibility for ensuring that the young person's accommodation needs are met. 16 and 17 year olds are owed a duty under Section 20 (Children Act 1989) and may be referred for a letting by the local authority who have a duty under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. The Act obliges the authority to support 16-17 year olds who are 'relevant' young people in their accommodation needs.

14.3 The Panel heard from Connexions Direct, an organisation providing information and advice for young people, assisting them to get into training and employment. It was noted that a Connexions Worker is based in the Re-housing Service at Apex House working specifically with young people and helping them to obtain suitable accommodation. The lack of social housing also has an impact on this client group and concerns were raised that some sixteen and seventeen year olds are placed in unsuitable accommodation with very little support. It is the view of the Panel that the Service must consider how it supports this group, by assessing and addressing their needs. Members also wanted to find out how the new lettings policy would impact on this group and it was agreed that Connexions Direct would report back to the Panel at the end of the year with their comments and experience of the policy.

14.4 The Panel wishes to ensure that in all cases support for young people holding tenancies or in temporary accommodation is available.

14.5 Managing Voids

The Panel heard evidence relating to the length of time taken to re-let empty properties. Targets for void turn-around had not been achieved and the Panel noted concerns regarding the standard of repairs to some properties, resulting in a high number of refusals by applicants. Whilst detailed consideration of this issue is outside the scope of this review, nevertheless the Panel wish to see improvements in the existing processes for void management.

14.6 Sustainable Communities

14.7 The Lettings Policy has to achieve the right balance between the importance given to choice in housing and the need to meet housing needs. The Council is developing strategies with its partners to deliver new products and services for customers requiring social housing.

14.8 This approach ties in with government thinking on linking CBL with a broader housing options approach. It is essential that the relationship between CBL and broader strategies is maintained and enhanced. For example there are likely to be many factors that contribute to the achievement of sustainable communities and meeting housing needs through local lettings policies. Lettings policies will only be one of many policies that might help to achieve this. The Panel recognises that more work needs to be done to address this issue which is outside the scope of this review.

14.9 Choice Based Lettings – Home Connections

14.10 It is imperative that a watching brief is maintained on national policy initiatives on CBL. This will enable the Council and its partners to respond quickly and effectively to initiatives as well as understanding any implications for Homes for Haringey.

14.11 The Service should develop a program of regular training and briefing sessions to improve stakeholder awareness of the policies, procedures and processes – there is a need for training sessions for staff and organisations directly and indirectly involved in CBL. The Service should ensure that protecting vulnerable and excluded groups involves ensuring that information on vacancies and processes is available in appropriate formats, including minority languages; that bidding mechanisms are accessible to all; and that systems are in place to provide assistance to those who would otherwise struggle to participate in CBL process.

14.12 Managing the Housing Register

14.13 There are approximately 25,000 people on the Housing Register which has not been reviewed for a number of years. The Audit report found that a high proportion of errors are occurring in the assessment of priority, which means that some cases have not been awarded the correct number of points. Some points are calculated manually before being entered on the computer, this is prone to greater inaccuracy than systems which automatically calculate points based on the allocations criteria. Members were informed that the Service is currently consulting all applicants on the Housing Register in order to meet the requirement to review the register and to ensure that applications are relevant and households given the relevant level of priority. The Panel would like to see a modelling impact assessment of the applicants on the Housing Register before implementation of the policy ensuring that applicants are re-pointed using the new lettings policy to ascertain whether the aims of the policy will be met. It is also the view of the Panel that the review of the register should be carried out as a matter of urgency and that the Service should ensure that the Register is reviewed on a regular basis thereafter, in keeping with good practice.

RECOMMENDATION TEN

- (a) **That the review of the Housing Register be undertaken as a matter of urgency. That the Re-housing Service ensure that the register is reviewed on a regular basis.**

- (b) **A modelling impact assessment of the applicants on the Housing Register be carried out before implementation of the policy ensuring that applicants are re-pointed using the new lettings policy, to ascertain whether the aims of the policy have been met.**

14.14 Preventions and Options

14.15 Haringey's Accredited Lettings Scheme has been praised in the Housing Ombudsman's annual Report for 2006. It highlighted the joint partnership and support for the Council's Accredited Letting Scheme. Other local authorities involved in similar private sector initiatives are encouraged to follow Haringey's example and offer similar services for tenants who may have complaints about private sector landlords. The Panel welcomes the establishment of the Council's new Prevention and Options services that seeks to reduce the number of households applying as homeless and to increase the choices available to households threatened with homelessness. The Panel believes this is likely to produce direct net savings for the authority, for example through reduced processing of homeless applications, lower use of temporary accommodation, reduced rent arrears and fewer service interventions. Resources allocated to preventing homelessness will also help to reduce pressures on wider services e.g. health in the longer term, including the provision of on going Housing Benefit support and advice for clients

14.16 Arms Length Management Organisation.

14.17 The Panel welcomes the Council consulting with Homes for Haringey as part of the broad consultative process on the proposed Lettings Policy. Homes for Haringey is the Arms Length Management Organisation that provides the Landlord service as management agent for the Council. The Panel wish to see the role of Homes for Haringey explained clearly in the policy. This will enable applicants to know exactly who their providers are and avoid confusion by some applicants when dealing with both the Re-housing Service and Homes for Haringey.

RECOMMENDATION ELEVEN

That an explanation about Homes for Haringey be included in the Lettings Policy, to enable applicants to distinguish clearly between the Council's Housing Strategic Services and Homes for Haringey.

14.14 Variation to the Terms of Reference

14.5 In order to ensure the successful implementation of the policy, the Panel wish to vary the terms of reference to include ensuring that the policy is properly administered and implemented successfully and that the new Lettings Policy is deemed fit for purpose.

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Lettings Policy

A guide to housing lettings in Haringey

Version 11.0 (24 August 2006)



This Lettings Policy sets out how council housing is allocated to people.

If you would like a copy of this document in your own language, please fill in your name and address, tick the right language box and send the form to the FREEPOST address:

Albanian

Nëse doni një kopje të Housing Lettings policy në gjuhën tuaj, ju lutem shënjoni kutinë dhe dërgoni formularin në adresën e mëposhtme me Postim Falas.

Kurdish

Hek hun kopîyeke nûçenameya ‘Housing Lettings policy’ bi zimanê xwe zixwazin, ji kerema xwe qutîkê îşaret bikin, nav û navnîşana xwe binivîsin û formê ji navnîşana jêrîn a Posta Bêpere re bişînin.

Bengali

Somali

Hadii aad dooneyso warka ku yaal buugaan oo ku qoran afkaan, fadlan xariiq halkaan kadibna hoos ku qor faa faahintaada oo u soo dir buugaan cinwaanka hoos ku yaal

French

Si vous souhaitez obtenir un exemplaire du Housing Lettings policy dans votre langue, veuillez cocher la case, compléter votre nom et adresse et renvoyer le formulaire à l’adresse au port payé ci-dessous.

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Housing Lettings policy kendi dilinizde bir kopyasını temin etmek istiyorsanız, kutuyu işaretledikten sonr, adınızı ve adresinizi doldurup formu aşağıdaki ödemeli posta adresine yollayınız.

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Executive Summary

- 1.0 Every council has to produce and publish a housing lettings policy ¹. This is Haringey's Lettings Policy. It shows:
 - how to apply for housing in Haringey
 - how we decide who to let homes to
 - how we offer choice
 - how we make offers of housing
- 2.0 The policy reflects the legal requirements placed upon the council ² and in addition draws upon regulations and guidance and good practice. ³
- 3.0 The policy sets out how the Council works with the private sector and partners such as housing associations to address homelessness, overcrowding and the need to develop safe, diverse neighbourhoods. The Borough faces severe housing shortages.
- 4.0 The policy sets out how a points system is used to ensure fairness and openness in allocating homes and should be considered alongside new services such as Prevention and Options and the Reduction in Temporary Accommodation strategy.
- 5.0 There is a high level of housing need locally. The policy sets out a number of limited but clear priorities. The number of people who will be directly housed by the Council will be limited to those with the most severe housing needs. Tackling overcrowding is a high priority. Applicants with low levels of need will be advised of other options they can consider.
- 6.0 Preventing homelessness, offering choice and increasing the range of ways to meet housing need means placing an emphasis upon applicants with the most severe housing needs. It requires a range of options to be available to other people.
- 7.0 The close working relationship with Social Services is reflected in the policy. It will ensure that older and vulnerable people have their needs addressed in a fair and consistent way.
- 8.0 By 2010 Haringey will reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by 50%. This policy is the key to achieving that target.
- 9.0 The policy reflects the commitment to create greater choice, through the introduction of Choice Based Lettings for most applicants. It responds to everyone in a fair, open and consistent way. The policy is backed up by procedures.
- 10.0 The Lettings Policy will be reviewed regularly including consideration of the way the policy assists the promotion of choice and mobility across the North London sub region.

¹ Section 167 Housing Act 1996 requires a scheme to be in place

Section 168 Housing Act 1996 requires the scheme to be published

² Housing Act 1996 amended by the Homelessness Act 2002

³ The main guidance relating to Lettings is the Allocation of Accommodation: Code of Guidance 2002 This is supplemented by various Statutory Instruments (Regulations)

Introduction

This document sets out Haringey Council's Lettings Scheme. It is the allocation scheme for determining priorities for the letting of Council homes and nominations to Registered Social Landlords.

This policy fully complies with all legal requirements and reflects recent changes to the law arising from the Homelessness Act 2002 and various Statutory Instruments. It also reflects caselaw and has regard to the Code of Guidance on the Allocation of Accommodation issued by the Government in May 2002.

The Challenge facing Haringey

Haringey contains some of the most deprived wards in the Country. Almost 30% of Haringey's population live in areas that are amongst the 10% most deprived in the United Kingdom.⁴ The borough has relatively high levels of unemployment and a high level of inequality in health reflected in high levels of vulnerability such as mental health. 11.5% of households have incomes below £10,000⁵ leading to significant numbers of residents relying upon social housing. It is this level of deprivation when coupled to the ethnic and culturally diverse nature of the borough, and the implications of this for family income and household size that provides the background to this Lettings policy. The main challenge for the policy is how to address high levels of severe housing need in a fair and transparent way with homes being allocated to people with the greatest need. According to the Housing Needs Survey Update 2005 there is a shortfall of 4387 affordable homes.⁶ In 2004/5 the level of homeless applications was running at 145% of the total social housing lettings and of the applicants 90% were from Black and Minority Ethnic households. All the evidence points to a borough and a housing service under severe pressure. This Lettings Scheme helps implement the Council's commitment to:

- Prevent homelessness
- Increase options for access to good housing for homeless people
- Increase choice for residents in housing need
- Meet the needs of specific groups such as vulnerable and older people or residents from Black and Minority Ethnic communities.
- Establishing a fair and open way of allocating social housing
- Meet its wider commitments to creating safe, diverse neighbourhoods.
- Reduce the number of people in temporary accommodation

Our Priorities

The policy has been developed in line with relevant legislation, guidance and good practice. The law says to whom we can and can't allocate housing. It allows Haringey to give reasonable preference to particular groups of people to whom housing can be allocated.⁷

⁴ Indices of Deprivation 2004, DCLG.

⁵ GLA CACI September 2005

⁶ Housing Needs Survey Update 2005

⁷ Section 167 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

The high levels of housing need locally mean that the policy focuses upon meeting the housing needs of:

1. People facing severe overcrowding

Addressing overcrowding locally is a top priority. According to the 2001 Census there are 20,455 households in Haringey who are suffering from overcrowding which equates to 22% of all households in the borough.⁸ More than 10% of households living in social housing are overcrowded with 4.4% severely overcrowded. Many living in the private sector also suffer with nearly 8% overcrowded.

2. People with Medical requirements

The policy considers people with medical needs a high priority. The aim is to make sure that disabled or chronically ill applicants, including those with children with disabilities, are able to obtain housing that allows them a good quality of living. In responding to the medical needs of applicants the Council seeks to balance such needs against other housing pressures.

3. Vulnerable People

Adults vulnerable due to mental health issues or learning disability are a further focus of the policy. Addressing the housing requirements of people with complex needs is a priority. This policy highlights the importance of ensuring that vulnerable and excluded groups are able to access Choice Based Lettings in accordance with good practice.⁹ Haringey has adopted the following definition of vulnerable adults¹⁰ :

“A person over the age of 18 years who:

- *Is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who*
- *Is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself*
- *Is or may be unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.”*

4. Older People

The Lettings Policy reflects the priority Haringey Older People’s Service (OPS) gives to supported housing. The aim of OPS is to provide an individual social care, support, advice and advocacy service within a housing management context, relevant to the needs of older people from the full range of communities and cultures in Haringey. The objective of the supported housing service is to help older people to maintain their independence and live at home as long as practical. The wider challenge is to slow down deterioration and consequent loss of confidence and self esteem. The Lettings Policy compliments the supported housing service and reflects the close working between housing services, housing providers, health and social services in addressing the needs of older people.

⁸ 2001 Census

⁹ Pilot Based Lettings: An Evaluation, ODPM (2004)

¹⁰ Policy & Procedure for Protecting vulnerable Adults. LB Haringey (2002)

Equalities

Throughout its work, Haringey Council is committed to reflecting the full diversity of the community it serves and to promoting equality of opportunity for everyone. We accept that the Council is not free of unintended institutional discrimination. We will work to eradicate it. We aim to ensure equal access to our services by all citizens on the basis of need and to provide services in a manner that is sensitive to the individual whatever their background. We will represent the needs of our diverse communities to other agencies and make equal opportunities a key guiding principle in all our work with our partners. We will ensure that our workforce reflects the community it serves. We will take positive action to realise our equality of opportunity policy. We have a duty to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, national origin or race, gender, HIV status, marital status, region or belief, responsibility for dependents, sexual orientation or unrelated criminal convictions.

Discretionary Powers

The Lettings Policy cannot cover every eventuality. In special cases with exceptional needs, the **Head of Rehousing (Strategy and Needs)** has discretionary power to award additional priority and approve offers of housing taking into account all factors relevant to housing and social needs.

In the various sections of the policy, reference is made to the rules determining priority and eligibility for housing. In all these instances, subject to any legal constraints, discretionary powers may be used to deal with special cases which may need to be treated in an exceptional way.

The points scheme set out in the policy may be varied, as required, to reflect the meeting of priorities.

Chapter 1: Who can be considered for housing?

Any person may approach the Council and ask to join the Housing List

The reality of the severe lack of social housing lettings is that only a very small number of people will be offered social rented housing.

Applicants eligible for housing are considered according to their level of housing need. Housing need is measured by a points system that reflects this Lettings policy.

All decisions made will be put in writing and provided to the applicant.

There are also two groups of people who are not eligible to apply for council housing. These are people:

- covered by immigration rules.
- guilty of unacceptable behaviour

People covered by Immigration rules

Applicants from abroad who are subject to immigration control are ineligible for allocations. The Secretary of State has prescribed classes of people who are subject to immigration control but are nonetheless to be eligible for allocation.

The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Amendment) England Regulations 2004 set out that some people who have a right to enter a Country (Such as EU Citizens) may not be eligible for housing if they are not habitually resident or not here exercising EEA rights (e.g. right to work)

Unacceptable Behaviour

‘Unacceptable behaviour’ is behaviour that would be likely to result in the council gaining a possession order against you or your family, even if you are not actually Haringey Council tenants. Unacceptable behaviour includes:

- owing substantial rent arrears (to any Landlord)
- causing nuisance and annoyance to neighbours or visitors (anyone with an Anti-Social Behaviour Order)
- being convicted for using your home for illegal or immoral purposes (e.g. prostitution or drug dealing)
- committing an arrestable offence in or near your home
- being violent towards your partner or family
- allowing the condition of your home to deteriorate
- getting your tenancy by deception (for example, by giving untrue information)
- paying money to illegally obtain a Haringey Council tenancy.

Applications from Home Owners

Housing applications from home owners are considered. However the following factors will be taken into account:

- Whether an applicant can reasonably be expected to remain in accommodation taking into account medical, social and other needs.
- The equity available if the property were sold and whether this would provide sufficient funds for the owner to buy or rent alternative suitable accommodation.
- Income, savings and/or other investments

The Council will assess whether sufficient funds are available to secure alternative suitable accommodation, taking into account the market value of the type of accommodation required.

Where there are medical problems, applications will be considered in the following circumstances:

- Where it is not possible to adapt the current accommodation to meet the needs of the owner-occupiers medical condition.
- Where it is too expensive to adapt the existing accommodation to meet the needs of the owner occupiers medical condition and they cannot afford to buy or rent suitable alternative housing
- The sale of the property would not enable the owner occupier to purchase or rent an alternative property suitable to their needs.

Four Categories of Priority

The Council has to give priority to applicants who fall within categories of need defined by the law. The priorities reflect local needs and the legal requirement to give *'reasonable preference'*, *'additional preference'* or *'local preference'* to certain people who apply.

The Council has adopted four broad categories of housing need. The points system reflects these. Each is divided into priority areas.

The four categories of need, adopted by the policy allows clarity with respect to the different priority groups. Priority given to each group in the Point's scheme reflects the legal and guidance requirements.

The four categories are:

- Families and Children
- Property
- Care and Health
- Stable Communities

Chapter 2: Families and Children

The Homeless.

Homeless households are a high priority for the Council. The Council, primarily seeks to prevent homelessness.

It has adopted a Prevention and Options policy and has introduced a new service to prevent homelessness. The aim is to help homeless households find alternative housing.

If alternative options are not available and homelessness cannot be prevented then households may be eligible for a Council or housing association house subject to them having sufficient points. Homeless households will be allocated the following number of points:

No	Category	Aim	Points
1	Homeless in Priority Need, not intentionally homeless.	To help households who have become homeless, are in Priority Need and in temporary accommodation to obtain settled accommodation.	350
2	Homeless, in Priority Need, but homeless intentionally.	This would meet the legal duty under Section 193(2) to people who are homeless with a Priority Need, but made themselves homeless (Intentional homeless).	200
3	Homeless or threatened with homelessness, but not in Priority Need.	This allows the Council to offer help to households who are homeless, but do not have a Priority Need. This meets duties under Section 195(5)(a).	100
4	Homeless or threatened with homelessness in Priority Need, but intentional homelessness.	This allows the Council to offer help to households who are homeless, have a Priority Need but are intentionally homeless. This meets duties under Section 195(5)(b).	100

Prevention of Homelessness

Preventing homelessness is a key objective of the proposed new Lettings Policy. The points in this section help people to avoid homelessness by looking to other options.

No	Category	Aim	Points
1	Homeless at Home with 1 child.	To encourage people threatened with homelessness, in priority need, to stay in the parental home and to be rewarded for doing so. (For every 6 months)	200
2	Homeless at Home with 2 children	To encourage people threatened with homelessness, in priority need, to stay in the parental home and to be rewarded for doing so. (For every 6 months)	150
3	Out of Borough	To encourage people to move to a new area.	100
4	Out of London	To encourage people to move to a new area.	100
5	Mediation	Successful completion of mediation course. Points for staying in parental accommodation (For every 6	100

		months)	
6	Family Support	Points to reflect a need to move closer to other family members who will provide support.	50
7	Foster Carers/Kinship	This will allow the role of carers and foster parents to be recognised.	100

Assured Shorthold Tenancies

These points encourage applicants to remain in private sector property

No	Category	Aim	Points
1	Retention of private sector AST	To encourage households to remain in AST with a private landlord. (This does not relate to ASTs secured by the Council for households in Priority Need)	50 per annum

Living in Temporary accommodation

The Council wants to reduce the numbers of households in temporary accommodation. The points for residing in such accommodation aim to help households move on to permanent housing.

No	Category	Aim	Points
1	Moving out of temporary accommodation	To help households move from temporary to permanent accommodation.	50 per annum

Violence and Harassment

Families or individuals facing violence or harassment require a strong and high priority response from the Council.

No	Category	Aim	Points
1	Severe Harassment/Violence (Urgent Move)	Where a person/household requires an urgent move because of severe violence and/or harassment.	200
2	Harassment/Violence (Desirable Move)	Where it is desirable to move a person/household because of violence and/or harassment.	100
3	Witness Protection.	A move in order to secure a witness's safety	250

Children in Need

These points reflect the Council's duties to Children.

No	Category	Aim	Points
1	Children and Young People unable to leave hospital.	A household would receive points to reflect the unsuitable nature of the parental home.	400
2	Child Protection.	Where a parent and child should be moved due to the child being in need or where a child is placed on the Child Protection Register and a more suitable property will reduce risk to the child.	250

Relationship Breakdown

In general, where a relationship breakdown has occurred between couples and one or both partners is a council tenant, one or both partners will receive 50 points providing:

- Both partners have been living in the accommodation since the commencement of the tenancy (irrespective of whether both partners held a joint tenancy)
- There has been no violence or threat of violence
- Under-occupation of the accommodation will not result from rehousing just one of the former partners.

Under this policy the term 'couples' refers to heterosexual, lesbian and gay relationships.

No	Category	Aim	Points
1	Relationship Breakdown	To support people to find new accommodation following the breakdown of a relationship.	50

Chapter 3: Property

This section in the points scheme aims to address problems associated with a property.

Overcrowding

The draft scheme reflects the clear policy commitment to address overcrowding. The statutory definition is very limited. The Council uses the English Survey of Housing definition of overcrowding and this uses the lack of bedrooms

No	Category	Aim	Points
1	1 bedroom short.	To reflect level of overcrowding	100
	2 bedrooms short.	To reflect level of overcrowding	200
	3 bedrooms short.	To reflect level of overcrowding	300
	4 bedrooms short.	To reflect level of overcrowding	400
2	Shared bathroom.	To reflect sharing of facilities	30
	Shared WC.	To reflect sharing of facilities	20
	Shared Kitchen.	To reflect sharing of facilities	30
	Shared Living room.	To reflect sharing of facilities	20

Poor Quality Housing

No	Category	Aim	Points
1	Insanitary Conditions	To tackle accommodation that poses an ongoing threat to a person or households health. Examples include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infected drinking water • Insect or animal infestation • Being exposed to untreated sewerage. 	200

Under Occupation

These points encourage existing tenants to move to a smaller property. This should be considered alongside other incentives to move. The Council provides a range of financial incentives to encourage households to move to more suitable property.

No	Category	Aim	Points
1	Give up 1 room	To encourage tenants to move to smaller properties	200
2	Give up 2 rooms	To encourage tenants to move to smaller properties	300
3	Give up 3 rooms	To encourage tenants to move to smaller properties	400

Chapter 4: Care and Health

Vulnerable People

These points reflect the Council's duties to vulnerable adults and compliment the medical points scheme.

No	Category	Aim	Points
1	Mental Health with Support.	To help households with mental health challenges obtain housing subject to them being supported in such accommodation.	150
2	Drug & Alcohol challenges.	To help households where a person with drug or alcohol challenges undertakes and completes course of rehabilitation.	150
3	Learning Disability.	To help people with Learning Disability, who reside with parents to have own tenancy with support.	150
4	Complex Needs	To support people aged 55 and over who have complex needs and need specialist accommodation e.g. Disability, declining health, severe mobility or mental deterioration.	150

Medical

The Council gives medical points to reflect how unsuitable an applicants current accommodation is. If there are medical problems, but the property is suitable for their medical needs, no points will be given.

Composite Test

When considering the medical needs of a person the impact on the whole household will be considered.

No	Category	Aim	Points
	Category A	To address exceptional, urgent and/or life threatening situations that would be addressed by an urgent move to a different property.	300

Category A: A category A may be granted to people who have an urgent need to move for medical reasons. This might include a terminally ill person who needs larger accommodation for a carer to reside with them, or someone whose life may be at risk as a result of the property they live in.

No	Category	Aim	Points
	Category B	Where a different property would address health, mobility and disability problems facing a household.	150

Category B: This covers people with health, mobility or disability needs who require a home with improved access to facilities or mobility. This covers people whose home is not suitable because they have medical, mobility or disability needs and their existing home is not accessible or near to medical or family support.

Disability Facilities Grant

Adapting homes so that disabled or residents with mobility problems can reside in them is important. The Council may use the Disability Facilities Grant to fund such activity. However where the cost of adaptations is above £25,000 for a property then the applicant will be considered for a transfer with Category B medical points being awarded.

No	Category	Aim	Points
	Category C	Home not suitable in the long term	50 per annum

Category C: This relates to people who have long term medical needs that will require them to move from their existing property. Customers with medical conditions such as arthritis, loss of mobility in limbs etc. They may require a ground floor property but currently reside in a house with stairs or a flat

Chapter 5: Stable Communities

Local Connection

The Council is committed to developing stable inclusive communities. The Lettings policy has a key role in achieving this strategic aim. An appropriate level of priority is given to applications that can demonstrate a local connection. A local connection is considered as an applicant:

- Who has lived in the Borough for at least 6 months in the last 12 months or 3 of the last 5 years or
- Having permanent employment within the Borough or
- Having a close relative, for instance a parent, sibling or child living in the Borough who is and has been living in the Borough for the last 5 years.

Transfers

The Council will allocate points to recognise the important role 'good neighbours' can play in creating stable communities. Where a tenant applies for a transfer and they have:

- A rent account that has not been in arrears for the previous 3 years.
- Not been the subject of Possession proceedings for rent arrears
- Not been the subject of Possession proceedings for anti-social behaviour

No	Category	Aim	Points
1	Local Connection	To reflect the importance of stable inclusive communities	75
2	Good Neighbour Transfers	To reflect a tenant meeting their tenancy conditions	50

Time on the Waiting List

The Council also provides an annual uplift to recognise time on the Housing Register.

No	Category	Aim	Points
1	Time on Housing Register	To provide an annual uplift.	24 points per year

Management Transfers

Management Transfers are used to address problems of emergency and special housing problems. Full details of the Councils Management Transfer scheme are set out in the procedures that underpin this policy.

Decants and Major Works

Where an estate or property requires improvement work to bring it up to the Decent homes or other appropriate standard points will be awarded to reflect the degree of impact on the tenants life. These will help the person move if they wish to do so.

No	Category	Aim	Points
1	Decant	To help a tenant move where work cannot be done without a move	300
2	Major Works	To help the tenant move where they are concerned at the impact of major works on their home	50

Independent Living

The following points recognise that groups of people need stable settled accommodation.

No	Category	Aim	Points
1	Care Leavers.	To ensure accommodation with support	200
2	Ex Offenders	To ensure people leaving prison are able to access stable accommodation.	150
3	Nomination from independent housing scheme.	To support a vulnerable person moving from supported housing to greater independence with 'own' tenancy.	150
4	16 & 17 Year olds.	To provide secure housing at age 18.	100

Teenage Parents

The borough has a high level of teenage pregnancies. The support and options to help young parents are set out in the Council's '*Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood Strategy*'. It places a strong emphasis upon semi independent housing options where the young person cannot remain with parents. The support comes from Supporting People (A funding scheme)

Other Categories

No	Category	Aim	Points
3	Move on Quota	To help people move from temporary hostel based accommodation to long term housing	150
4	Shared Hostel Move on	To help people move from a temporary hostel containing shared facilities to long term housing	200
5	Service Tenants	To take account of a service tenancy that is coming to an end	300
6	Special Circumstances	This would allow points to go to a person who does not qualify under any other category	200
7	Leaving Supported Housing Projects	To help people move from Supported Living Projects to independent living.	300

Chapter 6: How to apply for housing in Haringey

To apply for housing requires an applicant to complete a relevant application form. These vary according to the tenancy or housing position the applicant is in:

Table 1: Application Forms for Housing in Haringey

Applicant	Form	Where available
Homes for Haringey Tenant	Transfer Form	Homes for Haringey Local Offices www.homesforharingey.org www.haringey.gov.uk
Housing Association Tenant	Housing Application Form	Tenants of housing associations need to approach their own landlord.
Other Applicants	Housing Application Form	Homes for Haringey Local Offices www.homesforharingey.org www.haringey.gov.uk Prevention and Options Service, Apex House.

Help for Applicants completing Application forms

It is the policy of Haringey Council to help people with the completion of Application forms where they have:

- Language needs
- Literacy needs
- Other Health and care needs.
- Where the applicant has a caseworker.

Data protection

The Data Protection Act 1998 (the Act) is designed to protect personal data about living individuals (Data Subjects). The Act also places obligations on those organisations that process personal data (Data Controllers). As a Data Controller, Haringey Council is committed to complying with this legislation by applying the Principles of Good information handling across all its services.

Tenancy Audit Scheme (TAS)

It is the requirement of Haringey Council, as part of its wider challenge to stop fraud to photograph all applicants and to keep a record for identification purposes.

Information Check

All applications must be supported with relevant documents. All supporting documents, as far as possible, must be originals. Without this information Haringey cannot process an application. The Council reserves the right to make enquiries into your application.

Chapter 7: Choice- The heart of the Lettings Policy

Our Commitment to you

People applying for housing should be able to choose where they live. This Lettings policy gives priority to people with the greatest housing need, but also places choice at the heart of the way we work. The Council has moved to a Choice Based Lettings scheme for most lettings.

Home Connections

Haringey is part of the Home Connections scheme. This is the North London choice based lettings scheme. When properties become available, they are advertised widely and applicants are invited to bid. The system allows applicants to bid for properties which they would like to be offered. Applicants on the Housing Register and existing tenants can bid for property. People can bid for as many properties as they like.

A nomination agreement is in place between the council and its housing association partners to ensure the best use of available homes via the Home Connections framework.

Exceptional Circumstances

All allocations of permanent housing stock will be made this way, except in exceptional circumstances. These could include:

- Where there are serious and urgent child or public protection issues.
- If an applicant falls under the National Witness Mobility Scheme.
- If it may be costly to the Council if an applicant is not moved.
- Where homes are significantly adapted for use by vulnerable persons or with a disability.
- Where properties are designated for use by the Older persons Service
- Where a property is difficult to let
- Allocations to temporary accommodation
- Allocations to any homes which the council requires for specific purposes.
- In any interim period where either the Council is in organisational change
- Where CBL may lead to detriment being suffered by any groups(s)/persons.

Fraud

Applicants will be closely checked, and evidence requested, by the Council before an offer is agreed. This means all relevant supporting documents and information supplied will be checked and appropriate home visits made. We will make sure you are legally entitled to housing. Where evidence is not provided the offer of housing will be withdrawn. If evidence of false information or any related fraud becomes known after the applicant has moved in or the transfer taken place, the Council will recover the property through the Courts and consider prosecution.

Declaration on Fraud

The law ⁽¹¹⁾ very clearly states that it is an offence to make false statements, withhold information, or fail to disclose any change in circumstances. Haringey will take appropriate action if fraud is suspected.

What if I refuse the offer?

Applicants made offers under Home Connections are not expected to refuse the offer, as they have asked to be considered for the property. All applicants included in the scheme will be provided with information to ensure they understand the scheme and the requirement for them to be pro-active. If a property is requested and the applicant later discovers that there is someone living locally that is a threat to them or their household, they may refuse the property within 24 hours of signing the tenancy.

Please note that refusing a suitable offer may lead to the Council discharging any legal obligation it has to rehouse an applicant.

(11) Section 214 of the Housing Act 1996

Chapter 8: Other Housing Options

Prevention and Options Service

This Lettings Policy has clearly set out a number of priorities.

For applicants who are threatened with homelessness or suffer from lower levels of need the Council has introduced the Prevention and Options service.

This service advises residents on all available housing options as well as working hard to prevent homelessness through schemes such as:

- Homeless at Home and mediation
- Helping secure private sector lettings
- Helping secure home improvements to allow people to remain in residence.

The amount of social housing available each year is extremely limited. The Council has developed its Prevention and Options service to advise applicants on the Housing Register, or people in danger of homelessness, of alternative options. This section describes some alternative ways of existing council and housing association tenants, and in some cases those on the housing register securing accommodation. People's needs and circumstances are considered before an offer is made.

Table 2: Mobility Scheme options

Mobility Option	Description
Homeswap Scheme	HOMESWAP (Housing Organisation Mobility and Exchange Services) is a national scheme. It allows councils and housing associations to put people forward for each other's housing.
Seaside and Country Homes	The Seaside and Country Homes scheme allows council tenants and housing association tenants, aged 60 or over, to give up their council properties and move to the coast or countryside.
Anchor Trust Retirement Homes	The Anchor Trust is a housing association that provides sheltered housing in many parts of the country. This is accommodation for older people, with the services of a warden if needed.
Moving out of London	<p>Moving out of London may be an option. Some towns and cities have social and affordable housing to rent or buy. You can apply to move out of London if you are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haringey Council tenant • Haringey housing association tenant • Homeless household living in temporary accommodation provided by Haringey Council • Homeless household accepted as 'homeless at home' • Household registered for housing.

Chapter 9: Reviews and Complaints

All applicants have a right to appeal under the Housing Act 1996 ⁽¹²⁾. This means that they have:

- a) The right of review of any decision not to give a preference under the policy.
- b) The right, on request, to be informed of any decision about the facts of an applicant's case which has been, or is likely to be, taken into account in considering whether to make an allocation
- c) The right to a review or request any decision to treat an applicant as ineligible for any reason..

Homeless applicants also have an additional right of review of the suitability of any offer under Section 202 of the Housing Act 1996. There are three other appeals against the offers of accommodation that are available where the applicant does not have a statutory review. These are

1. Council tenants
2. Housing Register applicants that Haringey have not accepted a homelessness duty
3. Homeless applicants who applied before 1st April 1997.

Complaints

For applicants concerned at the quality of the service they received the opportunity to make a complaint exists. Haringey operates a three-stage procedure for dealing with complaints:

Stage 1 Local Resolution.

When we receive your complaint, we will try to sort out the problem straight away. If we can't, we will write to you within 2 working days to let you know who is dealing with your complaint. We reply in writing to you within 15 working days

Stage 2 Service Investigation

If you are unhappy with our Stage 1 reply, you are entitled to have your complaint considered by a senior manager in the relevant service. You should contact the Directorate complaints officer to explain why you are unhappy with the Stage 1 response.

Stage 3 Independent Review

If you are unhappy with our stage 2 reply, the Central Feedback Team (formerly Corporate Complaints' Team) can conduct an investigation. The Central Feedback Team is independent of the service departments and will carry out an impartial investigation of your complaint on behalf of the Chief Executive.

(12) Section 167(4a) (b) or Section 160A (9) of the Housing Act 1996.

Chapter 10: Applicants Rights

Applicants for housing are entitled to:

- free advice and information about making a housing application
- help with their application if they require it.
- have their application considered by us
- have their application kept confidential
- ask for information to help them to judge their chances of being offered accommodation including whether appropriate accommodation is likely to become available and how long they might have to wait
- be informed of any decision made and the facts of the case
- receive in writing the Council decision not to consider a person for housing because of unacceptable behaviour by them and the reasons for the decision

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THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE**EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS**

At Key Stage 1 (7 years olds) results have not altered significantly over the last five years at level 2+. They have tracked the national results but remain on average 6% below the national figures. The results for the more able seven year olds achieving level 3 are in line with results nationally.

At Key Stage 2 (11 year olds) progress has been made in English with an increase this year of 2% to 74%, compared to 79% nationally and in maths an increase of 2% to 70%, compared to 76% nationally- these results are ahead of the national increases for these two subjects. In science the figure has remained at 78%, compared to 87% nationally. Key Stage 2 remains our main priority to raise standards particularly in those schools where fewer than 65% of 11 year olds achieve the national standard. The number of primary schools with fewer than 65% of 11 year olds achieving national standards continues to decline from 23 in English in 2000 to 11 in 2006 and from 26 in maths in 2000 to 18 in 2006. We need to accelerate this progress to enable standards to rise even further at Key Stage 3 and 4 and to support young people in to early adulthood.

The attainment of looked after children (LAC) is difficult to compare over time as the cohort is relatively small and includes a number of young people with special needs. This means that final attainment levels for the cohort can vary substantially year on year. At Key Stage 1 level 2 and above results for LAC has improved in reading from 47% to 50%, in writing from 41% to 50% and declined in maths from 65% to 60%. At Key Stage 2, only 18 children sat the tests and a number of these children has special educational needs, as a result level 4 and above English results have declined from 57% to 26%, in maths declined from 43% to 35% and science results have remained at 57%. Using these statistics to monitor the progress of this group of young people, especially at Key Stage 2, is not especially useful.

At Key Stage 3 (14 year olds) the level 5 and above results are very provisional. Currently English results have dropped by 5% from 64% to 59%. We expect that when the results have been validated and checked this will improve to 61%. Maths has improved from 61% to 63% (expect to increase to 65%). Science has improved from 52% to 54% (expect to increase to 57%). There are currently no national results available for 2006. For LAC at Key Stage 3 results are not currently available.

At Key Stage 3, the number of schools where fewer than 50% of pupils achieve level 5 and above in English remains two, in maths the number has fallen from three to one and in science the number of schools has fallen from six to four.

At Key Stage 4 (16 year olds) preliminary results once again show an increase this year from 48.9% to 53.2% which we anticipate will be twice the national rate of progress when figures are announced later in the year. Last year the value-added position for Haringey between Key Stage 3 and 4 put us in 11th position nationally and in 7th position between Key Stage 2 and 4. We expect to be in a strong position again this year.

For LAC at Key Stage 4, 5+ A* - C GCSE results have improved from 12% to 21%, at 5+ A* - G have improved from 41% to 48% and at 1 A* - G have improved from 58% to 60%.

In November when all the analyses are done we will be able to report on the progress made by different ethnic minority groups.

There are no schools in Haringey judged by Ofsted to require special measures to improve, two have serious weaknesses but are now judged to be making good progress and will probably be re-inspected in the autumn, and the two primary schools given a notice to improve have now strengthened their provision. The vast majority of Haringey schools when inspected have had a very favourable report with two primary schools achieving "excellent" across all performance measures by Ofsted and three others with an overall good and some outstanding features.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

There has been a steady improvement over the last four years in secondary, primary and special school attendance but it remains below national averages – continued work is needed to reduce unauthorised absence. There has been a small decline in attendance in a number of primary schools and targeted work is in place.

The good record on low exclusions is being maintained after earlier difficulties and where fixed-term exclusions are used as a behaviour management tool this is being challenged at school level.

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Haringey has implemented the Pan-London co-ordinated system for secondary admissions successfully and all Haringey children had a single offer for 2005 and again in 2006 and all deadlines were met. Admissions are now on schedule for e-admission for 2007. The first year of co-ordinated admissions for the primary sector has also gone very well. Appeals at both primary and secondary have fallen significantly in the last few years- at primary level from 100 in 2004 to 53 this year and at secondary level from 233 in 2004 to 134 in 2006.

SOCIAL CARE INDICATORS

There have been significant improvements in social care in 2005-06 with performance in six performance indicators now judged to be in the top band of performance when compared with other councils. These are: the stability of LAC placements; the increased number of LAC in education, employment and training after the age of 16; re-registration of children and young people on the child protection register; the reduction in the time they spend on the child protection register; and the percentage of LAC who have communicated their views to a statutory review. The major focus now is to continue to drive up performance in relation to LAC and to ensure that the high performance around safeguarding children and young people is maintained and further improved.

CHILDREN'S NETWORKS

The delivery of the Children and Young People's Service is now planned through three Children's Networks (CNs) which are based upon council's wards. The implementation phase began in April 2006 following some very detailed consultations. The CNs will have multi-agency teams focused on creating 'the team around the child' thereby ensuring that services are provided close to children and families. The Children's Centres will be key to the delivery of multi-agency working alongside increased numbers of Extended Schools and play provision. Together these initiatives will provide wraparound services in the community.

CHILDREN'S CENTRES

The rapid development of the children's centres initiative has now ensured that phase 1 is on target with 10 centres now designated and open. Eight more are in the planning stage in phase 2 which is targeted up to 2008.

The Phase Two target areas are the remaining 20% most disadvantaged wards - Harringay, Tottenham Green & Bruce Grove wards - and the 30% super output areas with high deprivation across the borough. It is a Government condition that the centres provide services to at least 80% of the under fives in the borough (approximately 14500) by March 2008.

JOINT AREA REVIEW

The Joint Area Review (JAR) took place between June 12th and 23rd and the final report is set to be published on October 9th. The feedback so far is very favourable and we are looking forward to a positive report. The JAR is an aspect of the whole partnership for children and young people in Haringey and involves Primary Care Trust (PCT) provision.

SPECIFIC HIGH PROFILE INITIATIVES

The headlines (not in priority order) include:

- Phase 2 of the Children's Centres roll-out.
- Approximately £20m of capital funding is in place to deliver 120 additional primary places at Coldfall, Tetherdown and Coleridge.
- The development of an inclusive learning campus which will replace the primary provision at Moselle and William C Harvey special schools with a purpose built special unit attached to Broadwater Farm Primary School.
- Further reduction in the number of young people not in education, employment or training.
- Continuing to improve the Youth Service with the new centre at Bruce Grove and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Centre now open at St Thomas More secondary school as well as three mobile units to travel around the borough.
- The new 6th Form Centre is well on target to open in September 2007. The principal and several senior staff are now appointed and busy with preparations for next year.
- Approximately £165m has been secured through the national Building Schools for the Future (BSF) funding to deliver transformational change to teaching and learning in our secondary schools through rebuilding or redesigning our secondary school estate, including state-of-the-art ICT infrastructure to deliver the curriculum for the 21st century, including a new secondary school on the Heartlands site.
- Increasing the number of extended schools and integrating the Play Service into extended school services.

Hornsey Central Hospital – Stakeholder Briefing / Update for Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

September 2006.

1. Introduction.

This paper provides a brief update on the TPCT's ongoing work in relation to the redevelopment of the Hornsey Central Hospital site.

2. Primary Care Resource Centre (PCRC) Development

In December 2004 HTPCT received planning permission to develop a Primary Care Resource Centre on the Hornsey Central Hospital Site.

The initial business case was to provide a wide range of primary and community health services as well as a dementia day care centre and a pharmacy. The plans included significant space for expansion and flexibility in the future.

However, the TPCT has not to date been in a position to approve the final business case for the scheme in the context of the TPCT's overall financial position and value for money / affordability of the scheme in the longer term. The PCT is continuing to review all options to improve value for money and affordability and is currently pursuing the following avenues:

- Modelling in impact of capital receipt from sale of phase 2 land (see below).
- Modelling in impact of potential capital receipts from other TPCT properties as part of an overall strategic review of estate. (Specifically reviewing option to dispose of Fortis Green clinic once New facility at Hornsey is operational.)
- Developing a bid against first tranche capital funding recently announced by DOH to support development of community health services (Community Hospitals funding). The original PCRC scheme is significantly in line with ethos and approach set out in community hospitals guidance but the TPCT is currently working with stakeholders to review options in the context of the new guidance. If the TPCT is successful in its bid the overall affordability of the scheme will significantly improve (i.e. the ongoing revenue costs of the scheme per m²) and this potentially opens up a range of options for the PCRC that had previously been discounted due to affordability – for example the

inclusion of staff accommodation for an integrated older people's team. The bid has to be prepared and submitted by end of September.

- Working with local GPs and the West Haringey practice based commissioning collaborative to ensure full clinical support and engagement in the development. This includes discussions with practices potentially seeking to relocate their core service to a PCRC at Hornsey Central and well as discussions with all practices about new, extended and collaboratively provided primary care services. The services would be accessible to all West Haringey residents regardless of which practice registered with and could include, for example, minor surgery, diagnostics, clinical assessment and urgent treatment services.
- At the date of the last stakeholder meeting the TPCT was in discussion with an independent sector company re. potential joint ownership / partnership arrangement. This option has not been completely discounted but we have decided to work on the options described above in the first instance.
- Additionally options that would see the overall size of the development and / or a proportion of the development being for non health usage have been explored but are not being actively pursued at the current time pending
- The **PUBLIC MEETING scheduled for the 13th September (see attached press release)** will be an opportunity for local residents and stakeholders to contribute to the development of practice based commissioning collaborative work plan / priorities for service redesign as well as an opportunity to contribute to our thinking as we develop the community hospitals bid.

3. Land disposal

As notified to stakeholders in February 2006 HTPCT has formally taken the decision to dispose of that part of the Hornsey Central Hospital site that is not required for the PCRC development set out above. The reasons for this decision were fully discussed at the time.

The capital receipt from the sale will contribute to the affordability of the PCRC development as set out above.

We are working jointly with Camden and Islington Mental Health Trust who currently own part of the land to take forward the land disposal. We expect to appoint agents and start marketing the sale of site within the next 6 – 8 weeks.

Helen Brown
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1st September 2006.

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