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04 November 2024

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

Dear Member,

Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel - Tuesday, 5th
November, 2024

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

8. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE (PAGES 1 - 14)

Yours sincerely

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Report for: Housing, Planning & Development Scrutiny Panel – 5th November

Title: Work Programme Development

Report

authorised by: Ayshe Simsek, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager

Lead Officer: Philip Slawther, Principal Scrutiny Officer

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Ward(s) affected: N/A

Report for Key/

Non-Key Decision: N/A

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the work planning process for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the four Scrutiny Panels following the recent Scrutiny Café engagement event.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Panel notes the comments and feedback received from the Scrutiny Survey and the Scrutiny Café consultation event and gives consideration to including the priorities raised when developing its work programme.
- 2.2 That the Panel give consideration to the agenda items and reports required for its next meeting

3. Reasons for decision

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) is responsible for developing an overall work plan, including work for its standing Scrutiny Panels. In putting this together, the Panel will need to have regard to their capacity to deliver the programme and officers' capacity to support them in that task.

4. Scrutiny Café and development of Work Programme 2024-26

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Café event to inform the 2024-26 Work Programme was held on 20th September 2024 at the Engine Room in Tottenham. A large number of community and voluntary sector organisations were invited, and the event was well attended.
- 4.2 An online Scrutiny Survey was also developed and went live in August and early September in the run-up to the Scrutiny Café event. The survey was promoted on the Council's website and social media channels, as well as being

disseminated through various partnership networks in the local community. At the time of compiling the results, the Scrutiny Survey received 119 responses. The issues that respondents thought should be prioritised for each of the scrutiny bodies is included in the feedback from the Scrutiny Café attached as an appendix to this report. The Committee are invited to use the information received at the Scrutiny Café and the results of the Scrutiny Survey to help inform the work planning process for 2024-25 & 2025-26.

- 4.3 Participants at the Scrutiny Café were divided into five tables, each one orientated to a particular scrutiny body, namely: Adults and Health; Children and Young People; Climate, Community Safety & Environment; Placemaking & Housing; and the main Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Each table was chaired by the relevant chair of that body. During the Scrutiny Café, attendees were invited to put forward their issues of concern, and the areas in which they thought Scrutiny should look at as part of its work programme for the next two years. Attendees were then asked to prioritise the issues that had been put forward and suggest a top three.
- 4.4 A summary of the issues and priorities identified through the Scrutiny Café and Scrutiny Survey for the Housing, Planning & Development Scrutiny Panel are provided as appendices to this report. These priorities should be carefully considered developing the work programme. Not all of the priorities put forward can be Scrutiny Reviews. Members should note that there are other methods of including a particular topic in the work programme, short of undertaking a review, such as; questions to the Cabinet Member, and a one-off report to Scrutiny. Scrutiny can also undertake site visits and invite external participants to attend meetings and give evidence.
- 4.5 At the 14th October meeting of OSC, each of the four Scrutiny Panels was tasked with looking at the feedback from the scrutiny café in relation to their respective areas and to use this information to develop their own work programmes. The work programmes for each of the panels will come back to the November meeting of OSC for ratification.

5. Effective Scrutiny Work Programmes

- 5.1 An effective scrutiny work programme should reflect a balance of activities:
 - Holding the Executive to account;
 - Policy review and development – reviews to assess the effectiveness of existing policies or to inform the development of new strategies;
 - Performance management – identifying under-performing services, investigating and making recommendations for improvement;
 - External scrutiny – scrutinising and holding to account partners and other local agencies providing key services to the public;
 - Public and community engagement – engaging and involving local communities in scrutiny activities and scrutinising those issues which are of concern to the local community.
- 5.2 Key features of an effective work programme:

- A member led process, short listing and prioritising topics – with support from officers – that;
 - reflects local needs and priorities – issues of community concern as well as Borough Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy priorities
 - prioritises topics for scrutiny that have most impact or benefit
 - involves local stakeholders
 - is flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues

5.3 Depending on the selected topic and planned outcomes, scrutiny work will be carried out in a variety of ways, using various formats. This will include a variety of one-off reports. In accordance with the scrutiny protocol, the OSC and Scrutiny Panels will draw from the following to inform their work:

- Performance Reports;
- One off reports on matters of national or local interest or concern;
- Issues arising out of internal and external assessment (e.g. Ofsted, Care Quality Commission);
- Reports on strategies and policies under development or other issues on which the Cabinet or officers would like scrutiny views or support;
- Progress reports on implementing previous scrutiny recommendations accepted by the Cabinet or appropriate Executive body.

5.4 In addition, in-depth scrutiny work, including task and finish projects, are an important aspect of Overview and Scrutiny and provide opportunities to thoroughly investigate topics and to make improvements. Through the gathering and consideration of evidence from a wider range of sources, this type of work enables more robust and effective challenge as well as an increased likelihood of delivering positive outcomes. In depth reviews should also help engage the public and provide greater transparency and accountability.

5.5 In the past, Scrutiny has undertaken short, focused pieces of work, referred to as 'Scrutiny in a day'. It is important that there is a balance between depth and breadth of work undertaken so that resources can be used to their greatest effect.

6. Contribution to strategic outcomes

6.1 The contribution of scrutiny to the corporate priorities and the Corporate Delivery Plan will be considered routinely as part of the OSC's work.

7. Statutory Officers comments

Finance and Procurement

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report. Should any of the work undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny generate recommendations with financial implications these will be highlighted at that time.

Legal

- 7.2 There are no immediate legal implications arising from the report.
- 7.3 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the approval of the future scrutiny work programme falls within the remit of the OSC.
- 7.4 Under Section 21 (6) of the Local Government Act 2000, an OSC has the power to appoint one or more sub-committees to discharge any of its functions. In accordance with the Constitution, the appointment of Scrutiny Panels (to assist the scrutiny function) falls within the remit of the OSC.
- 7.5 Scrutiny Panels are non-decision making bodies and the work programme and any subsequent reports and recommendations that each scrutiny panel produces must be approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such reports can then be referred to Cabinet or Council under agreed protocols.

Equality

- 7.6 The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act (2010) to have due regard to:
- Tackle discrimination and victimisation of persons that share the characteristics protected under S4 of the Act. These include the characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (formerly gender) and sexual orientation;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not;
 - Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.
- 7.7 The Committee should ensure that it addresses these duties by considering them within its work plan and those of its panels, as well as individual pieces of work. This should include considering and clearly stating;
- How policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share the nine protected characteristics;
 - Whether the impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate;
 - Whether there is equality of access to services and fair representation of all groups within Haringey;
 - Whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people, are being realised.

- 7.8 The Committee should ensure that equalities comments are based on evidence. Wherever possible this should include demographic and service level data and evidence of residents/service-users views gathered through consultation.

8. Use of Appendices

Appendix A – Feedback from the Scrutiny Café - Housing Planning and Development Panel

Appendix B - Draft Work Programme.

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Scrutiny Café – 20 September 2024

Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel

Top Priorities from Survey from within terms of reference:

- 1) Homelessness & Temporary Accommodation – 57
- 2) Council Home building – 43
- 3) Housing Strategy and Development – 41
- 4) Social Housing – 40
- 5) Planning Policy & Enforcement - 33

Top Priorities from the Scrutiny Café:

- 1) Aids & Adaptions
- 2) Fire Safety
- 3) How the Council communicates with its residents
- 4) Repairs and Maintenance
- 5) Use of Bailiffs

Specific Suggested Issues or Concerns:

| No. | Suggestion | Comments and Feedback from Café | Priority – High, Medium or Low | Proposed Action (Item for Panel meeting/potential review/Cabinet Member Question/no further action) |
|-----|----------------------|---|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Aids and Adaptations | <p>Delays in aids and adaptations and failure of different departments to adequately communicate with each other. Lack of clarity on the timescales for adaptation work.</p> <p>Lack of accessible housing in general.</p> <p>Maintenance of old housing stock used by vulnerable residents</p> | High | Item for future Scrutiny meeting |
| 2. | Fire Safety | <p>Failure to remove cladding in high rise blocks. Council not transparent and honest with residents. Failure to take safety of residents seriously.</p> <p>Lack of accountability/transparency</p> <p>Lack of detail about works carried out.</p> | High | Item for future Scrutiny meeting |

| No. | Suggestion | Comments and Feedback from Café | Priority – High, Medium or Low | Proposed Action (Item for Panel meeting/potential review/Cabinet Member Question/no further action) |
|-----|---|---|---|---|
| | | Fire safety in unconventional buildings e.g. converted industrial units. Personal evacuation plan for disabled residents | | |
| 3. | Improvements on how we communicate with residents especially in relation to repairs | Lack of named housing officers How do we communicate with residents in TA and how do those residents access Council services when they are housed by another organisation. Slow response times from customer services. Communication between different council departments – things not being recorded and slippages. Failure to be transparent and failure to keep to agreed timescales. Lack of joined-up databases across the Council. Risks if technological upgrades aren't completed Being able to navigate residents through housing pathways and support from VCS organisations Poor communication between housing charities and the Council | Medium | Questions to Cabinet Member. A future report on repairs will be brought a panel meeting as part of an update on the Housing Improvement Programme. |
| 4. | Repairs and Cyclical maintenance of estates | Delays in repairs. Cancelled appointments and repeat repairs. Delays caused by industrial action. Failure to undertake external decorations on estates. Quality of data. Health impacts from poor housing. Progress in meeting decent homes standard. Failure to carry out repairs to balconies on estates. | High | Item for future Scrutiny Panel meeting |
| 5. | How do we monitor the work carried out by contractors and sub-contractors | Fire Safety Inspections and Repairs. Vetting/due diligence of sub-contractors. How do we ensure they are good tradespeople. Quality of value for money from contractors | Medium | Questions to Cabinet Member & repairs will form apart of a future update to the Panel on the Housing |

| No. | Suggestion | Comments and Feedback from Café | Priority – High, Medium or Low | Proposed Action (Item for Panel meeting/potential review/Cabinet Member Question/no further action) |
|-----|--|--|--------------------------------|--|
| | | | | Improvement Programme. |
| 6 | Progress in completing Energy Performance certificates and other compliance certificates | The quality of data on EPCs and other compliance certificates. How many homes are unassessed? | Medium | A future update to the Panel on completion of Actions from Housing Regulator. |
| 7. | Housing Register and the length of the waiting list – 12k households. Impact of this on Temporary Accommodation | How can we reduce the length of time people spend on the register? Average Band 'B' case will spend over 10 years on the register. Should the bands be re-looked at? Should we prioritise local people of those most in need? Delays in carrying out Housing Register assessments. The Council needs to be better at identifying need in terms of housing prioritisation | High | Possible future Scrutiny Review into the Allocations Policy |
| 8. | Impact of cuts to winter fuel payments and the uptake of local people to the warm homes discount. | Do we have data on numbers of eligible people taking up the warm homes discount? | Low | Written Question to the Cabinet Member. |
| 9. | Planning | Performance of the Planning Services - delays in sites being given planning permission and the additional pressure put on housing. | Low | Question to Cabinet Member |
| 10. | Private Rented Sector | Support for people being evicted. Standard of accommodation in private sector. Enforcement against bad landlords. | Low | Question to Cabinet Member |
| 11. | Use of bailiffs | The Council's use of bailiffs for Council Tax arrears. There is a clear link between rent arrears and homelessness. | Medium | Question to Cabinet Member |
| 12. | Empty Properties | A clear strategy for empty commercial and residential properties. There was a general feeling that the number had increased since the pandemic. How is the Council bringing empty properties back into use (voids)? Buying more street properties | Medium | An report on Voids to be brought to a future Scrutiny Panel. |

| No. | Suggestion | Comments and Feedback from Café | Priority – High, Medium or Low | Proposed Action (Item for Panel meeting/potential review/Cabinet Member Question/no further action) |
|-----|---|--|--------------------------------|---|
| 13. | Homelessness | What support do we offer to veterans? A feeling that homelessness provision was working better for single people, rather than families. | Medium | Question to Cabinet Member |
| 14. | Greater resident involvement in contracting and procuring of services for Council tenants | Involvement of residents in building procurement and monitoring. | Low | Question to Cabinet Member |
| 15. | Services for people who are not Council tenants. | There was a feeling that if you are in the private rented sector or a leaseholder then the Council doesn't really listen to you or provide anywhere near the same level of support. | Low | Question to Cabinet Member |
| 16. | Leaseholders – Service charges. Leaseholder repairs | Expensive and a feeling that leaseholders get a bad deal. Repairs - Delays and expensive. Leaseholders being unable to carry out their own works. Disrepair to properties causing issues for neighbouring leaseholder properties | Medium | A report on Leaseholders was presented to the Committee at its July 2024 meeting. |
| 17. | Housing advocacy service & support for older residents | There is no advocacy service for older people. How can we support older people to navigate the housing system. There is an increase in older people having housing issues and they tend to be more digitally excluded. | Low | Questions to Cabinet Member. |
| 18. | Process of supporting people who want to move out of the borough | Are we doing enough to help those with secure tenancies, that want to move elsewhere, to realise this? Do we provide tailored support. It's not clear who a resident would talk to. A specific instance of a person having to liaise directly with Housing Director at Bedford – huge number of forms and documentary evidence required. | Medium | Questions were put to officers on this topic at the September 2024 meeting. A further update will be requested to a future meeting as part of an update on the Neighbourhood Moves scheme. |

Housing, Planning & Development Scrutiny Panel

Work Plan 2024 – 2026

| 1. Scrutiny review projects; These are dealt with through a combination of specific evidence gathering meetings that will be arranged as and when required and other activities, such as visits. Should there not be sufficient capacity to cover all these issues through in-depth pieces of work, they could instead be addressed through a “one-off” item at a scheduled meeting of the Panel. These issues will be subject to further development and scoping. It is proposed that the Committee consider issues that are “cross cutting” in nature for review by itself i.e., ones that cover the terms of reference of more than one of the panels. | | |
|--|--|----------|
| Project | Comments | Priority |
| TA Placements Policy & TA Discharge of Duty Policy | The Panel would like to do a short review to align with the development of these two strategies. The Panel would like to look at Temporary Accommodation and how the organisation decides who is placed in what type of property. The Panel is concerned about the use of expensive nightly paid accommodation and the use of Travelodges. The Panel would also like to look at the types of accommodation that we place people in to discharge out housing duty, particularly use of the private rented sector. | |

| 2. “One-off” Items; These will be dealt with at scheduled meetings of the Panel. The following are suggestions for when particular items may be scheduled. | |
|---|-----------------|
| Date | Potential Items |
| | |

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|--|---|
| 2024/25 | |
| 30 July 24 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference • Housing Asset Management Plan • Leaseholders • Fire Safety Action Plan |
| 26 September 2024 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Strategy & Policies Programme • HRA Capital Governance • Placemaking Programmes and Funding • Response to Ombudsman Complaint in relation to Planning Application HGY/2022/4537 |
| 05 November 2024 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Associations • Work Programme |
| 21 November 2024 (Budget Meeting) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget scrutiny |
| 06 March 2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan (TBC) • Aids & Adaptations (Joint update from Adults & Housing) • Update on the Council's Housebuilding Programme • Allocations Policy (TBC) • Cabinet Member questions (Cllr Williams) <p>* The finalised list of items for this agenda will be agreed closer to the time and will be dependent upon the wider submission timescales for the Local Plan and the Allocations Policy.</p> |
| 2025/26 | |

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Meeting 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference • Update on the Housing Improvement Programme and outstanding actions from the Social Housing regulator referral • Repairs and Cyclical maintenance of existing estates • 12 month update on the actions from the Review into PRS |
| Meeting 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Fire Safety Actions • Cabinet Member questions (Cllr Gordon) |
| Meeting 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Homelessness and TA. • Further update on the Neighbourhood Moves Scheme (Update on its implementation and progress to date) • Cabinet Member questions (Cllr Williams) |
| Meeting 4 (Budget) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Scrutiny • Update on Legal Disrepair claims |
| Meeting 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Social Housing Consumer Standards • Voids |

Indicative future agenda items:

- Housing Associations
- Local Plan update
- Allocations Policy
- An update on zero carbon future building projects and zero carbon demolition projects. It was suggested that this could dovetail with an update on the Local Plan.
- Complaints and how do we handle these? Learning from complaints.

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