

Title: Social Housing Scrutiny Report
Cabinet response to the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel recommendations

Report authorised by: Helen Fisher, Interim Director, Housing Regeneration & Planning

Lead Officer: Dan Hawthorn, Director of Housing & Growth

Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** Key

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 The report sets out the proposed Cabinet response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on social housing as proposed by the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

- 2.1 The new administration is keen to welcome the input of the scrutiny arrangements into the formulation of new policy. This makes it all the more welcome that at one of the very first Cabinet meetings of the new administration we can, in some detail, engage with the ideas and proposals that emerged from the extensive investigations of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel, under the last administration.
- 2.2 I look forward to working closely with my fellow members in scrutiny as we seek to deliver the aims set out in our manifesto to improve the availability, affordability and quality of housing for all residents in the borough.

3. Recommendations

Members are asked:

- 3.1 To consider the Overview and Scrutiny Report on social housing (attached as Appendix 1).
- 3.2 To agree the responses to the Overview and Scrutiny report recommendations (attached as Appendix 2).

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1 On 26 March 2018, Overview and Scrutiny Committee approved the report of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel (HRSP) on social housing.
- 4.2 In developing its report, the HRSP held a number of evidence gathering sessions and took evidence from Council officers as well as a range of experts and local stakeholders. The HRSP then made a number of recommendations, which were adopted by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 March 2018.
- 4.3 The recommendations made in the HRSP report can be used to help guide the development of the policy agenda in housing, regeneration and planning for the new administration. While the report does not set out a detailed list of explicit objectives to be delivered to a given timescale, it does propose a clear direction of travel for policy in these areas. Many of the recommendations are positive and are either currently being incorporated into the Council's approach or can be incorporated going forward. Some recommendations present challenges to implementation and have therefore been responded to cautiously, with partial agreement. Specific reasons for each recommendation response are given in Appendix 2, the draft responses to recommendations. The overall approach of the report – which is comprehensive and detailed – is a helpful framework to inform the future housing policy of the Council.

5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1 None.

6. Background information

- 6.1 The Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel (HRSP) produced two reports on the Haringey Development Vehicle (HDV): an interim report on the governance arrangements of the HDV, approved by Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 17 January 2017, and a final HDV report approved by OSC on 13 June 2017. Following Cabinet's decision to establish the Haringey Development Vehicle (HDV) on the 3 July 2017, the HRSP agreed to set up a scrutiny review project into the wider remit of social housing. The HRSP sought to examine models of regeneration and estate renewal other than the HDV to see what other options were available to local authorities and the lessons that could be learnt.
- 6.2 The provision of social housing is a significant issue facing both local and national government. For the purposes of the Social Housing Scrutiny Report, the HRSP defined social housing as housing at social rent levels. In carrying out a scrutiny review on social housing, the HRSP felt that delivering more social housing was a crucial factor in addressing the current housing crisis. With this in mind, the panel undertook a high level review of social housing, focusing on national, regional and local issues.
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7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

- 7.1 The recommendations and responses made will guide the Council's actions towards achieving the strategic outcomes set out across the full scope of the Corporate Plan 'Building a Stronger Haringey together', and in particular Priorities 4 (Growth) and 5 (Housing), as well as to the more detailed expression of these ambitions in the Economic Development and Growth Strategy and Housing Strategy.

8. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)

Finance

- 8.1 Where there are financial implications of implementing the recommendations within this report, it is important that the recommendations are fully costed and a funding source identified before they can be agreed. If the recommendation requires funding beyond existing budgets or available external funding, then Cabinet will need to agree the additional funding before any proposed action can proceed.
- 8.2 The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
 - 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.

The three parts of the duty applies to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

- 8.3 The Scrutiny Report recommendations aim to improve the quality of life for social housing tenants in Haringey. Women, BAME communities, and individuals with disabilities and/or long-term health conditions are overrepresented among social housing tenants in Haringey. Although no data is available on single parents in Haringey social housing, single female parent households are overrepresented among those in temporary accommodation and are therefore likely to be overrepresented among social tenants. Where the recommendations of the Scrutiny Report are incorporated into the Council's

approach, it can be anticipated that they will have a positive impact for social tenants with protected characteristics. Where the recommendations are not adopted in full but are used in future to help guide the development of the policy agenda in housing, regeneration and planning, it can be anticipated that the policy agenda will be more responsive to social tenants with protected characteristics.

- 8.4 The Scrutiny Report recommendations also seek to increase the quantity of social housing in Haringey. This would be likely to have a positive impact on individuals in temporary accommodation. Data held by the Council suggests that women, young people, and BAME communities are over-represented among those living in temporary accommodation. As such, where recommendations that seek to increase the supply of social housing are adopted, it is reasonable to anticipate a positive impact on residents with protected characteristics.

Legal

- 8.5 The Assistant Director Governance and Law has been consulted in the drafting of this report.
- 8.6 The terms of the Right to Buy Retention Agreement prevent the Council from using retained Right to Buy receipts in funding provision of housing through a wholly-owned company for housing development (Recommendation 3a and 3b).
- 8.7 All Council housing is let through its Allocations Policy, primarily through the choice based letting system. There are however occasions, particularly when making offers to homeless households, when direct offers are made. A policy decision that an offer of housing above the 5th floor to a family should not count as their single offer would require amendment of the Allocations Policy to implement.
- 8.8 Councillors sitting on the Board of Homes for Haringey owe duties of good faith and confidentiality to and collective responsibility for decisions of that Board. Any changes to the Board's governance to link to the Council scrutiny process will require approval of the Board.
- 8.9 Consultation prior to decisions on estate regeneration is required both by statute and Council's established policy and practice, and the Council fulfils those requirements. The consultation process in law is a means of exploring consultees' views and informing Council decision-making. The decision however remains that of the Council, not least because regeneration schemes often have implications for neighbouring areas/estates or even the whole borough – including residents of other Council housing.
- 8.10 Ballots are a useful test of resident opinion on fully-worked up schemes, where the outcome has no broader implications for the borough. Where however there is a ballot there is an expectation that the result will be decisive. A blanket policy of ballots on all schemes would open the Council's decision-making to challenge where the scheme in question has broader implications for the Council.

- 8.11 When proposals are brought forward to implement the accepted recommendations in this report further legal comment will be required.
- 8.12 Other legal implications appear in the Responses to Recommendations.

Equalities

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- 8.14 The Scrutiny Report recommendations also seek to increase the quantity of social housing in Haringey. This would be likely to have a positive impact on individuals in temporary accommodation. Data held by the Council suggests that women, young people, and BAME communities are over-represented among those living in temporary accommodation. As such, where recommendations that seek to increase the supply of social housing are adopted, it is reasonable to anticipate a positive impact on residents with protected characteristics.

9. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1: Social Housing Scrutiny Report (including appendices)

Appendix 2: Draft response to recommendations

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 10.1 Draft minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 26 March 2018 are available on the Haringey Council website at [this link](#).