



Meeting: Integrated Housing Board

Date: 10 December 2008

Report Title: Haringey Housing Strategy Update

Report of: Assistant Director for Strategic and Community Housing Services

Introduction

At its meeting on 15 October 2008, the Integrated Housing Board approved the methodology and timetable to be used for the development of Haringey's new 10 year Housing Strategy.

This report updates the Board on the progress made since that meeting.

Recommendations

It is **recommended** that the Integrated Housing Board:

- (a) Notes the progress that is being made in developing the Strategy;
- (b) Endorses the approach and timetable that is proposed for the ongoing development of the Strategy; and
- (c) Notes the contents of the working document (attached as Appendix A) and provides feedback on the content.

Progress to date

To date, the following work (supported by a 'key issues' paper) has been undertaken to develop Haringey's 10 year Housing Strategy:

- **Chief Executive's Management Board**

Meeting on 4 November 2008, this group of the Council's Chief Officers considered the Housing Strategy and advised that:

- (a) The Haringey Strategic Partnership must play an active role in the development of the Housing Strategy
- (b) Value for money considerations must be incorporated into the Strategy

▪ **Stakeholder Group**

On 10 November 2008, a group of Council Officers met with representatives from Homes for Haringey, London Councils, the GLA and a number of RSLs and, after a wide ranging discussion, concluded that:

- (a) Sustainability must be at the heart of the Housing Strategy
- (b) A 'whole communities' approach is needed, drawing on all partners to provide residents with the support they need
- (c) The Tenant Services Authority offers an opportunity to share performance information about the management of social housing and could prove to be a very useful tool with which to improve performance where it is patchy across the borough
- (d) There is scope for estate renewal and regeneration in the borough. Although the 'credit crunch' makes delivery challenging at the moment, it is essential we plan for the long-term and explore the options now.
- (e) We need to explore alternative funding and delivery models, since delivery on the basis of cross-subsidisation is not viable in the current economic climate.
- (f) Neighbourhood regeneration has a big impact on resident satisfaction, especially where it is linked to the condition of individual homes.

▪ **Landlords Forum**

Meeting on 13 November 2008, more than fifty private landlords and rental agents considered the housing needs of the borough.

Of the landlords and rental agents present, about a third managed less than 3 properties and more than half managed more than 20 properties. A large proportion of these were 'buy to let' properties.

From consultation with the landlords and agents present (using voting technology), it was established that:

- (a) 40% felt that the most pressing need for investment was general repairs; 27% felt that the most pressing need was for energy efficiency
- (b) 45% said that the biggest problems they have with tenants is the poor condition in which properties are left at the end of the tenancy; 39% said that the biggest problem was the non-payment of rent.
- (c) In terms of the wider neighbourhood, 51% said that crime and anti social behaviour were the most important issue; 20% said transport links were the most important.

(d) More than three quarters said there was a possibility that they would expand their operation over the next 3 years.

▪ **RSL & Developers Forum**

On 25 November 2008, a group of Council Officers met with 2 developers and representatives of a dozen RSLs to consider the priorities for the new Housing Strategy and the challenges / opportunities resulting from the 'credit crunch'.

The RSL & Developers Forum agreed that the priorities were:

- (a) To maximise new supply across all tenures
- (b) To develop flexible tenure options - rent to buy; home ownership to renting; broadening the range and accessibility of shared equity options
- (c) To provide support for home owners – mortgage rescue and flexible tenure (see above) and new innovative mortgage products
- (d) To provide sustainable, well designed, energy efficient housing
- (e) To improve housing management standards and the co-ordination of housing management between the RSLs and the Council

The Forum concluded that, although the 'credit crunch' may provide new opportunities (lower land prices and construction costs, for example), the Planning authorities will need to be more flexible on the tenure mix of new developments, while market sales are difficult. As cross-subsidisation is no longer feasible, new subsidy arrangements (such as discounted public land) are needed for affordable housing.

▪ **Cabinet Members**

On 27 November 2008, the Council's Chief Officers met with the Cabinet Members to discuss the Housing Strategy and requested the following:

- (a) More consideration of housing and older people
- (b) More consideration of the private sector housing 'offer' and the way in which the sector is to be regulated
- (c) References to green and environmental issues to be enhanced
- (d) Specific objectives should be set to ensure that RSL accommodation is managed to a good standard
- (e) The Strategy should demonstrate the contribution that housing can make to help families to settle and stabilise, and how the borough can

invest in the social housing stock and adapt families' homes so they do not have to move as their family grows.

- (f) The Strategy should reflect the fact that there are particular needs associated with specific communities in the borough

Process for development

A draft Housing Strategy is under development, and the latest working document is attached at Appendix A.

Members of the Integrated Housing Board are invited to review the document and provide comments that will inform the development of this early draft.

Permission to consult on a draft strategy will be sought from the Council's Cabinet on 26 January 2008, following which there will be a seven week consultation period.

Consultation will take place with a wide range of stakeholders, including residents, partners, community groups and council staff, using a variety of methods. The consultation will make use of existing forums, including the Haringey Strategic Partnership and its theme boards, resident engagement mechanisms used by Homes for Haringey and RSL partners, community and voluntary groups, the Youth Council, the Haringey Forum for Older People, and the consultative forums in place for engaging with housing stakeholders.

A Housing Conference will be held in January or February 2009, and the Council's website, Haringey People, and customer access points in the borough will be used to ensure that the Strategy reaches a wide audience.

The results of the consultation will be incorporated into the final version of the Housing Strategy which will be 'signed off' by the Integrated Housing Board on 23 March 2009, and by the Council's Cabinet at its meeting in April 2009.

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