

Report for: Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel

Item number: 10

Title: Update on the Housing Strategy

Report authorised by: Dan Hawthorn, Director of Housing, Regeneration & Planning

Lead Officer: Alan Benson, Interim Assistant Director of Housing

Ward(s) affected: All

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

1. **Describe the issue under consideration**

Haringey Council has committed to developing a new Housing Strategy. Work on this new strategy is currently underway, and officers are planning to present a draft to Cabinet in early 2020.

2. **Cabinet Member Introduction**

n/a

3. **Recommendations**

To note the report.

4. **Background information**

Strategic context

- 4.1. Haringey's Housing Strategy sets the direction of travel for housing in the borough, identifying overall objectives, targets and the means to achieving these. Haringey's current Housing Strategy was adopted in 2016, and runs to 2022.
- 4.2. Many local authorities maintain a housing strategy, although it is not a statutory requirement to do so. It is, however, a particularly important document for councils that hold housing stock, and for Local Housing Authorities – and Haringey Council is both of these.
- 4.3. Following a number of changes at the national, regional and local level since the last Housing Strategy was adopted, Cabinet agreed, in November 2018, to develop a new Housing Strategy for the borough.

4.4. At the national level, the following changes have occurred since 2016:

- A number of policies that have been proposed by the 2010-2015 Government have been dropped, including policies on the forced sale of higher value council homes, on fixed term tenancies, and on 'pay to stay'.
- Affordable Rent homes has stopped being funded, and conversions of existing Social Rent to Affordable Rent have also stopped.
- The Homelessness Reduction Act has come into effect
- The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant has been introduced to fund homelessness services.
- The Social Housing Green paper was published in August 2018, marking a shift in the national mood on social housing in the past few years and in particular since the Grenfell Tower fire. However, it is as yet unclear whether the current government intends to bring this forward.
- Social rents are to return to CPI +1% increases.
- Most significantly, the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap has been lifted, allowing councils to deliver new council housing at scale.

4.5. At the regional level, the Mayor of London has started to prioritise spending on council housing, with a higher grant rate for new council homes. Haringey has been granted £62.8m of funding. The Mayor has also introduced two new types of housing, London Affordable Rent and London Living Rent. The former is a new general needs housing, with rents based on – although higher than - social rents. The latter is a form of intermediate housing, with rents based on local incomes.

4.6. At the local level, the current administration has made delivering 1,000 new Council homes at Council rents one of its top priorities. It also launched a Fairness Commission which will be publishing a report with recommendations on making Haringey a fairer borough.

4.7. A new Borough Plan was adopted in March 2019, following consultation with residents and stakeholders. Housing is one of the five priorities around which it is organised, under which sit three outcomes:

- We will work together to deliver the new homes Haringey needs, especially new affordable homes
- We will work together to prevent people from becoming homeless, and to reduce existing homelessness
- We will work together to drive up the quality of housing for everyone

4.8. As well as a new Borough Plan, work is also currently underway on a number of other strategies which are relevant to the Council's Housing Strategy. In particular, work on a new Local Plan is underway, a statutory planning document setting out how land in the borough is to be used.

Process for a new Housing Strategy

4.9. In November 2018, Cabinet noted that a new Housing Strategy would be developed. It was agreed that a Member Working Group would be set up to guide this work.

4.10. Following the adoption of the Borough Plan in March, work commenced on a new Housing Strategy. The Member Working Group has been established, and has

met three times, with two more meetings planned. The Member Working Group has held an introductory meeting for members to discuss the broad housing context and the Housing Strategy's place in relation to other Council strategies. Two meetings have been held to discuss two of the three outcomes on Housing in the Borough Plan:

- A meeting to discuss the delivery of new homes, in particular new affordable homes and new supported housing.
- A meeting to discuss the Council's approach to homelessness prevention and to households living in temporary accommodation.

A third meeting will be held in the coming weeks on the final outcome on housing quality, where the Working Group will discuss housing stock in the borough, including the Council's own stock. Further meetings may be held if necessary, and the group will also discuss the final draft for Cabinet.

4.11. The Member Working Group – which is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Estate Renewal – allows members to discuss the delivery approach to the Borough Plan's outcomes. Following this process, officers will engage with residents and stakeholders.

4.12. Haringey's Housing Strategy forms part of the Council's Policy Framework. This means that it needs to be agreed by Full Council. And as a document setting out Council policy, it will also be subject to a public consultation.

4.13. The process for a new Housing Strategy being adopted is therefore as follows:

- Cabinet will be recommended a draft Housing Strategy for consultation
- Once agreed by Cabinet, a public consultation will be held
- Following consultation and consideration of consultation responses, a final Housing Strategy will be recommended to Cabinet
- Once agreed by Cabinet, Cabinet will recommend this to Full Council for final adoption

4.14. Officers are currently aiming to present a draft Housing Strategy to Cabinet in early 2020.

5. **Contribution to strategic outcomes**

5.1. The development of a new Housing Strategy supports, and directly flows from, the outcomes for Housing in the Borough Plan.

Background Documents

Housing Strategy <https://www.haringey.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategies-policies-and-plans/housing-strategy>

Borough Plan <https://www.haringey.gov.uk/local-democracy/policies-and-strategies/borough-plan>

Housing Strategy Cabinet Report November 2018

<http://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/documents/s104890/Housing%20Strategy%20Cabinet%20Report%20v8%20-%20final%20version.pdf>