

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING SERVICES**

### **KEY ISSUES – STRATEGIC AND COMMUNITY HOUSING SERVICES**

#### **Business Plan objectives:**

1. To halve the number of homeless households in Temporary Accommodation, by March 2010, through effective homelessness prevention, smarter working, better partnerships and the provision of a range of housing options.
2. To maximise the development of affordable housing, by attracting investment and ensuring effective partnership working, to meet the needs of residents and help build strong and environmentally sustainable communities.
3. to ensure the efficient management and maintenance of the council's housing stock by developing a robust client function in respect of Homes for Haringey's finance and performance managements arrangements, together with a structured approach to determining and communicating the council's requirements.
4. To tackle homelessness, overcrowding and under occupation by making best use of Haringey's social housing stock, bringing empty homes back into use encouraging housing mobility, extending and promoting choice based lettings, and removing barriers to the private rented sector.
5. To achieve the continuous improvement of the Strategic and Community Housing Service, ensuring that it is well managed, fit for purpose, customer-centred and provides good value for money.

#### **Key functions of Strategic and Community Housing Services:**

- The development and implementation of the overarching housing strategy and its sub strategies, covering such matters as homelessness, private sector housing, fuel poverty and the supply of affordable housing.
- The provision of a robust ALMO client function that ensures that Homes for Haringey manages and maintains the Council's housing stock efficiently and to the required standards, and delivers Haringey's decent homes programme within budget and on time.
- The development and implementation of an affordable housing programme, in partnership with registered social bodies, to provide affordable homes for rent and purchase.
- The improvement and enforcement of standards in private sector housing, including houses in multiple occupation, empty homes, the private rented sector and homes requiring substantial renovation.
- The assessment of housing applicants' housing and support needs (including homeless households living in temporary accommodation, and social housing tenants seeking a transfer), the maintenance of a housing register and the letting of social housing.

- The procurement, management and letting of temporary accommodation.

### **Recent key developments and events:**

- The restructure of the business unit is almost complete and there has been extensive consultation with all staff affected. The new structure will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Strategic and Community Housing Services by defining roles and responsibilities, re-aligning teams and services, improving communication and joint working, holding managers more accountable for the conduct and performance of their teams, encouraging partnership working and actively involving service users in planning, shaping and monitoring services.
- Haringey's Housing Strategy for 2009-12 is currently being updated and has been the subject of wide consultation including at the inaugural annual housing conference which was held in February 2009. The strategy will go to Cabinet for approval in April 2009.
- Haringey's Homelessness Strategy 2008-11 was adopted in September 2009 with wide buy in from a range of partners, specific sub-groups have been set up to implement the strategy.
- Haringey will host the North London Sub-regional Landlords Forum in April 2009.
- A TA User Forum has been established and two forums have taken place since December 2009. The forums have been very successful in engaging service users.
- There has been a marked improvement in the number of people being placed in Private Sector accommodation from an average of 5-10 per week in Summer 2008 to 20 per week in March 2009.
- Hearthstone has successfully moved back to a larger, more modern premises at Commerce Road. The larger premises gives more space for our partners and will encourage multi-agency working.

### **Key issues and challenges for 2009/2010**

- Continuing to reduce the number of homeless households in TA
- Renewing a major backlog of private sector leases – a tender is currently out at the moment to get a contractor to complete this work
- Imbedding the new staffing structure
- Continuing to provide a range of affordable housing options including the private sector and affordable home ownership
- Attracting affordable housing development into the borough – this is currently affected by the economic downturn

- Developing a new Lettings Policy - a project team has been set up and the policy will be finalised by December 2009
- Reviewing the management agreement with Homes for Haringey
- Improving performance on voids
- Monitoring the effects of TA subsidy changes and developing an effective procurement strategy that delivers value for money under the new regime.
- Targeting areas to identify licensable HMOs which have not made an application and areas where a discretionary licensing scheme is possible
- Taking CPO and enforced sale action to ensure properties are brought back into use.
- Introduce a target for the reduction in the use of nightly rated accommodation.
- Increase the fees charged for the licensable HMO's which have not made an application.