

Report for: Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel - 27/02/23

Date: 27 February 2023

Item number: 8

Title: **Improvement Plan for Housing**

Report
Authorised by: David Joyce, Director of Housing, Regeneration and Planning

Lead Officer: Jahedur Rahman, Operational Director of Housing Services, and Building Safety

Ward(s) affected: All

Report for Key/
Non Key Decision: Non-key

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1. This report provides an update on the Housing Services Improvement Plan.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny is recommended to note this report.

3. Background

3.1. The Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel report dated November 2022 on the update on the Insourcing of the ALMO confirmed the Operational Director, Housing Service and Building safety, once in post will lead on the next phase of service improvement. The Operational Director joined Haringey Council on the 16th of January 2023.

3.2. With the insourcing of the Landlord function in June 2022, Phase one of the integration was largely a “lift and shift” approach with some duplicated functions from Homes for Haringey moved to the relevant service within the Council. Since the above integration, interim arrangements were put in place to manage the initial transfer, however we are now moving to the next phase as the current interim approach to service improvement needs to become more consolidated and streamlined.

- 3.3. The Landlord Function that the Council insourced is far from being the high-quality service that residents deserve and expect. There are important opportunities to integrate some of these services with others within the council, to deliver greater value for money and to be more focussed on the needs of residents. There are also many services where performance needs to improve and a need to get the basics right, for instance through ensuring that repairs satisfaction improves through ensuring that we get a first time fix.

4. Current update

- 4.1 An external consultant was appointed as it was important to understand the state of the service in detail. The consultant produced a high level analysis on the status of the landlord function at the point of insourcing.
- 4.2 The report identified key areas of the service that were not performing to the standard that would be expected, and were below of the benchmark when compared to other services. Areas such as Voids, tenancy management, Repairs amongst others were highlighted as requiring significant improvement.
- 4.3 There are some general areas that also would naturally need to be reviewed following any insourcing exercise – general culture, staffing and policies and procedures are need to be reviewed in depth.
- 4.4 The report did find areas of strength – it must be recognised that there are many high calibre and hardworking members of staff across the landlord function who are delivering a good service to residents.
- 4.5 It is recognised that there needs to be significant improvement including with leadership in the landlord function, to connect people to their roles, to raise staff standards and expectations and to restore a sense of pride in their work and to develop a performance culture.
- 4.6 In January 2023, the Director of Placemaking and Housing and the Operational Director, Housing Service and Building Safety agreed a new set of governance arrangements to ensure that key housing improvement plan workstreams have dedicated oversight and clear escalation channels to senior officers, Council Leadership Team, and members.
- 4.7 As part of the governance arrangements, a Members Improvement Board has been established to provide a steer, monitor and provide direction on the required changes and implementation resulting from the Housing Services Improvement Plan. This group will help inform officers progress any changes required via the relevant governance routes. Currently it is proposed that the Board memberships is made up of 3 Labour members and 1 Liberal Democrat member and will be chaired by the

Chief Executive. Senior officers will also attend the board as required on a non-core membership basis. Meetings will take place every 6 weeks with the first meeting arranged for the 16th of February 2023.

5 Proposed next steps

- 5.1 Officers are currently reviewing the plan to create a detailed and in depth document with defined key milestones, timescales and identified resources. Priorities have been developed considering the current health and safety, compliance, benchmarking data and value for money information. In addition, priorities have been set where weaknesses have been identified in terms of legislative or statutory frameworks.
- 5.2 Whilst the plan will cover a vast range of areas with the services, we will need to define the priorities clearly to ensure we are working towards a realistic and achievable plan.

The key focus areas will be:

- Void management transformation
 - Repairs Service Transformation
 - Income management and collection
 - Improved Homeownership Service
 - Estate and Neighbourhood Management standards
 - Remodelling of tenancy audits and vulnerability visits
 - Compliance and planned maintenance performance improvements
 - Improved complaints handling.
- 5.3 The aim is to agree Housing Improvement plan and the Building Assurance statement at Cabinet in April (via the appropriate internal governance route). Any changes resulting as part of the agreed proposals will be subject relevant approvals/discussions from statutory services.

6.0 Contribution to strategic outcomes

- 6.1 The confirmed continued improvements and reviews contributes to Theme 5 of the Corporate Delivery Plan Of Homes for the Future specifically the vision of a borough where everyone has a safe, sustainable, stable and affordable home.

7.0 Statutory Comments

7.1 Finance

As this is an update report, there are no financial implications arising.

7.2 Legal

As this is an update report, there are no legal implications arising.

7.3 Procurement

As this is an update report, there are no procurement implications arising

8.0 Use of appendices: Appendix 1

[Cabinet report 19 July 2022](#)

9.0 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 : Not applicable