

**Report for:** Cabinet 16 January 2024

**Title:** Housing Annual Report 2022-23

**Report authorised by :** David Joyce, Director Placemaking and Housing

**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 The Housing Annual Report for 2022-23 is the first produced by the Council since the service was brought back in house in June 2022.
- 1.2 The housing service has been through a period of significant change, and on a journey of improvement since it was insourced in June 2022. In January 2023, it self-referred to the Regulator of Social Housing and was found to be in breach of two parts of the Home Standard in March 2023. It has been subject to a Regulatory Notice since then which remains “live” till March 2024 or until full compliance is achieved. In April 2023 a Housing Improvement Plan was agreed by the Council to address and resolve the issues raised, and to grasp the opportunity to improve services for the benefit of our residents and tenants.
- 1.3 The Housing Annual report gives an overview of the Service’s performance between 2022 and 2023 in relation to the Regulator’s consumer standards for social housing: Home (‘providing good quality, decent homes’); Neighbourhood and Community (‘supporting neighbourhoods and communities’); Tenancy (‘providing good tenancy services’); and Tenant Involvement and Communities (involving and empowering residents). It notes achievements, indicates where progress has been made – and also where there is more work to be done.

## **2 Cabinet Member Introduction**

- 2.1 Good quality, affordable and sustainable homes are essential for good quality, healthy, happy and secure lives. They are also key to our ability as a place to respond to broader challenges such as the cost of living crisis and sustainability. That’s why the standard of the 20,000 homes the council manages is so important.
- 2.2 The Annual Report for 2022-23 provides a retrospective view of our performance since we brought housing services back in house, and our progress against our

commitments to improve it. It describes our progress in respect of compliance with fire and electrical safety standards; the support we've provided to tenants through the cost of living crisis; and our involvement of residents in the key decisions along our improvement journey, which I am especially proud of.

- 2.3 At the same time, we still have significant challenges, and it is important that we are open and transparent about these. We know there is more to do to tackle our repairs backlog; damp and mould issues and boost tenant satisfaction and we are determined to improve in these areas in the coming year.

### **3 Recommendations**

- 3.1 Cabinet notes and approves the Housing Annual Report 2022-23 attached as Appendix 1 so that it can be made available to tenants and leaseholders on the Council's website.

### **4 Reasons for decision**

- 4.1 It is essential that the Council is transparent about the landlord services it provides to tenants and leaseholders; explains the work it is doing to improve its services; and how it is spending the money it receives from tenants' rents.

### **5 Alternative options considered**

- 5.1 As a social landlord, we are obliged to produce an Annual Report by the Housing Regulator so an alternative option was not considered.

### **6 Background information**

- 6.1 On 7 December 2021, Cabinet resolved that the Council's housing service which was then provided by Homes for Haringey ("HfH") should be brought back in-house and delegated authority to officers to deal with the detailed implementation process. It was agreed that the transfer would take place on 1 June 2022.
- 6.2 Following the findings of the external health check after the Council brought the service back in-house, the Council made a self-referral to the RSH in January 2023. The RSH responded in March 2023 to confirm that they had concluded that the Council had breached two parts of the Home Standard:
- Part 1.1 (a) of the Home Standard says that registered providers shall:  
(a) ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in section five of the Government's Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard.
  - Part 1.2 (b) of the Home Standard says that registered providers shall:  
(b) meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes.
- 6.3 Since identifying the issues the Council has embarked on implementing a Housing Services Improvement Plan, agreed at Cabinet in April 2023. Since the

self-referral, the Operational Director of Housing Services and Building Safety and Director of Placemaking and Housing have been meeting on a monthly basis with the Regulator to monitor the Council's progress and provide the appropriate level of assurance that our improvement plans are on track. Additionally, our Chief Executive-chaired Housing Services Improvement Board, which includes representation from both Council administration and opposition councillors, provides additional levels of scrutiny and monitoring.

- 6.4 The Annual Report provides our tenants and leaseholders with an update on our performance in relation to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) standards (as outlined in paragraph 1.3). This includes the considerable progress we have made towards full compliance with safety standards; the measures we have put in place to tackle damp and mould and our repairs backlog; and the numbers of homes we have made decent (in support of the statutory decent homes standard). It gives examples of the work we have been doing to engage and support our communities through delivery of tenant surgeries, community events, our major regeneration schemes and the ways we've embedded resident engagement into delivery (in support of the Tenant Involvement and Communities standard). It also describes the support our tenancy management team has given throughout the cost of living crisis and the work we have underway to improve tenant satisfaction.
- 6.5 Our complaints handling data; statistical data on our performance; our tenant satisfaction data (which is low and needs improvement) are all set out in the Report, along with a breakdown of the ways we have allocated our budget over the year.

## **7.0 Regulator of Social Housing**

- 7.1 The RSH is the government body tasked with overseeing the regulation of the social housing sector, regulating both local authority and housing association landlords, collectively known as Registered Providers (RPs). The RSH adopts an assurance-based co-regulation approach. This means that the local authority executive, usually the cabinet, in local authority landlords, or the board of the housing association are responsible for ensuring they comply with the regulatory standards set by RSH.
- 7.2 All registered providers of social housing (including Councils) are subject to the consumer standards and the RSH will intervene if these are breached and there is a significant risk of serious detriment to tenants or potential tenants.
- 7.3 The RSH expects the Council to have systems such as audit, risk management and performance monitoring in place that allow the early identification of problems and take effective action to resolve them.
- 7.4 Where appropriate the RSH expects providers to self-refer. The Council's approach has been to acknowledge failure and take responsibility for urgent improvement. The Council is working very closely with the RSH to achieve the necessary improvements.

## **8. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2022-2024 High level Strategic outcomes’?**

- 8.1 The Report describes the Housing Service’s contribution to Theme 5 of the Corporate Delivery Plan: Homes for the Future - our vision of a borough where everyone has a safe, sustainable, stable and affordable home.

## **9. Carbon and Climate Change**

The housing service is contributing to the council’s net zero ambitions by improving the energy efficiency and sustainability of its existing stock, principally through its major works activities. We are also encouraging greening projects on its estates that improve biodiversity. Examples of these activities are noted in the report.

## **10. Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance ( procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities)**

### **Finance**

- 10.1 The Housing annual report is an update report on housing activities during the year. There is no direct financial implication arising from this report.

### **Procurement**

- 10.2 Strategic Procurement notes the contents of this report and confirms there are no procurement related matters preventing Cabinet from approving the recommendation stated in paragraph 3 above.

### **Head of Legal & Governance**

#### **10.3 Head of Legal & Governance**

- 10.3.1 The Head of Legal and Governance has been consulted in the drafting of this report and comments as follows:

- 10.3.2 The RSH has statutory responsibility for setting and enforcing housing standards in the social housing sector, including local authority housing.

- 10.3.3 As a registered provider of Social Housing, the Council is required to comply with the consumer standards set by the RSH, these include the Home Standard.

- 10.3.4 Section 198A of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 enables the RSH to use its regulatory and enforcement powers if a registered provider such as the council has failed to meet a consumer standard.

- 10.3.5 Following the Council's self-referral, the RSH issued a Regulatory Notice having been satisfied that the Council breached parts 1.1 and 1.2 of the Home Standard and that there was potential for serious detriment to Haringey's tenants.
- 10.3.6 The RSH has taken the co-regulation approach and is working with the Council as it seeks to remedy these breaches. It will need assurance that the Council is rectifying the issues identified. Where it is not satisfied, the RSH has a range of enforcement powers including imposing penalties, awarding compensation to tenants and (under s269A Housing and Regeneration Act 2008) censure of employees where there has been mismanagement.
- 10.3.7 The Housing Ombudsman has gained new powers under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (not all of which is yet in force), allowing it to not only address individual complaints about housing services, but also to extend fairness and protection to residents and to make orders that are binding, rather than recommendations.
- 10.3.8 The Head of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) confirms that there are no legal reasons preventing approval of the recommendations in this report.

## **Equality**

- 10.5 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.
- 10.6 The three parts of the duty apply to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status apply to the first part of the duty.
- 10.7 Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.
- 10.8 This decision is not expected to have any direct positive or negative equality impact. It does, however, indirectly contribute to Haringey Council's housing improvement plan. Black people, disabled people, women and those from a low socioeconomic background are overrepresented in our social housing stock, so it is expected that this report will have an indirect positive impact on those who share protected characteristics.

## **11. Use of Appendices**

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## 12. Background Papers

7 December 2021 - Decision on the Council's proposal to bring Homes for Haringey (HfH) in-house – [link here](#)

7 July 2022 – Proposals for Resident Engagement and Participation following the Insourcing of Homes for Haringey – [link here](#)  
– link here

18 April 2023 - Housing Services Improvement Plan and Compliance Assurance Statement – [link here](#)