

Report for: Housing Scrutiny

Title: Haringey's Housing Strategy and Policy Programme

Report authorised by: Director of Placemaking and Housing

Lead Officer: Assistant Director for Housing

Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** No

1 Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 This report sets out the upcoming housing strategy and policy programme, for Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel's consideration. This is not an exhaustive list of policies and strategies being developed, since the team and broad function react to changes in the local and national policy landscape. However, it provides an overview of the current workplan.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny panel considers the proposed programme.

3 Background

- 3.1 Haringey Council has a number of roles and responsibilities in relation to housing in the borough. It is a landlord of social housing – the largest in the borough, holding more stock than all other registered providers combined. The council is also engaged in a major new council housing delivery programme. It is the local planning authority and thus responsible for the delivery of housing of all types in the borough.
- 3.2 As the local housing authority, it also has responsibility for homeless households and for providing them with accommodation in some cases. It is responsible for licensing and enforcement in the private rented sector. And with responsibility for adult social care, children's social care and public health, ensuring that residents are living in homes that meet their needs and allow them to thrive is crucial to all parts of the organisation.
- 3.3 The council's housing strategy function sits at the intersection of these roles. It is responsible for developing long term strategies which set out a shared vision for housing in Haringey across the council and borough; and policies which set out how the council will act and the mechanisms it will use to achieve the aims of its overall strategies.

A new housing strategy for Haringey

- 3.4 In March 2024, Cabinet agreed Haringey's Housing Strategy 2024-2029. This sets out the Council's approach to housing in Haringey over the next five years. The strategy was adopted following consultation, which showed strong support for the strategy's overall strategic objectives.
- 3.5 The Housing Strategy 2024-2029 sets out the Council's ambition for everyone in Haringey, whatever their circumstances, to have a safe, stable, and genuinely affordable home.
- 3.6 The Housing Strategy is built around four strategic objectives:
- Delivering the new homes Haringey needs
 - Improving housing quality and resident services in the social housing sector
 - Improving the quality of the private rented sector
 - Preventing and alleviating homelessness
- 3.7 Each of these strategic objectives sits over sub-objectives, setting out how the overall strategic objective will be achieved. This is set out below:

Strategic objective 1: Delivering the new homes Haringey needs

- 1.1 *Supporting the delivery of 1,592 new homes every year in Haringey.*
- 1.2 *Ensuring the right mix of homes for our communities.*
- 1.3 *Establishing a new era of Council home building.*

Strategic objective 2: Improving housing quality and resident services in the social housing sector

- 2.1 *Transforming services to our tenants and leaseholders, and designing those services with them*
- 2.2 *Ensuring and improving the quality of our Council housing*
- 2.3 *Embedding these functions into the Council's core business*
- 2.4 *Collaborating to help drive improved services in the sector across the borough*

Strategic objective 3: Improving the quality of the private rented sector

- 3.1 *Setting clear standards for the private rented sector and supporting landlords to meet those standards*
- 3.2 *Enforcing those standards and taking decisive action against landlords who will not provide their tenants with a home that is decent, safe, and secure*
- 3.3 *Empowering and supporting private renters to hold their landlords to these standards*

Strategic objective 4: Preventing and alleviating homelessness

- 4.1 *Preventing homelessness whenever possible*
- 4.2 *Ensuring that we have the right accommodation and support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness*
- 4.3 *Supporting people who are, or who are at risk of, rough sleeping*
- 4.4 *Ensuring that we are making the best and fairest use of our housing stock*

3.8 Five fundamental principles run through each of the Strategy's objectives and underpin all areas of the proposed strategy:

- Communication and co-production - communicating clearly, transparently, and respectfully with residents, and putting residents at the centre of the design of services and of homes.
- An active council – using all levers and powers at our disposal to tackle the housing crisis.
- Working holistically and in partnership - putting housing at the heart of what this council does, and taking a lead in bringing residents, community groups, voluntary and private sector organisations together to tackle the housing crisis.
- Creating and maintaining sustainable and healthy communities - working with residents to deliver new, better, and healthier homes and neighbourhoods, enhancing the places and sense of community that make them proud to call Haringey home.
- Responding to the climate emergency - delivering homes and neighbourhoods that are healthier and more resilient.

3.9 Following the adoption of the Housing Strategy in March 2024, the Council's strategic housing function is focused on the development of work in other areas. This includes three major pieces of strategic work – a new housing allocations policy, a new homelessness strategy and a new older persons' housing strategy, alongside a number of associated strategies and policies. This work is all fully in line with the council's housing strategy and the corporate delivery plan.

The Homelessness Strategy

3.10 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to carry out a homelessness review and to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on that review. A homelessness strategy is a strategy for:

- preventing homelessness
- securing that sufficient accommodation (of a range of types) is available for people who are or may become homeless
- providing satisfactory support for people who are or may become homeless, or who need support to prevent them becoming homeless again

3.11 In March 2018, Cabinet adopted a Homelessness Strategy. That strategy ended in 2023. The lengthy process of developing a new Homelessness Strategy had not begun when homelessness services were brought back under the Council's direct control in May 2022. A decision was taken to delay formulating a new homelessness strategy until the insourcing process had bedded in. Further decisions were taken to develop the Homelessness Strategy on a timeline that would allow it to align with the emerging 2024 Housing Strategy.

3.12 However, because the rough sleeping environment was at a critical moment in the aftermath of Covid and the end of the 'Everyone In' initiative, and because the Council's rough sleeper services were not managed by the ALMO, a decision was taken to produce a standalone Rough Sleeping Strategy. That standalone Rough Sleeping Strategy was developed through extensive coproduction and then adopted by Cabinet in July 2023.

- 3.13 Homelessness Reduction Boards (HRB) were proposed in the Government's 2018 Rough Sleeping Strategy as a mechanism for improving local accountability for the delivery of homelessness services, from February – May 2019. In a number of Local Authority areas, HRBs have been established and play an effective role. The Local Government Association recommend that HRBs could be an opportunity to increase the commitment of a variety of public bodies to the delivery of a local homelessness strategy.
- 3.14 The 2024 Housing Strategy commits to a partnership approach to homelessness and to set up a Homelessness Reduction Board to drive that partnership work by bringing together principal officers from the Council – including from housing and social care – with other public services, social landlords, and the voluntary sector in order to ensure a joint approach and hold each party accountable for preventing and reducing homelessness and rough sleeping. Alongside homeless people themselves, our new Homelessness Reduction Board will play a key role in developing a new Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan for the Council during 2024, and thereafter to overseeing its delivery.
- 3.15 A Haringey Homelessness Reduction Board (HRB) has been established. It is chaired and led by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning. It held its first meeting in November 2023.
- 3.16 The Haringey HRB is made up of senior officers from across the Council including from Housing Strategy and Policy, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, and Housing, as well as external partners including housing associations, commissioned partners, the voluntary and community sector, Citizens' Advice, the probation service, the metropolitan police, the NHS and the department for work and pensions.
- 3.17 The key purpose of the HRB, as agreed in its terms of Reference, is to oversee the development and implementation of the Haringey Homelessness Strategy 2025 and the implementation of the Haringey Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 so that through effective partnership work homelessness and rough sleeping are prevented and reduced in our part of London.
- 3.18 The Homelessness Strategy will be developed through a process of engagement and coproduction before being subject to public consultation before being approved.

The older persons' housing strategy

- 3.19 The second major piece of strategic housing work being developed is an older persons' housing strategy. Unlike the homelessness strategy, this is not a statutory requirement. However, it was identified by officers across several services that developing an older persons' housing strategy would be beneficial, in line with existing workstreams and priorities, and could lead to an opportunity for better working across the council and more widely with external partners.
- 3.20 The older persons' housing strategy will provide strategic direction for the provision of housing for older people in Haringey in the medium and longer term; consider the use of the council's existing sheltered housing stock; consider how

and whether the council should be developing housing specifically for older people and what other housing developed by external partners will be required in addition to this. It will consider this in the context of changing needs of older people, both in terms of support requirements and in terms of the type of housing and housing tenure they are living in.

- 3.21 The older persons' housing strategy is being developed in collaboration with the council's adult social care, public health, sheltered housing, planning policy and new housing development teams.

The rightsizing strategy and policy

- 3.22 Many social tenants in Haringey live in homes that are larger than they need. A similar number of social tenants are overcrowded in their homes. And of course, many households on the housing register need our larger homes.
- 3.23 Our housing strategy sets out an ambition for 50% of new social homes delivered in Haringey to have 3 or more bedrooms. However, building these larger homes is very challenging in terms of financial viability, for either the council or other registered providers.
- 3.24 An additional way to make homes with 3 or more bedrooms available to Haringey's housing register is to support social tenants to move to smaller homes, where appropriate for them. Currently, the council places any 'downsizers' in Band A of the housing register, and offers them financial incentives to move. However, this has not historically resulted in a significant number of social tenants moving to smaller homes.
- 3.25 The rightsizing strategy will set out the council's strategic approach to delivering social homes that meet the needs of existing and future social tenants, and that takes into account changing household sizes.
- 3.26 It will be accompanied by a rightsizing policy which will set out a range of incentives and support to encourage and facilitate social tenants who are able to and happy to move to a new, smaller, social home.

TA placements policy and TA discharge of duty policy

- 3.27 As the local housing authority, Haringey is responsible for providing accommodation for adults to whom it owes a homelessness duty. Due to the chronic shortage of social housing in Haringey, this is generally in temporary accommodation. For all households for whom Haringey accepted this duty after the Localism Act 2012, the local housing authority can end this duty by an offer of settled accommodation – whether in the social or private sector.
- 3.28 As such, the council needs to have policies in place setting out the types of accommodation that will be offered – both as temporary accommodation and as accommodation when the council is discharging its duty. In doing this, the council needs to balance the needs of its residents with the considerable cost to the general fund of temporary accommodation. A new TA placements policy and TA discharge of duty policy will be developed to achieve this.

3.29 These policies will be subject to public consultation before being approved.

Supported housing strategy

3.30 The Supported Housing Act 2023 requires local authorities to prepare a supported housing strategy. This will set out the current supported accommodation available in the area as well as the medium-term need for this type of accommodation.

Intermediate housing policy

3.31 The council adopted an intermediate housing policy in 2018 which sets out both the eligibility criteria for accessing intermediate housing in Haringey as well as the prioritisation for that housing. Eligibility is based on household income. A new intermediate housing policy will be developed with updated income thresholds.

Allocations policy and Sheltered Housing Allocations Policy

3.32 All local housing authorities need an allocations policy which sets out who is prioritised for social housing in the area. In the context of a chronic shortage of social housing, and growing demand, a fair and clear housing allocations policy is even more important.

3.33 Haringey is in the final stages of developing its new housing allocations policy, following extensive engagement with residents and stakeholders.

3.34 This will be followed by a separate policy setting out how the council's sheltered housing will be allocated, informed by the older persons' housing strategy.

3.35 These policies will be subject to public consultation before being approved.

Housing management policies

3.36 Separate from the policies and strategies set out above, the council is also reviewing all the policies which it needs to have in place as a landlord of social housing. In July, the Vulnerable Tenants and Leaseholders Policy and the Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy were agreed by Cabinet. Upcoming cabinets will consider the Responsive Repairs Policy, the Income Collection Policy and the Housing Arrears Policy.

Targets dates for new policies and strategies

3.37 The table below sets out target dates for the adoption of these policies and strategies by Cabinet. Note that these are target dates for final adoption by Cabinet; in some cases, a draft for consultation will be agreed by Cabinet in the first instance and final draft will be considered following a period of consultation.

Policy / Strategy	Target period for adoption
Homelessness Strategy	Q3 25/26
Older Persons Housing Strategy	Q3 25/26
Rightsizing Strategy	Q2 25/26
Supported Housing Strategy	tbc

Rightsizing Policy	Q4 25/26
TA Placements Policy	Q2 25/26
TA Discharge of Duty Policy	Q2 25/26
Intermediate Housing Policy	tbc
Allocations Policy	Q2 25/26
Sheltered Housing Allocations Policy	Q3 25/26