

Housing, Planning & Development Scrutiny Panel

Review on Haringey's TA Allocations and PRS Discharge policies (2024/2025); Scope and Terms of Reference

Review Topic	Review / Project Title
Rationale	<p>As part of the work planning process for Scrutiny in 2024/25, we undertook an online scrutiny survey and an in-person Scrutiny Café event to engage with local community and resident groups, to seek their views about which areas Scrutiny should focus its attention upon for the next two years. As part of the feedback relevant to the Housing, Planning and Development Panel, one of the areas where most concern was raised was Temporary Accommodation and a lack of available social housing more generally, as well as the length of time that families had to wait on the housing register, before being allocated a council home.</p> <p>At the Housing, Planning & Development Scrutiny Panel meeting on 26th September 2024, the Panel received an update on the upcoming housing strategy and policy programme. During the meeting it was discussed that the TA Allocations and PRS Discharge policies were due to be revised over the following 6-9 months. The policies had last been updated in 2016. Since 2016 the level of demand and complexity of demand for local housing has changed significantly and a revised policy is needed to determine how different people or groups will be prioritised for Temporary Accommodation, given that the number of people on the waiting list far outstrips the number of homes available. In light of this, it is felt that a review on this area is timely and provides the Panel with an opportunity to have a tangible impact and contribute to improved outcomes for residents.</p> <p>The allocation or placement policy sets out how the organisation prioritises different types of households for local housing placements (and by extension which groups are not going to be prioritised). The PRS discharge policy relates to how the Council prioritises placing someone in an arrangement with a private sector landlord in order to discharge the Council's homelessness duty to that person. The two policies are currently separate but they could be combined into a single policy. The criteria used to prioritise someone for TA is likely to be fairly similar to how to prioritise someone for a PRS placement. One method used by some other local authorities to prioritise residents is to have bandings. Officers advise that these are not statutory and that there were other options for determining which groups or individuals should be prioritised for housing.</p>

	<p>The Panel propose to conduct a scrutiny review of the council's new TA Allocations and PRS discharge policies which are being developed over the next 6 months.</p> <p>We know there are many issues within the council's use of TA that are of interest and concern to everyone – how long people spend in TA, the quality of the accommodation, and how best to maximise our supply of the least harmful forms of TA. However, in order to make best use of a time-limited scrutiny review and to try to have a tangible impact, it is proposed to keep it focused on the TA allocations and PRS discharge policies.</p> <p>The Council has a limited amount of local housing stock for use as TA and the scrutiny panel would like to make sure that we have as robust and evidence-based framework as possible for making decisions about who is prioritised and who is not.</p>
Objectives/Desired outcomes	To make recommendations to the Council's Cabinet in relation to the development of new TA allocations and PRS discharge policies
Key lines of enquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who should be prioritised for the different types of TA available? (Both in terms of its type e.g. a flat, B&B, nightly paid, and its location e.g. in borough, in London, outside of London?) Who should be a lower priority? • What criteria should be used to decide where someone falls in the prioritisation? • Who will be protected from certain types of accommodation? What are the red lines? E.g. children under a certain age will never be placed in X type of accommodation. • Who should be prioritised for placements into the PRS? Who is this not appropriate for? • How much choice should/can households feasibly have? • What are the most socially just choices and what are the most cost-effective?

Terms of Reference (Purpose of the Review/ Objectives)	<p>To review the TA Allocations Policy and the PRS Discharge Policy and make recommendations for how these could be improved. In particular, the Panel want to understand what criteria should be used to decide when someone is given priority and who should be protected from certain types of accommodation.</p> <p>The Panel are keen to know what other local authorities doing around this and to understand best practice.</p>
Scrutiny Membership	<p>The Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel:</p> <p>Cllr Worrell (Chair), Cllr Diakides, Cllr Harrison-Mullane, Cllr Hymas, Cllr Barnes, Cllr Bevan & Cllr Moyeed</p>
Timescales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approx 6. evidence sessions to take place March-early April. • Recommendation setting mid-April. • Write up late April. • Sign off on final draft early May.
Links to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2024-2026.	<p>Homes for the future</p> <p>Outcome Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving social housing and the private rented sector services • A reduction in temporary accommodation
Evidence Sources	<p>These will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance, research and policy documents;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with Cabinet Member, key officers – what is the current experience of applying existing policies and what is the current thinking on direction of travel for the new policies? • Interviews with NGOs and academics in this field • Other London boroughs
Methodology/Approach	<p>A variety of methods will be used to gather evidence from the witnesses above, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk top research; • Evidence gathering sessions with witnesses; and • Visits
Witnesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers – Hannah Adler, Sara Sutton, Darren Fairclough • Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning • Haringey residents who have experience of having been through this process if we can find someone willing to engage • London Councils/LGA • Other London boroughs who have up-to-date TA allocations/PRS discharge policies • NGOs with expertise – Shelter, Crisis, Trust for London • Academics in this space – further research required
Equalities Implications	<p>The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to: (1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act; (2) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not; (3) Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.</p> <p>The three parts of the duty applies to the following protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy/maternity; race; religion/faith; sex and sexual orientation. In addition, marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.</p>

	<p>The Panel should ensure that it addresses these duties by considering them during final scoping, evidence gathering and final reporting. This should include considering and clearly stating: How policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share the nine protected characteristics; Whether the impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate; Whether there is equality of access to service and fair representation of all groups within Haringey; Whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people, are being realised. The Panel should ensure that equalities comments are based on evidence, when possible.</p>
Date for completion	Cabinet – June 2025
Reporting arrangements	The Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health will coordinate a response to Cabinet to the recommendations of the panel's final report.
Publicity	The review will be publicised through the scrutiny website. The outcomes of the review will be similarly published once complete.
Constraints / Barriers / Risks	We aim to complete the draft report before the membership of the panel is updated for 2025/26. However, In order to achieve this, we need to keep the review short, specific and time focused. A failure to do so will undermine the timescales for this report and risk the report not being completed by late May.
Officer Support	Lead Officer; Philip, Scrutiny Officer, 0208 489 2957 philip.slawther2@haringey.gov.uk