

Report for: Cabinet - 11 November 2025

Item Number: 8

Title: Matters Referred to Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Review into the Temporary Accommodation Placements Policy and Private Rented Sector Discharge Policy.

Report authorised by: Jahedur Rahman, Director of Housing

Lead Officer/s: Maddie Watkins, Assistant Director for Housing Demand
Darren Fairclough, Head of Lettings and Rehousing

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Non-Key Decision: Non-Key Decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration.

- 1.1. The report sets out the proposed Cabinet response to the recommendations of the Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny review into the Temporary Accommodation (TA) Placements Policy and Private Rented Sector (PRS) Discharge Policy which is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

- 2.1. I would like to thank the members of the Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel for their hard work on this review, and special thanks to the Council officers and external witnesses who gave up their time and energy to participate in the evidence gathering sessions.
- 2.2. With around 50% of homelessness temporary accommodation placements being made in areas outside of the Borough, the Council needs to have a fair, consistent and transparent way of making decisions about who will be prioritised for local accommodation that is available. This is currently achieved through the Council's TA Placement Policy and Private Rented Sector Policy, however, both policies are more than 7 years old and overdue for review.
- 2.3. The average time households have been occupying temporary accommodation as of August 2025 was approximately 6.5 years, and this figure is longer for those requiring larger sized family accommodation. Given the acknowledged impact on families occupying TA, ensuring adequate support for families living in and moving out of TA, particularly where this involves accommodation further from the Borough, is a priority for the Council.
- 2.4. Many of the Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel's recommendations can help shape the proposed new TA Placement and Private Rented Sector Policies,

with particular focus on how the impact on families can be minimised. All recommendations have either been agreed or partially agreed.

- 2.5. I am keen for Cabinet colleagues to either agree to the recommendations as set out in Appendix 2 so these changes can be considered as part of the policy review work. Some other recommendations whilst helpful, do not fall within the remit of the policies in scope of review and this has been stated as such.

3. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 3.1. Note the recommendations of the Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel Review as agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.2. Respond to these recommendations as set out in the table attached at Appendix 2.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1. Under the agreed protocols, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) has responsibility for all overview and scrutiny functions on behalf of the Council, where the OSC can assist the Council and the Cabinet in its budgetary and policy framework through conducting in-depth analysis of local policy issues and can make recommendations for service development or improvement. The Committee may:
- (a) Review or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Cabinet's or Council's functions.
 - (b) Make reports and recommendations to the full Council, the Cabinet or relevant non-Executive Committee in connection with the discharge of any functions.
 - (c) Make reports or recommendations on matters affecting the area or its inhabitants.
- 4.2. The Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel met on 26th September 2024, where it discussed relevant policies that were due for revision. In addition, a number of comments were received related to the length of time that families had to wait for a housing placement. Therefore on this basis, it was agreed that a review would be carried out by the Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel.
- 4.3. On 18th September 2025, the OSC agreed the review of the Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel on the Temporary Accommodation Placements Policy and Private Rented Sector Discharge Policy. The OSC agreed to send the recommendations to Cabinet for response. (Appendix 2).

5. Alternative options considered.

None.

6. Background information

- 6.1. As part of the work planning process for OSC in 2024/25 and 2025/26 an online scrutiny survey, as well as an in-person Scrutiny Café event, were held in order to engage with the local community and resident groups to establish what areas should be focused on throughout a two-year period.
- 6.2. At the Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel meeting on 26th September 2024, the Panel received an update on the upcoming housing strategy and policy programme, where during the meeting it was discussed that TA allocations, PRS Discharge policies were due to be revised in the near future. The policies had last been updated in 2016 and 2011 respectively and since this time the level and complexity of demand for local housing has changed significantly.
- 6.3. As part of all feedback relevant to the Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel, one of the areas of concern was Temporary Accommodation and lack of available social housing more generally. Specifically, a number of comments received related to the length of time that families had to wait for a housing placement.
- 6.4. In light of this, it was felt that a review on this subject was timely and provided the Panel with an opportunity to influence the revised policies as they were in development, and to contribute to improved outcomes for residents.
- 6.5. The OSC agreed the terms of reference for the review on 6th March 2025, with evidence gathering taking place between March and May 2025.
- 6.6. Various officers in Housing Services were interviewed initially in order to gain a better understanding of the existing policies and which groups were currently prioritised in Haringey. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning and a number of external witnesses were also spoken to, including a migrant advocacy group, Shelter, an academic from the Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research at Heriot Watt University, and a private housing consultant with links to government.
- 6.7. At the beginning of the review the initial lines of questioning, which developed over the course of the review but are instructive in terms of what the review set out to ascertain:
 - i. Who should be prioritised for the different types of TA available?
 - ii. What criteria should be used to decide where someone falls in the prioritisation?
 - iii. Who will be protected from certain types of accommodation?
 - iv. Who should be prioritised for placements into the PRS and who is this not appropriate for?
 - v. How much choice should/can households feasibly have?
 - vi. To what extent should the choices made reflect the financial pressures facing the Council?
- 6.8. The full rationale for the setting up of the review, including the scope, terms of reference, evidence and outcomes can be found in Appendix 1.

7. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2024-2026 High level Strategic outcomes

- 7.1. This review relates to Theme 5 of the Corporate Delivery Plan – Homes for the Future. Under this theme the high level outcome areas are:
 - i. Building high-quality, sustainable homes.
 - ii. Improving social housing and the private rented sector.

- iii. Reliable, customer-focused resident housing services.
- iv. A reduction in temporary accommodation.
- v. Preventing and reducing homelessness and rough sleeping.

8. Carbon and Climate Change

- 8.1. Under the Haringey Climate Change Action Plan, there are actions such as identifying external funding streams and help the bidding for funding to enable the delivery of EPC B across all existing housing stock, temporary housing, hostels and bed and breakfasts and lobbying national government to revise the minimum EPC rating required at the point of sale/let for all private sector homes to EPC B by 2035. However, the review in itself and the recommendations are not relevant to the Carbon and Climate Change actions.

9. Statutory Officers comments: Procurement, Finance, Legal, Equalities.

Procurement

- 9.1. Strategic Procurement note the contents of this report and confirm there are no procurement related matters preventing Cabinet approving the recommendations stated in paragraph 3 above – (as referred to in Appendix 1 and 2).

Finance

- 9.2. Finance notes the recommendations and responses provided. Implementation of most of the recommendations in this report would not have additional cost implication. However, if there is additional cost implication, such will go through the governance framework before implementation.

Legal

- 9.3. The Director of Legal & Governance has been consulted in the drafting of this report and comments as follows.
- 9.4. Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 imposes on the Council a number of duties to secure accommodation for those seeking assistance as homeless. The main duties are set out in the body of the review.
- 9.5. In addition, under the same Act the Council has power where appropriate to secure accommodation for the homeless.
- 9.6. Where accommodation is secured by the Council, it must be suitable; and location is taken into account in determining suitability. On the other hand, the Council is not expected to be able to produce perfectly suitable accommodation at all times for all those accommodated.
- 9.7. It is open to the Council, if it is unable to find in-borough accommodation for all those for whom it secures accommodation, to use out of borough accommodation. If it does, it must do so according to a rational policy and it must keep under review its Acquisitions Policy to ensure that it is doing what it reasonably can to procure in-borough accommodation.
- 9.8. Other legal comments are contained in this report, the review and Appendix 2.
- 9.9. There is no legal reason why Cabinet cannot adopt the recommendations made in this report.

Equality

- 9.10. The council has a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) 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 protected characteristics and people who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.
- 9.11. 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 applies to the first part of the duty.
- 9.12. Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.
- 9.13. The Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel has considered the Public Sector Equality Duty through evidence gathering and final reporting.
- 9.14. The review includes a specific recommendation on Equalities Monitoring, where the recommendation is that Cabinet commit to Equalities Monitoring for households in TA, particularly around ethnicity. This should take into account the proportion of ethnic groups in TA, the ethnicity of household who are placed out of borough, and the length of time households are in TA. This is to reflect concerns that there is a national disproportionality around ethnicity and temporary accommodation.
- 9.15. Due to the nature of the majority of the remaining recommendations from the review, it is likely that this would lead to increased awareness and consideration given to those with protected characteristics in the context of Temporary Accommodation. Any actions taken are likely to positively affect those who share protected characteristics and advance the public sector equality duty in Haringey.
- 9.16. If any of these recommendations are taken forward, they will be subject to complete equality analysis, including equality impact assessments where appropriate.

10. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel Review into the TA Placements Policy and PRS Discharge Policy.

Appendix 2 - Response to the Recommendations of the Housing, Planning & Development Scrutiny Review into the TA Placements Policy and PRS Discharge Policy.