

Report Title: Overview of the Neighbourhood Moves Scheme

Report for: Housing, Planning & Development Scrutiny Panel

Item number: 10

Title: Overview of the Neighbourhood Moves Scheme

Report authorised by: Rachel Sharpe, Interim Director of Housing Services

Lead Officer: Darren Fairclough, Head of Lettings & Rehousing
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Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non-Key Decision:** For information.

1. Recommendations

1.1 That the report be noted.

2. Describe the issue under consideration.

2.1 This report will set out the background of the Neighbourhood Moves Scheme (NMS), including its introduction and the results of the scheme on our allocation and letting of homes. The report will also set out the existing proposed changes as part of the Allocations Policy consultation that was authorised by Cabinet.

2.2 The report can be used to support the Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel's understanding of the scheme and the proposed amendments as part of the wider Allocations Policy review.

3. Background

3.1 The Neighbourhood Moves Scheme (NMS) was approved by Haringey's Cabinet on 9 February 2021 following a 6-week consultation.

3.2 The NMS is part of the Housing Allocations Policy and changes to the policy have been approved for consultation in summer 2026. These changes include amendments to the NMS which will be covered in this report.

- 3.3 The NMS policy aims to extend the benefits of new homes to those living near them. The Cabinet Report also introduces the NMS as a means to address over-crowding by releasing larger family homes which are under-occupied and by allowing over-crowded households to move locally.
- 3.4 The NMS seeks to achieve this aim by giving priority for newly delivered Council rented homes to existing Secure Tenants in the local area.
- 3.5 The NMS is facilitated by the Lettings & Rehousing service, with a dedicated NMS Officer to support the process and residents.

Current NMS offer

- 3.6 The current NMS applies to developments where there are four or more newly built homes unless a Cabinet decision is made to exclude a particular development and/or there is an alternative Local Lettings Plan.
- 3.7 Priority for newly built homes is in bands with the first band being for those whose home is being demolished as part of a regeneration programme. This priority has rarely and possibly never been exercised under the NMS as this is relevant to specific legal rights involving decants and is separate from any local lettings, which is covered by the Council's Estate Renewal Rehousing and Payments Policy and the Temporary Moves (Decant) Policy.
- 3.8 The second priority band is for existing council tenants living on the same estate or within 250 metres of the new homes. Homes left after this second band are then released to the wider Housing Register.
- 3.9 Priority within this local band is determined by their current housing arrangements, with first priority going to those with spare bedrooms. The second priority is given to those who are overcrowded, with priority given to those with the largest shortfall in bedrooms. The third priority is given to those with any other housing needs, and finally, those with no housing needs. In all cases, these offers are voluntary and tenants have the option to refuse these homes with no impact on their applications or current tenancy.

Eligibility

- 3.10 Six months before completion, the NMS officer will write to all eligible local residents. This will generally be all residents in the catchment area so long as they will have been living in their current home for 12 months at the estimated completion date.

3.11 To be accepted, applicants will also need to have a good tenancy record e.g. no ASB or arrears greater than one month. Those with arrears at the time of application will be given an opportunity to clear them by the move date.

Summary of Outcomes

3.12 We have provided data that summarised the number of moves under the NMS for the period between April 2024 and December 2025.

3.13 The table below outlines the number of eligible tenants by Scheme, against the number of applications received under the NMS and the proportion of those that resulted in a successful move under the NMS:

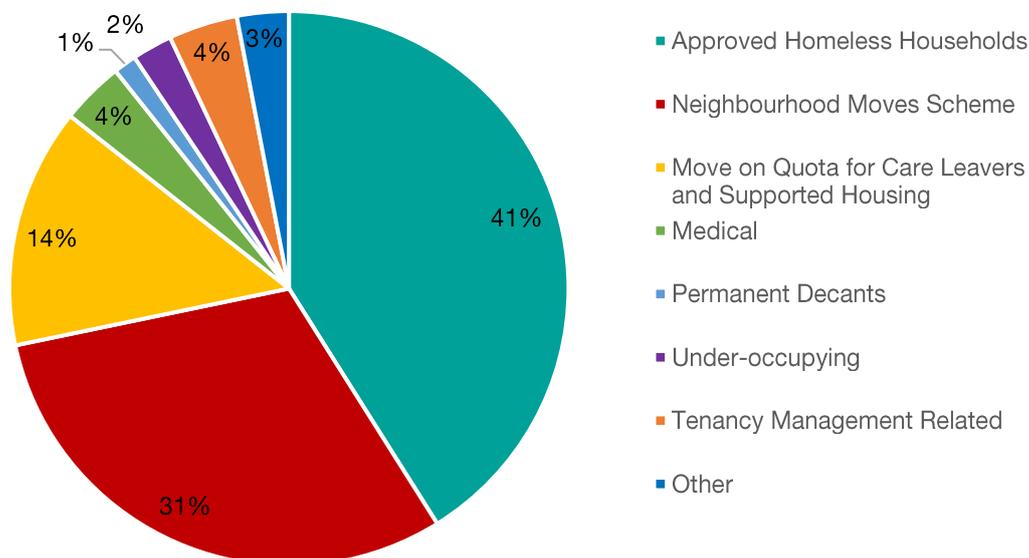
Scheme	Eligible tenants	Applications received	No. of moves under NMS	% of successful applications
White Hart Lane	247	19	4	21%
Ashley Road Depot	533	90	30	33%
Edith Road	129	19	5	26%
Hale Wharf	594	59	31	53%
Nilgun Canver	107	26	15	58%
Partridge	430	63	15	24%
Redhouse	168	53	26	49%
Remington	698	111	34	31%
Walter Tull	Unknown*	89	24	27%
Total	698	529	184	35%

* Sent 2022 prior to NMS officer

3.14 For the table below, we have set out the number of moves per scheme in addition to setting out what this is as a proportion of the total number of lets for the whole scheme :

Scheme	No. of moves under NMS	Total no. of units let	Proportion against whole scheme
White Hart Lane	4	6	67%
Ashley Road Depot	30	72	42%
Edith Road	5	8	63%
Hale Wharf	31	181	17%
Nilgun Canver	15	77	19%
Partridge	15	36	42%
Redhouse	26	46	57%
Remington	34	46	74%
Walter Tull	24	129	19%
Total	184	601	31%

3.15 The chart below shows the lettings plan category across all lets for all of the schemes showing the proportion of NMS moves:



3.16 The table below summarises the number of moves by scheme through the NMS against the number of bedrooms and the proportion of properties by the number of bedrooms that have been let in total:

Scheme	1 bed		2 bed		3 bed		4 bed	
White Hart Lane	1	100%	1	50%	2	67%	n/a	n/a
Ashley Road Depot	4	27%	6	50%	16	42%	4	57%
Edith Road	n/a	n/a	1	100%	3	50%	1	100%
Hale Wharf	8	11%	12	13%	11	73%	n/a	n/a
Nilgun Canver	7	19%	4	18%	2	12%	2	100%
Partridge	8	38%	7	47%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Redhouse	5	42%	10	45%	9	90%	2	100%
Remington	5	63%	12	57%	13	100%	4	100%
Walter Tull	4	11%	6	8%	14	64%	n/a	n/a
Total	42	21%	59	23%	70	56%	13	81%

3.17 For the 184 NMS moves, 10% were noted as having an existing Band A priority, 16% that would have been entitled to Band B and the rest either being band C or having not been assessed under the Housing Allocations Policy.

3.18 Overall, there was 64% of those that moved through the NMS that would have had a housing need as defined under the Council's existing Housing Allocations Policy.

- 3.19 Of the 64%, 15 households that were under occupying their accommodation were helped to move through the scheme and therefore released more bedrooms for the Housing Register. These households would have had good prospects of moving through the general Housing Register in any event however, it may be that an offer of a new build home incentivised residents to move.
- 3.20 There was a further 5% that had identified medical needs and were able to move through the NMS but were not assessed for priority on the Housing Register. The remaining households with a housing need were overcrowded or severely overcrowded and in all but a very limited number, would not have had sufficient priority and/ or waiting time, to be offered accommodation through the general Housing Register.
- 3.21 Whilst the number of properties made available for relet should match the number of moves through the NMS, in reality there is a temporary loss of homes available for those on the Housing Register where released properties will require void works to get the property ready for let. As the scheme enables existing tenants to move in circumstances where they otherwise would have been less likely or unable to through the Housing Register, there is an increase in the number of voids as secure tenants release Council properties instead of being let to those on the Housing Register in the first instance.

4. Key Principles and Benefits of the NMS

Key principles of the NMS

- 4.1 There is theoretically no net loss of available homes. The letting of new homes to existing tenants would cause a disadvantage to other people on the Housing Register unless the same number of re-lets are provided by the secure tenants releasing their existing Council home through the NMS.
- 4.2 For this reason, the policy has not extended the NMS to people who do not hold a social tenancy as it would not release a home to be relet to the wider Housing Register. Therefore, as one property is let, another is released.
- 4.3 However, in practice, properties that have been released by existing Council tenants moving into a new home through the NMS will require voids works, some of which will be more extensive than others, and means that there is a temporary loss of homes available for those on the Housing Register.

- 4.4 The scheme should address under-occupation and over-crowding, which has been a principal aim of the policy and is reflected in the priorities for local moves.
- 4.5 Whilst the policy tries to prioritise those living close to the new homes and exclude those who have no or little connection to the building site, this cannot always happen in practice. For example, tenants that are being decanted from their homes due to regeneration work in a ward or neighbouring ward (that is outside the immediate area) will be given priority for new homes over nearby tenants.
- 4.6 This option was strongly supported during the original consultation, and this compromise allowed maximum choice to those whose homes were being demolished, especially given the numbers moving through the re-generation priority was expected to be very low.

Other benefits of NMS

- 4.7 Without the NMS, new homes would be occupied by households in greatest housing need but not necessarily from the immediate area and, generally, new to a social tenancy. By bringing in local people, this helps to make the new homes part of the existing community and the tenants new to the area will be dispersed into vacant homes in the wider area.
- 4.8 In the absence of a scheme like the NMS, anyone seeking to move would likely have to move out of the immediate area unless they were able to identify a suitable mutual exchange. This may require a change of schools, doctors and local amenities. By using the NMS, households have more opportunity to move to more suitable housing without these changes. It therefore allows people to maintain support networks with limited upheaval. This is particularly important for older people who represent most of under-occupiers.
- 4.9 The increased moves from existing Council properties provides further ancillary benefits that would not be seen without the scheme. This includes allowing tenants to move on from their current accommodation, recovering outstanding rent arrears as part of agreeing a move, alleviating overcrowding or medical difficulties for households that would not have had realistic prospects of moving through the general Housing Register.
- 4.10 The scheme has also increased local support for new build homes. Before the introduction of the NMS, local people typically had no or little interest in new homes and/or were against them as they were seen as being a means to move people out of the area. With the NMS, local residents are more invested in the outcomes.

5. Proposed Changes to the NMS

- 5.1 Changes to the current NMS have been proposed as part of the draft Housing Allocations policy, with Cabinet approving these changes for consultation which is planned to take place in summer 2026. The below outlines the proposed changes:
- 5.2 **Simplify the catchment area to only being within 250 metres and remove the 'same estate' criteria.**
This is sought as some estates are very large or are not always clearly defined, meaning some residents are in effect living outside the 'immediate' area and with no connection to the building area.
- 5.3 **Include Housing Association tenants that provide nomination to released properties.**
This is proposed as 60% of under-occupiers in the borough are tenants of housing associations and so there is a missed opportunity to increase the number of family homes being released through this scheme. This would be opened up to Registered Providers should they guarantee that a property would be released for the Housing Register in return.
- 5.4 **Give under-occupiers anywhere in the borough priority for new homes.**
This is also proposed to increase the number of family homes being released.
- 5.5 **The tenant must have a housing need to move as set out in the Housing Allocations Policy.**
This is proposed to prevent those with no housing need moving for a low or no reason as there are limited benefits of the move to the tenant or council. The level of housing need that would be applicable would need to be determined and set out in a revised policy.
- 5.6 **Only allowing a second NMS move after 5 years.**
This is proposed as some new builds are next to each other.
- 5.7 **Only offer homes where there are 10 or more homes being built.**
This is proposed as on smaller schemes the number of potential applicants far outweigh the number of homes and most nearby tenants would be unsuccessful.
- 5.8 **Two-year residency criteria for applicants**
This is proposed as applications open about 6 months before a scheme completion and a 12-month residency would mean new residents would be able to apply a few months after moving-in to the area.
- 5.9 **One year residency criteria for household members and preventing sub-households from joining the application.**

This includes those who have their own housing application and those living with their children and/or partner. These criteria are proposed to ensure that household members are long-term residents as both new arrivals and sub-households are more likely to leave the family home.

Allocations Policy Consultation

- 5.10 In addition to proposed changes above, Cabinet has also approved questions as part of the Allocations Policy Consultation, some of which are relevant to the NMS. These are outlined in Appendix A.
- 5.11 We will be assessing internal operational effectiveness and outcomes within Housing Services as part of the Allocations Policy review prior to consultation.
- 5.12 Further changes to the NMS would require Cabinet approval and would be linked to the Allocations Policy consultation and review.

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

Not required.

7. Procurement

Not required.

8. Head of Legal & Governance

Not required.

9. Equality

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.

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.

Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.

It is imperative that we consider the equalities inequity that could be demonstrated through a scheme such as the NMS. For example, new Housing not going to those most in need on the Housing Register who are likely to have one or more protected characteristics. Whilst other priorities within housing are important, such as releasing properties in under-occupation, it is important this is balanced across the borough alongside protected characteristics so that no one is discriminated against inadvertently.

The new Allocations Policy will be consulted on, which includes the NMS scheme, and will be subject to a full EQIA assessment.

10. Use of Appendices

- 10.1 Appendix A – Allocation Policy Consultation Questions on the NMS
- 10.2 Appendix B – Neighbourhood Moves Scheme
[Neighbourhood moves scheme](#)
- 10.3 Appendix C – Current Allocation Policy
[Housing allocations policy 2015 - amended 9 February 2021](#)

11. Background papers

- 11.1 Cabinet Paper on the Allocation Policy Consultation:
 - [Approval to consult on a new Housing Allocations Policy report.pdf](#)
 - [Issue - items at meetings - Approval to consult on a new Housing Allocations Policy | Haringey Council](#)