

Report Title: **Housing Strategy Update**

Forward Plan reference number (if applicable):

Report of: **Stephen Clarke – Director Housing Services**

Wards(s) affected: **All**

Report for: **Information**

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To inform Executive of plans to maintain the currency of the Housing Strategy and the current priorities.

2. Introduction by Executive Member

- 2.1 Our Housing Strategy has achieved the coveted "fit for purpose" endorsement of the civil servants. Although this is a real achievement and important to us, the real importance of a strategy document is that it really guides our direction and practice.
- 2.2 This update of the strategy is important to ensure that we review the progress we have made and have an up to date action plan to take us forward.
- 2.3 It is a timely review and update, which highlights how much we have achieved since we produced the Housing Strategy in 2003.
- 2.4 We are at a significant juncture in the delivery of our housing service, as we prepare for the ALMO split, which makes our concentration of delivering a strategic lead particularly relevant.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Executive note the contents of this report and comment as appropriate.
- 3.2 That Executive agree that this report is put forward to Full Council on 9th January.

Stephen Clarke

Report Authorised by:

Stephen Clarke – Director Housing Services

Contact Officer: **Denise Gandy – Head of Housing Strategy and Performance**
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4. Executive Summary

- 4.1 The current housing strategy (2003-6) was granted Fit For Purpose (FFP) by GOL in August this year following nearly 18 months of dialogue with them. The inevitable result of this delay was that much of the background information and context in the strategy is out of date, as are the proposed actions
- 4.2 FFP status means that the council will not be required to submit an updated housing strategy to government for at least three years. However, we should and are expected to keep the strategy current and maintain an up to date action plan.
- 4.3 This report describes the process for updating and monitoring the Housing Strategy and highlights our priority areas for the next 2 years.

5. Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development (if applicable)

N/A

6. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

7. Background

- 7.1 The current housing strategy (2003-6) was granted Fit for Purpose (FFP) by GOL in August this year following nearly 18 months of dialogue with them. The inevitable result of this delay was that much of the background information and context in the strategy is out of date, as are the proposed actions. Particularly, there is little mention of the ALMO and its implications.
- 7.2 FFP status means that the council will not be required to submit an updated housing strategy to government for at least three years. However, to ensure that our business plans and housing related strategies are properly aligned to our overall housing strategy and to our community strategy priorities, we should and are expected to keep the strategy current and maintain an up to date action plan.

- 7.3 The existing action plan, although meeting FFP criteria, does not accurately reflect current work being undertaken to meet our objectives as it does not include such major initiatives as the ALMO or the Prevention and Options project which will radically alter the way we deliver services. Also the monitoring arrangements are not as robust or joined up as we would like.
- 7.4 Reviewing the Housing Strategy at this time and taking it through the Council decision making process will aid the ALMO inspection process and ensure we are focused on our priorities at this critical time.

8. Description

- 8.1 It is proposed that the background, context information and actions in the housing strategy be updated while keeping the existing objectives and overall vision.
- 8.2 Our housing vision will, therefore, remain as:
Meeting the Borough's current and future housing needs – and through doing so, making a major contribution to social inclusion and the socio-economic well-being of Haringey.
- 8.3 Our overall housing strategy objectives remain as:
- Improve housing services to residents across the tenures
 - Maximise the supply of affordable homes, increasing access and housing choice
 - Improve community safety, sustainability and cohesion in our most deprived communities and create opportunities for people to achieve and succeed
 - Regenerate our neighbourhoods, achieving decent homes for all and improve the environment
- 8.4 As part of the review of the strategy we have looked at each of the key drivers to ensure that our strategy and actions reflect current priorities and direction. The following drivers have informed the development of the strategy and the prioritisation of the actions.
- 8.4.1 National, Regional and Sub-Regional priorities
- *Sustainable communities agenda has developed.*
 - *Target of reducing temporary accommodation by half by 2010*
 - *Increased drive to sub regional and regional working – context clearer than in 2003*
- 8.4.2 Local Strategic Context, including the Council's corporate priorities as stated in the Community Strategy
Our priorities remain in line with the Community Strategy objectives and the updated strategy reflects the important role that housing has to play in achieving the overall aims of the Council and our partners. GOL has recently recognised the effectiveness of the Housing Strategic

Partnership in delivering outcomes by giving a green light to the housing contribution to the community strategy action plan.

- 8.4.3 The Haringey context and the local housing market, including supply and demand and property condition
- *Demand continues to exceed supply*
 - *Affordability remains a key issue*
 - *Increased need and possible opportunity to access private rented options*
- 8.4.4 The prioritisation of limited resources
- *Changes to the housing funding regime has major implications for our private sector grants programme and the delivery of our Private Sector Housing Strategy*
 - *A successful ALMO and achievement of 2 and 3 stars will bring the investment needed to meet the decent homes standard*
- 8.4.5 Issues of concern for stakeholders
- *Transience and the impact of high levels of temporary accommodation*
 - *Impacts of new development*
 - *For service users - options and customer care*
- 8.5 Consideration of the drivers have led to the identification of the following key issues and priorities:
- 8.5.1 Delivery of the ALMO
- The Council endorsed the proposal to create an ALMO in January 2005 and it received the backing of a majority of tenants (54%) in the ballot held in March/April 2005. A Shadow Board was established in October 2005 and Homes For Haringey will go live in April 06*
- 8.5.2 Delivery of a robust remaining housing function
- The Government consider that the creation of an ALMO gives the remaining housing service an opportunity to concentrate in its strategic housing function. The creation of a new management structure for the Housing Strategy and Needs Service is the first step in ensuring that the service can meet the challenges ahead.*
- 8.5.3 Implementation of the Homelessness Project
- The new 'prevention and options' approach, which will be delivered with our partners, marks a fundamental change in the way that our homelessness services are delivered. The project is likely to be implemented at the end of March 2005.*
- 8.5.4 Achieving a 50% reduction in temporary accommodation by 2010
- Our levels of temporary accommodation continue to rise against a backdrop of the ODPM expecting a 50% drop. A specific action plan that feeds into this strategy is being developed.*

- 8.5.5 Delivery of housing development that contributes to the achievement of sustainable communities
Provision of new units to assist housing need while ensuring that the impacts are positive for the borough.
- 8.5.6 Regeneration of private sector housing
Private sector housing plays a major role in meeting housing need in Haringey, providing homes to over 70,000 households. The strategy seeks to encourage the sector to provide affordable, accessible and decent homes for those wishing to rent or buy. Key activity includes action on HMOs , empty properties and rogue landlords. We will work with landlords through the Accredited Letting Scheme to improve standards and offer options to those in most need. The improvement of private sector housing is also a critical part of our neighbourhood regeneration activity.
- 8.5.7 Partnership working on housing and broader objectives.
Partnerships to deliver key objectives are well developed. Progress has been made in our joint working with both internal and external organisations. Particular work on anti poverty and fuel poverty will be undertaken.
- 8.5.8 Increased understanding of the market
In the future the CPA will place greater emphasis on the council's understanding of the market and planned interventions. The Strategy acknowledges that and the service is actively working towards building a far greater level of knowledge about Haringey's housing need and local housing markets. A major new housing needs survey has been commissioned and will report in March 2006 with sub-area analysis to ward level. In conjunction is hoped that the sub-region will procure a detailed housing markets analysis across all 6 boroughs.
- 8.6 This process involves an updating of the strategy. A more fundamental review of the strategy and its priorities will be conducted in 2007, following the development of the new Community Strategy and the receipt to updated housing needs and market analysis information.
- 8.7 Action Plan
A key aspect of the update has been to ensure that the action plan has SMART targets clearly linked to the achievements of the strategies objectives. The action plan covers the period from 2006 to 2008. The action plan will be updated to reflect the most recent Audit Commission KLOE guidance. The action plan will be agreed with key stakeholders.
- 8.8 Action Plan Monitoring
As our strategic objectives will require close partnership working with internal departments and key external agencies including Housing Associations, the health authority, the voluntary sector, monitoring of the action plan will be through the Housing Strategic Partnership. It is

proposed that the Head of Housing Strategy and Performance prepare a quarterly report, which will be considered by the partnership.

8.9 Timetable

It is recommended that Executive agree that this report be considered at Full Council on 9th January. Following the strategy being signed off by Full Council, a summary version will be produced for publication and dissemination. It will be translated into the most appropriate community languages and an Information campaign will be undertaken to publicise the strategy and the work being undertaken in the action plan.

9. Consultation

9.1 There will not be a formal consultation, as the review will not alter any of the objectives or the overall direction that the strategy proposes. The aim of the exercise is simply to ensure that the information contained in the document is as accurate as possible and reflects the current environment including the ALMO.

9.2 However, the revised document will be circulated to partners, following agreement to this approach at Executive. It will also be discussed at the Housing Association Forum and Housing Strategic Partnership.

9.3 Consultation has been carried out on specific areas included in the strategy, including extensive ALMO consultation, work with stakeholders on the Prevention and Option project and consultation on aspects of our private sector housing work.

10. Summary and Conclusions

10.1 The update of the Housing Strategy ensures that it continues to meet our local priorities and responds to key drivers.

10.2 The Strategy action plan will remain under review and will be monitored by the Housing Strategic Partnership.

10.3 A more fundamental review of the strategy and its priorities will be conducted in 2007, following the development of the new Community Strategy

11. Recommendations

11.1 That Executive note the contents of this report and comment as appropriate.

11.2 That Executive agree that this report is put forward to Full Council on 9th January.

12. Comment of the Director of Finance

- 12.1 The Director of Finance has been consulted. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

13. Legal Comments

- 13.1 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report and confirms that there are no legal implications which arise from it.

14. Equalities Implications

- 14.1 An equalities impact assessment is being carried out as the Strategy is reviewed.