

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON THURSDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER, 2020

**MEMBERS:** Councillors Elif Erbil, Hass Yusuf, Margaret Greer, Susan Erbil and Edward Smith and Alessandro Georgiou.

**Officers:** Joanne Drew, Director of Housing and Regeneration, Susan O'Connell, Governance and Scrutiny Officer, Andy Ellis, Governance and Scrutiny Officer.

**Also Attending:** Councillor Nesil Caliskan, Leader of the Council, Councillor Gina Needs, Cabinet Member for Social Housing

### 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair, Cllr Elif Erbil, welcomed everyone to the meeting. No apologies for absence were received.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Hass Yusuf declared an interest as an attendee at the Repairs and Sourcing Stakeholders Group. Cllr Alessandro Georgiou declared an interest as a member of his family was a social housing tenant.

### 3. INTRODUCTIONS AND PURPOSE OF EVENING

Cllr Elif Erbil stated that the purpose of the meeting was to assist the Housing Scrutiny Panel in devising a work programme for the year.

### 4. LOCAL PRIORITIES FOR 2020-21

The Chair invited Joanne Drew, Director of Housing and Regeneration, to outline the priorities related to Council Housing and Homelessness Services.

#### Council Housing

- 1) Over the past 20 years the profile of homes in Enfield has altered. The council are currently a landlord to over 10,000 tenants and freeholder to 5,000 leaseholders. The housing market is relatively more affordable in Enfield so migration from Central London is common.
- 2) The Good Growth Housing Strategy 2020 sets out 5 ambitions; More affordable homes for local people, invest and be proud of our council homes, quality and variety in the private rented sector, inclusive placemaking, accessible housing pathways and homes for everyone.

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- 3) All homes in the borough must meet the needs of residents, however, this can be a challenge as the council do not own all the homes. The council ensure that vulnerable groups, for example, young people, residents with complex support needs and prison leavers are supported. The council are committed to delivering good growth to support our resident's needs.
- 4) Housing Services are a major contributor to the Corporate Plan and are working collaboratively to address issues within the Climate Action Plan. Working across the council, for example with Adult Social Care Services, independent living in good quality housing, is supported.
- 5) The priorities for council housing in 2020-21 include raising satisfaction levels relating to housing repairs. Following a review of the service provision, the housing repairs work was brought back in-house. To improve customer service, it is estimated that the Civica Housing Management System will be operational from February 2021, issues relating to the pandemic permitting. Estate Management will be reviewed, especially in problematic areas. A £30m capital investment programme relating to stock will be delivered, along with a long-term Asset Management Strategy. A Social Housing White paper is imminent and the council will contribute to this.

### Homelessness

- 6) Homelessness prevention and management is a statutory service for which the council is responsible for funding. There is a severe homelessness issue in Enfield and demand is escalating rapidly. The use of expensive temporary accommodation is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest in London, with the average length of stay being 2.5 years. There are over 4,000 residents on the housing register but only 4-500 homes become available each year. The private rented sector has grown faster in Enfield than any other London borough, an increase of 60% from 2006-2016.
- 7) The priorities relating to homelessness and temporary accommodation include  
Implementing the new Housing Advisory Service and the new Allocations Policy (as part of the Civica System). Deliver reductions in temporary accommodation and supporting rough sleepers.
- 8) The Chair then asked if members of the scrutiny panel had any questions or comments.

In response to a question relating to high eviction rates in Enfield, it was noted that the council will support landlords who are not receiving rent from tenants and landlords would be encouraged to approach the council if this is an issue.

A question relating to the use of temporary accommodation in Harlow, highlighted that although the premises used was of a poor quality, a number

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of residents wished to remain in Harlow. However, it was noted that a number of people had been supported by Enfield Council, in moving out of the building. Those that wish to stay in the area, would be supported by the Pan-London Housing Support Scheme.

A question was asked regarding how the housing strategy will be influenced by the Meridian Water development. In response, it was noted that Meridian Water is crucial for Edmonton and grant funding has been received from the GLA and Central Government. Building on-site at Meridian Water will commence within a year. Alongside Meridian Water, there are vitally important estate renewal schemes such as Joyce and Snells.

It was confirmed that the former Housing Advisory Board would be reconvened under an alternative name as much good progress had been made. The dates of the meetings would be circulated once arranged.

It was noted that Senior Officers were currently working on implementing the Landlord Registration Scheme.

### **5. PLANNING THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020-21**

Members of the panel had a discussion on their preferred areas for future scrutiny. It was agreed that in order to effectively scrutinise each item, there should be no more than 2 items per meeting. With 3 meetings confirmed in the council calendar, a total of 6 items were required for scrutiny. Following the debate, the following 6 items were agreed:

- Fire safety and Capital works
- Housing White Paper
- Responsive Repairs
- Allocations Policy
- Housing Advisory Service – Temporary Accommodation and Homelessness
- The Role of Housing Associations

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It was agreed that these items would form the work programme for 2020-21. The draft work programme would go to the executive Management Team, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet, and finally, Full Council on 30<sup>th</sup> September.

### **6. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Terms of Reference of the Housing Scrutiny Panel were noted.

### **7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The dates of future meetings were noted as follows:

Tuesday 1 December 2020

Thursday 11 February 2021

Thursday 15 April 2021