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HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL

**Thursday, 17th March, 2022 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber,
Civic Centre, Silver Street, Enfield, EN1 3XA**

Membership:

co : Anne Brown, Ergin Erbil (Associate Cabinet Member (Non-geographical based)), Margaret Greer, Ayten Guzel, James Hockney (Chair), Saray Karakus, Edward Smith and Hass Yusuf (Vice-Chair)

AGENDA – PART 1

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Council are invited to identify any disclosable pecuniary, other pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests relevant to the items on the agenda.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 1 - 8)

To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2021

4. HOUSING GATEWAY AND HOUSING UNDERSPENDS (Pages 9 - 12)

To receive the report of Kayt Wilson, Head of Private Housing Solutions.

5. NEW PARTNER ARRANGEMENTS WITH REGISTERED PROVIDERS (Pages 13 - 20)

To receive the report of Amena Matin, Head of Regeneration & Growth.

6. RETENTION OF STAFF IN HOUSING DEPARTMENT (Pages 21 - 24)

To receive the report of Vanessa Tanner, HR Business Partner.

7. WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2021/22 (Pages 25 - 26)

Work Programme attached for information

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

To note that future meeting dates will be confirmed at Annual Council in May.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON TUESDAY, 7TH DECEMBER, 2021

MEMBERS: Councillors Anne Brown, Ergin Erbil (Associate Cabinet Member (Non-geographical based)), Ayten Guzel and Edward Smith

Officers: Joanne Drew (Director of Housing & Regeneration), Karen Lucas (Head of Housing Management), Martin Greenway (Head of Repairs & Estate Services), Helen Baeckstroem (Strategy & Policy Team Manager), Stacey Gilmour (Governance Officer)

Also Attending: Councillor Gina Needs, Cabinet Member for Social Housing

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hockney (Chair), Yusef (Vice-Chair), Greer and Karakus.

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, nominations were sought and seconded and Councillor Ergin Erbil chaired the meeting.

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and introductions were made.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were received.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2021

4. ENFIELD REPAIRS DIRECT - OVERVIEW ON DELIVERY AND RECENT CHANGES

The Chair thanked Officers and Members for attending to present the item on the Review of Enfield Repairs Direct.

Councillor Needs introduced the item highlighting that the report views the progress and performance of Enfield Repairs Direct as it approaches a year and a half from its setup.

Councillor Needs stated that this administration had listened to residents and brought the service in house which has paid off dividends. She added that she was very proud of the team, who were working really hard and, thanks to Officers, there was currently no back log of work.

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Martin Greenway, Head of Repairs & Estate Services provided an update on the Review of Enfield Repairs Direct which covered the below points;

- Response to the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Performance
- Staffing structure changes
- ERD Operations
- Contracts and Quality Team
- Planned IT improvements
- Resident Involvement
- Future plans for the development of the service.

During his update Martin made the following key points:

- Resident and member feedback on previous repairs contractors responsible for undertaking repairs in recent years has been poor.
- In June 2019, the Cabinet approved the in-sourcing of the Housing Repairs Service. This service was launched in May 2020.
- In addition to the setting up of a new inhouse team wider feedback was considered which included residents wanted their call answered quickly by polite, helpful staff and being able to book a convenient appointment slot with minimum customer effort.
- There also needed to be more reliability in attending appointments and higher rates of 'first time fix'. Communication needed to be better to satisfactorily resolve repair issues including how escalations and complaint casework are handled.
- In February 2020 Cabinet reviewed a report detailing the design of the service, a policy for repairs, timescales for delivery, a financial business, branding and a service model with proposed timetable for introduction of defined functions.

Response to the challenge of the COVID-19 Pandemic

- The pandemic had a disruptive impact upon the service as with all other sectors in economic and social life.
- Repairs services across the country have applied restrictions in repairs to critical emergencies only, furloughed staff and have been fraught with supply chain difficulties.
- Enfield Repairs Direct (ERD) having launched in may 2020 has remained operational throughout.

Performance

- Residents expect a responsive repairs service which is fast and effective. ERD has extended a great deal of effort in developing its job management system to enable appointments to be managed effectively.
- A chart was provided in the report showing progress over the past year in completing appointments on time.
- The team have not carried a backlog coming out of Covid restrictions as other housing providers have experienced.
- A level of confidence in the system and method has been achieved where the operating Works In progress (WIP) is below a thousand jobs and targets are expected to be met in the last quarter of the year.

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- Recognising that the route to improving the responsive repairs service, the team needs to act on feedback. For this reason, data is captured on a transactional basis from completed jobs.
- The feedback team also review data from complaints and Members' Enquiries.

Staffing Structure Changes

- The service has changed its delivery model following a review of structures across the Housing Department as well as an extended period of staff consultation earlier this year. A chart included in the report outlines how functions are organised.

ERD Operations

- The inhouse repairs operation is of critical importance to the future success of the service. The reason for this is to not over-rely on contractors as has been a problem in the past.
- The vision is to create a dedicated inhouse workforce with trained and knowledgeable tradespeople, with apprenticeship programmes and succession planning.
- The benefit of an inhouse service is that there is greater control and accountability for the standard of work.
- The apprenticeship programme includes 5 apprentices in the next intake. There are significant advantages to the 'grow our own' strategy including affording local residents an opportunity to develop themselves and at the same time the Council benefits from the knowledge they have.

Resident Involvement

- The insourcing and development of Enfield Repairs Direct has been monitored by the Repairs stakeholders' Group. This has been very valuable in understanding the key concerns of residents and where to prioritise focus.

Future Plans for the Development of the service

- ERD is emerging from the start-up phase of its establishment and is now stabilising. The public service ethos of the team is strong and there is great willingness to succeed in its next phase of development. As performance continues to improve gauged by internal indicators and more importantly by customer and member satisfaction, opportunities will continue to be sought for the growth of the service.

The Panel then asked questions of the Officers. A summary of the questions and answers are set out below.

Q: Councillor Smith stated that he regularly receives complaints from residents in his ward (particularly Poplar estate) regarding outstanding repairs, delayed appointment times and lack of response to enquires from Officers. He acknowledged that repairs are a very emotive subject with some residents expressing dissatisfaction from the outset therefore he appreciated that there would always be an element of challenge. However,

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in his opinion, the feedback he is receiving from residents is somewhat different from the honed words in the report.

A: Martin replied that the data and statistics for complaints shows a decrease overall and therefore this has formed the basis for the information included in the report. He agreed however that it is important that the service responds to challenges and rectifies them at the earliest opportunity. Joanne Drew, Director of Housing & Regeneration added that monthly performance sessions take place at which data and statistics are discussed. She agreed however to do a deep dive into data, particularly around the Poplar estate as discussed by Cllr Smith.

Action: Joanne Drew, Director of Housing & Regeneration

Q: Although there is now more control over repairs there still appears to be areas for improvements and we are still outsourcing to contractors. Why is this?

A: Although we procure a whole host of support contractors, we start with the premise that works are carried out inhouse where possible. Some specialist works (e.g. roofing and draining) cannot currently be done inhouse therefore there is sometimes the need to use support contractors. A procurement exercise is currently taking place which is moving to the second stage shortly.

Q: Are there any plans for a Residents' Portal Service whereby they can log into their account, look at job references/progress and keep track of their own repairs?

A: A modern Repairs Team's success is largely tied up in the effectiveness of its IT and how it is used and as such, an upgrade to the Housing System is currently taking place. This is a large project, but the aim is to get to the stage where residents can book their own repairs and appointment slots which will in turn reduce customer effort as much as possible resulting in a better customer experience.

Q: Have the numbers of permanent staff within the Housing Department now increased and is it the aspiration to have all permanent staff? Can exact figures for agency and permanent staff be provided?

A: A recruitment process is currently taking place with more staff coming on board permanently. This is a rigorous process involving a skills test and interview with a review to recruiting good quality staff. The market as a whole is very tough at the moment which is why there is also a focus on the apprenticeship programme. Figures for agency and permanent staff will be circulated to members.

Action: Martin Greenway, Head of Repairs & Estate Services

5. ESTATE SERVICES

RECEIVED the report of Martin Greenway, Head of Repairs & Estate Services.

NOTED

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1. Councillor Gina Needs, Cabinet Member for Social Housing introduced the report and gave credit to Officers for their achievements.
2. Key points of the report highlighted by Martin Greenway, Head of Repairs & Estate Services.
3. Estate Services & Repairs are now located in the same building so all responsible for communal repairs, tracing and tracking.
4. Continually looking at ways in which recycling can be improved, including educating residents on how best to recycle.
5. Fly tipping remains a national issue, therefore Enforcement Officers are working collaboratively with estate staff. Two posts have been created dedicated to waste enforcement on council land.
6. A wider remit is in place to manage anti-social behaviour on estates. This includes looking at the design of estates, the possibility of better lighting and working closely with the Council's First Response Team.
7. Through its resident engagement service, the council seeks to involve a wide range of tenants, leaseholders and other residents, not only in housing issues but also in the context of place shaping in the borough.
8. In response to Members' queries regarding estate walk abouts and the need for these to be more flexible and to involve closer liaison with Councillors, it was confirmed that future calendar dates for appointments were now being looked at and it was agreed that these could be more flexible as these walk abouts are very important.
9. In response to a question regarding a new abseiling cleaning service for high rise buildings it was confirmed that as communal windows in tower blocks were not currently cleaned an enhancement to this service was being looked at with a view to instructing companies to carry out this task
10. Officers provided more information on bulk waste collection points, the action taking place to prevent these areas from becoming dumping grounds, and how this would be reviewed and monitored.
11. Regarding fly tipping, Officers advised that the inhouse team will respond quickly and efficiently to remove it and the enforcement team will work closely with the estate caretakers and seek intelligence from on the ground to identify the source of each item.
12. In response to Members' concerns regarding bulk waste items being dumped on estates from people outside it was advised that if this was a particular problem then in an attempt to tackle this issue, rapid measures could be considered such as the installation of CCTV. Members felt that a strategy to deal with this matter needed to be developed and Officers took this point on board.
13. The Chair, Councillor Erbil expressed concerns regarding the location of cycle storage units as, although these had been successfully delivered, residents were reluctant to use them due to theft. It was agreed that the location and take up of these units would be looked at.
14. Discussions took place regarding car parking on estates and how this was often abused by residents from adjoining roads. Councillor Needs confirmed that she had been meeting with Officers to discuss the possible introduction of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs)/permits. She

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emphasised however that any such measures would need to be affordable to everyone.

The Cabinet Member and Officers were thanked for attending and presenting the report.

6. DRAFT TENANCY STRATEGY

RECEIVED the report of Helen Baeckstroem, Strategy and Policy Team Manager.

NOTED

1. The verbal introduction by Councillor Gina Needs, Cabinet Member for Social Housing in which she thanked Officers for all their hard work on the draft Strategy.
2. The report presents the new draft Tenancy Strategy 2021-2025 for discussion as part of its engagement process before approval by Cabinet.
3. The draft strategy outlines the Councils' commitment to good homes in well-connected neighbourhoods through the setting of high standards for tenancies in the Borough and also sets out requirements regarding lifetime tenancies for social housing and also recommends good practice for private landlords and letting agents in regard to the tenancy agreements they use.
4. The draft strategy proposes that all tenants of social housing are given lifetime tenancies to enable them to live safe, healthy and confident lives in settled communities across the borough.
5. Key points of the reported highlighted by Karen Lucas, Head of Housing Management, Helen Baeckstroem, Strategy and Policy Team Manager and Joanne Drew, Director of Housing & Regeneration. Members were invited to raise questions and comments.
6. Officers advised that the draft strategy has benefited from engagement and formal consultation with a wide range of stakeholders throughout its development.
7. In response to questions from Members, Officers explained that the policy focused on four priority areas which were:
 - Residents have a clear understanding of their tenancy;
 - Lifetime tenancies are the preferred option as to the best approach for addressing housing need in the borough;
 - Residents are able to stay in their home for as long as it remains suitable for them;
 - If a tenancy ends, residents are supported to avoid homelessness
8. In response to Members' queries regarding what happens when a property is no longer suitable for a tenant's needs due to overcrowding, Officers explained the allocations scheme which awards priority to tenants in severely overcrowded properties. Resident Relationship Officers work closely with these families to offer support, help and advice with various other schemes that can be accessed.

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9. Councillor Brown expressed concerns regarding the number of residents on the housing register as well as the number of families living in overcrowded accommodation and asked how the council intended to address these issues. Officers explained that due to the national housing crisis there were just not enough homes to meet the needs at the right price point to address this. However, Enfield Council is working to make sure that existing stock is used most effectively. Further information was provided on various schemes in place such as home share, under occupation incentives and a vacancy chain system which creates a chain of moves that allows people to end up in the right size property. The Council is being as active and pro-active as possible in an attempt to address these issues.
10. In relation to the Draft Tenancy Strategy, Councillor Smith expressed his concerns regarding the relationship the Council envisaged between itself and the HAS. He said he would be concerned if Enfield Council went further than trying to persuade Registered Providers (RPs) to adopt the strategy but instead insisted and he very much hoped that it would not be the latter. Officers gave assurances that the Council wanted to retain as positive relationships as possible with its RPs.
11. Members agreed that this strategy was good for cohesion and social inclusion and also commented that long term tenancies are extremely important for children and young people especially in regard to schooling and education. It was also felt that long term tenancies can create pride in homes as well as pride in the neighbourhood.

The Cabinet Member and Officers were thanked for attending and presenting the Draft Tenancy Strategy.

7. RETENTION OF STAFF IN HOUSING DEPARTMENT

NOTED the report and agreed that this would be discussed further at the next meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Panel in March 2022.

Action: Joanne Drew, Director of Housing & Regeneration

8. WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2021/22

NOTED the Work Programme for 2021/22 and agreed that the report in respect of Retention of Staff in Housing Department would be discussed in more detail at the next meeting in March 2022 and therefore included on the agenda for this meeting along with the other two items marked on the panel's work programme for the March meeting.

Action: Stacey Gilmour, Governance Officer

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

NOTED the date of the next meeting was Thursday 17 March 2022.

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This report format is for scrutiny reports

London Borough of Enfield

Housing Scrutiny Panel – Thursday 17th March 2022

Subject: Housing Gateway Ltd

Cabinet Member: Cllr Gina Needs

Executive Director: Sarah Cary

Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the performance of Housing Gateway Ltd (HGL) and is for information.

Relevance to the Council Plan

- 2.1 Good Homes in Well Connected Neighbourhoods – HGL supports the Council in delivering the aims of its housing strategy. HGL's purpose is "to provide quality housing for Enfield residents to help the Council end the use of temporary accommodation". Furthermore, the core values align to those of the Council's homelessness model which focusses on homeless prevention and strengthening the rights of the tenant. HGL's ethical lettings agency proposal has been designed to provide greater security of tenure for families renting in the private rented sector.
- 2.2 HGL and Enfield Let also support the Council's Licensing scheme and aspiration to improve the standard of accommodation in the private rented sector. HGL and Enfield Let set exemplary landlord standards by ensuring the stock is well maintained and managed.

Background

- 3.1 HGL was created in 2014 as a response to the Council's budget pressure on temporary accommodation. HGL was initially commissioned to purchase 100 properties that could be used as an alternative to temporary accommodation. Since this time HGL has expanded its portfolio to 611 properties and diversified to create an ethical letting agency, provide specialised housing for severely disabled service users and purchased accommodation for rough sleepers.
- 3.2 HGL has a clear mission:
- Secure local properties for local people.
 - Increase the supply of private rented accommodation that can be accessed by Enfield Council.
 - Set exemplary landlord standards, with well managed and maintained accommodation.

- Operate in a commercial, innovative manner exploring options for development and expansion.
- Provide attractive economic value leading to higher returns invested in capital and improved gearing.

3.3 HGL's Core Model

- HGL purchases properties at market value and renovates them to a lettable standard.
- HGL lets properties at sub market rents, not exceeding Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, to ensure properties are accessible by residents in receipt of benefits.
- LBE has sole nomination rights to HGL's properties. LBE uses these properties to place families who would otherwise require temporary accommodation. This delivers a saving to LBE of c. £2,500 per property, per annum in avoided temporary accommodation costs.
- All of its core activities are delivered by LBE via service level agreements, which enables a joined up, Council led service.

Main Considerations for the Panel

- 4.1 In 2021/22 HGL has continued to expand its portfolio and deliver innovative solutions to the Council. It has been a challenging year namely due to the pandemic and the economic impact that this has had on residents and the property market.

HGL Core Portfolio

- 4.2 As outlined in HGL's business plan, HGL had the capital funding to purchase an additional 100 properties in 2021/22. At the end of January 2022 HGL has purchased 46 properties and it is anticipated that a further 24 properties will be purchased by year end.
- 4.3 Whilst HGL has a capital allocation within the Council's capital finance budget, HGL only draws down the funds required when properties are being purchased. Therefore, there is no cost of carry to either LBE or HGL for the unused capital allowance. Via the Council's Capital Finance Board, the capital requirement is reviewed and adjusted on a quarterly basis.
- 4.4 HGL provides the Council with good quality, affordable accommodation as an alternative to temporary accommodation. The current portfolio saves LBE c.£2m pa and has saved c.£11.2m to date.
- 4.5 The property market has remained buoyant and prices have risen at times, despite the pandemic. The changes to stamp duty stimulated the market and meant that there not as many properties were available in HGL's price range. As HGL is committed to renting its properties at a sub market rent, this restricts the amount HGL can purchase a property for and this is significantly lower than most investment landlords that HGL is competing with. HGL makes an offer on every available and suitable property on the market. HGL's excellent reputation and ability to purchase quickly, often secures a property at less than market value. Clearly for

vendors there is always a balance to be struck between price and speed and efficiency.

- 4.6 HGL is actively supporting the Council's Landlord Licensing Scheme and has been proactive in submitting licencing applications. To date HGL has submitted applications for 92% of its properties. HGL fully renovates all properties when purchased and ensures they are well maintained via regular inspections and using the Council's repairs team, Enfield Repairs Direct. HGL aims to set an example to other landlords in the Borough by holding well maintained and managed properties.

Rough Sleeper Accommodation

- 4.7 HGL, in collaboration with the Council, was successful in securing a £6.7m capital grant from the GLA to support the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP). The largest allocation in the UK. In order to maximise the grant allocation HGL has agreed to commit its own capital up to the usual yield level supplementing any shortfall via the GLA capital grant. LBE was not able to deliver the scheme alone as the capital funds to match the grant were not available.
- 4.8 The grant funding facilitates the purchase of 73 bed spaces, by purchasing a mix of studios, 1 bed and 2 bed accommodation. 36 properties have been purchased by January 22, providing a total of 44 bed spaces. The remaining 29 bed spaces will be purchased by Q1 2022/23.

Ethical Lettings Agency

- 4.9 HGL launched its ethical lettings agency, Enfield Let, in October 2020. Enfield Let's vision is to promote ethical lettings in the Borough, tackling social injustice and ensuring residents are not discriminated against because of their financial status.
- 4.10 Enfield Let leases properties from private landlords in the Borough, offering long leases of 3 – 5 years. Landlords are offered guaranteed rent, paid monthly in advance and a full management service.
- 4.11 The Council has sole nomination rights to Enfield Let properties and nominates clients at risk of homelessness. Enfield Let rents are set as a percentage of market rent, in line with Local Housing Allowance.
- 4.12 Enfield Let has grown a portfolio of 195 leased properties since its inception, providing quality homes in the private rented sector for families who would otherwise be placed in temporary accommodation. This housing solution provides the Council with a viable private rented offer for families on low incomes and also avoids the costs associated with housing residents in temporary accommodation.

Integrated Learning Disabilities Accommodation

- 4.13 Housing Gateway strives to find innovative housing solutions which not only deliver financially but provide better life outcomes for the residents of Enfield. A good example of this can be seen through a collaboration with the Integrated Learning Disabilities Service (ILDS) to source accommodation for residents with disabilities and complex needs. In all of

the cases identified the private sector has been unable to provide the service user with suitable accommodation.

- 4.14 Housing Gateway has been able to purchase 5 properties that can be tailored to meet individual requirements, providing the Council with a creative solution to a challenging issue. Each property conversion takes on average 1 year, so is resource intensive. However, the result has been that service users and their families have suitable accommodation, in the right area. This improves their wellbeing, enabling them to live independently and reducing the pressure on wider Council budgets.

Conclusions

- 5.1 Housing Gateway continues to address the Council's priorities of providing secure, rented accommodation whilst delivering significant savings of c. £11.2m to date. Housing Gateway continues to ensure sound financial management and is delivering on its commitment to support the Council's housing agenda through innovative business and solutions that LBE would be restricted from delivering itself.

Report Author: Kayt Wilson
Head of Private Housing Solutions
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Date of report: 3rd March 2022

Appendices

N/A

Background Papers

N/A

This report format is for scrutiny reports

London Borough of Enfield

Housing Scrutiny Panel

17 March 2022

Subject: Working with Registered Providers

Cabinet Member: Cllr Gina Needs, Cabinet Member for Social Housing

Executive Director: Sarah Cary

Purpose of Report

1. For information.

Relevance to the Council Plan

2. The partnership arrangements outlined in this report seek to deliver on the commitment to ensure all residents, regardless of whether they are council tenants or housing association tenants, are provided with good homes in well-connected neighbourhoods and the creation or management of safe, healthy and confident communities.

Background

3. There are currently 39 stock owning Registered Providers (also known as Housing Associations) in the Borough with a total of 8566 homes. This represents 6.8% of the Boroughs housing stock in 2019.
4. In 2020, the Council set out an approach to establish a new way of working with Housing Associations (also known as Registered Providers) and a range of Affordable Housing Providers to maximise contributors towards the delivery of the Council's Good Growth Housing Strategy and contribution to housing supply delivery of 12,460 homes over the Local Plan period. Specifically, the intention of the Council to work with housing providers to make the most of their own land and assets in the Borough and to contribute to the delivery of more new homes delivered at pace.
5. A range of activities have taken place to build relationships with Housing Associations over the pandemic and the proposed arrangements will continue to be outcome focussed. These include:
 - a. **Intergenerational Design Competition** with Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing Association to support small and medium architectural practices to develop innovative products. This was a very successful initiative which brokered relationships across the sector and supported by the Mayor of London.
 - b. Proactive partnership during the pandemic through the **Homelessness Prevention Partnership Board**

- c. Delivering Shared Ownership at New Avenue through partnership working. There is a high demand for low cost affordable home ownership products on the new estate so the Council **brokered an arrangement** with the developer and the Housing Association to offer a different tenure which will help to meet a range of needs.
 - d. Unlocking obstacles or issues identified through the **planning process** and working collaboratively to unlock homes.
 - e. Soft engagement throughout pandemic to identify impacts to delivery and **promote new opportunities** either Council-led or third-party land ownership.
 - f. **Consultation on council policy** – for example on Resident Engagement and Tenancy Strategy
6. To continue to establish a strong collaboration, the Council will seek to establish a *Charter for Delivering Better Housing Outcomes* and creating an Affordable Housing Developer Framework.
 7. We will also continue with regular engagement meetings and the suggested work plan for these in 2022/23 is attached

Enabling Development

8. Procurement commenced on the Affordable Housing Provider Framework, which is aligned to the needs of the Council, as enabler, developer and landowner. The Framework is split into three “Lots” for i) works ii) services and iii) Out of Borough management. In line with anti-competitive rules, the Council isn’t able to restrict the procurement to only Registered Providers but the scope of the framework is likely to be more attractive to an organisation which owns and manages social housing and is aligned to the objectives of the Council’s Council Plan. The Framework will be established later this year and will become a critical route to market for Council Housing delivery, Meridian Water and Joyce and Snell’s.
9. Additionally, to support new development, the Council proactively adapted its pre-application and planning service to ensure schemes which are grant dependent are prioritised and determined in timely fashion to ensure the borough is able to benefit from grant.

Skills and social mobility

10. There is substantial ongoing uncertainty as the UK and global economies emerge from the pandemic. Labour market and supply chain disruption are affecting the prices and availability of goods and services, with significant volatility in inflation. Access to skills is likely to remain a substantial issue for providers’ delivery of development programmes, major repairs and maintenance, health and safety compliance, and key services to tenants. With the Skills Academy and wider skills and employment initiatives, there is an opportunity for the Council to collectively work with Housing Associations to manage emerging and longer-term labour, skills, and materials shortages, identifying opportunities and access to training and employment for people living in social housing.

Nominations

11. Under existing arrangements, the Council requires 100% nominations on social housing first lets delivered through the planning system. The allows for the Council to offer suitable accommodation to those on the Housing Register. Currently housing association nominations make up 21% of total lets although performance varies between organisations and is limited by new supply.
12. In 2020, we identified that there were insufficient lets being provided by housing associations to applicants on the Housing Needs Register. In response to this a monthly monitoring system was established. We now require housing associations to declare all of their lets and monitor this against the nominations we are offered on a monthly basis. This has helped to drive up the percentage of nominations we receive from some associations.

Main Considerations for the Panel

13. The overall supply of new homes has reduced over the past few years which has reduced overall churn of new lets for people on the housing register.
14. Traditionally Registered Providers acquire S106 affordable units to deliver their grant programme targets. However, there has been a decline in interest for S106 units in the borough due to increasing land value and build costs which means delivery of new social housing is impacted. In the absence of an affordable housing provider the developer's cashflow is limited and therefore pace of build slows down. The acquisition of S106 homes will become more challenging from March 2023 as the new GLA Affordable Homes Programme restricts grant funding to homes in addition to those achieved through the planning system. This is likely to significantly impact the local market and number of new lets available for the Council to allocate to under its Tenancy Strategy.
15. The Council is focussed on understanding the market issues better and has appointed a Housing Enabling team to engage landowners, Registered Providers and the planning service to establish better intelligence on the local market to help inform policy.
16. Key to delivering homes in the borough is the need for affordable housing grant which Registered Providers will need to secure on a programme basis similar to the Council's own arrangements with the GLA. There are currently 11 Registered Providers who have grant allocations and actively progressing schemes under the current Affordable Homes Programme (2016-2023) and we are working with them to accelerate through the planning system or during construction.
17. Much of providers' focus over the past year was inevitably dedicated to the COVID-19 pandemic. Providers had to respond to the unprecedented challenges they faced, reacting quickly to change operating models and develop new ways of working. However, the public health and economic outlook remains unclear, and providers continue to operate in an intensely uncertain environment.

18. The economic recovery to date remains fragile, with significant ongoing disruption to supply chains and the labour market resulting in high-cost inflation and ongoing shortages of materials and skills. Weaker operating margins and increased spending on existing stock due to remedial safety works, catch up on repairs, and energy efficiency improvements have seen the sector's interest cover deteriorate in latest forecasts which is likely to further impact on how existing Housing Associations in the borough operate.
19. The sector faces increased scrutiny as they respond to the government's Social Housing White Paper and sector delivers against evolving requirements from its zero-carbon commitments. Navigating sometimes competing demands for providers' resources will require some difficult trade-offs, and the Council will seek to better understand the local landscape to ensure all residents, regardless who their landlord is, feel safe and supported.
20. As the sector will become more reliant on debt, Registered Providers are likely to need to undertake substantial investment in existing stock over the next few years. The Council will work with Providers to establish evolving requirements from the review of Decent Homes Standard and the decarbonisation agenda.
21. Ensuring that tenants are safe in their homes is a fundamental responsibility of all social landlords. The Council will seek to use the Housing Management forums to understand Housing Association duties and responsibilities with regard to fire and building safety. Providers' ability to meet statutory health and safety requirements relies on holding good quality data about their tenants and their stock.
22. Demands for transparency in service delivery and accountability to tenants will increase and consultation on Tenant Satisfaction Measures by the Regulator for Social Housing has just ended.
23. The Council will look to establish a new way of working with Chief Executives for Housing Associations by creating a collaboration between the Chair of Boards, the Director for Housing and Regeneration and Cabinet members or ward councillors to enable more and better homes in the borough.

Conclusions

1. The Panel will note that the Housing Association market is changing but that the Council is committed to working with all residents across the Borough, regardless of who their Landlord is, and ensure residents are treated fairly, with respect and feel safe and secure in their homes. This can only be achieved if Housing Associations proactively work with the Council to deliver on that shared commitment and common goal.

Report Author: Amena Matin
Head of Regeneration and Growth
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08 March 2022

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RP liaison work programme 2022/23

Meetings	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Housing Management and Existing stock	<p>Plans for decarbonisation of stock in Enfield – Retrofit London Action Plan and agreeing place-based priorities for Enfield</p> <p>Nominations and Chain Links project</p> <p>New Housing and Growth Strategy</p>	<p>Priorities for the new Administration/meet the new Cabinet member</p> <p>Supporting residents with cost of living crisis in Enfield - preparing for Winter including the Fuel Poverty Action Plan and employment support</p>	<p>Safety in the borough – community safety and policing, safeguarding, modern day slavery, ASB, building safety</p>	<p>Allocations policy and nominations performance - reciprocals scheme, emergency Housing Protocol Housing for Older people, tenancy strategy review</p>
Housing Supply and Development	<p>Housing Delivery Action Plan – themes and activity – supporting RPs to develop in the Borough</p> <p>New Housing and Growth Strategy</p>	<p>Priorities for the new Administration/meet the new Cabinet member</p> <p>New AHP programme – what does it mean for your organisation, performance against GLA targets in Enfield</p> <p>MMC housing delivery</p>	<p>Meet the new Director for Planning and Growth</p> <p>Market and Land trading Products and housing need Planning review</p>	<p>Site visits, Housing Delivery Action Plan – look back</p>

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London Borough of Enfield

Housing Scrutiny Panel
17th March 2022

Subject: Retention of Staff in Housing Department

Cabinet Member: Gina Needs (Social Housing)
Executive Director: Sarah Cary

Purpose of Report

1. For discussion

Relevance to the Council Plan

2. Good homes in well connected neighbourhoods.
 - a. Supports our new approach to estate renewal, understanding and responding to the needs of tenants and working ever more closely with tenants and leaseholders to build on the strength of our existing communities.
 - b. Restructure designed with the future in mind, planning for the implementation of the emerging social housing regulatory framework and for building safety.
 - c. Cross team approach to support effective collaborative working with the in-house repairs service.
3. A modern council.
 - a. Supports our aim of delivering high quality services which benefit local people and puts our customers and communities at the heart of everything we do.
 - b. Fulfils our commitment to engage with our workforce,
 - c. As an organisation we are committed to engaging with our workforce. As part of our cross-cutting themes of being a modern council, we work towards having an empowered, responsive and happy workforce.

Background

4. This report has been compiled at the request of the Chair who wished to have the following matters addressed:
 - a. How has the restructure affected the number of Neighbourhood Officers on the ground?
 - b. Similar question on caretakers
 - c. Update around new board
 - d. Turnover of staff historical / current
 - e. New strategies from HR?

Main Considerations for the Panel

As you will be aware the Council Housing department recently completed a significant restructure with the aim of creating a service fit for the future. The structure review encompassed the full breadth of the Council Housing teams, recognising the need for change within the context of the broader legislative framework and the opportunities afforded by new ways of working and new more mobile technologies.

In designing the new structure the senior leadership took a broad and holistic approach taking into consideration feedback from residents; the views from the team; looking forward to the responsibilities incumbent in the new regulation regime including the greater role of the Social Housing Regulator and Ombudsman; preparing for the implementation of the Social Housing White Paper as well as reflecting on lessons learnt and challenges associated with the pandemic.

Prior to the restructure there were three neighbourhood teams with a total of 27 Neighbourhood Officer posts. In the new structure the Neighbourhood Officer role has been deleted and we have created 3 new roles with 30 FTE posts

- First Response Officer x 8
- Community Manager x 6
- Resident Relationship Officer x 16

The First Response Team are a geographic patch based team and highly visible in uniforms. They are the first point of contact for residents on our estates. Their role is community facing and includes tasks such carrying out home visits to support tenants on repairs and anti-social behaviour issues; conduct estate and block inspections, raise communal repairs and conduct welfare checks with residents.

The Community Partnerships Team provide an intensive housing management service across 6 of our most challenging estates. This highly focussed team manage and create strategies to improve the estates facing the greatest crime, anti-social behaviour and deprivation challenges. They also liaise with the Capital Programme and Regeneration teams to ensure residents impacted by these projects are fully supported.

The Resident Relationship Team are there to support residents facing the greatest challenges. This team will provide guidance to residents with complex and potentially multi-faceted problems such as domestic violence, hoarding, safeguarding, substance misuse, poor mental health. They will work in partnership with other teams across the council as well as voluntary and statutory agencies. The Resident Relationship Officer will be the single point of contact for that resident, providing support and guidance on tasks associated with independent living, maximising access to benefits to ensure tenancy sustainment, reducing rent arrears and other debt, whilst minimising anti-social behaviour and social isolation.

In addition to these three teams the restructure also created a **Place Improvement Team** to deliver the Council's Resident Led Estate Improvement Programme using data and insight to inform long term community and place based investment priorities. This team also support on more immediate improvements to the feel of the estates by working through the DVLA for abandoned vehicles, managing the Councils garage sites and estate parking and overseeing the introduction of parking controls through Traffic Management Orders etc.

As part of the restructure the Estate Services team, which includes the caretakers, was moved across to the newly created Repairs & Estates service. There were no other substantive changes to this team with the number of caretakers and senior caretakers remaining unchanged.

As requested, we have looked at turnover of staff from within the Council Housing department, comparing the turnover within Housing with both the Place Directorate and the Council.

	01/09/2020 to 31/08/2021			01/09/2019 to 31/08/2020		
	Average Headcount	No. Leavers	% Turnover	Average Headcount	No. Leavers	% Turnover
Housing	189	20	10.61%	168	11	6.54%
Place	1396	125	8.95%	1104	79	7.16%
Enfield	3591	368	10.25%	2873	264	9.19%

Of the 20 leavers between the 01/09/2021 and 31/08/2021, based on the leaving information recorded:

- 4 were retirements of which 1 was an ill health retirement.
- 12 were resignations, 6 where no reason was given, 3 leaving the profession and 3 leaving LBE for new appointments.
- 4 were redundancies.
- The grades of the leavers varied between Scale 2 and HoS 3.
- The average age of the leavers was 46 with an age span of 20 to 72.
- Of the 20 leavers only 1 was part time.
- 14 of the leavers were male and 6 were female.
- The declared ethnicity of the leavers was as follows; 2 African; 3 any other white; 2 Bangladeshi, British Bangladeshi; 3 British; 4 Caribbean, 2 English; 1 Irish; 1 Other Black & Black British; 2 unknown / refused.
- None of the leavers had a declared disability.

Building Resilience

As already referenced the restructure was future facing. The senior leadership team worked effectively with the HR Associate BP analysing key workforce data to build in additional resilience and strength in the workforce.

An implementation plan for the new service is being developed and will include clear team plans which link to the wider departmental objectives. As part of the development of the implementation plan staff engagement, to ensure staff feel engaged with the plan, will take place.

A training programme for the department is being developed which will be informed by the new approach and training needs analysis with staff as part of the annual PDR process and the recent IIP survey.

As a result of our strategic analysis around future staffing need we have built in apprenticeship posts in both Housing Management Services and the Estate and Repairs service – eight in housing management and in the Estate and Repairs service four trade apprentices and an office apprentice. Additionally, the Estate and Repairs service are moving more staff from temporary to permanent roles. This will enable us to recruit locally and attract new and potentially younger recruits to the service. This has been complemented by creating structures with more visible career progression opportunities.

The service has moved to a new office and new way of working as pathfinders for the Corporate 'build the change programme; the new office space offers desk space as well as space which encourages collaborative working. As hybrid working is

established it's anticipated that it will increase staff satisfaction and improved retention of staff.

We also recognise that our previous structures did not overtly support the ethos of grow your own, particularly in more technical roles. In the new structure we have created trainee surveyor roles to try and build pipeline talent and increased opportunity for professional development.

Facilitated team away days are in progress which focus on how teams work together to support the ambition of the Housing and Growth Strategy and to improve collaborative working across teams.

HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2021-22

ITEM	Tues 6 July 2021- Planning Session	Thurs 30 September 2021	Tues 7 December 2021	Thurs 17 March 2022
Annual Items				
Setting the Panel's Work Programme 2021/22	Agree work programme 2021/22			
Specific items:				
Local Priorities 2021-22	Verbal presentation			
Building Safety- including cladding compliance with Building Safety Bill		Report		
Temporary accommodation levels and strategy to reduce		Report		
Retention of Staff in Housing Department		Report (deferred to 7 Dec meeting)	Report	Report (to be discussed in more detail as the report was only received for noting at the December meeting)
Enfield Repairs Direct- overview on delivery and recent changes			Report	
Estate Management			Report	
Draft Tenancy Strategy			Report	
New Partner arrangements with Registered providers				Report
Housing Gateway and budget underspends				Report

