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HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL

**Wednesday, 22nd March, 2023 at 7.00 pm in the Conference Room,
Civic Centre, Silver Street, Enfield, EN1 3XA**

Membership:

Councillors: Maria Alexandrou (Chair), Lee Chamberlain (Vice-Chair), Josh Abey, Sinan Boztas, Hivran Dalkaya, Ayten Guzel, Nelly Gyosheva and Tom O'Halloran

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 THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 1 - 6)

To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2022.

4. HOUSING GATEWAY LTD - UPDATE (Pages 7 - 12)

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

5. STRATEGY TO REDUCE TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION & EMPTY HOMES (Pages 13 - 28)

To receive the report of Eloise Shepherd, Housing Improvement Programme Director.

6. PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING- UPDATE ON THE STRATEGY (Pages 29 - 36)

To receive the report of Richard Sorensen, Head of the Housing Advisory Service.

7. DRAFT COUNCIL HOUSING ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK (Pages 37 - 48)

To receive the report of Katie Martell, Service Development & Improvement Lead.

8. WORK PROGRAMME 2022/2023 (Pages 49 - 50)

To note the completion of the Work Programme for 2022/23 and that the Housing Scrutiny Panel Work Programme for 2023/24 will be discussed at the first meeting of the new municipal year.

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

To note the dates of future meetings will be confirmed following Annual Council on Wednesday 10 May 2023.

HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL - 29.11.2022**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON TUESDAY, 29TH NOVEMBER, 2022**

MEMBERS: Councillors Maria Alexandrou (Chair), Lee Chamberlain (Vice-Chair), Josh Abey, Hivran Dalkaya, Ayten Guzel, Tom O'Halloran and Mustafa Cetinkaya

Officers: Joanne Drew (Director of Housing & Regeneration), Eloise Shepherd (Housing Programme Improvement Director), Harriet Potemkin (Head of Policy & Strategy), Amena Matin (Head of Regeneration & Growth), Nnenna Urum-Eke (Head of Development), Stacey Gilmour (Governance Officer)

Also Attending: Councillor George Savva, Cabinet Member for Social Housing

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Sinan Boztas and Nelly Gyosheva. Cllr Mustafa Cetinkaya was substituting for Cllr Gyosheva.

Apologies for lateness were received from Joanne Drew, Director of Housing & Regeneration.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Maria Alexandrou (Chair) and Cllr Mustafa Cetinkaya declared a non-pecuniary interest in both agenda items as they are landlords in the borough.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2022.

4. DRAFT HOUSING & GOOD GROWTH STRATEGY

RECEIVED a presentation on the Draft Housing & Good Growth Strategy.

NOTED

1. Key points of the draft strategy were highlighted by Harriet Potemkin, Head of Policy & Strategy.
2. Information was provided on the desk-based review of the 2020 strategy, environmental pressures, and the proposed ambitions for more and better homes for Enfield.
3. Regarding the housing test for good growth, officers advised that they wanted to retain this in the new strategy as both the council and

HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL - 29.11.2022

residents are feeling considerable financial pressures and demand for affordable housing continues to rise beyond the resources available to address it. This housing test will help Enfield Council aim for the best possible quality homes within the current challenging climate.

4. Further engagement with stakeholders would take place in January-February 2023 followed by further drafting of the strategy in February-March 2023. The full council decision on the final strategy would then be taken in April 2023.
5. Members were invited to raise questions and comments.
6. In response to Members' questions regarding the impact of environmental pressures on building new homes, officers advised that the construction industry has experienced severe material and labour cost inflationary pressures throughout 2022 and interest rate increases will add further pressure during 2023.
7. Further information was provided on the all-round impact of environmental pressures. People are already suffering from the 'cost of living crisis' which will be exacerbated by energy and food price hikes and interest rate rises affecting the costs of housing. Whilst Enfield council retains its aspiration to reduce the numbers in temporary accommodation and prevent homelessness, demand is increasing substantially while resources reduce alongside accommodation.
8. Officers provided an overview of the council's proposed ambitions for more and better homes for Enfield and reiterated that it is operating in a very challenging and volatile climate for increasing supply. As a result of this, Enfield Council will need to explore all available options to continue to directly deliver Council homes and will need to further strengthen its partnerships with registered providers and developers and enable homes via robust planning, policy, and processes.
9. In response to a question raised on how right to buy receipts will be used going forward, officers advised that additional short-term flexibilities were being asked for including through relaxing the restrictions on combining receipts with other forms of grant funding for new development (e.g. Affordable Homes Programme funding) complete relaxation was ideally required to use resources that come from Enfield housing stock to support new homes or invest in existing stock. However, there is a limit on possible acquisitions and restrictions on how the money can be spent.
10. In response to a question regarding the use of prefabricated houses, Joanne Drew, Director of Housing & Regeneration advised that this was something that had been extensively looked at in the past but following an options appraisal it was deemed not affordable and not a suitable option. However, Joanne agreed to revisit this option to see if there was any new products or models that may now be available.

Action: Joanne Drew, Director of Housing & Regeneration

11. Cllr Guzel raised concerns regarding the high level of evictions taking place in Enfield and felt that one of the priorities of the draft strategy should be to invest more in the private rented sector (PRS). Officers acknowledged this and stated that one of the levers for this is the Housing Gateway.

HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL - 29.11.2022

12. Cllr Savva (Cabinet Member, Social Housing) asked what engagement is taking place with residents who have concerns regarding repairs/mould in their homes. Officers advised that this issue is being addressed by reviewing the material on Enfield Council's website which provides information on how residents can deal with mould in their tenures, training is also taking place for staff that go into residents' homes so that they can identify and deal with any problems they find. A leaflet is also being produced which will be sent to tenants by way of an e-newsletter.
13. Further discussions took place and members raised the following questions to which officers agreed to look into and provide a response as soon as possible.
 - (i) Amount of specialised housing for older people?
 - (ii) How many people are in need of specialised housing?
 - (iii) What gaps are there in the specialised housing market and how are these gaps being addressed?
 - (iv) How many council houses have been retrofitted so far and how has this been funded?
 - (v) What are the housing targets over the next three years?

Action: Officers

Post meeting note: Responses to the above questions have now been circulated to Members of the Housing Scrutiny Panel.

Members extended thanks to officers for the detailed and informative update.

5. DELIVERY OF SOCIABLE & AFFORDABLE HOUSING

RECEIVED a presentation from Nnenna Urum-Eke, Head of Development.

NOTED

1. Key points of the presentation were highlighted which included progress to date and the implications of the current environment.
2. With regards to the Joyce and Snells Programme Cllr Chamberlain commented on the successful ballot in December 2021 and asked what had contributed to the high turnout rate of 85%. Officers advised that this had been one of the strongest residents' ballot results in London. Engagement had gone far and beyond a housing solution to a better quality of life and better neighbourhoods.
3. Cllr Halloran asked what the next completion date on Meridian Water was and how many properties would be completed in the next calendar year. Officers to clarify and feedback accordingly. **Action: Officers**
4. Cllr Halloran asked if Enfield Council were on track to meet the pledge of 3500 new homes as detailed in the current Administration's manifesto. Officers advised that to date, 1000 homes had been secured for delivery. Moving forward, funding, planning and the ability to enter into viable contracts all needed to come together to allow delivery of this target.

HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL - 29.11.2022

5. In response to a question regarding more similar housing to Reardon Court, Officers advised that there is ongoing joint working between the Adult Social Care, Council Housing and the Place Regeneration and Development teams to bring forward specialist housing schemes similar to Reardon Court in future development proposals.
6. Members asked for a breakdown on the % of Affordable Housing on Bury Street West, Electric Quarter, Newstead House and Gatward Green. Officers to clarify and circulate the information to Members following the meeting. **Action: Officers**
7. Members also sought clarification on the breakdown of family housing of the 242 council owned properties on Meridian Water Phase 1. Officers to clarify and circulate the information to Members following the meeting. **Action: Officers**
8. Members raised concerns regarding the decision to accept only single staircases on Joyce and Snells as they felt this could present a safety issue. Officers would clarify this and provide a detailed response to Members following the meeting. **Action: Officers.**
9. Cllr Alexandrou (Chair) asked what action/progress has been made on the 3000 empty privately-owned homes and how many have been brought back into use over the last three years. Officers to clarify and circulate a response to Members. **Action: Officers**
10. Members requested an explanation on the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) process. Officers to circulate an explanation following the meeting. **Action: Officers**
11. Further discussions took place on the economic forecasts affecting the housing market and the Council's response to these. This included greater focus on acquisitions to underwrite continued delivery, reducing exposure to inflation volatility and mitigating risk on Right To Buy (RTB) spend. A range of delivery options were also being explored for future delivery across all programmes.
12. With regards to influencing the conditions of supply lobbying was taking place for increased grant on shared ownership, grant funding for life expired stock, flexibility to use RTB receipts alongside grant to address viability gaps as well as additional funding to address inflationary pressures for the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF).
13. Cllr Savva (Cabinet Member, Social Housing) suggested to the Chair that a cross party letter be sent to lobby Central Government on the above issues. The Chair agreed to discuss this further outside of the meeting. **Action: Chair, Cllr Savva & Officers**

The Chair thanked Officers for their informative update.

Post meeting note: Responses to the above questions have now been circulated to Members of the Housing Scrutiny Panel.

6. WORK PROGRAMME 2022/2023

NOTED the Housing Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23.

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL - 29.11.2022

NOTED the dates of future meetings as follows:

Wednesday 22 March 2023.

This meeting will commence at 7:00pm and will be held in the Conference Room at the Civic Centre.

The meeting ended at 8:40pm.

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London Borough of Enfield**Housing Scrutiny Panel – Wednesday 22nd March 2023**

Subject: Housing Gateway Ltd**Cabinet Member: Cllr George Savva****Director: Joanne Drew**

Purpose of Report

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

Relevance to the Council Plan

2. 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, Enfield Let, has been designed to provide improved access and greater security of tenure for families renting in the private rented sector.
3. 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.

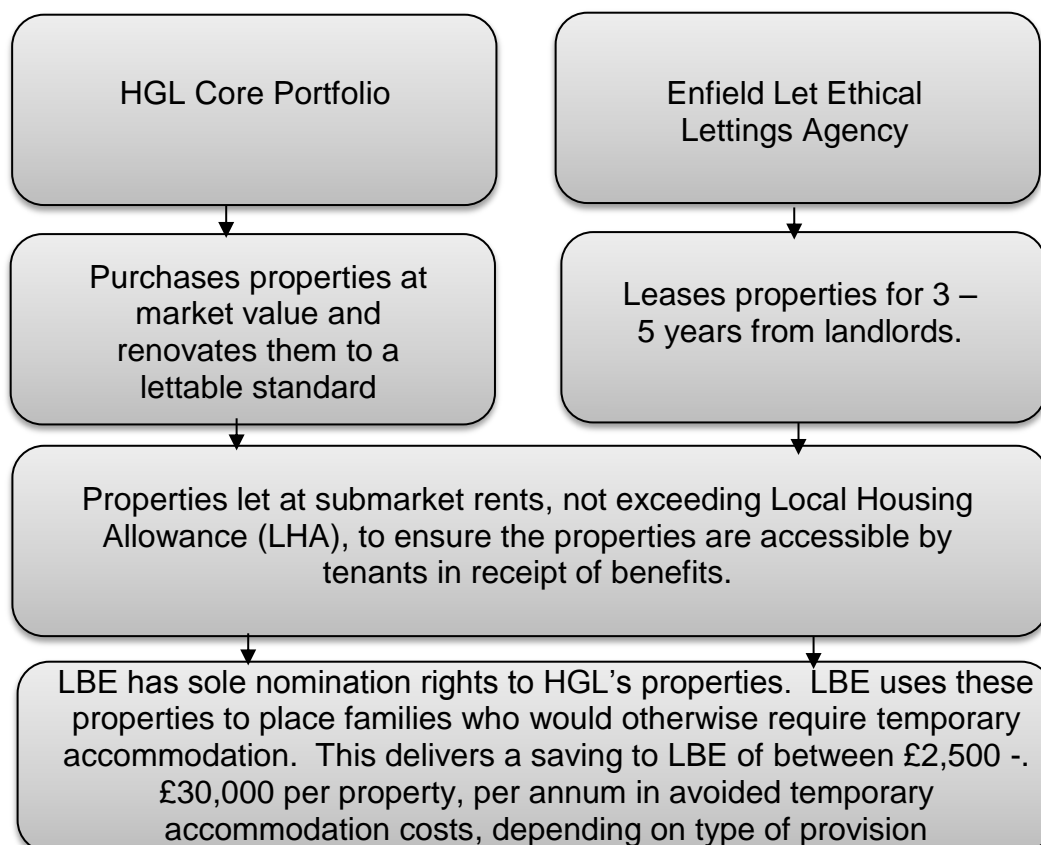
Background

4. 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 648 properties and diversified to create an ethical letting agency, Enfield Let. HGL also provides specialised housing for severely disabled service users and has purchased accommodation for rough sleepers.
5. HGL is now one of the largest and to date, most successfully funded and operated local housing companies.
6. HGL has a clear mission:
 - Deliver demonstrably, good quality housing for residents through a variety of products suitable for residents on low to median income levels. Deliver increased housing supply to the Council with at least an additional 270 units by 2025. Ensuring that the best use of the housing stock is being made to benefit residents in most need, providing

opportunities within the stock portfolio for residents to move to more suitable accommodation, as needs change.

- Expand Enfield Let, an innovative ethical lettings agency, providing an excellent service for tenants and landlords alike. In doing so providing significant cost savings to the Council and reduction in the use of temporary accommodation. Establishing a portfolio of 780 units by year 2025.
- Deliver savings to the Council of at least £2m pa, contributing to the Council's financial pressures arising from the shortfall in the provision of temporary accommodation.
- Ensure a suitable financing structure for the company. Either return 50% of post-tax profits to the Shareholder each year in the form of a dividend providing the Council with an additional cash injection or invest in additional housing to meet housing needs.
- Ensuring high standards of customer service adopting the relevant measures promoted in the Fairer Private Sector Renters White Paper.
- Develop a strategic asset management plan to support a 30-year financial plan which will ensure investment in homes to meet the Decent Homes standard and to achieve EPC B on energy efficiency by 2030 and the future requirements of the Building Safety regime.

7. HGL's main business streams are purchasing and leasing properties:



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All core activities are delivered by LBE via service level agreements, which enables a joined up, Council led service

Main Considerations for the Panel

8. In 2022/23 HGL has continued to expand its portfolio and deliver innovative solutions to the Council. It has been a challenging year due to the increases in interest rates, impact on the housing market and cost of living crisis being experienced by residents.

HGL Core Portfolio

9. Since HGL's inception in 2014 it has grown its core portfolio to 648 properties. The portfolio provides a stable private rented housing solution for families who would otherwise be placed in temporary accommodation.
10. As the Council has sole nomination rights to HGL's portfolio, the use of these properties has saved the Council c. £13.2m to date. By providing affordable accommodation as an alternative to temporary accommodation this delivers a saving of up to £30k per property, per annum depending on the type of temporary accommodation that is being provided.
11. The mini budget in September 2022, has had a negative impact on HGL's business plan, like many other housing providers, as interest rates have increased dramatically. HGL's purchasing model assumes LHA rents and therefore costs, including interest costs must be affordable. The impact of the interest rate increases has been that HGL cannot offer market value for properties as LHA has not risen proportionately.
12. HGL reviewed its financial modelling following the mini budget and took the decision to complete purchases associated with the Rough Sleeping project, as this attracts grant, whilst pausing offers on new purchases unless they met hurdle rates.
13. Despite the interest rate challenges of the latter part of the year, HGL has purchased 34 properties against a target of 70. It is not anticipated that HGL will purchase any further properties this financial year.
14. 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.
15. HGL's business model is viable based on the current portfolio and does not need growth to be successful. However, as its role is to deliver a supply of accommodation to the Council, alternative delivery models and

financial criteria are being reviewed as the Council's costs of TA increase as a result of the use of commercial hotels due to the absence of PRS properties. It is HGL's aim to begin purchasing properties to support the Councils bed and breakfast reduction strategy and subject to market conditions.

16. HGL's operations are delivered by the Council and are performing well. HGL has very few void properties, 10 to date this year, with a current average time taken to re-let of 33 days.
17. HGL is actively supporting the Council's Landlord Licensing Scheme and has been proactive in submitting licencing applications totalling c. £110k to date.

Enfield Let - Ethical Lettings Agency

18. HGL's ethical lettings agency, Enfield Let continues to promote ethical lettings in the Borough, tackling social injustice and ensuring residents are not discriminated against because of their financial status.
19. 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.
20. 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.
21. Enfield Let has grown a portfolio of 248 leased properties since October 2020, 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.
22. Enfield Let has been asked to collaborate with the Council to manage some or all of the Council's temporary accommodation stock, delivering significant savings to the Council. This workstream will be the primary focus for Enfield Let in 2023/24

Rough Sleeper Accommodation

23. 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 committed 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.
24. The grant funding facilitated the purchase of 77 bed spaces (61 properties), by purchasing a mix of studios, 1 bed and 2 bed accommodation. All properties have been purchased, meeting the 31st March 23 deadline.

25. The 61 properties purchased have already served to house 90 tenants who were previously sleeping rough and the properties will remain available to house ex-rough sleepers for 30 years.
26. The ex-rough sleepers are fully supported in the accommodation by services provided by the Council.

Integrated Learning Disabilities Accommodation

27. 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.
28. HGL 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.
29. HGL and the Council were shortlisted for an MJ Award for this scheme and progressed to be a finalist in the category of Best Social Housing Initiative.

Care Leaver Accommodation

30. HGL has been collaborating with the Council's Care Leavers Team to design an effective housing solution for care leavers, whilst reducing costs to the Council. HGL are in the process of purchasing two properties which will provide a semi-independent home to care leavers, before they move into their permanent Council home.

Conclusions

31. Housing Gateway continues to address the Council's priorities of providing secure, rented accommodation whilst delivering significant savings of c. £13.2m 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 03/03/23

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London Borough of Enfield**Housing Scrutiny**
22nd March 2023

Subject: Strategy to Reduce TA and Empty Homes: Update
Cabinet Member: Cllr George Savva
Director: Joanne Drew

Purpose of Report

1. For information and discussion

Relevance to the Council Plan

2. Good homes in well-connected neighbourhoods:
 - a. Build more and better homes for local residents
 - b. Deliver new homes and regeneration programmes with our residents

Background

3. Following discussion at November Scrutiny meeting regarding reconsidering modular supply as a potential partial solution to increasing homelessness, the paper gives an overview of other schemes and issues for LBE in consideration of the possibility.
4. The paper also summarises the increasing homelessness pressures across London.
5. We also report back on the progress of the Empty Homes Strategy – another supply initiative to reduce homelessness demand.

Main Considerations for the Panel

6. *Key challenges include:*
 - a. *Significant reductions in PRS supply*
 - b. *Increases in homelessness demand*
 - c. *Continuing development cost challenges*
7. *Key opportunities include:*
 - a. *Potential to learn from other councils' work bringing forward modular homes*
 - b. *Opportunities to utilise vacant land*
 - c. *Opportunity to continue reducing numbers of empty homes in the borough*

Conclusions

8. While the situation in terms of PRS supply is immensely difficult, the council can and is deploying innovative solutions to bring forward suitable and affordable homes for residents

Report Author: Eloise Shepherd
Housing Improvement Programme Director
eloise.shepherd@enfield.gov.uk
Date of report 8 March 2023

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Strategy to reduce TA and Empty homes

Update on plans to meet housing need

Page 15

Background

- At the Housing Scrutiny meeting in November 2022 we committed to reconsider and review options for modular delivery in the borough.
- The last viability review was conducted in 2019, and since then the market for modular homes and the delivery environment for development has shifted in a variety of ways.
- The review has now commenced and is ongoing, and this presentation details some key considerations at play and work undertaken by other boroughs.

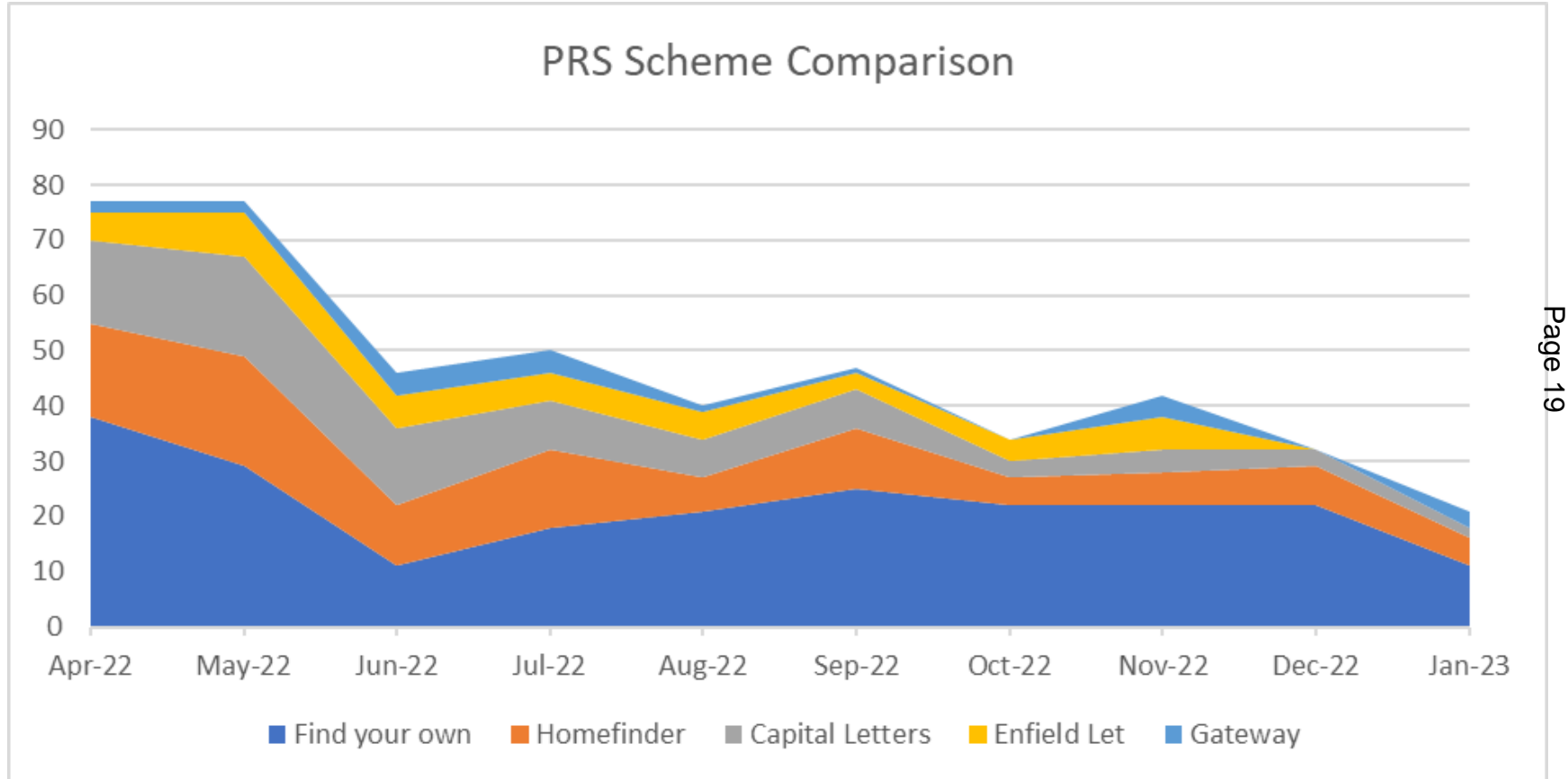
Housing Need and homelessness

- We are considering the modular project as a method of relieving homelessness and providing in borough, suitable accommodation for homeless families.
- Homelessness demand is currently at crisis point fuelled by rising demand and collapse of available private sector properties, especially at the affordable end of the market. This impact is being felt all across London and in other parts of the country.

Homelessness pressures across London

	October 2021	October 2022		Number of responses
Total number of homelessness presentations	6,058	6,918	+14.2 % +860	28
Total number of households owed a prevention or relief duty	7,480	7,978	+6.7% +498	27
Total number of households in TA	54,383	55,392		28
Total number of Children in TA	63,377	64,095		23
Families in Bed and breakfast (B&B) hotels (including shared annexes)	1,679	2,441	+45.4 % +762	27
Families in B&B hotels (including shared annexes) for longer than 6 weeks	77	403	+423% +326	26

PRS supply collapse illustrated



Place Ladywell - Lewisham



Ealing - Modular Units



Y-Cube – YMCA housing projects



Considerations for LBE

- More meanwhile sites are available due to the challenging construction environment – and potentially for longer periods.
- LHA levels are comparatively lower in LBE making viability more challenging.
- Cost avoidance via decreased use of hotels / B&B (as used in the Ealing model) may assist.
- More entrants and innovation in the market may show models that are more viable
- GLA grant is likely to be available for builds like these

Principles for assessment

- Eight sites are being considered for viability assessments.
- They would need to:
 - be available post completion for 5-10 years (ideally 7+) and fit 25-50 units.
 - Limited site clearance required (e.g. structures all/mostly demolished)
 - No leasehold interests to resolve
 - Availability of parking/play nearby or sufficient room to provide onsite
 - Site access sufficient for MMC delivery

Next Steps

- Following the assessment of sites, we'll then need to make a decision whether any of the proposals are viable and stack up financially.
- Following this, there is a procurement process and a full planning application to progress.
- Therefore starts on site would be unlikely until 2024.

Empty Homes

- One plank of the work underway to increase supply is to address the issue of Empty Homes in the PRS.
- There are currently 1769 private empty properties within the borough which shows a gradual but significant decline in numbers from the start of the year (31/03/2022) when there were 2,620 private empty properties
- Every home back in use is of significant value to the council – if brought back into use at LHA levels, this potentially saves c.£25k per year in costs of sourcing other accommodation for homeless families

Empty Homes – Council Progress

- 41 homes have been brought back into use as a direct result of LBE work. Results have been achieved through a combination of providing general advice and assistance, leasing to Enfield Let, letting, sale or re-occupation by the owner, offering renovation grants, enforcement action via CPN notices or threat of CPO and ensuring that Council Tax levies/penalties are invoked.
- We are investigating the reasons for the overall significant reduction which is thought to be down to increase in the resolution of probate cases and the disincentive arising from Council tax policy which impacts on empty homes as follows:
 - Any properties that have been unoccupied and unfurnished for more than two years will be charged twice the normal Council Tax rate.
 - Properties that have been empty for more than five years will be charged three times the normal Council Tax rate.
 - From 1 April 2021, the premium for properties that have been empty for more than ten years will increase to four times the normal Council Tax rate.

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London Borough of Enfield

Housing Scrutiny
22nd March 2023

Subject: Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Cabinet Member: Cllr Savva
Director: Joanne Drew

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Panel on progress against our Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Relevance to the Council Plan

2. Good homes in well-connected neighbourhoods

In seeking to drive up the quality and availability of properties in the private rented sector, the service aims to increase the number and quality of homes available to low-income households in the borough.

3. Sustain strong and healthy communities

Poor quality housing and homelessness have been identified as key factors in health inequality. Through reducing the number of households reaching crisis point and increasing the supply and quality of rented homes we help to reduce the impact of homelessness and poor housing on the health and wellbeing of our residents.

4. Build our local economy to create a thriving place

The service aims to ensure a thriving, high quality private rented sector that is accessible to low income households. By acting proactively to engage with and support landlords we aim to increase the supply of rented homes.

Background

5. In 2020 we published our Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. This outlined an ambitious plan to end homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough through the delivery of five key ambitions:
 1. Make homelessness prevention a priority for everyone
 2. Treat people with empathy, dignity and respect
 3. Support people to access the right accommodation
 4. Support people to plan for their lifetime housing needs
 5. End rough sleeping in Enfield
6. In October 2020, the Council launched the Housing Advisory Service (HAS) to meet the challenges set out in the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

7. This brought together all of the services offered to homeless households and expanded our prevention activities.
8. This paper is a review of progress against the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, covering each of the key workstreams.

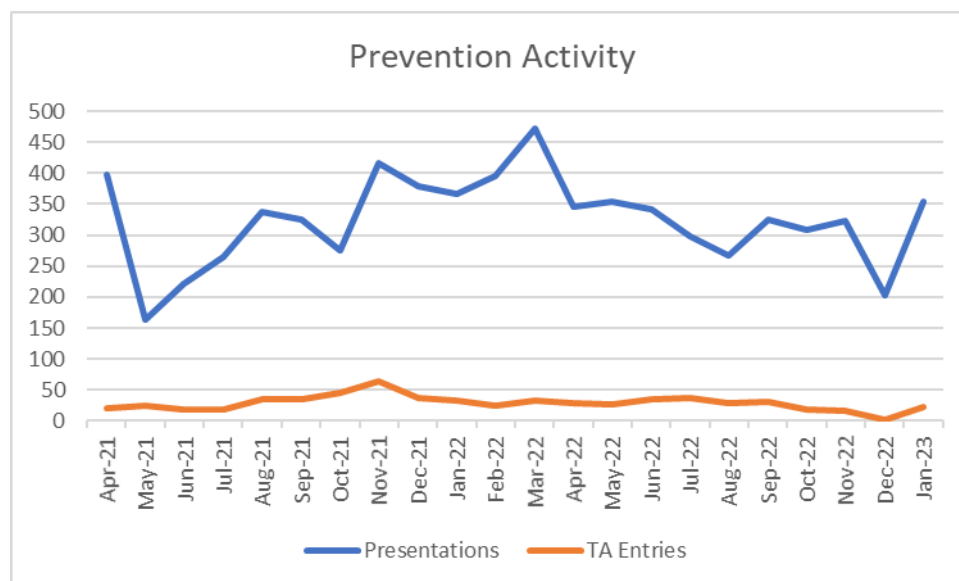
Main Considerations for the Panel

Making Homelessness Prevention a Priority for Everyone

9. The impact of the new service and its new focus on prevention was immediate. The table below provides a snapshot across the last three years:

	Oct-19	Oct-20	Oct-21	Oct-22
Homelessness Approaches	184	196	275	308
TA Entries	71	45	45	19

10. Despite a consistent rise in the number of households approaching the Council for help, the number of households needing emergency housing has been reduced dramatically. In October 2019, 38% of households approaching the Council needed emergency accommodation. By October 2022, this figure had dropped to just over 6%.
11. The chart below shows the number of households approaching the service against the number of households moving into temporary accommodation. Without this increased focus on prevention the number of households needing temporary, or emergency accommodation would have been far higher.



12. This focus on prevention has meant developing a new way of working both across departmental boundaries but also externally with other agencies. The Housing Advisory Service has staff collocated within a wide variety of partner organisations including:
 - Job Centres
 - Courts
 - Probation
 - Children and Family Services

13. In addition, we run outreach services in community organisations, work through local schools and educational establishments, and have tried to embed the service in our local communities. The establishment of the Homelessness Prevention Partnership Board has enabled the partner organisations to both assist and have a say in setting the priorities for the service.

Treat people with empathy, dignity and respect

14. Homelessness prevention requires taking a holistic view of the situation. A family approaching us for assistance will often face multiple barriers. Employment, benefits issues, physical and mental health all form part of the challenge is assisting individuals and families to rebuild their lives. Housing is a key building block in enabling this to happen.
15. Caseloads are far lower than in the old homelessness service. This was designed to enable a greater focus on ensuring that we provide the right level of support to prevent people from losing their home. However, to do this properly we have engaged a range of new partners to assist us.
16. Each household has a Housing Coordinator whose role is to coordinate the range of services and schemes on offer. The intention is to ensure that we equip households with the tools to help them secure long term sustainable housing. Key partners in this include:

Beam

17. In 2020, we launched a new partnership with Beam. This was to assist residents to access training and employment opportunities. This partnership has grown from an initial pilot and now covers the full journey from training to employment and moving out of temporary accommodation.

SHPS

18. SHPS is our Single Homelessness Prevention Service. This was launched alongside the Housing Advisory Service to address the needs of single homeless people and childless couples. As such this is a non-statutory service as it caters for the needs of households for whom we do not have a statutory duty. SHPS works with around 500 households per year to secure permanent accommodation.

Floating Support

19. Within the Prevention Team we have established a floating support team to provide intensive support to those either struggling to maintain a tenancy or to navigate the process to secure a new home. The team support around 60 households at any one time.
20. Alongside our traditional casework we have begun piloting different approaches. In 2022 we launched a Serious Youth Violence Project designed to target families with young people at risk of being drawn into gangs. The pilot involved the Housing Advisory Service, Children Services and Early Help Hub, as well as schools, social services and other Services.
14. The team worked with 15 families over the course of a year, providing intensive support to gain employment and move out of temporary accommodation. 10 families moved out for temporary accommodation as

a result. On average we reduced household debt by 18% and four families moved into employment.

15. We built on this experience to develop a new team focused on households in temporary accommodation who are benefit capped. The project is funded through the ESF and works with the 250 household in temporary accommodation who are benefit capped.

Support people to access the right accommodation

16. Initiatives to help residents to move to the private rented sector included the launch of Enfield Let (our ethical lettings agency), Capital Letters procurement increasing supply, and changes to the allocations scheme that both encouraged residents to move out of temporary accommodation and prioritised those unable to do so for social housing. This in turn led to the number of households living in temporary accommodation falling for the first time in many years, bucking the national trend.
17. The impact of landlords evicting tenants, combined with the on-going cost of living crisis has meant that the number of households approaching the Council for help has risen from 196 in October 2021 to 461 in February 2023. We anticipate that the high number of households in need of assistance will continue for at least the next two years, reflecting wider changes in the housing market.
18. Despite these high figures the service has effectively intervened so that the number of households needing emergency accommodation remains relatively low. The key challenge is in both securing affordable private rented accommodation for households to move on to and emergency accommodation in the immediate aftermath of their housing crisis.
19. House prices were initially boosted by the government through waiving stamp duty on purchases for a limited time. House prices continued to climb until the mini budget.
20. The government has recently made several proposals to increase the regulation of the private rented sector. The key elements of the proposals are:
 - Removal of s21 'no fault' evictions
 - Decent homes standard extended to cover private rented properties
 - Minimum EPC rating for new lets to be EPC band C from April 2025
 - Minimum EPC rating for all lets to be EPC band C from April 2028
21. These proposals are all welcome developments in improving the quality of properties in the private rented sector. Our Licencing scheme plays a vital role in driving up the quality of properties in the private rented sector. Since its introduction in 2021 it has registered some 13,500 properties and ensured compliance with gas and electrical safety for these properties. The Council has received £4.7m in license fees to date with another £3.7m pending payment. Five cases are being progressed for prosecution and the team have imposed 59 financial penalties for housing related offences. It will have an ongoing role in ensuring the enforcement of new standards in the Private Renters Bill.

22. However, for landlords, the high market value combined with the cost of improving their properties means that many are exiting the market, and this is a trend that may be expected to continue.
23. These factors have led to a shortage of the supply of privately rented properties and a rise in rent levels. Research carried out by Savills (on behalf of Capital Letters last summer) suggested that rents had increased in Enfield by between 4% and 6%. They also found that there had been a 42% reduction in the supply of private rented properties in Enfield over the last two years.
24. These figures match the experience of the Housing Advisory Service. The supply of private rented properties at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rents has reduced by 61% over the last year. With LHA frozen at 2020 rates there is little prospect of an increase in supply of affordable accommodation.
25. The changes in the housing market have also impacted the supply of temporary accommodation. Nightly paid accommodation is below LHA rent levels and so supply has also been impacted by the rise in rent levels.
26. This shortage of temporary accommodation means that the service has been dependent on commercial hotels and shared accommodation in recent months. This is not suitable for residents, particularly those with children, for any length of time and it is also expensive for the Council.
27. The original business plan for the Housing Advisory Service was based on assumptions developed before Covid. These assumptions have proved to be correct in terms of the increasing demand and therefore levels of temporary accommodation usage without our new service model. However, our assumptions for reduced use of temporary accommodation have not been fully realised due to the pressures resulting from the pandemic outlined in this report and illustrated below. It is likely that the number of households in temporary accommodation across the country will exceed 100,000 during 2022-23 with two thirds of this usage being in London.
28. Despite these challenges the Housing Advisory Service has reduced the number of households in temporary accommodation by around 400. The original business plan target was to have just under 2700 households in temporary accommodation by the end of 2021/22. This target was not achieved and there were 3163 households in temporary accommodation at year end. There are currently 3098 households in temporary accommodation.
29. Nationally the use of temporary accommodation has continued to climb with over 99,000 households in temporary accommodation at the end of the second quarter of 2022/23. Over 57,500 of these families are in London

Support people to plan for their lifetime housing needs

30. Not all households face the same issues and it important to remember that a household's circumstances will change over time, particularly with the right levels of support.
31. The services described early have helped to create a framework for residents to improve their circumstances. We have introduced pre

tenancy training to ensure that households have the skills to maintain a tenancy alongside the additional services to move people into employment.

32. The next phase of this is to assist some of our residents in temporary accommodation to move into shared ownership properties. This is a relatively new venture for the service, but we have started a pilot with five households who have the financial ability to afford a shared ownership property. For the household this means that they will still have lower monthly bills when compared with private renting.

End rough sleeping in Enfield

33. The number of new rough sleepers found bedded down on the streets has increased significantly both in London and nationally since 2020. However, due to significant investment into our Street Homelessness Services, and the roll out of a number of successful initiatives in Enfield, we have developed a comprehensive pathway to quickly intervene to help people forced to sleep rough, or at risk of sleeping rough. As a result, and we have seen a steady reduction in the number of rough sleepers found bedded down on any typical night.

34. The Street Homeless Service is fully funded through successful bids from external funding streams.

Partnership working

35. Our specialist Outreach Team respond to all reports of rough sleeping made by members of the public through Streetlink. In addition, we have developed multiagency meetings and protocols with partners to gather and share up to date intelligence on rough sleeping in Enfield. We aim to respond to all reports of rough sleeping within 24 hours. However, during periods of severe weather we step up outreach sessions to ensure that we respond to reports urgently.
36. Through our Specialised Housing Board, Preventing Homelessness Board, Rough Sleepers Board and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Meetings we have strengthened our partnership working with relevant agencies such as “Enable” substance misuse service, the Modern Slavery Team, Adult Social Care and mental health services to help rough sleepers access relevant support, maintain their home and ensure they do not return to the streets.
37. In addition, we have worked closely with our VCS partners, including “All People All Places” to support and house rough sleepers, and we have proactively contributed to the North London Housing Partnership, to deliver a Hub for rough sleepers with complex needs in Finchley, Ramfel immigration advice and the Central Eastern European Housing Advice Outreach service.

Increased supply of supported accommodation

38. Our Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub provides a 12-bed rapid assessment and resettlement service with 24/7 support. Since opening in Jan 21, the Hub has helped 164 rough sleepers off the streets. Our Hub has proved very successful, the average time taken to support and find a settled home for rough sleepers is 38 days.

39. In 2020 we successfully bid for the highest national allocation of funding under the Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme. We have used this to buy 91 homes through Housing Gateway Ltd to support rough sleepers into settled accommodation. Once in their new home, rough sleepers are supported by our in-house specialist staff to access the help they need, such as support for mental health and substance abuse problems, moving towards training and work.
40. We have allocated 22 one bed Council properties to house entrenched rough sleepers, with high /complex needs, through our Housing First scheme. Our specialist Social Worker provides needs assessments, intensive support, tenancy sustainment and integration into the community. Our Housing First scheme facilitates a multiagency approach that prevents the most entrenched rough sleepers returning to the streets.

Private rented sector move-on

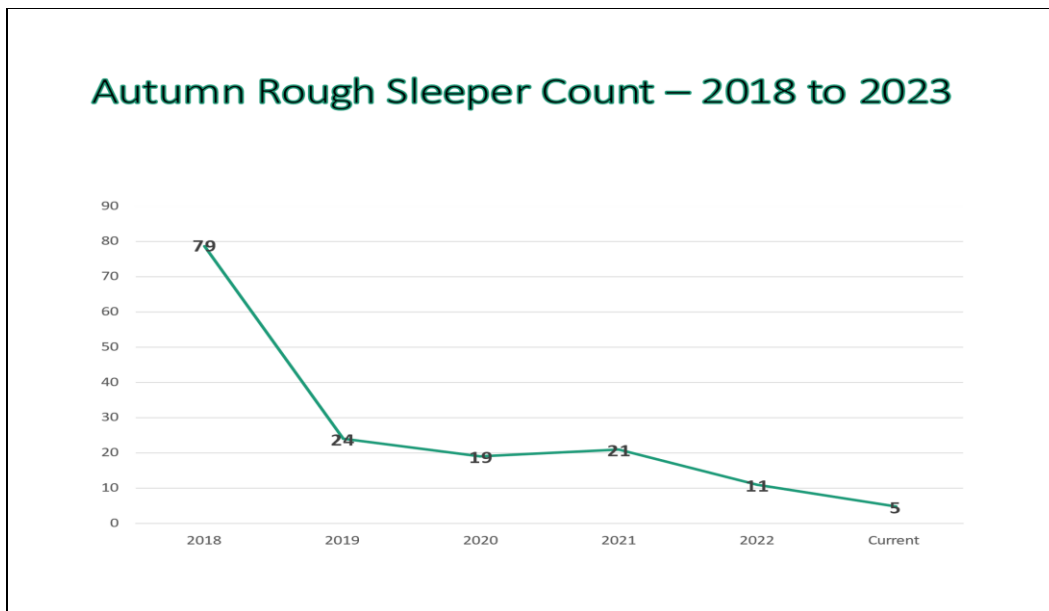
41. Our successful private rented move-on scheme secures long term move-on accommodation for rough sleepers with low to medium support needs. Our floating support workers provide specialist tenancy sustainment support.

Encampments

42. We make every effort to engage with people living in unlawful rough sleeper encampments (more than one rough sleeper bedded down on any site) to offer advice and support, alongside relevant partners. Where this does not lead to the occupants accepting support, or voluntarily moving on, we will take appropriate and proportional action through our Encampments Working Group, in partnership with the Police, Strategic Property Services, and the Antisocial Behaviour Team.

Measures of success

43. Through the above actions, we have reduced the number of rough sleeper encampments from 7 in Summer 2020 to Zero from October 2022. This has significantly reduced the impact of antisocial behaviour that encampments can have on the local community.
44. Due to the significant investment into our Street Homelessness Services, and the roll out of a number of successful initiatives in Enfield, we have seen a steady reduction in the number of rough sleepers found bedded down on any typical night. Since April 2020, our Street Homeless Service has found, visited, supported and housed 840 rough sleepers in Enfield.



45. The most recent GOV.UK rough sleeping data release shows that the key measure for rough sleeping (number of rough sleepers bedded down on a typical night) has seen a significant increase of 26% nationally from Autumn 2021 to Autumn 2022. The highest increase was in London - a 34% increase over the year. However, despite this challenging wider picture, Enfield has achieved a reduction in the number of rough sleepers over the same period – a reduction of 48%. This was the highest reduction in rough sleeping achieved in the UK.

Conclusions

- a. The Homelessness Prevention Strategy has successfully supported greater intervention to reduce and minimise the impact of homelessness in the Borough. However, market conditions have changed significantly and the strategy of supporting residents into the private rented sector is challenged by the severe lack of availability of accommodation. A review of the strategy is underway to tackle this.

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Date of report 02/03/2023

Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

N/A

London Borough of Enfield

Cabinet
8 February 2023

Subject: Council Housing Assurance Framework
Cabinet Member: Cllr George Savva, Cabinet Member for Social Housing
Executive Director: Sarah Cary

Key Decision: [KD5575]

Purpose of Report

1. This report sets out the proposed Assurance Framework to support the Council Housing Service in preparation for the Social Housing Regulation bill which is anticipated to pass through parliament in spring/summer 2023.
2. The Council housing service has been focused on service improvement. This has started from being clear about its role and purpose – which has been agreed and articulated through our allocations policy as providing homes for residents with enduring needs and who cannot access housing independently. This enables us to ensure those in most need are prioritised for housing.
3. We have committed and set aside significant capital resources to invest in improving standards which has been progressing at scale over the last two years. This is necessary as the stock is aging and has extensive requirements to replace basic infrastructure as well as addressing new building safety requirements, decent homes standards and greener homes. Our regeneration and new build programmes are not just to meet the severe housing needs pressure but to balance our stock profile.
4. Our service model has included a focus on a universal service for estate and tenancy management with Resident Relationship Officers for residents that need additional support because of their needs and/or circumstances.

Proposals

5. Note the new regulatory environment and proposed changes to the consumer regulation of social housing.
6. Approve the proposed Assurance Framework enabling transparency and oversight of performance.
7. Note the actions being taken to gain assurance and maintain it.
8. Note the current performance of Assurance measures set out in the Council Housing Assurance Framework

Reason for Proposals

9. This report sets out the assurance framework covering the Council Housing Service to ensure conformance with the new regulatory framework for social housing which is outlined in the Social Housing Regulation Bill scheduled to pass through Parliament in spring/summer 2023.
10. The Regulator of Social Housing (the Regulator) is the body tasked with overseeing the regulation of the social housing sector, regulating both local authority and housing association landlords. The Regulator adopts a co-regulatory approach. This means that the Council, through Cabinet is responsible for ensuring conformance with the regulatory standards set by the Regulator.
11. The current regulatory environment is based on landlord self-reporting when standards are not being met, however proposed changes in legislation means Local Authorities will be subject to pro-active regulation which will include:
 - Reporting of performance against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's)
 - "Ofsted-style" inspections
 - The ability of the regulator give to issue social landlords with 'performance improvement plan notices' if they fail to meet standards
 - Removal of the serious detriment test - this currently blocks the Regulator from intervening over consumer standards unless it suspects tenants are at risk of serious harm
 - Granting of the Housing Ombudsman with further powers

Relevance to the Council Plan

12. The Assurance Framework outlined in this report will seek to deliver on the Council's 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.
13. The Council's Housing and Growth Strategy recognises the importance of Council Housing.

Background

14. Three new pieces of legislation were introduced following the Grenfell tragedy, the Fire Safety Act 2021, the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Social Housing Regulation Bill.
15. In 2020, the Government published a White Paper 'the Charter for Social Housing Tenants', in which it committed to reforming the regulation of social housing, in particular by strengthening the ability of the Regulator of Social Housing (the Regulator) to regulate the condition of social housing and the quality of the services provided.
16. In June 2022 the Social Housing Regulation Bill was introduced to Parliament setting out the aim to "facilitate a new, proactive approach to

regulating social housing landlords on consumer issues such as safety, transparency and tenant engagement”.

17. Legislation is expected to pass through Parliament by spring/summer 2023. A significant amount of detail about the post-legislative operating environment is still to be established through consultation by regulatory authorities throughout 2023 following the passing of legislation.
18. The 4 consumer standards as introduced by the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 are:
 - Home Standard - sets expectations for registered providers of social housing to provide tenants with quality accommodation and a cost effective repairs and maintenance service.
 - Tenancy Standard - sets expectations for registered providers of social housing to let their homes to tenants in a fair, transparent and efficient way.
 - Neighbourhood and Community Standard - sets expectations for registered providers of social housing to keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes they own clean and safe, co-operate with relevant partners to promote the wellbeing of the local area and help prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour.
 - Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard - sets expectations for registered providers of social housing to provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants, a clear approach to complaints and a wide range of opportunities for them to have influence and be involved.

Main Considerations for the Council

19. The Council Housing Assurance Framework will help to ensure that the service meets the proposed changes to Social Housing Regulation and the four consumer Standards by reporting in a transparent way on performance.
20. The proposed changes in Social Housing Regulation take place at a time of increasing financial pressure for the Housing Revenue Account as a result of rising inflation and increased costs of borrowing. The actual costs of delivering the service – the cost of maintaining homes and delivering services - are rising significantly faster than the proposed rent increase.
21. In November 2022 a social housing rent cap of 7% was imposed on local authorities, the impact of which on our budget for 2023/24 is a pressure of £830k.

22. Council Housing tenants are, on average, older than the rest of the population of the borough and are more likely to be female and to have a disability. The impact of poor assurance and not meeting the regulatory standards will therefore impact more on residents of the borough with these protected characteristics.

Assurance Framework

23. The proposed Council Housing Assurance Framework will mitigate the risks associated with non-compliance against the Housing Regulators consumer standards using a three lines of defence model aligned to the key risks which may prevent compliance with the regulatory standards and to provide stronger governance structure around the Consumer Standard.
24. Figure one sets out the proposed structure of the Council Housing Assurance Framework

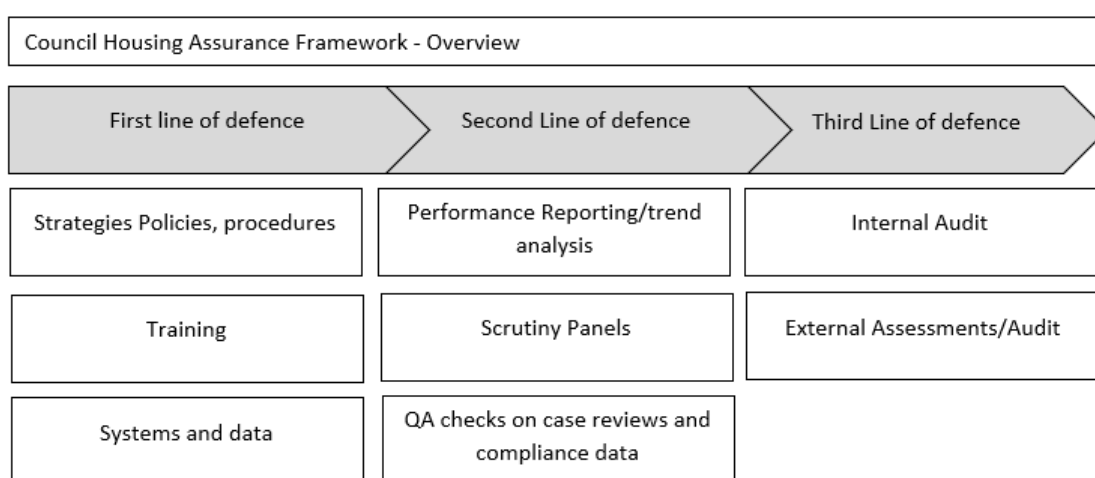


Figure One: proposed governance structure within Council Housing Assurance Plan

Actions to gain assurance

25. An Assurance Action Plan has been developed to embed and monitor all requirements of the Assurance Framework and to ensure these are maintained or updated when appropriate.
26. An effective strategy, policy and operating procedure framework is essential to translate the objectives of the service and the philosophy for its operation through to published policies which enable residents to understand what the service offers and operational guidance for staff to enable them to effectively translate strategy and policy into operational practice. There are key areas that we need to update over the next year including:
- Anti-Social Behaviour policy (new)
 - Neighbourhood management policy (new)
 - Tenant Empowerment policy (annual review)
 - Tenancy Strategy (annual review)
 - Repairs policy (annual review)

27. Adequate, appropriately targeted skilled and competent staff are a key requirement. We are operating in an environment of skills shortages especially in technical areas. We are therefore focused on growing our own capacity and training staff to reach appropriate levels of competence. The quality of homes is a key concern and it is essential that staff have rounded expertise, understanding about building safety, addressing issues such as damp and mould, decent homes and greener and warmer homes in the context of the needs of residents living in these homes.
28. In 2023 we will be launching our housing skills academy which will provide all staff with knowledge in these areas with a system of quality checks. We will also be working to develop and embed an approach to “making every visit count”.
29. An effective housing management system operated by skilled staff is a key foundation of the service. Ensuring effective record keeping is a key requirement.
30. A key aspect of the Assurance Framework is performance monitoring. Figure Two outlines how performance is reviewed, providing appropriate oversight including by Cabinet on a quarterly basis as part of the corporate performance dashboard.

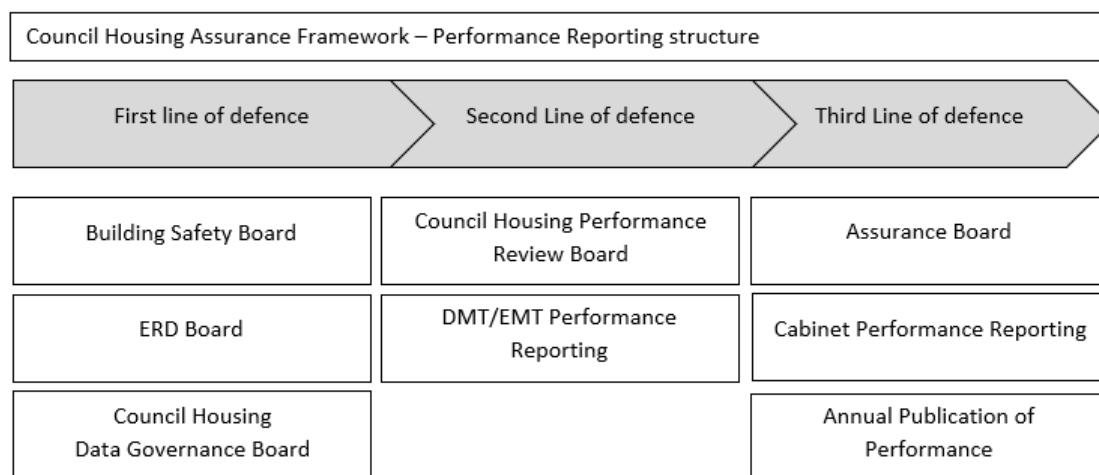


Figure Two: proposed performance reporting structure within the Assurance Framework

Current Performance against assurance

31. Work is already underway to progress the Action plan with performance monitoring in development and being embedded across the first and second lines of defence. The Assurance Framework will strengthen governance and ensure that the Council can be assured and can demonstrate that action and improvements are taking place and reported appropriately. KPIs are now embedded as part of corporate reporting to the Executive Management Team and Cabinet.
32. Performance against the recommended measures and actions in progress to improve performance or embed changes to measures set out in the

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) is highlighted below. This year's annual satisfaction review is in progress and due to report in January 2023.

33. On 21st September 2022 the Regulator published the final TSMs following consultation.
34. The TSM's are broken into two groups – those where the Council will be asked to provide performance data and those where the Council will collect information from residents directly on their satisfaction with elements of the service.
35. Building Safety Assurance Measures

	Required	Compliant	Current Performance
Gas Safety Checks (Domestic)	7940	7869	99.1%
Gas Safety Checks (Communal)	22	22	100%
Blocks for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out	1109	1097	98.9%
Asbestos Safety Checks	948	974	100%
Legionella Risk Assessments	851	806	94.7%
Lifting Equipment (passenger lift)	114	106	93%
Number of repairs orders open relating to damp and mould or conditions that increase the risk of damp and mould	NA		130

Data reported as at end of December 2022 (Q3 2022-23)

36. The implementation of the Apex data system will improve the data governance of compliance reporting against the building safety assurance measures.
37. Key staff have been aligned to support the compliance monitoring process
38. The new addition of Damp and Mould monitoring is in development. We have formed a multidisciplinary task force to address damp and mould issues across all tenures. The task force consists of Environmental Health Officers, Housing and Property Professionals working in all relevant areas including the management of Temporary Accommodation, and with input from Public Health and NHS partners.
39. As at 3rd January 2023, 130 repairs orders were open relating to damp and mould or conditions that increase the risk of damp & mould. This is a decrease of 30 on the 1st December figure largely due to the additional operatives focusing on the issue and the increase in temperatures.
40. The number of reported cases has been included in the corporate performance report and we are currently developing more detailed KPIs which may be comparable with other boroughs.

41. Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Measures	Current Outturn	Peer group comparison
CH01 Complaints relative to the size of the landlord	16.37	21/22 outturn would put Enfield in the upper quartile for performance in this area. Outturns range from 19.9 to 102.6 (based on 11 LA Housing providers)
CH02 Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales	90%	78% London avg for Stage 1 (based on 11 LA Housing providers)
NM01 Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord	1.18	No peer group data available
CH069 RP01 Homes That Do Not Meet the Decent Homes Standard	37.6%	Latest available figures show 43 per cent of London's social housing – approximately 343,000 social homes – do not meet the current Decent Homes Standard
CH103 RP02 Repairs completed within target timescale	98.38%	No peer group data available

Data reported as at Q2 2022-23

42. Ongoing work with complaint team and key stakeholders to improve the standard of complaints handling and quality of responses facilitated by the introduction of the Verint system.
43. Focus on improving outcomes and satisfaction in dealing with ASB is a focus of the housing service, this includes better complex case management and updating the ASB procedure to reflect current practice around pursuing resolutions and closure. A review of the ASB service is underway.
44. The remaining measures which are due to be published in June 2024 are set out over the page.

New Measures
Overall satisfaction with service landlord provides
Satisfaction with overall repairs service
Satisfaction with the time taken to complete most recent repair
Satisfaction landlord provides a home that is well maintained
Satisfaction landlord provides a home that is safe
Satisfaction that the landlord listens to your views and acts upon them
Satisfaction landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them
Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect
Satisfaction with landlords approach to complaints handling
Satisfaction landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained
Satisfaction landlord makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood
Satisfaction with Landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour

Safeguarding Implications

45. The expressed aim of the bill is to ensure “more people living in decent, well looked-after homes enjoying the quality of life they deserve” and the Assurance Framework would support Council Housing Service to deliver this aim.
46. Key themes of the Social Housing Regulation Bill relate to safety and the proposed Assurance Framework would support Council Housing Service to monitor and address safety issues.
47. The Assurance Framework would only enhance our ability to safeguard residents

Public Health Implications

48. The expressed aim of the bill is to ensure “more people living in decent, well looked-after homes enjoying the quality of life they deserve” and the Assurance Framework would support Council Housing Service to deliver this aim.
49. The Assurance Framework would provide compliance monitoring of safety related TSMs and support Council Housing Service to understand satisfaction levels that may impact wellbeing from timeliness of repairs to being treated fairly and with respect.
50. Council Housing Services would like to note that the Assurance Framework would only enhance our ability to improve the health of the public

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

51. To analyse how the new Council Plan 2023-26 could impact differently on people who share a protected characteristic compared with those who do not, we have completed an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) which is attached with this report at appendix 1. Based on this assessment, we do

not expect delivery of the Council Plan 2023-26 to have any adverse impacts on any group who share a protected characteristic.

52. The EqIA indicates that the Framework is expected to positively impact on all social housing tenants by providing assurance that the Council is providing decent, safe and well looked-after homes to social housing tenants in line with the Social Housing Regulation and four consumer standards.

Implications provided by Sarah Gilroy 07.12.22

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

53. There is no increase in consumption or emissions associated with the Assurance Framework.
54. Council Housing Services would like to note that the Assurance Framework would have no negative impact on Environment or Climate Action and would ensure close monitoring of stock condition.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

55. Senior Leadership Team and members would not have the transparency needed to ensure governance of compliance against the standards. Senior Leadership team would not be able to gain assurance that residents are being listened to and their safety concerns addresses.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

56. The purpose of the Assurance Framework is to reduce and mitigate risk. Close monitoring of compliance will allow Council Housing Service to understand risks that may arise and provides the framework to demonstrate that actions and improvement are taking place and being monitored

Financial Implications

57. There are no direct financial implications to the proposals in this report but it is important to ensure the financial plan for the HRA supports investment into core priorities for the service.
58. The assurance measures required by the Regulator are on performance of the Housing Service and the costs associated with achieving this is part of the core management and maintenance budget.

Legal Implications

59. The Social Housing (Regulation) Bill (the Bill) had its first reading in the House of Lords on 8 June 2022. The Bill follows the Government's proposals to strengthen the regulation of the social housing sector in the Social Housing White Paper (the White Paper), which was published in November 2020. The majority of the Bill's clauses amend Part 2 of the

Housing and Regeneration Act (HRA) 2008 (as amended) which sets out the framework for the regulation of social housing in England.

60. The most important change in the Bill is the removal of the "serious detriment" test. This test currently requires the Regulator to have reasonable grounds to suspect that a breach of the consumer standards has caused or could cause 'serious detriment' to a tenants or potential tenants before taking any regulatory action. This removal puts consumer standards on an equal footing with the economic standards and will provide a basis for the Regulator to regulate the consumer standards proactively.
61. Registered Providers of Social Housing such as Enfield Council will be required to designate a person to act as a health and safety lead within the organisation. The Bill requires that this must be an employee or officer of the Council so the role cannot be outsourced although there are slightly different arrangements for local authorities in relation to elected members. Importantly for those taking on the role, the Bill clarifies that the health and safety lead is not liable for breaches and legal responsibility for ensuring compliance with health and safety requirements remains with the Council.
62. The Bill also introduces new powers for the Regulator to set standards in relation to providing information to tenants and to the Regulator. This includes an "Access to Information Scheme", which would enable tenants to request information from their local authority/ Registered Provider of Social Housing.
63. The Regulator will have new enforcement powers under the Bill and there are also new sanctions for under-performing organisations. Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs) are a new enforcement measure being introduced as well as the introduction of unlimited fines.
64. The Public sector equality duty came in to force in April 2011 (s.149 of the Equality Act 2010) and Enfield Council is required, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010. This is being adhered to as seen by the Equality Impact Assessment appended to this report.

Workforce Implications

65. Development of staff should be included as part of PDR's. The opportunity to develop should be fair and consistent and within scope of job description and grade. If further recruitment needs are identified, a restructure report will be required and the report will need to consider the organisational design principles. Implications provided by Jemima Paddon 06.12.22.

Property Implications

66. HRA property implications: these are found throughout the report.
67. Corporate property implications: none

Implications provided by Adrian Wise 07.12.22

Other Implications

- 68. Whilst this report is focused on an assurance framework. Any actions relating to the Assurance Framework that will require expenditure, must follow the Councils contract procedure rules.
- 69. It also needs to consider the Sustainable and Ethical Procurement policy, regarding Carbon emissions, social value and modern slavery.
- 70. Contracts set up to deliver the Assurance Framework will need to be robustly contract managed to ensure Value For Money is maintained via the contract. Implications provided by Claire Reilly 30.11.22.

Options Considered

- 71. Not taking any action to embed an Assurance Framework would prevent Senior Leadership Team and Members gaining assurance on our compliance with Social Housing Regulation. The three line defence Assurance Model is used across many sectors and is a recommended way to provide assurance.

Conclusions

- 72. Council Housing Services believes the proposed structures should give members assurances that residents are being listened to and safety concerns taken seriously.
- 73. The proposed option would be to approve the Council Housing Assurance Framework and associated governance as suggested in the report and strengthen the governance around Housing Consumer Standards

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Date of report: 25.1.23

Background Papers

None

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HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

Date of meeting	Topic	Lead officer	Lead Members	Executive Director/ Director	Reason for proposal	Other committee/ Cabinet/Council approvals?
5 July 2022	Work Planning					
22 September 2022	Social Housing Regulation Bill & the impact on Enfield	Richard Sorenson	Cllr Savva	Joanne Drew	A priority as set out by the Cabinet Member and Director.	
	Private Renters Reform Bill & the impact on Enfield	Richard Sorenson	Cllr Savva	Joanne Drew	A priority as set out by the Cabinet Member and Director.	
	Enfield Repairs Direct - overview on delivery, efficiency, response times and out of hours repairs.	Martin Greenway	Cllr Savva	Joanne Drew	A priority as set out by the Cabinet Member and Director.	
29 November 2022	Draft Housing & Good Growth Strategy to inform the Panel	Nnenna Urum - Eke	Cllr Caliskan	Joanne Drew	A priority as set out by the Cabinet Member and Director.	
	Delivery of Social & Affordable Housing (to include an update on Meridian Water)	Amena Martin / Penny Halliday	Cllr Savva	Joanne Drew/Peter George	A priority as set out by the Director as a new bill is due out on this.	
22 March 2023	Housing Gateway/Enfield Let - Update	Kayt Wilson	Cllr Savva	Joanne Drew	A priority as set out by the Director.	
	Temporary	Richard	Cllr Savva	Joanne Drew	A priority as set out by the	

	Accommodation and Empty Homes focusing on the levels and strategy to reduce.	Sorenson			Cabinet Member and Director.	
	Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping – the Panel will receive an update of the Strategy	Richard Sorenson	Cllr Savva	Joanne Drew	A priority as set out by the Cabinet Member and Director.	
	Draft Council Housing Assurance Framework	Katie Martell	Cllr Savva	Joanne Drew	Report going to February Cabinet meeting. Chair has asked that the report also comes to this meeting of the scrutiny panel.	