

# MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019/2020 REPORT NO. 166

**MEETING TITLE AND DATE:**  
Cabinet: 22.01.20

**Full Council: 29.01.20**

**REPORT OF:**

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<b>Agenda – Part: 1</b>	<b>Item: 6</b>
<b>Subject: Housing and Growth Strategy</b>	
<b>Wards: ALL</b>	
<b>Key Decision No: KD 4841</b>	

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Housing and Growth Strategy sets out the overarching vision and direction of the Council in relation to delivering housing growth and balanced housing markets in Enfield for the benefit of all residents.

A leading aim of this bold strategy is to deliver more affordable homes and better places for Enfield, using the Enfield model for regeneration, so that everyone benefits from the opportunities that growth can bring.

It also recognises the need to invest in Council housing and services, to improve the private rented sector and to ensure a wide range of housing products are provided, including for people who have specific housing needs.

The strategy also sets out the Council's key asks of Government. This includes fairer and more sustainable funding, which would allow us to build more affordable homes with increased grant levels and to address the negative impact that welfare reform has had on residents. The strategy also calls on Government to reverse welfare reforms, such as changes to the London Housing Allowance, and to end the Right to Buy in London.

The report details the wide engagement that has taken place during 2019 as part of the consultation process and summarises the feedback which has been incorporated into the Strategy.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Recommend the approval of the Housing and Growth Strategy to Full Council.
- 2.2 Delegate authority to the Leader, as the portfolio for new housing supply and regeneration, to approve measurable targets to deliver the strategy
- 2.3 Note that key metrics will also be monitored in the 2020 Corporate Performance Report submitted quarterly to Cabinet.
- 2.4 Note that the targets will be published as an appendix to the strategy once these are finalised, with a planned date for publication being April 2020

## **3. BACKGROUND**

Housing Strategies are intended to provide the overall direction for the Council's work to deliver the housing that current and future residents will need. Our strategy is written at a time which many describe as a national housing crisis, both in terms of affordability and accessibility of the right kind of housing for people at every stage of their lives.

The national crisis is also played out in Enfield. For this reason, the Council has set out on a path to develop, in collaboration with residents and a wide range of partners, an ambitious plan to tackle these challenges. This report outlines the conclusion of this work and commends the new strategy for approval by Council.

## **4. AIMS OF THE GOOD GROWTH HOUSING STRATEGY**

Through the new strategy, the Council is aiming to deliver transformation through five bold ambitions, outlined below, with examples of the rapid progress the Council is already making to deliver these ambitions.

- **More affordable homes for local people:** Building more homes that are the right kind of homes, in the right locations and for local people. This means homes that are well-designed and are the right size, tenure and price that local people can afford. In January, Cabinet will receive a report outlining the Council's direct delivery housing development programme of at least 3,500 homes over the next 10 years plus many more it will enable through partnerships.
- **Invest in and be proud of our council homes:** Investing in our existing council homes to make sure they provide safe and secure

homes for future generations and offer high-quality management services. In February, Cabinet will consider the model for the Council's in-house repairs service to improve this important service for Council tenants and leaseholders.

- **Quality and variety in private housing:** Taking action to create high-quality, fairer, more secure and more affordable homes in the private sector. Cabinet will also be receiving a report on proposals for a licensing scheme following consultation.
- **Inclusive placemaking:** Working together with local organisations and communities to design, deliver and maintain good homes in quality places and promoting the Enfield model for regeneration. In November 2019, Cabinet agreed plans to transform the Joyce and Snells Estates as part of a multimillion-pound scheme to dramatically improve residents' lives. The plans, which reflect the residents' vision for their estate, are underpinned by extensive engagement and form part of the wider investment and development in Upper Edmonton.
- **Accessible housing pathways and homes for everyone:** Providing access to housing and support for people with specific needs, so that everyone can reach their full potential. A senior officer Board leading the delivery of this part of the strategy has been established and strategy for housing for later living will be brought forward to Cabinet during the first part of 2020.

The strategy also sets out some clear principles for good growth, which will guide future decisions about housing, in our role as developer, commissioner, partner or planning authority. This means in everything we do our vision is for homes and places which are:

- Affordable for Enfield residents
- Safe and good for people's health and wellbeing
- Child, age and disability friendly
- Environmentally sustainable
- Digitally connected

The strategy outlines key asks of Government that we will lobby for to help maximise the outcomes to be delivered for Enfield residents:

- Fairer funding with grants awarded over a longer time period, to help us plan for the medium and long term, for example in homelessness services.
- Restoration of London Housing Allowance (LHA) rates to the median market rate.

- Legislating to end discrimination from private landlords and lettings agents against those claiming benefits.
- Ending Right to Buy in London, so that councils and Housing Associations can develop sound business plans for more new affordable housing.
- Increasing funding available for building safety, so that essential improvements do not restrict us from building more affordable homes at the scale and pace need.

## **5. OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION**

In delivering the Housing Strategy, the Council will need to work with a wide range of partners, as well as taking direction action. Consultation has been a critical part of shaping a strategy that will deliver maximum outcomes.

Therefore, we have carried out extensive engagement with stakeholders, including with residents, voluntary and community sector, registered providers, the private sector and elected members.

The public consultation on the draft strategy launched on 26<sup>th</sup> July and ran for 12 weeks until 21<sup>st</sup> October. This comprehensive consultation programme included an online survey, distribution of paper copies at community events, discussion on the strategy at community forums, stakeholder committees and Boards. The consultation was promoted in civic buildings, GP surgeries, on social media and in the press.

We also wrote directly to key stakeholder organisations, inviting discussion on the draft, including all Registered Housing Providers with stock in the borough; development partners, our three local NHS Trusts; Enfield Clinical Commissioning Group; Enfield and Haringey Borough Command Unit; Public Health England; the Greater London Authority (GLA); and neighbouring authorities.

There were 295 responses to the consultation including the online questionnaire and direct responses via email. This included responses from 242 residents, 7 registered providers and 11 voluntary sector groups.

There was broad support for the vision and ambitions of the strategy. There was particular support from Registered Providers and private developers, who supported our approach to housing and growth in Enfield and expressed their interest in helping Enfield deliver on this strategy through increased partnership working. Several organisations approached Enfield to have further discussions on the draft strategy and how they could support the delivery of the strategy, including Transport for London (TfL), Places for People and London Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC).

Respondents also suggested where further detail and clarification was needed to strengthen our approach, and the strategy was further developed as a result of this feedback. This included greater prioritisation on place-making as a key part of the delivery of the strategy; committing to high-density development being of a high quality, in keeping with the surroundings and being well managed; and clearer commitments to action to make sure all our buildings meet requirements including lobbying for funding to meet new legislative requirements.

The consultation highlighted the importance that residents place on development and growth benefiting local communities. The strategy vision supports this and commits us to delivering not only good housing, but for good growth, where everyone in Enfield can benefit. This includes commitments for increasing the supply of a variety of affordable housing products, and raising standards in the private rented sector, where a large proportion of residents in the borough live. We have included case studies in the strategy illustrating which type of housing products households of different incomes could access. We have also strengthened ambition four of the strategy, to deliver ‘inclusive placemaking,’ making more explicit commitments to infrastructure delivery, in particular transport infrastructure.

The consultation showed strong support for long-term council house building which supports our position in the strategy and strengthens our calls on Government to provide adequate funding to enable us to build council housing at the scale that is needed. We will use the headroom in the Council’s Housing Revenue Account to maximise the delivery of affordable homes, but we also require subsidy from Government to deliver on the scale that is needed and if we are to deliver more homes for new lets at social housing rent levels as opposed to London Affordable Rent Levels. We will continue to work proactively with the Greater London Authority (GLA) and national Government to maximise the opportunities available for Enfield.

The full list of who we consulted, details of how we promoted the consultation, information on who responded, and how we developed the strategy as a result of the feedback is included in the Consultation report in appendix II.

## **6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

As the Housing and Growth Strategy is not a statutory document, an option considered was to not replace our existing strategy. However, in the context of the national housing crisis, rising homelessness in Enfield and significantly increased housing targets, it is unlikely that the Council would be able to address the scale of this challenge without a renewed strategy setting out a clear approach to address new challenges and new ambitions.

## **7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

Increasing homelessness; a growing private rented sector which in many cases is offering sub-standard accommodation; a growing population and ambitious new housing targets mean that we require a bold new approach to deliver more and better homes in Enfield.

This new strategy sets out our approach for guiding future housing decisions, giving an overarching vision and guiding principles that will channel efforts across relevant council departments and set out how we will work in partnership to achieve our vision. The strategy provides the opportunity for new ways of working and increased partnership across the Council, with stakeholders and with local people in our communities.

## **8.COMMENTS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS**

### **8.1 Financial Implications**

The Housing and Growth strategy is a high-level objectives document and does not detail specific budget requests. However, the impact of this strategy to the HRA 30-year Business Plan will affect the capacity and borrowing requirements.

This strategy has driven a review of the HRA business plan to ensure it can sustain its ambitions. An updated business plan will be reported and agreed at January Cabinet (KD4969). Part of this report recommends the implementation of financial metrics to ensure the plan remains financially viable and within affordable limits. These measures are Interest cover ratio (ICR) and Loan to Value (LTV).

The strategy sets out the need to increase affordable housing within the borough and the ambition to increase this level by direct delivery to 3,500 new homes in the next 10 years. A pipeline programme has been developed and has been built into the HRA 30-year business plan.

The strategy also sets out the need to invest in our existing council homes to ensure the Council is providing safe and secure homes for future generations and offer high-quality management services. A stock condition survey has recently been completed showing that the overall level of budget is adequate to cover the costs of works required. By investing in our stock and building new homes it will ensure asset life and reduce long term repairs and major works costs.

Some aspects of the Housing Strategy delivery will have implications for General Fund and will need to be considered in the Council's 5-year Medium Term Financial Plan and agreed on an annual basis, as well as the Council's 10 year Capital Programme. The Council should benefit from the creation of 3,500 new homes in the borough for

example, through the additional income generated as a result of an increase in the Council Tax base and the impact of additional specialised housing on Social Care delivery. However, other areas will also need to be considered such as the implications on the number of school places required and general infrastructure demands for example.

## **8.2 Legal Implications**

The Deregulation Act 2015 abolished the statutory requirement for English authorities to produce a housing strategy as previously required. However, section 333D of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 provides that any local housing strategy of any London borough has to be in general conformity with the Mayor's London housing strategy.

## **8.3 Property Implications**

The Housing and Growth Strategy refers to the Council's intention to expand current housing delivery programmes by optimising the Council's property holdings. The Council's Strategic Asset Management Plan, which applies to the Council's non-housing assets, supports this approach.

Further property implication may arise following implementation of the strategy and these will be reported on separately in any subsequent operational reports.

## **9. KEY RISKS**

Uncertainty in the housing market, as well as the cross-subsidy model required to fund affordable housing, means that the Council and registered providers are facing considerable challenges in delivering affordable housing at the pace and scale required.

This includes uncertainty around how the housing market will react to Britain leaving the EU and the impact this may have on housing construction, including the potential for skills shortages if falls in net migration are not met by an increase in other skilled workers. This would make delivery of our housing delivery targets increasingly challenging.

For this reason, we are supporting London Councils and the G15 housing associations in their calls for greater funding and support for local government and registered providers. We will also continue to work proactively with partners to deliver affordable homes.

Robust programme management will be in place on each scheme development, led by the Council's Place Department.

Delivery of good growth is also dependent on the delivery of supporting infrastructure, without which delivery of housing at the scale required will not be possible. We are working closely with strategic partners, including Transport for London, and are continuing to support the delivery of Crossrail 2 and other transport infrastructure to manage this risk.

The Council's commitment to becoming zero carbon by 2030, as set out in the Cabinet's Climate Emergency Pledge, and the fast-changing national regulatory framework in relation to this, may also add further challenges to achieving viability of new housing schemes and delivering housing to the scale required. The Council has set up a Climate Change Taskforce to oversee the development of our strategy for zero carbon, and along with the Housing Delivery Board, will be overseeing the council approach to manage this risk and respond to both the housing targets and the zero carbon targets.

We will need to take a proactive approach and be prepared to flex our strategy if, as a result of changing risks in the national economic and legislative climate, it is appropriate to do so. A risk register will be created and monitored to manage and respond to the risks associated with the delivery of the strategy, which will be owned by the Housing Delivery Board.

## **10. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES - CREATING A LIFETIME OF OPPORTUNITIES IN ENFIELD**

## **10.1 Good Homes in Well-Connected Neighbourhoods**

The Housing and Growth Strategy sets out how we propose to deliver this priority over the next ten years using good growth principles.

## **10.2 Sustain Strong and Healthy Communities**

The Housing and Growth strategy is guided by five principles, one of which is to build homes and places that are good for people's health and wellbeing. The vision is to build places that are affordable and child, age and disability friendly – all of which will contribute to sustaining strong and healthy communities. The strategy takes a 'Health in all Policies' (HiAPT) approach by setting proposed principles for how we will improve health and wellbeing through housing and good growth.

## **10.3 Build our Local Economy to Create a Thriving Place**

Our vision is to build more homes and better homes through good growth principles. This means that any new housing must bring benefits to the local economy through regeneration and renewal.

## **11. EQUALITIES IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

We have completed an Equalities Impact Assessment for the strategy and anticipate that the strategy will have a positive impact on equalities.

In order to develop a strategy which reflects the diverse needs of communities, including people of all protected characteristics, we undertook an extensive consultation on the draft strategy, and used the results of this to finalise our approach.

The equalities impact assessment is included in appendix I.

## **12. PERFORMANCE AND DATA IMPLICATIONS**

The Council has established a Housing Delivery Board as a response to the high priority the Council is placing on increasing the delivery of new and quality homes for the borough, and to ensure we effectively oversee and monitor the delivery of our housing targets. This Board will play a key role in delivering on the vision and ambitions of the Housing and Growth Strategy.

The Housing Delivery Board is in the process of agreeing a suite of measures and targets that will provide the framework for the Council to monitor housing delivery in order that we achieve the delivery of the targets in our Local Plan, and the target of delivering 3,500 new Council homes through our Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan. These measures will be agreed and monitored by relevant

cabinet members and the key metrics will also be monitored in the 2020 Corporate Performance Report. Once agreed, these targets will be published as an appendix to the Housing and Growth Strategy, with an anticipated date of publishing this appendix being April 2020.

Further data implications may arise following implementation of the strategy and these will be reported on separately in any subsequent operational reports.

### **13. PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

The strategy will help to embed Health in All Policies (HiAP) principles. We have proposed an Enfield Housing Test which sets out guiding principles to achieving good growth. This includes questioning whether any plan for housing renewal or a new development is good for people's health and wellbeing. This includes helping people to be smoke free, be physically active, eat well, be socially connected and live in thermal comfort.

#### **Background Papers – None**

#### **Appendices**

Draft Housing and Growth strategy  
Appendix I: Equalities Impact Assessment  
Appendix II: Consultation Report