

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY
PANEL HELD ON TUESDAY, 5TH JULY, 2022**

MEMBERS: Councillors Maria Alexandrou (Chair), Josh Abey, Hivran Dalkaya, Ayten Guzel and Tom O'Halloran.

Officers: Joanne Drew (Director of Housing & Regeneration), Stacey Gilmour (Governance Officer)

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

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

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

Apologies were received from Cllrs Lee Chamberlain (Vice-Chair) and Nelly Gyosheva. Cllrs Elisa Morreale was substituting for Cllr Chamberlain and Cllr Mustafa Cetinkaya was substituting for Cllr Gyosheva.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair, Cllr Alexandrou, stated an interest as she is a landlord.

3. INTRODUCTION-PURPOSE OF MEETING

The Chair explained that the panel will hear from the Cabinet Member for Social Housing, Cllr George Savva and the Director of Housing & Regeneration, Joanne Drew, outlining the department's priorities and areas of challenge for the upcoming municipal year. The Cabinet Member and Officer would then be asked to leave the meeting at which point members of the panel will discuss and agree the Housing Scrutiny Panel work programme for 2022/2023.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2022.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE

NOTED, for information, the attached Terms of Reference for the Housing Scrutiny Panel.

6. LOCAL PRIORITIES FOR 2022/23

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The Chair invited Cllr George Savva, Cabinet Member, Social Housing and Joanne Drew, Director of Housing & Regeneration to present the Local Priorities for 2022/23, highlighting the following:

- The remit of the Housing Scrutiny Panel is informed by two strategies agreed by Cabinet.
- Delivering on the Housing and Growth Strategy 2020:
 - The housing crisis is currently a hot topic, with lots happening regarding this from a Central Government perspective which Local Governments need to respond to. It is therefore time for Enfield to review its Housing Strategy to ensure that we provide a balanced housing market for all.
 - More affordable housing – this sits under the remit of the Regeneration and Economic Development Scrutiny Panel.
 - Being proud of and investing in our council homes to make sure they provide safe and secure homes for future generations and offer high-quality management services.
 - Maintain clean and green estates and expand the Enfield Repairs Direct Service.
 - Support residents impacted on by the cost of living crisis including access to employment.
 - The Social Housing (Regulation) Bill aims to facilitate a new, proactive approach to regulating social housing landlords on consumer issues such as safety, transparency and tenant engagement, with new enforcement powers to tackle failing landlords.
 - It aims to drive significant change in landlord behaviour to focus on the needs of their tenants and ensure landlords are held to account for their performance.
 - Quality and variety in the private housing sector – many vulnerable residents are living in the private sector, there is a focus to intervene to improve and enable access for residents Enfield Let was mobilised in October 2020, there are plans for Housing Gateway growth.
 - Private Renters Reform Bill- Renters to receive new rights to challenge landlords in the biggest shake up in thirty years.
 - A private renter's Ombudsman will be appointed to settle disputes between renters and landlords.
 - Development of Housing Asset Management Strategy which includes support for bringing dwellings up to EPC B (Energy Performance Certificate)
- Delivering the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020 - Making homelessness something that is rare, brief and non-recurring:
 - A better future for rough sleepers –permanent housing of residents taken in during the pandemic.
 - To enable everyone to access a stable, secure and decent home regardless of tenure.
 - Step in to prevent people from becoming homeless at the earliest possible stage, rather than waiting until they have a crisis.

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- Equip people with the skills to manage a tenancy in the PRS (private rented sector) through training and support.
- Reshape the housing market to improve access to housing in the private rented sector for residents whilst improving quality.
- Housing Advisory Service -Aims within five years:
 - Fewer than 500 households in Temporary Accommodation.
 - No one in Temporary Accommodation for more than 6 months.
- Housing Advisory Service – Priorities 2022-23
 - Prevention – preventing homelessness and improving outcomes for residents is our top priority.
 - Housing Supply – the supply of privately rented homes has halved in 12 months.
 - Security of tenure – the number of homelessness presentations has doubled in 12 months, driven by PRS evictions and the cost of living.
 - Affordability – rents have risen and have outstripped benefit levels.
- Information was provided on the Housing Gateway’s mission, achievements and development 2022/23
- Ensure the service has the skills and capacity to deliver and continue to work to ensure quality of living for everyone

Joanne Drew, Director of Housing & Regeneration made the following suggestions of possible areas for scrutiny:

- Social Housing Regulation Bill – what does the new bill involve? How have we prepared for it and what does it look like for Enfield.
- Private Renters Reform Bill – look at the affect of the bill on private renting. Will this make it harder for us to place Enfield residents into private housing?
- Look at the position on empty homes along with how the economic climate is affecting Enfield’s overall housing plans.
- Housing Gateway – review progress that has been made.
- Invite Housing Associations (HA’s) to a future meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Panel to review/question.
- Homelessness Service- review how the service is responding to people during this cost of living rise.

Following the update above there were no further questions raised by members of the panel, therefore Cllr Savva and Joanne Drew left the meeting at this point.

7. PLANNING THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2022/23

The Chair opened discussions in terms of the work programme. It was suggested that there were two items per meeting, with three as a maximum

Following discussions, the process for extra meetings was confirmed.

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Discussions were held on the most appropriate timings for items.

The following items and timings were agreed:

September's meeting

Social Housing Regulation Bill

Private Renters Reform Bill

Enfield Repairs Direct – overview on progress, delivery, efficiency, response times and out of hours repairs.

November's meeting

Draft Housing & Good Growth Strategy

Delivery of Social & Affordable Housing (to include an update on Meridian Water)

March's meeting

Housing Gateway/Enfield Let - update

Temporary Accommodation and Empty Homes – levels and strategy to reduce

Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping – update & review of strategy

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

NOTED the dates of future meetings as follows:

Thursday 22 September 2022

Tuesday 29 November 2022

Wednesday 22 March 2023.

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