



AGENDA FOR THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members of the Housing Scrutiny Committee are summoned to Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on **4 September 2017 at 7.30 pm.**

Yinka Owa
Director of Law and Governance

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Despatched : 24 August 2017

Membership

Councillor Michael O'Sullivan (Chair)
Councillor Marian Spall (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Alex Diner
Councillor Gary Doolan
Councillor Aysegul Erdogan
Councillor Troy Gallagher
Councillor Osh Gantly
Councillor Mouna Hamitouche MBE

Rose Marie McDonald (Resident Observer)
Dean Donaghey (Resident Observer)

Substitute Members

Councillor Satnam Gill OBE
Councillor Gary Heather
Councillor Jenny Kay
Councillor Una O'Halloran
Councillor Olly Parker
Councillor Angela Picknell
Councillor Dave Poyser
Councillor Nurullah Turan

Quorum: is 4 Councillors



A. Formal Matters

Page

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declaration of Substitute Members
3. Declarations of Interests

If you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest*** in an item of business:

- if it is not yet on the council's register, you **must** declare both the existence and details of it at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent;
- you may **choose** to declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest that is already in the register in the interests of openness and transparency.

In both the above cases, you **must** leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If you have a **personal** interest in an item of business **and** you intend to speak or vote on the item you **must** declare both the existence and details of it at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent but you **may** participate in the discussion and vote on the item.

***(a) Employment, etc** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.

(b) Sponsorship - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect of your expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of your election; including from a trade union.

(c) Contracts - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between you or your partner (or a body in which one of you has a beneficial interest) and the council.

(d) Land - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.

(e) Licences- Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.

(f) Corporate tenancies - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which you or your partner have a beneficial interest.

(g) Securities - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

This applies to **all** members present at the meeting.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting
5. Chair's Report
6. Order of Business
7. Public Questions

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For members of the public to ask questions relating to any subject on the meeting agenda under Procedure Rule 70.5. Alternatively, the Chair may opt to accept questions from the public during the discussion on each agenda item.

B.	Items for Decision/Discussion	Page
1.	Fire Safety Scrutiny Review: Witness Evidence	7 - 22
2.	Housing Communications Scrutiny Review: Witness Evidence	23 - 28
3.	Quarterly Review of Housing Performance (Q1 2017/18)	29 - 32

C. Urgent non-exempt items (if any)

Any non- exempt items which the Chair agrees should be considered urgent by reason of special circumstances. The reasons for urgency will be agreed by the Chair and recorded in the minutes.

D. Exclusion of press and public

To consider whether, in view of the nature of the remaining items on the agenda, any of them are likely to involve the disclosure of exempt or confidential information within the terms of the Access to Information Procedure Rules in the Constitution and, if so, whether to exclude the press and public during discussion thereof.

E. Confidential/exempt items

F. Urgent exempt items (if any)

Any exempt items which the Chair agrees should be considered urgently by reason of special circumstances. The reasons for urgency will be agreed by the Chair and recorded in the minutes.

The next meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee will be on 3 October 2017

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Agenda Item 4

London Borough of Islington

Housing Scrutiny Committee - 17 July 2017

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee held at Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 17 July 2017 at 7.30 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** O'Sullivan (Chair), Spall (Vice-Chair), Diner, Erdogan, Gallagher, Gantly, and Hamitouche.

Resident Observers: Rose-Marie McDonald and Dean Donaghey

Councillor Michael O'Sullivan in the Chair

281 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item A1)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Doolan.

282 **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item A2)**

None.

283 **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Item A3)**

None.

284 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item A4)**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 June 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

285 **CHAIR'S REPORT (Item A5)**

The Chair welcomed Dean Donaghey, who had been appointed as a resident observer at the 29 June meeting of the Council. The Chair commented that Mr Donaghey had technical expertise in the building trade and would be an asset to the Committee.

286 **ORDER OF BUSINESS (Item A6)**

No changes were proposed to the order of business.

287 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item A7)**

The Chair set out the procedure for public questions and the filming of meetings.

288 **FIRE SAFETY SCRUTINY REVIEW - SID AND WITNESS EVIDENCE (Item B1)**

The Committee considered the Scrutiny Initiation Document and received witness evidence from Damian Dempsey, Group Leader – Quantity Surveyors, and Stuart Fuller, Construction, Fire, and Gas Safety Manager.

The following main points were noted in the discussion:

- The council's fire safety works were informed by guidance issued by the Local Government Association following the major fire incidents at Lakanal House in 2009 and Shirley Towers in 2010.
- Fire safety issues were considered regularly by the Homes and Estates Safety Board, which included representation from housing services and the London Fire Brigade. The Board was independently chaired by the Director of Housing Services at Oxford City Council to provide external oversight.
- One major aspect of the fire safety improvement works carried out in recent years was the upgrading of existing entrance doors and the installation of certified fire safe doors to each property. Islington Council was responsible for upgrading the doors to tenanted properties, whereas leaseholders were responsible for fitting such doors to their own properties. Fire safe doors were fitted with a self-closing mechanism which helped to contain fires.
- It was explained that self-closing doors could operate either through self-closing hinges or an overhead device. Doors with self-closing hinges were more aesthetically pleasing than overhead devices, which officers commented could make a property feel 'institutional'. However, the council preferred to install doors with overhead closing devices as they were more effective than self-closing hinges.
- Since the Grenfell Tower fire the council had taken a stronger stance on leaseholders who had not yet installed a self-closing door which complied with regulations. The council was contacting leaseholders advising that they needed to either fit their own door or opt-in to the council's door-fitting scheme within seven days, otherwise the council would seek a court injunction requiring them to fit a compliant door.
- Officers commented that the Grenfell Tower fire would very likely result in regulatory change, and the council would ensure that it was fully compliant with any new regulations or guidance.
- Islington Council had three full time fire safety risk assessors. Each housing block was assessed every three years and its level of fire risk rated as either Tolerable, Moderate, or Substantial. The results of this fire risk assessment fed into the capital programme.
- The council was currently evaluating tenders for the installation of emergency lighting and inter-linked hardwired heat and smoke alarms in street properties and mansion blocks. It was explained that Partners for Improvement in Islington was not responsible for these works as they were outside the scope of the street properties management contract.
- A member queried if fitting inter-linked heat and smoke alarms was sufficient to ensure the safety of residents in street properties and mansion blocks. Officers advised that the alarms would give residents early warning in the event of a fire and would assist in the prompt evacuation of a property. A member suggested that an early warning may not offer a sufficient level of safety to a vulnerable tenant with

Housing Scrutiny Committee - 17 July 2017

mobility issues. Officers commented that these properties were general needs housing and were not built to specifically accommodate disabled and vulnerable people.

- It was commented that Partners' tenants were worried, particularly as Partners' repairs service was managed by Rydon, which had refurbished the Grenfell Tower. It was suggested that Partners' needed to be more responsive to the concerns of residents, particularly as the Partners' resident scrutiny forum was now defunct.
- Officers confirmed that Partners' attended meetings of the Homes and Estates Safety Board.
- A member of the Committee provided an example of fire alarms fitted in street properties which were inaccessible to vulnerable and disabled people due to the height of their ceilings. These alarms could only be tested and deactivated manually by using a broomstick or another aid. It was commented that remote-controlled alarms were available and these would be much more suitable for vulnerable and disabled people. It was commented that this had been reported to Partners but no action had been taken.
- A member of the public queried if the council would be upgrading entry systems on council blocks. Officers were not able to provide specific details of any plans at the meeting. It was commented that the fire brigade was able to override these systems however access to the properties had to be carefully controlled.
- The Committee requested that the Scrutiny Initiation Document be amended to include: (i) a review of the working relationships between the council's Emergency Planning team and Local Authority Liaison Officers, and the London Fire Brigade; (ii) a review of how vulnerable residents are incorporated into evacuation plans and how these plans are stored and accessed in the event of an emergency; (iii) a review of the risks posed by takeaways and hazardous materials being located on the ground floor of blocks of flats; and (iv) a review of tenancy conditions related to the storage and use of barbeques and gas canisters.
- It was suggested that committee members should familiarise themselves with the findings of the Lakanal House Coroner Inquest.
- It was suggested that the London Hazards Centre and Health and Safety Executive could be invited to submit evidence to the review.

The Committee thanked the officers for their attendance.

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Initiation Document be approved; subject to the following additions:

- (i) a review of the working relationships between the council's Emergency Planning team and Local Authority Liaison Officers, and the London Fire Brigade;
- (ii) a review of how vulnerable residents are incorporated into evacuation plans and how these plans are stored and accessed in the event of an emergency;
- (iii) a review of the risks posed by takeaways and hazardous materials being located on the ground floor of blocks of flats; and
- (iv) a review of tenancy conditions related to the storage and use of barbeques and gas canisters.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HOUSING SERVICES COMMUNICATIONS SCRUTINY REVIEW - SID AND INTRODUCTION (Item B2)

Lynn Stratton, Deputy Head of Communications and Change, introduced the Scrutiny Initiation Document.

The following main points were noted in the discussion:

- The Housing Service was a large service which had to communicate several different messages to residents. It was important to communicate the right message, to the right people, at the right time.
- The council's resident review groups had previously reviewed communications matters. It was commented that the findings of these reviews could be fed into the committee's review.
- The Committee suggested that agreeing a Code of Communications among the council's housing services, Partners, and contractors would be a method of ensuring that communication with residents was of a consistently high quality.
- The council had been working to develop its online housing services, which included the repairs reporting system. The council's website had also been redesigned in 2016 and it now met high standards of accessibility.
- It was suggested that witness evidence could take the form of joint workshops with officers to review complaints, and receiving feedback from focus groups or resident forums.
- A member commented that residents often assigned greater importance to printed communications as opposed to emails, and acknowledged the council's work to develop and improve online services. It was asked if there were any services which would not be appropriate or effective to provide online. Officers noted that no decision had been taken on if particular services could not be provided online, but it was decided that some key information should be available in hard copy. For example, recent communications relating to fire safety following the Grenfell Tower fire had been printed and delivered to each property due to its importance. It was suggested that websites were particularly useful in signposting to other services.
- A member commented that although it was possible to report anti-social behaviour online, there was no feedback system to communicate what was being done in response to these reports.
- The digital notice boards installed on estates had been well received, and it was thought that these could be developed further by including more localised content. It was suggested that residents' associations could be consulted on the information they wanted these screens to display.
- The Committee queried how repairs reported online were processed, and if this resulted in a quicker response than reporting via telephone.
- A member commented that housing services were unlikely to receive feedback from residents who could not speak English, and asked how the council knew that its housing services were accessible to all. In response it was advised that the council did make a number of publications available in multiple languages, and telephone translation services were available on request. A member suggested that many residents did not know that translation services were available.
- A review by the resident Service Review Group found that if one person in a household could speak English they would often translate for their families. This usually involved younger people translating for their parents.
- It was requested that the findings of relevant reviews carried out by resident scrutiny groups be circulated to the Committee.
- The Committee requested that the Scrutiny Initiation Document be amended to specify that the review should focus on verbal, written and online communication, as

Housing Scrutiny Committee - 17 July 2017

well as communication between officers, communication with residents, communication between departments, and communication with tenant and resident associations.

- A member of the public suggested that residents needed methods to communicate with the housing service in a collective way, as 'atomised' forms of communication did not highlight wider issues.
- A member of the public asked if the review would focus on how councillors communicated with residents. In response it was advised that the review was focused on Housing Service communications.
- The Committee requested an organisation chart which indicated lines of communication within the council and with residents. It was requested that this include front line staff, including caretakers.
- A member of the Committee highlighted that issues were sometimes escalated to councillors if there was not an effective resolution, and councillors could get frustrated by the same issues occurring repeatedly. It was suggested that a detailed evaluation of resident journeys through services could help to identify issues which need resolving.

The Committee thanked Lynn Stratton for her attendance.

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Initiation Document be approved, subject to amendments to specify that the review would consider: verbal, written and online communication, communication between officers, communication with residents, communication between departments, and communication with tenant and resident associations.

290 REVIEW OF WORK PROGRAMME (Item B3)

The Committee indicated that an additional meeting may be required to consider how the council works with Housing Associations.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm

CHAIR

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Agenda Item 1

Housing Scrutiny Committee 2017/18

Fire Safety in Council Housing – Witness Evidence Plan

Overall aim: To review if the fire safety features of the council's housing stock and associated arrangements are sufficient

Committee Meeting – 4 September 2017		
Who / What	Organisation / Purpose	Other key information
Damian Dempsey, Group Leader – Quantity Surveyors, and Stuart Fuller, Construction, Fire and Gas Safety Manager.	To provide a range of information on how the council ensures fire safety in its properties.	To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council's responsibilities for directly managed properties, PFI properties, and TMO properties• The responsibilities of tenants and the responsibilities of leaseholders• how fire risks in council properties are identified, assessed, and responded to• The communications channels for residents to report fire safety concerns to the council, and how these are responded to• What general fire safety advice is provided to residents• If it is feasible to fit alarm systems, sprinklers and fire escapes to council housing.• If capital resources are sufficient to complete any required fire safety improvements to the council's housing stock• If revenue resources are sufficient to ensure that the council's housing stock remains compliant with fire regulations, building control and health and safety standards, and that any fire risks are proactively managed.• How fire safety is considered at the design stage of refurbishment works and new developments, and to review how decisions are made on matters which affect fire safety.• How capital works are monitored to ensure that they are being carried out to the agreed specification• How the council works with Partners and TMOs on fire safety matters

London Fire Brigade	To provide the Committee with advice and guidance on fire safety, and information on working relationships with the council.	<p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fire risks to council housing • If any additional risks are posed by takeaways and hazardous materials being located on the ground floor of blocks of flats, as well as the storage of barbeques and gas canisters • The council's compliance with advice and guidance from the London Fire Brigade • Working relationships between Housing Services, Emergency Planning, Local Authority Liaison Officers, and the London Fire Brigade • Can Islington Council do anything additional to ensure that a major fire is prevented.
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Committee Meeting – 3 October 2017		
Who / What	Organisation / Purpose	Other key information
Jan Hart, Service Director, Public Protection	To understand the work of the Emergency Planning unit and how the council would respond in the event of a major fire.	<p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How emergency plans are triggered and what these entail • Working relationships between Emergency Planning, Housing Services, Local Authority Liaison Officers, and the London Fire Brigade
Partners	Partners for Improvement in Islington – to provide information on the organisation's fire safety procedures and joint-working with the council.	<p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the council works with Partners on fire safety matters • How Partners works with the fire brigade and others • How Partners assesses and responds to fire safety risks • The communications channels for residents to report fire safety concerns, and how these are responded to • What general fire safety advice is provided to residents

Committee Meeting – 16 November 2017 – DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Who / What	Organisation / Purpose	Other key information
London Hazards Centre	The London Hazards Centre is a not for profit organisation which campaigns for Londoners to live and work in safe and healthy environments. To provide the Committee with advice and guidance on fire safety.	To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Best practice guidance• The fire risks to council housing• Can Islington Council do anything additional to ensure that a major fire is prevented.
Damian Dempsey and Stuart Fuller	To provide any further information requested by the Committee or respond to any issues raised during the course of the review.	

Key dates:

16 November 2017: Draft Recommendations

11 December 2017: Final Report

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Housing Scrutiny Committee

4 September 2017

Fire Safety in Council Housing – Witness Evidence

The following information has been provided by officers in response to the objectives of the review. The Fire and Gas Safety Manager and Fire Safety Work Group Leader will be present at the meeting to discuss the evidence with the Committee.

To evaluate how fire risks in council properties are identified, assessed, and responded to	
Stuart Fuller, Construction, Fire and Gas Safety Manager	<p>The council is required under Article 9 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRFSO) to carry out Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) to the common areas of its housing stock in order to identify the general fire precautions required to protect 'relevant persons' from the risk of fire. FRA are currently completed by in house officers, including former building control and fire service personnel.</p> <p>FRA are carried out on a rolling programme due to the high number of properties under the Councils control – approx. 1800. There is no defined review period in the RRFSO and the FRA review period is dictated by the overall fire safety rating awarded for each block, which are as follows; Tolerable (Low Risk) – 3 years; Moderate (Medium Risk) – annually; Substantial (Higher Risk) – within 3 months.</p> <p>The overwhelming majority of blocks are rated as Tolerable, although the council has recently given a commitment to completing FRA on all blocks over 6 storeys (127 total) on an annual basis. The formal FRA process is supplemented by routine inspection by the local Area Housing Office Estate Services teams, which also identify fire safety concerns (i.e. access) or repairs issues (such as defective door closing devices).</p> <p>Actions raised during the FRA are assigned to various departments within the council and uploaded to a web-based application. This allows others to review actions assigned to them and close them out appropriately. This system provides an auditable trail of actions taken and also allows any reports generated to present the most up to date status. Actions arising will be shown on the FRA report as 'open', 'closed', or 'on-hold'. The action status is monitored at various levels throughout the organisation.</p>

To review if the council's capital programme includes all of the fire safety works it should; and to understand the feasibility of fitting alarm systems, sprinklers and fire escapes to council housing

Damian Dempsey,
Fire Safety Work
Group Leader, and
Kevin Byrne, Housing
Investment Manager

The LGG's Purpose Built Blocks of Flats guidance document (published in 2011) highlighted a number of concerns arising from the fatal fire at Lakanal House in July 2009. The key recommendation was to ensure that flat front entrance doors were of a suitable standard and effectively self-closing, "*in the short term as a matter priority*". This has been the Council's primary focus in recent years, along with the interlinked detection and warning programme for converted street properties where it is known that compartmentation is unlikely to effectively support a stay-put fire strategy.

Communal Fire Alarms – The same guidance reaffirms the view that "in general needs blocks designed to support a 'stay put' policy, it is unnecessary and undesirable for a fire alarm system to be provided. A communal fire detection and alarm system will inevitably lead to a proliferation of false alarms. This will impose a burden on fire and rescue services and lead to residents ignoring warnings of genuine fires. A fire alarm system ought to be provided only in a building in which some control can be achieved over the occupants to ensure that they respond appropriately. For most blocks of flats, it would be unrealistic to expect this. Nor is it necessarily desirable that evacuation should take place from areas remote from the fire, unless and until these areas themselves become threatened by the fire".

A simultaneous evacuation of a large block presents significant operational difficulties for the fire and rescue service. Tenanted properties have mains-powered smoke/heat detection and warning alarms installed as part of Decent Homes work, Voids and the cyclical electrical testing regime where required.

Sprinkler/Suppression Systems - The purpose built blocks of flats guidance suggests that; other fire safety technology cannot always readily be applied to existing buildings. It is unlikely that retrofitting sprinklers or water mist systems would be reasonably practicable for existing blocks. A list of considerations for any future feasibility study might include;

- Building Regulations – currently required for buildings >30m in height, not retrospective
- Indicative costs anywhere between 4.3m and 97m – blocks 10 storeys and above only
- Asbestos removal – inconvenience/cost/time (also usually last resort)
- Resident acceptance (trunking/boxing) & leaseholders/access/duration of works
- Water Pressure – likely to require boosting equipment/tanks
- Effectiveness in multiple actuations/lack of expertise/specialist installers
- Vandalism/accidental damage/annual maintenance

Fire Escape (Additional) – A single means of escape staircase is neither uncommon, or in itself considered a major concern. Protecting the single means of escape is paramount, which highlights the importance of suitable, self-closing doors. Additional means of escape are likely to be costly, encounter planning difficulties and may lead to security concerns. A simultaneous evacuation of a large block with several hundred residents is again likely to cause operational difficulties for fire-fighting personnel.

Imminent works identified through the Fire Safety Working Group within Housing Property Services and the FRA programme include fire stopping; upgrading and/or replacement of communal doors to current standards; and the street property detection/warning programme.

To review the Housing Service’s emergency response arrangements in the event of a major fire; including evacuation and re-homing plans, and ongoing support arrangements

<p>Billy Wells, Acting Head of Service, Housing Operations</p>	<p><i>The Committee will receive evidence from the council’s Emergency Planning team at a future meeting.</i></p> <p>A report/procedure is currently being put together by service development (Paul Byer, Service Improvement and Involvement Manager) to confirm how housing will respond to emergencies. Interim arrangements are in place. The report will need to be signed off by the housing department’s management team.</p>
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To assess how the council ensures that its housing stock is compliant with fire safety regulations, London Fire Brigade advice and best practice guidance.

<p>Stuart Fuller, Construction, Fire and Gas Safety Manager</p>	<p>The council’s FRA questionnaire is based on the Publically Available Specification (PAS79:2007) – Fire Risk Assessment Guidance and Recommended Methodology. Other primary references to ensure compliance with legal requirements and best practice include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 ▪ Fire Safety in Purpose Built Blocks of Flats Guidance – LGG/CFOA ▪ The Building Regulations 2010 – Approved Document B (Fire Safety) ▪ LACORS – Housing Fire Safety Guidance (street properties/HMO’s etc.) <p>The council established a Homes and Estates Safety Board in 2012, which meets on a quarterly basis, has an independent Chair and is attended by key stakeholders (including LFB’s Borough Commander) and the Executive Member for Housing and Development. The HESB examines 6 key areas, including fire safety, reviewing not only management arrangements, trends and current issues but also monitoring performance through a quarterly KPI report.</p> <p>In addition to the HESB, quarterly strategic liaison meetings are chaired by the Corporate Director of Housing and Adult Social Services and attended by LFB’s Borough Commander. The Construction, Fire and Gas Safety Manager also holds quarterly meetings with the Borough Commander and Fire Safety Regulation Team Leader to review fire incidents, including both operational and enforcement matters.</p> <p>Joint inspections with LFB personnel are also carried out periodically, to look at issues highlighted by either party. This collaborative approach is demonstrated by LFB’s involvement in forming the council’s street properties detection/warning programme. Representatives from the Construction and Fire Safety Team also attend quarterly meetings of the Fire Safety in Social Housing forum which is made up of other local authorities and social housing providers to discuss common issues.</p>
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To identify if there are adequate communications channels for residents to report fire safety concerns to the council, and to assess how these are responded to; and to consider the fire safety advice provided to residents.

Stuart Fuller,
Construction, Fire and
Gas Safety Manager

The council has dedicated Fire Safety pages on its website, providing advice to residents and also linking to the LFB website. Advice is also provided in the new tenant sign-up pack which explains fire safety strategies and basic advice on preventing fires. The new tenant sign-up process also offers all new tenants the opportunity to request a Home Fire Safety Visit from LFB. This visit includes bespoke fire safety advice for the property and lifestyle factors in evidence, as well as the installation of battery operated smoke alarms if these are required. Fire safety advice is also provided periodically through newsletter articles to residents, in addition to the FAQ's on the council's website following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower.

Routine enquiries from residents, AHO staff and leaseholders etc. are generally via the generic fire safety inbox, which all members of the team have access to. The Council adopts LFB's (and current guidance for purpose built blocks of flats) stance that if there's a fire elsewhere in the block, residents are usually safer to remain in their homes unless directly affected by smoke, heat or fire. Where the strategy requires simultaneous evacuation (street properties and a limited number of mansion blocks), Fire Action Notices are installed advising of the actions to be taken in the event of fire.

To review if there are sufficient capital resources to complete any required fire safety improvements to the council's housing stock.

Damian Dempsey,
Fire Safety Work
Group Leader, and
Kevin Byrne, Housing
Investment Manager

There are currently sufficient resources within the council's 30-year investment plan to invest in fire safety improvements and periodic maintenance. It should be noted however that significant investment need in fire safety improvements arising from the Grenfell Tower inquiry would necessitate a review of the council's short/medium term priorities and there may be a detrimental impact on other mainstream investment. The council recognises its duty of care to residents and in delivering of its capital programme schemes. The first call on available financial resources are invariably to general health and safety and/or fire safety issues.

To review if there are sufficient revenue resources to ensure that the council's housing stock remains compliant with fire regulations, building control and health and safety standards, and that any fire risks are proactively managed.

Damian Dempsey,
Fire Safety Work
Group Leader, and
Matt West, Head of
Repairs and
Maintenance

It is considered there are sufficient revenue resources in place to ensure the council's housing stock remains compliant. We are currently carrying out sample checks within properties/blocks and checking on compartmentation and all contractor's works are post inspected to ensure that any breaches to compartmentation/fire breaks are re-instated with correct materials following completion of the work.

These post inspections will also be rolled out to the in house repairs service to ensure compliance and managed with our new system Oneserve. All housing repairs service staff have received training or ongoing tool box briefings to ensure that this is adhered to, and to highlight any areas where breaches/non-compliance exist within the properties/blocks are suitably re-instated. We also have our cyclical testing contractors that are carrying out compliance checks to various properties/blocks currently, reporting any findings back to be proactively managed and addressed.

To evaluate how the council works with Partners and TMOs to ensure that council-owned properties which are not directly managed are compliant with fire safety regulations.

Stacey Wright,
Housing Partnerships
Clienting Manager

TMO's - Whilst the council is largely responsible for the structure and design of its properties, TMO's are generally responsible under their management agreements (contracts) for repair and services which may be associated with a range of fire safety aspects of a building. Example of these include communal fire doors and windows, removal of bulk or stored items in common parts and the security of roof access.

In addition, TMOs are responsible for regular inspections to their delegated managed areas and this includes all common parts, ensuring there are no obstructions to emergency access or exits, checking electrical intake cupboards and dry risers and the removal of items on the estates such as bulk refuse and lumber. TMO management agreements make a general reference to the organisation adhering to all current health and safety regulations.

A comprehensive quarterly estate inspection is carried out jointly with the Estate Service Co-ordinators (ESC) and TMO's and a template checklist is used to inspect and assess areas such as caretaking, internal communal areas, estate repairs, grounds maintenance, lumber collection and broader estate issues. Areas of responsibility for actions are flagged within a report and should be carried out by the delegated organisation responsible for the specific works.

All programmed Fire Risk Assessments (FRA's) on TMO managed estates are carried out by the council.

PARTNERS - Partners fire safety measures centre on their Fire Risk Assessments (FRA's) of their managed properties and their Communal Area Risk Assessments (CARAs). FRA's are completed every three years, with the next round due to start later this year. CARAs are conducted twice a year for High and Medium risk properties, and annually for the lower risk blocks. The risk level is based on the number of flights of stairs in the building (+4 is high, 3 is medium and less than 3 is deemed low risk). Partners are re-introducing the zero tolerance policy on items being stored in communal areas to minimise fire risks.

All gas inspections are conducted annually and form part of Partners contractual KPI's and performance is reported monthly to the PFI Clienting team. This is in addition to monthly performance reporting on the 5 yearly programmed fixed wire electrical checks. Partners have promoted fire safety through their regular newsletters to residents 'Partners Gazette' with an 'Important fire safety' article in the July 2017 edition and the 'Fire Safety – Know the Plan' article in the January and April 2017 editions.

Partners also attend the Councils quarterly Homes & Estates Safety Board Meetings where they report on a range of H&S areas related to the PFI Street properties and are kept in the loop on key issues and changes in practises. Partners also feed into the FRA Street Property Meetings on the forthcoming programme to install heat and smoke detection systems into communal parts of street properties. Partners hold an internal quarterly Health and Safety Group meeting which incorporates Partners and its contractors to review all aspects of H&S issues and performance monitoring.

There are also circa 100 high risk, vulnerable residents in deemed available dwellings who have already been visited by Partners or will be visited over the next six months. All these dwellings will be fitted with smoke alarms and Partners will also be referring vulnerable residents to the LFB's 'Home Fire Safety Visits'.

To review how fire safety is considered at the design stage of refurbishment works and new developments, and to review how decisions are made on matters which affect fire safety.

Damian Dempsey,
Fire Safety Work
Group Leader

New Build (Pre-Planning) Scheme proposals are discussed with Planning and LFB are consulted as part of the planning application process, ensuring that projects are compliant with current Building Regulations and to ensure access arrangements, fire-fighting facilities (DRM etc.) are considered and incorporated as required.

In respect of the Cyclical Improvement Programme (CIP), FRA are provided to the project teams during the planning stages, where fire safety improvements can be considered and incorporated into the CIP project if possible. Long term improvements/upgrades or high value repairs are allocated to CIP through the FRA programme. Due to the level of work and urgency required post-Lakanal House a decision was taken to establish a dedicated fire safety works team and complete many fire safety projects on a 'standalone' basis outside of CIP

The Construction and Fire Safety Team provide the health and safety competence to collaborative project team approach, liaising with in house fire risk assessors as required to inform the projects. Expectations in respect of fire safety are set out in the Council's Code of Conduct for Contractors and within our Pre-Construction Information Packs (PCIP) required for major projects under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015.

To review the working relationships between the council's Emergency Planning team and Local Authority Liaison Officers, and the London Fire Brigade.

Daniel Lawson, Head
of Emergency
Planning and
Business Continuity

The Emergency Planning Unit has a well-established relationship with all emergency services in Islington and across London including with the London Fire Brigade. This has enabled the Emergency Planning Unit to develop training links with local fire stations whereby our Local Authority Liaison Officers attend a station and carry out training on the Fire Brigade Command Units alongside Fire Brigade Officers; this provides a realistic experience in the workings of the command units and their integral part of co-ordination during an emergency.

Our group of 30 LALO's are all trained to a level of LALO Module 2, which includes; Introduction to Emergency Management, LALO Module 1 (Civil Contingencies, LALO role) and LALO Module 2 (Scene Management, Silver/Tactical Meetings, Major Incidents, Emergency Services).

The LALO's form part of the Council's Crisis Response Plan which is often activated, albeit to different levels. Recently the Emergency Planning Unit were requested to assist Kensington & Chelsea and Camden by providing LALO's and EPO's to run rest centres and emergency services liaison. At the height of our assistance we had LALO's in Kensington & Chelsea whilst still being able to respond to the Finsbury Park Terrorist Attack in our own borough.

<p>To review how vulnerable residents are incorporated into evacuation plans and how these plans are stored and accessed in the event of an emergency.</p>	
<p>Stuart Fuller, Construction, Fire and Gas Safety Manager</p>	<p>Vulnerable resident data has been offered to LFB previously but presents a number of difficulties in terms of storing/interpreting data, preventing unauthorised access/use of such data and ensuring it remains up to date. It is understood the vulnerability codes used by housing management were scrutinised as part of the Committee’s review of Housing Services for Vulnerable People, and are likely to be reviewed/rationalised. It is suggested that following this review, further dialogue with LFB will be required to establish the level of information which is both useful and manageable. This may be limited to properties where there are significant outstanding risks, for example residents that use medical oxygen and properties with significant hoarding issues.</p> <p>It should be noted that most general needs, purpose built blocks of flats were constructed on the ‘stay-put, unless directly affected by smoke/fire’ principle and as such a simultaneous evacuation strategy is not only undesirable, but also presents operational difficulties for LFB. Where a fire strategy of simultaneous evacuation is required (i.e. converted street properties with interlinked smoke/heat detection and warning systems) this will require liaison with housing management and potentially adult social services in some cases. There is an assumption that residents would be able to self-evacuate in event of a fire in their own property in most cases however.</p>
<p>To review the risks posed by takeaways and hazardous materials being located on the ground floor of blocks of flats.</p>	
<p>Stuart Fuller, Construction, Fire and Gas Safety Manager, and Ellis Turner, Environmental Health Manager</p>	<p>Typically, where commercial properties are below residential Council accommodation these are on very long term leases, which required the leaseholder to comply with all applicable legislation including fire safety. Enforcement of the RRFSO in commercial property is the responsibility of LFB and such premises will be audited periodically to assess compliance with the Order.</p> <p>There are mechanisms in place for the Councils environmental health (EH) teams to notify LFB of any fire safety concerns identified through their own routine visits/inspections. The quarterly liaison meetings with LFB’s Borough Commander referred to earlier in this statements are also attended by the Service Manager (Environmental Health) or the Service Director (Public Protection). It has been highlighted through this close working relationship that there is often a strong correlation between poor fire safety regimes and poor food hygiene standards and so information sharing has proved highly valuable for both LFB and LBI.</p>
<p>To review tenancy conditions related to the storage and use of barbecues and gas canisters.</p>	
<p>Billy Wells, Acting Head of Service, Housing Operations</p>	<p>The standard conditions of tenancy state:</p> <p><i>You must not have or use, or cause or allow anyone else to have or use:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>any inflammable materials in the property, shed or garage except those reasonably needed for normal domestic use; or</i> • <i>gas cylinders or bottles in the property.</i> <p style="text-align: center;">-----</p> <p>It is considered that existing provisions in policy are clear enough – fire hazards are already covered in the condition of tenancy, although not explicit on BBQ’s. There isn’t a current need to amend the existing conditions of tenancy at the moment but this may be necessary in the future depending on guidance/legislation changes.</p>

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SCRUTINY INITIATION DOCUMENT (SID)

Review: Fire Safety in Council Housing

Scrutiny Review Committee: Housing Scrutiny Committee

Director leading the review: Simon Kwong, Director of Property Services

Lead officers: Stuart Fuller, Construction, Fire and Gas Safety Manager
Damian Dempsey, Group Leader – Quantity Surveyors

Overall aim: To review if the fire safety features of the council's housing stock and associated arrangements are sufficient

Objectives of the review:

- To evaluate how fire risks in council properties are identified, assessed, and responded to.
- To review if the council's capital programme includes all of the fire safety works it should; and to understand the feasibility of fitting alarm systems, sprinklers and fire escapes to council housing.
- To review the Housing Service's emergency response arrangements in the event of a major fire; including evacuation and re-homing plans, and ongoing support arrangements.
- To assess how the council ensures that its housing stock is compliant with fire safety regulations, London Fire Brigade advice and best practice guidance.
- To identify if there are adequate communications channels for residents to report fire safety concerns to the council, and to assess how these are responded to; and to consider the fire safety advice provided to residents.
- To review if there are sufficient capital resources to complete any required fire safety improvements to the council's housing stock.
- To review if there are sufficient revenue resources to ensure that the council's housing stock remains compliant with fire regulations, building control and health and safety standards, and that any fire risks are proactively managed.
- To evaluate how the council works with Partners and TMOs to ensure that council-owned properties which are not directly managed are compliant with fire safety regulations.
- To review how fire safety is considered at the design stage of refurbishment works and new developments, and to review how decisions are made on matters which affect fire safety.
- To review the working relationships between the council's Emergency Planning team and Local Authority Liaison Officers, and the London Fire Brigade;
- To review how vulnerable residents are incorporated into evacuation plans and how these plans are stored and accessed in the event of an emergency;
- To review the risks posed by takeaways and hazardous materials being located on the ground floor of blocks of flats
- To review tenancy conditions related to the storage and use of barbeques and gas canisters.

How is the review to be carried out:

Scope of the review

The review will focus on:

1. Fire risks

- How risks are reported
- How risks are assessed and responded to
- Risk assessments and how risks are managed
- The resources available to proactively manage risks
- The risks posed by takeaways and hazardous materials being located on the ground floor of blocks of flats
- The risks posed by the storage and use of barbeques and gas canisters, and if tenancy conditions are sufficient to control this risk.

2. The Capital Programme

- The fire safety works already carried out to council properties
- What fire safety works are scheduled to be carried out
- What fire safety features are not included in the capital programme and why
- How fire safety is considered when planning capital works
- How capital works are monitored to ensure that they are being carried out to the agreed specification
- How decisions are made which affect fire safety
- The resources for fire safety improvements

3. Emergency response arrangements

- Evacuation and re-housing plans
- How emergency plans are triggered and what these entail
- How vulnerable residents are incorporated into evacuation plans and how these plans are stored and accessed in the event of an emergency

4. Working with others

- The council's responsibilities in regards to PFI and TMO properties
- How the council works with Partners and TMOs on fire safety matters
- Partnership work between Housing Services, Emergency Planning, Local Authority Liaison Officers, and the London Fire Brigade
- How residents can raise fire safety concerns to the council
- How fire safety concerns are responded to
- The responsibilities of tenants and the responsibilities of leaseholders
- How fire risks and advice is communicated to residents

5. Compliance

- Compliance with fire safety, health and safety, and building control regulations
- Compliance with advice and guidance from the London Fire Brigade and others

Types of evidence

- Evidence from officers
- Evidence from the London Fire Brigade
- Evidence from independent experts on fire safety matters
- Feedback from residents
- Documentary evidence
- Scrutiny visit or other sessions as required

Additional information:

The review will not include a detailed scrutiny of the fire safety of particular housing blocks, as this is already being reviewed by the council's Housing Service in partnership with the London Fire Brigade.

The review will be carried out at the same time as the Grenfell Tower inquiry. The review will not directly consider the issues raised during the inquiry, but the inquiry is of significant interest to the Housing Scrutiny Committee and the implications arising from the inquiry's conclusions will be reported to the Committee in due course.

In carrying out the review the committee will consider equalities implications and resident impacts identified by witnesses. The Executive is required to have due regard to these, and any other relevant implications, when responding to the review recommendations.

Programme

Key output:	To be submitted to Committee on:
1. Scrutiny Initiation Document	17 July 2017
2. Draft Recommendations	16 November 2017
3. Final Report	11 December 2017

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Agenda Item 2

Housing Scrutiny Committee 2017/18

The Effectiveness of Housing Services Communications – Witness Evidence Plan

Overall aim: To review the effectiveness of Housing Service communications.

Committee Meeting – 4 September 2017		
Who / What	Organisation / Purpose	Other key information
Lynn Stratton, Deputy Head of Communication and Change	To provide the committee with a range of information on Housing Communications which will inform the review.	<p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a summary of previous communications reviews, • a summary of resident priorities, regular feedback and complaints • feedback received on specific communications issues, i.e. from the Housing Disability Panel • details of staff training, • details of how staff are supported in communicating (templates etc) • overview of current range of communications channels used by the service • a structure chart identifying key communications channels • how the quality of communications is evaluated, • What is the housing service's approach to making communications accessible to residents needing different formats? <p>To meet SID objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review the effectiveness of verbal, online and written communication channels; with residents, tenant and resident associations, and internally.
Lorenzo Heanue, Group Leader - Productivity & Compliance	To look in detail at how feedback and complaints are handled – to focus on the Repairs service as a case study of a front line service which receives a number of complex complaints	<p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of common complaints and feedback • How can feedback and complaints processes be improved • How can housing services resolve issues to avoid them being escalated <p>To meet SID objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review how Housing Services respond to and learn from feedback and complaints.

Evidence Gathering Session – Date TBC	
<p>Members of the Committee to interview residents on their priorities, preferences and experiences of housing communications.</p> <p>Findings of the Focus Group to be reported to the next Committee Meeting</p>	<p>To meet objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review the effectiveness of verbal, online and written communication channels; with residents, tenant and resident associations, and internally.

Committee Meeting – 3 October 2017		
Who / What	Organisation / Purpose	Other key information
<p>Representative of Partners for Improvement in Islington</p>	<p>Representative from Partners on how they communicate with residents</p>	<p>To meet objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review how the council can be assured that the council's contractors and their subcontractors are communicating with residents effectively.
<p>Roger Dunlop, Head of Design and Transformation, with support from Housing officers</p>	<p>To provide the Committee with an update on the council's online housing services; including website performance and accessibility, the effectiveness of online repairs reporting, the reasons for 'channel shift', how channel shift can be encouraged, and plans for the further development of online services.</p>	<p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web data and website performance information <p>To meet objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To evaluate the take-up of new electronic communication methods used by the Council's Housing Services, if these have been successfully implemented, and plans for any further 'channel shift'

Focus Group – Date TBC	
<p>Members of the Committee to interview staff from a range of front line services – Customer Services, housing Direct, caretakers, service ambassadors, repairs operatives, AHO staff, complaints teams, etc.</p> <p>Findings of the Focus Group to be reported to the next Committee Meeting</p>	<p>To meet objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess if internal processes and staff training are sufficient to achieve effective communication with residents.

Committee Meeting – 16 November 2017

Who / What	Organisation / Purpose	Other key information
Maxine Holdsworth, Service Director Housing Needs and Strategy	To provide a strategic insight into Housing Service communications and to respond to any specific issues raised in the course of the review	To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Principles and expectations of communication• Do housing services consider the 'bigger picture' when issues are raised by multiple residents, or are issues considered on an individual basis?
Christine Short, Head of Capital Programming	To provide evidence on how capital works contractors communicate with residents, and how the council could seek to influence this.	To meet objective: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To review how the council can be assured that the council's contractors and their subcontractors are communicating with residents effectively.
Paul Byer, Service Improvement and Involvement Manager	To provide the Committee with an update on any other matters raised during the course of the review.	

Key dates:

11 December 2017: Draft Recommendations

30 January 2018: Final Report

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SCRUTINY INITIATION DOCUMENT (SID) – DRAFT

Review: The Effectiveness of Housing Services Communications

Scrutiny Review Committee: Housing Scrutiny Committee

Director leading the review: Maxine Holdsworth, Service Director, Housing Needs and Strategy

Lead officer: Paul Byer, Service Development Manager
Lynn Stratton, Deputy Head of Communications and Change

Overall aim: To review the effectiveness of Housing Service communications

Objectives of the review:

- To review the effectiveness of verbal, online and written communication channels; with residents, tenant and resident associations, and internally.
- To assess if internal processes and staff training are sufficient to achieve effective communication with residents.
- To review how Housing Services respond to and learn from feedback and complaints.
- To evaluate the take-up of new electronic communication methods used by the Council's Housing Services, if these have been successfully implemented, and plans for any further 'channel shift'.
- To review how the council can be assured that the council's contractors and their subcontractors are communicating with residents effectively.
- To identify areas of good practice and how housing communications could be improved.

How is the review to be carried out:

Scope of the review

The review will focus on:

1. Ensuring the quality of communications
 - Internal communications, including communication between departments and with councillors
 - External communications to residents, including output from third party contractors
 - External communications to stakeholders such as TRAs
 - Communication processes – how are letters and other forms of written communication drafted
 - Staff training – what training is received?
 - How the quality of Housing Service communications is evaluated
 - How the service seeks to achieve consistency
 - Expectations of service communications

2. Feedback, complaints, and resident journeys
 - Examples of common complaints and feedback
 - How Housing Services learn from feedback and complaints
 - How can feedback and complaints processes be improved
 - How can housing services resolve issues to avoid them being escalated
 - Do housing services consider the 'bigger picture' when issues are raised by multiple residents, or are issues considered on an individual basis?
 - What barriers to communication do residents face, and how these can be overcome
3. The development of Housing Communications
 - How do residents prefer to be communicated with?
 - The effectiveness of new online communications methods (inc. repairs reporting)
 - The reasons for 'channel shift' and the benefits and costs of online services
 - Plans for the further development of online services
 - Can the take-up of online communications channels be encouraged?
 - If staff need additional support in communicating with residents

Types of evidence

- The results of previous reviews of communications
- Feedback received through resident surveys and engagement
- Complaints data
- Website data and website performance information
- Structure chart indicating key communication channels
- Examples of communications related complaints and casework
- Evidence from residents on their priorities, preferences, and experiences.
- Evidence from third parties, such as Partners
- Evidence on best practice
- Workshop for members and officers to jointly review how complaints have been handled, as well as other issues. This could take the form of a focus group with frontline staff such as customer services, Housing Direct, caretakers, service ambassadors, repairs operatives, AHO staff, and complaints teams.

Additional information:

In carrying out the review the committee will consider equalities implications and resident impacts identified by witnesses. The Executive is required to have due regard to these, and any other relevant implications, when responding to the review recommendations.

Programme

Key output:	To be submitted to Committee on:
1. Scrutiny Initiation Document	17 July 2017
2. Draft Recommendations	11 December 2017
3. Final Report	30 January 2018



Report of: Executive Member for Housing and Development

Meeting of	Date	Ward(s)
Housing Scrutiny Committee	4 th September 2017	All

Delete as appropriate	Exempt	Non-exempt
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SUBJECT: QUARTERLY REVIEW OF HOUSING PERFORMANCE (Q1 2017/18)

1. Synopsis

- 1.1. Each year the council agrees a set of performance indicators and targets which, collectively, help us to monitor progress in delivering corporate priorities and working towards our goal of making Islington a fairer place to live and work.
- 1.2. Progress is reported on a quarterly basis through the council's scrutiny function to challenge performance where necessary and to ensure accountability to residents.
- 1.3. This report sets out a progress update for those indicators related to Housing over the first quarter of 2017/18.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To note progress to the end of Quarter 1 against key performance indicators falling within the remit of the Housing Scrutiny Committee.

3. Background

- 3.1. The council routinely monitors a wide range of performance measures to ensure that the services it delivers are effective, respond to the needs of residents and offer good quality and value for money.

4. Quarter 1 update on Housing performance

- 4.1. This report contains an update on Housing indicators for Quarter 1.

Objective	Indicator	F r e q u e n c y	Q1 Actual Apr- June	Q1 Target Apr- June	Target 2017-18	On/Off target	Same period last year	Better than last year?
<i>Increase supply of and access to suitable affordable homes</i>	Number of affordable new council and housing association homes built	Q	0	53	328	Off	39	No
	Number of severely overcrowded households that have been assisted to relieve their overcrowding	Q	28	27	108	On	35	No
	Number of under-occupied households that have downsized	Q	24	41	163	Off	37	No
<i>Ensure effective management of council housing stock</i>	Percentage of LBI repairs fixed first time	M	84%	85.0%	85.0%	Off	84.6%	No
	Major works open over three months as a percentage of Partners' total completed major works repairs	M	7.3%	11%	11%	On	2.7%	No
	a) Rent arrears as a proportion of the rent roll - LBI	M	1.8%	2.0%	2.0%	On	1.8%	Same
	b) Rent arrears as a proportion of the rent roll - Partners	M	2.4%	N/A	N/A		2.4%	Same
<i>Reduce homelessness</i>	Number of households accepted as homeless	M	61	100	400	On	119	Yes
	Number of households in nightly-booked temporary accommodation	M	341	350	350	On	478	Yes

NB: Frequency (of data reporting): M = monthly; Q = quarterly

Increase supply of / access to affordable housing

- 4.2. The borough aims to provide 328 affordable homes in 2017/18. This is an increase from the previous target due to schemes slipping from 2016/17 and now due to complete in 2017/18.
- 4.3. The schemes at Ivy Hall, Blenheim Court and Bramber House were forecast to complete in Q1 of 2017/18 but have slipped into Q2, with Ivy Hall and Blenheim court completing in August 2017 and Bramber House due to complete in September 2017. Ivy Hall was primarily delayed due to further delays from the electrical supplier in connecting the supply.

Blenheim also had issues with service connection as well as further changes with the contractor's site staff. There have been further delays at Bramber House as Thames water have failed to make main water connections. Any lessons learnt are incorporated into the New Build Teams processes, for example, by updating the Employer Requirements or New Build Checklist.

- 4.4. It should be noted that the majority of the borough's affordable housing development is undertaken by housing associations and private developers, and as such, the council has limited influence over timescales for delivery. Risk of delay increases for schemes in their early stages so while schemes due to complete in a financial year are delayed into the following financial year, future schemes are also slipping back so the expectation should not necessarily be that the following year will see larger number of homes delivered.
- 4.5. However, the council is still on course to meet its corporate targets for affordable homes delivery and the council new build programme has seven schemes completing in 2017/18.

Effective management of council housing stock

- 4.6. The volume of major works over three months old as a % of Partners' total major works repairs has reduced from the last report to 7.3% up to the end of June 2017.
- 4.7. There are 22 major repairs over 3 months for Partners, the current status of which is identified as: 6 of the 22 work are now underway, whilst 11 of the 22 are still delayed as a result of legal processes associated with leaseholders (who can scrutinise proposed works under the section 20 process), planning requirements and Party Wall protocols (which need to be completed with neighbouring properties). The remaining repairs are delayed due to operational issues, such as problems arranging access to the property and difficulty accessing required materials.
- 4.8. The slight drop in first time fix for repairs is thought to be due to a tidying up of old jobs on the system (jobs complete practically but not shut down on the system) in preparation for the launch of the new OneServe IT system. Repairs volumes increases of around 10% year-on-year continue and are thought to be a combination of pent-up demand, weather-related issues and increased pressures on the housing stock. Efficiencies and doing more work in house rather than contracting out have to date largely absorbed the costs of this. Quarter two is likely to show worse performance due to IT disruption resulting from Office upgrades and the roll out of Office 365, which have severely hampered repairs delivery during that period. OneServe go-live was postponed for two weeks to 17 July following the Grenfell Tower incident and work pressures during that time. OneServe implementation does not seem to have impacted services on a measurable scale so far.
- 4.9. Rent arrears are at 1.80% against the rent roll, which is the same position as previous quarter last year. This shows a consistency in rent collection.
- 4.10. Income Recovery teams continue to contact and support tenants by referrals to our Partners and to utilise the Resident Support Scheme to assist tenants affected by welfare reform. Tenants affected by the new level of Benefit Cap introduced from 07.11.16 have now been re-triaged by the IMAX team to achieve exemption from the Benefit Cap or have been provided with assistance to help move into work. Tenants engaging with the IMAX team have been assisted with DHP payments. Non-engagement for council tenants is minimal.
- 4.11. We are pleased to maintain consistency of 1.80% against the target of 2.0%. This has been achieved against a background of an increasing number of Universal Credit cases and the reduced levels for the Benefit Cap cases.

4.12. The total rent arrears as a percentage of the rent roll for Partners managed stock increased a little in 2017-18 from 2.1 % at the end of Q4 to 2.4 % for Q1 some of this is due to the rent increase for tenants living in Partners' properties and some long term income recovery staff absences due to sickness. Partners are taking action to address these issues.

Reduce homelessness

4.13. The number of households accepted as homeless in the first quarter of this financial year are within target of less than 100 acceptances in the quarter. This is due to successful work in preventing and delaying homelessness that the service is undertaking as preparation for the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

4.14. The main reasons for homelessness in Islington continue to be due to the loss of private sector accommodation, being asked to leave accommodation by family or friends or leaving accommodation due to domestic abuse.

4.15. The high cost of private renting in Islington means that residents are no longer able to access the private rented sector as an alternative to making a homelessness application.

4.16. Our target for reduction in the numbers of households in nightly booked TA in Q1 2017/18 is 350. The target for the full financial year is to keep the number of households in nightly booked TA below 350. The target has been met in with a performance of 341 demonstrating continuous improvement against the year end figure of 350. The reasons for this successful reduction are down to implementation of our TA reduction strategy, which includes increased move on to permanent accommodation, and a more rigorous approach at the front end, to minimise TA bookings and homeless acceptances. This puts our number of households in Temporary Accommodation at its lowest since September 1998.

Appendices: None

Background papers: None

Final Report Clearance:

Signed by	24 August 2017
	Director of Property Services
		Date

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