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## **AGENDA FOR THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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Members of the Housing Scrutiny Committee are summoned to Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD - Islington Town Hall on, **20 January 2020 at 7.30 pm.**

Enquiries to : Ola Adeoye  
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Despatched : 10 January 2020

### Membership

Councillor Michael O'Sullivan (Chair)  
Councillor Sue Lukes (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Theresa Debono  
Councillor Troy Gallagher  
Councillor Mouna Hamitouche MBE  
Councillor Gary Heather  
Councillor Ben Mackmurdie  
Councillor Marian Spall  
Rose Marie McDonald (Resident Observer) (Co-Optee)  
Dean Donaghey (Resident Observer) (Co-Optee)

### Substitute Members

Councillor Vivien Cutler  
Councillor Osh Gantly  
Councillor Satnam Gill OBE  
Councillor Sara Hyde  
Councillor Jenny Kay  
Councillor Roulin Khondoker  
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

1 - 10

7. Public Questions

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>B. Items for Decision/Discussion</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. 2018/19 Mini Scrutiny Review ( Homelessness) - Presentation and Draft Recommendations	11 - 14
2. 2019/2020 Mini Scrutiny Review ( Private Rented Sector) - Presentation and witness evidence ( To Follow)	
3. Quarterly Review of Housing Performance ( Q2 - 2019/2020)	15 - 18
4. Work Programme 2019/20	19 - 20

**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** **Page**

**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 March 2020

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London Borough of Islington

## **Housing Scrutiny Committee - 25 November 2019**

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee held at Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD - Islington Town Hall on 25 November 2019 at 7.30 pm.

**Present:**      **Councillors:**      O'Sullivan (Chair), Debono, Hamitouche, Heather, McDonald (Co-Optee) and Donaghey (Co-Optee)

### **Councillor Michael O'Sullivan in the Chair**

**132      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)**

Apologies were received from Councillors Lukes, Gallagher, Mackmurdie and Spall.

**133      DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)**

There were no declarations of substitute members.

**134      DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Item 3)**

There were no declarations of interest.

**135      MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)**

Matters Arising:

A Member enquired if officers had received information from the Camden's Commercial Manager regarding responsive repairs and the criteria assessment used to determine which works to be brought back in house had been received. The clerk to look into this issue.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2019 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

**136      CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 5)**

The Chair welcomed members of the Housing Disability Panel to the meeting and in particular their contribution at future meetings.

The Chair reminded members of a number of forthcoming housing related events, details to be circulated to interested members, one of which is the Housing Construction event in Uxbridge on Friday where the Hackitt Review report will be discussed.

The Chair informed the meeting that the breakdown of the communal heating systems in Brooke House, Redbrick House and Spa Green had been brought to his attention, however he welcomed the news from Council Officers that this had now been resolved. The Chair mentioned that the item will be on the agenda for consideration at a future meeting in 2020 when all contractual matters have been fully resolved.

**137 ORDER OF BUSINESS (Item 6)**

The order of business would be as per the agenda.

**138 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 7)**

None

**139 RSL SCRUTINY : ISLINGTON SHOREDITCH HOUSING ASSOCIATION (Item B1)**

The Committee received a presentation from Ruth Davison, Chief Executive, Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association about its work, challenges and future plans as a landlord in the borough.

The following points were highlighted:

- Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association (ISHA) is committed to building homes of high quality where everyone irrespective of their background has the opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life. The meeting was informed that ISHA has developed many homes in the borough in partnership with developers and with Islington Council who, for example, recently provided a plot of land at the old Ashmount school site at a price which enabled ISHA to build 60 homes - 100 percent of which were social rent or shared ownership.
- Meeting was informed that ISHA has been in operation within the borough since 1933 and has presently 616 homes built for social housing, with presence in other neighbouring authorities such as Camden, Hackney and Haringey and outer boroughs such as Waltham Forest. Meeting was informed that half of ISHA homes have been built in the last 20 years and it continues to look for opportunities to grow and to build more houses. ISHA's Board is run by volunteers and staff and contractors are paid the London Living wage.
- Chief Executive informed members that in its pursuit to build and help others to build homes ISHA established the North River Alliance(NRA) 15 years ago, a development consortium of 11 small housing associations where both expertise and resources are shared and has over the years delivered 3,500 homes.
- Meeting was advised that ISHA continues to strive to be a good landlord, does not have starter tenancies; is committed to life tenancies; new homes and all re-lets are provided at social rents and importantly it does not carry

out affordability checks for social rented homes. In addition, homes are built with great space and high environmental standards.

- With regards to repairs and maintenance, ISHA endeavours to provide high quality service, however feedback from a recent STAR survey shows an overall satisfaction rate of just 60% which indicates that there is still room for improvement especially with its first time fixes. The Chief Executive assured members that ISHA is addressing this and that its analysis has recognised that although in general the service is good, there are issues of consistency and communication that need to be addressed.
- Ruth Davison informed the meeting that in its pursuit of being a good landlord to its residents, training is provided to all staff on a range of issues, both staff and contractors are now being held accountable and in extreme cases contracts were terminated due to service failure. ISHA continues to invest in stock and repairs and have been able to set new standards, which was co-created with residents at 'action days'.
- On the consultations held at St Mary's Path estate, Ruth Davison reminded members that on taking office, she made commitments that secure and assured tenants had the right to remain; that there would be no loss of social homes and no increase in rents for its residents.
- Ruth Davison informed the meeting that following the consultation ISHA has abided by the majority view and would not be demolishing any of the buildings on the estate, nor carrying out the refurbishment as consulted upon. It will now form a task and finish group to reach agreement on the scope of works.
- ISHA prides itself as being anchored in the community it serves, it remains the first housing authority to become a London Living Wage employer which is also applied to contractors that carry out work on behalf of the organisation. ISHA takes the issue of climate emergency seriously and its efforts have been recognised by winning the SHIFT Gold award for its activities. ISHA also provides tenancy sustainment & outreach & support services for its own residents and to Vietnamese residents more widely as it has a specialist outreach team.
- With regards to the future, the Chief Executive requested further assistance especially with the high value of land within the borough. In addition, the Chief Executive requested if the Council could consider changing the mortgage clause in the S106 agreements and adopt that which is agreed between the GLA and NHF as it will enable organisations borrow and build more affordable homes within the borough.
- Meeting was advised that ISHA has an Asset Strategy through which it carries out both its cyclical and responsive repairs to its properties investing over £2000 per household. ISHA does not utilise direct labour services in carrying out its repairs, but employs Mears as its contractor. In terms of gas safety checks, compliance and certificates, the services of an external

organisation is also employed. Meeting was advised that fire safety certificates of all its building blocks are published on the ISHA organisations website.

- On the issue of contracts, the meeting was informed that ISHA is in the position of looking at disaggregating its contracts so that it employs local contractors instead of being subjected to the OJEU rules in tendering or contracts.
- Members were advised that ISHA does not offer starter tenancy and that 75% of its nomination comes via the local authority with the remaining 25% reserved for management transfers to residents who are experiencing domestic abuse, harassment or have a medical condition.
- In response to overcrowding concerns in households, Ruth Davison informed the meeting that due to lack of capacity ISHA is unable to address this but continues to work in conjunction with Islington's Housing Needs Manager by signposting its residents to available support. Members were informed that a piece of work being carried out in conjunction with other housing associations to find suitable accommodation for tenants interested in downsizing will help alleviate the overcrowding issues in the borough.
- On monitoring of repairs and the quality of the work carried out, Ruth Davison acknowledged that the current practice of residents receiving text survey from contractors when works are completed is recognised as inadequate as evidence confirms that residents prefer either a physical visit or completing written questionnaires, hence the decision by ISHA to employ an officer to undertake the monitoring of repairs. The Chief Executive reiterated that the organisation has recognised the need to redefine what is termed first time fixes which is now easily understood by both the repair operatives and the residents.
- In response to a question about rents, meeting was advised that tenants pay affordable social rents and not sub-market rents which is sometimes described as affordable rents.
- On the question of whether the partnership arrangement with the Council has been beneficial to both parties, Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Housing acknowledged the arrangement especially in light of the scarcity of land and the authority is willing to work with similar small size community association to build high quality social housing homes for its residents.
- In response to a request for more information about the North River Alliance consortium and its efforts in building homes, the Chief Executive agreed to provide more details via the clerk of the committee. The Chair encouraged ISHA to liaise with officers about its community energy initiatives as it will be beneficial to its residents in terms of addressing fuel poverty and high energy

bills.

- In terms of community engagement and consultation, the meeting was advised that efforts are made to ensure participation of its residents and provides transport for vulnerable residents to such meetings.
- In response to a question from the Housing Disability Panel regarding smoke alarms, lack of consultation and its impact on deaf residents, the Director Housing and communities advised that specialist Council officers with specialism working with deaf will be able to share the products available for households with deaf people. On the concerns that blind residents could get stuck in lifts, The Director Housing and Communities indicated that although no solutions exists at present she indicated that she will be willing to meet HLP representatives to discuss the issues early in 2020.

The Chair on behalf of the Committee thanked the Chief Executive, Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association for her presentation, extending an invitation to ISHA to update committee on its future plans.

**140** **EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATIONS -12 MONTH REPORT BACK (Item B2)**

Paul Byer, Service Improvement and Involvement Manager updated Members on the progress of the recommendations in a report produced in May 2016 following the review undertaken by the Housing Scrutiny Committee on the effectiveness of Housing Services Communications.

In the discussion the following points were made -

- On Recommendation 1, to agree a code of communications for the Council's Housing Services, TMO's and Partners for improvement and contractors, Paul Byer advised that although Partners is responsible for improving its own communications within its organisation, the Council has granted Partners access to the Council's on-line Housing Library on the intranet which has Council guidance on documents such as Write First Time Toolkit, Writing Style Guidance, updated branding guidelines etc. In addition, TMO's have been sent the council's communications guidance and good practice information.
- With regards to Recommendation 2 & 7 which relates to improving complaints processes, the meeting was informed that a complaints improvement Action plan has been put in place to improve complaints handling in Property Services. In addition, the Repairs Customer Service Team have also been provided training on handling and dealing with difficult phone calls and the quality checking system for complaints responses from the team has also been reviewed.
- With regard to managing resident's complex responsive repairs, a named manager will be in place to deal with these type of complaints. Meeting was

also informed that a Property Services Complaints Resident Group has been set up. This is a forum for resident input into improving handling and improving how we learn from complaints. Changes have recently been made to the learning from complaints process within Property Services. Repair Group Leaders now have more timely information about complaints linked to their service area to improve performance.

- On Recommendation 4 and 6, making better use of communications, members were advised that protocol is in place with regards to the use of Electronic Notice Boards (ENB's) especially as they are now used to support corporate, community information and localised messages. Residents views have been taken on board so ENB's now display local information specific to their estate, job opportunities and training and community services for different groups.
- In response to Recommendation 5 and 10 which addresses out of date information and broken links on the Council website, the manager informed members that the Service has been able to put in place a well-established process for residents and staff to report issues about the information on the website or being able to query information that needs clarification with the communication team being able to monitor it regularly, investigate and address any anomalies. In addition, the meeting was informed that since 2019, the communications team is now responsible for managing the content on the website and will be working more closely with services to review and improve their pages.
- Members were reminded of the future legal requirement for content on the council website to be accessible to a wider range of people and those with disabilities such as blindness and low vision, deafness and hearing loss, limited movement, speech disabilities, photosensitivity and residents with learning disabilities and cognitive limitations.
- With regard to recommendation 15 which addresses the ability of caretakers and front line staff to report and follow up issues on behalf of residents, the meeting was advised that all caretakers have undertaken bespoke "Eyes and Ears" training which is designed to enable and empower staff to be vigilant, ask questions, build relationships and report issues to relevant teams where they have concerns. In addition, members were advised that the service has also developed a pilot " quick referral" process for caretakers and Estate Services if it recognises any immediate concern of residents welfare or where they feel someone may need a helping hand.
- Recommendation 16 addresses the online reporting system which was recently down. The new system has been re-launched, which allows residents to re-schedule and cancel appointments on-line.
- With regards to recommendation 19, making better use of bulk mailing to communicate information effectively to residents about council initiatives on

issues with the universal credit and SHINE, the meeting was informed that in the last two years, Homes and Communities have been making better use of the reverse of annual rent statements to include information and advice on property maintenance, tenancy management or promotion of early intervention services.

- In response to vulnerable resident's concerns that call centre staff not being aware of their details therefore causing delays to their repairs being carried out, Members were advised that a list for all its vulnerable residents exists which is updated weekly and available to Housing Incident Managers which can be shared if an out of hours crisis arises.
- Full implementation of the Power BI system is not in place yet. Property Services are working with Islington Digital Services to implement a new suite of IT reporting and monitoring dashboards. The Chair informed members that this IT issue will be considered at a future meeting.
- Meeting was informed that Islington Caretakers do a remarkable good job in maintaining the general outlook of their estates and in addition do replace light bulbs in communal areas. Caretakers tend to be the 'eyes and ears' and kept to date about issues around safeguarding, child and domestic abuse and missing children.
- In response to a question on if any caretaker duties had been outsourced, the meeting was advised that this would only occur in rare instances for example resolving complex electrical lighting issues.

Jo Murphy, Director Homes and Communities updated members of changes in the Service area within the last year. The following points were highlighted -

- Meeting was informed of the new leadership in place and the rebranding of the Service to Homes and Communities Service. Prior to the restructure, operations were based on a geographical north/south divide with the level of service provided to residents' dependent on the quality, calibre and availability of housing officers based in the area office.
- The Director advised members that prior to the restructure it was noticeable that operations was more process driven rather than resident engagement, however with the changes, officers are now in contact with residents, visit residents and carry out the necessary assessments. The Service has had to reframe how things are done in terms of council priorities of locality and partnership working.
- The Director informed the meeting that with the restructuring 90 management staff have had to reapply for their jobs and a reduction of 17 posts across the whole service area. The whole exercise has removed any duplication of roles and posts which were underutilised.

- Members were informed that what is in place is that when residents call in to report an issue relating to tenancy or estate management, they will receive a universal service which is manned by office based Housing officers who are well equipped to respond instead of being dealt with the customer service officers at call centres.
- The meeting was informed that although the focus will be through the telephone rather than person, housing officers will be expected to go out in the community and meet residents.
- In response to a question on the support available to residents who require more engagement; have complex needs or mental issues, the Director advised that this will be managed through the Intensive Tenancy Sustainment Team , who in engaging colleagues in other areas of the council such as Adult and Social Services and Housing Needs will provide a wrap-around services that will be required.
- Members were informed that the Service has recently recruited the services of an ex-Superintendent police officer, a social worker, anti-social behaviour officers and a specialist with experience working with elderly residents into the Intensive Tenancy Sustainment Team with a view that this new way of working would ensure that experience and skills of these specialist with some knowledge of housing issues would be beneficial to address a number of issues such as anti-social behaviour and behavioural issues. Members were advised that the Service is about to embark on a soft launch of this new way of working with residents especially with the significant changes in housing personnel with different roles and responsibilities which residents are not aware of.
- With regards to the evictions reported in the press, the Director Homes and Communities informed the meeting that this was not related to a council tenant but Partners and Improvement. The meeting was informed that where there is rent arrears there is support in place for residents that engage with officers however in the very difficult cases, the Council would have to pursue their evictions after court proceedings.
- In response to a question, the Director reassured members that the Council has in place strict safeguarding criteria in place which prevents vulnerable residents from being evicted.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

141

**WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20 (Item B3)**

**RESOLVED:**

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting ended at 9.35 pm

**CHAIR**

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Recommendations for consideration by Housing Scrutiny Committee 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Members of the committee will be aware that we did a scrutiny into homelessness last year and that we are awaiting recommendations from it.

We got evidence in committee from officers and from Islington Law Centre. Members of the committee visited or met with Streets Kitchen, Solace, councillor colleagues, St Mungo's, the Glasshouse temporary shelter, Dr Keen from Now Medical, the Streets Festival and Jubaa Somali organisation. The chair and vice chair are active professionally in the field and have had informal discussions and exchanges with many organisations and legal representatives particularly those concerned with legal rights, medical assessments, migrant issues (Sue is the migrant champion) and street homelessness. The chair also attended a seminar on homelessness run by Sarah Turley the outreach coordinator.

The vice chair met with Solace Women's Aid who shared details of several cases which caused them significant concern, involving women survivors of domestic violence with multiple needs. These were then shared in confidence with the Director and executive member for housing because they raised serious concerns about what had happened in these cases and how the borough works with key agencies

The recommendations we propose for the committee to approve are as follows. We have raised some concerns with relevant officers and their responses are noted below, but we propose that the committee pass the recommendations in any case in order to ensure that work on these issues progresses. This meeting is a chance for committee members to look at what is being proposed and comment on it. We welcome suggestions for amendments and additions. The committee will note that the scrutiny has already had some results, as can be seen by the officer responses.

Each recommendation is followed by a brief note explaining which we propose it and what has already been done on it.

**1. The council move forthwith to inhouse medical assessments for homelessness and housing applications.**

We were very concerned about how the assessments conducted by Now Medical have been the subject of many legal cases, often lost by the councils concerned because the assessments are not undertaken with knowledge of the person assessed or any personal contact. We are also concerned at the data provided by Now Medical which appears to show they spend very little time on these assessments which must affect their quality.

*Officer response: Following concerns raised at Housing Scrutiny we are looking at future options for delivering the housing medical assessments. This including consideration of employing a Housing Occupational Therapist who will carry out assessments – including home visits – on behalf of the service supplemented with assessments of mental health issues, where required in complex cases. It is hoped to start this new approach from Spring 2020*

**2. The relevant officers look at arrangements for liaison, communication and coordination with voluntary sector agencies and how multi agency working is functioning in the borough in relation to homelessness**

The discussions with Solace revealed major concerns about how their staff perceived liaison with council officers.

*Officer response: Co-ordination with voluntary sector agencies – Islington Homelessness Forum*

*Islington has a well-established Homelessness Forum which has been running for over ten years; MHCLG attended a meeting earlier this year and sited the forum as a model of good practice for authorities. Attendees include local and national rough sleeping services, housing providers, council teams, and voluntary sector organisations.*

*The last meeting included a presentation on psychologically informed environments and from Homeless Link. The focus of the forum is on information sharing - inviting speakers from different agencies to come along and discuss their work in order to facilitate referrals and networking between the attendees.*

*Our intention is to continue to grow the Homelessness Forum.*

**3. The Director look at the specific failures identified in the Solace cases and identify whether and how the guidance and procedures in use need to change.**

We were very concerned about how these very vulnerable women had found it difficult to access the services they needed

*Officer response: Domestic Abuse*

*Since the scrutiny Housing Needs have met with Solace Women's Aid to look at how we can work better together. Clearer information about how issues with individual cases can be escalated to managers in the housing needs team have been shared with Solace, a team structure and named contacts in Housing Needs have been shared. The importance of early identification and sharing of all pertinent information by Solace was also established to enable better outcomes for clients.*

*The Housing Department is preparing for DAHA accreditation for both our Tenancy Services and Housing Needs services which will lead to service improvements.*

*Housing Needs staff are scheduled to attend a rolling program of training sessions specific to domestic abuse; the training available to staff has been reviewed following issues raised during the scrutiny around how staff treat victims of domestic abuse. Current training available to all staff in housing needs includes:*

*Stalking and harassment- to raise awareness of stalking and harassment and how it impacts survivors, and empower staff to better support residents experiencing these things*

*MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)- This covers an understanding MARAC as part of a multi-agency response to domestic abuse, how to refer into MARAC, how to present a case at MARAC, and taking follow up actions from MARAC and safety planning*

*Perpetrator briefings- This covers an introduction to work with perpetrators, giving participants an understanding of perpetrator behaviour and how perpetrator programmes engage and support perpetrators to address abusive behaviours, as well as practical strategies to help manage interactions with perpetrators.*

*Dynamic Abuse- This training focusses on understanding dynamics of abuse in LGBT relationship by exploring domestic abuse in gay, lesbian and transgender relationships or*

*abuse where survivor and abusers are not intimate partners but a blood family, step-family or in laws.*

**4. The Director review staff training, knowledge and understanding in key areas of dealing with survivors of domestic abuse and those with multiple needs**

See above

**5. The Chief Executive liaise with relevant directors to ensure that the proposed localities initiative takes the lessons learned from this scrutiny and from housing first into account in its design**

The localities initiative seeks to make the focus of council services the person concerned rather than potentially siloed services. We believe that some of the best homelessness prevention and housing first work done by the borough can inform this well

**6. Relevant officers should report to the committee on current arrangements for cross borough and pan London cooperation in relation to homelessness**

The issues about rough sleeping at Finsbury Park and Kings Cross illustrate how it is impossible to deal effectively with this problem on a single borough basis. The borough also places homeless households outside the borough, and although there are significant efforts to reduce this, it still needs good liaison with the boroughs involved.

**7. Housing Scrutiny Committee should insist that housing associations being scrutinised provide information about what they are doing to help prevent and deal with homelessness and why, if relevant, they are doing so little.**

We were concerned that we got very little evidence of the role these major providers of social housing play in dealing with homelessness, and believe that the committee can provide a point where this information is collated and may also inspire or shame some into doing more

**8. The committee request that the Director respond to it with details of all targets set for officers dealing with homelessness, the rationale for them and what is known about the effects of them**

It is the belief of some voluntary sector and legal focused organisations that boroughs have targets for reducing the numbers of homelessness applications. We have raised this with officers but not yet got a response. We are concerned that such targets reduce the ability of officers to respond appropriately to applications and individuals and are inappropriate given that the causes of homelessness in the borough are largely structural.

**9. Councillors should campaign actively to end Universal Credit and replace it with proper social security system that supports people rather than penalising them, and should consider other campaigns that tackle the root causes of homelessness.**

Given that the causes of homelessness in the borough are largely structural and out of the council's control it is incumbent on us as councillors to speak truth to power and try to eliminate the causes of homelessness if we can





Housing Directorate

222 Upper Street, London, N1 1XR

Report of: Executive Member for Housing & Development

<b>Meeting of</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Ward(s):</b>
Housing Scrutiny Committee	20 <sup>th</sup> January 2020	All

Delete as appropriate	Exempt	Non-exempt
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## **SUBJECT: QUARTERLY REVIEW OF HOUSING PERFORMANCE (Q2 2019/20)**

### **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. At the end of Quarter 2, all 13 of the Housing performance indicators were better than, or level with, the profiled targets for this point of the year.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. To note progress to the end of Quarter 2 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 2 update on Housing performance**

- 4.1. This report contains an update on Housing indicators at the end of Quarter 2

Objective	PI No.	Indicator	Frequency	Q2 Actual	Q2 Target	Target 2019/20	On/Off target	Same point last year	Better than last year
<i>Increase supply of and access to suitable affordable homes</i>	H1	Number of genuinely affordable new homes (social rented or shared ownership) completed by the Council	Q	39	39	96	On	35	Yes
	H2	Number of genuinely affordable new homes (social rented or shared ownership) completed by Developers	Q	78	78	315	On	164	No
	H3	Number of planning permissions agreed for new council housing	Q	0	0	3	On	10	No
	H4	Total number of new council homes (net growth taking into account new homes and homes sold through right to buy)	Q	20	20	41	On	35	No
	H5	Number of severely overcrowded households assisted to relieve their overcrowding	M	77	75	150	On	70	Yes
	H6	Number of under-occupied households that have downsized	M	92	80	160	On	86	Yes
<i>Ensure effective management of council housing stock</i>	H7	Percentage of LBI repairs fixed first time	M	87.0%	85.0%	85.0%	On	80.7%	Yes
	H8	Major works open over three months as a % of Partners' total completed major works repairs	Q	14.6%	15.0%	15.0%	On	11.0%	No
	H9	Rent arrears as a proportion of the rent roll - LBI	M	3.4%	3.75%	3.75%	On	2.5%	No
	H10	Rent arrears as a proportion of the rent roll - Partner properties	M	3.0%	3.25%	3.25%	On	3.2%	Yes
<i>Reduce homelessness</i>	H11	Number of households accepted as homeless	M	169	200	400	On	90	No
	H12	Number of households in nightly-booked temporary accommodation	M	368	370	350	On	370	Yes
	H13	Number of street homeless supported into accommodation	Q	60	22	45	On	8	Yes

Note: H8, H9, H10, H12 are end of month snapshots.

## **Increase supply of and access to affordable housing**

- 4.2. Thirty-nine affordable new homes were completed this quarter, as anticipated.
- 4.3. Seventy-eight affordable new homes have been completed by developers in Islington, so far this year. This figure is below the same period last year, as anticipated given the current schedule. It is anticipated that 315 will be completed by the end of the year.
- 4.4. No planning permissions were agreed for new Council housing; this is in line with expectation.
- 4.5. Overall, the number of new Council homes has increased by 20 this year, after accounting for homes sold through right to buy. This number is expected to double by the end of the year.
- 4.6. 37 severely over-crowded households were assisted to relieve their overcrowding this quarter. So far this year, the activity exceeds both the profiled target and the team's position at the same point last year.
- 4.7. 92 under-occupying households have been supported to downsize this year, including 40 in the past quarter. Again, this is ahead of the profiled target for this point in the year (80), and our position at the same point last year (86).

## **Effective management of council housing stock**

### Housing Repairs

- 4.8. Repairs performance has continued to improve, from 85.4% at the end of the previous quarter to 87.0% at the end of this quarter. This is significantly better than the same point last year, where satisfaction was at 80.7%.

### Partners' Repairs

- 4.9. Major repairs are more complex repairs carried out by Partners often of higher value and are often delayed by requirements such as Leaseholder consultations, scaffolding works, building control consultation and the issue of party wall notices. It is not possible to deliver 100% of major repairs within the 3 months due to statutory timescales however, Partners aim to keep the number of works exceeding 3 months to a minimum and monitor those exceeding the 3-month period. These repairs are monitored separately as they are not included in the measure of the resident satisfaction for day to day repairs.
- 4.10. At present, 14.6% (12 out of 82) of major works have been open for more than three months.
- 4.11. The remaining repairs are delayed due to a range of reasons, including:  
Works in progress; Access issues; Authorisation; Section 20 consultation/challenge process; Building Control/Conservation/Planning; Third Party delay/Legal process/Disrepair/party wall and utility companies' issues; Temporary move/decant required; Works completed but awaiting post inspections.

### Rent Income Collection

- 4.12. Rent arrears have continued to slowly increase, from 3.2% of the total rent roll at the end of June 2019 to 3.4% at the end of September. However, this is still below the profiled target for this point in the year.
- 4.13. This increase is mostly driven by the continued roll-out of Universal Credit in the borough. This pattern has been seen in a number of other London boroughs as well.
- 4.14. To mitigate the effects of Universal Credit we have opened a UC helpdesk at 222 to offer support to residents.
- 4.15. Collection has also been slowed by delays in the court system, making it harder to gain eviction orders and start recovery proceedings.
- 4.16. The switchover to Universal Credit is having a smaller impact on PFI's rent arrears, because they have a slightly different resident mix. PFI managed properties are contractually required to achieve an annual rent collection rate of within 1% of Islington Council's. If they do not achieve these targets they are subject to financial penalties. At present, PFI's rent arrears are 3.0%, slightly lower than the same point last year.

## **Reduce homelessness**

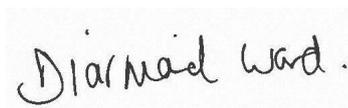
- 4.17. The number of households accepted as homeless is slightly below the profiled target.

- 4.18. The current figure of 169 is above the equivalent position last year, which is as expected given that the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act last April slowed down processing of cases through the first part of last year.
- 4.19. The HRA has also introduced a greater burden on Councils to prevent or relieve homelessness without households needing to be accepted for statutory homelessness. Successful work by the team has helped to keep the number of acceptances below target.
- 4.20. We have seen an increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018. The length of stay in temporary accommodation has increased due to the Act's requirements in terms of deferred decision-making and the extra client liaison required.
- 4.21. However, the team has successfully worked to reduce the number of households in nightly-booked accommodation. This indicator is down from 397 at the end of June 2019 to 368 at the end of September.
- 4.22. This quarter, the team has supported 32 rough sleepers in to accommodation, in addition to 28 in the first quarter. This already puts us ahead of the annual target of 45, and level with last year's annual total of 60.

**Appendices:** None

**Background papers:** None

Final Report Clearance:



Signed by .....

DATE

Corporate Director of Housing

Report collated by: David Clifford, Principal Public Health Intelligence Specialist, Public Health, with input from relevant leads in the Housing Directorates.

## HOUSING ON SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### SCRUTINY TOPICS AND WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

#### **20 JANUARY 2020**

- 1) Quarterly Review of Housing Performance (Q2 2019/20)
- 2) Mini Scrutiny Review – Draft Recommendations ( Homelessness)
- 3) Mini Scrutiny Review Private Rented Sector: Witness Evidence
- 4) Work Programme 2019/20/20

#### **3 MARCH 2020**

- 1) Partners for Improvement - Presentation
- 2) Annual Executive Member Presentation and Quarterly Review of Housing Performance (Q3 2019/20)
- 3) 2018/2019 Mini Scrutiny Review ( Homelessness) – Final Report
- 4) Scrutiny Review: Draft Recommendations

#### **28 APRIL 2020**

- 1) Scrutiny Review: Draft Report
- 2) Work Programme 2019/20

#### **23 JUNE 2020**

- 1) Scrutiny Review: Final Report
  - 2) Work Programme
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