

Recommendation Number	Housing Scrutiny recommendations from the overcrowding strategic review 2023/2024	Actions/Progress	RAG rating	Timeframe
1	Housing Services to undertake a comprehensive Tenancy and welfare audit of all its housing stock with a view of identifying overcrowding, under occupiers, and victims of domestic abuse etc. this is currently being trialled in Halton Mansions	Pilots completed, with evaluation completed and attached to this report. These audits to commence once the Housing management restructure is in place.	Amber	To commence in November 2024
2	Committee recommend that Housing Services rigorously promote issues around existing incentives for under occupiers such as mutual exchanges, that financial incentives be reviewed, - The downsizing scheme to receive a comprehensive review and the outcome of this review to be reported to the November 2023, Housing Scrutiny Committee. The council will also conduct regular sessions/ briefings/community drop-in sessions to promote downsizing and mutual exchanges to address overcrowding	<p>Review completed as part of the strategic review and incentive payments increased, plus the housing allocations scheme changed to promote estate under-occupied moves and one additional officer to be appointed.</p> <p>The new housing allocations scheme to be launched April 2024. Recruitment to the additional position commenced.</p> <p>Increase in incentive payments and new promotion material to be launched March 2024</p> <p>Drop ins to promote the under-occupation scheme planned for Spring 2024 and on-going.</p> <p>Incentives and removal payment increased: Increase from £500 to £1000* per bedroom released example: 3-2 or 2-1 £2000* per bedroom released where all</p>	Green	Completed April 2024 and on-going

		<p>household members are over 65 and releasing 3 or more bedrooms example: 4-1 * the above is subject to a clear rent account (rent arrears will be deducted from grant and balance paid to the tenant via bacs) Removals incentive increased from £500 to £750</p> <p>New scheme launch letter sent to all existing downsizers Council tenants highlighting new scheme (end of March 2024) and the new Allocations letter that went out to all tenants with points breakdown. Both letters prompted many downsizers to contact us.</p> <p>New leaflet produced/Website updated/downsizing mailbox set up (April 2024).</p> <p>New Scheme Information provided to Communications for insert in the Council's Housing Matters Bulletin.</p> <p>Officers have been giving briefing to colleagues and other departments on downsizing scheme – housing options; Homes and Communities and PFI and have date set for briefing session with AgeUK</p> <p>First option day delivered on 24 April to downsizing and our overcrowded Council tenants. For our future</p>		
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		<p>events we will be joining Estate Champion event dates and sending out our own flyers to selected downsizers/overcrowded tenants within the local area. This will be more attractive to tenants as other services available at the same event.</p> <p>Not a lot of interest shown from downsizers to consider Smartmove mutual exchange, but I feel the Allocation policy change around the Council stepping in with a void property to complete the exchange chain might help gain interest.</p> <p>new under occupation officer joins us on 13 May. And cover for MD's maternity-leave scheduled to start on 3 June.</p> <p>We have data on Council tenants effected by bedroom tax and will be targeting this group for promotion of unoc scheme.</p> <p>Downsizers will have a named officer to support them through the process.</p> <p>Sheltered housing, SSCH and other mobility schemes including MX is highlighted on downsizing web pages and these options are discussed with relevant tenants at contact.</p>		
3	Complete review of the housing allocation scheme by	Completed and approved on the 20 th of July 2023 Executive	Green	New Housing Allocations

	making sure we are addressing that needs as it is clear that there are thousands of people who are living in overcrowded accommodation but not on the housing register - what fits on the local estate or local community	meeting.		scheme launched April 2024
4	Council will build larger 4–5-bedroom accommodation	Discussion continuing with the new build team to prioritise the development of 4- and 5-bedroom properties. The purchase of ex right to buy properties to also focus on the purchase of 4- and 5-bedroom properties. Since the 19 th of October 2023, when the Executive approved the ex-right to buy property purchase programme 4 x 4 ex right to buy properties have been purchased or exchange conducted.	Amber	This matter was also referenced in the New Build Scrutiny conducted during 2023/2024. The service completed the purchase of 10 Ex Right to Buy 4 bedroom properties since 19 th October 2023 and will shortly the purchase of a further 5 x 4 bedroom properties.
5	Working with the GLA and DLUH&C to try and develop /design a scheme that allows LA to access funds because at the moment it is possible to buy properties to accommodate people from Afghanistan and	Discussions on-going	Amber	On-going

	Ukraine but there is no grant that helps addressing overcrowding residents and rehousing them.			
6	Adopt a communication plan across the council, i.e., children services - simple tips on how to address overcrowding	It is aimed this communications plan will commence from February 2024, with the support of the Corporate Communications team.	Amber	August 2024
6	Committee should consider reviewing its tall building policy, in the long term – not just building on existing top of roof tops	On-going communications continuing with all departments across the council and progress to be reported during May 2024.	Amber	September 2024
8	Increase in supply of 4- and 5-bedroom properties for families in need of larger homes using all means possible	The promotion of the under-occupation scheme to commence in March 2024. The promotion of the purchase of ex right to buy 4- and 5-bedroom properties conducted in November 2023. Drop-in sessions to focus on under-occupation moves planned for the Spring 2024.	Amber	On-going
9	Collaborating more with community groups to promote advocacy services within all communities, to enable all sections of society to benefit from the council's positive work in this area	Partnership newsletter produced for all partner and community groups. Promotion material to be provided to all community and partner agencies in March 2024. Council wide community newsletter to focus on under-occupation incentives and helping hand framework to move from the Spring 2024.	Green	On-going
10	Explore alternative schemes – GLA, seaside and community home scheme for those	This work is on-going and promoted to all residents overcrowded and under-occupying Islington Council and	Green	On-going

	over fifty-five	Housing Association homes. Schemes are already promoted on our housing leaflets and application forms and website. SSCH average 150-200 vacancies a year and available to all Greater London tenants with priority to downsizing tenants. Very few vacancies, Islington average 4-6 moves a year . HomefinderUK also have options for sheltered accommodation in many locations and all schemes are advertised and promoted to our tenants.		
11	Council in its partnership with RSL's assist in identifying more voids /abandoned homes	This has been promoted with the new Housing Association partnership agreement and discussed at the Housing Association liaison meetings.	Green	On-going
12	As statutory overcrowding is difficult to address, the Council lobby and liaise with GLA on redefining the Overcrowding standards as they are long overdue for a change.	These discussions are continuing.	Amber	On-going
13	Council should address issues of language barriers as this may hinder under occupiers' residents and especially those who do not engage in mutual swaps	Partnership work with all community based voluntary sector and faith organisations are continuing. Community language translation services offered to all residents.	Green	On-going
14	In response to evidence from Islington law centre, indicated that Islington residents do not meet the council's adverse threshold to bid for larger properties. –	Analysis to be completed for the 2023/2024 financial years activities and the results presented to the Housing Scrutiny committee in June 2024.	Amber	August 2024

	Conduct detailed annual analysis for those accommodated through the Choice Based Lettings scheme and amend policies accordingly to ensure overcrowded households are rehoused as an equal proportion of those on the housing register.			
15	When a void property which is a 3-, 4- or 5-bedroom property these properties should be fast tracked through the voids process	Voids performance to be reported to the April 2024 Housing Scrutiny committee as agreed at the February 2024 Housing Scrutiny Committee	Red	June 2024
16	Undertake right size moves on our estates to promote a series of chain lettings to increase lettings locally and reduce overcrowding.	This was launched in April 2024 when the new housing allocations scheme approved on the 20 th of July 2023 Executive meeting will be launched.	Green	April 2024 and on-going
17	During the community drop-in sessions, the council seeks the views of residents on how to improve services to people who are overcrowded, or under-occupying properties and the council then produces policies and procedures considering this feedback	This was completed at the 2023 60 Community Drop-in sessions, and this will continue going forward with the results of this work considered at the November 2024 Housing Scrutiny Committee. Allocation policy change to support chain moves by offering property to complete the chain. 'Smartmove MX' promoted to our downsizing tenants. So far little interest shown by downsizing tenants to consider MX. But the change in policy may help to make this more attractive to downsizers.	Green	On-going
18	The council empowers residents	On-going and to be promoted through the	Amber	On-going

	through the resident empowerment framework to help the council to develop new ways of working to address overcrowding.	tenancy audit work, community drop in work and the resident's empowerment framework. Overcrowding advisor offers support and signposts severely overcrowded tenants to other services, offers space saving furniture		
19	The council designs a seamless service offer between Health, Adult Social Care, Housing, and Children's services to ensure we address overcrowding, damp and mould, education attainment and health improvements for people living in overcrowded households	Regular liaison meetings conducted with Housing, Adult Social Care, Health, Children's services now taking place to promote positive partnership work and outcomes.	Green	On-going
20	The council develops data platforms across the council to capture a holistic approach to benefit residents who are overcrowded, and this ensures services are developed using this data and empowering residents to influence the way we work.	Working with Adult Social Care and Health to develop this platform. Progress to be reported to the Housing Scrutiny Committee in the summer of 2024.	Amber	Summer 2024