



TOWNS & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

16th December 2020

Subject Heading:

Housing Strategy

Board Lead:

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SUMMARY

The Council remains committed to doing everything we can to tackle the 'Housing Crisis' both in providing those much needed new affordable homes for local people in Havering and supporting vulnerable members of society to have a home that they can be proud to live in.

"Whether you live in a council home, rent privately, or own your own home, we understand people deserve to live in a place that they love."

Cllr Damian White, Leader of Havering Council

Current Housing Strategy covered a successful period of delivering valuable services to our residents, but now we need a new one to take into account the ever-changing environment.

Havering, like many local authorities, faces huge challenges not only in housing but also in social care, health and other public services. Councils' are under vast pressure to deliver excellent services at a time of increasing demand and financial restriction. This challenge is ever more demanding when we take into account the potential impact on the Council from the covid-19 pandemic!

However building new homes remains a high priority to meet the needs of our fast growing population in Havering. The Council is taking a pro-active approach to housing delivery, as it recognises the importance of ensuring that there is the necessary provision of genuinely affordable homes for local people.

We are doing this by working with partners to build new homes, with an ambitious 12 estates regeneration programme across existing Council estates to revitalise Havering's Housing and investing in building new communities.

Alongside our existing ambitious regeneration plans for Havering, we will set out our vision for those living in Council managed new and existing homes within the borough, and how we will work with local residents to shape sustainable communities, future proofing for the next five years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We are proposing that Havering Council deliver a new Housing Strategy to set out the strategic aims of Housing for the 5-year period 2021–26. This strategy will form

part of a joined up approach to tackling the housing challenges for all residents of Havering.

As part of the overall development of the strategy, it is recommended that the **Towns and Communities O&S committee input into the vision and draft objectives of the proposed Housing Strategy and consider the plans for consultation and proposed timetable.**

REPORT DETAIL

Our approach to developing a Housing Strategy

Councillor Joshua Chapman, Cabinet Member for Housing, says about the vision for a new Housing Strategy:

“Our ambition is to foster a positive culture that runs through our service with a commitment to engaging with our tenants and leaseholders across Housing – We understand that ‘home is where the heart is’ - It’s not just about the bricks and mortar, (although that is important), it’s also about how residents ‘feel’ about living in their home and local community.”

The Housing Strategy will define what ‘affordable’ housing actually means in a Havering context, based on: legislation, national and local government guidance and best practice, local and national demographic information, as well as changes to the planning regulations, and the review of the Local Plan and the GLA – revised London Plan.

Working with London Boroughs of Redbridge and Newham, we have commenced a new Joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and Housing Needs Assessment. This will help direct robust cross-departmental housing strategies for the Boroughs, aimed at addressing local housing requirements. The study will also provide the analytical framework to inform Havering’s objective assessment of housing need.

The Housing Strategy will set out our proposed solutions to what type of housing is needed in our borough and how new housing relates to infrastructure planning and ‘place-making’, so making that crucial link with Social Care, Health care, Education and Employment, mental health and wellbeing of those living in our homes.

As a social landlord, Housing Services has a distinct responsibility to those living in Council managed homes. So Housing Services needs to focus on preserving and enhancing the borough’s valuable assets i.e. existing Council homes, but we also care about those living in our homes and their aspirations for the future.

We have just completed an extensive stock investment survey and will be developing an Asset Management Strategy that will sit alongside the Housing Strategy and inform residents about our programmes to invest in managing and maintaining Council homes over the coming years.

Other Housing documents will also contribute to delivery of the commitments contained within the new Housing Strategy: so a Supported Housing Strategy and our new Prevention of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, will be key to achieving that holistic approach to Housing in Havering, along with the Council’s Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

In order to produce a corporately owned document, it is important that the strategy be developed in conjunction with wider Council partners including Public Health, Adult Services, Children’s Services, Regeneration, Planning and Environmental

Services.

The Cabinet Member for Housing has indicated that the strategy should focus on four key priorities that will seek to enhance the lives of all our residents and drive our service delivery in Housing Services.

It is proposed that the underpinning principle to the new Housing Strategy remain a commitment to a borough that is **Cleaner, Safer, Prouder, Together.**

A presentation on the draft vision and objectives for the Housing Strategy was made to:

- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Housing Resident Participation Panel on 17 November 2020
- Elected Members 18 November 2020
- Health & Wellbeing Board 25 November 2020

Following this consultation, we have made some amendments to the original draft objectives previously submitted and this will form basis for further consultation with stakeholders and residents in December to February 2021.

We are proposing four statements of intent or 'aims', under which will sit the greater detail around our commitments to deliver the Housing Strategy objectives. An action plan will be included in the final draft, based on responses received as part of informal and formal consultation.

Statement of Housing's Aims to:

Aim 1: Deliver more genuinely affordable homes that meet the needs of Havering residents.

Priority objective: **We will –**

- *Work together with a wide range of partners to deliver the mix of homes that Havering needs.*
- *Aim to build 3,500 new homes, of which 50% will be affordable.*
- *Engage borough residents on our regeneration plans to ensure their views are considered – we want to build new homes for local people, whilst also creating sustainable communities where people want to live.*

Aim 2: Maintain good quality homes, prioritising safety and environment.

Priority objective: **We will –**

- *Make best use of new and existing homes, ensuring Council residents have a safe, secure and well maintained that is environmentally sustainable.*
- *We want Havering residents to be proud of their homes and neighbourhoods, ensuring that quality and safety is a priority for all our Council managed homes.*
- *Working with communities to develop improved environments for people to live in.*
- *Involve and engage with tenants and leaseholders in making sure that their homes, communities and environment are clean, safe and community-focused places.*
- *Work with the private housing sector to improve the quality and safety of the*



housing stock.

Aim 3: Support existing and future residents to live independently and well.

Priority objective: **We will –**

- *Prevent homelessness and end long term rough sleeping in the borough by providing pathways into appropriate housing and support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, to improve their opportunity to find a settled home.*
- *Work with our partners to actively support the improved **health and wellbeing** of our residents.*
- *Champion early intervention so that people in Havering can feeling included and supported to live independent lives.*
- *Support residents with a vulnerability by helping with housing related health and wellbeing initiatives across the Council, and within our Supported and Sheltered Housing.*

Aim 4: Deliver good quality housing services for all residents.

Priority objective: **We will –**

- *Communicate, engage and work in partnership with residents to ensure that in any interactions with Havering Housing Services, and the wider Council, residents are satisfied that we are delivering an excellent customer service.*
- *We will treat residents respectfully and be open and transparent with information, removing barriers to communication and engagement.*
- *We will also liaise with other borough landlords – private sector, housing associations, owner-occupiers – to ensure we provide good local information to all residents so they are aware of initiatives relating to their homes and communities.*
- *We will foster a culture of respect, understanding and respecting the needs of tenants and leaseholders, especially those with vulnerability.*

We would welcome discussion on whether these aims and objectives are the right ones to steer this important strategy and if there are any further objectives that should be considered.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

As part of the project delivery plan, we will be maintaining a risk register. At present the main risks identified are:

- Changes in National legislation: -
 - MHCLG has published its **Charter For Social Housing Residents** (Social Housing White Paper) 17 November 2020. The commitments in this long awaited document will need to be embedded into the Strategy. Particularly around changes to the Social Housing Regulator and Housing Ombudsman.
 - Changes to the planning system (Planning White Paper 2020) – which may lead to revisions to the ‘standard method’ for calculating the housing need minimum target for a local planning authority.



- Housing Strategy being defined solely in terms of building homes – Regeneration is an important part of the strategy in creation of sustainable communities.
- Lack of potential buy-in from private sector landlords and/or Housing Associations.
- Emphasis on linking to Havering residents' health and wellbeing as a way to support vulnerable residents living in our Council managed homes.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Draft project delivery plan timetable

The Housing Strategy and Service Development team is leading on the research and development of the new Housing Strategy and have proposed a project delivery plan based on five key stages, (the sixth being implementation), as below.

Council residents and other stakeholders will play a key role in feeding back their opinions throughout the development of the strategy. Although we have proposed formal resident consultation on the strategy vision and draft objectives takes place from December 2020 – February 2021, we have already commenced informal consultation with Tenants and Leaseholders and stakeholders. We will be keeping all stakeholders updated at each stage as to progress with strategy development against the milestones of the project plan.

Stage 1 - Evidence base development	Stage 2 - Scoping document	Stage 3 - Stakeholder Engagement & Strategy development	Stage 4 - Strategy final drafting	Stage 5 - Cabinet Approval Process	Stage 6 - Implementation and monitoring
2 weeks period / 26 Oct.2020 – 8 Nov. 2020	2 week period / 9 – 22 Nov. 2020	12 week period / 30 Nov. 2020 – 21 Feb. 2021	4 week period / 22 Feb. 2021 – 21 March 2021	10 week period / 22 March 2021 – 30 May 2021	June 2021 – ongoing
Including benchmarking, ONS data, locally held data (e.g. 'This is Havering' report).	Including: Project Plan, Project Tasks to Senior Mgt and Member for Housing.	Including: Director and staff Workshops, Public Consultation, Stakeholder Meetings.	Including reconciling outcomes of Stakeholder Engagement with Lead Member for Housing's vision.	Including: 'Theme Board' and Lead Member Final Briefings.	Including: monitoring of the action plan/ 'SMART' actions. Reporting and annual reviews.