

HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 12 July 2017 at 6.30 p.m.

701, 1st Floor, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London,
E14 2BG

This meeting is open to the public to attend.

Members:

Chair: to be appointed

Vice-Chair: to be appointed

Councillor Dave Chesterton, Councillor Rabina Khan, Councillor Gulam Robbani,
Councillor Andrew Wood, Councillor Helal Uddin and Councillor Shiria Khatun

Substitutes:

Councillor Marc Francis, Councillor John Pierce, Councillor Rajib Ahmed and Councillor
Chris Chapman

Co-opted Members:

Moshin Hamim

Leaseholder Representative

Anne Ambrose

Tenant Representative

[The quorum for this body is 3 voting Members]

Contact for further enquiries:

Anthony Jackson, Committee Services Officer
Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG
Tel: 020 8364 5554
E-mail: anthony.jackson@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Web: <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk>

Scan this code for
an electronic
agenda



Public Information

Attendance at meetings.

The public are welcome to attend meetings of the Committee. However seating is limited and offered on a first come first served basis.

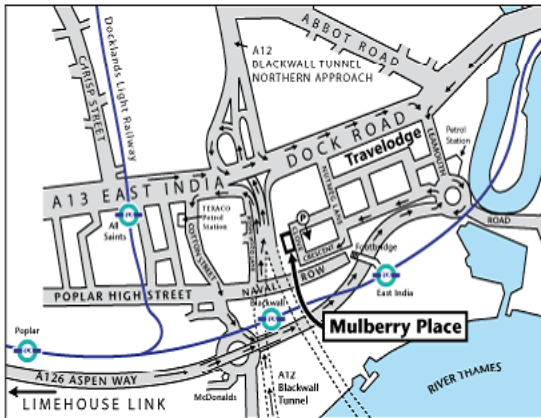
Audio/Visual recording of meetings.

Should you wish to film the meeting, please contact the Committee Officer shown on the agenda front page.

Mobile telephones

Please switch your mobile telephone on to silent mode whilst in the meeting.

Access information for the Town Hall, Mulberry Place.



Bus: Routes: D3, D6, D7, D8, 15, 108, and 115 all stop near the Town Hall.

Docklands Light Railway: Nearest stations are East India: Head across the bridge and then through the complex to the Town Hall, Mulberry Place

Blackwall station: Across the bus station then turn right to the back of the Town Hall complex, through the gates and archway to the Town Hall.

Tube: The closest tube stations are Canning Town and Canary Wharf

Car Parking: There is limited visitor pay and

display parking at the Town Hall (free from 6pm)

If you are viewing this on line: (http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/content_pages/contact_us.aspx)

Meeting access/special requirements.

The Town Hall is accessible to people with special needs. There are accessible toilets, lifts to venues. Disabled parking bays and an induction loop system for people with hearing difficulties are available. Documents can be made available in large print, Braille or audio version. For further information, contact the Officers shown on the front of the agenda



Fire alarm

If the fire alarm sounds please leave the building immediately by the nearest available fire exit without deviating to collect belongings. Fire wardens will direct you to the exits and to the fire assembly point. If you are unable to use the stairs, a member of staff will direct you to a safe area. The meeting will reconvene if it is safe to do so, otherwise it will stand adjourned.

Electronic agendas reports and minutes.

Copies of agendas, reports and minutes for council meetings can also be found on our website from day of publication.

To access this, click www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee and search for the relevant committee and meeting date.

Agendas are available at the Town Hall, Libraries, Idea Centres and One Stop Shops and on the Mod.Gov, iPad and Android apps.



QR code for smart phone users.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

To receive nominations and appoint a Chair of Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

(Note: This appointment is for this meeting only and not for the remaining Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee meetings in the 2017/18 municipal year. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will appoint a permanent Chair on 20 July 2017)

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

To receive nominations and appoint a Vice-Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee for the duration of the 2017/18 municipal year.

3. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

1 - 4

To note any declarations of interest made by Members, including those restricting Members from voting on the questions detailed in Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992. See attached note from the Monitoring Officer.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

5 - 10

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on 24 April 2017.

5. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, QUORUM, MEMBERSHIP AND DATES OF MEETINGS

11 - 20

5.2 HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE - HOW IT WILL WORK

21 - 30

5.3 HOUSING IN TOWER HAMLETS - UNDERSTANDING THE KEY CHALLENGES

31 - 44

5.4 FIRE SAFETY IN HIGH RISES

45 - 62

5.5 DEVELOPING THE HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

**6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS
TO BE URGENT**

Next Meeting of the Sub- Committee

The next meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee will be held on Monday, 11 September 2017 at 6.30 p.m.

Agenda Item 3

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS - NOTE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER

This note is for guidance only. For further details please consult the Members' Code of Conduct at Part 5.1 of the Council's Constitution.

Please note that the question of whether a Member has an interest in any matter, and whether or not that interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, is for that Member to decide. Advice is available from officers as listed below but they cannot make the decision for the Member. If in doubt as to the nature of an interest it is advisable to seek advice **prior** to attending a meeting.

Interests and Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs)

You have an interest in any business of the authority where that business relates to or is likely to affect any of the persons, bodies or matters listed in section 4.1 (a) of the Code of Conduct; and might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial position of yourself, a member of your family or a person with whom you have a close association, to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward affected.

You must notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of any such interest, for inclusion in the Register of Members' Interests which is available for public inspection and on the Council's Website.

Once you have recorded an interest in the Register, you are not then required to declare that interest at each meeting where the business is discussed, unless the interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI).

A DPI is defined in Regulations as a pecuniary interest of any of the descriptions listed at **Appendix A** overleaf. Please note that a Member's DPIs include his/her own relevant interests and also those of his/her spouse or civil partner; or a person with whom the Member is living as husband and wife; or a person with whom the Member is living as if they were civil partners; if the Member is aware that that other person has the interest.

Effect of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest on participation at meetings

Where you have a DPI in any business of the Council you must, unless you have obtained a dispensation from the authority's Monitoring Officer following consideration by the Dispensations Sub-Committee of the Standards Advisory Committee:-

- not seek to improperly influence a decision about that business; and
- not exercise executive functions in relation to that business.

If you are present at a meeting where that business is discussed, you must:-

- Disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of the interest at the start of the meeting or when the interest becomes apparent, if later; and
- Leave the room (including any public viewing area) for the duration of consideration and decision on the item and not seek to influence the debate or decision

When declaring a DPI, Members should specify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which the interest relates. This procedure is designed to assist the public's understanding of the meeting and to enable a full record to be made in the minutes of the meeting.

Where you have a DPI in any business of the authority which is not included in the Member's register of interests and you attend a meeting of the authority at which the business is considered, in addition to disclosing the interest to that meeting, you must also within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the Register.

Further advice

For further advice please contact:

Graham White, Acting Corporate Director Law Probity and Governance Tel 020 7364 4800

APPENDIX A: Definition of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

(Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, Reg 2 and Schedule)

Subject	Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vacation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	<p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by the Member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of the Member.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p>
Contracts	<p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority—</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to the Member's knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the Member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>

This page is intentionally left blank

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.34 P.M. ON MONDAY, 24 APRIL 2017

**MP702, 7TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,
LONDON E14 2BG.**

Members Present:

Councillor Amina Ali (Chair)
Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE
Councillor Gulam Robbani
Councillor Andrew Wood
Councillor John Pierce

Co-opted Members Present:

Moshin Hamim	Leaseholder Representative
Anne Ambrose	Tenant Representative

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Sirajul Islam	Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Management & Performance
--------------------------	---

Others Present:

Sandra Fawcett	Chair of Tower Hamlets Housing Forum
Neil Isaac	Tower Hamlets Homes
Richard Hards	Tower Hamlets Homes

Officers Present:

Ahmed Choudhury	Senior Strategy Policy and Performance Officer
John Coker	Strategic Housing Manager, Place
Muhibul Hoque	Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer
Rafiqul Hoque	Lettings Services Manager, Housing Options Service, Development & Renewal
Marc Lancaster	Private Sector Housing Policy Officer
Martin Ling	Housing Strategy Manager

Farhana Zia	Democratic Services
-------------	---------------------

1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

The Chair, Councillor Amina Ali welcomed everybody to the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting. She stated the meeting would hear presentations

from Tower Hamlets Homes regarding 'How the Council meets the needs of Leaseholders', followed by a presentation on the Private Tenant's Charter. The sub-committee would also be asked to comment upon the 'Under-Occupation Review' and the recommendations made by therein.

She requested everyone to introduce themselves and commenced the meeting.

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Rabina Khan, and Cllr Rachel Blake – Cabinet Member for Strategic Development.

Cllr John Pierce declared he was a Board Member of Tower Hamlets Homes.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

The Chair referred members of the Sub-Committee to the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 6th February 2017. She asked members to approve these as an accurate record of the meeting.

The Members agreed the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting.

3. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Tower Hamlets Leaseholders Report - to follow

Richard Hards and Neil Isaac, from Tower Hamlets Homes made a presentation to the Sub-Committee relating to how the Council meets the needs of Leaseholders and what steps it has taken to ensure that leaseholders receive excellent customer service at competitive prices.

Main points from the presentation:

- The 'lease' provides the basis of the contract between the Landlord (Council) and the leaseholder.
- The lease sets out what the Landlord can do and likewise what the leaseholder can do and expect from the landlord.
- Tower Hamlets Homes have developed an improvement plan which seeks to ensure the leaseholders needs and satisfaction are met.
- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is ring fenced and the Council needs to ensure it gets value for money across the entire HRA.
- Slide 5 shows the day to day cost and the average service charge, charged to leaseholders and how Tower Hamlets compares with other London boroughs.
- The satisfaction ratings shown on slide 6 shows that leaseholders in Tower Hamlets are satisfied with the services they receive.
- Tower Hamlets Homes has developed an improvement plan and have involved leaseholders in this. They are seeking to publish a 5 year advanced programme of works, which will better inform leaseholders, right to buy applicants as well as open market purchasers.

Members of Sub-Committee made the following comments:

- Great to see there is a five year schedule of planned works however lessons need to be learnt from the previous major works programme of 2013, when residents complained about the delays in the completion of work.
- There is a need to educate people about being a leaseholder, what this entails and what to expect.
- Comparatives should be provided with other Housing Associations within the Borough and not other local authorities in London.
- Do leaseholders qualify for a reduction in service charges if they apply to extend their lease?
- Is there a distinction between an actual leaseholder and a leaseholder who is a Landlord?
- Has any research been conducted with regards to absentee landlords? There has been a boom in Airbnb lettings and a rise in anti-social behaviour associated with this.
- Do Estates have designated Housing Officers? They would know who resides at a flat, if it's in multi-occupation or sub-let?

Action: Tower Hamlets Homes to provide further data on how it compares with other Housing Associations within the Borough as well as how it compares with similar comparative local authorities, via data from the 'Housemark' benchmarking insight company.

3.2 Tower Hamlets Private Tenants' Charter

Martin Ling, Housing Strategy Manager and Marc Lancaster, Private Sector Housing Policy Officer presented to the sub-committee with their proposal of a Private Renters Charter.

Main points from the presentation:

- Many renters in the Private Rented Sector (PRS) received a poor service from their landlords and have a poor understanding of their legal rights.
- There has been a change in tenure since the 1990s with an increase in 'right to buy'.
- About 6,000 ex-council properties are let out, often in poor condition, as homes in multiple-occupation.
- Many vulnerable people live in private rented accommodation.

- The Charter intends to signpost Renters to the right agencies and will create a culture where Landlords and Tenants clearly know what the minimum standards are thus raising standards in this sector.
- The Charter does not intend to be a 'quality' marker, but a set of statements backed up by an alliance of stakeholders such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Tonybee Hall, Bromley by Bow Advice centres.

Members asked the following questions and made comments on the proposed Charter:

- Do you think it is possible to change the behaviour of Landlords? Will the charter raise standards?
- Crucial the publicity campaign informs and targets private renters. A public relations company may be better placed to run the campaign rather than an in-house campaign.
- Consideration should be given to building up a rapport with companies who intend to sell properties to private investors, so they are aware of the Charter and the minimum standards expected of them.
- What penalties can the Local Authority impose, when Landlords are not compliant?
- Tower Hamlets can learn lessons from Newham, who have been very successful in raising standards in the Private rented sector.
- How do Councillors obtain a copy of the 'Anti-Social Behaviour' plans that Landlords have in place, as part of their licensing agreements. Are they in the public domain?
- What is being done to tackle Managing Agents who guarantee rent to their clients, however these Landlords are oblivious to their properties being in disrepair or in multi-occupation?
- The Charter proposes to signpost people to agencies, but what happens when a tenant cannot get legal aid and does not have the means to challenge their Landlord?

The Chair thanked the Officer for their presentation and hoped the comments made by Members of the Sub-Committee would be incorporated into the development of the Charter. The members noted the timeline to progress this through the governance processes and the intended launch date.

3.3 Under Occupation Review

The Chair referred members of the Sub-Committee to pages 33 and 34 of the agenda pack and asked if Members wanted to add or comment upon the recommendations listed as part of the Under Occupation Review.

Members asked the following questions:

- Some of the good practice Housing Associations are undertaking ought to be shared with others, so they too can improve their practices.

Members were assured the recommendations will be accompanied with a detailed action plan and good practice identified as part of the review would be shared with all Housing Associations.

The Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee

1. Agreed the report and the recommendations; and
2. Authorised the Interim Head of Policy, Performance and Partnership to amend the draft report before submission to Cabinet, the after consultation with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

There was no other business discussed.

The meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Amina Ali
Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee

This page is intentionally left blank

<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee</p> <p>12th July 2017</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Matthew Mannion, Committee Services Manager</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, QUORUM, MEMBERSHIP AND DATES OF MEETINGS</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	Farhana Zia Democratic Services
Wards affected	All wards

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report sets out the Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership and Dates of meetings of the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee for the Municipal Year 2017/18 for the information of members of the Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee agrees to note its Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership and Dates of future meetings as set out in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to this report.

3. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

3.1 This report is for the information of the Committee and no specific decisions are required.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 Not applicable to reports for noting.

5. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

5.1 At the Annual General Meeting of the full Council held on 17th May 2017 the Authority approved the review of proportionality, establishment of the Committees and Panels of the Council and appointment of Members thereto.

- 5.2 At the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21st June 2017 the Committee noted the proportionality and establishment of the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee and approved the appointment of co-opted members thereto.
- 5.3 It is traditional that following the Annual General Meeting of the Council at the start of the Municipal Year, at which various committees are established, that those committees note their Terms of Reference, Quorum and Membership for the forthcoming Municipal Year. These are set out in Appendix 1 and 2 to the report respectively.
- 5.4 The Committee's meetings for the remainder of the year, as agreed at the Annual General Meeting of the Council on 17th May 2017 as set out in Appendix 3 to this report.
- 5.5 In accordance with the programme of meetings for principal meetings, meetings are scheduled to take place at 6.30pm, except where the meeting falls within the month of Ramadan which will be at 5.30 pm.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 Matters brought before the Committee under its terms of reference during the year will include comments on the financial implications of decisions provided by the Chief Finance Officer. There are no specific comments arising from the recommendations in this report.

7. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 7.1 The terms of reference provided for the Panel to note are in line with Section 3.3.6 in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

8. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 When drawing up the schedule of dates, consideration was given to avoiding schools holiday dates and known dates of religious holidays and other important dates where at all possible.

9. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no specific Best Value implications arising from this noting report.

10. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 10.1 There are no specific sustainability implications arising from this noting report.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no specific risk management implications arising from this noting report.

12. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

13. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

Appendix 2 – Appointments to Committee

Appendix 3 – Dates of Meeting

Officer contact details for documents:

If not supplied
Name and telephone number of holder
Farhana Zia
Democratic Services
020 7364 0842

This page is intentionally left blank

Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

Chair and Membership

Sub-Committees will be chaired by a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. For this Sub-Committee it will be the Lead Scrutiny Member for Development and Renewal for 2017/18. The membership of the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee will be selected at the Annual General Meeting.

Frequency of meetings

It is proposed the Sub-Committee meets four times per year formally and the following are suggested dates that are available in the Corporate Diary for 2017/18.

12th July
11th September
13th November
29th January
19th March

The Sub-Committee may arrange other meetings as and when necessary to consider any urgent issues as well as arranging meetings for detailed scrutiny reviews and challenge sessions.

Responsibilities

The Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee will discharge the Council's statutory functions to undertake overview and scrutiny, insofar as these pertain to housing matters. This will include:

- (a) Reviewing and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's housing functions;
- (b) Advising the Mayor, DCLG Commissioners or Cabinet of key issues/questions arising in relation to housing reports due to be considered by the Mayor, DCLG Commissioners or Cabinet;
- (c) Making reports and/or recommendations to the full Council and/or the Mayor, DCLG Commissioners or Cabinet in connection with the discharge of housing functions;
- (d) Delivering (c) by organising an annual work programme, drawing on the knowledge and priorities of the council, registered providers and other stakeholders, that will identify relevant topics or issues that can be properly scrutinised;
- (e) Holding service providers to account, where recent performance fails to meet the recognised standard, by looking at relevant evidence and make recommendations for service improvements;

- (f) Considering housing matters affecting the area or its inhabitants, including where these matters have been brought to the attention of the sub-committee by tenant and resident associations, or members of the general public.
- (g) The Sub-Committee will report annually to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on its work.

Support to the Sub-Committee

The Service Heads for Corporate Strategy and Equality (LPG) and Strategy, Regeneration and Sustainability (D&R) will be the senior officer leads and champion the work of the Sub-Committee.

The servicing of meetings will be undertaken by the Council's Democratic Services Team which will include:

- Meeting room bookings, refreshments
- Agenda preparation and dispatch
- Taking minutes and recording of actions/decisions
- Dissemination of minutes and decisions

The Corporate Strategy & Equality Service will provide policy support to the Sub-Committee which will include:

- Research and analysis
- Work programme development
- Support with undertaking reviews and challenge sessions
- Drafting review reports and challenge sessions

Proceedings

The Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee will generally meet in public and conduct its proceedings in accordance with the rules and procedure contained in the Council's Constitution such as the:

- Council Procedure Rules
- Access to Information Procedure Rules, and
- The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS 2017-2018

NOMINATIONS SUBMITTED TO THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING ON 17th MAY 2017

HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE (Nominations for information - Panel to be appointed by Overview & Scrutiny Committee) (Six members of the Council)				
<i>Labour Group (3)</i>	<i>Independent Group (1)</i>	<i>Conservative Group (1)</i>	<i>People's Alliance of Tower Hamlets (1)</i>	<i>Ungrouped (0)</i>
Cllr Helal Uddin Cllr Dave Chesterton Cllr Shiria Khatun Substitutes:- <i>Cllr Rajib Ahmed</i> <i>Cllr Marc Francis</i> <i>Cllr John Pierce</i>	Cllr Gulam Robbani Substitutes:-	Cllr Andrew Wood Substitutes:- <i>Cllr Chris Chapman</i>	Cllr Rabina Khan Substitutes:-	N/A
Co-opted Members:- <i>To be appointed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee</i> <i>Anne Ambrose – Tenant Representative</i> <i>Moshin Hamim – Leaseholder Representative</i>				

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX 3

SCHEDULE OF DATES 2017/2018

HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 12th July 2017 at 6:30 p.m.

Monday, 11th September 2017 at 6:30 p.m.

Monday, 13th November 2017 at 6:30 p.m.

Monday, 29th January 2018 at 6:30 p.m.

Monday, 19th March 2018 at 6:30 p.m.

Notes

1. The Sub-Committee, by custom has met at 6;30 p.m. in accordance with the Calendar of meetings agreed by full Council's AGM.
2. It may be necessary to convene additional meetings of the Sub-Committee should urgent business arise. Officer will keep the position under review and consult with the Chair and other Members as appropriate.

This page is intentionally left blank

How Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee will work

12th July 2017

Ahmed Choudhury
Strategy, Policy and Performance

HSSC - rationale

- Greater public transparency and scrutiny
- High profile amongst Members
- Priority for local residents
- Key determinant of quality of life

HSSC - rationale

- Rapid changes: local, regional, national
- Affordable housing - top priority
- Housing Strategy 2016-21

How will it work?

- Consider practical improvements
- Mayor and Cabinet fully engaged
- In depth review or challenge session
- Pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet papers
- Listen, observe and learn
- Provide challenge, spotlight and evidence

How will it work?

- Solution focussed
- Recommend improvements
- Policy development
- Performance management
- Service visits and meetings with officers

What will it do?

- Provide scrutiny
- Social and private landlords
- Identify best practice

What does it want to achieve?

- Make an impact
- Find solutions to local housing challenges
- Enable
- Drive up standards
- Highlight improvements
- Independent review and challenge
- Recognise good practice
- Partnership

Previous work

2012/13

Review: Housing regulations introduced in the Localism Act 2011 Challenge Session: Housing lettings for people with mental health problems-

2013/14

Housing Spotlights: Focused on delivering a sufficient supply of affordable housing, costs of the Decent Homes Programme and tackled problems in the private rented sector.

2014/15

Challenge Session: Implications of conservation areas for extensions to family homes

Challenge Session: Quality of social housing funded through section 106 agreements

2015/16

Challenge Session: Homelessness within the borough- Considered how the Council can become less reliant on using B&B accommodation to meet the needs of homeless families and find viable alternatives.

2016/17

Review: Under occupation of social housing

Spotlight: Repairs Services

Thank You

ahmed.choudhury@towerhamlets.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

Housing Scrutiny Sub –Committee

The Challenges facing LBTH Housing

Wednesday 12th July 2017

Mark Baigent – Interim Director Housing and
Regeneration -PLACE

Aims

- To provide Members with an update on the *2016/21 Housing Strategy*, the challenges we face and how we are responding
- To take questions from the Sub Committee in order to help shape the 2017/18 work programme

Key drivers behind the Strategy

- The population of the borough has more than doubled in the past thirty years, rising from 144,800 in 1985 up to 295,200 in 2015.
- New Mayors of LBTH and London.
- The LBTH Mayor's Affordable Housing Commission
- Continuing Welfare Reform and reduction in resources for social housing
- Changing Social rent regime and 1% rent reductions over 4 years
- Huge growth of private sector and increasing private rents
- Lost of private rented tenancies is now main reason for homelessness
- New Legislation – Housing and Planning Act and Planning White Paper

Housing Challenges for LBTH

- Nearly 20,000 people on the housing register.
- More than 9,000 people in substantial housing need
- Over 2,000 people in Temporary Accommodation
- 44% of households in income poverty
- Population of TH to increase by 26% by 2026
- The average cost of a property in LBTH is 15 times (£450,000) than the median income of £30k per annum
- Highest GLA Housing targets in London – 3931 per year

Changing Tenure

Tenure	2003	%	2011	%	2016	%
Private*	44821	51%	56947	56%	71192	61%
Council owned (Rented)	24200	28%	12500	12%	11884	10%
Registered social landlord (Rented)	17828	20%	30108	30%	29740	26%
Shared ownership	500	1%	2000	2%	3000	3%
Total	87349		101555		115816	

* Includes owner occupied and private rented tenancies now estimated at between 35% to 40%)

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the Housing and Planning White paper

- **Much of the original act has been softened:** i.e **Starter Homes** made optional, **Pay to Stay:** removed.
- **Lifetime Tenancies:** Replaced with fixed tenancies of 2-5 years, up to 10 years for the disabled, and up to 19 years for those with children up to nine years of age. Final Regulations awaited
- **Voluntary Right to Buy:** Gov't pledge to build 2 homes for every 1 sold in London. Still being piloted.
- **LAs to sell off high-value homes –** Still no advice on scope or cost of deal to Local Authorities.

Housing and Planning White Paper 2017

- Planning for the right homes in the right places
- Building homes faster
- Diversifying the market
- Helping people now

Multiple measures designed to increase housebuilding, most of which have little impact in LBTH as develop mor ehomes than any other borough in the country

Housing Strategy 2016/21 - The Key themes

- **Theme 1** – Building affordable housing, economic growth and regeneration.
- **Theme 2** – Meeting people’s housing needs.
- **Theme 3** – Raising private rented housing standards
- **Theme 4** – Effective partnership working with residents and stakeholders.

Housing Strategy - Key Themes / Actions

Theme 1 – Building affordable housing, economic growth and regeneration

- Develop affordable and sustainable homes in key locations
- Develop truly affordable homes on Council land at social rent 'Living' rent
- Develop accountable and flexible Local Housing Companies to ensure best use of assets to maximise new supply of council homes
- Work with Registered Providers to reduce 'Affordable rent' to an acceptable level
- Develop a coherent approach to starter homes, home ownership and build to rent developments

Housing Strategy Key Themes & Actions

Theme 2 – Meeting people’s housing needs.

- Update the Allocations Scheme to take into account recent policy changes
- Improve the Overcrowding/Under occupation Plan
- Refresh the Tenancy Strategy in response to the 2016 Housing Act
- Homelessness - Maintain Prevention as core objective and reduce Temporary Accommodation and associated costs
- Work in co-operation with Vulnerable Adults team to meet the needs of households with special needs housing and contribute fully to the Ageing Well agenda
- Meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and the Boating Community
- Address the needs of young people

Housing Strategy Key Themes & Actions

Theme 3 – Raising private rented housing standards.

- Implement and review Licensing Scheme and consider further additional selective/additional schemes in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Deliver a robust Empty Homes Strategy and Grants programmes including reducing 'Buy to Leave'
- Deliver the objectives of the Care Act and use the Better Care Fund to enable people to live safely and securely at home
- Work closely with a revised Landlord Forum, increase Accreditation and develop a LBTH Private Renters Charter
- Make best use of Enforcement powers including 2016 Act legislation to tackle poor standards

Housing Strategy Key Themes & Actions

Theme 4 – Effective partnership working with residents and stakeholders.

- Renew and revise Tower Hamlets Homes (ALMO) management agreement making it fit for purpose with a longer term plan for the Housing Revenue Account
- Refocus our relationship with Housing Associations as Regulatory controls change and financial pressures impact including supporting small local Associations and influencing larger mergers
- Continue to work with East London Housing Partnership, GLA and London Councils on capital wide issues to ensure LBTH remains a key influencer
- Continue to develop resident involvement and engagement

Any Questions?

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/housingstrategy2016

This page is intentionally left blank

Housing Fire Safety Update

Mark Baigent

Interim Divisional Director
Housing and Regeneration

Housing Fire Safety Issues

- Fire Risk Assessments
- Building Regulations
- Environmental Health
- Cladding materials
- Post-Grenfell DCLG-led testing programme
- Council Housing
- Other social housing
- Private housing
- Emergency response contingency plans

Fire Safety in Tall Buildings

Sandra Fawcett – Chair THHF

Tony Hughes – Chair Asset Management
Sub-Group

Members update:

- Role of Tower Hamlets Housing Forum
- Principal requirements on fire safety
- Fire safety in high rise buildings
- Managing the current situation
- Working with local communities

Tower Hamlets Housing Form (THHF)

- The Tower Hamlets Housing Forum (THHF) is a strategic partnership between the Council and principal local Registered Providers in the Borough
- The Forum has a range of sub groups delivering an annual work plan
- The Asset Management sub group leads on fire safety

Asset Management Sub Group

- Develops good practice and continuous improvement
- Tracks regulatory and legislative changes
- Recognises different business and operational approaches
- Shares best practice and explores opportunities for engagement and joint working
- Considers all aspects of work in relation to core Asset Management activities, including responsive repairs, major works, fire risks, asbestos and management, delivery of local offers and occupational therapy work.

Asset Management Sub Group

Fire safety activity

- In 2014 developed an approach in partnership with the Borough and the Fire Service
- Set out 31 best practice recommendations for housing providers to consider and take forward within their respective organisations to inform corporate and operational arrangements.

Asset Management Sub Group

- Mapped the number and location of all high rise schemes in the Borough
- Supported a presentation on the Penfold fire exercise conducted by Barking & Dagenham to help inform organisational incident response plans.
- Supported a presentation on the LFB/ Poplar HARCA joint working initiative highlighting best practice to reduce incidents of fire linked to ASB.

Asset Management Sub Group

- Identified vulnerability categories and high risk groups used by the LFB when targeting home visits and/or tackling fires.
- Considered Fire Risk Assessments and the Building Regulations for new build schemes.
- Reviewed fire safety and leasehold homes
- Supported and monitored trials of LFB Strathclyde information plates which have now moved to a digital platform.

Legal duties on landlords

- Requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) and Fire Safety in Purpose Built Blocks for Flats Guidance 2011
- RRO applies to the common spaces of flats and maisonettes, houses in multiple occupation and common spaces of sheltered accommodation
- Principal objective - To provide a minimum fire safety standard in all premises

Legal duties on landlords

- Requirement for organisations to identify a Designated Responsible Person (RP)
- Required to carry out certain fire safety duties which include ensuring the general fire precautions are satisfactory and conducting a Fire Risk Assessment
- Fire safety design in new blocks of flats is governed by the Building Regulations 2010

Managing the current situation

- Offered help and support to Kensington and Chelsea – vacant homes/ staff
- Review of Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) and actions required
- Produced and issued fire safety advice for residents
- Supported front line teams with guidance and enforcement advice concerning items stored in communal areas
- Data return to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on all Tall Buildings. Data also provided at Borough.

Managing the current situation

- Web sites updated with information for residents, stakeholders and staff
- Identified blocks where cladding, in particular Aluminium Composite Materials (ACM) may be a feature
- Joint meeting between Council and housing providers to review arrangements and understand how landlords were responding
- Common Housing Register review of voids to support decants if required
- Contacted Managing Agents for the position on blocks not directly managed

Fire safety in high rise buildings – position as at 30th June 2017

Current status:

- 540 tall buildings (over 6 storeys or 18 metres)
- 410 owned by RPs
- 130 owned by Council
- Department for Communities and Local Government required all ACM cladding to be tested
- 11 blocks owned by RPs not passed Building Research Establishment (BRE) cladding tests. Further results awaited.

Response by RPs following cladding tests

- Detailed communication and advice for residents in blocks affected
- Review and implementation of recommendations from the Department for Communities and Local Government
- London Fire Service joint working
- Development of individual strategies to take issue forward
- Ongoing changing picture

Going forward

- Continue to work closely with Borough's Fire Service
- Ongoing review of fire safety advice to customers if the position changes
- Partnership working to review good practice in fire risk assessment
- Consider early and long term findings from Grenfell Tower inquiry and impact on building and fire regulations
- Robust housing management – communal areas and balconies
- Asset Management group to create separate Fire Safety work stream.

Questions

This page is intentionally left blank