


<b>Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee</b> <b>18 July 2016</b>	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of: Kevin Kewin, Interim Service Head, Corporate Strategy and Equality</b>	<b>Classification: Unrestricted</b>
<b>Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Work Programme 2016/17</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	<b>Mark Bursnell, Senior Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	<b>All wards</b>

### **Summary**

The report outlines the draft work programme for the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee for the municipal year 2016/17

### **Recommendations:**

1. Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee is asked to consider and comment on the proposed draft work programme
  
2. Authorise the Interim Service Head for Corporate Strategy and Equality after consultation with the Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee, to finalise the work programme

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 9 May 2016 agreed to establish the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee and delegate its housing responsibilities and functions to this Sub-Committee. The terms of reference of the Sub-Committee and its membership were also agreed at the same meeting. The Sub-Committee was established to reflect the high profile of housing related issues within the borough with local people identifying more affordable and better quality housing as a key priority for them. The Sub-Committee will carry out comprehensive scrutiny across the range of the Council's housing functions and relationships with other housing providers and seek to address and find solutions to some of the most difficult housing issues facing the borough. The Sub-Committee will work in partnership with key stakeholders, such as local registered social landlords and housing tenants, and try to establish consensus in making its recommendations.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 The Sub-Committee will adopt its own work programme for the coming municipal year and the suggestions contained in this report are for guidance only. However, the Sub-Committee does need to adopt a work programme so it can decide how it will structure and plan its activities over the course of the year.

## **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

- 3.1. As a new Sub-Committee there is an opportunity to set a work programme that reflects the current housing agenda for the borough and select issues and matters for scrutiny that are a high priority for Members, stakeholders and tenants. It is anticipated that the business for the Sub-Committee will consist of a mix of four elements: firstly, scrutiny review work on specific topics and issues that will include recommendations to be considered by the Mayor and Cabinet; secondly, reports on operational issues that affect tenants and require the views of the Sub-Committee before being referred on to the Cabinet for decision; thirdly, opportunities to question and discuss housing matters and issues in a public forum, with relevant housing portfolio holders or senior managers representing significant local housing providers present; and fourthly, information briefings which keep Members up to date and informed on important matters that have a direct impact on their role and purpose, for example the implications of new Government legislation, or changes in housing regulations.
- 3.2. Officer and Member resources available to support scrutiny in delivering the work programme will need to be used as effectively as possible, to meet realistic Member expectations of what can be achieved. A draft work programme for the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee has been developed (see appendix 1). An earlier version of the work programme was included in the members pack for the Induction Session held on 27 June, the work

programme contained in this report reflects the additional ideas and suggestions that Members proposed at the Induction Session.

- 3.3. As part of the Member Induction on 27 June, several potential issues were identified as priorities for scrutiny review or report. These included investigating how efficient the different housing providers in the borough are in dealing timely with outstanding repairs. This would complement a report that was considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee last summer on comparative repairs performance. Another issue was exploring the potential to take people off the Council's waiting list by considering innovative options to house families either inside or outside the borough, where land values are less expensive.
- 3.4. Other topics suggested for this year's work programme included exploring the Council's relationship with the private rented sector (which in 2014, housed 39% of all the borough's residents compared to only 20% in 2003) and if any new action is required to improve the services provided, or protection offered to private sector tenants. Members, if they feel it is justified, can also follow up on this year's Homelessness Challenge Session by examining related issues in more detail, especially the link between homelessness and poor health standards in the borough. Before a final work programme is adopted by the Sub-Committee it will be necessary to consult with other stakeholders (other housing providers, tenants bodies and individual tenants) to ensure that their views and priorities are reflected.

#### **4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 4.1 This report asks the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee to consider and comment on the proposed draft work programme and authorise the Interim Service Head for Corporate Strategy and Equality, after consultation with the Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee, to finalise the work programme.
- 4.2 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report, although given the changes in this area arising from the new Housing and Planning Act 2016, there are significant financial implications that the Scrutiny Committee will need to be fully sighted on when undertaking its scrutiny functions.

#### **5. LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 5.1 In order for scrutiny to be undertaken in an efficient and effective way it is entirely appropriate that the Sub-Committee gives consideration to the work it can carry out over the municipal year and to programme that work accordingly. Legal considerations will be the subject of separate advice in each of the work streams at the relevant times, but currently there are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

#### **6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 Although the Sub-Committee has not yet adopted its work programme for the year, it is likely that many of the issues that will be considered as part of its workload will have equality or diversity implications. The Sub-Committee will be mindful of its responsibilities to promote greater equality and diversity in framing its recommendations for improvement, which contribute to the achievement of One Tower Hamlets aims.

## **7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 It is anticipated that many issues addressed as part of the Sub-Committee's work programme will have Best Value implications, for example, ensuring that service improvements are made on the basis of securing better value for money, using the most cost effective form of delivery, or streamlining processes that don't add any customer value to the service. The Sub-Committee is aware of its responsibilities in this area and will reflect Best Value considerations in making its recommendations.

## **8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

8.1 The extent to which positive action can be taken to promote the Greener Environment will depend on the topics and issues included in the work programme. However, key corporate objectives such as protecting green public space, especially in areas of high housing density, will be reflected in any recommendations made by the Sub-Committee that are relevant to contributing to a sustainable environment.

## **9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The Sub-Committee will be mindful in developing and executing its work programme, that the recommendations it formulates should take into account and seek to mitigate any risk to the Council and/or any risks arising from the Recommendation themselves and the action taken to address these.

## **10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 It is likely that the work programme will include several topics or issues that will have community safety implications. In reaching conclusions and framing recommendations the Sub-Committee will identify any relevant implications and actively seek to contribute to the reduction of crime and disorder in the borough.

# Draft Work Programme for the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee

# Appendix 1

Date of Meeting	Item of business	Lead Officer	Outcome
18 July	<p>Work programme for the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee</p> <p>Affordability Commission</p> <p>Tower Hamlets Leaseholders Report</p> <p>Implications of the new Housing and Planning Act 2016</p>	<p>Mark Bursnell</p> <p>Jackie Odunoye</p> <p>Chief Executive, Tower Hamlets Homes</p> <p>Jackie Odunoye</p>	<p>Identify key topics that have an impact on some of the challenging issues facing the borough and which fulfil the ambitions of the Sub-Committee</p> <p>Report on the conclusions reached by the Commission and establish how these impact on the work of the Sub-Committee</p> <p>Consider the options for how the Council meets the needs of its leaseholders and provides services at competitive charges in future</p> <p>Gain an understanding of how the provisions of the Act will impact on the Council's housing policy and its relationship with tenants</p>
10 October	<p>Spotlight session- Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Performance</p> <p>Comments on the draft Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Jackie Odunoye</p> <p>Jackie Odunoye</p>	<p>Cabinet Member will set out the Council's policies around the key issues within their portfolio</p> <p>Opportunity for Members on the Sub-Committee to comment and input into the development of this key strategy</p>

Date of Meeting	Item of business	Lead Officer	Outcome
	Registered Social Landlord quarterly performance report	Jackie Odunoye	Consider the relative performance of the borough's main housing providers across a spectrum of performance indicators. Make proposals for improvement based on the comparative data included in the report
28 November	Question time session-Invitation to the public to attend a session where Cabinet Members and two or three of the big RSLs in the borough address key topics raised by the public	Jackie Odunoye	Cabinet Members and senior managers from large local housing providers will address and answer questions on a variety of issues. There will be a special focus on how efficient housing providers in the borough are in dealing with outstanding repairs. The purpose of the event is to give tenants and the public the opportunity to raise key housing issues and improve transparency
6 February	<p>Spotlight Session- Cabinet Member for Strategic Development</p> <p>Report on the potential to reduce the Council's housing waiting list by considering innovative options to directly build new homes or facilitate this through</p>	<p>Jackie Odunoye</p> <p>Jackie Odunoye</p>	<p>Cabinet Member will set out the Council's policies around the key issues within their portfolio</p> <p>The report will examine if there are viable options to expand provision and house more local people in the foreseeable future. As well as establishing if this can</p>

Date of Meeting	Item of business	Lead Officer	Outcome
	third parties.		be achieved by building more homes within or outside the borough
24 April	<p>Report on the impact of new housing developments on those communities experiencing the highest rates of growth</p> <p>Report on the future status of the Council's arms-length housing provider- Tower Hamlets Homes (THH)</p> <p>Report on the Council's relationship with the private rented sector and the potential to introduce a landlord accreditation scheme based on the existing Tower Hamlets pilot</p>	<p>Jackie Odunoye</p> <p>Jackie Odunoye</p> <p>Jackie Odunoye</p>	<p>The report will identify where these development pressures are most acute, their impact on local communities and proposals that might ameliorate the worst effects of this development</p> <p>The report will consider the options and potential for bringing THH back in-house</p> <p>This type of tenancy is now the most popular in the borough and growing rapidly, so should more be done to improve the support the Council provides for private sector tenants</p>