

# HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

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**Wednesday, 26 September 2018 at 6.30 p.m.**

**MP701 - Town Hall Mulberry Place**

**SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA – POWERPOINT SLIDES**

**This meeting is open to the public to attend.**

**Contact for further enquiries:**

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agenda:



For further information including the Membership of this body and public information, see the main agenda.

**4 .1 SOCIAL HOUSING GREEN PAPER**

**5 - 30**

Presented by Mark Baigent, Interim Divisional Director Housing & Regeneration.

The Social Housing Green Paper published for consultation on the 14 August 2018 is the government vision for a new deal for social housing. The Committee will receive a presentation outlining government proposals through 5 of the key priorities: 1. Decent homes, 2. Effective resolution of complaints, 3. Strengthening regulation and empowering residents, 4. Tackling stigma and celebrating communities, 5. Housing supply and ownership. The committee is to comment on proposals.

**(18:45-19:05)**

**4 .2 EMPTY & SECOND HOMES**

**31 – 40**

Presented by Mark Baigent Interim Divisional Director, Housing and Regeneration.

The Committee will receive a presentation on the number of empty properties (up to and more than 6 months) and second homes in the borough, and the Council's response. To note and comment on the presentation.

**(19:05-19:20)**

**4 .3 VOIDS (THH & THHF)**

**41 - 60**

Presented by Beverley Greenidge, Head of Neighbourhoods, Sandra Fawcett - Chair Tower Hamlets Housing Forum.

The presentations will include information on the management of voids and empty properties, including the return of keys, and average re-let times with comparative data. To note and comment on the presentations.

**(19:20-19:40)**

#### **4 .4 COMMON HOUSING REGISTER & ALLOCATIONS POLICY**

**61 - 68**

Presented by Rafiqul Hoque, Head of Housing Options.

The Committee will receive a presentation on the Common Housing Register and Allocations Policy, numbers on the waiting list, priority bandings, the assessment and allocation process and planned service improvements. To note and comment on the presentation.

**(19:40-20:00)**

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# Social Housing Green Paper

## Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee 26 September 2018

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### Mark Baigent, Interim Divisional Director – Housing and Regeneration

Agenda Item 4.1



# What is the Social Housing Green Paper (SHGP)?

- Governments vision - **“A new deal for social housing”** by a “top-to-bottom” review
- Proposals to rebalance tenant landlord relationships, tackle stigma, ensure homes are safe and a spring board to home ownership
- Developed through engagement events nationally and online consultations
- The SHGP has 5 key priorities: (1) decent homes, (2) effective resolution of complaints, (3) strengthening regulation and empowering residents, (4) tackling stigma and celebrating communities, (5) housing supply and home ownership.

# Key Messages

- The SHGP is only a small step towards delivering more social homes against a need for more affordable homes.
- Limited measures announced so far - housing borrowing cap and use of Right to Buy receipts.
- The scrapping of mandatory fixed term tenancies and sale of high value council homes is welcomed.
- The green paper is focussed on social tenants – key partners will be engaged in drawing up the Council's response to the consultation.

# 1: ENSURING HOMES ARE SAFE AND DECENT

## Ensuring resident safety:

- Hackitt Review & tenant involvement – to engage landlords on building safety.
- New approaches to engage residents on safety issues.

## Decent Homes (DH) standard:

- Review of current DH standard - exploring adding energy efficiency and fire safety.

## Initial view from Tower Hamlets Council:

- Changes to regulations of building control awaited.
- Implementation of recommendations from Fire Safety scrutiny review.
- £26.8m committed for fire safety improvements to Council housing stock.
- Proposals to improve communication with residents welcomed.
- Upholds existing Decent Homes Standards. 12.80% (April 17) of homes were non decent. Better Neighbourhoods programme in delivery. Un programmed works would results in budget implications.
- Calls for long term freedoms and flexibilities which allows councils to invest in their housing stock.



## 2: EFFECTIVE REGULATION OF COMPLAINTS

- Raising awareness of complaints processes, tenants rights and providing access to advice and support.
- Speeding up the complaints processes with an effective route for raising safety concerns.
- Complaints resolved swiftly and effectively and handling improved.
- Speeding up landlords' internal complaints processes – a code of practice.

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### **Initial view from Tower Hamlets Council:**

- A more simplified redress scheme is welcomed.
- The Council has recently reduced its complaints procedure from 3 to 2 stages.

### 3: EMPOWERING RESIDENTS AND STRENGTHENING THE REGULATOR

- New performance indicators and proposals to publish comparative ratings for landlords.
- Rewarding good performance through the allocation of Government funds.
- A stronger regulator and more powers to scrutinise the performance of local authority landlords
- Ensuring residents voices are heard; incl. through a representative body.
- Strengthening choice - more community ownership or community leadership of social landlords.
- Leasehold reforms including transparency and value for money.

#### **Initial view from Tower Hamlets**

- Supports the scrutiny of and publishing performance.
- Funding for new homes linked to league tables not welcomed, given housing need.
- Regulation changes are not likely to make RPs more accountable to Local Councils.
- Nation wide call on tenant voice welcomed.
- Appetite for stock transfer amongst council tenants expected to be limited.
- The Council supports TMO's and community land trusts - robust management structures, transparency and equality crucial.

## 4: TACKLING STIGMA AND CELEBRATING THRIVING COMMUNITIES

- Celebrating thriving communities by investing in community initiatives and events.
- Professionalism and a 'customer service culture' with neighbourhood management and Pls.
- New affordable homes designed to the same standard as other tenures with resident involvement.

### **Initial view from Tower Hamlets**

- A call for community events and initiatives to be supported with funding.
- Encouraging professionalism should be linked to the professional standards by the Chartered Institute of Housing.
- Design standards are not subject to tenure; planning policy, design guide and wheelchair brief supports.
- SHGP and the NPPF/London Plan working to different timetables and agendas.
- Tower Hamlets Draft New Local Plan at Examination in Public stage.

## 5: EXPANDING SUPPLY AND SUPPORTING HOME OWNERSHIP

- Supporting councils to build more – reforming Right to Buy, enabling housing companies, and repealing the Higher Value Assets policy.
- Longer term funding for Housing Associations.
- Delivering more affordable homes - supporting housing associations, community owned homes and resident-led estate regeneration.
- Social housing a springboard to homeownership – supporting shared ownership products (incl. increasing stake in home) and Right to Buy pilots.
- Understanding social housing allocations – fixed-term tenancies offered at discretion.
- Lifetime tenancies retained for victims of domestic abuse (DV) that relocate.

### Initial view from Tower Hamlets

- Proposals to encourage housing delivery welcomed although limited proposals allowing councils to invest or in properties to be let at social rents..
- Reference to social housing as an option of last resort or ‘springboard’ not helpful.
- No additional grants or proposals to replace £400m diverted for works post-Grenfell.
- A change to full housing ownership will reduce affordable housing supply, high rents (PRS) with low community benefits.
- Review of housing allocations welcomed; Council delivers Choice Based Lettings and updates register to incorporate new legislation and case law.
- Longer term funding for refuge and support services needed.

## NEXT STEPS – CONSULTATION RESPONSES

### DEADLINES:

**16 October 2018**

- **Social Housing Green Paper (Appendix [1](#))** - “A new deal for social housing”
- is the Government’s vision for social housing.
- **Social housing regulation – (Appendix [2](#))** call for evidence - Seeks information to support the review of the regulatory regime for social housing.

Return responses by email to  
[abidah.kamali@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:abidah.kamali@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

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SHGP Proposals	SHGP Questions	Response	Lead Officer
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## Questions 1-9 - Information on individual / organisation completing form

Chapter one - Ensuring homes are safe and decent			
Dame Judith Hackitt's independent review of building regulation and fire safety states that residents have an important role to play in identifying and reporting issues that may impact on the safety of the building and in meeting their obligations, including co-operating with crucial safety-related works, to ensure their own safety and that of their neighbours.	<b>10. How can residents best be supported in this important role of working with landlords to ensure homes are safe?</b>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent
There have been recent changes to drive up safety that apply to the private rented sector but not the social sector. For example, in 2015, we introduced a requirement to install smoke alarms on every storey in a private rented sector home, and carbon monoxide alarms in every room containing solid fuel burning appliances. Government has recently announced that there will be a mandatory requirement on landlords in the private rented sector to ensure electrical installations in their property are inspected every five years.	<b>11. Should new safety measures in the private rented sector also apply to social housing?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not sure Please explain your answer further below, if you wish to.		Dave Tolley / Marc Lancaster/ Susmita Sen / John Kiwanuka
The Decent Homes Standard requires social homes to be free of hazards that pose a risk to residents, to be in a reasonable state of repair, to have reasonably modern facilities and services such as kitchens and bathrooms and efficient heating and effective insulation.	<b>12. Are there any changes to what constitutes a decent home that we should consider?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not sure Please explain your answer further below, if you wish to.		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent/ Susmita Sen/ John Kiwanuka
	<b>13. Do we need additional measures to make sure social homes are safe and decent?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not sure If you answered yes, are there measures you would		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent/ Susmita Sen/ John Kiwanuka

SHGP Proposals	SHGP Questions	Response	Lead Officer
	suggest? Please answer below		
<b>Chapter two - Effective resolution of complaints</b>			
<p>We want to understand whether more residents need to be able to access independent advice and potentially advocacy to support them in making a complaint.</p> <p>Alternative dispute resolution and mediation services can be critical in allowing issues to be resolved swiftly and locally, while sustaining positive relationships between the parties involved. We are considering whether and how we might strengthen the mediation available for residents and landlords after initial attempts at resolution have failed.</p>	<p><b>14. Are there ways of strengthening the mediation opportunities available for landlords and residents to resolve disputes locally?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not sure</p> <p>If you answered yes, you can provide suggestions below.</p>		Susmita Sen / Ruth Dowden / Tracey St Hill
<p>Where a complaint is not resolved, a resident should refer their complaint to a “designated person”, such as a local MP, councillor or tenant panel, (known as the democratic filter), but if they do not want to do this or the designated person does not resolve or refer it on themselves, a resident must wait for eight weeks before the complaint can be referred to the Housing Ombudsman. There is a perception that the process of seeking redress took too long, and that the “democratic filter” contributed to delays.</p>	<p><b>15. Should we reduce the eight week waiting time to four weeks? Or should we remove the requirement for the 'democratic filter' stage altogether?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Support the option to reduce the waiting time to four weeks</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Support the option to remove the 'democratic filter' stage altogether</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Support no change</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not sure</p>		Susmita Sen / Ruth Dowden / Democratic Services / Tracey St Hill
<p>Reforming the filter stage would require primary legislation. We therefore also want to explore what more could be done in the meantime to help ensure that “designated persons” better understand their role and help to deliver swift, local resolutions for residents.</p>	<p><b>16. What can we do to ensure that “designated persons” are better able to promote local resolutions?</b></p>		Susmita Sen / Ruth Dowden / Democratic Services / Members Support/Tracey St Hill
<p>We are looking at awareness of housing dispute resolution services more widely as part of our housing redress consultation. We also want to consider if there is a case for an awareness</p>	<p><b>17. How can we ensure that residents understand how best to escalate a complaint and seek redress?</b></p>		Susmita Sen / Ruth Dowden / Andreas Christophorou /



SHGP Proposals	SHGP Questions	Response	Lead Officer
campaign to support social residents in particular to understand their rights to seek redress and to know how to make complaints and escalate them where necessary.			Tracey St Hill
We want to understand whether more residents need to be able to access independent advice and potentially advocacy to support them in making a complaint.	<b>18. How can we ensure that residents can access the right advice and support when making a complaint?</b>		Ruth Dowden / Susmita Sen/Tracey St Hill
There are no statutory guidelines setting out time frames within which providers should handle complaints. Dissatisfaction with the length of time it takes to resolve issues was mentioned at our engagement events. We therefore want to consider how to speed up landlord complaints processes.	<b>19. How can we best ensure that landlords' processes for dealing with complaints are fast and effective?</b>		Ruth Dowden / Susmita Sen / Tracey St Hill
	<b>20. How can we best ensure safety concerns are handled swiftly and effectively within the existing redress framework?</b>		Susmita Sen/ Tracey St Hill
<b>Chapter three - Empowering residents, making sure their voices are heard</b>			
<p>We consider that key performance indicators should be focused on issues of key importance to residents, covering those identified through our engagement, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keeping properties in good repair;</li> <li>- Maintaining the safety of buildings;</li> <li>- Effective handling of complaints;</li> <li>- Respectful and helpful engagement with residents; and,</li> <li>- Responsible neighbourhood management, including tackling anti-social behaviour.</li> </ul>	<b>21. Do the proposed key performance indicators cover the right areas?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / John Kiwanuka / Tracey St Hill
	<b>22. Are there any other areas that should be covered?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure Please explain your answer further below, if you wish to.		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / John Kiwanuka / Tracey St Hill
	<b>23. Should landlords report performance against these key performance indicators every year?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / John Kiwanuka / Tracey St Hill

SHGP Proposals	SHGP Questions	Response	Lead Officer
<p>The Regulator already expects landlords to publish information about complaints each year, but approaches vary. We are considering setting out a consistent approach on how landlords should report their complaint handling outcomes, by asking them to report how many complaints were resolved, how many were resolved after repeated complaints and how many were referred to the Ombudsman.</p>	<p><b>24. Should landlords report performance against these key performance indicators to the Regulator?</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Not sure</p>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / John Kiwanuka / Tracey St Hill
	<p><b>25. What more can be done to encourage landlords to be more transparent with their residents?</b></p>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / John Kiwanuka / Tracey St Hill
	<p><b>26. Do you think that there should be a better way of reporting the outcomes of landlords' complaint handling? How can this be made as clear and accessible as possible for residents?</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Not sure</p> <p>If yes, how can this be made as clear and accessible as possible for residents?</p>		Susmita Sen / Ruth Dowden
	<p><b>27. Is the Regulator best placed to prepare key performance indicators in consultation with residents and landlords?</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Unsure</p> <p>Please explain your answer further below, if you wish to.</p>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / John Kiwanuka / Tracey St Hill
<p>We want to consider the role of financial incentives and penalties to promote the best practice and</p>	<p><b>28. What would be the best approach to publishing key performance indicators that would allow residents to make the most effective comparison of performance?</b></p>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / John Kiwanuka / Tracey St Hill
	<p><b>29. Should we introduce a new criterion to the Affordable Homes Programme that reflects</b></p>		Mark Baigent Alison Thomas /

SHGP Proposals	SHGP Questions	Response	Lead Officer
deter the worst performance. For example, whether key performance indicators should help inform or influence the extent to which landlords receive funding and link the Affordable Homes Programme funding to the Regulator's governance rating as well as the viability rating.	<b>residents' experience of their landlord?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not sure Please explain your answer further below, if you wish to.		Jen Pepper
	<b>30. What other ways could we incentivise best practice and deter the worst, including for those providers that do not use Government funding to build?</b>		Mark Baigent
We want to understand more about whether the regulatory framework is setting the right expectations on how landlords should engage with residents, and how effective current resident scrutiny measures are. Landlords are required to consult residents at least once every three years on the best way of involving them in the governance and scrutiny of the housing management service, and demonstrate how they respond to tenants' needs in the way they provide services and how they communicate.	<b>31. Are current resident engagement and scrutiny measures effective?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not sure		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill
	<b>32 What more can be done to make residents aware of existing ways to engage with landlords and influence how services are delivered?</b>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill
A number of national tenant and resident organisations in the sector have been exploring the option of an independent platform for tenants, based on widespread engagement with tenants, to enable them to have their voices heard more effectively at a national level.	<b>33. Is there a need for a stronger representation for residents at a national level?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not sure If you answered yes, how should this best be achieved?		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill
We want to offer residents greater opportunity to exercise more choice and influence over the day to day housing services. We are exploring options to demonstrate how community leadership can be embedded in the governance and culture of	<b>34. Would there be interest in a programme to promote the transfer of local authority housing, particularly to community-based housing associations?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Afazul Hoque

SHGP Proposals	SHGP Questions	Response	Lead Officer
mainstream landlords.	<input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know If you answered yes, what would it need to make it work?		
	<b>35. Could a programme of trailblazers help to develop and promote options for greater resident-leadership within the sector?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not sure		Susmita Sen / Afazul Hoque
	<b>36. Are Tenant Management Organisations delivering positive outcomes for residents and landlords?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Don't know Please explain your answer further below if you wish to.		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent/ Carol Tubb
	<b>37. Are current processes for setting up and disbanding Tenant Management Organisations suitable? Do they achieve the right balance between residents' control and local accountability?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes – the current processes are suitable and achieve the right balance. <input type="radio"/> Yes – the current processes are suitable but do not achieve the right balance <input type="radio"/> No – the current processes are not suitable and do not achieve the right balance <input type="radio"/> Not sure Please explain your answer further below, if you wish to.		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent/ Carol Tubb
There have been schemes, such as Local	<b>38. Are there any other innovative ways of giving</b>		Susmita Sen /

SHGP Proposals	SHGP Questions	Response	Lead Officer
Management Agreements and Community Cashback (called Give it a Go grants) which have been designed to support social residents to take responsibility for a service within their local community.	<b>social housing residents greater choice and control over the services they receive from landlords?</b>		Mark Baigent
	<b>39. Do you think there are benefits to models that support residents to take on some of their own services?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure If yes, what is needed to make these work?		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent
	<b>40. How can landlords ensure residents have more choice over contractor services, while retaining oversight of quality and value for money?</b>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent
The Government has recently announced a significant programme of leasehold reform which will benefit all leaseholders, both in the private and social sectors.	<b>41. What more could we do to help leaseholders of a social housing landlord?</b>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent/ J Kiwanuka
<b>Chapter three continued - Empowering residents, making sure their voices are heard</b>			
Parliament has set the Regulator of Social Housing a consumer objective, which is: • to support the provision of social housing that is well-managed and of appropriate quality; • to ensure that actual or potential tenants of social housing have an appropriate degree of choice and protection; • to ensure that tenants of social housing have the opportunity to be involved in its management and to hold their landlords to account; and, • to encourage registered providers of social housing to contribute to the environmental, social and economic well-being of the areas in which the housing is situated.	<b>42. Does the Regulator have the right objective on consumer regulation?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure Please explain your answer further below, if you wish to.		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill

SHGP Proposals	SHGP Questions	Response	Lead Officer
<p>The Regulator has published four outcome-based consumer standards to deliver the consumer regulation objective. These are:</p> <p>1.The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard (July 2017) which includes a requirement for landlords to provide choices and effective communication of information for residents on the delivery of all standards, and to have a clear, simple and accessible complaints procedure.</p> <p>2.The Home Standard (April 2012) which requires homes to be safe, decent and kept in a good state of repair.</p> <p>3.The Tenancy Standard (April 2012) which requires registered providers to let their home in a fair, transparent and efficient way, and enable tenants to gain access to opportunities to exchange their tenancy.</p> <p>4.The Neighbourhood and Community Standard (April 2012) which requires registered providers to keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe; help promote social, environmental and economic well-being in areas where they own homes; and work in partnership with others to tackle anti-social behaviour in neighbourhoods where they own homes.</p>	<p><b>43. Should any of the consumer standards change to ensure that landlords provide a better service for residents in line with the new key performance indicators proposed?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not sure</p> <p>If yes, how?</p>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill
<p>We also want to know whether landlords and residents would benefit from further guidance on what good looks like, without being overly prescriptive.</p>	<p><b>44. Should the Regulator be given powers to produce other documents, such as a Code of Practice, to provide further clarity about what is expected from the consumer standards?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not sure</p>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill
<p>Where a landlord breaches a consumer standard, the Regulator can only use its regulatory and enforcement powers if there is or may be a “serious detriment” to existing or potential residents. The</p>	<p><b>45. Is “serious detriment” the appropriate threshold for intervention by the Regulator for a breach of consumer standards?</b></p>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill

SHGP Proposals	SHGP Questions	Response	Lead Officer
Regulator interprets this as meaning where there is “serious actual harm or serious potential harm to tenants.”	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not sure If no, what would be an appropriate threshold for intervention?		
To support a more proactive approach to enforcing the consumer standards we are considering arming residents with information through the introduction of a number of key performance indicators and for landlord performance to be published. Our current thinking is that the Regulator should monitor the key performance indicators to identify where there may be issues of concern with performance. The Regulator would then be able to make a risk-based assessment of how and where to intervene, including through more regular or phased interventions.	<b>46. Should the Regulator adopt a more proactive approach to regulation of consumer standards?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not sure		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill
	<b>47. Should the Regulator use key performance indicators and phased interventions as a means to identify and tackle poor performance against these consumer standards?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not sure If yes, how should this be targeted?		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill
We want to make sure that regardless of whether someone is a resident of a housing association or a local authority, the same minimum standards of service apply. The Government respects the democratic mandate of local authorities, but this must be balanced against the need to ensure that residents are protected.	<b>48. Should the Regulator have greater ability to scrutinise the performance and arrangements of local authority landlords?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not sure If yes, what measures would be appropriate?		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill
Where a breach of the consumer standards meets the “serious detriment” test, the Regulator will publish a regulatory notice and consider the most appropriate course of action. The Regulator is able to use a number of regulatory	<b>49. Are the existing enforcement measures described above adequate?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill

SHGP Proposals	SHGP Questions	Response	Lead Officer
<p>and enforcement powers where necessary to ensure compliance with the standards. The Regulator has different tools available depending on the landlord, and has published guidance setting out how it will use its powers. The key powers include:</p> <p>Powers applicable to all landlords :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey to assess the condition of stock</li> <li>• Inspection to establish compliance with the regulatory requirements</li> <li>• Hold an Inquiry where it suspects landlord mismanagement</li> <li>• Issue an Enforcement Notice</li> <li>• Requirement to tender some or all of its management functions</li> <li>• Requirement to transfer management of housing to a specified provider</li> </ul> <p>Powers applicable only to private registered providers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue Fines</li> <li>• Order payment of compensation to a resident</li> <li>• Appointment of manager to improve performance of the landlord</li> <li>• Transfer land to another provider to improve management of land (following an Inquiry)</li> <li>• Suspension and removal of officers in cases of mismanagement (during or after Inquiry)</li> <li>• Appoint a new officer to address service failure and improve management of company</li> </ul> <p>Power applicable only to local authority landlords:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint an adviser to improve performance</li> </ul>	<p><input type="radio"/> Not sure</p> <p>If you answered no, what other enforcement powers should be considered?</p>		
<p>As part of examining the scope of the Regulator's role we want to consider the case for extending its remit to other organisations that manage social housing. The Regulator will hold the local authority landlord to account for the way services are delivered so it is vital that the local authority has good oversight arrangements in place to ensure that management organisations provide a good</p>	<p><b>50. Is the current framework for local authorities to hold management organisations such as Tenant Management Organisations and Arms Length Management Organisations to account sufficiently robust?</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p>		<p>Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / John Kiwanuka / Carol Tubb</p>



SHGP Proposals	SHGP Questions	Response	Lead Officer
service	<input type="radio"/> Not sure If you answered no, what more is needed to provide effective oversight of these organisations?		
We want to be clear and transparent about how the Regulator is accountable to Parliament for meeting its statutory objectives. Upcoming legislative changes will shortly establish it as a standalone Non-Departmental Public Body. As such it will be accountable to Parliament in the same way as other Non-Departmental Bodies.	<b>51. What further steps, if any, should Government take to make the Regulator more accountable to Parliament?</b>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent
<b>Chapter Four - Tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities</b>			
We want to celebrate residents' role in shaping fantastic places by recognising the best neighbourhoods	<b>52. How could we support or deliver a best neighbourhood competition?</b>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill
	<b>53. In addition to sharing positive stories of social housing residents and their neighbourhoods, what more could be done to tackle stigma?</b>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill
We want to embed a customer service culture and attract, retain and develop the right people with the right behaviours for the challenging and rewarding range of roles offered by the sector.	<b>54. What is needed to further encourage the professionalisation of housing management to ensure all staff delivers a good quality of service?</b>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill
We are minded to introduce a key performance indicator that will capture how well landlords undertake their neighbourhood management responsibilities.	<b>55. What key performance indicator should be used to measure whether landlords are providing good neighbourhood management?</b>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill
	<b>56. What evidence is there of the impact of the important role that many landlords are playing beyond their key responsibilities?</b>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill
	<b>57. Should landlords report on the social value they deliver?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Not sure If you answered no, what more is needed to provide effective oversight of these organisations?		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill

SHGP Proposals	SHGP Questions	Response	Lead Officer
We are proposing to introduce a key performance indicator to help tackle anti-social behaviour, but we will want to consider how this could impact on areas, and whether it could lead to some people feeling more stigmatised.	<b>58. How are landlords working with local partners to tackle anti-social behaviour?</b>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill
	<b>59. What key performance indicator could be used to measure this work?</b>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill
We want to ensure that the revised National Planning Policy Framework is applied to social housing in the right way. In particular we will: - Strengthen planning guidance to take into account the principles of Secured by Design: to ensure that external spaces, parks, streets and courts are well-lit and well maintained so they are safe from crime and the fear of crime. - Strengthen guidance to encourage healthy and active communities: building on the NPPF's healthy and safe communities chapter. - Strengthen guidance to encourage new affordable homes to be designed to the same high-quality as other tenures and well-integrated within developments. - Encourage design that reflects changing needs: for example, inclusive design for an ageing population and family housing at higher densities for effective use of land.	<b>60. What other ways can planning guidance support good design in the social sector?</b>		Owen Whalley / Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill
Neighbourhood planning gives communities power to agree and implement a shared vision for their neighbourhood. However, we are aware that too often local people hear about schemes after a planning application has been submitted.	<b>61. How can we encourage social housing residents to be involved in the planning and design of new developments?</b>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Tracey St Hill
<b>Chapter Five: Expanding supply and supporting home ownership</b>			
Recognising the need for fiscal responsibility, this Green Paper seeks views on whether the government's current arrangements strike the right balance between providing grant funding for Housing Associations and Housing Revenue	<b>62. Do current arrangements strike the right balance between providing grant funding for Housing Associations and Housing Revenue Account borrowing for Local Authorities</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, current arrangements strike the right		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Paul Leeson

SHGP Proposals	SHGP Questions	Response	Lead Officer
Account borrowing for Local Authorities	balance <input type="radio"/> No, they don't strike the right balance <input type="radio"/> Not sure Please explain your answer further below if you wish to.		
	<b>63. How we can boost community led housing and overcome the barriers communities experience to developing new community owned homes?</b>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent
We want to give housing associations and others the certainty they require to develop ambitious plans to deliver the affordable homes this country desperately needs	<b>64. What level of additional affordable housing, over existing investment plans, could be delivered by social housing providers if they were given longer term certainty over funding?</b>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Alison Thomas / Jen Pepper
We are determined to remove the barriers that many shared owners face. We want everyone who enters shared ownership to have the opportunity to increase equity in their home.	<b>65. How can we best support providers to develop new shared ownership products that enable people to build up more equity in their homes?</b>		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent / Alison Thomas / Jen Pepper

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the SHGP consultation. Your feedback will be collated into a combined response on behalf of Tower Hamlets Council as signed off by the Mayor in cabinet.

**Once completed, please return your consultation responses by email to:**

**Abidah Kamali**

Business Improvement and Performance Coordinator

Corporate Strategy and Equality

Governance Directorate

☎ 020 7364 7038

✉ [abidah.kamali@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:abidah.kamali@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

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Proposals	Questions	Response	Lead Officer
<b>Principles of Regulation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Details to protect and empower residents</li> <li>To secure both public and private investment to enable delivery of new homes</li> </ul> <b>Economic Regulation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RPs of social housing are financially viable</li> <li>Support provision of social housing to meet demand</li> <li>Value for money from public investment</li> <li>Burden not imposed on public funds</li> </ul> <b>Consumer Regulation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social housing well managed and in appropriate quality</li> <li>Tenants have choice and protection</li> <li>Tenants involvement in management, holds landlords to accountability</li> <li>RPs of social housing contribute to social and economic benefit</li> </ul>	<b>Q1.</b> We would welcome information on whether the current statutory objectives, and monitoring and enforcement powers are right, whether they need amending, and if so, how.		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent
	<b>Q2.</b> We would welcome information on whether the “regulated self-assurance” approach to regulation of social housing is the right approach. If not, how should it be changed?		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent
<b>Economic Regulation</b> Regulator takes proactive risk based approach to economic regulation for private register providers to help in resolving financial and governance problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help secure lender confidence and ensure organisation are financially viable</li> </ul>	<b>Q3.</b> We would welcome information on the effectiveness of the current approach to economic regulation.		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent
	<b>Q4.</b> We would welcome information on any areas of the economic regulatory framework which might not work effectively or provide sufficient oversight when meeting the challenges of the evolving sector.		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent
<b>The Regulatory System as a Whole</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulator has right enforcement tools available to ensure compliance with economic and consumer regulations</li> </ul>	<b>Q5.</b> We would welcome information on any specific issues that we should be aware of as the review progresses, to ensure that we retain a coherent regulatory framework.		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent
	<b>Q6.</b> We would welcome information on any risks arising from improving the approach to consumer regulation enforcement.		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent
<b>Relationship with the Hackitt Review</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hackitt review called for a new regulatory framework that needs to have greater transparency and accountability</li> <li>Implementation plan will be available in</li> </ul>	<b>Q7.</b> What are your views on risks and opportunities presented by the regulatory regime suggested by Dame Judith Hackitt and how that should work with social housing regulation?		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent

Proposals	Questions	Response	Lead Officer
Autumn 2018 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ensure regulatory Frameworks is effectively together</li></ul>			
Any Other Suggestions for Improvement	Q8. We would welcome any further information that might inform the review of the regulatory framework.		Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent

# Empty homes and second homes

Page 31

**Marc Lancaster**  
**September 2018**

Agenda Item 4.2

# What is an empty home?

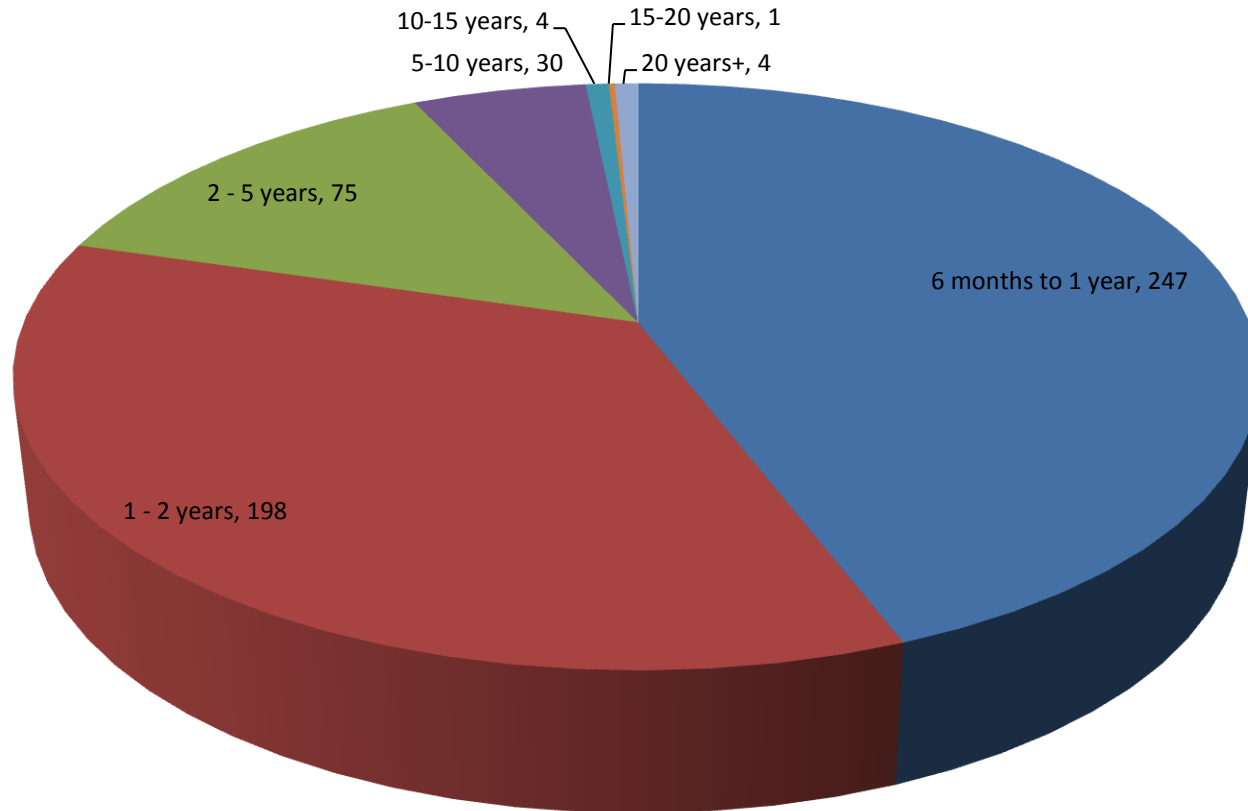
- MHCLG: a dwelling unoccupied for six months or more – excluding...
  - ✗ owner is in hospital, prison, or care
  - ✗ repossessions
  - ✗ probate
  - ✗ 'second homes'



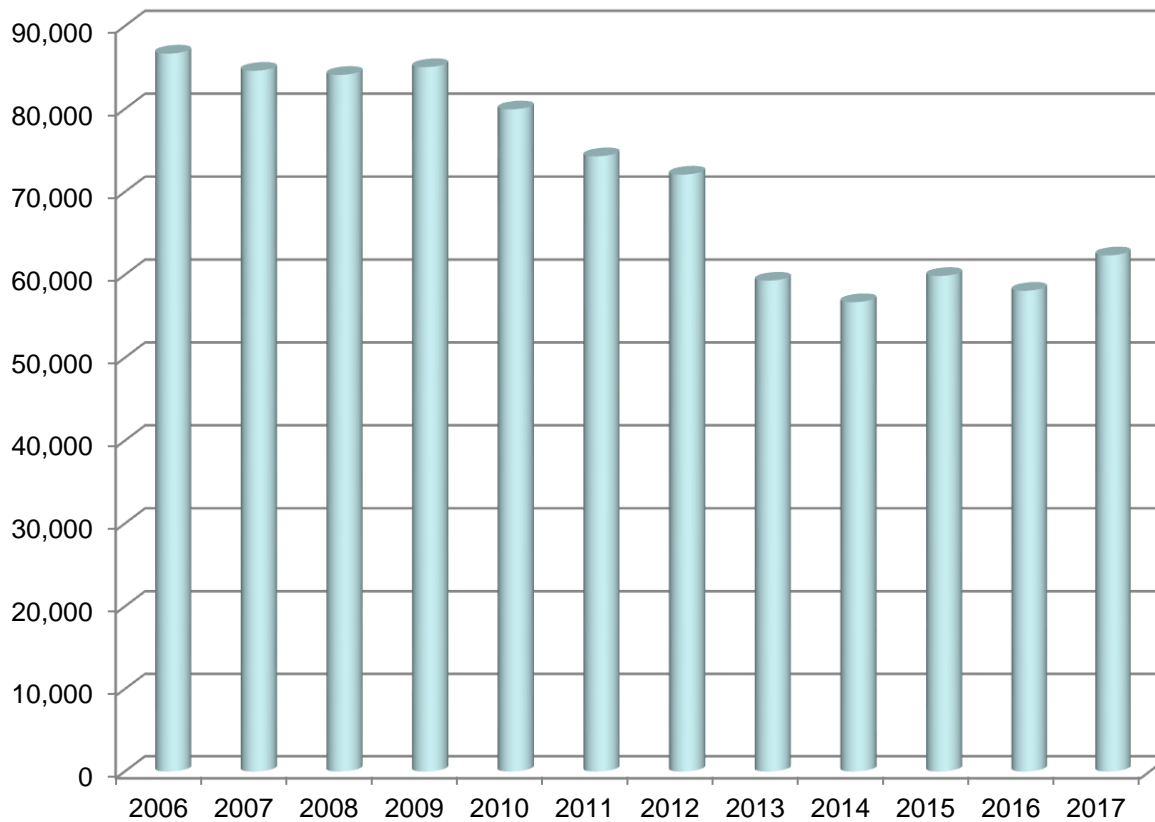
# 1,565 homes empty for less than 6 months



# 559 homes empty for more than 6 months

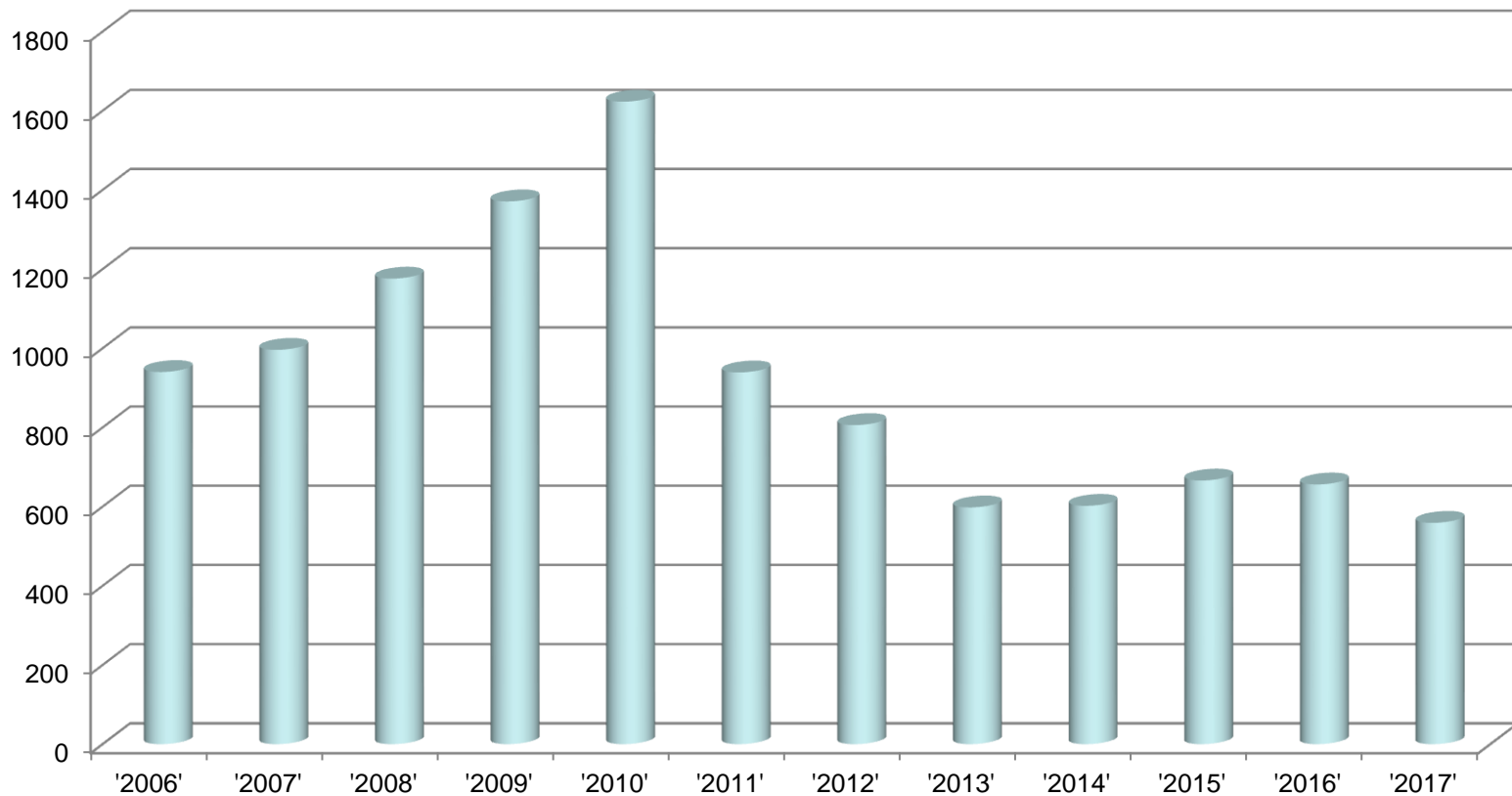


# Empty homes in London



# Empty homes in Tower Hamlets

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# Council Tax – ‘empty homes premium’

- April 2013: 50% premium for properties ‘unoccupied and substantially unfurnished’ for more than two years
- ‘Second Homes’? Even if ‘unoccupied’, pay standard rate if not ‘substantially unfurnished’

# The Rating and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Bill 2017-19

- Awaiting date for consideration of Lords amendments
- Empty and substantially unfurnished for more than:
  - two years = 200%
  - five years = 300%
  - ten years = 400%





# 1,264 Second Homes

190 for between 5 & 10 years

19 for more than 10 years

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# **Spotlight on voids**

Page 41

**Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee**  
26 September 2018

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# 2

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# Background

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## Metrics

- ❖ THH handles c 44 new voids per month
- ❖ There are c 600 new tenancies per year including 450 -500 re-let through the Council's Choice-Based Lettings bidding process.

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# 3

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# Background

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## Historic performance

	Short term	Long term
2013/14	35.46	118.54
2014/15	40.5	169.16

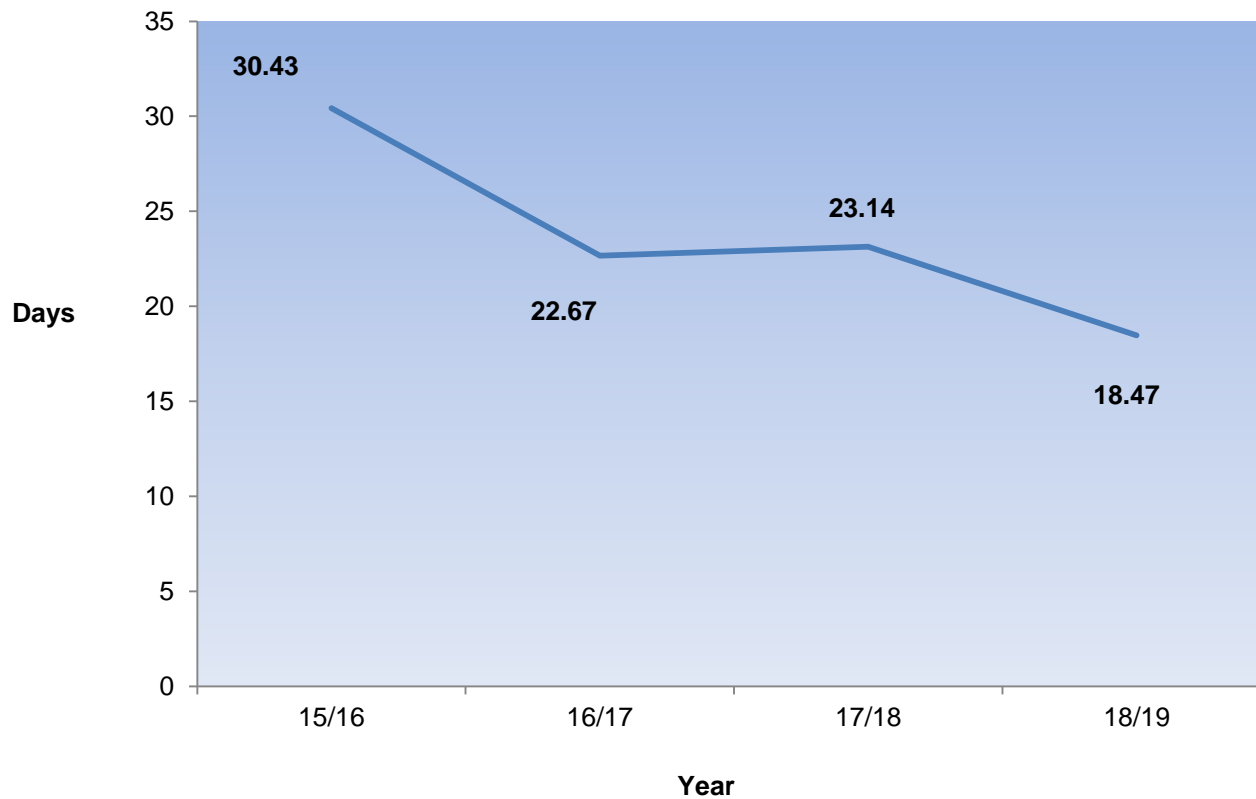
- Normal or 'short term' voids were taking over **35** days on average to re-let.
- 'Long term' voids – those undergoing major works – were taking an average of well over a **100** days to re-let.
- The rent lost on voids was £796,000 in 2014-15.

# 4

# Improving performance

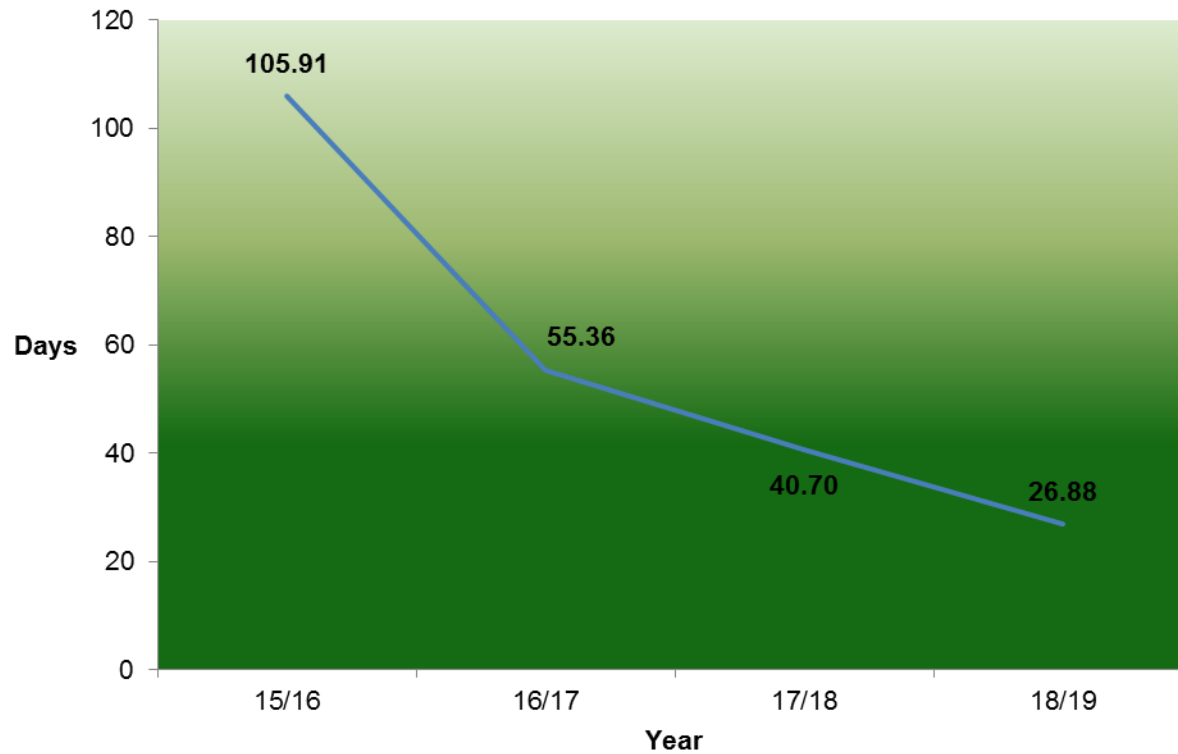
# 5

## Short term void performance 2015-16 to 2018-19

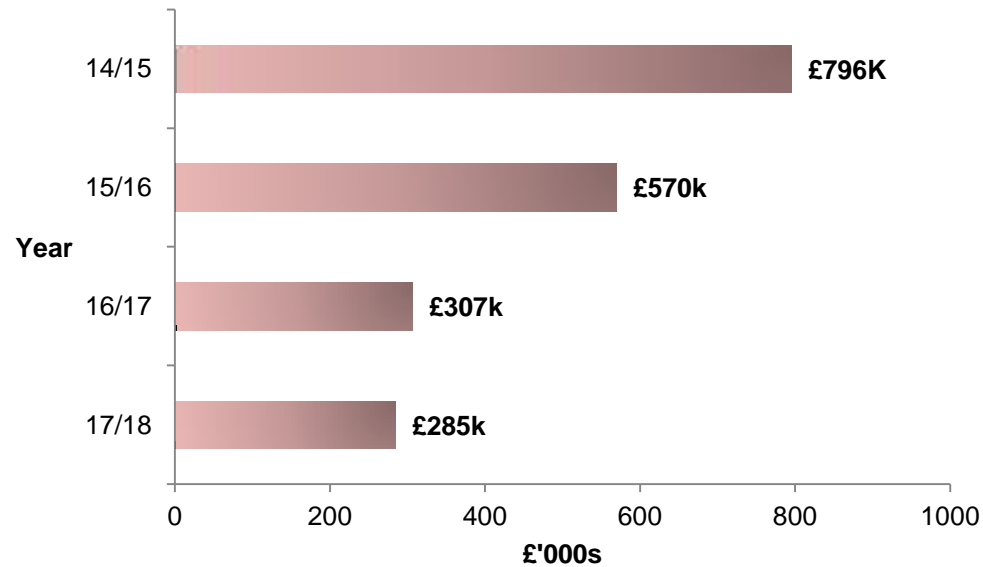


# 6

## Long term void performance 2015-16 to 2018-19



## Void rent loss 2014-15 to 2017-18



# **Voids Review 2015-16**



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# 9

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## **What did we change?**

- Agreed one voids works path
- One clear lettable standard, introduced early by Lettings team
- Clear and revised definition of a 'potential void' to reduce risk of wasted applicant bids
- Use of key safes for voids
- Improved documentation and standardised working
- Decision to create a dedicated Voids team

## **Voids Team**

Key-to-key focus including all viewings and sign ups

- 1 team rather than 27 NHOs
- Consistent and robust focus on key management
- Pre-termination visits ensure properties are left in good condition and property elements are accurate on the system
- Closer working with the Repairs Team and Mears to improve quality of voids and reduce refusals
- Improved experience of applicants and new tenants

## Key management

### 1. Reclaiming keys at the end of tenancies:

Rule 9 of our Tenancy Conditions requires tenants to ***hand in the keys of their home to the office which manages their property, on or before the date the notice expires***

In addition:

- Tenants can be charged for the cost of getting new keys cut and pay rent until we do so
- If keys are returned later than midday on the Monday on which the tenancy ends, an additional week's rent is charged

When keys are received a lock change is carried out the same day.

### 2. Keys withheld

If keys are not returned, a forced entry is carried out and the lock changed.

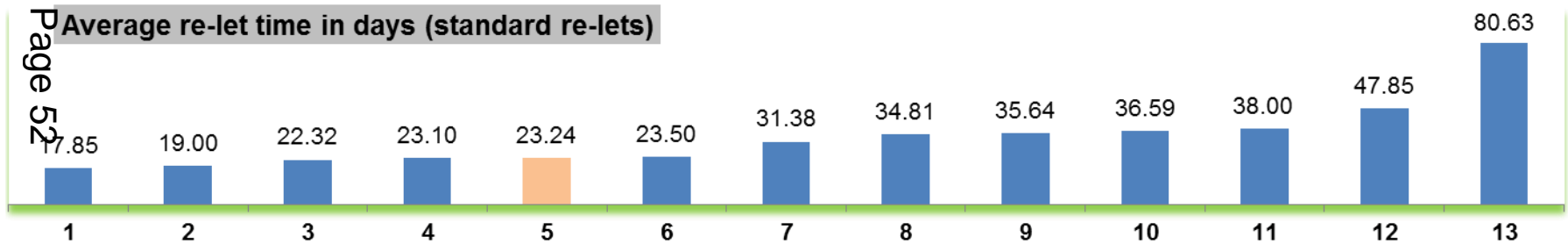
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# 12

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## How we compare now?

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# Voids and Empty Homes

Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee

26<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Sandra Fawcett

Chair - Tower Hamlets Housing Forum (THHF)

# Importance of void management

## ➤ Make effective use of stock

- Reducing time in temporary accommodation

## ➤ Maximise income

- Void properties reduce rental income

## ➤ Effective asset management

- Maintaining homes and meeting H&S requirements

## ➤ Landlord's reputation

- Prolonged or high number of void properties indicates poor management

## ➤ Sustainable communities

- Long term voids can lead to decline of an area

## Dealing with voids

- Notification of tenancy terminating
- Pre-void property inspection
- Clear instructions given to outgoing tenant on their responsibilities
- Robust targets and time-frames in place
- Responsibilities for voids clear for repairs, lettings, housing teams
- Effective monitoring in place

# Empty property management

## ➤ When keys are not returned

- Eviction
- Death of tenant, no family
- Property illegally occupied
- Abandoned

## ➤ Abandoned properties

- Robust process for reporting and investigating
- Act quickly
- Take legal steps to end tenancy
- Recover, repair and relet





# Lettings process

## ➤ Advertise during notice period, when

- Existing tenant offered and accepted another property
- Existing tenant has died and no successor

## ➤ ELHP Nomination Agreement

- Promotes best practice
- Standardised approach by LA and RP
- Consistency in allocation processes





## Key stages

### ➤ Notice generates tasks and targets

- Date the keys are due
- Starts lettings process
- Pre-void inspection indicates work needed to relet

### ➤ Keys returned

- Tenancy ends
- Locks changed – suited locks/key boxes
- Enable multiple trades/works to be done
- Viewings
- Let through the Common Housing Register

## The numbers

- THHF Members join the Common Housing Register
- 2017/18 – Register let 1,680 new/ relet homes across the borough
- Challenging targets set by Registered Providers
- Average void turnaround time – range from 14 to 30 days depending on stock type and condition

**Thank you for listening**  
**Any questions?**

# Presentation to Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee

## 26 September 2018

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**Rafiqul Hoque**  
**Head of Housing Options**

Agenda Item 4.4



# The Tower Hamlets Common Housing Register

- Currently 19280 households on the housing register (11,280 in HN) (August 2018)
- Over 7961 categorised as being overcrowded – 1649 lacking 2 or more bedrooms
- **Number of under occupiers 1013 – bedroom(s) surplus to need**
- 8000 of these have no identified housing need
- In 2017/18 only 1680 properties were let
- Over 2000 households have been on the register for more than 12 years

# Lettings

## Performance 17/18

- 1,680 households rehoused, 518 into Tower Hamlets Homes and 1,160 into RP properties
- Rehoused 897 overcrowded households (53% of total lets, ↑ 4ppts since March 16)
- Rehoused 67 under occupying CHR tenants, 40 of which gave up 3 beds+ (down 52% and 59% respectively since March 16)
- 42 lets to project 120 households, 200+ families rehoused since project inception

# Priority Bands

## Band 1A

- Currently 19280 households on the housing register (11,280 in Housing Need - August 2018)
- Emergencies
- Medical/Disability need for ground floor or wheelchair
- Priority decants
- Under-occupiers

## Band 1B

- Priority medical
- Priority social
- Decants
- Priority Target Groups

## Band 2

- 2 A – Overcrowded, and Homeless
- 2B – in housing need but **do** not meet 3 years residency criterion

## Band 3 – Applicants not in housing need





# The Common Housing Register

- The Council offers a Choice Based Lettings Scheme – allowing applicants to bid for homes they consider suitable for them.
- Properties are advertised on the Tower Hamlets Homeseekers website: [www.thhs.org.uk](http://www.thhs.org.uk)
- There is no average time for how long people will wait – applicants given queue position at point of bidding
- Waiting time for an offer depends on a number of factors; priority band, bedroom size needed and bidding strategy
- Families in Band 3 unlikely to receive an offer
- Applicants in other Bands who do not bid will not receive an offer
- Applicants who limit their choices will wait far longer e.g. only bidding for properties with gardens, or on the ground floor or in very limited area
- Applicants need to be flexible and realistic with their bidding strategies to achieve a quicker offer
- Offers refused – 3 offers then demotion for 12 months. Homeless, management and quota group cases receive one offer only.

# Health Assessments

**Will only be awarded where a household member has a severe, long term limiting illness or a permanent and substantial disability including mental illness or disability**

**AND**

**their health and quality of life is severely affected by the home they live in**

**A priority medical award is not given on the basis of the medical condition or disability alone, but on how this is affected by the current living conditions**

# Health Assessments

- In reaching their decisions officers have access to advice and guidance from Occupational Therapists, GPs and Consultant Psychiatrists
- Each individual assessment will be based on its own merits, each application is different
- Applicants are informed at all stages about progress of their application
- Decisions can take up to eight weeks depending on the level of information required
- Applicants can request a review if they do not agree with the decision. This will be carried out by a different health advisor and more senior officer
- Project 120 – Rehousing wheelchair cases to suitable homes

# Next Steps

- On-line housing applications and customer self-service provisions
- Better customer service through a streamlined housing application process
- Work with CHR partners to maximise housing opportunities for applicants
- Engage residents and staff in delivering service improvements