

**Executive Decision
Individual Decision Notice
Special Urgency Notification**



Decision Maker: Cabinet, 16 May 24

Classification:
[Unrestricted]

Improving the Homelessness Service

Under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 – notice is hereby given that an Executive Key Decision is required to be taken under Special Urgency provisions as it is not possible to provide at least 5 clear days’ notice of the decision.

As required under the above regulations, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed to the above decision being taken under the Special Urgency Provision.

This notification will be published as soon as possible before the decision is taken.

Reason why it is impractical to provide 28 clear days’ notice of the decision:

The cost to all local authorities of meeting their obligations to those experiencing homelessness has increased exponentially recently. Higher levels of investment have been made by Tower Hamlets. However, the additional investment made has been driven by substantial increases in 3rd party costs of temporary accommodation for a higher number of people. The consequent burden and pressures faced by internal staff teams to support the substantial increase in demand now needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Although there has been heavy investment, the lack of a suitable structuring of the service fit to deal with the changing external service landscape and demands – coupled with the omission of a comprehensive service review, redesign and new delivery plan – has compounded these issues.

Signature:

Julie Lorraine

Date:

14/05/24

Comments of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Signature:

Date:

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Further details of the decision to be taken:

Key Decision? Yes	Ward(s) All Wards
Summary of Decision	<p>The complexity and significance of the national housing crises alongside the London wide additional pressures associated with the characteristics of the capital’s housing landscape have an amplified impact on Tower Hamlets due to the unique demographics of the Borough.</p> <p>The Council’s Housing Options Service is facing unprecedented levels of increasing demand and levels of complexity in homelessness cases. This is the underlying driver constraining the services’ ability to discharge our statutory duties effectively. Housing is a primary corporate priority for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The Council’s commitment to ensuring accessible high-quality customer centric public services drives our ambition to exceed, rather than simply meet the minimum levels of statutory housing duties.</p> <p>The exponential increase in volumes of homelessness cases in Q4 to the last financial year drives an immediate call to action. Over the years, there has been reconfiguring of resources, which has seen resources moved from the front end of the service into management positions. This – alongside the growing demand on the service – has had a negative impact on the service’s ability to adapt to these demands and deliver. We do not have the luxury of waiting for longer term transformation to materialise - we need to act now, or we will not resource the bigger changes effectively.</p> <p>The cost to all local authorities of meeting their obligations to those experiencing homelessness has increased exponentially recently. Higher levels of investment have been made by Tower Hamlets. However, the additional investment made has been driven by substantial increases in 3rd party costs of temporary accommodation for a higher number of people. The consequent burden and pressures faced by internal staff teams to support the substantial increase in demand now needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>Although there has been heavy investment, the lack of a suitable structuring of the service fit to deal with the changing external service landscape and demands – coupled with the omission of a comprehensive service review, redesign and new delivery plan – has compounded these issues.</p> <p>This paper seeks significant additional investment to the resources available to the service, to address its fundamental structural issues driven by lack of a cogent and adapted service design and</p>

	<p>delivery plan and missing front-line resources that have been offset by an increase in management positions. This has led to a drop in service-satisfaction for residents and inability to meet exponentially increasing demand. The investment will help to strengthen and support the invaluable work being undertaken by our skilled and professional staff teams in our current operations, and to complete a full service review and redesign underpinned by a robust delivery plan.</p> <p>This report sets out a recommendation to immediately invest in additional resources for frontline services to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop capacity on the frontline to provide an empathetic and dignified response to every service user seeking support. • Address the pressures within the service caused by increasing demands including high caseloads and backlogs. • Alleviate pressures on the workforce and build capacity for staff to access additional support and development. • Implement expanded face to face service hours to provide those in need with wider access to the service including later opening hours on weekdays and on a Saturday morning. • Secure improvements to the council's telephony services providing benefits to the wider organisations.
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Community Plan Theme	Homes for the future ; Invest in public services; Tackling the cost of living crisis
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding (Councillor Kabir Ahmed)
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	N/A
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	<p>Investing additional resources in the frontline will have a positive impact on vulnerable residents or groups who may be experience inequalities in housing by increasing the capacity and ability of services to provide a tailored and empathetic service to residents.</p> <p>Increasing capacity and alleviating pressure on individuals and the service will support staff health and wellbeing and contribute all round to the improvements being sought within the Service Improvement Programme.</p>
Contact details for comments or additional information	Nicola Klinger (Housing Companies Manager) nicola.klinger@towerhamlets.gov.uk

What supporting documents or other information will be available?	N/A
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why (Paragraph number – see notes section)?	No, Unrestricted

NOTES

Advance notice of Key Decisions

Key decisions are all those decisions which involve major spending, or savings, or which have a significant impact on the local community. The precise definition of a key decision adopted by Tower Hamlets is contained in Section 3 of the [Constitution](#). Key Decisions are taken by the Mayor, or the Mayor in Cabinet.

Individual notices of new Key Decisions will be published on the website as they are known, whilst a Forward Plan collating these decisions will be published 28 days before each Cabinet meeting. The Forward Plan will be published on the Council's website and will also be available to view at the Town Hall and Libraries, Ideas Centres and One Stop Shops if required. [The Committee pages](#) on the Council website include copies of the Forward Plan, Cabinet and other meeting dates and the publication dates of the Forward Plan.

If, due to reasons of urgency, a Key Decision has to be taken where 28 days' notice have not been given. Notice will be published (including on the website) as early as possible and Urgency Procedures as set out in the Constitution will have to be followed.

The most effective way for the public to make their views known about the issues listed in the Forward Plan is to examine the consultation column of the Forward Plan, and/or contact the report author or Cabinet Lead Member as soon as possible, and no later than 10 working days before the decision is expected to be taken.

Reports, appendices and background papers will be available on the Council's website 5 clear working days before the Cabinet meeting. For all other information or to submit documents in relation to any issue, please contact the relevant officer.

Notice of Intention to Conduct Business in Private

The Council is also required to give at least 28 days' notice if it wishes to consider any of the reports on the agenda of an Executive meeting (such as Cabinet) in private session. The last row of each item below will indicate any proposal to consider that item in private session. Should you wish to make any representations in relation to an item being considered in private please contact Democratic Services on the contact details listed below. Note that this applies to Cabinet but not to Individual Mayoral Decisions outside of Cabinet.

The notice may reference a paragraph of Section 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act. In summary those paragraphs refer to the following types of exempt information (more information is available in the Constitution):

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority handling the information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:-
 - a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - a) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Democratic Services Contact Details:

Contact Matthew Mannion
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