

# HOUSING & REGENERATION SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 3 November 2020 at 6.30 p.m.

Online 'Virtual' Meeting - <https://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

This meeting is open to the public to view.

**Members:**

Chair: Councillor Ehtasham Haque

Vice-Chair:

Councillor Amina Ali, Councillor Dipa Das, Councillor Marc Francis, Councillor Helal Uddin and Councillor Andrew Wood

**Substitutes:**

Councillor Shad Chowdhury, Councillor Mohammed Pappu and Councillor Leema Qureshi

**Co-opted Members:**

Anne Ambrose

Tenant Representative

Moshin Hamim

Leaseholder Representative

[The quorum for this body is 3 voting Members]

**Contact for further enquiries:**

The Committee Services Officer

Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG

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Web: <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk>

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**PAGE  
NUMBER(S)**

### **1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

### **2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

The Sub-Committee are asked to appoint a Vice-Chair for this Municipal Year.

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

**5 - 6**

Members are reminded to consider the categories of interest in the Code of Conduct for Members to determine whether they have an interest in any agenda item and any action they should take. For further details, please see the attached note from the Monitoring Officer.

Members are reminded to declare the nature of the interest and the agenda item it relates to. Please note that ultimately, it's the Members' responsibility to declare any interests and to update their register of interest form as required by the Code.

If in doubt as to the nature of your interest, you are advised to seek advice prior to the meeting by contacting the Monitoring Officer or Democratic Services

<b>4.</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)</b>	<b>7 - 12</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION</b>	
<b>5 .1</b>	<b>Housing &amp; Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership and Dates of Meetings 2020/21</b>	<b>13 - 22</b>
<b>5 .2</b>	<b>Approval of H&amp;RSSC Work Programme 2020/21</b>	<b>23 - 24</b>
<b>5 .3</b>	<b>Social Landlords' Performance Report</b>	<b>25 - 32</b>
<b>5 .4</b>	<b>Homeless Reduction Act (HRA)- One Year On - Report for Approval</b>	<b>33 - 48</b>
<b>5 .5</b>	<b>Housing Options Service Delivery</b>	<b>49 - 66</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	

#### **Next Meeting of the Sub- Committee**

The next meeting of the Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub Committee will be held on Wednesday, 10 February 2021 at 6.30 p.m. in Online 'Virtual' Meeting - <https://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

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# Agenda Item 3

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AT MEETINGS– NOTE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER**

This note is for guidance only. For further details please consult the Code of Conduct for Members at Part C, Section 31 of the Council's Constitution

### **(i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)**

You have a DPI in any item of business on the agenda where it relates to the categories listed in **Appendix A** to this guidance. Please note that a DPI includes: (i) Your own relevant interests; (ii) Those of your spouse or civil partner; (iii) A person with whom the Member is living as husband/wife/civil partners. Other individuals, e.g. Children, siblings and flatmates do not need to be considered. Failure to disclose or register a DPI (within 28 days) is a criminal offence.

Members with a DPI, (unless granted a dispensation) must not seek to improperly influence the decision, must declare the nature of the interest and leave the meeting room (including the public gallery) during the consideration and decision on the item – unless exercising their right to address the Committee.

**DPI Dispensations and Sensitive Interests.** In certain circumstances, Members may make a request to the Monitoring Officer for a dispensation or for an interest to be treated as sensitive.

### **(ii) Non - DPI Interests that the Council has decided should be registered – (Non - DPIs)**

You will have 'Non DPI Interest' in any item on the agenda, where it relates to (i) the offer of gifts or hospitality, (with an estimated value of at least £25) (ii) Council Appointments or nominations to bodies (iii) Membership of any body exercising a function of a public nature, a charitable purpose or aimed at influencing public opinion.

Members must declare the nature of the interest, but may stay in the meeting room and participate in the consideration of the matter and vote on it **unless:**

- A reasonable person would think that your interest is so significant that it would be likely to impair your judgement of the public interest. **If so, you must withdraw and take no part in the consideration or discussion of the matter.**

### **(iii) Declarations of Interests not included in the Register of Members' Interest.**

Occasions may arise where a matter under consideration would, or would be likely to, **affect the wellbeing of you, your family, or close associate(s) more than it would anyone else living in the local area** but which is not required to be included in the Register of Members' Interests. In such matters, Members must consider the information set out in paragraph (ii) above regarding Non DPI - interests and apply the test, set out in this paragraph.

### **Guidance on Predetermination and Bias**

Member's attention is drawn to the guidance on predetermination and bias, particularly the need to consider the merits of the case with an open mind, as set out in the Planning and Licensing Codes of Conduct, (Part C, Section 34 and 35 of the Constitution). For further advice on the possibility of bias or predetermination, you are advised to seek advice prior to the meeting.

**Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992 - Declarations which restrict Members in Council Tax arrears, for at least a two months from voting**

In such circumstances the member may not vote on any reports and motions with respect to the matter.

**Further Advice** contact: Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer,  
Tel: 0207 364 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	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. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	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— (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
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	Any tenancy where (to the Member's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where— (a) that body (to the Member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either—  (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or  (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.

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS  
MINUTES OF THE HOUSING & REGENERATION SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE  
HELD AT 5.30 P.M. ON MONDAY, 13 JULY 2020  
ONLINE 'VIRTUAL' MEETING - [HTTPS://TOWERHAMLETS.PUBLIC-  
I.TV/CORE/PORTAL/HOME](https://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home)**

**Members Present:**

Councillor Dipa Das (Chair)  
Councillor Shah Ameen  
Councillor Andrew Wood  
Councillor Shad Chowdhury

**Co-opted Members Present:**

Anne Ambrose

**Others Present:**

Pam Bhamra	– Pam Bhamra Director of Operations Tower Hamlets Community Housing (THCH)
Rafiqul Hoque	– Head of Housing Options
Mark Slowikowski	– Senior Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer
Karen Swift	– Divisional Director, Housing
David Knight	– Senior Democratic Services Officer
Joel West	– Senior Democratic Services Officer
Farhana Zia	– Senior Democratic Services Officer

Good evening and welcome to the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub Committee my name is Councillor Dipa Das and I will be Chairing this meeting. Please note that this meeting is being recorded and will be available to view via the Council's website by tomorrow morning. Thank you all for participating in this meeting under these new circumstances. It is important that these formal scrutiny meetings resume as the Council must continue to demonstrate transparency and openness in its decision-making and include scrutiny as part and parcel of the Council's operations for and on behalf of the residents of Tower Hamlets. Following Government advice to avoid all but essential travel and to practice social distancing, this will be a virtual meeting. If during the meeting a technical error occurs with the transmission which cannot be resolved within a reasonable period of time, then the meeting will be closed and the remaining business will be deferred to a subsequent meeting of the Committee on a date to be determined, and notified by way of the publication of the agenda on the Council's web site. Everyone (whether participating or listening-in) including Committee Members and the Officers are accessing this meeting from remote locations.

Please could everybody ensure that mobile phones are switched off or on 'silent mode'. Members and Officers will be speaking at various points during the meeting and those speaking may switch their cameras on at that point, but

I would ask that with the exception of myself as Chair, at all other times you keep your microphones switched off as this will help to minimise any background noise and interference and to ensure the connection remains as stable as possible. If any Members and officers wish to raise a point or question, they should use the 'Meeting Chat' facility accessed via the teams toolbar signified by the conversation icon, and simply type "Speak?" and I will come to you in the order I receive requests. Please do not use your microphone until I invite you to do so. Can I please ask the Members and guests to introduce themselves when they speak for the first time at the meeting.

We will now go through the agenda.

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

No declarations were received at this meeting.

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

That the unrestricted minutes of the last meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> were approved as a correct record of the proceedings. Copy to sign.

Subject to the following amendment:

- i. **Delete** from list of attendees Sandra Fawcett Chair of the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum (THHF); and
- ii. **Insert** in the list of attendees Pam Bhamra Director of Operations Tower Hamlets Community Housing (THCH)

**3. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION - OSC COVID-19**

**3.1 Presentation and Discussion - Housing and Regeneration - Moving Forward on Covid-19**

The Committee received a report that provided an update on the Councils response to rough sleeping during the corona virus and the impact of Covid-19 Private Rented Sector. The main points of the discussion may be summarised as follows:

The Committee noted that:

**Responding to rough sleeping during the corona virus**

- Since mid-March – following a directive from government all rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping had to be accommodated to facilitate social distancing/self-isolation, regardless of priority need, local connection, or recourse to public funds.
- Over 200 individuals either rough sleeping on the streets or at imminent risk of rough sleeping where been found emergency



accommodation by the Council. Most being from Tower Hamlets with over 40 have no recourse to public funds.

- Rough sleeping in the Tower Hamlets had reduced dramatically during the lockdown. Entrenched rough sleepers being accommodated in commercial hotels. Ad hoc bookings in the portfolio of emergency Bed and Breakfast accommodation was increased to provide accommodation to those judged to be at risk of rough sleeping or who claim to be rough sleeping.
- A large supply of hotel accommodation was also procured for rough sleepers by the GLA at the start of the pandemic. There are 350 rough sleepers in GLA hotels in Tower Hamlets. Individuals have been accommodated under Housing Act 1996 s.188(1) duty and Housing Act 1996 s.205(3) statutory powers, and Localism Act 2011.

### **Responding to rough sleeping during Covid-19 – Health and Welfare**

- The Council had commissioned 24/7 on-site support and floating support at the commercial hotels as most rough sleepers brought in directly off the streets have complex needs.
- The value of these arrangements has been shown by the relatively low number of evictions and abandonments from the hotels and the low rough sleeping numbers during the 3 months of the lockdown. Public Health have led on implementing an operational plan to minimise the risk of an outbreak and spread of infection.
- To date there have been no reported outbreaks in any of the hotels used by the Council or in the Council's commissioned hostel sector. Given the high levels of substance misuse among the rough sleepers in commercial hotels a priority has been to assess individuals and help them access substance dependence treatment. .
- The physical health of most rough sleepers in the commercial hotels had been assessed by a nurse. Most have been assessed as having a 'mental health' support need, and a number have been referred to mental health services.
- Full board has been included in the block-booking contract with several hotels and a meal delivery of 3 meals per day has been provided to complex needs rough sleepers at other hotels. Within the wider range of emergency accommodation used by the Council, fridges and microwaves have been provided for people in their rooms to enable social distancing and support with self-isolation.
- The majority of the Borough's homeless are in accommodation and the Council are working with its partners to arrange safe housing options for the limited number of people still sleeping rough during this crisis. As mentioned, the Council have secured hotel space which, in addition to the hostel network and other temporary accommodation sites, means there is more options at the Council's disposal.

### **Improving the Customer Journey to prevent and relieve homelessness in the light of Covid-19**

- The public and staff need to be kept safe during the period of the corona virus and beyond
- The Housing Options service has historically managed demand reactively through the crisis-oriented daily drop-in at Albert Jacobs House.
- Recovery of the service post Covid-19 will provide the opportunity for a different customer experience ready to relocate to the new Town Hall.
- The service wants to achieve a higher rate of prevention and reduce temporary accommodation placements and associated costs. To do this the Housing Options service will now need to intervene earlier and in a more planned and proactive way with those at risk of homelessness.
- Those seeking help should be able to understand the help on offer and access help through a range of channels, including to self-help, whether on the web or over the phone or from alternative service settings, e.g. Job Centre Plus reducing the need to visit busy offices.
- An improved telephone service with enough staff with the right skills set coupled with automated call distribution will enable more people to get assistance over the phone (for Lettings and Homelessness enquiries) and avoid people needing to visit the office because they cannot get through on the telephone.
- The Council has a legal duty towards homeless people, and this accommodation should be “suitable” and it is unlawful for Tower Hamlets to keep homeless families in Bed and Breakfast for more than six weeks.
- There were concerns that temporary housing can be unsuitable and can affect the physical health of families e.g. Living in cramped conditions and with on-going insecurity and uncertainty can be damaging to the health of families.

### **Scoping out areas for change**

- Steps to developing a staff engagement strategy using (i) Inform (Updates on progress); (ii) Involve (Consulting experts); and (iii) Listen (Avenues for concerns and fears to be raised)
- Content on the Council’s website must be relevant and easy to navigate to allow residents to find the content they are looking for much faster.
- It is important to keep in mind the ever-growing usage of smartphones and tablets so the web design of the Council’s site be effective for various screens.
- Interactive sections on the website can filter the customers enquiry, directing customers to web resources where relevant and directing others who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to book appointments with the service online. This provides customers with flexibility.

- Triaging those into the service who need casework through an online appointment booking system would enable the demand to be dealt with in a more planned way and for customers to pre-book an appointment that suits them. Prompts and alerts on what documents to bring will aid the interview process.
- Minimising unplanned office presentations and undertaking appointments either virtually or in person upstream in partner service settings will entail more efficient use of casework time and increase time that can be spent to successfully prevent and relieve homelessness.
- There will continue to be those for whom an emergency office presentation will continue to be appropriate, e.g. DV. These groups will need a safe welcoming environment with appropriate social distancing.
- Those with language needs will also need to be considered in any new arrangements.
- There is growing interest the 'Housing First' approach to help people with complex needs to secure a tenancy first along with a long term and flexible package of support around them.

#### **Private Rented Sector – impact of Covid-19**

- The Councils private housing advice team have seen a significant increase in private tenants approaching them for advice and mediation: from 25th March to 24th April the team had over 100 new approaches. A similar increase has been seen in subsequent months.
- Key issues presented by private tenants approaching our service include:
  - (i) Private tenants unable to pay rent due to loss of income
  - (ii) A marked increase in queries linked to security of tenure including around 30 cases where tenants have experienced harassment or threats of eviction, sometimes in response to a request for a rent deferment.
  - (iii) There are two known cases of unlawful eviction which the team are moving to prosecution.
  - (iv) Our Private Renters Charter' partners have seen a significant increase in queries from private tenants related to security of tenure and loss of income, including many requests from migrant renters unsure of their rights. Partners working on the rogue landlord market say they have seen no let-up in cases of unlawful eviction and harassment.
  - (v) The market has seen a drop in tenant demand due to lack of home moves, students moving home, loss of jobs. Private rents have gone down but still unclear what the long-term impact on the market might be.

### Key Issues for Recovery Phase

- **Evictions** (i) The financial impact of the crisis on could see a surge in evictions and homelessness once emergency protections come to an end.(ii) Court proceedings for possession cases under s21 and s8 resume (remotely) on August 23rd. Unclear how quickly cases will move - may create a bottle neck that will take the next year to untangle.(iii) Delays in court proceedings could lead to an increase in unlawful evictions. Prosecuting for unlawful evictions could act as a deterrent. The borough has limited capacity to support injunctions (to reinstate a tenant subject to unlawful eviction) or offer legal services, but we can refer tenants eligible for legal aid to appropriate solicitors and/or pursue rent repayment orders.(iv) Rising evictions in the private rented sector could lead to increased demand on homelessness services.
- **Rent arrears** (i) The shortfall between median rents and average incomes alongside rising unemployment means many private tenants are unable to afford their rent leading to increased demand for financial support. (ii) Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) may help. Where tenancies remain, unaffordable tenants will need to move.
- **Private tenants do not know their rights** Our partners say that many renters are unclear of their rights and the support available to them, particularly migrant renters, and those for whom English is not their first language.
- **Private rental market** Drop in tenant demand and collapse of short lets industry appears to have led to short-term drop in rents. However, over the long-term house sales are likely to slow, potentially increasing demand for private rented housing.

#### 4. APOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

The Sub-Committee that Councillor Marc Francis be appointed as the Vice-Chair for the remainder of the current Municipal Year.

**The meeting ended at 7.16 p.m.**

**Chair, Councillor Dipa Das  
Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub Committee**

<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p><b>Housing &amp; Regeneration Scrutiny Sub Committee</b></p> <p><b>Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020</b></p>	 <p><b>TOWER HAMLETS</b></p>
<p><b>Report of:</b> Asmat Hussain Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer</p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Open (Unrestricted)</p>
<p><b>Housing &amp; Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership and Dates of Meetings 2020/21</b></p>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	David Knight – Democratic Services Officer
<b>Wards affected</b>	(All Wards);

## Executive Summary

This report sets out the Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership and Dates of Meetings of the Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee for the Municipal Year 2020/21 for information.

## Recommendations:

The Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee is **recommended** to:

1. Note its Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership, and Dates of future meetings as set out in the appendices of this report.

## 1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 This report is for the information of the sub- committee and no specific decisions are required.

## 2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Not applicable to the report.

## 3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 At the Annual General Meeting of Council held on 15 May 2019, the Authority approved the review of proportionality, establishment of the Committees, Panels of the Council and the appointment of Members. It delegated authority to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to establish its sub-committees.
- 3.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on the 20 May 2019 and agreed to set up three sub-committees, including this one, on which occasion they agreed the terms of reference for all three sub-committees. The groups have

since submitted their nominations for membership which have been agreed by the Corporate Director for Governance.

- 3.3 It is within tradition 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 the appendices of the report.
- 3.4 The Sub-Committee's meetings for the remainder of the year are set out in **Appendix 3** of this report.
- 3.5 Meetings are scheduled to take place at 6.30pm except where the meeting falls within the month of Ramadan where they will aim to take place at 5.30pm. The Sub-Committee may wish to discuss an appropriate start time that suits its Members at the first meeting of the Sub-Committee.
- 3.6 It may be necessary to convene additional meetings of the Sub-Committee should urgent business arise. Officers will consult with the Chair and Members as appropriate.

#### **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Not applicable to this report

#### **5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

- 5.2 Not applicable.

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

This report recommends that the Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee note its Terms of Reference, Quorum, Membership, and Dates of future meetings as set out in **Appendices 1-3**. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 7.1 The Council is required by section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 to have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to have executive arrangements that ensure the committee has specified powers. Consistent with this obligation, the Council's Constitution provides that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can appoint such Sub-Committees or Scrutiny Panels as the Committee considers appropriate from time to time to carry out individual reviews under the Overview and Scrutiny work programme.
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### **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

#### **Linked Report**

- NONE

#### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference
- Appendix 2 – Membership
- Appendix 3 – Dates of Meetings and Meeting Procedure

#### **Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)**

##### **List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- NONE.

#### **Officer contact details for documents:**

Or state N/A

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## Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee

<b>Summary Description:</b> The Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee will undertake overview and scrutiny pertaining to housing management and planning matters, as well as regeneration strategy and sustainability, including economic development, regeneration and inequality; and employment strategy and initiatives and skills development.	
<b>Membership:</b> 6 non-executive councillors – the chair and five councillors  Two non-voting co-Optees may also be appointed.	
<b>Functions</b>	<b>Delegation of Functions</b>
1. Reviewing and/or scrutinising decisions made, or actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's housing and regeneration functions;	None
2. Advising the Mayor or Cabinet of key issues/questions arising in relation to housing and regeneration reports due to be considered by the Mayor or Cabinet;	None
3. Making reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or Mayor or Cabinet in connection with the discharge of housing and regeneration functions;	None
4. Delivering (3) 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;	None
5. 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;	None
6. Considering housing and regeneration 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; and	None
7. The sub-committee will report annually to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on its work.	None
<b>Quorum:</b> Three voting Members	
<b>Additional Information:</b> Is contained in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitution Part A Section 9 (Overview and Scrutiny)</li> <li>• Constitution Part B Section 30 (Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules)</li> <li>• Constitution Part D Section 53 (Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee Procedure Rules)</li> </ul>	

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**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**  
**SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS 2020- 2021**

**Quorum:** The quorum for the committee is 3.

<b>HOUSING &amp; REGENERATION SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE</b> <b>(Seven members of the Council)</b>			
<b><i>Labour Group (6)</i></b>	<b><i>Conservative Group (1)</i></b>	<b><i>Ungrouped (0)</i></b>	<b><i>Co-opted Members (2)</i></b>
Councillors:  Cllr Amina Ali Cllr Dipa Das Cllr Ehtasham Haque – Chair Cllr Helal Uddin Cllr Marc Francis Cllr Andrew Wood  <u><b>Substitutes –Councillors: -</b></u>  Pending formal confirmation	Councillor Andrew Wood  <b>Substitutes: -</b>  Councillor Peter Golds	       <b>N/A</b>	Anne Ambrose – Tenant Representative  Moshin Hamim – Leaseholder Representative

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**HOUSING & REGENERATION**  
**SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**

**MEETING PROCEDURE AND SCHEDULE OF MEETING DATES**  
**2020 -2021**

**1. Chair and Membership**

- 1.1 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 Housing & Regeneration for 2020/21. The membership of the Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee has been determined by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**2. Frequency of meetings**

- 2.1 The Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee will meet 3 times a year. The following dates are available in the Corporate Diary for 2020/21:
- 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020;
  - 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021; and
  - 15<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

Meetings are scheduled to take place at 6.30pm (unless they fall during the month of Ramadan where they will endeavour to start at 5.30pm). 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.

**Support to the Sub-Committee**

- 4.1 The Divisional Director for Strategy, Policy and Performance, will be the senior officer lead and champion the work of the Sub-Committee.
- 4.2 The servicing of meetings will be undertaken by the Council's Democratic Services Team which will include:
- (a) Meeting room bookings, refreshments
  - (b) Agenda preparation and dispatch
  - (c) Taking minutes and recording of actions/decisions
  - (d) Dissemination of minutes and decisions

The Housing and Regeneration Strategy and Policy Team will provide policy support to the Sub-Committee which will include:

- (e) Research and analysis
- (f) Work programme development
- (g) Support with undertaking reviews and challenge sessions
- (h) Drafting review reports and challenge sessions

## **5. Proceedings**

- 5.1 The Housing and Regeneration 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:

- (a) Council Procedure Rules
- (b) Access to Information Procedure Rules, and
- (c) The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.


## **Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee - Proposed Work Programme 2020/21**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Comment</b>
3/11 Nov 20	Homeless Reduction Act (HRA) – One Year On	Challenge Session	Draft report of the scrutiny challenge session (held on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2020) and an action plan to be presented to committee for approval.
	Housing Options Service Delivery (Customer journey, Allocations scheme policy update and Intermediate Housing Register of Interest)	Spotlight	A presentation on the Housing Options Service focussing on the customer journey (in light of Covid-19) , including an update of the implementation of the changes to the Allocations Scheme and the introduction of an Intermediate Housing Register of Interest.
	Social Landlords Performance Report	Policy Framework Scrutiny	This item was deferred due to Covid-19 and this report will catch up on outstanding performance reports. The report will provide an update on the work of the Benchmarking group who are in the process of revising a new set of qualitative and quantitative KPI data. A PRP will be invited to attend the meeting to discuss aspects of their performance, starting with a request to Clarion to attend the November meeting.
10 Feb 21	Comprehensive Regeneration Update	Spotlight	A presentation covering all aspects of the Council's approach to regeneration, containing an outline of all current regeneration schemes.
	Leaseholder Service Improvement Plan (THH)	Spotlight	An update on the implementation of actions in the THH Leaseholder Service Improvement Plan following the presentation on service charges to the committee in January 2019.
	Housing Companies Update	Spotlight	A presentation providing an update on the Council's two housing companies – Seahorse and Mulberry Homes.
	Social Landlords Performance Report	Policy Framework Scrutiny	The first report in the new format with the second PRP (proposed: One Housing Group) invited to attend.
15 April 21	Employment Support – Covid-19 Response	Spotlight/Scrutiny Review	A presentation on the Council's response in supporting residents into employment who have been displaced by the Covid-19 pandemic, focussing on jobs and skills.
	Fire Safety Progress Report	Spotlight	Following on from the 2017 scrutiny review of fire safety, this item will update members on the Council's work in remediating ACM cladding from the Borough's high-rise blocks. Progress on the MHCLG's External Wall Survey and an update on legislation will also be provided.
	Social Landlords Performance Report	Policy Framework Scrutiny	The end-of-year report on PRP performance alongside the third invited PRP (to be selected after consultation with all Council members) in attendance.

N.B. 2 informal meetings to be arranged in January and March 2021. These will be outside of the formal work programme.

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<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p><b>Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee</b></p> <p>3rd November 2020</p>	 <p><b>TOWER HAMLETS</b></p>
<p><b>Report of</b> Ann Sutcliffe, Corporate Director, Place Directorate, Corporate and Capital delivery.</p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted</p>
<p><b>Social Housing Landlords Performance Report – QTR4 AND QTR1</b></p>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Shalim Uddin Affordable Housing Coordinator
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards

## Executive Summary

Social Landlords in the borough produce quarterly performance data for key customer facing performance indicators so tenants and local residents can be assured they are delivering effective and customer focused services. The performance report attached at appendix 1 provides cumulative performance data ending Quarter four & quarter one for 14 of the Social Landlords with homes in the borough (including THH), who can provide performance data specifically for properties they manage in Tower Hamlets.

## Recommendations:

The Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee is recommended to:

1. To review and note progress in the performance outturns achieved by individual Social Landlords and the overall performance trend.

## 1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee previously agreed that the Social Landlord Performance information will be submitted twice per annum as a standing item on the committee agenda. This provides opportunity for the committee to review and note for information the performance data that is reported to the Statutory Deputy Mayor also the Cabinet Member for Housing. Therefore, allowing two quarters to be compared against each other and after the end of quarter four the whole years' worth of data submissions.

## 2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Member review of Social Landlord performance to remain exclusively with the Cabinet Member for Housing.

### **3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

- 3.1 Through the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum (THHF), the Council works with key Social Landlords who manage social rented stock in the borough. THHF through its Performance Management Framework has agreed a set of key performance indicators (KPI's); to review and assess performance and drive performance improvements through the THHF benchmarking sub-group. Quarterly performance information is presented to the Statutory Deputy Mayor also Cabinet Member for Housing and circulated to the Housing scrutiny Sub Committee for information. Good performance is an indicator of quality housing management and supports the Council in ensuring the borough is one that residents are proud of and love to live in whilst also support delivery of partnership priorities.
- 3.2 Cumulative performance information on the agreed list of measures below is attached at appendix 1.:
- % repairs completed in target
  - % respondents satisfied with last completed repair
  - % appointments kept as % of appointments made
  - % properties with a valid gas safety certificate
  - % residents satisfied with how the ASB case was handled
  - % complaints responded to in target
  - % Members Enquiries answered in target
  - Average re-let time in days (General Needs only)
  - % General Needs Income collected
  - % of tall buildings (over 18m) owned by RPs that have an up to date FRA in place
- 3.3 Appendix 1 outlines cumulative performance for two quarters for the fourteen key Social Landlords who operate in the borough, (including THH) who are able to produce borough specific data. The remaining 7 key Social Landlords can only produce regional data; therefore, performance for these is not included.
- 3.4 To note the Benchmarking group are in the process of revising a new set of qualitative and quantitative KPI data. The group will be focussing on setting measurable definitions as currently not all partners are able to do this. This is due to either using different metric systems or capturing data nationally rather than on a regional level. Revising the KPI's should provide accurate data in relation to Tower Hamlets specifically. The new KPI questions should enable and provide data for the RP's to utilise and improve their service offer as well as share best practise amongst themselves. Thus, ensuring all existing and new THHF partners are aware of the reporting parameters producing more accuracy within KPI submissions. Unfortunately, delays have occurred and are likely to occur due to Covid-19. With a reduced service offer from housing partners this aspect remains an evolving one which varies on the restrictions imposed by government and how the partners adapt to lockdown rules and regulations.

- 3.5 Some Registered Providers have made significant improvements in relation to the PI's. This includes:
- 3.6 In Quarter One EastEnd Homes managed to achieve a 100% in the field of responding to complaints. The previous quarter 4 figures indicated they achieved 94.48%. (5.51% increase) Providence Row managed a 100% in responding to members enquiries and One housing achieving 100% to ASB satisfaction levels. To emphasise these figures were achieved during a period of lockdown and Covid -19 restrictions.
- 3.7 During Quarter four Spitalfields Housing achieved good relet times by only requiring eleven days. Tower Hamlets Community Housing managed to keep a 100% of their appointments whilst THH managed to achieve above 98% in repair completion.

#### **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no direct equalities or diversity implications arising from this report.

#### **5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
  - Environmental (including air quality),
  - Risk Management,
  - Crime Reduction,
  - Safeguarding.
- 5.2 There are no direct Best Value implications arising from these reports, although if performance is further improved for performance indicators 1, 2 and 3 which relate to repairs, this may lead to improvements in working practices that will in turn improve efficiency and potentially reduce costs for Social Landlords.
- 5.3 Another indirect Best Value Implication is a landlord's ability to ensure its general needs income target (rent collection) is achieved.
- 5.4 The percentage of properties with a valid gas safety certificate directly relates to health and safety risks to residents. It is important that statutory compliance of 100% is achieved, and that landlord performance in this area shows continued improvements.
- 5.5 The percentage of tall buildings (over 18m) owned by Registered Providers that have an up to date Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) in place also has a

direct health and safety impact. It is a statutory requirement to ensure an FRA has been completed and is up to date.

- 5.6 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the report or recommendations.
- 5.7 Resident satisfaction with the handling of anti-social behaviour cases has an indirect relation to crime and disorder reduction matters.

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

- 6.1 This report provides an update to the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee on the performance of various providers of social housing (Social Landlords) that operate within the borough. This includes the comparative data for Tower Hamlets Homes which manages the Council's housing stock. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 7.1 This report is recommending that the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee review the performance of individual Social Landlords during 20-21.
- 7.2 Regeneration agency Homes England and the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH), focus of their regulatory activity is on governance, financial viability and financial value for money as the basis for robust economic regulation. The objectives of the social housing regulator are set out in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.
- 7.3 The regulatory framework for social housing in England from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 is made up of: Regulatory requirements (i.e. what Social Landlords need to comply with); Codes of practice; and Regulatory guidance. There are nine (9) categories of regulatory requirements and these are:
  - 1. Regulatory standards – Economic (i.e. Governance and Financial Viability Standard; Value for Money Standard; and Rent Standard)
  - 2. Regulatory standards – Consumer (i.e. Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard; Home Standard; Tenancy Standard; and Neighbourhood and Community Standard)
  - 3. Registration requirements
  - 4. De-registration requirements
  - 5. Information submission requirements
  - 6. The accounting direction for social housing in England from April 2012
  - 7. Disposal Proceeds Fund requirements
  - 8. Requirement to obtain regulator's consent to disposals
  - 9. Requirement to obtain regulator's consent to changes to constitutions
- 7.4 In addition to RSH regulation, there is a Performance Management Framework ('PMF') agreed with the Council which also reviews the performance of the Social Landlords in key customer facing areas. These are monitored cumulatively every three months against 8 key areas that are

important to residents. This has a direct bearing on the Council's priority to ensure that Social Landlords are delivering effective services to their residents who are also, at the same time, residents in the local authority area. This provides re-assurance for the Council that the main Social Landlords in the Borough are delivering effective services to their residents.

7.5

The Council has no power to act against any Social Landlord (other than THH which it monitors already) but one of its Community Plan aspirations is for Tower Hamlets to be a place where people live in a quality affordable housing with a commitment to ensuring that more and better quality homes are provided for the community.

7.6

The review of the Social Landlords performance though not a legal requirement fits in with the above Community Plan objective and the regulatory standards as stated above. The standards require Social Landlords to co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the area where they own properties.

The review of housing matters affecting the area or the inhabitants in the borough fall within remit of the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee and accordingly authorised by the Council's Constitution

## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

- None

### **Appendices**

- Social Housing Landlords Performance Report QTR4 & QTR1 2020-21

### **Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)**

#### **List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report**

- NONE

### **Officer contact details for documents:**

- Shalim Uddin RP Coordinator

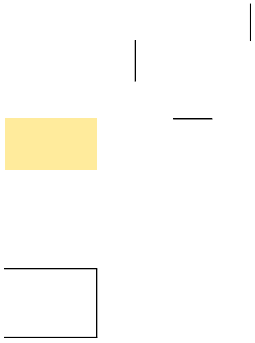
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## Appendix 1

Organisation	QTR4 AND QTR1 RP PERFORMANCE FIGURES										
	1. % Repairs completed in target	2. % respondents satisfied with last completed repair	3. % appointments kept as % of appointments made	4. % properties with a valid gas safety certificate	5. % residents satisfied with how the ASB case was handled	6. % complaints responded to in target	7. % Members Enquiries answered in target	8. Average relet time (days)	9. % General Needs Income collected (Rent including eligible service charges only)	10. % of tall buildings (over 18 metres) owned by RPs that have an up to date FRA in place	11. General Needs Stock Numbers
Clarion Housing Q1	99.88%	91.00%	99.53%	96.20%	We do not currently report on this	53.00%	58.00%	119.0 days	95.88%	100%-(29 out of 29 high rise buildings)	4102
Clarion Housing Q4	86.39%	89.01%	95.47%	99.72%	We do not currently report on this	20.00%	32.00%	102 days	We do not currently report on this	80.56%	3840
EastendHomes Q1	82.58%	95.90%	93.66%	99.83%	No figure Provided	100.00%	42.86%	11.0	84.31%	100.00%	2243
EastendHomes Q4	91.83%	97.46%	97.98%	100.00%	93.28%	94.48%	92.94%	19.9	97.85%	100.00%	2243
Gateway HA Q1	65.00%	76.00%	N/A	99.56%	N/A	63.00%	100%	82	100.46%	100%	1922
Gateway HA Q4	85.00%	82.00%	86.00%	100.00%	66.00%	70.00%	56%	28	100.19%	100%	1922
Land Q Q1	78.42%	83.33%	90.91% (Overall percentage)	97%	Not Collected	61%	50%	49 days (after Minor repairs) 147 days (after Major repairs) General Needs Only	101.67%	96%	1367
Land Q Q4	64.94%	85.50%	89.8% (Overall percentage)	99%	Not Collected	72%	55%	119 days (after Minor repairs) 182 days (after Major repairs) General Needs Only	100.00%	100%	1457
Notting Hill Genesis Q1	N/A	88%	N/A	99.03%	N/A	90%	80%	53.4	98%	100%	1634
Notting Hill Genesis Q4	N/A	61% (All General Needs)	N/A	99.87%	N/A	50.00%	64.00%	54	98%	100%	1634
One Housing Q1	90.56%	n/a	87.74%	99.5%	100.00%	87.50%	73.91%	82.10	95.5%	100.0%	2876
One Housing Q4	95.07%	n/a	93.70%	99.9%	68.75%	57.63%	64.44%	37.30	108.1%	100.0%	2876
Peabody Q1	Average Speed Reported instead	88.8%	Average Speed Reported instead	99.0%	36%	No Target Set	No Target Set	60	96.0%	53%	1822
Peabody Q4	metric not used in Peabody	90.8%	metric not used in Peabody	99.8%	0%	68.29% complaints logged in quarter and resolved in quarter	50% % complaints via MP / Councilor logged in quarter and resolved in quarter	52	98.4%	100%	1934
Poplar HARCA Q1	97.37%	98.60%	N/A	99.90%	82.35%	96.67%	96.77%	N/A	96.09%	100%	5542
Poplar HARCA Q4	98.88%	95.46%	98.15%	99.98%	73.33%	88.78%	92.75%	32.3	101.66%	100%	5542
Providence Row HA Q1	94.30%	95.00%	94%	99%	n/a	100%	100%	n/a	79%	100%	100
Providence Row HA Q4	98.30%	97.10%	100%	99%	No cases closed	91%	100%	1	96%	100%	100
Southern Housing Group Q1	91%	No Data	N/A	100%	No Data	33%	73%	2	N/A	100%	1161
Southern Housing Group Q4	75%	82%	N/A	100%	52%	55%	82%	16	N/A	100%	1159
Spitalfields HA Q1	92.27%	99%	98.05%	100%	100%	100%	100%	65.5	97.00%	n/a	732
Spitalfields HA Q4	99.05%	97%	97.77%	100%	100%	100%	88%	11	100.40%	n/a	732
Swan HA Q1	97.51%	96%	97.58%	100%	no data	100%	100%	34	2.62%	100%	1631
Swan HA Q4	96.38%	92%	95.46%	100%	100%	100%	100%	17.4	100.12%	100%	1631
Tower Hamlets Community Housing Q1	94.80%	n/a during Q1- currently undertaking	99.2%	100%	follow-up ASB cases not completed	60.0%	60%	N/A - no lettings in Q1	90.90%	100%	2002
Tower Hamlets Community Housing Q4	95.09%	74.5%	100.0%	100%	Data not collected	65.5%	93%	37.7	100.30%	100%	2002
Tower Hamlets Homes Q1	98.66%	n/a	n/a	99.31%	n/a	96.42%	94.87%	3.5	100.11%	43%	11,466
Tower Hamlets Homes Q4	98.07%	87.76%	94.01%	100%	53.57%	95.74%	91.00%	20.58	101.34%	47%	11,466

Below 85%

n/a = The information is either not a RP measured by the RP, measured in a different way or is not available.  
 NR = The Data was not requested by the borough for the period in question.





**Tower Hamlets Housing and  
Regeneration Scrutiny  
Sub-Committee**

**The Homelessness Reduction Act  
One year on**

**Scrutiny Challenge Session**



April 2020

## **Chair's Foreword**

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I am pleased to present this report which considers the impact of the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) on residents and the Council which brought new duties and ways of working for officers.

The Challenge session took place before the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and focuses on what was business as usual prior to the shift in emphasis that the pandemic brought where the Housing Options Service shifted their focus to COVID care and protect schemes for rough sleepers and ensuring the safety and well-being of single-persons and households placed in temporary accommodation.

This report therefore makes a number of practical recommendations for the Housing Options Service as the Council moves towards a normal service post-pandemic to improve the services available for providing housing options advice and support for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The recommendations focus on improving the experience of residents and exploring other ways to enhance the experience of residents who use the Housing Options Service for homelessness support and advice.

I would like to thank all of the council officers who gave their time and effort to contribute to this Review. I am also grateful to my Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee colleagues for their support, advice and insights.

**Councillor Dipa Das**  
**Chair of the Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

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## 1. Recommendations

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Recommendation	
R1	Benchmark against other authorities' customer journeys and identify best practice which achieves efficient service provision and customer access. This can be applied to the Housing Options Services' practices. In order to gauge the current quality of the customer service that clients receive, consider using mystery shopping to test the effectiveness and efficiencies of the service.
R2	Consider developing the 'House for Good' application and scope to assess its validity as a route to channel shift enquiries from applicants. This may be particularly useful for younger applicants who are more 'tech savvy' who use mobile phones to access the internet and social media.
R3	Develop guidelines for the use of cubicle/interview room facilities particularly when using them in the instances where sensitive and personal information is discussed relating to a service user. Ensure that managers regularly monitor compliance with these guidelines.
R4	The Housing Options Service develops and implements a plan to improve staff satisfaction informed by the staff survey. The plan may include performance indicators, training, regular team meetings and one-to-one as actions.
R5	Housing Options Service to promote and publicise the good work carried by officers not just internally within the Housing Options Service but to use opportunities corporately and among partners to promote officers within the Service. This will provide recognition and a sense of value to officers.
R6	Develop and implement a plan for a new IT solution which is effective and efficient for the Housing Options Service.

## 2. Introduction

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- 2.1. This scrutiny challenge session has set out to understand the impacts on residents and the Council which have arisen from the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA - 2017), which came into effect from 3rd April 2018. The Act was the most significant change in the statutory approach to homelessness since the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977.
- 2.2. The Act places new legal duties on local authorities to ensure that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help, irrespective of their priority need status, as long as they are eligible for assistance.
- 2.3. The HRA adds two new duties to the original statutory rehousing duty: the duty to prevent homelessness, and the duty to relieve homelessness.
- 2.4. New provisions introduced by the HRA include:
  - A duty to prevent and relieve homelessness
  - A requirement to carry out an assessment and personalised housing plan
  - Public bodies now have a duty to refer people whom they know are threatened with homelessness
  - Applicants have the right to ask for a review of any points of the new legislation
- 2.5. To assist local authorities the Government provided £73m in new burdens funding for the first 2 years of the new duties and committed to completing a review of the Homelessness Reduction Act by March 2020.
- 2.6. Research from the London School of Economics<sup>1</sup> commissioned by London Councils evidences that this funding was insufficient.
- 2.7. Additional funding was made available through the Private Rented Sector Access fund (£19.52m) for 66 local authorities announced March 2019 for over 8000 households to be supported to access and/or sustain Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST),
- 2.8. To date, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) has received £1,555,181 in new burdens funding, however, this funding stream does not go far enough.

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<sup>1</sup> The Cost of Homelessness Services in London – An LSE Project with London Councils published Oct 2019  
<https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/sites/default/files/LC%20final%20report%20-%20CA%20edit.pdf>

- 2.9. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) set up a Homelessness Reduction Act working group, to assess the impact of the Act. It also commissioned an independent review and placed a call for evidence, considering the delivery of the HRA and costs for local authorities.
- 2.10. In December 2019, £263 million funding for local authority homelessness service for 2020-21 was announced. This is on top of £80m homelessness prevention line in the local government finance settlement and the rough sleeping funding. This is an increase of £38m on the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FHSG) and new burdens funding allocated 2019-20 year.
- 2.11. The Council's Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee want to understand what the impact of the HRA (2017) has been on the Council's Housing Options Service who provide and deliver services for applicants who seek homelessness housing and advice. The sub-committees' questions included:
- How has it impacted on the homelessness provision in the Borough?
  - Has the footfall of homelessness enquiries increased?
  - Are more residents being placed in temporary accommodation as a result of the prevention and relief duties that the Act has placed on the Council?
- 2.12 This challenge session set out to provide the sub-committee with a clear understanding of how the HRA has impacted on both residents who seek homelessness advice in the Borough. This has resulted in the sub-committee making recommendations for service improvement as part of the Council's wider review of Homelessness provision in the Borough. The scrutiny challenge session was underpinned by five key questions:
- What impact has the HRA (2017) had in Tower Hamlets and what outcomes have been achieved in the Borough as a result of the HRA, including by protected groups?
  - Is the Council meeting its duties under the HRA? What are the barriers and challenges?
  - What more can the following do to tackle homelessness and prevent rough sleeping:
    - The Council (Local Housing Authority)
    - Commissioned partners
    - Statutory partners
    - Non statutory partners
    - Residents affected by homelessness
    - Government

- What has been the experience of people approaching the Council and its commissioned partners for help?
- What elements of the Act and processes are working well/not working well in Tower Hamlets and how can this be improved (including customer journey, homelessness/ housing pathways/ accommodation provisions, upstreaming preventions and innovative practice)

### **Challenge session approach**

2.12. The challenge session was chaired by Councillor Dipa Das, Chair of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee and supported by Una Bedford, Strategy and Policy Officer (Place); LBTH.

### **Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee Members**

Councillor Dipa Das	Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee (Chair)
Councillor Sirajul Islam	Statutory Deputy Mayor & Lead Member for Housing
Councillor Andrew King	Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee Member
Councillor Helal Uddin	Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee Member
Councillor Andrew Wood	Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee Member
Councillor Ayias Miah	Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee Member
Councillor Shah Suhel Ameen	Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee Member
Councillor Shad Chowdhury	Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee Member
Council Leema Omar Qureshi	Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee Member
Councillor Mohammed Pappu	Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee Member
Anne Ambrose	Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Co-Opted Member

The panel received evidence from the following officers:

### **London Borough of Tower Hamlets**

Rafiqul Hoque	Head of Housing Options
Seema Chote	Team Manager, Statutory & Advocacy Team, Housing Options

### 3. Homelessness Legislation

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- 3.1. Homelessness affects a wide range of people, covering not just people sleeping rough, but also those in temporary accommodation, sleeping temporarily at friend's houses, living in unfit dwellings and those threatened with homelessness.
- 3.2. The primary homelessness legislation in England is Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. This sets out the statutory duty for local authorities to take action to prevent homelessness and to provide assistance to people threatened with or actually homeless.
- 3.3. In 2002, the Government amended the homelessness legislation through the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002 to:
  - a) ensure a more strategic approach to tackling and preventing homelessness, in particular by requiring a homelessness strategy for every housing authority district; **and**,
  - b) strengthen the assistance available to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness by extending the priority need categories to homeless 16 and 17 year olds; care leavers aged 18, 19 and 20; people who are vulnerable as a result of time spent in care, the armed forces, prison or custody, and people who are vulnerable because they have fled their home because of violence.
- 3.4. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also requires housing authorities to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who have 'priority need.' These include:
  - a) an enhanced prevention duty extending the period a household is threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days, meaning that housing authorities are required to work with people to prevent homelessness at an earlier stage; **and**,
  - b) a new duty for those who are already homeless so that housing authorities will support households for 56 days to



relieve their homelessness by helping them to secure accommodation.

- 3.5. Additionally, local authorities in England have a duty to provide free advisory services to everyone in their district on preventing homelessness, securing accommodation, clarity on the rights of homeless people and those threatened with homelessness. The HRA 2017 still recognises 'priority need' so therefore, non 'priority need' households are entitled to advice and assistance only but not necessarily housing.

#### 4. National Context

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- 4.1. In November 2018 the **Local Government Association** conducted a **survey**<sup>2</sup> of English councils to gather information on their experience of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) since its implementation.
- 4.2. The survey found that the number of homelessness presentations made to councils has continued to rise since the Act's implementation. The majority of councils responding to the survey attributed the increase in presentations directly to the Act. However, there are also indications that this increase in presentations is due to broader trends in homelessness.
- 4.3. The most recent data<sup>3</sup> collated and published by the MHCLG reaffirms that the number of households assessed by Local Authorities as either homeless or threatened with homelessness has increased by 11.4% from April to June 2018 to 68,170 in April to June (Q2) 2019.
- 4.4. For the same quarter, April to June (Q2) 2019, approximately two-thirds (65.2% or 44,480) of households owed a prevention or relief duty were single households (households without children).
- 4.5. 30,670 households, or 45.0%, were identified as having one or more support needs. The most common support need was a history of

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<sup>2</sup> Local Government Association 'Homelessness Reduction Act Survey 2018 - Survey Report' March 2019  
<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Homelessness%20Reduction%20Act%20Survey%20Report%202018%20v3%20WEB.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> MHCLG Experimental Statistical First Release 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019: Statutory Homelessness; April - June 2019: England  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/852953/Statutory\\_Homelessness\\_Statistical\\_Release\\_Apr-Jun\\_2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/852953/Statutory_Homelessness_Statistical_Release_Apr-Jun_2019.pdf)

mental health problems, accounting for 14,950 households or 21.9% of households owed a duty.

- 4.6. The new duty to refer which commenced in October 2018 has risen with the number of referrals increasing to 4,340 in April to June (Q2) 2019 (compared with 3,740 January to March 2019) in England. Children's Social services made the most referrals with 740, or 17.1% of the total in Q1 of 2019 whereas in Q2 of the same year, the National Probation Service made the most referrals with 650 of 17.4% of all referrals.
- 4.7. At the same time the Act has resulted in some improvements to homelessness provision. Single homeless people have seen the benefits of an increased focus on prevention, and more targeted support. Many councils have used the Act as an opportunity to refresh their service provision, drawing together new burdens funding and the many other funding programmes which have been made available by Government.
- 4.8. More recent research carried out by Crisis<sup>4</sup> has found that the change in legislation has significantly expanded access to homelessness assistance particularly for single people. The research mirrors the picture emerging from the statutory statistics showing that more people are eligible and are accessing support under the HRA. (The research formed the basis of the 'A Foot in the Door' report and is based on 984 surveys and 89 in-depth interviews across 6 local authority areas with those approaching services for support).
- 4.9. Only nine per cent of those interviewed stated they were given no support – reasons included no recourse to public funds, lack of local connection, not being able to provide evidence of current situation, and a general lack of eligibility for support. The research findings suggest that this is one of the most substantial changes observed since the introduction of the HRA and that the change in legislation has had a noticeable impact on widening access to single homeless people
- 4.10. The implementation of the HRA has brought significant new burdens to English local housing authorities. Local housing authorities have seen increased footfall, and an increased administrative burden associated with each case.
- 4.11. In November 2018, the LGA conducted a survey<sup>5</sup> of councils to gather information on their experience of the Homelessness Reduction Act

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<sup>4</sup> A Foot In The Door: Experiences of the Homelessness Reduction Act ( March 2020)  
[https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/241742/a\\_foot\\_in\\_the\\_door\\_2020.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/241742/a_foot_in_the_door_2020.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> LGA - Homelessness Reduction Act Survey 2018 - Survey Report (March 2019)  
<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Homelessness%20Reduction%20Act%20Survey%20Report%202018%20v3%20WEB.pdf>

(HRA) since its implementation. Many report that H-CLIC data collection system, (Homelessness case level collection), continues to impose a significant administrative burden six months after the Act's implementation, to the extent that council officers are being diverted from core work. One third of respondents to the LGA's<sup>6</sup> survey on the Act did not think they had been sufficiently resourced to deliver their new duties.

- 4.12. The Act is also not having the anticipated effect on temporary accommodation costs, and demand for temporary accommodation is increasing as a wider range of people are owed interim housing duties. However, moving people onto settled housing, and sustaining the tenancies of those already in housing, is becoming increasingly difficult as freezes to the local housing allowance rate continue to widen the gap with housing support and rents. This is likely to have a significant and rising cost implication for councils, which will require a review of new burdens funding.
- 4.13. The Act has not improved the availability of the tools which local authorities need to successfully prevent and relieve homelessness, i.e. affordable housing, sustainable funding for services, and the support of a wide range of public sector partners. The intention and ambition of the HRA is being constrained by the housing market, welfare system and funding.
- 4.14. In particular, the local authority finance context is having a significant impact on councils' ability to prevent homelessness, with the previously cited LGA analysis showing that local homelessness services are facing a £421 million spending gap by 2024/25.
- 4.15. The Duty to Refer has seen an increase in referrals, but councils' ability to work in partnership is again limited by broader cuts to services. In this context, councils have expressed concerns that the Duty does not incentivise upstream prevention work by a broad range of services, but instead risks a shunt in responsibility.
- 4.16. As a result, research using data and information across England illustrates that councils are constrained in their ability to help people, even as homelessness demand pressures increase.

## **5. Local Context**

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- 5.1. There has been an increase in the footfall count of homelessness presentations overall, of around 8 per cent compared to the period prior to the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act

- 5.2. The Housing Options team has seen an increase in homeless approaches from singles and early intervention opportunities. This has resulted in an increase in the number of single persons in temporary accommodation because officers are unable to prevent their homelessness due to lack of affordable accommodation in the Borough.
- 5.3. A considerable number of approaches to the Housing Options Service are from those who have been evicted or threatened with eviction where they have been residing with family or friends.
- 5.4. The chronic shortage of affordable housing in the Borough and the consequent inability to meet current demand lie at the root of Tower Hamlets' homelessness situation. As well as the Borough's changing demographics and socio-economic profile, central government funding, and the additional burdens placed on English local authorities as a result of the HRA (2017) has led to the prediction that this trend is set to continue.
- 5.5. The Private Rental Sector is often the Council's only option for securing accommodation and the Housing Options Team recognises that there is a need to procure more accommodation from within this sector to meet housing need.

## **6. Findings and Recommendations**

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- 6.1 The Council has utilised funding opportunities which have been made available to all local housing authorities: Private Rented Sector Access Fund, 'No First Night Out', Transitional Insurance, the Private Rented Sector Team Rough Sleeping Initiative and the Flexible Housing Support Grant.
- 6.2 However in most cases, submitting a bid for these funding streams is time limited and this can pose a challenge for the Housing Options Service as managers are moved from day-to-day operational functions to prepare and write bids for funding. Similarly, the procurement and process for amending existing contracts to implement initiatives is not always clear and often slow. Uncertainty over future funding makes it difficult to plan services and retain staff.
- 6.3 There has been some success in improving and increasing working in partnership with other agencies and service providers which include:
  - Work undertaken within East London Housing Partnership identifying gaps to tackle roughs sleeping in East London - Navigators for ELHP.
  - Recent funding for Independent Domestic Violence Advisors and Floating Support for Domestic Abuse cases working in

partnership with the Violence Against Girls and Women team.

- Mediation Services – the Service has increased its in-house provision and works with external partners to improve prevention to keep applicants in their existing accommodation.
- Complex need cases in supported accommodation requiring end of life care – identified gap in service requires developing through Integrated Commissioning Service.

6.4 The Housing Options team recognises that the increased footfall of clients seeking homelessness or housing advice necessitates better ways of managing processes along the customers journey to facilitate service improvement and better customer access. Officers are seeking a better understanding of customers needs and the reasons why they access Albert Jacobs House.

**Recommendation 1:**

*Benchmark against other authorities' customer journeys and identify best practice which achieves efficient service provision and customer access. This can be applied to the Housing Options Services' practices. In order to gauge the current quality of the customer service that clients receive, consider using mystery shopping to test the effectiveness and efficiencies of the service.*

6.5 The intention is to use this data to channel shift – to allow service users more choice and access to information; to ensure better outcomes for service users and the Council. The channel shift could involve using the Customer Contact Centre to deal with general and non-complex Housing Options enquiries or improving customer's ability to self-help via information on the Council's Housing Options Internet pages. It is hoped that this will also free up staff on duty to allow them more time to better manage their case work and to improve decision making.

**Recommendation 2:**

*Consider developing the 'House for Good' application and scope to assess its validity as a route to channel shift enquiries from applicants. This may be particularly useful for younger applicants who are more 'tech savvy' who use mobile phones to access the internet and social media.*

6.6 The Housing Options Service are part of the second wave of Customer Access Programme and officers are currently producing a Project Initiation Document to bring about changes in the long and short term - to include an expert advisor to assist with the delivery of service improvements through the lens of customer and prevention.

- 6.7 The Housing Options Service recognises that a review needs to be undertaken of its triage service to reduce the number of officers involved in a case. At present there remains considerable duplication within the triage process and the Service needs to effectively filter reception, online, telephone and Duty to Refer contacts. This will mean that the current structure within the Service will need to be redesigned with the possibility that separate singles and family's teams are created.
- 6.8 The Housing Options Service is aware that the environment within the contact centre is not always conducive and welcoming to service users and work is planned to refresh this area. Despite there being cubicles and private interview rooms to meet with service users, these are not always used. Further concern was expressed by members that the appropriate settings are not always used when conducting delicate and highly personal interviews where there is a safeguarding or perceived threat of violence against a service users.

**Recommendation 3:**

*Develop guidelines for the use of cubicle/interview room facilities particularly when using them in the instances where sensitive and personal information is discussed relating to a service user. Ensure that managers regularly monitor compliance with these guidelines*

- 6.9 In addition any restructure process will take a wider look at how Lead Professional, Complex Assessment, Housing Options Singles and Housing Advice Teams interlink on casework to ensure the service is customer centric.
- 6.10 To facilitate these changes, the Housing Options Service has had approval and agreement to recruit a Service Improvement Team to implement changes required over the next 12 to 24 months and beyond.
- 6.11 The complexity of cases and time spent by staff in carrying out assessments has led to an increase in demand and pressure on staff. The Homelessness Reduction Act has brought higher expectation on officers to keep clients informed and added to the administrative burdens on staff.

**Recommendation 4:**

The Housing Options Service develops and implements a plan to improve staff satisfaction informed by the staff survey. The plan may include performance indicators, training, regular team meetings and one-to-one as actions.

- 6.12 The morale of staff within the Service is consequently low while staffing turnover is high and this contributes further to increased stress and pressures on staff.
- 6.13 There is presently 1200 cases still outstanding (in terms of a decision). The backlog of work remains a major concern, with the Service having taken on six additional staff to tackle backlog within next 9-12 months.
- 6.14 It is a challenge for the Housing Options Service to recruit and retain skilled temporary staff (agency/fixed term). This is attributable to the increased demand, particularly in London for Homeless/Housing Options officers since the introduction of Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 6.15 Where practical, posts are now first being offered to internal staff. This however is time consuming and mean that other staff have to back-fill posts.

**Recommendation 5:**

*Housing Options Service to promote and publicise the good work carried by officers not just internally within the Housing Options Service but to use opportunities corporately and among partners to promote officers within the Service. This will provide recognition and a sense of value to officers.*

- 6.16 Staff within the Housing Options Service are also hindered by having to use multiple IT systems to process homelessness enquiries and applications. Having these numerous IT systems leads to the duplication of work (information and processes) which are onerous and time consuming for staff creating implications in reporting. This has a major impact both on service delivery and staff morale.

**Recommendation 6:**

*Develop and implement a plan for a new IT solution which is effective and efficient for the Housing Options Service.*

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# Housing Options Customer Access Project Recovery and Renewal

Karen Swift, Divisional Director, Housing, Regeneration and  
Sustainability

Presentation to H&RSSC - November 2021

## Project Purpose and Scope – Business Rationale

- The public and staff need to be kept safe during the period of the pandemic. Lessening the volume and regulating the flow of people attending Council offices is needed to enable appropriate social distancing in the public space.
- The Housing Options service has historically managed demand reactively through the crisis-oriented daily drop-in at Albert Jacobs House. Recovery and reinvention of the Service as a result of Covid provides the opportunity for a more stable and transformed service ready to relocate to the Town Hall.
- If it is to achieve a higher rate of prevention and reduce TA placements and associated costs, the Housing Options service will need to intervene earlier and in a more planned and proactive way with the homeless or those at risk of homelessness.
- If people can access help through other channels, including to self-help, whether on the web or over the phone or from alternative service settings, e.g. JCP, fewer people may need to attend for a face-to-face service to get help.
- An improved telephone service with enough staff with the right skills set coupled with automated call distribution (press button options when people phone) can enable more people to get assistance over the phone (for Lettings and Homelessness enquiries) and avoid people needing to visit Council offices because they cannot get through on the telephone.

## Project Purpose and Scope – Business rationale

- Content on the Council's website that is relevant and easier to find and navigate between pages could aid self-help.
- Interactive sections on the website that could screen demand, directing individuals to web resources where relevant and directing others who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to book appointments with the service online could enable people to get the help they need in a timely and appropriate way without needing to come into Council offices first or delaying getting help.
- Triaging those into the service who need casework through an online appointment booking system would enable the demand to be dealt with in a more planned way
- Minimising unplanned office presentations and undertaking appointments either virtually or in person upstream in partner service settings will entail more efficient use of casework time and increase time that can be spent to successfully prevent and relieve homelessness.
- There will continue to be those for whom an emergency office presentations will continue to be appropriate, e.g. DV. These groups will need a safe welcoming environment in Council offices with appropriate social distancing.

# Project Scope

## In Scope

- Telephony Improvements
- Web content and self-service
- Appointments
- Online offer

## Workstreams to be pursued concurrently to the Project

- IT Systems and data collection
- Increasing prevention and accommodation options
- B&B and TA reduction
- Service design improvements
- Casework admin and clearing backlog
- Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

## Benefits and savings:

Customers will have a range of ways to engage with us and can make their own appointments. The channel shift will also achieve cashable savings.

# CUSTOMER ACCESS PROJECT WORKSTREAMS

## TELEPHONES

- Improve customer experience – minimise hunt group call drop-off
- Call monitoring analysis
- Transform into ACD automated call triaging and distribution of calls (hmlss, lettings, housing options)

## WEB CONTENT AND SELF SERVICE

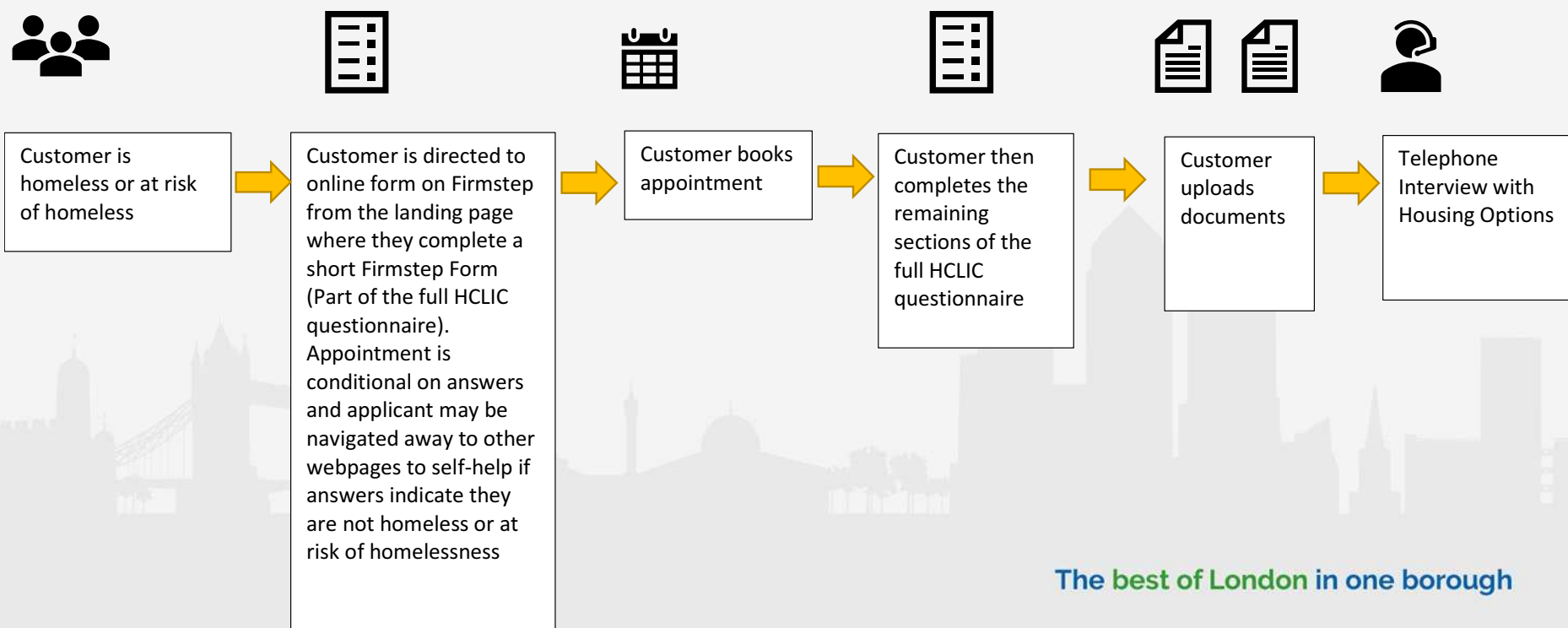
- Improved self help and information and advice on website
- Housing Options Online Triaging including self-booked appointments
- Improved functionality of Housing Online Registration Form

## APPOINTMENTS

- Use MS Teams/other solutions to conduct telephone/ video link appointments

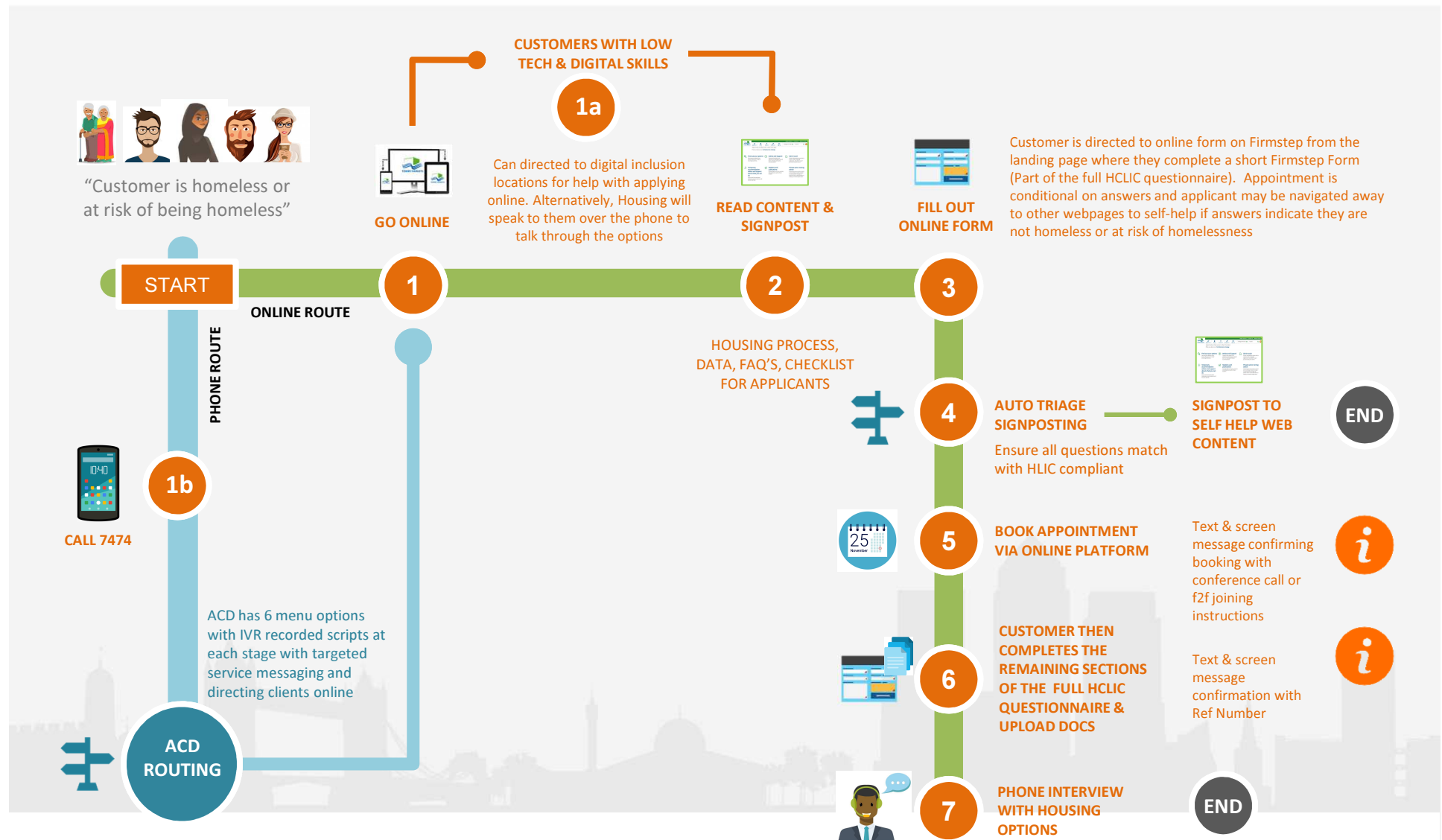
# HOMELESS OR THREATENED WITH HOMELESSNESS ONLINE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Before the customer gets to this part of the journey there will be a series of self-help information and guidance available on the Housing Options contents page which will direct customers to different options. If, however, they are homeless or at risk of homeless within 56 days they will be directed to complete an online form. Information will be provided to confirm what documents we would like to see before the appointment.



# HIGH LEVEL | TO BE CUSTOMER JOURNEY (NOT KNOWN TO US)

## PRESENTING AS HOMELESS OR AT RISK OF BEING HOMELESS



# Housing Option

## Persona 1 | Scenario HEALTH ISSUES



"I want to apply for my own flat"

Name: Iqbal Miah & Fatima Begum  
Age: 64 & 60  
Occupation: Retired  
Ethnicity: British Bangladeshi

Iqbal has health issues with cardiac problems and Fatima is not mobile as she would like to be, which restricts her movement. The small 3 bedroom flat has now occupied with the extended family. Their grown-up children currently live in their home, which is now overcrowded.

The youngest child causes problems for the elderly couple, which has put strain on their relationship. The couple's eldest child has recently had a newborn baby and now the house is overcrowded.

The couple and their children are not good with technology. The and want to move out somewhere suitable without any difficulties.

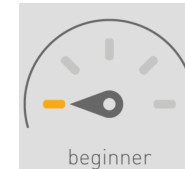
### DEVICES



Dumb Phone\*

\* A dumbphone is a mobile telephone that, unlike a smartphone, has little-to-no computing or internet capacity.

### TECH SAVVY



### Primary Goal

The couple wants to apply for accommodation in Tower Hamlets.

### How couple finds \us

Housing Options will speak to the couple over the phone to talk through the options. When social distancing is no longer an issue, the couple would call the Housing Options and be offered an appointment in Ideas Stores and thereafter follow the customer journey as per slide 4.

### Pain points

We can't speak read, write or speak English and rely on our children to communicate for us. We will need help with translation.

### Why couple comes to us

The current home is overcrowded. The couple need space for their children.

### What the couple doesn't want

- Confusing information with complex terminology
- Referred to do something online
- No translation option

### Teams

Housing Option Team

POTENTIAL OUTCOME: SHOULD BE SIGNPOSTED TO HOUSING REGISTER

The best of London in one borough



# Housing Option

## Persona 2 | Scenario FINANCIAL PRESSURE



"I can't afford my revised rent"

Name: Khadija Farah  
Age: 29  
Occupation: Office Cleaner  
Ethnicity: Somalin

Khadija has two children and is a single parent escaping a violent relationship. She works a few hours each week in a charity as a cleaner.

She uses her smart phone to shop online, pay bills and for social media. Khadija is currently working towards her qualifications and she aims to work in tourism.

She is currently renting a one bedroom flat privately and her landlord now wants her out. She in rent arrears and she is in debt with her bank.

### DEVICES



Laptop



Desktop

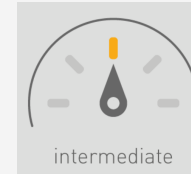


Smartphone



Tablet

### TECH SAVVY



### Primary Goal

Khadija wants an affordable place to stay.

### Why she comes to us

She can't afford the rent in her current flat and needs help.

### How she finds us

She can find the website via any of her devices and follow the customer journey as per slide 4

### What she doesn't want

- She doesn't want to keep going in or checking online for her progression
- Dealing with multiple Housing Officers
- Unnecessary information being provided

### Pain points

She needs to drop her kids off to school and can come to appointments mid-day only. She needs something affordable and not too far from the kids' school and her work.

### Teams

Housing Option Team

POTENTIAL OUTCOME: CAN BE SIGNPOSTED TO RENT NEGOTIATION UNTIL SETCION 21 IS SERVED

The best of London in one borough

# Housing Option

## Persona 3 | Scenario OVERCROWDING



"I need to move out"

Name: Amy Kerry  
Age: 32  
Occupation: Secretary  
Ethnicity: British

Amy is currently living with her family with her partner. She is pregnant and is on maternity leave. Her current living space is overcrowded.

Amy wants a bigger space for her partner and baby. She is career driven and keen to return to work as soon as. She is a secretary at a local firm.

Amy is independent and brilliant at technology.

### DEVICES



Laptop



Desktop

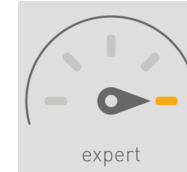


Smartphone



Tablet

### TECH SAVVY



### Primary Goal

Amy wants to move into a bigger space for her family.

### Why she comes to us

Her current living space is small.

### How she finds us

Amy can find Tower Hamlets via her mobile device and follow the customer journey as per slide 4

### What she doesn't want

- Poor recommendation for accommodation
- Multiple appointments
- Having to deal with multiple Housing Officers

### Pain points

I can't attend to multiple appointments and can't go on regular viewings for accommodation due to having a newborn.

### Teams

Housing Option Team

POTENTIAL OUTCOME: HOUSING REGISTER UNLESS MAKING YOURSELF HOMELSS IN THE NEXT 56 DAYS

The best of London in one borough

# Housing Option

## Persona 4 | Scenario MENTAL HEALTH



"I want to apply for housing"

Name: Abdul Miah  
Age: 27  
Occupation: Unemployed  
Ethnicity: Bangladeshi

Abdul is sofa surfing and has not lived with his family for many years. He suffers from depression and has learning difficulties; he is currently on medication.

Abdul doesn't have any close family or friends to talk to, hence is unable to get support.

Abdul doesn't have many qualification and only has a 'dumb phone' phone with no web access.

Abdul gets a lot of help from the local mosque.

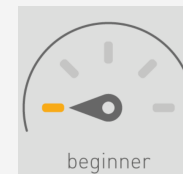
### DEVICES



Dumb Phone\*

\* A dumbphone is a mobile telephone that, unlike a smartphone, has little-to-no computing or internet capacity.

### TECH SAVVY



### Primary Goal

Abdul needs a safe place to stay.

### How he finds us

Housing will speak to them over the phone to talk through the options. When social distancing is no longer an issue, Abdul would call the Housing Options and be offered an appointment in Ideas Stores and thereafter follow the customer journey as per slide 4.

### Pain points

Does not like social environments and complicated actions and often doesn't like talking about his situation.

### Why he comes to us

Abdul needs the councils help to find him a suitable place to stay.

### What he doesn't want

- He doesn't want to keep asking for help
- He doesn't want to speak to multiple officers
- He doesn't want to be in a noisy environment

### Teams

Housing Option Team

POTENTIAL OUTCOME: HOMELESS YES/NO BUT TECHNICALLY NOT HOMELESS BUT CAN DO PREVENTION WORK, SIGNPOST TO BASED ON PRIORITY NEEDS

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# Housing Option

## Persona 5 | Scenario HOMELESS, REQUIRES EMERGENCY HOUSING



"I have nowhere to stay tonight"

**Name** Richard Taylor

**Age** 33

**Occupation** Unemployed

**Ethnicity** White/British

Richard has had a history of rough sleeping. He recently has come out of prison and he's under probation service. He came from Yorkshire but spent most of his life in Tower Hamlets. He was in care as a child and suffered abuse as a child.

Richard is a substance user and spends most of his money on alcohol and drugs. He has low literacy and has serious anger management problems.

He has no devices to use besides an old phone. He's not good with technology and doesn't do anything online.

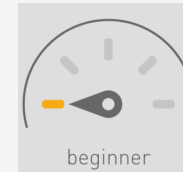
### DEVICES



Dumb Phone\*

\* A dumbphone is a mobile telephone that, unlike a smartphone, has little-to-no computing or internet capacity.

### TECH SAVVY



### Primary Goal

Richard needs a place to stay tonight

### How he finds us

Richard was asked to come to the front desk. The Social Worker should complete a full referral for him and apply for him online. Social Services have a statutory 'duty to refer'.

### Pain points

It's his first time using the service and will struggle to show basic documents.

### Why he comes to us

He has no where to turn.

### What he doesn't want

He wants a stable place to stay and to deal with his medical condition.

### Teams

Housing Option Team

POTENTIAL OUTCOME: HOMELESS APPLICATION REQUIRED

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# Timeline

November

December

January

February

March

April

## REQUIREMENTS SIGN OFF:

- ACD
- Website content
- Self – help navigation form
- Online application form
- Housing Register form

## DESIGN:

- ACD – Telephony partner
- Website content - Digital
- Self -help navigation form - Digital
- Online application form – Digital + IT applications
- Housing Register form – IT applications

## DESIGN/TESTING

- ACD –design by recording partner
- Website content – Service, residents, partners testing
- Self-help navigation form – Service, residents, partners testing
- Online application form – Digital + IT applications design + Service, residents, partners testing
- Housing Register – IT applications design/ Service testing

## Mobilisation Handover Closure

# Intermediate Housing Register



## What is it and why?

- Will deliver on the commitment made by the Council (current Housing Strategy) to develop and promote Affordable Housing within the Borough through the creation of an Intermediate Housing Register
- New Intermediate Housing policy provides guidance for residents, officers, registered providers and developers on eligibility and the prioritisation of applicants on the Intermediate Housing Register for the first three months of marketing any new Intermediate homes built within the Borough – funded in part or full by the GLA's Affordable Homes Fund.
- After the initial three months of marketing, eligibility will automatically cascade to the London-wide offer as specified by the GLA where other qualifying applicants may apply.

# Intermediate Housing Register



- New policy conforms with the GLA's Affordable Homes eligibility criterion.
- Income thresholds:
  - Household income of < than £60,000 per annum for intermediate rent homes
  - Household income of <than £90,000 per annum for shared ownership homes
- Council will set a minimum household income for all intermediate housing products. (£20,000 pa). However, each scheme will have its own valuation and costs. Applicants will be required to show that they are able to afford the property. (RPs and developers will screen for affordability).
- Applicants will be required to have sufficient deposit for the purchase (usually 5-10%) and will also need to have enough savings or to be able to access the costs of buying a home; for instance, to cover additional costs such as legal fees and Stamp Duty Land Tax.

# Intermediate Housing Register



## **Priority Matrix for the first three months of marketing new Intermediate Homes**

1. Existing social housing tenants (living in accommodation owned by the Council or a Registered Provider as registered).
  2. Tower Hamlets residents
  3. Non-Tower Hamlets' residents who have been working in the Borough for the past six months
- Applicants within each band will be accorded priority accordingly to the date of their registration or application for a particular housing product.
  - Set minimum household income of £20,000 pa. Each scheme will have its own valuation and costs. Applicants will be required to show that they have the financial means for the home to be affordable to them.
  - In the event of a 'tie' between applicants in one of the priority groups, the applicant/household who is on the lower income threshold of affordability should be prioritised.



# Intermediate Housing Register



## Benefits

- Maximise housing supply for those eligible (reducing pressure on supply in the Borough).
- Encourage and facilitate residents on low to medium incomes, who have the financial ability and the aspirations of home ownership, towards achieving their goal, via the intermediate housing route.
- Prioritise existing social tenants, working age sons and daughters living with parents , residents who are private renters, living with family or friends and others on low/middle incomes living and working in the borough.
- Will cover all schemes in the Borough for intermediate rent or shared ownership – although Council will procure IT system to register and prioritise applicants.
- No council administration involved - self administered by RP's and developers although Council will procure/develop an IT system to register and prioritise applicants – enabling direct and targeted marketing

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