

Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee

Housing

3 July 2018



Key functions

- Housing management (THH & RPs)
- Improving conditions in the private rented sector (PRS) – charter, landlord accreditations, licensing
- Increasing housing supply, particularly affordable housing (new build, self build, acquisitions, change of use etc.)
- Addressing housing needs and maximising housing opportunities, tackling overcrowding & under occupation
- Managing lettings of social housing
- Managing Common Housing Register (CHR) partnership with RPs

Key functions

- Delivery of estate regeneration programmes
- Targeting empty properties
- Facilitating delivery of disabled facilities grant
- Early homeless intervention and prevention service - information, advice, support and assessments
- Accommodate households accepted as homeless
- Procurement and management of temporary accommodation (TA)
- Prevent rough sleeping

Key Achievements 17/18

- Granted planning consent for 2,573 housing units, 1,765 private and 808 affordable
- 926 affordable homes completed, 316 family rented and 146 wheelchair
- 1,680 households rehoused, 897 previously overcrowded
- 148 new council homes built at Watts Grove and let at social rents and Tower Hamlets Living Rents (THLR)
- Planning consent for 77 new homes (Jubilee Street, Baroness Road, and Locksley Estate A), completion expected in 2020
- Pipeline of 450 homes has been established, consultations completed, first planning submissions due by 29th June

Key Achievements 17/18 (continued)

- Council has spent £19.76m (since 2014) in right to buy receipts to provide new social housing
- Purchased 60 ex-Council homes, previously acquired under RTB
- Purchased over 100 Poplar HARCA properties
- 4,038 applications registered for housing licensing scheme
- 53 mandatory Homes of Multiple Occupation (HMO) licenses issued
- 349 households prevented from becoming homeless
- No families in B&B for more than 6 weeks (sustained legal compliance)
- 329 (31%) of 1057 2 bed+ lets were to homeless households

Key Achievements 17/18 (continued)

- 1,680 households rehoused, 518 into THH and 1,160 into RP properties (18,000+ on housing waiting list)
- Rehoused 897 overcrowded households (53% of total lets)
- Rehoused 67 under occupying CHR tenants, 40 of which gave up 3 beds+
- 42 lets to project 120 households, 200+ families rehoused since project inception in 2012

Priorities 18/19

- Increasing the supply and delivery of affordable homes incl. new homes for TA / delivery vehicles
- New build by the Council through the HRA (infills and estate regeneration)
- Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap flexibility
- Policy to support delivery of self build homes
- Improving quality of new build stock
- Targeting long term empty properties to increase greater occupation
- Improving the quality and management of housing stock
- Delivering priorities on short term lets (area exemptions, partnerships, enforcements, illegal sublets)

Priorities 18/19 (continued)

- Fire safety interventions and responses
- Support for private landlords
- Deliver housing renewal grant programme
- Selective licensing inspection programme
- New selective licensing scheme for HMOs
- Progressing article 4 - protection of residential units converting into HMOs
- Legislative changes - regulation of letting agents
- New homelessness strategy
- Implementation and review of the Homelessness Reduction Act
- Targeted interventions to reduce rough sleeping
- Legal compliance in the use of B&B accommodation

Social Housing Green Paper

- Planning/building of homes in right places and safety
- Quality and management
- Benefits to the economy – industrial strategy
- Tackling homelessness
- Illegal sublets
- Support for leaseholders with a social landlord
- Social landlords role in creating places people want to live
- Social housing policy – promoting safe and integrated communities
- To be published “Spring 2018”, expected July

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

- New TH Homelessness Strategy
- East London Housing Partnership - collaborative approach to tackling homelessness
- Implementation of recommendations from scrutiny review - Effectiveness of health and social care provision for homeless residents
- HRA came into force April 2018, comprising of:
 - Information, advice, prevention & relief, accommodation, client rights incl. right to review
 - New prevention duty - support to everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness, subject to eligibility
 - Threat of homelessness – increased to 56 days incl. issue of Section 21 notices
 - More time for casework / homeless preventions (6 months sustainability)
 - Personalised housing plans
 - Duty to refer

Eliminating Rough Sleeping

- Halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate by 2027
- Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Taskforce supported by an expert Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel
- £30M fund 18/19 for local authorities with high levels of rough sleeping
- £100k funding for frontline Rough Sleeping workers - enhance skills / knowledge
- Exploring additional, coordinated move-on accommodation
- Support from Government departments:
 - Health & Social Care – mental health and drug treatment services
 - Ministry of Justice – prison and probation work with LA's, identify those at risk
 - Home Office – Policing sector work with LA's, enforcement and sharing of best practice
 - Digital, Culture, Media and Sport – opportunities for Social Impact Bonds
- Mayor of London to publish new Rough Sleeping Strategy in 2018

London Housing Strategy

- Building new homes – increase supply of land, supporting infrastructure, diversified industry (capacity & speed), address construction skills gaps
- Genuinely affordable homes – 50% of homes built affordable, protect existing affordable homes
- High quality homes and inclusive neighbourhoods – well designed, good quality and environmentally sustainable, meet diverse housing needs, involve communities

London Housing Strategy (continued)

- A fairer deal for private renters and leaseholders – decent standards and management practices, more affordable and secure, reform of leasehold
- Tackling homelessness and helping rough sleepers – Prevent homelessness, house homeless households into sustainable accommodation, route off streets
- TH target of 3,931 net additional homes per annum
- Priorities captured in TH 2016 – 2021 housing strategy

Regeneration

- Isle of Dogs & South Poplar Opportunity Area Planning framework (c. 31,000 homes)
- Poplar Riverside Housing Zone (c.15,000 homes)
- Infill Schemes & Council estate regeneration (2,000 new Council homes)
- Blackwall Reach (phased delivery, 1,575 homes)
- Poplar Harca - Place making & reshaping Poplar programme - Aberfeldy / Crisp Street proposals
- Ocean Estate site H (c.225 homes)

Challenges

Tackling Homelessness

- Rising housing costs, welfare reforms and its impacts on homelessness
- Shortage of social housing
- 44% of households in income poverty
- Over 16,000 people unemployed

Implementation of the HRA 2017

- Service re-design, staff training and recruitment & new IT system
- Written decisions and increasing requests for review / challenge
- Increasing demands on temporary accommodation

Challenges (continued)

Housing Supply & Regeneration

- Rapidly increasing population growth
- Resident ballots – possible stalling of schemes
- Reduced CIL & S106 income for infrastructure and sustainability of residential developments
- Availability of land and supporting funds
- Financial restrictions – HRA borrowing cap, RTB receipts (30% cap and 3 year deadline)
- Brexit – increased construction costs, skills shortage and stalled schemes

Fire safety

- Increased costs for fire safety improvements (across housing providers)
- Cladding – non compliant freeholders, enforcement and prosecutions
- Limited financial support available for private property owners to remove Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding from tower blocks, costs to leaseholders

Opportunities

- Partnership working - Self-builders, Community Land Trusts, Housing Associations
- Poplar Riverside Masterplan, delivering up to 15,000 homes, new infrastructure provisions, place making, clear framework for the area and cross borough working
- Opportunity Area Planning Framework for Isle of Dogs and refreshed for Lower Lea Valley – attracting development & investment
- HRA - Improved communications, partnership working and enhanced measures to maximise preventions

Work Programme – 18/19

Recommended challenge areas for scrutiny review:

- Review of the **Homelessness Reduction Act 2017** around 6 months after implementation began (i.e. start review in October / November).
- Review the **Temporary Accommodation Acquisitions Programme** – this would look at the impact, benefits and VFM across the range of property purchases from ex-RTB buybacks, Poplar HARCA and Out Of Borough acquisitions.

Q&A