

Housing & Regeneration Priorities 2023/24

Councillor Kabir Ahmed – Regeneration,
Inclusive Development and House Building



Achievements and Challenges 22-23



Homelessness and Rough Sleeping



Achievements Overview

- Transition into resident's hub and improvement to customer pathways / journey
- Improved customer portal for homeless applicants via 'Housing Online' launched April 23
- Approval of funding to resource an additional 22 housing office
- 37% of approaches had their homelessness successfully prevented or relieved inc22/23.
- 317 homeless household were supported into sustainable accommodation
- 48% of all lets made to overcrowded households
- Increased specialist provision for people rough sleeping through DLUHC's Rough Sleeping Initiative fund.
- Review of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in the borough completed

Challenges Overview

- Acute contraction and lack of affordable PRS Accommodation, leading to a steep increase in use of costly TA to complete a prevention or main duty discharge.
- An increase in the volume of statutory breaches and judicial review threats where families placed in unsuitable accommodation.
- Contraction in the supply of PRS means the cost of TA has risen sharply and an unprecedented use of commercial hotels
- Rising homelessness leading to increased volume of case work where homelessness cannot be prevented.
- Caseworker capacity- switched to dealing with frontline emergencies, leading to a growth in decision case backlog.
- Customer satisfaction is harder to achieve with fewer prevention options,



Housing Supply



Achievements Overview

- 2,330 Net additions to the housing stock
- 591 affordable homes consented and 585 affordable homes delivered
- 40 new build council scheme completions with a 144 more anticipated before the end of 2023
- Progress on the Joint Venture Partnership initiative commencing imminently
- Modular Homes for use as Temporary Accommodation now onsite at Langdon Walk

Challenges Overview

- National delays in construction this year due to cost of inflation and materials which on occasion requires new planning application.
- Discussions are ongoing with developers who have schemes with planning approval that have stalled.
- Regulations to require two staircases residential developments above 18m, which will slow development further and impact on costs/ viability



Housing Management



Achievements Overview

- Refresh of the council's tenancy terms and conditions
- Successful engagement on THH insourcing and decision to bring THH inhouse in late 2022/3.
- Overcrowding Action Plan and Partner engagement to ameliorate overcrowding
- Joint work with registered providers via Tower Hamlets Housing Forum (THHF) and the Private Renters Forum

Challenges Overview

- Ensuring readiness for the new Social Housing Regulation Act and revised consumer standards.
- Ensuring a focus on performance during transition period and ensuring that delivery is not disrupted during insourcing.
- Increased levels of stock now owned by leaseholders which impacts upon the management of stock
- Ensuring residents are aware and use the correct channels of remediation to ensure issues/ complaints are resolved effectively.



Planning / Place Based Regeneration



Achievements Overview

- Preparation of new Local Plan – including early engagement conducted in Q4 22/23 with formal consultation beginning in winter 2023.
- Commencement of Whitechapel Road Improvements Southern public realm works including sections to tie-in with new Town Hall
- Establishment of Regeneration Forums in Whitechapel and East India Dock to manage change emerging from new development and forge better partnership working
- Lea Valley (enabling works for the construction of the Lochnagar Bridge)
- Progress in transition of planning powers back from the LLDC to LB Tower Hamlets

Challenges Overview

- Complexities of technical, legal, and financial matters related to the construction, operation, and maintenance of bridges.
- Current economic conditions including high inflation affecting cost of materials and pushing up the cost of delivery on capital projects and development.



Safety / Compliance



Achievements Overview

- Fire Safety Action Plan and preparation for the enactment of the Building Safety Act.
- Adoption of the council's new code of construction practice (April 23)
- 1,891 licensed premises interventions
- Damp and Mould review and reporting
- Preparation for Social Housing Regulation Bill

Challenges Overview

- Delivering and ensuring statutory duties around Fire and Building Safety'
- National recruitment shortage of EHOs leading to high competition around environmental health professionals,
- Potential impact of the Renters (Reform) Bill - introduction of Decent Homes Standard in the PRS will mean more Enforcement powers for Environmental Health Team, more resources required – no funding clarity from government and shortage of qualified officers across the sector



Priorities 23/24



Priorities 23/24



Housing Supply

- Working with developers and builders to deliver a minimum of 1,000 homes pa.
- Seeking delivery partners for 8 housing development sites in the council's freehold ownership.
- To appoint one or two experienced residential developers based on a contractual development agreement, launching an open tender and a launch event for developers on 11 September 2023.
- Continued discuss with developers and reiterating the message that more family-sized affordable homes are required .

Housing Management

- Ensuring seamless insourcing of housing management service back to the council
- Progressing action plan to tackle overcrowding and work with partners to better support residents living in overcrowded accommodation (inc. Damp/Mould)
- Ensure housing management of council stock meets consumer standards arising from Social Housing Regulation Act, including safety checks (Water, Fire, Gas, Asbestos, Electrics and Lifts)
- Work with residents and social housing providers around best practice and compliance to the Social Housing Regulation Act
- Working with resident to ensure effective resolution of management issues including escalation to the Housing Ombudsmen where necessary.

Planning / Place Based Regeneration

- Further development and submission of the council's new Local Plan
- Progress the transition of LLDC planning powers back to LBTH
- Securing approval for the northern footway public realm works and market stall scheme for the Whitechapel Road Improvement Programme,
- Additional greening and placemaking strategies for Whitechapel
- Securing planning consent and all licenses needed to construct the Lochnagar Bridge.
- Deliver GLA funded School Superzones pilot projects in Canon Barnett Primary School and Woolmore Primary School
- Deliver community centre near East India Dock Basin to cater to needs of residents in the area.

Regulation / Compliance

- Progression of Fire Safety Action Plan
- Approval of additional and HMO licensing schemes
- Preparation for Social Housing Regulation Act on council stock to ensure compliance
- Readiness for Private Reters Reform bill and impact on licensing and housing options
- Monitor compliance of council stock in relation to provisions within the Social Housing Regulation and put in place effective risk management protocols

Homelessness

- Continue to improve customer pathways / journey
- Development of new Local Lettings Agency
- Progressing recruitment of 22 additional staff to plug frontline gaps, improve customer satisfaction and expedite casework management
- Mobilising a project to address casework decision backlog
- Targeted work with severely overcrowded to examine and discuss their housing options.
- Adopting a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in 2024.
- Bidding for funding from DLUHC under the Single Homelessness Accommodation programme to expand housing options for those experiencing rough sleeping.

