

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny	Date: Tuesday 4 th December 2012	Classification: Unrestricted	Report No:	Agenda Item: 7.2
Report of: Corporate Director - Aman Dalvi Originating officer(s) Martin Ling		Title: Strategic Housing issues – Update Wards Affected: All		

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council has been making progress in a number of areas in order to meet its strategic housing duties and on-going priorities.
- 1.2 A review of the 2009 – 12 Housing Strategy action was carried out and presented to the Great Place to Live Board in July 2012. Of the 67 actions agreed, 59 had been achieved with the remaining 8 either in progress or on hold.
- 1.3 As well as giving details of the 2009 /12 review, this paper sets out other key areas of activity which will inform on- going work in both the public and private housing sectors. The Committee is asked to comment on the progress to date and future activity.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider and comment on:-

- 2.1 The outcomes and achievements of the 2009 –12 Housing Strategy.
- 2.2 The key areas of activity to be taken forward in response to housing issues in the borough.

3.0 Housing Strategy 2009 – 12 Review

The Housing Strategy 2009 – 2012 was adopted by Tower Hamlets in 2009. This section of the report considers in detail the Housing Strategy Action Plan and identifies areas of success and areas where targets have not been fully achieved.

In many instances, the delivery of the Housing Strategy Action Plan requires joint working with a range of other agencies and partners. Many of the successes are

as a result of the formation of strong, positive working relationships that enable delivery and ensure positive outcomes for people in Tower Hamlets.

This part of the report covers the period from 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012, the final year of delivery and compares progress to the previous year. This information was previously reported to the Great Place to Live Delivery Group in July 2012.

3.1 Strategic Housing Themes and Performance Overview

The Following tables give an overview of the five main priority themes within the Housing Strategy. The Strategy is accompanied by an action plan detailing sixty-seven commitments (objectives) in total. The performance summary below for 2011/12 shows steady progress with fifty nine objectives either on target or completed. The remaining eight are either showing slower progress or on hold. It should be noted that with the change in Government in 2010 and the introduction of social housing reforms and reductions and alterations in funding streams that it was inevitable that some targets would be affected.

3.2 Delivering and Managing Decent Homes

Every resident in the borough has a right to live in a home that meets a decent standard and is managed effectively. The standard of homes and management varies considerably in the borough and the Council wants to see all social sector housing and private housing occupied by vulnerable households raised to decent standard and wants all social landlords delivering at least a good management service.

	On target or completed	In progress /on hold	Overdue
2010/11	12 (71%)	5	2
2011/12	17 (100%)	2	0

3.3 Placemaking and Sustainable Communities

Housing has a key role to play in delivering better places to live and offering people opportunities to achieve a better quality of life. This involves ensuring that new and regenerated housing environments make a positive contribution to the places that people live in. In addition, new investment has to make a positive contribution to the opportunities available to people through access to services and amenities, helping to improve community well-being.

	On target or completed	In progress /on hold	Overdue
2010/11	8 (62%)	5	0
2011/12	9 (69%)	4	0

3.4 Managing Demand, Reducing Overcrowding

Existing and new affordable housing needs to be used as effectively as possible in order to manage existing and future housing demand. Specifically, a fresh approach is needed to reduce overcrowding in the borough.

	On target or completed	In progress /on hold	Overdue
2010/11	7 (88%)	0	1
2011/12	8 (100%)	0	0

3.5 New Housing Supply

The amount of affordable housing, particularly social housing in Tower Hamlets needs to be maximised. The quality of new housing needs to be higher, reflecting new priorities on climate change, lifetime standards and at the same time delivering housing that helps deliver more employment and training opportunities

	On target or completed	In progress /on hold	Overdue
2010/11	10 (71%)	3	1
2011/12	14 (100%)	0	0

3.6 Housing Investment Strategy

Additional investment from the Government – principally through the Homes and Communities Agency – needs to be maximised to fund schemes that will meet the Borough’s housing priorities. The key areas for investment are new affordable housing, meeting the decent homes standard and delivering estate renewal. This is about identifying the resources necessary and putting in place a plan to ensure the resources are well spent.

	On target or completed	In progress /on hold	Overdue
2010/11	11 (85%)	2	0
2011/12	12 (92%)	1	0

Total (all 5 themes)			
	On target or completed	In progress /on hold	Overdue
2010/11	48 (72%)	15	4
2011/12	59 (88%)	8	0

3.7 **Overall Performance**

The action plan performance summary demonstrates the Council and its partners have achieved progress and success over the last twelve months building on the initial work arising out of the strategy.

The Council achieved 100% of targets in 2 of the 5 categories, over 90% in 2 others and 66% in the Placemaking and Sustainable Communities category. Overall nearly 90% of target have either been completed or on target or as a result of other circumstances on hold.

Attached at Appendix 1 is a summary of the achievements in the Housing Strategy Action Plan to 31st March 2012.

4.0 **Housing Outlook**

4.1 With regard to future housing activity, the review of the 2009 – 12 Housing Strategy was the starting point for identifying future interventions. The review identified areas that were still relevant and on-going, areas where there had been significant change and areas that would no longer require attention.

A full evidence base is also being assembled to inform future activity.

In addition there has been a significant development of other surveys, plans and strategies which will impact on future housing activity:

- Tower Hamlets Community Plan 2013
- Allocations Review
- Draft Homelessness review 2013
- Overcrowding Strategy - 2009
- Under Occupation Plan - 2012
- Private Sector Stock Condition Survey - 2011
- Older Persons –Need Assessment 2010
- Supporting People Commissioning Strategy 2011 - 2016
- Core Strategy and Managing Development – Development Plan Document – 2011/2012

4.2 **External Drivers**

Equally important will be the external drivers that will shape future Housing activity and the Council's ability to tackle the housing issues in the borough. The formation of the Coalition Government in 2010 and the passing of the Localism Act 2011 and the Welfare Reform Act 2012 are particularly important. The most significant external drivers can be summarised as follows:

- Social Allocations Reform
- Tenure Reform
- Reform of Council Housing finance
- Reform of homelessness legislation
- Abolition of the Tenants Service Authority
- Transfer of Homes and Communities Agency funding and responsibilities in London to the Mayor of London
- Reduction in capital funding for new build and introduction of affordable rent
- Changes in Housing Benefit entitlement
- Introduction of Universal Credit
- Welfare Reform

4.3 **Housing Need and Demand**

Set out below are the key areas of work related to housing need and demand:

Letting Affordable Housing

The Council's is conducting a review of the lettings scheme allowed for under the Localism Act and will be consulting on areas such as local connection, tenancy history, direct lets to wheelchair users priority for armed forces and possible revised approach to income levels and owner occupation.

Overcrowding / Under-occupation

The 2009 Overcrowding Plan needs to be refreshed and new targets set. The Under Occupation Plan is currently being considered by the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum Common Housing Register group.

Homelessness

A review of homelessness activity is being considered by Homelessness Partnership Board. Areas for development could include:

- Provide quality, timely and accessible information and advice focused on homeless prevention and support.
- Address the root causes of homelessness as part of a partnership approach to tackling worklessness and exclusion
- Support people to remain in their homes
- Develop innovative and sustainable housing options in the private sector
- Maximise the use of the existing social housing stock
- Ensure that there is a sufficient supply of appropriate temporary accommodation and reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation

- Prevent homelessness among families and young people as part of an integrated approach to youth and family services
- Improve the life chances of homeless children, families and young people
- Better identify the needs of vulnerable people through a personalised, multi-agency approach
- Address and reduce the support needs of vulnerable homeless people to enable them to live independently

Tenancy Strategy

The draft Tenancy Strategy sets out a preference for lifetime tenancies and safeguards for tenants who are given flexible tenancies by Registered Providers. A final version will be considered by Cabinet on the 5th December 2012. A copy of the draft Tenancy Strategy is attached at Appendix 2.

Supporting People

Housing activity will be shaped to ensure the priorities set out in the Supporting People Commissioning Strategy are taken into account in associated housing plans.

The Supporting People Commissioning strategy aims to:

- Support individuals to live as independently as possible;
- Rebalance services towards prevention and early intervention away from high cost less empowering longer term services;
- Expand the commitment to personalised services; and
- Drive up efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

In the provision of support, the programme helps the most vulnerable and excluded contribute to wider society by focusing on achieving positive outcomes for individuals.

This support will aim to:

- reduce rough sleeping or other forms of homelessness by providing emergency accommodation' such as hostels and supported accommodation,
- reduce repeat homelessness by providing support to individuals to move from hostels and supported accommodation to permanent independent living,
- prevent homelessness through eviction due to debt, harassment and lack of relevant support,
- reduce the need for institutional types of care, tackling social exclusion by improving access to paid employment, education and training opportunities, tackling substance abuse through appropriate housing related support services for people with a drug or alcohol related need and reducing re-offending
- promote community safety, by meeting the housing-related support needs of offenders and women facing domestic violence.

Older Persons

An Older Persons Housing Need assessment was carried out in 2010 and indicated a need to provide of different choices in housing for older people and improved support for them to stay in their own homes.

Initiatives could include:

- consideration of the requirements for a range of older person's accommodation on all new developments
- to plan for longer term provision of extra care sheltered housing schemes, review existing sheltered housing stock
- to continue to provide Disabled Facilities Grant,
- assess the viability of an affordable private leaseholder scheme in Tower Hamlets,
- promote the private sector handyperson service
- develop an affordable warmth strategy to help older people live comfortably within their existing homes.
- to continue to provide a range of support services to older people in their own homes,
- further explore the provision of hub facilities offering integrated social care, health and wellbeing services linked more closely with housing
- improve the quality of housing and health advice and information services older people,
- ensure the quality of day care services are fit for purpose review and develop existing housing policies with Tower Hamlets Homes and other social landlords that support older people to remain in their homes
- value older people's contribution to the delivery and running of services
- promote options and services in order to overcome preconceptions about specialist housing such as sheltered housing and extra care housing and promote joint working with Age Concern, Housing Providers and third sector organisations to make sure sheltered services are welcoming and appropriate for older BME and LGBT people.

4.4 Housing Delivery and Supply

Changes in national and regional planning policy will impact on the delivery of the supply of new housing. The Greater London Authority has set a target of 2885 new homes per annum which is set out in the London Plan.

Tower Hamlets Planning Policy

The housing elements of the core strategy including geographical locations for new developments.

Managing Development - Development Plan Document (MDDPD)

The key areas of the MDDPD cover quantity and tenure, affordability and affordable rent, housing type, intermediate housing, student housing, design and standards, lifetime and accessible homes, car free developments and gypsy and travellers provision.

Affordability will be subject to the outcome of the recent MDDPD Examination in Public held by the Planning Inspectorate and which is expected to report back at the end of November 2012.

4.5 Regeneration and Renewal

Decent Homes

The decent homes programme managed through Tower Hamlets Homes is now on track to deliver by 2015.

Regeneration Programme

Key regeneration schemes include Ocean, Blackwall Reach, Poplar Baths, Alfred/Malmsbury Estate, Cottall Street, Fish Island (Olympics site) and St Andrews.

Private Sector Renewal

A range of interventions will be considered in the private sector for the improvement of the stock drawing on the data from the 2011 Private Sector Stock Condition Survey. This could include private sector renewal and disabled facilities grants, energy efficiency and carbon reduction initiatives,

4.6 Management and Regulation

The Council's is required to respond to the new regulatory framework including the new democratic filter and complaints system.

Tenant Involvement

The Council's commitment to tenant participation including Tenants Panels, the Tenant Federation and Leaseholders groups will continue.

Regulation in the private rented sector

Options for private rented sector accreditation and regulation need to be considered.

5.0 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

- 5.1 This report summarises the outcomes and achievements resulting from the Borough's 2009-12 Housing Strategy and seeks the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on future housing activities that should be taken forward.
- 5.2 Whilst there are no specific financial consequences arising directly from the recommendations in the report, ultimately the key housing activities will underpin key decisions in relation to the allocation of the limited resources available within the Borough, and will influence the shaping of various other Council strategies.
- 5.3 The report sets out some of the challenges that the Authority and its partners face over coming years as a result of demographic and economic growth, and the need for affordable social housing. Investment in individual projects and initiatives will need to be subject to detailed planning at the appropriate time, including consideration of the financial impact on both partner organisations and on the Council.

6.0 CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL)

- 6.1 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, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution provides that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants and may make reports and recommendations to the Full Council or the Executive in connection with the discharge of any functions.
- 6.2 The Committee should be aware of the following requirements relevant to the Council's housing functions -
- The Council is required by section 166A of the Housing Act 1996 to have a scheme for the allocation of its housing accommodation (the Lettings Policy).
 - The Council is required by section 150 of the Localism Act 2011 to prepare and publish a tenancy strategy setting out the matters that registered providers of social housing in Tower Hamlets are to have regard to when formulating policies relating to: (a) the kinds of tenancies they grant; (b) the circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind; (c) the length of term if a tenancy is granted for a term certain; and (d) the circumstances in which a further tenancy will be granted on the coming to an end of an existing tenancy.
- 6.3 When exercising its housing functions, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to

advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don't. This should also inform any comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny committee on these functions.

7.0 ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Housing activity contributes towards One Tower Hamlets objectives.

8.0 SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

8.1 The impact of reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty will form a key part of future housing activity

9.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific risk management implications at this stage related to this report.

10.0 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Housing activity is linked into other Council objectives including contributing to safe and cohesive communities. The Council work with its housing partners and the police in order to assist in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.

11.0 EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

11.1 There is no specific efficiency implications at this stage as the final document and action plan are in the first stages of development and specific funding arrangements are yet to be agreed.

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)
List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report

Brief description of “background papers”	Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection
Older Persons Housing Needs Assessment 2010 Private sector stock condition survey 2011	Martin Ling Development and Renewal London Borough of Tower Hamlets Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent London, E14 2BG Tel: 020 7364 0469

12. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Summary of actions from 2009 -- 2012 Housing Strategy Action Plan as reported to the Great Place to Live Delivery Group
Appendix 2 – Copy of Draft Tenancy Strategy
