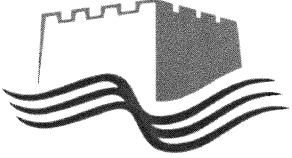


Individual Mayoral Decision Proforma Decision Log No: 201	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Karen Swift, Divisional Director, Housing and Regeneration	Classification: Unrestricted
Approval of report and recommendations following the Scrutiny Challenge Session: The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) One Year on	

Lead Member	Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Housing
Originating Officer(s)	Una Bedford, Strategy & Policy Officer (Place)
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	No
Forward Plan Notice Published	16 March 2020
Reason for Key Decision	This report has been reviewed as not meeting the Key Decision criteria.
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People are aspirational, independent and have equal access to opportunities: 2. A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in. 3. A dynamic outcomes-based Council using digital innovation and partnership working to respond to the changing needs of our borough.

Executive Summary

This report details the recommendations of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-committee following the scrutiny challenge session held on 2nd March 2020. The challenge session set out to understand the impacts of the new Act on residents and on the council, which have arisen from the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA - 2017), which came into effect from 3rd April 2018.

The challenge session was held just before the first National lockdown was introduced because of the emerging Covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, the Council's scrutiny activities were curtailed with the resumption of its activity in the autumn of 2020.

Over that period, the membership and chair of the H&RSSC changed and work to improve the Housing Options Service was progressed. At the first "re-convened" meeting held on 3rd November 2020, Members were not able to approve the report and its findings, due to the effluxion of time, and requested that:

1. A resumed/additional challenge session be arranged to re-explore the matters raised in the report and draft new recommendations, if appropriate.

2. Any resumed/new challenge session to include consideration of evidence provided by councillors from beyond the sub-committee.

After further discussion between the Chair and senior officers, it was agreed that the report arising from the challenge session would be distributed to both current and previous sub-committee Members for them to review content and suggest amended recommendations.

In the time between holding the challenge session and the resumption of the H&RSSC meetings, the Housing Options Service has continued to push forward with its transformation programme and has developed its operational practices to encompass appropriate ways of working as necessitated by the pandemic. Therefore, as a consequence of time moving on since the original scrutiny challenge session, while all the recommendations are accepted by the Housing Options Service, some of the recommendations within this report will not be progressed until such time that we move out of national lockdown and return to normal business as usual activity - see recommendations 1, 2 and 5 within the Action plan.

Other recommendations, namely 2,3,7 and 8, have already been superseded by the operational changes arising from the pandemic. It is important to note that the Housing Options Service has, since the original scrutiny challenge session, embarked on the Customer Access Programme, including the soon to be launched new automated customer self-service (ACD) programme and commenced the Homelessness Transformation Programme. This will ensure service is more efficient, offers better outcomes and service improvement for applicants. The Action Plan in Appendix 2 clearly demonstrates where the Housing Options Service has moved forward since the original challenge session and provides the rationale where certain recommendations will be followed at a later date or have been adapted due to changes in the delivery of the Housing Options Service.

As a result, the original report and recommendations emanating from the challenge session has been amended, as discussed with the Chair and current members, to reflect the progress of the Housing Options Service. The final report and recommendations were approved at the recent meeting of the H&RSSC on 10th February 2021.

Full details of the decision sought, including setting out the reasons for the recommendations and/or all the options put forward; other options considered; background information; the comments of the Chief Finance Officer; the concurrent report of the Head of Legal Services; implications for One Tower Hamlets; Risk Assessment; Background Documents; **and other relevant matters are set out in the attached report.**

Recommendations:

The Mayor is recommended to:

1. Consider the report (Appendix 1) of the scrutiny challenge session on Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) One year on and agree the action plan (Appendix 2) in response to the report recommendations.

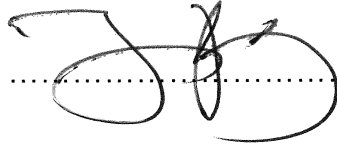
APPROVALS

Approvals provided by the Corporate Director, Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer through the normal Cabinet report procedures.

1. Mayor

I agree the decision proposed in the recommendations above for the reasons set out in the attached report.

Signed



Date

26/5/21