

Housing

OSC Update December 2021



Content



This presentation provides an overview of our activities to deliver housing priorities over the last 18 months and will look at :

- Housing projects delivered
- Work in progress /Planned work
- Key challenges facing housing
- Update on Housing Revenue Account



Context



- Increasing demand for social housing - Common Housing Register (CHR) currently at **21,397** applications - fuelled by lack of affordability to buy or rent in the private sector
- Tower Hamlets has the 4th highest proportion of social housing stock in London and over 43,000 social housing homes, 74% of the borough's social housing stock, are managed by registered providers operating in the borough.
- Private landlords now provide more homes than any other sector in Tower Hamlets, making up 39% of the housing stock in the Borough.
- Significant development in recent years has limited the number of sites available for redevelopment and intensification. Leading to development brought forward at high densities.
- While seeking to utilise the land it already owns, including buildings no longer used as they once were, consideration also given as to whether there is room to increase the number of homes on existing estates by finding 'infill sites' by redevelop existing estates to replace older buildings with ones that are modern, better designed and crucially, that provide more council homes for our residents.
- Consideration also given to the cost, as well as viability, planning and speed.



Housing Options - Project delivered Customer Access Pathway Project



TELEPHONES

- Improve customer experience – minimise hunt group call drop-off
- Telephone rota for homelessness caseworkers
- 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

- New appointment system for emergencies and upstream demand
- Use MS Teams/other solutions to conduct telephone/video link appointments



Housing Options - what's next?



Homelessness Transformation Programme began in April 2021 and intends to deliver:

- Upstream work with households before crisis point.
- Increase successful prevention outcomes.
- Delivery of speedier outcomes for those who are homeless
- Successful Prevention with cohorts otherwise destined to need Temporary Accommodation.
- Increased Number of PRS placements with the aim of brokering 975 new tenancies in the Private Rent Sector.

Rough Sleeping Delivery Plan 2021/22 which will bring:

- Implementation of Emergency Accommodation and Specialist Support Winter Plan
- Co-produce a Rough Sleeping Initiative Fund 2022-25 bid with the DLUHC
- Further develop health initiatives with colleagues in Integrated Commissioning and Public Health
- Explore new long term accommodation options for rough sleepers



Homelessness Transformation – Progress so far



The Homelessness Transformation Programme was launched in April 2021. The first year of the programme is focussed on mobilisation and establishing systems. Key milestones delivered since the launch:

- **Baseline multiple data sets** sourced
- **New appointment system** introduced to better respond to upstream prevention and homelessness crisis
- **Casework reduction** targets set and caseloads reducing
- **Backlog of pre-2020 cases reduced** to 166 cases (850 at start of 2021)
- **Training strategy** for staff agreed
- **Positive customer feedback**
- Monthly service meetings **promoting staff achievements and positive feedback**
- **Increase in staff satisfaction** in last staff survey on most indicators
- Ongoing **benchmarking and learning from other LAs** (e.g., Brent, Haringey, Southwark, Lambeth, Lewisham)
- **1st ben cap TA family starts job** through new BEAM service (September 2021)
- **1st homeless family moves into social tenancy through Homefinder UK**
- **New management panels** agreed to oversee office booking requests for TA and TA move-on
- **TA decant** in Merton being used to **pilot new TA move-on approach**
- **IT changes** initial scoping undertaken



Housing Delivery and Supply



Challenges

- work on sites halting during the peaks of the pandemic (fewer workers on site arising from social distancing measures).
- shortage of labour, delays with material deliveries and the rising costs of materials.

Delivered

As of 6th December 2021, the council has delivered the following*:

- 827 new homes. – completed and occupied. These are a combination of new build and purchases.
- 224 new build homes are on site
- 184 new build homes awaiting contractor appointment, finances approved and planning secured
- 42 homes have planning permission secured and funding being finalised
- 451 mainly new build homes have been allocated funding (includes HAP and rooftops, moving through to Cabinet approval for funding and towards planning application)
- 318 are in the pipeline or in appraisal
- In total this will yield 2,046 homes

RP's have delivered 1,613 new homes (905 rented**, 705 intermediate) since 2020/21



Housing Delivery and Supply

Achievements in 2021/22 include:

- Completed and occupied **115 new council homes in Barchester Street, Poplar** (through s.106). The development also includes **10 wheelchair adaptable units**
- The granting of planning permission to build **53 new council homes at Barnesley Street** and **22 new homes at Mellish Street**.
- A positive ballot response in relation to proposals for the regeneration of **Harriot, Apsley and Pattison Houses**.
- We are consulting residents on proposals to develop infill sites at a number of locations .

By the end of 2021/22, the following council homes are due for completion:

- **7 (three and four bedroom) townhouses in Hanbury Street, 5–three-bedroom houses) in Sidney Street; 18 new council homes at Lowder House and 23 new council homes at St Pauls Way**



The Future of Harriott, Apsley & Pattison Houses
Proposed Visuals

PRP



Housing Delivery & Supply – Service



Other achievements over the last 18 months include:

- The successful securing of **£32m in grant funding from the Mayor of London's Affordable Housing Programme** to fund an additional 194 new homes for social rent
- Introduction of a local lettings plan where 25% of completed homes can be let to households on the Common Housing Register who already live on the estates where the new homes are built for example; Jubilee Street.
- An award of £17.6m in New Homes Bonus grant from the government
- The development and launch of the **Intermediate Housing Register of Interest** (launched 1st October 2021)
- Approval of the '**Affordable Self-Build**' Programme with the first 2 of 4 sites successfully bid for by community self-build groups.



Fire & Building Safety



Fire Safety

Despite the detrimental impact of Covid-19 restrictions on the 2020/21 fire safety programme, improvement initiatives included:

- Launching the council's building safety pledge on 22 July 2021
- Working with Tower Hamlets Homes to ensure their readiness in meeting the new standards as set out in the new Fire Safety Act and the Building Safety Bill.
- Commencing a review of fire safety works in future years' capital programme, (to be completed by December 2021/January 2022), as well as reaching agreement on the door renewal programme.
- A review of fire safety across the borough, on the request of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny sub committee.
- New Fire Safety pages on the council's website.
- Along with THHF partners, the council is working with the London Fire Brigade (LFB) on how best to engage with residents on fire safety issues



Fire & Building Safety

Building Safety Bill



In readiness for enactment of the Building Safety Bill, the council has been preparing for the Bill by:

- Collaborating with THH, to prepare for the introduction of the Building Safety Bill. An internal Building Safety Bill Group has been established and meets monthly to progress matters.
- Building Safety Case Report pilot project – Latham House has been selected for the pilot case.
- The Corporate Risk Register now includes the impact of the Bill and the Bill is on the Strategic Information Governance Board's agenda.
- Engaging with various forums and bodies such as THHF, London Councils, LGA, Council with ALMOs Group, National Federation of ALMOs, Local Authority Building Control & London District Surveyors' Association.
- Reviewing legal advice as the Bill unfolds and more thinking emerges in the sector.



Challenges



- Economic and social impacts post- pandemic
- Increased affordability issues/cost of rising rents in the Private Rent Sector
- Rising use of food banks and increase In fuel poverty illustrating higher costs of living and soaring inflation
- Recovery of the construction industry post-pandemic and potential further disruptions
- Impact of Brexit and the pandemic on construction costs.
- Rising labour costs, of skills in certain trades
- Impact of increased energy prices affecting the cost of capital projects
- Lack of availability and viability of land for development, potentially high infrastructure costs, planning issues, legal issues and keeping pace with population growth, demographics and socio-geographic changes.
- Legal and regulatory changes.
- Building and Fire Safety.
- Costs of Net Carbon zero delivery.
- Housing Revenue Account

