

Housing and Homelessness Policy and Accountability Committee Agenda

Tuesday 25 July 2023 at 7.00 pm

Main Hall (1st Floor) - 3 Shortlands, Hammersmith, W6 8DA

Watch the meeting live: [youtube.com/hammersmithandfulham](https://www.youtube.com/hammersmithandfulham)

MEMBERSHIP

Administration	Opposition
Councillor Jacolyn Daly (Chair) Councillor Paul Alexander Councillor Sally Taylor Councillor Asif Siddique	Councillor Adronie Alford

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This meeting is open to the public and press. The building has disabled access.

Residents with an interest in any of the items on the agenda are encouraged to attend and participate in the discussion. If you would like to attend, please contact:
Debbie.Yau@lbhf.gov.uk

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21 July 2023

Housing and Homelessness Policy and Accountability Committee

Agenda

25 July 2023

<u>Item</u>		<u>Pages</u>
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST <p>If a Councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest in a particular item, whether or not it is entered in the Authority's register of interests, or any other significant interest which they consider should be declared in the public interest, they should declare the existence and, unless it is a sensitive interest as defined in the Member Code of Conduct, the nature of the interest at the commencement of the consideration of that item or as soon as it becomes apparent.</p> <p>Where Members of the public are not allowed to be in attendance and speak, then the Councillor with a disclosable pecuniary interest should withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is under consideration. Councillors who have declared other significant interests should also withdraw from the meeting if they consider their continued participation in the matter would not be reasonable in the circumstances and may give rise to a perception of a conflict of interest.</p> <p>Councillors are not obliged to withdraw from the meeting where a dispensation to that effect has been obtained from the Standards Committee.</p>	
3.	MINUTES <p>To approve the minutes of the previous meeting on 20 March 2023.</p>	4 - 10
4.	ROUGH SLEEPERS AND HOMELESSNESS UPDATE <p>This report provides a high-level summary for the Policy and Accountability Committee on rough sleeping and homelessness.</p>	11 - 14
5.	PRIVATE AND SOCIAL HOUSING STANDARDS <p>The report provides an overview of the national and local policies that guide the Council's operations as a social landlord, current performance in compliance with these policies, and plans to improve the conditions of our housing stock.</p>	15 - 23

6.	REPAIRS IMPROVEMENT PLAN	24 - 28
	This report provides a comprehensive overview of the Repairs Improvement Plan, initiated to address identified shortfalls in the repair services and complaints management.	
7.	WORK PROGRAMME	29
	To note the Work Programme.	
8.	DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS	
	To note the dates of future meetings:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 14 November 2023• 30 January 2024• 26 March 2024	

Agenda Item 3

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Housing and Homelessness Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes



Monday 20 March 2023

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Jacolyn Daly (Chair), Paul Alexander, Asif Siddique, and Adronie Alford

Other Councillors: Councillor Frances Umeh (Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness)

Guests: Neil Campbell (Partner, Architecture, BPTW), Onur Osman (Senior Associate, Architecture, BPTW), Andrew Yates (Partner, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, Calford Seaden) and Emily Mansfield (Sustainability Consultant, Calford Seaden)

Officers: Richard Shwe (Interim Director of Housing), Jon Pickstone (Strategic Director for the Economy), Matt Rumble (Strategic Head of Regeneration and Development), Peter Cook (Head of Development) and Debbie Yau (Committee Coordinator)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor David Morton.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

Actions and officer responses

Councillor Paul Alexander appreciated the officers' response to outstanding issues raised at the last meeting. On item 1.1 relating to damp and mould, Councillor Alexander referred to the revised social housing regulation published in February 2023 which had over time lost connection to the Decent

Homes standard originally drawn up in 2006. Expressing concerns about the different standards adopted for disrepair and damp & mould, and none of them was based on the aforesaid Decent Homes standard, he considered it necessary to have a clear set of standards used for all the related works.

As regards item 4 on carbon emissions, Councillor Alexander noted that Council housing had emitted a total of 40,498 tonnes CO₂, with 12,161 tonnes emitted for electricity and 28,337 tonnes for gas. He considered it more realistic to measure the amount of CO₂ emitted on-site. Noting the heating target of 165 kWh/m²/year among 6 property types, Councillor Alexander queried the types of property involved as immediate actions might need to be taken for older property types in order to meet the target.

In response, Richard Shwe (Interim Director of Housing) undertook to take on board concerns expressed by Councillor Alexander and include these issues in the next Forward Plan. His office would also consult with the Climate Change team to ensure the information and hence corresponding actions were aligned with the Council's net zero goals.

ACTION: Richard Shwe

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January were agreed to be accurate.

4. INTRODUCTION BY RICHARD SHWE, INTERIM HOUSING DIRECTOR

Before inviting Richard Shwe to speak, the Chair stated the purpose, principal functions, and the role of the Committee.

NOTE: The Chair's statement is attached as Appendix 1

Richard Shwe (Interim Director of Housing) delivered his introductory remark. He highlighted the top priorities and associated tasks, with a strong focus on fixing repairs as the number one priority.

NOTE: Richard Shwe's introductory remark is attached as Appendix 2

Councillor Adronie Alford was concerned that the Committee had not received regular updates on repairs and associated improvements as agreed at the beginning of the year and her related questions on the subject were not addressed. As opposition, she considered it justified for her to hold the Administration to account and to scrutinise related issues, including regular updates on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), a more detailed update on voids, and regular updates on repairs.

The Chair reiterated that the principal functions of the Committee were, inter alia, to make recommendations to the Cabinet, review the impact of decisions, scrutinise policies in the interest of residents and monitor spending rather than reviewing the operational tasks. The role of the Committee was to monitor the policies and review their implementation. For instance, the Committee would review the void and repair strategies to see how they could

be improved. She added that while committing to review the HRA every January, the Committee could always scrutinise the costing behind a housing policy and its impact on the HRA.

Councillor Alford said she intended to find more savings by reviewing the HRA on a regular basis. She found it disappointing that her requests had not been actioned by senior officers. Richard Shwe assured members that the Housing team would strive to deliver what he had promised in his introduction.

Councillor Paul Alexander appreciated that the issue of repairs was given top priority. He requested awareness be raised to better coordinate between leaseholders and tenants to prevent their conflicting needs from escalating to becoming legal issues. He supported prioritising maintenance, including maintaining the standards for repairs. Councillor Alexander hoped to see that the improvement measures proposed by the senior management would be executed. He further urged that efforts should be made to resolve the problematic disrepair cases to obviate questioning by the Ombudsman.

Councillor Asif Siddique expressed concern about the circumstances of repairs faced by residents amidst the cost-of-living crisis. He asked whether special strategies or a tracking system were in place to deal with complaints on the delay of repairs.

Richard Shwe said that the Housing team had looked at the data and were addressing issues directly. For casework in the pipeline, the best approach was to work with contractors and fix them before they became a bigger problem.

Councillor Frances Umeh thanked members for sharing their reflections as well as Richard Shwe for his overview of housing work priorities, specifically the improvements of repairs work. She noted that in addition to improving works, there was a need for making investment in the housing stock which had been left wanting for many years and was aggravated by severe budget cuts over the last 12 years. She suggested that at the July meeting, the Committee consider scrutinising the work that had been done with residents to improve housing services.

Summing up, the Chair said that in face of significant challenges, the Committee would endeavour to scrutinise the housing strategies and policies to make a difference for the residents within the borough.

5. UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Matt Rumble (Strategic Head of Regeneration and Development) updated members on the following:

- Building Homes and Community Strategy and its underpinning principles;
- the Development Programme overview, including the direct delivery programmes and partnership delivery projects;

- the housing tenures in H&F, including genuinely affordable homes, intermediate homes and market sales homes;
- funding and financial performance, including negotiating affordable housing obligations in private development (Section 106); and
- partnership delivery of the Education City: the Ark Swift Primary Academy site and its phases of development.

Peter Cook (Head of Development) outlined the following:

- the principles of co-production: doing things with residents, not to them;
- the Defend Council Homes Policy;
- co-producing White City Central and the White City Estate Resident Advisory Panel;
- co-production with the community in numbers;
- response to Climate and Ecology Strategy; and
- the redevelopment of Hartopp and Lannoy site.

Neil Campbell (Partner, Architecture, BPTW) gave a detailed account of the Hartopp and Lannoy Point Project, including co-production with the Resident's Steering Group.

Emily Mansfield (Sustainability Consultant, Calford Seaden) introduced the Sustainability Strategy of the Hartopp and Lannoy Point Project, including the H&F's target under the Climate & Ecology Strategy, the benefits and values of net zero, and the reduction of running costs through passive design under the Sustainability Framework.

Andrew Yates (Partner, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, Calford Seaden) briefed members on the low energy design under the Passivhaus Principles, including energy efficient design via fabric enhancement, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, the use of air source heat pumps for heating and hot water and the adoption of solar photovoltaic array to generate renewable energy.

Onur Osman (Senior Associate, Architecture, BPTW) outlined the Sustainability & Passivhaus Design Principles. He also noted the project summary and the next steps.

The Chair said she was interested to see how the constrictions and challenges presented by residents could be overcome by co-production. She requested for the sets of presentation slides be circulated to members after the meeting. (Appendices 3a and 3b)

NOTE: The presentations are attached as Appendices 3a and 3b

Councillor Paul Alexander asked if the residents had expressed any views during the consultation on the size of internal and communal living space, the window size and ceiling height, and the maintenance of heating installations.

Peter Cook noted that all the new builds were developed according to the national standards to accommodate modern living. The accessible units, co-produced with the accessible working groups, were bigger in size with larger

furniture layouts. Matt Rumble added that the provision and size of the balcony and outdoor space were also set out in the national space standards.

Councillor Alexander understood that the national standards allowed a range, and he was concerned whether the minimum was adopted by councils in London which might not meet residents' expectations.

Councillor Adronie Alford asked about the distribution of beds in the development. Peter Cook said there were 67 genuinely affordable homes made up of 28 one-beds, 27 two-beds, and 12 three-beds. There were 45 intermediate homes made up of 22 one-beds, 19 two-beds, and 4 three-beds.:

Noting the absence of 4-bedroom flats, Councillor Alford considered it necessary to provide more such units to cater for the needs of larger families to avoid overcrowding. Matt Rumble assured that a broader range of family-sized homes would be available across the borough under the other 16 projects based on a number of factors, including the plot of land in question, the local demand and residents' affordability.

On maintenance, Richard Shwe remarked that new maintenance contracts would be H&F-specific and resident-centric. Matt Rumble added that residents would be educated on how new homes and new technologies operated and how to maximise the benefits to keep the energy bills low.

The Chair asked about consumers' understanding of and demand for homes built according to Passivhaus principles given a number of the housing units would be for private sale. Peter Cook referred to the schemes implemented by Exeter City Council where a premium was added to the leasehold properties on the open market. Peter further noted about the 5-year process of monitoring the performance of the new homes where various living style might lead to different maintenance charges.

In response to Councillor Alford's concern on how to ensure residents would clean the filters of the new ventilation systems, Peter Cook noted that mechanical ventilation would be the standard going forward as it helped alleviate noise pollution of the heat recovery unit. The Regeneration and Development team might replace the filters on behalf of the residents and that cost would be reflected in the net rent itemised under repairs and maintenance.

Councillor Alford referred to the demolition and rebuilding of housing blocks in Munster ward, where no compensation had been made available to the residents remaining on the estate. Richard Shwe undertook to look into the matter and provide a response outside of the meeting.

ACTION: Richard Shwe

Councillor Asif Siddique thanked the comprehensive presentations and sought information about similar developments, if any, in the UK. He asked about the provisions of vehicle and bike parking and availability of electric charging points. Matt Rumble referred to the Council's policy in promoting

active travel away from car travel. As such, all residential schemes in the borough were 'zero car' and hence all new homes were built without additional parking except for people with blue badges. On the other hand, there would be significant amount of bike parking facilities for promotion of active travel.

In reply to Councillor Siddique's question about facilities accessible by disabled and elderly residents and their carers, Matt Rumble noted that for all projects under development, about 10% would fully be adapted for wheelchair use and the housing allocation team would match these properties with people on the housing register who needed them the most. Such matching and allocation would be extended to affordable homes developed by the private sector. He added that these units were built with adaptable standards which could be life-time homes to those even if their conditions might change over time. In terms of special support for elderly residents at homes, Matt Rumble said that while the primary focus was delivering affordable homes to meet the needs of those on the housing register, his team was exploring embedding social care in new homes to provide extra care housing for elderly residents, children leaving care, and people with learning difficulties etc. He noted that over the next 18 months, the team would look at all sites and land across the borough for further development and he believed those opportunities might then come forward.

Summing up, the Chair requested the officers address members' concern, including compensation for residents near the demolished elderly blocks, living space and population density, number of bike parking units and the number of genuinely affordable and social housing homes completed in the last couple of years and in the pipeline.

ACTION: Matt Rumble

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the content of the presentation.

6. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee noted the dates of future meetings:

- 25 July 2023
- 14 November 2023
- 30 January 2024
- 26 March 2024

Meeting started: 7.00 pm

Meeting ended: 9.14 pm

Chair:

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[Appendix 1: Chair's Statement](#)

[Appendix 2: Richard Shwe's Introduction](#)

[Appendix 3a: Development Programme Update](#)

[Appendix 3b: Hartopp and Lannoy Point](#)

Report to: Housing and Homelessness Policy and Accountability Committee

Date: 25/07/2023

Subject: Rough Sleepers Homelessness Update

Report author: Alice Hainsworth, Head of Homelessness and Prevention
Roy Morgan, Assistant Director of Housing Management

Responsible Director: Richard Shwe, Director of Housing

Executive Summary

1. This report provides a high-level summary for the Policy and Accountability Committee on rough sleeping and homelessness.

Rough Sleeping Prevention Plan

2. We have a range of measures in place to prevent rough sleeping within Hammersmith & Fulham.
3. We work very closely with local partners within Health – GPs and A&Es in particular and also Department for Works and Pensions, and Metropolitan Police who have a duty to refer anyone suspected of being homeless or rough sleeping.
4. Our Rough Sleeper Outreach team, delivered by ThamesReach act on local intelligence shared by these agencies (and also local people via the Street Link telephone number) to engage with people sleeping rough and refer them to our Rough Sleeper Assessment Hub. From here onward referrals can be made into more settled accommodation and support where needed.
5. We recognise that Housing First (rather than the more traditional supported hostel route) is the most sustainable method of ensuring former rough sleepers don't return to the street.

Rough Sleeping

6. At any one time the number of rough sleepers in the Borough is approximately 5 to 7 people which is low for an inner-London Borough. In addition to the flow of new people to the streets, there are a few individuals whose status or willingness to work with services means that finding them a solution is particularly challenging.
7. We have a range of services in place to help us respond to prevent rough sleeping, respond to it appropriately, and support people to recover and move away from the streets for good. A list of funded services for rough sleepers in H&F is set out in the **Appendix 1**.

8. Ensuing a good rate of people moving out of our rough sleeper hub and supported hostel pathway is key to achieve the following:
- To keep the number of rough sleepers low at any given time;
 - To reduce the number of people in costly and unsupported temporary accommodation which does not meet their needs; and
 - To build on success and promote independence by not keeping people in hostel services for longer than they need.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Rough Sleeping Services in LB Hammersmith and Fulham

Appendix 1 – Rough Sleeping Services in LB Hammersmith and Fulham

Service	Description
Rough Sleeping Street Outreach Team	This service is delivered by Thames Reach Charity and is tasked to collate and respond to intelligence and find rough sleepers across the Borough. The team provides assessment, support and makes an offer away from the streets.
Housing First	We have secured funding from the Greater London Authority to increase the total number of Housing First properties to 31 this year for former rough sleepers with complex needs. Increasing the amount of Housing First is a manifesto commitment .
Rough Sleeper Assessment Hub	A 20-bed assessment hub including limited provision for people with No Recourse to public funds. Access to Emergency Beds is key for the outreach team to offer rough sleepers an immediate route off the streets.
Supported Accommodation Pathway	Commissioned hostel pathway for rough sleepers and single homeless people with support needs. The support is delivered by St Mungo's and there are a total of 129 beds across 8 buildings.
Rough sleeping Navigators	Four posts employed by St Mungo's to work intensively with rough sleepers or people at risk of rough sleeping. Navigators will provide intensive support and co-ordinate referrals into a range of services.
Floating Support	Two posts through Hestia to support rough sleepers with low needs who are in unsupported temporary accommodation and/or who have moved on into the Private Rented Sector.
Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator	Employed by the council to co-ordinate all the various initiatives and to ensure a co-ordinated and holistic approach across council departments and our partners.
Homeless Health Project	This service increases engagement and access to healthcare services for homeless people, particularly those with multiple and complex needs who struggle to do this. The service aims to reduce non-elective hospital admissions and the inappropriate use of emergency services.
Homeless Health Nurses	Two Central London Community Healthcare funded nurses working in our high support hostels supporting residents with access to nursing care such as wound dressing, medication, vaccines etc.
Enabling Assessment Service London	This service supports the workforce to become more resilient so they can better manage the very complex cases and trauma prevalent amongst our hostel residents and rough sleepers. In 2023/24 we are offering this service to our Housing Advisers to support their wellbeing given the high number of complex and traumatic cases they manage.

Appendix 1 - Continued

Service	Description
Dual Diagnosis Nurses	Two specialist Dual Diagnosis nurses working across our high-support hostels. Aim to reduce the number of incidents occurring in hostels, hospital admissions, and look at creative ways to increase peoples access to substance use and mental health services.
Domiciliary Care Worker	One worker to promote independent living skills for people in hostels through prompting and training for example on laundry, decluttering, cleaning, healthy eating.
Adult Social Care Social Worker (6-month pilot)	Based in Adult Social Care to assess hostel residents for Care Act eligible needs, reducing unsuitable placements including into extra or residential care and supporting people returning to a hostel from a hospital admission.

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Housing and Homelessness Policy and Accountability Committee

Date: 25/07/2023

Subject: Property Standards in Private and Social Housing

Report author: Ed Shaylor, Assistant Director Housing Standards
Sam Cunningham, Programme Manager

Responsible Director: Bram Kainth, Strategic Director of Environment
Richard Shwe, Director of Housing

SUMMARY

The private rented sector in Hammersmith and Fulham is the sixth largest in London, and eighth largest in the country. The 2021 census found that out of approximately 90,000 dwellings in the Borough, more than a third of these were privately rented. For social housing, Hammersmith and Fulham own approximately 11,000 dwellings, which are rented out to residents.

Conditions vary for the private rented sector, from high rent, high specification properties to lower quality housing which may be in a hazardous condition, have an out-of-date kitchen or bathroom, or poor insulation or ventilation. These deficiencies can be dealt with by the Council using statutory enforcement powers and property licensing.

For social housing we have been assessed as compliant by both internal and external auditors and also ensure that all houses let are of a lettable standard. We are also undertaking a stock condition survey.

The report provides an overview of the national and local policies that guide the Council's operations as a social landlord, current performance in compliance with these policies, and plans to improve the conditions of our housing stock.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For the Committee to note and comment on the report.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

PART 1 PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR (PRS)

1. Although there is no single stock condition survey of the PRS there are indicators. Such as the number of complaints received by the Council about hazardous housing conditions and disrepair in the PRS; local surveys of

tenant satisfaction carried out from time to time, and the English Housing Survey (EHS). In 2006, new enforcement powers were introduced to regulate the PRS rather than the Decent Homes Standard, which had been introduced in 2000 to set minimum standards for social housing. Although it does not apply in the same way to the PRS, estimates can be made about compliance using EHS data.

English Housing Survey

2. For a dwelling to be considered 'decent' under the Decent Homes Standard, it must:
 - Meet the statutory minimum standard for housing (ie not contain a serious hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System)
 - Provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort
 - Be in a reasonable state of repair
 - Have reasonably modern facilities and services.
3. EHS data ¹ about household and dwelling characteristics has been used to predict housing quality for each local authority in England, together with other national datasets such as Energy Performance Certificates (useful for the thermal comfort criteria) and Experian household level data.
4. The modelling estimates there to be a great deal of variation across local authorities – from 9% of occupied dwellings failing the decent homes standard in some local authorities, to more than 30% of dwellings in others.
5. Hammersmith and Fulham is estimated to have 19.1% PRS dwellings failing the decent homes standard, compared to an average for London of 17.2% and an average for the rest of England of 25.2%. The differences from London averages are probably in part due to the predominant age and type of housing in the borough compared to other boroughs. High demand for rental property (and therefore rent levels) in London compared to the rest of England means that landlords are incentivised to make improvements. The gov.uk website states: "Across all tenures, higher proportions of non-decent occupied dwellings are more likely to be found in local authorities in the North and South West (of England), as well as some districts in the West Midlands."
6. Hammersmith and Fulham's privately rented figure of 19.1% compares to 14.7% for owner occupied dwellings and 14.5% of socially rented (estimates). The dwelling type with the largest proportion non-decent are flats (17.6%) compared to terraced or semi-detached houses (11.7%).

Licensing Schemes

¹ [English Housing Survey: local authority housing stock condition modelling, 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-housing-survey-local-authority-housing-stock-condition-modelling-2019)

7. In December 2021 Cabinet approved the implementation of new property licensing schemes from June 2022 for a further 5 years, as follows:
- Additional licensing for houses and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) which are outside the scope of mandatory HMO licensing
 - Selective licensing for rented dwellings in 24 specified streets
(Appendix A)
8. There are currently 584 mandatory licensed ² HMOs, and 3,580 Additional Licensed ³ HMOs
9. HMOs in the borough are generally of a good standard, but some common problems officers have found from inspections are:
- Lack of fire doors or inadequate numbers of smoke alarms
 - Undersized kitchen for the number of occupiers
 - HMOs offering a bedroom which is too small
 - HMOs where the only reception room is used as a bedroom, so that there is no shared living space apart from a small kitchen
10. Minimum amenity standards expected and standard licence conditions are on the Council's website here [Property licensing for landlords and letting agents | LBHF](#)
11. The policy for inspecting HMOs is to inspect all Mandatory HMOs as soon as the licence is applied for, before the licence is issued. The target is to issue the Licence within 12 weeks of the application, with any necessary additional licence conditions included. There is a consultation period before the licence is issued.
12. Current performance is that 84% of licences are issued within the 12 week target (average 8.5 weeks, median 6.3 weeks). Some exceed the target timescale due to difficulties in arranging an inspection or because additional information has been requested from the applicant, or additional enquiries are being made, for example as to whether the proposed licence holder is a fit and proper person to hold a licence.
13. With Additional HMOs, under the discretionary scheme, the licence fee does not include a fee for inspection, but we have a duty to make sure there are no serious housing hazards in these HMOs, so we will be inspecting a sample of at least 10% (about 400) during the licence period. Occupiers of the remainder will be contacted by post to complete an online survey (or by phone) about the condition of the HMO. Any hazards reported will be followed up as a Service Request.

² Mandatory Licensing refers to the national scheme where an HMO with 5 or more occupiers must be licensed, unless it is a purpose built flat in a block

³ Additional HMO Licensing applies to HMOs which are not licensable under the Mandatory scheme, in other words an HMO with 3 or 4 occupiers or which is a purpose built Flat in Multiple Occupation in a block; Additional HMO Licensing also applies to houses poorly converted into self-contained flats where the conversion did not comply with Building Regulations

14. 3,516 flats and houses have been licensed under the 2017-2022 Selective Licensing scheme and 767 under the 2022-2027 scheme making a total of 4,283 Selective Licences issued.

15. The current Selective Licensing streets score highly using the following factors:

- the number of private rented sector (PRS) properties on the street
- the % of properties on the street which are PRS
- the ratio of ASB reports per household in the street and
- the % of the boroughs total ASB recorded on the street.

16. The 24 Selective Licensing street are 2% of the borough's streets but account for nearly 20% of the borough's anti-social behaviour (ASB) reports.

17. The policy with Selective Licensing streets is to concentrate resources on PRS addresses which have not been licensed, as experience shows that it is the unlicensed properties where housing hazards or poor management are likely to be found. To allow time for as many landlords as possible to obtain licences, work to identify unlicensed properties in Selective Licensing streets will start in earnest in 2024 to be completed by the end of 2025. There is no statutory requirement to inspect for housing hazards in properties licensed under a Selective Licensing scheme, other than the general duty to keep housing conditions in the area under review in order to decide if any action is necessary, but any report by a tenant or neighbour about a licensed address will be investigated as a service request.

Enforcement Action

18. Since 2014, the council has taken 20 successful prosecutions for housing offences ⁴, with fines totalling £137,500. Costs awarded to the Council were £51,672.

19. A 2022 conviction levied fines of £80,000 and costs of £30,000 against a landlord and a management company but the result of an appeal is still awaited.

20. 10 financial penalties have been imposed since 2020 totalling £56,775, nearly half of which has been received so far (£23,025). Applications for County Court Judgements are to be made to recover the unpaid penalties. A further 8 are in progress totalling £103,250. Unlike court fines, the Council receives the financial penalty and the funds can be used for further enforcement activity. However, there are representation and appeal processes, and unpaid penalties may require court orders to recover, so there are costs as well as income.

⁴ Typically managing an HMO without a licence, breach of HMO regulations, failing to supply documents or details of interested parties

21. There are no prosecutions currently awaiting court dates (the 2020/21 backlog having been caught up) but at least one case is being built which might result in a prosecution.

PART 2 SOCIAL HOUSING

29. Hammersmith and Fulham has approximately 11,000 residential properties (excluding those owned by leaseholders), which are leased to tenants throughout the borough.
30. This section outlines policy, lettable standards and compliance.

Relevant National Policy

31. The 'Decent Homes Standard', which was introduced by the UK government in 2000 and sets out a technical baseline for public housing, including council housing and housing associations. In addition to the standard for social housing, there is a Regulator of Social Housing (previously the Homes and Communities Agency) and social housing tenants have access to a Housing Ombudsman to investigate complaints on their behalf.
32. In 2004, the Decent Homes Standard was further reinforced with the introduction of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) under the Housing Act 2004. The HHSRS is a risk-based evaluation tool that helps local authorities identify and mitigate potential risks and hazards to health and safety stemming from any deficiencies in dwellings. Linked to the Social Housing Bill, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has announced a review of the Decent Homes Standard which will be applicable to the private rented sector and include stringent requirements on damp and mould.
33. The Decent Homes Standard will be incorporated within the Homes Standard which will form a suite of Consumer Standards. These standards will form the basis of proactive cyclical inspections of Social Housing Landlords by the Regulator of Social Housing from April 2024.

Council housing stock condition

34. To better understand the condition of our housing stock, we have commissioned a Stock Condition Survey which will run to June 2024.
35. Concurrently, the Housing service has also introduced a Home Visit programme replacing the existing tenancy audits. These deliver a broader assessment of a residents' needs and the property they live in. They cover all the areas in the tenancy audit and include additional questions covering damp and mould, under occupation and employment. Gathering the additional information at the home visit will help the council to better understand the needs of our residents and plan services for the future, whilst also understanding the quality of its stock.

Compliance

36. In response to the Building Safety Act of 2022, LBHF, as the landlord of 49 high-rise residential buildings (over 18 metres or 7 storeys or more), has taken on specific responsibilities. These include registering all high-rise buildings with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) portal by September 2023 and providing key fire and structural safety information. From October, the BSR will require us to provide Safety Case Reports for each building to enable certification.
37. In addition to meeting the regulations, our Big 6 Compliance Areas (Gas, Asbestos, Fire, Electric, Water Hygiene, and Lifts) has assurances from both internal and external auditors. Pennington, an external auditor, recently recognised and commended our adherence to best practices in compliance.

Housing Associations

38. There are 43 Housing Associations within the borough and 12 of these manage more than 100 properties. Registered providers of social housing should have a procedure in place to deal with serious hazards and disrepair and a complaints procedure for their tenants to use if they are not satisfied with the service they have received and can contact the Housing Ombudsman.

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Streets in where Selective Licensing applies

Appendix B: Local policy for lettable standard for council homes

Appendix A

Streets in Hammersmith and Fulham where Selective Licensing applies

Greyhound Road	Woodstock Grove
Shepherd's Bush Road	Lime Grove
Dalling Road	Bloemfontein Road
King Street	Wood Lane
Talgarth Road	Uxbridge Road
Baron's Court Road	Crookham Road
Sinclair Road	Dawes Road
Blythe Road	New King's Road
Askew Road	Wandsworth Bridge Road
Coningham Road	Fulham Road
Richmond Way	North End Road
Goldhawk Road	Scrubs Lane

Appendix B

Local policy for lettable standard for Council homes

General standards: All properties are expected to be structurally sound, free from dampness, mould, wet and dry rot, timber decay or infestation. Gutters and downpipes should be intact and free from leaks, and roofs should be in a watertight condition. All light fittings, sockets and switches should be safe and working properly. Details on how to find the utility meters, fuse box and water stop cock should be provided. Floors and stairs should be in sound condition with no loose floorboards, and balustrades and handrails should be secure. Plasterwork should be in satisfactory condition.

Aids and Adaptations: We aim to equip properties with necessary aids and adaptations for households that require them. In situations where this isn't possible, these aids and adaptations will not be altered or removed without the necessary permissions, and any changes will be at the resident's expense.

Interior Decor: The interior decor, including paintwork, wallpaper, and wall surfaces, should be in an acceptable condition. If the existing decoration is not up to the Decent Homes Standard, a decoration voucher may be provided to help improve the home's aesthetics.

Kitchen: All kitchen fixtures, including cupboards, doors, and countertops, should be clean and fully functional. An adequate number of sockets should be provided, and an extractor fan should be installed where possible. Essential appliances such as a fridge/freezer, washing machine, and cooker should be accommodated.

Bathroom: All bathroom fixtures should be operational and free from leaks or blockages. The toilet, sink, and bath should be clean, and a new toilet seat should be fitted. An extractor fan should be fitted where possible.

Cleanliness: The property should be cleaned and free from the previous occupants' belongings. All surfaces, including floors, kitchen units, countertops, bathroom fixtures, and fittings should be cleaned.

Doors and Windows: External door locks to the property should be changed and new keys to doors and windows (at least two sets) should be provided. All doors and windows should open and close with ease, and all ironmongery, such as hinges, catches, locks, handles, should be in working order.

Flooring: All vinyl flooring in the kitchen, bathrooms and WC should be intact and free of trip hazards. Please note that we do not provide floor covering to other rooms.

Heating: The property should have a source of space heating. This may be in the form of an individual heating system, communal heating or night storage heaters. All heating systems should be controllable by the resident.

Asbestos: To comply with current regulations, we will check the property for asbestos and ensure that it is either removed or left in a safe condition, in accordance with our asbestos policy and procedures.

Garden and External Areas: Repairs to fences, gates, paths, patios, paving, sheds and so forth, should only be carried out where they are causing, or are likely to cause, a hazard. Sheds that are a hazard should be removed, but not replaced. Gardens should be cleared of rubbish and overgrown shrubbery.

Agenda Item 6

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Housing and Homelessness Policy and Accountability Committee

Date: 25/07/2023

Subject: Housing Repairs Improvement Plan

Report author: Sam Cunningham, Programme Manager
Lisa Keating, Assistant Director of Housing

Responsible Director: Richard Shwe, Director of Housing

SUMMARY

This report provides a comprehensive overview of our Repairs Improvement Plan, initiated to address identified shortfalls in our repair services and complaints management. Confronting the accumulated repair backlog, we've integrated strategies such as enlisting additional contractors and implementing a proactive work in progress reduction plan.

Our complaints procedure has undergone significant enhancements, aimed at addressing residents' concerns more effectively and promptly. Central to this endeavour is the Housing Hub, a single, unified approach/team designed to handle repairs, complaints, and other wider housing issues. This hub seeks to improve our overall operational efficiency and service delivery by creating a more streamlined process for our team.

The Repairs Improvement Plan is also introducing an enhanced feature known as "Home MOT". This aims to provide a suite of additional home services, ensuring the inhabitant's dwelling remains fully functional and fit for purpose. This offer specifically caters to those who have previously raised a legitimate complaint and this initiative is dedicated to cultivating a culture of prompt and effective problem resolution, ensuring residents feel valued and their concerns are attended to swiftly.

Above all, the report underscores our ongoing commitment to better serve our residents by continuously refining our service. The strategies outlined in this report are not short-term solutions but part of an overarching effort to establish a sustainable model for our service. Our aim is to ensure long-term improvements in the quality and efficiency of our housing service, centred around the needs and experiences of our residents.

Over the last three months, we have appointed a dedicated Head of Repairs, Steven Holmes and in addition, we have also recruited a new Assistant Director of Repairs; John Hayden, who has recently joined us at the beginning of July.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For the Committee to note this report.

1. Introduction

In response to the challenges we've faced in our repair services and complaints management, we have started a comprehensive journey to improve our service and have developed a Repairs Improvement Plan (**Appendix A**). This plan presents our commitment to rectify previous shortcomings and improve the resident experience.

This plan includes how we are tackling the repair backlog head-on with our proactive works in progress (WIP) reduction strategy and by onboarding additional contractors. It also notes how we are enhancing our complaints process, and how we've introduced a Home MOT offer, which provides additional services, fostering a culture where residents feel valued and their concerns addressed promptly and effectively.

At the heart of our Housing Repairs Improvement plan is the establishment of the Housing Hub, which streamlines repairs, complaints handling, and broader housing issues under one umbrella. The hub creates an integrated and more efficient approach to delivering resident-centred service.

This report outlines our ongoing improvement efforts setting out, our commitment to providing an excellent housing service and provides an overview of the Repairs Improvement Plan.

2. Background

Understanding the past difficulties of our housing repairs service provides a critical foundation in developing our comprehensive improvement plan. A key area of concern has been the repairs backlog. Several external factors have contributed to this such as the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns and the unexpected departure of key contractors, which have fuelled an excessive number of repair requests.

3. Strategy for Repairs and Improvements in Housing Services

Our strategy is wide ranging and includes significant investment, strengthening leadership and staffing, effective contractor management, improvements in operations and culture, continued stringent safety compliance, and rigorous corporate oversight and performance management. It includes six key interventions designed to make immediate and long-term service improvements including:

a. Significant Investment and Resourcing

We have made a significant financial commitment to improve residents' homes, with £600 million being invested over the next ten years for repairing and enhancing homes. This financial provision aims not merely to tackle existing repair requests in a timely manner but also to inhibit the creation of new backlogs.

b. Strengthened Leadership, Enhanced Staffing and Active Recruitment

Our housing leadership team has been augmented with new senior housing specialists, including roles specifically added to the Repairs team. There's a dedicated Assistant Director for Residents and Building Safety, new Direct Labour

Organisation (DLO) operatives and additional contractors and surveyors; to help promptly address repairs including leaks and plumbing. All housing leadership and frontline teams are participating in a cultural development programme to deliver a resident-centric approach with better complaints handling.

c. Rigorous Contractor Management and Backlog Reduction

We have thoroughly revised our contractor management approach, ensuring accountability from our contractors, Morgan Sindall and Mears, for below par workmanship. There are weekly head of service meetings, monthly Director meetings and regular direct communication with the Managing Directors of both companies. We have developed a robust strategy to reduce our housing repairs WIP and backlog.

d. Operational, Cultural, and Policy Enhancements

We are improving our housing service culture, processes and systems to deliver prompt and effective repair services, underpinned by exceptional customer service. This is informed by valuable resident feedback via our Fire Building Safety and Repairs Working Group and Housing Representatives Forum to refine our policies and procedures. Moreover, we have instigated a Proactive Emergency Management system and a Complaint Reduction Strategy to streamline our response to emergencies and complaints, ensuring immediate and effective action.

e. Quality Assurance and Rigorous Safety Compliance

To maintain the highest standards of repair and refurbishment, we have introduced an automated post-inspection form that simplifies our procedures and provides comprehensive audit reports. We diligently continue to adhere to the "Big 6" safety elements (which are Fire, Asbestos, Gas, Electrical, Legionella and Lifts) to meet or surpass mandatory safety requirements for resident buildings, ensuring our residents live in safe, secure homes. Recent internal and external audits together with further assurance by Pennington's have demonstrated that we are achieving compliance across these key areas. We are also undertaking the necessary compliance actions as a result of the Building Safety Act which requires registering all high-rise buildings with the respective regulator by September 2023.

f. Enhanced Corporate Oversight

We have bolstered corporate oversight of our repairs and complaints handling through the establishment of a corporate Housing Taskforce and regular reporting to the Council's Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) and Cabinet Member. This is supplemented by initiating increased engagement with our residents to listen and co-produce rapid improvements in the repairs and wider housing services.

Through these multifaceted interventions our goal is to transform the quality of our repair and refurbishment services, thereby ensuring our residents enjoy safe, comfortable, and well-maintained homes.

4. Complaints Management Strategy in Housing Services

Recognising the necessity for a more efficient and robust complaints handling mechanism, we are committed to bringing about substantial changes to our existing approach. The is to boost our efficiency in dealing with issues raised by our residents. This section outlines the key strategies and initiatives we have put into motion to rectify our identified shortfalls in complaints handling.

a. Single Complaints Team

In our efforts to streamline the process of complaint resolution, we have amalgamated all housing complaints within a single, dedicated unit known as the Hub, as mentioned above. Our objective in creating this unit is to centralise complaint handling, promoting better coordination among our staff, and ensuring complaints are dealt with in a timelier manner.

In addition to The Hub, a dedicated resolution team has been established to deal with all cases that reach the Housing Ombudsman. The resolution team, comprising experienced and specially trained staff members, stands ready to engage with more complex and escalated complaints. This two-pronged approach – dedicated complaints team for general complaints and the resolution team for escalated cases – serves to enhance our capacity to resolve complaints promptly and effectively.

b. Consistent Complaints Handling

To ensure uniformity and enhance our efficiency in handling complaints, we have developed and implemented a proactive, standardised approach. This applies to both Stage 1 complaints (those initially raised) and Stage 2 complaints (those escalated due to non-resolution at Stage 1).

We believe that such an approach will accelerate the resolution process and ensure fair treatment for all residents.

c. Proactive Culture

An essential pillar of our complaints management strategy is a proactive complaint handling culture within our team. We believe that continuous training and skill development are key to building such a culture. We have launched a comprehensive training programme, designed to upskill our team members, and prepare them to handle complaints effectively.

The training includes proactive complaint handling, empathy in communication, recognising resident vulnerabilities, and understanding the regulatory landscape. We aim to equip our team members with the necessary tools to handle complaints proactively and deliver satisfactory resolutions swiftly.

d. Resident-Centric Approach

We are placing the residents' needs and feedback at the centre. Our approach will ensure that resident vulnerabilities are identified proactively, and services tailored appropriately. We are upgrading our record-keeping systems, ensuring every complaint is accurately logged, tracked, and analysed.

These improved records help with individual complaint tracking and help identify recurrent or systemic issues, to prevent similar future complaints. Regular in-service audits help to spotlight areas that need further improvement.

Through these initiatives, we will provide swifter, fairer resolutions to our residents' complaints.

5. The Housing Hub - An Integrated Approach to Service Improvement

At the core of our strategy is the establishment of a dedicated team within the Housing Hub, tasked with analysing our complaints and repairs systems. The aim of this is to improve service delivery and resident satisfaction.

a. Services offered by the Housing Hub

The Hub addresses critical issues spanning across complaint management, enhancement of repair services, safeguarding measures, tackling overcrowding, and mitigating fuel poverty.

b. Introduction of an MOT Offer

In an effort to enhance our complaint resolution process, we will be implementing a new initiative from Autumn 2023. If a complaint is validated, the involved residents will be promptly offered a "Home MOT" service. This unique service includes a series of supplementary measures designed to ensure their homes remain up to standard. By swiftly addressing the residents' concerns, we hope to cultivate a more trusting relationship and enhance the overall satisfaction with our services.

6. Conclusion and Next Steps

The housing service is prioritising significant improvements to its repairs service and complaint handling. We want to ensure timely and appropriate support is given to our residents, particularly those with vulnerabilities, so that they can enjoy a safe and secure home in Hammersmith and Fulham.

Housing and Homelessness Policy and Accountability Committee

Work Programme

Social Housing Bill
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
Budget
Coproduction and Community Engagement
Capital Works
10 Year Housing Plan
Repairs
Homelessness Prevention