



HILLINGDON  
LONDON



# Social Services, Housing and Public Health Policy Overview Committee

**Date:** THURSDAY, 30 JULY 2015

**Time:** 7.00 PM

**Venue:** COMMITTEE ROOM 5  
CIVIC CENTRE  
HIGH STREET  
UXBRIDGE  
UB8 1UW

**Meeting Details:** Members of the Public and Press are welcome to attend this meeting

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## Councillors on the Committee

Wayne Bridges (Chairman)  
Teji Barnes (Vice-Chairman)  
Peter Davis  
Beulah East (Labour Lead)  
Becky Haggar  
Manjit Khatra  
June Nelson  
Jane Palmer  
Shehryar Wallana

## Co-Opted Member

Mary O' Connor

**Published:** Wednesday, 22 July 2015

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***Putting our residents first***

Lloyd White  
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## **SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING & PUBLIC HEALTH**

To perform the policy overview role outlined above in relation to the following matters:

1. Adult Social Care
2. Older People's Services
3. Care and support for people with physical disabilities, mental health problems and learning difficulties
4. Asylum Seekers
5. Local Authority Public Health services
6. Encouraging a fit and healthy lifestyle
7. Health Control Unit, Heathrow
8. Encouraging home ownership
9. Social and supported housing provision for local residents
10. Homelessness and housing needs
11. Home energy conservation
12. National Welfare and Benefits changes

# Agenda

## **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 1 Apologies for Absence and to report the presence of any substitute Members
- 2 Declarations of Interest in matters coming before this meeting
- 3 To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2015 1 - 6
- 4 To confirm that the items of business marked in Part I will be considered in Public and that the items marked Part II will be considered in Private
- 5 Budget Planning Report for Social Services, Housing and Public Health Services 2016/17 7 - 12
- 6 Social Services, Housing and Public Health POC - Review 2015-16 13 - 22
- 7 Forward Plan 23 - 28
- 8 Work Programme 29 - 32

## Minutes

### SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

2 July 2015



Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre,  
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW

	<p><b>Committee Members Present:</b> Councillors Wayne Bridges (Chairman), Teji Barnes (Vice-Chairman), Peter Davis, Becky Haggar, Phoday Jarjussey (In place of Beulah East), Manjit Khatra, June Nelson, Shehryar Wallana and Mary O'Connor</p> <p><b>LBH Officers Present:</b> Nigel Dicker (Deputy Director of Public Safety &amp; Environment), Steve Hajioff (Director of Public Health), John Higgins (Head of Service Safeguarding, Quality and Partnerships), Ed Shaylor (Residents Services - ASB &amp; Investigations Team) and Debby Weller (Residents Services - Housing Strategy Manager) (Residents Services - Housing Strategy Manager) and Nikki O'Halloran (Democratic Services)</p>
3.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Beulah East. Councillor Phoday Jarjussey was present as her substitute. It was noted that Councillor June Nelson would be arriving a little late for the meeting.</p>
4.	<p><b>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 APRIL 2015 AND 14 MAY 2015</b> (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes of the meetings held on 22 April 2015 and 14 May 2015 be agreed as correct records.</p>
5.	<p><b>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED IN PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That all items be considered in public.</p>
6.	<p><b>MAJOR REVIEWS -2015/16</b> (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>At its meeting on 22 April 2015, it had been suggested that Raising Standards in Private Sector Rented Accommodation be considered as the Committee's first major review topic for this municipal year. However, as this was a broad subject and 'raising standards' required definition, officers were present to provide Members with additional information, should they decide to progress this topic. If Members did not wish to undertake this review, consideration would need to be given to an alternative topic.</p> <p>Mr Ed Shaylor advised that, since 2004, a nationwide standard (Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)) had been implemented for hazard assessments in occupied dwellings to reduce the number of injuries. It was noted that all housing was</p>

subject to hazards but that the rating system identified those hazards that were more likely to cause injury in the next twelve months. HHSRS assessed 29 housing hazards and the effects that each might have on the health and safety of the current or future occupant or any visitor to the property. The hazards assessed were: damp and mould growth; excess cold; excess heat; asbestos (and MMF); biocides; carbon monoxide and fuel combustion products; lead; radiation; uncombusted fuel gas; volatile organic compounds; entry by intruders; lighting; noise; crowding and space; domestic hygiene, pests and refuse; food safety; personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage; water supply; falls associated with baths, etc; falling on level surfaces, etc; falling on stairs, etc; falling between levels; electrical hazards; fire; flames, hot surfaces, etc; collision and entrapment; explosions; position and operability of amenities, etc; and structural collapse and falling elements.

The most common cause of complaints in the colder months was damp and mould growth. Although landlords would be required to resolve some of these issues, the hazards were not always as a result of their negligence and could be as a result of things like draying laundry, showers and kettles which all contributed to a build up of condensation that could cause damp in some properties.

The second most common cause of complaints from tenants was in relation to excess cold. Clearly, this type of complaint was predominantly made over the winter months and, if the landlord failed to rectify any issues identified, the Council was able to undertake remedial action and pass the charges on to the landlord.

In the summer, the main causes of complaints were in relation to sanitation and drainage, pest infestation, damp and mould growth, electricity and gas, structural collapse, lack of cooking facilities, water supply door locks, boilers and occasionally fire hazards.

Mr Shaylor agreed to forward a breakdown of the nature of the complaints being received from tenants and the outcomes.

It was noted that the Council's Housing Standards Team currently comprised five officers who dealt with both multiple and single occupancy housing. In December 2014, January 2015 and February 2015, the Team received approximately 60-70 reports from tenants each month. During May 2015, this number reduced to 24. The total number of reports made each year by the 10-12k households in the Borough was approximately 400. However, this did not account for the number of tenants that did not report hazards for fear of some kind of retaliation from their landlord.

With regard to arrangements to safeguard tenants from homelessness, Members were advised that meetings could be arranged with a Housing Advisor to discuss the options available to them. However, tenants often felt that they were paying high rents and should be getting better value for money. Officers were also able to give advice on issues such as how to obtain better accommodation within the private rented sector.

Although the Housing Standards Team generally responded to hazard reports within a few days, there were times when the Council was unable to take action. In these circumstances, officers would provide tenants with alternative contacts, for example, if there were health concerns.

Mr Shaylor advised that a range of information was available on the Council's website to help residents to reduce the amount of condensation in their properties (and therefore reduce the likelihood of damp and mould growth). For those residents that

were unable to obtain information from the website, officers were available to provide an explanation and further advice.

Tenants should, in the first instance, speak to their landlord about any issues they had with their property. If the landlord failed to address the issues in a timely fashion, the tenant could then contact the Council. Reports to the Council tended to be made directly by the tenant via telephone. Contact Centre staff had been briefed to deal with these calls and would need to ask the tenant a series of questions in order to capture as much information as possible about the issue.

Although the Council tried to foster good relation with landlords, enforcement action could be undertaken in relation to hazards. This action included:

- Improvement Notices - generally the landlord complied with these; and
- Prohibition Notices - this was deemed to be an extreme action and meant that the tenant might need to vacate the property whilst work was undertaken. However, these notices could be suspended until the work was completed and could be used to enforce 'beds in sheds'. Members were advised that only 1-2 of these Notices were issued each year as properties in the Borough tended to generally be of a reasonable standard.

It was noted that, other than a £300 fee, there were no penalties for those landlords that received a Notice if the work identified was completed.

Although the Fire Brigade had the right of entry where there was a risk of explosion, their powers were limited and did not include enforcement. As such, the Council had recently been working in partnership with the Fire Brigade.

Members were advised that the Deregulation Act 2015 had provided tenants with some protection from retaliation from landlords to hazard reports. The Act prevented landlords from issuing tenants with a 'notice to quit' until six months had elapsed from the time a Prohibition Notice had been issued. It was thought that this would provide the landlord with adequate time to address any hazards and also allow them time to reflect. However, should they choose to do so, the landlord could still issue the tenant with a 'notice to quit' once this six month period had ended. Mr Shaylor advised that, should a landlord fail to comply with an improvement notice, they could be prosecuted.

Concern was expressed by Members that some emergency bed and breakfast accommodation used by the Council was not of an adequate standard. Mr Shaylor advised that bed and breakfast accommodation was inspected by the Council before it was first used and those that were regularly used were inspected on a six monthly basis. It was noted that there were approximately 2-3 prosecutions in relation to these properties each year.

With regard to houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), Mr Shaylor advised that overcrowding tended to be more of an issue where there were a number of families living in the same property rather than multiple single people (such as students). It was noted that Brunel University students were part of the community and often made a positive contribution. As the properties that students rented were not usually hazardous, complaints tended to be from neighbours about the amount of noise that they caused rather than from the students themselves.

Members were advised that the Council had developed good relations with the University, particularly with regard to disciplinary procedures. In addition, the authority had been working closely with a major lettings agency in the area that dealt with

housing a large number of students. Brunel was keen for its students to integrate into the community and it was recognised that disruptive students were in the minority. It was noted that students were required to provide a guarantor for their rent which was often their parents (who would then be advised about issues such as noise abatement notices). Although the University had its own lettings office, it would be unable to create additional HMOs without licensing.

It was noted that the private rented sector included Housing Association properties.

Mr Nigel Dicker stated that the Tenancy Deposit Scheme was now in force and covered letting agents. The Scheme looked to address the issue of tenants' deposits being partially or wholly kept unfairly and now meant that these deposits were held in an escrow account.

Members were advised that the Council did not currently undertake selective licensing which required all landlords to register their accommodation with the authority. It was noted that this would be a massive undertaking that would be very costly and resource heavy. It was suggested that selective licensing could result in poor landlords being driven underground and perceived by good landlords as a form of tax.

It was noted that the mandatory HMO licensing scheme, introduced in 2010, related to two storey properties housing five or more tenants and needed to be reviewed every five years. The related consultation exercise had ended on 30 June 2015 and was the subject of a Cabinet report which, it was anticipated, would be considered on 23 July 2015. A report would be brought to the Committee after the Cabinet meeting to update Members on the action being taken.

Mr Dicker advised that, as they proffered the highest risk, the Council would be concentrating on HMOs. Currently, 153 of the estimated 212 HMOs in the south of the Borough had been licensed. There were a total of 140 HMOs in the north of the Borough. Members were advised that the HMO Article 4 Direction removed permitted development rights for landlords and forced them to go through the full planning process. It was noted that this Directive was applicable in the Uxbridge South and Brunel wards as a means of controlling the growth of student accommodation in those areas. Since the advent of the scheme, eight planning applications had been submitted, of which five had been approved.

Ms Debby Weller advised that the affordability of housing was an issue in the Borough, as it was across London. Rising house prices put pressure on the private rented sector as there was increased competition from families that would previously have entered owner occupation. The number of tenancies increased between the last two censuses from 9k to 18k. This competition was exacerbated by people moving from inner London boroughs (where they could no longer afford the rent) and enabled landlords to demand higher rents. The benefit cap made rents for larger capped families in Hillingdon increasingly unaffordable but, at present, affected a relatively small number of households. It was noted that the Council was able to provide stability for tenants by guaranteeing rent over a period and offering discretionary housing payments for a limited period so that families could look for a property in a cheaper area.

Dr Steve Hajioff stated that poor housing posed a risk to tenants' health, with a noisy environment posing a risk of stroke and heart attack and a damp environment exacerbating respiratory disease. As such, it was important for landlords to maintain a decent standard in their properties. Members were also advised that the highest predictor of infant mortality was co-sleeping and would need to be considered if the



Committee decided to look at HMOs.

Members were advised that the last stock condition survey was undertaken by the Council in 2008. Although not a specific requirement, house condition surveys were undertaken periodically by local authorities. Ms Weller advised that a survey would typically include basic household information (to establish a link between individuals and their housing) as well as information about the structure of the dwelling, heating, etc. Survey costs would be a minimum of £50k, and sample sizes would comprise at least 1k homes.

It was agreed that the Committee would undertake a review of Raising Standards in Private Sector Rented Accommodation which would specifically address on the following issues:

1. Tenants' awareness of their options and the alternatives that were available to them;
2. Overcrowding and the impact on the health of tenants;
3. Demographic breakdown of the population for comparison purposes;
4. Accessibility of housing; and
5. Signposting tenants to alternative services where the Council was not responsible.

Although consideration was given to including hoarding as part of the review, it was agreed that these tenants tended to be owner-occupiers and the issue would be more about the mental health of the individual concerned, involving a different body of evidence and set of witnesses. As such, it was agreed that this would be better placed as a standalone report for consideration by the Committee.

**RESOLVED: That:**

1. **Mr Shaylor forward a breakdown of the nature of complaints being received from tenants and the outcomes;**
2. **Mr Dicker provide the Committee with an update report in relation to the HMO licensing scheme following consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 23 July 2015;**
3. **the Committee undertake a review of Raising Standards in Private Sector Rented Accommodation which would specifically cover the following issues:**
  - a) **Tenants' awareness of their options and the alternatives that were available to them;**
  - b) **Overcrowding and the impact on the health of tenants;**
  - c) **Demographic breakdown of the population for comparison purposes;**
  - d) **Accessibility of housing; and**
  - e) **Signposting tenants to alternative services where the Council was not responsible;**
4. **officers provide the Committee with an update report in relation to hoarding; and**
5. **the presentations be noted.**

7. **FORWARD PLAN** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The Committee considered the latest version of the Cabinet Forward Plan.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

8.	<p><b>WORK PROGRAMME</b> (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>Consideration was given to the Committee's Work Programme and timetable of meetings for the current municipal year.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.</b></p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.21 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Charles Francis on 01895 556454. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.

## **BUDGET PLANNING REPORT FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES 2016/17**

**Contact Officer:** Tim Dauncey  
**Telephone:** 01895 250398

### **REASON FOR ITEM**

This is the first opportunity for the Policy Overview Committee to discuss the current stage of development of budget planning work with regard to Social Services, Housing and Public Health Services. Within the context of the Council's overall financial position, this paper sets out the main financial issues facing the Group's services and the work being undertaken to respond to them. This paper gives a strategic context in which the detailed proposals to be discussed at Policy Overview Committee meetings in January 2016 will need to be considered.

### **OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE COMMITTEE**

It is recommended that the Committee notes the development of the financial planning process undertaken to date, and comments as appropriate on the response to the issues being developed by the Group.

### **INFORMATION**

- 1 This is the first of two opportunities within the planning cycle for the Policy Overview Committee to consider issues relating to budget planning for 2016/17. The focus of this report is the major issues that have been identified through the service and financial planning process for Social Services, Housing and Public Health Services. The report to be considered in January 2016 will set out the detailed budget proposals for the Group, those proposals having been included in the report to Cabinet on the Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) on 17 December 2015.

### **Corporate Summary**

- 2 While the focus of the discussion for the Policy Overview Committee should be the specific services within its remit, it is important that this discussion is conducted in the context of the overall corporate financial position.
- 3 The budget report to Council in February 2015 identified the savings requirement for 2016/17 as £20.3m and work is currently underway to refresh this figure. The finance settlement announced in December 2014 was only for the year 2015/16. Therefore, until the final settlement is announced towards the end of the year the final funding position will not be fully known, although an indication of the scale of funding reductions may be given in the Comprehensive Spending Round expected in autumn 2015.

- 4 In addition, there is significant other uncertainty within the budget for next year from increasing demographic pressures and from ongoing welfare reforms.
- 5 Alongside this, any other emerging pressures which arise throughout this financial year will have to be provided for in next year's budget. The budget gap will be monitored throughout the year and the budget strategy adjusted accordingly to ensure that a balanced budget for 2016/17 can be set.

### Strategy to deal with the budget gap

- 6 The Council remains strongly placed to deal with the challenges ahead. We have a good track record of coming in or under budget each year and have accumulated balances of £40.4m by the end of 2014/15, although £5m of that has been committed to being drawn down during 2015/16. We have a well established HIP programme that has helped steer the Council from a position of having low balances to one of having healthy balances at the same time as dealing with significant external challenges. This has been enhanced by the development of the BID programme as the main vehicle for delivering the fundamental changes required to the Council's structure and ways of working in order to address the reductions in funding going forward.

### MTFF process update

- 7 The timetable for the budget process was refreshed in February 2015 and the first MTFF sessions with Groups took place during late June and early July to review the detailed budget proposals developed by each group. Progress on the development and delivery of these proposals will be monitored monthly by CMT and the Leader of the Council throughout the remainder of the year.

### Timetable for 2016/17 Budget

- 8 The broad timetable is as follows:

Process	Timetable
Monthly CMT updates (March 2015 to Feb 2016)	Monthly
CMT discussion on options to address 2016/17 gap	February
SMT Briefing on budget position	February
Analytical review of 2014/15 outturn	April - June
MTFF Review (1) – 1st Challenge Sessions	June
Initial Draft MTFF Report to Leader	July
Spending Review	Summer / August
MTFF Review (2) – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Challenge Sessions	Sept/Early October
Leader review of MTFF	November
Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement	December
Draft MTFF reported to Cabinet	December
POC review of draft Group Plans and budget proposals	January
Final Local Government Finance Settlement	January
Council Tax setting	February

Social Services, Housing and Public Health Policy Overview Committee  
30 July 2015

PART I – Members, Public and Press

## Budget Planning in Social Services, Housing and Public Health Services

### Summary of Key Financial Issues

- **Adult Social care**

#### 9 Independent Living Fund

The Independent Living Fund (ILF), which provides additional support to people with disabilities, is a service which has transferred from the DWP to the Council on 30/06/2015. The Council will take on this new burden and become responsible for 34 current ILF service users. The estimated full year cost of this support in 2015/16 by the ILF is £571k. The actual award of grant for the period July to March 2016 was announced on 1<sup>st</sup> July and is £428k. The care and support needs of users being transferred have been reviewed and updated assessments are being carried out under the Care Act. Funding for this service in 2016/17 and in future years has yet to be announced.

#### 10 Provider Sustainability

There remains a serious risk to social care provider sustainability within the care market due to the level of capacity available to meet demand and the deteriorating financial position of a number of our care providers. One of the council's residential placements providers is currently in administration due to financial pressures. The implementation of the National Living wage announced in the recent budget will also become a significant financial pressure if the associated funding is not provided to cover the additional cost. Without some form of market realignment, this risk of failure will only increase, the result of which could leave the authority with significant budget pressures and the need to mitigate any additional costs.

#### 11 Demand Management

In order to mitigate the growing increases in demand for social care by our residents, it is vitally important that we continue to identify opportunities to manage this demand. Key to this will be to develop the wider use of preventative services such as telecare to keep residents in their own homes, helping residents to commission their own care through the greater use of Connect to Support Hillingdon and increasing the ability of clients to make decisions on choice of care available through increasing the number of clients using prepaid cards as direct payments to purchase their care.

#### 12 Demographic Growth for Adults and Children transitioning into Adult Social care

The financial modelling of demographic demand for adult social care will be carried out during the summer period to provide a more accurate forecast in October for the financial year 2016/17.

### 13 Winterbourne Review

There are 9 clients remaining who have been identified as Winterbourne View placements that will transfer to the responsibility of the Council on discharge and in many cases with financial support from the HCCG /Department of Health through joint funding. It is estimated that the maximum full year gross cost of £1,262k p.a.

There have been considerable delays in the timetable for completion of transfers which is expected to continue into 2016/17. Of the 4 clients who have transferred to date only one has been partly joint funded by the CCG. Of the remaining 9 cases it is likely that some clients will require Secure Unit support and will remain the responsibility of NHS England beyond 2015/16.

Subsequently in March 2015 the Public Accounts Committee reviewed the progress on the implementation of the Winterbourne View report and recommended that the Department of Health should identify how funding can follow the patient to meet the costs of new community services to keep people out of hospital. It should also set out the arrangements for its proposed 'dowry-type' payments to local commissioners from NHS England to meet the costs of supporting people discharged from hospital..

### 14 Implementing the Care Act

The responsibilities set out in the 2015 Care Act regulations have been implemented and are operational. It has been announced that the implementation of the Care Act phase 2 from April 2016 has now been delayed until April 2020 to provide the opportunity to understand the financial impact of the costs of the implementation of cap on Care costs of £72k in more detail.

### 15 Better Care Fund

The BCF fund comprising £17,991k of pooled monies has been in operation since April 2015. Regular financial and monitoring reports have been developed to report the current financial position and performance levels to the Chair and members of HWBB. The BCF was originally set up for 2015/16 only and decisions are awaited from the DOH on whether this approach will continue into 2016/17 and what ongoing funding levels will be provided.

### 16 Supported Living

The delivery of the supported living programme over the next few years' remains high risk in terms of both delivering the planned units to timescale and the associated savings in this and future years. Current forecasts show slippage in the completion of projects in 2015/16 which impacts upon the level of savings being delivered in this year.

- **Housing General Fund**

17 The 2015/16 budget includes a contingency sum of £1,836k to resource the anticipated pressures on Temporary Accommodation in the borough. The overall numbers in temporary accommodation including high cost bed & breakfast units remain at the levels seen in 2014/15. The Housing Needs service is still experiencing a high level of demand in terms of homelessness presentations and advice. There are significant pressures on supply reflecting the wider pressures in the Housing market, both on a local and national front, and which continues to impact adversely on the availability and cost of private sector rented accommodation.

- **Housing HRA**

18 The HRA has a savings target of £2.448m in 2015/16. These are on target to be achieved through measures that will be concentrated on improving the efficiency of reactive and planned maintenance.

19 The most significant pressure on the HRA continues to be the high volume of RTB sales, with a continuing increase in the number of applications from tenants.

20 The government announced in the July 2015 budget a number of initiatives which will impact on the HRA including:

- Reducing rents in real terms by 1% for four years from 2016/17
- A proposal to sell off high value properties as they become void with any receipts returned to the Treasury in order to finance the extension of RTB to Housing Associations.
- Reduction in the benefit cap coupled with universal credit, which may impact on rent collection rates
- Changes in tenancies, including increased rents for higher earners, with the additional revenue returned to the Treasury.

- **Public Health**

21 Public health is on target to achieve the efficiency savings of £430k in 2015/16. These savings are being achieved from a combination of budget realignment and procurement activity across a range of service areas.

22 In June 2015 the government announced an overall reduction in Public Health funding of £200 million from the national budget of approximately £2.7 billion. The detail of how this reduction is to be applied to individual local authorities is not yet available.

## **Next Steps**

- 23 The Medium Term Financial Forecast setting out the draft revenue budget and capital programme will be considered by Cabinet on 17 December 2015 and issued for consultation during the remainder of December 2015 and January 2016. This will include detailed consideration by each of the Policy Overview Committees of the proposals relating to their respective services.

## **SUGGESTED COMMITTEE ACTIVITY**

To consider whether there are suggestions or comments the Committee wish to make.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Council's Budget: General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2015/16 – reports to Cabinet 12 February 2015 and Council 26 February 2015.



## MAJOR REVIEWS IN 2015/16 – SCOPING REPORT

**Contact Officers:** Charles Francis  
**Telephone:** 6454

### SUMMARY

To enable the Committee to consider a draft scoping report on '*Raising Standards In Private Rented Sector Accommodation*' and to enable the Committee to agree the issues Members wish to include in their Review (see Annex A).

### INFORMATION

At the Committee meeting on 22 April 2015, Members discussed a number of potential review topics for 2015/16 and requested officers to prepare a draft scoping report on '*Raising Standards In Private Rented Sector Accommodation*'.

At the 2 July 2015 meeting, a verbal overview of the Private Rented Sector in Hillingdon was given by Housing Officers to assist the Committee in narrowing the focus of the review.

The draft scoping report is attached for Members' consideration.

### SUGGESTED COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

1. To consider the draft scoping report and ask any further questions of officers;
2. To agree the scoping report to undertake as a major review in 2015/16;
3. Subsequently, to agree the programme and the scheduling of witness sessions and amend or update the work programme accordingly.

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# HILLINGDON

LONDON

## Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee Review Scoping Report 2015/16

### ***RAISING STANDARDS IN PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR ACCOMMODATION***

#### **Aim of review**

This review aims to examine standards in private sector rented accommodation in Hillingdon, and will focus on the specific issues detailed in the Terms of Reference.

#### **Terms of Reference**

- a. To provide a profile of the sector and its tenants and how this has changed for comparative purposes and provide information regarding accessibility to such accommodation;
- b. To report on levels and the impact of overcrowding in the sector particularly in relation to the health of occupants;
- c. Consider current and potential mechanisms through which information regarding their options is made available to existing and prospective private rented sector tenants. To include council services and signposting to other agencies;
- d. To make recommendations to Cabinet based on the findings of this review

#### **Reasons for the review**

At 22 April 2015 meeting, the Committee considered investigating Raising Standards in Private Rented Sector Accommodation as its first major review topic for 2015/16. At the 2 July 2015 meeting a verbal overview of the Private Rented Sector in Hillingdon was given by Housing Officers to assist the Committee in narrowing the focus of the review.

## **INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS**

### **Key Issues**

1. The private rented sector in Hillingdon has grown significantly in terms of both the number and proportion of households that live in this tenure. The cost of accessing private sector housing in Hillingdon has also increased markedly and the make-up of the sector has changed. Increased competition comes from within the borough and further afield. These factors create a different climate for private rented sector housing than previously and have an impact on households' ability to access the sector. There are also potential impacts on property conditions and management standards. There is, for instance, some evidence that overcrowding is increasing. The Council needs to better understand the private rented market and in particular the impact of overcrowding on occupants' health.
2. Resources to address issues in the private rented sector are limited and consequently it is important that information about available options is disseminated effectively in relation to both Council services and those provided by others. Given the rapid growth of the sector and other changes, such as those relating to welfare benefits, it is timely to review this.

### **Background and importance**

#### **Overview**

3. The private rented sector has continued to grow in size and importance, not only for traditional groups housed in the sector, such as young single people, but also for families with children.
4. The London Housing Strategy includes a target to increase the supply of purpose built private rented sector housing. The Mayor of London has also developed a London Rental Standard; a set of minimum standards that the Mayor expects every landlord and letting agent in London to meet.
5. There has been significant growth in the Buy-to-let market and although the recent Budget set out plans to reduce tax relief to basic rate only, buy-to-let is likely to continue to be seen as an attractive investment prospect.
6. The majority of landlords are reputable and provide decent well maintained homes, but there are a minority of landlords who ignore their obligations and knowingly rent out unsafe and overcrowded accommodation.
7. Tenants may not be aware of their rights and what can be expected of their accommodation and their landlord. Encouraging tenants to raise

complaints and concerns about their landlords, letting agents or neighbouring tenants can help to target investigations.

8. Likewise a small number of landlords have little awareness of their obligations towards their tenants. In many cases landlords are willing to learn how to be better in their role. Landlord education, training and signposting can assist in improving the management of property.
9. Legislation now requires all letting and property management agents to join one of three approved redress schemes, which gives tenants a process through which to hold agents to account.
10. There are important links between housing and health. The Building Research Establishment (BRE) estimate that, across the country, avoidable disease and injuries caused by poor housing costs the NHS at least £600m a year.
11. Growing up in an overcrowded household can have a serious impact on the health of children. Infectious diseases spread more readily in overcrowded conditions and frequent illnesses lead to missed days at school. Research has found evidence of a relationship between overcrowding and the physical health of children, including respiratory conditions and meningitis.<sup>1</sup>

## Remit

### Private rented sector – size and profile

12. Between the 2001 and 2011 census the number of private rented dwellings increased from 9,439 to 18,141 and it is thought that the increase has continued at pace since the census. The growth of the private rented sector is a common across the country but has been particularly strong in London. According to a report by Kent Alliance<sup>2</sup>, in the last year, 77% of the new households formed in Great Britain were created in the private rented sector. The review will examine this growth in more detail.

### Rent levels in the private rented sector

13. Market rents in the private rented sector have been increasing and there have been various changes to the way in which the Local Housing Allowance operates that have been made since it was introduced in 2008. A number of other welfare benefit changes are also relevant in relation to

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<sup>1</sup> The Impact of Overcrowding on Health & Education: A literature review (Office for the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004)

<sup>2</sup> The Kent Alliance: Buy to Let Britain report, Edition Two

households' ability to access the sector, including the household benefit cap. The review will explore rent levels and affordability in more detail.

### Overcrowding and Health Implications

14. "Crowding and space" is one of the 29 possible hazards in domestic dwellings identified in the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme (HHSRS) introduced in 2006 to support the enforcement regime created in the Housing Act 2004. Crowding and (lack of) space is described in HHSRS as a "psychological hazard" as the effects of lack of space for living, sleeping and normal household and family life are mainly psychological distress and mental disorders as personal space and privacy needs are compromised. There is also an increased risk of accidents and lack of hygiene. There appears to be no particular age group more vulnerable than others, but those most at risk will be those who spend most time in the dwelling, typically older people, the very young, those who are mobility impaired and their carers. The likelihood of overcrowding depends, of course, mainly on choices made by landlords and occupiers, but the type of property where likelihood increases is in newer houses, for example those built since 1979, as room sizes and overall dimensions of properties have become smaller. The lowest risk is in properties built before 1920. Overcrowding in flats is generally less common than in houses, where the temptation to introduce additional tenants, family members or families is higher. However, some of the more extreme cases of overcrowding can occur in flats, for example one family living in each room including the living room.
15. Enforcement action open to the Council under the Housing Act 2004 includes an Improvement Notice, requiring the owner to make changes within a time frame, or a Prohibition Notice, requiring the owner to cease using the premises as a dwelling completely, or partially for example by returning it to single family use or limiting the number of occupiers.
16. This is in addition to traditional enforcement powers under public health legislation relating to filthy premises or removal of conditions encouraging pests.

### Information, advice and guidance

17. Initial enquiries regarding landlord issues are dealt with via the Council's contact centre who have scripts for dealing with a variety of query types. The Homelessness Prevention Team also provide advice to people on what they should expect from landlord and tenant relationships. The team also signpost as necessary for legal advice. Where there may be a need for more specific intervention in relation to housing standards, households are directed to the Private Sector Housing Team. A section of the Council website is devoted to private sector housing conditions and provides advice for both tenants and landlords.

**Connected work** (recently completed, planned or ongoing)

18.The Renewal of HMO Scheme.

## **EVIDENCE & ENQUIRY**

### **Witnesses**

Debby Weller  
Nigel Dicker  
Ed Shaylor  
Steve Hajioff  
Lynn Forshaw  
Local management agents  
Private sector landlords

### **Lines of enquiry**

The first witness session will focus on the profile of the private rented sector and accessibility.

- The size and composition of the private rented sector and its occupants
- The differences within the private rented sector in different parts of Hillingdon
- The various sub-markets within the sector
- How the sector has changed. Current market trends and the effect this has had on the private rental market?
- Likely future trends?
- Private rental reposessions and the impact on homelessness
- Accessibility of the sector including the impact of rental costs and of welfare reform

The second witness session will focus on overcrowding and the impact on health.

- A definition of overcrowding
- The room standard and the space standard
- Households overall at greater risk of illness, infection poor diet and nutrition.
- Specific impact on children. Prevalence of meningitis and respiratory problems. Overcrowded homes and linkage to slow growth in children and correlation with increased risk of heart disease as an adult.
- Detrimental effect on emotional and mental health.

The third witness session will look at information, advice and guidance

- What information is currently provided to prospective Private Rented Sector tenants?
- Should the Council consult to see if this is effective?
- What further forms of information might be provided?
- Channels of communication

The fourth and final session will

- Agree the final report including recommendations to Cabinet/Cabinet Members based upon the findings of the review.

## **LOGISTICS**

Proposed timeframe & milestones

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
30 July 2015	Agree Scoping Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed terms of reference and preferred witnesses</li> </ul>
3 Sept 2015	<p><i>First witness session</i></p> <p>Potential witnesses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debby Weller</li> <li>• Nigel Dicker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To review the size and scale private rented market in Hillingdon</li> <li>• Sub - markets</li> <li>• The evolution of the sector and future trends</li> </ul>
6 Oct 2015	<p><i>Second witness session</i></p> <p>Potential witnesses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ed Shaylor</li> <li>• Steve Hajioff</li> <li>• Nigel Dicker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To determine what overcrowding is and the current levels</li> <li>• To determine the most likely health impacts</li> <li>• To propose those steps which might be taken to improve conditions</li> </ul>
4 Nov 2015	<p><i>Third witness session</i></p> <p>Potential witnesses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lynn Forshaw</li> <li>• Ed Shaylor</li> <li>• Debbie Weller</li> <li>• Local management agents (Orchard &amp; Shipman and Gibbs Gillespie)</li> <li>• Private sector landlords</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information, advice and guidance</li> <li>• Sign posting by the Council to other agencies</li> </ul>
20 January 2016	Final session	Agree final report.



## **Risk assessment**

To meet its terms of reference the review will need to be resourced. Officers will be tasked to support the review as an integral part of the Housing Delivery Plan.

The impact of the review may be reduced if the scope of the review is too broad.

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## **CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

**Contact Officer:** Charles Francis  
**Telephone:** 01895 556454

## **REASON FOR ITEM**

The Committee is required to consider the Forward Plan and provide Cabinet with any comments it wishes to make before the decision is taken.

## **OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE**

1. Decide to comment on any items coming before Cabinet
2. Decide not to comment on any items coming before Cabinet

## **INFORMATION**

1. The Forward Plan is updated on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. An edited version to include only items relevant to the Committee's remit is attached below. The full version can be found on the front page of the 'Members' Desk' under 'Useful Links'.

## **SUGGESTED COMMITTEE ACTIVITY**

1. Members decide whether to examine any of the reports listed on the Forward Plan at a future meeting.

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**Ref Decision Further information**

Council Departments: RS = Residents Services CYPs =Children and Young People's Services ASCS= Adult Social Care Services AD = Administration FD= Finance

**Cabinet meeting - 23 July 2015**

Ref	Decision	Further information	Ward(s)	Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer Contact for further information	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	Private decision?
40	Licensing of 2 storey Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	Following consultation, Cabinet approval is sought to renew the Council's extended HMO licensing scheme, so that the Council can require 2 Storey HMO's to be licensed.	All		Cllr Philip Corthorne	RS - Dave Youngs	Consultation with stakeholders		

**Ref Decision Further information**

Ward(s)

Council Departments: RS = Residents Services CYPs =Children and Young People's Services ASCS= Adult Social Care Services AD = Administration FD= Finance

**> August 2015**

No Cabinet is currently scheduled during August 2015

Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer Contact for further information	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	Private decision?
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## Ref Decision Further information

Ward(s)

Council Departments: RS = Residents Services CYPs =Children and Young People's Services ASCS= Adult Social Care Services AD = Administration FD= Finance

### Cabinet meeting - 24 September 2015

Ref	Decision	Further information	Ward(s)	Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer Contact for further information	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	Private decision?
51	Older People's Plan update	Cabinet will receive a quarterly update on progress on the Older People's Plan.	All		Cllr Ray Puddifoot MBE / Cllr Philip Corthorne	AD - Vicky Trott	Older People		

### Cabinet Member Decisions - September 2015

SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of decisions each month on standard items - details of these standard items are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	AD - Democratic Services	Various		
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### Cabinet Member Decisions - October 2015

**Ref Decision Further information**

Council Departments: RS = Residents Services CYPs =Children and Young People's Services ASCS= Adult Social Care Services AD = Administration FD= Finance

**Cabinet meeting - 19 November 2015**

Ref	Decision	Further information	Ward(s)	Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer Contact for further information	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	Private decision?
54	Carers Strategy - progress update	As requested at it's meeting in April 2015, Cabinet will receive an updated on progress implementing the Carers' Strategy and Delivery Plan.	All		Cllr Philip Corthorne	AD - Vicky Trott		<b>NEW</b>	



# Agenda Item 8

## WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16

**Contact Officer:** Charles Francis  
**Telephone:** 01895 556454

## REASON FOR ITEM

This report is to enable the Committee to review meeting dates and forward plans. This is a standard item at the end of the agenda.

## OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE COMMITTEE

1. To confirm dates for meetings
2. To make suggestions for future working practices and/or reviews.

## INFORMATION

*All meetings to start at 7.00pm*

<b>Meetings</b>	<b>Room</b>
<b>2 July 2015</b>	<b>CR 5</b>
<b>30 July 2015</b>	<b>CR 5</b>
<b>3 September 2015</b>	<b>CR 5</b>
<b>6 October 2015</b>	<b>CR 6</b>
<b>4 November 2015</b>	<b>CR 6</b>
<b>20 January 2016</b>	<b>CR 6</b>
<b>23 February 2016</b>	<b>CR3/3a</b>
<b>24 March 2016</b>	<b>CR 6</b>
<b>20 April 2016</b>	<b>CR 6</b>

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Social Services, Housing and Public Health Policy Overview Committee  
30 July 2015

PART I – Members, Public and Press

Social Services, Housing and Public Health Policy Overview Committee

**2015/16 - DRAFT Work Programme**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Item</b>
<b>2 July 2015</b>	Major Reviews Topics 2015/16
	Work programme for 2015/16
	Cabinet Forward Plan

<b>30 July 2015</b>	Budget Planning Report for SS,Hsg&PH
	Scoping Report for Major Review
	Work Programme
	Cabinet Forward Plan

<b>3 September 2015</b>	Major Review - Witness Session
	Cabinet Forward Plan
	Annual Complaints Report
	Work Programme

<b>6 October 2015</b>	Major Review - Witness Session
	Update on previous review recommendations (Shared Lives Review)
	Cabinet Forward Plan
	Work Programme

<b>4 November 2015</b>	Major Review - Draft Final report
	Consideration of Second Major Review
	Cabinet Forward Plan
	Work Programme

<b>20 January 2016</b>	Budget Proposals Report for 2016/17
	Cabinet Forward Plan
	Work Programme

<b>23 February 2016</b>	Cabinet Forward Plan
	Work Programme
	Witness Session

<b>24 March 2016</b>	Cabinet Forward Plan
	Work Programme
	Witness Session

<b>20 April 2016</b>	Cabinet Forward Plan
	Major Review Second Final report

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