

Overview & Scrutiny

Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

All Members of the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission are requested to attend the meeting of the Commission to be held as follows

Wednesday 22 March 2023

7.00 pm

Council Chamber, Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street, London E8 1EA

This meeting can be viewed (or replayed) via the following link:

<https://youtu.be/YMjU9RFYZQQ>

A back up link is provided in the event of any technical difficulties:

<https://youtu.be/JQyt1bxFHmY>

Should you wish to attend the meeting please give notice to the contact below and note the guidance included in the frontsheet.

Contact:

Craig Player

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Mark Carroll

Chief Executive, London Borough of Hackney

Members: Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Ian Rathbone, Cllr Penny Wrout, Cllr Soraya Adejare (Chair), Cllr Clare Joseph (Vice-Chair), Cllr Joseph Ogundemuren, Cllr Sam Pallis, Cllr Ali Sadek, Cllr Sarah Young and Cllr Zoe Garbett

Agenda

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Urgent Items / Order of Business
- 3 Declaration of Interest
- 4 Temporary Accommodation

(Pages 9 - 38)

- 5 Cabinet Question Time - Accountability of Private Rented Sector & Housing Associations (Pages 39 - 40)
- 6 Minutes of the Meeting (Pages 41 - 54)
- 7 Living in Hackney Work Programme 2022/23 (Pages 55 - 68)
- 8 Any Other Business

Access and Information

Public Involvement and Recording

Public Attendance at the Town Hall for Meetings

Scrutiny meetings are held in public, rather than being public meetings. This means that whilst residents and press are welcome to attend, they can only ask questions at the discretion of the Chair. For further information relating to public access to information, please see Part 4 of the council's constitution, available at <https://hackney.gov.uk/council-business> or by contacting Governance Services (020 8356 3503)

Following the lifting of all Covid-19 restrictions by the Government and the Council updating its assessment of access to its buildings, the Town Hall is now open to the public and members of the public may attend meetings of the Council.

We recognise, however, that you may find it more convenient to observe the meeting via the live-stream facility, the link for which appears on the agenda front sheet.

We would ask that if you have either tested positive for Covid-19 or have any symptoms that you do not attend the meeting, but rather use the livestream facility. If this applies and you are attending the meeting to ask a question, make a deputation or present a petition then you may contact the Officer named at the beginning of the agenda and they will be able to make arrangements for the Chair of the meeting to ask the question, make the deputation or present the petition on your behalf.

The Council will continue to ensure that access to our meetings is in line with any Covid-19 restrictions that may be in force from time to time and also in line with public health advice. The latest general advice can be found here - <https://hackney.gov.uk/coronavirus-support>

Rights of Press and Public to Report on Meetings

Where a meeting of the Council and its committees are open to the public, the press and public are welcome to report on meetings of the Council and its committees, through any audio, visual or written methods and may use digital and social media providing they do not disturb the conduct of the meeting and providing that the person reporting or providing the commentary is present at the meeting.

Those wishing to film, photograph or audio record a meeting are asked to notify the Council's Monitoring Officer by noon on the day of the meeting, if possible, or any time prior to the start of the meeting or notify the Chair at the start of the meeting.

The Monitoring Officer, or the Chair of the meeting, may designate a set area from which all recording must take place at a meeting.

The Council will endeavour to provide reasonable space and seating to view, hear and record the meeting. If those intending to record a meeting require any other reasonable facilities, notice should be given to the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting and will only be provided if practicable to do so.

The Chair shall have discretion to regulate the behaviour of all those present recording a meeting in the interests of the efficient conduct of the meeting. Anyone acting in a disruptive manner may be required by the Chair to cease recording or may be excluded from the meeting.

Disruptive behaviour may include moving from any designated recording area; causing excessive noise; intrusive lighting; interrupting the meeting; or filming members of the public who have asked not to be filmed.

All those visually recording a meeting are requested to only focus on recording Councillors, officers and the public who are directly involved in the conduct of the meeting. The Chair of the meeting will ask any members of the public present if they have objections to being visually recorded. Those visually recording a meeting are asked to respect the wishes of those who do not wish to be filmed or photographed. Failure by someone recording a meeting to respect the wishes of those who do not wish to be filmed and photographed may result in the Chair instructing them to cease recording or in their exclusion from the meeting.

If a meeting passes a motion to exclude the press and public then in order to consider confidential or exempt information, all recording must cease, and all recording equipment must be removed from the meeting. The press and public are not permitted to use any means which might enable them to see or hear the proceedings whilst they are excluded from a meeting and confidential or exempt information is under consideration.

Providing oral commentary during a meeting is not permitted.

Advice to Members on Declaring Interests

Advice to Members on Declaring Interests

Hackney Council's Code of Conduct applies to all Members of the Council, the Mayor and co-opted Members.

This note is intended to provide general guidance for Members on declaring interests. However, you may need to obtain specific advice on whether you have an interest in a particular matter. If you need advice, you can contact:

- Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services
- the Legal Adviser to the Committee; or
- Governance Services.

If at all possible, you should try to identify any potential interest you may have before the meeting so that you and the person you ask for advice can fully consider all the circumstances before reaching a conclusion on what action you should take.

You will have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter if it:

- i. relates to an interest that you have already registered in Parts A and C of the Register of Pecuniary Interests of you or your spouse/civil partner, or anyone living with you as if they were your spouse/civil partner;
- ii. relates to an interest that should be registered in Parts A and C of the Register of Pecuniary Interests of your spouse/civil partner, or anyone living with you as if they were your spouse/civil partner, but you have not yet done so; or
- iii. affects your well-being or financial position or that of your spouse/civil partner, or anyone living with you as if they were your spouse/civil partner.

If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest in an item on the agenda you must:

- i. Declare the existence and nature of the interest (in relation to the relevant agenda item) as soon as it becomes apparent to you (subject to the rules regarding sensitive interests).
- ii. You must leave the meeting when the item in which you have an interest is being discussed. You cannot stay in the meeting whilst discussion of the item takes place, and you cannot vote on the matter. In addition, you must not seek to improperly influence the decision.
- iii. If you have, however, obtained dispensation from the Monitoring Officer or Standards Committee you may remain in the meeting and participate in the

meeting. If dispensation has been granted it will stipulate the extent of your involvement, such as whether you can only be present to make representations, provide evidence or whether you are able to fully participate and vote on the matter in which you have a pecuniary interest.

Do you have any other non-pecuniary interest on any matter on the agenda which is being considered at the meeting?

You will have 'other non-pecuniary interest' in a matter if:

- i. It relates to an external body that you have been appointed to as a Member or in another capacity; or
- ii. It relates to an organisation or individual which you have actively engaged in supporting.

If you have other non-pecuniary interest in an item on the agenda you must:

- i. Declare the existence and nature of the interest (in relation to the relevant agenda item) as soon as it becomes apparent to you.
- ii. You may remain in the meeting, participate in any discussion or vote provided that contractual, financial, consent, permission or licence matters are not under consideration relating to the item in which you have an interest.
- iii. If you have an interest in a contractual, financial, consent, permission, or licence matter under consideration, you must leave the meeting unless you have obtained a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer or Standards Committee. You cannot stay in the meeting whilst discussion of the item takes place, and you cannot vote on the matter. In addition, you must not seek to improperly influence the decision. Where members of the public are allowed to make representations, or to give evidence or answer questions about the matter you may, with the permission of the meeting, speak on a matter then leave the meeting. Once you have finished making your representation, you must leave the meeting whilst the matter is being discussed.
- iv. If you have been granted dispensation, in accordance with the Council's dispensation procedure you may remain in the meeting. If dispensation has been granted it will stipulate the extent of your involvement, such as whether you can only be present to make representations, provide evidence or whether you are able to fully participate and vote on the matter in which you have a non-pecuniary interest.

Further Information

Advice can be obtained from Dawn Carter-McDonald, Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services via email dawn.carter-mcdonald@hackney.gov.uk

Getting to the Town Hall

For a map of how to find the Town Hall, please visit the council's website <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/contact-us.htm> or contact the Overview and Scrutiny Officer using the details provided on the front cover of this agenda.

Accessibility

There are public toilets available, with wheelchair access, on the ground floor of the Town Hall.

Induction loop facilities are available in the Assembly Halls and the Council Chamber. Access for people with mobility difficulties can be obtained through the ramp on the side to the main Town Hall entrance.

Further Information about the Commission

If you would like any more information about the Scrutiny Commission, including the membership details, meeting dates and previous reviews, please visit the website or use this QR Code (accessible via phone or tablet 'app')

<http://www.hackney.gov.uk/individual-scrutiny-commissions-living-in-hackney.htm>



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Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission 22nd March 2023 Item 4 – Temporary Accommodation	Item No 4
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Outline

The Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission is keen to hear about the current situation with regards to the provision of temporary accommodation in Hackney.

The Commission sees this discussion as timely given the steady increase in homelessness experienced across London in recent years, and the resultant increased demand for temporary accommodation in the borough.

As part of the scrutiny process, Commission Members undertook site visits to temporary accommodation hostels in Hackney. The aim of the site visits was to gain an understanding of the standard of temporary accommodation, and the experiences of residents, staff and temporary accommodation providers.

Discussion

To look at the arrangements in place to provide temporary accommodation to residents in priority need.

Particular focus to be given to:

- What is driving the rising demand for temporary accommodation locally and what impact this has had
- The process for placing households in temporary accommodation
- How the Council is responding to increased demand, and how it maintains high standards in temporary accommodation
- How the Council ensures that temporary accommodation meets the needs of the most vulnerable residents, and mitigates against the associated challenges and impacts

Report(s)

To support this discussion the following written submissions were included for background information:

- Item 4a. Report from Housing Needs
- Item 4b. Report of Members' Site Visits to Temporary Accommodation Settings

Invited Attendees

- Councillor Sade Etti - Mayoral Advisor for Housing Needs and Homelessness
- Rob Miller - Strategic Director of Customer and Workplace
- Jennifer Wynter - Head of Benefits and Housing Needs
- David Borrell - Senior Asset Management Advisor
- Claire Oldham - Operations Manager
- Beverley Gachette - Strategic Commissioner, Mental Health and Prevention

Action

Members are asked to consider the written submissions and ask questions of those in attendance.

LiH Scrutiny Commission | Temporary Accommodation

22 March 2023

1. BACKGROUND: PREVIOUS INFORMATION CONSIDERED BY LIVING IN HACKNEY SCRUTINY COMMISSION

The provision of temporary accommodation has been considered by Scrutiny Commissions on a number of previous occasions. Links are provided below for ease of reference:

- December 2016: [Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission](#) (agenda item 4)
- April 2017: [Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission - response to recommendations](#) (agenda item 7)
- March 2018: [Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission](#) (written update given under AOB)
- October 2017: [Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission](#) (agenda item 4)

To support the Commission in preparing for this meeting, a tour of some of the Council's portfolio of temporary accommodation hostels in the borough took place on 28 February 2023. This included the chance to speak with residents, staff and temporary accommodation providers and see the work that is taking place to develop longer term TA supply and improve living conditions.

2. CONTEXT: LIVING IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION AND THE STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

Hackney currently has around 3,100 households who are living in temporary accommodation provided by the Council. This is one of the highest populations of people in TA in London.

TA provides much needed shelter for people who are experiencing homelessness, but does not provide a settled home. The key strategic challenges that Hackney faces in terms of temporary accommodation provision are:

1. **Rising demand:** the Council has experienced significant growth in approaches for housing and a rising population who are living in temporary accommodation.
2. **Reducing supply:** the available supply of temporary accommodation has reduced sharply, with rising costs and the need to look well outside of London to secure the temporary accommodation we need to meet demand.
3. **Quality of temporary accommodation:** the Council is working hard to ensure that we are able to provide good quality temporary accommodation to people who need it - this includes working in partnership with providers to improve the quality of temporary accommodation.
4. **Financial pressures:** the costs to the Council of providing temporary accommodation have increased significantly as a result of the increased demand and the very challenging market for accommodation. This compounds the wider financial challenges that the Council faces.
5. **Moving on to settled accommodation:** it has become increasingly challenging to support people who are living in temporary accommodation to secure longer term

housing. This is in the context of extreme constraints in the supply of social housing, significant challenges finding affordable privately rented housing in Hackney and the impacts of welfare reform (in particular the LHA cap) on affordability.

6. **Growing complex needs:** people approaching the Council for housing support increasingly require additional support beyond that which has traditionally been provided for people in general needs temporary accommodation. This includes people with needs that are not eligible for adults' social care or NHS support.

These strategic challenges and the Council's response are explored in further detail in section 4 below.

Living in TA can have significant negative impacts on a household's health and wellbeing, as shown in the report that was recently published by Shelter: [Still Living in Limbo](#). As highlighted in the report:

"Temporary accommodation was never intended to exist outside of emergencies. But it's now accommodating almost 100,000 households, including over 125,000 children. And its use is on the rise. The number of households living in temporary accommodation has doubled in the last ten years. Temporary accommodation is often far from a temporary arrangement. The majority of households live there for a year or more."

Spending extended time living in temporary accommodation can also have specific negative health impacts, as identified in [a report commissioned by the North East London Integrated Care Board](#) which highlights:

"The chances of a household living in temporary accommodation in London is much higher than elsewhere in England. 59% of all English households in temporary accommodation are in London: this represents 56,000 households including 75,850 children – of which 17,582 households are in NEL, with 22,468 children including 2,624 under 5s. This is not because of the decisions councils make but because of London's high housing costs and shortages, and because the benefit people receive do not reflect these costs. The health impacts of this are well reported and include poor facilities (such as shared kitchens and bathrooms, lack of laundry facilities on site, lack of internet connection), small rooms (often with all family members sharing one room, which creates a cramped living environment and no places for children to do homework etc), properties in disrepair and other factors such as inability to continue stable education and employment which have a significant impact on the physical, mental and emotional health of those living in these settings."

The Council is committed to ensuring that the quality of the temporary accommodation we provide is of a good standard, that residents are supported to access all the services they need (including health services) and that residents are supported to find settled accommodation. It remains the case, however, that the housing market in Hackney, the scarcity of affordable housing in the borough, and growing needs make meeting this commitment extremely challenging to fulfil.

3. OUR STATUTORY DUTIES

Local housing authorities have a legal duty to ensure that suitable accommodation is available to homeless households who are accepted as being in priority need (such as families with children and households that include someone who is vulnerable, for example because of pregnancy, old age, or physical or mental disability) provided they are eligible for assistance and are unintentionally homeless.

Hackney, along with all other London councils, is experiencing a significant increase in the number of households who are facing homelessness and approaching the Council for assistance. Whilst this additional demand places substantial strain on housing advice services, the impact is most acute in the provision of suitable temporary accommodation.

The housing authority can provide accommodation from within its own stock or arrange for it to be provided by another landlord, for example, a housing association or a landlord in the private rented sector. If settled accommodation is not immediately available, temporary accommodation must be made available until the applicant can find a settled home, or until some other circumstance brings the duty to an end, for example, where the household voluntarily leaves the temporary accommodation provided by the housing authority.

In many ways the term 'temporary accommodation' enshrined in law, is a misnomer because it is sadly the case that for many households living in temporary accommodation their stay can be for an extended period of time, often many years. This is a consequence of the wider affordable housing crisis and the lack of suitable affordable options for settled housing. Where a household has specific needs due to disability or household size the availability of potential housing options shrinks even further.

In this context, Council officers work closely with our residents who are living in temporary accommodation to support them in exploring options for settled accommodation - this will typically include considering options for housing outside of the borough or outside of London in order to find affordable housing that meets their needs. As well as direct support we have developed (and continue to develop) toolkits and guidance that can help residents make informed choices and access opportunities they may not have previously considered. We have also introduced [the Hackney Money Hub](#), which includes proactive work to help residents ensure that they are claiming all of the benefits and other financial support that they are entitled to and help them make a longer term plan to manage rising costs, particularly housing costs.

4. STRATEGIC PRESSURES AND HACKNEY'S RESPONSE

4.1. The rising demand for temporary accommodation

4.1.1. The picture nationally and across London

Nationally, statutory homelessness started to rise in 2010/11 for the first time since 2003/04. This is attributed to several factors, including:

- A continuing shortfall in the delivery of new affordable housing relative to levels of need.

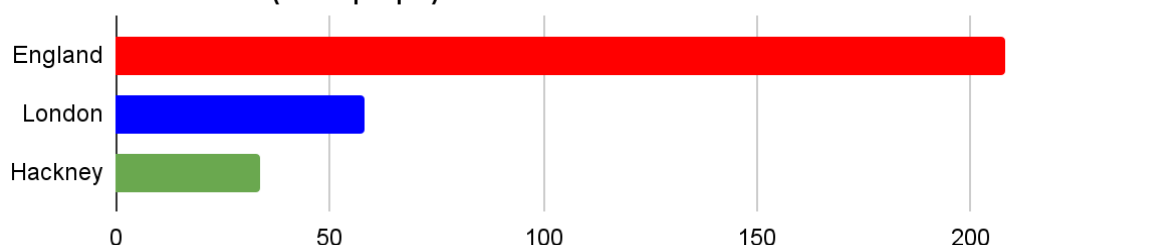
- Housing Benefit reforms, including the cap on benefits, which means that benefits support has not kept pace with rapidly rising rents.

In January 2023 Shelter published analysis which showed that the number of people living in temporary accommodation has risen by 74% in the last 10 years

(https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_release/at_least_271000_people_are_homeless_in_england_today). More than two-thirds of families (68%) living in temporary accommodation have been there for over a year, showing this type of accommodation is increasingly becoming less ‘temporary’ as families cannot escape homelessness due to the severe lack of affordable homes. This is a situation made even worse by the three-year freeze on housing benefit, and the impact of the wider cost of living crisis.

Shelter’s research also identifies that homelessness is most acute in London, with 62% of all homeless households (one in 58 people) living in the capital. Hackney has the fourth highest rate of homelessness after Newham, Westminster and Haringey (see data below).

Rate of Homelessness (1 in X people)



Rank*	Local authority	Rate of homelessness (1 in X people)	Est. no. of people homeless and living in TA arranged by the council	No. of homeless children in TA	Est. total no. homeless people
1	Newham	21	16,568	8,363	16,585
2	Westminster	27	7,280	3,615	7,467
3	Haringey	33	7,986	4,295	7,996
4	Hackney	34	7,555	3,781	7,566
5	Redbridge	38	8,096	4,117	8,111
6	Lewisham	41	7,293	3,885	7,300
7	Wandsworth	45	7,183	3,337	7,201
8	Southwark	46	6,729	2,784	6,742
9	Barking and Dagenham	50	4,411	2,408	4,411
10	Ealing	53	6,852	3,441	6,910

* Ranking is based on the rate of Homelessness; indicating where homelessness is most acute in the Capital

The Covid-19 pandemic had an impact on the numbers of households approaching councils as homeless. In April - June 2020 the number of households owed a prevention duty fell nationally by almost a third compared with the previous year (attributed to Government measures aimed at reducing evictions during the pandemic). The number of relief duties rose by 18% over the same period, in part because of instructions to local authorities to provide housing for rough sleepers.

Since the end of the lockdown restrictions, the number of households owed a prevention duty has started to return to pre-pandemic levels. The number owed a prevention duty in 2021/22 was 11% higher than in 2020/21 and this increase has primarily affected households with children, particularly those threatened with homelessness due to the end of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) in the private rented sector as landlords look to relet for higher rent or sell their properties.

Data gathered by London Councils also reflects a worsening situation across the capital, both in terms of rising demand and also the increased difficulty in procuring and retaining suitable temporary accommodation. As a result London boroughs are seeing increased use of bed and breakfast accommodation and an increase of the level of spend on homelessness: [London Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation Dashboard](#).

These pressures are also affecting Hackney, where we are facing similar challenges to other London councils. We have managed to mitigate some of the impacts, however, and while the number of households spending more than 6 weeks in bed and breakfast accommodation has increased in Hackney, the rate of increase is not as high as that seen across London as a whole (with a 100% increase in Hackney compared to a 185% increase for London).

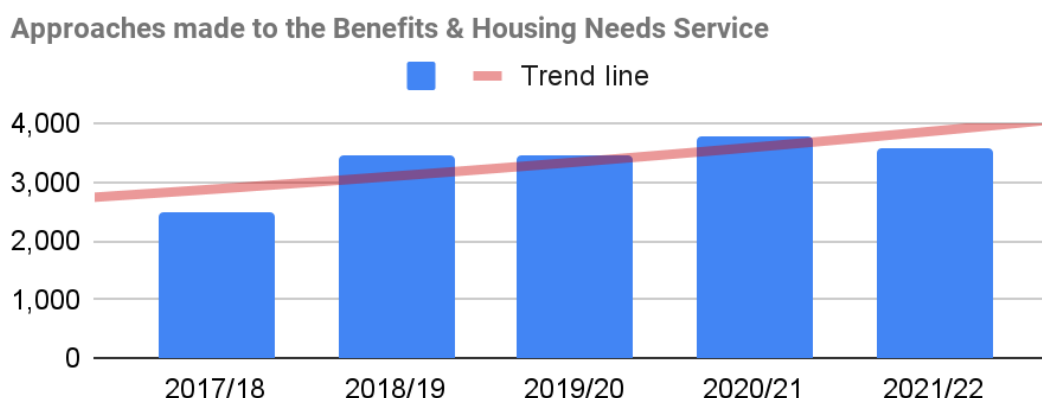
4.1.2. Demand pressures in Hackney

Hackney has experienced a huge amount of change over the last 15 years, Council services have improved and the borough's population has increased by a third. House prices have also more than doubled over the last 10 years. Better schools, cleaner and greener open spaces and much improved transport links, mean that Hackney is now a highly desirable place to live and the knock on effect of this has been a huge surge in demand for housing and spiralling house prices and rents.

The issue of housing affordability is particularly severe in Hackney, where the increase in house prices and private rents are amongst the highest in London and the country. As average incomes in the borough are relatively low, many households on moderate incomes are unable to take a first step on to the housing ladder within the borough.

The severe lack of affordable housing within the borough means that Hackney residents often have to live in insecure, unaffordable and/or overcrowded housing. Living in unsuitable accommodation has a detrimental effect on a household's health and wellbeing, as well as impacting negatively on future life chances leading to poverty, inequality and hardship.

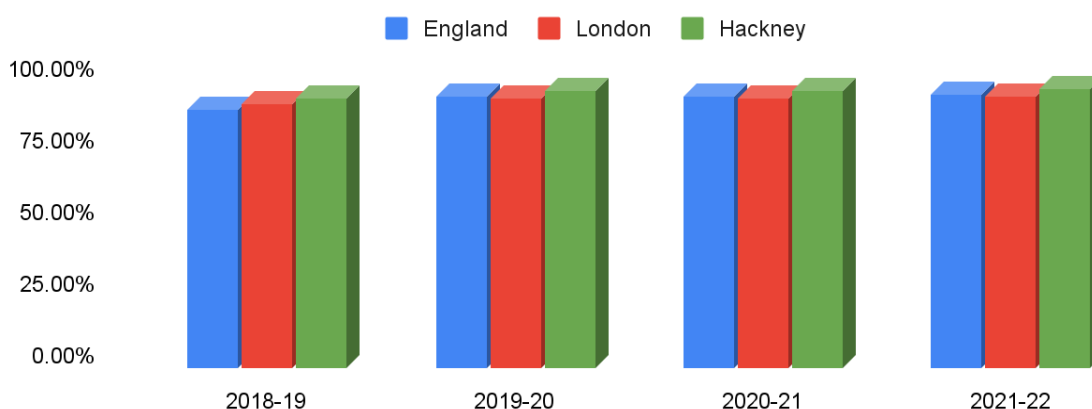
The general levels of homelessness locally in the borough are increasing rapidly, with the number of approaches up by 44% from 2017/18 to 2021/22. In 2021-22, over 3,500 residents approached the Council seeking help to source alternative accommodation.



It is important to note that while the number of approaches in 2021-22 were down on the previous year, this is an outlier as a consequence of the Covid 19 pandemic and the temporary relief measures put in place, rather than an improvement in the impacts of the housing crisis. Year to date figures for January 2023 show approaches at least 7.5% higher than at the same point in time for any of the last 5 years.

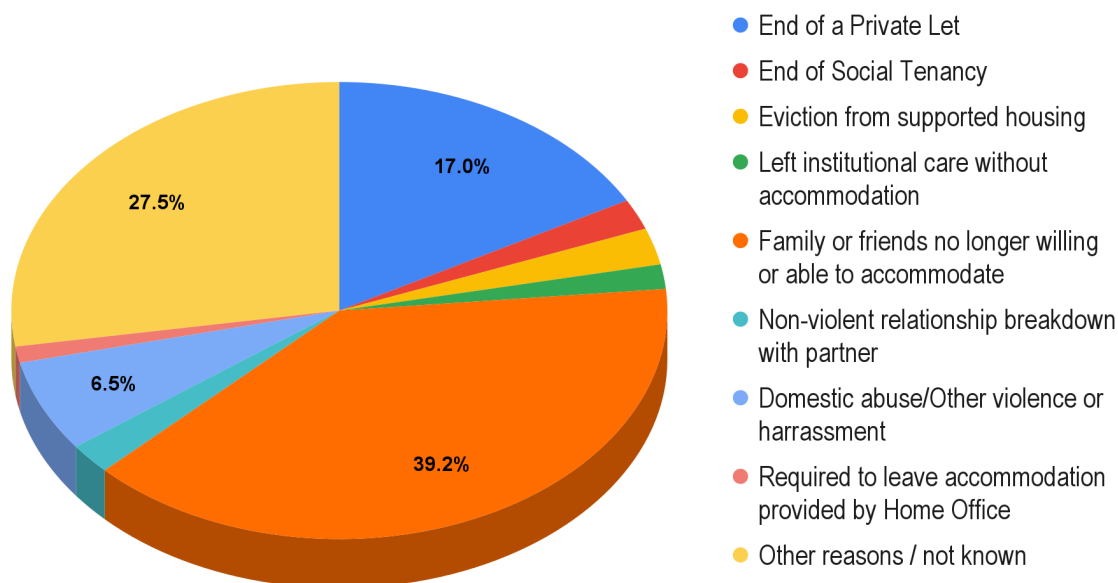
Based on the trend line we anticipate that the number of approaches will continue to increase at around 8% per year, with 5,100 households approaching the service by 2027-28; the equivalent of an average 400+ new households in need each month.

Hackney is also above the trend in terms of the percentage of households for whom we establish that we have a statutory duty of prevention and/or relief, again illustrating how acute the need is in Hackney:



4.1.3. Why are households approaching the Council?

The chart below provides an analysis of the reasons for households becoming homeless who were owed a prevention duty by reason for loss (or threat of loss) of their last settled home (financial year 2021-22):



The largest proportion of households accepted were previously living in accommodation provided by families and friends. This indicates that overcrowding remains a significant issue within Hackney, but might also indicate that increasing economic pressures means that households are less able or less willing to provide accommodation for family members. Increased utility bills, food costs etc are a significant concern, while accessing social activities (which can help diminish family tensions) are also less affordable.

A further significant factor is the rise in households evicted from assured shorthold tenancies within the private sector. Our data shows that 54% of those being made homeless due to the end of a private let were as a consequence of the landlord intending to sell or relet the property, while 25% of households were evicted on the grounds of rent arrears/affordability. This reflects the robust property market within the borough and the greater returns that can be achieved in different markets.

4.1.4. Supporting residents and working to prevent homelessness

Tackling increasing demand requires that we act to prevent homelessness. The Council's teams work with residents on actions that could prevent them becoming homeless. This includes:

- Developing a collaborative approach to working with residents who require housing assistance. We give them the information they need to make decisions around their housing options and always provide support around rent/Council Tax arrears before taking any legal action.
- Supporting residents by seeking to maximise their income through debt and welfare benefits advice and by providing access to apprenticeships, other work and training opportunities in Hackney.
- Our innovative 'Safe and Together' programme works with families who are experiencing domestic abuse to reduce risk and harm to children.

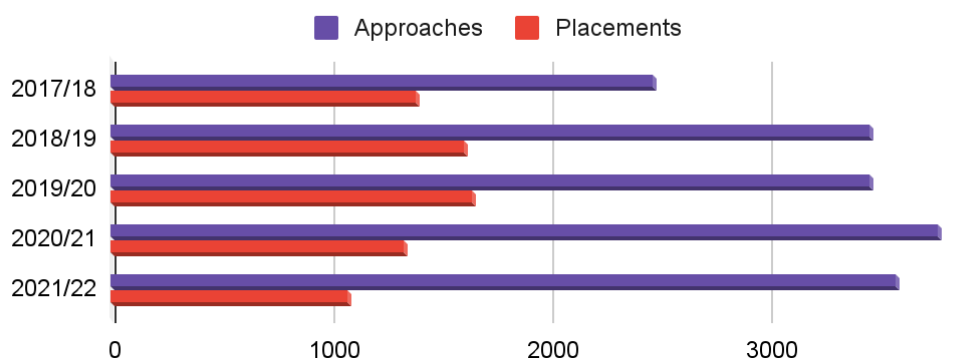
- Reviewing our Allocations and Lettings Policy and targeting resources on those most in need of social housing.

While homelessness and the threat of homelessness has been increasing, the Benefits and Housing Needs Service has continued to work tirelessly on prevention and relief efforts to minimise the need for additional units of temporary accommodation to the greatest extent possible.

Successful prevention of homelessness (rather than assistance in sourcing alternative accommodation) is most effective when the household approaches the service at an early stage. Our experience indicates that Hackney residents are more likely to approach the Council for advice and support at the point when their housing issues have become acute than is the case in other authorities. Data from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) indicate that in Hackney we have more approaches at relief than at the prevention stage than elsewhere (57% of inner London LAs have more approaches at prevention than Hackney and 64% have fewer approaches at relief than Hackney).

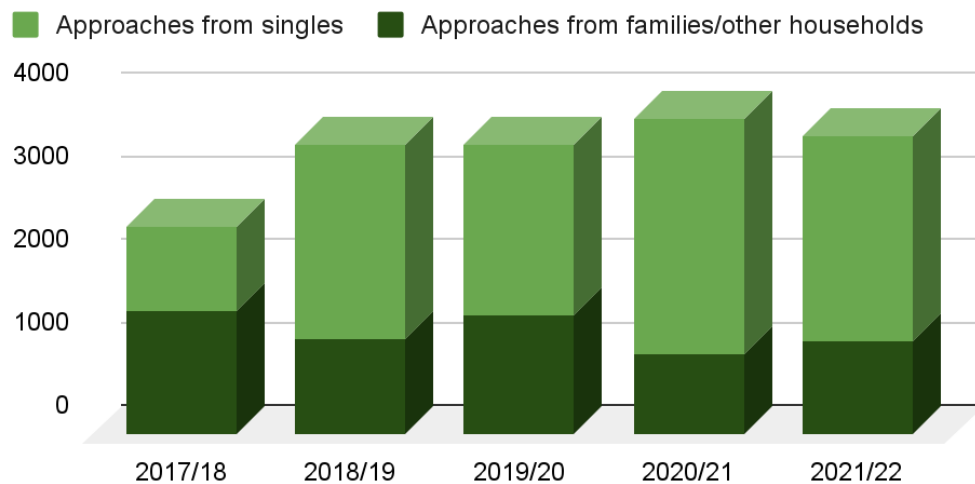
Hackney is, however, in the second quartile for the number of successful prevention and relief outcomes within London, despite the limited options we can deliver as a consequence of the local market.

Households placed in temporary accommodation



While the number of households placed in temporary accommodation has remained relatively stable, the profile of households who need to be placed has changed. In particular, the proportion of larger families, families with disabled member(s) and single people with complex needs has increased.

We have also seen a change in the balance between approaches from single households and those from families. While the number of approaches from families and other households has remained relatively constant over the last five years, approaches from single households increased significantly in 2018 following the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act. The Act introduced new burdens and responsibilities upon local authorities, particularly with regard to single people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, who were previously outside the statutory envelope. Previously, single people were provided with generalist advice and guidance on an informal basis but would not necessarily progress into casework.



Additional support has been put in place for single residents in line with the requirement of the Homelessness Reduction Act. The Council has contracted the Single Homelessness Prevention Service (SHPS) to work with single residents with low needs and this commissioned service has three core objectives:

- To prevent homelessness for single people and other households without dependent children who meet the agreed referral criteria and are at risk of homelessness within 56 days.
- To relieve homelessness for single people and other households without dependent children who meet the agreed referral criteria and are already homeless.
- To assist those single people and other households without dependent children whose homelessness is prevented or relieved to sustain suitable accommodation and to prevent repeat homelessness.

Directing single households with lower needs away from the mainstream service into a more dedicated, personalised service can help better meet those people’s needs and find longer term, sustainable solutions to their housing needs.

Where the loss of accommodation cannot be prevented, the Council has a “Prevention to PRS” (P2P) service. This service looks to assist households into the private rented sector rather than placing them into temporary accommodation. The P2P team encourages these residents to examine options which they may not have previously considered and to explore whether the private sector is a realistic choice.

Affordability will always be a key concern, and as part of the ongoing engagement with the resident the team will help them to identify areas which are affordable, or could be affordable if factors such as the Benefit Cap can be mitigated. The team then supports the household to utilise the toolkits that are available such as Homefinders and Rightmove; identifying options which might work for them etc. We actively encourage households to source their own potential property as they should be confident that it is suitable.

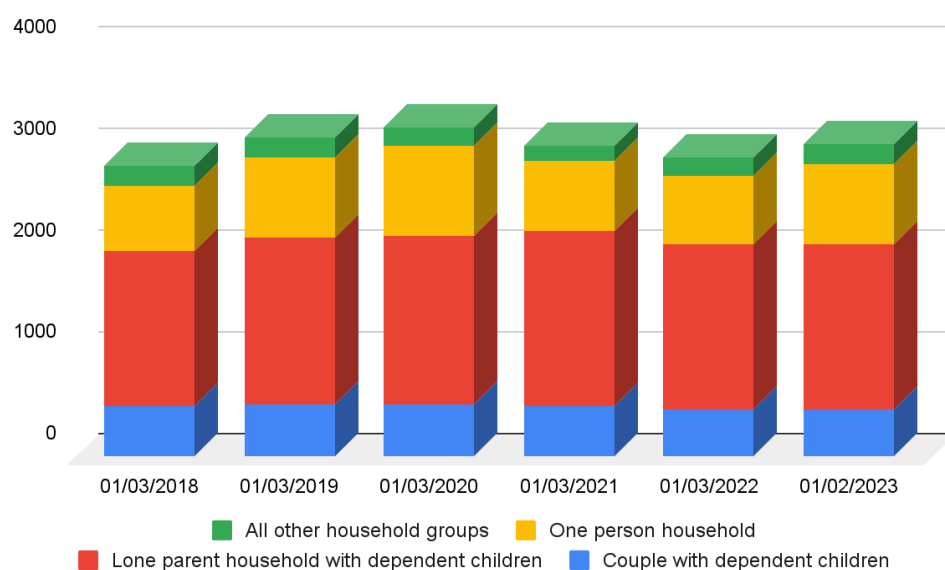
If a household does find a private property that would work for them, the team will support them to arrange the let. This can involve checking safety certificates and land registry, negotiating with the landlord (including potential incentive packages) etc.

4.2. Supply of temporary accommodation

4.2.1. Availability and competition for temporary accommodation supply

Our stock of temporary accommodation needs to be flexible and there is an ongoing requirement for a steady supply of temporary accommodation sufficient to meet ongoing and future needs; both in the number of units and the size of these units.

Demand for temporary accommodation comes from new households approaching the Council for homelessness assistance, and from households who need to move from one unit of temporary accommodation to another (because they have had children, for example). Not all households approaching the service will either require a placement or attract a statutory obligation from the Council to provide housing in temporary accommodation. Hackney currently provides temporary accommodation for around 3,100 households.



Over the last 7 years Hackney has been pursuing a planned temporary accommodation property strategy delivered through:

- A significantly higher number of Council owned accommodation units within our temporary accommodation portfolio than is the case for nearly all other London boroughs. This approach of developing Council owned temporary accommodation is always a more cost effective approach than merely relying on nightly paid temporary accommodation from private providers.
- A substantial number of units are provided through repurposing void properties on regeneration estates, which currently provides over 700 units of temporary

accommodation. (The availability of these units is time limited as the delivery of the regeneration programme progresses, illustrating the importance of finding additional long term solutions.)

- Units leased by the Council from both registered social landlords and the private sector on longer term leases (eg. [Modern accommodation opens for homeless mothers thanks to Council refurb](#)).

This strategy has meant that we have been able to some extent manage the rising costs and mitigate supply challenges, rather than being completely at the mercy of the volatile housing market. However, as our own stock of temporary accommodation is insufficient to meet the high levels of demand and our financial modelling indicates that to supply the temporary accommodation needed to meet demand and the estimated 8% year on year increase in demand through an entirely in-house model would be in the region of £450M, we are still reliant on going into the market to source additional units of accommodation.

The core issue is that our stock of **suitable** temporary accommodation is diminishing due to reducing availability of privately provided stock (it is important to stress that in this statutory context “suitable” relates to the needs of the family to be placed and not the condition of the property).

Our ability to secure accommodation on long leases is hampered by restrictions imposed by the DWP - to be able to satisfy the housing benefit subsidy rules, leased accommodation used as temporary accommodation must be secured on a lease of under 10 years. This means that the housing benefit subsidy achievable is restricted to social rent levels rather than Local Housing Allowance market rates. It should be noted that for temporary accommodation subsidy calculations, the financial return from the government is fixed on the Local Housing Allowance rate as of 2011 less 10%.

It is important to be aware that even under a long lease, landlords can and do seek to increase rent charges as a consequence of inflation and the wider economic factors. Accommodation providers and landlords we have spoken to recently are seeking to build in annual CPI increases into any agreement. The consideration for the Council is to balance the overall long term cost of the agreement against the potential costs of securing nightly let and short term units.

The level of competition in the market means that the number of TA properties which the Council has been asked to return to private landlords has reached previously unseen levels, with 170 properties currently in the process of being returned as the private rented sector shrinks and landlords pull out of the TA market.

The extremely constrained supply of affordable temporary accommodation means that the only family sized temporary accommodation currently available is located well outside of the borough in areas such as Peterborough, Coventry, Wolverhampton, Dudley and Derby. It is anticipated that within the next six months that available temporary accommodation will be even further away.

4.2.2. Working to increase our supply of temporary accommodation stock

It is important to recognise that we are not the only local authority facing acute challenges in supply of temporary accommodation. The housing affordability crisis stretches across the capital and beyond and all local authorities are competing to expand their options and opportunities. There is also increasing competition from central Government, who are particularly active in securing accommodation for asylum seekers and their families. It is therefore crucial for the Council to be as proactive as possible in our approach to sourcing temporary accommodation.

The Council has established a temporary accommodation delivery group comprising officers from Benefits & Housing Needs, Housing Services, Regeneration and Finance. The Group's role is to examine and identify potential temporary accommodation delivery programmes, map out the steps and actions required to implement these programmes and work collectively to overcome any blockages or barriers that arise. This includes working with partner organisations, charities and DLUHC / GLA to identify and to bid for funding streams and opportunities that can assist in the delivery of temporary accommodation. This includes examining options within Hackney and also further afield, including exploring opportunities for:

- Repurposing Council properties such as unused care homes and children's homes, with the potential to convert these into hostels.
- Making use of underused Council-owned sites which are sub-optimal for conventional (heavyweight) housing construction; temporary accommodation may be more suitable than our normal regeneration and new homes approach to some of these sites.
- Examining options to use modular development for provision of temporary accommodation.

There have been some successes achieved by adopting a mixed strategy and exploring all the opportunities that are presented. These include:

- The lease of 5 Hostels For Rough Sleeper Move On And General Needs Temporary Accommodation.
- The acquisition of Local Space properties - the Council purchased 34 properties that were originally sold under the right to buy scheme and that were offered for sale by Local Space.
- Adding 3 new temporary accommodation family hostels: Royal Park, Ivy House and Manor House.

Recognising that this is a pan-London issue, the London Housing Directors group and the Society of London Treasurers have established a Temporary Accommodation Working Group. This is chaired by the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.

4.3. Improving the quality of our temporary accommodation

Ensuring that we provide a good standard of temporary accommodation is a key component of our service. This is especially important as households are increasingly spending an extended period in temporary accommodation.

Our hostel managers, caretakers and temporary accommodation officers play a key role in monitoring and maintaining health and safety standards within our portfolio. These linked videos show members of the team talking about their work: [Emelia](#), [Glenford](#) and [Kazim](#).

We are also partners of the Setting the Standard programme, a pan-London service which works to ensure that Bed & Breakfasts and Studio flats used by local authorities for nightly paid temporary accommodation meet a decent level of quality and management standards. This shared service provides a central inspections team, ensuring that accommodation receives a high-quality inspection on at least an annual basis. Inspections records are shared between participating authorities to ensure confidence in the quality of accommodation being procured and improve efficiencies. Further inspections will be undertaken if necessary when complaints are raised.

Residents in temporary accommodation offered by the Council can expect the property to meet Decent Homes Standards, but we understand that issues may arise, for example problems with damp and mould.

Council officers arrange to visit homes that we use for temporary accommodation to thoroughly assess the current living conditions. The inspection enables us to accurately determine the root cause of any damp and identify the steps that need to be taken to remedy the issue. This may entail the provision of automatic fans and dehumidifiers, but if the issue caused by damp that cannot be resolved with the resident in occupation of the property, then we will seek to rehouse them into another temporary home.

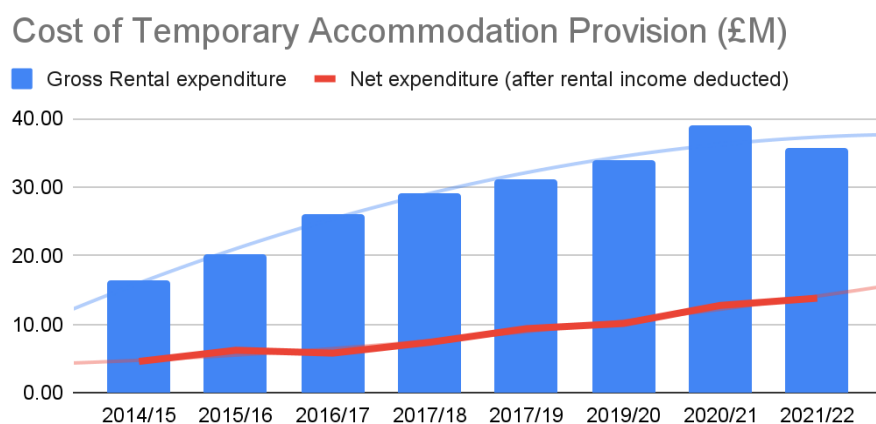
Work is also in progress to invest in maintenance of the Council's own hostel properties, addressing issues such as mechanical and electrical systems and other aspects of the properties which are at end-of-life / obsolete. A programme of capital investment of c. £16M over five years has been secured to repair and maintain the properties to the required standard, including fire safety works. A new role of Temporary Accommodation Health & Safety Manager post has been created as part of this programme of works to create more capacity to move at speed and coordinate delivery with the Council's contractors.

Two HRA sites currently used as TA, have also been brought into the Council's asset review process to look at both short term and longer term options for configuration and refurbishment to make best use of the sites.

Health and safety within temporary accommodation is taken very seriously by the Council. Meetings with the corporate health and safety team and hostel team managers, operation managers and the temporary accommodation surveyor are held weekly, with quarterly review meetings with the Head of Service and Strategic Director for assurance purposes. All Fire Risk Assessments and PEEP (Personal Evacuation procedures) are up to date. At first glance, some of the Council's restrictions regarding access for visitors may seem unfair, however, they are as a result of the requirements for safe building management.

4.4. Financial pressures

The significant increase in demand and cost relating to the provision of temporary accommodation means that the cost to the Council is expected to reach c £10M for the current financial year, with a significant overspend. The Government's cuts to council funding and benefits caps mean that we expect these pressures to worsen in the years ahead.



Even where we are able to secure appropriate units for temporary accommodation, the costs are increasing steadily. With landlords able to achieve a greater return in the wider rental market, committing a property to the Council for an extended period is no longer financially attractive and many landlords are exiting from the market (either letting for a higher rent or opting to sell). Those that do choose to remain in the TA market are seeking greater returns by offering properties under short term/nightly let arrangements.

Importantly, we have seen net costs rising faster than gross expenditure, as a consequence of the need for more short term and nightly provision which is more expensive. As we are unable to charge higher rents for this type of accommodation the gap between actual costs and revenue is growing.

In response to this forecast increase in cost the Council has taken proactive measures to try to intervene earlier by supporting residents at risk of homelessness, at a stage when interventions could be less costly. This includes:

- Launching the Money Hub service which is identifying households in financial difficulty and working to make timely homelessness prevention interventions.
- Developing a clear communications strategy and to give clear and honest information that can help to avoid unrealistic expectations that prompt demand.
- Refreshing the Housing Strategy, with a Housing Needs survey currently underway.
- Joining the Capital Letters scheme to increase the amount of privately rented move-on accommodation procured with DLUHC grant attached.

- Front loading capacity within the Benefits and Housing Needs Service to focus on homelessness prevention by creating the Prevention to PRS Team (which provides additional support to help residents find a privately rented home) and the Single Homeless Prevention service for those with low to no support needs funded by a performance by results commissioned service through DLUHC.
- Re-gearing and re-profiling the Council's partnership with Local Space to provide affordable move on accommodation.
- Reviewing our service charges for hostel residents to develop a sustainable strategy for the costs of heating, lighting, hot water and Council Tax.

4.5. Move on from Temporary Accommodation

As noted in section 2, extended stays in temporary accommodation are recognised to have negative implications for residents' health and wellbeing, and our goal is to support our residents to find settled accommodation.

Given the extremely limited availability of social housing in Hackney and London and the high local costs of privately rented accommodation this is extremely challenging. The Council is committed to a significant programme of social housing development, but in the short to medium term there are unlikely to be social housing options available to many residents living in temporary accommodation. We do not believe that leaving families in temporary accommodation for up to (or over) 20 years is in their interests, or is consistent with our statutory obligation to provide 'genuine and effective housing advice'.

We have a responsibility to help our residents understand how options outside of Hackney (including options outside of London) might help meet their housing needs. We do not force anyone to leave the borough, but we have been able to help residents find housing options that dramatically improve the quality of life for them and their families in areas with lower rents.

We encourage and support residents to source their own housing, which often proves to be the quickest and most effective way to secure settled accommodation and empowers residents to make informed choices about where they want and can afford to live.

From the initial meeting with BHN Homelessness Advice Teams, residents co-design their Personal Housing Plan which identifies the steps forward to secure settled and suitable housing. Affordability is reviewed based on the residents' current income along with a [step by step process](#) which helps the resident in their search for housing. Residents are referred for further support to the Housing Supply Team (HST) who will keep them informed of advertised properties available for the client to view and determine if it meets their needs.

When the resident has viewed a property and wishes to move forward to secure a tenancy, they submit the property and landlord details so that a Housing Supply Team officer can review those for affordability, suitability and negotiate with the landlord/estate agent to finalise the terms of the tenancy agreement and address all legal requirements. There are also prescribed financial awards that can help meet rent in advance and/or deposits.

4.6. Support for residents in temporary accommodation who have complex needs

We recognise that living in temporary accommodation is disruptive and unsettling to residents and their families, and while we work with them to help find a suitable settled placement, we also look to provide additional support to mitigate the challenges they face.

Isolation can be a particular concern and we encourage all our residents to speak regularly with officers not just about their housing options but also other support they might need. While we often cannot provide a direct solution, we will signpost or actively engage with other services and organisations that we work with and could help.

One example of this is Engage Hackney (<https://hackney.gov.uk/support-for-adults>) the all tenure floating support service with an overarching objective of homelessness prevention and reduction.

Launched on 31 October 2019, the service represents the integration of several floating specialist support services into a single service. The service, an important component of the Council's homelessness reduction/prevention offer, was designed to reduce homelessness, promote peer support, befriending and volunteering, support people with mental health needs, learning disabilities, children and young people in transition to adult services, older people and deliver interventions to people who hoard. The service was designed to be delivered through four levels and one pilot.

- Crisis intervention
- Long-term low level support
- More intensive specific support up to 2 years
- A resettlement service to help people move from supported to independent accommodation on a time-limited basis
- Deliver an Assistive Technology pilot

The service was commissioned by the Council to deliver support to 1300 people per year at an average annual contract value of £2,145,000.

The floating support service is currently being reviewed and a first draft of findings are expected to be completed by the end of March 2023.

Benefits & Housing Needs officers are not equipped to support the increasing number of residents approaching with multiple and complex needs and themselves will need additional guidance. To address these more complex needs there are two social workers embedded within the service (one mental health and one generalist) to support staff and provide a holistic, wraparound and psychologically-informed service for the most vulnerable residents.

These specialist team members are now being joined by:

- Two rough sleeping navigators funded by the Rough Sleeping Initiative grant, who will support rough sleepers once they are housed in TA
- The established Hospital Discharge officer within the service
- Two Riverside officers from the Hackney Engage Floating Support commissioned service who will join this newly formed TA Complex Needs Team

In 2022 the Benefits and Housing Needs Service also implemented two youth homeless and care leaver focused officer roles. The two officers support young people between the ages of 18 to 25 to explore youth specific housing options, which includes young people who identify as LGBTQI+. They also work closely with the TA placement team to ensure that young people who have to move into TA before more settled housing has been secured, are placed into the most suitable TA for young people and with the right level of wrap-around support in place.

For people housed in temporary accommodation the impact on health and access to services are likely to be least detrimental when they are placed in Hackney and moves are kept to a minimum. However, the lack of suitable supply does mean a significant proportion of people are moved to other boroughs sometimes a long way from Hackney.

We have been working closely with NHS partners on how we can improve access to NHS services through outreach / inreach work and developing community hubs.

We also know that children living in temporary accommodation face unique challenges, and we look to offer additional support to them, for example:

- We work with CARIS Families, a grassroots charity that runs support services for homeless children and their parents living in hostels in the London Boroughs of Camden and Hackney. They run an after-school club at Royal Park Hostel, offering play and arts and crafts activities to resident children. They also run a Homework Club offering one-to-one academic help and mentoring to school-age residents.
- Hackney Playbus is a small charity dedicated to bringing play opportunities and support to families who need it the most. They visit our hostels to deliver play sessions that provide a variety of resources and activities that support children's early learning and development in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

5. HOW WE SUPPORT RESIDENTS IN NEED OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

We do not view dealing with homelessness (including the provision of temporary accommodation) simply as a technical process, it is key to our service that we respond to the needs of the residents through acknowledging their experiences and responding to their concerns and asks.

While there is a legislative framework which we are required to follow, our primary focus is on how we can help the residents to achieve a settled resolution of their housing issues. In many instances this will encompass other aspects of their lives that are affecting their housing circumstances and may require support, guidance and access to other services.

Procedures for the placement of residents in temporary accommodation and offers of private sector accommodation in discharge of the Housing Duty are detailed in [the Benefits and Housing Needs service Placement Procedure](#). This can be found on the Council's website in accordance with DLUCH good practice advice (<https://hackney.gov.uk/homelessness>). This requires the authority to take into account certain relevant circumstances, such as medical needs, place of employment, place of education for children of relevant age and support needs, when deciding the type and location of temporary accommodation to be offered.

The review process allows residents to challenge the suitability of accommodation through internal review and also judicial review, based on legislation and case law. Each application for a review must be treated on a case by case basis that recognises the individual factors within the household.

Where we are looking to offer interim and/or emergency accommodation we will follow the same considerations, but urgency may override our ability and a more short term offer may be constrained by what is available.

Residents approaching the service have taken different journeys to the point where they have fallen into a housing crisis. Our ethos is not just to address the immediate housing needs, but to support them in tackling the drivers that led them into crisis. This will help ensure that when they have a settled solution, they can sustain it.

Further details on the statutory dispute process can be found here: https://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/legal/homelessness_applications/homelessness_reviews_and_appeals/ways_to_challenge_homelessness_decisions

5.1. The statutory process

The Council has statutory obligations to residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. These are conveyed, primarily, by the [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#), the Localism Act 2011, the [Housing Act 1996](#) and the [Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities](#). But our offer of help and assistance is not restricted just to those who fall within the parameters of the legislation and we will offer more general advice and guidance to any resident seeking information. The Council defines its response to homelessness through the [Homelessness Strategy](#) (a refresh is currently in progress).

Local authorities must give proper consideration to all applications for housing assistance, and if they have reason to believe that an applicant may be homeless or threatened with homelessness, they must make inquiries to see whether they owe them any duty under Part 7 of the 1996 Act. This assessment process is important in enabling housing authorities to identify the assistance which an applicant may need, either to prevent them from becoming homeless, or to help them to find another home. In each case, the authority will need to first decide whether the applicant is eligible for assistance and threatened with or actually homeless. Certain applicants who are 'persons from abroad' are not eligible for any assistance under Part 7 except free advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness.

The Council's housing duty is not an indefinite one and comes to an end when certain conditions are satisfied. These will include where an offer of suitable settled accommodation is made, either social housing or private sector accommodation. With limited availability and extensive waiting times for social housing the Benefits and Housing Needs service has officers dedicated to supporting residents through the process of securing PRS tenancies. This will include helping residents search for property, negotiate with landlords/agents and the legalities of the tenancy. Financial support for rent deposits, rent in advance and removal costs may also be available.

Where a resident refuses an offer of suitable accommodation the housing duty will be brought to an end and notice given to end the temporary accommodation. It is important that any offers of temporary accommodation or settled accommodation are not turned down and are accepted by clients. A dispute process is available which can be followed once the offer has been accepted.

5.2. Working with residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

Any Hackney resident who believes they are going to become homeless, or who is already homeless, is strongly advised to contact the Council or any other advice agency as soon as possible.

When the Council is contacted a Customer Service Officer will assist and conduct a triage interview to work out the best course of action. If it is clear that specialised advice is required, an interview with a Benefits and Housing Needs officer will be booked (immediately if necessary) to ensure that every approach receives the appropriate response.

An initial meeting with an officer can be expected to last at least 90 minutes due to the level of information that is required by the officer in accordance with legislation. For single people this takes place at the Greenhouse and for families the meetings are held at the Hackney Service Centre. Appointments are prioritised depending on the urgency of the need.

At this interview, as well as establishing the household circumstances and options that may prevent the household from eviction, the officer will identify what statutory duties the Council hold in respect of the client/household:

- Is the client eligible under the Homelessness Reduction Act?
- Does Hackney have a duty to provide temporary accommodation under the Housing Act?
- Or, if we are unable to establish a main housing duty at this time, is the client vulnerable and in need of interim accommodation pending further investigation?


Where possible, officers will liaise between the current accommodation provider and the resident to establish whether there is any possibility to sustain their current tenancy. Under extremely limited circumstances the Council may be able to offer a short term financial incentive to expedite this.

Where this is not possible or practical, we assist the resident to access alternative accommodation; this will include guidance on accessing the toolkits and support mechanisms available to them, advice on affordability and how they may maximise their opportunity to source suitable accommodation.

While the interview will initially be focused on preventing a household from being made homeless, or sourcing other accommodation, there will be instances where a placement in temporary accommodation is necessary. The local authority only has a duty to actually arrange accommodation if the person has or might have a priority need.

Additionally, a local authority must secure **interim** accommodation if it has reason to believe a person might be homeless, be eligible based on their immigration status and have a priority need. The local authority does not need immediate proof or evidence to have a reason to believe someone might be in 'priority need'. The information the person provides at an initial interview can be enough.

Again, this is not a process driven tick box exercise; our focus remains on how we can best support the resident. This can be challenging, as illustrated in a slide deck Housing Advice managers put together for colleagues -

 Copy of Duty Manager presentation - TMs version.pptx as part of internal staff development practices. Also attached is a video where one of our Team Managers explains her role: [Michelle](#) , and another where Michelle sets out her development journey [Michelle's Journey](#) .

Priority Need would apply if someone has dependent children living with them, or they or someone they live with is vulnerable for some additional reason. The local authority must decide if the person is significantly more vulnerable than an ordinary person would be if they were homeless.

It is not always possible at the first engagement with clients to establish whether the Council will have a duty to provide accommodation. Often the client will not have the information, supporting documentation or other evidence to hand. In these instances, The officer will assess whether an emergency/interim placement is appropriate.

Gathering the information can sometimes be a protracted process, particularly when original documentation is not available. We are often reliant on the household being proactive in obtaining and providing the information we need to establish the duty we hold to them, although officers will support them with the process where they can. In some instances this can be a few days, while for others it may be much longer.

Households placed in accommodation on an interim basis will continue to be accommodated until we establish whether the Council has a duty to support them under the Housing Act. If we find that we do not hold a duty to the household they will be put in contact with other support agencies that can help them (this may include other local authorities if, for example, they have a stronger local connection to that local authority area).

For households who we have either accepted at the outset or for whom we subsequently establish a duty, the responsibility of the Council to provide temporary accommodation remains until we are able to discharge them into settled accommodation or they refuse a reasonable offer of settled accommodation.

5.3. Sourcing temporary accommodation and placing households

Having recognised the necessity of providing accommodation, either on an interim basis or as a full duty, our teams then work to source suitable accommodation.

Given the high levels of demand and scarce supply of available properties, officers expend considerable efforts to try and identify additional units, and often this will be nightly let accommodation or hotel / bed and breakfast accommodation outside of the borough. There are some occasions when despite all our endeavours we cannot source accommodation and clients are bedded down within the HSC.

As of September 2022, over half our TA stock consists of single studio and one bed units. While there has been no reduction in the need for this size accommodation, the need for family sized units is rising. This is particularly true for larger family sized units and those that have been adapted to meet the needs of disabled households and those needing wheelchair accessible accommodation.

While we would always seek to place a household in a suitable TA property, this is not always immediately deliverable, especially for larger households and those with disabled household members who require wheelchair accessible and/or adapted housing.

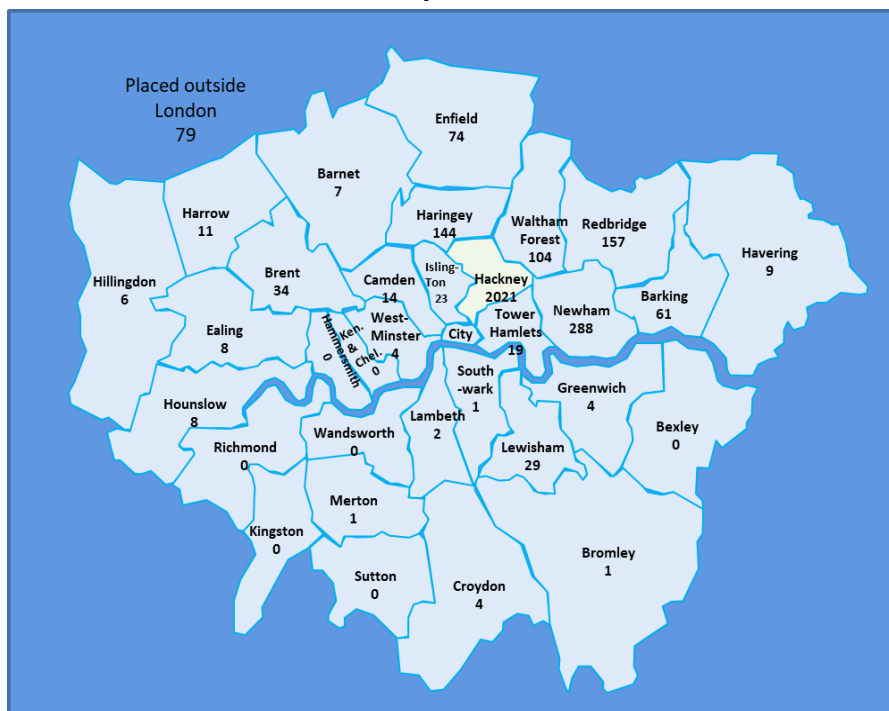
The current stock of this type of accommodation within the Council owned or long leased units is limited and heavily oversubscribed. Consequently we are often required to utilise short term and nightly let properties to meet this need. Even within the short term/nightly let property market, these types of properties are at a premium. Supply is limited and competition fierce. Often a suitable unit is just not available at the point of approach and the only solution is a sub-optimal placement while we try to source viable alternatives.

For these households, they face the prospect of further disruption of moving again when a more suitable property becomes available. The Council is frequently required to source accommodation outside of London and often the offer of a new placement will generate other concerns (eg. the new offer will meet the accommodation needs of the household but may well be out of borough, raising issues around schooling, access to support networks etc).

Households placements 2018



Households placements 2022

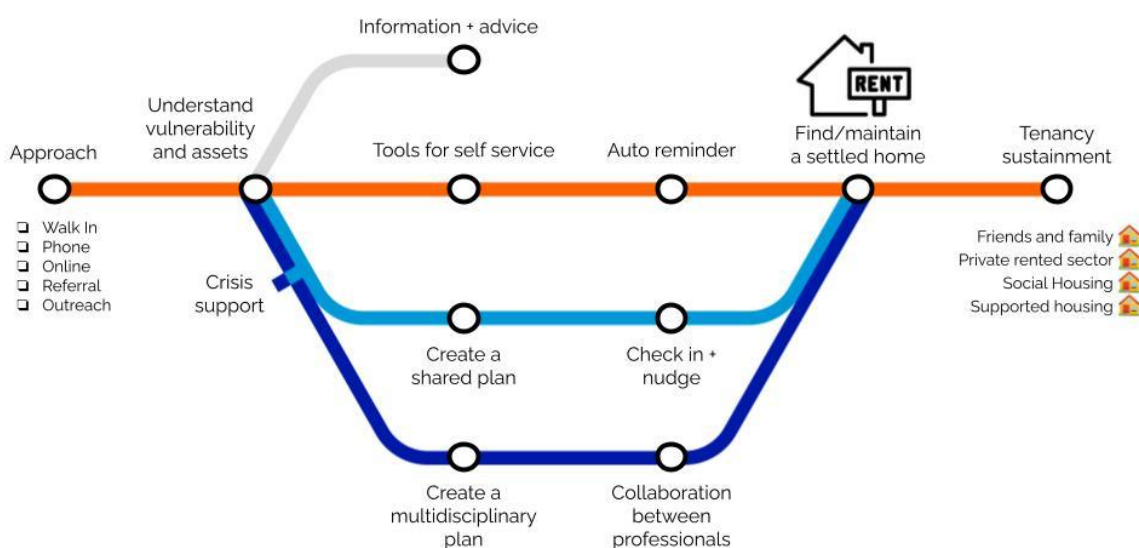


Our engagement with residents does not end at a conversation around temporary accommodation and our teams will continue to focus is on how we can support them into settled accommodation.

This engagement will centre around a personal housing plan: setting out the steps to be taken to help prevent the resident becoming homeless or help them secure accommodation. The plan is an agreement between us and the resident that sets out what actions the Council and the resident will both take to prevent or relieve their homelessness.

This could include mediation by the Council between a landlord and resident, support and signposting to tools and agencies that can assist the resident in finding a solution and for those who are most vulnerable direct intervention on behalf of the resident and a referral to other partner agencies.

This can be illustrated by our “tube map”;



- Those of our residents able to take a leading role and only requiring access to tools and resources will generally follow the orange path.
- Those residents who are less confident and/or more input from the service will follow the light blue path.
- Those more vulnerable residents needing more direct intervention, support accessing other services (such as drug and alcohol support, domestic violence support etc.) will follow the dark blue pathway.

The service is committed to delivering the right support for each individual household, tailored to their circumstances. We take pride in promoting a holistic and trauma informed approach that looks at all the circumstances that may be affecting their ability to find settled accommodation and link them into support where appropriate.

In some cases these will be simple and straightforward conversations about realistic options, the remedial steps available and future planning. For others with more complex needs we are working with the household for an extended period. Here are two videos where officers talk about their work with one of our residents.

[Jenny and Anna Part 1](#)
[Jenny and Anna Part 2](#)

Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

22nd March 2023

Report of Members' Site Visits to Temporary Accommodation Settings

Members undertook site visits to temporary accommodation settings in the borough on the morning of Tuesday 28th February 2023.

The aim of the site visits was to gain a further understanding of the standard of temporary accommodation in the borough, as well as to hear about some of the experiences of residents, staff and temporary accommodation providers.

A number of temporary accommodation hostels were visited including those managed by both the Council and external providers, those catering for different households including both families and single people, and those supporting households with a range of vulnerabilities and needs.

The site visits were attended by Members of the Commission, the Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture, the Mayoral Advisor for Housing Needs and Homelessness and relevant Council Officers.

During the visits, Members had the opportunity to look around the hostels and inside accommodation units, as well as to speak with residents, hostel managers, officers, caretakers and provider staff.

Insights from the site visits are summarised below.

Suitability

- **Location**
 - The Council takes into account transport links and accessibility/availability of essential services appropriate to household needs.
 - However, where there is a lack of suitable accommodation in Hackney or there are higher priority households awaiting accommodation, out of borough placements are used.
 - The Council considers the proximity to schools, public transport, primary care services, GPs and local services in the area in which the accommodation is located.

- **Affordability**
 - The Council determines the affordability of a property to a tenant based on their specific circumstances.
 - Generally the households will have its equivalent level of income support or Universal Credit available to spend on living costs after accommodation costs have been deducted.

- If the household is subject to the benefit cap this will also be taken into consideration when assessing the income available to them.
- **Impact upon employment, education and caring responsibilities**
 - Where households include a child or children of school age the proximity of the child or children's school is considered.
 - The Council considers the need of households who are in employment to reach their normal workplace from the accommodation.
- **Impact on health and safety**
 - The Council considers health factors, such as the ability to manage stairs, care and support provided by agencies or the need to access specialist medical service nearby.
 - For households who are victims of domestic violence and abuse priority is given to a Council owned hostel with 24 hour security provision.

Habitability

- **Disrepair**
 - There was concern over dampness and lack of ventilation in some accommodation, and a feeling that some accommodation may not adequately protect households from the elements due to building defects.
 - There was an understanding that it is the landlord's responsibility to make repairs, but there were concerns around their proactivity and actions to reduce risk of disrepair, waits for repairs and how easy it is to report issues.
- **Lack of adequate space**
 - There was a concern over a lack of adequate space in some accommodation, which can be compounded by lengthy stays e.g. unfit for children to play and enjoy recreational time and difficult for children to concentrate or find a quiet environment to do their work.
 - There were concerns that a lack of access to communal spaces in some accommodation may lead to negative social/health issues, and a feeling that some accommodation does not have adequate access to outside and/or green spaces on site or in close proximity.
- **Access to bathroom, toilet and kitchen facilities**
 - There were concerns in some accommodation that shared facilities are locked or only open during certain times of the day, which may pose issues for those that work irregular hours for example.
 - There was a feeling that shared facilities in some accommodation were too small to cater for the number of households using them, which may become a real issue for those that are in accommodation for an extended period of time.
- **Mobility and disability accessibility**
 - There were concerns that some accommodation may not be accessible to those with mobility issues and those with small children, though assurance

was given that households were generally placed with consideration to mobility and accessibility needs.

- **Visitors and personal callers**

- There were concerns over restrictions around visitors and personal callers, although requests are considered in exceptional circumstances e.g. short notice childcare needs and hospital appointments.
- There was a feeling that restrictions on visitors and personal callers can have detrimental social/health impacts, whilst recognising the need to ensure the safety and security of households.

Support after being placed

- **Joined up working between agencies and providers**

- There was concern that information held by agencies is not always being highlighted to hostel staff in a timely manner (particularly concerning in cases of complex and multiple needs), although there is an understanding that issues are not always known and are brought to light as trust is built with households.

- **Pressure on hostel managers/caretakers/provider staff**

- There was encouragement in the practical and wraparound support provided by hostel staff and the relationships they develop with households, although there was concern around just how much they were picking up and the challenge of increasingly complex needs.

Officer Contact

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Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission 22nd March 2023 Item 5 – Cabinet Question Time - Accountability of Private Rented Sector & Housing Associations	Item No 5
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Outline

The Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission is keen to hear about how the Council works with the private rented sector and housing associations to ensure effective accountability and protection for housing association tenants and private renters.

The Commission sees this discussion as timely given the development of a shared Housing Compact between the Council and housing associations operating the borough, and the Council's ongoing commitment to supporting private renters and challenging rogue landlords.

Discussion

To look at the relationship between Hackney Council, housing associations and the private rented sector and how they work together to ensure effective accountability and protection for private renters and housing association tenants.

Particular focus will be given to how the Council works with housing associations and the private rented sector to:

- Maximise nominations and lettings
- Support tenancy sustainment
- Safeguard adults and children and young people
- Maintain properties in good repair

Invited Attendees

- Councillor Sem Moema - Mayoral Advisor for Private Rented Sector and Housing Affordability

Councillor Moema has responsibility for strategic housing; private sector housing (excluding temporary accommodation); housing affordability; fire

safety and leaseholders (non-council); promoting shared ownership and other intermediate products; housing association relationships and accountability; Hackney's housing company and living rent homes.

Action

Members are asked to note the verbal update provided and ask questions of the Mayoral Advisor.



Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission 22nd March 2023 Item 6 – Minutes of the Previous Meeting	Item No 6
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Outline

Attached are the draft minutes of the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission meetings held on 16th February 2023.

Action

Members are asked to review and agree the draft minutes as an accurate record of the meeting, and note any responses to actions arising.

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London Borough of Hackney
Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission
Municipal Year 2020/21
Thursday 16 February 2023

Minutes of the proceedings of
the Living in Hackney Scrutiny
Commission held at
Hackney Town Hall, Mare
Street, London E8 1EA

Chair:	Councillor Soraya Adejare
Councillors in Attendance:	Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Joseph Ogundemuren, Cll Ali Sadek and Cllr Zoe Garbett
Councillors in Virtual Attendance:	Cllr Clare Joseph and Cllr Ian Rathbone
Apologies:	Cllr Penny Wrout, Cllr Sam Pallis and Cllr Sarah Young
Officers In Attendance:	Lucy McMenemy (Cultural Development Manager)
Officers in Virtual Attendance:	Polly Cziok (Strategic Director of Engagement, Culture and Organisational Development)
Other People in Attendance:	Cllr Chris Kennedy (Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture), Yamin Choudury (Hackney Empire) and Sindy Man & Khanh Luong (Jun Mo Generation)
Other People in Virtual Attendance:	Katherine Mengardon (Play Space) and Vicky Hambley (Hackney Shed)
Officer Contact:	Craig Player  020 8356 4316  craig.player@hackney.gov.uk

Councillor Soraya Adejare in the Chair

1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 The Chair updated those in attendance on the meeting etiquette and that the meeting was being recorded and livestreamed.

1.2 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Wrout, Pallis and Young.

1.3 Councillors Joseph and Rathbone were in virtual attendance.

2 Urgent Items / Order of Business

2.1 There were no urgent items, and the order of business was as set out in the agenda.

3 Declarations of Interest

3.1 The Chair declared that her daughter regularly attended Hackney Shed.

3.2 The Cultural Development Manager declared that her son had formerly attended Hackney Shed.

3.4 There were no further declarations of interest.

4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Arts & Culture Sector

4.1 The Chair opened the discussion by explaining that the item had been requested as the Commission was keen to hear about the barriers faced by under-represented groups in accessing arts and culture opportunities in Hackney, and the work of the Council and its partners to improve access and increase participation.

4.2 Inequality of access to arts and cultural services appeared consistently as a challenge for the sector, and the Commission saw the discussion as timely given the inequalities and barriers that had been brought into the spotlight as a result of the pandemic and cost of living crisis.

4.3 Representing London Borough of Hackney

- Councillor Chris Kennedy, Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture
- Polly Cziok, Strategic Director of Engagement, Culture and Organisational Development
- Lucy McMenemy, Cultural Development Manager

4.4 Representing Hackney Empire

- Yamin Choudury

4.5 Representing Jun Mo Generation

- Sindy Man
- Khanh Luong

4.6 Representing Play Space

- Katherine Mengardon

4.7 Representing Hackney Shed

- Vicky Hambley

4.8 The Chair invited the Cultural Development Manager to give a short verbal presentation to supplement the written evidence included within the agenda papers. The main points are highlighted below.

4.9 The Cultural Development Team was tasked with delivering the Council's Arts and Cultural Strategy, which was due a rewrite for 2022-26. This comprised five key themes including community cohesion, employment, health and wellbeing, education and the economy.

4.6 Hackney was a particularly diverse borough. 40% of the borough was from Black and minority ethnic groups, 6% of residents were born in Turkey and Hackney was home to the largest group of Charedi Jewish people in Europe.

4.7 The average age of Hackney's residents was considerably younger than in England and Wales overall, with nearly 50% of the population aged from 22 to 45.

4.8 In 2019, the Council commissioned a report into the social and economic impact of Hackney Carnival. Hackney Carnival is regarded as the borough's biggest and most inclusive cultural event and the majority of the Culture team's annual budget is invested in the event.

4.9 The report suggested that while Hackney Carnival attracts people of all ages, abilities, ethnicities, sexualities and backgrounds, there were lower participation rates among certain communities such as Charedi Jewish, Muslim, Turkish, Kurdish and Asian communities and disabled residents.

4.10 The 'PANIC! Social class, taste and inequalities in the creative industries' report showed that the cultural and creative sector workforce was marked by significant exclusions of those from working class origins. It also concluded that women and those from global majority communities faced barriers in addition to those associated with social class origin.

4.11 Entrance fees to events and activities create a barrier to participation for those on lower incomes. This was in addition to the barriers to those organisations that are hosting events and activities in finding ongoing revenues and project costs at affordable prices.

4.12 There were a wide range of physical barriers experienced by disabled people and those with limited mobility, such as older people. Digitally excluded residents were also impacted by not accessing listings and booking information online, plus online content itself.

4.13 If residents cannot find people from their own communities represented in a cultural activity, artform, venue or workforce they may perceive that cultural activity as not being for them, and some cultural activities may not be accessible due to differences in culture.

4.14 A lack of arts and cultural provision in schools further exacerbated barriers as early opportunities often form lifelong habits. Many cultural organisations would like to work with schools, which were often inundated with requests to deliver activities.

4.15 A brokering role was needed, as identified as part of the Arts and Cultural Strategy. Work to date in this area included occasional engagement with schools for key projects such as Windrush and Hackney Carnival, and Hackney Music Services and Hackney Museum maintained strong partnerships with schools.

4.16 The Chair then invited the Hackney Empire representative to give an overview of its work in the borough.

4.17 Hackney Empire sought to involve all audiences and participants at the heart of its creative process, with a view to making arts and culture accessible to all.

Particularly, it worked with young people from all backgrounds and involved them in decision making as far as possible.

4.18 The aim was to include young people at all levels of the decision making process, and it was currently looking at the ways in which it could involve young people at the most senior level. For example, it was looking to create a Youth Board.

4.19 It also sought to provide employment opportunities for young people, such as for those that were interested in becoming creative arts practitioners and facilitators. This included free workshops and signposting to schools, external organisations and employers.

4.20 The relationship between Hackney Empire and the Council was productive, especially in terms of ensuring its reach was as wide as possible and working with other organisations in the borough. It was recognised that it was in a privileged position due to this relationship, and that other smaller organisations may benefit from this level of engagement and support.

4.21 Those that were engaging with arts and culture had not changed much over the last few decades. The key to progress was to make people understand that arts and culture was all around them, for example when you turn on the radio or TV, and not just when you go to the opera or ballet. Increased participation did not necessarily mean increased attendance at specific events.

4.22 There was difficulty in increasing young people's engagement in arts and culture employment opportunities, partly because creative careers were still not perceived as being on par with other professional careers. Ensuring children were able to understand the careers available and the skills needed for success in cultural industries were therefore crucial.

4.23 The Council's Hackney Community Fund has recently awarded funding to the 'Entry for All' programme, run by Hackney Empire. This had brought together over 6,000 young people from across Hackney and East London to have their first experiences of theatre, with tickets being free of charge.

4.24 The Chair then the Jun Mo Generation representative to give an overview of its work in the borough.

4.25 East Asian communities had settled in Hackney for many years, including a large proportion of Chinese people. Chinese cultural offerings in the borough were particularly strong in the 1980s, although many communities began to disengage in the early 2000s for various reasons.

4.26 Jun Mo Generation was set up to promote the exploration of East Asian culture, arts and education and to support cultural exchange events for community unity and understanding. It regularly attended Hackney Carnival, and was most recently involved in bringing communities together to create and showcase the Carnival Earth Dragon.

4.27 Its work in promoting East Asian culture, arts and education was not just about reaching Hackney's East Asian communities, but also about engaging young people and other diverse communities to get involved in arts and cultural activities and learn about different cultures.

4.28 The Chair then the Play Space representative to give an overview of its work in the borough.

4.29 Play Space was a project based arts and cultural organisation that delivered playful learning opportunities. It had most recently worked on Hackney Young Voices, which ran creative after school workshops for children and young people to develop and showcase their artwork, and was also involved in running projects at Shakespeare Walk Adventure Playground and supporting Tower Theatre to better engage with children and young people.

4.30 These types of projects aimed to introduce arts and culture to children and young people, help them develop relationships with organisations and nurture talents with a view to them considering a career in the sector in the future.

4.31 The Chair then invited the Hackney Shed representative to give an overview of its work in the borough.

4.32 Hackney Shed was a performing arts group for young people that worked with people between the ages of 7 and 25. Its work focused on advancing participation in the performing arts for all groups, from the financially disadvantaged to those with disabilities.

4.33 Making the programme more accessible included a range of measures including donation only projects to they were affordable to those on lower incomes, dedicated staff to support those with additional support needs, projects to cater for all levels of commitment and needs, and working with partners and venues across the borough to reach a range of communities.

Questions, Answers and Discussion

4.34 *A Commission Member asked whether the Council collected core data on cultural services and organisations and whether this allowed the Council and its partners to evaluate the impact of cultural activity on communities.*

3.35 The Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture explained that those that organised arts and culture events in Hackney were increasingly seeing audiences and participants that were more representative of the local community, and strides were also being made in developing a more representative cultural workforce.

3.36 The Cultural Development Manager added that an evaluation framework was created for larger arts and cultural projects such as Hackney Carnival, which involved the Council working with stakeholders to set out the aims, outcomes and measures for the various projects undertaken as part of it, as well as a plan for data collection, analysis and reporting.

3.37 Benchmarking was undertaken less frequently. It was recognised that more could be done in terms of analysing and comparing the performance of arts and cultural projects with other London Boroughs and arts and culture organisations.

3.38 *A Commission Member followed up by asking whether there was scope to create evaluation frameworks for smaller arts and cultural projects, and whether arts and cultural organisations would find monitoring and evaluation of outcomes useful.*

3.39 The Cultural Development Manager clarified that evaluation frameworks were used whenever funding was granted for arts and culture projects, not only for large scale projects. The way in which they were created depended on the circumstances, for example if funding had to be granted in a short timescale the Council may create a framework once the project had been undertaken rather than beforehand.

3.40 The Hackney Shed representative explained that the monitoring and evaluating of outcomes was important to arts and culture organisations, especially in terms of accessing funding. However, some smaller organisations and/or freelancers may not have the knowledge or capacity to evaluate its work, or access relevant support and guidance.

3.41 The Play Space representative added that funding criteria was often a barrier for smaller organisations and freelancers, and whilst advice and guidance was available, it was often difficult to access.

3.42 *A Commission Member asked how Hackney's diverse communities were supported to be actively involved in shaping the development of the Council's arts and culture projects.*

3.43 The Cultural Development Manager explained that co-production played an important role in the development of arts and culture projects. For example, the Council met regularly with Hackney Carnival stakeholders throughout the planning stages to ensure activities reflected their interests and ambitions. The Windrush Programme was also led and shaped by the Windrush Generation, their descendants and community representation groups.

4.44 The Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture added that the cancellation of Hackney Carnival in 2022 showcased how important co-production was in creating arts and culture opportunities in Hackney, with community, arts and cultural groups coming together to look at the ways in which projects could be showcased in spite of the cancellation of the live event.

4.45 The Carnival Earth Dragon, which was showcased as a live parade at Hackney Bridge as part of Lunar New Year 2023, was given as an example of the outcomes of co-production coming out of the cancellation of Hackney Carnival 2022.

4.46 The Strategic Director of Engagement, Culture and Organisational Development went on to explain that the Council saw arts and cultural development as a key way to engage with its communities. For example, it used arts and culture as a means to engage with harder to reach groups - building trust with these communities in turn supported the Council to engage with them on wider issues.

4.47 The Windrush Programme was provided as an example of this. The Council had traditionally found it difficult to engage and build trust with older African Caribbean residents, yet the programme had allowed it to open a dialogue with this community which had led to wider engagement on issues such as vaccine hesitancy and Covid testing.

4.48 Another example was in engaging community groups and organisations involved in Hackney Carnival on the proposals for the future regeneration of Dalston, and in supporting Charedi Jewish-led cultural activity which created the foundation for more regular support and resources from the Council.

4.49 A Commission Member asked what the Council was doing to engage with harder to reach groups that may not see themselves represented in arts and cultural opportunities in Hackney, for example Black African community.

4.50 The Strategic Director of Engagement, Culture and Organisational Development explained that the Council had done a lot of work to engage with the Black African community on arts and culture, although recognised that there was work to do in ensuring this was communicated more widely. For example, a number of exhibitions had been held at Hackney Museum to celebrate Black African heritage and culture in recent years.

4.51 There was a wider piece of work that needed to be undertaken to ensure that arts and culture projects and opportunities were more widely communicated and reached the groups that would benefit most from them. Bringing libraries, culture and heritage together under one department was one way in which better joined-up working could be achieved, and the team had also recently created roles which focused on marketing and outreach across the portfolio.

4.52 The Council managed eight libraries in Hackney, and all residents in the borough lived no less than a mile from a library. Libraries therefore had the capacity to be community hubs which run range of services out of them, and work was underway to make them more focused on cultural engagement and facilitating arts and culture events and projects.

4.52 A Commission Member asked what more the Council could do to ensure arts and cultural opportunities in Hackney were equitable and accessible to all residents.

4.53 The Hackney Shed representative explained that making arts and culture more accessible had financial implications for groups and organisations involved in the delivery of events and activities. For example, Hackney Shed organised events and projects for children and young people with a range of disabilities and access needs, for which significant extra resources were needed.

4.54 It was therefore important for these groups and organisations to consider the costs of providing accessible events and activities during the planning process, and for arts and culture organisations to work more closely with the communities their events and activities were aimed at to ensure that all access needs were catered for.

4.55 For those organisations inviting funding proposals from the community, it was important to recognise the financial implications of making projects more accessible, and to reflect this in the grant funding made available.

4.56 A Commission Member followed up by asking whether the Council considered accessibility requirements when allocating grant funding for arts and culture events and activities.

4.57 The Cultural Development Manager explained that the Council asks that all grant funding applications included any details of accessibility requirements and any expected cost implications to address these requirements.

4.58 In terms of the Council's own arts and culture events and activities, it was felt that there was always room to learn more about how to address accessibility requirements. Each event or project would have different requirements, and the Council sought to work with stakeholders to identify the solutions needed to address any related barriers.

4.59 A Commission Member asked for an overall picture of the arts and cultural sector in Hackney and some of the challenges it may face, particularly in light of the pandemic and cost of living crisis.

4.60 The Cultural Development Manager explained that one issue facing many arts and culture organisations in Hackney was the need for affordable workspace. The Council was working to provide solutions by working in partnership with local businesses and organisations to provide workspaces, and ensuring redevelopment projects include affordable workspaces.

4.61 The Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture added that the Council was in regular dialogue with the sector to understand the impact of the cost of living crisis and inflationary pressures. Overall, the arts and cultural sector in Hackney was going through a challenging period, although some organisations are doing better than others.

4.62 An example was given of one organisation that was unsuccessful in securing grant funding from the Arts Council and had made the difficult decision to open the voluntary redundancy process, with the possibility of compulsory redundancies.

4.63 The Cultural Development Manager went on to add that theatres and cinemas had been hit by a loss of income due to family audiences attending events less often, and even when they do so, spending less whilst there on food and beverages.

4.64 Other concerns included a decrease in the use of hired venues, the impact of high energy costs, ticketed audiences being less keen to try out new experiences, the impact of transport strikes on audience volume and recruitment to the workforce.

4.65 A Commission Member followed up by asking whether demand for arts and culture activities in particular had increased over the last few years, and whether arts and culture organisations were in a position to accommodate this demand.

4.66 The Play Space representative explained that schools and other education settings would always have a need for arts and culture, but were increasingly taking their children and young people out of the borough to undertake these activities. It was felt that this was perhaps due to arts and culture opportunities in Hackney not being communicated widely enough.

4.67 The Strategic Director of Engagement, Culture and Organisational Development followed up by explaining that many schools and education settings take children and young people out of the borough to experience arts and culture as many of them would not have the opportunity to do so otherwise.

4.68 The Hackney Shed representative added that demand for its services had been relatively steady since the pandemic. The challenge it was facing was matching demand with the workforce needed to run services, especially as many volunteers were young people that often leave the sector to go onto other careers such as teaching.

4.69 The Play Space representative added that whilst volunteers were valued, some smaller organisations may be reluctant to look to volunteering for support because of the associated financial implications in training them up.

4.70 The Jun Mo Generation representative added that whilst demand for arts and culture activities in Hackney's schools was high, it was often difficult for smaller organisations to find the resources and staff needed to deliver these activities. This was made more challenging by short delivery timescales, the increasingly complex needs of children and young people, a lack of funding and a lack of volunteers.

4.71 The importance of the Council brokering with schools and organisations to deliver activities was highlighted, and an example was given of when the Council intervened to provide extra grant funding within a short time frame for Jun Mo Generation to deliver more workshops in schools for the Lunar New Year.

4.72 A Commission Member asked what work was being undertaken by the Council to develop closer working relationships with schools and education settings in Hackney, and a more embedded approach to engagement.

4.73 The Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture explained that schools and other education settings had long standing relationships with Hackney Museum and Hackney Music Service, and that schools and other education settings were increasingly showing more willingness to engage on arts and culture opportunities.

4.74 The Cultural Development Manager added that a new post had been created as part of the emerging restructure of the libraries service, which would work across libraries, heritage and culture to broker the relationships between schools, arts and culture organisations and council-led activity. This would involve signposting to different schools and organisations to ensure the best fit for any arts and cultural proposals.

4.75 Work was also ongoing to introduce arts and culture to young people, with a view to them considering a career in the sector, and to help young people to develop their own relationships with arts and culture organisations in Hackney.

4.76 A Commission Member asked whether the Council was giving due consideration to the rising costs associated with hosting arts and culture activities and events in Hackney, for example in hiring venues or covering enforcement costs.

4.77 The Cultural Development Manager explained that holding arts and cultural events, especially outside, was often expensive. When hosting an event outdoors there were a number of associated costs in terms of safety and enforcement.

4.78 These costs were often difficult to overcome, although the Council did encourage organisations to work in partnership when hosting events to share any costs and negotiate better deals, for example, cheaper venue hire costs.

4.79 The Jun Mo Generation representative added that the costs associated with hiring council managed community halls were a barrier for many smaller organisations in delivering events and activities. It was felt that these organisations would benefit from subsidised hire costs, with consideration given to their financial circumstances and the services they provide for local communities.

4.80 The Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture responded by explaining that work was underway to look at how the Council used its assets more strategically, and this included looking at the types of services that may benefit from their use and how to make them more affordable.

4.81 A Commission Member asked whether allocating the majority of the Culture team's annual budget to Hackney Carnival was an appropriate use of resources, and whether there was scope to reallocate some of its budget to other priority areas.

4.82 The Cultural Development Manager explained that the budget for Hackney Carnival was set each year with consideration given to what would be achieved through the carnival that year and that, ultimately, budget allocation was agreed at Member level.

4.83 The Jun Mo Generation representative added that Hackney Carnival should not be looked at as a standalone event, but rather a collective of diverse groups that come together to engage their respective communities through a variety of activities and events.

4.84 That may involve young people, community groups, arts and cultural organisations and schools, and may require the expertise of a range of local businesses, from photographers through to designers. A range of groups were encouraged to take part, including those not heavily represented such as Turkish, Charedi Jewish and Asian communities, those with disabilities and those whose first language was not English.

4.85 The Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture added that although the previous few live Hackney Carnival events had not gone ahead due to the pandemic and the Death of the Monarch, a range of activities and events were still funded to promote inclusion and celebrate Hackney's diversity.

4.86 A Commission Member asked about the challenges that arts and culture organisations faced in accessing funding opportunities, and what support was provided by the Council to help them in navigating the funding landscape.

4.87 The Hackney Shed representative explained that funding was frequently project-based and short-term, which did not allow for long-term planning and financial stability. This meant that organisations were unable to predict with certainty what they would be able to deliver year on year, and may lead to difficult decisions around what needed to be prioritised.

4.88 Whilst Hackney Shed was unsuccessful in securing grant funding this year, the Council did provide to hire a funding consultant to do put together a strategic fundraising plan covering the next few years, and funding applications.

4.89 A Commission Member asked how the Council ensured the voice of Hackney's diverse communities was at the heart of its arts and culture offer, and how it ensured all residents were involved in shaping proposals for events and activities in Hackney.

4.90 The Cultural Development Manager explained that the team received correspondence from a range of residents throughout the year with ideas for arts and culture events and activities. It did its best to encourage all suggestions and consider how they could be incorporated into the Council's programme of activities, and to signpost them to funding opportunities and relevant support and guidance.

4.91 Residents were often heavily involved in planning arts and culture events and activities to ensure they have meaning for the communities there were aimed at. For example, Hackney Museum created a steering group of representative local residents for every project it undertook which was aimed at a specific community.

Chair's Summary

In summing up, the Chair explained that the Commission would reflect on the evidence heard and follow up with any additional information requests after the meeting.

If appropriate, the Commission may also make suggestions or recommendations for improvement for consideration.

5 Minutes of the Meeting

5.1 The draft minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd January 2023 were presented.

5.2 A Commission Member asked for clarifying amendments to be made to paragraphs 4.85, 4.118 and 4.123 in the minutes document.

5.3 Members then agreed the draft minutes, subject to the changes amendments suggested, as an accurate record.

6 Living in Hackney Work Programme 2022/23

6.1 The Chair referred to the Commission's work programme and highlighted the discussion items planned for the remainder of the municipal year.

6.2 Members noted the inclusion of a Cabinet Question Time session on the meeting scheduled for 22nd March 2023, which would look at the accountability of the private rented sector and housing associations.

6.3 A Commission Member asked whether there was scope to look at how the Council handles its void properties at the Commission's next meeting. The Chair agreed to progress the request outside of the meeting, either as a written update or informal meeting with the relevant officers.

6.4 Members were reminded of the joint meeting with the Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission on 28th March 2023 to review progress against the outcomes of the Child Q Safeguarding Practice Review.

7 Any Other Business

7.1 None.

Duration of the meeting: 7:00pm – 9:10pm



Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission 22nd March 2023 Item 7 – Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission Work Programme 2022/23	Item No 7
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Outline

Attached is the work programme for the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission for the 2022/23 municipal year.

Please note that this is a working document.

Action

Members are asked to note the work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year.

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Overview & Scrutiny

Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission: Work Programme for June 2022 – April 2023

Each agenda will include an updated version of this work programme

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
<p>13th June 2022</p> <p>Special Joint Meeting with Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission</p> <p>Papers deadline: Wed 1st June 2022</p>	<p>Strategic Response of Statutory Partners to Child Q and the Accountability and Monitoring Arrangements</p>	<p>City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership</p> <p>Metropolitan Police Service - Met HQ & Central East Borough Command Unit</p> <p>Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC)</p> <p>London Borough of Hackney</p>	<p>The Scrutiny Commissions have convened this meeting to review the strategic response of statutory partners to the recommendations from the Safeguarding Practice Review by the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP).</p> <p>This meeting is to review the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The timeline of events and actions from the date the incident related to Child Q was reported to all agencies up to the publication of the report. ● The response and actions taken by the statutory agencies to the report and recommendation of the Child Q Safeguarding Practice Review report. ● The accountability structures and monitoring arrangements in place reviewing the progress and implementation of the recommendations made in the report. ● Public involvement and accountability in the monitoring process and structures.

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
<p>13th July 2022</p> <p>Papers deadline: Mon 4th July 2022</p>	<p>Implementation of the Charter for Social Housing Residents – Resident Experiences</p>	<p>Selected advocacy groups and resident testimonies</p>	<p>The Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission is looking at how local social housing providers in the borough have responded to and are implementing the 7 commitments outlined in the Charter for Social Housing Residents - Social Housing White Paper November 2020.</p> <p>The scrutiny commission wants to get an understanding of tenants' experiences of social housing since the White Paper. The Commission invited residents to submit information about their experiences and invited two advocacy groups to share information about the key issues tenants face and to outline their work to support tenants.</p> <p>Commitments of the Charter for Social Housing Residents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To be safe in your home. 2. To know how your landlord is performing, including on repairs, complaints and safety, and how it spends its money. 3. To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly, with access to a strong Ombudsman. 4. To be treated with respect, backed by a strong consumer regulator and improved consumer standards for tenants. 5. To have your voice heard by your landlord. 6. To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in, with your landlord keeping your home in good repair. 7. The government will ensure social housing can support people to take their first step to ownership.

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
	<p>Implementation of the Charter for Social Housing Residents - Housing Associations</p>	<p>Selected Housing Associations</p>	<p>The Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission is looking at how local social housing providers in the borough have responded to and are implementing the 7 commitments outlined in the Charter for Social Housing Residents - Social Housing White Paper November 2020.</p> <p>The scrutiny commission asked local housing associations to provide information on how they have responded to and are implementing each of the seven commitments below. The commission has expressed a particular interest in repairs, complaints, disputes, and transparency in decision-making relating to service charges.</p> <p>Commitments of the Charter for Social Housing Residents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To be safe in your home. 2. To know how your landlord is performing, including on repairs, complaints and safety, and how it spends its money. 3. To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly, with access to a strong Ombudsman. 4. To be treated with respect, backed by a strong consumer regulator and improved consumer standards for tenants. 5. To have your voice heard by your landlord. 6. To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in, with your landlord keeping your home in good repair. 7. The government will ensure social housing can support people to take their first step to ownership.

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
	LiH Work Programme Planning 2022-2023	Craig Player, Overview & Scrutiny Officer	Discussion to consider and make suggestions for the LiH work programme for the new municipal year.
12th September 2022 Papers deadline: Thurs 1 st Sept 2022	N/A		As a result of the Death of the Monarch and subsequent period of designated national mourning, this meeting was cancelled and planned agenda items were deferred to the subsequent meeting.
7th November 2022 Papers deadline: Wed 26 th October 2022	Changes to the Housing Register and Lettings Policy	Housing Needs Jennifer Wynter, Head of Benefits and Housing Needs	To look at the impact of Hackney Council's new housing register and Lettings Policy which came into effect in October 2021. Particular focus to be given to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advice and guidance in place for residents that no longer qualify for the register, and to those that face a long wait or that are unlikely to get housed ● The impact of the policy on prioritising residents in the greatest need and providing more predictable outcomes

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
	Impact of the Cyber Attack on the Housing Register	Housing Needs Jennifer Wynter, Head of Benefits and Housing Needs	To look at Hackney Council's efforts to mitigate the impact of the 2020 cyber attack on its housing register. Particular focus to be given to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The impact of the cyber attack on the housing register ● What has been put in place to mitigate the risks to residents in need
	LiH Work Programme 2022-2023	Craig Player, Overview & Scrutiny Officer	To agree the LiH work programme for the new municipal year.
12th December 2022 Papers deadline: Wed 30 th Nov 2022	Housing Repairs	Housing Services Steve Waddington, Strategic Director of Housing	To look at progress against Hackney Council's action plan to tackle the repairs backlog built up during the pandemic. Particular focus to be given to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Progress made in clearing the backlog and returning services to business as usual ● How the Council has engaged with residents who may be in need of repairs but unable to report issues ● What the Council has learned from what happened, and how this learning will lead to service improvement going forward

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
<p>23rd January 2023</p> <p>Papers deadline: Wed 11^h January 2023</p>	<p>Policing of Drug Use</p>	<p>Metropolitan Police Service - Met HQ & Central East Borough Command Unit</p> <p>Interim Borough Commander Dan Rutland</p> <p>Public Health</p> <p>Sandra Husbands, Director of Public Health</p> <p>Selected third sector organisations</p>	<p>To look at the policing of drugs in Hackney as part of the Commission's continued work on building trust and confidence and inclusive policing.</p> <p>Particular focus to be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The approach to policing drug use in Hackney ● How effective the approach is and how consistently it is used across communities ● The impact of the approach to the policing of drugs on local communities

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
<p>16th February 2023</p> <p>Papers deadline: Mon 6th February 2023</p>	<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Arts & Cultural Sector</p>	<p>Arts & Culture</p> <p>Petra Roberts, Strategic Service Head for Culture, Libraries and Heritage</p> <p>Selected arts and culture organisations</p>	<p>To look at Hackney Council's progress in advancing equality, diversity and inclusion in the arts and cultural sector.</p> <p>Particular focus to be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What barriers remain in engaging under-represented groups to take advantage of arts and culture opportunities ● How under-represented communities are supported to take advantage of opportunities to participate in arts and cultural activities

<p>22nd March 2023</p> <p>Papers deadline: Fri 10th March 2023</p>	<p>Temporary Accommodation</p>	<p>Housing Needs</p> <p>Jennifer Wynter, Head of Benefits and Housing Needs</p> <p>Adult Social Care Commissioning</p> <p>Zainab Jalil, Head of Commissioning, Business Support & Projects</p> <p>Public Health</p> <p>Claire Giraud, Senior Public Health Practitioner</p>	<p>To look at the arrangements in place to provide temporary accommodation to residents in priority need.</p> <p>Particular focus to be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is driving the rising demand for temporary accommodation locally and what impact this has had ● The process for placing households in temporary accommodation ● How the Council is responding to increased demand, and how it maintains high standards in temporary accommodation ● How the Council ensures that temporary accommodation meets the needs of the most vulnerable residents, and mitigates against the associated challenges and impacts
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Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
	Cabinet Question Time - Accountability of Private Rented Sector & Housing Associations	Mayoral Advisor for Private Rented Sector and Housing Affordability	<p>To look at the relationship between Hackney Council, housing associations and the private rented sector and how they work together to ensure effective accountability and protection for private renters and housing association tenants.</p> <p>Particular focus will be given to how the Council works with housing associations and the private rented sector to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maximise nominations and lettings ● Support tenancy sustainment ● Safeguard adults and children and young people ● Maintain properties in good repair

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
<p>20th April 2023</p> <p>Papers deadline: Tues 11th April 2023</p>	<p>Resident Engagement for Estate Regeneration Schemes</p>	<p>Housing Regeneration</p> <p>Stephen Haynes, Strategic Director of Inclusive Economy, Regeneration and New Homes</p> <p>Chris Trowell/James Goddard, Interim Directors of Regeneration & Capital Programme</p>	<p>To look at how Hackney Council engages with residents affected by estate regeneration schemes.</p> <p>Particular focus to be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How residents are given sufficient opportunity to be involved in shaping any proposals that will affect their homes throughout the planning and design process ● Where estate regeneration schemes involve the demolition of existing homes, the approach to temporary rehousing and how displaced social tenants are supported to understand their options and rights ● The approach to providing assistance and guidance for leaseholders, freeholders and private tenants on regeneration estates to ensure they are aware of their options and rights ● The approach to strengthening community cohesion on regeneration estates through engagement activity

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
<p>25th April 2023</p> <p>Special Joint Meeting with Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission</p> <p>Papers deadline: Fri 14th April 2023</p>	<p>Outcomes of Child Q Safeguarding Practice Review</p>	<p>City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership</p> <p>Metropolitan Police Service - Met HQ & Central East Borough Command Unit</p> <p>Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC)</p> <p>London Borough of Hackney</p>	<p>The Scrutiny Commissions have convened this meeting to maintain oversight of the strategic response of statutory partners to the Safeguarding Practice Review by the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP).</p>

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