

Overview & Scrutiny

Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

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

Tuesday 27 February 2024

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://youtube.com/live/CVcHMc9pPrs>

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

<https://youtube.com/live/i0RuE73sJ2M>

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

☎ 020 8356 4316

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Dawn Carter-McDonald

Interim Chief Executive, London Borough of Hackney

Members: Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Ian Rathbone, Cllr Soraya Adejare (Chair), Cllr Clare Joseph (Vice-Chair), Cllr Joseph Ogundemuren, Cllr Sam Pallis, Cllr Ali Sadek, Cllr Zoe Garbett, Cllr Caroline Selman and Cllr Yvonne Maxwell

Agenda

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Urgent Items / Order of Business**
- 3 Declaration of Interest**
- 4 Supported Accommodation for Rough Sleepers & Single Homeless People with Complex Needs** (Pages 9 - 14)
- 5 Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-26 - Executive Response to Scrutiny Recommendations** (Pages 15 - 30)

- 6 Minutes of the Meeting** (Pages 31 - 64)
- 7 Living in Hackney Work Programme 2023/24** (Pages 65 - 78)
- 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')

[Scrutiny Panel](#)



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<p>Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission</p> <p>27th February 2024</p> <p>Item 4 – Supported Accommodation for Rough Sleepers & Single Homeless People with Complex Needs</p>	<p>Item No</p> <p>4</p>
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Outline

The Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission is keen to hear about the challenges and opportunities in developing supported accommodation for single homeless people with complex needs locally, and to look at the ways in which improved partnership working may unlock opportunities for increased provision.

It follows on from the discussion held on [22nd November 2023](#), where members looked at the local context for supported accommodation for single homeless people with complex needs, including current provision and future need.

As part of the scrutiny process, members undertook site visits to supported accommodation schemes in both Camden and Hackney to gain an understanding of the supported accommodation provision across both boroughs, and the experiences of residents, staff and providers.

Report(s)

The following document is included for information:

- Item 4a. Overview Report of Site Visits to Supported Accommodation Provision in London Boroughs of Hackney & Camden
- Item 4b. Presentation from NHS North East London (*to follow as supplementary paper*)

Background Information

Attendees are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the recent Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission discussions on:

- a. [Supported Accommodation for Homeless People with Complex Needs - 22nd November 2023](#)
- b. [Evidence base for new Housing Strategy - 22nd November 2023](#)

Invites Attendees

Benefits and Housing Needs

- Cllr Sade Etti, Deputy Cabinet Member for Homelessness & Housing Needs
- Rob Miller, Strategic Director Customer & Workplace
- Jennifer Wynter, Assistant Director Benefits & Homeless Prevention
- Beverley Gachette, Strategic Commissioning Lead Rough Sleeping & Homelessness

Regeneration and Housing Delivery

- Cllr Guy Nicholson, Deputy Mayor for Delivery, Inclusive Economy & Regeneration
- James Goddard, Assistant Director Strategy, Assurance & Private Sector Housing
- Rachel Baganel, Assistant Director Housing, Regeneration & Delivery

City & Hackney Public Health

- Amy Wilkinson, Director of Partnerships, Impact and Delivery
- Simon Young, Principal Public Health Specialist & Substance Misuse Partnership Lead

NHS North East London

- Ellie Hobart, Deputy Director of Health Improvement & Inclusion
- Cindy Fischer, Senior Manager Unplanned Care

Action

Members are asked to consider the background information and ask questions of those in attendance.

Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

27th February 2024

Report of Members' Site Visits to Supported Accommodation for Single Homeless People with Complex Needs

As part of its wider investigation into the provision of supported accommodation for single homeless people with complex needs in Hackney, Commission Members undertook site visits to supported accommodation schemes in London Borough of Camden and London Borough of Hackney.

The aim of the site visits was to gain a further understanding of the delivery of supported accommodation and housing-related support across comparable boroughs, as well as to hear about some of the experiences of service providers and users.

The Commission visited two schemes in Camden, both of which were managed directly by the local authority. The Commission also visited two schemes in Hackney, both of which were managed by St Mungo's.

The site visits were attended by Members of the Commission, the Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing Needs & Homelessness and Council Officers.

Insights from the site visits are summarised below.

Holmes Road Studios & Mount Pleasant Hostel, London Borough of Camden - 14th November 2023

- Camden has over 743 bed spaces across 16 hostels run by a variety of providers including the local authority. This encourages flexibility across the pathway to ensure people are suitably housed. The schemes visited provided for 60 (Holmes Road) and 50 (Mount Pleasant) bed spaces.
- Both provide accommodation for single homeless people with ongoing support needs including substance misuse, mental health, offending behaviour and rough sleeping.
- Typical lengths of stay vary depending on the individual's circumstances, from four weeks to up to two years.
- Both offer resettlement support and advice to help residents find and sustain appropriate longer-term housing, which includes both social housing and private sector housing (although 6/10 are placed in private rented accommodation).
- All hostel staff have received psychologically informed training, ensuring that hostel-based work takes account of the effects of adversity or trauma on clients, and their resulting psychological and emotional needs.
- Accommodation is staffed 24 hours a day, and provides for mobility access, en-suite toilet and shower provision, shared kitchen facilities, communal garden/courtyard areas, medical rooms and multi-purpose rooms for a range of activities including recreation, learning and support.

- Accommodation is separated into living clusters depending on individual circumstances and experiences. For example, both schemes visited have separate clusters for women that have experienced domestic abuse and these have different limits on visitors.
- Visiting policies vary, but typically 1 to 2 visitors are allowed between the hours of 12-9pm. Visitors are provided with fob keys that only allow access to specified areas e.g. the host's room and shared facilities/communal areas. In order to ensure the safety and security of everybody living within the accommodation, all requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Mare Street Hostel & Lansdowne Drive, St Mungo's Hackney - 17th January 2024

- The schemes provide for 68 bed spaces at Mare Street and 18 bed spaces at Lansdowne Drive.
- Both provide accommodation for single homeless people with ongoing support needs including substance misuse, mental health, offending behaviour and rough sleeping. Mare Street provided for clients with high support needs, whereas Lansdowne Drive provided for clients with medium to low support needs.
- Typical lengths of stay were 18 months to 2 years, but varied and were recovery focused.
- Resettlement support and advice to help residents find and sustain appropriate longer-term housing was offered, however those with higher complex needs are harder to place as local move-on options are limited and not always suitable.
- Hostel staff received psychologically informed training, and a complex needs worker worked at Mare Street. There is also an in-house psychologist who works between St Mungo's accommodation in Hackney. However, not all staff are equipped to deal with the increasingly complex needs of residents.
- Hospital discharge is an issue locally due to an acute lack of beds at the Homerton - meaning residents with high support needs are increasingly presenting to St Mungo's for supported accommodation. The short-term nature of funding and commissioning made it difficult for St Mungo's to plan service delivery and ultimately to support these residents/increase bed spaces to meet demand.
- Mare Street is separated into two living clusters depending on individual circumstances and experiences, and there are two emergency bed spaces in which residents can stay for up to five days.
- Lansdowne Drive is separated into three living clusters, with residents separated depending on their support needs and gender. Residents with medium support needs typically begin their stay in the larger clusters, before moving on to the self-contained units to support their adaptation to independent living.
- Increasing maintenance costs (due to inflation/labour and material shortages) and security costs (due to increasing complex needs of residents) are an issue for St Mungo's, which did ultimately have an effect on service delivery. If costs continue to increase this may become even more acute.
- Mare Street provides for shared kitchen facilities, shared toilet and shower provision, communal areas, an IT suite and a music room. Mare Street also works in partnership with the Greenhouse day centre to provide health services.

- Lansdowne Drive provides for shared kitchen facilities, shared toilet and shower provision, wash facilities in self-contained units, a shared garden and multi-purpose conservatory.
- Mare Street allows up to 2 visitors per day, who are in some cases allowed to stay overnight. Lansdowne Drive has visiting hours of 10am-9pm, limited to the first six residents to request visitors. In order to ensure the safety and security of everybody living within the accommodation, all requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Officer Contact

Craig Player, Overview & Scrutiny Officer (Tel: 020 8356 4316)

craig.player@hackney.gov.uk

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Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission 27th February 2024 Item 5 – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-26: Executive Response to Scrutiny Recommendations	Item No 5
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Outline

The Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission held a discussion on the Council's draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy at its meeting on 18th September 2023. This enabled members to challenge how the strategy will be delivered, how the Council had considered any risks and the key measures of success before it was adopted.

Following the meeting, the Commission brought together its findings and sent a letter to the Executive outlining its recommendations. The response from the Executive to the letter was received on 30th January 2024.

Report(s)

The following documents are included for information:

- Item 5a. Letter to Executive regarding draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-26
- Item 5b. Response from Executive to findings and recommendations on Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-26

Action

Members are asked to note the agreed letter to the Executive and response regarding work undertaken in relation to the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-26.

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Overview & Scrutiny

Room 118, 2nd Floor
Hackney Town Hall
Mare Street
London, E8 1EA

9th November 2023

craig.player@hackney.gov.uk

To:

Cllr Sade Etti, Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing Needs & Homelessness

Draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-25 (Findings & Recommendations)

The Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission held a discussion on the development of the Council's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy on 18th September 2023. This was a helpful meeting which enabled members to constructively challenge how the strategy will be delivered, how the Council had considered risks, and the key measures of success before it is adopted by Cabinet.

Prior to this, the Commission held a discussion on the provision of temporary accommodation in Hackney on 22nd March 2023, with a particular focus on what is driving demand across London, how the Council is responding locally, and how it ensures temporary accommodation is of a high standard and meets the needs of the most vulnerable residents.

As part of the scrutiny process, the Commission also undertook [site visits](#) to temporary accommodation settings. This allowed members to gain a further understanding of the standard of temporary accommodation, as well as to hear about some of the experiences of residents, staff and providers.

The video recordings, alongside the agenda papers and minutes provide a public record of these meetings:

- Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission 22nd March 2023: [video recording](#), [agenda papers](#) and [minutes](#)
- Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission 18th September 2023: [video recording](#), [agenda papers](#) and [draft minutes](#)

The Commission would firstly like to place on record its thanks to Rob Miller, Strategic Director Customer & Workplace, Jennifer Wynter, Assistant Director Benefits & Housing Needs, Beverley Gachette, Strategic Commissioning Lead Rough Sleeping & Homelessness and Andrew Croucher, Operations Manager for their valuable contributions to both meetings. Similarly, we would like to thank Sally Caldwell, Strategy & Transformation Consultant and Helen Lewis, Associate Consultant at Homeless Link for sharing their insights and research.

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The Commission would also like to thank Cllr Sade Etti, Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing Needs & Homelessness for her contributions and ongoing engagement with the scrutiny process.

On the evidence provided and through consultation with officers, members of the Commission have outlined their findings and made four recommendations for consideration, which it is hoped will contribute further to the positive work that is already taking place.

We look forward to receiving an update on the progress of the development of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan and the success of its implementation at a later date.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Soraya Adejare

Chair, Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

Councillor Clare Joseph

Vice Chair, Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

Cc:

- Jackie Moylan, Group Director Finance & Corporate Resources
- Rob Miller, Strategic Director Customer & Workplace
- Jennifer Wynter, Head of Benefits & Housing Needs
- Ben Bradley, Head of Mayor and Cabinet Office

Overview & Scrutiny

Recommendations of the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

The Commission welcomes the refreshed Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-25, and commends the evidence gathering and stakeholder engagement work undertaken to develop the key priorities. We feel assured that the Council's approach to homelessness and rough sleeping continues to meet its responsibilities for carrying out day to day administration and delivery of homelessness services and, in many places, go well beyond them.

We recognise, however, that there have been significant changes to the local, regional and national context which makes it ever more difficult for the Council to plan its services to meet its statutory obligations and support all residents approaching it for assistance. House and rental prices in Hackney continue to grow, and the supply of new affordable housing remains limited. The pandemic and current cost of living crisis has also intensified inequalities for vulnerable groups in Hackney, and there are increasingly competing demands on housing resources.

In addition, the Council can only do so much within the funding, policy and legislation parameters set by the government, particularly in regards to Local Housing Allowance rates, Homelessness Prevention Grant funding and welfare reform. The Commission strongly believes that regulation and leadership must come from the national government to tackle homelessness and its related issues, backed by adequate funding.

Collaboration and joint working

The Commission heard about the importance of the Council's departments and services working closely together, and collaborating with health, criminal justice and employment sectors, other London boroughs, and people with lived experience of homelessness, in order to effectively prevent and reduce homelessness in Hackney.

The Commission strongly supports a collaborative approach, and believes it is important that the strategy is viewed holistically and responsibility for its delivery is shared across the Council and in partnership with other agencies and organisations, moving towards a whole system approach to homelessness. Some leadership will certainly need to be devolved to external partners who can drive the work via the Homelessness Partnership Board.

We have already heard about positive examples of joined-up working in Hackney, such as the Greenhouse Day Centre (Single Homeless Hub) and the Housing First Scheme. Continuing in this vein and working together to explore further opportunities for collaboration will be important in identifying more people at the point where they are at risk of losing their home, finding ways to help them stay in secure housing, and ensuring holistic support to those with complex and multiple needs.

We welcome that, whilst Benefits and Housing Needs will hold responsibility for maintaining the action plan and reporting against performance, there is an ongoing expectation that colleagues, stakeholders and partners report regularly on progress to ensure the action plan is up-to-date and reflects current performance.

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Increasing affordable permanent and temporary housing

The Commission heard that the steady rise in statutory homelessness over the last decade is attributable to a range of factors, which includes the continuing shortfall in the delivery of new affordable housing relative to the levels of need in Hackney. We will continue to retain oversight over the Council's plans to build genuinely affordable housing and explore alternative methods of housing delivery, and plan to provide our views on the emerging priorities and delivery mechanisms for the Housing Strategy before it is adopted in 2024.

The Commission also heard that the Council's access to suitable temporary accommodation is diminishing due to the reducing availability of privately provided stock, largely due to the withdrawal of private landlords, other boroughs seeking temporary accommodation placements and government resettlement schemes. We therefore welcome the commitments made not only to explore all possible avenues to increase the supply of the Council's own temporary accommodation stock, but also to explore new ways of working with landlords who are interested in long-term investment in the borough.

Of particular importance to these areas of work will be the collaboration between Benefits & Housing Needs, Housing Services, Regeneration and Private Sector Housing to increase both affordable housing and temporary accommodation supply, obtain private rented accommodation and reduce the use of nightly-paid temporary accommodation, and continue to tackle disrepair, fuel poverty and illegal evictions in private rented properties. We hope that this is reflected throughout the Housing Strategy, and that proactive measures to try to intervene earlier by supporting residents at risk of homelessness feature prominently.

Improving the quality of temporary accommodation

Whilst the Commission is supportive of exploring innovative approaches to increasing the supply of temporary accommodation, we think it is of the utmost importance that providing a good standard of temporary accommodation remains a key component of the service. This is especially important as households are increasingly spending an extended period in temporary accommodation.

We recognise that Hackney is better at this than most - we heard that the Council currently makes 87% of private placements into registered buildings which meet quality standards (much higher than the London average of 30%) - and work is in progress to invest in the repair and maintenance of the Council's own hostel properties. Having said this, we feel more can be done to lobby central government to improve minimum basic facilities in temporary accommodation, ensure the Council's own temporary accommodation units go beyond statutory standards where possible, and that best practice is shared with other providers in the borough to encourage improved basic facilities and adaptations.

The Commission recognises that temporary accommodation was never intended to exist outside of emergencies, but we know that it is often far from a temporary arrangement. We therefore also came away with a sense that more needs to be done to ensure that there is greater input from people in temporary accommodation so that they can express their views

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on what needs to change and receive meaningful engagement with these views from providers and statutory agencies.

The Commission therefore recommends that:

- 1) The Council lobbies central government to include all accommodation provided under the Homelessness Legislation Act in the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill, and for an update to legislation and the Homelessness Code of Guidance to include minimum basic facilities and adaptations for temporary accommodation.
- 2) Benefits & Housing Needs ensures that the Council's own temporary accommodation stock in all cases includes minimum basic facilities and adaptations which go beyond those currently set out in legislation and the Homelessness Code of Guidance, such as the provision of WIFI, laundry facilities, adequate space for children to learn and play, safer sleeping equipment and enough bedrooms to accommodate family size.
- 3) Benefits & Housing Needs explores the options for funding and encouraging the creation of Temporary Accommodation Action Groups (TAAGs) or equivalent bodies in which residents have an active and inclusive role in every locality, so that people living in temporary accommodation don't feel isolated, and can express their views on what needs to change and receive meaningful engagement with these views from providers and statutory agencies.

Supporting residents with multiple and complex needs

The Commission heard that people approaching the Council for homelessness support increasingly require additional support beyond that which has traditionally been provided, including people with needs that are not eligible for adults' social care or NHS support. It is important that work to develop tailored accommodation and support pathways for people with complex needs continues, alongside ensuring all staff working with people experiencing homelessness have the right skills to help them feel better equipped to deal with their jobs and support their caseloads.

We were therefore pleased to hear that mental health and social workers have been embedded into the service to support staff to provide a holistic, wraparound and psychologically-informed service for vulnerable residents. It is also encouraging that multi-disciplinary meetings are utilised regularly to support complex needs individuals, facilitating collaboration with a range of services including Adult Social Care, Hackney Children's Services, mental health teams, commissioned providers for substance misuse and neighbourhood health structures.

We also heard about how the service is exploring possibilities to develop additional supported housing for people with multiple and complex needs and rough sleepers, and increase the capacity of available dedicated support. We look forward to supporting and challenging the service's work in this area, with a scrutiny session on the commissioning and provision of supported accommodation for rough sleepers and single homeless people scheduled on 22nd November 2023.

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Addressing homelessness amongst young people

The Commission heard about how the pandemic and cost of living crisis has affected young people in Hackney, and how it has led to an increase in homeless approaches to the Council from 17-24 year olds. In addition, we heard that it can be challenging to offer timely help to young people at risk of homelessness as they are more likely to approach the Council once they are already in housing crisis, and young people sleeping rough are more likely to be in less visible locations and tend to utilise different support networks to adults.

We were encouraged by areas of good practice in Hackney, including the Council's Edge of Care service and the youth-targeted pathway delivered collaboratively through the London Youth Gateway project. However, this trend is nonetheless concerning and we welcome the steps outlined in the draft strategy to meet these challenges, particularly in terms of developing youth-specific housing officers and encouraging young people at risk of homelessness to engage with services and support early intervention with their housing needs.

The Commission will seek to retain oversight over any developments in this area, and will explore the options for scrutiny involvement in developing solutions alongside the Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission where appropriate. Any future work would look to build upon the findings and recommendations made in regards to the recent joint scrutiny into housing support for care leavers.

Addressing inequalities in the housing market

The Commission heard that the pandemic and cost of living crisis has intensified inequalities in Hackney, with more and more households experiencing financial hardship, rent arrears and risk of homelessness. We were pleased to hear examples of positive joint working to mitigate impacts such as targeting vulnerable households in need of support through the Household Support Fund, utilising the Hackney Money Hub and making better use of data to understand housing and homelessness issues for specific groups.

We heard that LGBTQIA+ residents face significant challenges in accessing affordable and secure housing, with transgender individuals in particular experiencing higher levels of discrimination and risk of homelessness. We therefore welcome the emphasis in the strategy on addressing issues around accessibility and service provision, with a particular focus on young LGBTQIA+ residents, which coincides with ongoing council-wide work to develop and implement the new Equality Plan and LGBTQIA+ Strategic Framework.

Whilst stakeholder engagement has been broad, the Commission did come away with a sense that there is room for further engagement and consultation with local LGBTQIA+ organisations, groups and residents with lived experience of homelessness to ensure that housing solutions and wraparound support truly meets their needs. Looking at different and creative ways to allow people to participate will be key, especially in terms of young LGBTQIA+ residents.

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The Commission therefore recommends:

- 4) Benefits & Housing Needs undertakes further consultation with LGBTQIA+ organisations, groups and residents (including young LGBTQIA+ residents) to ensure homelessness services meet their needs, and engages those involved to hold the Council to account during the implementation of the strategy.

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Cllr Soraya Adejare, Chair
Cllr Clare Joseph, Vice Chair
Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission
Sent via email

guy.nicholson@hackney.gov.uk
sade.etti@hackney.gov.uk

30 January 2024

Dear Soraya and Clare,

2024-26 Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy - response to Scrutiny recommendations

In our respective capacities as the Cabinet member and Deputy Cabinet member for Housing Needs & Homelessness we both welcome the conclusions and recommendations of the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission regarding the recently adopted 2024-2026 Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.

As the commission has identified, the strategy comes at a time of unprecedented demand alongside uncertainty and change impacting on housing supply and the Council's roles hampered by a lack of funding, a coherent national policy to tackle homelessness and Government legislation to address the issues that are driving ever higher levels of homelessness. All this is compounded by a chronic lack of coherent Government led policy to meet both the wider housing and health related challenges faced by individuals and families.

We both note and welcome the Commission's recommendations, set out below for reference:

Recommendation 1

The Council lobbies central government to include all accommodation provided under the Homelessness Legislation Act in the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill, and for an update to legislation and the Homelessness Code of Guidance to include minimum basic facilities and adaptations for temporary accommodation.

Recommendation 2

Benefits & Housing Needs ensures that the Council's own temporary accommodation stock in all cases includes minimum basic facilities and adaptations which go beyond those currently set out in legislation and the Homelessness Code of Guidance, such as the provision of WIFI, laundry facilities, adequate space for children to learn and play, safer sleeping equipment and enough bedrooms to accommodate family size.

Recommendation 3

Benefits & Housing Needs explores the options for funding and encouraging the creation of Temporary Accommodation Action Groups (TAAGs) or equivalent bodies in which residents have an active and inclusive role in every locality, so that people living in temporary accommodation don't feel isolated, and can express their views on what needs to change and receive meaningful engagement with these views from providers and statutory agencies.

Recommendation 4

Benefits & Housing Needs undertakes further consultation with LGBTQIA+ organisations, groups and residents (including young LGBTQIA+ residents) to ensure homelessness services meet their needs, and engages those involved to hold the Council to account during the implementation of the strategy.

Having considered the recommendations in detail please find a formal response to the commission from the Benefits & Homeless Prevention Service.

Recommendation 1

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act received royal assent in July 2023. The Act lays foundations for changes to how social housing is managed. It includes increased regulation of social landlords and new rules for protecting tenants from serious hazards in their homes.

An amendment proposed in the debate on the (then) Social Housing (Regulation) Bill would, if adopted, have tightened up regulation of the enforcement of the homelessness code of guidance for temporary accommodation. But this was rejected by Government on the grounds that the amendment was outside the scope of the bill.

It should be noted that the Council, along with most other Local Authorities, utilises a wide range of tenure options when seeking to provide temporary accommodation, drawing on both the social and private housing sectors.

As such any legislative framework that monitors and or enforces standards would need to be applied to both social and private landlords. With this in mind it would require amendments to Parts 9 and 10 of the Housing Act 1985 and Parts 1 to 4 of the Housing Act 2004, which relate to the standards of accommodation.

Additionally, the supply of suitable accommodation that is affordable is limited and consequently TA residents are being dispersed across London and beyond. The dispersal picture is driven by availability and affordability and is therefore not static, but increasingly the Council is required to source accommodation outside of London.

The Council always seeks to place a household in a suitable TA property; Council officers arrange to visit homes that are used for TA to thoroughly assess the condition of the property. The Council is also working with London Councils and other partners to improve the quality of TA. This includes being part 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 TA meet a decent level of quality and management standards. This shared service provides a central inspections team, ensuring that a TA home is subject to a high-quality inspection on at least an annual basis.

The Council continues to lobby Government on a range of housing issues to ensure both policy and legislation takes a balanced and relevant approach to supporting the Council deliver for its residents and for all those in need. This includes the powers required to raise standards across both the private and social housing sectors and the capacity and powers required to increase the supply of affordable accommodation in London to reduce the long term need for TA.

Recommendation 2

Hackney always seeks to ensure that the households placed into TA are placed in TA of good quality that is suitable to their needs, 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 that the intense demand for affordable housing both in the borough and across all London, makes meeting the supply of TA commitment extremely challenging to fulfil. Unfortunately recent Government announcements about an increase in funding to meet TA costs still go nowhere near addressing the actual costs Councils are faced with across London.

The Council's hostel managers, caretakers and officers play a key role in monitoring and maintaining health and safety standards within the TA portfolio. Residents in Council offered TA can expect the property to meet LBH's Decent Homes Standards.

The Council is also a partner in 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.

For Council owned hostel properties the Council has initiated a £16m five year programme to repair and maintain the properties to the required health & safety standards including fire safety works. The Benefits & Homeless Prevention Service have a TA Health & Safety Manager to monitor and progress this at pace and coordinate delivery with the Council's contractors.

For households with children, living in TA presents unique challenges, and the Council offers additional support to this group, for example, it works 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. The organisation operate an after-school club at Royal Park Hostel, offering play and arts and crafts activities to resident children and a Homework Club offering one-to-one academic help and mentoring to school-age residents. Hackney Playbus also provide play and support services to families who need it the most. Playbus visit the hostels to deliver play sessions providing a variety of resources and activities that support children's early learning and development in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The Council recognises that even with the best facilities TA is not the ideal situation for residents, particularly children. The Benefits & Homeless Prevention Service supports residents explore all settled housing options to enable them to secure a permanent home that meets their needs.

Recommendation 3

In updating the 2024 - 2026 Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy, the Council consulted with residents on their views and concerns. The Council is planning to extend and expand this engagement with residents on the further development of the strategy for 2026 - 28 and based on the implementation outcomes of the 2024 - 26 strategy.

However, currently the Benefits & Homeless Prevention Service does not have funding available to put in place TAAG's groups as suggested by the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission. This could be an additional function incorporated into the community engagement work undertaken by the Corporate Partnership team through the advice grants programme or worked up as part of the 2026 - 28 strategy.

Some of the partners present at January's LBH led Homelessness Partnership Board expressed an interest in contributing to the development and delivery of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy action plan. The contribution of partners and stakeholders will ensure the action plan identifies the key issues and ways we can work together to address them.

The Service continues to work closely with the advice services and the voluntary sector and are always open to work with support organisations who residents are engaged with.

Within the Council the Service is working with the Policy and Strategic Delivery Team on how the Council can raise the profile of the Council's response to increasing homelessness with community partners and develop trusted relationships between Council services and external partners to enable collaboration between the Council, other anchor institutions including health partners and the wider VCS.

Recommendation 4

The Council recognises that the LCBTQIA+ community face specific and intense social and cultural barriers that increase the likelihood of homelessness. In addition this community can also face challenges when living in TA.

The 2024 - 26 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy acknowledges that “LGBTQI+ residents face significant challenges in accessing affordable and secure housing compared to non-LGBTQI+ residents, with transgender individuals particularly experiencing higher levels of discrimination and risk of homelessness. This discrimination can create or exacerbate housing instability for LGBTQI+ residents throughout their adult lives. Tackling this inequality is identified as one of the key themes within the strategy.

With the new strategy now in place, the service will be developing an Action Plan detailing the proposed activities, expected outcomes, performance targets and outcomes. The Action Plan will evolve over the duration of the strategy to enable the Council to respond to external pressures and demands.

As an integral part of the Action Plan, the Service will be engaging with community partners and residents to identify the actions to take forward the objectives set out in the strategy. Partners will also be central to reviewing and responding to delivery on an ongoing basis. It is the Council's intention that this engagement includes organisations from across the community, including those supporting LGBTQI+ residents.

The Service have worked closely with partners and stakeholders to deliver the 2024 - 2026 strategy and have already made the first steps to deliver a comprehensive action plan with partners at the recent Homeless Partnership Board meeting. Going forward the Service would welcome the opportunity to report progress on the delivery of the plan to the Commission if that may be of value.

In conclusion, please accept our thanks to all Members of the Scrutiny Commission for their observations and comments on the 2024 -2026 Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy and for helping to deliver the Council's ongoing response to the housing crisis and tackling homelessness in the community.

Regards



Cllr Guy Nicholson, Deputy Mayor for delivery, inclusive economy & regeneration



Cllr Sade Etti, Deputy cabinet member for housing needs and homelessness

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Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission 27th February 2024 Item 6 – Minutes of the Previous Meeting	Item No 6
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Outline

The draft minutes of the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission meetings held on 11th December 2023 and 22nd January 2024 are provided.


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 2023/24
Monday 11 December 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 Joseph Ogundemuren, Cllr Sam Pallis, Cllr Zoe Garbett and Cllr Clayeon McKenzie
Councillors in Virtual Attendance:	Cllr Clare Joseph, Cllr Ian Rathbone and Cllr Caroline Selman
Apologies:	Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Ali Sadek and Cllr Yvonne Maxwell
Officers In Attendance:	Steve Waddington (Strategic Director Housing Services), Rob Miller (Strategic Director Customer & Workplace), Kain Roach (Assistant Director Building Maintenance) and James Gibson (Specialist Lawyer)
Other People in Attendance:	Cllr Clayeon McKenzie (Cabinet Member for Housing Services & Resident Participation)
Officers in Virtual Attendance:	Helena Stephenson (Assistant Director Tenancy Services), Sarah Kulay (Head of Resident Participation, TMOs and Communities), Ron Springer (Assistant Director Customer Operations)
Other People in Virtual Attendance:	Steve Webster (Resident Liaison Group Co-Chair)
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 Cllr Oszen, Cllr Maxwell and Cllr Sadek.

1.3 Cllr Selman, Cllr Rathbone and Cllr Joseph were in online 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 Declaration of Interest

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4 Housing Services Resident Engagement Strategy 2022-25

4.1 The Chair opened the item by explaining that the Commission was keen to hear about the progress the Council had made against the key commitments outlined in the Housing Services Resident Engagement Strategy (RES), and any plans for it to be refreshed to reflect what had been achieved and new things which may need to be done.

4.2 The Commission saw this discussion as a timely means of monitoring progress in delivering the action plan against the five strategic priorities of the strategy.

4.3 Representing London Borough of Hackney

- Councillor Clayeon McKenzie, Cabinet Member for Housing Services & Resident Participation
- Steve Waddington, Strategic Director Housing Services
- Helena Stephenson, Assistant Director Tenancy Services
- Sarah Kulay, Head of Resident Participation, TMOs and Communities

4.4 External Guests

- Steve Webster, Resident Liaison Group Co-Chair

4.5 The Chair then invited the Cabinet Member for Housing Services & Resident Participation and Council officers to give a verbal presentation. The main points are highlighted below.

4.6 The RES was co-produced with residents, with its development had been overseen by a Project Champions Group, made up of the Resident Liaison Group (RLG) Co-Chairs and the Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation, alongside a wider Strategy Scrutiny Group bringing together officers and involved and uninvolved residents.

4.7 Final proposals were informed by wider feedback from housing residents and staff, including focus groups, major surveys, and outreach to residents via local community and faith groups. This provided confidence that the direction outlined in the final document was a fair representation of the issues and challenges residents faced, and their priorities for improvement.

4.8 The strongest message from the consultation was a need to get the basics right, with a stronger focus on timely, transparent and honest communication. It was also clear that some tenants and residents associations (TRAs) wanted more support, and

some residents who were not involved felt that some TRAs needed to be more inclusive.

4.9 Strategic Priority 1 (Embed a 'Resident First' culture across the service) focused on actions to ensure that the service culture, and behaviour of staff, puts the residents' voice at the centre of its work, with policies, service delivery and priorities shaped by active listening and engagement.

4.10 To support this priority the service had worked with involved residents to agree on a set of new service standards. This had resulted in a suite of 21 indicators which reflected a focus on getting the basics right.

4.11 There had also been a focus on embedding improvements in service performance in those areas which were a high priority for residents. This included repairs, customer contact and responding to damp and mould.

4.12 The service had also sought to enable strong engagement between the involved resident structure and senior housing leaders, with the development of all new housing policies and procedures to include resident engagement.

4.13 It had also looked to ensure regular and effective communication of key housing messages and service developments to the wider resident base, using a variety of channels such as social media, leaflets, Love Hackney features, estate posters and the residents' annual report.

4.14 Strategic Priority 2 (Support involved residents' groups to thrive) focused on work to support tenants and residents' groups to be as effective as possible and to work in ways that supported the service's engagement principles.

4.15 This year the focus had been on developing the tools and support to better promote the creation and sustainment of TRAs. This included the development of a new guide to resident engagement which set out a range of information and guidance on setting up and running a TRA, including templates and policies that can be used and adapted by new groups, and advice on other forms of engagement.

4.16 The service had also worked with involved residents to develop a new model constitution for TRAs and a refreshed code of conduct. Consultation on these new model documents would take place early in 2024.

4.17 It had also published a new Resident Training Programme, based on feedback from TRAs. The new programme was designed to support both new and existing involved residents, with sessions on running a successful TRA, chairing meetings, taking minutes and dealing with finance, as well as more specialist courses.

4.18 Since 2022 10 new TRAs had been formed, meaning there were now 55 TRAs covering the Council's directly managed homes. The service would continue to work at grassroots level to support new and emerging groups and to run activities on unrepresented estates.

4.19 Strategic Priority 3 (Widen the ways residents can engage with us) focused on widening the range of engagement options available, with opportunities tailored to the different needs, lifestyles and interests of Hackney's diverse communities.

4.20 So far, the service had extended opportunities for residents to make contact online for bookings and appointments., as well as creating new opportunities for residents involved in community gardens to come together to share their experiences and network.

4.21 It had also recruited to a new Housing Services Youth Forum, with 13 young people now signed up. The Forum would provide a platform for young people to have their say about housing services, influence how the service engages with young people, and support wider succession planning in the involved structure.

4.22 There had been a strong focus on the approach to housing estate surgeries with 225 estate-based surgeries held between April and October 2023. The approach had evolved to deliver surgeries in partnership with voluntary and community groups. Opportunities to co-locate in GPs surgeries were also being developed, helping the service to work more collaboratively with health colleagues and support healthy placemaking.

4.23 Strategic Priority 4 (Ensure that residents influence our decision-making and drive service improvement) focused on how the service would work with residents so that they could influence decision-making and ensure that proposals for improvement reflect their priorities and concerns.

4.24 There had been a strong focus on getting residents' views through surveys and consultation exercises, particularly on spending priorities, rent increases, estate surgeries and annual resident satisfaction (STAR) surveys.

4.25 A new performance dashboard had also been developed which would be presented at each RLG meeting and provided further opportunities for the group to hold management to account and challenge under-performance.

4.25 A new framework for resident scrutiny was in development, which would include a Resident Scrutiny Panel comprising up to 12 residents who were not currently involved. The Panel would undertake two scrutiny reviews per year, with recommendations for improvement presented to and monitored by both the Panel and Housing Services Management Team.

4.26 Strategic Priority 5 (Promote engagement activity that strengthens our communities) focused on the work to promote the integration and resilience of housing communities and build partnerships with others services and the third sector to develop projects that delivered community benefits.

4.27 To support this, the service had allocated 100% of the Community Development Fund in 2022/23 to support TRA and other resident-led projects and initiatives, and was on track to spend the full budget again in 2023/24.

4.28 It had also continued to support over 50 community gardens and grow projects across estates, with 13 new projects taken forward in 2023, including those on Pond Farm, Nightingale Estate, Landfield Estate, Wick Village, and Sandford Court and St Andrews Mews.

4.29 Initiatives had been developed to support residents during the cost of living crisis. This included awarding grant funding of £40k to voluntary and community partners to extend their provision to offer warm spaces during the winter months, and producing

the cost of living booklet, with information on money and debt, free food and activities in the borough, and jobs and training support.

4.30 Two estate-based food projects had been funded to support housing residents, and the use of community halls had been promoted by funding health and wellbeing projects, digital skills classes and young projects.

4.31 In terms of monitoring impact, bids to run youth and other commissioned projects were evaluated with a focus on value for money, deliverability and service quality. Projects were underpinned by service levels agreements, with a range of output/outcome measures such as level of participation and retention, impact on participant behaviour and personal development.

4.32 The RES Action Plan included key milestones and KPI indicators for the 42 actions, with a range of output and outcome indicators and linked to work on implementing the new Social Housing Regulator consumer standards.

4.33 The annual STAR survey measured progress on key outcome indicators, and the 2023/24 survey showed improvements in all Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) - with the overall satisfaction level in the service rising from 52% in 2022/23 to 59%.

4.34 The Chair then invited the Resident Liaison Group (RLG) Co-Chair to give a verbal presentation. The main points are highlighted below.

4.35 There had been some areas of progress over the last year, and the RLG was looking forward to working with Housing Services to take forward other areas of work. Progress had been made in getting the basics right, for example, with the overall satisfaction in the service increasing.

4.36 The RLG did however have some areas of concern in regard to the implementation of the strategy. With the action plans yet to be finalised, it was difficult to see how the strategy could be implemented by 2025 as planned. There may therefore be a need to consider extending the implementation of the strategy until 2026/27.

4.37 It was felt that the action plans would need to be ambitious but also realistic and achievable within the current staffing and financial resources. They would also need to address service improvement issues, organisational culture change and the expectations of residents, elected members and staff.

4.38 The action plans would need to map out the journey to meet the five priorities identified in the strategy. That would require detailed action plans which were thoroughly consulted on and with buy in from residents, staff and elected members.

4.39 The action plans would require ownership and buy in from across Housing Services, but also other council services. Each department would need to focus on how their service and workforce could support the implementation of the strategy and ensure there was not an over reliance on the Resident Participation Team.

4.40 The action plans would also need to set out a clear process so that they could be reviewed, monitored, scrutinised and adjusted, with residents, staff and elected members involved throughout. There would also need to be strong engagement between senior management, residents and elected members to map out the

relationship between the action plans, the overall strategy and the introduction of the Government's social housing regulatory framework.

Questions, Answers and Discussion

4.41 A Commission Member asked what steps had been taken to ensure the involved resident structure was representative of the wider community, and to bring residents who were not currently involved on board.

4.42 The Head of Resident Participation, TMOs and Communities explained that work to widen participation needed to be underpinned by better information about residents. This involved developing an approach to collecting data on protected characteristics and vulnerabilities, and profiling involved structures to better understand which groups and tenures may be under-represented.

4.43 In parallel to this work, the service was looking to create social and demographic profiles of neighbourhoods, drawing upon information from the 2021 Census and local knowledge of communities and local groups/organisations.

4.44 A Commission Member asked for further information on the governance arrangements for the new Housing Scrutiny Panel, and how its recommendations would be monitored.

4.45 The Head of Resident Participation, TMOs and Communities explained that the Resident Scrutiny Panel would comprise up to 12 residents who were not currently involved. The recruitment and training of Panel members would take place in the last quarter of 2023/24, and training and support would be provided for participants.

4.46 The Panel would undertake two scrutiny reviews per year, with recommendations for improvement presented to, and monitored, by both the Panel and Housing Services Management Team. The Housing Services Management Team was committed to being open and transparent in sharing information, and following up on recommendations.

4.47 Suggestions for topics would be put forward by Panel members, resident groups and the Housing Services Management Team. The topics would ultimately be agreed upon by members as part of the Panel's work planning process.

4.48 A Commission Member asked for further information on how the recruitment process for the new Housing Scrutiny Panel would be publicised.

4.49 The Head of Resident Participation, TMOs and Communities explained that the recruitment process for the Housing Scrutiny Panel would be widely publicised. This included leaflets being widely distributed and shared in public spaces and on estates.

4.50 It would also include features in Love Hackney, as well as communications via the Council's social media channels. Tenants' and residents' groups would also be encouraged to share the recruitment process with their networks.

4.51 A Commission Member asked how the impact and outcomes of projects undertaken to support Strategic Priority 5 (Promote engagement activity that strengthens our communities) would be evaluated.

4.52 The Head of Resident Participation, TMOs and Communities explained that the Community Development Fund (CDF) was used to support local resident-led projects and initiatives. A total of £191k had been made available for the current financial year, and residents could apply for up to £3.5k of funding depending on the size of their estate.

4.53 Separate funding was also available to support voluntary and community organisations to run activities on estates. For example, the Housing Youth Development Fund received £60k to fund commissioned youth projects across estates and funding was made available to support over 50 community gardens across estates.

4.54 Projects were evaluated through a range of output/outcome measures such as level of participation and retention, impact on participant behaviour and personal development. For example, particular focus would be given to increasing understanding of healthy lifestyles, increasing understanding and awareness of diversity and improving communication and social skills.

4.55 *A Commission Member asked whether engagement activity looked the same across the borough, or whether it was tailored to reflect the needs of individual estates.*

4.56 The Head of Resident Participation, TMOs and Communities explained that the service wanted to take a strategic approach to engagement activity, but retain the flexibility to be reactive to the needs of individual estates where appropriate.

4.57 In practice this meant that some areas of work, such as digital skills courses or health and wellbeing projects, may be offered widely across the borough, but there may also be instances where the Council supports tailored projects at a locality level.

4.58 *A Commission Member asked for further information on the new Vulnerable Residents Policy.*

4.59 The Assistant Director Tenancy Services explained that the service recognised that many housing residents experience financial hardship, social isolation, poor health and increasingly complex vulnerabilities.

4.60 To address this, a new policy to underpin the approach to supporting vulnerable households was being developed. It would be informed by wider work to improve data collection around protected characteristics and vulnerabilities, and would set out how the service offer would be flexed for residents with additional needs and those who were at risk of experiencing disadvantages in accessing services and inequality in outcomes once they do.

4.61 *A Commission Member asked for further information on the level of responses to the Housing Services annual STAR survey.*

4.62 The Strategic Director Housing Services explained that the annual STAR survey was undertaken over the summer, and around 13% of residents responded to the survey (2.5-3k respondents). This was a slight decrease on the previous year but the statistical relevance was similar.

4.63 It was advised that a breakdown for results of the survey and the number of responses by geography/tenure/demographics could be provided to Commission Members following the meeting.

4.64 A Commission Member asked how a culture of accountability would be embedded across the service, and how senior management would ensure service delivery was shaped by active listening and engagement with residents.

4.65 The Assistant Director Tenancy Services explained that promoting a culture of accountability was central to the overall focus of the RES, demonstrating how residents' voice would be at the heart of policies, service delivery and priorities, but also being honest with residents about what they should expect from staff.

4.66 This underlined the need for the RES to be owned across the service, with engagement understood as the responsibility of all housing leaders, managers and staff. It was recognised that staff having the right skills, being empowered to take decisions at the right level, and being accountable, were key to good service delivery.

4.67 To support this, a workforce development plan for Housing Services would be developed which would identify the skills and behaviours which needed to be embedded in different roles across the service, and create a staff training plan and updated staff induction packs.

4.68 A Commission Member asked whether there was confidence amongst senior management that the aims of the RES would be fulfilled in the timescales set out.

4.69 The Cabinet Member for Housing Services & Resident Participation recognised that delivering the actions identified in the RES in a timely manner was challenging, especially when considering capacity issues in some areas and increasing Council-wide financial constraints.

4.70 Nonetheless, there were some significant areas of progress, as well as some work that would be taken forward next year to further embed the approach and ensure that all actions were delivered by December 2025. Deliverability of key actions against the milestones set out in the action plan would continue to be monitored and amendments could be made if appropriate.

4.71 A Commission Member asked for further information on plans to strengthen neighbourhood panels.

4.72 The Head of Resident Participation, TMOs and Communities recognised that neighbourhood panels provided a forum to bring together TRAs to share experiences, consider common areas of concern, consider housing policy and performance and make suggestions for improvement.

4.73 The service would be revisiting recommendations made following a review undertaken with some of the Panel Chairs in 2021/22, including proposals to review the terms of reference, widen participation, and improve promotion of the meetings.

4.74 A Commission Member asked how staff managed the contact details of involved resident groups to ensure key housing messages and engagement opportunities were received.

4.75 The Head of Resident Participation, TMOs and Communities explained that a master list of the contact details of all involved resident groups was kept within the Resident Participation Team. It was recognised however that, since Covid, it had not been kept entirely up to date and work was underway to ensure an updated, centralised list was available to all staff across the service.

4.76 A Commission Member asked for further information on plans to ensure more effective follow up on issues raised by TRAs.

4.77 The Head of Resident Participation, TMOs and Communities explained that all registered TRAs could hold quarterly meetings with their housing officers (ETRA meetings) to flag areas of concern and follow up on matters raised that remain.

4.78 A new online ETRA monitoring tool had recently been developed to better track performance on the actions arising from these meetings and this was now being rolled out to housing officers. The service was working to embed this way of working over the next few months, and develop a more accessible version of the tool so that TRAs could monitor follow-up from their meetings in real time.

4.79 A Commission Member asked for further information on plans to increase promotion of the benefits of TRAs and encourage more interest in formal resident involvement.

4.80 The Head of Resident Participation, TMOs and Communities explained that there was a target to reach out to 30 unrepresented estates per year to promote the benefits of TRAs, which was often exceeded. Staff also continued to work at grassroots level to support new and emerging groups, and to run activities on unrepresented estates.

Summing Up

4.81 The Chair thanked Commission Members for their questions and all witnesses for their responses and engagement with the scrutiny process.

4.82 It was explained that, after the meeting, the Commission would reflect on the evidence heard and may make suggestions or recommendations for consideration.

5 Housing Repairs

5.1 The Chair opened the item by explaining that the Commission was keen to follow up on progress against the improvement actions identified at the previous meeting in December 2022, where the measures to improve the Council's repairs performance and customer care following the pandemic and cyber-attack were discussed.

5.2 As part of the scrutiny process, Commission Members undertook a focus group with residents living in council-managed homes to understand their experiences of the repairs service over the past year and what they may like to see happen differently in the future.

5.3 Representing London Borough of Hackney

- Councillor Clayeon McKenzie, Cabinet Member for Housing Services & Resident Participation
- Steve Waddington, Strategic Director Housing Services
- Kain Roach, Assistant Director Building Maintenance

- Rob Miller, Strategic Director Customer & Workplace
- Ron Springer, Assistant Director Customer Operations

5.4 The Chair began by giving an overview of the key issues, patterns and trends which were highlighted during the focus group with residents.

5.5 It was noted that the findings represented a small sample of the experiences of residents living in council properties, and that there had been improvements in some areas over the past year. However, many of the issues raised were familiar to Commission Members who dealt with housing repairs issues routinely through their casework.

5.6 Reporting repairs online

- Online reporting not providing a written record of the repair being reported, which could lead to inaccurate information being logged and wrong or unprepared operatives being sent to a job
- No online reporting function for communal repairs

5.7 Call centre performance

- Recognition that wait times had improved recently, although residents were still waiting a long time to obtain a job ticket once through
- Call centre staff generally polite and helpful, although reporting more complicated issues could be difficult

5.8 Communication

- Lack of prompt communication and appointment rearrangement where agreed appointment cannot be kept
- Not keeping residents up-to-date at the various stages of a case, and on the timelines for resolutions
- Not communicating the resolution/outcome of an issue with the resident who reported the issue (with communal visits it was difficult to know whether someone has attended at all)
- Lack of communication between Council officers and contractors, leading to delays in repairs being undertaken and repeat visits
- Lack of communication with leaseholders around which repairs issues may be the leaseholder or landlord's responsibility, and how to report issues which are thought to be the landlord's responsibility
- Walkarounds and surgeries with housing officers were helpful, allowing residents to raise issues and concerns with officers directly

5.9 Waits for repairs

- Long wait times between reporting an issue and initial assessment, as well as between initial assessment and resolution of issue
- Repairs not being finished to the required standard, and residents having to chase the Council multiple times to find a resolution
- No emergency service at weekend for boiler and heating repairs, meaning in some cases elderly and families have had to wait over a week for a visit which can be particularly challenging in the winter months
- New communal repairs officer role is helpful and communal repairs were getting resolved more quickly

5.10 Repeat visits

- Repairs orders not being logged properly, leading to wrong or unprepared operatives being sent to a job
- Not arriving to an appointment with the correct equipment and/or keys for access
- Repeat visits to assess seemingly straightforward issues, leading to delays in getting the issue resolved
- Repairs not being of the best standard initially, leading to repeat visits and lengthy delays

5.11 The Chair then invited the Cabinet Member for Housing Services & Resident Participation and Council officers to give a verbal presentation. The main points are highlighted below.

5.12 Since the last meeting, the service had implemented a five day inspection target for reports of damp and mould. As of October 2023, the average time to inspect reports of damp and mould was 4.92 days.

5.13 It had also implemented a target to raise and attend all plumbing jobs by the end of the next working day. As of October 2023, 88% of plumbing jobs were being raised as emergency (24 hours) or immediate (two hours) priority, and plumbing leaks were being completed on average in 1.45 days.

5.14 Overall, resident satisfaction with plumbing had increased from 56% in October 2022 to 76% in October 2023. Further improvements had been made to follow on work and leak hub referrals, with plumbers now fully completing one job at a time. The Leaks Hub Team were handling complex cases that involved more than one home and taking a proactive approach to access and resolution.

5.15 The service had also introduced property MOTs, which were targeted inspections where data and intel suggested there may be a wider issue in a block. For example, at Colville Estate operatives had completed further surveys on the block and would now look to collate property survey information with the Regeneration Team and address any further issues.

5.16 Operatives had reviewed damp and mould issues in properties at Tradescant House, with a long-term aim to develop a future works programme and addressing immediate general build issues. At Vain House, operatives had inspected properties following leaks, floods and upsurges in recent weeks, and were planning to extend these surveys to the whole block to review waste pipe services.

5.17 The service had also been working closely with the Regeneration Team on the property condition survey for Woodberry Down Estate, actively addressing cases of damp and mould and commencing a data-insight led approach to predict likely cases. In addition the service had reviewed its damp and mould process in line with Housing Ombudsman recommendations and was following up with residents after works were completed.

5.18 In terms of Director Labour Organisation (DLO) growth, the trade operative base had increased from 145 in 2021/22 to 165 currently, and the service was on track to reach its 20% increase target by the end of 2023/24.

5.19 In addition to the 20% growth target, a business case had recently been approved to expand by a further 20 operative posts over the next two years to increase the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Team.

5.20 In addition to growing the number of operatives the service was also looking to improve infrastructure and invest in workforce development, namely by improving depot and stores facilities, renewing the fleet of trade vehicles, and investing in skills and development of the workforce including apprenticeships.

5.21 There had been a significant increase in the number of completed repairs (both DLO operatives and contractors), with 101k forecasted for 2023/24 compared to 91k in 2022/23 and 58k in 2021/22.

5.22 Void turnarounds times had decreased, with average times at 84 days in November 2023 compared to 107 days in March 2022 and 118 days in March 2023. It was recognised that this was still too high, although the average was slightly higher than anticipated as the service had recently been letting a number of properties which had been empty for a long time.

5.23 The number of 24 hour leaks jobs completed was also forecasted to increase, with 12k forecasted to be completed this year compared to 2.25k in 2021/22 and 7.6k in 2022/23.

5.24 The backlog of over 7k repairs jobs from November 2022 had been cleared. However, there were currently 460 overdue repairs with the DLO, and 1.8k with contractors. The vast majority of these were only just out of time and the external contractor element was mostly linked to the demobilisation of the current contract.

5.25 Each month the service undertook transaction satisfaction surveys. Key performance indicators were listed as below:

- Overall Satisfaction - October 2022 63.06% / October 2023 71.11%
- Average days to complete a repair - October 2022 11.07 days / October 2023 10.20 days
- Satisfaction with quality of work - October 2022 67.57% / October 2023 68.82%
- Satisfaction with complete on first visit - October 2022 / October 2023 65.77% 63.33%

5.26 It was recognised that there had been a slight decrease in satisfaction with repairs jobs being completed first time. One reason for this was that where multiple repairs were needed, satisfaction surveys were sent out to residents after each visit rather than at the end of the repairs process.

5.27 All repairs with the DLO and main contractor were included on the Repairs Hub system. Work was ongoing with IT to onboard all remaining contractors onto the system (new contractors would be on the system from day one). The system recently went live with 'one job at a time' for plumbers which improved efficiency and responsiveness, with a roll out planned for other trades.

5.28 Scoping and requirement gathering was underway for an integrated housing IT system and this would be going out to tender imminently, with a priority area being to procure a data and information management system.

5.29 Measures had been put in place to improve the management and performance of contractors. This included onboarding all contractors to the Repairs Hub to further improve the visibility and management of contractor performance, as well as expanding the supply chain with onboarding of specialist contractors - particularly to support the approach to damp and mould.

5.30 Regular contractor performance management meetings were being held, reviewing the suite of reporting data and information. A Quantity Surveyors and Audit Team function had also been added to the Commercial and Contracts Team to scrutinise contractor and DLO performance.

5.31 There had also been a re-tendering of the DLO support contract with four contractors rather than one (two large/two small), which would be geographically split between the north and south of the borough.

5.32 The overall number of disrepair cases continued to increase as was the case across London (current number of open cases being 1.1k), but over the last six months the number of new cases had been reducing. More cases were being completed and closed with three times more cases closed/completed in the last 12 months than the previous 12 months.

5.33 The ADR approach would make a significant positive impact, with an expansion of the Legal Disrepair and ADR Team to resolve a higher number of cases more quickly. The ADR approach had fully resolved 92 cases so far, with repairs completed much more quickly, and residents receiving 100% of any compensation.

5.34 Breakdown of spend on disrepair cases since November 2022, compared to previous six months was listed as below:

- Repair costs - April to October 2022 £555,723 / April to October 2023 £1,361,118
- Compensation - April to October 2022 £497,197 / April to October 2023 £226,254
- Associated costs - April to October 2022 £335,328 / April to October 2023 £353,125
- Legal fees (external) - April to October 2022 £1,078,856 / April to October 2023 £264,153
- Legal fees (internal) - April to October 2022 £152,551 / April to October 2023 £152,551
- Total spend - April to October 2022 £2,619,655 / April to October 2023 £2,357,202

5.35 Spend was expected to increase as more cases were completed, however there were significant savings for cases completed via ADR instead of legal disrepair in the long run.

5.36 In terms of customer care, complaint numbers had continued to increase however the time to respond had reduced as listed below:

- 2021/22 - 672 complaints / 19.15 average days to respond
- 2022/23 - 1323 complaints / 13.50 average days to respond
- 2023/24 (to date) - 832 complaints / 14.78 average days to respond

5.37 There had been a 27% increase in stage 1 responses being provided on target compared to 2021/22 and an 11% increase compared to 2022/23. So far this year, only around 1% of DLO reactive repairs had turned into stage 1 complaints.

5.38 The results of annual STAR Resident Satisfaction Survey had seen overall satisfaction in the repairs service increase from 58% in 2022/23 to 63% in 2023/24, satisfaction with the time taken to complete the most recent repair increase from 52% in 2022/23 to 60% in 2023/24, satisfaction that home was well maintained increase from 53% in 2022/23 to 61% in 2023/24 and satisfaction that home was safe from 58% in 2022/23 to 63% in 2023/24.

5.39 Demand on the repairs contact centre had reduced by 6%, with 1,152 less calls in October 23 compared to October 22. However, there had been a seasonal increase in the volume of calls by 46% from September 23 to October 23 (18,930 calls received in total). Average call volumes were 4.4k per week, and call demand was 15-20% higher than pre-pandemic volumes.

5.40 There had been a 9% increase in routine repair calls answered - from 74% in October 2022 to 83% in October 23, and a 7% increase in emergency calls answered from 87% in October 22 to 94% in October 23. There had also been a 47% improvement in wait times for routine repair calls from 17 minutes to 9 minutes over the past year, and a 50% improvement in wait time for emergency calls from 6 minutes to 3 minutes over the past year.

Questions, Answers and Discussion

5.41 *A Commission Member asked how the Council learned from repairs complaints, and how it used Housing Ombudsman reports and decisions to develop policy and practice.*

5.42 The Strategic Director Housing Services explained that all complaints received by the service were reviewed with a focus on resolving the issues raised and learning from mistakes to prevent similar problems in the future.

5.43 For example, many of the improvement actions identified in terms of mould, damp and leaks responses were influenced by resident feedback and the recommendation of the Housing Ombudsman's recent spotlight report on damp and mould.

5.44 Complaints data and Housing Ombudsman cases were reviewed at senior management team meetings on a quarterly basis to ensure service planning and delivery reflected learning and best practice.

5.45 *A Commission Member asked how contractor performance was monitored and evaluated, and how contractors were held accountable for poor performance.*

5.46 The Strategic Director Housing Services recognised that contractor performance had been an issue. The Council had one main contractor which had at times been overwhelmed with the volume of work raised, especially post cyber-attack and during the pandemic.

5.46 One of the responses to this was to increase the DLO trade operative base, improve infrastructure and invest in workforce development. Another was to re-tender

the DLO support contract to move away from one large contractor to two larger and two smaller contractors, with work being apportioned appropriately.

5.47 The Assistant Director Building Maintenance added that the DLO had recently gone live with 'one job at a time' for plumbers and planned to roll it out to other trades. This improved efficiency and responsiveness by ensuring that, where needed, the next repairs job was booked straight after the previous one.

5.48 Measures had also been put in place to improve the management of contractors, including onboarding all contractors to the Repairs Hub to improve visibility and management and regular contractor performance management meetings.

5.49 A Commission Member asked whether the Council was able to hold subcontractors accountable for their performance.

5.50 The Assistant Director Building Maintenance explained that the Council evaluated the proportion of works which were delivered by contractors in-house when re-tendering the DLO support contract, and wanted contractors to be less reliant on subcontractors. It was important to note, however, that the use of subcontractors was common in the industry, especially during periods of higher demand.

5.51 A Commission Member asked for further information on how onboarding contractors to the Repairs Hub would improve visibility and the management of contractor performance.

5.52 The Assistant Director Building Maintenance explained that onboarding all contractors to the Repairs Hub allowed the service to monitor the journey of all repairs jobs from initial contact through to job completion. This allowed staff to easily access the status of a job, update residents accordingly, and record more detailed performance data.

5.53 A Commission Member asked for further information on the routes available to residents if they were not satisfied with a repairs job and wanted an operative to revisit their home.

5.54 The Assistant Director Building Maintenance explained that the resident could call the customer service centre or use the online reporting tool to arrange a follow-up appointment. This would then be entered into the Repairs Hub, but residents did not have access to the Repairs Hub itself. The longer term aspiration was to have a resident portal to allow for more transparency and visibility, but this was not possible until the new housing IT system was in place.

5.55 Residents were also encouraged to fill out a feedback form following the completion of a repairs job, which gave them an opportunity to raise any outstanding issues or concerns. When a resident was dissatisfied with a repairs job, staff made efforts to get in touch with them to find out more about their experience and take any follow up action where required.

5.56 A Commission Member asked why the number of complaints continued to increase despite improvement actions being implemented across the service and performance improving in some areas.

5.57 The Strategic Director Housing Services recognised that complaints numbers continued to increase. A lag time between things improving and complaints numbers decreasing was expected, but it must also be accepted that the service was not where it wanted to be.

5.58 There were also other factors which had led to an increase in complaints across the sector, such as heightened media coverage on social housing encouraging residents to speak up about the issues in their homes, which was ultimately welcomed.

5.59 The Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation added that depreciating housing stock continued to be an issue and put increased demand on the service.

5.60 A Commission Member asked about average wait times between initial inspection and job completion for damp and mould cases, and how residents were kept up to date on the progress of the job.

5.61 The Strategic Director Housing Services recognised that while the service was meeting its five-day target for inspecting reports of damp and mould, residents sometimes had to wait for a long period of time before the issue itself was resolved.

5.62 One of the improvement measures put in place to address this was expanding the supply chain and onboarding specialist contractors to support the approach to damp and mould. The service also needed to be more transparent with residents about how long jobs may take, as damp and mould cases were often complex and required more time to complete.

5.63 The Assistant Director Building Maintenance added that measures to improve visibility and the management of contractor performance would also be helpful in this respect, promoting a culture of ownership and accountability.

5.64 The ADR process would also decrease the length of time it took to resolve some cases, with these cases taking around 70 days to resolve on average. The ADR approach was already making a significant impact, and resources within the area were being expanded to resolve a higher number of cases more quickly.

5.65 The Strategic Director Housing Services then explained that promoting a culture of accountability was central to service improvement, and was linked to ongoing work around workforce development. A behaviour framework would be developed to set out expectations in terms of how staff go about their work and engage with residents.

5.66 A Commission Member asked what the approach was to decanting residents when repairs works had to be carried out which could not be completed with the resident staying in the property.

5.67 The Assistant Director Building Maintenance recognised that residents would sometimes need to be decanted to another property to carry out repairs, although this was rare. Decants could be disruptive and difficult for residents, and as such residents' needs were considered regarding alternative accommodation and residents were provided with clear information and kept informed throughout the decant process.

5.68 *A Commission Member queried whether the data provided around average working days to respond to plumbing leaks related to initial inspections or jobs being completed.*

5.69 The Strategic Director Housing Services confirmed that the data relating to the average working days it took to respond to plumbing leaks related to the completion of the job. The aim was to inspect and complete repairs for plumbing leaks at the same appointment date by the next working day after an issue was reported.

5.70 *A Commission Member asked whether there were performance monitoring measures in place to ensure housing officers and estate management staff were identifying and raising repairs issues.*

5.71 The Strategic Director Housing Services explained that there was an expectation for housing officers and estate management staff to raise repairs issues when they were identified whilst undertaking their normal duties. Housing officers also monitored and reported repairs identified at estate and block inspections. Having said this, developing key performance indicators around this particular aspect of their roles was not straightforward.

5.72 *A Commission Member asked whether housing officers had access to information pertaining to communal repairs, and whether chasing outstanding communal repairs was part of their role.*

5.73 The Strategic Director Housing Services explained that the Communal Works team had responsibility for managing communal areas works such as the Resident Estate Improvement Fund (REIF) and undertook regular estate walkabouts. Housing officers had access to communal repairs information via the Repairs Hub where necessary, and were expected to monitor and report repairs.

5.74 Having said this, it was important that housing officers spent their time focusing on their day-to-day duties and, ultimately, the responsibility for completing all repairs sat with the building maintenance team. The focus must be to ensure that communal repairs were completed within the agreed time period rather than how housing officers could chase them up.

5.75 *A Commission Member asked whether it would be possible for elected members to access the Repairs Hub to enable them to monitor repairs issues in their wards and chase up outstanding issues.*

5.76 The Strategic Director Housing Services explained that it would not be possible for elected members to access the Repairs Hub as it was an operational system. However, there were plans to embed a members' portal into the new integrated housing IT system which would allow them to track repairs issues more easily.

5.77 *A Commission Member asked what the approach was to ensuring residents were kept up-to-date at each stage of the repairs process.*

5.78 The Strategic Director Housing Services explained that the aspiration was for residents to receive text messages at each stage of the repairs process, for example to confirm appointment dates, send out reminders or communicate any changes to an appointment.

5.79 The Assistant Director Customer Operations added that a text message was sent out to residents each time a repairs job was raised. Contact centre staff were also encouraged to confirm contact details when booking appointments over the phone to ensure that they were up-to-date.

5.80 Keeping residents informed beyond this was an area which needed to improve, and the service was looking at ways in which it could implement systems which would give residents more information on the operatives which were attending the appointment and their expected arrival time.

5.81 In response to a follow up question, the Assistant Director Customer Operations confirmed that residents received basic information on the job via text message rather than just the ticket number. It was acknowledged that more information would be useful to residents, especially those with multiple repairs jobs open.

5.82 A Commission Member asked what the approach was to communicating with residents when additional work may be needed to be undertaken to resolve a repairs issue.

5.83 The Strategic Director Housing Services explained that the aspiration would be for this to be communicated clearly via text. Having said this, it was also important for operatives to be clear with residents about what work may be needed and associated timescale when carrying out inspections or works. Whilst damp and mould cases may be more complex, operatives should be making use of the Repairs Hub when attending jobs and making appointments there and then.

5.84 A Commission Member asked about the level of information sharing across Housing Services and Customer Services to ensure contact centre staff had access to all necessary information relating to a repairs issue.

5.85 The Strategic Director Housing Services explained that there were plans to put an interim system in place to allow for better information sharing between Housing Services and Customer Service before the implementation of the fully integrated housing IT system.

5.86 It was recognised that giving contact centre staff more detailed information on repairs issues would allow them to more easily resolve residents' issues and improve their experience of reporting issues. For example, this may include more information on repairs currently underway at a property and a residents' contact centre history.

5.87 The Strategic Director Customer & Workplace clarified that contact centre staff had full visibility of a repairs job where the contractor had been onboarded onto the Repairs Hub. However, there were challenges in getting relevant information from those contractors which were not yet onboarded which could lead to delays.

Summing Up

5.88 The Chair thanked Commission Members for their questions and all witnesses for their responses and engagement with the scrutiny process.

5.89 It was explained that, after the meeting, the Commission would reflect on the evidence heard and may make suggestions or recommendations for consideration.

6 Minutes of the Meeting

6.1 The draft minutes of the previous meeting on 22nd November 2023 would follow in the next meeting agenda.

7 Living in Hackney Work Programme 2023/24

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

7.2 It was explained that the draft Housing Strategy, draft Private Rented Sector Strategy and Intermediate Housing Panel interim findings were now due to be taken at the March meeting, as the timelines for their completion had been extended. The Community Halls discussion would therefore be moved to the February meeting.

7.3 It was also noted that a follow up discussion on supported accommodation for homeless people with complex needs including Housing Regeneration & Delivery colleagues, health partners and Health in Hackney Scrutiny Members would be held at the meeting in February. This would be in place of the discussion on the Parks & Green Spaces Strategy which had been postponed.

8 Any Other Business



8.1 None.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00 - 9.35 pm

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London Borough of Hackney
Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission
Municipal Year 2023/24
Monday 22 January 2024

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 Clare Joseph (Vice-Chair), Cllr Joseph Ogundemuren, Cllr Zoe Garbett, Cllr Yvonne Maxwell and Cllr Susan Fajana-Thomas
Councillors in Virtual Attendance:	Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Ian Rathbone and Cllr Caroline Selman
Apologies:	Cllr Sam Pallis and Cllr Ali Sadek
Officers In Attendance:	Helena Stephenson (Assistant Director Tenancy Services), Wayne Hylton (Head of Anti-Social Behaviour & Estate Safety), Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney (Director Environment and Climate Change), Gerry McCarthy (Assistant Director Community Safety, Enforcement & Business Regulations), Maurice Mason (Community Safety Manager), Steven Davison (Enforcement Manager) and Jacqueline Fearon (Operations Director Tenancy and Home Ownership)
Other People in Attendance:	Cllr Susan Fajana-Thomas (Community Safety and Regulatory Services) and Detective Chief Superintendent James Conway (Borough Commander, Met Police Central East Borough Command Unit)
Other People in Virtual Attendance:	Steve Waddington (Strategic Director Housing Services), Steve Webster (Resident Liaison Group Co-Chair) and Zahra Shoorvazi (Resident Liaison Group Co-Chair)
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 Cllr Pallis and Cllr Sadek.

1.3 Cllr Selma, Cllr Rathbone and Cllr Oszen were in online attendance.

2 Urgent Items / Order of Business

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

3 Declaration of Interest

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4 Anti-Social Behaviour on Council Managed Estates & Blocks

4.1 The Chair opened the item by explaining that the Commission was keen to hear about how the Council works with partner agencies and communities to ensure multi-agency responses and support in order to prevent, reduce and if necessary enforce against anti-social behaviour on council managed estates and blocks.

4.2 The Commission saw this discussion as timely given the recent refresh of the Community Safety Partnership Plan, and the Government's recently published Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan which promised new measures to support relevant agencies.

4.3 Anti-social behaviour on council managed estates and blocks was also identified as a concern for residents in the Overview & Scrutiny annual work programme consultation 2023/24.

4.4 As part of the scrutiny process, the Resident Liaison Group carried out a survey to understand the experiences of residents living in council-managed homes in reporting, being kept-up to-date on and resolving anti-social behaviour issues.

4.5 Representing London Borough of Hackney

- Councillor Susan Fajana-Thomas, Community Safety and Regulatory Services
- Steve Waddington, Strategic Director Housing Services
- Helena Stephenson, Assistant Director Tenancy Services
- Jacqueline Fearon, Operations Director Tenancy and Home Ownership
- Wayne Hylton, Head of Anti-Social Behaviour & Estate Safety
- Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney, Director Environment and Climate Change,
- Gerry McCarthy, Assistant Director Community Safety, Enforcement & Business Regulations
- Maurice Mason, Community Safety Manager
- Steven Davison, Enforcement Manager

4.6 External Guests

- Detective Chief Superintendent James Conway, Borough Commander, Met Police Central East Borough Command Unit
- Steve Webster and Zahra Shoorvazi, Resident Liaison Group Co-Chairs

4.7 The Chair then invited the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Regulatory Services and Council officers to give a verbal presentation. The main points are highlighted below.

4.8 Anti-social behaviour (ASB) plays a major part in whether residents felt happy and safe in their homes, as well as how satisfied they were with the Council as a landlord. This could be true whether the issues were serious, high level crimes or related to issues such as noise, fly-tipping and other nuisance behaviours.

4.9 Housing Services was committed to working with reporters and alleged perpetrators in a holistic way, working towards prevention and behaviour change wherever possible. This was in recognition of the social determinants of ASB, and that many reporters and alleged perpetrators of ASB were vulnerable.

4.10 This involved working in partnership with other teams and partner agencies to tackle the root causes of ASB while providing clear boundaries and expectations around behaviour as required. This included diversionary programmes and community activities, CCTV, property adjustments, mediation and referrals for support.

4.11 This also provided a firm basis for robust enforcement action where efforts to change behaviour did not work, recognising that enforcement was a key tool in a victim-centred approach. This included warning letters, additional patrols and enforcement powers such as Community Protection Warnings, civil injunctions, full or partial closure orders or criminal charges.

4.12 All new tenants were required to sign a Tenancy Agreement which set out the behaviours expected of all tenants. New tenancies would be introductory tenancies unless the person had previously held a secure/assured tenancy for 12 months prior to signing up.

4.13 The tenancy would become a 'secure' tenancy if the resident did not break any of the tenancy conditions during the introductory period of 12 months. The tenancy may be 'demoted' (giving the resident fewer rights) if the Council had to take them to court because of ASB.

4.14 The approach to resolving ASB in Housing Services included the ASB Team, Resident Sustainment Team, Housing Management Team and TMOs. The wider partnership also included the Police, Community Safety & Enforcement, Gangs Team, legal services, TRAs, social care and health, employment support and other landlords in the locality.

4.15 There were a number of pressures, drivers and opportunities within the social housing sector which impacted on Housing Services' approach to ASB. This included the introduction of new Social Housing Regulation, where ASB and promoting good neighbourhood relations featured heavily.

4.16 One of four of the new Consumer Standards focused on neighbourhoods and communities, outlining requirements on working cooperatively to contribute to the upkeep and safety of shared spaces, cooperating with partners to promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing, working with the Police and other relevant organisations to deter and tackle ASB, and working with other agencies tackling domestic abuse and tenants to access support and advice.

4.17 Working alongside this regulation was the Housing Ombudsman, which looked at complaints about social housing providers and evaluated housing policies and practice. It produced Spotlight reports on key issues with recommendations for improvement, with recent reports focusing on noise complaints and knowledge and information management.

4.18 To prepare for Social Housing Regulation inspection and ensure compliance with Housing Ombudsman directions and guidance, Housing Services had initiated a deep dive service review to consider how the ASB and Estate Safety Team could be modernised and improved.

4.19 The local Community Safety Partnership approach was driven by the Community Safety Strategic Assessment, which informed the priorities of the Community Safety Plan 2023/26 (of which ASB was identified as a key priority). At a local level, strategic and tactical ASB information and analysis was utilised, including community complaints and feedback.

4.20 It was also influenced by the new national ASB Action Plan which gave agencies and landlords additional powers to be able to deal with ASB, although work would need to be undertaken at a local level to understand how these additional powers could best be utilised to reflect local circumstances.

4.21 In terms of delivery, partnership monthly tasking meetings, attended by key internal stakeholders, were used to allocate resources to community and ASB problems. The style of partnership interventions used here ranged across prevention, diversion and enforcement activities.

4.22 Partnership weekly tasking meetings were used to focus on estate based ASB and were attended by the Metropolitan Police, Housing Services, Turning Point, Operation ADDER and Support When It Matters outreach teams. An audit trail was retained of all interventions undertaken by the partnership including hours patrolled and other ASB related interventions.

4.23 ASB Action Panels were also utilised, which allowed stakeholders to focus on the granular details of a particular problem. This may involve sharing data and analysis between relevant agencies to understand an issue in more detail which may inform subsequent actions.

4.24 Residents were able to report ASB issues via email, telephone, online through the "Report a Problem" website or through the noise works process which covered the out of office noise process together with gaps in service provision.

4.25 Between January 2022 and December 2023 there were 11,093 noise calls linked to Council-managed estates, which equated to almost a third (31.3%) of all noise calls. There were 2,213 victimised households on estates. The percentage of repeat victims on estates was 80%, so the majority were repeat callers.

4.26 The ASB Case Review was available to support victims of ASB (formerly known as the Community Trigger). The ASB Case Review was published on the community safety website. Last year, there were 34 reports of which just four met the threshold for intervention.

4.27 In recognition of the difficulty some residents faced in reporting and being kept-up-to-date on ASB issues, the Community Safety team would shortly be implementing an integrated ASB reporting and case management system. This would provide for anonymous reporting and risk management of ASB cases, a single point of contact for victims and better management information.

4.28 In terms of how community engagement was undertaken to identify community concern and support residents to understand what constitutes ASB and the range of options available to them, stakeholders attended ward panels, undertook community surveys and made use of social media.

4.29 Enforcement powers were utilised where necessary, including Fixed Penalty Notices, ASB Warning, Community Protection Notices and Warnings and Closure Orders. The case study "E5" was referenced to highlight how the full extent of these powers might be used to address a complex ASB issue.

4.30 In May 2023, the Police executed a drugs search warrant and on entry found Class A drugs with an estimated street value consistent with drug supply. The tenant and another two individuals were arrested for possession with intent to supply a class A drug.

4.31 Residents reported to the Council that they felt intimidated by the tenant and the number of unknown people frequenting the building at all times of day and night. The tenant was threatening and violent toward them, visitors were frequently found taking drugs inside the building and urinating or loitering outside, and the tenant played loud music, hosted loud parties, and disturbed the peace constantly. Women were also often heard screaming in pain from the tenant's property.

4.32 The tenant was therefore invited to an interview with an ASB Officer in June 2023. Allegations of ASB, disorderly behaviour, drug dealing, and drug-related activities were presented to him, which were denied.

4.33 A referral was made to the Resident Sustainment Team, which informed the tenant his tenancy was at risk and a Notice Of Seeking Possession would be issued. As the activities did not stop, the Community Safety & Enforcement Team applied for a Closure Order under as the most effective way to provide respite to the residents by temporarily closing the address.

4.34 Anonymised impact statements from residents were compiled by the ASB Officer, and the Police also provided statements on their visits and the illegal activities associated with the address. A legal file was compiled reflecting this information.

4.35 In August 2023, the Closure Order was granted for three months. The property was secured and Sitex security screens were installed the following day with the three key stakeholders present on site (ASB Housing, Police and Enforcement).

4.36 The case was monitored and in October 2023, the Principal Enforcement Officer, in conjunction with colleagues in Housing Services and the Police, agreed to apply for an extension application of the order for the maximum period of a further three months.

4.37 In November 2023, the extension was granted for a maximum period of three months. The ASB officer had served him a Notice Seeking Possession on Absolute

Grounds, to terminate the tenancy. The Closure Order would be monitored in the ASB Action Panel.

4.38 The Chair then invited the Borough Commander, Metropolitan Police Central East Borough Command Unit (CE BCU) to give a verbal presentation. The main points are highlighted below.

4.39 The partnership approach was important in addressing ASB issues locally, allowing the Metropolitan Police to understand ASB more holistically before taking action where necessary. What begins as an initial report of ASB may lead to further investigations of criminality such as drug dealing and organised crime, and similarly what begins as a report of criminality may not result in criminal charges but more preventative action or support measures by Housing Services.

4.40 The CE BCU received 7,350 999 or 111 calls between October 2022 and December 2023 relating to ASB in Hackney. This placed Hackney 12th out of all 32 boroughs, slightly above Waltham Forest, similar to Haringey and notably below neighbouring Tower Hamlets.

4.41 In terms of how things had changed over time, there had been 19.2% fewer ASB calls between October 2022 and December 2023. However, this data was based on calls into 999 or 111 and should be treated with caution, as many reports of ASB came through other routes.

4.42 There had also been notable spikes in March and October 2023, but this was thought to be due to data recording issues rather than any notable spike in ASB issues. Overall, ASB related calls had slightly decreased year on year over the previous three-year period, but had remained relatively.

4.43 Between October and November 2023 there had been notable reductions in calls relating to ASB in hotspots such as Hoxton East & Shoreditch (-29%) and Hoxton West (-45%). However, the data was treated with caution because most ASB calls tended to be received in the summer months.

4.44 In terms of the types of ASB calls received, 75.3% were related to nuisance, with much smaller numbers coming in for personal issues (5.1%), suspicious circumstances (3.6%), civil disputes (2.9%) and environmental issues (2.1%). Nuisance encompassed a wide range of activities, each of which may or may not become a criminal investigation.

4.45 Around 58% of calls were made for rowdy behaviour, 11% for rowdy and inconsiderate neighbours, around 7% for vehicle nuisance, around 6% for noise and lower numbers for issues such as begging and highway incidents. Calls for drug offences were low, but it was important to note that many of these calls would initially relate to rowdy behaviour.

4.46 The geographic spread of calls was to be expected, with more calls being made relating to ASB in areas such as Hoxton East & Shoreditch (125 calls), Homerton (114 calls) and Hackney Central (109 calls) than areas such as Cazenove (62 calls), King's Park (59 calls) and Stamford Hill West (48 calls).

4.47 Responses to ASB from CE BCU varied from de-escalation, advice and referrals, to the use of enforcement powers and criminal interventions. The ASB Early

Intervention Scheme (EIS) was a stepped approach used across London to deal with people coming to police notice through their ASB which used increased intelligence, highlighting of safeguarding issues and diversionary opportunities prior to any enforcement action. Hackney ranked 3rd across all 32 boroughs for the use of EIS interventions in 2023 (1079).

4.48 Compliance in terms of CE BCU response to 999 or 111 calls relating to ASB was monitored centrally, with CE BCU responding to just over 90% of all calls received. This was a relatively high compliance rate, especially when considering the total volume of calls received and the fact that most ASB issues reported did not relate to crime related aspects.

4.49 In terms of resident engagement, community contact sessions were utilised to enable residents to receive ASB and crime prevention advice, report ASB and crime or talk to officers about issues of local concern.

4.50 Additionally, the neighbourhood policing model was currently being reviewed by CE BCU, which had begun with the appointment of a dedicated Superintendent to oversee neighbourhood policing. The amount of dedicated ward officers and community support officers were also set to increase, and inspectors would oversee neighbourhood policing across ward clusters.

4.51 Officers from across the Metropolitan Police, British Transport Police and City of London Police also worked together to police the local transport network to tackle crime and ASB, focusing on the bus and road networks, as well as the rail and Tube networks.

4.52 The Chair then invited the Resident Liaison Group (RLG) Co-Chairs to give a verbal presentation on the survey undertaken to understand the experiences of residents in reporting, being kept-up to-date on and resolving ASB issues. The summary overview of the responses received were shared with those in attendance, as included within the agenda papers.

Questions, Answers and Discussion

4.53 *A Commission Member asked for further information on the most common types of ASB, and how community safety partners used intelligence to direct ASB resources appropriately.*

4.54 The Community Safety Manager explained that the Community Safety Intelligence Hub provided the performance data, analysis and intelligence to services and agencies upon which resources were directed and decisions were made.

4.55 53% of all ASB on estates related to noise. This could be related to loud music, parties, multiple visits at a property and banging to name a few. Rowdy and inconsiderate behaviour was also a common ASB issue on estates, which related to general nuisance behaviour such as people drinking or taking drugs in communal spaces or young people loitering.

4.56 *A Commission Member asked for further information on how CCTV was used across estates to stop ASB before it happened.*

4.57 The Community Safety Manager explained that CCTV was used across estates to reduce a range of anti-social behaviour. They played an important role in reassuring residents that action was being taken in regards to ASB issues, discouraging anti-social behaviour and gathering evidence to support enforcement action.

4.58 A Commission Member asked how the Council and its partners supported residents to understand what constitutes ASB, the range of options available to them and how to access them.

4.59 The Assistant Director Tenancy Services explained that Housing Services was working on ensuring effective communication of key messages around ASB and service developments to the wider resident base. This included regular updates through Love Hackney, leaflets, the website, social media and estate posters. The service was also looking to be more proactive in terms of translating materials into languages spoken by residents and providing translation services.

4.60 A Commission Member asked for further information about how the integrated ASB reporting and case management system would work in practice and its implementation timelines.

4.61 The Community Safety Manager explained that the integrated reporting and case management system would be a single point of contact for ASB victims, and provide information to ensure that victims were provided with regular updates and were involved in the problem-solving process. This system would be implemented by the end of January or in early February 2024.

4.62 The Assistant Director Tenancy Services clarified that the new integrated system was not a system in which Housing Services could manage its own casework. This would instead be managed by the team through the new integrated housing IT system which was going out to tender imminently. Both systems would have application programming interface (API) software which would allow for Housing Services and Community Safety to easily share information across them.

4.63 A Commission Member asked about what the Council understood about repeat victims on estates, and how it supported them to address their ASB issues.

4.64 The Community Safety Manager began by highlighting an error in the written submission and presentation, which stated that 80% of residents who reported ASB on estates were repeat victims. 25% of residents who reported ASB on estates were repeat victims, which was still high.

4.65 In practice, repeat reports of ASB would be picked up by Housing Services and referred to the Principal Enforcement Officer. The issues would be raised at a subsequent weekly tasking meeting which was attended by Community Safety, the Police, Housing Services and other relevant agencies.

4.66 A Commission Member asked about how good liaison and proactive working amongst relevant agencies was promoted, particularly in relation to more complex cases of ASB.

4.67 The Community Safety Manager explained that weekly meetings were attended by the Police, Housing Services, Public Health, Turning Point, and Support When It Matters outreach teams to ensure multi-agency, holistic responses to ASB issues.

4.68 The aim was to provide support for perpetrators which had complex needs, such as responsive advice and referrals. However, enforcement action was also needed in some cases where this did not work.

4.69 An audit trail was retained of all interventions undertaken by the partnership including hours patrolled and other ASB related interventions. It was expected that the introduction of the integrated reporting and case management system would allow for this information to be shared more easily with residents too.

4.70 The Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Regulatory Services added that the Adult Safeguarding team did a piece of work in the previous year around ASB and mental health, which could be shared after the meeting.

4.71 A Commission Member asked whether the location and suitability of social housing was considered when allocating homes to households which may have more complex needs as a means of preventing ASB.

4.72 The Assistant Director Community Safety, Enforcement & Business Regulations explained that the Council were compelled to investigate issues that could be deemed as 'statutory nuisance'. Whilst this related to noise nuisance from a property, enforcement action could not be taken when it related to domestic activity such as someone walking around their flat. In these cases property-related adjustments may be encouraged such as carpets or noise reducing pads.

4.73 The Assistant Director Tenancy Services explained that the demand for housing significantly exceeded supply and in reality it was difficult to always place households in the most appropriate way. Having said this, would be making changes in response to the Housing Ombudsman recommendations around ensuring that information shared relating to an applicant's suitability for a home was substantial enough to support any requirements relating to sensitive lettings.

4.74 The Head of Anti-Social Behaviour & Estate Safety added that this may include mediation and enhanced information sharing with residents, as well as property related enhancements such as fitting carpets, removing hard flooring, ensuring adequate insulation and fitting anti-vibration mats into washing machine space. It was important to consider the impact of the cost of living crisis on households, and look to work with them sensitively when encouraging property related adjustments to be made.

4.75 The Assistant Director Tenancy Services went on to explain that Housing First was delivered locally to provide permanent housing and support for individuals with complex needs. Tenancy and housing management was sometimes challenging for these properties, but it was not always easy to predict and was not necessarily related to where households were placed.

4.76 A Commission Member asked whether the Council had considered reopening area housing offices so that residents could access face-to-face support on ASB issues more easily.

4.77 The Strategic Director Housing Services explained that the decision to close area housing offices in 2020 because footfall was low and they were not providing value for

money. Local housing surgeries were set up to ensure residents could still receive in-person help and advice on housing issues across various locations.

4.78 The Resident Liaison Group Co-Chair added that TRAs worked closely with Housing Services to find solutions to ASB issues where necessary, and to provide information to residents about local issues and concerns.

4.79 *A Commission Member asked about how CE BCU sought to prioritise prevention, support and behaviour change rather than enforcement and criminalisation in cases of ASB.*

4.80 The Borough Commander, Metropolitan Police CE BCU recognised that the BCU was not where it wanted to be in terms of working with local communities to tackle anti-social behaviour in a more preventative manner.

4.81 The neighbourhood policing model was currently being reviewed to ensure the BCU and partner agencies could work more closely together with local communities to identify and tackle issues of local concern in a more holistic way. A dedicated Superintendent to oversee neighbourhood policing had been appointed, and increased numbers of dedicated ward officers and community support officers were expected to support this work.

4.82 The BCU was involved in partnership tasking to ensure multi-agency responses to ASB issues, and partnership interventions here ranged from prevention, diversion and enforcement. In reality, police powers were weighted towards enforcement action and criminal prosecution, but it did work with relevant agencies on preventative and diversionary activities.

4.83 The BCU was looking to prioritise a more diversionary approach going forward, ensuring coordinated action was provided with partners to ensure that individuals were directed into support rather than further or disproportionate criminalisation.

4.84 *The Resident Liaison Group Co-Chair asked whether CE BCU valued the contributions of local Neighbourhood Watch schemes in identifying and providing solutions to local community safety concerns.*

4.85 The Borough Commander, Metropolitan Police CE BCU explained that watch schemes and initiatives were a good way for local people to be actively involved in keeping their neighbourhoods safe. It was hoped that the review of the local neighbourhood policing model would provide a clearer interface between local policing and watch schemes which perhaps had not been there before.

4.86 In addition, the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime had been progressing work to overhaul community engagement and scrutiny mechanisms in Hackney to ensure they were more accountable, transparent and representative. It was hoped that as these developed it would become easier for watch schemes to actively engage with the local BCU.

4.87 One example of best practice was the Stamford Hill Shomrim, which had its roots as a Neighbourhood Watch group. It now set up reassurance patrols and community engagement activities, and in particular contributed to working towards achieving a reduction in hate crime towards the Jewish community.

4.88 The Assistant Director Community Safety, Enforcement & Business Regulations added that the Council valued the work of Neighbourhood Watch schemes, and worked closely with them particularly in youth crime and anti-social behaviour hotspots.

4.89 A Commission Member asked for further information on the case study "E5" referenced, particularly around the involvement of partner agencies and services in preventative and diversionary measures.

4.90 The Enforcement Manager explained that the case study was referenced to demonstrate the full range of enforcement measures the Council might have needed to take in order to resolve a complex ASB issue.

4.91 Before getting to a stage where enforcement action was necessary, Housing Services would have worked closely with the individual in question to provide dedicated support and signpost to relevant services before escalating.

4.92 A Commission Member asked about the training local police officers got to equip them to provide trauma informed responses to ASB issues.

4.93 The Borough Commander, Metropolitan Police CE BCU explained that trauma informed practices informed part of the basic officer training, but recognised that this was an area that needed to be built upon at a local level.

4.94 There was a desire to ensure that once an officer arrived at the BCU they would also get further, more localised trauma informed training. The Superintendent responsible for neighbourhood policing in Tower Hamlets was overseeing a taskforce to revisit the local training offer with this in mind.

4.95 A Commission Member asked how the Council used Ombudsman reports and decisions to develop its policy and practice.

4.96 The Assistant Director for Tenancy Services explained that the ASB service improvement plan had been initiatives in response to recent Housing Ombudsman Spotlight reports, and to ensure compliance with directions and guidance.

4.97 This would include a review of ASB-related policies and procedures, including the introduction of a new neighbourhood management policy and vulnerable resident policy and procedure, as well a new staff training and development programme.

4.98 A Commission Member asked how the Council prioritised reports of ASB.

4.99 The Assistant Director Community Safety, Enforcement & Business Regulations explained that on receiving a report of ASB an assessment was undertaken by an officer to determine whether it was a high or low risk report. If deemed to be higher risk, an investigation would begin immediately by ward-based enforcement officers.

4.100 One challenge it did face was in getting registered social landlords operating in Hackney to take action in cases of ASB, which may lead to prolonged investigations and repeated reports. One reason for this, as highlighted in the Housing Ombudsman Spotlight report on noise complaints, was that the member of staff responsible for handling ASB reports was often the same as for collecting rent which may give rise to a conflict of interest.

Summing Up

4.101 The Chair thanked Commission Members for their questions and all witnesses for their responses and engagement with the scrutiny process.

4.102 It was explained that, after the meeting, the Commission would reflect on the evidence heard and may make suggestions or recommendations for consideration.

5 Minutes of the Meeting

5.1 The draft minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

5.2 The draft minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th December 2023 would follow in the next meeting agenda.

6 Living in Hackney Work Programme 2023/24

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 It was explained that, following a request from officers, the community halls discussion which was scheduled for February had been postponed. This would now likely take place early in the new municipal year, although would need to be agreed as part of the 2024/25 work planning process.

7 Any Other Business

7.1 None.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00pm – 9.05pm



<p>Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission 27th February 2024 Item 7 – Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission Work Programme 2023/24</p>	<p>Item No</p> <p>7</p>
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Outline

Attached is the work programme for the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission for the 2023/24 municipal year.

Please note that this is a working document.

Action

Members are asked to note the work programme for the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission for the 2023/24 municipal year.

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Overview & Scrutiny

Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission: Work Programme for June 2023 – March 2024

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
12th June 2023 Papers deadline: Tues 30th May 2023	Cabinet Question Time: Accountability of Private Rented Sector & Housing Associations	Cllr Sem Moema, Deputy Cabinet Member for Private Rented Sector and Housing Affordability	To question the Deputy Cabinet Member on the Council's relationship with its housing association partners and the private rented sector and how it works with both tenants and landlords to ensure effective accountability and protection. Particular focus will be given to how the Council works with housing associations and the private rented sector to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maximise supply, nominations and lettings ● Support tenancy sustainment ● Maintain properties in good repair
	LiH Scrutiny Commission Work Programme Planning 2023-2024	Craig Player, Overview & Scrutiny Officer	To consider and make suggestions for the LiH Scrutiny Commission work programme for the new municipal year.

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
10th July 2023 Papers deadline: Mon 4 th July 2023	Meeting the Council's Net Zero Target: Retrofitting	Steve Waddington, Strategic Director Housing Services James Goddard, Assistant Director Strategy, Assurance and Private Sector Housing	To look at the Council's work to meet its net zero carbon target in relation to the retrofit of housing stock in the borough since the Commission last looked at retrofit in 2021 as part of the overarching Net Zero Review. Particular focus will be given to progress against retrofitting and promoting better energy use across two key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Council housing stock ● Housing association, private rented sector and owner-occupied housing stock
	Housing Support for Care Leavers: Executive Response	Craig Player, Overview & Scrutiny Officer	To note the Executive response to the Housing Support for Care Leavers Review undertaken with the Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission in 2021/22 and agree the follow up process.
	Accountability of Registered Social Landlords: Recommendations and Findings	Craig Player, Overview & Scrutiny Officer	To note the agreed letter to the Executive and Housing Associations in response to the scrutiny sessions on the accountability and performance of registered social landlords held throughout the 2022/23 municipal year.

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
	LiH Scrutiny Commission Work Programme Planning 2023-2024	Craig Player, Overview & Scrutiny Officer	To note the shortlist for the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission work programme for the new municipal year and make any comments and/or further suggestions as appropriate.
18th September 2023 Papers deadline: Tues 5 th September 2023	Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-25	Rob Miller, Strategic Director Customer & Workplace Jennifer Wynter, Assistant Director Benefits & Homeless Prevention	To look at the Council's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-25 and provide any feedback or comments before it is adopted by Cabinet.
	Letter to Independent Office for Police Conduct: Child Q Investigation	Craig Player, Overview & Scrutiny Officer	To note the agreed letter to the Independent Office for Police Conduct regarding its investigation into the police officers involved in the Child Q incident following the joint scrutiny session held with the Children & Young People's Scrutiny Commission held on 25th April 2023.
	Policing of Drug Use: Findings & Response	Craig Player, Overview & Scrutiny Officer	To note the agreed letter to the Community Safety Partnership and Mayor's Office for Police & Crime and their responses following the scrutiny session on the policing of drug use in Hackney held on 23rd January 2023.

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
	Overview & Scrutiny Public Engagement Protocol	Craig Player, Overview & Scrutiny Officer	To note the Overview & Scrutiny Public Engagement Protocol, which was agreed at Scrutiny Panel on 13th July 2023.
	LiH Scrutiny Commission Work Programme 2023-2024	Craig Player, Overview & Scrutiny Officer	To agree the LiH Scrutiny Commission work programme for the new municipal year.
<p>22nd November 2023</p> <p>Papers deadline: Mon 13th November 2023</p> <p>This meeting was rescheduled from 16th October 2023 due to the Mayoral elections.</p>	Supported Accommodation for Rough Sleepers & Single Homeless People with Complex Needs	<p>Rob Miller, Strategic Director Customer & Workplace</p> <p>Jennifer Wynter, Assistant Director Benefits & Homeless Prevention</p> <p>Dr Adi Cooper OBE, Chair of City & Hackney Adults Safeguarding Board</p>	To look at the current provision and future need for supported accommodation for rough sleepers and single homeless people with multiple and complex needs.

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
	Draft Housing Strategy & Private Sector Housing Strategy: Evidence Base	James Goddard, Assistant Director Strategy, Assurance and Private Sector Housing	To look at the evidence base for the Council's draft Housing Strategy and Private Sector Housing Strategy.
	Resident Engagement for Estate Regeneration: Findings & Executive Response	Craig Player, Overview & Scrutiny Officer	To note the agreed letter to the Executive and its response following the scrutiny session and related work on resident engagement for estate regeneration schemes in Hackney held on 20th April 2023.
	Draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-25: Recommendations & Findings	Craig Player, Overview & Scrutiny Officer	To note the agreed letter to the Executive following the scrutiny sessions on temporary accommodation and the draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy held on 22nd March and 18th September 2023.

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
	Overarching Scrutiny Panel Review into Net Zero: Executive Response	Craig Player, Overview & Scrutiny Officer	To note the Executive response to the Overarching Scrutiny Panel Review into Net Zero undertaken in 2021/22 and the follow up process.
11th December 2023 Papers deadline: Tues 28 th Nov 2023	Housing Services Resident Engagement Strategy 2022-25	Steve Waddington, Strategic Director Housing Services Resident Liaison Group and/or Tenants & Resident Associations	To look at progress made against the strategic priorities identified in the Housing Services Resident Engagement Strategy since it was adopted by Cabinet in December 2022, which are as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Embed a 'Resident First' culture across the service 2. Support our involved residents' groups to thrive 3. Widen the ways residents can engage with us 4. Ensure that residents influence our decision-making and drive service improvement 5. To promote engagement activity that strengthens our communities

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
	Housing Repairs	<p>Steve Waddington, Strategic Director Housing</p> <p>Rob Miller, Strategic Director Customer & Workplace</p> <p>Resident Liaison Group and/or Tenants & Resident Associations</p>	<p>To look at the progress made against the improvement actions put in place by the Council to improve housing repairs performance and customer care.</p> <p>Particular focus will be given to those improvement actions discussed at the previous meeting in December 2022 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Damp & mould and the Leaks Hub ● Property MOTs ● DLO growth ● Roll out of Repairs Hub ● Contract management ● Disrepair case management ● Alternative Dispute Resolution

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
<p>22nd January 2024</p> <p>Papers deadline: Tues 9th January 2024</p>	<p>Anti-Social Behaviour on Council Managed Estates & Blocks</p>	<p>Gerry McCarthy, Assistant Director Community Safety, Enforcement and Business Regulations</p> <p>Steve Waddington, Strategic Director Housing Services</p> <p>Central East Borough Command Unit, Metropolitan Police Service</p> <p>Resident Liaison Group and/or Tenants & Resident Associations</p>	<p>To look at how the Council works with partner agencies and communities to ensure multi-agency responses and support in order to prevent, reduce and if necessary enforce against anti-social behaviour on council managed estates and blocks.</p> <p>Particular focus will be given to the multi-agency approach across key areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prevention and early intervention ● Supporting those affected by anti-social behaviour ● Enforcement and diversionary activities ● Engaging with communities

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
<p>27th February 2024</p> <p>Papers deadline: Thurs 16th February 2024</p>	<p>Supported Accommodation for Rough Sleepers & Single Homeless People with Complex Needs</p>	<p>Rob Miller, Strategic Director Customer & Workplace</p> <p>Jennifer Wynter, Assistant Director Benefits & Homeless Prevention</p> <p>Stephen Haynes, Strategic Director Inclusive Economy, Regeneration & New Homes</p> <p>NHS North East London</p> <p>City & Hackney Public Health</p>	<p>To further understand the challenges and opportunities in developing supported accommodation and in commissioning housing-related support.</p> <p>Particular focus will be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Challenges and opportunities in developing and delivering supported accommodation units ● Challenges and opportunities in commissioning housing-related support ● Enablers and barriers to effective collaboration between key agencies and organisations <p>This session follows on from the previous discussion held at the meeting on 22nd November 2023.</p>

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item
<p>12th March 2024</p> <p>Papers deadline: Fri 1st February 2024</p>	<p>Draft Housing Strategy 2023-28</p>	<p>James Goddard, Assistant Director Strategy, Assurance and Private Sector Housing</p>	<p>To look at the Council's draft Housing Strategy 2023-28 and provide any feedback or comments before it is adopted by Cabinet in early 2024.</p>
	<p>Draft Private Sector Strategy 2023-28</p>	<p>James Goddard, Assistant Director Strategy, Assurance and Private Sector Housing</p>	<p>To look at the Council's draft Private Sector Strategy 2023-28 and provide any feedback or comments before it is adopted by Cabinet in early 2024.</p>
	<p>Intermediate Housing Panel: Interim Findings</p>	<p>James Goddard, Assistant Director Strategy, Assurance and Private Sector Housing</p>	<p>To look at the interim findings of the Intermediate Housing Panel, which has been commissioned by the Council to look into the delivery of intermediate homes (affordable home ownership and intermediate rent).</p>

Items to be considered outside of formal meetings: June 2023 – March 2024

Proposed Item	Directorate and lead officer contact	Description, Comment and Purpose of item	Type
Arts & Culture Funding	Petra Roberts, Strategic Service Head Culture, Libraries and Heritage	To look at how arts and cultural provision is funded in Hackney, and how individuals, groups and organisations are supported to make use of local, regional and national funding opportunities.	Written briefing
Hackney Prevent	Gerry McCarthy, Head of Community Safety, Enforcement and Business Regulations	To look at Hackney Prevent's progress against its key priorities and objectives (with key consideration given to the Channel process), and explore potential ramifications of Home Office funding ending in 2025/25 (though responsibility to implement duty locally remains) on future work.	Written briefing

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