

Title of Report	Compact, Partnership Working with Housing Associations
Key Decision No	CHE S145
For Consideration By	Cabinet
Meeting Date	23 January 2023
Cabinet Member	Mayor Philip Glanville and Cllr Sem Moema, Mayoral Adviser for Private Rented Sector and Housing Affordability
Classification	Open
Ward(s) Affected	All
Key Decision & Reason	Yes Affects two or more wards
Implementation Date if Not Called In	30 January 2023
Group Director	Rickardo Hyatt, Group Director, Climate, Homes and Economy

1. Cabinet Member's introduction

- 1.1. In 2018 the Council published its five-year housing strategy, 'Delivering the homes Hackney needs', setting out the steps we would take to address Hackney's housing crisis, from delivering genuinely affordable homes to tackling rogue landlords. As well as identifying the steps the Council needs to take, the strategy identifies a number of opportunities to work with housing associations to tackle the crisis.
- 1.2. For a number of years, the Council has been working collaboratively with Registered Providers to increase the supply of genuinely affordable housing in Hackney, ensure the fire safety of Hackney's housing blocks, improve energy efficiency, minimise the impact of Right-to-Buy sales and maximise the like-for-like replacement homes sold within Hackney.
- 1.3. While I'm proud of the progress we've made to help tackle the housing crisis, there's still much more to do. A number of dramatic changes have meant that the housing crisis and housing related needs are as acute as ever. These changes include but are not limited to: the climate emergency declaration; the post-Grenfell landscape continuing to bring to light building safety issues and amplifying residents' voices more than ever before; the COVID-19 pandemic; and the considerable impact of the cost of living crisis causing inflation and making life harder for many people in the borough.
- 1.4. We want to continue our work making the borough a better place for all our residents. This Compact reflects the strategy and sets out how we will expand on and champion our working partnership with housing associations, which make up a large proportion of landlords in Hackney.
- 1.5. This Compact builds upon a number of housing related topics the Council and Registered Providers are already working on and refocuses them into the present context. This is all a result of cross-departmental input, as well as input from Housing Associations and condenses this into one partnership document. It sets out our commitment to continuing to do everything we can to give as many Hackney residents as possible a good, safe and genuinely affordable home.

2. Group Director's introduction

- 2.1. Housing Associations make up a large proportion of landlords in Hackney and manage a significant number of homes across the borough. Similarly to the Council, they fulfil an important social role by housing and supporting people in housing need. They contribute to helping meet the Mayor's vision that everyone in Hackney has a genuinely affordable, good quality, and stable home, as well as promoting health and wellbeing.

- 2.2. The Compact contributes to best aligning the Council's and Housing Associations' key priorities, principles and objectives which reflect the current climate. It sets out shared good practice principles and joint commitments across a range of housing related areas to foster partnership working between Hackney Council and Housing Associations operating in the borough.
- 2.3. This Compact has had cross-departmental input within Hackney Council but it is not a Council's document or policy. It is a co-produced partnership document written with the active input of Registered Providers who contributed to it with their wealth of knowledge and experience in working with local communities in the borough.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. Cabinet is recommended to:
 1. Agree the Hackney Council-Housing Associations Compact 2023-2026, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

4. Reason(s) for decision

- 4.1. Cabinet approval of the Compact between Hackney Council and Registered Providers (RPs) is sought in order to foster partnership working between the Council and housing associations operating in the borough as RPs make up a large proportion of landlords and manage a significant number of homes across Hackney.
- 4.2. As emerged in the Exploring the work of Housing Associations in Hackney Scrutiny Review of the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission, it is good practice for the Council to have this type of partnership arrangement in place. A meeting took place in July 2020, as part of the Scrutiny Review, which explored the strengths of formal partnership arrangements.
- 4.3. The Compact is neither a Hackney Council policy nor a contract and cannot be enforced. Although the Compact will not give the Council formal oversight over housing associations (which are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing), it is a non binding mechanism for partnership working. This partnership can contribute to best aligning the Council's and RPs' key principles and objectives thus maximising housing associations' contribution to achieving Hackney Council's vision for the borough.
- 4.4. One of the aims of the Compact is to reinforce shared values and objectives so RPs can best contribute to the Councils' vision: keep Hackney a place for everyone by ensuring all residents can have safety, security and long-term roots in the borough.

- 4.5. The Compact, together with the Better Homes Partnership Housing (BHP) Forum meetings that will be relaunched once the Compact is introduced, will be a tool for the Council and housing associations operating in the borough to reciprocally share best practice, in a range of areas including but not limited to: development of new homes, carbon management and decarbonisation (e.g. retrofitting of housing stock), dealing with anti-social behaviour, housing management, area based partnership working and place based community development.
- 4.6. The Compact will cover the period 2023-2026 and will be reviewed annually. Key strategic objectives will be monitored via the Better Homes Partnership Housing Forums.

5. Details of alternative options considered and rejected

- 5.1. As having this Council-RPs partnership document is not a statutory requirement, an alternative option would be not to produce the Compact. However, it was decided to produce a Compact because of the benefits that it can offer in terms of the Council working in partnership with the housing associations operating in Hackney and vice-versa. Some of these benefits are set out below:
- It presents the Council's objectives, principles and priorities on a range of housing related topics proposed by both the Councils and housing associations who took part in the project meetings and co-production of the partnership document ("*Why is this important?*" in the Compact).
 - It shows how the Council and housing associations aim to work together to help address the housing and housing-related needs and aspirations of residents in Hackney.
 - It provides a number of joint commitments that can facilitate partnership working ("*How can we work together?*" in the Compact) and can help maximise the quality, and consistency, of services that Hackney RP residents receive from their landlords.
 - It sets out how housing and housing providers can contribute to residents' health and wellbeing, as well as enabling residents to secure training and jobs, and sustain their tenancies, also via a hyper local place based community development approach.

6. Background

Policy Context

- 6.1. Registered Providers are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) which is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by

the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The role of the RSH is being strengthened to deliver the measures aimed at improving safety, accountability and transparency in social housing, proposed in the 2020 Social Housing White Paper - The Charter for Social Housing Residents.

- 6.2. Although the Council has no formal oversight over housing associations, the Hackney Housing Strategy 2017-22 (and Housing Strategy Position Paper 2023) refers to collaboration and partnership working between the Council and RP partners to achieve the Council's housing vision and the Mayor's of Hackney broader vision for the borough. For example, the Housing Strategy refers to Hackney Council and RPs working collaboratively to: increase the supply of genuinely affordable housing in the borough; minimise the impact of Right to Buy sales and maximise the like-for-like replacement, within the borough, of homes sold; to ensure the fire safety of Hackney's housing blocks; to help improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty. The proposed Compact reinforces and expands on these Housing Strategy actions.
- 6.3. The proposed Compact is articulated around fourteen topics/headlines thus making a contribution not only to the achievement of RPs related Housing Strategy goals, but also other Council's strategies, such as the Community Strategy 2018-2028 and the Inclusive Economy Strategy 2019-25. The themes/headlines of the proposed Compact are as follows: 1) New Homes Development; 2) Nominations and Lettings; 3) Homelessness and Tenancy Sustainment; 4) Adult Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse; 5) Safeguarding Children and Young People; 6) Anti-social Behaviour and Estate Safety; 7) Maintaining Properties in Good Repair; 8) Estates Waste and Recycling; 9) Building and Fire Safety; 10) Carbon Management; 11) Supporting Residents with Health and Wellbeing; 12) Supported Housing; 13) Inclusive Economy: Employment Skills and Adult Learning; and 14) Registered Providers' role in communities.

Equality impact assessment

- 6.4. An EQIA was carried out for the Compact. Overall, the partnership document and its proposals will be highly positive for groups with Protected Characteristics. They are intended to align good practice principles across providers of social housing thus helping improve the housing and housing related services for Hackney residents, particularly those on low incomes.
- 6.5. It is worth noting that, although the Council will monitor high level key principles, the Compact is a partnership document and not a contract; it will not give Hackney Council formal oversight over housing associations. The Compact will contribute to aligning good practice principles and objectives amongst social housing providers, and can help maximise the quality and consistency of the housing related services that residents receive from their social landlords. However, the extent of the positive impacts of the proposals will ultimately depend on each provider and their work.

Sustainability and climate change

- 6.6. There is an entire section of the Compact which covers Carbon Management and encourages Council and RP partners collaboration on decarbonisation, heat networks and how to reduce the capital cost of decarbonisation. This section also includes a commitment about RPs' contribution towards the achievement of the goals set out in the future Hackney's Climate Action Plan.

Consultations

- 6.7. No formal consultations are required as part of this report. However, officers widely engaged with Hackney Council colleagues from a number of teams and directorates to ensure that expert and specialist input fed each section of the Compact.
- 6.8. Officers also widely engaged with housing associations via a number of project meetings where Council officers and RP representatives defined and discussed the topics/headlines that compose the Compact. RP representatives contributed to and co-produced the different sections of this partnership document.

Risk assessment

- 6.9. There may be a reputational risk should the Compact not be agreed considering that the project was co-produced with RPs. RP representatives attended project meetings and actively contributed, with their time and work, to the production of this partnership document.

7. Comments of the Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.

- 7.1 There are no specific Finance implications resulting from this report. Any future financial implications linked to the principles in the partnership document will be commented on at the relevant time.

8. Comments of the Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising from the Cabinet Report.
- 8.2 The proposed Hackney Council-Housing Associations Compact 2023-2026 provides a long term framework for Hackney Council to continue to work towards achieving the Council's housing vision and the Mayor's of Hackney broader vision for the borough.
- 8.3 The Cabinet Report complies with the requirement for the Council to carry out Equality Impact Assessments of its proposals and Hackney Officers & Their

Registered Providers stakeholders have been in regular discussions which has contributed to this Report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Hackney Council-Housing Associations Compact 2023-2026

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment

Exempt

None

Background documents

None

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