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London Borough of Hackney  
Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission  
Municipal Year 2023/24  
Monday 10 July 2023

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

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<b>Chair:</b>	<b>Councillor Soraya Adejare</b>
<b>Councillors in Attendance:</b>	<b>Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Clare Joseph (Vice-Chair), Cllr Joseph Ogundemuren, Cllr Sam Pallis, Cllr Ali Sadek, Cllr Zoe Garbett and Cllr Yvonne Maxwell</b>
<b>Apologies:</b>	<b>Cllr Ian Rathbone and Cllr Caroline Selman</b>
<b>Officers In Attendance:</b>	<b>James Goddard (Strategic Head of Strategy, Assurance and Private Sector Housing)</b>
<b>Officers in Virtual Attendance:</b>	<b>Rickardo Hyatt (Group Director Climate, Homes and Economy) and Sinead Burke (Head of Property and Asset Management)</b>
<b>Other People in Virtual Attendance:</b>	<b>Cllr Clayeon McKenzie (Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation) and Steve Webster (Resident Liaison Group Co-Chair)</b>
<b>Officer Contact:</b>	<b>Craig Player</b>  020 8356 4316  craig.player@hackney.gov.uk

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## **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 Cllrs Rathbone and Selman.

### **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 Meeting the Council's Net Zero Target: Retrofitting

4.1 The Chair opened the item by explaining that the Commission was keen to hear about the progress made in retrofitting and promoting better energy use across Council-owned and managed housing stock, and in encouraging retrofit and energy monitoring across housing association, private rented sector and owner-occupied housing stock.

4.2 The Commission saw this discussion as timely given the adoption of Hackney's Climate Action Plan in May 2023, in which retrofit was identified as a key priority. The Commission was also keen to follow up on its previous work on retrofit as part of the Scrutiny Panel's overarching Net Zero Review in 2021/22, and review progress against the Council's objectives since.

### 4.3 Representing London Borough of Hackney

- Cllr Clayeon McKenzie - Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation
- Rickardo Hyatt - Group Director Climate, Homes and Economy
- James Goddard - Strategic Head of Strategy, Assurance and Private Sector Housing
- Sinead Burke - Head of Property and Asset Management

### Council owned and managed housing stock

4.4 The Chair invited the Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation Head of Property and Asset Management to give a short verbal presentation. The main points are highlighted below.

4.5 The Council was committed to achieving net zero by 2040 for its housing stock. In addition to a significant reduction in the Council's climate emissions, it would also mean the homes it manages would be comfortable, offer value for money for residents and be more resistant to damp and mould.

4.6 Officers had carried out valuable research on the technical potential of its retrofit of homes, and as planned were now moving to begin pilot projects. The Housing Services Resident Engagement Strategy would provide a framework for how the Council engages with residents on retrofit.

4.7 It was important to understand the challenges the Council faced in retrofitting its housing stock. It would require significant levels of investment, which was currently unaffordable even with grant funding. As well as this, the Council needed to ensure it focused on key issues such as fire safety and regular maintenance.

4.8 Since the last update in November 2021, Housing Services had appointed consultants to carry out feasibility studies for a possible net zero retrofit project. At this stage, the purpose was to understand detailed costings, technical potential, funding models and resident impacts.

4.9 It had also placed a successful bid for wave two funding of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. This was worth up to £4.5 million and could contribute to energy efficiency improvements for up to 550 homes.

4.10 Housing Services was working to appoint consultants to manage the project, and contractors to deliver the work. The timescales associated with the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund were very tight, with funding needing to be spent by March 2025.

4.11 It had placed a successful bid for £100k of the Heat Network Efficiency Scheme to improve the efficiency of one network as a pilot project which may be rolled out to other networks in the future.

4.12 Housing Services were working to the same 2040 target as the rest of the Council to achieve net zero, and its targets and objectives were embedded into the Climate Action Plan, notably in the section on buildings.

4.13 Internally, Housing Services had several operational working groups focused on fabric retrofit, communal heating and other mechanical and electrical systems. These were reported into a strategic housing retrofit group which considered broader questions such as funding models, resident engagement strategies and alignment with other key work like fire safety. This group sat under the council-wide Environmental Sustainability Board.

4.14 In terms of progress against key milestones, Housing Services had completed a comprehensive review of all our EPC data and procured a software system to enable modelling and analysis, and was currently developing a roadmap to 2040, which was expected to be completed within this financial year in line with the Mayor's manifesto commitment.

4.15 The average EPC issued between 2009 and 2011 was a D rating, with a Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) figure of 63. A decade later there had been a significant improvement - EPCs issued between 2018 and 2020 had an average C rating with a SAP figure of 70. The rate of improvement would need to increase about 50% to achieve an average of B (a SAP figure of 81) by 2030.

4.16 The current focus was on research and pilot projects. This was expected to be the focus for another 2-3 years and then potentially wide scale roll out of deeper retrofit could begin. In the meantime, planned programmes will continue with all new contract specifications reviewed to ensure that planned work maximises available retrofit potential.

4.17 Initial assessments had indicated that the work needed to bring the stock to a net zero standard was not affordable under present funding regimes (nationally not just for Hackney). There were also additional challenges for Housing Services in understanding the implications for leasehold homes - lease terms did not always permit high levels of investment or support improvement works.

4.18 Whilst the Council was trying to make use of all available grant funding, this was often very low compared to the cost of the work required overall, and grant funding arrangements often contained very specific requirements which brought additional complexity.

4.19 While fabric retrofit is usually welcomed as it reduced energy bills, this was less clear to residents as a benefit of low carbon heating systems. These usually rely on electricity and the higher cost per kWh for electricity over gas, meaning that the Council needed to carefully consider resident implications in moving away from gas.

4.20 Resident engagement had been limited at this stage as schemes were largely at a research stage. Detailed engagement plans were being developed at present for works under the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. The Housing Services Resident Engagement Strategy would play a lead role in informing engagement on retrofit projects going forward.

4.21 Regeneration & Housing Delivery were completing post-occupancy analysis of some homes which would be valuable to Housing Services too, as it would explore the experience of residents in moving to new build highly energy efficient homes.

4.22 In terms of sharing and embedding technical knowledge, the Council was working as part of a London Councils group on retrofit, sharing research and experiences with other London Boroughs who were facing similar challenges.

4.23 Housing Services had secured grant funding to train several officers to be retrofit assessors, and was working to ensure it had an appropriate range of contractors to complete retrofit works and maintain new energy efficient systems. This was reflected in both the requirements placed in base contract requirements and specifications and in testing contractor's competencies via the procurement evaluation process.

4.24 The Council used the EPC to report progress, which was the national standard and basis of the 2030 target. Housing Services was also using the carbon intensity element of it to estimate carbon emissions towards the 2040 target. At present, progress was reported as part of the working group, but the initial plans for a roadmap included proposals for more formal reporting.

4.25 Retrofit projects were being operated to the PAS2035 process to ensure they were operated properly and that the measures chosen to improve a home are suitable and complementary. Housing Services were continuing to examine the wider national context of progress, for example the impact of the decarbonisation of the electricity grid or the future opportunity for hydrogen in place of gas.

#### Questions, Answers and Discussion

4.26 *The Resident Liaison Group Co-Chair asked about the Council's plans to engage with residents affected by the delivery of the latest projects being funded by the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.*

4.27 The Head of Property and Asset Management explained that the project being supported by the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund was currently at an early stage, with the Council currently looking to appoint consultants to manage the project and contractors to deliver the related work.

4.28 Detailed engagement plans were currently under development for works under the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. These plans had to weigh up how best to engage residents on the areas in which residents could have some influence, and the areas in which the Council had to push ahead with changes due to the requirements of the fund.

4.29 *The Resident Liaison Group Co-Chair asked about the expected practical and financial benefits for residents associated with the pilot project to improve the efficiency of a heat network being funded by the Heat Network Efficiency Scheme.*

4.30 The Head of Property and Asset Management explained that the project being supported by the Heat Network Efficiency Scheme would help to install metres across one heat network and associated buildings to understand their energy efficiency (both in terms of where heat is being lost and demand levels). It was hoped that, should the pilot be successful, similar projects could be rolled out to other heat networks in the borough.

*4.31 A Commission Member asked whether the Council was likely to meet its net zero ambitions by 2040 in regard to retrofitting and improving energy efficiency across its council housing stock, and how it was proactively identifying and responding to new funding opportunities as they arise.*

4.32 The Head of Property and Asset Management explained that it was difficult to predict how much progress will be made by 2040, and in what areas. At this stage, the Council was trying to understand the costs, technical potential, funding opportunities and resident impacts.

4.33 The Group Director Climate, Homes & Economy added that whilst funding opportunities were uncertain and difficult to deliver on, the Council continued to horizon scan for potential funding opportunities, and look in detail at their requirements and whether the Council had the capacity to meet them.

4.34 Having said this, the Council was one of the biggest social landlords in London and, even if it had the funding it needed to retrofit its council housing stock, technical capacity in the sector would most likely not meet demand. The reality was, therefore, that meeting the 2040 net zero target was highly unlikely.

4.35 The Strategic Head of Strategy, Assurance and Private Sector Housing went on to add that it was correct to have the ambition to reach net zero by 2040, but the likelihood of the target being met across Hackney's housing stock was unlikely due to inadequate funding and understanding of the challenge.

4.36 The Cabinet Member for Housing Services & Resident Participation added that the existing financial and legislative context meant that Housing Services was not confident of reaching net zero by 2040. However, if this context were to change, the Council felt optimistic that it had the desire and knowhow to deliver against its ambitions.

*4.37 A Commission Member asked about the extent to which Housing Services considered the implications arising from retrofit for residents, and how it would communicate with residents who may be concerned about what retrofit meant for their home.*

4.38 The Head of Property and Asset Management explained that the Council was taking a fabric first approach to retrofitting its council housing stock. This involved maximising the performance of the components and materials that make up a building itself, before considering the use of renewable heat sources.

4.39 There were various benefits to using a fabric first approach on an operational level, but also could lead to lower monthly energy bills for residents. Having said this, it had been difficult to articulate the financial benefits of this approach to residents because it would often differ from household to household - for example, some

researchers had noted the “rebound effect” in energy use, where changing behaviour cancelled out the reductions in gas use.

4.40 The Council was therefore looking at more tangible retrofit benefits to communicate to residents. For example, retrofitted homes could be more comfortable, use less energy and can also improve air quality and eliminate mould and condensation problems.

*4.41 A Commission Member asked how Housing Services’ retrofit work would interact with other work streams both in terms of housing maintenance and the development of new council homes.*

4.42 The Head of Property and Asset Management explained that retrofit would need to be approached as part of a wider council housing improvement plan. For example, retrofit measures may be undertaken on a property at the same time as remedial or fire safety work, or a contractor may look to retrofit a property but identify other issues which need to be addressed in tandem. It was therefore important that Housing Services took a holistic approach to work on its existing housing stock.

4.43 The Group Director Climate, Homes & Economy added that the Council would strive to build new homes to the highest possible energy efficiency standards, which were set both nationally and as part of the London Plan. In terms of the interaction between housing maintenance and new homes delivery, it was noted that much of the Council’s development was on infill sites, which created opportunities for retrofit to be undertaken alongside new homes delivery.

*4.44 A Commission Member asked whether the Council was able to set conditions within its procurement contracts to encourage contractors to provide employment, training and skills development opportunities for local people in respect of retrofit.*

4.45 The Group Director Climate, Homes & Economy explained that retrofit was a highly specialised profession, and that there was a labour shortage across the retrofit market. There were therefore various challenges in reducing the skills gap locally and creating opportunities for retrofit jobs to be given to local people. Having said this, the Council did include within its sustainable procurement processes stipulations that encouraged contractors to look to the local labour market where possible.

4.46 With achieving net zero across the Council’s existing housing stock by 2040 currently being viewed as difficult to achieve, a Commission Member asked what timescales might be more achievable.

4.47 The Head of Property and Asset Management explained that Housing Services needed to do more work on mapping out its progress over the next few years to understand where it lay in the journey to net zero.

4.48 Having said this, the average EPC rating issues between 2009 and 2011 was D, with a SAP figure of 63, and EPCs issued between 2018 and 2020 had an average of C, with a SAP figure of 70. If this rate of improvement continued, existing council housing stock would reach an average B EPC rating by around 2050. There therefore needed to be a 50% increase in the rate of improvement to reach an average of B by 2040.

4.49 *A Commission Member asked for more information on why meeting the timescales associated with the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund was difficult for the Council.*

4.50 The Head of Property and Asset Management explained that some characteristics of the funding landscape have caused barriers to take-up and the effective delivery of projects for local authorities. Short delivery timescales made it difficult to plan for the longer terms and develop capacity, and they often came with strict rules on what the funding could be used for.

4.51 *A Commission Member asked why the Council used Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) rather than Energy Use Intensity (EUI) to measure energy efficiency in council homes.*

4.52 The Head of Property and Asset Management explained that Housing Services was using EPC to measure energy efficiency at the moment because it was a national standard and the basis of the 2030 target. It was used as a benchmarking tool for the entire housing stock in the borough, and could be compared easily with other boroughs.

4.53 However, it was not used for individual retrofit projects. These were being operated to the PAS2035 standards to ensure that the measures chosen to improve a home were suitable and complimentary. PAS2025 was a specification which took into account the requirement of the entire building, both from a technical standpoint and considering factors like occupancy comfort.

4.54 *A Commission Member asked whether the construction sector currently had the skills capacity to support retrofit.*

4.55 The Head of Property and Asset Management explained that the introduction of PAS2035 had outlined a number of professional roles, such as retrofit advisors, assessors, coordinators, designers and evaluators, which meant that many more contractors were receiving the levels of training and certification required to support retrofit. It was necessary for these roles to be carried out by separate individuals, so many would upskill. Having said this, there were many challenges facing the industry, such as the impact of the pandemic, Brexit and increasing demand.

4.56 The Group Director Climate, Homes & Economy added that there would likely be a challenge with the workforce age profile when it came to retrofit, and the urgent need to encourage people to enter the industry, as well as upskilling and supporting those that already work in the industry.

4.57 *A Commission Member asked whether the Council was looking at the ways in which it could expand its Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) to enable it to undertake some of the retrofitting and clean energy work itself.*

4.58 The Group Director Climate, Homes & Economy explained that the Council was not currently looking to align and expand its DLO to undertake the retrofit work required across its housing stock. It was not necessarily appropriate to compete with the wider construction industry, and the costs associated with building a workforce to deliver the net zero target was likely unaffordable.

4.59 A Commission Member asked how the Council would ensure an appropriate level of condensation when retrofitting existing properties, with consideration of the impact that these may have on damp and mould issues.

4.60 The Head of Property and Asset Management explained that condensation problems, and in turn damp and mould if left untreated, was often poor ventilation. Increasing ventilation which enabled air to travel more freely throughout a building was therefore a way in which condensation could be reduced.

4.61 The regeneration team were completing post-occupancy analysis of some homes, which would explore the experiences of residents moving into new build energy efficient homes, including in levels of condensation and damp and mould. This would prove useful in informing how the Council works with residents on retrofit projects, and the impact of energy efficient measures on residents.

4.62 A Commission Member asked whether the Commission could have sight of the Housing Services roadmap to net zero 2040 once it was completed, as well as the plans for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund fund once confirmed.

4.62 The Head of Property and Asset Management explained that the roadmap would likely be a published document, perhaps as an addendum to the Asset Management Strategy, and would be shared with the Commission once completed.

4.63 The plans for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund would also be shared once they had been developed, with the Council currently working to appoint contractors to deliver the work.

4.64 The Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation recognised the disruption that retrofit could have on residents, and what it may mean for their homes. There was therefore a clear need for the Council to be honest about what retrofit means for them, as well as emphasising how changes would benefit them through improvements in their comfort, health and possible reductions of ongoing costs.

#### Housing association, private rented sector and owner occupied stock

4.65 The Chair then invited the Strategic Head of Strategy, Assurance and Private Sector Housing to give a short verbal presentation. The main points are highlighted below.

4.67 The new Housing Strategy was currently in development and was due to be adopted in 2024. This recognises retrofitting as the most relevant tool at its disposal to decarbonise the housing stock, alongside continued work to replace the most inefficient gas boilers with better performance boilers.

4.68 The average SAP for Hackney was around 66. There were around 23,000 homes in the borough, around  $\frac{2}{3}$  of which were privately rented and owner occupied. Around 22% of properties were in Conservation Areas compared to the 17% average across London, and these properties have further restrictions on what can be done without gaining approval from the Council.



4.69 Flats were by far the most common property type with houses second, and terraces took up the vast majority of houses. Around 1.3% of properties (1,564) were F or G EPC rated, compared to 1.9% across London.

4.70 Solid walls were the most common type across the borough's housing stock, and the vast majority were insulated. Cavity walls were the second most common, although around three-quarters of these were uninsulated. Around 3,362 were system walls (mainly in housing association stock), which brought their own challenges in terms of retrofit.

4.71 Individual gas boilers accounted for over 90% of the heating systems present in Hackney, all of which would need to be swapped for low-carbon heating systems.

4.72 The average tCO<sub>2</sub> in Hackney in 2021 was 3.07 tonnes. In comparison, the average tCO<sub>2</sub> figure for all of London in 2019 was 3.28 tonnes. The highest levels of tCO<sub>2</sub> were coming from the north of the borough, and a few other hotspots. Social housing was spread throughout the borough, and conservation areas covered a large proportion of the borough, especially in the south and east.

4.73 Two pathways summaries were undertaken for the Council in 2019. The first was an interim targets pathway which aimed for 30% of properties to reach net zero. This estimated that an investment of £1.326 billion would be needed to reach this target.

4.74 The second, which the Council had committed to, was a net zero target pathway which first aimed for fabric efficiency and then to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to zero using the carbon intensity expected in 2038. This estimated that an investment of £2.746 billion would be needed to reach this target, although more recent estimates expected it to be double this figure.

4.75 There were particular challenges in retrofitting Hackney's private sector housing (PSH) stock. 95% of PSH stock was made up by amateur landlords, and therefore comprised of multiple landlords. Their stock varied in condition, with many older, complicated properties, and some landlords engaged better than others.

4.76 There were different incentives for owners and occupiers for retrofit. For landlords, the cost of retrofitting is high, the financial benefits uncertain or unclear and, in response, some were increasingly reviewing their stock. The Council had little influence over occupiers, as powers and funding schemes did not extend to this stock.

4.77 Renters in Hackney were a transient population - often young and increasingly mobile. This meant that it was difficult to engage them in the Council's work, and they were often less likely to put pressure on their landlord to carry out retrofit works.

4.78 Hackney had the second highest rate of poverty in London, and one of the highest rates of fuel poverty in particular. The relationship between the two is complex, because whilst fuel poverty is in part caused by poor energy efficiency, retrofit and swapping energy systems does not necessarily lead to immediate reductions in energy bills.

4.79 Whilst the financial challenges were considerable, the Council was exploring a range of options such as front loading marketing support, energy performance standards for all building types, green loans, grants, transition funds and advice, and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) enforcement in the PRS.

4.80 In terms of next steps, the Council would be developing its Housing Strategy and Private Sector Housing Strategy in 2023/24, with a focus on retrofit and energy efficiency, looking to collate data and in particular undertaken a stock condition survey, unlocking new funding opportunities, exploring new opportunities for partnership working and looking to develop borough-wide standards, measures and targets.

#### Questions, Answers and Discussion

4.81 *A Commission Member asked whether the Hackney Council Housing Associations Compact 2023-26 had set out the ways in which they may work together on net zero, and the importance of collaboration on issues such as retrofit.*

4.82 Strategic Head of Strategy, Assurance and Private Sector Housing explained that the Compact did set out some ways in which the Council could work together with housing associations on their net zero commitments, such as sharing best practice and collaborating on issues. Having said this, like other elements of the Compact, these were not enforceable and relied on partnership working.

4.83 *A Commission Member asked whether the Local Plan set out planning policies aimed at mitigating climate change, and in particular requirements on retrofit and energy efficiency, and whether planning gain could be used to fund retrofit and energy efficiency measures.*

4.84 Strategic Head of Strategy, Assurance and Private Sector Housing explained that the Local Plan had set out a number of planning policies aimed at mitigating climate change both in new developments and existing developments which are re-used or extended.

4.85 Planning gain and the Community Infrastructure Levy could and was used to fund retrofit and energy efficiency measures in the borough, although this was a relatively small income in comparison with the finances needed to fund the move to net zero across Hackney's housing stock.

4.86 *A Commission Member asked whether the Council was looking at borrowing as a means of financing retrofit and energy efficiency improvement measures for the borough's private housing stock.*

4.87 The Strategic Head of Strategy, Assurance and Private Sector Housing explained that the Council was looking at a grant based system for the most vulnerable residents, in which the Council provided grants for energy efficiency measures which would be charged to the property. The Council was also looking at a complimentary loan system for residents who did not meet the criteria for grant funding.

4.88 *A Commission Member asked whether the landlord licensing schemes in operation in Hackney set out conditions relating to retrofit and energy efficiency.*

4.99 The Strategic Head of Strategy, Assurance and Private Sector Housing explained that the Council was looking to extend the landlord licensing schemes across the borough, subject to Secretary of State approval. Licensing schemes across the country did not currently set out environmental requirements, only in terms of disrepair, living conditions and anti-social behaviour.

4.100 The Council was looking at options to include a requirement for landlords to demonstrate that they had a pathway to net zero in their property. Early indications were that such a requirement may not be possible and would be subject to legal challenges, but discussions were ongoing.

4.102 The Council was currently compiling evidence to present to the Secretary of State. It was not a straightforward decision as many private rented properties were of a good standard in Hackney (when compared with other London Boroughs). Also, in order to have landlord licensing across the borough, all wards must have over 20% private rented stock, with two wards not reaching this threshold and therefore ineligible.

*4.103 A Commission Member asked whether the Council was able to offer discounts for the landlord licensing schemes to those landlords who were voluntarily complying with retrofit and energy efficiency standards.*

4.104 The Strategic Head of Strategy, Assurance and Private Sector Housing explained that the Council offered a range of discounts for landlords applying to the licensing schemes, and retrofit and energy efficiency was another area in which discounts could be applied.

*4.105 A Commission Member asked about how the Council engaged with owner occupiers and the Private Rented Sector to communicate the importance and benefits of retrofit and energy efficiency.*

4.106 The Strategic Head of Strategy, Assurance and Private Sector Housing explained that the Council communicated the range of benefits retrofit and energy efficiency can have for a property. Landlords, for example, would be able to attract tenants more easily and for longer, as well as offering residents improvements in comfort, health and possibly ongoing costs.

4.107 Should the Housing Policy & Strategy Team be successful in identifying resources for a borough-wide stock condition survey, which would collect data on homes within Hackney, it may be easier for the Council to make the correlation between retrofit and comfort, health and ongoing costs.

*4.108 A Commission Member asked for further information on the Council's approach to lobbying central government for more guidance, funding and support on the retrofit and energy efficiency of homes.*

4.109 The Strategic Head of Strategy, Assurance and Private Sector Housing explained that coordinated lobbying was taking place with other London Boroughs through London Councils, for example on more legal requirements and more and better designed funding for all tenures. Having said this, little traction had been made to date.

*4.110 A Commission Member asked how the Council was currently working with housing associations to encourage them to prioritise retrofit and energy efficiency measures across their housing stock.*

4.111 The Strategic Head of Strategy, Assurance and Private Sector Housing explained that the Council was focused on how it used planning policy and grants

system to ensure it had legal and enforcement powers over its development partners (including housing associations) to ensure compliance with net zero requirements.

4.112 The Council also tried to liaise with other social housing providers, and facilitate conversations between social housing providers, to coordinate actions on retrofit in terms of procurement, costs and finance and communication. However, without any real enforcement powers this was not straightforward.

4.113 The Group Director Climate, Homes & Economy added that the Council and registered providers in the borough faced many of the same challenges, as well as unique challenges that were impacting their underlying financial capacity. As well as net zero, they were also considering the significant investment required for building safety remedial works and damp and mould. There was a significant opportunity for local authorities and other social housing providers, however, to lobby central government in a more coordinated way around guidance, funding and support.

### Summing Up

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

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

## **5 Accountability of Registered Social Landlords: Recommendations & Findings**

5.1 The Chair explained that during 2019/20 and 2020/21, the Commission undertook a Housing Associations Review which looked at the practices and approaches of housing associations in Hackney, and their relationships and partnership arrangements with the Council.

5.2 Last municipal year, the Commission looked into a number of topics relating to the accountability of all registered social landlords in Hackney, which included reviewing progress against the implementation of the Charter for Social Housing Residents, and exploring issues of local concern such as nominations and lettings, tenancy sustainment, repairs, complaints, safety and resident engagement.

5.3 The Commission had agreed and finalised its response following these pieces of work, which was sent to the Executive and Housing Association partners for response in June 2023.

5.4 Members noted the agreed letter to the Executive and Housing Association partners in Hackney.

## **6 Housing Support for Care Leavers: Cabinet Response**

6.1 The Chair explained that in March 2022, the Children and Young People and Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commissions undertook an investigation into the nature and level of housing support for care leavers in Hackney. As a result, the Commissions developed a report in October 2021 setting out ten recommendations for the Executive.

6.2 The Cabinet response to these recommendations was published on 16th June 2023 and was considered and approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 26th June 2023.

6.3 It would be important to continue to monitor and review the recommendations to ensure that it remained a high priority. The Chair would therefore be meeting with the Chair of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission to plan and agree the next steps and will update members in due course.

6.4 Members noted the Cabinet response and the next steps outlined to follow up the agreed recommendations.

## **7 Living in Hackney Work Programme Planning 2023/24**

7.1 The Chair explained that the following stakeholder groups had been consulted on their views for the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission work programme 2023/24:

- Members of the Commission
- Non-Executive Councillors, Cabinet Members and Senior Officers
- Resident Liaison Group
- Local residents

7.2 The Chair & Vice-Chair had developed a shortlist based on these suggestions, which, subject to Commission Members' comments at the meeting, would be discussed with Cabinet Members, senior officers and key stakeholders before the work programme was finalised.

7.3 The Chair & Vice-Chair would present the finalised work programme to the Commission at the next meeting in September 2023, and to the Scrutiny Panel at its next meeting in October 2023.

7.4 The Chair then invited Commission Members to make any comments on the 2023/24 work programme shortlist.

7.5 A Commission Member supported the suggestion to look at the interim findings of the Intermediate Housing Panel, which was being commissioned by the Council to look into the delivery of intermediate homes in Hackney.

7.6 A Commission Member supported the suggestion to look at progress made against the improvement actions put in place by the Council to improve housing repairs and customer care, and suggested that the item had a focus on the expansion of the Direct Labour Organisation (DLO).

7.7 A Commission Member supported the suggestion to undertake a review into the Council's approach to the long-term viability and future use of community halls, and addressing the challenges faced by local organisations and groups in securing adequate spaces from which community and/or statutory services can be delivered.

7.8 A Commission Member made a suggestion to look at the barriers faced by some residents in accessing the Council's customer services, although it was noted that this would likely fall outside of the Commission's remit.

7.8 A Commission Member supported the suggestion to look at the multi-agency approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour, particularly in terms of prevention and early intervention and engaging with communities.

7.9 A Commission Member made a suggestion to look at the Council's draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, with a particular focus on the inequalities and barriers faced by those with protected characteristics in accessing homelessness services in the borough.

## **8 Minutes of the Meeting**

8.1 The draft minutes of the previous meeting on 12th June 2023 were presented.

8.2 Members agreed the draft minutes as an accurate record.

## **9 Any Other Business**

9.1 None.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00 - 9.15 pm