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| LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN | WARDS: All |
| REPORT TITLE: Work Programme – Housing Scrutiny | |
| REPORT OF: Director of Property Management | |
| FOR SUBMISSION TO: Housing Scrutiny Committee | DATE: 14 th November 2023 |
| <p>SUMMARY OF REPORT: This report provides an update on the Committee’s work programme for 2023/24 and provides an update on action requested at previous meetings of the Committee.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to information No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report</p> <p>Contact Officer: Gavin Haynes, Director of Property Management, 5 Pancras Square, N1C 4AG, 020 7974 1955, gavin.haynes@camden.gov.uk</p> | |
| <p>RECOMMENDATIONS:</p> <p>The members of the Housing Scrutiny Committee are asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) to consider any proposals for items that should be included in the work programme and to confirm the work programme for the year ahead. (ii) Approve a Chair of the Homelessness Panel and decide whether a new panel member should be appointed (para 3.4) | |

Signed:



Director of Property Management

Date: 1 November 2023

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The committee has been set up with the following terms of reference:

- To scrutinise the Council's policies and the provision, planning, financing, management and performance of services relating to housing provided by the Council and other service providers.

1.2 A draft committee workplan is attached to this report (Appendix A). The committee may wish to make further suggestions or amendments to the workplan for the year ahead.

2. **CABINET FORWARD PLAN – Housing**

2.1 The Committee is also invited to consider what, if any, forthcoming key Cabinet decisions it wishes to look at in advance of those decisions being taken. Forward Plan items under the Committee's remit are set out at Appendix B.

3 **PANELS**

3.1 The Scrutiny committee may establish a time limited, task focussed Panel. The Panel is chaired by a member of the committee and is able to request contributions and evidence about local housing services from a wider range of contributors including Partners, expert advisors and local residents. A report is made by the Panel to the Scrutiny Committee on its findings at the end of its work. Updates are provided to the Committee by the Chair of the panel whilst its work is ongoing.

3.2 Committee members are reminded of the constraints on Council resources at this time and have previously committed to run these Member-led panels with only limited officer support in order to ensure an efficient and cost-effective process.

3.3 The Homelessness Panel was set up in September 2023 to examine resident understanding and perceptions of homelessness and the experiences of accessing joined up, holistic support for those who have been or are currently homeless.

3.4 The Housing Committee needs to appoint a new Chair of the Homelessness Panel following the resignation of Cllr Richard Cotton and decide whether a new panel member should be appointed so that the panel has four members rather than three.

4 **CO-OPTEEES**

- 4.1 In addition to council members, the committee has previously decided that three co-optees should sit on the committee. These arrangements are subject to annual review.

5 **ACTION TRACKER**

- 5.1 The actions arising from the last meeting (January 2023) are attached at Appendix C.

6. **COMMENTS OF THE BOROUGH SOLICITOR**

- 6.1 The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no comments to make on the report.

7. **COMMENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES**

- 7.1 The Executive Director of Corporate Services has been consulted and has no comment to add.

8. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

8. There are no Environmental Implications relating to this report.

DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME

Housing Scrutiny Committee draft work programme 2023/24

Meeting date: Monday 18th December

- **Housing Services** (Housing Needs) *Report to include: allocations, rough sleeping, sheltered housing.*
- **Housing Supply:** *Report to include CIP delivery including small sites (Cabinet report), Temporary Accommodation Purchasing Programme, private rented sector*
- **Update on fire safety and regulatory standards**
- **HRA Budget Update**
- **Cabinet Member better Homes – Update**
- **Work programme**

JANUARY 2024

- **HRA rent setting** (Cabinet report)
- **Tenancy arrears and rent collection**
- **Cost of Living update**
- **Update on fire safety and regulatory standards**
- **Cabinet Member Better Homes – Update**
- **Work programme**

FEBRUARY 2024

- **CIP annual report**
- **Report of Cabinet Adviser: Leaseholder billing and service charges**
- **Homelessness Scrutiny Panel (provisional date)**
- **Update on fire safety and regulatory standards**
- **Cabinet Member Better Homes annual report**
- **Work programme**

Appendix B: Forward Plan items under the Committee's remit (1 November 2023 – 29 February 2024)

| Item | Summary | Decision-making body | Indicative decision date |
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| Camden Capital Works Framework Procurement (All Wards), SC/2023/41 | A report proposing the procurement of a framework for the delivery of capital works. | Cabinet | 20 th December 2023 |
| Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Rent Review 2024/2025 | To consider the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2024/25 including housing rents and service charges. | Cabinet | 24 th January 2024 |

NB: A report on Resident Safety was scheduled to go to Cabinet in December 2023 however this has been deferred until the Government publish the remaining secondary legislation. The Resident Safety report is expected to be put back on the forward plan after April 2024.

APPENDIX C – HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER (SEPTEMBER 2023)

| Meeting | Item | Action | Action by | Status |
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| 11/9/23 | Building Safety Act & Regulatory Standards | Officers were working with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) regarding the way forward for the Council following the regulatory notice, and they would share the action plan arising from the regulatory notice once it had been signed off by the Regulator of Social Housing. | Director of Property Management | The Council received further comments on the action plan from the Regulator on 26 October 2023. There is a meeting 8 November 2023 where these will be discussed with the Regulator. The finalised action plan should be available mid to late November and a copy will be provided to committee members. |
| | | Officers would provide members with a copy of the briefing information being provided to private rented sector landlords. | Director of Property Management | A copy of the Spring Landlord newsletter was sent to Committee members on 30/10/23. A further update on prospective regulatory change will be included in the winter newsletter. |

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| | | <p>The Council had also been working with specialist third party advisors to develop its approach to the implementation of the fire and building safety regulatory framework. This would lead to a third-party audit of the Council's processes so that it could meet British Standard 9997. The results of this undertaking would be shared with members when it was available.</p> | <p>Director of Property Management</p> | <p>The audit is in progress and will conclude early 2024.</p> |
| | | <p>Officers would provide further information regarding the key issues arising from the estate action initiatives.</p> | <p>Director of Housing</p> | <p>The work has covered 15 of the largest estates in the borough and knocked on the doors of over 3,300 tenants.</p> <p>Most people spoken to have expressed that they enjoy living on their estate. A majority of residents talked about the sense of community on their estates and that they can talk to their neighbours. That said, a small number of residents reported feeling lonely or isolated. On most of the estates,</p> |

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| | | | | <p>residents have also talked favourably about caretakers and the service they provide.</p> <p>Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a significant issue across the majority of estates that have been visited so far, meaning tenants are adjusting their behaviours. In some cases, crime and ASB is not being reported for fear of retribution or perceived lack of action in response. The most common issues are drug dealing and taking (in “secret pockets” – out of sight of CCTV and patrols) and people illegally accessing the estate to sleep or defecate under stairwells.</p> <p>Repairs are an issue for some of tenants, but not everyone. Some tenants talked about having repairs outstanding, but are tolerating them and not reporting. Some are struggling to use the Council’s reporting systems. This is frustrating for them, or they are not reporting. Where there are ongoing repair issues, for example, the cause of the problem isn’t always addressed.</p> <p>Greening of estates is another theme. Many residents have appreciated where this has already taken place and would like to know how they can get involved with, or start, a similar initiative themselves.</p> <p>Residents have also fed back positively about the programme of engagement. Many people commented on how much they value speaking to</p> |
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| | | | | <p>people face-to-face. More recently at the Estate Action Days, officers providing information, advice and guidance on the cost-of-living crisis have been accessed by more residents. This is understandable as the days get colder and energy costs remain high.</p> |
| | | <p>THAT members of the scrutiny committee receive a monthly update on performance of fire safety actions and any progress made and possible risk. This will also include updates on all areas of compliance (repairs/estate service/landlord service and capital works); the installation of hard wired smoke and carbon monoxide detectors; whether all buildings have had the FRAEW test; the BS9997 third party audit (evidence to be provided that this has been undertaken (4.10)); the outstanding high risk actions; the Building Safety Case reports on</p> | <p>Director of Property Management</p> | <p>The format for the monthly update has been clarified with the Regulator and the first edition of this will be included in the report to the November meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Updates will also be provided on Building Safety Cases and the audit as they are completed.</p> <p>A copy of the Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Communal Areas policy will be provided to members of the committee.</p> <p>A copy of the EIA was sent to members of the Committee on 27th October.</p> |

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| | | the Council's high rise blocks; and on the clearing of combustible items with a focus on how the Council would support vulnerable residents to achieve this; | | |
| 11/9/23 | Council's Corporate Performance quarter 4 end of Year 22/23 | Officers agreed to provide further information regarding the 'Cost of Living' support being provided by the Camden Advice Network (e.g. where the support was based, types of concerns being presented, number on waiting lists to access advice and how long on average are they on a waiting list for, what happens to those on agency waiting lists). Also, further information to be provided regarding accessing the temporary | Director of Housing | The requested information regarding cost-of-living support from the Advice Network; accessing temporary accommodation and support; and storage on council estates was sent to committee members on 1 November 2023. |

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| | | accommodation homes the council has, the support provided through that process and storage available on estates | | |
| | | Officers would also provide further information regarding rough sleeper support provision (e.g. numbers contacted, where they were located, what support they were provided with, repeat person contact) | Director of Public Safety/Director of Housing | An update will be provided to members of the Committee before the meeting under separate cover. |
| 11/9/23 | Work programme | Officers agreed to set up visits to the Council's temporary accommodation sites for members of the scrutiny committee to attend. | Director of Housing | Officers will set up these visits, and will look for suitable diary dates during December. |