

Cabinet 24 April 2017

Report title: Lambeth's Housing Strategy 2017-2020

Wards: All

Portfolio: Cabinet Member for Housing and Environment: Councillor Jennifer Brathwaite

Report Authorised by: Strategic Director, Neighbourhoods and Growth: Sue Foster

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Report summary

This report details Lambeth's revised Housing Strategy 2017-2020. The strategy is intended to cover all aspects of housing, including new development, our role as a social landlord, how we can support vulnerable households with their housing needs and how we can better integrate with key services and effectively work with partners.

Finance summary

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, however implementation of specific programmes arising from the strategy will result in significant financial implications for both capital and revenue budgets which will need to be considered in detail as future plans are developed.

Recommendations

1. To approve the Housing Strategy 2017-2020 (Appendix 1).

1. Context

- 1.1 Lambeth's new Borough Plan was approved by the Cabinet on 19 September 2016. It is focused on 3 priorities: Inclusive Growth; Reducing Inequality; and Strong and Sustainable Neighbourhoods. This key document provides an overview of the direction the council intends to take and allows for more detailed plans to be developed, including the updating of the borough's housing strategy. Housing is a key component of the borough plan, particularly in terms of delivering on the growth agenda.
- 1.2 The population of Lambeth is growing at a rapid rate, with the number of households expected to increase by over 1% each year for the next 10 years from 142,000 now to 158,000 in 2026. Over just the last three years there have been an additional 5,700 new homes provided in Lambeth but too few of these are available to those that need them most.
- 1.3 The average house price in Lambeth in January 2017 was £524k and the average weekly rent for a 2 bedroom flat is £365 / week. These figures are up 48% and 27% respectively since 2012 when we last updated the Housing Strategy. Over the same period, wages have remained relatively stagnant.
- 1.4 Lambeth recognises that the shortage of genuinely affordable housing is one of the biggest challenges facing our residents, and the council is not prepared to be a passive observer of the housing crisis. In establishing Homes for Lambeth, through major schemes like Somerleyton Road and through a programme of estate rebuilding the council is being bold and ambitious in its housing policy by using council land to bring forward thousands of new homes for local people, including at least 1000 extra homes at council rent. Lambeth is building new homes for the first time in a generation.
- 1.5 It comes at a time where there is still uncertainty around national government policy. The Housing and Planning Act has far reaching implications, the specifics of which are yet to be confirmed, but include the forced sale of expensive council housing and an end of security of tenure for council tenants. Progress on several areas of government policy, including housing, appear to have been delayed following the Brexit vote earlier this year.
- 1.6 Positively, the introduction of 'pay to stay' where council tenants on higher incomes are required to pay higher rents (with the excess going to the treasury) is now optional. As announced in February in the Housing White paper, there has been a shift in focus away from home ownership and it appears that we will no longer be required to build Starter Homes. There has also been the election of a new Mayor in City Hall, who has put genuinely affordable housing at the heart of his manifesto. £3billion of government funding has been committed to help increase the number of affordable homes in London by 2021. The plans include working towards 50% of all new housing developments to be affordable and the introduction of homes at a 'London Living Rent' and the 'London Affordable Rent'. More details will be available when the mayor releases his new housing strategy this year.
- 1.7 New legislation has been proposed through the Homelessness Reduction Bill which will extend homelessness prevention duties to single non vulnerable people.
- 1.8 We know that all services paid for out of the general fund will be under extreme and unprecedented financial pressures, and with the ongoing annual 1% cuts to social housing rents, landlord services to the council homes we manage also face significant budget pressures. Key to meeting these

pressures will be organisational re-design and our commitment to continually improve services with better access and value for money.

- 1.9 Government cuts to welfare spending continue; November 2016 saw the introduction of a reduced benefit cap to £23k per year, and the introduction of Universal Credit in Lambeth begins in earnest towards the end of 2017. There are almost 50,000 households in Lambeth in receipt of housing benefit / Local Housing Allowance (LHA) who will be affected by these changes.
- 1.10 For our own current stock, we brought housing management services back in house from Lambeth Living in 2015. From the start of the Lambeth Housing Standard (LHS) programme up to and including 2016/17 21,507 units have had works to achieve the standard. This includes works to 3,335 more homes than originally planned.
- 1.11 For people renting privately, Lambeth has the second highest number of accredited landlords in London, having accredited over 500 Lambeth landlords since 2012. We have been one of the best performing boroughs in London in delivering a highly successful and effective approach to homelessness prevention, limiting the impact of welfare cuts and wider economic challenges.
- 1.12 Ever more expensive housing costs, coupled with welfare cuts, mean that despite an increase in annual homelessness preventions, up from 1,031 in 2012-2013 to 1,424 in 2015-2016, we have also seen an increase in number of households in temporary accommodation, from 1,200 to almost 2,000.
- 1.13 The existing Housing Strategy which ran from 2012-2016 now requires updating to align with both the council's aspirations outlined in the Borough Plan and the pace of change in the housing sector.
- 1.14 Previously housing strategies at Lambeth have been much longer documents. The aim this time has been to produce a concise statement that clearly sets out the challenges and provides a policy guide for actions over the next 2-3 years. As an overview, the strategy does not attempt to provide an in depth description of activities. The majority of plans are already in place; a variety of more detailed actions to deliver the Housing Strategy will be developed as required as part of the usual service planning process for 2017/18 and beyond.

2. Proposal and Reasons

- 2.1 The Housing Strategy 2017-2020 will focus on delivering 4 key objectives relating to housing – More Homes; Better Homes, across all tenures; Better Services and More Support; and how housing will work more collaboratively with other parts of the council and partners. Whilst the fundamental drivers and associated actions in the housing strategy largely remain, the major change is that the council will now play a much more important role in the direct delivery of new homes, in response to an even more challenging environment.
- 2.2 The new strategy learns from past experiences, for instance lessons learnt from the PFI at Myatt's Field has led to the co-production of the 'Key Guarantees' for tenants and leaseholders and the 'Design Principles for New Homes'. It identifies areas for improvement, such as the

resident involvement aspect of housing management. Meaningful engagement with residents and effective communication is key to the delivery of the housing strategy. We are committed to providing greater transparency and access to performance data in housing to allow residents, TRAs and ward councillors to hold the service and contractors to account.

2.3 A summary of the 4 key outcomes the strategy aims to achieve are as follows:

(i) MORE HOMES - Increase the supply of housing, available to households on a range of incomes, and diverse needs

2.4 Increasing housing supply, in particular genuinely affordable housing, is key to tackling the housing crisis, and the council has a crucial role to play to ensure this happens in Lambeth. With 23,000 households on the waiting list and competing demands for accommodation we will not be able to provide homes that are affordable for everyone that would like to live in Lambeth but we can make a difference.

ONGOING ACTIVITY

2.5 We have committed to building 1,000 new homes at council rents, some of which will be delivered through the Estate Regeneration programme. We are setting up a council-owned company, Homes for Lambeth, to allow us to build homes ourselves. Several housing associations are also using opportunities through estate regeneration to increase housing supply. We have a proactive approach to private sector development that brings forward opportunities across the borough and negotiates the maximum amount of affordable housing.

2.6 Where we are approached for help by households not eligible for affordable housing and unable to afford the private rented sector in Lambeth, we will help them to access homes outside the borough in areas nearby where the private rented sector is more affordable.

2.7 We plan to provide a range of housing products for people on different incomes and different needs, including homes for families or single people and specialist or bespoke accommodation for those that require it. A priority will continue to be to deliver larger family homes at lower rents, as these are in particularly high demand and frequently unaffordable for households in the most need.

NEW PROJECTS AND POLICIES 2017 onwards

2.8 A partial review of the Lambeth Local Plan 2015 is forthcoming, which will provide an opportunity to develop Lambeth's policy on the delivery of affordable housing through the planning system, taking into account emerging national and regional policy guidance.

2.9 In addition to using council owned land to deliver new affordable housing, we will work in partnership with the NHS and other land holding public bodies to identify development opportunities. We also need to ensure we develop better and more collaborative ways of working with registered providers and to support delivery of additional affordable, both by more innovative

means and in the targeted use of grant funding received through settlement with the Mayor of London.

- 2.10 While the details of the payments have yet to be announced, we know the Government intends to force the sale of the highest-value council properties. Where homes are lost to forced sale, and to the right to buy, we aim to replace these in the borough on a 1 for 1 basis, in addition to the 1,000 new homes at council rent, to ensure there is still a net increase in available housing stock.
- 2.11 Work is ongoing to increase the supply of homes Lambeth owns to use as temporary accommodation for homeless households. Owning more of our own temporary housing will reduce the amount spent on expensive nightly paid accommodation.

(ii) BETTER HOMES – Homes are warm, safe, secure and well managed across all tenures

- 2.12 In addition to increasing the supply of housing, we also want to maintain and improve the quality of housing in Lambeth across all tenures.

ONGOING ACTIVITY

- 2.13 In our role as a landlord, this means delivering the Lambeth Housing Standard, including through estate regeneration and an ongoing planned maintenance programme. We are using our purchasing power through these major contracts to expand employment opportunities for local people. Through the LHS programme, so far this financial year, 16 residents have moved into full time employment with a further 47 undertaking apprenticeships.
- 2.14 We need to do this, and improve our housing management service, despite the 1% rent reduction year-on-year for four years imposed by the Government. This means we need to plan for the reduction in rental income carefully to minimise impact on front line service. Areas of housing management that are being targeted for improvement include repairs and capital works, leaseholder services, and resident engagement. The improvements should translate to improved and ongoing overall resident satisfaction.
- 2.15 Housing associations now own as many properties in Lambeth as the council. The vast majority of their homes met the decent homes standard several years ago. We work with our housing associations as key partners to ensure the best conditions for our residents.
- 2.16 We will continue to work with landlords through accreditation and other schemes to improve conditions for those renting in the private sector.

NEW PROJECTS AND POLICIES 2017 onwards

- 2.17 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 introduced a range of new measures to enforce standards in the private rented sector, including better information on landlords and lettings agencies who have been convicted of certain criminal offences; civil penalty notices for certain breaches of

housing legislation; extension of Rent Repayment Orders where tenants have been illegally evicted; improved access to data from Tenancy Deposit Protection schemes for local authorities; and a new process for landlords to regain possession of abandoned properties. We will use these powers and work with landlords through accreditation and other schemes to ensure the private rented sector in Lambeth offers a well-managed and decent quality housing option.

- 2.18 Through Homes for Lambeth, we will build and manage our own intermediate/market rented sector accommodation and we will need to develop a policy to allocate this. Homes will be built to according to our new 'Housing Design Principles for Lambeth' with high standards including energy efficiency, outdoor space, adequate light, sound proofing, and cycle storage, and they will be let on a longer term basis with no unexpected rent rises.
- 2.19 Work is ongoing to increase the number of homes in Lambeth for people with disabilities to help reduce the amount spent on expensive accommodation out of easy reach of the borough.

(iii) BETTER SERVICES AND MORE SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE RESIDENTS – residents with particular support or social care needs are supported with their housing needs.

- 2.20 We have a particularly important role to play in providing housing assistance to residents at risk of becoming or who are already homeless, and providing specialist support to vulnerable residents and those with social care needs, including young people, older people, disabled people, people with mental health issues and people sleeping rough.

ONGOING ACTIVITY

- 2.21 We will continue to focus on preventing homelessness by supporting households in their homes or helping them find appropriate alternative accommodation. Where necessary, we will continue to discharge homelessness duty via the private rented sector, including outside of London where appropriate. We will also develop tenancy sustainment and support services in the private rented sector to ensure this is a sustainable choice for those residents for whom it is suitable.
- 2.22 When private tenants have issues with their landlord they can either get advice from our private sector team - either with regards to their tenancy rights or the condition of their property. We will usually liaise with the landlord in the first instance to address the issue, but are able to take enforcement action and prosecute where necessary. We are fully involved in a number of proactive pilots addressing the issues of rogue landlords in partnership with other Local Authorities, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Greater London Assembly (GLA). These include the London Lockdown Project, and new data sharing pilots which will use combined data to identify possible houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).
- 2.23 The number of properties brought up to standard this year through informal action and enforcement at the end of February was 215. We have also licensed 122 HMOs.

- 2.24 We have already refurbished over 550 units of council sheltered accommodation. We will continue to ensure older people and those with specific support needs have a range of housing options available to suit their needs by working with partner organisations and ensuring we have extra care schemes across the borough. Providing assistance for people to remain in their own home with aids and adaptations is another key priority.
- 2.25 Separate strategies exist detailing the support provided to vulnerable groups, including the Rough Sleeping Strategy and Violence against Women and Girls Strategy, and we will continue to deliver these. We are committed to ensuring that Women and Girls are safe, and that rough sleeping is kept to a minimum. We work closely with Adult Social Care over housing needs of those with eligible social care & support needs.

NEW PROJECTS AND POLICIES 2017 onwards

- 2.26 We are developing an integrated accommodation and support pathway for all young people (including care leavers and young offenders) aged 16-21, with shared assessment, accommodation and move-on processes which will ensure better outcomes for our young people.
- 2.27 We are also carrying out a pilot exercise to develop housing options for residents with Learning or Physical Disabilities.
- 2.28 We will improve our understanding around specialist housing requirements to develop an approach that makes the best use of the existing portfolio and develop effective strategies which allows for a more informed position to build or commission accommodation.
- 2.29 Work is ongoing to agree a new Temporary Accommodation Strategy, and as noted above, an important aim is increasing the council's portfolio of owned temporary accommodation, which will be achieved both through better use of our existing hostel sites and other investment opportunities outside the borough.
- 2.30 It is important to note that all of these aims exist against a background of welfare reforms which make it increasingly difficult to meet housing costs, especially for vulnerable residents. We will continue to work with residents to manage the impact of these restrictions, including by commissioning financial and employment advice.

(iv) INTEGRATING HOUSING WITH OTHER SERVICES – working in partnership with other services to secure the best outcomes

- 2.31 Housing has a major impact on health and social care, children's development, neighbourhood cohesion and community safety. Lambeth's housing services therefore need to work closely with other council services, following our corporate organisational redesign principles, in order to avoid areas of duplication and share knowledge and resources to deliver efficient and effective services to our residents.

ONGOING

- 2.32 Partnership working is crucial to aims such as delivering the Housing Management Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, supporting the development of a wellbeing strategy, and ensuring adherence to the Safeguarding Policies for Adults and Children.
- 2.33 Overcrowding levels are high across all tenures in Lambeth, and this is linked to a number of problems: poor health, social, and emotional outcomes, especially for children who do not have space to play or study, and increased family conflict leading to a higher risk of parental or relative eviction. We will work to support families in overcrowded accommodation via the Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP) project.
- 2.34 There is a project underway where housing is working with ACS to move a small number of people with mental health issues or learning difficulties from residential to community settings with appropriate support.
- 2.35 A good example of successful partnership working is the Integrated Personalised Support Alliance (IPSA). This has brought together the Council, voluntary sector, and NHS, in a project aimed at improving the outcomes for people placed in NHS rehabilitation beds and residential care. The project has been very successful at supporting people to move on to independent living settings ranging from self-contained flats through to a range of supported housing provision procured via supported housing providers. The IPSA has not only delivered improved housing provision and other key social and health outcomes but also significant cost savings (for the council and NHS) c23% against the original budget.

NEW PROJECTS AND POLICIES FOR 2017 onwards

- 2.36 There are specific areas such as homelessness prevention and private sector housing which could benefit from closer working with health and wellbeing services. Housing staff are facilitating a number of workshops with public health colleagues to identify ways of better working and will be sending a representative to join the Staying Healthy Board.
- 2.37 We also have to work effectively with our key housing association partners, and we will review and refresh the partnership and arrangements we have with our main Registered Social Landlord (RSL) providers.
- 2.38 As discussed above, we want to ensure our residents with Physical and Learning Disabilities are in the most appropriate accommodation for their needs, and where more suitable accommodation can't be provided, that we offer a range of other interventions to ensure the best possible outcomes in their current accommodation. This pilot project requires close cooperation between housing and adult social care services.

3. Finance

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, however implementation of specific programmes arising from the strategy will result in significant financial implications for both capital and revenue budgets which will need to be considered in detail as future plans are developed.

4. Legal and Democracy

- 4.1 The Deregulation Act 2015 abolished the statutory requirement for English authorities to produce a housing strategy as previously required by section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 4.2 Section 333D of the London Greater Authority Act 1999 provides that any local housing strategy of any London borough has to be in general conformity with the Mayor's London housing strategy.
- 4.3 Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 requires every local housing authority to periodically consider housing conditions in their district and the needs of the district with respect to the provision of further housing accommodation, and the need to review housing conditions under section 3 of the Housing Act 2004 (licensing of HMOs, selective licensing of other houses, management orders etc.). This duty includes consideration of the needs of people residing or resorting to the district with respect to the provision of sites on which caravans can be stationed.
- 4.4 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 imposes a duty on the Council in the exercise its various functions to have due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour; the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances; and re-offending in its area.
- 4.5 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the public sector equality duty replacing the previous duties in relation to race, sex and disability and extending the duty to all the protected characteristics i.e. race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership and gender reassignment. The public sector equality duty requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under that act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and
 - Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it, which involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
 - (a) tackle prejudice, and
 - (b) promote understanding.

- 4.6 Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—
- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it, including, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities;
 - (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- 4.7 Compliance with the duties in section 149 of the Act may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under the Act.
- 4.8 The Equality Duty must be complied with before and at the time that a particular policy is under consideration or decision is taken - that is, in the development of policy options, and in making a final decision. A public body cannot satisfy the Equality Duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.
- 4.9 No further comments from Democratic Services

5. Consultation and co-production

- 5.1 The housing strategy is not providing the council with a new direction, and is based on previously agreed plans which have been subject to consultation, including on specific projects such as estate regeneration, and the Borough Plan in terms of the strategy's overall direction and focus.
- 5.2 Extensive consultation on the attached draft strategy has been carried out internally, including discussions with numerous cabinet and ward members, senior management and public health (Staying Healthy Board). Externally we have consulted with our housing provider partners and a large cross section of supported housing providers. The draft has also been discussed at Tenants' Council and Leasehold Council, the latter of whom provided a detailed written response, largely concerning the Council's approach to increasing housing supply via estate regeneration.
- 5.3 The draft Housing Strategy was also distributed to all members of the Lambeth 500, a large group of tenants and leaseholders who have signed up to act as a consultative body and there were three responses. There were a number of issues raised, most substantively there was some criticism of the council's plans for estate regeneration and the planned use of Homes for Lambeth.
- 5.4 All consultation responses have been thoroughly considered and any required changes applied to the Strategy. Responses have been provided to those consulted where appropriate.
- 5.5 The Housing Strategy was considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 March 2017. The Committee raised a number of issues and recommended a stronger commitment for the council to use its purchasing power through major contracts to secure employment and apprenticeships for local residents. Members said that they would also like to see a greater commitment to working with other council departments to plan for the provision of housing options for vulnerable residents with specific needs (paying particular attention to future proofing).

5.6 The wording on the provision of housing options for vulnerable residents has been amended to reflect the aim to meet future needs.

5.7 However on using spend to increase employment opportunities, there is a balance between this and other areas such as pushing for the expansion of the London Living wage and how these costs are then passed on to the council. At this stage the commitment to secure employment and apprenticeships remains unchanged and has not been strengthened within the strategy; however the Council's approach may be progressed through the Future Jobs Scrutiny Commission, the Social Value Policy and Guidance, and the updating of the Responsible Procurement Guide.

6 Risk management

6.1 The risks associated with the delivery of the various projects for each year of the strategy will sit with the project owners and be documented within relevant departmental / divisional risk registers.

7 Equalities impact assessment

7.1 An overview of the housing strategy and the equality implications was discussed at the corporate EIA panel on 6 March 2017. The EIA carried out on the 2012 Housing Strategy is still relevant, with the basic challenges and groups affected the same, for instance the demographic profile of council tenants is largely unaltered. In the longer term, there is a prediction that the proportion of 'White Other' residents will increase more rapidly than other groups. The strategy is informed by previous EIAs carried out specific policy areas. We are however, committed to carrying out additional analysis to refresh data to support the delivery of the Strategy.

8 Community safety

8.1 The housing strategy has a number of positive impacts on community safety. The Lambeth Housing Standard Estate includes lighting, improved access and estate security. Housing has a key role in tackling anti-social behaviour. Work supporting vulnerable clients through the housing pathways also has a positive effect on community safety.

9 Organisational implications

9.1 Procurement

None

9.2 Health

The impact that housing has on both physical / mental health and general wellbeing is well documented. The housing strategy was developed in consultation with the Staying Healthy Board.

10 Timetable for implementation

10.1 Once approved the housing strategy will inform service plans for 2017/18. Progress against the key aims will be monitored on an annual basis.

Audit trail				
Consultation				
Name/Position	Lambeth cluster/division or partner	Date Sent	Date Received	Comments in para:
Sue Foster	Strategic Director, Neighbourhoods and Growth	04.04.17	06.04.17	
Councillor Jackie Meldrum	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	15.12.16	15.12.16 11.04.17	
Rachel Sharpe	Director, Strategic Housing Regeneration and Communities	04.04.17	06.04.17	
Neil Wightman	Director Housing Services	04.04.17	06.04.17	
Cllr Matthew Bennett	Cabinet Member for Housing	04.04.17	05/04.17	
Mandy Green	Assistant Director Homes and Communities	04.04.17	04.04.17	Section 1
Andrew Ramsden, Finance	Corporate Resources	04.04.17	05.04.17	Section 3
Greg Carson, Legal Services	Corporate Resources	04.04.17	07.04.17	Section 4
Henry Langford Democratic Services	Corporate Resources	04.04.17	05.04.17	Section 4

Report history	
Original discussion with Cabinet Member	October 2016
Report deadline	10.04.17
Date final report sent	10.04.17
Part II Exempt from Disclosure/confidential accompanying report?	No
Key decision report	No
Date first appeared on forward plan	N/A
Key decision reasons	N/A
Background information	<p>Future Lambeth our Borough Plan https://modern.gov.lambeth.gov.uk/documents/s83861/Lambeth%20Borough%20Plan%202016%202021.pdf</p> <p>Housing Strategy 2012 – 2016 https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ho-lambeth-housing-strategy-2012-16.pdf</p>
Appendices	Appendix 1: Housing Strategy 2017-20