

| <b>Housing Select Committee</b> |  |      |                   |
|---------------------------------|--|------|-------------------|
| Title                           | Key housing issues                       |      |                   |
| Contributor                     | Executive Director for Customer Services | Item | 10                |
| Class                           | Part 1 (Open)                            | Date | 11 September 2013 |

## **1 Summary**

- 1.1 Housing Key Issues is a general report that aims to update the Housing Select Committee on current and new issues important to housing that are not covered in a separate more detailed report.

## **2 Social housing complaints**

- 2.1 The new system for social housing complaints was reported to Housing Select Committee on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2013. The Committee agreed that chair of the housing select committee act as the main Designated Person and the remaining members of the HSC will act as designated people where there is a conflict of interest or the chair is unavailable.
- 2.2 The first referral has been made but has not yet concluded. The outcome will be reported to the Committee when available.

## **3 Comprehensive spending review**

- 3.1 The Comprehensive Spending Review, announced on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2013 (for 2014/15), included a commitment by the Government of a £3 billion capital investment in affordable housing. More details of this funding is awaited.
- 3.2 The CSR announced that £400 million from the New Homes Bonus will be pooled within Local Enterprise Partnership areas to support strategic housing and economic development priorities. A subsequent document has been launched by the DCLG to consult on this proposal, with a closing date of 19<sup>th</sup> September. The council is currently working through the detail and preparing a response which will be fed back to this committee at a future meeting.
- 3.3 The intention is that the pooling remains within Local Enterprise Partnership areas, with 'reassurance' that these resources will be used for local housing and growth priorities. It is also intended to give local authorities an indirect financial stake in new housing built near but outside their council boundaries; whereas before, there was no mitigation for developments which placed strains or pressures on neighbouring councils.

## **4 Mayor of London's Care and Support Specialist Housing Fund**

- 4.1 The proposed Extra Care Scheme on Chiddingstone, Lewisham Park has attracted a £2,295,000 subsidy through the Mayor of London's Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund which was announced in July.

- 4.2 The site is able to provide 51 units, made up of 46 1-bed units and 5 2-bed unit, and the Council has agreed a start on site date of September 2014, with practical completion in March 2015.
- 4.3 Officers from Housing Strategy and Adult Social Care are working to draft a development agreement and nomination agreement for the disposal of the scheme. A competitive dialogue process will be used to procure a registered provider to develop, own and manage the scheme.
- 4.4 Key milestones:

| <b>Chiddingstone Extra Care Scheme:</b>                 | <b>End</b>     |
|---|----------------|
| Development Agreement and Nominations agreement drafted | December 2013  |
| Procure a Registered Provider                           | December 2013  |
| RP submits planning application                         | May 2013       |
| RP start on site  | September 2013 |
| Practical completion                                    | March 2015     |

## **5 GLA's Building the Pipeline fund**

- 5.1 On 22 July 2013, the Mayor announced allocations of £136.5m to deliver 6,190 homes through the Building the Pipeline fund. The funding has been allocated to 56 housing providers who will all begin work during this Mayoral term.
- 5.2 All construction starts for schemes funded through this programme will need to be achieved by March 2015.
- 5.3 Lewisham as a borough has attracted funding to deliver 477 new units and the Council itself attracted £500,000 to bring 25 empty homes back into use. The full list of allocations can be found at Appendix 1.

|                            | <b>Bexley</b> | <b>Bromley</b> | <b>Greenwich</b> | <b>Lewisham</b> | <b>Southwark</b> |             |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------|
| LA new build               | 0             | 0              | 33               | 0               | 4                |             |
| LA Empty properties        | 10            |                | 10               | 25              | 9                |             |
| LA Hidden Homes            | 0             | 0              | 10               | 0               | 10               |             |
| LA Supported               | 0             | 0              | 51               | 0               | 0                |             |
| HA Rent                    | 0             | 0              | 464              | 390             | 379              |             |
| HA Low Cost Home Ownership | 50            | 0              | 93               | 62              | 343              |             |
| <b>TOTAL UNITS</b>         | <b>60</b>     | <b>0</b>       | <b>661</b>       | <b>477</b>      | <b>745</b>       | <b>1943</b> |

- 5.4 Phoenix Community Housing Trust were one of the providers that was successful in bidding through the Building the Pipeline fund to develop an extra care scheme. They were awarded £2.6m to develop a 60 unit scheme at Hazelhurst Court in Bellingham. The Council is working with Phoenix to help them deliver this scheme.
- 5.5 In January, Mayor and Cabinet approved a proposal for the Council to provide support to make the scheme viable, through Section 106 Affordable Housing funding.
- 5.6 Key milestones:

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| <b>Hazlehurst Extra Care scheme (Phoenix Housing Trust):</b> |              |
| Phoenix agrees capital funding with LBL                      | January 2014 |
| LBL and Phoenix agrees nomination agreement                  | April 2014   |
| Phoenix submit planning application                          | March 2014   |
| Start on site  | August 2015  |

## **6 Heathside & Lethbridge**

- 6.1 The new build homes in Phases 1 and 2 are complete. The empty blocks in Phase 3 have now transferred to Family for demolition and new build works which are to be complete between 2015 – 16. The decant of Phase 4A is well underway with around 10 tenants remaining and the Council seeking Compulsory Purchase powers from the Secretary of State to gain possession of leasehold properties should negotiation not be possible. Officers are working with Family Mosaic to review scheme timescales and unit mix for the remaining Phases (Phases 4 – 6).
- 6.2 Occupation rates in the new Phase 1 and 2 properties from Heathside and Lethbridge Close residents are very high. 64 tenants from Phase 3, 50 tenants from Phase 4A and 1 request to return tenant from Phase 1 moved into the new build. This means that over 75% of the new rented homes are occupied by existing estate residents. 3 resident leaseholders from Phase 3 have bought new homes under shared equity and at least 2 residents leaseholders from Phase 4 are expected to do the same.
- 6.3 Family Mosaic have obtained £1.5m for the second block of housing in Phase 3 and £3m for Phase 4 from the Mayor's Housing Covenant fund. This adds to the £26m funding already in place from the GLA.

## **7 Regeneration Schemes**

### **7.1 Excalibur**

- 7.2 The Phase 1 & 2 contractor, Denne have been on site since March 2013 carrying out pre site commencement work including surveys and disconnecting services. There is one final tenant on site who is currently moving and due to his

circumstances, officers have been allowing this to happen over an extended period. Officers are looking at legal action should this be required. Before the demolition can begin, the Planning Conditions are to be discharged by Planners which is expected in the autumn 2013 with demolition commencing in October 2013. Homes are due to be complete by March 2015.

7.3 The Phase 3 decant has begun with most tenants wanting to be re-housed in the new homes to be built in Phase 1. Other tenants are beginning to move away if this is their choice.

#### 7.4 **Milford Towers**

7.5 Tenants in Milford Towers continue to be re-housed and properties are almost transferred fully from property guardians to our lettings partner Notting Hill Housing. The result is that currently 58 secure tenants remain; 139 properties are with Notting Hill, Ad Hoc have 2 final properties to handover, 30 properties are being used as temp stay and the 22 leaseholders are yet to be bought back. The remaining 25 properties are a combination of void awaiting works prior to occupation (either with Notting Hill or Lewisham Homes) decommissioned units that won't be re-let and tenants that have accepted offers and are moving.

7.6 Due to the extended period for decanting as part of the wider regeneration scheme, the decant is now being carried out in a responsive rather than proactive way, with help being given to moving where it is wanted. For the time being, tenants will not be actively decanted until the timescales for the scheme are clearer.

#### 7.7 **Kender**

7.8 Hyde Housing Association have started work on the final phase of the Kender housing redevelopment in New Cross. The work has commenced under licence while the final land sale documentation is agreed and signed. This phase will deliver 204 units in total with completion expected in 2015.

### 8 **Stock transfer guidance**

8.1 On the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013 the Government issued a consultation document relating to the new Housing Transfer Manual. The consultation closed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2013 and the council provided a detailed response to the questions asked.

8.2 In Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England, the Government committed to bring forward proposals for a new programme on housing transfer. The draft manual sets out the Government's proposed approach to stock transfer in the context of the self-financing settlement. The new manual applies to transfers in the period to March 2015.

8.3 A lot of the detail contained in the previous version of the housing transfer manual has been removed. The manual is not expected to take account of every issue which may arise from transfer proposals coming forward in a wide range of circumstances. The expectation is that those interested in transfer contact the

HCA or GLA at an early stage to discuss the specific circumstances which apply to them and questions arising.

- 8.4 The draft manual sets out the criteria that Government intends to apply when assessing whether the Secretary of State should grant consent to a transfer. Those criteria reflect both the advent of self-financing and strong focus on securing good value for money from transfer.
- 8.5 Lewisham's response, in summary is that the council is concerned with the proposed transfer manual and that the Government takes every possible financial benefit from the new landlord's business plan, while leaving Council tax payers and tenants of the RP to fund the process. In order to maximise its return from the deal, the Government also drives the business plan, but it does so from a position of no responsibility because it will not be the body which has the responsibility and accountability for running the business post-transfer. It also leaves the new landlord with all the risk; perversely much of that risk lying in the hands of the government itself (cp VAT scheme, rent controls, management standards and new initiatives like bedroom tax and universal credit - both of which will impact rent income recovery rates).

## **9 Financial implications**

- 9.1 This report is intended to inform members of current issues and, therefore, has no direct financial implications.
- 9.2 The financial implications of each issue will be considered in specific reports as matters progress.

## **10 Legal & human rights implications**

- 10.1 There are no additional legal implications at this time, save to note the following:
- 10.2 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a new public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 10.3 In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
  - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 10.4 The duty continues to be a "have regard duty", and the weight to be attached to it is a matter for the Mayor, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations.

10.5 The Equality and Human Rights Commission has recently issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled “Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice”. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/equality-act/equality-act-codes-of-practice-and-technical-guidance/>

10.6 The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

1. The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
2. Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making
3. Engagement and the equality duty
4. Equality objectives and the equality duty
5. Equality information and the equality duty

10.7 The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at:

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty/guidance-on-the-equality-duty/>

## **11 Equalities implications**

11.1 There are no specific equality implications for this report (other than those in the legal implications) as its an information report and refers to other reports that, where necessary, will have an Equalities Analysis Assessment.

## **12 Crime and disorder implications**

12.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications.

## **13 Environmental implications**

13.1 There are no specific environmental implications.

## **14 Background documentation and report originator**

If you have any questions about this report please contact Jeff Endean, Housing Programmes and Strategy Team Manager on x46213

## APPENDIX 1

| <b>Mayor's Housing Covenant - Building a Pipeline - Homes for Rent and Sale</b> |  |                               |                           |   |                           |
|---|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| <b>Programme</b>  | <b>Lead Partner Name</b>   | <b>Offer Line Name</b>        | <b>Sub-product</b>        | <b>LA List</b>                          | <b>Total No. of Units</b> |
| Affordable Homes Guarantee  | Affinity Sutton Group Limited  | BOND HOUSE                    | Affordable Rent           | Lewisham                                | 52                        |
| Affordable Homes Guarantee  | Family Mosaic Housing  | South London Sub Region       | Affordable Rent           | Greenwich, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark | 213                       |
| Affordable Homes Guarantee  | Family Mosaic Housing  | South London Sub Region       | Affordable Home Ownership | Greenwich, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark | 56                        |
| Affordable Homes Guarantee  | Hexagon Housing Association Limited                                    | BTP - Evelyn St. 12 AR        | Affordable Rent           | Lewisham                                | 12                        |
| Affordable Homes Guarantee  | Leicester Housing Association Limited (Asra)                           | Fishers Court                 | Affordable Rent           | Lewisham                                | 20                        |
| Affordable Homes Guarantee  | Leicester Housing Association Limited (Asra)                           | Staunton Street               | Affordable Rent           | Lewisham                                | 7                         |
| Affordable Homes Guarantee  | Leicester Housing Association Limited (Asra)                           | Kent Wharf                    | Affordable Rent           | Lewisham                                | 12                        |
| Affordable Homes Guarantee  | Leicester Housing Association Limited (Asra)                           | Trundleys Road                | Affordable Rent           | Lewisham                                | 14                        |
| Affordable Homes Guarantee  | Leicester Housing Association Limited (Asra)                           | Trundleys Road                | Affordable Home Ownership | Lewisham                                | 6                         |
| Affordable Homes Guarantee  | Phoenix Community Housing Association (Bellingham and Downham) Limited | Hazelhurst Court (Extra Care) | Affordable Rent           | Lewisham                                | 60                        |
| Empty Homes   | London Borough of Lewisham   | 159-161 New Cross scheme      | EHARENT                   | Lewisham                                | 6                         |
| Empty Homes   | London Borough of Lewisham   | 2 Tanners Hill                | EHARENT                   | Lewisham                                | 3                         |

|             |                            |                         |         |          |     |
|-------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------|----------|-----|
| Empty Homes | London Borough of Lewisham | 14 - 16 Deptford Bridge | EHARENT | Lewisham | 4   |
| Empty Homes | London Borough of Lewisham | 8-16 Perry Rise         | EHARENT | Lewisham | 8   |
| Empty Homes | London Borough of Lewisham | 10-12 London Road       | EHARENT | Lewisham | 4   |
|             |                            |                         |         | TOTAL    | 477 |