

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE			
Report Title	Update from Cabinet Member for Housing		
Key Decision	No		Item No. 3 (appendix B)
Ward	All		
Contributors	Cabinet Member for Housing		
Class	Open	Date: 27 January 2020	

Purpose

This report provides an update to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on some of the achievements in the Housing Portfolio

Recommendation

Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note this report.

Tackling the Housing Crisis: developing new social homes

The Council has launched the Building for Lewisham Programme that will see new social homes delivered across the borough. Progress is being made to deliver both a tranche of directly delivered sites, together with sites delivered by partners such as Peabody, L&Q and Phoenix.

Since May 2018, 237 new social homes have been delivered by Lewisham and RP partners with an active Council pipeline of over 1,000 new homes and acquisitions. Eighteen schemes are currently in delivery phases. The Council, via our housing company Lewisham Homes are due to start over 200 council homes on site in the first half of 2020.

The Council is now working on the development of 16 new sites as well as forward funded acquisitions to directly deliver around 500 new homes. At present, the redevelopment of the former Ladywell Leisure Centre site remains the largest single development, with in excess of 200 units currently anticipated to be delivered as part of a mixed use, multi-tenure development. This will be delivered by the Council, via our housing company, Lewisham Homes.

New homes for homeless households

Following the success of PLACE/Ladywell, officers are working to deliver three new sites for Temporary Accommodation (TA). Around 2300 households are in TA, of

which 735 are placed in nightly paid accommodation. It is imperative the Council builds these new homes to tackle the acute housing crisis.

The development at Edward Street will provide 34 units and is currently out to tender with a start on site due by the end of the financial year.

Planning permission has now been granted for the development on the former Mayow Road warehouse site and 118 Canonbie Road, purchased to stop the activities of a rogue landlord.

Mayow Road will deliver 26 new homes and Canonbie Road will consist of 6 new homes for social rent. Both developments will provide exclusively self-contained flats with two and three bedrooms, all benefiting from their own private amenity space. The homes will provide much-needed temporary accommodation, supporting residents to remain in their local community.

Further opportunities will be considered as part of the Council's ongoing feasibility work.

Council-owned homes for private rent

The planning application for the Council's joint venture with Grainger to deliver a 100% Build to Rent scheme has now been submitted.

One in every two families who approaches us for housing has been made homeless because their private tenancy has ended. Currently there are not have enough social homes to offer everyone in this position so the Council is looking at alternative ways of ensuring that there are good, secure and affordable private tenancies available to help people in this position.

Besson Street is one of a number of sites the Council is using to respond to the housing crisis challenge we face. It is specifically focussed on how we can support an improved private rented sector that works for working residents on ordinary incomes, with better rent levels and greater security of tenure as well as providing 35% of units at London Living Rent.

New homes for adults with learning disabilities

As part of the development at Mayow Road the Council will also deliver six supported living homes for residents with learning disabilities or autism, helping them to remain in borough and live more independent lives.

This will be supported by 24-hour on-site care and support staff. We are supporting these aims in partnership with NHS England's transforming care programme.

The Council's Strategic Development Team are working closely with colleagues in Adult Social Care to look at further opportunities across the Borough. A bid was recently submitted to the Local Government Association for some additional recourse to support this work as part of their Housing Advisers Programme.

Introducing ballots on estate regeneration sites: Achilles Street

In September 2019, Mayor and Cabinet agreed to a “Landlord Offer” being made to the residents of the Achilles Street Estate as part of the rebuilding of the estate. There was also a ballot of those residents to ask if they agreed with the redevelopment proposals.

The resident ballot ran from Friday 18 October until Monday 11 November 2019. All residents who were eligible to vote, based on the criteria set out by the GLA, were given the opportunity to vote on the Achilles Street Estate proposal.

In total, 92% of eligible residents voted in the Achilles Street Estate resident ballot for estate regeneration. This represents 81 of 88 eligible voters on the estate. This is the highest turnout of any resident ballot for estate regeneration held to date.

Of the 81 residents who voted, 73% voted “Yes” in favour of regenerating the Achilles Street Estate. This means that 59 eligible residents support the redevelopment proposals.

This represents a very high level of support for redevelopment and provides a clear mandate for the Council to proceed to the next phase of the project.

Borough wide landlord licensing

Lewisham Council is committed to improving conditions in the private rented sector (PRS). One out of four Lewisham residents live in the PRS, and whilst many private rented properties are decent and well-maintained there remains a small number of landlords who rent out unsafe and substandard accommodation.

An in-depth analysis of the PRS conducted in 2019 demonstrated a need for an expanded landlord licensing scheme. In obtaining a license, landlords will need to fulfil certain conditions before renting out their property and when managing their property. In line with the corporate strategy objective, the Council are working towards introducing a new selective and additional licensing scheme. If we are successful in our application to the Secretary of State for the selective licensing scheme, all PRS properties in the borough will require a license.

This will have a wide-ranging positive impact on the PRS sector, including improved property standards and more recourse for the Council to tackle poor landlord behaviour, anti-social behaviour, and crime.

Over the summer of 2019 the Council carried out a public consultation on our proposals. The consultation received 1831 responses, one of the highest response rates in London for licensing consultations. The results of the consultation were broadly supportive of the proposals.

Housing Select Committee were updated on the outcome of the consultation and the changes that have been made to the proposed scheme on the basis of the results. By the end of this financial year Mayor & Cabinet will be asked to:

- approve the designation of an additional licensing scheme for all Houses in Multiple Occupation in the Council's area;
- approve the submission of an application to the Secretary of State for a Selective Licensing Scheme to apply to all privately rented single occupancy dwellings in the Council's area

Officers are currently working to introduce new technology, process and practice to ensure a successful roll-out of the schemes.

Private renters union

As part of its commitment to improve standards in the PRS, the Council will be facilitating the development of a strong Private Renters Union, to ensure tenants have an active voice.

This work will start in earnest at the start of 2021, following the launch of the expanded licensing schemes. Discussions have already commenced with established private renting unions in London that will be developed as part of this work.

Building safer communities: supporting survivors of domestic abuse

We are working with colleagues from Lewisham Homes, Lewisham VAWG (Violence against women and girls), Athena and other partners to obtain Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation. DAHA is the UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse in the UK. They are a key partner in delivering the governments "Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy: 2016 to 2020."

Officers from across Housing, Crime and Enforcement are leading a new steering group that has been set up to achieve accreditation. Officers are currently collating all the pertinent information from their services to support a gap analysis exercise that will be undertaken against DAHA best practice. The group will also look to engage RPs and other partners to support the extension of this work.

Consideration is currently being given to potential changes to the council's allocations scheme in relation to survivors of domestic violence.

Housing Strategy 2020-26

A new housing strategy 2020-26 is currently being developed, with plans to publically consult in February and March this year. Officers anticipate a new strategy will be launched in early Summer 2020, alongside a new homelessness and rough sleeping strategy.

Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications from noting the contents of this report

Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications of relevance to this report.

Equalities implications

With respect to the Council's Comprehensive Equalities Scheme 2016-20, the activities described in this report make a clear contribution to the following equality objectives:

- Tackling victimisation, discrimination and harassment
- Improving access to services
- Closing the gap in outcomes between citizens
- Increasing mutual understanding and respect within and between communities
- Increasing participation and engagement

The various actions described in this report will directly benefit the protected characteristics of: age, disability, sex and pregnancy and maternity. However, other protected characteristics will also benefit indirectly.

Although not a characteristic protected under the Equality Act 2010, the activities described in this report will also help to tackle socio-economic inequality, which is part of the lived experience of all characteristics protected under the Equality Act.