

	<p>Housing Committee 21 June 2018</p>
<p>Title</p>	<p>Housing Strategy</p>
<p>Report of</p>	<p>Councillor Gabriel Rozenberg</p>
<p>Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p>Urgent</p>	<p><i>n/a</i></p>
<p>Key</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Enclosures</p>	<p>Housing Strategy Summary Evidence Base</p>
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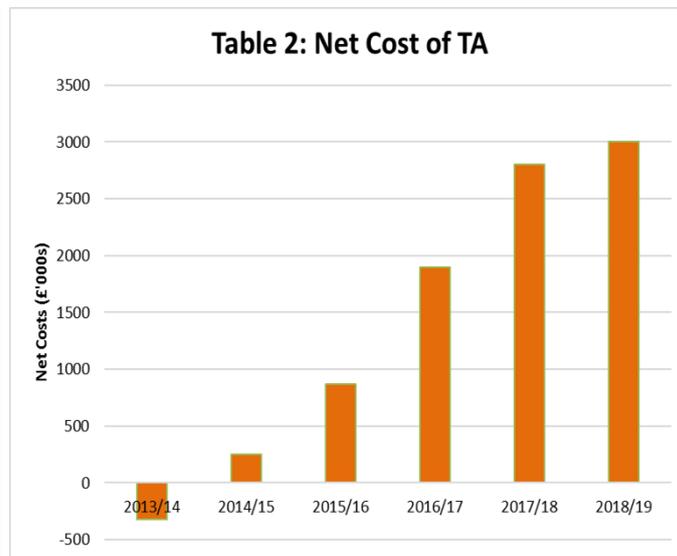
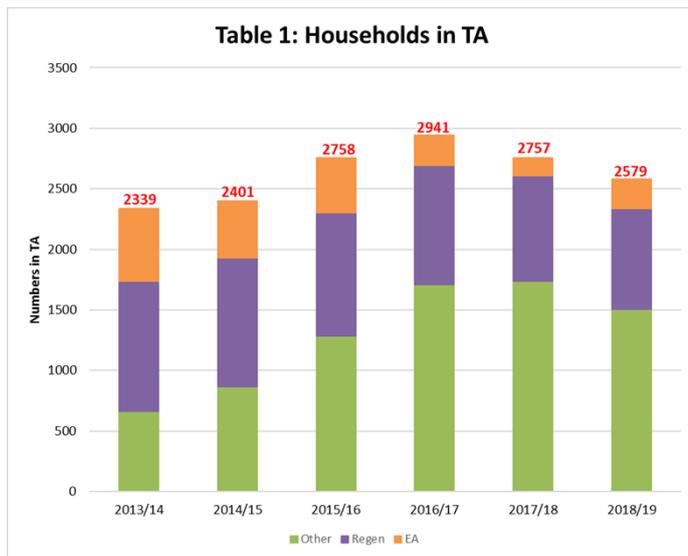
Summary

Council Officers have updated the evidence base that supports the Housing Strategy, and a summary version of this is attached at appendix 1. This report also includes information about a number of changes and events that have occurred since the Housing Strategy was agreed by the Council in 2015. The report recommends that officers are instructed to prepare a new draft housing strategy and sets out some emerging themes for that strategy. It also notes the requirement to produce a Homelessness Strategy and recommends that officers are instructed to prepare a draft homelessness strategy based on the themes set out.

- Officers Recommendations**
- 1. That the committee endorse the emerging themes for the new Housing Strategy and instruct the Deputy Chief Executive to prepare an updated draft strategy for consideration by the Housing Committee at its meeting on 10 October 2018.**
 - 2. That the committee endorse the emerging themes for the new Homelessness Strategy and instruct the Deputy Chief Executive to prepare an updated draft strategy for consideration by the Housing Committee at its meeting on 10**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The Council's Housing Strategy dates from 2015, and a number of changes have occurred since then which mean that the Council's approach to housing needs to be reviewed and updated. These changes include:
 - a change in Government,
 - a new London Mayor with a new London Housing Strategy,
 - new legislation including the Housing and Planning Act 2016, and
 - the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and
 - the updated Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities.
- 1.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA 2017) requires that the Council's Homelessness Strategy is updated. Barnet's Homelessness Strategy is currently a component of the Housing Strategy but it is proposed the two are separated to reflect the increased focus on tackling homelessness.
- 1.3 Officers have updated the evidence base (appendix 1) that supports the Housing Strategy. A new Strategic Housing Market Assessment has been commissioned, setting out the level of demand for housing in the borough.
- 1.4 Since 2015, other significant events have impacted on Housing at a national level, including the EU referendum and the Grenfell Tower fire disaster.
- 1.5 Additionally, the Council is in the process of updating the Local Plan, and the Assets, Regeneration and Growth Committee is preparing a Regeneration Strategy.
- 1.6 The updated evidence shows a great deal of continuity in the trends which drove the 2015 housing strategy, and thus a degree of continuity in the themes for the new strategies. However, housing costs have risen unexpectedly fast, relative to both local median incomes and Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates. The resulting affordability gap has created real challenges for households seeking to buy or rent, and also for the Council's temporary accommodation budget.
- 1.7 Despite the Council's increased focus on homelessness prevention, it is increasingly difficult to secure good quality, sustainable and affordable temporary accommodation of all types in London, and especially at prices within the LHA cap. The cost of procuring temporary accommodation (TA) has increased significantly and the current levels of costs cannot be sustained indefinitely. Table 1 illustrates that despite the reduction in the number of households in TA from 2016/17, the net cost of the accommodation (Table 2) has continued to increase and has created a significant financial pressure for the Council.



1.8 Tackling and preventing homelessness and rough sleeping continue to be a focus for the Council. It is recommended that the Homelessness Strategy focus on the following themes:

- Preventing homelessness.** Prevention remains the most effective way to manage homelessness and the Council will look to help people to stay in their own homes or support them to find new homes. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a duty on the Council to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness. It also requires the Council to provide homelessness services including advice and assistance to all those affected, not just those who are in ‘priority need’¹
- Reducing the use of Temporary Accommodation (TA).** Temporary accommodation in Barnet is of good quality. Nonetheless, its temporary nature by definition inhibits families’ efforts to move forward with their lives. Furthermore, the cost burden of TA is a significant pressure on the Council’s finances. The Homelessness Strategy must therefore set out a broad range of measures which can be taken to secure accommodation whilst reducing the use TA.
- Establishing effective partnerships, working arrangements and support.** To prevent homelessness and improve outcomes for people, especially rough sleepers, care leavers and other vulnerable groups.

1.9 It is recommended that the new Housing Strategy focus on the following themes:

¹ Section 189(1) and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002 (the 2002 Order) provide that the following categories of applicant have a priority need for accommodation e.g. pregnant woman, person with dependent children, vulnerable adult, 16/17 year olds, looked after children under 21 years old no longer in care, vulnerable looked after children over 21, Armed Forces, domestic violence victims, homeless due to an emergency such as fire, flood or other disaster.

- **Raising standards in the private rented sector.** Developments in the housing market over many years mean that the private rented sector is home to a high and rising proportion of Barnet's households. Affordability constraints have prompted many families to turn to the private rented sector as a way of life. The new strategy will therefore place more emphasis on supporting responsible tenants and ensuring that landlords provide a good quality offer.
- **Delivering more homes that people can afford.** The evidence shows that Barnet's population continues to grow sharply. While the Local Plan will set the policy framework and targets for new homes, the Housing Strategy will set out how the Council will deliver new homes, and particularly affordable homes. The updated strategy will therefore focus on exploring innovative approaches to accelerate building, noting the opportunities presented through The Barnet Group and its subsidiary Opendoor Homes.
- **Safe and secure homes.** The tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in June 2017 drew attention to the fundamental importance of fire safety, particularly in high rise blocks. The Housing Strategy will set out the Council's continuing commitment to the highest standards of fire safety, and wider health and safety, across all tenures.
- **Promoting independence.** Good housing can help to support other Council objectives, such as helping older and vulnerable people to live independently. The strategy will promote the delivery of homes that meet the needs of older people and those with disabilities. It will promote measures to support young people leaving care to make a successful transition to living independently.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The updated evidence base and changes set out in section 1 of this report mean that the Housing Strategy which was produced in 2015 needs to be reviewed and updated.
- 2.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 requires that the Council's Homelessness Strategy is updated to reflect the new legislative provisions and updated Homelessness Code of Guidance.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 The Council could decide not to review the Housing Strategy or the Homelessness Strategy, but this is not recommended as the document would not then reflect the changes that have occurred since 2015.

4 POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Council officers will prepare a draft updated Housing Strategy and draft Homelessness Strategy for consideration by the Housing Committee at its meeting in October 2018.
- 4.2 The Council will consult with key partners and stakeholders when developing both draft strategies and subject to the agreement of the Housing Committee, wider consultation on the draft Housing Strategy and draft Homelessness Strategy will take place during the winter, and a further draft that takes account of this will be brought back to Housing Committee early in 2019.

5 IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 The Housing Strategy contributes to the Councils Corporate plan purpose as follows:

Successful Places	Meeting the housing needs of the borough is key to ensuring Barnet remains a successful place
Great Outcomes	Housing is important to helping residents achieve great outcomes
Quality Services	Housing services provided by Barnet Homes, Re and Housing Associations
Resilient Communities	Access to housing and reducing homelessness is key to building resilient communities

- 5.1.2 The Housing Strategy contributes to key priorities identified in Councils Corporate plan priorities including ***Increasing the housing supply, including Colindale*** and ***Building compliance and fire safety***.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 The costs of producing the draft documents will be met within existing resources.

5.3 Social Value

- 5.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

5.4.1 The Council's Constitution Article 7.5 Responsibility for Functions, states that the Housing Committee is responsible for housing matters including housing strategy, homelessness, social housing and housing grants, commissioning of environmental health functions for private sector housing.

5.5 Risk Management

5.5.1 There is a risk that the housing requirements of the Borough are not met if the Housing Strategy is not updated.

5.5.2 There is a risk that the Council's Homelessness Strategy will not reflect recent legislative changes and that homelessness may increase if the Council does not update the strategy and set out the measures it will take to tackle homelessness.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

5.6.1 Equality and diversity issues are a mandatory consideration in the decision making of the Council. This requires elected Members to satisfy themselves that equality considerations are integrated into day to day business and that all proposals emerging from the finance and business planning process have properly taken into consideration what impact, if any, there is on any protected group and what mitigating factors can be put in place.

5.6.2 The Public Sector Equality duty is set out in s149 of the Equality Act 2010: A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

5.6.3 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.
- 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.

5.6.4 The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

5.6.5 Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard of the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

5.6.6 Compliance with the duties in this section 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 this Act. The relevant protected characteristics are:

- a) Age
- b) Disability
- c) Gender reassignment
- d) Pregnancy and maternity
- e) Race
- f) Religion or belief
- g) Sex
- h) Sexual orientation

5.6.7 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken to assess the impacts of both the Housing Strategy and the Homelessness Strategy.

5.7 **Corporate Parenting**

5.7.1 Promoting independence is proposed to be a central theme of the Housing Strategy. This includes ensuring that care leavers make a successful transition to independent living.

5.8 **Consultation and Engagement**

5.8.1 Consultation with key stakeholders will be undertaken to support and inform the development of the draft Housing and Homelessness strategies. There will also be public consultation on the draft strategy, once developed. Feedback from this will inform the final version of the documents.

5.9 **Insight**

5.9.1 The Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategies will be informed by evidence bases. A summary of the Housing Strategy evidence base is appended to the report.

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 Housing Strategy (2015)

<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s24071/Housing%20Strategt.pdf>

REPORT CLEARANCE CHECKLIST

(Removed prior to publication and retained by Governance Service)

Note: All reports must be cleared by the appropriate Committee Chairman, Chief Officer, Legal, Finance and Governance as a minimum. Report authors should also engage with subject matter experts from other service areas where this is required (e.g. procurement, equalities, risk, etc.). The name and date that the chairman or officer has cleared the report must be included in the table below or the report will not be accepted.

Legal, Finance and Governance require a minimum of 5 working days to provide report clearance. Clearance cannot be guaranteed for reports submitted outside of this time and your report is likely to be withdrawn from the agenda and deferred to the next scheduled meeting.

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