

Housing Committee

1 April 2019



Title **Housing Strategy**

Report of [Cllr Gabriel Rozenberg](#)

Wards [All](#)

Status [Public](#)

Urgent [No](#)

Key [Yes](#)

Enclosures [Appendix 1 – Draft Housing Strategy 2019-2024](#)
[Appendix 2 – Consultation Report](#)
[Appendix 3 – Summary EIA](#)

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Summary

The council has developed a new draft Housing Strategy to take account of major changes in the housing sector and wider demographic and economic changes, including rising housing costs, a shift in tenure from owner occupation to private renting, the impact of the Grenfell Tower fire disaster and legislative changes. The draft Housing Strategy was approved for public consultation by Housing Committee on 10 October 2018. The consultation has now been completed and a revised draft is attached for the Housing Committee's consideration at appendix 1, along with a summary of the consultation outcomes at appendix 2.

Officers Recommendations

1. That the Housing Committee approves the revised draft Housing Strategy attached at appendix 1.

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:
- changes in Government Policy,
 - 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 council's Homelessness Strategy also requires an update to take account of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA 2017). 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 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 Housing Committee considered the above matters in June 2018, and instructed council officers to prepare a new draft Housing Strategy based on the following themes:
- **Raising standards in the private rented sector.**
 - **Delivering more homes that people can afford.**
 - **Safe and secure homes.**
 - **Promoting independence.**
- 1.7 The Housing Committee approved for consultation a new draft Housing Strategy to cover the period 2019- 2024 on 10 October 2018, and agreed that a proposed final draft should be brought back for Housing Committee members to consider following a period of public consultation.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The draft Housing Strategy has been updated to take account of responses to a public consultation that took place between November 2018 and February 2019. The responses to the consultation were positive and it is recommended that the revised draft strategy is approved by the Housing Committee.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 The Housing Committee could decide not to approve the revised draft housing strategy but at its meeting in June 2018 the Housing Committee instructed officers to prepare this, and subsequently approved the draft version for consultation in October 2018. The responses received during the public consultation about the proposed Strategy have been positive. Not revising or having such a Strategy is not recommended because the current one would not be reflective of the changes noted earlier in this report.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Subject to approval by the Housing Committee, the revised Housing Strategy 2019-2024 will be published on the council's web site.
- 4.2 Progress against the Housing Strategy objectives will be monitored through the Barnet 2024 business planning process, which includes the Housing Committee's Housing Delivery Plan.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 The Housing Strategy contributes to the council's Corporate plan priority of ***ensuring decent quality housing that buyers and renters can afford, prioritising Barnet residents*** as follows:

- Increasing supply to ensure greater housing choice for residents
- Delivering new affordable housing, including new homes on council owned land
- Prioritising people with a local connection and who give back to the community through the Housing Allocations Scheme
- Ensuring that good landlords continue to provide accommodation and that poor-quality housing is improved

- 5.1.2 The Housing Strategy supports the vision in Barnet's Health and Well Being Strategy 2015-2020 "*To help everyone to keep well and to promote independence*", with specific proposals to promote independence amongst vulnerable groups, including older people, those with mental health issues, and care leavers.

- 5.1.3 A health impact assessment (HIA) of the draft Housing Strategy has been completed, and found that the majority of the proposals in the strategy would have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of residents, with no negative impacts expected.

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

- 5.2.1 Activities and proposals in the Housing Strategy are planned to be funded through existing council budgets and plans

5.3 **Social Value**

5.3.1 Not applicable

5.4 **Legal and Constitutional References**

5.4.1 The Deregulation Act 2015 removed the power (in section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003) on the Secretary of State to require local housing authorities in England to produce a housing strategy. This does not prevent an authority from having such a strategy.

5.4.2 Section 333D of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 requires that any local housing strategy prepared by a local housing authority in Greater London must be in general conformity with the London Housing Strategy (the Mayor's strategy).

5.4.3 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.

5.6 **Equalities and Diversity**

5.6.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the Public-Sector Equality Duty which requires a public authority (or those exercising public functions) to 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 persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not

5.6.2 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services. The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

- 5.6.3 Changes to policies and services are analysed in order to assess the potential equalities impacts and risks and identify any mitigating action possible, through an equalities impact assessment, before final decisions are made. Consideration will also be made to the equalities and data cohesion summary.
- 5.6.4 A full equalities impact assessment has been completed for the Housing Strategy, and concluded that the overall impact of the Housing Strategy on the protected groups from the Equality Act 2010, as well as the Barnet Fairness Agenda, is positive.
- 5.6.5 There are a number of challenges related to housing in Barnet as described in the Housing Strategy, some of which disproportionately affect the protected groups due to their tendency to reside in the private rented sector. The strategy should improve this, which gives it a positive impact as a result. It is a minimal impact though because it will benefit all residents, rather than being targeted at the protected groups.
- 5.6.6 A summary version of the Equalities Impact Assessment is attached to this report as Appendix 3.

5.7 Corporate Parenting

- 5.7.1 Promoting independence is 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

- 5.8.5 A public consultation on the draft Housing Strategy ran from 5 November 2018 to 11 February 2019.
- 5.8.6 The consultation primarily consisted of an online survey on Engage Barnet. Supporting documents were also available on Engage Barnet, allowing residents to view the draft strategy. 171 responses were received to the consultation, with high levels of support for the strategy which are summarised below:
- Across the five themes, the mean average agreement was 83.2%, which demonstrates the strong level of support for the strategy overall.
 - The draft strategy identified five main priorities for housing within Barnet. The consultation asked respondents whether they agreed with each priority, with options of strongly agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree, strongly disagree and don't know.
 - Support for all of themes was relatively high, with a large proportion of the respondents either tending to agree or strongly agreeing.
 - The most popular priority was tackling homelessness and safe and secure homes, which both received 89% tending to agree or strongly agreeing.
 - The other priorities still received high levels of support, with delivering more homes people can afford to buy or rent producing 83% agreement, raising standards in the private rented sector receiving 79% and promoting independence 76%.

- 5.8.7 In addition to the survey, presentations were made to the Barnet Homes Performance and Advisory Group, the Children's Partnership Board, the Youth Board and Health and Well Being Board, and a roadshow was also held in November 2018 for residents to meet the chair of the Housing Committee, and give their views on the strategy. This event had a focus around private renters, inviting attendees to share their experiences of residing in that sector.
- 5.8.8 A number of formal responses were received from a range of stakeholders, including developers, Public Health and the London Mayor.
- 5.8.9 The draft Housing Strategy has been updated to take account of the consultation response, and changes can be summarised as follows:
- Additional references to links with Health
 - Clearer references to draft London Plan housing targets
 - Clearer reference to corporate parenting responsibilities
 - Acknowledgement of role of Build to Rent in providing new homes
 - Ambition to become an age and dementia friendly borough
 - Acknowledgement that good neighbourhood design is also important to effectively promote independence of individuals with physical disabilities
- 5.8.10 More information about the consultation is attached to this report at Appendix 2.

5.8 Insight

- 5.8.1 The Housing Strategy was informed by an evidence base. A summary of the Housing Strategy evidence base was reported to the Housing Committee in June 2018.

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.6 Housing Committee 10 October 2018 – Item 8 Housing Strategy 2019-2024
<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=699&MId=9487&Ver=4>
- 6.7 Housing Committee 21 June 2018 – Item 7 Housing Strategy -
<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=699&MId=9486&Ver=4>
- 6.8 Housing Strategy (2015)
<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s24071/Housing%20Strategt.pdf>

