

	<p style="text-align: center;">Health and Wellbeing Board Thursday 28th September 2023</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Title</p>	<p>Deep Dive - Homes and Health</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Date of meeting</p>	<p>28 September 2023</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Report of</p>	<p>Deputy Chief Executive, London Borough of Barnet Joint Director of Public Health and Prevention, London Borough of Barnet and Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Urgent</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Appendices</p>	<p>Appendix A – Homes and Health deep dive presentation Appendix B – Mould and Damp Action Plan (September 2023 update) Appendix C – Homeless Health Action Plan (as of September 2023)</p>
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Summary

The purpose of the report is to provide context for the Deep Dive into housing and health. The report sets out why (and how) Housing matters for people's health. It also provides an update on two of the current priorities in relation to housing and health – the council's response to damp and mould and the Homelessness Health Action Plan. It then gives an overview of the council's new Housing and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategies and how the implementation plans for the strategies are emerging.

Recommendations

1. That the Health and Well-being Board note and comment on the Deep Dive update (Appendix A).
2. That the Board comments on how the challenges on the Homeless Health Action Plan can be overcome.
3. That the Board discusses and inputs into the implementation plans for the Housing Strategy and Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategies.

1. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 1.1 Housing is an important determinant of health. Just as access to health care or financial deprivation affects our health, the quality of the homes people live in does too. Decent, well-maintained, affordable and safe homes support good physical and mental health, and reduces health inequalities. Ensuring people have good quality homes can help to delay or reduce a person's need for health and care services in the future and help them retain their independence, health and wellbeing for longer.
- 1.2 This is why the Deep Dive at today's Health and Wellbeing Board into the relationship between homes and health. The presentation in Appendix A sets out why (and how) Housing matters for people's health. As the topic itself is a wide ranging one, Appendix A and the covering paper provides an update on two of the current priorities in relation to housing and health – the council's response to damp and mould and the Homelessness Health Action Plan. Finally, the presentation gives an overview of the council's new Housing and Homelessness and Rough sleeping strategy and the relationship to housing and health.
Damp and Mould
- 1.3 Homes that have damp or mould issues can increase the likelihood of respiratory, cardiovascular and communicable diseases, alongside other issues such as overcrowding or houses being poorly insulated (too cold or too hot). Young children, older people and people with long-term conditions or other vulnerabilities are more likely to be affected by poor quality housing.
- 1.4 On 17 January 2023 Housing and Growth Committee received an update on damp and mould issues in Barnet, including progress across council properties managed by Barnet Homes, and activity in relation to relevant Registered Providers of Social Housing (RPs) and across the private sector housing stock. At the meeting four Registered Providers (Home Group, Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing, Network Homes and Peabody) also provided an update on their response to damp and mould).

- 1.5 This was followed up by a further report to Housing and Growth Committee on 23 March 2023. At this meeting Notting Hill Genesis provided an update on their response to damp and mould.
- 1.6 Further reports to Housing and Growth Committee in January and March included a Damp and Mould Action Plan. An updated version of this, as of August 2023 has been included in Appendix B.
- 1.7 A public facing campaign was also undertaken in April 2023 to provide residents with information on how to tackle damp and mould, and advice on where to go if there are continued issues, including to the new Healthy Homes team. This was supported by Healthy Homes Roadshows, which were held around Barnet.

Homeless Health Workplan

- 1.8 The “Homeless Health Workplan” aims to address and improve health inequalities experienced by people who are currently or recently rough sleeping. It was approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board in July 2022 following the completion of a homeless health needs assessment.
- 1.9 Since this time, the Homeless Health Strategic Group have met monthly to deliver the workplan objectives. The partnership group includes representation from:
 - Barnet Homes Housing Options Service
 - Homeless Action in Barnet
 - LB Barnet Public Health
 - Barnet Integrated Care Board
- 1.10 The partnership group has worked collaboratively to establish the Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Project. The team delivers enhanced support to people experiencing substance misuse and rough sleeping, including direct access to detox and rehab provision. This project has supported people with multiple and complex needs to access treatment and housing where they may have faced barriers previously. The project also includes a designated Romanian speaking worker which was particularly helpful as the deadline for the EU Settlement Scheme approached in June 2021. Whilst LB Barnet continued to offer support and health services to people with no recourse to public funds beyond this time, it has become increasingly difficult to support people in this group who no longer have access to housing services.
- 1.11 There have also been ongoing challenges for the general homeless population to access suitable health services including primary care, dentistry and chiropody. Whilst Barnet ICB has committed to commissioning two new contracts for homeless primary care services alongside refurbishing the existing clinical space at Homeless Action in Barnet, this has had significant delays and there are currently unclear timelines.
- 1.12 Furthermore, delays to the contracting of these services has meant further barriers for homeless people accessing services such as wound care, chiropody and routine screenings.
- 1.13 Additionally, access to dental care remains a challenge. The Barnet partnership group is working closely with the NCL Inclusion Health team to address gaps in provision and identify pathways for homeless people to access dentistry however there are no immediate solutions.
- 1.14 Lastly, the partnership has focussed on and prioritised mental health pathways for people who are homeless. Crisis support often presents a barrier resulting in high-risk situations in community settings. Additionally, referral pathways are complex and challenging, particularly when trying to refer from VCS organisations without suitable primary care services in place.

1.15 The Barnet Safeguarding Adults Board is currently conducting two Safeguarding Adult Reviews that address the deaths of two homeless people with multiple, complex needs including mental health issues, substance misuse issues and histories of offending. The reports are soon to be finalised with a set of recommendations to address the findings.

Housing and Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy

1.16 On 18 July 2023 Cabinet approved the Housing Strategy and the Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy following consultation.

1.17 The Housing Strategy includes the following themes:

- Prevent homelessness and support rough sleepers off the streets. [Note: to be articulated through the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy].
- Deliver the right homes in the right places.
- Ensure safe, sustainable council housing.
- Raise quality and standards in the private rented sector.
- Support living well by promoting healthy homes and wellbeing.

1.18 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy includes the following themes, which were influenced by the Government's 'Homelessness Code of Guidance' on publishing a homelessness strategy:

- Prevent homelessness.
- Ensure a sufficient supply of accommodation.
- Provide support for people who are or have been homeless.

Health and Wellbeing Board's input into the implementation plans for the two strategies is sought.

2. Alternative Options Considered and Not Recommended

2.1 None in the context of this report

3. Post Decision Implementation

3.1 The implementation plans for the Housing and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will be finalised and delivered, incorporating feedback from Health and Well-being Board and other stakeholders, with regular updates on progress provided to appropriate stakeholders, including through the implementation of relevant priorities in Our Plan for Barnet (the council's Corporate Plan) and the Transformation Programme.

3.2 The Winter Well Campaign will include a second round of communication about the importance of addressing damp and mould issues in homes, advice for residents on how to fix them, and sources of further guidance. This will be alongside communications about other ways residents can protect their health, for example, flu vaccination. This campaign will start in Autumn 2023.

3.3 The Homeless Health Strategic Group will continue to drive progress on improving the health of homeless people, with input from the Health and Wellbeing Board about how the current challenges can be surmounted.

4. Corporate Priorities, Performance and Other Considerations

Corporate Plan

- 4.1 Our Plan for Barnet 2023-26 is centred around being a council that cares for people, our places, and the planet. The Housing Strategy will play a key role in helping to achieve the ambitions under the People priority to care for people by tackling inequalities, being family friendly, and living well. Under the Places priority it will help to achieve the ambitions to deliver quality, affordable homes. Under the Planet priority it will support our journey to net zero.
- 4.2 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will play a key role in helping to achieve the ambitions under the People priority to care for people by tackling inequalities. Under the Places priority it will help to achieve the ambitions to deliver quality, affordable homes.

Corporate Performance / Outcome Measures

- 4.3 Access to good quality housing supports good physical and mental health. Therefore, alongside a range of other factors, it can impact on a person's life expectancy (the years a person is expected to live on average), and healthy life expectancy (the number of years a person is expected to live in good health). Both of these indicators are in the Barnet Plan and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 4.4 The Barnet Plan include key performance indicators tracking the percentage of tenanted council properties that meet the Decent Homes Standard; repeat homeless applications; prevention of homelessness episodes; and council tenant satisfaction.

Sustainability

- 4.5 There are no direct environmental implications in relation to this report, however some of the works to properties in relation to damp and mould may also support the journey to Net Zero. The draft Housing Strategy includes aims that support the delivery of the council's Sustainability Strategy, the BarNET Zero campaign, and the council's Net Zero targets regarding its social housing stock, and these would be expected to have a positive impact on sustainability.

Corporate Parenting

- 4.6 As a corporate parent to all children in care and care leavers, the council must have regard to the need to act in the best interests and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of those children and young people, help them gain access to and make the best use of services provided, promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for them, help ensure they are safe and have stability in their home lives, and prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

Risk Management

- 4.7 Failure to deliver the Damp and Mould action plan would potentially leave the council open to reputational risk due to failure to meet legal requirements and/or adverse publicity. There is also a risk of increased pressure on the NHS and Barnet Homes if appropriate action isn't being taken to deal with serious damp and mould in the community. Delivering the action plan will also provide reassurance to residents that the council is taking this matter seriously.

Insight

- 4.8 The Housing Strategy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy have been informed by the evidence base which includes insight gained through the Healthy Workplan's Homelessness Prevention and Insight Project

Social Value

- 4.9 Outcomes delivered through the new Housing Strategy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will take into account the delivery of social value through any procurement that is undertaken. It should be noted that the strategies themselves will additionally secure wider social, economic, and environmental benefits through delivery of its objectives.

5. Resource Implications (Finance and Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT and Property)

- 5.1 There is limited supply of social housing in Barnet. In 2022/23 there were over 2,700 homeless applications and only 609 social housing properties available to let, of which 298 were council homes. There are significant costs associated with social housing generally, including managing the allocations service, managing the provision of council housing and providing services to those experiencing homelessness or the threat of homelessness. All of these are affected over time by the demand for housing.
- 5.2 The Housing Strategy aims to increase the supply of suitable affordable accommodation in Barnet for those in most housing need who cannot afford home ownership or high private sector rents, will support the council to work with partners to meet the housing and support needs of residents, and will promote the health and wellbeing of individuals and build sustainable, balanced, and cohesive communities.
- 5.3 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy aims to increase the supply of suitable affordable accommodation in Barnet for those in most housing need who cannot afford home ownership or high private sector rents, will support the council to work with partners to meet the support needs of residents, and will deliver earlier interventions to prevent homelessness
- 5.4 It should be noted that there is a shortfall in funding to address some of the challenges set out in the Housing Strategy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, including achieving national and local decarbonisation targets, increasing housing supply to meet all of the borough's demand, providing sufficient specialist housing to meet likely needs, and providing specialist support and accommodation for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including those who are survivors of domestic violence. The strategies therefore acknowledge the need to apply for competitive funding to deliver a range of outcomes, and they emphasise the need for increased funding from Central Government, regarding which the council sets out that it will play a role in campaigning and lobbying for. This uncertainty of funding for some aspects of the strategies means that there is a chance that some of the aims will not be possible to deliver, either in full or partially, during the lifetime of this strategy; however, in the event that relevant funding cannot be secured, other options for achieving positive outcomes in line with the aims will be explored, including the potential for allocation of resource from existing budgets where possible. Barnet Council and Barnet Homes have a strong track record of successfully applying for funding where opportunities have arisen, and the council has no reason to anticipate that it would not achieve future success in the event of new funding streams becoming available.

6. Legal Implications and Constitution References

- 6.1 Under Part 2B of the Council's Constitution, the Health and Wellbeing Board's terms of reference include specific responsibilities for overseeing public health and promoting prevention agenda across the partnership. These include:

- To work together to ensure the best fit between available resources to meet the health and social care needs of the whole population of Barnet, by both improving services for health and social care and helping people to move as close as possible to a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing. Specific resources to be overseen include money for social care being allocated through the NHS; dedicated public health budgets; the Better Care Fund; and Section 75 partnership agreements between the NHS and the Council.
- To provide collective leadership and enable shared decision making, ownership and accountability

Housing Strategy

6.2 Section 29 of 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. 6.2 Where a Greater London authority has a local housing strategy, section 333D of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 provides that this should be in general conformity with the Mayor's London Housing Strategy.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

6.3 Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 provides that a local housing authority in England may from time to time (a) carry out a homelessness review for their district; and (b) formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of that review. The legislation also expects that the homelessness strategy will be renewed within five years of the last one being published. 6.4 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also requires housing authorities to provide homelessness services, in some form, to all those affected, not just those who have 'priority need'.

7. Consultation

7.1 Following the approval for public consultation by Housing and Growth Committee on 23 March 2023, formal public consultations began for eight weeks; the consultations on the Housing Strategy, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, and Housing Allocation Scheme were extended to just over ten weeks. The consultations included online surveys and focus groups, in addition to targeted communications with key affected parties for some of the documents. Whilst focus groups were held with relatively small numbers of residents, these are a valuable approach to genuine engagement that provides the opportunity for detailed discussion about aspirations and the aims of the documents that lends itself to more qualitative feedback.

8. Equalities and Diversity

8.1 Decision makers should have due regard to the public sector equality duty in making their decisions. The equalities duties are continuing duties they are not duties to secure a particular outcome. The equalities impact will be revisited on each of the proposals as they are developed. Consideration of the duties should precede the decision. It is important that Cabinet has regard to the statutory grounds in the light of all available material such as consultation responses. The

statutory grounds of the public sector equality duty are found at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and are as follows:

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 this Act;
- 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.

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.

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.

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, in particular, to the need to:

- a) Tackle prejudice, and
- b) Promote understanding.

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
- i) Marriage and civil partnership

8.2 Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken after consultation to assess the potential impacts of the documents. The EIAs have indicated a potential positive impact on all groups due to the aims to increase access to affordable, quality housing across tenures, aims to prevent

homelessness and provide support to those at risk of or affected by homelessness, proposed increased security of tenure, and increased choice to those applying for social housing.

- 8.3 Further Equalities Impact Assessments may be undertaken as part of the planning or delivery of activities and projects that may arise from the implementation of the Housing Strategy and/or Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, as required, and adjustments or mitigations will be made as appropriate.

9. Background Papers

- 9.1 18 July 2023, Cabinet, Item 18, Housing Strategy, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, Tenancy Strategy and Housing Allocation Scheme [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday 18th July, 2023, 7.00 pm \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)
- 9.2 23 March 2023, Housing and Growth Committee, Item 6, Housing Provider – Notting Hill Genesis, [Agenda for Housing and Growth Committee on Thursday 23rd March, 2023, 7.00 pm \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)
- 9.3 23 March 2023, Housing and Growth Committee, Item 19, Damp & Mould, [Agenda for Housing and Growth Committee on Thursday 23rd March, 2023, 7.00 pm \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)
- 9.4 17 January 2023, Housing and Growth Committee, Item 7, Registered Providers of Social Housing, [Agenda for Housing and Growth Committee on Tuesday 17th January, 2023, 7.00 pm \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)
- 9.5 17 January 2023, Housing and Growth Committee, Item 8, Damp and Mould, [Agenda for Housing and Growth Committee on Tuesday 17th January, 2023, 7.00 pm \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)