



## Housing Scrutiny Committee

27 July 2017

### Report from the Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships

Wards Affected: All

## Housing Scrutiny Committee 2017-18 Work Programme

### 1.0 Summary

1.1 This report sets out the scope of the Housing Scrutiny Committee's draft work programme for the next municipal year 2017-18. The work programme covers a broad range of items and policy areas across fire safety for tower blocks, transformation of Brent Housing Partnership, developing oversight for Housing Associations to preparing for legislation on homelessness and was selected by members of the committee based on criteria for effective scrutiny. It also sets out the remit for the committee and its responsibilities for scrutiny.

### 2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to discuss and agree the report and the work programme set out in Appendix A.

### 3.0 Background

3.1 Scrutiny is a member-led process which looks at the performance of Brent Council and other organisations in the borough to ensure that they deliver good quality services to local residents. The role is to challenge effectively and the committee endorses the principles of effective scrutiny which have been developed by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. They are to provide a 'critical friend' challenge to Cabinet, be independent-minded, drive improvement in public services, and finally to provide a voice for concerns of the public and Brent's communities. The committee sets out to do this in a constructive way.

### 4.0 Remit

4.1 The Housing Scrutiny Committee's remit is to scrutinise housing functions within the Community Wellbeing department, including the transfer of Brent Housing Partnership Ltd; housing supply; housing growth numbers; temporary accommodation; landlord licensing; the private rented sector; housing policy;

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homelessness; registered providers; supported housing; floating support, and home adaptations. Its remit covers the portfolio areas of the Leader, Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Housing & Welfare Reform.

4.2 Under Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 local authorities are required to appoint at least one committee to provide overview and scrutiny. The committee is also responsible for scrutinising the partnership work of the Safer Brent Partnership and receives their annual reports each year.

4.3 The committee has its own chair and vice-chair and is made up of six other elected members. In accordance with the council's Standing Orders, there may be two co-opted members for Housing.

## **5.0 2017-18 work programme**

5.1 In order to scrutinise effectively and to co-ordinate its activities with the Cabinet's forward plan of decision-making the committee has agreed its own work programme for 2017-18. These include the items it will discuss at committee and its three task groups for the municipal year.

5.2 Members have decided on items which best suit the criteria for effective scrutiny in Brent. It is up to the committee to select the items for inclusion in its work programme, however ideas were brought together from a number of sources to assist members in their choices.

5.3 Ideas included suggestions from service areas, performance and budget monitoring information, the Cabinet forward plan. There are also a number of statutory items which have to be on the committee's work programme such as annual complaints report and the annual report on the Safer Brent Partnership. The Work programme remain fluid with the flexibility to prioritise items of significant borough wide importance; and where officers and the chair agree changes.

5.4 Ideas and suggestions were judged against key criteria for inclusion in the scrutiny committee's work programme. These include:

- clear alignment with priorities set out in the Borough Plan and Brent 2020 Vision.
- outcomes and benefits which can be delivered by the intervention of scrutiny.
- is there a major council policy or strategy to be agreed by the Cabinet seeking contribution from scrutiny.
- subject is related to underperformance of a service where the intervention of scrutiny would enable an improvement in performance.
- the issue being scrutinised can directly be influenced by the actions of the council – i.e. is not a review of national policy over which the council is unlikely to be able to exert any influence.
- there is clear evidence that the subject is of significant public concern and merits the consideration of scrutiny.

## **6.0 Financial Implications**

6.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.

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## **7.0 Legal Implications**

7.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

## **8.0 Diversity Implications**

8.1 There are no diversity implications immediately arising from this report.

## **Background Papers**

None

## **Contact Officers:**

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