



Housing Scrutiny Committee

22 February 2018

Report from the Strategic Director of Community and Wellbeing

Housing Development Plans - Update

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	Two
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Geeta Le Tissier External Contracts Manager geeta.letissier@brent.gov.uk Tel. 0208 937 1261

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. This report seeks to update Housing Scrutiny Committee on the Council Housing Development Plans and Infill Programme.
- 1.2. Housing demand in Brent follows the London trend and the Council is developing its full response to the service needs via its Housing Strategy. The Housing Strategy will be reported to members separately.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1. That the Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of this report.
- 2.2. That the Scrutiny Committee consider making recommendations to Cabinet members and Council officers, on action(s) they consider necessary.

3.0. Detail

- 3.1. Brent is in the process of procuring services for a stock condition survey of its HRA property portfolio. The tender is on track to be issued this month (February) on the preferred framework, and the survey work will be

undertaken over the coming summer. The delivery is timetabled for the end of August 2018 and will cover 100% of external surveys and 20% of internal surveys for all Brent owned properties. This will provide us with a better understanding of our stock, enabling us to plan more efficiently for the future.

- 3.2. In 2015 the Council was successful in its bid for funding to the GLA under the London Mayor's Housing Programme 2015-18 in respect of infill development sites. These sites have all progressed and handover of 4 units took place last year.
- 3.3. A number of handovers are due this financial year as the GLA grant funding programme comes to an end. The units are part-funded (approximately 15% of the costs) by GLA grant while 14 units are being funded through the use of Right To Buy Receipts accumulated by the Council and which must be used according to strict guidelines.
- 3.4. The Phase 1 Infill Programme consists of 12 sites delivering a total of 62 new affordable homes and 23 homes for supported housing accommodation, totalling 85 additional homes. A Phase 2 programme of 6 x sites Infill Sites is currently in development and should deliver 42 additional new homes in 2019.
- 3.5. A further 5x infill sites are currently being considered - these are not in receipt of grant and due to the lack of borrowing headroom in the HRA cannot be funded through Right To Buy Receipts.
- 3.6. The new homes provided include a mix of one bed units which are being delivered for the provision of specialist supported housing for vulnerable clients with specific needs identified through medical assessments and include a care package. A number of mixed 2 and 3 bed units are also being built to provide housing for young families. The rents for 3 bed family units are set at 50% below market rent while the one bed units are between 30% and 20% below market rent.
- 3.7. In addition to these small infill sites, the Council is considering the development of new homes on non-housing land which it owns and which require the provision of other services; such is the case of the community library at Preston Park Annex. The level of housing provided is agreed as part of the planning process. These mixed sites have the added consideration that they often require a number of housing units for sale and shared ownership in order to cross subsidise the main project costs as well as the provision of affordable housing units. The proportion of affordable housing is dependent in those instances on the land available and the funding available for the whole scheme.
- 3.8. Resident Involvement is a key factor in the successful delivery of infill development schemes. It is important that consultation takes place at the earliest opportunity and that the development also brings about an improvement of the local environment for existing residents. This dual approach is more likely to foster sustainable communities. The opportunity of the infill developments has also provided estates with the modernisation and regeneration of local pockets of poorly used land parcels.

- 3.9. The capital programme in past years concentrated heavily on achieving the Decent Homes programme, and a large part of the works were to the internals, concentrating on kitchen and bathroom renewals, rewiring, windows and roofs and increasing insulation to properties where possible.
- 3.10. As a lot of our properties now meet Decent Homes standards, we have commenced concentrating on the external fabric, planned maintenance programme (something which was not prominent due to lack of funding). In 2017/18, we have started looking at each building holistically, i.e. carrying out works to all the elements which require work as necessary, so we do not have to visit the property again for a number of years.
- 3.11. We have also been sweeping up on properties where tenants refused to have kitchen and bathroom renewals carried out, either carrying out the works whilst the properties are void, or working closely with Housing Officers to persuade tenants to have the works carried out. We are now almost at the end of the programme with under 300 properties requiring a new kitchen or bathroom.
- 3.12. Please see Appendix 2 for details of the Capital Programme 2016/17 and 2017/18.
- 3.13. The draft London Plan currently out for consultation and the recent London Housing Strategy will have an impact on the Council's housing strategy and development plans. The housing development ambition of Brent Council is being addressed through its own Housing Strategy and the Council's future direction will be agreed as part of that strategy.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1. Capital allocations for the Development Programme is proposed to be £24m in 2018/19 and £10.5m in 2019/20.
- 4.2. The majority of Development programme will be funded via borrowing within the HRA and the utilisation of retained Right to buy Receipts. Retained Right to Buy receipts can be used to fund up to 30% of the development costs.
- 4.3. In order to ensure that borrowing is affordable nationally, each local authority was set an HRA borrowing limit under self-financing, and it will not be possible for that limit to be exceeded. Where a local authority's Housing Capital Financing Requirement (HCFR) is less than the limit set for self-financing valuation, a "headroom" to increase borrowing under self-financing will be created. The government determinations for self-financing set out that Brent's borrowing limit is £199.2m.
- 4.4. In the short term the HRA capital programme is forecast to reach its headroom so future council developments will need to be funded via other sources.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 There are legal implications pertaining to individual projects at the point of delivery in that they include the procurement of services and construction works.

6.0 Equality Implications

- 6.1 The aim of the housing development programme is to meet the demand for affordable housing , alleviate homelessness and overcrowding in the borough, therefore focusing on low income families and on vulnerable members of the community who qualify for the housing waiting list.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

- 7.1 For each development site, a consultation strategy was designed, which ensured meaningful engagement and involvement of all relevant stakeholders was achieved. This included residents on the estate, ward members, private residents whose properties are within the vicinity of the development and Housing Management and Planning colleagues.

8.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

- 8.1 None

Report sign off:

Phil Porter

Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing