

## APPENDIX A



### **Scrutiny Task Group, Housing Scrutiny Committee: Service Provision on Housing Estates**

#### **Background**

1. This task group will review service provision on housing estates. This includes where Registered Providers are in operation. Areas to be covered include the public realm – green space provision, grounds maintenance, cleaning, waste management, recycling, parking, lighting and highway infrastructure. This topic has been chosen given the importance of effective delivery in this area in ensuring that a seamless service is delivered for those who live in the borough. Feedback from residents shows that the public realm and how it is delivered is a high priority for those who live in Brent. As a universal service, it is what residents experience on a daily basis. Services on housing estates are currently delivered by a range of organisations delivering on behalf of the council and registered providers and/or their contractors. This task group will engage with these key organisations.
2. A co-ordinated approach is important for residents on housing estates to ensure that the services delivered meet their needs. This is of particular importance where various public realm activity takes place often in high housing density areas. Effective public realm delivery is a key cornerstone for future changes and long term investments.
3. There are a number of key stakeholders for this area of work - council departments (proposing public realm improvements and whose decisions have an impact on the public realm), Registered Providers, other public sector bodies and the private sector.
4. Key public realm principles include the need to ensure that the public realm is:
  - coordinated, rational and de-cluttered; an inclusive environment
  - delivered with management and maintenance in mind;
  - delivered to stand the test of time;
  - delivered to promote a sense of ownership, respect, responsibility and community;

5. This work is set within the regional context of the London Housing Strategy, the Mayor's Environment Strategy and the London Plan.

## Regional Context

6. **The London Housing Strategy** sets out the Mayor's plans to tackle the capital's housing crisis and his vision to provide all Londoners with a good quality home they can afford. The strategy was formally adopted in August 2018.

7. This strategy has five key areas:

- building more homes for Londoners
- delivering genuinely affordable homes
- high-quality homes and inclusive neighbourhoods
- a fairer deal for private renters and leaseholders
- tackling homelessness and helping rough sleepers

8. The Mayor published his **first integrated Environment strategy** in May 2018. In it he outlined the importance of public realm aspects in improving the quality of life for those who live, work and visit the area.

***“The state of London’s environment affects everyone who lives in and visits the city”. (Executive Summary – May 2018)***

9. Although the Mayor's powers to get involved in public realm on estates are limited, the principles that he referred to in his strategy are important. The strategy sets out a vision to 2050. It is focused on supporting good health and quality of life and on making the city a better place to live, work and do business.

10. The aims for 2050 are focused on – climate change (London will be a zero carbon city by 2050, with energy efficient buildings, clean transport and clean energy) waste (London will be a zero waste city. By 2026 no biodegradable or recyclable waste will be sent to landfill and by 2030 65 per cent of London's municipal waste will be recycled) and adapting to climate change (London and Londoners will be resilient to severe weather and longer-term climate change impacts. This will include flooding, heat risk and drought).

11. The outcomes outlined are:

- Greener
- Cleaner
- Ready for the Future

These are all important features of effective public realm delivery on housing estates.

12. **The London Plan** is the statutory Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London prepared by the Mayor of London (“the Mayor”) in accordance with the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (as amended) (“the GLA Act”) and associated regulations.
13. The legislation requires the London Plan to include the Mayor’s general policies in respect of the development and use of land in Greater London and statements dealing with general spatial development aspects of his other strategies. The Mayor is required to have regard to the need to ensure that the London Plan is consistent with national policies. When published in its final form the Plan will comprise part of the statutory development plan for Greater London.
14. The current 2016 Plan (The London Plan consolidated with alterations since 2011) is still the adopted Development Plan, but the draft London Plan is a material consideration in planning decisions. The significance given to it is a matter for the decision maker, but it gains more weight as it moves through the process to adoption.

## **Case Studies**

15. This task group will focus on the following Brent estates as case studies – Chalkhill, Stonebridge, Church End and Roundwood. This will include engagement with the Registered Providers for these estates. The focus will be on finding out what works well and what needs to improve.

## **Role of Scrutiny and Rationale**

16. There is a strong rationale for the Housing Scrutiny Committee setting up a members’ task group to look at service provision on housing estates. Service provision and in particular public realm activity is an important issue for local people.
17. Scrutiny often review cross-cutting areas of the council’s work and service provision delivery involves teams and departments across the local authority. On estates there are particular challenges given the density of housing, tenure and accessibility. The delivery mix also presents both opportunities and challenges.

18. A members' task group has a clear role in reviewing service provision on estates. Members of the group are in a unique position to question and challenge executive power by holding it to account and ensure that decision-making is accountable and tested. As non-executive members, they are able to judge proposals against their unique knowledge of the borough and its communities. As well as scrutinising executive decisions, the role of scrutiny is to examine policy themes and matters of local concern. <sup>1</sup>

19. It is proposed that the group meets up to three times to take evidence from relevant witnesses and consult key policies and strategies, with a view to producing a detailed report and a set of recommendations for Cabinet which examines the national, regional and local context, along with learning from other councils. Site visits will also be undertaken.

20. The task group's objective should be to develop up to five recommendations which are clear, based on a rigorous challenge, supported by detailed evidence and which can then be implemented. The methodology will be to gather qualitative and quantitative evidence to develop these recommendations. In particular, the task group will undertake a series of face-to-face interviews with those involved in service provision on housing estates, and could include:

- Strategic Director Community and Wellbeing
- Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment
- Cabinet Lead for Housing and Welfare Reform
- Operational Director Housing
- Operational Director Environment Services
- Head of Housing Management
- Head of Housing Needs
- Contractor Representatives of those who deliver public realm services on the estates
- Registered Providers representatives

21. The task group will report back to the Housing Scrutiny Committee by April 2019. The detail of the meetings will be in the task group's project plan. The task group will be required to adhere closely to its terms of reference as set out in Appendix B. The membership of the Group will be up to four members and if appropriate one co-opted member from the committee. This number includes a chair of the task group. The list of task group members is set out in Appendix B. Senior Policy and Scrutiny Officer Jackie Barry-Purssell from Strategy and Partnerships

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<sup>1</sup> *New council constitutions: guidance to English Authorities* (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006)

in the Chief Executive's Department will support the task group, and will liaise with the other organisations involved in the task group's work.