

## Appendix 1: Recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Review Challenge Panel on Homelessness

No.	Recommendation	Response	Update March 2018
1	To request that officers provide clarity on what plans there are to build more quality housing; high density, high rise (similar to the Harrow on the Hill development)	<p>Over the course of the next 5-10 years, the Borough will receive significant levels of investment in housing– a substantial proportion of the £1.75bn of investment in the Harrow and Wealdstone area will be directed towards housing. Officers consider that high quality design is central to Building a Better Harrow. Developing a reputation for design quality in Harrow will raise ambition and attract talent, improving the quality of architecture across the Borough, and the quality of life for Harrow residents and workers.</p> <p>The Council is promoting and managing design quality in a number of ways; in 2015, the Council's first Head of Design and Regeneration was appointed; a long-standing agreement with the GLA provides an Urban Design Officer with design expertise to secure high quality development and; a Harrow Design Review Panel is being established to provide independent external advice on applications. These measures enable the council to insist upon high quality and challenge substandard development. These measures have already yielded tangible results – the planning permissions at College Road and Gayton Road car park are examples of high quality, high density schemes.</p>	<p>Sites such as College Road and Gayton Road are now on site and building works significantly progressed. For example, the 72 new social homes being built on Gayton Road by Fairview Homes for the Council are due to be handed over from April-September 2018. The council will soon be advertising these homes to applicants on the Housing Register.</p> <p>Vaughan Road has been granted planning permission and will be on site shortly. The Civic Centre planning application has been submitted. Planning applications for Poets Corner and Byron Quarter are due to be submitted in Spring 2018. L&amp;Q and Hyde/Barratt are progressing development of the Kodak site with an increased level of affordable housing than in the original application.</p> <p>Housing Services continues to deliver new social housing on its infill sites with the first homes completed in 2017/18. A planning application for the regeneration of the Grange Farm estate was submitted on 1 December 2017 for 574 homes to replace the existing social housing and provide private homes for sale.</p>

	<p>High quality, high density mixed use and housing schemes are being developed by the Harrow Regeneration Unit at the existing Civic Centre site (Poets Corner), Leisure Centre (Byron Quarter) and Vaughan Road car park with planning submissions expected in 2017. Schemes by Origin Housing at Palmerston Road and Cumberland Hotel are either in the planning system or expected shortly. TfL are considering options for the redevelopment of the Harrow-on-the-Hill underground and bus station complex to provide improved access and high quality, high density housing. Land Securities/L&amp;Q will begin to develop the Kodak Alaris site for high quality, high density housing and applications are expected in 2017/18 for these sites.</p> <p>Within Housing Regeneration the council is committed to increasing the supply of high quality higher density housing on sites within its ownership. Each site will be developed taking into account its individual characteristics and ability to take an increased density. For example the planning application for the Grange Farm regeneration project significantly increases the existing density with a range of different types and height of buildings which reflect the different characteristics across the site in relation to neighbouring housing.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> To continue maximising high quality higher</p>	
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		density housing taking into account individual site characteristics.	
2	To request that clarity be provided as to the financing of the Council's housing portfolio expansion and to investigate whether this Council could borrow General Fund housing revenue to act as a funding stream	<p>The council currently has two streams of new development.</p> <p>The first is within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), and is largely comprised of infill development of small sites of spare land and disused or underused garage sites. This stream is constrained by the availability of development funding within the HRA, which has significantly reduced as a result of the requirement to reduce social rents by 1% per annum for a 4-year period. A December 2015 Cabinet report highlighted the significant increases in tender prices over recent years, and that the cost of building the approved programme would be higher than the original approved budget. We are currently reviewing the programme to assess how many new homes can be provided within the approved HRA budget, and the options for completing the programme. General fund borrowing could be an option for completing an extended infill programme as well as extending the property purchase initiative. The second stream is within the General Fund and is part of the Council's overall regeneration activity. This will entail building new housing for rent and sale and is likely to be funded from a combination of new General Fund borrowing (probably from the Public Works Loans</p>	<p>There is housing activity that is already funded by the General Fund, the 100 Homes Property Acquisition Programme at £27m, with a further additional 50 Homes to be funded from a budget allocation of £15m- decision pending.</p> <p>Unlike the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the General Fund does not have a borrowing cap but spend is linked to affordability and this is considered annually as part of the Councils' capital programme.</p>

		Board) and capital receipts from the sale of some newly-built assets to help cross-subsidise the overall development, including delivery of a significant amount of new affordable housing.	
3	To request that the Leader of the Council raises with London Councils, concerns around the Homelessness Reduction Bill and the impact this will have locally if implemented	<p>Key issues and concerns regarding the Homelessness Reduction Bill will be raised with the Leader at the next monthly meeting. A range of possible financial impacts will be modelled in partnership with other councils, but it may take 6 months before sufficient clarity about the detail and impact of the Bill enables reasonable forecasting.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> The Leader will lobby London Councils. Report back on modelling of the likely impact on homelessness in Harrow, demand for the housing needs service and the financial impact of the proposed new statutory duties once completed.</p>	Concerns around the proposed Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 were raised at all levels and all consultation opportunities were used, but this produced very little change to the legislation and implementation is due on 3 <sup>rd</sup> April 2018. Some new burdens funding was received to assist with implementation of the new statutory duties and the impact of the Act on the Council's homelessness budget will be closely monitored.
4	To request that officers be instructed to investigate options around utilisation of green belt land and allotments; and rationalise where you could develop housing in green belt areas and swap land elsewhere	Officers investigate all options to increase the supply of housing – there are planning restrictions on the use of green belt land and allotment land which combined with other lengthy statutory legal processes mean that these will always be long term options. The government is due to publish a Housing White Paper this year which will focus on increasing housing supply – at this time we do not know if this will allow for some opportunities to be taken forward which are currently restricted.	The Housing White Paper 'Fixing our broken housing market' was published for consultation in February 2017 with a focus on increasing housing supply, including social housing. However, following the General Election and change of Housing Minister no new policies with regard to green belt land have been proposed. Additional funding for new homes has been made available such as through the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF). This was a competitive bidding process and

		<p><b>Action:</b> Review all council land assets for potential to increase housing supply. Report back on Housing White Paper when published.</p>	<p>the Council has been successfully awarded the maximum grant for the Grange Farm regeneration project.</p> <p>We are now awaiting publication of a Housing Green paper on social housing in England for further policy direction.</p> <p>We are continually reviewing council land assets and the opportunities to increase housing supply but this is also subject to availability of public subsidy for development of affordable housing.</p>
5	<p>To request that officers advise as to the work being undertaken with families on low incomes, whether there is close working between departments working with families at risk of homelessness, and how effective this is</p>	<p>For 2016/17 the council has secured funding to support households on low wages to increase their skills and wages. The performance for this financial year from the DCLG's Transformation Challenge Award Skills Escalator is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 residents provided with independent Information Advice and Guidance</li> <li>• 17 residents entering training</li> <li>• 12 residents increasing their earnings.</li> </ul> <p>Please note this is based on Q1 performance and there has been a change in staff with the broker role vacant from July-October.</p> <p>Harrow's Together with Families programme has referred 45 people, of which 12 have entered employment, 7 are now volunteering and 3 are in</p>	<p>As of February 2018, please note that the Skills Escalator programme is coming to an end. Harrow's positive work in engaging with businesses to address low skills was highlighted by the Learning and Work Institute in the evaluation of the Skills Escalator pilot (October 2017).</p> <p>Joint work with Housing Services, Revenue and Benefits and the Troubled Families programme continues.</p> <p>The "In the Mix" programme has ended. However, a second application has been submitted and we are awaiting the outcome of that bid.</p> <p>The secondment to CNWL has ended.</p>

	<p>training.</p> <p>The council's Xcite employment programme is closely working with Housing. The Xcite programme has been featured in Homing In, the quarterly magazine for council tenants and leaseholders. Housing officers refer their clients to Xcite. Housing rent statements sent to council tenants have also advertised Xcite. Information about Xcite is included on key housing leaflets and web pages. Xcite has attended a range of housing events, including the summer housing fair for council tenants and leaseholders and recent residents meetings at the civic centre and in the community.</p> <p>The Revenue and Benefits Service provides Xcite with list of Housing Benefit claimants affected by the Benefit Cap. As of September 2016 there were 175 households affected by the benefit cap in Harrow (as per the Economic Dashboard). Unemployed residents that secure employment are not subject to the Benefit Cap. In this financial year Xcite has supported 159 people into work, of which 117 were claiming Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support. 5 of these cases were direct referrals from Housing.</p> <p>The Xcite project has seconded a worker to Central and North West London (CNWL) NHS Foundation Trust to support residents with complex mental</p>	<p>The Work and Health programme was launched in Harrow on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018. Shaw Trust will be the prime contractor. The programme has specific priority groups which include supporting homeless people into employment.</p> <p>As of February 2018, 86 of the 278 residents supported into work in 2017/18 were referrals from housing and/or recipients of the council tax support scheme</p>
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6	To request that officers provide data on the correlations between	In September 2016 the Housing Benefit caseload was 16,000 households (as per the Economic	In December 2017 the Housing Benefit Caseload was 16161 as per the Economic Dashboard. There

	up-skilling the workforce, incomes, households on benefits and housing supply	Dashboard). There are circa 91,000 households (DCLG Household Estimates) in Harrow so approximately 18% claim housing benefit. There are between 23-25% of Harrow residents in low paid jobs (ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2011 – 2013).	are circa 91,000 households (DCLG/MHCLG Household Estimates), an increase from 17.59% claiming benefit to 17.76%. 25% of Harrow workers earn below 2/3rds of the median hourly wage (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2018).
7	To request that Cabinet and officers ensure that the maximum amount of affordable housing under planning policy is achieved	<p>The Planning and Housing teams work closely together to ensure that the maximum viable proportion of affordable housing is negotiated under planning policy. Financial viability assessments are required for all relevant planning applications and are independently scrutinised to ensure the maximum amount is provided – however this is much less than the policy target of 40% due to financial viability. Clawback mechanisms are considered in legal agreements so that any uplift in financial viability during the life of the development can be captured.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Current robust approach to continue. Appropriate clawback mechanisms to be included in all legal agreements where possible.</p>	We continue to robustly negotiate maximum levels of affordable housing subject to financial viability assessment and clawback mechanisms are included. The Mayor's London Plan policies also seem to be contributing to increased levels of affordable housing on larger sites.
8	To request that the Leader of the Council enters discussions with the Mayor of London on housing supply issues, highlighting that average wages in Harrow are low,	Officers meet regularly with colleagues in the GLA and brief them on Harrow's specific requirements for affordable housing. Housing supply issues are discussed in Housing Zone Board meetings.	Officers meet regularly with the Greater London Authority (GLA). The GLA supported the Council's bid to the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) fund with a successful outcome. The GLA has also provided funding for Grange Farm affordable



	so the Council has to ensure access to a supply of genuinely affordable housing	<b>Action:</b> Discussions to continue with the GLA highlighting Harrow's specific circumstances to maximise funding opportunities for increasing the supply of affordable housing.	housing and for the Housing Zone, specifically for Poets Corner.
9	To request that consideration be given to the resourcing of the housing needs and housing regeneration teams in the event that these teams require extra resources in order to maintain and build on progress to date, particularly on homelessness prevention	<p>As a result of the CSB Challenge Panel on Homelessness Demand CSB agreed extra staffing provision for Housing Needs and recruitment is underway.</p> <p>The Housing Regeneration team has increased its resources to ensure delivery of current development programmes. However it has proved difficult to recruit suitably skilled and experienced staff on the grades agreed through the job evaluation process.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Resource levels in both teams to be kept under review and increased where proved necessary. Continue current recruitment process.</p>	<p>As a result of the impending Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 implementation and the associated new burdens funding more staff have been recruited to meet the new duties. .</p> <p>An assessment of the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and any restructuring of the service will be made in 2019.</p> <p>Recruitment to key posts in the Housing Regeneration team is due to commence again in Spring 2018.</p>
10	To request that clarity be provided as to the impact of the additional resources in the housing needs team approved by the Corporate Strategic Board	Once all the additional staff are recruited, separate monitoring for these posts will be carried out in order to demonstrate the impact on performance (homelessness prevented or relieved) and the savings generated, as a result of the additional resources agreed by CSB. This will be reported using a dashboard.	The use of B&B has been reduced significantly, from a peak of 307 families in June 2016 to 116 families by the end of 2017, and the MTFS savings in relation to those extra resources have been met.
11	To request that Cabinet make	Officers have responded to consultation regarding	We now have clarity on the change to the

	<p>representations to the Government concerning the impact on the Council's finances of the changes to the treatment of the Temporary Accommodation Management Fee.</p>	<p>the government's proposal to change the subsidy given for temporary accommodation and accommodation used for homelessness prevention. The West London Housing Partnership has been actively involved in the consultation.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> The Leader will lobby London Councils for the details of the new formula to be released as soon as possible and/or once the details of the new scheme are confirmed and the likely impact on Harrow has been modelled.</p>	<p>Temporary Accommodation management fee. It has been replaced by the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant that we find helpful. However this is only guaranteed for 3 years (until 19-20) and will produce a significant financial pressure after that, if it is not extended. However plans are underway to reduce the use of Private Sector Leasing over the next 2 years that may partly mitigate this.</p>
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