

Subject: Housing Committee Work Programme

Report to: Housing Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 25 March 2014

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Committee receives a report monitoring the progress of its work programme at each meeting. This document reviews work undertaken in the municipal year 2013/14 and notes the first proposed topic planned for 2014/15.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes the record of its work in 2013/14.**
- 2.2 **That the Committee delegates authority to the Chair, in consultation with party Group Lead Members, to agree the Committee's contribution to the Assembly's submission to the consultation on the Further Alternations to the London Plan.**
- 2.3 **That the Committee notes the initial priority for its work programme in 2014/15.**

3. Record of work in 2013/14

- 3.1 The Committee has undertaken a wide range of investigations in 2013/14:
- **Housing Associations and the Delivery of Affordable Housing in London** considered the risks that housing associations face as they adapt to a new business model and changes to the welfare system. The final report (*Housing Associations and the Delivery of Affordable Housing in London: An Issues Paper*) was published in June. The Committee will continue to keep the role of housing associations in affordable housing delivery under review.
 - **London's Private Rented Sector** examined reforms to help banish rogue landlords from the capital's rental market. Measures set out in the report included stabilising rents, enforcing landlord registration, higher penalties for breaching regulations and issuing longer tenancies. Measures to support landlords in improving their properties were also included. The final report (*Rent Reform: Making London's Private Rented Sector Fit for Purpose*) was published in June.
 - **Council Housing in London** focused on methods boroughs are using to develop new council homes. The Committee heard from 28 of the 33 boroughs either via written submissions or

responses to the quantitative survey commissioned to underpin this work. The Committee identified steps the Mayor could take to support more council building such as pressing government to relax the borrowing caps imposed on boroughs' Housing Revenue Accounts. It also recommended a renewal of the Decent Homes Programme and that the Mayor review the impacts of the Affordable Rent policy in London. A final report (*Right to build: What's stopping councils from building more housing?*) was published in October.

- **Single Homelessness and Rough Sleeping** reviewed the progress of the No Second Night Out programme, hostel provision and services for single homeless people in the capital. In its October meeting the Committee heard about the challenges faced by those seeking to support London's single homeless people. A site visit to a homeless hostel for entrenched rough sleepers was arranged in January. The final report is being prepared and will be considered by the Committee in Spring 2014.
- **Specialist Housing Options for Older People** considered how the housing needs of older Londoners are being met and the challenges faced for increased future provision, particularly examining options for Mayoral support to deliver new homes in this sector for different client groups. The Committee visited Peabody's Darwin Court facility which has been hailed as among the best housing schemes for older people in Europe. A final report (*Homes for Older Londoners: Building Healthy homes for a comfortable and independent retirement*) drawing on best practice from across London was published in November 2013.

3.2 Other work carried out by the Committee in 2013/14 has been:

- **Mayor's Housing Commitments.** In November 2013 the Committee held a meeting with the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land and Property to monitor the Mayor's housing commitments and consider out-turn data. The number of affordable housing starts achieved in September 2013 was well below that needed to meet the Mayor's target. The Committee will be keeping progress under review as the target deadline approaches.
- **Overcrowding.** In November 2013, the Committee held a meeting with the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land and Property to discuss the Mayor's progress in reaching his target to halve severe overcrowding by 2016.

3.3 The Committee has undertaken two site visits during 2013/14:

- **Investigation into specialist housing for older people** (4 June 2013, Peabody's Darwin Court, Walworth)
- **Investigation into rough sleeping and homelessness** (15 January 2014, Old Theatre Hostel, Hammersmith and Fulham)

3.4 No expenses were incurred by the Committee on these visits.

3.5 On 15 January 2014 the Mayor published Draft Further Alternations to the London Plan for public consultation, which closes on 10 April. The London Assembly's Planning Committee is the lead Committee which will respond to this consultation. As part of their deliberations, the Housing Committee has been invited to submit contributions in so far as the proposed changes apply to housing in London. To this end, the Housing Committee is recommended to delegate authority to the Chair, in consultation with party Group Lead Members, to agree the Committee's contribution to the consultation.

4. Work programme priorities for 2014/15

- 4.1 In January 2014 party Group Lead Members of the Committee met informally to consider priorities for the Committee's work programme in 2014/15 and the Committee agreed at its February meeting that the first topic for the coming municipal year would be Housing Estate Renewal.

Housing Estate Renewal

- 4.2 A wide range of factors come into play when deciding whether to refurbish or demolish and rebuild. These include financial considerations (sources of finance, amount available and when), environmental considerations (carbon emissions and energy use associated with new build, the wasted carbon embodied in existing homes, compared with the ongoing environmental efficiency advantages of new build), and people considerations (what do current and future residents want, how are they involved and consulted, how are the rights of leaseholders protected). The investigation will explore these issues, to understand current practice in London and good practice at home or abroad, with a view to making recommendations to the Mayor and the boroughs.
- 4.3 The Committee's June and July meetings will be devoted to this investigation. A site visit is also planned for July.
- 4.4 A formal proposal regarding further topics will be made to the Committee at the first meeting of 2014/15.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report: None

| Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 | |
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| List of Background Papers: None | |
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