

Subject: Response to *Assessing the Consequences of Welfare Reform Report*

Report to: Housing Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 16 October 2014

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out for noting the detailed response from the Mayor to the Housing Committee's report, *Assessing the Consequences of Welfare Reform*.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes the response from the Mayor to the report, *Assessing the Consequences of Welfare Reform*.**

3. Background

- 3.1 On 17 June 2014, the Housing Committee noted its report on the consequences of welfare reform in London as agreed by the Chair of the Committee, Darren Johnson AM, under delegated authority, in consultation with Lead Members.
- 3.2 The report sets out findings and recommendations on the consequences of welfare reform. The report made the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

The Mayor should publish regular monitoring data on the impact of welfare reforms against his housing priorities, including the risk for investment partners and potential opportunities.

The Mayor should publish regular monitoring data on the impact of welfare reforms on London's households, including a disaggregation by tenure and equality group.

Recommendation 2

The Government should ensure LHA rates are regularly reviewed and properly take account of the higher costs in London.

The Mayor should ask the Government to regularly review the Local Housing Allowance Targeted Affordability Fund to ensure that sufficient numbers of areas of London are receiving assistance.

The Mayor should lobby the Government to ensure that the category of 'vulnerable' claimants, whereby rents will continue to be paid directly to landlords, is defined broadly and includes tenants with complex credit and debt problems.

Recommendation 3

The Mayor and London Councils should produce an assessment of the impact on movement of claimant households within, and out of, London, and publish regular monitoring data.

Recommendation 4

The Mayor should continue to make the case for significant discretionary housing payments funding for London boroughs. There is a particular opportunity to influence this when the government decides on both the overall budget and individual allocations for discretionary housing payments for 2016/17.

London Councils should work with boroughs to ensure that there is sufficient monitoring and transparency over how boroughs are allocating their discretionary housing payments, that boroughs are allocating these payments in the most effective and sustainable way and that best practice is shared.

Recommendation 5

The Mayor should seek additional mitigation for households placed in temporary accommodation that are subject to the overall benefit cap.

The Mayor should also seek an exemption from direct payments for those in temporary accommodation, to minimise the risks to social and private landlords.

3.3 The report can be found on the London Assembly's website at:
<http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/london-assembly/publications>.

3.4 The Committee invited the Mayor to respond to these recommendations.

4. Issues for Consideration

4.1 The Chair of the Housing Committee received a detailed written response to the Committee's report from the Mayor in October 2014, attached at **Appendix 1**.

4.2 The Housing Committee is asked to note this report. This does not preclude the Committee from making more detailed consideration of this response at another time.

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 financial implications to the GLA arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 – Response from the Mayor to the report *Assessing the Consequences of Welfare Reform*

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

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