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| Subject: | Disability & Inclusion Forum Briefing |
| Reason for briefing note: | Requested agenda item – Housing update |
| Responsible officer(s): | Tracy Hendren, Head of Housing, Environmental Health and Trading Standards |
| Senior leader sponsor: | Hilary Hall, Executive Director of Adults, Health and Housing |
| Date: | 8 June 2021 |

Summary

A written update was requested from Housing Services for the Disability and Inclusion Forum on:

- The Housing Strategy
- The numbers of social housing units within new developments
- Establishing a Landlords Forum
- Housing register capturing relevant medical conditions / disabilities

An update on each theme has been provided below including relevant statistical data.

1 The Housing Strategy

Although the requirement to develop and publish a Housing Strategy is no longer a statutory duty for local authorities, it is imperative The Royal Borough develops a strategy that clearly states its housing ambitions and goals for the future benefit of the residents of The Royal Borough. The Housing Strategy has now been fully consulted upon, ensuring that the ambitions of The Royal Borough reflect those of our residents, partners, and colleagues.

Members and partner organisations were consulted on the Housing Strategy in November 2020, including the option to complete a 'Survey Monkey' consultation response to provide their views and to attend a consultation event to discuss in person. 48 consultation responses were received and analysed in the first consultation round.

The public consultation on the Housing Strategy began on 24 December 2020 and closed on the 3 February 2021. A total of 134 consultation responses were received and analysed during the second round of consultation.

The draft Housing Strategy 2021 - 2026 has been developed around three key objectives:

- Deliver New Homes
- Promote Health & Wellbeing
- Support Vulnerable Residents to Obtain and Sustain Appropriate Accommodation

The Strategy's Delivery Plan will be monitored and reviewed, including updates which will be published annually.

The adoption of the Housing Strategy will enable the related action plan to be implemented, monitored, and fed back through the appropriate channels. The final action plan has highlighted the agreed priorities for housing within the Borough through full consultation and adoption at Cabinet. The action plan is SMART, including milestones, ownership and proposed outcome dates enabling demonstration of its effectiveness.

The final stage of the process is for the Housing Strategy to go to Full Council on 29 June 2021, with the recommendation that the strategy is adopted.

Detailed objectives of the Housing Strategy are set out below:

Deliver new homes: Deliver thousands of new high-quality homes with a mixture of tenures and sustainable infrastructure to provide a range of housing solutions for our residents

1. Deliver a mixture of housing tenures; social rent, affordable rent, private rented sector, shared ownership, ownership; maximising developments which deliver appropriate homes and adaptable spaces to suit the modern workforce, with ambition to deliver on our assessed need
2. Create homes for ownership by working with partners to create a ladder of housing opportunity, particularly for social housing tenants
3. Liaise with business to ensure we are building homes to support a modern workforce and to help support continued economic growth
4. Support house building in the appropriate location (as per the Local Plan), including maximising housebuilding on brownfield sites and putting the right infrastructure in place
5. Work with Registered Providers to monitor customer satisfaction to enable improved leaseholder and tenant satisfaction and services
6. Work with private sector landlords to improve accommodation standards in the private rented sector, including the provision of appropriate guidance
7. Assess the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities within the Borough and seek appropriate sites to increase supply and support sustainable communities
8. Expand the Property Company's house building programme to push forward social regeneration and neighbourhood renewal projects

Promote health & wellbeing: Use development to drive positive physical and social regeneration, maximise health and social outcomes and reduce health inequalities through the use of green technology and innovative built environments

1. Take a targeted approach to areas of high social and economic deprivation through regeneration, which improves the built environment and supports better education, employment, and housing outcomes for existing and future residents
2. Improve health outcomes by supporting innovative designs that promote well-being and better health (including mental health) outcomes - particularly gardens and green open spaces
3. Incentivise developers to bring forward schemes that support our climate change obligations to achieve net zero by 2050, including supporting carbon-neutral and carbon-positive technologies in new homes
4. Work with private landlords and Registered Providers to retrofit existing stock with zero carbon technologies, particularly with the least sustainable stock
5. Tackle digital inequality and digital poverty by working with housing associations to improve opportunities for their residents to benefit from super-fast broadband
6. Ensure residents with disabilities are not further impacted by their home environment by providing efficient and effective assessment and adaptations through the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) process, maintaining strong partnership working for the successful delivery and implementation of grant-funded interventions
7. Assess the need for supported accommodation, including Extra Care, and review our supported accommodation provision to ensure we are able to offer accommodation to support better health and wellbeing outcomes

Support vulnerable residents to obtain and sustain accommodation: Increase support and prevention for homelessness by providing excellent customer service, a range of housing options and good quality temporary accommodation for those in need

1. Create a coalition of temporary accommodation landlords to provide sustainable, reliable, cost-effective temporary accommodation to support homeless households into long-term solutions
2. Strengthen working relationships with existing partner organisations and seek to develop new relationships in order to increase support provision to our residents
3. Consider the purchase of units of quality temporary accommodation to replace those leased from the private sector and ensure value for money
4. Optimise revenue available to create new services by monitoring funding opportunities and bidding for funding where this could fill gaps in service provision
5. Use technology to improve access to services and clearly demonstrate outcomes
6. To improve access to the private rented sector for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness

7. Explore and optimise opportunities to support vulnerable residents in maintaining accommodation and reduce instances of repeat homelessness
8. Maximise effectiveness of the new 'Tap & Donate' scheme – *Tap 4 Lasting Change*

2 The numbers of social housing units within new developments

Affordable housing has been secured from development proposals since at least 2003 using the local plan Policy H3 – this requires 30% of total dwellings to be affordable on sites of 15 or more dwellings.

Delivery of affordable housing since 2012 has been low, averaging around 10% of total dwellings completed. This is partly because of smaller sites coming forward which are below the affordable threshold number and partly due to schemes which *have* triggered the affordable threshold not delivering 30% affordable housing due to viability issues.

As an example, in 2020/21, 85 affordable homes were completed of which 7 were social rent and 78 shared ownership. Shared ownership or low-cost home ownership does provide affordable homes; however this will not always address the wider social housing need.

Several proactive steps have now been put in place to support the delivery of affordable housing. These include:

- A Housing Enabling Officer has been appointed and is consulted on any planning application, or pre-application, which involves affordable housing. After proper assessment of the proposal, appropriate comments are made to Planning.
- Policy HO3 in the Borough Local Plan Submitted Version continues to seek 30% of total dwellings to be affordable housing. Unlike the 2003 local plan policy, this new policy specifies a tenure split of 45% social rent, 35% affordable rent and 20% shared ownership which reflects the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2016 (SHMA) conclusion for future tenure requirements to meet local housing needs.
- The SHMA also refers to the percentages of dwelling types from future developments, and on larger developments a full range of dwelling types should be secured from 1-bed flats to 4-bed houses. We are also seeking a small proportion of dwellings to be designed to full wheelchair standard for households with mobility needs.
- The Housing Options and Allocations Service has prepared tables showing percentages of affordable types and tenures to inform future developments. These have been sent to Registered Providers and some developers.
- The Council's Housing Register is the key indicator for housing need and in March 2021 68% of households needed social rented accommodation. Total number of households on the Housing Register is currently over 950.
- The recently published Housing Strategy has a clear commitment to deliver a mixture of housing types and tenures

- The Council-owned Property Company seeks to maximise the number of social rent and affordable rent properties in the Borough and have various schemes in their development pipeline

Table showing the affordable housing development since 2013

| From RBWM Annual Monitoring Reports | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------|
| Rent (Social/Affordable/Intermediate) | 61 | 61 | 14 | 8 | 6 | 38 | 8 | 7 |
| Shared Ownership | 23 | 12 | 3 | 7 | 17 | 13 | 62 | 78 |
| Total Affordable Homes Completed | 84 | 73 | 17 | 15 | 23 | 51 | 70 | 85 |
| Total Dwellings Completed (AH + Private) | 360 | 514 | 608 | 584 | 515 | 705 | 334 | <i>tbc</i> |
| AH as % of total | 23% | 14% | 3% | 3% | 4% | 7% | 21% | <i>tbc</i> |

3 Establishing a Landlords Forum

There is a housing affordability crisis in the UK and in The Royal Borough our residents face particularly acute housing costs. The average house price in The Royal Borough is approximately £476,000, which is over 15 times the average UK salary (£30,420). This makes getting into sustainable rented accommodation and onto the house ladder difficult for many of The Royal Borough's residents. To address this key issue, The Royal Borough has submitted a Local Plan for inspection and requires a Housing Strategy to clearly set out the Council's priorities for addressing the housing challenges our residents face.

The Housing, Environmental Health & Trading Standards Service Plan recognises the challenges set out above and clearly sets out the agreed actions for the service including establishing a landlords' forum by December 2021.

Accessing the private rented sector and establishing a positive relationship with local landlords will support an inclusive approach moving forward, an extract of the action plan is included below for information.

| Service Name | Team Name | Project Name | Description and Scope | Emerging Milestones/ comments | Lead Officer Role | Due Date |
|---|--------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Housing Operations Service | Options & Strategy | Deliver improved services for Private Rented Sector Landlords and their tenants, by developing a bespoke RBWM landlord and tenant offer | Ensure appropriate access to the private rented sector for discharging homelessness duties. Set up and run a landlord's forum to influence, support and provide training to landlords | Established landlord offer Established tenant offer Aligned budgets for both Website promoting services Staff training provided | Lindsay Megson Emma Congerton | Dec 2021 |
| Housing Strategy & Residential Services | | | | | | |

4 Housing register capturing relevant medical conditions / disabilities.

The Council's Housing Register is now an online register, providing applicants with the ability to apply to join the register, supply supporting documents and monitor the progress of their application online.

There are currently 961 households in housing need on the Council's housing register. When applying to join the Council's housing register, applicants are required to provide a range of information about their current circumstances and future aspirations. This includes information pertaining to disabilities.

The table below captures information provided by applicants on the Council's housing register who have indicated they or a member of their household has a disability and the nature of the disability.

| Reported disability. | Number of households | % of those on the housing register |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Learning disability | 75 | 8% |
| Long term mental health condition | 113 | 12% |
| Long term physical condition | 211 | 30% |
| Permanent physical disability | 89 | 9% |
| Visual impairment | 14 | 2% |

When applications to join the council's housing register are reviewed, an assessment is undertaken as to the household's property requirements, including any adaptations which may be required.

The table below captures information from the assessments of households on the housing register including any specific adaptation which may be needed:

| | 1 bed | 2 bed | 3 bed | 4 bed | 5 bed | 6 bed | Total |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Ceiling track hoist | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Full Lift | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Fully wheelchair adapted | 1 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| Ground floor bedroom | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Ground floor essential facilities | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Ground floor toilet | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Level access shower | 12 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 22 |
| Over bath shower | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Ramped access | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Stair lift | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Through floor lift | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Toilet on both levels | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Wet room | 6 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 15 |

The Council's new online housing register provides an enhanced ability to interrogate data available on the housing needs of households in the Royal Borough and is already being used to influence future housing delivery line with key objectives set out above in the Council's Housing Strategy.

Conclusion

Each of the updates above link directly to the Council's Housing Strategy or Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, the action plans for which will be a live document which will be available annually as a mechanism to provide further updates to the Disability and Inclusion Forum.