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## PLACE AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS SCRUTINY PANEL

**Day:** Tuesday  
**Date:** 1 November 2022  
**Time:** 6.00 pm  
**Place:** Committee Room 1 - Tameside One

Item No.	AGENDA	Page No
1.	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
2.	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>  To receive any declarations of interest from members of the Scrutiny Panel.	
3.	<b>MINUTES</b>  To approve as a correct record, the Minutes of the proceedings of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel held on 20 September 2022.	1-4
4.	<b>FOLLOW UP ON REVIEW OF HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING</b>  The Panel to meet Councillor John Taylor, Executive Member (Adult Social Care, Homelessness and Inclusivity); Emma Varnam, Assistant Director; and John Gregory, Head of Community Safety and Homelessness, to receive an update on past scrutiny activity and recommendations on homelessness and housing.	5-50
5.	<b>RESPONSE TO MID-YEAR BUDGET UPDATE</b>  To receive for information, a letter to Councillor Jacqueline North, First Deputy (Finance, Resources and Transformation), in response to the mid-year budget update.	51-52
6.	<b>CHAIR'S UPDATE</b>  The Chair to provide a verbal update on activity and future priorities for the Panel.	
7.	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>  To note that the next meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel will take place on Tuesday 10 January 2023.	
8.	<b>URGENT ITEMS</b>  To consider any additional items the Chair is of the opinion shall be dealt with as a matter of urgency.	

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From: Democratic Services Unit – any further information may be obtained from the reporting officer or from Paul Radcliffe, Policy and Strategy lead, to whom any apologies for absence should be notified.

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## Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel 20 September 2022

**Commenced:** 6.00pm

**Terminated:** 7.20pm

**Present:** Councillors Cartey (Chair), Alam (Deputy), Glover, Gwynne, A Holland, Robinson, Roderick

**Apologies:** Councillors Chadwick, Mills

### 9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted by members of the Scrutiny Panel.

### 10. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel held on 26 July 2022 were approved as a correct record.

### 11. TAMESIDE TOWN CENTRES

The Panel welcomed Councillor Vimal Choksi, Executive Member (Town Centres, Communities, Corporate Land & Community Assets); Julian Jackson, Director of Place; and Gregg Stott, Assistant Director, to receive a strategic overview and proposals on next steps for Tameside's town centres.

At a national level, town centres are facing a number of significant challenges. Notwithstanding, Tameside's town centres are a crucial component to the future economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the borough.

A draft Town Centre Framework will act as a strategic umbrella to coordinate future development and regeneration activity. This will provide context on a coordinated strategic approach for each individual town centre, to realise the opportunities that exist over the next 15 years. Priorities set within the framework include:

- Heritage and culture
- Environment
- Transport, accessibility and movement
- Retail including markets and leisure
- Employment and skills
- Commercial opportunities

Part of the presentation focused on Ashton Town Centre, with a recap on the improvement works to date and the progress of agreed projects and development. The Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid for Ashton has secured £19.87m to support continued regeneration and improvement works. Part of this is crucial to completing the final phase to Vision Tameside.

Members received a breakdown of proposals specific to the funding allocated to land remediation works, public realm improvements and the restoration of Ashton Town Hall. This included proposals, planned consultation and a breakdown for delivery.

Mr Stott updated members on the parameters of LUF bids for Stalybridge and Denton, with decisions anticipated at the end of 2022. Detail was provided on aspirations and specific projects that aim to improve existing buildings and infrastructure while seeking to unlock future potential and development opportunities. Members received a further breakdown on:

- High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) - £2.55m of investment for buildings, environmental improvements, cultural and community projects
- Stalybridge West opportunities – regeneration and development catalyst
- Hyde town centre, High Street Task Force and masterplan
- Funding already secured and work to date
- Partnerships within and across each town

The identified interventions aim to help town centres reach their full potential and funding bids have been prepared to provide a robust benefit cost ratio. Projects are planned across a number of phases that tie in with objectives set within the overarching framework and the funding available.

Cllr Choksi advised members that the link between strategy and delivery is important and increased focus is now placed on deliverables in the short to medium term. The initial phase will include a formal public consultation on Ashton public realm and market square, to take place in November 2022.

The Executive Member and officers responded to a number of questions from the Panel on:

- The renovation works for Ashton Town Hall.
- Identifying common themes and direction for Tameside across all town centres.
- Projects that require immediate attention and progress, where delivery is now a priority.
- Opportunities, sustainability, costings and budget responsibility beyond one-off investment and funding.
- Understanding the complexity of town centres and generating a diverse offer for retail, housing and leisure.
- Wider role of the Council, partnerships, influence and local barriers.
- Input of ward councillors and consideration of Strategic Neighbourhood Forums to support wider public engagement.
- Outcomes from previous engagement activity and future consultations, to identify suitable opportunities for Scrutiny involvement and oversight.

Cllr Choksi, Mr Jackson and Mr Stott thanked for attending the meeting.

## **12. CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair updated members on the following matters.

- All Scrutiny members were invited to attend a training session on 5 September, delivered by Ian Parry from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny.
- All Scrutiny members have received an invitation to attend a mid-year budget session on 3 October. Two sessions are available 3.30pm and 5.45 pm.
- The next meeting of Overview Panel is on 26 September at which recent Scrutiny activity will be reported.
- A working group of the Panel to progress activity, oversight and input to consultation and delivery phases for town centres. Membership and priorities to be confirmed at the next meeting.

## **13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel will take place on Tuesday 1 November 2022.

#### **14. URGENT ITEMS**

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

**CHAIR**

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# Scrutiny Review Homelessness & Housing

1 November 2022



# Some Key Achievements

Stronger Together Tameside, a coalition of third sector partners working in this field

The development of a proactive and effective RSI Service.

The reduction in Rough Sleeping from 43 in 2017 to 5 currently.

Moving over 220 people from the Rough Sleeper service to permanence during 2020-2.

The development of relationships with private sector landlords and rolling out the Help2Rent

Collaborative initiatives with the Veterans Food Company including the provision of cooked meals

Successful applications for funding from the DLUHC to support various initiatives such as Next Steps.

The implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Effectively adapting services within both THA and the RSI team to protect service delivery during the pandemic.

Transfer of Housing Advice into the Council



# Emerging Pressures

A series of new and emerging pressures are facing Homelessness in Tameside.

- Increasing numbers of people presenting homeless in Tameside.
- Lack of availability of suitable move-on accommodation and competing demands from priority groups.
- An increase in the complexity of needs of service users and issues accessing services to meet those needs.
- Increased service demands arising due to conflict abroad.
- Challenges in accessing mental health and adult care services.
- Impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis

The Council alongside many organisations is facing an increasingly difficult financial environment within which to meet its obligations towards homeless people. It is key that this Strategy implements services in a cost effective way that prioritises the prevention of homelessness and identifies and utilises appropriate funding streams.

# Recommendation 1

That Scrutiny ask the Executive to monitor the local impacts of the decision to withdraw eviction relief. That any concerns of vulnerability, inequality and increased incidence of homelessness, (local voice and experience), add to a written response to the appropriate Government Office to inform future policy in this area.

*The moratorium on evictions ended in August 2021. Although the service saw a slight increase in homeless presentations, the increase was not significant. The Housing Options Service transferred to the council on 1 June 2022 & reduction in the numbers of people in temporary accommodation was made a priority. On 1 June, in excess of 230 households were accommodated in temporary accommodation. That number is now down to 198 and continues to drop, bringing significant savings to the council. The next potential pressure is the predicted cost-of-living crisis which may bring additional demand to the service.*

# Recommendation 2

That the Council prioritise and undertake a review of existing policies and mechanisms relating to local allocation and nomination arrangements with Registered Social Landlords. That future work in this area aims to improve transparency and accountability of decision making, with the need to generate and secure housing placements above that of recent years.

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*Work is underway in partnership with officers from Growth, to develop a new local allocations & nominations policy with RSLs. An initial meeting with RSLs (the Registered Provider Strategic Partnership Group Meeting) took place on 10 October & all RPs present committed to the development of these policies. They were particularly keen on developing a single choice-based lettings scheme for Tameside. Working groups are being established to work on all aspects of Housing Policy – they will report back to the Board chaired by the Leader.*



# Recommendation 3

With additional preventative responsibilities placed on the Council to actively identify and mitigate the associated risks of homelessness. That enhanced recording of homelessness demand, temporary accommodation and housing placements, is essential to recognise pressures within the system, to act on them promptly and effectively with greater accountability across all responsible parties. To routinely assess and review the overall success, impact and outcomes of interventions, to include financial appraisal of cost benefit analysis and value for money principles.

*A series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs have been agreed in the service and are published every week (see the KPI document highlighting successes & pressures)*



# Recommendation 4

That the Council's current Homelessness Strategy (2018-2021) is updated for 2022 and beyond, with a review of strategic priorities undertaken on an annual basis, taking account of national and local pressures and to achieve greater alignment with objectives set within the new local Housing Strategy.

*A draft homelessness strategy for 2023-2028 has been developed & is now ready for a public consultation prior to adoption by the council. It reflects new working practices and changes to both the service and legislation since the introduction of the previous strategy. The strategy will include three key priorities for the service:*

- *To Further Develop Housing Options to ensure early prevention and relief of homelessness*
- *To improve availability of a range of sustainable housing options for households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness*
- *To End Rough Sleeping and Promote Recovery*

# Recommendation 5

That the Council reviews current monitoring tools to assess the effectiveness of homelessness interventions and how the service identifies, records and monitors future homelessness preventions and outcomes for residents.

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*Since the housing options service transferred to the Council on 1 June 2022, managers have been evaluating the effectiveness of the service via KPIs and the existing software system – LOCATA. Work is now underway to redesign the homelessness service to make more efficient use of the existing staff and ensure that performance is monitored in a more effective way. The timescale for the redesign to be complete is April 2023.*

# Recommendation 6

That the Council looks to target a reduction in the time residents are housed in temporary and short-term accommodation, with consideration to a more ambitious and cooperative pathway to secure housing solutions within a maximum timeframe.

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*Temporary Accommodation (TA) has been a key priority since the service transferred in June 2022. The Service recognises that temporary accommodation is not ideal, especially for families, and that TA is expensive & brings significant financial pressures. Work has been underway in 3 key areas – preventing people from being placed in TA in the first place, reducing the cost of TA and moving households on to permanent accommodation more effectively. The service is starting to see success in all three of these areas (see the KPI document)*

# Recommendation 7

In addition to the work with RSLs, that attention is placed on developing the Council's partnership with the private rented sector across the short and long-term. To secure greater capacity for sustainable housing placements and accommodation options; and methods to engage and support vulnerable tenants at the earliest opportunity.

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*Permission is currently being sought to carry out a consultation on introducing a policy which would allow the discharge of a homelessness duty in to the private rented sector. The policy is drafted & a consultation should start in the next few weeks. This policy will allow more people in TA to be accommodated in private rented housing. The Service has had considerable success in moving rough sleepers into PRS & has much improved relationships with the private rented sector in Tameside.*





# Recommendation 8

That the Executive look to prevent any delay in future decision-making linked with previous ambitions to improve quality and standards in the private rented sector; and to connect with regional schemes aimed to promote best practice and build partnerships with the private rented sector.

*Under the new Leadership a review will be undertaken on this aspect of the Housing Strategy and the future of Good Landlord schemes and licensing arrangements.*



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# Tameside Registered Provider Partnership

**Joint Working Agreement  
February 2022**

The Tameside Registered Provider Partnership has been in existence for many years and more recently following changes in the structure of housing delivery and partners across the Borough has been operating on an informal, ad hoc basis.

The development of the Tameside Housing Strategy 2021 to 2026, provides ideal timing and opportunity to review and refresh the partnership working arrangements with all Registered Providers who own, manage, develop stock and provide housing services in the Borough.

**The purpose of the refreshed Partnership is;**

*‘To improve the housing offer in Tameside by delivering the priorities set out in the Tameside and GM Housing Strategies, through a collaborative approach to deliver place based management of existing stock, the development of new homes to meet a diverse range of needs, investing in communities and neighbourhoods to achieve and enhanced social and economic outcomes’*

It is proposed that all Registered Providers operating in Tameside become members of the Tameside Registered Provider Partnership, signing up to the Terms of Reference and support the Council in delivering the Corporate Plan, through the Housing Strategy.

The full membership would convene on an annual basis, as a minimum, to celebrate the previous year’s achievements, review the housing strategy forward plan for delivery to ensure;

- the membership of the operational ‘Strategic Partnership Group’ which sits below the Tameside Registered Provider Partnership has the appropriate membership bringing relevant skill , knowledge , experience, resource and expertise to meet the delivery requirements of the Strategy, and agree any changes necessary.
- the structure and delivery function of the ‘Strategic Partnership Group’, including sub groups/ task and finish working groups, is relevant to ensure priority projects and work programmes can be met.
- the priorities projects and programmes are in line with Housing Strategy keeping to the vision and aims.
- Partners are fully engaged, taking up opportunities to deliver projects and work programmes deriving from the Strategic Partnership Group.

## Terms of Reference

1. Set the overall vision and direction for collaborative working between Registered Providers, Private Sector and the Council.
2. Support the delivery and achievement of the Tameside Corporate Plan through the Housing Strategy's priorities, objectives and desired outcomes, promoting and celebrating delivery.
3. Collaborate to maximise the delivery of new homes at pace across the Borough, including identification of bid and funding opportunities to create new housing accommodation and service provision, research and support for new models of delivery, unlocking sites, supporting land assembly and through collaborative working, utilise available resources to ensure development opportunities, both revenue and capital, across the borough are brought to fruition.
4. Utilise existing stock, where appropriate, to support the Councils allocations process, enter into nomination arrangements for existing and newly developed homes, contributing to retaining balanced communities and working to ensure that these homes are truly affordable for local people.
5. The creation and delivery of home ownership products that support households into tenures of their choice.
6. Enabling an improved quality private rented sector offer in the borough, bringing empty homes back into use, reducing fuel poverty and creating better managed communities.
7. Develop place-based management solutions that promote community engagement and cohesion, promote financial and digital inclusion, reducing social isolation.
8. Deliver long term social and economic investment and development opportunities which support local people and communities, including tenants and their family members into education, training and employment.
9. Deliver specialist accommodation to meet the needs of the borough's residents promoting a person centred approach.
10. Assisting the prevention of homelessness, through provision of appropriate support, advice and accommodation.
11. Support the Council to build up on and develop an accommodation and service offer enabling older people to remain living in their homes for longer and access to appropriate accommodation to meet need as required.
12. Deliver and promote added value and social value through activities including investment, development, housing provision and services.
13. Support the Council with capital and revenue funding bids to enable delivery of projects and work programmes in the borough. These activities will assist to ensure contribution to the aims and objectives of Tameside's Inclusive Growth Strategy 2021-26 and beyond.
14. Support ambitions for re-purposing the borough's town centres.
15. Support initiatives to assist vulnerable people remain in their own homes e.g. Home Improvement Agency, Handy Person Service

## The Council use its best endeavours to:

- Enter into continuous market engagement, identifying opportunities for development, providing support to access funding through National programmes and sub-regional partnerships.
- Work in partnership to unlock challenging sites. We intend to work within the Greater Manchester Combined Authority framework to maximise resources available from the Housing Investment Fund but we also explore the development of a Tameside Housing Investment Fund that can provide investment funding to support viability. Commuted sums, capital receipts, new homes bonus and prudential borrowing may be used to build the fund which used flexibly with our partner members delivers positive outcomes.
- Work with Registered Providers to create new sites. This would include detailed examination of public sector and social landlord held assets and land to explore radical options for creating new sites.
- Share risk on sites. The Council intends to become more engaged with housing delivery, which may be direct delivery, investment in new housing and utilising our assets. Working with our preferred Registered Providers to consider joint site delivery where this is appropriate, particularly in more challenging locations.
- Support Registered Providers with land packaged deals enabling Registered Providers to access better quality sites in return for delivering more challenging sites.
- Support Registered Providers to develop intermediate housing products. Building on the previously successful LAMS product and some of the exciting products developed by GM partners. Options to manage this process, hold charges and fund equity loans where this supports scheme viability will be explored.
- Develop equity loans to create person centred housing solutions.
- Work with Registered Providers to financially support alternative delivery models such as custom build, co-operative living and Community Land Trusts.

## The Registered Provider partners will use their best endeavours to:

- Utilise existing stock and nomination arrangements together with delivery of new affordable rented homes, contributing to maintaining and rebalancing communities whilst demonstrating that these homes are truly affordable to local people.
- Agree with the Council to offer 50% of re-let stock as nominations. In the event that 50% of nomination are not achieved, evidence that direct relets combined with nomination provide 50% lettings in accordance with Appendix 3 of the Tameside Registered Provider Partnership, Joint Working Agreement
- Ensure 100% of new build Social Rent and Affordable Rent homes are offered to the Council on a nomination or direct let basis for first lets, and at least 50% nominations on subsequent lets in accordance with Appendix 3 of the Tameside Registered Provider Partnership, Joint Working Agreement unless planning obligations or conditions, or any other agreements require a higher percentage which will have primacy over any extant Local Lettings Policy. For sensitive lets a Local Lettings Policy may be agreed between the Council and the RP which will be time limited for a year and subject to review by the parties at the end of the period.

## Registered Providers through sub-group membership will endeavour to:

- Assistant in maximising the delivery of new homes at pace across the Borough.
- Work with the Council to create intermediate products that support households into tenures of their choice as they move through their life.
- Develop models of delivery for new homes and services in partnership with the Council.
- Support the borough to develop a higher quality secure private rented sector offer.
- Develop place-based management solutions that promote community engagement, promote financial and digital inclusion and reduce social isolation.
- Positively disrupt the private rented sector market to create more stable and better managed communities, reducing fuel poverty and tackling anti-social behaviour.
- Demonstrate a long-term commitment to social and economic investment which supports local people and communities, particularly supporting tenants into education, training and employment
- Deliver specialist accommodation that meets our evidence-based need requirements and also provides person centred solutions.
- Support the authority to meet its homelessness obligations and supports preventative approaches
- Create an accommodation and service offer for older people to remain living in their homes for longer and access to specialist accommodation as it is required.
- Work with the Council to bring empty homes back into use.
- Demonstrate social value that benefits the communities and neighbourhoods of Tameside
- Support the Council's plans for re-purposing the borough's town centres
- Support other relevant Council initiatives e.g. Home Improvement Agency, Handy Person Service

## Registered Provider 'Strategic Partnership Group'

Tameside Council will have a place on the Strategic Partnership Group and will be represented on all Sub Groups which flow from the work streams. Representatives will be drawn from Housing Growth, Operations and Neighbourhoods (including Homelessness), Planning, Adult Services, Children's Services and Strategic Property and other departments including Legal, Policy and Finance as appropriate.

Homes England / CCG/ NHS representation and other Partners supporting capital and revenue programmes will be invited to have a role on the Strategic Partnership Group.

Registered Providers as members of the Tameside Registered Provider Partnership

- leading on Key areas of the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan
- Chair Sub groups delivering on key areas of the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan
- Registered Providers with a specialism will bring relevant skills , knowledge , experience , resources and expertise

The Chair and Deputy-Chair for the Strategic Partnership Group will be decided at the initial meeting for a term of 1 year. The election of Chair will be an agenda item for resolution on an annual basis, and any changes will be implemented following the annual meeting of the Tameside Registered Provider Partnership.

Meeting frequency will be monthly initially to set the work plan and programme, this will be reviewed with the Sub Groups taking on more operational work reporting back to the Strategic Partnership Group.

The Strategic Partnership Group is initially expected to run for the life of the strategy and will be reviewed alongside the Housing Strategy.

New members may join the Tameside Registered Provider Partnership at any time provided they sign up to the Terms of Reference which will enable access to the Strategic Partnership Group.



## Sub Groups

The Strategic Partnership Group, will establish the sub groups/ task and finish working groups as required. It is proposed that the following sub groups/ task and finish working groups are established and lead on the following themes;

Supported Housing	Housing Management/Allocations & Nominations/ Homelessness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children’s Services including Leaving Care</li> <li>• Older People</li> <li>• Learning Disabilities &amp; Autism</li> <li>• Mental Health</li> <li>• Domestic Abuse</li> <li>• Complex Needs &amp; Other needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing advice all tenures</li> <li>• Housing letting systems, allocations &amp; nominations</li> <li>• Homeless Families</li> <li>• Single Homeless</li> <li>• Complex needs</li> </ul>
Place Making /Regeneration/Town Centres	Growth and Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ashton/ Hyde/ Stalybridge/ Droylsden/ Denton</li> <li>• Empty Property</li> <li>• PRS / Housing Standards</li> <li>• Estate based initiatives</li> <li>• Planning and Health, Safety and Welfare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs and Demand, Type/ Tenure/ Location</li> <li>• Asset Management</li> <li>• Public and Private Sector Land and Property/ Procurement/ Collaboration</li> <li>• Allocations /Funding and Funding Bids/ 5 year Development Programme</li> <li>• Section 106 on site and Commuted sums.</li> <li>• Meeting for specific projects related to the sub groups will be facilitated by the relevant Council Directorate/ Department.</li> </ul>

### DECLARATION

Nothing in this Agreement shall create, or be deemed to create, a partnership (under the meaning given in the Partnership Act 1890), or the relationship of principal & agent between the parties to this Agreement. Except as expressly authorised in this Agreement, no party to the Agreement has any authority to act, make representations or bind or contract on behalf of any of the other parties to this Agreement.

## Strategic Partnership Group

- Housing Strategy oversight and review
- Work programme and Implementation plan delivery
- Strategic Leadership

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### Supported Housing

- Children's Services including Leaving Care
- Older People
  - Learning Disabilities & Autism
  - Mental Health
  - Domestic Abuse
  - Complex Needs & Other needs

### Housing Management/ Allocations & Nominations/ Homelessness

- Housing advice all tenures
- Housing letting systems / allocations & nominations
- Homeless Families
- Single Homeless
- Complex needs

### Growth and Development

- Needs and Demand, Type/ Tenure/ Location
- Asset Management
- Public and Private Sector Land and Property/ Procurement/ Partnership
- Allocations /Funding and Funding Bids/ 5 year Development Programme
- Section 106 on site and Commuted sums.

### Place Making/ Regeneration/Town Centres

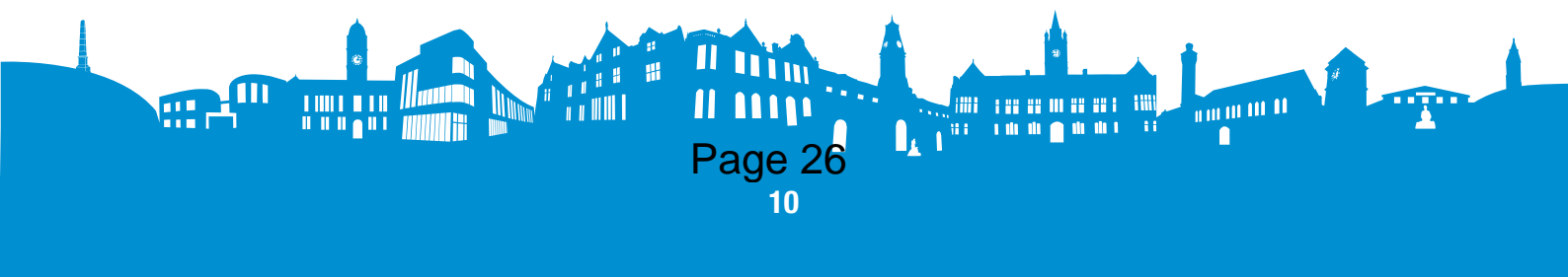
- Ashton/Hyde/ Stalybridge/ Droylsden/ Denton
- Empty Property
- PRS/ Housing standards
- Estate based initiatives
- Planning Health Safety and Welfare

## Appendix 2 – The Signatories

The following organisations commit to the purpose and principle of this Joint Working Agreement. All signatories are members of the Tameside Registered Provider Partnership.

Organisation	Name and Designation	Signature	Date
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			
			

Organisation	Name and Designation	Signature	Date
			
			
			
			
			
			
			





## Appendix 3 – Direct Lets

**The following are households whose circumstances may be considered suitable to be suggested by the Council for a Direct Let under this agreement:**

- Households under homelessness legislation that TMBC currently owe a Prevention, Relief or Full Statutory Duty (s.193) to.
- Households who have not presented as homeless but are considered a priority for rehousing by Children's or Adults' services (the Social Care Authority)
- Households suffering domestic abuse or racial harassment
- Ex armed forces personnel with suitable homes.
- Households with a member who has a physical or mental health condition made worse by current housing (including requirement for an adapted home)
- Households moving into first tenancies (from supported housing)
- Care leavers with appropriate support package.
- Households with an Inhabitable home as confirmed by local authority.
- Those moving for employment or for education.
- Moving to provide family support or for caring purpose.
- Applicants that can demonstrate a contribution to the local community e.g.volunteering.
- Overcrowded by at least one bedroom according the bedroom standard
- Moving because they can't afford where they currently live.
- Moving into first tenancies (from family home or currently staying with family/friends)
- Losing or lost home due to a relationship breakdown.

All households will have a local connection as defined by the Housing Act 1996, except for households who are exempt (e.g. u armed forces within 5 years of leaving) or the Council has a statutory duty to assist.

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>JOINT MEETING EXECUTIVE CABINET/OVERVIEW PANEL</b>
<b>Date:</b>	9 February 2022
<b>Scrutiny Panel / Executive Member:</b>	Councillor Mike Glover – Chair to Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel Councillor Gerald Cooney – Executive Member (Housing, Planning and Employment)
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>SCRUTINY REVIEW ON HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	The Chair of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel to comment on the Executive Response ( <b>Appendix 1</b> ), and the report on Homelessness and Housing, with recommendations made to support future services ( <b>Appendix 2</b> ).
<b>Recommendations:</b>	To note the recommendations detailed in Section 5 of <b>Appendix 2</b> .
<b>Links to Corporate Plan:</b>	Scrutiny activity seeks to support effective decision making and to improve outcomes for residents and service users.
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	The review itself has no specific policy implications. Should the Executive accept recommendations, all relevant services will need to assess the policy implication.
<b>Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)</b>	There are no direct financial implications arising from the content of this report. Any policy or service delivery changes considered as a consequence of the recommendations from Scrutiny Panel will need to be assessed separately and the financial implications determined as part of this consideration.
<b>Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)</b>	No decisions are being sought in relation to the projects referred to within this report. Each project will be subject to it's own due diligence, governance and decision making.
<b>Risk Management:</b>	The Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the Scrutiny Panels will be informed of the progress in implementing the work programmes.
<b>Access to Information:</b>	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Paul Radcliffe, Policy and Strategy Lead by:  Telephone:0161 342 2199  e-mail: paul.radcliffe@tameside.gov.uk

**Scrutiny - Executive Response**

**In Respect of:** Scrutiny Review on Homelessness and Housing

**Date:** 10 January 2022

**Response of:** Councillor Gerald Cooney, Executive Member (Housing, Planning and Employment)

**Coordinating Officer:** Ian Saxon, Director of Place



Recommendations	Accepted/ Rejected	Executive Response	Officer Responsible	Action By (Date)
<p>1. That Scrutiny ask the Executive to monitor the local impacts of the decision to withdraw eviction relief. That any concerns of vulnerability, inequality and increased incidence of homelessness, (local voice and experience), add to a written response to the appropriate Government Office to inform future policy in this area.</p>	Accepted	<p>From 1 October 2021, all notice periods returned to the pre-pandemic position, which is 2 months' notice for a s.21 no fault eviction, which reduced from 4 months June to September 2021, and in effect an eviction ban from the end of March 2020 up until that point except for the most serious cases under a s.8.</p> <p>Instance of household presentations to the Council due to s.21 notices can be compared from June 2019 – December 2019 on a monthly basis with the comparative months of 2021, along with any other empirical evidence that is required, and the relevant quarters information will be bench marked against other Local Authorities when the information is published on the Government website later this year.</p> <p>Consultation on ending 'No Fault' evictions or s.21 ran until October 2019, and it clear the direction of travel was to move to something close to the Scottish model, where a landlord can only evict a tenant for no fault if they are moving back into the property or selling it, and there was a 2 year protection period before this suggested. Due to COVID the Council awaits the Government's response to the consultation feedback and the implementation of any changes:</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a-new-deal-for-renting-resetting-the-balance-of-rights-and-responsibilities-between-landlords-and-tenants">https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a-new-deal-for-renting-resetting-the-balance-of-rights-and-responsibilities-between-landlords-and-tenants</a></p>	John Gregory	Ongoing review

Recommendations	Accepted/ Rejected	Executive Response	Officer Responsible	Action By (Date)
<p>2. That the Council prioritise and undertake a review of existing policies and mechanisms relating to local allocation and nomination arrangements with Registered Social Landlords. That future work in this area aims to improve transparency and accountability of decision making, with the need to generate and secure housing placements above that of recent years.</p>	Accepted	<p>The Council has tightened Local Connection and Nomination criteria for new build stock via s.106 agreements and planning permissions. The s.106 agreements require 100% nomination rights on first and subsequent letting in perpetuity and with suitable local connections.</p> <p>A new nominations agreement is currently being drafted, and nominations of at least 50% of existing re-lets of Social Rented and Affordable Rented properties are a key feature of the draft Joint Working Agreement for the Registered Provider Partnership which will have its initial meeting by February 2022 for sign-up COVID restrictions permitting.</p> <p>It is understood by all housing related functions that making the best use of social stock is key, and the Council's Allocations Policy is due to be reviewed later this year to ensure it is still as effective as possible. New supply obviously assists increasing the number of lets to assist the Council to delivery its duties, and 220 new affordable homes started on site in 2020/21.</p>	John Gregory/ Patrick Nolan	June 2022

Recommendations	Accepted/ Rejected	Executive Response	Officer Responsible	Action By (Date)
<p>3. With additional preventative responsibilities placed on the Council to actively identify and mitigate the associated risks of homelessness. That enhanced recording of homelessness demand, temporary accommodation and housing placements, is essential to recognise pressures within the system, to act on them promptly and effectively with greater accountability across all responsible parties. To routinely assess and review the overall success, impact and outcomes of interventions, to include financial appraisal of cost benefit analysis and value for money principles.</p>	Accepted	<p>Enhanced reporting was a requirement of the Homelessness Reduction Act which in 2018 changed from the P1E return to H-Clic which asked for much more information on any household who presented to the Council as homeless or threatened with homelessness.</p> <p>The detailed data is published online:  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness">https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness</a></p> <p>Regular collaborative meetings take place with MHCLG, this is a forum where best practice, experience, knowledge and lessons learned are shared.</p> <p>Monthly Delta reports are completed and provided to the Ministry, giving them an overview of our service and how we are performing and impacting on homelessness within the borough.</p> <p>Regular reports are sent to GMCA, this highlights where we are performing against the nine districts and will identify any support that may be required.</p> <p>Weekly KPI's are produced to highlight statutory and non-statutory performance.</p> <p>Constant reviews of our service and a proactive approach to ensure we are working cost effectively and that we are making procurement decisions based on the best service and value for money.</p>	John Gregory	Ongoing review

Recommendations	Accepted/ Rejected	Executive Response	Officer Responsible	Action By (Date)
4. That the Council's current Homelessness Strategy (2018-2021) is updated for 2022 and beyond, with a review of strategic priorities undertaken on an annual basis, taking account of national and local pressures and to achieve greater alignment with objectives set within the new local Housing Strategy.	Accepted	<p>Work on a refreshed draft homeless strategy is close to completion, including a departmental pledge that will include both our statutory and non-statutory provisions within the borough</p> <p>Alongside the strategy, the service will also be implementing an action plan. This will highlight and focus on key strategic priorities and objectives</p>	John Gregory	September 2022
5. That the Council reviews current monitoring tools to assess the effectiveness of homelessness interventions and how the service identifies, records and monitors future homelessness preventions and outcomes for residents.	Accepted	<p>Process monitoring takes place at 28 days and focuses on a number of key cohorts to identify demand and trends.</p> <p>Weekly KPIs are monitored for emergency, statutory and main duty services. Also monitored are Armed Forces, Refugees, Domestic Abuse Perpetrators and Offender cohorts</p> <p>A culture of ongoing training within the service ensures continued growth when working towards homelessness interventions and their effectiveness with clear development or training with the third party sector inclusive and essential</p> <p>Current development of our internal system, Locator, to ensure are more robust recording and monitoring system</p> <p>The existing housing advice service will be subject to an internal audit in February/March 2022. This audit will help to inform any service changes which will be planned following the transfer of the service in-house in June 2022.</p>	John Gregory	Audit to be completed by April 2022

Recommendations	Accepted/ Rejected	Executive Response	Officer Responsible	Action By (Date)
<p>6. That the Council looks to target a reduction in the time residents are housed in temporary and short-term accommodation, with consideration to a more ambitious and cooperative pathway to secure housing solutions within a maximum timeframe.</p>	Accepted	<p>Significant reductions have been made in the length of time individuals are accessing the emergency service, with an average stay of 44 days. This is impacted by the housing market and the Councils capacity for new builds.</p> <p>Implementation of individuals on temporary duties to be discharged into the private rental sector (PRS)</p> <p>A sizable marketing campaign has been ongoing through local radio and newspapers to generate the flow of private rented housing stock.</p> <p>Building relationships with landlords and estate agents, both locally and nationally over a two year period has created repeat contacts and property flow which is just about keeping up with the demand in our emergency service.</p> <p>Challenges have been faced with domestic abuse perpetrators and offenders, however an appeal to support refugees generated an overwhelming response</p> <p>Once the housing options service has transferred to Tameside Council control in June 2022, a comprehensive service review will be undertaken aimed at significantly improving move-on rates from temporary accommodation.</p> <p>In addition, governance is currently being sought on the adoption of a policy which would allow for the discharge of statutory homelessness duty in to the private rented sector.</p>	John Gregory	December 2022

Recommendations	Accepted/ Rejected	Executive Response	Officer Responsible	Action By (Date)
7. In addition to the work with RSLs, that attention is placed on developing the Council's partnership with the private rented sector across the short and long-term. To secure greater capacity for sustainable housing placements and accommodation options; and methods to engage and support vulnerable tenants at the earliest opportunity.	Accepted	<p>A database of landlords and estate agents where good relationships have been created and where property of the right standard has been quickly provided.</p> <p>Highlighting in real time property that becomes available from daily searches and matching it to the current cohort within the emergency provision and from this week those in temporary service.</p> <p>Regular team collaboration to utilise and share property that is available between the emergency and temporary provisions.</p>	John Gregory	Ongoing
8. That the Executive look to prevent any delay in future decision-making linked with previous ambitions to improve quality and standards in the private rented sector; and to connect with regional schemes aimed to promote best practice and build partnerships with the private rented sector.	Accepted	<p>The Council is currently considering the best approach to take in relation to improving quality &amp; standards in the private sector. Consideration is being given to a range of regulatory approaches, including a selective licensing scheme and a good landlord scheme.</p> <p>Members will be provided with an options paper later in the year to allow them to make an informed decision as to the direction of travel on these issues.</p>	Patrick Nolan/John Gregory	June 2022

# APPENDIX 2

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council's Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel has undertaken a review of strategic priorities for homelessness and housing. Research and activity has identified a range of existing and emerging pressures, with consideration for the role and ongoing effectiveness of statutory and non-statutory services in preventing homelessness and methods aimed to improve access to quality housing.
- 1.2 Covid-19 has and may continue to exacerbate a range of existing health and economic inequalities, with demand on services becoming increasingly difficult to predict. A number of identified risks to homelessness link closely with disproportionate outcomes for residents currently housed in the private rented sector.
- 1.3 The Council has a legal duty to provide residents with housing support and advice. It remains important that the assessment and decision making process identifies the range of factors that lead to individuals and families becoming homeless.

## 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report summarises and concludes activity undertaken by the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel during the period September to December 2021. As part of the process, Scrutiny has:
  - Completed a desktop review of homelessness and housing, informed by the emerging national picture and growing concerns highlighted for the accessibility of quality housing and risks of homelessness. A report tabled at the meeting of Overview Panel on 27 September 2021, attached as **Appendix 3**.
  - Met with Councillor Gerald Cooney, Executive Member, Housing, Planning and Employment; Ian Saxon, Director of Place; Gregg Stott, Assistant Director, Investment, Development and Housing; and John Gregory, Head of Community Safety and Homelessness, to receive an update in response to the Scrutiny desktop review of homelessness at the formal Scrutiny Panel on 2 November 2021.
  - Submitted a number of questions to the Executive for response. The three areas below have remained in place as key strands that Scrutiny aims to seek assurance and focus its attention towards improving outcomes for residents.
    - Homelessness – statutory responsibilities and wider preventative work
    - Housing access to public and private rent
    - Private rented sector and improving quality
- 2.2 The report puts forward a number of recommendations to the Executive.

## 3. KEY FINDINGS

### National Picture

- 3.1 The health and economic impacts of Covid-19 have placed added pressure to residents on low income and those paying disproportionately high housing costs. People on low income, in receipt of benefits, with a disability, refugees and single parents, or people with protected characteristics set within the Equality Act are more likely to be affected by what is widely referred to as a housing emergency, leading to homelessness for some.
- 3.2 It is estimated that one in three adults in Britain do not have a safe or secure home, with the high cost of housing being the main cause of homelessness. Regulation in this area has not substantially changed since 1988.

- 3.3 The homelessness response to the pandemic has seen a range of actions taken to safeguard individuals and families, non-more so than a decision of Government to place a temporary ban on Section 21, no fault evictions.
- 3.4 This much-needed intervention, at the time, appeared as a first step towards addressing a growing need to protect the most vulnerable and to tackle homelessness in the long-term. This includes:
- Bringing forward the Governments pledge to end ‘no fault evictions’
  - Improve protection through the welfare system
  - Ensuring councils have enough resources to support households at risk of homelessness
  - Support for renters in arrears by increasing the funding for Discretionary Housing Payments, and amending how they are administered
  - Protecting people from harm: re-align Local Housing Allowance rates with local rents
  - Building more homes for social/affordable rent
- 3.5 In May 2021 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) announced that the temporary protection from eviction would cease, with no plans to extend or adapt legislation. At the time, leading bodies including the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) warned of significant risks during recovery from the pandemic and a disproportionate concern for renters. JRF reported that on the day the eviction ban was lifted their survey revealed:
- Around 400,000 renting households have either been served an eviction notice or had been told they may be evicted.
  - Around 1 million renting households are worried of eviction in the next 3 months.
  - 1.7 million renting households are worried about paying their rent in the next 3 months.
- 3.6 Successful partnerships, multiagency working, system changes and increased funding have all come about during the pandemic. This is something that needs to continue throughout recovery phases. Housing associations can be part of the recovery work and ensuring a sustainable end to homelessness requires adequate funding, with the need for updated national guidance and policy.
- Local Picture**
- 3.7 **Homelessness** - The Homelessness Reduction Act was introduced on 3 April 2018. The Act was a significant change for council’s with the objective to help more people earlier, to prevent homelessness as much as possible and to help find accommodation for people who have become homeless. This has increased the range of people the Council is expected to support and the type of services it provides. In particular, the Act introduced assessments for people who ask for help and new duties to help people retain or find accommodation.
- 3.8 In addition to existing homelessness demand there is now a projected need for local authorities and partners to support a flow of people at risk of losing their home. There has become an increasingly common view to place homelessness as a priority factor within long-term and emergency planning for local authorities
- 3.9 Individuals and families living in temporary accommodation are often in overcrowded conditions where it is difficult to self-isolate and maintain social distancing. At 7 December 2021, there were 213 individuals placed in temporary accommodation by the Council, with the average length of staying being 179 days. The properties and facilities used to house individuals and families is diverse, limited and not always fit for purpose for long periods.
- 3.10 **Access to housing** - The Council has recently developed and adopted a new Housing Strategy. Whilst the authority has no housing stock it has a duty to ensure an effective scheme is in place for the allocation of social housing placements and a policy that prioritises households in ‘Reasonable Preference’.



- 3.11 With around 1,800 social homes let in Tameside each year, the Council can decide who qualifies for waiting lists. It is important to review such a policy in effort to ensure it remains fit for purpose and is framed in a way that supports vulnerable and priorities groups, where necessary and appropriate and set within boundaries of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 3.12 A Registered Provider Partnership is to be established in Tameside, with strategic priorities to address:
- Supported Housing
  - Housing management / Homelessness / Allocations and Nominations
  - Growth and Development
  - Place Making / Regeneration / Town Centres
- 3.13 Included within the wider aims of the partnership is to deliver new homes, specialist housing, improve quality in the private rented sector and to assist with homelessness prevention.
- 3.14 **Private rented sector (PRS)** – The sector has a substantial impact on Tameside and the Council’s priority areas including population health, community safety and homelessness.
- 3.15 In 2019, Scrutiny reviewed methods to improve quality and standards in the PRS. The review looked at a variety of options available to the Council that included the use of a selective licensing scheme. Scrutiny appreciated that the impacts of Covid-19 have delayed work in this area.
- 3.16 The PRS in Tameside has grown over recent years, with 14.2% of all properties (2017) being privately rented. This equates to almost 15,000 households and 40,000 residents, of which 12,000 are children. It is estimated that the number of private rentals has risen further over recent years.
- 3.17 Tameside’s low income households and single parents continue to be adversely affected by the impacts of welfare reform and Universal Credit. This also includes housing elements such as the Local Housing Allowance and pressures placed on single people in receipt of the shared room rate who continue to face limited housing options.
- 3.18 Tameside Housing Advice is a frontline service that provides residents with help and advice for all aspects of housing and directly supports individuals and families to resolve housing problems. The demand for advice and support is increasing, with the following data drawn from 2018/19.
- 657 households accepted as being owed a homeless relief duty or main homeless duty.
  - 276 households homeless or at risk of being made homeless as result of loss of property in PRS.
  - 97 households became homeless as result of loss of property in PRS (Section 21 notices).

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 Covid-19 appears to have highlighted and exacerbated a range of issues set within outdated national legislation in protecting vulnerable residents at risk of eviction. This presents a vital role for Government to prevent any future delay in developing a new and sustainable national framework for tenants and landlords alike.
- 4.2 The removal of temporary measures aimed to safeguard vulnerable residents from eviction and homelessness continues to present an added level of uncertainty and risk while impacts of Covid-19 remain present within all communities.

- 4.3 Strategic priorities for homelessness and access to accommodation has changed significantly since the Council's existing homelessness strategy was developed in 2018.
- 4.4 The Council has a continued role to prevent crisis demand of homelessness in the housing sector. It is therefore pleasing to see that a local Registered Provider Partnership is to become a key driver for work specific to homelessness and access to suitable housing and accommodation for vulnerable residents.
- 4.5 There is a continuing need to prevent homelessness and to provide greater access to safe, affordable and quality homes.
- 4.6 The Council currently has range tools and policies available and at its disposal to improve access to housing options through existing allocation and nomination arrangements with RSLs.
- 4.7 The PRS has a significant role to play within the future supply of temporary accommodation and the provision of long-term housing solutions.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 That Scrutiny ask the Executive to monitor the local impacts of the decision to withdraw eviction relief. That any concerns of vulnerability, inequality and increased incidence of homelessness, (local voice and experience), add to a written response to the appropriate Government Office to inform future policy in this area.
- 5.2 That the Council prioritise and undertake a review of existing policies and mechanisms relating to local allocation and nomination arrangements with Registered Social Landlords. That future work in this area aims to improve transparency and accountability of decision making, with the need to generate and secure housing placements above that of recent years.
- 5.3 With additional preventative responsibilities placed on the Council to actively identify and mitigate the associated risks of homelessness. That enhanced recording of homelessness demand, temporary accommodation and housing placements, is essential to recognise pressures within the system, to act on them promptly and effectively with greater accountability across all responsible parties. To routinely assess and review the overall success, impact and outcomes of interventions, to include financial appraisal of cost benefit analysis and value for money principles.
- 5.4 That the Council's current Homelessness Strategy (2018-2021) is updated for 2022 and beyond, with a review of strategic priorities undertaken on an annual basis, taking account of national and local pressures and to achieve greater alignment with objectives set within the new local Housing Strategy.
- 5.5 That the Council reviews current monitoring tools to assess the effectiveness of homelessness interventions and how the service identifies, records and monitors future homelessness preventions and outcomes for residents.
- 5.6 That the Council looks to target a reduction in the time residents are housed in temporary and short-term accommodation, with consideration to a more ambitious and cooperative pathway to secure housing solutions within a maximum timeframe.
- 5.7 In addition to the work with RSLs, that attention is placed on developing the Council's partnership with the private rented sector across the short and long-term. To secure greater capacity for sustainable housing placements and accommodation options; and methods to engage and support vulnerable tenants at the earliest opportunity.

- 5.8 That the Executive look to prevent any delay in future decision-making linked with previous ambitions to improve quality and standards in the private rented sector; and to connect with regional schemes aimed to promote best practice and build partnerships with the private rented sector.

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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>OVERVIEW PANEL</b>
<b>Date:</b>	27 September 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sandra Stewart, Director - Governance and Pensions Sarah Threlfall, Assistant Director – Policy, Performance and Communications
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>SCRUTINY – DESKTOP REVIEW ON HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	To receive a summary and insight of existing publications and research aimed to highlight current and projected pressures for local authorities regarding access to quality housing and the impact of Covid-19 on demand for statutory homelessness support.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	That Overview Panel are asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agree that subject to any further comments the report be shared with the relevant Executive Member for information and to inform future strategy and service delivery where necessary.</li> <li>2. That Scrutiny receives a service response to the impacts of Covid-19 to homelessness and the effects of recent changes to safeguarding measures for residents at risk of eviction.</li> </ol>
<b>Links to Corporate Plan:</b>	Scrutiny activity seeks to support effective decision making and to improve outcomes for residents and service users.
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	Scrutiny activity seeks to check the effective implementation of the Council’s policies and if appropriate make recommendations to the Executive with regards to development, performance monitoring, outcomes and value for money.
<b>Financial Implications:</b> <b>(Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)</b>	Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, the financial context for the provision of housing and homelessness services is significant. During the 2020/21 financial year, the Council faced significant financial pressures in respect of temporary accommodation costs, which were driven by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council receives direct grant funding to support housing and homelessness services, however costs often exceed available funding. Future decisions on housing strategy and service delivery will need to consider the financial implications and constraints of the current funding system.
<b>Legal Implications:</b> <b>(Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)</b>	The office for National Statistics alongside the <a href="#">English Housing Survey</a> results additional information was published about <a href="#">household resilience</a> and changes due to COVID-19 provides data to drive evidence based change. A study from Shelter and YouGov 2020 revealed the lasting impact of homelessness and bad housing on a child’s education. With over 136,000 children growing up in temporary accommodation across Britain, it is unsurprising the devastating effects homelessness and bad housing can have on a child’s wellbeing and their ability to learn. All of these issues then create a level and demand and costs for the Council to attempt to manage with reducing income.

It is therefore critical that the Council has a fit for purpose strategy to deal with these issues or failing that raise them with Government in a clear and evidence way to effect change.I

**Risk Management:**

The Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the Scrutiny Panels will be informed of the progress in implementing the work programmes.

**Access to Information:**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Paul Radcliffe, Policy and Strategy Lead by:



Telephone:0161 342 2199



e-mail: [paul.radcliffe@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:paul.radcliffe@tameside.gov.uk)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council's scrutiny function remains well positioned to respond to local challenges and has an important role to provide direct insight and support to the Executive on a range of key matters. Improving outcomes for residents remains at the forefront of all work priorities and feedback of this nature aims to inform future planning in response and recovery to Covid-19 in Tameside.
- 1.2 As detailed in the Scrutiny Annual Work Programme, tabled at a meeting of Overview Panel on 26 July 2021, there is a range of options available to each Scrutiny Panel as to how activity is planned and undertaken. In order to prevent delay this will take the form of research on a particular issue as a desktop review.

## 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This short report aims to provide a range of points for consideration regarding the emerging national picture and growing concerns highlighted for the accessibility of quality housing and risks of homelessness.
- 2.2 Research of this nature links closely with continued efforts of the Council to support residents and to safeguard against external pressures and future demand on services that have become increasingly hard to predict throughout Covid-19 and recovery. This subject also broadly connects with past Scrutiny activity and recommendations to improve quality and standards in the private rented sector.
- 2.3 The paper highlights and summarises recent publications, research and findings that are publically available from the following sources:
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation
  - Crisis
  - Shelter
  - National Housing Federation
  - Local Government Association
  - UK Collaborative for Housing Evidence
  - Centre for Ageing Better
- 2.4 Undertaken as a desktop review to inform the Executive of key issues, Scrutiny wish to request a service response to the impacts of Covid-19 on homelessness and the effects of recent changes to safeguarding measures for residents at risk of eviction, to include updated data and insight on demand for housing support.

## 3. KEY MESSAGES

- 3.1 Future challenges associated with Covid-19 have potential to be profound and far-reaching for the resilience of households and communities. This relates to a range of expected and delayed external factors such as uncertainty of future employment, housing, education and timely access to healthcare and support.

### **Homelessness**

- 3.2 Homelessness affects a wide variety of people. Some people may be more vulnerable to homelessness. They may be more at risk if they are:
- Leaving home for the first time or leaving care
  - Pregnant with nowhere to stay when the baby is born
  - Struggling to live on benefits or low income
  - From abroad without the without the right to benefits
  - An asylum seeker or refugee

- Leaving prison

3.3 Residents can ask for help from the Council if they are homeless or under threat of becoming homeless within 8 weeks. Local authorities have a legal duty to help people, while not all will be eligible for housing, advice and guidance is available to all people in need.

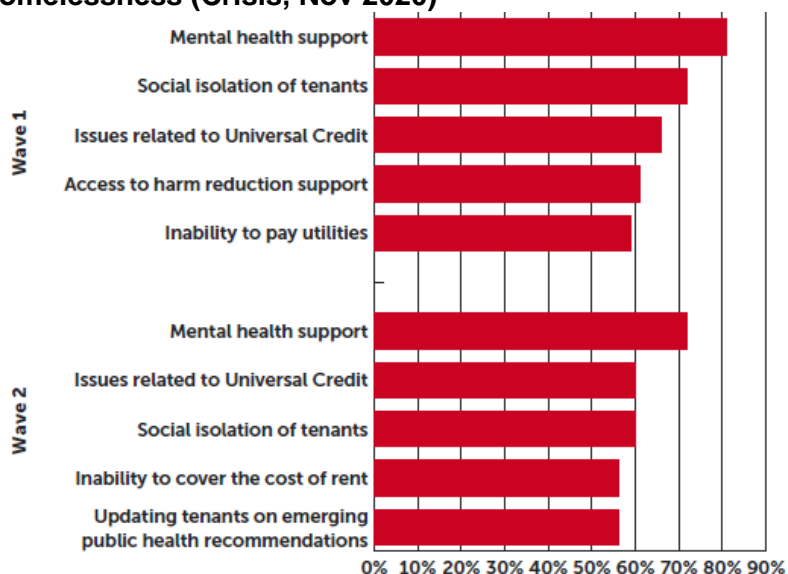
**Impacts of Covid-19**

3.4 The homelessness response to the pandemic has seen a range of actions taken to safeguard individuals and families, non-more so than the temporary ban of Section 21 evictions within the private rented sector. Covid-19 has also applied added pressure to people on low income and those paying disproportionately high housing costs.

3.5 In addition to existing homelessness demand there is a projected need for local authorities and partners to support a new flow of people at risk of losing their home. While data is not comprehensive, in England between April and June 2020 around 64,000 households were eligible for a homelessness duty. There has become an increasingly common view that homelessness should now be a priority factored within emergency planning.

3.6 Figure 1 below shows the challenges in supporting residents at risk of homelessness during the first two waves of the pandemic.

**Figure 1: Top 5 reported challenges related to supporting people currently housed and at risk of homelessness (Crisis, Nov 2020)**



3.7 In May 2021, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation warned of significant risks during recovery from the pandemic and a disproportionate concern for renters. Joseph Rowntree Foundation reported that on the day the eviction ban was lifted a survey revealed:

- Around 400,000 renting households have either been served an eviction notice or had been told they may be evicted.
- Around 1 million renting households are worried of eviction in the next 3 months.
- 1.7 million renting households are worried about paying their rent in the next 3 months.

3.8 The temporary ban on evictions provided much needed security to renters at a time of profound economic and social disruption. Warning signs now point to a spike in evictions and homelessness with the ban lifted. In addition to the 400,000 households worried of eviction, there is also around 450,000 households in rent arrears and almost 20% of this group in arrears for over four months.

3.9 Families with children, BAME households and those on lower income are disproportionately worried about paying rent and in fear of eviction in the next three months. Households with



three or more children are more than twice as likely to be worried about being evicted (21%) compared to households without children (9%). The proportion of children growing up in privately rented accommodation, the least secure tenure, has risen from 16% to 22% in the past ten years.

- 3.10 Renters from BAME backgrounds are almost twice as likely to be worried of eviction compared to white renters (18% vs 10%). Households with annual income below £25,000 are three times more likely to be worried about paying rent (24%) and are more likely to already be behind with household bills and rent payments compared to households on higher incomes.
- 3.11 Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Local Government Association has relayed a number of similar points to the Government. The view being to protect the most vulnerable and to tackle homelessness in the long-term. They include:
- Bringing forward the Governments pledge to end 'no fault evictions'
  - Improve protection through the welfare system
  - Ensuring councils have enough resources to support households at risk of homelessness
  - Support for renters in arrears by increasing the funding for Discretionary Housing Payments, and amending how they are administered
  - Protecting people from harm: re-align Local Housing Allowance rates with local rents
  - Building more homes for social/affordable rent
- 3.12 A report published by Crisis (Nov 2020) details that at the end of September 2020 over 10,000 people in England were living in emergency accommodation as a direct result of the 'Everyone In' initiative and almost 19,000 people have been moved into other forms of accommodation.
- 3.13 Families living in temporary accommodation are often in overcrowded conditions where it is difficult to self-isolate and maintain social distancing. The pause in lettings did mean they had to stay in this accommodation even longer than previously planned. The new guidance on social housing lettings will help ensure suitable accommodation for families in this position.
- 3.14 Issues such as youth homelessness, increased incidence in domestic abuse, hospital discharges, and prison releases are likely to become more problematic. Other increases in homelessness may arise, with regard to mental health and breakdown of relationships.
- 3.15 Successful partnerships, multiagency working, system changes and increased funding have all come about during the pandemic. This is something that needs to continue through Covid-19 recovery. Housing associations can be part of the recovery work and ensuring a sustainable end to homelessness, provided adequate funding and ongoing guidance is available.

### **Housing**

- 3.16 It is vital that everyone is able to live in a home that is safe and comfortable. Unfortunately, this is not always the case and there is an urgent need to improve the quality of housing in England for the benefit of current and future generations.
- 3.17 Shelter report a housing emergency, with 17.5 million people unable to secure a safe and stable home. This includes families and individuals of all ages living in unaffordable homes of poor quality.
- 3.18 People on low incomes, in receipt of benefits, with a disability, refugees and single parents, or people with protected characteristics set within the Equality Act are more likely to be affected by the housing emergency, leading to homelessness for some.
- 3.19 The high cost of housing means the private rented sector has doubled in size over the last 20 years. Private renters have watched the cost of rent rise faster than their earnings. Priced

out of owning a home and denied social housing, people are often forced to take what they can afford even if it is of poor quality or away from jobs and support networks.

- 3.20 One in three adults in Britain do not have a safe or secure home with the high cost of housing being the main cause of homelessness. Regulation in this area has not substantially changed since 1988 and most private rentals are on tenancies of 6 to 12, often creating a permanent state of stress and instability for tenants.

### **Findings from past Scrutiny activity on quality and standards in the private rented Sector (Pre-Covid)**

- 3.21 Tameside's housing stock is unique, with 88% of all properties located within council tax bands A, B and C. There is a high density of terraced properties within certain areas which is typical of the housing type made available for private rent.
- 3.22 The Private Rented Sector in Tameside has grown over recent years, with 14.2% of all properties (2017) being privately rented. This equates to almost 15,000 households and 40,000 residents, of which 12,000 are children. It is estimated that the number of private rentals has risen over recent years.
- 3.23 A wider range of residents are now living within the Private Rented Sector and for longer. This includes older people, families with dependent children, single parents, single occupiers and residents with a disability, poor mental health or long-term condition. For the first time, there are now a higher number of older residents living in the Private Rented Sector when compared to numbers housed with social landlords.
- 3.24 Tameside's low income households and single parents continue to be adversely affected by the impacts of welfare reform and Universal Credit. This also includes housing elements such as the Local Housing Allowance and pressures placed on single people in receipt of the shared room rate who continue to face limited housing options.
- 3.25 Tameside Housing Advice is a frontline service that provides residents with help and advice for all aspects of housing and directly supports individuals and families to resolve housing problems. The demand for advice and support is increasing, with the following data drawn from 2018/19.
- 657 households accepted as being owed a homeless relief duty or main homeless duty.
  - 276 households homeless or at risk of being made homeless as result of loss of property in Private Rented Sector.
  - 97 households became homeless as result of loss of property in Private Rented Sector (Section 21 notices).

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 Economic and social recovery from Covid-19 is progressing for some, but many renters are struggling to stay afloat.
- 4.2 The Council and partners have a significant and continued role to prevent crisis demand of homelessness in the housing sector.
- 4.3 The drive to prevent homelessness and to provide safe, affordable and quality homes for all continues beyond Covid-19.
- 4.4 There is a growing need for on-going assessment and earlier identification of households at risk of eviction; and to mitigate known inequalities and range of almost predetermined outcomes for vulnerable residents.

**5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1 As set out on the front of the report.

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## Chair of Overview Panel

## Chairs of Scrutiny Panels

**Councillor Jacqueline North**  
**First Deputy**  
**Finance, Resources & Transformation**

**Caroline Barlow**  
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Date	19 October 2022

Dear Councillor North,

### **Scrutiny mid-year budget update 2022/23**

We write in response to the mid-year budget update presented on 3 October 2022. The sessions enable members to seek assurance on the Council's approach to managing and mitigating budget pressures, known risks and future uncertainty. The demand on statutory services and the sustainability of budgets beyond the short-term remains a concern for members, along with growing social and economic pressures associated with the rise in living costs and a need to support individuals and families in Tameside.

The Council has demonstrated an unwavering commitment and drive to meet all financial challenges to date. We now find ourselves in a position where further savings are required at a time when the demand on statutory services is at its greatest. It is also important to reflect on the strength and resilience of our workforce and communities during such challenging times that now extend to the aftermath and recovery of a global pandemic.

Members shared concerns on the challenges and uncertainty associated with a repeated one-year funding settlement. This can inhibit the Council's ability to set a more robust medium term financial plan and it is accepted that a greater level of confidence can be achieved should longer funding arrangements be granted by the government to local authorities beyond the next financial year.

Scrutiny forms part of the Council's governance and decision-making process, underpinned by principles that aim to provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge, to amplify the voice and concerns of residents, and to drive improvement in public services. This letter provides an account of discussions captured from the meetings and subsequent feedback received. It is hoped that the collective points can assist with planning for 2023 and beyond.

In response to a previous request of scrutiny members, the update included a section on how the budget aligns with priorities set within the Corporate Plan. Members would have liked to hear more on the savings identification process, but please be assured that the content as a whole was detailed and well received.

Revenue monitoring information highlighted a significant in-year overspend across directorates. This is of concern and likely to have a cumulative impact on the budget, with areas showing a sizeable variance against the opening budget and savings position. This appears to place the authority in a precarious position with limited options to balance the budget for 2022/23. The Place directorate was most noticeable on the non-delivery of savings and income shortfall. It is felt that the strategic direction for growth and investment has an important role to play going forward.

A question that remains for Scrutiny is clarity on the existing financial planning model and processes by which directorates identify achievable savings. Further points include learning from previous years with regard to overly ambitious savings targets and members are keen to ensure future decisions are robustly costed and achievable, without jeopardising service quality or requiring late or unplanned financial adjustments.

With limited options available to the Council to increase income and revenue beyond a rise in Council Tax, the required budget savings are somewhat intensified. Members queried the assumption of a 97% collection rate for Council Tax, with reference to past learning from the pandemic and a pressing need to review the impact of significant rises to household budgets. This also included the assumptions for business rate income and collection given the current economic climate and the historic challenges to achieve growth in an area that has predominantly struggled in previous years.

The Council continues to face high levels of demand across statutory services with concerns on the ability to sustain budget increases in future years. This also includes the practicality and rationale of savings targets applied to such areas. Improving outcomes for children and vulnerable residents remains a pressure, which includes outcomes from past Ofsted inspections of Children's Social Care and SEND. It would be naïve of the Council not to acknowledge that growing economic and financial turmoil within society, most notably on household budgets, employment and housing, may result in added demand on statutory services.

A number of questions touched upon budget monitoring arrangements and existing methods to report and flag known risks and shortfalls in savings as they arise. It was reported that approximately half of savings targets have a projected shortfall, with limited information provided on what can be done to claw this back. Further points include:

- The realistic pace that savings can be made and understanding the opportunity cost of such decisions.
- The savings most at risk of not being met.
- The previous use and reliance of one-off monies, grants and reserves that are no longer accessible.
- Future viability and appraisal of non-statutory and discretionary services beyond 2023/24.
- Asset management strategy, streamlining process for energy savings and costs associated with staff returning to office work.
- Future opportunities to intensify corporate and elected member oversight to monitor agreed savings.

We are pleased to say that the Council's leadership and Executive remain fully engaged with all aspects of Scrutiny activity.

Yours sincerely,

**Councillor Jack Naylor – Chair of Overview Panel**

**Councillor Yvonne Cartey – Chair of Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel**

**Councillor Naila Sharif - Chair of Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel**

**Councillor Tafheen Sharif – Chair of Children's Services Scrutiny Panel**