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**Nottingham
City Council**

Nottingham City Council Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committee

Date: Monday 15 July 2024

Time: 2:00pm

Place: Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG

Councillors are requested to attend the above meeting to transact the following business

Director for Legal and Governance

Scrutiny and Audit Support Officer: Adrian Mann

Direct Dial: 0115 876 4353

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Declarations of Interests**
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To note the latest responses received to the Committee's recommendations
- 6 Work Programme** 29 - 34
Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

If you need advice on declaring an interest in any item on the agenda, please contact the Scrutiny and Audit Support Officer shown above before the day of the meeting, if possible.

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Nottingham City Council

Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 10 June 2024 from 2:04pm to 4:02pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Sarita-Marie Rehman-Wall
(Chair)
Councillor Michael Savage (Vice Chair)
Councillor Kevin Clarke
Councillor Sam Harris
Councillor AJ Matsiko
Councillor David Mellen
Councillor Samina Riaz
Councillor Adele Williams

Absent

None

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Jay - Executive Member for Housing and Planning
Hayes
Mark Lowe - Head of Housing and Regeneration
Adrian Mann - Scrutiny and Audit Support Officer
Sajeeda Rose - Corporate Director for Growth and City Development
Paul Seddon - Director of Planning and Regeneration
Karen Shaw - Local Plans Manager
Damon Stanton - Scrutiny and Audit Support Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

None

2 Declarations of Interests

In the interests of transparency in relation to item 7 (Social Housing Delivery Progress), Councillor Sarita-Marie Rehman-Wall and Councillor Michael Savage declared that they are Council tenants.

3 Appointment of the Vice Chair

Resolved to appoint Councillor Michael Savage as the Vice Chair of the Committee for the 2023/24 municipal year.

4 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2024 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

5 Committee Terms of Reference

The Chair presented a report on the Committee's Terms of Reference, the Council's structure for the Overview and Scrutiny function and the Overview and Scrutiny Protocol to provide clarity on the Committee's purpose, objectives and terms of operation so that it can work efficiently and contribute effectively to the good governance of the Council.

The Committee noted the report.

6 The Nottingham Local Plan - Housing Delivery

Councillor Jay Hayes, Executive Member for Housing and Planning; Sajeeda Rose, Corporate Director for Growth and City Development; Paul Seddon, Director of Planning and Regeneration; and Karen Shaw, Local Plans Manager, presented a report on the delivery of housing across the city as part of the currently adopted Local Plan. The following points were raised:

- a) To seek to address increased housing need across the country, the national target is for there to be around 300,000 new properties built each year in England. The target for Nottingham is the provision of 1,000 new homes each year, with the figure including an additional 35% uplift applied to the 20 largest cities and urban areas. It is expected that the Council will also deliver appropriate student accommodation as part of the overall housing need and, since 2011, around 50% of housing delivery has been in student accommodation – predominantly in the city centre.
- b) Housing need at the local level is assessed using a set Standard Method Calculation, which includes the projected household growth over the next 10 years, affordability adjustments, a cap of up to 40% and the additional 35% uplift for the larger cities. The Council must then set out policies within its Local Plan to establish how the housing need will be delivered, which includes suitable sites being identified that can provide at least five years' worth of housing.
- c) Delivery is enforced through a Housing Delivery Test that the Council submits to Government, stating the number of new houses provided against the national requirements. There are sanctions for under-delivery and it is estimated that 110 out of 350 Local Authorities nationally will not be able to meet their housing requirements this year. If a Local Authority achieves less than 75% of its local housing need, a formal 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' is then applied in the Planning process for new residential projects.
- d) The Council has a clear focus on ensuring that housing development plans are well-evidenced and sustainable. There are a number of development aspects that the Council examines such as Housing Needs Assessments, infrastructure delivery plans, transport modelling, employment studies and flood risk assessments. As a result, the Council has been successful in achieving its housing requirements over the last decade, with delivery monitored through a Housing Information System, which is a complex database that incorporates Planning Application data, Council Tax data, site visit information and Building

Control data, which is all assessed by the Planning Policy and Geographical Information System teams.

- e) The Council ensures that there are sites for housing delivery through a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. Once housing sites have been identified, information is provided to ensure they can be developed, including any constraints and likely timelines. Once approved, these housing sites are included in the Local Plan. Each year, the Council must identify a five-year housing supply of land to show that it is able to deliver on its requirements.
- f) However, the Council faces some key issues in relation to housing provision going forward, as it develops its new Local Plan with partners. These include the increased number of houses for delivery due to the 35% uplift, the physical constraints on land due to the city's tightly drawn boundaries and less student housing being built due to a reduction in demand. The Government has also consulted on raising the shortfall threshold from 75% to 95% before the 'presumption in favour of development' is applied.
- g) Ultimately, it is likely that the Council's Standard Method Calculation from 2023-2041 is 33,210 against an estimated supply of 26,685, leaving a shortfall of 6,525. However, as national guidance does state that the Standard Method can be deviated from if there are exceptional circumstances, the Council is proposing that it follows an alternative land supply-based calculation, rather than the Standard Method figure, in the next version of the Local Plan. This approach will be tested in a Public Examination in 2025/26.

The Committee raised the following points in discussion:

- h) The Committee asked what types of housing was needed most by Nottingham residents, and whether meeting the actual local need plus the 35% national uplift was achievable. It was reported that a Housing Needs Assessment has been commissioned to fully assess what housing is required in the city. There is a clear need for both social and affordable rent housing. A number of other specific housing needs are also incorporated into the Assessment, such as those of students, young people and older people, as well as work towards alleviating homelessness. The Assessment also considers the city's housing market trends. Unfortunately, the 35% uplift will be particularly difficult to meet in Nottingham due to its tight physical boundaries – and everything possible should be done to not compromise the city's available green spaces.
- i) The Committee asked how it is ensured that suitable brownfield sites are developed for new housing in a timely way. It was explained that the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment seeks to identify potential housing sites, which include vacant properties and brownfield land. There is now funding available for developers through the East Midlands Combined County Authority (CCA) to help address viability problems on brownfield land, with potential further funding streams available in the future. However, it is simply sometimes that case that a site might look suitable for development but, upon further investigation, it is found to not be viable for residential properties for various reasons, including where there is a significant risk of flooding.

- j) It was set out that Nottingham has a good reputation for development and strong relations with developers. However, the Council has limited intervention powers to progress an approved private development beyond the use of a Compulsory Purchase Order, which would be difficult to implement due to the current financial situation. The CCA will also have Compulsory Purchase powers that it could use if required. The Government has consulted on how it could address developers who are delaying the delivery of housing for which they have approval.
- k) The Committee asked how the Council's strategic approach to the delivery of housing was grounded in a clear understanding of the needs of local people. It was explained that there is currently a housing shortage nationally, with the limited housing supply increasing prices and rents. The Council works to alleviate this shortage by seeking to meet the housing development targets for Nottingham as closely as possible and the Housing Needs Assessment will allow the Council to implement the right housing mix that is required by residents. The development sites within the strategic Local Plan are ones that are large enough for over 500 dwellings. A 'part two' plan will follow on from the strategic plan to outline and go into greater detail on the development of smaller housing sites.
- l) The Committee asked what the primary risks to the Council were if the national housing delivery targets for the city were unrealistic. It was reported that the Council has provided a robust response to the Government's consultation on raising the threshold for the 'presumption in favour of development' to 95%, outlining the tight physical boundaries of the city and the consequences of over-development. The Council is using 3D modelling to show the potential impacts of the 35% uplift and it will be putting this forward, along with other evidence as to why it should depart from the Standard Method formula, to the Public Examination. Currently, however, there is still a healthy five-year plan of land supply, so the 35% uplift represents a risk in the longer term. Nevertheless, the Council will need to develop alternatives if the independent examiner decides against its future Local Plan position if a supply-based housing target.
- m) The Committee noted that there are a number of urgent housing issues for residents, where long-term plans do not support people facing the immediate threat of eviction and homelessness. The Committee considered, therefore, that residents must be able to have a clear voice in the effective delivery of the Local Plan, to ensure that it meets the needs of everyone – and, particularly, the most vulnerable.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for Housing and Planning, the Corporate Director for Growth and City Development, the Director of Planning and Regeneration and the Local Plans Manager for attending the meeting to present the report and answer the Committee's questions.

Resolved:

- 1) To recommend that the Council maximises its engagement and relationships with partners (including the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA)) and developers to take best advantage of the potential investment opportunities for the unlocking of brownfield sites in the city for housing development, as part of its strategic approach to housing delivery.**

- 2) To recommend that the Council works in partnership with both the Greater Nottingham District and Borough Councils and the EMCAA to make a representation to the appropriate Secretary of State on the challenges faced locally in meeting the 35% uplift for house building applied to the larger cities, following the upcoming General Election.**
- 3) To recommend that the Council's strategic and policy approaches to housing development in the city clearly embed and express the true housing need of Nottingham's communities, and that the input received through consultation with these communities and partners is used effectively to inform both strategic policy development and delivery planning.**

7 Social Housing Delivery Progress

Councillor Jay Hayes, Executive Member for Housing and Planning; Sajeeda Rose, Corporate Director for Growth and City Development; and Mark Lowe, Head of Housing and Regeneration, presented a report on the delivery of new social housing in Nottingham. The following points were raised:

- a) Formally, 'social housing' is defined as a low-cost form of rented or home ownership properties such as social rent, affordable rent, shared ownership, shared equity or discounted sale. The Council owns over 24,000 social housing properties and so is the largest Registered Provider in the city. There are more homes in the pipeline to build and the Council continues to work closely with other Registered Providers to establish more social homes across the city.
- b) A change to the Housing Revenue Account in 2012 allowed the Council to borrow to develop new Council homes. Since this time, the Council has completed 570 new homes for rent, with 351 currently being built and 24 more approved at the Oakdene site – with further sites being sought. The Council has acquired 150 properties from the private sector and has agreed a programme to purchase 60 homes over the next two years. It has also established 37 homes as part of private developments via Section 106 Agreements. Currently, 150 properties are still held as part of Nottingham City Homes. In total, 2,663 social homes have been provided in Nottingham over the past 20 years.
- c) As social housing is rented or sold at sub-market values, it requires a subsidy in order to be developed. The main forms of subsidy are Right to Buy replacement funds, the Homes England Affordable Housing Programme and Section 106 Agreements with developers. However, the Council is not currently able to mix the funding from these sources, so it is usually the case that it uses one form of subsidy for a given project and then needs to borrow the remainder.
- d) The primary challenges to future delivery in Nottingham include cost inflation for building materials and labour; increased investment demands on Registered Providers to meet new energy standards, decency standards and fire safety measures; a lack of land supply; less funds being generated from Section 106 Agreements; and the Council's current financial situation limiting new borrowing.

The Committee raised the following points in discussion:

- e) The Committee asked how many people were on the waiting list for social housing, and how need was prioritised. It was reported that there is a local connection requirement for residents to access social housing in the city, and around 10,000 people are currently on the Council's waiting list – who are placed in bands according to various criteria of need. The overall number on the waiting list remains largely consistent as there is increasing demand and reducing supply. As much work is done as possible to limit the number of void properties at any given time.
- f) The Committee asked how Right to Buy impacts on the Council's social housing stock. It was explained that, over the past 10 years, over 3,000 homes have been sold through Right to Buy, with the number of purchase applications remaining consistently high. This has reduced the level of social housing that the Council has, as it is not able to replace the stock at the same pace. The Council has no control over what happens to properties once they had been purchased under Right to Buy, but a number of licensing schemes are in place for properties to be used for private rent. Right to Buy income must be reinvested in social housing projects within a limited time window, so the Council is engaging at the national level on how Right to Buy funds could be used more flexibly, including through mixing with Homes England funding and Section 106 Agreements, to help increase the social housing stock.
- g) The Committee asked what was being done to support District and Borough Councils in the Greater Nottingham area to increasing their housing stock. It was explained that the Council looks to work with its other Local Authority partners to help increase their social housing stock where appropriate, particularly through utilising Section 106 contributions from developers. Section 106 Agreements are a legally binding means of ensuring investment for new social housing, but if an independent assessment identifies that a development is not viable for the amount of Section 106 asked for, this can be challenged by the developer. The new East Midlands Combined County Authority should further enhance that partnership working.
- h) The Committee queried how residents are supported in temporary accommodation while waiting for a permanent placement. It was clarified that the Council placing someone in temporary accommodation outside of the city area does not remove their eligibility to access social housing in Nottingham. Where someone is provided with temporary accommodation in another Local Authority area, that Local Authority must be notified.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for Housing and Planning, the Corporate Director for Growth and City Development and the Head of Housing and Regeneration for attending the meeting to present the report and answer the Committee's questions.

Resolved:

- 1) To request that further information is provided on:**

- a) **the banding structure and number of people on the current waiting list for social housing, and the projected trend of the number of people on the waiting list;**
 - b) **the number of void properties, and the amount of time taken for void properties to be re-occupied; and**
 - c) **the number, proportion and projected trend of Right to Buy sales, and the rate at which properties are being replaced in comparison to the rate at which they are being sold.**
- 2) **To recommend that the Council engages proactively with both the Greater Nottingham District and Borough Councils and the East Midlands Combined County Authority on sharing best practice to maximise the delivery of social housing across the Greater Nottingham area.**
 - 3) **To recommend that work is undertaken across all relevant Council teams to ensure that social housing purchases under Right to Buy are legitimate, and that all properties that enter the private rented sector are licenced for an appropriate use under the relevant Council licencing scheme.**
 - 4) **To recommend that, following the upcoming General Election, the Council reviews its strategic approach to the delivery of social housing in the context of any significant changes to related policy at the national level.**

8 Work Programme 2024-25 and Activity Summary 2023-24

The Chair presented the Committee's proposed Work Programme for the 2024/25 municipal year and a summary of the work that it had undertaken during 2023/24. The following points were discussed:

- a) The Committee queried how the Decent Neighbourhoods Programme was now managed and delivered as part of improving Nottingham's estates and neighbourhoods to create homes and places in the city where people want to live, and requested that this was discussed further with the Executive Member for Housing and Planning as a potential future item of business for the Committee.

Resolved to agree the proposed Work Programme for the 2024/25 municipal year.

9 Future Meeting Dates

Resolved to meet on the following Mondays at 2:00pm:

- **15 July 2024**
- **16 September 2024**
- **18 November 2024**
- **20 January 2025**
- **17 March 2025**

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Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committee 15 July 2024

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To scrutinise the current position in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping in Nottingham, and the restructuring work taking place within Housing Solutions.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked:

- 1) to make any comments or recommendations in response to the report from the Executive Member for Housing and Planning on the current position regarding homelessness and rough sleeping in Nottingham; and
- 2) to consider whether any further scrutiny of the issue is required (and, if so, to identify the focus and timescales).

3 Background information

- 3.1 Homelessness is a significant national issue and many of its causes apply everywhere. However, specific features of the Nottingham housing market, economy and other local circumstances have led to the city having a particularly acute problem. A restructure is currently underway of the Council's Housing Solutions service as one of the key interventions to help address the current challenges.
- 3.2 The majority of the Council's costs related to homelessness are due to its duty to support households in priority need who are becoming homeless as a result of a range of factors, including eviction or relationship breakdown. Separately, there are growing numbers of rough sleepers, often with a range of complex needs. The majority of grant funding made available by the Government are ring-fenced to tackle rough sleeping and cannot be used to meet the Council's statutory duties in relation to homelessness.
- 3.3 The Council's primary objective is to seek to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first instance. This involves encouraging households at risk of homelessness to contact Housing Solutions at the earliest opportunity, where officers have a range of interventions available to seek to save a tenancy or move the household into alternative accommodation before they become homeless. The Council has been successful with its prevention work in many cases, however, this work requires the right level of officer capacity. High

casework numbers (compounded by many people presenting to Housing Solutions at a very late stage) have meant that there are still large numbers of households that become homeless and need assistance with rehousing or temporary accommodation. However, this is now being addressed through additional capacity created within the Housing Solutions team.

- 3.4 Nottingham has an existing Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy that was developed in 2019 and is currently in the process of being updated for completion later in the year. The Strategy draws on a cross-sector partnership of organisations that have committed to take actions to help prevent and respond to homelessness and its causes, and also to tackle rough sleeping. It is monitored by the multi-partner Strategy Intervention Group, which is completing an updated Homelessness Needs Assessment to provide the evidential base to inform the new Strategy.
- 3.5 There has been a significant rise in rough sleeping nationally, which has also been evident in Nottingham. Most of the factors leading to increase homelessness generally also impacts on the number of people rough sleeping. Many rough sleepers have complex support needs and factors such as people being discharged from hospital without accommodation can further exacerbate this. In October 2023, the Government announced that it was closing a range of hotels housing asylum seekers and this has also led to an increase in rough sleeping for refugees without accommodation. More recently, the overcrowding pressure in prisons has led to a significant number of early releases, including of offenders who do not have appropriate accommodation.
- 3.6 Rough sleeping is a symptom of a range of other underlying issues. As with homelessness more generally, the Council's first priority in tackling rough sleeping is to prevent people from reaching this stage at all. Many people sleeping rough have multiple complex issues and if housing is provided without appropriate wrap-around support then this often results in the person becoming homeless again. The Council, therefore, takes a co-ordinated response to addressing this, working with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to produce an Ending Rough Sleeping Plan with agreed actions and an analysis of the gaps in support contributing to increased rough sleeping.
- 3.7 Ultimately, Nottingham faces a significant challenge around homelessness and rough sleeping, which is consistent with the national picture. This growing problem, which the Council has a statutory duty to address, is leading to major additional pressures to the Council's budget. Many of the drivers for this growing problem relate to the wider housing market, combined with high levels of deprivation locally. As a result, the Council has a plan to address the challenges and reduce homeless and rough sleeping numbers. The significant investment in the Housing Solutions services to enable a range of initiatives around prevention and private sector engagement, combined with investment into sourcing and reorganising temporary accommodation and measures to drive down costs, are designed to tackle the backlog of cases and increase the flow of people into settled housing.

3.8 The Committee considered the Council's approach to approaching homelessness and rough sleeping previously at its meeting on 16 October 2023, making recommendations focusing on enhanced engagement at the national level and the development of close partnership working locally to seek to help address the significant challenges being experienced.

4 List of attached information

4.1 Report: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information

5.1 None

6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

6.1 Reports to, and Minutes of, the Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committee meeting held on [16 October 2023](#)

7 Wards affected

7.1 All

8 Contact information

8.1 Adrian Mann, Scrutiny and Audit Support Officer
adrian.mann@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

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Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committee

15 July 2024

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the current position regarding homelessness and rough sleeping in Nottingham. There is a significant national problem relating to homelessness and many of the national drivers for this are also at play locally. However, specific features of the local housing market, economy and other local circumstances, including a past history of underinvestment, have led to the city having a particularly acute problem. The restructure currently underway of the Council's Housing Solutions service is one of the key interventions utilised to tackle this situation.
- 1.2 The report will distinguish homelessness generally from rough sleeping. The majority of the Council's budget costs related to homelessness are due to its duty to support households in priority need who are becoming homeless as a result of a range of factors such as evictions or relationship breakdown. The experience of these households does not usually involve rough sleeping. Separately, rough sleeping is a growing phenomenon, for a relatively small number of people, often with a range of complex needs. The majority of grant funding opportunities made available by the Government are ring-fenced to tackle rough sleeping and cannot be used to meet the Council's statutory duties.

2. Homelessness in Nottingham

- 2.1 The Council's statutory duties in relation to homelessness are set out in the Housing Act 1996, Part VII (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) and the Homeless Reduction Act 2017. Under this legislation, the Council has a statutory duty to prevent and relieve homelessness, which includes a requirement to provide emergency accommodation to people in priority need while their application for permanent housing is assessed. For people assessed as homeless, eligible, in priority need and who have not made themselves intentionally homeless, the Council has a duty to provide temporary accommodation up to the point in which an offer of permanent, settled accommodation can be made.
- 2.2 Over the last 12 months, the use of emergency accommodation – either hotels or nightly paid temporary accommodation (NPTA) – for homeless households more than doubled. In relation to emergency accommodation, the Council is currently (at 18 June 2024) accommodating 235 households, 85% of whom are families, compared to 115 a year ago. Whilst use has increased significantly, the average cost of an emergency room or unit used by the Council has reduced if all forms of temporary accommodation are included. There are around 800 households currently being accommodated due to

being placed by the Council under Homelessness Reduction Act duties, and this includes around 430 families.

- 2.3 The Council's primary objective is to try and prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place. This involves encouraging households at risk of homelessness to contact Housing Solutions at the earliest opportunity where officers have a range of interventions available to save the tenancy or move the household into alternative accommodation before they become homeless. This will include the creation of a personalised Housing Plan and referral to any services required that can meet support needs. The Council has been successful with its prevention work in many cases, however, this work requires officer capacity and, in the past, high casework numbers (along with a tendency for many households to approach the Council too late in their process to enable a prevention) has meant that there are still large numbers of households that become homeless and need assistance with rehousing or temporary accommodation. This is now being addressed through the additional capacity created within the Housing Solutions team.
- 2.4 When homeless households with support needs are provided with temporary accommodation operated by a Registered Provider, then the accommodation costs can be largely met from exempt supported accommodation housing benefit charges. However, when this is not available and households are accommodated in hotels, the Council must largely meet these costs from its own budget. The Council is forecasting a significant spend on its temporary accommodation budget because of the high numbers of people being accommodated and because there is an imbalance between supply and demand with more households going into some form of temporary accommodation than exiting it. The total number of people in any form of temporary accommodation on 31 March 2023 was 599 while, on 31 March 2024, it was 776 (an increase of 177 households). The lack of available affordable housing as well as the unaffordability and high demand for properties within the private rented sector limits the options for permanently rehousing.
- 2.5 Features of the national and Nottingham housing market have made this crisis acute, including very high rents in the private sector, well above Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels, and a shortage of affordable homes. Average incomes in Nottingham are well below national averages while recent rent increases in the East Midlands have been higher than national averages. Due to a previous Government freeze in LHA rates, even lower quartile rents within the private sector market have been higher than LHA limits. The Government amended this policy in April 2024 when the LHA was restored to match the 30% percentile of local market rents (that is, equal to the cost of the lowest 30% of rented properties). However, this is based on all market rents, not just new leases. That means the LHA rate remains lower than most rents for available properties. Private rental markets within the Council's boundaries are also under pressure from the expanding student market and city professionals, further limiting supply. Affordability issues have worsened due to the cost-of-living crisis with utility and food inflation impacting on the

broader spectrum of household income levels, including owner occupiers who have also been affected by the increase in mortgage interest rates.

- 2.6 The shortage of affordable housing is also acute in Nottingham. There are now almost 10,500 households on the Council waiting list. Although the Council has been, and continues to invest, in the development and acquisition of new Council housing, the number of new homes built has not been able to match the significant numbers lost through Right to Buy (RTB). Between 2019-2023, there were 988 RTB sales completed while, in the same period, the Council completed building and purchasing 374 new permanent affordable homes and Register Provider partners completed a further 126 homes, totalling a replacement supply of 500 affordable homes. The number of affordable homes being delivered by Registered Provider partners has decreased due to the additional budget pressures related to the increased costs of fire prevention works, new decency standards and additional measures to tackle damp and mould. This has been compounded by high build cost inflation and limited land supply for development within the city's tight boundaries.

3. Reducing Homelessness

- 3.1 Nottingham has an existing Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy that was originally developed in 2019 and is currently in the process of being updated for completion later this year. The Strategy draws on a cross-sector partnership of organisations who commit to actions to prevent and respond to homelessness and its causes, and also to tackle rough sleeping. It is monitored by the multi-partner Strategy Intervention Group (SIG), which meets on a bi-monthly basis. The SIG is completing an updated Homelessness Needs Assessment, which will provide the evidential base to inform the new Strategy.
- 3.2 One of the key actions for the Council has been to increase the capacity of Housing Solutions. Previously the service had been understaffed, leading to extremely high caseloads. This meant that staff were largely having to prioritise crisis cases and so were unable to spend adequate time on prevention and advice. The team has sought to expand in several ways, including to increase its work with the private rented sector through the Nottingham Private Rented Assistance Scheme (NPRAS) team, to source more suitable properties to rehouse households to whom the Council has a duty and provide advice to private rented tenants. Once new staff are recruited and trained, the Council expects to see more homeless preventions and an increase in move on rates for families currently in temporary accommodation. Prevention remains the most important of all intervention strategies because, if there continues to be more people going into emergency and temporary accommodation than going out, the problem will continue to get worse.
- 3.3 The restructure of Housing Solutions is now progressing well, although it is not yet complete. The restructure increases resources of the Housing Solutions Service. Some of the increase in capacity is designed to reduce

caseloads to manageable levels (35-40 per officer). This will improve the capacity for officers to focus on prevention, increase use of discharge of duty and improve homelessness decisions, thereby reducing the proportion of applicants being placed in temporary accommodation. The restructure also increases the capacity of the NPRAS team, which procures private rented sector property that is offered to homeless applicants. A proportion of this supply is used to prevent homelessness so, as the supply increases, the Council is able to prevent more homelessness. The increase in capacity also enables greater liaison and co-operative working with internal and external partner agencies.

- 3.4 Recruitment is continuing for the remaining 14.9 full-time equivalent (FTE) vacant posts of those established in September 2023. While the Council remains focused on its target to complete the recruitment by August 2024, the biggest challenge is finding suitable candidates.
- 3.5 The Casework Team has continued to focus on reducing the outstanding caseload. There are over 750 decided cases awaiting rehousing. Individual caseloads remain higher than the recommended caseload of 35-40, but the average is now 72 per officer (down from 165 at the beginning of the calendar year) and no officer has a caseload of over 90 cases. As of June, the NPRAS team is on track to facilitate a minimum of 42 tenancies. Of the 42 households, 22 are families. Overall, 29 of the 42 tenancies are for an initial minimum fixed term of 12 months, offering more stability for homeless households, while 16 of the 42 are households were previously in a form of temporary accommodation (hotels, NPTA, hostels and dispersed provision).
- 3.6 In addition to the increased capacity within Housing Solutions, the Council is also seeking to prevent people becoming homeless through the robust contract management of operational partners providing support services, providing targeted support to landlords considering eviction and expanding eviction prevention protocols, supporting family members who are asked to leave to move out in a planned way, assisting people in financial hardship, and linking households in temporary accommodation into employment support.
- 3.7 The Council has put in place a framework to provide block bookings of emergency accommodation such as hotel and NPTA. This is achieving significantly lower rates per night and helping to reduce Council budgets. It will help to get more families out of hotel and B&B accommodation without self-contained facilities and into self-contained spaces, at a lower cost.
- 3.8 A range of measures are also being taken to support households in temporary accommodation to minimise the time they spend there, depending on the increased capacity of officers in Housing Solutions. This includes:
 - putting personal Housing Plans in place for each household that are tracked and actioned;
 - robustly managing third-party providers to ensure that they are supporting people to move on and to evict anyone to whom the Council's duties are discharged;

- providing more offers of private rented accommodation to discharge duties, including properties outside of the city boundary; and
 - reviewing the allocations policy to ensure that homelessness is not a route to Council housing and enabling the allocation of flats to families (currently in progress).
- 3.9 The previous under-resourcing of Housing Solutions has led to a backlog of households living in temporary accommodation. The Council's Housing department has invested in bringing back into use a large number of void properties as quickly as possible to use these to provide additional temporary accommodation. This will allow the service to move as many of the families currently in expensive hotels and bed and breakfasts (B&Bs). Given this additional capacity, the Council will also seek to place more households directly into hostel-type accommodation when they require emergency accommodation, bypassing the need for prolonged stays in hotels and B&Bs. It will reorganise its wider temporary accommodation portfolio to include some supported housing managed by Registered Provider partners alongside other temporary units managed by the Council without support (where this is not required). Through the new Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan, the Council will put in place a procurement strategy detailing the temporary accommodation model and our supply mechanisms, in order to ensure sufficiency.
- 3.10 Increased officer capacity at Housing Solutions is also enabling the Council to maximise the amount of Housing Benefit it can claim to meet the costs of households placed in B&B or NPTA, further reducing costs. Opportunities will also be explored to reclaim service charges from households where appropriate.
- 3.11 In addition to the increased investment into utilising void properties, the Council is also sourcing additional temporary accommodation by purchasing additional properties using devolved funding, utilising established frameworks to procure properties under a variety of models (including via block booking and through Register Provider partners), converting under-utilised and low demand properties within the Council's stock to new temporary accommodation facilities, and utilising grant funding to secure supported accommodation for single people with complex needs through third-party providers.
- 3.12 Taken together, these measures aim to increase preventions, minimise the use of expensive hotel and B&B placements, help people to move through temporary accommodation more quickly, source new temporary accommodation and tackle the current backlog of people living in temporary accommodation.

4. Rough Sleeping in Nottingham

- 4.1 There has been a significant rise in rough sleeping nationally, which has also been evident in Nottingham. Most of the factors leading to increase homelessness generally also impacts on the number of people rough

sleeping. Many rough sleepers have complex support needs and factors such as people being discharged from hospital without accommodation can further exacerbate this. In October 2023, the Government announced it was closing a range of hotels housing asylum seekers and speeding up decision-making. This has also led to an increase in rough sleeping for refugees without accommodation, to whom the Council owes no duty due to a lack of priority need. More recently, the overcrowding pressure in prisons has led to a significant number of early releases, including of offenders who do not have appropriate accommodation and can result in more rough sleeping. The recent increase in early releases has not always been accompanied by prior notice to Local Authorities, which has led to more people on the streets in an emergency situation in terms of having nowhere to stay.

- 4.2 During the Coronavirus epidemic in 2022, the national 'Everyone In' initiative sought to see all rough sleepers placed in hotels to avoid infection. This had a legacy, however, as more rough sleepers were attracted to the city because of its comprehensive services. On top of this, many of the other Local Authorities around Nottingham place rough sleepers in hotels within the city boundary. Some of these individuals then remain within the city when the Local Authority's support duty ends.
- 4.3 The Council utilises a range of external funding to commission services to support rough sleepers. This includes a monthly count of people sleeping rough to give a snapshot of the extent of the problem. The June 2024 headcount found that there were 51 people sleeping rough in Nottingham. Rough sleeping patterns tend to follow seasonal patterns and although there have been a number of occasions when there have been higher numbers of people sleeping rough, this has been the highest figure recorded in June over the last 10 years. This included 42 males and 9 females. Of this group, 6 did have an available home and 12 people were homeless after being released from prison.
- 4.4 Although this shows that there has been a real increase in rough sleeping, the perception of rough sleeping is compounded by begging from individuals who present as rough sleeping but who are, in fact, housed. Further to this, consistently around one in ten individuals found rough sleeping in Nottingham are not homeless and have an accommodation option. Many of the individuals who continue to sleep rough when they have accommodation are experiencing Severe and Multiple Disadvantage (SMD), meaning they have a complex combination of at least three of the following issues: homelessness, substance abuse, mental health condition, a history of offending and domestic violence. It is common for these individuals to form alliances and communities on the streets and remain with these networks despite having housing available.
- 4.5 So far in 2024, 154 individuals have been supported into accommodation. Despite this, engaging people to accept support and accommodation can be a challenge as a number of rough sleepers will refuse to be assessed. A large proportion of rough sleepers move through the city and are not seen again after they have initially been counted. However, there are entrenched rough

sleepers, often with SMD and backgrounds of trauma, who are disillusioned with services and distrust that support is going to deliver what they determine to be a positive outcome.

- 4.6 In addition to the entrenched cohort of people, there has been the additional pressure of accelerated Home Office evictions. This initiative led to an additional 145 people (all newly recognised refugees) being found rough sleeping on the streets of Nottingham between September 2023 to present day.
- 4.7 Not all grant funded services are fully mobilised as one of the supported accommodation projects closed at the end of June due to partner organisation being unable to continue delivery. Alternative provision has been sourced, however, there is likely to be a gap in provision in July while alternatives are put in place. The Nottingham Shelter will also close at this time, which together could lead to higher rough sleeping number during July 2024.

5. Reducing Rough Sleeping

- 5.1 Rough sleeping is a symptom of a range of other underlying issues. As with homelessness more generally, the Council's first priority in tackling rough sleeping is to prevent people from reaching this stage in the first place. Many people sleeping rough have multiple complex issues and if housing is provided without appropriate wrap-around support then this often results in the person becoming homeless again. The Council, therefore, takes a co-ordinated response to addressing SMD. Officers have worked with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to produce an Ending Rough Sleeping Plan with agreed actions and an analysis of gaps in support leading to increased rough sleeping.
- 5.2 Support services for rough sleepers are funded through external grants. Working in partnership with Registered Providers, Nottingham has been successful in achieving one of the highest combined awards to address this issue outside of London, totalling over £20 million between 2021 to 2025. Grants sources include:
- Rough Sleeping Initiative
 - Accommodation for ex-Offenders
 - Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment
 - Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme
 - Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme

Reliance on grant funding can, however, lead to short-term programmes that limit the ability for cross-sector collaboration and joint investment.

- 5.3 The funding has been used to deliver a comprehensive range of over 20 services, working with public and community sector partners. Activities range from prevention, identification, engagement, support, providing accommodation and resettlement work, all co-ordinated by a dedicated officer. The programme includes:

- an outreach team incorporating specialist roles to target engagement, reconcile people with their accommodation and navigate services;
- specialist navigators to prevent rough sleeping from hospital, prison and mental health facilities;
- a 20-bed accommodation and assessment hub;
- around 200 units of supported accommodation;
- a prevention and resettlement team providing support to people in their tenancies;
- focused roles within the statutory homelessness service to assess, support move on and increase access to the private rented sector; and
- a service to support people with histories of rough sleeping into employment.

These services are offered regardless of how often they are rejected.

- 5.4 The co-ordinated system of support involves co-operating with community and faith partners, as well as specialist public sector agencies. This includes working with health services specialising in substance misuse, mental health assessment and treatment and primary care. These workstreams link in with the Changing Futures and Integrated Care Partnership workstreams addressing SMD. Services also work with the Police to help support in circumstances where behaviours such as persistent and aggressive begging or offending create barriers to exiting rough sleeping.
- 5.5 The Council also produces a Winter Plan each year to set out how people who are rough sleeping will be supported during cold weather. Under the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP), the Council has a responsibility to provide shelter for this group that triggers when the temperature reaches zero degrees. This involves organising warm spaces to stay, usually in the form of sit-up services. The Council does not offer hotel spaces during SWEP and rough sleepers from other areas are sent back to their area of origin after one night. This was put in place to avoid incentivising rough sleepers from other Local Authority areas to migrate to Nottingham during cold weather periods, rather than relying on their own Local Authority to meet need. The Council also promotes an alternative giving service called Street Aid, which allows people to donate to support homeless people in a way that supports services to these individuals rather than directly giving money that could be used to fuel addiction or go to people merely presenting as homeless but who are in fact adequately housed.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Nottingham faces a significant challenge around homelessness and rough sleeping, which is consistent with the national picture. This growing problem, which the Council has statutory duties to address, is leading to major additional pressures to the Council's budget. Many of the drivers for this growing problem relate to the wider housing market, combined with high levels of deprivation locally. Despite this, the Council has a plan to address the challenge and reduce numbers. The significant investment in the Housing Solutions services to enable a range of initiatives around prevention and

private sector engagement, combined with investment into sourcing and reorganising temporary accommodation and measures to drive down costs, are designed to tackle the backlog and increase the flow of people into settled housing.

- 6.2 Rough sleeping services will continue to help people off the streets and support them back into housing and stable life patterns. Although costs and numbers are expected to continue to rise in 2024, increase resource is aimed at reducing these on an ongoing basis going forward. The Council will also have to respond to any changing policy landscape following the General Election and seek to take advantage of initiatives that will support its efforts to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

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Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committee: 22 January 2024

Response to Recommendations: Impact of the Proposed 2024-25 Budget on Growth and City Development

Portfolios: Strategic Regeneration, Transport and Communications; Skills, Growth and Economic Development; and Housing and Planning

Recommendation	Response
1) That full account is taken of the associated Equality Impact Assessments (as updated where appropriate following the results to the public consultation) in the development of the final proposals for service delivery savings within the Growth and City Development Directorate.	All proposals for the budget contained Equality Impact Assessments as part of the development process, and there were fully considered.
2) That full consideration is given to how the free use of accessible toilet facilities can be provided for the most vulnerable people in the city, such as rough sleepers and people with limited mobility.	Free toilets are provided in the Broadmarsh Bus Station and Car Park, and are therefore still available.
3) That full consideration is given to how information on public transport times can be made easily accessible to everyone travelling in the city, particularly when there is service disruption.	<p>A network of 1,500 real-time information displays have been implemented in Nottingham providing bus and tram journey times and disruption information. Local public transport operators and the Local Transport Authorities also provide disruption information and journey times through their social media channels and apps. The refreshed Robin Hood Network Website for bus and tram services will be released in the next month and includes a new journey planner. Audio-visual announcements have also been implemented on bus and tram services across the network.</p> <p>The Greater Nottingham Bus Service Improvement Plan identifies the need to improve access to information for the disabled (including those with visual impairment) and, subject to funding and policy alignment with the East Midlands Combined County Authority alongside an appropriate</p>

	technical solution, the Council will look to implement further improvements to complement existing functionality on some public transport operator apps.
4) That everything possible is done to mitigate against increasing future demand for statutory services in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping, within the current context of growing service demand both locally and nationally.	The re-design of the Housing Solutions team has been to provide more proactive support to prevent homelessness in the first instance and thereby reduce the demand on the Council.
5) That everything possible is done to maintain capacity within the Directorate to apply successfully for relevant grant funding for the support of service delivery.	The importance of the ability to be able to apply for grant funding is recognised and capacity exists to continue in this area.

Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committee: 19 February 2024

Response to Recommendations: Preparedness for the East Midlands Combined County Authority

Portfolio: Strategic Regeneration, Transport and Communications

Recommendation	Response
1) That the Council continues to work to identify the future workforce skills needs in the city and develop a vision for how investment in skills at all ages could ultimately be supported through the East Midlands Combined County Authority (CCA).	The Council is working with the CCA on all levels and will input into the emerging Employment and Skills Strategy to ensure the needs of Nottingham are reflected within it.
2) That all possible communications and engagement is carried out, working in collaboration with the relevant partners and stakeholders, to inform Nottingham people why the establishment of the CCA is important and encourage them to vote in the upcoming first Mayoral election in May.	Communication and engagement with Nottingham people was undertaken regarding the importance of the CCA and the Mayoral vote, which took place on 2 May 2024, had an overall turnout of 28%.

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Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committee 15 July 2024

Work Programme

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To note the Committee's work programme for the 2024/25 municipal year, based on the issues identified by Committee members previously and any further suggestions arising from this meeting.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked:

- 1) to note its work programme for the 2024/25 municipal year and make any amendments required; and
- 2) to consider any further priority topics or issues for inclusion on the work programme.

3 Background information

- 3.1 The Committee's formal Terms of Reference are set out under Article 9 of the Council's Constitution, with Committee being established to:
- hold local decision-makers (including the Council's Executive and the relevant Boards of the Council's group of companies) to account for their decisions, actions, performance and management of risk;
 - review the existing policies and strategies of the Council and other local decision-makers where they impact on Nottingham citizens;
 - contribute to the development of new policies and strategies of the Council and other local decision-makers where they impact on Nottingham citizens;
 - explore any matters affecting Nottingham and/or its citizens;
 - make reports and recommendations to the relevant local agencies with respect to the delivery of their functions (including the Council and its Executive);
 - review decisions made but not yet implemented by the Council's Executive, in accordance with the Call-In Procedure; and
 - contribute towards providing assurance and oversight of the Council's statutory responsibilities regarding housing in the context of regulatory compliance and tenant satisfaction.
- 3.2 The Committee sets and manages its own work programme for its Scrutiny activity. Business on the work programme must have a clear link to the Committee's roles and responsibilities, and it should be ensured that each item has set objectives and desired outcomes to achieve added value. Once

business has been identified, the scheduling of items should be timely, sufficiently flexible so that issues that arise as the year progresses can be considered appropriately, and reflect the resources available to support the Committee's work. It is recommended that there are a maximum of two substantive items scheduled for each Committee meeting, so that enough time can be given to consider them thoroughly.

- 3.3 The Committee is asked to note its work programme for the 2024/25 municipal year and make any amendments to its business that are needed. Potential issues raised by Committee members are regularly scoped for scheduling in consultation with the Chair, the relevant senior officers and partners, and the Executive Members with the appropriate remit.

4 List of attached information

- 4.1 Work Programme 2024/25

5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information

- 5.1 None

6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

- 6.1 [Nottingham City Council - Constitution](#) (Article 9 and Article 11)

7 Wards affected

- 7.1 All

8 Contact information

- 8.1 Adrian Mann, Scrutiny and Audit Support Officer
adrian.mann@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024/25

Meeting	Items
10 June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="517 405 1554 475"> <p>• Appointment of the Vice Chair To appoint the Committee’s Vice Chair for the 2024/25 municipal year</p> <li data-bbox="517 517 1832 624"> <p>• Committee Terms of Reference To note the Committee’s Terms of Reference, the terms of its operation and the Overview and Scrutiny Protocol</p> <li data-bbox="517 665 1812 772"> <p>• The Nottingham Local Plan - Housing Delivery To review the impacts and outcomes of the Council’s strategy for the delivery of housing across the city as part of the adopted Local Plan</p> <li data-bbox="517 813 1644 884"> <p>• Social Housing Delivery Progress To review the progress in the delivery of the Council’s social housing targets</p> <li data-bbox="517 925 1856 1075"> <p>• Work Programme 2024-25 and Activity Summary 2023-24 To agree the Committee’s work programme for the 2024/25 municipal year, and to note its activity and recommendations to the Council’s Executive during the 2023/24 municipal year (and the responses received)</p> <li data-bbox="517 1117 1585 1187"> <p>• Future Meeting Dates To agree the Committee’s meeting dates for the 2024/25 municipal year</p>

Meeting	Items
15 July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="517 272 1845 416">• Homelessness and Rough Sleeping To review the implementation and outcomes of the transformation work within Housing Solutions, and the progress made towards achieving the ending of the need to use one-off night-time accommodation.
16 September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="517 496 1879 608">• Student Living Strategy To review the progress and outcomes of the Student Living Strategy following its introduction in September 2023 <li data-bbox="517 647 1845 759">• Transforming Cities Project - Sustainable Transport To review the impacts of the Transforming Cities Fund schemes for enhancing sustainable transport in and around Nottingham
18 November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="517 834 1861 946">• East Midlands Combined County Authority - Establishment and Progress To consider the initial outcomes for Nottingham of the Combined County Authority following its formal establishment in May 2024 <li data-bbox="517 986 539 1018">•
20 January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="517 1099 1727 1179">• Asset Rationalisation - Delivery Progress To review the delivery progress of the Council's Asset Rationalisation Programme <li data-bbox="517 1219 1765 1291">• Social Housing Repairs and Maintenance Performance To review the Council's performance in the repair and maintenance of social housing

Meeting	Items
17 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •

Potential items for scheduling to a meeting or a task-and-finish review group:

- **Council Budget 2024/25 - Delivery Impacts:** to assess the ongoing delivery and impacts of the 2024/25 budget in the context of the services delivered within Growth and City Development.
- **Council Budget 2025/26 - Planning and Development:** to consider the development and potential impacts of the 2025/26 budget on the services delivered within Growth and City Development.
- **Economic Plan for Growth - Implementation Progress:** to review the initial outcomes of the Council’s Economic Plan for Growth following its introduction during May 2024.
- **Broadmarsh Redevelopment:** to consider the planning, timeline and progress to date for the redevelopment of the Broadmarsh area.
- **Housing Strategy Implementation:** to review the initial outcomes of the Council’s Housing Strategy following its introduction during [Summer] 2024.
- **Selective Licensing Scheme:** to review the progress and outcomes of the Council’s second Selective Licensing scheme following its introduction in December 2023.
- **Regulator of Social Housing Inspection Outcomes:** to review the outcomes of the Regulator’s first inspection of the Council as a provider of social housing.
- **Housing Retrofit Scheme:** to review the delivery of the Council’s programme of housing retrofitting to reduce fuel poverty and address climate impact.
- **Decent Neighbourhoods Programme:** to review how the programme is now managed and delivered as part of improving Nottingham’s estates and neighbourhoods to create homes and places in the city where people want to live.
- **Lifelong Housing and Supported Living:** to consider the development and implementation of housing that supports effective independent living.
- **Housing Allocations Policy:** to review the impacts, outcomes and future approach of the Council’s policy for the allocation of social housing.

- **Council Tenant Satisfaction and Engagement:** to consider how the Council engages with its tenants at all levels in delivering an effective service.