

Waltham Forest Council

Landlord Forum

Update on the Housing Strategy

8 July 2013

Key Challenges for Housing in Waltham Forest

Demand massively outstrips supply

Reduced grant and introduction of 'affordable' rents

Poor condition of some stock, particularly in private sector

Affordability issues for local people for all tenures

Impact of welfare reform on housing

- Increase in homelessness & associated costs
- Benefit Cap makes housing unaffordable for some families
- Landlords in the PRS reluctant to house people on benefits

Low income households unevenly spread across the borough

4 key objectives

1. Maximising the supply of new, high quality housing
2. Improving existing housing and neighbourhoods and facilitating great management
3. Responding to changing housing demands with new solutions and opportunities
4. Using housing as a catalyst to improve lives

Improving existing homes and neighbourhoods and facilitating great management

Focus on the private rented sector

- 32% + of Waltham Forest's stock is in the private rented sector (Stock condition survey 2011)
- Compares to 25% in London and 15% nationally
- 5% of dwellings are HMOs compared to 2.5% nationally
- Estimated that 440 HMOs that require a licence in the borough whereas only 130 are registered for licensing
- Fire hazards are particularly associated with PRS and HMOs in particular so this is a big concern

Improving existing homes and neighbourhoods and facilitating great management (cont)

PRS compares badly to other stock in WF

1. Higher proportion of households in receipt of benefits (39% compared to an average of 34% across all sectors)
2. Higher proportion of properties were 'non-decent' (41% compared to 29% in the owner occupied sector)
3. Lowest proportion of homes occupied by vulnerable people are considered 'decent' (51.9% compared to 67% in the owner occupied sector)
4. Highest proportion of properties with Class 1 hazards under the housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS) (21% compared to 15% in the owner occupied sector)
5. Far higher levels of overcrowding (17.6% of homes were overcrowded compared to around 8% in other tenures)

Our Aspiration for Private Renting in Waltham Forest

Want a good quality private rented sector where good landlords are encouraged and bad landlords are not tolerated

Encouragement

Property Accreditation Scheme

Local Lettings Agency

How can we be more effective? What would make you sign up? What other encouragement can we give?

Enforcement

Liaison and advice on improvement

Serving enforcement notices

Works in default

First Response Team

How do we better identify bad landlords? Role of landlords and tenants

Empty Homes – better identification, increased Council Tax