

Temporary accommodation and school place planning – briefing paper for HASOF – 4 November 2010

Housing

Haringey's population is now 226,200¹, a 0.7 per cent **increase** on the mid-2007 population of 224,700. Haringey Council has approximately 3,500 households in temporary accommodation (TA) units, of which approximately 766 are placed in neighbouring boroughs, although that figure is on a downward trend. One of the Council's 2008 – 2011 Homeless Strategy's objectives was to halve, by March 2010, the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation.

The recent (July 2010) Audit Commission's inspection of the Housing Service found that there is now a comprehensive approach to preventing homelessness and offering housing options, which has contributed to a steady decline in the use of temporary accommodation. Targets to limit the use of emergency accommodation have been met, and the standard of temporary accommodation is considered generally satisfactory. However, the Commission concluded that there are still a very high number of households in temporary accommodation and the speed of homelessness decision-making is slow.

The council is continuing to make efforts to reduce the numbers of people/length of stay in temporary accommodation units. But despite substantial reduction in the number of units, the number of homeless people living in temporary accommodation in the borough is consistently the highest or second highest in the country.

Following joint meetings between Housing and CYPS all allocations to TA take into account wherever possible the current location of the family if there are children of primary school age within the household. Efforts are made to keep families within the same area/location thus minimising disruption by allowing for children to continue attending the same primary school.

The TA Allocations Team from the Housing Service also works closely with CYPS in relation to the NOTIFY system which alerts relevant officers/services to the in and out of borough movement of vulnerable children known to SS.

Town Planning

Planning has a current housing target (set by the Mayor) of 680 new dwellings per year. The Draft Replacement London Plan (currently the subject of a public inquiry) is recommending that this target be increased to 820 dwellings a year. The existing Unitary Development Plan (UDP) requests that, in schemes that provide 10 or more units, 50% of these units should be affordable housing. The emerging Core Strategy (that will replace the UDP) makes that same provision, although, in addition, it sets out that schemes below 10 units will be required to provide 20% affordable housing on site.

The Council's **Housing Needs Assessment** report produced in June 2007 indicates an extremely high level of housing need in the borough and identified a shortfall in affordable housing of 4865 units p.a. The preliminary results of the sub regional **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)** produced in February 2010 indicates a smaller shortfall in the provision of affordable housing in the borough with a need identified for 2025 units over a five year period which is around 50% of the total requirement (including market sale housing) of 4100. Whichever statistics are used, it is clear that a 50% affordable housing policy can be supported by the level of housing need in the Borough. A realistic provision of affordable housing in

¹ Based on ONS'2008 mid year population estimates – the latest figures available

the borough will make some contribution to reducing the number of households in TA. A supply of good quality rented accommodation will also make a contribution.

Regional picture

There has been a substantial increase in international migration to London within the past decade. There is now a net increase in the overseas born population of about 100,000 per year. However, the turnover of people moving in and out of London is - officially – approaching 250,000 per annum, and unofficial (and uncounted) mobility will almost certainly add to this number. London has higher levels of inter-regional mobility than other regions of the country, and London has some boroughs where population mobility is greater than 35% per annum. Haringey is one of seven² boroughs identified by an LSE Study of Population Mobility and Service Provision (2007), and the Study characterises Haringey as being the gateway to London for different types of groups arriving in London. The nature of the groups arriving is changing, with many arriving with significant needs for public services support. Where these groups have children, there will be an impact on school rolls and their subsequent stability in terms of pupils. Further, the Study concludes that a number of boroughs act as an “escalator” for people, investing heavily in them when they first arrive (for example with language skills, housing and school places) before those individuals/families move on and are then replaced by new ones who require councils to start afresh in building them into the city’s economic and social life. The identification of Haringey as a “gateway” borough for newly arrived migrants will undoubtedly impact on mobility within our schools.

School place planning

Pupil mobility is defined as ‘a child joining or leaving a school at a point other than the normal age at which children start or finish their education at that school, whether or not this involves a move of home’ (Dobson and Henthorne). Pupil mobility is recognised nationally as having an impact on both the school and the pupils who are mobile. Among other things, pupil mobility can have implications for funding to both Haringey and its schools, as well as potential to impact on school performance³, target setting, bench marking and league tables.

CYPS recognise the impact that pupil mobility is having on some of our schools and their ability to plan effectively. We are working closely with Housing to analyse and assess the impact that TA in the borough is having on mobility in local schools, and to see what measures can be put in place to link the placement of families to the provision of stable and long term education for any school aged children within those families. Housing is also continuing to seek to reduce the amount of TA across the borough as a whole. At present there are approximately 3500 temporary housing units in the borough, but that figure is on a downward trend. In addition to this number there are households in TA in the borough whom have been placed by neighbouring authorities.

Planning Area 7 (Stamford Hill Primary, Crowlands, St Ignatius, and Tiverton schools) generally experiences high levels of mobility within its primary schools and has a high level of surplus capacity within its year groups. There are currently 162 temporary accommodation units within Planning Area 7, and the mobility levels are set out in the table below for each of the schools in the Planning Area.

² The others are Hounslow, Barking & Dagenham, Lewisham, Newham, Westminster and Redbridge

³ at Key Stage 1, 2, 3 and 4 pupils (nationally) who had not been at their current school for the whole of the Key Stage achieved at significantly lower levels than those who had been on roll for the whole of the key stage. High mobility is also linked to high absence levels.

School	Total
Crowland	31%
St Ignatius RC primary	14%
Stamford Hill primary	32%
Tiverton primary	24%

Source: School Place Planning Report 2010

CYPS carried out a specific piece of work in 2009 focusing on Stamford Hill Primary and whether or not there was a link between the allocation of temporary accommodation in the area and the high level of mobility that the school was experiencing. The conclusion was that the link between the two factors was less strong than might have been expected in an area that is characterised by fairly high mobility within its schools. In summary, of 92 children who had left the school mid year, only two cases (1.86%) could be said to be directly linked to temporary accommodation placement. This figure was arrived at by taking the postcodes of all of those pupils that had left the school at a point other than the end of Y6 and comparing this with the postcodes of temporary accommodation addresses (and cross referencing names). Even allowing for this very low correlation, we are continuing to explore ways to ensure that the allocation of families with school age children to temporary accommodation in this (and other) areas does not have a negative impact on the stability of rolls in local schools.

We are currently looking more closely at pupil mobility in the northern part of the borough (around Noel Park), including an assessment of the correlation (if any) between mobility and housing in this area. This area is being looked at as the schools selected have at or close to 20% pupil mobility i.e. one in five children leave the school before the end of Y6. The schools which we are looking at are Noel Park, Alexandra, Earlham, Nightingale, St Michael's N22 and Lordship primary schools. These schools have now submitted to CYPS records of all pupils that left the school (other than at the end of Y6) between September 2008 and July 2010 i.e. a two year academic period. These records have been passed on to Housing who will cross reference them with postcodes and names of those on their TA register to try to ascertain whether there is a link between a housing placement and the movement of a child. The results of this cross referencing are expected imminently.

Changes to Housing benefit and potential impact on TA.

The June 2010 emergency budget announced a number of changes to housing benefit and the Local Housing Allowance. As a result of the changes, the Chartered Institute of Housing estimates that within a generation there will be towns and cities all over the country where this is "no accommodation with a rent within the reach of people whose income is supported by benefits".

Two of the most important changes are:

- Imposing caps on rent of £400 a week for a four-bedroom property and £250 a week for a two-bedroom home (the government estimates that this will affect 14,000 households, largely in London)
- Calculating the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates using the 30th percentile of market rents rather than the 50th percentile.

As a result of the cap, housing benefit will only be paid in Haringey where the rents fall below, say, £400, for a four bedroom property. Rents vary across the borough considerably, with lower rents generally found in the east of the borough. This cap

is likely to disproportionately skew the rented sector to the east of the borough and, in theory, increase mobility in areas where mobility is already above the borough average.

At the moment Councils decide the allowances for different types of accommodation by working out the median rent in that area for the type of property. This median is sometimes expressed as the 50th percentile. The government proposes reducing this to the 30th percentile. In practice this means that housing benefit will pay less out for the same accommodation – and the difference will have to be paid for by tenants. Haringey, for the purposes of rental calculation, falls within the Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA) of ‘Outer North London’. At the moment a median rent for a two-bedroom property in the area is £230⁴. Under the changes proposed, this would fall to £218.63 for a two-bed allowance, leaving a shortfall of £11.37 a week to be made up by the tenant.

Haringey’s Housing Service has estimated that the unintended consequences of the changes to the benefits system will be, among others:

- Increased concentration of TA in areas with lower housing costs
- Disruption to schooling, healthcare and support
- Increased pupil mobility
- Increased demand in (cheaper) outer London authorities will push up rents and lower standards

The changes to the calculation of the LHA will be introduced in October 2011. The changes to the capping of the LHA will be introduced in April 2011.

Conclusion

Mobility DOES impact on schools in a number of ways, and, where a family with children of school age are placed in TA accommodation within the borough, there is potential for that family to move on within a short period and take their children out of school, only for the vacant places to be filled by new children who may also leave before the end of Y6. Proposed changes to the benefits system could result in an increase in the number of families on benefits seeking accommodation in Haringey, with particular emphasis on those wards where rents are lowest. In term of the role that TA accommodation plays in exacerbating mobility levels, the purpose of the work that has been and continues to be carried out by CYPS and UE (Housing) is to ascertain whether or not there is a strong positive correlation between the allocation of families to temporary accommodation and the mobility within the schools that are local to that accommodation. Where there is a correlation, however small, we will work with Housing to minimise or, where possible, eradicate the impact of housing policy on mobility. The first piece of work carried out (in Stamford Hill Primary) suggests that there is very little correlation. We are waiting for the results of the data that has been gathered around Noel Park. The results of this work will be reported back to the next HASOF meeting. CYPS will also continue to look at how we can reduce the level of mobility and its impact on our schools, irrespective of the cause of that mobility.

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⁴ Source: Guardian Data Blog July 2010