

RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 8 September 2021

Present:

Councillor Yvonne Bear (Chairman)
Councillor Gary Stevens (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Vanessa Allen, Julian Benington,
Christine Harris, Charles Joel, Keith Onslow,
Will Rowlands and Richard Scoates

Also Present:

Councillor Nicholas Bennett MA J.P., Councillor Hannah Gray and Councillor Peter Morgan, Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillor Aisha Cuthbert. Councillor Keith Onslow attended as substitute.

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In respect of Minute 21b, Councillor Bennett declared that he was a Bromley MyTime Passholder.

16 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

Written questions were received from Councillor Simon Fawthrop and these are attached at Annex A.

17 MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 JUNE 2021

The minutes of the Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee held on 16 June 2021, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

18 MATTERS OUTSTANDING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND WORK PROGRAMME Report CSD21091

The report dealt with the Committee's business management including matters outstanding from previous meetings and the proposed work plan for the remainder of the year.

In respect of heritage buildings, the Committee noted that further information from Historic England was required, it was therefore agreed that an interim update would be provided at the November meeting with a full update provided in January 2022.

In respect of HMOs, the Committee noted that a report concerning licensing was imminent. The Article 4 Directions removing HMO PD rights had now been made. The immediate Direction covering Biggin Hill and Darwin came into force on 1 September 2021, meaning that any new HMOs in these wards would now need planning permission; the Direction must be confirmed by 28 February 2022 to remain in force. The non-immediate Directions covering the rest of the borough would come into force on 1 September 2022, if confirmed following consultation.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the work programme updated as necessary.

HOLDING THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER TO ACCOUNT
19 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO REPORTS

The Committee considered the following reports where the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio Holder was recommended to take a decision:

A FINAL OUTTURN REPORT 2020/21
Report FSD21056

The report provided details of the final outturn position for 2020/21 for the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio.

Members noted that staffing pressures within the Housing Service continued and workloads were being monitored. The Director of Housing, Planning and Regeneration confirmed that vacancies were not being held, although finding temporary cover had been difficult. Managers were working hard to fill the vacancies.

In relation to the 'Everyone In' Scheme, around 100 rough sleepers had been supported and the Council had been successful in securing grant funding and achieving good outcomes.

The Committee noted that the outcome from the PAS Review had been received and a further report would be presented to the Development Control Committee in November 2021.

Members noted that all the funding allocated for Discretionary Business Grants had been allocated the Council had now been given a further £2.6 million to allocate.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Director of Housing, Planning and Regeneration confirmed that the Planning Division was actively trying to recruit, and vacancies were not being held. The number of planning applications being received remained high and resources had been increased in response to this increased demand.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to endorse the 2020/21 final outturn position for the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio.

**B BUDGET MONITORING 2021/22
Report FSD21054**

The report provided the first revenue budget monitoring position for 2021/22 for the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio based on expenditure and activity levels for the first quarter of the financial year.

In response to a question concerning evictions, the Director of Housing, Planning and Regeneration reported that the Council had been undertaking pre-emptive work with partners to ensure support was in place. Some tenants at risk of eviction had not engaged and there was a delay with the Courts which meant it was hard to predict when the changes would impact the service.

The Committee noted that an update on Building Control would be provided in November's thematic Session.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to

- 1. Endorse the 2021/22 revenue budget monitoring for the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio.**
- 2. Confirm agreement to the drawdown from Central Contingency of the carry forward budgets set out in Appendix 1A.**

**C CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING
Report FSD21047**

On 15th July 2021, the Executive received a report summarising the current position on capital expenditure and receipts following the 1st quarter of 2021/22 and agreed a revised Capital Programme for the four-year period 2021/22 to 2024/25. The report presented to the Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee highlighted changes agreed by the Executive and the Leader in respect of the Capital Programme for the Renewal, Recreation & Housing Portfolio. The revised programme for the portfolio was set out in Appendix A, and detailed comments on individual schemes were shown in Appendix B, with details of the 2020/21 outturn position included in Appendix C.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Director of Housing, Planning and Regeneration confirmed that the replacement of the heating system in the Walnuts Leisure Centre amounted to essential repairs that could not wait and related to a wider area than just the part which was under consideration for redevelopment.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to note and acknowledge the changes agreed by the Executive on 15 July 2021.

D PROPOSED NON-IMMEDIATE ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION TO REMOVE PART 2, CLASS A PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS IN THE KNOLL ASRC
Report HPR2021/044

The report recommended that the Council made a non-immediate Article 4 Direction to withdraw the Part 2, Class A permitted development (PD) right which allowed the erection or construction of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure. The Direction would apply to the Knoll Area of Special Residential Character (ASRC). The Direction would come into force at least 12 months after being made, subject to confirmation by the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio Holder after taking account of representations received.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to endorse the making of a ‘non-immediate’ Article 4 Direction (covering the Knoll Area of Special Residential Character, as defined in the Bromley Local Plan) to withdraw the permitted development right granted by Part 2, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (“the GPDO”), Schedule 2, which allows the erection or construction of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure.

20 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Committee considered the following reports on the Part 1 agenda for the meeting of the Executive on 22 September 2021:

A ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT (ARG) TOP UP FUNDING
Report HPR2021/048

The London Borough of Bromley had now distributed all the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) funding received from Central Government to support businesses in Bromley during the Covid-19 pandemic. As a consequence of distributing these monies in advance of the 30th July 2021 the Council had received an ARG top up of £2.611m to further support businesses. The report set out recommendations for the spend of the top up funding.

The Committee expressed its thanks to Officers for their excellent handling of the distribution of funding under very difficult circumstances and the Chairman highlighted how much the funding had meant to businesses within the Community.

The Chairman suggested that it may be helpful to track the number of jobs created by businesses in receipt of the funding. The Assistant Director for Culture and Regeneration confirmed that through the application process bids with more job creation would be prioritised and jobs created would be tracked.

RESOLVED: That the Executive be recommended to:

- 1. Approve the distribution of £2.611m grants to businesses and business support across the borough across the five grant programmes detailed in this report: Existing start-up businesses, new start-up businesses, business expansion, business growth and cultural programming.**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Director of Housing, Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation to determine grant criteria and application processes as required, in line with the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) guidance.**
- 3. Delegate authority to the Director of Housing, Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation to move funding between the five grant programmes to best respond to demand and to ensure the full £2.611m is distributed.**

B WEST WICKHAM LEISURE CENTRE OPTIONS APPRAISAL Report HPR2021/049

The report updated Members on the findings of the recent condition survey for West Wickham Leisure Centre and set out options for the future of the site. The report recommendations would provide the final information required for a full financial options appraisal to be undertaken which would be reported back to Members for further consideration and decision.

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report, setting out the context in which the proposals outlined in the report had been developed. A Schedule of Condition (attached to the agenda) had been prepared and Officers had set out seven options on which to undertake a full financial appraisal with Option 6 (part disposal of the site for housing) being the recommended option. The Portfolio Holder explained that it was hoped that the revenue generated from the sale would be sufficient to enable the rebuild of the leisure centre.

The Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture explained that the financial appraisal would enable Members of the Council to take an informed decision.

In opening the discussion, the Chairman emphasised the need for timely progress and the Committee noted that it would be possible to take a high-level decision around financial sustainability once the site had been marketed. The Chairman suggested that it would be helpful for the Committee to have a further update in January 2022.

It was suggested that options around use of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to ease the housing burden should be further explored although this would be dependant on interest from the market.

The Committee recognised the need for either replacement or refurbishment of the leisure centre. It was noted that in the last 18 years only essential maintenance for health and safety reasons had been carried out on the site and Members suggested that this lack of maintenance was an issue. It was also noted that if the option of simply repairing was pursued at this time the Council would be left with long-term maintenance liabilities.

In respect of increasing building costs, the Assistant Director for Culture and Regeneration explained that there was no indication of costs reducing in the next two years although the position would be kept under review.

The Committee noted that at the current time all seven options were under review, the proposals currently before the Committee were about making sure there was a fit-for-purpose building and sufficient information to present a full options appraisal to Members in due course.

Councillor Nicholas Bennett, visiting Ward Councillor, addressed the Committee highlighting the frustration of the Ward Councillors around the time it had taken to get to this point. Councillor Bennett stressed the need for there to be a leisure centre in West Wickham as it was a valued part of leisure provision in the Borough. Ward Councillors were seeking an assurance that there would continue to be a leisure centre in West Wickham.

The current leisure centre was not fit for purpose and therefore timely action was necessary. The Ward Councillors were keen to ensure that that was sufficient parking for any proposed scheme. It was also noted that if the swimming pool were to be closed some form of alternative provision would need to be put in place. It was noted that the Ward Councillors preferred option was Option 4 however they would reluctantly accept Option 6.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that none of the options proposed the closure of the leisure centre and the intention was to retain that facility.

RESOLVED: That

- 1. The Executive be recommended to approve the marketing of the leisure centre car park for sale, through a suitable compliant procedure, with conditions on car parking provision for the leisure centre and purchase of any affordable housing as set out in Option 6 within the report; and**
- 2. A further update be provided in January 2022.**

**C NORMAN PARK
Report HPR2021/043**

The report provided Members with an update on plans for Blackheath and Bromley Harriers Athletic Club (BBHAC) to take over the management and operation of the Norman Park Athletic Track on a 125-year full repairing and insuring lease. In relation to this and the Club's plans to make the site self-sustaining the report recommended a grant of £200k towards the development of the new Clubhouse, funded by a draw down from Central Contingency in 2021/22, of which £41k related to forward funding of the remaining year of the current contract and would be credited back to Central Contingency in 2022/23.

Members supported the proposals but noted that the Athletic Club would need to contribute their funds before receiving the Council contribution.

RESOLVED: That the Executive be recommended to

- 1. Approve, subject to legal consideration of Subsidy Control Legislation (previously state aid), a grant of £200k towards the cost of the new clubhouse at Norman Park, to be funded by a drawdown from Central Contingency in 2021/22, of which £41k relates to forward funding of the remaining year of the current contract and will be credited back to Central Contingency from the Leisure Client revenue budget in 2022/23.**
- 2. Agree to the Director of Housing, Planning & Regeneration in consultation with the Director of Finance authorising the grant conditions and due process following receipt of the information detailed in paragraph 7.4 of the report.**
- 3. Authorise the Director of Corporate Services to execute the Grant Agreement and all ancillary paperwork/legal documentation.**

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER ITEMS

21 THEMATIC SESSION: HOUSING

The Committee received a presentation from Lynnette Chamielec, Assistant Director, Housing and Lydia Lee, Assistant Director for Culture and

Regeneration. The presentation covered the breadth of services in the division, the housing pressures being managed by the Council and the ongoing work to address these pressures. The presentation is appended to the minutes at Annex B.

Members noted that one of the key areas of concern was the affordability of accommodation. Another key issue was that there were insufficient affordable housing completions to meet need. A Member highlighted that Bromley's Local Plan protected the Green Belt and the local authority would not be in a position to deliver the same number of developments as other London Boroughs such as Tower Hamlets, Newham and Ealing without building high rise blocks. The Chairman also noted that Bromley was not receiving the same level of affordable housing contributions as other London Boroughs and it was suggested that it may be helpful for Officers to liaise with colleagues in other Boroughs to see what more could be done to increase developer contributions.

In relation to prisoner release, Members noted that there was a range of eligibility criteria and individuals who made an approach to the Council had to be able to evidence some kind of local connection. (The Assistant Director for Housing clarified that local connection does not apply where a client is fleeing violence or domestic abuse. In such instances it would be reasonable for the person at risk to approach any borough that they consider to be safe in order for an assessment to be carried out.)

Turning to the work being undertaken to address some of the Housing Pressures, the Assistant Director for Culture and Regeneration highlighted that the Council had recently embarked on a programme of house building. This work was being delivered by the Regeneration Team with no additional resource and this had inevitably put pressure on the strategic regeneration work being delivered by the Team.

In relation to the York Rise development, the Committee noted that car parking spaces had been negotiated with Crofton Halls. These spaces would be allocated on a needs basis and further details would be provided in the report presented to the Development Control Committee in November 2021.

In response to a question concerning the length of time to build modular housing, the Assistant Director for Culture and Regeneration explained that overall, there was very little difference in the length of time for the build however, with modular housing the key benefit was that there was less time on site.

The Committee thanked Officers for their presentation which had provided helpful context around the various initiatives being undertaken.

**22 TRANSFORMATION UPDATE
Report CSD21086**

At its meeting on 30th June 2021 the Executive considered a report on the Council's Transformation Programme and referred the report to all PDS Committees and General Purposes and Licensing Committee.

Members noted that the key areas of transformation within the Portfolio had been housing supply and the transformation of Property Services. Other areas for transformation were being actively reviewed and a portfolio specific report would be presented to a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That progress with the Transformation Programme be noted.

PART 2 (CLOSED) AGENDA

23 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006, AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

RESOLVED that the Press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business referred to below as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the Press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

**The following summaries
refer to matters involving exempt information**

24 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 16 JUNE 2021

The exempt (not for publication) minutes from the meeting of the Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee held on 16 June 2021, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

The Meeting ended at 9.15 pm

Chairman

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RENEWAL, RECREATION & HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE

8 September 2021

QUESTIONS

(A) QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY

(1) From Councillor Simon Fawthrop to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

Can the Portfolio Holder confirm how many properties in the London Borough of Bromley owned by Housing Associations are currently empty/void or vacant? Can this be split as follows: -

- (i) Over 6 months
- (ii) Under 6 months

Reply:

Available data concentrates on properties which have been empty for over 6 months, and data is not reliably available for those under 6 months as the picture changes constantly for such properties as they go from void to tenanted or vice versa. Government advice on taking action on Empty properties defines Empty properties as those that are unoccupied for 6 months or more.

As of 8/10/21 there were 22 empty properties owned by Housing Associations that had been empty for over 6 months.

4 were empty as identified for disposal on the open market

8 were empty as subject to redevelopment

4 were empty due to requiring major works

4 were previously empty due to major works and were about to be let.

1 was empty due to proving hard to let.

1 was empty as it was held empty for use when emergency decants are necessary.

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Thematic Session: Housing

Lydia Lee:

Assistant Director, Culture and Regeneration

And

Lynnette Chamielec:

Assistant Director, Housing



The Basics

- We have a statutory duty to assist eligible people in housing need.
- Assistance can take the form of advice, support or an offer of accommodation.
- The Housing Register isn't just for homeless people.
- We aren't always the ones responsible for fixing a problem.
- In order to “discharge **our** duty” there are certain things that we need to do.



Housing Options

Advice and homeless prevention

Acquisitions

Integrated services young people

Rough Sleeper Support

Compliance and Strategy

Allocations

Housing

Money Advice

Temporary Accommodation

Traveller sites

Housing Register

Visiting Officers

Support and Resettlement

Housing Improvements

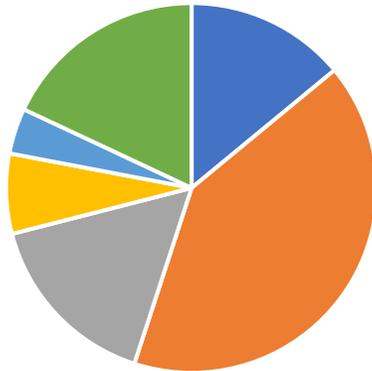
O.T.'s

Homelessness:

	2020/21	2021/22 (Apr-Jul)
Approaches		
Immediate Advice/Diversion work	1478	362
At imminent risk of homelessness – work to try to prevent	502	762
Homeless – work to relieve homeless	675	185
No duty closed at preventative stage	50	28
Total	2705	1337
Prevention:		
Closed at prevention stage	284	73
Prevention unsuccessful – moved to relief stage	173	40
Total	457	113
Relief		
Closed at Relief Stage	186	75
Relief unsuccessful – moved to full homeless assessment	431	98
Total	617	173
Final Homeless Duty Assessment		
Full Duty Accepted	460	92
Full Duty not accepted	41	7
Total	501	99

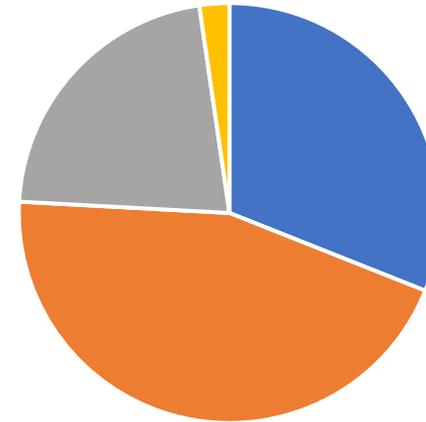
Reasons For Homelessness

2020/21



- Loss of rented accommodation
- Family/friends no longer able to accommodate
- Domestic Abuse/Violence
- Relationship Breakdown
- Left Institution/care
- Other

2021/22



- Loss of rented accommodation
- Family/friends no longer able to accommodate
- Domestic Abuse/Violence
- Left Institution/care
- Other

Allocations Snapshot

PRS Procurement:

20/21 – 132

21/22 - 42 (end of Q2)

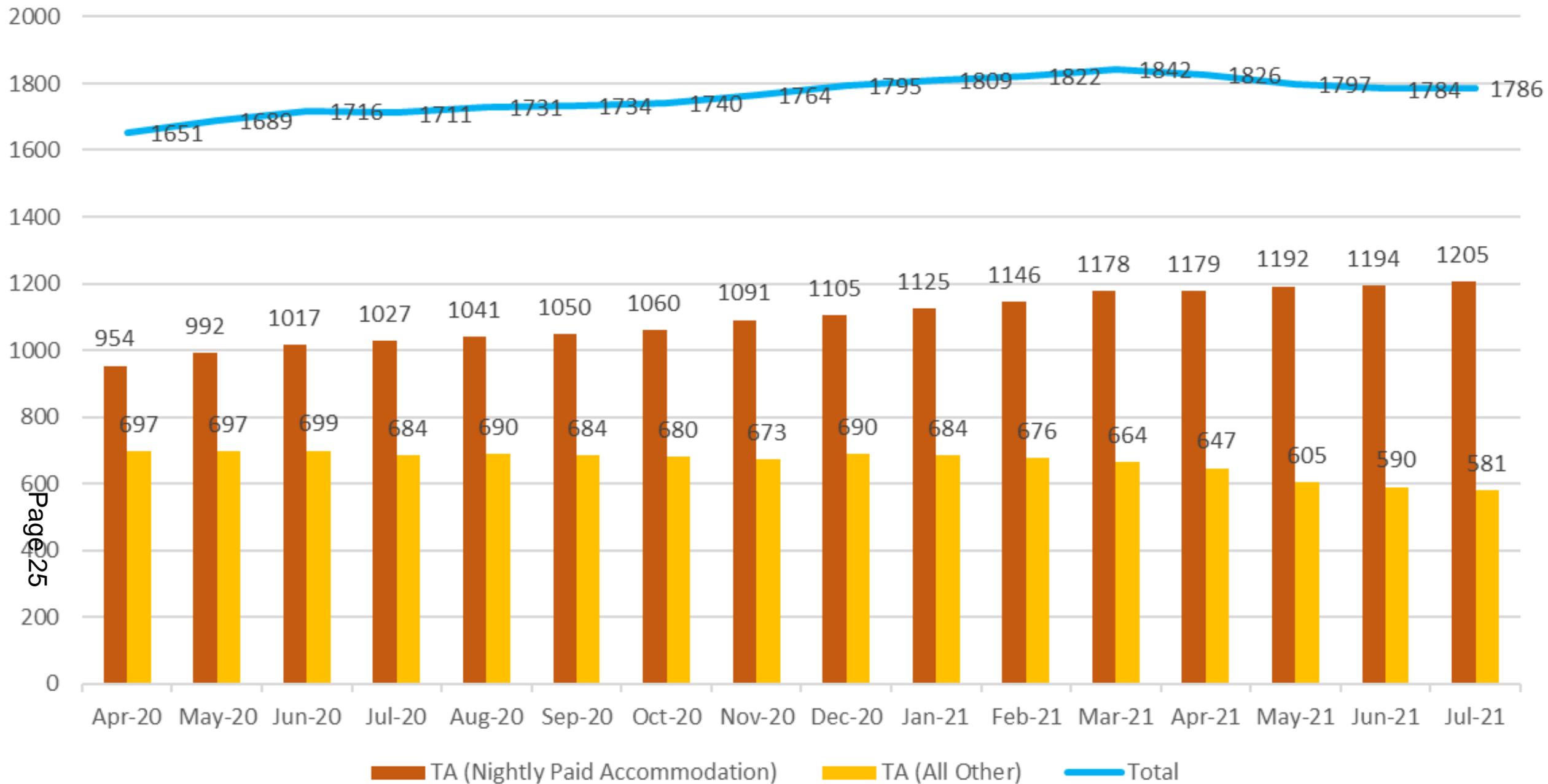
HA Lettings:

20/21 – 534

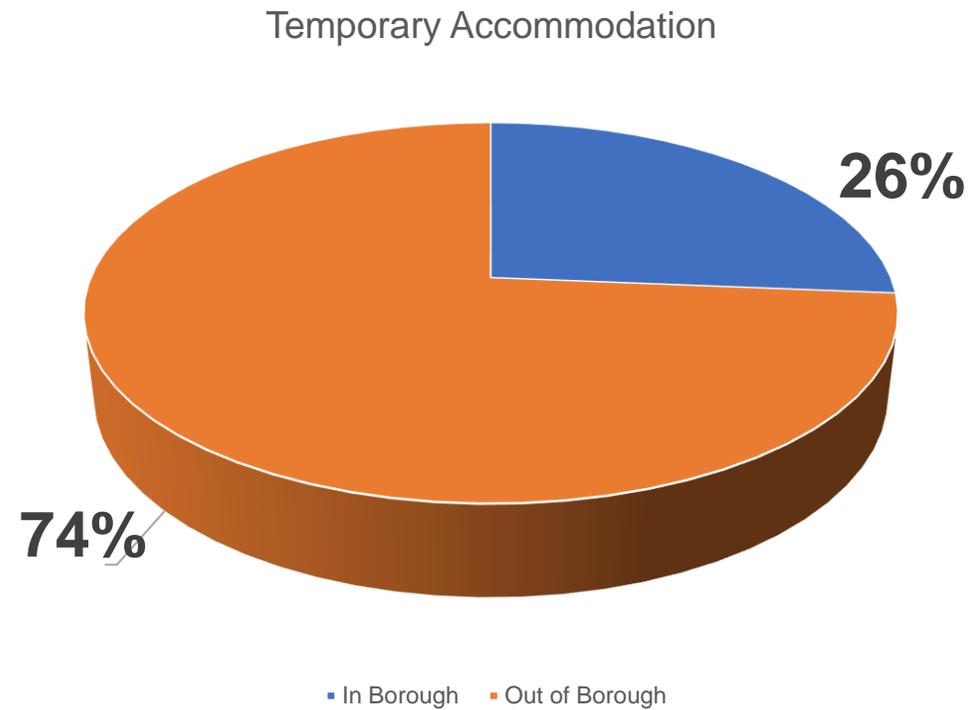
21/22 - 165 (end of Q2)



Total Households in TA and Nightly Accommodation



In Borough vs Out of Borough

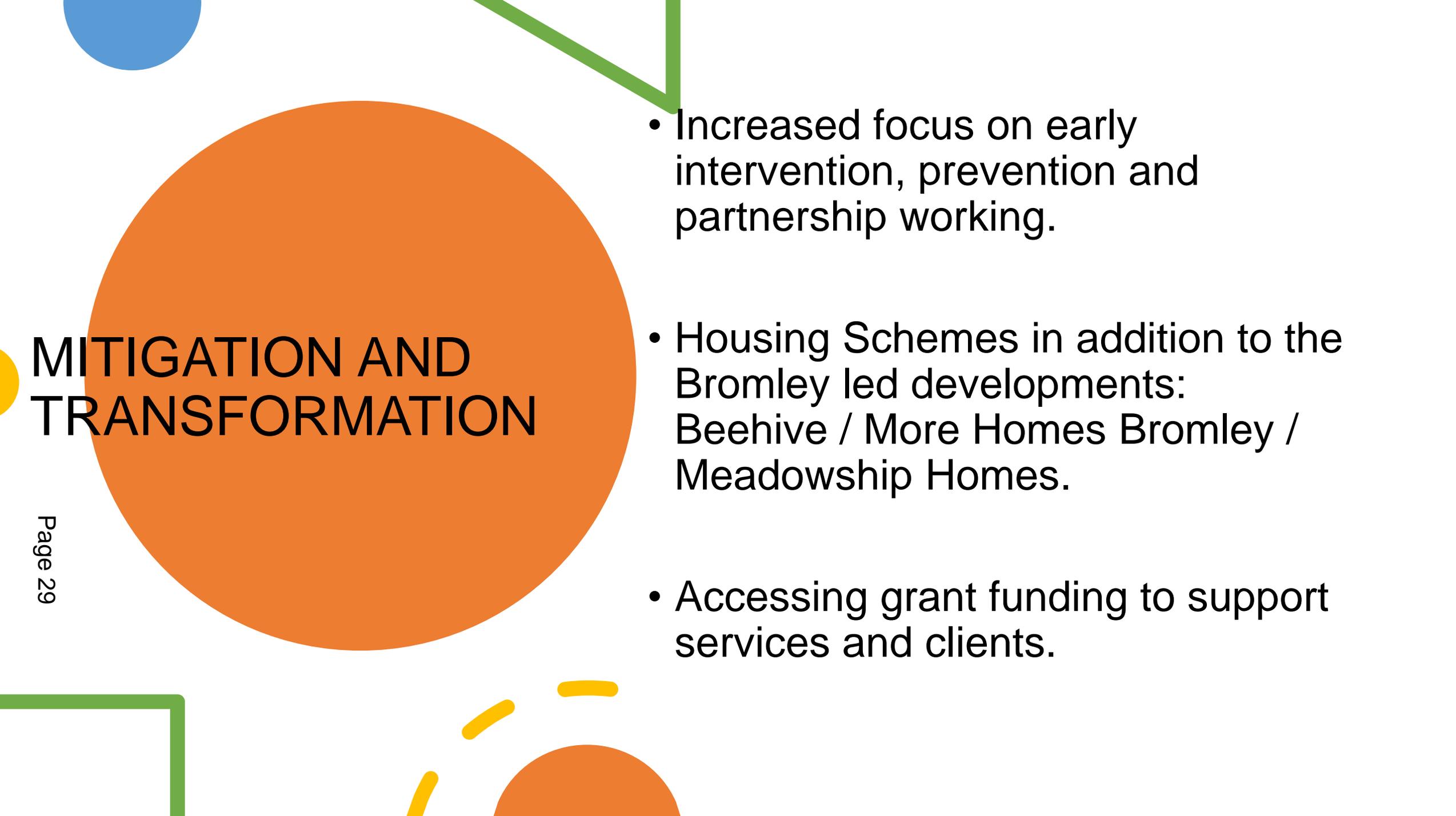


The Cost of Nightly Paid Accommodation

	Average weekly cost to LBB (May 2021)
Single Room	76.04
Studio	80.15
Self-Contained (1 Bed)	101.97
Self-Contained (2 Bed)	124.62
Self-Contained (3 Bed)	149.30
Self-Contained (4 Bed)	134.62
Weighted Average	117.94
** Against 1196 households in NPA	

Areas of Concern

- Increased rent arrears.
- Increased evictions.
- Additional pressure on the market as a result of Everyone In and the Refugee crisis.
- Lack of Housing Association move on; particularly larger units.

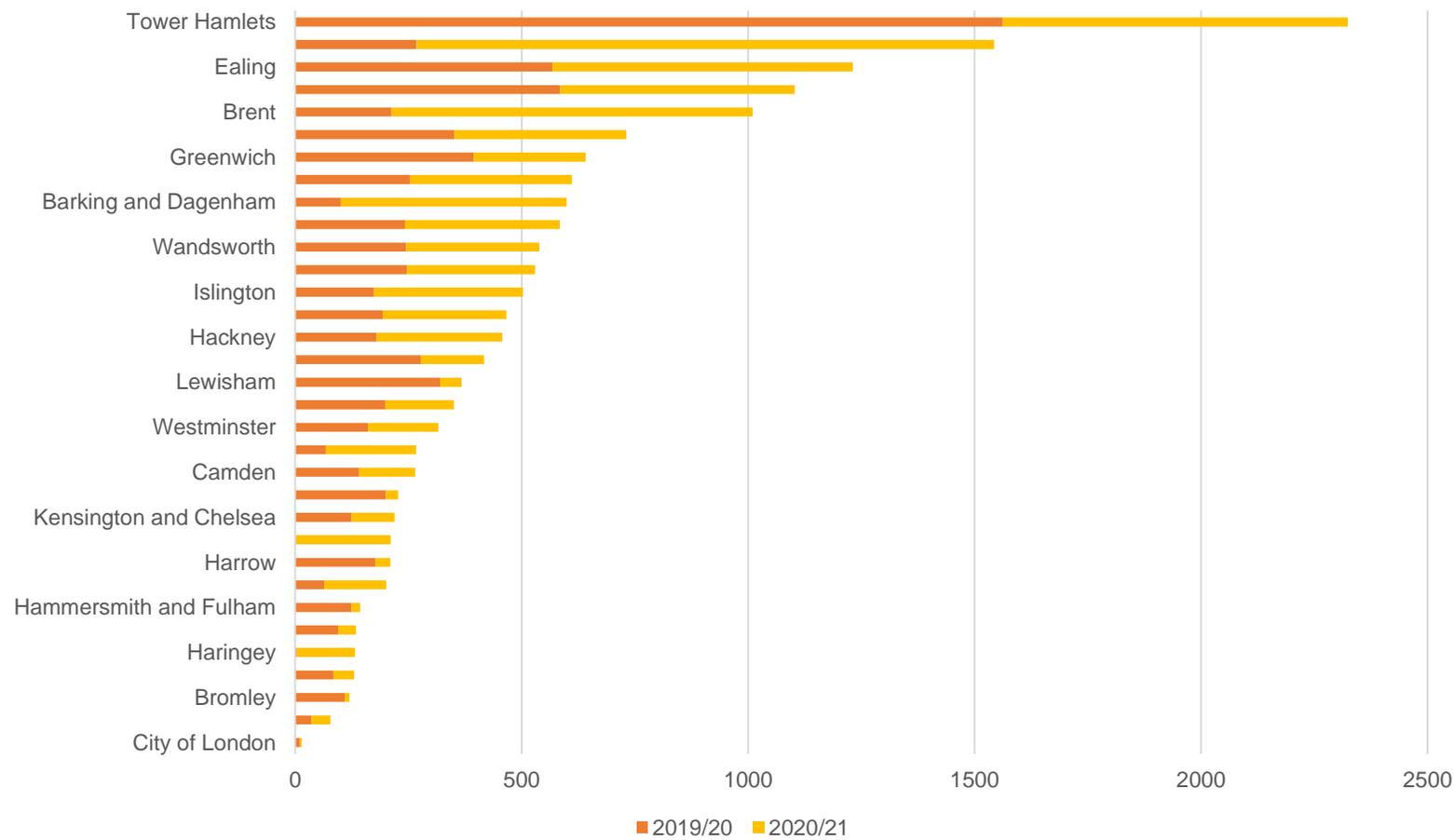


MITIGATION AND TRANSFORMATION

- Increased focus on early intervention, prevention and partnership working.
- Housing Schemes in addition to the Bromley led developments: Beehive / More Homes Bromley / Meadowship Homes.
- Accessing grant funding to support services and clients.

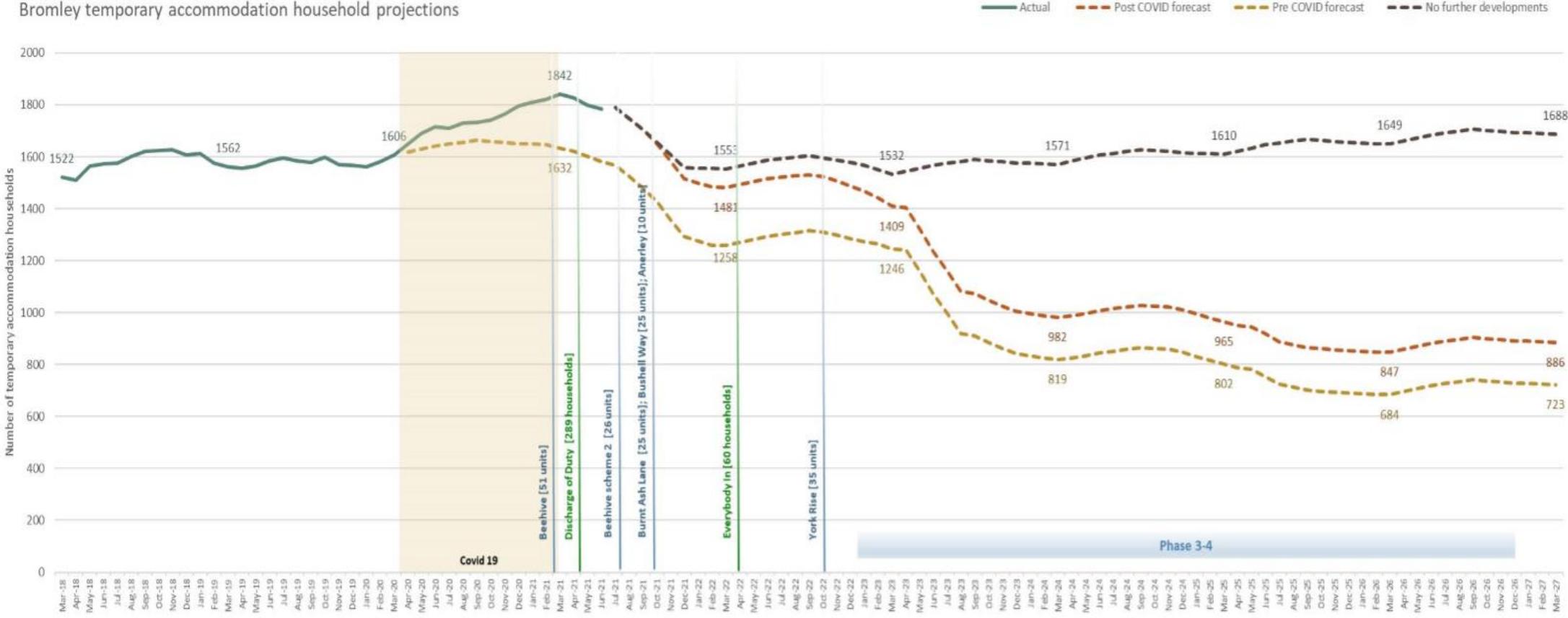
Affordable Housing Completions

Affordable Housing completions - 2019/20 and 2020/21



Temporary Accommodation Projections

Bromley temporary accommodation household projections



Affordable Housing

September 2021

An Overview of the Pipeline of Affordable Housing Schemes



Approach to Housing Delivery

The Regeneration team has progressed a variety of sites within the following strategic areas:

- Small infill sites within town centre locations.
- Sites allocated in the Bromley Local Plan.
- Agreements with developers.
- Mixed-use proposals.



Burnt Ash Lane

- Bromley's first self-delivered affordable housing development in the 21st century.
- Consisting of 25 modular pods and 18 car parking spaces.
- Previous use as a car park now providing one- and two-bedroom homes using modular methods of construction.
- Completion is set for September 2021

Bushell Way, Chislehurst

- Under construction.
- Consisting of 25 homes.
- Completion set for November 2021.

Anerley Town Hall Development

- Development of 10 affordable homes.
- Ground works and excavation works have begun on site.
- Completion set for November 2021.



York Rise Housing Development

- Development for 35 homes.
- Combination of one, two and three bedrooms using modular methods of construction.
- Planning application submitted in May 2021.



Phase 2 Affordable Housing Sites

West Wickham Library and Car Park

Bromley North

Beckenham Car Park





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Working with Developers

The Function of the Housing Revenue Account

Bromley has reopened its Housing Revenue Account (HRA) in order to increase its housing stock. This will enable the Council to deliver affordable housing and to reduce the costs associated with temporary accommodation.

The HRA is a **ring-fenced account separate from the Council's General Fund** that contains the income and expenditure relating to the management and maintenance of Bromley's housing stock. The system pools together all rent assumed to be collected at a local level and redistributes the resource back to local authorities to fund management, maintenance and major improvements of the housing stock and to support the borrowing costs that exist in terms of the existing level of housing debt.

The Council intends to procure Orchard & Shipman to manage and maintain the self-delivered housing.