Temporary Accommodation and the Pan-London Approach

Good afternoon,

I want to set out the approach being taken through the Ending Homelessness Accelerator Programme – EHAP – and why it matters so much for temporary accommodation and for how we work collectively across London.

First, the scale of the challenge.
Homelessness and temporary accommodation pressures in London are no longer just a housing issue. They are a system issue. Demand is rising. Financial pressure on boroughs is intensifying. And for too many residents, outcomes are still not good enough. The consequences are felt far beyond housing, with impacts on education, health, safeguarding and the criminal justice system.

EHAP has been established as a pan-London response to that challenge. It brings together London Councils, the GLA, boroughs and wider partners with a clear purpose: to move the system away from crisis management and towards prevention, reform and long-term system change.

At the heart of EHAP is a set of Plans of Action focused on the levers that can make the biggest difference. One of the most important is temporary accommodation.

The starting point is simple: the current model is not sustainable. It is financially unsustainable for boroughs, and it is not delivering consistently good outcomes for the households we support.

So the response is built around four core shifts.

First, reduce the flow into temporary accommodation.
That means a much stronger focus on prevention, earlier intervention, and better use of data across services. The aim is to spot homelessness risk sooner – whether through housing, health, schools or other public services – and act before households reach crisis point.

Second, increase the supply of suitable accommodation.
That includes collective work across boroughs to access and manage private rented sector supply more effectively, accelerate acquisition and leasing programmes, and make better use of supported and move-on accommodation. Alongside that, we must be clear that increasing the overall supply of housing remains fundamental.

In Enfield, we are taking that approach forward. Our development and acquisition programme remains an important part of the programme. Alongside a range of other measures to increase accommodation in the short term. One of these is through a practical pilot to increase the supply of good quality exempt supported accommodation for single people with low to medium support needs.

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The pilot works with preferred providers that meet clear standards on accommodation, support and management, in return for stronger nomination arrangements, a more reliable pipeline of referrals from the Council and incentive payments for successful outcomes including move on.

Over 12 months, the target is to secure 240 lets for Enfield residents. That will reduce reliance on expensive temporary accommodation, support better move-on, and help create a local market that supports Enfield residents. It is a clear spend-to-save intervention.

Third, improve the quality and consistency of temporary accommodation. That means stronger inspection regimes, better provider management, and greater consistency in standards across London. The focus is not just on availability, but on suitability, location and resident outcomes.

Fourth, strengthen coordination across the system.
This is critical. For too long, boroughs have been operating in competition for limited supply. EHAP is intended to move us towards a more coordinated model – with greater transparency around placements, better management of cross-borough impacts, and stronger alignment in how we operate as a system.

A practical example of that pan-London coordination is the London Area Management Agreement, or LAMA. It provides a shared framework for managing cross-borough temporary accommodation placements more consistently, with clearer expectations on notification, communication and oversight when households are placed outside their home area. That helps contain costs by reducing unhelpful competition for scarce accommodation, improving visibility across the system, supporting more orderly commissioning and provider management, and moderating some of the cost escalation that comes from fragmented demand management.

It does not remove the underlying market pressure, but it is an important mechanism for improving collective control.

Another important area of work has been strengthening practice around section 208 notifications for out-of-borough placements. Following the closure of the previous Notify system, boroughs have worked together through London Councils and a cross-sector task and finish group to build a more consistent pan-London approach. That has included Key Lines of Enquiry to help boroughs review compliance and wider practice, a standardised email address format for receiving notifications, common information-sharing templates, and stronger links between housing, children's services, safeguarding and health. The aim is not simply to meet a statutory requirement, but to ensure placements are understood earlier, risks are identified sooner, and receiving areas have the information they need to respond appropriately.

Underpinning all of this is a stronger use of shared data and benchmarking. That will allow us to track performance more clearly, understand costs and outcomes better, and make stronger decisions both locally and across London. One of the tools supporting that is the Newton consultancy developed homelessness benchmarking tool. It gives boroughs a more consistent evidence base on the drivers of homelessness and temporary accommodation pressure – including demand, use of different forms of accommodation, cost, duration and outcomes. That makes it easier to compare performance with peers, identify where pressure is greatest, and target improvement effort where it will have most impact.

Alongside these specific actions on temporary accommodation, EHAP also represents a broader shift in how we work across London.
There is a move towards more structured pan-London and sub-regional collaboration, with stronger governance through arrangements through EHAP delivery structures.

There is also investment in shared infrastructure – including programme capacity and data capability – to support boroughs to deliver.

And crucially, EHAP is designed to test what works and then scale it. This is not only about better coordination. It is about building approaches that can shift the system at pace and at scale.

Taken together, this is a very different way of operating.

It is a shift from fragmented, borough-by-borough responses to a genuinely collective approach. From managing demand to reducing it. And from short-term fixes to sustainable, system-level solutions.

For boroughs, that creates both opportunity and responsibility.
The opportunity is to reduce pressure, improve outcomes for residents, and create a more sustainable model for temporary accommodation.
But it also requires us to work differently – to commit to shared approaches, align our local models with London-wide priorities, and play our part in a more coordinated system.

In summary, EHAP is about fundamentally reshaping how we respond to homelessness and temporary accommodation.

It is about creating the conditions in which fewer households need temporary accommodation, the accommodation that is used is better and more stable, and the system as a whole works more effectively for the people who rely on it.
The ambition is to create a more sustainable system, better outcomes for residents, and a stronger collective response from London as a whole.