

## **CABINET**

**TUESDAY 4 MARCH 2025**

### **DECISIONS**

The following are the decisions taken by Cabinet at the above meeting.

Please note that these are not the full minutes, which will be published at a later date. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, where indicated the decisions listed below are subject to Call-In. The Call-In period will expire in 5 working days from the publication date of this notice

**Publication date: 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

**Date of decision: 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

**End of the call-in period is Midnight p.m. on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

**This decision can be implemented from 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision notice please contact Joy George, Democratic Services Officer, on Tel: 020 3373 1256; or E-mail: [joy.george@newham.gov.uk](mailto:joy.george@newham.gov.uk)

#### **1. Quarterly update to Cabinet on Social Housing Improvement**

**Decision status: Recommendations Approved**

**Is this a Key decision?: No**

**Is subject to call in?: No**

#### **Decision**

For the reasons set out in the report and its appendices Cabinet RESOLVED to Agree to note:

- i) The Council's progress to date on the development and implementation of its response to the Regulator of Social Housing's report; and
- ii) The further plans to drive improvements and bring the service into full compliance with the regulatory consumer standards.

## **Alternatives Considered**

- a) Do nothing: given the C4 rating, it is not possible for the Council to do nothing. Under the terms of the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023, the Council is required to comply with the Regulator's judgement and reach compliance with the Consumer Standards.

## **2. Populo Living 2025/26 Business Plan**

### **Decision status: Recommendations Approved**

**Is this a Key decision?: Yes**

**Is subject to call in?: Yes**

### **Decision**

For the reasons set out in the report and its appendices Cabinet  
RESOLVED to Agree:

- i) To approve the Populo Group Business Plan for 2025/26 as set out at Appendix 1.

## **Alternatives Considered**

- a) Populo is required by the Council to produce a Business Plan for each financial year. The Populo Executive team discussed alternatives for this year's plan with Council officers in November 2024. Were the Council not minded to approve this Business Plan it would leave Populo operating within the parameters of the previously approved Business Plan for 2024/25.
- b) As sole shareholder, the Council could have directed the company to continue to pursue a direct development strategy linked to working capital and development / investment loan funding facilities in line with the previous approved plan. This was considered however due to prevailing interest rates this alternative would not have allowed the company to present a deliverable plan for 2025/26 and beyond due to its cost of finance.
- c) The Council could opt to scale back Populo to a small housing management company overseeing 795 homes. This was considered however Newham continues to face an affordable housing shortage and Populo provides the Council with an expert team capable of progressing the delivery of complex major regeneration projects. This is considered a valuable commissioning route for the Council hence scaling back the company's development team was discounted in favour of expanding and increasing the use of Populo for Development Management Services.
- d) The Council could procure a Development Management Service from an alternative provider, via a suitable framework. The council continues to test this particular route and undertakes

benchmarking with the wider markets to ensure value for money remains by using Populo, as well as maintaining close control. as shown in 6.5 of this report, not recommended

- e) Following consideration of the alternatives, the recommended Business Plan strategy balances prevailing development economics with a desire by the Council to continuing to commission Populo to progress major residential development projects across the borough. The Council commissioning Populo allows it to retain close control whilst also benefiting from the skills and expertise in Populo and promoting the sustainability of a Council company.

### **3. Review of the Boroughs Statement of Licensing Policy**

**Decision status: Recommendations Approved**

**Is this a Key decision?: Yes**

**Is subject to call in?: Yes**

#### **Decision**

For the reasons set out in the report and its appendices Cabinet  
RESOLVED to Agree:

- i) To consider the draft policy and statutory consultation feedback and approve the reviewed statement of licensing policy,
- ii) To note that the proposed statement of licensing policy will take effect for 5 years.
- iii) To send this matter to Full Council to adopt the final version of the statement of licensing policy

#### **Alternatives Considered**

- a) The policy was approved by full Licensing Committee on 20 February 2025, the reviewed statement of licensing policy will go to full Council for adoption.