

# Delivering the homes Hackney needs

Hackney Housing Strategy  
Position Paper 2023



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## Introduction

This document outlines a housing position statement to bridge the period between the end of the current 2018 Housing Strategy and the start of the next, currently planned for adoption in 2024. The document describes the pressures on residents and the Council, and identifies the actions already adopted in the 2018 Housing Strategy that need to be applied and/or enhanced to cover the period from now through to the adoption of the 2024 Housing Strategy.

Before work can commence on the 2024 Housing Strategy, an up to date, accurate, representative and evidence-based housing needs survey and strategic housing market assessment (SHMA) has to be completed. The SHMA requires the evidence base provided by the most recent census, which is being

released in stages into 2023 and on that basis, the SHMA is scheduled to be completed by mid-2023. On completion of the SHMA and housing needs survey, work can commence on the new five year Housing Strategy.

The UK is currently in the midst of an unprecedented cost of living crisis, with inflation reaching its highest peak in 40 years. Russia's invasion of Ukraine and instability in the Government are all contributing to the economic turmoil.

As well as this the housing crisis continues to intensify, with the constriction of the private rented sector causing a huge price spike in rents, construction cost price inflation causing a slowdown in housing delivery and interest rate rises driving up



New homes at Woodberry Down



the borrowing costs of capital for new build either already on the ground or about to start.

In addition the cost of living crisis means residents are facing difficult choices this winter, between heating, eating or shelter, as prices rise. The case for well insulated and energy efficient homes has never been greater.

Climate change is already disrupting weather patterns and creating extremes that most homes in the UK are ill equipped to cope with. In response to the root cause of climate change the Council is committed to creating a net zero borough by 2040.

In 2018 the Council published its five-year housing strategy, 'Delivering the homes Hackney needs', which set out the long-term housing ambitions for Hackney based on a borough-wide consultation with residents.

Since the publication of the 2018 strategy, there have also been some significant changes to housing needs in the community and the Council itself. These changes include but are not limited to: the UK's formal exit from the European Union; the Council's climate emergency declaration; the COVID-19

pandemic; the criminal cyber attack; the introduction of Universal Credit; the introduction of the charter for social housing residents; and the post-Grenfell landscape continuing to bring to light building safety issues and amplifying residents' voices more than ever before.

Despite all the negatives there have been some positives since the publication of the 2018 strategy. There have been 1,500 new homes started or completed by the Council since 2018, with more than half being genuinely affordable Council social rent, Shared Ownership or Hackney Living Rent homes. The Council has also brought forward a Hackney Better Renting campaign that aims to support private sector tenants and drive up the quality of private sector rented homes. It has launched the first Hackney Living Rent homes through the Council's own housing company.

Through continued campaigning, restrictions around Right to Buy receipts and the HRA borrowing cap have been lifted, giving the Council more flexibility to deliver new social housing - though Government investment into the building of social housing continues to fall short of what is needed.

## Achievements

- **1,500 homes** started or completed by the Council since 2018, with more than half being genuinely affordable
- **Launched private rented sector licensing schemes** aimed at tackling rogue landlords and improving standards
- **£1m invested** into improving the Council's repairs service
- **Drafted compact with Registered Providers** working in the borough to be adopted in 2023
- **Relaunch of lettings policy for those in social housing** and introduced our Hackney Living Rent product for those on lower-middle incomes

## Key Borough Housing Statistics

- **28%** private renters, **28%** owner-occupiers (inc. Shared Ownership), **44%** social renters<sup>1</sup>
- **Average house price as of August 2022:** £698,290<sup>2</sup>
- **Median household income:** £36,35<sup>3</sup>
- **House prices are 19x the median household income**
- **Average 2-bed rent:** £1,998 /month<sup>4</sup>
- **8,500 still on the waiting list** following the review of the lettings policy<sup>5</sup>
- **3,097 homeless households** living in temporary accommodation containing 3,528 children<sup>6</sup>

# Summary and Wider Context

**This position document uses and builds upon the existing themes presented in the 2018 Housing Strategy, refocusing them to the current challenges and providing the Council with a coherent policy platform through this period between Housing Strategies.**

**The six themes will continue to be delivered through the work of the Council and its partners and are set out below:**

1. **Delivering the Homes that Hackney Needs**
2. **Improving Homes, Services and Resident Engagement**
3. **Protecting Private Renters and Leaseholders**
4. **Supporting Those in Health and Housing Need**
5. **Promoting Employment and Sustainable Communities**
6. **Preparing for a Greener Future**

There remains an ongoing need for good quality, genuinely affordable housing in the borough. Too many residents are trapped in overpriced and in some cases poor quality rented accommodation. Home ownership is simply out of reach for a significant majority of residents with the average house price at nineteen times the average household income.

In 2020 the Council adopted its Local Plan (LP33) which provides the spatial framework, growth strategy and planning policies to realise the Council's vision for a fairer, safer and more sustainable Hackney for the period through to 2033. LP33 sets an objective to deliver 26,250 additional new homes, including genuinely affordable housing, during the lifetime of the Plan. In addition, the use of Planning gain obligations, through Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy contributions, can go some way in helping to mitigate specific development-led impacts that include obtaining on or off-site affordable housing or financial contributions for other relevant infrastructure or other community needs.

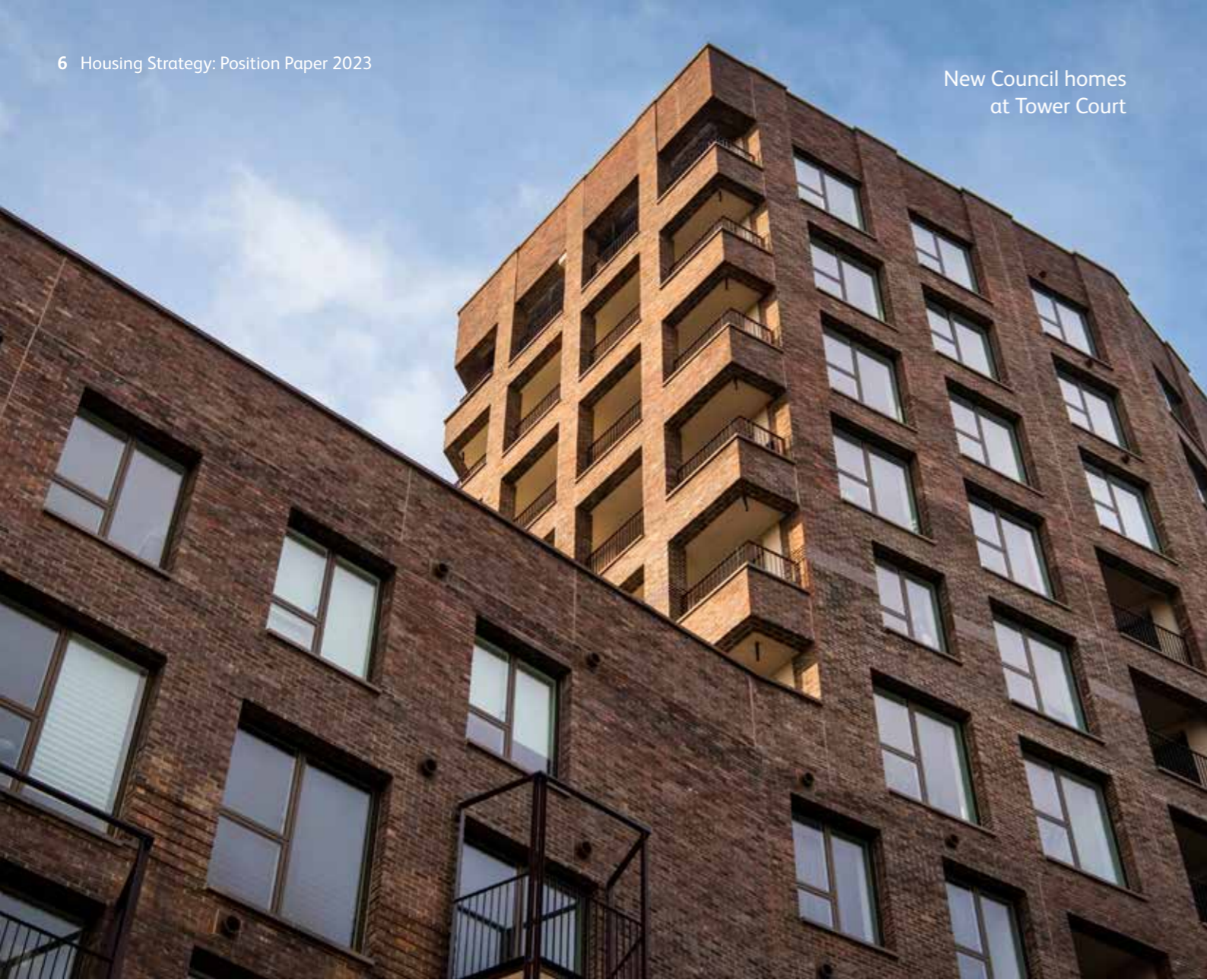
In order to deliver the homes Hackney needs the Council will not only have to focus on its own build programme, but must also work with housing providers and explore new ways to deliver new homes against the backdrop of an increasingly uncertain housing market. Alongside this the Council intends to remain focused on making sure that any new homes delivered have high quality design standards, meet all building safety and sustainability requirements and minimise housing-related health risks.

The Council is working on the implications of the introduction of 7% rent caps in April 2023. These caps are there to protect residents from unprecedented rent rises due to inflation. However, this will have a significant impact on our long term business planning and our service delivery due to loss of income. Our new HRA business plan will be launched in April with the aim of reducing the impact on front line services to make sure that we are still able to provide all of our essential functions, while protecting our residents from inflation-level rent rises.

The tragedy at Grenfell Tower brought to light a number of serious fire safety issues, and the surveying of housing stock nationwide has identified more than just cladding as a concern in regards to building safety. All buildings must be brought up to safety standards and leaseholders who are often trapped in these buildings with uncooperative owners must be supported.

The COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the criminal cyber attack on the Council, has made it more difficult to deliver Council services, difficulties that residents have noticed in their dealings with the Council. Improving Council services and the relationship with residents who live in the Council's homes is now prioritised. The pandemic also continues to have a huge impact on the health and wellbeing of residents, and has widened pre-existing social and health inequalities. Providing affordable, secure and safe homes is one of the main ways that the Council can help to support residents and their physical and mental wellbeing.





The Inclusive Economy Strategy published in 2019 sets the policy approach to delivering inclusive economic development with a focus on increasing prosperity and tackling poverty and inequality. Alongside this, the Poverty Reduction Framework published in 2022 sets out the Council's approach and contribution to reducing poverty in the borough.

Significant inequalities exist in the borough between different places and in different sections of the community. Hackney ranks second in the UK for income deprivation affecting older people<sup>7</sup> and despite a range of improvements Hackney still remains one of the most deprived local authorities in the country. The Council is working on a coordinated area basis internally and with stakeholders and partners, supporting local neighbourhoods and town centres to thrive and prosper; supporting local businesses, delivering affordable workspace, providing high quality employment support, opportunities for skills development, access to good quality, well paid work and career progression in work.

Hackney declared a climate emergency in 2019 and has committed to achieving Net Zero across all Council functions by 2040. The decarbonisation of the Council's existing housing stock will play an important role in achieving this aim and Hackney's Climate Action Plan, due to be finalised in Spring 2023, sets out how this can be achieved.

The Council will continue to campaign and lobby central Government for the changes that are needed to provide better, safer and more affordable homes for all residents.

## Theme One

# Delivering the Homes that Hackney Needs

**It remains a priority in the borough to maximise housing supply across all tenures.** With the average price of a home on the open market close to £700,000 and the average household income being below £40,000 per annum, home ownership is not a feasible option for the average household without significant help. Genuinely affordable housing remains the highest priority to cater for those on low to middle incomes, alongside the delivery of high quality new homes for sale and rent.

When the Council adopted its Local Plan, LP33, it ensured that any schemes of over 10 homes would include a commitment for 50% affordable housing, with any smaller schemes giving a financial contribution through a section 106 agreement. The Council has also managed to continue delivering its own homes despite the increased challenges of the pandemic and severe inflation of construction prices, as well as having launched the Hackney Living Rent (HLR) product. Hackney's registered provider partners have also delivered homes for social rent and HLR through the Mayor of Hackney's Housing Challenge funding.

Conventional self contained housing is the priority residential land use in the borough in line with LP33. However, there should be recognition of other forms of residential accommodation which meets the communities housing needs, including affordability. These include but are not limited to; housing that specifically caters for independent living, older people, working age adults who have supported living needs; and co-housing options. High quality decent housing is recognised as a contributory factor of a healthy, enriching, fulfilling life. Hackney's Ageing Well Strategy looks at the other activities which will enable older residents in Hackney to age well. This may include providing and building on opportunities for intergenerational activity, social participation and civic inclusion.

There still remains a demand for more homes; already, it is known that 1,750 homes are needed per year until 2031 and this number may change with the newly commissioned SHMA. There are over 3,000 homeless households in temporary accommodation and over 8,500 on the housing waiting list. There are residents with increasingly complex medical conditions and disabilities, including large multi-generational families caring for each other in the same dwelling.

These more complex housing needs put even more strain on the housing register, health services and social care teams and make the need for more housing and more specialist housing even more acute. The Council itself would simply be unable to continue delivering its key services and duties with its current stock if nothing changes.

Through lobbying central Government, Councils have now been given more flexibility around the use of their Right to Buy receipts, enabling Hackney to fund 40% of the cost of social and Shared Ownership homes within five years. Alongside this, the HRA borrowing cap has been removed, allowing Councils to borrow more for housing schemes.

It still remains an issue that Government funding for social housing is severely lacking and Hackney, like all Councils, needs to continue to find new and innovative ways to maximise the delivery of genuinely affordable Council housing.

Hackney is committed to continue building its own homes through Hackney's cross-subsidised direct delivery programme, which has seen 1,500 homes started or completed by the Council since May 2018, with more than half of these as genuinely affordable Council social rent, Shared Ownership or Hackney Living Rent. As part of the new Housing Strategy a five-year delivery plan will be established.





New Council homes at Daubeney Road, Clapton

The Council has secured a further £17.5m from the Mayor of London's Affordable Homes Programme to deliver new Council homes beyond 2022.

In addition, the Council is working with public and private housing partners to bring forward homes within mixed use schemes in town centres and the borough's growth areas as part of a strategic approach to area regeneration. In particular, the Council continues to work in partnership with other public sector organisations to bring forward publicly owned land for development, including homes of all tenures.

As a result of the UK's exit from the single market, the Council has experienced supply, skill and workforce challenges. This has included both contract and tender pressures as a result of inflation, leading to increases of up to 20% in new development tender prices. The COVID-19 pandemic created a flat housing market, leading to a price slowdown in London, which made the viability of housing schemes very difficult.

In 2020, the Council set in motion an asset review programme to assess all of its housing assets to

help meet the communities housing requirements. The Council has now identified future sites for our new homes programme, as well as sites for alternative uses and will continue assessing these assets for future opportunities. The Council will also be exploring whether or not the new homes programme would benefit from new and innovative ways of delivering new homes, such as using modular housing methods to deliver high quality temporary accommodation on meanwhile sites.

All new build housing must continue to meet high design and quality standards, including those relating to density, building safety, environmental sustainability and health. This has become ever more relevant as the cladding scandal continues and Hackney Council will continue to respond to the requirements of the Building Safety Bill in its own schemes.

The Council is exploring all possible avenues to maximise the supply of genuinely affordable housing in the borough. This includes buying back properties sold under the Right to Buy scheme, the review of Council owned land assets and bringing unused community flats back into use as social housing.

An overpriced and understocked private rented sector is all that remains to those who are unable to access the open housing market, with 2-bed properties in Hackney having seen the fastest rent rise in Britain in the last decade<sup>8</sup>. This sector has constricted even further recently, with landlords leaving the lower end of the market and housing supply issues further driving up demand.

This means that affordable options to lower and middle income earners in the borough are few and far between and it is simply not a viable option without entering into an often expensive house share, or moving out of the borough. With nearly a third of all residents in Hackney in the private rented sector, it is essential that Hackney continues its work to protect private renters which is covered in the third section of this document.

The Hackney Housing Company launched in 2019 with its first HLR homes set at a third of ward level incomes. A further 16 homes were launched in 2022 and the Council will continue to seek further HLR opportunities through its own delivery programme and with its partners. Alongside this, an allocation policy was launched for all HLR homes so that local people in need are prioritised.

## Theme One: Actions

- Continue building the Council's own genuinely affordable housing, with high design and quality standards that are aligned with the requirements of the Building Safety Bill and contribute to the Council's net zero targets
- Through area regeneration plans, planning documents and masterplans, identify and provide guidance for opportunity areas/sites to deliver the Council's Local Plan, Inclusive Economy Strategy and Community Strategy and bring forward Council owned sites in growth areas for new homes and other land uses
- Explore opportunities for intergenerational communities to help address adult social care issues
- Continue to identify sites on Council-owned land for future housing delivery programmes and alternative housing options
- Continue partnership working with Registered Providers to maximise genuinely affordable homes, including Hackney Living Rent
- Explore alternative methods of housing delivery including modular housing and, where possible, use these opportunities to build temporary accommodation
- Identify buildings that can be brought back into use or sold to generate further housing, including any unused community flats being brought back into use as social housing
- Increase the number of Hackney Living Rent and discounted private rented housing in the borough
- Respond to the challenges of the housing white paper and commission a new strategic housing market assessment and housing needs survey to feed into the new strategy
- Use our planning decisions to maximise the delivery of housing, including affordable housing, where appropriate



## Theme Two

# Improving Homes, Services and Resident Engagement

**Hackney has a significant amount of housing stock and the majority of its social housing lettings each year are from the existing housing stock, rather than newly built social rented housing.** The Council has one of the largest local authority stock holdings in the country, making it essential that best use is made of this existing housing stock, that it is future proofed and that the Council intervenes when necessary to bring homes up to standard. There are an increasing number of leaseholders within the Council portfolio and there is substantial work underway to improve the services offered in this regard.

Hackney Council manages a range of tenures, comprising social rented housing, Shared Ownership, leasehold properties, private renters who are subtenants of leaseholders and both Hackney Living Rent and market rent through the Council's own Housing Company. The needs of each of these tenures vary widely, which in turn increases the complexity of the management arrangements. This becomes even more difficult when considering the wide range of health and social needs that can be faced, especially by those in social housing, who are more likely to experience financial hardship.

The Council must be able to continue to support all Hackney's residents through these challenges that have become even more acute as the cost of living increases. The tragic death of Awaab Ishak and shocking conditions he and his family had to endure brings into focus just how essential a safe, warm and dry home is and how important it is to listen to residents. We are working across all tenures and with all partners to reduce the risks of damp and mould in our homes and all homes in the borough and make sure that cases are being investigated fully.

Over the coming months the Council will be working towards a service that can respond to requests as quickly as possible, as well as carrying out a full stock condition survey to ensure stock is assessed throughout the borough. In the short-term, Hackney have set up a dedicated damp and mould line to help speed up dealing with requests from council tenants through the repairs contact centre.

There is also a significant number of people living in temporary accommodation in the borough and due to the housing waiting list, they remain in temporary housing much longer than hoped. The Council has a duty to assist these people to live in safe and secure homes, both through direct improvements to the Council-owned stock or making sure private landlords respond to the requirements of the decent homes standard.

The tragedy at Grenfell Tower brought to light a number of serious fire safety issues on a national scale. Hackney has developed its fire safety strategy and implemented a fire safety policy and continues to respond to any new recommendations arising from new guidance as it is published. The new Building Safety Bill has been launched to ensure resident safety in high rise blocks and these requirements are being implemented. The Council has addressed the two highest risk blocks within its portfolio that were identified following guidance issued by central Government

Progress has been made in improving the energy efficiency of Hackney's homes through various methods including fitting heat meters, upgrading old heating systems, replacing insulation and its capital works programme. Details on how the Council will be achieving its longer term sustainability ambitions are covered in section six.



The cost of living crisis presents a number of challenges for residents and the Council must continue to provide effective support during this period. The Council has been running sessions around financial advice and income maximisation providing residents links to other services, including food support and mental health support. No one in Hackney should be forced to make the choice between heating and eating. The Hackney Sales team have ensured that those with a live/work connection to the borough are prioritised for both the Council's own Shared Ownership and Hackney Living Rent homes.

The team produces statistics and reports on all Council developments. These statistics offer the sales team insight into what developments attract first time buyers and enable us to give feedback to colleagues in projects during the Gateway process of future sites.

The social housing green paper announced the withdrawal of many controversial proposals that were highlighted for being counterproductive in the previous strategy, including fixed term tenancies

and the forced sale of high value homes. The subsequent white paper brought forward the proposals for improved consumer regulation and the introduction of new tenant satisfaction measures. The Council knows from its own customer surveys that too many Hackney tenants were not satisfied with the repairs services they received, though this was one of the services heavily affected by the restrictions introduced by the pandemic. Hackney have therefore committed a further £1m of funding towards improving the repairs services for Hackney's residents.

However, it is not only repairs that residents are worried about. There are further concerns around the introduction of Universal Credit increasing rent arrears, accessibility to services and how the Council communicates with residents and acts upon their concerns. In response to some of the challenges faced, Hackney has co-produced with housing residents, a new Resident Engagement Strategy for Housing Services. This strategy, which was based on a wide-ranging consultation with residents who live in Hackney homes and housing services staff, sets out five strategic priorities. These priorities broadly

aim to make residents' voices, understood and acted upon, to encourage more residents to get involved in shaping service delivery, and to help us build stronger communities.

It covers all residents who live in Hackney Council-owned homes - tenants, leaseholders, private renters, freeholders and shared owners. The strategy provides new opportunities to consider how the Council can target its resources and strengthen partnership working to better meet the challenges many social housing residents face.

These include those related to health, isolation, employment, education and systemic inequality, to make better use of new forms of digital communication, and to further strengthen the support offered to involved residents groups, including tenants and residents associations and neighbourhood panels.

## Theme Two: Actions

- Continue to respond to any further building and fire safety recommendations that come forward, so that residents are kept in the know about their buildings and that homes are sustainable and future proof
- Maximise income collection across the managed stock, with targeted support for those struggling to meet their payments
- Report on housing performance and the actions the Council are taking to mitigate any areas of under-performance
- Show marked improvements in the Council's repairs service following further investment and deliver against the principles of the Asset Management Strategy when maintaining and improving Council stock
- Deliver against the actions set out in the Resident Engagement Strategy and adhere to its principles of effective engagement
- Develop strong partnerships with other Council services, community and voluntary organisations, and other statutory partners to address the wider social and financial challenges some housing residents face
- Provide new homes support the health needs of residents - including helping to improve mental wellbeing and meet the needs of people with disabilities
- Continue to use empty Council homes awaiting demolition for temporary accommodation where it remains cost effective to do so

## Theme Three

# Protecting Private Renters and Leaseholders

**Around one third of Hackney residents live in the private rented sector and private renters have long been at the forefront of Hackney's housing crisis.** Most private landlords take their responsibilities very seriously and a majority of private renters in Hackney are satisfied with their homes. However, there are unfortunately some who are subjected to a badly regulated sector which allows poor conditions, mistreatment from landlords, unstable tenancies and extortionate rents and the Council will continue doing all that it can to address this.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the lack of protection for private renters, with not all renters afforded rental payment holidays if they lost their job as a result of the pandemic. Lockdown also took a toll on people living in smaller or shared accommodation, and the wider financial impact of the pandemic is shining a light on the lack of security private renters have.

Private rent levels in Hackney remain high compared to many other parts of London, and a stock shortage has caused rental values to rise dramatically in recent times. At present, the average rent for a two-bedroom property is £1,998 per month, which is unaffordable to people in Hackney on low and medium incomes. Tenants can also be faced with large, unpredictable rent hikes, as there is no limit to the amount by which landlords can raise rents. Hackney Council has pushed for the changes it wants to see to make renting in

Hackney better through the Better Renting campaign – including a database of rogue landlords, stopping letting fees for tenants and ending Section 21 'no-fault' evictions – and introducing the Council's own measures like licences for landlords and living rent homes for renters.

The Council will continue to make the case for tenants to be given the choice of stable tenancies for years, not months; for rent rises to be capped; and for a range of other measures that will improve the private rented sector for tenants and landlords. Vulnerable private renters are at the greatest risk of health-related housing issues and more needs to be done to reduce these health inequalities in the borough.

In 2021 the Private Sector Housing Grants Policy was approved by the Council's cabinet. This enabled the Council to assist vulnerable residents in private rented accommodation through warmth and security grants and to offer empty homes grants and other assistance, should demand rise.

Property licensing schemes will continue to be rolled out, with an increased focus on property inspections and issuing of licences, raising standards and enforcement. As it moves into the fourth year of the five-year scheme, enforcement activity is increasing and has resulted in civil penalty notices being issued and prosecutions being progressed. Hackney has also





assisted tenants to apply for Rent Repayment Orders when they have been living in licensable properties, but which are unlicensed.

There has been a comprehensive review of all private sector residential tower blocks in the borough in regards to fire safety. A data gathering exercise was conducted on all of these blocks and the Council continues to engage with both building owners and the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities so that any defects that have been identified are remediated. Enforcement action has been taken against three of these blocks and all buildings are under constant monitoring for remediation.

The Council will continue to pursue building owners to remediate their buildings and do its best to prevent the costs of remediation being passed on to residents. The Government needs to do more to protect leaseholders in these situations and hold these building owners accountable.

The Government recently published its white paper on the Private Rented Sector, which commits to deliver a fairer, more secure and higher quality private rented sector. The pledges and ambitions laid out in this paper will be closely monitored by the Council to ensure that the Government delivers upon its promises.

### Theme Three: Actions

- Continue the Council’s licensing and enforcement activity in the private rented sector to improve management and physical standards
- Continue work addressing cold homes and fuel poverty in the private rented sector
- Continue to lobby the Government to introduce inflation-capped rent increases and stable, longer term tenancies in the private rented sector
- Continue monitoring all tall buildings in the borough so that any fire safety defects identified are remediated and push building owners to cover the cost of their own works
- Lobby the Government to do more to fix the cladding crisis and protect leaseholders trapped in unsafe buildings
- Take targeted action to improve housing conditions for vulnerable private renters to reduce health inequalities in the borough

## Theme Four Supporting those in Health and Housing Need

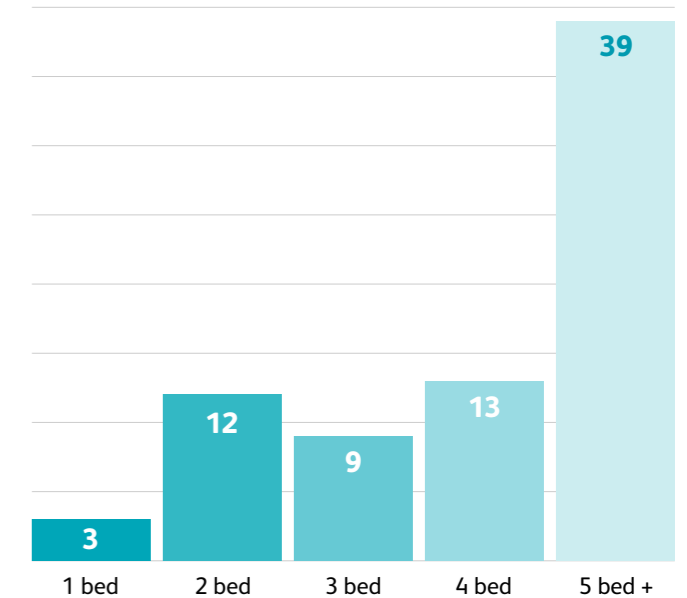
**Housing needs are wide ranging and severe in Hackney and this is due to a number of factors, of which the lack of supply of genuinely affordable housing and the impact of welfare reforms have had a significant impact.**

The Council's housing stock and the housing register both contain disproportionately high numbers of residents with social and health needs, including mental health problems - more than ever before. Hackney currently doesn't have the housing to meet demand for all of these residents of different needs; whether it be homelessness, specialist support, domestic abuse or care leavers. The challenge to support Hackney's residents is greater than ever.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the Council introduced rent freezes to further protect its residents financially and outreach work was carried out so that rough sleepers were provided with accommodation in hotels. However, the fact remains that there are more people on the housing register than ever before with health conditions and disabilities and there simply isn't enough housing to support them into a stable and secure home, both within the borough and in neighbouring boroughs.

Demand for social housing in Hackney continues to grow exponentially each year and the number of lets being made available continues to decrease yearly, thus exacerbating the problem further. Before the review of the lettings policy, for every 100 properties that became available the Council would receive 11,000 bids. More and more households are in priority need, with those considered to be in acute need rising from 18% in 2014 to 34% in 2021.

As you can see in the below graph, listing the average waiting time in years against the property size, the wait for family sized units is significant:



Average waiting time in years for permanent social housing by property size

In addition to this, homelessness levels are increasing and there are currently over 3,000 homeless households living in temporary accommodation either in or outside of the borough. Some of these households face years, if not decades in hostel accommodation if they wait for a social property. Being homeless has significant impacts on people's physical and mental health, with the average age of death of a homeless person being just 47 years - 30 years younger than the population average<sup>9</sup>. The Council has in place a Homelessness Strategy, with a refresh due in 2023, alongside strategies relating to temporary accommodation and rough sleepers.





In 2021, Hackney launched a new lettings policy that prioritised those residents in the highest need, but there still remains over 8,500 households on the waiting list. The new lettings policy aims to simplify the process and avoid the creation of false expectations. Going forward the Council needs to provide personalised housing advice and wrap-around support for those who may need support accessing the private rented sector. As well as this, continued work needs to be focused on mutual exchange offers and downsizing where necessary.

Issues for young people in gaining access to affordable housing in London remain, with many in-house shares in the private rented sector. The Council needs to maximise new affordable alternative options to the private rented sector, such as living rent, whereby those with a live/work connection on low to middle incomes are prioritised.

In the Social Care White Paper, the Government is promising to invest at least £300m into supported housing. This is a welcome announcement as demand is estimated to increase nationally by 2030. In 2020, Hackney Council published the Ageing Well Strategy which sets out the objectives for the Council for the next 5 years for its ageing population.

The Council would also like to increase the availability of supported housing to those with diagnosed mental health conditions.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 aims to ensure that victims have the confidence to come forward and report their experiences, safe in the knowledge that the state will do everything it can, both to support them and their children. Hackney will continue to work with the tier 1 authority (GLA) to provide refuge spaces as part of a more equitable pan-London approach to safe accommodation. Hackney is working towards DAHA accreditation, to provide support for victims and that effective action is taken against perpetrators living in the Council's homes.

The Council has a corporate parenting responsibility to care leavers and legal and moral obligation to do everything it can to try and set them up right as young adults. Care leaver feedback consistently highlights access to safe, stable housing as one of their key priorities in equipping them to achieve this. In order to respond to this, the Council will be exploring ways to support those leaving the care system at 21 who are unable to access a social tenancy. There are currently only 18 allocated tenancies available for over 400 care leavers annually

and more needs to be done so they are getting the support required when formally leaving the care of the borough and to avoid them having to end up presenting as homeless.

The Council will be exploring its approach to supported housing and independent living in detail in the new housing strategy. Through the feedback from the housing needs survey and the evidence base that is collated, the Council will be able to review its approach to independent living across the borough.

The Council is relaunching partnership working with Registered Providers operating in the borough. The Council has drafted, together with RPs, a Compact in order to improve partnership working, and align principles and priorities, across a range of issues and services and it will be adopted in early 2023. This Compact covers a wide range of partnership agreements including: new homes development; lettings and nominations; safeguarding and domestic abuse; health and wellbeing; and inclusive economy amongst other topics. Through this Compact the Council is able to promote its own public health initiatives around physical activity, mental wellbeing, suicide prevention, fuel poverty, smoking cessation, food poverty, tackling obesity and other key issues affecting Hackney residents.

National and local data and evidence showed that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, a disproportionate impact on people from ethnic minority populations and more deprived backgrounds<sup>10</sup>, who make up a large proportion of Hackney's social housing residents. This comes on top of stark pre-pandemic social disparities in health. Strengthened partnership action is essential in order to address these historic and stubborn health inequalities in Hackney.

Hackney's Health and Wellbeing Board produced a new strategy for publication in 2022, covering three main priorities - mental health, social connections and financial security. This strategy will aim to decrease health inequalities in the borough over the coming years. The Council will be doing all it can to support its residents in line with these priorities.

## Theme Four: Actions

- Provide personalised housing advice for those who are unable to access social rented housing, including support to access the private rented sector
- Continue supporting households in under-occupied social housing to voluntarily move to smaller more suitable homes, freeing up larger family homes
- Continue to lobby and raise with Government and others the impact that changes to the welfare system have on Hackney residents and the Council's ability to discharge its housing and homelessness prevention obligations
- Extend the opportunity of supported housing further than those who are 55+, to include those with diagnosed mental health conditions
- Implement the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and seek to achieve DAHA Accreditation
- Explore different ways in which the Council can offer better support to Care Leavers who are unable to access social tenancies
- Continue to work with social housing providers to reduce health inequalities and help people to be active, independent and healthy
- Continue improving services to residents across all tenures and providing support to residents with health and care needs
- Publish, adopt and commit to the priorities set out in the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy



## Theme Five

# Promoting Employment and Sustainable Communities

Hackney has seen dramatic change over recent years and the popularity of Hackney as a place to live has not only driven up the cost of housing in the borough, but has also brought significant economic opportunities for local residents. However, many are still not benefitting equally from the opportunities available and may feel excluded from this growth.

There still remains high levels of poverty and inequality, and, like many other London boroughs, the most deprived in society can often be living over the road from immense wealth and these social inequalities drive significant health inequalities. It is the diversity of Hackney that has made it such an exciting place to live and do business in. The Council hopes that all people, community groups and businesses benefit from opportunities that Hackney's economy brings.

### The Council's Inclusive Economy strategy aims to address this through its three priorities:

1. Support local neighbourhoods and town centres to thrive and to be inclusive and resilient places.
2. Champion and support local business and social enterprise in Hackney and protect and maximise the delivery of affordable workspace in the borough.
3. Connect residents to high-quality employment support and opportunities to learn new skills, get good quality, well-paid work and progress their career throughout their working life.

Through the delivery of mixed use development schemes in Hackney's town centres and growth areas Hackney will seek to maximise the delivery of new and affordable homes, as well as new affordable workspace, community facilities and infrastructure improvements to create inclusive and sustainable communities. Employment and training targets have been incorporated into all contractor and developer procurement exercises carried out by the Council's housing delivery teams, which include one apprenticeship per £2m contract value.

The Council is able to link developers to potential candidates through the Hackney Works talent pool so that local people are offered these opportunities.

The Council should be focusing its work around employment and adult education to all people in the borough, especially those in deprivation. The Council can make use of its community halls for these adult learning opportunities as they have direct links to the communities and mean that people can participate close to home. There will also be new opportunities for jobs and upskilling created through the green economy.

Housing affordability remains a concern for residents including a lack of housing for young people, key workers and first time buyers. The difficulty with key worker accommodation, especially in the wake of the pandemic, is how to decide a definitive list of what constitutes a key worker. In the depths of lockdown delivery drivers, supermarket workers and transport workers among others were essential to keeping the country running. Hackney has taken the approach that any type of key worker priority should be replaced by income banding as this will often capture this cohort.

Work spaces in Hackney Wick



Intermediate housing offers many young people and potential first time buyers a step on the ladder. Whether it be through being able to live in secure accommodation and save money in a Hackney Living Rent property, or taking the first step on the housing ladder in a Shared Ownership property. The vast majority of people living in the Council's own Shared Ownership and Hackney Living Rent schemes have all had a live/work connection in the borough through the work of the Hackney Sales team and the HLR lettings policy.

Intermediate housing benefits the local economy by enabling some of those working locally to be able to live close to their place of work. Intermediate housing also provides housing opportunities to groups of workers we all depend on, such as nurses and teachers, occupations where the cost of housing is causing recruitment and retention problems. The Council will continue to maximise the intermediate options available in the borough and explore the long term need for these through the evidence base commissioning for the next housing strategy.

## Theme Five: Actions

- Promote the delivery of high quality homes and affordable housing in Hackney's growth areas and town centres, alongside other facilities and infrastructure to support inclusive and resilient communities
- Use the opportunities created by the delivery of new homes and mixed use sites to maximise opportunities to create new affordable workspaces for local businesses
- Continue to maximise opportunities created by the Apprenticeship Levy
- Improve the adult learning offer, creating opportunities for adult education and employment and training advice through the use of community halls
- Prepare for the employment opportunities offered by the green economy
- Continue to maximise intermediate housing in the borough, with local people continuing to remain the priority for these homes



## Theme Six

# Preparing for a Greener Future

With the advent of the climate and ecological crisis, Governments have stepped up to take action to ensure global warming doesn't reach 1.5 degrees celsius above pre-industrial levels that would cause irreversible damage to the planet's climate. The possibility for Local Authorities to reduce UK emissions remains greater than ever. The Council recognises the scope to influence and is presently taking action to transition all Council functions to net zero by 2040 on the back of the climate emergency declaration in 2019. This Council-wide approach is laid out in the Climate Action Plan.

The current housing stock is not fit for future generational use. Greenhouse gas emission reductions from housing have stalled and efforts to adapt the housing stock to flooding, water scarcity and falling temperatures are falling behind the increased risk from the changing climate of the planet.

The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) now recommends a near complete decarbonisation of the UK's housing stock to meet its emission reduction targets. This recommendation is despite the chronic shortage of funding, a large skills gap, poor national guidance, policy gaps or weak policies to support low-carbon measures and unambitious building standards. The challenge is monumental, however, the opportunity to boost the local economy, increase jobs and skills in the borough, reduce fuel poverty, improve health, well being and comfort of Hackney's residents is unparalleled.

Alongside the Council's continued work to replace its most inefficient gas boilers with better performance boilers, retrofitting is the most relevant tool at its disposal to decarbonise the housing stock. The Council's retrofitting programme will be delivered as an enhancement to the ongoing maintenance

programme and Hackney's net zero pilot project will produce important lessons learned for future projects. Wider work as part of the manifesto commitments will be undertaken to continue lobbying the Government for further funding to help meet the cost of retrofitting the Council's entire housing stock.

Hackney's retrofit programmes will prioritise the 'fabric first approach' to maximise the performance of the components and materials that make up the building fabric itself. This will allow the Council to make the furthest initial strides in improving the EPC ratings of its dwellings while leveraging the net zero opportunity by continuing to swap gas boilers with innovative heating solutions such as communal air, ground and water source heat pumps.

Further improvements in energy efficiency will be made by connecting to low carbon district heat networks and installing solar panels with battery storage options to provide new sources of renewable power. This work will be compounded by the ongoing work with Adult Skills to train operatives as Retrofit Installers and other support functions under the Government backed PAS 2035 process.

The Council is also looking at reviewing the Planning Contributions SPD to adopt a more realistic carbon offset price to incentivise carbon savings on site. This new rate will need to be viability tested so that the full suite of policy requirements set out in LP33 such as affordable housing or open space requirements can still be achieved.

Hackney's planners are exploring ways to encourage developers to create low carbon (zero carbon if possible) buildings, rather than pay an offset fee and create inefficient buildings that will later have to be retrofitted.



Gardening project at the Nightingale Estate

Hackney is considering how to conduct procurement so that it gets more out of its commercial spend to deliver major social, economic and environmental benefits for local communities. While the Sustainable Procurement Strategy has expired, there is a draft strategy that is expected to take its place promoting more circular procurement by adopting the principles of reducing demand, reusing and recycling.

The strategy will reduce CO2 emissions in the Council's supply chain, proactively source low carbon and purchase sustainable timber products where possible. The Council will continue its net zero commitment for embodied carbon within the construction materials on its own developments and encourage more developers to build energy-efficient and net zero developments, exploring ways to encourage developers to create low carbon (zero carbon if possible) buildings, rather than pay a large offset fee and create inefficient buildings that will later have to be retrofitted. While Hackney is doing everything in its power to achieve the net zero

transition, the participation of residents is crucial. The Council has direct control of only 5% of the borough's emissions, and influence over another third, but more than half of the borough's emissions are directly linked to personal consumption, such as driving.

Hackney will offer alternative transportation options to its residents by rolling out 1,500 new EV charging points by 2024 which will include charging points on every estate and by doubling the amount of annual bike hangar installations. The Council will also look to build on its energy services arm, Hackney Light and Power, by aiming to reopen its Green homes scheme in early 2023 and by continuing the work to renew and build public or community-owned district energy networks, including at Woodberry Down and Colville Estate, to supply low carbon heat to homes, businesses and public buildings. All in all, the efforts outlined in this section will contribute to lower energy bills by what the CCC expects to be £70 to £260 annually for households. This is especially



important in a time where the Council's residents are disproportionately affected by the cost of living crisis that is exacerbated by the unprecedented increase in energy prices. The efforts will also help reduce the reliance of Hackney's residents on the unstable energy sector and provide energy independence to residents at a time where Russia's invasion of Ukraine is turning energy into an economical and social weapon.

The transition to Net Zero is still in its infancy, and as such, the information surrounding it is very limited. Organisations are engaged in a learning process which will inform the path they take to achieve Net Zero. Hackney should look to champion or engage in information sharing networks to improve the understanding of the Net Zero transition. The Housing Strategy & Policy team will also continue to monitor developments of national policy, such as the expected revision to the UK's Net Zero strategy and several of the bills announced earlier this year.

## Theme Six: Actions

- Transition all Council functions to net zero by 2040
- Deliver upon the goals and objectives laid out in the Council's Climate Action Plan
- Explore a trial of communal air, ground and water source heat pumps on homes that have had their fabric improved
- Promote the use of net zero construction materials and encourage more developers to build energy-efficient and net zero developments and explore ways to encourage developers to create low carbon buildings
- Offer alternative transportation options to Hackney's residents by rolling out 1,500 new EV charging points by 2024 which will include charging points on every estate and by doubling the amount of annual bike hangar installations
- Explore an expansion of the energy services arm, Hackney Light and Power, by aiming to reopen its Green homes scheme in early 2023 and by continuing the work to renew and build public or community-owned district energy networks



## Next Steps

**This position paper serves as an overview of the Council's approach to housing going forward from the previous strategy until the publication of the next. In the interim a new evidence base will be collated through the commissioning of the strategic housing market assessment and housing needs survey.**

A proper and full resident consultation and engagement exercise will be undertaken to include residents' voices in the new Housing Strategy. Alongside the housing needs survey, we will be carrying out a detailed wide-ranging consultation exercise, aimed at all members of the community.

This will include focus groups, questionnaires and interviews which will be aimed at identifying what the key priorities are for the community in Hackney. Before the publication of the new strategy we will also be running a housing strategy day to make sure that residents' voices are at the heart of our new strategy.

The actions listed in this document, either legacy commitments from the previous strategy or new commitments, can be monitored until the publication of the new strategy and/or incorporated as part of the new strategy.

## Key Strategic Actions for 2023

- Commission a new Housing Needs Survey & SHMA
- Collate the evidence base for and write and deliver the new Housing Strategy
- Continue maximising genuinely affordable housing across the borough, through the Council's direct delivery model, partnership working and area regeneration plans
- Show marked improvements in the Council's repairs service following further investment and deliver against the principles of the Asset Management Strategy when maintaining and improving Council stock
- Continue licensing and enforcement activity in the private rented sector to improve management and physical standards



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