

# WE ARE SHAPING.

# WE ARE NEWHAM.



# OUR HOMES.

## Introduction

The delivery of genuinely high-quality, affordable homes is critical, helping our residents to live healthy and happy lives. The COVID-19 pandemic has re-emphasised the connection between the quality of our homes and our physical and mental health. If our housing is good quality, we are more likely to make connections and thrive in our neighbourhood. Housing also has an important role to play in addressing the climate emergency, ensuring our homes are energy efficient, that we achieve carbon reduction targets and reduce the environmental impacts of construction. We need to ensure that recovery from the pandemic leads to better housing outcomes for all of our residents. This means not only delivering a sufficient number of new homes to meet our housing targets, but also providing housing that meets the needs of all our residents. The housing policies of the Local Plan will be fundamental to securing this future.

The current Local Plan policies that relate to this topic are:

- H1: Building Sustainable Mixed Communities
- H2: Affordable Housing
- H3: Specialist Accommodation Needs
- H4: Protecting and Re-Shaping the Existing Housing Stock

## What does our current policy seek to achieve?

### H1: Building Sustainable Mixed Communities

- Delivery of at least 43,000 new homes between 2018 and 2033.
- Well-designed and high quality homes and neighbourhoods, with access to supporting infrastructure and community facilities.
- A mix and balance of housing types, including requiring 39% of new dwellings to be 3 bedroom homes on sites capable of delivering 10 or more units and 10% of new build homes being delivered as wheelchair user dwellings.
- Delivery of housing on sites which aren't otherwise protected for other uses.

### H2: Affordable Housing

- Overarching strategic target for 50% of new homes delivered between 2018 and 2033 to be affordable units, ensuring affordability is not delivered at the expense of quality or housing mix.
- Individual sites, with the capacity for 10 or more units, to deliver between 35-50% affordable housing, with a tenure split of 60% social housing and 40% intermediate homes (a ratio of 50:50 is sought in the Canning Town and Custom House Regeneration Area).

### H3: Specialist Housing

- Delivery of homes to meet the local and strategic needs of all households, ensuring specialist forms of accommodation are provided in suitable locations and, where appropriate, aligned with local needs.
- Protection for older people's housing and other specialist accommodation for vulnerable people (falling under use class C2).
- Proportionate delivery of purpose-built student accommodation so it does not undermine the delivery of conventional housing.

### H4: Protecting and Re-shaping the Existing Housing Stock

- Protects all forms of housing unless replaced by equivalent floorspace.
- Specifically protects family-sized properties (3 or more beds).
- Supports the de-conversion of flats and Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) back into family dwellings.



## What you've told us

- Cost of living, housing affordability and high private sector rents remain significant concerns for our residents.
- We need to build more affordable and high quality housing, especially social rented homes, and ensure that new homes are supported by required infrastructure (for example, schools and GP surgeries).
- Young people are worried about the cost and insecurity of housing. Increasing the amount of affordable housing is one of young people's priorities for Newham.
- Considerable support has been shown for improving social integration and fostering relationships within the community, helping people to get to know their neighbours.
- There is a need to keep the history and culture of the borough alive, avoiding poor quality, 'faceless' housing developments.
- We need to clarify how we will support vulnerable young people, adults with mental health issues, people with disabilities, people who have experienced domestic violence and abuse and people with no recourse to public funds into housing.
- We need to ensure that temporary accommodation is of a high standard and that people living in temporary accommodation are receiving appropriate support.
- Residents want to be involved in housing decisions, both through engagement and being part of the solution to issues.
- Collaboration with the voluntary sector, community groups and unions on housing issues is welcomed.
- We need to ensure our objectives for housing delivery support and reflect other Council priorities and strategies, including the Borough's COVID-19 Re-orientation and Recovery Strategy, our Health and Wellbeing Strategy and supporting the local economy.

### Sources:

- [Newham's Housing Delivery Strategy Consultation Report](#)
- We Make Newham: Youth Assembly Event Findings Report 2021
- [Community Assemblies](#)
- [Royal Docks and OAPF: Engagement Report](#)
- Newham Survey 2018 and 2019





## What does the data tell us?

- Newham has a young population compared with the rest of the country, with the average median age being 32.7 years old. This means demand for housing will continue to increase in future years. A resident's age can sometimes affect their housing choice, particularly young people, in receipt of housing benefit, who are subject to the single accommodation rate.
- The borough does not have sufficient capacity in our pipeline of approved housing schemes to meet our housing target for the next five years.
- Completions of new housing have fallen behind our annual housing targets but permission rates remain high. The reasons for this gap include low market 'absorption rates' (the rate developers will release homes onto the market to prevent price falls), high costs of infrastructure and remediation, complex land ownerships and viability constraints.
- Delivery of affordable housing has fallen below our adopted strategic target. However, approval rates of affordable homes are improved and should translate into increased completion rates in future years.
- Delivery of family-sized homes has not kept pace with approval rates. However, existing policy protections for existing housing stock and family-sized homes have proved effective, being upheld through multiple appeal decisions.
- House prices have risen significantly in the borough, with the average median house price in Newham being £415,000 as of December 2020.
- Newham has a high proportion of households renting in the private sector (around 60,000), with average rents having increased by 40% between 2014 and 2019. In 2017 those from white, non-British ethnic backgrounds were most likely to rent their accommodation from a private landlord, with 75% of these ethnic groups living in the private sector. The next most likely to rent privately were those from Asian Indian backgrounds, one third of whom live in privately rented accommodation.
- Welfare reforms by the Government have affected some residents' access to housing. In 2018/19 Newham had the highest number of households in temporary accommodation and the second highest Local Authority waiting list for affordable housing in the country. This situation may be exacerbated in future years by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Overcrowding also continues to be a significant issue in Newham, with proposed amendments to our Housing Allocations Policy seeking to address this. The 2011 Census data showed that Bangladeshi and Black African residents in particular were more likely to be found in overcrowded households, and were more likely to be living in housing in a poor condition, or otherwise be more unsuitably housed than the white British population.
- Newham also has the highest rate of family homelessness in London, with this impacting children's start in life through increased risks to their physical and mental health. Data from Public Health England shows that Newham has the highest number of children living in poverty in London.

- Research has shown that people with a disability face barriers in accessing suitable housing. In 2017, research of Newham Survey responses found that residents with a disability were twice as likely to live in households in poverty before housing costs. Waiting times for wheelchair adapted homes in Newham remain high, particularly for larger family homes (four and five beds).
- Specialist housing remains a small proportion of the borough's housing delivery, reflective of the fact that most housing need remains in the conventional sector. However, a significant number of student bedrooms are currently being delivered in the London Legacy Development Corporation area.

#### **Sources:**

- [mid-2020 ONS MYE](#)
- [Newham Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy](#)
- [Newham Housing Delivery Strategy](#)
- [VOA Average Private Rents, Borough](#)
- [The Census 2011](#)
- [Understanding Newham 2017: Findings from Wave 9 of the Newham Household Panel Survey](#)
- [Building for Equality: Disability and the Built Environment](#)
- [ONS, Median house prices for administrative geographies](#)
- [Newham Recorder, Borough has the highest number of children living in poverty, study shows](#)
- [Newham 5 Year Land Supply Update](#)
- [Planning applications data 2019](#)
- [GOV.UK Statutory homelessness in England](#)
- [LAHS](#)
- Newham Occupational Therapist Data (2018)
- [Well Newham: 50 Steps to a Healthier Borough - The Evidence for Action](#)



## What are we required to consider and plan for?

### National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- Boroughs should establish a housing target and prepare a housing needs assessment to identify need for different types and tenures of homes. The size, type and tenure of housing for different groups in the community should be reflected in planning policies.
- Boroughs should prepare a strategic housing land availability assessment to understand land availability in the area. Plan policies should identify a supply of sites and locations of growth over the Plan period. At least 10% of the Borough's housing requirement should be on sites no larger than one hectare.
- Policies should specify on-site targets for the delivery of affordable housing where a need is identified. In most cases at least 10% of a major development's housing offer should be available for affordable home ownership.

### The London Plan (2021)

- Sets a target for Newham to deliver 32,800 new homes between 2019/20 and 2028/29, of which 3,800 homes should be on small sites (below 0.25ha).
- Strategic target for 50% of new homes delivered across London to be genuinely affordable, with a minimum affordable housing tenure split of 30% low-cost rented homes (London Affordable Rent or Social Rent) and 30% intermediate products (London Living Rent and Shared ownership), with the remaining 40% determined by boroughs based on their identified housing needs. The policy sets an expectation that affordable homes should be delivered on site and implements a threshold approach to affordable housing, with review mechanisms for schemes delivering less than policy compliant levels.
- Schemes should consist of a range of unit sizes, with appropriate mix being determined through a range of factors including robust evidence of local need.
- Housing floorspace should be protected or reprovided. Existing affordable housing floorspace should be retained or replaced by housing of an equivalent tenure.
- Developments and site allocations should follow a 'design-led' approach to optimising site capacity, responding to individual site contexts. Boroughs should seek to deliver high density in well-connected areas supported by required infrastructure. Further guidance is provided in the Good Quality Homes for all Londoners London Plan Guidance.

- At least 10% of dwellings should meet Building Regulation requirement M4(3) (wheelchair user dwellings). All other dwellings should meet Building Regulation requirement M4(2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings).
- The housing chapter sets out policy expectations with regards to a range of housing typologies and tenures, including:
  - Build to rent
  - Supported and specialised accommodation
  - Specialist older persons housing (Policy H12 sets a benchmark for delivery of 85 specialist older people's homes per annum in Newham between 2017 and 2029)
  - Gypsy and Traveller accommodation
  - Purpose-built student accommodation
  - Large-scale purpose-built shared living

### **Relevant London Plan chapters and policies:**

- Chapter 4 Housing
- Policy D6 Housing quality and standards
- Policy D7 Accessible housing

## What new trends and objectives do we want to address?

- **Over the course of the pandemic there has been a fall in London's population**, accompanied by a reduction in rental prices, particularly in inner London. We will continue to monitor the longer-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit on London's population and housing market.
- **There is a pressing need to address housing inequalities** in the borough, recognising that nearly 50% of our residents live in poverty when housing costs are taken into account. A significant amount of additional housing needs to be delivered in the borough at a price and level of quality that can enhance the lives of residents and ensure they can settle and put roots down in Newham. Delivering high quality housing will form a key foundation of Newham's recovery from the pandemic.
- **A number of new affordable housing products have been introduced**, including London Affordable Rent and London Living Rent. The Government has also announced its intention to introduce a new discounted affordable home ownership product, First Homes. It will be important to explore the affordability of these new tenures for our residents as part of the Local Plan evidence base.
- The **housing sector has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and wider economic instability**. Recognising that affordable homes are a stable asset, given high levels of need across London, delivering more affordable homes can help with the housing sector's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **The stability and quality of our housing can have a significant impact on our physical and mental health**. Housing needs to be well-designed, safe and adaptable to our changing needs. This may include increased space for homeworking and study, good quality kitchens, provision of private gardens, ensuring our homes are warm and energy efficient and are well-located in terms of access to facilities and open space.
- We want to place greater emphasis on the **contribution housing can make in addressing the climate emergency**, in particular through improvements to thermal and energy efficiency and through design choices (for example, dual aspect design).
- **A 29% rise in London's older population is expected across the next decade**. More adaptable housing and more tailored specialist provision will likely be required to provide greater housing options for older people.
- **Homelessness** has reduced slightly in the London as a result of the emergency measures put in place by the Government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, long-term trends in homelessness and the economic repercussions of the pandemic, which may lead to an increase in homelessness, mean that we

need to tackle issues of homeless and rough sleeping in the borough, ensuring homeless households are provided with housing options suitable to their needs and accompanied by appropriate support.

### Sources on data trends:

- [GLA Housing and Land, Quarterly Housing Market Report](#)
- [Financial Times, What London's falling population means for the housing market](#)
- [The RIBA Journal, Rethink: How Covid is rearranging the design of homes](#)
- [Newham Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy](#)
- [Centre for London, Third Age City: Housing for Older Londoners](#)
- [GLA, London's COVID-19 Housing Delivery Recovery Plan](#)
- [Newham Climate Emergency Action Plan](#)
- [Newham Well Newham 50 Steps to a Healthier Borough - The Evidence for Action](#)
- [Newham Towards a Better Newham COVID-19 Recovery Strategy](#)
- [Newham Community Wealth Building](#)





## What evidence will we use?

### Strategic Housing Market Assessment / Housing Needs Assessment

- The study will provide an assessment of housing need across the borough, helping us to plan for a mix of housing based on evidenced demographic and market trends as well as the needs of different groups in the community.
- It will help us to set affordable housing policies, informed by an up-to-date picture of our housing needs.

### Call for Sites

- The Call for Sites exercise will provide an opportunity for members of the public, businesses, landowners and developers to identify sites we may not know about and where there is an intention to undertake development in the future. The exercise will also give an indication of when these sites may be made available for development, which will feed into the Characterisation Study and housing trajectory.

### The Characterisation Study

- The Characterisation Study will identify the housing capacity of strategic sites and areas suitable for intensification, building on the design-led approach to optimising site capacity set out within the Good Quality Homes for all Londoners London Plan Guidance.



## Proposed policy changes:

- 1. We need to balance Newham's strategic importance in delivering London's housing target with providing homes that meet local needs within the borough.** We anticipate that Newham's housing need, identified through our updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Housing Needs Assessment evidence, will be less than our London Plan housing target. Therefore, we will need to update our policies to balance national and regional requirements with local housing need and viability. This may result in changes to our existing size and tenure mix requirements. These changes will be led by our evidence base.
- 2. We need to maximise the delivery of genuinely affordable homes that meet the needs of Newham's residents.** We anticipate that our evidence base will identify a significant need for social rented housing. We also want to explore the need for other affordable housing products, as well as explore the feasibility of introducing a more targeted approach to viability review mechanisms and affordable housing requirements on minor schemes (below 10 units). Changes to affordable housing policy will need to be tested through evidence, as we need to make sure any amendments are viable and deliverable across the plan period.
- 3. Balancing the need to protect family homes with meeting specialist housing needs, particularly of vulnerable groups.** Our adopted housing policies place emphasis on protecting family housing. This position has been beneficial in helping us to meet the considerable need for family-sized homes in the borough. However, we recognise that this approach can reduce housing options for rough sleepers, homeless people, people leaving care and single people. We also recognise that larger affordable homes may be needed to address issues of overcrowding. We will explore options for how the needs of those residents will be met while making sure we continue to protect and deliver family homes. Evidence around housing need and viability will inform any updates to our adopted family housing policy.
- 4. We will consider whether a renewed approach is needed in assessing applications for supported and specialist accommodation.** Specifically, we may move from one policy covering all types of specialist accommodation to specific policies for different types of housing to allow for more focused policies. Critically, any updates to our approach will need to ensure that accommodation is of a high quality, meets identified needs (including affordability where relevant) and is suitably located for its occupants. Exploring how and where best to meet the accommodation needs of different groups will be informed through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Housing Needs Assessment evidence base, as well as best practice and feedback from residents living in specialist accommodation.
- 5. We wish to explore how we can achieve best practice in the design of new housing, making sure new homes contribute positively to our residents' physical and mental wellbeing.** Homes delivered will need to be well-located, safe and designed to meet the varied needs of Newham's diverse population and be adaptable to people's changing circumstances over time.
- 6. Responding to the climate emergency needs to be further embedded in our approach to housing delivery.** We want to ensure that housing developments are energy efficient, reduce fuel poverty and contribute even further towards carbon reduction targets. However, we need to balance the cost of these requirements (for example net zero or Passivhaus) with other policy requirements for affordable housing and infrastructure. This policy may be contained within the sustainability section of the Local Plan.



## You tell us

- Do you agree with the proposed changes?
- Are there other changes we should consider?
- Is there anything missing?
- What do you think the main priority for housing delivery should be? (for example, affordability, size or types of accommodation, addressing the climate emergency etc.)
- What could improve the quality of housing provision within the borough? (for example, adaptable layouts, accessibility, proximity to shops and services etc.)
- Is there anything else we should be aware of when developing more tailored policies for different types of supported and specialist accommodation? (for example, around design or need for particular accommodation types)

