

# WE ARE BUILDING HOMES.

# WE ARE NEWHAM.



## HOMES FOR PEOPLE: NEWHAM'S HOUSING DELIVERY STRATEGY

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Final version July 2021

# HOMES FOR PEOPLE: INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION



Newham is a place of huge ambition, wonderful diversity and significant opportunity and we want it to be the best place for children to grow up in, and for people to live, work and fulfil their ambitions in today and for many years to come.

Preventing and alleviating homelessness and continuing to do everything we can to make sure that our residents are treated fairly, whether they are private or social renters, is also a key part of our approach to ensuring that everyone can have access to a secure good quality home. We will use our landlord licensing scheme to work with private landlords continue supporting tenants and improve conditions in the private rented sector.

Housing sufficiency and affordability is a significant issue within Newham, and London as a whole, with generations of Londoners unable to afford their rent and forced to live in overcrowded or unsuitable conditions. It's a well-documented fact that the quality of your home affects your health, children's attainment at school and the quality of family relationships.

We believe that every Newham resident has the right to access good quality and genuinely affordable housing that they can afford and not be forced to leave the borough just because of rising rents. That's why the Council is transforming the way housing is built and managed in Newham, and rethinking the orthodoxies of the last few decades.

This starts of course with building new homes, with a commitment to delivering new homes that are genuinely affordable to Newham residents and built to high environmental standards. We are taking a leading role in delivering more new homes through our housebuilding programme, almost all of which will be for social rent. We have clearly stated our ambition to start 1000 new social rented homes by 2022, a target we are on track to beat. We also have an ongoing programme to improve our existing Council homes, and make all our current homes fit for purpose and more environmentally friendly.

Investing in new and existing homes is only part of the Newham story however, we are steadfastly committed to putting people at the heart of housing in the borough by enabling residents to better engage with us and help us continually improve our housing service. It's vital that we get this right and press ahead with rolling out new and innovative engagement routes despite the challenges and new ways of working brought about the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

We are resolutely ambitious for Newham and all our residents. Whilst we recognise that the challenges ahead are significant, and we have much to do and a long way to go to realise these ambitions, we are confident we can deliver this new approach and make a difference for our residents.

This strategy sets out our plans for the next three to five years and outlines our first steps in the new direction. It will guide our actions as a Council and demonstrate to our residents and partners that we are serious about tackling the housing crisis.

We are indebted to everyone who contributed to the consultation on the draft Housing Delivery Strategy through the survey, letters, resident focus groups, and stakeholder meetings. Your feedback has been so valuable in shaping the final strategy and showcases the enormous benefits of working collaboratively with local residents and partners.

As we press ahead, changes to Government policy on housing, continued underfunding and the as yet unknown financial fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic will undoubtedly pose very real challenges to our abilities to deliver our plans. Nonetheless, we are determined to make a difference and deliver for local people. We are confident we can achieve.

## **WE ARE NEWHAM.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rokhsana Fiaz'.

### **Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz OBE**

Lead Member for Inclusive Economy and Housing Delivery

### **Cllr Shaban Mohammed**

Lead Member for Housing Services

**People at the Heart of Everything We Do**

# HOMES FOR PEOPLE: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2020, the Council published its draft Housing Delivery Strategy, with the aim of setting out how we will deliver the new homes the Borough needs, and meet our residents' broader housing needs. We then launched a public consultation from October 2020 to January 2021, to gather feedback from our residents and local stakeholders. We had the opportunity to discuss the strategy through public meetings with residents, voluntary and civic organisations, and professionals in the housing sector.

This final version of the Housing Delivery Strategy has been updated to respond to the comments we received during the consultation. Some of the main ways in which the strategy has changed following the consultation are:

- Prioritising the building, buying and securing of new homes within the strategy, as respondents told us that was the issue they felt most strongly about
- Clearly stating what we mean when we say 'affordable', 'genuinely affordable', and 'social' housing
- Providing more detail about the powers the Council has to deliver new homes and improve housing
- Changing the tone to reduce the amount of technical jargon
- Setting out where there will be opportunities for residents to tell us how well we are doing – not just setting internal targets for ourselves
- Addressing points that we missed the first time around – such as setting out our support for Community Land Trusts

Some of the comments we received are included in the strategy to illustrate how we have responded, and further information can be found in the accompanying Consultation Report.

The actions in this strategy are focused on what we can do now (over the next three to five years) within the resources and constraints that the council operates under (for more details, see The Council's Role on p12). They include:

## **BUILDING, BUYING AND SECURING MORE AND BETTER HOMES**

London is moving eastwards, and Newham is perfectly placed to take advantage of the opportunities this affords to deliver new homes for our residents. Increasing the housing supply in Newham is one of the key tools we have for tackling the housing crisis. We have one of the most ambitious housing targets of any local authority in the UK; the Local Plan sets out an indicative housing delivery of over 32,800 new homes by 2028/29.

Steps towards meeting this target will include the delivery of new homes through the Council's own affordable housebuilding programme, and planning for the next phases of Council-led development. It will also include the development of innovative approaches to boosting supply such building new affordable homes on the top floors of existing buildings, modular homes to boost temporary accommodation, and a joint venture with the NHS. We will ensure that new homes delivered through our partners as well as our own housebuilding programme are able to meet a range of housing needs.

We will also procure and acquire new homes, bringing them into use as temporary accommodation or as Council homes to be let at social rent.

We will work with partners including private developers, housing associations and GLA and TfL to ensure that not only are new homes delivered, but that genuinely affordable housing is maximised in new developments.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## PUTTING PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF HOUSING

We are developing a resident involvement strategy, which will set out the housing service's new residents-first approach. We are creating more opportunities for residents to discuss housing issues face-to-face through housing hubs, housing liaison officers, and regular tenant and leaseholder forums. Our responses to homelessness and rough sleeping will be caring and compassionate, and across our regeneration programmes we will continue to prioritise co-production and take the views and concerns of residents into account.



## ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

A quarter of Newham's CO2 emissions come from domestic energy use. To tackle this we are setting ourselves high standards for low-energy homes in new Council-led developments, and using planning powers to ensure that homes delivered by our partners are also ambitious. We will be starting a programme of energy-efficient retrofit across Council properties and using the landlord licensing scheme to address poor energy management and standards in the PRS. We also are exploring an innovative retrofit scheme that would incentivise owner-occupiers to invest in making older homes more energy efficient.



## A SAFE AND SECURE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

We will build on the existing Council's landlord licensing schemes and look to continue these into a third five-year term to consolidate what we have already achieved. We are now building a sustainable PRS, utilising the regulatory licensing framework to encourage the rights of tenants and ensure that all landlords take their responsibilities seriously. We will also focus on tackling poor energy performance in the PRS using all the levers and incentives available. We will continue to promote a professional PRS to drive up quality and safety, and continue to campaign for legal and administrative changes to provide greater security of tenure, protection from rapid rent rises and illegal eviction, simplified regulatory regimes and higher penalties for bad landlords.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## BETTER COUNCIL STOCK AND SPECIALIST HOUSING

Newham owns just under 16,000 social rented homes. With a housing register with more than 28,000 applicants, it's crucial that these properties are allocated in the best possible way. We are therefore reviewing the way we allocate Council properties via the waiting list, to ensure that those most in need are prioritised. Proposals will be consulted on from September to December 2020. We will also invest in these existing properties to ensure that these properties are safe, well maintained and managed, contribute to climate change avoidance and mitigation, and that the Council housing portfolio grows to help meet the high demand for affordable housing. We will also ensure that specialist housing needs for vulnerable adults and children leaving care are met.

## TACKLING HOMELESSNESS

We will work to prevent homelessness by providing good quality advice and information and where homelessness cannot be prevented, we will ensure early intervention and a caring and compassionate approach. We will build on the progress on rough sleeping made with the "everybody in" programme and develop a long-term plan for Stratford to reduce the numbers of rough sleepers using the Stratford Centre. We will reduce the numbers in temporary accommodation by procuring longer term solutions, including more supported housing.

We will also be campaigning for changes to national policy, in particular around:

- funding and supporting affordable housebuilding programmes;
- regulating for and funding a Green New Deal to address climate change;
- regulating the private rented sector and protecting the rights of tenants;
- ensuring that universal credit and welfare more generally supports and reflects housing need;
- reforming the 'right to buy'

## LINKS TO OTHER STRATEGIES

Housing is one part of the wider picture in Newham. Housing, health, and economic wellbeing are closely interwoven, as the Covid-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus.

The Housing Delivery Strategy links closely with:

- Towards a Better Newham: Covid-19 Recovery Strategy (2020); and
- Well Newham: 50 Steps to a Healthier Borough (2020)

These strategies take a holistic approach to improving social and economic wellbeing, and physical and mental health. We know that delivering the high-quality, genuinely affordable housing we need will be an important element of building a Borough that is healthier, happier, and with improved wellbeing.





# THE HOUSING CRISIS IN NEWHAM

# THE HOUSING CRISIS IN NEWHAM

London has been at the centre of the nation's housing crisis for some years, with rents and house prices increasing at a much faster rate than incomes. Newham has experienced many of the same symptoms of the housing crisis as other boroughs, but with some additional pressures as a result of its unique character and history. It also has a number of opportunities and success stories that provide the key to alleviating the housing pressures on our residents.

The following section uses data to set out the key challenges and opportunities for housing in Newham.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Housing in London has been rapidly growing less affordable in recent years and although in previous years Newham has been cheaper than many other Boroughs, it has now caught up with the rest of London.

The high cost of housing in Newham is compounded by the low earnings of Newham residents. Newham has the lowest average wages in London with 30% earning less than the national living wage. Average rents in the Borough now represent 65% of average wages compared to 30% across the UK. 49% of Newham residents are in poverty after housing costs are taken into account.

This problem is worsening over time. Between 2011 and 2020:

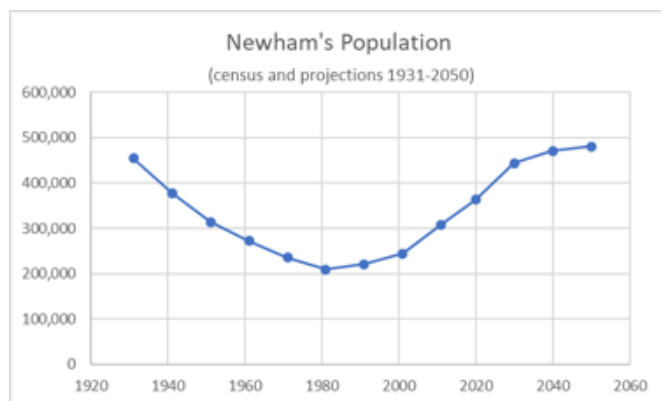
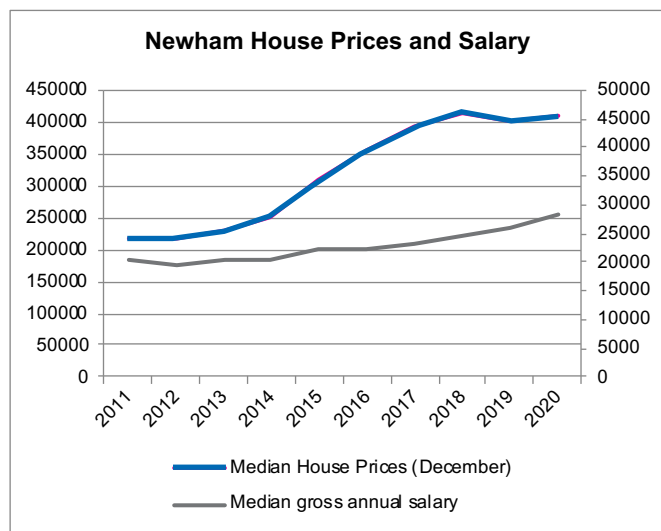
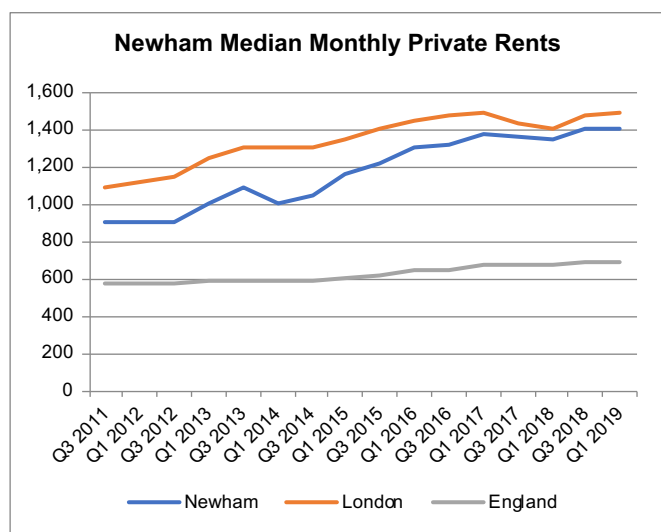
- rents in Newham increased by 55%;
- house prices increased by 87%; but
- wages only rose by 37%.

## DELIVERY OF NEW HOMES

Newham has a growing, ageing, and highly diverse population. Newham's population is growing and is projected to reach 480,000 by 2050, more than doubling the population of the 1980s.

However in past decades the housing stock being built has not kept up with need. In the 10 years to 2018 the population grew by 25% while the number of homes in Newham grew by 14%.

When local authorities reduced the building of new Council homes in the late 1980s, the private sector did not deliver sufficient additional homes to meet the need.



# THE HOUSING CRISIS IN NEWHAM

Alongside traditional social rents, which are set locally by a formula, in 2011 the Government introduced ‘affordable rent’, which could be up to 80% of market rent. This new tenure, generally found in homes supplied by housing associations, was often not affordable for local people and has created confusion and mistrust for many. As a result, the Council does not regard 80% market rent as genuinely affordable.

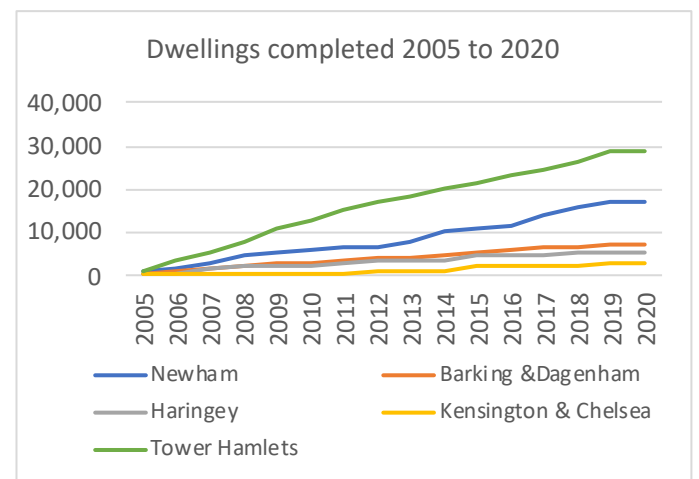
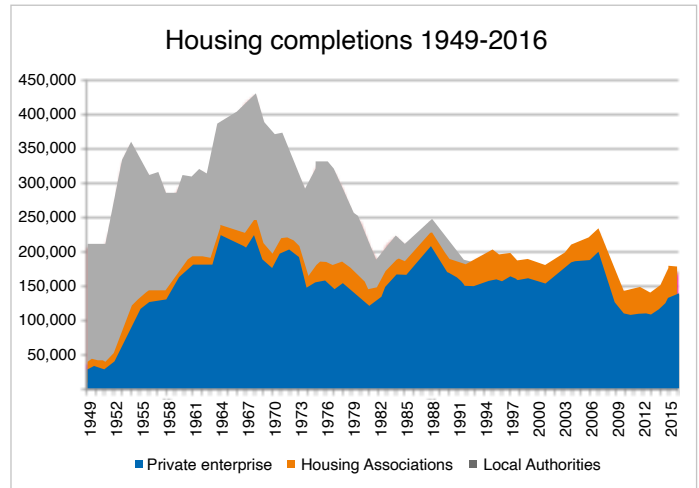
Newham’s housing delivery targets are now amongst the highest in London. Private investment has delivered an increase in new homes completed in recent years, but not enough to match demand, particularly for social rented (genuinely affordable) homes. Newham has the second largest pipeline of new homes in London with over 24,000 houses and flats with planning permission waiting to be built.

As a result of undersupply and declining stock, the Council has launched an ambitious programme of building genuinely affordable homes to be let by the Council at social rents. In October 2018, Newham received a £107,476,000 grant from the GLA’s Building Council Homes for Londoners fund, the largest of any London borough. This funding has given a boost to the Council’s target to start over 1000 new social-rented homes by 2022, which it is set to beat.

As well as increasing the supply available to residents on the Housing Register (waiting list), having our own housebuilding programme has several advantages:

- retaining land and value uplift within the borough;
- controlling the rate of delivery without being so tied to housing price cycles;
- greater control over ‘placemaking’;
- controlling the type of home that is built – in particular affordable housing.

The Council also has the advantage of having some of the largest strategic sites in London available for housing. Unlike many other boroughs, we have never sold significant amounts of our landholdings. Having landholdings available for building will reduce the cost of our housebuilding ambitions.



# THE HOUSING CRISIS IN NEWHAM

## HOMELESSNESS

Newham has the highest overall level of homelessness in England.

In December 2020, Newham had 5,780 households in temporary accommodation which is the highest number in the country. This equates to 48 in every 1,000 households living in temporary accommodation. The Council is working hard to reduce these numbers and has set ambitious targets to reduce the numbers of households placed in temporary accommodation year on year.

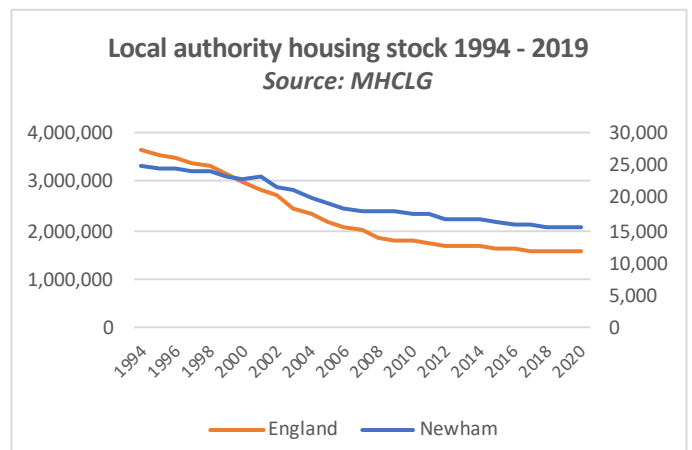
There were 724 rough sleepers in Newham in 2019/20, the second highest in London, behind Westminster. However in 2020/21 the number of rough sleepers fell dramatically, and in February 2021 Newham had only seven rough sleepers. This huge reduction is the result in large part of the 'everyone in' directive from national Government at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Council swiftly mobilised to assess and accommodate rough sleepers regardless of immigration status or local connection. Hotels and houses of multiple occupation (HMOs) were procured directly by the Council, with the accommodation later re-profiled to better meet the needs of rough sleepers (for example, female-specific schemes, and locations for people with high risk of drug and alcohol abuse). This has provided rich intelligence about the needs of rough sleepers and capacity for future work.

## RIGHT TO BUY

As the homes lost to the Council under the Right to Buy policy have not been replaced in recent years, the number of Council owned homes has been falling for years. In the last 25 years the council's housing stock has fallen by 38%.

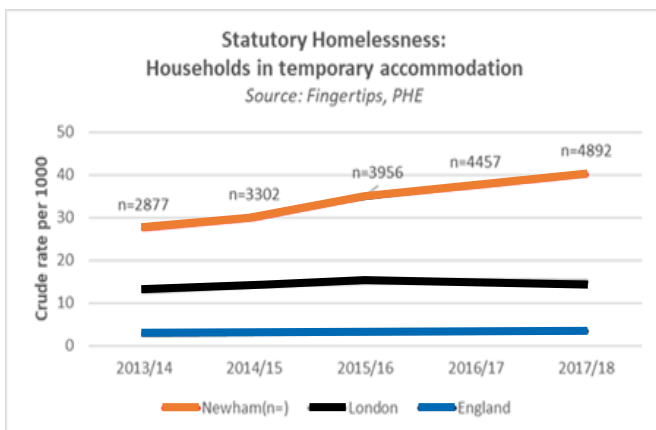
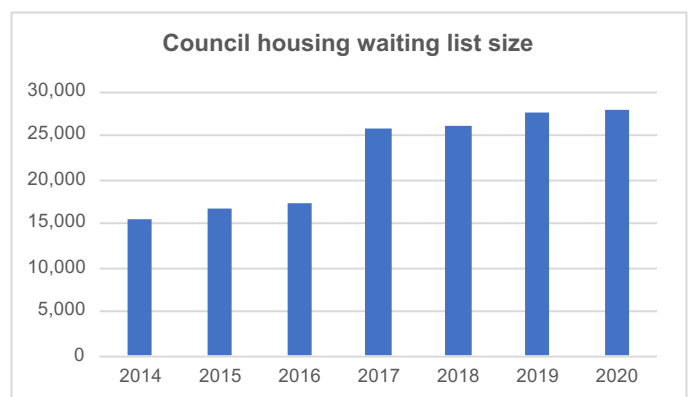
47% of Council homes sold under right to buy in Newham are not occupied by former council tenants, as the properties are 'flipped' to be rented out in the private sector.



## HOUSING REGISTER

Newham's housing waiting list is the largest in London, at over 28,000 households. This has grown 80% in the last 5 years.

This has led the Council to review how it allocates Council homes, to ensure homes go to those in the greatest need.



# THE HOUSING CRISIS IN NEWHAM

## OVERCROWDING

The 2011 census found 25% of households to be overcrowded, the worst rate in London. Poor affordability and an under-supply of family-sized homes contribute to this problem.

Overcrowded homes:

- affect mental health and stress related illness;
- increase the risk of infectious diseases (such as Covid-19 and TB);
- impacts children’s physical health, and their ability to play and study

The Council has chosen to target severely overcrowded households in its proposed changes to the Housing Allocations Policy. Under the proposals, households who are overcrowded by two or more bedrooms and have an additional housing need will be prioritised for choice-based lettings.

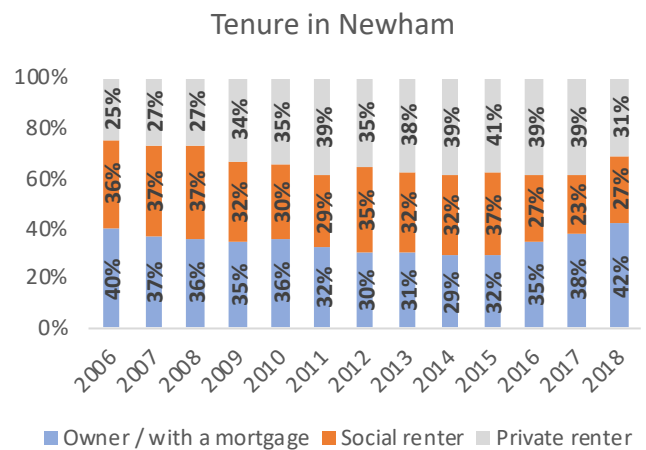
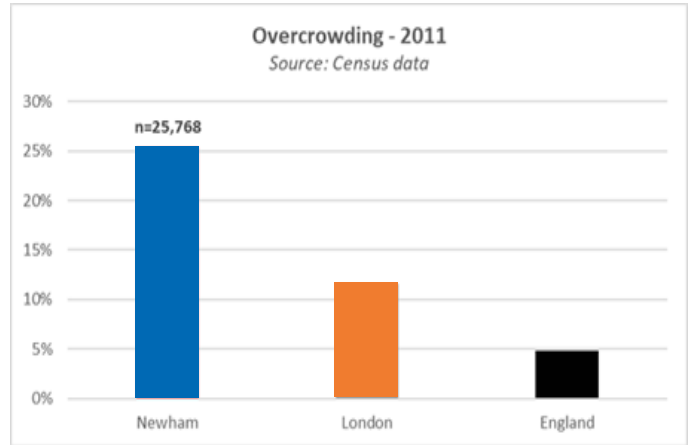
## PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

Newham has one of the largest private rented sectors in the UK, with just under a third of residents renting privately. At the same time, the proportion of residents living in social rented accommodation has shrunk.

Rental contracts in this sector are generally 12 months, at which point tenants can be evicted without reason.

Many properties in this sector suffer from poor quality, a minority of criminal landlords persist in carrying out illegal evictions and harassment of tenants.

In response to this, the Council pioneered its landlord licensing scheme in 2013. Now in its second iteration, we are seeking to tackle issues of hazardous properties and poor energy performance in the private rented sector, as well as continuing to crack down on rogue landlords.



# THE HOUSING CRISIS IN NEWHAM

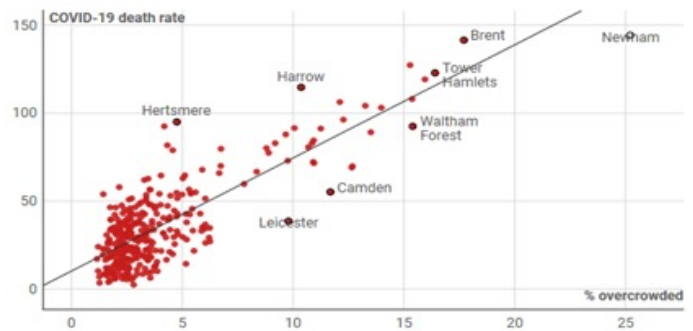
## PUBLIC HEALTH

The Covid pandemic has highlighted the link between poor housing and poor health, with local authorities with high rates of overcrowding also experiencing high death rates.

Before the pandemic, life expectancy was already lower in Newham relative to London (1.2 years for males and 1.6 years for females). As is Healthy Life expectancy (3.6 years for male and female) and disability free life expectancy (7 years for male and 4.6 years for female).

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council published its Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 'Well Newham: 50 Steps to a Healthier Borough', which takes a holistic approach to improving overall health and wellbeing in the borough, including through housing.

COVID-19 death rates versus housing overcrowding



COVID-19 death rates shown per 100,000 people between 1 March and 17 April  
Chart: Nathaniel Barker - Source: ONS - Get the data - Created with Datawrapper

## ENERGY PERFORMANCE

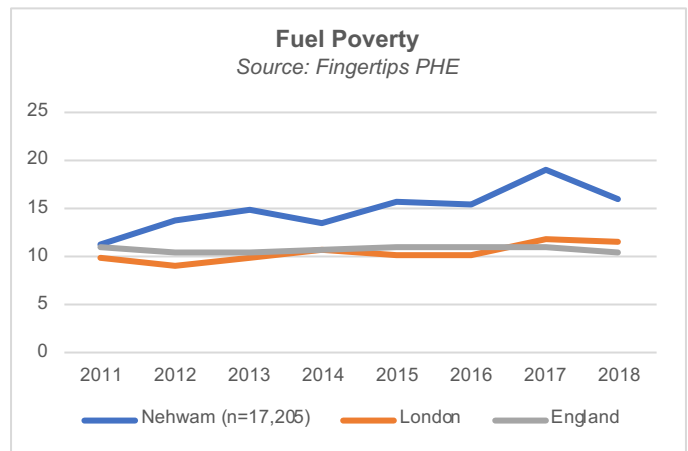
The environmental performance of housing in Newham is poor which contributes to the climate emergency. 25% of the Borough's carbon footprint comes from domestic energy use, which means housing must be made more energy efficient if the Council is to meet its 2050 targets.

Only 63% of Newham homes have an Environmental Performance Certificate and over half of those that do have a rating of D or below.

A combination of poor energy performance in homes and low incomes means Newham has the highest fuel poverty rates in the UK. Fuel poverty means a household spends more than 10% of their income on heating.

Fuel Poverty

Source: Fingertips PHE



# OUR NEW APPROACH TO HOUSING FOR NEWHAM

# OUR NEW APPROACH TO HOUSING FOR NEWHAM

## PRINCIPLES

As the Council has not had a Housing Delivery Strategy for many years, we are taking this opportunity to set out some principles for what we believe the role of housing should be. The following principles underpin the strategy and its actions:

- The cost of housing should be affordable for residents;
- New homes should be decent quality, well designed, secure, and suitable for a diverse population whether that is older people, extended families, single people or people with specialist needs;
- Residents should be fully involved in shaping the future of housing in the borough;
- Residents should be treated fairly and with respect regardless of whether they are a private or social renter, or owner-occupier;
- People experiencing homelessness should be treated with care and compassion;
- No household should be forced to live in an overcrowded home;
- Renters should have secure, quality homes regardless of whether they are Council tenants, housing association tenants, or living in the private rented sector;
- Homes should promote good physical and mental health;
- Our housing programme should help reduce poverty, and play a role in tackling racial and gender inequities;
- Our housing programme should strengthen community wealth building and support economic wellbeing;
- Our investments in new neighbourhoods should make Newham a greener, more child-friendly place for communities
- Universal credit and welfare more generally should support people with critical housing needs and reflect the scale of the housing crisis;
- The Right To Buy should be reformed





# OUR NEW APPROACH TO HOUSING FOR NEWHAM

## MAJOR PROJECTS

### LONDON LEGACY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) was established in 2012 to develop the area around the Olympic site. Although the Council sometimes collaborates with LLDC on specific projects, it is in charge of development in this area. It is also the planning authority for this part of Newham – Newham will take back planning powers in 2024. For more information, see action 1.7.

### THE CARPENTERS ESTATE

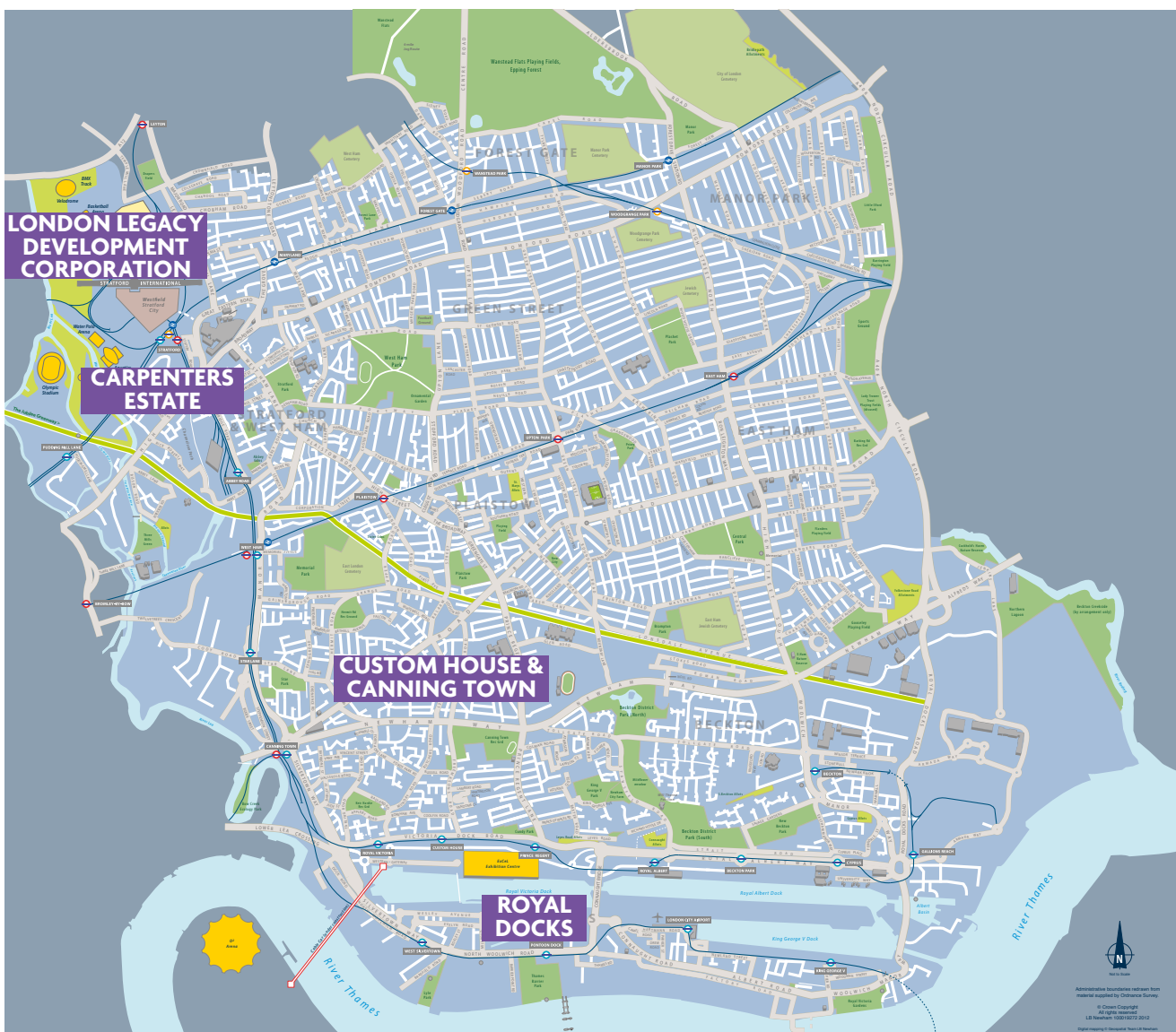
The Council is regenerating the Carpenters Estate in Stratford – this will be led by the Council rather than a private developer. For more information, see action 1.3

### CUSTOM HOUSE AND CANNING TOWN

Work is underway in the regeneration of Custom House and Canning Town, in collaboration with local residents. For more information, see action 1.4

### ROYAL DOCKS

The Royal Docks is London's only Enterprise Zone and is a joint project between the Mayor of London, Newham Council – led by Mayor Fiaz – and the London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP). It has the potential to deliver 35,000 jobs, 4,000 new homes and more than £5 billion of inward investment by 2037/38. For more information, see action 1.7



# OUR NEW APPROACH TO HOUSING FOR NEWHAM

## THE COUNCIL'S ROLE

While the Council is committed to using all the possible tools to increase the supply of new homes, our powers are limited in some areas. The following table sets out some of our main powers, and areas where we are unable to intervene.

WHAT WE CAN DO	WHAT WE CAN'T DO
Build new homes ourselves or through our housing company, Populo Living. Most of these will be genuinely affordable (social-rented and London Affordable rent) as we have funding from the GLA and from our ringfenced housing funding (housing revenue account).	Force private developers to deliver 100% social-rented in all new developments – it wouldn't be financially viable for them. Instead, we negotiate to secure the greatest possible share of social-rented homes. We also can't increase the number of social-rented homes where this has already been agreed.
Use the landlord licensing scheme to improve the quality and management of homes in the private rented sector (subject to the Secretary of State's approval).	Use a rent cap to keep rents low – the Government would have to introduce new policies to allow us to do that
Work on reducing the numbers of people in temporary accommodation and either allocating them a permanent Council tenancy through the Housing Register, or finding them a suitable home in the private rented sector	Convert people's temporary accommodation tenancies to permanent Council tenancies within the same property
Take action to stop people fraudulently using the Right to Buy discounts for profit, for example immediately converting properties into private-rented homes or taking advantage of vulnerable relatives	Cancel the Right-to-Buy – this is national policy
Make changes to homes that are in the private rented sector or owner-occupied to make them more environmentally friendly	Incentivise homeowners to make improvements to their properties, and enable them to take advantage of national grant schemes. If it is a rental property, we can take legal action against landlords whose homes don't meet minimum energy-efficiency standards.
Increase the supply of social-rented properties so that households have a greater range of housing options, and provide information about government schemes to support first-time buyers	Reduce the cost of buying a home – this is determined by the market
Use our planning powers to ensure new developments are high-quality, sustainable and attractive places to live	Make changes to new developments by private developers or housing associations if they already have or do not require planning permission.

# SECTION 1. BUILDING, BUYING AND SECURING MORE AND BETTER HOMES

# 1. BUILDING, BUYING & SECURING MORE AND BETTER HOMES

## BUILDING HOMES

Delivering new homes for our residents is a key priority for the Council, and we are prioritising social-rented properties because we believe this is the most important for our existing residents, given the huge size of the Council's Housing Register (waiting list). Genuinely affordable homes also benefit residents on low incomes, who are in turn more likely to be from BAME backgrounds or disabled, and so these homes are key to delivering on the Council's equality and Community Wealth-Building goals.

We are committed to delivering 1000 new homes at social rent levels, starting on site before March 2022. We aim to deliver 50% of all the new homes built on Council-owned land as social-rented properties, and have established our 'Affordable Homes for Newham' programme to enable us to build homes ourselves, without relying on the private sector to deliver on our behalf. We have also repurposed our wholly-owned housing company, Populo Living, to deliver 50% of its new homes at social rent levels.

We understand that some definitions of 'affordable housing', such as 80% of market rent, are not affordable to the majority of our residents, and we do not regard them as part of our affordable housing supply. Instead, Affordable Homes for Newham and Populo Living are delivering 'genuinely affordable', or social-rented homes, which includes:

- **Social rent:** the basis for traditional council housing rents, set according to a formula set by government.
- **London Affordable Rent (LAR):** Although not identical (and not formula generated), rents are only slightly higher than traditional Council rents. LAR was created by the Greater London Authority, as the funding agency in London for affordable homes, to enable Councils to access Government funding for 'affordable rent' when funding for social rent was not available. It also gives us a slightly improved financial position that allows us to focus on building as many affordable rented homes as possible in this programme.

### You told us:

"Build social housing! This creates a bulwark against runaway prices in the private sector"

"New properties should be built big enough for people to live comfortably, not crammed in"

"Utilising existing and potential land should be a priority"

"We would welcome the inclusion of CLTs into this strategy as a marker towards the realisation of the first CLT in Newham next year, and more in the years to come"

Our Affordable Homes for Newham programme is supported by grant from the GLA, and rents will be set at the London Affordable Rent level. The programme is vital to ensure that housing:

- is built out and delivered at our pace and supports the local economy;
- contributes to our wider placemaking ambitions for Newham, delivering sustainable communities;
- helps address climate change and improve public health and safety;
- delivers value for money out of one of the Council's biggest assets – its land - and create economies of scale and efficiencies in delivery.

In some cases, the Council, Populo Living or more commonly housing associations or private developers build other types of housing, for example for market sale or rent, to fund the delivery of new social rented homes.

Our Local Plan (2018) is clear that in these cases, between 35-50% of the number of proposed units should be provided as 'affordable housing' comprising a tenure mix of 60% social housing and 40% intermediate homes (for example shared ownership). An even split of tenures is sought in the Canning Town and Custom House Regeneration Area.

Populo Living also delivers great quality, well managed modern homes for market, and the rents from these help to subsidise the properties at social rent levels.

# 1. BUILDING, BUYING & SECURING MORE AND BETTER HOMES

## BUYING HOMES

As well as building new homes, there are circumstances where it makes sense for the council to buy existing homes or take part in new development schemes led by others. The council has done this in the past – recently it bought 211 affordable homes on the site of the old West Ham ground. In a changing market, we have positioned ourselves to act on opportunities to buy properties at scale where the opportunity is right.

## SECURING HOMES

Newham has an ambitious new London Plan housing target of 32,800 new homes 2019/19 to 2028/29, and most of this new housing will be built by the private sector (including housing associations). The planning system is used to regulate what is built including the type and quality of housing, and most importantly the amount of affordable housing that is required to be delivered as part of the planning permission. We aim to attract private investment where it delivers the housing Newham needs.

## 1.1 DELIVER OUR AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR NEWHAM PROGRAMME

We have an ambitious Council house building programme that is being delivered by the council and its local housing company, Populo Living.

We are committing hundreds of millions of pounds to this significant housebuilding programme, which is part of a sector-wide change in the roles Councils take, building new homes ourselves in addition to those being built by the private sector. We are using our Council-owned land to deliver new homes, and we are using the sale of the market housing we are building to fund more genuinely affordable homes. We have Investment Partner status with the GLA as our schemes are part of the Building Council Homes for Londoners programme.

Our Affordable Homes for Newham programme will provide more than 1000 new genuinely affordable rented homes, started on site by March 2022. Alongside this, we will deliver a further 700 homes of other tenures including shared ownership and market rent

Our new homes will meet Lifetime Homes standards, to be adaptable to the changing needs of our diverse residents over time. Lifetime Homes have a number of benefits, for example making it easier for families to use and store pushchairs, and enabling residents to stay in their home if they develop mobility issues and require wheelchair access.

Our new homes will also prioritise energy efficiency and environmental standards. For new schemes currently in design, we have adopted the Passivhaus Classic standard, which focuses on keeping energy use low by careful design and construction – typically reducing space heating requirements by 75% and keeping residents' energy bills low.



# 1. BUILDING, BUYING & SECURING MORE AND BETTER HOMES

## 1.2 SET OUT THE NEXT PHASE OF NEWHAM-LED DEVELOPMENT

The Council is the biggest landowner in the borough, and we want to make best use of this land to deliver new homes for Newham residents.

We are now looking at Council-owned land across the borough that could be used for the next phase of housebuilding.

The principles that will shape the next phase include:

- Involving residents in planning – decisions will take account of residents' views
- Delivering homes that suit a diversity of needs, in recognition of our diverse population – see also 1.9
- Continued focus on genuinely affordable housing
- Strategic use of land, skills and capacity – as the council's most precious resources.
- Value for money – drive down cost per unit through innovation, economies of scale and standardisation
- Partnership working – partnerships with the private and Housing Association sectors can bring valuable capacity, synergy and creativity to the programme
- Zero Carbon in line with the Newham and London plans.
- Design Standards – in compliance with Newham's policies to support the delivery of better neighbourhoods.
- Mixed Communities – building for a range of markets (social rented, young professionals, older people's housing etc) in one place is good business as well as good for social integration. We will focus on providing family-sized accommodation, which we know is in short supply, contributing to overcrowding.

Where appropriate, we will make use of land that has been cleared for regeneration for temporary accommodation. We will work with Place Ltd, a company set up by London Councils to use factory built modular homes to create temporary housing, to develop proposals for the borough. As well as creating much

needed temporary accommodation this has the benefit of ensuring that regeneration areas remain good liveable places.

The Council's first priority for investment is to ensure that our existing homes are safe and well maintained. Newham has invested considerable sums invested in fire safety works over the last year, including de-cladding of blocks with ACM and High Pressure Laminate wall systems. Should additional investment in existing stock be required as a result of changing building safety standards, we will prioritise this expenditure and this may result in lower capacity to deliver new homes through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Our HRA is a ringfenced account for finances relating to council social housing, and we maintain a 30 year Business Plan to forecast long-term income and expenditure. We will review this plan on a regular basis to update assumptions, respond to economic, political, and sector changes, and assign long-term investment in our existing homes and understand capacity for increasing supply of new Council homes.

However the HRA is not the only source of funding for new affordable homes, and as set out elsewhere in this report, we are looking at a wide range of delivery options for new affordable homes.



# 1. BUILDING, BUYING & SECURING MORE AND BETTER HOMES

## 1.3 DELIVER ON THE CARPENTERS ESTATE

The regeneration of the Carpenters Estate is a long-held ambition that has gone through a number of unsuccessful plans over the last 15 years. Populo Living have been appointed by the Council to lead the development of proposals, with a clear brief to work in conjunction with local people and produce a masterplan that embraces residents' views, delivers affordable housing, and is financially viable.

The masterplan will:

- Reflect the views of the residents
- Focus on design and a mix of housing types that generates value and benefits the full diversity of our residents
- Maximise affordable housing
- Aim for the refurbishment of one of the tower blocks to minimise the environmental impact of the regeneration
- Make the most of the Carpenters' strategic location next to Stratford station and the Olympic park, and the building craft college in the estate

We will publish a resident led masterplan and hold a ballot in autumn 2021

If the results of the ballot support the development, we aim be on site to start delivering that masterplan by 2022.

## 1.4 DELIVER NEW HOMES IN CUSTOM HOUSE AND CANNING TOWN

Custom House/Canning Town is one of the largest regeneration programmes in London, and has been running for over 15 years.

The long-term aim is to provide thousands of new homes, and improve the heart of the neighbourhood at Freemasons Road in Custom House to provide great local facilities for residents.. The overall level of investment exceeds £1bn. Phase 1 has delivered 2,400 homes through development agreements with third party developers, with 37% affordable homes.

Since May 2018 the Council has increased its focus on social rented housing, seeking to secure an increase in genuinely affordable housing through the regeneration in Custom House and Canning Town. We therefore aim to deliver 50% genuinely affordable homes (social-rented or London Affordable Rent) for the remainder of the programme.

Working with local residents has been the central theme of the regeneration planning, and the learning from this experience will inform future co-design work. We will bring forward the first proposals for schemes in Custom House in 2021.



# 1. BUILDING, BUYING & SECURING MORE AND BETTER HOMES

## 1.5 ROOFTOP DEVELOPMENT TO DELIVER NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES

As well as building on Council-owned land, we have the opportunity to build new homes on top of existing buildings. In Newham this could mean up to 1,000 homes on top of existing blocks of flats.

We will test the feasibility of a development programme which could:

- Shorten development timescales by using factory-based construction.
- Provide savings on upgrades and planned maintenance of existing buildings
- Provide an opportunity to improve the carbon footprint of the building through reduced heat loss through roofs and incorporating green technology during the refurbishment process
- Improve the design of the skyline
- Deliver new affordable homes in existing neighbourhoods and estates and contribute to their future success

In December 2020, the Council gave the go-ahead for a feasibility programme for up to 211 new homes. This will be delivered through a collaboration between Populo Living and the Council.

The Council will work with residents and Populo Living to develop a set of proposals for rooftop development, including bringing forward the first scheme to planning in late 2021.

## 1.6 DELIVER NEW HOMES ALONGSIDE NEW HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

This will redevelop the health estate in Newham to produce both new healthcare facilities that support integrated care and 180 new homes. This joint venture with the NHS will acquire 20/21 sites and investment of around £200m is anticipated across the portfolio. New homes will be available for and affordable to key workers.

## 1.7 WORK WITH PARTNERS TO DELIVER ON NATIONALLY-SIGNIFICANT REGENERATION PROGRAMMES

### LLDC

The London Legacy Development Corporation was established in 2012 and took over planning powers around the Olympic site and some significant landholdings from the Olympic Delivery Authority and others. Since then, as well as the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and stadium, the LLDC has helped to deliver significant development including 10,997 homes between 2014 and 2020 and there is a plan target to deliver a further 22,000 through to 2036.

Rick Roberts Way is currently proposed at 450 units. This will be led by LLDC, however noting the Council's landholdings at this location, the intention is to deliver a four form entry secondary school and sixth form working with the Department for Education.

The Pudding Mill Lane site is proposed to include 948 units. It is led by LLDC, is within the LLDC planning boundary and is not an area of substantive Newham land-ownership.

Bridgewater will provide approximately 575 homes, located north of Pudding Mill Lane.

Stratford Waterfront (also known as East Bank) residential element will provide approximately 590 homes.

The Council will take back planning powers from the LLDC in 2024, and are preparing for this.

### ROYAL DOCKS

We are working closely with the GLA in the Royal Docks Enterprise zone. Enterprise Zones are a national government initiative to incentivise the creation of business hubs and attract foreign investment, Royal Docks is London's only enterprise zone, and will establish the area as hub for enterprise, employment and culture, as well as a test-bed for technological innovation. This area, which is planned to deliver 35,000 jobs and 4,000 homes within the zone, is overseen by London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP), for which Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz is a board member.



# 1. BUILDING, BUYING & SECURING MORE AND BETTER HOMES

## 1.8 SUPPORT LOCAL BUILDERS AND DEVELOPERS

We want residents to fully benefit from housing investment, not just as tenants, homeowners and employees on building sites but as builders and developers. Our commitment to Community Wealth Building means ensuring that local small and medium sized builders should play an important role to play in building and lessen the dominance of volume housebuilders. As the largest landowner in the borough we will explore ways of making land available to local builders so that we can support local enterprises.

A key aspiration of this is to look at small sites owned by the Council and making these available for local builders and developers to build new homes on, with a focus on affordable housing

## 1.9 ENSURE THAT NEW HOUSING MEETS A RANGE OF NEEDS

This means striking a balance between the government's agenda and what the market brings forward, and what residents need and what works for Newham. We have a hugely diverse population in Newham, and it is important that the housing we build and acquire reflects this.

We will gather data to help us understand what the housing needs of our residents are and the combined Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Housing Needs Assessment (SHMA) will inform much of the forthcoming planning. The SHMA will be commissioned by mid-2021.

We already have targets in place covering the provision of large, family-sized homes and affordable housing, but we believe that there are other groups whose housing needs and aspirations must be better understood, including:

- Multigenerational families who choose to live together
- People with disabilities and special needs
- Groups considering self-build
- Children leaving care
- Key workers
- Multi-family sharers
- Older people

We will commission a separate study to understand the housing needs of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.

## 1.10 COMMUNITY LED HOUSING

The scale of the affordable housing challenge needs the commitment of a wide range of actors. We have seen local communities come together and set out a plan for how they will make a difference. The Council will support community-led housing schemes that have the backing of local people.

The Council is currently working with E16 Community Land Trust (CLT), looking at ways in which it can support a community-led new housing scheme in Custom House. This newly founded organisation has the backing of a wide range of local community members, and is working closely with partners experienced in community-led housing, including London CLT, Newham Citizens and Community Led Housing London.

We will encourage other communities to come forward with a plans and projects for schemes in their communities, and develop the Council's ability to support local people to make these schemes happen.



# 1. BUILDING, BUYING & SECURING MORE AND BETTER HOMES

## 1.11 INCREASE ACQUISITION OF HOMES TO MEET HOUSING NEED

We will establish a framework for acquisition of new homes that sets out our approach to acquisition or leasing of property to meet homelessness needs. We will also continue to engage with the market to acquire properties to meet long-term affordable housing needs.

We will look at all options, including purchase through Populo Living and its Registered Provider subsidiary, Populo Homes. The Council has a long history of innovation, as we funded and established Local Space (an independent housing association) 15 years ago to buy homes to help address homelessness. Local Space currently owns 1450 homes that the council uses as temporary accommodation and a further 800 properties providing long term homes for homeless families from Newham.

## 1.12 REVIEW THE LOCAL PLAN

The current plan was adopted in December 2018 and will be reviewed to ensure that policies address Newham's housing target, require development to meet Newham's housing need and reflect the Council's climate, community wealth building and Covid recovery objectives

## 1.13 WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

Housing Associations (Registered Providers) are also big developers in Newham and while we work with many of them, much more could be done to partner on developments; pool land and capacity for developments; and work together on housing management.

We will also explore how we could arrange regular engagement sessions with housing association tenants.

## 1.14 ENCOURAGE HIGH-QUALITY PRIVATE DEVELOPMENTS

Private developers will continue to be the biggest deliverers of housing in Newham including affordable housing through Section 106. Newham is very much open for private investment in housing and welcomes the opportunity to work with developers to produce the housing Newham needs.

We will continue to promote Newham as a place that welcomes good, high quality housing investment, which has seen the delivery of over 17,000 new homes and £5bn investment in the last decade;



# SECTION 2. PUTTING PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF HOUSING

## 2. PUTTING PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF HOUSING

The Council is committed to continually improving services and putting people at the heart of housing is a core part of this effort. Engaging and involving tenants is a core activity for council and we want to make it easier for residents to talk to us about their lived experiences. We also aim to encourage more people and different voices to give us feedback that will help us improve our services for everyone. In 2019, we began a series of Tenant and Leaseholder Forums, where residents could attend in-person meetings in their local area to discuss any issues they had about their homes or with our housing services. The success of these forums has driven a new residents-first approach to service delivery and resident engagement in Newham, which we will be setting out in a Resident Involvement Strategy later in 2021.

Our aim through the following actions is a housing service that is:

- Approachable and responsive
- Improved upon and monitored in collaboration with residents
- Equipped to respond to complex and multiple housing needs
- Works effectively with partners to support residents all across our diverse community
- Communicates effectively with tenants and leaseholders
- Is open and transparent when things go wrong and continually seeking to improve the customer experience



### YOU TOLD US:

“Putting people at the heart of housing would show that the people of Newham are cared about. Having a decent home is the foundation of a decent beginning.”

“In order to improve, you need us to be able to easily feedback points, and expect they’ll be acted on, with confirmation of what you’ve done about it.”

### 2.1 DEVELOP A CLEAR FRAMEWORK FOR RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSING

This will set out structured opportunities for residents to shape services and influence decisions that affect their homes and estates.

This will set out a framework for resident involvement in designing, monitoring and evaluating services and processes. This will be well-resourced, with officers recruited to support resident groups, training provided where needed, and incentives for residents who contribute their time

As part of this wider framework, we will continue the programme of tenants and leaseholders’ forums across the Borough.

A draft Resident Involvement Strategy in place by Spring 2021 and recruiting for roles in resident groups by Autumn 2021

Success will be measured in terms of improvement to resident experience, via:

- Tenant and Leaseholder Forums and surveys
- Complaints and service issues

## 2. PUTTING PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF HOUSING

### 2.2 CREATE NEW WAYS TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE COUNCIL

We are improving how residents can get in touch to discuss housing issues over the phone or face-to-face. We have appointed dedicated Housing Liaison Officers for all our estates, who are available to offer advice and resolve housing issues.

We have also begun to establish a network of Housing Hubs on estates and community centres where residents can talk face to face with a housing officer who can help deal with problems. This will particularly benefit those who may be unable to access our digital services. The services available at the hubs will include::

- Rent and debt
- Repairs and maintenance
- Crime and anti-social behaviour

We have opened one Housing Hub on Carpenters Estate in Stratford and will be opening up more hubs throughout 2021.

We will continue to roll out and improve upon digital services for residents.

To ensure that our complaints, comments and suggests processes are fit for purpose, responsive and accessible, we are training and empowering our teams to resolve complaints more quickly. We examine any themes and trends that emerge so that we can take action within a service identified. We also want to explore ways of involving tenants in reviewing and co designing the complaints service.

### 2.3 ADOPT A 'RESIDENTS FIRST' APPROACH TO ENGAGING WITH RESIDENTS

We are in the process of undertaking a transformation of the housing service, which will shift the service's approach to one of 'Residents First'. We are redesigning our services so that they are oriented around the experience of the resident, making it more user-friendly and helpful. We are training frontline officers to better equip them to help people with complex or multiple needs.

### 2.4 CHAMPION CO-PRODUCTION AND CO-DESIGN IN REGENERATION SCHEMES

We are working with residents in co-production to ensure the community has the opportunity to shape the masterplan and regeneration proposals for Custom House, Canning Town and Carpenters Estate. We will ensure residents have access to the information, training and resources necessary to maximise their input into the programme as valued partners.



# SECTION 3. ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

# 3. ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Domestic gas and electricity usage causes a quarter of Newham's total CO2 emissions. This means that tackling carbon emissions from homes in the Borough will be crucial to our effort to make the borough carbon neutral by 2030. We need to ensure that the new homes and neighbourhoods will be sustainable, which means setting high standards for the homes we deliver ourselves and for developments built by the private sector. As a Council, we need to think creatively about how we can save carbon by avoiding demolishing and rebuilding where possible, and adapting older properties to deliver sustainable housing. We will support owner-occupiers and private landlords to improve their properties, and ensure that they are able to reap the benefits, such as lower energy bills.

Newham currently has the highest rate of fuel poverty nationally. Improving the energy-efficiency of our homes will also reduce energy bills for residents, improving financial wellbeing and tackling the negative health impacts of poorly-heated homes. Fuel poverty can cause or worsen circulatory and respiratory diseases and mental health. It is known to have particularly severe impacts on older people and people with chronic illnesses and disabilities, but can also cause problems for children and young people. It can also indirectly affect nutrition, when households are forced to compromise on food due to the high costs of heating their home, sometimes called the 'heat or eat' dilemma. By definition, fuel poverty tends to affect the poorest and most vulnerable among our residents and is most often found in the private rented sector, where residents have limited powers to improve their homes, or to encourage their landlords to do so. Tackling poor energy-efficiency in homes can therefore support the Council's equalities agenda as well as improving health and financial wellbeing outcomes.

## 3.1 SET HIGH ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS IN NEW HOMES

We will review the Local Plan to ensure the highest possible environmental standards from new development by private sector partners, and that policies reflect best practice.

We are leading the way by setting ambitious energy standards for our own Council home delivery. New-build Council homes should target Passivhaus 'classic' standard, with minimum 'Low Energy Building' standard certification, as independently certified by the Passive House Institute, with the ability to reduce to the Passive House Institutes 'Low Energy Building' standard for constrained sites if necessary

The first four planning applications (for approx. 140 new affordable homes) have been submitted to Planning, all having been designed to achieve the 'Classic' Passivhaus standard.

When delivering new housing, we will also explore the possibility of adapting or re-using existing buildings where possible. The Council is working with residents in the Carpenters estate to examine the refurbishment of one of the existing tower blocks, instead of demolishing it and rebuilding. As part of our Affordable Homes for Newham programme, we are also carrying out a wholesale refurbishment of some former supported housing accommodation to provide 16 new homes, ranging from studios to 3 bed family homes. We will also ensure that new housing is designed to promote good air quality, as set out in the Council's Air Quality Action Plan and 2018 Local Plan. New neighbourhoods and redevelopments will be aligned with 'Air Quality Positive' and 'Healthy Streets' approaches.

# 3. ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

## 3.2 REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS FROM COUNCIL-OWNED HOMES

We will get 100% of council stock to Environmental Performance certificate C or higher by 2025.

We will develop a plan for phasing out the use of gas boilers and explore the scope for generating electricity locally, for example, using solar panels on our properties.

We are delivering a programme to install new high-efficiency gas boilers in Council-owned homes, but are looking to the future and developing plans for when gas central heating is phased out. We are looking at alternative heating systems and exploring the scope for generating electricity locally, for example, using solar panels on our properties.

## 3.3 TAKE ADVANTAGE OF GOVERNMENT GRANTS AS THESE BECOME AVAILABLE

We are working with other boroughs to take advantage of central Government grants, which will enable us to tackle some of the least energy-efficient homes across a range of tenures (delivered via an external delivery partner).

We will work with partners in the energy sector to use Flexible Eligibility (FE) for the purpose of reducing carbon emissions and fuel poverty in the borough. This will enable energy companies to make national retrofit and energy-saving schemes available to eligible households.



## 3.4 IMPROVE THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF PRS PROPERTIES

We have established a specialist energy efficiency team with the landlord licencing regime to inspect houses in the private rented sector and offer advice and guidance to landlords. The team will encourage landlords to take energy saving measures and if necessary enforce against landlords whose rental properties fall below the minimum energy standards. We have now located the energy performance data on all residential homes in Newham and made it available across the Council via the Data Hub. We will regulate all landlords and thus ensure an Energy Performance Certificate is always provided. We will also support tenants to reduce their carbon footprints through disseminating information, and landlords to take up green retrofit grant opportunities, for example from central Government, where these are made available.

Residents across all tenures will be encouraged to switch to London Power renewable electricity as part of a suite of money-saving and low-carbon options.

## 3.5 INCENTIVISE REFURBISHMENTS TO OLDER, TERRACED PROPERTIES

We will explore creating a green refurbishment package for Victorian and Edwardian homes which will enable families and landlords to use a standardised planning, design and financial package. This would enable residents to grow their homes for expanding or multi-generational families and increase the value of their properties, whilst future proofing them against climate change and rising energy prices.

We will establish a pilot and start construction within 2021. If successful, we will develop a package offer to private owners which will be rolled out within two years.



# SECTION 4.

# A SAFE AND SECURE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

# 4. A SAFE AND SECURE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

The private rented sector (PRS) is home to over 60,000 Newham households. We have 25,000 private landlords renting homes in the borough including 40,000 properties licensed by the Council through one of the three current licensing schemes.

As the largest tenure, we want a PRS sector that offers safe, secure, good quality and affordable housing for our families. To achieve this we need to continue to use our strategic position to both influence and regulate the sector. We strive to drive out bad practice whilst simultaneously improving the professionalism and offer from the private landlord community. We believe we can only continue to do this whilst we operate our discretionary landlord licensing schemes that cover 95% of the PRS. That is why we wish to see our schemes extended for a third term, as without this regulatory framework we believe the PRS will once again shift its external costs onto the authority and we have serious concerns regarding the impact of Covid-19 on the fragile housing market in Newham after 2021.

We need to provide help and support to tenants to enforce their rights and we need to keep arguing for legal change to improve those rights. We are committed to empowering tenants and supporting them to understand their rights, sustain their tenancies and raise issues without fear of harassment or illegal evictions. We also want to work with landlords to help them deliver quality housing and to help residents secure or retain decent quality housing which meets their needs.



## 4.1 PROVIDE TENANTS WITH INFORMATION ABOUT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We will undertake a review of the information and communications provided to tenants, which will enable them to be more aware of their rights in the private rented sector. This will include:

- Information being made available in a range of languages
- Working with Generation Rent to develop impactful communications, and seeking advice from other campaign groups
- Working with partners in the voluntary, community and faith sector to develop and distribute materials
- Providing case studies as part of the materials, ensuring that the information is easily understood

Reviewing and improving on the first renters' pack over time, using feedback from PRS tenants  
Longer term, we will establish forums for PRS tenants to engage with the Council.

## 4.2 BUILD UPON THE PRS LICENSING SCHEME

We will ensure that all landlords apply and hold a licence in one of the licencing schemes, pay a fee and comply with the terms of the licence. We will also work with landlords to help them comply and have some 30,000 individual contacts with our landlord clients every year.

At least 17,000 PRS homes have been checked through licensing audits or inspection/compliance visits to enforce licensing conditions and safety standards since the beginning of the current licensing schemes in 2017.

In 2021 we will embark on another statutory consultation exercise and then subject to the results of this consultation and a Council resolution, the Authority will reapply to the Secretary of State to renew the terms of its two discretionary licensing schemes for a possible further five-year period. We see this step as an absolute necessity to continue with the progress and positive gains we have achieved within the PRS in last decade.

# 4. A SAFE AND SECURE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

## 4.3 PROSECUTE LANDLORDS WHO DO NOT COMPLY WITH THEIR LICENCE

We will prosecute and/or take formal action against landlords who do not comply with the terms of their licence, and support tenants to take legal action against bad landlords. We will formally investigate all allegations of harassment and illegal eviction, and work with police and support tenants to take appropriate action.

Our aim is to use the powers conferred by the licence scheme to hold landlords to account over:

- Poor (or lack of) response to reports of anti-social behaviour
- Housing hazards, improve licencing compliance rates and reduce overcrowding;

We will use the full range of enforcement tools including Fixed Penalty Notices and Banning Orders against criminal landlords.

We will ensure that all complaints of poor housing conditions in the PRS are investigated and formal action taken where appropriate.

Our licensing and enforcement team has also agreed a partnership with Safer Renting to enable tenants to take legal action against their landlords.

## 4.4 RAISE AWARENESS OF ROGUE LETTING AGENTS

Newham has established a rating scheme for letting agents under a Fair Lettings initiative that seeks to make landlords and tenants aware of those agents that trade unfairly and /or use illegal business practises. We will continue to proactively work with tenants and landlords, protecting them from letting agents who do not comply with consumer protection regulations. We will carry out business audits and publish an updated list of publically rated letting agents online by Autumn 2021.

## 4.5 BUILD A POSITIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH LANDLORDS

We will improve our engagement and communication with the landlord community in the borough, and try to better support them as a Council to improve the PRS.

Building a better relationship with landlords will enable us to work together to find suitable accommodation for homeless households, drive up quality and safety in the sector, and better respond to crises like the Covid 19 pandemic.

We have already established a regular forum for landlords to enable them to raise concerns, and will improve the front-end communications as part of a wider communications review within the Private Sector Housing Service, to take place in 2021. This will include specific information and advice aimed at PRS landlords to improve their business practises.

## 4.6 PROMOTE A PROFESSIONAL PRS SECTOR

We will encouraging landlords to join professional bodies, which will enable them to access information and support. We will actively promote accreditation by a recognised body, such as the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA), which will provide a thorough grounding in health and safety requirements, property management, and existing legislation. We will consider financial incentives for membership for a professional body in any future licensing designation.

## 4.7 CAMPAIGN FOR LEGAL CHANGES TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR PRS TENANTS

We will push for legal and administrative changes to provide greater security of tenure, protection from rapid rent rises, simplified regulatory regimes and higher penalties for criminal landlords. We will also push for regulation changes to make licencing simpler and better and to ensure that those providing houses to those in temporary accommodation or asylum seekers are included.

The Council is currently involved in the following campaigns;

1. Case for review of Decent Homes Standard and HHSRS HA 2004 review - to improve standards and ensure effective enforcement in the PRS.
2. Building Safety Bill improvements.
3. Campaign for improved support for residents in building with unsafe cladding.

# SECTION 5. COUNCIL STOCK AND SPECIALIST HOUSING

# 5. COUNCIL STOCK AND SPECIALIST HOUSING

Newham owns just under 16,000 social rented homes. We understand the important role these play in boosting the financial wellbeing of our residents, especially given the high costs of private sector housing. Although we are building new genuinely affordable homes at scale, they remain a scarce resource and we have the longest Housing Register in London, so we are reviewing our allocations policy to ensure that those with the greatest need are first in line. We are also developing an attractive offer for Council tenants who are in a property larger than their needs, to encourage them to downsize and free up larger homes for families. This will contribute to our aims of using low-cost housing to support our most vulnerable residents and tackle social inequalities.

We are reviewing our existing stock to ensure that our Council homes are safe, well maintained and managed, and energy efficient. This evidence will inform how we invest in our properties in the future. We identified and removed dangerous cladding from Council towers in 2019/20 and are increasing fire safety in all our blocks. It is not just the property itself that makes a home, however – it’s also being part of an attractive, well cared-for neighbourhood, and so we are investing in the public realm and green spaces in our streets and estates.

We are working across departments within the Council to better understand and meet the specialist needs of children and young people, and vulnerable adults of all ages.



## YOU TOLD US:

“Fly tipping and rodent infestations affect how we feel about our area”

“We need more support for downsizers”

## 5.1 CHANGE OUR COUNCIL HOME ALLOCATION PROCESS

The new system will prioritise those most in need. Currently residents in employment are prioritised for Newham’s council housing. We are developing proposals to prioritise those most in need such as households experiencing severe overcrowding plus one other need, such as a medical condition.

We will also review the offer for downsizers, who are occupying a Council property larger than their needs and wish to move to a smaller home.

We published a draft Allocations policy in autumn 2020, and will implement the final version, incorporating feedback, in the second half of 2021.

## 5.2 INVEST IN OUR COUNCIL PROPERTIES

We are investing more than £150m in planned and major works to our homes by March 2024. We want our Council housing stock to be high quality, well maintained and environmentally sustainable, in order that they provide a warm, affordable and sustainable home to our tenants.

Our Estate Busters programme will give local communities the chance to identify problem areas in their estates and funding to tackle them.

# 5. COUNCIL STOCK AND SPECIALIST HOUSING

## 5.3 REVIEW ALL OUR FIRE SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS

All ACM cladding was removed from our tall blocks in 2019/20, and more recently, work to remove High Pressure Laminate cladding commenced on Smiths Point and is progressing well. We will remove the EPS insulation from a further 4 blocks in 2021.

We will ensure that all council properties have an up to date fire risk assessment and we are under way with a large programme to replace fire doors across our stock.

Looking forward, resident safety will be the foremost principle in our investment and improvement planning. This will respond to the outcomes from the Grenfell Inquiry and implement any corrective measures required, as well as incorporating best practice and emerging technology.

Looking forward, resident safety will be the foremost principle in our investment and improvement planning. This will respond to the outcomes from the Grenfell Inquiry and implement any corrective measures required, as well as incorporating best practice and emerging technology. As noted at 5.2, we have allocated significant monies for planned investment in existing homes. Should additional investment in existing stock be required as a result of changing building safety standards, we will prioritise this expenditure and this may result in lower capacity to deliver new homes through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

## 5.4 IMPROVE OUR HOUSING OFFER FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS

This will enable the Council to develop a long-term proposal based on evidence, which includes the full range of accommodation for vulnerable adults, not just those in the Social Care system.

This will look at Sheltered Housing, Extra Care, and Care Homes, with Supported Living addressed separately. This would cover individuals who would benefit from a period of in-patient rehab; those who require one or more of the following 'works': assistive technology installation, pest control, specialised cleaning, warm

homes; and those who are N RTPF and / or Homeless and Care Act eligible whose need/s would usually be met in a home environment.

The Adults and Health directorate will develop a strategic commissioning plan for supported living to replace the dynamic purchasing system that is currently paused. This will be first set out in a vision document, then developed into a new strategic approach to commissioning which meets the agreed vision.

This programme will look at a range of client groups, including those experiencing mental illness and learning difficulties.

We will also develop a Step-Down / Move-On Action Plan for Care Act individuals being discharged from hospital but are unable to return home due to the level of their Health and Social Care needs - bridging the gap between hospital and home.

## 5.5 REVIEW HOUSING OPTIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

As a Borough with a high proportion of young people, it is important that their housing needs are understood by the Council. We already know that overcrowding has a disproportionately negative effect on children and young people's health, mental health and educational development. We will explore how we can engage with young people to better understand their needs and concerns around housing.

We are committed to supporting children and young people with experience of living in care. The Council will conduct a review of the housing pathways for children and young people leaving care. The review will also consider all the options for meeting those needs and exploring options that provide best value for money including building, buying and long-term lease arrangements where appropriate.

Housing teams and the Leaving Care service will produce a joint housing offer to care leavers by the end of 2021. This will include improved pathways into the PRS, new shared accommodation options and support packages to ensure care leavers are supported in their new homes.

# SECTION 6. TACKLING HOMELESSNESS

# 6. TACKLING HOMELESSNESS

Newham has historically performed poorly on homelessness. We have the highest number of households in temporary accommodation in the country, and the third-highest number of people sleeping rough of any London borough. We are committed to reversing this trend, developing a systems approach to homelessness and rough sleeping that is caring, compassionate, and centred on the needs of the person or household. We will take a partnership approach, collaborating with trusted community groups to ensure we are able to reach households that are homeless and at risk of homelessness from all backgrounds.

In December 2019 we published the first Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Newham has had in over ten years. This was a short-term strategy designed to last only two years, and in December 2021 we will publish our ten-year Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which will set out our plans in much more detail. The following section provides an overview of short-term actions, and will be superseded by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2021) once published.

## 6.1 PREVENT HOMELESSNESS THROUGH JOINT WORKING

We will strengthen our focus on preventing homelessness through joint working within the Council and with partners. We recognise that private landlords and local housing providers have an important part to play in supporting the prevention effort – particularly through collaborative work with landlords and local housing providers.

## 6.2 INTERVENE EARLY WHERE HOMELESSNESS CANNOT BE PREVENTED

Where homelessness cannot be prevented, we will ensure early intervention and working actively with all applicants to find suitable accommodation, focussing on securing tenancies in the PRS. This includes improving services for young people, single people and couples without dependent children.

### YOU TOLD US:

“Use the Covid emergency accommodation provided for the homeless to support and sort out their complex needs so they don’t return to the streets”

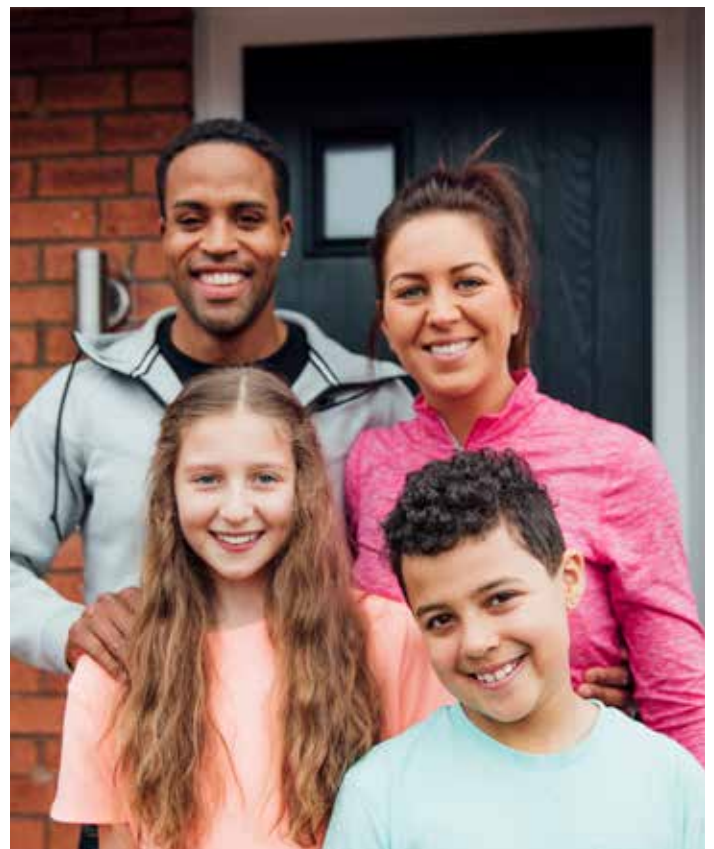
“Regular meetings for residents in temporary accommodation to discuss concerns”

## 6.3 DEVELOP PATHWAYS FOR COMPLEX CASES

We will work across services and agencies to develop housing pathways for people with complex needs, shaped around their circumstances. Areas of focus will be:

- Hospital Discharge
- Women
- Families
- Singles

We will co-ordinate joint working between Housing and the Youth Empowerment team to develop joint working protocols and single point of contact within HPAS. This will include training on appropriate use of the National Reform Mechanism.





# 6. TACKLING HOMELESSNESS

## 6.4 ESTABLISH AND IMPROVE UPON A PATHWAY FOR PEOPLE SLEEPING ROUGH

We will build on the progress on rough sleeping made with the “everybody in” programme. Proposals include:

- person centred and integrated health, care and accommodation pathways;
- buying services and accommodation that is tailored to the needs of individuals or groups with common problems rather than blanket approaches;
- gathering data on all rough sleepers to create individual solutions;
- Commission a rough sleepers assessment hub

## 6.5 CREATE A LONG-TERM PLAN TO REDUCE ROUGH SLEEPING IN STRATFORD

The closure of the Stratford Centre at night during the lockdown has significantly reduced the number of new rough sleepers and a Mayoral Taskforce will develop a long-term plan for Stratford to reduce the numbers of Rough Sleepers using the Stratford Centre.

## 6.6 DEVELOP ALTERNATIVES TO NIGHTLY-PAID ACCOMMODATION

We will develop more settled housing as an alternative to nightly paid and temporary accommodation and work with the voluntary and faith-based sectors to develop services for young and single people.

We will agree an acquisition strategy for new homes to be used for temporary accommodation by end of 2021.

## 6.7 REDUCE THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

We will reduce the number of households living in temporary accommodation by through procuring longer-term solutions, acquiring new homes, and working with partners such as Local Space to acquire and supply accommodation for those currently in TA.

## 6.8 IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

Any new temporary accommodation must meet our standards and we will ensure that it is pre inspected before it is accepted. We are also part of a new inter-borough initiative called ‘Setting the Standard’ which will set out agreed standards for temporary accommodation for single persons across all participating boroughs.

We will establish a temporary accommodation resident forum by end of 2021.

[www.newham.gov.uk](http://www.newham.gov.uk)