

**Kensington and Chelsea
DRAFT Housing Strategy
2019-2022
(July 2019)**



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

Foreword

The Grenfell tragedy changed Kensington and Chelsea forever. It shone a light on the Council's housing policy – how we manage our estates, our relationship with our Council tenants, how and where we build new homes. It also raised fundamental questions about safety and building regulations and about the state of affordable housing in London and across the country.

Since the tragedy we have been rightly scrutinised and challenged by Government, the media, our partners and, most importantly, our residents. We have made major changes in Housing over the past two years, but we know from what we have heard from survivors, the bereaved and local residents that we need to do much more. They expect us to be exemplary and to lead the way in providing services that meet the needs and aspirations of the people we serve.

The draft strategy has this challenge at its heart. We know that a safe, secure and affordable home is essential for giving people the best possible chances in life, helping to narrow the gap between communities and promoting equal access to services and opportunities for all. A Council-wide approach to housing will be critical if we are to fulfil the broader ambitions set out in our new Council Plan.

As a Council, we have important responsibilities for housing: as landlord to our tenants and leaseholders, as an authority responsible for the fair and transparent allocation of social homes, as a provider of specialist advice and support to those in housing need, and as a planning authority with the capacity to support the delivery of new homes and shape the future of our neighbourhoods.

The strategy signals our commitment to transforming the ways we work in all of these areas, informed by what we have heard about what matters most to our residents. This commitment is reflected in the **six key priorities** which will guide our work over the next four years and **two cross-cutting themes** which show how we will work with our residents and partners to deliver responsive services that are resident-focused.

We must improve services against the backdrop of huge challenges. Kensington and Chelsea is the most expensive place to live in the country, with house prices outstripping average earnings by a ratio of more than 40 to 1. Even 'affordable' homes are often still beyond the reach of many and we have large numbers of homeless households in temporary accommodation.

These challenges are mirrored across London and the rest of the country and we will continue to lobby both regional and national government to argue for the changes that would make the biggest difference in the lives of our residents, on issues such as building safety. In the meantime, the draft strategy commits us to using all the tools we have to improve access to housing for everyone.

None of this will be possible without the support and challenge of our residents and partners. Throughout our work, we will ensure that we involve residents in the design and delivery of services and that we collaborate in new and innovative ways with other Council services and key partners.

In this spirit of partnership and collaboration, we have published this draft strategy for discussion, to be developed with residents, partners and other key stakeholders. We look forward to continuing the conversation.



Cllr Kim Taylor-Smith

Deputy Leader, Grenfell, Housing and Property

DRAFT

Introduction

Housing will be a major focus of the Council's activity over the next four years and is at the heart of the ambitions set out in the new Council Plan. The draft strategy sets out our vision and key priorities for housing over the next four years, including the delivery of new homes and wider improvements to our services for tenants, leaseholders and residents in housing need.

The draft strategy is informed by evidence about housing need in the borough and reflects:

- the major changes that we have already made to Housing services since the Grenfell tragedy;
- what we have heard from residents about their housing priorities over the past two years;
- the commitments made in the Council Plan, the Grenfell Recovery and other local policies and plans.

The strategy outlines **six** draft strategic priorities:

Supporting recovery for those affected by the Grenfell tragedy (Priority 1) is the Council's number one priority and the starting point for this strategy. The majority of Grenfell survivors have moved into new homes and we must now support them to settle there, providing high-quality housing management services to help them feel safe and secure and wider support to help them rebuild their lives and turn houses into homes.

We have heard clearly from residents across the borough that we need to do more to **improve the safety, quality and security of people's homes (Priority 2)**. At the heart of this is our duty to keep our residents safe. We have committed to investing £300m in refurbishing our housing stock over the next seven years and, since the handback of housing management services in 2018, we are continuing to drive improvements in key areas such as fire safety and repairs, in partnership with residents. But we know there is more to do, including working with housing associations and private sector landlords to drive up standards for all.

We recognise that we urgently need to find ways of **delivering more genuinely affordable housing in the borough (Priority 3)**. Kensington and Chelsea is the most expensive place to live in the country, with house prices outstripping average earnings by a ratio of more than 40 to 1. We have large numbers of residents in temporary accommodation and even 'affordable' homes are often still beyond the reach of many. To increase housing supply, we have shifted our focus from the regeneration and redevelopment of existing estates to new sites and have committed to delivering 600 new homes, of which 300 will be homes at social rent. As well as delivering new homes on Council land, we will also use planning policy to encourage developers to build more genuinely affordable homes across the borough.

While we work to deliver more new homes, we will also focus on improving our services for tenants, leaseholders and residents in housing need. This means **putting residents at the heart of our housing services (Priority 4)** to ensure that

those services reflect their needs and priorities. Since housing management services were handed back in 2018, we have transformed the way we work with our tenants and leaseholders, re-establishing the Tenants' Consultative Committee and involving residents in all major projects, from procurement to fire safety. We will continue to build on these changes, while also improving services for residents who approach the Council in housing need. We want to ensure that they are offered joined-up, personalised services which support them to make informed choices about their housing options. We are committed to high standards of customer care across all services to ensure that residents feel their voice is heard.

Housing services are vital to **supporting our borough's most vulnerable residents (Priority 5)**, especially older people, care leavers, residents with disabilities or medical needs, and those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Prevention and early intervention is one of the core themes of the Council Plan and housing can play a critical role in supporting this. By making sure that Housing is closely joined up with other services (including health, Adult Social Care, Family and Children's Services, Environmental Health and employment support), we can support residents to remain independent and thrive in their homes. This also includes working with residents, partners and other key stakeholders to **prevent and relieve homelessness (Priority 6)**, which is the focus of the wide-ranging Homelessness Review currently underway.

This strategy also sets out two cross-cutting themes to run through all six priorities which show how we will work with others to deliver the priorities:

1. **Working with residents.** Involving residents in the design and delivery of services to ensure those services reflect their needs and priorities.
2. **Joined-up working with partners.** Working more closely to align Housing with other Council services (Children's services, Adult Social Care, Environmental Health etc.) and with key partners (Health, housing associations etc.) to ensure that our services have maximum impact for residents.

The strategy supplies an overall framework for a range of plans, policies and other strategies (including, for example, plans for the delivery of new affordable homes, a new Homelessness Strategy, a new Repairs policy etc.).

This is a draft strategy for discussion. The final strategy, including a detailed action plan, will be developed further with residents, partners and other key stakeholders.

Strategic Context

Housing challenges and opportunities in Kensington and Chelsea

We face major housing challenges in Kensington and Chelsea. Genuinely affordable housing is in short supply, meaning that many residents struggle with high housing costs in the private rented sector or are placed in temporary accommodation while they wait for a suitable home.

Although the situation in the borough is particularly acute, the same challenges are mirrored across London and reflect a broader national housing crisis. The draft strategy acknowledges the challenges and constraints we face and commits us to using the tools we have at our disposal while recognising that many of the solutions are in the gift of regional and national government and the private sector.

Historically, rates of housebuilding in Kensington and Chelsea have been among the lowest in London, with significant population density and high land values limiting opportunities to deliver new housing. This is something that the strategy seeks to address, through the delivery of new homes on Council land and the use of planning policy to require more genuinely affordable homes as part of new developments.

Kensington and Chelsea is a small but densely populated borough, with approximately 160,000 residents. Of the 73,000 households in the borough:

- 30,000 households (41 per cent) own their own homes, either outright or with a mortgage
- 24,000 households (33 per cent) rent from a social landlord, of which approximately 6,500 are in Council housing and the remainder in homes owned by Registered Providers
- 19,000 households (26 per cent) rent privately in the borough. This has fallen slightly over the last ten years, in contrast to the dominant pattern across London which has seen an increase in the proportion of households in the private rented sector.¹

Kensington and Chelsea is the most expensive place to live in the country. The borough has the highest average house prices (over £2m compared to a London average of £620,000)² and the highest average private rents (£3,173 per month compared to a London average of £1,661)³ of any local authority in the country. House prices in the borough outstrip average earnings by a ratio of more than 40 to 1, meaning that home ownership and private sector renting are beyond the reach of many.

Fewer than 1 in 10 households in the borough live in Council homes. More than twice as many live in homes owned by housing associations, meaning this sector has a vital contribution to make to the provision of decent affordable housing.

¹ Office of National Statistics, 2016 (<https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/housing-tenure-borough>).

² DCLG/Land Registry, 2017 (<https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/average-house-prices>).

³ Valuation Office Agency, 2018 (<https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/average-private-rents-borough>).

Of those households living in Council homes, the majority are in the north of the borough and over 60 per cent in just three wards (Golborne, Notting Dale and Chelsea Riverside). These are also among the most deprived areas in the borough, with deprivation across multiple indices, including income, health, education and employment. Residents who live in Council homes are also more diverse than the population of the borough as a whole, with over 40 per cent from a Black or minority ethnic background.

The Council accepts relatively high numbers of households as homeless; in 2017-18, the in-year figure was nine per 1000, compared to a London average of four.⁴ However, the limited supply of affordable housing in the borough means that many of the households to whom we accept a duty are placed in temporary accommodation. At present, there are over 2,300 households in temporary accommodation (more than 30 households per 1000, considerably higher than the London average). Of these, about half are placed locally (in Kensington and Chelsea or neighbouring boroughs), but roughly two thirds are outside the borough's boundaries.

There are over 3,000 residents on the Housing Register waiting for a more suitable home, with an average waiting time of almost three years. There is a particular shortage of accessible and family-sized properties meaning that larger households or those with disabilities may spend many years on the register waiting for a home. In 2018, 11 per cent of residents on the Register had special access needs, 18 per cent had a medical condition of some kind and over 20 per cent required a property with three or more bedrooms.

In general, households on the Register are a very diverse group, with a range of housing needs. In 2018, 68 per cent were women, 51 per cent had dependent children and over 37 per cent were single parents with dependent children. 64 per cent were from a black or minority ethnic background. In each case, these percentages are higher than the general population, indicating that those in housing need are more likely to have protected characteristics. This makes the Council's approach to housing crucial for delivering the commitments made in the Council Plan to work to narrow the gap between communities and ensure equal access to services.

Against this backdrop, it is clear that we urgently need to provide more affordable homes and encourage developers, housing associations and others to do the same. However, we also need to focus on improving our prevention and diversion services to prevent homelessness before it occurs and on providing specialist advice and support to enable residents to make informed choices about their housing options.

Reflecting the priorities of our residents

Alongside evidence about housing need and opportunity in the borough, the draft strategy and the key priorities are shaped by what we have heard from residents over the past two years. They are informed by what we have heard through the 'Let's Talk Priorities' consultation, the 'Stronger Communities' conversations, the Council's

⁴ DCLG, 2017-18 (<https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/homelessness>).

borough-wide Listening Forums and the range of consultation and engagement that has taken place with tenants and leaseholders as part of the changes we have made to housing management services. They also reflect what we have heard from Residents' Associations, community groups and organisations such as Grenfell United.

As set out in the Council Plan, the two housing-related priorities most frequently raised by residents across the borough were as follows:

- The Council should provide more social and affordable housing for local people and improve and repair Council homes.
- Everyone should have access to opportunities and services such as housing, employment, education, health and social care. Everyone across the borough should have the chance to fulfil their aspirations.

The strategy addresses these two priorities directly but it also seeks to tackle a range of other priorities residents have raised with us, including:

- Relieving overcrowding and homelessness
- Exploring alternatives to the term 'affordable'
- Improving fire safety
- Providing more accessible housing for residents with disabilities
- Tackling stigma and misconceptions about social housing
- Supporting young people and key workers to stay in the borough
- Improving the standard of the temporary accommodation we procure
- Tackling empty homes
- Preventing illegal sub-letting
- Ensuring fair, open and transparent allocation of social housing
- Encouraging Registered Providers and private landlords to improve standards

Through our work with the Tenants' Consultative Committee and the consultation and engagement work we have done with Council tenants and leaseholders, we have also established other key priorities, including:

- Involving residents in improvements to fire safety measures
- Improving customer service and customer care standards
- Changing our approach to the procurement of major works
- Making repairs services more responsive to residents' needs
- Tackling antisocial behaviour on our estates and in our communities

As part of this draft strategy, we are committing to working with residents in new ways so that their priorities continue to be at the heart of our work in Housing.

Building on local, regional and national plans

As well as reflecting residents' priorities, the strategy has also been shaped by a range of local, regional and national plans.

The Council Plan and the Grenfell Recovery Strategy

The Council Plan sets out our ambition for the borough around five core priorities for the next four years, directly informed by what we have heard from residents about what matters most to them:

- Grenfell recovery
- A great place to live, work and learn
- Supporting and safeguarding vulnerable residents
- Healthy, clean and safe
- A place of culture to visit and explore

The Council Plan commits specifically to developing a new Housing Strategy to maximise the delivery of new genuinely affordable homes in the borough. Building new social housing will be a major focus of our activity over the next three years, but Housing services have a vital contribution to make to each of these five priorities and to the Plan's commitments to involving the community in the design and delivery of services, narrowing the gap and ensuring equal access to services, and focusing on prevention and early intervention to secure better outcomes for residents.

This draft strategy therefore encompasses more than the delivery of new homes. It sets out our ambitions for housing services more broadly, including improving the quality of permanent and temporary housing, providing residents with specialist support around their housing options, involving our tenants and service users more closely in the design and delivery of services, and supporting our most vulnerable residents.

The Grenfell Recovery Strategy committed to supporting Grenfell survivors to settle in their new homes, to refurbishing the Lancaster West Estate to a high standard and to transforming our housing management services across the borough. This strategy also builds on these commitments.

Local Planning Policy

Planning policy provides the key framework for the delivery of new housing in the borough. Planning policy based on evidence of need and financial viability is one of the most important tools that the Council can use to require developers to deliver more homes at social rent. When formally adopted, the Council's revised Local Plan policy will require the provision of 35 per cent affordable housing from residential developments of 650m² and above. This brings more developments within the scope of planning policy on affordable housing than is required by national planning policy.

As soon as this Local Plan review process is complete, we will immediately start another review to ensure that the Plan closely reflects the needs and aspirations of our communities. In the meantime, we will be developing a new Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to focus specifically on the delivery of genuinely affordable housing. This will be a clear public statement of intent to developers and others about our new approach and will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.

The SPD will look at the split between social rent and intermediate homes for affordable housing secured as part of new developments. The emerging London Plan allows us to increase that split to 70:30. The SPD will also build on policies set out in the new Local Plan to provide clarity where necessary, about policy requirements: for example, to make clear that where (in exceptional circumstance) affordable housing is to be provided on another site, it must be within the borough. The SPD will also look at how proposals involving provision of social rent homes should also consider the need for community space for meetings and for the community to come together.

The plans for the SPD will be fully consulted on with residents. We have heard from some residents already that they feel the term 'affordable' is no longer fit for purpose because it has lost its meaning and is too often misunderstood. As part of the SPD process, we want to explore other terms which could be used in its place.

The Council has committed producing a new Statement of Community Involvement to set out how we engage in a meaningful way with our communities on all planning matters.

Regional and national policy

The London Mayor's Housing Strategy acknowledges that 'how to provide everyone who lives here with a decent, affordable home is the biggest challenge facing London today'.⁵

The Mayor's priorities are:

- building homes for Londoners;
- delivering genuinely affordable homes;
- high quality homes and inclusive neighbourhoods;
- a fairer deal for private renters and leaseholders; and
- tackling homelessness and helping rough sleepers.

The Mayor's strategy recognises that councils in London are at the frontline of the housing crisis and will play a central role in the delivering this strategy. We will continue to engage with the Mayor and the Greater London Authority (GLA) to ensure that local authorities can deliver new homes and provide Londoners affected by the housing crisis with the help and support they need.

The Government's recent Green Paper was directly shaped by the lessons from the Grenfell tragedy, promises a 'a new deal for social housing'.⁶ It identifies several key priorities:

- a safe and decent home which is fundamental to a sense of security and our ability to get on in life;
- improving and speeding up how complaints are resolved;
- empowering residents and ensuring their voices are heard so that landlords are held to account;

⁵ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2018_lhs_london_housing_strategy.pdf.

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a-new-deal-for-social-housing>.

- tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities, challenging the stereotypes that exist about residents and their communities; and
- building the social homes that we need and ensuring that those homes can act as a springboard to home ownership.

The Council fully supports these aspirations, especially the commitment to empowering residents and ensuring their voices are heard. We have responded to the Secretary of State along with other councils across London, identifying areas where national Government can enable local authorities to have more of an impact in each of these areas.

We also support calls for reform of building safety legislation, including clear guidelines for local authorities because we know that it is essential that residents are safe and feel safe and secure in their homes.

The recent lifting of the borrowing cap on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a welcome development for local authorities but we will continue to lobby central and regional government for more funding to support the refurbishment of existing estates, including the delivery of new homes where there are opportunities for infill.

Resourcing

The commitments in the draft strategy will have to be delivered against a challenging financial backdrop. We know we need to spend significant sums investing in our housing to ensure homes are brought up to modern standards but any HRA borrowing required to provide this funding has to be supported by rental income. This means there will be significant pressure on the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which funds refurbishment of our housing stock. Alongside this, the Council will have to make £40m of revenue savings over the next three years, meaning additional pressure on the General Fund, which funds our housing needs and homelessness services.

We will therefore need to work more efficiently in Housing and in other areas, reducing spend where possible, seeking external sources of funding to support our work, and making the most of opportunities for prevention and early intervention.

Strategic Priorities

1. Supporting Grenfell survivors

Grenfell recovery is the number one priority in the Council Plan and is at the heart of this strategy. The Grenfell tragedy has raised wider local and national issues addressed in this strategy, but the Council's most immediate duty over the past two years has been to support survivors to move into new homes.

Over the past two years, we have acquired over 300 properties to replace the homes that were lost in the tragedy and properties not needed for Grenfell survivors are now being made available to households on our Housing Register who need a more suitable home.

We have worked with survivors in a highly personalised way and have sought to meet individual needs wherever we can. Of the 201 households in need of a new home, the vast majority are now in permanent accommodation. We will continue to support the small numbers of residents in temporary or emergency accommodation to move into new homes. The Grenfell Rehousing Policy sets out our long-term housing commitments to survivors on key issues such as rent and service charges and security of tenure.

However, we recognise that for many survivors this is just the first stage of a long process of rebuilding their lives. All survivors will need access to high quality housing management services to help them feel safe and secure in their homes and some may also need additional support to sustain their tenancies or manage their finances. A dedicated housing management team has been established specifically for Grenfell survivors and a Dedicated Service is up and running to support them with their wider needs.

Outcome: Grenfell survivors feel supported in their new homes and receive the highest possible standard of housing management services.

What we are doing

- Implementing the Grenfell Rehousing Policy, with long-term commitments to survivors on rent and service charges, tenancy rights and long-term security.
- Providing bespoke Housing Management service for survivors, working closely with Registered Provider landlords to ensure a common standard of customer service.
- Providing wide-ranging specialist support for survivors via the dedicated service, developed in partnership with them.

How we will work with residents

- Working with survivors to agree common standards for housing management and repairs services in their new homes.
- Co-designing the Dedicated Service with bereaved and survivors, with a steering group made up of bereaved and survivors being established to set the direction of the service.

How we will work with partners

- Close working in partnership with the Dedicated Service Steering Group, Health, statutory partners and community services to ensure survivors received joined-up, personalised support.
- Close liaison with Registered Providers to ensure consistency of housing management services for all survivors.

2. Improving safety, quality and security of housing

The Grenfell tragedy has highlighted fundamental national questions about fire safety and building regulations, but it has also raised important issues for local authorities which manage residents' homes directly.

We recognise that our responsibilities as landlord are some of the most important we have as a local authority and that the relationship we have with our tenants and leaseholders is vital. The Council is committed to providing safe, secure and comfortable homes that either meet or exceed all health and safety requirements. In March 2018, housing management services were handed back from the Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (KCTMO) and since then we have been working to transform services in partnership with residents.

We have set up a dedicated team to deal with all aspects of strategic and operational fire safety. This team is responsible for reviewing and responding to recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, reviewing fire safety measures, consulting and listening to residents on fire safety, procuring a new set of fire risk assessments and developing and implementing a fire training programme.

The broader challenge we face is to bring existing Council homes up to a good standard and ensure that all homes are as safe, secure and comfortable as they can be. In 2018, we commissioned a full stock condition survey of all Council properties. We have now set out an indicative investment programme informed by this survey and have committed over £300m million to refurbishing Council homes over the next seven years. This is funded through a combination of borrowing and General Fund capital receipts. Across the borough, we are working with the re-established Tenants' Consultative Committee residents and the new resident Procurement Panel to ensure that residents can shape the approach to procurement of major works for this programme.

We have committed £30m to the refurbishment of the Lancaster West Estate, including a £15m contribution from central Government. We recognise that more funding is required to deliver an ambitious refurbishment and will therefore be asking the Leadership Team to commit an additional £27.9m at its meeting in July. This level of investment reflects the special commitments we have made to Lancaster West, as the estate which had Grenfell Tower at its heart. Plans for the refurbishment are being developed in partnership with residents to ensure that it is genuinely resident-led.

We are also making wider changes to support residents to live comfortably and securely in their homes, including changes to repairs services, new measures to tackle antisocial behaviour on our estates and in our communities and a proposal to reintroduce lifetime tenancies for Council tenants.

In addition to improving the quality of Council homes, we recognise that we also need to improve standards in the temporary accommodation we procure for residents waiting for a permanent home. We also have a key role to play in enforcing standards in the private rented sector and we are committed to working with registered providers and other landlords to drive up standards for all residents.

Outcome: Residents live in good quality homes where they feel safe and secure.

What we are doing

- Investing in Council homes to ensure that homes meet or exceed the relevant standards and to improve and maintain the quality of the inside of tenants' homes and communal areas.
- Ensuring a renewed focus on safety, especially fire safety, including a dedicated fire safety team to deal with all aspects of strategic and operational fire safety, including reviewing and responding to recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.
- Asking the Leadership Team to agree a return to lifetime secure tenancies for our Council tenants.
- Taking repairs services back in house, with the repairs backlog now eliminated and a longer-term Repairs Policy developed following extensive consultation with over 800 residents.
- Implementing the recently agreed 'Residents' Charter' setting out standards of customer care for our tenants and leaseholders.
- Actively supporting the extension of regulation to local authority social housing (including homes managed by TMOs and ALMOs) and the development of performance indicators that reveal true performance and support clear comparison between landlords.
- Implementing a new approach to antisocial behaviour to tackle persistent ASB including better use of enforcement tools, developed in close consultation with residents through a Task and Finish Group.
- Working with our resident-led Procurement Panel to inform the development of a strategy to shape procurement of all major works for refurbishment projects.
- Requiring providers of temporary accommodation to comply with high health and safety standards.
- Procuring temporary accommodation via smaller providers to build up better quality and larger portfolio and maximising in-borough accommodation.
- Working in partnership with Registered Providers to do what we can to ensure that all residents receive a high-quality management service.
- Refreshing our Tenancy Strategy and exploring a joint charter with housing associations, committing all landlords to placing residents at the heart of their services.
- Working closely in partnership with Environmental Health and others to tackle poor quality homes and improve standards in private rented sector accommodation.
- Supporting renters through the Rogue Landlord and Agent Checker and Redress schemes.
- Empowering residents' associations to manage community rooms on Council estates, with income reinvested in community facilities.

How we will work with residents

- Responding to concerns residents raise about safety, repairs and other issues quickly and compassionately to ensure they feel listened to.

- Extensive consultation on capital programme, procurement, repairs strategy and all other areas of housing management activity.
- Ensuring that residents are able to shape the standards through which safety is measured and facilitating full transparency and independent scrutiny of the health and safety processes.
- Support and training for residents on regulatory standards to ensure they know what to expect of their landlord and can strengthen their voice.
- Support for the strengthening of a national voice for tenants (through a national 'Tenants Consultative Committee' or similar).

How we will work with partners:

- Close working in partnership with Environmental Health to improve standards in the private rented sector.
- Working with housing associations and other registered providers to ensure high standards across all social housing in the borough.

3. Increasing the supply of genuinely affordable housing

We know that we urgently need more genuinely affordable homes in the borough. Alongside action from regional national government, housing associations and the private sector, the Council is committed to increasing supply and thereby reducing the numbers of households in temporary accommodation.

First, we will build more genuinely affordable homes on Council land. We have already announced plans to provide 600 new homes, 300 of which will be at social rent, with construction due to start in 2020. Our programme seeks to deliver the types of social homes we need, including larger family homes and more accessible properties, which we know are in short supply. We want to ensure that plans for new homes are developed with residents and that they are supported by strong links to transport, economic opportunities and services.

Second, we can ensure that local planning policy responds to the need for more genuinely affordable homes in the borough. Planning policy is the fundamental tool for requiring private developers to provide the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing. Alongside the next review of the Local Plan, the Council will also be developing a new Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which will reflect the emphasis on providing more genuinely affordable homes in the borough. The SPD will include commitments on the split of genuinely 'affordable' homes to increase the number of homes delivered at social rent.

We can also increase supply in smaller but important ways, managing our existing stock more effectively, bringing empty properties back into use and working closely with housing associations to secure nomination rights.

Outcome: There is a significant increase in the number of genuinely affordable homes in the borough.

What we are doing

- Taking forward plans to provide 600 new homes, 300 of which will be at social rent.
- Exploring opportunities to deliver new homes in consultation with residents through infill on existing estates and the building of affordable housing on major privately-owned sites in the borough, with no loss of existing homes.
- Commissioning an up-to-date Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to ensure the Council has a good understanding of future housing need and demand in the borough.
- Developing a new SPD to require developers to deliver more homes at social rent.
- Starting a full review of the Local Plan to update planning policies in line with community aspirations and need.
- Seeking new sources of funding to support the building of new homes, including £33.6m of funding already awarded by the GLA to support development of social rented homes.
- Making more efficient use of our existing stock, bringing empty properties back into use through effective management of voids.
- Exploring the use of buyback schemes to purchase ex-Council properties on estates.
- Developing plans for key worker housing to help public sector workers find housing they can afford in the borough.
- Working closely with housing associations to ensure those on our housing register have maximum access to existing affordable housing in the borough.
- Working with Environmental Health to identify and tackle empty homes in the borough and bring them back into use.
- Maximising in-borough procurement of temporary accommodation to enable residents to stay in the borough.
- Exploring innovative new tools for housing provision such as modular and or pop-up housing in order help residents stay in borough, particularly to provide more temporary housing more quickly.
- Investigating and addressing illegal sub-letting.
- Establishing a direct lettings service to increase access to more affordable private rented properties.
- Using other initiatives to bring in private landlords to provide quality accommodation, such as Transitional Insurance and Fair BnB.
- Explore additional ways to provide incentives for residents who may no longer need social housing or may be under-occupying their homes to move.

How we will work with residents:

- Consultation on new homes delivery programme on a site-by-site basis.
- Full consultation on a new Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to deliver more genuinely affordable housing.

- Engaging residents in the planning process at an early stage to ensure that applications are aligned to what they would like to see for their area, through a new 'Statement of Community Involvement'.
- Full consultation with residents when working with Housing Management to deliver new homes.

How we will work with partners:

- Working across the Council to make best use of existing land and housing stock and identify new opportunities for delivery of housing.
- Ensuring planning policies provide a supportive framework to address the housing challenges we face, including the development of an SPD and a commitment to start a full review of the Local Plan.
- Working with RPs to maximise the delivery of newbuild housing for our residents including a range of genuinely affordable and intermediate housing.

4. Putting residents at the heart of housing services

One key lesson from the Grenfell tragedy has been the importance of putting residents at the heart of the services we deliver. The Council Plan sets out our commitment to involve local people in the design and delivery of services and to engage openly with residents and service users in all the work we do as an organisation.

Nowhere is this more important than in Housing. Since Housing Management services were handed back to the Council, we have made major changes to our ways of working with residents to ensure that services reflect their priorities.

We have re-established the Tenants' Consultative Committee for Council tenants to give them the opportunity to shape the design and delivery of Housing Management services. We have also established resident-led Task and Finish Groups in key areas, including the procurement of major works, repairs and maintenance services, anti-social behaviour management, workforce development, complaints and customer service and estate services. We have agreed a Residents' Charter with our tenants and leaseholders setting out our standards of customer care and have developed detailed metrics against which residents can hold us to account. We have also launched a quarterly *Housing Matters* newsletter with a resident-led editorial board, which provides regular updates to our residents on the issues that matter most to them.

We also want to make sure that our housing services offer the best possible advice and support to residents in housing need who approach the Council, ensuring that they have the information they need to make the right decisions about their housing options. We want our Housing teams to work with all residents in a way that is empathetic and resident-focused, using data, technology, digital and face-to-face channels to provide responsive and personal services.

Outcome: Residents feel that services are there to help them and feel positively involved in the design and delivery of services.

What we are doing

- Working with the re-established Tenants' Consultative Committee and the resident Task and Finish groups to improve services and ensure that they continue to meet residents' needs.
- Simplifying residents' access to services, improving customer service and guaranteeing responsiveness to complaints and other feedback, via a dedicated resident Task and Finish Group.
- Implementing our Residents' Charter to ensure that we are meeting high standards of customer care.
- Implementing our new offer to Council leaseholders, to provide greater certainty to leaseholders to allow them to plan, budget and trust the consistency of Council services.
- Changing and improving our Housing needs services to provide resident-focused services which are responsive and personalised.
- Ensuring that residents in permanent, temporary and private rented sector accommodation have access to all the right information about their housing options and support to help them make informed decisions about their housing future.
- Maximising use of private sector rented offers to support residents to find suitable housing options.
- Involving residents in making referrals about substandard accommodation.

How we will work with residents:

- Implementing and monitoring the customer service standards agreed in the Residents' Charter.
- A quarterly Housing Matters newsletter for residents, overseen by an editorial panel which includes residents to ensure that content is relevant and reflects residents' key interests and priorities.
- Talking to residents about the type of housing advice and support on offer and seeking regular feedback on the delivery of existing services.

5. Supporting vulnerable residents

Supporting and safeguarding vulnerable residents is a key priority in the Council Plan and housing has a vital role to play alongside other statutory and community services in improving the health and wellbeing of those residents.

This includes developing housing solutions for older residents and those with particular needs. 15 per cent of those on our Housing Register and a third of our Council tenants are over the age of 65. We recognise the need to link Housing more closely with Adult Social Care, with a focus on supporting older residents to lead safe, health and independent lives.

We also want to ensure that vulnerable young people, including care leavers, are supported to access suitable housing to equip them to live independently in the borough.

In 2018, over 11 per cent of residents on the Housing Register had special access needs and almost a fifth had a medical condition of some kind. Equally important therefore will be the way we work with our disabled residents or those with health problems, helping to ensure that homes are adapted to meet their needs.

Outcome: Vulnerable residents have suitable homes where they feel safe and secure and are able to live independently in them for as long as possible.

What we are doing

- Considering a review of our allocations policy to ensure our limited stock of social housing is allocated to those who need it most.
- Supporting residents on our estates to stay in their own homes and live independently for as long as possible, working with them to ensure their homes are adapted to meet their needs.
- Working with Children's Services to ensure that care leavers have move-on options into stable and secure housing.
- Delivering new initiatives to promote high quality, independent living, including new housing provision for people with SEND currently in institutional care.
- Beginning home visits to Council tenants to focus on general health and wellbeing issues, giving officers opportunity to identify issues around mental health and wellbeing, loneliness and isolation, physical impediments that might require alterations or any other issues.
- Learning from our residents through a Disability Forum focused on issues facing disabled residents living in Council homes, including fast-tracking of repairs and a joined-up approach from Council's adaptations and occupational therapy teams.
- Engaging with the newly established Disability Forum for tenants and leaseholders to ensure that their housing management needs are met.
- Reviewing and improving the accessibility of our housing stock to ensure it is appropriate for residents with disabilities.
- Using the pan-London Accessible Housing Register Guidance to ensure that accessible social housing is targeted to residents who require it.
- Working with developers to build wheelchair accessible (not just adaptable) homes.
- Commissioning a wide range of services to support vulnerable groups through our supported housing programme.
- Working closely with Council and bi-borough commissioners to identify new opportunities for supported housing provision within the borough.
- Working with vulnerable individuals and families at risk of homelessness to support them to stay in their homes or find a suitable alternative home.
- Working to ensure that Council tenants receive advice and support with benefits, finances and related issues, e.g. around introduction of Universal Credit.
- Focusing on offering joined-up support for residents who are looking for work through a dedicated Housing and Employment team.

- Working to expand opportunities for local residents through our supply chain, e.g. on the Lancaster West Estate.

How we will work with residents

- Working with our tenants and leaseholders through our Disability Forum to ensure that our housing management services meet their needs.
- Providing grass-root support to our residents through our Tri-Borough Community Champions programme to strengthen community engagement, bring residents together and increase the impact of local services.
- Ensuring service user engagement to shape the design and delivery of supported housing services.
- Engagement with community groups representing vulnerable residents to ensure services meet their needs.

How we will work with partners

- Closer partnership working with Adult Social Care, Children's and Family Services, Health services and other key partners to support residents to stay in their own homes.
- Tackling antisocial behaviour through close cooperation with Community Safety partnership.
- Working with partners to agree priorities for the provision of appropriate housing for residents who are dependent on support services.

6. Tackling and preventing homelessness

As noted above, Kensington and Chelsea is the most expensive place to live in the country. Increasing rents and a limited supply of affordable housing means that too many residents struggle to find a suitable home or risk losing the home they have and being placed in temporary accommodation.

Preventing and tackling homelessness and rough sleeping is therefore a particularly acute challenge in this borough. We want to ensure that homeless households or those at risk of homelessness get the support they need to find safe, suitable and affordable homes.

Our work in this area will be informed by the Homelessness Review currently underway. The findings will be used to develop a targeted Homelessness Strategy which will set out our approach to supporting residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Outcome: Households receive specialist advice and support to prevent homelessness wherever possible and homeless families are supported to find suitable accommodation.

What we are doing

- Focusing on preventing and relieving homelessness at an earlier stage.

- Shifting the focus of our services to ensure we provide specialist, tailored advice and support to prevent homelessness, contributing to a reduction of placements in temporary accommodation.
- Maximising use of private sector rented offers where appropriate to support residents to find suitable homes.
- Working with our key strategic partners to ensure residents at risk of homelessness are referred for specialist advice at the earliest opportunity.
- Identifying vulnerable adults who have a housing need or area at risk of homelessness as early as possible and providing of advice and resources to key stakeholders to assist those at risk to access suitable pathways.
- Ensuring early engagement with residents in arrears and income management cases.
- Improving the procurement and management of temporary accommodation.
- Bidding for funds from central Government's Tackling Homelessness Fund to support work to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- Targeting residents in temporary accommodation with alternative housing options such as Homefinder.
- Providing a comprehensive support service for rough sleepers.
- Working with partners to reduce the number of rough sleepers returning to the street.

How we will work with residents

- Consultation with residents and service users on the new Homelessness Strategy, and on other key policies designed to support those in housing need.
- Working closely with residents at an early stage to support them sustain their tenancies and prevent homelessness.

How we will work with partners

- Close partnership working with Adult Social Care, mental and physical health services etc to help identify high-risk groups and individuals and ensure early identification of households at risk of homelessness.
- Work with our partners to build in-house capacity and improve sharing of information, data and resources to better support individuals.

Monitoring and delivery of the strategy

The delivery of the Housing Strategy will be monitored through the performance management arrangements put in place within the framework of the Council Plan.

We will also be developing a detailed action plan alongside the final strategy which will set out the plans, timescales and deliverables in each of the key priority areas.

This action plan will ensure that members, residents, partners and other stakeholders can scrutinise the delivery of the commitments set out in the strategy.

Next steps

The draft strategy will be further developed in discussion with residents, partners and other stakeholders, with a final version to be agreed in the autumn.

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