

Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2021-2026

Full Strategy Commitments and Actions



Foreword

Tackling the housing crisis remains one of the most urgent priorities for the Royal Borough of Greenwich. We believe that housing is not just about having a roof over your head, but that everyone deserves a home which is affordable, safe, secure and comfortable.

Although we continue to face challenges with budget cuts, we are proud of what we have accomplished over the past few years. From working collaboratively with local organisations to find innovative solutions to prevent homelessness, to launching our housing scheme, Greenwich Builds, which aims to build 750 new council homes by 2024. The success of these programmes is something we will continue to build upon in our new strategy.

But there is more work to be done. Like every other borough in London, we are facing an unprecedented housing crisis. While the cost of living has increased, people's incomes have not kept pace. Too many people in Royal Greenwich are struggling to afford decent, stable housing and this is something we must fix urgently.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the housing crisis and put a huge amount of pressure on our teams and services, not to mention the devastating impact it's had on so many people in our borough, and across the country.

The pandemic has also disproportionately affected some of the most vulnerable people in our society, and highlighted inequalities that are simply not acceptable. Our plans must drive positive change for everyone and truly reflect the diversity that makes our borough such a great place to live, while continuing to promote equality and fighting injustice.

That is why we have developed our new housing and homelessness strategy 2021-2026. This document details our vision and plans for the next five years, ensuring we affect real change for the residents of our borough.

We remain committed to doing all we can to solve the housing crisis in Royal Greenwich. But if we are going to achieve long-term success, there need to be fundamental changes to national housing policy. We will continue to apply pressure to the UK Government on issues including renter's rights, more genuinely affordable social housing programmes, and climate change.

It is our residents, and the diverse and vibrant communities in which we live, that make our borough such a wonderful place to be. We want our strategy and our plans to reflect this, putting people at the heart of our decision-making. Your input and feedback on our strategy is vital for shaping the future of housing in Royal Greenwich. Thank you.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Okereke'.

Cllr Anthony Okereke
Cabinet Member for Housing

Introduction

The Five Strands

There are five strands of our strategy. These are key to tackling the competing housing pressures in the borough and improving housing for all our residents. They are:

1 Ensuring the supply of high-quality homes

2 Tackling homelessness and ending rough sleeping

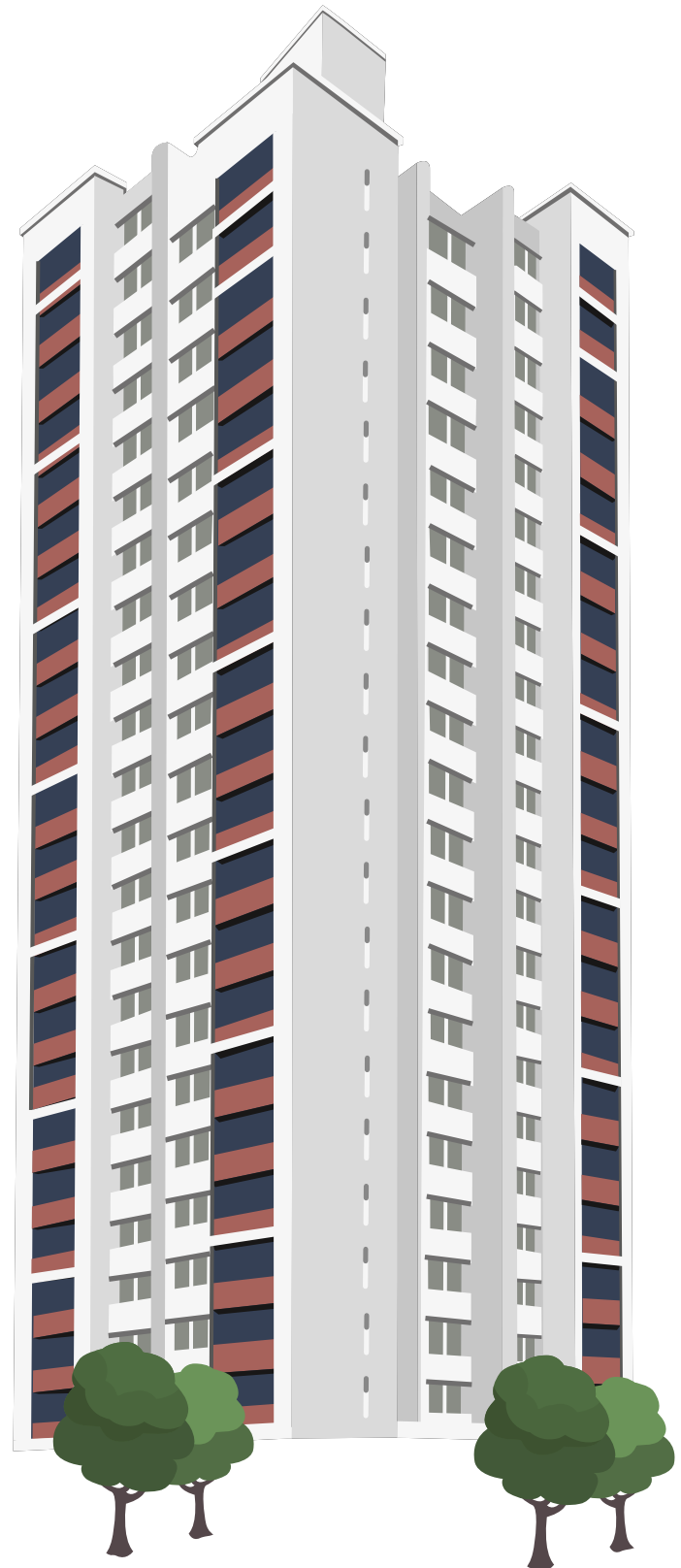
3 Support for specific housing needs

4 Safe and sustainable homes for all

5 Building resilient and vibrant communities and neighbourhoods

Safe, secure and affordable homes have a direct impact on people's health and happiness. Having a secure home is as important as health and education. It helps people gain employment, access health services, and provides a stable environment for children to grow up in.

That's why we are launching our new Housing and Homelessness Strategy, so we can make sure that all our residents in the Royal Borough of Greenwich are able to access safe, high-quality and affordable housing.



This document sets out overarching principles and key aims for our housing and homelessness services over the next five years. It is divided into five key strands and we will develop a separate document for each strand to help us achieve our vision.

Our strategy needs to cater to the diversity of our borough; whether that is older people, people from minority ethnic backgrounds, extended families, single people or those with disabilities and specialist needs.

By focussing on the five strands one at a time, we will be able to engage with residents in a meaningful way, gain a deeper understanding of your experiences, the

challenges you face in terms of housing, and develop plans and actions which keep local people at the heart of what we do next.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we live, and as a local authority it has changed the way we deliver our services. In light of the pandemic and the uncertainty it brings, we want to make sure that we can respond to challenges quickly and adapt our housing plans to the ever-changing environment

We have established four clear principles that will underpin our strategy and which we will use to approach any challenges that arise over the next five years:



- **Resident focus:**

Every commitment and action we take to tackle housing issues in the borough will be built around the needs of our residents. Residents should be fully involved in shaping the future of housing in the borough.



- **Evidence-based decision-making:**

This means that we will use evidence and data to inform our decisions, while using tried and tested programmes that are proven to work.



- **Partnership-working:**

The only way to address the complex challenges facing the housing and homelessness sector as a whole, is to work directly with experienced partners and other private housing providers.



- **Digital transformation:**

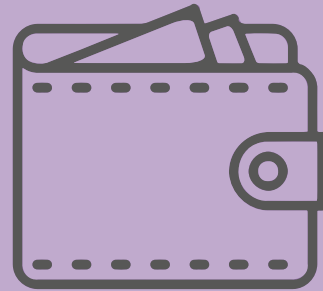
Delivering on the Council's Digital Strategy will be key to help us design inclusive digital tools that improve how residents use our services while helping our staff to do their jobs more effectively.

Housing need in Royal Greenwich



3,140

households on the
priority waiting list for
council homes



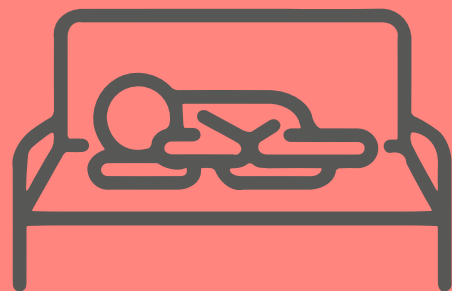
£30,778

average household
income, the 6th lowest
in London



£397,000

average property
price, 13x higher than
median wage



133

people sleeping rough
during 2019/20



Glossary

Royal Greenwich Housing Band System

We operate a housing waiting list which uses a band system of A, B and C to determine the priority need of everyone who wants a council home in the borough.

Active downsizing policy

Downsizing is a voluntary scheme which means moving from a property that has spare bedroom(s) you no longer use, to a smaller property that is more manageable for you. The council will support tenants throughout the downsizing process and with the move into your new home.

Median

The median is the number that is halfway into the set; for example, the 'median' wage in Royal Greenwich is £30,778 – meaning half of people in the borough earn less than this, while the other half earn more.

London Affordable Rent

London Affordable Rent is a target rent for social housing that was introduced by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan. It is set at a level significantly below the upper limit for what can be defined as 'affordable rent' and is generally around 50% of market rents in Royal Greenwich.

Intermediate Housing

Means homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent but below market levels. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent

Lifetime home standards

These are a set of criteria which homes should meet in order to be fully accessible and adaptable to suit the needs and lives of older people or people with disabilities.



Ensuring the supply of high-quality homes



Our Commitments

- Secure the delivery of council housing and affordable rented homes for those in most need.
- Ensure that intermediate housing is accessible for those who want it.
- Use our partnerships with housing providers and influence private developers to maximise affordable housing development in the borough.

Our key priority is to maximise the number of high-quality and genuinely affordable homes in the borough for all our residents, catering for people from a wide range of backgrounds and on different incomes.

This will allow us to address the area of greatest need and demand; with over 3,100 applicants in priority need (also known as Bands A and B) on our waiting list for social housing.

We will continue to invest in the pace and scale of our own ambitious council housebuilding

programme, Greenwich Builds, delivering 750 new council homes by 2024. Construction has already begun and will continue throughout the five-year strategy. We will outline future plans for sustaining our social housebuilding in the coming years. These new homes will continue to meet our commitments to carbon neutrality and national building safety standards.

We will continue to work closely with registered housing providers and private developers to ensure that the number of new affordable homes in the borough is maximised.



Affordability Pressures

The average household income in the borough is approximately £30,778. The average market rent for a two-bed property is around 53 per cent of the average household income before tax, service charges and any other expenditures. This is clearly not affordable. Although many households would be eligible for housing benefit to help cover the cost, it is unfair that people must

rely on benefits to afford private rented homes.

Homeownership is even more unaffordable, with the average price of a house being 13 times higher than the average household income. This makes homeownership near-impossible without assistance from family, friends or affordable home ownership schemes.

Market housing costs for sale and rent, mean that many people will struggle to afford a home without assistance.

Working in partnership with housing providers and private developers will be key to delivering the homes that our residents need in the borough. We will strengthen our existing partnerships to learn from best practice within the housing sector, which will inform our plans for housebuilding. We will also use our influence

as a local authority to make sure that the number of new and affordable houses built by partners is maximised.

To address the competing challenges in the borough and deliver the homes we need, we must come up with ambitious and practical solutions. We set out below different options to increase the overall supply of new and existing homes, alongside a multifaceted plan of how we will mitigate risks.



Secure the delivery of council housing and affordable rented homes for those in most need

- Build at least 750 new council homes and set out our future plans to sustain the development of affordable housing in the borough.
- Use off-site construction where possible to deliver new council homes quickly, efficiently and safely.
- Continue to tackle climate change by meeting our carbon neutrality commitment while ensuring high building safety standards in all our homes.
- Aim to meet the target for two and three-bedroom low-cost rented homes because this is the property type with the greatest demand for those in priority need.
- Aim for at least 35 per cent of on-site affordable housing units on schemes of ten or more homes, and at least 50 per cent on developments that are delivered on public land.
- Of these affordable homes, aim for 70 per cent to be available at London Affordable Rent (LAR) and 30 per cent to be intermediate housing. When planning applications do not meet these targets, we will negotiate with private developers to maximise the number of affordable homes.
- Develop an active downsizing policy that makes it easier for people who want to move to do so.



Strand 1

The level of demand and affordability pressures for low-income households in Royal Greenwich means that we will make delivering low-cost rented homes for those in priority need our primary focus. We will achieve this through our own housebuilding programme, Greenwich Builds, and by securing affordable housing on other private developments in the borough.

During the 2019/20 financial year, there were 1,199 social homes allocated through our social housing waiting list. In comparison, there are over 3,100 households in priority need on the waiting list. The demand for affordable housing is clearly outstripping the supply and is something we need to urgently address.

To tackle this, we will continue to build high-quality council homes over the next five years, while outlining future plans for sustaining our housebuilding. These new homes will continue to meet our commitments to reach carbon neutrality by 2030, while ensuring all of our homes meet national building safety standards.

Evidence shows that the biggest demand for social housing in the borough is two and three-

bedroom homes. In 2019/20, there were 228 social housing allocations for three-bedroom homes, compared to the over 900 households on the waiting list. We will continue to monitor the supply of new and existing affordable rented homes and the demand from people in the most need, to make sure that we have social housing available for those who need it.

On new housing developments built by partners and private developers, we will aim to ensure that at least 35 per cent of their on-site builds are affordable housing on schemes of ten homes or more. This target will increase to 50 per cent of homes which are built on public land, and we will continue to seek the maximum-allowed proportion of affordable rented homes of 70 per cent, at London Affordable Rent levels.

For the supply of existing social homes, we will develop an active downsizing policy to make it easier for our tenants to find a smaller, more manageable home and give your old house to a family that needs the extra space and who are on our priority need waiting list.



Ensure that intermediate housing is accessible for those who want it

- Develop a new Intermediate Housing Policy which will help us match the demand for housing with the needs in the borough.
- Establish a process for matching homes with the residents who need intermediate housing and home ownership schemes.
- Identify the priority categories for intermediate housing to ensure that the homes are matched to households in demand.

We want to establish a policy and process for matching the supply of low-cost housing and properties with the demand, to help ease housing pressures in the borough and support the people who can afford them.

The extent of housing affordability pressures in Royal Greenwich means that even for households with above-average incomes, housing costs can be unaffordable and home ownership near-impossible without financial support. For example, the average cost of a home in Royal Greenwich is now eight times higher than higher-

than-average household incomes (which is approximately £52,000 in London).

National housing planning policy requires that at least 30 per cent of all new affordable housing is intermediate/low-cost (e.g. low-cost rent below the market or shared ownership schemes). This means that there is a steady supply of low-cost homes, which are designed to help people onto the housing ladder. By establishing a standardised process for matching people to intermediate homes, we will help priority households find the right home more easily.



Use our partnerships with housing providers and influence private developers to maximise affordable housing development in the borough

- Establish our relationship with Meridian Home Start as our preferred provider of Build-to-Rent housing in Royal Greenwich.
- Encourage partnerships to develop homes with non-profit organisations that are committed to meeting the needs of current and future residents.
- Review how we allocate Right-to-Buy funding to maximise take-up from registered providers.
- Work with the NHS and our health partners to explore opportunities to develop housing for key workers and lifetime homes alongside neighbourhood health and wellbeing hubs.
- Deliver two pilot sites for the community land trust model, which is a form of community-led housing that is set up and run by local people to develop and manage homes.
- Establish a standard for the supply of high-quality licensed and regulated accommodation with some shared facilities targeting young, single people.

Working in partnership with private developers and other housing providers in Royal Greenwich, and using our influence as a local authority, will help us to bridge the gap between the supply and demand for high-quality homes and affordable housing options. We want to influence the decisions our partners make, to ensure the housing needs of our borough are met and our residents' best interests are kept at the heart of planning.

New partnerships should be of clear benefit to our residents. We will use our influence to increase the number of affordable homes, reduce housing costs, improve physical or social infrastructure and shorten the housing development cycle so homes are ready for people to move into more quickly. This will allow us to extend our influence and resident-focus beyond our own housing development programme, Greenwich Builds.

Following the recent changes to how income from Right-to-Buy sales can be legally spent,

we will look at how we can use this to ensure that more affordable rented homes are built by partners. The changes mean that Right-to-Buy receipts can fund 40 per cent of each new home (up from 30 per cent) and the deadline to spend them has been increased from three to five years. This means we can spend more money per home and have longer to plan.

We will continue to work with our partners in health services to explore opportunities to develop housing for key workers, implement lifetime home standards and neighbourhood health and wellbeing hubs. This will help to ensure that on new developments and estates there is a focus on promoting the health and wellbeing of residents.

The council established not-for-profit housing provider Meridian Home Start, which build and let properties at intermediate rents. We will strengthen our relationship with Meridian Home Start as our preferred provider of Build-to-Rent housing in Royal Greenwich.



Glossary

Discretionary Housing Payments

Can provide extra money when your council decides that you need extra help to meet your housing costs.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

LHA rates are used to calculate housing benefit for tenants renting from private landlords. They are based on private market rents being paid in the local area, by people with the same number of bedrooms as the property where you live, or the number of rooms you and your household needs.

Homelessness Reduction Act

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 was one of the biggest changes to the rights of homeless people in England for 15 years. The Act places a new duty on local authorities to help prevent the homelessness of all families and single people, regardless of priority need, who are eligible for assistance and threatened with homelessness.

Assured shorthold tenancy

Is the most common type of tenancy if you rent from a private landlord or letting agent. The main feature that makes an AST different from other types of tenancies is that your landlord can evict you without a reason, but they must follow the correct procedure to do this.

DAHA Accreditation

Is the UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse.

Beam

Is a charity which supports people experiencing homelessness through crowdfunding to pay for things like training programmes, education, deposits for flats, and helping people into work. The Royal Borough of Greenwich partnered with Beam in 2020.

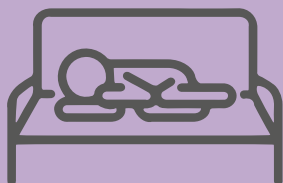
Housing First

Housing First is a homeless assistance approach that prioritises providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, thus ending their homelessness and serving as a platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life.

Landlord business forum

Is a club run by the Royal Borough of Greenwich and National Landlord Association Business Club, which enables local landlords to meet fellow landlords, local business owners, members of the National Landlord Association and council officers. The club meets quarterly and is for all landlords with property in the Royal Borough of Greenwich and surrounding areas.

Tackling Homelessness and Ending Rough Sleeping



Our Commitments

- Deliver a person-centred approach to preventing homelessness.
- End rough sleeping by 2024 by implementing the government's Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- Reduce the number of households living in temporary accommodation and improve standards in the sector as a whole.
- Improve the quality of housing in the private rented sector.

We are determined to continue our record of preventing and resolving homelessness and rough sleeping across the Royal Borough of Greenwich through early intervention and strong partnership working. This document sets out how we will achieve our objectives and commitments.

Rough sleeping is the most acute form of homelessness and has a significant impact on people's mental and physical health. Ending rough sleeping in the borough is a key priority for the council. We will use an approach informed by people's experiences, so we can put in place personalised plans for rough sleepers to help them off the streets and into more settled accommodation.

Preventing people from becoming homeless requires a well-rounded, system-wide perspective and upstream focus. We aim to map, coordinate and deliver services with the rights and needs of people experiencing homelessness at the centre. By approaching problems using this all-inclusive approach, we should see a real reduction in the number of people facing and experiencing homelessness.

Our person-centred approach will also reduce the need for temporary accommodation (TA). As the number of households experiencing homelessness has risen, we have been increasingly reliant on expensive TA to house people. Reducing the number of households in TA, improving the standard of TA, and lowering the cost to the council, are key aims of this strategy.

Our ambition is to not only reduce the number of people requiring TA, but also help people move into more settled housing. One way to achieve this is to increase the supply of genuinely affordable homes, which is outlined in more detail in the Ensuring the Supply of High-Quality Homes strand of the wider Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2021-2026.

We also need to recognise the important role that the private rented sector (PRS) can play in providing settled homes for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We will seek to collaborate with PRS landlords and representatives to make informed and effective decisions, and to ensure that the PRS in the borough meets the needs of our residents.

A Systems Approach

Homelessness is a complex issue and the product of many factors that interact in unpredictable ways and are often out of the control of the people who experience it. For example, homelessness can be caused by many different things including the availability of affordable housing, the economy, national social policy, household income, housing

security, physical and mental health, relationship stability, public attitudes, investment in homelessness prevention programmes and the quality of support services. An individual who is or is at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping cannot change many of these factors, as Sarah's story demonstrates:

Sarah's Story

Sarah lost her privately rented home after facing financial difficulty when the working hours on her zero-hour contract were cut. She was unable to find another job, had no savings and moved back into her family home. The house was overcrowded, which caused tensions between Sarah and her family, and after several months she was asked to leave. Unable to afford the deposit and rent for a flat and unlikely to secure social housing quickly, she had to rely on the kindness of her friends. Sarah's mental health worsened, and she became increasingly anxious and depressed. To avoid feeling like a burden, Sarah began sleeping on the streets. The toll of rough sleeping caused Sarah's mental and physical health to further deteriorate to the point where she lost her job and was unable to maintain her relationships.

There are numerous points in Sarah's story where she was unable to improve her situation because of things that are beyond her control. For example, her financial hardship was caused by employment laws that do not guarantee job security. The lack of affordable housing and benefits that do not cover the full cost of privately rented housing means she was unable to find an alternative home.

By taking a systems approach to preventing and resolving homelessness, we aim to address the different and often connected factors that cause homelessness. We will lobby central government

to urgently address issues including renter's rights and more genuinely affordable housebuilding programmes, and make policy changes which will improve people's welfare, employment and economic status. We also want to improve our services within the council including more information sharing, working more cross-departmentally and embedding strategic aims to reduce homelessness and end rough sleeping.

Ultimately, we want to offer people a package of services built around the needs of the individual.

Centre for Homelessness Impact, 2018:

homelessnessimpact.org/post/what-we-talk-about-when-we-talk-about-systems

Deliver a person-centred approach to preventing homelessness

- Establish a Homelessness Prevention Board to drive a joined-up approach to homelessness prevention across the borough.
- Use data more effectively to understand the routes people take into homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Review the restructured homelessness services implemented following the enactment of the Homelessness Reduction Act.
- Develop digital tools designed to help residents more easily, improve results and assist staff.
- Specialist support for vulnerable people including survivors of domestic abuse and victims of modern slavery.
- Improve access to employment opportunities and address in-work poverty for people in housing need or those at risk of becoming homeless, to help them sustain long-term housing.
- Review the use of Discretionary Housing Payment to address the increased demand for additional financial support that has been required following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act.
- Provide a rent guarantee scheme that is attractive to private landlords and with rents that are within Local Housing Allowance levels.



Strand 2

The Homelessness Reduction Act represented a significant shift in housing and homelessness legislation. It placed a greater emphasis on preventing and relieving homelessness, regardless of a person's priority need status. Between 2018/19, when the act was introduced, and 2019/20, the number of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless through our services increased from 1,022 to 1,211. We aim to continue to improve these services to prevent homelessness, helping people before they reach a point of crisis.

We will focus our resources on services and programmes which have the greatest impact on preventing homelessness. Among the households accepted as homeless, the most common reason was eviction from a friend or relative's home. The next most common reasons were termination of assured shorthold tenancy and people leaving accommodation provided by the Home Office as asylum support.

To deliver a more person-centred approach to our upstream prevention services, we will set up a Homelessness Prevention Board with wide range of partners. This will be the next step in developing a package of services that are built around people's individual needs.

We aim for different council services to share data and information to develop a shared understanding of the cross-cutting issues that are affecting people experiencing homelessness, and which will give us expert insight into how well our programmes are working. This will help us better understand the routes people take into homelessness and support people with complex needs, before they even reach a point of crisis.

We will also continue valuable work with partners to identify and support the most vulnerable groups, preventing crises and protecting the welfare of residents. The council will be looking to build upon our services that were awarded the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation. This includes supporting survivors of domestic abuse and victims of modern slavery. We will also engage with the perpetrators of these crimes to prevent future violence.

To improve the effectiveness of our services, we plan to expand the training we provide to staff and partners. This will allow us to have greater influence over housing outcomes as we will be able to adapt to challenges that rise in the coming years and work towards the overarching aim of continuous improvement.

We will also upgrade our digital systems and tools to improve how residents access our services. With improved digital infrastructure, staff will be able to dedicate more time to supporting residents. New systems will also help improve the data we use to monitor and design services more effectively, while introducing new digital services will improve communication with residents.

Accessing employment or training can be key in helping people avoid or recover from homelessness. While recognising that in-work poverty still affects many people in the borough, increasing a household's income can help them to explore different housing options. We will continue our valuable partnership work with the charity Beam and Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB).



End rough sleeping by 2024 by implementing the government's Rough Sleeping Strategy

- Scale our outreach services to engage with rough sleepers.
- Embed healthcare into services offered to rough sleepers.
- Provide suitable emergency accommodation for rough sleepers to help them off the streets and into a place where our services can better engage with them.
- Reserve a proportion of move-on accommodation in council homes for rough sleepers who have been assisted by our commissioned services carried out by partners.
- Monitor results and explore opportunities to expand our Housing First project for rough sleepers.
- Develop initiatives to improve partnership working with other boroughs to address cross-border activity, prevent displacement and share information.
- Support London-wide initiatives that support rough sleepers such as No Second Night Out, Routes Home for non-UK, Severe Weather Emergency Protocol, Pan-London Safe Connections, Pan-London Accommodation Network and London Homeless Health Programme.



Strand 2

To end rough sleeping in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, we will focus on helping people who are sleeping on the streets recover, while working to prevent future instances of street homelessness.

The number of rough sleepers in the borough has been increasing over the last few years. Between 2018/19 and 2019/20, the number of rough sleepers rose from 91 to 133. In addition, the proportion of those sleeping rough who also have multiple complex needs, including substance misuse and/or poor mental health, has also increased.

The 133 cases of rough sleeping in the borough each represent someone facing tremendous hardship who has different experiences and needs. Personalised and individual support programmes are vital to help people sustain settled accommodation in the future.

We want to expand our outreach services to continue to meet demand, while increasing the number of suitable emergency accommodation to help and move people sleeping rough off the streets and into safe accommodation. These services will be person-focused and tailored to the needs of the individual. In line with government and NHS advice,

we will ensure that emergency accommodation is COVID-safe.

People sleeping rough often have worse mental and physical health than the general population and are not always able to regularly see medical professionals or easily access health services. As well as being a basic human right, studies have shown that improving access to healthcare can positively impact housing and employment for rough sleepers. We will work closely with our health partners to improve access to healthcare for people experiencing homelessness.

We aim to expand our housing-based initiatives because evidence strongly suggests that housing-based solutions for rough sleepers are more effective at helping people sustain accommodation. The council will continue to monitor the number of Housing First homes and look for funding opportunities to expand this initiative. We will also reserve several council homes for rough sleepers who are moving on from our commissioned services and use our procurement service to provide access to the private rented sector.



Reduce the number of households living in temporary accommodation and improve standards in the sector as a whole

- Maximise the number of genuinely affordable homes delivered through our Greenwich Builds programme.
- Develop a cross-departmental temporary accommodation (TA) and procurement strategy to ensure value for money, improve housing standards and ensure that TA is being used effectively.
- Work in partnership with other local authorities in London to coordinate TA rates.
- Review our downsizing incentives to encourage people who are living in council properties with spare bedrooms to move into homes that fit their housing need.
- Reduce our use of expensive emergency overnight accommodation by increasing the supply of good quality and affordable TA.
- Explore opportunities to develop our own TA homes.
- Review our arrangements with private sector landlords to allow us to use their properties for those in housing need.



Strand 2

The number of households living in TA has nearly trebled since 2015/16, reaching 1,272 at the end of March 2020. The nature of TA means that the people cannot put down their roots when living there and the accommodation might be ill-suited to their needs. It is the last resort for relieving homelessness. We want to reduce the number of people who get to this stage, improve the quality of TA and help those in TA move on and into more secure and stable accommodation. Our ultimate goal is for TA to only be used in emergencies and for a limited time period.

We want to reduce the use of bed and breakfast (B&Bs) and nightly-paid accommodation. The increase in the number of households in TA has forced the council to use B&Bs in emergencies to make sure that people have a roof over their heads, but nightly-paid solutions should be used as a last resort.

At the end of March 2020, five per cent of the households in TA were living in B&B accommodation. A further 56 per cent of

households in TA were living in nightly-paid accommodation. Both these types of accommodation are generally more expensive than alternatives and do not provide a stable home environment, but they can be arranged quickly to help residents who are in immediate crisis.

We also want to improve the standard and quality of the TA we use. We will explore all opportunities to develop our own TA by using our in-house development team and building on council land. This will give us the opportunity to directly provide high quality TA at a more affordable cost.

This will form part of the total supply of TA, but we also aim to increase the number of private sector leases which we can use. These are units that we lease for an extended period so we can more closely monitor the standard of accommodation. Developing our relationships with PRS landlords will also be key to achieving this.



Improve the quality of accommodation in the private rented sector

- Find and secure more high-quality private rented sector (PRS) homes to use as TA and suitable 'move-on' accommodation for residents.
- Review our Landlord Business Forum to improve engagement with the PRS sector.
- Collaborate with landlords to improve our understanding of the sector and to better inform our services.
- Lobby central government for national policy changes including improving security and affordability.
- Use enforcement action where required to improve standards in the minority of homes that are poorly managed.
- Develop a data-informed approach to landlord incentives.
- Offer tenancy workshops with residents to help them stay in PRS tenancies.

The private rented sector has an important role to play in the housing market so accessing the full potential of the sector is one of the key aims of the strategy. To do this, we will develop our collaborative approach with the sector and strengthen our partnerships with landlords and lettings agents. This can then help to increase the supply of high-quality PRS units to be used as TA and move-on accommodation to those in temporary housing.

Since 2001, the number of people who rent in the private sector has more than quadrupled². As the proportion of people living in PRS properties has grown, the demographics of those living in it has evolved. The PRS is traditionally perceived to cater for young professionals who want the freedom to move between homes with ease to access different employment opportunities. However, a survey of renters showed that only six percent of private renters live in the sector primarily for the freedom and flexibility it provides³ and a quarter of all new-born babies' first home is in the PRS⁴.

The unaffordability of purchasing a home and the undersupply of social housing means that the PRS is the only feasible option for a significant proportion of households who would rather live in alternative tenures. Whereas households with higher incomes have more relative freedom to move, lower-income households are limited by factors such as cash deposits, discriminatory practices (i.e., refusing to let to people on benefits) and local housing allowance (LHA) levels that do not match market rents.

The legislation and perception of the sector has lagged behind these shifts. The PRS is now an essential part of the housing market and needs reform to be fit for purpose. Many of these shortcomings are structural and need nationwide reforms to resolve. This legislation needs to be developed with the input of partners to ensure it is robust and achieves its aims.

One key issue is that much of the private rental market is unaffordable to those who are reliant on benefits. Housing benefit and the housing

Strand 2

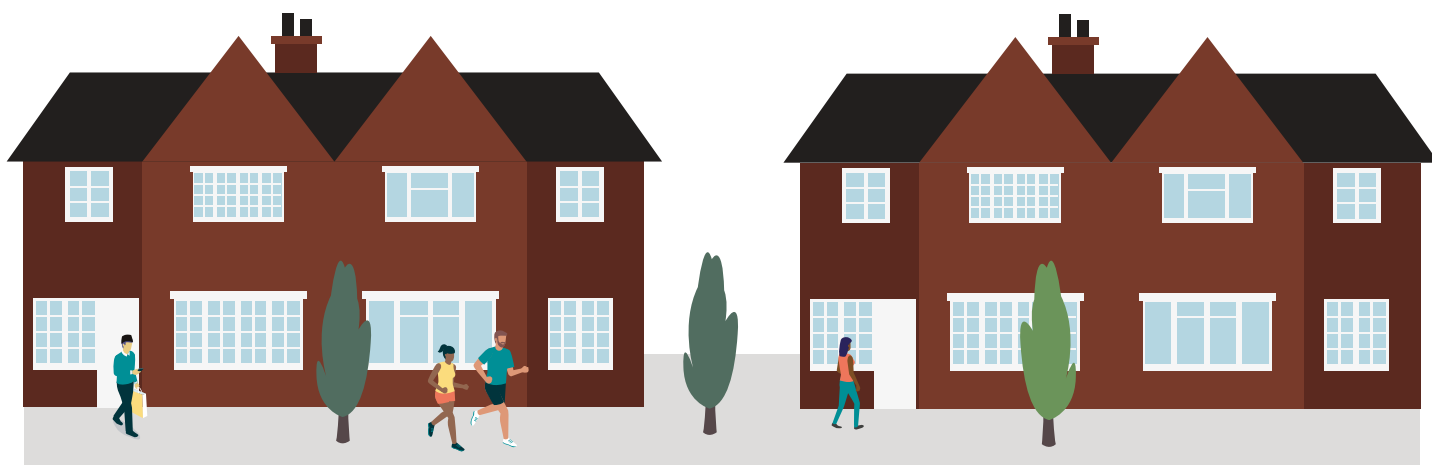
element of Universal Credit (UC), have been capped at LHA levels significantly below market rents for years. In 2019/20, for example, the LHA rate for a two-bed in the borough was £210 and market rent for a relatively cheap⁵ two-bed was £277. This means that benefits would only cover up to a limit of 76 per cent of some of the lowest rents in the borough. The government rightly increased the LHA limit to cover the rent of 30 per cent of properties in each area for one year in its response to the pandemic but this needs to be raised year-on-year to prevent it falling behind rents again.

Other issues relating to benefits for households renting privately include the bedroom tax, the single person cap for under-35s and the five-week wait for UC claims to be processed. There also needs to be consideration for how furloughed workers return to work and those with rent arrears are treated fairly to avoid mass evictions from the PRS. The government needs to address these structural failings as part of its approach to mitigate the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and related economic uncertainty.

We plan to continue to lobby central government to improve the security of tenure for renters in the sector. This includes abolishing Section 21 evictions with robust legislation and close monitoring to ensure it achieves the aim of improving security of tenure.

Unlike other tenures, there is little-to-no centralised or statutory data available to make evidence-informed decisions. As a result, policymakers have a less comprehensive understanding of the sector compared to social housing and there are fewer channels of communication. We are, therefore, committed to improving our understanding of the sector by developing a collaborative approach to decision-making with local landlords and lettings agents. We aim to review our Landlord Business Forum to improve engagement and inform meaningful changes.

Greater engagement and improved communication with landlords will also help to improve standards in the minority of properties that are poorly managed. We can outline the standard of accommodation that we expect to landlords and highlight that we only want to use properties that meet these standards.



² This is the difference between the 2001 Census (8,312) and our PRS modelling (38,000).

³ YouGov, 2017

⁴ Royal London, 2019: royallondon.com/media/press-releases/2019/march/half-of-all-babies-now-born-in-rented-accommodation/

⁵ This refers to properties in the lower quartile of rental values i.e., the bottom 25% of rents.



Glossary

The Charter for Social Housing Residents – Social Housing White Paper

Sets out the actions the government will take to ensure that residents in social housing are safe, are listened to, live in good quality homes, and have access to redress when things go wrong.

Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation ensuring that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly.

BME

Black, minority ethnic

Commissioners and Providers

A commissioned service means care, support or supervision that has been arranged and paid for on a client's behalf by a public authority such as

CLDT

Community Learning Disability Team

DHIT

Disability and Home Improvement Team. Homeowners or private tenants living on a low income may be able to get help paying for home improvements and repairs.

DLC

Digital listening campaign

Equality and Equity Charter and Equality Objectives

Our Equality and Equity Charter is our pledge to ensure our borough is a fair, safe, accessible and inclusive place for people of all backgrounds to feel they belong, succeed and thrive. The Charter outlines our guiding principles and helps us to lead by example as a champion for equality and equity in Royal Greenwich and beyond. See link to the Equality Charter

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/equalitycharter

Extra Care Accommodation / housing

Extra care housing combines accommodation with care and support services. There are many different types of extra care housing, from small communities of flats and bungalows to retirement villages. The facilities and care provided will vary, but extra care housing schemes usually include: self-contained adapted flats or bungalows

Floating Support

Floating support means support that is not linked to accommodation and not normally provided by a person's landlord, a person might need support with issues such as budgeting, life skills, drug or alcohol misuse, avoiding offending etc. A support provider can offer this as a stand-alone service without providing or arranging accommodation linked to the support



Glossary

Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB)

Helps local people get training and matches them with local job opportunities. We work in partnership with a range of organisations to give you the best chance of finding a job in Royal Greenwich and wider area

Handyperson Service

A Royal Borough of Greenwich Service which helps with odd jobs around the home for older or disabled homeowners, private tenants and council tenants to maintain safe and independent living. Check the website for details.

HMO

House in multiple occupation is a property rented out by at least three people who are not from one household (who are not family/blood related), but share facilities like the bathroom and kitchen.

HouseProud

HouseProud was set up in 2014 as the network group for LGBT people working in social housing; in housing associations, local authorities and care providers. See link to [HouseProud consortium.lgbt/member-directory/houseproud/](https://consortium.lgbt/member-directory/houseproud/)

Intergenerational Housing

Intergenerational housing is a new idea based on an old model: people of different ages living together and sharing their skills and time. In the past, this tended to be within extended families, or tightly-knit local communities. More recently, this idea has been introduced into some older people's housing.

Intersectionality

The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.

LGBTQ+

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or questioning). The "plus" represents other sexual identities including pansexual and Two Spirit.

Mental Health Alliance

Collaborative brings together people using services, providers and commissioners to create ideas and plans for improving mental health services and support.

SEND

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities



Glossary

Shared Lives placements

This is a scheme that provides care and accommodation for people with support needs. A family or individual can provide accommodation and support for people who need some help to live the lives they choose. It allows people who use the service to maintain a level of independence or to develop skills and independence in order to maximise the quality of their life.

Sheltered Accommodation

Sheltered accommodation is specifically designed for older people (or younger disabled people) to allow them to live independently. It usually consists of self-contained flats with communal facilities. In most cases, it is available to people aged 60, or in some other schemes it may be open to those over 55 years old.

Smart Homes

A home equipped with lighting, heating, and electronic devices that can be controlled remotely by smartphone or computer.

Worktrain Greenwich

Worktrain Greenwich is delivered in partnership with Unity Works, Advocacy in Greenwich, Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB) and the Royal Borough of Greenwich. Unity Works is a charity that supports people with a learning disability to gain skills, achieve qualifications and secure jobs, so they can reach their full potential.

Support for Specific Housing Needs

The Royal Greenwich is a vibrant borough with a growing diverse population. We share an ambition to create a fairer, safer, accessible and inclusive borough where everyone feels they belong, has a voice and an equal opportunity to succeed and thrive.

The consultation on this strand was different to the other strands in our Housing and Homelessness Strategy, as even though we had already identified groups that we believe may be marginalised or need support; we did not want to be restricted by this scope and wanted to learn more from our engagement to identify more groups and adapt to their feedback too.

It was important that the voices of our residents were heard, and our plans fully shaped by what they have told us. Prior to consultation we previously identified the following groups as the focus of this strand, as they may find it harder to access or sustain general needs accommodation:

- People with learning disabilities and/or autism
- Communities and ethnic groups at risk of marginalisation
- People with physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments
- People with mental ill health
- Older people

However, during the consultation we widened our engagement to the following organisations representing; parents with children with Special Educational Needs (SEND), Metro-Gavs (representing the LGBTQ+ community), Metro-Gavs (representing people with disabilities) and the Royal Borough of Greenwich's tenants and leaseholder residents.

By broadening the engagement, it improved on our original plans and made us recognise that there are crossovers in the difficulties our residents experience, as well as ones that just affect them.

Residents also identified that they can be marginalised in more than one way, this is often described as intersectionality. For example, they can be affected by both their age and their race, or their faith and their gender. Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and oppression and we must consider everything and anything that can marginalise people, be it gender, race, class, sexual orientation, physical ability, etc.

The different groups identified the below themes that can affect more than one group; and we recognized by targeting and resolving these problems we could support more people.



Lessons learnt and improving resident engagement

COVID-19 has forced us all to find innovative solutions to engage with residents outside of traditional face-to-face methods, making sure people's voices and views are heard. In June 2020, Cllr Anthony Okereke, Cabinet member for Housing, launched a new (DLC) Digital Listening Campaign to reach tenants, leaseholders and clients using our housing services from across the borough.

The feedback from the campaign helped to inform what services worked well and what needed improvement, while also highlighting how residents working in partnership with the council is crucial to achieve real change.

Also, for us to embrace 'The Charter for Social Housing Residents – Social Housing White Paper' to ensure that residents in social housing are listened to, live in good quality homes, and have access to redress when things go wrong.

Through this campaign, we have achieved more significant engagement and diversity levels than we have seen before at previous face-to-face meetings.

We reached out to residents often under-represented in the typical in-person meetings. Nearly half of the attendees were from a BAME background in comparison to only 14% at our housing panels held between Sept 2019 and January 2020.

Given the success of the DLC, we will continue to use this approach and have set ourselves the challenge of revising estate inspections over the next 12 months, so residents can engage with us both in-person and digitally.

The benefit of digital engagement is the flexibility it provides for residents, e.g. parents with young children. They have been able to attend virtual meetings from the comfort of their home, at work or whilst out.

This method was vitally important when we met with the parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), who's feedback was insightful and informative. Parents emphasised we need to understand and be aware of the living and housing requirements of a SEND child. Some children are affected by noise, heat and sound and that we need to be mindful of this impact on the child, family and neighbours when allocating properties. Many families are wrongly accused of noise nuisance or anti-social behaviour due to the misconception of a child's disruptive behaviour.

Parents also voiced improvements to be made to temporary accommodation when placed there with a child with SEND needs. Many families identified the need for a holistic housing assessment in order to plan that child's journey and establish the appropriate housing for the family, putting the child at the centre

We also recognise the need for greater engagement with Travellers. We have placed dedicated officers on the Traveller site in the borough and plans to develop a working group with the aim of improving conditions on their site.

Having listened to our resident's concerns, makes us even more committed to ensure that residents have appropriate, accessible long-term homes and to have a voice in shaping the delivery of services tailored to their needs.

Themes Identified in Consultation

- Equal access to housing services
- Supporting and sustaining people to live independently
- Suitable and specific accommodation

Our approach to addressing the housing challenges for potentially-vulnerable or marginalised people has been informed by our targeted consultations to incorporate the lived experiences of these residents into our plans.

To deliver on our aims, all Council services will work in partnership with registered providers, private landlords, health and social care providers and employment support services.

Supporting our most vulnerable and marginalised residents to lead independent, safe and active lives is our commitment to help individuals and families sustain their accommodation.

It is vital:

- Our services are built on respect and empathy
- That there is equal access to services and inclusivity
- We help people live independently
- That we design inclusively e.g. dementia-friendly, wheelchair-accessible, futureproofed for adaptations
- That we take into consideration in the recovery from the COVID pandemic and lockdowns that there has been disproportionate impact on identified groups
- That we have an Equality and Equity Charter

In October 2020, we agreed an Equality and Equity Charter and a new set of Equality Objectives for the period of 2020-2024. The Charter and Objectives have been developed through extensive consultation with staff, trade unions representatives, local voluntary and community groups, partner organisations and residents. Consultation started internally in January-March 2020 and then externally in July-August 2020.

In support of our Equality and Equity Charter and pledge for equality in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, we consulted with our residents and listened to their feedback.

This strategy sets out our commitment to support the residents of the Royal Borough of Greenwich in accessing and living in good quality housing that improves their health and wellbeing. We acknowledge the importance of working together with as a Council and our partners in order to respond effectively to the needs of those who may need specialist support.

Equal access to housing service



Our Commitments

- Sign up to Houseproud to understand the issues faced in Council housing by LGBTQ+ residents and work better with LGBTQ+ communities.
- Continue to support and raise awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant among all council staff and the general public.
- Support the Nepalese community through targeted engagement, public health initiatives and improving housing conditions in HMO properties.
- To lobby for the provision of dedicated refuge places for transgender women and gay men experiencing domestic abuse.
- Review our commissioning of specialist refuges.
- Review how we monitor access to housing to understand the barriers and improve engagement.
- Review the accessibility of our digital channels and ensure people with disabilities are not disadvantaged.

We are committed to ensuring that residents have appropriate, accessible long-term homes. To achieve this, we want residents to have access to the necessary information, advice and support to live independently in their homes for as long as possible.

Through targeted engagement, we are also supporting the Nepalese community and their housing needs in conjunction with public health initiatives. We will take action to eradicate unfair and illegal treatment by landlords of marginalised communities, particularly non-English speaking tenants. Our enforcement team will take the necessary enforcement action to improve the living conditions in HMO properties and make tenants aware of remedies available to them

To assist the armed forces community, the Royal Borough of Greenwich signed the Armed Forces Covenant on 8 February 2012 and renewed our

commitment to it in 2019. We will continue to support the Armed Forces community and any changes implemented by the Armed Forces Bill 2021, which will come into effect in 2022. To help prevent potential disadvantage faced by the Armed Forces community they and their families, are put into a priority band on our housing waiting list. We also provide support to help them navigate the housing application process and help to sustain their tenancies

According to our data for the financial year 2018/19, 0.7% of homeless case decisions were for people who identify themselves as gay or lesbian. 0.8% of people identified as other and 40.7% did not state their sexual orientation. From staff feedback we ascertain the reluctance for people to identifying as LGBTQ+ is due to the negative experiences they have encountered.

Strand 3

Our service aims to support these groups to confidentially access the support from specialist service providers and be sensitive to their needs. LGBTQ+ people can face discrimination when they access housing or homelessness support. We are actively engaging with LGBTQ+ residents to gain a better understanding of their experience of our services and to work jointly on improving services. We will also be signing up to Houseproud, which requires specific staff training on LGBTQ+ to engage and work better with specific communities.

We will also lobby for the provision to widen the inclusivity of other groups who also experience domestic abuse. Likewise the need for hostels for the LGBTQ+ community requiring emergency accommodation pending rehousing

We will review and use more inclusive language in communications and official material such as application forms and surveys should be more inclusive to the LGBTQ+ and other marginalised groups.



Supporting and sustaining people to live independently

Our Commitments

- Pilot a move-on protocol for people with learning disabilities and/or autism to access general needs Council housing with floating support from Health and Adult Services.
- To develop a multi-agency project to build recovery, address health inequalities, supporting better outcomes and independence for people with mental ill health
- We will target funding on measures such as fuel poverty and energy efficiency work, security or crime prevention initiatives for older People
- Reduce admissions for people with learning disabilities and/or autism to residential and care homes by flexible access to accommodation provision where it can prevent high care costs
- Expanding the Handyperson service to provide more minor adaptations to vulnerable clients, to people with learning disabilities and/or autism and those with physical disabilities and or sensory impairments; and streamline our processes for residents who are to receive an adaption in their home to reduce waiting times.
- Explore opportunities to use new technologies to help older residents live independently for as long as possible, improve their health and connect with their communities.
- Work with partners to implement the Mental Health Alliance model which aims to reduce the rate of residential and supported living placements and increase the rate of independent accommodation.



Regardless of a person's health, disability or age, a quality home helps provide the basis for a fulfilling and independent life and to be an active participant in their community.

We want to reduce admissions to residential and care homes by flexible access to accommodation provision where it can prevent high care costs. The

Handyperson service and home improvement and adaptation services are central to this. There are Disabled Facilities Grants available to pay for any major adaptations that have been recommended by an occupational therapist so that residents, or their child with disabilities can live more independently and allow them to remain in their homes.

Strand 3

We have an ageing population in Greenwich and with this we acknowledge there are different requirements for different stages of old age that need to be provided for.

Our future plans for older peoples housing design will consider:

- Intergenerational housing, smart homes, homes for life and other innovations.
- Reflect on the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic and the future of what a pandemic-proof model of older people's housing should look like.

We are setting up an evidence-based survey of older people's needs in the borough to fully understand the types of housing required for different stages of old age including their support needs and health needs.

We need to have robust local knowledge along with the Census 2021 data, to provide a proper insight and analysis to help inform our delivery of services and housing for older people.

We will proactively encourage and promote service users with a learning disability and /or autism to live in more independent settings such as Extra care accommodation, Shared Lives placements, sheltered accommodation and their own front doors with minimal or floating support.

We are currently drafting a new vision for Health and Adult Services, which includes the priority of working with residents to live as independently as possible.

There is clear evidence that people are living longer but in poorer mental and physical health. Fifty percent of over 65's already live with a degree of frailty or living with multiple long-term conditions and with more complex needs. The pandemic has also had a major impact on our older residents. All older people day services were closed throughout the pandemic and at least 9,000 residents were shielded,

increasing social isolation, food insecurity and mental ill health.

Our ambition is to help residents improve their health, connect with their communities, live independently and provide a modern service which best meets the needs of our tenants and residents.

The Council is committed to assisting older people, people with physical disabilities and learning disabilities to remain living independently in their own home for as long as it is appropriate through measures including aids and adaptations and ensuring new homes are built to lifetime home standards.

To assist more service users to live independently, we have created a pilot move-on protocol for people with a learning disability. The pilot program gives clients access to the Council's general needs housing with floating support from Health and Adult services. This will assist more service users to live independently and free up supported accommodation for those who no longer require this type of accommodation.

Our partnership with Worktrain Greenwich will also provide support to over 100 people with a learning disability to find and sustain employment. Having employment will enable them to sustain their housing tenancies with the support from Worktrain. They also provide support to young people under the age of 25, who have autism and or a learning disability to gain support in finding employment.

To assist more service users to live independently, we will also be reviewing our commissioning contracts which supports residents in receiving specialist accommodation and set out our procurement intentions. This is underpinned by the new Vision for our Health and Adult services.

Suitable and specific accommodation

Our Commitments



- Review current commissioning contracts for the support that people with learning disabilities and/or autism receive in specialist accommodation and set out our procurement intentions.
- Engage with specialist housing providers to encourage additional developments that are wheelchair accessible, with consideration for proximity to local amenities and are amenable to increased use of assistive technology as required.
- Prioritise the delivery of 20 units of supported living accommodation for people with mental health support needs who are stepping down from in-patient or high-support settings.
- To reduce the rate of residential and supported living placements for people with mental ill health and increase the rate of independent accommodation.
- Work with SEND parents to help inform the design of housing and develop services.
- Secure the delivery of an additional 30-40 units of extra care housing to help meet the immediate needs of residents.
- Increase our engagement with the Traveling Community in the Borough and continue to improve conditions and safety on our permanent Traveller's site
- Continue to support vulnerable young people through our commissioning services.

We aim to ensure that there is an adequate supply of specialist housing to those in need, such as extra care housing, and aspire for new homes to meet lifetime standards so that people are not forced to move because of their changing needs.

Learning Disability Services will be commissioning a new supported housing service on the Royal Hill car park site, providing 9 units.

Community Learning Disability Team will place 18 service users into more independent settings.

A newly created protocol has recently been agreed and established between Housing and Health and Adults Service to provide a 'move-on' priority, for rehousing people with learning disabilities and/or autism into mainstream general needs accommodation. Floating support will be provided to clients by Health and Adults service.

The success of these initial moves will be reviewed and may result in 'move-on' quotas going forward. The introduction of this scheme enables Health and

Strand 3

Adult services to free up supported accommodation for those who no longer require this type of accommodation, whilst providing customers with safe, independent living solutions within the community, within the council managed stock.

We will identify additional opportunities to expand extra care provision for people with low level dementia.

The Sheltered Housing team continues to assist with meeting the needs of older people who have specific housing requirements. The borough has 15 Sheltered Housing schemes, 3 Extra care sheltered housing schemes and plans for one new Dementia Friendly Extra Care sheltered scheme. We are supporting our older tenants living in sheltered accommodation by making £857,624 upgrades to five sheltered housing schemes and one extra care sheltered home. The upgrade is for replacement warden call and fire safety renewal works.

The consultation highlighted that for many parents of SEND children they want a home that will adapt with their children's growing needs as they transition from child to teenager to adulthood.

We will work with parents to develop services by reviewing the housing suitability assessment process at the allocation stage, post allocation support services and housing related information for parents with children of special needs and disabilities.

A range of commissioned services will assist young people and care leavers, as we work in partnership with Children services. We will provide a supported lodgings scheme for young people as well as supported housing specifically for young homeless parents.

We also recognise that we need to have greater engagement with Travellers when aiming to improve conditions on their site.





Glossary

Hackitt Report

Is the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety that was announced by government in July 2017, following the Grenfell Tower tragedy and was led by Dame Judith Hackitt.

Council's Carbon Neutral Plan

The Royal Borough of Greenwich declared a climate emergency in 2019 and agreed to set an ambitious target to reach net zero carbon emissions 20 years ahead of the national target. We've now published a draft carbon neutral plan and the draft plan sets out what changes we'll make and what actions are necessary to make sure we reach our ambitious target of becoming a carbon neutral borough by 2030.

The Charter for Social Housing Residents – Social Housing White Paper

Sets out the actions the government will take to ensure that residents in social housing are safe, are listened to, live in good quality homes, and have access to redress when things go wrong.

The Regulator of Social Housing

The Regulator of Social Housing regulates registered providers of social housing to promote a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs.

The Building Safety Regulator

A new regulator has been set up in the wake of the Grenfell Tower disaster following Dame Judith Hackitt's report. It will oversee the safe design, construction and occupation of high-risk buildings so that residents are safe and feel safe. The regulator will be independent and provide expert advice to the industry as well as residents

Cladding and ACM Cladding

The term cladding refers to components that are attached to building to form non-structural, external surfaces (usually flat coloured panels). ACM stands for Aluminium Composite Material which has been linked to a number of major fires.

House in multiple occupation (HMOs)

It is a house or flat which is let to three or more tenants, who form two or more households and who share a kitchen, bathroom or toilet. The full definition and exclusions can be found in the Housing Act 2004, Section 254 to 264 and Schedule 14.

Mandatory HMO licensing

The Housing Act 2004 introduced the mandatory licensing of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). Many HMOs are now required to be licensed by the local authority.
royalgreenwich.gov.uk/hmollicence



Glossary

Additional licensing

In addition to the mandatory licensing of certain larger houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), the Housing Act 2004 gives local authorities the power to impose additional licensing on smaller HMOs beyond the national mandatory regime.

Selective licensing

This enables local authorities to extend the benefits of licensing beyond the mandatory licensable properties (large HMOs); it focuses on improving the management of privately rented properties accommodating single households. It is a discretionary scheme applicable to all privately rented properties with single households in a given area. The area must have demonstrable issues in line with the legislation, such as poor property conditions, anti-social behaviour or deprivation. Schemes that cover more than 20 per cent of the private rented stock in the borough must have secretary of state approval for the scheme.

Carbon neutrality

Carbon neutrality, or having a net zero carbon footprint, refers to achieving net zero carbon dioxide emissions by balancing carbon emissions with carbon removal or simply eliminating carbon emissions altogether.

Carbon offsetting

A carbon offset is a way to compensate for emissions by funding an equivalent carbon dioxide saving elsewhere.

Fuel poverty

A person is to be regarded as living “in fuel poverty” if they are a member of a household living on a lower income in a home which cannot be kept warm at reasonable cost. The South London Healthy Homes scheme may be able to help if you’re struggling to keep your home warm, or to afford your energy bills, if you meet certain criteria. Call **0808 169 1779** or visit **cact.org.uk/swtw**.

Hoarding

A hoarding disorder is where someone acquires an excessive number of items and stores them in a chaotic manner.

Compliance

Compliance refers to the state of being in accordance with established safety standards and regulations, or the process of becoming so.

Tenure

The term tenure refers to the various ways that you can own a property or rent a property e.g. Owner-occupier, freehold, leasehold, or private-rented, council or a housing association tenant.



Glossary

Housing and Planning Act 2016

The Act provides powers that permit local authorities to impose a civil penalty of up to £30,000 as an alternative to prosecution for a range of offences under the Housing Act 2004, and where a landlord or property agent has breached a banning order under the Housing and Planning Act 2016. Civil penalties for certain housing offences came into force on 6 April 2017. The guidance has been updated to reflect that from 6 April 2018 a civil penalty can also be imposed for breach of a banning order.

Autodialler devices

An electronic device that monitors alarm signals for a problem, when a problem is detected it will instantly communicate the problem to the correct on call personnel, so it can be quickly rectified.

Retrofitting

Making an existing building more energy efficient. This could include insulating walls, roofs and floors; upgrading windows and doors and heating systems; and swapping to low carbon heating sources.

Heat Networks

A heat network, sometimes called district heating, is a distribution system of insulated pipes that takes heat from a central source and delivers it to a number of domestic or non-domestic buildings.

Ground Source heat pumps

A ground source heat pump (GSHP) also known as a geothermal pump, harvests solar heat absorbed by the ground.

Solar Photovoltaic systems

Is a power system designed to supply power by the direct conversion of sunlight into electricity.

Low Carbon buildings

Low-carbon buildings are buildings designed and constructed to release very little or no carbon at all during their lifetime.

Illegal Conversions

Houses illegally converted into House in Multiple Occupation or garages/out buildings illegally let as domestic accommodation or commercial accommodation used as domestic accommodation without a change of planning permission.

Safe and Sustainable Homes for all



Our Commitments

- Ensure our Council homes are safe and have modern facilities.
- Support and enforce safety standards in privately-owned and rented homes.
- Improve the energy efficiency in homes owned by the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
- Support carbon reduction and improved energy efficiency in all homes in Royal Greenwich.

We have consulted on the key objectives and aims in this strategy and listened to your feedback and will help us focus on the priority issues and help shape our approach to addressing them, in a way to achieve the best outcomes over the next five years.

This strand is underpinned and will be informed by the Social Housing White Paper, the review of building safety standards and evolving green agenda, including the Council's Carbon Neutral Plan.

Good quality housing is essential for everyone's health and wellbeing; safe and sustainable housing can support good physical and mental health, reduce fuel poverty, decrease carbon emissions, reduce hospital admissions and help people live independently for longer.

We are committed to work with our partners with the aim of ensuring high quality housing for all our residents. Promoting prevention by empowering our tenants and those in the rented sector with the tools to help themselves.

It is important that we get the best outcomes for our tenants and residents by reducing inequality and narrowing the gap in quality of housing across

tenures. We can achieve this by partnership working and tackling challenges through positive collaboration.

As a landlord, we will implement legislation and good practice recommendations to improve building safety and empower residents.

In addition, we will use our roles as a partner to many housing providers; and as an enforcer, to implement the new building safety standards.

Using the opportunities, we have to engage with residents, housing associations, and the private rented and home ownership tenures, we will support the improvement of energy efficiency of homes across the borough.

By providing information, and referral to services which support landlords in the private rental sector and those homes undergoing disability adaptations to retrofit their properties. Updating the information, we provide to private sector landlords through enforcement and licensing processes; encouraging increased energy efficiency standards in the private rental. Making every opportunity count when engaging with residents on housing plans to provide fuel poverty and energy efficiency advice.

Strand 4

Taking into consideration sustainability and the long-term implications on our environment; we will ensure we support council wide action on carbon reduction in all housing tenures across the borough; and continue to engage with residents, businesses and

organisations to encourage them to share ownership of our Carbon Neutral Plan and to jointly make the changes that will be required to achieve carbon neutrality.



Ensure our Council homes are safe and have modern facilities

- Agree an Asset Management Strategy to support the long-term investment programme for Council homes and estates.
- Enhance resident engagement in line with the recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry and the proposals contained in 'The Charter for Social Housing Residents – Social Housing White Paper'.
- Produce a comprehensive Compliance Strategy for our housing services, encompassing all areas of the Royal Borough's landlord compliance obligations, including the proposals contained in the Fire Safety Act and Building Safety Bill.
- Work collaboratively with the London Fire Brigade and other partners to reduce fire risks inside people's homes and communal areas.

We will develop a Housing Asset Management Strategy to underpin our long-term investment programme to improve the quality and safety standards of our housing stock; whilst improving energy efficiency and helping to alleviate fuel poverty. Our planned maintenance programme will upgrade and modernise external parts of the home, such as roofs and inside the home, such as kitchens and bathrooms.

Over the past 18 months, the Repairs and Investment Service have embarked on creating an entirely new customer experience for its residents, to ensure their voices are heard and we learn from their feedback.

This has included engaging with an independent organisation to gain feedback on the service we provide. Our challenge now is to learn from the feedback and start to put in place a service that meets our residents' needs. This includes developing an engagement strategy that allows us to engage with our residents and staff through various forums.

The strategy will set out our vision, values and priorities for the next three years. In developing this document, we have talked directly to over 25,000 residents (through surveys), staff and reviewed

complaints. We have agreed that over the next three years our service should centre around five themes:

- Resident Voice
- Make every visit count
- Pride in our homes
- Digital by choice
- Tenants of the future

We will review our working practices with the emerging and evolving agenda around fire and building safety, including the recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry and proposals contained in 'The Charter for Social Housing Residents – Social Housing White Paper'. This includes council officers working solely on safety issues, as the purpose of their job.

Fire safety remains as a top priority for our residents in all tenures.

We will ensure compliance with the requirements proposed in forthcoming fire and building safety legislation, including the Fire Safety Act and Building Safety Bill. And, we will embed the core principles of these new laws within our working culture. This will include producing a comprehensive Compliance

Strand 4

Strategy for our housing services, encompassing all areas of the council's landlord compliance obligations.

We will embrace the latest good practice to ensure we have clear and up-to-date policies and procedures for each area of landlord compliance covering; fire safety, asbestos, gas safety, electrical safety, water hygiene and lifts. To help us achieve this, we will work with the Regulator of Social Housing and Building Safety Regulator.

To support a comprehensive Compliance Strategy, we have already produced up-to-date policies on these big six areas of compliance.

- We will remove asbestos wherever possible, or alternatively, safely manage it within the building.
- We will undertake annual inspections inside properties, to make sure gas appliances are safe and, where necessary, upgrade and replace gas installations we are responsible for. Ensuring all locations with a gas supply has an in-date Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR) certificate.
- We will risk assess each property for the hazards associated with water and implement the remedial work identified.

- Our passenger lift improvement plans include installing autodialler devices to allow trapped passengers to call for emergency help.
- We will ensure electrical safety precautions are implemented and will appoint a competent person to lead the management of electrical safety, ensure compliance is achieved and maintained; and provide an Electrical Installation Condition Report. This will include completing electrical tests for all residential properties at least every five years.
- We will work collaboratively with the London Fire Brigade, our Health and Adults social care services and the Oxleas NHS mental health service, to tackle fire safety risks caused by excessive hoarding of personal items and smoking in blocks of flats.

In addition, we will look at safety in the wider environment and including the play areas on housing land; ensuring all play areas are regularly serviced and inspected and highway areas, under our responsibilities as a landlord ensuring they are inspected and maintained.



Support and enforcing safety standards in privately owned and privately rented properties

- Introduce a selective licensing scheme in private rented accommodation, to tackle unethical landlords and to improve living standards.
- Lobby central government for structural changes including improving security of tenure and affordability.
- Use enforcement action when required to improve standards in the minority of homes that are poorly managed.

Poorly-managed privately rented properties have a negative impact on many neighbourhoods. Anti-social behaviour (ASB), noise complaints, nuisance neighbours, accumulations of rubbish and other problems.

Overcrowding and illegal conversions are also features of the private rented sector and all contribute to neighbourhood problems.

Currently the council operates the Mandatory Licensing scheme covering larger Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and has also designated the whole borough in an Additional Licensing scheme, this commenced in October 2017.

Mandatory Licensing of HMOs applies only to the largest HMOs and is compulsory for all councils across the country.

The Additional Licensing of HMOs is a discretionary power, local councils have to introduce licensing schemes for other HMOs, not already included in the mandatory scheme. We can specify what type of HMO will be covered by an Additional Licensing scheme based on the problems with housing conditions in our area.

Both types of licensing are valid for five years. However, if we want to keep discretionary schemes after five years, further public consultation and Cabinet approval is required.

Our Additional licensing is now in its 4th year and therefore our scheme is currently being reviewed and this will then help inform the decision whether to renew the scheme in 2022.

Currently there are over 1,200 actual licensed HMOs, however we will continue to promote the need to licensing HMO's and will continue to encourage and enforce compliance.

We will work with landlords to support and encourage them, so together we can drive up standards in the private rented sector, whilst also cracking down on rogue private landlords.

We will continue to use the powers provided to local authorities in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 which have strengthened our ability to act against criminal landlords with civil penalties, banning orders, extended rent repayment orders and use of a national database to track rogue landlords across council boundaries.

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We believe everyone should have a good quality home no matter who their landlord is. We want to work with landlords to increase security, certainty, affordability and stability for their tenants; however, we will use our enforcement powers where needed.

We will provide more advice and support to victims of unscrupulous landlords. Take enforcement action against landlords who rent sub-standard accommodation and exploit vulnerable tenants and

those from marginalised groups. We will regularly meet and work with organisations representing these affected communities, to develop service improvements such as awareness of remedies available and confidence building, to support enforcement action.

Our use of enforcement powers is a key part of our broader strategy that aims to improve the lives of our residents in the private rented sector.



Improve the energy efficiency in homes owned by the Royal Borough of Greenwich

- Make existing homes owned by the Royal Borough of Greenwich more energy efficient, including insulating walls, roofs and floors and upgrading windows and doors.
- Pilot a whole block approach to reduce carbon emissions in a cost-effective way.
- Reduce the dependence on fossil fuels by replacing communal heating systems to carbon neutral alternatives such as heat pumps; explore new technologies and opportunities for funding to enable wider roll out.
- Install individual meters, moving communal heating charges away from pooled to an individual billing model, providing transparency and for residents to pay for their actual consumption.
- Through Greenwich Builds - Build all new Royal Borough of Greenwich council homes to zero-carbon standards.
- Work with partners and other agencies to develop schemes and initiatives to help alleviate fuel poverty.

The substantive work to transition council homes towards zero carbon will commence in 2021 and be part of the Five-Year Investment Plan being developed.

To achieve our carbon-neutral objectives with our own housing, we will:

- **Making our existing homes more energy efficient:** Retrofit our existing homes more energy efficient by installing additional insulation and upgrading windows and doors.
- **De-fossilise energy systems:** By shifting energy systems away from fossil fuels, such as gas and towards low carbon renewable sources of energy, such as air and ground source heat pumps, and solar photovoltaic systems.
- **Smart energy systems:** Using technology and data to monitor, control and optimise low carbon buildings and energy assets, so they are more efficient, generating cost savings and further reduce emissions; Introducing new technologies which can provide flexibility to local energy networks and enable greater impact to be gained from defossilised energy systems, such as battery storage.
- **Support council tenants:** Give tenants the necessary tools, whether that be technology, advice or knowledge to better manage household energy consumption, make the most of retrofitted homes and low carbon energy technologies, use low emission modes of travel, and tackle fuel poverty.

Support carbon reduction and improved energy efficiency in all homes in Royal Greenwich

- We will support council wide action on carbon reduction in all housing tenures across the Borough and continue to engage with residents, businesses and organisations to encourage them to share ownership of our 'Carbon Neutral Plan', and to jointly make the changes that will be required to achieve carbon neutrality.

Our programme of resident engagement will focus on involving residents with the development and implementation of services to make homes safer and environmentally sustainable.

We recognise that one method of engagement is not suitable for all residents, and we will therefore provide a range of engagement opportunities.

Action includes: all council homes to be heated and powered by non-fossil fuels; procuring 100 percent green electricity; building low carbon homes; creating safer routes for walking and cycling; installing electric vehicle charging points; planting thousands of extra

trees; and setting up a partnership of businesses and local organisations to help reduce emissions across the borough.

Being carbon neutral means reducing emissions arising from the Royal Borough of Greenwich as far possible, and to very low levels. As well as reducing the amount we emit, offsetting of the residual emissions is possible, by reducing emissions elsewhere.

We gave residents the opportunity to have their say on the draft carbon neutral plan before it is published in October 2021.





Glossary

Mixed-use neighbourhoods

In a mixed-use neighbourhood, housing and residential areas are mixed in with restaurants, cafes, dry cleaners, supermarkets, corner shops, etc. – businesses that serve local people and support the daily needs of residents.

Gigabit broadband

Gigabit broadband is an internet connection that offers a speed of 1 gigabit per second (1Gbps/1Gb) or more. With a speed of 1Gb, you could potentially download a 5GB file in just 40 seconds. At present, these incredible speeds are only achievable with a fixed-line connection.

Real-time data

Real-time data is information that is delivered immediately after collection, for example when you withdraw money from your bank at an ATM, the amount in your bank account is immediately updated.

Zero carbon

Zero carbon means that the amount of greenhouse gases (like carbon dioxide) that the council adds to the atmosphere is no longer more than what they take out.

Internet of Things

‘The internet of things’ is the interconnection via the internet of computing devices embedded in everyday objects, enabling them to send and receive data. For example: a smart meter to monitor your electric usage.

Telehealth and telemedicine

Telehealth is the use of digital information and communication technologies, such as computers and mobile devices, to access healthcare services remotely to easily manage your own healthcare, whereas telemedicine is the practice of medicine using technology to deliver care to patients at a distance.

DG Cities

DG Cities Ltd is the commercial smart cities arm of the Royal Borough of Greenwich. It enables the organisation to work flexibly with external partners in research, local government, consultancy and other new business opportunities related to smart city development.

Integrated enforcement

Integrated enforcement is a joined-up approach to tackling issues of anti-social behaviour by working with various teams with the Royal Borough of Greenwich and our partners including the police. It recognises that all issues need to be resolved not just one type of issue.

Building Resilient and Vibrant Communities



Our Commitments

- Ensure that residents have a voice and are empowered and supported to help shape their local environment.
- Improve the safety and security of our neighbourhoods.
- Prioritise the design of mixed-use, high-quality neighbourhoods.
- Improve digital connectivity in homes across Royal Greenwich.

A good place to live is about more than just having a good home. It is about the local environment, safety, being close to shops, cafes and restaurants, and an attachment to the local area. Through the activities outlined in the Housing and Homelessness Strategy, we aim not only to improve people's homes and the services we provide, but also the area in which they live. We want to build local neighbourhoods that are vibrant, sustainable and resilient which meet the needs of residents today and in the future.

Our goal is to create neighbourhoods that can provide residents with what they need locally and improve their quality of life, while minimising the impact on the environment. Royal Greenwich spaces, buildings, transport, services and communities need to be inclusive, easy to access, and reflect the diversity and warmth which makes the borough such a great place to live.

We also want residents to be well-informed and for services to be responsive by allowing access to real time data and information. Responsiveness is becoming increasingly important, as it will allow us to anticipate and prevent problems. To enable this, we are committed in deploying robust digital connectivity and infrastructure.

Finally, given the environmental challenges we face, we are determined to make the most of the opportunities that data and technology provide to enable the borough to be carbon neutral by 2030.

This is a long-term vision which requires council-wide commitment and investment. We will work across many different departments within the council, as well as building on external partnerships, to achieve these goals.

Ensure that residents have a voice and are empowered and supported to help shape their local environment

- Develop an inclusive community engagement approach which ensures that we engage with all communities in the borough.
- Be an excellent landlord and lead by example to ensure that residents and their needs act as the 'guiding star' for our housing service delivery with services that are designed around resident needs.
- Conduct research with tenants, leaseholders and service users to review and refine the channels we use for engaging with them.
- Improve the council's data and evidence-base to improve service delivery and neighbourhood planning and management.
- Enable increased community participation in support of the Digital Inclusion strategy.

Building Resilient and Vibrant Communities and Neighbourhoods relies heavily on connecting and engaging with residents and communities, so that they can shape their local surroundings and environment.

A key priority is to facilitate improved community engagement on housing and neighbourhood matters. We recognise the complex barriers that many residents and communities face when trying to engage with the council. We need to understand these to make sure we are talking to everyone and that all residents feel represented and included in our plans.

The council is the largest landlord in the borough, owning and managing around 25% of all of homes in Royal Greenwich. It is important that the council leads by example in ensuring that all tenants and

leaseholders can help shape their local surroundings and environments.

As a landlord we will be guided by the UK Government's recent white paper – 'The charter for social housing tenants', to ensure that we listen to our tenants and their needs, responding quickly and comprehensively when issues do arise.

We will ensure that residents' needs are at the centre of our services, and that future services are designed around them. We will therefore begin a programme of research with our tenants and leaseholders to ensure that we are guided by them in delivering our services. To do this, we will work across the council to offer a more joined-up approach, generating a comprehensive understanding of residents' needs and experiences.

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We recognise that communication plays a vital role in enabling meaningful participation, and that effective communication is consistent and two-way. We will therefore work with our tenants and leaseholders to evaluate and improve our communication methods to ensure that no-one is excluded from being able to have their say.

We will look to apply practice standards to our data management processes and invest in building our

data and reporting capabilities, making them practical, accessible and useful for residents.

To enable supportive, participative communities, we are committed to working closely with other housing providers, landlords and private homeowners. Using our collective knowledge and experience, we will ensure that we have a real understanding of what we need to be doing to better support our local communities.



Improve the safety and security of our neighbourhoods

- Build on our integrated enforcement approach, both within and outside of the council, to tackle crime, disorder and broader community safety issues which impact on the quality of life of our residents.
- Increase enforcement and problem solving on our residential estates using our Safer Spaces service in conjunction with housing colleagues.
- Modernise our 24/7 CCTV capability across the borough and maximise the lawful and proportionate use of new technology to keep people and places safer.
- Introduce a new Community Protection Team to help provide a more integrated and cost-effective response to noise, nuisance and anti-social behaviour (ASB).

We believe that every resident has the right to feel safe in their home and in their neighbourhood. The council also has both a moral and a legal duty to work with others to reduce crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and re-offending.

Moving forward, the council intends to improve the visible enforcement and problem-solving activities already undertaken on our estates and in our neighbourhoods. This will see further expansion of our highly regarded Safer Spaces service. The Safer Spaces service is very much at the heart of the council's Integrated Enforcement (IE) approach and can call upon a dedicated team of local police officers who are part-funded by the council. This is in addition to working with all IE partners, including colleagues from Housing; Street Services; and Park, Estates & Open Spaces; as well as other partners such as London Fire Brigade.

The council has also committed investment to modernise its 24/7 CCTV capability. Currently, the Council has earmarked around £3.7m to upgrade and maintain our CCTV system over the next several years, which will see analogue technology replaced with digital. This will also enable the use of analytics

to help the council and emergency services better identify, respond to, and reduce incidents of crime and disorder.

As part of the modernisation programme, we aim to undertake a specific review of CCTV and associated technology on all our estates over the next 12-18 months, with a view of upgrading necessary equipment and infrastructure. Adding significant numbers of additional cameras is not financially viable or practical, so exploring more cost-effective solutions for tackling crime and anti-social behaviour is essential. For example: using mobile CCTV which can be moved around to respond to the need.

Striving for a more integrated approach to enforcement and community safety, the council is moving to a more effective and efficient model of tackling noise, statutory nuisance, and anti-social behaviour. This would take the form of a new Community Protection Team (CPT), bringing together the noise and anti-social behaviour services together as one team. The vision for the new CPT would be focused on earlier intervention, the use of a broader range of powers and proactive ways of working to better deal with complaints, as well as

Strand 5

closer working with other council teams and partners to resolve more complex issues.

A proposed area of change is our out-of-hours community protection response. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, a noise-only service usually operated throughout the year, Monday to Sunday, and predominantly between 8pm and 1am. Although this is not a statutory requirement, the council is keen to keep an out-of-hours response to both noise but adding wider issues with anti-social behaviour. To deliver on our ambition and associated benefits, the council is looking to move permanently to a Thursday to Sunday provision, broadly operating between 4pm and 2am.

This reflects the current service maintained during the pandemic period and the actual demand; with 64% of calls being recorded on a Friday or Saturday. It is also less reliant on staff working overtime and financially more sustainable than previous operating hours.

The recently introduced 'Noise App' will be available to support residents to report issues and submit supporting recordings for service follow-up. The additional daytime capability at weekends will also enable the service to respond to other forms of statutory nuisance, such as odour and smoke related issues, as well as supporting wider joint priorities for IE.

As well as driving continuous improvement of our own enforcement and community safety teams, we will also continue to develop our broader strategic and partnership responses to things like violence against women and girls, modern slavery and serious youth violence. We will continue to engage and involve residents and businesses in our plans, listening and responding to concerns and working with community and voluntary groups. We want to bring about real change across our neighbourhoods and deliver a safer, cleaner and healthier Royal Greenwich for all.



Prioritise the design of mixed-use, high-quality

- Promote compact and mixed-use neighbourhoods to meet the needs residents of all age groups locally.
- Reduce the need to travel and promote active and sustainable transport options.
- Use influence to push for good transport infrastructure between neighbourhoods and town centres so they are all efficiently connected and part of a well-linked network.
- Explore how flexible building design in new developments could accommodate different uses, increasing the long-term resilience of local neighbourhoods to changing trends and requirements.
- Encourage the design of new homes which meet people's needs throughout their lifetime.
- Ensure the provision of good quality and diverse open spaces for the enjoyment of residents.
- Where possible, make buildings more inviting to add interest, life and vitality - this could mean helping promote and design vibrant shop fronts, or improving building facades to boost the neighbourhood's local economy, its liveability and safety.
- Embrace new technologies and digital infrastructure to gather information which will help us to build more efficient and better environments, as well as better management of our current buildings, spaces, resources and infrastructure.

The new Housing and Homelessness Strategy has been drafted against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to have a big impact on the way we live, work and interact with each other. It also comes at a time when our world is changing in many ways:

- The impact of, and response to the climate crisis.
- The impact of new technology and global economic trends.
- Increasing pressure on public infrastructure, services and finances.

These trends highlight the need to build resilience into our approach, to rethink how we plan our

environment, how we can ensure flexibility and meaningful engagement with our residents.

One of our key priorities is to promote active travel including walking and cycling, with the aim to tackle the high levels of congestion and pollution in some areas of the Borough, while improving people's health and tackling obesity.

We also want to create neighbourhoods that are self-sufficient and liveable by using compact, flexible and multi-use buildings. These buildings will be able to accommodate lots of different things including residential, commercial, retail, leisure and office spaces, which can be adapted as needs change.

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We aim to deliver neighbourhoods where people – of all ages – can live, work, socialise, shop and play locally, without routinely travelling long distances, which are easily accessible by walking or cycling. We will encourage inviting street fronts to accommodate businesses like cafes, restaurants, shops and workspaces of different sizes, etc., to increase social interaction and economic activities.

Alongside our compact and mixed-use neighbourhoods, we will create lovely, well-maintained open and green spaces designed to welcome a wide range of activities and people.

We will also seek to ensure that Greenwich's neighbourhoods are well connected with each other through green and sustainable infrastructure as part of a wider network of urban centres with excellent facilities and services.

Finally, we will embrace the potential of digital change and new technologies to help us achieve all the above.

We are committed to achieving our ambitious plans for building resilient and vibrant communities and neighbourhoods. We need feedback and support from residents who will play a part in delivering the strategy.



Improve digital connectivity in homes across Royal Greenwich

- Deliver full fibre connectivity to every property in the borough by 2025, giving residents and businesses future-proofed connectivity and enabling digital public services that help people to learn, work and live.
- Use *‘Internet of Things’ technologies including a range of smart sensors and building components in council homes. Use data analytics to improve, deliver and maintain buildings and services more efficiently for residents.
- Use ‘Internet of Things’ technologies, smart sensors and controls to support and enable energy efficiency and carbon reduction in people’s home.
- Enable resident discussion and suggestions through the use of open data on energy use, building maintenance and other services.
- Develop robust and comprehensive cyber security and privacy approaches to ensure that residents and their data remain safe and secure.

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of access to fast and reliable digital connectivity and has meant more people are remote/home working, as well as using the internet for shopping, learning and accessing services.

Currently, approximately 20% of premises in Royal Greenwich have access to full fibre broadband (download speeds of at least one gigabit per second). We want to ensure that every place in the borough has access to full fibre connectivity by 2025. We will work with a wide range of commercial providers to deliver this connectivity, ensuring that residents benefit from choice, value for money, and early access to high internet speeds.

We will use the increased internet connectivity to directly improve the delivery of council and other public services, working with colleagues across the council, in schools, and with the NHS, police and other service providers (e.g. TFL). We will explore a local open data and community engagement

platform, allowing residents and businesses to easily understand what’s happening in their communities, e.g. monitor their energy use and engage with the council and each other to suggest improvements to their communities.

We will work with local health and education providers to pilot new telehealth and telemedicine approaches. We will also work with social care workers to help support residents and allow them to stay in their homes as long as possible through the use of a wide range of technologies.

We will take advantage of rapidly developing ‘Internet of Things’ technologies to deliver maintenance of council buildings which will be able to prevent and fix problems before they arise. We also want to pilot a range of devices (like smart energy meters) across at least 10% of the council’s properties by 2025, and will work directly with housing associations, private landlords and owner-occupiers to share the lessons learned.

Strand 5

Achieving zero carbon requires new approaches that go beyond traditional energy efficiency and renewable energy measures. We need to look at energy systems as a whole, and how things like power, heating and storage work together to balance them and minimise carbon emissions. It is important to build on the lessons learned and the partnerships developed through the wide range of innovation

programmes delivered by the Royal Borough of Greenwich's innovation programme DG Cities.

While making sure that services are innovative and high quality, we will ensure that residents' personal data and information is secure and private, using appropriate technological standards to keep details safe and secure.

