

A Housing Offer for Wandsworth People

Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019-2022





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Foreword

Councillor Caddy, Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration

Developing a new Housing and Homelessness Strategy has given us an opportunity to take stock and review our housing priorities in light of new legislation and the changing housing landscape.

The new Strategy, A Housing Offer for Wandsworth People, will further build on the aims of the previous Strategy and set out an ambitious housing programme designed to benefit the residents we serve.

Over the course of the last Strategy, much has been achieved. We have exceeded targets for delivering both market and affordable housing in the Borough, implemented changes to prevent homelessness, and taken action where necessary to improve standards in the private rented sector. We have continued to invest in maintaining and improving our Council housing stock so that our properties exceed the national decent homes standard. Two estate regenerations schemes are well underway and set to deliver new homes and improved neighbourhoods for our residents. The Council led development programme is also in full swing and delivering homes now.

However, there have also been challenges over the past three years that have refocused priorities in the housing sector. Following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower in June 2017, the Council took significant steps to review fire safety measures across its housing stock, including works to replace cladding on two Council blocks and committing to retrofit sprinklers in its high-rise blocks.

The Council has worked in partnership with the London Fire Brigade to ensure that private and council properties in the Borough comply with the highest safety standards. The Social Housing Green Paper will also provide the basis for a review of our Council resident participation arrangements and how we can demonstrate that social housing is a positive choice and a launchpad for our residents to grow, progress and aspire.

Homelessness legislation has been significantly amended through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which requires local authorities to take a new approach to tackling homelessness. The Council has embraced this opportunity and made significant investment to implement the Act. I am proud that we have also worked seamlessly with voluntary sector outreach teams to assist rough sleepers off the street and our refreshed Strategy will put the Council squarely behind the Government's intention, matched with investment, to end rough sleeping by 2027.

National legislation has also focused on improving conditions in the private sector and the Council is committed to improving conditions for our private renters where this is needed. There will be a focus on targeted intervention to tackle rogue landlords, to bring empty properties back into use and to help maintain the high standards in the private rented sector which are generally seen across the Borough.

There is however more to be done; our residents have told us that we need to provide more housing opportunities for younger residents and working households who wish to take their first step on the property ladder in a Borough where such options have become increasingly out of reach. We need to respond to this demand and need to see a step change in the delivery of affordable market and low cost homeownership housing.

The Social Housing Green Paper identified that around two thirds of social tenants would prefer to be owner-occupiers if they had the choice. However, only 30 per cent of social housing renters expect to buy compared to the 60 per cent of those who rent privately. We need to consider the mobility and homeownership initiatives available to our social housing residents and see what we can do to increase opportunities to own. Schemes such as our House Purchase Grant have released well over 100 homes for reletting and helped residents realise their dream to own. This Strategy addresses how we can extend these offers and help more social tenants into homeownership.

To meet the diverse housing demands of the Borough, the Council must be innovative and ambitious in its approach. The new Strategy demonstrates how we will meet local housing needs and how we will work with our partners to achieve our objectives.

Above all, it will set out how we as a Council will step up to the challenge of doing more to improve housing options and conditions in the Borough.

Helping residents meet their housing aspirations is at the heart of this Strategy;

A Housing Offer for Wandsworth People.



Councillor Kim Caddy

Cabinet Member for
Housing and Regeneration



Introduction

The new Strategy, A Housing Offer for Wandsworth People, sets out the Borough's plans for housing and homelessness services for the period 2019-2022.

The Housing Act 1985 states that every local housing authority shall consider housing conditions in their district and the needs of the district with respect to the provision of further housing accommodation. As such, Wandsworth Council has formulated a housing strategy in line with the diverse needs of the Borough. The Homelessness Act 2002, requires all local housing authorities to publish a homelessness strategy to identify strategic objectives to tackle homelessness and set out how it will deliver these services. In addition, as required by the Government's recently published Rough Sleeping Strategy, this Strategy incorporates the priorities and objectives of tackling rough sleeping in the Borough.

For the first time, the Housing and Homelessness Strategies are combined into one plan to reflect the joint approach needed to deliver housing options and prevent homelessness. The Strategy is required to be in general conformity with the London Housing Strategy under the Greater London Authority Act 2007.

The Strategy is accompanied by an Equality Impact Needs Assessment (EINA) to identify how residents will be affected by the proposals set out and what we need to do to monitor this impact.

The Strategy focuses on five key themes, each of which plays an integral part in providing housing for the Borough:

- Building More Homes
- Proud of Our Council Housing
- Improving Standards for Private Renters
- Tackling Homelessness and Rough Sleeping
- Supporting Vulnerable Residents

Good quality housing is fundamental in supporting the wellbeing of our residents, fostering aspiration and building vibrant communities. The Council understands the challenges faced by Londoners in securing a good quality and affordable home to live in and the role it can play in meeting these basic requirements.

Within each theme, the Strategy sets out the Council's priorities and objectives and how it will address these.

Since 2015

Wandsworth delivered

7,607
new homes

including 1,160
affordable
homes



Over the next five years

Wandsworth will deliver over

14,000 new homes

including 2,200 affordable homes

National Context

Since the previous Strategy was published in 2015, the housing landscape has changed both locally and nationally.

The past four years have reshaped the way the housing sector works with new national legislation to encourage house building, tackle rogue landlords and increase responsibilities for councils to prevent homelessness. This has created new challenges and shifted priorities, but the fundamental need for a greater supply of housing remains.

The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 ended the automatic entitlement of 18–21 year olds and the restriction of benefits for families with more than two children. The Act built upon the Welfare Reform Act 2012 which introduced significant changes to the benefits system including the creation of Universal Credit (UC), new caps on Local Housing Allowance and Housing Benefit, and the reform of Council Tax Benefit and Disability Living Allowance. The roll out of UC across Wandsworth began in September 2018.

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 introduced a number of policy changes including the extension of the Right to Buy (RTB) to private registered providers (PRPs), measures to tackle rogue landlords in the private rented sector and regulations to streamline planning policies to increase the delivery of homes.

The Housing White Paper: Fixing our Broken Housing Market, which was released in February 2017, sets out the Government's proposals to encourage house building and create 200,000 new home owners by 2020.

The tragic events at Grenfell Tower in June 2017, brought safety in high-rise blocks into sharp focus. Councils and housing providers across the country have taken significant

steps to review fire safety measures and ensure their housing stock is of the highest possible safety standard. As a landlord, the Council has responded to guidance from the London Fire Bridge and the findings of the **Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety**. The ongoing **Grenfell Inquiry** will also have ramifications for the Council as well as for PRPs and private sector developments in the Borough.

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017, which came into effect on 3 April 2018, places new duties on local authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness. It shifts emphasis towards preventative measures, such as providing housing options and advice, to address homelessness before it occurs and therefore reducing the need for temporary accommodation. The Act aims to strengthen the provisions for households who are not in priority need. A further HRA duty, the duty to refer, came into effect in October 2018. This gives specified public authorities a statutory duty to refer service users they believe to be homeless or threatened with homelessness to a local authority.

The Secure Tenancies (Victims of Domestic Abuse) Act came into effect in May 2018. It contains measures to ensure that lifetime tenants who are victims of domestic violence retain a right to a lifetime tenancy in cases where they need to move due to abuse.

The Government's **Social Housing Green Paper** was released in August 2018 and covers the overall quality of social homes, their management and the rights of tenants. It sets out the Government's proposals to empower social residents, tackle stigma and ensure that social housing can be both a stable base that supports people when they need it and assist social mobility. Residents across the country were asked their views on social housing to help inform the paper.

The paper sets out five core themes: Ensuring homes are safe and decent; Effective resolution of complaints; Empowering residents and strengthening the regulator; Tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities; and Expanding supply and supporting home ownership. The Government's consultation on the Green Paper closes in November 2018.

The Government's **Rough Sleeping Strategy**, which was released in August 2018, commits £100million to ending Rough Sleeping by 2027. The strategy sets out the Government's plan to eradicate rough sleeping under three key themes: Prevention; Intervention; and Recovery. It identifies funding opportunities and expectations on local authorities to tackle rough sleeping.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and Residential Property Licensing reforms came into effect in October 2018. The reforms increased the number of properties subject to mandatory licensing. All houses, regardless of size, which house five people or more in two or more separate households now require an HMO licence. A minimum room size of 6.52sqm in line with the existing overcrowding standard (Housing Act 1985) has also been introduced for rooms used as sleeping accommodation.

The Domestic Abuse Bill, which is currently going through Parliament, seeks to address domestic abuse at every stage from prevention through to rehabilitation and reinforces the Government's aim to make domestic abuse everyone's business. The Bill focuses on four main themes: Promote awareness; Protect and support; Pursue and deter and Improve performance in the response to domestic abuse.

Alongside this, a new statutory definition of domestic abuse is proposed to cover the concept of economic rather than just financial abuse.



Regional Context

The **London Housing Strategy 2017** sets out the Mayor's plan for addressing London's housing crisis which includes identifying and releasing more land for housing, allocating grants to support new housing targets with 90,000 affordable homes to start on site by 2021, and improving conditions in the private rented sector.

The Strategy has five key priorities: Building homes for Londoners; Delivering genuinely affordable homes; High quality homes and inclusive neighbourhoods; A fairer deal for private renters and leaseholders; and Tackling homelessness and helping rough sleepers. Council housing strategies are required to be in general conformity with the London Housing Strategy under the Greater London Authority Act 2007. Therefore, the key priorities are reflected in the Wandsworth Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

The Mayor also published a good practice guide to estate regeneration, **Better Homes for Local People**, in 2018. This introduced a new funding condition that requires a positive vote in a resident ballot for estate regeneration schemes. From July 2018, major estate regeneration schemes involving the demolition of any social homes must have the backing of existing residents before they can receive Greater London Authority (GLA) funding.

The Mayor of London published a **new draft London Plan** in 2018. It proposes increased targets for housing delivery in London. For Wandsworth, this could mean a revised target of delivering at least 23,100 homes of all tenures from 2019-29 (2,310 per year)¹. In terms of affordable housing delivery, the Plan sets out a strategic target of 50 per cent of all homes delivered across London to be affordable. Specific measures to achieve this target include:

- requiring residential and mixed-use developments to provide affordable housing through the threshold approach
- using grants to increase affordable housing delivery beyond the level that would otherwise be provided
- affordable housing providers with agreements with the Mayor delivering at least 50 per cent affordable housing across their portfolio
- public sector land delivering at least 50 per cent affordable housing across its portfolio
- strategic partners with agreements with the Mayor aiming to deliver at least 60 per cent affordable housing across their portfolio
- no net loss of social housing in estate regeneration schemes
- affordable housing should be provided on site to deliver mixed and inclusive communities.



¹ The London Plan 2016 set Wandsworth a target to deliver 1,812 homes per year including bringing long term empty homes back into use.

Local Context

The Council's Corporate Objectives are published annually as part of the **Corporate Business Plan** which brings together the achievements, key improvement plans, performance targets, the financial strategy and planning process.

The Council has six strategic objectives that reflect the Council's priorities and its ongoing corporate ambition to deliver high quality, value for money services, including keeping the council tax amongst the lowest in the Country. These are:

- Providing the best start in life
- Cleaner, safer, better neighbourhoods
- More homes and greater housing choice
- Helping people get on in life
- Encouraging people to live healthy, fulfilled and independent lives
- Value for money

These objectives are reviewed regularly and are informed by concerns and priorities gathered through professionally conducted market research, user groups and residents' meetings. These were approved by the Finance and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2018.

The Council's Local Plan, adopted in March 2016, sets out the spatial vision for Wandsworth and the planning policies in place to achieve this. The Local Plan aims to make provision to meet needs for housing, business, community services and infrastructure, in a sustainable way, protecting both the built and the natural environments.

The Council's vision for Wandsworth is a borough of attractive and distinctive

neighbourhoods, separated by parks and commons, with a good range of local services, housing options and opportunities for local business.

The Localism Act 2011 enabled local authorities to devise their own allocation policies appropriate to the local area. The Council's current **Allocations Policy**, which came into effect in 2017, sets out how the Council will assess applications for housing, make decisions on these and allocate social housing. The policy has been developed to make the best use of stock available.

In line with national standards for social housing, the **Wandsworth Tenancy Policy** sets out the Council's policies in relation to types and lengths of tenancies granted by the Council, when a tenancy will be granted, how the Council considers the needs of vulnerable households and the Council's approach to succession, tenancy management and housing advice.

In accordance with requirements of the Housing Act 1996, the Council publishes an **Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy Statement** which is reviewed every four years. This Statement supports the Department's long-standing commitment to prevent and tackle ASB and make housing estates and neighbourhoods safer. The Statement sets out how the Council will prevent and tackle ASB under five key commitments; Prevention; Enforcement; Support and diversionary activities; Communication; and Effective joint working.

Homes with a mortgage %32.3

Private rent %30.5

Homes bought outright %20.6

Social rent %16.6



Key Achievements

The Wandsworth Housing Offer 2015-2018 focused on three key objectives: Delivering more homes; Better homes and neighbourhoods; and Maximising use of existing stock.

The Council has had many successes in delivering these over the period of the Strategy and the key achievements are set out below:

- Supported the delivery of 7,607 homes across all tenures, exceeding targets set by the Mayor of London to deliver over 1,800 homes per year. In 2018, Wandsworth were allocated the second highest New Homes Bonus in the country for a consistently strong record of housing delivery and are on track to deliver 18,000 homes over ten years.
- Worked in partnership with PRPs to complete 1,160 affordable homes prioritised for those living or working in the Borough.
- Exceeded affordable housing delivery targets for low cost rent and homeownership housing set in the Local Plan. The Council has also put in place a strong pipeline which will see 2,200 affordable homes delivered over the next five years.
- Maintained a high level of shared ownership sales to Wandsworth residents and workers. In 2017/18, over 90 per cent of sales were to these groups.
- Worked with partners to deliver innovative forms of intermediate housing, such as modular build homes for sale at less than market value to meet the needs of working households.
- Embarked on an ambitious Council led development programme to make best use of Council assets by developing homes on under used areas of land on Council estates. The Council is on track to build 300 homes by 2020 and has extended the programme by a further 700 homes to be delivered over the next five to eight years with a forecast that up to 60 per cent of these homes will be affordable.
- Secured £3.92 million GLA grant for the development of 71 affordable homes as part of the Council led development programme.
- During 2017/18, the GLA allocated £21.91 million to help deliver 954 affordable homes in the Borough from their 2016 to 2021 Affordable Homes Programme.
- Secured development partners for both the Winstanley/York Road and the Alton Estate regeneration projects and maintained resident support for these schemes including providing a local rehousing and compensation package for Council residents.
- The House Purchase Grant (HPG) scheme has increased in popularity and helped 122 Council tenants become homeowners and therefore released these homes for reletting.
- Over the last five years, the Council has assisted nearly 400 social renting households to downsize through focused downsizing initiatives which release larger, family homes.
- Continued to seek innovative ways to meet housing needs such as running a Housing into Work Pilot which has now been mainstreamed into the Council's Workmatch Service to ensure young people are provided with both an employment and housing offer where appropriate. The Council also launched the Right to Part Buy scheme which allows residents to buy a share of their home and pay a low cost rent on the remaining share.

Key Achievements

- Identified three sites for a pilot resident self-build scheme which will allow three local residents to build their own home with further sites being identified in 2018.
- Invested £63.5 million to upgrade Council homes, blocks and estates through the Council's Decent Homes Plus Programme and Environmental Estate Improvement Programme.
- Progressed the roll-out of fibre optic broadband making it available to more than a third of Council properties (11,358).
- Appointed 20 Housing Community Champions who receive funding and support to implement projects on their estates, such as community gardens, neighbourhood events and arts projects.
- Took action to bring 161 long term vacant private dwellings back into occupation exceeding the target of 112 and approved a minimum of £350,000 of Council funding to the Empty Homes programme for 2018/19.
- Worked with private landlords and took enforcement action where necessary to make 1,045 private sector dwellings decent.
- Began to implement the HRA 2017, which came into effect in April 2018.
- This included recruitment of 28 new members of staff and an initial assessment by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) found that the Council were well ahead in its preparations.
- Worked in partnership with Kingston upon Thames and Richmond upon Thames to secure £400k funding from the MHCLG to tackle entrenched rough sleeping in South West London.
- Prevented 287 cases of homelessness.
- Delivered 45 extra care homes for older residents, with a further 90 secured in the pipeline.
- Completed 20 supported homes for people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities or mental health needs and started building works on a further 27 including the first Council built supported housing scheme in many decades.
- Against a target of 487, completed 531 major disability adaptations to help elderly or disabled residents remain independent in their homes for longer.
- Took legal action which resulted in a £40,000 fine for a rogue landlord who did not make essential plumbing and safety improvements to two properties.



Key Challenges

Wandsworth is one of the most popular places to live in London, with a population of 314,544 it is the 3rd most populated borough in Inner London.

In 2017, it was the most popular destination for UK residents moving to the capital with 13,105 moving into the Borough.

Wandsworth, in common with the rest of London, is growing and with this comes an increased demand for housing. It is notable that 43 per cent (133,000 people) of the population are aged between 20 to 39 and therefore the aspirations of this demographic, known as 'generation rent', need to be addressed.

Affordability is a significant challenge in Wandsworth's housing market. Rental costs and house prices are higher than the inner London average and are amongst the highest in the Country³. Private rents in Wandsworth have increased, whilst in other areas of London they have fallen. The affordability gap is widening year on year making living in Wandsworth increasingly unaffordable, particularly for younger households and those who work in the Borough. Overwhelmingly younger households living in the Borough want to move into homeownership, however the supply of low cost homes to buy does not meet demand, and consequently the turnover of second hand stock is also small at around ten to 20 homes per year. Over the term of the previous Strategy, the number of applicants on the Council's homeownership queue has increased significantly whilst the supply of low cost homeownership housing is not keeping pace with demand.

One challenge the housing sector faces is to ensure that development continues across economic cycles. It is inevitable that changes in the economy and housing market can affect the supply of housing.

Therefore, the Council must play a key role in maintaining momentum of development to ensure necessary housing is delivered within the Borough, including affordable homes. This requires flexibility in terms of planning policies alongside a continued focus on increasing affordable housing supply.

A key priority of this Strategy is to increase mobility in and between housing tenures. At present mobility between tenures remains a challenge, with both social and private renters having fewer opportunities to move on and buy their first home.

With over 5,000 applicants on the low cost homeownership queue, potential buyers can be pushed out of the purchase market and into the private rented sector if lower cost options are not available. This, in turn, is pushing lower income households including families out of the private rented sector and putting pressure on social housing. At the end of 2017/18, there were 6,726 applicants accepted on the Council's housing register and 58 per cent of these need two or more bedrooms. Whilst there is a continued supply of approximately 900 social rent homes (new homes and relets) becoming available in the Borough each year, the number of relets has slowed down.

To relieve pressures and increase mobility, housing of all tenures is needed, in particular low cost rent, low cost homeownership and structured private rent options.



³ The average private market rent in Wandsworth is £1,873 per month, and the average house price is £595,962.

Increasingly, councils across London have needed to prioritise social housing for emergency housing needs. In 2017/18, 48 per cent of social housing lettings in Wandsworth were allocated to homeless households, with the most common reason for homelessness acceptances being the loss of privately rented accommodation (35 per cent). The second most common reason was eviction by a friend or relative (30 per cent) demonstrating the difficulty in securing accommodation and highlighting the number of residents reliant on friends or family for a place to live. Given the investment and focus on prevention services that has accompanied the HRA 2017, it is anticipated that the numbers in temporary accommodation will reduce thus reducing the pressure on the social housing stock. This is likely to provide an opportunity to increase transfers for social housing residents, producing a chain of moves and making better use of the social housing stock in the Borough. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that the Council supports social renters who are considering downsizing, given the efficiencies that can be achieved in freeing up larger family size homes for reletting.

Since the previous Strategy, there have been national welfare reform changes, including a cap on the total benefits households are entitled to in November 2016. In London, couples or those with children can receive no more than £442.31 and single people can receive no more than £296.35 per week. This reduction has doubled the number of households affected by the benefit cap in Wandsworth from 252 in November 2016 to 537 in September 2017.

Use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) has helped to mitigate any negative impact on housing circumstances. There is clearly further preparation required to ensure that effective financial inclusion advice and tenancy support services are available to those affected by welfare changes, in particular for those moving onto Universal Credit who will be responsible for managing their housing costs.

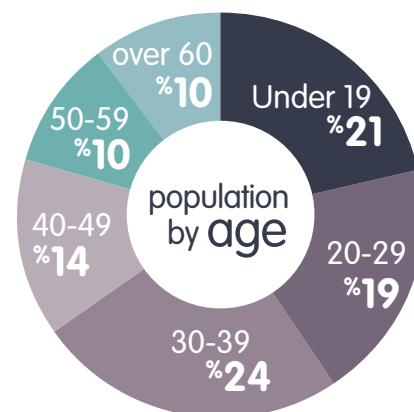
Much can be learnt from the PRP sector who have invested time and effort in providing proactive budgeting advice and worked hard to improve joint working with the Department of Works and Pensions.

The Council manages 32,304 homes and as such is the biggest housing stockholder in the Borough. Since the last Strategy, the social housing sector faces new challenges, including meeting changing fire safety standards and communicating more effectively with residents. The Social Housing Green Paper has provided an opportunity to identify what the Council is doing well and what it needs to review. Councils must consider how they interact with Council residents to ensure that issues concerning them are identified and responded to and therefore this is an opportune time to refresh participation structures.

Furthermore, much will be done in the coming years to improve the Council's online services for residents with a new IT system and resident portal being implemented.

In Wandsworth, it is estimated that 6,311 people aged 18 or over have a learning disability and 37,678 people aged 18 to 64 have a common mental disorder.

The proportion of the population with learning disabilities or mental health needs is increasing. It is, therefore, important that the Borough supports the housing needs of these residents. Whilst not all this group will require supported housing, there is a continued commitment across departments, including Children's and Adult Services, to improve housing options and access to services locally.



Average
Wandsworth
salary
£34,558





There are 27 supported homes in the pipeline and further opportunities to remodel existing schemes or build new schemes will be considered where there is an identified need.

By 2035, the number of over 65-year olds living in the Borough is expected to rise by 52 per cent from 30,000 to 45,500 compared to the national estimate of 44 per cent. As the population continues to live for longer, there is an increased demand for housing options for this resident group.

A wide range of suitable housing options, including accessible homes, sheltered housing and extra care schemes, are needed to provide choice and independence. These must be delivered across a range of tenures, in particular low cost homeownership, where there is currently no supply specifically for older residents, and for affordable rent which is a key housing resource for Adult Social Services.

Where older residents wish to remain in their homes the Council must also continue to provide services such as adaptations and telecare.

Analysis of the key challenges has allowed the Council to develop a Housing and Homelessness Strategy which seeks to meet the needs and ambitions of local residents; A Housing Offer for Wandsworth People. The Council will meet these challenges through its own efforts, innovative thinking and partnership working with the public and private sector.

Average **Wandsworth**
house price

£595,962

Average **London**
house price

£478,234

Average **England**
house price

£242,484

Theme One:

Building More Homes

The Council is committed to delivering 14,523 homes of all tenures over the next five years. Sustaining levels of development is a key priority and to achieve this the Council must understand the flexibility required to maintain development in a changing economy and housing market.

Overall the Council will seek to accelerate the development of high quality, energy efficient housing to meet demand. This will include supporting approaches to bring land, including public land, forward for development faster and securing related improvements in infrastructure. This will not only meet local aspiration but also reflect the need for increased development identified by the Mayor of London and national government. The aim will be to increase overall supply by 2,000 homes above current targets. This will include meeting and exceeding delivery targets for both low cost rent and low cost homeownership housing as set out in the Council's current Local Plan.

The Council will aim to significantly increase the scope of low cost housing options available in the Borough. For example, we will consider how we can support the provision of intermediate rent and rent to buy housing. For homeownership, we will also support schemes that can offer Help to Buy as well as Shared Equity.

The Council is particularly interested in working with the development sector, including utilising its own sites, to provide bespoke forms of first time buyer housing and marketing these directly to residents and workers. The Council will consider approaches that cater for younger residents who are looking for a home with additional amenities, for example work spaces and leisure facilities, at a price which is affordable.

Council housing estates make up ten per cent of the Borough's land and the Council is committed to making the most of these



assets. The Council will do this by ensuring that this space is being utilised effectively to deliver much needed housing, for example through the Council led development scheme or resident self-build scheme. This approach saves the Council high land costs and therefore offers value for money.

The Council will continue to offer Wandsworth residents and workers priority access to all affordable and intermediate housing in the Borough to ensure that housing is allocated fairly and prioritised to those on average and below average incomes. Where appropriate, this will include options designed to meet demand from key workers. Through its Allocation Scheme, the Council has determined priorities to ensure that social housing in the Borough is allocated fairly and lawfully to those most in need. Through the Allocation Scheme, the Council will continue to offer ex armed forces personnel a higher priority for housing.

We will:

- Meet residential development targets and aim to exceed house building targets, including the affordable housing targets the Council has set itself in its Local Plan. This means aiming to deliver over 14,000 homes of which 2,200 will be affordable over the term of the next five years.
- Over the next ten years, put in place plans to accelerate affordable housing provision to deliver 5,500 homes, including through the Council led development and regeneration programmes.
- Build 1,000 mixed tenure new homes on Council land as part of the Council led development programme and aim for 60 per cent of these to be affordable including low cost homeownership and rented housing which will be prioritised for residents living in close proximity to the development. In addition, any market housing built as part of the programme will also be prioritised for local residents and workers to buy.
- Promote open market sale with the assistance of Help to Buy and explore the viability of requirements to resell market housing to those intending to buy, own and occupy where the Council builds market housing itself.
- Support delivery of London Affordable Rent housing particularly where GLA grant is available.
- Support rent to buy housing options including London Living Rent which works on the basis of accommodation becoming available for shared ownership sale after ten years.
- Seek further grant allocations from the GLA's 2016 – 2021 Affordable Homes Programme to support the Council's development programme with these resources being reinvested to support delivery.
- Over the next four years, invest £500,000 per year to expand and convert existing council homes to provide larger, family homes for low cost rent.
- Continue to support and meet targets to bring long term empty homes back into use. This will include continuing Council financial support for its own Empty Homes programme.
- Increase the number of households who are building their own homes and provide further opportunities to support the development of resident self-build housing on smaller Council owned plots.
- Progress plans for a modular development pilot on Council owned land and investigate further potential sites to provide temporary, intermediate and private rent housing.
- Support delivery of new build structured private rent housing including through our estate regeneration plans for Winstanley and York Road.
- Establish a resident Shared Equity Scheme to be prioritised for existing social renters. This will be the first time that housing association tenants living in the Borough will get an opportunity to purchase a home through a Council sponsored scheme. The Council will then secure nomination rights for any rented homes vacated through the scheme.
- Develop local marketing and lettings plans which can be used on Council and other development sites to prioritise local residents and workers. This will include maintaining the low cost homeownership waiting list to ensure shared ownership sales are made to our priority groups.
- Continue to work with PRPs and the private sector to ensure these sectors are working to national and regional best practice and seek to promote affordability and transparency of service charges.

⁴www.wandsworth.gov.uk/info/1004/planning_policy/1366/local_plan

Theme Two:

Proud of Our Council Housing

Wandsworth Council manages 32,304 properties (16,824 tenanted and 15,480 leasehold).

The Council wants to ensure these are safe and enjoyable places to live, with quality homes and thriving communities.

The Council is committed to meeting its service standards, being held to account for its performance through its scrutiny arrangements and maintaining its estates to the highest possible standard whilst delivering value for money.

The Council will continue to work proactively with residents to inform and improve services. Lessons will be learnt from the consultation undertaken as part of estate regeneration plans and the positive feedback the Council received from residents in its handling of communications after the Grenfell fire tragedy. The Council will support residents to get involved with their local community and facilitate a range of ways residents can participate with the Council to ensure that everyone has the chance to be involved in decisions affecting their housing. The Council will review its approaches to consultation and resident participation to ensure the wider council resident voice is heard and to take account of proposals set out in the Government's Social Housing Green Paper.

Ensuring our residents are safe in their homes and neighbourhoods is an absolute priority for the Council and we will continue to respond to recommendations arising from the Grenfell Inquiry. Fire Safety will remain an ongoing focus as we review our Fire Risk Assessments and undertake additional works to improve our blocks, including installing sprinkler systems for our most vulnerable residents and to high-rise blocks. The Council will continue to improve the quality of our Council homes and estates by delivering our Decent Homes Plus Programme, including

energy efficiency works. The Council will also investigate ways we can deliver a continued programme of environmental works, for example through our Council led development programme.

Two large scale estate regeneration schemes are underway on the Winstanley/York Road Estates in Battersea and the Alton Estate in Roehampton. These are set to deliver over 3,000 new homes, including a net increase of social rent homes, brand new community facilities and improvements to the whole area, integrating the estates into the wider neighbourhoods. The Council's priority is to ensure that residents living on these estates benefit from the regeneration and has made strong commitments to existing residents to enable them to stay if they wish.

Mobility within the social housing sector and between tenures is key to ensuring that social housing stock is used effectively and Council tenants have opportunities to meet their housing aspirations. In particular, the Council will continue to proactively encourage under occupier moves. For each household that downsizes, the Council can create a chain of moves which has the potential to improve the living conditions of multiple households.



We will:

- Continue to deliver the Wandsworth Decent Homes Plus Programme to maintain and improve Wandsworth homes and estates so that they exceed national standards.
- Continue to deliver an Environmental Estate Improvement Programme which will target areas of estates of poorer quality. Invest more than £153million into these programmes between 2017 - 2022 and investigate options to increase investment.
- Commit £230million to support the Council's development programme and estate regeneration plans. These will include environmental improvements and new community facilities for estates where these are required.
- Guarantee replacement homes for council tenants and resident leaseholders living on estates which undergo estate regeneration.
- Put in place a new housing IT system by May 2019. This will improve the Department's online services and communications with residents by including a Customer Portal to allow residents to report issues, track progress and get in touch with the Council in a more accessible way.
- Continue the roll out of the provision of broadband to Council managed blocks, with an aim of reaching all possible Council owned properties.
- Review the Council's resident consultation arrangements in partnership with a residents' working group.
- Replace cladding at Sudbury House and Castlemaine by Autumn 2019 and continue to develop a programme of sprinkler installations to Council high rise blocks, sheltered schemes and hostels.
- Review fire safety arrangements including developing a programme of communal electrical inspections, reviewing fire risk assessments, continuing fire safety visits to residents and responding to findings of the Grenfell Enquiry.
- Develop a new combined CCTV and emergency control facility. This will include reviewing and modernising CCTV on Council estates and developing a new CCTV strategy.
- Undertake a review of ASB case management and complaint handling arrangements to improve performance monitoring⁵.
- Establish a residents' working group to review the cleaning contract specification in advance of re-tendering the service.
- Review and consider approaches which increase mobility in and around the social housing stock in the Borough. Carry out a survey of under occupied larger social rent properties to help inform approaches and initiatives.
- Conclude reviews of the Council's social housing tenant homeownership initiatives to ensure these are maximising opportunities to own for council and housing association tenants.

⁵ In line with the Council's ASB Housing Policy Statement 2019-22

Theme Three:

Improving Standards for Private Renters

The private rented sector is vital to meeting demand and supporting the London economy.

Government legislation is becoming increasingly focused on enforcing standards and dealing with rogue landlords and lettings agents. Locally, this is an important priority to ensure Wandsworth's 100,000 private renters live in good quality homes. Generally, the private rented sector in Wandsworth is working well and providing good accommodation options for those wanting to live in a connected and well-regarded Borough. Whilst a direct link cannot be fully demonstrated, it is clear that good quality private rented housing attracts households to the Borough. Increased demand for privately rented homes and rising house prices have led to a 32 per cent increase in rental costs in Wandsworth since 2011/12. A key factor in maintaining a well-functioning private rent sector is providing viable housing options to move on, and in particular more homeownership options for younger households.

Whilst most properties in the private rented sector are of good quality and well managed, there are instances where basic standards are not met. In those cases, it is vital that the Council takes action to improve conditions. In 2017/18, the Council's Private Sector Housing Team intervened to improve the standards of 386 privately rented properties following complaints about disrepair or poor conditions. When carrying out an assessment of a property, the Private Sector Housing Team will also assess for excessive cold and check the energy efficiency performance, taking action if the minimum E rating is not met.

The Council currently has 460 licensed HMOs, which are traditionally more at risk of being in poor condition. This number will increase as new legislation requires more

HMOs to hold licenses. The Council will make use of new powers to impose financial penalties on landlords who fail to license an HMO or fail to carry out required improvements.

The Council is working proactively with owners of private high-rise blocks to ensure fire safety standards are met. The Council has liaised with building owners across the Borough to identify all private residential high-rise buildings with Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding and to ensure these are tested for fire safety. The Council continues to liaise with owners to ascertain their intentions for removal and replacement of cladding and to encourage building owners to communicate effectively with their residents throughout the process.

Tackling empty properties has the dual benefit of providing much needed homes in the Borough and improving neighbourhoods where homes may otherwise lay dilapidated. In 2018/19, the Council invested £350,000 in its Empty Homes Programme and aims to continue the programme in future years to encourage owners of empty homes to return these to use. Homeowners can apply for a grant of up to £25,000 per home towards renovations to return an empty home into use on the condition that the home is let as temporary accommodation to households nominated by Council for at least five years.

 **Average monthly rent
Wandsworth
£1,873**

 **Average monthly rent
London
£1,605**

 **Average monthly rent
England
£829**

We will:

- Support implementation of Government legislation which will help tackle rogue landlords and lettings agents and provide better recourse to Ombudsman Services which the Council can sign post to.
- Improve conditions in the private rented sector through informal intervention with landlords and appropriate enforcement action when required.
- Respond to any increased service demands, including undertaking a review of HMO licensing and ensuring that all required HMOs are licensed.
- Tackle long term empty properties to bring them back into use through the Council's Empty Homes Programme.
- Put landlords who are prosecuted or issued with a Civil Penalty on to the 'Rogue Landlords Database' which members of the public can check before renting a property.
- Continue to support more structured forms of private rent housing which commit to offering longer assured shorthold tenancy terms, intermediate rent options, a greater degree of certainty of rents and rent increases and a guaranteed high level of management.
- Work alongside the London Fire Brigade to continue a review of private high-rise blocks in the Borough to ensure fire safety requirements are met including remediation measures where ACM cladding is identified.
- Continue to support and seek best practice and transparency for those paying service charges in privately managed blocks and estates.
- Utilise powers under The Energy Efficiency Regulations to ensure private rented homes are sufficiently energy efficient and meet new regulations. Conduct checks following new requests for HMO licenses and where a tenant makes a complaint about excessive energy bills or excessive cold. Where necessary, the Council will use powers to grant financial penalties (a civil penalty of up to £4,000.)



Theme Four:

Tackling Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

This section of the Strategy will constitute the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and will be updated through the Housing Resources and Commitments report published annually in early summer.

In 2017/18, local authorities across London saw a continued and significant demand from households approaching as homeless and seeking help with their housing. The HRA 2017 has fundamentally changed homelessness legislation by placing an increased emphasis on preventing homelessness by helping households maintain existing housing or seek suitable alternative housing. The Act provides the Council with an opportunity to tackle homelessness at the root, rather than take a reactive approach and the Council's investment in prevention services will ensure that this opportunity is maximised. The Council will now work with households to agree a plan to prevent homelessness. Whilst the primary aim of this work is to reduce the upheaval of households facing homelessness, it also provides an opportunity to reduce the use of emergency accommodation over time and use social housing more effectively.

We are committed to overcoming the challenges presented by the local private housing market, tackling both the significant rise in private sector evictions and sourcing private sector properties to meet demand and prevent or relieve homelessness.

Where prevention is unsuccessful or not possible, we commit to ensuring temporary accommodation is of good standard, is self-contained and meets the housing needs of the individual. The challenging local housing

market and the scarcity of temporary accommodation means that the Council, as is the case for other inner London boroughs, faces difficulties in sourcing local, affordable accommodation for homeless households. The inevitable increase in the total time households spend in temporary albeit self-contained accommodation (due to increased admissions and acceptances over recent years) emphasises the importance for the Council to protect the social, education and employment links of people and families but also help households who need to relocate do this successfully.

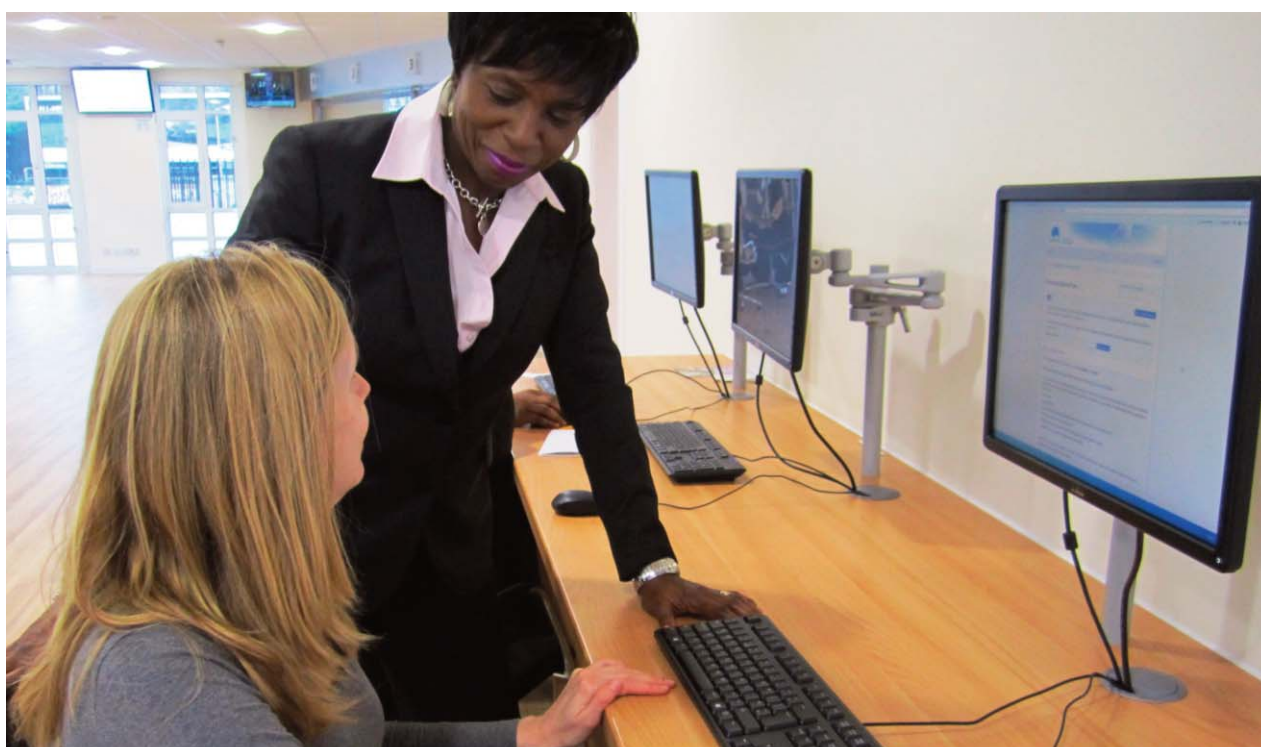
Homelessness often stems from problems unrelated to housing issues, particularly for vulnerable people and therefore collaborative working between services is required to tackle the root cause of their homelessness. The Government's national Rough Sleeping Strategy, published in August 2018, highlights the need for a holistic approach with a focus on not only housing issues but other factors which may contribute to someone's housing problems. The strategy set out three themes councils must focus on to work towards the Government's target of eradicating street homelessness by 2027: 'Prevention', 'Intervention' and 'Recovery'; which has been incorporated into the Wandsworth Strategy. It is important that Wandsworth capitalises on the opportunities offered by this national strategy, including additional funding to support local services, to ensure that low numbers of entrenched rough sleepers in the Borough are maintained.

The HRA 2017 has also imposed a new duty on certain public authorities to refer service users where it considers they may be at risk of homelessness.

The national rough sleeping strategy highlighted that people released from prison or discharged from hospital with no pre-arranged accommodation are some of the most likely to end up sleeping on the street.

To tackle homelessness, we will:

- Keep people in their homes: in the first instance, the service will use a variety of approaches to help people at risk of homelessness remain in their home long term, where this is suitable. For example, mediation with landlords and friends or family, enforcing the rights of tenants in cases of illegal evictions, referrals to Citizens Advice Wandsworth and utilisation of the revised New Generation Scheme.
- Establish improved links with landlords: where it is not possible to keep people in their homes, the private sector will provide through the Council's incentive schemes a stable and quality housing option for those threatened with homelessness.
- Improve pathways with public authorities and partner agencies to prevent homelessness: work with partners to identify those at risk of homelessness, intervene at the earliest stage and assist with issues related to housing such as benefits, debt management, vulnerability and tenancy sustainment.
- Seek to improve the Council's supply and suitability of temporary accommodation, whilst reducing expenditure in this area and use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation. This will include maintaining the Council's temporary acquisition programme, to help meet demand.
- Continue to reduce the number of families with children in Bed and Breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks.
- Through its Private Sector Leasing Scheme, seek to secure local private rent housing to meet demand for homeless households and those threatened with homelessness. A safe, self-contained and well managed housing offer.
- Ensure that the Council's housing and homelessness services are working effectively with the Council's Children's Services Department to provide housing options and services to care leavers and young people threatened with homelessness.



To tackle rough sleeping, we will:

- Respond and plan to meet the objectives set out in the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy, published in August 2018.

Prevention

- Continue to facilitate online referrals from public bodies such as prisons and hospitals with the aim of preventing entrenched rough sleeping.
- Explore and introduce new ways of facilitating access to the private rented sector for single people at risk of homelessness, including options for funding deposit and rent-in advance e.g. through affordable loans.

Intervention

- Look for further opportunities to improve pathways and partnerships between the Council and local charities who support people who are street homeless and take a joined-up approach to helping entrenched rough sleepers off the street.
- Continue to monitor and mitigate levels of rough sleeping in the Borough by continuing to work collaboratively with the voluntary sector, including through outreach services such as SPEAR.
- To ensure that resources are allocated to provide holistic services across the entire Borough. This will include actively supporting grant applications arising from the publication of the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy (or its successors) that provide funding opportunities to sustain and improve the rough sleeping services provided.
- Work with local partners to conduct an annual rough sleeper street count/estimate and undertake further measures to accurately assess, record and monitor levels of rough sleeping in the Borough. This may include additional snapshot counts as required from future funding which may become available to further resource services for rough sleepers.
- Chair regular multi-agency rough sleeper forums to bring local partners together and ensure effective and targeted intervention is in place to engage with entrenched rough sleepers and those at risk of becoming entrenched. Through multi-agency working, this forum assists in finding creative solutions to these challenges. Attendees include SPEAR, community safety, health services, drug and alcohol services, supported housing providers and police.

Recovery

- Continue to work with the HMO 'single homeless projects' in Wandsworth as well as the various supported housing schemes, facilitating clients to move on into the private sector.
- Work with partner agencies such as St Mungos, the Wandsworth Community Drug and Alcohol Service and Adult Social Services to ensure that newly housed clients, who may have previously slept rough, have the necessary support in place which is tailored to individual need.

Theme Five:

Supporting Vulnerable Residents

Suitable housing is vital to the wellbeing of the Borough's vulnerable residents and the Council will consider the housing needs of vulnerable residents in a range of tenures.

Rough sleepers are one of the Borough's most vulnerable groups and the Council is committed to providing support for those sleeping rough to move into accommodation. The needs of rough sleepers are addressed in theme four, which constitutes the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for the Borough. Theme five will address the housing needs of older residents, those with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health needs.

There is an increasing demand for housing suitable for older people, those with disabilities and mental health needs, including affordable rent options. Through its work with PRPs and its own development, the Council will increase supported housing in the Borough, this will include new developments as well as remodelling existing schemes. The Department will continue to work closely with Adult Social Services to ensure that any new supported housing provision meets the needs of the Borough's client groups.

Alongside the provision of new housing, the Council is committed to encouraging greater independence and supporting more residents to live independently at home. The Council will continue to deliver home adaptations for residents with mobility issues due to older age or a disability. Telecare services are vital in helping residents remain independent and the Council will continue to promote its telecare offer.



Partnership working is key to supporting Wandsworth's vulnerable residents. The Council is committed to working with social care and health services to ensure the safety, wellbeing and independence of vulnerable residents.

The Council is part of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Board which brings local partners together to agree shared priorities for improving health and wellbeing of the people of Wandsworth, of which good quality housing plays a vital role. The Council is committed to protecting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and understands the important role it plays in this. Housing officers are often well placed to identify risks and needs of vulnerable residents. The Department is a regular partner on both the Adults and Children Safeguarding Boards and carries out an annual review of safeguarding procedures and training. The Council's housing teams also regularly participate in multiagency panels to identify residents at risk to find a joint solution.

We will:

- Work with Adult Social Services to proactively plan for the future needs of the population through robust analysis, determining the types of accommodation required for all client groups – including care leavers, those transitioning from Children's to Adult Social Services, vulnerable older people, those with a learning disability, physical disability and/or mental health needs. Seek to provide housing that will be adaptable and flexible enough to meet changing demand.
- Deliver the programme of new build supported housing in the Borough including working with PRPs to deliver 95 extra care homes for frail elderly over the next three to four years and completing supported housing schemes to deliver a minimum of 27 homes for residents with learning disabilities, physical disabilities or mental health needs. Seek to increase the provision of accessible, independent housing options to provide choice and alternatives to residential care.
- Work with Planning Services to identify the need for privately developed assisted living schemes for older residents to understand how these schemes can help meet the local need for housing for those with care and support needs.
- Maintain the commitment of ensuring that ten per cent of new housing is wheelchair adaptable, and more clearly identify the demand for adapted accommodation through a review of the Local Plan. The Council will further analyse the demand for adapted accommodation from households on the Council's physical disability register to inform commissioning and adaptation of new build properties.
- Identify further opportunities to remodel existing supported housing schemes, including sheltered schemes that might need to be modernised. Identify schemes where accessibility could be improved through either remodelling, provision or making better use of assisted technology. The Department and Adult Social Services will consider the merits of creating a jointly funded post to take forward this work.
- Provide a range of telecare services to help residents remain safe and independent in their home for longer.
- Carry out major adaptations to help residents remain living in their own home, such as level access showers, against a forecast of 170 for 2018/19.
- Implement a Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant and Housing Adaptations Policy which will allow for DFG funding to be used more flexibly to help more private residents remain living in their home independently and safely for longer.
- Continue to meet safeguarding responsibilities and support the Council's Family Recovery Project. Review how this support can be improved and funding utilised effectively.



A Housing Offer for Wandsworth People

Housing and
Homelessness Strategy
2019 - 2022

