

Contents	Page
1. Foreword	1
2. Introduction	1
3. Strategic Drivers	2
4. Strategic Housing Themes & Performance Overview	2
5. Focus on Action Plan Performance	4
6. Conclusion	7
7. Other Information	8

# Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy 2009 – 2012 Annual Report - 2009/10

## 1. Foreword

As Lead Member for Housing and Development, it has been one year since I launched Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy. This Annual Report demonstrates our successes in 2009/10. The Housing Strategy is an important document that sets out how the council wishes to see its housing agenda addressed in Tower Hamlets. It explores the nature of the housing market, the challenges we face, and our long-term strategic aims and priorities spanning three years.

Housing impacts on residents' health, education, employment opportunity and well being. If we can get the housing supply and housing services right, then we can secure a better and brighter future for our residents in all aspects of their lives.

The housing agenda in Tower Hamlets already has many positive aspects, but we need to achieve more, we must meet our housing need, and ensure we create places where people want to live and work, striving to achieve the vision of One Tower Hamlets and The Community Plan.

Backed by an Investment Strategy we focus on four key priority areas:

- Delivering and Managing Decent Homes.
- Managing Demand, Reducing Overcrowding.
- Placemaking and Sustainable Communities.
- New Supply of Housing.

This Annual Report shows good progress and efforts made by dedicated partners in meeting Housing Strategy targets and objectives.

I am confident that through this strategy, new and existing residents will be able to choose from a much wider range of good quality homes to rent and buy. The Great Place to Live - Community Plan Delivery Group have been appointed the delivery board, ensuring the strategic housing themes and objectives deliver positive change. I continue to look forward to working with you to help achieve that change for the coming two years of the Strategy.

**Councillor Marc Francis** - Lead Member for Housing and Development

## 2. Introduction

The Housing Strategy 2009 – 2012 was adopted by Tower Hamlets Council in May 2009. This report considers the Housing Strategy Action Plan and identifies areas of success and areas where targets are not being achieved. For the latter it seeks to address the reasons for non delivery and where possible consider if an alternative course of action can be taken to achieve the target.

The delivery of the Housing Strategy Action Plan requires, in many instances, joint working with a range of other partners and agencies. Many of the successes are a result of the formation of strong, positive working relationships that enable delivery and ensure positive outcomes for people in Tower Hamlets.

This report covers the period from 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010. The full Housing Strategy document is available on Tower Hamlets Council website on: [http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgsi/851-900/868\\_housing\\_strategy\\_and\\_polic.aspx](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgsi/851-900/868_housing_strategy_and_polic.aspx)



The Housing Strategy Launch

### 3. Strategic Drivers

Housing issues have taken an increasingly prominent policy positions both nationally, and regionally. At local level, Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy is an organised response that will make a difference in meeting the four objectives set out in the foreword of this report. The Council’s overarching enabling approach is about influencing partners to deliver wider socio-economic objectives that feature in the Community Plan. To accelerate positive change in housing issues the Council must maximise its use of powers, resources and people. It needs to effectively generate external resources and get the most from partnership working in meeting shared objectives. The Housing Strategy objectives fit strategically into the Council’s Community Plan as well as paying due regard to the emerging regional and national policy context. This illustration shows the current key strategic housing drivers.



### 4. Strategic Housing Themes & Performance Overview

The Following tables give an overview of the four main priority themes within the Housing Strategy. The Strategy is accompanied by an action plan detailing sixty-seven commitments (objectives) in total. The performance summary below for 2009/10 shows steady progress with fifty objectives either on target or completed. Thirteen are rated Amber, in progress, and four are overdue and require fast tracking. The strategy was accompanied by a full Equalities Impact Assessment, and the resulting action plan for that document is being monitored through the equalities Group based in the Development & Renewal Department.

#### Delivering and Managing Decent Homes

Every resident in the borough has a right to live in a home that meets a decent standard and is managed effectively. The standard of homes and management varies considerably in the borough and the Council wants to see all social sector housing and private housing occupied by vulnerable sector households raised to decent homes standard levels and wants all social landlords delivering at least a good management service.

On Target or Completed	In Progress	Overdue
12	5	2

## Placemaking and Sustainable Communities

Housing has a key role to play in delivering better places to live and offering people opportunities to achieve a better quality of life. This involves ensuring that new and regenerated housing environments make a positive contribution to the places that people live in. In addition, new investment has to make a positive contribution to the opportunities available to people through access to services and amenities, helping to improve community well-being.

On Target or Completed	In Progress	Overdue
8	5	0

## Managing Demand, Reducing Overcrowding

Existing and new affordable housing needs to be used as effectively as possible in order to manage existing and future housing demand. Specifically, a fresh approach is needed to reduce overcrowding in the borough.

On Target or Completed	In Progress	Overdue
7	0	1

## New Housing Supply

The amount of affordable housing, particularly social housing in Tower Hamlets needs to be maximised. The quality of new housing needs to be higher, reflecting new priorities on climate change, lifetime standards and at the same time delivering housing that helps deliver more employment and training opportunities.

On Target or Completed	In Progress	Overdue
10	3	1

## Housing Investment Strategy

Additional investment from the Government – principally through the Homes and Communities Agency – needs to be maximised to fund schemes that will meet the Borough's housing priorities. The key areas for investment are new affordable housing; meeting the decent homes standard; and, delivering estate renewal. This is about identifying the resources necessary and putting in place a plan to ensure the resources are well spent.

On Target or Completed	In Progress	Overdue
13	0	0

TOTAL (All 5 Themes)		
On Target or Completed	In Progress	Overdue
50	13	4
Taking the percentage completed of each objective gave an average of 53%	Objective Number - 10, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27	Objective Number – 7, 12, 37, 45

## 5. Focus on Action Plan Performance

This section further focuses on a selection of the objectives (by theme) demonstrating highlights and challenges from 2009/10

### Delivering and Managing Decent Homes

#### Highlights

**Objective 5 - Tower Hamlets Homes will develop and put in place a programme that will deliver the Decent Homes and Decent Homes Plus Standard to the social rented stock under its management.**

*The programme is set to take place from 2010 to 2017. The Council have already invested £20m in the first phase of pilot schemes which have commenced on site after extensive resident consultation. A report titled 'Developing the Investment Programme', has been produced which encompasses a new way of developing the capital investment programme, moving away from the traditional elemental works approach to a more comprehensive neighbourhood approach, which will not only deliver a Decent Homes Plus standard but will also address other targets in the Housing Strategy, like Place Making and Sustainability. If THH achieve two stars in their November-10 inspection, this could release £222m of HCA funding (total DH requirement £425m) for the main programme of decent homes work to commence.*

**Objective 18 -Tower Hamlets will commission an independent audit of processes that determined 2007/08 leasehold service charges and recommend changes that will improve the way estimates and actuals are calculated in the future.**

*In 2009/10 this activity has been procured and let. The Auditors have now submitted their draft report for consideration and completion is scheduled for June 2010.*

**Objective 19 -Tower Hamlets in partnership with Tower Hamlets Housing Forum members will develop a Performance Management Framework that will track and drive improvement in social landlords' management performance.**

*Adding to existing benchmarking performance activity among social landlords in 2009/10 - the Preferred Partnering Housing Management process commences in July-10. Within the first six months we will require RPs to submit performance information that will be monitored to support the push to meet the TSA requirements.*

#### Challenges

**Objective 7 - Tower Hamlets will expect all social landlords Registered Providers to develop and implement an Asset Management Strategy that sets out how the Decent Homes standard is to be maintained. The Asset Management Strategy will be available to tenants, the Council and other housing stakeholders.**

*This exercise is to build up an investment picture across the (medium-large sized) social landlord stock and should have been completed during 2009. About 30 per cent were collected as part of the preferred partnering tender process; a new date of July 2010 has been set.*

**Objective 12 -Tower Hamlets will expect all social landlords to make reasonable financial provision to fund adaptation works to meet changing residents' needs.**

*The council will seek to work closely with Registered Providers to ensure that the changing needs of residents are taken into account; this will entail close scrutiny of the grant regime and other available resources. This objective will be revisited by THHF and the Council's Private Housing Improvement Team by autumn 2011.*

## Placemaking and Sustainable Communities

### Highlights

**Objective 23 -Tower Hamlets Council will work in partnership with locally based housing associations and Tower Hamlets Homes to bring forward regeneration proposals that help regenerate localities, which may include the development of new housing.**

*In 2009/10 good progress has been made in developing such proposals. Currently the Council's Malmesbury & Birchfield estates are in the masterplanning process - consultation starts on this in May-10 and continuing through the summer culminating with outline planning permission by December-10. There has been significant work done on Council owned regeneration areas such as Blackwall Reach project and Ocean, which has been confirmed a HCA grant allocation under the 2008/11 NAHP programme. The Local Homes Initiative (new homes on infill sites) will receive a planning decision by June 2010, the contract to be let in June 2010, with planned start on site in August 2010 and a forecast completion date of March 2011. Reshaping Poplar, an infill and regeneration initiative that if realised will provide 1700 homes during the programme; the short term schemes planning applications started the planning process during 2009/10. Progress continues on major public sector site projects such as St Clements Hospital site & further phases of the St Andrews Hospital site.*

**Objective 31- Develop an Older Peoples Housing Strategy which will implement the recommendations of the Best Value review, incorporate cross cutting housing initiatives and develop new ventures that will improve the quality of housing for older people in Tower Hamlets.**

*In 2009/10 the contractor was procured to carry out a detailed older people housing needs assessment. The project group for the strategy has been assembled to oversee the project. The Strategy will be implemented towards the later part of 2010.*

### Challenges

**Objective 22- Tower Hamlets will encourage the creation and retention of existing, local businesses in new and regenerated housing schemes. For example by considering letting commercial units at workable rent levels to local people and local businesses.**

*Apart from the Ocean Estate that has offered 'right to return' for existing local commercial unit holders, there has been little known activity from housing associations that develop larger sized schemes. Further efforts will be made in 2010 by the Council, with support of THHF to ensure this objective is realised on certain schemes going forward.*

## Managing Demand, Reducing Overcrowding

### Highlights

**Objective 33- Review Tower Hamlets Lettings Policy leading to firm proposals for an improved policy and choice based lettings scheme.**

*A successful stakeholder consultation exercise was undertaken in 2009/10 on the revised Lettings Policy. It was then agreed by Cabinet on the 10th of March 2010. Work is currently underway for its implementation for late June implementation.*

**Objective 35- Tower Hamlets will develop and implement a new Overcrowding Reduction Strategy with annual targets. This involves delivering on our CLG Overcrowding Pathfinder initiatives with additional initiatives such as a Knock-through programme, reducing under-occupation, and the Council funding the repurchase of a planned 20 ex council properties (RTB BuyBack initiative).**

*The Strategy was approved by Cabinet in October 2009; the Action Plan is being monitored by THHF sub-group, the Common Housing Register (CHR) Forum. In partnership with our CHR social landlords, last year we successfully completed the under occupation, and private sector rent deposit scheme initiatives to tackle overcrowding in the borough which were funded by CLG. This released family sized accommodation to let to others on the Housing List. Forty-two under occupation moves were completed and twenty moves into the private sector under the aforementioned initiatives.*

## Challenges

**Objective 37- Tower Hamlets will develop and implement an Estate Renewal Decanting Strategy which will include housing association-led innovative solutions that will help speed up the decanting process.**

*This work has not yet commenced due to a lack of available resources. A further 500+ homes are likely to come forward in the near future seeking similar decant status, so it's important resources are secured to fast-track this important objective in 2010/11*

## **New Housing Supply**

### Highlights

**Objective 41 -Tower Hamlets will seek as a strategic target up to 50% affordable housing on all housing developed in the borough, applying 35% on individual sites. To be achieved through future developments complying with LDF Core Strategy which will increased affordable housing to meet the growing need.**

*This has been written into the Core Strategy during 2009/10 and is going to full Council for adoption in September 2010. 2009/10 saw the record delivery of 1,931 new Affordable Housing units within the borough.*

**Objective 42 -Tower Hamlets will seek 45 per cent of the social rented element of new developments to be for large family purposes.**

*For future years, extra family provision will help to alleviate overcrowding for families housed. An evidence base for this issue has been established in 2009/10. The next step is for the policy to be incorporated into the Development Management DPD which is due for adoption in 2011.*

**Objective 50 & 51-Tower Hamlets test the feasibility of designating affordable housing partners for development sites in order to improve local management service delivery and maximise contribution to Community Plan objectives. It will also examine the value of establishing a panel of preferred affordable housing developers that will work in partnership with the Council to deliver housing and wider Community Plan objectives.**

*The Preferred Development partner process is currently underway and looks a little different to the feasibility idea. Now, it has selected fifteen housing association partners who will develop certain sized schemes going forward. The other aspect is housing management and aiming for consistent services across all (including the fifteen) housing associations. In 2009/10 the interview process to choose the preferred partners concluded. For 2010/11 the process of drafting the Development Agreement begins, this will be to be signed up to by the fifteen selected partners. The project officially launches in July-10*

**Objective 54 -Tower Hamlets Council to prioritise its resources to the identified key corporate strategic housing projects (mainly LA and HCA owned public sector sites)**

*This has partly been achieved during 2009/10 as the Council have been working up the Borough Investment Plan (BIP) also known as Local Investment Plan, and one priority includes these public*

sector sites. The BIP is expected to be locally signed off this summer for submission to the HCA and approval by the strategic arm of the London Board in September.

## Challenges

**Objective 45 - Develop guidance that has regard for housing design requirements for black, Asian and minority ethnic groups with a particular focus on the needs of the Bangladeshi community.**

*In late 2009/10 the HCA are currently consulted on a new set of standards. The Council will investigate this proposed policy to understand if it offers cultural design guidance. However the RSL preferred partnering standards will also ensure a suitable design code is adopted for LBTH that meets the need of this objective during 2010/11.*

## **Housing Investment Strategy**

### Highlights

**Objective 59 - Tower Hamlets will develop, publish and maintain a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) identifying a fifteen year supply of land that will help deliver the annual housing planning target, which at the time of the Strategy being published was 3,150 homes.**

*A London wide SHLAA is being undertaken and Tower Hamlets is further developing evidence through the 'Call for sites' process for the Site and Place Making DPD.*

**Objective 61 -Tower Hamlets will work with statutory agencies to maximise housing and wider infra-structure investment and private sector leverage to deliver housing strategy objectives.**

*This has partly been achieved during 2009/10 as the Council have been working up the Local Investment Plan (LIP) .The LIP will specify housing and infrastructure priority areas for investment which will meet identified housing cross-cutting themes.*

**Objective 67- Tower Hamlets will convene an Annual Developers Forum meeting for affordable and private developers to discuss housing development issues.**

*Two meeting forums were held in 2009/10 and a further one to be held in June 2010, where the Borough Investment Plan will be consulted on and the Preferred Partnering Developer process discussed.*

## **6. Conclusion**

The action plan performance summary demonstrates the Council and partners successes in the last twelve months. Within the 'new supply' we have undertaken many initial activities to schemes that are set to maximise supply that meets user need and supply has continued in spite of the economic climate. Within existing supply our actions set out to protect the vulnerable, create prosperity and ensure residents receive value or money services and live in decent homes and places.

Stakeholder-partnership and multi-agency working has strengthened the Council's strategic approach to housing delivery and services and the Great Place to Live Community Plan delivery Group will ensure that for the future two years, our strategic outcomes are achieved.



## 7. Other Information

### Accessing the Housing Strategy Action Plan – 2009/10 Performance

The Highlights and Challenges detailed in section five are extracts from the full Action Plan document. This table is on the Housing Strategy and Policy page of Tower Hamlets web site at this web address: [insert URL here prior to desk top publishing].

Should you require a hard copy of the full Action Plan or this report, you can contact us using the contact details provided below.

### Staying in Touch

If you would like to be kept informed of future housing strategy consultation, please write to the Strategic Housing Team using the freepost address below. You don't need a stamp. Please include your name and full address. Title your letter Housing Strategy Consultation List. By doing this you are giving your consent for us to hold your name on the Strategic Housing Team's consultation database. This does not commit you to doing anything. We will just write to you to keep you informed of any relevant housing strategy consultation so you can be involved if you wish. We will not pass your details to anybody outside of the council.

FREEPOST RRG5-XYTG-UHCZ  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
D&R Strategic Housing  
PO Box 55739  
Mulberry Place (AH),  
5 Clove Crescent  
E14 1BY

Alternatively, email your name and address. Title your email Housing Strategy Consultation List and email to: [strategic.housing@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:strategic.housing@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

Monday - Friday  
9:00am - 5:00pm

59380

**For free translation phone**

Për një përkthim falas telefononi  
للترجمة المجانية الرجاء الاتصال هاتفياً  
বিনামূল্যে অনুবাদের জন্য টেলিফোন করুন  
Za besplatne prevode pozovite  
欲索取免費譯本，請致電  
Pour une traduction gratuite, téléphonez  
Για δωρεάν μετάφραση, τηλεφωνήστε  
મફત ભાષાંતર માટે ફોન કરો  
निःशुल्क अनुवाद के लिए कृपया फोन कीजिए  
بو ته رجومه كردنى به خوراىي ته له فون بکه بو  
Del nemokamo vertimo skambinkite  
സൗജന്യമായ തർജ്ജിമയ്ക്കായി ബന്ധപ്പെടുക  
Po bezplatne tłumaczenie prosimy dzwonic  
Para uma tradução grátis, telefona  
મુફત અનુવાદ ਲਈ ફોਨ ਕਰੋ  
Перевод – бесплатно. Звоните  
Para obtener una traducción gratuita llame al  
Turjubaan lacag la'aan ah ka soo wac telefoonka  
இலவச மொழிபெயர்ப்புக்கு தொலைபேசி செய்யவும்  
Ücretsiz çeviri için telefon edin  
Để còn bản dịch miễn phí hãy điện thoại  
مفت ترجمے کے لئے فون کریں

**Also for Audio, Large Print and Braille, phone**  
**0800 952 0119**  
© The Language Shop