

2010 UPDATE



Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy Summary 2009 – 2012



Foreword

As Lead Member for Housing and Development, it's been one year since I launched Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy. This remains 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. We focus on four key priority areas:

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

The Housing Strategy Annual Report 2009/10 shows good progress being made by our dedicated partners in meeting the strategy 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 were appointed the delivery board, ensuring the strategy delivers 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

Accessibility

This document sets out the council's plans for housing and housing services in Tower Hamlets over the next three years. A summary of the main points is available. If you need a translation of the summary in your language please contact Newham Language Shop by telephoning 0800 952 0119 quoting reference number 59380. If you need the summary in a large print, tape or Braille version, please contact us by telephoning 020 7364 0469 or email us at strategic.housing@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Bengali

এই ডকুমেন্টের মাধ্যমে টাওয়ার হ্যামলেটসে আগামী ছয় বছর হাউজিং ও হাউজিং সার্ভিসের ব্যাপারে কাউন্সিলের যে পরিকল্পনা আছে সেটি তুলে ধরা হয়েছে। যদি আপনার নিজের ভাষাতে মূল বিষয়গুলির সংক্ষিপ্তরূপ পেতে চান তাহলে রেফারেন্স নম্বার 59380 উল্লেখ করে 0800 952 0119 নাম্বারে নিউহাম ল্যাঙ্গুয়েজ শপে ফোন করুন। যদি বড় অক্ষর, অডিও টেপ অথবা ব্রেইলে এই সারসংক্ষেপ পেতে চান তাহলে দয়া করে 020 7364 0469 নাম্বারে আমাদের ফোন অথবা housing@towerhamlets.gov.uk ঠিকানায় করুন।

Somali

Dokumintigan wuxuu qeexayaa qorshaha dowladda hoose ee guriyaynta iyo addeegyada guriyeynta Tower Hamlets saddaxda sanadood ee soo socota. Qoraal kooban oo ah meelaha ugu muhiimsan ayaa la helaa. Haddaad u baahan tahay ku turjumidda qoraalka kooban luqaddaada fadlan kala soo xiriir Dukaanka Luqadaha ee Newham adigoo soo wacaya telefoonka 0800 952 0119 sheegaayana tixraaca lambarka ah 59380. Haddaad u baahan tahay in qoraal far waawayn ah laguugu qora qoraalka kooban,cajalad maqal amase Qoraalka Dadka indhoolayaasha ah, fadlan nagala soo xiriir adigoo soo wacaya telefoonka 020 7364 0469 ama noogu soo dir email barta ah housing@towerhamlets.gov.uk

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1. Challenges and Opportunities

This document sets out how the Council wishes to see the housing agenda addressed in Tower Hamlets over the coming three years. Housing in Tower Hamlets should be an opportunity for households to achieve individual well-being and realise their lifetime aspirations. Whilst there is opportunity in the borough, there are many challenges. The borough registered a modest growth in jobs between 2006 and 2007 totalling 6,155 jobs ⁽¹⁾, but there are still 47,300 ⁽²⁾ economically inactive working age people in the borough (31.4%), the second highest rate in London (24.5% average). This is in line with the highest unemployment rate in London at 11.3% ⁽³⁾.

The housing challenge in Tower Hamlets is immense, as the borough continues to witness major new house building and redevelopment. Between 2004 and 2008 up to 9,000 new homes have been built in the borough, 3,238 of them have been affordable homes. This makes Tower Hamlets one of the largest deliverers of affordable housing in the country. There are 9,446 overcrowded households in socially rented homes, and 1,798 of these are severely overcrowded ⁽⁴⁾.

Our consultation with borough residents in the drafting of this document highlights the fact that residents are pleased to see regeneration where necessary and believe it should be linked to sustainable outcomes such as employment, education, health and good quality development. Residents also supported the development of larger units in an effort to reduce overcrowding.

The Council has a clear leadership role to play. A large proportion of the change required in housing will be delivered by its partners, not the Council itself, hence the need to provide clear and effective direction. This strategy sets out how it will deliver to its key priorities, areas, vision and objectives, in conjunction with partners and stakeholders.

(1) Source: Annual Business Enquiry 2007

(2) & (3) Source: Annual Population Survey, July 2007- June 2008

(4) LBTH Overcrowding reduction Strategy

- The Population of Tower Hamlets is 215,300¹, the number of households is 95,845².
- Tower Hamlets has a fairly young population with 43.5% of people in the 25-44 age group and only 7.7% of the population in the older age groups of 65+².
- 43.8% of the population are from an ethnic minority. Almost half of the minority group are Bangladeshi households, representing around 20.0% of the whole population².
- 35% of households are Owner Occupiers, 23% are Private Renters, 14% live in a Council rented home, and 28% rent with a housing association².
- 44% of 'Tower Hamlets Homes' properties, 15% of housing association homes and 33% of private rented homes did not meet the Decent Homes Standard³.
- The cost of raising Tower Hamlets Homes council housing stock to the Decent Homes Standard is currently just under £426m. The indicative bid for ALMO funding from CLG is £230m. The remaining investment is expected to be met by the Council and is currently £195m⁴.
- Since 2004, the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) helped a total of 444 private sector households (including 278 RSL tenants) to remain living independently in their homes³.
- Between 2001 and 2009, Tower Hamlets experienced a 22% increase in household growth².
- Just under half of the housing in the borough is in the social sector³.
- About 83.5% of housing in Tower Hamlets is either flats or maisonettes².
- Currently, about three-quarters of social housing tenant households claim (full or part) housing benefit³.
- On selected recorded crimes, LBTH is ranked fourth highest in Inner London³.
- About 23,000 households are registered on the Common Housing Register².
- Specifically looking at overcrowded households, 7,648 households on the housing register lack one bedroom (overcrowded) and 1,798 lack two bedrooms or more (severely overcrowded). This means that around 41 percent of households on the housing register currently live in overcrowded households.⁵
- Just over 2,000 homes per annum were available for social rent annually from new supply and council and housing association re-lets³.
- Of the 23,000 tenants listed on the council housing register, about 64% were waiting for a home, with the remaining 36% likely to be existing tenants seeking a transfer³.
- During 2008/09, Tower Hamlets Council accepted 853 statutory homeless cases. This brought the number of household in temporary accommodation to around 2400⁶.
- In 2008/09 about 70% of households accepted as homeless had dependent children or were expecting⁴.
- In 2008/09, 594 social rented, 961 intermediate and 1,424 market homes were built⁷.
- The average property price in Tower Hamlets in 2009 was £309,326².
- The lowest quartile entry level price in the Borough was in Bromley By Bow/Mile End East for a 1-bedroom flat at £169,995, rising to £250,000 in Blackwall/Cubit Town/Millwall².
- An income of £46,100 (single) is needed to access the cheapest entry level property (one bedroom flat) in Bromley by Bow/Mile End East area and £60,300 (dual) in Bethnal Green North/Weavers/Mile End/Globe Town area².
- The lowest private sector entry rental costs in the Borough start at £720 a month for a one bedroom flat in Bow East/Bow West rising to £1,000 in St Katherine's/Wapping/Shadwell².
- 272 council and housing association properties have been sold to existing tenants through right to buy (RTB) during the last three years. This brings stock that is managed by THH on behalf of the council down to 13,071 units².

Sources

1. ONS Mid-Year Estimates (2007)
2. Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2009)
3. Housing Strategy Evidence Base (2009)
4. Tower Hamlet Homes Information (2009)
5. Overcrowding Reduction Strategy(2009)
6. Homeless and Housing Advice Local Performance Information (2009)
7. Draft Annual Monitoring Report for 2008/09 (To be submitted 12/2009)

2. Strategic Overview

The Housing Strategy is about how we can accelerate our efforts to change the situation for the better. It's essential to have an organised realistic response that can make a difference in meeting the four priority areas set out in the foreword. The Council over-arching '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 new Community Plan – 2020 Vision – Tower Hamlets Community Plan as well as paying due regard to the emerging regional and national policy context.

Local Context

► **2020 Vision –Tower Hamlets Community Plan** ⁽¹⁾ - The council's Community Plan has the following themes:

- A Great Place to Live
- A Prosperous Community
- A Safe and Supportive Community
- A Healthy Community

Underpinning all these themes is a desire for One Tower Hamlets – a borough where everyone has equal stake and status; where people have the same opportunities as their neighbours; where people have a responsibility to contribute and where families are the cornerstone of success. Housing issues generally relate to the theme of a Great Place to Live.

► The **Local Strategic Partnership** is responsible for delivery of the Community Plan and the Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets. The quality, quantity and affordability of housing features in the Community Plan and the associated LAA housing targets are as follows (also see appendix B):

- Number of additional market and affordable homes provided.
- Number of affordable homes provided.
- Number of affordable family social rented homes provided.
- Reduction in Non Decent Homes in stock transferred to housing associations.
- Reduction in Non Decent Homes in Tower Hamlets Homes stock.

► **Local Development Framework (LDF) – Core Strategy**

Refresh – See Appendix

c

The LDF Core Strategy ⁽²⁾ sits alongside the Community Plan and provides the Council and the Local Strategic Partnership with a strategic spatial strategy for the borough. It facilitates the delivery of objectives set out in the Community Plan and provides the delivery mechanisms for all types of housing and supporting infrastructure.

Housing elements of the Core Strategy will be evidenced by the findings of a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) commissioned in March 2009. It focuses on the kind of housing current and future residents (across all tenures) are likely to need over the medium to long term. Whilst housing demand is known to be high in Tower Hamlets, the Council needs to have an evidence-based approach to its future housing requirements. The SHMA report will be ready in July 2009 and this Strategy in its annual refresh will focus on the report findings.



National and Regional Policy Context

Housing issues have taken an increasingly prominent policy positions both in London and in central government, relevant reports and policy documents which have been considered are:

- ▶ **Housing Green Paper** (3) – well-designed and greener homes to meet growing demand; links to schools, transport and healthcare; and more affordable homes to rent.
- ▶ **Hills Report - Ends and Means: the Futures Roles of Social Housing in England** (4) focused on the need for addressing worklessness amongst social housing tenants and the need to provide more choice to tenants.
- ▶ **National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society** (5) set out the Government's approach to meeting the housing challenge of an ageing population.

► **2008 Housing and Regeneration Act** ⁽⁶⁾:

- Establishing the **Tenant Services Authority** responsible for regulating social landlords; setting performance standards and enforcement action where standards are not being met.
- Establishing the **Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)** replacing the investment functions of the Housing Corporation, English Partnerships and the Decent Homes responsibilities of the DCLG. They provide investment support for infrastructure and housing new supply in England.

► **The London Housing Strategy** ⁽⁷⁾ (2009) is a statutory document requiring conformity. It highlights a number of significant changes to the former Mayor's Strategy published in 2007. Whilst the 50,000 affordable housing delivery target for 2008/11 remains intact, the new document:: removes the 50% affordable housing target for individual boroughs; proposes that future affordable housing targets be agreed with individual borough; promotes intermediate affordable housing delivery. The London Mayor is Chair of the London Board of the HCA and has strategic responsibility for affordable housing investment (including Decent Homes) in the capital.

► **Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3)** ⁽⁸⁾ sets the planning agenda for housing delivery policies across the country. It requires Councils to undertake housing need and site availability assessments, and assess how financial viability impacts on affordable housing contributions.

► **The London Plan** ⁽⁹⁾ sets the planning targets for housing in London, stating how many new homes LBTH must build (31,500 in the lifetime of the plan), and sets housing policies for affordable housing, lifetime homes and specialist housing.

Refresh - See Appendix

[↶](#)

3. Strategic Housing Themes

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.

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.

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.

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.

4. Key Strategic Objectives

Delivering and Managing Decent Homes

One of the core reasons for developing a Tower Hamlets housing strategy is to set out the minimum standards of housing quality and management that the council expects social landlords to deliver for its residents. On the quality side, the council expects all social landlords to deliver the Government's decent homes standard as soon as possible. Regarding management, the council expects social landlords to be delivering an Audit Commission 'good' standard with an expectation that the service will improve further over time.

The decent homes agenda has a wider ambit than social housing. The council wishes to see the decent homes standard delivered for vulnerable tenants in the private rented sector. And the Council would like to see existing homes becoming more flexible in order to meet people's changing needs. Reducing carbon emissions from existing housing will be key to meeting the Mayor's Climate Change Action Plan objectives.

Achieving 'Decent Homes' and 'Decent Homes Plus' in Social Housing

Context

The government's 2000 Housing Green Paper set a 2010 target for achieving a decency standard for all affordable housing. For a home to be decent it needs to be 'warm, weatherproof and have reasonable modern facilities. The government set out four detailed key criteria to meeting their decent homes standard (16). In summary, the home should:

- ~ meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing
- ~ be in a reasonable state of repair -
- ~ have reasonably modern facilities and services
- ~ provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

Housing associations are expected to meet decent homes standards through self-finance or private lenders. In Tower Hamlets housing associations have fewer non-decent homes (15%) than the council rented stock (41%). Non-decent housing association homes will be stock they built, purchased, or homes transferred from council ownership.

For public sector housing, the government put forward three main options to achieve the decency standard where insufficient mainstream resources were available. They were:

- ~Stock Transfer to a new or existing housing association
- ~Setting up an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)
- ~Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

Studies dating back to 2003 appraised these three options in the absence of a fourth option. Current or future resources weren't available to sustain the fourth option of stock remaining in council ownership and management. The options appraisal output resulted in Tower Hamlets setting up its Housing Choice process. Tenants were given the opportunity to choose a new social landlord, over 13,000 homes have been transferred to housing associations via this process, leveraging in £420m of investment into the borough and to ensure transferred homes met or exceeded the decent homes standard. Despite the potential benefits many residents were reluctant to vote for stock transfer. To ensure these residents had the opportunity of a decent home, the council set up an ALMO, Tower Hamlets Homes. It's now the single largest social landlord in the borough with stock totalling over 22,000 with 9,000 of the homes owned by leaseholders.

► **Tower Hamlets Council will require all social landlords to meet the decent homes standard, reporting annually to the borough on progress towards the target**

Tower Hamlets are committed to delivering decent homes for all and will track annually the number of decent homes across local authority and housing association homes.

Housing Choice partner RSLs continue to make good progress in meeting meet decency standards in stock transfer homes as well as their non-transfer stock. The Council will monitor decent homes progress in line with LAA targets. It will also monitor the wider promises (i.e. the Offer Document and Transfer Agreement) made by stock transfer RSLs; where deemed necessary using legal powers or TSA powers to ensure promises are delivered.



Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) manages homes on behalf of the Council, their services include major works and bringing council owned homes up to decency standards. Annually, the Council have made a limited number of council homes decent using HRA and MRA resources. One of the reasons for setting up THH was to access additional capital investment from the HCA to fund and complete decent homes for all, where possible meeting the Decent Homes Plus standard.

To release these funds THH must achieve a two-star performance inspection rating from the Tenant Services Authority. Each of the organisations directorates has been working extensively to making positive changes and improvements ahead of the 2010 inspection date.

► **Delivering Decent Homes Plus - Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) will develop and put in place a programme that will deliver this raised standard to the social rented homes it manages. THH and the Council will implement a business plan which will explore all sources of funding in order to deliver Decent Homes Plus and any additional estate renewal work required to regenerate Tower Hamlets estates.**

In consultation with residents, THH derived its objectives on the raised standard and aim to deliver homes that are: warm and dry with an effective heating system; secure and free with double glazing where this can be fitted; have modern electrical wiring with enough sockets; have reasonably modern facilities including kitchens and bathrooms and finally homes are accessed through clean and safe communal areas.

► **Delivering Decent Homes Plus within the wider neighbourhood renewal agenda**

Recent CLG Guidance has emphasised the importance of ensuring that decent homes delivery should be part of a wider strategy for regeneration, this issue is developed further in the next chapter.

Housing investment approaches should be part of a wider neighbourhood renewal approach and this is reflected in the outcomes sought in Tower Hamlets Community Plan.

The Decent Homes Standard is considered a basic requirement which (at the time of inception) didn't consider other components like lift replacements or environmental improvements.

Resources required for comprehensive works on this scale are not available from council budgets, so the Council needs HAs and THH to continue to play a successful role in delivering wider neighbourhood renewal outcomes.

Tower Hamlets will develop a Decent Homes Plus Standard that will set out additional repairs and improvements that would be expected when decent homes works are undertaken. Essentially this will be developed with THH in mind and set out the Council's expectations on what added value it can expect from decent homes investment. Subject to financial viability, additional elements could include the reduction of carbon emissions, increased recycling levels, improved environmental cleanliness and a level of biodiversity measures.

► **Maintaining Decent Homes in Tower Hamlets – all social landlords will be expected to develop and implement an Asset Management Strategy. This will be made available to tenants, the Council and other housing stakeholders.**

For homes that are, or will be decent through investment by the social landlord concerned, an asset management strategy specifically will be required. Where the RSL is a multi-area operator, we would expect a focus on Tower Hamlets stock. Typical Characteristics of an Asset Strategy might include:-

- A Five-year external redecoration programme needed to protect the building and window fabric
- The Annual gas safety inspection for landlords to meet their statutory responsibility on safe gas installations in the home.

Having a Strategy in place is crucial to anticipating problems that might arise from particular components of the building failing at points in the future. The Strategy should aim to make the component last longer. The Strategy will also identify any major works required to specific blocks, which may include an option to demolish buildings at the end of their economic life or buildings that are not meeting current housing needs and aspirations.

Achieving 'Decent Homes' in the Private Rented Sector

Context

Key legislation affecting housing in the last decade includes the Regulatory Reform (Housing assistance) Order of 2002. This required councils to have a Private Sector Renewal Strategy in place setting out local priorities and the nature of the assistance given by the council and who is eligible to receive it. As well as this, the Housing Act 2004 introduced a fundamental change to the way local authorities deal with house condition problems. It gave new powers to deal with certain empty properties with the option of using Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs) and it introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) which replaced the old Housing Fitness Standard in April 2006. The HHSRS system moves away from a prescriptive standard and now assesses risk of 'hazards' within dwellings. Hazards are converted into Category 1 and Category 2 hazards. Local Authorities have a duty to take action to deal with Category 1 hazards; excessive cold is typically the most common occurring hazard.

► Refreshing Tower Hamlets existing Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy to deliver decent Homes in the private rented sector and using enabling methods (such as grants, loans and equity release) to achieve a reduction of Category 1 hazards.

Tower Hamlets Private Sector Renewal framework and Empty Properties framework will reflect national, regional and local priorities, founded on partnership principles strategic/enabling focus in meeting the needs of local residents. The main objectives of the framework will be to improve the living conditions for owner-occupiers and private sector tenants by:

~Reducing the number of properties containing Category 1 hazards, (including Houses in Multiple Occupation - HMO), in the private sector, and where possible bring them up to the Decent Homes Standard.

~ Increasing the number private sector vulnerable tenants living in decent homes.

~Reduce the number of private sector empty properties, bringing certain properties up to Decent Homes Standard and where possible for let through the Council's rent deposit guarantee scheme.

~Enable disabled and other vulnerable residents to remain safe and independent in their own homes.

It's expected other outcomes of framework objectives will be helping to prevent homelessness, improving the overall energy rating of private sector dwellings and actions taken to improve living conditions will increase availability of hospital beds by reducing the delay in hospital discharges.

► Ensuring decent places - Exploring feasibility of using additional selective licensing of certain private sector properties in multiple occupation.

Currently HMOs with three or more storeys and with five or more occupants are covered by the mandatory licensing scheme brought in under the 2004 act. Smaller (non-mandatory) HMOs on social housing estates are typically ex-Right to Buy properties owned by distant landlords and sub-let to private tenants. Some tenants of these properties have proven to be perpetrators of anti-social behaviour and blight in their neighbourhoods. This would be a final sanction to successfully resolve acute cases of anti-social behaviour.

Improving Accessibility to Existing Homes

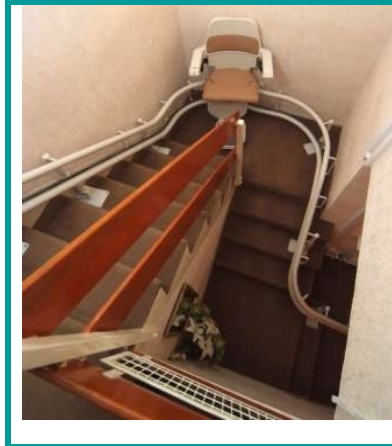
► Tower Hamlets will make available information on Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) for residents and maximise use of available resources.

DFGs are available to owner-occupiers, private landlords and private sector tenants to help a disabled person live more independently in their own home, one of the Private Sector Renewal Strategy objectives. This has obvious advantages to both the occupier who is able to stay in his/her home and service providers who are not required to provide residential care. The proposed works have to be necessary and appropriate for the disabled person and also have to be reasonable and practical.

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

Whilst the Government's Housing the Elderly strategy commits housing stakeholders to delivering the Lifetime Homes Standard for all new housing by 2013, Tower Hamlets have to consider what can be done for existing tenants or tenants who are allocated homes that need adaptation work undertaken.

There will be financial limits to the scope of works that can be undertaken under this activity, but there is no doubt this will bring quality of life benefits to those in need, who are primarily the elderly and the disabled.



Under the East London Protocol housing associations will carry out works from their own resources up to £1000. Where their own resources have been expended then they could apply for Disabled Facilities Grants to assist with funding for of adaptations. This arrangement stretches the available grant to help more people. Where aids and adaptations are installed into council homes, this is delegated to Tower Hamlets Homes. Works are funded out of the R&M Revenue budget and actioned through the Capital Programme; this is distinct from the Disabled Facilities Grant which is for occupants of RSL and private housing only. It's equally important that council tenants (assessed by occupation therapists) receive aids and adaptation when they need them and that work to the homes is turned around within a reasonable timescale.

Energy Efficiency and Reducing Carbon Emissions in Existing Homes

► Tower Hamlets will develop an Energy Efficiency Strategy for all dwellings and make available additional information on energy and water conservation measures for households wishing to improve their homes.

Local Authorities have statutory duties in respect of energy conservation in domestic dwellings under the 1995 Home Energy Conservation Act. Energy conservation both helps reduce fuel poverty and also reduces harmful carbon emissions. Tower Hamlets energy services team have been operating since 1995 to provide a focus for domestic energy efficiency and to fulfil the Council's statutory duty by reducing domestic energy consumption by 30% on 1996 levels by 2010. Implementing this Strategy is crucial to achieving this target.

► Social landlords when considering repairs, refurbishment and new build should have regard to the Mayor's climate change policies in the London Plan; the future London Climate Change Adaptation Strategy; London Housing Strategy and local policies that will help reduce carbon emissions from homes in Tower Hamlets. Once implemented, the Mayor's London Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (10) will set out carbon emission reduction targets for the capital, reducing carbon emissions by 60% by 2025.



The Climate Change Adaptation Strategy focuses strongly on reducing carbon emissions from existing housing plays as the domestic sector contributes to nearly 40% of London's total emissions. Decent Homes programmes play an important role, delivering thermal comfort and reducing carbon emissions. However, reaching the decent homes standard won't make existing homes zero carbon. The BRE's *Code for Sustainable Homes* ⁽¹¹⁾ standard for achieving zero carbon in new housing is now complimented by the Eco-homes XB Standard; this enables housing stakeholders to measure the environmental impact of repairs and improvements to components of existing housing.

► **Tower Hamlets will develop and implement a local Climate Change Strategy that will help reduce carbon emissions from existing and new housing**

Carbon emissions are caused by inefficient use and an increase in our energy consumption. Significant reductions in carbon emissions can be achieved by: householders taking action to cut wasteful energy use in the home; householders changing to energy efficient products and appliances; insulating the home, and lastly, the option to install renewable energy technology. In the coming years more radical measures may be needed and Tower Hamlets Climate Change Strategy intends to rise to that challenge.

Delivering Effective, Efficient and Fair Housing Management – The Regulatory Framework

► **Tower Hamlets will work closely with Tenant Services Authority to ensure that tenants in Tower Hamlets receive an effective, efficient and fair management service and that all social landlords are seeking a minimum 'Two Star' service (or TSA new regulatory equivalent)**

Prior to the creation of the TSA in December 2008 (under the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), the Audit commission periodically inspected housing associations for governance, financial viability and management performance and then separately the Commission periodically inspected all social landlords on the landlord services they provide to residents awarding them a standard of - one to three stars – with a 'direction of travel'. Since then the TSA has brought the former two 'inspection' and 'governance' regulatory functions together. Consultation included a 'national conversation' with mainly tenants, and other stakeholders; wider consultation and then statutory consultation with stakeholders on the proposed standards. The TSA will achieve one set of 'cross-domain' standards that fall into the following framework. There is flexibility for location variation on the first three:

- **The service offer to tenants**
- **Tenant empowerment and involvement**
- **The tenancy agreement**
- Governance
- Viability
- Value for Money

The powers to regulate housing associations begins in December 2009 and for Local Authorities (responsible body for ALMOs) the commencement date is April 2010

Focusing on Residents – Tenant Involvement, Serving Leaseholders Well

► **Tower Hamlets Council will require all social landlords in the borough to have a resident involvement statement (or similar report) setting out how it involves Tower Hamlets tenants and leaseholders in the running of its organisation. Tenants' statements should build on emerging TSA principles.** Tower Hamlets is committed to ensuring that all social landlord tenants are provided with the opportunity to influence the policies and practices that govern the management of their homes.



In the past tenant involvement has mainly involved: representation on landlord boards; focus groups on management issues and effective methods of communication with tenants taking account of diversity and the needs of 'hard to reach' groups. The TSA believes that tenants should help set

targets for key landlord services, be informed and able to compare their landlord against others monitoring landlord performance; be able trigger intervention when standards aren't met. The TSA's new model approach to tenant involvement will be set out in the Audit Commission's Key Lines of Enquiry (12) from December 2009. The Council recognises that effective and inclusive involvement can benefit all stakeholders by: empowering communities; satisfying more service users, providing improved services that tenants want, raise service standards and maximise cost effectiveness and efficiency.

Social landlords in the borough support resident associations and their growth and the Council will continue to benefit from Tenant Management Organisations in the borough with extensive history of delivery. Resident statements will further strengthen the roles of these organisations.

► **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.**

A significant number of households in Tower Hamlets are leaseholders. This commitment focuses on those who hold leases in housing owned by the Council. They are and managed by Tower Hamlets Homes, and leaseholders represent about 40 per cent of the total managed stock. Leaseholder homes are typically bought under the Right to Buy where the build type are mainly blocks. An ongoing issue for these residents is the service charge costs and the quality of services they receive.

In October 2008 the full Council made the decision to assess how services charges are budgeted and eventually charged for, with an additional focus to draw on best practice; the legislative framework; and with the intention of any new arrangements determining the actual expenditure charged for the 2008/09 financial year.

Social Landlords' Performance Management Framework

► **Tower Hamlets Council in partnership with Tower Hamlets Housing Forum (THHF) members will develop a Performance Management Framework that will track and drive improvement in social landlords' management performance.**

THHF members are RSLs operating in the Borough and Tower Hamlets Homes (the ALMO). A performance management framework (covering all services) will help govern the relationship between Tower Hamlets Homes, housing associations and the Council. Reviewed each year, some of its main elements will include:

- Aiming for excellence in key aims and objectives (to be reviewed annually)
- Monitoring core activities, processes and performance reporting arrangements
- Effective Liaison arrangements (monthly THH performance reports, quarterly for RSLs, and a separate quarterly reports for corporate performance purposes)
- Continuous driving of improvement
- Dealing with under performance

The Council will compare performance management framework against its objectives and ensure that the results (outputs and outcomes) are readily available to all stakeholders, which includes residents. Social landlords won't set up a separate regulatory regime which would be too onerous on landlord, but, instead use the existing HouseMark benchmarking system. The Council retains responsibility for developing Housing Policies objectives. For example in rent setting, homelessness, allocations, or achieving Decent Homes. The Council will consult with THH, THHF if suggested changes are proposed.

Placemaking and Sustainable Communities

Placemaking and sustainable communities in Tower Hamlets

Context

Tower Hamlets is geographically one of the smallest boroughs in Greater London. Over the last decade it has undergone significant regeneration and includes one of the largest affordable and market house building programmes in London. Over the next decade housing and employment

growth is set to continue with the redevelopment of the Lower Lea Valley, Canary Wharf, the City Fringe and the emerging international centre at Stratford as key generators of economic activity. It is also one of the host boroughs for the 2012 Olympic Games which should realise major legacy development in the north-east of the borough following the Games. New transport investment – principally Crossrail and the East London Line Extension – will provide new opportunities for housing development. The Borough has historically led people to closely associate themselves with particular localities, a helpful platform to the concept of ‘placemaking’ and ‘sustainable communities’. The agenda is more than physically redeveloping areas; it’s about the coordination of local service delivery in areas such as community safety, lifelong learning and street management.

Local documents that drive the placemaking and sustainable communities agenda are the:

- Community Plan ⁽¹⁾ –the Borough’s Sustainable Communities Strategy for delivering individual and community economic, environmental and social well-being.
- Core Strategy ⁽¹³⁾ – the main document within the LDF outlines the vision for how our places will change over time and how it will happen.

Housing is the dominant land use, shaping local places. Housing and regeneration outcomes are often sought and delivered through planning obligations such as public realm and local infrastructure improvements. Using this platform, this section focuses on how housing stakeholders and other service providers can help create sustainable communities and what that commitment entails.

Urban Planning and Development

► **Tower Hamlets Council will work in partnership with all stakeholders involved in the urban planning and development process to deliver the four Community Plan crosscutting themes.**

A core element to modern urban planning is the concept of place-making. Vibrant neighbourhoods are well-designed, economically successful and have mix of tenures and uses. Successful places are usually characterised by good access to transport links enabling fast access to places of work and shopping facilities. In an urban context, an area of focus within Tower Hamlets LDF-Core Strategy is directing housing growth to meet the vision of each Hamlet.

Managing the Public Realm

► **Tower Hamlets Council will work in partnership with social landlords to ensure that Local Area Agreement targets on street and environmental cleanliness are met.**

Borough residents should have access to good quality open space that is clean, safe and well-managed. Much of the public realm comprises of housing (mainly flats) well managed public realm makes a real and lasting difference to people’s perception of places.



Supporting Local Businesses in New/Regeneration Housing Schemes

► **Tower Hamlets will encourage the creation and retention of existing, local businesses in new and regenerated housing schemes.**

Local economies thrive through having a wide range of shops and businesses for people to choose from. Local businesses offer goods/services people want and need; employ local people; they create social and market capital and keep it within the Borough’s boundaries. Businesses will be aligned with the LDF- Core Strategy town centre vision with in the Hamlets. Where RSLs are developing large schemes the Council will encourage them to support businesses (especially those facing displacement) by letting commercial units at workable rents to local people and local businesses.

Regenerating Localities, Making Best Use of Council Assets

► **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.**

Tower Hamlets has had a number of major regeneration projects which have involved partial or full redevelopment of council estates in need of substantial renovation. Often, this involved replacing poor quality council homes with new housing association homes, with additional open-market-sale homes to support the social housing build costs which introduces mix-tenure into the area.

For the future locally based housing associations will be encouraged to progress proposals that meet wider placemaking/sustainable communities objective. Tower Hamlets Homes will also put forward proposals that meet regeneration objectives and where decent homes investment offers poor or marginal value for money. Proposals of this kind would give new or returning decant tenants improved living standards. Other opportunities for redevelopment may simply involve bringing forward small infill on council estates for redevelopment; the Council refer to this as the Local Homes Initiative.

Low Carbon Areas

► **Tower Hamlets will work in partnership with housing stakeholders to facilitate the delivery of a pilot area-based low carbon project.**

In line with national and regional climate change objectives, the Council will expect residents (across all tenures) and developers to help reduce harmful carbon emissions from existing and new housing stock. This can be achieved by simple and practical measures around the home such as: accessing advice from the LDA-funded Green Homes concierge service or the Energy Saving Trust; by minimising household energy and water usage; by maximising household recycling activities; and encouraging landlords to turn to Combined Heat and Power Systems. It is possible for stakeholders to deliver an area-based holistic approach to reducing carbon emissions.

Household Recycling

► **Tower Hamlets Council will work in partnership with social landlords to agree a target and activities to increase the proportion of household recycling undertaken in Tower Hamlets.**

A key corporate priority for the Council, current recycling activity is relatively low compared to the rest of London. Improvement can be achieved working effectively with social landlords through the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum; it's possible for landlords to forward-plan in soft sanctions for new residents to make use of local recycling and waste facilities, and once adopted the LDF – Core Strategy wants every new home (or estate) to have appropriate space for waste and recycling storage.

Working Neighbourhoods

► **Tower Hamlets Council will work with Tower Hamlets Housing Forum members and other stakeholders to deliver more skills, employment training opportunities, and other intermediary options; and drawing on available Working Neighbourhoods Fund and other resources.**

Sustainable communities are invariably characterised by the majority of the working age population in sustainable employment. Its expected part of the community will be 'economically inactive' like retired people or students and part will be unemployed people, classed as economically active as they are expected to be seeking work. In parts of Tower Hamlets about half the working population are not in employment. These issues are further complicated if the households are caught up in the 'poverty trap' where returning to work (for example) may mean a drop in income. In the Borough average unemployment rate have tended to be higher than regional and national averages, this is exacerbated by low educational attainment. Improving educational attainment can help a person's employability as a long-term. Another measure could be increasing residents' incomes through community intermediary options. Residually this could be through benefit advice and assistance or building up the person to be 'job ready'; through voluntary work or parcelling up work into small pockets earning small amounts without affecting benefits. With Working Neighbourhoods Funds in place, achieving success in this commitment will deliver better skills and employment outcomes for local people in a sustainable way.

Tower Hamlets LBAP will span 2009 to 2013. It's divided into four Habitat Action Plans, one of which is called 'Gardens and Grounds' and includes amongst other habitat types - communal gardens on housing estates and community and private gardens. Other enhancements could be green roofing or appropriate planting. The LDF – Core Strategy has identified 14 bio-diversity enhancement areas across the Borough, the BAP will inform the interventions needed in each of the areas. There is an urgent need for all housing stakeholders to take ownership of biodiversity conservation and enhancement and for the Housing Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan to be mutually reinforcing of each other.

Personal and Community Safety

► **Tower Hamlets will work with social housing providers to ensure they take account of security issues when designing new homes and that they contribute to the Community Plan community safety objectives.**

A recurring concern for all residents is personal and community safety. The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act require local authorities to prevent crime and disorder in their area and the Safe and Supportive Community Delivery Group are set up to deliver on this. In a housing context, the top three ways to address safety is to ensure that:-

- on new/regenerated schemes, crime is designed-out using Secured by Design principles (14)
- housing stakeholders work closely at a strategic level through the Living Safely Partnership to deliver objectives set out Crime and Drugs Reduction Strategy (15)
- joint-working between social housing partners with community safety partners deals with crime problems in local crime and ASB hotspots

Social landlords are key in helping to reduce crime; this role will need to be enhanced in future years. Tower Hamlets will lead the way by fast-tracking capital works designed to tackle ASB problems in blocks lacking effective security.

Supporting People – Including Older People

► **Tower Hamlets will ensure that the Supporting People programme is integrated with the Homelessness Strategy and wider local and regional Housing Strategy objectives, together with priorities of the PCT and Probation Service**

Supporting People (SP) is a national programme that helps improve the lives of vulnerable people; it increases their opportunities for independence by the commissioning and delivery of imaginative services and development that meets Tower Hamlets strategic priorities and serving the needs of vulnerable people.

Tower Hamlets Council is responsible for administering the SP programme for the Borough, which involves managing an SP grant of over £15m per year; contracting, monitoring and reviewing over 120 supported housing services in the Borough. Working in partnership with over 45 providers of housing support services and delivering support to over 4,500 people, SP not only brings positive change to the individual but contributes to community cohesion, with the wider community benefiting.

Funded services will address the support needs and make a difference to the lives of people who:

- are Homeless or at risk of homelessness
- have a chaotic lifestyle (For example, a drug dependent lifestyle, or a person fleeing domestic violence)
- are not currently integrated into mainstream services
- are having difficulty maintaining their own independence (For example, people with dementia)
- are socially excluded

Examples of services funded by Supporting People include:

- Sheltered housing services for older people.
- Support workers who visit a wide range of people in their own homes, called 'Floating Support'
- Specific housing-related support in a range of accommodation, including hostels and homes for residents who have specific short or long term needs.

The top two Supporting People priorities are to:

- Respond effectively to the planned removal of the SP ring-fenced grant to the new area-based grant system and contributes tangibly to the Council's Local Area Agreement and National Performance Indicators. The annual Strategy refresh document will expand on this in 2010.
- Implementation of the Strategic Review and conduct the subsequent tender process to deliver new services, which are due to go live about in November 2009.



The Council's Supporting People team will work with the Mayor on the London Housing Strategy requirement for SP to achieve increased better coordination and dialogue of linked to both sub-regional and pan-London commissioning and development issues using existing and new structures.

► **Develop an Older Peoples Housing Strategy which will implement the recommendations of the Best Value review (2006), incorporate cross cutting housing initiatives and develop new ventures that will improve the quality of housing for older people in Tower Hamlets.**

The Council transferred its Sheltered Housing to Gateway Housing Association in 2005. Since 2006 the actions of the review (agreed by Cabinet) are being implemented. However, a more joined up approach across all council services is needed to deliver better services for older people. Some of these elements have already been identified as part of the recommendations of the Best Value Review, and others as part of the Supporting People programme (noted above), with additional elements that also need addressing. For example, continuing improvement in scheme quality, i.e. management provision and physical condition of buildings. The Older People's Strategy will also address the poor private sector provision for elderly accommodation. The new Strategy will draw together the Government aspirations outlined in publications such as *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society* (5)

Working with Tower Hamlets Social Landlords

► **Working closely with Tower Hamlets Housing Forum (THHF) members to deliver the objectives set out in the THHF protocol and the wider objectives of this Housing Strategy.**

The Council continues to enjoy a close working relationship with housing associations active in the borough and (the newly formed) Tower Hamlets Homes. In the future the Borough will become more dependent on social landlords to deliver its wider objectives and rely on social landlord's collective commitment to the Borough (as set out in the Protocol) and certain objectives within this strategy.

Stronger focus on the strategic enabling role and client monitoring role should ensure objectives are met and social housing residents and social housing tenants experience an improvement in the wider social landlord 'offer'. Aside from development and service provision, current THHF areas of work include tackling anti-social behaviour; improving the public realm; common housing registers and allocations review; achieving financial inclusion. The work of the current groups will be revised to reflect Community Plan objectives under great place to live them.

Managing Demand, Reducing Overcrowding

Context

Tower Hamlets has amongst the highest levels of housing need in London. At the start of 2009 the waiting list stood at about 23,000 households. The need was greatest (over 11,768) amongst households seeking a one bedroom home. In addition, over 1,677 households needed a home with four bedrooms or more. Whilst this is a comparatively smaller number than those seeking a one bedroom home, because fewer larger social rented homes are developed, those waiting for these kinds of homes have to wait many years to be rehoused. The Council therefore needs to strike a

balance between the size of accommodation it wishes to see developed by both private developers and housing associations. However, it is clear that more large family accommodation for social rent needs to be developed. In addition as the Council rehuses people from the Common Housing Register, new households join the list often making it difficult to demonstrate the successful work the Council has achieved over the years.

Letting Affordable Housing

Refresh - See Appendix



► Review Tower Hamlets Lettings Policy leading to firm proposals for an improved policy and choice based lettings scheme.

Lettings policies tend to focus on the new let and relet of social rented homes (council and housing association homes). The Borough's current policy is set out in the Tower Hamlets Common Housing Register Lettings Policy (Revised 2005). The Lettings Policy (17) must conform to legislative requirement set out in part six of the 1996 Housing Act as amended by 2002 Homelessness Act.



A number of classes of household must be given 'reasonable preference' under the Council's allocation scheme (HomeSeekers), they are:

- people who are homeless
- people occupying unsanitary, overcrowded, or otherwise unsatisfactory housing
- people who need to move for medical or welfare reasons, including ground relating to a disability and
- people who need to move to a particular location - for example, to be nearer to special training opportunities, or special medical facilities - and who would suffer hardship if they were unable to do so.

Housing applicants need to complete a housing registration for (subject to standard eligibility checks to join the borough's 'housing list'. The (single) housing list includes new applicants for social housing and existing tenants who wish to transfer from their existing home. In Tower Hamlets different levels of housing need are allocated to four community groups or bands, shown in the table below.

	Categories	How who gets housing is decided
Community Group 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral date – then • Lacking most bedrooms
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All decants (people having to move because their home is being demolished) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demolition date – then • Medical – then • Lacking most bedrooms
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under occupiers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving up most bedrooms – then • Medical awards
Community Group 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority Homeless • Extenuating Health • Extenuating Social • Extenuating Repairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most medical awards - then • Lacking most bedrooms – then • Date registered in the band
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quota Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From earliest date registered in the band
Community Group 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcrowded applicants with a local connection • Non – Overcrowded applicants with a local connection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacking most bedrooms – then • From earliest date registered
Community Group 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No local connection • Property Owners • Tenants of landlords who are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacking most bedrooms – then • From earliest date registered

Tenants of partner RSLs have access to available local authority properties and vice versa. All lettings are marketed through the Council's choice-based lettings scheme called *Tower Hamlets Homeseekers*, the web address is www.thhs.org.uk. Home seekers advertise properties and take bids in a variety of ways that suits bidders' needs. Much of the new social rented homes are let to households on the Housing Register, although some are allocated to other local authorities under the Sub Regional Nomination Protocol arrangement referred to later in this section.

Lettings Policy Changes

In May 2008 the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended a number of changes to the Council's Lettings Policy. The objectives of this scrutiny review were to:

- Consider the accessibility of the scheme with a view to improving access particularly for elderly and disabled residents
- Consider the impact of the Council's policy to tackle overcrowding in the borough
- Consider the medical assessment process and how it works
- Consider homelessness in the context of choice based lettings
- Explore resident and other stakeholder understanding of how the process works with a view to addressing any issues identified
- Consider the level of transparency in decision making in the allocation of properties

Key elements of the Overview and Scrutiny Report included recommendations to:

- Consider joining the East London Lettings Company scheme, subject to a feasibility study
- Adopt a Local Lettings Plan approach for all new developments of 20 units or more affordable homes to help facilitate sustainability
- Undertake a full Equality Impact Assessment of choice based lettings in Tower Hamlets in order to understand its impact on community cohesion

Maximising Nominations for Social Housing

► Tower Hamlets will encourage all housing associations partners who have or intend to develop stock in the borough to become members of the Common Housing Register Forum and its parent group, the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum.

The scale of demand for social housing in Tower Hamlets requires that all sources of nominations are maximised. The two key sources of social housing are nominations for new homes and nominations for existing housing that has become empty. Members of the Common Housing Register Forum (CHRF) make available all their stock for nomination through 'Homeseekers', Tower Hamlets choice-based lettings scheme. However, a number of housing associations that operate in Tower Hamlets are not members and consequently nominations are not necessarily being maximised, this objective sets about addressing that.

Overcrowding Reduction Strategy

Refresh - See Appendix

c

► Tower Hamlets will develop and implement a new Overcrowding Reduction Strategy with annual targets linked to reduction initiatives

No housing problem in Tower Hamlets is as acute as that of household overcrowding. Independent research has shown that the health, education and well-being of children growing up in overcrowded homes are all markedly lower. HHSRS guidance based on research findings cite lack of space and overcrowded conditions as linked to a number of health outcomes, including psychological distress and mental disorders, especially those associated with a lack of privacy and childhood development. Overcrowding is also a key driver of homelessness in the Borough, including statutory homelessness acceptances.

While stock transfer means that Tower Hamlets has made significant progress in reducing overcrowding within our existing stock, the number of families on the waiting list remains daunting.

Tower Hamlets Council is widely recognised as being at the forefront of innovative schemes to try to help overcrowded families. Initiatives that are already used to reduce overcrowding include:

- Knock-thoughts of two properties into one.
- Cash incentive schemes to encourage under-occupiers to move into the owner occupied sector where possible.
- Cash incentive schemes to encourage under-occupiers to downsize into smaller accommodation.
- Young adult members of severely overcrowded households being prioritised for re-housing independently.
- Development of more large family accommodation.
- Cash incentives to encourage council tenants to secure private sector accommodation.

These initiatives have helped ensure that the level of overcrowding does not get any worse. However, the Council believes it is not acceptable to leave another generation of young children growing up for years in overcrowded conditions. The real solution to this crisis is clearly a significant and sustained increase in the delivery of new family-sized social rented homes.

However, those homes will take several years to be built. In the meantime, we believe it is right that LB Tower Hamlets utilise every available source at its disposal to maximise the number of overcrowded families moved into bigger homes over the next eighteen months. We believe it is possible to help an additional 500 overcrowded families over and above those who would have been rehoused otherwise. The council is therefore proposing a package of additional measures:

- ① Reform the Choice-Based Lettings scheme, so that it increases the priority awarded to applicants living in overcrowded households
- ② Pilot a Local Homes Initiative that will build homes on small sites with the intention that these will only be available for households on the Tower Hamlets Common Housing Register
- ③ Purchasing available properties previously sold under the Right to Buy and encourage housing associations to purchase such homes in their localities
- ④ Review the amount of new large family accommodation made available to other boroughs for sub regional nomination purposes.



► **The Council will review the current Sub Regional Nomination arrangements to ensure that Tower Hamlets is gaining an appropriate share of homes developed in the borough and lobby for changes if required.**

This commitment links to the earlier 'maximising nominations' commitment. The council and its housing association partners are signatories to the East London Sub Regional Nominations Protocol (18). This allows a proportion of affordable homes developed in the borough to be made available to the other East London boroughs housing register applicants. Similarly the Council has access to nominations in the same boroughs. Whilst the Council supports the flexibility that this offers, it is also concerned that it is not benefiting sufficiently from the high amount of affordable housing that is being developed in Tower Hamlets, particularly in respect of large family social rented housing.

Estate Renewal Decanting Requirements

► **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.**

Tower Hamlets is one of London's market-leaders in delivering estate renewal projects. Estate Renewal involves an element of demolition and new build which helps regenerate areas and create a more diverse mix of tenure. Projects lead to an increase in quality social homes particularly new family-sized homes. In the short term, such schemes create a demand for available social rented stock and inevitably this demand is competing with demand from other Community Groups, particularly the overcrowded and the homeless. Estate renewal projects take a long time to develop. In the event of a 'preferred option' being agreed, the decanting process can take many years due to rehousing large families or the time needed to buy out leaseholders' interests.

Currently, the number of homes that have 'decant status' totals nearly 800 homes (some households are also overcrowded), a further 500+ homes are likely to come forward in the near future seeking similar status. Tower Hamlets will need to look at alternative options beyond giving Community Group 1 status to tenants with decant status as it is highly unlikely that there will be sufficient new (and relet) opportunities to meet the demand required to unlock the estate renewal sites for development.

Homelessness Strategy

► Deliver the actions set out in the Council's 2008/13 Homelessness Strategy.

Since Tower Hamlets Council adopted its first homelessness strategy in 2003, progress has been made on preventing homelessness and improving service provision. Preventative services like the rent deposit schemes, mediation services, tenancy support and a sanctuary scheme for women fleeing domestic violence have developed, these helped drive down the number of homelessness applications and acceptances. The Supporting People programme also provides housing-related support services for vulnerable homeless people.

The new five-year Homelessness Strategy ⁽¹⁹⁾ cross-service partnership working, as such the homelessness strategy will be strengthened and play a key part in delivering improved outcomes for Tower Hamlets across all the areas and themes of the new Community Plan. Prior to drafting the Strategy, the Services undertook a review of homelessness during 2007/08, some of the key issues coming out of it were:

- Homelessness disproportionately affects BME families
- 60% of homelessness acceptances in Tower Hamlets are the result of ejection by parents.
- One in twelve children in Tower Hamlets live in homeless households
- Single homelessness remains a significant issue locally, annually around 1500, but only a minority are housed directly under the legislation.
- Youth homelessness remains an issue locally, about 300 young people (16-17 year olds) present to the Homelessness Service every year.
- Homelessness and worklessness are heavily correlated; high rents can be a disincentive to work.

The new Homelessness Strategy 2008/13 has five overarching themes that address local and government challenges. The service looks to providing more support for families; shape services locally to support vulnerable people through to settled, sustainable options; and using the same approach they want to reduce overcrowding. The service will deliver an integrated approach to employment and financial inclusion; and generally the aim is for excellent services for their key service users. Flowing from the themes, a summary of the proposals are to:

- Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by half (of 2005 levels) by 2010
- Review the allocations policy to stop overcrowding and new household formation being the main cause of homelessness locally.
- Link all homeless families, young people and teenage parents to cross-cutting mainstream services
- Place homeless 16-17 year olds in supported accommodation by 2010
- End rough sleeping as an enduring local problem
- Place single people (in priority need) in supported housing, where it's the best option for them
- Provide more support for women experiencing homelessness

- Change the service's approach to the allocation of permanent housing for single people, to provide the right housing options at the right time, and resolve the move-on problem from supported housing
- Develop a temporary to permanent scheme
- Make the private rented sector a better option
- Reduce poverty and benefit trap of homelessness by getting more people into employment
- Work in partnership to reduce levels of child poverty in homeless households

It is fundamental the homelessness strategy is delivered in partnership across council directorates and branching to stakeholders like RSLs, criminal justice system, NHS partners and third sector stakeholders. Policy areas the strategy partially relies on to be successful are the allocations policy and the continual supply of affordable housing coming forward.

Gypsy and Travellers

► **The Council will work with the Nominated Undertaker for the Crossrail Act, other agencies and stakeholder groups to ensure the Eleanor Street Travellers' Site is relocated in accordance with best practice design standards.**

Tower Hamlets has one official council Gypsy and Travellers Site located at Eleanor Street providing 19 pitches. The Crossrail project has given rise to the need to relocate the site to an area of land immediately adjacent its current location. The Eleanor St site has a number of overcrowded pitches, not unique in London. The Council carried out an initial local needs assessment in 2006, as supporting evidence for the petition to the Crossrail House of Commons Select Committee. The assessment indicated that additional provision would need to be planned in this particular instance following the site relocation exercise. The Council has successfully negotiated an undertaking within the statutory framework of the Crossrail Bill to ensure that the site at Eleanor Street is relocated in line with relevant provisions of site design guidance produced by Government. Opportunities will be sought to provide an enhanced level of improvement in the new site design to meet best practice standards. The site will be designed to maximise the potential use of land adjacent to the site that will be returned to the Council when the Crossrail construction is complete in 2017.

► **The Council will produce an over-arching strategy that will set out the Borough's approach to Gypsy and Traveller issues which include the development of suitable proposals for the provision of additional site accommodation based on information set out in the pan London Accommodation Assessment, London Housing Strategy and Regional Spatial Strategy.**

A programme of work will be undertaken to develop and implement proposals to meet the needs identified in the pan London Accommodation Assessment and targets established by the regional housing and spatial strategy process. The legal requirement on Tower Hamlets to address Gypsy and Traveller housing needs is unambiguous. There are three papers that requires the Council to act. There is the Housing Act 2004, requiring Local Authorities to assess the need; the Planning Circular 01/2006 introduces a requirement for every Local Authority to proactively identify land to meet the identified need and Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing requires local authorities to consider the needs as a part of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The findings from the pan-London assessment report were considered in the Mayor's London's Housing Strategy. The Mayor's Strategy encourages boroughs to protect existing Gypsy and Traveller pitches, refurbish existing sites where needed, and address the identified requirements for the provision of new sites. The Council will practice conformity and will need to review site provision and quality (as will all other boroughs) on implementation of the Mayor's Strategy.

New Housing Supply

New Housing Supply in Tower Hamlets

One of the core reasons for developing a Tower Hamlets housing strategy is to set the framework for the delivery of new housing in the borough, particularly new affordable family housing for social rent. Despite being a geographically small borough, it delivers a comparatively large amount of

affordable housing. According to the former Housing Corporation, in 2007/08 Tower Hamlets hosted the largest delivery of affordable housing in London and represented about 10% of the Housing Corporation's London programme. Despite this impressive record, not enough affordable housing is being developed for social rent and intermediate (e.g. shared ownership) purposes, which is having a direct and indirect negative impact on the borough's Community Plan LAA targets. This chapter sets out what the borough expects from affordable housing developers and what the borough will do to help deliver those expectations.

With the continuing recession, the Council will need to monitor closely the impact on the local housing market. The Council will seek to ensure that householders struggling with mortgage payments receive the advice they need, and that they have access to support available from national schemes. Struggling homeowners could include investment landlords. In this case the council's offer of advice or referral is extended to the tenants who could be at risk of homelessness if a possession order is made.

A broader, medium to long term strategic issue for the Council is to ensure that private finance required to fund major regeneration projects - particularly those that will deliver significant socio-economic outcomes - continues to be accessible to partner organisations. One means to achieving this is ensuring that Council and/or HCA funding and support is maximised in order to give support to partners raising money on the finance markets and applying their own resources. However, such an option will not be possible in all scenarios as such money and land (as examples) are finite and could eventually compromise support, on an opportunity cost basis, for other projects.

In terms of the 'guiding principles' to any approach to supporting future major regeneration projects, the Council will continue to apply the four key strategic objectives set out in this Strategy. Priorities and targets - including Local Area Agreement targets - will need to be reviewed regularly, particularly given the above mentioned recession. However, the Council and its partners are well positioned to mitigate the worst impacts being currently experienced, and create a strong platform for housing delivery once the housing market recovers.

Tower Hamlets Planning Policy

Every local planning authority is required by law to produce a set of Local Development Documents which set the Local Development Framework. Amongst these documents will be the 'Core Strategy', a Statement of Community Involvement; Area Action Plans; Masterplans; and specific documents setting out policy detail of certain thematic areas such as affordable housing, waste management, or climate change.

It is important to note that planning policy (including housing-related policy) is a statutory document which must be considered when private and affordable developers are proposing schemes to the borough. A borough's housing strategy is not statutory; therefore borough planning policy sets the framework for housing development in Tower Hamlets which is why the Housing Strategy needs to be in broad compliance with the Core Strategy (policies and related documents) Intrinsically linking to the Sustainable Communities Strategy – the Borough's 'Community Plan' - which promotes economic, environmental and social well-being in the borough. Important policy areas where the Core Strategy and Strategic Housing must effectively link together are:

- Where the Core Strategy has identified suitable sites and locations for larger family-size housing with good links to infrastructure.
- Working together to seek a strategic target of up to 50% affordable housing on all housing developed in the borough.
- On large housing regeneration schemes and strategic development sites: the effectiveness of the Strategic Housing is key to negotiating with the HCA to secure grant funding as well as private sector leverage. These will help deliver on the council's LAA targets and the Mayor's (three-year) agreed delivery targets.
- In delivering more accessible homes (especially fully wheelchair accessible), planning policy must give clear direction as to bedroom size ratio and tenure mix ration to guide future developers. Accessible housing features and dimensions (including recommended space standards) should be adopted in the Core Strategy strategic policy or supporting planning documents.

Housing Quantity and Housing Types

► Tower Hamlets will seek as a strategic target of up to 50% affordable housing on all housing developed in the borough, applying 35% on individual sites. *Refresh – See Appendix*

↻

Tower Hamlets’ annual housing target initially set by the Mayor of London for all tenures assumes 3,150 homes per annum up to 2016/17, of which up to 50% should be affordable. Tower Hamlets supports the strategic target of 50% affordable housing and will seek a minimum of 35% affordable housing on individual sites. Currently 80% of which should be for social rent and 20% for intermediate purposes. Should the LDF – Core Strategy be adopted, the tenure split will change to 70% social rent, 30% intermediate. Evidence informing this change originates from Tower Hamlets Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

► Tower Hamlets will seek 45% of the social rented element of new developments to be for large family purposes (i.e. three bedrooms or more) either provided onsite, or where delivery proves unsustainable, provided offsite; 25% of the intermediate and market homes should have three bedrooms or more. *Refresh – See Appendix*

↻

Tower Hamlets is committed to maximising the amount of affordable housing developed, ensuring a sustainable mix of affordable housing is also developed. The Borough’s Interim Planning Policy on Housing sets out the following preferred mix of social rent housing types in new developments (see table below) based on identified local needs highlighted in the 2004 Housing Needs Survey. The SHMA will be published in July 2009; although change is unlikely (due the need for compliance within the London Housing Strategy) this will be reported in the Strategy refresh in 2010.

Bed-sit	One-Bed	Two-Bed	Three-Bed	Four Bed	Five/Six Bed
0%	20%	35%	30%	10%	5%

Housing Design and Space Standards

► Following publication and review of the Mayor’s Housing Design Guide, Tower Hamlets will make a decision on whether to adopt the document for housing and planning policy guidance purposes.

A key determinant of housing quality is a home’s internal space standards. Where overcrowding is an issue, ensuring that there is adequate living space in each room can especially make a big difference to the well-being of residents. Affordable housing (including that developed by private developers) will need to comply with the Housing Corporation’s Design and Quality Standards (20). Tower Hamlets intends to review its requirements on publication of the Mayor of London’s Housing Design Guide.



► All affordable housing to comply with the Homes and Communities Agency guidance set out in Design and Quality Standards (April 2007 version) Space standards for housing in Tower Hamlets are guided by the Residential Space Standards Supplementary Planning Guidance, which is currently under review.

► 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. Developers should also have regard to housing design for minority ethnic groups, with a particular focus on the cultural requirements of the Bangladeshi community. The community requires homes of three bedrooms and above, and to have separate kitchens and dining rooms. The requirement for separate kitchen and living areas is not unique to these minority ethnic groups as the need for living space to live is for all households, particularly those with young children. The changing needs

of elderly people also need to be considered, and these can often be catered for through adaptations.

Family Housing in High Density Developments

► **Tower Hamlets will examine family housing issues in its forthcoming High Density Living Supplementary Planning Document.**

Reviewing the rationale for building family housing in high density developments (principally those that are 'private developer-led') will be undertaken. The reasons for this are threefold:

- Family housing in extremely high density locations can present housing management issues for landlords and service charge issues for residents
- Lack of access to amenity and recreational space can be limiting for the development of family well-being and contribute to potential neighbour disputes over common areas
- Service charge costs (in addition to rental payments) can confine new households in the 'poverty trap' making it uneconomic for people to seek sustainable employment. Some elements of services charges are not eligible for benefits.

Achieving good design and factoring in effective management are critical to achieving this objective.

Car Free Developments

Reduction of car usage is a simple, effective way of reducing carbon emissions. Tower Hamlets benefits from significant public transport infrastructure which means that car dependency should be significantly less than in other boroughs. Nonetheless, the lack of access to a car can hinder households' ability to take up employment; visit family and friends; transport children to school. Protecting the environment is increasingly the high priority for future housing developments, but consideration must be given to ensuring new residents of housing developments are not wholly excluded from accessing personal use of a car.

Intermediate Housing for Families on Low to Medium Incomes

► **Tower Hamlets will explore innovative approaches to facilitate the delivery of more family accommodation for households on low to medium incomes, including Community Land Trust models of affordable housing**

Tower Hamlets wants to create more housing choices for economically active residents who have children and wish to stay in the borough. Historically, residents whose housing requirements have grown would choose (if financially able) to move further out into the Sub Region where house prices have been lower and the house type – house with garden – more in line with their aspirations. This trend is likely to continue unless Tower Hamlets is able to make available the choice of affordable larger homes for households on low to medium incomes, then this decision will be forced upon people rather than be a genuine choice. The Council is therefore keen to ensure that more intermediate housing for families is available on low to medium incomes. That could take the innovative form of a 'community land trust', which if successful could be rolled out more widely in the borough and beyond.

Student Housing

Tower Hamlets produced a student accommodation needs report for the borough. Tower Hamlets is a preferred location for student accommodation as it's close to the city, has good transport links with inner city universities, and is a cheaper alternative for renting than the other central parts of London.

Tower Hamlets full-time student population is currently about 20,785 with about 50 per cent of the students living at home. The borough has a current provision of 5,610 bed spaces with 3,635 existing bed spaces, and another 1,975 that have been approved or were under construction in 2008. Purpose built student accommodation within Tower Hamlets is by far the highest compared to other boroughs in the north-east (planning) sub-region.

The two major universities within the borough have agreed to a requirement of 900 and 2000 student bed spaces respectively in the next five years. An additional 1000 beds (33%) would be

required for the students from other selected universities, about 3900 beds in total. Tower Hamlets has already exceeded this demand. The need for land for student housing competes with land requirements for the housing needs of permanent affordable accommodation in the borough.

The Report recommends that the supply of student accommodation should be linked to the demand from the local universities. Tower Hamlets accepts its responsibility for providing for student accommodation from universities in Central London at 33% of its local demand.

Reducing Carbon Emissions from New Housing

► Tower Hamlets will require all new housing developments to meet the Government's national target of zero carbon housing by 2016. Alongside this, all new housing developments are required to plan in appropriate space for waste and recycling storage giving residents maximum opportunities to recycle both within the home and in communal areas outside it.

As set out earlier in this Strategy, carbon emission reductions targets are set, they need to be met are a key issue for stakeholders. In that vein, the Government has set a target that all new housing which is developed (both private and affordable) is zero carbon by 2016.

The current method of measuring the sustainability and environmental efficiency of new housing is through the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) (22) which measures the sustainability performance of new housing from Level 1 (the lowest) to Level 6 (the highest), meeting the requirements of level 6 achieve a 'true zero carbon home'.

The HCA expects all affordable housing developed to meet CSH Level 3 and is set out in *Design and Quality Standards*. The former Mayor's Housing Strategy sets a target of CSH Level 4 during 2011/14, with a target of CSH Level 6 by 2015.

Both the Mayoral targets are subject to technology being available. In tandem, the developers should have regard to the Sustainable Design and Construction and Energy policies set out in the Borough's Local Development Framework and the Mayor's London Plan.

They should also be maximising opportunities for future residents to recycle household waste.



Development Site Registration – Preferred Partnering

Refresh – See Appendix

c

► Tower Hamlets will test the feasibility of designating affordable housing partners for development sites in order to improve local management service delivery and examine the value of establishing a panel of preferred affordable housing developers. All parties will work in partnership with the Council to maximise contribution to Community Plan objectives.

Tower Hamlets wishes to see an integrated and accessible management service available to all current and new tenants, help achieve these objectives, the council intends to test the feasibility of designating key sites to preferred development partners (for affordable housing purposes) who have a locally based management service and are committed to delivering Community Plan objectives via the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum.

Accessibility and the Life Time Homes Standard in New Housing

► Tower Hamlets will seek to maximise Lifetime Homes Standards in new housing stock and seek at least 10% of all new homes to be wheelchair accessible (GLA London Accessible Housing Register Standards) or easily adaptable for wheelchair users.

Delivering on this objective will ensure future housing is built to meet residents' needs which will change during their lives. The Mayor's London Plan set out this as a requirement applying to both market and affordable homes. In the Government's recently published 'National Strategy for

Housing in an Aging Society' they commit housing stakeholders to delivering the Lifetime Homes Standard for all new housing by 2013, with a further commitment to introduce statutory regulations if the target is not met voluntarily.

Alternative Vehicles for Housing Delivery

► **Tower Hamlets will investigate alternative housing delivery vehicles that can best deliver corporate housing development objectives.**

One of the key announcements in the Housing Green Paper was on Local Housing Companies (LHCs). This was part of a wider Government initiative to give local authorities a wider role to develop new affordable housing. Basically, LHCs use local authority land in vacant possession in partnership with a private developer and a funder(s) to bring forward more and better housing. Local authorities gain a return on their investment in a longer term fashion as opposed to an early capital receipt. This approach can lead to an uncertain early development process (as the developer has to raise much private finance) and lose value from the local authority when the developer is perceived to be generating excess profits when the homes are eventually sold.

LHCs are one of a number of options explored in the Green Paper. Others are: a Local Authority-Owned Company; Community Land Trust; Limited Liability Partnership; Single Estate Transformation Model and Strategic Housing and Regeneration Partnerships.

Since then a further council investment option was recently proposed by Government, this was for Local Authorities to enter bid rounds for resources to help restart council house building. Tower Hamlets will consider this with other Green Paper options, listed above.

Tower Hamlets will be testing which vehicles can assist in the delivery of the borough's housing strategic objectives.



Major Development Sites in Tower Hamlets

Refresh – See Appendix



► **Tower Hamlets Council to prioritise its resources to the identified key corporate strategic housing projects.**

Tower Hamlets continues to be the focus for major housing development activity in London. There is a constant concern that not enough affordable housing is being developed and insufficient socio-economic infrastructure is accompanying the new housing being developed challenging its long term sustainability.

Ensuring that the borough achieves maximum value from new housing development in the medium to long term will mean adopting a more 'programme managed' approach to housing development, there are two key drivers to this.

First, the **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)**;

Second is Tower Hamlets emerging **Local Investment Plan (LIP)**, a development and infrastructure output document developed through the HCA's Single Conversation that meets the strategic housing objectives of the HCA and Tower Hamlets.

The **SHLAA** makes a judgement on the potential for new dwellings on each site in terms of net gain (or loss) of dwellings; and the site's "deliverability" and "developability". The first five years illustrate what sites are developable in the short to medium term, with the following ten years showing what can be developed in the long term, the assessment is annually reviewed. In simple terms the SHLAA will effectively become the register of available developable land in the borough, which necessitates the need for a renewed focus on how the borough oversees the development of new housing in its area.

The **LIP** and subsequent Local Investment Agreement (LIA) will represent how closely Tower Hamlets will work in partnership with the HCA to ensure that investment is maximised to enable the development of new homes, improvements to homes as well as the necessary socio-economic infrastructure to help deliver sustainable communities, and the roles of private and affordable

housing developers and the private finance required to build new market and affordable homes needs to come forward is key to that. The LIP is likely to cover the following business activities:

- New Housing Projects - This can be categorised into: **Corporate Strategic Housing Projects** (the LA and HCA have key interests in achieving positive outcomes); **Private-Sector led projects** (generates significant affordable housing); and **Housing association-led projects**.
- Decent Homes - achieving the required service performance standards to unlock decent homes investment agreed with the HCA and in line with residents' needs and wants.
- In the future the LIP will include bids for Council House Building
- Targeted Funding Stream delivery, for example, grant funding received for an element of Gypsy and Travellers site and amenity needs.

Outline below are the key **Corporate Strategic Sites** that will deliver new or improved homes, infrastructure and multi-use space:

Corporate Strategic Site Name	Estimated Housing capacity	Delivered...
2012 Olympic Legacy Sites	about 9,000	Long tem
Blackwall Reach/Robin Hood Gardens	1,600	Short tem
Bromley-by-Bow Masterplan Area:- Of which Ailsa St Of which Bow Lock	800 300	Medium tem Short term
Chrisp St Area	300	Medium term
HCA Hospital Sites:- Of which St Clements Hospital Queen Elizabeth Hospital Mildmay Hospital	275 160 150	Short term Short term Short term
Aspen Way	5,000	Long tem
Ocean Estate (new & refurb.)	777 net additional	Short term
Reshaping Poplar	-	-
THH - Housing Estate Renewal	-	-

This additional investment creates the potential to deliver wider socio-economic outcomes sought in the community plan. In addition there is the potential to deliver new homes through infill development and selective demolition where homes are beyond their economic life and/or do not meet housing needs (e.g. bed-sits). This has the potential to supplement the resources available to support Tower Hamlets Homes' Business Plan to deliver the Decent Homes Plus programme. The Council, working with THH could also consider (with a successful inspection) the development of new council housing which will be enabled by the forthcoming HRA review and changes being made to the subsidy system.

5. Delivery approach

Why Tower Hamlets needs a housing investment strategy

Developing and implementing a housing investment strategy and delivery plan is about identifying the resources (often private and public) necessary and putting in place a plan to ensure the resources are well spent. Focusing on the key strategic key areas this table identifies an array of resources:

Theme	Resources	Vehicle/Process	Outcome
Delivering and Managing Decent Homes	Major Repairs Allowance; ALMO Resources / Housing Associations.	Tower Hamlets Homes / Housing Associations	Delivery of Decent Homes Plus Standard and well managed homes
Placemaking and Sustainable Communities	Affordable Housing Grant; Private Finance; Other Public Sector Sources, e.g., HCA, LDA, GLA etc.; Community	Housing Associations; Housing Developers; Alternative Housing Delivery Vehicles	Delivery of: Decent Homes Plus Standard; Affordable Housing Target; Placemaking and Sustainable Communities

	Infrastructure Levy; Growth Area resources		objectives
New Affordable Housing	HCA ; Private Finance; Housing Association Reserves; Land at discounted value; S106 planning obligations	Housing Associations; Private/Affordable Housing Developers; Alternative Housing Delivery Vehicle	Delivery of Affordable Housing Target

Decent Homes Investment

Tower Hamlets is committed to delivering the decent homes standard for all its residents as soon as is reasonably practicable. Specifically, Tower Hamlets will:

- Seek additional investment from Government and other sources that will resource the delivery of the Decent Homes Plus standard to housing stock managed by Tower Hamlets Homes.
- Monitor delivery of the Decent Homes Standard to homes transferred to housing associations under the *Housing Choice* programme.
- Monitor delivery of the Decent Homes Standard to stock managed by social landlords.

Private Sector Renewal and Disabled Facilities Grants

Tower Hamlets will continue to seek to identify resources (grants or loans) to help deliver:

- the Decent Homes Standard for vulnerable households in private sector stock.
- reduce long term empty homes in the private sector.
- adaptations to help disabled people stay in their homes rather than depend on institutional care.

Placemaking and Sustainable Communities Investment

Delivery of investment under this heading is key to protecting the value of investment generated under the decent homes and new supply headings. In placemaking terms this might mean a higher specification to public realm improvements or external fabric. In sustainable communities this could involve an enhanced approach to economic inclusion for workless tenants. Sources of additional funding will include:

- Homes and Communities Agency
- London Mayor's Targeted Funding Streams
- CLG funding initiatives such as the Housing Options programme
- CLG Local Area Agreement Funding
- CLG Working Neighbourhoods Fund
- Planning Obligations from Housing Developers
- Innovative use of public sector land

New Supply Housing Investment

① Land Investment

Tower Hamlets will work closely with statutory public sector agencies such as the London Development Agency, London Thames Gateway Development Corporation, and the HCA to help bring forward land for development in an organised and strategic fashion. Similarly, it will work closely with housing associations, THH and private developers to take advantage of 'infill' and estate redevelopment opportunities that help regenerate disadvantaged areas and deliver the placemaking and sustainable communities agenda. Tower Hamlets will develop, publish and maintain a SHLAA identifying a fifteen year supply of land that will help deliver the annual housing planning target, currently 3,150 homes.

② Housing Investment

With the largest affordable housing delivery programme in London, the borough continues to attract a significant amount of public sector investment, chiefly through the HCA. The borough will continue to seek additional grant support on the basis that it meets the commitments set out in Chapter 4 which stipulates the housing types, tenures and quality the borough is seeking. By maximising

public sector finance, this provides a more secure platform for the private sector to invest. Two examples of private sector leverage are where the RSL seeks private match-funding from a commercial lender, or the private sector provides private business units - facilitating a retail quarter.

Corporate Strategic Housing Projects

Already highlighted in the previous section of Strategy were nine of the projects that will help ensure that the council is playing a direct role in facilitating the delivery of more and better housing for its residents. They have been identified as schemes where the borough can make a significant difference through use of its land, planning powers and influence, the tenth project is the additional units bought forward through the Overcrowding Reduction Strategy.

Delivery Plan

Key to achieving Tower Hamlets investment priorities is a delivery plan. This will be dependent on staff in the Tower Hamlets' Development and Renewal Directorate working effectively together to deliver the commitments set out in this Strategy. Key to achieving this will be:

- Organising the Directorate's housing strategy work
- Putting in place local partnership arrangements to achieve the investment priorities Tower Hamlets is seeking, primarily through building on the current good relationship with Tower Hamlets Housing Forum, and working relationships with private developers
- Ensuring Tower Hamlets maintains a productive working relationship with national and regional statutory funders
- Disseminate Tower Hamlets housing investment activities on a regular and promotional basis

This Housing Strategy Programme Board will have overall responsibility for:

- Delivering the commitments set out in each of the chapters
- Overseeing the delivery of each of the corporate strategic housing projects identified in Chapter 4
- Reporting to the Great Place to Live Community Plan Delivery Group, helping to ensure alignment between Housing Strategy and wider Community Plan objectives.

6. Key terms used, references and links

Key Terms Used

Affordable Housing - Affordable housing includes both social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing costs should be below open market costs and should be available at a sub-market price in perpetuity.

Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMO) - The ALMO is a company, set up and owned by Tower Hamlets Council to manage its housing service. The ALMO is called Tower Hamlets Homes and they manage homes and estates owned by Tower Hamlets council.

Biodiversity - This refers to the variety of plants, animals and other living things in a particular area or region. It includes habitat diversity, species diversity and genetic diversity. Biodiversity has value in its own right and has social and economic value to human society.

Choice-Based Lettings - A method for Council's allocating homes, which give applicants more choice by bidding for a property in the area they want to live.

Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) - The Code measures the sustainability of a new home against categories of sustainable design, rating the 'whole home' as a complete package. The Code uses a 1 to 6 star rating system to communicate the overall sustainability performance of a new home. The Code sets minimum standards for energy and water use at each level, within England.

Common Housing Register (in LBTH) - a list of all the people who want affordable housing in Tower Hamlets. It is a partnership between the Council and housing associations that provide homes in the borough. The register is administered by the Council.

Community Land Trust (CLT) - In these models public land is transferred into the ownership of a trust controlled by members of the local community, who use this control to provide community benefits. The CLT can procure the development of affordable housing on this land and, as it owns the land in perpetuity, it can ensure that new homes remain affordable for future generations. Any profits can be recycled into the CLT, which can use them to keep homes affordable and to provide other community benefits.

Community Plan (also known as Sustainable Communities Strategy) - A Plan produced by the Council and other Organisations in consultation with the public and other interested parties. The Plan identifies and prioritises issues to be addressed in the Borough through the Local Strategic Partnership.

Decent Homes Standard and Decent Homes Plus - Decent Homes is a government standard that all Council and Housing Associations must achieve by 2010. A Decent Home is a home that is warm, weatherproof and has reasonably modern facilities. Decent Homes plus is going beyond this standard to make wider improvements.

Estate Renewal - Estate renewal requires working closely with stakeholders and with residents, in the social housing sector, with emphasis on renewal of existing stock for the benefits of residents, and the wider urban environment on a particular social housing estate.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) - Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) - generally an entire 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, though definitions are complex. In some cases landlords who operate such a letting will need a licence, which is issued by the local authority.

Housing Choice (LBTHs stock transfer programme) –Housing Choice was adopted in 2001 to allow council residents to transfer to social landlord (RSLs) who unlike councils could borrow money for repair, maintenance, improvements and redevelopment. Tenants were balloted. Positive ballots saw the stock transferred.

Housing Strategy Programme Board (also known as the Delivery Board) - The primary purpose of the programme board is to develop and oversee implementation of the Council's Housing Strategy.

Intermediate housing - Intermediate housing is either properties let by a housing association at sub-market rent to low/modest income households, or shared ownership or equity loan based low cost home ownership homes.

Lifetime Homes Standards - A standard of design of new homes that make them adaptable to the changing needs and potential disabilities of residents.

Local Area Agreement (LAA) - Local Area Agreements (LAAs) set out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and a local area (the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership) and other key partners at the local level.

Local Delivery Vehicles - Are partnerships which bring the public and private sectors together to deliver large-scale economic and environmental improvement.

Local Development Framework (LDF) - Annual Monitoring Report - The Local Development Framework is a 'live' set of documents that will be reviewed regularly by assessing whether the policies are meeting the strategic objectives. This Annual Monitoring Report provides the preliminary information required for that, as well as identifying key challenges and opportunities.

Local Development Framework (LDF) - Core Strategy - A policy document to be in place by late 2010 which will form the planning framework with which all planning decisions must comply. It will replace the current Local Development Plan.

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) - A single body comprising representatives from all sectors for the planning of local services

Market Housing - Housing either bought or rented on the open market without the assistance of a housing association or the Council.

Multi-Area Agreement - A multi-area agreement is designed to be cross-boundary local area agreement (LAA). They bring together key players in flexible ways to tackle issues that are best addressed in partnership – at a regional and sub-regional level.

One Tower Hamlets - The Tower Hamlets Partnership (One Tower Hamlets) is the borough's Local Strategic Partnership. Stakeholders to work together to provide and improve services for local people. Members include the Council, Police, the Primary Care Trust, public services, voluntary/community groups and others.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) – it assists a Local Authority in demonstrating that it can meet the requirements of the national planning guidance in Planning Policy Statement 3. It should identify specific, deliverable sites for the first five years of a plan that are ready for development, identify specific, developable sites for years 6 to 10 and where it is not possible to identify specific sites for years 11 to 15 of the plan, indicate broad locations for future growth.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) - is a key tool to inform planning and housing policy and forms a crucial part of the evidence base underpinning Local Development Documents. The SHMA enables local authorities to understand the characteristics of housing market areas and how they function including key drivers/relationship in the housing market.

Temporary Accommodation - Temporary accommodation is sometimes referred to as 'interim' or 'emergency' accommodation. We use several types, including our own hostels and private sector homes. It's used to house homeless in the short term.

Tower Hamlets Housing Forum (THHF) –is the partnership forum between Tower Hamlets Council and local RSLs who work and develop in the borough. The main THHF group or executive is open to all RSLs operating in the Borough and discusses all matters relating to the management and development of social Housing within the Tower Hamlets.

Wheelchair Accessible - Homes should be designed to be wheelchair accessible or easily adaptable for residents who are wheelchair users using the latest GLA wheelchair accessible homes standards

1. LBTH 2020 Vision – The Tower Hamlets Community Plan (2008)
www.onetowerhamlets.net/your_community_plan.aspx
2. LBTH Core Strategy and Development Control Plan (2007)
http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgsi/851900/856_local_development_framework/core_strategy.aspx
3. Communities and Local Government Housing Green Paper (2007)
www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/doc/Homesforthefuture.doc
4. Hills Report - Ends and Means: the Future Roles of Social Housing in England (2007) – Published by the London School of Economics
www.communities.gov.uk/housing/strategiesandreviews/hillsreport/
5. Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society (2008) <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>
6. 2008 Housing and Regeneration Act
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2008/ukpga_20080017_en_1
7. The London Housing Strategy (May 2009)
www.london.gov.uk/mayor/housing/strategy/index.jsp
8. Planning Policy Statement 3 -
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps3housing>
9. The London Plan (2008)
www.london.gov.uk/mayor/planning/strategy.jsp
10. Mayor's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2008)
www.london.gov.uk/mayor/publications/2008/08/climate-change-adapt.jsp
11. Breeam – Code for Sustainable Homes (2008)
www.breeam.org/page.jsp?id=86
12. Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry
www.audit-commission.gov.uk/housing/kloe.asp?CategoryID=english%5E1628

13. Tower Hamlets Core Strategy (2009)
www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/851-900/856_local_development_framework/core_strategy.aspx
14. Secured by Design - <http://www.securedbydesign.com/>
15. Tower Hamlets Crime and Drugs Reduction Strategy (2008-2011)
www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/851-900/870_community_safety.aspx
16. Decent Homes Standard Definition www.communities.gov.uk
17. Tower Hamlets Lettings Policy
www.towerhamletshomes.org.uk/finding_a_home/tower_hamlets_letting_policy.aspx
18. East London Sub Region Nominations Protocol
www.elhp.org.uk/nominations-protocol.pdf
19. LBTH Homelessness Strategy 2008/13
www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/851900/868_housing_strategy_and_polic/homelessness_strategy.aspx
20. Housing Corporation's Design and Quality Standards (2007)
www.housingcorp.gov.uk/upload/pdf/Design_quality_standards_v4.pdf
21. Housing Corporation's Design and Quality Standards (2007)
www.housingcorp.gov.uk/upload/pdf/Design_quality_standards_v4.pdf

Other Strategies and Plans

Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy (Full Version)

http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/851-900/868_housing_strategy_and_polic.aspx

Tower Hamlets Housing Strategy Evidence Base (November 2008)

http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/851-900/868_housing_strategy_and_polic.aspx

Planning Circular 01/2006 planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/circulargypsytraveller

Tower Hamlet Homes (ALMO) Business Plan

www.towerhamletshomes.org.uk/PDF/100309_Item%207%20business%20plan.pdf

Tower Hamlets LDF - Annual Monitoring Report

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/851-900/856_local_development_framework/annual_monitoring_report.aspx

Tower Hamlets Supporting People Strategy

http://www.spkweb.org.uk/Your_local_area/GOL/Borough_of_Tower_Hamlets/Strategy_and_policies/

Appendix A – Consultation pointers

The formal Consultation period for the draft Housing Strategy took place from January to March 2009. **Consultation activities included:**

- Consultation session with members of Tower Hamlets Housing Forum
- Consultation session with housing community stakeholders board members
- Extensive consultation with other Tower Hamlets Council Directorates
- Formal distribution of the full draft Housing Strategy and accompanying Evidence Base to 200 or more stakeholders. This included residents Getting Involved Register, resident associations, elected members and the Local Area Partnerships. Twenty-two responses were received, eleven from individual residents and eleven from stakeholder organisations. Many of the comments were included into the final strategy approved by Cabinet in May 2009
- Housing Strategy Consultation event
- Four resident focus groups were held across the borough. Attendees were from across the tenures, age bands and ethnic groups.

Resident Focus Groups: A selection of views about aspects of housing in Tower Hamlets

Regeneration and redevelopment:-

- Recognition that regeneration provided better quality housing and places, but it's vital that space is used for maximum community benefit.
- Good management is a key to success and there are local examples of this.
- Young people should be better engaged so they have suitable community facilities provided for them to use.
- There are not as many rights for residents in private housing. Where do tenants of RTB landlords stand where council sites are redeveloped?
- More thought needs to go into the design of properties - open plan does not always suit everyone.
- A lot of high rise buildings – people want to see more houses than flats, and people with accessibility issues should not be placed in high rise housing.
- New developments to consider safety aspects – CCTV and good lighting.
- Local shops should be on new developments.

Decanting:-

- “How does the Council decide what buildings need redeveloping? How will it improve my Area? What will I get out of it?”
- People should be kept in the same area that they have friends in, go to school in, and be where their GP is. They are also vulnerable if they go into another area. The community should be able to move together.
- A lot of residents do not have a chance of going back to their area. Are residents formally informed that they can return? (right to return)
- In the decanting process people do get a house of their choice and a better one.

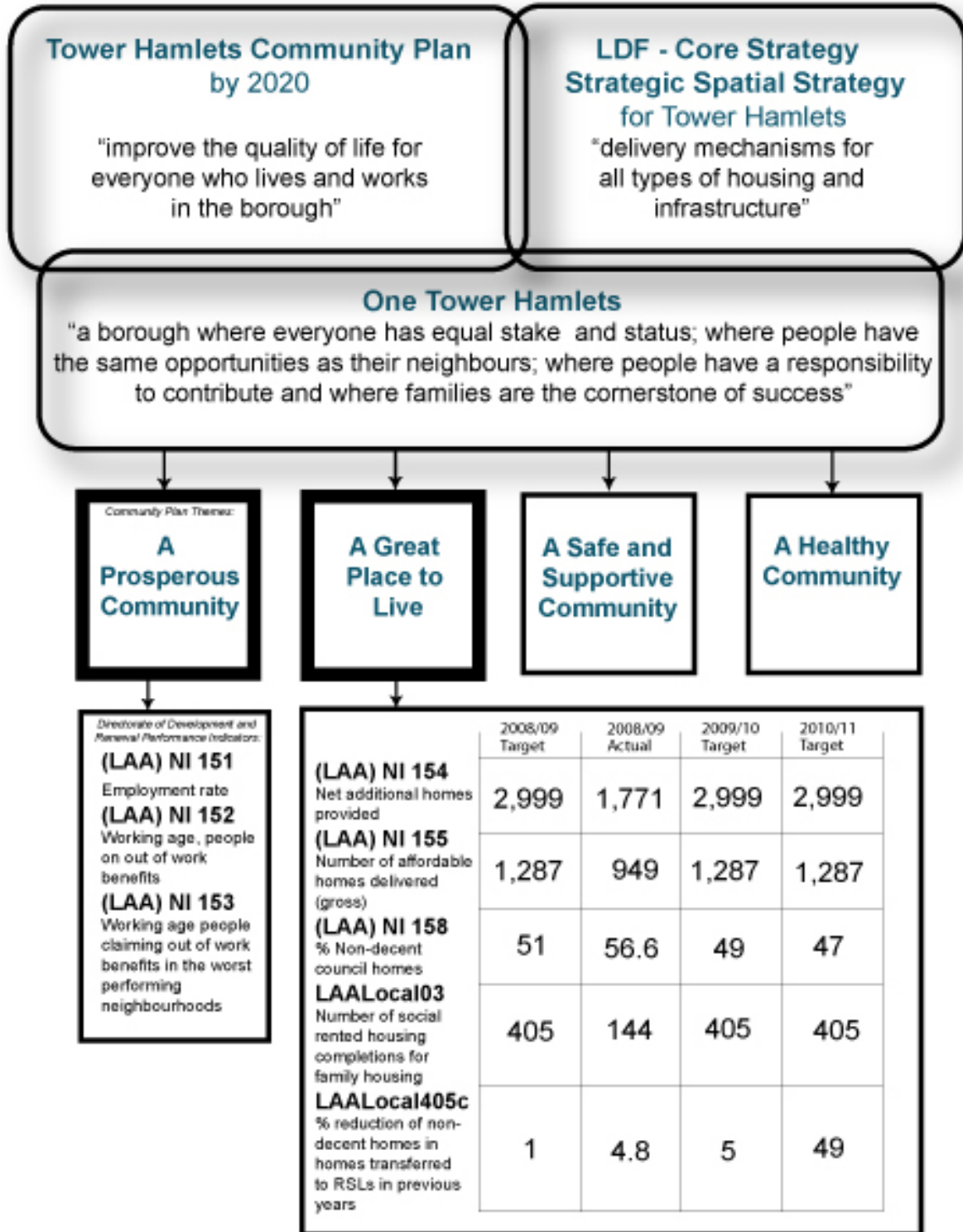
Resident Involvement:-

- In the private sector resident involvement is generally poor, it's an isolated tenure.
- Tenant and residents associations have to try harder to sustain tenant engagement.
- Engagement is harder for those tenants and residents not based on estates.
- The Council must be consistent and honest when consulting.
- More effort must be spent on feedback of consultation results.
- Resident involvement is essential during re-development; residents should be involved from the start to the end.
- Everyone should have a say, despite their tenure.

Issues around high density living:

- Off-site provision of family accommodation is short-sighted
- Genuinely mixed communities are preferred.
- People should be educated in the importance of using their cars less, rather than just creating car-free zones.
- Private developments offering car park spaces are expensive; this creates empty spaces, which should be better used.
- By not having a car space can affect the way you bid for homes.
- High density schemes must be mindful of impact / preservation of open space
- Larger sized rooms are desired or double-use rooms
- Large developments should have multi-use community centres that are affordable to hire.
- Features like long corridors, tunnel access, and multi-block lift-use attract crime and personal safety fears.

Appendix B – Community Plan Chart



Appendix C – Update for 2010

Introduction

In this section we report changes to objectives that have occurred since 2009 when the Housing Strategy was published. Rather than reproducing a housing strategy each year, it was decided that a refresh as an appendix would year on year, would provide greater clarity.

For 2010 the changes have occurred in the following strategic or policy areas:

- Various Planning Policy Changes
- Lettings Policy and Choice Based Lettings Scheme
- Overcrowding Initiative
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)
- Preferred Partnering - from feasibility to implementation
- HCA Single Conversation - Borough Investment Plan

If you would like the Housing Strategy Annual Review for 2009/10 and its accompanying Action Plan, they are accessible on the Tower Hamlets Council website [insert URL here before publishing] or you can request a copy, using the contact details placed on the inside back page of this strategy.

Strategic Overview

LDF Core Strategy

Housing elements of the Core Strategy were evidenced by the findings of a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) commissioned in March 2009. It focused on the type of housing current and future residents (across all tenures) are likely to need over the medium to long term. The SHMA found housing demand in Tower Hamlets remains high and that an overall affordable tenure target balance of 70% for social rent and 30% for intermediate housing should be sought to create better balanced stock tenure and communities.

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The **London Plan** (10) sets the planning targets for housing in London. It states how many new homes LBTH are required to build (this was 31,500 in the lifetime of the plan), sets housing policies in terms of requirements for affordable housing, lifetime homes, specialist housing. These have been revised to 2,885 per year, further explained in the LDF – Core Strategy

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Managing Demand, Reducing Overcrowding

The Lettings Policy

Tower Hamlets Council and Registered Social Landlords have for many years maintained a successful Common Housing Register (CHR) partnership and all eligible applicants are placed on a common housing list. All the available housing is offered to these applicants through the Tower Hamlets Common Housing Register Lettings Policy jointly developed by the Council and its CHR partners

The Lettings Policy in operation since 2002 (revised September 2005) was subject to a major review and consultation exercise during 2009/2010. This was in response to a recommendation by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee that was approved by the Cabinet in December 2008.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee identified a number of concerns in the existing policy following consultation with residents, stakeholder organisations and partners. A significant concern was that many found the existing policy difficult to understand and explain, and decisions made to allocate housing lacked transparency. This was allied to the Committee's finding of a strong perception that social housing was allocated unfairly.

The Committee considered that the existing scheme could encourage homeless applications. The legislation requires that homeless and overcrowded households are given “reasonable preference” in the allocation of social housing. Historically, the Council has awarded greater priority to homeless applicants than to those who are overcrowded. Under the Council’s existing Lettings Policy homeless households are placed in Community Group 2, overcrowded households are placed in Community Group 3 which attracts less priority. For several years, the numbers of homeless households rehoused (where a full statutory duty has been accepted) has been greater than the number of overcrowded households regardless of the length of time they had been waiting. The concern was that the greater priority given to homeless households and the higher number of these applicants housed each could encourage further homeless applications and become self-perpetuating.

Local authorities have adopted until recently a mainly “housing needs-based” approach in their lettings policies with those in the greatest need being given priority. Exploring giving more priority to waiting time was a key recommendation of the 2008 Scrutiny and Overview Committee. This approach was supported by the House of Lords judgement in favour of Newham’s Council’s Lettings Policy which had for some time given greater priority to waiting time for allocating social housing.

A joint Council and Common Housing Register partners working group with external consultancy support carried out the review of the Council’s Lettings Policy during 2009. The review examined the options to introduce greater priority for waiting time and to improve opportunities for overcrowded households. During 2009 the review working group produced proposals for a new Lettings Policy that were endorsed by Cabinet on 31 July 2009. This was followed by wide ranging public and stakeholder consultation between October and December 2009 which produced strong support for the proposals.

The department of Communities and Local Government issued fresh guidance on allocations schemes in November 2009 that supported the approach taken by the review.

The new Lettings Policy was agreed at Cabinet on 10 March 2010 and is due to be implemented in July 2010.

The New Lettings Policy introduces fundamental changes to the way in social housing is allocated in Tower Hamlets.

- Four new bands replace the previous four Community Groups.
- Households with multiple “reasonable preferences”, or who are awarded priority on health grounds will remain in a high priority band as at present.
- A single high priority band, subdivided into two sections, with emergency cases and the most pressing cases, for example, decants close to their clearance date, being placed in the highest category.
- Higher priority for applicants who must have ground floor on medical grounds or require wheelchair accessible category A or B homes.
- “Reasonable preference” categories, including homeless households with a statutory duty accepted and overcrowded households are placed in the same band (Band 2) and will be given preference in date order of application.
- New date order emphasis. An emphasis on date order within a band is a fundamental change in approach that will be more transparent and easier to advise applicants on their rehousing prospects compared to the policy in place from 2002. Preference will be given to applicants who bid for advertised homes in the highest priority band first and if more than one applicant bids for a home in the same band, preference will be given to the applicant who has waited the longest. The choice based lettings process will remain.
- Additional measures to increase the opportunities for rehousing independently sons & daughters of existing tenants where there is severe overcrowding.
- Provision for local lettings plans on new developments.

A full equalities impact assessment on the proposed new Lettings Policy was carried out in late 2009 and the outcome reported to Cabinet in March 2010. The results indicated that there were no aspects of the new Lettings Policy that were likely to create a discriminatory effect. The

assessment did identify a lack of systematic monitoring, analysis and reporting on equalities issues in relation to the existing lettings policy. A key recommendation is that this must be systematically carried out in order to ensure that the new Lettings Policy does not create any discriminatory effects for any group. Measures have been identified to put this in place as part of the planning to implement the new Lettings Policy.

The public consultation on the new Lettings Policy was analysed by ethnicity, age, gender and religious orientation. There was majority support for the new policy across all groups. There was strong support across all groups for giving preference in date order within the bands.

The new Lettings Policy is due to be implemented in July 2010 with a review and report to Cabinet six months from implementation date in order to assess the impact and ensure the anticipated objectives and outcomes are being achieved. The four new bands are set out in summary in the table below:

New Lettings Policy: The Four Bands

Bands	Categories in each band	Priority Order
Band 1 High Priority Band	Group A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergencies • Medical/Disability need for ground floor or wheelchair accessible property (category A & B) • Priority decants • Under – occupiers 	Emergencies first then: Preference in date order
	Group B <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority medical • Priority social • Decants • Priority Target groups 	Preference in date order
Band 2 Priority Band	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcrowded applicants • Homeless applicants 	Preference in date order
Band 3 General Band	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing applicants who are not overcrowded • Tenants who are not overcrowded and the landlord is a Common Housing Register partner 	Preference in date order
Band 4 Reserve Band	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No local connection • Property Owners & Leaseholders • Tenants of landlords who are not Common Housing Register partners 	Preference in date order

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Overcrowding Reduction Strategy

Tower Hamlets has developed and is currently implementing a new Overcrowding Reduction Strategy (ORS) with annual targets linked to reduction initiatives

Overcrowding has always been a focus in housing within the borough. Overcrowding impacts on residents' health, education, employment opportunity and well being. If we can get the housing supply and housing services right, then we can make a positive impact towards securing a better and brighter future for our residents in all aspects of their lives. The Overcrowding Reduction Strategy brings together, in a structured and coordinated manner, the way in which the Council with Register Partners will tackle overcrowding.

The Council approved its first [Overcrowding Reduction Strategy - 2009/12](#) in October 2009. The strategy aims to tackle overcrowding by:

- Reducing overcrowding in existing housing stock, and putting in place preventative measures to reduce future overcrowding.
- Increasing the overall supply of housing for local people including a range of affordable, family housing.

- Preventing overcrowding and homelessness by providing access to the right housing options at the right time

The first aim looks to ‘reduce overcrowding in existing housing stock and putting in place preventative measures to reduce future overcrowding’. This will be achieved by a package of support and initiatives which include; *Cash Incentive Schemes, Knockthroughs, Lettings Policy Review, Reviewing the sub-regional nominations agreement, Improving living conditions, Better RSL partnership working* and *Improving overcrowding in the private sector* through assisted loans/equity release, enforcement and action.

The second aim looks to ‘increase the overall supply of housing for local people including a range of affordable, family housing’. This will be achieved by a package of funding and initiatives which include; Piloting the Local Homes Initiative, Building New Council Housing, Buying back ex-council 3 bed plus Right to Buys properties, creating an Under-occupation plan, Promoting Low Cost Home Ownership and Re-housing 19 Gypsy & Traveller families.

The third aim looks to ‘prevent overcrowding and homelessness by providing access to the right housing options at the right time’. This will be achieved by a package of support and initiatives which include; increasing *home visits* to overcrowded and under occupied households, reviewing the Council’s *Lettings Policy*, *Tackling empty properties* and Procuring larger sized properties in the private rented sector through *Private Sector Leasing*.

Overall the strategy aims to improve the quality of life of all residents living in Tower Hamlets. The initiatives’ underpinned by three objectives which fall into strands taken from the Community Plan, Housing Strategy, Homelessness and Child Poverty Strategy. The strategy is also underpinned by a SMART action plan and monitored through the Common Housing Register Forum (a partnership between the council and 18 housing associations) and the ‘Great Place to Live’ Community Plan Delivery Group. The strategy was developed through extensive consultation with residents, tenants, stakeholders, Members, community & voluntary organizations and staff.

The full Overcrowding Reduction Strategy (2009/12) can be found here:
http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgsl/851-900/868_housing_strategy_and_polic/overcrowding_reduction_strateg.aspx
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New Housing Supply

Affordable Target

The SHMA also identified a shortfall of 2, 994 units in the market sector and a shortfall of 2.700 units of affordable housing bringing the overall shortfall across all tenures to 5,694 units. The scale of demand and need identified through the SHMA is significant and is linked to current in-migration levels.

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Family-Sized Social Rented Homes

Based on robust evidence found in the SHMA the authority will seek to apply (once the Core Strategy is adopted) a target of 35% from planning negotiations on all developments capable of delivering affordable housing, negotiated by habitable rooms. Viability will ultimately determine delivery proportions but up to 50% may be achieved with major grant support on some sites. The Borough’s Core Strategy sets out the following preferred mix of social rent housing types in new developments (see table below) based on identified local needs highlighted in the 2009 Housing Needs Survey.

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Tenure	Bedroom Size (%)			
	1-Bed	2-Bed	3- Bed	4- Bed +
Market Sector	50	30	10	10
Intermediate	25	50	25	0
Social Rented	30	25	30	15

Source: LBTH SHMA.

Preferred Partnering Process

During the year the preferred partnering process has been taken forward as follows:-
In May 2010, fifteen development partners were chosen for the borough, all of which are Registered Providers.

The process involved establishing a criteria that all partners would be expected to meet to ensure consistency and establish a benchmark of performance that met the boroughs expectations. These requirements were then reformed to create Pre Qualifying Questionnaire (PQQ) that all interested organisations would have to complete and submit to the council with various documents. The purpose of this exercise which was to ensure that we could establish a consistent, measurable approach to assessing each organisation's financial, development and management capacity to deliver the boroughs wider objectives outlined in the Community Plan.

The PQQ was then scored and the highest scorers invited to deliver a presentation on their ability to add value to the boroughs objectives over the next three years. They were then asked to answer questions from a panel on what their organisation could contribute to the borough in terms of development, localised housing management services and sustainability of communities, such as youth initiatives training and employment opportunities.

The successful organisations have been notified and the next stage in the process is to draft a Development Agreement that will define how the organisations will work with council over the next three years to deliver on these promises. The performance of the organisations will be monitored on an annual basis.

The benefit of taking this initiative forward is primarily to drive up the standard of new homes built in the borough, ensure consistency and establish a benchmark of excellence for the management services provided on handover.

In addition, the partnering arrangement will improve communication between developing registered providers and the council, enhance partnership working, improve value for money, provide opportunities for joint procurement etc.

Once the Development Agreement has been signed, an official launch of the preferred partnering process is planned for July 2010. D&R are also to incorporate a process to improve housing management amongst RP's.

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Housing Investment Strategy

The Single Conversation Process – Update on the Local Investment Plan

The Single Conversation is the HCA's most important business process – it is the way in which delivery is secured at local level in support of national objectives and by working in an open and transparent way with us (local authorities) and others, securing better outcomes for each place.

The term 'Single Conversation' refers to its comprehensive coverage including the full range of housing, infrastructure, regeneration and community activities. The Conversation will draw on the long-term, comprehensive priorities set out in Local Authority Plans and Strategies (mainly the Community Plan and LDF) and together join up decision making across the range of housing and regeneration activities and investment programmes.

The process of the Single Conversation will lead to a Local Investment Plan* (LIP), a Local Investment Agreement (LIA) that will set out the contribution, both investment and other support to help deliver the changes for the area. It links funding from a variety of public and private sources to get maximum impact, as well as obtaining maximum leverage for the best value for money for overall investment.

*Also referred to as 'Borough Investment Plans'

The key benefit to this approach is the ability to tailor investment strategies to the needs and local ambitions of places and by developing mutually shared and agreed priorities.

The LIP is the starting point for investment partners to consider resource allocation that will help us and the HCA deliver short and long term priorities for our priority areas, whether this is affordable housing, growth, market or community renewal, or improving transport links for communities. Whilst LIPs are expected to be realistic, given limited financial resources, the HCA doesn't expect all LAs to be able to provide the level of funding sought in their LIPs.

A core objective of Tower Hamlets Local Investment Plan will be to crystallise the delivery of these objectives into a single investment document that sets out clearly the Council's and its partners' short, medium and long term objectives. In simple terms our proposed draft investment priorities are as follows:

Investment Opportunity One: Housing Renewal – delivering decent homes and regenerated environments to homes managed by Tower Hamlets Homes and *Housing Choice* social landlords

Investment Opportunity Two: Reshaping Poplar – regenerating social housing estates including the *St Paul's Way* initiative; and brownfield regeneration opportunities that straddle the A106.

Investment Opportunity Three: Shoreditch and Spitalfields – centering on delivering the Bishopsgate Goodsynd scheme, capitalising on the area's new transport infrastructure and regenerating a key strategic City Fringe location.

Investment Opportunity Four: Blackwall and Leamouth – delivering the Blackwall Reach Regeneration Framework and the regeneration of the Leamouth area.

Investment Opportunity Five: Fish Island – Ensuring that Tower Hamlets capitalises on the regeneration of the Olympic Park Legacy Masterplan area and ensures that Fish Island and the adjacent Hackney Wick area are regenerated in a complementary and strategic fashion.

Key Delivery Opportunities (outside of areas two to five) – other schemes that underpin housing delivery in Tower Hamlets.

In tandem with the above, delivering against cross-cutting objectives that the Council wishes to see realised:

Cross Cutting Objective One: Deliver more large family affordable accommodation and reduce existing overcrowding and introduce measures that reduce its future occurrence

Cross Cutting Objective Two: Reduce carbon emissions from existing and new housing

Cross Cutting Objective Three: Deliver more jobs, skills and training opportunities from housing and regeneration investment

Cross Cutting Objective Four: Deliver Core Strategy Placemaking objectives in tandem with investment in new and existing housing

Pulling together these wide ranging housing and regeneration objectives into a coherent, but deliverable programme of work is the over-riding objective of this Local Investment Plan due to complete during the summer, HCA submission will be September 2010.

Staying in Touch - Future Housing Strategy Consultation

We have developed our strategy in consultation with a very wide range of stakeholders and were very grateful for all comments we received. We will review the strategy annually in consultation with residents and partners to ensure that it is up to date and reflects changing needs and priorities.

If you would like to be kept informed of future housing strategy consultation please write to the Strategic Housing Team using 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 RRGs-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.co.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.

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