

# Housing and Homes

Delivery report 2021-2022



# Introduction



*The housing crisis is the greatest challenge facing London today. Having an affordable, secure home is difficult for many people due to rising private rents and a lack of genuinely affordable homes.*

This presentation provides an overview of our activity to deliver housing priorities over the last 18 months in the following areas:

Housing Options

Housing Delivery & Supply

Housing Management

THHF

Private Licensing and Enforcement

Net Carbon Zero Delivery

Fire Safety



# Challenges



- Economic and social impacts arising post –pandemic.
- The cost of rising rents in the Private Rent Sector.
- Rising use of food banks and increase in fuel poverty illustrating higher costs of living and soaring inflation.
- Recovery of the construction industry post-pandemic and potential further disruptions caused by further health and public safety measures.
- Impact of Brexit and the pandemic on construction costs.
- Rising labour costs, combined with shortage of skills in certain trades, is also having an impact on project costs and delivery timetables.
- Impact of increased energy prices affecting the cost of capital projects.
- Lack of availability and viability of land for development, potentially high infrastructure costs, planning issues, legal issues and keeping pace with population growth, demographics and socio-geographic changes.
- Legal and regulatory changes.
- Building and Fire Safety.
- Costs of Net Carbon zero delivery.
- Housing Revenue Account.
- Move from Mulberry Place to Whitechapel



# Housing Options – Pandemic Response

The Housing Options Service has worked hard to ensure that those who needed support as a result of the pandemic have had the help and assistance that they have needed. Key achievements included:

- The successful delivery of the '**Everyone In**' initiative.
- Around 260 people were given emergency accommodation by the council through the '**Everyone In**' scheme.
- 150 of which were rough sleepers accommodated directly from the street.
- 180 of this group with a positive move-on from emergency accommodation, assisting many into a secure a home in the medium term - in excess of 70 clients.
- Protocols were put in place for managing any potential Covid-19 outbreaks in hostels and emergency hotel accommodation.
- Wraparound care with health partners to support the health and wellbeing of hostel residents. Covid-19 vaccine.



# Housing Options – Performance

## In 2020/21:

- 55.3% of lets went to overcrowded households (776 families).
- 43.2% of 'homeless approaches' had their homelessness prevented/relieved (exceeding target of 29%). 868 preventions.
- 268 residents moved out of temporary accommodation and into affordable sustainable homes.
- Worked with 1,935 households assessed as being owed a prevention or relief of homelessness duty and prevented or relieved the homelessness of 959 households.

## In 2021/22 (to date)

- 158 homeless families moved from temporary accommodation into affordable and sustainable housing (75 households have been moved into social housing and 83 were moved into homes in the private rented sector).



# Housing Options - service development



Despite the pandemic, the Customer Access Project has delivered significant improvements to the customer journey. These include:

- An improved and new telephone system (introduced in July 2021) – one telephone number with options.
- The launch of the Housing Options finder tool on the council website.
- An improved and revised internet presence which allows customers to self-help (September 2021).
- Better webpages, online forms.
- An appointment system prioritising people at risk of becoming homeless to be seen quickly.
- The move from Albert Jacob House to the Town Hall in Mulberry Place in spring of 2021.
- Commissioning a new complex needs service for street homeless providing 31 new accommodation units.
- Commissioning a new specialist employment service for the homeless (BEAM) helping benefit capped households in temporary accommodation into sustainable employment.
- Recruitment of more staff in the Housing Options Service.



# Housing Options - what's next?



## Homelessness Transformation Programme

Objectives include:

- **Upstream work with households before crisis point.**
- **Increased successful prevention outcomes.**
- **Delivery of speedier outcomes for those who are homeless.**
- **Successful Prevention with cohorts otherwise destined to need Temporary Accommodation.**
- **Increased Number of PRS placements with the aim of brokering 975 new tenancies in the Private Rent Sector.**

In addition, the service has produced its **Rough Sleeping Delivery Plan 2021/22** which will bring:

- **Implementation of Emergency Accommodation and Specialist Support Winter Plan**
- **Co-produce a Rough Sleeping Initiative Fund 2022-25 bid with the DLUHC**
- **Further develop health initiatives with colleagues in Integrated Commissioning and Public Health**
- **Explore new long term accommodation options for rough sleepers**



# Housing Management – Tower Hamlets Homes



THH manages 21,398 properties, 11,633 are tenanted which 9,765 are leasehold properties.

## Pandemic support provided by THH

- Set up 3 support hubs, delivered 4,000 food parcels and over 20,000 meals.
- THH staff made over 10,000 welfare and befriending calls, 100 home visits, and over 2,000 shopping trips and 200 medicine drop offs to residents.

## Repairs –

THH invested **£28m in 2020/21** through the ‘Better Neighbourhoods’

**c.£18m on repairs and maintenance** (day-to-day repairs, refurbishment of empty homes, kitchens, and bathrooms)

**53,821 responsive repairs.**

97% of responsive repairs on time (on target)

- 87% of responsive repairs were completed right first time (the target was 85%)
- 85% satisfaction with the way repairs dealt with (above target of 82%)
- 86% satisfaction with major works (above the target of 85%)





# Housing Management – Tower Hamlets Homes



## Complaints

In 2020/21, **97.8% were responded within target time.**

In Q1 of 2021/22, THH responded to **100% of stage 1 complaints on time** (the council deal with stage 2)

## Compliments

In 2020/21, THH received 24 compliments from residents.

To date in 2021/22, THH has received 30 compliments from residents.



# Housing Delivery and Supply



## Challenges

- work on sites halting during the peaks of the pandemic (fewer workers on site arising from social distancing measures).
- shortage of labour, delays with material deliveries and the rising costs of materials.

## Delivered

As of 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021, the council has delivered the following\*:

- 827 new homes - completed and occupied. These are a combination of new build and purchases.
- 224 new build homes are on site
- 184 new build homes awaiting contractor appointment, finances approved and planning secured.
- 42 homes have planning permission secured and funding being finalised.
- 451 mainly new build homes have been allocated funding (includes HAP and rooftops, moving through to Cabinet approval for funding and towards planning application)
- 318 are in the pipeline or in appraisal.
- In total this will yield 2,046 homes.

RP's have delivered 1,613 new homes (905 rented\*\*, 705 intermediate) since 2020/21



# Housing Delivery and Supply

Achievements in 2021/22 include:

- Completed and occupied **115 new council homes in Barchester Street, Poplar** (through s.106). The development also includes **10 wheelchair adaptable units**
- The granting of planning permission to build **53 new council homes at Barnsley Street** and **22 new homes at Mellish Street**.
- A positive ballot response in relation to proposals for the regeneration of **Harriot, Apsley and Pattison Houses**.
- We are consulting residents on proposals to develop infill sites at a number of location .

By the end of 2021/22, the following council homes are due for completion:

- **7** (three and four bedroom) **townhouses in Hanbury Street**, **5** (three-bedroom houses) **in Sidney Street**; **18 new council homes at Lowder House** and **23 new council homes at St Pauls Way**



The Future of Harriott, Apsley & Pattison Houses  
Proposed Visuals

PRP



# Housing Delivery & Supply – Service



Other achievements over the last 18 months include:

- The successful securing of **£32m in grant funding from the Mayor of London's Affordable Housing Programme** to fund an additional 194 new homes for social rent
- Introduction of a local lettings plan where 25% of completed homes can be let to households on the Common Housing Register who already live on the estates where the new homes are built: for example; Jubilee Street.
- An award of £17.6m in New Homes Bonus grant from the government
- The development and launch of the **Intermediate Housing Register of Interest** (launched 1 October 2021)
- Approval of the '**Affordable Self-Build**' Programme with the first 2 of 4 sites successfully bid for by community self-build groups.



# Tower Hamlets Housing Forum (THHF) Covid-19



Pandemic brought **opportunities** for :

- Partnership working with the council's Public Health Team.
- Supporting vulnerable residents & families - welfare calls, food parcels, hot meals.
- THHF joint pledge.
- Increased focus on sanitising touch points .
- Service delivery adaptations

The pandemic presented the following **challenges**:

- Backlog in day to day and planned repair
- Supply issues affecting some trades - industry wide issue
- Labour shortages affecting contractors
- Increase in residents WFH: more demand on properties with wear and tear

The **impact** has been:

- Customer expectations: some cyclical/planned repairs delayed
- Longer lead in times for some jobs or emergency job fixed but cosmetic jobs delayed
- Ongoing risk staff /contractors impacted by Covid - further delays

In **response**, THHF has:

Ensured a joined-up message: not poor performance but elements beyond their control

- Built understanding with residents on why there are delays
- Holding contractors to account
- Working with residents to ensure up to date comms on the latest position.

In **addition**, THHF continues to:

- Collaborate: Workpath, Job Centre and Kickstart
- Provide targeted employment support for care leavers, migrants, over 50's, where language is a barrier and women returning to work.

**Future challenges** include:

- Social Housing White Paper
- Consumer Regulation
- Development v fire safety pressures ... plus review of Decent Homes Standard
- Pressures on resident income



# Private Rent Sector Licensing and Enforcement



- The Selective Licensing Scheme has been extended from 1 October 2020 for 5 more years covering all rented properties within the Weavers, Whitechapel, Spitalfields and Banglatown areas.
- Up to November 2021, a total of **13,202** properties have been licensed under the following schemes:
  - **3710** properties with **Additional HMO Licenses** (since 1 April 2019)
  - **767** properties with **Mandatory HMO Licenses** (since 2006)
  - **8752 Selective Licenses** (since 1 October 2016)
- Over last 3 years, 57 successful prosecutions made against rogue landlords and letting agents.
- Court fines issued has totalled £361, 662. (13 landlords given a criminal caution, and 12 received civil penalties totalling £76,661).
- Crimes included renting out unlicensed properties, failing to carry out required improvements and charging hidden fees
- The single largest fine was £167,000 to an estate agent for giving false information to clients who was also successfully prosecuted for 2 other offence under the Housing Act (2004) and fine a further £16,200.
- Helped tenants claim back more than £360k from rogue landlords in 2020/21 via **Rent Repayment Orders**.



# Private Renters Charter Forum

Despite the pandemic, officers have continued to facilitate virtual meetings on a bi-annual basis. The forum plays a vital role by :

- Providing an opportunity for members and council officers to share information and intelligence.
- Provides an opportunity for forum members to inform council officers of any emerging issues and themes.

The Forum provides a collaborative approach between the council and the partners in maintaining and establishing the rights of Private Renters in the borough.

Over the course of the next year, (2022), with the forthcoming Renters' Reform Bill due for publication, it provides an opportunity to enhance the Private Rented Sector offer in the borough and to promote the rights of renters particularly as the ban on evictions lifts post pandemic.



# Net Carbon Zero Delivery

In March 2019, the council declared a Climate Emergency - with an ambitious target of becoming a Net Zero Carbon council by 2025. In terms of housing and homes, the council has achieved the following since March 2020:

- 100% grant funding of 96 low-income households with a total of £264,000 to replace old inefficient boilers reducing carbon emissions and helping to alleviate fuel poverty
- Completed a Bio-solar retrofit feasibility study of council housing stock to deliver renewable energy generating technologies (photovoltaics) Currently working with THH to deliver the Bio-solar retrofit to 6 Housing blocks.
- Became a part of **Solar Together London**, a group buying scheme for London Councils for purchasing solar panels and battery storage for homeowners.
- Rolling out the council's '**flats recycling package**' delivering improvements to recycling infrastructure on Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) estates. So far, we have **rolled this package out to 25 estates**.

Over the course of this financial year, officers will be looking to:

- create a delivery plan for the rollout and installation of renewable energy technologies to council buildings which are suitable for renewable energy generation; and
- ensuring the development of Zero Carbon standards for new council development schemes working with Capital Delivery.





# Fire & Building Safety



## Fire Safety

The council have continued to deliver improvement initiatives, although Covid-19 restrictions had a detrimental impact on the 2020/21 fire safety programme. These improvement initiatives include:

- Launching the council's building safety pledge on 22 July 2021.
- Working with Tower Hamlets Homes to ensure their readiness in meeting the new standards as set out in the new Fire Safety Act and the Building Safety Bill.
- A review of the Fire Safety Management Framework in residential blocks and dwellings.
- Commencing a review of fire safety works in future years' capital programme, (to be completed by December 2021/January 2022), as well as reaching agreement on the door renewal programme.
- A review of fire safety across the borough, on the request of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny sub committee – was completed in September 2021 (following the fire incident at New Providence Wharf, May 2021) with the financial impact of the report's recommendations presently under consideration.
- The creation of new fire safety pages on the council's website which contains clear information for homeowners, tenants, leaseholders and clarifies the role of Housing Associations, builders, and developers.



# Fire & Building Safety



## Fire Safety

Along with THHF partners, the council is working with the London Fire Brigade (LFB) on how best to engage with residents on fire safety issues and are in discussion with the LFB on producing a fire safety video and creating a Tower Hamlets Fire Safety Forum – which may include managing agents and leaseholder representatives as part of the engagement process.

## Building Safety Bill

In readiness for enactment of the Building Safety Bill, anticipated to receive Royal Assent between April and July 2022 and fully implemented twelve to 18 months after, the council has been preparing for the Bill by:

- Collaborating with THH, to prepare for the introduction of the Building Safety Bill. An internal Building Safety Bill Group has been established and meets monthly to progress matters.
- Building Safety Case Report pilot project – Latham House has been selected for the pilot case.
- The Corporate Risk Register now includes the impact of the Bill and the Bill is on the Strategic Information Governance Board's agenda.
- Engaging with various forums and bodies such as THHF, London Councils, LGA, Council with ALMOs Group, National Federation of ALMOs, Local Authority Building Control & London District Surveyors' Association.
- Reviewing legal advice as the Bill unfolds and more thinking emerges in the sector.

