

Housing Strategy

SMT Discussion 20 February 2024

Purpose of the strategy

- Set out the City of London Corporation's vision for the supply of housing and the successful delivery of housing services to residents.
- The strategy should align to national housing priorities and provide clear strategic direction for housing investment in the development of new and existing homes, actions, and targets to improve quality, condition, and energy efficiency.

Wider strategic context

- New approach to regulation
- Increased role of Housing Ombudsman
- Climate action
- Building safety
- Covid pandemic legacy
- Rent cap

Corporate plan and the vision for housing

- People should receive good services, live in good quality housing, and live independent and healthy lives
- Communities should be involved in co-creating fair and innovative outcomes to improve how they feel about the place where they live.
- Housing should be a positive aspect of everyday life, enhancing health and well-being and providing stability for successful lives.
- Housing services should be high-quality, generating high levels of resident satisfaction.
- Homes should be safe and well-maintained with a strong emphasis on fire safety and building safety.
- There is an aspiration to develop more affordable housing for those in housing need.
- There should be meaningful engagement with residents, so they can influence the quality of their housing services and raise the standards of their homes to enhance their well-being and life chances.

Five draft overarching priorities for the new housing strategy

1. Increase the supply of housing.
2. Improve housing quality.
3. Improve the quality of housing services.
4. Improve building safety.
5. Engage and listen to residents.

Increasing the supply of new housing

Our ambition:

- We will make housing development economically viable and better value for money.
- We will explore new development funding delivery models, including cross subsidy models.
- We will clearly define what we mean by affordable housing and who it is for
- We will set new achievable housing targets.
- We will prioritise new housing for local people through local letting policies.
- We will use our existing stock more efficiently by helping residents to downsize to more suitable properties.
- We will deliver an effective housing options and homelessness service, aimed at reducing the number of people at risk of homelessness and need for temporary accommodation.

Improve housing quality

Our ambition:

- We will develop a new asset management strategy and plan, supported by a rolling stock condition survey.
- We will invest in our estates and homes to achieve ongoing decent homes standard compliance.
- We will develop and consult with residents on a City of London Corporation standard.
- We will provide a high quality, responsive repairs, and maintenance service.
- We will build new zero carbon housing, retrofit where it is cost-effective to do so in our existing housing, and explore off-setting carbon emissions.
- We will develop and implement a plan to replace gas heating systems and improving the energy efficiency of homes.
- We will publish a five-year planned maintenance and cyclical decoration programme to provide residents with visibility of planned works.
- We will improve void turnaround times and ensure a suitable letting standard is achieved for new tenants.
- We will meet the requirements of the Homes Fitness for Human Habitation Act.

Improving the quality of housing services

Our ambition:

- We will meet the demands of the Regulator of Social Housing, increasing year on year performance against consumer standards and tenant satisfaction measures.
- We will increase the level of customer satisfaction through the effective management of services for tenants and leaseholders.
- We will build strong person-centred relationships with residents, enabling staff to take early, appropriate, and effective action with specialist interventions for those with complex needs.
- We will develop tenancy support to maintain tenancies and know our residents better by conducting annual visits to all tenants who live in Council housing.

Improving building safety

Our ambition:

- We will achieve full compliance with the regulatory framework for building safety.
- We will ensure effective fire safety management, maintaining up to date fire risk assessments, publishing documents and renewal dates.
- We will achieve full health and safety compliance on the 'big six' - fire, asbestos, gas, electrical, lifts and legionella.

Engaging and listening to residents

Our ambition:

- We will create a culture of co-production through the creation of a separate forum for HRA residents, comparable to the Barbican Residential Consultative Committee, so that the tenant voice can be fully heard.
- We will develop more proactive and specific engagement with residents on matters of local concern using innovative and non-traditional methods.
- We will provide responsive services and effective customer care to all by identifying the needs of vulnerable households.
- We will proactively involve residents in monitoring the performance of services where they live.

Questions

1. From your perspective, what are the three most important housing issues on which we should focus?
2. Do the draft priorities of the housing strategy adequately capture the key housing-related issues and challenges for the City of London Housing Corporation?
3. Are there any other issues we should be looking at?
4. For each of the five priorities, please tell us whether you agree with the proposed actions?
5. Are there any other actions that the City of London Corporation should be taking forward which would help deliver these priorities?