

HOUSING STRATEGY 2024-2029

Executive Summary

The Housing Strategy 2024-2029 outlines the City of London Corporation's vision for the successful delivery of housing services to residents of social housing and future supply of new housing.

The strategy focuses on improving the quality of housing services, engaging, and listening to residents, improving building safety, and increasing the supply of housing.

The strategy aligns with national housing priorities and aims to address the challenges posed by the housing crisis, particularly in terms of affordability, quality, and safety.

Key priorities include improving customer service, investing in repairs and maintenance, engaging residents in decision-making, ensuring compliance with building safety regulations, and increasing the supply of affordable housing.

The strategy also emphasises the need for ongoing monitoring and governance to track progress and ensure accountability for the delivery of actions.

Vision

Our vision is for every resident to have access to safe, affordable, and high-quality housing that enhances their well-being and provides stability for successful lives.

Through working together, openness and transparency, and continuous improvement, we aim to create thriving, inclusive, and sustainable neighbourhoods, where every resident feels valued, supported, and empowered to live their life well.

Purpose of the strategy

The City of London Corporation is the landlord responsible for 1923 social rented properties and 936 leaseholder properties across London. Most residents within the Square Mile live on four estates at the Barbican, Golden Lane, Middlesex Street and Mansell Street. Three quarters of our social housing is situated outside the Square Mile on eleven estates that the Corporation manages in the six London boroughs of Southwark, Islington, Lewisham, Lambeth, Hackney, and Tower Hamlets.

The purpose of the housing strategy is to set out our vision for the successful delivery of housing services to residents of our social housing and future supply of new housing. In this document, we have outlined the priorities, ambition, and actions we consider necessary to address current housing needs and challenges and ensure that appropriate, affordable, and quality housing is available to meet the diverse needs of our existing and future residents.

The strategy aligns to national housing priorities and provides a roadmap for our areas of focus over the next five years.

Over the last year, we have reviewed how best to improve our services to residents and have reconfigured the housing service into two new departments, one for the Barbican residential estate, and one for social housing. Led by two new Assistant Directors, we have done this to ensure that there is a dedicated focus on services to leaseholders living in the Barbican residential estate, and to the remaining residents within the City of London itself and six other London boroughs.

We know that Housing is a fundamental issue for all residents. Everyone should have access to a decent, affordable home which is warm, dry, and safe. We know that poor housing, or poorly managed housing, has a negative impact on people's lives, so we are committed to getting the basics right in our housing management service to ensure a quality housing experience for all.

Five overarching priorities for the new housing strategy

The draft priorities of the housing strategy were developed and strengthened via consultation, with residents, members, and staff through face-to-face focus groups, webinars, and an online questionnaire.

The sessions provided an opportunity to highlight key housing issues and to give views on the proposed priorities and actions with the final set of priorities agreed as below:

- Improve the quality of housing services.
- Improve housing quality.
- Engage and listen to residents.
- Improve building safety.
- Increase the supply of housing.

The wider strategic context for housing

This is a critical period for the delivery of housing services. Nationally, Council landlords face a complex set of challenges which test our ability to enable all residents to have access to safe, affordable, and high-quality housing.

Today, there is a huge national shortage of affordable housing in the UK with demand for social housing exceeding available supply. This has resulted in long waiting lists for social housing and increased homelessness. The City of London is not immune from this crisis with 1056 applications currently on the housing register and a high incidence of rough sleeping, the vast majority of which are single homeless men.

Last year, 482 people were reported as sleeping rough in the City of London, and for this population, demand is particularly high for studio and one-bedroom sized accommodation. Amongst the City's rough sleepers, there were high incidences of poor mental health and drug and alcohol misuse. Those in need of long-term

accommodation come with a variety of vulnerabilities which require a supportive approach to housing management, working in partnership with social services and support agencies, which is not always easy when working across a range of different boroughs.

Following the tragic Grenfell Tower fire in 2017, which exposed a range of systemic failures in housing and fire safety regulations as well as issues related to social inequality and marginalisation, a strong focus on building safety, and particularly fire safety has issued in a new culture of regulation, particularly in relation to high rise blocks. We must ensure that our residential buildings are safe as they can be, not only because it is the right thing to do, but because of new legislation such as the Building Safety Act 2022.

This Act is intended to strengthen the regulatory system for building safety, with increased responsibilities of building developers, owners, and managers to ensure greater accountability for the design, construction, and occupation of high-risk buildings. We have taken our responsibilities seriously in this regard, not least through a widescale programme of fire sprinkler installation, but fire safety requires significant investment. The challenge is how we can ensure that we deliver much needed investment in the ongoing maintenance of our existing homes, as well as meet our statutory health and safety responsibilities.

Housing, and the quality of homes, particularly social rented homes has been in the national spotlight with successive investigations highlighting the perilous conditions that some residents have been living with for years, often without any redress. These recent high-profile cases have increased the scrutiny of housing conditions, exposing neglect, and ignoring factors that impact on the health and well-being of residents. How landlords tackle damp and mould alongside health and safety compliance of the 'big six' - fire, asbestos, gas, electrical, lifts and legionella is subject to public scrutiny and government intervention.

We are a proactive landlord, and in the last year, have commissioned two external reviews of our housing management practice to highlight where we can do more to improve the service to residents. The Altair review of the Barbican residential estate has resulted in a comprehensive action plan to improve the service to Barbican residents including a sharp focus on value for money of service charges, effective monitoring of contractor performance, and driving up the quality of customer service. Overseen by a Programme Board of residents, members and officers, the action plan arising from this review is already delivering improvements, with the Barbican team demonstrating greater responsiveness, more ownership and responsibility to resolve longstanding problems and better customer service.

The Barbican transformation programme has been driven by true partnership working with residents who have tirelessly supported the team to improve the quality of their service. It is a template that we wish to apply to all aspects of the housing service. Over the next 5 years, we want to encourage the same level of active engagement to drive up standards on those estates funded by the Housing Revenue Account.

The Pennington review of the housing management service for the social housing estates drew many of the same conclusions as that of the Altair review. Similarly, an action plan has been developed to improve the quality of the service overseen by the Housing Sub-Committee. Not only is it important to ensure that these actions are achieved internally, but there is an external driver too. In recent years, concerns about the treatment of social housing tenants have prompted the strengthening of the role of the Regulator of Social Housing with the introduction of a set of tenant satisfaction measures and consumer standards and a landlords' league table, to be published annually from April 2024.

This external scrutiny and new reporting regime are intended to strengthen the resident voice, increase transparency, and hold landlords to account. A zero-tolerance approach to poor housing service and consequences for inaction enables central government to intervene where residents are being failed.

We are pleased that currently 67% of our social rented tenants are satisfied with the service that we provide, up 10% from the year before, but we are certainly not complacent. We intend to build on this benchmark year on year, listening to what our residents have to say and working with them much more closely to make the improvements that they desire to their service. We will ensure that complaints are dealt with promptly and fairly, that the resident's voice is heard and that residents are treated with respect.

The Housing Ombudsman's service has also been bolstered to thoroughly scrutinise the service that is being provided to residents of social housing. They have produced a series of spotlight reports on the poor quality of complaint handling by local authorities and housing associations. There have been high profile deep dives into incidences of damp and mould, dealing with anti-social behaviour, attitudes towards tenants, respect, and tenant rights.

The naming and shaming of landlords who persistently let down their residents is something which we have thus far avoided, and we will continue to improve on our responsiveness to residents. However, we know that our residents are unhappy with the quality of the repairs and maintenance service and are uncertain about when they can expect investment in their homes. Getting the repairs service right and having a clear plan for housing investment, through our asset management strategy, will go a long way to reducing complaints and giving residents confidence for the future.

In 2019, central government declared a climate emergency, amending previous legislation to commit the UK to bringing down all greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. We have embraced this challenge with an aspiration to achieve net zero emissions by 2030 and have implemented measures to ensure that housing meets minimum quality, safety, and energy efficiency requirements. Where we can, we will ensure that energy efficiency is a top priority. We are committed to meeting net zero carbon in all our new-build housing, to meet government targets, and importantly reduce fuel poverty and increase comfort for new residents. We will explore fully how to achieve net zero in our existing homes through retrofitting.

Over the lifetime of this strategy, we will be informed by the accompanying asset management strategy about how we will replace gas boilers in our housing stock, with alternative energy efficient systems which are also economical to run. However, we know already that ground heat pumps are not a widescale solution for our social housing, and hydrogen boilers are costly to run. We will investigate all viable options for replacement and include a fully costed plan in our future housing investment programme.

In a period of financial turbulence and with the tail of the Covid pandemic legacy, we have witnessed a profound effect on housing, from supply chain issues which have impacted on the cost and timeliness of new development, the costs of procuring and delivering effective repairs and maintenance services, and shortage of resources, skills, and expertise. High inflation has had a severe impact on operating costs. The stark truth is whilst we aspire to do much more, we are operating within a much more constrained environment. Set alongside a cost-of-living crisis, the pandemic has also magnified existing issues such as social isolation, poverty, and scarcity of housing supply.

The rent cap worsens an already difficult financial position for the housing revenue account, with the annual 1% reduction policy in place from 2016 to 2020 leaving reserves severely depleted and demanding greater efficiency to achieve savings.

All these factors contribute to a challenging environment for housing management and a tough backdrop for the successful delivery of services to residents. Our ambition, despite these factors, is to deliver much more value to residents - value for money, community value, and strong values in our housing staff so that they are committed to creating great places for people to live.

Corporate Plan and the vision for housing

Our corporate plan provides the context for a new housing strategy. People should receive good services, live in excellent quality housing, and live independent and healthy lives. Communities should be involved in decisions that affect them and 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.

We deliver housing services via a local housing management model, with estate-based offices and a patch-based service which provides for residents where they live. By having housing management services delivered at a local level, our housing

teams should be better able to tailor their services to meet the specific needs of the community and provide a more personalised and responsive service.

As our housing is in different local authority areas, a local housing management service also enables better communication between residents and housing teams, with greater transparency and oversight, and dedicated points of contact for inquiries, feedback, and concerns.

Although the local housing management model has fallen out of favour with housing providers in recent years, increasingly with the challenges of the new housing regulatory regime and a demand from residents to improve the quality of housing service delivery, many housing providers are returning to patch-based housing management.

Because our housing stock is so widely dispersed, a locality-based model works for us and therefore it is not proposed that in the short to medium term this should change. However, when we spoke to residents, we heard from them a strong desire that the service should become more customer focussed. The challenge posed by residents was that our services were not focussed enough on them as recipients and that they wanted to see higher standards of customer service with a strong focus on outcomes not processes.

The benefit of a locally delivered service is that it should be easier to be more responsive to residents, however this was not the broad experience of residents who reported back to us via the Housing Strategy online questionnaire. Despite being based in the heart of estates, there was a disconnect between 'them and us,' and a feeling that housing teams were remote and disengaged.

This was also borne out by the lack of participation in the face-to-face consultation sessions, and the lack of attendance at estate drop-in sessions. This demonstrates that there is work to be done to improve the relationship between housing teams and the customers that they serve.

We need to provide more digitally accessible service routes in recognition of the fact that people are used to doing things for themselves and at a time that suits them, however we need to capitalise on our existing local presence and utilise it to its best effect. Increasingly too, we see many more vulnerabilities amongst residents who need that local, tailored support so we should not pursue modern options of service delivery without recognising that our resident base requires both; smarter ways to connect as well as one-on-one support.

Improve the quality of housing services

We believe that it is paramount that we employ people with the right attitude to deliver housing services and that this is essential for building a successful customer focussed approach.

Our senior leaders will set the tone for the right attitude and behaviours to create a positive culture which puts residents at the heart of everything we do. Residents

want to be confident that when they contact us their enquiry will be dealt with promptly by someone who is knowledgeable, professional, and empowered to resolve their request, so we have invested in mandatory customer service training for all. We are recruiting new staff specifically for their customer service skills because we know that we can train them in housing management.

We will make it easy for residents to give feedback on our services and we will listen to what they have to say. Although nearly three quarters of our residents said that they were happy with the service that we provide in the most recent resident survey, that still leaves a significant swathe of dissatisfaction that we need to address through continuous improvement of service delivery.

Both residents and staff tell us that the main area for improvement is the quality of the repairs and maintenance service, and it is certainly the most frequent generator of complaints. New contracts are currently being procured, and their term will align with the housing strategy.

Residents have been fully involved in shaping the new contracts, which have prioritised the quality of the maintenance service as well as ongoing cost control and efficiency. The new contracts will require stronger collaboration between teams to avoid repairs being dropped and there will be better communication and sharing of information to frontline staff who are the main point of contact for residents.

We are committed to more much rigorous performance management of contractors to ensure that they are properly held to account, and the new contracts set stretching targets to ensure repairs are timely and completed right first time, and that there is less reliance on sub-contractors to reduce cost and improve efficiency.

There is a strong view that if the repairs service improves, residents will have an overall better perception of the housing service, and staff will be freed up to concentrate on other tasks rather than deal with repeated failure demand.

We also recognise that we need to be better equipped to deal with the increasing number of tenants with complex needs. Within the City of London, there is excellent joint working with corporate colleagues to get residents the help that they might need. However, this becomes less easy when dealing with the other boroughs in which our housing is located where those natural day to day relationships with colleagues are less familiar and embedded.

We will focus on establishing better networking and partnership working with outer borough social services and agencies to get vulnerable tenants the support that they need. We will also ensure that we are providing more support at the start of the tenancy for the most vulnerable residents to ensure that tenancies are sustained and that there is appropriate signposting to support services. We are keen to ensure that tenancy support becomes a core skill for frontline staff, alongside the existing specialist provision.

Knowing our customers is key to success in this area, and we have already increased the frequency of tenancy visits to ensure that we continue to build up a rounded picture of who is living in our housing, and what they might need from us as

their landlord. Improving the quality of core data will be a key area of focus to ensure that we have a continuously refreshed profile of our customers, and we can tailor our services based on this information.

Over the last year, we have invested in the installation of a new housing management system, Civica, which should enable a better base of core information to support the housing management service. The system implementation has not been without disruption, but we have invested to improve the reliability of the system and support staff through training so that they are using it to its maximum capacity. We will work with our teams and residents to ensure that data is constantly refreshed and updated at all points of contact.

Although we work across London, we have not always been as curious as we could be in exploring best practice and using it to improve our housing management service. The benefit of external review is that we have had our practice validated against an external evidence base which has provided lots of excellent case studies and examples of what works well. Building on this for the future, we know that we need to continue to actively seek out how things work elsewhere and actively benchmark with other organisations through informal peer review, Housemark, the sector-wide quality network, and London Councils' directors' groups.

In line with the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing, all staff providing housing services have received customer service training, and we will refresh this through an ongoing training plan. We will continue to invest in communication skills and conflict resolution to ensure that residents receive respectful, consistent, and responsive services.

Senior management staff will also receive accredited management training to equip them with the required managerial skills to ensure effective oversight of housing management services, and to meet the standards of the new monitoring regime by central government.

We recognise that over time, some frontline housing management roles may have been deskilled by an over-reliance on policies and procedures to the detriment of relationship building, problem solving and the ability to exercise sound judgement. We will create a culture in which everyone has a strong customer focus and performs to their best. Our teams are not large, and our structures are not complicated so we will focus on collaboration between teams, breaking down internal silos, and reducing handovers between teams to create a more seamless customer experience.

Whilst we are committed to a local housing management model, and services which are easily accessible to residents, we can do more to lever modern technology, including providing multiple channels for communication, and ordering online platforms for service requests. We will employ more sophisticated communication methods such as apps and customer portals to enable customers to do things for themselves where they are willing and able to do so, and generally embrace smarter ways of working.

We will collect data on service usage and resident satisfaction and use this data to actively inform decision-making, measure impact, identify any areas of non-compliance and make improvements to housing services. We will continually evaluate and monitor to assess effectiveness, identify areas for improvement and ensure that services are meeting the needs of residents.

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.

Improve Housing quality

Improving the quality of our existing housing is hugely important to residents. Throughout the consultation process, the quality of the current repairs and maintenance service and the lack of clear plans for housing investment were raised as major causes of concern, by residents and by colleagues working to deliver the housing service.

A lack of a clear plan for housing investment has caused dissatisfaction and increased the demand for the day-to-day repairs and maintenance service in the absence of a long-term plan for asset management.

Alongside this housing strategy, the asset management strategy is being developed, a 5-year plan which will provide a fully costed plan for major works to improve the fabric of our homes. The asset management strategy will include measures to enhance the safety, comfort, energy efficiency and overall liveability of homes. This will include investing in renovation and retrofitting projects to upgrade existing homes, improving building condition, and addressing maintenance issues as well as meeting central government targets for decent homes.

The asset management strategy will set out clear, timetabled plans to implement energy-efficient measures such as insulation, window upgrades, and roof renewal to reduce energy consumption, lower utility costs and improve sustainability.

For the Housing Strategy, we recognise that there is untapped potential to regenerate our existing stock, which could bring a range of benefits to communities and residents, primarily improved housing but also enhanced public spaces, economic opportunities, social cohesion, and environmental improvements.

The ambition for regeneration should be one rooted in the local community, for the benefit of existing residents as well as welcoming new ones, through the provision of more and better housing by refurbishing existing homes and building sustainable new homes. New housing should be also at the forefront of net zero carbon development, with sustainable design principles to deliver significant reductions in CO2 emissions and cheaper energy costs for residents.

We are keen to develop a coordinated and structured approach to estate regeneration. This will be rooted in a corporate understanding of how regeneration has the potential to realise real benefits for existing residents, through large scale refurbishment of estates and the delivery of new housing to meet local housing need.

We will also involve frontline staff and residents in the design of new housing so that it can be managed most effectively, and issues foreseen before they occur, futureproofing new homes especially when it comes to accessibility.

As part of the asset management strategy, appraisals will be undertaken across all estates, and recommendations around viability, enabling decisions around estate regeneration to have a robust evidence base.

Alongside our strategic ambitions, we recognise the need to improve operational management to keep homes well-maintained and in good condition. That sense of neighbourhood and home is enhanced by surroundings that are clean, tidy, and well-maintained, with inviting and functional spaces for residents to socialise, exercise and engage in community activities.

With a locally based workforce, we are well-placed to see neighbourhoods' quality first-hand as experienced by those who live there. Getting the basics right, through effective property management, regular maintenance and cleaning schedules and responsive repairs services will go a long way to keeping homes well-maintained and in good condition.

Our ambition

- We will develop a new asset management strategy and plan, supported by survey information on our housing stock that is constantly updated.
- We will invest in our estates and homes to achieve ongoing decent homes standard compliance.
- 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 improve the energy efficiency of homes.
- We will publish a 5-year planned maintenance and cyclical decoration programme to provide residents with visibility of planned works.
- We will meet the requirements of the Homes Fitness for Human Habitation Act.

- We will develop a 5-year estate regeneration strategy, outlining a plan for revitalising and improving the City of London's housing estates, which drives the completion of existing schemes and identifies new opportunities to keep development on track through an effective programme management approach.

Engage and listen to residents

Despite a housing management service which is rooted firmly within the local community, our relationship with residents needs strengthening. Engaging with residents to gather feedback, address concerns and involve them in decision-making processes related to the management and maintenance of their homes is essential for building trust and collaboration, however we know that this is an area which requires some improvement.

The Social Housing Regulation Act places a legal duty on social housing providers to ensure that tenants' voices are at the heart of their services. It expects landlords to tailor engagement so all tenants can engage through a wide range of methods. Effective resident engagement has many benefits, highlighting services that are valued by residents, identifying areas for improvement, improving communication, and building relationships with residents. If residents feel that they are valued and are being listened to, in turn they will feel happier about where they live and that their voice makes a difference.

For us, putting in place more meaningful and long-lasting resident engagement is more than just a tick in the legal tick-box. We want to do this well to build trust, enhance well-being and reduce complaints about the housing service.

Although we have many active established tenant associations and committees, there needs to be more effective liaison between residents and housing management teams. We have already recognised that this is an area of concern, and have been working with TPAS, the tenant engagement experts, to help us build model constitutions and better ways of working together.

Where it works well, we can see how joint working really drives service improvement and a greater sense of accountability. However, we do not have a strong sense of advocacy, or established forum, for residents to voice their opinions, share feedback and raise concerns about housing matters.

We are committed to improving resident forums so that these are stronger conduits for communication about the things that matter to residents. As well as door-to-door outreach and estate inspections to connect with residents, we will make more use of online platforms, social media, and digital communication to engage with residents, share information and facilitate feedback and dialogue.

Residents told us that we could improve the way in which we communicate with them, and how we provide feedback to those who do actively engage. At the heart of our organisational culture, must be a new approach to resident engagement and the opportunity for residents to influence decisions that impact them.

Giving residents the opportunity to opt in or out of the conversation is just as important as formal structures. We recognise that engagement needs to be tailored to residents' needs and the type of home that they live in, which is particularly pertinent to involving residents in discussion around fire safety for example.

Our Ambition

- We will create a culture of co-production through the creation of a separate forum for social housing residents, reporting into Housing Sub-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.

Improve Building Safety

We have been focussed on ensuring that the lessons from the Grenfell fire are learned and that action has been taken to ensure that every resident is safe in their home.

We have an effective fire safety regime and have recently completed the building safety cases required by law for all our high-rise blocks. We have commissioned an external check of our health and safety compliance monitoring regime to ensure that all our reporting is accurate and that there are no risks associated with our management of fire, asbestos, gas, electrical, lift and legionella safety.

Regular building inspections to identify and address maintenance issues, structural defects, and safety hazards, are conducted addressing any concerns related to damp, mould, and other health hazards.

The costs of building safety fall on our already overstretched housing revenue account and this work must be prioritised, and potentially redirected from planned maintenance or the development of new homes, however our sprinkler installation programme is well underway, and we have not faced the significant remediation costs that other landlords have had to bear.

We agree that the construction industry should be made to fix the fire safety defects built into blocks owned by councils and housing associations, and although this does not apply to any stock currently owned by the City of London Corporation, we will support residents who are facing these issues through our enforcement activities.

We will work closely with the police and the local community to address safety concerns and promote a safe living environment for residents.

Staying updated on changes to building regulations and safety guidelines is important to ensure that homes meet the latest standards, and we will actively engage with sector forums.

An important part of our resident engagement activity will be working with residents to raise awareness about building safety measures, emergency procedures and reporting mechanisms for safety concerns. We will continue to provide information and resources to help residents understand their rights and responsibilities related to building safety in their homes and continue to invest in training for staff and contractors on building safety practices, regulations, and emergency response protocols.

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.

Increase the supply of housing

The average house price in the City of London in February 2024 was £809,000, more than double the national average (£298,000). The average monthly private rent for a two-bedroom property between October 2022 and September 2023 was £2,685 per month which is higher than the average rent in London (£1,860). For those in housing need, affordable housing is not within easy reach.

We have had a steady development programme in recent years, and projects are already underway at COLPAI (66 new homes), York Way Development (91 new homes), Sydenham Hill Development (110 new homes) and potential future developments at Sumner Building Estate and Avondale Square Estate. These schemes will increase the number of homes available for social rent, improve the existing housing stock and provide ongoing rental income for the Housing Revenue Account.

Our model for the supply of new affordable housing is supported by s106 contributions from developers (contributions towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure), delivering new office accommodation within the Square Mile. Historically, we have used these commuted sums to develop new social housing on our existing estates in the City and other London boroughs.

Social housing provides affordable and secure housing options for low-income households who may struggle to afford market-rated housing. Increasing the supply of affordable housing provides a stable base for family life and, where we can, we will strive to deliver more housing to provide long term security of tenure, address homelessness, and provide a safety net for those in unstable housing conditions. We also want to ensure that our housing is inclusive and supports accessibility for

people with additional needs, or who may need additional support, such as care leavers or people with specific vulnerabilities.

Although mixed tenure housing is in accordance with our Local Plan objectives, historically there has been a commitment that any new housing development should be social rented housing. However, the cost of construction and the availability of grant funding means that we may need to review what we build in the future, to futureproof the funding of council housing by building other forms of tenure as cross-subsidy. Moving away from this would require a policy refresh, and potentially new ways of working on housing delivery via a partnership with a developer contractor, housing association or other local authority under a development agreement, or joint venture.

Over the lifetime of this strategy, we will develop a clear plan for the future supply of new homes and will clearly define our definition of affordable housing, as we recognise that there is an increasing demand for all types of affordable housing including intermediate market rent, shared ownership, rent to buy and outright sale.

Our ambition

- We will identify and secure an ongoing pipeline of funding streams, primarily s106 contributions, to support our development 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.

Monitoring and Governance

The strategy is designed to drive progress and deliver measurable outcomes for the quality of service provision, investment in our homes and new housing supply, underpinned by a delivery plan with clear actions against each of the priorities with timescales.

Oversight of performance against the ambition of the strategy will be via the Corporation's Community and Children's Services Grand committee with an annual report confirming the progress which has been made to ensure there is ongoing accountability for the delivery of actions.