



Waltham Forest Housing Compact 2019-24

A statement on how Waltham Forest Council and its housing association partners can work in partnership to improve residents' individual and community well being



Section 1 – Vision Statement

1.1

Over 14,500 properties in the borough are home to housing association residents, and there are over 2,000 new homes that will be brought forward by housing associations in our borough over the next 5 years. Our 30+ housing association partners provide homes and neighbourhoods for a significant proportion of Waltham Forest's residents. It is therefore clearly important that the Council and housing associations work collaboratively to deliver the best housing outcomes we can for our residents.

1.2

The vision guiding the content of this Housing Compact document reflects Waltham Forest's resident-informed priorities to help improve our residents' quality of life. Working in partnership with the Council, housing associations have a continuing major role to deliver outcomes that address those priorities, which are to:

- Keep Waltham Forest clean and safe
- Ensure a decent roof over residents' heads
- Improve residents' life chances

1.3

We have taken those overarching priorities, and as part of our Big Housing Conversation with residents, stakeholders and partners, distilled these into four housing priorities which will deliver outcomes that make a difference to residents' lives. These housing priorities are set out in our new Housing Strategy, *Housing Futures: A Decent Roof for all (2019-2024)*:

1. Supporting growth and aspirations within the borough
2. Tackling and preventing homelessness
3. Ensuring decent, safe and healthy homes
4. Think Family, Think Housing, Think Work: inclusive and sustainable neighbourhoods

1.4

We know that our housing association partners make a contribution to delivering these housing priorities every day, and this commitment to supporting communities and working closely with the local authority as a valued partner was restated by the G15¹ in their December 2018 offer to London "Tackling the housing crisis together"². This Housing Compact seeks to add value to that contribution by setting out what those commitments will look like for the residents of Waltham Forest, through new initiatives, better coordination and direction of work, and improved mutual understanding.

1.5

This Housing Compact is predicated on acknowledgement of the Council's statutory duty to promote and improve the economic, social and environmental community well-being, and respecting housing associations as independent providers of affordable housing and investors in the Waltham Forest community.

1.6

There are two strands to the Council's partnership with housing associations which involve delivering the commitments set out in the:

1. Waltham Forest Housing Charter, detailed in Section 4 of this Compact
2. Waltham Forest Housing Partnership Work streams, detailed in Section 5 of this Compact

¹ The G15 is the group of London's largest housing associations, including L&Q, Clarion and Peabody

² <http://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/jfd-g15/G15-Offer-to-London-brochure.pdf>

Section 2 – What are the drivers for change?

2.1

The Council wishes to work in partnership with housing associations to continue delivering more and better affordable housing in the 2019-24 timeframe of the Housing Strategy. This Housing Compact has been drafted with that intent with the additional expectation that a wider direct and indirect contribution is made to other priorities identified in the Housing Strategy.

2.2

The **first driver for change** is Waltham Forest's new housing delivery target of 18,000 new homes over 10 years starting from 2019-20 doubled from its previous target of 862 per annum. Delivering this number of new homes will require ambitious, innovative and collaborative approaches to bringing forward the homes our residents so desperately need.

2.3

The expiry of the 2014-18 Preferred Partners Framework requires a new partnership arrangement which is less prescriptive but more effective than what it is replacing. Waltham Forest Council and partners have a good track record in bringing forward affordable housing (47% of homes were affordable during the period 2013-14 to 2015-16), which indicates that past partnership working has been successful. Despite recent successful delivery of new council homes and the establishment of its own local housing company, Sixty Bricks, the Council has much to learn from housing associations in order to raise council housebuilding to a significant level: the Development Partnership Group will be the forum where those lessons can be shared.

2.4

The **second driver for change** is focused on listening to the residents who live in affordable housing and acting effectively where their concerns are greatest. Reforms on resident engagement and how their complaints are dealt with are likely to follow the 2018 Government Housing Green Paper⁴. The paper makes reference to residents' concerns at not having sufficient information on performance data; that complaints are not dealt with effectively; and that resident engagement and scrutiny measures could be made more effective. The Council shares those concerns and believes that if these issues are addressed, it will provide the platform for wider community wellbeing outcomes the Council and its partners are seeking to deliver.

2.5

How housing providers effectively measure performance was a key theme of the Housing Green Paper, and the Council wants to play an enhanced role in partnership with housing associations to ensure new key performance indicators (KPIs) and related information is disseminated effectively. One route for this is through a proposed single Annual Report which includes KPI information which is informed by all housing providers active in the borough, including the Council.

2.6

The **third driver for change** is the G15 offer to London, "Tackling the housing crisis together". This represents renewed commitment from some of the borough's largest landlords to share challenges, work with local authorities to engage and invest in communities, support council housebuilding and tackle homelessness. The G15 offer and this Compact strengthen the important work that housing associations already undertake and contributions they make to alleviating homelessness; providing a decent home; and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in Waltham Forest.

³ London Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2015/16

⁴ Government's 2018 Housing Green Paper: A new deal for social housing.

Section 3 – How will the partnership between the Council and Housing Associations work?

3.1

In order to deliver the Housing Strategy, Housing Charter objectives and specific work stream priorities described in this Housing Compact, three partnership groups will be established.

Waltham Forest Housing Partnership Board

3.2

The Board will lead and direct the partnership. This group will meet twice a year and will be jointly chaired by the Leader of the Council, and a Chief Executive from one of the large stock-holding housing associations in the borough, or their delegated representatives. Other representatives shall include the Cabinet Member responsible for housing and senior representatives from the Council and housing associations.

3.3

The Board will provide strategic oversight for the housing association sector's contribution to the 2019-24 Housing Strategy, have oversight of the Housing Charter commitments and the specific tasks identified in the Housing Compact. To achieve this, the Board will receive reports from the Housing Partnership and the Development Partnership Groups, and monitor the agreed work programme which will be reviewed annually. The Partnership Board will produce an annual report setting out what it has achieved in the past year and what it intends to do in the following year.

Housing Partnership Group

3.4

Meeting three times a year, this group will be responsible for coordinating the delivery of outcomes against the following headings:

- Housing management
- Integrating communities
- Community safety
- Anti-social behaviour
- Waste management (recycling & fly-tipping)
- Homelessness prevention
- Enterprise, employment and skills
- Joint commissioning (social care)
- Benchmarking
- London Borough of Culture 2019

Development Partnership Group

3.5

Meeting three times a year, this group will be responsible for coordinating the delivery of outcomes against the following headings:

- Local Plan and planning policy
- Increasing and accelerating affordable housing supply
- Place making
- Sustainable design
- Housing standards
- Development viability
- Joint commissioning (supported housing)
- Community-led housing

Section 4 – Waltham Forest Housing Charter

4.1

The points below provide partners with a service standard for residents and a commitment to the partnership by signatories.

4.2

Housing Charter signatories will:

1. Listen to and respect residents' views
2. Respect diversity and provide inclusive services
3. Operate transparently and openly; and work cooperatively with properly constituted and representative resident groups
4. Respond to Members' enquiries and information requests within agreed timescales
5. Ensure residents live in warm, safe, weathertight and decent homes
6. Remedy resident repair requests in an appropriate and timely manner
7. Actively participate in tackling anti-social behaviour
8. Work towards the creation of a common housing register for all social lettings in the borough
9. Evidence value for money in service provision
10. Share key performance data to identify and share best practice
11. Maximise opportunities for residents to take up work, training and apprenticeships
12. Ensure capital resources available for new affordable housing are maximised for the borough
13. Work with the Council to prevent homelessness

4.3

The Council will support signatories to the Compact by:

- Providing a named officer as first point of contact
- Offering a meeting with senior officers to discuss issues of importance
- Supporting their investment in new housing in Waltham Forest, so maximising the supply of affordable homes

4.4

Housing associations are independent charitable organisations set up to support people in housing need. Most housing associations are now registered providers (RPs), regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), an executive non-departmental public body of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

4.5

The Regulator of Social Housing sets out regulatory standards that all registered providers must adhere to, and its remit is to:

- protect social housing assets
- ensure providers are financially viable and properly governed, maintain confidence of lenders to invest into the sector, encourage and support supply of social housing
- ensure tenants are protected and have opportunities to be involved in the management of their housing
- ensure value for money in service delivery

4.6

The Council supports the RSH's remit as vital to the continued provision of affordable housing options for Waltham Forest residents. The Council recognises the important regulatory role that the RSH performs, giving confidence to local authorities and government in the robustness of individual housing associations and the sector as a whole and has neither the intention nor the expertise to replicate the RSH's role. However,

the Council does want to understand better how the sector is performing in Waltham Forest and assist with any improvements in service delivery and increasing housing delivery in the process. We will work with our housing association partners to agree useful key performance indicators that will help us to do so.

4.7

This Housing Compact is intended to cover the five year period of the Waltham Forest Housing Strategy 2019-24 while the Council will be looking to all housing associations in the borough committing to working with the Council in delivering the Compact starting in April 2019, housing associations can sign up to the Compact at any time by contacting:

Housing Strategy Team
London Borough of Waltham Forest
Cedar Wood House
2d Fulbourne Road
London E17 4GG
Tel: 020 8496 4405 / 020 8496 5549
Email: Housingcompact@walthamforest.gov.uk

Section 5 – Identifying the Themes and Work Streams

5.1

The identified themes and associated work streams, which are intended to directly or indirectly deliver outcomes that will help deliver priorities identified in the 2019-24 Housing Strategy, are set out below.

Theme 1

Supporting growth and aspirations within the borough

Supporting growth through a **New Homes and Place-making** work programme to include the following priorities:

- Designing and building good quality sustainable new homes in inclusive and connected neighbourhoods
- Accelerating delivery of new homes through innovation and new delivery methods

Supporting aspirations through a **Creating Futures and Life Chances** work programme to include the following priorities:

- Training and employment programmes (including construction training)
- Delivering bespoke projects like community-led housing schemes, providing homes for young people

New homes and place-making

Waltham Forest's annual housing target has been increased by the Mayor of London from 862 homes (London Plan 2016) to 1,794 homes (Draft London Plan 2018) with a strategic target of 50% of all additional housing to be affordable. To help realise this ambitious new target, the Mayor of London is providing support to local authorities and housing associations to build new affordable homes.

The focus for this work stream will be to:

- Provide strategic oversight from the Housing Partnership Board on affordable housing delivery
- Work towards Waltham Forest's proposed annual housing target (Draft London Plan 2018) of 1,794 homes, 50% of which to be affordable
- Identify and utilise additional resources such as the GLA Housebuilding Capacity Fund to increase and accelerate affordable housing delivery
- Input into the Draft London Plan 2018 and emerging Local Plan in order to increase and accelerate affordable housing delivery
- Ensure that new affordable housing meets design standards required by local and regional planning policy
- Ensure housing delivery work is aligned with the Waltham Forest and London Housing Strategy objectives

Creating futures and promoting life chances

The Waltham Forest Commission on Life Chances reported recently on the challenges faced by young people in particular in accessing the support and opportunities they need to fully realise their potential. We would like to explore with our partners ways in which we can help young people access the housing they need.

The focus for this work stream will be to:

- Help young people into careers in the housing sector that will give them the income they need to sustain their own home
- Offer products targeted at young people and families that will support their housing choices
- Help residents into education, training, enterprise and employment through working with education institutions
- Provide more and better coordinated opportunities for apprenticeships and work experience

Theme 2

Tackling and preventing homelessness

Tackling homelessness through a **Meeting Housing Needs** work programme to include the following priorities:

- Providing support and assistance to prevent residents becoming homeless
- Providing good quality alternatives to temporary accommodation

Meeting Housing Needs

The Council is committed to providing a decent roof over all our residents' heads but, like other local authorities, is facing significant budgetary challenges in meeting the housing needs of households to whom we have a rehousing duty, particularly in providing temporary accommodation.

In line with the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act, we have adopted a prevent first approach, and are working with partners to try and identify those most at risk of homelessness in order to help them resolve any issues that may result in them losing their home.

The focus for this work stream will be to:

- Work with our housing association partners to share best practice and learning about tenancy sustainment and homelessness prevention
- Working towards a common housing register for the borough

Theme 3

Ensuring decent, safe and healthy homes

Ensuring decent homes through the New Homes and Place-making theme above and work streams on **tackling anti-social behaviour, coordinating fire safety** and delivering **high quality services to residents**

Tackling anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) ruins the experience of living in a community for all concerned. Waltham Forest Council is refreshing its approach to tackling ASB, and wants to work with its partners to understand what interventions are necessary to make a lasting difference for the better.

The focus for this work stream will be to:

- Understand how the Council can support its housing association partners where ASB is an issue for their residents
- Ensure that ASB is reported to the right people and dealt with by the teams best placed to do so
- Link up with other local authorities and the Greater London Authority on joint initiatives

Coordination of borough-wide work on fire safety

Following the Grenfell fire in June 2017, fire safety in social housing has become a national priority. The Hackitt Review has made its recommendations to government which are being considered for implementation, but the Grenfell Inquiry is still ongoing.

The focus for this work stream will be to:

- Ensure information and best practice for all social housing is shared between partners across the borough to ensure the safety of its residents
- Prepare for implementation of recommendations made by government on fire safety

Ensuring we are providing a high quality service to residents

The first step in this is to understand how our partnership is doing in relation to the things that matter to all our residents.

Partners will work together to agree a common set of indicators to report against annually that will enable the Partnership to report on our collective progress on the agreed Housing Compact priorities. This is because Council Members and residents are keen to understand better how local housing associations are performing; how that performance compares to that of the Council's own landlord function; housing associations' approaches to service charges; and how all KPI information can be collated into a wider annual report. This report is expected to convey the important role that housing associations play in delivering individual and community wellbeing outcomes for the borough's residents.

The focus for this work stream will be to:

- Agree on KPIs that should be reported on (see Appendix 1)
- Produce an annual report on agreed performance indicators

Theme 4

Think Family, Think Housing, Think Work: inclusive and sustainable neighbourhoods

Creating inclusive and sustainable neighbourhoods through some of the work programmes already identified above, but also work programmes on **London Borough of Culture, improved methods of resident engagement and dealing with complaints** and **coordinating community investment**.

London Borough of Culture 2019

The Mayor of London announced in February 2018 that Waltham Forest would be the first London Borough of Culture in 2019. The programme will put culture at the heart of the local community and inspire a new generation of creative talent. Housing associations as the social landlord of over 14,500 households in Waltham Forest have a crucial role to play in ensuring that residents have access to all the events and opportunities that arise from the London Borough of Culture and the legacy that will follow.

The focus for this work stream will be to:

- Initiate, develop and fund events for the London Borough of Culture programme
- People Power the London Borough of Culture
- Develop a legacy programme for residents based around culture, enterprise, employment and training

Adopting improved methods of resident engagement and dealing with complaints

The Government's 2018 Housing Green Paper makes reference to tenant dissatisfaction with how tenants are engaged with; how tenants' complaints are dealt with; how residents can be empowered to contribute towards improving services in the borough; and broader concerns about the transparency of housing associations and other social landlords.

A concern for the Council is that all the important work that housing associations regularly undertake is undermined by a minority of complaints that could have been managed more effectively and efficiently.

The Council wishes to explore whether there are local mediation options as referenced by the Housing Green Paper that might provide a better experience for both tenants and landlords to resolve complaints more effectively and efficiently and to agree a common protocol for resolving resident complaints where they have reached Members.

The focus for this work stream will be to:

- Improve tenant engagement
- Review and improve tenants' complaints handling
- Review how residents can be empowered to contribute towards improving services in the borough

Coordinating community investment to help promote resilient communities

Both the Council and its housing association partners spend significant sums of money on investment initiatives in the borough to support community resilience. This will help tackle the stigma associated with social housing by bringing communities together, regardless of tenure, by coordinating community investment and providing residents with the resources and opportunities they need to realise their ambitions.

The focus for this work stream will be to:

- Secure maximum value from community investment initiatives
- Collectively agree what initiatives, such as tackling anti-social behaviour, should be prioritised
- Jointly bid for resources from funding initiatives from the Greater London Authority or central government that may arise, for e.g. DWP Community Investment Fund to support people into work

Appendix 1 Performance Measures and Indicators

Part of the work of the Compact will be to agree a common set of performance indicators to monitor and measure the outputs and outcomes from the work streams.

The Council and the registered providers already have a comprehensive set of key performance indicators (KPIs) that are part of individual organisations' performance management as well as regulatory requirements. Some of the common and shared indicators would include:

- % Rent collected from current and former tenants as proportion of rent due
 - % Repairs completed in target time
 - % Respondents satisfied with last completed repair
 - % Appointments kept as % of appointments made
 - % Properties with a valid gas safety certificate
 - % Complaints responded to on target
 - Average re-let time (days)
- The Compact will also have some more Housing Charter (HC) and borough specific performance measures, including but not limited to:
- Percentage of tenants satisfied that their views are listened to and acted on (HouseMark definition) (HC1)
 - Proportion of tenants satisfied with service by ethnicity, gender, age, disability (HC2)
 - Type of resident engagement and number/ proportion of local residents engaged (HouseMark definition) (HC3)
 - Percentage of member enquiries responded to in 10 calendar days (HC4)
 - Percentage of dwellings that are non-decent at the end of the year (Housemark definition) (HC5)
 - Average number of calendar days taken to complete repairs (HouseMark definition) (HC6)
 - Satisfaction with ASB case outcome (Housemark definition) (HC7)
 - Satisfaction that rent provides value for money (HouseMark definition) (HC9)
 - Number of apprenticeships, work experience and job opportunities offered (construction and others) (HC11)
 - Number of local people successfully taking up apprenticeships, work experience and job opportunities (HC11)
 - Number of new affordable homes built by tenure by year (HC12)
 - The level of energy efficiency and sustainability of the new homes
 - Percentage of expenditure spent with local SMEs in the supply chain
 - Number of homelessness preventions through tenancy sustainability interventions (HC13)
 - Types of community investment programmes in the borough and resources invested in these programmes

Registered Providers in Waltham Forest

Registered Provider / Housing Association
London & Quadrant
Peabody Housing Trust
Clarion Housing Group
Islington & Shoreditch Housing Association
Christian Action Housing Association
Metropolitan Thames Valley
Waltham Forest Housing Association
YMCA East
Notting Hill Genesis
PA Housing
North London Muslim Housing Association
Newlon Housing Trust
Southern Housing Group
Sanctuary Housing
Paradigm Housing
Anchor Hanover
Places for People
Orbit Homes
Network Housing Association
Local Space
One Housing Group
Habinteg Housing Association
A2Dominion
Riverside Group
Richmond Fellowship
Salvation Army Housing Association
Tamil Housing
Teachers' Housing Association
Home Group
Housing 21
Look Ahead
Centrepoint
Swan
Catalyst
Waltham Forest Housing (Waltham Forest Council)

For more information about this Housing Compact please contact:

Housing Strategy Team

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Cedar Wood House

2d Fulbourne Road

London E17 4GG

Tel: 020 8496 5549

Email: Housingcompact@walthamforest.gov.uk

Web: www.walthamforest.gov.uk/housing