

**A PLACE WE CAN ALL
CALL HOME:**

**LAMBETH HOUSING
STRATEGY
2023 – 2030**

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FOREWORD

Lambeth is a fantastic place to live with a strong and diverse community of which we are all proud to be a part. However, like every borough in London, we are facing significant housing challenges.

Thirteen years of austerity, combined with significantly increasing housing costs, have placed huge strain on the availability of affordable housing of all types and tenures in our borough. The lack of investment from the government for new affordable housing, improving existing housing or supporting residents who need housing has had a profound impact on many people in the borough – from the families left on the waiting list for a decent and affordable home to those facing ever-rising private rents.

These pressures have many different impacts on the lives of Lambeth residents – from the health of residents living in poor quality housing to the inability for local workers like teachers and nurses to live in a stable and affordable home near their place of work.

Despite 13 years of government policies that have tied the hands of local authorities, Lambeth council has worked to alleviate the pressures of the housing crisis on local people. As one of the largest social housing landlords in the country, we've invested over £500 million pounds into our council homes. We've set up an in-house repairs team to improve services for tenants. And we're proud to have built the first new council houses in a generation – each providing a safe, secure and better home for a local family in need.

But to meet our Borough Plan ambition to make Lambeth a place we can all call home, we know that we need to intervene much more to deliver the affordable housing that local people need. That means focusing on using our land to deliver brand new council homes, built to high design and sustainability standards. Each new home is a lifeline for those who would otherwise be left on our waiting list or in overcrowded or insecure housing.

It means working with housing associations and house builders to deliver new affordable homes and pursuing innovative new approaches including community land trusts. It also means reducing the number of empty homes by bringing vacant properties back into use quicker for those who need them.

It means tackling housing insecurity in all tenures and in all parts of our borough, from driving up the quality of temporary accommodation, to introducing additional licensing to improve the conditions of those in the private rented sector. It also means building on our record as one of the most effective boroughs in London at preventing homelessness. Our new partnership with The Royal Foundation is underpinned by a conviction that we can end homelessness – and a commitment to make it rare, brief and unrepeatable.

There remain areas which require more significant investment, and all our homes will require major improvements if we are to meet our ambitious commitments to tackle the climate emergency. We will need major investment from central government to deliver these commitments to retrofitting and improving our homes and helping our residents live more sustainably.

Covid-19, and more recently the cost-of-living crisis, have exacerbated existing inequalities in Lambeth and now it is more important than ever that we do all we can to make Lambeth a borough of equity and justice, providing the appropriate support to those that need it most.

This new strategy sets out to tackle these issues and aims to sets out our housing offer to people, whether they are young people in need of special support, groups of friends renting

privately, families looking for an affordable home, people who live in properties with damp, or older people who need support.

A key part will be a cultural change in how we deliver services to make sure that residents' lived experiences are put at the centre of all that we do. Our number one priority for this strategy is to ensure resident needs are at the centre of service delivery and drive improvement.

Our strategy is centred around the following themes:

1. More Affordable Homes
2. Delivering Excellent Housing and Repair Services
3. Supporting Healthy and Safe Neighbourhoods

It sets out our commitment to address the housing crisis and deliver our ambition of making Lambeth a place we can all call home. We look forward to working with you to make that happen.

Councillor Maria Kay

Cabinet member for Housing and Homelessness

INTRODUCTION – HOUSING IN LAMBETH

Lambeth is a thriving borough of energy and opportunity. For generations, Lambeth has attracted people from across the country and abroad who want to make the borough home, drawn by its openness and vibrancy. A large and varied borough, Lambeth has a truly global population, home to over 40 countries of birth, with 130 languages spoken. From the buzzing South Bank and bustling centres of Brixton and Vauxhall to the greenery of Brockwell Park and Clapham Common, Lambeth has something for everyone. It is this unique offer which makes Lambeth a great place to live, work and visit.

Despite this, inequalities persist across the borough. Lambeth is one of the most deprived boroughs in London, with levels of deprivation and health inequalities significantly higher amongst our diverse communities. Residents across Lambeth continue to grapple with social and economic uncertainty, exacerbated by the cost of living crisis, with households making tougher choices than ever.

London has a significant housing crisis and Lambeth is no different. Our teachers, social workers and other key workers are increasingly unable to afford housing either to buy or rent, and many young people struggle to afford to continue living in the borough. Employers in our most exciting industries cite the lack of affordable housing as a barrier to growth and providing more employment opportunities for our residents. Citizens Advice has reported rapidly rising rent arrears among housing benefit recipients, along with rising rates of eviction from the private rented sector and a growing risk of homelessness.

These challenges have only exacerbated the existing lack of affordable housing across the UK, but especially in London. Average rents are now higher than their pre-pandemic levels in all boroughs across the capital – London rents have increased by an average of 15.8% over the year to June 2022, in part due to a substantial decrease in supply, with 35% fewer rental properties listed across London in the first quarter of 2022. Fewer affordable properties render the rental market increasing inaccessible to many, especially at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates.

Changing policy context

Understanding the complex housing policy context at local, regional and national levels reveals both the challenges and the opportunities for housing in Lambeth. These national and regional trends have deeply influenced the Lambeth housing environment. The council has seen a marked change in the relative numbers of local authority and registered provider dwellings over the past 20 years, largely due to the Right to Buy policy introduced in 1980. With less housing now available and prices rising, many Lambeth residents are struggling to afford living in the borough, whether in social housing or the private rented sector. Many households who are renting in the private sector face barriers accessing affordable, secure, and high-quality accommodation. Lambeth currently has approximately four thousand households in temporary accommodation, and many individuals and families are at risk of homelessness.

Safe, affordable housing is desperately needed locally, regionally, and nationally, and it is vital that this housing is provided with the climate emergency in mind. In 2019, Lambeth became the first borough in London to declare a climate emergency, and as part of this, Lambeth has committed to be to be a net-zero council and to support the borough to achieve net-zero compatibility by 2030. However, energy use in homes accounts for the largest share (42.21%) of Lambeth's carbon dioxide emissions. Lambeth is already progressing efforts to make homes more energy efficient, retrofit homes, and utilise renewable energies,

but there will be more work to do in the coming years to ensure housing is affordable and sustainable.

Looking to the future, a range of legislation has been introduced since the publication of our last housing strategy, with implications for local authorities and the housing sector. In 2018, the Government lifted the borrowing cap which had been placed on local authorities' Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA), giving some local authorities greater room to manoeuvre in regard to the development of council homes. However, continued restrictions on Right to Buy receipts, a lack of government grant and caps on the funding for the Housing Revenue Account have restricted councils' abilities to take advantage of these changes. It is against this backdrop of constrained financial resources that housing need has risen while the supply of good quality homes has been under increasing pressure.

The introduction of Universal Credit in 2017 has brought about changes to the welfare system and how people claim benefits. Other changes include the introduction of the two-child limit benefit cap and the freezing of the local housing allowance (LHA) rate at 30% of market rates. The Homelessness Reduction Act in 2017 introduced new duties for local authorities to relieve homelessness and prevent homelessness, focusing on the provision of more personalised support. In 2022, the central government released its national rough sleeping strategy, which lays out a whole-of-government approach to ending rough sleeping which promises to collaborate with local government housing sectors. Additionally, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced a statutory definition for domestic abuse for the first time and placed a duty on local authorities in England to provide safe accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children.

In 2017, 72 people tragically lost their lives in the Grenfell Tower fire. The subsequent Grenfell Tower Inquiry was established in 2017 to understand the circumstances surrounding the fire and the causes of these events. Following the Grenfell Tower fire and serious concerns about the fire safety and quality of higher-risk buildings across the country, the Building Safety Act 2022 was introduced to provide a framework and series of standards around the building and development of new homes. The legislation establishes new regulators to provide oversight and provides clarification around the liability for remedial works.

Looking forward to 2030, there are likely to be further legislative changes at a national level that affect housing. These include reforms to the private rented sector. Currently, households in Lambeth renting in the private rented sector can find themselves at risk of eviction without reason. The Renters Reform Bill seeks to end this practice and improve support for private renters. We will continue to follow the progress of this legislation closely, as well as the progress of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, which was introduced in May of 2022 and proposes various planning, land, and housing reforms to increase the supply and quality of affordable housing.

In 2018, the social housing green paper, "A new deal for social housing," was published, setting out new principles to guide social housing delivery. These included improving how complaints are resolved, building social homes, and empowering tenants while strengthening the regulator of social housing. In response, the Government introduced the Social Housing Regulation Bill (Awaab's Law), which aims to improve the standard of social housing in the UK and will require social landlords to fix hazards, such as damp and mould, in their homes within strict time limits. We will monitor this legislation closely as well.

Lastly, the Social Care White paper (2021) highlights the importance of meeting people's day-to-day health and social care needs at the neighbourhood level, where possible. The

White Paper emphasises the significant role of high-quality housing in delivering this objective and further legislation which addresses housing and social care needs together will be of interest.

Housing is a right

We believe housing is a right. Housing is the basis of stability and security for individuals and families. As the centre of our social, emotional and economic lives, a home should be a sanctuary – a place to live in peace, security and dignity. Having access to a secure and affordable home is often a prerequisite to having healthy social, emotional, and economic ties.

The United Nations has declared adequate housing a right. Adequate housing means having an affordable and secure tenure, a safe structure, and access to appropriate services, schools, and employment. The UN Human Rights Report on the “Right to Adequate Housing” outlines these criteria in detail:

- **Security of tenure:** Residents must have a degree of tenure security which guarantees legal protection against forced evictions, harassment, and other threats.
- **Availability of services, materials, facilities, and infrastructure:** Housing is not adequate if residents do not have safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, energy for cooking, heating, lighting, food storage or refuse disposal.
- **Affordability:** The cost of housing must not threaten or compromise residents’ enjoyment of other human rights.
- **Habitability:** Housing is not adequate if it does not guarantee physical safety and / or provide adequate space, as well as protection against the cold, damp, heat, rain, wind, other threats to health and structural hazards.
- **Accessibility:** The specific needs of disadvantaged and marginalized groups must be considered.
- **Location:** Housing is not adequate if it is cut off from employment opportunities, health-care services, schools, childcare centres, and other social facilities, or if located in polluted or dangerous areas.
- **Cultural adequacy:** Housing must respect and consider the expression of cultural identity.

OUR HOUSING VISION AND PRIORITY THEMES

Lambeth has a long history of providing opportunities and support to improve the lives of our residents.

Our borough plan, Lambeth 2030, has set a clear, bold ambition to make Lambeth A Place We Can All Call Home. Housing is central to this ambition. We want our residents to have safe, secure and well-designed homes within which they can raise families, live well and independently, and have the conditions to thrive in good quality employment. These homes will be in neighbourhoods which are fit for the future, promoting good health and wellbeing and which are clean, vibrant and sustainable. We also want Lambeth to be a home for those who are fleeing persecution, providing refuge and safety in our wonderful borough.

Our vision for housing in Lambeth is:

For all residents to have access to and benefit from safe, secure and high-quality local homes which are affordable and provide sanctuary, stability and the best conditions to grow up and age well – across all tenures.

To deliver this vision, we have identified 3 priority themes to guide us over the next five years:

PRIORITY ONE: MORE AFFORDABLE HOMES

Lambeth will lead the way in providing more genuinely affordable homes for residents, making best use of resources, levers and opportunities to innovate.

PRIORITY TWO: DELIVERING EXCELLENT HOUSING & REPAIR SERVICES

Lambeth will put residents first, providing services which value and meet the needs of residents – and rectify things if they go wrong.

PRIORITY THREE: SUPPORTING HEALTHY AND SAFE NEIGHBOURHOODS

Lambeth housing will be at the centre of safe and sustainable places, which support health and wellbeing.

These principles of adequate housing are fundamental to our vision and priorities in this strategy. By delivering our commitments within our housing strategy, we aim to honour our residents' right to adequate housing so Lambeth can be a place we all call home.

STATE OF THE BOROUGH

Population	
The last census in March 2021 showed that Lambeth had grown 4.8% in the last 10 years to a population of 321,813.	In Lambeth, 8.25% of residents identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or as another non-heterosexual sexuality, making Lambeth 2 nd in London and 3 rd in the UK in LGB+ residents as a proportion of our population
Lambeth is the 5th most densely populated borough in England and Wales. 70% of people live in flats, many with limited access to green space.	Lambeth is disproportionately a borough of young adults. Lambeth has significantly fewer residents aged 15 and under and 65 and over, but significantly more residents aged 25-34 (nearly twice the national average).
Overall, Lambeth has the 12 th largest number of residents with a non-UK national identity in the country, and the 8 th largest in London.	Half of Lambeth households are deprived in at least one dimension of deprivation (dimensions are education, employment, housing and health).
The top three largest sole national identities in Lambeth are, in descending order, Portuguese (fourth largest population in the UK), Spanish (third largest in the UK), and Irish.	Social renters are over three times more likely to live in deprived households compared to private
The most spoken languages in Lambeth besides English are Spanish and Portuguese. Among these language communities, nearly one in three and over one in four, respectively, cannot speak English well / very well.	18.97% of Lambeth households experience housing-related deprivation. This means nearly 1 in 5 households experience either a combination of overcrowding (10.56%), living in a shared dwelling (0.39%), or lacking central heating (2.61%).
Lambeth is one of the most ethnically diverse boroughs in the UK. Lambeth is home to the 3rd largest Black / Black British community nationally and in London at 24% of the population.	Accordingly, families in Lambeth are significantly more likely to experience deprivation than the national average.
Housing market and housing suitability	
The average house price in Lambeth in July 2023 was £556,000 (Land Registry), which is slightly higher than the average for London but more than double the national average.	Larger families may be further affected by the benefit cap, meaning families with three children may have just £150 per week to support their rent costs, which drops to £83 for families with four children.
The average median monthly private rent for a two-bedroom property in Lambeth in 2022 was £1,750 per month which is higher than the average rent in London (figures from the GLA).	The average percentage of predicted properties with category 1 hazards (where enforcement notices require action) in Lambeth is 25%, with the highest proportion of unsuitable properties with category 1 hazards found in Coldharbour (over 40%).

Housing tenure	
There is a fairly even split of household tenure in Lambeth –with around a third of households being social renters, private renters, and owner-occupiers.	The private renting through a private landlord or letting agency in Lambeth makes up 29.1% of residents’ housing.
Households in Lambeth are considerably less likely to be owner-occupiers than the national average.	Compared to London, Lambeth households are disproportionately private and social renters. The wards with the greatest proportion of social renters are in northeast Lambeth. Brixton North is the highest (54.12%, vs the borough average of 33.59%).
Housing composition	
In Lambeth, 50.1% of households are single family, 32% are one-person, and 17.9% are other household types.	Lambeth has overall fewer single-family households than London (58%) and England (63%). However, it does have slightly more single parent and families where the parents are not married or in a civil partnership.
Homelessness applications	
The average homeless application rate in Lambeth is 10.9 per 1,000 households, with notably higher rates in 9 out of 21 wards.	Coldharbour and St Leonard’s wards have the highest homelessness application rates per 1,000 households.
Climate and housing	
Energy use in homes accounts for the largest share (42.21%) of Lambeth’s emissions.	To achieve our target of being a net-zero compatible borough we need to be retrofitting 6,300 homes per year.
Housing needs	
The proportion of residents applying for council housing register over the last two years varies by ward, with more applications being received from residents living in wards south-east of the borough compared to other parts of Lambeth.	The wards with the proportion of residents applying for the council housing register were Streatham (1), Gipsy Hill (2), and Streatham Hill (3).
Waiting list figures	
The council receives over 3,000 new housing applications a year, and there are currently over 40,000 people already on the list. Each year, the council houses about 800 people.	Roughly a quarter of households on the register are families with children.
Housing affordability	
According to the ONS, in 2022 Lambeth had a median housing affordability ratio of 14.36,	Households in Lambeth need to have an income of over £57,000 per annum to be able to

<p>meaning the average full-time employee in Lambeth could expect to spend 14.36 times their gross annual earnings purchasing a home in the borough. This is compared to 12.54 in London.</p>	<p>reasonably afford to rent a two-bed flat in the borough, yet average household income in the borough is only £38,000 (in 2021).</p>
<p>Larger families may be further affected by the benefit cap, meaning that families with three children may have just £150 per week to support their rent costs, which drops to £83 for families with four children.</p>	<p>There is a wide discrepancy in housing costs in Lambeth between affordable and private options. For households on benefits, which are currently capped at £442 per week in London, rents in the borough are prohibitive.</p>
<p>There are five wards where the housing affordability ratio exceeds the borough average.</p>	<p>Compared to other parts of the borough, housing in Oval, Clapham Common, Bishop's and Prince's wards is much less affordable.</p>
<p>As of August 2023, there were 4,116 households in temporary accommodation over the last five years is 819.</p>	<p>17% of Lambeth residents aged 65+ cited the need for affordable, decent housing for rent as one of the key issues that needs improving in the borough. (Lambeth Residents Survey 2021)</p>

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

<p>In November 2020, two HFL schemes were featured in the New London Architecture's (NLA) Zero Carbon London Report. The report by the NLA showcased 80 projects that showcase excellent environmental design and contribute to London's ambition to become a low carbon city.</p>	<p>Phase 1 of the Somerleyton Road development was successfully completed in 2022 and includes the refurbishment of the locally listed Carlton Mansions (Block A) and the construction of the new Brixton House Theatre (Block B).</p>
<p>We entered into a development agreement with London Square to deliver 240 homes, 50% affordable (70% are social rent and 30% are shared ownership).</p>	<p>The council received £200k of grant funding from the GLA's Land for Council Homes Revenue Fund, matched with £200k of council funding, to explore the feasibility of four sites for residential development and the delivery of affordable homes. The work to assess sites' feasibility will be completed by the end of the 23-24 financial year."</p>
<p>We have continued to fund 52 refuge bedspaces for women and their children fleeing domestic abuse. This is the greatest number of commissioned bedspaces in London and nearly twice the London average, and 84% of these are culturally specific services.</p>	<p>Lambeth Housing have continued to fund the Sanctuary Scheme, delivered by the Gaia Centre, and providing risk assessment and enhanced security measures to allow victims and survivors to remain in their own homes.</p>
<p>There were 2,876 homelessness prevention cases undertaken by Lambeth Council in the last financial year. The most recent government data reports Lambeth as one of the best performing councils in London in this area, preventing more homelessness than anyone else.</p>	<p>We have secured £11m grant funding over four years to support our rough sleepers, enabling us to expand our offer. The number of entrenched rough sleepers has decreased by over 80% over the last year. The Lambeth Housing First pilot has completed its first year and has been a huge success.</p>
<p>In 2022, we agreed the Damp Charter. This statement is a series of commitments about how we will support tenants who have a problem with damp. The Charter includes arranging a quick diagnosis, remedy and ongoing support. We have introduced a rapid response service to deal with mould removal and treatment.</p>	<p>We have carried out 16,750 stock condition surveys plus 2,700 external surveys on our stock. These surveys are going to be used to inform a new Asset Management Strategy and investment plan. They will also help identify where homes are prone to damp so that a targeted approach can be taken. The data will also inform the council on which homes are suitable to retrofit and insulate in order to reach our carbon reduction aspirations.</p>
<p>We are also surveying our residents to identify where they have any specific needs and referring them to other services as required. The neighbourhood management teams have been working on their 'vulnerability surveys' with over 5,000 completed. The rent collection team have also been proactively out and about, visiting over 500 tenants who need the most support in</p>	<p>Lambeth Council and a charity partner are working on a new pilot programme to reduce the risk of homelessness faced by women and girls who have survived violence and abuse. The experience of the women and girls will be central to the work. Lambeth Council is one of four London boroughs that will be working with the charity Against Violence and Abuse (AVA) on</p>

<p>paying their rent and making sure they don't lose their homes.</p>	<p>the programme, after successfully applying for the support.</p>
<p>We completed over 520 home visits to those with the highest level of arrears and hardest to engage with.</p>	<p>Lambeth Council have welcomed and found accommodation for 31 families under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme between 2018 and 2021 and 14 families under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy/Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme since 2021.</p>
<p>Lambeth Council has supported 655 Ukrainian guests in their sponsors accommodation and has the lowest sponsorship breakdown rate in London.</p>	<p>We have finished the re-cladding on Kelvedon House and started re-cladding on Rundle Towers and Meath House.</p>
<p>We are installing approximately 60 new fire doors a week and we have installed 100 new bike stands.</p>	<p>Lambeth Housing Partnership is now well established and has been cited by G15 and ward members as good practice.</p>
<p>HFL Homes delivered 16 new homes at Knights Walk estate, located on Renfrew Road, Kennington. The previous low-rise development has been transformed into a and sustainable 5-storey building, with the extra space being used as a garden.</p>	<p>The 30 home development, South Lambeth Estate, was completed in October 2022. It includes 25 social rent homes and 5 homes offering an opportunity for existing leaseholders to remain on the estate as part of the council's key guarantees.</p>

PRIORITY ONE: MORE AFFORDABLE HOMES

FOREWORD

As an inner-London borough, Lambeth is at the forefront of the national housing crisis. This crisis is taking place at a time when, in common with many other local authorities, the council's financial resources continue to be impacted by 13 years of austerity. The housing crisis has created an under supply of affordable homes for those on lower incomes and contributed to rising costs in the private rental market both of which are often the root cause of housing problems including overcrowding and homelessness. Lambeth currently has approximately 4,000 households in temporary accommodation and over 40,000 on the waiting list for social housing.

Housing costs are increasingly forcing people to move out of the borough. This disrupts family and friendship groups, contributes to skills shortages in key sectors such as health, education and social care and has a detrimental effect on neighbourhood networks and neighbourhood stability.

Lambeth is the fourth most densely populated of London's 33 local authority areas, with around 85 people living on each football pitch-sized area of land. This presents a significant challenge when seeking available land to develop much-needed affordable housing, with extremely high land costs, a shortage of developable land and constraints on existing sites available for development.

Despite strong progress on delivering affordable housing through the planning route, with Lambeth consistently exceeding its targets from the Mayor of London for new affordable homes each year, and the delivery of the first new council homes in a generation in recent years, much more needs to be done to deliver more affordable homes, particularly those at council rent.

In response to these challenges, in summer 2022, Lambeth council commissioned a review of Lambeth's housing programme, carried out by independent Peer Lord Kerslake, to look at how Lambeth could accelerate the delivery of affordable housing in the borough and in particular, homes at social rent which are genuinely affordable for local families.

The review highlighted that over 2,400 affordable homes have been delivered in Lambeth since 2017, the 13th highest in London, and it praised the council's approach to delivering new affordable housing with high sustainability standards in line with the council's commitments to tackle the climate crisis.

However, the Kerslake Review highlighted significant delivery challenges in the council's wholly-owned housing company Homes for Lambeth, - as a result, the council has committed to lead on the delivery of all future homes built on its own land.

The review also considered how Lambeth's housing delivery commitments could be met alongside its commitments as the first London borough to declare a climate emergency, as well as recommending a reset of the council's estate renewal programme on three estates in the borough.

These recommendations have informed the development of this strategy.

This chapter of the new Housing Strategy sets out the council's proactive and strategic approach to the delivery of affordable housing in Lambeth by setting out how land and property is identified, assessed, prioritised and delivered.

Cllr Danny Adilypour,
Deputy Leader of the Council (Sustainable Growth and New Homes)

Our Plan sets out how the council will deliver its commitments, by:

- *Building new homes* – through direct delivery, partnerships, and via others through the planning system
- *Buying more homes* – through registered provider and developer partners, via nomination rights, and directly to add to council stock where it is appropriate to do so, and by assessing opportunities to make best use of underutilised council property (including space above commercial premises and offices)
- *Making better use of existing homes* – including tackling vacant homes, incentivising efficient occupancy and investing in estate improvements

In addition, our plan sets out how we will:

- Tackle the Climate Crisis - the council's approach to innovation in delivery and sustainability, including support for a Passivhaus demonstrator project and exploring how innovative solutions like modular housing and co-living models can be used to increase supply.
- Work with Residents - to commit to including residents in the design process for new homes so that the homes we build reflect how people use their homes in the day to day thereby maximising the positive impacts the new homes have on peoples' lives.

Finally, in the context of a period of greatly increased construction costs impacting the financial viability of housing development across the country, the plan sets out the council's approach to resetting its financial framework to ensure it can continue to secure the delivery of much-needed new homes in the Borough now and into the future.

Building new homes

The administration's 2022 manifesto committed to tackling the housing crisis by delivering more high-quality affordable homes more quickly for more people. That commitment is reflected in the Lambeth 2030 Borough Plan, in which the council has committed to increase the supply of genuinely affordable housing and the quality of existing homes for residents who need them.

Over the next five years, the council will seek to deliver more new council homes for local people, by building on council-owned land, working with partners to bring forward land for affordable housing and progress with the renewal of estates that are no longer fit for purpose and where residents support change.

Since the reduction in grant funding for affordable housing in 2010, the social housing sector has been reliant on a cross subsidy model, where the profits used from homes aimed at higher earners fund affordable homes. House prices in Lambeth are still too high for many Lambeth residents to buy; the slowing growth in house prices and the increase in development costs is making the cross-subsidy model increasingly unviable.

At the time of writing, consumer price inflation is over 10% and construction activity has been falling consistently across the UK. The sector is facing huge increases in the cost of construction material prices, supply chain disruptions and ongoing shortages of construction workers. These challenges are impacting housebuilding programmes all over the country, with most major housing associations, councils and developers taking steps to curtail their house building programmes.

Building new homes requires a proactive and strategic approach to land where we identify land and under-used property which can be used for housing. In addition to the hundreds of council homes under construction, with planning permission or currently planned, we will

supplement the sites we are already progressing, and implement a clear and explicit approach for how council owned land and property are prioritised for development. This will include a proactive and strategic approach to identification, categorisation and appraisal of land and potential development sites by establishing a dedicated team to own a land register and development opportunity tracker for the borough.

The council will assess many factors to determine the best possible delivery route to provide more affordable homes in the borough and deliver estate renewal. In particular, this will consider the size, complexity, risk and cost of developing the site (including cost and risk of demolition, decant, planning, enabling works, site conditions, construction, sales); the potential to partner with adjacent landowners or council owned sites; the scope to optimise density; and if the site involves demolition of existing buildings.

The council's preferred approach to estate renewal and delivering new homes sites remains through direct delivery where possible. However, with economic circumstances and levels of risk, in-house delivery capacity and the competing demands for council resources this will not always be possible and we expect that some developments may be delivered via partnership models. The council will therefore have an open mind and look at a range of development models needed to deliver estate renewal and the new homes our residents need, whether direct delivery, joint ventures or development agreements.

As recommended in the Kerslake Review, we will robustly develop all possible options through the business case process, prioritising the approach that is able to deliver the highest levels of affordable and social housing, while remaining deliverable within the council's overall budgetary framework, alongside other capital priorities and at an acceptable level of risk.

Development Agreements will form part of the range of delivery methods explored by the council. This particular model would transfer key delivery risks to a commercial or Registered Provider third party who would be responsible for designing and delivering a scheme compliant with Lambeth's requirements, including for affordable housing to be retained by the council or a Registered Provider.

We will be careful stewards of our land and ensure that where disposals occur, the necessary checks and balances will be maintained within our agreements with partners to ensure the best possible value. We will undertake all activity necessary to secure the best social and financial return for our sites. This will include progressing design work and securing planning permission during adverse market conditions - which will allow sites to progress and accrue value.

On sites developed using council-owned land, the council is committed to targeting 50% affordable housing in aggregate across its own developments, in line with the policies of the Mayor of London. Within this 50% commitment, the council's ambition is to meet and exceed the provisions set out in the Lambeth Local Plan by ensuring that up to 70% of the affordable component is low cost rented homes.

Smaller sites identified as suitable for 100% affordable schemes will be considered for direct delivery by the council, subject to approval of a business case assessment.

The council has committed to supporting a pilot Community Land Trust scheme, as set out in the administration's manifesto, and to seek to identify potentially suitable sites for this model as part of the land review process.

The delivery of new affordable homes will be delivered through a mix of funding types, including grant funding from the GLA, right to buy receipts, section 106 receipt and cross subsidy from private sale. The council will continue to lobby for the Government to invigorate council house building by providing much-needed grant funding, removing restrictions on existing grants and allowing councils to retain all right to buy receipts to build additional homes.

While developments on council land are crucial to delivering homes Lambeth needs, we are also committed to maximising the number of genuinely affordable homes delivered through the planning system, specifically through London wide and borough specific policies for delivery of affordable housing within schemes. We will use our strategic approach to land planning to expand and refresh the pipeline of development sites and will work actively to foster relationships with registered providers and landowners in the Borough.

The council will actively engage and advise on affordable housing proposals including mechanisms to secure housing and housing nominations, including at the pre-application and planning application stages of development. The affordable housing element of new schemes should reflect the preferred borough-wide housing mix for social/affordable rented and intermediate housing: one-bedroom units (not more than 25%), two-bedroom units (25-60%) and three-bedroom+ units (up to 30%).

For market and intermediate housing, a balanced mix of unit sizes including family-sized accommodation shall be provided. The council agrees with the Mayor of London, that 80% of market rents is not affordable.

For intermediate housing, Lambeth supports the use of London Living Rents and community land trusts and shared ownership or discount sales schemes that demonstrate affordability. Prospective applicants can access intermediate properties through the Homes for Londoners portal (or equivalent). They are required to bid directly to developers or registered providers.

Our Tenancy Strategy 2020 stipulates the criteria which we expect providers to base their allocations on, prioritising homes for people with a local connection to the borough. Applicants can access intermediate housing, such as shared ownership schemes, on household incomes of up to £90,000 per year. However, many Lambeth residents cannot afford these homes, and Lambeth is trying to encourage more development of 'London Living Rent', a more accessible option to ownership with prices linked to local incomes to start with, allowing residents to save for a deposit.

The council will continue to promote and support the delivery of homes at both social rents and London Living Rent (intermediate housing). We are particularly committed to helping people access housing who are furthest away from the housing market, but we need a range of options including for those that are unlikely to ever access social housing. The council will also continue to support the delivery of self and custom housebuilding and community owned housing.

Buying more homes.

To maximise the number of genuinely affordable homes for local families, we will work with housing associations and developers to encourage the take up of affordable homes delivered through the planning system. The planning system at London-wide and borough level places requirements on developers to deliver affordable housing within developments of 10 or more residential units. Residential units secured as part of planning permissions are typically acquired by a registered provider.

We will put in place clear parameters for the council to act as a purchaser of affordable housing within developments as an alternative to these being purchased by a registered provider. This would be subject to business case approval in circumstances where developers may otherwise be able to reduce the number of affordable homes they provide on viability grounds. In circumstances where registered providers are able to purchase affordable housing within developments, this will remain the preferred route. The council will establish a programme to acquire vacant properties on the open market and make them available as affordable homes subject to a business case assessment.

We will proactively support third parties in reviewing opportunities to acquire vacant properties on the open market and make them available to the council for general needs, temporary, and other forms of accommodation. We will proactively investigate opportunities to stimulate provision of affordable homes by third parties through council intervention, for example by entering into allocation and nomination agreements, occupancy guarantees and other indirect support.

We will also explore grant funding models that enable the purchase of homes, including the Mayor of London's Right to Buyback Fund. Such schemes will be dependent on the level of grant and opportunities to purchase properties at affordable rates, but with the right conditions such schemes can be important avenues to reverse the loss of social housing triggered by the Right to Buy.

Making better use of existing homes.

Ensuring we make the best use of our existing stock and clamp down on those landlords that keep homes empty for years on end, are key steps to increasing the supply and availability of affordable homes in the borough. That is why the council has doubled council tax on those with empty homes.

For Lambeth council homes that are empty, we will work to turn around empty homes quicker after tenants move out and we will actively target the re-letting of long-term voids. Homes on estates planned for estate renewal made available for temporary and short-term rent to ensure estate renewal plans are not delayed by bringing these homes back into use.

As part of the land and assets review, subject to securing planning permissions we will identify opportunities to optimise council land and buildings including bringing space above commercial premises into residential use (e.g. shops), converting use from non-residential to residential where buildings are under-utilised, looking at in-fill options on existing estates and leveraging opportunities for 'Hidden' homes, including sensitive in-fill development and rooftop 'air rights' opportunities.

We will also review the existing incentives for optimising occupancy to ensure they are delivering the desired outcome - freeing up larger homes - by providing an attractive alternative to encourage people who can downsize to do so. To further make the best use of our stock, we will continue to take a robust approach to social housing fraud by undertaking tenancy checks to identify properties that have been illegally sublet or allocated based on false information.

Tackling the climate crisis

As the first borough in London (2019) to declare a climate emergency, Lambeth Council has made a bold commitment to be a net-zero council and to support the borough to achieve net-zero compatibility by 2030. The council is committed to prioritising housing delivery whilst remaining consistent with this ambition, because climate and social justice are inextricably

linked. We also recognise the important links between environmental factors and health and wellbeing.

Existing schemes by the council and Homes for Lambeth have achieved demonstrably high standards of sustainable development with the homes built using design standards dictating a Fabric First policy. With the new homes to be built by the council, we will continue to value the highest possible standard of sustainable design and construction.

In compliance with the London Plan 2021 net-zero policy, we will undertake careful planning of strategic and local infrastructure to make it more efficient and more resilient. In compliance with Lambeth Local Plan policy EN4 we will ensure that for new major development there should be a minimum on-site reduction of at least 35 per cent beyond Building Regulations, ideally striving for 50% in line with the GLA 2022 Energy Assessment Guidance. Residential development should achieve 10 per cent, and non-residential development should achieve 15 per cent through energy efficiency measures.

All new council homes will be built to high levels of energy efficiency, with homes that are more resilient to the impacts of climate change. All new developments will consider adequate shading solutions, minimising potable water consumption, additional ventilation, green roofs or other measures to reduce the accumulation of heat within a building as reasonably practicable. Resilience to extreme weather events will be built into the design of the homes and surrounding landscaping, for example incorporating sustainable drainage systems and including nature, wherever possible to help increase biodiversity and provide shading.

As recommended in the Kerslake Review report 2022, we will embed whole lifecycle carbon assessments into schemes, including estate renewal, and use this assessment to inform decision making on the scope and specification of new development. We will update our Employers Requirements, considering the circularity, recyclability and end of life of building materials, alongside deliverability.

We will investigate opportunities to Design for Manufacture and Assembly (DfMA) in order to reduce material waste and transport impact by using prefabricated systems designed for deconstruction for use elsewhere when the building has got to the end of its life. In line with our commitments to pursue innovation in sustainable development, we will undertake a Passivhaus demonstrator project to consider the benefits of this approach in comparison to other methods. This will build on the learnings of the Passivhaus approach taken in the delivery of the new homes at Akerman Road, which included the importance of post-occupancy evaluations to ensure standards are achieved and maintained and cost in use can be quantified to inform future developments.

The lack of Government investment in net-zero and sustainable development represents a significant barrier to local authorities that seek to increase affordable housing supply while acting in line with our net-zero commitments. We will seek to lobby for continued investment in sustainable and climate resilient affordable homes, while ensuring our business case process includes a balanced assessment of options including financial, social, economic, climate and environmental impacts and benefits.

Working with residents

By building homes that meet our residents' specific needs, we can support older residents or those with health conditions and other support needs to live independently for longer.

We are committed to including residents in the design process for new homes so that the homes and places we build reflect how people use their homes and neighbourhoods in the day to day, thereby maximising the positive impact the homes will have on peoples' lives, including on their health and wellbeing.

We want neighbourhoods to be places where residents can thrive and will design the communal and public areas around the new homes to increase residents' abilities to be physically active as well as foster confidence and reassurance with families that their children can play safely near their home, for example by improved natural surveillance in and around communal play areas. We will ensure that the homes we build meet the needs of all communities and support the variety of ways different communities use their homes, for example by building homes that support multi-generational households.

We are committed to working with residents in the delivery of more affordable housing to ensure local residents benefit from the investment being made on their doorstep, both in terms of the new homes but also the economic and social benefits arising from the development.

The council will take a fresh approach to estate renewal by working to build trust with residents, ensuring that genuine engagement and consultation is programmed and prioritised. Intentions and timelines will be clearly communicated through continued dialogue with residents and detailed within published Local Engagement Plans framed by the Estate Renewal Engagement Framework launched in 2023. The use of ballots will be introduced as a key milestone in the delivery of estate renewal, in accordance with the Mayor of London's grant conditions for estate regeneration. We will do so:

- *By Informing* – this is when the council provide residents with clear information about what is happening, what it means and how the decision was made.
- *By consulting* – the council will ask for residents' opinions on a proposal or options and then show how residents' feedback has influenced the final plan.
- *By involving* – by inviting you to take part in the delivery of renewal via workshops, meetings and resident panels.
- *By collaborating* – this is where the council will support residents to be part of decision making about the renewal of their estate, for example by supporting residents to create a residents' design brief which will be included in the procurement of any architects.

PRIORITY TWO: DELIVERING EXCELLENT HOUSING & REPAIR SERVICES

People are at the centre of our approach to housing. Our ambition is to be recognised as a centre of excellence in service delivery, taking a human-centred approach to providing the best customer experience to our residents. It is important to us that our residents feel that they can easily access top-quality housing services, access and interact with housing staff, and have their feedback listened to, considered and acted upon appropriately.

This is part of a larger cultural change which will put our residents' lived experiences at the heart of all that we do, taking a compassionate and empathetic approach. We will transform our services so that there is one 'front door' for residents, and work to ensure that the needs of residents are prioritised and met first time. We acknowledge the frustrations some residents have faced previously and will place a greater emphasis on getting the basics right, as part of an excellent housing service standard.

We know that the number one issue for our tenants and leaseholders right now is improving the repairs service - and this is our priority. Our support offer for Lambeth Council housing tenants includes our focus on tackling damp and mould which we know remains a real problem for many of our tenants, threatening good health and wellbeing. When repairs aren't done properly, this can lead to a range of subsequent problems and impact badly on residents' mental and physical health and on neighbourhoods. We understand how stressful it can be – and are determined to make the required improvements to minimise this experience for our residents.

The Repairs Service and Tackling Damp and Mould

"Housing is not adequate if it does not guarantee physical safety and / or provide adequate space, as well as protection against the cold, damp, heat, rain, wind, other threats to health and structural hazards." (United Nations, the Human Right to Adequate Housing).

Living in well-managed, good-quality housing is the minimum our residents deserve. We recognise that in a minority of cases the repairs service hasn't been meeting expectations. We have taken accountability and recognise the need to improve the quality of repairs, making it easy to raise repair requests and improve the overall customer experience – getting the job done right the first time as often as possible.

To improve this, the council has already taken action; during 2021, we commissioned new repairs contractors with contractual agreements that incentivise them to get things right the first time - and to invest in Lambeth's communities through our social value fund, so that residents benefit from new opportunities.

We have built measures into the contracts which allow us to take a robust approach to managing the contracts, to ensure they deliver to our expectations and those of our residents. But, recognising the importance of good relationships and our role as a landlord, we will look at options to deliver repairs services in-house where it is feasible and where we can secure better outcomes and better value for residents. This is particularly preferred in instances where we are providing services to vulnerable residents, as we strive to embed compassion throughout our services. Although the current financial context includes increased costs for material and labour and ongoing constraints on council finances, our ambition is to provide the best possible repairs service for our tenants.

We believe everyone should live in a warm and dry home. Damp, mould and condensation are issues that affect many homes in the UK, and nationally we have already seen the devastating consequences this can have. As a landlord, this is an issue we take extremely

seriously, as we want all our residents to have a safe and healthy home environment. Our overall approach for our housing stock will be multi-faceted – combining home condition surveys and evidence-based preventative maintenance strategies with enhanced support for tenants, and a rapid response to reported mould issues.

Our determination to overcome the challenges associated with damp and mould is outlined in the commitments within our Damp Charter, focused around quick diagnosis, remedy, prevention and ongoing support. We will not lose sight of these challenges or our commitments and will review the delivery and effectiveness of our response every year, to ensure residents have healthy home environments.

Providing the best housing management service for our residents

People are at the heart of our housing services – and we will take a resident-centred approach to delivering the best housing management services for residents. We continually review what we can do to improve housing management services in Lambeth – for example, using our tenant vulnerability surveys, which allow us to provide targeted support for residents which is appropriate for their needs. This includes carrying out an annual property MOT for those tenants, to ensure that the property continues to meet the right standard and the needs of the household, signposting or referring to advice or specialist support, or access to an enhanced repairs service.

We believe that our residents have a right to expect openness, transparency, and fairness from our housing service. To achieve this and deliver the best outcomes for residents, we know that we need to partner directly with residents to design services that they need.

It is our ambition to provide a high-quality and effective resident involvement service that is more representative of our borough, particularly increasing the participation of young people and other lesser represented groups. We want to improve transparency and communication to ensure that residents retain confidence that involvement is meaningful, and their views are incorporated into service delivery. And importantly, we are committed to being accessible, so that we can have a continued dialogue with residents, building the relationships required to better understand their needs, what is working well and what more we can do together to achieve and maintain excellent services.

Leading by example to tackle climate change

The largest proportion of the council's carbon emissions come from the use of gas and electricity to heat and power our homes. Our housing stock is relatively old, suffers from poor quality building in the 1960s and 1970s and requires significant investment to ensure everyone can live in a good home that is fit for the future.

The council has carried out the biggest ever comprehensive stock condition survey to help achieve this ambition. These surveys will be used to inform a new Asset Management Strategy and also identify where homes are prone to damp so that a targeted approach can be taken to ensure good quality across our housing stock.

The Asset Management Strategy will enable the council to get an in-depth insight into the property condition, investment needs, development opportunity and net zero requirements of its entire stock. This survey programme will be a key part of delivering our ambitious net zero target which will require huge investment across the council's portfolio. Some decarbonisation measures pay for themselves in the long term through reduced costs on energy bills, such as solar PV, LED lighting, and lower cost energy efficiency measures. The council is reviewing a number of finance options, including borrowing to invest in measures

and retrofit packages that can be funded through on-bill financing, to ensure that this is not a barrier to carrying out these essential interventions. However, heat decarbonisation measures like air source heat pumps do not in themselves reduce energy bills, and more costly fabric efficiency measures that are required for older buildings have very long payback periods. The council therefore requires more support from central government to finance these measures at scale. We recognise that the current financial environment is especially challenging with restrictions on the income to the council's Housing Revenue Account, and it is clear that government funding is crucial to achieving net zero by 2030. As both a landlord and a civic leader, we will continue to lobby government for the required support so that Lambeth residents are not left behind.

Lambeth was the first London borough to declare a climate and ecological emergency as a recognition of the threat posed by rising global temperatures and to make a clear statement of our commitment to playing our role in tackling the climate emergency.

The council has signed up to being carbon neutral in its operations and estate by 2030 – a hugely ambitious target that we are determined to deliver. Of all the operational emissions that come from buildings in the UK, 69% come from energy use in the domestic stock which alone is responsible for 18% of our annual national emissions. As part of our Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan, the council has committed to every council home having an EPC rating no lower than B by 2030.

In addition to improving our homes and reducing energy use, there are many other things we are doing to create a more sustainable future. Lambeth's estates are a haven for greenery and wildlife as well as a vital space for people and families to relax and enjoy the outdoors. Our estates have the potential to play a key role in mitigating the impact of climate change with resident involvement at the heart. We recognise the key role of environmental factors such as the importance of green and open spaces for the health and wellbeing of our residents and have made commitments to maintain grassed and planted areas to a high standard, to create areas that reflect biodiversity, improve air quality and reduce flood risk. We will also support residents to set up and maintain food growing spaces and community gardens. We know that summers in London will become hotter and that Lambeth will be more prone to flooding and to the impacts of air pollution. We can mitigate this by installing sustainable drainage systems, planting trees, increasing the biodiverse nature of our green spaces – supporting both our Kerbside and Urban Forest Strategies in the process.

Enabling sustainable travel

Lambeth Housing should be at the centre of sustainable neighbourhoods that are fit for the future – promoting healthy active lifestyles and supporting climate resilience and sustainability. As such, we are committed to promoting walking and cycling over private car use, by implementing measures that enable active travel. We are investing £500,000 in new cycle storage for residents of our housing estates and we are ensuring that our estates are well-connected with our low traffic neighbourhood and healthy route networks so that people of all ages and abilities can cycle safely. Our active travel team will continue to provide cycle training to residents on estates and support for people to be able to use cycles, particularly focusing on breaking down barriers to access for those on lower incomes, in line with our ambitions around equity and justice.

PRIORITY THREE: SUPPORTING HEALTHY AND SAFE NEIGHBOURHOODS

The homes and neighbourhoods we live in have an important influence on our health and wellbeing. We see housing as a crucial part of ensuring all residents have the best conditions and environment in which to grow up and age well, as emphasised in our Lambeth 2030 borough plan. The development of our Housing Strategy has been informed by Lambeth's new Health and Wellbeing Strategy which recognises the importance of both mental and physical good health, and the need to work together to support residents and to tackle health inequalities. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy highlights health inequalities in the borough and includes housing as one of the wider determinants which impact on people's health and wellbeing. Ensuring that everyone has a safe, warm, dry and affordable home which meets their needs is fundamental to becoming a borough of equity and justice. Our ambition is to put health and wellbeing at the centre of housing policy and delivery and provide the best housing options for Lambeth's diverse communities. We are committed to supporting people to live well independently for as long as possible, an approach which supports the council's ambition to become an age-friendly borough. Housing also plays a key role in our efforts to become one of the safest boroughs in London and we will focus our efforts to ensure that our residents are safe in their neighbourhoods, and in their homes.

To support healthy and safe neighbourhoods, we are committed to tackling homelessness, protecting private renters, preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, protecting families from domestic violence and abuse, and providing additional support to residents, including pathways to employment.

We are also committed to continuing to be a borough that welcomes sanctuary seekers, ensuring that they too can benefit from healthy and safe neighbourhoods, and eventually call Lambeth home.

Tackling these challenges will not be easy, and the council cannot do it alone. Partnership working is fundamental to our approach, and the Housing Strategy will follow the commitments in Lambeth 2030 to work in partnership with residents, local groups and organisations to overcome these challenges together – and make a difference for our residents.

Tackling homelessness

Like many areas, Lambeth has a growing homelessness challenge and is under increasing pressure to find suitable temporary accommodation for families. In January 2023 there were approximately 3,700 households in temporary accommodation, with around three-quarters of these being either families with children or pregnant women. Many people living in temporary housing do not feel a sense of pride where they live and feel disempowered. There is also an inequity challenge, with 80 per cent of homeless families in temporary accommodation being from a Black and Multi Ethnic background.

One key to solving this challenge is building more homes but we also need to support people now. Building on our success as one of the best performing councils in London in this area, Lambeth has recently entered a new partnership with The Royal Foundation, as part of the Homewards project focused on tackling homelessness. Homewards is a five-year, locally-led programme which will see the council work as part of a coalition of committed individuals, organisations, and businesses who will work together to create and deliver a tailored plan delivering solutions to prevent and end homelessness – with a focus on making it rare, brief, and unrepeatable.

Additionally, addressing the scale of the challenge surrounding homelessness will require us to continue the delivery of our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The strategy comprehensively sets out our approach, based around five priorities:

Priority 1

Ensuring that all people sleeping rough in Lambeth are supported off the streets and assisted in improving their lives and do not return to the streets.

Priority 2

Preventing homelessness by supporting households to remain in their homes or helping them to find alternative accommodation.

Priority 3

Establishing effective pathways internally, with public authorities and partner agencies, to prevent homelessness.

Priority 4

Making sure there is a supply of suitable accommodation for people to move into.

Priority 5

Improving the supply and sustainability of temporary accommodation.

Whilst the council will do all that it can to solve this significant issue, it is also crucial that we work with our partners to continue to lobby central government to provide funding to enable Lambeth to effectively tackle homelessness and rough-sleeping. We want central government to deliver on our asks as a borough, which are:

- Sustainable and long-term funding for local government and homelessness services.
- Supporting local authorities to build the affordable and good-quality homes needed to end the housing crisis.
- Ending the hostile environment to non-UK nationals.
- Early interventions to prevent homelessness.

Homelessness can affect anyone at any age. Lambeth has several people at any one time that are part of the 'hidden homeless' which means they are sofa surfing or have no fixed home of their own. For people under 25, those who identify as LGBTQ+ are more likely to be part of this 'hidden homeless' population, as they may lose their support system after coming out. To address some of these challenges, Lambeth is ensuring that all staff are trained in offering a safe and inclusive service to members of the LGBTQ+ community.

We will continue to support rough sleepers through our Rough Sleeping Outreach team, including those with No Recourse to Public Funds, to access appropriate accommodation and support services to meet their needs. This also includes night shelter provision, which supports people to access education, training and employment opportunities, private rented sector accommodation and immigration advice where appropriate.

We know that people who are homeless and sleeping rough, especially those with no recourse to public funds, may be at risk of exploitation such as being victims of modern slavery. We are committed to preventing and taking action against such forms of exploitation

at an early stage and will support the delivery of the council's annual statement of activities for tackling modern slavery.

Temporary accommodation remains an acute challenge across London. The vast majority of those needing temporary accommodation are placed in self-contained nightly booked accommodation sourced from private sector suppliers. However, there is not enough supply of good quality and suitable temporary accommodation in the borough to meet demand, which has led to the use of out-of-borough placements. Just a third of temporary accommodation households are in Lambeth with the remaining households elsewhere, principally in the neighbouring boroughs of Croydon, Southwark, Bromley and Lewisham. This is compounded by the fact that many of our in-borough placements are in costly private sector accommodation, which isn't a sustainable option and places additional strain on Lambeth's financial resources.

Innovative solutions are required to raise the standards of existing temporary accommodation in the borough and, additionally, increase the supply of good-quality and suitable temporary accommodation. To raise the standards of existing temporary accommodation, we are introducing software which will record safety compliance information for properties, and spot checks on property condition will also be carried out. Our ambition is to increase in-borough placements and reduce the dependency on the private sector, keeping our residents in their local neighbourhoods as much as possible.

Identifying opportunities to use our existing assets as temporary accommodation will also be an important part of the solution. It is also critical that we work in partnership with Registered Providers to access vacant sites, share learning on good working practices to improve standards and provide investment to support charities such as St. Mungo's to deliver new temporary accommodation. We will also seek out and review opportunities for joint venture schemes. With all these initiatives it's important that we are thinking – first and foremost – about the needs of the families who will be moving in.

We will also carry out a 'health-check' on our Allocations Policy to make sure that it is meeting its aims and making best use of available supply.

For those requiring housing advice and assistance, renting privately is one of the principal options. However, the private rented sector is particularly challenging in Lambeth and is made even more difficult because of restrictions to welfare benefits by government and the continued unwelcome behaviour of some landlords when it comes to accepting tenants in receipt of benefits.

Lambeth offers tailor-made financial packages to encourage landlords to work with us to improve the quality of housing and to enable more of our residents to access the private rented sector who might otherwise have been unable to. These include non-refundable incentives, deposit guarantee bonds and rent in advance. Lambeth promotes landlord accreditation, where landlords receive training and sign up to a code of conduct. This accreditation requires landlords to meet a baseline of standards representing good practice, in turn improving improves the housing quality.

Better standards for private renters

In many cases, the private rented sector is the only option for many residents who historically would have had access to social housing. Eliminating poor-performing private sector landlords throughout the borough remains a priority. New licensing measures will be implemented to drive improvements into this crucial part of the borough's housing offer. As

part of our commitment to get the best for our residents, the council will not hesitate to follow through with enforcement measures where landlords do not respond.

Overall, the proportion of private renters in the borough has increased from 11 per cent in 1991 to 31.6 per cent in 2021, nearly a third of all households in Lambeth. A high proportion of those renting in the private sector are families with children. The number of properties listed to rent across London in the first quarter of 2022 was 35 per cent lower than the pre-Covid quarterly average. The fall in supply has contributed to increased rents. Though upcoming legislation, such as the long-awaited ban on Section 21 evictions, may help to make private sector tenancies more secure, there is still work to do to drive up standards and get a better deal for renters.

Whilst only in a minority of cases, it is the private rented sector where the worst conditions, fuel poverty and landlord behaviour is found. Private tenants still suffer from insecurity of tenure from vulnerability to rent rises, and landlords, letting agents and property managers failing to adhere to legislation. They may also be affected by the negative impact of anti-social behaviour. These issues can combine to create an impact that affects the health, safety and mental wellbeing of the people living in these homes as well as their educational and employment outcomes.

In 2020 Lambeth published its Tenants' Charter – a guide for private sector tenants explaining their rights and what the council can do to help if things go wrong. We will continue to promote the Tenants' Charter to support private rented sector tenants' in understanding their rights and their landlord's obligations.

We are committed to working with landlords to improve standards within properties and this includes energy efficiency measures. Where we ask for works to be carried out in privately-rented properties, we will always recommend that landlords consider carrying out works with optimum energy efficiency in mind. Where there are suspected breaches to the energy efficiency regulations, we will investigate as necessary and where breaches are identified, take appropriate action. Breaches generally include the letting of sub-standard properties - those with energy performance certificates rated F or G.

Keeping residents safe

Being the victim of anti-social behaviour is distressing and it can negatively impact the victim's mental and physical health. Anti-social behaviour may take varied forms and can impact negatively on residents across housing tenures, affecting street properties as well as estates. We will continue to work with residents, across the council and with external partners to ensure that steps are taken to tackle anti-social behaviour. Our approach to anti-social behaviour embeds a victim-focused approach, working with our partners to intervene early to provide the appropriate help and support. It is also important that we focus on rehabilitating the perpetrator by providing the right support and interventions to steer the person, especially young people, away from a life of anti-social behaviour.

While we will always seek to use early intervention and tenancy sustainment measures in the first instance, this will not always be possible. If it is proportionate and reasonable to prevent further anti-social behaviour from occurring, we will not hesitate to take enforcement action, while having regard to the full range of legal options available. Violence affecting young people is an ongoing issue in Lambeth and has devastating consequences for the individuals and families directly involved and for communities more broadly. Housing services, particularly in our capacity as a social landlord will play a key role in tackling this tragic issue.

Where required we will develop a plan for our estates and neighbourhoods to make them safer for residents by introducing measures to design out crime and reduce the potential for incidents of anti-social behaviour to occur.

Domestic violence and abuse

Domestic violence and abuse has a devastating impact on victims and survivors, their families and the wider community. Lambeth is regarded across the country as a leader in providing a coordinated response to domestic abuse and has a dedicated asset for victims and survivors called the Gaia Centre.

We take a victim and survivor-focused approach and will provide support in a confidential and non-judgemental manner. We recognise the link between domestic abuse and forms of discrimination and inequalities, which cause additional risk factors and could impact on the victims and survivors' ability to speak out and access support services. We believe all victims and survivors and will not ask for proof to evidence domestic abuse. We ask questions to support our understanding of the situation, help us determine the most appropriate action to make sure we provide the right help and support.

Victims and survivors of domestic abuse will be helped either to move quickly into alternative, suitable temporary accommodation if they need to flee their home or, if they wish to remain in their home, security enhancement can be offered as part of the safety plan via the Sanctuary Scheme delivered and coordinated by Gaia.

Other support may include signposting to advice and support for those who do not reside in the borough. In some circumstances, tenants who are affected by domestic abuse may wish to move to other London boroughs – and we will make the necessary arrangements to facilitate this.

Fire safety

The most important duty of a landlord is to ensure the safety of their residents. Following the Grenfell disaster in 2017 Lambeth worked with the Greater London Authority to undertake surveys in high-rise buildings above 18 metres. The surveys investigated the make-up and flammability of the external wall insulation and the building's design. We have undertaken our own fire risk assessments of all high-rise buildings, sheltered schemes and street properties, and we continue to assess high-risk buildings each year.

As a result of fire risk assessments, we have implemented a programme of borough-wide fire protection improvements. These include fire door replacements and undertaking fire safety works to sheltered schemes.

Looking to the future, the cost of the required fire safety is significant - we estimate that the cost for fire safety works on the council's entire housing stock to be around £35m up to 2026. We will continue to make the case to government for financial support to deliver fire safety works over the coming years, and for them to protect leaseholders from the cost of fire safety works, including replacing dangerous cladding.

To ensure that high-rise buildings in the private sector have the right safety measures in place, we have instituted a High-Rise Taskforce. The taskforce has already surveyed all the residential blocks in the borough we know about and identified those with cladding materials that require further investigation. The Taskforce will inspect these blocks (based on the risk they pose) and, where necessary, take action to secure the improvements needed to make these blocks safe.

A Borough of Sanctuary

Welcoming sanctuary seekers from all over the world has made us the borough we are today. We have a proud history as a sanctuary to those fleeing violence and persecution and for those in the LGBTQ+ community facing discrimination. Lambeth remains a beacon of hope and opportunity. Generations of migrants – of which the Windrush generation are but one example – have long chosen our corner of south London to make a better life for themselves and their families.

In December 2022, these commitments were recognised and Lambeth was officially awarded status as a Borough of Sanctuary.

The challenge in 2023 and beyond is to maintain and improve further the high-quality services for sanctuary seekers.

Health and wellbeing

“Housing is not adequate if the specific needs of disadvantaged and marginalized groups are not taken into account” (United Nations, the Human Right to Adequate Housing).

It is important that we have a shared approach with our partners in Lambeth for improving the health and wellbeing and the lives of residents in the borough. The new Health and Wellbeing Strategy outlines our commitment to ensure health and wellbeing is at the centre of housing policy and delivery, thereby supporting people to live well independently. To support this, we will continue to develop the partnerships required to ensure that we have a collaborative approach to housing and social care delivery, enabling residents to live and age well in their homes.

We want to enable people to live longer, live independently and improve their health by getting the right support at the right time based on their need. Appropriate housing options – across all tenures – is critical to delivering this commitment.

A significant proportion of our social housing tenants are older people, but in the future, as Lambeth’s population ages, more older residents will become dependent on the private rented sector. In addition, families with children with disabilities and adults with disabilities and mental health needs are also often social housing tenants.

To meet the diverse needs of Lambeth’s communities and improve health and wellbeing outcomes, we must ensure that our supply of housing and support is suitably diverse too.

This means providing accessible and adaptable housing options that can support people with social, physical and mental health needs, both in the social and private rented sectors, to stay in their homes for as long as possible, supporting the use of residential and nursing homes provision at the most appropriate time based on need. With regard to adaptations, it is not only about what we can do with existing homes but also ensuring accessibility when building new ones – currently, 10% of new homes are designed and built with wheelchair use in use in mind.

Ensuring we put residents first, we will engage with adults with care and support needs on the design and size options within the council’s development proposals. We will continue to be robust with developers to ensure they plan their new developments with the care and support needs of residents in mind. We will also continue to be innovative in finding solutions to support people to live in their homes for longer.

Extra Care and sheltered accommodation provision is also an important part of our housing options. We will be redeveloping our Extra Care Strategy, while reviewing opportunities to

extend extra care provision. We have commissioned an independent review of the council's sheltered housing provision, with the aim of modernising sheltered accommodation and ensuring it is fit for purpose for our older adults who may need additional support. Our approach supports the council's commitment to making Lambeth an age-friendly borough, with the aim to support residents better as they get older and ensure that people are able to lead full and active lives.

Making sure people get financial help available to improve health and wellbeing

The housing strategy recognises that advice on financial issues, and support to access benefits in particular, can play a crucial role in supporting people to sustain their tenancies, and in preventing homelessness. There are often links between financial difficulties and housing need, with this affecting disadvantaged groups in particular. Financial and housing problems can also adversely impact on physical and mental wellbeing, exacerbating health issues and inequalities. A report by Impact on Urban Health indicates that many health issues and problems with money exacerbate each other, and that the pandemic widened the health gap between the most deprived and affluent communities in Lambeth.

Access to effective timely benefit advice will be provided as part of a more holistic service model. We are looking to improve prevention, and health and wellbeing outcomes, by developing more effective housing referral pathways (including supported housing), to ensure people are supported to access benefit advice. When taking steps to recover rent arrears or provide housing advice, staff will consider the impact on physical and mental health or other vulnerabilities, and identify where there is a need for more specialist support. This requires shared knowledge across services around the interfaces between housing, health and financial problems, improved identification processes and a commitment from key services to deliver a more holistic approach. We will provide training to front-line staff to help them better identify vulnerable customers and to recognise interfaces between housing needs and benefit advice needs.

Those with complex needs will have improved access to specialist benefit advice through joint working arrangements and protocols. This will require strengthening existing pathways and creating new ones, and partnership working arrangements which record and learn from outcomes. These improvements, with data analysis, will help us better identify both those missing out on financial support, and the most vulnerable customers, to ensure preventative work is focused where it is most needed.

The most vulnerable who experience a range of serious health problems, including substance misuse and mental ill health, are the most likely to miss out on benefits, and the same health problems link them to being over-represented within our homeless population. Due to their complex, overlapping needs they need a more specialist offer of benefit advice support. We will proactively target these residents with, or at risk of developing, long-term serious health conditions, who are likely to be experiencing financial difficulties, to provide a holistic response which will include benefit advice. This will help drive improvements in their health trajectories and financial situation.

Housing-related support for young people

Every young person in Lambeth should have a safe and stable home that provides the best place to grow up, and from where they can develop the skills needed to transition to a happy and fulfilled adulthood.

In 2020, Lambeth carried out a comprehensive needs assessment of young people who require housing-related support and we are now delivering a large-scale transformation programme over the coming years. Key to this is our new Joint Housing and Children's

Social Care pathway for young people, which has been co-produced with our young people and will be introduced from April 2023.

This programme has the potential to drastically improve outcomes for all young people. It will provide support via youth homelessness prevention including early intervention and mediation; assessment of housing needs including a 24-hour staffed assessment centre; 200 units of housing-related support services including for young people with mental ill health, young parents, unaccompanied asylum-seekers, young people who identify as LGBTIQ+, male-only, female-only, and 16-18 year olds; and emergency and longer-term placements. There will also be support for move on into independent accommodation, such as the Housing First support service for young people, floating support and short-term tenancy support.

We will also continue to support families with children with disabilities, taking a partnership approach with Children's Social Care, ensuring the necessary long-term care and support.

Supporting residents into work

Lambeth recognises the link between sustainable employment and good-quality, affordable and secure housing. In Lambeth, there are deep levels of inequality in respect of access to jobs and access to housing, with exclusion from the labour market felt particularly acutely by our Black and disabled residents. Secure, good-quality employment can also help people to flourish and contribute to their resilience, health and wellbeing.

We will enable our diverse communities to succeed in the labour market. Key to this is investing in skills development and employment support activities to prepare residents in what Lambeth's economy needs.

In terms of the contractors we use to repair council housing, we have diversified the supply chain, so it's no longer dominated by very large companies, but instead local small to medium-sized enterprises which have more of an opportunity to work in our communities. This means more jobs for Lambeth residents.

OUR COMMITMENT TO RESIDENTS

The scale of the housing challenge in Lambeth is clear. We have already committed to working in partnership with the relevant agencies, organisations, groups and institutions to deliver our housing strategy, but our most important commitment is to our residents.

To deliver this housing strategy, and make Lambeth a place we can all call home, we are committed to working with residents to deliver new homes, deliver great services, and create healthy, safe neighbourhoods. At the heart of this will be working to build trust – ensuring that our engagement and consultation is genuine, well programmed and prioritised. Our intentions and timelines will be clearly communicated through continued dialogue with residents, and principles of how we will carry out this engagement are detailed by the Estate Renewal Engagement Framework launched in 2023.

Our commitment is formed around these principles:

- Informing: providing residents with clear information about what is happening, how the decision was made and what it means for them.
- Consulting: asking residents' opinion on a proposal or options and then show how their feedback has influenced the final decision.
- Involving: inviting residents to take part in workshops, meetings and resident's panels to influence and have their say.
- Collaborating: supporting residents to be part of the decision making – for example, creating residents design briefs for estate renewals.

We recognise that we will not always get it right – but we will be driven by our sense of compassion, accountability and humility to continue to work with residents to ensure they have safe, secure and affordable housing.

We hope you will join us on this journey. Together, let's make Lambeth A Place We Can All Call Home.