

Lambeth Housing Strategy

Consultation Results Summary Report

JANUARY 2024



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Introduction

A lack of government investment in new or existing homes coupled with rising costs and a cost-of-living crisis means there are many housing challenges facing Lambeth. Lambeth is updating its Housing Strategy. This is a high-level document setting out how we will address these challenges across three priority themes:

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.

How we consulted

The consultation was launched on 12 October and ran for six weeks initially until 20 November. In response to community demand the consultation period was then extended until 19 January. The draft strategy had been informed by several discussions with residents' groups and partners which had informed the main priorities.

The main way that we consulted was by the use of an online survey which was widely circulated to Lambeth Council tenants and leaseholders, other Lambeth residents and partners. The consultation was also widely promoted through the council's social media channels. Some organisations submitted long documents in response, not necessarily linked to the specific questions being asked.

Residents were given the option of attending a 'drop in' if they wanted help to fill in the questionnaire. Sessions were run between 14:00-16:00 at the Civic Centre in Brixton for four weeks during the consultation period. The drop in sessions were there for residents to discuss the housing strategy and proposals on changes to the allocation policy which was being consulted upon at the same time. We had 50 residents come to the drop ins in total. Many of the residents attending the drop ins found the sessions a helpful opportunity to discuss their individual housing situation, in addition to feeding into the overall process.

Posters were put up on council estates advertising the consultation including an option for residents who were not online to text in a request to receive a paper copy of the questionnaire.

As part of the survey responses, people were able to express an interest in attending workshops. We ran three sessions although these were only attended by a total of 10 people. In addition the proposals have been discussed with council departmental management teams, Staying Healthy Partnership, LAMPAG (Lambeth Pensioners Action Group), Visit Lambeth Forum Network, and the Lambeth Housing Partnership who represent the main housing associations in Lambeth.

The allocation proposals were a topic at the Resident Assembly, a big gathering with council tenants and leaseholders held on 11 November.

We also received a small number of detailed responses from organisations by email that did not seek to specifically answer the questions we asked but gave a view on a range of topics. We have summarised the key findings from the consultation and included direct quotes to support the summaries.

Results Summary and our response

Introduction / Vision.

Overall there is a strong level of support for the vision. 72% supported the vision compared to 12% against with 16% undecided.

Many people who supported the vision did have questions about its delivery with some people sceptical about whether it was achievable. Some of the responses and discussions at workshops referred to the need to see an associated action plan.

Some respondents thought the vision was wrong because of their own housing situation and their feeling therefore that the overall approach being taken by Lambeth needed to change.

Others said that we were too focussed on building additional homes when we should be more concerned about existing stock.

Some felt that overall the strategy wasn't doing enough to tackle the climate emergency and used their response to the question on the vision to put forward their disapproval of plans for estate regeneration.

There were a small number of comments on the information in the introduction.

Our Response (introduction and vision).

We have made some small amendments to the introduction in response to comments questioning some of the information provided. As there is a high level of support for the vision, we are keeping it the same, noting that not everyone has the same priorities.

Lambeth has an established performance management framework and service planning process and the delivery of the housing strategy will be integrated into this process and overseen by an annual review by the relevant cabinet members. We have added in new sections at the end of each chapter to be clearer about what our actual commitments are, so we can more easily see if delivery of the strategy is successful and there can be clear accountability.

Priority 1 - More Affordable Housing

There is broad support for the overall approach to the delivery of more affordable housing in the Borough, with 65% agreeing / strongly agreeing with the approach and 17% disagreeing / strongly disagreeing. Many respondents noted the scale of challenge the Council faces in delivering on this objective, directly and through the planning system, in the current environment.

Some respondents expressed concern, given the climate crisis, about demolition and replacement of existing homes, suggesting that the Council should prioritise retention and refurbishment wherever possible. There was support for specification of new housing consistent with the climate emergency.

Some respondents noted other impacts arising from housing development and estate renewal, including concern about impact on sense of community, density of development, pressure on infrastructure, and the ability of residents to be able to afford to stay in their local areas after redevelopment takes place. Conversely some respondents suggested that proceeds of development should be reinvested elsewhere in the Borough

Many respondents raised the issue of housing affordability in the Borough, as well as the need for family homes and homes for older people. Concern was expressed about the number of empty

properties across the Borough, with respondents suggesting these should be brought back into use as soon as possible, whether Council owned or privately owned.

Many respondents raised the issue of communication with, and listening to residents, particularly on estate renewal, as well as on housing delivery generally. Some respondents raised the Kerslake report's recommendation around development of a housing delivery plan.

Our response (More Affordable Housing)

We have reinforced in the strategy the Council's commitment to a balanced assessment of all options in relation to estate renewal and development schemes, including consideration of all options for retention and refurbishment in line with national best practice.

We have included references to the Council's empty homes policy and the New Homes Programme, noting that the programme will provide metrics to enable progress to be tracked, and we have confirmed the Council's commitment to bringing empty Council-owned homes back into use, and clamping down on private landlords to ensure they do the same.

In response to the theme around community and resident engagement, we have included within the commitments a commitment to listen to resident views, ideas and concerns from the earliest stages, and to communicate in a clear and timely manner what the Council intends to do. We must continue to maintain an ongoing dialogue with residents in this area.

Priority 2 - Delivering Excellent Housing and Repair Services

There was a high level of support for all the priorities within this chapter with damp coming out at the top. There was more ambivalence towards sustainable travel with some quite negative comments though there was still a majority of residents agreeing it should be a priority.

Respondents listed a number of things in response to the question "is anything missing". The most common comments related to repairs (including the need to reduce the money wasted paying disrepair claims and the need to improve contract management), estate management, resident engagement, and anti-social behaviour / noise. Some residents said that they wanted more detail in the strategy on how things were going to improve.

We asked how the council can best put our residents' lived experience at the heart of all that we do. Residents made a range of responses, often with a focus on improving the repair service. Many respondents talked about bringing the repairs service in-house and changing the relationship between the council and its residents. Some people criticised the quality of staff and contactors and generally poor customer service and said that residents would like a 'named-person' they could contact.

Some leaseholders / leaseholder representative groups felt that their interests were not adequately considered in the strategy and that there needs to be a place for leaseholders to have their views heard at a strategic level. There is also the misconception among some leaseholders that they are subsidising tenants, suggesting we need to improve our communication with leaseholders.

Particularly from the face-to-face consultation sessions, some residents felt that there were now not enough occasions to hold officers to account in public meetings and they missed the old engagement structures. Others said that they wanted to be involved but didn't want to commit to a formal role in a residents' association.

Our response (delivering excellent housing and repair services).

There is broad support for the approach being proposed. We think that for most of the comments received the existing draft adequately covers what is being asked for. For instance we are already committed to providing a better customer experience and delivering services in-house where possible. Many of the changes need to be part of a cultural shift.

We have made some changes to the text, recognising the need to reduce the number of legal disrepair claims and that contract management is an area we need to improve. We've also amended the section on resident engagement to include reference to a wide range of ways to become involved in how the service is run which meet the needs of residents and that officers can be held to account. We're currently looking at how resident engagement is delivered within Lambeth housing, using the principles within this draft strategy as a guide.

During this consultation there was no option for Lambeth leaseholders to identify themselves as such, they were included together with other homeowners. For future consultations by the housing department we will make this an additional category.

We've noted the request for more detailed explanations in certain areas and think more clearly pulling out the commitments will help with this, but do need to bear in mind that it is a high level strategy and detail would be for the action plan.

Priority 3 - Supporting Healthy and Safe Communities

There was a high level of support for prioritising making buildings fire-safe, protecting people from domestic violence and abuse and tackling homelessness. There was also support, but at lower levels, for prioritising protecting private renters and providing additional support to residents including help finding jobs.

Part of the consultation involved discussions with partners including the Staying Healthy Board, Lambeth Together (our local care partnership) and children's services. They had a number of suggestions that we need to better reflect their priorities.

There were a diverse range of answers to the "what's missing" question, but no obvious recurring themes. Some thought that we should focus on our core responsibilities and leave the delivery of wider social benefits to other departments / organisations.

We asked about the housing impacts on health and wellbeing, beyond repairs and expensive rents. Many respondents referred to the impact of living in housing that didn't meet their needs. There were a wide range of reasons why this might be the case including the physical environment and not having a stable place to call home.

One issue which came up several times in the workshop discussions was that people found it frustrating to get hold of the right person or feeling they weren't listened to.

Several leaseholders made reference to having to pay bills being a source of stress. Anti-social behaviour and noise also came up as aspects of housing that impacted negatively on people's wellbeing.

In response to the question about what the council and its partners could do, the feedback referred to the comments above including the need for affordable housing and improvements to housing services, and concerns about noise and anti-social behaviour.

Our Response (supporting healthy and safe communities)

We have added to the text more details on our support for looked after children, foster carers and our approach to tackling serious youth violence. We've also made some changes in terms of how we describe the interaction of housing with health services.

There was no specific mention of noise in the draft housing strategy. From the consultation it is clearly an issue for many residents, and is also an area which has been recently highlighted by the Housing Ombudsman. We have added a new section explaining the difference between noise caused by day-to-day living and anti-social noise. Lambeth aims to deliver a service which promotes good neighbourhood relationships.

We note that some people feel that the housing department should focus on its core business and leave addressing wider issues to other teams. We try to take a "One Lambeth" approach, aligning resources behind shared priorities and emphasising the importance of working together.

One of the "what's missing" responses referred to fuel poverty; this is something Lambeth is committed to tackling and we've added in a reference to this chapter.

We very much agree with the sentiments that an improved housing service and better supply of more suitable accommodation will improve wellbeing and believe that the housing strategy sets the right framework for this to happen.

Equality Characteristics of Respondents Overall

The following tables provide an overview of the characteristics of consultation respondents (number of respondents varies for each).

Age

Under 25 Years	1.3%
25 to 44 Years	26.4%
45 to 64 Years	41.8%
65 Years and Over	26.1%
Prefer not to say	4.4%

Race / ethnicity

White	55.3%
Black African/ Caribbean	18.9%
Mixed Ethnicity	4.1%
Asian (Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian, Other)	2.5%
Other	19.3%

Sex

Male	29.4%
Female	59.8%
Prefer not to say	9.2%
Use another term (for example, non-binary)	1.6%

Considers themselves to have a disability or long term illness

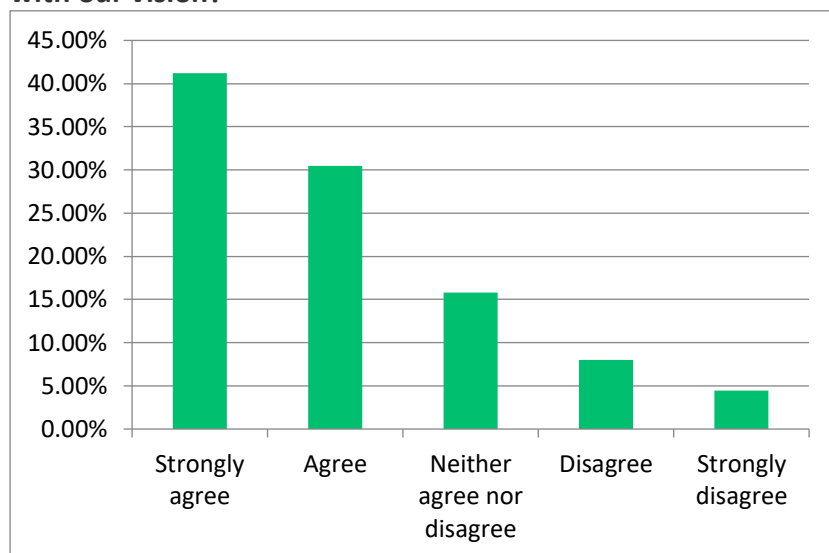
No	59.7%
Yes	30.3%
Prefer not say	10.0%

Detailed analysis question by question

To what extent do you agree with our vision?

The housing strategy sets out our vision which 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.”

We recognise that there are many challenges that will make achieving this difficult. But we want to be ambitious for Lambeth and our residents. To what extent do you agree with our vision?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	41.20%	185
Agree	30.51%	137
Neither agree nor disagree	15.81%	71
Disagree	8.02%	36
Strongly disagree	4.45%	20
Please give reasons for your answer		155
	Answered	449
	Skipped	61

In general, there was support for the vision with 71.7% of respondents to the question either strongly agreeing or agreeing with the vision. A small number of respondents, 13.5% did not agree. The question also asked respondents to give reasons for their answer and 137 responded.

Generally people supported the vision, as for example in two comments: “It is a good, strong vision. Your analysis of the problem and proposed solutions are good”; and, “This tallies entirely with Southern Housing’s own vision. It’s ambitious and clearly articulated and covers all that could reasonably be expected from the council’s housing strategy.”

Many people supported the vision but had questions about its delivery.

- Nothing wrong with vision. The implementation will be issue. A very very long way to go to put residents at the centre and deliver excellent services.
- These are great ideals - but they are miles from the reality in Lambeth.

- Your definitions are management euphemisms which makes me feel you are being dishonest about your intentions.
- Strongly agree but Lambeth have a history of squandering funding whilst basic services falter.
- You have failed time and time again with the housing vision you have...
- I agree strongly with the overall vision, but I regard it as unattainable, as so much depends on government policy. I would much prefer a grounded, realistic strategy of what is attainable within existing resources, with clear targets and budget scenarios.
- Vision [is] too ambitious - implies Lambeth is an island unbuffered by forces across London, UK, Europe. An achievable vision would build trust in the council.
- Because I have been a tenant for years and all I see is promises and no action. Because Lambeth just don't care.
- This is not a strategy. There is no plan and Lambeth do not have the ability to deliver.
- The strategy needs to state how and when the aims will be achieved.
- We agree that this Housing Strategy correctly identifies three major areas of concern for our borough: (1) the lack of affordable homes, (2) the dire state of housing and repair services, and (3) the need to prioritise healthy neighbourhoods and climate-positive projects in the future. However, the Liberal Democrats are concerned that the Housing Strategy, as outlined, does not set any clear performance indicators for Lambeth to mark itself against, nor does the vision go far enough to change the status quo.

Some respondents thought the vision was wrong because of their own situation, i.e. the approach taken by Lambeth wasn't working for them:

- Because Lambeth is Lambeth I have been bidding for 9 years and still nothing.
- On housing list for 10+ years and still no accommodation provided. Children getting older and removed from our allocation yet they still live at home and have no prospect of moving out due to not being able to afford to and cost of living anytime soon.
- I'm aged 50, live and work in Lambeth as a keyworker, and can't afford to live by myself.

A number of people referred to the condition of existing homes suggesting they felt that should be the main focus for the vision.

- Maintaining and improving the existing property stock and enabling fair rentals for landlords and tenants is more cost effective than new developments in an already densely populated borough. New developments should not be the priority as it appears in the strategy.
- Ensure current council homes are up to scratch first, then look to new homes.
- Good vision but the priority must be repairing and retrofitting the current housing stock.
- I think Lambeth is going about this the wrong way. Leaving properties empty whilst paying a fortune to put families up in temporary accommodation. Spending an absolute fortune building few houses and not dedicating resources to improving housing and bringing empty homes back for people to live in.
- Too many homeless people and people in substandard homes which do not meet their needs.
- Too much social housing stock in Lambeth is badly maintained. You don't do repairs that have been outstanding for 4 years or more.
- At the moment, the quality of the flats is poor. Existing residents could benefit from a refurbishment, similar to refurbishments done near New Park Road, years ago.

- Contractors brought into Lambeth cost millions and [do] more harm than good. Large fines should be handed out for deliberate delays i.e. scaffolding companies.

Several respondents referred to housing development in their answer to the question on the vision.

- All development needs to be sensitive to the area and not destroy local communities by shoehorning in inappropriate development without suitable infrastructure. Family homes are a must. New affordable homes must be of high quality.
- Some people may argue new developments to be Passivhaus standards. Housing should reflect climate emergency and need to urgently eliminate the emissions of greenhouse gases.
- Everyone needs safe and secure housing, but strongly disagree with approach of demolition.
- Stop selling off social housing to private developers
- Your relentless social cleansing and arrogance suggest you can't be trusted to deliver a newspaper
- 'Affordable homes' is a nebulous term which could mean almost anything
- Where [is] the new social housing? Why are families with children stuck in one bedroom flats and in condemned tower blocks
- We understand that Lambeth's current definition of affordable housing includes shared-ownership sales – we do not believe that should be the case because shared ownership homes are not affordable for the vast majority.

Others commented on the state of the housing market in Lambeth for instance:

- Far too much poor-quality expensive private rented housing and not enough social housing.
- There is a real lack of affordable housing in the borough, that really means there is a strong demographic shift in who can afford to live there.
- The concept of "affordable" home" is flawed because they are mostly not affordable. What is needed is more social housing!
- We need more home ownership not more council housing
- Concerns about high cost of private renting or buying a property in Lambeth
- The government should consider private rent controls and restricting Airbnb to spare rooms

Some residents put forward other miscellaneous comments, some examples of which are below.

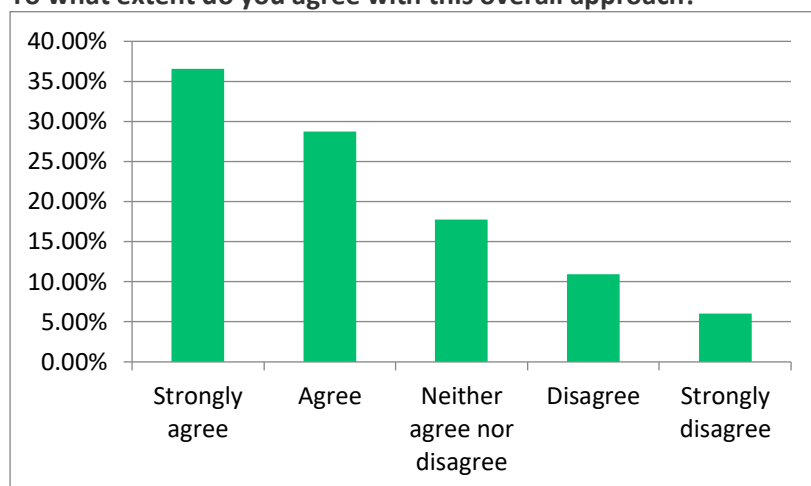
- It doesn't seem to take into consideration the impact on individuals of the Council's housing decisions or consider residents' agency in housing decisions.
- Waiting for years for community gates at King's House.
- The specific needs of leaseholders are ignored.
- You've not considered any innovative ideas and grass root problem solving mechanisms.
- Concern about tenancy assignment when others may have greater need (disability or health)
- Stronger emphasis on housing for families with children with neurodisability and neurodevelopmental needs
- Housing needs of ageing population. Neither of us wants to be moved.
- Lambeth is already making rental properties more expensive through licensing of HMOs, so you're failing on your own target currently.
- Concern about noise, drug dealing and other anti-social behaviour

Priority 1: More Affordable Homes

Do you agree with the proposed approach with delivering affordable homes?

Our first priority is to deliver more affordable housing, particularly social housing. Over the next five years, the council will seek to deliver more new council homes for local people, by increasing density 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.

To what extent do you agree with this overall approach?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	36.55%	140
Agree	28.72%	110
Neither agree nor disagree	17.75%	68
Disagree	10.97%	42
Strongly disagree	6.01%	23
	Answered	383
	Skipped	127

In general, there was support for the overall approach with 65.27% of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing, and 16.98% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Some respondents criticised the question, saying that it was misleading and conflated too many different issues.

Is anything else you think we could be doing to make the best use of our existing supply of homes

There was a range of suggestions from 214 respondents who responded to this question. The responses included comments on the need for housing, encouraging downsizing to free up larger-sized homes, tackling tenancy fraud, ensuring homes are offered to those in genuine housing need, tackling noise and anti-social behaviour.

Some respondents use this question to comment on the approach to new supply and made comments about affordability, what we should be building, and the approach to estate regeneration.

On housing affordability

- Top priority is the supply of social rented homes, and the strategy has to be delivered in conjunction with local residents.
- We need more rented council homes, not more expensive homes, which they say are affordable and are not. Stop building luxury apartments.
- Affordable is meaningless again you are not being honest. Concern about "opportunity for landlords to buy them and increase rents".
- Lots of new builds are going up, but very few if any are available for social rent and even then the rent and council tax are extremely expensive. How about tackling this first.
- What do you call affordable? On one scheme, only 2 out of 14 new build homes were for social rent. When you build new "affordable" homes, most are sold to private buyers e.g. King's Avenue.
- Look for a new term to describe affordable housing, linked to incomes of people in lowest earning quartile not the market prices. Will affordable homes be secure tenancies?
- Try to keep rents affordable. Support tenants who pay their rent.
- Look at increasing rents for council tenants on higher incomes. Increase council rents to something more in line with private rents. Ensure people pay their rent.

What we should be building / working with partners

- Ensure balance between proportion of family over single person homes. [Smaller] are cheaper to develop but larger family homes are most in demand reducing overcrowding.
- Look at room sizes when building. Also, availability to fresh air with gardens. No one feels well inside small boxes of concrete, in tall buildings with lifts not working and the fear of being targeted by criminals, drug and alcohol addicts, etc.
- Look at pocket homes/buildings on small sites, no need for large rooms, increase the density, build upwards, where there's inefficient use of land look to start again in partnership with private developers. Don't compromise on energy efficiency, energy efficient homes are nicer to live in - higher rents but cheaper energy bills.
- Don't forget drying facilities for peoples' clothes and providing adequate storage.
- More bungalows should be built for older disabled people.
- More sheltered housing units should be established with proper unit support who check on residents' welfare
- Many councils now offer ECH "Extra Care Housing" for eligible vulnerable/elderly people who wish to remain living independently - Lambeth should include the same.
- Affordable social housing should be a secondary priority after making the current stock habitable for people who are currently let down by Lambeth.
- Mandate that private builders must build social houses too
- Work with partners to bring forward more social housing and affordable housing both in mixed developments and housing only. You need to build trust with residents....
- Working with partners - ensure that any partners decided are selected using due process, and no conflicts of interest.
- Private property developers building in Lambeth should be penalised if they do not deliver the amount of affordable housing that they signed up to when seeking planning permission. The quality of housing they provide should be strictly monitored.
- New developers should get binding contract with the council to provide jobs and skills while developing new homes to local applicants.

While there is support for more affordable housing, several respondents talked about density.

- Disagree with increasing density on council land. Reduces quality of life for everyone.

- Lambeth is already densely populated. If there isn't enough social housing here, then people can look to other places where more space is available.
- Density only works if there is infrastructure.
- Strongly disagree with higher density housing, gardens and open space are very important for wellbeing.
- Don't lose green space on estates by infill building. Keep to climate crisis commitments, retrofit don't demolish.
- Density is obviously needed, but a vision of how dense. It can be made liveable and on a human scale needs to be expanded on.
- The density of properties is already too high. The services supporting them are failing. Encourage people to move to council where there is more space and the councils are better run than Lambeth.
- Yes to build more homes for low income residents and social housing but not with the sardines in a tin standard
- Allow more owner occupiers to extend their properties. L shaped dormers, for example, are allowed in most councils, but Lambeth seems more restrictive and blocking of basic small development such as loft or rear extension, seemingly with no reason

Allocations and meeting housing need

- Making sure all homes are being offered and offered to the right people. Give social homes to local people whose family support and education are in Lambeth. Prioritise existing residents renting from Lambeth Council, into newer homes.
- Allocate them using a transparent process that places tax-payers and citizens at the top of the priority list
- I've been on the choice based letting for 19 years. In the beginning when I had children of different semester I was told when they reach certain ages that I'll be moving, which wasn't the case. I feel as though I've been cheated and lied to regarding my moving circumstances. I'm still in the same situation it's just that my eldest has left home. I used to be in band B2 now I'm in C2. I'm very disappointed in Lambeth Council.
- Give disabled home to disabled people, making sure it's not given to people who don't need them, the council should know who needs these properties.
- Unaffordable private rents. People will never get on the housing list. Do you offer Guardianship of empty buildings for young people?
- More affordable homes for single tenants over 50. Housing for single men also.
- What about larger accommodation for families/overcrowded. Build some 4/5 beds or let the elderly who are left in big properties on their own, swap for smaller homes.
- Prioritise families with learning disabilities, children with disabilities. Consider needs of those with mental health needs (at highest risk with bipolar or schizophrenia), autism, medical needs, ADHD people don't have a priority on register nor a professional housing officer who specialises in housing assessment.
- Young carers should have their own bedroom as applies for adult carer. When the young person is 15 years old onwards, they should be better supported mentally and into housing.
- Close working with HA partners to make sure our tenants have access to HA [housing] options where appropriate.
- House low/mid income 'working' people, not just people on benefits to create a more stable, balanced community.

- Change allocation process: make nomination processes stricter to ensure as properties are let quicker. What happens if nominees don't turn up for appointments when shortlisted for properties? Limit the number of offers. Ensure timely verification of housing applicants.

Comments on regeneration / building more council homes

- Past policies which made decisions without ballots, and were not co-designed with local residents, led to a lack of trust. This has to be built up again.
- Carry out the recommendations of the Kerslake review for a start. Plenty to learn from the mistakes made, before jumping heading into new 'visions.'
- Put the needs and views of the community above all else your fawning love of the private sector and your appalling behaviour towards tenants and residents on estates you planned to 'regenerate' was shameful.
- Why are there no questions on how estate renewal should be funded and managed? The strategy appears to propose handing over council land to private and housing association partners for this purpose. I disagree with this.
- Concerns about the quality of new buildings, for example Myatt's Field looks nice but has poor sound insulation.
- Upgrade some excellent older-built flats, don't sell them off for use by private residents, dislodging long-standing residents to estates like Angel Town or Somerleyton. Resolve very overdue repairs, along with building homes needed.
- Leaseholder concern about regeneration resulting in loss of home and extensive gardens for further building, and possibly being priced out/ having to move out of area. Could any of new flats have same qualities as current flat (balcony/size/view/etc.) for existing owners without insuring extra cost?
- Developing brownfield sites, converting obsolete buildings and unused commercial space to residences, and improving existing estates makes sense.
- Not knocking down estates that are already in place without good reason
- Refurbish and retrofit your well built existing social housing estates . Don't leave empty properties on these estates. Retrofit, making sure they are as close to Passivhaus standards as possible. New builds and demolishing cause excess carbon and are not good quality.
- Retain some really amazing architecture in Lambeth - some of which is being destroyed by estate regeneration e.g. Cressingham Gardens or Knights Hill Estate.
- Retrofit should be first choice with infill or selective demolition. Do get rid of awful blocks.
- Estate regeneration/renewal has already taken 11 years and delivered 41 council rent homes at a cost of £100s of millions mainly in setting up HfL, buybacks and legal costs.
- Estate demolitions should be taken out of the strategy until it is proved that refurbishment and upgrading of the property is not possible.
- This strategy only goes out to 2030 and it has been proved that estate regeneration takes much longer than that.
- Give those in TA on regen estates a permanent tenancy.
- 100% Council control of house building. Be specific about Lambeth building council homes. Don't be over-reliant on other partners or building social housing for housing associations.
- Need private and council housing sector to work together. New developers bring more style, class, businesses and generate work for local people. Repairing old council homes is not a great solution in the long run. Work with private developers to build both private and council homes. Some housing areas in Lambeth are "jungle of bricks and mortar". Please create bright, green areas, rather than bringing in anti-environmental and anti-social behaviour.

- Stop further sales of council owned land/properties to private landlords/ investors/ “developers” and increase number of units that private landlords need to make available (in respect of new builds).
- Fill empty homes on regeneration estates. Use empties for temporary accommodation.
- “Council needs to research a systematic energy efficient mass scale retrofit of council housing, in line with global climate emergency imperatives. 'Regeneration' is a false strategy in which local residents are bought out of their homes, then costed out of replacement tenancies. The only winners are property developers who work in association with the council. 'Regeneration' is an outdated strategy, which has brought multiple councils across the country to financial collapse. It is not sustainable on any level - environmentally and financially.”

There were various views about selling council assets:

- Stop people building property portfolios out of the right to buy scheme.
- Sell them off. Sell off properties that are too expensive to maintain, older Georgian/Victorian. Dispose of your individual/free standing leasehold properties.
- Make right to buy more accessible.
- End right to buy.
- Buy back Council homes that were sold. Stop selling off of council houses/flats and if new social housing is built they must have an agreement that they cannot be bought by renters.
- End shared ownership and leasehold. Focus on commonhold.

And climate change

- What is needed is more council housing and a proper strategy for climate change, which would include a plan for refurbishing and future proofing all housing stock. It feels like the council would rather service the needs of corporate partners than the homeless.
- Retrofit training would improve buildings and benefit job market.
- Make homes more energy efficient, more economical in long term

There were comments on downsizing – it was felt that the council should encourage this as it would enable larger homes to be available for families on the housing list.

- To allow people to 'downsize', build more new properties for older/vulnerable people which will encourage onward move. People don't always have somewhere to downsize into.
- Talk to underoccupiers to see if there are ways of encouraging more moves. Updating the home swap sites. There should be support for house swapping for disabled households.
- Allow one extra bedroom in addition to incentives. Provide more assistance for downsizers.
- Downsizing should be a priority – “people should give up their larger property for people who need them”.

Finally there were some other miscellaneous comments including:

- All housing stock should be habitable far & above the minimum standards which Lambeth fails in reaching. There should be a tenant & leaseholder charter in place which will place substantial & meaningful levels of fines upon the council when it fails in its public duty &

legal requirements. Individuals should be compensated according to the losses they suffer including the consequential financial & other costs & burdens thrown upon them due to shortcomings within the councils structure. Once complaints reach a certain lever or time elapsed, there should be immediate financial help given to tenants & Leaseholders alike.

This might help focus or refocus the council departments responsible of their duties!

- Allow more owner occupiers to extend their properties. L shaped dormers, for example, are allowed in most councils, but Lambeth seems more restrictive and blocking of basic small development such as loft or rear extension, seemingly with no reason
- There are MANY MANY empty council properties in the borough. You know about them but don't fill them even when informed they are empty. You need to manage the existing stock - its in decline at the moment as you don't take care of it

Priority 2: Delivering Excellent Housing and Repair Services

From your perspective how can the Council take a compassionate approach, putting our residents' lived experience at the heart of all that we do?

168 people provided an answer to this question. Some of our housing association partners drew on their own experiences to provide advice.

- "We'd recommend adopting a co-creation model to enable staff and residents to work collaboratively to shape the council's housing and repair services. We've used the model at Southern Housing across a variety of applications including improving our approach to complaints handling and developing our Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy. On repairs specifically, we endorse the council's pledge to investigate the feasibility of delivering repairs services in-house."
- "At Hyde we find that having a single well-trained workforce really helps with the appropriate technology. We have taken a customer focused approach. We use an App to route and schedule jobs to our property maintenance teams, this then has an interface with the customer's 'MyAccount' so they can see jobs scheduled and get updates when the service person is due to visit."

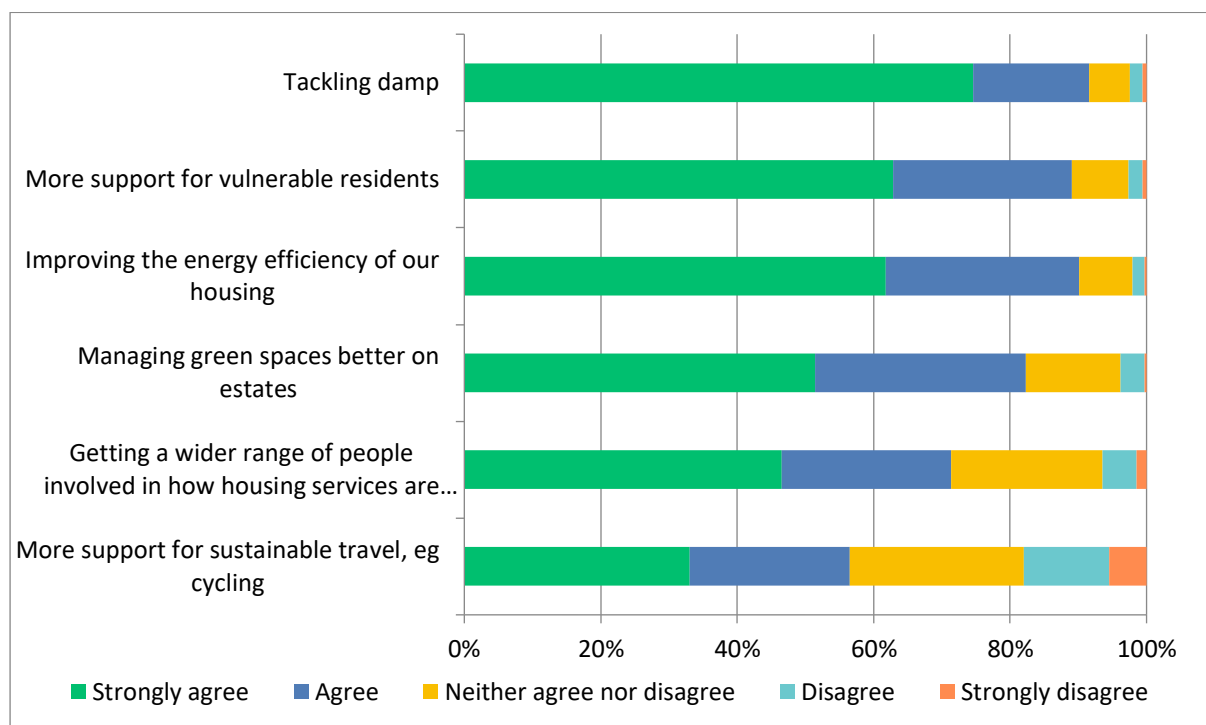
Residents made a range of responses, often with a focus on improving the repair service. Many respondents talking about bringing the repairs service in-house and changing the relationship between the council and its residents. Some people criticised the quality of staff and contactors and had suggestions for how customer experience could be improved. A selection of comments has been pulled out from the responses below:

- Allow residents to choose who they have to repair their homes
- Appointment times that fit with residents' lives
- The current phonenumber is slow or (often) impossible to get through to. It seems you now demand a smartphone photo, which many people can't do.
- Resurrect two monthly meetings of local areas to discuss housing and repairs issues and create accountability and joint decision making, with some participatory budget decision making
- Genuine empowerment of tenants. Tenant housing committees with rotating membership and quotas for age, gender, cultural background etc to allow the largest number of council housing tenants to have a say in how and when repairs happen on their estates.
- Get the basics right
- Make reporting problems straightforward for all residents (as a leaseholder it is incredibly complex just to report a communal light being out of operation
- Work in a more mutual relationship with residents
- Bring services in-house to make them more accountable and remove the profit motive.
- Allow the resident to agree when a repair case is 'shut', if the resident doesn't agree, then it stays open
- Ensure there is as much human to human contact as possible, and minimise waiting time. People just want to be heard, and feel they're being respected, by another human being.
- Allow leaseholders to use the repair service
- The council needs an in-house drone surveying unit
- Improving the appearance of estates... making it look as though Lambeth cares about its residents

- Officers need to be proactive at all levels within Housing in responding to individual residents and particularly resident groups' legitimate concerns and dealing with them quickly and effectively
- Not having scaffolding up for months before or after a job
- Be aware how distressing it can be if the occupier has reported a problem that needs almost instant response and such request is ignored.
- Better communication between the council, contractors and residents
- Explaining to tenants how to maintain their own homes
- Employ trained staff
- Prioritise repairs for elderly / senior tenants by setting up a separate hotline line to fast track their repairs so that they are not left waiting for long periods for repairs to be completed.
- Keeping booking lists for repairs efficient and up to date. I have noticed in an improvement in this aspect of the repairs service, thank you.
- Housing officers don't respond to emails
- Put an end to fraud and waste
- More accountability
- Find a solution to deal with anti-social behaviour like drug addicts in stairwells
- Listen to us!
- Penalising contractors
- For people to have a 'go to' person and not be lost in layers of call centres
- More inspections of contractors work
- Stop blaming residents for damp
- Acting on complaints
- Communication! Answer phones & let residents be informed on what's going on, ie with their housing status and actually be a little empathetic.
- Have an in-house labour force and respond to repairs and infestations promptly. Get it right first time.
- Stop treating leaseholders as cash cows.
- "Staff are not appropriately trained, they don't actually listen (even though you have standards around customer service) and they talk down to residents as if we all have brain injuries"
- Make this more affordable by ensuring competitive quotation process for these services is undertaken. It seems a bit of a racket as when residents challenge these prices across London Boroughs more affordable quotes are found and agreed

Are these the right priorities for housing and repair services?

There is a range of different things we want to improve in relation to Housing and Repair Services. To what extent do you agree that these are the right priorities?

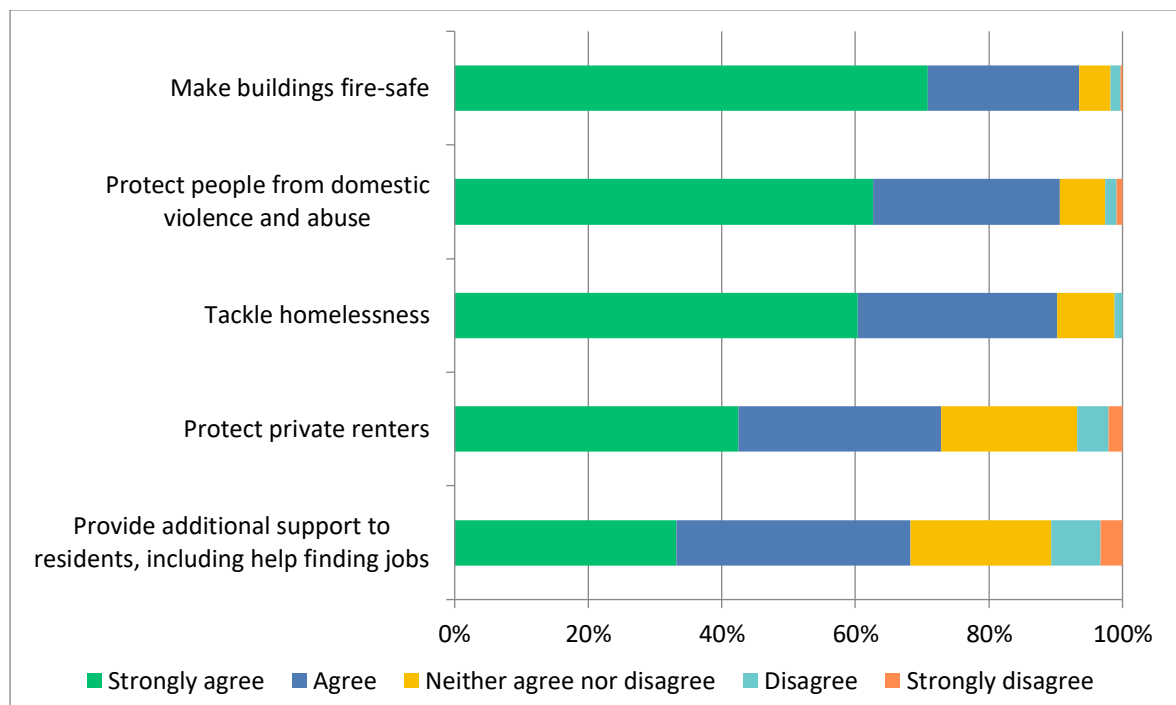


There was a high level of support for all the priorities with damp coming out at the top. There was more ambivalence towards sustainable travel with some quite negative comments though there was still a majority of residents agreeing it should be a priority. Respondents listed a number of things in response to the question “is anything missing”. The most common comments related to repairs (including the need to reduce the money wasted paying disrepair claims and the need to improve contract management), estate management, resident engagement, allocations, traffic management and anti-social behaviour / noise.

Priority 3: Supporting Healthy and Safe Communities

Are these the right priorities?

Within this priority we talk about a range of commitments. To what extent do you agree that these are the right priorities?



The above chart shows that there was a high level of support for prioritising making buildings fire-safe, protecting people from domestic violence and abuse and tackling homelessness. There was also support, but at lower levels, for prioritising protecting private renters and providing additional support to residents including help finding jobs.

The survey also asked respondents to tell us if they think anything is missing, and 93 respondents provided comments which covered a range of issues including the following:

- Housing need - tackle overcrowding, more social housing is needed. Tackle homelessness and be more transparent about how homelessness is dealt with and where people are sent.
- “The next generation is moving out of Lambeth because they cannot afford to live here. Can they be included in housing scheme. Lewisham runs a scheme to help residents stay in Lewisham. Could you include single young men.”
- Don’t “bully homeless single parents and threaten with unfair discharges of duty without following the proper procedures and guidelines”
- Increase supply of better quality and cheaper temporary accommodation
- How will you protect people from domestic violence and abuse? (Education on how to care is the answer but - are you going to do that?)
- There's nothing wrong here but deals on how you plan to meet these objectives would be helpful. For instance, are you seeking to bring in landlord licencing and rent caps to protect private renters or are you hopeful that landlords will make these changes out of their own good will?
- Don't let homeless unit call applicant who is experiencing domestic violence and “scare them into cancelling their appointment with lies”.

- Make sure the domestic abuse/abuse is real - not “used as a way to get housed”.
- Fuel Poverty
- Don’t return to the high rise towers/ concrete jungles of the past. Prevent gentrification.
- St Martin's Estate and Palace Road Estate – address resident concerns and finish the works.
- Listen to residents’ concern about affordability and unaffordable tenure types. Don't cost residents out of the neighbourhoods they have created.
- Support for young people and children: bring back youth clubs, services and qualified workers, safe areas to play and meet, activities. “We also need spaces for teenagers to enrich their lives - prioritise them, give them jobs in the local area, and create spaces that reflect their interests as they are the main demographic.”
- Provide an area where local residents can carry out “car boot” sales/clothes swaps, pop-up stores, small music events, would also be good.
- Health and education, but make clear what is due to government policy, and what is achievable quarter by quarter, with specific budget requirements.
- Health is a key priority e.g. projects for encouraging fitness and good health
- Resident engagement - help residents get to know other and build neighbour self help support networks, resident involvement sessions on estates
- Allow tenants to have meetings so they can pool their stories and resources to present their concerns to the council
- Lambeth Council could easily provide basic rules to residents living in council estates
- Define anti-social behaviour. This is not an intelligent response; it feels like the council would rather criminalise than do the hard work of opening dialogue with offenders and offenders
- Carry out timely repairs and maintenance including communal areas, monitor contractors.
- Implement standard plan to confirm which tenants need mobility help when all lifts break down and provide support e.g. food delivered and help to attend medical appointments.
- Improve the energy efficiency of buildings, upgrade your properties e.g. new gas boilers. Support leaseholders to replace gas and electric boilers with air source heat pumps.
- Extortionate communal heating charges- having to pay even if we aren’t using it!
- Fire-safety is important but any works must be necessary and useful.
- Support people who have the right to succeed a tenancy
- Streets should be free of dog waste, obstructions such as bikes on pavements, overhanging branches. Penalise bike companies over obstructions.
- Please include more light in areas where crime is a problem. More lights in green areas, small dark paths within the estates.
- Drug use services, public toilets, sports, mental health support, shoplifting support for retail.
- You didn't mention any innovative solutions.
- Listen when we tell you that the massive 6 storey trees need attention and are keeping out the light rather than telling us it is our responsibility.
- Understand residents that get into financial difficulties and work out ways to help them.
- With respect to jobs we need to stop employing out of area private companies to do things for a profit that residents could do themselves with some support and financing.
- Greening, trees and communal space are important. Improve access to recycling, reduce fly tipping, monitor and improve air quality
- Support for older people, people with disabilities, mental health and health needs. “As an autistic person myself, I have not seen any support from council. Need well-soundproofed flats for hyper sensitive autistic people.”
- Manage green spaces for wildlife.

There were varying views about Housing’s remit including that we should “stay within your remit. You aren’t doing housing great so please stop trying to do everything. Lambeth Housing should stick to housing, let police and social services do the rest. Apart from clever building design to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour.” Other views included, “Housing department should not be dealing with protecting people from domestic violence or helping with finding jobs or protecting private renters - those are for other departments in the council.”

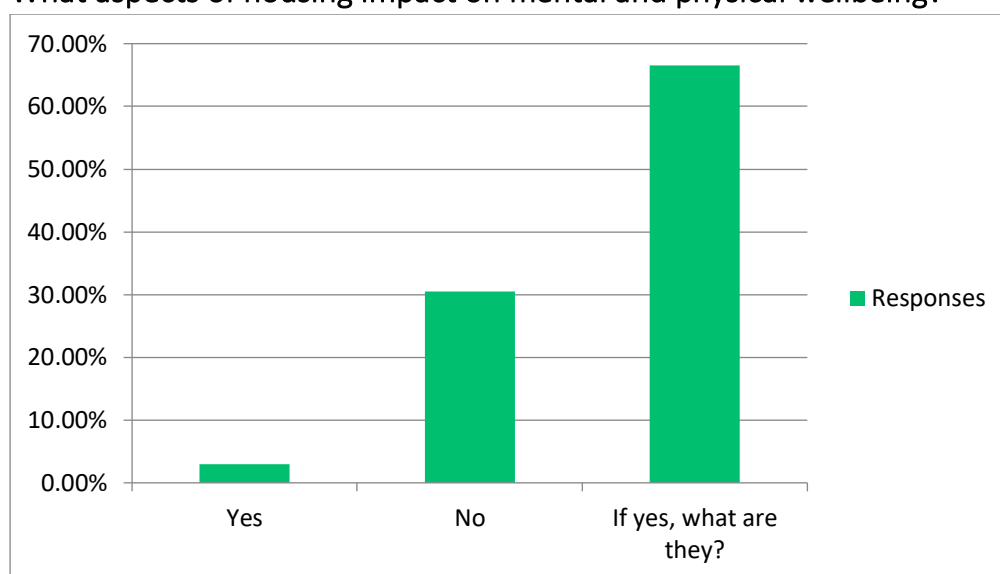
Also, “Those things are not solely on Lambeth. The council have never successfully tackled homelessness as social services is understaffed and underpaid whilst money is wasted [...]. You have never successfully tackled anti-social behaviour [...] What is missing is a team of staff that care. The council should concentrate on providing excellent housing and lobby those that are responsible for tackling domestic violence and job creation.”

Other issues included tackling tenancy fraud, noise and anti-social behaviour, dealing with complaints, the need for clear effective communication, being well-staffed and having a 24 hour housing team.

A housing association partner commented, “This is an area that needs a lot of multi-agency collaboration. The work of the Lambeth Housing Partnership should continue in this area to do as much as possible. Important to highlight that there is a need to support vulnerable residents with the right support services in place. Put in place the right support for care leavers as there is currently a gap. All nominated applicants should have a care package in place as part of the offer of a home. Disclosure [of] information held on dangerous offenders with relevant registered providers.”

Part of the consultation involved discussions with partners including the Staying Healthy Board, Lambeth Together (our local care partnership) and children’s services. They had a number of suggestions that we need to better reflect their priorities on areas including care leavers, serious youth violence and how housing works with primary care networks (GPs).

What aspects of housing impact on mental and physical wellbeing?



As indicated in the above chart, 66.7% of respondents (223) to this question responded that there were other aspects of their housing which impact badly on their mental or physical wellbeing.

The 195 responses referred to a range of issues, many of them referring to the impact of living in housing that didn't meet their needs. There were a wide range of reasons why this might be the case including the physical environment and not having a stable place to call home.

- Instability, sanctions, no hope of getting a secure base from which to live and prosper
- The fear of family in temporary accommodation of eviction and the impact of instability.
- Even with OT assessment, mine nor my children's needs are adequately accounted for because I don't fit Lambeth Housing box. I'm disabled and want to be safe and independent.
- It is important that individuals are not sent to areas where they have no family support.
- Overcrowding. Crowded space with 2 teens. Lack of space in some properties e.g. studio.
- Little support when not on a very low income or requiring complex social or medical needs.
- No available properties on our estate for real disabled people.
- I am sofa surfing due to council decision/policy. More support needed for private renters especially on council owned estates.
- Lack of help for middle earners, share to buy is rip off. You should provide affordable homes to buy.
- Shared Ownership - unable to buy more shares, value decreases and difficult to move.
- Issues around accessibility for disabled resident
- Unable to decorate internally as I am disabled, can't do it myself or afford to pay someone.
- Uncertainty - the threat of demolition.
- Being an estate in limbo, with empty/squatted homes, waiting for promised 'lessons learned' exercise promised by leader of the Council when they accepted Kerslake Review in full.
- I live on third floor with no lift and I am disabled.
- I am very happy with my home now and love living here. I feel that I am lucky to live in my home but it took a long time to feel this way.
- Fund tenants' legal and advocacy services. Lambeth to commit to enforcing landlord compliance on private rentals.
- Councils to ensure that any private sector housing which they rent for people on their housing list is of an adequate standard and in good condition.
- Insecurity of private renting and high cost makes it impossible to save to buy a home.
- Pests, cannabis stench constantly, building security, having to contact Lambeth for anything, wanting to move and not being able to. 😞
-

The following comment was also made by a voluntary sector group:

- The lack of affordable social housing means the refugees we support voluntarily to integrate and put their roots down when they first arrive in Lambeth, are unable to find accommodation in the borough where their children are in school and college and their support network exists. We are a community sponsorship group who ensures private rental at LA rates for the first 2 years of the family's life here. After that they are forced to relocate far away with no friends or support or community. the impact of this is obviously wide-ranging.

One issue which came up several times in the workshop discussions was that people found it frustrating to get hold of the right person or feeling they weren't listened to. They would welcome

having a named individual that they could contact. Inefficiencies in service delivery were seen as a major cause of stress in some of the responses.

- Dealing with Lambeth when chasing repairs, repairs are poor quality or not completed.
- I have called and called about new kitchen, new bathroom and new windows but nothing has been done.
- Poor work done during supposed "uplift" that leave more issues than they resolve at extremely high costs.
- Lack of loft insulation in council owned buildings and unclear responsibility on who can make repair to a roof if it is a privately owned flat but a council owned building
- Small block is left out of improvements, such as new fire doors, double glazed windows, electric wiring, general maintenance of the block is very poor, recurring damp.
- Providing lift service and intercom, lift breakdowns.
- Building works at the weekend - not an effective service
- Poor housing management and communal areas/stairs need to be clean and clear of rubbish, importance of green areas, bins, street lights. Dirty and damaged public realm. Signage to discourage fly tipping would help. Is playground/sports equipment working?
- Poor communication. Constant writing to Lambeth about repairs has led to me suffering from depression. I'm at my wit's end. I am now seeking legal advice.
- Having little input on changes in immediate community, e.g tick-box consultations with actual views or wants being taken in to consideration.
- Engagement by the council in areas, such as demolition and resident engagement. Our estate is considered brownfield land. How come?
- Poor customer service/interaction from housing officers/management and contractors.

Several leaseholders made references to costs:

- Stress about S20 notice and overcharging for works. Lack of transparency with service charges, need justifiable evidenced bills.
- Lack of control or input into decisions related to my building. As a leaseholder, I have very little say yet I'm expected pay for repairs to the building and maintenance. Anxiety caused by the way Housing communicates.
- Lambeth major works that are poorly understood, poorly completed by contractors who have long term deals with Lambeth where residents are then charged a fortune.

Anti-social behaviour and noise also came up as aspects of housing that impacted negatively on people's wellbeing.

- Anti-social behaviour, attacks against women, confrontations from homeless displaced individuals, dangerous dogs. Gang activity and violence, estates and streets. County Lines. Drug addicts moving in and out of building and estate. Alarmed to find out that the dealers now have drop down keys. Drug use, shoplifting, threat of knife crime.
- Gang crime, but also police racism
- Areas that seem dangerous such as Tyers St. and Lambeth Walk. Very dark and quiet at night.
- Poor insulation - impacts on noise nuisance, and higher heating bills, cost of living.
- More should be done to help people living beside inconsiderate neighbours, who are making people's lives miserable.

- Noise/ disturbance caused by educational establishment for adults opposite flat, impacts on health.
- Anti-social and criminal behaviour especially on council estates, noisy neighbours, drunk, late night parties. Drug addicts - dispute about Lambeth's responsibility and what's the police's.

Other miscellaneous comments:

- As someone who doesn't live on an estate, I feel forgotten about.
- I wish we could have capacity for renewable energy
- For owner occupiers restrictive planning
- Isolation, feeling a lack of community cohesion
- Gentrification/lack of protection for ethnic minorities, need spaces for young adults to enrich themselves.
- allow drivers to have affordable hybrid cars stop the congestion charge at the weekend and lower the charge in the week its too much. Improve the roads stop all the pathetic ongoing road works and restrictions things have not improved they have got worse there is no traffic flow anymore. Musicians who carry PA should be allowed to park outside venues to offload without penalty its crap the whole road traffic control.

Is there anything the council or partners could do to help?

There were 180 responses to this question. The feedback covered some of the issues which have been referred to above, including the need for affordable housing and improvements to housing services, and concerns about noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

Suggestions on how we manage council housing:

- Housing services need to be responsive – answer emails and answer the phone. Respond to complaints.
- Be honest and learn from errors and poor service rather than wait for another bad report from the housing ombudsman.
- Councils should be inspecting the estates regularly and implementing external repairs and maintenance including green areas, bins, dog bins and cleaning, remove graffiti. Stop fly tipping. Don't cut back on weekly bin collections as that will lead to problems. Increase presence of neighbourhood managers on estates.
- Make Estate Action Plans transparent and structured, with actions and due dates.
- Give first refusal of council let garages to Lambeth residents.
- Council should visit their property every quarter.
- Offer DIY services to help people that are on their own and not much support
- Turn off heating in the summer to lower the cost and prevent wasting energy.
- Help lower service charges; it's not fair on individuals or small families as we pay the same service charge as large families for gas and heating. This is bringing us to severe poverty.
- Sheltered Accommodation - I feel the place is run down
- Put a lift in the block.
- Phone reception at Lambeth Service Centre is really bad, hard to hear what is being said possibly due to background noise. Often confusion about which repair is being requested.

- Improve technology, accountability, customer service. Recruit the right people and replace the failing providers and manage the new ones properly i.e. don't pay for work not done or not done adequately and produce a code of conduct for disrepair
- Don't overstretch your housing officers, by giving them too much work and making them leave. Our estate has more officers leaving the job in the last six months, because they are being overworked.
- On an estate designated for 'regeneration', work on 2nd Phase has been delayed and we now have more squatted properties than tenanted. Why? Why have 4 housing officers had all of their time taken up with dealing with the squatting issues? You told residents as homes became empty you would rent them out. Why haven't you? It's shameful to think you are asking about ways to deal with homelessness when you have so many empty properties.

Comments on allocations and supporting people with specific needs

- Bigger house/ flat for disabled children and families, who are looking after the children.
- Tackle homelessness, provide help to get people off drugs and open centres drop in social places, build community. People are desperately lonely.
- I don't get on with the bidding system and I think especially for older disabled people there should be another option to find suitable accommodation.
- Talk to the people languishing in temporary housing for years, especially if they've lived in Lambeth all their lives.
- I am 50 years old and living with many people is not ideal. I would love to have a one bed flat.
- Ensure high level of support around safety and families with children with ASD and ADHD housed in ground floor properties.
- Children's Centres, community hubs, older people's meeting places/hubs, youth centres, therapeutic activities, sports, activities etc all staffed by skilled compassionate staff.
- Better access to rehousing for people experiencing domestic violence and abuse
- Loneliness in older persons and the disabled.
- Extended families should be able to live close to each other (like it used to be).
- Extend community provision, security, engagement, health, and other services to those living in estates to people residing in street properties. Services can help build a sense of community and provide valuable resources. By addressing the challenges faced by street property residents, the community as a whole can become more resilient and cohesive.
- Prioritise tenants in temporary housing for permanent council homes.

Comments on anti-social behaviour, including noise

- Look at the security on an estate: surveillance, full CCTV and secure door entry.
- When the Met police do search raids, premises should be secured as a priority.
- Help the police to be more dynamic in how it addresses drug crime.
- Send reminders to residents about anti-social behaviour and vandalism, rubbish disposal.
- Implement stronger by-laws and action against noise nuisance.
- As an autistic person, I have not received any support from council. Need well sound-proofed flats for hypersensitive autistic people.
- STOP no fault evictions
- Have a direct point of contact for noise issues.

- What protection and options do tenants have with regard to their health during construction works? Noise, dust in homes, in to lungs...

Here is a selection from the comments made about housing development

- Build more Council houses as well as Council flats - encourage a family environment within Lambeth. Look at buying back houses sold at RTB
- Development of new affordable homes is a long-term project, it will not happen overnight and there are considerable challenges to building low-cost homes for those who need them.
- More Community Land Trust sites; a cap on private homes being built.
- Build homes that exceed minimum space requirements which are stingy. Build and protect green space around homes, restrict cars near homes, bring architects in-house.
- Stop taking payments from property developers so that they can avoid the requirements for low cost or social housing.

We received several suggestions of things connected to the environment the council and its partners should be doing.

- Maintain outside spaces, free from rubbish and well kept gardens increases pride of all residents in their homes and spaces for gentle exercise (places to safely walk and sit and enjoy nature, not necessarily games or playgrounds) increases general well-being for all.
- The council should liaise with other sustainability teams e.g. Enfield Council. Develop in house team around retrofit plans, including assimilation of LETI (Low Energy Transformation Initiative) national affordable retrofit strategy.
- Lobby for net zero homes for all
- Teach residents and staff how to care about the community and the planet. Consciousness, consideration and collaboration!
- Grants for insulating external walls to reduce heat loss and to vulnerable residents for internal decorations.
- Acceleration of LTNs, more active travel support to support greater densification,
- Provide more green space in every estate, plant more trees, especially near busy roads.
- Upgrade needed in property that's so cold that in winter.
- Use scale to bulk buy insulation and offer more competitive rates - particularly around aerogel products for conservation area homes which cannot insulate outside of their buildings cost effectively

Some suggestions from leaseholders included:

- Establish a structure of a) properly procuring the work that's subject to S20s; ensuring it overseen and good work b) work more closely with leaseholders on S20s, even advising when they will be issued ahead of time.
- Provide me with accurate information when purchasing my property.
- Make more effort to lower costs for services like cleaning, concierge, estate management etc. The contracts always go to the same companies.
- Leaseholders in mixed blocks get a poor service,

A housing association partner advised:

- Since the pandemic/cost of living crisis, Wandle have introduced a budget set aside to support our tenants experiencing financial hardship - We would suggest a similar approach from the council and its partners may prove beneficial.

Finally some miscellaneous comments:

- Think about designating roads and spaces as community hubs to encourage group engagement, maybe even increasing LTNs, and giving road space to local cafe, restaurants, bars, encouraging public transport or cycling.
- On estates organise Health and Wellbeing days, mobile libraries, estate wardens, social groups for elderly and vulnerable residents, Samaritan style days.
- Article 4 (permitted development rights) sooner rather than later. Been very slow to act.
- Create strong cohesive communities via series of study days for tenants so that they can discuss what it means to be a good tenant. This should be compulsory.
- Impact Lambeth is having on making rents expensive via HMO Licensing
- Don't build dark ugly homes!. Incorporate green areas, education on gardening for tenants.
- Make air quality a priority when considering the requirements of a safe and healthy neighbourhood.
- Better education and understanding of community wants and needs, including community in decision-making. Build trust. Listen to local residents and acknowledge importance of cultural needs.
- Focus on the core responsibilities you're paid/elected to deal with and stop playing politics
- Properly fund social services and resources for vulnerable communities. Stop funnelling council funding to private groups like Homes for Lambeth. Stop privatising and redeveloping estates.
- Landlord licensing, siezing homes from rogue landlords
- Introduce rent controls

Working with residents

The strategy outlined how we want to work with residents to gain their trust and put forward an approach to resident engagement based on Informing; Consulting; Involving and Collaborating. We asked for comment on the approach.

There was a lot of support for the approach, *“The approach to resident engagement outlined in the strategy appears to be a well-rounded and comprehensive framework for building trust and fostering collaboration between residents and the organization”*, and *“this is an excellent approach”*.

However, many of the comments said that they didn’t feel this was the way things are done, in particular that Lambeth makes decision and then consults:

“Sounds nice, but I’ll believe it when I see it. It would help if Lambeth put themselves in the shoes of a resident and read any comms before hitting 'send'. A lot of consultations (including this one) feel like they’re done just so that Lambeth can claim that they’ve engaged with residents, rather than actually taking action from the feedback.”

“The problem lies with the execution”

“I feel that most council decisions are already made and set in stone by the time residents are consulted and there isn’t any influence realistically possible anymore.

Some residents thought that there should be more chances for residents to have access to regular meetings where they could find out what was going on and hear proper answers, for instance, “The resident engagement structures have been almost totally dismantled and there is no place for the leaseholders to have their voice heard at a strategic level.” This also came up during the discussions with residents at workshop and during the drop ins. There were discussions around how some people did want to be involved, but didn’t like all the admin and formalities association with TRAs.

Some respondents referred to the need for consultations to be open to a wider range of people and the need for transparency.

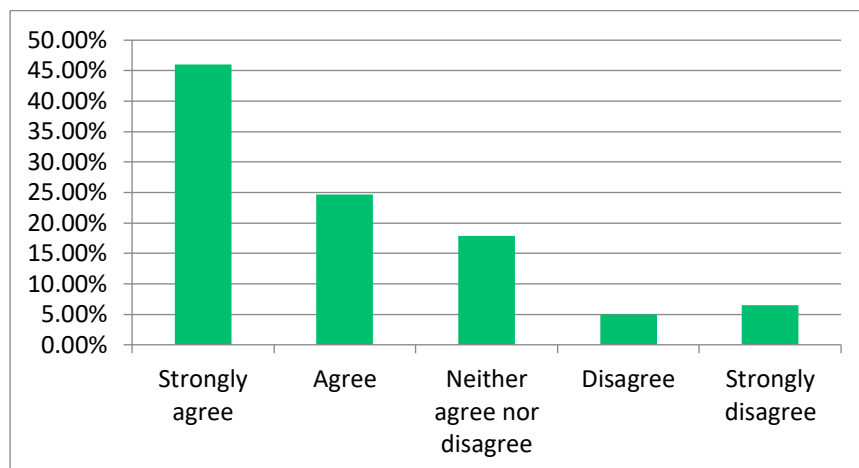
Some other ideas included:

- More targeted online surveys, e.g. on an estate basis
- Don’t ask too many people. It’s wastes money. Hire talented, people outcome led experts to make decisions efficiently and quickly and most importantly in the best interested of customers affordable lives.
- You need to do more door-to-door consultation work, rather than holding ‘workshops’ which the majority of residents don’t have time to attend.

Equalities

We are committed to improving the housing options of all our residents and believe that overall this strategy will benefit all residents regardless of age, gender, pregnancy, gender identity, marital status, race, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation.

We asked the extent to which people agreed with this statement.



The majority of residents agreed with this statement. However, a small number of residents disagreed, because they believed more evidence is needed so show Lambeth has the capacity to deliver on its promises:

The effectiveness of strategy cannot be assessed until it is accompanied by an action plan setting out how and when the elements of the strategy will be delivered

- "There appears to be a strategy but no plan to deliver it"
- "I am not sure from the questions you have asked in this questionnaire or in the housing strategy who WILL benefit from the housing strategy. There are no clear measurable targets or anything that the council can be held accountable for"
- "What does that even mean. It's a pointless statement that has no impact on the number of social homes or their quality and the quality of the upkeep! Stick to the basics!!!"
- "I would need to see actions being delivered before I believed any changes were being made. The strategy does not appear to discriminate against any particular group"
- "Policies do not make things happen nor plans though they are required, actions do"
- "It's not saying anything. The proof is in the delivery. What are your actual plans?"
- "It is one thing to have the strategy, but how do you get the workforce to put it into operation. I think you really need to look at the staff structure as computers do help with some of the monkey work but you would have got a lot more out of me if a person had been asking questions and probing, rather [than] me just doing some quick flip answers because I am tired"
- "Could you develop an initial public forum and start sharing details of budgets and policy options on an incremental basis, to build involvement and understanding. We at Citizens UK Lambeth might well help with this."
- "Set realistic goals, against a realistic timeline and deliver that. No need for lofty statements which no one stands behind in reality"

- “This is a very wishy-washy strategy. Nothing one can disagree with, but there is no detail on how you are going to achieve it!”

In some instances, the resident’s previous experience led them to observe that Lambeth may not deliver on the promises set out in the strategy

- “Lambeth Council has proven to be unable to improve the anti-social behaviour and crime in South Lambeth Estate, which creates an unsafe environment for everyone. Despite having cameras and resident’s complaints, it takes too long for any action to be taken.”
- “I don’t believe you got a moment. You need to build more council accommodation. You need to allow the homeless or those in temp accommodation to move into the many empty homes on the estates you want to demolish. Leaving tenants in limbo for up to a decade is inhumane. Having decent empty properties is disgusting.”
- “In order to gain trust back, you’d have to stop prioritising gentrification, and show some consideration for the people that have built this community, which happens to be ethnic minorities”
- “Up to now I have not seen any evidence pointing in this direction”
- “All of them. What I've seen so far tells me that none of this will really be effective, so none of these groups will benefit.”
- “You are committed to privatising council estates and funneling money to private developers”
- “Unless the council acknowledge there are genuine problems with housing services residents whatever their protected characteristics or none, won't benefit”
- “You can't even be trusted to enact statutory Reasonable Adjustments so unclear what this even means.”

Final Comments

We ended with a final question asking if people had any other comments not covered elsewhere.

An answer to this question residents raised a number of issues which they felt had not been sufficiently addressed in the strategy:

Concerns around the limited impact the strategy will have on helping to address the consequences of the climate emergency

- “You have not included considerations about the impacts of air pollution in your housing strategy and the health impacts of air pollution to some particularly vulnerable residents including older people, infants and children and pregnant women and their unborn children.”
- “The time has come for Lambeth Council to see the Bigger Picture. This involves the Climate Emergency (for which you signed up as being important) along with The Kerslake Review and the fact that the Ombudsman is doing the first ever review of an actual council (because reports have shown the situation to be so terrible!! Decisions on policies that were created in 2015 (or so) need to be re-examined and changed. 'Regeneration' that involves demolishing whole estates is proving to be the least helpful process. Communities are being ripped apart; wellbeing is not being nurtured and carbon emissions are being ignored. There are many clues to show that these policies need to change - not least the views of many architects that say the greenest building is one that is already standing. The number of people who could be housed in the number of buildings that are standing empty shows small-minded planning and ignorance of the Bigger Picture. Our lives depend on you,

Lambeth Council. It's about time that you made real efforts to provide Real Change. Why don't you check out Doughnut Economics? You might be able to imagine (and even create) better ways!!"

- "Lambeth Council, as responsible local governance, cannot ignore the non-negotiable environmental imperatives of protecting against an amplified embodied carbon 'bill' in the current estate 'regeneration' plan. It simply isn't acceptable. The UK is in the top ten wealthiest countries globally - all the resources exist: expertise, industry innovation, sustainability leadership - to take the opportunity to recant on outdated and overly expensive demolition and 'regeneration' plans, and rather take up a meaningful path of scaled affordable social housing retrofit borough wide. This strategy would make Lambeth Council a London leader, not outdated and overly expensive, destructive 'regeneration' imperatives."
- "You're not talking about measures to help residents tackle the causes and impacts of climate change."

The strategy should set out how Lambeth could do better at managing repairs contractors

- "There is a very great danger that the Council will not have the resources, both capital and revenue, to achieve all its aims. Concentrating on making contractors comply with their contractual obligations would help."
- "1. Accountability with consequences - Lambeth managers and heads of departments along with the MP for that area ie The Head of Housing 2. Every single resident being treated equally 3. Outside / Inside contractors being held accountable with large fines included in the contracts regarding timescales of completion of works and quality of jobs taken on and customer service, before committing with them on a long-term contract. Put in place as a deterrent. Lastly trained supervisors to do unannounced spot-checks of the contracts whilst on site and monitor them evening getting feedback from the clients. Thereby keeping them accountable on track and on schedule."
- "Also the people that Lambeth hires for repairs, they miss appointments, they are sometimes rude and they do a minimal repair work because Lambeth cannot afford to pay the main job to sort the problem."
- "I have many repairs to do in my home. I have called and had repair men come, mostly they say they need to come back and finish the job and they never do; hence I have windows with no handles and one that actually hangs off its hinges. I have had to pay out for a shower to be installed and new taps as my mixer tap put in by the council did not mix and the water pressure was not very good, I lived like this for about 4 or 5 years and saved the money to pay someone to come and fix it and put a shower in because the council refused to help me. I should not have had to pay for this myself. but I have two children and it was causing all sorts of problems not being able to have a 'normal' bath!"
- "You need to ACTIVELY pursue improvement in your maintenance, repairs and associated billing process to make them more transparent and make your DEFAULT to take the side of your residents and owners when they alert you to financial and quality abuses, rather than defaulting to defence of your contractors in the first instance."

Provide more focus on addressing the specific needs of leaseholders

- "You need to provide a meaningful and useful service to leaseholders too!"
- "I think there is a fundamental gap between what you think and what you achieve. The basic structure in housing is half-arsed. The Right to Buy has caused an enormous problem. There never should have been a sell off of social housing. Therefore you need to separate the

Leaseholders from the Tenants. Please re-examine that structure. The Leaseholders should not be your Cash Cows. Politically this is a major challenge. I can wax lyrical on this topic. But if you solved the basic contradiction, everything would run more smoothly.”

- “Lambeth leaseholder should be a separate household type of the first page of the survey. We pay service charges to maintain estates, and engage via residents’ associations, and do a lot of unpaid, voluntary estate maintenance like litter picking and gardening. Your understanding of these results would be more insightful if you understood the experiences of owner occupiers living in Lambeth estates, and dealing with repairs teams and officers, compared to owner occupiers in general.”
- “There are very many private/ shared ownership of leaseholders in the borough who struggle with their mortgages due to high interest rates and the cost of living crisis. Imposition of significant increases in service charges and poor property management compound their problems. This group of residents in LAMBETH and their needs should not be overlooked. Perhaps an advice service for them re their rights and the introduction of a voluntary Code of Conduct for Landlords responsible for large swathes of property in the area could be considered?”
- “You didn't even have a category for Lambeth leaseholders at the beginning - shows how sidelined the nearly 10,000 of us are. Homeowner doesn't cover us as homeowner includes freeholders and leaseholders of other freeholders.”
- “You ignore freeholders and leaseholders. You don’t state what you will do to regain broken trust”
- Lambeth Council has a track record of billing its leaseholders for extortionate service charges, which are often found to be illegitimate requests upon further inspection
- When retrofitting a fund will be needed to support leaseholders
- What plans are there for fire safety measures for leaseholders (fire doors etc.)
- A forum or panel of leaseholders is needed as part of a new resident engagement structure to address leaseholder issues which also include leaseholder insurance.
- Many leaseholders suffer considerable mental ill health due to the challenges they face from poor repairs but also having to face what can only be termed as bullying from the Homeownership team when it comes to chasing payment of leasehold bills.

More control and regulation of the private rented sector

- “Lambeth needs a super ambitious strategy for housing. We need to ensure that there is strict licensing and repercussions for bad private landlords and the proper support for tenants.”
- “The council should have a designated person who works with private Landlords to get information on how they are protecting the residents, and the same designated person should also have a private discussion with residents, if the residents want to and without fear.”
- “Build a campaign across the Borough directly aimed at landlords to request they do not up rents if they do not need to (make the case). There are landlords who only get the estate agent rationale without a thorough understanding of the consequences of rent increases”

Some other individual comments and observations about what should also be included in the strategy

- “You need to review your waiting list. Hasn't been done for years. You need to embrace the once-in-a-blue-moon opportunity on the South Lambeth Estate to refurbish the empty block instead of demolishing it. You could find out the real cost and any disadvantages in a small

pilot project. This kind of work would save heartache and serious money, repair your v damaged reputation with local residents, show real commitment to climate responsibilities, make LBL potentially a leader in the field, create jobs and training in relevant skills - for further use.”

- “The practical priorities look promising -need a detailed action plan published with strategy in Jan 2024. Wider context helps anchor a strategy-and tell the story better. Concept of council housing is about 100 years old. A review , at London level, is needed of its purpose and its target customers. Any new council homes need a substantial subsidy which limits volumes. Savills survey has indicated a massive budget to maintain existing Lambeth council homes. What will be left for new build? More & more low income households are in poor, often illegal, PRS lets. London does not have the capacity for extensive enforcement. Lambeth and London needs low rented quality homes for essential workers on LLW -regular 35 hr week means £24k pa. Public services need low rented quality homes for skilled workers on average wages. What demographic model is Lambeth council Housing aimed at? Where do Lambeth's young people move to from age 16-30? What impact does regeneration/ gentrification have on borough?”
- “I would like to see much less emphasis on building homes for sale to cross-subsidise council homes for rent. Reverse your demolition programme. And increase the accountability and DEMOCRACY in the council. Get rid of the cabinet and have ALL democratically elected councillors being more involved in the council.”
- “Converting unused offices into housing. Forcing constructors to build for locals not overseas investors, who buy off the plan before the building is completed. Land is being taken up by luxury high rise buildings that stay empty because they belong to foreign investors. If a property is empty for more than a year, the council should be able to take possession of it and use it for those that don't have homes.”
- “Using small sites to deliver housing is important and is not in the strategy. Housing benefit and council tax arrears are a huge problem in Lambeth. Residents can really struggle to engage with Lambeth Council on these issues. Lambeth Council should review how it is delivering these services, ideally a review carried out by a third party and in collaboration with organisations such as Citizens Advice Merton and Lambeth.”
- All estates should have a ten year documented plan
- Quantitative elements of the strategy should be published each year (i.e. number of homes built)
- What are you doing about empty homes?
- What has been the impact of Housing First?
- The strategy does not explain how you are going to improve contract management