

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2014 -2019 Executive Summary

Introduction

Since our last Housing and Homelessness Strategies were published, there has been a change of government which has resulted in extensive changes to national government legislation and policy.

Ealing Council's new combined Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2014 – 2019 aims at facilitating greater integration in the provision of our housing services to help residents and partners to better understand our plans over the next five years. It is one of a number of strategies supporting the Council's Corporate Plan and Community Strategy and will directly support a key corporate priority of the council to "secure jobs and homes. Ealing Council's vision is to

'Ensure the borough has an affordable, good quality housing stock to meet the housing needs and aspirations of our residents, ensuring Ealing is a thriving place to live and work'

We have undertaken a thorough review of our evidence base including the census 2011 data and the results of our recent strategic housing market assessment (SHMA). This has identified a number of housing issues in the borough, which are set out in our strategy. These have helped shape our priorities and plans for the next five years. We have identified five priority areas, which are to:

- Increase the supply of affordable homes
- Improve the quality of housing & neighbourhoods in Ealing
- Support residents to access affordable, well managed social and market rented homes
- Meet the needs of older and vulnerable residents
- Prevent homelessness

Strategic priority 1: Increase the supply of affordable homes

Key Issues and Challenges:

- Home ownership and private renting is already unaffordable to many
- There are significant differences in affordability across the borough
- Homes are expected to become less affordable over the next five years
- Reduced central government funding to build affordable housing
- Lack of Supply
- Significant Demographic Change
- Changes in tenure patterns
- High levels of population churn (inward and outward migration)
- High number of empty homes
- High demand for and lack of availability of social housing

Our Objectives:

- Work with housing associations and other developers to maximise affordability and security of tenure
- Deliver a new supply of quality, mixed tenure homes
- Make the most efficient use of the existing housing stock

Key Outcomes being sought:

- Provide a minimum of 500 new council managed homes
- Deliver a minimum of 3000 new homes of all tenures with our delivery partners across our estate improvement and new build programmes.
- Meet the Greater London Authority's current delivery target (a revised target of 1,297 new homes per year is being consulted on)
- Ensure 50% of new homes are affordable housing
- Meet the London Housing Strategy tenure split targets for affordable housing of 40% for low cost home ownership and 60% social housing
- 50% of future affordable homes delivery should be small one and two bedroom properties, to meet the needs of younger single and couple households, older people and small families
- 50% of affordable homes delivery should be three and four bedroom units
- Meet the London Housing Strategy target of ensuring that no more than one per cent of homes stand empty and unused for more than six months
- Bring 350 long-term empty dwellings into use through direct intervention

Strategic priority 2: Improve the quality of housing & neighbourhoods

Key Issues and Challenges:

- Pockets of deprivation within the borough
- Resident satisfaction with neighbourhoods has declined slightly
- Improving Community Safety
- Poor thermal comfort of homes
- Reduced local government funding
- Fuel poverty amongst vulnerable households
- High levels of overcrowding
- Tenure patterns vary across the borough
- Established links between affordable warmth and health
- Vulnerable households are more affected more by poor property conditions
- Poor safety record of private rented sector
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Our Objectives:

- Ensure homes are safe and free from hazards
- Minimise over-crowding
- Improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty
- Continue to deliver the Estate Improvement Programme
- Invest in and improve neighbourhoods
- Ensure new homes are of a high quality design and environmentally sustainable

Key Outcomes being sought:

- All new homes should be built to the London Housing Design Guide standards
- Reduce the number of homes with category 1 hazards
- Reduced levels of over crowding
- 100% of new homes should be built to Lifetime Homes standards
- 10% of new homes should be wheelchair accessible
- Reduced crime and anti-social behaviour
- Reduce domestic CO2 emissions by 40% on 2010 levels by 2020
- Raise SAP rating of all properties judged to be in lowest EPC bands (G, F and E) to minimum SAP 70 (EPC 'C') by 2018
- All affordable homes in Ealing should be retrofitted by 2020
- Reduced levels of fuel poverty

Strategic priority 3: Support residents to access affordable, well managed social and market rented homes

Key Issues and Challenges:

- There has been a substantial increase in people privately renting both in Ealing and nationally
- Social Housing in Ealing has a very low turnover
- A high proportion of council tenants are reliant on welfare benefits
- Local authorities can discharge their homelessness duty into the private rented sector
- Ealing has a higher than average percentage of houses in multiple occupation
- Private sector tenancies have less security of tenure
- Local impact of Welfare Reform
- Changing demographic profile with a higher proportion of vulnerable people
- Poor property condition of Houses in Multiple Occupation

Our Objectives:

- Improve access & choice to homes for households living & working in Ealing
- Raise the management standard of social and private rented housing
- Promote a range of opportunities for resident involvement
- Provide effective regulation of houses in multiple occupation
- Ensure council housing services offer excellent services

Key Outcomes being sought:

- Extended levels of housing choice
- Increased levels of access into PRS
- Reduced number of complaints regarding management issues
- High levels of tenant satisfaction with the management of the council owned housing stock
- Reduced levels of arrears for rent collection

Strategic priority 4: Meet the housing & support needs of vulnerable residents

Key Issues and Challenges:

- Changing demographic profile with a higher proportion of vulnerable people
- There is a limited availability of supported housing in Ealing
- The demand for housing support and care is high
- Ealing is the third most ethnically diverse boroughs in the country
- Residents generally think that people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together
- A high proportion of older people are living on low incomes
- Reduced government funding

Objectives:

- Support vulnerable residents to enable people to live independently and remain in their home
- Ensure vulnerable people are able to access accommodation which meets their needs
- Support minority ethnic groups to integrate in communities
- Work in partnership to support families at risk with complex & multiple needs

Key Outcomes being sought:

- A high proportion of people who are supported to establish and maintain independent living.
- Improved access to advice and support services
- Improved health and wellbeing indicators
- Effective information and services to reflect the diversity of local communities
- High levels of resident satisfaction with neighbourhoods

Strategic priority 5: Prevent homelessness

Key Issues and Challenges:

- Increasing homelessness
- Loss of private rented sector accommodation has increased and is now the main reason for homelessness
- Difficulty in finding suitable accommodation in the private sector
- Increased demand for temporary accommodation
- Rising costs of providing bed and breakfast accommodation
- The demand for housing advice has been increasing
- Unemployment and low paid work has increased in Ealing
- There is a lack of availability of social housing
- Private sector tenancies have less security of tenure making it difficult for families to settle in a location
- The number of people sleeping rough has increased
- Pressures created by welfare reform

Our Objectives:

- Provide housing advice & support to households at risk of homelessness
- Minimise the impact of Welfare Reform on residents
- Support unemployed residents into employment and training
- Minimise the use of bed and breakfast accommodation
- Provide suitable accommodation for those who are homeless
- Work with the voluntary sector to support households experiencing or at risk of homelessness

Key Outcomes being sought:

- Ensure families are not placed in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks
- Reduced numbers of homeless households
- Reduced number of households in high cost temporary accommodation
- Reduced numbers of rough sleepers
- Ensure rough sleepers do not spend a second night out on the streets
- Support household members to remain as a family unit
- Reduced waiting times for homeless households to be placed in suitable housing
- Increase numbers of members of 'deprived' households into work
- Reduced levels of benefits dependence
- New local jobs and apprenticeships created in the construction industry through house building