

Housing Strategy 2023-28

1 Foreword (Councillor Hale)

Croydon is London's largest borough, and our ambition is to provide good housing services and that residents should be able to live in safe, secure, warm and dry homes.

Croydon Council's five-year Housing Strategy 2023-2028 sets out how we intend to respond to the challenges we face in ensuring that existing housing stock in both the private and social housing sector is well-managed and safe and that those facing genuine housing need are supported by the Council and the Voluntary agencies it works with. In addition, it presents a pathway as to how we can begin to address the issues of housing supply in an environment where demand for housing is ever increasing.

As a Council, we recognise the need to improve our performance in delivering better outcomes in the management and condition of our own stock and through the development of the Resident Charter we will work closely with residents to achieve this. We are also conscious of our role in driving up the quality of housing in the private sector by working with Landlords and Property Agents and where necessary using the powers we have to make sure this happens. I also recognise the importance that Disabled Facilities Grants have in allowing many of our elderly or disabled residents to stay in their own homes.

The context in which the Council delivers housing services has changed a great deal in recent years as the financial position in May 2022 along with a challenging economic environment has meant that the pressures on our housing services have reached unprecedented levels.

New legislation introduced by the Government following the Grenfell Tower fire has given more responsibility to councils to improve building and fire safety for both social and private rented tenants. The Government has also introduced legislation which requires local authorities to improve conditions in social or private rented homes, particularly regarding damp and mould following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak. The increased cost-of-living and private sector rents means the Council is also seeing growing numbers of residents needing support and emergency housing. The demand for housing and homelessness services has reached unprecedented levels and the Council must focus our available resources to protect the borough's most vulnerable people and deliver core services well. Achieving this will require us to continue the wholesale transformation of our housing services and our Strategy will create housing services which listens to and empowers residents to do more for themselves. Preventing homelessness at the earliest opportunity will be an important and key ambition.

The Council has spent too long disregarding the priorities of residents and our Housing Strategy 2023- 2028 will build on our work to really listen to residents' needs and transform our housing services. We have co-designed our Residents' Charter to make sure our tenants and leaseholders are treated with respect and our services are designed with residents' needs at their heart.

Our Housing Strategy 2023- 2028 sets out our ambition to re-build and strengthen our relationship with partners, including the voluntary sector and housing associations, and bring more resources to the borough.

Access to safe, warm, and dry homes is key to ensuring our residents live healthier lives for longer. Our Housing Strategy 2023- 2028 puts our residents at the heart of our housing services and sets out the Council's strategic priorities which will both bring alive and go beyond this vision. My thanks to everyone who responded to the recent Housing Strategy

consultation; your thoughts and views are invaluable to us and have been carefully built into this Strategy.

With a reputation for ignoring residents and a legacy failure to invest in homes, Croydon housing is in a poor state, and I do not underestimate the scale of the challenge. This Strategy demonstrates our commitment to creating sustainable services which support residents and provide the decent housing which our residents deserve.

2 Introduction (Susmita Sen)-National Context

In recent years, Croydon has fallen short in delivering the excellent housing services that our residents deserve. This strategy sets out the Council's commitment to rebuild trust within our community by listening and responding to views about our services and providing or facilitating safe, warm and dry homes for our residents as well as offering solutions to those in housing need. Additionally, we will work to foster stronger relationships amongst housing providers including private sector landlords and housing associations as well as develop stronger partnerships in the Voluntary and Statutory sectors.

As a Council, we are faced with multiple challenges both locally and nationally. The cost-of-living situation as well as the increasing unaffordability of the private rented sector has heightened the demand for our housing and homelessness services. We have re-organised our services to ensure a much greater emphasis on the early intervention and prevention of homelessness as required by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 but like all London Councils are faced with rising applications of those in housing need. The aftermath of the Grenfell tragedy and wider concerns regarding the condition of social housing has led to the Government introducing new legislation which places new demands on Councils and Social Housing Landlords. The Fire Safety Act 2021, the Building Safety Act 2022 and Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (including Awaab's Law) introduces new requirements on Landlords to improve living conditions and building and fire safety standards for social tenants and homes.


In addition, the Renters (Reform) Bill will extend the Decent Homes Standards to the private rented sector therefore aiming to improve conditions for the 26% of households in Croydon that rent their homes from private sector landlords or agents.

Rising interest rates and subsequent increases to mortgage repayments have meant higher rental costs for private rented sector tenants making properties in Croydon unaffordable to low-income households. The subsequent pressures on our homelessness services have led to increases in the number of residents placed in emergency and temporary accommodation with many likely to remain in this form of housing for years. This also heightens our responsibility as a Council to manage our stock more effectively and maximise any opportunities for new housing. Despite difficult economic circumstances, it is beholden upon us, and our housing association partners to be creative in facilitating new build opportunities and to set a longer-term plan for delivering new housing that follows on from our commitment to provide excellent new housing for the residents of Regina Road.

Finally, I am absolutely determined that the commitments we have made to Croydon tenants and leaseholders in the Residents Charter (see page 9) also apply to all those who seek housing advice and support and that we as a Council demonstrate our respect by engaging with residents of all tenures as well as partner agencies to-deliver services that truly serve the needs of our community.

By fulfilling the priorities set out in our Housing Strategy 2023- 2028 over the next 5 years and beyond, we aim to place residents at the centre of our services, truly listening to them and ensuring access to appropriate housing. Through collaboration, respect, and empowerment, we hope to build a stronger, more inclusive community for all.

3 Local Context-

The priorities and objectives within our Housing Strategy 2023- 2028 are shaped by the Mayors Business Plan 2022 and revised Local Plan 2019- 2040. 



Our Housing Strategy provides the foundation for the development of forthcoming strategies including the Asset Management Strategy, Resident Engagement Strategy and Homelessness Prevention & Rough Sleeping Strategy enabling the Council to take a forward-thinking, planned and proactive approach to shaping the future of our housing service. In addition, cross departmental strategies such as those dealing with anti-social behaviour, corporate parenting or care experienced young people are of similar importance.

The Housing Strategy 2023- 2028 also provides the strategic framework for the **Housing Transformation Programme**, a programme of individual projects which aim to improve and transform our housing services and deliver commitments in the Mayoral Business Plan to establish *good governance, achieve financial sustainability and drive-up standards in developing a more responsive and effective housing service*. The Housing Transformation Programme has identified specific areas of our housing services, such as housing needs, voids management and repairs service, which require immediate improvement, whilst the Housing Strategy sets out our longer-term ambitions.

The Mayor's Business Plan 2022- 2026, it's linking strategies and the Housing Transformation Programme have been developed in response to the challenging context in which the Council delivers housing services.

In 2022, Croydon Council issued its third section 114 notice due to the severe ongoing financial challenges facing the authority, and the Council's inability to balance its budget for 2023/2024 financial year. The notice meant that all new non-essential spending was stopped, and a savings plan was further developed across the Council, including housing services. In response to the financial challenge, Croydon Council is reliant on a Capitalisation Direction from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Local Government and discussion with the Government regarding a long-term solution to the Council's debt.

In 2021, following the commission of an independent report into conditions at Regina Road, a high-rise Council owned block, the Regulator of Social Housing found the Council to be in breach of the Regulator's two consumer standards: the Home Standard and the Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard. In May 2021, the Council committed to improving its social housing and landlord services and therefore provide a better service to tenants and

leaseholders through developing the Housing Improvement Programme. In December 2021, Croydon's independent Housing Improvement Board was established to provide evidenced, fair and honest feedback to the leadership of the Council's progress in delivering the Housing Improvement Programme (HIB). Since the election of the Mayor and the new Cabinet in 2022, this advisory body has continued to play a role in monitoring the delivery of the new administrations intent to improve services as outlined in the Transformation programme.

4 Demographic context-For infographics

Croydon is the most populous borough in London (census 2021) with approximately 390,800 residents across 152,900 households.

In terms of the national deprivation indices, Croydon is the 18th poorest out of 33 London boroughs (DCLG and Ordnance Survey (Crown Copyright)). and the 97th most deprived local authority of 317 lower tier authority districts in England.

The most deprived areas in Croydon under the domain of health deprivation and disability are around the wards of Waddon, West Thornton, Selhurst, Thornton Heath, Addiscombe West, New Addington North

Croydon is also the 24th most deprived out of 33 London boroughs for indoor living environment (the proportion of houses without central heating 2011) and the proportion of houses that are in a poor condition 2015 (DCLG and Ordnance Survey). According to the DCLG and Ordnance Survey (Crown Copyright), the wider barriers to housing and services also include household overcrowding, homelessness and housing affordability.

Against this backdrop, average house prices were 11.88 times average earnings (Census 2021) suggesting barriers for those wishing to pursue home ownership. Further, the number of house sales in Croydon has been decreasing every year from 2014 to 2020 (GLA Housing Sales, based on Land Registry data, October 2022) meaning the availability of homes is also problematic for those who can afford it.

In a borough which has one of the youngest populations amongst all London Councils the demand resultant from the difficulties in accessing both affordable social housing and home ownership opportunities is partially met by the Private Sector (see below). Nearly a quarter of Croydon's population are aged 17 years and under, with Croydon having the highest number of 0–19-year-olds in London pointing to the challenges we face in terms of future housing supply.

Croydon also has an ageing population: since 2011 the borough has seen a 19.6% growth in the number of residents aged 65 years and over and this is now the second highest in London. The most-recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment suggests that the growing older population will lead to an increase in requirements for specialist housing solutions such as housing with support and care and care-bed spaces.

The Census 2021 data also shows that 15.8% of residents in Croydon identify themselves as disabled under the Equality Act 2010). However, the Croydon Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) states that only 55.1% of adults with learning disabilities and 32% of adults in contact with mental health services live in stable and appropriate accommodation, in comparison to the London averages of 77.5% and 61.0%.

5 The Council's strategic role in Housing

This strategy sets out the direction for housing related responsibilities and services within the Council and includes the following services.

Homelessness, Rough sleeping and housing need.

Housing allocations

As of January 2023, there are approximately 6,979 households on Croydon Council's Housing Register which represents an increase of 5.9% since January 2022.

The average wait time for a permanent offer of housing between 2016 and 2021 was five years and 11 months with one and two bedrooms subject to the most demand. Over the next few years, it is anticipated that demand for housing will continue to increase raising challenges for the Council in terms of supplying the affordable and social housing that is needed.

Over the period of the Strategy, the Council will review its Allocation Scheme which sets out the conditions which determines an applicant's priority for rehousing.

Homelessness

Between April 2021 and March 2022, 2,526 households received a homelessness assessment from Croydon Council. Over the last five years the numbers of residents housed in temporary accommodation has seldom fallen below 2,000 and it is anticipated, by London Councils that these numbers are likely to rise further. When benchmarked against other London Boroughs, a proportionately higher number of those assessed required rehousing in temporary accommodation. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 placed new requirements on Councils in terms of working to prevent homelessness occurring extending the duty to provide advice to all those threatened with losing their home within 56 days. We recognise the destabilising impact that the loss of a secure home can have on both families and single people and over the course of this Housing Strategy, the Council will fully implement this new legislation beginning with a re-organisation of the housing needs services to ensure it is fit for purpose.

The prevention of homelessness will be a priority for the new service, and we will seek to bring down the percentage of those requiring a rehousing duty to London norms during the period of this strategy.

Tackling the causes of homelessness

These changes will adapt the service we provide to work more effectively in tackling and preventing the causes of homelessness such as domestic violence, drug and alcohol problems and mental health. To achieve this will require a greater emphasis on working with both the statutory and voluntary sector as well as working effectively with both Children's and Adults Services. Our Corporate Parenting and Care Leaver Strategy outlines our key objectives to meet the needs of our care experienced young people and this includes the development of the Joint Housing and Children's Social Care Protocol for care experienced Young People. We are developing an approach towards the Joint Assessment of 16- to 17-year-olds facing homelessness and we have adopted a robust partnership approach and are targeted at ensuring that young people are accommodated. In doing so, this approach reduces the negative impact of instability on mental health and well-being associated with leaving care and provides a smoother transition into adulthood for care experienced young people.

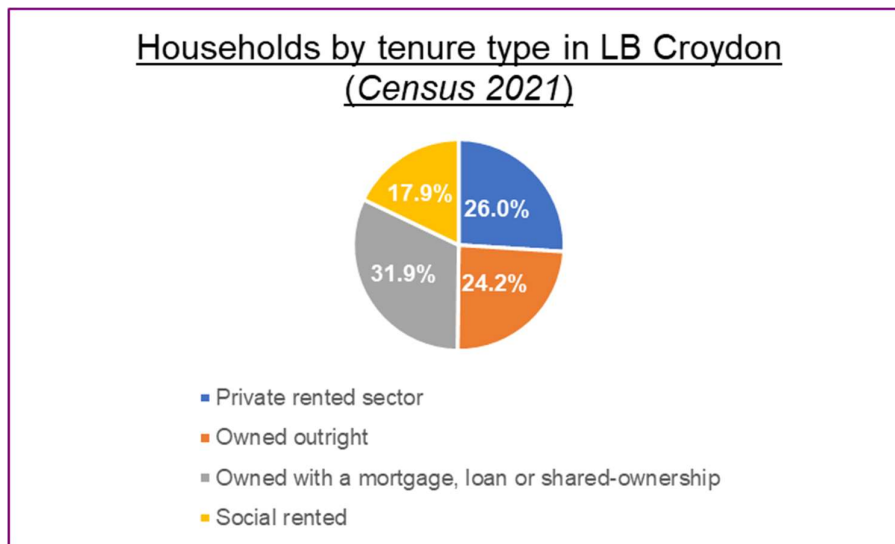
We are also aware of the traumatising impact that domestic violence can have on woman and families and will undertake to provide training for staff in all housing related services. As part of this Strategy the Council will review how it supports homelessness and housing applications from survivors of domestic violence as well as how it might improve the quality of service for them.

Rough Sleeping

In Croydon, a total of 373 people were seen rough sleeping between April 2022 and March 2023 which is higher than any other outer London borough. The number of people who were recorded rough sleeping represents an increase of 22% in comparison to April 2019 to March 2020. Again, projections made by London Councils point to probable rises in rough sleeping over the next few years. Although Croydon has a good performance in ensuring that many rough sleepers do not face a 'Second night out' it is also accepted there are some people who do not want to change their lifestyle and who are regularly causing anti-social behaviour on our streets. Where this persists, our Rough Sleeping team will work with the Safer Streets Partnership and be pro-active in preventing recurrence. Rough sleeping should only be rare, brief and non-recurrent.

Tenure in Croydon

The table below shows the proportion of more than 150,000 households by tenure type in Croydon.



Census 2021 data shows us that most households in LB Croydon are one-person or two-person households (57.7% of households). Approximately 18.2% of households in the borough are 3-person households, and 24.1% of households are 4+ person

Home Ownership

Nearly 58% of residents either own their homes outright or are paying a mortgage.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2019 shows that people who are elderly or who have a long-term health problem or disability are more likely to own their homes outright than

the general population. It is important that these homes are adapted to meet the needs of those with long-term health problems or disabilities to prevent admission into supported housing, hospital, or residential care.

Croydon's 'Staying Put Service' helps people to remain living independently in their own home, through the provision of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) for adaptations, and Home Investment Loans for essential repairs. It also provides a Hospital Discharge Service to facilitate safe discharges, as well as a Handyperson Service for minor work. In 2022/23, the Council distributed over £3m of DFG funding to the former and nearly £100,000 in loans for home improvements.

Our Social Housing Partners

Over 27,000 homes (17.9% of homes) are provided by the Council and its Social Housing partners. The amount of affordable housing provided has not increased as a proportion of overall households over the last 10 years. Nearly 14,000 properties are provided by Housing Associations with the largest being London and Quadrant, Hyde Housing, Clarion, Southern Housing and over 70 others, who make use of the Council's home choice register. The Council recognises that it needs to work with our social housing partners to maximise the supply of good quality affordable housing in the Borough and to ensure a consistent level of service across social housing tenures. To improve joint working and communication, the Council will set up a social housing forum which will cover all aspects of its relationship with housing associations.

Additionally, the Council will make sure the Nomination agreements it holds with Housing Associations are maintained.

Landlord to Council homes tenants and leaseholders

Croydon's has 13,342 properties, which makes it the largest social housing provider in the Borough. The majority of Council owned homes are concentrated in the north and east and its stock is relatively small when compared with many other London councils. Of these properties, 52% are flats, 36% are houses, 10% are maisonettes and 2% are bungalows

As stated in section 3, the Housing Transformation Programme sets out the Council's approach for tackling identified weaknesses in Service delivery in its Council homes.

Creating responsive housing services

Tenants who responded to our 2022/23 satisfaction survey stated the following.

- 59% said that landlord services treated them fairly and with respect
- 44% were of the view that the landlord services were easy to deal with.
- 49% were satisfied that communal areas were clean and well-maintained.
- Only 44% of residents surveyed were satisfied with the Council's approach to anti-social behaviour.

This is not good enough and we are determined to improve the quality of our services. We also recognise the need to significantly improve our response to resident complaints. Between April 2021 and March 2022, the Council's housing services received 770 complaints which is equivalent to approximately 15 complaints a week with most of these relating to the housing register, homelessness assessments and repairs.

Tackling such issues are essential if the Council is to comply with the Social Housing Regulator's Customer Care and Home standards.

Stock condition

Croydon Council must address its ageing social housing stock. A substantial number of the Council's social homes were built in the 1930s and are often poorly insulated and unsuitable for tenants with accessibility needs. The Council also owns 46 high-rise (seven storeys or more) residential buildings many of which were built in the 1970s and require improvements and repairs as well as implementing safety standards set out in the Fire Safety Act.

Our performance indicators report that in March 23, 42% of tenants were satisfied with the quality of the repairs service, some way behind the 58% average reported in the National Resident Survey for the Social Housing Quality report carried out in 2020 by the Government.

As of March 2022, 0.13% of the Council's social homes do not meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard. Although this figure is significantly below the London average of 9%, our stock condition survey data would suggest that the number of Council social homes not likely to meet the Decent Homes Standard is higher. In addition, Office for National Statistics data indicates that the average energy efficiency of Croydon's social homes is Energy Performance Certificate Band C. (A being the most efficient, G the least).

The Asset Management Strategy 2023/8 will set out our long-term approach to managing and regenerating our housing stock effectively and safely. This will include an assessment of 13 LPS (Large Panel System) blocks where there are concerns about the long-term viability of this housing.

Residents Charter.

Following the findings of the independent report at Regina Road (see Section 3), tenants and leaseholders developed the "Residents Charter" which outlined the principles by which the Council should deliver housing services to residents, tenants, and leaseholders. The Charter was developed and agreed by the Executive Mayor in June 2022. The charter's principles which emphasis respect, transparency and responsiveness are fully set out in the Resident Engagement Strategy and are fundamental not only to improvements in Landlord services but across our housing services.

Regulation of the Private Sector

Our strategy recognises that a healthy private rented sector plays a vital role in providing good homes and we will seek to work and support the many responsible landlords within our community.

Recent legislation including the Renters Reform Bill demonstrates the Government's intention to give Councils a pivotal role in maintaining standards in the private sector. Nationally, the number of private rental properties has doubled since 2004 and in Croydon now accounts for up to 26% of all tenure types according to Census 2021 data.

The Private rented sector is unaffordable to many Croydon residents, and this is increasing the demand for social homes and the pressure on the homelessness services. Rents in the sector are increasing with Croydon's average annual increase standing at 9.7% compared

with the London average of 12% making it a target for other Boroughs seeking to procure temporary accommodation.

In 2019, the Council had amongst the highest number of evictions from the Private Sector in London and in 2021-22, 284 evictions took place in Croydon under Section 21 proceedings. With the delays in implementing legislation designed to reverse no fault evictions the Council will continue to monitor the impact this has on homelessness applications.

In September 2019, Croydon Council commissioned a stock condition survey of the borough's private rental properties. The private housing stock condition and stressors report supported the assumption that poor housing conditions are prevalent in this sector, which the report estimated to consist of 58,000 households.

The report estimated that 23.7% of properties in the private sector had at least one serious hazard and in addition 27% have an E, F or G rating, the three lowest ratings within the Energy Performance Certificate system. Moreover, the report suggests that the private rented sector also faces issues with anti-social behaviour; between 2015 and 2019, 7,277 properties reported at least one ASB incident resulting in 15,746 council investigations having been conducted. The report estimated the wider resource required by the council to successfully intervene in the sector. In the same period the Council made 12,172 interventions in the Private Rental Sector with 1,307 housing and public health statutory notices being served on non-compliant Landlords. The council will explore options to tackle ASB in liaison with the community safety team and look at ways of tackling ASB in the private rental sector.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) house some of the more vulnerable Croydon residents as this is amongst the most affordable accommodation available. The borough has over 800 HMOs that have been issued a mandatory licence. Further modelling estimates that there are in excess of 3,000 unlicensed HMOs in each of the two categories; (section 254 – with one or more shared facilities and section 257 – certain self-contained flats)

It is the Private Rental Sector where some of the worst conditions, fuel poverty and irresponsible landlord behaviour can be found, along with high levels of deprivation, disrepair and anti-social behaviour. These issues can combine to adversely affect the health, safety and mental wellbeing of residents living in such conditions. It also impacts educational and employment outcomes for affected tenants.

To respond to this the Council will use a data driven approach and make the best use of its powers to improve the Borough's Private Rental Stock. This includes a commitment to consult on options for the introduction of a landlord licensing scheme on either a boroughwide basis or in targeted areas of the borough.

We will explore ways to support leaseholders in private buildings with concerns about fire safety, including work with partners to ensure Freeholders meet their fire safety responsibilities.

Facilitating the supply of new housing and managing our stock effectively

London Mayoral targets

The London Mayor has set housing targets for the delivery of 522,870 new homes between 2019/20 and 2028/29. In Croydon, the target for this period is to deliver 20,709 homes. By 2021/22, 5,965 homes had been delivered and the 5-year housing supply estimate produced

in March 2023 projects the building of a further 11,893 units between April 2022 and March 2027 which puts the Borough on course to meet this target.

An analysis of tenure breakdown of new stock between 2020 and 2022 shows the following;

<i>Tenure</i>	<i>Units</i>
<i>Market for sale</i>	<i>3,400</i>
<i>Market for rent</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>Affordable homes</i>	<i>703</i>

Delivery of affordable and social housing by the Council and its housing association partners

At this time the Council's financial position as well as the difficult national environment places restrictions on its role in providing the new affordable and social housing that the Borough needs. In addition, the dissolution of 'Brick by Brick' makes it necessary for the Council to reconsider how it will facilitate the supply of affordable accommodation. In doing so, it will play a full part in setting a strategic direction which encourages local housing providers to engage in opportunities to increase their stock and provide the affordable and social housing that is needed. Additionally, it will not miss opportunities to plan or purchase land for future development in the area if this is financially prudent and with our partners will set out a long-term vision for providing the affordable and homes that our residents need. We will develop a Regeneration and New Homes Strategy that will set out our approach to housing supply following the delivery of the Regina Road project. This will not only shape the vision to boost newbuild supply by partners and Council delivery but will also set out a rationale that embraces building safety, fire safety and the ongoing investment in existing housing.

Set out below are measures the Council will take to increase supply within the existing stock.

Increasing Supply through more effective management.

- *We will continue to improve upon our performance on reservicing void properties and in doing so identify properties (usually large bed street properties) for investment or disposal if not economic to pursue.*
- *Identify properties for extension/conversion or "knock throughs" to provide family accommodation.*
- *Incentives and support for those who are under-occupying their properties and wish to find smaller accommodation.*
- *Tenancy Audits to ensure that tenants are living in homes and support for vulnerable residents to sustain tenancies.*

The Council has a key role to play in articulating the borough's housing needs, shaping development delivery plans and working with the GLA and planning authority to support the types of homes that are needed. As set out in the table below, we will work with partner Housing Associations to facilitate the delivery of new affordable and social homes and where viable deliver these homes ourselves as we have shown in our commitment to the regeneration of Regina Road.

Supplying new housing for residents

- *We will rehouse the residents of Regina Road in excellent new build housing*
- *The Council through the Asset Management Plan and the Housing Regeneration Strategy will consider options for investment, development or sale of HRA assets and land subject to financial viability and stakeholder consultation.*

- *We will include a review of all the Council Estates and identify land suitable for new build development and then carry out feasibility work should there be agreement to proceed further. Land holdings and surplus to requirement garages or estate facilities will be considered within the scope of our strategy.*
- *We will purchase homes including buyback schemes of ex right to buy properties and open market purchases*
- *Where viable, the Council will direct deliver schemes across all tenures but with an emphasis on providing socially rented housing.*
- *The Council will also work with those locally based housing associations of sufficient scale who have a record of building a range of social and affordable rented units as well as providing shared ownership opportunities. Where a possible scheme has been identified an appraisal process will determine whether this is best delivered by the Council or a Housing Association partner.*
- *We will maximise provision of accommodation through Section 106 planning obligations which commits developers who build more than 10 homes to an affordable target of 50% of new homes with 60% being social rent and 40% intermediate subject to the financial viability of the scheme*
- *We will carry out an option appraisal of sheltered housing accommodation.*

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2019 (SHMA) has determined the type of housing needed in the borough until 2029, including affordable rented homes, affordable ownership housing, and market (private) housing. The SHMA 2019 indicates that of the affordable rented housing built, the majority should be two-bed and three-bed properties (50% and 20% respectively), whilst of the affordable home ownership housing built, the majority should be one-bed and two-bed properties (30% and 40% respectively) (21). The SHMA 2019 determines that of the market housing built, the majority should be two-bed and three-bed properties (45% and 20% respectively). The Strategic Housing Market Assessment is currently being updated and will be available by early 2024.

Tackling the Climate Crisis

In 2019 the council declared a Climate Emergency and committed itself to playing as full a role as possible in tackling the climate crisis.

Subject to the availability of budget and grant funding (and we are determined to maximise our access to the latter), this strategy commits us to work to improve the energy efficiency of our council housing stock and private homes in our borough, as one part of a wider council contribution to the meeting of our net zero objectives.

Working with our residents and our partners to establish the Councils Vision

Working with Residents

Croydon Council's housing services are undergoing significant transformation to allow us to improve the experience of residents, tenants, and leaseholders.

It was important that residents, tenants, and leaseholders were able to determine the vision (what the service should look like) and mission (what we need to do to get there) of the services that they receive, and so 20 engagement sessions across 20 localities were held with residents across the borough including the following groups

- Council tenants and leaseholders
- Council tenants in temporary accommodation and hostel accommodation
- Children and young people including care experienced young people.

- Voluntary and community sector partners
- Council staff
- Croydon councillors and the Executive Mayor
- Croydon's independent Housing Improvement Board

The sessions determined the following vision and mission, as well as key actions to delivering these goals:

Vision: Creating great homes, places, and communities to enhance life opportunities

Mission: Working with residents, partners, and businesses to provide safe and warm homes in thriving, sustainable and inclusive communities.

Part of our work to improve the quality of Private Rental Homes involve empowering our Private Rental Sector residents to be able to demand improvements themselves.

In order to improve our engagement with tenants in the Private Rental Sector we will use our engagement on landlord licensing to establish a Private Renters Forum. Once this is up and running we will work with the forum to develop a Private Renters Charter.

Our Vision and Mission will be at the heart of all that we do, and we expect both our staff and our partners to work towards these goals.

Working with Partner organisations'.

Croydon has a large and diverse voluntary sector with the second highest number of voluntary, community and faith sector organisations (VCFS) of all outer London boroughs (23). The 657 VCFS organisations in the Borough had a total income of £162.39m between April 2019 and March 2020.

The VCFS has an excellent track record of identifying local issues and reaching out to the most vulnerable in our communities. The VCFS deliver services across the six Local Community Partnerships (North-East, North-West, Central East, Central West, South-East and South-West).

The Council will extend partnership working in the Borough and will involve voluntary organisations in strategic decisions affecting the direction of the housing service.

OUR FIVE PRIORITIES

PRIORITY ONE

LISTEN TO OUR RESIDENTS AND PROVIDE GOOD HOUSING SERVICES

This will include

- Working with residents across tenures to transform their housing service and develop easy to access, modern housing services that prioritise residents.
- Transforming our Housing Needs service to ensure a responsive and tailored approach to tackling homelessness.
- Embedding the commitments made to Croydon Tenants and Leaseholders in the Residents Charter and extending these principles to all those who receive a housing service from the Council.
- We need to continuously improve upon the responsive support we provide to residents living in poor quality Private Sector accommodation using our statutory powers where necessary.
- Delivering major improvements in customer care for Council Tenants and Leaseholders so as to meet the Regulator of Housing's four consumer standards.
- Maintaining our commitments to consult with residents in the forthcoming regeneration of Regina Road.

Why is this important?

- Residents should be able to access, modern housing services which have our residents at the heart of service delivery.
- We aim to provide a variety of ways to hear resident voices and encourage involvement in service development.
- We are committed to creating inclusive communities and neighbourhoods which are safe and attractive places to live.
- We need to tackle poor conditions within the Private Sector caused by bad Landlords.
- We need to transform the quality of service provided to Croydon's tenants and leaseholders.
- Residents, tenants, and leaseholders should be kept informed through clear, honest, and accessible communication throughout their interactions with the Council.

PRIORITY TWO

WORK WITH OUR PARTNERS, RESIDENTS AND LANDLORDS TO ENSURE THAT HOMES IN THE BOROUGH ARE SAFE, SECURE AND ENERGY EFFICIENT

This will include;

- A recognition that residents across all tenures want safe, secure, warm accommodation, free from mould and leaks, and want their voices listened to when decisions that affect them are being taken.
- Our Asset Management strategy will set out how we plan to maintain the condition of Croydon Councils housing stock including our LPS blocks.
- We will produce an investment plan for the longer term that enables us to meet the Regulator of Social Housing's Decent Homes Standard.
- We will ensure robust contract management of our newly established repairs, heating, and voids contracts.
- We will prioritise resident safety by continuously reviewing the compliance of our social and privately rented homes with the Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Act 2022.
- We will explore ways to support leaseholders in private buildings with concerns about fire safety, including work with partners to ensure Freeholders meet their fire safety responsibilities.
- Where possible we will reduce the reliance on the use of temporary accommodation and carry out a boroughwide audit of these properties to assess their safety and suitability.
- We will support landlords and property agents to ensure private rented sector homes are safe, energy efficient, and meet wider regulatory standards.
- Where necessary, we will enforce policies to tackle the cumulative impact of poor Landlord management of houses in multiple occupation and will increase the number of those that are licensed.
- We will consult on options for the introduction of a landlord licensing scheme on either a boroughwide basis or in targeted areas of the borough.
- We will continue to be committed to the Councils Sustainability objectives as well as committing to Croydon's climate action plan.
- We will adopt a "joined-up approach" for our services and work with other Council services such as waste collection, grass cutting, anti-social behaviour and street lighting to ensure seamless service provision.

Why is this important?

- We need to strive to ensure that homes in both the Private and Social Housing sector are warm safe and dry across all tenures.
- Improve the quality of our council housing stock and lower our maintenance costs.
- Ensure that properties in the social and private sector meet the revised decent homes standards and provide excellent core services in areas such as waste control and reacting to Anti-Social Behaviour.
- High quality responsive repairs and planned maintenance services for tenants and leaseholders which 'get it right first time'.

PRIORITY THREE

ENABLE PEOPLE TO LEAD HEALTHY AND INDEPENDENT LIVES IN THEIR HOMES AND COMMUNITIES.

This will include;

- Enabling residents to remain in their own homes by effectively distributing Disabled Facilities Grant and Home Improvement Loans to assist elderly and disabled people and to ensure the signposting of all residents to the support services they require.
- To tailor all of our housing related services towards preventing the causes of homelessness such as domestic violence, drugs and alcohol abuse and mental health issues.
- As a Council, we will take a pro-active approach towards tenancy sustainment across all tenures and work closely with Social Services to identify those who are vulnerable in our community.
- We will work closely together with Children's Social Care and cross directorate colleagues and partners to ensure a robust development of housing options for young adults leaving care and deliver the commitments made in the Joint Working protocol with Children's Services.
- We will tackle those who cause anti-social behaviour in our community whether they are in private sector or social housing and provide support to the victims of such behaviour.
- Supporting those who are rough sleeping and delivering on the commitment that nobody should have to spend a "second night out"
- Seek secure housing options for vulnerable residents, including older people, and residents with additional needs and disabilities, which support their independence
- A review of how we prioritise homelessness and housing applications from survivors of domestic violence and improve the availability of priority housing for them.

Why is this important?

- We need more housing for older people including housing with care and support
- We need to assist elderly or disabled people to stay in their homes.
- Homelessness can have a destabilising impact on the education prospects and life chances of young people.
- We need to tackle the causes of homelessness at the earliest stage to prevent it occurring.
- Support care experienced young people and families assessed as vulnerable into appropriate housing.
- Prevent homelessness and rough sleeping occurring in our community.

PRIORITY FOUR

MAINTAIN THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOMES THAT MEET THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS IN CROYDON

This will include

- We will develop a Regeneration & New Homes Programme which will set the strategic vision for borough-wide regeneration.
- Make the best use of housing assets, including vacant properties, to secure housing options that are affordable to our residents.
- Developing the skills and resources within the Council to maintain the supply of affordable homes.
- Strengthen relationships with our affordable housing providers including housing associations, developers, and investors.
- Enabling the development and delivery of the Local Plan 2019- 2040 to ensure homes built in the borough meet residents' needs.
- Providing for genuinely affordable homes, including those for residents reliant on LHA/UC to meet all or part of their housing costs.
- Effectively managing our supply of properties to minimise wait times and improve the customer experience.
- Delivering high quality housing for residents at Regina Road.

Why is this important?

- It is important that new developments include genuinely affordable homes. Our projections show that there are insufficient affordable homes to house those on the housing register and that the supply of housing needs to increase
- Our Regeneration and New Homes programme will ensure that our housing stock including our high-rise blocks, are safe, fit-for-purpose and meet our net-zero targets which are detailed in the Council's Carbon Neutral Action Plan.
- We need to work with our partners in the housing association sector to facilitate the supply of new housing.
- The younger age profile of our population means that we need a long-term strategy for delivering more homes.

PRIORITY FIVE

WORK WITH OUR PARTNERS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF RESOURCES AND MANAGE THE DEMAND FOR HOUSING RELATED SERVICES

This will include

- Strengthen collaboration with statutory, community, and voluntary sector partners to improve resident access to housing services.
- Set up a forum to develop effective links with housing associations in the Borough
- Consulting widely on our services to obtain cross community feedback and establish new links in the Community.
- Encouraging the development of Tenant and Resident organisations in Croydon Council stock.
- Establishing a Private Renters' Forum and development of a Charter for Private Renters.
- Leading on the running of the Landlords Forum with a view to improving conditions in the Private Sectors.
- Liaise with Partners with a view to establishing a forum to discuss homelessness
- Ensuring that Croydon's commissioned partners deliver social value and provide opportunities for Croydon residents.
- Supporting voluntary, community and faith sector in bids to bring more funding and resources into the Borough.

Why is this important?

- A better knowledge of our community will enable us to target our resources more successfully.
 - A joined-up approach between the Council and the Voluntary Sector provides better value for money and increases the chances of bringing more resources into the Borough.
 - Effective Liaison is necessary to restore confidence in the Community.
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Delivering the strategy

Our Housing Strategy 2023- 2028 will be underpinned by a Delivery Plan which will detail the key actions and milestones to be achieved by 2028 to ensure our strategic priorities and objectives are delivered.

The key milestones will be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) and reviewed as part of our Housing Transformation Programme. The key milestones will align with the Council's existing key performance indicators, including the Tenant Satisfaction Measures and our performance against the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards.

The strategic priorities and objectives of our Housing Strategy will be reviewed against imminent changes to legislation including the introduction of revised Consumer Standards by the Regulator of Social Housing and the revised Decent Homes Standards.