

# Southwark Housing Strategy 2020 Consultation draft (large font version)

Moving towards genuinely secure,  
affordable, high quality homes for all

Full Version – A two page summary is also available at  
<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategy>

# Introductory foreword

Welcome to our Housing Strategy 2020. We have developed this strategy to respond to the severe challenges facing the borough in relation to housing and the wider environment.

The housing crisis is growing, particularly in London. The housing market is simply not delivering safe, secure and affordable housing for too many of our residents. This needs to change. The cost of buying and renting privately is simply out of reach of a significant proportion of our residents, changes to the welfare system such as freezing local housing allowance (housing benefit) levels and introducing benefit caps have made the private rented sector even less of an option. The results of this are plain to see, we have over 10,000 families on our waiting list and over 2,000 households in temporary accommodation.

We also face a longer term threat from climate change and the council has declared a climate emergency to help combat carbon emissions and rising global temperatures, with a target to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. This will be a factor in agreeing designs for new homes, determining the best methods of construction and improving the condition of existing homes. It is also an opportunity to reduce fuel poverty and improve air quality. There are many actions related to carbon reduction across all four of the principles of the housing strategy (in green shaded boxes). Actions from the emerging carbon reduction strategy will be

updated in our housing strategy action plan.

Southwark Council has a vision to create a fairer future for all in Southwark including the best start in life, quality homes, and great places to live, where people can lead healthy lives and improve their economic prospects.

Everyone should have a place that they are proud to call home. We remain committed to delivering good quality genuinely affordable homes for all our residents, delivering 11,000 new council homes by 2043, and working with housing associations and developers to maximise social rent and intermediate housing.

We are ensuring that more residents benefit from the opportunities that regeneration creates. Where older council homes need to be replaced, we will increase the number of council homes and build to the highest standards; and ensure investments in libraries, leisure centres and parks.

The lack of affordable housing is affecting the recruitment and retention of key workers who are essential to delivering high quality services to local residents. So we are exploring ways of prioritising homes for keyworkers.

Southwark Council is the biggest local authority social landlord in London and the fourth biggest nationally. We have invested over £500m of improvements in council homes since 2014. Now over 98% of our homes are decent. We will continue to invest to make sure all our

housing estates are clean, safe and cared for.

Therefore this housing strategy continues the broad direction set in the Housing Strategy to 2043 agreed in 2015, with simplified clearer commitments and updated actions to deliver these. The previous housing strategy had been developed in response to feedback from the work of the Independent Housing Commission and the following community conversations on the future of housing in Southwark. Based on council consultations since then, it is clear that the fundamental housing issues remain the same as in 2015: a shortage of genuinely affordable housing; issues with poor quality housing, and insecure housing particularly in the private rented sector.

The four fundamental issues are affordability; quality; security and pride and responsibility. The four broad principles have been refocused on these key values, as follows:

1. Increasing the supply of quality new homes that people can genuinely afford
2. Demanding the highest standards of quality of homes
3. Ensuring housing provides security and support to meet housing needs and to help improve the health, wellbeing and economic resilience of residents.
4. Empowering residents and communities to have pride and responsibility in the running of their homes and neighbourhoods.

The past five years have been turbulent with changing housing priorities under different Prime Ministers. Our Southwark Housing Strategy has helped provide clarity on our approach and will continue to do so during any further uncertainty and potential impacts of Brexit.

In the face of an increasingly challenging funding position, partnership working is as essential as ever. We strongly encourage our partners to sign up to helping us deliver this housing strategy. If you have any ideas for how you can help we would love to hear from you. Please email your ideas and suggestions at [housingstrategy2@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:housingstrategy2@southwark.gov.uk)

- Cllr Leo Pollak - Cabinet Member for Social Regeneration, Great Estates and New Council Homes
- Cllr Kieron Williams - Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Modernisation
- Cllr Johnson Situ - Cabinet Member for Growth, Development and Planning

# Principle 1. Increasing the supply of quality new homes that people can genuinely afford

## Our commitments under this principle:

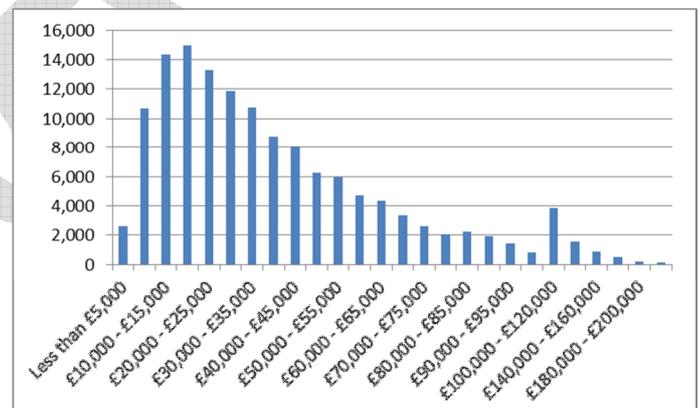
- Continuing to deliver 11,000 new council homes at social rents by 2043
- Maximising the supply of other forms of social rent and intermediate homes (including London Living Rent and shared ownership homes)
- Ensuring all new homes are of a high quality, including a mix of different types and sizes which respond to people's changing needs over time.
- Ensuring a supply of homes to meet specific needs including homes for people with disabilities and older people
- Increasing supply through making better use of existing properties

The average cost of buying a home in Southwark is £616,000 as of summer 2019. To buy on a 25 year mortgage with a 5% deposit, the monthly mortgage payments would be around £3,000. Therefore if a third of income was used on the mortgage, an annual income of £108k would be required to afford this. The lower quartile rent for a two bed in Southwark is £2,145 a month, assuming a third of income is used on rent, an annual income of around £77k would be required to afford this. However the median household income in the borough is about £31,000. Just under half of households in the borough have an income below £30k, and 81% of the residents in the borough have incomes below £60k<sup>1</sup>.

## Introduction

We want Southwark to be a place where everyone has a decent home and borough where families can afford to remain and choose to do so. We want to retain our distinctive mix of communities as we continue to develop our long term plans for the borough.

Southwark is an inner London borough which presents both great opportunities but also big challenges in terms of housing. Private house prices and rents have risen rapidly over recent decades and are now out of the reach of a significant proportion of our local residents, and the benefit cap which has made the private rented sector unaffordable for people on low incomes.



Our first priority is therefore to deliver more social rent and intermediate housing (including discount market rent and shared ownership homes) that provide genuinely affordable options for the majority of people who live in the borough. To ensure Southwark and London have the homes needed to meet the needs of the whole population we also remain committed to using all the

<sup>1</sup> CACI Paycheck 2018 data

tools at our disposal to increase the supply of all forms of housing. We will ensure a supply of housing for those on a mix of income levels and a mix of sizes and types to meet a range of needs, including for keyworkers who are essential for the provision of high quality public services.

Given the severe demand for social rent and intermediate housing it is essential we work together to deliver these homes. There are a number of partners in the borough who have the relevant skills, experience and resources to help increase the supply of homes. We will continue to maximise these opportunities. We will continue to creatively respond to the changing context of funding and models for delivering social rent and intermediate homes, to ensure a continued supply over the next 25 years and beyond.

## Continuing to deliver 11,000 new council homes at social rents 2043

To ensure a supply of genuinely affordable housing the council is continuing with the ambitious plans to deliver new council homes as set out in the 2015 housing strategy. Therefore we have maintained our original target but added a new interim target. Therefore we will be:

- Continuing to build 11,000 council homes at social rent by 2043, of which 2,500 will be 'delivered or onsite' by 2022
- Building additional council intermediate housing, including shared ownership and intermediate rent.
- Ensuring high standards of new council homes through the New Homes Design Standards, setting a new bar for light, spacious, safe, low impact, fuel efficient homes.

### **Identifying new opportunities working with residents**

Resident support is essential to ensure our success. The council is committed to ensuring local residents benefit from the opportunities being created right on their doorstep, and that this is better communicated to residents. Therefore we will:

- If estates need to be redeveloped, to increase the number of council homes and build to the highest standards;
- Guarantee developments on council housing land have at least 50% council rented homes
- Ensure residents benefit from any new council housing through the

Council's Great Estates Programme, to expand and enrich our estates (please see principle 2 for more information).

- Ensure a right to return for council tenants and resident leaseholders so local people can stay in the borough they call home
- Introduce ballots on any new estate regeneration, in accordance with the Mayor of London's grant conditions for estate regeneration.

### **Choosing the most effective methods of delivery**

The council will continue to consider the best ways of delivering new homes, and will consider all development options to maximise use of land, grants, loans (including HRA borrowing), and where necessary cross subsidy through sales of private homes, other resources, and skills.

### **Council delivery**

The council is taking a lead role in developing new council housing, using council staff and council owned land to deliver a significant number of new homes. This includes:

- Identifying sites for new council homes including: Infill development on existing estates, hidden homes and building on top of blocks
  - Land re-designation
  - Resident-led Estate regeneration and intensification
  - Creating strategic partnerships with major landowners
  - Freeing up land working with landowners and buying up stalled sites

- Establishing a Southwark Construction Company to build the homes and develop the skills our borough needs
- Ensuring the housing company is available to deliver other genuinely affordable housing products if the opportunity arises

### **Delivering new council homes through effective partnerships**

The council is also considering how we can work jointly with our partners to deliver new council homes where this can increase the supply of council homes, or help resolve particular issues. This can take a number of forms such as working on Joint Ventures (with registered providers, developers or investors) land agreements or direct procurement. We will explore partnership working covering the following areas:

- Use of partner land – Working jointly to deliver homes (council and private) including where partners may have land banks, stalled sites, etc.)
- Use of Southwark land and airspace – This will be considered where this would result in an increase in the number of council homes compared to council delivery.
- Sharing risk - Where there may be benefits from sharing the risks of a development, while prioritising the council realising the fullest value of its own assets
- Sharing expertise - Working with housing associations and developers to share knowledge and expertise to build up the capacity of council development staff
- Making best use of resources e.g. grants, loans, capital outlay to

maximise the supply social rent and intermediate housing.

- Maximising wider regeneration opportunities where this will help secure benefits to the wider area.
- Purchasing council homes directly from developers through S106 agreements, against our design and manageability standards for new council homes
- Working with third party community led development models

## Maximising the supply of other forms of social rent and intermediate homes

Whilst the Council's key priority is delivering new council homes, the Council is also determined to ensure a supply of other forms of social rent and intermediate homes.

### **Increasing the supply of social rent and intermediate homes supply through our planning policies**

A key tool to increase housing supply is through the council's planning policies. The council has developed a New Southwark Plan which sets out our planning and regeneration strategy for the borough up to 2033, ensuring that all areas of the borough provide homes for those on a range of incomes. We will do this through:

- Submission and adoption of the New Southwark Plan (NSP)
- Setting ambitious housing targets, through the New Southwark Plan (NSP), to significantly increase the supply of homes in all tenures including an overall target for over 23,550 net new homes between

2019/20 and 2028/29, of which at least 35% would be affordable homes. Our strategic target is 50% affordable housing which is to be achieved through building council homes and encouraging developers to provide a higher provision of affordable housing through grant funding.

- Maximising the supply of social rent and intermediate homes completed on privately led developments (including new council homes) through section 106 decisions
- Using the planning regime, including a streamlined planning process, to accelerate development

### **Increasing social rent and intermediate homes and other housing supply through our regeneration projects**

In addition to the New Southwark Plan the council also has and continues to develop plans to regenerate specific areas of the borough, and increase housing supply.

Under our social regeneration approach, we want regeneration to work for everyone, to reduce health inequality, create jobs and opportunities and build council homes that are as good as, or better than, private homes. Southwark is a borough that is continuing to grow and change for the future and we will continue to work with our local communities to make sure that no one is left behind and that all those who live, work and visit our borough benefit from change.

Under the new Regeneration that Works for All framework, our new Social Regeneration Charters will set out the

policy context, vision and priorities for each regeneration area. Social Regeneration Place Plans sit underneath each Social Regeneration Charter and detail how the charter's vision will be implemented. They will include community investment commitments, developer commitments, council commitments and partner commitments. Area specific indicators will help monitor the impact that the charter and place plans are having. There are Social Regeneration Charters for Old Kent Road and Canada Water.

Our plans include:

- Implementation of the Regeneration Works for All Framework to support social integration to create new life opportunities, promote wellbeing and reduce inequalities.
- Unlocking new sites for house-building and help deliver a large number of new homes in the areas identified in our 4 Area Action Plans (AAPs) including
  - Old Kent Road AAP – 20,000 new homes including 7,000 affordable homes of which 5,000 will be social rented.
  - Canada Water AAP – A minimum of 4,500 homes on sites in the core area between 2011 and 2026, and with capacity for around 600 more homes in the wider AAP area, including a minimum 1,000 affordable homes)
  - Aylesbury AAP – Replacing 2,700 homes with 4,200 new homes (between 2009 and 2027) including 2,100 affordable homes (of which 75% will be social rent and 25% intermediate).
- Peckham & Nunhead AAP – A minimum of 2,000 net new homes (between 2011 and 2026) including a minimum 700 affordable homes.

### **Working with our partners to increase social rent and intermediate housing supply**

Many of our partners have their own plans to increase social rent and intermediate housing supply and we are keen to encourage and support this. Our plans include:

- Encouraging housing associations to maximise the supply of traditional social rented homes
- Working with HAs and developers to ensure that where any “Affordable Rent” properties are developed, due to viability reasons, that these are at rent levels which are affordable to Southwark residents, and below the Local Housing Allowance (LHAs) level
- Securing 1,000 new intermediate homes by 2022, prioritising London Living Rent
- Providing opportunities for home ownership through ensuring a supply of affordable intermediate housing that is affordable to those on low to mid incomes. This could include traditional shared ownership, London Living Rent, Discount Market Sale and shared equity.
- Introducing a new intermediate rent housing list which will prioritise intermediate housing for Southwark key workers and other set priority groups.
- Working to deliver new homes through Community Land Trusts

## Ensuring all new homes are of a high quality, and include a mix of different types and sizes which respond to people's changing needs over time.

It is essential we increase the supply of high quality housing and that this includes a mix of housing types to meet the diverse needs of our communities, and that any new developments are well planned to ensure wider benefits to local residents.

All new homes, regardless of ownership, must be built to the highest standards of quality and design, as part of attractive well designed neighbourhoods which promote wider economic, health and social wellbeing. New homes should be energy efficient with low carbon emission, to contribute towards meeting the Council's carbon reduction target and to help improve local air quality. Our plans include:

- Requiring a mix of dwelling sizes as set out in the New Southwark Plan
- Achieving minimum 35% regulated carbon emissions reduction on Part L of 2013 Building Regulations on all major developments
- Ensuring New homes on all major developments to be zero carbon as per London Plan Policy 5.2, achieved either on-site or via financial contribution for off-setting.
- Exploring more ecological forms of construction.
- Continuing to ensure that every new development has enough GPs, school places and parks to support residents

## Ensuring a supply of homes to meet specific needs

Southwark is committed to becoming an age friendly and dementia friendly borough providing homes and neighbourhoods that will support people to live long and healthy happy lives in their own community. More information on this aspect on increasing supply is included under principle 3. Our plans include:

- Requiring that new developments include provision for those with specialist needs, or where not suitable, securing payment towards adapting other properties to maximise independence for people. The specialist needs include physical disabilities, mental ill-health, learning disabilities, young people who are leaving care, older people, etc.

## Increasing supply through making better use of existing properties

Given the demand for housing, it is essential that we are using all the stock in the borough as efficiently as possible. This includes working to reduce the number of vacant properties, reducing the time to let properties, and making better use of the stock through trying to reduce under occupation. We will make better use of the existing stock by:

- Seeking to expand the existing Home Purchase Grant Scheme, using right to buy capital receipts, to increase the supply of council properties available to let on secure tenancies
- Turning around routine council voids within 28 days

- Providing incentives and opportunities for under-occupiers in social housing to downsize. This includes promoting our Smart Move scheme which provides an individually tailored package of financial and practical support, and home swaps to assist people to downsize to smaller homes, which may better suit their needs.
- Ensuring social housing is going to those who need it most by detecting fraud through data matching and tenancy checks to identify fraudulent homelessness and right to buy applications, and unauthorised subletting
- Providing grants, loans free impartial advice, support and refurb options to bring long-term empty properties back into use, ideally as long-term private rented sector homes for families. The Empty Homes Service specifically targets long term or derelict properties, as these can generate wider community issues. It also addresses vacant commercial properties (e.g. public houses, or spaces above shops which could be suitable for residential accommodation.
- Exploring options for an “ethical” lettings agency to encourage absent absentee home owners to let their property to Southwark Council at affordable rents.
- Exploring the scope for a council-run lettings agency offering model PRS tenancies for families in temporary accommodation, and guaranteed yields refurbishment and management service to landlords.

## Principle 2. Demanding the highest standards of quality of homes

### Our commitments under this principle:

- Investing in our council homes to make them fully fit for the twenty-first century.
- Delivering the Great Estates Programme
- Improving quality standards in the housing association sector
- Improving quality standards in the private rented sector

### Introduction

Good quality housing is essential for everyone's health and wellbeing. Since the housing strategy was agreed in 2015 there has been considerable progress in improving the condition of the council rented stock, with 98% of council homes now meeting the Decent Homes Standard. There has also been some notable progress in the private sector through use of enforcement powers and changes to licensing rules. However there is still too much poor quality housing in the borough.

This principle sets out how conditions will be improved in the borough's existing housing. Principle 1 has already set out how the Council will ensure that all new properties are developed to high standards of quality.

The Council also has an aim of becoming a carbon neutral borough by 2030. It is important that this is factored in to improving the condition of existing homes. As stated the council is developing a carbon reduction strategy and actions from this strategy will be updated in our housing strategy action plan in future years as they are agreed.

### Investing in our council homes to make them fully fit for the twenty-first century

Following the community conversations on the future of council housing the council reaffirmed the commitment to retaining the council's housing stock and investing in it for the future. The Council has made considerable progress to ensuring every council home is warm dry and safe. Improving the condition of council homes and improving energy efficiency remains a key priority for the council to make our homes fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This will include:

- Delivering the Housing Investment Programme and carrying out improvement works to our stock and the surrounding area.
- Developing and delivering the Heat Networks strategy and improvement plan
- Providing a quality kitchen and bathroom (K&B) for all council homes
- Implementing a repairs improvement plan so more jobs are done right first time
- Enhancing value for money in our repairs and major works contracts,

and providing a range of repayment options for leaseholders affected by major works programmes.

- Preparing and maintaining the council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan to provide both short and long-term projections for HRA revenue and capital, and to indicate the affordability of spend on our own stock and the delivery of the new build homes target
- Continuing on our improvements to our gypsy and travellers sites to ensure high standards, particularly focusing on improving fire safety.

## Fire Safety

Fire safety remains a top priority for the council in all tenures. In our council stock we are continuing to improve fire safety. We have a well trained Fire Safety Team, which co-ordinates approximately 4,000 Fire Risk Assessments a year and ensure identified actions are carried out in appropriate timeframes.

We will continue to identify any specific issues in relation to fire doors and other high risk areas such as compartmentation. We have also fitted sprinklers to all supported and extra care housing and hostels, where some of our most vulnerable residents live.

We have adopted a very careful approach to the management of common areas, allowing residents some small items in common parts (except where specific risks have been identified). Fire Safety is also a priority on our Travellers sites, which has informed refurbishment works and where regular advice is provided.

While none of Southwark Councils blocks over 18m are fitted with ACM cladding, we are testing the fascia construction of all blocks over 18m and will undertake works to address any identified issues. We are also working to replace any wooden sections of façade that have been identified on a number of blocks across the borough. The Fire Safety Team also ensures all council new builds and refurbishments are safe and compliant with current legislation.

As part of our commitment to fire safety, we will:

- Undertake regular Fire Risk Assessments to all relevant stock and ensure any resulting actions are completed or programmed.
- Continue to publish fire risk assessments for our blocks 7 storeys and above online and make all others available on request.
- Quickly implement any of the recommendations that result from the tragic Grenfell Tower fire enquiry that would apply to our stock.

## Delivering the Great Estates Programme

In addition to improving housing, it is also important that we make the necessary investment in the wider estate to improve the look, feel and lived experience of our estates. The council has launched a Great Estates Programme to ensure every estate is clean, safe and cared, for and to give residents the tools to garden and improve their estate.

The key elements of the programme are:

- An “expand and enrich” approach which includes identifying appropriate sites on our estates for building new council homes in exchange for delivering wider estate benefits.
- A set of Great Estates guarantee and commitments to ensure the basics are being done well with a clear set of expectations for the council and residents.
- Estate improvement plans - To help enrich our estates, the council is also developing Estate Improvement Plans to create new opportunities for residents to come together to improve the shared living experience of our estates, which is currently being piloted on seven estates.

### Improving quality standards in the housing association sector

Around 12% of the stock in the borough is owned by a large number of housing associations. The Council will work with housing associations to encourage them:

- To improve their stock where required
- To publish their fire risk assessments online
- Quickly implement any of the recommendations that result from the tragic Grenfell Tower fire enquiry
- Share best practise in regards to fire safety

### Improving quality standards in the private rented sector

More people in Southwark are living in private rented homes than ever before.

Our ambition is to transform the private rental sector so that all homes provide good quality, secure accommodation. We will work with landlords to support and encourage them to drive up standards in the private rented sector, whilst also cracking down on rogue private landlords. We believe everyone should have a good quality home no matter who their landlord is. We want to work with landlords to increase security, certainty, affordability and stability for their tenants, especially families with children.

Part of our efforts to improve the quality of the private rented sector involve empowering our private rented sector residents to be able to demand improvements themselves. This is covered in Principle 4.

We will improve standards in the private rented sector through:

- Maximising use of our existing licensing schemes using the Southwark Private Rental Standard to improve conditions and management standards in the private rented sector
- Continuing to issue licenses to ensure all HMO's comply with the improved HMO standards to protect the health and safety of our residents
- Introducing new five year selective and additional licensing scheme to start in 2021 to improve conditions and management standards in the private rented sector.
- Seek to expand selective and additional licensing.
- Introducing a Gold Standard to identify good landlords, support inexperienced ones and challenge those that fail to improve

- Improving the inspection regime of accommodation we procure for homeless and vulnerable households using our accreditation standards."
- Working with local and London-wide campaign groups and households in temporary accommodation to form a Renters Union (as per principle 4)
- Taking a zero tolerance approach to landlords where the health and safety and welfare of residents are put at serious risk, through our enforcement action.
- Continuing to crack down on rogue landlords and lettings agencies, and publicising successful prosecutions and civil penalty notices as a deterrent to others
- Continuing to work in partnership with landlords, through our private sector landlords' forum, to spread good practice
- Providing a range of advice, support and incentives for good landlords to work with us, particularly those who offer longer tenancies for families.
- Working to persuade private landlords to publish their Fire Risk Assessments online.
- As per principle 1 – Using grants and loans programmes to bring long-term empty properties back into use as long-term PRS homes for families.
- As per principle 3 - Working with the Mayor of London to lobby for improvements to reform private sector tenancies to give longer term security and rent certainty.

## Principle 3. Ensuring housing provides security and support to meet housing needs and to help improve the health, wellbeing and economic resilience of residents.

### Our commitments under this principle:

- Increasing security of tenure for residents in the borough
- Connecting residents to the services and support they need across health, education, training, employment and financial advice
- Supporting residents with specific needs to live as independently as possible for as long as possible in their own communities
- Preventing homelessness wherever possible, with a focus on finding long term sustainable housing solutions, and minimising use of temporary accommodation
- Working in partnership locally and across London to bring an end to rough sleeping in Southwark

### Introduction

Good and affordable housing is fundamental to helping improve the health, wellbeing and economic resilience of our residents. Poor housing conditions can have a serious detriment on health and wellbeing. A lack of housing security can also have impacts on mental health. Good warm dry and safe housing can help empower residents by providing places and links through to education and training. Regardless of a person's health, disability or age, a quality home helps provide the basis for a fulfilling and independent life and to be an active participant in their community.

Housing has a key role to play in helping residents to improve their job prospects which can be a key defence against issues around affordability and welfare benefit caps.

We are committed to working together with our residents and other partners to empower and support residents to develop the skills that will help them to live independently and healthily, and to fulfil their own housing requirements over time.

Anyone can become homeless at any point. We will continue to provide a safety net for those in greatest need. We will work with individuals, families and partner organisations to help reduce the chance of becoming homeless through early intervention, through provision of tailored advice and support, to help people get back on track as quickly as possible.

While Southwark generally has a younger population compared to nationally, the actual number of older people is projected to increase, particularly those aged over the age of 85. This will create a real challenge in the delivery of care and support services for older and other vulnerable people. To help meet this challenge we will need to continue to work creatively with partners including health, housing and voluntary organisations to provide quality and affordable age friendly housing across the borough, and to deliver sustainable solutions to address specialist housing needs.

## Increasing security of tenure for residents in the borough

We will increase security of tenure for residents through:

- Continuing to offer secure lifetime tenancies on all lettings of council rented homes at council rents
- Encouraging all housing associations to continue to offer lifetime tenancies instead of fixed term tenancies.
- Working with private landlords and the Mayor of London to develop the London Model for reforming private sector tenancies including
  - open-ended tenancies with no fixed term
  - ending 'no-fault' ('section 21') evictions;
  - protecting the rights of landlords to regain possession of their properties where they have a legitimate reason to do so.
  - scrapping all break clauses in tenancy agreements
  - increasing landlord-to-tenant notice periods to four months
  - providing tenants with more certainty over future rent payments
  - assisting the development of a universal register of PRS properties
- Preventing homelessness and finding long term sustainable housing solutions for people threatened with homelessness (see homelessness commitment for further detail)

## Connecting residents to the services and support they need across health, education, training, employment, and financial advice

Long term housing provides a solid and stable base for residents to improve their health, wellbeing and economic resilience, and this in turn can then contribute to being able to retain housing. Housing services can also play a key role in this process.

The council remains committed to the ambition to be “more than a landlord” through connecting people to the services and support they need – across health, education, training and employment. This is another area where there are clear benefits to working with our housing association and voluntary and community sector partners to share good practice and to use resources as efficiently as possible.

We will do this by:

- Providing targeted housing management and support to those people with particular needs and requirements (e.g. those with learning and/ or physical disabilities, autism, mental health issues or chronic illness, or facing financial exclusion or eviction), to ensure they can live as independently as possible
- Working with housing associations to encourage them to all provide targeted housing management and support to those people with particular needs and requirements as per the bullet point above.
- Investing in mental health awareness training for all housing service staff to

help direct residents to the appropriate support where necessary.

- Training staff to help effectively support residents with issues around hoarding.
- Co-locating - and providing online - advice services to residents so that they have quick and easy access to financial advice, debt counselling and support services.
- Working in partnership with the Southwark CCG and the Voluntary Community Sector to understand the opportunities to improve social cohesion to tackle the sense of loneliness, particularly in social housing stock.
- Working in partnership with the CCG, council service and voluntary sectors to coordinate an approach to fuel poverty, focusing around advice, income maximisation, health and other energy efficiency schemes.
- Working with Tenants and Residents Associations and Housing Associations to explore the role of housing in the delivery of community food hubs to improve food security in the borough by linking food growers, community kitchens, training and surplus projects
- Supporting residents into jobs and apprenticeships, including those from vulnerable communities with particular barriers between them and employment opportunities. We will work to forge closer links between our housing services and our free employment service Southwark Works.

## Supporting residents with specific needs to live as independently as possible for as long as possible in their own communities

Southwark is committed to being an Age Friendly and Dementia Friendly borough.

We are committed to increasing and supporting the independence of older residents, and people with disabilities, helping them to live long, healthy, happy lives in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.

Where remaining in their own home is not possible there needs to be adequate provision of specialist housing options which maximise independence and which reduces the need for other alternatives such as residential care.

There is a commitment to make connections across housing, health social care, education and employment which is articulated in Partnership Southwark. There is a number of work streams focused on residents with specific needs including those with mental health needs. Housing, Health and Adult Social Care are redesigning community services and making connections across their workforce to use their expertise to support those that need support to live as independently as possible.

## Providing support services for people

- Improving access to disabled facilities grants and maximising access to funding opportunities, so that older people and people with disabilities who want to stay in their own home can do so

- Delivering a handypersons and adaptations service that enables people to remain in their existing homes, or where this is not possible, assisting them to move to a more suitable home
- Exploring new technology, such as telecare and telehealth, to help people retain their independence at home
- As per Principle 1 - Promoting our Smart Move scheme which provides an individually tailored package of financial and practical support, and home swaps to assist people to downsize to smaller homes, which may better suit their needs.

### **Providing specific housing or facilities**

- Delivering additional extra/flexi care housing for older people, including a Centre of Excellence for people living with dementia and associated complex needs
- Delivering a Older People's Hub for people with social care needs, co-located on new extra care housing provision at Cator Street 2 development
- Carrying out improvements and service upgrades to sheltered housing schemes across Southwark (including improvements in digital accessibility and assistive technology)
- Providing alternatives to residential care for adults and young people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health issues so they can live independently in their own homes and as part of their local communities.
- Improve the Supported Housing Hostels service by reviewing the

assets and service model to improve the life chances of vulnerable tenants.

### **Preventing homelessness wherever possible, with a focus on finding long term sustainable housing solutions, and minimising use of temporary accommodation**

We remain committed to preventing and reducing homelessness, tackling the main causes of homelessness and supporting those in need. The Council has developed a new Southwark Homelessness Strategy. The primary strategic focus is on finding long term sustainable housing solutions for people threatened with homelessness; offering high quality and innovative services to homeless households; and working with homeless households to explore the full range of housing options available to them. We will do this by:

- Improving coordination across the council and with partners to prevent homelessness through implementation of the 2018-22 Homelessness Strategy Action Plan
- Minimising use of temporary accommodation and keeping families out of bed and breakfast style accommodation
- Providing tenancy sustainment support services across all housing types to help people at risk of losing their homes
- Working with schools and colleges to better engage with children and young people around the realities of housing and homelessness
- Working with the voluntary sector through the Homelessness Forum to

make the most of the resources available to help homeless people

- Closely working with local housing associations to minimise evictions
- Providing quality debt advice and support with benefit maximisation and bidding support for residents, particularly for those affected by welfare reform changes. This will be achieved through joint working with the Citizens Advice Bureau, Blackfriars Advice and other agencies
- Ensuring that victims of domestic abuse and their children can remain safe in their homes, either through security in their home or supporting them into accommodation, either short or long term.
- Raising awareness in local agencies including the private rented sector, as to how housing and other advisory services can assist people at risk of homelessness
- Improving the capacity of council, named public bodies and voluntary sector services by providing induction training that ensures homeless prevention protocols are well known and properly deployed, especially when designing and commissioning services for the vulnerable
- Increasing the range of housing options for young people by jointly commissioning schemes for young people at risk of homelessness, on the edge of care and leaving care.
- Providing employment support through Southwark Works for residents at risk of homelessness or out of work.

## Working in partnership locally and across London to bring an end to rough sleeping in Southwark

Rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness and has a terrible impact on health and wellbeing, significantly reducing life expectancy. The Southwark Homelessness Strategy sets out how we plan to deliver on our ambition to eliminate rough sleeping in the borough. We will do this by:

- Ensuring that no one new to the streets sleeps rough for a second night, no one lives on the streets of Southwark and rough sleeping is minimised by working with the Mayor of London and other key partners (particularly mental/ physical health, the police and treatment services.
- Increasing the number of people assisted via the 'Routes Home' service" to support non-UK nationals that sleep rough in London, to explore their options away from the street including access to services in the UK and their country of origin.
- Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping amongst people with complex needs and individual with mental health issues by prioritising access to Southwark's Complex Needs Advisory Panel (CNAP) and agreeing long-term housing and support requirements

## Principle 4. Empowering residents and communities to have pride and responsibility in the running of their homes and neighbourhoods

### Our commitments under this principle:

- Enabling council tenants and homeowners to take greater control over their local housing services
- Working with local housing associations to promote resident involvement and a more consistent Southwark wide service standard
- Providing advice and assistance to tenants on their respective rights and responsibilities.
- Working in partnership with local residents to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour where it blights neighbourhoods and people's lives.

### Introduction

Across the borough our neighbourhoods have become increasingly more diverse in terms of tenure, ethnic makeup and economic makeup. Factors such as the right to buy have increased the number of homeowners and private tenants living on council estates. And some units may have been built for outright sale or shared ownership. It is essential that communities can come together and take ownership of their neighbourhoods through an inclusive approach.

We are providing a menu of options for local communities to make decisions over the running of their areas, and will support innovation and collaboration in this area.

Principle 1 also explained how we intend to empower residents to have more

control over the regeneration happening in their areas through implementing the Regeneration that Works for All Framework.

We want to celebrate our housing estates ensuring these are well valued. We want people in the borough to take pride in their homes and their local area, and we are empowering residents to come together to make improvements to their estates to help ensure these are Great Estates.

We remain committed to working with residents to tackle the issues in their communities, specifically around issues such as anti social behaviour which can blight the lives of residents.

We are also keen to help our residents in all tenures to understand their rights, and their responsibilities so that they can take action to ensure improvements for themselves.

### Enabling council tenants and homeowners to take greater control over their local housing services

Ensuring council tenants and homeowners have a strong voice in shaping our housing services, and the support they need to improve their estates and communities, is a key priority for the council.

We have proposed changes to our approach to resident involvement to reflect changes in how the housing service is run; the changing social and

cultural diversity of tenants and homeowners; and to respond to developments in technology including social media. These are currently being consulted on and the final outcomes will be updated in the final draft of this housing strategy.

To further enable council tenants and homeowners to take greater control over their local housing services we will be:

- Working with tenants, residents and homeowner groups to find new ways to engage so that more people can have their say
- Implementing the 'Empowering the Communities' programme to enable democracy at more local level.
- Encouraging development of TMOs on our estates by providing residents with the dedicated support that they need
- Implementing the Great Estates Guarantee so that every estate is clean, safe and cared for, and giving residents the tools to garden and improve their estate through new Estate Improvement Plans (as per principle 2).

• Supporting the creation of community led sustainable energy projects on estates to help residents reduce their energy bills

- Continuing the use of Southwark Homeowner service to provide a channel for leaseholders (and freeholders) to make independent representations to the council around quality of service delivery and value for money.
- Developing and delivering a cross departmental homeowners improvement plan (communicating

with homeowners and re-setting the relationship)

- Empowering homeowners by raising awareness of the choices they have
- Recognising and rewarding resident contributions, such as through the Housing Heroes award scheme
- Providing better on-line service/ 24 hour access to services and service information (especially repairs service)
- Improving high speed internet access across the borough, including free connections for TRA halls

Working with local housing associations to promote resident involvement and a more consistent Southwark wide service standard

Around 12% of the stock in Southwark is owned by housing associations and many of their estates neighbour council estates. We are exploring how we can ensure that housing association tenants have the same opportunities to have their say in the running of their homes and local areas. This will include:

- Demonstrating leadership through our own approach and sharing examples of good practice through the Southwark Housing Association Group (SOUHAG) including developing consistent responses and protocols on issues.

Providing advice and assistance to tenants on their respective rights and responsibilities.

The private sector has expanded considerably in recent years. But there is quite a range of condition levels in the

sector and many examples of tenants being treated badly by their landlords. We want to empower residents by helping them to understand their rights and responsibilities. We will continue to do this through:

- Providing high quality advice to private tenants (and landlords), including details of any grants and loans available via the council's website
- Providing dedicated housing advice to private tenants threatened with illegal eviction.
- Introducing a Southwark Private Renters Union to support the council's work to improve the conditions of private renters.

### Working in partnership with local residents to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour where it blights neighbourhoods and people's lives.

The council is committed to working with residents and our stakeholders to tackle all forms of anti-social behaviour; we will continue to do this by:

- Working with all stakeholders to tackle anti-social and criminal behaviour to protect the most vulnerable in our communities, including issues such as child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, community harm, anti-social behaviour (ASB), knife crime, gun crime, drugs, trafficking, etc."
- Working with communities to find local solutions that help young people stay away from knives
- Taking enforcement action against perpetrators of domestic abuse wherever this is possible, and

ensuring that those that commit abuse do not receive any priority for rehousing.

- Developing a Violence Against Women and Girls strategy to tackle all forms of gender based violence
- Having zero-tolerance of hate crime.
- Tackling extremism, support people at risk and work with our communities to prevent radicalisation
- Using all available powers under the ASB Crime and Policing Act to deal with perpetrators of anti social behaviour
- Bringing communities together to solve problems collectively through key schemes such Cleaner, Greener, Safer (CGS), Neighbourhood fund, Tenants & Residents Social Improvement Grants (TRSIG), Neighbourhood Watch, Police ward panels, Positive Futures Fund, Democracy Fund, etc."
- Working with residents to design out crime from new developments while protecting access to communal areas and facilities.
- Supporting tenants to be a good neighbour by providing a pre-tenancy course on how to abide by their tenancy agreement, including acceptable behaviour standards, how to get involved and how to budget.

The Council is developing a SMART action plan to accompany the housing strategy. This will be updated on an annual basis. This will be available at

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategy>

