

## Consultation report - Haringey's Housing Strategy 2009-19

### 1. Introduction

This document reports on the results of the consultation process and results for Haringey's housing strategy, which was carried out between 26 January and 13 March 2009.

The housing strategy is designed to set out plans for how the council and its partners plan to improve housing in Haringey over the next ten years.

The draft strategy identifies as its vision the creation of:

*balanced neighbourhoods of choice, which meet the housing aspirations of Haringey's residents and offer quality, affordability and sustainability for current and future generations*

Four priorities framed the draft strategy. These guided how information was gathered during the consultation process, although steps were taken to ensure respondents could feedback on any aspect of housing they thought relevant.

1. To meet housing need through mixed communities which provide opportunities for our residents
2. To ensure housing in the borough is well managed, of high quality, and sustainable
3. To provide people with the support and advice they need
4. To make all homes in the borough a part of neighbourhoods of choice

### 2. Consultation materials

In order to communicate the content of the strategy and provide different methods for people to feedback, a number of consultation materials and communication techniques were used:

**Consultation leaflet** which contained a 'simplified' version of the vision and priorities (expanding them from four to eight, for ease of understanding) asking respondents to comment on these and identify which three they thought most important to housing in Haringey. Space was also provided for additional comments.

These were mailed out to community groups, distributed to customer service centres, libraries and community centres, taken to Area Assemblies and sent out when people contacted us.

**Web page** detailing the purpose of the strategy and consultation, with details of how to feedback.

**Article in Haringey People** on the housing strategy and consultation information.

### **3. Who we consulted with and how**

Residents, community and voluntary groups, council staff and organisations which deliver housing or have an interest in housing in Haringey where included in the consultation.

#### **Residents**

Residents of the borough were consulted with in a number of ways:

- Attended existing social housing forums (Temporary Accommodation Forum, Resident Consultation Forum and Tenant Participation Panel), with a presentation on the strategy and then feedback gathering exercises.
- Attended six Area Assembly meetings (where local issues are discussed and residents get an opportunity to speak to community leaders and Councillors), where council officers could talk face-to-face with residents about housing issues and the strategy.
- Presented and gathered feedback at a Haringey Youth Council meeting.
- Presented and gathered feedback at the Older People's Partnership Board (this was a mixture of older people representatives, council officers and partners).
- Consultation leaflets were display in customer service centres, libraries and community centres.
- Consultation leaflets sent to resident associations and community groups alongside copies of the full strategy.
- Article in 'Haringey People'
- Information on the Haringey council web site

#### **Organisations with an interested in housing and council staff**

- Presentations and feedback gathering at a Landlords Forum and Registered Social Landlord Developers Forum
- Presentations and feedback gathering at forums and meetings with Safeguarding Adults Board, Older People's Partnership Board, Advice Providers Network, Acquisitive Crime Partnership Board, Integrated Housing Board, Corporate Policy Network and Homes for Haringey (an arms length management organisation (ALMO) set up by Haringey Council, to manage social housing)
- Strategy distributed to Haringey Council staff

#### **Community and voluntary groups**

Over 300 community and voluntary groups (these included groups which dealt with race, sexuality, housing advice, faith, mental and physical health, abuse, environmental and homeless issues) were mailed a copy of the strategy and copies of the consultation leaflet.

#### **Housing Conference**

A Housing Conference was held on 18 February 2009, which provided an opportunity to discuss the direction the council should take to meet housing aspirations over the next decade. 125 people attended, which included: representatives from housing associations,

landlords from the private sector, residents, representatives community and voluntary organisations. The conference incorporated workshops which explored the priorities set out in the strategy, plus an extra workshop which explored green issues for housing.

#### **4. Feedback**

In this section, feedback from the consultation has been organised according to the priority they address. An additional priority (Priority five) was added when feedback was analysed, which contributes to the Greenest Borough strategy.

#### **Findings from consultation leaflet**

Overall results from the consultation leaflets (the majority being from owner occupiers) indicated that reducing homelessness, building more homes, safe and attractive neighbourhoods, improving social housing and making homes 'greener' were seen as the most important housing priorities for Haringey.

#### **Priority one: To meet housing need through mixed communities which provide opportunities for our residents**

##### *Supply new housing as a part of mixed communities*

- It was generally agreed that there is a need for more housing (a mixture of private and social) and that any new housing should benefit the community
- There was support for plans to provide a balance of flexible tenure options so there is choice for residents
- A need for more HMO (Houses of Multiple Occupancy), but acknowledging the need to safeguard family environments and ensure local communities are not negatively effected.
- Regeneration projects must be led by the local community

##### *Connecting housing to employment and skills*

- There was extensive support for the need for housing providers to work in partnership to improve life chances by contributing to education, training and employment initiatives which will build peoples' skills.

##### *Maximise the supply of housing from existing homes*

- The need to address what to do with empty properties, and support for the council to have the ability to purchase empty properties

##### *Work with residents and private sector options to address Temporary Accommodation*

- There was agreement that the private sector would be a viable option to address this. Concerns over the sustainability and security of this was stressed alongside the need to provide support for people.

- The need for a culture change was stressed, so that residents think of secure shorthold tenancies rather than tenancies for life.

**Priority two: To ensure all housing in the borough is well managed, of high quality and sustainable**

*High quality new build*

- There was agreement for high quality new build and an increase in large properties.

*High quality social housing*

- The improvement of housing management standards was identified as an issue, as was the need to build on relationships between Registered Social Landlords and the Council to improve the management of housing.
- The use of the Decent Homes fund (designed for things like double glazing and better bathrooms) needs to be used for its original purpose and not for superficial works.
- Consultation with residents needs to be strengthened in the Council.

*High quality private sector housing*

- A number of 'support' issues were raised: the need to be able to challenge landlords on behalf of tenants, and landlords being kept up-to-date on their responsibilities and how they can take action when necessary.
- Respondents felt the securing of standards particularly important where private housing was to be used as a 'substitute' for social housing.

*High quality temporary accommodation*

- Respondents stressed the need to tackle overcrowding and disrepair issues

**Priority three: To provide people with the support and advice they need**

*Provision of high quality advice*

- There was agreement that 'housing advice' needs to look beyond housing

- Need to think about how service users can be engaged with at an early stage to promote independence
- Need to support home-owners on mortgage rescue, flexible tenure and innovative mortgage products
- The need to manage expectation of housing services by having a more honest approach when providing advice was identified
- High standard of training for advice and support for Council and voluntary staff to ensure quality and consistency

*Provide joined-up support through multi-agency working*

- The importance of strong partnerships and communications across all sectors of relevance to housing (health, employment, vulnerable service users) was stressed.
- It was requested that this section be called 'needs of vulnerable adults and partnership working' to reflect a whole-system approach that addresses the different priorities or different service user groups (Learning Disability, Older People, Adult Mental Health Services, Physical disabilities, alcohol and drugs dependents etc.).
- There was an emphasis on addressing older peoples housing needs over the next ten years and an increase in low income older owner-occupiers

*Safeguarding children and young people*

- The need to engage with children in schools before they become homeless and effectively manage their views of the service was highlighted

**Priority four: To make all homes in the borough a part of neighbourhoods of choice**

- Respondents stressed that they must be involved in the development and shaping of local areas and communities
- Good quality local services should be coordinated with housing through area-based working
- Infrastructure (such as transport and local enterprise) is important to consider when regenerating and designing areas

- 'Designing out crime' was considered key in regeneration programmes

#### **Proposed Priority five: To contribute to the Greenest Borough**

- Respondents stressed that building sustainable, well-designed housing was critical – this was also important with existing housing
- Clear direction for landlords (social and private) regarding energy efficiency was required
- Changes in the behaviour of residents was thought to be vital, with a need to promote green projects, educate and train people to adopt 'greener' lifestyle choices
- Recycling facilities needed to be tailored to suitable for the range of types of homes in the borough

#### **General feedback**

Feedback which did not address specific priorities in the strategy was concerned with:

- The language in the vision being simplified and less oriented towards the housing profession
- Making clearer the links to existing strategies and areas of work (such as homelessness, travellers, older people) and illustrate structures and partnerships which will be used to deliver the strategy
- The need to recognise and respond to the Audit Commission inspection