

6. DELIVER DECENT HOMES

Hackney faces a housing crisis of supply, affordability and quality. Across every tenure of housing, and almost every level of household income, there is a need for action.

Private renters **need more rights and security**. Homeowners and social landlords need help to make their homes more energy-efficient. Leaseholders living in privately-owned flats face years of bills for fire safety works. And homeless families desperately need **more affordable homes**.

But still, the Conservative government sits on its hands and finds others to blame. They would rather rip up planning laws, and allow their developer donors to ride roughshod over local democracy than meet the needs of Hackney residents.

At the same time, the Tory Brexit deal is increasing costs and driving supply chain delays that are also disrupting the delivery of new homes.

In the face of these challenges, Hackney Labour has been delivering decent homes and fighting for change.

We have proudly returned the Council to its historic role as a builder of council homes. We have helped a record number of homeless people and families. We have fought for a better deal for private renters and prosecuted criminal landlords. We have delivered a *Green Homes* programme that is helping cut energy bills during a cost-of-living crisis.

A Hackney Labour council will continue to do **everything it can** to deliver decent homes for all.



OUR RECORD

- **Built 1,276** genuinely affordable homes for social rent, living rent and shared ownership.
- **Secured** almost **500** genuinely affordable homes since adopting Hackney's **50%** minimum affordable housing planning policy.
- **Adopted** a simpler, **more transparent** housing register for people waiting for a council home.
- **Committed to ending** rough sleeping in Hackney, following the successful "Everyone In" scheme during the pandemic.
- **Started** refurbishing **three** temporary accommodation hostels so that homeless people have a decent place to stay.
- **Fitted** new and upgraded fire-safe front doors on **17,000** council homes and replaced cladding to council blocks across four estates.



- **Published** all of our **850** Fire Risk Assessments online - the first council to do so.
- **Invested £64 million** into improving **22,000** council homes in 2021.
- **Developed** a **£1m** plan to tackle the backlog of housing repairs caused by the pandemic and cyberattack.
- **Through** our #betterrenting campaign, lobbied for changes to protect Hackney's **36,000** private rented households, including longer tenancies and rent controls.
- **Supported** housing association and private sector leaseholders to challenge their landlords on **fire safety** defects, repairs and service charge increases.
- **Issued** almost **3,000** landlord licences, giving the Council the power to inspect private-rented properties and prosecute criminal landlords.



OUR PLAN

We are determined to tackle the crisis of the supply of new home by making sure Hackney Council continues to build more genuinely affordable homes itself.

That means building council homes for social rent, for *Hackney Living Rent* - where rent is set at an average of local income and with longer tenancies - and for shared ownership to **help local people onto the housing ladder.**

We will do that by building new homes, refurbishing empty homes, and buying back council homes that were bought under *Right-to-Buy*. We will only demolish existing council homes where they are unsafe or after a democratic ballot of residents.

We will explore development partnerships that can help us to deliver the homes Hackney needs, but on council-owned land, the Council will always be the lead developer.

For the past ten years, we have led an award-winning **council homes building programme** with residents shaping the designs.

We will continue this approach and build 1,000 council homes for social rent. We will always involve residents in the design of new homes being built on or near their estates.

We will deliver on the promises we made to build more homes.



We will complete the new homes programmes started at King's Crescent and Nightingale estates, at Marian Court and Tower Court. For the Colville Estate, we will ensure that every existing Council tenant and leaseholder is offered a new home and we will speed up delivery.

We will complete the new *Britannia* project, providing the funding for the already opened new secondary school and leisure centre, and financing the building of the new council social rented and shared ownership homes.

We will complete the new council homes that are to be delivered in Hoxton West, De Beauvoir, Frampton

Park, King's Park and Lincoln Court, and we will search for new sites to build the next generation of social rented council homes.

We will complete Phase 3 and start Phase 4 of the regeneration at Woodberry Down, delivering new social rented homes for local residents; and through the new masterplan we will increase the number of social rented homes, protect existing trees and create a new town square.

Where we are building new council homes we will support residents with the local lettings policy that **gives priority to existing residents**, recognising the disruption that demolition and construction brings.

We will also focus on moving homeless families out of temporary accommodation and into decent homes, as well as expanding accommodation that supports independent living, helping older residents and disabled residents to live independent lives, and helping our care services go further.

We will **build 1,000 council homes** for social rent

We recognise the important role that council shared ownership and *Hackney Living Rent* homes play in supporting people into a new home, and offering a way out of the private rented sector. We will continue with the plans to deliver new homes for shared ownership and living rent, and keep the approach to local marketing and new home sales focused on local residents.

We know we do not have all the answers to building new affordable homes or different types of tenure, so we will launch a review through a special *Living in Hackney Commission* to explore and advise on existing models and **develop new ways** to build affordable and accessible homes in Hackney.

We will review Hackney's policies that support and enable the building of new homes in the borough, and ensure we are making the best use of the limited land available.

Across all the Council's new homes we will ensure that there is the right mix of accessible and family housing to meet the range of housing needs in Hackney. We will ensure that all homes are high quality, lifetime homes with the highest sustainability standards.

Our mission is to **end rough sleeping** in Hackney, and we will develop an *Ending Homelessness Strategy* to build on the progress that we made with the "Everyone In" scheme during the Coronavirus lockdowns. Led by a multi-

agency partnership we will include specific support for the borough's homeless and at-risk young people.

We will also expand council-owned or leased accommodation for homeless people, especially to meet the growing needs of single homeless people and families. We will set high standards for temporary accommodation provided by local charities and private providers.

We will always support every person sleeping rough, irrespective of their immigration status, and we will continue to refuse to report rough sleeping migrants to the *Home Office*.

We will create more awareness of homelessness in secondary schools and colleges, and look into the impact of homelessness on young people in overcrowded housing, exploring with local housing providers how we can develop new forms of co-housing.

We will review the impact of the new *Lettings Strategy and Choice Based Lettings* to ensure it is delivering on its objectives and **leaving no one behind**.

We will continue to develop local homeswapper schemes to better match existing tenants with homes that meet their needs.

Our priority for all council tenants will be to make sure they live in **safe, warm and well-maintained homes** with a **high quality of service from the**



Council. To do that, we will tackle the backlog of housing repairs for Council tenants and leaseholders caused by the pandemic and cyberattack, and set a new target that reports of leaks are tackled within 24 hours.

We will continue to improve the Council's repairs and maintenance call centres and ensure that problems can be reported quickly, and progress tracked so tenants and leaseholders don't wait in long queues or have to call back.

We will develop a long term investment strategy and maintenance plan for our lifts, and make sure they are well maintained and renewed ensuring they are operating efficiently at all times. When they break down, we will make sure residents are kept informed and repairs are carried out within clear and transparent timescales that are communicated to residents.

To help us meet these ambitions, and provide more good, skilled jobs and apprenticeships, we **will grow Hackney's in-house maintenance team by 20%**.

We will improve resident engagement on councils estates, increasing the face-to-face support housing officers provide to residents. This will include committing to weekly housing surgeries as part of a wider plan to improve resident participation.

We will continue to support tenant and residents' associations and tenant and resident management organisations to thrive.

We will provide more digital services so that tenants can receive more services online. We will provide online self-service access to order responsive repairs and provide an online portal

where leaseholders will be able to access all information relating to their lease, including billing information.

We will work with the Council's leaseholders to bring forward a *Leaseholder Service Charter* which will set out the Council's commitment to improving services for leaseholders.

We will complete the review of Council owned community-based assets such as community halls. In each neighbourhood, **we will develop a community hub** that will provide residents with access to high-quality space for a range of uses, with free wifi and service touchpoints. We will ensure that every community hall provides free space at least once a week to support local community projects and activities.

We will continue to support food growing on our estates and the



participatory budgets that allow tenants and leaseholders to shape the future of their estates.

We will ensure that all council-owned estates of over 250 homes will have a five-year investment plan setting out plans for future estate investment that captures the aspirations of residents to improve where they live.

We remain committed to the highest standards of fire safety

and will maintain a transparent approach across all our council-owned blocks. We pledge to take action as soon as new issues are identified, publish the *Fire Risk Assessments* and ensure the Council responds quickly. We will continue to stand up for individual leaseholders and tenants in council-owned homes so they will not have to face any fire safety costs.

We will deliver a council-led Building Control service that will ensure new development in Hackney meets the highest fire safety standards. We will be ready to implement the post-Grenfell recommendations. We believe the Conservative-led approach that allowed private companies to inspect building works led to an erosion of the regulations with the horrific consequences we all saw. This service will be delivered by the Council and will be accountable to the community it serves.

We will improve community life and the communal areas across our estates

We want all our council tenants to live in decent homes that are warm, high quality and fit for the future. We will develop a plan as part of our *Green New Deal* to make them more energy-efficient and reduce carbon emissions across all council estates, helping to lower energy bills and tackle climate change.

We will make sure all council homes achieve an efficient energy performance rating of C or above and we will set out a clear plan to **help reduce home energy bills** and reduce energy consumption by 2030 still further. We will develop a plan to expand solar panels across all council estates and replace all existing estate lighting with new, low energy, LED lights.

We will deliver a pathfinder net zero home initiative to test the effectiveness and reliability of net zero technologies in the home, and then begin the rollout across

all 30,000 homes owned by the Council. We will use this council-led initiative as an opportunity to create jobs, apprenticeships and training opportunities as part of our *Green New Deal for Hackney*.

We will develop a programme of works to improve the reliability, transparency and energy efficiency of our communal heating networks and more consistent monitoring of the effectiveness of our building design and energy schemes.

Hackney's Private Rented Sector now provides 36,000 homes in the borough. Tenants are drawn from all of Hackney's communities and reflect its diversity. What they have in common is a lack of security, whether that is the length of tenancy or the cost of rents and rent rises.

Private renters in Hackney deserve a better deal - capped rents, longer tenancies, and quality homes. We will fight for the right to introduce mandatory landlord licensing and rent controls, and we will **prosecute bad landlords and letting agents**.

We will fight for
**mandatory
landlord licensing**

We will explore a *Private Renters' Forum* for tenants so our residents living in this sector can raise issues directly with Council teams and councillors.

We will continue to lobby to end Section 21 'no fault' evictions and the licensing of "Airbnb" style short-term lets.

We will expand our support to housing association tenants, leaseholders and shared owners affected by the cladding and fire safety crisis, lobbying the government on their behalf and making the case that freeholders and landlords should **cover the costs** of remediation works. We will lobby the government to act as an insurer of last resort and to underwrite insurance premiums for leaseholders and shared owners affected by the fire safety and cladding scandal.

We will continue to campaign alongside organisations such as *London Renters Union*, *Age Concern*, *Generation Rent* and *Hackney Citizens* to campaign for renters' rights, including awareness-raising campaigns. We will provide a single portal or point of contact for all tenants and landlords to understand their rights and responsibilities.

Through our existing private landlord licensing scheme we will push landlords to ensure their properties meet a minimum energy performance rating to help **keep energy bills low** for their tenants.



We will campaign against any government plans or a freeholder who force leaseholders in privately-owned blocks to pay for the cost of removing dangerous cladding and other fire safety measures including the cost of waking watches.

We will launch an empty property campaign to tackle the 1,000 privately-owned, long-term empty properties, exploring all options to discourage leaving homes empty through Council Tax increases and more.

All privately-rented homes in Cazenove, Brownswood and Stoke

Newington wards are licensed under the Council's selective scheme, and houses of multiple occupation with three or more tenants are licensed under our additional licensing scheme across all other wards. We will push for full borough licensing across Hackney so that all tenants in the private rented sector have the backing of the Council when dealing with their landlords.

We will always hold local housing associations to account for the services they provide to local residents while working in partnership with them to improve estates and deliver more affordable homes in the borough. ■