



**Barking &
Dagenham**

Barking and Dagenham Housing Strategy 2026 - 2031

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Foreword

In Barking and Dagenham, we know a good home changes everything. It's where you feel safe, where you can get on with your life, and where families can grow and thrive. That's why, for us, it starts here - with getting the basics right and making sure residents can rely on their housing service.

Over the past year, residents have been clear with us about what needs to improve, and we've been getting on with it. We've strengthened our housing services, invested in making homes safer, and kept our focus on the issues that matter day to day, such as repairs and tackling anti-social behaviour. We've also worked to improve how we listen and how we communicate, so residents feel better informed and more involved. There's more to do, but we're moving in the right direction.

This Housing Strategy sets out what comes next. It builds on our Interim Housing Strategy and provides a clear plan for the years ahead, better homes, better services and stronger neighbourhoods.

Our aim is simple: everyone in Barking and Dagenham should be able to access a good-quality, affordable home that meets their needs. That includes older residents, young people, and families with children who have complex needs. We want homes people can live in with confidence - now and in the years ahead.

So this is what we will deliver. We'll build more genuinely affordable homes. We'll improve access to accessible and adaptable homes. We'll keep raising the standard of the homes we already have, making them safer, warmer and better maintained. We'll act earlier to prevent homelessness, and we'll work with residents and partners, so services reflect real experience and local priorities.

We know change won't happen overnight, but it starts here. As we continue working together, Barking and Dagenham will be a borough where every resident can find a home that works for them and feel proud of the place they live.

Cllr Maureen Worby
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, and Health, Housing



Executive Summary

The Housing Strategy 2026-2031 sets out the Council's long-term plan to ensure that every resident has access to a safe, good-quality, affordable home that meets their needs. Developed in response to the borough's evolving housing needs, the Housing Strategy establishes a five-year framework to improve housing outcomes and align services with the Council's wider objectives for fairness, safety, inclusion, sustainability and partnership.

The Housing Strategy builds upon the foundations laid by the 2025-2026 Interim Housing Strategy, maintaining continuity in both approach and delivery. It sustains the nine housing missions, which continue to guide the Council's day-to-day housing operations. These missions provide a practical bridge between long-term strategic objectives and frontline service delivery, ensuring that the values and standards set out in this Strategy are embedded in all aspects of housing management.

The Housing Strategy is informed by extensive engagement with residents and stakeholders, reflecting the diverse needs and lived experiences of the borough's communities. Consultation carried out in 2025 involved residents across a range of backgrounds, including disabled residents, families with complex needs, and young people. Their insights directly informed the development of the strategic objectives and action plan.

The Council's vision for housing is clear: that all residents should be able to access a secure, suitable home that supports their health, independence, and participation in community life. Six strategic objectives support this vision:

1. Increase the supply of high-quality, accessible homes to meet the needs of a growing and diverse population.
2. Make housing more affordable by delivering a balanced mix of tenures and rent levels that reflect local incomes.
3. Prevent homelessness and rough sleeping through early intervention, targeted support and improved housing pathways.
4. Support vulnerable residents to live independently and access timely adaptations and appropriate accommodation.
5. Improve housing quality, safety and environmental performance through investment and regulatory compliance.
6. Promote prevention and wellbeing through collaborative working and the evolving Neighbourhood Model of service delivery.

These objectives are aligned with the Council's wider strategic framework and are designed to contribute to the delivery of the borough's Local Plan, Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Inclusive Growth and Place Strategy, and Equality, Diversity and

Inclusion Strategy. The Housing Strategy also reinforces the Our Barking and Dagenham framework, which is built on the pillars of People, Place and Partnership.

The Council will continue to work in close collaboration with residents, health and care partners, housing providers, and community organisations to deliver these objectives. Resident voice and co-production will remain central throughout the Strategy period. Ongoing oversight will be provided through the Housing Strategy Delivery Board and the Resident Scrutiny Group, ensuring that delivery is transparent, accountable and informed by those who use housing services.

Through this Strategy, the Council reaffirms its commitment to housing as a foundation for wellbeing, opportunity and inclusive growth. It provides a clear and accountable plan for sustained progress in addressing the borough's housing challenges and delivering better outcomes for all residents.

Introduction

Purpose and Scope

The Housing Strategy 2026-2031 establishes the Council's long-term vision and commitments for improving housing in Barking and Dagenham. It details how the Council will address the borough's housing challenges over the next five years, focusing on key issues such as housing affordability, the quality and safety of homes, homelessness prevention, accessibility and support for vulnerable residents. This Strategy builds on the foundation laid by the Interim Housing Strategy 2025-2026, providing a structured, co-produced response to current and emerging housing needs.

This Strategy sets out the Council's statutory duties as a local housing authority and affirms its broader commitment to fairness, safety, inclusion and accountability. It is shaped by the principle that all Barking and Dagenham residents should have access to a safe, high-quality and affordable home, including accessible housing for those with specific needs, supporting better health, independence and wellbeing.

Development Process and Engagement Undertaken

The Housing Strategy 2026-2031 was developed through a co-produced process that placed residents' voices at its core. Between September and November 2025, the Council undertook an extensive programme of public and stakeholder engagement. This engagement included:

- An online survey open to all residents

- Community workshops held across the borough
- Targeted sessions for young people, disabled residents, families of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and leaseholders
- Cross-service workshops with Council officers

The consultation identified key priorities, including housing affordability, housing conditions and repairs, community safety and anti-social behaviour, access to accessible homes for residents who need them, homelessness prevention and improved communication with residents.

These themes directly informed the Strategy's strategic priorities and action plan. Residents also provided powerful personal insights that shaped the Strategy. For example, one young resident said, "Crime is the biggest concern when deciding where I live," while a parent of a child with SEND said that there is "no real choice in housing offers" for families with specific needs. Such feedback was instrumental in ensuring that the Strategy reflects residents' real experiences and expectations.

Relationship to Corporate Strategies and the Local Plan; Alignment to People, Place, Partnership

This Housing Strategy is closely aligned with the Council's broader strategic framework. It supports and complements the objectives set out in the following key plans and strategies:

- **Corporate Plan (2023-2026)** - reinforcing the focus on housing quality, safety, and the prevention of homelessness
- **Local Plan (2020-2037)** - supporting sustainable development, the delivery of affordable housing, and effective placemaking
- **Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023-2028)** - highlighting the role of housing in promoting health, wellbeing and independence
- **Community Safety Partnership Plan (2022-2026)** - complementing efforts to build safer communities
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy (2025-29)** - promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in housing services
- **Anti-Poverty Strategy (2025-2026)** - aligning housing initiatives with the Council's broader anti-poverty efforts
- **Learning Disabilities & Autism Strategy (2024-29)** - promoting co-production so residents with learning disabilities and autism are involved in decisions about services that affect them
- **Digital, Data and Technology Strategy (2025-28)** - supporting data-led, digital improvements to housing services and performance
- **Inclusive Growth and Place Strategy** - contributing to borough-wide goals for regeneration, skills development and economic wellbeing

- **Neighbourhood Plan** - a community-led, place-based plan focusing on early intervention and partnership working to improve residents' health, well-being and housing outcomes in line with the Council's People, Place and Partnership priorities

Furthermore, the Strategy reflects the Council's Our Barking and Dagenham framework, which is built around the pillars of People, Place and Partnership:

- **People** - placing residents at the heart of decision-making and prioritising safety, fairness and accessibility
- **Place** - delivering neighbourhoods that are well-designed, sustainable and inclusive
- **Partnership** - strengthening collaboration with registered providers, voluntary organisations, the NHS, developers and local communities

Vision and Strategic Objectives

Our Vision

Every Barking and Dagenham resident will have access to a safe, good-quality and affordable home that meets their needs. This includes accessible homes for those who require them. A secure and suitable home is essential to enabling people to live independently, maintain their wellbeing and participate in community life. This vision will guide the Council's housing priorities, decisions and partnerships over the lifetime of the Strategy.

Strategic Objectives

To deliver this vision, the Council will focus on six strategic objectives that define the long-term housing outcomes we aim to achieve:

1. **Increase the supply of high-quality, accessible homes:** Expand housing supply to meet the needs of a growing, diverse population, including older residents and residents with disabilities.
2. **Make housing more affordable for local residents:** Deliver a balanced range of homes across different tenures and rent levels that reflect local incomes and reduce cost-of-living pressures.
3. **Prevent homelessness and rough sleeping:** Strengthen early intervention, advice and support services to prevent homelessness, protect vulnerable households, and promote long-term housing stability.

4. **Support vulnerable residents to live independently and access adapted homes:** Coordinate with health and social care services to ensure timely home adaptations and provide suitable accommodation for residents with support needs.
5. **Improve housing quality, safety, and environmental performance:** Invest in both new and existing homes to ensure they are safe, energy-efficient, and fully compliant with regulatory standards.
6. **Support prevention and wellbeing through partnership:** Promote collaborative working with residents, health partners, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector to deliver accessible, joined-up support. As the Council's evolving Neighbourhood Model is established, this approach will be embedded within local delivery structures to strengthen place-based support and community resilience

Each of these objectives is grounded in statutory duties, local evidence, and the Council's core commitments to fairness, safety, inclusion, sustainability and partnership. Together, they ensure that housing plays a central role in advancing the borough's wider goals of equity, wellbeing and prosperity.



Be First Ltd has developed the House for Artists, an award-winning scheme that delivers 12 flexible apartments and a dedicated community space. These homes are offered at intermediate rents to support artists and their families, fostering creativity and community engagement within the borough.

Our Core Principles

This Strategy is underpinned by five guiding principles that shape how we plan and deliver housing services:

- **Fairness:** Ensuring all residents are treated equitably and without discrimination.
- **Safety:** Ensuring homes and neighbourhoods are secure and free from harm.
- **Inclusion:** Designing services and homes that meet the needs of our diverse population.
- **Sustainability:** Building and maintaining homes that support environmental goals and long-term resilience.
- **Partnership:** Delivering housing solutions in collaboration with residents, communities and partners across all sectors.

Housing Missions: Turning Strategy into Daily Delivery

These missions are aligned with our strategic objectives and guide the Council's day-to-day housing services. Each mission turns a high-level aim into an actionable commitment, ensuring that daily operations deliver on the long-term housing Strategy while upholding the Council's values and legal duties.

Our nine housing missions are:

1. **Safe, Decent Homes:** We will provide safe, well-maintained homes that meet or exceed the Decent Homes Standard, using data to plan repairs and adapt homes as residents' needs change.
2. **Health & Safety:** We will uphold the highest safety standards in all council homes and communal areas. We will ensure full legal compliance and act swiftly to address hazards such as damp, mould, fire risks and any threats to residents' health.
3. **Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour:** We will work in partnership with the Police, community safety agencies and local groups to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour, crime and hate incidents. Our actions will be proportionate and effective, ensuring that victims are supported and neighbourhoods remain safe and respectful.
4. **Tenancy Management:** We will manage all tenancies fairly and transparently, making sure every tenant understands their rights and responsibilities.
5. **Fairness and Respect:** We will deliver services that treat all residents with dignity, fairness and respect. We will train and support our staff to reflect these values in every interaction, ensuring that every resident has equitable access to our services.

6. **Meeting Diverse Needs:** We will recognise and respond to the diverse needs of the borough's residents. Housing services and homes will be inclusive and accessible for older people, people with disabilities, carers and families.
7. **Tenant Engagement:** We will put tenants' voices at the heart of our services. Through co-production, tenant forums, neighbourhood events and other engagement activities, residents will help shape housing policies and hold the Council to account.
8. **Open and Accountable Services:** We will ensure transparency by publishing clear, accessible information on our housing performance. Key indicators (such as completed repairs, tenant satisfaction levels and safety compliance rates) will be published regularly so residents can scrutinise how our services are performing.
9. **Responsive Complaints Handling:** We will handle all housing complaints promptly, fairly and transparently. We will treat each complaint as an opportunity to learn and improve, strengthening accountability and building trust with tenants.

Each of these missions directly supports the strategic objectives by guiding everyday decisions and actions. In this way, our long-term vision is continuously woven into the daily delivery of housing services across the Council.

Equalities, Fairness and Inclusion



Guiding Commitments on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Council's approach is guided by its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2025-29, which commits all services to improving access, removing barriers and promoting equitable outcomes. It sets out how we meet the Public Sector Equality Duty and our medium-term equality objectives, which are broadly:

- **Closing Equality Gaps** - acting to address known inequalities that exist in access to opportunities and support in areas like employment, healthcare, housing and education and ensuring we have ways of identifying the gaps we don't yet know about.

- **Providing Fair and Accessible Public Services** - making sure our services are designed to meet the needs of all our residents, regardless of their background, ability or circumstance, to ensure that every interaction is shaped by empathy, inclusivity and continuous improvement.
- **Promoting Cohesion and Integration** - creating a borough where people from different backgrounds can connect and thrive together.

Commitments to Equitable Access and Outcomes

The Council's vision is that every Barking and Dagenham resident should have access to a safe, affordable, high-quality and accessible home that supports their wellbeing. Achieving this vision requires proactive steps to remove inequalities in housing access, experience and outcomes.

The Council will continue to:

- Ensure housing services are accessible to all residents, including those with communication or mobility needs.
- Provide housing advice and information in accessible formats and, where needed, in multiple languages.
- Embed inclusive design standards in all new housing developments, with at least 10% of new homes built to wheelchair-accessible standard M4(3) and all others to accessible and adaptable standard M4(2).
- Deliver timely adaptations for residents with disabilities, supporting independent living.
- Maintain and update policies, such as the Housing Allocations Policy, to ensure they are fair, transparent and in line with equality objectives.

These commitments are integral to the Housing Strategy's delivery and will be applied across all housing services. Equality considerations are reflected in how the Council allocates homes, prioritises investment, supports vulnerable residents and engages with communities.

Inclusive Support for Residents with Additional Needs

The Council recognises that some residents may face greater barriers in accessing suitable housing or experience poorer housing outcomes. To address this, the Strategy includes targeted commitments to key priority groups:

- **Disabled residents and older people:** The Council will increase the supply of accessible homes and ensure adaptations are assessed and delivered in a

timely way, supporting residents to live safely and independently for longer. This is informed by the tenancy profiling data, which shows over 20% of household members identify as disabled, compared with around 13% across the borough, and there are 4,944 household members aged 65 and over.

- Learning disabilities and autism: The Council will co-design housing options with residents and carers and strengthen supported housing and move-on pathways in partnership with Adult Social Care and the NHS, including clear referral routes and targeted tenancy sustainment support. This is informed by the tenancy profiling data, which show 270 tenants have recorded indicators for autism and/or learning disabilities.
- Care leavers: The Council delivers a dedicated housing pathway for care leavers, including early advice, planned move-on options and ongoing tenancy support. Working with Children's Services and commissioned providers, the Council will continue to improve stability and prevent homelessness. From April 2020 to October 2025, the Council supported 356 care leavers through this pathway, providing advice and assistance to help them move on successfully
- Survivors of domestic abuse: The Council will maintain access to safe accommodation and specialist support, aligned with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, including risk-informed allocations, multi-agency working and clear routes into refuge, sanctuary schemes and resettlement support. This is informed by local need, as the borough has the highest rate in London of recorded domestic abuse offences, at 14.9 offences per 1,000 residents as of November 2025. Tenant profiling data also indicates 39 tenants have recorded domestic violence as a vulnerability indicator.
- Households with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF): The Council will work with voluntary sector partners and legal advice services to provide early advice, practical support and clear referral routes, ensuring decisions are lawful, consistent and delivered within statutory frameworks. As of June 2025, the Council has supported 74 households with NRPF through accommodation and/or financial support.
- Racially minoritised communities: The Council will use Continuous Recording (CORE) lettings data and inclusive engagement to identify and address any disparities in housing access and outcomes, and to target action where needed. The tenancy profiling data shows 50.7% of household members identify as White British and 49.3% identify as ethnically minoritised.
- LGBTQ+ residents: The Council will ensure housing services are inclusive, respectful and safe, with staff trained to respond appropriately and with zero

tolerance for discrimination or harassment. Where appropriate, the Council will work with specialist organisations to strengthen support and referral routes. This is informed by the 2021 Census which identifies 11.42% of all people aged 16 or above who do not identify as heterosexual.

Monitoring Equalities Actions and Outcomes

The Council will monitor equality outcomes through Continuous Recording (CORE) lettings data. This data is collected when social housing homes are allocated and helps the Council understand who is being housed, what types of homes are being offered, and whether outcomes differ for particular groups, including disabled residents and older people. Where the data indicates disparities in access or outcomes, the Council will consider appropriate action to strengthen fairness and accessibility.

Alongside this, the Council will work closely with the Lived Experience Panel to inform the development of the borough's Design Code. The Design Code sets out the principles and expectations for the design of new homes and neighbourhoods, including accessibility, safety and inclusivity, so that development better reflects the needs of local residents.

Ongoing oversight will be provided by the Resident Scrutiny Group, which includes representatives from a broad range of communities, including disabled residents and other underrepresented groups. This approach will help ensure housing services and future development are shaped by lived experience and delivered in a fair, inclusive and accountable way.

Strategic Context and Needs

National Policy and Legislative Framework

This Housing Strategy is underpinned by the national statutory and regulatory framework that sets out the Council's duties as a local housing authority and social landlord. These include responsibilities for homelessness prevention and relief, the allocation of social housing, enforcement of housing standards, and ensuring the condition and safety of homes.

The legislative context has evolved in recent years, with a stronger focus on resident safety, consumer standards and tenant rights. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 strengthened consumer regulation for registered providers (RPs), including local authorities. From April 2024, the Regulator of Social Housing began routine inspections of large landlords, assessing compliance with consumer standards,

tenant satisfaction and overall service performance. The Act also supports the implementation of Awaab's Law, requiring social landlords to address serious hazards, including damp and mould, within prescribed timescales.

The Building Safety Act 2022 introduced stronger duties for the management of higher-risk residential buildings (over 18 metres or seven storeys), including registration with the Building Safety Regulator and the maintenance of safety case information. These requirements complement duties under the Fire Safety Act 2021, which strengthened fire risk assessment requirements for structural elements and common parts, including cladding, balconies and entrance doors.

The Housing Acts 1985, 1996 and 2004 continue to provide the legislative basis for tenancy management, allocations, homelessness duties and enforcement action to address poor housing conditions. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced duties to prevent and relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants. The Equality Act 2010 applies across housing services and requires the Council to have due regard to eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity.

The Strategy also reflects national reforms affecting private renters, including the Renters' Rights Act 2025, which proposes major changes to private renting, including the removal of Section 21 'no-fault' evictions, the move to periodic tenancies, and strengthened standards and routes to redress. The Council will continue to monitor legislative change and ensure local approaches to advice, enforcement and prevention remain aligned with national requirements.

This Strategy sets out how the Council will meet these duties in practice, ensuring homes are safe, decent and accessible, and that services uphold residents' rights while acting early to prevent housing need from escalating.

Regional Context

The Council's approach to housing is shaped by regional policy, especially the London Plan 2021, which assigns the borough one of the highest housing delivery targets in the capital, 1,944 homes per year. The London Plan embeds a city-wide ambition that 50% of all new homes should be affordable, with the fast-track planning route made available to schemes meeting minimum thresholds of 35% affordable housing (or 50% on public land).

This is supported by the Greater London Authority (GLA) Affordable Homes Programme (2021-2026), which provides capital grants to deliver genuinely affordable homes. The council, through Be First Ltd, has secured funding through this programme for council-led developments at Social Rent levels, and is frequently cited as London's biggest council housebuilder, delivering around 20% of all new council homes in the capital in recent years.

Regional guidance also includes the Mayor’s London Housing Strategy, which outlines strategic priorities across supply, safety, affordability and tenant engagement. The GLA also supports coordinated approaches to reducing rough sleeping and improving housing standards through sub-regional initiatives and specialist funding. The Council contributes to these regional goals through both policy alignment and active delivery.

Local Context and Evidence of Need



Barking and Dagenham’s population grew by 17.7% between 2011 and 2021, from just over 185,900 to around 218,900 residents, the third largest percentage increase of any local authority in England over that period. ONS mid-2024 estimates put the population at around 233,000, with further significant growth projected into the early 2030s. Around 25% of residents are aged under 16, the highest proportion of any local authority in England and Wales.



There is also a growing need for housing that supports older and disabled residents. Around 18% of Barking and Dagenham’s population lives with a long-term illness or disability that limits their daily activities, and the number of residents aged 65 and over is projected to rise significantly in the coming years. This will increase demand for accessible and specialist housing, including homes adapted for wheelchair users and people with mobility or sensory impairments, and supported living schemes for residents with care needs. Ensuring new and existing homes are suitable for disabled people is crucial to enabling residents to live safely and independently.



Barking and Dagenham is one of the most deprived boroughs in England and experiences some of the poorest health outcomes in London. The under-75 premature mortality rate for Barking and Dagenham is the highest of all London boroughs and is significantly above the England average. High levels of deprivation and associated inequalities mean many residents face daily challenges that good quality, affordable housing can help to address. Child poverty and fuel poverty remain widespread, underscoring the need for housing solutions that improve living conditions and reduce costs for low-income households.



At the same time, affordability pressures persist. While house prices remain lower than the London average, the gap between local incomes and housing costs is widening. According to the latest ONS data, the median house price in Barking and Dagenham was £370,000 in the year ending March 2025, and is now around 9.6 times median gross annual earnings. In the private rented sector, rents continue to rise, placing increasing pressure on lower-income households.



Demand for affordable housing far exceeds supply. As of 2025, over 6,300 households are on the borough's social housing register, and more than 1,000 households are living in temporary accommodation, many for more than a year. The housing stock is ageing, with roughly 90% of council social housing built before the 1970s.



Council residents also experience severe overcrowding, with around 18% of households, almost one in five, living in homes with fewer bedrooms than they need, one of the highest rates in England and Wales. Overcrowding particularly affects families with children and can negatively impact health, education and overall wellbeing. This underlines the importance of developing a range of housing solutions, including better use of existing stock and targeted support for overcrowded households, so that families can move into accommodation that meets their needs.

In this context, there is a clear and urgent need to:

- Deliver more affordable homes, particularly Social Rent
- Prevent homelessness through early intervention and sustainable housing options
- Invest in stock condition and building safety
- Expand accessible and specialist housing for residents with support needs
- Strengthen resident engagement and communication to ensure housing services are accessible, responsive, and informed by lived experience
- Promote inclusive neighbourhoods through design, management and partnership working, supporting wellbeing, community safety and community cohesion

Resident engagement exercises in 2025 confirmed the Strategy's priorities. Residents consistently highlighted the need for genuinely affordable housing, safer and better-maintained homes, and greater opportunities to shape how housing services are delivered. Specific concerns raised included delays in repairs, persistent

damp and mould issues, and difficulties in accessing suitable housing for disabled residents. These insights have directly shaped the Strategy, reinforcing the focus on accessibility, safety, service quality, and ensuring that residents have a stronger voice in decision-making.

Lessons Learned from the Interim Strategy (2025-2026)

The Interim Housing Strategy provided a vital transition between the Council's previous Housing Strategy (2012-17) and this new framework. It enabled the Council to act quickly on urgent issues while embedding stronger data, resident engagement and partnership working.

Key progress included:

- Strengthening homelessness prevention, with a shift towards earlier intervention and support
- Expanding the role of tenant voice through consultation, forums and early-stage co-production

However, several gaps were also identified:

- Accessible homes - the supply of accessible and adapted housing remains insufficient, and there is a need to increase the number of homes that are suitable for disabled residents
- Pathways for vulnerable residents - routes into the right type of housing for vulnerable residents, including those with care and support needs, are not always clear or consistent and need to be strengthened.

These lessons have directly shaped the Housing Strategy 2026-31. The Strategy includes clear commitments to increase the supply of accessible and adapted homes, to strengthen and clarify housing pathways for vulnerable residents, and to continue embedding a stronger prevention-first approach to homelessness so that fewer households reach crisis.

Opportunities and Enablers

Barking and Dagenham is well placed to deliver transformational housing outcomes over the next five years. The following opportunities and enablers will support delivery of the Housing Strategy 2026-2031:

1. Development Pipeline and Construction Innovation

The borough has a significant housing development pipeline, led by regeneration schemes delivered through Be First Ltd, the Council's regeneration company:

- To accelerate delivery and improve environmental standards, the Council will assess the viability of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), including modular approaches. A dedicated MMC programme will be developed to support this work.
- In parallel, new partnerships with housing associations, coordinated through the RP Forum, will help expand the supply of affordable homes across the borough during the Strategy period.

2. Council-Owned Delivery Companies

The Council's wholly owned companies provide direct capacity to deliver, manage, and maintain housing. For example:

- Be First Ltd leads the delivery of the Council's housing pipeline
- Reside manages the borough's growing portfolio of affordable and intermediate homes, with 70% of lettings going to existing borough residents.
- BDMS Ltd delivers maintenance services to improve the quality of council housing.
- B&D Energy Ltd is expanding the district heating network, aiming to increase the number of connected homes from 2,616 to around 7,188 by 2030.

These delivery vehicles enable coordinated, large-scale action aligned with council priorities.

3. Partnership Working

The Council is strengthening partnerships with housing associations, developers, and the voluntary and community sector to support more coordinated and community-focused service delivery. For example:

- Through the evolving Neighbourhood Model, these partnerships will help align activity across housing, health, employment, and support services at a local level.
- The RP Forum enables collaboration on housing delivery, while community-led housing is supported through access to suitable council-owned land and co-design processes.
- The Council also works with organisations such as Beam, which supported 20 local families into private rented homes between January and June 2025.

These partnerships enhance collective efforts to improve outcomes and promote inclusive, place-based working.

4. Targeted Housing Interventions

A range of targeted initiatives is being introduced to make better use of the existing housing stock. For example:

- A Large Families Taskforce will support overcrowded households in finding suitable housing solutions, including helping older family members move into smaller homes.
- The Council is also promoting rightsizing for under-occupying tenants, returning empty homes to use, and supporting developments on infill sites

These actions increase the availability of homes and reduce pressure on the most in-demand stock.

5. Quality, Safety and Energy Efficiency

Investment in housing quality is a key enabler. For example:

- A borough-wide energy retrofit programme aims to upgrade 3,500 council homes by 2028.
- A stock condition survey will inform future maintenance planning.
- Safety is being strengthened through a zero-tolerance approach to risks such as fire hazards and damp, backed by inspection regimes and improved data use.

These programmes ensure that homes meet modern standards and support wider health and sustainability goals.

6. Integrated Support for Residents

The Council is working with health and care partners to provide coordinated housing-related support, particularly for vulnerable residents. For example:

- Multi-agency protocols are in place to improve tenancy sustainment for residents with complex needs.
- The Council is also working with the Safeguarding Adults Board to strengthen policy and practice to protect at-risk tenants.

By embedding support and safeguarding across housing services, the Council is creating the conditions for stable, long-term tenancies and improved resident outcomes. Together, these enablers equip the Council to take a proactive role in shaping the housing system and to deliver the Housing Strategy 2026-2031 in a focused, effective and accountable way.

Housing Supply and Place-Making

Strategic Approach to Housing Supply and Place Making

Barking and Dagenham faces both a pressing need and a significant opportunity to deliver new homes at scale. To meet the demands of a growing, young population and to address acute housing need, the Council, with Be First Ltd, will take a proactive, planned and partnership-based approach to increasing housing supply. The Council will work with the private sector and registered providers (RPs) to prioritise the delivery of new housing that provides a balanced and diverse tenure mix, ensuring that new development supports sustainable, resilient and inclusive communities and responds to market demand.

Delivery Targets and Annual Trajectory

The borough's housing delivery target, set by the London Plan 2021, is 1,944 homes annually. The Local Plan (2020-2037) aims to deliver at least 38,864 new homes during the plan period. Delivery is expected to increase gradually, reaching around 2,100 homes per year in the late 2020s to offset previous shortfalls and accommodate new opportunities in major growth areas.

To ensure delivery aligns with local housing needs, the Council will update its Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) by the end of 2026 and every four years thereafter. The updated evidence base will inform tenure mix and affordability targets across all housing programmes.

Pipeline and Land Strategy

New housing will be delivered through a borough-wide pipeline of strategic sites, with a focus on regenerating brownfield land and underutilised sites. Growth in Barking and Dagenham will be concentrated in the Transformation Areas identified in the Local Plan. These include Barking Town Centre, Barking Riverside, Thames Road, Dagenham Heathway and Beam Park. These sites are the foundation for delivering new homes, supported by comprehensive planning policy and infrastructure investment.

The Council, working with Be First Ltd, will consider how to bring forward underutilised infill sites - including disused garage plots.

High Quality Homes and Neighbourhoods

All new housing will meet or exceed national and local standards for space, safety and energy efficiency. Developments will comply with the Local Plan, with at least

10% of new homes delivered to wheelchair-accessible standard M4(3) and the remainder to accessible and adaptable standard M4(2).

Good design and placemaking are core priorities. New neighbourhoods will be integrated with transport, open space and essential services from the outset. Infrastructure requirements will be identified through the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and secured through planning agreements and developer contributions. Secure by Design principles will be embedded in all council-led schemes.

Partnership Delivery Arrangements

The Council, working in partnership with Be First Ltd, will collaborate with RPs, developers and local communities to deliver high-quality homes across the borough. Through the Barking Investment Partnership, the Council and Be First Ltd will continue to work with private sector partners to secure external funding and investment to support regeneration and housing delivery. A new RP Forum will strengthen coordination and partnership working to support the delivery of affordable housing, while joint ventures will be used where appropriate to unlock and redevelop complex or large-scale sites. Reside, alongside other RPs, will manage the borough's growing portfolio of affordable and intermediate homes, supporting effective tenancy management and the ongoing management of homes and services over the longer term.

Community-led housing models will also be considered in the delivery plan, with opportunities to bring forward any suitable council-owned sites identified through co-design processes.

Tenure Mix

All new developments must contribute to a balanced and inclusive housing market. The Council has a strategic target of 50% affordable housing across new development, with the remaining homes provided for sale or rent at market rates. In line with Policy DMH 1 of the Local Plan, the Council expects the following affordable tenure split:

- 50% of affordable homes at Social Rent
- 50% intermediate housing, such as London Living Rent

In addition to Local Plan requirements, the London Plan sets out the following expectations:

- For major developments, a minimum of 35% affordable housing should be provided on-site

- For schemes on public land and designated industrial sites, a minimum of 50% affordable housing should be provided

Schemes that fall below these thresholds will be subject to a viability review. Each scheme's tenure mix will be assessed during the planning process to ensure it meets local needs and supports mixed-income communities, while taking relevant planning considerations into account.

Once updated, the SHMA will also consider demographic trends and localised housing need across tenures, informing future tenure mix set out within planning policy and the assessment of planning applications. It will also consider emerging and alternative tenure types, such as key worker rental, build-to-rent, student accommodation and co-living, ensuring that the borough's housing offer supports the growing population of young people, enables inclusive and economically vibrant communities, and responds to market demand.

Through sustained leadership, long-term planning and effective partnerships, the Council, with Be First Ltd, will meet its strategic housing targets and ensure new developments support safe, sustainable and inclusive neighbourhoods. By aligning supply with local needs, embedding quality and infrastructure in every scheme, and prioritising affordability, the Housing Strategy 2026-31 will ensure that growth directly benefits Barking and Dagenham's residents.



Be First Ltd is proud to have delivered Farrimond House as part of the third phase of the Gascoigne Estate Renewal Programme. This scheme provides 90 high-quality homes arranged around a welcoming courtyard, designed to foster a sense of community for our residents. All homes have been allocated to those on the Housing Register, supporting local people in need of affordable housing.

Housing Affordability

Affordability Pressures and Resident Feedback

Housing affordability remains one of the most significant challenges facing Barking and Dagenham. The cost of renting across all tenures has risen faster than local incomes, intensifying the affordability gap for many households. This continues to drive high demand for genuinely affordable homes and contributes to sustained pressure on the housing register and on the use of temporary accommodation (TA).

Consultation undertaken to inform the Housing Strategy has reinforced these concerns. Residents consistently highlighted the shortage of social housing and reported that affordable rents remain out of reach for many local households. Younger residents in particular raised concerns that rising private rents and house prices are increasingly limiting their ability to remain in the borough. Feedback also indicated a perception that new housing development does not sufficiently prioritise local people or households on low incomes.

This strategy responds to those concerns through a series of policy commitments designed to secure the delivery of genuinely affordable homes, prioritise low-cost rent, and enable a more inclusive mix of tenures across the borough.

1. Apply a Borough-Wide 50% Affordable Housing Target

The Council applies a borough-wide strategic target that 50% of all new homes be delivered as affordable housing, in line with the London Plan and the Local Plan. This target is considered alongside scheme viability and developer contributions. For major developments, at least 35% on-site affordable housing is required to benefit from the Mayor of London's fast-track viability route, rising to 50% on council-owned or former industrial sites. However, under the proposed emergency measures to support housebuilding in London, this requirement would be temporarily reduced to 20% in certain qualifying cases. Schemes that do not meet these levels will be subject to viability testing and review to secure the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing. Through its planning powers, including the Be First Ltd development programme, which is currently delivering around 78% affordable homes, the Council will continue to prioritise genuinely affordable housing.

2. Prioritise Social Rent

To respond to the borough's most acute housing need, the Council will prioritise the delivery of genuinely affordable, low-cost rented homes that are aligned with local incomes. In line with the Local Plan, at least 50% of new affordable homes will be provided at Social Rent. This tenure will be prioritised on council-owned land and secured through Section 106

agreements wherever possible, to maximise delivery and ensure homes remain affordable for households in greatest need over the long term.

3. Support a Balanced Tenure Mix and Pathways to Ownership

The Council recognises the importance of providing a range of housing options to meet diverse needs. Alongside Social Rent, the Council will support the delivery of intermediate housing products, including shared ownership, London Living Rent and other low-cost home ownership models. These options are intended for households that cannot access social housing but cannot afford market rents or buy on the open market. Where appropriate, the Council will explore opportunities for housing for key workers and community-led housing models, including co-operatives and community land trusts, particularly on council-owned sites where this is deliverable. The tenure mix on individual sites should reflect local housing needs and support the creation of sustainable, inclusive communities.

4. Maximise Delivery Through Partnership

The Council, with Be First Ltd, will continue to work with registered providers (RPs) through the borough's RP Forum to accelerate the delivery of affordable housing. Delivery mechanisms may include joint ventures, land assembly and the effective use of council-owned land. Reside and other RP partners will manage a growing portfolio of affordable and intermediate homes. The Council will ensure that new homes deliver clear benefits for local people. To date, around 70% of Reside lettings have gone to households already living in Barking and Dagenham, and local lettings approaches will be used, where appropriate, to maintain a strong focus on existing residents. Delivery partners will be expected to support the Council's ambitions on affordability, tenure mix and quality, in line with borough needs.

Taken together, these commitments provide a clear framework for increasing the supply of genuinely affordable homes in Barking and Dagenham. By setting a borough-wide affordable housing target, prioritising Social Rent, supporting a balanced mix of tenures, and working closely with delivery partners, the Council will seek to ensure that new development directly benefits local residents and responds to identified needs. This approach will help reduce reliance on TA, improve access to secure, affordable homes, and support the creation of mixed, sustainable communities across the borough.

Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping

Our Commitment to Preventing Homelessness

The Council is committed to ensuring that no one needs to experience homelessness or sleep rough in the borough. This section of the Housing Strategy 2026-2031 sets out how the Council will work proactively with partners to prevent homelessness at the earliest stage and support those at risk with secure housing solutions. The overarching goal is to prevent rough sleeping. In practice, this means strengthening early intervention, protecting vulnerable households before they reach crisis point, and coordinating services so that residents receive help before their situation escalates into homelessness. By focusing on prevention and collaboration, the Council aims to reduce instability in communities and ensure everyone can access a safe, stable home.

Prevention and Early Intervention Model

Preventing homelessness before it happens is the cornerstone of the Council's approach. Early intervention measures will be strengthened so that problems are addressed well before reaching crisis point. The Council will expand access to housing advice and support at the local neighbourhood level, making it easier for residents to get help in their own communities. Through the evolving Neighbourhood Model, housing officers will work closely with local partners to offer timely, tailored advice. For example, local hubs will have a homelessness prevention officer who provides guidance on tenancy sustainment, benefits and legal rights. This neighbourhood approach will ensure advice and support are better coordinated at a local level, responsive to local need, and easier to access within communities, so that residents can resolve issues early without needing to approach the Council in crisis.

A key part of this prevention model is identifying households at risk and intervening early with personalised support. The Council will dedicate more specialist homelessness prevention officers to provide early advice and targeted signposting for at-risk families. These officers will support households as soon as warning signs appear, for instance, rent arrears, family breakdown or landlord notices and help resolve problems before an eviction or homelessness occurs. Working hand in hand with landlords, housing providers and organisations such as BEAM, a social enterprise that provides tailored support for residents at risk of or experiencing homelessness, the Council will mediate disputes and prevent evictions wherever possible, keeping families in their homes. By enabling early help, strengthening tenancy support and streamlining access to services, the Council's prevention-first approach will mean fewer people face the trauma of homelessness. Embedding a

culture of early intervention and prevention at the first point of contact will ensure that most housing issues can be resolved before they escalate into crisis.

Support for Higher Risk Groups

The Council recognises that certain groups of residents are at higher risk of homelessness and may require more intensive support. In particular, young people leaving care, survivors of domestic abuse, and people with complex needs such as serious mental health or substance misuse challenges often face unique barriers in securing and sustaining housing.

The Council will provide tailored support pathways for these vulnerable groups to ensure they do not slip through the net. For example, care leavers will receive enhanced support as they transition to independent living. The Council will work with children's services to secure appropriate housing and ongoing tenancy support, ensuring young people leaving care have a stable start and are not left without a home. Survivors of domestic abuse will be offered safe and suitable accommodation alongside specialist support services, so that fleeing an abusive relationship does not result in homelessness. The Council will continue to strengthen its safe accommodation provision in line with national requirements, ensuring those escaping abuse can quickly access a secure home and support for recovery.

The Council is also committed to supporting residents with extremely limited options, including those with no recourse to public funds. Although statutory support for this group is constrained, the Council will work in partnership with voluntary and faith-based organisations, such as The Source, which provides day-centre facilities, food and essential items, and wellbeing support for people experiencing hardship. Through these partnerships, cases will be thoroughly assessed, and individuals will be referred promptly to appropriate healthcare, legal advice, charitable assistance, and, where possible, housing options. This coordinated, multi-agency approach is particularly important for residents who are unable to access mainstream welfare benefits or statutory housing assistance.

Similarly, residents with multiple and complex needs will be supported through a coordinated, person-centred plan. Many individuals sleeping rough or living in temporary accommodation (TA) have overlapping needs, including mental health issues, substance dependencies or physical health problems, which make it harder for them to engage with services. Working with the NHS, the Council will ensure that such residents receive comprehensive assessments and referrals to appropriate support, such as healthcare, while addressing their housing needs. By adopting a holistic, multi-agency support model, the Council and its partners will support higher-risk groups and ensure the most vulnerable members of our community receive focused support, improving their health outcomes while the Council seeks sustainable housing solutions and prevents crisis.

Approach to Temporary Accommodation

The Council is committed to improving both the quality and use of TA for households experiencing homelessness. While TA is intended as a short-term safety net, sustained housing pressures have led to a significant increase in its use. As of mid-2025, over 1,000 local households were in temporary accommodation, including families placed in bed-and-breakfast (B&B) hotels, which are not suitable for prolonged stays, particularly for families with children.

This Strategy prioritises reducing the use of B&Bs and improving overall TA provision. The Council will focus on strengthening early intervention and prevention services to reduce the number of households entering TA. Where placement is unavoidable, the Council will aim to minimise the length of stay and ensure that accommodation is high-quality, safe and appropriate for residents' needs.

Improvements will be achieved through closer partnerships with providers and landlords, including expanding private-sector leasing arrangements. The Council will carry out regular inspections and monitoring to uphold standards and will increase its in-house provision to reduce reliance on unsuitable B&B accommodation. A key objective is to ensure B&B placements are only used as a last resort in emergencies.

As part of this approach, the Council is increasing staffing capacity in its prevention and tenancy sustainment roles and strengthening its supply of temporary homes. These actions will reduce the need for B&B use and enable faster move-on to settled accommodation. The long-term ambition is to end the use of B&Bs for homeless families, ensuring that even in crisis, residents are supported with safe, self-contained housing.

Rough Sleeping Reduction and Housing First Pathways

Eradicating rough sleeping is a top priority for the Council. The vision is that no one should have to sleep rough on our streets, and anyone at risk will be quickly identified and supported. To achieve this, outreach teams will continue to engage daily with people sleeping rough, building trust, verifying needs and connecting individuals with shelter and services.

Given that many rough sleepers have complex needs and limited access to public funds, the Council's approach is multi-disciplinary. Outreach teams will work closely with health professionals, social workers, and addiction specialists to ensure that each person can access rapid referrals to health care, mental health and substance misuse services, as well as specialist housing advice. This comprehensive assessment process addresses the root causes of rough sleeping, not only the lack of housing but also the personal issues that contribute to long-term street homelessness.

Coordinated partnership working is central to reducing rough sleeping. The Council's dedicated rough sleeping coordinator leads collaboration with local shelters, faith and community groups, and voluntary sector partners to ensure that anyone found sleeping rough receives timely help. Multi-agency working will support individuals with complex needs, ensuring nobody falls through the cracks. The Council will continue to conduct annual rough sleeper counts and use this data to inform targeted interventions, directing resources where they are most needed.

Recent initiatives have demonstrated the success of this approach. In a five-month period during 2025, outreach and support services helped dozens of people move from rough sleeping into private rented homes. Building on these positive outcomes, the Council is intensifying efforts to end rough sleeping for good.

A flagship commitment of this Strategy is the pilot of a Housing First model to tackle entrenched rough sleeping. Housing First places rough sleepers directly into permanent, self-contained housing as the first step, rather than requiring them to progress through hostels or TA. It then provides intensive, ongoing support to help them sustain their tenancy. The Council will pilot a Housing First programme to rapidly rehouse rough sleepers into permanent accommodation with wraparound support to address their needs. This means individuals with long histories of rough sleeping or repeated shelter use will be offered a stable home as the foundation for rebuilding their lives, accompanied by personalised support such as counselling, life skills training and employment advice. Housing First placements will focus on residents with the most complex needs, those who have struggled to engage with traditional services, including people with chronic health conditions or long periods of street homelessness.

Alongside Housing First, the Council will maintain a range of pathways to support rough sleepers, including emergency accommodation for those in immediate crisis and supported housing for residents who need a stepping stone before living independently. Through our outreach work, coordinated partnerships and the Housing First model, the Council is committed to making rough sleeping rare and non-recurrent, moving towards a borough where no one is left without a safe home.

Tenancy Sustainment and Repeat Homelessness Prevention

Preventing homelessness is not only about early intervention before a crisis but also about what happens after a household has been rehoused. The Council is placing a strong emphasis on tenancy sustainment, helping residents keep their homes in the long term, as a critical part of breaking the cycle of repeat homelessness. Once individuals or families move into a new home, support does not end there.

The Strategy sets out plans to expand wraparound tenancy support services to ensure that newly housed residents can maintain their tenancies and avoid repeat homelessness. This includes ongoing advice, visits and check-ins, and rapid help if any issues arise that might put a tenancy at risk. For example, if a household begins to struggle with rent payments, the Council will intervene early with tailored financial advice and budgeting support, and work out solutions such as affordable repayment plans or referrals to welfare benefits advice. If a tenant faces difficulties due to health problems or disability, housing officers will coordinate with Adult Social Care and health services to arrange adaptations or in-home support. This proactive, supportive approach ensures problems are addressed before they lead to a tenancy failing.

The Council is strengthening and coordinating wraparound services to address the underlying factors that can lead to tenancy breakdown. Housing is working in partnership with the NHS, Adult and Children's Social Care and other local services. Tenants will receive holistic, person-centred support that links housing stability with health and wellbeing. Through the Housing and Care Board and the evolving Neighbourhood Model, housing services will work closely with health and social care professionals to provide joined-up assistance for vulnerable residents. This coordinated approach ensures that issues such as mental ill health, substance misuse or chronic illness, which can place tenancies at risk if unmanaged, are addressed alongside housing needs.

The Council is also strengthening links between housing and employment skills to promote financial resilience. By helping tenants to develop skills and secure work, housing services aim to support sustained income growth and long-term tenancy stability. Partnerships with the voluntary and community sector remain central to this approach. Building on this success, housing services will formalise and expand such partnerships to provide tailored wraparound support, including mentoring, employment coaching and legal advice, for residents who need it most.

The Council is committed to preventing repeat homelessness by ensuring that, once residents are rehoused, they are supported to sustain their tenancies and do not need to return for homelessness assistance. Strong prevention work already means that most cases are resolved before homelessness occurs. Building on this, housing services will extend support beyond rehousing to promote long-term stability. This will include monitoring new tenancies in the early months, providing rapid assistance when risks emerge, and offering practical support to strengthen tenancy management skills such as budgeting and household maintenance.

By expanding tenancy sustainment programmes and wraparound support, the Council aims to reduce tenancy failure, prevent repeat homelessness and help residents maintain secure, lasting homes. Over the life of the Strategy, this outcome-focused approach will lead to fewer evictions, fewer repeat homelessness cases and stronger, more resilient communities.

Quality, Safety and Compliance

Asset Management and Planned Investment

The Council is committed to ensuring that all council-owned homes are safe, decent and well-maintained. A borough-wide stock condition survey is underway to assess the condition of the Council's housing, with 39% of homes already surveyed as of November 2025. The programme will be completed by 2027 and will provide a robust evidence base to inform long-term asset management and a planned maintenance programme for all council-owned homes.

The survey findings will support a shift from predominantly reactive repairs to a structured, planned programme of investment and improvement. From 2028, the Council will implement a planned maintenance programme to replace key building components, refurbish homes and deliver estate-wide improvements, with a clear focus on resident safety, statutory compliance and improved energy performance.

As at Q2 2025/26, 9.2% of council homes are recorded as not meeting the Decent Homes Standard, unchanged from 2024/25. The Council's objective is for all homes to meet or exceed the Decent Homes Standard, and progress will be monitored through year-on-year performance reporting. Alongside wider investment in improvements to council-owned housing, the Council will deliver targeted measures to improve energy efficiency and support warmer, more sustainable homes.

Repairs and Maintenance Standards

Improving the quality, consistency and timeliness of repairs is a priority for the Council. We will strengthen how repair services are managed and monitored, with a sharper focus on response times, completion rates, first-time-fix performance, and resident satisfaction. A revised performance framework will support regular monitoring and transparent reporting, helping to drive improvement in day-to-day delivery.

The service will place greater emphasis on planned and preventative maintenance to reduce avoidable failures and improve outcomes for residents. Where responsive repairs are required, works will be completed to a high standard and within agreed timescales. The Council aims to complete emergency repairs within 24 hours; however, performance declined in 2025/26 and requires improvement. As of Q3 2025/26, 91.4% of emergency responsive repairs were completed within target timescales, compared with 93.01% in 2024/25. For non-emergency repairs, performance improved to 92.96%, up from 89.8% in the previous year. The Council will focus on improving emergency repairs performance and sustaining improvements in non-emergency repairs.

The latest Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) results indicate an increase in reported satisfaction with the repairs service. In 2024/25, 63% of tenants who had a repair in the previous 12 months reported being satisfied with the overall service; this increased to 67.7% in 2025/26. Satisfaction with the time taken to complete repairs also improved over the same period, rising from 60% to 67.6%.

However, these year-on-year changes should be interpreted with caution. The uplift is mainly attributable to a change in survey methodology, with TSM interviews now undertaken by telephone in line with approaches used by other boroughs. While this strengthens comparability, it limits the extent to which the results can be treated as a direct measure of service improvement.

The Council remains committed to strengthening the repairs service so that repairs are completed promptly, safely and to a high standard. Future improvements in tenant satisfaction will be driven by sustained performance improvements across the repairs function, supported by strengthened contractor management, clearer standards and ongoing monitoring.

Building and Fire Safety Compliance

Ensuring the safety of residents and full compliance with regulatory requirements is a core responsibility of the Council. The Council is compliant with the Fire Safety Act 2021 and the Building Safety Act 2022 and operates a borough-wide programme of statutory checks across the six “FLAGEL” areas: fire, legionella, asbestos, gas, electrical and lifts. All high-rise council housing buildings are registered with the Building Safety Regulator, and the Council will continue to ensure compliance with all requirements for higher-risk buildings. As of November 2025, statutory safety compliance stands at 100% for gas safety and asbestos, 96% for lifts and fire safety, and 98% for electrical testing and legionella.

A Higher Risk and Complex Buildings Resident Engagement Strategy (2025-27) has been developed to strengthen resident involvement in building safety. This Strategy ensures that residents are informed about the safety features and management arrangements for their buildings and supports the “golden thread” of information principles set out in the Building Safety Act.

To meet duties under Awaab’s Law, the Council has implemented clear procedures for identifying and addressing damp and mould. Triage, inspection and escalation pathways are in place to ensure all reported cases are investigated and resolved within statutory timescales. A zero-tolerance approach has been adopted, supported by increased investment to tackle damp and mould issues across the borough, and residents are kept informed throughout the process.

Resident Involvement and Assurance

The Council uses the new statutory TSMs to drive improvement and transparency. The Council is committed to meeting or exceeding national performance benchmarks on these measures. Results will be published annually so that residents can scrutinise performance and hold the Council to account for the quality of housing services.

Residents are at the heart of the Council's continuous improvement efforts. Complaints and feedback from tenants inform staff training, contractor performance reviews and policy updates, helping to shape services around residents' needs. The Council will establish and maintain a Tenant Complaints Panel, comprising a diverse group of tenants, to co-design and oversee ongoing improvements to the complaints process.

Alongside this, the Council will continue to strengthen its resident engagement channels, including the Resident Board, Resident Scrutiny Group, neighbourhood walkabouts, community listening events and digital engagement platforms. These channels ensure that tenants have clear and meaningful opportunities to influence how services are delivered. Together, these engagement and oversight arrangements assure that housing services are safe, responsive and focused on residents' needs.

Private Rented Sector Standards

Local Context

The private rented sector (PRS) plays an increasingly significant role in meeting housing need in Barking and Dagenham. It provides homes for thousands of residents, including households that are not eligible for social housing and those unable to access home ownership. However, the quality, security and affordability of PRS housing vary considerably. While many landlords provide well-managed accommodation, the Council's 2025 resident consultation highlighted persistent concerns about rising rents, housing insecurity, poor property conditions and instances of illegal eviction in the PRS. These issues particularly affect lower-income households and contribute to wider inequalities.

The Council is committed to using all available powers and partnerships to raise standards in the PRS. Our approach aligns with borough-wide priorities on safety, prevention, neighbourhood stability and reducing housing-related poverty. This includes preparing for and implementing national reforms to the PRS introduced through the Renters' Rights Act 2025, which will abolish Section 21 "no-fault"

evictions, move tenancies onto open-ended periodic agreements, restrict rent increases to once per year and strengthen protections against unfair practices.

Licensing Coverage and Enforcement

The Council operates a borough-wide property licensing scheme, covering all privately rented homes in Barking and Dagenham. This comprehensive framework enables a more consistent approach to monitoring property standards, supports compliance, and addresses unacceptable landlord practices. Licensing assessments include checks on essential housing conditions and management arrangements, and properties must meet defined minimum standards before a licence is granted.

Enforcement is a core part of the Council's regulatory role. Officers will carry out inspections and respond promptly to complaints, using powers under the Housing Act 2004 to identify and address serious hazards, such as damp and mould, fire risks, and unsafe electrical systems. A new triage system will enable tenants to report concerns online, supported by photographic or video evidence, so that officers can assess and prioritise the most urgent cases. Where Category 1 hazards are identified, which are serious risks to the health or safety of occupants as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System under the Housing Act 2004, the Council will take swift enforcement action, including issuing improvement notices, imposing civil penalties or pursuing prosecution where appropriate.

The Council aims to eliminate all Category 1 hazards in private rented properties by 2027 and sustain this standard thereafter. High-risk Houses in Multiple Occupation will continue to be covered by the licensing system, with enforcement targeted towards neighbourhoods where poor housing conditions are concentrated. Responsible landlords will be encouraged through positive incentives, including potential discounts on licence fees for consistently high standards.

Landlord Engagement and Support

Improving PRS standards requires not only strong regulation but also engagement with landlords. Many landlords in the borough are committed to providing good-quality homes, and the Council will offer a structured programme of support to help them understand and meet their responsibilities.

A newly appointed Tenancy Sustainment Officer will lead this engagement, including the relaunch of quarterly landlord forums. These forums will provide opportunities for landlords to share experiences, receive updates on regulatory developments and hear from specialist speakers on effective property management practices. The forums will be complemented by a digital landlord portal that outlines licensing requirements, compliance expectations and best practices. The Council will continue

to promote a culture of compliance by recognising landlords who demonstrate a strong commitment to tenant safety and service quality.

Tenant Rights, Advice and Protection

Private tenants must have clear, accessible information about their rights and the support available when problems arise. Many residents report uncertainty about what constitutes disrepair and how to respond safely when they experience harassment or are at risk of illegal eviction.

To address this, the Council will deliver a borough-wide advice offer, including a weekly drop-in service delivered through local neighbourhood hubs. As the Neighbourhood Model continues to evolve, the Council will use learning from early delivery to refine locations, capacity, and referral pathways, ensuring support is accessible and targeted effectively. Sessions will provide tailored guidance on housing standards, tenant rights and responsibilities, and how to report concerns and access further support.

Alongside this in-person support, the Council will expand and improve digital information available on its housing website, including clear guidance on legal protections, minimum standards and the complaints process. Tenants will be encouraged to use the new online triage tool to report disrepair issues, supporting faster identification and resolution of the most significant risks. Cases requiring specialist intervention will be directed to enforcement teams or homelessness prevention services.

The Council will also strengthen its response to illegal evictions by formalising joint working protocols with the Police. This will ensure that such incidents are recognised and treated as criminal offences, with rapid, coordinated responses, including joint visits when appropriate. To raise awareness and prevent disputes from escalating, the Council will publish the Tenant and Landlord Guide by mid-2027. These resources will clarify rights, responsibilities and routes to redress.

Empty Homes and Short-Term Lets Monitoring

Returning empty homes to use is essential to increasing housing supply and supporting thriving neighbourhoods. The Council will deliver a borough-wide Empty Homes Programme to identify long-term vacant properties and work proactively with owners to bring them back into occupation. This may include financial incentives such as refurbishment grants or nomination agreements, enabling the Council to allocate tenants in return for providing support with renovation costs. Where owners fail to engage, the Council will use legal powers, including enforced sale and Empty Dwelling Management Orders, to ensure long-term vacant properties do not remain unused.

The growth of short-term and holiday lets in London has reduced the availability of longer-term rented housing in some areas. The Council will closely monitor local trends and apply all available measures, such as increased council tax premiums on second homes and long-term vacant properties, to discourage the loss of housing to short-term use. The Council will also support regional and national reforms to improve the regulation of the short-term letting sector.

By 2031, the Council is committed to delivering a safer, fairer and better-regulated PRS. Through strengthened licensing arrangements, targeted enforcement, proactive landlord engagement, enhanced tenant support and measures to maximise the use of available homes, the PRS will play a more constructive role in supporting housing quality, resident wellbeing and neighbourhood stability across Barking and Dagenham.

Climate, Energy and Resilience

Our approach to climate, energy and resilience

The Council is committed to improving the quality, thermal efficiency and resilience of homes across Barking and Dagenham. This approach aligns with the borough's developing manifesto, Mission Eight: Better homes, it starts here, which reinforces the Council's commitment to warm, safe and well-maintained homes as a foundation for wellbeing. Housing also contributes to the borough's ambition to be carbon-neutral by 2050, as set out in the Borough-wide Zero Carbon Roadmap. The Council will prioritise practical measures to improve energy efficiency, reduce emissions and energy costs, and ensure homes are better prepared for the impacts of a changing climate.

Improving Energy Efficiency in Existing Homes

The Council is delivering a major retrofit programme to upgrade the energy performance of council-owned homes. By 2028, around 3,500 council homes will have benefited from measures including insulation, improved ventilation, solar PV, battery storage and air-source heat pumps. This work will help raise the average EPC rating across our stock, aiming to bring most homes to EPC C or better over time.

Alongside improvements to council-owned homes, we will continue to raise standards in the private rented sector. Through the borough's licensing schemes and targeted inspections, we will require landlords to meet minimum energy-efficiency expectations and ensure homes are safe and healthy. Where landlords need support

to achieve compliance, we will offer guidance and signposting, including the opportunity to get part-grant funding, but the Council will take enforcement action where conditions fall below acceptable standards.

Homeowners will also have access to advice on energy use and retrofit options, including information on any relevant financial support. The Council has access to £3M of grant for eligible owner-occupied households to insulate their properties. We will prioritise outreach to low-income homeowners who may be disproportionately affected by rising energy costs and who stand to benefit most from improvements that help maintain independence and reduce bills.

Low-Carbon New Build

New development will play a key role in reducing emissions across the borough. In line with the Local Plan and the London Plan, major housing schemes are expected to be designed to achieve net-zero carbon. This means prioritising lean design, using low-carbon heating systems and incorporating on-site renewable energy wherever feasible. Any remaining regulated emissions must be addressed through local carbon offset arrangements.

New developments are expected to connect to local heat networks where these are available or planned. Where heat networks are not expected to become available, schemes should use low-carbon alternatives such as heat pumps. Given the need to move away from fossil fuels, gas boilers are expected to be no longer permitted in new residential developments under the Future Homes Standard. New developments delivered by the Council, with Be First Ltd, will continue to demonstrate good practice, building on work already underway in Barking Town Centre, Becontree Heath, and other growth areas that use low-carbon communal energy systems.

Fuel Poverty Reduction

Fuel poverty remains a significant issue for many residents. The Council will continue to target support at households facing the greatest pressures, working alongside national and regional programmes where appropriate. Advice on reducing energy costs, help accessing grants and support schemes, and targeted interventions for vulnerable households will form the core of this work.

Where retrofitting homes offers an opportunity to reduce bills for those in fuel poverty, this will be prioritised. Our progress will be monitored through reductions in fuel-poor households and improvements in residents' well-being.

Climate Adaptation, Green and Blue Infrastructure

The impacts of climate change, including more frequent heatwaves and increasing flood risk, mean that new and existing homes must be designed to be resilient. Planning policies require developments to demonstrate that they are safe from flooding and incorporate sustainable drainage measures. Development in known flood-risk areas will only be permitted where long-term safety can be clearly evidenced.

To address rising temperatures, new homes will need to minimise the risk of overheating. Developers will be expected to prioritise passive design measures such as orientation, shading and natural ventilation. Mechanical cooling will only be considered where adequate comfort levels cannot be achieved after maximising passive solutions, or due to constraints such as pre-existing high levels of noise or poor air quality that may limit opportunities for natural ventilation. Overheating assessments will be required for major schemes.

Green and blue infrastructure will remain central to our approach. New development will be expected to meet relevant Urban Greening Factor and Biodiversity Net Gain targets and contribute positively to the borough's network of green spaces, such as through species-rich planting, trees, green roofs and rain gardens. We will also continue to invest in borough-wide green and blue infrastructure, including wetland restoration, park improvements and street-tree planting, which support climate resilience while contributing to healthier neighbourhoods.

Through this combined programme of retrofit, fuel-poverty support, low-carbon construction and climate-resilient design, the Council will continue to reduce emissions, improve housing quality, and ensure that new development contributes to a greener, more resilient borough.

Accessible, Adapted and Supported Housing

Accessible and Inclusive New Housing Supply

The Council is committed to increasing the supply of accessible, adaptable and suitable homes to meet the needs of residents of all ages and abilities. As of June 2025, the Council manages more than 2,700 adapted homes. However, demand continues to outstrip supply, with around 370 households registered on the Accessible Housing Register.

All new housing developments will be required to meet high standards of inclusive design so that homes can respond to residents' changing needs over their lifetime. In

line with the Local Plan, at least 10% of new homes will be delivered to wheelchair-accessible standard M4(3), with all other new dwellings meeting the accessible and adaptable M4(2) standard. This will significantly expand the supply of suitable homes for disabled residents and those with mobility needs.

To further embed inclusive design, the Council will co-produce an Accessible Housing Design Code with disabled residents. This will help ensure that new developments create inclusive, age-friendly neighbourhoods and that developers consistently meet agreed standards. By designing homes to be accessible and adaptable from the outset, the Council will reduce the need for later retrofitting and better support residents' long-term independence, health and wellbeing.

Timely Adaptations and Independent Living Support

Supporting residents to live independently and safely at home remains a core priority for the Council. As of June 2025, around 500 council homes require adaptations to ensure they are accessible and suitable for the residents living there. Level-access showers are the most common requirement.

The Council will continue to deliver home adaptations so that properties remain suitable as residents' needs change. This includes minor and major adaptations such as grab rails, level-access showers, stairlifts and ramps. Through Disabled Facilities Grants and the Aids and Adaptations service, the Council will work to increase delivery capacity, improve end-to-end processes and reduce waiting times.

A preventive, early-intervention approach will be strengthened through the Behind Every Door programme. Housing officers will identify households with emerging mobility or care needs and coordinate appropriate support, working in partnership with Adult Social Care and health professionals. As of January 2026, 512 visits have been completed.

Performance will be monitored through agreed service standards and routine reporting, to complete urgent minor adaptations within weeks and deliver more complex works in line with nationally recommended timescales.

Specialist Housing and Supported Pathways for Vulnerable Residents

As of 2025, 2,742 council tenants have one or more recorded vulnerability indicators. The Council will ensure that residents with higher support needs, including older people, people with learning disabilities, people experiencing mental ill health and survivors of domestic abuse, can access safe, suitable housing alongside tailored support, delivered in partnership with health, social care and the voluntary and community sector.

To strengthen the evidence base and guide future provision, the Council will undertake a Older Persons' Housing Needs Assessment and publish a dedicated Older Persons' Housing Strategy. This will consider a range of housing models, including intergenerational living, bungalows, accessible ground-floor homes and care-ready accommodation.

Housing, Adult and Children's Social Care and health partners will work more closely to strengthen support pathways, including through joint commissioning of supported housing and more effective use of shared resources. The Housing and Care Board will provide strategic leadership and oversight. At the same time, the evolving Neighbourhood Model will support local, person-centred delivery in partnership with the NHS and voluntary and community sector organisations.

The Council will continue to meet its statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, including providing safe accommodation and specialist support, with a strong focus on early intervention and prevention. The Council will also expand partnerships with voluntary and community sector organisations to support more residents at risk of homelessness, building on existing work to help households secure and sustain stable homes, including in the private rented sector.

The Council will monitor delivery through agreed measures and resident feedback, with a focus on strengthening tenancy sustainment and increasing the number of residents able to live independently with the right housing and support in place.

Fair and Equitable Access to Adapted Housing

To ensure fairness and make the best use of available council housing, the Council will strengthen the allocation process for adapted and accessible homes. A borough-wide Accessible Housing Register will be launched by 2027, cataloguing all homes that have been adapted or built to accessibility standards. This will enable faster and more accurate matching of homes to residents with mobility or disability-related needs.

The Housing Allocations Policy is also being updated to strengthen prioritisation, enhance verification processes and ensure that adapted homes are allocated to residents who need them most. Improved data sharing with Adult and Children's Social Care, including through partnership working with the Safeguarding Adults Board, will support more coordinated responses in complex cases.

To expand the supply of suitable homes, all void properties, homes temporarily empty between tenancies, will be assessed for their adaptation potential. Where appropriate, improvements such as ramps, level-access showers, or other accessibility measures will be completed before the home is re-let and offered to a household with identified needs.

Progress will be monitored using indicators such as the number of adapted homes successfully matched to residents, average waiting times for accessible properties and tenant satisfaction. By 2031, the Council aims to have a more integrated system in which housing, health and care services work in partnership to ensure residents are housed appropriately, promptly and fairly.

These actions reflect the Council's wider ambition to ensure that accessible and adapted housing is delivered, allocated and supported in a way that is fair, timely and focused on achieving positive outcomes for residents with additional needs.

Resident Engagement and Co-Production



Embedding Resident Voice and Co-Production in Housing Services

The Council is committed to placing residents at the heart of housing services, embedding co-production and resident voice in all decision-making. A formal framework of engagement ensures that residents have structured opportunities to shape policy and scrutinise services. Key resident engagement structures and initiatives include:

Resident Board: A new Resident Board is being established as a high-level forum for residents to help shape service delivery and policy. Led by the Resident Safety and Engagement Team, the Board will enable residents to raise concerns, provide feedback, and contribute directly to housing decisions. It will act as a strategic consultative body, strengthening transparency and trust between the Council and its residents.

Resident Scrutiny Group: The Council will establish and maintain a Resident Scrutiny Group, comprising volunteers from the Resident Board, to co-produce housing policies and monitor the implementation of the Housing Strategy. This resident-led panel, which will reflect the borough's diversity, including young people, older residents, and other underrepresented groups, will meet quarterly to review service delivery, assess progress against

strategic priorities, and drive continuous improvement across housing services.

Community Engagement Events: The Council will continue to run regular ward walkabouts and community listening events. These initiatives invite residents to join councillors and officers as they walk their neighbourhoods to identify issues and discuss solutions. Community listening sessions will be held borough-wide as informal forums for residents to share their views directly with housing officers. Insights from these engagements will inform policy development and service delivery improvements, ensuring that day-to-day housing issues and local knowledge inform strategic decisions.

Young People's Housing Forum: In recognition of the need to engage younger residents, the Council will launch a Young People's Housing Forum. This forum will empower young tenants to shape housing policy and services. It will be actively facilitated with training and resources to enable meaningful participation and leadership development. The group will ensure the voices of young residents influence decisions on issues that affect them, such as housing options and tenancy support for new renters.

Lived Experience Panel: The Council will create a Lived Experience Panel comprising residents with disabilities and carers. This panel will inform a new Accessible Housing Design Code, ensuring inclusive design in new developments.

Through these structures, resident engagement is formalised across all levels of the housing service. This comprehensive approach to co-production means housing policies and services will be designed with residents, not just for them, resulting in services that better reflect community needs and priorities.

Strengthening Complaints Handling and Learning from Feedback

The Council is committed to strengthening complaints handling to support continuous improvement, transparency and accountability. Complaints provide an important source of intelligence about service performance and residents' experiences. The Council will ensure that every complaint is used to identify root causes, address recurring issues and drive service improvements, while building resident confidence in housing services.

In the 2024/25 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) satisfaction survey, 26% of residents who report making a complaint in the last 12 months indicate satisfaction with the Council's approach to handling complaints. In 2025/26, this reduced to 23.9%, indicating that resident confidence in the complaints process remains low and has not improved alongside response timeliness.

In 2024/25, 81% of housing complaints were responded to within target timescales, increasing to 82% in 2025/26. While this represents a modest improvement, the Council recognises the need to strengthen the quality, consistency and clarity of responses, alongside the overall customer experience. The Strategy therefore prioritises improved communication, transparent and fair decision-making, and stronger learning and follow-through so that complaints lead to measurable service improvements.

To achieve this, the Strategy sets out the following commitments:

1. Annual Complaints Improvement Plan

The Council will publish a Complaints Improvement Plan, aligned with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. The plan will:

- Define specific actions to improve response times, resolution quality, and communication with residents
- Set clear accountability, implementation timelines and monitoring mechanisms
- Promote a learning culture across housing services through service reviews and performance feedback

2. Resident-Led Oversight

A Tenant Complaints Panel will be established, made up of a diverse cross-section of residents. This panel will:

- Co-design improvements to the complaints process
- Review complaint trends and recommend service changes
- Monitor the delivery of the annual improvement plan alongside officers and senior managers

3. Formal Feedback and Learning Loop

A structured feedback process will be embedded to ensure that resident insights are acted upon. Complaint data and emerging themes will be regularly reviewed. Actions resulting from this review may include updates to policy and targeted staff training.

Through this approach, complaints will serve as a catalyst for reform, resolving individual issues while also driving wider improvements across housing services. By embedding a strong feedback culture and ensuring that complaints lead to tangible action, the Council aims to significantly improve satisfaction with the complaints process and increase overall confidence in the Council's housing service.

Partnerships for Health and Wellbeing



Strategic Framework for Housing, Health and Wellbeing

Housing is a key determinant of health, well-being, and safety. The Council works with NHS partners, public health, community organisations and other statutory partners to improve residents' wellbeing and reduce health inequalities. The Housing Strategy aligns with the borough's Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which sets out how housing policy and practice can support improved health outcomes and mitigate the impacts of poor housing conditions. It also complements the Community Safety Partnership Plan, which focuses on creating safer places and stronger communities.

To embed this approach, the Council will apply a Health in All Policies (HiAP) framework across housing. Regular HiAP reviews will assess the potential health impacts of housing policies and inform any necessary changes. In addition, Health Impact Assessments will be undertaken at an early stage for major housing, regeneration and related developments to ensure that factors such as access to green space, air quality, active travel and community safety are considered while proposals can still be shaped and influenced.

This strategic framework supports an overarching objective of prevention and improving health and well-being through partnership working. Housing services will work closely with residents, NHS partners, public health, Adult and Children's Social Care and the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector to deliver coordinated support that promotes good health, independence and safety.

Integrated Working with Health and Social Care

Strategic direction for integrated working between housing, health and care is provided through the Housing and Care Board, which brings together senior officers from Housing, Adult and Children's Social Care and related services. The Board sets priorities for joint working, oversees joint commissioning activity and ensures that

housing is embedded within wider pathways of support for residents with higher or more complex needs.

Building on this framework, the Council is developing a Neighbourhood Model to strengthen alignment between housing services and local health and care provision. As the model continues to be developed, multi-disciplinary teams will operate across defined localities to enable residents to access coordinated advice and support closer to home. Housing officers will work alongside social care, NHS services and voluntary and community sector partners to identify risks early and provide joined-up responses for residents who require additional support.

Alongside the development of the Neighbourhood Model, the Council is delivering the Behind Every Door programme of tenancy visits to all council-owned homes. Housing officers meet residents, verify occupancy, assess property condition and identify any support needs. Where appropriate, referrals are made to Adult Social Care, health services, welfare and debt advice, or local support services. This programme strengthens understanding of tenants' circumstances, supports tenancy sustainment and enables earlier intervention where there are risks to health, safety or independence.

Housing and Health Programmes

The Council delivers a range of housing-led initiatives that support residents' health, safety and independence. A key area of focus is fall prevention, enabling older and disabled residents to remain in their homes for as long as possible. The Council provides adaptations such as stairlifts, level-access showers, and grab rails. These modifications help reduce the risk of falls, promote safe and confident movement around the home, and minimise avoidable hospital admissions. This work forms part of the Council's wider commitment to early intervention, prevention, and the support of healthier, more independent lives.

In cases involving hoarding and self-neglect, housing officers work with Adult Social Care, fire services and other partners to develop multi-agency plans. This joint approach addresses both immediate safety risks in the property and the underlying issues affecting the resident. The aim is to reduce fire risk and health hazards, protect neighbours, and support residents to live more safely and securely.

Housing also plays a direct role in hospital discharge and rehabilitation. Housing and Adult Social Care staff work with NHS discharge teams to ensure that medically fit patients can return to suitable accommodation without avoidable delay. This may involve arranging interim housing, carrying out urgent adaptations or resolving serious disrepair that would otherwise prevent discharge.

The Council will continue to fund and deliver minor and major adaptations where these are assessed as eligible and approved for council-funded support. The Council will also maintain clear pathways with health and care partners to coordinate responses to issues such as hoarding and self-neglect, and to ensure housing services are embedded within wider support planning for residents with complex needs.

These actions are intended to reduce risks within the home, support timely access to appropriate interventions, and enable more residents to live independently throughout the Strategy period and beyond.

Community Safety Through Partnership Working

The Council works with the Police and other key partners to prevent and tackle crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in and around housing. This work aligns with the borough's Community Safety Partnership Plan, which sets out shared priorities for safer neighbourhoods and the coordination of action on ASB and related concerns. Housing services work with enforcement and policing partners to address persistent issues on estates, supported by appropriate information sharing within legal and safeguarding requirements to enable timely, targeted responses.

The Council also plays a key role in preventing ASB through coordinated early intervention. Estate-based initiatives, youth engagement programmes and tenancy-related support are used to identify and address emerging concerns before they escalate. Where enforcement action is required, such as tenancy warnings or legal proceedings, this is accompanied by offers of support to help change behaviour and promote longer-term resolution. Victims of ASB are supported through coordinated case management and safeguarding processes, working across housing, enforcement and community safety teams.

The Council will continue to deliver joint, coordinated activity on estates, with Housing, Community Safety and Police working together to target identified hotspots. ASB case resolution times will be monitored annually and used to strengthen practice, improve timeliness and reduce repeat incidents. In parallel, Secured by Design principles will be embedded within all new Council-led developments to enhance natural surveillance, manage access and create safer communal spaces.

Through these measures, the Council intends to reduce ASB, strengthen residents' sense of safety and ensure that issues are addressed swiftly and effectively.

Cross-Sector Partnerships and Joint Funding

The Council participates in cross-sector partnerships to support shared objectives across housing, health and social care. This includes joint work on supported

housing, homelessness prevention, mental health accommodation and hospital discharge pathways. These partnerships enable more substantial alignment between housing and NHS planning and create opportunities to secure external funding for local initiatives that improve residents' outcomes.

Partnerships with the VCFSE sector form a core part of this approach. For example, the Council's collaboration with Beam, a social enterprise, has helped families at risk of homelessness to secure and sustain private rented homes through personalised support and employment advice. Similar models with other voluntary and community organisations will be expanded, with a particular focus on early, preventative support and tenancy sustainment.

Housing works with Adult Social Care to jointly commission a range of housing-related support, drawing on pooled health and care resources. Through these arrangements, services such as small-scale property interventions are funded to reduce risk and help people remain safely at home. Housing, Adult Social Care, and NHS partners will continue to align resources in this way so that investment in housing and support services directly contributes to agreed health and care priorities.

Taken together, these partnerships and joint commissioning arrangements are intended to deliver more integrated services, improve health outcomes, reduce avoidable risks in the home, and support residents in living independently for longer.

Digital, Data and Service Modernisation

Modernising Housing Services

The Council will continue to modernise its housing systems and services to make it easier for residents to access support, improve the quality and consistency of service delivery, and strengthen the use of data for earlier intervention. This programme will support improved repairs reporting and communication, better access to tenancy and account information, stronger compliance and building safety assurance, and more integrated case management across complaints, hazards and homelessness prevention.

Digital modernisation will also support the wider aims of this Housing Strategy by strengthening safety and quality outcomes (including faster identification and resolution of damp and mould risks), improving transparency and accountability through better reporting and performance information, and supporting a consistent learning culture through improved use of complaints and feedback.

The Council's housing services are underpinned by a core Housing Management System, supported by specialist digital tools for repairs, compliance, hazard case management, complaints handling and document management. The Council will also continue to learn from best practice through partnership working, including sector collaboration on the responsible use of digital tools and AI.

Digital access to services

The Council will expand and improve online access to key housing services, while maintaining phone and face-to-face routes for residents who need them. Priorities include:

- Improving online reporting and booking for repairs, including urgent hazards such as damp and mould
- Improving access to rent and service charge information through online accounts
- Strengthening digital access to housing advice, applications and complaint submission and tracking
- Improving appointment communications and service updates to residents
- Mobile working and front-line efficiency

The Council will equip front-line housing and compliance teams with mobile tools to support real-time updates during estate inspections and home visits. This will reduce reliance on paper-based processes, improve record accuracy, and enable faster reporting and follow-up actions, particularly when residents report safety risks or recurring service issues.

Data and early intervention

The Council will strengthen its approach to data quality and integration, giving officers a more complete view of properties and tenancies. This will support early identification of recurring issues, such as repeat damp reports, compliance risks, anti-social behaviour hotspots (where relevant), and tenancy sustainment concerns. Improved data will also strengthen performance monitoring and support more preventative, insight-led approaches to service delivery over time.

Innovation, AI and service improvement

The Council will continue to test and adopt new digital approaches that improve the resident experience and operational efficiency. This includes exploring the responsible use of AI to support signposting, improve the quality and consistency of self-service information, and reduce avoidable contact, while ensuring appropriate controls, auditability and oversight are in place.

Digital inclusion, data protection and cyber security

All digital developments will be delivered in line with data protection and information governance requirements. The Council will maintain strong cyber security arrangements and ensure residents can access services regardless of digital confidence, through assisted digital support, accessible service design and the continued availability of non-digital routes.

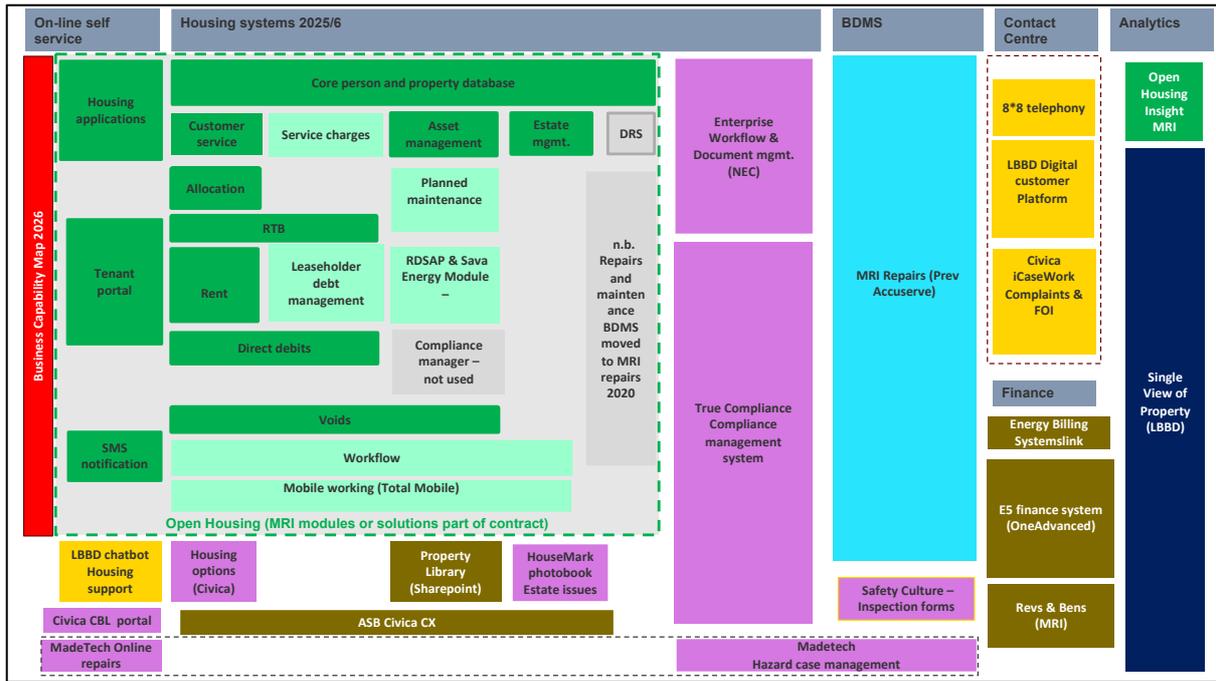
Delivery and governance

Digital modernisation will be delivered through a structured programme overseen by established governance arrangements. Priorities and delivery plans will be kept under review. They will be progressed in line with available resources, funding and service need, with a focus on improvements that most directly support resident safety, service accessibility and accountability.

Modernising Housing Services Through Technology

The diagram below provides an overview of the digital platforms, systems and tools that support our housing services in Barking and Dagenham. From case management and repairs reporting to estate inspections and complaints handling, these integrated systems work together behind the scenes to help us serve residents better. They also cover important areas like housing safety checks and resident contact, ensuring that information is joined up and accessible. In essence, the diagram shows how all these tools connect to keep our housing services running efficiently and responsively.

By investing in modern technology, the Council is streamlining processes and improving the quality of housing services. This means we can respond to issues more quickly, keep homes safe and well-maintained, and make it easier for residents to get in touch or request repairs. Ultimately, using these digital tools helps deliver better outcomes for our residents, from faster repairs and updates to a more convenient and reliable service overall.



Key	Colour
Open Housing (MRI, formerly Capita)	Green (light green modules being implemented)
MRI Repairs	Light blue
Customer Services systems	Yellow
Other Housing systems – separate to Open Housing	Pink
Corporate or other LBBB systems	Brown
Single View of Property – LBBB solution	Dark blue

Delivery, Finance and Risk

Action Plan Overview

The Housing Strategy 2026-2031 is supported by a detailed Action Plan which sets out the programmes, milestones and performance measures required to deliver the agreed objectives. Effective delivery will depend on clear decision-making, joined-up management across services and the ability to respond to changing circumstances. This section sets out how the Council will govern and resource the Housing Strategy, manage key risks, and monitor progress, ensuring the Action Plan is implemented as intended and delivers tangible benefits for residents.

Governance and Roles

A formal governance framework will oversee delivery across all workstreams. Strategic oversight will be provided by the Housing Strategy Delivery Board, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Housing. The Board will set priorities, approve delivery plans, and receive regular reports on performance, risks and progress against strategic objectives.

Operational coordination will be undertaken by a cross-council Officer Group, bringing together senior officers from relevant services. The Officer Group will ensure that activities are aligned, dependencies are managed, milestones are monitored and issues are escalated to the Board when necessary.

Residents will have a structured role within these arrangements through a Resident Scrutiny Group, which will review progress against the Housing Strategy Action Plan, provide independent challenge, and feed residents' experience into decision-making. Taken together, these arrangements are intended to ensure that delivery is transparent, subject to clear accountability and informed by lived experience.

Funding Responsibilities Across Housing Revenue Account and General Fund

The Council recognises that not all of the services and initiatives outlined in this Strategy fall within the scope of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The HRA is a ring-fenced account used exclusively for the management, maintenance and investment in council-owned housing stock. In line with legislation, it cannot be used to fund general housing functions. As such, services such as homelessness prevention and administration, housing advice, the housing allocations register, and wider support for vulnerable residents are considered non-core HRA functions. They are funded in whole or in part from the General Fund.

Aligning Resources with Statutory and Strategic Roles

To deliver the Strategy's priorities in a sustainable and compliant manner, the Council will draw upon a combination of HRA, General Fund and external resources. Activities relating to the management and improvement of council-owned homes, including compliance, asset management and new build delivery, will be resourced through the HRA, in accordance with the 30-year Business Plan. Broader statutory housing functions, such as homelessness services, temporary accommodation, and private-sector enforcement, fall outside the landlord function and are funded from the General Fund. This ensures that all services are resourced in line with financial regulations and reflect the Council's dual role as landlord and strategic housing authority.

Maximising External Funding and Financial Efficiency

The Council will continue to maximise the use of external funding and partnerships to support the delivery of its housing objectives. This includes capital grants from the Greater London Authority Affordable Homes Programme and national funding streams such as the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. Section 106 contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy receipts will be used to secure affordable housing and supporting infrastructure.

In addition, the Council will continue to pursue invest-to-save opportunities, where early investment in prevention, compliance or housing quality delivers long-term savings and improves outcomes for residents. Joint commissioning with Adult Social Care, health and other partners will be strengthened to ensure that housing-related support services are integrated, co-funded where appropriate, and aligned to shared priorities. Through this blended, strategic funding model, the Council will ensure that the Housing Strategy is delivered in a way that is financially sustainable, outcome-focused, and fully aligned with its statutory responsibilities.

Risk Management and Mitigations

Risk management will form an integral part of the Housing Strategy delivery. A live risk register will be maintained covering the main delivery risks, including changes in national policy and funding, market and economic conditions, community engagement, delivery capacity and compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.

Each risk will have identified controls and an agreed lead officer. The Officer Group will review the register regularly, and significant or emerging risks will be escalated to the Housing Strategy Delivery Board. This approach is intended to ensure that the Council can respond promptly to pressures and safeguard the delivery of safe, good-quality, and affordable homes.

Monitoring, Key Performance Indicators and Reporting

Monitoring and evaluation arrangements will be used to track progress, support accountability and inform future improvement. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been developed with baselines and targets to 2031, covering all of the Strategy's objectives. Performance against these measures will be reviewed quarterly.

Progress will be reported to the Housing Strategy Delivery Board and, on an annual basis, to Cabinet through a formal update. A mid-term review of the Housing Strategy will be undertaken around 2028 to assess overall impact, reflect any

significant changes in context and, where necessary, adjust actions or targets accordingly.

Conclusion and Next Steps

By 2031, the Housing Strategy will have delivered meaningful progress across the borough's housing offer and the services that support it. The Council remains committed to ensuring that every resident has access to a safe, high-quality, affordable and, where required, accessible home. More residents will be supported to secure and sustain accommodation that meets their needs. Housing conditions will improve through continued investment in quality, compliance and planned maintenance. Homelessness will be reduced through a stronger focus on early intervention and prevention. At the same time, older and disabled residents will benefit from more coordinated support and a greater supply of accessible homes.

Core principles have been embedded throughout the Strategy's delivery, including co-production, prevention and inclusive design. Co-production processes will continue to inform policy and service development by drawing on residents' lived experience to identify priorities and shape solutions. Early intervention is becoming standard practice across prevention, compliance and tenancy sustainment activity. Inclusive design refers to the design of homes and neighbourhoods that are accessible, adaptable and suitable for people with a wide range of needs. These principles are being applied to new housing development and are reflected in how the Council adapts and refurbishes existing homes to better meet residents' needs.

Immediate Next Steps

Following the adoption of the Housing Strategy 2026-2031, the Council will begin implementation in 2026 by taking the following steps:

- Publish the Housing Strategy Action Plan, setting out the key activities, timelines and lead teams for each priority.
- Establish the Housing Strategy Delivery Board to provide oversight and ensure delivery remains on track.
- Establish the Resident Scrutiny Group to ensure residents have a clear, ongoing role in shaping and reviewing progress.

Updates on these actions will be shared with Cabinet through the Council's usual reporting arrangements.

Glossary

Accessible and Adaptable Standard (M4(2))

A building standard for new homes that are designed to be easier to live in as needs change over time, including features such as step-free access and layouts that allow for adaptation.

Adaptations

Changes made to a home to support a resident's health, mobility or independence, such as grab rails, ramps, stairlifts or a level-access shower.

Affordable Housing

Homes are provided at below-market cost to support households that cannot afford market housing. Affordable housing includes both rented and home ownership options, such as Social Rent and intermediate housing.

Affordable Rent

A type of affordable rented housing where the rent is set below market levels, in line with national policy requirements.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Behaviour that causes nuisance, harassment, alarm or distress to others, including persistent noise, vandalism, intimidation or hate incidents.

Awaab's Law

Requirements for social landlords to respond to and resolve serious hazards, including damp and mould, within set timescales.

Behind Every Door programme

A programme of tenancy visits to council homes to check household details, identify property issues, and spot any support needs so the Council can refer residents to appropriate help.

Be First Ltd

The Council's wholly owned regeneration company, which leads on the development and delivery of new homes and regeneration projects across the borough.

BD Management Services Ltd (BDMS)

The Council's wholly owned repairs and maintenance company, which delivers repairs and related works to council homes.

B&D Energy Ltd

A wholly owned Council company responsible for operating and expanding local heat networks (district heating) in Barking and Dagenham.

Building Safety Act 2022

Legislation that strengthens duties for those responsible for managing safety in higher-risk residential buildings and introduces new regulatory requirements.

Category 1 Hazard

A serious health or safety risk in a home, identified through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

Climate adaptation

Designing and improving homes and neighbourhoods so they better cope with climate risks, such as heatwaves and flooding.

Co-production

A way of working where residents help shape services and decisions from the start, based on lived experience and shared problem-solving.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

A charge paid by some developers to help fund local infrastructure needed to support growth, such as transport, schools and public spaces.

Complaints Improvement Plan

A published plan setting out how the Council will improve housing complaints handling, including actions, monitoring and service learning.

Consumer standards

Standards that social housing landlords are required to meet, covering safety, service quality, tenant engagement and tenancy management.

Continuous Recording (CORE) social lettings data

The Government collects data on every new household moving into social housing. It helps understand who is being housed and whether outcomes differ between groups.

Decent Homes Standard

The minimum standard for the condition of social housing. Homes should be in a reasonable state of repair, have modern facilities and provide a reasonable degree of warmth.

Design Code

A set of standards and expectations for the design of new homes and neighbourhoods, including accessibility, safety, and how places function for residents.

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

A grant that can help fund adaptations to support residents to live safely and independently at home, subject to eligibility criteria.

District heating (heat network)

A system that supplies heat (and sometimes hot water) to multiple homes from a central energy source, rather than gas boilers in each home.

Equality Act 2010 / Public Sector Equality Duty

Legal duties require the Council to consider equality and avoid discrimination in the planning and delivery of services.

Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO)

A legal power the Council can use, in specific circumstances, to bring a long-term empty private home back into use.

Enforcement

Actions the Council can take to require landlords or owners to address unsafe or unacceptable housing conditions, using powers under housing legislation.

Fire Safety Act 2021

Legislation that strengthens requirements for fire risk assessments, including in common parts of residential buildings.

FLAGEL checks

A set of statutory safety compliance areas in council homes: Fire, Legionella, Asbestos, Gas, Electrical and Lifts.

Fuel poverty

A situation where a household struggles to afford to heat their home adequately, often due to low income and high energy costs.

General Fund

The Council's main budget for services that are not part of the Council's landlord function, such as homelessness services and wider housing advice.

Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

A structured way of assessing how a policy, programme or development may affect health and wellbeing, so proposals can be improved.

Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

A property rented by multiple people who are not one household and who share facilities such as a kitchen or bathroom.

Homelessness Prevention

Support and action to help residents keep their home or secure alternative accommodation before homelessness occurs.

Housing Allocations Policy

The Council's policy explaining how social housing is allocated, including how priority is assessed and how offers are made.

Housing First

An approach that provides stable, settled housing as the starting point for people who have slept rough, alongside ongoing support to sustain the tenancy.

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

National guidance setting expectations for how social landlords should handle complaints fairly, consistently and transparently.

Housing Register

The register of households that have applied for social housing and have been assessed as eligible to join the register.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

A ring-fenced account used to fund the management, maintenance and investment in council-owned homes.

Inclusive design

Designing homes and neighbourhoods so they are safe, accessible and usable for people with a wide range of needs and abilities.

Intermediate housing

Homes priced between Social Rent and market housing, intended for households who cannot afford market options but are not eligible for social housing.

Landlord forum

A regular meeting or engagement route where the Council shares information with private landlords and supports compliance with standards and legal duties.

Licensing (private rented sector)

A scheme requiring landlords to hold a licence for certain rented properties, helping the Council monitor standards and management arrangements.

Local Lettings

A policy approach that may prioritise certain homes for local residents or groups, within legal and policy frameworks.

Local Plan

The borough's planning policy framework sets out how and where growth will be delivered, including housing targets and expectations for affordable housing.

London Living Rent

An intermediate rent product designed to support households who want to save towards home ownership, with rents set below market levels.

Modern Methods of Construction (MMC)

Construction approaches that can improve build quality and speed, including off-site manufacture and modular building techniques.

Neighbourhood Model

A place-based approach where services work more closely together within local areas, improving access to support and strengthening early intervention.

No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

A condition attached to some immigration statuses, which means a person cannot access most welfare benefits and housing support.

Planned maintenance

A scheduled programme of investment to replace or renew building components (such as roofs, windows or kitchens) and reduce reliance on reactive repairs.

Private Rented Sector (PRS)

Homes are rented from private landlords. The Council regulates standards through licensing, inspections and enforcement.

Registered Provider (RP)

A housing association or other provider registered to deliver and manage social housing.

Resident Scrutiny Group

A resident-led group that reviews housing performance and delivery of the Strategy, providing oversight, challenge and recommendations.

Retrofit

Upgrading existing homes to improve energy efficiency and comfort, such as insulation, ventilation improvements, solar panels or heat pumps.

Rightsizing (under-occupation)

Supporting households living in homes larger than they need to move to a more suitable size, freeing up larger homes for families who need them.

Rough sleeping

Sleeping outside or in places not designed for habitation, such as doorways or parks.

Section 106

A legal agreement with a developer that can secure affordable housing and contributions towards local infrastructure and services.

Secure by Design

A set of principles for designing buildings and public spaces to reduce crime and improve safety.

Service charge

A charge paid by some tenants or leaseholders towards shared services and communal areas, such as cleaning, lighting, grounds maintenance or building insurance.

Shared Ownership

An intermediate home ownership option where a household buys a share of a property and pays rent on the remaining share, with the option to increase their share over time.

Social Rent

A low-cost rent for council or housing association homes, set using a national formula and generally lower than other rent products.

Supported housing

Housing with additional support to help residents live independently, often for older people or residents with specific health, care or support needs.

Temporary Accommodation (TA)

Short-term accommodation is provided to households who are homeless while longer-term housing is secured.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

National measures used to understand tenant views and landlord performance, covering areas such as repairs, safety, complaints and engagement.

Tenancy sustainment

Support to help residents keep their home, including early help with rent arrears, welfare advice, or referrals to support services.

Tenure

The way a home is occupied, such as Social Rent, private rent, shared ownership, or owner occupation.

Tenure mix

The balance of different housing tenures within a development or area is intended to support inclusive, mixed communities.

Viability review

An assessment of a development's finances to determine what level of affordable housing and contributions can reasonably be provided.

Wheelchair Accessible Standard (M4(3))

A building standard for new homes designed to be suitable for a wheelchair user, including space standards and accessibility features.

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