

Cllr Guy Nicholson
**Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing
Management and Regeneration**
London Borough of Hackney
Hackney Town Hall
Mare Street
London
E8 1EA

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Dear Soraya and Joseph

Hackney Housing Strategy 2026-31 - Living in Hackney Scrutiny Recommendations

I am writing in response to your letter following the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission discussion on the Hackney Housing Strategy 2025-30.

Many thanks indeed to the Commission for their comments and suggestions for refining and enhancing the development of Hackney's forthcoming 2026-31 Housing Strategy. I have set out to respond to each of the specific recommendations in turn as follows.

#	LiH Scrutiny Recommendation	Response
1	<p>The Housing Strategy team ensures that the forthcoming Housing Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Prioritises the delivery of social rented homes over all other tenures and maintains a minimal level of at least 35% in all major developmentsb) Outlines the steps the Council will take to deliver more social rented homes in its own new homes schemesc) Sets out how other housing developers in the borough will be engaged to identify opportunities to increase the supply of new social rented homes	<p>The current percentage of affordable housing expected for delivery on major developments is set out in the Local Plan, LP33 at 50% of which 60% of the 50% are to be social rent homes, this results in 30% social rent homes per scheme. This target is set by the Council and is implemented via the Planning Service. The current target will be reviewed as part of the Local Plan review scheduled for the summer of 2026.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy in its current iteration and the emerging proposals for the 2026-31 Strategy, recognise the</p>



	<p>d) Clarifies how the need for family-sized social rented homes will be addressed, including four or five bedroom homes</p>	<p>importance of the maximisation of social rent homes as the primary tenure for delivery. The Council's most recent direct delivery programme, the New Homes Programme, is delivering a minimum of 75% social rented housing. Hackney continues to prioritise the highest number of social rent homes at every opportunity where viability permits. The 2026-31 Housing Strategy will build on the experience from Hackney's extensive record of delivering multi tenure social housing, in combination with the current Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment evidence base and examples of delivery drawn from across the sector to set out the Council's future new homes delivery strategy.</p> <p>Hackney has and will continue to engage with Housing Associations and Developers and ensure implementation through the Planning process. Both the existing Local Plan LP33 and its successor will identify development sites and opportunity areas. The 2026-31 Housing Strategy will also consider how best to ensure that these opportunities are delivered, such as via joint ventures or through direct delivery.</p> <p>There will be a review and update commissioned to the Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment in 2026. This is likely to further clarify the need for family sized social rented homes. This will be included in the evidence base and strategy document and form the basis of the Councils direct delivery strategy and inform the expectations to be made of third party developers via the Planning process.</p>
2	<p>The Cabinet Member for Housing Management & Regeneration lobbies the Mayor of London to ensure the temporary 20% affordable housing quota does not become permanent and for the 35% target to remain in place (or be increased) in the new London Plan as it undergoes its review in 2026.</p>	<p>The Mayor of Hackney, myself and other elected Members frequently engage with the Mayor of London and the Deputy Mayor of London for Housing on such Housing related matters. Additionally a formal Government and GLA led consultation has recently taken place on the 'Crisis in Construction' temporary legislation for London in which both officers and Members have had the opportunity to</p>

		<p>discuss and respond to these proposals. Hackney remains committed to the affordable housing percentages outlined within its current Local Plan LP33 and will ensure that all direct delivery schemes will hold to this current policy and the Planning Service will continue to seek the highest percentage of affordable housing possible in all other developments within the Borough.</p>
3	<p>The Housing Strategy and Planning & Building Control teams take a direct role in delivering intermediate housing in the borough to ensure strategic oversight, local tailoring and accountability, with a preference for truly affordable intermediate rent products wherever possible. This should involve championing, commissioning and contributing funding for affordable intermediate rent schemes, exploring the use of council land and the Hackney Housing Company for delivery, and setting local eligibility frameworks and truly affordable rent levels.</p>	<p>Hackney very much welcomes the recent Mayor of London’s funding announcement for key worker and living rent intermediate housing. The evidence base used in the draft 2026-31 Housing Strategy, includes the independent Hackney commissioned Intermediate Housing Panel report and its recommendations align entirely with the Mayor of London’s announcements.</p> <p>The Panel’s report explicitly considers and recommends the delivery of intermediate rented housing that is affordable to local residents. This has so far been applied within the draft Future Shoreditch Area Action Plan and is planned to be included in the 2026-31 Housing Strategy. A full action plan resulting from the recommendations of the independent Intermediate Housing Panel report is under preparation and the Councils Housing Strategy team is developing these into a coherent and implementable delivery plan.</p> <p>The LiH Commission is correct in identifying these mechanisms as potential delivery options. The Council will explore how to best utilise the existing direct delivery functions, partnership approaches and the Hackney Housing Company for the delivery of intermediate rented homes.</p>
4	<p>The Cabinet Member for Housing Management & Regenerations increases lobbying activities for a new funding settlement from the Government to ensure Hackney is able to build new homes for social rent in the long term.</p> <p>This should be in line with the detailed and practical recommendations outlined in the</p>	<p>Southwark’s work in this area, particularly around housing revenue funding, is exemplary and supported by all involved in the delivery of social housing at Hackney Council.</p> <p>A long term, sustainable rent settlement enables not only borrowing to fund new</p>

	Southwark report on England's council housing.	social housing delivery but also the long term maintenance of the homes.
5	Housing Strategy and Planning & Building Control set out how they will work with small and medium-sized developers to address the barriers on small sites threatening their viability, including increasing planning capacity to reduce delays and fast tracking small sites proposals where possible.	<p>The Housing Strategy team will continue to work closely with the Planning and Building Control team on the development of the 2026-31 Housing Strategy and the Local Plan review, both of which will set out to identify the steps to address how best to use small development sites and estates in the borough, including those on Council-owned land.</p> <p>Hackney also recently received grant funding from the GLA to support small builders to develop on small sites within the borough and will utilise both the successes and challenges of the experience of this scheme to inform a future delivery strategy.</p>
6	The Housing Regeneration & Delivery team appoints 'Housing Disability Champions' to more explicitly and routinely champion the views of disabled residents and ensure disability equality and co-production is embedded into the design phase for new council homes.	<p>The current Housing Strategy outlines the Council's commitment to accessibility that is embedded in the ongoing work of the Housing Regeneration & Delivery team. While the team has a proven track record of delivering considerate, accessible, and inclusive homes, all recognise there is an opportunity to do more and the team welcomes this recommendation.</p> <p>The Housing Regeneration and Delivery team proposes the establishment of a 'Housing Accessibility and Inclusion Champions Programme' to embed disability equality and co-production at the heart of the Council's design process. This will include the recruitment of older disabled residents with diverse lived experiences of disability, chronic illness and access needs to serve as Housing Accessibility and Inclusion Champions.</p> <p>Working directly with the Strategic Design team, the Champions will provide a person-centred perspective of the barriers that Hackney's tenants and leaseholders face, supported by a specialist access consultant and design managers who will provide technical expertise. It is proposed that as with participants in Resident Steering Groups, there will be a voucher based remuneration policy in place for those committing their time.</p>

		<p>The Strategic Design team are authors and guardians of the New Build Design Specification (NBDS) which is the Council's quality benchmarking document and sets the standard for all new Council homes. Now in its 6th iteration, it forms a key briefing document for the design teams. The Champions will contribute strategically to design solutions by reviewing and commenting on specifications for housing elements - from public realm to fittings, finishes, bathrooms and kitchens - ensuring they are accessible, ergonomic and aesthetically designed and reducing the need for costly adaptations.</p> <p>Champions will also be invited to contribute to the Regeneration Design Advice Group (RDAG), an independent panel of design professionals and academics that support the Housing Regeneration team to deliver high-quality social housing and estate improvements in Hackney, ensuring accessibility sits alongside other design, sustainability, safety and Planning considerations.</p> <p>By influencing the design specification and RDAG, the Champions will embed accessibility into all new Council homes from the outset. This will create lifetime homes that work for families, older residents, and residents with disabilities - reducing future retrofit and or conversion costs as well as reducing any disruption to the resident. The Council believes this will further establish Hackney as a leader in delivering accessible, adaptable and inclusive homes.</p>
7	<p>The Housing Strategy team develops an outcomes framework and delivery plan for the refreshed Compact to monitor the key contributions from housing associations and to allow for the ongoing review, analysis and understanding of performance. This should be managed through the Hackney Better Housing Partnership Forum, with regular reporting to the Council's Cabinet and Living in Hackney Scrutiny to ensure wider accountability.</p>	<p>The Council welcomes the Commission's comments and suggestions. The Council is in the process of reinstating the Hackney Better Housing Partnership Forum and invitations which include a clarification of the governance structure, its remit and discussion themes, have been sent to Housing Associations operating in the borough. The ambition is to connect with all social landlords in the borough through this Forum.</p> <p>The areas outlined in the Compact will form the basis of the discussions but it is planned to review and refresh the Compact</p>

		<p>which has been in place since 2023. In addition, it is proposed that a quantum of data gathering and performance monitoring is also incorporated into the Forum's remit and to establish how Social Landlords and the Council can best work together and data share.</p> <p>Reporting to the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission can be arranged at the request of the Commission and a reporting pathway to Cabinet within the wider Housing Services Improvement Plan reporting will also be explored with the Mayor and Chief Executive.</p>
8	<p>The Housing Strategy team sets out what progress has been made in improving collaborative working with housing associations to identify safeguarding issues, raise safeguarding concerns, and support residents and their families who are at risk of or experiencing abuse or neglect since the Compact was adopted in 2023. This should include information and data on new policies and procedures, uptake of training and learning opportunities and engagement with key meetings and forums, and be inclusive of adult safeguarding, domestic abuse, safeguarding children and young people and anti-social behaviour and estate safety.</p>	<p>Despite the hiatus of the Better Housing Partnership Forum, the Housing Strategy team and elected Members remain engaged with Housing Associations in the borough usually with a focus on new homes supply alongside homes and estate maintenance and management matters. The need for greater engagement and data collection is acknowledged and will be developed via the Forum's relaunch and review.</p>
9	<p>The Housing Strategy team ensures the forthcoming Compact refresh includes shared commitments with housing associations to address the following priority areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increasing the supply of affordable homes, particularly homes for social rent b) Facilitating the development of new temporary and supported accommodation schemes c) Sharing information on housing stock, lets and allocations and ensuring no properties are left empty d) Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and improving the safety of residents in social housing e) Aligning approaches to emergency planning and responses f) Equipping staff to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns and more effectively sharing 	<p>Discussions to be held at the Forum will raise all of these priorities identified by the Commission. The objective is to develop, with all partners signed up, a fit for purpose and updated Compact that, with the agreement of all partners, will monitor and manage all of the priorities raised by the Commission.</p> <p>It should be noted that these priorities have traditionally characterised the previous Forum's discussions and it is planned that they will continue with partners in the restarted Forum.</p>

	information	
10	<p>The Housing Strategy team establishes a dedicated advice and prevention service for private renters, providing a single point of contact with staff who are equipped to advise and signpost them on a range of issues such as housing rights, benefits, debt, adult learning, parenting, childcare, affordable warmth and fuel poverty.</p>	<p>The Council recognises the increasing pressures faced by households in the private rented sector and the importance of accessible housing-related advice and homeless prevention support.</p> <p>As part of the forthcoming Private Sector Housing service restructure, opportunities will be explored to strengthen the existing advice, prevention and signposting arrangements in a practical and financially sustainable way. Direct advice would focus on housing-related matters, with wider issues addressed through appropriate signposting to specialist services.</p> <p>Additionally, further support and advice is expected to be provided through the implementation of the Renters Rights Act unlocking resources for the relevant teams to provide a coordinated service and communications to private renters.</p>
11	<p>The Housing Strategy team coordinates the introduction of a triage service for those professionals who regularly visit residents' homes to report and discuss housing issues and explore potential solutions with housing colleagues.</p> <p>This should allow for professionals to collate and share a range of data that can be viewed from all property levels, enabling assessments of potential service needs based on vulnerability.</p>	<p>Hackney's Homelessness Prevention Service, in line with its statutory duties, provides advice for all Hackney residents regarding their rights as renters and can assist with resolving issues related to affordability, disrepair and rent arrears. The 2026-31 Housing Strategy will set out how this service can be better coordinated between the Homelessness Prevention Service and the private sector to improve the resident experience and efficacy of the Councils existing service offer.</p> <p>Opportunities and procedures to embed into the Councils new Housing Management IT system and specifically the collation, use and sharing of relevant personal housing-related data will be considered as part of the system implementation that is now underway and will establish a set of improved triage and referral arrangements.</p> <p>It should of course be noted that any data sharing arrangements will be subject to data protection requirements alongside system capability and resources.</p>

12	<p>The Housing Strategy team ensures that the forthcoming Housing Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Recognises and prioritises the needs of older people b) Outlines how and when the housing and support needs of this cohort will be addressed c) Sets out how other housing providers will be engaged and involved to provide better access to appropriate and affordable housing for older people 	<p>Both the Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment and the subsequently commissioned evidence based on specialist and supported housing, identified a large underserved cohort of older residents in the borough requiring housing both currently and also a projected demand into the future.</p> <p>The decision was made that either a specific chapter in the 2026-31 Housing Strategy or a stand alone Housing Strategy would be written that addresses this need directly and with specialist input. This option can be presented to the Mayor and Members for a decision in the new Council post May 2026.</p> <p>Hackney has recently established a capital build programme for the development of supported housing for residents with a duty of care under the Care Act 2014. This programme will be a key component of the Council's delivery actions within the 2026-31 Strategy. It is expected that the majority of the need for supported housing could be met via this programme but the Housing Strategy team have also established a care and support provider forum in partnership with Adult Social Care colleagues to ensure opportunities for partnerships are not missed and need and demand underestimated.</p>
13	<p>The Housing Strategy team, alongside other invited council departments, reports on the following topics at the joint meeting of Living in Hackney and Children & Young People Scrutiny on 10th February 2026:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Housing and related support for families of children with SEND and other disabilities b) Implementation of the recommendations of the housing support for care leavers scrutiny review 	<p>The Housing Strategy team has been working closely with Children's Services colleagues on these topics and supported them through attendance at this meeting.</p> <p>Colleagues from the Benefits and Homelessness Prevention Service who also work closely with Children's Services provided the Commission with the information requested and also attended the meeting.</p>
14	<p>The Housing Strategy team, alongside other invited council departments and health partners, reports on the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the supported accommodation for homeless residents with complex needs scrutiny</p>	<p>The Housing Strategy team will attend this meeting and will work to implement the recommendations made into the 2026-31 Housing Strategy.</p>

	review at the 10th March 2026 meeting of Living in Hackney Scrutiny.	
15	<p>The Housing Strategy team develops an outcomes framework and delivery plan for the refreshed Compact to monitor the key contributions from housing associations and to allow for the ongoing review, analysis and understanding of performance.</p> <p>This should be managed through the Hackney Better Housing Partnership Forum, with regular reporting to the Council's Cabinet and Living in Hackney Scrutiny to ensure wider accountability.</p>	<p>The Housing Strategy team welcomes the Commission's comments and suggestions. As previously mentioned in response to Recommendations 7,8 and 9 the team is reinstating the Hackney Better Housing Partnership Forum in early 2026 and hopes to connect with all social landlords in the borough through this Forum. The areas outlined in the Compact will form the basis of discussions, and there will be a review of the Compact. In addition and as previously mentioned, data gathering and performance monitoring is a topic that will also be discussed at the Forum.</p>

I hope that this response is helpful.

Best wishes



Cllr Guy Nicholson

Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Regeneration