

HOUSING STRATEGY

2023-2028





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Executive Summary

This strategy sets out our five year plan to deliver the homes that people in Redbridge need.

Between December 2022 and March 2023, we undertook a consultation exercise and over 1,000 people shared their views with us. We heard how important a safe, warm and well-maintained home was to people's health and wellbeing. We received strong public support for each of the following objectives:



1. Increase the supply of housing, particularly for local people on low-incomes and families.

To do this we will increase our stock of Council homes, work with development partners to deliver the affordable homes our residents need and make the best use of the homes the borough already has.

2. Provide the homes that vulnerable residents need and support people to help prevent them from becoming homeless.

To do this we will focus on the needs of the most vulnerable, help people find a secure home, increase our supply of temporary accommodation and prioritise ways to prevent homelessness.

3. Improve the quality of homes, make them healthier places to live and increase their energy efficiency.

To do this we will invest in the housing we own, influence landlords to improve the properties they rent out and signpost ways for homeowners to upgrade their homes.

4. Put residents first by being easier to contact and dealing with resident's concerns effectively.

To do this we will improve the way we communicate with residents, use our enforcement powers to tackle issues and help people get the advice they need.

Introduction by Councillor Solanki



Our newly developed housing strategy outlines our aspiration to deliver new affordable homes, improve Redbridge's housing stock, strengthen the housing service through better resident engagement and tackle homelessness.

We are in extremely challenging times, and one of the biggest challenges we face is the housing crisis. The housing crisis has become an undeniable reality, casting a shadow over communities far and wide. The soaring costs of housing, coupled with limited availability of affordable homes, has left countless individuals and families struggling to find safe, secure, and suitable housing.

In the past five years, there have been significant events that have reshaped our approach to the way in which we run the housing service. These include the Grenfell fire tragedy, the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate emergency, and a challenging cost-of-living crisis.

In Redbridge we have over 2,900 families in temporary accommodation and 7,500 households on the housing register. The fact that over 2,900 families are currently living in temporary accommodation serves as a stark reminder of the pressing need for safe, secure, and suitable housing. Each of these families represents individuals who yearn for a place they can call home, a space where they can feel safe, build their lives, and thrive. Housing is a fundamental right. It is our shared responsibility to address this housing crisis, to find suitable solutions, and to ensure every individual and family can create a foundation for a better future.

The voices and responses of residents have been of paramount importance in shaping this new housing strategy. By actively seeking and valuing the input of residents, we have ensured that our housing strategy reflects the aspirations and concerns of those directly impacted.

We held an extensive listening exercise over three months and reached out proactively to residents who had direct contact with housing services, including council tenants, leaseholders and people living in temporary accommodation. The consultation hub comprised of three different surveys: individual, organisation and young person's survey. It was important for me that all those voices were captured, and the housing strategy team have done an incredible job ensuring we have done so.

In total we received 754 responses via our online survey, which comprised of 626 individual responses, 26 organisational responses and 102 young people survey responses. In addition to this face-to-face meetings were held with 320 people from community groups and voluntary sector partners as well as Council staff and Councillors. I would like to thank every individual, organisation, young person, and many more who responded to our housing strategy consultation.

This strategy sets out in more detail what we aim to deliver during the course of the next five years. Central to our strategy is a commitment to increasing the supply of housing. We have one of the lowest Council owned and Housing Association housing stocks across London, which presents a significant challenge in meeting the housing needs of our residents.

The housing crisis has become an undeniable reality

Over 1,000 people responded, either via an online survey or in person at meetings

Introduction by Councillor Solanki continued

We recognize the critical need to address the ever-growing demand and ensure that our communities can flourish. Through comprehensive planning and innovative approaches, we aim to build new council homes and deliver much needed housing across the borough. Homes that are of high quality and design, that will provide secure and stable accommodation to many families.

Equally important in our housing strategy is addressing the immediate needs of those facing homelessness and housing insecurity. Our approach places an emphasis on prevention and long-term support and helping the individual become self-sufficient. We strive to provide the necessary resources, guidance, and compassion required to help individuals and families regain stability and find permanent housing solutions.

Quality of housing is at the core of our housing strategy. Everyone deserves a home that is safe, comfortable, and built to the highest standards. Our commitment to improving the quality of homes encompasses new developments, our existing housing stock as well as the private rented sector. With more homes in the private rented sector, we are ensuring we have robust licensing schemes in place to ensure the properties are safe and those who manage the properties are equipped with the tools to maintain the properties and keep them safe for our residents. We will work tirelessly to ensure that building regulations are robust, energy-efficient, and designed with the well-being of residents in mind.

Quality of housing is at the core of our housing strategy

Crucially, our new housing strategy places residents at the heart of decision-making processes. We recognize that a home is more than just bricks and mortar - it is the foundation upon which lives are built, dreams are pursued, and communities are forged. Through extensive community engagement initiatives, we will empower residents to actively participate in shaping their neighbourhoods. Their voices will be heard and respected, allowing us to create spaces that foster a sense of belonging and pride.

This comprehensive document marks a significant milestone in our commitment to address the complex challenges within the housing sector. This strategy is bold and ambitious, and we recognise the urgency of the situation and the need for transformative action. We invite stakeholders, community organisations and partners to work with us as we embark on this journey.

This strategy is bold and ambitious, and we recognise the urgency of the situation



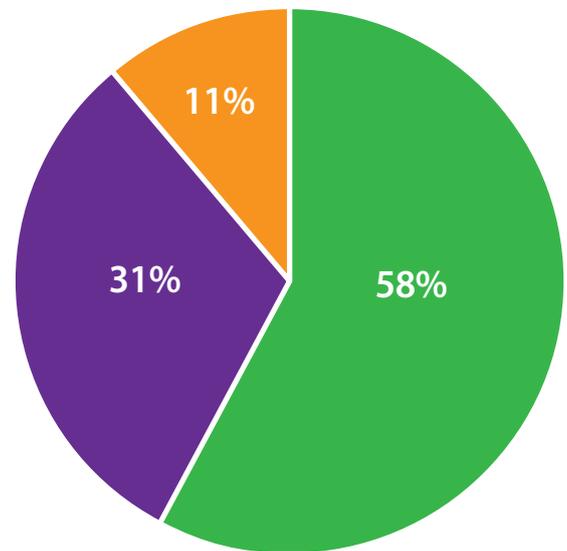
Overview Housing in Redbridge



Housing in Redbridge is predominantly privately owned. According to the Census 2021, 58% of households live in a privately owned home, 31% live in a privately rented home and 11% in a 'social' rent home (meaning rented from the Council or a Housing Association.) Over the last 10 years there has been a noticeable increase in households renting from private landlords rather than owning their own home. Evidence suggests that the Census 2021 percentage of 31% maybe an underestimate and the proportion is actually nearer to 36%.

Since 2011, Redbridge's population has grown by 11%, with an increase of 31,290 people. Although higher than the London average, this is a lot lower than boroughs such as Tower Hamlets (22%) or Barking and Dagenham (18%). The main driver for growth has been inward migration, with particularly high population increases in and around Ilford Town centre.

Redbridge has an unusually young population and a large number of families. There has been a sharp rise in the average size of households over the last 10 years, resulting in a high proportion of homes being overcrowded. This pent-up demand for family-sized homes is partly due to the fact that over half of the larger homes in the borough are under-occupied. The predominance of one- and two-bedroom homes in new developments has also contributed to the problem.



- Privately rented
- Social rented
- Privately owned

16% growth
in the population over
the next 22 years

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (April 2023) forecasts a 16% growth in the population over the next 22 years. This will require the delivery of 1,409 new homes a year. Modelling suggests that the greatest need will be for 3-bedroom private ownership and private rental homes. The predominant need for 'social rent' housing will also be for 3-bedroom homes, though this is closely followed by the need for 2-bedroom homes.

Although the need for larger homes will continue to dominate, the part of the population that will grow the most over the next 20 years are residents above the age of 65. Many of these households will already have a home and will grow older without moving, further contributing to the level of under-occupation. This indicates that there is a pressing justification to focus on the needs of older people when developing new, smaller homes, to support them to live comfortably and to help free-up existing family sized homes, over the next 20 years.

Objective 1: Increasing the Supply of Housing

Overview of housing supply in Redbridge

Redbridge has the smallest council housing stock of all London boroughs, with around 4500 homes. Since the introduction of the Right to Buy legislation in the 1980s we have lost 40% of the homes we once owned. The number of affordable rented homes provided by Housing Associations (around 4900 homes) is also much lower in Redbridge than in surrounding boroughs. We know we need to do more to increase the number of affordable homes, particularly larger family-sized homes.

For many years, housing development in the borough has not met government housing delivery targets. The rising construction costs caused by external factors, such as BREXIT, the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, is continuing to impact on the rate of housing development. Many of the private developer owned sites in Redbridge have been paused. Although this economic situation is not unique to Redbridge, the impact on residents who want to live here is intensified by the low levels of existing affordable housing.

In comparison with much of Greater London however, Redbridge is still an affordable place to purchase homes and to buy land for development. The borough benefits from new transport links provided by the Elizabeth Line and we are actively seeking to improve transport infrastructure across the borough to support the delivery of more housing. This presents a good opportunity for inward investment by private developers to build new homes.

We understand the challenges we face. This Strategy proposes different ways to maximise housing supply by working collaboratively with private developers and Housing Association partners to achieve greater results. The actions we will deliver to achieve these are shown below.

Our Corporate Priorities

The Redbridge Plan 2022-2026 highlights the importance of increasing the number of new affordable homes. It sets out our ambitious target to build 500 council homes and deliver 1,000 affordable homes in partnership with Housing Associations.

The Regeneration Strategy 2017-2027 sets out the context for delivering 17,500 new homes by 2030, alongside increased infrastructure, such as community amenities and health facilities. It promotes housing development as an important driver for regenerating town centres, particularly Ilford. The development targets are aligned with the Local Plan 2015-2030, which identifies sites where housing can be bought forward and sets out the proportion of affordable tenure properties and family sized homes that are required.



Redbridge has the smallest council housing stock of all London boroughs



Objective 1: Increasing the Supply of Housing continued



What we are already doing

Since 2017 we have built 180 new Council homes and there are 300 more in construction. We have purchased 160 homes, both in and out of the borough, to rent to households on the housing register. To help rough sleepers, we have delivered a new scheme at Ryedale for use by 40 people and we have worked with the Salvation Army to provide 42 self-contained accommodation units at Project Malachi. We have supported the delivery of 640 affordable homes by Housing Associations.

We are working in partnership with Private Developers on a range of sites across the borough, including our flagship Western Gateway in Ilford Town Centre. A proportion of the new homes in these developments will be affordable homes for local people.

At any given time, there are typically around 880 private homes in the borough that have been left empty for a range of reasons for longer than six months. Between 2017-2022 we bought 446 long term empty homes back into use. We are continuing to proactively work with owners to encourage and support them to make their homes available to let.

We have built **180**
new Council homes and
there are 300 more in
construction

What you told us and what we will do

In response to our consultation exercise 71% of people felt that increasing the supply of homes was an important issue. The feedback showed that highest priority was for homes that are affordable to rent, particularly family-sized homes and smaller homes for vulnerable people. People also said that new homes should recognise the importance of green outdoor spaces, good transport links and local facilities, such as doctor's surgeries.

Q How do you feel about increasing the supply of homes?

71% of people agreed

Objective 1: Increasing the Supply of Housing continued

	You Said	We Will
1.1	New housing developments should prioritise homes for those on low incomes.	<p>Build more Council homes.</p> <p>Explore new ways to deliver more homes for people on low incomes.</p> <p>Work with Housing Associations and Developers to deliver more affordable housing.</p>
1.2	Prioritise the delivery of larger homes for families.	Use the planning process to ensure larger, family-sized homes are included in Developer and Housing Associations projects.
1.3	Provide supportive homes for people with disabilities, vulnerable adults and older people.	Produce a strategy that delivers the right kinds of homes for those with specialist needs.
1.4	Make the best use of the homes we already have.	<p>Do more to bring empty homes back into use.</p> <p>Increase support to under-occupiers to encourage down-sizing to free-up larger homes.</p>
1.5	Do more to deal with empty sites, especially in town centres.	Bring stalled sites forward by working closely with Private Landowners, Developers and Housing Associations.
1.6	New homes should have access to green space and feel safe. Parking is important.	Use the planning process to ensure that new developments deliver good quality landscaping, security measures like street lighting and adequate parking.
1.7	Having more housing developed in an area will impact on local amenities like Doctor's surgeries and increase traffic congestion.	Review the Local Plan to ensure that housing development comes forward on different types of sites across the borough, where there is enough social and transport infrastructure to support an increase in population.



Objective 2: Housing Need and Homelessness

Overview of housing need and homelessness in Redbridge

There are not enough Council homes and Housing Association properties in Redbridge for all the households who need affordable social housing. The impact of rising private rents and the cost of living crisis means that the number of people needing housing assistance is increasing.

There are currently (as of end of March 2023) over 7,500 households waiting on the housing register for a home, including around 2,980 homeless households in temporary accommodation.

On average only 235 social housing homes become available for re-letting each year.

This shortfall means that the Council relies heavily on the private rental sector to provide homes for those in need. The cost of private rent in Redbridge is rising, with an increase of more than 40% over the last 10 years.

To find homes that are affordable the Council's housing service is increasingly having to look outside of the borough for properties. Currently around 41% of households in temporary accommodation are housed outside Redbridge.

Living in temporary accommodation and experiencing homelessness has a significant impact on people's health, wellbeing and life prospects. They are more likely to suffer from health problems and struggle to access support services.



The number of people needing housing assistance is increasing

Our Corporate Priorities

The Redbridge Plan 2022-2026 sets out a target to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-2023 acknowledges the detrimental impact of homelessness. The Strategy sets out three priorities:

- to end rough sleeping
- to support vulnerable residents through early intervention and prevention services
- to increase the supply of affordable housing to reduce the use of temporary accommodation

The Community Crime Commission report (2021) states that no victim of abuse should lose their home as the result of anti-social behaviour or other criminal actions by an abusive partner.

Objective 2: Housing Need and Homelessness continued

What we are doing already

During the cost of living crisis we have supported households at risk of being made homeless including use of the Household Support Fund. We have a comprehensive range of ways to help people who are sleeping rough and work closely with our partners such as the Welcome Centre and the police.

Our aim is to prevent homelessness by assisting households to remain where they are if it is suitable and sustainable to do so. Where this is not an option, we help people to find alternative affordable accommodation as soon as possible. This is usually in the private rented sector and can be away from Redbridge.

If a household has to relocate outside of the borough, we provide appropriate support to settle in a new area and sustain the accommodation. It is particularly difficult to find affordable family-sized properties for rent in Redbridge. Having to move can impact school children who are taking exams and we take this into account when looking for a suitable property.

Our aim is to prevent homelessness

We've increased the number of bed spaces available for rough sleepers through the development of 40 new single person spaces in Ryedale

To reduce having to depend on bed and breakfast accommodation, we manage a number of temporary hostels. We've also increased the number of bed spaces available for rough sleepers in the borough through the development of 40 new single person spaces in Ryedale, and the opening of Project Malachi with the Salvation Army in Ilford, providing 42 self-contained units.

We carry out building works to adapt our properties, to help keep residents in their homes whenever possible. We offer Disabled Facilities Grants to private landlords to help them adapt their properties for the benefit of their tenants, so that they do not have to move out due to a health condition.

We support council tenants who wish to 'down-size' from a larger home, with a range of financial incentives and practical support. On average only 8 moves are achieved a year that free-up larger units for households who need them.

Our Reach Out service supports any adult or child in Redbridge who is facing domestic abuse. It links up residents to appropriate services that can provide emotional support, counselling and practical advice on issues such as housing, finance and benefits.

We carry out building works to adapt our properties and we support council tenants who wish to down size



What you told us and what we will do

In response to our consultation exercise 72% of people felt that helping people who are in housing need or are homeless was an important issue. The shortage of Council and Housing Association homes was a critical problem for vulnerable people who contacted the Council in housing need.

Q How do you feel about the objective of housing need and homelessness?

72% of people agreed

	You Said	We Will
2.1	You want it to be clearer how the process of joining the Housing Register works, who is being allocated a home and why waiting times are so long.	<p>Update our policies and guidance documents about joining the Housing Register and the allocations process, to make it easier for our residents to understand.</p> <p>Publish an annual table of lettings so that it is clear how many homes have been found for people on the Housing Register.</p>
2.2	Families who are overcrowded are struggling to finding a bigger home that is affordable to rent in Redbridge.	<p>Purchase larger homes to help families on the Housing Register.</p> <p>Work with Private Landlords to motivate them to let homes to families on the Housing Register.</p> <p>Help households to access good quality larger homes outside of the borough where rents are more affordable and provide resettlement support.</p>
2.3	Action should be taken to prevent people from becoming homeless.	<p>Promote Work Redbridge to people at risk of homelessness to help them gain employment, get training and access eligible benefits.</p> <p>Write a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy that addresses current issues.</p>

Objective 2: Housing Need and Homelessness continued

	You Said	We Will
2.4	Being in temporary accommodation, such as a bed and breakfast room is hard, especially for families.	Reduce reliance on bed and breakfast style accommodation by acquiring more suitable properties we can use for temporary accommodation. Reach out to families in temporary accommodation to provide support.
2.5	People fleeing domestic abuse need more help.	Work with partner agencies to provide advice and support. Offer a range of housing options, including helping people remain in their homes safely where possible. Become a Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accredited landlord.
2.6	Having to move away from Redbridge to find a home is difficult for people.	Be clearer with people on the Housing Register about the limited number of affordable homes in Redbridge and why moving out of borough is a quicker way to get a settled, suitable and affordable home. Renew our Placement and Resettlement policy to provide clarity on which homeless households will be prioritised for local accommodation.
2.7	The increase in your household bills is making it difficult to afford your rent.	Provide advice about managing bills and accessing support, such as training and employment guidance from Work Redbridge.
2.8	More needs to be done to tackle bad landlords.	Implement and maintain a borough licencing scheme for private landlords to improve the quality of rented homes.
2.9	The Council should show more empathy towards vulnerable people who are asking for help.	Provide training and support to our staff to improve their understanding of difficult situations.



Objective 3: Improving the Quality of Homes

Overview of the quality of homes in the Redbridge

As the borough's housing stock ages, the need for repairs and upgrade works increases. Residents living in old and poorly maintained homes are more likely to suffer from damp and mould. This can have a detrimental effect on people's health, especially those who are already vulnerable.

The majority of the housing in Redbridge pre-dates the era when regulations required homes to be built with insulation. Uninsulated homes can be expensive to heat, impacting on the resident's comfort and wellbeing.

In response to the challenges caused by climate change, the Government has imposed a legally binding target to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050. Improvements to the energy efficiency of the building's fabric need to have been undertaken by 2035. This includes measures such as increased insulation.

In 2033 regulations will also change so that when a gas boiler needs to be replaced in an existing home it will have to be upgraded to a low-carbon alternative, such as an air-source heat-pump. These new heating systems only work efficiently in homes that are well insulated and that have control ventilation systems.

Estimates suggest that around 80% homes will need to have building fabric upgrades 'retrofitted' before 2035 to conform with government targets and changes in regulations. This will require significant investment, regardless of whether homes are privately owned, belong to a landlord or are part of the Council's stock.

Our Corporate Priorities

The Redbridge Plan 2022-2026 focuses on the need to improve the quality of private sector rented housing through delivery of a new and improved licensing scheme. It sets out the need to increase residents' satisfaction with their neighbourhood as a place to live.

In 2019 we declared a Climate Emergency. Our Climate Action Plan 2021-2024 commits to improving the quality of existing housing by increasing insulation to make them more energy efficient.



Uninsulated homes can be expensive to heat, impacting on the resident's comfort and wellbeing

Objective 3: Improving the Quality of Homes continued

What we are doing already

Council Homes

In 2022 we acknowledged that we need to do more ensure that all our homes comply with the regulations that safeguard our tenant's wellbeing. We are working to identify and rectify damp and mould in our homes. We are currently undertaking an in-depth survey of all of our homes, so that we can better plan our refurbishment works for the next 30 years. The survey data will allow us to prioritise homes that need upgrades, such as additional insulation to make them more energy efficient.

We are building new Council housing and have set ourselves enhanced standards for energy efficiency. For example, installing low-carbon air-source heat pumps, instead of gas boilers. This ensures that the new homes will not need to be retrofitted to meet future building standards.

Housing Association homes

We meet regularly with the Housing Associations who have homes in the borough to review the quality of their homes and understand their challenges. We are working collaboratively with them on solutions, including ways of making homes more energy efficient.

Privately rented homes

A new Private Rental Sector Landlord Licensing scheme has been consulted on and (subject to central government approval) will come into force in 2023. The intention is that this will strengthen the Council's enforcement powers, including being able to stop bad landlords from renting sub-standard property.

All types of homes

We take the problem of people's health being affected by damp and mould in their home very seriously. We have led the development of an NHS Health Impact Assessment 'toolkit' that will be used across London by all health and social care professionals who visit people at home. They will be able to assess if someone's health is at risk and alert the Council and health services to take action.

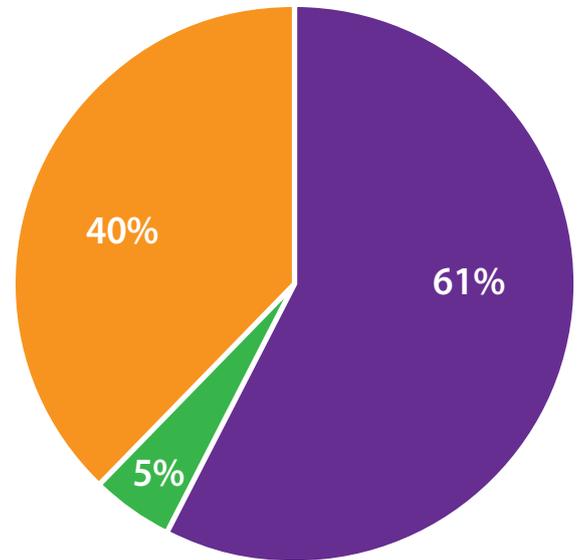
How residents feel about the quality of their home is impacted by the surrounding neighbourhood. Our Enforcement Team tackles issues like fly-tipping and littering. It also works closely with the Metropolitan Police's Safer Neighbourhood team and other agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour. We have invested in increasing CCTV.

Our Civic Pride team works with communities to undertake improvements to the streets in their neighbourhood to make them quieter, greener and healthier. Our Sustainable Transport Strategy will support the transition to electrical vehicles to help tackle air pollution.

What you said and what we will do

In response to our consultation exercise 81% of people felt that improving the quality of homes was an important issue. The highest proportion of people who said that their home was poor quality lived in private rented homes (61%). Fewer Council tenants reported the same issue (40%). Only a few private homeowners were dissatisfied with their home (5%).

Problems reported included drafts, damp and mould, caused by repairs not being carried out. The quality of their neighbourhood was also important and issues such as anti-social behaviour were raised. Rising heating bills were big a concern. 90% of people said that energy efficiency measures, such as insulation, would be their top priority for improving their home.



- Privately rented
- Social rented
- Privately owned

Q How do you feel about improving the quality of homes?

90% of people said that energy efficiency measures would be their top priority

Objective 3: Improving the Quality of Homes continued

	You Said	We Will
3.1	Your Council home was not well maintained and the estate is poorly looked after.	Make it easier for tenants and leaseholders to report repairs, undertake more regular estate inspections and engage with residents about planned maintenance work.
3.2	Your private landlord was not carrying out repairs to your home.	Implement and maintain a licencing scheme for private landlords to improve the quality of rented homes. Take enforcement action to ensure repairs are carried out.
3.3	Your Housing Association landlord was not looking after your home properly.	Work closely with Housing Associations in the borough to ensure that they keep their homes maintained to a decent standard.
3.4	Your home was cold and draughty, making it expensive to heat and uncomfortable to live in.	Survey and analyse our Council stock and set out a programme of energy efficiency improvements. Signpost advice for homeowners and private landlords who want to improve the energy efficiency of their properties and highlight the grants available.
3.5	You want us to do more to address the climate emergency and its impact on housing.	Collaborate with other boroughs and Housing Associations to set out a route map to meeting the net zero emissions target for housing by 2050. Identify opportunities to apply for Government funding to support housing retrofit when they are made available.
3.6	You need changes to be made to your home more quickly so it is easier to live in due to a disability or health problem.	Carry out adaptations to the homes we own promptly and provide grants to landlords to help them make changes to their properties.
3.7	Antisocial behaviour in your neighbourhood is affecting your quality of life.	Coordinate the Councils' enforcement teams to target neighbourhoods where residents are experiencing multiple antisocial behaviour problems.

Objective 4: Putting Residents First



Overview of putting residents first in Redbridge

Access to good quality, safe housing is central to the health and wellbeing of everyone who lives in Redbridge. All of the services that the Council provides its residents impact in some way on housing and improving people's living conditions.

Our Corporate Priorities

The Redbridge Plan 2022-2026 is committed to making the borough a better place to live and resident involvement is central to the delivery of all the Council's aims. Putting residents first is about listening to their views, to drive service improvements and make sure that the Council is accountable for delivering against its promises.

Access to good quality, safe housing is central to the health and wellbeing of everyone who lives in Redbridge

What we are doing already

Council tenants

As of April 2023, in line with the requirements of the government's Charter for Social Housing Residents (2020), we are reviewing our new Council tenant and leaseholder engagement framework. This will ensure that we hear what our tenants and leaseholders are saying about the services they receive from us and ensure that we can demonstrate that we have listened and acted upon their feedback.

We will visit each home once every two years to check on the condition of the property and speak to the tenant to update our records and understand any needs that their household has, so that we can help support them.

We are also strengthening the processes around complaints and telephone handling with a new system to manage our telephone calls. This means that all complaints are dealt with effectively and responses are delivered in a timely way.

Private Landlords

We have a Landlord's Forum that meets quarterly. The aims of the forum are to develop and share good practices, provide current information and signpost opportunities to improve the quality of rented homes in the borough.

Private rental sector tenants

We provide tenants with information about their rights and responsibilities. Provide advice and assistance on disrepair issues, rent repayment orders and illegal evictions.

All residents

We understand the importance of continuously engaging with residents, using in-person events and online outreach. To make sure that we better meet the needs of our diverse population, we benefit from having established community steering groups, including our Community Voice Panel, UNICEF Youth Council and Learning Disability Partnership Board.

Objective 4: Putting Residents First continued

What you said and what we will do

In response to our consultation exercise 83% of people felt that putting residents first was an important issue. People wanted the Council to be better at communicating with them, especially if they were seeking help with a housing problem.

Q How do you feel about the objective of putting residents first?

83% of people agreed with objective of putting residents first

	You Said	We Will
4.1	Be better at answering phone calls and emails. Focus on better customer care.	Look at how we can improve our communications with people in temporary accommodation and people who contact us with a housing problem. Set out our commitments in a Customer Service Charter.
4.2	Be better at communicating with Council tenants and leaseholders	Work collaboratively with Council tenants and leaseholders to improve the services we deliver.
4.3	Do more help tenant's in the private rental sector who have problems with their landlord.	Establish and run a Private Tenant Forum and signpost information about tenant's rights.
4.4	Not everyone can access the internet and some vulnerable residents face communication barriers.	Provide opportunities for face-to-face meetings and support people who are less able to access digital services.
4.5	Talk to residents more about how housing issues affect them.	Build on the all the connections made during the Housing Strategy consultation process to ensure people can continue to guide the delivery of the strategy outcomes.

Summary



To deliver the objectives set out in this Housing Strategy over the next 5 years, we will work collaboratively with public and voluntary sector partners and private developers and providers of housing. We will monitor the delivery of the strategy actions and outcomes through our governance framework and provide regular public and Council updates on our progress.

Objective 1: Increase the Supply of Housing

We will:

1. Deliver homes for people on low-income

- Build more Council homes.
- Explore new ways to deliver more homes for people on low incomes.
- Work with Housing Associations and Developers to deliver more affordable housing.

2. Deliver homes for families

- Use the planning process to ensure larger homes are included in Developer and Housing Associations projects.

3. Deliver homes for people who need support

- Produce a strategy that delivers the right kinds of homes for those with specialist needs.

4. Make better use of existing homes

- Do more to bring empty homes back into use.
- Increase support to under-occupiers to encourage down-sizing to free-up larger homes.

5. Make better use of empty sites

- Bring stalled sites forward by working closely with Private Landowners, Developers and Housing Associations.

6. Provide a suitable setting for new homes

- Use the planning process to ensure that new developments deliver good quality landscaping, security measures like street lighting and adequate parking.

7. Address the impacts of new homes

- Review the Local Plan to ensure that housing development comes forward on different types of sites across the borough, where there is enough social and transport infrastructure to support an increase in population.

Objective 2: Housing Need and Homelessness

We will:

1. Improve the transparency of our Housing Register process

- Update our policies and guidance documents about joining the Housing Register and the allocations process to make it easier for our residents to understand.
- Publish an annual table of lettings so that it is clear how many homes have been found for people on the Housing Register.

2. Increase housing for families

- Purchase larger homes to help families on the Housing Register.
- Work with Private Landlords to motivate them to let homes to families on the Housing Register.
- Help households to access good quality larger homes outside of the borough where rents are more affordable and provide resettlement support.

3. Prevent homelessness

- Promote Work Redbridge to people at risk of homelessness to help them gain employment, get training and access eligible benefits.
- Write a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy that addresses current issues with a focus on helping to prevent people from becoming homeless.

4. Reduce number of families in bed and breakfasts

- Reduce reliance on bed and breakfast style accommodation by acquiring more suitable properties we can use for temporary accommodation.

- Reach out to families in temporary accommodation to provide support.

5. Help people fleeing domestic abuse

- Work with partner agencies to provide advice and support.
- Offer a range of housing options, including helping people remain in their homes safely where possible.
- Become a Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accredited landlord.

6. Be clear about out of borough homes

- Be clearer with people on the Housing Register about the limited number of affordable homes in Redbridge and why moving out of borough is a quicker way to get a settled, suitable and affordable home.
- Renew our Placement and Resettlement policy to provide clarity on which homeless households will be prioritised for local accommodation.

7. Help manage household bills

- Provide advice about managing bills and accessing support, such as training and employment guidance from Work Redbridge.

8. Tackle bad landlords

- Implement and maintain a licencing scheme for private landlords to improve the quality of rented homes.

9. Help staff provide support

- Provide training and support to our staff to improve their understanding of difficult situations.



Objective 3: Improving the Quality of Homes

We will:

1. Maintain Council homes better

- Make it easier for tenants and leaseholders to report repairs, undertake more regular estate inspections and engage with residents about planned maintenance work.

2. Help private tenants get repairs carried out

- Implement and maintain a licencing scheme for private landlords to improve the quality of rented homes. Take enforcement action to ensure repairs are carried out.

3. Support Housing Association tenants

- Work closely with Housing Associations in the borough to ensure that they keep their homes maintained to a decent standard.

4. Make homes more energy efficient

- Survey and analyse our Council stock and set out a programme of energy efficiency improvements.
- Signpost advice for homeowners and private landlords who want to improve the energy efficiency of their properties and highlight the grants available.

5. Address the climate emergency

- Collaborate with other boroughs and Housing Associations to set out a route map to meeting the net zero emissions target for housing by 2050.
- Identify opportunities to apply for Government funding to support housing retrofit when they are made available.

6. Make homes easier to live in

- Carry out adaptations to the homes we own promptly and provide grants to landlords to help them make changes to their properties.

7. Tackle anti-social behaviour

- Coordinate the Councils' enforcement teams to target neighbourhoods where residents are experiencing multiple antisocial behaviour problems.

Objective 4: Putting Residents First

We will:

1. Be better at communicating

- Improve our communication with people who contact us with a housing problem and those in temporary accommodation.
- Set out our commitments in a Customer Service Charter.

2. Improve our services

- Work collaboratively with Council tenants and leaseholders to improve the services we deliver.

3. Help private tenants

- Establish and run a Private Tenant Forum and signpost information about tenant's rights.

4. Provide different ways to get support

- Provide opportunities for face-to-face meetings and support people who are less able to access digital services.

5. Continue talking to residents.

- Build on all the connections made during the Housing Strategy consultation process to ensure people can continue to guide the delivery of the strategy outcomes.



Library of Council Policies

Corporate Plans

Redbridge Plan 2022-2026

Climate Action Plan 2021

Local Plan 2015-2023

Commissions

Crime Commission 2021

Growth Commission 2020

Strategies

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2017-2023

Regeneration Strategy 2017-2027



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