



TOWER HAMLETS  
HOUSING FORUM

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



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# Introduction

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Welcome to the annual report of the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum (THHF) for 2018. This year we have developed a new style annual report which we hope reflects the work of the partnership during the year.

The Forum brings together housing providers locally in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets who have made a commitment to work together in partnership to deliver high quality homes and services to local residents. In addition THHF also supports the delivery of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets' (the Council's) strategic housing objectives as well as the Tower Hamlets Plan 2018-2023. THHF has a clear governance structure led by the THHF Executive and supported by a range of local sub-groups.

This annual report includes our achievements over the last year. By working in partnership we have been able to ensure continuous improvement in services to residents as well as working with the Council to develop new affordable homes and sustainable communities.

Following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower last year, we have been working in partnership with the Council to fully review fire safety arrangements and more details of our work on this can be found in the report. We will be continuing our work over the coming year reviewing both the recommendations from the Hackitt Review and the expected recommendations from the public inquiry.

We would like to thank both the Council, residents, the Mayor of London, local businesses, the Police and Fire Service and the voluntary sector, who have continued to work in partnership with housing providers to deliver our ongoing work to local communities.

We hope you find the annual report useful. Please do let us know if you would like any further information.



**Sandra Fawcett**  
**Tower Hamlets Housing Forum Chair**





# Governance

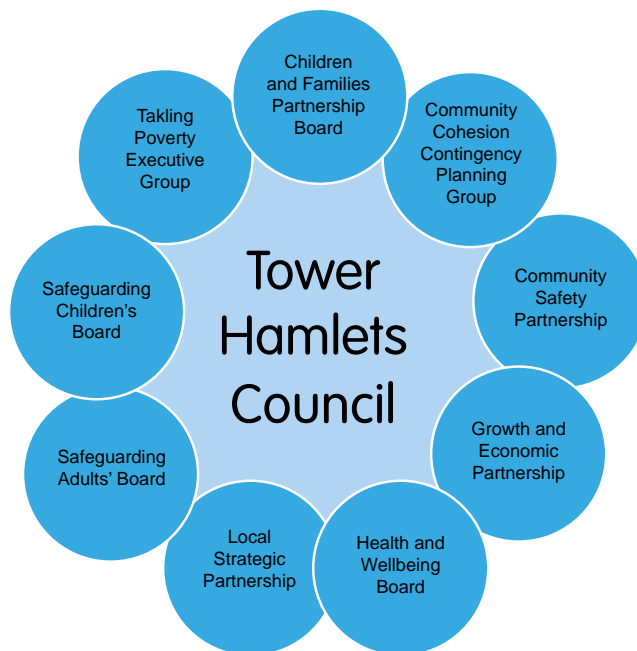
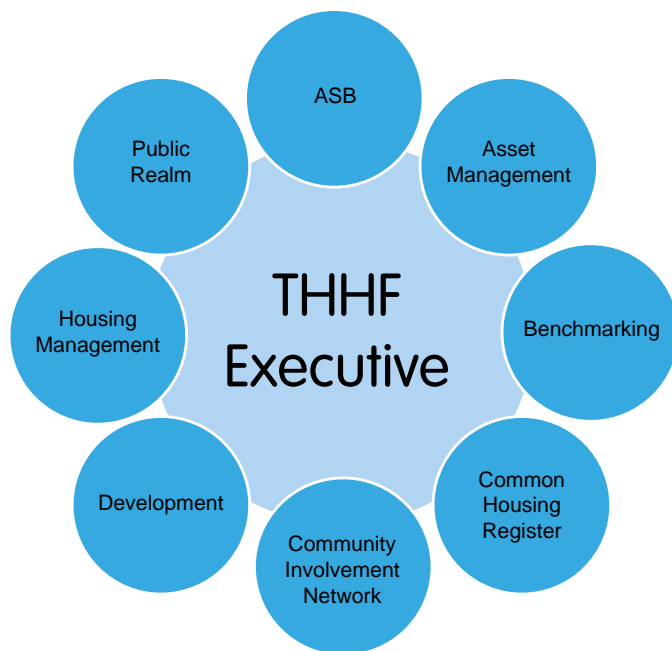
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THHF develops an executive work plan for the year to ensure that its key objectives can be delivered.

THHF meets at least 4 times during the year and holds its AGM each Autumn.

The THHF Executive sub-groups meet throughout the year. These groups cover a range of operational delivery items and team members work together to share good practice and to discuss current housing policy and local issues. The groups collectively work together with the Council to support its overarching strategic aims.

THHF also supports a range of Council strategic scrutiny and delivery forums with representatives across all disciplines.







# ASB Strategy Group

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Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) is a key priority for housing providers and the Council.

Local residents tell us that security and safety are key priorities for them locally and the work of the ASB strategy group helps support this. The group works with other partner agencies who also have a strategic responsibility to help address Anti-Social Behaviour in the borough. This includes representation from the Police, as well as Victim Support, the London Fire Service and the Youth Offending and Probation Services.

The group works in partnership with the Council's Community Safety Partnership. This year the group has:

- **Focused on supporting delivery of the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Review. Key outcomes have included reviewing the standard operating procedures covering the use of dispersal powers, public space protection orders, community trigger and closure powers. These procedures will enable a consistent approach to enforcement by members of THHF.**
- **Reviewed the community trigger process which includes a process for the role of external agencies.**
- **Revised the Safer Neighbourhood Team contact arrangements to support moving calls away from 101 and enabling stronger local delivery.**
- **Launched a Nitrous Oxide communications campaign including a radio broadcast to raise awareness across the borough of the impact of the use of silver canisters.**
- **Shared best practice between partners to further improve our overall response to ASB issues within the borough.**







# Asset Management sub-group

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Ensuring the health and safety of many of Tower Hamlets' residents including safety in the event of a fire is an essential part of the work of this group. In addition, members of this group have overall responsibility for repairing and improving homes across the borough.

A safe and good quality home is fundamental to people's quality of life and THHF Members work together to ensure they can deliver this.

The sub-group has worked closely with the Council and the London Fire Service during the year and has:

- Fully considered fire safety following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower. This work included working closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in relation to checks for Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding, as well as considering Government guidance on interim measures for those landlords affected.
- Reviewed information from the Fire Service High Rise Task Force, ensuring that landlord responsibilities are adhered to and that there is transparency around Fire Risk Assessments and their follow up work.
- Contributed to the Council's Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Fire Safety Review and agreeing a new Fire Risk Assessment performance indicator for housing providers to ensure borough wide information is available.
- Contributed to the Disabled Facilities Grant funding arrangement review as part of the new Private Sector Renewal Policy.
- Reviewed maintenance arrangements for new build homes.
- Ensured ongoing compliance with the Heat Network Regulations for the development and delivery of hot water, heating and power systems as well as looking at retrofitting opportunities and ways to improve the efficiency of existing systems.
- Considered how smart technology can be used in a reactive maintenance service, giving potential for housing providers to take preventative maintenance action based on performance data as well as improving energy management and income maximisation.





# Benchmarking sub-group

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The group's primary objective is to share good practice and compare costs and performance to ensure value for money for local residents, as well as ongoing continuous improvement to service delivery.

The group has considered a range of best practice during the year and has:

- Scrutinised key performance indicators of housing providers on a quarterly basis and used the outcomes to support learning and service improvement.
- Considered a range of best practice and continuous improvement presentations from others.
- Agreed to use the new housing Sector Scorecard in order to support benchmarking in 2018/19.
- Completed a leaseholder administration service charges survey.
- Considered the implications of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), which were implemented during 2018.





# Common Housing Register Forum

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The ongoing shortage of affordable housing both in the borough and across London continues to make media headlines.

The Forum delivers an accessible allocations and lettings service which supports best practice in line with the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England. The Forum also supports members to meet their statutory responsibilities.

The Forum leads on the Borough's Lettings Policy, informing and influencing this and ensuring consistency in application. In addition the Forum delivers both overcrowding and under-occupation reduction strategies to support high housing demand in the local area.

During the year the Forum has worked in partnership with others and has:

- Delivered the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee's initiatives to reduce under-occupation.
- Promoted the use of mutual exchange and the associated national exchange schemes to help meet the severe housing need in the borough.
- Developed a new Common Housing Register Agreement for members, taking account of current legislation and good practice.
- Agreed a range of decant requests to support the Council's strategic responsibilities towards regeneration.
- Worked with the East London Housing Partnership to develop a sub-regional guide to nominations best practice.
- Held a well attended Housing Options Day for local residents to provide information about different housing tenures available locally.
- Commenced work on the first reviews of 5 year fixed terms tenancies.
- Considered the requirements of the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- Supported the Council's Housing Strategy consultation 2018-22.
- Collectively let over 1,600 new social and affordable rented homes and delivered the targets for Project 120 to ensure accessible housing for those in need.





# Community Involvement Network

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Working closely with local communities is key to success for local housing providers.

The Community Involvement Network (CIN) has delivered a range of really strong outcomes around training, employment, community involvement, community cohesion and the involvement of a diverse range of local residents.

During the year the CIN has:

- Promoted a range of funding for sports, exercise and play activities across the borough resulting in member RPs gaining financial support for fitness activities for local residents
- Delivered the annual shared resident training programme, increasing the number of partners involved and offering a wide range of training to help residents into employment and to develop as community champions.
- Shared knowledge and expertise aimed at building strong communities.
- Promoted good practice models of youth participation in governance and/or scrutiny structures actively supporting the Housing Associations Youth Network (HAYN).
- Championed the Council's Community Driving Change programme actively encouraging residents to engage in their local action plan.
- Discussed models for community centres, agreeing best practice frameworks to maximise the use of centres across the borough.





# Development sub-group

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The delivery of good quality, secure, affordable housing is key to delivering sustainable communities. The delivery of new housing continues to be one of the key challenges faced by all housing providers at this time.

The Development sub-group works with all developing housing providers locally to consider the most effective way to meet this challenge and deliver new homes.

The Development sub-group works with the Council's Housing Strategy team and the Greater London Authority (GLA) to deliver both the Affordable Housing Programme, the Council's Local Plan and the Mayor of London's Housing Strategy.

During the year the Development sub-group has worked with a range of external stakeholders and has:

- Formally launched the Section 106 Design Guide.
- Considered fire safety in new build housing with a particular focus on tall buildings and the use of external cladding materials.
- Developed the Wheelchair Housing Design Brief 2017.
- Facilitated the rehousing of 42 families requiring wheelchair accessible housing.
- Considered and responded to the draft London Plan and the draft London Housing Strategy consultation.
- Worked in partnership to develop 926 affordable homes during the year.
- Signed up to the Shared Ownership Charter for Service Charges for delivery of the 2016-21 Affordable Housing Programme.
- Considered information on self-build and custom build projects and how these may be taken forward locally.
- Contributed to the Council's Green Grid Strategy.





# Housing Management sub-group

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Offering good and easy to access local housing management services is a key requirement for housing providers.

The Housing Management sub-group considers emerging housing policy and works in partnership with others to deliver consistently high quality services. The main aim of the sub-group is to develop and implement good practice and continuous improvement in relation to the core housing management activities in the borough. This includes income management and financial inclusion, leasehold management, tenancy management and sustainment and supported housing.

The Housing Management sub-group has worked with others during the year and has:

- Enhanced the approach to tenancy fraud by working with the Council to recover properties illegally sub-let. During the year 80 homes were recovered across the borough by housing providers.
- Promoted help and services available to sustain tenancies for those at risk due to mental health issues and considered guidance relating to support for those under the threat of eviction.
- Worked in partnership with the Mental Health First Aid programme.
- Shared good practice on service delivery in relation to mixed tenure management.
- Considered the Council's Hate Crime Strategy and Homeless Prevention Project and how housing providers can support these initiatives.
- Worked with the Borough on the review of private renting and leaseholder landlords.





# Public Realm sub-group

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The Public Realm sub group works with a range of partners including the London Fire Service and the Council to deliver ongoing improvements to the communal areas on housing developments.

Local residents tell us that keeping the areas around their homes clean, attractive, safe and secure is really important and impacts directly on how local people feel about where they live. The first impression of housing providers as landlords is the visible appearance of housing developments.

During the last year the Public Realm sub-group has:

- Considered joint procurement of day to day materials with the objective of obtaining better value for money.
- Worked with the London Fire Service to ensure that all communal areas are kept free from obstruction.
- Worked with the Council on the development of their Waste Strategy.
- Worked in partnership with the North London Waste Authority and Peabody on a project to increase recycling.
- Held a successful conference for Caretakers enabling the sharing of good practice and the development of improvements for the coming year.
- Held a range of resident awareness campaigns, including around fire safety, across the borough.
- Continued to work in partnership to deliver the agreed protocol for Firework Night, prohibiting bonfires and displays in housing developments and encouraging residents to attend the organised firework displays available locally.



**CLARION**  
HOUSING

**Clarion Housing** owns and manages 5,800 homes in Tower Hamlets – most of them in Bow - following the merger of Circle Old Ford with Clarion Housing in March 2018.

Clarion has a new leadership team in place focused on improving the services residents receive. The team are locally based in Bow and provide a comprehensive service to their homes and neighbourhoods. The £75m Parkside investment programme is nearing completion and they are in the process of bringing the repairs service in-house. Clarion has also completed over 100 new homes for social rent for local people at City Island.

Clarion's charitable foundation, Clarion Futures, supported hundreds of residents in Tower Hamlets over the last year getting into work, improving their digital skills, accessing training and providing money and debt advice. They also support a range of community facilities including the Roman Road Adventure Playground – where local young people can go to play – and the Eastside Youth and Community Centre.

Clarion are in the process of setting up a resident-led Community Panel which will help shape neighbourhoods and local services going forward.



**Eastend Homes** is a community based Registered Provider set up in 2005.

It owns and manages 2,251 tenanted, 53 private and 1,477 leasehold homes in several clusters across the Borough: from the southern part of the Isle of Dogs through to the City of London fringe.

It provides a comprehensive housing management service from local estate-based offices.

To date, it has invested over £140m in estate improvements and regeneration; and building new affordable homes, primarily let at social rent.



**Gateway** provides 3,000 homes for people living in East London, predominately in Tower Hamlets. It offers social rent and shared ownership homes and is the largest provider of older people's housing in the borough.

Gateway is undertaking an extensive regeneration and development programme and aims to build 500 new homes by 2020 while it continues to make improvements to its sheltered schemes.

Gateway invests in people and services to make a difference in the local community and sees itself as more than just a landlord. For every £1 Gateway invests in community initiatives the return on the investment is over £8. Residents feel the benefits of this investment with improvements in health, wellbeing, and access to advice, training and employment support. Gateway will have made 5000 lives better by 2020.





**L&Q Group** is one of the UK's leading housing associations and one of London's largest residential developers. The L&Q Group manages more than 90,000 homes across London and the South East, including almost 3,000 homes in Tower Hamlets.

The L&Q Group is working towards delivering 100,000 quality new homes, half of which will be genuinely affordable and half for private rent or sale. Through the L&Q Foundation, it will also invest £250 million to improve the life chances of those who live in its homes and communities and to promote independence among residents. L&Q launched its care and support subsidiary, L&Q Living, in 2017.



**Notting Hill Genesis** is a leading provider of homes and services. The organisation was formed following the merger of Notting Hill and Genesis Housing Associations in April 2018. Both organisations have a long history within the housing sector having celebrated their 50th anniversaries.

Notting Hill Genesis own or manage around 55000 units of all tenures, providing homes and services to over 170,000 people in more than 80 local authorities in London, Hertfordshire and the east of England.

Our stock portfolio includes a range of properties – from temporary housing, to private and social rent homes, homes for sale, to supported housing and key worker accommodation. Notting Hill Genesis is also part of the G15 group, London's largest 15 housing associations, which between them provide homes for one in ten Londoners and a quarter of all new homes in the capital.



Because good homes make everything possible

**Network Homes** owns and manages 20,000 homes across London and the Homes Counties, housing around 50,000 people. They aim to build around 750-1000 new homes a year and have an active development programme in Tower Hamlets. They also invest around £1 million every year in the communities where they work to support people to get jobs and training and improve their quality of life. Over more than 40 years, Network has worked in partnership with local authorities, communities and developers to build and regenerate homes and neighbourhoods.

Network Homes believe good homes make everything possible, the foundation stone for a good and fulfilling life, and we do everything possible to play our part in tackling the housing crisis.



**One Housing** helps people to 'live better' by providing high quality homes and care across London and the south east. We manage approximately 16,000 homes and have plans to build 3,500 more by 2020. We also care for over 11,000 people to help them live independently.

We work hard to make a positive difference to our residents' lives by promoting aspiration, independence and well-being through a range of training and support services.



**Peabody** has a mission to help people make the most of their lives by providing great quality affordable homes, working with communities and promoting wellbeing. In June 2017, Peabody and Family Mosaic merged to become one organisation. We are now responsible for 55,000 homes in and around the capital. We build great quality places and will develop more than 2,500 new homes each year.

Most of our 110,000 residents live in London, predominantly in the inner boroughs including Tower Hamlets where we have around 3500 homes. Next year we will be building an additional 317 new homes in the Borough.

The Peabody Community Foundation has invested more than £6.9 million in programmes to enhance resilience and wellbeing in the communities we work in. This has included helping 982 people into work, generating a return of £8 for every £1 invested, and supporting 1,877 young people into skills, education or employment.



**Poplar HARCA** is a multi-award-winning housing association with an international reputation for regeneration, innovation and service.

With partners, it is leading a local regeneration programme that has already delivered over 1,000 new social rent and affordable homes. Annually it invests over £3m in community initiatives focusing on creating opportunity for its residents.

It employs 300 staff, and attracts hundreds of volunteers, many of whom also live locally. It is proud to have been one of the first accredited London Living Wage employers.





**Providence Row HA** is based in Tower Hamlets and provides mainly specialist supported accommodation and intensive support services for people with multiple support needs, histories of rough sleeping, mental health issues and young people. We provide recovery based programmes that help people return to mainstream accommodation and to reintegrate with local communities. Last year this benefited over 600 Tower Hamlets residents.

We also provide 133 units of unsupported accommodation most of which provides housing for local families.

We are a local employer and aim to provide local people with work experience and volunteering opportunities.

Partnerships with local voluntary groups have included childcare provision through the Early Years Network Tower Hamlets and gardening and environmental enhancement with the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park.

**Southern Housing Group** was established in 1901 and has grown to become one of the largest housing associations in the south east of England. The Group houses 72,000 customers, owns and manages over 27,000 homes and properties and works with over 40 local authorities. It also employs nearly 1,000 people, offers a range of housing products for rent and sale and undertakes a wide range of activities to improve the lives of its customers.

The Group believes that investing in people and communities is as important as building homes and this philosophy has informed its activities for more than 100 years. It aims to provide a first-class housing management service for its customers living in a range of tenures including social rent, affordable rent, private rent, shared ownership and private sale.

Southern Housing Group is a member of the g15, which represents London's largest housing associations. The g15 houses one in ten Londoners and builds a quarter of London's new homes. Together they work to solve the housing crisis by delivering good quality, affordable homes of all types.

**Spitalfields HA** is the largest Bangladeshi-led housing Association in the UK. The Association was founded in 1979 by members of the Bangladeshi community in response to poor housing conditions in the Spitalfields area. Set up originally as a co-operative, the Association concentrated on developing large family sized accommodation for Bangladeshi families.

The Association was registered with the Housing Corporation in 1979 and began an ambitious development programme, refurbishing what had been underdeveloped. We are now a general needs housing provider, providing good quality housing and community services to those with the greatest needs in Tower Hamlets.

The Association currently owns and manages over 850 properties with a target in our business plan of getting to 1,000 homes in the near future. The Association also owns and manages a commercial property portfolio where the surplus is reinvested for the benefit of the community and social housing needs.

Spitalfields HA's mission is to 'create places where people want to live'. In 2017/18, Spitalfields HA opened their first ever community centre at Vallance Road E1.



**Swan Housing Association** owns and manages over 11,000 homes in Essex and East London. Customer Service Excellence accredited, we are committed to delivering local services to our residents, stakeholders and Borough partners. Tower Hamlets is home to our London Regional office, based at Blackwall Reach and we take an active role in Borough initiatives including the Tower Hamlet's Housing Forum and the Star in the Community Awards.

Our dedicated teams provide specialist advice and work closely with our partners to ensure residents have access to the widest range of support. Through the Swan Foundation we supported over 1,500 people and funded a range of projects in Tower Hamlets, such as the "Cat in the Hat" literacy outreach programme for local primary schools and the LBTH Friends and Neighbours Project, tackling social isolation.

We are committed to delivering much needed new homes in Tower Hamlets. Blackwall Reach will create 1,500 homes, 50% of which will be affordable and Watts Grove will deliver 65 across a 100% affordable housing scheme.

**Tower Hamlets Community Housing (THCH)** is an independent, community focused housing provider managing 3,200 homes in Tower Hamlets. It has a strong community ethos and focuses on empowering residents, encouraging communities to thrive and delivering sustainable investment to existing and new housing stock. THCH provides a mix of quality, affordable housing as well as market sale, shared ownership and commercial property and has a proud history of regeneration and delivering innovative housing developments.

THCH has been undergoing a major transformation programme called Fit For the Future to deliver better value for money and modernise services.

THCH is a member of the PlaceShapers Group - a national network of more than 100 community based housing associations.

**Tower Hamlets Homes** was Formed as an Arm's Length Managing Organisation (ALMO) in 2008 and is a not-for-profit company responsible for the management, maintenance and improvement of over 21,000 homes owned by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

Working with residents, partners, and the council, our aim is to provide thriving, safe and sustainable neighbourhoods where residents can be proud of their homes, respect one another and realise their potential.

THH delivers a full range of tenant and leasehold management services and is proud of the many improvements it has made both for and with residents. Over the last year customer satisfaction increased across a range of measures and tenant satisfaction reached an all-time high.

Increasingly THH is making a positive difference to the lives of residents and last year we helped over 100 residents secure employment.



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