



TOWER HAMLETS
HOUSING FORUM

ANNUAL REPORT 2016





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INTRODUCTION

The Tower Hamlets Housing Forum (THHF) brings together housing providers who share an overarching commitment to Tower Hamlets and its residents.

THHF members do much more than only provide quality affordable homes. Working together, THHF supports Tower Hamlets Council's vision for the area and for the people who live, work, and visit the Borough.

This annual report includes the achievements THHF members are most proud of. It is just a small fraction of the work that THHF members have done in the year. With the Council. With residents. With charities and the Third Sector. With social enterprise. With small, medium, and big business. With anyone and everyone who shares the common purpose of providing the best to Tower Hamlets' residents.



GOVERNANCE

THHF Executive

ASB

Asset Management

Benchmarking

Common Housing Register

Community Involvement Network

Development

Housing Management

Public Realm

THHF meets at least four times each year, and has an AGM in October.

Dedicated sub-groups bring together operational leads to share best practice, discuss emerging issues, and work closely with the Council to achieve key strategies.

THHF also supports, and is represented on, the Council's strategic scrutiny and delivery forums.

Tower Hamlets Council

Children & Families Partnership Board

Community Cohesion Contingency Planning Group

Community Safety Partnership

Economic Task Force

Great Place to Live

Health & Wellbeing Board

Local Strategic Partnership

Safeguarding Adults Board

Safeguarding Children's Board

Welfare Reform Task Group



ASB STRATEGY GROUP

The group is made up of partner agencies with a strategic responsibility to address anti-social behaviour in the Borough.

It includes representation from the Police, Council, Victim Support, London Fire Brigade, Youth Offending Service, Probation and these forums: Tower Hamlets Housing Forum ASB Forum, ASB Operations Group, ASB Partnership Action Group, ASB Legal Consultation and Certification Group, Neighbourhood Panels and Community Trigger Panel.

This year the group:

- Developed an innovative Partnership Action Group that focuses on very vulnerable and at risk victims of ASB. This forum has worked with 25 individuals, and close working with mental health support services has made a significant contribution to the reduction of repeat callers
- Provided training on new ASB legislation, which has eased the transition from the old powers and enabled new powers to be used effectively and consistently in the Borough
- Worked closely with statutory partners and providers with hostels, to more effectively support a particularly vulnerable client group that causes ASB, which often impacts significantly on neighbours
- Contributed to the Council's reviews of Youth Services, and Community Alcohol Partnership





ASSET MANAGEMENT SUB-GROUP

Protecting and improving the homes in which so many Tower Hamlets residents live is a vital part of what THHF members are responsible for.

This complicated area of work is often overlooked, but it is fundamental to the quality of life for those who live in members' homes.

The group works closely with the Council, and in the past year has developed and implemented:

- An Environmental Protection and Health protocol to support a more effective partnership approach when responding to complaints of disrepair
- A Disabled Facilities Grant protocol which defines the approach to facilitate the consistent and effective delivery of funded adaptations in Tower Hamlets which enable disabled residents to live independently
- A Fire Strategy that sets out best practice recommendations to prevent and manage fire risk incidents in high-rise blocks.
- Requirements to ensure compliance with new Heat Network regulations when providers act as heat suppliers by way of district and communal heat systems

BENCHMARKING SUB-GROUP

Learning from each other, sharing best practice, and comparing performance and costs are key drivers for improvements to services.

This year, the benchmarking sub-group has:

- Developed a Performance Management Framework
- Produced and scrutinised key performance indicators each quarter
- Initiated a project to look at service charges
- Carried out best practice peer reviews



COMMON HOUSING REGISTER

The Forum partners ensure continuous improvement of allocations and lettings services in-line with the Regulatory Framework, good practice, and supports members to meet statutory responsibilities.

- The Forum leads on the Borough's Lettings Policy, informing and influencing the policy and ensuring consistency in its application
- The Forum hosts a very well attended annual Housing Options Day. This event gives local residents access to landlords and housing schemes, and information about different housing tenures
- The Forum implements the Overcrowding and Under-Occupation Reduction Strategies, both very important in an area of very high housing demand



This year the Forum has enabled:

- A reduction in overcrowding
- Better management of under-occupation
- Support for the homelessness agenda
- Greater transparency for residents waiting to move
- Provision of strategic information and support for residents, in particular around changes to the policy

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT NETWORK

CiN has developed key strategic partnerships which deliver initiatives promoting stronger, sustainable communities.

Learning from each other and working together on projects has meant enhanced value for money and a raft of positive outcomes around the key themes of Enabling Participation, Young People and Employment and Training.

This year, the CiN has:

- Developed resident learning and employment initiatives, working together to deliver Job Fairs and develop employment opportunities
- Supported a variety of initiatives recognising our community champions, including Gardens for Life and Tower Hamlets Food Growing Network
- 13 partners delivered a training programme of 28 courses with support from the Idea Stores
- Promoted best practice for involving young people in governance and scrutiny
- Assisted in the Council's strategic review of its Community Engagement Plan and Youth Services



DEVELOPMENT SUB-GROUP

The need for good quality and affordable homes has never been more acute. The Development sub-group is critical to ensuring Tower Hamlets maximises the number of new homes across a range of tenures to meet housing need. It shares best practice about place-making, regeneration, design and funding.

This past year it has considered:

- How to help the London Fire Brigade with tower block safety information, leading to the incorporation of information plates on new blocks
- The value and usefulness of car clubs to new car-free developments
- New housing 'products' which provide housing options across a range of housing needs and aspirations, including low cost home ownership opportunities
- Strategic projects such as the Housing Zone, Project 120 (housing those with complex health needs), the Council's Local Plan, the GLA and London Mayor's Housing initiatives and the Council's Housing Strategy





HOUSING MANAGEMENT SUB-GROUP

The Housing Management Sub-Group brings together the operational leads from the THHF partners. The group shares best practice, discusses emerging trends, and works closely with the Council's teams to ensure consistently quality housing services by all social landlords.

The sub-group's successes in the year include:

- Working the Council's Housing Options Team on a tenancy sustainment initiative to prevent homelessness
- Supporting Claim the Max initiatives to support residents to claim benefits
- Challenging tenancy fraud through a number of projects including a 'key amnesty' and working with the Council's fraud team
- Reviewing mutual exchange policies and practice to maximise the opportunities for residents to move

PUBLIC REALM SUB-GROUP

Keeping the areas in and around homes safe clean and attractive is an important area of work that directly affects how residents feel about where they live.

This year, the group:

- Arranged the second very successful Caretakers' Conference. This well-attended event brought together 60 caretakers representing the major housing providers in Tower Hamlets to share best practice, and discuss their work and experiences
- Supported the Council's introduction of the 20 mph speed limit
- Heard how we can support organisations that specialise in getting long-term unemployed residents back into work
- Exchanged ideas on the best way to carry out estate inspections
- Shared best practice about the management of common and shared spaces
- Agreed a protocol for Fireworks Night prohibiting bonfires and displays on estates, removing rubbish in the lead-up to 5th November, and encouraging residents to attend the Council's organised firework displays



ABOUT THHF MEMBERS



Old Ford

Circle Old Ford owns and manages 5,190 homes in Tower Hamlets, including specialist supported housing and homes for older people.

Since 2010, it has invested over £225million in new homes in the Borough. In the past 5 years it has invested £100million building 495 social rent homes; and £40million building 204 shared ownership homes. It has recently purchased the former London Chest Hospital site to build more new homes.

In the past 3 years, it has invested £1.3million in community development.

Last year 1,000 residents received employment advice, 314 were helped with training; and 97 helped into work. It converted an unused underground car park into an award-winning Construction Training Centre. There are 1,000 visits each month to its 8 community facilities. It provides accredited training and youth activities with the Council.



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

It owns and manages 2,229 tenanted and 1,431 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.

Tenant and leaseholder involvement is fundamental to developing and shaping services to meet residents' needs, priorities, and aspirations.

To date, it has invested over £130m in estate improvements and regeneration; and building new affordable homes, all let at social rent. By 2017, it will have invested £145m and completed its estate regeneration programmes.

ABOUT THHF MEMBERS



East Thames Group is one of the largest housing associations operating in east London and Essex. We have more than 35 years' experience and we own and manage almost 15,000 homes. As well as building new affordable homes, East Thames also offers care and support services and runs a range of programmes to get unemployed people back into work.

We are an equal owner of Triathlon Homes, a joint venture with Southern Housing Group and First Base, established to own and manage the 1,379 affordable homes on East Village, formerly the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic athlete's village.



Gateway provides over 2,800 homes for residents of East London, predominantly in Tower Hamlets. It offers social rent and shared ownership homes, and is the largest provider of older people's housing in the borough.

As Gateway celebrates its 90th year, it is undertaking an extensive development and regeneration program. In recent years it has spent over £27m on new buildings and regeneration, and aims to build 500 new social homes by 2020 as well

as improvements to sheltered schemes. Gateway Homeworks – an in-house repairs initiative – successfully launched in 2015.

Gateway's 'Support to Employment Program (STEP)' this year assisted 132 residents with employability support; 60 into employment; and 63 into education and volunteering. It also funds over 100 tenant groups and allocates £40,000 to environmental improvement grants.



Genesis owns or manages around 33,000 homes across London and the east of England and its stock portfolio includes a range of properties - from temporary housing to rented homes, homes for sale, and supported housing.

At any given time there are around 100,000 people living in a Genesis home.

It provides homes to people wherever there is a need: whether in one of its homeless services in Suffolk, or at its award-winning Stratford Halo development. It creates and sustains thriving communities, working with customers to ensure they have a safe and secure place to call home and access to high quality services that suit their diverse needs.



One Housing provides high quality homes and care. It manages over 15,000 homes across 27 London boroughs and surrounding counties and care for over 11,500 people, and is London's largest provider of support, housing and services to people with complex needs.

One Housing builds and sells new homes or rents them commercially to raise money for more affordable homes and services for its customers. Since 2011 it has delivered 1,500 new affordable homes and it has plans to build 3,600 more by 2019.

ABOUT THHF MEMBERS



Poplar HARCA is a multi- award-winning housing association with an international reputation for innovation, services, and regeneration. It owns and manages over 9,000 homes, community, green, and commercial spaces - all in Poplar and Bow.

It has built over 1,000 new social rent homes. With partners, it is leading a £2billion investment in new homes, enterprise,

infrastructure, public spaces, and regeneration – all in just four square miles.

Each year it invests over £3million in community initiatives that focus on creating opportunity for local residents. It employs over 300 staff, and attracts 100s of volunteers, the majority of whom live locally. It is proud to have been one of the first accredited London Living Wage employers.



Peabody is one of London's oldest and largest housing providers. The Peabody Donation Fund was founded in 1862 by the great American philanthropist George Peabody.

Now called Peabody, it owns and manages more than 29,000 homes across the capital. It also delivers and supports a wide range of community programmes for all Londoners.

Providence Row Housing Association houses 133 households in general needs, and 335 people in supported housing, all in Tower Hamlets.

It employs over 110 staff and 30 volunteers, many of whom are local people, current and former residents who bring “lived experience” to support services.

As well as accommodation, it provides support and social care services to people with a range of needs and experiences. This can include those with

histories of rough sleeping, mental ill health, substance misuse, and offending. They regain independence and find a place again within their local community through training, volunteering, and employment.

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



Southern Housing Group owns and manages more than 28,000 homes to 67,000 residents across London and the South East. It provides housing management services to a range of tenures including social, affordable, and intermediate and market rent; and homeownership including shared ownership and outright sale.

Its Social and Economic Regeneration Department works with local communities and partner organisations to develop communities and create opportunities for residents.

In the past year, it supported customers with a variety of projects, and invested over £1.8million in communities.

Projects include support into employment and training, money management, funding for local projects, developing opportunities for young people, and helping residents get on-line.

It is a member of the g15 which represents London's 15 largest housing associations that house one in ten Londoners, and builds a quarter of London's new homes.

ABOUT THHF MEMBERS



Swain owns and manages over 11,000 homes in Essex and East London, 2,015 are in Tower Hamlets. Its ambitious three-year corporate strategy sees it on track to deliver over 1,000 new homes, investing 10,000 hours in community engagement activities and with partners investing £100million in regeneration by 2017.

It was recently accredited by the Sunday Times as one of the Top 100 Not-for-Profit Companies in the UK to work for. It maintained its Customer Service Excellence accreditation this year.

Its Resident Involvement and Community Development Team ensure that residents are fully involved. It delivers a wide range of activities from youth clubs and sporting activities, to ESOL classes and employment and training programmes. It has specialist anti-social behaviour, income recovery, community development, neighbourhood management, allocations and estate services teams. Repairs and planned maintenance are delivered through a 14-year partnership with Axis Europe Ltd.

It specialises in complex regeneration projects building new mixed tenure estates, often including community and commercial facilities. Local regeneration projects include Blackwall Reach and Bow Cross. Blackwall Reach was recognised at the 2015 Planning Awards; It replaces 252 homes on Robin Hood Gardens with over 1,500 homes, new community facilities, an extended school, a mosque, commercial premises, and improved public realm. Bow Cross was a 10-year project with 295 homes refurbished, and 385 new homes built. It won a prestigious London Mayor's Award for Housing Excellence and an award for "Best Project 5 Years On."

It is committed to delivering local services. This year it will relocate its London Regional Office from Crisp Street to Blackwall Reach, and open a new multi-purpose community facility.



Tower Hamlets Community Housing owns and manages around 3,200 homes in Bethnal Green, Limehouse, Shadwell, Spitalfields, and Wapping.

It has 2 area offices, employs 78 permanent staff, and is financially strong. It prides itself on maintaining its high tenant satisfaction rate.

Formed in March 2000 with Government funding of £21million for the transfer of 1,249 homes from the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, it has continued to grow through three further local authority stock transfers, the transfer of 54 homes from Mitali Housing Association, and by building new homes.

Year-on-year, its development programme will build new homes for social rent.



Tower Hamlets Homes

Formed as an Arm's Length Managing Organisation (ALMO) in 2008, Tower Hamlets Homes 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, its aim is to provide thriving, safe, and sustainable neighbourhoods where residents can be proud of their homes, respect one another, and realise their potential.

It delivers a range of services, including rent collection, cleaning and repairs, and additional support for vulnerable residents.

It has been recognised for its many achievements. It was the first housing provider in London to achieve Customer Service Excellence, it ranked in the top 10 in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index for two years running, and it is only the second ALMO nationally to be awarded Network Accreditation for excellent practice in delivering equality and diversity.

It is committed to improving performance through collaboration and knowledge sharing; and was the first ALMO to sponsor LSE's Housing Plus Academy knowledge exchange project.



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