



TOWER HAMLETS  
HOUSING FORUM



# ANNUAL REPORT 2017



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# Introduction

Welcome to the Annual Report of the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum (“**THHF**”) for 2017. The Forum brings together local housing providers who have made a commitment to work in partnership to deliver high quality homes and services.

THHF supports the delivery of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets’ (“**the Council**”) strategic housing and community plan objectives.

The Forum has a clear focus on the delivery of continuous improvement in housing management, maintenance and the development of new homes and sustainable communities.

This annual report includes the achievements THHF members are most proud of. Our partnership work demonstrated here is just a snapshot of the range of services offered by housing providers locally in the Borough. We hope this will give you a flavour of the daily work we deliver to a large number of Tower Hamlets residents in partnership with the Council, residents, the Mayor of London, the voluntary sector, businesses and the Police and Fire Service.

The members of THHF were deeply saddened by the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower earlier in the year and as a group, we stand ready to undertake any recommendations that come out of the investigation into this devastating incident.

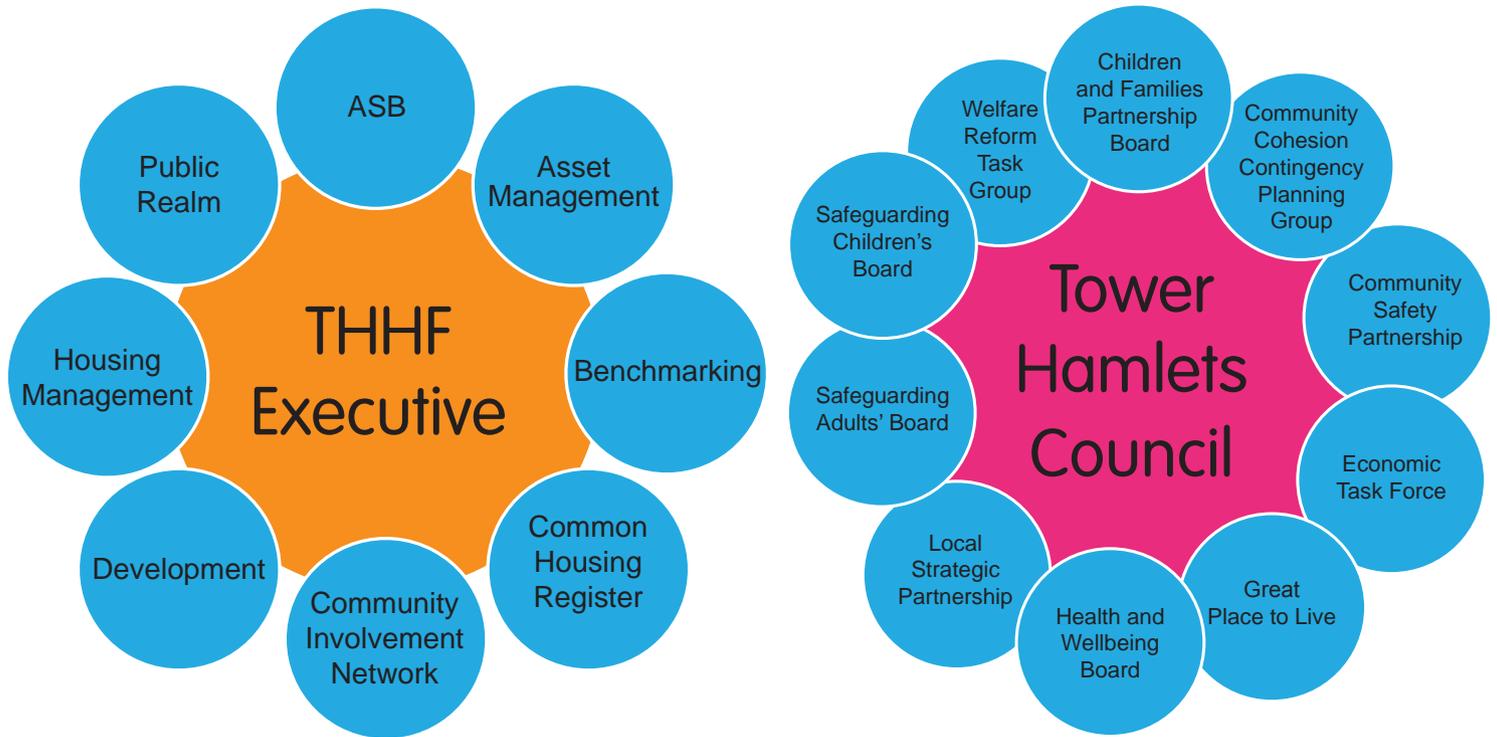
We hope you find the information in this annual report useful.



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



# Governance



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

THHF has an overarching work plan for the year to ensure key objectives can be delivered.

A range of THHF sub groups meet throughout the year bringing together a range of team members to share good practice and to discuss current policy and local issues. The groups work with the Council to support its strategic aims.

THHF also supports a range of Council strategic, scrutiny and delivery forums with representatives across the full range of activities.

# ASB Strategy Group

This group brings together Housing and partner agencies with a strategic responsibility to address anti-social behaviour in the Borough.

It includes representation from the Police and the Council and extends a standing invitation to Victim Support, London Fire Brigade, Youth Offending Service and Probation Service.

It has unified ASB-related forums from across Tower Hamlets: Tower Hamlets Housing Forum ASB Sub-Group, ASB Operations Group, ASB Partnership Action Group, ASB Legal Consultation and Certification Group, Neighbourhood Panels and Community Trigger Panel.

This year the group:

- **Agreed a common definition of ASB based on the ASB, Crime & Policing Act 2014.**
- **Agreed new Terms of Reference to include oversight of the Community Trigger Panel, ASB PAG and ASB OPS meetings.**
- **Contributed to the Council's governance review of the Community Safety Partnership.**
- **Contributed to the Council's review of ASB services focusing on: Communication, Community Engagement, Early Intervention, Resources, Tasking and Tools & Powers.**
- **Contributed to the Council's review of its Youth Service.**
- **Developed common questions to be asked when a case is closed to allow benchmarking between organisations.**
- **Worked with the Tower Hamlets Metropolitan Police ASB Team on tasking and data-sharing.**



# Asset Management sub-group

Improving and repairing homes across the Borough as well as ensuring the health and safety of many Tower Hamlets residents is an essential part of our work.

A good quality home is fundamental to people's quality of life and is something all THHF members strive to deliver.

The AM sub group works closely with the Council and during the year has:

- **Implemented the Environmental Protection and Health protocol which has resulted in more effective partnership working.**
- **Worked in partnership with the Council and London Fire Brigade to ensure sharing of good practice and that the highest priority is given to fire safety in residents homes.**
- **Worked to ensure compliance with the Heat Network regulations for the development and delivery of communal heating, hot water and power systems.**
- **Hosted a number of workshops to improve local knowledge including Trees for Cities, Ofcom and the provision of digital connectivity.**



# Benchmarking sub-group

Learning from others, sharing best practice and comparing performance and costs are key drivers for improving services to customers.

The Benchmarking sub group has considered best practice and this year has:

- **Reviewed and scrutinised key performance indicators on a quarterly basis and used the outcomes from this to aid learning and improvement.**
- **Completed a project and review on the setting and collection of service charges.**
- **Considered a range of best practice and continuous improvement presentations.**
- **Initiated a project looking at leasehold administration charges.**



# Common Housing Register Forum

The Forum works in partnership to deliver an accessible allocations and lettings service which supports best practice, is in line with the regulatory framework for social housing in England and supports members to meet their 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 high housing demand.**

The Forum has worked in partnership with others this year and has:

- **Supported the East London Housing Partnership with the development of guidance for sub regional nominations.**
- **Implemented the amendments to the Borough's letting policy agreed by the Council's Cabinet in November 2016.**
- **Considered best practice in tackling housing fraud.**
- **Agreed amendments to the Common Housing Register agreement.**
- **Worked with the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to promote initiatives to reduce under occupation.**
- **Worked with Safer London to encourage members to sign up to the pan London reciprocal agreement on domestic abuse.**
- **Continued to promote the use of mutual exchange and the associated national exchange schemes to help meet housing need.**

# Community Involvement Network

Prosperous communities are the key to success for local housing providers. The Community Involvement Network (CIN) works with a range of strategic partners to promote strong, sustainable communities.

Partnership working and learning from best practice has delivered a range of positive outcomes covering employment, training, community participation and the involvement of young people.

The CIN works across Tower Hamlets and during the year has:

- **Delivered a joint training programme involving 10 housing providers across Tower Hamlets offering a range of services to support employment.**
- **Actively supported the Council's strategic review of employment services recommending that residents who are under-employed are also considered.**
- **Hosted the Star in the Community Awards, celebrating and recognising the excellent community development work carried out by residents in Tower Hamlets.**
- **Delivered employment workshops as part of International Women's Day.**
- **Promoted best practice in developing resident participation, supporting young people and providing employment services.**



# Development sub-group

The increasing provision of good quality affordable housing continues to be one of the biggest challenges facing the Borough at this time. The Development sub-group is critical to exploring the best way to meet this challenge and to deliver neighbourhoods that residents are proud to live in. The group shares good practice on the regeneration of communities, promotes excellent design and funding.

The Development sub group works with a range of partners and during the year has:

- **Developed a Section 106 Design Guide to support the delivery of new, good quality, affordable housing. This guide covers the standards expected for materials and components to ensure robustness and longevity.**
- **Continued to deliver Project 120 to ensure the provision of tailored housing for those residents who need wheelchair accessible accommodation.**
- **Contributed to strategic projects including the Council's Housing Strategy, the Local Plan, the Greater London Authority's (GLA) Affordable Housing Programme and the Mayor of London's housing strategies.**
- **Explored how to meet the bespoke housing needs of residents with autism.**



# Housing Management sub-group

A key role for housing providers is offering easy to access housing management services. The Housing Management sub-group shares best practice, considers emerging government policy and trends and works in partnership with others to deliver consistently high quality housing services.

The housing management sub group has worked with others during the year and has:

- **Developed a pre eviction and preventing homelessness protocol to support tenancy sustainment.**
- **Supported 'My Time Active' to promote healthier living to local families.**
- **Contributed to the development of the Councils Housing Strategy for 2016/21.**
- **Developed a range of initiatives to support residents with welfare reform including the roll out of Universal Credit and accessing discretionary housing payments for those most in need.**



# 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.

The Public Realm sub-group works with the Council, the London Fire Brigade and other strategic partners to deliver ongoing enhancements to public realm areas on housing developments.

During the year the Public Realm sub-group has:

- **Completed a value for money exercise for the replacement of refuse bins.**
- **Worked with the Council to seek to improve bulk rubbish collection and develop a consistent approach for housing providers.**
- **Held a range of resident awareness campaigns on the work of estate services teams across for Borough.**
- **Held another successful Caretakers' conference enabling the sharing of best practice and the development of ideas and improvements for 2018.**
- **Implemented the agreed protocol for Fireworks Night prohibiting bonfires and displays on housing developments, removing rubbish in the lead up to 5th November and encouraging residents to attend the Council's organised fireworks displays.**



# About THHF Members



Enhancing Life Chances

**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.

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.

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

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

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**East Thames** is part of the L&Q Group, 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.

# About THHF Members (continued)



**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 this year it spent £9.6m acquiring and developing new properties. Gateway aims to build 500 new social homes by 2020 and continues to make improvements to its sheltered schemes. Gateway launched Phase 2 of its in-house repairs initiative, Homeworks, in June 2017.

Gateway is closely integrated in the local area and aims to make 5000 lives better by 2020. 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 £7.31. Residents feel the benefits of this investment with improvements in health, wellbeing, and access to advice, training and employment support.



**Genesis**

**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.



**Network Homes** owns and manages 20,000 homes across London and the Home 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 have 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.

# About THHF Members (continued)



**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 build and sell new homes on the open market or rent them out commercially to raise money for more affordable homes and for services for our customers. In the last three years we have delivered more than 1,500 new affordable homes to help meet the housing shortage. We offer a wide range of housing options including homes for affordable rent, shared ownership, private rent and private sale.

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**

**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.



**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 hundreds of volunteers, the majority of whom live locally. It is proud to have been one of the first accredited London Living Wage employers.



**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

# About THHF Members (continued)

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.

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**Southern  
Housing  
Group**



**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 our customers living in a range of tenures including social rent, affordable rent, private rent, shared ownership and private sale.

In the last year Southern Housing Group's community activities delivered an estimated social value of £2.6m return and our Financial Skills Officers helped leverage and generate £1.6m in additional income for its customers. The Group's Employment and Training Advisers helped 566 people into employment or training and its Home Energy Advice Team delivered an average £252 in energy cost savings for 590 households.

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.

# About THHF Members (continued)



**Spitalfields Housing Association** is one of the largest BME-led Housing Associations in the UK. The Association was founded in 1979 by members of the local Bangladeshi community in response to poor housing conditions in the Spitalfields area. Set up originally as a co-operative, the Association registered with the Housing Corporation in 1980 and began a development programme, refurbishing what had previously been slum areas. They are now a general needs and shared-ownership housing provider, providing/delivering good quality housing and community services to those with the greatest needs in Tower Hamlets and to those who cannot afford to purchase their homes outright. The Association currently owns and manages over 850 properties with a target on our business plan of getting to 1,000 homes in the near future.

During 2016/17 they delivered 67 warm and welcoming new homes across two new developments, along with providing a multi purpose community centre at Vallance Road which is now operational providing Youth Club, Health & Wellbeing sessions and Employment projects. Spitalfields Housing Association also invested in their properties to a value of circa £1.3m, improving overall efficiency and making their services even better value for money through effective contract procurement, management and by controlling their operational overheads.



Swan Housing Association owns and manages over 11,000 homes in Essex and East London, with over 2,000 of those in Tower Hamlets. Swan has an ambitious new corporate strategy which challenges us to grow to 20,000 homes by 2026, making a substantial contribution to meeting housing need, whilst still maintaining our social purpose of providing homes and services to those who need them.

Swan has been a regenerating Landlord for almost a quarter of a decade with its own house construction arm NU living now having built over 800 homes. Swan has a secured development pipeline of over 3,500 homes, many of which will be built using modular construction methods in their new factory – including homes for its development in Watts Grove, Tower Hamlets. Local regeneration projects include the £300m regeneration at Blackwall Reach, which Swan are delivering in partnership with the Mayor of London and LBTH, and where they have already opened The Reach, a fantastic new Community Facility from which their Community Development Team provide a range of activities in the heart of Tower Hamlets including youth, health and fitness, and employment and skills training. When complete, Blackwall Reach will see 1500 new homes including 50% affordable, enhanced public realm, and commercial space, transforming a key part of Poplar.

# About THHF Members (continued)

Swan's housing teams work from offices across the Borough providing specialist neighbourhood management, ASB, Income and Housing services with their in house Estates Services team delivering estate management services across the Borough. Repairs and Maintenance continues to be delivered in partnership with Axis Europe Limited. New for 2017 – Swan's teams will be working with residents over the age of 70 offering additional support as winter approaches.

Swan continues to strive for excellence – this year they achieved Investors in People Gold, Housing Diversity Network Accreditation, retained their Customer Service Excellence Accreditation and leapt to number 39 in the Sunday Times Top 100 Not for Profit Companies list.



**Tower Hamlets Community Housing** has a strong community ethos and prides itself on its high levels of resident satisfaction and providing a mix of quality, affordable housing. They have a proud history of regeneration and delivering innovative housing developments. They manage about 3,200 homes in the western side of Tower Hamlets covering Spitalfields, Bethnal Green, Shadwell and

Wapping. The majority of homes were transferred from Tower Hamlets Council in 2000 but the company have since added a range of commercial and residential properties including for private sale, shared ownership and for social rent.

Tower Hamlets Community Housing's current corporate plan objectives are:

- Getting back to good
- Unlocking our potential
- Growth for the future

To deliver these objectives THCH has been undergoing a major transformation programme called Fit For the Future. This has focused on *Doing the right things... The right way...* Demonstrating value for money in everything they do. Fit for the Future was aimed at providing a step change so that THCH could reduce costs whilst maintaining good quality services and investing in our homes and our communities.

The company pride themselves on the work that we do as part of their Community Development Strategy. Through this, they aim to support financial inclusion and improve the employability of their residents; improve the health and wellbeing of residents; work with young people in their communities and empower these communities to do great things.

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

# About THHF Members (continued)

The logo for Tower Hamlets Homes is a yellow arrow pointing to the right, containing the text "Tower Hamlets Homes" in black.

## 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.

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 overall satisfaction reached an all-time high. The Decent Homes programme that THH was set up to deliver has been completed, seeing over £170 million invested in almost 8,000 homes. Tackling ASB remains a focus and in recognition of this top area of concern for residents and the Council, funding of £2.5m over three years has been committed by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to better manage ASB on our estates. Work to support residents being affected by welfare reform was and continues to be a priority.

THH is only the second ALMO nationally to be awarded Network accreditation for excellent practice in delivering equality and diversity and it remains committed to improving performance through collaboration. It was the first ALMO to sponsor the London School of Economics, Housing Plus Academy knowledge exchange project.





TOWER HAMLETS  
HOUSING FORUM

a2dominion



Enhancing Life Chances



CLARION  
HOUSING GROUP

east  
end HOMES

East  
THAMES

Part of the L&Q Group

family  
mosaic



Genesis

the  
guinness  
partnership

gateway  
housing association

POPULAR  
HARCA

KARIN  
Housing Association Ltd  
more than just a roof

L&Q

Metropolitan

Network  
Homes  
Because good homes make everything possible

Notting Hill  
Housing

ONE  
HOUSING  
LIVING BETTER

PEABODY

Providence Row  
Housing Association

Southern  
Housing  
Group  
www.shgroup.org.uk

SPITALFIELDS  
HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD  
স্পিটফিল্ডস হাউসিং এসোসিয়েশন লিমিটেড

SWAN

TOWER HAMLETS  
Community Housing  
THCH

Tower  
Hamlets  
Homes

TOWER HAMLETS



