

# Overview & Scrutiny

Room 118, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Hackney Town Hall  
Mare Street  
London, E8 1EA

5th December 2025  
[craig.player@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:craig.player@hackney.gov.uk)

To:

**Cllr Guy Nicholson**, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Management & Regeneration

## **Hackney Housing Strategy 2026-31 (Recommendations for Improvement)**

Over the past few years the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission has undertaken an in-depth piece of work to look at the key elements of the forthcoming Hackney Housing Strategy 2026-31.

Delivering genuinely affordable homes, tackling the housing crisis and supporting renters continues to be a top priority for residents, and we have therefore sought to challenge the emerging priorities, how the strategy will be delivered, how key risks have been considered, and the key measures of success before it is adopted.

The Commission has held discussions on a range of housing-related topics at recent meetings, including council housing and estate management, affordable housing delivery and regeneration, homelessness and temporary accommodation, private sector housing, housing association partnerships and supported housing and living.

We have also held specific discussions on the development of the evidence base for the forthcoming strategy, allowing us to challenge assumptions and the robustness of evidence-gathering at both an early stage and in later stages of its development.

The video recordings, alongside the agenda papers and minutes, provide a public record of those meetings. These can be accessed via the Commission's [webpage](#) or by contacting our support officer ([craig.player@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:craig.player@hackney.gov.uk)) directly.

The Commission would firstly like to place on record its thanks to Rickardo Hyatt, Group Director Climate, Homes & Economy, Suzanne Johnson, Director Economy, Regeneration & Housing Delivery and James Goddard, Assistant Director Strategy, Assurance & Private Sector Housing for their valuable contributions to this piece of work.

The Commission would also like to thank yourself, as Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Management & Regeneration, Caroline Woodley, Mayor of Hackney, Cllr Sade Etti, Cabinet Member for Homelessness Prevention, Rough Sleeping & Temporary Accommodation and Cllr Sem Moema, Deputy Cabinet Member for Private Rented Sector &

# Overview & Scrutiny

Housing Affordability for their contributions and ongoing engagement with the scrutiny process.

On the evidence provided and through consultation with officers, members of the Commission have outlined their findings and made 14 recommendations for improvement, which it is hoped will contribute to, and further support, the positive work that is already taking place.

We look forward to receiving your response in due course.

Yours sincerely

**Councillor Soraya Adejare**  
Chair, Living in Hackney Scrutiny  
Commission

**Councillor Joseph Ogundemuren**  
Vice Chair, Living in Hackney Scrutiny  
Commission

Cc:

- Caroline Woodley, Mayor of Hackney
- Cllr Sade Etti, Cabinet Member for Homelessness Prevention, Rough Sleeping & Temporary Accommodation
- Cllr Sem Moema, Deputy Cabinet Member for Private Rented Sector & Housing Affordability
- Rickardo Hyatt, Group Director Climate, Homes & Economy
- Alex Clarke, Director Housing Strategy & Homelessness Prevention
- Suzanne Johnson, Director Regeneration, Economy & Housing Development
- James Goddard, Assistant Director Strategy, Assurance & Private Sector Housing
- Natalie Broughton, Assistant Director Planning & Building Control
- Christopher Carthy, Assistant Director Housing Delivery & Regeneration
- Ben Bradley, Head of Mayor and Cabinet Office

# Overview & Scrutiny

## Recommendations for improvement

Hackney is facing a housing crisis. The Commission welcomes the forthcoming Housing Strategy, which seeks to coordinate the actions of all stakeholders across the borough involved in delivering policies, strategies and actions to address this challenge. It details the approach the borough will take to meet its housing objectives, weaving together different workstreams into a comprehensive document to coordinate and guide local housing action.

The new strategy comes at a time of considerable policy and legislative change, and we are keen to see how all of the Council's longer term housing priorities and strategies align with local and national policy. This will include the forthcoming London Plan and Hackney Local Plan, as well as the new Government's plans for housing, including the Affordable Homes Programme, Renters Reform Bill and changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.

It is the Local Plan that sets out the Council's Planning Framework and Growth Strategy for future development in the borough, including targets for the delivery of affordable homes and the mix of new homes including their size, energy efficiency and how safety will be ensured. The Commission plans to engage with the Local Plan review at the appropriate juncture.

Alongside that, the forthcoming Housing Strategy sets out the Council's policy positions on those issues. We commend the extensive evidence gathering undertaken to build a detailed analysis of local housing needs and resources. This includes a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), a housing needs survey, a number of focus groups held with residents, a housing assessment focused specifically on supported housing, and an independent panel looking at intermediate housing options in the borough.

Acknowledging the depth and breadth of the forthcoming strategy, the Commission's response will focus on the following four priority areas:

- Affordable housing delivery
- Private sector housing
- Housing association partnerships
- Supported housing and living

Our scrutiny of the Council's social landlord function, including its response to the Housing Ombudsman's special investigation report, the C3 grading from the Social Housing Regulator and the delivery of the wider Housing Improvement Plan, nevertheless continues to be an important part of our work, with a particular focus on issues such as damp and mould, repairs, vulnerability and complaint handling.

This includes the special Scrutiny Panel meeting held on [12th June 2025](#) to consider the Housing Ombudsman's report, as well as the upcoming Commission meeting on [8th December 2025](#) where we will be reviewing the delivery of the Housing Improvement Plan and scrutinising the implementation of the Housing Ombudsman recommendations. The findings and recommendations from this piece of work will be shared in due course.

# Overview & Scrutiny

Similarly, we retain a keen interest in the Council's response to the homelessness and temporary accommodation crisis in Hackney. We continue to monitor the implementation of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy, as well as the delivery of transformation activities to expand the Council's temporary accommodation portfolio and manage increasing demand for homelessness support. This was most recently considered at our meeting on [9th June 2025](#).

## Affordable housing delivery

Whilst there is a need for all types of housing in Hackney, the need for genuinely affordable homes is particularly pressing. The cost of both renting privately and owning a home is out of reach for households on an average income. The average wait time for Council housing for 2 bed properties is now more than 10 years and for 2 beds and larger over 25 years, and there are over 8,500 families on the waiting list, with those in priority need rising.

The Commission therefore strongly supports the Council pushing for as many new homes as possible to be genuinely affordable. Many kinds of new homes are now officially classed as 'affordable'. Homes for shared ownership, for social rent, and for intermediate tenures such as London Living Rent all count as affordable but, in reality, not all of these are genuinely affordable for most people in housing need.

According to Hackney's recent SHMA, home ownership remains unaffordable to almost all households on low to median incomes, and only some can afford shared ownership. So where affordable housing is built in Hackney, we support the majority to be built for social rent. We note that the premise of affordable rent was introduced by the previous government as part of its austerity package as a means of facilitating a 60% cut in funding for new housing.

With delays to planned social rent builds arising for a multitude of reasons, statistics suggest that limited increases in numbers have now been surpassed by affordable rent properties. This is despite growing recognition of the fact that increasingly small numbers of people living in Hackney can afford to pay "affordable" rent or intermediate rent. As such, the premise of "affordable" housing in our borough is becoming increasingly tenuous.

Building high quality Council housing is one of the most important things we can do as a local authority. We were therefore pleased to hear that 965 new social rented homes are due to be in delivery by 2026, just shy of the 1,000 targets set out in 2022. This is a considerable achievement.

It should be noted, however, that only 29 of those homes have been completed since 2022. Whilst we recognise the significant challenges posed by Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic, new building regulations and inflationary pressures which have led to progress being stalled at a number of sites, more needs to be done to improve the deliverability of homes.

We recognise that the cost of construction and borrowing have increased to an unprecedented extent and the resultant impact on the finances of the social housing delivery

# Overview & Scrutiny

programme has been very significant. The current 0.6% reduction in interest rates for Councils from the Public Works Loans Board for self financing builds is a particular challenge, as is the 5.2% maturity rate.

The Government has also taken the decision to exclude local authorities and non-profit providers from the £2.5 billion of low-interest loans being made available for new social and affordable housing. The cost of borrowing, coupled with a relatively low government grant environment, is cumulatively prohibitive to significantly increasing Hackney's supply of self-financed council housing.

It is therefore imperative that the Cabinet Member for Housing Management & Regenerations increases lobbying activities for a new funding settlement to ensure Hackney is able to build council homes for social rent in the long term. This should be in line with the detailed and practical recommendations outlined in the [Southwark report on England's council housing](#).

Whilst strong foundations are in place to deliver future Council housing schemes, including in-house skills, capacity and expertise, and productive relationships with funders, a major challenge going forward will be land supply. Most of our new homes will likely need to be built on Council land - including land currently occupied by garages or car parking spaces, or land between existing blocks.

We feel that it is important that we also look at sites that currently have other uses than housing - for example, where we have leased our own land for purposes that no longer meet our communities' needs, we may need to look to regain control of it. The benefit of new homes will sometimes need to be balanced against the loss of amenities, and we will need to approach these trade-offs openly and honestly.

We should also work with other public sector landowners - including the NHS, Network Rail, and the emergency services - to release more land for housing, putting in clear plans to bring forward sites for housing and developing partnership approaches to developing such sites.

The Council also has a crucial role in facilitating the delivery of the remaining affordable homes, working with the Mayor of London, housing associations, private developers, construction companies and other partners to create an environment in which these new homes can be built.

This is particularly important in light of affordable housing quotas in London being effectively cut from the previous 35% target to just 20%, in addition to mooted proposals which could see developers convert homes designated as affordable into properties that can be sold to (increasingly overseas) investors or owner occupiers. We view these approaches as problematic given the acute shortage of homes for social rent in the borough.

The Local Plan currently sets out a requirement of 50% affordable housing to be provided on-site on developments of 10+ units, and contributions towards affordable housing from smaller sites. We strongly believe this should remain in place and would encourage the

# Overview & Scrutiny

Council to push back against any plans to make the temporary 20% affordable housing quota permanent in the new London Plan.

Where projects are fast-tracked and approved with 20% affordable housing, well over the required 60% of those homes should be made available at the cheapest social rents. These combined approaches are seen as the only way Hackney will be able to move to an eventual position where widescale reliance on temporary accommodation and associated costs are reduced, resulting in a generational increase in our housing supply and a reduction in the time Hackney residents have to remain on our housing waiting list.

Small sites' contribution such as infill to housing supply is increasingly important, but small and medium-sized builders face a number of obstacles such as access to land, financing and planning delays. We should look to bring forward more small sites for housing, working more closely with small and medium-sized developers, housing associations, and community led organisations to overcome the challenges threatening their viability.

We welcome the contribution that community land trusts and co-operative housing initiatives make in delivering new housing, and encourage the Council to actively work with those who wish to deliver genuinely affordable homes in Hackney to help them scale up. In particular, we welcome the knowledge and understanding of local areas, local needs and local communities that these community led organisations bring to the table.

Given the ongoing affordability crisis, social rent must remain the highest priority for Hackney. However, intermediate housing products could provide important options for some of the many households who are either not eligible or have no priority for social rented housing but are priced out of both market-rate renting and traditional homeownership. As such, we have kept a keen interest in the work of the recently commissioned Intermediate Housing Panel.

We do, however, have concerns regarding the affordability of intermediate rented and ownership housing. Shared and partial ownership, in particular, meets the needs of a distinct minority of Hackney residents at current local prices. Shared ownership market values have risen considerably over the past decade, and average deposits have also climbed. Rising service charges, repair responsibilities, and unrealistic expectations around staircasing also impact affordability over time.

If we are to encourage more intermediate housing in the borough, we therefore would have a stronger preference for intermediate rent models. Whilst this is the most genuinely affordable intermediate tenure for residents, even then intermediate rent products are still likely to be out of reach for most residents unless the Council sets rent levels significantly below current GLA benchmarks (e.g. Hackney Living Rent).

We feel there might be a potential opportunity for the Council to take a direct role in delivering truly affordable intermediate rent by championing, commissioning and contributing funding for affordable intermediate rent schemes, exploring the use of council land and the Hackney Housing Company, and setting local eligibility frameworks and affordable rent levels.

# Overview & Scrutiny

Whilst the Commission would like to see that there are enough homes for households of all kinds and sizes, the shortage of family-sized homes is particularly acute. We strongly recommend a focus on building family housing for social rented and other low cost rented housing, including homes with four or five bedrooms. Many local families are living in overcrowded conditions in the borough, and others have little option other than to leave the borough for areas with cheaper family housing. There is also a resulting impact on both community longevity and connectedness more widely.

Many social renting households include at least one person who is limited in their day-to-day activities by disability or serious illness. The Council already meets London Plan standards as a minimum, and we should look to exceed these standards where possible and actively encourage other housing developers to do the same. Having the views of disabled residents more embedded in the design of our self-delivered homes, for example by appointing 'Housing Disability Champions', would further support the rights, inclusion and equality of disabled people.

The Commission therefore recommends that:

- 1) Housing Strategy ensures that the forthcoming Housing Strategy:
  - a) Prioritises the delivery of social rented homes over all other tenures and maintains a minimal level of at least 35% in all major developments
  - b) Outlines the steps the Council will take to self-deliver more social rented homes
  - c) Sets out how other housing developers will be engaged and involved to identify opportunities to increase the supply of social rented homes
  - d) Clarifies how the need for family-sized social rented homes will be addressed, including four or five bedroom homes
- 2) The Cabinet Member for Housing Management & Regeneration lobbies the Mayor of London to ensure the temporary 20% affordable housing quota does not become permanent and for the 35% target to remain in place (or be increased) in the new London Plan.
- 3) Housing Strategy and Planning & Building Control take a direct role in delivering intermediate housing in the borough to ensure strategic oversight, local tailoring and accountability, with a preference for truly affordable intermediate rent products wherever possible.

This should involve championing, commissioning and contributing funding for affordable intermediate rent schemes, exploring the use of council land and the Hackney Housing Company for delivery, and setting local eligibility frameworks and truly affordable rent levels.

# Overview & Scrutiny

- 4) The Cabinet Member for Housing Management & Regenerations increases lobbying activities for a new funding settlement from the Government to ensure Hackney is able to build new homes for social rent in the long term.

This should be in line with the detailed and practical recommendations outlined in the [Southwark report on England's council housing](#).

- 5) Housing Strategy and Planning & Building Control set out how they will work with small and medium-sized developers to address the barriers on small sites threatening their viability, including increasing planning capacity to reduce delays and fast tracking small sites proposals where possible.
- 6) Housing Regeneration & Delivery appoints 'Housing Disability Champions' to more explicitly and routinely champion the views of disabled residents and ensure disability equality and co-production is embedded into the design phase for new council homes.

## Housing association partnerships

Alongside the households renting homes from the Council, there is a significant number of social tenants and their families living in homes owned and managed by housing associations in Hackney. All social tenants should expect the same high quality service and well maintained homes, whether their landlord is the Council, a large housing association with stock across the country, or a small, local housing association.

All social landlords are bound by the same regulatory frameworks which set the baseline for their responsibilities, and, generally, housing associations working across Hackney do provide good services for residents, and are on similar journeys to continuously improve them, better maintain their housing stock, and contribute to the wider community and environment.

Having said this, we believe that there is still work to be done to foster a greater shared commitment amongst housing associations to both residents and to the borough more generally. The introduction of a Compact between the Council and housing associations operating in Hackney is a good start, and has been a useful reference point to build on.

There have been some successes since the introduction of the Compact. For example, there is now a Hackney Social Landlords Domestic Abuse Protocol in place to improve how landlords identify and respond to domestic abuse, the first of its kind in the UK. Close collaboration and a robust nominations agreement has continued to ensure that the Council receives its share of properties from housing associations for households on the housing register.

However, there have also been challenges. Much of these stem from the fact that the Compact itself is not enforceable, with the Council having limited legal or statutory powers over housing associations. Performance is also not routinely monitored - only two Compact

# Overview & Scrutiny

objectives are subject to performance monitoring and robust protocols and agreements: nominations and domestic abuse, which are the two areas where there has been sustained progress.

Whilst we appreciate that there are different data capture and reporting arrangements across and between housing associations operating in Hackney, we feel that a lack of performance monitoring will continue to be a barrier to progress once the new Compact is rolled out. In our view, it is imperative that strong oversight and monitoring arrangements are therefore made to allow for the ongoing review, analysis and understanding of performance, and to monitor outcomes and measure success.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 has introduced four consumer standards (covering safety and quality, neighbourhood and community, transparency, influence and accountability, and tenancy) which are measured through 22 tenant satisfaction measures (TSMs). It may prove more straightforward for these TSMs to form the basis of performance measures for the Compact, with some additional local performance indicators not covered by TSMs where appropriate.

To be responsible and responsive, the governance and working structure for the Compact must be robust enough to deliver the outcomes required from the partnership whilst remaining flexible enough to quickly address emerging issues and new priorities. We therefore welcome the relaunch of the Hackney Better Housing Partnership Forum, which we hope will provide an opportunity for performance and outcome measures to be developed, agreed, and owned collectively between social landlords.

As previously touched upon, working together to enable, facilitate and increase the supply of affordable homes must be a key priority in the new Compact. This should include homes for residents who need them the most, ensuring new homes meet priority housing needs, including specialist and supported housing. Whilst we appreciate that the current development climate means that housing associations are looking at how they can include a variety of tenures in new developments, we have a strong preference for as many new homes as possible to be built for social rent.

Facilitating the development of temporary and supported accommodation schemes should also be a feature of the new Compact. The current supply is not enough to meet increasing demand, with over one third of placements now out of borough. Alongside looking at our own land and underused buildings, we should also be exploring the meanwhile use of underused housing association-owned sites to deliver high quality temporary and supported accommodation wherever possible.

We understand that housing associations can have empty homes for a variety of reasons, for example whilst undergoing necessary refurbishment or whilst being held for future development. Ultimately, bringing empty homes back into use can play a key role in meeting housing need, and housing associations should do all they can to ensure that all are used as a place to live. Routinely sharing information with the Council on housing stock, lets and

# Overview & Scrutiny

allocations would help to foster an environment in which we can work proactively and cooperatively to encourage and support housing associations to bring them back into use.

We would also like to see a renewed focus from housing associations on working more effectively with partners to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and improve the safety of residents in social housing. There should be a unified approach to addressing crime and anti-social behaviour with clarity around responsibilities and accountabilities, with housing and community safety partners working collaboratively to identify issues affecting communities and find solutions.

Similarly, housing associations should be looking to work more closely together with partners to align their approaches to emergency planning and responses. This should involve supporting them to actively contribute to developing the borough's joint approach to identifying and supporting people in an emergency through the Local Resilience Forum, as well as developing their own emergency plans and training, exercising and testing arrangements.

Housing associations play a crucial role in identifying safeguarding issues, raising safeguarding concerns, and supporting residents and their families who are at risk of or experiencing abuse or neglect. We therefore feel that ensuring effective information sharing arrangements are in place and that staff are fully equipped to recognise safeguarding concerns and confidently signpost, refer and support those in need or at risk should continue to be a key priority.

The Commission therefore recommends that:

- 7) Housing Strategy develops an outcomes framework and delivery plan for the refreshed Compact to monitor the key contributions from housing associations and to allow for the ongoing review, analysis and understanding of performance.

This should be managed through the Hackney Better Housing Partnership Forum, with regular reporting to the Council's Cabinet and Living in Hackney Scrutiny to ensure wider accountability.

- 8) Housing Strategy sets out what progress has been made in improving collaborative working with housing associations to identify safeguarding issues, raise safeguarding concerns, and support residents and their families who are at risk of or experiencing abuse or neglect since the Compact was adopted in 2023.

This should include information and data on new policies and procedures, uptake of training and learning opportunities and engagement with key meetings and forums, and be inclusive of adult safeguarding, domestic abuse, safeguarding children and young people and anti-social behaviour and estate safety.

- 9) Housing Strategy ensures the forthcoming Compact refresh includes shared commitments with housing associations to address the following priority areas:

# Overview & Scrutiny

- a) Increasing the supply of affordable homes, particularly homes for social rent
- b) Facilitating the development of new temporary and supported accommodation schemes
- c) Sharing information on housing stock, lets and allocations and ensuring no properties are left empty
- d) Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and improving the safety of residents in social housing
- e) Aligning approaches to emergency planning and responses
- f) Equipping staff to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns and more effectively sharing information

## Private sector housing

1 in 3 households in Hackney live in homes rented from a private landlord. This is 133% more people than in 2001 and accounts for 32% of all homes. We strongly believe that everyone who rents privately in Hackney should live in a home that is decent, safe and secure, and feel invested in and connected to their home and local community.

With the steady national decline in the supply of social housing, private renting is and will likely continue to become even more common among households at the lower end of the market, including vulnerable groups. Many residents living in this sector are on low incomes, living in poverty, exacerbated by the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

Concerningly, a recent independent review of Hackney's private rented sector found that a significant proportion of privately rented homes (17%) may contain serious hazards - above the national average of 10%. These issues are even more prevalent in houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), with 30.1% of HMOs in the borough predicted to have a serious hazard.

Whilst many private landlords take their responsibilities seriously, there are still far too many private tenants who are subjected to poor conditions, mistreatment from landlords, unstable tenancies and high rents. Often this is because their landlord does not understand their responsibilities, but in some cases it can be because their rogue landlord deliberately breaks the law.

Last year we set out our [response](#) to the new Private Sector Housing Strategy, outlining our broad support for the Council's plans around setting clear standards and supporting landlords to meet those standards, enforcing those standards and taking decisive action against landlords who will not provide tenants with a home that is decent, safe and secure, and empowering and supporting private renters to hold their landlords to these standards.

Whilst the introduction of the Renters' Reform Act is a significant milestone for the sector, it is important to acknowledge that the Council's ability to implement and support the measures to improve the private rented sector will be constrained by existing resource limitations. It is imperative that the Council's leadership continues to push for better resources to fully carry out the provisions of the Bill and deliver meaningful change for renters.

# Overview & Scrutiny

We are supportive of the Council's plans to introduce property licensing for all private rented homes in 17 of the 21 wards in Hackney. This will provide more opportunities to educate and improve the professionalism of landlords, allowing the move from a reactive to a more proactive and strategic approach. It will allow the Council to identify good landlords, support inexperienced landlords, and to challenge those that fail to improve.

Whilst we agree that the Council should in the first instance work with landlords to support and encourage them, it is important that we are proactive with enforcement on the worst properties, landlords and agents. We were pleased to hear that growth resources of £400,000 had been secured for the expansion of the Private Sector Housing function in 2023, and hope to see this funding utilised in full to continue to expand our enforcement capacity and ensure private landlords meet their duty to tackle damp and mould and provide a good, safe home to their tenants.

As well as working with landlords, we would like to see more of an emphasis on working with tenants to educate them of their rights and responsibilities. Increasing our use of social media as a platform to promote our commitments and enforcement action, advice and support to tenants is one way we can do this. We also need to ensure the Council's interventions in the private rented sector are aligned, making sure that all of our services and processes support each other and are easy for renters to navigate.

We would therefore support the establishment of a dedicated advice and prevention service. This would provide a single point of contact for renters, with staff who are equipped to advise and signpost them on a range of issues including housing rights, benefits, debt, adult learning, parenting, and childcare. We also would welcome a focus on affordable warmth and fuel poverty, identifying households at risk and providing targeted advice and support to both tenants and landlords.

Fundamental to making every contact count continues to be close working with colleagues across the Council and other public sector agencies to share a range of data and information that enable assessments of potential service needs based on vulnerability. We would therefore support the introduction of a triage service for those professionals who regularly visit residents' homes to report and discuss housing issues and explore potential solutions with housing colleagues.

The Commission therefore recommends that:

- 10) Housing Strategy establishes a dedicated advice and prevention service for private renters, providing a single point of contact with staff who are equipped to advise and signpost them on a range of issues such as housing rights, benefits, debt, adult learning, parenting, childcare, affordable warmth and fuel poverty.
- 11) Housing Strategy coordinates the introduction of a triage service for those professionals who regularly visit residents' homes to report and discuss housing issues and explore potential solutions with housing colleagues.

# Overview & Scrutiny

This should allow for professionals to collate and share a range of data that can be viewed from all property levels, enabling assessments of potential service needs based on vulnerability.

## Supported housing and living

The Council's housing stock and the housing register both contain disproportionately high numbers of residents with social and health needs, including mental health. Hackney currently doesn't have the housing to meet demand for all of these residents of different needs - whether it be homelessness, specialist support, domestic abuse, or care leavers.

The Supported Housing Act 2023 introduced new responsibilities for the Council in overseeing the supported housing sector. This includes requirements around enforcing minimum standards for both the property and the care provided in supported homes and a strategic planning duty which will include collecting data on the supply of homes, a forecast of future need, and a delivery plan.

Clearly, developing the right mix of supported housing and living to meet the needs of vulnerable residents must be a key priority going forward. We welcome the forthcoming Supported Housing Strategy which seeks to set out the vision for this type of accommodation in the borough, and will encompass a wide range of groups with specific needs, including older people, care leavers, people with disabilities, homeless people with complex needs, and those with mental health issues.

We are supportive of an 'invest to save' approach, acknowledging that investing in supported housing and living has the potential to reduce demand on wider public services and systems. The case for change is - as well as improving outcomes for individuals - around freeing more resources for more appropriate care, reducing the need for costly adult social care interventions, delayed discharges and emergency care, which in turn will make resources available to other council services and partner agencies.

As well as engaging with accommodation providers in the borough to consider the most appropriate use of current accommodation and guide their future service provision, we would encourage the Council to explore the development of specialist supported housing on its own land and through the Hackney Housing Company to maximise more in-borough options.

We are pleased that the Council has already set up a programme of work specifically focused on capital build opportunities for Adult Social Care, with the aim to identify accommodation required in Hackney over the next 3-10 years. We note that this new accommodation will be for residents who have been assessed using the Care Act 2014 and have eligible care needs, and also require specialist accommodation.

As highlighted in our [recent report](#) on supported accommodation for single homeless people with complex needs, there is also a small but significant cohort of residents experiencing homelessness who do not meet the threshold for adult social care interventions but would benefit from specialist housing. Demand far outstrips the number of supported

# Overview & Scrutiny

accommodation places for these people, meaning that many of them are being placed in unsuitable temporary accommodation or hostels that do not meet their multiple and complex needs.

In our report we made a number of recommendations aimed addressing the unmet needs of people currently in unsupported accommodation, substantially increasing additional supported accommodation supply, and for more strategic, integrated long-term planning and funding arrangements across the housing, health and social care, community and voluntary and criminal justice sectors. We look forward to reviewing how these recommendations have been taken forward later in the municipal year.

Whilst Children's Social Care supports a significant proportion of care leavers to live in supported accommodation up to the age of 21, our [joint report](#) on housing support for care leavers with the Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission highlighted that there is a cohort of care leavers who would continue to benefit from this type of accommodation before moving on to fully independent tenancies. We are therefore pleased to note that the specific needs of care leavers will be reflected in the forthcoming Supported Housing Strategy.

A significant development following our report is that the housing register was changed from April 2024 to allow care leavers to join a priority band on the Council's housing register at 18. However, it is likely that the number of allocated social tenancies available will continue to far exceed the number of care leavers formally leaving the care of the borough each year. We are therefore closely following the implementation of our recommendations around creating additional housing capacity for this cohort in the borough.

There is also a clear need for the Council to drive the delivery of the right number, mix and quality of housing for older people in Hackney. The number of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase significantly over the next decade, as is the number of households headed by someone aged 65 and over. The forthcoming Housing Strategy needs to plan for current older people and those approaching older age.

Where and how people live in later life depends on their individual needs, aspirations, preference, and financial circumstances. The majority of people will want to live in their current home for as long as possible, although there will be some who will need accommodation with access to specialist care and support. We support the Council's efforts to ensure specialist housing and support is targeted to those most in need, and develop housing options (such as extra care accommodation) that enable people to live independently for as long as possible.

We also recognise the specific challenges faced by families of children with special educational needs and disabilities in accessing suitable accommodation. Whilst the average waiting time for Council housing (particularly larger, family-sized homes) is significant and a rising number of households on the waiting list are in priority need, we are committed to exploring the local offer and what further support can be provided to help them live independently in their homes alongside the Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission.

# Overview & Scrutiny

The Commission therefore recommends that:

- 12) Housing Strategy ensures that the forthcoming Housing Strategy:
  - a) Recognises and prioritises the needs of older people
  - b) Outlines how and when the housing and support needs of this cohort will be addressed
  - c) Sets out how other housing providers will be engaged and involved to provide better access to appropriate and affordable housing for older people
  
- 13) Housing Strategy, alongside other invited council departments, reports on the following topics at the joint meeting of Living in Hackney and Children & Young People Scrutiny on 10th February 2026:
  - a) Housing and related support for families of children with SEND and other disabilities
  - b) Implementation of the recommendations of the housing support for care leavers scrutiny review
  
- 14) Housing Strategy, alongside other invited council departments and health partners, reports on the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the supported accommodation for homeless residents with complex needs scrutiny review at the 10th March 2026 meeting of Living in Hackney Scrutiny.