

## Appendix 2- Written Responses to Draft Housing Strategy consultation

In addition to the online survey the Council received eight written responses to the draft Housing Strategy. The responses were from The Barnet Group, Barnet Labour Group's Housing Commission, the Labour Party Prospective Parliamentary Candidates for Hendon, Finchley and Golders Green and Chipping Barnet, Mill Hill Neighbourhood Forum, Fizzy Living and a local resident. The content of the responses are summarised under each draft Housing Strategy objective in the tables below.

### Increasing housing supply

No	Comments
1	Questions about how the Housing Needs Assessment and requirements for new homes take account of households already living in Emergency or Temporary Accommodation and future pressures on homelessness.
2	Question about how the council intends to assist non-secure tenants when they are decanted from the regeneration estates and what impact will it have on the supply of affordable accommodation for all housing applicants given the extent of decanting due to take place?
3	Suggestion that council could increase affordable housing supply by buying out Right to Buy leaseholders in non-regeneration areas using the right of first refusal to buy back within the first 10 years of sale. Homes could then be let out to housing applicants.
4	Comments agreeing that it is important to ensure that new developments are of a high quality design, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good space and environmental standards.</li> <li>• Complimenting and enhancing the area's local character and identity.</li> </ul>
5	Concerns about the risks of over-development, particularly high density flatted developments and lack of communal green space and concerns about the lack of other infrastructure to support the new communities (e.g.: schools, transport and health services).

### Delivering homes that people can afford

No	Comments
1	The majority of comments on this priority were relating to the proposal to increase council rents to 80% market or LHA rate. They were mainly against the proposal. The key concerns raised included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRS rents in Barnet have become unaffordable for many working families.</li> <li>• Increasing council rents will substantially increase the housing benefits bill and mean more households are affected by the overall benefits cap.</li> </ul>

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No	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council tenants, given local allocation policies, are already those most in need of assistance. Pegging council rents to the private sector may increase welfare dependency.</li> <li>• This proposal may push families who may just be managing without claiming housing benefit onto reliance on housing benefit.</li> <li>• It is likely to drive Right To Buy sales as the individual business case for those who can afford to buy will buy rather than pay higher rents thus reducing affordable housing supply</li> <li>• The strategy is silent on whether tenants will see any specific improvements in service, or a revised service offer as a result of the rents increase.</li> </ul> <p>There was some recognition from one respondent that there is room to increase council rents above their current level and that increased rental income can assist the council in developing more affordable homes.</p>
2	<p>Suggestions to ensure that affordable housing is maximised through the planning system , for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set out specific targets for social rented housing.</li> <li>• Develop a Supplementary Planning Document that sets out clear expectations on value in viability reports, including that viability calculations should be transparent and public.</li> <li>• Establish a policy on the local marketing of properties to minimise off-plan sales.</li> </ul>
3	<p>Suggestion that where the council must transfer land to secure delivery of affordable housing it should maintain a long-term interest in the land through retaining the freehold, keeping a long term equity stake in the value uplift of the land by adding covenants on disposal, and look at long term payback arrangements on private sector-led development.</p>
4	<p>Suggestion that Barnet Council should halt the West Hendon development, seek legal advice and review the current scheme.</p>
5	<p>Suggestion that on the regeneration schemes the same number of council homes should be provided as a minimum.</p>
6	<p>Suggestion that all longstanding non-secure temporary tenants on Barnet's regeneration estates should be granted secure tenancies</p>
7	<p>Suggestions on the development of new intermediate rent and low cost home-ownership products, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intermediate rent based on a percentage of income.</li> <li>• Key worker housing for particular target groups of people including those who need to live close to where they work.</li> <li>• Mutual home ownership.</li> </ul>

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No	Comments
8	Concern about how any low cost home ownership product created does not very quickly become recycled back into the buy to let market.

### Sustaining quality of private rented sector

No	Comments
1	<p>Suggestion that the council should promote and plan for the delivery of purpose built PRS for a number of reasons, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demand for PRS housing continues to increase due to a range of factors including, mortgage constraints on access to owner-occupation, movement towards smaller household, more people opting to rent as a flexible life-style choice.</li><li>• To provide flexibility and choice to new entrants to the labour market.</li><li>• Encourage mobile middle income earners to move to the borough.</li><li>• Reduce pressure and improve quality of existing local PRS market by increasing the supply of purpose built high quality PRS</li></ul>
2	<p>Suggestions to improve standards in private rented sector, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• License all private sector landlords in order to tackle rogue landlords, improving standards in the private rented sector and reducing anti-social behaviour.</li><li>• Introducing a Decent Homes Standard based Kite mark for the private rented sector, including current minimum legal requirements.</li><li>• Increase tenants awareness of their rights.</li></ul>
3	<p>Suggestion to set up a social lettings agency to offer a quality management service to private landlords for letting their properties at either market rent or affordable rent but the service is free of charge for tenants.</p>

### Tackling homelessness

No	Comments
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1	Suggestion that the draft strategy does not go into enough detail about homelessness prevention which is a big challenge for Barnet Council and Barnet Homes. The detail could be provided in a separate homelessness strategy.
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### Other issues

No	Comments
1	Suggestion that public health outcomes should be included in the Housing Strategy.
2	Suggestion that overseas buyers should not be able to buy up properties and leave them empty for investment purposes.