

# Consultation and Engagement Report

## Housing Strategy 2023- 2028 Consultation

*August 2023*

## **Housing Strategy 2023- 2028 Consultation and Engagement Report**

The Housing Strategy 2023- 2028 has been co-designed with residents and partners through targeted engagement sessions and an online survey consultation.

In total, 529 people contributed to the co-design of the Housing Strategy 2023- 2028 including tenants, leaseholders, voluntary, community and faith sector partners, staff, and Members.

The draft priorities, objectives and accompanying narrative have been finalised to reflect the feedback from the consultation and engagement process. Changes have been made to the draft Housing Strategy 2023- 2028 where the feedback was high-level and strategic; specific, detailed feedback will be incorporated into the subsequent Delivery Plan.

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### **1. Feedback from the targeted sessions**

Targeted sessions were held with the following groups to ascertain detailed feedback on our draft priorities and objectives, and suggestions as to what these should mean for our residents and partners:

- Residents
- Tenant and Leaseholder Panel
- Members through an All-Member briefing
- Voluntary, community, and faith sector partners
- Private rented sector landlords
- Housing associations

The targeted sessions were attended by a total of 79 people (excluding Council staff); suggestions made at each of the targeted sessions are detailed below.

## **Resident and Partner Engagement session**

- *The Council's housing 'front-door' should be more accessible, e.g., options to contact the Council in-person or over the phone and accessibility options for those for whom English is not their first language.*
- *Guidance provided to those at risk of homelessness should not be to stay-put within the property once an eviction notice has been received.*
- *The Council should respond to residents' concerns in a timely manner.*
- *The Council should conduct an initial needs assessment when a resident applies as homeless.*
- *The Council should re-introduce the selective licensing scheme.*
- *The Council should only place homeless households in licensed Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs).*
- *The Council should improve access to services for residents and landlords relating to the private rented sector.*
- *Care leavers should be prioritised in the Council's Allocation Policy.*
- *The Homelessness Prevention & Rough Sleeping Strategy should be co-produced with residents and partners.*
- *The Council should focus on the prevention of homelessness, not just the relief of homelessness.*
- *The Council lacks accommodation for women and domestic abuse survivors*
- *The Council must improve its joint working with housing associations to ensure housing associations build the homes residents need.*
- *The role of the voluntary, community and faith sector to support residents should be recognised by the Council and the sector should be listened to.*
- *Pathways for referrals between the voluntary, community and faith sector and the Council should be formalised.*

## **Tenant and Leaseholder Panel**

- *The Residents' Charter should be adopted by all Council service, not just housing services.*

## **Private Sector Landlord Engagement Session**

- *Croydon Council should support private sector landlords in meeting new legislative requirements including financial support.*
- *Croydon Council should support private sector landlords in improving the energy efficiency of private sector homes.*
- *Croydon Council should support private sector landlords with anti-social behaviour and managing disputes between tenants.*
- *Croydon Council should support private sector landlords in addressing damp and mould.*

## **Housing Association Engagement Session**

- *Re-establish the Croydon Housing Association Group chaired by a local housing association*
- *Learn from best practice when re-establishing the Croydon Housing Association Group*

- *Croydon Council should work with housing associations to identify land suitable for development*
- *Croydon Council should improve joint-working with housing associations regarding nomination agreements, planning, and adaptations for those with disabilities*

## **2. Survey Consultation Report**

The Housing Strategy 2023- 2028 consultation survey received a total of 450 responses. The majority of respondents identified as a Tenant or leaseholder of Croydon Council or 'other'.

### **Are you a...**

- Tenant or leaseholder of Croydon Council: 29.2%
- Croydon Council staff member: 6.6%
- Voluntary, community or faith sector partner: 6.8%
- Statutory partner, e.g., NHS, Metropolitan Police Service, London Fire Brigade: 1.1%
- Other: 58.3%

Of the respondents that identified as 'Other', the majority identified as either a...

- Homeowner: 5.8%
- Private landlord: 32.2%
- Croydon resident: 12.0%

The survey respondents were then asked if they agreed or disagreed with our draft priorities and objectives.

### **Priority One: Listen to our residents and provide good housing services.**

Objectives:

- Work with residents to transform the housing service and develop easy to access, modern housing services with residents at the heart of delivery.
- Effectively managing our supply of properties to minimise wait times and improve customer experience.

### **To what extent do you agree with this priority?**

- Strongly agree or agree: 77.2%
- Strongly disagree or disagree: 8%
- Neither agree nor disagree or don't know: 12.7%

**To what extent do you agree with these objectives?**

- Strongly agree or agree: 70.6%
- Strongly disagree or disagree: 14.5%
- Neither agree nor disagree or don't know: 14.9%

**Priority Two: Work with our partners, residents, and landlords to ensure that homes in the borough are safe, secure, and energy efficient.**

Objectives:

- Ensure our homes meet revised decent homes standards and are safe, warm, and dry
- Work with anti-social behaviour and waste collection services to make our communities and neighbourhoods cleaner, safer, and healthier places to live.
- Work in partnership with landlords and property agents to ensure private rented sector homes are safe, energy efficient, and meet wider regulatory standards.

**To what extent do you agree with this priority?**

- Strongly agree or agree: 73.6%
- Strongly disagree or disagree: 13.8%
- Neither agree nor disagree or don't know: 12.5%

**To what extent do you agree with these objectives?**

- Strongly agree or agree: 73.5%
- Strongly disagree or disagree: 17.9%
- Neither agree nor disagree or don't know: 8.7%

**Priority Three: Enable people to lead healthy and independent lives in their homes and communities.**

- Secure housing options for vulnerable residents, including residents with additional needs and disabilities, which support their independence.
- Support care-experienced young people and children with families assessed as vulnerable into appropriate housing.
- Enable our residents to stay safe in their homes.
- Prevent and tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

**To what extent do you agree with this priority?**

- Strongly agree or agree: 75.9%
- Strongly disagree or disagree: 8.2%
- Neither agree nor disagree or don't know: 15.9%

**To what extent do you agree with these objectives?**

- Strongly agree or agree: 74.2%
- Strongly disagree or disagree: 10.1%

- Neither agree nor disagree or don't know: 15.7%

**Priority Four: Maintain the supply of affordable homes that meets the diverse needs of residents in Croydon.**

Objectives

- Make the best use of Council assets to secure affordable housing options.
- Develop skills and resources within the Council to maintain the supply of affordable homes.
- Strengthen relationships with our affordable housing providers including housing associations, developers, and investors.

**To what extent do you agree with this priority?**

- Strongly agree or agree: 65.3%
- Strongly disagree or disagree: 17.5%
- Neither agree nor disagree or don't know: 17.3%

**To what extent do you agree with these objectives?**

- Strongly agree or agree: 68.8%
- Strongly disagree or disagree: 14.6%
- Neither agree nor disagree or don't know: 16.5%

**Priority Five: Work with our partners and local community to make best use of resources and manage the demand for housing related services.**

Objectives

- Collaborate with statutory, community, and voluntary sector partners to improve residents access to housing services.
- Prepare for the future to ensure our homes in the borough meet the needs of our diverse communities.

**To what extent do you agree with this priority?**

- Strongly agree or agree: 69.9%
- Strongly disagree or disagree: 9.7%
- Neither agree nor disagree or don't know: 18.2%

**To what extent do you agree with these objectives?**

- Strongly agree or agree: 67.3%
- Strongly disagree or disagree: 8.1%
- Neither agree nor disagree or don't know: 23.5%

**Analysis of responses to draft priorities and objectives with low agreement**

N.B., 'low agreement' has been defined as where approximately a third or more of respondents either 'strongly disagree or disagree', 'neither agree nor disagree' or 'don't know' in response to the draft priorities and objectives.

The survey data tells us that 34.8% of respondents either 'strongly disagree or disagree', 'neither agree nor disagree' or 'don't know' in response to the following priority:

**Priority Four:** Maintain the supply of affordable homes that meets the diverse needs of residents in Croydon.

The survey data tells us that 31.1% of respondents either 'strongly disagree or disagree', 'neither agree nor disagree' or 'don't know' in response to the following objectives:

- Make the best use of Council assets to secure affordable housing options.
- Develop skills and resources within the Council to maintain the supply of affordable homes.
- Strengthen relationships with our affordable housing providers including housing associations, developers, and investors.

When respondents were asked why they strongly disagreed or disagreed, the following responses were provided:

- *We need genuinely affordable homes*
- *Affordable must mean something*
- *There is not enough family sized accommodation*
- *All new builds I've seen are not affordable at all*
- *There are not enough affordable homes for people on low incomes*
- *To maintain the supply of affordable homes in Croydon [this] requires slowing down the exodus of private landlords*
- *Maintaining is not going to be enough...you need to actively work to increase the supply of affordable housing for everyone.*
- *There are many properties that lie empty...*
- *We need affordable homes but not at the expense of quality*

The survey data tells us that 31.6% of respondents either 'strongly disagree or disagree', 'neither agree nor disagree' or 'don't know' in response to the following objectives:

#### *Priority Five*

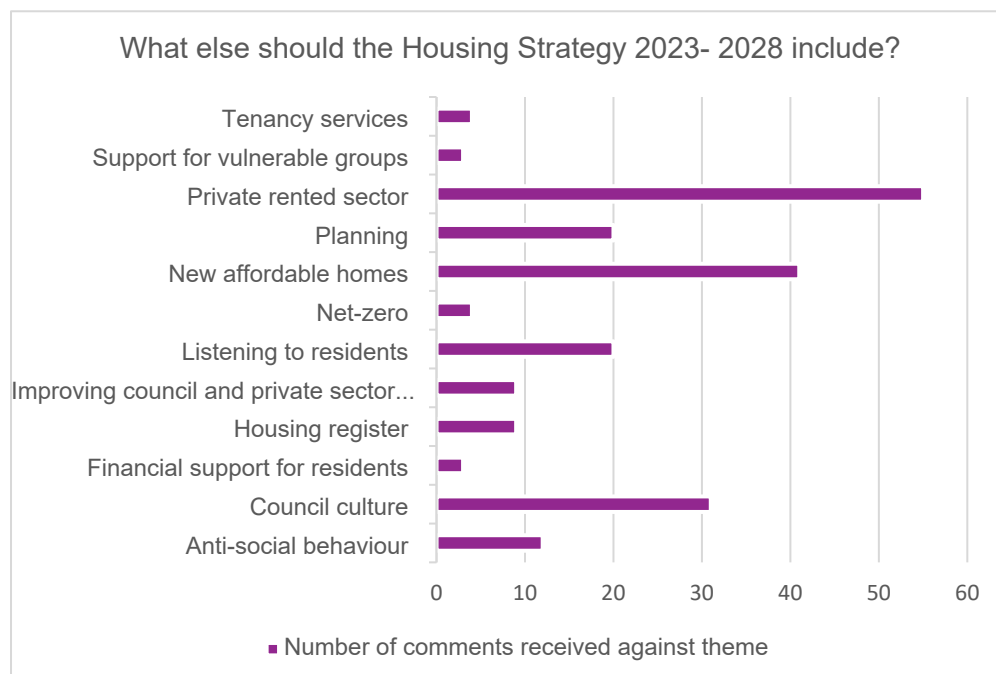
- Collaborate with statutory, community, and voluntary sector partners to improve residents access to housing services.
- Prepare for the future to ensure our homes in the borough meet the needs of our diverse communities.

When respondents were asked why they strongly disagreed or disagreed, the following responses were provided:

- *Over-development has blighted the area with inappropriately sized developments on quiet residential streets...*
- *...the council should work with socially-aware/value organisations such as housing associations...*
- *I am not sure what managing demand means*
- *Instruct statutory, community and voluntary sector partners to improve residents access to housing services*
- *I'm not really sure what diverse communities has to do with meeting building regulations and ensuring housing is built to current standards*

### Is there anything else you think Croydon Council's Housing Strategy 2023-2028 should include?

Survey respondents were asked if there was anything else the draft priorities and objectives of the Housing Strategy 2023- 2028 should include. The responses have been grouped into 12 themes; the majority of comments related to the private rented sector, new affordable homes and improvement to the Council's culture.



Respondents have highlighted a number of issues to be addressed as part of the Housing Strategy 2023- 2028 against the key themes below.

#### Private rented sector

- *Grants to landlords to meet the latest Decent Homes standards*
- *Incentives to private sector landlords to provide affordable and compliant homes*



- *Make it easy for private landlords to supply good quality housing*
- *Design policies to make tenants take more responsibility*
- *Better help and advice to private landlords which supports landlords to stay as landlords*

#### New affordable homes

- *Houses not flats*
- *Work with Community Land Trusts and explore community-based housing options*
- *Ensure that the elderly are given suitable accommodation*
- *More affordable homes 2- to 4-bedroom size*
- *Utilise vacant homes and buildings to increase affordable housing*

#### Council culture

- *Ensure all departments within the council stop working in silos*
- *More meaningful communication with residents*
- *Make sure phone calls are answered promptly*
- *Managers and staff who really care about the needs of residents*
- *Honesty*

### **3. Changes to the draft priorities and objectives following engagement and consultation feedback**

The draft priorities and objectives have been finalised to reflect the feedback from the consultation and engagement process. Amends to the priorities, objectives and accompanying narrative have been highlighted in red.

#### **Priority One:** Listen to our residents and provide good housing services

- Work with residents **across tenures** to transform the housing service and develop easy to access, modern housing services with residents at the heart.
- **Transforming our Housing Needs service to ensure a responsive and tailored approach to tackling homelessness.**
- **Embedding the commitments made to Croydon Tenants and Leaseholders in the Residents Charter and extending these principles to all those who receive a housing service from the Council.**
- **We need to continuously improve upon the responsive support we provide to residents living in poor quality Private Sector accommodation using our statutory powers where necessary**
- Effectively manage our supply of properties to minimise wait times and improve the customer experience-are now in **Priority Four**.

**Priority Two:** Work with our partners, residents, and landlords to ensure that homes in the borough are safe, secure, and energy efficient

- Ensure our homes meet revised decent homes standards and are safe, warm, and dry.
- **We will support** ~~Work in partnership with~~ landlords and property agents to ensure private rented sector homes are safe, energy efficient, and meet wider regulatory standards.
- **We will adopt a “joined-up approach” for our services and work with other Council services such as waste collection, grass cutting, anti-social behaviour and street lighting to ensure seamless service provision**
- **We will support landlords and property agents to ensure private rented sector homes are safe, energy efficient, and meet wider regulatory standards**

**Priority Three:** Enable people to lead healthy and independent lives in their homes and communities

- **Secure housing options for vulnerable residents, including older people, and residents with additional needs and disabilities, which support their independence**
- **To tailor all of our housing related services towards preventing the causes of homelessness such as domestic violence, drugs and alcohol abuse and mental health issues.**
- **We will work closely together with Children’s Social Care and cross directorate colleagues and partners to ensure a robust development of housing options for young adults leaving care and deliver the commitments made in the Joint Working protocol with Children’s Services.**
- **Enable our residents to live independently ~~stay safe~~ in their own homes by effectively distributing Disabled Facilities Grant and Home Improvement Loans to assist elderly and disabled people.**

**Priority Four:** Maintain the supply of affordable homes that meets the diverse needs of residents in Croydon.

- We will develop a Regeneration & New Home Programme which will set the strategic vision for borough-wide regeneration.**
- Make the best use of housing assets, including vacant properties, to secure housing options that are affordable to our residents.**
- Developing the skills and resources within the Council to maintain the supply of affordable homes.**
- Strengthen relationships with our affordable housing providers including housing associations, developers, and investors.**
- Enabling the development and delivery of the Local Plan 2019- 2040 to ensure homes built in the borough meet residents’ needs.**

**Priority Five:** Work with our partners and the local community to make best use of resources and manage the demand for housing related services.

- **Strengthen collaboration** collaborate with statutory, community, and voluntary sector partners to improve resident access to housing services.
- **Improving links with representative groups who 'speak' for the community we serve.**
- **Set up a forum to develop effective links with housing associations in the Borough**
- **Consulting widely on our services to obtain cross community feedback and establish new links in the Community.**
- **Encouraging the development of Tenant and Resident organisations in Croydon Council stock.**
- **Leading on the running of the Landlords Forum with a view to improving conditions in the Private Sectors.**
- **Liaise with Partners with a view to establishing a forum to discuss homelessness**

#### **4 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE HOMES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

- 4.1 The Homes Sub-Committee recommends that Housing Strategy includes details of how the Council will improve the availability of priority housing for domestic abuse victims and residents from other vulnerable backgrounds. Staff should be trained to detect and tackle abuse-related issues.
- 4.2 The Homes Sub-Committee recommends that the following areas should be explored for inclusion in the Housing Strategy and accompanying delivery plan: (i) a simplified downsizing process; (ii) how to utilise underused garages; (iii) green energy grants; (iv) tackling licencing problems with houses in multiple occupations; (v) overcrowding; (vi) cooperation with Education division to ensure that children placed in temporary accommodations are not excluded from education.
- 4.3. The Homes Sub-Committee recommends that the Housing Strategy should include more detail on the following areas: (i) energy efficiency; (ii) actions to tackle antisocial behaviour.
- 4.4. The Homes Sub-Committee recommends that, given the shortage of available housing in the borough, the Housing Strategy needs to provide strategic direction on how the supply of available housing in the Borough will be increased, and supported by a delivery plan providing tangible outcomes.
- 4.5. The Homes Sub-Committee recommends that the Residents' Complaint Process is reviewed to ensure it provides efficient resolutions to resident complaints.

- 4.6. The Homes Sub-Committee recommends that the delivery plan being developed to accompany the Housing Strategy must include clear timelines for delivery and SMART objectives, outline any interdependencies and indicate the key risks to deliver and how they will be mitigated.

## **5. Survey Consultation Equalities Questions**

### **What is your sex?**

Comparison of our survey data with Census 2021 data indicates that our respondents are broadly representative of Croydon's population by sex.

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Survey respondents</b>	<b>Census 2021</b>
No response	2.9%	0.0%
Female	43.1%	52.0%
Male	40.2%	48.0%
Prefer not to say	13.8%	0.0%

### **What age range are you in?**

Comparison of our survey data with Census 2021 data indicates that respondents between the ages of 16 and 34 are underrepresented in the survey.

<b>Age range</b>	<b>Survey respondents</b>	<b>Census 2021</b>
No response	2.2%	0.0%
16- 19	0.0%	11.3%
20- 24	0.2%	
25- 34	3.1%	
35- 44	10.4%	15.3%
45- 54	21.1%	13.6%
55- 64	27.1%	11.8%
65- 74	14.9%	7.4%
75- 84	5.8%	6.2%

85+	0.7%	
Prefer not to say	14.4%	0.0%

### Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

Comparison of our survey data with Census 2021 data indicates that our respondents are broadly representative of Croydon's population by gender identity.

Gender identity	Survey respondents	Census 2021
No response	8.2%	7.5%
Yes	77.8%	91.6%
Prefer not to say	12.9%	0.0%
No	1.1%	0.9%

### Are you married or in a civil partnership?

Comparison of our survey data with Census 2021 data indicates that our respondents are broadly representative of Croydon's population by legal partnership status, however, residents who identified as 'never married and never registered in a civil partnership' are underrepresented in the survey.

Legal partnership status	Survey respondents	Census 2021
No response	2.7%	0.0%
Never married and never registered in a civil partnership	14.9%	42.9%
Married	51.6%	41.6%
In a registered civil partnership	0.4%	0.3%
Separated, but still legally married	1.1%	2.6%
Separated, but still legally in a civil partnership	0.2%	0.0%
Divorced	6.4%	8.1%
Formerly in a civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	0.0%	0.0%
Widowed	2.9%	4.7%
Surviving partner from a registered civil partnership	0.0%	0.0%
Prefer not to say	19.8%	0.0%

### How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Comparison of our survey data with Census 2021 data indicates that our respondents are broadly representative of Croydon's population by ethnic group, however, residents who identified as 'Black African', 'Pakistani' or 'Any other Black background' are significantly underrepresented in the survey.

<b>Ethnic group</b>	<b>Survey respondents %</b>	<b>Census 2021 %</b>
White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	46.5	37.4
Prefer not to say	22.4	0
Indian	7.6	7.6
Any other White background	4.3	9.3
Black Caribbean	4.3	9.2
Any other Asian background	2.7	4.1
Black African	2.7	10.3
Any other Mixed / multiple ethnic background	1.6	2.3
Chinese	1.4	1
Other	1.4	3.3
White Irish	0.9	1.3
White and Black Caribbean	0.9	2.7
White and Black African	0.9	1
Pakistani	0.9	3.9
White and Asian	0.7	1.5
Any other Black background	0.5	3.1
White Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.2	0.4
Bangladeshi	0.0	0.9
Arab	0.0	0.6

### What is your religion?

Comparison of our survey data with Census 2021 data indicates that our respondents are broadly representative of Croydon's population by religion, however, residents who identified as 'Muslim' are significantly underrepresented in the survey.

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Survey respondents</b>	<b>Census 2021</b>
Baha'i	0.0%	0.0%
Buddhist	0.7%	0.6%
Christian	34.8%	48.9%
Hindu	4.1%	5.9%
Jain	0.7%	0.0%
Jewish	1.1%	0.2%
Muslim	2.5%	10.4%
Sikh	0.7%	0.4%
Any other religion	0.7%	0.8%
No religion	29.5%	25.9%
Prefer not to say	23.8%	0.0%
Other (please specify)	1.4%	0.0%
No response	3.0%	6.9%

## Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Comparison of our survey data with Census 2021 data indicates that our respondents are broadly representative of Croydon's population by disability status.

Disability	Survey respondents	Census 2021
No response	3.1%	0.0%
Yes	12.2%	14.4%
No	69.3%	85.5%
Prefer not to say	15.3%	0.0%

Analysis has been undertaken to identify issues or themes raised by the following protected characteristic groups underrepresented in the survey:

- Never married and never registered in a civil partnership
- Black African
- Pakistani
- Any other Black background
- Muslim
- Aged 16- 34

The below details the percentage of those responding 'strongly agree or agree' by group. The analysis shows that for all underrepresented groups, excluding those identifying as 'Muslim', the percentage of those responding 'strongly agree or agree' was higher than across all respondents. In contrast, a lower percentage of those identifying as 'Muslim' responded 'strongly agree or agree' to the five draft priorities. Analysis of the eleven respondents identifying as 'Muslim' to the five draft priorities does not highlight reasons for not responding 'strongly agree or agree' shared by the eleven respondents.

% of respondents responding 'Strongly agree or agree' by group							
	All respondents	Never married or never registered in a civil partnership	Black African	Any other Black background	Pakistani	16- 34 y/o	Muslim
Priority One	77.2%	77.6%	83.4%	100.0%	100.0%	80.0%	54.6%
Priority Two	73.6%	76.1%	91.6%	100.0%	75.0%	80.0%	45.5%
Priority Three	75.9%	79.9%	91.7%	100.0%	75.0%	80.0%	45.5%
Priority Four	65.3%	71.6%	75.0%	100.0%	100.0%	73.4%	54.6%
Priority Five	69.9%	71.7%	83.4%	100.0%	66.6%	80.0%	40.0%

No. of respondents by group	450 respondents	67 respondents	12 respondents	2 respondents	4 respondents	15 respondents	11 respondents
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