

Housing Services

Vision and Team Commitments

Ambition

Excellent services, shaped and valued by
our communities



Housing Ambition Plan 5 2014-2015

Getting Closer to the customer



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE | Gold



Ambition

Excellent services, shaped and valued by our communities

By 2020

- Be the housing provider of choice with a strong recognised brand both within and outside Harrow
- Have a strong pipeline of new housing development so that stock numbers are growing annually
- Deliver a mixed tenure house building programme through a range of delivery models and partnerships
- Offer housing solutions for all Harrow residents with a housing need

2015 - 2017

- Increase the supply and quality of housing across all tenures in Harrow
- Ensure residents and customers consistently acknowledge that expectations are met or exceeded
- Provide management services to a range of other landlords (private and social)
- Finances for department worked out and secured giving a long term plan for maintenance of existing property, growth of stock and supporting the Council's savings targets
- Organise staff development and succession planning to sustain the organisation
- Broaden and deepen reach of communication and engagement mechanisms used by the department
- Ensure organisation is flexible to respond alone and with partners to meet challenges it faces including reviewing and sharing services
- Create structure(s) to deliver and manage a range of tenures and employment initiatives
- Build consensus amongst stakeholders on long term strategy



Ambition

Getting closer to the customer

2014 - 2015

- Develop management services to offer to other landlords
- All parts of department embrace new ways of working that are flexible and proactive in addressing the needs and concerns of customers
- Teams work jointly to deliver best possible service to meet estate needs
- Implement annual cycle of staff development and engagement that is integrated with HAP process
- Develop partnerships with other agencies (Fire, Police, Health, private sector regulators and teams (Adults, Children, Procurement) to work collaboratively on meeting the Council's strategic objectives
- Develop additional methods to support those residents who are under financial stress to meet their realistic housing aspirations
- Agree with residents a programme of regeneration initiatives to maximise the housing stock and land value within the HRA
- Increase access to supply of economical rented property to meet temporary housing needs
- Support employment initiatives to reduce the number of customers without a minimum of 16 hours per week employment
- Obtain approval for the delivery model for the Homes for Harrow programme and commence delivery
- Work with Greater London Authority, Registered Providers and private developers to bring forward affordable housing on private sites
- Review customer access channels to ensure they continue to meet needs
- Broaden the engagement of residents in shaping the service



Housing **Golden Thread**

2014/2015

National and Regional Drivers

Localism Act, • Department for Communities and Local Government & coalition policies relating to housing & welfare reform • Greater London Authority • London Housing Strategy and the London Plan • Availability of funding • Co-regulation

Local Harrow / Council Drivers

- Corporate vision and priorities • Transformation Plan
- Core Strategy and the “Heart of Harrow” opportunity area • Medium Term Financial Strategy • HRA Business Plan • Housing need in the borough and the “Homes for Harrow” project • Equality Objectives • Tenant scrutiny • Other council strategies

Community, Health & Wellbeing vision

Housing Ambition Plan 5 (2014-2015)

Divisional Commitments

- Resident Services • Partnerships and Strategy • Housing Needs • Asset Management

Team Commitments

Individual Commitments / Appraisals

Housing Engagement Structure 2014/2015

**Cabinet
Housing Portfolio Holder**

TLRCF, HFTRA & scrutiny groups

Editorial board, events planning groups, Housing communications plan

Housing Leadership Group, HAP events, team meetings/ briefings, 121s, appraisals

Broader stakeholder engagement – written info, Homing In, road shows, social/ other media, surveys



Housing Management Team commitment

- Provide clear and visible leadership
- Establish the vision for the service
- Trust our people and empower them to deliver
- Establish clear priorities in line with corporate & directorate priorities
- Ensure sufficient resources available to deliver priorities
- Listen to, respect and engage all staff
- Listen to, be honest with, respect and engage all residents
- Acknowledge success and support those trying to improve
- Be your ambassador
- Communicate honestly and openly
- Maintain a good working environment
- Provide learning and development opportunities as part of planning for the future
- Listen to, be honest with, respect and engage all residents



People commitments

We will:

- Develop the Housing Ambition People Plan, to include the next housing skills campaign, via the Housing People Ambition group
- Start a Housing 'Future Leaders' programme - to develop talent and bring forward managers for the future
- Continue to develop our approach to Mobile and Flexible working
- Support the corporate move from IPAD to appraisal and use appraisals to develop a personal skills programme for all staff
- Start to use 360 degree feedback beginning with managers to set two year development programmes
- Support the completion of professional qualifications as part of a balanced training portfolio
- Develop and deploy team 'dashboards' that show performance and allow improved focus on outcomes for the people of Harrow Council
- Apply to be assessed and retain Investors in People Gold Standard
- Support corporate priorities for equalities and staff engagement



Our culture

The following six themes emerged from detailed consultation with each housing team, and the change leaders; they describe the culture and behaviours we want to reinforce to support our Mobile & Flexible, new ways of working.

- Theme 1: TRUST
We trust each other to do our jobs to the best of our ability
- Theme 2: RESPECT
We strive to build mutual respect with our colleagues, customers and partners
- Theme 3: SUPPORTIVE TEAMWORK
We are a supportive team, that shares knowledge and helps each other out
- Theme 4: ACCOUNTABILITY & RESPONSIBILITY
We are all accountable for our actions, aware of our responsibilities to others, and take a proactive, service-wide approach to problem solving
- Theme 5: MOTIVATION
We are happy and motivated to work in Harrow and make a difference to its people
- Theme 6: OPEN COMMUNICATIONS
We communicate clearly in an open and honest manner, carefully considering which channel is best for our audience



Partnerships & Strategy

Overarching Commitment 2014/15

Ambition

We will:

- Actively involve residents & partners in developing plans that will:
 - Ensure affordable, good quality housing continues to be available across Harrow
 - Develop options to make best use of the housing stock across all tenures
 - Influence the housing market to meet priorities
- Commission the first new HRA homes
- Continue the development of new housing models
- Proactively support operational teams, members & residents by providing:
 - Information, analysis, benchmarking, communications & complaints co-ordination
 - Monitoring impact of policy changes
 - Systems (IT), procedures /policies designed to put the customer first and ensure value for money
 - Developing staff to be the best - via learning & development, liP, staff engagement and new ways of working



Resident Services

Overarching Commitment 2014/15

Ambition

We will:

- Actively involve stakeholders in helping to shape services to meet their needs and aspirations
- Continue on our journey of getting closer to the customer
- Work more closely with Asset Management to develop a seamless response to tenants and leaseholders
- Respond to the challenges arising as a result of Welfare Reform
- Review the effectiveness of changes to Sheltered Services provision
- Improve the appearance of our estates
- Maximise Resident Services income
- Deliver a professional service to leaseholders and maximise income, whilst dealing with the challenges of Section 20 duties
- Seek to deliver maximum tenancy sustainability



Asset Management

Overarching Commitment 2014/15

Ambition

We will:

- Provide a first class service that our customers value and that responds appropriately to the needs of disabled and vulnerable residents
- Increase the involvement of tenants, leaseholders, residents and stakeholders in all aspects of asset management, to help to shape the monitoring, management and development of the service
- Ensure the health and safety of our customers, staff and contractors is paramount in all we do
- Improve the quality of homes and the external environment by ensuring we deliver the service to agreed standards, meet best practice for customer service and value for money and protect the council's investment in the housing stock
- Embed robust contract management arrangements for all aspects of the service to ensure that all contracts are consistently well managed and that, where any problems arise, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively
- Improve joint working with Resident Services, Adults and Health, taking into account customer's specific needs
- Integrate the Aids and Adaptations service



Housing Needs

Overarching Commitment 2014/15

Ambition

We will:

- Provide a realistic assessment of a customer's likelihood of obtaining social housing in Harrow through our allocation scheme, so they can make appropriate informed decisions about their alternative housing options
- Inform customers so they understand how the welfare benefit changes affect them
- Help customers move into work, or get training to help get a job, because increasing household income widens housing choices
- Inform and encourage customers to consider the advantages of moving to areas with less expensive housing with greater choice
- Work with landlords, lenders and families to find new solutions to prevent losing the home
- Through discussion, help customers to consider realistic options to find and keep a suitable home



Housing Needs

Overarching Commitment cont. 2014/15

Ambition

We will:

- Curb the rise in homelessness: if possible by assisting customers to stay in their current home or helping them to find a suitable alternative home
- Advise about low cost home ownership when appropriate, and help customers decide if home ownership is right for them
- Encourage those tenants who are under-occupying social housing to move, to make room for larger families and to avoid risking rent arrears because of housing benefit cuts
- Work with private landlords to increase the supply of rented homes that are suitable for families and single people in housing need
- Work to improve standards in private rented housing through advice, assistance and support
- Try to avoid keeping customers waiting for advice and assistance, by offering an appointment



Finance

Team Commitment 2014/15

Ambition

We will:

- Maintain a healthy Housing Business Plan that enables the housing service to be delivered and provides opportunities to increase the Council's stock and access to new housing
- Help all housing staff to understand the purpose and significance of a positive business plan and support its delivery
- Use the Business Plan potential to help unlock new housing options
- Broaden the involvement of housing finance to support the Council's wider regeneration objectives
- Help to develop new ways of delivering new forms of housing
- Improve financial awareness and responsibilities in all housing staff
- Embed the concept of value for money in all housing services and transactions
- Improve financial awareness and understanding amongst housing customers and key partners
- Maximise financial compliance amongst all housing staff

