

A group of diverse families, including men, women, and children, are smiling and posing for a photo at an outdoor community event. In the background, there are multi-story apartment buildings and a blue tent. The scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a pleasant day.

Westminster Housing Compact

Our Residents,
Our Homes,
Our Communities:
A Call to Action in Westminster



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Foreword

Councillor Liza Begum,
Cabinet Member for Housing Services

I am delighted to introduce the Westminster Housing Compact, a new partnership between the council and registered providers to tackle the housing crisis together and drive real outcomes for our residents.

We want to make sure that every resident in Westminster has access to a safe, high-quality, and affordable place to call home.

The Compact puts our residents and communities at its heart. Our city is home to vibrant neighbourhoods, filled with diverse communities, but we face significant housing challenges. This includes the rising cost of living, aging housing stock, and the risk of homelessness, all of which impact the well-being of our residents. The Housing Compact is our collective response to these pressures. By bringing together our skills, resources, and experience, we can build more homes, collaborate on regeneration, deliver more

consistent services and work together to tackle issues like overcrowding or anti-social behaviour.

Each area of the Compact has been developed collaboratively with partners, bringing our expertise, insights, and commitments to the table. It is more than a commitment to work together better, it is a call to action. We have set clear principles to make our partnership a success, committing to building open collaboration, mutual accountability, and leveraging our organisational strengths.

We are proud to take this step forward with our partners so that we can make housing in Westminster better for everyone.



Introduction & Vision Statement

Introduction

Westminster City Council is building a 'Fairer Westminster' that puts residents at the heart of our decision making, helping determine the city's future because their voices are heard. We are creating a more equitable and inclusive city by addressing the social, economic, and environmental challenges faced by residents, particularly those from marginalised communities.

To drive our vision for a Fairer Westminster – one that through housing, puts residents first – we are forming a Housing Compact with registered housing providers across the city to foster collaboration, share best practices, and co-develop initiatives to improve the lives, homes and communities of Westminster residents.

Our challenge

When people think of London, they think of Westminster. However, beyond its role as the epicentre of a global city, the city faces a significant housing challenge. Demand for housing exceeds the supply, leading to high rents, overcrowding, displacement, and a growing risk of homelessness. In 2024, over 2,500 families and nearly 1,000 individuals live in temporary accommodation with over 280 recorded rough sleepers in the city.

These conditions create substantial risks for both providers and residents, contributing to social inequality, environmental deprivation, and poor health outcomes for our communities. Westminster's housing challenges are further complicated by broader issues that put additional pressure on social housing providers, such as the urgent need for decarbonisation of

homes, adapting to new building safety regulations – particularly challenging for high-rise buildings – and new consumer standards.

Our response: Westminster Housing Compact

While these challenges are significant, we believe in our collective power to address them. Together, Westminster City Council and over 40 registered housing providers manage over 28,000 affordable homes across the city. By bringing together key housing providers, and with the council playing a crucial role both as major landlord and as place-shaper, the Housing



When people think of London, they think of Westminster.

Compact provides a platform for us to jointly respond to these issues and seize opportunities that can only be realised by working in partnership.

Our joint commitment to residents is clear: through this partnership, Westminster City Council and registered housing providers will work together to ensure that every resident has access to safe, high-quality and affordable housing. We will prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable, and focus on creating inclusive, safe and more resilient communities. This Compact is our pledge to strengthen and improve housing services and deliver tangible improvements to our residents and communities, both now and into the future.



Vision and Themes

From this collaborative process, we co-produced the Ambition Statement and identified the five key themes that will guide this partnership, each aligned with the Fairer Westminster priorities.

Council Fairer Westminster priorities

Fair Council

Culture of collaboration and mutual respect

Commitment to engagement, inclusivity and accessibility with public participation

Fair Housing

High quality services

More control and influence over housing choices and decisions

Housing Compact Aspirations / Themes



Effective Housing Partnership



High Quality Resident Services

Workstreams

- Relationship management
- Shared knowledge and mapping
- Communication and promotion
- Building trust
- Innovation/shared skills and resources

- Joined up operations
- Resident engagement/voice
- Tenancy sustainment/homelessness prevention
- Vulnerable residents
- Specialist Housing

The vision and themes will shape our collective action, ensure better coordination, establish a clear direction of work, and strengthen mutual understanding among all stakeholders. This Compact also established a structure for accountability, enabling us to hold one another

responsible for delivering our shared commitments.

This is not a final or fixed solution. Our Compact provides a flexible, agile and evolving framework – one that can be adapted and refined over time through a collective and collaborative agreement on how we work together.

Fair Communities

Cohesive and inclusive communities

Tackle inequalities and strengthen the multiagency support



Local Place-Based Services

- Community connectivity
- Shared spaces
- Resident focused
- Co-located resources (e.g. hubs)
- Employment and skills

Fair Environment

Greening and sustainable initiatives

Better quality housing



Safe and Healthier Homes

- Safer homes, streets and neighbourhoods
- Quality of homes
- Repairs
- Supporting vulnerable people in emergencies/events

Fair Economy

Innovative and sustainable solutions

Deliver more genuinely affordable housing



Housing Supply

- Working together to deliver new homes
- Increase temporary accommodation
- Reciprocals
- Investment and divestment decisions



Themes

The Westminster Housing Compact themes provide a framework for our partnership action. Collectively, we have identified and agreed on shared priorities for each theme; ensuring a unified approach to tackling Westminster's housing challenges.

Five Key Themes

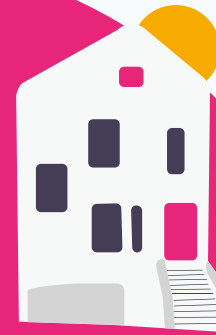
Effective Housing Partnership

Forming a strong relationship where partners work together strategically and operationally.



Housing Supply

Retaining, growing and maximising affordable housing supply in Westminster.



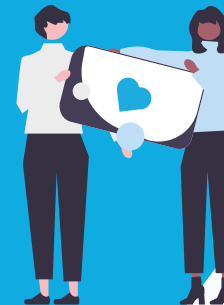
Local Place-Based Services

Working together to provide local, resident-centred services in our communities.



High Quality Services to Residents

Delivering high-quality services to residents, focusing on tenancy sustainment, homelessness prevention, and protecting our most vulnerable.



Safer & Healthier Homes

Delivering the best quality, safe, healthy and secure homes and neighbourhoods for our residents.



Cross-Cutting Actions

Each of these themes will be supported by the following cross-cutting priority actions and initiatives.



Mapping and understanding our homes

We will develop and maintain a comprehensive understanding of Westminster's social housing footprint, including the type, quality, age and condition of our homes. This will enable us to identify opportunities for place-based collaboration by bringing together key resident and community services.

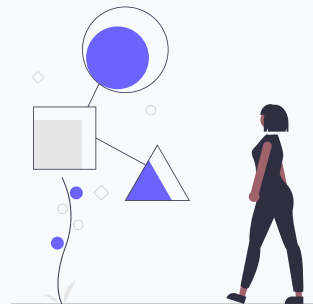
Sharing knowledge and data

We will create a collaborative environment for sharing knowledge and data. This will enable us to better coordinate actions, complement each other's services, and develop targeted solutions to improve service delivery.



Innovating, learning and improving

We will drive innovation and continuous improvement by sharing and applying lessons from experience.



Strategic coordination

Through our governance and operational structure and close dialogue, we will ensure objectives are aligned, agreeing on shared goals and approaches to addressing the city's housing challenges.



Maximising our resources

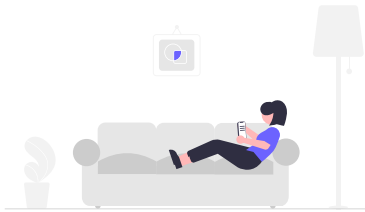
We will explore opportunities to leverage and pool our collective resources. This will enable us to make service delivery more efficient to all partners and more accessible across our communities.





Meeting the New Consumer Standards

This framework will also enable us to meet the new consumer standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing, for the benefit of our residents and communities. These revised standards, which came into effect on 1st April 2024, require social landlords to:



Ensure safety and quality of their homes and wellbeing of tenants, including having detailed information about their homes and condition to ensure health and safety requirements are met and properties are maintained appropriately.



Build an open, transparent and fair relationship with tenants including maintaining effective communication, making services and complaints procedures accessible, and integrating our residents in key decision-making.



Promote a fair tenancy allocation and management by supporting our residents from allocation to the end of their tenancy.



Strengthen communities by ensuring our neighbourhood and communal areas are safe and healthy, collaborating with relevant partners to promote community wellbeing.





Top left image: Ladbroke Grove Flats
Top middle image: Sandringham Flats
Left image: Ashbridge Street

FIVE

KEY THEMES

Effective Housing Partnership

Forming a strong relationship where partners work together strategically and operationally.

The opportunity

With over 40 providers in Westminster, this partnership enables us to harness our collective power to address locally-specific and industry-wide challenges, improve service delivery, and enhance outcomes for residents.

By working together in partnership, we can:

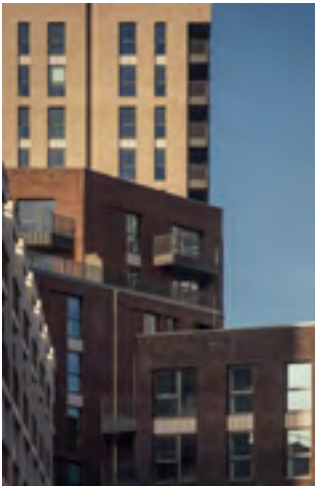
- Increase visibility and awareness of our services.
- Know who to contact to resolve issues promptly.
- Share resources and capacity to better meet residents' needs.
- Face competing priorities together.
- Align our shared plans and goals for the city.

What does a good future look like and how are we going to get there?

For the Housing Compact to succeed, Westminster and registered housing providers need to form an effective housing partnership where knowledge is shared, and trust is built.

We will achieve this by:

- **Ensuring universal collaboration** - we will create a framework for Senior Leaders to agree strategic approaches to shared challenges while operational leads work on practical actions.
- **Joint approaches to standards** - we will work together to meet consumer and regulatory standards and demands, including complaints resolution and escalation, upholding service standards and best practice. This will strengthen accountability.
- **Shared priorities on key services** - we will align on shared objectives and strategies on services such as tenancy, homelessness prevention, skills & employment, public health, adult social care, children services, and anti-social behaviour.
- **Coordinated and consistent approaches** - we will promote consistent approaches to our shared challenges, such as temporary accommodation, tenancy frauds & support provision.



Top image: Ebury Bridge
 Middle left image: Harrow
 Bottom left image: Daventry House, Bottom right image: Carrick Yard

Summary of short/medium/long term ambitions*

Short Term (within six months)

Set up the Compact governance framework.

Agree on a clear shared agenda and priorities for this partnership.

Medium Term (within a year)

Build a data-sharing platform to share key information, including contacts and where our homes are.

Improve cross-organisation communication.

Long Term (within three years)

Share lessons learned and evolve partnership.

Align strategies and key policies.

Scope the approach to our work in partnership that will make best use of our collective resources, skills, and expertise in Westminster.

*to be expanded in the Implementation Plan

High Quality Services to Residents

Delivering high quality services to residents, focusing on tenancy sustainment, homelessness prevention and protecting our most vulnerable.

The opportunity

By working together, we can provide high quality services to all residents, including our most vulnerable.

This partnership enables us to deliver essential housing services to our residents in a consistent way, regardless of their landlord. This presents an opportunity to address effectively complex resident issues, to achieve better outcomes for those who call Westminster home.

What does a good future look like and how are we going to get there?

Our partnership will be characterised by collaboration and communication. We will ensure that residents' voices are at the heart of service delivery.

We will achieve this by:

- **Working together on complex resident cases** – we will establish a two-way dialogue on issues like nominations, allocations and safeguarding, enabling housing providers to advise on the suitability of homes, with our residents' best interests at the centre.
- **Improving signposting and communication** – we will ensure better communication across partners, including identifying specific service area leads at all organisations for core issues to enable all partners to provide the right guidance to residents, regardless of landlord.
- **Creating a joined-up approach to key services** – we will work together to deliver key services such as tenancy sustainment and homelessness prevention with a focus on vulnerable residents.
- **Enhancing resident engagement** – we will give a bigger voice to local residents to understand what services they need and build a long-term productive relationship between residents and landlords.
- **Providing tailored, prevention-led solutions** – we will identify opportunities to work with communities according to their specific needs. We will adopt a prevention-focussed approach to key issues such as homelessness and tenancy arrears.
- **Giving a voice to residents** – we will ensure seldom heard voices are heard to understand their needs and aspirations for their homes.



Summary of short/medium/long term ambitions*

Short Term (within six months)

Agree priorities issues and services.

Focus on nominations / allocations.

Medium Term (within a year)

Undertake place-based neighbourhood pilots that look at specific resident needs and how local partners can work together.

Deliver joint resident/ community engagement initiatives and events.

Long Term (within three years)

Use learning from pilots to improve services.

Explore opportunities for joint commissioning and investment.

Focus on prevention and early intervention.

*to be expanded in the Implementation Plan

Local Place-Based Services

Joining together to provide local, resident-centered services in the community

The opportunity

Westminster and registered housing providers all deliver key services to local communities individually. There is a great opportunity to work in partnership, using local knowledge, to deliver services based on resident needs, focusing on where the service is needed rather than the individual provider.

By focusing service delivery around our residents, we can deliver a more locally useable, inclusive and cost effective suite of services. Delivering effective use of resources and releasing funding for other housing priorities.

What does a good future look like and how are we going to get there?

Our future partnership will deliver services in the community that are 'place-based' and focused on resident needs, rather than determined by the provider or landlord. We will work together in a coordinated way, leveraging collective resources to improve outcomes.

We will achieve this by:

- **Understanding our residents and their needs**
 - we will use our shared knowledge of our homes, services and residents to deliver services in the right way, at the right time.
- **Reviewing and improving our services** - we will review what services we deliver, the customer journey, and how we can be improve. We will work together to design delivery in a resident-focused way.
- **Co-locating service delivery** - we will explore opportunities to co-locate, using our collective assets – such as local offices, community hubs
 - ensuring people can access different services through 'one front door'.
- **Making services accessible** – we will ensure residents know where to go for support, based on an understanding of services and key contacts.
- **Co-ordinating on specific support services**
 - we will work together on key services such as employment & skills and financial & digital literacy, where combining our assets and resources could maximise benefits for our residents.



Right image: Harrow
Bottom image: Ebury Bridge

Summary of short/medium/long term ambitions*

Short Term (within six months)

Map our services and our community facilities.

Identify priorities for potential pilots to deliver services together.

Medium Term (within a year)

Undertake place-based neighbourhood pilots to consider, from a resident's perspective:

- what services are provided in that area and how they could be delivered more efficiently
- how resources could be co-located to improve the accessibility

Long Term (within three years)

Use learning and experience from pilots to broaden the approach to improving resident experience.

Develop a 'one front door' strategy for residents so they can access services and resources easily.

—————
Pooled funds, joint-procurement or joint-commissioning.

*to be expanded in the Implementation Plan

Safer and Healthier Homes

Delivering the best quality, safe and healthy homes and neighbourhoods for our residents

The opportunity

As providers of social and affordable housing in Westminster, we have a significant opportunity to improve residents' health and wellbeing by providing high-quality, secure homes. We will meet tighter regulatory standards and contribute to building safe and healthy neighbourhoods and communities.

Working in partnership to address issues such as damp, mould and inadequate insulation – alongside community safety challenges – will enable us to make sure that every resident has the opportunity to live in a safe, secure, and healthy environment.

What does a good future look like and how are we going to get there?

Our partnership will help us to meet all the necessary regulatory standards so residents are safe within their homes and neighbourhoods; working together on issues such as anti-social behaviour, and incident/emergency response.

We will achieve this by:

- **Taking a joint approach to standards and quality** – we will share data on the condition of our homes, agree common standards, and work together to find solutions to address issues like damp and mould.
- **Funding and delivering retrofit projects** – we will share best practice and lessons learned from retrofit, explore joint/group procurement and funding initiatives; engaging pro-actively with residents in the process.
- **Collaborating on neighbourhood safety** – we will implement a unified approach to ASB, leveraging Westminster's Local Authority powers to identify issues affecting communities and find solutions.
- **Aligning our approach to emergency response and planned events** – we will develop a joint approach to identifying and supporting people in an emergency (e.g. Local Resilience Forums or Local Action Plans). We will work to mitigate potential impacts of planned events (e.g. road closures), especially where they impact vulnerable people.
- **Identifying priority areas/neighbourhoods** – we will identify areas where service provision is shared, and where we face common issues (e.g. pest control) that affect health, wellbeing and community safety.
- **Align on key community services delivery** – we will explore opportunities for joint commissioning or procurement of key services.



Summary of short/medium/long term ambitions*

Short Term (within six months)

Share insights on our homes and their condition.

Identify immediate focus for joint working (e.g. building safety).

Medium Term (within a year)

Undertake place-based pilots to improve community safety.

Sharing of best practice on common challenges.

Long Term (within three years)

Align ambitions, strategies and initiatives on quality of homes.

Joint procurement/ commissioning of key services.

*to be expanded in the Implementation Plan

Housing Supply

To retain, grow and maximise housing supply in Westminster

The opportunity

Increasing housing supply is subject to a number of challenges. We will work together to find collaborative solutions to tackle the local housing crisis. Demand far exceeds the supply, particularly for affordable housing and temporary accommodation (TA) but working in partnership, we will be able to find ways to develop new homes and create deliverable solutions.

What does a good future look like and how are we going to get there?

Westminster and registered housing providers will work in partnership to retain, grow, and maximise affordable housing supply by collaborating on regeneration initiatives, working together on TA, and coordinating on investment and disinvestment, among other priorities.

We will achieve this by:

- **Identifying where additional homes are needed**
 - we will map and analyse our housing stock to pinpoint areas of need.
- **Reviewing temporary accommodation** – we will work together to ensure TA stock is fit for purpose. We will develop initiatives to link into emergency housing. We will better capture the resident journey into permanent housing, analysing the root causes of homelessness.
- **Tackling empty homes and long-term voids** – we will collaborate to identify creative solutions to restore these properties back into use.
- **Exploring rehousing solutions** – we will better assist residents in need of rehousing due to overcrowding, domestic violence, or other vulnerabilities, including reviewing the processes for reciprocals.
- **Accelerating housing delivery** – we will explore joint efforts to address Westminster-specific challenges and boost housing delivery.
- **Regeneration** – we will identify opportunities for regeneration, focusing on quality and sustainability whilst optimising new supply.
- **Facilitating development** – we will explore innovative ways to make it easier for registered housing providers to build homes.
- **Coordinating on disinvestment and acquisitions**
 - we will work together to address disinvestment in neighbourhoods, mitigating impacts on communities and identifying targeted interventions, including land/asset swaps to retain social and affordable housing.



Top right image: Carrick Yard
Middle image: Ladbroke Grove flats
Bottom left image: Bravington Road Shared Ownership Flat, Bottom right image: Church Square

Summary of short/medium/long term ambitions*

Short Term (within six months)

Identify areas where there are shared estates/priorities to improve the quality of homes through regeneration.

Review where Westminster can enable new developments.

Medium Term (within a year)

Develop a coordinated, data-led response to empty homes/voids.

Westminster to review its potential opportunities (including Joint Ventures) for registered housing providers.

Long Term (within three years)

Develop strategies to increase long-term opportunities to boost supply.

*to be expanded in the Implementation Plan



Delivering the Compact

Building a strong and sustainable partnership between Westminster and registered housing providers is central to the success of the Housing Compact and to achieving meaningful results for our residents and communities. To ensure this, we will establish clear governance, communication and operational structures, along with defined partnership principles and shared commitments, and measurable outcomes.

Partnership Principles

The success of the Housing Compact relies on our shared commitment to the following guiding principles, which will underpin how the council and registered housing providers work together:



Mutual understanding – We will foster a deep understanding of each other's roles, priorities, and long-term plans. This will enable us to respond more effectively to immediate issues and work together on common challenges.



Delivering together – We will collaborate to tackle the critical challenges in delivering services and building new homes in the city. Effective, innovative and targeted collaboration will be key to improving services to our current and future residents, recognising and leveraging the unique strengths and experience of each partner.

Open collaboration – We will build an environment that promotes open collaboration, where we share information and insights to help us make better decisions to enhance our service delivery for the benefit of all Westminster residents.



Honesty, transparency, and two-way

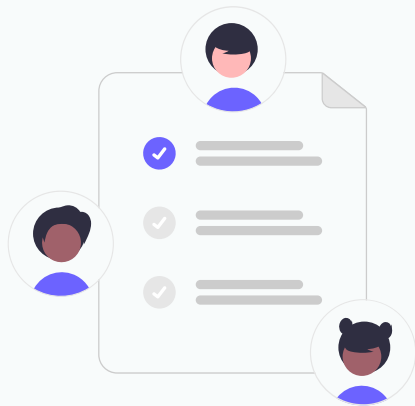
accountability – We will promote a new type of relationship between Westminster and registered housing providers which is built on honesty, transparency and mutual accountability. Embedding this into our ways of working will enable us to make a real step change in the quality of social housing services in the city, and provide demonstrable benefits as a result of this Compact.



Investing in positive relationships – We will create opportunities for consistent dialogue and joint action. Our partnership will be based on trust, shared goals, and a commitment to delivering tangible actions and results for our residents.

Governance

We will establish the following groups to oversee the strategic direction and co-production of work, as well as to monitor and manage progress on agreed actions and annual targets. In other words, these groups outline how we will tackle the housing crisis together.



Strategic Leadership Group – Setting the strategic direction for the Compact.

Chaired by Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, this Senior Leaders group will define the overarching themes, priorities and long-term goals of the Compact, agree yearly initiatives and targets. This group will ensure our partnership remains focused on improving outcomes for residents and that strategic alignment is maintained. In the first year of implementation, the group will meet quarterly, with bi-annual meetings thereafter.



Compact Taskforce – Delivering the day-to-day implementation of the Compact.

This group will translate the Strategic Leadership Group overarching direction into a detailed implementation plan. Composed of subject-matter leads from Westminster City Council – across different directorates – and registered

housing providers, this group will identify priorities to take forward to the Leadership Group for approval, and deliver on the actions agreed. The taskforce will be at the forefront of driving projects and pilots, sharing best practices, and ensuring resident engagement is at the heart of any delivery.

Implementation

Delivering a successful Westminster Housing Compact lies in our ability as partners to translate our strategic goals, principles and commitments into deliverable, measurable outcomes for residents. To achieve this, we will create a comprehensive implementation plan, informed by the Strategic Leadership Group, to ensure our vision and themes result in meaningful improvements. This will include the following key components:

Image: Lamark Road





Effective governance, management and communication with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. We will establish practical communication and knowledge sharing channels to maintain contact and share key information to enable collaboration, and secure dedicated resource to support partnership coordination.



Set short, medium, and long-term actions linked to the Compact's five themes, identifying a clear strategic purpose and operational requirements.



Manage, monitor and evaluate progress by developing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) linked to each theme and priority actions, ensuring we track and adjust where necessary.



Review and adapt the Compact periodically to ensure that our partnership principles, shared commitments, and priority actions remain relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of our residents and communities, as well as to the rapidly changing housing landscape. The Compact will undergo a comprehensive refresh every three years, with annual reviews to monitor progress, adjust priorities, and ensure our work continues to meet emerging challenges and opportunities.



Identify and implement place-based pilots to test collaborative approaches, enabling us to trial new ideas and solutions in targeted neighbourhoods. Building on our collaborative and knowledge sharing environment, we will identify how and where we can work together most effectively to deliver better results across the city. In a spirit of city-wide collaboration, we will work with other registered housing providers outside of the Compact in specific projects and pilots where appropriate.

