



CATHERINE WEST MP

Member of Parliament for Hornsey and Wood Green

Hannah Adler
Interim Head of Housing Strategy and Policy
Haringey Council
Alexandra House, Level 5
10 Station Road, Wood Green
LONDON N22 7TR

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Dear Hannah,

A new Housing Strategy for Haringey

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Haringey's draft Housing Strategy. Housing is the number one issue that residents contact me about, and I welcome the Council's efforts, under the leadership of Cllr Peray Ahmet, to build more desperately needed social homes, bring housing services back under direct council control, improve housing quality in both the social and privately rented sector and tackle homelessness.

It's clear that many of the issues in our housing sector cannot be solved by Haringey Council alone. In Parliament, I will continue to push for long overdue rental reform and for Councils to receive the resources they need to build more council homes, reprioritising social housing as the most affordable and secure form of rented tenure.

Please find below my consultation response under your four headings:

Delivering the new homes Haringey needs

Far too many people in Hornsey & Wood Green are living in unsuitable, inadequate, expensive housing. It is the key driver of inequality across London and there is a desperate need locally for more council housing and for better quality housing. I consistently oppose any planning applications of 10 or more units that don't include **a minimum of 50% genuinely affordable homes** and would like to see **affordable housing provision onsite** wherever possible in recognition of the serious need in the west part of the borough.

My regular meetings with local hospitals have served to highlight the serious and growing **lack of affordable housing options for keyworkers** within our hospitals, schools, and other public services. I would welcome key worker housing being part of the affordable housing mix for our diverse community.

In Parliament, I've repeatedly raised the need for adapted housing for families with disabled children with life limiting conditions. There is a severe shortage of accessible homes within the borough, and this is an issue I'm seeing increasingly frequently in my casework, with families struggling for years whilst waiting to be rehoused. I welcome the strategy aim to ensure **20% of new affordable homes are wheelchair adaptable** and believe this must include ensuring sufficient space for medical equipment and carrying out therapies, together with suitable toilet, bathroom and kitchen facilities. I would also like to see more support for families requiring adaptations to existing properties, with better co-ordination between housing services and social services.

As the country falls into recession with unemployment set to rise, Hornsey & Wood Green already faces unemployment rates above the national average. I strongly support the Council's aim to **increase construction training and apprenticeships by working with local education providers**, and I would like to see this integral to all major developments and council or housing association led developments in the borough.

Improving housing quality and resident services in the social housing sector

I increasingly receive complaints about repairs issues in council and housing association properties. Nobody should be forced to live in poor quality homes, with the knock-on impact that has on their physical health and mental wellbeing. I welcomed the decision to bring Homes for Haringey back in-house, giving residents a stronger local voice and would welcome Haringey Council **reviewing its own repairs contracts to improve quality and resident satisfaction**.

I would also strongly support the **establishment of a registered social landlord (RSL) peer group** for Haringey to help improve co-operation, push up standards in all social housing across Hornsey & Wood Green and provide a stronger voice for regular feedback from tenants and leaseholders.

An issue that frequently comes up in my casework is the **difficulty faced by people fleeing domestic violence and other forms of violence** who need to quickly move area for their own safety. I want to commend the work of Hearthstone and the support they provide to people experiencing domestic abuse.

With many housing associations closing their internal transfer lists, I'd like to see the council and RSLs working together to improve the support on offer to residents in these circumstances, to speed up moves and ensure families don't feel forced to surrender secure tenancies at what is already an incredibly difficult time. This isn't just an issue for those fleeing violence. I am also contacted by constituents who need to move due to having critical medical needs which cannot be met in their current homes.

Improving the quality of the private rented sector

Over 17,000 Hornsey & Wood Green households now live in the private rented sector where housing insecurity and poor standards are serious problems. Private tenants are the most likely tenure to already be in fuel poverty, so with energy prices soaring I particularly welcome the proposed **targeted focus on fuel poverty** through the Council's Connected Communities programme.

I regularly receive **complaints from residents about HMOs** including dumped rubbish, loud noise and other ASB and from tenants struggling in sub-standard damp and overcrowded homes. **I strongly support tough enforcement action to crack down on rogue landlords who exploit their tenants and harm our communities**.

In the time since the Government first promised to **scrap Section 21 "no fault" evictions**, nearly 230,000 private renters in England have been served Section 21 notices – one every seven minutes. I secured a Parliamentary Adjournment Debate earlier this year to push for a long overdue Renters' Reform Bill. I'll keep pushing the Government to act, but I welcome and fully support Haringey Council's decision to place improving standards in the private rental sector as central to your housing strategy, including a **pro-active use of existing licensing powers**.

Preventing and alleviating homelessness

When rough sleeping was virtually eliminated overnight during the COVID-19 lockdown, we saw what could be achieved with the political will and right resources. It is deeply disappointing that the Government withdrew this support and despite their pledge to end

rough sleeping by 2024, Crisis have estimated that it will rise by 76% in the coming decade.

Through my casework, I hear from many families living in temporary accommodation for prolonged periods and the impact this has on family life, particularly for children. It is expensive for councils, harmful for families and I fully support your strategy's aim to **improve the quality of temporary accommodation** and **provide more support to households affected including personalised move-on plans**.

Ultimately the only sustainable solution is to address the causes of the housing emergency by investing in truly affordable social homes. In Parliament, that is what I will continue to push for.

Yours sincerely,



Catherine West
Member of Parliament for Hornsey & Wood Green

cc: Cllr Peray Ahmet, Leader of Haringey Council
Cllr Dana Carlin, Cabinet Member for Housing
The Rt Hon David Lammy MP, Member of Parliament for Tottenham
Tom Copley, Deputy Mayor for Housing & Residential Development