# Waltham Forest Council to borrow £20m for 64 new social homes amid soaring homelessness



Waltham Forest Council is set to invest nearly £29 million to acquire 64 new homes, an effort aimed at alleviating the mounting pressures on its housing sector. Offered as temporary accommodation, these homes are poised to support residents facing imminent homelessness, a growing crisis in the borough that has seen more than 8,000 individuals register for housing assistance. Council leader Grace Williams has labelled the situation as “significant,” acknowledging that the council overspent by £17 million last year, largely due to the escalating costs associated with temporary accommodation.

The council has faced a consistent increase in demand for housing, with about 200 new applications each month, of which 88% are accepted. Councillor Ahsan Khan, responsible for the housing portfolio, has noted that the financial strain does not solely stem from costs; the quality of temporary housing often falls short of residents' needs, especially for families and larger households. In an effort to tackle these issues, the council aims to replace costly nightly rate accommodations and hotels with more suitable long-term housing solutions. Acting housing director Joe Garrod emphasised that the new acquisitions would not only fulfil immediate needs but are expected to save the council £6.1 million over the next decade.

To fund this initiative, the council will utilise £8.6 million previously allocated by the Greater London Authority (GLA) and supplement it with a £20 million loan. This financial strategy follows a comprehensive review initiated by the council in 2023 to explore ways to enhance affordable housing supply. The GLA had allocated £15.4 million for building or acquiring 77 social rented homes, and this latest proposal is part of a broader effort to invest in new housing developments that can alleviate the pressure of homelessness.

However, the housing landscape in Waltham Forest is increasingly challenging. A recent investigation highlighted that nearly all private rentals in the area have become unaffordable for individuals on benefits, exacerbated by frozen Local Housing Allowance rates since April 2020. The situation is further compounded by additional findings that the council is adding approximately 176 people to its housing list each month, making the urgent need for permanent accommodation ever more pressing.

Despite these hurdles, the council has put into action several initiatives. In addition to the current acquisition plan, the council is in discussions to acquire 53 new build homes in Hepworth Place as part of a dual strategy aiming to reduce dependency on temporary accommodations. However, the projected decrease in the construction of new social rent homes following recent fire safety regulations poses a looming threat to these efforts. Housing associations across the borough anticipate building significantly fewer homes than previously planned, raising critical questions about future supply.

As local authorities work to address these deep-seated housing issues, the hope remains that these investments will begin to make a tangible difference in the lives of many struggling residents in Waltham Forest at a time when the housing crisis appears fundamentally entrenched. Council officials remain committed to tackling these challenges head-on, with the immediate goal of increasing the availability of affordable and sustainable housing in the borough.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/waltham-forest-council-to-borrow-20m-to-partly-pay-for-64-new-social-homes/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=waltham-forest-council-to-borrow-20m-to-partly-pay-for-64-new-social-homes), [[2]](https://walthamforestecho.co.uk/2024/10/24/over-8000-waiting-on-waltham-forest-housing-register/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/waltham-forest-council-to-borrow-20m-to-partly-pay-for-64-new-social-homes/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=waltham-forest-council-to-borrow-20m-to-partly-pay-for-64-new-social-homes), [[5]](https://walthamforestecho.co.uk/2022/11/08/almost-all-private-rent-in-waltham-forest-unaffordable-on-benefits/), [[6]](https://eastlondontimes.co.uk/local/east-london-waltham-forest-council-is-adding-176-people-per-month-to-its-housing-list/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://walthamforestecho.co.uk/2021/10/14/new-social-rent-homes-built-in-waltham-forest-expected-to-plummet-in-2023/), [[4]](https://www.lgcplus.com/home/news/london-borough-begins-root-and-branch-review-of-housing-issues-13-02-2023/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.yellowad.co.uk/waltham-forest-council-to-borrow-20m-to-partly-pay-for-64-new-social-homes/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=waltham-forest-council-to-borrow-20m-to-partly-pay-for-64-new-social-homes> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://walthamforestecho.co.uk/2024/10/24/over-8000-waiting-on-waltham-forest-housing-register/> - As of October 2024, over 8,000 individuals were on Waltham Forest's housing register, awaiting permanent accommodation. The borough faces a severe housing crisis, with 186 rough sleepers reported in 2022/23. The council is working to address rising homelessness by investing in new developments and increasing the supply of affordable housing. However, challenges persist due to a shortage of specialist homes and the need for more diverse accommodation options. ([walthamforestecho.co.uk](https://walthamforestecho.co.uk/2024/10/24/over-8000-waiting-on-waltham-forest-housing-register/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://walthamforestecho.co.uk/2021/10/14/new-social-rent-homes-built-in-waltham-forest-expected-to-plummet-in-2023/> - In October 2021, it was anticipated that the number of new social rent homes built in Waltham Forest would dramatically decrease after 2023. This decline was attributed to the increased costs associated with new fire safety regulations introduced post-Grenfell. Housing associations expected to build 50% to 70% fewer homes than initially planned due to the scale of required fire safety works. ([walthamforestecho.co.uk](https://walthamforestecho.co.uk/2021/10/14/new-social-rent-homes-built-in-waltham-forest-expected-to-plummet-in-2023/?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.lgcplus.com/home/news/london-borough-begins-root-and-branch-review-of-housing-issues-13-02-2023/> - In February 2023, Waltham Forest Council launched an affordable housing commission to explore ways to increase housing supply. The commission comprises industry experts and aims to develop practical steps to boost local housing availability and reduce homelessness. Council Deputy Leader Ahsan Khan emphasised the need for a comprehensive review to address the challenges preventing councils from building the required number of homes. ([lgcplus.com](https://www.lgcplus.com/home/news/london-borough-begins-root-and-branch-review-of-housing-issues-13-02-2023/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://walthamforestecho.co.uk/2022/11/08/almost-all-private-rent-in-waltham-forest-unaffordable-on-benefits/> - An investigation in November 2022 revealed that nearly all private rental properties in Waltham Forest were unaffordable for individuals on benefits. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism found that 97% of two-bedroom properties listed on Rightmove exceeded the area's Local Housing Allowance rates. This situation has been exacerbated by the government's decision to freeze LHA rates since April 2020, making it increasingly difficult for benefit recipients to afford private rentals. ([walthamforestecho.co.uk](https://walthamforestecho.co.uk/2022/11/08/almost-all-private-rent-in-waltham-forest-unaffordable-on-benefits/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://eastlondontimes.co.uk/local/east-london-waltham-forest-council-is-adding-176-people-per-month-to-its-housing-list/> - As of February 2025, Waltham Forest Council was adding 176 people to its housing list each month, with over 8,000 individuals awaiting permanent accommodation. The council's temporary accommodation costs have decreased from £327 per week in October 2024 to £246 in November 2024, yet remain high, with third-party hotels costing £607 per week per household. The borough's housing crisis is attributed to economic uncertainty, inflation, rising borrowing costs, and a lack of new affordable housing. ([eastlondontimes.co.uk](https://eastlondontimes.co.uk/local/east-london-waltham-forest-council-is-adding-176-people-per-month-to-its-housing-list/?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/london-borough-mould-damp-waltham-forest-labour-b1154459.html> - In April 2024, it was reported that over 160 homes managed by Waltham Forest Council were affected by damp and mould. Additionally, nearly 1,800 other properties were in urgent need of repairs and maintenance. The Housing Ombudsman had previously recorded five instances of severe maladministration in the council's handling of housing complaints, highlighting significant issues in property management and tenant safety. ([standard.co.uk](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/london-borough-mould-damp-waltham-forest-labour-b1154459.html?utm_source=openai))