

## Discussion topic guides for draft London Housing Strategy consultation workshops – 4 and 13 October 2017

The summaries below give an overview of the policy proposals which will be discussed on each table at the workshops and reference the relevant policies in the draft London Housing Strategy. Following the preferences you indicated when signing up to attend one of the workshops, you have been allocated three discussion topics, each of which you will have an opportunity to discuss during the workshop.

In order to prepare for the workshop, it would be helpful for you be familiar with the policy proposals summarised below. You can find out more detail about the Mayor's proposals for tackling London's housing crisis in the full draft London Housing Strategy. The strategy (and its executive summary, easy read version and integrated impact assessment) are available on the GLA website at <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing-and-land/have-your-say-tackling-londons-housing-crisis>.

You may also wish to consider the following questions in relation to the discussion tables to which you have been allocated:

- Do you think the draft proposals on this topic outlined in the draft LHS go far enough in meeting London's housing challenges?
- Are there specific proposals that you strongly support (or do not support)?
- How else can the Mayor tackle the issues relating to [specific discussion topic]?
- How could your organisation best support (and be supported by) the Mayor to achieve these objectives?

<b>Table 1: Identifying and bringing forward more land for housing:</b> proposals to assemble more land, more quickly to deliver housing ( <i>Policy 3.1</i> )
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Through the London Housing Strategy and London Plan, the Mayor proposes to support and proactively intervene to increase the land available for housing by:

- Setting clear housing targets for councils.
- Protecting the Green Belt, and instead strongly support development on brownfield land and in town centres, and making the best use of land by supporting higher-density development and co-location of different types of development.
- Promoting development of small sites through the London Plan, including by setting local authority development targets for such sites. This will enable more homes to be built in areas within walking distance of town centres and public transport, while protecting and enhancing the appeal of London's suburbs.
- Exploring incentives to encourage development of inefficiently-used land, such as surface car-parks and low-density retail centres, and faster build-out rates.
- Putting in place additional staff and resources so City Hall can identify land for housing and support councils and housing associations to bring forward new homes on these sites
- Where necessary, directly intervening to bring this land forward for development. City Hall plans to allocate an initial £250 million revolving fund to support this, and the draft Strategy sets out that that the Mayor will:
  - support other partners – particularly housing associations – to gain access to land opportunities;
  - directly co-ordinate and support delivery around key sites; and

- where necessary, step in to proactively assemble land for development and/or to de-risk sites.
- Using public land under the Mayor’s control to deliver new housing. GLA’s land bank will deliver more than 50,000 homes in the coming years, and TfL will bring forward land for 10,000 homes.
- Requiring councils to have a clear plan to bring their appropriate landholdings forward to deliver new homes
- Calling on other public landowners to lead by example to bring forward more land for housing, including homes for key workers where appropriate, and support this through a newly-procured London Development Panel.
- As a last resort, supporting public sector agencies to make full use of their compulsory purchase powers to bring forward development, or using the Mayor’s own powers to do so where necessary.
- Calling for more devolved powers to assemble land, including through improvements to the compulsory purchase process, and to bring more Government-owned land to the market.

**Table 2: Diversifying the homebuilding industry:** proposals to support a wider group of organisations to build homes. *(Policy 3.3)*

The Mayor proposes to increase and accelerate the number of homes delivered in London by diversifying the homebuilding industry and will do this by:

- Putting in place a package of support to expand the purpose-built private rented (‘Build to Rent’) sector, including through planning guidance.
- Promoting longer tenancies and stable rent increases in Build to Rent developments, and support delivery of rented homes at a range of discounted levels, including London Living Rent.
- Promoting development of small sites through the London Plan and making it easier and quicker to bring small sites to the market, including through the Small Sites, Small Builders programme (which will be piloted on TfL land).
- Changing the way that Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy (MCIL) is levied so that small- and medium-sized builders can pay less up front.
- Supporting councils to build new council homes by providing investment and lobbying for Government reforms.
- Funding and supporting housing associations with ambitious development programmes, including through ‘strategic partnerships’ with housing associations.
- Calling on Government to remove the barriers that are limiting council and housing association housebuilding efforts, including calling for a long-term rent settlement.

**Table 3: Improving the skills, capacity and building methods of the industry:** proposals to address the construction skills gap and increase the proportion of London’s homes built with precision-manufactured components. *(Policy 3.4)*

The Mayor wants to ensure there are enough people in the construction industry with the right skills and using modern construction methods to deliver the housing London need. He proposes to do this by:

- Leading a publicity campaign to highlight what Londoners, homebuilders and Government can do to deliver the skills and people to build the homes that London needs. It will encourage many more Londoners to take up a career in construction targeted at those

currently under-represented in the construction work force including young people, women and those from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background.

- Making the case for urgent certainty over EU nationals' rights to continue working in the capital.
- Working with partners to improve access to local construction apprenticeship schemes.
- Establishing a Construction Academy Scheme to ensure there are enough people with the construction skills that London needs.
- Lobbying for more control by London government over its skills system.
- Promoting more modern and precision construction methods, including through the Affordable Homes Programme. These methods can be quicker, more cost-efficient and safer to build, and will be an essential part of tackling the housing crisis.

**Table 4: Working towards half of new homes built being genuinely affordable:** proposals to significantly increase the number of affordable homes built in London, including ensuring that the planning system delivers more genuinely affordable homes and bringing forward more public land to deliver affordable homes. (*Policy 4.2, related policies 4.1 & 4.3*)

The Mayor wants to significantly increase the number of new affordable homes built in London should be significantly increased and has a long term target for half of new homes built in London to be affordable. He proposes to do this by:

- Implementing his new approach to viability (as outlined in recently published Supplementary Planning Guidance):
  - Encouraging landowners and developers to assume that a minimum of 35 per cent of all new homes on individual development sites should be affordable, with the viability of schemes proposing to deliver fewer affordable homes than this subject to detailed scrutiny, supported by a new expert team at City Hall
  - The Mayor's long-term target is for 50 per cent of new homes to be affordable, and he will use funding and other measures to deliver a higher proportion of affordable homes.
- Investing a record settlement of £3.15 billion to support delivery of 90,000 affordable home starts by 2021.
- Prioritising the delivery of affordable homes on publicly-owned land. The Mayor expects that public landowners should deliver an average of 50 per cent affordable homes on the land that they bring forward, as he has committed to do for land under his control.

### **Genuinely affordable homes**

Supported by a series of clear affordability tests, the Mayor wants to ensure that new affordable homes are genuinely affordable to Londoners. He proposes to do this by:

- Delivering low cost rented homes at around social rent levels (**London Affordable Rent**), allocated to Londoners on low incomes according to need. The Mayor will also refuse to authorise any further conversions of social rented homes to higher rents.
- Supporting Londoners on middle incomes who do not have enough savings to access mainstream or affordable home ownership by investing in **London Living Rent** homes and other types of intermediate rented homes. These homes will generally be affordable to households with incomes below £60,000.
- Increasing the number of affordable homes for sale, including through shared ownership (**London Shared Ownership**). All of these homes will be genuinely affordable to households with incomes below £90,000.

### **Protecting London's affordable homes**

Given the overwhelming need for more affordable homes, London's existing affordable homes should be protected and utilised as efficiently as possible. The Mayor proposes to do this by:

- Using the Housing Moves and Seaside and Country Homes schemes to ensure that social tenants who wish to move can do so quickly, freeing up larger homes and enabling Londoners to be closer to work opportunities.
- Strongly opposing the Government's 'Pay to Stay' policy and the 'Bedroom Tax'.
- Calling on Government for reform to ensure that homes sold through Right to Buy are replaced on a like-for-like basis, and oppose plans to force councils to sell their higher-value homes.
- Ensuring affordable homes demolished as part of estate regeneration projects are replaced on a like-for-like basis.

**Table 5: Well designed, safe, good quality, and environmentally sustainable homes:** proposals to ensure that new homes are built with a focus on design, quality, safety and sustainability. (*Policy 5.1*)

The Mayor wants to ensure that London's new and existing homes and neighbourhoods are well-designed, good quality and environmentally sustainable. He proposes to do this by:

- Calling on Government to ensure that Building Regulations focus unflinchingly on quality and safety, and bear the costs of making social housing safe in the capital.
- Investigating whether the draft London Plan can strengthen fire safety for tall buildings.
- Bringing together London's housing design standards into a single planning document, and maintain existing space standards.
- Upholding the quality of development across London, including by appointing 50 Design Advocates.
- Working with boroughs to develop 'Public Practice', to put high-quality planners into hard-pressed planning departments.
- Ensuring new and existing homes meet high environmental standards, contributing to his target for London to be a zero-carbon city by 2050 and supporting incentives for energy efficiency improvements and lower energy bills for Londoners.

**Table 6: Meeting London's diverse housing needs:** proposals for investing in specialist and supported housing and adopting strict standards for accessibility. (*Policy 5.2*)

The Mayor wants to ensure new and existing homes meet Londoners' diverse needs. He proposes to do this by:

- Ensuring that 10 per cent of new homes be wheelchair accessible and 90 per cent be accessible and adaptable, and make it easier for Londoners to identify these homes.
- Making existing homes more accessible and appropriate to Londoners, including older and disabled people, including by maximising the use of Disabled Facilities Grants and ensuring that social landlords are well-informed about their homes' accessibility.
- Promoting a range of housing options to meet Londoners' diverse needs, including by increasing opportunities for older homeowners to move to accommodation more suited to their needs, funding homes for older, disabled or homeless people, and make the case to Government to fund ongoing revenue costs.

- Meeting the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers, including by expecting boroughs to plan for the housing needs of this group and by funding new sites and improvements to existing sites.
- Funding new homes that meet specific housing need, which could include housing for specific Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities, housing aimed at Londoners who are leaving care or for foster carers, or LGBT+ majority extra care schemes.
- Making the case to Government that the new funding arrangements should meet the support and housing costs of supported housing in London.
- Expecting that all social landlords ensure that their services are LGBT+ inclusive.
- Making housing provision a key part of the strategy for resettling Syrian refugees in the capital.
- Welcoming bids for investment to fund affordable family-sized homes.

**Table 7: Involving Londoners in homebuilding:** proposals to promote community-led housing, increase transparency in London’s housing market and address concerns about empty homes, overseas buyers, and the impacts of estate regeneration. *(Policy 5.3)*

The Mayor wants to work with partners to deliver new homes that involve communities and earn their support. He proposes to do this by:

- Funding self-build and community-led housing projects and a Community-Led Housing Hub to support, advise and build capacity of community-led housing groups.
- Considering, and discussing with major homebuilders, steps to make more new homes available to Londoners before anyone else, with any measures particularly focusing on homes sold for prices that Londoners, especially first time buyers, are more likely to be able to afford.
- Minimising the number of empty properties in the capital by encouraging councils to levy the Council Tax empty property premium and calling on Government to increase this premium.
- Lobbying Government to make it quicker for tenants to complain to the Housing Ombudsman, and lower the bar at which the Social Housing Regulator will investigate complaints.
- Calling for a ‘Commissioner for Social Housing Residents’, modelled on the Children’s Commissioner, to give residents an independent voice at the heart of Government
- Expecting social landlords to implement the Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration, which will be published shortly and which sets out a minimum standard of treatment of residents on estates. It requires resident support for proposals following full and transparent consultation, no loss of affordable housing, a right of return for social tenants and a fair deal for leaseholders. The Mayor will take this into account when making decisions on whether councils and housing associations are eligible for GLA funding for new schemes.

**Table 8: A fairer deal for private renters:** proposals to improve the quality of private renting and ensure a more secure, stable and affordable private rented sector. *(Policies 6.1 and 6.2)*

### **Improving standards for private renters**

The Mayor wants to ensure private renters benefit from decent property standards and management practices across the sector. He proposes to do this by:

- Supporting greater collaboration between London boroughs through a new London Boroughs’ Private Rented Sector Partnership, and encouraging them to make best use of their new enforcement powers
- Opposing Government’s Right to Rent policy, which creates additional costs and delays for landlords and opens the door to discrimination against tenants
- Strongly supporting well-designed and operated property licensing schemes, and call on Government to devolve powers over these schemes.
- Calling for powers to implement a light touch landlord registration scheme to enable councils to better target their enforcement activities.
- Introducing a London-wide public database to ‘name and shame’ landlords and letting agents who have broken the law or incurred civil penalties.

### **Improving affordability and security for private renters**

The Mayor wants to improve the affordability and security of private renting for Londoners. He proposes to do this by:

- Considering reforms that enhance security of tenure for renters, reduce discrimination, and improve the evictions process and dispute resolution, while ensuring landlords retain their right to gain possession of the property for legitimate reasons. The Mayor will work with partners to explore a new deal – a London Model – for tenants and landlords, which will focus on how to:
  - increase security of tenure to support a more stable, family-friendly private rented sector;
  - properly regulate property standards; and
  - introduce a light-touch registration scheme for landlords.
- Supporting the proposed ban on letting agent fees, and lobbying Government to ensure its enforcement is properly resourced.
- Urging Government to comprehensively review the financial support available to private renters on low and middle incomes, and work with employers to widen access to Tenancy Deposit Loan schemes to help renters manage the upfront costs of renting.
- Calling for proper resourcing of the First-tier Tribunal system so it becomes a check and balance when landlords increase rents.

<p><b>Table 9: A fairer deal for leaseholders:</b> proposals for reforming and improving leasehold. (Policy 6.3)</p>
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The Mayor wants to work with Government and others to support reform of leasehold and measures to improve leaseholders’ experiences. He proposes to do this by:

- Calling for wholesale reform of the leasehold tenure, including a long-term shift towards fairer tenures in order to improve the experiences of a significant and growing number of London’s homeowners.
- Supporting statutory regulation of residential managing agents.
- Ensuring London’s leaseholders have access to high quality, accessible information on their rights and obligations, by calling on Government to fully fund LEASE’s delivery of high quality, independent advice to leaseholders, as well as producing a ‘How to Lease’ guide for London leaseholders, setting out basic information on rights and responsibilities.
- Publishing a London Charter for service charges in shared ownership homes.
- Setting a clear expectation that resident leaseholders affected by estate regeneration projects should be offered a fair deal as compensation for their homes.

**Table 10: Tackling homelessness and helping rough sleepers:** proposals for preventing homelessness, supporting homeless Londoners into accommodation and helping rough sleepers off the streets. (*Policies 7.1 and 7.2*)

### **Preventing and addressing homelessness**

The Mayor wants to work with Government, local authorities and charities to make preventing homelessness a priority and support those who are homeless into sustainable accommodation. He proposes to do this by:

- Supporting local authorities to implement their new homelessness prevention duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act (with effect from spring 2018), and calling on Government to meet its commitment to fully cover the costs they incur in doing so.
- Tackling the root causes of homelessness by increasing the supply of affordable homes and calling on Government to review the welfare reform measures that have fueled the increase in homelessness, particularly in London.
- Tackling youth homelessness, including by investing in specialist accommodation for those at risk.
- Improving the housing options that councils can offer homeless households, including by working with councils to establish how they can secure more and better accommodation for homeless people – both by collaborating more closely when procuring private rented accommodation and by using the Innovation Fund to support the development of quality accommodation for homeless households.
- Expecting councils to meet their obligations to inform other local authorities when they place homeless households in their areas, and make sure these households get the advice and support they need.
- Helping those facing homelessness because of domestic abuse, including by funding new refuges.
- Urging Government to make clear to councils their obligations to homeless veterans.

### **Supporting rough sleepers off the streets**

The Mayor wants to lead and coordinate work to develop new approaches to supporting rough sleepers off London's streets. He proposes to do this by:

- Leading the No Nights Sleeping Rough Taskforce, which brings local authorities, charities and Government together for this purpose, and invest £8.5 million a year in the pan-London services already commissioned.
- Developing new services to identify and assist more rough sleepers, including by supporting the development of innovative services.
- Promoting opportunities for Londoners to help rough sleepers.
- Investing up to £30 million to support the development and refurbishment of London's hostels and supporting optimum use of these bed-spaces, including by investing £50 million to develop housing for people ready to move on from hostels.
- Making the case to Government that the new funding arrangements should meet the support and housing costs of supported housing in London.