

**Written answers to written questions submitted to the Plenary meeting on
7 December 2023**

Council Homes Acquisition Programme (1)

Question No: *2023/4441*

Sian Berry

How much of the funding from the current Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26 (AHP21-26) is being allocated towards the Mayor's new Council Homes Acquisition Programme (CHAP) and the goal of purchasing at least 10,000 extra council homes over the next ten years, as announced in his press release on 17 November 2023?

Council Homes Acquisition Programme (1)

The Mayor

Last updated: 22 December 2023

We have not ringfenced any funding from the current AHP 2021-26 for the CHAP programme. The CHAP scheme is demand-led, meaning it is difficult to determine the total funding that will contribute to this part of the AHP 2021-26 at this early stage of the programme. Allocations are ongoing for CHAP and subject to AHP overall headroom.

There is a limited number of acquisitions the GLA can fund under the AHP as set by the government. The GLA has committed to delivering 23,900-27,200 AHP homes. Government allows up to 30 per cent of these homes to be delivered as 'acquisitions', although only 10 per cent can be 'second-hand' acquisitions of street properties or flats, rather than new build homes. Other types of housing are also captured in the 30 per cent cap. For example, some estate regeneration replacement homes are counted towards the 30 per cent cap.

CHAP is the first step in the Mayor's ambition to see councils purchase 10,000 homes over the next decade. We believe it is appropriate to set a target beyond the lifetime of current funding given the scale of London's housing crisis and the need to show a long-term commitment to local authorities. However, the Mayor has made it clear that, while many councils now have the capacity and capability to deliver in-house acquisitions programmes, this will not be possible without additional and long-term AHP funding and flexibilities from government.

Council Homes Acquisition Programme (2)

Question No: 2023/4442

Sian Berry

Could you provide an estimate of the number of additional council homes to be purchased in each year of the Mayor's new ten-year Council Homes Acquisition Programme (CHAP), as announced in his press release on 17 November 2023?

Council Homes Acquisition Programme (2)

The Mayor

Last updated: 22 December 2023

As noted above, CHAP is demand-led. Bidding is currently open and many boroughs have already expressed strong support for the programme. The number of homes delivered under CHAP will be subject to AHP programme parameters, including available headroom and the programme's acquisitions cap.

The Mayor has set an ambitious goal for boroughs to purchase 10,000 council homes over the next ten years. While we think the capacity and the ambition is there for many councils, delivery of 10,000 acquisitions would be reliant on more money from government – including early commitment to a post 2026 AHP settlement.

I was pleased that government announced an additional £450m in Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) funding, and I hope government allocates a significant portion of this to London given the pressures local authorities are currently facing and the track record of councils in London to boost supply through acquisitions.

Council Homes Acquisition Programme (3)

Question No: 2023/4443

Sian Berry

What additional funding is the Mayor seeking from Government to support the new ten-year Council Homes Acquisition Programme (CHAP), as announced in his press release on 17 November 2023? Please provide copies of any correspondence and supporting documents that you or the Mayor have exchanged with Government departments on this issue to date.

Council Homes Acquisition Programme (3)

The Mayor

Last updated: 22 December 2023

The Mayor wrote to government on 7th November 2023 following the London Housing Delivery Taskforce. He called for an immediate £2.2bn injection in additional AHP funding to bring the AHP 2021-26 target back up to 35,000 affordable homes. Alongside this, the Mayor called for a longer-term and more flexible affordable housing and infrastructure funding settlement to deploy in London. The Mayor and I are confident that – if heeded – the implementation of these asks would help councils to deliver more acquisitions.

The Mayor has also lobbied government to lift Right to Buy receipt spending restrictions, including to lift the current cap on acquisitions. This would also help councils to buy more homes with their own resources. As previously mentioned, after further successful lobbying, government recently announced they would be allocating a further £450m to councils to deliver homes as part of the LAHF. We are still awaiting details about this fund, including the expected

London share, but I will expect this will go some way in helping councils to buy and convert more homes into affordable housing.

Council Homes Acquisition Programme (4)

Question No: [2023/4444](#)

Sian Berry

What analysis of the costs and wider benefits ratio will you or the Mayor be carrying out to assess his new Council Homes Acquisition Programme (CHAP)?

Council Homes Acquisition Programme (4)

The Mayor

Last updated: 22 December 2023

Funding bids for acquisitions via CHAP receive the same scrutiny as other types of delivery in the AHP. My housing team applies assessment requirements set by Treasury, with an emphasis on grant as a percentage of total scheme cost and compared to other providers to ensure value for money is achieved. The GLA's AHP Review Group provides a robust challenge to every allocation to ensure full value for money assessments, considering all possible funding sources and comparing to other proposals.

Outside of GLA day-to-day practice, DLUHC will be conducting a formal evaluation of the AHP 2021-26. The evaluation may assess the benefits of acquisitions, although this evaluation is undertaken independently to the GLA.

London boroughs are now spending £60 million a month on temporary accommodation and I anticipate that CHAP will deliver crucial savings to councils.

Key worker priority access to intermediate affordable housing

Question No: [2023/4445](#)

Sian Berry

When will the Mayor be publishing the update to the Affordable Housing and Viability London Plan guidance that covers giving key workers access to intermediate affordable housing, which he anticipated would be published for consultation in Spring 2023?

Key worker priority access to intermediate affordable housing

The Mayor

Last updated: 22 December 2023

Draft Affordable Housing London Plan Guidance was published and consulted on between May and July this year. This encourages councils to prioritise key workers when determining eligibility for affordable homes. Councils are able to take this approach under the current London Plan and guidance, and we will be highlighting this with boroughs prior to adoption of the new guidance next year.

Right to Buy-back homes as completions

Question No: 2023/4446

Sian Berry

In the letter from Tajmina Jetha, Head of Programme Management, Housing and Land, to the Chair of the London Assembly Budget and Performance Committee, dated 25 October 2023, it said: "A total of 1,105 completed homes were via Right to Buy Back projects, 108 completions in 2021-22 and 938 completed homes in 2022-23 and 59 in Q1 of 2023-24." Were all these funded from the Affordable Homes Programme 2016-23 and, if so, what was the total funding from this programme? If not, how many were funded from the Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26 and what was the total funding from this programme?

Right to Buy-back homes as completions

The Mayor

Last updated: 22 December 2023

The Right to Buy-back programme was delivered as part of the AHP 2016-23 programme. The grant funding linked to the 1,105 homes that completed to Q1 2023-24 is £88.5m.

Obsolete homes funding

Question No: 2023/4447

Sian Berry

In the letter from Tajmina Jetha, Head of Programme Management, Housing and Land, to the Chair of the London Assembly Budget and Performance Committee, dated 25 October 2023, it said: "the GLA is estimating that £173.5m of the funding approved for projects in the Affordable Housing Programme 2021-26 will be applied to homes replacing obsolete units." What percentage of the total funding in the Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26 is this £173.5 million?

Obsolete homes funding

The Mayor

Last updated: 22 December 2023

£173.5m would represent 4.34 per cent of the total AHP 2021-26 funding envelope (£4bn).