

# A CITY FOR ALL LONDONERS

Housing Workshop  
21st November 2016, 9.30 – 13.00

## Affordable Housing Tenure Table 3 Session 1

**Facilitator in bold facilitator – comments in bold**

Respondents in regular text

These notes are a summary of the conversation

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*Session 1, Table 2*

Marc Vlessing, Pocket Living

Claudia Firth, Coops for London

Lynne Everett,

Chloe Horne, Old Oak Common & Park Royal Development Corporation

Mick O'Sullivan, London Federation of Housing Cooperatives

Faraz Baber, Terence O'Rourke

Robert Davy, London Borough of Enfield

Tony Bird

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**We'll have lots of opinions represented around the table. We'd like three to four points by the end to feedback, so please bear that in mind. Let's start with a critical question. Given the limited availability of funding, is it better to fund a small number of low rent homes, or deliver a larger number of units with some at higher rents aimed at middle income households?**

In terms of the debate from the outset can we broaden our minds beyond rent?

**Yes. Rent is a tenure we need a lot more of, but I take the point.**

It's ultimately about supply of housing.

The supply of affordable housing.

**We need to recognise in London there are a lot of people who will never be able to afford their own homes.**

In the local planning process we have a need for 45% affordable housing, so not far off London in 2013. Of that, looking at people's incomes, 80% of that 45% need social rent or equivalent. We started with 'we need to deliver social rent.' But when you look at delivering 25,000 homes

to meet London's needs, and the values, viability, changing tenures-, London Living Rent is very useful in this regard because you can deliver more social rented homes.

### **Could you explain bit more?**

London Living Rent is an intermediate market rent product, set at the equivalent to a third of local incomes in the area.

Is it the medium income? In Islington we'd have quite a high average income given residents who work in the city, but we also have some of the poorest areas in England.

### **Some of the calculations reflect that skewing.**

### **How do you see the delivering of London Living Rent help to deliver social rent?**

We need to get past delivery thresholds in terms of viability of affordable housing. For example a socially rent home is valued at about 20% of market value. London Living Rent, we're still waiting for SPG to make this absolutely clear, but we think London Living Rent will be 40-50% of market value. So if we're getting more value overall we can be more flexible. We can have a bigger quantum of social rent, and housing for people on middle incomes.

You make some very valuable points. But it can only be done on public land. It's not going to happen on market-led principles. Are we playing a numbers game? For Sadiq who needs to deliver 50,000 homes there is a numbers game. The reliance on private sector to develop those is huge. The real challenge is how quickly the market can respond. If it's about getting those numbers.

### **That's a really useful point. What do you think in the real world it's so difficult and expensive to deliver very affordable housing, what we need is just more housing.**

From the Local Authority point of view, non-affordable housing is irrelevant, the only reason to build them is to make schemes viable. Our key issue is the fact we need to provide housing for people on medium and slightly above/below medium salaries. I like the idea of London living rent, but the likelihood of anyone within our standard deviation of income and rent being able to afford a home without a subsidy from family-, most people will have to rent. I'm also not too happy with shared ownership, there's not enough information: what proportion is owned by the owner, and how can they move onto full ownership in time?

### **Yes, there's not enough evidence to show if that's helping.**

That's the benefit of living rent. A monthly rent on a two bedroom house is meant to be less than £1000 per month. It varies from ward to ward. There is flexibility to take account of localised house prices and incomes.

The average market rent in a sink estate in Islington is £2000 per month.

That shows it's potentially more affordable. The great thing about it is it helps people potentially to save so that they can, in five to ten years, afford to get a shared ownership property. It gives them security because the rents only increase by inflation. It's a good way to help people to move towards-, people talk about housing journey: you start on rented, you save, you buy; that's been lost in London.

I share your concern about shared ownership. Only 12.5-15% of shared ownership ever gets stair-cased. A lot of people are stuck, they can't sell their share. So much of this debate starts on the wrong foot because of terms: social housing is a deep discount to market, and civic society needs to be brave enough to admit how much social housing it wants to maintain. It's a costly pledge, and I can never get politicians to admit to a figure.

28% of housing stock is social rent. Inner London is around 33%. One of the problems in the UK is polarising social housing and private housing. Islington is a good example: the only people living there are those on benefits or people on £150,000 salaries and over. It's the most polarised borough. It's dysfunctional: policies have driven the middle market out. We need to come up with social housing at market rent, affordable housing. And a very big range within affordable housing. Two big revolutions: Mayors from all parties need to accept there is no one size fits all within affordable housing. Starter homes are a wicked product. The question we should be addressing on tenures is how do you get more affordable tenures? Whether from public or private is irrelevant. If we only talk about social housing we do a great number of Londoners a great injustice.

But who is going to deliver this?

In our case [Pocket Living] we use public and private land. We have a development approach that allows us to sell homes affordably in perpetuity. The GLA made a brave choice with us, it should be doing this across a much wider range. The one thing we don't talk about in the UK is the inefficiency in capital. The reason we don't have SMEs is the banks [aren't offering them? - unsure].

**We recognise that a product like build to rent is always going to struggle. We need to look at whether we'll have a different viability approach that we can offer to developers. The SPG may change how that works. That is current thinking, not yet set in stone. We're looking at what can we do to help these different types of products.**

What's being said indirectly is it's trying to find a way to skew policy to meet the market.

The market is imperfect. It skews to people with a lot of capital. It's not perfect in an economic sense or a fair market altogether. It's a monopoly. There's four to five large property developers who control the London housing market.

**I want us to focus on what we should be delivering and how.**

It is part of the question. You can idealise this, we always start with policy, in New York they ask the question about the market.

I'm suspicious of the London Living Rent. People need social housing because they can't afford the rents. We're just inflating the housing benefit bill. It looks like the mayor's going to be a big failure.

**This is a good point. We need to strike a balance. We can't just deliver social rent. What can we realistically deliver? There's an extreme need for discount rent from the market.**

But the market is failing all the people in housing need.

We're not going to build the social rent we need without building the other types of housing.

You're not going to be able to build those kinds of housing unless you have people who can afford to work on the building sites, which implies a low level of rent.

I want to raise a question about viability. At present it's really skewed towards large developers. Community-led developers can't compete. The other question is about value; values of land and seeing value just in terms of financial asset, or whether value could be seen in terms of social value. The price of land could take this into account. I want to raise the issue of how we value land, and including social value in the cost of land, which would bring the price down?

**Very relevant. We need to use public assets as well as possible.**

Charities are having to sell off their assets, and at the moment they're bound to get the best value for the land, and currently that's only financial value. If they're able to include social value that includes a lot more possibilities.

We're the only European country that doesn't make public land available for development. We need to compel public land owners to register their land. We don't use it as a strategic output for housing. Only Islington are doing this intelligently, using public land for social housing. Can I ask how much social housing London should have as a world city? Meaning housing for people on salaries of £15-20,000 per year or below.

The definition is incorrect, the tenure does include people on salaries of £25-30,000 per year. The majority of people in social housing work. Lots of others are retired and have worked in the local community for many years.

How much housing would you like to see?

Enough to sort out the waiting list. You need 48-50,000. There are 1.2 million people on the waiting list. This government has abandoned those people.

If you compare the tenure mix in Britain with other European countries we've got a higher proportion of social rent type homes than other countries, the problem is the private rented sector isn't working. That doesn't deliver affordable housing.

**Do you think that the Mayor should say that every borough should deliver a fixed proportion of particular tenures? Or let each borough decide?**

It has to be done London-wide.

**Is that not quite difficult?**

The Mayor needs to set targets for individual boroughs, but it can't be up to the individual borough to set that target.

First you need a Mayor brave enough to say there is a minimum stock (a percentage) for each borough. 30-40% is a decent result for a world city. I don't know of any that has more than 40%. It has to be London-wide, you have to make up for huge differences in wealth. Once you've achieved that you need to open up the conversation to other kinds of affordable housing.

**Are we in agreement the GLA needs to set these parameters?**

Yes.

I don't know. Boroughs have very different views on how to develop their localities. There's a danger of City Hall not accepting that borough leaders have a role in how to shape their area. They have a role to do that.

It has to be a matter of collective bargaining, presided over by the Mayor. We need to say how much civil society should maintain. That's the only way to solve this.

Over the last 50 years, even back to 1930s, the ability of the private sector to build sufficient housing to house people in the UK fell down massively. It took the 1950s for a massive increase in council housing, and for housing need to be met. When they stopped council housing for rent in the 1980s, there's been an increase in the in-affordability of property. We get housing bubbles and massive waiting lists. The private sector built about 150,000 last year when it needed to build 300,000.

Postwar from PSBR point of view opened up the ability of local councils to gear up against prevention building. It takes a long time for you to build a team of people with competence. I don't know if it's a good idea for local authorities to begin building their own teams. You need a pan-London approach, and this pan-London view is not appearing. If we keep polarising between social and private we're not going to help ourselves.

A lot of the development happening is useless. Kensington & Chelsea, Richmond, boroughs like this won't do anything unless the Mayor acts. Battersea Reach is nearly empty. Security guards put the lights on at night to make it look like people live there. It's not rejuvenating the area at all. There's no social housing at all on the Battersea power station site. The Mayor got elected saying he's going to prioritise social housing. Is he going to deliver? So many estates feel they're being socially cleansed.

It's a mixed diet. Cities that don't attract poor people don't work: it's only by believing you can transform your circumstances that you come to a city. If we just prioritise poor people then we're going to lose a lot of others. How are my kids going to afford to stay in London? We can't just keep talking about social housing.

Vast numbers of people on an average wage can't afford to live in London. These definitions are confusing. In the housing co-op sector, they might be deemed to be social housing, but they house people in other brackets. I'm not sure how helpful the definitions are. It's fluid between those different groups. If you're not careful you bracket social housing as only for those on very low wages, where there are lots of people who are really in need.

### **There is a group in the middle not served by social housing.**

They used to be, and some still are, but now social housing has become like loading lifeboats on the Titanic.

### **People not at the top of the council's waiting list are never going to be served by social housing because of the rules in place.**

A lot of properties in European cities are cooperatively owned. They move into a rented place, have their family, they negotiate with others when they need to move again.

James Murray's just come from a 950 home development in New York rented out at discounts, the cheapest is 60%, and the premium is 150%. In there you have the bus driver and the legal counsellor with two children. You need a planning policy system and funding system that acknowledges the balanced and mixed community is very important. But you need two to three hundred homes.

This is where you can put some very clear policies in for development corporations. That's where you do have control. You can also provide soft direction. You need to work with the boroughs. If you're going to give them the infrastructure, then you negotiate with them. There's a range of issues around tenure, that you can begin to make a dent in.

**There's a feeling that people want the mayor to be brave.**

To do what he said he was going to do. He didn't give numbers, we now need to ask him what are your number plans for social housing.

**The mayor deliberately didn't say numbers, just to say 30% of what we deliver (for example) should be affordable.**

Numbers can be a real distraction from a delivery point. If you get the mechanisms in place that engender that delivery that's more important for London than saying we want 'x' number by this time. This government's failed: they're never going to deliver a million homes by 2020. But they're fixed on an unattainable number. They should focus on the delivery mechanisms.

There's a real opportunity in places like Old Oak, there's no existing community there. There's about 2000 households that live in the area. This is genuinely additional housing for London. We've got 10,000 in the pre-planning stage at the moment. If we get the to be mixed and cater for a range of incomes we can really help to deliver more homes that London needs.

And if you can't do it in places like that, then you might as well give up. We only have so many large development areas left in London, we need a more fluid approach.

Some sites can't be built on because they need to be used for railway works. It's a 20-30 year programme, but we want it to deliver a whole range homes, tenures, co-op housing, social housing.

It's so important to stress that point. A tendency to say it's all about 'social housing' (for example). But there needs to be a range. In Boston, the great problem with rented housing is that the community becomes incredibly temporary. Ownership entrenches people into a community. You need a mix.

**We need to think what our three or four main points to feed back are. Obviously there's a tension between what can be delivered in the real world and what's needed.**

There's one thing I want to say about the intermediate stage. You can't build a vast quantity of social housing properties. So how much private sector properties [at Old Oak] do you have to build to cross-subsidise it?

We're looking to have around 50% affordable, 50% market across the whole piece. It varies from site to site. Proportions of market to affordable vary.

In Islington sites the target rent would pay for the scheme, the key issue is the cost of the land. For a scheme we did recently, we modelled it on the basis of official housing rent being financed by property for sale, and then we started to put in shared ownership, and we found the number of properties we could build actually declined. The most efficient was market for market rent and social housing.

**We need to look at our big picture. We need strong direction from the mayor about what needs to be delivered.**

Can't do carte blanche.

As long as there really is a plurality of tenures.

There are three kinds of housing: social housing at target rent at a deep discount from market rates, open market, and affordable housing in between.

Deep discount isn't a question of the market. It's a question of what people can afford to live on and have a good lifestyle. Providing a product they can live in.

**So we have some strong feeling that we need to be catering for the target rent level of rent, and that's not forgotten when we talk about affordable housing.**

The thing we did discuss well is that there should be more pan-London targets. And that public land release needs to be geared much more towards affordable housing. There should be a mechanism for the Mayor to broker affordable housing deals among local authorities. I think the Mayor should have the power and will to acknowledge failure amongst local authorities.

Homes for Londoners can do that. The Mayor chairs it. He can talk to boroughs and broker deals.

**So we also want to feedback that on sites the Mayor controls he needs to be more strategic in direction, more pan-London directing, and homes for London could be a mechanism for that. The second point is we do believe in a need for a plurality of tenures. There's also some scepticism about the 'affordable' products like starter homes and shared ownership.**

Home ownership products like starter homes and shared ownership where affordability is not guaranteed in perpetuity is a problem. What we do is guaranteed to be affordable in perpetuity.

# Affordable Housing Tenure

## Table 2 Session 2

**Facilitator in bold facilitator – comments in bold**  
**Respondents in regular text**

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*Session 2, Table 2*

Tony Bird,

Pat Turnbull, Hackney Resident Liaison Group

Steven Burak, reclaim our spaces

Henry Smith, Town and Country Planning Association

Angela Epps, Peabody

Rachel Ormerod, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

Gordon Deuchars, Age UK London

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**I'd like to start with this question. Is it better to fund a small number of homes at very low rents, or a larger number of units at middle income, that is, as much housing as possible, as affordably as possible?**

One of the issues about mixed and balanced communities is you don't just want people right at the bottom and the top 10%. You need housing that does address medium incomes.

When you're talking about mixed and balanced communities, working class people are being forced out because housing is too expensive for them. Right to buy then being sold on means former council housing is now sold at market price. Council housing always was a mixed community. I got council housing in 1977 and I was a teacher. The only change since then is that it's impossible for teachers to get a council property. The shortage in London is of socially rented properties.

**Can we push that a little? If we don't have much money to increase socially rented housing, and we can increase it a little bit, but it's still not going to be teachers, nurses, etc. because we don't have the money to achieve it. Is it still the right thing for the Mayor to focus on?**

Yes because all the things described as 'affordable' are unaffordable to more than half of Londoners. You're talking about people on reasonable salaries who can't afford to live in London. If we could increase the supply of socially rented housing it would bring the cost of housing down over all. Providers of market housing currently have us by the throat.

I think that it's a choice between two unacceptable things. The mayor should be challenging the situation where there just isn't enough money. That's personal, not on behalf of Age UK. If I were speaking for Age UK, if you polled middle incomes, you'd get a strong push for more socially rented housing. We're concerned for people in their 40s up to 60s who look like they're going to be stuck in the private rented sector, and that would be people up to middle income levels.

London is unaffordable for so many people now, there's a real need for the whole swathe of people in the middle, a range of types and products are needed to convince people to stay in London. It's a crisis of people leaving the capital who are unable to start families. There needs to be a measured approach to how we build for different types of people.

**It seems like there are a lot of people in London whose needs are not being met.**

The concentration at the moment seems to be looking after the people at the top. And that's moving the middle, destabilising it. A good political move might be to look after the middle. A socially conscious move would be to look at the people at the bottom. If you don't look after the prow of the ship, the bottom half, the mainstay of the ship that keeps it separate from the water, then the ship sinks. The middle is a changing thing. If there's a super-concentration of effort at the top, the middle changes.

**So there's a feeling that the provision for high income households is skewing what we're doing overall.**

Both options are unsatisfactory, but we are where we are and have to deal with it. Peabody took part in a study a month or two ago that showed the contribution to the economy of people in shared ownership or affordable tenures was vast, something like £1.3bn. We talk in terms of we're providing something people pay rent for, but what we're actually doing is providing for something that is a big part of our economy. So it's not just about socially rented homes, but other products as well. The cap at £90,000 seems to be uniquely difficult. How can you change shared ownership in all London boroughs so that it does work? We need a range of tenures so it meets the needs of people who want to rent or want to buy.

**Do people think that the Mayor should be saying we need 'x' percentage of social housing, 'x' percentage of shared ownership across London, or is that better left to local authorities?**

I think the GLA should give advice. My advice would be the maximum possible number of socially rented homes. What's happening with local authorities is their terrible lack of money is allowing market value properties to be built all over the place.

It's critical the mayor has a strong voice to say it's genuinely affordable homes that are required: acting as an advocate to help planners negotiate with developers, to lead the way.

When you look at how uneven boroughs have been in terms of target and delivery an overall vision would be helpful.

**The London housing market is incredibly varied, different solutions are needed. Is it acceptable to say 'we can't deliver social rent in Islington,' (for example) so we take contributions from Islington and use it to build social housing elsewhere?**

No. You'd end up with a donut of social housing around London, and no provision in the middle. If as a borough you wanted to provide shared ownership in London and their planning requirement is a three to four bedroom property the income requirement will be over £60,000 per year. How can you change that so that (for example) two teachers could live in Westminster or Wandsworth and afford what they need?

The 'donut' approach would also drive people away from communities they've grown up in, and it would be quite harmful.

**So we need to say that boroughs do have to keep building social housing.**

Islington shows that if you can do it you want to. Places like Barking where there's been a lot of social change, and people who need social homes are just being placed in a community causes tensions with the existing community.

I worked with Sadiq's team when he was elected, and he made a very clear stance that the government's definition of affordable wasn't affordable. Nurses (for example) could only afford social housing. The Mayor is at a crossroads, he can carry on with what Boris Johnson did, and social housing is way down the list of priorities, or he could be proactive. Look at Wandsworth, there's no affordable housing on the Battersea power station development. Look at Richmond, who built five affordable houses last year. Golf courses in Central London should be taken over for social housing. Look at the Vancouver Tax - the locals put a 15% tax on purchases made by people from other countries, and the money is used to fund social housing. 48,000 families were forced out of London last year because there's not enough social housing. Tory councils won't build social housing at all, unless the Mayor does it and says 'we're going to build social housing in your area'.

**We need to look at the intermediate products as well as preserving the commitment to deliver social housing. Can we talk about what kinds of intermediate products are good? Shared ownership, London Living Rent?**

This is not a typical definition of intermediate rent, but some form of rent control; stabilisation is critical to improve the private rented sector. Given vast numbers who do live in that sector, and our country's obsession with home ownership, one of the most fundamental things to do is to improve what the private rental sector is, and consider some form of rent stabilisation.

**It's a good point to raise the private rented sector. A new type of sector is purpose-built market rented housing, it's not something we've delivered at scale in the past. What we can do is use that to deliver some intermediate housing where the rents are stabilised by the Mayor. Which is what the London Living Rent is intended to be: a new type of tenure. Rents are pegged to local incomes, not market rates.**

Isn't it a third of the median income? That's quite important.

**True, but it is weighted to make sure it isn't skewed. We make it as sensitive to local areas as possible. We've published what we think the rent levels would be for every ward across London. We're trying to make it much more relevant to people's actual lives and incomes.**

The devil's in the detail on this, I'm very suspicious about it, it's another way of rebranding 80% affordable market rates. Public subsidy is going to go into this.

**Is this a sensible product for the mayor to develop?**

In Hackney we've been told a two bedroom flat is going to have a rent of £1000 per month. That's going to be far beyond the reach of many middle incomes. A lot of housing association tenants need housing benefit to afford their current homes. So something even more expensive

isn't going to work. If you take a median income there's still half the population below the median.

### **So if it doesn't work for those people it's not helpful at all?**

It's going to be a substitute in my opinion. Grant funding will be going into that, not into social housing.

It is part of a mix. And it's a lot better than starter homes. It's a step in the right direction but by no means the only approach. It's an important part of that mix. Investing in the private rented sector could reduce the demand on ownership and bring the property prices down.

I'm not keen on pegging things to numbers. It's more important to peg things to human beings; nurses, teachers, social workers, street cleaners. If 50% of people in London are underneath the median, actually, well below the median, the effect of that will drive them out of London, beyond the borders of Greater London, so they have to travel two hours or more in to work. People in the so-called suburbs are having to pay more to be there. It makes the reality of keeping the NHS, schools, social care, street cleaning going an impossibility.

### **How could we peg rents to human beings? How do we make sure there is a rent those kind of people can afford?**

There must be acceptance turned into policy that these critical social groups who keep us all going have to be encouraged to stay in London. It's about saying that they will pay less. It's not ratcheted in relation to the median, we say, 'we will keep them here, so it must be subsidised.'

A teacher can start on £30,000. Those kinds of key workers are exactly the ones who would benefit from the London Living Rent. I completely support social rent, and we need more of it. But it's a 40-plus year trend that it's been decreasing. You're not going to get social tenancy unless you have extreme need.

You have to build more socially rented housing.

It's about having a spectrum of things. There used to be more of a focus on key worker housing. What kind of ten year options outside of social housing can be utilised? You can control it through planning, and incentivise it through grants. GLA can start to look at how it's getting a balanced tenure from housing associations.

But aren't housing associations focusing more and more on market rates?

Peabody seek to build 60% affordable homes and cross-subsidise with the other 40%.

### **Most would agree there is not enough social housing, it might take us 50-60 years from the government to build what we need. So small organisations like Peabody are being given a small amount of money and asked to deliver what they can.**

The previous mayor thought that affordable rent should be something like 65% of market rates. And London Living Rent is very similar. And so those properties will be added to that list, and so you're still not going to have enough socially rented housing. The market rents make £600 a month seem low.

Does the GLA think £250 a week is affordable? That's what's being produced.

**We need to report that it's better to use our subsidy for socially rented housing. Others feel like we need to use our subsidy to provide a range of housing options. Let's move on to another question. How important is it that we deliver larger units in London?**

It's a really tough balance. Decent space standards are so important. London is strong in relation to the rest of England. Exceptions like Pocket Homes and others show there is a need or demand for those kinds of homes in certain areas. Space standards are crucial.

Space standards are not good. Regenerations ten years ago had much better standards.

**GLA standards are higher than national, but smaller than Parker Morris. But is it important to make sure they don't get any smaller?**

If we're building to higher densities, we have to ask what space standards are needed at those densities? If you look at some of the high density housing under Parker Morris, that recognised the space you need when building at high density.

This is happening in development on my estate. The bigger housing is the market housing, and the smaller housing is the socially rented housing. That's not meeting needs: families are having to stay in properties that 30 years ago would have been regarded as too small for them. You have overcrowded families and the many families forced into temporary accommodation. Family-sized dwellings are needed in London.

**So it's important to retain the focus on family housing even if it's such more difficult to deliver.**

Yes, that's meeting need.

I'm not disagreeing necessarily, but if you provide a genuinely affordable two-bedroom unit it allows someone on their own occupying a three to four bedroom home to move to the two-bed home if they want to. You don't want pressure or compulsion, but if you provide the smaller unit, it gives the option and helps the overall availability of space. There's every reason to believe people want to down size or right size, but they don't have the option currently.

Talking about compulsion, the compulsion needs to come from both directions. Someone in a three-bed place not using one room, if they genuinely are living somewhere with spare rooms not being used, they should be downsized, it should be compelled, but only in the context of parallel compulsion on those who have bought properties that are lying empty to pay tax on them. If the council is responsible for the property they too should be penalised or taxed. I'm talking about checks being brought in from the bottom and the top so that the problem of wasted space is actually dealt with. It pushes the divergence more towards a converging economy.

No rich people are facing compulsion: only poor people are facing compulsion. The bedroom tax was imposed on the poorest people. There should be no compulsion on people to downsize because as soon as you do, it's always the poorest who are compelled.

**This is a very good point, but we're trying to focus on what we can build in the future.**

It's another argument for social housing. All good housing managers used to encourage people to downsize. It's not just about moving people down in number of bedrooms, bedroom tax has failed: it promotes less moving down, not more.

**If we want to create smaller units we need to make sure they're attractive in terms of being affordable.**

People are being told to move down into spaces that are too small.

There's a difference between someone on a social rent. Say a family of four or five are being housed in a high density, high-rise space, there is a need for space standard that is right for that accommodation. But if someone has a choice and they're buying into a situation, that's different. You have to be careful about how you vary space standards so you don't have the wrong sort of compulsion.

**That's a very difficult thing to make policy for. How do you know you're really meeting the need?**

I don't know how you do that, other than making it something people vote with their feet for. Unless you have a spectrum of homes that can be utilised in local authorities that would otherwise be expensive.

**Offering choice with inadvertently legislating for a race to the bottom.**

We have to build enough to make sure people genuinely have a choice. It comes back to increasing the number of homes.

**So that's a point of consensus.**

Build and regenerate. There's a lopsided concentration on building rather than refurbishment and renovation.

40,000 families in B&Bs have no choice. The market rents have failed them. People are having to move out of the communities they've always lived in.

**There's an undersupply of everything. There's not a plentiful supply of market rent.**

The figures disprove that.

**There's not more market supply than we need.**

I live next to tower blocks that are 90% empty.

There's a huge undersupply of social homes, which doesn't undercut the need to build new market rented homes in the right place and size with some improved rent security, longer term tenancies-, some evidence that there are something like eight people per market rented property in London.

Someone said to me the other day, on our estate, we've lived here for three generations, and now they want us to move out. That's an indictment of the situation in this country. Where do they go?

**That's the high challenge we have on our hands. Let's try and sum up. I want feedback both that we must use what subsidy we have to deliver socially rented units, and that we could deliver more if we look at a range of uses. I think there's also been some consensus about choice, that socially rented tenants shouldn't be forced to have whatever they're given. Also that the mayor should take a strong view on this and on a pan-London level the Mayor should take a lead on what local authorities are expected to delivered. With some local flexibility.**

That flexibility is what the Tory boroughs have now and they use it not to build social housing.

**So you think there should be no flexibility.**

There should be a focus and threshold on social rent within the planning and grant systems, but there should be range of tenures available alongside that.

You have countervailing forces nationally and in some local boroughs. Being too directive gets a little uncomfortable. Need some local community-driven input.

Flexibility that gives rich people the freedom to live anywhere is licentiousness not freedom. Flexibility in terms of councils having the freedom to do what they want creates a closed market for licentiousness to run amok. Checks must be brought in to reorientate the market in a more sustainable, resilient and more equal way.

**I'm also going to feed back that the Mayor shouldn't just accept the options handed out to him by government, but be a strong voice.**

London is a special case, and there must be strong voice to argue for what it needs.