

MAYOR OF LONDON

Murad Qureshi AM

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Date: 19 March 2021

Dear Murad

Thank you for having me to the Committee on 9 February and for your subsequent letter of 17 February.

Can I take this opportunity to thank you and the Committee for the work you have done on housing. You have produced a number of excellent reports, and I and my officers have appreciated the constructive way in which the Committee has engaged with City Hall during your time as chair.

I set out answers to your follow-up questions below.

The number of homes planned for delivery by the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (ODPC) and the timescale

Plans have been approved for over 6,000 homes since OPDC's inception in 2015, including 1,900 already completed and a further 1,500 under construction. OPDC policy is an area wide target of 50% affordable homes, subject to viability on a site by site basis.

OPDC plans to deliver 13,800 homes over the London Plan period (to 2029); 19,850 over the Local Plan period (to 2038) and 25,500 over the total development period in to the 2040s.

OPDC is working closely with MHCLG and Homes England to prepare a bid to Government's forthcoming National Homebuilding Fund to support the infrastructure funding required to optimise the regeneration and new housing opportunities at Old Oak.

The amount left unallocated in the current Affordable Housing Programme 2016-2023 at the end of this term

The Affordable Homes Programme 2016-2023 extends for almost two years beyond the current mayoral term, and allocations are managed accordingly. The programme will fund homes which start up until March 2023 and will deliver 116,000 homes in total.

Funding allocations are secured contractually, and the amount paid out to investment partners will depend on the achievement of milestones in starting and completing new affordable homes, as is standard practice.

The latest figure we have for unallocated funding is as I stated at the Housing Committee meeting in February.

To confirm to the Committee once he has discussed with the Mayor a policy on asking the Government for Right to Buy suspension on new council homes, and the outcome of that discussion

The Mayor and I regularly discuss housing matters given housing is a top priority for his mayoralty, particularly the building of new council homes. We are delighted that after years of under-investment, London is experiencing a renaissance in council housebuilding, with more new council homes started last year than in any year since 1983.

While policy on Right to Buy is set nationally, we are clear the Government's 1-to-1 replacement policy for Right to Buy cannot be achieved unless councils are given greater flexibilities to spend Right to Buy receipts, which is why we have lobbied Ministers to devolve more decisions on the use of Right to Buy receipts to councils, who are best placed to make decisions on how proceeds from the sale of their assets should be used to replace council housing locally. The Mayor introduced the Right to Buy ringfence offer in 2018 to support councils to achieve this aim.

Whether any new housing need modelling is being done by the GLA and if so, the timescales for when this would be available

GLA officers are closely monitoring data on housing need and the housing market to better understand the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on London, but it is too early to say to what extent the short-term impacts observed will last into the long-term. A clearer picture will emerge as London's recovery continues and as more data becomes available, including from the 2021 Census.

The terms of reference and the timescale for the 'first dibs' review

The Mayor's First Dibs policy was introduced in February 2018. The Mayor committed to a review of First Dibs in January 2019. This will cover the implementation of First Dibs, the experience of participating homebuilders, the homes offered through First Dibs and the extent to which it is improving Londoners' opportunities to buy new homes at the lower end of the market. The review is in hand and the findings will be published in due course.

An end-of-term update on the small sites programme in terms of what has been delivered

The Small Sites x Small Builders programme was set up in 2017 as a response to the lack of supply of small sites available for housing delivery, alongside a significant fall in the number of small builders operating in the UK. The programme's main purpose is to reduce or mitigate some of the barriers faced by public landowners and small builders in the development of small sites for housing.

In 2017, the programme was awarded funding of £473,000 by the LEAP to cover an initial pilot programme. In response to the pilot's success, a further £12.9m was awarded for 2018-2021 to carry the programme through a subsequent delivery period.

The programme has provided valuable leadership in the way that public landowners approach their small sites and has effectively championed the role of small builders in delivering homes. In doing so, it has nurtured the development of relationships between small builders and public landowners, encouraged public landowners to further their own strategic aims with regard to small sites and small builders, and created new opportunities for small builders, providing access to sites that wouldn't otherwise be available.

The programme has delivered a streamlined process for bringing sites to market and has incentivised both public landowners and small builders to engage with small sites as a source of new housing. The SSxSB portal has provided small builders access to small sites, where access was limited before. Capital and revenue funding allocations have increased the capacity of public landowners to bring sites forward for housing delivery. A high degree of due diligence has helped to de-risk sites and has improved the confidence of small builders to bid.

The programme's achievements include:

- 1000+ organisations are registered with the programme
- 85 per cent of small builders engaging employ fewer than 10 people
- small builders from 24 different boroughs are benefitting from the programme
- 53 small sites in 19 different boroughs have been brought to the portal
- £1.5m of revenue support has been given to ten boroughs for due diligence and site investigation projects.
- over £9m capital funding has been contracts for 33 projects across seven boroughs. These projects will complete in 2021-22.

Details on the more than 1,200 community led housing units in the pipeline and how many of these are on small sites

The schemes to deliver the pipeline of community-led homes are at different stages of the development process, ranging from site identification through to site acquisition and planning.

There are a broad range of scheme types including smaller groups of people wishing to provide housing primarily for themselves to larger schemes by community-led organisations seeking to achieve genuine affordability for people within their community.

There are pipeline schemes in the following London boroughs: Waltham Forest, Barking & Dagenham, Brent, Camden, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Harrow, Hounslow, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Redbridge and Wandsworth.

Given the nature of community groups and the relatively small scale of most schemes in the pipeline, the majority of schemes are likely to be delivered on small sites.

Two community groups (London Citizens Community Land Trust and Crystal Palace Community Land Trust) have successfully bid for sites earmarked for community-led housing through the Mayor's 'Small Sites x Small Builders' programme and the associated schemes will deliver approximately 68 units. Waltham Forest received bids for two sites advertised for community led housing groups through the Small Sites portal in January 2021. A further two sites in Tower Hamlets are currently advertised on the [Small Sites portal](#) and interested community-led self-build groups can submit proposals by mid-April 2021.

Camden have also sought expressions of interest from community groups for a site on their own website, and Greenwich Council approved a process for making two sites available specifically for CLTs.

The London Community-Led Housing Hub is supporting other local authorities to release sites for community-led housing in due course.

The data supporting the assertion that the proportion of family-sized homes has increased.

Data on the proportion of new homes of each tenure that are family-sized (with three bedrooms or more) was published in the 2018/19 London Plan Annual Monitoring Report.

The 41% figure for the proportion of social rented homes completed in 2018/19 with three or more bedrooms was previously available in the public domain, via 'Housing in London 2020' (part 2.4 [here](#)) where it was flagged as provisional, pending the publication of the AMR covering 2018/19.

I hope you and the Committee find these answers helpful.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Copley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tom Copley
Deputy Mayor for Housing & Residential Development