

MAYOR OF LONDON

Sian Berry AM

Chair of the London Assembly Housing Committee
C/o Sarah-Jane.Gay@london.gov.uk

Our ref: MGLA110322-6673

Date: 26 April 2022

Dear Sian,

Thank you for your letter of 11 March regarding the London Assembly Housing Committee's recent investigation into overcrowding in London.

I welcome the Committee's work on this topic, as overcrowding is a growing problem that severely affects the lives of far too many Londoners. Several hundred thousand children in London live in overcrowded conditions, and Black, Asian and other minority ethnic Londoners suffer significantly higher rates of overcrowding.

At the meeting on 18 January, the Committee heard valuable evidence on both the extent of the problem and the many steps that the Greater London Authority and London boroughs are taking to alleviate it, within the constraints imposed on us by government policy.

Your letter recommends that I should create a new action plan on overcrowding in London, but as my Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development told the Committee, I am already using the full suite of my powers and the levers at my disposal to tackle this urgent issue. My London Housing Strategy set out a list of actions on overcrowding, and since then I have taken further steps, including:

- Enshrining in policy H10 of the 2021 London Plan a new requirement for boroughs to provide guidance on the size mix of low-cost rent homes in their areas;
- Launching a new 2021-26 Affordable Homes Programme with a significantly increased share of homes for social rent and increased flexibility on grant rates to facilitate the development of larger homes; and
- Creating a new Right to Buy-back fund, supporting councils to increase their social housing stock and reduce their reliance on often overcrowded temporary accommodation.

But I do want to stress that I and our borough partners can only do so much to tackle overcrowding without the right policies and support from the government. In particular, inadequate benefit levels mean that many families in London have no choice but to live in overcrowded conditions and may not be able to afford new family-sized homes when built. As long as that continues, we are not going to be able to tackle the overcrowding crisis as I know we would all like to.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Thank you again for writing to me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the 'h'.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London