

Mayoral Mandate

Improving London's Housing Stock

Introduction

As Mayor of London, I am committed to ensuring that Londoners can live in affordable, safe and green homes. The challenges are stark. Seven years after the Grenfell tragedy more than a third of high-rise buildings with unsafe cladding are yet to start remediation works. Fourteen per cent of privately rented homes in London fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard, along with eight per cent of homes in the social rented sector. And 210,000 homes a year need to be made more energy efficient to help London reach net-zero by 2030.

The GLA has few direct levers to address these challenges, and needs to work with boroughs, housing associations and other partners to tackle them. But while each challenge is important in its own right, when addressed in isolation, there is a risk of uncoordinated action and conflicting messaging. The establishment of the *Improving London's Housing Stock* programme seeks to address this.

We must do all we can to ensure homes across London are healthy and decent to live in. We must also make them more energy efficient – not only to help tackle the climate crisis, but to reduce energy bills and end fuel poverty in our city.

This mandate commissions my City Hall team to define how best the GLA and other organisations across the GLA Group, working closely in partnership with others, can achieve these goals and improve coordination.

I expect this mandate to be read alongside three others: *Reducing Inequalities*; *Making Best Use of Land*; and *Building More Homes*. I expect the delivery plans for these to be developed in tandem to ensure that the benefits reach all Londoners (including those from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups) and that London moves towards consistently high standards across all homes.

Other important interactions should be with: *Upgrading London's Infrastructure* (facilitating the rollout of heat networks); *Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth* (addressing skills gaps and making employment opportunities available to all Londoners); and *Delivering a Greener, More Resilient London* (adapting London's housing stock to climate change). I expect to see these connections come through this programme's delivery plan.

Strategic objectives

The GLA has defined a number of London-level, long-term outcomes which reflect Londoners' aspirations for the city and to which the GLA, in partnership with others, is working towards. The core outcomes to which this programme should contribute are: Londoners' homes are safe and decent, and London is a net-zero carbon city.

In addition, consideration should be given to harnessing the benefits of bringing together work on improving London's existing housing stock and to coordinating engagement and interventions affecting boroughs, asset owners and households.

Programme approaches and priorities

The delivery plan for this programme should focus on four key areas of activity:

Establishing effective cross-London structures to make housing more energy efficient: We should work with London Councils to consider how the existing partnership

between the GLA, London Councils, boroughs and housing associations can be leveraged to make more homes energy efficient in London – building on the proposals for a London Office for Retrofit. This should prioritise the social housing sector and include (without being limited to) opportunities for improved coordination around: funding and financing; supply chains; data and technology; and technical assistance and knowledge transfer. I anticipate that the London Office for Retrofit will predominantly be funded through external sources. However, to support its initial establishment, the GLA should consider providing revenue funding to complement funding by London Councils and boroughs.

Unlocking wider uptake of measures to make homes greener and more energy

efficient: We should consider how the GLA can unlock and accelerate progress with measures to retrofit homes (such as: energy efficiency and insulation, heat pumps, heat network connections, solar and energy storage, and smart energy systems) in the private rental and owner-occupied sectors. This includes “able-to-pay” households. We should look how we can work with partners on digitisation and new commercial models/offers, as well as interventions to address skills gaps, incentivise uptake and increase investment in clean energy and homes being retrofitted.

Addressing systemic building safety issues: Our advocacy for justice for the bereaved, survivors and the wider Grenfell community must continue. This includes taking forward the Inquiry’s recommendations and seeking to address wider systemic failures. We should work with the government and partners to accelerate the pace of cladding remediation, including administering government funding. We should also consider wider safety issues in London’s existing housing stock.

Improving standards and conditions in rented homes: We should continue to work with councils, housing associations, private landlords, civic society and central government to drive improvements in private and social rented homes, including through any forthcoming legislation. We should seek to: support boroughs in the use of their licensing powers; seek further devolution of powers to London to support renters and hold landlords to account (including social landlords); and continue to advocate for better standards and conditions.

Contribution to cross-cutting priorities

The programme should identify where it can make a substantive positive contribution to the areas identified as cross-cutting priorities for the GLA. I expect that the key areas of focus for this programme will be around:

- Addressing structural inequalities – recognising that London’s disadvantaged and marginalised communities suffer disproportionately from poor housing
- Net-zero—recognising that tackling emissions from residential buildings, which are more than a third of London’s total, is critical to achieving climate goals
- A resilient city – recognising that housing stock which enhances fire safety and is adapted to climate change will play an important role in supporting overall city resilience
- Health in all policies – recognising that poor housing is an important driver of health inequalities, and action to address this can benefit both physical and mental health.

Resources

Recognising the significant current fiscal challenges both in London and at national level, I expect the delivery plan to demonstrate what can be achieved within the current level of funding (as well as establishing the resourcing requirements for the proposed New Deal for Renters). This should include setting out how resources might be most effectively redeployed as flexibility becomes available over the course of this Mayoral term.

I am aware that the largest sums relevant to achieving the objectives of this programme are held by government (for example, the current Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund or Building Safety Fund among others). A key aim should be to identify how such funding can be brought into London at a significant scale. Where additional funds are allocated to this programme, either from core GLA or external sources, the delivery plan should be updated to reflect this.

Senior Responsible Owner

I expect the Executive Director of Good Growth to be the Senior Responsible Owner of this programme, with my Deputy Mayors for Environment and Energy, Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service, and Housing and Residential Development to provide ongoing oversight and political direction, along with other colleagues from my office, on my behalf.

Next steps

I expect the Mayoral Delivery Board to recommend a delivery plan for this programme to me in line with our governance and oversight arrangements.

January 2025