

LONDON ASSEMBLY

March 2026

Planning and Regeneration Committee

This document contains the written evidence received by the Committee in response to its Call for Evidence, which formed part of its investigation into New Towns for London.

Calls for Evidence are open to anyone to respond to. In January 2026 the Committee published a number of questions related to its investigation, which can be found on page two. The Call for Evidence was open from 21 January to 4 March 2026.

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Questions asked by the Committee

1. What are the conditions that need to be in place to make new towns a success in London?
 - a. How should citizen engagement, consultation and coproduction inform the development of new towns?
 - b. How can delivery partners ensure that essential infrastructure is in place to ensure the success of new towns?
2. What new opportunities could new town designation in London unlock that existing planning tools do not?
3. What density, design and placemaking principles should underpin London's new towns?
4. What lessons can be learned from the past delivery of Mayoral Development Corporations (MDCs), Opportunity Areas (OAs), and the original development of Thamesmead (in the late 1960s to early 1970s) to inform the development of new towns for London in the present day?
5. What lessons can be learned from international examples of new towns?
6. What roles should the Mayor, GLA, London boroughs, and central Government each play in planning, funding and delivering new towns in London?
 - a. What governance structures should be implemented to ensure the long term success of new towns in London?
7. What are the potential environmental impacts of new town development in London on food and water security, climate resilience and access to green space?



Call for Evidence: New Towns for London.

February 2026



London Assembly Planning and Regeneration Committee

Call for Evidence: New Towns for London

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this response.

[Action for Enfield's Future](#) is a grassroots, non-political community group bringing together local residents, including members of [The Enfield Society](#), [Better Homes Enfield](#), [EnCaf](#) and [Enfield RoadWatch](#). Members have differing priorities and views but share a common goal: to help make the borough a fairer and better place to live, by pushing for transparent, evidence-based decision-making.

Context: Our response focuses on the proposed new town at Crews Hill and Chase Park in Enfield.

- c.884 hectares of Green Belt land at Crews Hill and Chase Park has been identified in the New Towns Taskforce report as a site for a potential new town of up to 21,000 homes.
- Enfield's Local Plan (currently being examined) proposes c.9,000 homes at Crews Hill and Chase Park, on roughly half the amount of land as the new town. Work has already begun at the [Arnold House](#) site, and another planning application has been approved at the [Anglo Aquatic](#) site.^{1, 2}

We address questions Q1a, Q3, Q6 and Q7 of the Call for Evidence, and have shared other information we believe may be useful to the Committee.

Q1a. How should citizen engagement, consultation and coproduction inform the development of new towns?

Q3. What density, design and placemaking principles should underpin London's new towns?

Q6. What roles should the Mayor, GLA, London boroughs, and central Government each play in planning, funding, and delivering new towns in London? a. What governance structures should be implemented to ensure the long-term success of new towns in London?

Q7. What are the potential environmental impacts of new town development in London on food and water security, climate resilience, and access to green space?

The response begins with a summary, before dealing with key issues in more detail (Sections 1-7). The response concludes with recommendations (Section 8).

¹ <https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/councillors-approve-care-home-rebuild-despite-heritage-objections/>

² <https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/plan-for-58-homes-on-brownfield-site-in-enfields-green-belt-approved/>

SUMMARY

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT (Q1)

If citizen engagement, consultation and coproduction are done properly, they are not just “nice to have” - they make new towns fairer, more deliverable, and better value for money for London.

- Coproduction is a delivery tool - it should be structured, inclusive, properly resourced, and continuous, so it improves outcomes for future residents, existing communities, and delivery partners alike, as well as reducing risks, delays, and costs.

BROWNFIELD-FIRST (Q3)

The UK Government and Mayor have repeatedly committed to a brownfield-first approach.

- In 2024, Matthew Pennycook, the Housing and Planning Minister said, “*The government is committed to a brownfield-first approach to housebuilding ...*”. (Oct 2024)³
- Tom Copley, Deputy Mayor of London for Housing and Residential Development, when speaking about new towns for London said, “*Brownfield-first means absolutely maximising the amount of housing you’re delivering on brownfield land ... we will always look to brownfield first.*” (Feb 2026)⁴

There has been no assessment of how building on Enfield’s greenfield land would impact the delivery of a brownfield-first approach across the remainder of the Borough.

- Most of the land identified for the Crews Hill and Chase Park new town is greenfield. (The land is not made up of “disused car parks,” or “dreary wasteland,” nor is it predominantly “grey-belt,” “of little ecological value,” or “inaccessible to the public.” Evidence shows most of it is high-performing Green Belt, with high biodiversity value and large areas are publicly accessible).

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-of-new-homes-to-be-built-as-government-unlocks-brownfield-sites>

⁴ <https://webcasts.london.gov.uk/Assembly/Event/Index/9fb0c9be-31fa-434d-96fd-a32cf85763cf>

A new town on greenfield land of the scale envisaged at Crews Hill and Chase Park would divert focus and capacity away from delivering brownfield sites and undermine a brownfield-first approach.

- Enfield's latest Local Plan identifies over 700 viable urban/brownfield regeneration sites, many of which were proposed by members of 'Action for Enfield's Future'. The [Local Plan trajectory](#) suggests these sites are sufficient to deliver around 30,000 homes across the plan period, although our members argue there is brownfield land for a further 10,000 homes.⁵
- In terms of addressing acute housing need, the brownfield sites listed in Enfield's Local Plan could deliver enough Social Rent homes to house all Enfield households currently living in temporary accommodation.

Identifying greenfield land at Crews Hill and Chase Park for a new town location is not a "brownfield-first" approach.

- Other London sites submitted to the New Towns Taskforce would regenerate brownfield land. Targeting greenfield land at Crews Hill and Chase Park, instead of prioritising brownfield new town sites, contradicts the Government's and the Mayor's stated "brownfield-first" positions.

Previously developed land at Crews Hill and Chase Park is in active employment use.

- Around a tenth of the land at Crews Hill and Chase Park is previously developed, so a small proportion of the land could potentially meet the definition of 'grey belt.'
- Most of this previously developed land has an important economic function, directly supporting hundreds of livelihoods across a range of employment sectors, including logistics, wholesale horticulture, landscaping, garden supplies, recycling, industrial, retail, sports, and leisure.
- These businesses would be protected if located within Enfield's Strategic Industrial Land, instead they have been characterised as "the wild west of garden centres" and depicted as expendable.
- Conversely, there is a large amount of underutilised industrial land within Enfield, including unused car parking and wasteland. We have the situation where large expanses of unused, misused, and underutilised industrial land, near public transport infrastructure, is protected, whilst land in active employment use at Crews Hill is targeted for development.

⁵ https://www.enfield.gov.uk/_data/assets/excel_doc/0020/122816/E9.6a-Stage-3-Updated-housing-trajectory-post-hearings-Planning.xlsx

DISTRACTION

A new town at Crews Hill and Chase Park risks distracting decision-makers, funding, and officer capacity away from implementing the shorter-term actions needed to tackle acute housing need.

- There is an urgent need for more Social Rent homes and better housing conditions across London. The case for a Crews Hill and Chase Park new town is repeatedly framed as a response to this shortage and to help households in acute housing need, particularly families living in temporary accommodation.
- We recognise and support the need for more Social Rent homes; however, it is important not to become over-reliant on the new town to deliver these. Based on the optimistic build-out rates in the Taskforce report, it will be many years before a new town at Crews Hill and Chase Park is able to deliver a substantial number of Social Rent homes, particularly given major essential infrastructure requirements and cross-subsidy finance models.
- We are concerned that the new town narrative may already be distracting attention away from exploring and implementing measures needed to improve outcomes for those already in acute housing need. Examples of these are provided later in the report.

DESIGN AND PLACEMAKING PRINCIPLES (Q3)

There is no clear single identity that unites the Crews Hill and Chase Park sites. Currently they are two or more separate regeneration areas which have been cobbled together.

- What is the single structure that unites the various Crews Hill and Chase Park sites in daily life: a rapid transit spine, a continuous movement corridor, and a shared civic heart? If the answer is not explicit at outline stage, the “new town” label is branding, not placemaking.
- If the intention is one sustainable new town, then outline proposals should demonstrate what makes the various sites function as one. That requires more than general references to “links” or “green infrastructure.” It needs a single, legible spine and a shared centre of gravity that people use every day. For example, it may require re-locating Crews Hill station.

Public land value should be captured as permanent affordability, not extracted as a one-off receipt.

- A much more positive vision for Crews Hill and Chase Park new town is needed, given the large amount of publicly owned land being targeted.

- Housing on publicly owned land should be 100% affordable, with at least 50% Social Rent, because this is the quickest and most direct way to meet London's housing needs, including assisting households living in temporary accommodation and concealed households/first-time buyers. This approach has multiple other placemaking benefits which are listed later in this response.

There has been no published, evidence-based assessment of the area's existing assets and constraints, or how these would be protected and positively incorporated into placemaking.

- The Crews Hill and Chase Park area has many existing placemaking assets. These do not appear to have been properly identified by the New Towns Taskforce.
- It would be an enormous benefit if these assets were understood and incorporated into placemaking, for the benefit of future residents and to help generate a coherent and appealing "sense of place" and functioning walkable settlement.
- More details around placemaking principles are provided later, but broadly the overlooked assets fall into the following areas:
 - Existing green sector employment should be a highly valued placemaking asset.
 - The existing good public access to nature and open countryside needs to be properly factored in.
 - Most of the area is rated highly in terms of biodiversity, which needs to be properly incorporated.
 - The area's historic landscape is an important placemaking asset but is misunderstood.
 - The area's rich equine history, today represented by miles of bridleways, stables, riding-schools etc, valued by people from across London, should be incorporated into placemaking.

Flexible masterplanning is key: The importance of a coherent, realistic, flexible, and up-to-date masterplan should not be underestimated.

- Outline stage planning should not "fix the masterplan," but it should fix the public interest guardrails. Outline consent should lock in enforceable principles and delivery triggers (the outcomes that must be achieved), while leaving flexibility on detailed design and phasing (how those outcomes are delivered).
- In practice this means clear "no infrastructure, no occupation" triggers, integrated land use and transport requirements, and binding standards on parking, overheating and flood risk, water and wastewater capacity, and nature recovery. Without those guardrails, a new town becomes path dependent on early compromises, and costs and impacts are later socialised onto communities.

TRANSPORT (Q3)

The transport case for Crews Hill and Chase Park is based on assumptions, not evidence. Delivering walkable car-lite neighbourhoods across an undulating rural setting will be very challenging.

- During the preparation of Enfield's local plan, both the GLA and TfL robustly and repeatedly objected to the Council's proposal to build c.9,000 homes at Crews Hill and Chase Park. This was due to issues linked to creating car-dependency and the investment required to support the additional public transport measures that would be needed – which TfL said would detract from investment in urban areas.
- We have listened carefully to what politicians and officers have said about transport requirements for the proposed new town. In our view, it is easy to extol the virtues of walkable car-lite neighbourhoods but far harder to deliver and maintain them in practice, particularly in rural/semi-rural settings such as Crews Hill.
- We also note the contradictory statements – Enfield Council's messaging portrays the new town as a low-density car-friendly environment, whilst the GLA, TfL and New Towns Taskforce propose a completely different approach. This tension between key players exposes a major underlying issue with the location which has not been properly recognised nor resolved.
- Therefore, a detailed, funded, and enforceable transport and placemaking plan is needed to show how car-lite outcomes would be achieved, phased from the outset, and maintained over time. Until that exists, transport remains a major obstacle for placemaking at Crews Hill and Chase Park.

DELIVERY (Q6)

The Crews Hill and Chase Park new town should be led and delivered by a Development Corporation or Mayoral Development Corporation, rather than by the Borough.

- If the new town is led by a DC or MDC, it will help free-up the Council and LPA to remain focused on delivering the considerable number of urban/brownfield sites within Enfield.
- The DC or MDC approach will also avoid a conflict of interest; Enfield Council owns roughly 50% of the greenfield land identified for the new town and has said it intends to realise £800m of land receipts by selling it for development. It is not appropriate for the Council to act as both landowner and lead the delivery, given its significant commercial interest in increasing the value of its own land.

Homes delivered by the new town should not be treated as part of Enfield's housing delivery for the Housing Delivery Test.

- The new town housing is a strategic response to London's housing needs, not solely Enfield's. Therefore, the units should not count towards Enfield's housing targets or delivery but should be recorded and monitored at a London-wide level. This would help maintain incentives and capacity for Enfield Council, as LPA and housing authority, to prioritise brownfield delivery.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS (Q7)

A new town at Crews Hill and Chase Park would create major risks for access to open countryside, food and water security, and London's climate resilience.

- There has been no published, evidence-based assessment of how negative impacts on access to green space, food and water security and climate resilience would be avoided or mitigated.
- As it stands, the new town could undermine valued walking and cycling routes and alter the character of Enfield's historic landscape, while permanently removing productive farmland and increasing pressure on water and wastewater systems, as well as reducing carbon sequestration.
- It also risks converting publicly funded access and restoration improvements (including along the London Loop) into a private development benefit, unless value uplift is captured for the public.
- If the proposal is to proceed at all, mapped boundaries, a clear baseline, and an outline-stage strategy with enforceable standards, long-term monitoring and "stop/go" triggers are needed to secure no net loss of meaningful countryside access, ultra-low mains water demand with reuse, and green and blue infrastructure that genuinely improves flood and overheating resilience.
- Proper carbon accounting is required. Publish a full carbon account that separates building whole life carbon from land use change, including soil carbon loss and the loss of sequestration from greenfield land take, and compares this transparently against a brownfield-first scenario.



Figure 1 - Land targeted at Crews Hill/Chase Park is green and accessible



Figure 2 - Land targeted at Crews Hill/Chase Park is green and accessible

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT (Q1)

“The heart of a town lies in its people”

(Official motto of Stevenage, the first post-war new town)

If citizen engagement, consultation and coproduction are done properly, they are not just “nice to have.” They make new towns fairer and more deliverable and better value for money for London.

1.1. How getting engagement right benefits everyone

For future residents

- Ensures the new town is designed around real needs (affordable homes, play space, schools, GP capacity, youth provision, safe walking and cycling, step-free access, inclusive public realm, homes for first-time buyers and downsizers).
- Later life accommodation should be planned in from the outset, not treated as an afterthought. A good supply of genuinely attractive, accessible homes for downsizers can help older residents stay local and free up larger family homes, easing pressure elsewhere in the borough.
- Forces early planning for long-term management: who maintains parks, streets, community buildings, and how this is funded.

For existing residents and communities

- Builds trust by showing what is genuinely open for influence, and what is fixed (and why).
- Protects and improves what already works locally (parks, routes, community assets, schools, health services, employment, place history, ‘sense of place’ etc.).
- Reduces fear of “done deal” development and lowers the risk of long-running conflict.

For developers, delivery bodies, and master planners

- Identifies issues early (access, flooding, utilities, schools, buses/rail capacity, construction impacts), before they become expensive redesigns, legal disputes, or stalled consents.
- Harnesses local knowledge that professionals often miss (desire lines, safety hotspots, overlooked biodiversity, informal community networks, how facilities are used).
- Designs out avoidable mistakes (car-dominated layouts, unsafe public spaces, poorly located community facilities, token green space that fails in practice).
- Improves planning certainty and reduces risk: fewer objections, clearer mitigation, smoother phasing, and stronger consent defensibility.
- Creates better places, which supports sales, lettings, reputation, and long-term stewardship.
- Increases legitimacy: more durable decisions over a 30 to 50-year programme.

1.2. London-wide reach

A London new town cannot be shaped only by those who already live next to the proposed site. That matters, but it must be balanced with the needs of:

- People on housing waiting lists across London, including those living in temporary accommodation
- Younger Londoners 'priced out'
- Disabled people and carers
- Renters in insecure or poor-quality housing
- Under-represented communities who are often missing from planning processes.

This means engagement should be London-wide and targeted:

- Outreach through schools, colleges, employers, faith groups, tenant organisations, youth services, and disability groups and specifically including those living in temporary accommodation and on council waiting lists.
- Accessible formats (plain English/translations, childcare-friendly sessions, online and in person).
- Paid participation for time-intensive roles (so not limited to those who can afford to volunteer).

1.3. A Residents' Delivery Panel (coproduction that lasts)

Set up an independently chaired **Residents' Delivery Panel** running through the life of the programme, not just a one-off consultation. It should:

- Include existing residents plus future resident voices (e.g., London-wide housing applicants, key workers, younger residents, private renters, disabled Londoners)
- Be representative (gender, age, ethnicity, disability, tenure, income, geography)
- Have a clear remit: reviewing masterplan options, phasing, design codes, community infrastructure plans, travel plans, and stewardship proposals
- Publish transparent outputs: "you said / we did," reasons for decisions, and open data
- Be properly resourced: independent facilitation, expert support, and the ability to commission short pieces of analysis

Coproduction is a delivery tool. In London, it should be structured, inclusive, properly resourced, and continuous, so it improves outcomes for existing communities, future residents, and delivery partners alike and reduces risk, delays, and cost.

We agree with the position set out by the UK Cohousing Network and Community Land Trust Network in their report '[Creating New Towns: By the People, for the People](#)':

*"... many of those people moving to New Towns should be thought of as clients commissioning their homes and community assets. They should be considered the codesigners of future phases of development, not just consumers of speculative housing and, at best, consultees after most of the key decisions have been made. Therefore, we argue, that New towns will be better if at every opportunity, future residents are recognised as codesigners, owners, managers and stewards of homes and community assets in the process of creating new settlements."*⁶



Figure 3 - Outputs from Community Workshop for a proposed new park, delivered by our members.

⁶ https://cohousing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/CLHNewTowns_PolicyMakersReport-2.pdf

2. BROWNFIELD-FIRST (Q3)

There has been no assessment of how a new town on greenfield land at Crews Hill and Chase Park in Enfield would affect delivery of a brownfield-first approach.

A brownfield-first approach is supported by both the Government and public polling.

The Government has repeatedly expressed support for a 'brownfield-first' approach to house building, which tends to be the most sustainable approach and can attract much-needed investment into neighbourhoods. This position is reflected in national and London-wide planning policy.

Research published in 2024 also shows that communities view brownfield land as wasted potential and that there is strong public support for brownfield regeneration, with 79% of respondents saying that brownfield regeneration would have a positive impact on their community.⁷

Brownfield sites in Enfield.

Enfield's Local Plan, which is currently under Examination, identifies over **700 viable brownfield sites** (of a range of sizes) capable of delivering **c.30,000** additional homes. Many were identified by local community groups, who also demonstrated capacity for a further 10,000 homes on brownfield sites.

Delivering 30,000 homes would add nearly 25% to Enfield's existing housing stock and exceed the Borough's London Plan housing target. If planning policies were met, brownfield sites alone could deliver **c.5,000 new Social Rent homes** - more than the 3,500 Enfield households currently residing in temporary accommodation.

The impact of a new town at Crews Hill and Chase Park on a "brownfield-first" approach.

The New Towns Taskforce report says c.884 hectares of Green Belt land could be released at Crews Hill and Chase Park to deliver up to 21,000 homes. Around 90% of this land is greenfield, i.e. not previously developed.

⁷ https://www.britishland.com/media/jczlfxkd/200924_how-to-deliver-more-growth-homes-and-jobs-with-the-support-of-communities.pdf

A response to a Freedom of Information request from MHCLG confirms that neither the New Towns Taskforce nor MHCLG considered the impact of releasing c.800 hectares of Green Belt land for housing on Enfield's brownfield delivery pipeline.

A new town on the scale proposed for Crews Hill and Chase Park could undermine a brownfield-first approach in two ways:

1. **Displacing investment and capacity.** It could divert limited public and private investment, grant funding, skills, and delivery capacity away from urban regeneration and brownfield delivery.
2. **Constraining delivery through market absorption limits.** It would introduce an exceptionally large volume of new housing into a housing market area, exceeding realistic demand and absorption rates and slowing build-out overall, rather than accelerating delivery across Enfield.

In relation to point 1 (**Displacing investment and capacity**) the Mayor's support for protecting London's Green Belt is linked to its role in containing outward expansion. The London Plan states that this has "*... helped to drive the re-use and intensification of London's previously developed brownfield land to ensure London makes efficient use of its land and infrastructure, and that inner urban areas benefit from regeneration and investment.*" ([London Plan 2021](#), para 8.2.1).⁸

This point has been repeatedly emphasised by the GLA during the development of Enfield's Local Plan. For example, the GLA has stated:

"The retention of the Green Belt is also to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land." ([GLA, Feb 2019](#))⁹

"In particular, there appears to be sufficient capacity to meet the required housing target for this local plan without Green Belt sites. Moreover, bringing forward Green Belt sites at this stage, alongside non-Green Belt brownfield sites, risks undermining brownfield delivery and viability, particularly in the first 10-year period. Housing development on Green Belt land is very often not fraught with the complexities of delivering housing on previously developed land and can offer much greater financial rewards. There is no 'brownfield first' approach to mitigate this potential risk and we are concerned that in this context,

⁸ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/the_london_plan_2021.pdf

⁹ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/PAWS/media_id_451875/enfield_local_plan_reg_18.pdf

market responses may not align with the borough's stated aims - with potentially significant impacts on brownfield sites and sustainable development.” (GLA, Sep 2021)¹⁰

In relation to point 2 (**Constraining delivery through market absorption limits**), there is substantial evidence about market constraints on housing delivery, including workforce capacity, demand drivers, sales and absorption rates, and build-out rates. It is not realistic to assume that Enfield can deliver housing at scale across its brownfield pipeline whilst also delivering a new town on Green Belt land. In practice, delivery is constrained by local demand and sales absorption, and by the cross-subsidy model that is likely to underpin much of the development.

In short, a new town on the scale envisaged, risks undermining a brownfield-first approach, which is a stated priority of the Government, the Mayor, and the local authority.

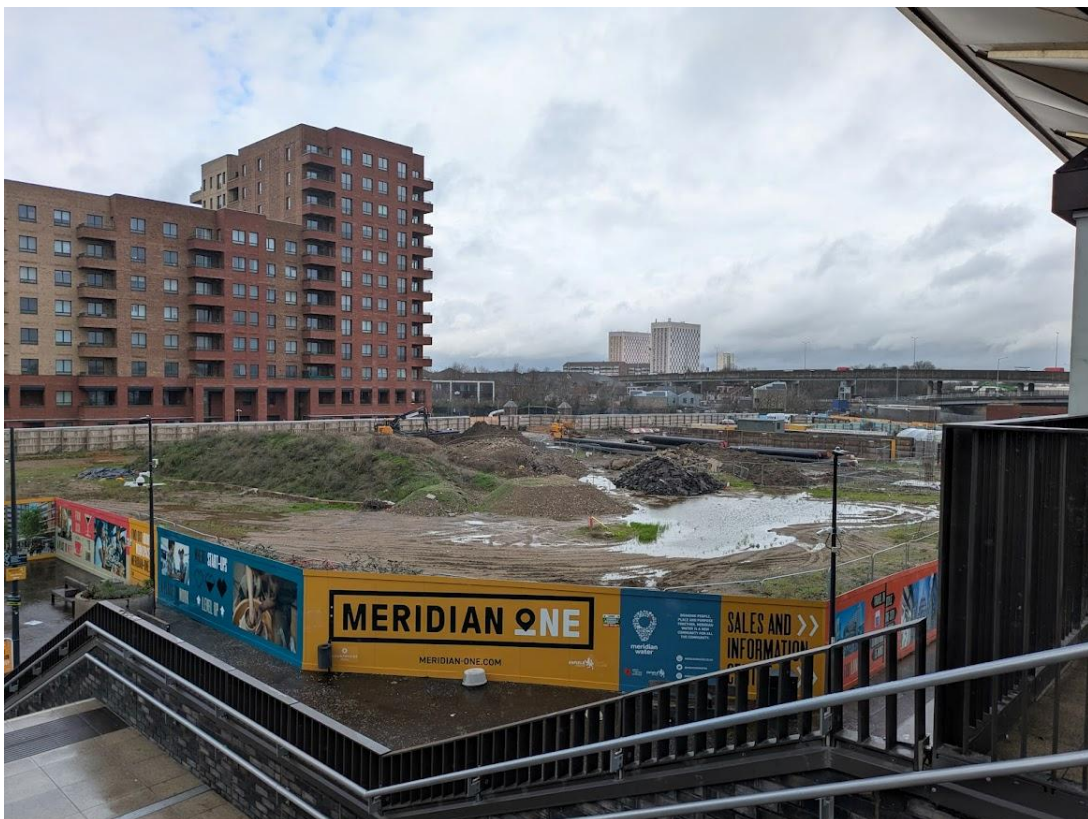


Figure 4 - Enfield has over 700 brownfield sites

¹⁰ <https://gla.my.salesforce.com/sfc/p/#4J000000tmdo/a/Q5000000VGje/DbM0d4UG4Rctyh0EBCZW18zSB1PHWSA2EwccUDfRtZI>

3. DISTRACTION

The new town risks distracting decision-makers and resources from implementing a range of shorter-term responses that are required to address acute housing needs.

The justification for a new town at Crews Hill and Chase Park.

The new town at Crews Hill and Chase Park is often justified by pointing to Enfield's housing pressures, including the number of households in temporary accommodation (c.3,500) and the volume of contacts the Council receives seeking housing-related advice.

But will a new town deliver homes quickly enough to address today's crisis?

Even on optimistic assumptions, delivery is likely to be gradual for many years. If a new town achieved a build-out rate of c.600 homes per year once the scheme is up and running (which is ambitious, particularly in the first decade), and if 50% of homes were affordable, and half of those were Social Rent, that would equate to around 150 Social Rent homes per year on average. In practice, the Social Rent figure could be significantly lower.

Based on these illustrative best-case assumptions, it would take more than 20 years to deliver enough Social Rent homes to match the number of households currently in living in temporary accommodation. Therefore, a new town may contribute to longer-term supply, but it is not a near-term solution.

Risk of distracting from urgent measures.

We are concerned that new town optimism could turn into over-reliance and distract from the policy, strategy and funding of the responses needed now. These include, but are not limited to:

- Urgently improving standards and security in the temporary accommodation sector
- Reviewing the housing benefit cap and Local Housing Allowance so rents are affordable
- Exploring private rented sector rent controls to limit excessive rent increases
- Bringing long-term empty homes back into use (including council stock) as Social Rent
- Stronger enforcement against misuse of social housing
- Removing incentives for landlords to switch homes into temporary accommodation use

- Tightening rules on short-term lets
- Expanding rent guarantee and deposit schemes
- Rapid action on rogue landlords and poor conditions
- Reforming temporary accommodation procurement to reduce inter-borough bidding wars
- Properly funding resettlement and move-on support
- Targeted tax changes that unlock existing homes such as stamp duty reform for downsizers and relief for councils and housing associations acquiring homes for homelessness prevention
- Reforming Permitted Development Rights, so these contribute to affordable housing supply
- Building more purpose-built student housing to free up private rental properties
- Unlocking stalled sites, including addressing leasehold, service charge, and ground rent issues
- Providing more support to SME and small site developers
- ... and other measures to increase supply and reduce homelessness in the short term.

There is an urgent need for genuinely affordable housing in Enfield. The role of what a new town could realistically deliver, and when, needs to be clearly evidenced, communicated and not allowed to displace immediate action.



Figure 5 - Bringing vacant homes back into use should be one of many measures implemented

4. DESIGN AND PLACEMAKING PRINCIPLES (Q3)

Design and placemaking will determine whether Crews Hill and Chase Park become a coherent, walkable new town with a clear identity, or a set of disconnected housing parcels that lock in car dependency. This section sets out core principles that must be fixed at outline stage: how the place functions as one town, how public land value is captured for permanent affordability, and how existing landscape, jobs, heritage and access to countryside are protected and built into the plan.

4.1. Coherence and identity: one town or two?

What is the single structure that unites Crews Hill and Chase Park in daily life: a rapid transit spine, a continuous movement corridor, and a shared civic heart? If the answer is not explicit at outline stage, the “new town” label is branding, not placemaking.

The Crews Hill and Chase Park proposal is described as a single “new town,” but at up to 21,000 homes spread across c.884 hectares and focused on two separate growth areas, it risks functioning as two or more settlements with one label.

In placemaking terms, a single coherent town needs a clear organising structure that is stronger than the pull of nearby existing centres. Here, the two halves would sit in different everyday catchments, with Crews Hill anchored to the rail station and Chase Park naturally gravitating towards Oakwood and surrounding suburban centres. Without a deliberate, binding strategy, Chase Park is likely to read as an Oakwood and Trent Park extension, while Crews Hill becomes a separate rail-oriented district, meaning the “new town” identity is not credible.

If the intention is genuinely one sustainable new town, the outline proposals should demonstrate what makes the two places function as one. That requires more than general references to “links” or “green infrastructure.” It needs a single, legible spine and a shared centre of gravity that people use every day.

In practice, this potentially means re-locating Crews Hill station, creating a rapid transit and active travel corridor that runs through both districts, and a clear hierarchy of centres so the scheme has one civic heart rather than two (or more) competing district or local centres. If these elements are not defined and secured at outline stage, the proposal should be treated as separate settlement projects rather than being welded together and presented as a single new town.

4.2. Public land, public homes

Public land value should be captured as permanent affordability, not extracted as a one-off receipt.

A more positive vision is needed. Social housing delivery should be at the heart of a Crews Hill and Chase Park new town.

Around 50% of the land at Crews Hill and Chase Park is understood to be publicly owned greenfield land, this presents a rare opportunity to deliver affordable housing at scale.

High land prices have made it challenging to deliver social rent homes. However, the scale of the publicly owned land at Crews Hill (alongside the removal of 'hope value' across new town sites), may present a once in a generation opportunity to deliver social rent housing at scale.

Housing on publicly owned land at Chase Park and Crews Hill should be 100% affordable, with at least 50% Social Rent, because this is the most direct way to meet London's housing needs, including assisting households living in temporary accommodation and concealed households/first-time buyers.

This approach has multiple benefits, for example:

- Helps stable communities to become established more quickly.
- Creates a guaranteed and predictable income stream.
- Homes can be delivered at speed as it prevents delivery rates being controlled by sales values, land banking, and speculative cross-subsidy financing models.
- Can free up housing elsewhere e.g. private rented sector homes used as temporary accommodation, can return to being used as standard rental properties.
- Gives an element of control over occupancy use e.g. lowers risk of homes being left vacant for prolonged periods or used as second-homes/short-term holiday lets/investment vehicles or switched to HMOs.
- These homes can be used more efficiently e.g. lower underoccupancy rates.
- Land-take is minimised e.g. a smaller amount of greenfield land is used to maximum benefit.

The government has begun to shift policy in the right direction: prioritising social rent within national investment programmes, reforming Right to Buy to slow the loss of existing homes, improving security for private renters, and providing greater long-term certainty for housing providers through rent and standards settlements. The next step is delivery at scale. New towns and major schemes on publicly owned land are the clearest opportunity to rebuild the supply of social rent in a way that matches need, making social rent a core, planned output of development, not an outcome that is negotiated down through viability.

Community-led housing models

Community-led housing models should be built into the delivery of homes on publicly owned land, helping to increase Social Rent delivery. This should include securing long-term community stewardship of land and shared assets; and using strong delivery standards to lock in high-quality design, sustainability, and lasting affordability.

4.3. Realise the benefits of existing placemaking assets

Placemaking should begin with what is already there. In the case of Crews Hill and Chase Park, we have seen little evidence that existing assets and constraints have been properly mapped, or understood, and used to shape the early concept ideas for a potential new town.

Employment should be a valued placemaking asset.

Crews Hill and Chase Park are not empty canvases. Crews Hill includes a long-established horticultural cluster (known as the “golden mile”), multiple equine and rural enterprises, and other well-established businesses in retail, engineering, wholesale, and distribution. Plans for a successful new town should value and protect these assets for future residents, not treat them as incidental, or easily expendable.

The protection of green sector and automation-resilient jobs, as well as the ancillary jobs supporting these businesses, is particularly important but ignored.

The Council may dismiss Crews Hill’s golden mile as “the wild west of garden centres,” but we see its potential as much more than that. It should continue to be an important part of the Borough’s economy, directly supporting the livelihoods of future residents, and continue to contribute to the area’s character and social value; a future focused placemaking strategy should embrace a positive vision for Crews Hill, as a centre for horticulture, which recognises the value of its existing businesses and the importance of the close proximity of Capel Manor College.¹¹

Capel Manor College describes itself as “*London’s environmental college, offering a diverse range of full and part-time courses in further and higher education for school leavers and adults. The College plays a vital role in the green agenda for the capital, equipping the next generation of land-based sector workers with the skills and knowledge needed to help preserve and protect London’s wildlife, national parks and green spaces.*”

¹¹ <https://www.capel.ac.uk/who-we-are/>



Figure 6 - Existing employment sites should be valued as a placemaking asset

Existing access to nature and greenspace needs to be factored in.

There have been suggestions that Crews Hill and Chase Park have poor accessibility to greenspace. This characterisation is misleading. The area benefits from having good access to the open countryside and nature, for example, via Merryhills Way, Hertfordshire Chain Walk and the London Loop, all of which are public rights of way. This access, particularly Merryhills Way, is highly valued by existing residents, and we suspect would also be valued by future residents. A successful new town should value and protect these assets. More details about the existing publicly accessible countryside are provided in Section 7.



Figure 7 - Existing open space assets need to be mapped

Green Belt needs to be accurately described and understood.

The Taskforce report describes land in the area as “lower quality greenfield land” and frames its proposal as releasing “poor quality Green Belt.” That is not an evidence-led assessment, and it is not how Green Belt is assessed in planning.

The relevant question is performance against Green Belt purposes and the harm of release. Enfield’s [own evidence](#) indicates low to moderate harm for the core Crews Hill area, high to very high harm for other parts of Crews Hill, and generally very high harm for Chase Park parcels.¹²

The “poor quality Green Belt” framing reads as an attempt to normalise large-scale release and should be treated with caution, particularly given the Council’s stated aims to benefit from [land value uplift](#).¹³

Existing biodiversity should be more accurately understood and communicated.

The site summary for Crews Hill and Chase Park in the New Towns Taskforce report, does not reflect the biodiversity value of the land. It does not acknowledge key Local Plan baseline evidence regarding

¹² https://www.enfield.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0032/87953/E7.M4-LBE-Planning.pdf

¹³ <https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/enfield-council-eyes-800m-sale-of-green-belt-development-sites/>

biodiversity constraints, including designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). These assets need to be properly understood and part of any future placemaking strategy.

The areas historic landscape is an important placemaking asset.

Vicarage Farm (Chase Park) is part of the last remnants of the historic Enfield Chase. This is reflected in the area in multiple ways, for example Enfield “Chase” train station and “Chase” Side etc. Enfield Chase was recorded as Enefeld Chacee in 1325 and includes historic field patterns, ancient trees, and hedgerows. Retaining these for future generations should be important for placemaking and ‘sense of place’ building.



Figure 8 - Historic map of Enfield Chase. Source: The Enfield Society

The area's equestrian heritage should be reflected in the placemaking strategy.

The area's history with horses is rooted in its royal past as a premier hunting ground, the medieval Enfield Chase, which served monarchs like Elizabeth I. Bridleways developed from ancient paths connecting these hunting grounds. Today there are multiple riding schools, stables and support facilities in the Crews Hill and Chase Park areas, alongside a web of bridleways, paddocks, and grazing. As well as horse riding facilities, stables also provide jobs and a large number of volunteer opportunities. Their social value is remarkably high.

The area's history with horses is a core part of its identity and should form part of the future placemaking assets, yet all this is under threat without, as yet, so much as a passing thought.



Figure 9 - the area's rich history with horses should be a placemaking asset

4.4. Set a clear, future proofed and citizen-led vision

A new town in London should be planned as an eco-town, not as an add-on of green features after the land use pattern has already locked in car dependence and high environmental impact.

The eco-town idea should shape the plan from day one: a place with a clear local identity rooted in the existing horticulture and landscape, built around nature recovery, flood resilience, and genuinely walkable neighbourhoods. It should minimise land take by using gentle mid-density homes overlooking and directly connected to parks and productive landscapes, with daily needs and employment within walking or cycling distance, and high-quality public transport as the default. It should also aim for practical self-sufficiency in energy and resource management, including proper waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and local handling capacity, not simply exporting “rubbish” elsewhere.

4.5. Placemaking principles we recommend for existing and future residents.

These principles matter because they determine whether a new town becomes a genuinely walkable, healthy place with local identity, or a dispersed car-dependent piecemeal settlements that deliver poor long-term outcomes.

- **Eco-town identity as a core placemaking principle.** A new town in London should be planned as an eco-town, not as an add-on of green features after the land use pattern has already locked in car dependence and high environmental impact.
- **Placemaking begins with existing settlements, landscape, and livelihoods.** Map and protect the places that people already use and value (publicly accessible green space, heritage assets, multiple footpaths and public rights of way, bridleways, local businesses, community facilities etc.), and design around them for the benefit of current and future residents. Embrace horticulture, food growing, and land-based skills as defining features of place, with protected and modernised horticultural zones, local supply chains, and training spaces.
- **Jobs and local economy as a first-order objective.** Retain and expand local employment where possible (including horticulture and related supply chains), and set out a realistic strategy for new workspace, training, and apprenticeships. Put workspace and training into centres and neighbourhood hubs so “walk to work and learning” is realistic for a large share of residents.
- **Human scale, gentle mid-density, and clear centres.** Concentrate the highest densities and the car-free living closest to the strongest public transport nodes and a true town centre, with mid-rise neighbourhoods stepping down to car-lite lower densities at edges. Prioritise park-facing and green-route-facing homes and workspaces, so green space is safe, overlooked, and used throughout the day, while minimising land take and avoiding sprawl. (Further details on transport and delivering walkable neighbourhoods is provided in Section 5.)
- **A complete neighbourhood from the start.** Deliver schools, health services, shops, community space, play, sport, and leisure early, not as “later phases.” Early delivery is essential to avoid car-dependent patterns becoming embedded. This need for investment may limit the number of new towns that can come forward in London initially.
- **Embedding Community Land Trusts (CLTs).** There’s also strong evidence that embedding Community Land Trusts (CLTs) across the next wave of new towns would bring major benefits for

both delivery and long-term stewardship. The new towns programme should make full use of CLTs from the outset, capturing the social, economic and financial gains they are known to generate.

- ***Green and blue infrastructure shapes the plan.*** Make SuDS, rivers, woodland, ecological corridors and parks structural elements, delivered early, and designed for climate resilience and biodiversity recovery. Plan for visible flood resilience and water management across the whole settlement (not just isolated basins), including wetlands, multi-functional parks, and connected habitats. Set measurable nature recovery targets that go beyond minimum compliance, with ecological corridors protected in perpetuity.
- ***Net zero and circular economy designed in, not value engineered out.*** Commit at outline stage to high fabric standards and low energy demand, with credible low carbon on-site heat and renewables, storage where appropriate, and clear delivery triggers. Plan for waste reduction first, then reuse and repair, then recycling, with adequate internal and external space standards and a servicing strategy that avoids streets dominated by bins and heavy vehicle movements.
- ***Design quality and stewardship baked in.*** Robust design codes, clear quality control, and a funded stewardship body from day one to look after public realm, green space, and community assets.
- ***Long-term planning for social infrastructure funded through land value capture.*** The removal of hope value from land identified for new towns will be critical to their success as places, as acquiring land at existing use value is essential to ensuring the towns long-term success and viability.
- ***Zero estate management charges.*** New towns should not lock residents into a permanent “second council tax” for basic streets, green space and public realm maintenance. These charges are typically unaccountable, hard to challenge, and can rise over time, undermining long-term affordability and trust in stewardship. Instead, the public realm should be adoptable by default and funded transparently through proper design standards, commuted sums/endowments, and where needed resident-led stewardship with full democratic control.
- ***Plan for ageing and changing needs.*** Provide a strong offer of later life accommodation, including accessible, adaptable homes in walkable locations near services and public transport. Done well, this supports downsizing within the community and helps release larger family homes without pushing people out of the area.

4.6. Flexible masterplanning is key

The importance of a coherent, realistic, flexible, and up-to-date masterplan should not be underestimated.

RTPI's recent [international review of new towns](#) concluded that masterplanning is essential, but only when it sets a clear direction while remaining adaptable over time.¹⁴ The warning is against rigid, deterministic visions that freeze assumptions too early and then become hard to change as circumstances shift (delivery economics, climate risks, infrastructure capacity etc.). That risk is familiar in Enfield: at Meridian Water, an out-of-date but intractable approach to the vision and masterplanning has acted like a dead weight on delivery.

The lesson for London is not that outline stage planning should “fix the masterplan,” but that it should fix the public interest guardrails. Outline consent should lock in enforceable principles and delivery triggers (the outcomes that must be achieved), while leaving flexibility on detailed design and phasing (how those outcomes are delivered). In practice this means clear “no infrastructure, no occupation” triggers, integrated land use and transport requirements, and binding standards on parking, overheating and flood risk, water and wastewater capacity, and nature recovery. Without those guardrails, a new town becomes path dependent on early compromises, and the costs and impacts are later socialised onto communities.

The masterplan, and updates, should be cocreated with communities – they should feel a sense of ownership over both its creation and delivery, including an agreed set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and commitment to a transparent reporting schedule.

¹⁴ <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/uowmiw52/rtpi-planning-is-global-4-england.pdf>

5. TRANSPORT (Q3)

Transport will determine whether Crews Hill and Chase Park can function as a genuinely sustainable new town, or whether it becomes car dependent from day one. This section sets out the non-negotiables for delivering a place where walking, cycling and public transport are the default choices.

5.1. A car-free/car-lite development is essential, but can it be delivered?

Distinctly different visions for the new town amongst key players highlights a major problem for placemaking and the coherent delivery of the new town.

The current reality.

Car ownership in the Crews Hill and Chase Park areas is currently very high. There are several reasons, for example the distance to amenities and to public transport. For Chase Park, the issue is not only distance to stations but also topography, which is likely to limit active travel (see figures below).

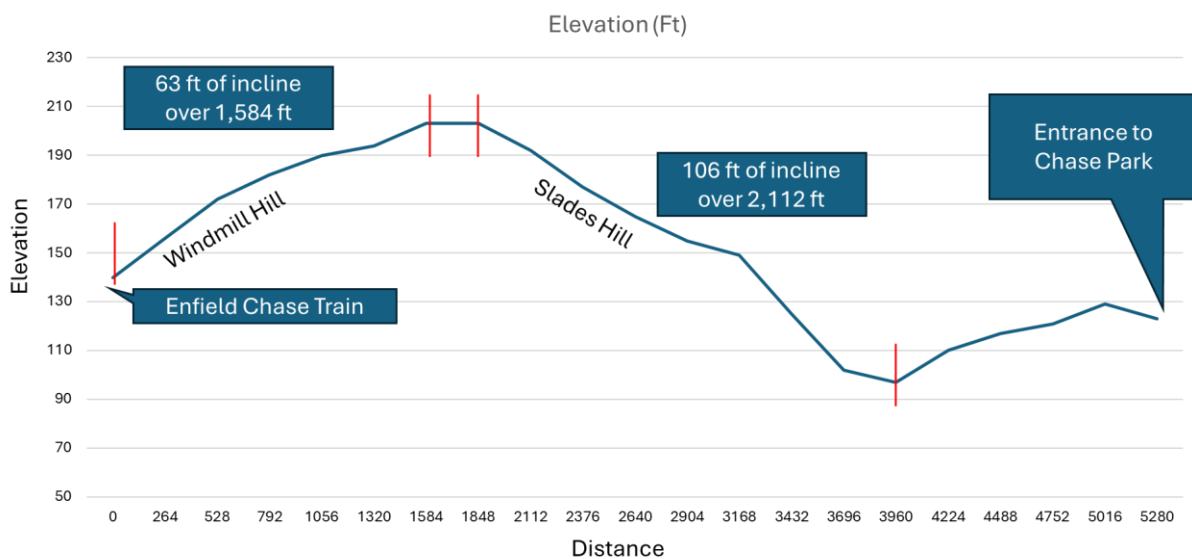


Figure 10 - Journey Enfield Chase Station to Chase Park (entrance)

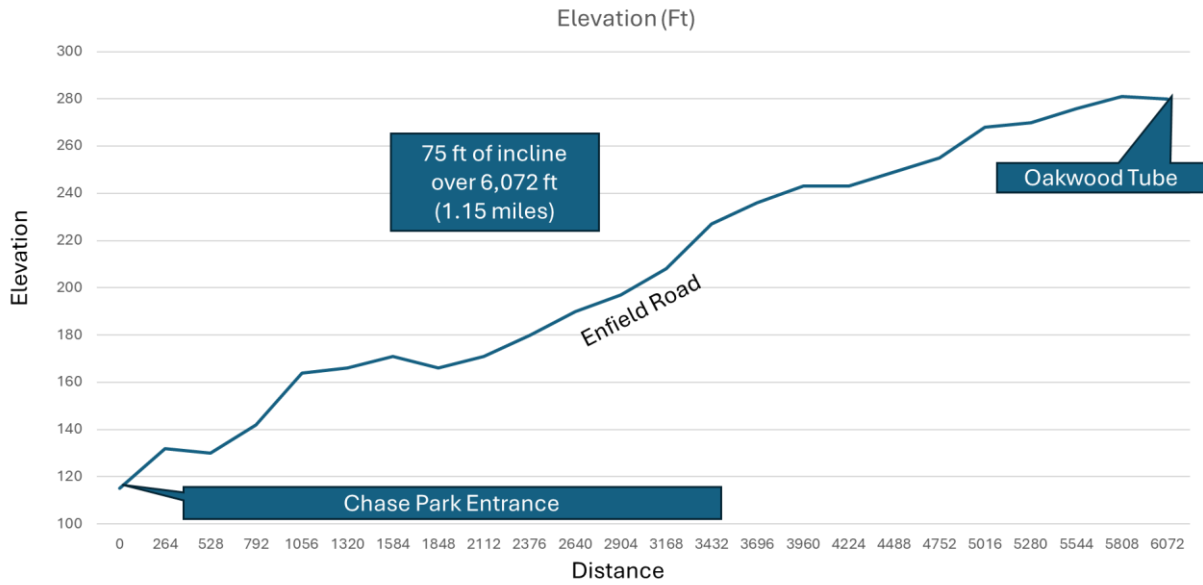


Figure 11 - Journey Chase Park (entrance) to Oakwood Tube

The undulating landscape topography will impact active travel (see figure below). This adds to our considerable concerns about car-dependent and car-led development.

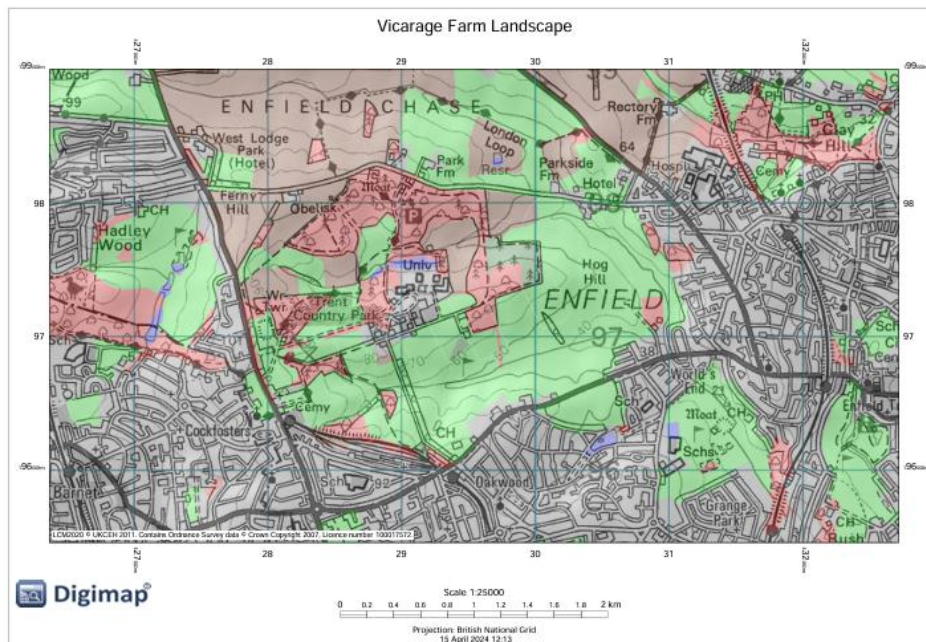


Figure 12 - Chase Park site landscape topography.

ONS 2021 Census data shows 69% of households in Enfield have at least one car (in line with the average for Outer London), and 25% have two or more. The data also shows rates of car ownership vary significantly across the Borough (Table 1).

Table 1: Car ownership in Enfield within Output Areas* (Census 2021)

		At least 1 car	2 cars	3+ cars
Enfield Average		69%	19%	6%
Urban centre locations	Area E00171481 (Southgate station)	41%	8%	0%
	Area E00171152 (Enfield Town)	51%	6%	1%
Recent suburban schemes	Area E00171167, including Trent Park scheme	81%	35%	23%
	Area E00007324, including Chase Farm scheme	88%	26%	8%
	Area E00007030 adjacent to Crews Hill station	93%	40%	22%
Areas proposed for new suburban schemes	Area E00007032 Crews Hill	84%	29%	19%
	Area E00007315 (close to Chase Park scheme)	93%	37%	13%
	Area E00007313 (close to Chase Park scheme)	91%	31%	15%

*Output areas are small analysis areas of between 40-200 households

Table 1 shows car ownership is lowest in urban centre locations, which have good access to public transport e.g. 41% of households living near to Southgate station own a car, far below the Borough average (69%), whilst areas that are less well connected, such as Crews Hill and Chase Park have far higher car ownership overall (91-93%) and high levels of multiple car/van ownership.

Table 1 also highlights car ownership statistics for areas that cover two recent suburban schemes at Trent Park and Chase Farm. The data suggests car ownership rates at these schemes is far higher than the Borough average, particularly multiple vehicle ownership. Both schemes are in similar areas to the proposed new town.

The car dependency of these neighbourhoods in the areas surrounding Crews Hill and Chase Park is obvious when you visit the area. It is also hardly surprising, given the emphasis of the marketing of these properties on car related 'benefits' e.g. drive times to the M25 or to locations in Enfield. This evidence shows the scale of the challenge facing the proposed new town should not be underestimated.

Context: TfL objections to around 9,000 homes at Crews Hill and Chase Park.

Crews Hill and Chase Park were identified as potential growth locations in 2021. Since then, TfL has repeatedly objected to Enfield Council's proposals for development at these sites, including proposals totalling around 9,000 homes.

References to proximity to Crews Hill railway station and Oakwood Underground station did not address TfL's concerns. Nor were those concerns fully resolved by the highway mitigation options being discussed, including major road widening and new junctions. TfL's core position was that development at Crews Hill and Chase Park as proposed by the Council would remain car-dependent, and that the scale of public funding required for public transport would compete with investment priorities elsewhere, including reducing funding for public transport in more urban parts of London.

TfL's latest position in the Local Plan examination ([January 2026](#)) shows that the transport case for development at Crews Hill and Chase Park remains contingent and unresolved.¹⁵

TfL also makes clear that delivery depends on enforceable requirements, including parking restraint, mode share targets, and density assumptions strong enough to support public transport viability, and that these need to be secured through binding policy rather than aspiration.

The long-running disagreement between TfL and Enfield Council regarding Crews Hill and Chase Park shows how hard it is to agree, let alone deliver, a workable transport strategy in these locations – there is far more to it than just the presence of a station.

The Local Plan transport modelling outputs also flag significant impacts on the highway network associated with 9,000 homes at Crews Hill and Chase Park.

- The [AM peak modelling](#) summary identifies increases in link delays, including at Hadley Road and Enfield Road and states that “*delays at access points to the network are high for Crews Hill and Chase Park*”.
- The same issue is repeated in the [PM peak modelling](#), with much larger delay increases on key links (e.g. Hadley Road +1173 seconds), and it again flags high delays at access points for Crews Hill and Chase Park.

¹⁵ https://www.enfield.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0022/122818/E9.7-TfL-position-statement-and-Appendix-A-Planning.pdf

Broxbourne Borough Council has also raised transport concerns about the scale of growth implied by a Crews Hill and Chase Park new town. In its November 2025 [letter](#) to the Planning Inspector, Broxbourne warned that the new town proposal would “exacerbate” its existing reservations about whether local road infrastructure can cope. It also flags that past ideas such as a new M25 junction in this locality could be “resurrected”, with direct cross-boundary impacts into Hertfordshire. ¹⁶

This is a fundamental issue at the heart of both the Local Plan approach and the New Towns Taskforce’s recommendation: **it is easy to describe a car-lite settlement in broad vision terms, but very challenging to deliver in practice across these locations.** The New Towns Taskforce’s proposal does not appear to properly appreciate the transport challenges or explain how they would be overcome, funded, and phased from the outset, or how car-lite outcomes would be enforced over time.

The “more homes solves transport” argument.

As Government housing expectations for London have increased, the tone of discussion has appeared to soften towards Green Belt development. The emerging argument for Crews Hill and Chase Park (from TfL and the GLA) is that higher housing numbers, combined with mid to high density development and very low parking, could support a walkable and more self-sufficient settlement and reduce car-dependence and impacts on the surrounding road network.

However, this is not demonstrated in the New Towns Taskforce’s recommendation. While the headline housing number increased to 21,000, the land take also increased proportionately, so the implied average density remains low. Without a clear distribution of density around stations, centres, and corridors, and without a funded and phased transport plan, higher numbers alone do not resolve the underlying transport constraints. Furthermore, whilst clustering around stations will be more sustainable, it will not deliver a coherent unified new town due to significant distances separating Oakwood and Crews Hill stations.

Implications for placemaking principles.

If 21,000 homes are pursued at Crews Hill and Chase Park, a genuinely car-lite approach is essential.

Car-lite is easy to promise and makes for compelling design images, but it will be hard to deliver, embed, and maintain in practice, particularly in rural parts of Enfield. It depends on very low parking-space provision, designs that prevent overspill and illegal parking, and ongoing management and enforcement.

¹⁶ https://www.enfield.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/108572/New-town-response-15-Your-council.pdf

It also requires mid to high density development, and major investment in public transport infrastructure and frequent services from the outset, so car-dependent behaviour does not become embedded.

In Enfield, there are already too many recent examples of schemes described as car-lite in planning then becoming car-dependent. Attempts to generate car-lite schemes by limiting parking spaces have failed due to a lack of ongoing enforcement and other design issues (e.g. low-profile pavements making it easy for cars to mount pavements to park).

A new town proposal must therefore demonstrate, in detail, how car-lite outcomes would be achieved and maintained over time, and whether sufficient demand exists for this type of development in this location.

Where does that leave us?

There is a clear and unresolved tension between key players on a central placemaking issue.

TfL has repeatedly challenged the Council's preferred approach on the grounds of car-dependence risk, network impacts and the viability and funding of public transport, and has called for binding requirements on density, parking restraint, and mode share to make a car-lite approach credible.

Yet **the Council's own recent public messaging about the new town points in completely the opposite direction**. The Leader of Enfield Council has recently used the Council's [social media](#) to describe the homes to be delivered at the new town as "low-rise" and "with a driveway" and "space to park your car".¹⁷

In parallel, London's Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service has argued that homes should be in mid-rise blocks (c.5-6 storeys) to make efficient use of land and avoid pressure for further Green Belt release.

The New Towns Taskforce report does not resolve this tension. On the one hand, it sets a clear national test: new towns should be built around "high quality public transport, walking and cycling networks", with a "bold transport vision" that "reduces car-dependency", delivered early so it can "shape long-term travel behaviours", and backed by a long-term strategy integrated into early masterplanning with "clear design standards for streets, parking", robust Travel Plans, monitoring, and "dedicated funding" to maintain the transport vision over time.

¹⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=923671180106548>

On the other hand, in its Enfield section it relies heavily on broad assertions that the site is “already well connected” and that development could “proceed quickly” with transport “improvements made in parallel.” It suggests that “many” of the improvements could be covered through S106, while also acknowledging that up-front government funding is likely to be needed and that Crews Hill rail frequency would have to increase beyond current service levels, with devolution options to be explored with TfL. **This does not reflect the years of disagreement during the development of Enfield’s Local Plan. The presence of a station is helpful but not in and of itself sufficient. It is more complicated than that.**

The positions held by the Council, TfL and the New Towns Taskforce, cannot all be true at the same time. If the Taskforce’s own “bold transport vision” test is taken seriously, Crews Hill and Chase Park needs a detailed, funded and enforceable transport and placemaking plan that sets binding mode share targets, meaningful parking restraint, street and neighbourhood design standards, and governance, and shows how car-lite outcomes will be achieved from the outset and maintained over time. Until that exists, transport remains a major obstacle to credible placemaking at Crews Hill and Chase Park.



Figure 13 - Transport is already an issue in this area of Enfield (car queuing to access the A10)

5.2. A potential solution - but can it be delivered?

Parking must be designed so that public transport, walking, and cycling are the default preferred choice, not the hard choice.

The most effective placemaking principle is to keep private cars away from front doors and out of the public realm, using genuinely car-free streets and courtyards near stations, and concentrating any necessary parking in edge or underground facilities such as district garages, and shared parking structures. This approach is used in leading international examples such as [Vauban in Freiburg](#), where neighbourhood streets are effectively parking-free and car owners use district garages rather than kerbside space outside homes.



Figure 14 - Vauban in Freiburg is a good example of a walkable area

It is hard to find comparable examples of genuinely car-free or very low-car, large-scale developments in suburban London. However, schemes such as Kidbrooke Village, which has far better public transport rating than Crews Hill, show that low parking ratios can be accepted through the planning process when a place is designed around rail, frequent buses, and high-quality walking and cycling connections. Crucially, parking is treated as a separate, managed layer (contained within dedicated facilities and governed by a parking management plan), rather than accommodated informally on streets and in residential courtyards. Even so, the parking ratios are still higher than would be needed at the scale being discussed for Crews Hill and Chase Park.

The reality is that Enfield, new developments on Enfield's urban edge – near Crews Hill - are car-centric.



Figure 15 - Chase Farm hospital development (Feb 2026)

For Crews Hill and Chase Park, parking for private vehicles will need to be kept to a minimum: car-free around stations, transport hubs and town centres, and very low ratios elsewhere (around 0.1 to 0.2 spaces per household on average). The limited parking provided should be in district garages away from homes to reinforce sustainable travel choices and prioritised for blue badge holders and people who need vehicles for work and mobility. Avoiding displacement into surrounding streets will require well-funded controlled parking and resident permit restrictions, alongside a clear servicing and delivery plan and car club provision.



Figure 16 - Vauban in Freiburg provides car free routes

5.3. Crews Hill station/rail service

Much emphasis is placed on the station at Crews Hill, so it is important to understand what it currently offers and what it would need to provide.

Current position (Crews Hill today).

The station is not step-free. Access to platforms relies on stairs, which excludes many disabled people, parents with buggies, and older residents. Off-peak service is limited (around 2 trains per hour). The station itself is “underused” in terms of passenger numbers, although crowding is experienced further south, where passenger numbers build up. The corridor terminates at Moorgate, a terminal rather than a through-running metro, which makes major frequency uplifts harder to deliver and more sensitive to reliability and turnround constraints.

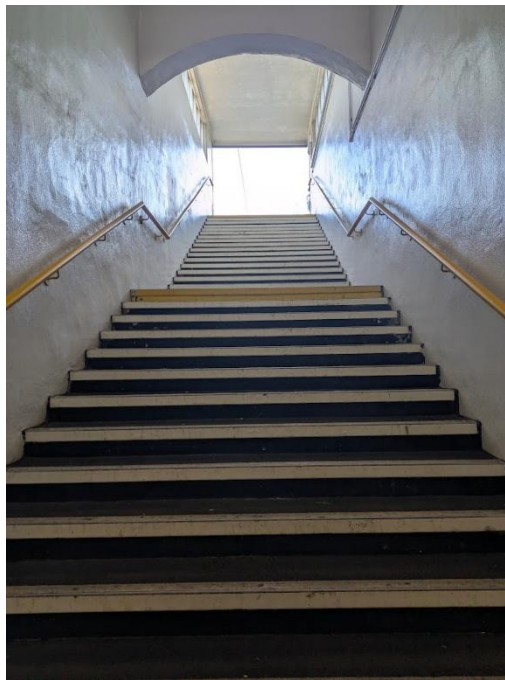


Figure 17 - Crews Hill station is currently inaccessible (not step-free)

What is needed (minimum for a credible low-car settlement).

1) Put the station where the town is

- If a new town centre is planned, the station may need to be re-sited so it sits within (or directly adjacent to) that centre, making walking the natural access mode and supporting a real high street.

2) Provide capacity that is protected for the new town

- If the scale of growth requires it, options should include turnback/originating capability so some trains can start at Crews Hill, protecting capacity and improving reliability (rather than simply displacing crowding further south).

3) Step-free by default

- A fully accessible station: street-to-platform step-free access in both directions, lifts sized for buggies/wheelchairs, and legible, safe routes to buses and cycling.
- If the settlement is promoted as inclusive and family-friendly, this cannot be left as “future enhancement.”

4) Turn-up-and-go service

- A low-car neighbourhood needs a rail offer that is frequent enough to feel like the default choice, not an occasional service.

5) Operational resilience, not just aspirations

- Any commitment to higher frequency must show how it works with Moorgate terminal constraints and the wider Great Northern operating pattern. Without this, frequency claims are not deliverable infrastructure, they are a hope.

Implications for placemaking and planning tests.

A low-car new town cannot be justified on today's station and service offer. If the proposal relies on low parking and high public transport mode share, then the rail package must be treated as enabling infrastructure. Without this, the risk is predictable: the scheme will either (a) demand more parking as delivery reality bites, or (b) create suppressed mobility and displaced crowding down the line, undermining both placemaking and the wider network.

5.4. Healthy environment: noise (aircraft and M25)

Noise levels from [aircraft](#) and motorway traffic adjacent to Crews Hill are reported to breach healthy levels for future residents.

Placemaking must start with a realistic understanding of aircraft and strategic road noise, including the M25. Noise mapping should be explicit at outline stage and used to shape land use, density, built form and phasing, not treated as a technical detail to mitigate later.

Noise recordings taken in the Crews Hill area using a smartphone app indicate average noise levels arising from the M25 are consistently around 70 decibels.¹⁸ These readings are indicative and not a substitute for a full baseline survey but they are consistent with a very noisy environment that would materially affect the liveability of homes and the usability of parks and play space.

By comparison, the WHO's [night noise guidance](#) recommends less than 40 decibels outside bedrooms to prevent adverse health effects. At around 70 dB, the issue is not minor nuisance.¹⁹

The Mayor's [London Environment Strategy](#) makes clear that this is not just about amenity: it links prolonged exposure to excessive noise to sleep disturbance and a range of health impacts including cardiovascular and physiological effects, mental health effects, and impacts on learning and communication, and it notes the World Health Organisation position that environmental noise is a major environmental health risk in Western Europe (second only to air quality).²⁰

This aligns with London Plan Policy D14 Noise, which frames noise management as a health and quality of life issue and puts the emphasis on avoiding significant adverse impacts, with noise considered early and designed into proposals rather than left to later-stage mitigation.



Figure 18 - High noise levels from traffic are recorded across Crews Hill farmland locations (Feb, 2026)

¹⁸ Indicative noise reading taken on a smartphone app (Sound Meter) at Crews Hill 24/02/26, held at approximately 1.5 m above ground. Smartphone readings vary by device and conditions and should be validated through an accredited baseline survey

¹⁹ <https://www.who.int/europe/news-room/fact-sheets/item/noise>

²⁰ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ambient_noise.pdf

6. DELIVERY (Q6)

A Development Corporation or Mayoral Development Corporation should lead the delivery of the new town at Crews Hill and Chase Park.

Locally-led delivery increases risk.

The risks set out in early sections of this report (i.e. section 2 'Brownfield-first' and 3 'Distraction') become more acute if Enfield Council is placed in the lead delivery role for a new town of this scale, for example acting as a local delivery corporation or equivalent. The risks also increase if homes delivered by the new town are counted within Enfield's housing targets and Housing Delivery Test results.

In these scenarios, there is a strong incentive for the Council to prioritise the new town, particularly given its landholdings, which it wishes to sell at a figure reported to be in the region of [£800 million](#) (it is not a neutral/objective party).²¹ It would therefore increase the risk of distraction from delivering brownfield regeneration, stalled sites, acquisitions, and other short-term measures needed to address Enfield's current housing pressures.

A further risk with a borough-led delivery model is political volatility. A new town is a 30-to-50-year programme, but a council administration can change overnight. This is a realistic scenario over a programme of this length: Enfield's political control has changed before and may change again, so governance should be designed for continuity across administrations. If an Enfield-led delivery corporation is closely tied to the borough's leadership, a change of control can drive masterplan resets, weaken transport and parking commitments, and create stop-start delivery that raises costs and undermines confidence. If a locally-led model is pursued at all, governance must be built to survive electoral cycles, with fixed term skills-based appointments, transparent delivery gateways, clear liability rules, and binding transport and parking standards that cannot be quietly diluted.

Recommended approach.

If the Crews Hill and Chase Park new town proceeds, we strongly recommend that:

- Delivery is led by a Development Corporation or Mayoral Development Corporation with clear accountability for land assembly at existing use value (not 'hope' value), infrastructure delivery, procurement, phasing, quality, and long-term stewardship, rather than led locally by the Borough.

²¹ <https://enfielddispatch.co.uk/enfield-council-eyes-800m-sale-of-green-belt-development-sites/>

- Delivery of homes should be recorded and monitored at a London-wide level, in a similar way to the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation model. Homes delivered through the new town should not be treated as part of Enfield's borough housing delivery performance/targets.

This would help maintain incentives and capacity for Enfield Council, as LPA and housing authority, to prioritise brownfield delivery and the immediate interventions needed to support households in acute housing need.

It is also appropriate as the new town would be a strategic intervention to address London's housing needs, not solely Enfield's.



Figure 19 - Enfield Council needs to remain focused on delivery of brownfield-sites

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS (Q7)

A new town at Crews Hill and Chase Park creates risks for nature conservation assets, public access to open countryside, food and water security, and London's climate resilience.

7.1: Nature conservation and recovery

Any genuine nature led approach must be explicit that Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) are constraints that shape what can go where, not an issue to be dealt with later through mitigation.

Nature recovery should be a primary organising principle for any new town at Crews Hill and Chase Park, with the mitigation hierarchy applied from the outset: avoid harm to designated sites and ecological networks first, then minimise and restore. SINCs, ancient and veteran trees and hedgerows, and priority habitats should be treated as non-negotiable constraints that shape the framework, with measurable biodiversity uplift secured and maintained for the long term.

Recent public comments by Cllr Erbil, the Leader of Enfield Council, have increased concern that the ecological baseline is being brushed aside, including the suggestion that housing could be built across land identified in the Local Plan evidence as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, assessed as having features that are "irreplaceable" and a site of metropolitan importance.

7.2: Public access to green space

We have flagged three routes where residents already benefit from access to open countryside. Two are under direct threat, and the third may be fundamentally altered.

The boundaries of the proposed new town at Crews Hill and Chase Park have not been published, making it difficult to assess its potential environmental impacts. However, the area broadly identified in the New Towns Taskforce report and discussed in subsequent meetings, appears to include parts of Crews Hill and Chase Park that contain well-used public rights of way.

These routes provide valued access to nature, open countryside and to Enfield's historic landscape (Enfield Chase). They are routinely used for exercise, dog-walking, cycling and to help with mental health and wellbeing.

They are also popular destinations for people from across London. The full extent and benefit of these routes appears to have been overlooked in the Taskforce's description of the area.

Merryhills Way (direct threat).

Merryhills Way provides direct access to open space, nature, and the historic landscape of Enfield Chase in a suburban part of Enfield that is already shown to have a deficit of accessible green open space.²²

The route lies within the Chase Park (Vicarage Farm) area of the likely new town designation. If this route is severed, constrained, or re-routed, residents lose a direct, walkable link to open countryside.

[A 2021 Enfield Society survey](#) of users of Merryhills Way found it is used regularly and highly valued. A small selection of comments helps illustrate the feedback received:²³

- *“The Merryhills Path is an integral part of community life. I have seen Red Kites, sparrow hawks, kestrels, wagtails, badgers and more. Losing access to it would be devastating.”*
- *“I live in a built-up area and visiting the Merry Hills Way and surrounds helps me to relax and improves my mental health an enormous amount. I rarely drive (always avoid it if possible) so having open space within jogging distance of home is very important to me”*
- *“I hope that access to Merryhills Way will be kept. We use it often not only for exercise but also to walk with our children to and from school. Access to natural green walking spaces support mental health and teach children about nature.”*
- *“It is a lovely walk where you feel like you really are in the countryside.”*
- *“The main reason we came to live in Enfield was to enjoy and benefit from the green spaces and parks that we could access by foot. As we get older this is even more important for our general health and sense of wellbeing. We would not wish to live here if these valuable and irreplaceable green spaces were not protected. They are an essential part of the local history and character of this area and once lost would alter its unique identity forever.”*

These benefits are materially different from internal urban green space. They depend on continuity, openness, and the route's countryside character.

²² https://www.enfield.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/11910/Enfield-Blue-and-Green-Infrastructure-Audit-2020-Planning.pdf

²³ <https://www.enfield.gov.uk/file/PDFs/email/01794-4-1.pdf>



Figure 20 - Merryhills Way (access to open historic countryside under threat). Source: The Enfield Society

Hertfordshire Chain Walk (direct threat).

The Hertfordshire Chain Walk is a series of linked walks running from the northern edges of Enfield (Crews Hill) into wider countryside, traversing woodlands, pasture, and farmland. Together, the linked walks form a continuous route from Crews Hill to Ashwell and Morden (Cambridgeshire).

This route also appears to have been ignored and is under threat. Even where fragments of the route are “retained,” within the new town, new roads, development edges or altered management can break continuity and change the experience and function of the walk.



Figure 21 - Part of Crews Hill Hertfordshire Chain (under threat and overlooked)

The London Loop (risk of being subsumed and changed).

The London Loop (established in the early 1990s in Enfield) traverses this area, including sections linked to the Enfield Chase restoration project (tree planting and footpath improvements since 2020).

The key risk is not only whether the route remains open but whether it becomes absorbed into the new town as managed parkland, changing its character from open countryside access for London, to an internal leisure route for the new development, with different constraints and experiences.

User reviews of this section consistently describe a mixed woodland and open field landscape and a sense of openness and distance, for example: *“Pretty nature walk with woodlands but also open fields...”*

There is also a value-for-money concern here. Major public funding has already supported the restoration of this section of the London Loop to reduce flood risk in the Greater London, Thames Flood Risk Area, and to make some access improvements (e.g. redirected and improved paths).²⁴ Public investment and volunteer effort should not become an uncoded subsidy to land value uplift. If publicly funded restoration and access improvements are relied on to justify development, the proposal should show how uplift will be captured for the public through binding commitments and funding for local infrastructure and stewardship, as well as how its character will be retained.



Figure 22 - The London Loop in Enfield - showing new paths and tree planting

²⁴ <https://environment.data.gov.uk/flood-planning/explorer/cycle-2/measure?uri=http%3A%2F%2Fenvironment.data.gov.uk%2Fflood-risk-planning%2Fdata%2Fmeasure%2F0208706004>

What is needed.

The existing access to green open space needs to be properly mapped, with a clear baseline set, before decisions are taken.

Any proposal should commit to no net loss of meaningful countryside access for Londoners. Routes must remain continuous, legible, and safe, and must retain their countryside character where that is the existing experience. Any diversions must be exceptional, evidence-based, and deliver a demonstrably equivalent or better experience (width, openness, views, crossings, surfacing, year-round usability).

7.3: Food and Water Security

Large areas of farmland and horticultural land support local production, supply chains, and skilled jobs. The loss of productive land, and land that could easily become productive, should be treated as a material impact, not a footnote, and alternatives should be evaluated first.

Food Security.

A new town at Crews Hill and Chase Park would take a large area of land out of existing and potential agricultural and horticultural use. Enfield's own planning evidence describes Crews Hill as a centre of food growing and horticulture, and the area's identity and local economy are strongly linked to plant nurseries, market gardening, and related businesses. The Borough has also presented the new town concept in terms of transforming a "horticultural cluster" into a new settlement, which underlines that the baseline land use is not marginal, it is an established productive landscape.

There is also clear documentary evidence that the Council has been ending or not renewing farm tenancies to change land use. A July 2020 [report](#) sought approval to remove land from existing farm tenancies so woodland creation and associated works could proceed, including serving part notices to quit across two tenancies.²⁵ A later [report](#) states that two farms were under Farm Business Tenancies renewed annually, but that the Council would not be renewing the leases, in the context of converting Council owned farmland to woodland.²⁶ Taken together, these reports support a careful conclusion: the Council has actively brought farmland back under direct control and reduced farm tenancy security to

²⁵ <https://governance.enfield.gov.uk/documents/s82642/PL%2020.034%20P%20-%2014%20JULY%2020.pdf>

²⁶ <https://enfield.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s107346/Enfield%20Chase%20Woodland%20-%20N%20Gateway%20Report.pdf>

enable large scale land use change. They do not, on their own, prove the specific motive of preparing for housing and land value uplift, but they do demonstrate a shift away from long-term farming use.

From a food security perspective, the key issue is permanence and lost options. Landscape restoration and rewilding keep open the possibility that land could return to farming in the future if policy or supply conditions change. Large scale housing development does not. Once productive soils, farm infrastructure, and an agricultural business ecosystem are displaced, the loss is effectively irreversible. This is why the farmland and horticultural function of Crews Hill, and the wider Chase Park area should be treated as an environmental impact, not simply as “low value greenfield.”



Figure 23 - Holly Hill Farm Enfield (2010), Source: Christine Matthews

Water Security.

A settlement of this scale will place major additional pressure on water supply, wastewater treatment, and drainage. The strategy needs to be credible at outline stage, including phasing, funding, and clear triggers if capacity is not available.

A new town at Crews Hill and Chase Park of the scale envisaged would materially increase water demand in a city already classified as water-stressed.²⁷ In that context, it is not enough to assume that the water industry will simply expand supply. The approach must be demand-led and enforceable. London Plan policy already expects new homes to achieve mains water consumption of 105 litres or less per person

²⁷ <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/help/home-improvements/how-to-install-a-new-water-connection/help-with-water-connection>

per day, but a new town should go further by treating water reuse and rain capture as core infrastructure, not an optional extra.

There are London precedents for this type of approach. [The Old Ford Water Recycling Plant](#) and its non-potable distribution network were created for the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, supplying recycled water for uses including toilet flushing and irrigation.²⁸ This demonstrates that district-scale recycled water systems are deliverable in London when they are planned early and built into the infrastructure model. A second London example is BedZED in Sutton, where monitoring reported very low mains water use supported by rainwater and recycled water for non-drinking purposes. It is not a new town, but it shows that ultra-low mains demand and reuse can work in practice in a London residential setting when it is designed in from the start and then measured in use.



Figure 24 - Old Ford Water Recycling Plant - Source: Architects' Journal (2012)

Water infrastructure can also support placemaking if it is designed properly. A network of ponds, wetlands and a small managed lake can provide visible storage for captured rainwater, support sustainable drainage, and reduce pressure on sewers while also creating a valued public space. If included, it should be engineered as a functional asset with defined storage volumes, water quality management, safe access, and long-term maintenance funding, not treated as a decorative feature. The same system can then supply non-potable uses such as landscape irrigation and support biodiversity, while giving the new town a strong civic focal point and character.

²⁸ <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20130403014430/https://learninglegacy.independent.gov.uk/publications/the-old-ford-water-recycling-plant-and-non-potable-water.php#skip-navigation>

A new town should not be allowed to simply add demand to a water-stressed city. It should be required to operate with ultra-low mains demand, and to supply toilets, irrigation and public realm uses from captured rainwater and recycled water wherever viable. This should be secured through binding conditions and obligations, including a water budget per phase, metering, post-occupancy monitoring with published results, and clear consequences if performance targets are not met.

The proposal should only proceed if there is a credible, independently tested strategy showing how water demand will be minimised and how resilience will be secured under drought conditions, with enforceable efficiency standards, monitoring over the long-term, and delivery triggers that prevent later phases progressing if water and wastewater capacity is not available.

7.4: Climate Resilience

A new town on greenfield land risks weakening London's climate resilience if it removes landscapes that help regulate temperature and manage water and creates car-dependent neighbourhoods.

The [London Plan](#) is clear that London's Green Belt performs multiple beneficial functions, including combating the urban heat island effect and contributing to flood prevention and climate resilience.²⁹

Development proposals are expected to minimise adverse impacts on the urban heat island through design and incorporation of green infrastructure, and the London Plan recognises that green infrastructure can help reduce heat through shading and evapotranspiration. The climate case for a new town therefore depends on whether it can deliver a genuinely infrastructure-led approach, with high tree canopy, connected green and blue corridors, and sustainable drainage that achieves greenfield runoff performance with long-term maintenance secured.³⁰

Transport outcomes are also decisive. If the settlement locks in car-dependency, it will undermine resilience and emissions objectives.³¹

If done properly, with enforceable delivery triggers and monitoring, a new town could create a net gain in climate adaptive green infrastructure, but this should not be assumed; it must be proven at outline stage and then secured through binding obligations over the full build-out period.

This should be demonstrated through an outline-stage overheating and canopy strategy, and a flood and drainage strategy that commits to greenfield runoff rates by phase with long-term maintenance secured. These should be monitored and reported over time, with delivery triggers that prevent later phases proceeding if outcomes are not being met.

Carbon counting, greenfield vs brownfield).

Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Assessments submitted under the London Plan focus mainly on the carbon associated with the buildings themselves, including materials, construction, maintenance and end of life. They are useful, but they do not usually capture the full carbon consequences of building a new settlement on greenfield land. In particular, they rarely quantify the one-off loss of soil carbon and biomass carbon from land take, or the ongoing loss of carbon sequestration when farmland, grassland or woodland is replaced by sealed surfaces and managed landscaping. For a proposal on the scale of

²⁹ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/the_london_plan_2021.pdf (Policies G2, SI4, G5, SI13, SI12)

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Ibid (Policies T1, T2, T4, T6, SI1, SI2)

Crews Hill and Chase Park, that omission matters. A scheme can appear compliant on building carbon while still embedding a major additional carbon impact through land use change that is not transparently assessed and which is ongoing.

To ensure the carbon case is credible, the assessment needs two parts. First, a standard WLCA for the buildings and infrastructure. Second, a separate land use carbon account that sets out the baseline carbon stocks and sequestration of the existing land and the net change under the proposed masterplan. Without this, claims about net zero, climate alignment or sustainability are incomplete and risk masking a significant, avoidable emissions burden compared with a brownfield first alternative.



Figure 25 - A new park in southeast Enfield at Meridian Water has been routinely flooded (it is the new settlements main park but its utility as a function public park will be limited during wet weather months)

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

We ask that the Committee considers the following recommendations, set out in the same order as Sections 1 to 7 of this response.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT (Q1)

- Set London-wide engagement plan for each new town, agreed at the outset, with targeted outreach to groups most affected by London's housing crisis, including people in temporary accommodation, younger Londoners priced out, disabled Londoners, key workers and private renters.
- Establish a Residents' Delivery Panel for the life of the programme, independently chaired, properly resourced, and able to scrutinise masterplanning options, phasing, design codes, infrastructure plans, travel plans, and stewardship proposals, with published "you said, we did" outputs.
- Make early publication of baseline evidence a condition of progression, so engagement happens when options are still genuinely open, not after key decisions are fixed.

BROWNFIELD-FIRST (Q3)

- Publish a brownfield-first impact assessment before endorsing any greenfield new town, testing whether it would displace investment, grant, skills, and delivery capacity from brownfield regeneration, including within the host borough and London-wide.
- Establish a London brownfield-first delivery gateway. Before supporting greenfield development, demonstrate progress on London's brownfield pipeline, including stalled sites, estate regeneration, and underused industrial land, alongside a published plan to remove barriers to delivery.
- Clarify land classification and existing uses. Previously developed land should not be presented as readily available if it is in active employment use, and the implications for jobs and supply chains must be assessed and addressed.

DISTRACTION

- Publish a London-facing delivery pathway for genuinely affordable housing that is specific and time bound, with assumptions on build-out rates, tenure mix, and delivery in years 5, 10 and 15.
- Put in place a parallel “now plan” alongside any new town programme, covering actions that can help households today, including tackling empty homes, acquisitions where appropriate, addressing stalled sites, and improving conditions and security in temporary accommodation and the private rented sector.
- Keep public reporting clear on timing and risk. Communications should distinguish between long-term supply from a new town and near-term actions needed to address the current emergency.

DESIGN AND PLACEMAKING PRINCIPLES (Q3)

- Apply a coherence test at outline stage. If the proposal is described as one new town, it should demonstrate the single organising structure that makes it function as one, including a clear civic heart, a legible movement spine, and an agreed hierarchy of centres.
- Make public land value capture translate into permanent affordability. Where publicly owned land is involved, the default expectation should be 100% affordable housing on public land, with at least 50% Social Rent, unless an evidence-based case is published to justify an alternative.
- Publish baseline mapping of existing assets and constraints and how they shape the plan, including publicly accessible countryside, rights of way, bridleways, heritage, employment clusters, SINC's and ecological networks, and how these will be protected and improved.
- Embed a stewardship model from the start. Public realm, parks, green and blue infrastructure, and community assets should have a long-term management plan and funding model agreed early, with democratic accountability.
- Avoid locking residents into estate management charges for basic public realm and green space. The default should be adoptable public realm, funded transparently through proper standards and commuted sums or endowments, with resident stewardship arrangements.

TRANSPORT (Q3)

- Agree a TfL-backed, costed, phased transport strategy before progression, covering rail and bus service levels, active travel networks, funding sources, delivery responsibilities, and commitments on density, parking maxima, and mode share.
- Use “no infrastructure, no occupation” triggers. If the strategy relies on low parking and high public transport mode share, enabling transport infrastructure and service uplifts should be secured early, not deferred to later phases.
- Secure binding parking restraint and enforcement, including measures to prevent overspill into surrounding streets, and a credible plan for ongoing management so car-lite outcomes are maintained over time.
- Make step-free access and inclusive design non-negotiable enabling infrastructure, including step-free station access where rail is a core assumption of the transport case.

DELIVERY (Q6)

- Adopt a Development Corporation or Mayoral Development Corporation model for any new town of this scale, with London-level accountability for land assembly, infrastructure delivery and sequencing, procurement, design quality, build-out rates, and long-term stewardship.
- Ensure clear separation of roles where there is a conflict of interest. Where a borough owns land and expects significant receipts, governance should prevent the borough acting as both landowner and lead delivery body in a way that undermines objectivity and public trust.
- Put in place London-wide monitoring and reporting for new town delivery. New town homes should be recorded and scrutinised as part of London-wide delivery reporting, rather than used to support borough Housing Delivery Test performance.
- Design governance to survive electoral cycles, with transparent gateways, independent skills-based appointments, and delivery standards that cannot be quietly diluted.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS (Q7)

- Publish mapped boundaries, a clear baseline, and early option testing before decisions are locked in, covering countryside access and rights of way, food and productive land, water and wastewater capacity, flood risk and drainage, biodiversity including SINC's, and climate resilience.
- Adopt a no net loss commitment for meaningful countryside access, with routes remaining continuous, legible, safe, and retaining their countryside character where that is the existing experience, with diversions only where equivalent or better outcomes are demonstrated.
- Secure an enforceable water strategy that is demand-led and designed in from the start, committing to ultra-low mains water demand, reuse and rain capture where viable, metering, post-occupancy monitoring and published performance, with clear consequences if targets are not met.
- Make green and blue infrastructure structural and early, with binding standards for canopy, overheating risk reduction, and SuDS that achieve greenfield runoff performance by phase, with long-term maintenance secured.
- Publish a full carbon account that separates building whole life carbon from land use change, including soil carbon loss and the loss of sequestration from greenfield land take, and compares this transparently against a brownfield-first scenario.

CROSS-CUTTING

- Publish regular London-level transparency reporting on land value assumptions, costs, delivery risks, environmental outcomes, and community benefits, so performance can be scrutinised and interventions made early if delivery diverges from plan.

Ends

LONDON ASSEMBLY

March 2026

Anne Ogundiya Ref No. NT002

This submission is provided in my capacity as Director of Development and Masterplanning at Beyond the Red Line, drawing on over two decades of experience working with Mayoral Development Corporations (including LLDC and OPDC), national infrastructure bodies (ODA), and local authorities on large-scale regeneration, strategic masterplanning, and inclusive place-making. I hope that you find it helpful.

1. New Town Development Corporations should be subject to embedded KPIs covering social infrastructure (schools, health, culture, green and civic space), sustainability and climate resilience, Inclusive design and long-term community engagement. This provides accountability beyond the build phase and ensures delivery partners are aligned with public objectives.
2. The composition of New Town Planning Committees really matters, combining elected members with independent professionals. This worked extremely well at LLDC, decision making was expedited, transparent, fair, and confident and reduced political deadlock. This balanced model should be replicated.
3. Importance of Planning powers including Local Plan making powers are critical and essential to the success of new towns. They allow a bespoke, place-specific spatial strategy that aligns land use, infrastructure, sustainability, and environmental priorities. Without them, development risks being fragmented, poorly coordinated, and disconnected from long-term public benefits. As I am sure LLDC will testify the LLDC Local Plan-making powers provided a degree of certainty for delivery partners and indeed communities. Experience from my 12 years at LLDC and currently as an Independent Member at OPDC shows that when plan-making powers sit alongside land control and delivery oversight, new places are more likely to succeed not just as housing schemes, but as lasting communities.
4. The role of a Chief Design Officer within each New Town Development Corporation cannot be overstated, they can help maintain quality and vision continuity across long timelines and delivery phases. Including design-qualified Board members ensures place-quality is embedded at the highest level.
5. While some elements of a masterplan must be fixed, others should allow for change. Granting multiple delivery options at outline stage though more demanding in terms of environmental testing could provide the flexibility developers seek, while still maintaining overall integrity and control.
6. Embedded design quality and inclusive design from the outset, including panels like LLDC BEAP (Built Environment Access Panel), an independent panel made up of people with lived experience of disability who provide expert advice on inclusive design from the earliest stages of planning and design.

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7. LLDC Community Review Panels made up of local residents ensured neighbourhoods were designed with lived experience in mind. Meanwhile uses, early delivery of social infrastructure and open engagement helped establish trust and continuity.

8. Similarly, LLDC Quality Review Panel (Design Review Panel) made up of professionals (architects, urban designers, planners, sustainability, transport and experts) helped to embed design quality.

As my colleague Anthony Hollingsworth former Director of Planning at LLDC rightly noted at the 2024 Planning Law Conference:

“The most successful development corporations are those that combine planning powers, land ownership, infrastructure coordination and long-term stewardship — supported by expert leadership and robust delivery governance.”

I am also including an attachment / links to documents that I think the Committee may find helpful.

LLDC Quality Review Panel - published 2025: <https://tinyurl.com/LLDC-QRP-Appraisal>

LLDC Publication - Creating Places that Work for Women and Girls:

https://live-geop.pantheonsite.io/sites/default/files/attachments/Creating%20places%20that%20work%20for%20Women%20and%20Girls%20Handbook%20FINAL_1.pdf

A Town Planning Legacy: Outcomes from the 2012 Games - LLDC publication 20124:

https://live-geop.pantheonsite.io/sites/default/files/attachments/QEOP_LAMR%20full%20report.pdf

Subject Planning and Regeneration Committee – New Towns Call for Evidence
- Arup submission

Job No/Ref

Date 27 February 2026

Executive summary

London has a strong policy basis for early and inclusive engagement through the Good Growth agenda. However, the scale, pace and multi-decade nature of New Town delivery requires that best-practice engagement is made mandatory, resourced and continuous from early stages and visioning to long-term stewardship. Participation should be treated as a core delivery mechanism that reduces legal and programme risk, strengthens democratic legitimacy, improves design quality, and underpins community building.

A New Town designation provides London with a unique opportunity to formalise a London New Town Participation Standard: a mandatory minimum requirement that establishes early participatory visioning, representative co-design and a clear iterative decision-making process, with feedback loops that show how input changes decisions, enabling a structured transition into long-term community governance.

At Arup, we believe that achieving this requires a dynamic, considered and effective approach to public engagement, what we call ‘purposeful participation’. This submission draws from our research and extensive experience supporting community change and development in other New Town locations, including South Bank Leeds and Tempsford.

We recommend that the Assembly advocate for:

1. Early participatory visioning before strategic parameters are fixed
2. Independent Community Review Panels embedded from early stages and given agency in decision-making
3. A governance transition from “proxy” representation to resident-led stewardship
4. Resources provided via developer-funded planning mechanisms and required governance contributions

Q1. Conditions required for successful New Towns in London

New Towns are not housing projects; they are long-term civic systems. Their success relies on coordinating housing with early-stage and carefully planned social and community infrastructure, fostering a sense of place and social unity, and ensuring strong governance that lasts well after construction ends. New Towns must be planned considering a substantial increase in future residents, likely to outnumber existing communities over time, requiring governance and engagement models that are flexible and evolve as the population changes.

New Towns are meant to become vibrant communities with strong economies, and lack of public support is a great risk to achieving this ambition. This is acknowledged in the September 2025 New Towns Taskforce report, which highlights the importance of effective public engagement to empower residents, foster social capital, and shape the cultural identity of each new town.

Another primary risk is moving residents into places before social and community infrastructure is in place, and without trusted civic mechanisms to manage shared assets. New Towns should therefore establish infrastructure and governance commitments as early, interconnected delivery

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requirements, instead of leaving the thinking of responsibilities for late design and delivery phases. Stewardship responsibilities should be thought and co-created with communities from the start, explicitly covering the transition from place vision to long-term performance and ownership.

Q1.1 Citizen engagement, consultation and co-production

New towns should be guided by a clear vision and purpose. The New Towns Taskforce explicitly recommends that new towns must have a strong identity formed with the existing community. Participation processes should be used to enable this collective vision, going beyond conventional methods by having purpose, ensuring continuity, inclusivity and transparency.

Different parties will all have individual purposes. Public Engagement must be carefully designed to account for all types of users and consider two distinct groups and their specific issues: existing communities experiencing change, and future communities that do not yet exist. For future residents, New Towns should establish ‘proxy’ Communities Panels (pre-occupancy / interim representation), drawing on local neighbours and housing applicants, with a clearly directed phased handover so governance seats transfer to incoming residents as occupancy increases. This ensures stewardship, a sense of ownership, and place pride evolve alongside the town itself.

Public participation must begin before key strategic parameters are fixed to create a deeper sense of localism and partnership, where people actively help shape New Towns. Independent Communities Review Panels (CRPs) should be embedded from early stages at pre-application stage, ensuring community input can influence proposals before decisions are taken. CRP advice should be formally considered alongside professional planning advice by decision-makers. They must prioritise lived experience and reflect local diversity (including age, ethnicity, and tenure), with councillors and council employees excluded to protect political independence.

Building on the successful approach of existing London Community Review Panels, this proposal extends their role by embedding them earlier and strengthening their influence within decision-making.

Q2. What New Town designation can unlock

A New Town designation should be used to standardise governance mechanisms that are not reliably achieved through business-as-usual development, for example: mandated community review and stewardship panels, a devolved Neighbourhood Fund with commissioning power, youth voice embedded in governance, an accelerated delivery partnership board including public, private and third sector, and funded capacity-building so participation is not restricted to already-organised groups.

A practical mechanism is stipulating a portion of CIL neighbourhood funding for community-panel-managed priorities, creating direct democratic power over local improvements.

The Assembly could also pilot a “Participation as Infrastructure” approach by requiring a funded participation strategy and a ring-fenced neighbourhood commissioning pot to be established at masterplanning stage, alongside a formal handover mechanism that transfers power from proxy

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representatives to incoming residents as occupancy grows. This would turn engagement from a consult-and-exit process into a permanent stewardship function, aligned with long-term social value and accountability.

Q6a. Governance structures for long-term success

Participation must continue beyond design and into the governance of New Towns. Whether governance is led by a mayoral development corporation, local authority vehicle, joint venture or other arrangement, New Towns should include a formally constituted community governance body with defined powers, resourcing and a transition plan from early proxy representation to resident-led stewardship.

A *Lifelong Community Panel* model should be embedded through planning obligations, with phased evolution: shadow governance in early stages, co-management during build-out, and long-term resident stewardship with post-occupancy evaluation of whether promised community benefits work in practice.

Developer-funded planning should guarantee resources through dedicated governance, treating participation as essential infrastructure rather than optional spending.

Conclusion

New Towns offer London a rare opportunity to set a new benchmark for inclusive, long-term place-making. To succeed, participation must be treated not as consultation, but as core civic infrastructure that is embedded early, resourced throughout delivery, and sustained into long-term stewardship. A clear London New Town Participation Standard, including mechanisms such as early participatory visioning, independent community influence and a Lifelong Community Panel, would reduce risk, strengthen democratic legitimacy and improve outcomes over time. By formalising participation as a core delivery mechanism, London can ensure new towns are resilient, trusted and genuinely shaped by the communities that will call them home.

London Assembly: Planning and Regeneration Committee

- **Call for Evidence:** New Towns for London
- **Submission:** [Better Homes Enfield](#)
- **Date:** 1st March 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a response to this Call for Evidence.

In this document we have answered three questions namely, Q1a, Q3 and Q6.

Q1a. How should citizen engagement, consultation and coproduction inform the development of new towns?

INTRODUCTION (Q1A)

We believe genuine engagement must underpin how the new town is planned, governed and built from the outset. Done well, engagement can reduce risk and delay and help to deliver a place people enjoy living in. Done badly, it can undermine delivery and generate mistrust in local and national democratic structures.

Citizen engagement, consultation and coproduction should:

- ✓ Be delivery focussed
- ✓ Embed co-production from the outset
- ✓ Use charrettes to resolve trade-offs
- ✓ Be transparent and realistic
- ✓ Involve “planning advocates”
- ✓ Be independently conducted and audited

Delivery focussed

Setting expectations is key. Consultees need to be informed about the purpose of the consultation or engagement activity, which means they need to be provided with a clear understanding of what decisions they can influence and which they cannot. Failure to do this properly risks generating frustration, distrust and disengagement.

Engagement activities should clearly state that they are about how the new town could successfully be delivered, not whether it is delivered.

Co-production from the outset

Academic literature argues that many of the current approaches to planning consultations fuel distrust in democratic decision making, fail to adequately challenge inequality or address environmental issues, and serve to support neo-liberal agendas.

For example, Allmendinger (2017) suggests that whilst public engagement practices may appear ‘inclusive and open’ they are in fact ‘managed and limited’, are undemocratic strategies for managing dissent, and that ‘... significant decisions and choices are made away from public arenas.’

In our experience, far too much public “engagement” sits on the lower rungs of Arnstein’s ladder (see below), whereby people can comment but do not meaningfully shape outcomes.

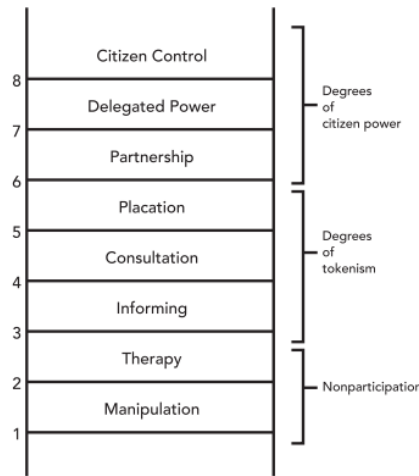


Figure 1. Arnstein identified eight types of participation, arranged on a ladder to illustrate the ‘extent of citizens’ power in determining the end product. Source Arnstein (1965, p.26)

For new towns, the risks of poor and tokenistic engagement are particularly serious due to the national profile of new town developments. Therefore, the ambition should be for engagement to be “partnership and delegated power” focussed, particularly for the decisions that matter most to communities, such as housing design, density and affordability; place making; green space and the natural environment; social infrastructure; and transport.

In practice this requires (a) early involvement before options are narrowed; (b) clarity on what is genuinely open for influence, who decides, and on what evidence and (c) shared decision points with published “what we heard / what we changed” reporting.

Crews Hill / Chase Park example: So far, public messaging and “big announcement” framing have not matched what local people experience on the ground. Impacts on existing businesses have been marginalised, and publicly accessible and highly valued green space has been treated as if it does not exist. Land identified in council commissioned expert assessments as being of irreplaceable value to nature, and of London-wide importance - is written off as nature depleted and targeted for development. That is what happens when engagement follows an announcement, rather than shaping the options and opportunities from the start.

Charrettes to resolve trade-offs

There are practical techniques that can help foster genuine engagement and useful feedback.

Delivery of a new towns will inevitably require resolving real trade-offs (homes/jobs, density, traffic, open space, infrastructure sequencing). Properly run “charrettes” can bring residents, businesses, designers and decision-makers together to co-create workable solutions, iterate quickly, and make constraints and compromises explicit and understood. ¹

"At their best, charrettes bring together everyone who cares about a complex design problem - residents, business owners, city planners, engineers, decision makers - to collaborate and compromise, ending with a solution everyone values" ([Next City, 2017](#)).



Figure 2 - Charrettes in practice (Source: [Design Charrettes | Involve](#))

Crews Hill / Chase Park example: A charrette process would force early clarity on which businesses and jobs are affected and how; what transition/mitigation support looks like; which green spaces and routes must be protected or enhanced; and what must be delivered early, so benefits are tangible rather than promised “later”. (Note - it’s best to avoid using architect/planning-speak terms like charrettes).

Transparent and realistic

Genuine engagement requires trust, and trust depends on honest, accessible evidence.

A practical barrier to genuine engagement is information overload, unrealistic timescales, and a pattern of commitments being made and then not honoured.

¹ See <https://nextcity.org/urbanist-news/how-to-hold-charrettes-successful-planning> for more information

When communities conclude that evidence is being presented in an inaccessible way, or that key promises on transparency and consultation are routinely missed, engagement becomes polarised. Instead of constructive problem-solving, the process can turn into an all-or-nothing conflict, increasing delay and undermining outcomes.

Minimum standards for London new towns should therefore include:

- Clear governance and timetables for consultation exercises and “reset” moments (e.g., masterplan refresh), including accountability if milestones slip.
- No “single dump” publication of evidence: staged early releases (including of draft documents), clear summaries and indexes
- Plain-English (and translated) accessible explainers for key information
- Consultation windows proportionate to the scale and complexity of material
- A published “what we heard / what we changed” log after each stage

Enfield example 1: Document dumping: Communities have experienced very large-scale releases of material (e.g., thousands of pages published in one go) with limited time to digest and respond, despite assurances (including via public petition) that this approach would not be repeated. This hinders genuine participation and favours the best-resourced whilst leaving communities feeling overwhelmed and unheard.

Enfield example 2: Meridian Water and repeated broken promises: At Meridian Water there have been repeated commitments to publish and consult on an updated masterplan, yet over 5+ years this has not been delivered. The predictable consequence is erosion of public and investor confidence and a more adversarial environment, which makes delivery harder.

Planning advocates to support businesses and residents

New towns involve complex viability arguments and technical assessments, which can be difficult to engage with and respond to.

To address this, we believe the delivery of new towns would be improved by including a funded “planning advocacy” model e.g. independent planning or design professionals that support and help

communities and businesses to understand proposals, test alternatives, and engage effectively.² This is a practical way to ensure engagement is solution-focused, rather than a reactive critique.

Without such support, engagement is likely to become unequal, whereby communities and small businesses will be asked to respond to highly technical material (often at speed), leaving better-resourced actors to shape the narrative, and undermining local support for the new town.

Independently conducted and audited

Research shows the public distrusts local authority planning decisions, citing reasons as failing to communicate plans properly, not understanding or caring about local needs, a lack of honesty and accountability, and a focus on economic outcomes (Grosvenor, 2019).

Wachs (2016) and Allmendinger (2017) have highlighted the contradiction in professional codes which require planners to be more loyal to their employer than the public interest.

In practice this means serious consideration should be given to who conducts consultation and engagement exercises. In our view, they should be conducted and reported by independent research and engagement specialists (as distinct from communication companies employed to shape messages/opinion, which in our experience tend towards the lower rungs of Arnstein's ladder). Consultation commissioned by landowners (including the LPA as landowner) is likely to be viewed with suspicion and written off as pre-determined tokenistic exercises conducted to suit commercial objectives.

Consultation activities for each new town should also be regularly audited by an independent body (e.g. the TCPA), to a set of pre-determined quantitative and qualitative standards. This will enable the auditors to identify issues, share best practice across locations, and will help to raise the standard and perception of consultations nationally, building renewed trust in the planning system.

² See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advocacy_planning for more information.

3. What density, design and placemaking principles should underpin London's new towns?

INTRODUCTION (Q3)

We have set out below the density, design and placemaking principles we believe should guide a new town at Crews Hill and Chase Park. We believe:

- ✓ Placemaking should start with what's already there
- ✓ Placemaking should be grassroots-led and shaped by what people value
- ✓ Density should be human-scale and gentle, and highest where transport can support it
- ✓ "Car-lite" must be a controlling principle, not a slogan
- ✓ Public transport must be genuinely transformative, not "best endeavours"
- ✓ Neighbourhoods should be mixed, inclusive and truly affordable
- ✓ Infrastructure must be delivered early, not promised for later
- ✓ Delivery rates should be ambitious, but realistic

Placemaking should start with what's already there

We believe the best approach is to properly understand and value existing placemaking assets and incorporate these into the masterplanning of the new town.

A Crews Hill and Chase Park new town should not be planned as if it is a blank site. The starting point should be a clear map of what already works, what people value and the established 'sense of place'.

Existing assets should be incorporated to give the new town a 'head-start', including:

- Recognising, protecting and strengthening the existing employment base, especially the horticulture and garden centre cluster at Crews Hill, which is a rare London asset. The masterplan should be designed to retain viable businesses where possible, and where change is unavoidable, provide local relocation options.
- Incorporating important historic and valued landscapes, existing leisure uses, publicly accessible green spaces and well used walking routes.

Placemaking should be grassroots up and shaped by what people value

Too often engagement does not ask the most important question: what places do people like and why, then how do we build more of that. Co-design should start by asking what people enjoy – from a cross-section of existing and potential future residents - rather than a top-down vision statement.

For Crews Hill and Chase Park that means early walkabouts (ideally with the local community / businesses and future residents), mapping of valued green spaces and routes, and an honest assessment of what will change, what may change and what will be protected.

It should result in a clear design code that locks in walkability, green access, historic landscapes, building heights, street types and parking rules before land is parcelled up.

Density should be human scale, gentle, and highest where transport supports it

Density should follow a clear pattern. Highest density should be closest to Crews Hill station and Oakwood Tube, because that is where genuine public transport led living is most realistic. Further out, density should be “gentle”, terraces, mews streets, mansion blocks and small apartment buildings that support families as well as singles and couples.

At the edges, especially where the landscape is sensitive, the new town should have a hard stop with parks, green corridors and ecological buffers, not low-density sprawl and back fences as the boundary.

The key test is whether the plan creates genuinely walkable neighbourhoods, with enough local life to support shops and services, without resorting to towers or car dependent layouts.

New development at Clamart Panorama, whilst admittedly of a different scale, nevertheless offers a useful reminder that 5 to 7 storey “gentle density” can work well when in outer city locations when part of a coherent place.

We believe that density should be achieved through 5-7 storey apartments and mansion blocks. This type of development has the best chance of delivering the mix of housing and density required to support good quality infrastructure and avoid car-dependent sprawl and will optimise land use.

Car lite must be the controlling principle, not a slogan

This is the make-or-break issue for Crews Hill and Chase Park. Putting aside the potential environmental and health impacts associated with car-dependant sprawl, local roads cannot cope with a significant uplift in car journeys without major mitigation, which would include road widening and new junction capacity. This would be expensive, highly disruptive, and damage the character and environment the scheme claims to value.

A genuinely car-lite approach must be a binding design constraint from day one. It is very easy to say a scheme will be “car-lite” but hard to deliver in practice. Enfield has seen too many schemes where car-lite promises are made, but which end up dominated by cars and pavement parking. To make it real, the new town needs to be designed around walking, cycling and public transport as the default. That means:

- Put most homes as close to the station as possible, and do not push large numbers into areas that will be car dependent
- Design streets for people first, with safe continuous routes, low speeds, and no rat running
- Parking must be structurally constrained and enforced, not managed by hope
- No pavement parking. Use edge of neighbourhood parking, mobility hubs and car clubs rather than parking outside every front door
- Tie later phases to real outcomes. If traffic and car ownership exceed agreed thresholds, later phases should not proceed until measures are strengthened

Public transport must be genuinely transformative, not “best endeavours”

If Crews Hill and Chase Park are being talked about at new town scale, then the public transport offer must be new town scale too. “Car-lite” will not happen through good intentions or solely by limiting parking spaces or by providing cycle parking. It will only happen if public transport is so frequent, reliable and simple (from the outset) that people do not need to own a car for everyday life.

That means the masterplan must answer, upfront, the hard questions that are usually avoided:

- Can Crews Hill station realistically provide the frequency of service a new town of the scale envisaged would require, including turn up and go frequency across the day and week, not just at peaks? If not, what is the actual solution, and when will it be delivered?
- How will new bus routes work in practice on a road network that already struggles, especially if buses are stuck in the same congestion as cars?
- What bus priority is proposed, where exactly, and how will it be enforced?
- What pump priming funding is committed and for how long, so that high frequency services run from day one, rather than being promised “once demand builds”?
- Given the scale proposed, are we looking at the need for a higher capacity option, such as a tram style link, a new rail spur, or an additional station, rather than cobbled together tweaks?
- Does the station need to be relocated, expanded, or redesigned to work as a true new town hub, with safe walking and cycling access and a real interchange?

If the transport answer is half measures or not thought through from the start, the outcome is predictable. High housing numbers plus limited rail frequency, plus buses without priority, equals rising car ownership, rat running, parking stress, congestion and pressure for road widening and new junctions, which will slow the delivery of new housing.

Any vision for Crews Hill and Chase Park must be realistic about human behaviour, and the scale of public transport needed to avoid car-dependent sprawl. The size and design of the new town must cut its cloth to reflect the public transport infrastructure available or planned and fully funded. We are concerned that plans may proceed based on wishful thinking, or weakly worded policies, rather than hard evidence and genuine commitments.

Neighbourhoods should be mixed, inclusive and truly affordable

New neighbourhoods should work for families, concealed households, downsizers, and people who need accessible and affordable homes, in a tenure blind way.

Family housing can be delivered as properly designed family sized flats, but the design must work, and that means ample storage space, play space, excellent parks, local schools and family-friendly amenities and safe streets.

Given the scale of the envisaged “new town”, the type of homes built should reflect wider London and North London housing needs, not just one narrow market segment in Enfield. Otherwise, delivery rates could be significantly constrained by local market demands and housing needs.

Infrastructure must be delivered early, not promised for later

If this is to be a genuinely successful new town, the enabling infrastructure must be new town standard and delivered early.

Green space, nature and recreation must be real, connected and open from the first phases. But so must a proper town centre offer, and local hubs, including food shopping, cafes and pubs, community space, healthcare including GP provision, and indoor and outdoor sports and leisure.

Water and drainage must be treated as core infrastructure, with SuDS and blue green corridors designed as part of streets and parks, not bolted on at the end.

Without early infrastructure, the development will default to car-based living and will create avoidable pressure on surrounding roads and services.

Delivery rates should be ambitious, but realistic

The plan should set ambitious but realistic targets for delivery.

We have already seen unrealistic build out and sales rates quoted, originating from a few good years of one exemplar scheme. This type of cherry-picking of data is ultimately unhelpful, as it creates unrealistic expectations and policy responses which set the project up to fail, which in turn undermines public and investor confidence in the scheme.

Q6. What roles should the Mayor, GLA, London boroughs, and central Government each play in planning, funding and delivering new towns in London? (a). What governance structures should be implemented to ensure the long term success of new towns in London?

INTRODUCTION (Q6/6a)

We have set out below the governance and delivery principles we believe should underpin the long-term success of any London new town. We believe:

- ✓ Use an MDC/DC model with clear delivery powers and accountability
- ✓ Make governance transparent by default (published decisions, papers and minutes; narrow confidentiality)
- ✓ Embed TfL, utilities, NHS and regulators formally in a delivery board, so constraints are dealt with early and in the open
- ✓ Publish and maintain a 20–30 year Infrastructure and Phasing Plan, with gateway reviews and public resets
- ✓ Ring-fence and audit infrastructure funding, with automatic “no infrastructure, no phase” triggers if delivery slips
- ✓ Fund stewardship from day one so quality is maintained long after build-out

New towns in London should be treated as strategic city-region infrastructure and delivery programmes, not conventional borough-led planning exercises. They require a single delivery body with the powers, specialist capability and financial tools to deliver over decades.

Use an MDC/DC delivery model

New towns should be led by a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) (or DC where appropriate), with clear accountability for:

- Land assembly and land strategy (including CPO where needed)
- Infrastructure planning, funding and sequencing
- Procurement and developer partnering
- Phasing, quality control and delivery rate
- Long-term stewardship and asset management

Boroughs can contribute local knowledge and help ensure good integration with surrounding neighbourhoods, but they should not control delivery, phasing, land strategy, or infrastructure sequencing.

This would avoid a model where the same body (e.g. an LPA/Council) is landowner/promoter and effectively controls planning outcomes. An MDC/DC provides a cleaner separation: boroughs have input and statutory roles but are not “marking their own homework”.

A board built for delivery

The board should be built around independent delivery expertise, not institutional representation. Statutory partners who “hold the keys” to delivery, such as TfL, utilities, NHS and environmental regulators, must be involved through a formal structure that produces published decisions on capacity, sequencing and mitigations. To maintain trust and discipline over a multi-decade programme, governance should be open by default: board and oversight meetings should be held in public wherever possible, with published agendas, papers, decisions and minutes (and a clear, narrow approach to confidentiality). This protects the programme from optimistic assumptions, closed-door trade-offs, and late-stage surprises.

Community representation should be formalised through an independent panel with real access and the right to publish views, alongside public meetings and published minutes but the delivery board itself should remain expert-led to avoid becoming a representative forum rather than a delivery body.”

Infrastructure-first

New towns only work if the enabling infrastructure is funded, scheduled and deliverable before large volumes of housing are promised.

There is a need to publish a single Infrastructure and Phasing Plan covering 20–30 years, showing (a) what infrastructure is needed (transport, power, water, drainage/flood, schools/health, parks), (b) who pays, (c) when it is delivered, and (d) what housing/jobs are contingent on each item.

Delivery of infrastructure should be reviewed every 2 years (or at key milestones) where the MDC/DC must publish an update on actual progress vs plan, revised costs and funding gaps, updated constraints (utilities capacity, water, transport, environmental limits) and whether the promised delivery rates and car-free assumptions still stack up.

If the numbers don't stack up, the MDC/DC must **reset the plan in public** (phasing, capacity, or scale) rather than quietly downgrading later.

Ring-fence infrastructure funding and make the triggers automatic

Create a dedicated, ring-fenced infrastructure fund for the new town (separate from borough budgets), with independent audit and regular public reporting.

This avoids "homes first, infrastructure later" and prevents optimistic assumptions being used to justify big numbers.

Set automatic triggers for intervention where delivery slips: e.g. if a critical piece of infrastructure is delayed, the corresponding housing phases cannot proceed until the dependency is funded and on track (or an alternative is agreed and published).

Stewardship from day one

New towns fail when nobody owns the long-term quality. With this in mind we suggest establishing a funded **Stewardship Body/Trust** at the start, with a clear remit to look after parks and green/blue infrastructure (including SuDS), public realm and community facilities, long-term maintenance standards and budgets.

This should be appropriately funded e.g. provided with a long-term income stream (not ad-hoc grants), so public spaces, drainage and community assets are maintained properly for decades.

Housing targets

We strongly believe that housing delivered via new towns should **NOT** be included as part of the individual borough's housing target or delivery figures but should be included as part of London's.

This will mean boroughs can focus on delivering urban regeneration and intensification across existing built-up areas rather than relying on a single strategic site. There is an urgent need for boroughs, such as Enfield, to remain focussed on delivering urban regeneration across the borough - on both small and large sites – and it is important to avoid new towns distracting from this task.

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BusinessLDN Ref No. NT005

New Towns for London

call for evidence

Response from: BusinessLDN, One Oliver's Yard, 55-71 City Road, London EC1Y 1HQ

Prepared by: Jonathan Seager, Policy Delivery Director, Research & Impact

Date submitted: 3 March 2026

Introduction

1. BusinessLDN is a business membership organisation with the mission to make London the best city in the world to do business, working with and for the whole UK. BusinessLDN works with the support of the capital's major businesses in key sectors such as housing, commercial property, finance, transport, infrastructure, professional services, ICT, and education.
2. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the London Assembly Planning and Regeneration Committee's call for evidence about new towns in London. In December 2024, prior to the New Towns Taskforce and Government selecting the 12 shortlisted new towns, BusinessLDN published [The case for a New Town in London](#), which outlined why London should be the location for at least one new town. We were therefore pleased to see both Enfield (Chase Park and Crews Hill) and Thamesmead selected on the Government's new towns shortlist and want to see them formally confirmed in the Spring.
3. We have answered the call for evidence questions that are relevant to our interests.

Response to questions

1. What are the conditions that need to be in place to make new towns a success in London?

4. For new towns to succeed in London, several conditions need to be in place. These include:
 - Appropriate governance arrangements, including delivery vehicles if required, with strong political leadership at both local, regional and national levels, providing certainty and continuity over the long-term.
 - Robust strategic and local planning frameworks to coordinate development including high standards of design and placemaking.
 - Infrastructure must be planned and funded early, ensuring high-quality transport connectivity alongside utilities, digital networks and sustainable energy provision.

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- New settlements must be supported by a full suite of social and community infrastructure including schools, healthcare, green space, and cultural facilities.
- A balanced mix of housing tenures, including genuinely affordable homes and build to rent, is essential to meet London's needs while ensuring that scheme viability is maintained.
- Housing must be delivered in tandem with other uses to create genuinely mixed and sustainable communities rather than dormitory estates. A clear economic strategy that provides access to employment opportunities must be put in place.
- Funding mechanisms, including proportionate developer contributions and appropriate public sector support, must be structured to unlock development rather than constrain it.
- Meaningful community engagement, conducted over the life of the scheme. Residents must feel heard and be part of the process.

a. How should citizen engagement, consultation and coproduction inform the development of new towns?

5. If new towns are to succeed, they must be desirable places to live, taking account of what people want from new development. Based on the experience of public consultations on housing, the most important issue that people raise is the affordability of homes and the quality of what is being built. Beyond housing, concerns move quickly to focus on community infrastructure and wider placemaking.
6. As new towns are brought forward, residents must feel heard and be part of the process. Communities that have experienced change in their area are often more likely to support further change, understanding the community benefits that development can bring. Learning the lessons from community engagement undertaken for largescale regeneration schemes in the capital provides a good basis upon which to promote the new towns in London.

b. How can delivery partners ensure that essential infrastructure is in place to ensure the success of new towns?

7. One of the reasons why London is so well suited to accommodate new towns is that it is already served by extensive infrastructure. Extending existing infrastructure connections is, in general, less time consuming and expensive than building new infrastructure in its entirety.
8. Timely planning of infrastructure needs, supported by an appropriately streamlined consenting regime, backed by a clear plan for financing and funding are integral to securing the essential infrastructure needed in London's new towns.
9. Given the current challenging and low-growth environment, it is unlikely the Government will step into fund the entirety of London's new town infrastructure requirements. However, the capital's track record in finding innovative solutions to fund new infrastructure does provide it with a firm basis from which to deliver against. Examples include the use of the

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Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy for Crossrail, Tax Increment Financing for the Northern Line Extension, tolling for the Silvertown Tunnel, and Regulated Asset Base model for Thames Tideway tunnel.

10. We have already seen confirmation that the Docklands Light Railway will be extended to Thamesmead backed by TfL borrowing and a guarantee from the Government. While there is still more work to be done on this package, including further details on the long-term funding for it, it clearly demonstrates the benefits of utilising London's existing infrastructure and the importance of joint working between national, regional, local government, and the business community.
11. Further innovation in infrastructure delivery may be required depending on the exact infrastructure requirements of London's new towns and those across the country. In our report with WSP, [Generating Land Value to Grow London](#) we set out how a new approach could be used to better capture value from residential development and deploy it to accelerate the delivery of new transport infrastructure by evolving the current Tax Increment Finance (TIF) model. Our proposal adds to how the current TIF structure captures value – through retaining the increase in business rates on commercial property – by capturing revenue from residential property taxes generated by new homes that have been unlocked by new transport infrastructure.
12. Whatever funding mechanisms are used, and where they relate to new development, it is important that they secure an appropriate contribution at a level that does not deter development from happening in the first place and therefore not generating any value to help fund the necessary infrastructure.

2. What new opportunities could new town designation in London unlock that existing planning tools do not?

13. Without the new town designation, neither of the proposed new towns in London would be happening at the speed or scale that they currently are. The new towns programme has galvanised action and provided a much-needed focus on delivery, with an ambitious target for some of the new towns to have got spades in the ground before the end of this Parliament.
14. While the DLR extension to Thamesmead has been talked about for several years and is an integral part of unlocking the site, it has taken the new towns designation to generate the political momentum to get the extension approved. In an ideal world this would not be the case, and there would be a transparent and coherent process in the capital for bringing forward large-scale enabling infrastructure along with suitably matched funding mechanisms. In the absence of such a process, the new towns programme has played a pivotal role.
15. Likewise, new town designation is set to create the space to reimagine an area's entire character and, with placemaking at the heart of this process, deliver significant numbers of new homes at high densities than would have happened without the designation.

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3. What density, design and placemaking principles should underpin London's new towns?

16. Housing density should be maximised in London's new towns within the context of the respective locations and their site-specific needs. High density development ensures a site is fully optimised, providing as many homes as possible. It helps generate a sufficient financial return to invest in social infrastructure, such as new schools, healthcare and other community facilities, required to support such development. High density development can be delivered through a variety of building heights and development types.
17. While London does have the highest housing density in England, even the densest areas in central London are below comparable urban areas in Europe¹, and suburban London has potential for intensification with many parts of the capital having good transport links but low housing density.²
18. In terms of design and placemaking principles, planning policies and planning consenting mechanisms should be shaped specifically to the place and circumstances associated with each site. Design codes and guidance could be used to ensure quality, but they must allow room for creativity and innovation. To support placemaking, new homes should be delivered alongside other uses and infrastructure to act as a catalyst. Having attractor and anchor uses will be important to shaping the new towns.

4. What lessons can be learned from the past delivery of Mayoral Development Corporations (MDCs), Opportunity Areas (OAs), and the original development of Thamesmead (in the late 1960s to early 1970s) to inform the development of new towns for London in the present day?

19. There are multiple lessons that can be learned from MDCs and OAs, but the overarching one is that there must be a clear reason for establishing the vehicle/designation and that it must also be provided with a full suite of powers, resources and investment to enable the delivery of a full range of benefits. Simply establishing a vehicle or designating an area a new town without, for example, providing enhanced infrastructure investment or devolving planning powers to the vehicle will reduce the effectiveness of the vehicle/designation from the outset.
20. Control of land is also key within a new town: whether through private acquisition and/or compulsory purchase, having certainty over land provides the basis for control over delivery. Where MDCs have delivered, they have been able to heavily control or influence the type of development that is brought forward. And conversely, where some OAs have been unable to make much progress, this can often be because, amongst other reasons, there is disparate control of land and an inability to act at scale and in a coordinated manner.

¹ See Redefining Density, Making the best use of London's land to build more and better homes, London First and Savills (September 2015).

² See How to fix the broken housing market, Should we increase housing density? CBRE (September 2024).

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21. Finally, while true of long-term development in general, a key factor in the success of previous MDCs and OAs is strong political leadership. A leader who acts as a ‘champion’, helping to build momentum and consensus, taking a long-term view across political and economic cycles is essential.

6. What roles should the Mayor, GLA, London boroughs, and central Government each play in planning, funding and delivering new towns in London?

22. It is not yet clear what the financial or other benefits Government will provide to new towns. Providing grant, soft loans or other types of financial support is the most obvious role that Government is best placed to play, and it must do so otherwise it runs the risk of undermining the new towns designation. The two areas, amongst many, that will require financial support are the provision of infrastructure and affordable housing.

23. The role played by the Mayor, GLA and London boroughs will depend on what governance structures the new towns in London have, as outlined in answer to question 6 a) below. There is scope for London government to help by utilising policy allocations; development corporations; compulsory purchase; development management tools; policy and guidance; design and development frameworks; and regeneration strategies.

a. What governance structures should be implemented to ensure the long term success of new towns in London?

24. The governance structures put in place for London’s new towns should be bespoke to the area. There is not a one-size-fits-all approach that should be used. As we outlined in our new towns report, London already has the power and structure to support quick delivery. Other options beyond a Mayor Development Corporation could be used, if all partners involved in the new town support that approach, be that a different type of development corporation or no development corporation, but an area which benefits from a streamlined and simplified planning regime, for example. Whatever governance structure is chosen, it must be at an appropriate spatial level and capable of taking swift decisions.

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CPRE Ref No. NT006

London Assembly
Planning & Regeneration Committee
By email to: scrutiny@london.gov.uk

3 March 2026

Dear Sirs,

Call for evidence – Investigation into New Towns for London

CPRE London is a membership-based charity, a branch of the national charity CPRE. Thank you for providing the opportunity to submit evidence to this investigation.

The purpose of new towns

The call for evidence states the “The aims of the current new towns programme are to generate economic growth, accelerate housing delivery, provide the necessary infrastructure for new communities, create environmentally resilient places and to contribute to changing the way that large settlements are delivered.”

This side-steps mention of London’s the acute and urgent need for housing to be made affordable. Our primary concern about the ‘new towns’ approach is that this cannot tackle affordability and certainly not within the next decade or likely not even for 20 or more years. Tackling affordability can only be achieved by

- dramatically increasing supply of genuinely affordable housing, which cannot be delivered via the private sector development model;
- making rents in the private rented sector affordable via rent controls with more teeth than currently proposed ‘rent stabilisation’ measures, welcome though they are
- increasing the housing benefit threshold to halt the transfer of households from the private rented sector into temporary accommodation. Currently there is an absurd situation where Government’s housing benefit threshold means housing benefit does not cover rent, so people cannot pay and become homeless and are then placed in temporary accommodation which is less secure, more expensive for the public purse, and threatens to bankrupt councils because they must cover some of the cost of temporary accommodation.

As such, we have significant concerns about the premise of building new towns, particularly on London’s green spaces and Green Belt:

- Building ‘new towns’ is a major distraction from the real causes and solutions to London’s housing crisis – and even a distraction from getting the 300,000 homes in London which already have planning permission built

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- Building two 'new towns' at Crews Hill and Thamesmead will not increase the availability of housing over and above the amount which would have been built anyway because it will displace other (already planned and permitted) development;
 - New towns will displace development elsewhere, because only so much new housing can be absorbed into the housing market in any one year.
- Building 'new towns' will not enable more affordable housing to be built, in fact will set London back in delivering affordable housing.
 - New towns will use limited public funding which would or could have been used immediately to increase the supply of social-rent housing and much-needed infrastructure on already-planned (brownfield) developments elsewhere in London.
- Delivering these 'new towns' will take decades and take vast resources to get off the ground. It will not help the linked crises of housing affordability and local authority finances in the near or medium term and arguably not in the long term either, unless national policy changes so that 100% uplift from land value can be captured under CPO. We believe 100% uplift from existing-use-value *should* be captured for the public (i.e. not paying for 'hope value' as per the 1961 legislation) but not for greenfield sites. This should apply strictly to brownfield sites and particularly surface car parks.
- ***In short, new towns are not a credible route to tackle affordability of housing in London and certainly not in the short term. In fact, they are at best a distraction, and at worst likely to actively suck funding and human resources from other development, reducing the capital's ability to tackle housing affordability in the short term.***
- Public resources, both human resources and funding, earmarked for delivery of new towns would be put to much better use, much more quickly, to deliver housing affordability in London by using available funds to purchase or build property for social rent, including by increasing the quantity of affordable housing in developments which already have outline or full planning permission, ensuring an actual impact in the short term.
- Planning permission is in place for 300,000 homes on brownfield land in London and there is enough brownfield land to accommodate at least double that amount, likely more. It is no secret that many of these developments have been stalled. Public resources would be better directed to getting those developments moving, and to ensuring they deliver affordable housing and public infrastructure. Delivering 'new towns' will simply displace planned and permitted brownfield development and will redirect valuable public resources from those developments.

Crews Hill

- Crews Hill is Green Belt land. It is not 'grey belt'. There is no way of making a 'new town' in that location sustainable from a transport point of view: it will increase car trips in direct

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contradiction of the Mayor's Transport Strategy and the London Plan. It will lead to extensive biodiversity net loss.

Thamesmead

- Thamesmead is theoretically 'brownfield' but very clearly has rewilded and is now a green space. Parts of it are SINC and designated open space. The claims for ease of delivery around the Thamesmead Waterfront site ignore the complexity and costs of this site, particularly (we understand) its historic use for landfill and ordnance dumping. It is also a site which could and should be safeguarded for vital water treatment infrastructure.
- Safeguarding land for urgently needed water treatment capacity. Thamesmead proposals ignore the very real possibility that this site will be needed to accommodate new water management infrastructure given Thames Water has said nearby Crossness Sewage Treatment Works needs to be expanded urgently, but the site is constrained, and that it is likely to reach its 'discharge permit capacity' soon which indicates discharges are already much too high.
- There is further likelihood that climate change will mean sites like this will be needed to manage surface water and potentially even fluvial flood management.
- Nearby planned re-development of the nearby Thamesmead Estate can deliver new housing particularly if the Morrisons surface car park is redeveloped for housing. This can benefit from the new DLR station and has a greater chance of being delivered in realistic timescales. The focus should be on that.

The above points are important context and we would ask that they are read in conjunction with our responses to the questions asked:

1. *What are the conditions that need to be in place to make new towns a success in London?*

a. How should citizen engagement, consultation and coproduction inform the development of new towns?

b. How can delivery partners ensure that essential infrastructure is in place to ensure the success of new towns?

- In the current circumstances, there are no conditions which could be put in place to make 'new towns' successful as a means to tackling affordability and availability of housing in London and, on the contrary, they are a major distraction from identifying a credible response to the housing crisis.

2. *What new opportunities could new town designation in London unlock that existing planning tools do not?*

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- 'New towns are not different to large housing developments being delivered, or planned, in many other parts of London, in the sense that those other large developments require infrastructure and need to deliver affordable housing. Creating a 'new mechanism' will not make it any easier, will be a distraction from delivering planned and permitted development, and will suck resources away from delivering those developments which have a stronger chance of being delivered in short and medium term timescales.

3. What density, design and placemaking principles should underpin London's new towns?

- Density for any development should be high and appropriate to the location. We support high density development of 5 to 8 storeys with zero car (car club and disabled parking only) and appropriate green space which can meet the variety of needs a local park might deliver, including for example it being possible to play informal sports - kick a football about. It is not appropriate to only provide e.g. 'linear parks' or spaces which can only be used for very limited activities.

4. What lessons can be learned from the past delivery of Mayoral Development Corporations (MDCs), Opportunity Areas (OAs), and the original development of Thamesmead (in the late 1960s to early 1970s) to inform the development of new towns for London in the present day?

- The clear and obvious lesson is that, if funding is available and appropriate authorities have the power and resources to deliver, affordable housing can be delivered. Without those resources, it feels like a strange comparison.

5. What lessons can be learned from international examples of new towns?

- This is impossible to answer without an understanding of whether those countries had other policies in place in relation to, for example, land value capture or housing affordability. These are choices, they are not technical problems.

6. What roles should the Mayor, GLA, London boroughs, and central Government each play in planning, funding and delivering new towns in London?

a. What governance structures should be implemented to ensure the long term success of new towns in London?

- To the extent that any new structures should be created, they should focus on delivering the major (brownfield) developments in London which are stalled.

7. What are the potential environmental impacts of new town development in London on food and water security, climate resilience and access to green space?

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- We do not see the implications of new towns as different from other major developments, except that both will be built on green space (one rewilded, one never-before-developed Green Belt); that it will be impossible to deliver biodiversity net gain and will certainly deliver net loss; and in the case of Thamesmead Waterfront, it may impact negatively London's ability to increase the waste water treatment capacity so urgently needed (given this site may be needed to accommodate water treatment infrastructure).

We hope these comments are helpful.

Yours faithfully,
Alice Roberts
Head of Campaigns, CPRE London

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Environment Agency Ref No. NT007

Environment Agency response to London Assembly Planning and Regeneration Committee Call for Evidence: Planning and tall buildings (New Towns)

Overarching comments:

- The Mayor should ensure full alignment with the high-level aims for New Towns set out by the New Towns Taskforce ([Building new towns for the future - GOV.UK](#)), particularly the ambition to create environmentally resilient places.
- A core priority of the New Towns is to create places where people want to live as they are safe, healthy, resilient and well designed, which the Environment Agency is supportive of. We are keen to contribute to this, and more can be achieved through early engagement with the Environment Agency. [Working together to shape the next generation of New Towns – Creating a better place](#)
- The Taskforce highlighted the Placemaking principle of Environmental Sustainability as a key feature of success. We would expect this principle to feature prominently and consistently throughout the decision-making process.
- New towns should be designed and delivered to embrace environmental principles, with buildings and neighbourhoods that are low carbon, climate resilient and which help to protect, restore and enhance biodiversity
- Some elements of current masterplanning for London New Town locations do not support building a climate resilient town or adhere to Taskforce high level aims. For example, the proposed zoning at Crews Hill, which moves habitat locations out of housing areas, and the split across two geographically separate settlements illustrate this concern.
- There are significant opportunities for improving how waste and circular economy are managed through exemplar infrastructure provision.
- There is evidence that sets out the need for comprehensive water planning (wastewater, potable supply, and flood risk) to ensure supply, deliver resilience and protect the environment.
- There are significant opportunities to use existing evidence on Green Infrastructure to embed delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy in New Towns.

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- A strategic, catchment-based approach to flood risk management may be necessary, utilising developer contributions and natural flood risk management approaches.
- London's key urban resilience challenges are set out in London Climate Resilience Review [The London Climate Resilience Review | London City Hall](#). Mitigation and adaptation measures for a resilient town will need to address these issues.

Detailed comments:

Question 1 What are the conditions that need to be in place to make new towns a success in London?

No comments

Question 1 a. How should citizen engagement, consultation and coproduction inform the development of new towns?

Waste and Resources

- The building of new towns offers an opportunity to do things better and more holistically for the delivery of the circular economy by integrating circular thinking and infrastructure into the fabric of the development, allowing more focus on sustainability and achieving this in a more cost effective way than through the kind of retro-fitting that is needed in other types of development.
- The New Towns Taskforce (2025) emphasises that new towns must be “well-planned, large-scale developments” with major infrastructure planned from the earliest stages. The Taskforce highlights that new towns must prioritize early master-planning for environmental resilience, creating sustainable, high-quality places rather than just housing. UK circular-economy policy guidance stresses that new developments must integrate waste and circular economy systems early in the planning process, not as bolt-ons. [New Towns Taskforce: final report](#).
- Examples of recent policy in local plan relevant to new towns proposals in London include the East London Circular Economy Topic Paper in the East London Joint Waste Plan supporting documents, which states that the circular economy (CE) must

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be embedded through policy, design codes and early infrastructure planning. [ELJWP Circular Economy Topic Paper v2.0 25.07.24](#)

- A similar approach was taken in Bath and North-West Somerset's planning guidance which requires the development of circular-friendly waste strategies "*at the earliest possible stage*". [Waste Management Guidance for New Developments](#)
- There should also be a Circular Economy Design Code which should be integrated into the masterplan, and a requirement for Circular Economy Statements (CES) for *all phases*, not just major schemes, the requirements of the CES could be reduced in detail for smaller developments while still maintaining circular principles are applied. Circular economy statements have been an intrinsic part of the London Plan's approach to sustainability and circularity in the building of major developments. [Circular Economy Statement Guidance | London City Hall](#).
- It is also essential that land is allocated for circular infrastructure (reuse hubs, repair centres, material banks) in the same way that space is allocated for other key infrastructure such as electricity substations, etc.

Green Infrastructure and biodiversity

- The London Green Infrastructure Framework (LGIF) is a strategic evidence tool to help plan and prioritise investment in GI in London. It brings together key data relevant to GI in one place, to help identify where and how to invest in GI to maximise the benefits it delivers for Londoners. [London Green Infrastructure Framework](#) (LGIF)
- The LGIF aims to support decision making for the GLA, London boroughs and others involved in the planning, delivery and management of GI. Its production was a recommendation of the 2024 London Climate Resilience Review [The London Climate Resilience Review | London City Hall](#).
- The London Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is currently at publication stage. Local Planning Authorities must "give regard" to this plan.

Social Equity and Social Value

- Citizen Engagement is key for the success of new towns. Efforts should be made to ensure representations of major stakeholder groups, including those representing the homeless and those awaiting affordable housing. It is also important in the design of housing developments, there is social equity in terms of the distribution of affordable homes (including council homes) so that they are not solely concentrated in the least attractive/accessible parts of the development. Similarly, there is a need for adapted properties for the disabled and elderly, so adequate provision is needed there. Consulting with disability charities would be useful. [Accessible housing in London letter.pdf](#)

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Flood Risk Management

- New Towns which minimise reliance on flood and coastal risk management infrastructure through location choice and design are safer, more sustainable communities, where people are more likely to aspire to live and work.
- New Towns provide opportunities to improve local environments for adjacent existing communities, helping ensure that existing environmental hazards are reduced for all. Opportunities include supporting nature recovery by providing functional and connected blue and green spaces which deliver multiple benefits, creating highquality places for people, connected to water and nature and ensuring that new development does not increase flood risk in adjacent areas.

Question 1 b. How can delivery partners ensure that essential infrastructure is in place to ensure the success of new towns?

- De-risking and ensuring timely delivery of New Towns can be achieved by taking a joined up and phased approach to infrastructure construction. Understanding the strategic options and their costs associated with significant housing growth in specific locations requires a clear strategy for environmental infrastructure, including agreement of delivery phasing to align housing development rates with infrastructure provision.

Question 2. What new opportunities could new town designation in London unlock that existing planning tools do not?

Waste and Resources

- Designing new housing developments presents new challenges, but also new opportunities to employ best practice in design. It also presents the opportunity to use new technologies for collection. Studies by ReLondon/WRAP have shown the importance of many of the basics of the design of collection systems from flats such as the importance of the location, lighting and signage of collection areas and security and access to receptacles in increasing the collection rate of recyclable materials.
- An example of innovative approaches to waste collection London has explored pneumatic (underground vacuum) waste systems in several regeneration projects — including Wembley City, London Riverside and parts of Old Oak & Park Royal, Some of the key points on vacuum waste systems based on London case studies and high-density guidance are;

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- 1. Suitability for high-density developments: Vacuum systems reduce the need for large bin stores and frequent vehicle access, which is beneficial in dense urban environments. They fit well with large-scale masterplans such as those at OPDC and London Riverside (Barking Riverside).
 - 2. Operational advantages: They reduce the number of vehicle movements and improve air quality and safety; Cleaner streets, less waste overflow; Potential for higher recycling if designed as multi-stream.
 - 3. Challenges: They are best suited to major new developments; they need a requires dedicated underground pipe network and space for terminal stations and well-coordinated phasing.
 - 4. *London has several examples from as noted in the ReLondon case studies which includes Wembley City, etc. The OPDC SPD is explicit about analysing innovative waste approaches for high-density builds, supported by the “Waste in Tall Buildings Study.” This study explores systems to manage vertical and large-scale waste flows, consistent with pneumatic systems.*
- Some London-specific guidance documents for waste collection in new developments, are listed below, and provide detailed guidance, templates and case studies:
 - *ReLondon Waste Management Planning Advice for New Flatted Properties* (2021, includes case studies, template planning policies, and developer waste strategy templates. [\[Link to Document\]](#)
 - *LWARB “Improving Waste Management in Flatted Properties”* (2020) Outlines strategic approaches for high-density living; addresses design issues that inhibit recycling. [\[Link to Document\]](#)
 - *OPDC “Waste Management in High-Density Development SPD”* (2022) Provides detailed waste management guidance for OPDC development areas. Forms part of the statutory planning framework for Old Oak & Park Royal. [\[Link to Document\]](#)

GI and Biodiversity

- New Towns locations could explore linking GI and biodiversity policies and strategies to Green Finance initiatives and brokers such as the Environment Bank, which is relevant to supporting delivery of statutory Biodiversity Net Gain. Newly established development corporations and public body requirement to deliver on their Biodiversity duty could also be an opportunity. [Complying with the biodiversity duty - GOV.UK.](#)

Question 3. What density, design and placemaking principles should underpin London's new towns?

Waste and Resources

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- Regarding London Waste Management Planning Advice for New Flatted Properties (2021) Includes comprehensive guidance for planning, designing, and delivering waste systems in new flatted developments. It also Includes case studies, template planning policies, and developer waste strategy templates. [\[ReLondon Flatted Property Advice\]](#)
- LWARB/BPP “Improving Waste Management in Flatted Properties” (2020) Outlines strategic approaches for high-density living and addresses design issues that inhibit recycling. [\[Improving WM in Flatted Properties\]](#)
- OPDC “Waste Management in High-Density Development SPD” (2022) provides detailed waste management guidance for OPDC development areas, particularly high-density developments. [\[WM in High Density Developments\]](#)

GI and Biodiversity

- Refer to LGIF and London Plan GI policies in CH8 e.g. policy 5 for the Urban Greening Factor, Also London Plan Design Codes (Ch2). These policies link to the necessity for integrated water management strategies and SuDS and natural flood management

Social Equity and Social Value

- As described above. Also follow the London Plan’s **Good Growth** policies, which include using the Social Value portal and TOMS, plus compliance with the Social Value Act. The outcomes should achieve: ‘improved well-being, reduced inequality, and strengthened communities.

Question 4. What lessons can be learned from the past delivery of Mayoral Development Corporations (MDCs), Opportunity Areas (OAs), and the original development of Thamesmead (in the late 1960s to early 1970s) to inform the development of new towns for London in the present day?

- There were benefits of the London Legacy Development Corporations and other MDCs having their own independent planning powers, allowing them to act as the Local Planning Authority for their defined development. It simplifies things where a development would cross multiple borough boundaries and cover multiple Local Planning Authorities (LPAs)

Waste and Resources

- The Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC) is implementing a comprehensive circular economy strategy to transform the area into a sustainable, low-carbon hub by 2040. Key initiatives include the launch of the Minerva Works hub

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for material reuse, "design for disassembly" in construction, and a Sustainability Charter focused on resource efficiency, waste reduction, and local industrial reuse. The development of a Decentralised Energy Strategy and Integrated Water Management Strategy complements the overall circular goals.

- The strategy is supported by evidence gathering and feasibility studies to ensure the regeneration project acts as a model for sustainable urban development.

Water (and green infrastructure)

- The inclusion of lakes and canals in Thamesmead were designed to help lower crime and vandalism levels (an effect apparently seen in Swedish housing complexes). Accounts point to this effect not being achieved, and the waterways are not universally cared for by the community - 21 vehicles were pulled from Southmere Lake in 2008 (Guardian archive) and on a recent EA visit to Birchmere Lake a large stretch of marshes was covered in litter and flytipping.
- The Marsh Dykes catchment partnership has also reported difficulty with engagement in the region.
- A new town in the area would need to foster engagement and appreciation for water and the environment from its inception, especially given the problems the area faces with surface water flood risk. Treating green and blue infrastructure design holistically would enhance community pride for its natural surroundings and bring the benefits of biodiversity, sustainable drainage and natural cooling.

Question 5. What lessons can be learned from international examples of new towns?

- The RTPi work list here will be of use: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/policy-and-research/futureproof-new-towns-international-lessons-on-how-to-build-flexible-and-adaptable-new-towns-in-england/>

Question 6. What roles should the Mayor, GLA, London boroughs, and central Government each play in planning, funding and delivering new towns in London?

- Mayor's role (also see governance structures) may be in establishing delivery / development corporations to set out delivery phasing, coordination of infrastructure and service provision, ensure maximising benefit of pooled resources (such as BNG and CiL contributions) to create resilient places. [New Towns Taskforce: final report](#)

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- There is also a place for using the Mayors teams to work on integration of new town into the existing communities. Both London sites are very close to existing urban areas with existing use of the space that will be built on.

Question 6 a. What governance structures should be implemented to ensure the long-term success of new towns in London?

- We would welcome working with new or existing governance structures. We would be happy to support Development Corporations, and have experience of doing so, for example Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, [London Legacy Development Corporation](#) (LLDC) and Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC). We are focused on environmental outcomes.
- To ensure the right outcomes are achieved, we would support the approach to provide a sustainability framework for new towns. The framework should set out a clear environmental vision, highlight ambitions, set high standards, and identify areas for innovation where even more ambitious standards may be achieved.
- New Towns present a rare opportunity for strategic delivery. Structures will need to be in place with control over housing schemes phasing, but also over contributed funding (CiL and BNG contributions for example).

Question 7. What are the potential environmental impacts of new town development in London on food and water security, climate resilience and access to green space?

- Thamesmead and Crews Hill have some similar issues regarding environmental impacts but are also very different. Total water consumption and where in the environment this comes from, impacts on surface water drainage from rainfall runoff (buildings, roads, all hard standing), break up of existing access points and corridors for Biodiversity.
- The split of Enfield New Town into two distinct and separated locations will undermine some of the potential benefits of placemaking for new towns. Specifically, the embedding of biodiversity, flood risk management, and climate resilience options as a core part of the development.
- There is also the impact of built environment on ambient air temperature. With regard to Enfield, the urban heat island will grow in extent and potentially remove the buffer benefit for adjacent existing urban communities, if not sensitively designed and delivered. The London Climate Resilience Review ([The London Climate Resilience](#)

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[Review | London City Hall](#)), concluded that London was significantly exposed and vulnerable to climate change impacts, such as extreme heat. An issue with the Enfield masterplan for Crews Hill is the separation of green and grey zones potentially exacerbating this impact. [Crews Hill Exhibition Boards](#)

- Please see the forthcoming London Heat Risk Action plan for adaptation and sustainability concerns. [Heat risk | London City Hall](#)
- Also see [Policy 5.9 Overheating and cooling | London City Hall](#), “*The Mayor seeks to reduce the impact of the urban heat island effect in London and encourages the design of places and spaces to avoid overheating and excessive heat generation...*”
- There may be positive impacts through strategically planned green space (if LNRS applied) with regard to urban heat mitigation as evidenced by the Joint Research Council ([Spatially-optimized urban greening for reduction of population exposure to land surface temperature extremes | Nature Communications](#))
- New Towns have the potential to deliver River Basin Management Plan objectives by applying the principles set out by the Taskforce. Current WFD classifications at adjacent waterbodies have poor elements that can be addressed through appropriate mitigation for runoff, agriculture and misconnections.

GI and biodiversity

- There is the potential for further degradation of biodiversity through habitat loss, fragmentation, negative impact on aquatic ecology through increased transport pollution and urban runoff, climate change including the urban heat island effect, pressures of increased urban density, inappropriate development (linked to waste and water resource management as well as poor design).

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Greater London Authority Ref No. NT008

Planning & Regeneration Committee Call for Evidence: New Towns for London

Place Unit, Greater London Authority

March 2026

The case for new towns in London

- London is facing a housing crisis and urgently needs to be build more homes – the government has assessed London’s need at 88,000 per year over the next decade.
- New towns in London would help deliver the government’s target of 1.5 million new homes and stimulate wider economic growth. It is the GLA’s view that new town housing numbers must count towards London’s housing targets.
- Housing shortages in London directly impact national productivity, constraining workforce mobility and economic growth. London is a vital part of the UK economy, but its potential is constrained by high house prices, which negatively impact productivity.
- London stands ready to deliver on the government’s housing mission but to do so it needs the powers and resources to deliver viable, sustainable and affordable new towns that will help address the chronic housing needs facing the capital.
- There is also a strong economic case for creating new towns in London, as they would support growth by providing much-needed housing for a workforce that can easily commute into central London, while also offering new commercial space and employment opportunities for local residents.
- London is the engine of our national economy, contributing nearly a quarter UK GDP and generating significant tax revenues that fund public services nationwide. However, without adequate investment in housing and transport, London risks losing talent and economic capacity, with a direct negative impact on the wider UK economy.
- We are continuing to make the case for London's commensurate share of fiscal investment to ensure our city has the homes and infrastructure it needs, and can continue to sustain growth that benefits the entire country.

What are the conditions that need to be in place to make new towns a success in London?

- The regional vantage point of the Mayor with strong powers over housing, planning, transport, energy, complemented by the local knowledge, powers and capabilities of boroughs, mean we are well placed to deliver viable, affordable and sustainable housing alongside high quality public transport to connect our communities.
- The broad range of statutory, financial and strategic powers held by the Mayor have the opportunity to de-risk and accelerate delivery, should London locations be designated by the government.
- It is too early to comment on which powers might apply to individual locations, however given the ambition of the government’s new towns programme and recommendations in

the New Town Taskforce Report, the ability to embed and align transport led growth with strategic planning, housing targets and associated delivery controls will be important to lock in high quality development.

- Broader levers such as engagement will also be key in supporting long term stewardship and community buy-in.
- London's transport network plays a crucial role in London's economy – supporting growth and linking people to opportunities. It's also important to the national economy, with TfL's supply chain supporting 100,000 jobs across the country and contributing more than £11 billion in GVA over the past two years.
- Leveraging transport powers, such as TfL-led infrastructure like the DLR extension to Thamesmead, could also enable early investment that anchors growth and makes new communities viable from day one.
- Both of the current shortlisted London proposals require the prioritisation of targeted and early investment in transport infrastructure to deliver viable, sustainable and liveable neighbourhoods, and unlock the housing numbers associated with New Town designation.
- Extending the DLR to Thamesmead would unlock development on some of London's most significant brownfield housing opportunities, so the combination of the Autumn budget statement and the shortlisting of Thamesmead as a potential new town makes our plans to extend the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) to Thamesmead (via Beckton Riverside) even more important. It will enable us to begin unlocking two newly regenerated districts of London with potential for 25,000-30,000 homes and approximately 10,000 new jobs in areas of high deprivation with huge housing need.
- Providing new public transport options like the DLR extension and supporting bus transit in Thamesmead would support highly connected, low-carbon developments in Thamesmead and Beckton Riverside. It will also improve connectivity across the river and provide alternatives to private car use, creating green, liveable neighbourhoods.
- The shortlisting of the Enfield location as a potential new town bolsters the case for devolving responsibility of London rail services to Transport for London (TfL) as detailed in the Mayor's Transport Strategy – in this instance the Great Northern Inners rail service. TfL have a proven track record of making rail services better and more reliable, and it would lead to economic benefits, improving services for millions of commuters.
- Funding for rail infrastructure upgrades and enhanced operating frequencies at Crews Hill is critical in unlocking the housing numbers associated with potential New Town designation, making the new town viable and providing confidence in the delivery of new housing in these areas. We are firmly of the view that these improvements can be most effectively delivered with the devolution of the Great Northern Inners rail services to Transport for London (TfL).
- Whilst we see transport infrastructure as critical in unlocking development, new towns also require a range of other infrastructure commitments from the outset. Early investment and delivery of a wide range of physical, social and environmental infrastructure will be essential in making new towns a success and for the creation of thriving neighbourhoods.

What new opportunities could new town designation in London unlock that existing planning tools do not?

- The two shortlisted London new town proposals present significant opportunities to help address London's acute housing need through the creation of sustainable and high-quality neighbourhoods.
- The new town programme is an opportunity to get extra homes, funding and infrastructure for London and leverage additional powers and delivery tools associated with a nationwide programme.
- We are still working through the detail to understand how this might work in practice, but designation would also bring central government in as an active partner and unlock ring fenced government resources and political capital, which would undoubtedly provide certainty for investors over the longer term.
- We welcome the government's commitment to cross government support for delivery of new towns. Aligning housing, transport and infrastructure planning and funding will enable us to deliver well designed homes and neighbourhoods with the social infrastructure needed for the community to thrive.

What lessons can be learned from international examples of new towns?

The international examples listed out in further detail below highlight the following key lessons learnt that could be applied to London New Towns:

- **Family-sized housing is not mutually exclusive with density – compact, innovative typologies can provide the right space and format of living, bringing nature and social contact into everyday life.**
E.g. De Groene Kaap, Rotterdam, Netherlands
- **Nature and play can be meaningfully integrated into neighbourhood design but relies on compact building footprints that create more space for habitats, parks and shared gardens.**
E.g. De Groene Kaap, Rotterdam, Netherlands
- **Climate and circular economy design can promote locally-sourced materials, reduce energy demand, lower household bills and boost community stewardship of shared resources.**
E.g. Common Woods, Amersfoort, Netherlands
- **Well-connected public transport and close access to services and amenities can support compact, high-density neighbourhoods that support car-lite, walkable and healthy lifestyles.**
E.g. Wendelstrand, Gothenburg, Sweden

Common Woods, Amersfoort, Netherlands

A nature-inclusive forest neighbourhood that absorbs more nitrogen than it emits – with the ambition to be the most sustainable residential neighbourhood in Europe.

- The neighbourhood is designed to encourage interaction and collaboration. In the shared common space, neighbours gather for a cup of coffee, while the **communal greenhouse offers a place to grow food together**.
- All homes are built using **pre-fabricated, modular, sustainable timbers panels**. Design is nature-inclusive, creating habitats for wildlife into homes and the landscape.
- Solar panels generate **energy to be used and stored in batteries**, with geothermal energy used to heat and cool homes. A smart grid offers insights into energy usage with rewards for those using the least.
- Rainwater is stored for irrigation, greywater is used for toilets and washing machines, recirculation showers and other technologies will **decrease demand for freshwater by up to 60%**.

Wendelstrand, Gothenburg, Sweden

A new lakeside neighbourhood set within a former quarry – healing a wound in the landscape through regenerative design.

- Environmentally and socially sustainable, low carbon design and circular economy construction **utilising locally-sourced materials** is a hallmark of the scheme.
- A mix of apartments, townhouses, terraces and detached villas – breaking with traditional typologies but **providing a range of choices for families**.
- A **car-free public realm** designed for pedestrians and cyclists, with projects for carsharing, electric cars and bikes and self-running buses planned - 30 minutes by public transport or 15 minutes by car to the centre of Gothenburg.

De Groene Kaap, Rotterdam, Netherlands

A new riverside neighbourhood with a continuous green roof that spans across five residential buildings, creating meaningful space for people, play, nature and wildlife.

- **New 'rewilded' neighbourhood** designed around a series of extensively planted courtyards and roof landscape gardens that are thriving habitats for people, animals, and plants – **80% of the roof is covered in greenery**.
- **Create space for family living at high density**, including a range of family-sized townhouses, maisonettes and apartments with front doors and private terraces that open onto a **continuous 'playable landscape'** with tree trunks and boulders.
- The neighbourhood is **home to 20,000 perennial plants and 167 trees**, 50 nesting boxes for birds and bats integrated into walls, climbing plants and hedges provide privacy and habitats for bees and hedgehogs.

GWL Terrain, Amsterdam, Netherlands

A car-free neighbourhood including communal housing, live/work dwellings and a community centre at its heart.

- Inspired by an ecological vision that intimidated private developers, so several **social housing associations created a joint venture** to undertake delivery.
- An early example of **eco-neighbourhood planned and designed around six key environmental considerations**: building materials, energy, water, vegetation, waste and traffic.
- A range of family-sized dwellings are delivered including 3, 4 and 5 bedroom apartments – providing **much needed compact family living opportunities in a city location**, with private and communal ground and roof gardens.

What roles should the Mayor, GLA, London boroughs, and central Government each play in planning, funding and delivering new towns in London?

- We welcome the recommendation that ‘Stewardship’ is one of the ten core placemaking principles of the New Towns Taskforce Report, signalling that long-term care, management and governance of places will be essential to the success of new towns.
- For London new towns to be a success we need to ensure that the GLA, location partners, central government and other partners work together to deliver high quality and sustainable development. This partnership approach could also help reduce potential public opposition to the proposals, for example any potential new development on greenfield land.
- We want to see true partnership working with national, regional and local governments working together to catalyse investment and delivery.
- We also welcome government's commitment to cross government support for delivery of new towns. Aligning housing, transport and infrastructure planning and funding will enable us to deliver well designed homes and neighbourhoods with the social infrastructure needed for the community to thrive.
- Mayoral Development Corporations have significant benefits in their ability to be singular in their focus on delivery in a particular place, centralising planning and land assembly, accelerating delivery and linking effectively with strategic transport needs. However we know they are also expensive, so we will be working closely with government and location partners to evaluate the costs and benefits for each place before any decision is taken.
- London has a mature strategic authority with a track record of effective delivery of major infrastructure and housing schemes using a range of delivery approaches -including the Northern Line extension, Elizabeth Line, Olympics and LLDC, OPDC and emerging Oxford Street DC.

New Towns for London Call for Evidence

March 2026

About L&Q

L&Q is one of the leading housing associations in the country. We house around 250,000 people, mainly from across London, the South East and North West of England. Our vision is that everyone deserves a quality home that gives them the chance to live a good life. We are coming towards the end of our current 5-year strategy and have already made significant progress, including:

- Launching a £3 billion, 15-year major works investment programme that will make sure every resident's home is safe, decent and more energy efficient.
- Implementing a new localised housing management approach that has put 30% more frontline colleagues in local neighbourhoods.
- Improving the quality and responsiveness of our repairs service through a change programme which has already delivered a 20% increase in first-time fix on day-to-day repairs.
- We're also developing new systems and ways of working to improve how we manage our data and information, and how we communicate with residents, particularly vulnerable residents who may need different types of support

However, we are operating in a very challenging economic environment, with rising interest rates, inflated costs and capped rents putting pressure on our ability to spend. We have committed to investing significant sums to bring our homes and services in line with changing regulatory standards, and the decisions we make are centred around safeguarding that investment.

Executive Summary

L&Q welcomes Government's proposal to establish new towns for London. New towns can play a key role in addressing the housing crisis in the long run and can help to raise the economic profile of an area. This is of critical importance in London where the UK's housing and homelessness crisis is at its most acute.

L&Q's biggest learning about how to deliver homes and communities at scale is that partnership working is key. Collaboration between partners that share values can unlock additional funding opportunities and brings together a broader range of skills and relationships, as demonstrated by the L&Q and Mayor of London joint venture at Barking Riverside.

We would like to emphasise to the London Assembly the vital role regeneration plays, not only in addressing the housing crisis but also in creating new towns. Delivering new towns requires a regenerative strategy that leverages existing assets while prioritising the wellbeing of residents. Any propositions for new towns should consider the possibility of regeneration with key actors in the area. L&Q is a stakeholder in the Chase Park new town in Enfield as we manage over 3,000 homes in the local area, and we would be keen to collaborate with the GLA and other local stakeholders on any planned development.

L&Q encourages the London Assembly to view social housing as critical infrastructure. Its development should be tied to the delivery of schools, transport and other essential projects. New town developments are by nature long and multi-phased, meaning timescales often last decades and must work across parliamentary terms. We advocate for the London Assembly to consider how social housing development can be de-politicised to ensure a cross-partisan, long-term strategy and thus consistent funding.

We advocate for the diversification of grant funding to ensure housing meets Londoners' needs. We would support funding programmes which account for each bedspace created, as opposed to focusing solely on units built, with higher grant rates for larger homes. This is important given the extremely long wait times for family-sized social rented homes in London. We would also encourage expanding the use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds in London to include social and affordable housing development.

Response

Question 1: What are the conditions that need to be in place to make new towns a success in London?

As one of the long-term custodians of Barking Riverside, L&Q believes that early investment in infrastructure, secure funding, and partnership governance are the key conditions required to make a new town successful in London. Social housing should be viewed as critical infrastructure to provide the consistent strategic and financial certainty required for a lengthy, multi-phase project like a new town. From our experience, we have also found that early commitment to develop major transport links is critical to ensure accessibility, especially in London. The ability of all investment partners to take a holistic long-term view, rather than looking for short-term financial returns, is also important in ensuring the success of complex, large scale projects such as these. We also emphasise the need for funding specifically earmarked to enable sites to come forward, for example, to support providers through the planning phase and in securing vacant possession.

We recommend that large scale landholdings, where a large area of land is owned by a single entity, are included to enable the strategic sequencing of homes and infrastructure. Strategic sequencing refers to the buying and selling of homes at a pace in line with generated revenue. By including large scale landholdings, a development can support the provision of its own infrastructure, as a single owner will control the pace of delivery. This can prevent stalled sites and encourages cohesive infrastructure. Where large-scale landholdings are in place, mechanisms like gap funding can be deployed more effectively, reducing repayment risk through coordinated delivery and predictable build-out rates.

Design and planning conditions, including the use of robust masterplans and design codes, should be utilised to ensure new towns are cohesive. Masterplans should identify critical enabling infrastructure, establish phase-linked delivery triggers, and set out transparent cost-recovery arrangements. This enables essential infrastructure to be delivered early – supporting place quality, market confidence, and community formation – whilst ensuring costs are recouped as land values mature.

We also believe it is vital that long-term stewardship and governance arrangements are embedded from the outset. A holistic approach focuses on aligning the handling of land, infrastructure and environmental sites and engaging with communities. Responsible resource management would support the longevity and sustainability of new towns.

Part A. How should citizen engagement, consultation and coproduction inform the development of new towns?

We wholeheartedly believe that facilitating the creation of new communities, whether through regeneration or the creation of new towns, must be done in close collaboration with current and future residents. L&Q has successfully engaged with residents in its development at Barking Riverside, where the co-creation of community facilities and public spaces with a social impact is central to the vision for the development.

As an example of this, Barking Riverside Limited (BRL) created Thames Futures in 2019, a bespoke social impact framework to ensure that residents shape the vision of this emerging neighbourhood. Driven by a desire to find out what residents thought about their local area, as well as their hopes for the

future, BRL worked with The Young Foundation over the course of a year. Over 1,000 separate engagements with residents across Barking Riverside, Barking Reach, Thames View and Scrattons Farm took place. This vision is refreshed annually to ensure it can develop with the arrival of incoming residents.

Residents of the development are also directly involved in the long-term ownership and management of the estate via a Community Infrastructure Company (CIC). In 2019, BRL ran a co-design process with residents and stakeholders to consider the most appropriate governance structure of the CIC. Residents were invited to join an independently chaired Learning Forum, which developed a set of recommendations for the future of the Barking Riverside CIC. The CIC will be responsible for estate maintenance, generating estate income, and finding ways to leverage community benefit from its activities.

Part B. How can delivery partners ensure that essential infrastructure is in place to ensure the success of new towns?

A clear framework for infrastructure gap funding should be established at the outset of the planning process. Major new settlements require significant upfront investment in transport, utilities, schools, healthcare, and green infrastructure before land value uplift or development receipts are realised. Gap funding mechanisms should, therefore, bridge the period between early delivery and later revenue generation, drawing on a combination of public forward funding, recoverable loans, land value capture, or revolving funds repaid as development progresses.

Early investment in infrastructure projects has been a critical factor in the success to date of Barking Riverside. The development includes two primary schools, two SEN schools, and one secondary school; two community hubs; a new London Overground station; an Uber Boat by Thames Clipper Jetty; and other local amenities, including shops, play parks and bike lanes. The partnership between L&Q and the Mayor of London has allowed access to different funding sources and meant we could tap into a wider range of skills and relationships.

This experience has demonstrated how delivery partners can work together through shared values to produce successful new towns. These values include strong partnership, dedication to community-led development, commitment to building affordable homes and a focus on long-term objectives rather than short-term profits.

Question 2: What new opportunities could new town designation in London unlock that existing planning tools do not?

Using masterplans and long-term funding, registered providers can plan at 10,000 plus home scales, effectively contributing to urgent need for new homes in London. Furthermore, new towns offer greater certainty for long-term investors, like L&Q, encouraging growth and development, as well as the potential for stronger land value capture. There are also earlier and clearer mechanisms for infrastructure financing involved in new town developments, compared to existing planning tools.

Alongside this, new town designation in London could offer the opportunity for streamlined, focused powers that reduce planning delays which are contributing to a slowdown in the number of housing

starts. Reports outline that just 19% of major planning applications were decided within the 13-week statutory timeframe between July to September 2025.¹ The number of projects granted planning permission also declined between the year to 2019 (quarter 1), from 2,381 projects to 1,000 in the year to 2025 (quarter 2). This is a 58% decrease and is clearly detrimental to housebuilding targets.²

Question 3: What density, design and placemaking principles should underpin London's new towns?

There needs to be a balance of key infrastructure, including housing, transport, businesses, schools, and energy centres. Careful curation of non-residential uses, evolving over time as the community grows, is essential to the socioeconomic success of a new town. A well-considered mix of employment, retail, leisure, community, and civic uses creates the conditions for a genuinely self-sustaining place, reducing car dependency, supporting local economic activity, and fostering social cohesion.

As part of this, we would encourage transport-oriented density around major nodes to ensure that public transport is easily accessible from key areas. Other key infrastructure includes the need for mixed-use centres, which can be delivered in phases. The sequencing and location of non-residential uses matters as much as their overall composition. Early phases must deliver sufficient activity to establish viability and footfall before the wider community reaches critical mass. This requires a deliberate strategy of anchoring uses at accessible, well-connected nodes from the outset, and allowing the mix to deepen and diversify as population grows and market conditions mature. Land use should remain flexible and responsive to changing economic conditions and community needs, rather than rigidly prescribing uses that may not be viable or relevant decades into delivery.

We recommend that green and blue infrastructure is integrated early in the development process and that Design Codes are used for long-term consistency. We would also encourage diverse, mixed-tenure housing types to be included in planning designs, to ensure that housing meets the needs of Londoners in new towns.

Alongside the development of new infrastructure, we would stress the positive impacts of regeneration and in-fill sites for new towns. In London, land is scarce and expensive, and project viability is a concern. L&Q is wary of developing new towns at the expense of regeneration in London given the inter-related nature of the two. Our strategic approach to regeneration helps to address issues such as overcrowding, lack of private amenity spaces, and disrepair. Research has revealed the benefits of regeneration, as residents at our Acton Gardens estate have reported significantly better wellbeing, reduced safety concerns, and improved perceptions of the built environment following the works.

Question 4: What lessons can be learned from the past delivery of Mayoral Development Corporations (MDCs), Opportunity Areas (OAs), and the original development of Thamesmead (in

¹ [MHCLG, Planning applications in England: July to September 2025 - statistical release \(December 2025\)](#)

² [GLA, Housing in London 2025 \(January 2026\)](#)

the late 1960s to early 1970s) to inform the development of new towns for London in the present day?

The OA framework has delivered real results in some locations. Stratford and the Olympic Park – where we've delivered homes at Chobham Manor through our joint venture with Taylor Wimpey – are a success story. The work in Nine Elms and Battersea Power Station has produced significant housing numbers and as well as genuinely affordable housing provision. These have delivered because they had a specific institutional driver: a mayoral development corporation, a major anchor project, or a single large landowner with both the capital and the incentive to bring forward comprehensive development. Before meaningful delivery is possible in these areas, we need an honest review of each OA, identifying which have genuine short-to-medium term delivery potential and which require a more fundamental intervention.

For present-day new towns in London, we would recommend long-term stewardship structures are used to avoid fragmentation in design and development. Furthermore, L&Q support public-private partnership models, like that used in the development of Barking Riverside, to support resilience. Food and beverage sites should also be offered early to attract visitors and develop community to boost local economies.

Question 5: What lessons can be learned from international examples of new towns?

A strong example is Hammarby, a 200-hectare mixed-use district built on contaminated former industrial land south of Stockholm, housing around 28,000 residents and 10,000 workers. Its success rests on a combination of municipal land ownership, which enabled coordinated master planning and infrastructure delivery; an ambitious closed-loop sustainability model embedded from the outset; high-density, mixed-use development anchored by exceptional public transport; and meaningful community engagement.

Another example is Vauban, a 5,000-resident mixed-use district built on a former French military base on the edge of Freiburg, developed from the early 1990s under municipal land ownership and guided by ambitious ecological and social principles. Its distinctiveness lies not only in its sustainability credentials, but in the degree to which future residents were involved as co-creators from the outset. The result is a car-light, high-amenity neighbourhood that has become a global reference point for community-led urbanism, demonstrating that the most ambitious places are often those where people have had the greatest say in shaping them.

Question 6: How were the proposed new town locations in London identified, what evidence and criteria informed these choices? Are there more London sites that could or should be designated in the future?

L&Q is uncertain on the criteria which has been used to identify the current proposed sites for new towns. We would be grateful for further clarification on the criteria and the factors that will need to be present for towns to be identified. However, we believe the most appropriate sites would be those with existing transport links, or the ability to create links.

The benefits of new towns are to lift the economic profile of an area, by bringing new and revived infrastructure and attracting businesses. One criterion that should therefore be considered is whether an area would benefit from economic regeneration.

Part A. What governance structures should be implemented to ensure the long term success of new towns in London?

N/A

Question 7: What roles should the Mayor, GLA, London boroughs, and central Government each play in planning, funding and delivering new towns in London, and how can Londoners be meaningfully involved in shaping them?

The process of delivering a new town is complex and often lengthy, and in some cases may require the repurchase of homes from existing freeholders and leaseholders. In the most exceptional circumstances, Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) may also be necessary to enable progress. While CPOs are always a measure of last resort, there are occasions where they are essential to unlock the delivery of a new town, such as on stalled sites and empty land. Ensuring that adequate funding is available to compensate and support affected residents appropriately is therefore critical, placing even greater importance on securing a robust and reliable funding framework.

Regarding London boroughs and local authorities, L&Q believes that they should retain ownership of land where new sites are being built and lease it for development. This would ensure that these authorities have a source of income at a time when finances are stretched. Alongside this, local authorities could also play a role in reforming the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), so that CIL money could be re-directed and utilised to deliver social housing on new developments.

L&Q would also welcome support from central Government, the Mayor and the GLA through the introduction of a range of grant levels for social housing, depending on the size of the unit being built. This would ensure that larger grants were available for larger homes, which are in high demand. As noted by the London Assembly Housing Committee in their January 2026 report, the current SAHP is not designed in a way that enables or incentivises the delivery of family-sized or accessible homes, which are more expensive to deliver. Across London, the average wait for a 1-bedroom property is 2 years and 3 months compared to 6 years and 3 months for a family-sized home of 4 or more bedrooms. For this reason, we would suggest funding could also be remodelled to focus on cost per bed space, rather than units.

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London Legacy Development Corporation Ref No. NT010

Planning and Regeneration Committee Call for Evidence: New Towns for London

London Legacy Development Corporation Response

1. What are the conditions that need to be in place to make new towns a success in London?

For new towns in London to succeed, they must be conceived as comprehensive, long-term place-making programmes rather than simply housing-led developments, underpinned by strong governance, significant early infrastructure investment, and with a clear commitment to inclusive growth embedded throughout.

The experience of London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) in regenerating Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park shows how strong leadership can provide the strategic direction and stability required to deliver a new town – from maintaining high design standards to ensuring long-term objectives are prioritised over short-term pressures. Through this approach, LLDC has been able to go beyond simply building homes to creating high-quality, sustainable, and inclusive neighbourhoods supported by a vibrant ecosystem of culture, education, and business and all of the opportunities these bring to local people. This has created places where people can not only live but live well.

Central to LLDC's approach has been a commitment to inclusive growth – ensuring that regeneration generates genuine opportunities for local people. While not all of the cultural, educational or creative opportunities will be relevant to the proposed new towns in London, at the very least, housebuilding programmes should generate new jobs and apprenticeships and those involved in planning and delivery should closely consider how local people can be supported to access these through skills and employment pathways.

Since its establishment in 2012, LLDC has placed high-quality design, sustainability and long-term place stewardship at the heart of development. Early and coordinated infrastructure investment has been essential, ensuring that social infrastructure such as schools, healthcare, and community spaces are prioritised in advance of housing, creating inclusive, resilient and future-proofed places. For example, in Stratford, three schools were built ahead of residential development to benefit both new and existing communities.

Transport connectivity is another key condition for the success of new towns in London. In LLDC's experience, access to high-quality public transport has been crucial in supporting large-scale residential and commercial development.

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Connectivity with surrounding neighbourhoods has also been central, looking beyond red line boundaries to ensure new development stitches seamlessly into the existing area. By prioritising physical, social and economic integration, regeneration can extend its benefits beyond the site itself and support growth across the wider area. This integration also supports inclusive economic growth by ensuring that new skills, training and employment opportunities are accessible to surrounding communities.

a. How should citizen engagement, consultation and coproduction inform the development of new towns?

Involving local residents from the outset, through governance structures, co-design processes, and trust-building, is essential to secure early buy-in and ensure new towns remain relevant for future generations.

LLDC engaged local residents early in the masterplanning process using formal and informal consultation to ensure communities felt part of the changes in their area. For example, The Hackney Wick Cultural Interest Group (2010) was an early mechanism for local organisations and voices to directly engage with regeneration work.

Engagement and partnership with key community and grassroots anchor organisations has continued to be essential for building trust and creating meaningful impact, whether that be through existing community structures and networks, or forums such as Park Panel or Your Neighbourhood Talks. The [Elevate](#) programme has given young people genuine influence by recruiting residents from local boroughs, equipping them with leadership and planning skills, and embedding their input at every stage of development, with paid roles and observer positions on the LLDC Board to ensure youth perspectives are included at a strategic level.

This approach reflects a broader commitment to inclusive growth, ensuring that local people – particularly young people – have a voice in shaping regeneration while also gaining skills and experience that can support future employment opportunities.

The Built Environment Access Panel has facilitated meaningful discussions on accessibility, inclusive design, and local priorities. These participatory models are now being piloted more broadly across London, demonstrating a commitment to community-centred planning.

Post-occupancy evaluation work, such as an [initial study](#) at Chobham Manor, has allowed LLDC to understand the lived experiences of residents and transfer lessons into future developments. Embedding engagement and co-design into developer contracts, procurement processes, and quality evaluations ensures that community input translates into tangible outcomes, creating high-quality, inclusive neighbourhoods that deliver lasting social and economic benefits for both existing and new communities.

In 2025 LLDC established the [Community Anchor Network](#), a platform for collaboration and an example of how we're embedding community voices into governance, policy, and place-based decision-making.

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Ultimately, LLDC has moved beyond consultation to embedding genuine community co-design and co-creation of place.

b. How can delivery partners ensure that essential infrastructure is in place to ensure the success of new towns?

For new towns to be successful, substantial public investment is needed to unlock delivery. At Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, major public sector investment has been used to attract and leverage private sector contributions and partnerships, enabling large-scale regeneration.

This investment has funded critical enabling infrastructure, such as transport, utilities, and energy networks, laying the foundation for successful neighbourhoods. Early public investment can also be used to assemble and remediate land, capturing land value uplift that private developers could reinvest in schools, health facilities, and community centres.

Equally important is investment in the skills and employment infrastructure that enables local people to benefit from growth. At Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, this has included targeted programmes to support residents into work, apprenticeships and training linked to new sectors emerging on the Park, particularly construction, culture, education, technology and the creative industries.

Crucially, LLDC has not only delivered programmes directly, but worked as a convenor, bringing together a wide variety of public and private partners to help shape and contribute to programmes such as those at [Build East](#) and the [Good Growth Hub](#) as well as educational initiatives including [East Summer School](#).

Ultimately, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park would not have achieved the success it has without close public and private sector collaboration; sharing risk, coordinating investment and unlocking value. This same spirit of collaboration and partnership will no doubt be essential to the emerging new towns programme too.

LLDC has been able to ensure essential infrastructure is provided by embedding requirements into masterplans, developer contracts, and procurement processes. This guarantees that transport, schools, healthcare, and green spaces are prioritised alongside housing to accommodate future growth generated by new neighbourhoods.

Embedding social value, skills and employment outcomes within procurement and development agreements can also ensure that regeneration delivers measurable benefits for local communities alongside physical infrastructure.

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2. What density, design and placemaking principles should underpin London's new towns?

Density, design and placemaking principles must respond to the evolving needs of both people and place over the long-term, ensuring neighbourhoods remain resilient, adaptable and inclusive.

LLDC has prioritised a diverse mix of housing tenures, delivering homes that cater to a range of household sizes and life stages to meet housing needs. This includes high levels of family housing as well as multi-generational homes at Chobham Manor.

Inclusive design and lifetime accessibility are also a key consideration. This commitment is reinforced through the appointment of an Inclusive Design Champion, the establishment of an independent Built Environment Access Panel, and the development of Inclusive Design Standards. Together, these measures aim to remove barriers and enable people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to participate fully in everyday life.

Ensuring that design and public realm respond to local context including history, geography, economy and culture should also play a key role in shaping the delivery of new towns. Hackney Wick and Fish Island is one of London's most distinctive creative communities. Our regeneration efforts have meant not only recognising this but helping to create the right conditions for these communities and businesses to flourish. The Hackney Wick Creative Enterprise Zone (HWFI CEZ) has been central to this work. Funded by the Mayor of London and managed jointly by London Borough of Tower Hamlets, London Borough of Hackney and LLDC, it has helped ensure that both established and emerging businesses benefit from creative sector growth support, along with the infrastructure and networks that build a resilient creative cluster.

3. What lessons can be learned from the past delivery of Mayoral Development Corporations (MDCs), Opportunity Areas (OAs), and the original development of Thamesmead (in the late 1960s to early 1970s) to inform the development of new towns for London in the present day?

In addition to the lessons learned outlined in Section 1, LLDC's former role as a Local Planning Authority from 2012 to 2024 was crucial to success. In contrast to previous Development Corporations, LLDC held a comprehensive set of planning powers which included responsibility for preparing a statutory Local Plan and determining all planning applications. This enabled coordinated planning across four borough boundaries under a single authority, ensuring consistency and joined-up delivery. The former LLDC Planning Committee, comprising local councillors and independent members, combined democratic accountability with technical expertise, supporting robust decision-making. Operating as a single Local Planning Authority was therefore instrumental in enabling timely, large-scale

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regeneration. Such a model could be particularly relevant for future new towns spanning multiple authority areas.

6. What roles should the Mayor, GLA, London boroughs, and central Government each play in planning, funding and delivering new towns in London?

In LLDC's view, clearly defined roles and responsibilities for local and regional government need to be determined from the outset, covering funding, control, and accountability arrangements. The local level can lead democratic engagement and oversee local service provision, while ensuring long-term stewardship. Strategic authorities can coordinate infrastructure delivery, align town planning with wider growth strategies, and secure cross-boundary collaboration. For Central Government, this could mean providing funding and legislative support.

Another key area of importance is ensuring lessons are learnt are captured and shared between existing new towns and current Mayoral Development Corporations for future developments. There is a wealth of expertise across the GLA group, and the [Kerslake Review](#) recommended that networks of expertise be established to improve knowledge exchange. These mechanisms are now in place, helping to ensure lessons are learned and not lost.

7. What are the potential environmental impacts of new town development in London on food and water security, climate resilience and access to green space?

New town development in London could present a significant opportunity to strengthen environmental resilience and enhance green infrastructure through strategic planning.

Urban design should be landscape-led, with nature and biodiversity woven into the fabric of new developments, supported by interconnected green corridors that help them grow and thrive. This is essential not only to ecological health, but to climate resilience and human health and wellbeing.

While some proposed new towns such as Crews Hill in Enfield will be delivered on greenbelt rather than brownfield land as in the Park's case, there are still lessons to be learnt from LLDC's experience. High-quality green infrastructure and biodiversity net gain can only be achieved if there is adequate investment in the necessary expertise – from landscape architects to landscape managers – to deliver and maintain it, supported by clear and consistent policy.

Future-proofing development has been integral to Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Climate resilience, biodiversity and environmental sustainability have been embedded within strategic masterplanning, ensuring that new neighbourhoods contribute positively to

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London's adaptation to climate change. For example, at Stratford Waterfront, green corridors, flood-resilient landscaping and generous open spaces have been designed to manage surface water, mitigate overheating, enhance biodiversity and support long-term ecological health. This integrated landscape approach not only strengthens resilience to extreme weather but also provides high-quality access to green space, supporting physical and mental wellbeing – a key area of focus as part of LLDC's [Inclusive Growth Framework](#).

Water management and sustainable drainage have been incorporated as core infrastructure, helping to reduce flood risk and improve environmental performance across the Park. In parallel, transport infrastructure has been planned alongside development, including enhanced pedestrian and cycling routes, promoting active travel and reducing carbon emissions.

Pour une Renaissance Urbaine Ref No. NT011



Submission – Pour une Renaissance Urbaine (PuRU) London Assembly – Planning and Regeneration Committee Call for Evidence: New Towns for London

About Pour une Renaissance Urbaine

Pour une Renaissance Urbaine (PURU) is a French non-profit promoting New Urbanism and contextual, human-scale architecture. We work at the intersection of design quality, delivery vehicles, and public legitimacy. We believe that, in practice, long-term build-out depends as much on trust and place quality as it does on planning policy.

We submit evidence with a Greater Paris perspective. Our French reference projects are not “New Towns” in the UK sense, but they are relevant because they show how metropolitan authorities can deliver large amounts of housing through comprehensive place-making, strong public delivery tools, and transport integration, often on constrained sites and under political scrutiny.

We are also finalizing an English-language book on this matter of New Urbanism, which should be out in the following month. It gives a particular focus on delivery, governance, and the role of beauty and urban form in public acceptance.

Summary of key points (for the Committee)

1. A “spatial model first” approach (street network, blocks, centres, public realm) reduces risk and accelerates delivery.
2. A dedicated delivery vehicle with long-term accountability is essential for land assembly, infrastructure, phasing, and quality control.
3. Transport is not to be seen as just a “supporting detail”: it shapes viability, acceptance, and the ability to sustain compact, mixed-use centres.
4. High-quality design is not a luxury, but rather a risk-management tool (lower objections, stronger absorption, more political durability).
5. Consultation works best when it is structured around concrete trade-offs (connections, heights, parks, schools, parking, phasing), not vague preferences.

1. Conditions needed to make New Towns a success in London

1.1 Spatial model first, then numbers

Successful large-scale settlements typically start with a clear spatial model: a connected street network, a hierarchy of public spaces, identifiable centres, and walkable catchments for daily needs. Only then are housing numbers translated into blocks, plots, heights, and typologies. This “form-first” sequence reduces later redesign, helps align multiple developers, and makes density politically feasible.

French illustration: In Greater Paris, large projects such as Clamart’s Panorama show how a coherent framework (public spaces, landscape structure, equipment and mixed-use intent) can be embedded from the outset, which supports phased delivery without losing the original logic over time.

1.2 A delivery vehicle that integrates land, infrastructure, phasing and quality

New towns require a body that can do four things over 10–20 years : assemble land (or coordinate control), deliver infrastructure, manage phasing/plot release, and enforce a consistent quality framework. The legal form can vary, but the capability must be unified and accountable.

French illustration: metropolitan projects often rely on a comprehensive development framework (including ZAC-type operations) and public development companies (SEM/SPL) to coordinate land servicing, public realm and equipment delivery, then release serviced plots to private developers under defined rules.

1.3 Infrastructure-first, with enforceable triggers

The credibility of a new settlement depends on visible early delivery of transport, schools, health, civic spaces and local centres. The practical lesson is to attach enforceable triggers to development—plot releases, occupation thresholds, or binding phasing conditions—so that essential services arrive early rather than as a distant promise.

French illustration: in large redevelopment districts, major public facilities (schools, childcare, sports facilities) and high-quality public realm are often programmed as integral components of the operation, not optional later phases. This “early civic anchor” approach increases public acceptance and supports market absorption.

1.4 Beauty and identity as delivery tools

In practice, design quality often reduces risk and accelerates delivery: people object less to projects they find coherent, attractive and locally legible. Quality supports value creation, which in turn supports value capture to fund public realm and facilities. This is not an argument for “ornament at any cost”; it is an argument that a durable urban form and contextual architecture pay back through lower friction and stronger long-term performance.

French illustration: Le Plessis-Robinson demonstrates a long-term, consistent approach to human-scale urban form and architectural coherence across multiple phases, contributing to acceptance and a stable political coalition over time. While not a “new town”, it is an instructive case of continuity and identity as an enabling condition for delivery.

2. Citizen engagement and consultation

The consultation question is often framed as “how much consultation” rather than “what kind”. Our experience is that the most effective consultation is structured around tangible, understandable choices:

- where the centre(s) and civic buildings will sit,
- which streets connect to where (permeability),
- where parks, schools and community facilities go,
- what heights and typologies are acceptable in specific locations,
- parking strategy and traffic management,
- what arrives in phase 1, 2, 3 (and the triggers).

This approach avoids “design by referendum” while still giving residents meaningful influence over the elements that shape daily life.

French illustration: metropolitan projects commonly combine formal consultation steps with more practical formats (site walks, thematic workshops, public meetings). When done well, this clarifies trade-offs early and reduces late-stage conflict.

3. **Funding, affordability and “how can you pay for quality?”**

A recurring misconception is that high-quality public realm, green-blue infrastructure, and social housing are separate “extras” that must be financed on top of housing. In most comprehensive delivery models, they are financed through an integrated balance:

- land value creation and value capture: value is created by transport access, public realm and a coherent plan, then part of this value is reinvested into infrastructure and facilities;
- cross-subsidy within the overall programme: market units, serviced plots and mixed-use components can help carry elements that do not pay for themselves directly;
- phasing that aligns cashflow with delivery: plot release and infrastructure timing are sequenced to maintain financial and political credibility.

Green-blue infrastructure (e.g., water features) is often affordable when framed as essential infrastructure (stormwater management, cooling, biodiversity), not as decorative landscaping. Underground parking is expensive, but can be rational when it enables a better surface city: streets, trees, squares, active ground floors, and reduced dominance of surface parking.

French illustration: Clamart’s Panorama includes substantial public realm and a major water component that functions as infrastructure as well as amenity. The broader lesson is that “amenity” and “infrastructure” should be planned together, then financed through a comprehensive model rather than negotiated item by item.

4. **Transport and the viability of New Towns**

Transport is central for three reasons:

- viability: strong transit supports higher intensities and mixed-use centres, making local services viable;
- acceptance: residents tolerate growth more readily when there is an alternative to car dependence;
- long-term sustainability: mode share, congestion, and public health outcomes are shaped early by the movement framework.

A practical recommendation is to design the settlement around “transit-ready urbanism”: centres and higher intensity in walkable catchments around high-quality transit; a

connected street network that supports buses as well as walking and cycling; and early delivery of the “minimum viable town” (centre + frequent transit + civic anchors).

French illustration: in Greater Paris, large housing growth tends to be concentrated along established transport corridors (including tram corridors). The operational lesson is that transport is not merely a mitigation for growth; it is the organising principle that makes a compact, walkable model feasible.

5. Governance and pace: how leaders “move quickly” without losing legitimacy

Speed usually comes from four aligned levers:

- a delivery vehicle with clear delegated powers,
- a stable spatial framework and design code that guides multiple developers,
- early credibility on infrastructure timing (especially transport and schools),
- political consistency across the multi-year build-out.

The question is not whether a mayor “decides alone”, but whether leadership can set an ambition and keep it coherent across time while maintaining legitimacy. In successful cases, leadership makes the key trade-offs, then locks them into a framework (plan + code + delivery triggers + quality review) that outlasts individual decisions.

French illustration: both Clamart (metropolitan-scale projects) and Le Plessis-Robinson (long-term urban transformation) show that continuity of vision, combined with a robust delivery apparatus, can be as important as the initial plan.

6. Measuring success: what to monitor

We recommend that “success” be evaluated through observable indicators rather than impressions:

- absorption and occupancy (housing take-up),
- high-street vitality (vacancy, footfall proxies),
- timing of schools/health/community facilities relative to occupations,
- mode share and congestion outcomes,
- public realm usage and maintenance quality,
- safety perceptions and everyday walkability,

- long-term stewardship arrangements (who maintains what, and how it is financed).

Closing thought

New towns should not be assessed only on unit numbers. They should be assessed on whether they create durable, mixed, walkable centres with long-term governance and stewardship. The goal is to create places that remain attractive and functional once the last unit is built. From a New Urbanism perspective, the central test is long-term: does the settlement still work socially, economically and environmentally after the build-out period ends?

We would be happy to provide additional written material aligned with the Committee's focus, including our forthcoming English-language book, "For an Urban Renaissance".

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Social Life Ref No. NT012

Towards Socially Sustainable New Towns

This response is from [Social Life](#). Our work is about understanding how peoples' day-to-day experience of local places is shaped by the built environment. We are social enterprise, created by the [Young Foundation](#) in 2012, to become a specialist centre of research and innovation about the social life of communities. Social Life builds on the ground-breaking work of two leading social thinkers: [Michael Young](#), sociologist and social entrepreneur who established the [Institute of Community Studies](#) in 1954 to bring social research to post-war urban planning; and [Professor Sir Peter Hall](#), one of the world's most respected and widely-published thinkers about urban planning and former Senior Research Fellow at the Young Foundation.

Question 1 - What are the conditions that need to be in place to make new towns a success in London?

- a. How should citizen engagement, consultation and coproduction inform the development of new towns?
- b. How can delivery partners ensure that essential infrastructure is in place to ensure the success of new towns?

Building new towns that can flourish and become socially successful is as important as ensuring that new towns are economically and environmentally sustainable. This is not a new challenge; there is much to be learnt from past experience of creating new settlements and regeneration schemes. In the past we have often seen how easy it is to overlook the social needs of communities in the drive for delivery and the cost of this for new and existing communities. The social sustainability of new towns is an issue of public value and social equity.

Drawing on Social Life's [Design for Social Sustainability framework](#)³ (commissioned by the Homes and Communities Agency to understand why new settlements fail or succeed), a key condition for success is creating thriving communities that support wellbeing and resilience and sit comfortably within their existing context. New housing development should contribute to local identity, support local economics and create facilities for new and longer-standing residents from parks to shops and schools. To achieve this, we have listed the below conditions based on our work across regeneration schemes in London.

³ https://www.social-life.co/media/files/DESIGN_FOR_SOCIAL_SUSTAINABILITY_3.pdf

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In the shorter-term:

- **Start with an understanding of the social dimensions of each proposed location.** Audit data describing social and community needs alongside Social Life's [Community Dynamics](#)⁴ data to build an initial data portrait. Community Dynamics predicts, at the hyper-local level, how residents living in or close to the sites of new towns feel about where they live. This includes feelings of wellbeing to perceptions about neighbourliness, safety, belonging and social cohesion. This throws light on the strengths and weaknesses of local communities and how they support residents' individual and collective wellbeing. We recently mapped this data in our [Towards Socially Sustainable New Towns](#)⁵ publication. We mapped data for three new towns that are proposed for early action, including Chase Park and Crews Hill, Enfield, to understand the social strengths and vulnerabilities of people living in communities where new towns are proposed.
- **Assess social infrastructure:** Assess existing social infrastructure and social supports, considering how they are used and by whom. Social infrastructure should be defined widely to include informal supports like cafes and on- and off-line networks. This can dovetail with or become part of early engagement with residents living in or around areas proposed for new town development. Our work on [Connective Social Infrastructure](#)⁶ for the Mayor of London with Hawkins\Brown sets out the findings of the Good Growth by Design research inquiry into how social infrastructure is supporting social integration.
- **Develop early-stage social infrastructure and social sustainability strategies:** Develop early-stage social infrastructure and social sustainability strategies, working with communities and agencies across sectors. These can set out a phased route to thriving communities. These must maximise the use of existing assets, temporary and meanwhile provision and incremental development of social infrastructure. Plans and strategies should serve different groups and interests of local communities within and beyond the red line of development. In our fourth social sustainability assessment in [Acton Gardens \(South Acton Estate\)](#)⁷, we found that physical improvements to housing design and public realm must be matched with social strategies to ensure that new and long-standing residents mix, rather than live parallel lives.

In the longer-term, delivery partners should consider:

- **Carrying out in-depth research:** Research should be carried out with residents of areas identified for new towns to understand how communities are faring today, as well as their hopes and worries for the future. This could involve training community

⁴ https://www.social-life.co/publication/understanding_local_areas/

⁵ https://www.social-life.co/publication/towards_socially_sustainable-new_towns/

⁶ https://www.social-life.co/publication/connective_social_infrastructure/

⁷ https://www.social-life.co/publication/south_acton_fourth_social_assess/

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researchers as part of the work. In [Clapham Park Estate](#)⁸ Social Life trained six paid community researchers to support carrying out a social impact assessment. We worked with them to co-design a resident survey, carry out street interviews and reflect on the findings. They helped us identify priority issues and contextualise the data, bringing insights from their experience.

- **Long-term partnerships:** Maintaining ongoing engagement with residents through governance and stewardship structures enabling them to take part in decision-making action. Our social impact assessment in [Woodberry Down](#)⁹ highlights that a successful new community relies on effective long-term partnerships between resident groups (such as the Woodberry Down Community Organisation), the local authority, developers, social landlords and community organisations.
- **Time, patience and sustained investment:** Delivery partners must recognise that creating cohesive, thriving communities cannot happen overnight. Social Life's social impact assessments at [Woodberry Down](#) and [Acton Gardens \(South Acton Estate\)](#)¹⁰ indicate that it can take time for local social networks and a sense of belonging to fully develop in newly built communities.

To ensure the meaningful participation of communities in the development of new towns, top-down consultation must be avoided. Our work indicates that the following methods can be effective in supporting this success:

- **Community Researchers:** In the [Clapham Park Estate](#) social impact assessment and the [Brent Youth Anchor](#)¹¹ project, Social Life trained local residents and young people as community researchers. This approach empowers local people, gathers more honest insights, helps to build local trust, and supports reaching groups who may be less engaged with development consultations.
- **Community Champions:** The [Sevenfields Community Health Champions](#)¹² were five Lewisham residents who came together to understand how health equity can be boosted in Downham, south Catford, and Grove Park. The central aim of the project was to develop plans and projects to reduce health inequalities that were rooted in lived experience. The Community Health Champions brought different skills and experiences and were involved in many different activities in employment and as local activists. Embedded resident's approaches to social cohesion can ensure new towns in

⁸ https://www.social-life.co/blog/post/evidence_from_community_researchers/

⁹ https://www.social-life.co/publication/understanding_woodberry_down_summary/

¹⁰ https://www.social-life.co/publication/south_acton_fourth_social_assess/

¹¹ https://www.social-life.co/publication/new_youth_hub_for_church_end/

¹² https://www.social-life.co/publication/tackling_health_inequalities/

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London prosper and integrate diverse communities, addressing inequalities.

- **Participatory budgeting:** Social Life's [Social Value of Regeneration in Tottenham](#)¹³ report highlights the use of the Transformation Challenge Award, where local residents were trained to form a Strategic Board to score criteria and directly award grants for local socio-economic projects, giving them real financial decision-making power.
- **Community ownership and long-term governance:** Engagement should inform the creation of formal, community-led governance structures that outlast the development phase. Our [Review of Urban Community Land Trusts](#)¹⁴ and our recent work developing a [Decent Neighbourhood Standard with Witton Lodge](#),¹⁵ Birmingham, both highlight that establishing structures like Community Land Trusts (CLTs) or Development Trusts ensures residents have ongoing control and a financial stake in the area.

Question 3 - What density, design and placemaking principles should underpin London's new towns?

Insights from the [Woodberry Down](#)¹⁶, [Kidbrooke Village](#)¹⁷, and [Acton Gardens \(South Acton Estate\)](#)¹⁸, social impact assessments highlight several core principles:

- **Tenure-blind design:** Developments must avoid visible distinctions between private and social housing. Gated areas within new developments weaken integration and create segregated spaces; inclusive design allows people from different backgrounds to share community and leisure facilities naturally.
- **Third spaces:** High-density living requires actively programmed spaces where people from different backgrounds can mix (such as shared courtyards, cafes, and co-located services) to encourage informal, day-to-day encounters between neighbours.
- **Adaptability:** Masterplans must avoid being overly prescriptive and inflexible. Planners should design flexible infrastructure that leaves space for residents to influence the future use of public areas, allowing spaces to evolve as the community's demographics

¹³ https://www.social-life.co/publication/social_value_regeneration_Tottenham/

¹⁴ <https://www.social-life.co/publication/review-urban-community-land-trusts-england/>

¹⁵ https://www.social-life.co/publication/developing_a_decent_neighbourhood_standard/

¹⁶ https://www.social-life.co/publication/understanding_woodberry_down_summary/

¹⁷ https://www.social-life.co/media/files/Living_at_Kidbrooke_Village.pdf

¹⁸ https://www.social-life.co/publication/south_acton_fourth_social_assess/

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change over time.

- **Retrofit, demolition, rebuild:** A need to minimise the negative environmental consequences of demolition and rebuilding making better decisions about the balance between social, environmental and economic trade-offs. This is particularly important in Thamesmead.

Question 5 - What lessons can be learned from international examples of new towns?

Drawing on a range of case studies, our [Design for Social Sustainability](#)¹⁹ report, commissioned by the Homes and Communities Agency, highlights that focusing purely on physical and economic development while neglecting the social dimensions of place routinely leads to failure.

Successful new settlements:

- **HafenCity, Hamburg, Germany**

The developers of a new HafenCity, a new residential and commercial quarter in Hamburg, employed a sociologist to act as an advocate and "go-between" for the residents and the developers. The developers adapted to their evolving needs, such as co-financing an indoor recreation area and building a temporary playground before permanent facilities were ready. Because of this early engagement and adaptability, residents identified strongly with their new surroundings very quickly.

- **SeniorForum, Sweden**

This cooperative housing association successfully responds to the social needs of an aging population. It provides a sustainable financial and social model where construction costs are shared between Swedish Credit Agencies and members. To combat isolation, residents pay a monthly fee that covers the cost of an employee who organises regular social activities. The scheme was short-listed for the 2010 World Habitat Awards.

- **Milton Keynes - England**

Successfully developed an investment model that clearly defined the cost of social

¹⁹ https://www.social-life.co/media/files/DESIGN_FOR_SOCIAL_SUSTAINABILITY_3.pdf

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infrastructure. £700 per new dwelling was budgeted specifically for social and community infrastructure.

We've found the most successful European developments are characterised by a **strong partnership between commercial providers and local government**. The local authorities take a leading, visionary role in setting the project on the right course and maintaining quality control, ensuring that private sector developers work towards a shared, long-term vision.

Less successful new settlements:

- **Cambourne, England**

A lack of facilitated activities and social spaces led to such a rise in mental health issues that the Primary Care Trust had to intervene, proving that "hard infrastructure alone would never build a community".

- **Chengong, Ordos, and Qingshuihe, China**

These are "ghost towns" that stand largely empty and unfinished. They failed to attract residents because they were built entirely from scratch 20 to 30 kilometres outside of existing urban centres. Planners unrealistically expected entire communities to uproot themselves from their historical, social, and cultural contexts overnight, which proved unsustainable.

- **Masdar City, Abu Dhabi, UAE**

While Masdar City is highly praised as a zero-waste, car-free, carbon-neutral model of environmental sustainability, it failed to consider the actual social needs of the people trying to live there. It highlights the danger of focusing purely on "green" sustainability infrastructure while ignoring social dimensions of design.

- **Cabrini-Green (Chicago, USA), Pruitt-Igoe (St. Louis, USA), and the banlieues (Paris, France)**

These older developments are high-profile failures that quickly spiralled into decline because they were built without the right social infrastructure. Some of these projects, like Pruitt-Igoe, ultimately had to be demolished and replaced at a massive financial and social cost.

Thamesmead Waterfront JV Ref No. NT013

London Assembly: New Towns for London

The Thamesmead Waterfront Joint Venture's response to the Planning and Regeneration Committee's Call for Evidence

About Thamesmead Waterfront

Thamesmead Waterfront, in north Thamesmead, is one of the most deliverable opportunities for housing and economic growth in London. It is a nationally significant opportunity. The 100ha site offers the potential to deliver up to 15,000 new homes, thousands of new jobs, a new and expanded town centre, and outstanding open spaces.

Thamesmead Waterfront was shortlisted as one of twelve potential new town sites by the New Towns Taskforce in September 2025.

The Thamesmead Waterfront Joint Venture

The Thamesmead Waterfront Joint Venture (JV) was formed in 2019 between Peabody, one of the UK's longest established housing associations, and Lendlease, a globally integrated real estate group with operations in Australia, Asia, Europe and the United States. The JV is leading the delivery of Thamesmead Waterfront. The partnership is underpinned by a shared long-term vision and common values, focused on placemaking, stewardship and socio-economic improvement.

Peabody in Thamesmead

Peabody is leading the 'whole place' regeneration of Thamesmead, with a mission to improve, grow and look after the town for the long-term. As owners and stewards of two-thirds of the land, we're able to work at scale on shared aspirations with communities and partners. We're investing in Thamesmead's buildings, outdoor spaces, culture and communities to create new opportunities and shape great places.

- 1. What are the conditions that need to be in place to make new towns a success in London?**
 - a. How should citizen engagement, consultation and coproduction inform the development of new towns?**

Local support and buy-in will be critical to the success of any new town. Strong, meaningful community engagement is integral to Peabody's town-wide programme of regeneration and renewal in Thamesmead. Since 2018 Peabody has co-created a wealth of projects, events and activities with communities, responding to local people's wants and needs. For example, Peabody has involved local people in commissioning public artwork, programming events such as the Thamesmead Festival, funding and running community projects, and the redesign of community and open spaces. This is in addition to consultation around redevelopment.

Based in Thamesmead, Peabody's resident-facing teams are able to keep in close touch with the community. Peabody also engage with local people through a range of communications. They include Talk of Thamesmead (a 20 page newspaper which goes out to 17,000 households); the

ThamesmeadNow website – which highlights local news, events listings, and new opportunities; digital newsletters; and social media channels.

As with Peabody’s wider work in Thamesmead, community engagement on a new town scale should start with understanding the needs and wants of the existing community. This will help to inform and shape the vision and principles for development. Community engagement on specific design visions should come later, and should be focused at a neighbourhood level. This is a much less conceptual and a more human scale, allowing for meaningful engagement and co-design with a broad and representative section of the community.

Drawing on Peabody’s experiences across Thamesmead, the JV believes that strategies, co-designed with the community, for all elements of placemaking (including arts and culture, landscape improvements, and other key social infrastructure), should be considered at the earliest stages of developing a new town. This could be delivered in several ways, including through meanwhile uses and the early delivery of community facilities to create a strong centre.

b. How can delivery partners ensure that essential infrastructure is in place to ensure the success of new towns?

Developments of the scale of Thamesmead Waterfront will require committed investment in, and delivery of, significant infrastructure – ahead of housing delivery. Coherent planning and alignment with infrastructure delivery are essential for sites of this magnitude, enabling landowners, statutory authorities, communities, and stakeholders to share a unified approach to bringing forward development. The nature of new town development means that there is a need to provide some crucial infrastructure at the earlier phases, such as roads, utilities and public transport infrastructure. At Thamesmead Waterfront, and many other new town sites, the upfront costs of infrastructure, community facilities and remediation work will likely outpace the early returns of development. As such, there is also a role for government in de-risking early phases and helping attract private investment.

As part of national, regional and local Government’s commitment to delivering new towns, there should be a commitment to supporting early-stage cash flow to bridge the gap between returns and to support the early delivery of infrastructure. This could take a number of different forms including grant or low-term low interest loans, but any funding should be flexible and adaptable to the needs of each site.

At the same time, planning policy at all levels should be flexible enough to accommodate shifts in priorities and market conditions, supporting phased development and allowing different parts of the site to proceed under a wider, flexible framework. Specific infrastructure requirements will need to be subject to viability and delivery testing, and it is imperative that planning policy supplies the requisite flexibility; this is particularly the case in relation to sites such as Thamesmead Waterfront where delivery will span several decades and likely experience various economic, environmental and social cycles, presenting different challenges along the way.

2. What new opportunities could new town designation in London unlock that existing planning tools do not?

In our plan-led system, there could be a tendency to be overly reliant upon existing planning policies to shape new towns. The first waves of new town development have provided an opportunity to think more creatively about what a town needs and could look like. We should be looking to learn

lessons, but also to think beyond what has previously been attempted, to not be unduly constrained by the existing policy context.

Nonetheless, achieving the shared ambitions for a new town of the scale of Thamesmead Waterfront will likely require a combination of complementary planning mechanisms. Given the scale and complexity of new town sites, a hybrid approach to planning mechanisms, utilising multiple tools, is likely to be beneficial. The range of potential planning instruments could include, for example: Local Development Orders (LDOs), Mayoral Development Orders (MDOs), and Special Development Orders (SDOs).

Considering the government's objectives to both maximise and expedite housing delivery, interim approvals – such as outline planning permissions or the deployment of LDOs, MDOs, or SDOs – may be necessary to facilitate progress. For example, a 'hybrid model' combining elements of SDOs and L/MDOs could allow key infrastructure to be delivered through an SDO – providing certainty and speed – whilst L/MDOs could be used to address more detailed and site-specific matters; such an approach could secure essential infrastructure, enhance investor confidence and accelerate delivery.

3. What density, design and placemaking principles should underpin London's new towns?

Places are complex, with many inseparable factors that shape their quality and character. All of these are particular to individual local neighbourhoods. This local context should guide the approach to placemaking.

Each place has unique assets and strengths. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to creating good places, but there are a series of common principles which contribute to achieving quality placemaking – the creation of distinctive, inclusive and sustainable places. These include:

- Building upon what already exists in the area.
- Empowering the community, through meaningful community engagement and co-design
- Working with experts in neighbourhood management, cultural programming, landscape management, community development, and the built environment.
- Building long-term stewardship into the planning, design and maintenance of places.

These principles should feed into a masterplan, which forms a clear vision for the new town.

New towns should be led by a strong vision, formed with the existing community, and have a strong identity. This vision should be reflected in the masterplan, and potentially within a design code to guide future development. This should provide long-term certainty but should retain a level of flexibility to be updated to changes in context, needs or market conditions. The masterplan and design code should be upheld and monitored. With the flexibility referenced above, it will support those bringing forward new towns to balance the need for excellent urban design with the overall deliverability of a development. It will also be crucial to make design choices which are financially viable to maintain in the long-term, to ensure that urban design remains at a high standard for the life span of the new town.

4. What lessons can be learned from the past delivery of Mayoral Development Corporations (MDCs), Opportunity Areas (OAs), and the original development of Thamesmead (in the late 1960s to early 1970s) to inform the development of new towns for London in the present day?

When Thamesmead was first designed in the 1960s, the vision was to create a utopian new town that would house over 60,000 Londoners. The town would enable people to move out of

THAMESMEAD WATERFRONT

overcrowded, congested inner London into a healthier environment. It offered a new way of living in innovative, modern homes and brought together people from different groups in society, creating a brand new community. The ambition for Thamesmead was on a grand scale. However, this ambition was set against the problems faced by residents from the outset, including issues with the design and construction of the buildings, the lack of amenities and investment, inconsistent governance and political support, and poor infrastructure.

Whilst the potential of the town was never quite realised, the original vision has left a distinct legacy that is still relevant today and presents a range of learning opportunities:

- The original experience of Thamesmead shows the importance of long-term policy commitment from central government. Clarity and consistency, regardless of political alignment, are needed to provide confidence to communities and investors and to deliver ambitious, people-centred places for the future.
- The successful delivery of new towns will require certainty and a commitment to providing the right infrastructure, especially transport infrastructure. Thamesmead has historically been poorly served by public transport, with a lack of transport infrastructure investment in comparison to other areas of London. The Thamesmead postcode of SE28 is the only postcode in the capital without a train or tube station. This poor provision of transport infrastructure has so far constrained development, employment and enterprise potential in the town. The proposed DLR extension to Thamesmead will have a transformational impact, connecting residents, improving access to employment, and enabling a major uplift in housing delivery with up to 30,000 new homes across both sides of the river. The new transport link will be critical in serving the long-term housing needs of London and the wider South-East, directly at the Thamesmead Waterfront site and with the potential for onward extension east in the longer-term. This would serve other parts of Thamesmead currently suffering from poor connectivity and into the London Borough of Bexley.
- Placemaking should be at the forefront of the masterplan design for any new town, and it should be ambitious in creating a place where people want to live, work, visit, and socialise. New towns should be seen as desirable places, and not just a way to deliver new housing at scale. This ambition has been a feature of successful new towns in the past and should be reflected in the ambition of today's new town proposals.
- Successful new towns should have plans for long-term maintenance, accountability and placemaking built-in at the outset. There should be an approach of long-term stewardship, rather than short-term land trading, with clear responsibility for placemaking and day to day maintenance, and a governance structure which gives accountability and space for scrutiny. This is Peabody's approach in Thamesmead, where it is taking the role of a long-term steward of the town. The JV recognises that key to the success of any development project of this scale is not just investment in new homes and infrastructure, but a commitment to quality and ongoing stewardship.
- Peabody's experience at Thamesmead has shown that new towns need strategies early on to embed, culture, landscape, and social infrastructure improvements. These will have to be built into the phasing and delivery timescales at the outset and will need to continue throughout the phased development to ensure there is a strong nucleus. There needs to be clarity on the long-term funding and finance arrangements set out within the governance

structures of selected new towns, to ensure their longevity, ongoing maintenance and plans for future growth.

This generation of new towns provides an opportunity to complete the vision of Thamesmead as a new town, learning lessons from the previous attempts both in Thamesmead and elsewhere. The management of Thamesmead's housing, community investment and land management activities are united under a single body for the first time since the 1980s. This therefore provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve infrastructure, facilities and connectivity for the whole town, as well as delivering 15,000 homes at Thamesmead Waterfront.

5. What lessons can be learned from international examples of new towns?

The JV is conscious that there will no doubt be many invaluable lessons to be learned from international examples of new towns but does not feel that it is best placed to comment on them.

6. What roles should the Mayor, GLA, London boroughs, and central Government each play in planning, funding and delivering new towns in London?

New towns which are left to single local authorities to deliver or imposed by national government will not be as successful as those which look to have a hybrid of local and national involvement.

There is a need for national government to provide the formal designation of an area as a new town and to set the direction for governance and funding arrangements. In the case of London, this could be in the form of a Mayoral Development Corporation, but it is important for the decision to have the backing of national government. This is so the new town has legitimacy in the long-term and momentum to move forward. We can see this through the original experience of Thamesmead, which did not have national backing and suffered as a result of changing political structures.

Any development corporation or similar structure needs local involvement and buy-in to be successful, and at this stage local authorities should be engaged. It will also be important to engage local residents, political stakeholders and businesses at the point of designing neighbourhoods and places, as this is a more understandable and human scale of development and where best engagement and co-design can take place.

Government should not seek to prescribe one particular type of governance and engagement methods for all new towns. They should look for a model which will work for each new town and is one which the local community and local stakeholders can support and be involved with.

a. What governance structures should be implemented to ensure the long term success of new towns in London?

London operates within a distinctive statutory framework that combines regional planning with decision-making authority. The Mayor has the power to create delivery bodies for new developments and can direct investment through Mayoral-led organisations to support their delivery. This is reinforced by strong democratic legitimacy, with the Mayor holding the largest direct mandate of any UK politician. As such, London is well-placed to swiftly set up the necessary framework to deliver a new town. However, like any other location, it will still require Government investment to support its delivery.

A strong partnership between the public and private sectors will be critical, and new towns will need to be led by organisations which can collaborate with government bodies and departments at all levels, as well as infrastructure providers. It may be the case that an independent body, such as a

development corporation with local representation, could be best placed to align and support ambitions, although the impact of the time required to establish such bodies should be considered to ensure that this does not delay delivery ambitions. This may mean that there needs to be a consideration of 'interim' and 'longer-term' arrangements.

Any development corporation or similar structure will also need local involvement and buy-in to be successful, and local authorities should be engaged.

Models which allow for capitalising on the planning system and the value it creates should be considered, in order to capture this for the benefit of new communities. Naturally, existing structures like Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy can be utilised to capture land value uplift and fund key infrastructure. However, there is an opportunity to trial new methods or look to the development tariff approach that new towns like Milton Keynes took. The appropriate method chosen would allow for a new town to be self-financing over time, through the capturing, sharing and re-investment of land value uplift. This would require a dedicated organisation to oversee the complex task of delivering this new community in the long term. If the right financial model is created it can ensure that funds are available in perpetuity to maintain community assets and provide additionality to the services provided by the local council.

It is unlikely to be productive to seek to prescribe one particular type of governance or delivery body / model across all new towns; rather, the intention should be to develop well-resourced models which will work for each new town and which the local community and local stakeholders can support and be involved with.

7. What are the potential environmental impacts of new town development in London on food and water security, climate resilience and access to green space?

Peabody owns and manages more than 240ha of open space in Thamesmead. At the time of the town's creation, the landscape was a major appeal of the town as an alternative to post-war, overcrowded inner city living. Thamesmead's distinctive lakes, canals and green corridors are a lasting reminder of the original masterplan for the area, developed in 1967. They are just as much a part of Thamesmead's identity today as they were back then.

Peabody's experience in Thamesmead has shown the important of incorporating large scale blue and green spaces into a development, but also of making space for smaller, community-driven areas which can adapt and develop as a community grows.

The importance of open spaces has always been recognised in town planning, but in recent years we've seen growing recognition of just how important they are. Across the world, individuals and organisations are turning more and more to nature to help tackle health inequalities and respond to the climate and biodiversity crises.

Masterplanning and developing a new town allows for intentional and large-scale green and blue spaces to be built-in to a development. These spaces are crucial, both for delivering high-quality placemaking, but will also be important for allowing denser residential developments to be built, supporting the viability of mixed-tenure developments.