

MAYOR OF LONDON

To: James Small-Edwards AM
C/o Saleha.Fazal@london.gov.uk

Our ref: DMPRF 2026_055

Date: 21 August 2026

Dear James,

Thank you for sending me the Planning and Regeneration Committee's report *Between skyscrapers and semis: London's missing mid-rise housing*. I have responded to the report's recommendations in Annex 1.

The recently published draft new London Plan which is out for public consultation addresses many of the report's recommendations.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Jules Pipe', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Jules Pipe CBE
Deputy Mayor, Planning and Regeneration

MAYOR OF LONDON

Annex 1: Response to the recommendations of the London Assembly Planning and Regeneration Committee's 'Between skyscrapers and semis: London's missing mid-rise housing' report

Recommendation 1

The next London Plan should establish mid-rise development as the preferred form of new residential development in high access locations.

The draft new London Plan actively promotes mid-rise development, in particular through the Optimisation Framework that provides indicative height ranges for development on brownfield sites. The draft Plan highlights that mid-rise development can bring many benefits and is at the heart of this Plan. Mid-rise development is also promoted through Policy PV7 Sustainable development and enhancement of Green Belt.

Recommendation 2

Mid-rise residential development should be explicitly defined in the next London Plan

The draft new London Plan defines mid-rise development in Policy MBUL2 as development of 12m up to 30m in height, which equates to four to nine storeys.

Recommendation 3

The GLA should reinstate a Density Matrix in the next London Plan. This should set out where mid-rise or higher density development is most appropriate, focusing on transport accessibility, site capacity and surrounding context that respect existing housing typologies and site characteristics.

The draft new London Plan's Optimisation Framework set out in Policy MBUL2 seeks to promote increased densities via greater use of mid-rise development across London, and it embeds the link between density and transport connectivity.

The Optimisation Framework utilises the new Sustainable Access Measure (SAM) alongside character settings (shown on the London Context Map) to provide a recommended residential density range that is expected for different SAM levels and settings within London. The density range is complemented by an indicative height range (in storeys).

The Sustainable Access Measure is a London-specific connectivity tool that provides a measure of different travel times to jobs, services and amenities by public transport and walking. The London Context Map categorises each built-up area of London into one of six overarching settings (locations with a predominantly similar character).

This tool is not simply a return to the previous Density Matrix, which had a number of challenges that were explored in detail at the examination in public for the 2021 London Plan. While it clearly embeds the important linkage between public transport connectivity and density, it takes a more nuanced approach, providing clear strategic parameters while allowing for site-specific design responses to be carried out within this as part of the process. This helps to optimise densities based on access to services and amenities by sustainable transport, while cognisant of context.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Recommendation 4

The GLA should review the effectiveness of the use of Design Codes in London and work with boroughs and local residents, particularly those in Outer London, to establish popular Design Codes for new mid-rise residential development.

Recommendation 5

By the end of 2027, the GLA should oversee and fund two pilot projects that test new ways of involving local communities early in Local Plan or design code processes, with a focus on mid-rise development

Although the GLA does not currently have any plans to produce specific design codes for mid-rise development, we will shortly be publishing a London Small Sites Design Code for public consultation. The aim of this design code is to provide greater clarity and certainty on acceptable design responses on small sites by setting out design parameters and requirements, to simplify and speed up the development of these sites. The design code would apply across London, with the ability for boroughs to refine the code for their local area if they choose to do so.

GLA officers have also been involved in the government's Design Code Pathfinder Programme. This national programme has included a number of London boroughs in the different phases. The Design Code Pathfinder Programme aimed to provide learning and insights for all local councils and neighbourhood planning groups, based on the exemplar design standards developed by the pathfinder authorities, using the National Model Design Code.