



Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

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Panel
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Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP
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Dear Linda,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 4 May, 9 July and 24 August about the London Plan in your capacity as Chair of the East of England Infrastructure and Growth Panel and Leader of East Hertfordshire District Council. Thank you for taking the time to set out your thoughts in such detail and for your expression of support for the general approach I have taken in issuing Directions.

The Directions I made in March were made after careful consideration of the Panel Report and its recommendations and the 'Intend to Publish' version of the London Plan. The Directions were designed to respond to the needs of Londoners, increase ambition and delivery and bring the Mayor in line with national policy. I note your specific concerns regarding the inclusion of figure 2.15 within the context of policy SD3, however I concluded this would not cause detriment that would provide grounds for making a Direction.

As I set out in my letter to the Mayor of London on 13 March, the new London Plan failed to set out a credible strategy to deliver the homes Londoners desperately need. I was disappointed that the London Plan actively discouraged ambitious boroughs. Accordingly, I have made a Direction which supports local authorities bringing forward more ambitious proposals to exceed their targets, ensuring more of London's need is met within London.

Delivery requires strong and proactive leadership and I expect the Mayor to work proactively with London Boroughs and my Department to maximise housing delivery within London. The Mayor needs to do much more to increase housing delivery, to support ownership, respond to Londoners' diverse needs, and make London more affordable for all.

London is central to my ambitions to deliver 300,000 homes a year by the mid-2020s. The Government is doing much to support housing delivery within the capital. For instance, my Department has given £4.8 billion to deliver 116,000 affordable homes to 2020/21, as part of the Affordable Homes Programme.

An agreement with the GLA in December 2018 authorises the use of three land funds in London: Accelerated Construction Programme; Land Assembly Fund; and Small Sites Fund, to remediate and release land with the aim of delivering over 8,000 new units of housing in the capital.

My Department also continues to progress three London Forward Funding projects to unlock up to 42,000 homes as part of our Housing Infrastructure Fund along with 10 Marginal Viability Fund projects which will unlock up to 6,700 homes.

This funding to support more homes in the capital necessitates closer scrutiny of the Mayor's delivery plans. I have already been clear I want to set a new standard of transparency and accountability on delivery in London and expect the Mayor to work closely with us to ensure this is achieved. He will be held to account on the delivery of this plan.

In addition to asking the Mayor to work with Government and ambitious boroughs to support housing delivery at levels above those in the London plan, my letter on 13 March asked that immediate consideration is given to the next London Plan and how this could meet the higher level and broader housing needs of London. I have powers under s.340(2) of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (GLA 1999) to direct a review of the London Plan should I consider this necessary during the lifetime of the plan.

I am looking to the Mayor to work in a more joined up way to deliver a new strategy with authorities in the wider South East, such as working closely with authorities in the Thames Estuary to match their growth ambitions with an appropriate housing offer. It will be a matter for London and the authorities beyond the GLA boundary to decide exactly how they collaborate to develop a strategy and what the timeframe for this is, but I consider a strategy for the wider South East should inform the review of The London Plan.

On August 6, the Planning for the future document was published for consultation. The document is available on GOV.UK and is being consulted upon for the next 3 months. There is also an ongoing 8 week consultation on Changes to the current planning system: Technical consultation on planning policy and regulations, which is also available on GOV.UK.

I would encourage you to take the opportunity to respond to the consultations, both of which include changes in relation to the calculation of housing need and proposed wider reforms in Planning for the future to introduce binding housing requirements which factor in land constraints. Several consultation events will be taking place in relation to Planning for the future and hopefully you will be able to contribute to these.

I am grateful that you have taken the time to write to me about these important matters.

Yours ever,
Robert
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RT HON ROBERT JENRICK MP