

MAYOR OF LONDON

Tony Arbour AM

Chairman of the London Assembly
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
More London
London SE1 2AA

Our ref: MGLA140218-3836

Date: 29 MAY 2018

Dear Chairman Arbour,

I am writing in response to the letter of 14 February from your predecessor about the motions agreed at the London Assembly (Plenary) meeting on 8 February. I am sorry for the delay in replying. My reply to each motion is set out below:

Motion 1 – Family Sized Homes, London Plan

Neither my predecessor's London Plan nor his Housing Strategy included a target for family-sized homes (those with three bedrooms or more). Instead, his affordable housing funding guidance included an aspiration for 36 per cent of a sub-category of Affordable Rent homes to be family-sized.

In contrast, my draft London Plan encourages all London boroughs to provide guidance on the size mix of low cost rent homes required in their area, taking into account levels of overcrowding. This means they can set out their requirements for smaller homes, including for people wanting to downsize, and larger homes for families. This policy reflects the ability of London boroughs to influence the occupancy of low cost rent homes, unlike new market homes where family-sized homes are often occupied by sharers rather than families.

The 2017 London Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) does not envisage a reduction in the supply of family-sized homes but a substantial increase. It identifies a requirement for nearly 19,000 family sized-homes a year, compared to the current supply of around 7,500 a year. Furthermore, the requirement for family-sized low cost rent homes identified by the SHMA is more than twice as much as the current supply.

I will consider amending the text of the Plan to make it clearer that 'family-sized homes' refers to those with three bedrooms or more. I will also consider amendments to my housing strategy to make clear the range of steps we are taking to ensure that tackling overcrowding is a priority.

Motion 2 – North London Coroner

It is of vital importance that public services respect the needs of diverse communities, and the Coronial Services in particular should take account of religious requirements and family preferences due to the incredibly sensitive nature of their work.

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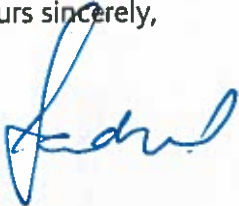
I previously urged Senior Coroner Hassell to demonstrate sensitivity towards families and faith communities and I welcome the High Court's recent ruling. As I said following the ruling, it is, of course, now crucial that a plan is drawn up on how this will be implemented in the Inner North London area.

Motion 3 – Fuel Poverty in the Private Rented Sector

Thank you for your question on Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards in the Private Rented Sector. Whilst I too welcome the proposed removal of the 'no upfront cost to the landlord' exemption I share your concerns that the government's preferred cost cap of £2,500 is too low and will leave thousands of private tenants languishing in cold homes. It is very difficult to see how the government can meet its own fuel poverty and clean growth strategy targets with such a low spending cap. In my recent response to the government's consultation on this subject I made the case for a £5,000 cost cap and pointed out that this level was supported by the government's own Committee on Fuel Poverty.

In February, I wrote to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy calling for the minimum standards to be strengthened and various exemptions removed.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London