

LONDON HOUSING STRATEGY MAYOR'S RESPONSE TO THE LONDON ASSEMBLY'S SUBMISSION



I very much welcome the submission from the London Assembly on the draft London Housing Strategy, which I published in August this year. Many of its comments have been invaluable in helping me to progress the development of the next version of the strategy, which has now been published for consultation with the public.

The Assembly's submission welcomes many of the commitments made in the strategy, including:

- how I will take advantage of my new responsibilities to better co-ordinate strategic housing and planning powers and land assets, and the intention that the new architecture for delivery should strengthen lines of accountability, with the Assembly able to play a much fuller role in scrutinising the delivery of housing on behalf of Londoners
- the aim of ensuring that new housing developments contain an appropriate mix of market and affordable homes, the intention to measure the supply of new affordable homes by bed spaces as well as units and to publish information on affordable housing supply on

the GLA website, and the proposals to support community-led housing in London

- the commitment to a strong and vibrant private rented sector
- the proposals to enhance mobility across London and to set up a pan-London mobility scheme
- the proposals to address overcrowding
- the proposals to improve the quality of homes and neighbourhoods, including raising environmental standards and to tackle empty homes.

The following document sets out my responses to the specific concerns, recommendations and requests for clarification raised by the Assembly, and indicates where there will be changes made to the strategy as a result.

I very much look forward to continuing to work closely with the Assembly as we move towards the publication of the final statutory strategy next year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Boris Johnson'.

Boris Johnson
Mayor of London
December 2011

The Mayor is required by law to consult the Assembly and the functional bodies (i.e. The London Development Agency, Transport for London, the Metropolitan Police Authority and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority) on the draft LHS and to respond formally in writing to the Assembly's submission. This response must set out whether the Mayor intends to revise the strategy as a result of the Assembly's comments and, where these are not taken on board, give reasons for this.

Increasing supply

Assembly comment	Mayor's response	Strategy change
<p>The Committee recommends that the Mayor provides more information in Table 2 of the Strategy showing on an annual basis planned delivery by each of the three types of affordable homes.</p>	<p>The Mayor will publish information on affordable housing supply by delivery partner and in each borough on the GLA website.</p> <p>It is anticipated that, subject to maintaining commercial and other confidentiality, the London Housing Board papers and minutes will be in the public domain.</p> <p>These reports will set out progress against the annual delivery targets.</p>	<p>No revisions will be made to the LHS.</p>
<p>The Committee recommends that the Mayor establishes a mechanism whereby the Assembly, and others, can access the information needed to assess the progress in delivering the Mayor's priorities through the contracts with housing providers. As a first step this might take the form of a commitment, by the Housing Board for London, to publish a regular update of the progress of contracts that have been agreed for the delivery of new affordable homes and that the information available indicates the number, type and location of all new affordable homes in London.</p>	<p>Please see above.</p> <p>The reports to the London Housing Board will set out the progress on delivery of the Affordable Housing Programme against the Mayor's priorities. Information regarding which organisations have signed contracts is published on the HCA website.</p>	<p>The public consultation version will include a commitment to publish London Housing Board papers on the GLA website, subject to maintaining commercial and other confidentiality.</p>
<p>Additionally, the Mayor should agree to open the meetings and agenda papers of the Housing Board for London to Assembly scrutiny as this will support the Mayor's intention that the Assembly should play a much fuller role in scrutinising the delivery of housing on behalf of Londoners.</p>	<p>The Mayor is committed to openness in his administration and is committed to making the work of this Board (and any sub committee, working group or other forum set up by this Board) transparent. To achieve this, access to information will be available in line with Mayoral policy.</p> <p>The meetings themselves will not be public to reflect the accountability arrangements Parliament has put in place for the GLA; that is, the Mayor is answerable to the Assembly through Mayor's Question Time only after he has taken decisions.</p>	<p>No revisions will be made to the LHS.</p>
<p>The Committee recommends that the Mayor clarifies his position on the role that GLA landholdings could play for improving the viability of schemes for family sized homes by building on the preliminary work set out in section 3.3 of his proposals document.</p>	<p>The Mayor is committed to maximising the number of family sized homes in London, and will explore in due course how GLA landholdings might usefully contribute to this aspiration.</p>	<p>No revisions will be made to the LHS.</p>

Assembly comment	Mayor's response	Strategy change
<p>This could include the potential for offering land at discounted prices to make the development of larger homes financially viable or as an equity contribution that could generate a return on investment in the longer term.</p>	<p>The Mayor's approach to GLA landholdings will be considered and options appraised over the coming months, as part of the due diligence work and as the Mayor's new housing and investment powers begin to take shape. This will include whether to dispose of sites, bring them forward for development or to retain ownership for future development.</p> <p>It would be premature to commit at this stage to any long term land and asset management principles, until this detailed work has taken place.</p>	
<p>To enable the Committee to monitor the Mayor's progress in achieving the delivery of new affordable homes in mixed and balance communities the Mayor should publish, in his annual monitoring report, a breakdown of new affordable homes delivered by borough.</p>	<p>The Mayor will publish information on affordable housing supply by delivery partner and in each borough on the GLA website.</p>	<p>This is a policy in the public consultation version of the strategy.</p>
<p>The Mayor should aim to publish future monitoring data in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics (UK Statistics Authority, January 2009) whenever possible or appropriate.</p>	<p>The GLA is in discussions with the HCA and DCLG on how best to align timetables and methodologies for publishing future monitoring data. The Mayor has already stated that GLA statistics will be published in line with the Code of Practice whenever possible or appropriate.</p>	<p>No revisions will be made to the LHS.</p>
<p>The Committee recommends that the Mayor ensures that the HCA contracts are signed only if they support his aim to ensure mixed and balanced communities.</p>	<p>Boroughs are already required to take into account the Mayor's existing policies on mixed and balanced communities when deciding whether to grant planning approval for new affordable housing schemes. The HCA consulted with boroughs on every identified scheme before drawing up its 2011-15 investment programme.</p>	<p>No revisions will be made to the LHS.</p>

Assembly comment	Mayor's response	Strategy change
<p>The relationship between level of Affordable Rent housing and the ability to deliver larger homes is still unclear. It would be helpful if the Mayor would set out how his proposals for ensuring larger homes can be delivered while retaining lower rents to meet Mayoral targets for family homes.</p>	<p>Negotiations with investment partners over the 2011-2015 Affordable Homes programme mean that around 36% of the new affordable rented homes will be three bed and above. Rent levels for these homes will be within local housing allowance levels and will take account of welfare reform changes. Both the quantum of family housing and rent levels will be specified in investment partner contracts.</p>	<p>No revisions will be made to the LHS.</p>
<p>The inter-relationship between rent levels (as a proportion of local market rents) and the proposed benefit caps is still not clear. It would be helpful if the Mayor could provide further details on the formulae used by providers in relation to rent levels and viability calculations so that the Committee can be reassured that London can continue to provide affordable housing for those who need affordable rented homes.</p>	<p>Rent levels for homes developed under the 2011-2015 Affordable Homes programme average 65% of market rents across the whole programme. Rent levels for family- sized homes in particular have been kept at levels which are designed to take account of the proposed welfare reforms.</p>	<p>No revisions will be made to the LHS.</p>
<p>The proposed London Development Panel must drive forward initiatives such as borough-led estate regeneration and community-led development as well as new forms of funding for housing delivery, such as long term institutional investment and equity funding. These have featured in Mayoral priorities throughout the last four years but need renewed impetus so that they can bring real benefits to London.</p>	<p>The London Development Panel will be a procurement framework of development partners. For clarification, development partner panels provide a streamlined procurement service to local authorities and registered providers for every stage of the development process, from soft market testing, to design, construction and marketing. A development partner panel is not strategic, its role is purely reactive and demand-led, depending upon the parties that choose to engage its services.</p>	<p>No revisions will be made to the LHS.</p>
<p>The Mayor's revised housing strategy needs to set out his proposals for promoting a network of Community Land Trusts across London in the form of an implementation plan.</p>	<p>The Mayor will continue to explore the options to safeguard the use and value of public land for the benefit of the community in the long term. By their nature, community initiatives and vehicles such as community land trusts and community interest companies are driven by communities themselves. In disposing of GLA Group landholdings, the Mayor will ensure that communities are given the opportunity to consider whether such options are appropriate for them.</p>	<p>This is a policy in the public consultation version of the strategy.</p>

Assembly comment	Mayor's response	Strategy change
<p>The Committee supports the Mayor's intention to encourage boroughs to remove any financial incentives to leave homes empty and, specifically his intention to encourage the involvement of the community in bringing empty homes back into use, for example through self-help organisations.</p> <p>The Committee would welcome further details of how the Mayor proposes to meet these objectives in the next version of his housing strategy.</p>	<p>The housing strategy necessarily cannot go into detail on every single policy area. The role of the strategy is to set out the Mayor's ambitions and intentions. The detailed work of how this will be achieved or realised will be undertaken separately – and a delivery plan will appear in the final statutory version.</p>	<p>No revisions will be made to the LHS.</p>
<p>The Committee understands that some organisations are encountering barriers to the use of Temporary Empty Homes funding. Through his housing strategy, the Mayor should argue for these restrictions to be lifted and to ring fence funding for self-help organisations to make use of empty homes in London.</p>	<p>The Mayor is keen for self-help groups to receive a reasonable portion of the £100 million empty homes pot, and has been in ongoing negotiations with DCLG to ensure that this happens. Unless the Committee is more specific about which organisations and what particular barriers they are encountering, it is difficult for the Mayor to make general statements in the strategy about asking government to relax national guidelines within London.</p>	<p>No revisions will be made to the LHS.</p>

Raising standards

Assembly comment	Mayor's response	Strategy change
<p>The Mayor should ensure standards are integrated into future housing contracts with partners delivering new affordable homes to make it an obligation to meet his energy efficiency and space standards.</p>	<p>Compliance with the standards set out in the Mayor's London Housing Design Guide is a condition of the contracts signed by providers of the 2011-2015 Affordable Homes programme.</p>	<p>No revisions will be made to the LHS.</p>
<p>The Mayor should include London's performance on meeting his space and energy efficiency standards for new homes in his regular housing monitoring reports.</p>	<p>As homes to which the London Housing Design Guide standards apply are completed, monitoring information on compliance with the standards will be produced and reported.</p>	<p>No revisions will be made to the LHS.</p>
<p>The Mayor should respond to the recommendations made in the Committee's forthcoming report on London's private rented housing before publishing a version of his revised housing strategy proposals for public consultation.</p>	<p>The Mayor's ability to do this will depend on when the Committee's report is published.</p>	<p>Any new evidence will be considered throughout the process of developing the LHS.</p>

Enhancing choice and mobility

Assembly comment	Mayor's response	Strategy change
The Mayor should make every effort to encourage social landlords to agree to work together to review their allocations policies and priorities in line with recommendations 7 and 8 of the Committee's report on overcrowding.	<p>On recommendation 7, local authority nominations to housing association are essential in order to enable a range of needs to be met, and can already be used to house underoccupiers so freeing up family-sized homes.</p> <p>On recommendation 8, the Mayor agrees that overcrowded households and underoccupiers should receive priority in allocation schemes. The Mayor has already proposed, in the initial proposals for the LHS, that underoccupiers should be given a high level of priority in local, sub-regional and pan-London allocation policies, and this policy will be in the public consultation version.</p>	<p>No revisions will be made to the LHS.</p> <p>The public consultation version will contain a new policy stating that in revising their allocations schemes and reforming their housing registers, boroughs should continue to meet the housing needs of people in reasonable preference categories. This would include overcrowded households.</p>
The Committee welcomes the Mayor's mobility proposals, but requests further details regarding what safeguards will be put in place to protect tenants' rights and the quality of their housing.	The Mayor's mobility proposals are about enhancing choice for existing tenants. Tenants will be given full details about the homes on offer, and will themselves choose whether to move or not. We will also be monitoring quality of the homes that are contributed to the mobility scheme, to ensure that they reflect the overall quality of social rented homes in the capital.	No revisions will be made to the LHS.

Tackling need

Assembly comment	Mayor's response	Strategy change
The Committee wishes to see in the next draft of the housing strategy what measures the Mayor proposes to take to reduce the number of households placed in temporary accommodation.	Increasing affordable housing supply and the provision of a range of housing options are key to reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation. The strategy has a raft of policies around increasing housing supply and enhancing housing options.	No revisions will be made to the LHS.

Assembly comment	Mayor's response	Strategy change
<p>The Committee requires further details in the Strategy from the Mayor on how he proposes to tackle rough sleeping given the funding levels now available to London.</p>	<p>The Assembly response rightly highlights the resources devolved to the Mayor and those made available in London through the Homelessness Change Programme. The new funding available will be spent in line with the principles set out in the Mayor's rough sleeping commissioning framework. They should also note that the Spending Review protected the level of Government Homelessness Grant to London boroughs, allocating just over £40 million per annum in the capital, and reductions to the Supporting People programme have been minimised.</p> <p>Preventing the entrenchment of individuals sleeping rough, and responding more rapidly will reduce the burden currently placed on local resources working with those who sleep rough.</p>	<p>No revisions will be made to the LHS.</p>
<p>The Committee would welcome the Mayor's views on, if and how, the recommendations in its recent report on overcrowding in London's social rented housing can contribute to improving this aspect of housing need in London.</p>	<p>Recommendation 1: The Mayor lobbied the previous government about updating the legal definition, and the housing strategy and its evidence base define overcrowding according to the bedroom standard.</p> <p>Recommendation 2: Consistency and quality of data will be considered by the London Overcrowding Board.</p> <p>Recommendation 3: There is now a new investment regime.</p> <p>Recommendation 4: The Affordable Homes Programme framework has a London section which set out the Mayor's expectation that a significant proportion of the programme would be family-sized homes.</p> <p>Recommendation 5: The revised London Housing Strategy initial proposals document sets out the Mayor's intention to monitor the programme by delivery of bedspaces as well as units.</p> <p>Recommendation 6: The delivery of family-sized homes has to be balanced with viability issues.</p>	<p>No revisions will be made to the LHS.</p>

Assembly comment	Mayor's response	Strategy change
	<p>Recommendation 7: Local authority nominations to housing association are essential in order to enable a range of needs to be met, and can already be used to house underoccupiers so freeing up family-sized homes.</p> <p>Recommendation 8: the Mayor agrees that overcrowded households and underoccupiers should receive priority in allocation schemes. The Mayor has already proposed, in the revised London Housing Strategy initial proposals document, that underoccupiers should be given a high level of priority in local, sub-regional and pan-London allocation policies, and this policy will be in the public consultation version.</p>	
<p>In addition to the welcome proposal to report the supply of new affordable homes by bed spaces as well as units, the Committee recommends the Mayor also reports on the number of "Londoners taken out of housing need" as a more meaningful measure of success to Londoners.</p>	<p>Housing in London, the Mayor's annually produced evidence base for the strategy, reports on various measures of housing need – homelessness acceptances, numbers in temporary accommodation, rough sleeping and overcrowding.</p> <p>There is at present no agreed definition or methodology for producing a single figure for 'Londoners taken out of housing need'. The Mayor would welcome further discussions with the Assembly about how this may be determined.</p>	<p>No revisions will be made to the LHS.</p>

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Chinese

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Vietnamese

Nếu bạn muốn có văn bản tài liệu này bằng ngôn ngữ của mình, hãy liên hệ theo số điện thoại hoặc địa chỉ dưới đây.

Greek

Αν θέλετε να αποκτήσετε αντίγραφο του παρόντος εγγράφου στη δική σας γλώσσα, παρακαλείστε να επικοινωνήσετε τηλεφωνικά στον αριθμό αυτό ή ταχυδρομικά στην παρακάτω διεύθυνση.

Turkish

Bu belgenin kendi dilinizde hazırlanmış bir nüshasını edinmek için, lütfen aşağıdaki telefon numarasını arayınız veya adrese başvurunuz.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦੀ ਕਾਪੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਰਾਬਤਾ ਕਰੋ:

Hindi

यदि आप इस दस्तावेज़ की प्रति अपनी भाषा में चाहते हैं, तो कृपया निम्नलिखित नंबर पर फोन करें अथवा नीचे दिये गये पते पर संपर्क करें

Bengali

আপনি যদি আপনার ভাষায় এই দলিলের প্রতিলিপি (কপি) চান, তা হলে নীচের ফোন নম্বরে বা ঠিকানায় অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Urdu

اگر آپ اس دستاویز کی نقل اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں، تو براہ کرم نیچے دئے گئے نمبر پر فون کریں یا دیئے گئے پتے پر رابطہ کریں

Arabic

إذا أردت نسخة من هذه الوثيقة بلغتك، يرجى الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو مراسلة العنوان أدناه

Gujarati

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજની નકલ તમારી ભાષામાં જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપા કરી આપેલ નંબર ઉપર ફોન કરો અથવા નીચેના સરનામે સંપર્ક સાધો.

