

Planning Committee - Tuesday, 14 March 2017

Transcript of Item 7 - Increasing Housing Density through the London Plan

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Item 7 is the key piece of business for today, to discuss the increasing housing densification through the London Plan. I welcome each of our guests today: Lin Cousins, Director of Three Dragons; Crispin Kelly of Baylight; Elliot Kemp, Senior Strategic Planner at the Greater London Authority (GLA); Jennifer Peters, Strategic Planning Manager, GLA; and Pieter Zitman of Mix Developments. Welcome all.

Moving on to our first question, it has been pointed out to me that sometimes I ask people to answer questions very succinctly, but in question one particularly we can go into a bit more detail because it is a very important question going into each of the research studies on densification that the GLA has undertaken with industry figures.

If we start with Jennifer and then go on to Elliot [Kemp] for your views, could you set out the context for the densification research studies, the main findings and how this will be taken forward in the London Plan review, please?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): Of course. The London Plan team identified the need to explore density in more detail in advance of writing a new London Plan. We commissioned some studies, five or six studies altogether. They were commissioned in late 2015 and so under the previous administration, but they provide a really good evidence base to inform the policy development of the London Plan, alongside all the work we have been doing over the last few months with the A City for All Londoners consultation and other work with stakeholders. Also, there have been quite a lot of other external publications about density over the last year and a half, which we have been looking at.

As a bit of context on why this is important, we know that the population of London continues to grow and we need to house that population. We are currently working on a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to understand exactly what level of housing need we have, but we assume that it is going to be higher than in the last London Plan, which had it down at 49,000 homes a year, and so we know that we need to find more capacity for housing. With the constrained land supply that we have in London, one of the ways of delivering more homes and making more of the capacity that we have is through higher-density development, but we need to make sure that all the growth we deliver is sustainable and of good quality. That is the background to what we were looking into when looking at these density studies.

A bit of the history of the London Plan: All through the three main London Plans that there have been so far, there has been a policy of maximising housing potential on sites or optimising. Essentially, that is about making sure we have the right density in the right places. This has been linked to the Sustainable Residential Quality Matrix, known as the SRQ Matrix, which is making sure that we get higher densities nearer more accessible places, which makes sense in a planning context now as well.

We saw with the evolution of the density policy over those three plans and the way it has been applied in actual planning decisions that we needed to understand it better. What were we trying to achieve with density policy? What we wanted to do was to really understand and get to the bottom of that - rather than just have a review of the policies that exist - and really understand what density is and how it helps us to deliver more

homes, and so we commissioned these five or six interlinked studies. I will just give you a quick overview and then Elliot [Kemp] will run through the findings of them.

The first study was understanding what density is and what we are trying to measure. There are various ways that it can be defined and it depends what we are trying to find out. Population density, for example, tells us something different to plot area ratios or habitable rooms per hectare, etc. Also, we needed to understand whether measurements were being done consistently because, if they are not, it is not necessarily telling us very much if we are comparing very different things.

The next project was looking at developments that have gone over the density matrix that we have at the moment in the London Plan to understand those schemes and whether they are successful places, what makes them successful or unsuccessful. That is where Lin's [Cousins] work comes in and so she will be able to explain that in a lot more detail. We know that a lot of the development that happens in London so far - about 50% - is above the density matrix that we have at the moment and so higher-density stuff is coming through. If it is coming through, we need to make sure that it is of good quality and is sustainable.

We then wanted to understand the cost of delivering higher-density development. The build costs are different the higher you go. Also, does that have implications for the level of affordable housing and viability? As the density goes up, do we get more or less affordable housing? We needed to see if there were any links there. Is more of it likely to be delivered onsite or offsite?

The next project looked at the character. Part of the density matrix at the moment has a character section - suburban, urban or central - and we wanted to understand whether that was the right way to understand the character of an area. Does it make sense for it to be that mechanistic?

Then we wanted to understand, in a more conceptual project, why density is important. Is it important to be a compact city, to have people close together, to be a global, functioning city?

The final project, which we did with Transport for London (TfL), was not a commissioned one; we did it in partnership. At the moment, the density matrix looks at Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTALs), but should we also look at access to opportunities and services? TfL has been working on Access to Opportunities and Services (ATOS), which is a measure of links to opportunities and services. Could link that in? Would that --

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): ATOS?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): ATOS, yes. ATOS is Access to Opportunities and Services. It is about how close you are to jobs, schools and general practitioner surgeries. It is linked to how close you are to transport but is not just focusing on transport. The PTAL is just about transport.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Can I just ask? Does the density matrix not take into account ATOS?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): No, not at the moment. It is just PTAL, although it does have a link to closeness to town centres, which you could suggest is a proxy for that sort of measure because we have a lot of amenities in town centres. That was our final project that we had a look at.

What Elliot can do is go through the main findings of those six projects and think about the next stages for the London Plan.

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): I will go through them in sequence. The first one was the project looking at what measures of density we should use and that was taken up by the London School of Economics (LSE). That looked at why we measure density in London.

The main finding was that really, for a strategic authority, it is about delivering housing and is not so much about measuring the character or the built form of that density at the end of the day. They felt that that was a decision for something at the local level. That led them to feel that we should measure density by habitable rooms, ideally. At the moment, we recommend it that we measure by habitable rooms and units. The trouble with units is that we do not control for how many people we are going to have in a particular area. However, we do not record data on habitable rooms on our London Development Database and so they recommended that as a proxy for that we use bedrooms per hectare as the outcome of what we measure.

They were also saying that, as a strategic authority, we have a very clear reason for trying to deliver more housing in areas that might not, for various reasons, deliver as much housing as they could do and so a minimum density level is something that we should be doing. However, they did not see a point in having an upper density level, which was quite an interesting finding. One of the reasons they came to this conclusion is because they looked at our current policy and said that the density matrix is being exceeded by 50% of development and is being undershot by 15% of development. Their conclusion was that it is not being followed very closely. They gave an explanation of why that is and they think it is really down to market factors driving where housing is built and the density it is built at. They also feel that the negotiation happens at the local level between local politicians, local planners and the developers and that is the outcome that is accepted. That is why maybe the strategic policy is not being followed as closely as we would expect.

They also did some research on what other cities do and what other countries do. They felt that not many people had something as seemingly complex as the density matrix; they focus on issues such as building height or maybe they look at other design factors to control density rather than having a set number linked to a PTAL measure.

They also looked at the cultural issue of density. We asked them the question: what is high density? They came back saying that it depends where you come from, really. It is your cultural perspective on density and so there is no actual limit. It is down to, probably, where you are in the world and what you think is acceptable. It is also down to the design of a scheme. The density could be very similar in different design schemes but could feel very different. There is not a fundamental limit so that we can say, "That is medium, that is high and that is unacceptable density", although maybe within particular cultural areas of the world they might be able to get that figure.

Overall, project one was saying that we should have a minimum density with no maximum. They then went into looking at whether we should be using the density matrix or whether we should be using another measure of density. They suggest that maybe we could look at a measure based --

Andrew Boff AM: I am sorry. Who is suggesting this?

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): This is the recommendation from the LSE's report.

Andrew Boff AM: It is from the LSE. Sorry.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): When you go through each research report, can you say who it was commissioned from?

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): Yes.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Also, it would be very nice to know what the instructions were and what the brief was. We ought to know what the assumptions were that were put into the people doing the research.

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): For project one, we were particularly asking how we should measure density in London and what measure we should use. We were thinking that we should be using plot ratio measures, habitable rooms or people per hectare, but they looked into this and came back with, "Why are you measuring it in the first place?" Their recommendation was that the Mayor's main aim is to deliver more housing rather than anything else. At the borough level they might want to have more detailed measures about character, height restrictions or height controls, but their recommendation was that that was not something that the strategic authority should be getting into, really. We should be focused on the delivery of housing. They twisted and turned what we thought we were going to get as an output into their recommendation that we should only be focusing --

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Which department of the LSE was it? There are loads of different departments.

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): Yes. It was the London grouping. It was within planning. The way that the LSE works when you go to commission reports is that it goes to LSE Enterprise and then different people within the LSE bid for it and then make up their own groupings. It takes people from different --

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): It was Christine Whitehead [Emeritus Professor of Housing Economics, LSE], Ian Gordon [Emeritus Professor in Human Geography, LSE] and Alan Mace [Assistant Professor in Urban Planning Studies, LSE] who were the key leaders of it.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Can you do that in every case, please?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): Yes.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Thank you.

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): Yes. In their finding, they were suggesting that we have a minimum and that we do not have a maximum. We would use, ideally, habitable rooms but we would use bedrooms per hectare as an outcome.

They then suggested a model with a different way to come up with minimum density figures across London, which looked at past trends and likely outputs depending on where we are in London. Further away from the centre we are likely to have lower density than near the centre and that is based on past trends. Some parts of London have not had much development, but we would predict or we would expect a level of density based on certain characteristics: the PTAL, the distance from London, the character of the area and access to jobs. With these factors, they came up with a crude model and said that we could work this up to come up with another number for density if we wanted to go down that route, but that was left as a hanging part of their research.

Andrew Boff AM: May I, Chairman, at this point?

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Yes.

Andrew Boff AM: Did at any point, as part of the brief, you talk about the health outcomes of this research? One of the good reasons for having a maximum density is tuberculosis.

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): Public health was not explicitly put in the brief. We gave different questions, but we were particularly focused on what we knew was not happening from our annual monitoring reports. We knew that our policy was not being followed as closely as our criteria expected --

Andrew Boff AM: I am questioning you, but I should be questioning the LSE and I am sorry about that. I am just astonished that they said that there should be no maximum density whatsoever. Are we going to get favelas?

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): They would suggest that there is going to be a maximum but the factors controlling maximum density at the moment are the market, our local planners and our local politicians. It is not that there should not be one, but that maybe a strategic authority with the Mayor is not the best place to have that maximum. It should be done at the local level.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): It is more around the design and the impact on the local surroundings. It is not necessarily about the number. That came out quite a lot. You could have an arbitrary maximum and you could deliver at that maximum or above it and it could be a terrible development, or you could deliver above it and it could be a really good development if it is designed well, is in keeping with the surroundings and takes into account the impact on amenities. It is about balancing the different things. To a lot of extent, the research shows that density as a number is not that important. It is all the other things and the outcomes that are important. We have become not obsessed but very focused on a number when actually that is not the outcome we are interested in.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you.

Tom Copley AM: You say - or they say, sorry - that maybe this should be something that is dealt with locally and not at the strategic level. I presume that access to public transport was in there, but you can only get to a certain point and then you go above it and there is a strategic issue for the Mayor in terms of what capacity we have on the Tube now. It seems a bit odd.

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): Having the outcome you have is in the context of all the planning policy. It is not that the only policy that determines scheme density is the density policy. We have transport policies and design policies and then there are local planning policies. All of those things combined shape the outcome. They are just saying that the density policy on its own is not very effective at doing that and so, if your main concern is a particular issue such as building heights, particular public health outcomes or open space outcomes, you would better having a policy about that and try to deal with that rather than trying to deliver it by just having a maximum density policy.

Navin Shah AM: Whose policies override? When you have a situation where you have strategic policy - the Mayor's London Plan, I am thinking - and then you have local area action plans or local planning frameworks, if there is a huge difference between the two approaches, which one overrides in that situation?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): There should not be too much of a huge difference because the London Plan is part of the development plan and any area action plan or local planning policy has to be in general conformity with the London Plan. We go through a process of checking that.

It depends. Often the strategic policy will be broader and more high-level and the local policy will be more detailed. Often the local policy will have more detail about density and design than perhaps the strategic policy would. It is not about one overriding the other.

Navin Shah AM: I am afraid that on the ground they do. We had a recent couple of cases, which suggest what I am saying. Fine, in the London Plan we have accessibility to local public transport networks and so forth, which is seen strategically as a key policy to derive maximum density, maximum affordable units, etc. However, then when we look at the local plan, there is a complete clash there and it is looking at a different set of policies: the local character of the area and so forth. Elliot described the cultural perspective as well, which is more borne out in local plans than in the Mayor's London Plan, I would say. Sorry, that is a gross generalisation, but that is how sometimes it works out. It is more than often.

There is that conflict there and more so as there is more pressure in terms of the growth that we want. How do we achieve sustainability between strategic requirements as against local benefits or local preservation, you might say?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): What we are looking for in the general conformity process is that the strategic policies within the plan can be delivered at the local level. Each local authority might do that in a slightly different way but, as long as the strategic outcomes are delivered, we can say that it is in general conformity.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): What the LSE is suggesting, then, is that we have a whole bunch of policies - character, setting, PTALs, accessibility, services, transport capacity - in all sorts of different parts of the London Plan. When we are considering density, we have to bring all of these together and look at them. Is that correct? Rather than having a maximum, we would look at all of those?

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): You would look at all of them. In fact, you could argue that density is the outcome and not the starting point. All of those other points are the starting point. If you get those right then the density is what it is.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): I want to ask this because we see constant examples of how one thing will trump another. Location trumps setting. That is where strategically, often, the location can take a tall building but, locally, the setting cannot. I do not know. How are you going to get the priority right and the balance right?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): That is what we are working through at the moment with the policies for the new London Plan, but I guess it has to be within the context that I set out at the start. We have a growing population and we do have to take more development if we are going to meet the needs of that population, which means that there will be denser development in some places that have not seen that development at the moment. We need to, as you said, balance it with being sympathetic to the surroundings and making sure that the amenities and the way it is designed are right for the area.

It will not necessarily be easy and it will be a balance. What we are trying to do is to make the focus beyond those issues of design and sustainability rather than just being a number. That is what the LSE is trying to suggest that we do.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): OK.

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): I am going to jump to project four now because it makes more sense in the storytelling. Project four was looking at the current density matrix and the character areas in it. The way that the policy is constructed is that we have the table at the top with the different PTAL ranges and then along the side are the settings. These are called character settings and they are suburban, urban and central. We asked them to review them --

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): You asked who?

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): The brief was to ask whoever was going to win and it became Arup that won the brief. There were a number of different consultants*. I do not have their names, sorry, but I can get those for you. [**the Project 4 report was signed off by Nicola White (Associate Director, Planning Policy) and co-authored by Peter Neckelmann (Senior Urban Designer) and Richard Katz (Planner)*]

The first project was to look at the character areas. We have a character area map that we use for the SHMA, which has three simple areas: suburban, urban and central. We use that as a quick way to determine character when we do the SHMA. We wanted to update it because it had been done a number of years ago and we wanted it to be updated with the new town centre boundaries and looking at a different way of doing it. That was their first project.

They came up with a way of making it more responsive. The London Plan describes what each character area should be and one thing is that they should be 800 metres from a town centre boundary. The old map was literally a circle around a town centre boundary. They turned that into walking distance from the town centre boundary. It is much more networked boundary and so it is a much finer grained boundary than what we had.

They also updated it with new census data. One of the determinatives of character is whether an area is full of flats, semidetached houses or terraced houses and there are different percentages. We needed to update that with newer census data because we had been using the 2001 Census data before and so we used the 2011 Census data.

We wanted a new map. They looked at many different ways of doing this map and were also looking at whether they could include more different elements of character. The description in the London Plan talks about building footprints and building heights and different types of buildings. They came to the conclusion that for the purpose of doing the SHMA, that level of complexity would be very difficult to map, we would have to change it pretty regularly and it probably was not necessary. They kept the same approach that we had before where we were just looking at census data and the distance from town centres to come up with this new map, which is shown in the report.

They then looked at the actual policy and how it is applied for development management and asked whether a map is appropriate for doing the setting. Should we come up with a map? This is what led them to delve them into the history of the development of the matrix. The matrix goes back to the 1990s and work that was commissioned by the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) at the time. The work that was done suggested that we could try to intensify density through a design-led approach. They were looking at design-led town centres. At that point in time lots of boroughs had maximum density limits and minimum car-parking

limits that led to particular schemes of particular densities. They were suggesting that maybe if we wanted to develop around these town centres, we did not need so much car-parking and could probably have a higher density than the borough plan would allow.

They experimented with different designs on different sites and came up with a range of different building typologies, which they then translated into a number. For some schemes in central London, you are going to have not much car-parking or zero car-parking and could maybe have flats, whereas in suburbia you want more car-parking and you are going to have houses. They did a range of different typologies and ended up with different numbers. They ended up taking all of these different design experiments, effectively, and then came up with a number that they put into this matrix. The matrix was very much meant to be the outcome of their work and their design-led approach to developing a site. The way you would determine whether you should have flats or whether you would be having suburban housing is to do with the character of that area. They came up with a description of what you should be looking for in the character area. It is, effectively, doing a site assessment and deciding how big the buildings are around it, how dense it is and what the urban grain is around it. You should be doing this for every single site you go to. It is just an indication of what you should be looking for.

There was never an intention that this should be mapped on a London-wide scale when they did this. This is a guide for when you get your site: if you have this level of transport accessibility and you are in this type of urban area, by your findings, you should probably build at this density. That is really the foundation of the density matrix. It moves on as the London Plan comes along in different iterations and PTAL comes in and so it starts using PTAL for transport accessibility. The description gets refined. Character becomes more and more dominant, in a sense. Because we had to do the SHMA, we could not possibly do a site assessment for every single site in that assessment and so we had to have a proxy for it, which is why we ended up with this map that takes all of these characteristics and turns them into just a few things from the PTAL and the census data on housing typology. That becomes the dominant thing and either you are in or you are out of one of these settings based on this map that was never meant to be a map in the first place. They tell a story of how we have ended up where we are from the original research, which was about having design-led development. I am sorry. It is a slightly complicated story.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): No, I realise that. It is my fault. I should probably have got us to summarise the reports in a bit more detail before we started. You have done two.

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): That was project four. Projects two and three, which Lin [Cousins] led on with Three Dragons, were two separate projects. The first one was saying that we do have high-density schemes above the density matrix; what are the problems with them and what are the lessons from them? Project three was saying that with these higher-density schemes, are there financial implications? Do they cost more to build or are they more cost-effective to build? We linked this with saying that we also want to look at tall buildings. Are tall buildings more expensive --

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): We will come on to question two in a second.

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): Yes. I am going to leave that for Lin [Cousins] to explain.

Project five was an academic piece. LSE won the contract on that. It was asking what the advantages or disadvantages are to density at a regional level. Could we increase productivity? Does density increase productivity? If we massively increase London's density, would we end up with a more productive city? The

outcome of that was that the only way that is going to work is if we massively increase density across a huge region of London.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Could I just ask, Tony? We never heard the last little bit. What is Arup actually recommending? You said no character map but what --

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): For the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), we use a map. They have updated that map and we are using that map. Then they suggested that for applying the London Plan to development management decisions, there should not be a map and we should just be looking at the character as was originally intended. They give a slightly refined description of character and what they think is important and what we should be looking at. They keep the matrix pretty much as it is with the numbers. They do not change the numbers. They still keep them.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): All right.

Andrew Boff AM: Could I just ask? It is almost asking the same question but on a broader thing, not just about the density. When this research was commissioned, did we ask to see what the health and social outcomes are for different typologies of building?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): Not in detail, no.

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): No, that was not the purpose.

Andrew Boff AM: No? You did not ask what the outcomes were for high-density residential social housing high-rise. You did not ask what the social outcomes were for that? I can tell you what the social outcomes are.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): Some of the work that Lin [Cousins] will come on to did look at how the higher-density developments are functioning, whether people enjoy living there and what some of the drawbacks or pros and cons of it are, but it was not specifically looking at --

Andrew Boff AM: There was nothing about educational attainment, health --

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): No.

Andrew Boff AM: -- family breakdown, criminality, nothing like that?

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): We can take that back to the Deputy Mayor [for Housing and Residential Development], perhaps.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Other people might have things to explore, but I just want to understand, first of all, measuring density because we have not asked any questions or asked any of the other guests to come in yet and they might have an idea about design.

On measuring density, Jennifer, you were saying that there were two, units and habitable rooms. Bed spaces as well? Is that how we are going to measure density? Are we going to do it by square meterage? How are we going to actually measure density?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): What we are talking about is what the LSE recommended and so we have not come up with a future process on this or a conclusion, but the LSE recommended habitable rooms. Was it units as well?

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): That is what we do at the moment.

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): No, they are suggesting using habitable rooms but, if you cannot do that, which we do not because that information is not given by the boroughs, using bedrooms. Bedrooms per hectare would be the density measure they would suggest.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Bedrooms, not bed-spaces? We get into this terrible thing where families of four and five are squashed into places that are too small because they have two-and-a-half bedrooms.

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): The data that is collected is on bedrooms rather than bed-spaces. It is what we can measure. Ideally, they suggest a range of measures all focused on the number of people, the type of people and the different tenures that will be delivered. There are various measures, but in terms of the most basic one it was going to be bedrooms.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): It is probably also worth saying that I know that in the last meeting [1 February 2017] you discussed the affordable housing viability Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), which talks about the 35% threshold based on habitable rooms because we wanted to make sure we were not getting a load of one-bedroom units through the affordable housing elements. We are going to be looking at the measurement. Whether it is habitable rooms, bed-spaces, units or a mixture of them, we are going to look at that.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): You will be looking at the square meterage?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): We might look at square meterage. We have had a lot of responses back from the SPG that talked about this issue and the best way. In different places within London, there are different issues. In central London, if you use bedrooms it can sometimes mask the size of units because there are very big units. We are looking into that and I guess we will make sure that the two approaches are linked.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Yes. Tony, it would be very good to hear from some of the other members what they think of what they have just heard, would it not?

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Please, yes. Do you want to start at the end, Pieter?

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): Yes. For us, with density, we have always looked at going well over the threshold because it makes it more affordable as a scheme, simply put. However, the success of the scheme, as has just been implied, has nothing really to do with what the density is. It is about whether you introduce communal gardens and the ownership of the place. It is a far more complex thing than looking purely at a density matrix. In some areas, if you are developing smaller one-bedroom units, you can get quite a high density but the age profile of the people and the income profile of the people will accept that more because they have access to jobs and local facilities, as against a family unit, which is going to require gardens and more facilities. It really depends on the demographic you are aiming at.

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): I hope my voice holds out. I apologise if it does not and I apologise if I cannot speak up. Just a point about viability, density and tall buildings: the three things do not actually all go together. What we have found - and it did not come as a surprise to us - was that because the costs go up per extra floor, you can achieve tall buildings in terms of viability - particularly if you want to deliver an element of affordable housing - only in very specific central, high-value locations. There is not an incentive necessarily to push up the height of buildings in lower-value areas, although the point made by my colleague on the right was about density. There is a market dynamic that is not pushing up the height of buildings in lower-value areas. It is a very complex picture. We have laid out all sorts of options and scenarios, but that simplifies very much our findings. It did not come as a particular surprise. I do not know if that was helpful.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Thank you. That was very helpful. Crispin?

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): I will come in later.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Great. Can I move on to question two?

Tom Copley AM: We have touched on it because it is to you, Lin [Cousins], and it is precisely about this issue of typologies. From your research and the case studies, what are the key factors in making high-density housing schemes successful? Does your research suggest that some building typologies are more suitable for central London than for more outer boroughs? That latter bit you have touched on already.

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): I have touched on it in terms of viability, although in terms of other aspects of density there may be. I am going to start off by stating the obvious and something that you will be very well aware of. We did not find that there is one particular type of development in terms of density that always works better than another. There are different solutions at the same density that you come up with because of how you design the scheme and the locality that will work well.

One of the interesting findings, which you may be interested in hearing, is that courtyard developments, even at quite high densities with tall blocks, seem to work quite well for affordable housing for families. I would not want to give the impression that that is the only solution, but it seemed to be one of the solutions that worked well.

Can I say what I think makes a success of a high-density scheme or a higher-density scheme? I have noted down three things and this is not helpful because there are different aspects. We are back to saying that there are different aspects and different levers and so what makes success?

My first would be the buildings themselves. There are still issues around daylight, overheating, how the building works, at times the single aspect, how to cope with parking and storage of cycles, but I would say that there are lessons that we have come up with about the building itself that are worth repeating. They have been spoken of before but they still seem to go wrong, but there are some very good solutions we have found as well.

Then an issue that you perhaps want to touch on again later is the relationship of the building or buildings to its surrounding area and how much attention is paid. What we felt was that where you have a comprehensive redevelopment area, you have the opportunity to, for instance, step buildings down towards the neighbourhood.

One of our most interesting examples of a not particularly exciting central high-rise building was in an area where we had a four-storey terrace of flats and houses opposite single-storey bungalows. Therefore, you were - and there is a correct technical term - increasing the density enormously in that very suburban area and you were achieving it by way of good design so that the new buildings respected that - whatever the technical architectural term is; I am sure they will tell me which one it is - and fitted in. You can increase the density in quite suburban areas with low-rise, higher-density development and it works. It is getting away from the image that we were just talking about with one type of very high-density scheme. That is about the relationship to the surrounding area.

A detailed point but one I would make is that we felt there was sometimes in high-density schemes a lack of attention, if I may put it that way, to what happens at the street level of those buildings. Do you just have vacant street frontages? We found a couple of examples of refuse storage at street level in terms of the streetscape rather than at the back of buildings. There are some very detailed points that we picked up in our report for you.

The other point I would make is that where you can get really high-density solutions all goes back to the existing plan, PTALs, etc. What we are finding is that in very accessible locations, you are getting the kind of person you would expect wanting to have accessibility to transport, facilities, etc, and who would perfectly well accept living in a tall building. They tended to be younger people and they tended to be people in employment. I agree that there are some issues about affordable housing and how you provide that in mixed-tenure schemes successfully and in higher-density schemes.

That leads me on to my fourth point and one that I know you want to pick up later: the importance of how the management is carried out in high-density buildings.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Could we look at that when we come to the question?

Tom Copley AM: I am doing that one anyway. We will come to that, yes.

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): Absolutely. I just made that point because, for me, it is one of the four aspects. That is for me. Perhaps that is because I am not a designer. It is equally important. Those would be my initial comments on successful schemes.

Tom Copley AM: There is the issue of height versus density and how one does not necessarily mean the other. Lillington Gardens in Westminster is often given as a good example of a low-to-medium-rise, very high-density development that is very popular.

I am not sure whether this is one for you or for the rest of the panel, but I will put it to you anyway. What do you think are the main factors driving high-rise or skyscraper development? Is it planning policy? Is it the market? What do you think is the main element? We are seeing new high-rise and there is a lot of concern about --

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): Yes, height.

Tom Copley AM: -- what people regard as inappropriate high-rise development --

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): I cannot comment on individual applications. It is not specialism.

What I would say, though, is that your question is about why. The answer to “why” partly in the viability situation is that going tall in some locations is a way to make a scheme more viable, but you will not get them everywhere because they will be less viable in some locations. Probably in 20 years’ time you will say that I had it wrong, but I would not anticipate this being something that we would see in every part of the capital because the economics do not work. That is the truth of it, although in some --

Tom Copley AM: In areas with higher land values, you would see it?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): Higher market values, yes.

Tom Copley AM: Higher market values, sorry, rather than in areas with lower market values?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): That would be the very general, crude rule.

Tom Copley AM: Thank you.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Tom, is it all right? Tell me. You might want to come in again.

Tom Copley AM: Yes, I might do.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): There is something in our briefing and I do not know whether it has come from you or not or if it is from the Three Dragons work. It says that you can go up to 13 storeys and then you can go up to 29 or something like that. I might have it a bit wrong but it is in the high 20s. In between it is going to be less viable and, therefore, different typologies are going to perhaps work better --

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): In different locations.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): -- depending on whether they are in central London or outer London. Is that correct?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): I would need to go back and double-check but there are odd things that happen with viability whereby, at different heights in buildings, you incur new and additional building costs but the values do not necessarily go up in compensation. That partly answers your question. It was about saying that there are odd things that happen in viability terms with tall buildings; odd in a very general sense, not in a technical sense.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Yes. What we are seeing is more like the 29 storeys - and it is going back to what Tom [Copley AM] said - in what people would consider would be inappropriate settings and they are residential. The Mayor has said that he will look at different configurations from towers for residential. I am just trying to put those thoughts together.

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): There are different things that occur at different heights within buildings. Different legislation kicks in. At 20 metres, you go from a dry-riser to a wet-riser and that has cost implications. Your net gross gets worse the higher you go, because of all this additional infrastructure. It is not an exact 10 storeys or 12 storeys it is about and then you jump, as you said, to 20 storeys and the cost profile changes quite significantly. You have to associate that, again, with the sales values. Every five floors you are adding about £5,000 to the sales value. At some point, it is not a simple graph. It is quite complex. It is a lot to do with legislation in terms of building costs, the structure that has to

go into the building at different heights, whether you have straddling walls, etc. that you have to build in, which you do not necessarily have to do with a three- or four-storey building. There is a lot of difference.

Andrew Boff AM: Just to come back on what Ms Cousins was saying, you were going on about the popularity of courtyard developments. I found one that worked once. It had service charges of £350 a month and that was what it needed in order to work. Does viability take into account how much the residents of that development will have to pay forever?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): The issue of service charges, which you are indicating there, is an important one and when we come back to the management issue we will have to pick it up again, I would suggest. We looked at two different aspects of the affordability of this. One was the affordability for the occupier where the service charge matters --

Andrew Boff AM: You did look at it?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): I will come back and perhaps not in the technical sense you might have wished us to, but I will come back and make some comments on it. The other was in terms of the viability and the economics of it from a position of developing it. I am happy to talk about the affordability issues --

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): We will come back to that.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): You said something about single aspect. I am getting quite a lot of inquiries from people and complaints from people about single-aspect buildings, particularly when other dense developments are put in very close and so suddenly their daylight, which was not great, is now almost non-existent. It is not non-existent but it is certainly reduced. Are single-aspect buildings cheaper than dual-aspect?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): They may be. I cannot answer that as a general point. We found some things that you may find do not happen with new buildings because we were looking at buildings that were *in situ*, were already occupied and had been occupied for long enough so that we could get some resident feedback and management/agent feedback. Your standards may well have moved on. There may be something about looking at the new standards and making sure that these lessons from the past do not arise again.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Can we ask our other guests that?

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Just very quickly.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): On single-aspect, are they on the whole cheaper than dual-aspect?

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): Yes, because you are having two flats share one corridor and so it is going to make it more cost-effective, quite simply. The real problem with single aspect is not necessarily heat loss or anything like that. It is heat gain and how to control that. It is the same problem with dual-aspect properties as well because they get hit by the sun in the morning and in the afternoon. It is about making sure that there is proper passive solar control within a building so that you are not ramping up air-conditioning and everything.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): There is air circulation?

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): Yes, you can get air circulation because of full-height windows, which most developments are doing now because the cost of that glass window is about the same as the *façade* anyway. You are going to get the air movement, but it is about stopping the space heating up in the first place. One of the only real mechanisms is passive solar control.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Is it more expensive, then, to make them really energy-efficient and sustainable environmentally?

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): There is a right sort of level. Heat gain has always been a problem not just inside the flats but in corridors. Where you have heat exchanges, they can get unbelievably hot. With current legislation, flats are using very little energy to heat themselves and so that has to have a benefit, but for the occupant rather than the developer, obviously.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): Yes, just two quick points, really. Linked to Andrew's [Boff AM] point before about the health and social implications of development, it is worth raising that density is one part of policy but we also have, as Lin [Cousins] has mentioned, a raft of standards that help to ensure the internal space is the right size and is conducive to people having a good quality of life. That also has implications on the typology because at the moment we try to avoid single-aspect dwellings and so that leads us down certain typology routes, although there is flexibility there.

The other point is about the land sites that we have in London at the moment. Some big courtyard developments might seem like perhaps the most attractive developments, but if you have a very small site and you are trying to develop a lot of houses on it, it gives you only a few options for the typology that you can follow. We have to bear that in mind.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Navin, question three, please?

Navin Shah AM: Yes, Chairman. Many communities and amenity society stakeholders often perceive density levels as too jam-packed already. How can developers, professionals and planners illustrate when this is not the case and win over those critics?

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): That is a tough one. Our experience is that you have a lot of opposition from local people, for example, to a tall building. The view is that whatever consultation you do, the opposition is there, particularly from local amenity societies and that sort of thing, and that suggesting a tall building is not going to be popular. It is going to take many decades for people to think that new clusters of towers, for example, were a good idea, if they turn out to have been a good idea.

We are working on a 20-storey building in Wandsworth and we are not expecting anything other than opposition from the local community and I can completely understand that from their point of view.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Is that because you have done it before?

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): No. In particular in Garratt Lane where our proposal is, there was a big council development with 30-storey towers, which have been horrible for a long time both as a place to live and also to look at. There is an ability to say that the design is better with our new towers, but it is tough. People are not that bothered whether it is a good design or a bad design. Does it really make that much difference when it is 20 storeys high and there is nothing there at the moment?

What we are relying on much more is the planning system and the support of the GLA and the importance of delivering housing, but at a local level it is very hard to say, "You are getting more housing and so it is OK to have a tower".

Navin Shah AM: Representing the outer London boroughs that I do, I know that generally there is opposition to taller buildings to start with. There are issues about the character of the area, overshadowing and all of that. Could it also be that people perceive, sometimes in reality, that the local infrastructure - transport, congestion, traffic and all of that - is not quite looked at properly? Also, there are issues about other social infrastructure like the impact on local school places, the impact in terms of community facilities and so on. None of that has been planned when you have a huge development coming through.

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): Yes, that is very much the case. People do feel that. If they get as far as worrying about those things, they do not feel that they are being considered.

Navin Shah AM: Do you reckon that this is a problem when you have large, very high-density developments, generally tall buildings, to overcome that local opposition and the serious difficulties that can arise from not having considered duly the infrastructure aspects?

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): Yes. There are two logical things to try to emphasise: the delivery of affordable housing and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contribution. CIL is a mystery that people are not really interested in, but it is a very real thing for developers.

Navin Shah AM: Yes, but we have a situation here where it is like section 106. CIL is also seen now to be the cure for everything. Unfortunately, we have tensions there as well because there are already current gaps in various local facilities and CIL tends to look from a borough perspective at plugging those gaps. On top of that, by having huge high-density developments, you are going to be compounding the current problems like the need for those infrastructure facilities, which CIL cannot deliver. What we are doing is providing a development that is not sustainable in the long term and, therefore, those critics in those local communities are right in opposing it and we are wrong as planners, developers or whatever in imposing those kinds of solutions. There is a problem here.

Are there comments from other colleagues as well?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): It is worth saying that it is often difficult to encourage local communities to buy into a development, particularly if they see it as not in keeping with their surroundings. However, part of the sell, if you like - and I would say this as a planner - is that if you are doing it this way, it can be planned and you can make sure you take account of all of those needs and the implications of having a bigger population.

At the moment, we are seeing that London's population is growing quite a lot and we are not necessarily building the housing for these people and so they are cramming in. We are ending up with those drawbacks and capacity issues with social infrastructure, schools, etc. even without the development. At least with development, we can plan it and make sure that we are getting the developers to contribute to what we need and understand what we need. Otherwise, we could have the same pressures without the planned process.

It is about going through the consultation process and we have seen over even the past couple of years that local communities and people are getting more accepting of development because they know the impact the housing crisis has on them and their families and they know that we need to deliver more. Some typologies can be emotive, but it is getting through that process and making sure that people understand why a certain

design has been designed for an area and that those things that have been mentioned about social infrastructure, the impact on highways, etc. have been considered. They should have been and that is part of the London Plan process and it is part of local plans to ensure that that does not happen. Then, on a case-by-case basis, the development density can be understood in keeping with what is there and what is needed.

Navin Shah AM: I have some figures here from an economic analysis and financial viability test of a range of building types, which indicated that 25-storey tower blocks and 13-to-14-storey tower blocks were most viable in areas like Camden, but when it looked at outer London areas like, it says, Harrow, Haringey and Lewisham, 5-to-8-storey types become more viable. Given that that is the analysis and the situation that we have demonstrated, certainly when we start going to those outer London areas and start promoting 15-plus-storey units, it does not make sense because they are not viable to start with.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): That – and Lin [Cousins] could come in here in more detail – is a very broad-brush analysis there. There will be places within each borough where higher density and taller developments are viable. It really is quite location-specific. What we were trying to do in that piece of work is give an overall understanding, which suggests that where the housing values are higher, you will be able to deliver higher. We are seeing higher-density developments in outer London, but they are in very specific places. I do not know if you want to come in there, Lin.

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): I just need to keep drawing the distinction between high density and tall buildings because you can have higher-density locations in the kinds of locations you are describing at lower heights and they will work. It generates the same number of people, which gives the issue about social and other infrastructure coping with the additional population.

Navin Shah AM: Yes. I am absolutely with you. This is the problem we have. Invariably we find that when we talk about high densities, it is seen as almost a licence to go as tall as you like. That is the serious problem that there is.

I accept that we explore it as part of the process and that is where I would like to see some changes in the new London Plan whereby there is a clear process and you have to demonstrate, if you are going to go very tall, that you have exhausted the other typology options to deliver high density.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): That is question seven, by the way. You are coming on to question seven. Do you mind if we move on?

Navin Shah AM: I will stop here, yes, Chairman. No problem at all. I will come in if I need to.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Thank you.

Andrew Boff AM: Yes. Mr Kelly, how difficult is it to get the GLA planning department to abandon section 7.7 of the London Plan? Is it quite easy?

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): Sorry, what section are you referring to?

Andrew Boff AM: It is the one that talks about tall buildings, where they will be required and the fact that they should not be built where they are unacceptable, where they are visually intrusive and all the rest of it.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): It is the main policy on tall buildings, policy 7.7.

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): For the particular building project that I am talking about, we had across the way from us a development by Pocket, which was 27 storeys and which had been approved - we have had a lot of support from the GLA and the height of the building was not an issue --

Andrew Boff AM: How often, in your experience, has the GLA said, "Our policy 7.7 really does not allow for a tall building here"?

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): That has not been my experience.

Andrew Boff AM: No, it has not been my experience, either, actually, Mr Kelly. How is it that the planning department has for years got away with this thinly veiled love affair with tall buildings? You have almost never, in my experience, turned a building down because it is too tall. I may be wrong. There may be some.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): It is probably worth saying that both Elliot [Kemp] and I work in the London Plan team and are not on development projects and so we do not have the specific cases.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): We will have a separate tall buildings meeting in due course.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): Elliot can come in on how the policy should work.

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): For Wandsworth, we would have expected them to have identified those areas in Wandsworth town centre that would be acceptable or not through their planning process. That is identified and then that would be an area that is considered acceptable or not. That would be the way that we would identify and expect to deal with all of those character issues that are outlined in the plan.

Andrew Boff AM: Currently in the London Plan there is a specification that tall buildings "should not have an unacceptably harmful impact on their surroundings". The point is that that currently is interpreted as something that the planning authority has to prove, not the applicant. Do you not think that the applicant in a future plan should have to demonstrate that their tall building is not unacceptable?

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): Yes, the starting point is that it should be plan-led and boroughs should identify, as the policy specifies at the moment, where they think they may be acceptable in principle. Then there is that scale and those criteria with which the applicant would have to demonstrate that it is acceptable in this location. The principle of a tall building of some sort in this particular area may be considered acceptable by the borough but then they have to meet all of these environmental, character --

Andrew Boff AM: Should it not be the applicant that has to demonstrate its acceptability, not the planning authority that has to demonstrate its unacceptability?

Elliot Kemp (Senior Strategic Planner, Greater London Authority): The planning department is making assessments and so is making the decisions at the end of the day. The applicant will have put in all of the evidence it wants to demonstrate that. There is an assessment being made at the end of the day and then a decision by the councillors --

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): We should come back to that.

Andrew Boff AM: We will come back. I am sorry.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): When we have Jules [Pipe, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills] here particularly, we will ask that question. Can you ask question four, please?

Andrew Boff AM: Yes. This is to all guests. How can we be sure that the low levels of voids and turnover are a reflection of support for high-density living rather than just about a more basic shortage of housing?

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Who wants to start on that?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): I might have a go. I do not think you can answer that question perfectly at all. I understand the point you are making: that these are relatively unpopular buildings but it is only the pressing need for housing that is making people stay there. I cannot prove the negative to you, but we did not pick up anything from the survey of residents we undertook nor from our discussions with managing agents that would suggest that people are living in these buildings because they have no other option. It is reasonable to say that there are groups of people, not necessarily everyone in the population, who are perfectly content living in high-density developments. We certainly did not pick up, "I am here because I have no other choice".

Andrew Boff AM: You asked the question?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): No, not directly. We asked about general satisfaction and their overall views on the building.

Andrew Boff AM: Did you ask if they were actively considering moving at the moment?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): No.

Andrew Boff AM: Did you ask whether or not they --

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): The turnover levels are very low. It is not just the void levels, but the actual turnover is low, which implies that people --

Andrew Boff AM: That would happen if there was nowhere else to go. They would stay where they are.

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): Indeed. We did not pick up any sign that that is --

Andrew Boff AM: That is London, is it not?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): It is a large part of the country, I should think.

Andrew Boff AM: Did you ask whether or not they were content?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): We asked what they thought about their home and then what they thought about the local area. We did not ask them whether they were considering moving but --

Andrew Boff AM: That would be a really good test, would it not?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): The trouble with speculative questions like that is that people give you an answer that they think you want. "Am I considering moving?" Maybe. It is a difficult question. The basic questions we asked suggested a level of satisfaction and not a level of high turnover.

One of the more interesting findings, I would suggest, is that we asked people a slightly odd question, perhaps, in tall buildings: whether they wanted to be at a higher level in the building or at a lower level. Most people wanted to go up higher.

Andrew Boff AM: Yes. If there is a penthouse, who would not?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): No, they were realistic about the costs of things, but they wanted to go higher. Nothing --

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Sorry. Did you break it down? Were they couples?

Tom Copley AM: Were they families with children?

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Were they elderly? Were they families?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): Most of the people we interviewed, actually, the largest single group of people in the higher buildings or taller buildings, were young people sharing. Most of the families we identified and interviewed were in the tall buildings but were also in the courtyard-type and lower-density schemes again. I cannot answer your question directly, but there was no evidence from the survey that --

Andrew Boff AM: Do you think it would be a good idea to ask people where they would like to live and what kind of typology they would like to live in?

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): A castle.

Andrew Boff AM: Maybe they would answer that but typically, when you have had surveys like that before, people are not ridiculous with their choices. They do not say, "I want to live at Buckingham Palace".

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): What we did was to ask people what they thought of the current scheme and then looked at how their different ratings and general perceptions of their current living environment compared across --

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): It was a very good question and we can use it as a mayoral question, I am sure.

Andrew Boff AM: I think we will. Thank you very much. That has probably covered it.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Tom, question five, please.

Tom Copley AM: This is going on to the issue of management agreements, which we started with earlier, and so I will start with Lin [Cousins]. What is the scope for developing policy guidance on the need for management agreements as part of considering any high-density proposal? Are there examples of successful practice in London?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): This is a very important area as you are looking at higher-density development because it means that you have more people having common spaces in more buildings in larger parts of future developments. I know that you already have policies that suggest that this must be attended to when you put in an application, but it is more important than that. It should be something that is very headline about how you have to have the right kind of management arrangements in place and they have to be affordable.

Some of the issues are about how you deliver good-quality management where you have mixed-tenure schemes. It does not matter whether they are tall or courtyard or whatever they are, but how to deliver that good management in a way that does not segregate the tenures is quite difficult. We found examples --

Tom Copley AM: Sorry, this is why the Mayor has said that he does not want to have 'poor doors' and things like that.

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): Yes. It is unfortunate that there is that expression because, when you see it working in practice on the ground, you can see how this can work. This does not look like that.

What I would say is that we were not looking for this when we started on the research. It was part of our brief to talk about management, but we were not particularly looking for this. We have found aspects of good practice in a number of different developments, but if the GLA wants to pick up the issue of how to strengthen the way management is delivered in high-density developments, we can go back and revert to, "Here is a good bit of good practice. Here is what seems to have worked in this instance". I would not say to you, "Here is the single or two examples where this is a perfect arrangement".

Tom Copley AM: Were there any general aspects, a concierge, things like that?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): Yes, there were general aspects, but if you have a concierge, it puts the cost up. There are some basics that seem to be delivered by good management to do with simply making sure waste gets removed, having some degree of security for the cycle storage or, if there are problems with children playing in a quiet area, those are somehow dealt with properly. It is a bad example, but it is having somebody around and repairing faults very quickly so that, if you have a problem with a lift, it is repaired very quickly, the kind of basics that all good management requires. You have to deliver that in a particular way when you have different tenures and different types of markets that you are serving.

Tom Copley AM: Did you find examples of places where they might have started out with various things and then over time, with good intentions and everything, they have disappeared; and that has changed the views of residents in the block?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): We found some useful examples of where things changed but where they changed in terms of how the management was delivered, not that the standards were reduced but the different arrangements for management over time because the first lot did not work. There are issues around technical details like having decent service-level agreements and costed plans and how those costed plans will work over time if costs go up and there is the affordability question again on service charges. There are quite a lot of bits of good practice from different case studies, but I would not point to one scheme and say, "That gives you all of the answers".

Tom Copley AM: Would anyone else like to comment on this?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): Some of that management approach can be looked at in terms of the design. For example, making sure that the cycle storage is secure and that people want to use it is something that you can work out through the design of buildings, not necessarily the management. Also, in terms of schemes and the management of them, if you are doing a developer that is doing a lot of schemes, particularly in London, they want to have a good reputation. We are finding that a lot of developers are starting up their own in-house management companies to make sure they are delivering the quality and the experience that they want. Particularly, I suppose, again, harking back to the SPG that I mentioned before, we talk particularly about build-to-rent now and we are very keen to make sure that there is the right kind of management for those schemes where there might be a higher turnover, more sharers, etc. We are looking at it from that point of view as well.

Tom Copley AM: Do you think that it is going to become even more of an important thing with build-to-rent and with more shared functions?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): Yes, and just more people generally, the amenity space, yes.

Tom Copley AM: Anyone else or should we --

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): Yes. I have to say that I agree with the comments. It starts with the design and making sure that the concept of the building takes into account right from the initiation what the management costs are going to be.

The next stage is about empowerment. It is about giving the people who live there the power to change the management. That is particularly for homeownership, not rent, obviously. If you can give them the power, they have the power to increase or decrease the level of the service charge and adapt it to whatever their collective needs are. On very big schemes, that is more difficult. If you are doing 400, 500 or 600 units, it is a slightly different thing. For 35-ish units, it is actually quite easy to do. Give the ownership of the management to the people who live there and let them do it.

Tom Copley AM: That is something that council tenants, of course, have in the form of tenant management organisations (TMOs).

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): Yes, but try to get something done with them. It just does not happen. They are labyrinthine. It is just nuts. I am talking more about ownership. On smaller schemes where you have ownership over that management process, it is far more successful.

Tom Copley AM: Is that the 'common-hold' arrangement? Do I have that terminology correct?

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): The people who live there become directors of the company that manages the managing agency.

Andrew Boff AM: Is the problem there that the owners get to vote and not the tenants? That means that they will always vote for the lowest cost, whereas tenants will have an interest in improved services. Sorry. I beg your pardon.

Tom Copley AM: It is all right.

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): Yes, but I am talking more about schemes where the majority own rather than rent their units. The people who rent can have a voice within those management systems because they can attend the public group meetings. From my experience, it tends to make more successful schemes if you allow people to manage their own spaces.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Lin [Cousins], did you want to come back in?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): I have just a couple of very quick comments on the question of management and service charges. We have looked at owners and affordable renters and private renters, but there is another group that any management costed plan needs to look at very carefully and that is people in shared ownership or any other kind. This could be a particular issue because they may well be paying the same service charges as an owner and they are in there because they are marginal affordability. That is one thing.

The other point I just wanted to emphasise, Chairman, is about any kind of guidance going forward. We talked about the importance of the management voice in the design. My own view would be that unless you can prove that the management team has been in there influencing the design, I would be very worried about whether some of the technical details have been properly sorted. Getting the management voice in is critical, not just nice to have, when you are designing a building.

Tom Copley AM: Thank you.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Andrew, question six?

Andrew Boff AM: Could you tell me - Mr Kelly and then Mr Zitman if possible - how architects and developers are responding to the pressure for increasing density and how much of a challenge is it to provide both affordable and family homes in high-density developments? If you could give us examples, it would be wonderful.

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): To use the example I have already referred to, the scheme in Wandsworth, we could not get an affordable registered social landlord (to take any units in that scheme because it was effectively a pencil tower and very expensive for them to take on. That is the problem and it is probably a problem with that particular typology of a very thin tower. I do not have a lot of experience of schemes with a mix of affordable housing, but it comes on to an answer I would like to make to the next question, but I will wait for that.

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): There is a very good scheme by Brady Mallalieu Architects. It was for Ballymore and One Housing Group in the Docklands on Mastmaker where they had all the family units on the ground floor and then, as the buildings went higher and higher, they had smaller and smaller units. It is a very expensive development but it is very successful for them to go around because all of the families have access to courtyards, which I mentioned earlier, and the street and play areas. There are quite good examples of doing that.

Andrew Boff AM: The ground level is --

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): Family homes.

Andrew Boff AM: Family homes. What about --

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): As you go up, if you are putting the private ones at the very top, they are getting the best return to sell, as an example.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): How tall is that development?

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): I do not know the overall height, I am afraid. It has 199 homes.

Andrew Boff AM: Yes, 199, but there are family homes within the tower as well. Is that correct?

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): Less in the tower. It depends on people's expectations. There are going to be places where you do not want to put families necessarily, on busy streets, but there are families that are quite happy to live in towers. There are architectural examples of where they have not.

Andrew Boff AM: Are you happy to find one for me? I have not found any to date who do not have a country home where they can take the kids.

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): If you look at schemes like Unité d'habitation in Marseille, it is a successful block. One has to look at the demographics of it to some degree.

Andrew Boff AM: Yes. I would not want the demographics of Marseille.

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): Yes, I completely agree with Andrew that this idea of families living in towers is not real. You get some couples with children who are architects who are happy to live in a tower, but why on earth would you want to live in a tower?

Andrew Boff AM: And they are off to the Chilterns at the weekend and they say, "Look at me. I am an urban dweller".

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): Not everybody has the income.

Andrew Boff AM: Exactly. Let us talk about affordable because you demonstrated family homes. That is the typology. What about the affordability of those homes? Would there be a mix or --

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): In this scheme, I believe most of the family homes are social rents. They are affordable rent homes versus for sale. Generally, if you are on the lower level of a property, the units tend to be cheaper units. As you go up, they get more expensive; rooftops.

Andrew Boff AM: The mere fact that we can talk about that means effectively that we are creating virtual poor and 'rich doors' and 'poor doors' because we know that if you are living in the tower you can afford it and if you are living on the ground you cannot. Is that --

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): Not necessarily. It depends on how you break down the demographics of those units on the ground. There is no reason why some could not be family homes for sale at a good price. Again, it comes down to the architecture of the place. If you have a development with 200, 300 units and you have one door, it becomes like a hotel. It is about how you break that up architecturally and create places where people can identify with that place rather than with the overall development.

Andrew Boff AM: Ms Cousins, would you --

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): I was just going to confirm that looking across all of our case studies, the point about affordable housing in tall towers and being on the lower storeys is confirmed by most of what we found from the research.

Andrew Boff AM: Supplementary -- I beg your pardon.

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): No, I have nothing.

Andrew Boff AM: OK. The SPG that was issued in March last year came up with the statement:

“Given the choice, many people, and most families, would prefer to live in a home with a private front door at ground level ... The challenge for higher density housing is to give some of the benefits of a private house ... to people living in apartments.”

How would you do that bearing in mind we have already established from GLA work that that is where people want to live?

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): In the developments I have been involved in, I give people ownership of their front doors and ownership of their places. I have not seen any issues to do with people not wanting to be in reasonably dense developments and take succour from being close to people who may be like-minded and be able to knock next door and ask for a cup of sugar or whatever and enjoy their community spirit. It is really down to how the development is built up right from the start. Is it just racked up to make as much money for the developer or is it trying to create a place where a community can evolve?

Andrew Boff AM: Do we know where that has happened in high-density developments?

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): Yes.

Andrew Boff AM: Yes. It would be interesting if you could write to us and give us some examples of where those communities are.

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): I can. Sorry. I used to be the development director for Pocket.

Andrew Boff AM: Sure.

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): The Westminster scheme works incredibly well. This is a scheme that packs in well over 1,000 with 32 flats and communal gardens. It has won Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) awards and two *Evening Standard* awards. Satisfaction there is pretty high because I spent a lot of time making sure that the ground floor flats, for example, had ownership of the garden spaces in front of them and that there is a communal space at the top. There is a sun lounge at the top that is open for any residents to use.

Andrew Boff AM: You have to understand that a lot of people do not have a problem with high density; it is high that they have a problem with.

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): Yes.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): With the design, what we have seen quite a lot of - and that is also part of the SPG guidance - is this idea of active frontages and having front doors. You can design and you can have a mix of typology so that you can have blocks that meet the family needs and requirements, access to open space and so on, and a street-based pattern. Then maybe an element of higher density or a higher tower, not necessarily a tower but a higher-density part of the development, and that works quite well because you get that quite nice mix.

Partly, it is thinking about yes, as we have said a few times, you can have higher density without high-rise and that is true, but it does also depend on the floor print and the space you have to deliver it in. Also, coming back to the point at the start, we do need to deliver more homes and higher density is one way we can do that.

Andrew Boff AM: High density is fine. When you are doing the plan and having a look, see if you can come up with a plan that solves the problem of Mare Street - and I am sure the Deputy Mayor [for Housing and Residential Development] knows where Mare Street is - where we have had these high density issues with high density homes put in and completely dead shopfronts that have been going on for 20 years. They have been granting planning permission to these dead shopfronts for 20 years.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): That is an issue. When we talk about active frontages, we are not necessarily just talking about shops.

Andrew Boff AM: No.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): You are talking about having a front door for the house on the ground.

Andrew Boff AM: Yes, on the ground.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): Yes.

Andrew Boff AM: One of the things. Thank you.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): We are going on to question seven, which is probably the most exciting question, which Nicky is going to ask.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): I just wanted, with your indulgence, to follow up on Andrew because we have in the past - and I am sure you were here when we did it - looked at design and medium density. For instance, one of the developments we looked at was St Andrews at Bromley-by-Bow. If I remember rightly, it is about 13 storeys, a very cleverly designed courtyard/perimeter block with different heights and, therefore, you get the light or you do not block out light. Families are on mezzanines all with their own door into a garden and then, at the top, more families and it is all social rent. That was probably 11, 12 or 13 storeys but with gardens on the roofs and, therefore, there was amenity space and there were balconies and so on.

I just wanted to ask Andrew and the panel. You do have families at heights in medium density. If we are going to rule out that, I am just interested in --

Andrew Boff AM: That is fine if that is where they choose to be. No, they do not.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Just because he dresses like an architect, by the way, he is not one.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): No. I want to ask if we are ruling out families in medium density --

Andrew Boff AM: If they are social housing tenants, they have absolutely no choice as to where they can be put. If you are told as a family on the social housing list that you have to go in a tower block and you turn it down, then they say you are homeless for your own reasons and by your own choice.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): All right. I am just talking about access to amenity space and garden space, so to speak, and you can do it on rooftops.

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): I would confirm that we found lots of examples of different ways of dealing with these issues, including the kinds of things you said and other things like internal lounges and community spaces within buildings where externally you would not have. There were different solutions that worked.

Andrew Boff AM: It is noisy. I do not want to stop them being noisy but I do not want to build buildings where the noise irritates all their neighbours, which is what tower blocks do.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): I am trying not to talk about that now. We are now moving on to my question. I normally agree with Andrew. I am now moving on to this question which is about new policies because we are leading up to a London Plan, which is going to come out in the autumn [2017]. This is a draft London Plan. It is really important now that we start feeding in ideas for policies. Out of what we have heard this morning, just thinking about what new policies we think could be included, these are new policies and I suppose also about what we need to amend because that would be virtually a new policy or it will become a new policy in the current London Plan, but what we will need to add for a new London Plan that will enable us to build at higher densities but sustainably, which are proper policies that allow for sustainable higher density.

In a sense, the point I have just made is part of what this Committee has recommended in the past because we have recommended that with residential towers, before there is ever a plan discussed for a residential tower - and the Mayor has endorsed this - we should be looking at meeting his objectives for affordable housing and other objectives through looking at different configurations. We have spoken about some of those this morning, but particularly around medium rise. I am opening it out for the panel.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): Just quickly, we are working on the new London Plan and it will be a new plan and, therefore, there are existing policies which we will learn from but it might be a totally different policy. We do not know; we are still working on that. We have done these pieces of research which we are going through and understanding the implications of. We have also done the A City for All Londoners consultation, which is on density and how we deliver the homes that London needs, where this came up quite a lot. Also, we have been doing some stakeholder working groups. We are synthesising that at the moment and working out what the new policies should look like.

It will be interesting to hear from the other guests what views they have about things that we need to take account of.

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): As this is all about density, for me, density should not be used as a whip on developers. The context is very important and the housing typology.

What has not been spoken about a great deal is looking at the affordability spectrum across all of these. Most of the housing in London is homeownership. It is very expensive, but there is a generation of people coming through who cannot afford to get anywhere need the stuff. Unless we build a significant platform on

intermediate housing that is sustainably intermediate, not lost to the open market almost instantly as a loss of the shared ownership is, we need to have a proper look at what is going to happen over the next generation. It might be nice to say everybody has their own front door in a nice terraced house and that is where the whole of London will be, but that is not reality if we, in the generation, are going to get up to 10 million. I suggest that might even be pessimistic. I do not know. If you look at other cities, they have gone away above that. We are going to have to change our view of how we live.

It comes back to what you mentioned earlier: how do people get to understand the changes in their built environment? It is about education. It is about having those consultations. Particularly in Wandsworth, a lot of it was fields, frankly, and it has not been very long since it changed. It very quickly became a terraced sprawl and now it is changing again. It is to show that evolution because London is not a static place and it never will be. It never has been and it is going to grow even more debts. We need to bring people along with that story and show them.

In all the consultations I have had, it is dangerous to have one consultation. You need to have at least two or three with a developer to show people how you have taken on board what their comments are. It is very well doing one and they say, "Where is my voice?" It is part of that process of showing the evolution and saying, "Where are your kids going to live in 25 years' time because none of this housing is affordable for them?" The pressures on social rents are going to be so extremely high over time. Councils can build their own, but how do you then develop that further on to give the people the opportunity to release that valve from the affordable to get them stepping stones to ownership?

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): It sounds good, but now can you translate that into policies?

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): No. That is their job.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): No, come on. This is an opportunity. You would want more consultation processes.

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): It is important and there is a need for better consultation with the public. There also needs to be a lot more forward looking not just to what this development does but how this development will sit within the context of what is going to happen over the next generation. Look at London. What is going to happen over the next generation if we are going to have to accept not just the current level of homes to be delivered but the numbers at that height with 10 million or 12 million people living in London and the future beyond that, which is a high possibility? How is that going to influence infrastructure? How will technology change all of that? That is where the policy perhaps could be looking at getting local councils rather than to say, "We are going to listen to just a certain sector of society about keeping everything as a two-storey terrace", to say, "What happens when X number of people need to be moving in?" It is not just young people but older people. What is there mobility across the tenures? In there lies a possibly stronger policy.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Mobility across the tenures.

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): Yes, as people move from homes, as was talked about, young people studying, just coming out, getting their first jobs, maybe sharing a home, moving on to being couples and having a family and then downsizing beyond that. How does that churn the curd? People moving on is not a bad thing. At one point, I moved every year but it is down to seven to ten years now and I do not have a problem with it.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Yes. This is not necessarily the place to explore it, but there are some very good initiatives and examples that we can pick up of how to encourage people to move and change tenures and also to not just change tenures but downsize.

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): It is an opportunity. For a lot of people, they do not have the opportunity.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): That is something we should explore. Anyone else? I am not trying to gag you, Pieter, but anything else you want to say?

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): No.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Come on, Lin.

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): I am going to be enormously pragmatic after that description about how life will change. I am going to be tremendously pragmatic and it will not come as a surprise to you. The quality of management needs to be built into the planning system as much as you worry about physical design and affordability. It should be part of the plan. Very clearly, you have to come up with decent management arrangements of these units and they have to be affordable because my concern would be about affordability. It is not so much the tenure because the tenure is what the tenure is, putting it crudely, but about the extra costs there are for residents. Therefore, I would want to see costs in plans. If I had my wish, that is what I would see. These two would kick me under the table but that is what I would like to see.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): We will interpret a policy quite broadly because there are other documents where some of these ideas could come out. That was very helpful.

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): It needs to be nailed down.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Are there other things you want to say in terms of policies or initiatives?

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): You can write to us if you want. We love receiving letters.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Yes. We love ideas.

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): I am going to focus my attention on that area because it is the hidden bit and the bit that is talked about less and possibly in terms of people's enjoyment of where they live is just as important or very important.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): I just want to say it has come up in other areas. We did an investigation into how public space was being made into private and private homes. One of the things we do not consider at the planning system is management of this space. We think about design but not management. Crispin, you wanted to come in.

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): Yes. I have three suggestions. My first suggestion is that the threshold of affordable housing at ten units is a highly negative thing in terms of producing housing. All small developers try to be under that threshold. You could get a 10% growth in your housing numbers in small schemes if you change that threshold. Although it might seem counterintuitive in producing affordable housing, you get a lot more housing.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): What would you change it to, though?

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): You could change it to 12 or something like that. It would be a small change and you would find all schemes with 11 units rather than nine units. You may think this is a small thing but I assure you that all schemes that are sold as small unit schemes are nine units. It would be interesting to know what research you have about the number of schemes that are under the threshold by one unit.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): I am sure one of my colleagues will take credit for that idea; you will have to watch the press on that.

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): Yes. That is my first suggestion. My second suggestion is that as a small developer, I am very aware that there are a lot of council estates - for example, in Fulham, where I have done stuff in the past - where the borough does not have infrastructure to investigate how it could densify its estates. I know it has recently set up a joint venture with Stanhope but, leaving that aside, there are many small sites on those estates that could be built on. You should be trying to harness the energy of small developers who are in the city looking how they can do things, where there are sites waiting to be built on if the architectural, intellectual capital was invested in making planning applications.

My idea for that - and I am about to do this with Zaha Hadid Architects on a Housing for London scheme - is to make applications on land that is not owned by a developer but is owned by the council for small schemes of 20 units. There should be some mechanism for obliging the council then to sell that once planning permission is granted. It is really saying, "You have this land but you are not doing anything with it". If a planning application is made which is successful, in other words is acceptable, then that should be the entitlement for the developer to develop it.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Crispin, can I just ask you? You are talking about garage sites or bits of green that are not being built on?

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Hidden homes, is it not?

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): It is hidden homes, yes. It might be like at the dead end of a 1950s block. You are going through a planning process and, therefore, it has to be architecturally OK to do it there. It is not something that is not acceptable to look and to go through the planning process. There is a sympathy for councils and housing associations that have land they cannot attend to because they have too much else to do, but you should be welcoming the enterprises and the small developers who identify that land and say, "We could put five homes here or ten homes here". That is my next suggestion.

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): They could apply and the council might have a strategic plan somewhere down the line to do something with the estate and, if they are then obliged to sell that land, it completely knocks back the wider strategic plan.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): They could do what Igloo did, which was to take all of the spare land on an estate, encourage people who are under-occupying to go into the smaller units, which were newly built, and then refurbish the flats. They got more social tenants that way.

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): I am merely trying to encourage the initiative of people who are looking around for things to do. I am not saying that if an estate has a long-term plan where they have worked out what they are going to do that should be upset, but in my experience there are lots and lots of sites in London that are small sites that are too small to be strategic for a council or a housing association but could be dealt

with by a small developer. We have this wonderful thing that you can moot a planning application on land you do not own and, therefore, why do we not encourage that? If people get consent for that, they should be entitled to buy that and give half of it as affordable housing. That is a partner.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): If you could write that up and send it to us, it would be great.

Andrew Boff AM: That would be brilliant.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): That was your number two, was it not?

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): Plan two, yes. My number three is really picking up the general tone of the conversation, which is I believe that the future development in London is going to be rental housing. Housing for sale is going to wither. The interesting thing about housing prices is that they are going to change our approach to the sort of housing we build. It is going to be built by big developers that are going to be doing an American model of housing for rent across family/single occupancy and they will be there for their lifetime in a particular development. That is going to completely change how big developments work in London. That would be an area that you should be addressing; certainly it is going to be a fundamental thing.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): Do you think the private rented sector (PRS) is going to take off?

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): It is, yes, for the first time.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): It is, yes.

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): That brings with it a particular sort of architecture and particular stuff about management. It is going to be all about management. It is going to be about capital being managed so that the tenants are happy. There is going to be effectively a private environment that has its own particular issues. It will not be about affordable housing. It is going to be about private market housing including cheap private market housing.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): You are not envisaging this, Crispin? You are not seeing these big blocks or private rented as being mixed tenure?

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): No.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): No. Are there going to be --

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): There will be mixed income in the sense of cheap housing there but it will market housing.

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): A bit at the bottom there.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): For rent?

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): Yes.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Yes, I get that.

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): This is a big business operation.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Will the drive for density drive one-person units or one-bed flats anyway?

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): In the American example, they develop so that they are like villages and, therefore, you can stay in this place as a student through to when you are going to die.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): A cheery last point.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Is this a one-bed flat?

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): No. You will go from a shared studio as a student, to a two-bedroom flat, to a family unit and back down to a two-bedroom unit. They will accommodate your entire lifetime.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Yes, all right.

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): We are going to have a completely different sort of housing development and it will be interesting to see how policies encourage it.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Have you seen this anywhere internationally?

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): No, but apparently that is what happens in [the United States of] America. A lot of our housing is --

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): There is a scheme finished in Croydon on that model.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): All right. We are getting some ideas here. This is good. Nobody has really mentioned the role of design. I do not know. When I was Chair of Planning [Committee], what I did notice is that I got higher densities. You will not like this, but I had a list. I went around and looked at what I thought were really good schemes and the architects at fairly high densities. I said, "If you choose these architects", and I did not prescribe, "here is a list of 15 firms that are pretty good. If you choose one of those and get good design, you can up the density". We do not pay enough attention to design. I really wonder - and we have a rich panel here in terms of ideas - how we could introduce more about design into the London Plan or into the documents that flow from it and also to make sure that there are design reviews of developments. Any ideas?

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): I am an architect and I have been President of the Architectural Association and my view of design reviews is that they are hopeless. The judging quality by committees is a terrible process and you get a very anodyne, every-decade-will-produce-a-design approach.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): It might be better than judging it by another committee, which is what happens.

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): What, a planning committee?

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Yes, it might be. I do not know.

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): I do not have any faith in them, either.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): I am not saying it. It is helpful sometimes, on planning committees, to have some alternative designs or to have some good design.

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): My view, which I know is perhaps a bit outrageous, is that design should not be part of planning. What buildings look like should not be part of planning.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): What?

Crispin Kelly (Director, Baylight): Yes. If you look at the history of what is built in this country, most of the stuff that was good did not go through a planning process in terms of design. If you look at the great estates, none of that had a planning process to go through. It was about the ambitions of individuals who wanted to do something good. It was not about them being told that white stucco is now good or curved roofs are not good.

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): Garden estates --

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Yes, the very great estates. There are some terrible ones, too.

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): I agree with Crispin. To some degree, it is not about looking at the championing of the design, which is what you are implying. It is looking at the other end and saying, "How do we try to improve the quality of what is lower down?" There is a difference between the two. I have been lucky enough to have a fair deal on the Holloway Road and it went through a planning committee. It is a brilliant building because I commissioned it. There is the other end which is very different in how to improve the quality. It is down to planning departments looking at design more critically and not to meddle but to improve. Like Crispin, I am an architect. I do not know how you would legislate for quality of design because it comes down to, very much, the client who is the driver of that process and who they choose to be their architects and what their intent is. Some people's intent is to improve quality and others are not. You can see it.

Navin Shah AM: What you are talking about over ideas, new policies, densities and stuff and design, is there any merit in looking at the current described room sizes do they include minimum heights as well as unit sizes there?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): Can I just make a comment about the question of design and standards? These gentlemen are far more knowledgeable about design than ever I am. I would just put a word in for the residents. There is a whole raft of things about living in high-density development that they require, such as decent room sizes, height of ceilings and single-aspect windows. They may be quite pedestrian requirements but they are the things that make these places work as a place to live for the people who live in them. However you treat design in the future, it is important that the list of things that matter for people living in there is kept up to date.

Personally, I do not have a particular view about whether the current space standards are good or bad. Even the national ones, even the ones for London, are where they are. If you increase the space standards for people, you increase the cost. There are other issues than just the space.

Navin Shah AM: Yes. The reason I asked this question is that at our Committee meeting on the private renting sector we had one of the panel members indicating that, when you have a scheme service that would provide pulling down facilities, he was putting forward a case pretty much to lower space standards in terms of having table areas. That is why I put the question here because space standards are critical. I am certainly

more opposed to reducing space standards from what currently they are for a lot of reasons. It is school of thought while we are looking at ideas and the various impacts. This is what we are taking on board.

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): This question is about how to design high density sustainably and we must get back to that.

Tom Copley AM: It is a charming idea that perhaps design should not be a role for planners. Part of their role - and I am sitting next to an architect - is to curb some of the excesses of architects and to say, "It is not just about the building itself. It is how it relates to the community". We were talking earlier about more setting versus location. If you are thinking about setting, you surely have to think about design, whether or not you are going to have a brick *façade* to fit in with the rest or whether it is going to be glass and steel. Surely we have to be thinking - or the planners have - and the design has to be front and centre for the planners, particularly if you want to get consent from local people and say, "It might be a few storeys higher perhaps than you might like but it fits in very well with the local area".

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): In Richard Roger's [British architect] urban talk that he gives quite regularly with a painting of St Mark's Square in Venice, he says, "Show me one building that matches the one next to it". This is a problem with London. It looks backwards to what it was. I was asked to deliver a code level five building and put a brick *façade* on it and you think, "Am I decarbonising a building by putting bricks on it?" It is contradictory.

Also, London, as I said before, is an evolving city. We have to take that into account, but not every building next to another building should look like it. You go to Prague and every single one is not only a different colour but is a different height, size and shape and the place looks great.

Tom Copley AM: It depends where in London you are. If you go to Kensington and Chelsea, basically, apart from Trellick Tower, everything is five to eight --

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): That is a question of mapping, not design, is it not? They have many different skins, those buildings. Some are brick and some are --

Tom Copley AM: Yes.

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): I am often in meetings with Planning Officers and the Design Officer is sitting there and I do not have respect for any of those Design Officers. They have not had any training in design, often. I will sit with a distinguished architect like Tony Preston, for example, and will be told that because I have a corner, the corner should have special treatment. Maybe it should and maybe it should not, but this person is telling Tony what to do and I consider it is an absurd waste of time.

Tom Copley AM: It might be --

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): I will do it the other way around. There is a design issue about the use of the space and the land and a lot of what we are trying to do now is rectify poor design and poor use of land in the past. That is why, if we have good design and we can have expert panels or have very good architects, we can create higher density.

I just want to turn this new policy question the other way around now and then I might get some more ideas. What are the challenges of high-density design that is sustainable? I do not mean high-rise. I mean high-

density design in a high-density building that is sustainable. What are the challenges of building them and making them sustainable?

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): It depends on how and what you view 'sustainability' as. Is it environmental, economic or social?

Nicky Gavron AM (Deputy Chair): Economic, social and environmental integrated.

Pieter Zitman (Director, Mix Developments): In the past, I have not had a problem integrating with all three because I have been aiming my markers at a particular area that is very desperate for housing. I understand the thing about the PRS but there are 1 million people out there chomping at your ankles to buy a place of their own and they are the under-35s. It takes proper consideration by the client team to create a properly sustainable environment because it has to take into consideration all these things we have been talking about: management, communal spaces, how the building relates to the streetscape and all those things. It is a very complex question to answer and it would probably take a thesis.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): You can write to us.

Andrew Boff AM: Two questions. Will you consider work to provide an evidence base on the different health and social outcomes of different typologies?

Lin Cousins (Director, Three Dragons): I will have to take that back.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you. That is what I want. The second question: what effect does all this have on infrastructure? We are talking about well-designed buildings but we need train stations, we need doctor's surgeries and we need all the rest of it. How can we take that into consideration when we are talking about densification?

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): As part of the London Plan, we will be thinking about all those things. We are talking about where we can improve transport. We have the Mayor's Transport Strategy coming out soon. We will be looking at how we need to take account of all the different implications of development, the social infrastructure, schools and so on. We should have qualities in the plan to make sure that those things are considered.

Andrew Boff AM: There are parts of London, at the moment that say, "It is in the plan but we are not getting it". Tower Hamlets is an example where there is quite a lot of controversy over developments that have not had supporting social infrastructure in place.

Jennifer Peters (Strategic Planning Manager, Greater London Authority): Particularly in Tower Hamlets, we are working on the Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF) for the Isle of Dogs, which is including that entire social infrastructure in there. There are different ways of doing it but we are conscious of the issue that we cannot just build housing without any of this.

Andrew Boff AM: You really need to talk to some of the local councillors on the Isle of Dogs. Thank you.

Tony Devenish AM (Chairman): I am going to use my Chairman's prerogative to drop my last question, which has been answered during the procedure. I thank our guests for their contributions.