

# New Towns for London

Wide shot of Lyon Road Public Square with Harrow Road town centre and high street in the background

## Key information

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## Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Investigation aims and objectives \(Terms of Reference\)](#)

[Key issues](#)

[Key questions](#)

[Call for Evidence](#)

## Introduction

The Government has stated that it aims to establish up to 12 new towns across England. Amongst 12 shortlisted sites for new towns by the New Towns Taskforce, two are in London – Thamesmead in Greenwich and Crews Hill and Chase Park in Enfield.

Previous new town designations in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were largely intended to accommodate the overspill of population from London, and none of the formal “new towns” built under the post-war UK programme were inside London’s administrative boundary. The aims of the current new towns programme are to generate economic growth, accelerate housing delivery, provide the necessary infrastructure for new communities, create environmentally resilient places and to contribute to changing the way that large settlements are delivered.

## Investigation aims and objectives (Terms of Reference)

This investigation will explore why new towns are being proposed for London, how they would work in practice, and what planning policies and governance arrangements may be needed.

## Key issues

- England has designated 32 new towns since 1945, now home to approximately 2.8 million people, but no new towns have been designated for 55 years. Pre-election, Labour's then deputy leader and shadow housing secretary said creating new towns was a key part of her party's plan to build 1.5 million homes over five years.
- The New Towns Taskforce was established in September 2024 to identify locations for potential new towns in England.
- The New Towns Taskforce report was published in September 2025. The report sets a benchmark for each new town to contain at least 10,000 new homes. Amongst 12 shortlisted sites for new towns, it identified two sites in London: Thamesmead in Greenwich and Crews Hill and Chase Park in Enfield.
- The Government has stated that it is “determined” to “get spades in the ground on at least three new towns in this Parliament.” It says a fuller response and draft proposals – including the final choice of which of the 12 potential sites will proceed – will be published in Spring 2026, after completion of environmental assessments (the Strategic Environmental Assessment, SEA).
- The site in Crews Hill and Chase Park has the potential to deliver up to 21,000 homes across 884 hectares, with an ambition for 50 per cent affordable housing, and it is supported by both the GLA and the borough of Enfield.
- The site in Thamesmead has the capacity for 15,000 homes on a 100-hectare brownfield site. Funding for the DLR extension to Thamesmead was confirmed in the 2025 Budget.

## Key questions

1. What are the conditions that need to be in place to make new towns a success in London?
2. What new opportunities could new town designation in London unlock that existing planning tools do not?
3. What density, design and placemaking principles should underpin London's new towns?
4. What lessons can be learned from the past delivery of Mayoral Development Corporations (MDCs), Opportunity Areas (OAs), and the original development of Thamesmead (in the late 1960s to early 1970s) to inform the development of new towns for London in the present day?
5. What lessons can be learned from international examples of new towns?
6. How were the proposed new town locations in London identified, what evidence and criteria informed these choices Are there more London sites that could or should be designated in the future?
7. What roles should the Mayor, GLA, London boroughs, and central Government each play in planning, funding and delivering new towns in London, and how can Londoners be meaningfully involved in shaping them?

## Call for Evidence

As part of this investigation, the Committee has launched a [Call for Evidence](#) open to all who would like to respond.

Please send evidence by email to: [scrutiny@london.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@london.gov.uk)

The deadline for submission is **4 March 2026**.

[Back to table of contents](#)