

Sadiq Khan

Mayor of London
Greater London Authority
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

26 January 2017

Dear Sadiq,

At home with nature: Encouraging biodiversity in new housing developments

Please find attached a copy of my rapporteurship report on behalf of the London Assembly Housing Committee. It considers how biodiversity can best be encouraged in new housing developments.

As you are well aware, we need to remain focussed on maintaining London as a green jewel as we attempt to solve London's other problems, especially the shortage of housing. There is a risk that London will see its biodiversity being squeezed or reduced as planners and developers focus on meeting London's urgent housing needs, by increasing housing density in the city.

The report makes a series of recommendations to ensure that as London continues to grow and change, it also maintains and improves on current levels of biodiversity:

Recommendation 1

The London Plan should be amended to include the wording 'net gain' - similar to the LLDC policy which delivered the Olympic Park, to ensure biodiversity is enhanced and created, not just protected.

Recommendation 2

The Mayor should ensure that biodiversity is integrated within Masterplanning processes, ensuring a whole area approach is taken in Opportunity Areas, Housing Zones and Development Corporations that are often deficient in biodiversity and green space, or areas which are suffering from environmental issues (e.g. flooding, urban heat island effect, air pollution).

Recommendation 3

New learning should be showcased at the OPDC, highlighting how sites can be built in high densities while still increasing the levels of biodiversity.

Recommendation 4

The Mayor should consider the possibility of implementing a green space factor in London, similar to that in place in Berlin and Malmö, and pilot this in Opportunity Areas, Housing

Zones and developments of strategic importance, to demonstrate direction of travel, prior to fully incorporating this methodology into the London Plan.

Recommendation 5

To bridge the gap between the strategic vision of the London Plan and practice on the ground at borough level, the creation of a Biodiversity in Housing SPG should be considered.

Recommendation 6

The Mayor should encourage planning departments to request a minimum baseline environmental survey through Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL), or others, to accompany all planning applications in order for planning departments to make an informed decision on the environmental impacts of developments.

Recommendation 7

The Mayor should request that all developments share ecological data with Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL), after a development is completed. This would allow data gaps to be closed and for effective monitoring through GiGL searches and updates.

Recommendation 8

The Mayor should provide resources (start-up funding/seed capital) to the 'Partnership for Biodiversity in Planning', which is working to simplify, streamline and improve the consideration of biodiversity in the planning process.

Recommendation 9

To raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity in housing, the Mayor should sponsor an Award Category for "Biodiversity Adaptations in Housing Developments" through the BIG Biodiversity Challenge.

Recommendation 10

The Mayor should commission a source of best practice guidance, which includes different options for temporary and permanent measures, price and maintenance information and how these measures could be included in the service charge, for those items that will be maintained on site after a development is complete.

I would appreciate receiving a written response to our findings and recommendations from you by **26 April 2017**. It would be very helpful if you would copy your response electronically to the Assembly's Housing Assistant Scrutiny Manager Charlotte Harrison (charlotte.harrison@london.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,



Leonie Cooper AM
Rapporteur, Housing Committee