

Representation on the Draft London Plan -

Pocket Living Ltd

Representor number: 3246

Matter number: M17

Matter M17 - Policy H1 - Increasing Housing Supply:

Pocket Living has a long history of delivering homes for Londoners in over half of London's boroughs. Pocket homes are sold outright to local first-time buyers priced out of private housing and unable to secure social housing. Homes are sold at a discount of 20% to other one-bedroom flats in the area.

Pocket Living has become an acknowledged part of the genuinely affordable housing offer in the Capital. With the help of the £25 million loan the Mayor invested in Pocket Living in 2017 and the £26.4 million loan the GLA provided from the Housing Covenant Fund in 2013, the company will start on 1,059 genuinely affordable homes for Londoners who are unable to access mainstream affordable housing and are priced out of the open market. Pocket is a subsidy free form of affordable housing.

A Section 106 agreement outlines the eligibility that a purchaser of a Pocket home must fulfil: purchasers must live or work in the local borough, have a household income must below the Mayor of London's affordable housing threshold and they must not own another property. Pocket Living provides homes which comply with the NPPF definition of affordable housing in Annex 2, through the use of the S106 and strict eligibility criteria and monitoring.

Pocket Living has made representations on previous versions of the London Plan in order to support the delivery of affordable homes. These representations have been supported by officers of the GLA and by EIP Examiners. The policies of the current London Plan have assisted Pocket Living in its negotiations with LPAs, demonstrating a pan-London approach to the delivery of intermediate housing.

Overall the Draft New London Plan (the Plan) is an excellent document which sets ambitious targets to significantly increase housing delivery and in particular affordable housing. Pocket Living strongly supports the Mayor's London-wide target of 66,000 new homes per annum, his focus on maximising affordable housing and bringing forward more small sites. However, Pocket is concerned that some of the drafting may inhibit the very growth in affordable housing the Plan is seeking to produce.

Pocket Living strongly supports the Mayor's London-wide target of 66,000 homes per annum. This demonstrates an ambitious target which will help provide a range of housing options for Londoners. The objective of making effective use of brownfield land to deliver more homes in accessible locations is the best way of delivering more homes.

Pocket Living is one of only a handful of private developers delivering 100% affordable housing on sites across London. The focus on accessible sites with PTAL 3 - 6 and intensification of land is in accordance with the NPPF and a sensible approach. Pocket Living suggests the wording of Policy H1 B (2) should be amended to add a further category to support housing delivery. Sites which maximise the provision of affordable housing (and where at least 75% of homes will be genuinely affordable homes in accordance with the London Plan) should be unlocked to add additional capacity.

We therefore propose the following additional wording:

H1 B (2) (g): Sites which can deliver provision of over 75% of homes as affordable housing (in accordance with Policy H6 CA).

Pocket Living is concerned that a reliance on 'small sites' to deliver a significant proportion of the 66,000 homes a year may be optimistic and there is a strong likelihood that such sites will be caught in the planning process for an excessive amount of time. There may also be the potential for outer London boroughs to allow low density developments with limited affordable housing to be developed on these sites as these may be more acceptable locally.