

# **Towards a new London Plan**

## **Consultation on the next London Plan**

Illustrated overhead view of a table with a copy of the London plan, a building blueprint and coffee mug on top

## **Key information**

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## Mayor's Foreword

Throughout history, London has evolved to meet the challenges presented by each new age – and we must do so again if we are to ensure every Londoner can afford somewhere they can call home.

This document sets out a path towards my next London Plan, the strategic framework that will guide and shape our city's development in the years ahead.

The next London Plan will be a blueprint for how we can continue to build the fairer, greener city that Londoners deserve. It will aim to make the best possible use of City Hall's planning powers to achieve two key objectives. These are to fix the housing crisis in London and deliver sustainable economic growth that benefits Londoners across our city, all while ensuring we continue to meet our ambitious climate commitments and improve our environment and green spaces.

Since 2016, we have worked hard to get London building again. We hit the target of starting 116,000 new genuinely affordable homes, and have also ushered in a new golden era of council housebuilding, taking council homebuilding to the highest level since the 1970s. That's double the rate of the rest of the country last year combined. However, we now face a difficult period for housebuilding in the capital. This is due to a lack of national funding by the previous government and the economic legacy of low-growth, high interest rates and the rise in the cost of construction materials.

When I was elected for a third term as Mayor, I said I wanted to make London the best city in the world to grow up in and to ensure all Londoners have the chance to reach their potential. To do this, we must do everything we can to build the affordable homes to buy and rent that Londoners desperately need.

At present, over 90,000 children are officially homeless and living in temporary accommodation in London. Tens of thousands more are in overcrowded housing. Young couples are having to move out of London to afford a family home. And high housing costs are increasingly becoming a barrier to moving to London to study or work in the first place. We cannot let this continue.

Addressing the housing crisis will also be critical to growing our economy, increasing productivity, raising living standards and reducing inequality in our city. That's why, working with local councils, business, and others, we have put affordable housing and the built environment at the heart of our new growth plan for London. We know that good quality housing is not only essential for Londoners, but for attracting and retaining talent, unlocking employment opportunities, and revitalising neighbourhoods.

Our previous London Plans have helped us to increase the number and quality of new affordable homes in London. But given the scale of the challenge we now face and our bold plans for growth, the next London Plan will need to go further.

The government has said London needs 88,000 new homes per year. So the next London Plan needs to plan for 880,000 homes, ten years' supply. This is far more than we have ever built before. London has only ever built at anything approaching this rate in the 1930s when there was a housing boom across the country. A large percentage of Londoners today live in the homes built during this time, particularly in outer London.

It's clear we face an extraordinary challenge, but one we must do everything we can to meet. We have no time to waste. That's why, in the short-term, I want to see local planning become more flexible and focused on securing permissions for housing development.

I also want to ensure we look at how we can make better use of the land we have, take opportunities to increase the density of housing developments and work with local councils to substantially increase the rate of building in every borough.

My preference will always be for us to secure as many new homes as we can on brownfield sites – both large and small – and ensuring that delivery is accelerated wherever possible. But this alone will not be enough. That's why the government has changed the national policy on potential development sites. This includes cities and local authorities exploring the potential release of parts of the green belt for development, particularly lower quality land.

As Mayor, I want to ensure that any release of the green belt to help address the housing crisis makes the best use of land and meets strict requirements. This includes maximising the level of affordable housing; ensuring high-quality housing design and good transport connectivity; and increasing biodiversity and access to good-quality green spaces as part any developments. The truth is that some land designated 'green belt' in London is low quality, poorly maintained and rarely enjoyed by Londoners. If built in the right locations, with close access to public transport infrastructure, new developments on parts of the green belt could deliver tens of thousands of new affordable homes for Londoners. They could also help to reduce carbon emissions, improve the quality of our green spaces, and increase biodiversity.

To achieve these aims of building more affordable homes, unlocking economic growth and increasing access to good-quality green spaces, the London Plan must become more streamlined and focused. This will remove duplication of national policies where these are equally relevant to our city. In some cases, we will need to go further than national guidance, recognising the unique challenges and opportunities of a global city like London. But in doing so, we must carefully consider the impact of policies on the costs and viability of new developments to ensure we don't hamper growth.

It's important to note that this is a consultation document, which looks at different options, trade-offs, and some potentially difficult choices. Not everything in this document can or will be taken forward.

I hope you consider the options we set out carefully and encourage you to take part in the consultation as we work towards our next London Plan. This will help us to build a brighter, fairer, and more prosperous London for everyone, where no one is left behind.

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 What is the London Plan?**