

# AGENDA

**Meeting**    **Housing Committee**

**Date**        **Tuesday 17 March 2015**

**Time**        **10.00 am**

**Place**        **Committee Room 5, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London, SE1 2AA**

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## Members of the Committee

Darren Johnson AM (Chair)  
Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair)  
Andrew Boff AM  
Nicky Gavron AM

Stephen Knight AM  
Steve O'Connell AM  
Murad Qureshi AM

A meeting of the Committee has been called by the Chair of the Committee to deal with the business listed below.

Mark Roberts, Executive Director of Secretariat  
Monday 9 March 2015

## Further Information

If you have questions, would like further information about the meeting or require special facilities please contact: David Pealing, Committee Officer; Telephone: 020 7983 5525; Email: [david.pealing@london.gov.uk](mailto:david.pealing@london.gov.uk).

For media enquiries please contact: Ash Singleton; Telephone: 020 7983 5769; Email [ash.singleton@london.gov.uk](mailto:ash.singleton@london.gov.uk). If you have any questions about individual items please contact the author whose details are at the end of the report.

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Certificate Number: FS 80233

**Agenda  
Housing Committee  
Tuesday 17 March 2015**

**1 Apologies for Absence and Chair's Announcements**

To receive any apologies for absence and any announcements from the Chair.

**2 Declarations of Interests** (Pages 1 - 4)

Report of the Executive Director of Secretariat

Contact: David Pealing, [david.pealing@london.gov.uk](mailto:david.pealing@london.gov.uk), 020 7983 5525

**The Committee is recommended to:**

- (a) Note the list of offices held by Assembly Members, as set out in the table at Agenda Item 2, as disclosable pecuniary interests;**
- (b) Note the declaration by any Member(s) of any disclosable pecuniary interests in specific items listed on the agenda and the necessary action taken by the Member(s) regarding withdrawal following such declaration(s); and**
- (c) Note the declaration by any Member(s) of any other interests deemed to be relevant (including any interests arising from gifts and hospitality received which are not at the time of the meeting reflected on the Authority's register of gifts and hospitality, and noting also the advice from the GLA's Monitoring Officer set out at Agenda Item 2) and to note any necessary action taken by the Member(s) following such declaration(s).**

**3 Summary List of Actions** (Pages 5 - 6)

Report of the Executive Director of Secretariat

Contact: David Pealing; [david.pealing@london.gov.uk](mailto:david.pealing@london.gov.uk); 020 7983 5525

**The Committee is recommended to note the outstanding actions arising from previous meetings of the Committee.**

#### **4 Questions to the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land and Property**

(Pages 7 - 10)

Report of the Executive Director of Secretariat

Contact: Lorraine Ford, [scrutiny@london.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@london.gov.uk); 020 7983 4394

**The Committee is recommended to note the report as background to discussing with the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land and Property, and other invited guests, housing issues in London, and note the subsequent discussion.**

#### **5 Overview of the Housing Committee's Work 2013-15** (Pages 11 - 20)

Report of the Executive Director of Secretariat

Contact: Lorraine Ford, [scrutiny@london.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@london.gov.uk); 020 7983 4394

**The Committee is recommended to note the report.**

#### **6 Purpose-Built Student Accommodation in London** (Pages 21 - 24)

Report of the Executive Director of Secretariat

Contact: Lorraine Ford, [scrutiny@london.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@london.gov.uk); 020 7983 4394

**The Committee is recommended to agree the scope for an investigation into the issues surrounding the provision of student accommodation in London.**

#### **7 Gypsy and Traveller Site Provision in London** (Pages 25 - 30)

Report of the Executive Director of Secretariat

Contact: Lorraine Ford, [scrutiny@london.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@london.gov.uk); 020 7983 4394

**The Committee is recommended to note the letter from the Mayor in response to the Committee's investigation on Gypsy and Traveller site provision in London, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.**

#### **8 Date of Next Meeting**

Subject to confirmation at the London Assembly's Annual Meeting on 13 May 2015, the next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, 23 June 2015 at 10.00 am in Committee Room 5, City Hall.

#### **9 Any Other Business the Chair Considers Urgent**

<b>Subject: Declarations of Interests</b>	
<b>Report to: Housing Committee</b>	
<b>Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat</b>	<b>Date: 17 March 2015</b>
<b>This report will be considered in public</b>	

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out details of offices held by Assembly Members for noting as disclosable pecuniary interests and requires additional relevant declarations relating to disclosable pecuniary interests, and gifts and hospitality to be made.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the list of offices held by Assembly Members, as set out in the table below, be noted as disclosable pecuniary interests<sup>1</sup>;**
- 2.2 **That the declaration by any Member(s) of any disclosable pecuniary interests in specific items listed on the agenda and the necessary action taken by the Member(s) regarding withdrawal following such declaration(s) be noted; and**
- 2.3 **That the declaration by any Member(s) of any other interests deemed to be relevant (including any interests arising from gifts and hospitality received which are not at the time of the meeting reflected on the Authority's register of gifts and hospitality, and noting also the advice from the GLA's Monitoring Officer set out at below) and any necessary action taken by the Member(s) following such declaration(s) be noted.**

## 3. Issues for Consideration

- 3.1 Relevant offices held by Assembly Members are listed in the table overleaf:

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<sup>1</sup> The Monitoring Officer advises that: Paragraph 10 of the Code of Conduct will only preclude a Member from participating in any matter to be considered or being considered at, for example, a meeting of the Assembly, where the Member has a direct Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in that particular matter. The effect of this is that the 'matter to be considered, or being considered' must be about the Member's interest. So, by way of example, if an Assembly Member is also a councillor of London Borough X, that Assembly Member will be precluded from participating in an Assembly meeting where the Assembly is to consider a matter about the Member's role / employment as a councillor of London Borough X; the Member will not be precluded from participating in a meeting where the Assembly is to consider a matter about an activity or decision of London Borough X.

<b>Member</b>	<b>Interest</b>
Tony Arbour AM	Member, LFEPA; Member, LB Richmond
Jennette Arnold OBE AM	Committee of the Regions
Gareth Bacon AM	Member, LFEPA; Member, LB Bexley
John Biggs AM	
Andrew Boff AM	Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (Council of Europe)
Victoria Borwick AM	Member, Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea; Deputy Mayor
James Cleverly AM	Chairman of LFEPA; Chairman of the London Local Resilience Forum; substitute member, Local Government Association Fire Services Management Committee
Tom Copley AM	
Andrew Dismore AM	Member, LFEPA
Len Duvall AM	
Roger Evans AM	Committee of the Regions; Trust for London (Trustee)
Nicky Gavron AM	
Darren Johnson AM	Member, LFEPA
Jenny Jones AM	Member, House of Lords
Stephen Knight AM	Member, LFEPA; Member, LB Richmond
Kit Malthouse AM	Deputy Mayor for Business and Enterprise; Deputy Chair, London Enterprise Panel; Chair, Hydrogen London; Chairman, London & Partners; Board Member, TheCityUK
Joanne McCartney AM	
Steve O'Connell AM	Member, LB Croydon; MOPAC Non-Executive Adviser for Neighbourhoods
Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM	
Murad Qureshi AM	Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (Council of Europe)
Dr Onkar Sahota AM	
Navin Shah AM	
Valerie Shawcross CBE AM	Member, LFEPA
Richard Tracey AM	Chairman of the London Waste and Recycling Board; Mayor's Ambassador for River Transport
Fiona Twycross AM	Member, LFEPA

[Note: LB - London Borough; LFEPA - London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority; MOPAC – Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime]

3.2 Paragraph 10 of the GLA's Code of Conduct, which reflects the relevant provisions of the Localism Act 2011, provides that:

- where an Assembly Member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered or being considered or at
  - (i) a meeting of the Assembly and any of its committees or sub-committees; or
  - (ii) any formal meeting held by the Mayor in connection with the exercise of the Authority's functions
- they must disclose that interest to the meeting (or, if it is a sensitive interest, disclose the fact that they have a sensitive interest to the meeting); and

- must not (i) participate, or participate any further, in any discussion of the matter at the meeting; or (ii) participate in any vote, or further vote, taken on the matter at the meeting

#### UNLESS

- they have obtained a dispensation from the GLA's Monitoring Officer (in accordance with section 2 of the Procedure for registration and declarations of interests, gifts and hospitality – Appendix 5 to the Code).

- 3.3 Failure to comply with the above requirements, without reasonable excuse, is a criminal offence; as is knowingly or recklessly providing information about your interests that is false or misleading.
- 3.4 In addition, the Monitoring Officer has advised Assembly Members to continue to apply the test that was previously applied to help determine whether a pecuniary / prejudicial interest was arising - namely, that Members rely on a reasonable estimation of whether a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, could, with justification, regard the matter as so significant that it would be likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest.
- 3.5 Members should then exercise their judgement as to whether or not, in view of their interests and the interests of others close to them, they should participate in any given discussions and/or decisions business of within and by the GLA. It remains the responsibility of individual Members to make further declarations about their actual or apparent interests at formal meetings noting also that a Member's failure to disclose relevant interest(s) has become a potential criminal offence.
- 3.6 Members are also required, where considering a matter which relates to or is likely to affect a person from whom they have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25 within the previous three years or from the date of election to the London Assembly, whichever is the later, to disclose the existence and nature of that interest at any meeting of the Authority which they attend at which that business is considered.
- 3.7 The obligation to declare any gift or hospitality at a meeting is discharged, subject to the proviso set out below, by registering gifts and hospitality received on the Authority's on-line database. The on-line database may be viewed here:  
<http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/gifts-and-hospitality>.
- 3.8 If any gift or hospitality received by a Member is not set out on the on-line database at the time of the meeting, and under consideration is a matter which relates to or is likely to affect a person from whom a Member has received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25, Members are asked to disclose these at the meeting, either at the declarations of interest agenda item or when the interest becomes apparent.
- 3.9 It is for Members to decide, in light of the particular circumstances, whether their receipt of a gift or hospitality, could, on a reasonable estimation of a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, with justification, be regarded as so significant that it would be likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest. Where receipt of a gift or hospitality could be so regarded, the Member must exercise their judgement as to whether or not, they should participate in any given discussions and/or decisions business of within and by the GLA.

## **4. Legal Implications**

- 4.1 The legal implications are as set out in the body of this report.

## 5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

<b>Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985</b>
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List of Background Papers: None
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Contact Officer: David Pealing, Committee Officer
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# Subject: Summary List of Actions

**Report to: Housing Committee**

**Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat**

**Date: 17 March 2015**

**This report will be considered in public**

## 1. Summary

1.1 This report sets out actions arising from previous meetings of the Housing Committee.

## 2. Recommendation

2.1 **That the Committee notes the outstanding actions arising from previous meetings of the Committee.**

### Actions Arising from the Meeting of 11 November 2014

Minute Number	Topic	Status	For action by
5.	<p><b>London Housing Strategy</b>            Guests committed to provide further clarification on the relationship between the London Rental Standard and the London Borough of Newham's licensing scheme.</p>	In progress.	Assistant Director – Programmes, Policy and Services, GLA, and; Director - Community Infrastructure Resources and Commercial Development, LB Newham
	<p>The Committee delegated authority to the Chair, in consultation with Lead Members to write to the Mayor expressing the Committee's views on topics covered during the meeting. A letter has been sent to the Mayor and a response is awaited.</p>	In progress.	Mayor of London

### **3. Legal Implications**

3.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

### **4. Financial Implications**

4.1 There are no financial implications to the GLA arising from this report.

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#### **List of appendices to this report:**

None.

<b>Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985</b>
List of Background Papers: None
Contact Officer: David Pealing, Committee Officer
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# Subject: Questions to the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land and Property

**Report to: Housing Committee**

**Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat**

**Date: 17 March 2015**

**This report will be considered in public**

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the background information for the Committee's update meeting with the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land and Property on selected housing issues which the Committee has investigated over the past two Assembly years.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes the report as background to discussing with the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land and Property, and other invited guests, housing issues in London, and notes the subsequent discussion.**

## 3. Background

- 3.1 It was over a year ago that the Committee last heard from the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land and Property, Richard Blakeway, on the number of affordable homes built in London. The deadline for Registered Providers to complete homes part-funded under the Mayor's 2011-15 Affordable Housing Programme is 31 March 2015.
- 3.2 The Deputy Mayor last discussed rough sleeping and single homelessness with the Committee in Autumn 2013. The housing impacts of welfare reform in London were last discussed in December 2013.

## 4. Issues for Consideration

- 4.1 In the intervening period, the Government's programme of welfare reforms has had time to bed down. The Committee would now like to hear from the Deputy Mayor how the resulting conditions in London have changed, both in terms of impacts on housing providers and on their tenants.

- 4.2 London's buoyant rental market means that caps on Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates have a far greater impact here than elsewhere. There is some evidence of movement by housing benefit recipients from inner to outer London, and from London to other parts of the country, as a result of changes to LHA and the overall benefit cap, despite the use of Discretionary Housing Payments to mitigate the worst effects.
- 4.3 Direct Payment of benefits to tenants has for some time been flagged as an issue for social landlords, because of fears that arrears would accumulate, potentially threatening providers' income streams and thus creditworthiness.
- 4.4 At the time of the Committee's investigation into welfare reforms, some contributors also indicated that there would likely be implications for homelessness and rough sleeping. The extension of the Shared Accommodation Rate, for example, was expected by some to increase the number of homeless under-35s.
- 4.5 The Committee's investigation into rough sleeping and single homelessness found that London's supply of hostel places is under considerable strain despite some capital funding to support hostel upgrades and new provision. Government revenue funding has also been used to support a range of services for rough sleepers, including the No Second Night Out and No Living on the Streets programmes. However, the investigation identified issues, for example with the quality and level of advice given to people at risk of becoming homeless, and the Mayor has since used a proportion of this revenue funding to develop a pilot No First Night Out project, intended to support improvements in this service.
- 4.6 The Mayor's 2012 manifesto promised he would "deliver around 55,000 affordable homes by 2015 for low and middle income workers".<sup>1</sup> In November 2013 the Deputy Mayor indicated that the Mayor's affordable housing target was "challenging." In 2014/15, the GLA forecasts 17,900 completions but by December 2014, only 5,200 had been completed.
- 4.7 The Committee may therefore wish to discuss with guests:
- the number of affordable homes completed to date in London and progress towards meeting the Mayor's manifesto commitments;
  - the latest evidence of the impacts of welfare reforms in London, on tenants both in the private and social rented sector and on social landlords; and
  - the latest data on rough sleeping in London, the provision of hostel places and housing advice services to Londoners at risk of homelessness.

#### **Invited guests**

- 4.8 A panel of expert guests has been invited to discuss these issues with the Committee, including:
- Richard Blakeway, Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land and Property;
  - Jamie Ratcliff, Assistant Director, Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority;
  - Pete Jefferys, Senior Policy Officer, Shelter;
  - Matt Downie, Director of Policy and External Affairs, Crisis; and

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<sup>1</sup> Better off with Boris (2012 manifesto), Growing the London Economy, page 34.

- Clarissa Corbisiero, Head of Policy, National Housing Federation.

## 5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

## 6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications to the Greater London Authority arising from this report.

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**List of appendices to this report:** None

<b>Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985</b>
List of Background Papers: None
Contact Officer: Lorraine Ford, Scrutiny Manager
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# Subject: Overview of the Housing Committee's Work 2013-15

**Report to: Housing Committee**

**Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat**

**Date: 17 March 2015**

**This report will be considered in public**

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the work and investigations the Committee has undertaken over the last two Assembly years.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes the report.**

## 3. Background

- 3.1 Housing is now viewed as the key policy priority for Londoners. The Housing Committee tracks the changing trends in tenure and monitors the role of the Mayor in supporting Londoners into affordable, quality accommodation.
- 3.2 Home ownership is becoming an increasingly difficult goal for Londoners. Owner occupation, which had been rising steadily since the 1940s, flat lined in the 1990s and has been declining steadily since 2001. In parallel with this decline in private home ownership, the private rented sector grew substantially: by the mid-2020s the proportion of Londoners renting privately is expected to equal the number of those who own their own homes.<sup>1</sup>
- 3.3 The London Assembly Housing Committee's work programme has sought to reflect the priority issues of increasing supply at a time of falling grant levels, providing a variety of tenures, adequate protections for those that rent and the impact of welfare reform on the housing sector.

<sup>1</sup> Homes for London: The London Housing Strategy, Mayor of London, page 5

## 4. Issues for Consideration

- 4.1 This paper provides an overview of the Committee's work and impact over the last two years, broken down into three central themes.

### **Theme 1: The Mayor's Housing Strategy**

- 4.2 Over the past two years, one of the key pieces of Committee work was the scrutiny of and response to, the Mayor's draft Housing Strategy. The Mayor published his draft Strategy in November 2013, following which the Committee held a meeting to examine its response to the draft, led a Plenary session of the Assembly in April 2014 and used a follow-up meeting in November 2014 to examine further issues arising from the final draft.
- 4.3 Although the Housing Committee supported a focus on house-building, given the substantial shortfall in supply that London faces, a key concern from the Draft was the lack of policy proposals relating to other areas of housing policy such as overcrowding and homelessness. With regards to supply, the Housing Committee considered the Mayor's proposals to deliver some 42,000 homes per year as not ambitious enough, in view of the evidenced need for between 49,000 and 62,000 per annum. The Committee reiterated particular concerns over the number and definition of affordable homes for those on low and modest incomes, noting that the focus of the Strategy is substantially upon homes for working households.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Impact*

- 4.4 Responding to the concern about numbers of affordable homes, the final version of the Strategy increased the annual delivery of affordable homes from 15,000 to 17,000. Issues remain over who will be able to afford these homes, which have been taken up in a subsequent investigation into Affordable Home Ownership in London. This final version of the Strategy also placed greater attention on the subject of overcrowding and under-occupation, including commitments to review and promote good practice in addressing overcrowding and plans to expand the Housing Moves and Seaside and Country Schemes. At a follow-up meeting in November 2014, the Committee had the opportunity to question several policies which had been highlighted in the Strategy but lacked sufficient information for detailed scrutiny. This includes the key policy of Housing Zones, the London Rental Standard (which the Committee argued for in a previous investigation into the private rental market in December 2012) and community- led development.

### **Theme 2: Supporting Disadvantaged Londoners**

#### **Welfare reform**

- 4.5 A seminar was held in December 2013 to allow Members of the Committee to hear from experts about some of the early monitoring of the impact of the Government's welfare reform package on the housing sector. The seminar featured presentations from the Department of Work and Pensions, the G15 group of housing associations, London Councils and the homeless charity Broadway, while other attendees included representatives from local authorities, housing associations and developers and third sector groups.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/London-Assembly-response-to-Draft-Housing-Strategy-FEB14.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/London-Assembly-response-to-Draft-Housing-Strategy-FEB14.pdf)



4.6 Key information provided by these speakers included:

- Almost half of all households affected by the benefit cap are in London;
- The changes to growth of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) claims in different parts of London and the high growth of in-work LHA claims in outer London. That 49 per cent of LHA claimants in London are in work, and that 95 percent of the growth of LHA claims in outer London is amongst working households;
- Over four times as many households in London than the rest of Great Britain are affected by the new size criteria in the social sector have lost at least £25 per week (21 percent compared in London to 5 percent elsewhere); and
- London is the only area to have seen a reduction in the proportion of lone parent LHA claims.

4.7 These findings, as well as other topics raised in the meeting were put to the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land & Property during a committee meeting in February 2014. Following the meeting, a report<sup>3</sup> was published which identified the following key actions for the Mayor and other organisations:

- To collect and publish regular monitoring data on the impact of welfare reforms in London, including household movement within and out of London;
- To ensure that additional support to London in recognition of its higher housing costs are regularly reviewed and adequate; and
- To work with boroughs to ensure they are allocating discretionary housing payments in an effective and sustainable way.

*Impact*

4.8 The December seminar brought together various strands of on-going research to give a more strategic picture of the various impacts of welfare reform in London. However, the Mayor's response to the Committee's recommendations claimed that current monitoring regimes, albeit not undertaken by the GLA, were sufficient to allow for a strategic overview, while recommendations concerning the need for additional transitional financial support offered to Londoners were largely rejected. The Committee has continued to monitor the effects of welfare reform throughout the year and will once again question the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land & Property one year on from the publication of the report. Further information can be found at Agenda Item 4.

**Homelessness and rough sleeping**

4.9 The Committee has returned to the issue of rough sleeping and homelessness at several points over the last two years, reflecting the emphasis that the Mayor has placed in tackling the issue, and the growing nature of the problem in London. The Committee's meeting in May 2013 established that the Mayor had failed to meet his 2012 target for ending rough sleeping, but also highlighted the success of the innovative No Second Night Out policy programme. A second meeting held in October 2013 heard from service providers who support London's homeless people. The Committee completed its evidence gathering with a site visit to a homeless hostel in Hammersmith. The Committee heard first-hand about the importance of key workers in facilitating recovery and the need for bespoke support to deal with clients' complex needs.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Assessing%20the%20consequences%20of%20welfare%20reform.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Assessing%20the%20consequences%20of%20welfare%20reform.pdf)

- 4.10 In *No Going Back: Breaking the cycle of rough sleeping and homelessness*,<sup>4</sup> the Committee recommended to the Mayor, London Councils and the London Health Commission to:
- Begin discussions with the Government and London Councils to establish pan-London and sub-regional commissioning arrangements for services supporting single homeless people;
  - Assess how health services can be made to join up with, and complement, other services which support rough sleepers;
  - Write to the Ministerial Working Group on Rough Sleeping to highlight the need for greater flexibility in the design of JobCentre Plus and NHS systems; and
  - Press hard for at least a proportionate share of Department of Health (DH) hostel funding for London and request Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to clarify what revenue funding will be available to support homelessness projects in London for 2015/16 and beyond.

#### *Impact*

- 4.11 The Government responded to the Committee's recommendation that more should be done specifically for single people to help them avoid homelessness and announced an extra £8 million for a 'Help for Single Homeless' fund to aid local authorities on this issue. Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform outlined a recent commitment to an easing of benefit sanctions for those recently made homeless, which is in line with one of the recommendations from the Committee. The main recommendation on pan-London commissioning was supported in principal by the Mayor who already commissions some services on that basis. A new pan-London framework will be brought in 2016 which establishes new guidelines for commissioning. £15.5 million has been made available by the DH and DCLG, to which the Mayor will add a further £15.5 million from the Affordable Homes Programme to finance hostel places in London. The Mayor also committed to working with London councils and boroughs to help achieve the Gold Standard for housing services.

#### **Gypsy and Traveller Sites**

- 4.12 The issue of providing the appropriate level of accommodation for Gypsy and Travellers was investigated by the Committee in September and October 2014. The Committee visited two Gypsy and Traveller sites; an authorised site in Southwark and an unauthorised site in Greenwich. A meeting was then held in City Hall at which members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities were invited to discuss the difficulties they face in locating appropriate accommodation and the ongoing prejudice they felt. The Committee also heard claims that some boroughs are using the Localism Act 2011 as a way to reduce the number of pitches available. Innovative approaches to supporting these communities were discussed with, amongst others, Leeds City Council.
- 4.13 As a result of the meeting a letter<sup>5</sup> was sent to the Mayor outlining the following actions he should undertake:
- In light of the success of Leeds Council's toleration sites, the GLA should work with the boroughs on a pilot scheme for London to make land available for short-term Gypsy and Traveller sites modelled on the toleration scheme in Leeds;

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<sup>4</sup> [www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/London%20Assembly-Rough%20Sleeping-report-July%202014\\_0.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/London%20Assembly-Rough%20Sleeping-report-July%202014_0.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Gypsy%20and%20Traveller%20site%20provision%20-Letter%20to%20Mayor.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Gypsy%20and%20Traveller%20site%20provision%20-Letter%20to%20Mayor.pdf)

- The GLA should encourage the boroughs to adopt robust and fair waiting list procedures, taking into account Gypsies and Travellers involuntarily residing in social housing. These might be based on Kent County Council’s approach; and
- The GLA should ensure that Boroughs are equipped to regularly engage with their local Gypsy and Traveller communities, providing an accessible frontline point of contact in each borough. Consideration should be given to the possibility of using any underspends from the Traveller Pitch Fund to finance a support system on which the boroughs could draw.

*Impact*

4.14 The Mayor responded to the Committee’s letter in February 2015. While rejecting a more robust pan-London approach to estimating traveller pitch sites, believing instead that boroughs were still best placed, the Mayor did commit to considering at bids from boroughs for toleration sites based on the Leeds model and to encourage fairer waiting list practices.

### **Theme 3: Construction and Regeneration**

#### **Homes for Older Londoners**

4.15 As part of its work on measures to boost supply, the Committee investigated for the first time the number and quality of homes for older Londoners being built in the capital. At this time, there are around 60,000 such specialist housing units in London and experts predict a further 80,000 could be needed over the next thirty years as London’s post war ‘baby boom’ generation reaches retirement age. The report found that specially designed housing – combining self-contained homes with access to on-site support and care – improves independence and quality of life for residents, reduces costs to the NHS of avoidable accidents and frees up much needed family homes. It also identified a disparity between inner and the outer London, and highlighted four outer boroughs currently accounting for a third of privately owned retirement homes. The report was the result of evidence gathered by the Committee including a site visit to the Peabody’s Darwin Court in Walworth which gave Members the opportunity to discuss the issue with centre managers, care workers and residents.

4.16 The Committee’s report<sup>6</sup> included the following recommendations:

- The Mayor should start planning for what happens after his Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund ends in 2017/18;
- The new Health and Wellbeing Boards include local authority housing directors to ensure they help champion joint planning and commissioning; and
- The report also calls on the Mayor to lobby government for changes to planning regulations to free developers of specialist housing from costs like the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106.

*Impact*

4.17 The Mayor’s published *Further Alterations to the London Plan* made a number of welcome references to measures advocated in the Homes for Older Londoners report. Of particular note is the setting of indicative annual targets for specialist housing for older people at a borough level and the promotion of the significance of decent housing for older people as a strategic health issue through the Health and Wellbeing Boards and the London Health Commission. The Committee also

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<sup>6</sup> [www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Final%20draft%20report%2026%20November%20%28Recovered%29\\_0.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Final%20draft%20report%2026%20November%20%28Recovered%29_0.pdf)

used the evidence gathered to successfully lobby the Mayor to make specific changes to the then Draft London Housing Strategy to provide further detail on how supported housing would be developed.

### **Diversity in the construction industry**

- 4.18 The issue of how to encourage more small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) construction companies to deliver housing was the subject of the Committee's meeting in March 2014. Members heard from experts including Molior, the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research, the Federation of Master Builders, the UK Co-housing Network and the GLA. It heard that the house building industry is dominated by a small number of large developers that alone do not have the capacity to build the number of homes that London requires. The recent recession has exacerbated this, the number of SME contractors has reduced at a faster rate than larger companies. The main reason given was the high cost of land in the capital which made it much harder for SME contractors to compete. This problem is likely to get worse for SMEs in the medium term if the GLA ignores the problem. Since sites available on the open market are so highly priced, and since access to finance remains difficult for SMEs, the release of public land over the next few years is going to be an increasingly important factor in whether or not new entrants emerge in London.
- 4.19 A letter<sup>7</sup> outlining the Committee's concerns was sent to the Mayor, and asked him to:
- Parcel public land into smaller sites prior to disposal, with some sites specifically reserved for small builders;
  - Be open about the framework GLA is considering to help small builders; and
  - Ensure greater transparency to see who is buying land in London through the London Development Panel - where and for how much.

### *Impact*

- 4.20 The Mayor welcomed the Committee's work and said that the issue of parcelling land into small units had merit but said that it was not practical at this stage due to the rapidly decreasing number of hectares available to the GLA. He would, however, continue to examine any further land releases to see if SME activity can be encouraged. While the Mayor could not impose a duty on future Housing Zones to ensure that SMEs are included in development plans, he would look for opportunities to include and promote the use of SMEs. Plans for a framework for SME developers was examined but ultimately rejected by the GLA as being impractical but the Mayor would support boroughs establishing such frameworks at sub-regional level, while also encouraging members of the London Development Panel to use SME construction companies wherever possible.

### **Councils constructing Affordable Homes**

- 4.21 In November 2013, the Committee published its report examining the issue of local authorities and their ability to increase the levels of affordable housing in the capital. The Committee considered both the current state of the council housing sector in London (including the number and quality of council homes) and the prospects for renewed council building programmes to address the problem of insufficient supply. As part of this investigation the Committee commissioned a piece of primary research from the University of Westminster. The research project included a survey of the London boroughs, analysis of relevant borough policy and project documentation and additional desk research. The report's recommendations and conclusions drew on input from 28 of the

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<sup>7</sup> [www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/London%20Assembly-Letter%20to%20the%20Mayor-diversify%20housebuilding%20industry\\_0.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/London%20Assembly-Letter%20to%20the%20Mayor-diversify%20housebuilding%20industry_0.pdf)

33 boroughs, arising either from written submissions or responses to the survey.

- 4.22 The report, titled *Right to Build: What's stopping Councils from building more houses?*<sup>8</sup> encouraged the Mayor to join with London Councils and others in a coordinated lobbying campaign to ensure that the borrowing caps are lifted and in pressing for housing investment to be removed from the measure of government debt. It also recommended that the Mayor should lobby government for an adequate renewal of the Decent Homes funding stream after 2016, undertake an assessment of the impacts of Affordable Rent in London to inform decisions about the planned successor programme post 2015 and continue to lobby government for more house-building funds for London (for example through the retention of stamp duty raised in London) some of which should be spent on new council homes.

#### *Impact*

- 4.23 The Assembly, Mayor and London Councils have repeatedly called for increasing the ability of councils to borrow in order to build new housing, and seen the issue move up the national agenda as a result. Following the report, the Mayor's Housing Strategy stated that the Mayor intends to offer a more differentiated programme of Affordable Rent housing during the coming investment round, and stated his support for renewal of the Decent Homes funding.

#### **Estate Regeneration**

- 4.24 The question of how councils and developers should approach regenerating estates was the subject of two meetings held by the Committee in summer 2014. Central to the issue of regeneration was the question of whether a particular run-down estate should be knocked down or whether refurbishment was a better option. Guests who appeared before the Committee included representatives from Publica, Arup, the London Tenants Association, University of York as well as boroughs such as Brent and Lewisham. Members also visited an example of estate regeneration at Clapham Park Estates, which gave them the opportunity to discuss with senior representatives of the housing association and the borough their vision for the estate and how this has been shaped by funding opportunities and Government/Mayoral policy.
- 4.25 The report based on the Committee's investigation, *Knock It Down or Do It Up? The Challenge of estate regeneration*<sup>9</sup>, found that estate regeneration had reduced the number of social housing dwellings by up to 8,000 over the last decade, and in many cases has led to continuing bad blood amongst residents and councils. Released in February 2015, the report is designed to provide a guide for community groups, councillors and housing professionals to some of the best ways to work together to regenerate estates. The tips include:
- Putting energy into early and comprehensive engagement with residents, as well as the physical build and finances
  - Holding an independent ballot on any final decision to demolish an estate
  - Creating a steering group of residents and securing the enthusiasm of community leaders and influencers.

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<sup>8</sup> [www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Council%20Housing%20Report%20If%20template%20version%204.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Council%20Housing%20Report%20If%20template%20version%204.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/KnockItDownOrDoItUp.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/KnockItDownOrDoItUp.pdf)

### *Impact*

- 4.26 The Committee's report was widely commented on in the media and through social media. A report on the impact of its recommendation will be produced in early summer 2015.

### **Theme 4: Ongoing monitoring work**

- 4.27 In addition to these main three themes of work, the Committee also undertook a number of meetings to follow-up on past work or to provide additional background on major issues. These included:
- 4.28 **Affordable Home numbers and ownership:** The Committee continues to monitor the number of affordable homes being built in London as part of the Mayor's Affordable Homes Programme 2011 - 2015, as well as interrogating the proposals for the Programme's next period in 2015 - 2018. Committee Members continue to hold the Mayor to account for any perceived delays in delivery through questioning at Mayor's Question Time meetings or through his Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land and Property at Committee meetings.
- 4.29 The Committee has used this ongoing scrutiny as the basis for an investigation into affordable home ownership in London, using meetings in earlier part of this year to examine the issue in detail. The investigation is looking at the Mayor's First Steps Programme which provides funding for affordable homes in the capital, as well as targeting intervention to make the market work more effectively. In particular, the Committee focused on Shared Ownership as the Mayor substantially increased the funding for this type of ownership in the 2015 - 2018 Affordable Homes Programme. A report will be released in early summer 2015.
- 4.30 **Overcrowding:** Following up recommendations from previous Assembly work on overcrowding in the social rented sector, the Housing Committee held a meeting in September 2014 designed to update its evidence base on what progress the Mayor had made to meet his target to end severe overcrowding by 2016. A further Committee meeting in November 2014 provided an opportunity to discuss with the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land and Property what further steps are planned or deemed necessary.
- 4.31 **London Plan:** In April 2014, the Housing Committee contributed formally to the Planning Committee's response on the Mayor's Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan. It reinforced messages from its response to the Draft Housing Strategy, notably the need to explain how the gap between the 42,000 homes planned for in the Draft Housing Strategy and the minimum of 49,000 identified within the evidence base will be closed. It also called for greater numbers of affordable homes and family homes.

## **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

## 6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

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### List of appendices to this report:

None.

<b>Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985</b>
List of Background Papers: None
Contact Officer: Lorraine Ford, Scrutiny Manager Telephone: 020 7983 4394 Email: <a href="mailto:scrutiny@london.gov.uk">scrutiny@london.gov.uk</a>

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# Subject: Purpose-Built Student Accommodation in London

**Report to: Housing Committee**

**Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat**

**Date: 17 March 2015**

**This report will be considered in public**

## 1. Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out the proposed scope for an investigation into the issues surrounding the provision of purpose-built student accommodation in London.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee agrees the scope for an investigation into the issues surrounding the provision of student accommodation in London.**

## 3. Background

- 3.1 The importance for London's universities of the adequate provision of student accommodation is emphasized in the Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP). It says that there is a requirement for 20,000 to 31,000 university places over the ten years to 2025, but the Plan also notes that student accommodation should not undermine the provision of affordable homes or the requirement for mixed and balanced communities.
- 3.2 The London Plan proposes that more student accommodation should be located in outer London and that it should be more affordable for the student body as a whole, while remaining within the context of local strategic planning needs. It requires privately provided units to be broadly comparable to university-provided accommodation, with benchmarking provided through the Mayor's Academic Forum and the London Plan Annual Monitoring Reports. Finally, it notes that if the accommodation is not "robustly secured for students", it should be subject to affordable housing requirements, although monitored separately from overall provision.
- 3.3 The Mayor's Academic Forum was established in 2011 to address student accommodation needs arising from the London Plan. The Forum's agenda covers: future student numbers, the geographical concentration or dispersal of student housing, affordability, quality, meeting strategic and local needs and partnership working.

## 4. Issues for Consideration

- 4.1 The provision of purpose-built student accommodation needs to be considered within the wider context of London's heavily pressurised housing market. The Mayor's Academic Forum believes that increased provision of purpose-built student accommodation has the potential to free up conventional housing currently occupied by students. As noted above, new student accommodation is exempt from the usual requirements relating to mixed use and affordable housing provision. It is increasingly provided by the private sector, up from 4% in 2003 to 41% in 2014. It may also affect the boroughs' ability to meet their affordable housing targets.
- 4.2 From the students' viewpoint, affordability is the most important issue, yet the price of London's university accommodation is very high. Some universities have argued that the 'affordability' threshold for student rent in London is £150 per week, but this is below the average London rent level reported by the National Union of Students in 2012/13 of £157 per week. And the average rent for private purpose-built accommodation was then £221. The Mayor's Academic Forum notes that high-quality en-suite rooms or studio flats may be being built at the expense of more basic, self-catering rooms with shared facilities.
- 4.3 Student accommodation is also heavily concentrated geographically, with 57% of existing provision located in four central London boroughs (Camden, Islington, Tower Hamlets and Southwark). Universities prefer to locate their provision (and students also prefer to live) in these areas, provided that such accommodation is 'affordable'. While some increased provision is being approved in outer London, there is still a heavy focus on central London in terms of new approvals. High rent levels mean that the poorest students spend on average 55% of their maintenance loan on accommodation and more than one third (37%) of students moving into the private rented sector (PRS) say they are doing so for reasons of affordability. So this heavy concentration of purpose-built accommodation in central London, together with the type of units we are providing, may be driving up prices for students. There is also a concern that the current arrangements for bespoke accommodation may be driving students into the already over-subscribed PRS, putting further pressure on rental levels for the wider market, and potentially pricing the poorest students out of London altogether.
- 4.4 Accessibility is an emerging issue, as both universities and private sector providers are looking to reduce the percentage of rooms made available for disabled students on the grounds that they are not attractive to other students. Therefore the Committee may also wish to consider whether London provides the right amount of accessible student accommodation.
- 4.5 Members may therefore wish to question expert guests on:
- whether new purpose-built student housing is in any way compromising affordable housing provision; and
  - the affordability and suitability of new student accommodation in London.
- 4.6 Subject to discussions with party Groups, a visit is proposed later in the year as a way to allow Committee Members to view recently built accommodation and to speak to those who manage, maintain and live there.

## 5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

## 6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications to the GLA arising from this report.

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### List of appendices to this report:

None

<b>Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985</b>
List of Background Papers: None
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# Subject: Gypsy and Traveller Site Provision in London

**Report to: Housing Committee**

**Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat**

**Date: 17 March 2015**

**This report will be considered in public**

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This paper sets out for noting the response from the Mayor to the Committee's investigation on Gypsy and Traveller site provision in London.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes the letter from the Mayor in response to the Committee's investigation on Gypsy and Traveller site provision in London, as attached at Appendix 1.**

## 3. Background

- 3.1 In February 2014, the Housing Committee agreed to investigate the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites in London as part of its work programme for 2014/15.
- 3.2 The Committee visited two Gypsy and Traveller sites on 9 September 2014: an authorised site in Southwark and an unauthorised site in Greenwich.
- 3.3 This was followed up in October 2014 by a Committee meeting which allowed Members to hear from a range of invited guests and to hear first-hand from Gypsies and Travellers about their experiences.
- 3.4 In February 2015, the Committee agreed the wording of a letter to the Mayor setting out recommended actions that he should take in light of the findings of the investigation.

## 4. Issues for Consideration

- 4.1 A response to the Chair's letter has since been received and is attached at **Appendix 1**. The Committee are asked to note the response.

## 5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

## 6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

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### List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 – Letter from the Mayor to the Chair of the Housing Committee, 26 March 2015

<b>Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985</b>
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List of Background Papers: None
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**Darren Johnson AM**  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
More London  
London SE1 2AA

**Our ref:** MGLA150115-6862

**Date:** 26 FEB 2015

Dear Darren

Thank you for your letter of 15 January about Gypsy and Traveller site provision in London and proposing nine actions for me to consider. Please see my response below to your proposed action points.

**Actions:**

**1. A majority of the Committee believes the GLA should work with the boroughs to commission a London wide update of the GTANA. This would provide the strategic overview necessary to determine the number of new sites London really needs and could support their fairer distribution.**

My London Plan (Policy 3.8 of the Revised Minor Alterations to the London Plan, carried forward in the Further Alterations to the London Plan) requires boroughs to ensure that the accommodation requirements of gypsies and travellers are identified and addressed, with sites identified in line with national policy, in coordination with neighbouring boroughs and districts as appropriate. Assessing levels of local need, deciding on the level and location of suitable provision to meet that need and carrying out the necessary consultation with relevant communities and stakeholders is far more effectively done locally. The Plan also reflects national guidance in requiring boroughs to identify, and keep updated a supply of deliverable sites to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets and identify developable sites or broad locations for growth for years 6-10 and where possible, for years 11-15.

**2. A majority of the Committee believes that there is a clear need for increased Gypsy and Traveller site provision in London. The GLA has significant land and other assets at its disposal.<sup>7</sup> Other public bodies in London may also be sitting on surplus land over which the GLA is seeking strategic control.<sup>8</sup> The GLA should consider releasing some of this land for the purpose of creating a pot of land that could be developed for additional Gypsy and Traveller sites and in particular to support the creation of a pilot toleration site (see below).**

I am not currently aware of any suitable opportunities to deliver new pitches on GLA owned land, but the GLA will consider provision for Gypsies and Travellers as part of its land disposal strategy.

## MAYOR OF LONDON

**3. In light of the apparent reluctance of the London boroughs to create additional sites, the majority of the Committee requests that the Mayor reconsider the value of reinstating pitch targets in the London Plan.**

I believe, for the reasons set out in response to 1 above, that boroughs are best placed to identify their pitch requirements.

**4. The GLA should better publicise the availability of Traveller pitch funding as well as providing practical engagement throughout the process, ensuring timeframes are specifically tailored to the longevity of local land searches.**

The GLA currently has information on its website that details how organisations, interested in developing new Gypsy and Traveller sites, can bid for grant funding towards site development costs. My staff regularly updates local authorities when new funding streams are announced and where local authorities express an interest in developing such schemes my staff can guide them through the bidding process.

**5. In the Committee meeting your officers informed us that a further portion of the Traveller Pitch Funding has been allocated for the creation of Gypsy and Traveller sites in London. Please publish details of this funding allocation, the criteria that will be used to allocate these funds and timelines.**

I have previously reported that £1.18m of funding was allocated to refurbish and develop 64 pitches across 4 London boroughs. In January this year, I allocated a further £75,000 of grant funding to renovate and refurbish 15 pitches. This funding means that I have so far allocated a total of £1.193m of funding which will deliver 79 new and refurbished pitches by the end of March 2015. GLA officers are also currently in active discussions with two London Boroughs to identify whether GLA funding can be used to provide further new and refurbished pitches.

**6. In light of the success of Leeds Council's toleration sites, the GLA should work with the boroughs on a pilot scheme for London to make land available for short-term Gypsy and Traveller sites modelled on the toleration scheme in Leeds.**

The GLA funding programme is primarily aimed at providing permanent new pitches, but any bids from boroughs for toleration sites similar to the Leeds example will also be considered, taking into account the value for money relative to permanent provision

**7. The GLA should encourage the boroughs to adopt robust and fair waiting list procedures, taking into account Gypsies and Travellers involuntarily residing in social housing. These might be based on Kent County Council's approach.**

I agree that boroughs should manage waiting lists in a fair and robust manner, taking into account factors such as the level of need, site management and the views of local Gypsy and Traveller communities. I would encourage them to share and learn from good practice in London and beyond, including the Kent County Council model your report describes.

**8. The GLA should ensure that Boroughs are equipped to regularly engage with their local Gypsy and Traveller communities, providing an accessible frontline point of contact in each borough. Consideration should be given to the possibility of using any underspends from the Traveller pitch fund to finance a support system on which the boroughs could draw.**

How to engage with their local communities, including Gypsies and Travellers, is a matter for boroughs to decide, taking into account local needs and resources. I do not anticipate any underspend against this budget, and would note that this is part of an overall affordable housing budget that will be entirely committed to delivering new affordable homes for London.



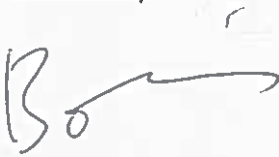
# MAYOR OF LONDON

**9. The GLA together with London Councils should establish a mechanism to support and encourage sub-regional collaborative working in the context of provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites.**

My London Plan already encourages collaborative working with surrounding boroughs and districts where appropriate.

Thank you again for writing to me.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Boris Johnson', written over a faint, large watermark of the London Underground roundel.

**Boris Johnson**  
Mayor of London

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