

City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA
Switchboard: 020 7983 4000
Web: www.london.gov.uk

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Your ref:
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A City for all Londoners

I would like to make a few comments in response to the consultation document a City for all Londoners.

Meeting the demands of London's rapidly growing population does obviously pose many challenges.

The document rightly highlights the importance of well-designed higher-density development, which regrettably has not always occurred in recent years.

I welcome the document's reference to developing new transport services in less – connected places, including exploring the potential to expand the Tramlink network from Wimbledon to Sutton, however I note with concern that no firm commitment to this form of infrastructure was included in the TfL Business Plan published on the 8th December.

I very much welcome the commitment to making cycling easier and safer in London, however I again note no reference to extending the cycle hire in this document or indeed in the recently published TfL Business Plan. There is a real need to consider extending the cycle hire scheme further out to Rotherhithe, which would very much complement the Rotherhithe to Canary Wharf pedestrian and cycle bridge and help tackle road congestion in this area. Other extensions of the cycle hire scheme that should be considered are its extension out to Richmond and possibly into Hackney.

I note the document's recommendation that there should be a target of 50% of new housing built across the city being affordable. However, current proposals fall short of this in relation to the requirement, and recent proposals by the Mayor will in effect cap at 35% the level of affordable housing in any major development on private land. At the very least I believe consideration now needs to be given to ensuring that some developments using public land provide close to, if not entirely, 100% affordable housing.

I welcome the document's recommendation of managing demand on roads space, including using road space for different purposes at different times, shifting lorry consolidation centres closer to the River Thames and encouraging more business deliveries by bike. I believe these proposals could in fact be bolder and consideration should be given to permitting more deliveries to take place during the night, if this would permit prohibiting lorry movements during the morning rush hour.

I entirely endorse the document's recommendation for extending London's Overground service, especially in South London.

I strongly support and welcome the commitment that the new London Plan include a new policy to protect existing residents and the local environment from the construction of 'mega basements' in residential areas, addressing problems that can arise from their construction, including noise and vibration, construction vehicles, the stability of properties, the loss of vegetation and biodiversity and localised flooding or drainage issues.

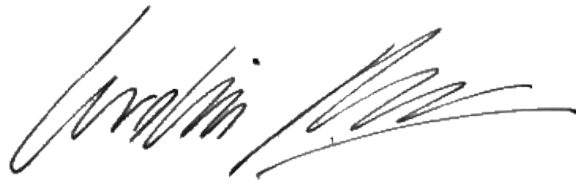
One area which appears lacking from this consultation document, despite being set out in the Mayor's manifesto, is a commitment to support 'tenure-blind' development, so as to avoid the use of 'poor doors'. It is obviously vital that access and communal areas for affordable housing are indistinguishable from those serving other homes.

Another area which appears lacking in this consultation document is a commitment to retain (or strengthen) London Plan targets for all new homes to meet Lifetime Homes standards and 10 per cent of new homes to be wheelchair accessible.

On the issue of good architecture and design and protecting London's heritage I believe a firm and absolute commitment must be provided to protecting specific sight lines within the London Plan. There is evidence that these are already under risk, including sight lines of St Paul's Cathedral. The current Mayoral decision to proceed with providing a GLA guarantee for the Garden Bridge is in practice a policy of supporting diminished views of St Paul's Cathedral for many residents enjoying the South Bank.

Finally, on the issue of tall buildings the document appears somewhat vague. While tall buildings can play a role in certain parts of London the overall planning policy towards them does need to be strengthened. I would welcome a number of policies being adopted including more thorough and effective master planning of opportunity areas and other zones appropriate for tall buildings; all applications to be analysed via a publicly accessible city-wide 3D digital model, allowing Londoners to understand the effects of individual proposals, and the cumulative impact of policies and decisions and all tall buildings to be subjected to design review by an independent body of experts.

I hope the enclosed comments are useful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Pidgeon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM