

A City For All Londoners – DIO Representations

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) manages the Defence Estate. We are currently examining, in close detail, where we can sensibly rationalise the Defence Estate and invest in a core, retained estate. This is a key element of the Strategic Defence and Security Review published last year, which set out our objective to reduce the size of the Defence Estate by 30% by 2040.

We have already made a series of announcements about our intention to release some sites into the London market. We anticipate that these London sites will yield more than 4,500 homes along with a significant amount of employment, retail and education space within the next 5 years.

Public Sector Land

The DIO is a member of the London Land Commission and helped it to form the Public Sector and Brown Field Land Register. We promoted several of our own sites into the Register. Because of this and because of the scale of house building the DIO will generate over the next 5 years, we would expect the DIO to be recognised within the London Plan in the same way as TFL, NHS and MET Police.

There are many small parcels of land identified on the Register. Usually they are too small for larger developers and too large for small builders. These sites should be clustered together to form packages of sufficient size that could be sold to large developers to accelerate residential delivery from Public Sector land.

We are aware that other parties are lobbying for the quick release of Public Sector land, even at the detriment to the land value released back to the freeholders. It should be noted that with the pressure on all Public Sector budgets, maximising returns from land and built assets is the only way some Public Sector bodies can balance their books.

We would urge the Mayor to resist the call to release Public Sector land without first allowing the freeholders' time to secure a change of use that could significantly uplift its value.

Similarly, we would urge the Mayor to resist the call for 50% affordable housing on Public Sector land. Affordable Housing is, ultimately, subsidised by the land owner accepting a reduce land value. In the face of the Public Sector budget pressures, it would be inequitable to introduce policies that would disadvantage Public Sector bodies in this way.

Regeneration & Infrastructure (including Digital Infrastructure)

We would recommend that Mayor use this Plan to pull together a fully co-ordinated set of policies that encourage a phased regeneration of all failing estates across London.

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There are many examples of excellent estate regeneration schemes where density has been improved along with the associated public realm. These schemes genuinely inject new life blood into neighbourhoods and a co-ordinated set of policies that encourage the right supporting development (employment, retail and education) along with infrastructure could multiply the economic benefits further.

We would recommend that a new ring-fenced Mayoral budget is formed to help kick start the more economically difficult regeneration schemes.

This could be funded by 'off-site affordable home contributions' from developers paid directly to the Mayor's office instead of to the Borough Councils. The Mayor's Office could then use this centralised pooled resource to maximise the number of affordable homes in the areas where they are most needed.

For example, an 'off-site affordable home contribution' for a planning consent in Westminster would yield a far greater number of affordable homes if it could be spent in some of the more outlying Borough regeneration schemes.

Increased Sub-Urban Density

There is a huge, largely untapped, opportunity to intensify residential development in the outer London Boroughs.

We would support the creation of 'Station Development Zones' to increase density and economic activity within a 1km radius of rail or multi-modal transport hubs. Building taller buildings within the context of such zones should be encouraged to maximise their impact. They would have the effect of distributing the 'housing load' across all of London and the associated economic activity would help to re-balance prosperity across Borough boundaries.

There is a need to increase the scale and speed of delivery of all forms of housing tenure, as well as take account of the need to increase the capacity of supporting utilities and infrastructure.

The evidence base for calculating future housing trends (location, tenure and quantum) should not only look at past demand but should also take account the changing way that people live.

For example, a reduction in car parking standards would reflect the fact that most London residents use public transport. This Policy change would encourage higher densities because developable land could be used to build more homes instead of being set aside for car parking.

We support the continued roll-out of London Housing Zones to help deliver higher density sub-urban residential development.