

A City for All Londoners: consultation response by Keepmoat Group

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About Keepmoat

Keepmoat is a top 10 UK housing and construction company. Working together with housing associations and local authorities, Keepmoat designs, builds, refurbishes and regenerates places to improve economic and social outcomes for people across Great Britain.

Keepmoat's specific areas of expertise include: new build homes, community regeneration, responsive maintenance, retirement solutions and energy efficient technology.

Keepmoat employs over 3,500 people across Great Britain, with 9% of its workforce made up of trainees, apprentices and graduates.

Response to 'A City for All Londoners'

We welcome the Mayor's ambitions to:

- Use his adult skills budget to train skilled workers for the homebuilding industry
- Deliver new homes for both sale and rent
- Support smaller housebuilders and new development models
- Encourage build-to-rent and, in particular, institutional funding.

Low cost home ownership

We are concerned that the consultation document appears to limit low cost home ownership tenures to shared ownership.

More than 70% of Keepmoat's private sales are to first time buyers, with 66% of sales supported by the Help to Buy programme. These sales are important to our housing association and local authority clients as a source of cross subsidy for affordable rented housing and estate regeneration. They provide choice for first time buyers and encourage people to stay within the area where they have an existing stake.

We endorse policy support for shared ownership, but encourage the Mayor to broaden the range of low cost home ownership tenures endorsed by the London Plan, so that local partnerships can choose the mix most appropriate in each area.

Local authority homebuilding

Councils can deliver additional homes through infill, large site development, the acquisition and release of land, rooftop schemes and estate regeneration.

We encourage the Mayor to support London boroughs in their homebuilding ambitions by providing the dedicated financial and people resources to grow these programmes.

Meeting the housing needs of older people

We see a major mismatch between demand and supply in this market. Current supply nationally is circa 5,000 homes per annum compared to a demand of nearer 60,000 homes. New homes for older people are needed at the 'value' end of the marketplace, where need is greatest and where supply is most lacking.

We encourage the Mayor to promote the delivery of two-bedroom, lifelong homes with plentiful storage that would help to meet demand from downsizers and free up larger family homes.

Diversifying the homebuilding sector

We note that larger builders can be involved in building the capacity of small and medium sized homebuilders and contractors. This can happen through:

- Supply chain alliances or partnering arrangements on sites
- Growing the expectation for housebuilders to maximise local employment through implementing arrangements where employment lands locally.
- Helping SME's to grow talent and the workforce.

We encourage the Mayor to support partnerships for the delivery of housing, whether those partnerships are between the public and private sectors or entirely private sector.

Modular homebuilding technology

The latest flexible products can deliver nearly 100 different house types, which can then be externally finished in a variety of different materials and facades to suit the local vernacular. They perform to a much higher standard of energy efficiency than the brick and mortar equivalent. They can be installed at a rate of between 4-8 homes per day and – in terms of productivity – use only 25% of the construction time required by traditional brick homes.

We encourage the Mayor to endorse modular construction of new homes – especially those that use UK supply chains – and provide the environment in which it's easy to grow this delivery approach.

Contact

We would be pleased to work with the Mayor and his advisers as policy is developed for the draft London Plan.

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