

Homes for Londoners: A blueprint for how the Mayor can deliver the homes London needs

July 2016



Dentons and business group London First have published a joint report, *Homes for Londoners: A blueprint for how the Mayor can deliver the homes London needs*, which outlines the first steps Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, needs to take to fulfil his promise to "tackle the housing crisis, building thousands more homes for Londoners each year". London First and Dentons' report sets out what needs to be done to fulfil the Mayor's election promise, from the perspective of London business.

During Khan's successful election campaign he proposed that a group be set up with the objective of ensuring that all of London government plays an effective part in increasing housing in London to 50,000 homes a year. This group is named Homes for Londoners and Khan stated that it would "bring together all the Mayor's housing, planning, funding, and land powers alongside new experts to raise investment, assemble land, make sure Londoners get a fair deal from developers, and commission and construct new homes".

Homes for Londoners: A blueprint for how the Mayor can deliver the homes London needs, argues that the primary role of Homes for Londoners should be getting public land ready for development. The main pipeline of land under the Mayor's control is owned by Transport for London. Homes for Londoners should help to advise the Mayor in establishing a strategy to identify and release TfL sites for development from the perspective of maximising housing supply. Where practical, Homes for Londoners should assemble sites around core public land-holdings by acquiring adjacent privately owned land. It should set out an acceptable level of density for development, and offer land to the market with clear requirements about the mix of tenures required. Securing a new pipeline of developable land owned by, or the disposal of which is controlled by, Homes for Londoners would provide the Mayor with the ability to directly influence housebuilding and increase the speed of delivery.

The recommendations in the report are predicated on the GLA evolving from being a body that sets strategies and distributes a small amount of government money to fund housebuilding, to instead becoming a more interventionist body – one that rolls up its sleeves and acquires land from other public bodies, and uses its compulsory purchase powers, where appropriate, to help get more homes built.

"In London we are falling lamentably and wilfully short of delivering the number of homes that we all need - and that is unacceptable and dangerous," said Stephen Ashworth, planning partner at Dentons. "What is proposed in our report represents a few first corrective steps: setting up Homes for Londoners to provide a focus for the Mayor's efforts, and

then concentrating on making sure that public land is turned into well designed homes as soon as possible. Delivering this will need energy, conviction and muscle. As the report highlights, there is little doubt as to whether it can be achieved. The question is whether the Mayor will do it."

"The case for Homes for Londoners is clear," added Jonathan Seager, Housing Director at London First. "London must double its rate of housebuilding if it is to adequately house a growing population and keep the city competitive. A step-change in delivery is required now. In the past, the public sector has led drives to increase housebuilding. The Mayor has both the convening legitimacy and a set of powers and resources, which complement those of the boroughs, to help get more homes built."

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