

MAYOR OF LONDON

FOREWORD

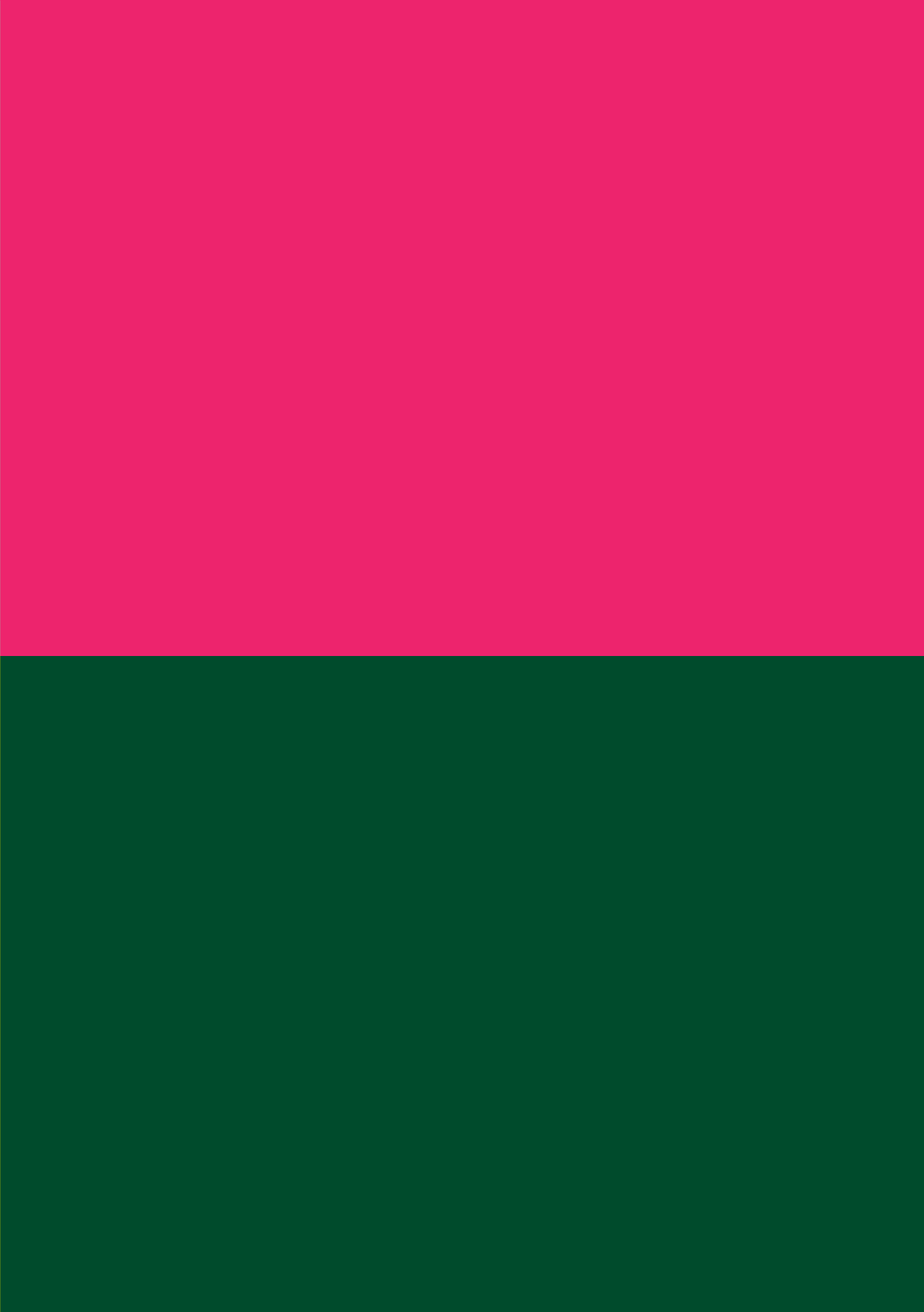
GOOD QUALITY HOMES

FOR ALL LONDONERS

LONDON PLAN GUIDANCE

OCTOBER 2020

GOOD GROWTH BY DESIGN









FOREWORD

London is the greatest city in the world and is attracting more people to live, work and study than ever before. Between 1997 and 2016, the number of people living in London grew by 25 per cent to 8.8 million. Yet, over the same period, housing stock increased by only 15 per cent. We must act fast to build the homes that Londoners need and ensure our city grows in a sustainable and healthy way.

Doing nothing is not an option. As Mayor, I'm striving to tackle the housing crisis by building good-quality, genuinely affordable homes for Londoners. We're making solid progress – last year we started building more council homes than in any year since 1984, and the latest stats show we're firmly on track to deliver on our ambitious target of starting 17,000 genuinely affordable homes this year, including homes for social rent, aimed at those on low incomes; London Living Rent, for those on average salaries; and shared ownership.

But the reality is, we need help from the Government to build tens of thousands more new homes every year. This cannot wait. I want young Londoners to have the opportunity to live in the city they grew up in and not be priced out. I want to help councils replenish the social housing stock that has been eroded over decades. And I want new homes to offer more options to people living in expensive, poor-quality or overcrowded private rental accommodation.

The Intend to Publish London Plan (London Plan) sets out clear policies to make this happen, including making the best use of land and ensuring homes are of the quality that Londoners deserve.

This draft London Plan Guidance on housing design shows how to do this. It sets out a way to calculate how many homes should be built on individual development sites, making sure that this is appropriate for the local area. And it ensures that design quality is considered from the very start of a project.

This guidance will support decisions on planning applications. It will help maximise affordable housing and promote mixed and inclusive

communities. And it will encourage developers to be more creative about the thousands of small and often difficult-to-deliver sites across our city.

This is about achieving our vision for Good Growth – growth that is socially and economically inclusive and environmentally sustainable.

This guidance will equip boroughs, designers and developers with the tools they need to achieve this. It will help make the best use of available sites to stimulate Good Growth, whilst maintaining a decent quality of life for new and existing residents. Only then can we build a city for all Londoners - a place where every Londoner, now and in the future, has access to a genuinely affordable, high-quality home.



Sadiq Khan





Introduction – the need for guidance

We need to adapt to make sure London grows in a sustainable way. This includes making sure that where we can build new homes, we make the most of the land available.

This draft London Plan Guidance sets out how to get the right quantity of new housing, at the right quality, in the right places.

This does not necessarily mean high-rise development. Mid and lower rise building types can, if planned well, get the best amount of housing out of a site.

This has been done before. London has a long history of innovating new housing formats in times of increased housing need. One great example is the mansion block developed in the late 19th century that increased density by stacking accommodation in a clever and effective way. This guidance is intended to help today's developers and architects rise to the challenge again. Innovative design is the key to using land more efficiently and delivering much more high-quality housing.

As well as building new homes, we must deliver the social infrastructure and other facilities that need to go alongside. These are the vital places and services that support Londoners' daily lives, such as schools, community centres, play areas, healthcare facilities and transport infrastructure.

Better, more efficient use of land can help deliver these important facilities, as well as new public transport and other key amenities. Locating new housing close to and within town centres, is not only convenient for residents but can also bring more potential customers, enabling more local high streets to thrive.

Well-designed developments can also help create a new sense of identity and provide opportunities for shared experiences and more socially integrated communities. This is especially good for residents who may be at risk from isolation, and for families with young children – who spend the most time close to home.

As well as facing a housing crisis, we face a global climate

emergency. Our new housing must respond. By carefully making the most of the land available and building more intensively in appropriate places, we can deliver more energy efficient housing. A home in a compact housing block, for example, uses around 40 per cent less energy per home than a detached house. Optimising the development on available land will help to meet both our housing need and the London Plan ambition for London to be a zero-carbon city by 2050.

Key to this is protecting and enhancing green spaces across the city. As well as making London a more pleasant place to live, the vital green space surrounding and within London helps to improve air quality, reduces the risk and impact of flooding, and provides important habitats for the city's wildlife. We need to take this into account when finding ways to deliver new housing. The draft Document will show how all of this can be done.

How the guidance will work

The draft guidance will help planners, developers and designers of new housing in London to get the optimum amount of homes out of development sites, ensuring that the homes we need can be delivered in an efficient way and support a good quality of life.

It does this by using seven tried and tested building types in combination with a new calculation tool. A series of exemplar schemes will help boroughs work out what quantities are appropriate to each site context.

Design quality is built into these calculations by ensuring that each building type meets the design requirements set out in the London Plan supported by the forthcoming refreshed London Housing Design Standards (see Module (C)). The use of building types to help plan site capacity is a new approach for London Plan guidance. The typologies range in scale from individual houses to tower blocks. No one type is favoured above another – it all depends on what's right for the context. Each type's characteristics are set out, along with its performance against a range of housing standards, all of which promote a good quality of life.

While the housing types are used to calculate capacity, they are not









meant to define the detailed design of the eventual development. Instead, the types help determine what the appropriate built form and scale is for optimising the development of a site and we expect developers to explore options within these parameters during the development design process. The guidance shows how building types can be combined to create new spaces and places, like courtyard-forming blocks, or as part of mixed-use development. References to case studies (see Module D) show successful built examples for each type. These include the urban villa block development of Chobham Manor in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and Vauxhall's Keybridge House. The latter combines terraces, urban blocks and towers. The draft guidance also gives specific advice for small development sites (see Module B) and how these can be developed appropriately.

Delivering high quality housing

Optimisation does not mean standards will decline. Ensuring high quality housing is critical to delivering good growth. All Londoners deserve homes that are safe and comfortable with plenty of daylight and access to outdoor space. There's no place for meagre space provision such as the recent spate of office-to-housing conversions allowed under the Government's Permitted Development Rights legislation.

Instead, this guidance ensures that capacity calculations meet the London Housing Design Standards. These set a benchmark for quality by enforcing strict design principles for homes in London. This means that quality of life for residents is considered at the earliest stages of the site planning process.

The Housing Design Standards cover all aspects of the home and its neighbourhood. These range from getting the basics right like bin storage and security to future-proofing designs to meet Londoners' needs over time. Key principles such as minimum space standards, dual aspect outlook, and ceiling heights of no lower than 2.5m, for example, are built into housing capacity calculations.

The potential of small sites

Even small areas of developable land can help in the drive for new homes. London has many small sites that together have the potential to provide a large number of high-quality new homes. These sites are everywhere, whether a row of derelict garages, an awkward patch of empty land or an underused site within a larger housing development. As set out in the London Plan, such sites should provide more of the much-needed new housing across London. This guidance sets out a way to get the most out of these plots. This builds on the work the Mayor has been doing working with partners to get more affordable homes built on small sites, including bringing forward surplus public land. Some boroughs are already leading the way. Croydon Council, for example, is rolling out a masterplan to create 1,000 new homes on 50 infill plots. Camden Council has delivered 122 new homes across eight sites on empty or underused sites on the Regent's Park Estate. The Mayor's Small Sites Small Builders programme is helping more boroughs to do the same by bringing many more sites to market and by aiming to increase the cohort of new and interesting small developers in London.

Promoting design codes

London's diverse neighbourhoods are a key part of the city's character. This guidance recognises the need to retain their distinctiveness as they do their bit towards meeting the demand for new housing. It does this by encouraging boroughs to prepare area-wide design codes to open up opportunities for small-scale housing developments in areas already well-served by public transport and existing infrastructure. It also provides guidance on how to link these to the Housing Design Standards. Such codes can enhance the character of a neighbourhood through well-considered design that is appropriate to its context.

The draft document provides example codes for how to get the most housing potential out of a variety of site contexts, and to help guide boroughs in writing their own design codes.

Showcasing good examples

The guidance includes 32 great examples of how new housing can be done well across London, to inspire plan-makers and showcase





the work of designers and boroughs that are leading the way in optimising housing sites. The case studies show a range of scales and contexts, from rooftops to backland development, urban to suburban, single houses to an urban block. The completed projects demonstrate how to deliver site-appropriate development that also enables a good quality of life for the people who live there. For example, at Ely Court (Case Study D5.2) two linear blocks create housing on a scale appropriate to the suburban context in Kilburn. Elsewhere at Brentford Lock West (Case Study D6.2) waterside villa blocks and townhouses are arranged around a courtyard garden. Together, these are an inspiring and useful resource for future housing schemes.

The draft document has been put together by a broad network of built environment and planning professionals, including Mayor's Design Advocates. Young Londoners working with the Stephen Lawrence Trust have had their say on the role that housing has in shaping our neighbourhoods and boroughs. Urban Design London have provided a platform for borough officers to offer their expertise.

This guidance is intended to optimise the delivery of high-quality housing in London. This is a crucial task. We will need your help to get it right. This suite of documents will be consulted upon following the Mayoral election.













CONTRIBUTORS AND THANKS

This suite of guidance documents has been led by the GLA's Planning team with the input and support of the GLA's Housing and Land, Environment and Regeneration teams. It draws on the findings of the Good Growth by Design Housing Design and Quality of life Inquiry and input from a range of contributors including the Stephen Lawrence Trust and Urban Design London members. The guidance documents have been prepared by a consultant team led by Mae Architects Ltd in close liaison with the GLA.

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