

Planning for Housing in 21st Century London

Duncan Bowie

**London Metropolitan
University/London RTPI**

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The Mayor of London as Strategic Planning Authority

- **Mayor is responsible for Spatial Development Strategy for London – The London Plan**
All borough plans must be in general conformity with the London plan
London Plan is part of each borough's Local Development Framework (under 2004 Act)
- **Mayor has strategic development control powers-**
- **Under 1999 GLA Act, power to direct LA to refuse planning consent on strategic schemes – housing schemes over 500 homes**
- **Under 2007 GLA Act, power to directly determine strategic schemes. New threshold of 150 homes**

2004 London Plan : The Threefold Vision

- **Strong diverse long term economic growth**
- **Fundamental Improvements in London's environment and use of resources**
- **Social Inclusivity to give all Londoners the opportunity to share in London's future success**

**(European Spatial Development Perspective :
Economy; Environment: Equity)**

Objectives of the 2004 London Plan

1. Accommodating sustainable growth
2. Linking growth to public transport capacity
3. Securing a compact city
4. Promoting an environmentally sustainable city
5. Ensuring economic and social inclusion
6. Linking realism, sustainability and action

2004 London Plan housing policies

- **Target was 23,000 homes pa (increased to 30,500 from 2007/8)**
- **Policy was 50% affordable (35% social;15% intermediate)**
- **All provision to lifetime homes ; 10% wheelchair standard**
- **Density based on Sustainable Residential Quality (with density guidance revised in 2008)**

Housing Requirements

- **2004 London Housing Requirements Study identified annual need as:**

Social rent	20,800 pa
Intermediate	2,450
Market	12,100
Total	35,350

Total affordable = 23,250 = 66% of total

Case for increasing social rent target from 35% to 60% if social rent need to be met

Not enough affordable housing

- **Only 31% of net completions have been affordable**
- **Average annual Affordable output**
 - **2004/5 to 2007/8**
 - 5,393 rented homes**
 - 3,955 intermediate homes**
- **9,348 – only 40% of 23,250 needed**

The Mayor's Density Policy

- **Maximise effective use of land ...
but compatible with Sustainable
Residential Quality principles set out
in density matrix**
- **Housing outputs have to be
appropriate to housing requirements**

The Original Density Matrix

- **Highest range 650-1100 habitable rooms per hectare; 240-435 dwellings per hectare. Assumes average 2.7 habitable rooms per dwelling – equivalent to 1.7 bedrooms – so mix of 1Bs and 2Bs.**
- **Lowest range 150-200 habitable rooms per hectare; 30-50 dwellings per hectare. Assumes average 4.6 habitable rooms per dwelling – equivalent to 3.6 bedrooms– so mix will be predominantly 3Bs and 4Bs.**

Highest density schemes in April 2005 to December 2006

- Woburn Place, Camden 2462 dph
- Pentonville Road, Islington 2052 dph
- Whitechapel High Street, Tower Hamlets 1955 dph
- Pioneer Market, Ilford, Redbridge 1681 dph
- Talbot Square, Westminster 1583 dph

- 513 schemes at densities over 435 dph

Densities as Sustainable Residential Quality

- **Planning consents since Plan adopted**

	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8
Above range	62%	65%	32%	55%
Within range	31%	28%	50%	40%
Below range	8%	7%	18%	5%

Densities and Bedroom size

- 2005/6 permissions

Density Range	% 3B+
Over 435 dph	8%
240-434	13%
65-239	21%
30-64	40%
Under 30	78%

The new tower block boom

- Schemes over 10 stories referred to Mayor

2003/4	1 scheme	45 units
2004/5	7 schemes	833 units
2005/6	23 schemes	6,122 units
2006/7	14 schemes	3,275 units
2007/8	39 schemes	13,331 units

Alternative space standards

•	HATC proposal	EP policy
1 person	37 sq m	51 sq m
2 persons	44 sq m	
3 persons	57 sq m	66 sq m
4 persons	67 sq m	77 sq m
5 persons	81 sq m	93 sq m
6 persons	92 sq m	106 sq m
7 persons	105 sq m	

The Verdict on 2000-2008

- **Quantity and Quality**
- **Density, bedroom size mix and built form**
- **Viability of affordable housing without subsidy**
- **Competing policy priorities**
- **Limitations of planning in controlling the market and ensuring housing delivery**

Conclusions from the study

- **Combining strategic plan making and strategic development control**
- **Combining strategic planning and strategic housing policy**
- **The verdict on the Livingstone era**
- **Spatial planning in boom and recession**
- **The need for more powers and resources**

New Challenges

- **Higher population growth projections**
- **Continuing pressure from Govt to raise housing output**
- **Market slow down**
- **Limited resources for public sector investment in transport and social infrastructure**
- **Environmental/ climate change issues wont go away**
- **Implementation now much more difficult**
- **The Olympics- key to regeneration or diversion of funding ?**

The Crunch

- **Starts on Site fallen by 35% over last 4 years**
- **Planning approvals down by 25% on last 4 years**
- **Fall in contributions from private development through planning gain**
- **Schemes being renegotiated with less affordable housing**
- **Affordable housing requires 30% more subsidy per home**

Revised London Plan Proposals

- **Increase housing target from 30,500 to 33,400 homes a year (based on new Strategic Land Availability Assessment)**
- **Abolish 50% Londonwide affordable housing target**
- **Reduce focus on social rented provision, despite difficulties in intermediate market. Shift from 70:30 social rent: intermediate to 60:40**
- **Protection of back gardens from development – end to ‘garden grabbing’ - limits potential for suburban infill development**
- **New space standards – for all tenures ?**

The Future for London Housing ?

- **Need to ensure need for social rented housing is met and get more family sized homes**
- **Public investment cuts from 2011, whichever party is in government – 50% reduction in net national capital investment over 3 years (IFS say 17% cut in housing budget over 3 years: HBF /NHF saying 25%)**
- **Who funds social and transport infrastructure ?**
- **Impact of Community Infrastructure Levy on the viability of affordable housing – especially if no subsidy**
- **Competing policy priorities (eg climate change mitigation)**
- **Limitation of strategic planning in controlling the market and ensuring housing delivery**
- **Importance of public sector interventions and ownership/equity stakes**

Do we need a Plan B ?

- **Population Change with Economic Decline**
- **Financial sector growth on hold**
- **Need for more diverse economic strategy**
- **Keynesian intervention as basis for restarting London economy**
- **Residential growth as key to economic stability ?**
- **Critical role for public sector**
- **Need to refocus development on appropriate and marketable outputs – lower density family housing**
- **Revisit compact city assumption**
- **Some modifications to green belt to provide small urban extensions – Green fingers not green girdle.**
- **Don't strangle London**

Strategic planning and neighbourhoods

- **The new neighbourhood focus and place-making – focus on local decision making/ borough priorities**
- **Strategic planning to use resources across London – tackling social polarisation and inequity**
- **Balance between strategic spatial planning and neighbourhood based planning ?**
- **London is more than an aggregation of ‘ self-contained’ neighbourhoods**
- **Planning must deal with transience arising from globalisation and world city role**