



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

Rt Hon Sadiq Khan  
Mayor of London  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London  
SE1 2AA

**The Rt James Brokenshire MP**  
*Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and  
Local Government*

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local  
Government**  
4th Floor, Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

Tel: 0303 444 3450

Email:  
james.brokenshire@communities.gsi.gov.uk

[www.gov.uk/mhclg](http://www.gov.uk/mhclg)

Our Ref:

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I am writing to you following the publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework. This is an essential part of the Government's strategy to fix the broken housing market. It provides the basis for planning authorities to build the homes this country needs, release enough land in the right places and make the best possible use of that land.

The Government is clear that this needs to be a country that works for all. This means building the right homes where they are most needed and ensuring people have access to safe and secure homes. London faces the most severe housing pressures in the country with median house prices now over 12 times median earnings – comparing to an England wide ratio of below 8 – and far more than what an individual can typically expect to borrow for a mortgage. This is clearly unacceptable. Housing will continue to remain out of reach of millions of hard working Londoners unless we see a step change in housing delivery across London.

As you know, the Government is clear we need a London Plan in place that plans to meet London's housing needs in full. I welcome the proposed increase of London's housing target in your draft Plan from 42,000 to 65,000 homes a year as a helpful first step towards meeting London's housing needs. But as set out in the Government's response to your consultation, I am not convinced your assessment of need reflects the full extent of housing need in London to tackle affordability problems. I have listened carefully to yours, and others, representations, and I am clear that the public interest lies with ensuring you deliver the homes London needs, including in the short term, as quickly as possible. This is why I have decided to amend footnote 69 of the revised National Planning Policy Framework so that the draft London Plan will be examined against the previous National Planning Policy Framework rather than new national policy. This will mean you can continue to progress your Plan and start delivering your London Plan targets for which you are responsible.

It remains crucial however that you bring forward a revised London Plan that has regard to new national policies at the earliest opportunity. You will want to note paragraph 33 and annex 1 of the revised National Planning Policy Framework, which sets out that the Government expects plans to be reviewed early where all identified housing need is not being met and to ensure a plan is in place which reflects current national policy. I would

therefore expect you to review the London Plan to reflect the revised National Planning Policy Framework immediately once the London Plan has been published. I remind you that if this is not forthcoming, I have powers to direct the review to ensure London delivers the plan and homes that communities need.

The Government is also clear that Plans should be effective, deliverable and consistent with national policy. You will recall that the Government highlighted a number of further issues with your draft Plan in response to your consultation, including that:

- A number of policy areas in the draft that are inconsistent with national policy, such as your policies allowing development on residential gardens and your policy on car parking.
- The detail and complexity of the policies within the draft London Plan have the potential to limit accessibility to the planning system and development.
- The draft Plan strays considerably beyond providing a strategic framework.
- The draft Plan does not provide enough information to explain the approach you will take to ensure your targets are delivered, including collaboration with boroughs and neighbouring areas.
- There are a number of policies in the draft Plan which seek to deal with matters relating to building standards and safety. It is important that there is a consistent approach to setting building standards through the framework of Building Regulations.

I look forward to seeing the draft London Plan and suggested modifications that you have submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. I would remind you that I have powers to intervene before the Plan is published, by giving a direction to avoid any inconsistencies with current national policy or to avoid detriment to the interests of an area outside of Greater London and I will be carefully considering whether it is appropriate to exercise any of my statutory powers.

Getting a London Plan in place as soon as possible will help us focus on the challenge of significantly increasing housing delivery across London. The Government recognises the scale of the challenge, which is why at the Spring Statement we increased our investment in affordable housing by a further £1.67bn and why last month we announced London boroughs can bid for up to £500m additional borrowing headroom to build more council houses. But London will only deliver with strong leadership. As Mayor of London you are responsible for delivering the strategy to significantly increase housing delivery in London and you will be held to account for delivering London's housing targets. It is in the public interest that there is much more, and more regular, information in the public domain on housing delivery across London and I have asked my officials for advice on what can be done to increase transparency of the net additions to the housing stock in London.

I look forward to further discussion on your plan for delivering the homes London so desperately needs.



**RT HON JAMES BROKESHIRE MP**