

ENSURING NO LOSS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

9 The Mayor believes that, where demolition and rebuilding is chosen as part of an estate regeneration, this should only happen where it does not result in a loss of social housing, or where all other options have been exhausted. This principle will apply to estate regeneration projects that seek new funding from the GLA.

10 Even where GLA funding is not involved, current London Plan policy states that the loss of affordable housing should be resisted unless it is replaced with better quality homes at existing or higher densities with at least the equivalent amount of floor space (see Appendix). The Mayor will continue to apply this approach when considering planning applications for estate regeneration projects. The policy will be reviewed as part of the development of his new London Plan, the draft of which is due for publication in 2017.

IMPROVING THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

11 When deciding on the scope of any estate regeneration scheme, local authorities and others should consider not just the 'red line' of the estate's boundaries, but also how the estate interacts, both in built form and accessibility, with the surrounding area. Estate regeneration can be an opportunity to re-integrate estates with their surrounding neighbourhoods and to deliver wider economic, social and physical regeneration.

12 Many estate regeneration projects seek to reintroduce traditional street patterns and create buildings that relate better in appearance and scale to their surroundings than the ones that have been demolished. Good estate regeneration can also utilise strategically-placed tall buildings to help with orientation, supplying appropriate density in well-connected places and maximising the amenity of certain locations.

13 The Mayor supports estate regeneration which seeks to make a positive contribution to the appearance of the site as well as the surrounding public realm.

Loss of existing affordable housing (including estate regeneration)

- 2.66 London Plan Policy 3.14 and paragraph 3.82 are clear that schemes which include the loss of affordable housing will be required to ensure that existing affordable housing is replaced by better quality accommodation, providing at least the equivalent floor space of affordable housing¹³. The Mayor expects existing affordable housing to be replaced on a like-for-like basis, meaning that, for example, homes at social rent levels should be replaced with homes at the same or similar rent levels, or that specialist types of affordable housing should be replaced with the same type of housing. The Fast Track Route does not apply in these circumstances, and all estate regeneration schemes should follow the Viability Tested Route to deliver the re-provision of the existing affordable floorspace on a like-for-like basis and maximise additional affordable housing.
- 2.67 Where a borough is redeveloping an estate as part of a wider programme then it may be possible to re-provide a different mix of affordable housing on the estate, taking account of the wishes of people who want to return to the estate, if the affordable housing is re-provided like-for-like or increased across the programme as a whole. This must also take account of the affordable housing requirements on the linked sites (i.e. it must be in addition to what the linked site would have delivered on its own). Further information on Estate Regeneration can be found in the Mayor's Good Practice Guide.

Vacant Building Credit

- 2.68 In 2014, Government introduced a vacant building credit (VBC) which applies to sites where a vacant building is brought back into any lawful use, or is demolished to be replaced by a new building. The VBC reduces the requirement for affordable housing contributions based on the amount of vacant floor space being brought back into use or redeveloped. This has significant implications for delivery of affordable housing in London where a high proportion of development is on brownfield land where there are existing buildings. It is estimated that as many as 18,000 affordable housing approvals would have been lost had VBC been allowed over the past five years.
- 2.69 VBC was introduced in a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) together with updates to the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), alongside a policy which sought to restrict planning obligations (including those for affordable housing) from sites providing 10 homes or less (and which have a maximum combined gross floor space of no more than 1,000sqm).
- 2.70 It is important to note that Sections 38(6) and 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 are clear that the determination of an

¹³ Further guidance can be found in the 2016 Housing SPG (Sections 5.1.13 -5.1.18).