

PLANNING BRIEFING NOTE

February 2015

LONDON HOUSING ZONES

OVERVIEW

On 20 February 2015, the Mayor of London announced the first set of London's Housing Zones. Accelerated housing delivery will be supported in these areas through new partnership working, policy interventions and new funding.

INTRODUCTION

Following the launch of the Mayor's Housing Zone Prospectus in June 2014, the Greater London Authority received 25 bids for Housing Zone status. The first nine Housing Zones were announced on 20 February 2015. They are:

- Abbey Wood, Plumstead and Thamesmead
- Abbey Wood and South Thamesmead
- Barking Town Centre
- Clapham Junction to Battersea Riverside
- Heart of Harrow
- Hounslow Town Centre
- New Bermondsey
- Southall
- Tottenham

The GLA proposes to identify further housing zones in the future, with up to 20 zones to be in place by the end of 2015.

WHAT ARE HOUSING ZONES?

Housing Zones are specific locations in which the Mayor of London and the GLA will work in partnership with boroughs, land owners, investors and builders to accelerate the delivery of new homes. Although a bespoke approach is proposed for each Housing Zone, in all cases the partners will work together and use a series of policy interventions in a coordinated and targeted way.

These interventions will include focused planning and place-making initiatives, and there will be intensive engagement with a wide range of delivery partners who are critical to making things happen, from utility companies to Network Rail and Transport for London.

The GLA says that it will expect new homes in Housing Zones to be geared towards meeting a range of housing needs. This, it says, means that open market homes and new long-term market rent homes, as well as affordable homes for rent and low cost home ownership, will need to be delivered.

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FUNDING

In addition to acting as a vehicle for focussed policy interventions, funding has been allocated to each zone. This funding will be used in a variety of ways, from financing infrastructure to supporting individual schemes.

The focus is on recovery and recycling investment, rather than conventional grant.

DELIVERY FRAMEWORKS

Each Housing Zone will have an agreed delivery framework. The framework will define the extent of the Housing Zone and list the sites within it, before setting out the target number of homes for delivery in each, what the blockages are to delivery of these, what interventions are required, and the timetable for delivery.

All the partners involved, including the GLA, will be held accountable to this framework for the delivery of projects and sites. The borough will be held accountable for the overall delivery programme and funding will be conditional on performance.

The GLA proposes that a small Delivery Board will be set up for each Housing Zone, comprised of the GLA, boroughs and key landowners/developers. These will meet as necessary to drive delivery and resolve specific blockages in the development process.

COMMENTARY

The designation of nine new Housing Zones demonstrates a commitment at the local and GLA level to the delivery of new homes. Focussed partnership working, together with additional funding, has the potential to accelerate delivery and increase the number of new homes. The challenge will be to ensure that the partnerships are strong and that all partners continue to work to their agreed aims.

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#HousingZones