

12th October 2015



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SUBMISSION BY THE HOUSING FORUM TO THE LONDON HOUSING COMMISSION

12TH OCTOBER 2015

I am the Chief Executive of The Housing Forum I am happy to put the research documents attached and the evidence submitted below in the public arena. The Housing Forum is an independent cross public and private sector network of housing organisations. We promote quality and innovation in housing supply and build influence within the trade and government drawing on the successful commercial and public sector practice of our members. Our unique offer is our cross sector membership which includes house builders, housing contractors, housing providers, specialist consultants in design and surveying, manufacturers, local authorities and investors. A list of our member organisations is included.

The Housing Forum's submission consists of:

- **Research publications**, "Nine Vital Ingredients", "The Case for Home Performance Labelling", "Making a place for low cost housing" and on behalf of 4 of our member organisations, "Superdensity: The Sequel" are put at the disposal of the Commission.

- **Member event** "More Homes for London" held 9th October 2015 with the Commission's chair Lord Bob Kerlake and the delegates (attached) to offer the evidence of those with substantial experience in the housing sector to the Commission and represent the findings of "Superdensity The Sequel" in terms of the 3 questions posed by the Commission.

Q.1 "How can we double the delivery of homes in London every year and maintain high levels of housing delivery in the long term?"

- *Superdensity recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4; Nine vital ingredients recommendations 1,2,3,4*
- *More Homes for London submission*
- Building at hyper density (at over 350 homes per hectare) is not the most economic use of land nor likely to deliver the numbers needed. The 263 high rise towers in the planning pipeline at present will in total deliver 40,000 homes which will give less than one year's supply based on the requirements of the Mayor's plan for 42,000 home p.a.

- Doubling the density of outer London suburbs, without building tall towers would yield £1million new homes
- However London grows, the growth will have an impact on the counties that surround its perimeter so London should strive to be a good neighbour, anticipating and managing the push and pull factors in relation to areas outside London
- Build partnerships and collaborative governance arrangements beyond and greater than London. London needs a wide spatial forum of partnerships both formal and informal
- An increase in the rate of new housing supply does not have to be at the expense of quality if housing supply is seen as a system in which quality and place making are embedded. Independent accreditation of home attributes - space, energy usage, etc. through initiatives like Home Performance Labelling is vital to ensure consumer confidence.
- Although there is concern in the industry about capacity in skills, medium-sized builders can build out brown field site quite quickly.

Q.2 “How can we reconnect the costs of home ownership and renting to incomes in London?”

- *Superdensity recommendations 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; Nine vital ingredients recommendations 5, 6, 7*
- *More Homes for London submission*
- All London Boroughs are facing a crisis of a lack of affordable rented homes and we need to be realistic about the impact of 1% rent reductions and the sale of housing association homes in London; right to buy sales could in some boroughs rise from 12 p.a. to towards 400 p.a. – and all of this will have an impact on the rising cost of housing in London.
- Expansion of housing supply offers a fantastic opportunity for offsite manufacture and cost efficiencies at scale and well suited for London’s current and future needs and economy.
- Cost exceeds value in regeneration and if large scale regeneration is to continue, longer term time scales, of up to 30 years, should be factored in to retain equity in asset value; stock assembly and planning currently take too long for cost certainty. Economic development is crucial to drive supply, attract investment and ultimately generate successful place-making.
- Tall towers above 8 storeys do not deliver mixed communities; only 15% of homes, or lower, are affordable
- A good proportion of housing for rent is needed to stabilise the market.

Q.3. “How can we provide a high quality private rented sector?”

- *Superdensity recommendations 9, (also q2) 10 Nine vital ingredients recommendations 8, 9*
- *More Homes for London submission*
- Purpose built PRS developments need to be plugged into existing infrastructure to encourage sustainable place-making

- Service charges are rising in taller buildings due to more complex technology; should tall buildings only be built by those with a long term interest in management and maintenance costs?
- Market rent should have its own use class; this proposition should be revisited and applied to London, enabled and supported by greater devolved powers.

Finally, from our members' insight and knowledge it is regarded that collaborative working and partnering delivers the best outcomes to build and maintain better homes for the future.

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BACKGROUND

The Housing Forum is the only cross sector, industry wide organisation that can properly claim to be the voice of the housing industry.

It has over a hundred thirty member organisations from both public and private sector and throughout the supply chain, collaborating to inform, network and influence with the shared objective of more homes and better homes for the nation. The cross sector representation of our membership equips us especially to investigate issues that require collaboration for successful outcomes.