

LINDEN HOMES

Housing our Capital - A Manifesto for London



The case for new homes in London

In order for London to keep its place as a global city with world class institutions and retain its status as the financial capital of the world, it must house an ever growing population. London is set to grow by one million between 2011 and 2021 and reach 10 million by 2031.

In recent years London's housing supply has failed to keep pace with population increases. Since 2002 the population has risen by 14% and the number of jobs by 15%, but housing has only increased by 9%.

London Councils believes that 80,000 new homes are needed in London each year. Housing completions are currently significantly lower than this – in 2011-12 there were fewer than 22,000 completions and even the current Mayor's own strategy only aims to build 42,000 homes per year.

Linden Homes is calling on all Mayoral and GLA candidates to support policies to help address the housing crisis over the next four years.

Linden Homes in London

Since 2010 Linden Homes:

- Has built **over 800** new homes across the 32 London Boroughs and is currently on site delivering **nearly 2,000 more**.
- Is delivering investment of **over £750 million** into the capital's boroughs
- Is providing Section 106 contributions of **over £25 million** to London's local authorities

Over the past six years Linden Homes has invested **more than £25 million** into local services – health, education, transport, leisure – through Section 106 contributions across London.



A challenge for City Hall and the London Assembly – Housing our Capital: a Manifesto for London

1. Making Land Available

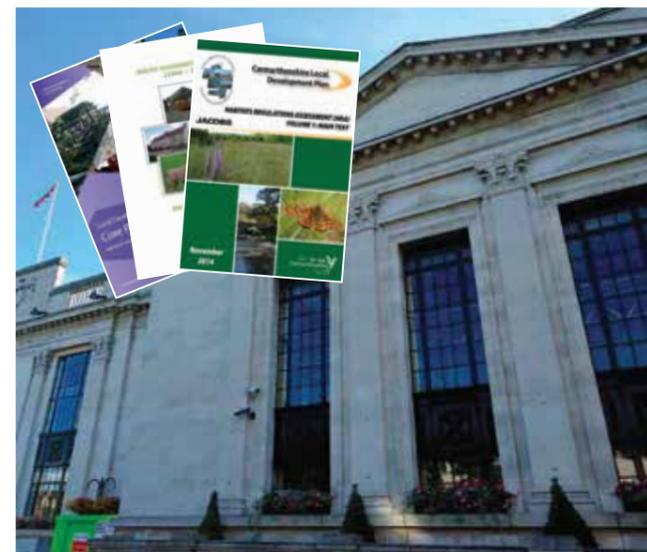
In order to ensure we are building the number of homes that the capital needs, we need to ensure that we have sufficient land coming forward for development, from both private landowners and the public sector.

Public sector land

- The public sector holds a significant amount of developable land, but too often this is retained for future employment use or whilst waiting for land values to rise. Disposals are also often delayed by regulatory issues or a lack of the necessary skills to bring forward the land.
- The new Mayor should continue the work of the London Land Commission, working with other public bodies to ensure that all available and deliverable public sector land is brought forward to deliver the homes the capital needs.

Private sector land

- Local Plans are key to securing the delivery of new homes – and their acceptance by communities. Under the Housing and Planning Bill, the Mayor of London will gain new powers to intervene with London Boroughs which do not have a Local Plan in place. The next Mayor should ensure this power is fully utilised.
- The Government's changes to permitted development rights allowing offices to be converted to residential properties have helped to create thousands more homes in the capital. The next Mayor should support these powers and ensure they are fully utilised across all London Boroughs.
- London's housing need is severe and should not be seen in isolation, but in relation to the south east. The next Mayor should seek to work with local authorities in the south east to help meet the demand, and should not immediately rule out green belt development.
- Contrary to popular belief, the green belt is not under threat: since 2006 its land area has actually increased. There needs to be a wider debate about the green belt and the next Mayor should be part of this debate.



2. Making Planning Work

The National Planning Policy Framework represents a significant reform of the planning system. Now in its fourth year, it has succeeded in delivering significantly more homes across the country, but too many of them are still being consented on appeal.

Linden Homes supports the Government's intention to require local authorities to have Local Plans in place by early 2017.

However, while developers are skilling up to meet the challenge of housing delivery, we need local authorities to do the same.

Without planning consent, not a single home can be built, yet with resources under significant pressure planning departments are having budgets cut and posts reduced. This is resulting in a log jam of delayed applications, which frequently end up at Committee with a string of conditions attached, as issues remain unresolved prior to determination.

- Politicians need to commit to the adequate funding and professional staffing of planning departments within their jurisdiction.

In addition, viability remains a key concern, and we welcome the Government's recent consultation on the Community Infrastructure Levy to look at how it could be made to work more effectively in conjunction with Section 106 agreements.

- We call on the next Mayor to be aware of viability concerns and in relation to the Mayoral CIL and affordable housing requirements be realistic as to what the private sector can deliver without public subsidy.



3. Controlling Regulation

The homes we build today are already highly energy-efficient. The Government has recognised this and has confirmed it will not proceed with an obligation to deliver zero carbon homes, but the current Mayor has recently suggested the London Plan will retain this target.

This would be counter-productive. Further regulation, while costly to implement, would not deliver proportionately greater energy savings and would likely constrain the number of new homes delivered.

- The next Mayor should not introduce further regulation which would impose excessive costs on the industry and impact on the viability of many marginal sites, leading to schemes being mothballed.
- The next Mayor should work with London Boroughs to ensure any locally imposed requirements are subject to a rigorous and open review of need and viability.



5. Delivering on Infrastructure

The delivery of new housing must go hand in hand with the delivery of new infrastructure. In order to ensure London keeps moving, its transport network requires ongoing investment.

- The next Mayor should commit to delivering Crossrail 2 at the earliest opportunity and should continue investing in the tube and bus network.



4. Working with Communities

Statistics show that 80% of people believe there is a national housing crisis, whilst just 45% consider that there is an issue in their area. In London, a recent poll put housing as the top priority of Londoners for the next Mayor: 67% believe this to be the most pressing issue in the capital.

Local communities can be unwelcoming of new development, unaware of the benefits it can bring to existing residents. Linden Homes actively promotes the benefits of investment in new homes but believes politicians could do more to spread this message and encourage communities to approach development with an open mind.

- The next Mayor and London Assembly members should actively speak up in favour of new homes and promote the benefits that development brings to the capital.



6. Boosting Demand; Enabling Supply

We build homes as fast as people want – and more importantly are able – to buy them. The challenge in recent years – and particularly in London – has been that the average house price to salary ratio has been growing rapidly. That is why we have supported the Help to Buy equity loan scheme since its introduction; around one third of all of Linden Homes' reservations are made through Help to Buy.

- We welcome the Government's commitment to maintain Help to Buy until at least 2020 as well as the introduction of Help to Buy London. The next Mayor should support these initiatives.

Linden Homes supports the Government's new Starter Homes, which will provide an additional tenure for first-time buyers helping more people to get on the housing ladder.

- The next Mayor should work with London Boroughs to ensure Starter Homes are delivered right across the capital.





About Linden Homes

Linden Homes is an award-winning, national housebuilder with a strong reputation for building quality homes across the UK. As the housebuilding division of the Galliford Try Group we deliver housing for sale on the open market and also to affordable housing providers. We also carry out large scale regeneration projects, many in partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency. Following a period of controlled growth we now deliver around 4,000 homes annually.

Linden Homes has built homes across all London Boroughs. We are fully committed to playing our part to help address the shortage of housing, but also to ensuring high quality design, public consultation and to building new communities. We are also signed up to the Mayor's pledge to ensure homes are offered to Londoners rather than just being sold to overseas buyers, helping more people to stay in the capital.

We were awarded Silver at the What House? Awards in 2015 for Sustainable Developer of the Year as well as Housebuilder of the Year and Sustainable Housebuilder of the Year in 2014. We are proud of this recognition from within the industry.

Investing in local communities: St Clement's, Mile End

Linden Homes is working with the East London Community Land Trust to redevelop this derelict, brownfield site and to create a pioneering, residential-led mixed-use scheme. When construction is complete, freehold will be gifted to the community.

- The development represents a total investment by Linden Homes of **£40 million** in the local economy.
- Of the **252 homes** to be built on site, **35% will be affordable**.
- Selling homes to Londoners: at our recently completed George Row scheme in Southwark, 80% of purchasers were from London and 100% from the UK.
- **£1.9 million** generated for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets through the New Homes Bonus Scheme. Funding is not ringfenced.
- New homes create new jobs: we estimate as many as **375 new jobs** will be created during the construction period.

Get in touch

If you would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Tobin Byers on Freephone **0800 298 7040**



House Builder of the Year 2013 & 2014