

# The Local Plan

## The Local Plan Scrutiny Commission





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# Foreword

Whilst apolitical, the scrutiny function exists in a political landscape: in the original meaning of the word, politics is all about the city, according to Aristotle. This is true for scrutiny, which is at the heart of local government, because it plays a pivotal role in amplifying the resident's voice and shaping policy, but particularly true when we engage in scrutiny of our Local Plan.

The Newham Local Plan is critical in shaping the place in which our residents live, work, play, worship and study. In September 2023, we saw the urgent need to scrutinise Newham's Local Plan, to use the levers at our disposal via planning policy and to conduct a rapid-response task and finish scrutiny commission over two meetings.

My colleagues and I considered various aspects in our scrutiny of the Local Plan, such as affordable housing; affordable workspaces; faith spaces

(including worship and burial space provision); community land ownership; climate resilience and flood protection; green spaces; biodiversity; and the housing needs of changing, diverse resident populations, such as our student population, families, and recent graduates.

The Local Plan plays a vital role in maintaining our vibrant, multi-age, multi-cultural communities, now and in the future in sustainable, affordable ways. As the Local Plan shapes and develops the Newham landscape in accordance with Newham needs, the Newham Local Plan itself must also be shaped and developed by Newham's needs.

The Local Plan is a living, evolving policy, which changes with every new brick laid or tree planted, and requires nuanced approaches. It is therefore entirely consistent that scrutiny's involvement with and oversight of the Local Plan does not finish here.



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<sup>1</sup> Aristotle (2017). Politics. Translated by C. D. C. Reeve. U.S.: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.

# Executive Summary and Recommendations

The Local Plan Task and Finish Scrutiny Commission (hereafter "the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission" or "the LP Commission") was initiated to ensure that input into the emergent Newham Draft Local Plan met the needs of residents. At the Crime, Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission meeting on 7 September 2023, Councillors requested the establishment of a Task and Finish Commission for the Local Plan, where Councillors would be able to share the concerns of residents and shape the emerging Local Plan.

Given timeframes, the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission was set up under the chairmanship of Cllr Terence Paul and held two meetings to explore the issues. These LP Commission meetings took place on 14 December 2023 and 30 January 2024, both chaired by Councillor Terence Paul.

The meetings and accompanying discussions were useful in portraying the residents' concerns and in developing an understanding of how the Council planned to overcome any concerns raised. It was particularly useful in relaying the issues with policy concerning affordable social housing. Following preliminary Local Plan Scrutiny Commission discussions, a motion was passed at Full Council on 11 December 2023 which would be reflected in Regulation 19 to amend Regulation 18, increasing social affordable housing to 50% per development.

Witnesses to the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission Inquiry

The Local Plan Scrutiny Commission engaged with all relevant internal and external stakeholders. These included LB Newham officers working on the Newham Local Plan and with other stakeholders, such as, for example, representatives of the

[Garden of Peace](#) cemetery, and the Evangelical and Pentecostal churches in Newham.

## Recommendations for Newham Council

It is recommended that:

### Recommendation 1: Affordable Accommodation: Affordable Rent and Affordable Housing

The Executive ensure that the LB Newham Local and Corporate Plans provide a clear commitment to a minimum of 50% genuinely affordable accommodation across all developments (including Socially Rented Housing and London Affordable Rent, but not other products such as Shared Ownership). This commitment to include housing developments by Populo, the Council's wholly-owned housing development company.

### Recommendation 2: Places of Worship

The Executive improve engagement and communication with the Newham Faith Forum to ensure communication is more effective with LB Newham's faith communities on the forthcoming Local Plan to encourage participation in the consultation, within 12 months of the publication of the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission report.

### Recommendation 3: Burial Spaces

The Executive outline in the Local Plan its clear policy position to support provision to meet the needs of LB Newham's communities, including (but not limited to) the faith communities, such as Newham's Muslim community, within 12 months of the publication of the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission Report.

# Introduction

1.1 Local Plans are prepared by a local planning authority, such as LB Newham, in consultation with its community. A Local Plan sets out a vision and a framework for the future development of an area, and once in place, becomes part of the Statutory Development Plan (SDP). The statutory development plan for the area is the starting point for determining local planning applications. Thus, LB Newham's Local Plan is the key planning document used to shape, plan and manage growth, regeneration and development across the Borough over a 15-year period. The Newham draft Local Plan sets out a vision, objectives, spatial strategy and planning policy framework, in order to fulfil its primary delivery tool function through planning applications. This means that the Local Plan is used, alongside the [London Plan 2021](#) and [National Planning Policy Framework 2023](#), to determine planning applications. However, within the Council, the Planning Policy team also works with Regeneration colleagues and other parts of the Council to reflect the work they are undertaking to deliver a collective vision for Newham.

1.2 The Local Plan Task and Finish Scrutiny Commission was initiated to ensure that the input into the latest iteration of the Newham Draft Local Plan met the needs of residents. At the meeting of the Crime Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission on 7 September 2023, Councillors identified emergent concerns relating to the Local Plan and resolved to establish a Local Plan Task and

Finish Commission, where Councillors would be able to share their concerns as well as those of residents.

1.3 As a result, the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission was constituted, conducting its work through two committee meetings held in public at East Ham Town Hall. In those meetings, a variety of topics that related to the Local Plan were discussed, such as: Social and Affordable Housing; Student Housing and Graduate Housing; affordable workspaces; community cohesion; Faith and Worship spaces; community land spaces; green spaces and biodiversity; and flood protection/prevention.

1.4 The first meeting was held on 14 December 2023, providing Members with an opportunity to consider topics within the Local Plan that were causes of concern for LB Newham residents. The Local Plan Scrutiny Commission heard about the challenges of statutory obligations, cost-inflation, and construction economics in a high-growth London borough during a housing crisis. Members highlighted the Full Council motion of 11 December 2023 (included at Appendix 5) and officers highlighted the consequences of the Social Housing commitment, including liaison with GLA colleagues over the abolition of the fast-track application route. Members also raised questions with LB Newham Executive Members and officers relating to the Local Plan about Affordable Housing ratios, affordability, viability assessments (conducted by an

in-house officer versus a consultancy with a firm), the 'threshold approach', timetable constraints, Newham faith groups/the Faith Forum, affordable workspaces and affordable retail space, student housing and recent graduate housing. The LP Commission requested a list of the current faith organisations with a presence within the Borough and heard that a list was corporately owned and updated by LB Newham officers. Executive Members advised Members about the difficulty of maintaining the list; however, Cllr Canon Ann Easter, the Faith Forum Coordinator, had advised that the list was up to date.

1.5 The second meeting was held on 30 January 2024, where Members were also able to consider written responses received to questions arising at,

or subsequent to, the December meeting. Further Member discussions focused specifically on the wording of the motion passed at Full Council on 11 December 2023. The motion concerned 50% Social Affordable Housing, and the LP Commission had also received the newly proposed wording for Draft Regulation 19 (please see Appendices 4 and 5). Members also discussed how LB Newham monitors delivery of housing over the four-year electoral term against manifesto pledges; workspace and industrial space needs; the Employment Land Review; Local Plan provision to ensure that faith communities are able to find spaces for practising their faith and for burials; building design for climate change; and flood protection/prevention.

<sup>2</sup> For an alternative view of the meaning of "affordable"; see Affordable housing does not mean what you think it means, Wiles, C. (The Guardian), 3 February 2014. Available online at: [Affordable housing does not mean what you think it means | Housing Network | The Guardian](#). [Accessed 25 March 2024]. For more on the challenges of providing affordable homes in London, see Apps, P. (The Guardian), 20 February 2024. Available online at: [Affordable housebuilding](#). [Accessed 25 March 2024].

<sup>3</sup> The threshold approach to planning applications through the Mayor of London's Affordable Housing and Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance was introduced in 2017 to increase the levels of affordable housing gaining planning permission by embedding the requirement for affordable housing into land values, with the aim of speeding up the planning process. For more information, please see the Threshold Approach to Viability, Mayor's Question Time, Greater London Assembly on 15 July 2021 (2021/3257). Available online at: [Threshold Approach to Viability | London City Hall](#). [Accessed 22 March 2024].

<sup>4</sup> Members were advised that the corporately-owned list of faith organisations within the Borough included circa 250 Christian churches, 120 Muslim organisations, other faith groups, and approximately 16 multi-faith organisations. Information provided verbally by Vicky Clarke at the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission meeting on 30 January 2024. For more information on Newham's diversity, including religious diversity, see the Population Report for Newham, based on the 2021 Census. Available online at: [Population Report](#). [Accessed 24 April 2024].

<sup>5</sup> LB Newham, Employment Land Review (July 2022). Available online at: [Newham Employment Land Review](#). [Accessed 26 March 2024].

# Affordable Accommodation: Affordable Rent and Affordable Housing

- 2.1. The Local Plan Scrutiny Commission used the term, “Affordable Accommodation” to cover Social Affordable Housing, Affordable Rent and Affordable Housing. The definition of “Affordable Housing” is contentious, as there are different ways of measuring affordability: a person-focused approach determines what an individual can afford to pay for their housing and a home-focused approach is determined by the type of tenure. These approaches can be aligned or contradictory.
- 2.2. According to Shelter, affordability can be calculated as being around 35% of the net household income. Ability to pay for accommodation will be affected by pay level, security of employment, the number of economically contributing adults, and whether the household is also composed of children (and if so, how many).
- 2.3. As stated, another way of considering affordability is to focus on the type and tenure of home. These could include:
- Social Rented Housing (SRH) – low rent housing, prioritised by need. The landlord might be a local authority, such as LB Newham. In terms of market share, this is over 16% of households in England. In 2023, 4 million households were socially rented;
  - Affordable Rent Housing (ARH) – higher rent housing, less secure but also prioritised by need;
  - Shared Ownership (SO) – housing that is part owned, part rented by the householder; and
  - Intermediate Rent (IR) homes – housing which is available for rental at up to 80% of market rate housing.
- 2.4. Affordable Housing (AH), as a legally defined term, covers these four types, so that in practice Affordable Housing is any home which is not private-sector housing (i.e. not a home rented from a private landlord nor a home bought/owned privately). The legal definition of Affordable Housing is contained within sections 68-71 of the Housing and Regeneration Act (HRA) 2008, and the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework. The HRA 2008 refers to accommodation at rents below market rates and let to people whose needs are not adequately served by the commercial housing market. Under section 70(2) of the HRA 2008, low-cost home ownership is defined as incorporating shared ownership, equity percentage arrangements, and shared ownership trusts. As with low-cost rented housing, these dwellings must be “made available to people whose needs are not adequately served by the commercial housing market” (section 70(3) of the HRA) to qualify as social/affordable housing (both

low cost rental accommodation and low cost home ownership accommodation).

- 2.5. The LB Newham Local Plan set out a 50% Affordable Housing target. Prior to the LP Commission’s first meeting, there was a motion proposed by Cllr Nate Higgins and agreed at Full Council on 11 December 2023 for 50% social housing. The LP Commission was informed that the policy changes would take some time to implement before the Local Plan would reflect the agreed Council motion.
- 2.6. The recent consultation on the Draft Local Plan set a Strategic Target of 50% affordable housing delivery. This is to be achieved through LB Newham’s own housing delivery and grant-supported schemes by registered providers as well as delivery secured through planning policy requirements. Individual developments must achieve 35% affordable housing (except on publicly owned or formerly industrial land, where it is set at 50%). Of this 35 or 50% (as appropriate), 65% should be for social rented homes and 35% for intermediate homes. The threshold approach is applied and is triggered if developments deliver below this level and/or do not deliver the policy compliant requirement of 40% family homes.
- 2.7. The LP Commission was advised about the London Plan requirements. The London Plan requires individual developments to achieve 35% affordable housing (except on publicly owned

or formerly industrial land, where it is set at 50%). Of this 35% or, if relevant, 50%, between 30% and 70% should be for social rented homes and between 30% and 70% for intermediate homes. It is for councils to set the correct mix for their borough (as per Policy H6). Thus, the percentage of social rented homes in a development is 23% under the new Regulation 18 policy and 14-25% in the London Plan.

- 2.8. For ‘Build to Rent’ housing developments, the previous Local Plan Draft had stated:
- “Developments of ‘Build to Rent’ housing as the sole housing tenure should provide at least 35 per cent affordable housing, or 50 per cent where the development is on public sector land or industrial land appropriate for residential uses. Affordable ‘Build to Rent’ homes should be provided as Affordable Rented Homes, with 65 per cent of new homes being at equivalent rents to London Affordable Rent and 35 per cent of new homes being at equivalent rents to London Living Rent.”
- ‘Build for Sale’, which is most of the Newham housing supply, is covered by Policy H3 in the Newham Regulation 18 Local Plan.
- 2.9. As the LP Commission began its work, the Council was in the process of reviewing Newham policy in order to develop the next version of the Newham Local Plan which

<sup>6</sup> For a Government definition of Affordable Housing, see Homes England, ‘Guidance – Fact Sheet 9: What is affordable housing?’ (2 November 2023). Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-homes-fact-sheet-9-what-is-affordable-housing/fact-sheet-9-what-is-affordable-housing>. [Accessed 14 March 2024].

<sup>7</sup> For statistics about social rented households in England between 2000 and 2023, see Statista. Available online at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/286509/england-number-of-social-rented-households/>. [Accessed 9 March 2024].

<sup>8</sup> According to the Census 2021, the percentage of Newham households that lived in socially rented property was 28.0%: please see Census 2021 Office for National Statistics. Available online at: [How life has changed in Newham: Census 2021 \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsandstates/census2021). [Accessed 15 March 2024].

<sup>9</sup> Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. Available online at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/17/contents>. [Accessed 12 March 2024].

<sup>10</sup> The LB Newham Local Plan (2018) and the suite of accompanying documents are available online at: [The Local Plan – Planning policy and the Local Plan – Newham Council](https://www.newham.gov.uk/plan-and-policy/the-local-plan-planning-policy-and-the-local-plan-newham-council). [Accessed 20 March 2024]. See also the Newham Labour Manifesto Pledges for 2018. Available online at: [2018 pledges](https://www.newham.gov.uk/plan-and-policy/the-local-plan-planning-policy-and-the-local-plan-newham-council). [Accessed 30 March 2024].

<sup>11</sup> Please see Appendix 5 to this Report. LB Newham Full Council, Meeting of 11 December 2023, Agenda Item 20: Motions, Motion 5. Available online at: [Appendix C \(newham.gov.uk\)](https://www.newham.gov.uk/plan-and-policy/the-local-plan-planning-policy-and-the-local-plan-newham-council). [Accessed 20 March 2024].

<sup>12</sup> Please see the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan, Policy H6 in the London Plan and the Newham Labour Manifesto Pledges for 2018. Please see the agenda papers

would be consulted on under Regulation 19. This would allow for consultation on the proposals, and for responses from various interested parties, including LB Newham residents, the property development community, and the Greater London Authority (GLA).

2.10. The LP Commission discussed the need to prevent talent-flight and accommodating a growing student population, whilst meeting the need for family accommodation, assessed by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) as being the predominant need at 60%. The Commission was informed that flexibility had been introduced across the Borough to accommodate student needs. The Commission was advised that market rent was varied across different parts of the Borough to meet this mosaic of needs and future-proofing.

2.11. LB Newham Officers advised Members that planning policy required site viability and plan deliverability to be assessed on the assumption that the Affordable Housing targets could be met without any grant subsidy. Where grant subsidy is available, it is available to deliver homes over and above the targets for scheme to progress through the fast-track threshold approach.

2.12. The LP Commission Members noted that the London Plan housing target was 41,382 homes to

be built between 2021/22 and 2028/29. Members also considered the Draft Local Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which had identified Affordable Housing needs for residents in LB Newham as being:  
- 54% Affordable Housing (7% Intermediate and 47% Affordable Rented homes); and - 46% market-rate homes.

2.13. The LP Commission Members reflected on how the 2018 manifesto had specified 50% Affordable Housing across all new developments, and that this 50% could be achieved via a combination of LB Newham's building, Populo developments, and developer contributions. Reflecting on the 2022 Manifesto, Members were keen for progress on achievement of the 50% manifesto commitment to be monitored and suggested that one way for this to be conducted would be via regular published updates from Cabinet. These updates would provide details on how delivery of the 50% was being achieved, what had been delivered, and proposals for bridging any identified deficits. Metrics included in these regular updates could be based on permissions given, homes finished, or other reasonable ways to measure delivery on the commitment. Scrutiny Members were keen for the reports to monitor accountability against the manifesto pledge and demonstrate commitment to residents.

# Student Housing and Housing for Recent Graduates

3.1. According to the Census 2021 for Newham, 34.5% of the Borough's population is aged 24 or under, including 8.1% between the ages of 20 and 24, which broadly corresponds to the age of undergraduate and graduate studies. LB Newham is home to the [University of East London](#) and [University College London East](#). The Commission was concerned about equality of opportunity for Newham's young residents, including access to tertiary education, and noted the proportion of Newham students continuing to live at home. Members considered the effects of areas of student housing on local community life, in areas such as Stratford and Maryland, for example, over vacation periods. Members also noted that there is not sufficient housing for students, that the student housing that is available is not affordable. There was little to no affordable housing for recent graduates.

3.2. The LP Commission considered the provisions and recognition of the urgent need for student accommodation within the London Plan 2021. According to the London Plan, a key objective of which is to provide homes needed, this includes delivering appropriate levels of Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA), including affordable student accommodation, as part of a more inclusive London.

3.3. The Commission was made aware of the important role played by PBSA not only in providing students with a place to live, but also in alleviating pressures on the wider private rental sector. Indirectly, the provision of PBSA also helps to underpin Newham's aspirations for its younger residents and assures the wider position of London's higher education sector as a global player, and the knowledge economy of London.

3.4. Members recognised how providing the mix of housing required to meet the needs of Newham's residents and contribute to diverse, inclusive communities would necessitate the balancing of competing pressures. The London Plan identified that significant volumes of new student housing will be required over this decade, but it was notable that 4,500 bed spaces have been completed or are in the process of being consented in Newham since 2019/20. Some of this growth has been tied to specific institutions, such as University College London (UCL) East.

3.5. The LP Commission heard that the emerging Newham Local Plan recognises the value of and need for this type of housing, but also the risks of one kind of housing

<sup>13</sup> Please see the agenda papers for the meeting of the CER Scrutiny Commission, 7 September 2023 at page 28. Available online at: [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Crime, Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission, 07/09/2023 19:00 \(newham.gov.uk\)](#). [Accessed 21 March 2024].

<sup>14</sup> Please see the 2022 Manifesto pledges. Available online at: [Newham Labour Manifesto 2022](#). [Accessed 30 March 2024].

<sup>15</sup> Census 2021, Office for National Statistics. Available online at: [How life has changed in Newham: Census 2021 \(ons.gov.uk\)](#). [Accessed 15 March 2024].

<sup>16</sup> LB Newham's student population is growing, due to the development of [East Bank](#) within the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Please see the UCL website. Available online at: [EAST BANK](#). [Accessed 25 March 2024].

<sup>17</sup> UCL East offers its students accommodation of Single Ensuite at £287.35 per week and Accessible Large Single Ensuite at £309.47 per week. Beyond UCL East provision, a small, random sampling revealed one-room student accommodation available in e.g. Walthamstow (£290 per week), Islington (£270 per week) and Stratford (£575 per week).

<sup>18</sup> See supra at footnote 16.



dominating a neighbourhood. Officers advised that the Newham Local Plan manages this by ensuring that, for future schemes, only student housing linked and physically adjacent to specific Higher Education Institutions will be permitted in the Stratford and Maryland areas. Members considered the conversion of single dwelling houses into a larger House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and discussed future applications under Article 4. A local planning authority can use the Article 4 direction, whereby a local planning authority demonstrates that in their area there is robust evidence to justify the withdrawal of this permitted development right.

3.6. Members heard about a student sub-set: recent graduates/former students. The LP Commission discussed the need to prevent talent-flight of recent graduates from LB Newham, whilst meeting the need for family accommodation, and the housing costs and needs for a group of recent graduates versus those of a family. Officers advised that there was no separate housing type for recent graduates, with the result that the housing needs of former students who have recently graduated are assessed alongside those of all other Newham residents, with or without higher education degrees. Recent graduates therefore face the same accommodation availability and pricing as any Newham resident or entrant to the Newham housing market. As for residents, one form of housing for recent graduates discussed by the LP Commission was shared housing: Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), as these options are cheaper than a studio apartment or a one-bedroom flat/house.

3.7. The LP Commission was also briefed on how the

London Plan 2021 sets out the overall strategic need for Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) in London. There is a requirement for 3,500 PBSA bed-spaces to be provided annually over the London Plan period: a total of 35,000 bed spaces between 2019/20 and 2028/29. LB Newham's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) sets out that it is expected that students attending new university campuses in Stratford will increase the number of students studying in Newham by between 15,000 and 25,000. The SHMA recommends that the Borough should therefore deliver around 210 bed spaces of purpose-built student accommodation annually, which equates to 4% of the Borough's annual London Plan housing target.

3.8. The LP Commission was advised that the Local Plan's Housing policies have been informed by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which is a requirement under GLA planning (as it pertains to the London Plan), and which seeks to understand need for different types and sizes of homes. The Newham SHMA identified that the vast majority of need for family sized homes within the Borough is for families, rather than for sharers. The Newham Local Plan acknowledges this need, as well as the limited provision of family homes in the Borough and under-delivery of family homes against policy requirements, and therefore continues to protect family homes from conversion into HMOs.

3.9. However, Members heard that the Local Plan does enable some family homes to be converted into HMOs under policy H2 in the Regulation 18 Local Plan. The emerging Local Plan also includes a new policy which supports the delivery of large-scale,

<sup>19</sup> Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) 2015, Article 4. Available online at: [The Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development\) \(England\) Order 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/1717/section-4) [Accessed 25 March 2024].

purpose-built HMOs in certain locations and where they meet required standards. The LP Commission also heard that, alongside housing policies, the Local Plan includes local employment obligations on new development delivering employment. Our Newham Works has supports residents, including recent graduates, into local jobs.

3.10. The LP Commission was informed that 17 London boroughs now have an Article 4 direction and seek to limit loss of family homes to Houses in Multiple Occupation. There is no discernible relationship between whether a borough has such an approach and the percentage of residents with a level 4 (or higher) qualification in the recent census.

3.11. Having deliberated, the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission made a recommendation concerning the Executive's commitment to Affordable Accommodation.

**Recommendation 1: Affordable Accommodation**

The Local Plan Scrutiny Commission recommended that the Executive ensure that the LB Newham Local and Corporate Plans provide a clear commitment to a minimum of 50% genuinely affordable accommodation across all developments (including Socially Rented Housing and London Affordable Rent, but not other products such as Shared Ownership). This commitment to include housing developments by Populo, the Council's wholly-owned housing development company.

<sup>20</sup> See Policy H9.

<sup>21</sup> See Policy J4.

## 4 Faith and Worship Spaces

4.1. The LP Commission identified that the Local Plan did not specify locations for new faith facilities within the Borough. As a consequence, there was a lack of provision for space for faith communities to worship within the Borough, especially for faith groups recently established in Newham, such as the Pentecostal and Evangelical churches. Members considered whether and how this could be corrected in a future iteration of the Local Plan.

4.2. The LP Commission was informed that a Community Needs Facilities Assessment (CFNA) had been conducted, which had investigated the demographics within LB Newham and how these were changing. It was found that the geographic and demographic distribution of community facilities was

uneven. This was incorporated into the Local Plan, which had examined where smaller facilities could be located within the Borough, and was being looked at with the Faith Forum.

4.3. The Local Plan Scrutiny Commission clarified that identifying a lack of faith spaces included not only spaces for worship but also burial spaces. There is one operational cemetery within the Borough which is under Council control: the 22-acre site of West Ham cemetery. There are five cemeteries or crematoria not within the control of LB Newham. There are also three Jewish cemeteries: East Ham (1919 - to date), West Ham (1858 - 1965) and Plashet (1896 - closed), some of which have Grade II-listed features.

<sup>22</sup> Please see the CFNA. Available online at: [NEWHAM CFNA](#). [Accessed 30 March 2024].

<sup>23</sup> The Faith Forum had been consulted on the CFNA.

<sup>24</sup> Please see the LB Newham website for more details. Available online at: [Cemeteries – Cemeteries – Newham Council](#). [Accessed 8 March 2024].

<sup>25</sup> For a list of the five sites, please see the LB Newham website. Available online at: [Cemeteries not under our control in the London Borough of Newham – Cemeteries – Newham Council](#). [Accessed 8 March 2024]. The Council website also signposts to the neighbouring London Boroughs of Redbridge, Waltham Forest, Havering, and Barking & Dagenham.

<sup>26</sup> For a description of the architectural and heritage value of LB Newham's Jewish cemeteries, see The Historic England website: A Brief Introduction to Jewish Cemeteries, Historic England (7 January 2020). Available online at: [A Brief Introduction to Jewish Cemeteries – The Historic England Blog \(heritagecalling.com\)](#). [Accessed on 8 March 2024]. For more information on Plashet Cemetery, see Security review as graveyard suffers second race attack, The Jewish Chronicle (2003). Available online at: [Security review as graveyard suffers second race attack - The Jewish Chronicle \(thejc.com\)](#). [Accessed 8 March 2024].



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4.4. However, the LP Commission members noted that there was a great deal of work still required in this area as the Muslim community in particular was struggling to find land within Newham for burial: there is currently no land available within the Borough for Muslim burial. It was identified that the Council was aware of the particular challenges regarding burial space provision in LB Newham, especially those faced by the Muslim community. For example, burial rites for some faith communities may require virgin ground, no re-use of graves, same day burial, and male/female segregated interment. Some faiths do permit re-use of graves. In 2009, for example, the Corporation of London had begun a programme of re-use in a specified consecrated section of the City of London Cemetery in Newham, after permission from the Diocese of Chelmsford. In this instance, the disturbance of graves was permitted provided that remains were removed

from one consecrated section in the cemetery to another consecrated section. A further constraint is the geographic location of LB Newham within flood plains and below the flood level of the River Thames. Climate change, including the impact of water stress within LB Newham, and cemeteries as potential sources of groundwater pollution also have implications for cemetery location.

4.5. Despite this earlier work and provisions within the London Plan 2021, Newham Council was finding it challenging to allocate land for burial space for faith communities within the Borough, including (but not limited to) the Muslim community. The Council was having discussions with the London Borough of Redbridge to see whether a reciprocal sharing of burial space by both boroughs could be arranged.

4.6. This issue had been discussed at the London Assembly in 2016 and in December 2023. The Greater London Authority does not constitute a burial authority under the Local Government Act 1972. Instead, statutory duties are placed on the London boroughs to provide and maintain cemeteries within and outside their areas, to collate data to inform burial space needs assessments, and to ensure that there is sufficient burial space for borough requirements. The Greater London Authority had commissioned an Audit of London Burial Provision in 2011, which formed an evidence base to the Mayor of London's London Plan and found that boroughs with large Jewish and/or Muslim populations were likely to face increased demand for burial space. Further, it considered that the shortage of burial space in London was reaching a critical stage in many London boroughs: Policy S7 in the London Plan set out an approach for boroughs to adopt to ensure burial provision for different local communities.

4.7. It is recognised that there are two separate but nevertheless linked barriers to establishing new burial spaces: the planning designation, and the purchase and management of land. Only one of these is pertinent to the Local Plan. The housing crisis in London, particularly in LB Newham, has had a far-reaching impact on all land uses, and has meant that the costs of and demands for land have risen exponentially.

4.8. Following Member discussions, a meeting was requested for Newham faith groups, with the Council using vehicles such as the Faith Forum to communicate how the Local Plan could meet current

need for places of worship and burial places. Members also directed that this future meeting should be used to communicate how the Council was considering and endeavouring to address the concerns of these faith groups. By encouraging and facilitating such meetings, this would assist in removing any barriers that the Newham faith communities may have with the Council, as well creating organisational corporate transparency, and bringing residents and faith groups along on the journey. It was acknowledged that such a meeting would have to be run sensitively in order to be multi-faith and inclusive, and to ensure that expectations were managed.

4.9. The LP Commission also requested that a policy approach be developed to address the issue of the provision of faith burial spaces, on a cross-borough basis, with particular reference (though not limited) to needs for Muslim burial space. Members heard about challenges faced, including how specific religious rituals were accommodated and the need for virgin land (as opposed to reuse of land). The Mayor volunteered to issue a briefing note to all LB Newham Members.

4.10. Subsequently, the LP Commission was advised that Regulation 18 of the Local Plan did not specifically address the issue of Muslim Burial Spaces because preliminary studies had indicated that there were unlikely to be any suitable sites within the Borough, primarily because of flood risk, a high water plain, and contamination. Further, Officers did not consider that there were any suitable sites in LB Newham and

<sup>27</sup> See Rugg and Pleace (2011) at page 51 for a summary of burial space available in LB Newham (no reserve land available).

<sup>28</sup> For example, in August 2021, there was widespread reporting of flood risks to East London, including LB Newham, by 2030. Please see MyLondon (18 August 2021). The Popular East London Towns That Could be Underwater by 2030. Available online at: [MyLondon The Popular East London Towns That Could Be Underwater](#) by 2030. [Accessed 2 April 2024]. Climate Central produced a map which shows flood risk and annual flood levels. Available online at: [Climate Central map](#). [Accessed 2 April 2024]. LB Newham is particularly susceptible to flooding (from rain, rivers, sewers and reservoirs).

<sup>29</sup> See Marten, R., (24 October 2019). [Grave danger – Cemeteries as a source of groundwater pollution](#) (Groundsure. London. 2019). Available online at: [Grave danger - Cemeteries as a source of groundwater pollution](#). [Accessed 2 April 2024].

<sup>30</sup> The Local Plan: The Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London, The Mayor of London (GLA, London) (March 2021). Available online at: [the\\_london\\_plan\\_2021.pdf](#). [Accessed 5 March 2024]. Referred to as the London Plan 2021.

<sup>31</sup> The issue of London's shortage of Burial Space available to the Muslim community, with reference to Havering and Redbridge, and options for reviewing the London Plan, was discussed at the London Assembly in May 2016. For more information on this, please see (for example) Mayor's Question Time on 25 May 2016 and Mayor's Question Time on 21 December 2023. Available online at: [London's Shortage of Burial Space \(3\) | London City Hall](#). [Accessed 4 March 2024].

<sup>32</sup> See Rugg and Pleace (2011) at pages 8 – 11 and passim. In particular, see Figure 2.3 at page 9, which illustrates the projected proportions of Muslim burials.

<sup>33</sup> The London Plan 2021 in Chapter 5: Social Infrastructure, Policy S7 at page 235ff.

which were also within the Council's direct ownership. In recognition of current and emerging needs in this area, the LP Commission was further advised that LB Newham's Officers were in the process of appointing an external consultant to review how the provision of suitable burial sites for specific faith communities, including those of the Muslim faith, could be optimised. The Commission was assured that this review would consider a range of options, both in and out of borough; and would be used to inform LB Newham's emerging local planning policy and the Regulation 19 of the Local Plan, scheduled for publication ahead of final consultation later this year.

4.11. The LP Commission acknowledged that burial space solutions and provision for Newham's diverse residents, including those from faith communities, would likely lie beyond the scope of the Local Plan. However, the LP Commission found that the Council could enable better co-operation and communication of the aims and objectives of the Newham Local Plan by developing an engagement strategy with and/or using the existing Faith Forum as a channel to communicate with LB Newham's faith communities. Therefore, the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission made a recommendation focused on how the Newham Local Plan should take faith communities and places of worship into account.

#### Recommendation 2: Places of Worship

The Local Plan Scrutiny Commission recommended that the Executive improve engagement and communication with the Newham Faith Forum to

ensure communication is more effective with LB Newham's faith communities on the forthcoming Local Plan to encourage participation in the consultation, within 12 months of the publication of the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission report.

4.12. The Local Plan Scrutiny Commission considered how the Borough had adapted to embrace diverse residents, including faith communities, over the years, notably the Jewish community in the 1850s, and how the Borough's demographics had changed. The LP Commission further found that, given the critical role of the Newham Local Plan in shaping the place in which our residents live, work, play, worship and study, the next iteration of the Plan needed to demonstrate a clear Council policy position on the provision of burial spaces for the Borough's faith communities and how this could be positively supported via the Local Plan. Members recognised this urgent need and recommended that the Executive reflect this in the Local Plan, with actions within 12 months of the publication of the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission's report.

#### Recommendation Three: Burial Spaces

The Local Plan Scrutiny Commission recommended that the Executive outline in the Local Plan its clear policy position to support provision to meet the needs of LB Newham's communities, including (but not limited to) the faith communities, such as Newham's Muslim community, within 12 months of the publication of the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission Report.

# Conclusions

5.1. The Local Plan Task and Finish Scrutiny Commission sought to understand how Newham's Local Plan met the needs of its residents and diverse communities, including student populations and faith communities. The LP Commission held informative discussions at its meetings, covering a range of subjects, such as: chronology; flood protection/prevention; climate change and resilience; green space / biodiversity; faith community needs; affordable spaces (workspaces, retail, industrial); social / affordable housing; student housing and housing for recent graduates; and the Newham Local Plan set in the context of the London Plan.

5.2. Over the course of two rapid-response scrutiny meetings to consider the Newham Local Plan, a series of information requests, and additional discussions in the interval, including at Full Council, the LP

Commission arrived at three recommendations.

5.3. The LP Commission's recommendations sought to address the diverse and growing needs of LB Newham's population, whilst maintaining inclusivity. The Commission framed recommendations around manifesto commitments about Affordable Housing, and recognised the shortages of places for worship and burial space (identified in the London Local Plan evidence-base in 2011). The Commission considered how this could be addressed inclusively to meet the needs of LB Newham's diverse residents, including faith communities. The Local Plan Task and Finish Scrutiny Commission looks forward to seeing the changes to the Local Plan, developing a continuing role for scrutiny, and delivering solutions for our residents and diverse communities.

<sup>34</sup> The LP Commission submitted additional questions on 19 February 2024 to the Inclusive Economy and Housing Directorate. Amongst these, Question 3 requested a provisional statement about the Council's current actions concerning burial spaces, in addition to a chronology regarding Muslim burial spaces. Response to Question 3 received on 20 March 2024.

<sup>32</sup> See Rugg and Pleace (2011) at pages 8 – 11 and passim. In particular, see Figure 2.3 at page 9, which illustrates the projected proportions of Muslim burials.

<sup>33</sup> The London Plan 2021 in Chapter 5: Social Infrastructure, Policy S7 at page 235ff.

# Acknowledgements

The Local Plan Scrutiny Commission wishes to thank all those who have offered their time and contributed evidence to this Scrutiny Commission Inquiry, including case study evidence. The Commission especially thanks Executive Members, Members and LB Newham Officers, who have generously given their time to contribute their expertise to the Commission.

The Local Plan Scrutiny Commission also acknowledges the contributions of Yeside Odumade, who supported the Commission from 7 September 2023 until 1 March 2024, and Artemis Kassi in writing the report.

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The Local Plan Scrutiny Commission consulted the following documents during its inquiry:

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# List of Abbreviations

AH	Affordable Housing	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ARH	Affordable Rent Housing	PBSA	Purpose-Built Student Accommodation
CER	Crime, Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission	SDP	Statutory Development Plan
CFNA	Community Needs Facilities Assessment	SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
GLA	Greater London Authority	SO	Shared Ownership
HMO	House(s) in Multiple Occupation	SRH	Social Rented Housing
HRA	Housing and Regeneration Act 2008		
IR	Intermediate Rent		
LAR	London Affordable Rent		
LB	Newham London Borough of Newham		
LP	Local Plan		
LP	Commission Local Plan Task and Finish Scrutiny Commission		

NOTE: the National Planning Policy Framework provides a useful glossary of terms. This is available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/annex-2-glossary>. [Accessed 12 March 2024].

# Appendix 1 - Membership

## Membership of the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission

Councillor	14 December 2023	30 January 2024
Terence Paul (Chair)	Present	Present
James Beckles	Apologies	Apologies
Carolyn Corben	Apologies	Apologies
Sasha Das Gupta	Present	Apologies
Zuber Gulamussen	Apologies	Present
Nate Higgins	Present	Present
Lester Hudson	Apologies	Apologies
Danny Keeling	Apologies	Apologies
Susan Masters	Present	Present
Anthony McAlmont	Present	Present
Ken Penton	Apologies	Apologies
Simon Rush	Apologies	Present
Rachel Tripp	Present	Present

### Declarations of interest

All Members' interests are held in the [Register of Interests](#). All Members' gifts and hospitality are listed in the [Register of Gifts and Hospitality](#). For

transparency, the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission Members have highlighted and declared the following interests during their membership of the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission:

Councillor	Interest
Susan Masters	Member of the <a href="#">Strategic Development Committee</a>
Anthony McAlmont	Private Landlord
Rachel Tripp	Chair of the <a href="#">Strategic Development Committee</a>

<sup>35</sup> Cllr Gulamussen became an Independent Councillor on 23 November 2023 and was confirmed in his appointment to the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 December 2023.

<sup>36</sup> Cllr Keeling was a substitute for Cllr Higgins.

## Appendix 2 - Witnesses

The Local Plan Scrutiny Commission Inquiry received oral evidence from the following witnesses:

Rokhsana Fiaz OBE – Mayor, Newham Council

Cllr John Whitworth – Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning and Development, Air Quality and Climate Emergency, Newham Council

Vicky Clark – Corporate Director of Inclusive Economy and Housing, Newham Council

Jane Custance – Director of Planning and Development, Newham Council

Ellie Kuper Thomas – Policy Manager, Newham Council

## Appendix 3 - The Local Plan Task and Finish Scrutiny Commission

The Local Plan Task and Finish Scrutiny Commission was appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission of the London Borough of Newham to carry out the local authority scrutiny functions for all policies and services relating to the Local Plan.

### Membership of the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission

Councillors:

Terence Paul (Chair)	Danny Keeling
James Beckles	Susan Masters
Carolyn Corben	Anthony McAlmont
Sasha Das Gupta	Ken Penton
Zuber Gulamussen	Simon Rush
Nate Higgins	Rachel Tripp
Lester Hudson	

### Councillor Mehmood Mirza attended the meeting on 30 January 2024.

Remit of the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission

The original remit of the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission was to consider the follow aspects of the Newham Local Plan:

1. The chronology for the Local Plan Development
2. Social housing / affordable housing
3. Faith / worship spaces
4. Community land ownership
5. Affordable workspaces
6. Flood protection / climate resilience
7. Green spaces
8. Biodiversity

### Formal Minutes and Published Written Evidence

Minutes of proceedings are available to view or download from the Council website at [www.newham.gov.uk](http://www.newham.gov.uk)

Meeting of the CER Scrutiny Commission, 7 September 2023. Available online at: [\(Public Pack\) Agenda Document for Crime, Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission, 07/09/2023 19:00 \(newham.gov.uk\)](#). [Accessed 21 March 2024].

Meeting of the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission, 14 December 2023. Available online at: [Agenda for Local Plan Scrutiny Commission on Thursday 14th December 2023, 7.00 p.m. \(newham.gov.uk\)](#). [Accessed 25 March 2024].

Meeting of the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission, 30 January 2024. Available online at: [\(Public Pack\) Agenda Document for Local Plan Scrutiny Commission, 30/01/2024 19:00 \(newham.gov.uk\)](#). [Accessed 26 March 2024].

Meeting of the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission, 30 January 2024, recording. Available online at: [Local Plan Scrutiny Commission \(Part II\) \(youtube.com\)](#). [Accessed 26 March 2024].

### Committee Staff

The staff of the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission are:  
Michael Carr - Scrutiny Manager (May 2023 - to date)  
Artemis Kassi - Senior Scrutiny Officer (March 2024 - to date)  
Yeside Odumade - Senior Scrutiny Officer (September 2023 - March 2024)

<sup>37</sup> For a list of the Mayor's portfolio responsibilities, please see the Newham Council website. Available online at: [Cabinet – Newham Council](#). [Accessed 8 March 2024].

<sup>35</sup> Cllr Gulamussen became an Independent Councillor on 23 November 2023 and was confirmed in his appointment to the Local Plan Scrutiny Commission by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 December 2023.

<sup>36</sup> Cllr Keeling was a substitute for Cllr Higgins.

# Appendix 4 - Housing Changes required to deliver 50% Affordable Housing

Policy part	Regulation 18 wording	Proposed revised wording
H3: Affordable housing, part 1	<p>1. Newham's strategic target is for 50 per cent of all new homes delivered across the Plan period to be affordable housing. This will be achieved through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the significant areas of Council and Greater London Authority land ownership within the borough where affordable housing will be prioritised; and</li> <li>delivering affordable housing through the threshold approach set out in the London Plan (2021); and</li> <li>delivering Newham's estate regeneration and affordable homes programmes; and</li> <li>supporting Registered Providers to deliver affordable homes.</li> </ol>	<p>1. Newham's strategic target is for 60 per cent of all new homes delivered across the Plan period to be affordable housing. This will be achieved through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the significant areas of Council and Greater London Authority land ownership within the borough where the delivery of affordable housing will be prioritised; and</li> <li>delivering affordable housing on all sites of 10 or more residential units; and</li> <li>delivering Newham's estate regeneration and affordable homes programmes; and</li> <li>supporting Registered Providers to deliver affordable homes.</li> </ol>
H3: Affordable housing, part 2	<p>2. New residential developments on individual sites with the capacity for ten units or more should provide:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the percentage of affordable housing required through the threshold approach as set out within Policy H5 of the London Plan (2021); and</li> <li>an affordable housing tenure mix of 65 per cent social rent housing and 35 per cent intermediate homes.</li> </ol> <p>Developments that do not meet these requirements and the delivery of the required level of family housing under Policy H4.2 can not follow the fast track route.</p>	<p>2. New residential developments on individual sites with the capacity to deliver ten residential units or more should provide 50 per cent of the total units as social rent homes and 10 percent of the total units as affordable home ownership homes.</p> <p>Developments that do not meet these requirements and the delivery of the required level of family housing under Policy H4.2 are required to submit a detailed financial viability assessment.</p>

Policy part	Regulation 18 wording	Proposed revised wording
H3 Affordable housing, part 3	<p>3. New residential developments with the capacity for ten units or more should provide affordable housing on site. Where the Council considers that on site provision is inappropriate or undeliverable with regard to site conditions, the scale of the site or local context (including tenure mix), Newham may accept off site provision of affordable housing or, exceptionally, a payment in lieu of affordable housing provided that it would result in the ability to secure a higher level of affordable housing provision than the 50 percent strategic target sought by part 1 above.</p>	<p>3. New residential developments with the capacity to deliver ten residential units or more should provide affordable housing on site. Where the Council considers that on site provision is inappropriate or undeliverable due to site conditions, the scale of the site or local context (including tenure mix), Newham may accept off site provision of affordable housing. In exceptional circumstance, a payment in lieu of affordable housing may be accepted, provided that it would result in the ability to secure a higher level of affordable housing provision than the 60 per cent strategic target sought by part 1 above.</p>
H5: Build to Rent Housing, part 3	<p>2. Developments of Build to Rent housing as the sole housing tenure should provide at least 35 per cent affordable housing, or 50 per cent where the development is on public sector land or industrial land appropriate for residential uses. Affordable Build to Rent homes should be provided as Affordable Rented Homes, with 65 per cent of new homes being at equivalent rents to London Affordable Rent and 35 per cent of new homes being at equivalent rents to London Living Rent.</p>	<p>Option 1</p> <p>1. Developments of Build to Rent housing as the sole housing tenure should provide at least 50 per cent of the total units as Affordable Rented Homes at equivalent rents to London Affordable Rent and 10 per cent of the total units being at equivalent rents to London Living Rent. These homes will be secured as affordable housing in perpetuity irrespective of the covenant period secured through H5.1.c.</p>

# Appendix 4 - Housing Changes required to deliver 50% Affordable Housing

Policy part	Regulation 18 wording	Proposed revised wording
H8: Purpose-built student accommodation, part 3	<p>3. New purpose-built student accommodation should provide at least 35 per cent affordable housing as defined within the London Plan (2021), or 50 per cent where the development is on public sector land or industrial land appropriate for residential uses in accordance with London Plan (2021) Policy E7 and Local Plan Policy J3. Developments for purpose-built student accommodation that do not achieve a policy compliant level of affordable housing on site are required to submit a detailed financial viability assessment with a Benchmark Land Value that uses and Existing Use Value plus premium approach.</p>	<p>3. New purpose-built student accommodation should provide at least 60 per cent affordable student accommodation as defined within the London Plan (2021). Developments for purpose-built student accommodation that do not achieve a policy compliant level of affordable student accommodation on site are required to submit a detailed financial viability assessment.</p>
H9: Houses in Multiple Occupation and Large-Scale Purpose-Built Shared	<p>4. Large-Scale Purpose-Built Shared Living developments should deliver:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>affordable housing in accordance with Policy H3, where accommodation is being delivered as part of a wider mix of tenures within the application boundary; or</li> <li>a payment in lieu contribution towards conventional affordable housing. The payment in lieu contribution should secure a higher level of affordable housing provision than the 50 per cent strategic target sought by Policy H3.1.</li> </ol> <p>Developments for Large-Scale Purpose-Built Shared Living that do not achieve a policy compliant level of affordable housing on site or provide a payment in lieu contribution towards general needs affordable housing are required to submit a detailed financial viability assessment with a Benchmark Land Value that uses and Existing Use Value plus premium approach.</p>	<p>4. Large-Scale Purpose-Built Shared Living developments should deliver:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>affordable housing in accordance with Policy H3, where accommodation is being delivered as part of a wider mix of tenures within the application boundary; or</li> <li>a payment in lieu contribution towards general needs affordable housing. The payment in lieu contribution should secure a higher level of affordable housing provision than the 60 per cent strategic target sought by Policy H3.1.</li> </ol> <p>Developments for Large-Scale Purpose-Built Shared Living that do not achieve a policy compliant level of affordable housing on site or provide a policy compliant payment in lieu contribution towards general needs affordable housing are required to submit a detailed financial viability assessment.</p>

# Appendix 5 - Affordable Housing

## Motion 5, Full Council, 11 December 2023

Council Supports 50% Social Housing in the Draft Local Plan

Proposed by: Cllr Nate Higgins [GREEN]

Seconded by: Cllr Danny Keeling [GREEN]

Council notes:

1. That Cabinet in June 2023 approved an amendment to the Corporate Delivery Plan which removed the commitment to require 50% social rent on all development sites specified as part of the local Development Plan, which is a Labour manifesto commitment. There is a new commitment to work to enable “50% affordable houses”, with no commitment to put this in the Local Plan

2. The recent consultation on the Draft Local Plan proposed a lower proportion of social housing (32.5%) than permitted in the London Plan (35%) and the of a new fast track approach for planning applications allowing schemes with only 35% Affordable Housing and a minimum of 22.75% social housing to get planning permission, with any deficit of affordable Housing from developers made up by developments on publicly owned land elsewhere.

3. The adoption of the Populo Business Plan by Cabinet which will allow Populo schemes with 36% Affordable Housing and 23.4% Social Housing to get planning permission

4. That much Council owned land has been or will be sold/transferred to Populo and it is this land that should provide the extra Affordable Homes

Council believes:

1. That such policies and plans would make it impossible to achieve 50% Affordable Housing overall, let alone 50% Social Housing

2. That ‘Affordable’ housing is rarely affordable for the residents who need it most, and that significant boosts to Social Housing levels are necessary to combat the housing crisis, of which council-owned housing is preferred

Council further notes:

1. That it is Councillors in Council who finally adopt a Local Plan

Council resolves to urge:

1. The Cabinet to pause the Draft Local Plan and instruct Officers to redraft it with a commitment to 50% Social Housing

2. The Cabinet to defer the adoption of a revised Plan until after the next General Election if the Government approval necessary for this commitment is not forthcoming

3. The Cabinet, meanwhile, to instruct Populo to amend their Business Plan on the basis of 50% Social Housing, indicating clearly the additional resources required to achieve this

4. The Cabinet to make available for public scrutiny both the Populo Living and Carpenters financial models

5. The Cabinet to lead a Council wide campaign for more resources for social housing, and to give more powers to Councils to require social housing from developers

6. The Cabinet to appoint Newham’s own dedicated in-house viability assessor

7. The Cabinet to instruct the Head of Planning to produce a breakdown of future proposed housing schemes by currently known or estimated tenure and a future monitoring process for affordable housing policies

8. The Cabinet to establish a process for regular member review and involvement in all future work on the Draft Plan such that members are consulted on all the key issues

9. Scrutiny of the decision-making processes which have led to a Draft Plan so out of step with the political and policy priorities of the Council and to make available to Scrutiny all necessary papers and records of the Council and Populo, in confidence if necessary.

<sup>39</sup> Full Council, Meeting of 11 December 2023, Agenda Item 20: Motions. Available online at: [Appendix C \(newham.gov.uk\)](#). [Accessed 20 March 2024].

# Labour Party Amendment

**Proposed by: Cllr Sasha Das Gupta**  
**Seconded by: Cllr John Whitworth**

'Council supports 50 per cent social rent housing in Newham Local plan so we can deliver homes our people can afford'

1 Council notes:

The current housing crisis in Newham with increasing numbers of households presenting themselves as homeless to the Council as a result of the broken housing market in the Borough and the adverse social consequences of such homelessness.

That the Council has both a statutory and a moral duty to rehouse such households and the adverse effects that this legal duty is having on the Council's budget.

The recent consultation on the Draft Local Plan proposing a lower proportion of social housing (32.5%) than permitted in the London Plan (35%) and the introduction of a new fast track approach for planning applications allowing schemes with only 35% Affordable Housing and a minimum of 22.75% social housing to get planning permission, without going through a viability assessment, with any deficit of Affordable Housing from developers made up by developments on publicly owned land elsewhere.

The adoption of the Populo Living Business Plan by Cabinet which will allow Populo schemes with 36% Affordable Housing and 23.4% Social Housing to apply for planning permission.

Much Council-owned land has been or will be sold/transferred to Populo and it is this land that should provide the extra social rent homes that Newham requires.

That a General Election will be held no later than January 2025.

2 Council believes:

That such policies and plans as are included in the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan would make it impossible to achieve 50% affordable housing overall, let alone 50% Social Housing in all future housing developments.

3 Council further notes:

That it is Councillors in Council who finally adopt the Local Plan, which must include the matters now set out below.

4 Council resolves to urge the Executive to and instruct its officers to, as appropriate:

Redraft the Regulation 19 Draft of the Local Plan with a specific commitment to the provision of 50% social housing on all development sites, including those owned by Populo Living which must be subject to the rules set out in the London Plan on the use of Public/ex Public land.

Ensure that this redraft takes full account of and sets out the housing crisis in Newham as a major justification for this change as well as looking again at the Council's Housing Market Needs Assessment in the context of housing affordability in Newham.

Withdraw the Fast Track approach from the Regulation 19 Draft of the Local Plan so that all schemes that have less than 50% social housing must undergo a full viability assessment.

Redraft the Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan to include

the appropriate London Plan percentages of intermediate tenure homes (i.e. 15% of total homes rather than the 17.5% in the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan)

Urgently produce a breakdown of future proposed housing schemes by currently known or estimated tenure and a future monitoring process for all planning applications/consents that allows the proportions and numbers of social rent/intermediate homes approved to be monitored throughout the Local Plan period.

Consider making available for scrutiny and testing both the Populo Living and Carpenters Estate financial models either publicly or to Scrutiny in confidence.

Lead a Council-wide campaign for more resources and wider powers to provide social housing after the next General Election.

Appoint Newham's own dedicated and fully qualified (not a repurposed officer) in-house viability assessor.

Make available to Scrutiny all necessary papers and records of the Council and Populo, in confidence if necessary, with Scrutiny having the powers required to call both internal and external witnesses and commission external evidence.

Add to the Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan support in principle for inclusive housing zones with particular reference to the three areas set out below.

To investigate possible future uses of the site of the now rejected MSG Sphere and in particular whether this site can be designated a Housing and Employment Inclusion Zone

In respect of Rick Roberts Way and under Development Principles, add to the Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan: "We will preserve the affordable housing requirements following the allocation of the site by the London Legacy Development Corporation under the portfolio approach with Stratford Waterfront and Pudding Mill.

Accordingly it is anticipated that more than 50% of housing on the site will be genuinely affordable housing, in order to comply with overall affordable housing requirements under the unilateral undertaking, made by the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) when developing Stratford Waterfront (now known as East Bank) with 0% low cost housing".

In respect of Pudding Mill and under Development Principles add to the Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan "We will preserve the affordable housing requirements following the allocation of the site by the London Legacy Development Corporation under the portfolio approach with Stratford Waterfront and Rick Roberts Way.

Accordingly it is anticipated that at least 50% of housing on the site will be genuinely affordable housing, in order to comply with overall affordable housing requirements under the unilateral undertaking, made by the London Legacy Development Corporation when developing Stratford Waterfront (now known as East Bank) with 0% low cost housing".



