

The Proposals in brief

Please contact leaders@futureoflondon.org.uk if you'd like to speak to any of the candidates about their Proposals for London in more detail

Lauren McHugh, Arup - Healthy London Homes Toolkit

Over the past decade we have seen major events affect Londoners' experiences of their homes. This has led to a revived awareness of the importance of homes to our health and wellbeing. With housing inequality being a significant contributor to poor health outcomes across the capital, what can planners do to help fix this crisis? My proposal is a Healthy London Homes Toolkit, a digital platform for planners to share ideas and best practice on how to embed health considerations into housing developments at each planning stage. Spanning policy and development management, the Toolkit would connect planners with other sectors, bringing together shared data and innovative approaches; providing a powerful route to the delivery of healthy affordable homes in London.

Ravinder Dhanjal, LB Barnet - High Streets to Community Streets

My proposal is about empowering residents in affordable housing to have a greater role in reshaping their high streets. Strong community engagement from councils and developers would be needed to establish a community partnership board to inform decisions through a co-design approach. Through this process, the board can establish a community improvement district (CID). A CID would enable the community to become the stewards of the area, providing autonomy to control spaces, services, and spending decisions in the area. It would boost local community ownership through "community right to buy". CIDs would bring the high streets back into community streets.

David Robinson, LB Lewisham - The Carbon Offset Hub

Planning policy in London requires developers to pay carbon offsetting payments to Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) when developing new homes, if the homes are not "zero-carbon". These payments are ring-fenced by LPAs to implement projects that deliver carbon reductions – given this is a recent policy requirement (2021), many LPAs struggle to make best use of these funds. My Proposal for London is to make these payments, made by private developers, available to housing associations and councils' Arm's Length Management Organisations to increase sustainability credentials of new homes, or retrofit existing affordable homes for the benefit of existing and future affordable housing occupants.

Victoria Coelho, LB Tower Hamlets - Larger Home Extension Levy

My proposal is a financial levy on household extensions that create significant additional floorspace, without additional residential units. The levy would be on a sliding scale, with the amount payable increasing with net gain of floorspace. The levy trigger would be based on the minimum space standards for residential dwellings and amount based on average monthly rent. The collected funds would be made available for those in rented accommodation facing homelessness. The intention is to provide assistance to struggling tenants, reducing the amount of people requiring interventions such as temporary accommodation to relieve pressures on local authorities, so long term affordable housing solutions can be prioritised.

Matthew Sims, Barking Riverside - The London/Borough Standard Home: A standard typology to creatively enhance place and build a circular economy

Can new homes contribute to the sense of place of a neighbourhood whilst also improving affordability? Affordable homes built for the working classes at the turn of the 20th century used standardised layouts, construction methods and building materials to create iconic homes that define place. What might this approach look like today? Could London's boroughs collaborate to produce a standard home typology to drive efficiency in design, procurement of materials and construction methods? Standardisation does not have to mean replication, this approach might open up opportunities to create economies of scale to develop circular materials that are distinctly of the place.

Natasha Graham, GLA Good Growth - Accelerator IN!

A leadership programme to accelerate systemic change in the built environment. You need to own it. You need to address it. And you need to do something about it! With the impacts of Black Lives Matter and the Covid-19 pandemic being felt throughout the sector, the need to rapidly make progress on equality and diversity in senior positions is even more pressing. The sector is to be rebuilt and recover, but it must not reconstruct the same barriers. It is also imperative that change happens. If this programme is embedded across the major players in the affordable housing sector, YOU can make positive interventions to make change happen.

Clodagh McCallig, LB Camden - An Eco System for Affordable Communities

My proposal reviews what makes housing and living 'affordable', reflecting on the housing crises not just being embedded in a supply and demand issue. Focusing on the pressures on family household budgets and on the impact of a quality 'care' system on affordability and quality of life, I look to unpack the impact of childcare in average family households. The availability of affordable childcare impacts on employment opportunities, family budgets, equity within households and wider economic impact. The resolution is to build a toolkit identifying the key mechanisms to aid quick and long-term resolution. 'Community Anchors' are identified for immediate direct care investment, and policy and design changes create greater 'soft benefits' in new housing models, recognising the care system as community infrastructure.

Brian Patterson, Home Group - Decanting through collaboration

To facilitate full scale re-development of affordable housing estates, the decanting of residents is necessary. But there is limited availability of temporary homes, which is an obstruction to regeneration. I propose a collaborative approach for key stakeholders through the development of a partner framework where the mutual benefits of sourcing and providing temporary decant accommodation is understood and facilitated. A digital platform will provide access to a bank of private, council and registered provider-owned properties, brownfield sites and open spaces, available for interim use and possibly for modular homes. De-risking the challenge of decanting residents early enables shorter development programmes, less disruption to residents, and cost savings that can be further invested into housing.

Bruna Menegace Varante, LB Brent - Employment to afford housing

Experts advise that the amount spent on housing shouldn't be more than 35% of people's income. However, we know this is far from the truth, as in London some people end up spending over 50% of their income on housing. People are not earning enough to keep up with the increasing cost of housing. Therefore, I propose that local authorities explore a quality and long-term development and employment programme, where subsidies can be used to promote local employment and business growth. With better employment opportunities, we can help reduce the financial burden some people have when paying for housing.

Stephen Boateng, Places for People - Private Rented Sector: Better standards through Local Authority and Landlord Partnerships

There has been a steady decline in the value of the cross-subsidy development model, enabling the social housing sector to deliver new affordable housing. This, in addition to the continuing supply of new homes targeted at higher earners, creates an affordable paradox within London where middle-low-income households continue to struggle to purchase or rent housing in London. My Proposal for London is for private landlords and local authorities to work together directly to utilise existing housing stock to improve the private rented sector to contribute more affordable homes, for the benefit of existing and future affordable housing residents.

Harriet Shone, London Communications Agency - Hey, wait a minute Mr. Taxman

Londoners pay c. 40% of their salary on rent – the lower your pay, the higher this percentage gets. No one feels this more than single-income households. Single earners carry an unfair financial burden – especially when it comes to housing and spiralling living costs. To transform their lives, we should cut them a (tax) break. If we taxed individuals on £40k a year the same way we do a couple on £20k each, we would put money into the pockets of working people and help them pay for safe, quality housing, moving people off housing lists and into the private rental sector.

Selina Raj Divakar, Guildford Council - Silos to Share Homes

More than half of employers say housing issues adversely affect recruitment (54%) and retention (50%), and 43% say that they harm business productivity. My proposal builds on the existing co-living model to promote shared living through collaboration between co-living providers, private businesses and local authorities, putting greater emphasis on sharing resources for affordable living. This includes government incentives to encourage employers to work with shared living providers to build or provide employees with housing that incorporates shared resources such as childcare or food, and separately using contributions from these developments for improvements to existing homes with capacity to house people.