

Alternative Development Options for London City Region

Context

London's annual housing requirements between 60,000 and 80,000 per year for 10 years. Greater South East requirements (outside London) 40-60,000 per year.

Caveats

- 1) Need to test scenarios re impact of BREXIT on labour migration to London. Potential controls on non EU migration to London following a new Government after General election.
- 2) Regional variations in employment opportunities and house-prices do impact on inter-regional migration.

Objective

It is important to focus not just on new housing supply numbers, but to recognise importance of housing type, affordability and location. Objective should be development which is sustainable in economic, social and environmental terms. Some housing outputs are more attractive for prospective occupiers; others more attractive for investors. Need to focus on housing for occupation, not residential property for investment.

Governance constraints

- 1) Need to understand relationship between London and Home Counties and London and rest of UK – limited ability of Govt to influence inter-regional distribution of population as a) No regional economic policy; b) no regional housing targets; and c) no national spatial plan.
- 2) Limited public funding
- 3) Much new development is investor driven

Options.

These are not mutually exclusive. Given numerical requirements, we will need a combination of options.

Option 1 Hyperdense development on brownfield sites and infill sites in central London and city fringe opportunity areas (including western Docklands).

Pros: Generates numbers of new units

Cons: Units not affordable by most Londoners

Sold for investment not occupation- many left empty

Wrong BR size mix – few family homes

Breach Sustainable Residential Quality (SRQ)/ density policies

Often limited social infrastructure

Option 2 Residential development over central London non-residential premises, for example stations

Pros: Generates numbers

Cons: Units not affordable by most Londoners

Sold for investment not occupation- many left empty

Wrong BR size mix – few family homes

Breach SRQ/ density policies

Sometimes limited social infrastructure if non-residential areas

Option 3 Intensive development of brownfield sites beyond central London and city fringe.

Pros: Generates numbers

Cons: Units not affordable by most Londoners

Sold for investment not occupation- many left empty

Wrong BR size mix – few family homes

Breach SRQ/ density policies

Sometimes limited social infrastructure if non residential areas

Sometimes poor transport access to employment

May involve loss of needed employment capacity

Option 4 Densification through redevelopment of inner London council estates.

Pros Can generate net additional units

Can remove unfit housing (though not always)

Can fund some replacement or improvement of social housing

Cons Significant loss of social housing

Significant displacement of existing residents

Generally a reduction in family sized homes

Units often not affordable by most Londoners

Sold for investment not occupation- many left empty

Breach SRQ/ density policies

Option 5 Conversion of underused office blocks for residential purposes

Pros: Generates net additional units

Cons: Poor standards (often below space standards if delivered through permitted development)

Loss of employment capacity

Poor BR size mix

Unlikely to include affordable units

Often inappropriate locations with no social infrastructure

Option 6 Residential development in underutilised suburban high streets

Pros: Generates net additional units

Cons: Loss of retail capacity

May be in inappropriate locations with no social infrastructure

Option 7 Redevelopment of underused suburban employment sites

Pros: Generates net additional units

Cons: Loss of employment capacity

May be in inappropriate locations with no social infrastructure and potentially inappropriate adjacent uses

Option 8 Suburban intensification through infill development (including use of 'surplus' private open space/ large private gardens)

Pros: Generates net additional units

Can provide mix of housing types and tenures with good affordability if land acquisition costs low

Can increase demand for local services in low demand areas

Cons: Land acquisition challenges

Some demolition may be necessary to access backland sites

Neighbour objections given potential overlooking, privacy, right to light issues

Potential negative impact on value of existing dwellings

Option 9 Residential development on 'surplus' public open space or on private open space not in effective use (for example golf courses)

Pros: Generates net additional units

Can provide mix of housing types and tenures with good affordability if land acquisition costs low

Can increase demand for local services in low demand areas

Cons: Sites may not be located close to social infrastructure and public transport

Objections to loss of leisure facilities/ open space (even if not public)

Option 10 Intensification of lower density suburban council estates (without significant redevelopment/ displacement)

Pros: Generates net additional units

May be delivered without demolition or displacement

May provide mix of units in terms of BR size and tenure

Cons: Potentially insufficient value to make intensification viable, if refurbishment of existing stock also necessary

Increased population in low density area may generate need for additional social and transport infrastructure

Potential objections from existing residents to loss of public open space within estate

Option 11 Additional storeys on existing residential development

Pros: Potential net additional units

Cons: Need to distinguish between additional units and additional space for existing units

Significant disruption during construction period, especially if decanting necessary

Potential structural issues

Need for separate access to self-contained units

Potential neighbourhood objections

Option 12 Urban extensions to London

Pros: Generates net additional units

May provide mix of units in terms of BR size and tenure

Cons: Increased population in low density area may generate need for additional social and transport infrastructure

Potential objections from existing residents to loss of public open space/ designated Green Belt

Option 13 Urban extensions to Home Counties towns (including existing New Towns)

Pros: Generates net additional units

May provide mix of units in terms of BR size and tenure

Cons: Increased population in low density area may generate need for additional social and transport infrastructure

Potential objections from existing residents to loss of public open space/ designated Green Belt

Potential objections from local planning authorities

Option 14 New settlements within the Green Belt linked to existing public transport nodes

Pros: Generates net additional units

May provide mix of units in terms of BR size and tenure

Cons: Increased population in low density area may generate need for additional social and transport infrastructure

Objections from existing residents to loss of designated Green Belt

Potential objections from local planning authorities

Option 15 Major new settlements beyond the Green Belt, linked to existing public transport

Pros: Generates net additional units

May provide mix of units in terms of BR size and tenure

Cons: Increased population in low density area may generate need for additional social and transport infrastructure
Long travel times and high travel costs for commuters to London

Option 16 Major new settlements beyond the Green Belt, based on substantial new employment provision

Pros: Generates net additional units
May provide mix of units in terms of BR size and tenure
Cons: Increased population in low density area may generate need for additional social and transport infrastructure
Long travel times and high travel costs for commuters to London or other employment centres if local employment provision insufficient or inappropriate
Costs of subsidising employment relocation or growth

Option 17 Dispersal to regions beyond South East linked to employment relocation/ creation

Pros: Generates net additional units
May provide mix of units in terms of BR size and tenure
Lower investment requirement than other options
Cons: Increased population in low density area may generate need for additional social and transport infrastructure
Long travel times and high travel costs for commuters to London or other employment centres if local employment provision insufficient or inappropriate
Costs of subsidising employment relocation or growth

Option 18 Dispersal to regions beyond South East without employment generation, focusing on dispersing households who are not or who are no longer economically active.

Pros: Generates net additional units
May provide mix of units in terms of BR size and tenure
Lower investment requirement than other options
Cons: Costs of subsidising employment relocation or growth
Increased population in low density area may generate need for additional social and transport infrastructure
Long travel times and high travel costs for commuters to London or other employment centres if local employment provision insufficient or inappropriate
Potential dispersal of households to areas where potential for employment are low with increased concentration of most vulnerable, economically non safe-sufficient households.