Greater London Development Plan

Approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment on 9 July 1976

Notice of Approval
Written Statement
Roads Map
Key Diagram
Urban Landscape Diagram

HATION AND HOUSING

- The Council will seek to improve housing conditions by:
 - (i) Improving wherever possible the condition of existing dwellings;
 - (ii) Where this is not possible, replacing them with new dwellings;
 - (iii) Adding new dwellings to the existing stock;
 - (iv) Helping households to obtain the accommodation they need.
- Both public and private enterprise will be needed for this task. The first two needed are, however, dependent on the initiative of the Council and the Boroughs in creating housing action areas and general improvement areas, promoting the use of improvement grants for improvements and conversions and, where necessary, the property of the provement areas, promoting the use of the provement grants for improvements and conversions and, where necessary, the provement grants for rebuilding.
- The Council and the Boroughs will exercise this initiative primarily in the problem areas (see para 3.9 for definition). Because, as it says below, these areas are so large, and the problems they present so grave and urgent, the council considers it necessary for it to take a leading role in their consideration. Poor housing conditions, which are at their worst in the housing problem are so, are associated with the sheer congestion of having too many people inhabiting too small a space without the aids of modern design for high density iving, and (in the absence of modernization) with the rapid obsolescence of that take part of London's housing stock which was built in the second half of the nimiteenth century.
- Much of London's housing stock is in bad physical condition. A sample suffey undertaken in 1967 classified about 665,000 dwellings out of a total of about 2,4 millions as being in fair or poor condition or unfit. Of the total lousing stock the survey showed that about 340,000 dwellings lacked baths or internal sanitation including 88,000 dwellings which were otherwise classed as seeing in good condition.
- Much of the housing stock suffers from multi-occupation or overcrowding. The survey in 1967 indicated that there were about 350,000 households more than there were acceptable separate dwellings. The last statistics available on overcrowding relate to 1966, since when much has been done: but in that year there at least 167,000 people living at two or more persons per room. At the same ime 128,000 people had more than five rooms per person. Most of the latter were were-occupiers or controlled tenants and a high proportion were elderly; many round have preferred small dwellings.
- The survey showed that of the total housing stock of around 2.4 millions but 170,000 dwellings were constructed before 1875 and about a further 846,000 wellings between 1875 and 1919. A great many of these are no longer appropriate or today's standards and expectations and obsolescence is gathering speed. uring the period 1967-81 some 216,000 dwellings (9 per cent of the present total) respected to become obsolete, and a further 347,000 (14 per cent) during the ubsequent ten years, if appropriate remedial action is not taken. (The Report f Studies, Ch. 2, gives further statistics.)

3.6 The problems vary from Borough to Borough, and from place to place within some of the Boroughs throughout London, but the difficulties are generally greater in the older urban area built before 1920, comprising with the City London the London Boroughs of:

The City of Westminster

Lambeth

Canden

Lewisham

Hackney

Newham

Hammersmith

Southwark

Haringey

Tower Hamlets

Islington

Wandsworth

Kensington and Chelsea

3.7 Within this older urban area the patches of obsolescence occur widely, due in part to the effect over the years of the Rent Acts on the private sector. They are difficult and expensive to remedy, calling for big schemes of rehabilitation and redevelopment. Slum clearance, redevelopment, new schools, open spaces and roads call for about three times as many households to be displaced as corresponding works in the rest of London. Within the older area most redevelopment for modern housing has been done hitherto by the local authorities. In London as a hole in 1969 and 1970 local authorities provided 75 per cent of new housing; in the older area 89 per cent. Provision for new owner-occupation has been small. But private enterprise has a part to play, whether the dwellings are for sale or letting, alongside the efforts of the public authorities.

3.8 The problems of houses in poor condition and lacking facilities and of puses which are overcrowded or where families are sharing facilities are largely procentrated in the privately rented sector. The number of dwellings in this category is diminishing as houses are demolished or sold for private occupation, but many of the householders in this sector would find difficulty in meeting the sts involved in owner occupation or, unless heavily subsidized, the rents which would be charged for better accommodation.

using problem areas

3.9 London's principal housing problem areas are:

Northern

Mainly in Islington extending westward into Camden, northward into Haringey and eastward into Hackney.

Southern

The northern and central parts of Lambeth and Southwark.

Eastern

Much of Tower Hamlets and Newham,

Western

Running from the southern portions of Brent through the northern parts of Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea into parts of Hammersmith.

- - There are two remedies for the unsatisfactory dwellings, redevelopment and rehabilitation. Redevelopment is the more thorough but often the more expensive and socially the less desirable since it can involve the dispersion of many families to other areas and so breaks up established communities. It also involves the provision of additional homes in these other areas and the alloction of building and land resources to meet the demand. Rehabilitation, which involves repairing and improving properties, can cost less and is quicker and less disruptive. It can, however, continue the old high densities and despite mprovements which can in many cases be made to the general environment it will still often, unless accompanied by partial demolition, leave the areas short of the standards of open space, layout and amenity which are considered necessary In new development. The Housing Act 1969 has accelerated the rate at which local uthorities and private owners take up improvement grants, so that numerically speaking the rate of demolition and rehabilitation now equals the rate of bsolescence: the backlog has yet to be dealt with. In cases where redeveloptent or full scale rehabilitation is not possible for several years, housing authorities must consider partial rehabilitation of dwellings as a short term expedient to bring relief from intolerable conditions. Further provisions to arry out full or partial rehabilitation, together with necessary demolition and redevelopment, were given by the Housing Act 1974. The selection of the most appropriate form of action must take account both of the availability of esources and the need to avoid for the future a mounting backlog of obsolescence or which it might be difficult to find the necessary resources in some future period. It should also take account of the advice on economics of rehabiliation given in Circular 65/69 and the guidance on renewal strategies and ousing action areas given in Circulars 13/75 and 14/75.
 - ation and an increase in the total number of dwellings by new building and conversion of larger premises will not suffice to relieve the present over-rowding and multi-occupation unless steps are taken to see that allocations of uitable dwellings at appropriate costs can be made to those in need. For those problems to be relieved it will be necessary to improve the present arrangements whereby allocations are made from separate housing lists operated under differing onditions. It will also be necessary to take more action to secure a better fit between dwellings and households and to enforce the statutes to prevent undesirable overcrowding and multi-occupation from recurring. It will also be necessary as see that those in need are not prevented by lack of means from occupying suitable housing.

he redistribution of population

3.13 The Council's determination to improve the quality of London life and to make conditions satisfactory for all entails relieving the strain on the older rban areas, particularly those parts of them which contain most obsolescence. This will call for a gradual redistribution of population following redevelopment, so that excessive overall densities can be reduced in congested parts while the dwellings are built at the best modern standards of environment wherever the opportunities allow, particularly in Outer London.

- 3.14 London's population is extremely mobile. The 1966 Census showed that no less than 11 per cent of Londoners had moved house during the previous year. Nor are bondon dwellings left long untonented: London has fower surty dwellings than the national average. These factors are favourable to the achievement of a redistribution of population, by providing the dwelling-space and the environment that people want, in the confidence that it will be utilized to the best advantage.
 - 3.15 It is likely that the population of London will continue to decline and by 1981 it may be substantially below 7 million. Such a decline might make it easier to deal with environmental problems provided the necessary resources are available. Nevertheless, the Council is concerned about the difficulties that such a substantial rate of population decline may cause, particularly to some of the Boroughs in Inner London. It will monitor most carefully the effects of population change, having particular regard to:
 - (i) The effect of any change on the earnings per worker and income per capita in London;
 - (ii) The effect on costs within London;
 - (iii) The effect on population composition.
 - London constantly needs more dwellings despite its expected fall in population. This is already London's experience, that the population has been falling but that there has not been a corresponding fall in the number of ctual or potential separate households, nor in the demand for separate wellings. Therefore, although the number of dwellings is increasing year by year, there is still a housing shortage. London had in 1971 an excess of births over deaths of about 30,000. In the same year (assuming that the pattern hown by the 1966 Census has continued) it had an inward flow of new residents of about 220,000 while the outflow probably exceeded a third of a million, creating a net loss by migration of 110,000 to 120,000 and a total population loss of up to 90,000. The gross annual outflow includes a comparatively small planned ovement to expanding towns and new towns (see para 3.27 below). This helps to solve particular housing problems. The Council will keep this under review.

he plan for housing

- 3.17 The plan, therefore, is for a concerted effort by all the planning and ousing authorities in London to improve living conditions, to enable more _____ wellings to be provided and to give priority in these respects to the improvement of the housing problem areas. Because these problem areas are so large and he problems they present so grave and urgent the Council considers it necessary take a leading part with the Boroughs in planning and programming renewal and rehabilitation, in providing the necessary replacement accommodation elsewhere for permanent occupancy and also where necessary for temporary occupancy while cisting dwellings are being improved or converted, and in coordinating activity both in the housing field and in the provision of transport facilities, traffic management and the creation of environmental areas.
- Within the framework of the considerations referred to in para 3.11 the Council considers that the programme of rehabilitation should be greatly increased both in improvements to dwellings and in conversions and that not only ist efforts be made to persuade landlords and owner-occupiers to improve their houses but compulsory powers should, where necessary, be used and assistance given, if needed, in the provision of temporary accommodation. Early action is sential in planning the work to be done in determining the area for redevelopment and for rehabilitation and in defining housing action areas and, where necessary, general improvement areas and the Council will assist in every way that it can to make sure that this work has the priority which it needs.

- The Council considers that it is not enough merely to seek to provide as many new dwellings as possible on the available land. The dwellings which are to be provided must meet the needs of small households and the stderly as well to find families and the quality of the new development in layout, density and design must satisfy the aim of substantially improving living standards. Available land resources within London are limited and some part of it is held by Government Agencies and statutory undertakings. It is the Council's policy:
 - (i) That as much land as is reasonably practicable shall be made available for residential development and released at the appropriate times to satisfy the needs of the construction programme.
 - (ii) That densities in new developments throughout London should take account of the need to provide good environmental conditions and in particular to provide for private garden space in developments for family housing. (The policy on densities is set out more fully in paragraphs 3.23 to 3.25 below).
 - (iii) That priority in allocation of homes must go to those in need, ie displaced under a demolition or rehabilitation scheme or with no satisfactory home at present. The Council will meet a part of this need by planned over-spill to places outside London but much of it will have to be provided within London. In cooperation with the London Boroughs the Council will use its powers of compulsory purchase both of land and premises to the extent necessary to ensure that this commitment is met at the right time.
- 3.20 The Council will seek to agree with the London Borough councils a programme of new house building for each of their areas. This will be published, evised and updated from time to time as appropriate. It will take account of the changing size and composition of the population; related proposals for housing demolitions, renewal and rehabilitation; the overall resources likely to be vailable; and the need to reduce congestion and social problems in inner London by additional building in the outer London boroughs.
- Developments at the appropriate densities in Outer London should enerally produce more dwellings than there are at present, especially where the sites of large obsolete houses are redeveloped. Borough councils should ecognise these opportunities in good time and plan accordingly. The rehousing families, displaced by renewal and rehabilitation schemes from the housing problem areas, in locations which place them favourably in relation to work-places and amenities is an essential ingredient of the new structure. Within landon replacement accommodation will be provided partly by relets of existing accommodation and partly by the construction of new dwellings. The Council will seek to coordinate activities with the Boroughs and housing associations when accertaining requirements and in building, purchasing and letting dwellings so that the necessary accommodation of the right type and size is made available.
- Development schemes throughout London should provide as many new vellings as a good standard of environment will allow. London's problems make it important to avoid under-development just as much as over-development and allowners and managers of residential properties should recognise the disadvantage London if they are under-occupied. It is also important that the development land now lying idle or under-used but suitable for residential use should proceed quickly. London's construction industry is capable of producing the

number of dwellings London needs; owners of suitable land must be encouraged to enable builders to get on with the job, by every possible means. The availability of suitable land for residential redevelopment is essential and must be secured by all planning, housing and riscal policies of both central and local government.

- 3.23 Taking into account all these considerations, the Council takes the view that a variety of densities suitable to local circumstances should be provided in each London Borough. The Plan itself does not prescribe a rigidly defined range of densities but it offers guidelines to be elaborated by Borough Councils in local plans. These should indicate densities for the whole of their areas, and parts, as appropriate.
- 3.24 Appropriate densities for new residential developments will vary according to the location and type of the development. For example higher densities than would otherwise be permitted may be suitable for non-family housing in Central London, at strategic centres, and at other locations with easy access to public transport, to open space, or to other local facilities. In new developments which include provision for families with children the desire for a home with its own private garden space should generally be met. This is rarely practicable at high densities. Therefore, in any schemes which include a housing mix with dwellings for families with children the overall density should not normally exceed 100 habitable rooms to the acre (hra), and should provide low rise dwellings for that part of the accommodation to be occupied by families wherever possible. Schemes that are predominantly for family housing should, however, be at somewhat lower densities and should not normally be above 85 hra.
- 3.25 Detailed guidance on appropriate conditions and locations for higher densities should be provided by Boroughs in their local plans. Similarly Borough Councils should use their local plans to set minimum density requirements. In order to avoid the wasteful use of housing land and of infrastructure resources, these should be at about 70 hra, although there may be exceptional circumstances where lower densities may be appropriate.
- 3.26 Subject to the overriding priority of providing dwellings for those in need the Council's policy throughout London is that housing associations and the private sector should contribute to the housing effort. This will increase the choice and variety of housing, give some relief to public financing and help to create socially varied communities. It will reduce the high proportion of potential owner-occupiers in the flow of residents out of London. The Council considers that London housing authorities must bear these points in mind and where appropriate should encourage development of housing sites by private developers and housing associations. There is evidence of a large unsatisfied demand for houses to own. Private builders should be encouraged to extend their interests more widely.
- 3.27 The Council will also play its part in major new developments such as Thamesmead and in the Docklands and, within the framework of its employment policies, will foster the provision there of related employment. The planned migration flow of people from London to New and Expanding Towns will continue but will be kept under review in relation to changing circumstances in London. In facilitating this migration, the Council will give priority to people in housing need or who are otherwise deprived and to those who, by moving, would assist the London authorities to help others in housing need.
- 3.28 In short, the expectation in regard to housing is that London will have a smaller population which will be better housed enjoying more space and better standards. The population will stop falling when the attractiveness of life in London including the availability of suitable employment matches the attraction

life elsewhere. So long as London housing is inadequate in size, amenity and myironment, and more costly, people will continue to leave in search of more acceptable standards. Thus the house building effort is not only a matter of gent social necessity but a basic factor in improving the living standards of indoners.

landon's population in 1981

- The size and structure of London's population is very largely influenced by factors outside the Council's control. Table 1 therefore shows high and low ojections for the population of each Borough in 1981 based on essentially amographic assumptions about future birth rates and migration trends. The projections make use of the 1971 census data that was available in October 1974. They have not been modified to take special account of major new developments thin London such as Docklands, Thamesmead or the Barbican.
- The projections will be updated as more of the results of the 1971 Census toome available, taking account of the latest information on recent migration thends. They will be extended in 1991 as part of the continuing process of monitoring and review which will be undertaken by the Council in consultation with the London Boroughs. In these later series account will also be taken of revised estimates of new housing development and renewal programmes as they become available. Where appropriate, indications will be given as to how the basic demographic projections may be modified to reflect the likely impact of such revised estimates (eg) on the size and composition of the housing stock, on occupancy rates, and on future migration trends.

TABLE 1: GREATER LONDON: POPULATION PROJECTIONS TO 1981

	1971	198	1981		Changes 1971-1981 (High)	
	Census	High	Low	(No.)	(%)	
Inner (Group A) Boroughs						
City of London City of Westminster Camden Hackney Hammersmith Haringey Islington Kensington & Chelsea Lambeth Lewisham Newham Southwark Tower Hamlets Wandsworth	240 207 220 187 240 202 188 308 268 237 262 166 302	5 182 162 182 145 201 146 140 266 222 215 206 126 261	5 174 155 178 139 193 140 131 257 214 212 200 122 252	+1 -58 -45 -38 -42 -39 -56 -48 -46 -22 -56 -40 -41	+25.0 -24.2 -21.7 -17.3 -22.5 -16.3 -27.7 -25.5 -13.6 -17.2 - 9.3 -21.4 -24.1 -13.6	
Outer (Group B) Boroughs Barking Barnet Bexley Brent Bromley Croydon Ealing Enfield Greenwich Harrow Havering Hillingdon Hounslow Kingston upon Thames Merton Redbridge Richmond upon Thames Sutton Waltham Forest	161 307 217 281 305 334 301 268 218 203 248 235 207 141 177 240 175 169 235	150 270 210 244 283 311 277 254 199 186 235 221 190 127 167 219 155 163 220	148 260 205 235 275 303 269 248 194 181 231 215 185 123 163 213 149 159 216	-11 -37 - 7 -37 -22 -23 -24 -14 -19 -17 -13 -14 -10 -21 -20 - 6	- 6.8 -12.1 - 3.2 -13.2 - 7.2 - 6.9 - 8.0 - 5.2 - 8.7 - 8.4 - 5.2 - 6.0 - 8.2 - 9.9 - 5.6 - 8.8 -11.4 - 3.6 - 6.4	
Inner (Group A) Boroughs	3,032	2,460	2,374	- 572	-18.9	
Outer (Group B) Boroughs	4,420	4,081	3,971	-339	- 7.7	
TOTAL GREATER LONDON	7,452	6,541	6,345	-911	-12.2	

Because of rounding, columns do not necessarily add up.

(Notes on Table 1)

The assumptions on which these projections are based are described in detail in Research Memorandum No 455 published by the Greater London Council, 1975. For Greater London as a whole it is assumed that:

"High" projection: Fertility will stay constant at the 1973-74 level until 1978-79 and then increase to 1981 at the same rate as it was decreasing in the 5 year period between 1966 and 1971. Net migration out of London will fall throughout the projection period from 1974 in proportion to the declining population, starting at the estimated average annual net migration between 1971 and 1974 of 114,500 and falling to 89,400 in 1980-81.

"Low" projection: Fertility will decline at the same annual rate as in the period between 1966 and 1971 until 1978-79, and then remain constant for the rest of the projection period. Net migration out of London remains constant at the estimated average annual level between 1971 and 1974 until the end of the period in 1981.

The mortality assumptions are the same in each projection and are rates held enstant throughout the projection period. They correspond to national gures, adjusted to the Greater London area by factors which are produced by the Government Actuary's Department.

plementation

- 3.31 If the provision of new dwellings by all agencies should at any time be filling short of what is needed, the Council will be in a position to exercise appropriate powers, whether by building itself, by assisting other agencies, by financial assistance, compulsory purchase, or the sale or lease of land, or its scrutiny of local plans and its rights to comment upon them.
- The Council's role in attaining its housing objective is not confined to the building of houses in London or to the encouragement of the Borough council's hasing activities and those of private developers. The Council intends to use every reasonable planning, administrative and financial device to obtain good dwellings for Londoners. It intends to continue encouraging housing associations by providing, year by year, capital to enable approved housing associations to carry out worthwhile schemes. The Council lends money on mortgage (£50,000,000 in 1970-71) to Londoners who can, by this means, buy homes inside or outside London and will continue to seek to do so. It will likewise provide homes for persons in housing need not only in London but outside, by its town expansion schemes and other building.
- 3. The Council will pursue a policy of fitting the population to the housing stack by encouraging exchanges, by moving people from homes too large for them into suitable smaller dwellings, by securing nomination schemes through the Bomough councils, the town development and new town authorities, and by allocating suitable tenants to relets. It will encourage individuals and local authorities as well as housing associations to apply for improvement grants. It will assist organisations which give advice and help to those in search of homes. By one method or another the Council and the Borough councils between them allocated 50,000 new tenancies in 1970.
- It is the Council's intention to harness all such methods in pursuance of its housing policy and its success will depend upon the readiness of Boroughs to ensure that overcrowding does not recur and that action is taken under the statutes to prevent undesirable sharing of facilities.

- The Council will maintain a monitoring system which will enable it to review the figures and their policy implications continuously not only in London but on a regional basis. It will seek with the Boroughs to ensure among over the that a constant and unified flow of information is available so that need is determined whether it be by way of information from the housing list, details about the needs of the elderly and the homeless, details of overcrowded accommodation or details of opportunities for providing a better fit.
- The Council is aware that there are losses from existing housing stock 3.36 which reduce the number of dwellings available to London residents. Some are necessitated by the development of new schools, open spaces, roads and other public works. Some are beyond control, like the growth of small second homes for those whose normal residence is outside London. Others, such as the losses due to the rapid growth of tourism which threatens the conversion of more dwellings from residential to hotel uses, can be slowed down by planning controls which the London Borough councils and the Council intend to use fully. But the largest extra demands on existing stock arise from the continued process of household fission, and they are a sign of rising living standards, with their demand for more privacy and a more spacious environment, and should not therefore be resisted. Yet all these processes mean that the net gain of housing in relation to households is not so large as might be suggested by annual building rates of between 30,000 and 40,000 new dwellings a year, and problems of underhousing are likely to remain even beyond 1981. The Council as the strategic authority will do all in its power to see that any disparity by 1981 between the number of potentially separate households and the number of dwellings in good condition is as small as possible.
- 3.37 So long as an overall shortage of housing persists in London, planning permission will not normally be given for a change from residential use of any residential building that can still be used, with or without adaptation, for residential purposes; and in considering applications for redevelopment of land previously used in whole or in part for residential purposes, regard will be had to the need to provide residential accommodation in the redevelopment, especially, but not exclusively, for those who are displaced and in need of housing.
- 3.38 The size and structure of London's population, and its residential pattern and employment opportunities together with the travel habits of London's and the region's population, are the crucial variables for the future prosperity of the whole South-East region. The Plan aims to achieve a satisfactory relationship of these variables, to provide the housing capacity and environmental conditions which London needs.

Borough Plan

