

Consultation on Planning Powers for Mayors in England

G15 Residents' Group Response



G15 Residents' Group
A STRATEGIC VOICE IN SOCIAL HOUSING

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The G15 Residents' Group (G15RG)¹ is an independent, resident-led strategic forum bringing together a diverse group of residents living in social and affordable homes provided by G15 housing associations. Members combine knowledge of housing, governance and regulation with insights and lived experience from across G15 housing associations, which together provide homes for around 880,000 households nationally and house approximately one in ten Londoners. The group uses that valuable combination of knowledge, strategic experience and practical insight to influence local and national housing policy.

We welcome the Government's ambition to strengthen mayoral devolution and provide strategic authorities with greater powers to deliver the homes, infrastructure and growth that communities need and deserve. The expansion of these powers represents a significant shift in how places will be planned, developed and governed. This response primarily addresses the consultation questions relating to Applications of Potential Strategic Importance, Mayoral Development Orders and the Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy. In addition, we have used this opportunity to highlight the importance of embedding strategic resident involvement within devolved planning arrangements, particularly in the preparation and review of Spatial Development Strategies and other strategic planning decisions.

Our experience is particularly relevant because London already operates within a devolved planning environment. Over the past three years, the G15 Residents' Group has engaged with government departments, particularly MHCLG², the Greater London Authority, the London Assembly, regulators and housing sector leaders, to provide strategic resident insight on planning reform, affordable housing delivery, building safety, leasehold reform, social housing regulation and consumer standards. Through this work we have seen how resident perspectives can strengthen policy, identify unintended consequences and support better implementation.

We agree with the core proposals in the consultation, specifically granting elected mayors powers to:

- call in applications for schemes with more than 150 homes, more than 15,000 square metres of commercial space, or any building over 30 metres (roughly 10 storeys)
- grant up front permission for development through Mayoral Development Orders so building can begin without a developer having to apply
- charge a Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy to fund major infrastructure projects.

¹ More information of the G15RG can be found here [G15 Residents' Group - G15](#)

² Ministry of Housing, communities and Local Government

We also believe mayors outside London should be able to call-in Category 3J (50 homes or more) applications where a local planning authority is minded to refuse permission, particularly given acute housing need, continued under-delivery of new homes and increasing pressure on housing waiting lists.

More fundamentally, we believe that strategic resident groups should be recognised as an essential part of devolved decision-making. As mayors gain greater influence over planning and funding decisions, residents should have opportunities to shape strategic plans and priorities before decisions are made, rather than being consulted only after proposals have been developed. Resident insight provides practical impacts and unintended consequences early, strengthening both policy and implementation.

This need has already been recognised in London. The *Open Planning?*³ report by London Assembly Planning and Regeneration Committee found that some community groups felt excluded from the mayoral call-in process and recommended more structured opportunities for engagement. The G15 Residents' Group's experience of working with the Greater London Authority, MHCLG and other strategic partners demonstrates the value that strategic resident insight can bring to decision-making.

We therefore encourage strategic authorities to engage with recognised strategic resident groups and tenant representatives when preparing and reviewing Spatial Development Strategies. We also encourage MHCLG to ensure that future guidance explicitly recognise such groups as important stakeholders within strategic plan-making.

As more powers move from Whitehall to mayors and strategic authorities, we would like more areas around England to benefit from the type of strategic residents' involvement already established in London. To support this, the G15RG is working with Campbell Tickell with funding from MHCLG's Social Housing Innovation Fund, to produce a practical toolkit that helps residents and social landlords establish and sustain effective strategic resident groups.

We look forward to publishing the toolkit this winter and sharing the learning from this work. We would welcome the opportunity to work with MHCLG to explore how that learning could inform future guidance on resident engagement and help create effective routes for residents to contribute to local, regional and national policy development.

The G15 Residents Group

³ [Open Planning? | London City Hall](#)