

# MAYOR OF LONDON

**Leaders of Essex councils and the Police, Fire and  
Crime Commissioner for Essex**  
C/o: [kneath@tenderingdc.gov.uk](mailto:kneath@tenderingdc.gov.uk)

**Our ref:** MGLA141218-0768

**Date:** 15 JAN 2019

Dear Councillors Baggot, Butland, McKinlay, Smith, Whitehead, Cory, Whitbread, Ingall, Fluker, Cutmore, Stock OBE, Lamb, Gledhill, Rolfe, and Finch and Mr Hirst,

## **Re: London boroughs' use of homes outside London for homeless households**

Thank you for your letter of 14 December 2018 about London boroughs' use of homes outside London for homeless households and the pressure that this places on your localities and their services. I appreciate your concerns for the families affected by the huge increase in homelessness that we have seen in recent years.

As you may know, monitoring by London boroughs indicates that, in the first quarter of the current financial year, only eight per cent of all temporary accommodation placements were outside London. While I do not have any direct control over the ways in which London boroughs meet their statutory responsibilities to assist homeless households, the law is clear that London boroughs' statements of housing policy must be "in general conformity" with my London Housing Strategy.

In that strategy, I have set out clearly my expectations of councils where they have no choice but to place homeless households in other areas. These are that councils should:

- meet their obligations to inform other local authorities;
- have in place clear policies around the provision of accommodation for homeless households, which prioritise the most vulnerable people for the most local accommodation; and
- provide households placed in other areas with information and support that will help them to settle there.

I understand that colleagues from London boroughs and the Local Government Association have been in contact with you around issues of communication and rates. I am very willing to play a part in these conversations if you feel that would be helpful.

As my Housing Strategy also makes clear, I am committed to working with London boroughs to help them improve the accommodation options they are able to offer to homeless households. To this end, I part-funded the feasibility study of options for closer collaboration between London boroughs in procuring private rented accommodation for homeless households, and I am pleased that the 'Capital Letters' initiative to enable collaborative procurement of private rented housing has resulted from this work.

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I am pleased to be supporting London boroughs by investing £11 million in the PLACE (Pan-London Accommodation Collaborative Enterprise) initiative. This will provide high-quality precision-manufactured homes that London boroughs can lease and place on meanwhile sites, to provide accommodation for homeless households who might otherwise be placed away from their local area. I would expect such meanwhile sites to normally be within the boroughs that are participating, and so I hope this will help with more local placements.

However, as I am sure you will agree, any real and lasting reduction in the number of homeless households London boroughs place in other areas, and the numbers of households becoming homeless in the first place, requires action from the Government.

To address these root causes of homelessness, Government Ministers must invest more in new homes for social rent; overhaul the private rented sector to make it more secure and affordable; and reverse the welfare reform measures that have left huge gaps between the cost of most private rented accommodation in London and the help to cover rents that the benefits system provides.

I hope that we can work together to impress on the Government the need for these changes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', written in a cursive style.

**Sadiq Khan**  
Mayor of London