



Movement Matters is a series of thought leadership events, presented by Steer, exploring new ideas about places, people and economies and providing a burst of fresh thinking.

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## Post-event summary

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**14 June, 2017**

8.00am-9.45am

Blue Fin Venue

110 Southwark St.

London, SE1 OSU

**London is facing an unprecedented housing crisis and constraints on the transport network. With growth expected to push the population to 10 million by 2030, the city needs to deliver approximately 50,000 new homes per annum for the next 20 years. But with a constrained city that needs to respect the desire to protect open space and a greenbelt that prohibits its outward growth, London development will inevitably need to provide homes at greater densities than has been the accepted norm for the past 100 years.**

**All this leads to a need for policy makers, authorities, developers and their professional advisors to balance the needs of a growing population with the sensitivities of existing communities.**

**We brought together industry experts to facilitate a discussion on the role that high-rise developments have in London's future.**

The first speaker was **Gareth Fairweather, Planning Policy Manager for Transport for London (TfL)**. He offered an overview of the challenges and opportunities of supporting higher density development with increased transport accessibility and connectivity. In his presentation:

- Gareth emphasised that growth is good for London but to accommodate it, a major modal shift is needed to avoid worsening air quality, higher congestion and the unsafe environments that unchecked growth could cause. Location and the density of housing play a key role in this modal shift.
- He explained that the denser a community is, the more likely people are to travel shorter distances to access opportunities and services and consequently choose to walk, cycle and use public transport. High-density development can thus drive mode shift and embed healthy streets in infrastructure, to make the city active, vibrant and accessible.
- Gareth noted that transport is key for development opportunities and it is of upmost importance that high-density developments are supported by high levels of connectivity and accessibility, leading to sustainable high-density growth. He mentioned several opportunity areas where TfL supports the location for potential high-density developments with a focus on Inner London, transport stations, town centres, suburban areas with a good PTAL (Public Transport Accessibility Level) and opportunity areas, such as unlocked brownfield sites.



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**Paul Eaton, Partner at Allies and Morrison**, presented second. He spoke about the positive aspects of density, and the qualities it brings to developments, with a focus on social implications and connectivity.

- Paul highlighted that although high densities might have a bad reputation, we all recognise the qualities that it brings to London, specially the social implications of high-density, which together with a mixture of uses and connectivity, create the social vibrancy that makes London, London. He also noted how living in a compact city produces much less demand on the physical resources of land. The traditional London residential street has a density of 20m<sup>2</sup> per resident, medium schemes 5m<sup>2</sup> per person, and high-rises can equate to just 1.2m<sup>2</sup> per person.
- He highlighted three key aspects new developments need to cater for. Firstly, the building must contribute to the life of the city. Secondly, the building must become a good place to live and provide good amenities, and thirdly respond to the wider context and character of the area and London.
- Paul mentioned several example projects which involve dense developments and how each respond to the character of the area and the connectivity to transport hubs. His examples included: Aldgate Place, Two Fifty One, Keybridge House and St Andrew's Bay. These new schemes also contributed to large scale placemaking creating quiet spaces between the buildings, extending streets and creating new walking and cycling connections.
- Finally, Paul focused on the potential of high streets based on the expected London decarbonisation programme meaning no carbon vehicles would be on the streets by 2050. Paul forecasted several future opportunities going forward, especially around unlocking potential land use along the streets of London, in particular, high streets, providing more active frontages and more attractive streets.

**Andrew Reid, Design and Planning Director at Mount Anvil** presented last, focusing on how without change there is no progress, he gave several project examples in which Mount Anvil have worked on.

- Andrew opened his presentation by saying that although people are often resistant to change, without change, there is no progress.
- He detailed several key developments which have been developed within London to provide mixed tenure residential dwellings, these include: Lexicon Tower; Taylor House; Dollar Bay; and Keybridge House. Keybridge House was an example of creative provision of infrastructure. Although only 5% of the units were built as affordable housing, phase 2 of the development involved gifting land and developing a school on the land for Lambeth Council.

The Q&A after the presentations focused on how London's evolving transport infrastructure and policy will tackle the different problems and challenges mentioned during the session. It also touched upon the funding needed to evolve the different ongoing schemes and the needed infrastructure, and the challenges that go alongside with it.

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In addition, the following themes were brought out:

- Additional infrastructure is vital to facilitate denser development and growth. Not only transport but also schools, playing fields, health infrastructure and placemaking. Regarding transport, solutions must be multimodal. One example of this is the Brunel Bridge in Canada Water encouraging active travel and thus relieving pressure from the Jubilee Line.
- The city should aim to become “polycentric”. This will involve transport infrastructure not just spurring residential development but mixed-use developments. Similarly, land use must be thought of creatively, with uses traditionally separated being mixed, such as residential and light industry in the Upper Lee Valley.
- Technology can help policy one of the guests highlighted. For example, he mentioned that, as suggested at a previous New London Architecture event, a London-wide 3D model that allows developers and architects to see their proposals in context and assess impacts would be very useful. Additionally, policy requirements must be clear enough that they are worked into feasibility studies before developers acquire sites, not after.

### KEY THEMES

In concluding Phil Rust, Director at Steer, acting as Chair on the morning, highlighted the following key points emerging from the presentations and further discussion:

1. Policy helping to tackle challenges and trying to accommodate requests bene
2. Connections. It takes everybody to work together to evolve solutions to truly evolve London.
3. There is great hope for London.