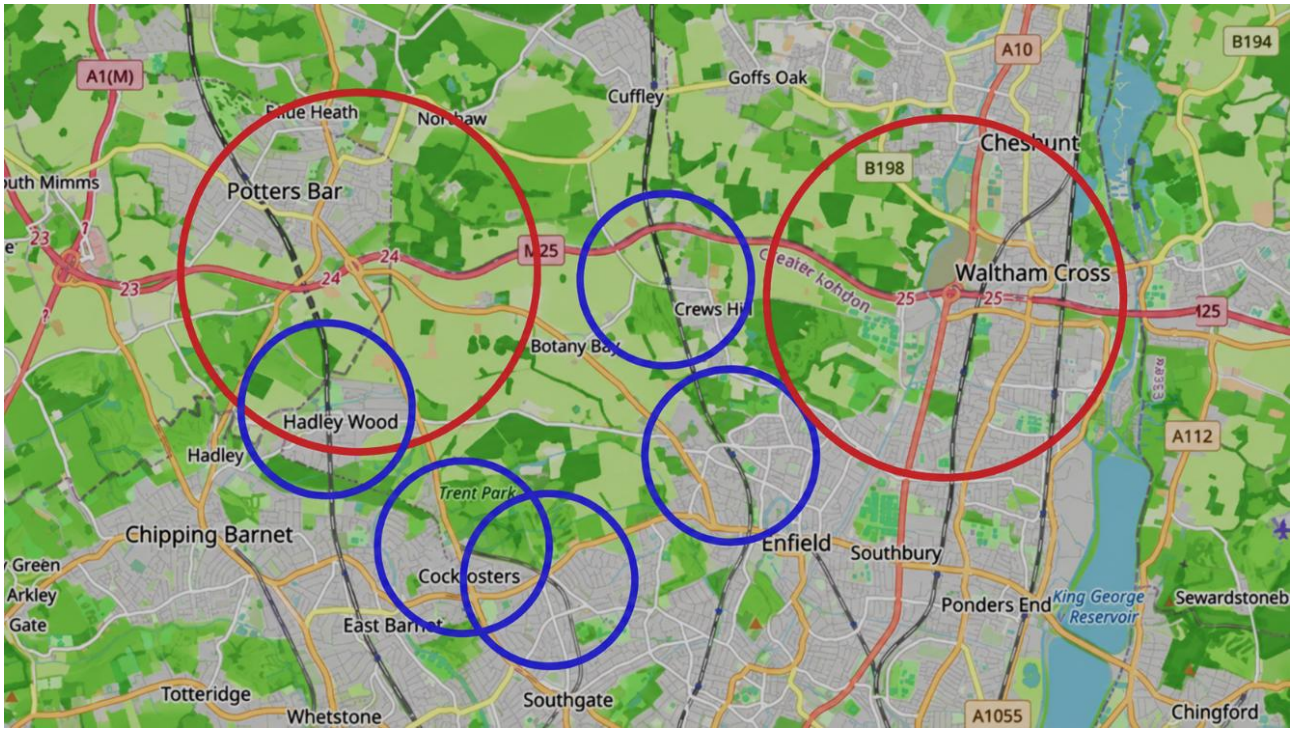


Illustrative map showing areas within 1,200 metres of the five identified railway and Underground stations (blue circles), and within 2,500 metres of M25 junctions 24 and 25 (red circles). The circles show straight-line distances, not proposed development

The Mayor of London expects Enfield to build 7,000 homes on greenfield land, but the GLA refuses to explain where.

Sadiq Khan's Draft London Plan sets Enfield a target of building 7,000 homes on greenfield land within walking distance of five stations: Gordon Hill, Hadley Wood and Crews Hill railway stations, and Cockfosters and Oakwood Underground stations.

Taken at face value, building new homes within walking distance of existing stations seems like a sensible approach.

But just because land is close to a station doesn't mean you can build on it.

Much of the land surrounding these stations is already developed or has other established uses, including schools, cemeteries and parkland. Other areas contain important wildlife habitats, streams and land at risk of flooding. Some land may simply be unsuitable or unavailable for development.

We spent considerable time reviewing the reports and spreadsheets that accompany the Draft London Plan but were unable to establish where these homes would be built.

And it isn't just Better Homes Enfield who is questioning this. Enfield Council's response to the draft London Plan also calls on the GLA to publish the evidence.

We decided to ask the GLA which areas of land it had counted, how many homes it thought each could accommodate and why it believed 7,000 homes could be built in these areas within ten years.

We thought these were reasonable questions. Apparently, the GLA disagrees.

We first asked the GLA for the evidence behind the 7,000-home figure in September, during the Draft London Plan consultation.

We received no answer, so we chased. We were then told our questions had been passed to the relevant Green Belt policy lead.

Still no answer. The consultation closed without the GLA providing the information.

We then made a formal request under the Environmental Information Regulations for the calculations, datasets or other recorded evidence showing how the housing target had been derived.

We finally received a response on the 12 November.

But the GLA refused to disclose the information and said our request was "manifestly unreasonable".

Is it unreasonable to expect the GLA to explain its own housing targets?

We don't think so.

The GLA's response said that the 7,000-home target was not broken down into individual sites. Instead, it will be up to Enfield Council to investigate the land and decide where homes should be built when it reviews its Local Plan.

That means the Mayor wants to set Enfield a 10-year target for 7,000 homes on greenfield land near five stations but has not demonstrated where those homes could realistically be built.

We don't know which land would be developed, how many homes each area could accommodate, what densities would be needed, or whether the necessary infrastructure could be provided. That is very poor planning.

Building more homes and the future of Enfield's Green Belt are both important issues. They require transparent, careful, and evidence-based planning, especially if the trust and confidence of the public is to be maintained.

But that's not what we've got.

Better Homes Enfield has challenged the GLA's refusal to disclose the evidence and is awaiting a response.

The Mayor needs to show his workings. If he cannot justify the 7,000-home target, he should review it.

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