

# Report urges mayor to move on modular

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Housing experts have welcomed a new report calling on the mayor of London Sadiq Khan to use his planning powers to kickstart a 21st-century modular housing revolution.

In its report, *Designed, Sealed, Delivered: The Contribution of Offsite Manufactured Homes to Solving London's Housing Crisis*, the London Assembly said Khan should create a standard design code for offsite manufacturing (OSM), designating public land and speeding up planning in a bid to help solve the housing crisis.

According to the report, an innovative approach was crucial to reaching the 50,000 new homes needed every year to meet demand in the capital.

The report, written by London Assembly planning committee member Nicky Gavron, recommends: **investigating the potential of using TfL-owned land to stimulate the OSM sector**; creating a standardised manufactured housing design code to help drive scale and minimum quality standards; bringing forward a further round of the mayor's innovation fund specifically focused on OSM; and setting up a London-specific OSM-led procurement framework.

“OSM housing is an innovative, forward-thinking and exciting way to close the gap,” she said. “The lack of a single design standard or mass-market demand has held back the sector's growth.”

“This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to work collaboratively with investors, developers and policymakers at a time when experts and central and local governments are all calling for the same thing to happen.”

Much of the report [echoes last year's Farmer Review](#), as well as recommendations set out earlier this year in the housing white paper.

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## PROPERTY REACTS

- Mark Farmer, chief executive of Cast Consultancy and author of the Farmer Review, said the report “sends an unequivocal message to the mayor that now is the time to show strong political leadership to establish a mainstream precision-manufactured housing market”. He added: “There is also a great opportunity for the Mayor to align with national policy and the growing cross party consensus on the role of offsite manufacturing as well as tying this into his separate ‘Skills for Londoners’ manifesto commitment and the Construction Academy Scheme initiative. Future skills in construction may look very different to what we currently see on a building site, and we should be planning ahead for this in London right now.”
- Christy Hayes, chief executive of Tide Construction, currently the UK’s biggest OSM developer, added: “The single most important thing needed for companies investing in OSM housing is certainty of demand. If the mayor can drive continuous growing demand for offsite-manufactured homes, we will see significant investment in this sector, which can only be good for everyone.”
- Rory O’Hagan, director at Assael Architecture, said: “Having a standardised design code will increase familiarity, lower barriers to entry for manufacturers and de-risk financing through advocating a design approach that unleashes the full potential of offsite technology. This means revisiting some guidance in the existing London Plan in terms of apartment building design, which just isn’t suited to optimising offsite technology. With strong strategic leadership, the mayor can ensure we get the most out of this exciting opportunity.”
- Pocket CEO Marc Vlessing said: “The GLA’s formal recognition of the potential for modular construction to help solve the housing crisis is to be warmly welcomed. Pocket Living has been at the forefront of delivering new homes through modern methods of construction and we aim to deliver a third of our pipeline this way. Modular construction not only allows Pocket Living to deliver homes faster, it also reduces waste and is considerably less disruptive to existing local residents.”