# Leigh Johnson to steer Barking Riverside into next major delivery phase



Leigh Johnson, currently regional development director at Wates Residential, has been appointed managing director of Barking Riverside Limited and will take up the role in November 2025 as the east London scheme prepares for a major new delivery phase. The move will see her replace Matthew Carpen, who after 12 years at the helm is due to become chief executive of the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation later this autumn. According to a Barking Riverside announcement reported in the industry press, Johnson’s appointment is timed to coincide with a fresh push on planning, infrastructure and housebuilding at the 443‑acre site.

Johnson arrives with a track record in large, multi‑phase housing work. Construction and developer statements note she has held senior roles at four of the UK’s five largest housebuilders and spent three years at Homes England overseeing master‑developer functions; Wates’ own materials list her among senior Residential leaders involved in major schemes. Those experiences, her supporters say, give her the blend of private‑sector delivery experience and public‑sector exposure thought necessary to co‑ordinate complex, long‑running regeneration projects.

The appointment comes against the backdrop of a refreshed masterplan for Barking Riverside. The company submitted an outline planning application in July 2024 seeking to update a 16‑year‑old scheme and to increase capacity to as many as 20,000 homes; the application has been described in industry coverage as one of the largest residential planning submissions in the country and is due for determination in 2026. The proposals emphasise riverfront connectivity, upgraded flood defences, new walking and cycling routes and expanded green infrastructure, including two major parks and commitments on ecology and sustainable systems that aim to raise the project’s long‑term environmental performance.

Public funding and enabling works are already shaping the next stages. Homes England announced a combined loan and grant package of £124 million to unlock infrastructure across the site — funding that the scheme’s promoters say will pay for preparatory land works, strengthened flood defences, an energy centre and new parkland, and contribute towards seven new schools. L&Q and the Greater London Authority, BRL’s delivery partners, have reiterated that the funding is intended to accelerate readiness for housebuilding and to release further phases on what is largely brownfield land next to the Thames. Over the coming 12 months BRL says it will progress a Thames‑side pedestrian promenade, flood‑defence upgrades, public‑realm works, delivery of a large park with play and sports facilities, the opening of health and retail amenities and strategic land sales intended to support delivery of more than 3,000 homes.

Commenting on her appointment in the Barking Riverside announcement, Johnson said she was “proud” to take on the role and described the project as “a nationally significant project and a career‑defining opportunity”. She added: “Having previously sat on both sides of the table, I feel uniquely positioned to reinforce BRL’s role as a true master developer, working collaboratively to deliver homes at the pace and quality that London requires.” BRL is explicit that it will act as master developer in partnership with the Mayor of London and housing association L&Q the design team for the current phase has not been publicly named.

Johnson’s task will be to turn the outline ambitions and recent public funding into tangible delivery on site. The outline application carries specific sustainability and community commitments — including a target of at least a 10% biodiversity net gain and proposals to decarbonise the district heating network — that will need to be carried through detailed planning and construction stages. Stantec has been reported as leading the planning and masterplanning work on the refreshed proposals, but significant technical work, funding flows and sales to housebuilders remain necessary before the scheme can realise its 20,000‑home aim. With the planning decision not expected until 2026, Johnson’s early months will focus on the enabling programmes and the strategic partnerships that will determine how quickly and with what quality the next phases are delivered.

### 📌 Reference Map:

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/peoplemoves/wates-leigh-johnson-appointed-to-lead-barking-riverside-delivery-15-08-2025/), [[6]](https://www.london.gov.uk/matthew-carpen-appointed-chief-executive-old-oak-and-park-royal-development-corporation)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/peoplemoves/wates-leigh-johnson-appointed-to-lead-barking-riverside-delivery-15-08-2025/), [[5]](https://www.wates.co.uk/insights/sustainability-services/culture/ukreiif-2024/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/peoplemoves/wates-leigh-johnson-appointed-to-lead-barking-riverside-delivery-15-08-2025/), [[3]](https://barkingriverside-planning.london/outline-application/), [[7]](https://www.bdonline.co.uk/news/barking-riverside-to-grow-to-20000-homes-with-stantec-leading-planning-and-masterplan/5132013.article)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/peoplemoves/wates-leigh-johnson-appointed-to-lead-barking-riverside-delivery-15-08-2025/), [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/barking-riverside-secures-government-backing-for-more-homes), [[4]](https://www.lqgroup.org.uk/media-centre/news/barking-riverside-secures-government-funding-for-more-homes)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/peoplemoves/wates-leigh-johnson-appointed-to-lead-barking-riverside-delivery-15-08-2025/), [[4]](https://www.lqgroup.org.uk/media-centre/news/barking-riverside-secures-government-funding-for-more-homes)
* Paragraph 6 – [[3]](https://barkingriverside-planning.london/outline-application/), [[7]](https://www.bdonline.co.uk/news/barking-riverside-to-grow-to-20000-homes-with-stantec-leading-planning-and-masterplan/5132013.article), [[1]](https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/peoplemoves/wates-leigh-johnson-appointed-to-lead-barking-riverside-delivery-15-08-2025/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/peoplemoves/wates-leigh-johnson-appointed-to-lead-barking-riverside-delivery-15-08-2025/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/barking-riverside-secures-government-backing-for-more-homes> - Homes England announced a £124 million funding package to unlock vital infrastructure at Barking Riverside, enabling delivery towards a 20,000‑home development on the 443‑acre former power station site. The combined loan and grant will support master developer Barking Riverside Limited – a partnership between L&Q and the Mayor of London – to prepare land, deliver flood defences, an energy centre and parks, and help provide seven new schools. The release notes the site’s current consent for 10,800 homes, recent transport improvements including the 2022 overground station, and quotes officials emphasising the importance of public funding to accelerate high‑quality housing delivery.
3. <https://barkingriverside-planning.london/outline-application/> - The Barking Riverside planning site states that Barking Riverside Ltd submitted a new outline planning application at the end of July 2024 (reference 24/01141/OUTALL) to refresh the masterplan and propose up to 20,000 homes. The application seeks to update a 16‑year‑old plan, enhancing green spaces and river connections, improving sport, play and ecology, and providing two additional primary schools. It highlights improved Thames access, upgraded flood defences, public realm enhancements, revised transport and pedestrian routes, and commitments to at least a 10% biodiversity net gain and the decarbonisation of the district heating network to support long‑term sustainability and community facilities.
4. <https://www.lqgroup.org.uk/media-centre/news/barking-riverside-secures-government-funding-for-more-homes> - L&Q’s media centre confirms Barking Riverside Limited has secured a new £124 million funding package from Homes England to support infrastructure for the proposed 20,000‑home scheme. The statement reiterates the site’s scale, its brownfield origins, and the partnership role between L&Q and the Mayor of London in BRL as master developer. It explains the funding mix of loan and grant will enable preparatory works including flood‑defence construction, an energy centre and parkland, helping to unlock further housing phases alongside homes already completed or under construction by L&Q and partner housebuilders.
5. <https://www.wates.co.uk/insights/sustainability-services/culture/ukreiif-2024/> - Wates’ UKREiiF 2024 page lists Leigh Johnson as Regional Development Director within Wates Residential, naming her among the senior leadership attending the event. The page identifies Johnson as part of the Wates Residential team alongside other development and commercial directors and provides a contact email. It confirms her current role at Wates and signals her involvement in large residential development activity for the firm. The listing does not detail her full career history but establishes Johnson’s position and employer, supporting reports of her profile as an experienced development leader within a national contractor active across complex multi‑phase housing projects nationally.
6. <https://www.london.gov.uk/matthew-carpen-appointed-chief-executive-old-oak-and-park-royal-development-corporation> - The Mayor of London press release on 3 April 2025 announces Matthew Carpen’s appointment as Chief Executive of the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC). It highlights his 22 years’ experience in strategic planning and infrastructure delivery and his role as Managing Director of Barking Riverside Limited, where he oversaw a masterplan for up to 20,000 homes and secured over £300m of investment. The statement says Carpen will take up the role later in the year with David Lunts remaining in post until then, and includes mayoral and chair quotes welcoming his leadership to lead OPDC delivery work.
7. <https://www.bdonline.co.uk/news/barking-riverside-to-grow-to-20000-homes-with-stantec-leading-planning-and-masterplan/5132013.article> - Building Design reports Barking Riverside Limited’s outline planning application to expand the development to up to 20,000 homes, describing it as one of the largest planning applications in the UK. It explains Stantec’s appointment to lead planning and masterplanning for the refreshed scheme. The article highlights proposals to nearly double the previously permitted capacity of 10,800 homes and includes two large parks – a 50‑acre Ripple Park and a 19‑acre River Park – plus riverfront enhancements, improved walking and cycling routes, and strengthened public realm to create a more accessible Thames‑facing neighbourhood and new community, health and retail amenities planned.