THE LONDON PLAN

SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR GREATER LONDON
JULY 2011

MAYOR OF LONDON

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Contributors credits

Simon Milton 1961-2011

London Plan Team
Alex Green, Andrew Barry-Purssell, Catherine Knivett/Gemma Kendall/Meredith Sedgwick
Celeste Giusti/David Taylor-Valiant/Josephine Gay, Gerard Burgess, Hermine Sanson/Samantha Coates
Jane Carlsen, John Burges, John Lett, Jonathan Brooker, Jörn Peters/Kevin Reid, Julie Fleck,
Mike Newitt, Neil Goldberg/Chris Poulton, Paul Bowdage, Peter Heath/John O'Neil, Rachael Rooney/
Martin Reason, Richard Linton, Tony Cumberbirch/Hannah Phillips/Stuart Meek, Zhuoya Ling

GLA Group
Alan Benson, Alex Nickson, Alexandra Reitman, Andrew Hiley, Andrew Jones, Andy Richmond
Baljit Bains, Bridget Rosewell, Catherine Jones, Charles Buckingham, Colin Lovell, Colin Wilson
Chris Hyde, Dan Hawthorne, Doug Simpson, Elaine Seagriff, Eliot Traherne, Giles Dolphin, Grant Pettit,
James Gleeson, Jamie Dean, Javiera Maturana, Jeremy Skinner, John Hollis, Jonathon Hoffman,
Julia Bray, Julian Ware, Katherine McManus, Lucy Davies, Madina Fassassi, Mark Ainsbury,
Mark Brearley, Mark Powney, Martin Rose, Matthew Thomas, Michele Dix, Mike Keegan,
Neil Georgeson, Nigel Campbell, Patrick Feehily, Pete Daw, Peter Massini, Peter Wright, Rachel Conti,
Rhodri Ball, Richard De Cani, Richard McGreevy, Ross Hudson, Simon Cooper, Simon Cousins,
Simon Wyke, Stefan Trinder, Wayne Hubbard

Will McKee

CONTENTS

MAYOR'S FOREWORD 5

OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION 9

CHAPTER ONE CONTEXT AND STRATEGY 15
Context 16
A growing population 16
A changing population 18
More households 19
A growing and ever changing economy 20
Persistent problems of poverty and disadvantage 23
A changing climate 26
Ensuring the infrastructure to support growth 27
Securing the legacy of 2012 27
A new focus on quality of life 28
A changing planning system 29
Conclusion: Planning for growth 29
Strategy: The Mayor's vision and objectives 32
Quality of Life 33

CHAPTER TWO LONDON'S PLACES 37
Spatial strategy 38
Looking beyond London 39
Realising the benefits of 2012 43
Sub-regions 45
Outer London 46
Inner London 52
The Central Activities Zone 54
Opportunity Areas and Intensification Areas 59
Town Centres 63
Strategic outer London development centres 66
Strategic industrial locations 67
Strategic network of green infrastructure 70
The Key Diagram 72

CHAPTER THREE LONDON'S PEOPLE 75
Ensuring equal life chances for all 76
Improving health and addressing health inequalities 78
Housing 80
Housing Supply 81

Affordable housing 95
London's housing stock 101
Social infrastructure 102

CHAPTER FOUR LONDON'S ECONOMY 113
Economic Context 114
Economic Sectors and Workspaces 116
New and emerging economic sectors 132
Improving opportunities for all 133

CHAPTER FIVE LONDON'S RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE 137
Climate Change Mitigation 139
Climate Change Adaptation 151
Waste 158
Aggregates, contaminated land and hazardous substances 169

CHAPTER SIX LONDON'S TRANSPORT 175
Integrating Transport & Development 177
Connecting London 188

CHAPTER SEVEN LONDON'S LIVING PLACES AND SPACES 209
Place shaping 210
Historic environment and landscapes 219
Safety, Security and Resilience to Emergency 228
Air and Noise Pollution 229
Protecting London's Open and Natural Environment 231
Blue Ribbon Network 241

CHAPTER EIGHT IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING AND REVIEW 253
Collaboration across London 254
Plan-Monitor-Manage 255
Planning Obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy 256
Monitoring 258
Looking to the future 260

ANNEXES
Annex 1 - Opportunity and intensification areas 261
Annex 2 - London's Town Centre Network 277
Annex 3 - Strategic Industrial Locations 287
Annex 4 - Housing Provision Statistics 291
Annex 5 - Glossary 295
Annex 6 - Index of Policies 313

ANNEX SIX

INDEX OF POLICIES

1 Context and strategy
Policy 1.1 Delivering the strategic vision and objectives for London 34

2 London's places
Policy 2.1 London in its global, European and United Kingdom context 39
Policy 2.2 London and the wider metropolitan area 41
Policy 2.3 Growth areas and co-ordination corridors 42
Policy 2.4 The 2012 Games and their legacy 43
Policy 2.5 Sub-regions 45
Policy 2.6 Outer London: vision and strategy 48
Policy 2.7 Outer London: economy 49
Policy 2.8 Outer London: transport 51
Policy 2.9 Inner London 52
Policy 2.10 Central Activities Zone – strategic priorities 54
Policy 2.11 Central Activities Zone – strategic functions 55
Policy 2.12 Central Activities Zone – predominantly local activities 58
Policy 2.13 Opportunity areas and intensification areas 59
Policy 2.14 Areas for regeneration 61
Policy 2.15 Town centres 63
Policy 2.16 Strategic outer London development centres 66
Policy 2.17 Strategic industrial locations 67
Policy 2.18 Green infrastructure: the network of open and green spaces 70

3 London's people
Policy 3.1 Ensuring equal life chances for all 76
Policy 3.2 Improving health and addressing health inequalities 78
Policy 3.3 Increasing housing supply 81
Policy 3.4 Optimising housing potential 84
Policy 3.5 Quality and design of housing developments 86
Policy 3.6 Children and young people's play and informal recreation facilities 88
Policy 3.7 Large residential developments 89
Policy 3.8 Housing choice 90
Policy 3.9 Mixed and balanced communities 94
Policy 3.10 Definition of affordable housing 95
Policy 3.11 Affordable housing targets 96
Policy 3.12 Negotiating affordable housing on individual private residential and mixed use schemes 98
Policy 3.13 Affordable housing thresholds 100
Policy 3.14 Existing housing 101
Policy 3.15 Coordination of housing development and investment 102
Policy 3.16 Protection and enhancement of social infrastructure 102
Policy 3.17 Health and social care facilities 105
Policy 3.18 Education facilities 106
Policy 3.19 Sports facilities 109

4 London's economy

Policy 4.1 Developing London's economy 114
Policy 4.2 Offices 116
Policy 4.3 Mixed use development and offices 119
Policy 4.4 Managing industrial land and premises 120
Policy 4.5 London's visitor infrastructure 122
Policy 4.6 Support for and enhancement of arts, culture, sport and entertainment provision 125
Policy 4.7 Retail and town centre development 128
Policy 4.8 Supporting a successful and diverse retail sector 129
Policy 4.9 Small shops 131
Policy 4.10 New and emerging economic sectors 132
Policy 4.11 Encouraging a connected economy 133
Policy 4.12 Improving opportunities for all 133

5 London's response to climate change

Policy 5.1 Climate change mitigation 140
Policy 5.2 Minimising carbon dioxide emissions 141
Policy 5.3 Sustainable design and construction 143
Policy 5.4 Retrofitting 145
Policy 5.5 Decentralised energy networks 145
Policy 5.6 Decentralised energy in development proposals 148
Policy 5.7 Renewable energy 148
Policy 5.8 Innovative energy technologies 150
Policy 5.9 Overheating and cooling 151
Policy 5.10 Urban greening 152
Policy 5.11 Green roofs and development site environs 153
Policy 5.12 Flood risk management 153
Policy 5.13 Sustainable drainage 155
Policy 5.14 Water quality and wastewater infrastructure 156
Policy 5.15 Water use and supplies 157
Policy 5.16 Waste self-sufficiency 159
Policy 5.17 Waste capacity 161
Policy 5.18 Construction, excavation and demolition waste 168
Policy 5.19 Hazardous waste 169
Policy 5.20 Aggregates 169
Policy 5.21 Contaminated land 171
Policy 5.22 Hazardous substances and installations 171

6 London's transport

Policy 6.1 Strategic approach 177
Policy 6.2 Providing public transport capacity and safeguarding land for transport 186
Policy 6.3 Assessing effects of development on transport capacity 187
Policy 6.4 Enhancing London's transport connectivity 188
Policy 6.5 Funding Crossrail and other strategically important transport infrastructure 191

Policy 6.6 Aviation 193
Policy 6.7 Better streets and surface transport 194
Policy 6.8 Coaches 195
Policy 6.9 Cycling 195
Policy 6.10 Walking 197
Policy 6.11 Smoothing traffic flow and tackling congestion 198
Policy 6.12 Road network capacity 199
Policy 6.13 Parking 200
Policy 6.14 Freight 202
Policy 6.15 Strategic rail freight interchanges 203

7 London's living places and spaces
Policy 7.1 Building London's neighbourhoods and communities 210
Policy 7.2 An inclusive environment 212
Policy 7.3 Designing out crime 213
Policy 7.4 Local character 214
Policy 7.5 Public realm 215
Policy 7.6 Architecture 216
Policy 7.7 Location and design of tall and large buildings 217
Policy 7.8 Heritage assets and archaeology 219
Policy 7.9 Heritage-led regeneration 221
Policy 7.10 World Heritage Sites 222
Policy 7.11 London View Management Framework 223
Policy 7.12 Implementing the London View Management Framework 226
Policy 7.13 Safety, security and resilience to emergency 228
Policy 7.14 Improving air quality 229
Policy 7.15 Reducing noise and enhancing soundscapes 231
Policy 7.16 Green Belt 232
Policy 7.17 Metropolitan Open Land 232
Policy 7.18 Protecting local open space and addressing local deficiency 233
Policy 7.19 Biodiversity and access to nature 234
Policy 7.20 Geological conservation 238
Policy 7.21 Trees and woodlands 238
Policy 7.22 Land for food 240
Policy 7.23 Burial spaces 240
Policy 7.24 Blue Ribbon Network 241
Policy 7.25 Increasing the use of the Blue Ribbon Network for passengers and tourism 241
Policy 7.26 Increasing the use of the Blue Ribbon Network for freight transport 243
Policy 7.27 Blue Ribbon Network: supporting infrastructure and recreational use 244
Policy 7.28 Restoration of the Blue Ribbon Network 245
Policy 7.29 The River Thames 246
Policy 7.30 London's canals and other rivers and waterspaces 248

8 Implementation, monitoring and review
Policy 8.1 Implementation 254
Policy 8.2 Planning obligations 256
Policy 8.3 Community infrastructure levy 257
Policy 8.4 Monitoring and review for London 258

be well defined and integrated, and limit opportunities for concealment.

7.12 An integrated mix of land uses throughout a neighbourhood will add to its vitality and security but should be carefully managed to minimise conflict between incompatible activities. Day time and night time uses should be incorporated into development where appropriate to ensure that spaces are active and informally monitored.

POLICY 7.4 LOCAL CHARACTER

Strategic

A Development should have regard to the form, function, and structure of an area, place or street and the scale, mass and orientation of surrounding buildings. It should improve an area's visual or physical connection with natural features. In areas of poor or ill-defined character, development should build on the positive elements that can contribute to establishing an enhanced character for the future function of the area.

Planning decisions

B Buildings, streets and open spaces should provide a high quality design response that:

a has regard to the pattern and grain of the existing spaces and streets in orientation, scale, proportion and mass
b contributes to a positive relationship between the urban structure and natural landscape features, including the underlying landform and topography of an area
c is human in scale, ensuring buildings create a positive relationship with street level activity and people feel comfortable with their surroundings
d allows existing buildings and structures that make a positive contribution to the character of a place to influence the future character of the area
e is informed by the surrounding historic environment.

LDF preparation

C Boroughs should consider the different characters of their areas to identify landscapes, buildings and places, including on the Blue Ribbon Network, where that character should be sustained, protected and enhanced through managed change. Characterisation studies can help in this process.

7.13 The social, cultural, environmental and economic relationships between people and their communities are reinforced by the physical character of a place. Based on an understanding of the character of a place, new development should help residents and visitors understand where a place has come from, where it is now and where it is going. It should reflect the function of the place both locally and as part of a complex urban city region, and the physical, economic, environmental and social forces that have shaped it over time and are likely to influence it in the future. Local character does not necessarily recognise borough boundaries. The Mayor therefore encourages cross-borough working to ensure a consistent approach to understanding and enhancing a sense of character. The Mayor will develop supplementary guidance to help boroughs with this work.

7.14 The physical character of a place can help reinforce a sense of meaning and civility – through the layout of buildings and streets, the natural and man-made landscape, the density of development and the mix of land uses. In some cases, the character is well preserved and clear. In others, it is undefined or compromised by unsympathetic development. Through characterisation

studies, existing character can be identified and valued, and used to inform a strategy for improving the place. This should help ensure the place evolves to meet the economic and social needs of the community and enhances its relationship with the natural and built landscape. The community should be involved in setting these goals for the future of the area (Policy 7.1).

7.15 The Blue Ribbon Network has significant cultural, historic, economic and environmental value to local character. Later in this chapter a range of policies require buildings and spaces to have particular regard to their relationship to waterspaces in their form, scale and orientation. New development should enhance physical and visual access between existing streets and waterfront sites and incorporate features that make the best functional use of the site's proximity to a water resource. Buildings and spaces should be designed to activate the Blue Ribbon Network in a way that is appropriate to its character, infrastructure value and heritage significance.

POLICY 7.5
PUBLIC REALM

Strategic

A London's public spaces should be secure, accessible, inclusive, connected, easy to understand and maintain, relate to local context, and incorporate the highest quality design, landscaping, planting, street furniture and surfaces.

Planning decisions

B Development should make the public realm comprehensible at a human scale, using gateways, focal points and landmarks as appropriate to help people find their way. Landscape treatment, street furniture and infrastructure should be of the highest quality, have a clear purpose, maintain uncluttered spaces and should contribute to the easy movement of people through the space. Opportunities for the integration of high quality public art should be considered, and opportunities for greening (such as through planting of trees and other soft landscaping wherever possible) should be maximised. Treatment of the public realm should be informed by the heritage values of the place, where appropriate.

C Development should incorporate local social infrastructure such as public toilets, drinking water fountains and seating, where appropriate. Development should also reinforce the connection between public spaces and existing local features such as the Blue Ribbon Network and parks and others that may be of heritage significance.

LDF preparation

D Boroughs should develop local objectives and programmes for enhancing the public realm, ensuring it is accessible for all and reflects the principles in Policies 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4.

7.16 The quality of the public realm has a significant influence on quality of life because it affects people's sense of place, security and belonging, as well as having an influence on a range of health and social factors. For this reason, public and private open spaces, and the buildings that frame those spaces, should contribute to the highest standards of comfort, security and ease of movement possible. Open spaces include green and civic spaces, both of which contribute to the provision of a high quality public realm (see Policy 7.18). Legibility and signposting can also make an important contribution to whether people feel comfortable in a place, and are able to understand it and navigate their way around. On going maintenance

of this infrastructure should be a key consideration in the design of places.

7.17 The public realm should be seen as a series of connected spaces that help to define the character of a place. Places should be distinctive, attractive, vital and of the highest quality, allowing people to meet, congregate and socialise, as well as providing opportunity for quiet enjoyment. They should also, wherever possible, make the most of opportunities to green the urban realm through new planting or making the most of existing vegetation. This will support the Mayor's aims for two million trees to be planted in London by 2025 and, to secure additional greening in the Central Activities Zone (CAZ) to help mitigate the urban heat island effect (Policy 5.10). Encouraging activities along the waterways can also contribute to an attractive townscape and public realm.

7.18 The effects of traffic can have a significant impact on the quality of the public realm in terms of air quality, noise and amenity of a space. The negative effects of traffic should be minimised to ensure people's enjoyment of public realm is maximised. The principles of shared space should be promoted in line with Policy 6.10 on Walking and in the Mayor's Transport Strategy. They should be implemented to accord with local context and in consultation with relevant stakeholders (including organisations of disabled and visually impaired people).

7.19 The lighting of the public realm also needs careful consideration to ensure places and spaces are appropriately lit, and there is an appropriate balance between issues of safety and security, and reducing light pollution.

7.20 The public realm does not necessarily recognise borough boundaries. Cross-borough working at the interface of borough boundaries should therefore be maximised to ensure a consistent high quality public realm. There is a range of guidance such as *Better Streets*[9], *Manual for Streets*[10], *Manual for Streets 2*[11], *Principles of Inclusive Design*[12], and *Streets for All*[13] which can help inform the design of the public realm. This should be part of a wider strategy based on an understanding of the character of the area.

POLICY 7.6 ARCHITECTURE

Strategic

A Architecture should make a positive contribution to a coherent public realm, streetscape and wider cityscape. It should incorporate the highest quality materials and design appropriate to its context.

Planning decisions

B Buildings and structures should:

a be of the highest architectural quality
b be of a proportion, composition, scale and orientation that enhances, activates and appropriately defines the public realm
c comprise details and materials that complement, not necessarily replicate, the local architectural character
d not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of surrounding land and buildings, particularly residential buildings, in relation to privacy, overshadowing, wind and microclimate. This is particularly important for tall buildings
e incorporate best practice in resource management and climate change mitigation and adaptation
f provide high quality indoor and outdoor spaces and integrate well with the surrounding streets and open spaces
g be adaptable to different activities and land uses, particularly at ground level

h meet the principles of inclusive design
i optimise the potential of sites.

7.21 Architecture should contribute to the creation of a cohesive built environment that enhances the experience of living, working or visiting in the city. This is often best achieved by ensuring new buildings reference, but not necessarily replicate, the scale, mass and detail of the predominant built form surrounding them, and by using the highest quality materials. Contemporary architecture is encouraged, but it should be respectful and sympathetic to the other architectural styles that have preceded it in the locality. All buildings should help create streets and places that are human in scale so that their proportion and composition enhances, activates and appropriately encloses the public realm, as well as allowing them to be easily understood, enjoyed and kept secured. The building form and layout should have regard to the density and character of the surrounding development and should not prejudice the development opportunities of surrounding sites.

7.22 A building should enhance the amenity and vitality of the surrounding streets. It should make a positive contribution to the landscape and relate well to the form, proportion, scale and character of streets, existing open space, waterways and other townscape and topographical features, including the historic environment. New development, especially large and tall buildings, should not have a negative impact on the character or amenity of neighbouring sensitive land uses. Lighting of, and on, buildings should be energy efficient and appropriate for the physical context.

7.23 The massing, scale and layout of new buildings should help make public spaces coherent and complement the existing streetscape. They should frame the public realm at a human scale and provide a mix of land uses that activate its edges and enhance permeability in the area. New buildings should integrate high quality urban design ensuring an appropriate balance between designing out crime principles and appropriate levels of permeability. Consideration should also be given to the future management of buildings in their design and construction.

7.24 New buildings should achieve the highest standards of environmental, social and economic sustainability by meeting the standards of sustainable design and construction set out in Chapter 5 and by being consistent with the existing or planned future capacity of social, transport and green infrastructure.

POLICY 7.7 LOCATION AND DESIGN OF TALL AND LARGE BUILDINGS

Strategic

A Tall and large buildings should be part of a plan-led approach to changing or developing an area by the identification of appropriate, sensitive and inappropriate locations. Tall and large buildings should not have an unacceptably harmful impact on their surroundings.

Planning decisions

B Applications for tall or large buildings should include an urban design analysis that demonstrates the proposal is part of a strategy that will meet the criteria below. This is particularly important if the site is not identified as a location for tall or large buildings in the borough's LDF.

C Tall and large buildings should:
a generally be limited to sites in the Central Activity Zone, opportunity areas, areas of intensification or town