

MAYOR OF LONDON



THE LONDON PLAN

**THE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR LONDON
CONSOLIDATED WITH ALTERATIONS SINCE 2011**

MARCH 2016

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CONSOLIDATED WITH ALTERATIONS SINCE 2011

THE LONDON PLAN 2011 CONSOLIDATED WITH:

- **REVISED EARLY MINOR ALTERATIONS TO THE LONDON PLAN**
PUBLISHED OCTOBER 2013
- **FURTHER ALTERATIONS TO THE LONDON PLAN**
PUBLISHED MARCH 2015
- **HOUSING STANDARDS MINOR ALTERATIONS TO THE LONDON PLAN**
PUBLISHED MARCH 2016
- **PARKING STANDARDS MINOR ALTERATIONS TO THE LONDON PLAN**
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OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

- 0.1 This introduction explains the status of the London Plan, what it covers and the process it went through before it was formally published.

What is the London Plan?

- 0.2 Strategic planning in London is the shared responsibility of the Mayor of London, 32 London boroughs and the Corporation of the City of London. Under the legislation establishing the Greater London Authority (GLA), the Mayor has to produce a spatial development strategy (SDS) – which has become known as ‘the London Plan’ – and to keep it under review. Boroughs’ local development documents have to be ‘in general conformity’ with the London Plan, which is also legally part of the development plan that has to be taken into account when planning decisions are taken in any part of London unless there are planning reasons why it should not.
- 0.2A The Localism Act 2011 empowers communities to prepare neighbourhood plans for their area. In London, these plans are also required to be in general conformity with the policies in the London Plan. The Mayor intends this document to be a useful resource for those preparing neighbourhood plans, and is preparing guidance on how it can be used for this purpose.
- 0.3 The general objectives for the London Plan, and the process for drawing it up, altering and replacing it, are currently set out in the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (as amended) and supporting detailed regulations.

The London Plan is:

- the overall strategic plan for London, setting out an integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of London over the next 20–25 years
- the document that brings together the geographic and locational (although not site specific) aspects of the Mayor’s other strategies – including those dealing with:
 - Transport
 - Economic Development
 - Housing
 - Culture
 - a range of social issues such as children and young people, health inequalities and food
 - a range of environmental issues such as climate change (adaptation and mitigation), air quality, noise and waste
- the framework for the development and use of land in London, linking in improvements to infrastructure (especially transport); setting out proposals for

implementation, coordination and resourcing; and helping to ensure joined-up policy delivery by the GLA Group of organisations (including Transport for London)

- the strategic, London-wide policy context within which boroughs should set their detailed local planning policies
- the policy framework for the Mayor's own decisions on the strategic planning applications referred to him
- an essential part of achieving sustainable development, a healthy economy and a more inclusive society in London

0.4 Under the legislation setting up the GLA, the London Plan should only deal with things of strategic importance to Greater London¹. The legislation also requires that the London Plan should take account of three cross-cutting themes:²

- economic development and wealth creation
- social development; and
- improvement of the environment.

0.5 The Mayor has also had regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people, and to:

- reducing health inequality and promoting Londoners' health
- climate change and the consequences of climate change
- achieving sustainable development in the United Kingdom
- the desirability of promoting and encouraging use of the Thames, particularly for passenger and freight transportation
- the need to ensure consistency between the strategies prepared by the Mayor
- the need to ensure consistency with national policies and international treaty obligations notified to the Mayor by Government, and
- the resources available to implement the Mayor's strategies.

Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the GLA also has to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder.

0.6 In drawing up the new London Plan, the Mayor has also had regard to relevant European Union legislation and policy instruments like the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP)³.

1 Greater London Authority Act 1999, section 334(5)

2 Greater London Authority Act 1999, section 30

3 The ESDP sets out a framework of planning policies to operate across the EU, in particular implementing the principles of sustainable development and balanced urban systems

- 0.7 The Mayor is legally required to keep the London Plan under review⁴. Government guidance also sets out the procedure to be followed when he decides that the Plan should be amended (or 'altered' under planning law), or when he decides there should be a completely new (or 'replacement') Plan.

Previous versions of the London Plan

- 0.8 The first London Plan was published in 2004. Subsequently, two sets of alterations were made to it, and an updated version, bringing these alterations together, was published in February 2008.
- 0.9 London elected a new Mayor in May 2008. Shortly after his election, he consulted on 'Planning for a Better London' (July 2008), which outlined his intended approach to planning.
- 0.10 The Mayor also believed that it was very important to set a clear spatial framework reflecting his policies and priorities as early as possible.
- 0.11 On its formal publication, the July 2011 London Plan replaced the version (consolidated with alterations since 2004) published in February 2008.
- 0.12 London planning does not stop with publication of a new London Plan. As explained later, the assumptions on which Plan policies are based, and the effectiveness of those policies, have been monitored – this process has helped inform the alterations made to the Plan since 2011. As circumstances change (a major change to the economy, for example), the Plan will be altered or, if necessary, replaced. This approach is known as 'plan, monitor and manage' and is explained in more detail in Chapter 8.

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 0.13 In March 2012, the Government published its National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This document replaces the Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Statements issued since 1991. It provides guidance for local planning authorities and decision-takers both in drawing up plans and as a material consideration in determining applications.
- 0.14 The Mayor carefully considered the extent to which the policies in this Plan are consistent with those in the NPPF. On the basis of this review, he is satisfied that the Plan reflected the intent of the Framework, and in particular the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and that the detailed policies in the two documents are consistent with each other. Given this consistency, he considers that the London Plan can be seen as the expression of national policy for London, tailored to meet local circumstances and to respond to the opportunities to achieve sustainable development here. These views informed the early alterations referred to in paragraph 0.16B, and they were upheld through their associated engagement and formal testing processes.

4 Greater London Authority Act 1999, section 339(1)

- 0.15 The Mayor will consider publishing supplementary guidance about the application of the policies in this Plan in the light of the relationship between the London Plan and the NPPF, in conjunction with the Government and London stakeholders.

Alterations to the London Plan since 2011

- 0.16A Four sets of alterations have been made to the 2011 London Plan to ensure it is as up-to-date as possible, in particular regarding references to Government guidance and national legislation enacted since July 2011.
- 0.16B Revised early minor alterations (REMA) were made to the Plan to ensure it reflected the NPPF and the Government's approach to affordable housing. These were formally published on 11 October 2013⁵.
- 0.16C Draft further alterations to the London Plan (FALP) were published for public consultation in January 2014 to reflect Mayoral priorities set out in his 2020 Vision: The Greatest City on Earth – Ambitions for London⁶, particularly the need to plan for the housing and economic capacity, needed for London's sustainable development against the background of the growth trends revealed by the 2011 Census. These alterations were considered at an Examination in Public held in September 2014, and the FALP were formally published as alterations to the London Plan in March 2015.
- 0.16Ca In May 2015 two sets of Minor Alterations to the London Plan (MALPs) – Housing Standards and Parking Standards – were published for public consultation. These were prepared to bring the London Plan in line with new national housing standards and the Government's approach to car parking policy. An Examination in Public considered the MALPs in October 2015, and they were formally published as alterations to the London Plan in March 2016.

The London Plan (consolidated with alterations since 2011)

- 0.16D This document, published in March 2016, is consolidated with all the alterations to the London Plan since 2011. It is the policies in this document (and any subsequent Alterations to it) that form part of the development plan for Greater London, and which should be taken into account in taking relevant planning decisions, such as determining planning applications.
- 0.16E The London Plan (consolidated with alterations since 2011) sets out policies and explanatory supporting material (or what the planning system calls 'reasoned justification'). These take account of:
- the legal requirements set out in paragraphs 0.2–0.7 above and the various issues that European and national legislation requires to be considered

5 Mayor of London. The London Plan. Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. Revised Early Minor Alterations. Consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework. GLA, 2013

6 https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020_vision_web.pdf

- other requirements of planning law and Government planning policy and guidance
- Integrated Impact and Habitats Regulations Assessments (see below)
- comments received during the consultation and engagement process the recommendations of the Panel that conducted the Examination in Public.

- 0.16F The London Plan now takes the year 2036 as its formal end date (the 2011 version of the London Plan looked forward to 2031). This date has been chosen both because Government advice suggests a twenty year planning period should be used, and because the Mayor believes a longer-term view of London's development should be taken to inform decision-making, development and investment.
- 0.16G Revisions consolidated in this Plan have been driven partly by the realisation that the population of London has grown much faster than was anticipated in the 2011 London Plan. However, the extent to which this unexpected level of growth is structural or cyclical is unknown as is the ability of the Plan's existing strategies and philosophy to successfully accommodate the envisaged level of growth. In light of this initial preparatory work towards a full review of the Plan commenced in 2015.
- 0.16H In the interim, as a result of changes proposed in the Government's Housing Standards Review, the Mayor brought forward the Housing Standards MALP in May 2015 to reflect Government housing standards. He also gave active consideration to addressing changes to national policy on car parking. The Mayor recognises the flexible approach in the National Planning Policy Framework on parking standards, and the abolition of maximum parking standards in national policy. National planning guidance published in 2014 also recommends that planning policies should consider how parking provision can be enhanced to encourage the vitality of town centres. Whilst the Mayor considers that there are sound reasons for retaining residential parking standards in core and inner London, he recognises the opportunity to adopt a more flexible approach in parts of outer London, especially where public transport accessibility levels are lower. He therefore brought forward through the Parking Standards MALP an early review of parking standards in Outer London in advance of the general review of the Plan. In doing so he gave active consideration to NPPF paragraph 39 on parking standards introduced by the Secretary of State's 'Planning Update March 2015' Written Statement to Parliament.

Integrated Impact Assessment

- 0.17 The development of this plan and the alterations made to it have been subject to full Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs). The IIA approach addresses all of the Mayor's legal duties to carry out comprehensive assessments of the plan and its proposed policies within one integrated process. The IIAs covered the legal requirements to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (including a Strategic
-

Environmental Assessment (SEA)) and a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA).

- 0.18 The IIAs also included Health Impact Assessments (HIA) and Equalities Impact Assessments (EqIA) to meet the Mayor's duties under the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (as amended) and equal opportunities legislation – see paragraphs 0.4-5. Finally, the IIAs covered relevant aspects of a Community Safety Impact Assessment (CslA) to ensure that the statutory requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and the newly enacted Police and Justice Act 2006 are also met.
- 0.19 The IIAs⁷ and the Habitats Regulation Assessments have helped shape the preparation of the London Plan and of the alterations made to it since 2011, ensuring a wide range of sustainability issues and the importance of protecting specific habitats were taken into account at each stage of the process.

The structure of this document

- 0.20 The Mayor intended that the new London Plan should be different from the previous version – shorter, more clearly strategic and user-friendly, and arranged in topic-based chapters intended to make policies on particular issues easier to find. It is arranged as follows:
- a chapter outlining the context for the Plan and its policies
 - a clear spatial vision in a chapter on 'Places'
 - topic-based chapters on London's:
 - People (including housing and social infrastructure)
 - Economy
 - Response to climate change
 - Transport
 - Living places and spaces
 - Implementation, monitoring and review.
- 0.20A For consistency the paragraph numbering reflects that of the 2011 London Plan. Where paragraphs have been added through plan alterations, they are identified with a letter after the paragraph number, and where paragraphs have been removed that paragraph number has also been removed from the document.

7 Mayor of London. Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening. Further Alterations to the London Plan Consultation. GLA, 2013. Amec, Integrated Impact Assessment. Further Alterations to the London Plan Consultation. GLA, 2013. Housing Standards MALP Integrated Impact Assessment Report, Amec for Mayor of London April 2015. Parking Standards MALP Integrated Impact Assessment Report, Mayor of London April 2015. Parking Standards MALP Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report, Mayor of London April 2015.

the quality of the local environment. All spaces should have clear ownership and be managed in a way that states that the space is cared for. Future maintenance of the space or building should be considered at the design stage.

- 7.11 Buildings and spaces should be designed in a way that clearly defines whether they are public, semi-public or private, and provides opportunities for activity and passive surveillance of publicly accessible spaces from ground and lower floors of buildings. Pedestrian, cycle and vehicular routes should be well defined, 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 designed to minimise conflict between incompatible activities. Day time and night time uses should be incorporated into development where appropriate to ensure that public spaces are active and overlooked.

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 has developed 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

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 Streets²²¹, Manual for Streets²²², Manual for Streets 2²²³, Principles of Inclusive Design²²⁴, and Streets for All²²⁵ 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

221 Mayor of London, Better Streets, Transport for London, November 2009

222 Department for Transport (DfT), Manual for Streets, Thomas Telford Publishing, March 2007 (

223 Department for Transport (DfT), Manual for Streets 2, Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT), September 2010 (or any subsequent replacement guidance).

224 Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), The principles of inclusive design (They include you), 2006 op cit

225 English Heritage, Streets for All: A Guide to the Management of London's Street, English Heritage, March 2000

- 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.
-