

# The Greater London Authority: powers and functions

**Summary:** The Greater London Authority (GLA) comprises the Mayor of London and the London Assembly. The GLA has five functional bodies, overseeing transport, policing, fire and rescue services, and regeneration, which together form the GLA Group. This paper sets out the range of powers available to the GLA and the other major areas of its work, including on housing, the environment, planning, skills, resilience, culture, health and economic development.

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## About the Research Unit

The London Assembly Research Unit provides an impartial research and information service. We undertake research and analysis on key issues in London to inform the Assembly's work. Our publications are made available for all Londoners.

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# 1 How the GLA's powers work

## 1.1 The GLA's operations

The powers available to the GLA vary in each of the different sectors or policy areas in which it operates. In summary, the range of powers available to the Mayor can be thought of as falling into three categories:

- **Devolved:** duties to provide certain services or to oversee other organisations providing them, together with funding for the service. For example, the provision of transport, policing and fire and rescue services, for which the Mayor oversees Transport for London, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), and London Fire Brigade respectively.
- **Delegated:** delivery of Government programmes, where the Mayor has powers to act but what they actually do is governed by the source of funding. Examples include the Adult Education Budget and the Affordable Homes Programme. Although the Mayor has powers to act in these policy areas, the spending programmes themselves are not statutory.
- **Discretionary:** programmes that are related to the Mayor's core purposes but that are delivered through the Mayor's functional power of competence: for example, the Mayor of London's Energy Efficiency Fund. Other levels of government are free to take action in these policy areas.

This briefing paper set out the powers available to the GLA in different policy areas in greater detail.

## 1.2 The GLA Group

The 'GLA Group' is the term used to describe the core group of organisations overseen by the Mayor and the London Assembly, including budget-setting powers. The GLA Group consists of the GLA and each of the five 'functional bodies'. The functional bodies are those providing the statutory public services the Mayor oversees, and two Mayoral Development Corporations (MDCs):

- Transport for London (TfL)
- the London Fire Commissioner (LFC)<sup>1</sup>
- the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC)
- the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC)
- the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC).

Specific governance arrangements between the Mayor, the London Assembly and the functional bodies vary. The five functional bodies, plus the Mayor and the London Assembly, are also referred to as the seven 'constituent bodies' of the GLA, primarily for budgeting purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> The LFC is responsible for running the London Fire Brigade; MOPAC is responsible for oversight of the Metropolitan Police Service.

The 'GLA family' is a related term often used to describe the wider set of organisations that have a close relationship with the Mayor, the London Assembly and the GLA, again with varied governance arrangements. This includes London & Partners, London TravelWatch, the London Pensions Fund Authority, ReLondon, the Museum of London, and others.

### 1.3 The GLA's core purposes

The GLA has the power to do anything that furthers its core purposes, which are economic development and wealth creation; promoting social development; and the improvement of the environment.<sup>2</sup> It must also have "due regard" to promoting equality of opportunity, when exercising its general power or delivering its strategies.<sup>3</sup>

This power could be described as a "functional power of competence". Local authorities in England have a "general power of competence", which is "power to do anything individuals generally may do".<sup>4</sup> The GLA's functional power of competence is less broad, requiring that everything it does must be related to its core purposes. It can do anything that is 'incidental' to this power.<sup>5</sup> In pursuing its core purposes, the GLA must take into account the effect on the health of Londoners; health inequalities in London; sustainable development; and climate change.

Alongside powers and programmes that are intended to deliver the Mayoral strategies, the GLA is permitted to manage discretionary programmes. These are established under the GLA's 'core purposes' power (see below). Examples include [Team London](#), promoting volunteering and mentoring; and the [Public Land Team](#), which promotes public sector co-operation around the assembly of public and private land for development purposes.

The GLA Act 1999 sets out limits on the power of the organisation. In particular, it cannot use its 'core purposes' power to undertake functions that could be undertaken by TfL, MOPAC, or the LFC, or to provide education or health services or social services.<sup>6</sup> However, specific qualifications on these limits are that the GLA can sponsor academy schools, provides services for the promotion of public health, and incur expenditure in co-operating and coordinating with the functional bodies. Furthermore, the limits on the GLA's powers do not apply to any GLA activity in housing and regeneration.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.4 Funding sources

In the UK's system of government, the existence of a statutory duty on a local or regional authority does not provide any guarantee that sufficient, or any, funding will be available to exercise the duty. Sources of funding for public authorities are not directly linked, in law, to their statutory duties.

The Mayor is required to provide services in the areas of transport, fire and rescue, policing. The Mayor is also responsible for setting the framework for London-wide planning. These functions are mainly funded from the GLA's share of council tax and business rates, the Government's police grant to the MOPAC, TfL's fare revenue, road user charging (for instance the Congestion Charge) and the Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy. The GLA

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<sup>2</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 30](#)

<sup>3</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 33](#)

<sup>4</sup> Localism Act 2011, [section 1](#) (1)

<sup>5</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 34](#). There is case law on the issue of what constitutes the 'incidental' use of a power.

<sup>6</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 31](#) (1)

<sup>7</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 31](#) (4A)

and functional bodies also receive funding from the proceeds of property sales, which may be used for further capital investments.

In areas such as housing and skills, there are overlaps between Mayoral statutory powers and powers held by other bodies. In other areas, such as culture, environment and health, statutory responsibility primarily lies outside the GLA, although the Mayor has statutory strategies in these areas, and the Mayor is one policy actor amongst many. Other actors may have considerably larger budgets than the Mayor,

It is up to the Mayor to decide how much funding to allocate to TfL, fire and rescue, and economic development; and how much should be allocated to the GLA's other priorities. These decisions are made via the Mayor's annual component budgets and consolidated budgets. The London Assembly has the power to amend certain figures within the Mayor's budget on a two-thirds majority of Assembly members voting.

## 1.5 National programmes

The Mayor manages a number of national programmes in London on behalf of the Government, including the Affordable Housing Programme, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Adult Education Budget. These programmes are not statutory: the Mayor has delegated authority to manage national programmes within London. Typically, the Government transfers London's share of the grant funding for the programme to the GLA and imposes regular reporting requirements. This type of arrangement is also common amongst the mayoral combined authorities elsewhere in England.

This type of delegation arrangement often includes a memorandum of understanding, agreed between the GLA and the Government. This is a document that has no legal force, but which sets out the basis on which the two sides will engage regarding the delegated programme.

## 1.6 Mayoral strategies

The Mayor is required to publish seven statutory strategies: transport; economic development; housing; environment; culture; health inequalities; and spatial development (the London Plan).

The process of publishing each strategy includes a range of statutory consultation requirements. The Government does not provide dedicated grant funding for the GLA to produce the strategies. The London Assembly may reject a draft strategy on a two-thirds majority of Assembly members voting, and the Mayor may not publish a strategy that the London Assembly rejects.<sup>8</sup> The Mayor has also published a number of non-statutory strategy documents, such as the [City Resilience Strategy](#) and the [London Food Strategy](#). The Mayor is not required to follow a statutory procedure when producing them.

In some of the policy areas covered by the strategies, the Mayor is not under a statutory duty to operate specific programmes, or to deliver specific outputs. Therefore, the extent to which the GLA itself operates programmes and delivers outcomes in these areas depends upon Mayoral priorities and the availability of funding. These discretionary programmes are operated using the GLA's general power to do anything that furthers one of its core purposes (see below).

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<sup>8</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 42B](#)

The purpose of each strategy will differ according to the role of the GLA and functional bodies in the particular area, and the nature of the Mayor's powers. In general, strategies seek to set a direction of travel for the public, private and voluntary sectors within London. In some matters, such as transport, the Mayor delivers most or all of the relevant services, and thus implements the strategy's priorities directly. In other matters, the Mayor does not deliver services directly but can require the boroughs to act in conformity with some of the statutory strategies (in planning, for instance). In other areas, the GLA's role is to lead policy in those areas without directly controlling all the relevant programmes and funding. The Mayor has no power, for instance, to oblige bodies such as Arts Council England, the British Tourist Authority, English Heritage, or Sport England to act in accordance with the culture strategy.

The strategy documents are not required to distinguish explicitly between the GLA's own programmes, other organisations' actions, and the Mayor's commitments to encourage other organisations to act.

The Mayor is also responsible for two other statutory strategies:

- As head of MOPAC, the Mayor is responsible for MOPAC's Police and Crime Plan, which sets strategic objectives for the Metropolitan Police Service.
- In his role overseeing the LFC, the Mayor must approve the LFC's Community Risk Management Plan, the primary organisational strategy for London Fire Brigade.

Many Mayoral programmes contribute to delivering more than one strategic aim and may, therefore, be cited in multiple strategy documents and web pages. For instance, encouraging cycling and walking would fall under both transport and environment (contributing to air quality), and potentially health inequalities.

## 2 Transport

The Mayor has a general duty to develop and apply policies to promote and encourage "safe, integrated and efficient transport facilities and services to, from and within London".<sup>9</sup> This is primarily done via Transport for London (TfL). There is also a Transport unit within the GLA.

TfL is a functional body of the GLA and is controlled by the Mayor of London. The Mayor appoints the board of TfL. TfL has always been chaired by successive mayors since the GLA was established in 2000, though this is not a legal requirement.<sup>10</sup> The Mayor can issue directions to TfL as to how it exercises its functions, with which TfL must comply, or guidance, to which TfL must have regard.<sup>11</sup>

TfL is the integrated transport authority for Greater London and is required to exercise its functions to help the Mayor discharge their general transport duty above, and to secure and facilitate the implementation of the Mayor's Transport Strategy.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 141](#)

<sup>10</sup> GLA Act 1999, [schedule 10](#)

<sup>11</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 155](#)

<sup>12</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 154](#)

## 2.1 TfL passenger services

TfL has responsibility for providing public passenger services in London. It runs most of London's public transport services, including the London Underground, the Docklands Light Railway, London Overground, the Elizabeth line, London Trams, London River Services, London Dial-a-Ride, Victoria Coach Station, Santander Cycles and the IFS Cloud Cable Car. TfL must also provide, or contract with others to provide, bus services comprising the London bus network, and consult on any changes to that network.

The Mayor is responsible for setting the general level of fares on the TfL public transport network, and may establish concessionary fares schemes to be operated by TfL that provide eligible persons with free or discounted travel on the TfL network.<sup>13</sup>

TfL operates a small number of rail services in the form of the London Overground network and the Elizabeth line. These railways are exempted from the national legislation used to award franchises.<sup>14</sup> TfL specifies operating requirements, including performance management, ticketing and timetabling. TfL also has branding control over the stations on the network.

### Regulation: taxis, waterways

TfL is responsible for regulating taxis in London.<sup>15</sup> It also regulates private hire vehicles (i.e. minicabs) in London, adopting the functions exercised by the Secretary of State via the [Private Hire Vehicles \(London\) Act 1998](#).<sup>16</sup> It also regulates pedicabs, following the passing of the [Pedicabs \(London\) Act 2024](#).

TfL has a legal duty to operate the Woolwich Ferry Service.<sup>17</sup> Beyond this service, it does not have a duty to provide passenger services on the Thames, but is permitted to “provide or secure the provision of such amenities and facilities as it considers would benefit persons using any waterway”.<sup>18</sup>

### Highways (TfL Roads)

TfL is the highways authority and the traffic authority for the TfL Road Network, covering all trunk routes within London with the exception of motorways.<sup>19</sup> Elsewhere in England, trunk roads are managed by National Highways.<sup>20</sup>

TfL manages bus and cycle lanes, street furniture, and restrictions on these roads (including parking charges). It also manages all traffic lights in London, via the London Traffic Control System.<sup>21</sup> TfL may place traffic signs on borough roads in connection with a GLA road. The

<sup>13</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 174](#) and [section 240](#)

<sup>14</sup> See the [Railways \(North and West London Lines\) Exemption Order 2007](#); and the [Railways \(North and East London Lines\) Exemption Order 2015](#)

<sup>15</sup> Schedule 20 of the GLA Act 1999 transfers the responsibilities in section 4 of the [London Hackney Carriages Act 1850](#) to TfL.

<sup>16</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 254](#)

<sup>17</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 257](#)

<sup>18</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 256](#)

<sup>19</sup> See section 1 (2A) of the [Highways Act 1980](#), inserted by [section 259](#) of the GLA Act 1999; and [section 121A](#) (1A) of the [Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984](#), inserted by [section 271](#) of the GLA Act 1999; see also [section 281](#) of the GLA Act 1999.

<sup>20</sup> Some combined authorities control a ‘key route network’ of local roads. These are roads that were previously managed by the member authorities, not trunk roads: trunk roads in those areas are still managed by National Highways.

<sup>21</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 275](#)

signs may be placed on any structure on that road, whether or not the structure belongs to TfL.

The boroughs manage non-strategic roads in London. As noted above, the Mayor has powers to direct a borough as to its local implementation of the transport strategy. TfL must be consulted on and approve borough proposals for their roads which could affect a GLA road.<sup>22</sup> The Mayor can also make orders to transfer borough roads to TfL, or vice versa.

TfL operates a lane rental scheme, to encourage consolidation of roadworks and minimise disruption to road users. This has operated since 2012. The gross income of the scheme is in the low millions of pounds per year. Proceeds must be spent on measures to avoid future roadworks; the bulk of this is spent on local transport schemes.<sup>23</sup>

## 2.2 Transport strategy

The Mayor must produce a [transport strategy](#), which must include their policies to discharge their general duty. The boroughs, and any body with statutory functions in respect of London, must “have regard” to the transport strategy.<sup>24</sup>

The Mayor can issue guidance to the London boroughs regarding how the transport strategy should be implemented. The boroughs must produce implementation plans and consult certain stakeholders on these.<sup>25</sup> They must be approved by the Mayor, who can direct boroughs to produce a plan in a given timescale, or take over the production of a plan if the direction is not completed within a reasonable time.<sup>26</sup> The Mayor can take steps to implement a local plan if the borough fails to do so.<sup>27</sup>

The London Transport Users’ Committee (known as [London TravelWatch](#)) may make representations to the GLA on any transport-related matter. The London Assembly has a specific power to issue London TravelWatch with guidance or directions.<sup>28</sup>

## 2.3 Road user charging

TfL may operate road user charging schemes,<sup>29</sup> and establish a workplace parking levy. These powers are available to all local authorities in England (including the London boroughs). Funds from any such schemes must be spent on matters that directly or indirectly help to deliver the transport strategy.<sup>30</sup>

TfL operates a number of road charging schemes:

- The [Congestion Charge](#) was established in February 2003, covering an area in Central London. The initial charge was £5 per day to drive within the zone between 7.30 and 18.30; as of February 2022 it is £15, to drive between 07:00 and 18:00 on weekdays and between 12:00 and 18:00 on weekends and bank holidays. The zone was

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<sup>22</sup> Highways Act 1980, [section 301A](#)

<sup>23</sup> See the annual [Transport for London Lane Rental Scheme](#) monitoring reports. The original order establishing the scheme is the [Street Works \(Charges for Occupation of the Highway\) \(Transport for London\) Order 2012](#). These powers are available to all highway authorities (upper-tier local authorities elsewhere) via section 74A of the [New Roads and Street Works Act 1991](#).

<sup>24</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 144](#)

<sup>25</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 145](#)

<sup>26</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 147](#) and [section 153](#)

<sup>27</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 152](#)

<sup>28</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 251](#)

<sup>29</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 295](#) and [schedule 23](#). In London, further primary legislation would be required for TfL or a borough to enforce a scheme.

<sup>30</sup> GLA Act 1999, [schedule 23](#), paragraph 16

expanded to an area west of the current zone between February 2007 and December 2010.

- A [Low Emissions Zone \(LEZ\) for vans, lorries, buses, coaches and specialist diesel vehicles](#) was launched in 2008. This covers the whole of Greater London and operates 24 hours a day every day. Non-compliant vehicles are charged £100 or £300 per day, depending on their emission standard, to drive within the LEZ.
- An Ultra-Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) was established in April 2019, covering the same area as the Congestion Charge. [The ULEZ was extended](#) to the area inside (but not including) the North and South Circular Roads on 25 October 2021. It was extended further to cover almost all of Greater London on 29 August 2023. Cars, small vans and motorcycles that do not comply with the ULEZ emissions standards must pay £12.50 per day to drive within the ULEZ. It operates 24 hours a day, every day except Christmas Day. Non-compliant vehicles that drive within the congestion charge zone must pay both the Congestion Charge and the ULEZ charge, unless eligible for a discount or exemption.

Alongside the 2023 extension of the ULEZ, TfL established a scrappage scheme. This offered grants of up to £2,000 to individual Londoners receiving certain social security benefits to scrap non-compliant cars. Wheelchair accessible vehicles could access up to £5,000 to scrap or £6,000 to retrofit them so as to become ULEZ compliant.<sup>31</sup> Grants to scrap vans and minibuses were also available for sole traders, businesses with up to 10 employees, and charities.

The scrappage scheme was extended on 4 August 2023.<sup>32</sup> Grants of up to £2,000 were made available to all residents of London. Scrappage payments of vans, minibuses and wheelchair accessible vehicles ranged from £7,000 to £11,000.

Road user charging schemes are fully devolved to London, and are operated by TfL according to the Mayor's decisions. Funds from them must be used to support delivery of the transport strategy, but can otherwise be spent as the Mayor and TfL determines.

### 3 Policing

The [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#) introduced Police and Crime Commissioners across England and Wales. The 2011 Act adjusted the governance of policing in London so that it broadly reflected the changes elsewhere in England.

In London, the Mayor is automatically the Police and Crime Commissioner, and is therefore the 'occupant' of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). The Mayor may appoint a deputy mayor for policing and crime, who can take on most of the Mayor's policing functions.<sup>33</sup> As of May 2024 this post is held by [Sophie Linden](#). The post may or may not be held by a London Assembly Member, and it is subject to a confirmation hearing by the Assembly.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> GLA, [Scrappage scheme – Transport for London](#)

<sup>32</sup> GLA, [Mayor announces massive expansion of scrappage scheme to all Londoners](#), 4 Aug 2023

<sup>33</sup> The functions that the Mayor cannot delegate are listed in section 19 (7) of the 2011 Act.

<sup>34</sup> GLA Act 1999, s60A (4). The confirmation hearing must be held by the Assembly's Police and Crime Panel: see section 32 of the [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#). If the deputy mayor is not an Assembly Member, the Assembly can veto their appointment on a two-thirds majority.

MOPAC must secure the maintenance of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and ensure that it is efficient and effective. The Mayor, as occupant of MOPAC, must publish a [police and crime plan](#) within the financial in which they are elected; the plan is therefore published in the first year of each Mayoral term. This plan which sets the strategic direction for policing in London.<sup>35</sup> MOPAC sets the policing budget, holds the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police to account and monitors progress against the Police and Crime Plan, and assesses the strategic budget position and risks to delivery.<sup>36</sup> A fuller articulation of MOPAC's role is set out in the England and Wales [Policing Protocol Order 2011](#).<sup>37</sup>

The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police is appointed by the monarch on the advice of the Home Secretary, who must consult MOPAC on the appointment and have regard to any recommendation made by MOPAC.<sup>38</sup> MOPAC may call for the Commissioner to retire or resign, with the approval of the Home Secretary and following procedures set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and The Police Regulations 2003.<sup>39</sup> The Commissioner must comply with such a request.

As with police services elsewhere in the UK, the MPS is “operationally independent” of the Mayor. The Policing Protocol uses this term a number of times, although it has no statutory definition.<sup>40</sup>

In May 2023, Mayor Sadiq Khan established a new [London Policing Board](#). This is a non-statutory body, chaired by the Mayor, with two Deputy Mayors and a range of experts and stakeholder representatives among its membership. The creation of the Board was a recommendation made by Baroness Louise Casey in a [review of culture and standards in the Metropolitan Police Service](#) in 2023. In the [announcement](#) of the Board the GLA stated that, “Members of the Board will provide high-level, specialist advice to challenge and support to assist the Mayor in holding the Met Police Service to account and rebuilding public confidence and trust in the force.”<sup>41</sup> The Board meets four times per year, and has both a People and Culture Committee and a Performance and Finance Delivery Committee.

The London Assembly is required by statute to establish a police and crime panel, known as the [Police and Crime Committee](#).<sup>42</sup> This has the power to scrutinise the police and crime plan, report on it, and require MOPAC staff to provide documents, attend Committee meetings, and answer questions.<sup>43</sup> It can include non-Assembly Members.<sup>44</sup>

The City of London Police is the police authority within the City's boundaries. The MPS, and MOPAC, do not operate in the City and have no jurisdiction over the City of London Police.

<sup>35</sup> [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#), s. 6

<sup>36</sup> MPS, [How the Met is governed](#) (accessed May 2024)

<sup>37</sup> [Policing Protocol Order 2011](#), paragraph 17

<sup>38</sup> [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#), s42

<sup>39</sup> [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#), s.48 and [The Police Regulations 2003](#), Regulation 11A. There have been two instances since the GLA's establishment where the incumbent Commissioner has resigned after it appeared that they no longer had the confidence of the Mayor, although the circumstances differ in each case and did not involve the full, formal procedure set out in legislation and regulation.

<sup>40</sup> For instance, [Policing Protocol Order 2011](#), paragraph 9. Baroness Casey's [review of MPS culture and standards](#) (page 220) discussed this use of the term “operational independence”, noting the helpful use of the term “operational responsibility” by Lord Patten in an earlier Review of Policing in Northern Ireland.

<sup>41</sup> GLA, [Mayor to establish London Policing Board to oversee and scrutinise reform of the Metropolitan Police Service](#), 23 May 2023

<sup>42</sup> [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#), s32. The legislation requires the Assembly to establish a special purpose committee. It refers to a “police and crime panel”.

<sup>43</sup> [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#), s. 32-33.

<sup>44</sup> See also the House of Commons Library briefing [Police and Crime Commissioners](#) for more on the role of Police and Crime Panels elsewhere.

Likewise, the Assembly does not have formal scrutiny or budget-setting powers over the City of London Police.

The Mayor's [Police and Crime Plan 2022-25](#) set out an overall vision for London to be a safer city, and included four priorities for policing in London:

- reducing and preventing violence
- increasing trust and confidence
- better supporting victims
- protecting people from exploitation and harm.

The majority of MOPAC's funding comes direct from the England and Wales system of police grant funding.<sup>45</sup>

In July 2023, the MPS also published the [New Met for London](#) plan, a two-year plan spanning 2023-2025, which focuses on key priorities including community crime-fighting and culture change.

## 4 Fire and rescue

The current structure of the [London Fire Commissioner \(LFC\)](#) was established on 1 April 2018, following provisions in the [Policing and Crime Act 2017](#).<sup>46</sup> The LFC is a corporation sole, with the Mayor holding certain statutory powers over the LFC. The Mayor appoints the LFC and holds them to account for the exercise of their functions.<sup>47</sup> The Mayor can delegate functions of his oversight role to a Deputy Mayor for Fire: as of May 2024 this role is held by [Jules Pipe CBE](#), Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service.<sup>48</sup>

In early 2020, Andy Roe KFSM was appointed as the LFC. The LFC also acts as London's chief fire officer, which in practice means that they run the London Fire Brigade (LFB). Unlike the MOPAC/MPS relationship, there is no formal legal distinction between the LFC and LFB.

The Mayor can issue guidance, or general or specific directions to the LFC regarding the exercise of its functions. However, the Secretary of State can direct the Mayor to revise guidance or directions if they believe the Mayor's guidance or directions are inconsistent with national policy.<sup>49</sup> Since 2018 the Mayor has issued one formal direction to the LFC, the LFC Governance Direction 2018, which sets out further requirements for LFC to seek consent or consult the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on key decisions.

The Mayor may require the Commissioner to resign, or suspend them from duty.<sup>50</sup> Since these arrangements were introduced in 2018, the Mayor has required the incumbent Commissioner to stand down on one occasion, Dany Cotton QFSM, who brought forward a planned retirement in 2019.

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<sup>45</sup> Home Office, [Police grant allocations: 2023 to 2024](#), 31 Jan 2023

<sup>46</sup> GLA, [The London Fire Commissioner Governance Direction 2018](#)

<sup>47</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 327A](#). The Commissioner is both an individual and the body responsible for fire and rescue in London.

<sup>48</sup> The appointment of Jules Pipe is subject to a London Assembly confirmation hearing. The Deputy Mayor for Fire may or may not be a member of the Assembly; Baroness Fiona Twycross held the role from 2018, whilst also being an Assembly Member until 2020.

<sup>49</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 327E](#)

<sup>50</sup> GLA Act 1999, [sections 327C](#) and [327D](#) (inserted by the Policing and Crime Act 2017).

As with policing, the London Assembly is required by statute to establish a single-purpose 'fire and emergency committee'.<sup>51</sup> This role is fulfilled by the [Fire Committee](#). This committee may contain non-Assembly Members.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework requires the LFC to produce a strategy, known as the [Community Risk Management Plan](#). This strategy must be approved to the Mayor before it is published, and the Assembly must be consulted before the Mayor approves its publication.

The London Assembly's Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee may also investigate the "actions and decisions" of the Commissioner or any of their staff, and may compel them to attend the London Assembly or produce documents.<sup>52</sup> Both the LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Fire are subject to a confirmation hearing by the London Assembly. The latter may be binding in some circumstances.<sup>53</sup>

Prior to 2018, the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) was responsible for fire and rescue in London. The Mayor appointed the members of LFEPA, which was required to be made up of a majority of Assembly Members.

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<sup>51</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 327H](#). The current arrangements were introduced by schedule 2 of the [Policing and Crime Act 2017](#).

<sup>52</sup> See schedule 2 of the [Policing and Crime Act 2017](#)

<sup>53</sup> GLA Act 1999, [schedule 4A](#), paragraph 11. The Assembly may veto the appointment of the Commissioner, and the deputy mayor if they are not an Assembly member, by a two-thirds majority.

## 5 Economic development

The GLA's economic development capacity includes:

- managing, within London, a small number of Government initiatives that operate throughout England, such as the [Growth Hub](#)
- managing allocations of central government funds, and bidding competitively for central government funds, that are ring-fenced to the delivery of specific projects; the GLA manages many of these internally, with oversight from [the London Partnership Board](#)
- appointing the boards of the two Mayoral Development Corporations, and liaising with them regarding policy.

The Mayor does not have access to a dedicated funding source to promote or fund economic development. The GLA is free to commit its own funding to relevant programmes, and to bid for Government funding programmes. In addition to using general GLA revenues, recent sources have included:

- residual EU funding programmes, including the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund, management of which had transferred into the GLA on 1 July 2011
- the Regional Growth Fund and Local Growth Fund, allocated to Local Enterprise Partnerships across England between 2011 and 2021
- the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, intended to replace EU funding programmes for the period from 2022 to 2025.

From 2011 to 2023, the GLA hosted the [London Economic Action Partnership](#) (LEAP), which was London's Local Enterprise Partnership. This was chaired by the Mayor, with Deputy Mayor for Business and the Chair of London Councils as deputy chairs.<sup>54</sup>

### 5.1 Economic Development Strategy

The Mayor must produce an economic development strategy. This must include an assessment of the economic conditions of Greater London, and the Mayor's proposals for:

- promoting business efficiency, investment and competitiveness in Greater London
- promoting employment in Greater London
- enhancing the development of skills relevant to employment in Greater London.

The strategy includes consultation requirements, and is subject to guidance from the Secretary of State, who may direct the Mayor to make changes if it diverges from national policy.<sup>55</sup> The [most recent strategy](#), published in December 2018, focused on:

- early years and careers guidance
- promoting training and further education, in particular to under-represented groups and the long-term unemployed
- improving (transport) accessibility and making private renting more affordable

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<sup>54</sup> See [The Local Enterprise Partnership for London](#) for details of the activities and the ending of LEAP.

<sup>55</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 333F](#). At this time the Government abolished Regional Development Agencies elsewhere in England, and repealed their duty to produce economic development strategies.

- promoting fairness at work and relaunching the London Healthy Workplace Charter
- addressing food insecurity and fuel poverty
- community participation, active citizenship and confronting terrorism.

The GLA must use a company if it wishes to use land for a commercial purpose, in pursuance of its housing, regeneration and economic development functions.<sup>56</sup>

## 5.2 Mayoral Development Corporations

The Mayor has powers to designate mayoral development areas. When a designation is made, the Secretary of State must establish an MDC. The London Assembly can veto the Mayor's decision to designate a mayoral development area on a two-thirds majority. The Mayor appoints the boards of MDCs and can transfer assets to them.<sup>57</sup>

The [London Legacy Development Corporation](#) (LLDC) went live on 1 April 2012, inheriting some staff and land from the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation and the Olympic Delivery Authority. It became the planning authority for its area from 1 October 2012,<sup>58</sup> and operates a community infrastructure levy. Planning powers are to revert to the boroughs in the area from November 2024.<sup>59</sup>

Following a consultation process in 2014, the then Mayor, Boris Johnson, launched a new MDC, the [Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation](#) (OPDC), in April 2015. This, too, is the planning authority for its area. The corporation is leading on developing an interchange station between the Elizabeth line (Crossrail) and the proposed High Speed 2 rail line.

## 5.3 London Partnership Board

The [London Partnership Board](#) was established in March 2023, and is co-chaired by the Mayor and Chair of London Councils, Councillor Georgia Gould.

The Board emerged from the work of the London Recovery Board, which had been established during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board took on some of the strategic responsibilities of the LEAP, and is also London's Local Partnership Group for the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#). It defines its role as:

“Building on the experience of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board aims to enable the city to respond to current and future complex and cross-cutting challenges by convening London's leaders. It helps co-ordinate London's response to these challenges, fostering collaboration between the city's partners at local, sub regional and city level to achieve shared goals.”<sup>60</sup>

<sup>56</sup> See the [Greater London Authority \(Specified Activities\) Order 2013](#), made under [section 34A](#) of the GLA Act 1999

<sup>57</sup> See the Localism Act 2011, [section 197](#) and [section 198](#)

<sup>58</sup> See the [London Legacy Development Corporation \(Planning Functions\) Order 2012](#) (SI 2012/2167)

<sup>59</sup> See LLDC, [Transfer of Planning Powers | Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park](#)

<sup>60</sup> GLA, [The London Partnership Board](#)

## 5.4 Economic development policies and boards

### London & Partners

[London & Partners](#) is a not-for-profit body, funded by the Mayor of London together with the Travel Association, the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Society of London Theatre, and UK Hospitality. It describes itself as a “business growth and destination agency”, and manages international promotion, foreign direct investment, and tourism. [Its website says](#):

“We promote London across the world; attract overseas organisations, events and visitors to the capital; and help retain and grow London companies ... Since 2011, London & Partners has helped to add £2.7bn to London’s economy; supported or created more than 70,000 jobs; and helped more than 2,000 overseas companies to set up or expand in London.”

The Mayor appoints the chair of London & Partners. Currently this is Howard Dawber, the Deputy Mayor for Business. The [most recent published accounts](#), for 2021-22, state that it received £14.6 million in grant from the GLA, and £5.6 million from other sources.

London & Partners also operates [Grow London Local](#), formerly the London Business Hub, one of a national network of ‘growth hubs’. These provide businesses with potential for growth with access to specialist services, such as legal, IT and accountancy support, and access to local universities. They also work with small and medium-sized enterprises to identify their support needs, and provide networking and direct support opportunities in response.

### Tourism

The Mayor has a statutory duty to support tourism, and to this end can undertake research, promotional and advisory activities, in or outside the UK, and provide financial support.<sup>61</sup> The Mayor must provide advice on request to the British Tourist Authority or (Government) Ministers on tourism matters. The Secretary of State can give grants to the Mayor in regard to tourism functions.<sup>62</sup>

London & Partners manages the [“Let’s Do London” tourism programme](#), commissioned in mid-2021 by the London Tourism Advisory Group, by way of encouraging domestic and international tourists to return to London after the COVID-19 pandemic. An [evaluation report](#) in 2022 stated that the GLA was investing £10 million in this programme that year.

### Digital policy

The GLA launched the [Smarter London Together](#) roadmap in 2018, with a further planning period running from 2021 to 2024. [A report is available](#) on progress between 2018 and 2021. Current priorities include:

- digital inclusion
- the [London Datastore](#)
- a crowdfunding platform called [Pay It Forward](#), and a chat forum called [Talk London](#)

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<sup>61</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 378](#)

<sup>62</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 381](#)

- [Make London](#) – a route for communities to propose local projects for match funding from the GLA
- Smart technology pilots in Greenwich, funded by the [EU's Sharing Cities programme](#).

## Economic fairness programmes

The Mayor has launched a number of programmes aimed at advancing economic fairness. Examples include:

- The Mayor has adopted a [London Living Wage](#) for the bodies in the GLA Group, and 2,500 other organisations have voluntarily signed up to implement it. An initial GLA report in May 2009 set the London living wage at £7.60 per hour (compared to the then National Minimum Wage of £5.73 per hour). As of May 2024, it is £13.15 per hour, compared to the National Living Wage of £11.44 per hour.<sup>63</sup>
- The [Good Work Standard](#) is an accreditation programme, providing resources to employers on good employment practices, launched in 2019. The GLA reports that over 150 organisations have been recognised by the Mayor as Good Work Standard employers.<sup>64</sup>
- The [London Anchor Institutions' Network](#) grew out of the London Recovery Board, and is a network of large organisations in London working collaboratively to address social and economic inequalities, and climate change. There are 22 member organisations listed as members currently. Specific areas of focus for the network include:
  - buying a greater share of goods and services from local micro, small, medium-sized and/or diverse-owned businesses
  - creating good work and progression opportunities for Londoners underrepresented in the labour market
  - increasing quality mentoring opportunities for young Londoners most in need
  - contributing to the capital's net-zero carbon goals, including through decarbonisation of estates and developing green skills
  - convening and sharing best practice on effective place-based partnerships.<sup>65</sup>

# 6 Spatial planning

## 6.1 The London Plan

The Mayor is required to produce a spatial development strategy (known as the London Plan). This must “include a statement of the Mayor’s policies in relation to the development and use of land in Greater London.”<sup>66</sup> The current London Plan [was published in March 2021](#). The previous version dated from [March 2016](#).

The GLA funds the production of the London Plan from its general funding. The Government does not provide any dedicated grant funding for the preparation or delivery of the London Plan. The London Plan forms part of the statutory “development plan” used to make land use decisions, alongside local plans and any neighbourhood plans. It does not constitute a

<sup>63</sup> GLA, [London Living Wage](#)

<sup>64</sup> GLA, [The Good Work Standard community of accredited employers](#)

<sup>65</sup> London Anchor Institutions' Network, [Our focus](#)

<sup>66</sup> GLA Act 1999 [section 334](#), as amended by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, [section 95](#).

delivery plan or any legal commitment to build specific infrastructure. There must also be an examination in public before the strategy is published.<sup>67</sup>

The policies in the strategy must be “of strategic importance to Greater London”, with a specific requirement to be of strategic importance to more than one London borough, and “designed to achieve objectives that relate to the particular characteristics or circumstances of Greater London.” There are further statutory requirements that the strategy must contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and take account of any nature recovery strategy relating to Greater London.<sup>68</sup>

The strategy must not be inconsistent with any national development management policy.<sup>69</sup> The Secretary of State has reserve powers to direct the Mayor to review or modify the London Plan, which were most recently exercised in March 2024.<sup>70</sup> The Secretary of State can also direct modifications during the plan-making process, a power which was exercised after the Mayor submitted a draft Plan in December 2019.<sup>71</sup>

The boroughs’ local plans and other development plan documents (such as waste plans) must be “in general conformity” with the strategy.<sup>72</sup> The GLA has published [16 London Plan Guidance documents](#) to support implementation of the London Plan.

## 6.2 Mayoral ‘call-in’ powers

The Mayor has powers to intervene in applications of ‘potential strategic importance’ submitted to London boroughs. These are governed by the [Town and Country Planning \(Mayor of London\) Order 2008](#) and the [Town and Country Planning \(Mayor of London\) \(Amendment\) Order 2011](#). The legislation defines an application of ‘potential strategic importance’ by reference to a range of criteria, including:

- development of 150 residential units or more
- development over 30 metres in height (outside the City of London)
- development on Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land.

If an application is referred to the Mayor of London, the relevant London borough planning authority would normally indicate to the Mayor whether or not it is minded to approve the application. The Mayor can then do one of three things:

- allow the London borough to determine the planning application
- direct the London borough to refuse the planning application
- “call in” the planning application.<sup>73</sup>

The Mayor may issue a direction to call in an application of potential strategic importance if all of the following criteria are met:

- the development or any of the issues raised by it are of such a nature or scale that it would have a significant impact on the implementation of the London Plan

<sup>67</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 338](#)

<sup>68</sup> GLA Act 1999 [section 334](#), as amended by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, [section 95](#).

<sup>69</sup> GLA Act 1999 [section 334](#), as amended by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, [section 95](#).

<sup>70</sup> GLA Act 1999 [section 340](#). Further powers are also in [section 341](#).

<sup>71</sup> The details of the 2020 direction, the changes made in response, and the final version of the Plan [can be found on the GLA’s website](#).

<sup>72</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 344](#)

<sup>73</sup> See the [Town and Country Planning \(Mayor of London\) Order 2008](#) (SI 2008/580)

- the development or any of the issues raised by it have significant effects that are likely to affect more than one London borough
- there are sound planning reasons for issuing a direction.

During his tenure as Mayor between 2008 and 2016, Boris Johnson used the power to call in 17 times.<sup>74</sup> Between May 2016 and October 2023, Sadiq Khan used the power 28 times.<sup>75</sup>

## 7 Housing

At its inception in 2000, the GLA was prevented from providing housing. The GLA Act 2007 removed this prohibition, permitting the GLA progressively to take on functions from Homes England (the Homes and Communities Agency). Under the [Localism Act 2011](#), the GLA took on the full range of land acquisition and social housing powers of the Homes and Communities Agency for London, including receiving grant from central government for housing purposes and the power to establish Mayoral Development Corporations for specified areas.<sup>76</sup>

The GLA has the power to compulsorily purchase land for housing and regeneration purposes, provided that the Secretary of State authorises it.<sup>77</sup> It has been conferred concurrent powers to Homes England with regard to rights of way, burial grounds and statutory undertakers.<sup>78</sup> The GLA cannot dispose of this type of land for less than market value.<sup>79</sup>

### 7.1 Homes for Londoners Board

Mayor Sadiq Khan established the non-statutory [Homes for Londoners Board](#) in 2016. The Board is chaired by the Mayor and includes representatives of London's boroughs, Transport for London, housing associations and the property sector. The Board has oversight of:

- overall housing delivery across London
- the statutory London Housing Strategy
- housing, planning and infrastructure coordination
- delivering housing investment programmes
- land held by the Mayor and other public bodies
- a task-and-finish work programme for policy development and innovation.

The Mayor established a sub-committee of the Homes for Londoners Board in 2022, the GLA Group Housing Delivery Sub-committee, to focus on the delivery of housing on GLA land. The Board has also established task-and-finish working groups for new models of housing delivery, skills and capacity of the construction industry, and the role of overseas buyers in London's property market.

<sup>74</sup> GLA, [Past public hearings](#)

<sup>75</sup> GLA, [Planning applications and decisions: public hearings](#)

<sup>76</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 333ZJ](#)

<sup>77</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 333ZA](#), introduced by GLA Act 2007

<sup>78</sup> See schedules 3 and 4 of the [Housing and Regeneration Act 2008](#). 'Concurrent' powers are available to more than one public authority and may be exercised independently by either authority.

<sup>79</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 333ZC](#)

## 7.2 Affordable Homes Programme

The GLA delivers the [Affordable Homes Programme](#) (AHP) in London, using a capital grant from the Government of £4 billion.<sup>80</sup> This programme will run from 2021 to 2026, for starts on site. In the previous iteration of this programme the GLA received £4.82 billion to deliver affordable homes between 2016 and 2023. There are a number of conditions the GLA must meet, including:

- at least half of the homes completed under this programme should be for social rent, with the remainder shared ownership and [London Living Rent](#), with rents set at one third of local incomes
- houses for sub-market rent should be calculated on the basis of [social rent](#)
- acquisitions of property (as opposed to new build) should form no more than 30 per cent of the programme spend
- some of the funding will be spent on supported housing.

The Mayor committed to providing 23,900 to 27,100 affordable homes with the funding from the 2021-2026 AHP. Some of the funding will be made available to support new council housing. Design, Sustainability and Building Safety standards, derived from the London Plan, are required for successful bids to London's AHP.<sup>81</sup>

The GLA also continues to deliver completed homes under the 2016-2023 programme, now closed for new starts on site, as well as a variety of [specialist housing programmes](#) such as the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme, and the Care and Supported Housing Programme.

## 7.3 Homes for Londoners Land Fund

The GLA operates [a fund for purchasing land for housing](#). This is operated by the GLA's Homes for Londoners team, and seeks to increase the supply of land, and the pace of supply, for affordable housing.<sup>82</sup> The fund can be used for grants, or for equity investments or debt financing. It is possible for the fund to be repaid loans made to developers, which can then be reinvested.<sup>83</sup>

The GLA says that the Land Fund comprises at least £736 million, drawn from the GLA's housing and land resources alongside funds the Mayor has secured from the Government. The Government states that it has contributed £486 million to the Land Fund. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and the GLA requires quarterly management information, on the basis of which future tranches of funding are released.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>80</sup> London Assembly, [Affordable Housing Monitor 2023](#)

<sup>81</sup> Mayor of London, Homes for Londoners: Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26 Funding Guidance, 2022, p16. Available at [MD2707 Homes for Londoners: Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26](#)

<sup>82</sup> The Land Fund is no longer open to new proposals as most funds have been allocated. See [Meeting of Homes for Londoners Board](#), 12 December 2023 (item 6).

<sup>83</sup> This has similarities with a £300 million loan fund provided to Greater Manchester in its first devolution deal, for similar purposes.

<sup>84</sup> DLUHC, [English Devolution Accountability Framework](#), March 2023, annex E

## 7.4 London Housing Strategy

The Mayor must produce a London Housing Strategy. This was made a statutory strategy by the GLA Act 2007, with further changes to the duty under Localism Act 2011.<sup>85</sup> Previously, housing issues formed part of the London Plan. The strategy is required to make recommendations for how much Government spending on affordable housing should be devolved to the Mayor, and how much should go to local authorities.<sup>86</sup> It must be signed off by the Secretary of State, who may direct the Mayor to alter it if it conflicts with national policies.<sup>87</sup> The boroughs must have regard to the strategy in any actions around housing or regeneration.

The [current Housing Strategy](#) dates from August 2018. It lists five priorities:

- building homes for Londoners
- delivering genuinely affordable homes
- high-quality homes and inclusive neighbourhoods
- a fairer deal for private renters and leaseholders
- tackling homelessness and helping rough sleepers.

The Mayor does not have the required powers to achieve all of these priorities directly – for instance, he does not have power over the private rented sector – but can seek to work with partners to deliver them.

The Mayor also published [an Implementation Plan](#) for the Housing Strategy in May 2018. This included: committing £250 million to the Mayor's Land Fund; scaling up the GLA's capacity around assembling land for housing; using land owned by the GLA group of bodies for housing; and setting a target of 649,350 completions in 10 years.

## 7.5 Building safety

Following the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017, central government pursued changes to building regulations and other reforms to improve the safety of buildings. This included work to remediate buildings that had unsafe cladding, similar to that installed on Grenfell Tower.

The GLA is administering three government funding programmes to [remediate London buildings with unsafe cladding](#):

- the Social Sector ACM Cladding Remediation Fund
- the Private Sector ACM Cladding Remediation Fund
- the Building Safety Fund for the remediation of unsafe non-ACM cladding systems.

The GLA's role is to administer these funding programmes on behalf of government. All decisions regarding the scope and design of these funds, including approvals of applications, are made by DLUHC.

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<sup>85</sup> GLA Act 2007, [section 28](#); Localism Act 2011, [section 188](#)

<sup>86</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 333A](#)

<sup>87</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 333B](#)

## 8 Skills and training

The GLA's main role in skills relates to the Adult Education Budget (AEB), which has been delegated to the Mayor. For other initiatives, the Mayor must rely on the 'core purposes' power of the GLA to implement skills policy. The GLA has no power to regulate or convene providers of further education and skills.

The Mayor has no powers over school education, further education colleges, or 16-19 training in general. The Mayor also has no power or influence over the funding decisions of the [Education and Skills Funding Agency](#), which provides funding for schools and further education colleges in England.

The Mayor convenes a [Skills for Londoners Board](#), co-chaired by Deputy Mayor Jules Pipe and Rokhsana Fiaz, the elected mayor of Newham. The Board oversees the [Skills Roadmap for London](#), published in January 2022. This is a non-statutory strategy that sets out the Mayor's priorities, focusing on the use of the devolved AEB (see section 8.2).

The [Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022](#) requires all local areas in England to publish a Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). The GLA and metro-mayors have no formal role in the production of LSIPs. [London's LSIP is being developed by BusinessLDN](#), together with the Federation of Small Businesses, the Confederation of British Industry and the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry. A [consultation document on initial findings](#) was published in April 2023. The LSIP was finalised [by the end of May 2023](#). It identified the need for improved skills in four key sectors: construction, health and social care, hospitality, and creative.

### 8.1 Adult Education Budget

The AEB was delegated to the Mayor from 2019, in line with a [memorandum of understanding on further devolution to London](#) in March 2017. This is an England-wide programme, delivered locally by the Mayor and by metro-mayors in mayoral combined authorities elsewhere in England. The AEB budget for London is just under £323 million per year.<sup>88</sup> It is ringfenced under the terms of [a memorandum of understanding between the Government and the GLA](#), published in January 2019.<sup>89</sup>

The AEB funds adult learners obtaining qualifications in circumstances set out on the Education and Skills Funding Agency webpage [Adult education budget devolution](#). Some elements of the AEB are statutory entitlements and must continue to be funded by devolved bodies.

A document entitled the '[Skills for Londoners: A Call for Action](#)' was published in September 2019 by the GLA and London Councils, calling for devolution of powers and funding for careers advice, apprenticeships, 16-18 skills, employment support services, and further education capital funding.

The GLA also receives funding from the Government to deliver a number of other skills programmes: [Skills Bootcamps for Londoners](#), [Free Course for Jobs](#), [Multiply](#), and the People and Skills strand of the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#).

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<sup>88</sup> GLA, [Mayoral Decision 3252](#), March 2024

<sup>89</sup> See also Department for Education, [Delegation of adult education: letter to the Mayor of London](#), 6 December 2018; see paragraphs 9 and 10 in particular

## 9 Environment

The GLA has a range of powers in relation to London's environment, and runs a number of programmes in this area. Key legislation in this area is the [Environment Act 1995](#), which was amended with powers and duties for the Mayor and local authorities by the GLA Acts 1999 and 2007, and the [Environment Act 2021](#). The Mayor's powers in other areas, such as in transport or spatial planning, may also be used to pursue environmental objectives.<sup>90</sup>

The Mayor has no power over Government arm's-length bodies operating around environmental policy, such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, or the Forestry Commission. The Mayor also does not have regulatory powers over the Thames or other London rivers, or any power over the [Port of London Authority](#).

The Mayor does not have a dedicated source of funding for environmental matters. Any Mayoral policies that deliver the Environment Strategy directly are dependent on general GLA funding or on competitive grants won by the GLA.

The GLA provides funding for the [London Sustainable Development Commission](#). This is a non-statutory body appointed by the Mayor. It has produced independent advice and research reports on matters such as green finance, low-carbon technology, and social value.

### 9.1 London Environment Strategy

The Mayor is required to publish a London Environment Strategy, covering biodiversity; climate change adaptation; municipal waste management; climate change mitigation and energy; air quality; and ambient noise.<sup>91</sup> This requirement was introduced by the [Localism Act 2011](#). Prior to 2011, the Mayor was required to produce separate strategies on each of the specific areas listed above.

The Mayor published the first [London Environment Strategy](#) in May 2018. Four [progress reports](#) have subsequently been published to date. As with other strategies, the Secretary of State may publish guidance and may direct changes to the strategy if it is inconsistent with national policies. The Mayor must take account of certain national policies when drafting the strategy.

### 9.2 Air quality

Under the Environment Act 1995, local authorities must have regard to the Government's national air quality strategy when carrying out their functions.<sup>92</sup> The Mayor of London is deemed the "appropriate authority" under the legislation, with a supervisory role over London boroughs in relation to air quality duties; in the rest of England and Wales this role is performed by the Secretary of State.<sup>93</sup> The legislation grants the Mayor significant powers to intervene in local action plans, including a power of direction over boroughs. The power of direction may be used, for instance, to ensure boroughs review local air quality, alter action plans, or implement specific measures to improve air quality.

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<sup>90</sup> Examples of the Mayor's use of these powers would be road user charging schemes aimed at reducing vehicle emissions, or the [Air Quality Neutral London Plan Guidance](#).

<sup>91</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 351A](#)

<sup>92</sup> Environment Act 1995, [section 81A](#), as amended by the [Environment Act 2021](#), Schedule 11

<sup>93</sup> Environment Act 1995, [section 85](#), as amended by the GLA Act 1999, [section 367](#)

In support of these powers, the Mayor has established a [London Local Air Quality Management](#) (LLAQM) framework, to enable the coordinated discharge of responsibilities by the GLA and boroughs.<sup>94</sup> The LLAQM requires London boroughs to monitor, assess and take action to improve local air quality. Boroughs must declare an Air Quality Management Area where air quality is not at required standards. Boroughs must also have regard to the provisions of the London Environment Strategy when exercising LLAQM functions.

The GLA and TfL run the [Mayor's Air Quality Fund](#), which launched in 2013. This provides London boroughs with funds to take action locally to improve air quality.

The Mayor may also use powers in other areas to pursue air quality objectives. For example:

- the Mayor has used powers in relation to transport and Transport for London to establish road user charging schemes aimed at reducing vehicle emissions (see Transport section)
- the Mayor has issued the [Air Quality Neutral London Plan Guidance](#), placing air quality requirements on new developments in London.

## 9.3 Waste management

London boroughs have responsibility for the collection and disposal of municipal waste. In some parts of London, this responsibility is managed by joint waste authorities. The boroughs must “act in general conformity” with the municipal waste element of the London Environment Strategy, and the Mayor may give them directions if they do not do so.<sup>95</sup>

The GLA Act 2007 established the [London Waste and Recycling Board](#) (now operating as ReLondon) as a statutory body. This is a partnership body with members appointed by the Mayor and London boroughs.<sup>96</sup> The Mayor chairs the Board, unless appointing a representative to do this on their behalf; Mayor Sadiq Khan appointed the current chair, Dr Liz Goodwin, in 2017. The Board's [objectives](#) are to promote and encourage:

- the production of less waste
- an increase in the proportion of waste that is reused or recycled
- the use of methods of collection, treatment and disposal of waste that are more beneficial to the environment.

## 9.4 Biodiversity and open spaces

The Mayor has some responsibilities in relation to parks and open spaces. The GLA manages Trafalgar Square and Parliament Square Garden (see Culture section), and also appoints some board members at [The Royal Parks](#). The Mayor has established time-limited advisory groups such as the [London Green Spaces Commission](#) and the [London Rewilding Taskforce](#), and has provided small funding programmes such as the [Grow Back Greener Fund](#) and the [Rewild London Fund](#).

Under the Environment Act 2021, the Mayor of London is the ‘responsible authority’ for the production of a [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) for Greater London. Responsible authorities must work with stakeholders to agree priorities for nature’s recovery; map the most valuable

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<sup>94</sup> The LLAQM system was first established in 2015, and subsequently modified in 2019.

<sup>95</sup> GLA Act 1999 [section 355](#), [section 356](#). The Mayor cannot require boroughs to take actions that would impose excessive cost or involve breaching or terminating a waste contract.

<sup>96</sup> See the [London Waste and Recycling Board Order 2008](#)

existing areas for nature; and establish shared proposals for what action should be taken to recover nature.

Relating to the Mayor's planning powers, the Environment Act 2021 also amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to introduce a statutory requirement for the Mayor to consider the biodiversity net gain in planning proposals.<sup>97</sup> This came into effect in February 2024.

## 9.5 Energy and climate change

The Mayor has no direct regulatory role or legal powers in the energy market, nor powers to compel individuals or organisations – outside of those directly controlled by the Mayor – to take steps to reduce emissions that contribute to climate change.<sup>98</sup> However, the GLA has a number of policies and programmes aimed at mitigating climate change and increasing energy efficiency.

In 2018, Mayor Sadiq Khan set out an ambition for London to be a '[net zero carbon](#)' city by 2030. This objective was not included in the London Environment Strategy earlier that year. The GLA also published a [1.5C Compatible Climate Action Plan](#) to set out measures to help achieve this objective.

The [Mayor of London's Energy Efficiency Fund](#) (MEEF) was launched in 2018, to fund low-carbon technology and upgrades to infrastructure. MEEF is a £500 million investment fund; initial funding was provided by the European Regional Development Fund, with the majority provided by private investors. MEEF is managed by Amber Infrastructure.

The GLA has an [Energy for Londoners](#) programme, which has included a wide range of initiatives, such as the following:

- [London Power](#) – an energy company launched by the GLA in 2020, in partnership with Octopus Energy. Electricity is generated from 100 per cent renewable sources.
- [Solar Together London](#) – a group-buying scheme for solar panels, to support Londoners to purchase and install solar panels for more affordable prices.
- [Warmer Homes](#) – a scheme that provided grant funding for heating and insulation measures to improve energy efficiency in the homes of fuel-poor Londoners.
- [Warmer Homes Advice Service](#) and [Energy Advice London](#) – schemes providing free advice services, advising Londoners on finding financial help, heating homes and energy efficiency.
- Retrofit Accelerator schemes for [Workplaces](#) and [Homes](#) provided boroughs and other organisation with funding, expertise, networks and other support to deliver energy efficiency measures in buildings.

Under [the Electricity and Gas \(Energy Company Obligation\) Order 2022](#), the GLA has the authority to deem certain households eligible for the national [Energy Company Obligation Flexible Eligibility](#) programme. This programme places obligations on energy suppliers to support energy efficiency measures to households vulnerable to fuel poverty.

The Mayor established the [Green Finance Fund](#) in 2023, which may lend up to £500 million to public bodies in London to fund net zero initiatives. The Mayor has also developed a

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<sup>97</sup> Environment Act 2021, [Schedule 14](#)

<sup>98</sup> [Roles and Responsibilities of the Mayor and Other Organisations](#), London Environment Strategy (Appendix 3), 2018

[divestment policy](#) with the [London Pension Fund Authority](#), the chair of which is appointed by the Mayor, aimed at ceasing new investments in fossil fuel companies.

## 10 Culture

The Mayor is required to publish a culture strategy. The most recent one, [Culture for all Londoners](#), was published in 2018.

The draft must be produced by the Cultural Strategy Group, which is established in statute. The Mayor has renamed this group [the Cultural Leadership Board](#). The Mayor appoints the chair and members, who must have relevant experience.<sup>99</sup>

The Mayor appoints the chair of the Arts Council England's London Area Council. The Mayor [appointed David Bryan to this role in December 2022](#).<sup>100</sup> However, the Mayor does not have direct control over the Arts Council's funding decisions in London.

The Mayor can provide financial support to museums, libraries, archives and other cultural institutions.<sup>101</sup> The Mayor is required by statute to appoint half of the governors of the Museum of London. The Mayor must provide at least as much grant funding to the Museum as is provided by the City Corporation (£7.6 million in 2021-22), but neither the Mayor nor the City actually controls the Museum.<sup>102</sup>

Since 2018, the Mayor has operated a London [Borough of Culture](#) award. Waltham Forest was the inaugural Borough of Culture in 2019, followed by Brent (2020), Lewisham (2022) and Croydon (2023). Wandsworth will be the next Borough of Culture, beginning in 2025. The context of this award is that London, and London boroughs, are not able to apply to the UK-wide [City of Culture award](#), which takes place every four years.

The GLA manages [Trafalgar Square](#) and [Parliament Square Garden](#). Trafalgar Square is used regularly for cultural celebrations and other events. The GLA's Culture, Creative Industries and 24 Hour London Unit oversees Trafalgar Square's Fourth Plinth Programme, and regularly commissions artworks to display on the plinth.

The GLA has a '24 Hour London' programme. In 2016, the Mayor appointed Amy Lamé as London's [Night Czar](#), whose role focuses on enhancing London's night-time economy. In 2017, the Mayor published [a vision for London as a 24-hour city](#). The Night Czar chairs the [Night Time Borough Champions Network](#).

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<sup>99</sup> GLA Act 1999, [schedule 30](#). As of May 2024, a new chair is to be appointed shortly.

<sup>100</sup> This power is exercised via [section 377A](#) of the GLA Act 1999.

<sup>101</sup> [GLA Act 1999](#), [section 377](#)

<sup>102</sup> [GLA Act 2007](#), sections 45 to 49; see also section 15 of the [Museum of London Act 1965](#). The City of London Corporation also appoints half of the governors and pays grant funding to the Museum of London.

# 11 Health

The Mayor has no power to control or direct the provision of health services in London. These are managed by the NHS via London's five sub-regional integrated care systems.<sup>103</sup>

The Mayor has a duty to consider health, and health inequalities, in all the GLA's policies.<sup>104</sup> There is no dedicated Government funding for this duty. Funding for the Mayor's health policies comes from GLA general funding, any available grants, and partnership with NHS bodies.

## 11.1 Health inequalities strategy

The Mayor must produce a health inequalities strategy.<sup>105</sup> The strategy is specifically required to set out the Mayor's policies for reducing health inequalities in London. This is a distinct responsibility from the general requirement for all of the Mayor's strategies to take into account "the health of persons in Greater London" and "health inequalities between persons living in Greater London".<sup>106</sup>

The [London Health Inequalities Strategy](#) was published in September 2018. An [Implementation Plan](#) was published in December 2021, focusing on public health-related issues such as transport, air quality and mental health (health services in London are the responsibility of the NHS).

The Mayor must collaborate with the public health adviser when producing the strategy.<sup>107</sup> The Secretary of State also has reserve powers to direct the Mayor to revise the strategy if it is inconsistent with national policies.<sup>108</sup> This implies that the strategy would, in practice, reflect points of consensus between the Government and the Mayor.

The strategy must "describe the role to be performed by any relevant body" to implement the strategy.<sup>109</sup> Relevant bodies include boroughs, functional bodies, integrated care boards, NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts, and the Secretary of State (with regard to their duty to protect public health).<sup>110</sup>

The GLA Act 1999 also defines the contents of the strategy as relating to the wider determinants of health, specifically standards of housing and transport, employment prospects, access to public services, and tobacco and alcohol use.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>103</sup> For background to the integrated care systems and an assessment of current challenges, see Anna Charles, Chris Naylor and Richard Murray, [Integrated care systems in London: challenges and opportunities ahead](#), King's Fund, February 2021.

<sup>104</sup> Upper-tier local authorities, and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, have a 'public health duty', which means they "must take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the people in its area" ([National Health Service Act 2006](#), section 2B (1)).

<sup>105</sup> This requirement was introduced by the 2007 Act, which inserted sections 309E-309H into the GLA Act 1999.

<sup>106</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 41 \(4\)](#)

<sup>107</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 309G](#)

<sup>108</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 309H](#)

<sup>109</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 309E](#) (4)(d)

<sup>110</sup> The Secretary of State's responsibilities are found in sections 2A and 2B of the [National Health Service Act 2006](#).

<sup>111</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 309F](#)

## 11.2 Health adviser

The GLA Act 2007 requires the regional director of public health for London to be the Mayor's public health adviser.<sup>112</sup> At the time of writing [this post is held by Professor Kevin Fenton](#).

The health adviser can provide advice to the Mayor, an Assembly Member, or a functional body regarding major health issues; the exercise of any functions in the GLA Act 1999 relating to health; and the implementation of the GLA Act 1999 with regard to health inequalities.<sup>113</sup>

## 11.3 London Health Board

The Mayor chairs the [London Health Board](#), which includes mayoral appointees and representatives from the health and local government sectors. The Board's terms of reference include improving the health of Londoners through pan-London collaboration; making the case for resources for London's healthcare system; and supporting London government in its statutory responsibilities for health and public health. Members include Tom Coffey (the Mayor's senior health adviser), Professor Kevin Fenton (the Mayor's public health adviser), councillors and NHS representatives. The partner members and the GLA fund the Board, and its secretariat is based at the GLA.

A 2019 report from the Mayor and NHS London, the [London Health and Care Vision](#), set out a number of joint priorities and informs the work of the Board.

## 11.4 Health and care devolution

In 2017, the Mayor signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with central Government, London boroughs, NHS Improvement, what was then Public Health England, and other partners, securing a devolution deal for health and care across the city. The deal commits partners to working towards:

- improving the utilisation of the health service estate
- new payment mechanisms
- place-based approaches to provider regulation
- integration of health and care budgets
- city-level action on the wider determinants of health, including through the Work and Health programme.

The GLA published a document in November 2017 setting out its intentions under health devolution in London.<sup>114</sup> These included:

- establishing a London Estates Board, to involve local government and other bodies in strategic NHS estates decisions; this will also mean that proceeds from land sales can be reinvested in the healthcare system
- ensuring funds from the 'sugar levy' are used to tackle obesity in London
- greater local design of health-related employment support services

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<sup>112</sup> GLA Act 2007, [sections 309A and 309B](#). If the regional director post ceases to exist, the Secretary of State must designate a relevant individual as the Mayor's health adviser.

<sup>113</sup> GLA Act 1999, [section 309A](#)

<sup>114</sup> GLA, [Health and Care Devolution: What it Means for London](#), November 2017

- a London Workforce Board, to coordinate training between health and social care staff, promoting more integrated roles to support an integrated model of care.

The [London Health and Care Partnership](#), which includes the GLA, has recently commissioned a review of the devolution agreement.

A 2019 report from the Mayor and NHS London, the [London Health and Care Vision](#), set out a number of joint priorities.

## 11.5 Food

The GLA also manages several food-related programmes. The non-statutory [London Food Board](#) was established in 2004 to advise the Mayor and GLA on food matters affecting Londoners, and on the delivery of the [London Food Strategy](#). The Chair of the Board is Claire Pritchard, the Chief Executive of the Greenwich Cooperative Development Agency. The strategy was published in 2018 and focuses on a number of priorities, including:

- reducing food insecurity
- restricting advertising of unhealthy food
- supporting community gardens and urban farming
- reducing childhood obesity.

Mayor Sadiq Khan announced in 2023 that the GLA would be funding [free school meals](#) to all pupils at state-funded primary schools in the 2023-24 academic year. This was later extended for a further year. The cost of the policy for 2024-25 is £140 million.<sup>115</sup>

# 12 Resilience

## 12.1 Resilience duties

Under the [Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#), duties are placed on local authorities, emergency services and other agencies to put in place arrangements for preparing for emergencies, such as floods, pandemics, or terrorist attacks. Agencies are required to cooperate and share information with each other in assessing risk, preparing response plans and providing advice to the public.<sup>116</sup> Agencies must set up a local resilience forum to support this cooperation.

The GLA is a Category 1 responder, as are the police; fire and rescue, and health services; London boroughs; and the Environment Agency. Alongside a wider group of Category 2 responders, including transport and utility providers, these organisations form the [London Resilience Partnership](#) (LRP).

The London Resilience Forum (LRF) meets three times per year to set the overall strategy for the LRP. The Chair of the LRF is appointed by the Mayor.<sup>117</sup> In May 2024, the Mayor

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<sup>115</sup> Mayor of London, [Mayor to continue funding groundbreaking universal free school meals policy next academic year \(2024/ 2025\)](#), 9 January 2024

<sup>116</sup> Civil Contingencies Act 2004, [Section 2](#)

<sup>117</sup> This and other specific roles for the Mayor and GLA are set out in Cabinet Office [guidance on emergency preparedness](#).

announced that David Bellamy, the Mayor's Chief of Staff, had been appointed as Chair of the LRF.<sup>118</sup>

The London Resilience Group (LRG) supports the work of the GLA, the LRP and the LRF in delivering the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act; and facilitates the coordination of partner agencies in response to large-scale incidents. Until 2024, the LRG was hosted within LFB, with funding provided by the GLA. A process is currently under way for transferring the LRG into the GLA directly, and combining it with the GLA's existing City Operations Unit to form a London Resilience Unit.<sup>119</sup>

## 12.2 City Resilience Strategy

In early 2020, the Mayor published London's first [City Resilience Strategy](#). The strategy focused on the long-term resilience challenges facing London over the next 30 years. It set out a vision for how the GLA and partner agencies can work in partnership to build resilience against shocks and long-term stresses. It addressed risks such as extreme weather, infectious diseases and infrastructure failure. An example of a project set out in the strategy is a network of [cool spaces](#) established to protect against extreme heat. The COVID-19 pandemic emerged soon after the publication of the strategy, affecting resilience priorities and processes, and the capacity of partner agencies to focus on the full range of resilience objectives.

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<sup>118</sup> Mayor of London, [Mayor announces key senior appointments](#), 10 May 2024

<sup>119</sup> [Mayoral Decision 3257](#), 12 March 2024

## Other formats and languages

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### Vietnamese

Nếu ông (bà) muốn nội dung văn bản này được dịch sang tiếng Việt, xin vui lòng liên hệ với chúng tôi bằng điện thoại, thư hoặc thư điện tử theo địa chỉ ở trên.

### Greek

*Εάν επιθυμείτε περίληψη αυτού του κειμένου στην γλώσσα σας, παρακαλώ καλέστε τον αριθμό ή επικοινωνήστε μαζί μας στην ανωτέρω ταχυδρομική ή την ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση.*

### Turkish

Bu belgenin kendi dilinize çevrilmiş bir özetini okumak isterseniz, lütfen yukarıdaki telefon numarasını arayın, veya posta ya da e-posta adresi aracılığıyla bizimle temasa geçin.

### Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਡਾਕ ਜਾਂ ਈਮੇਲ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

### Hindi

यदि आपको इस दस्तावेज़ का सारांश अपनी भाषा में चाहिए तो उपर दिये हुए नंबर पर फोन करें या उपर दिये गये डाक पते या ई मेल पते पर हम से संपर्क करें।

### Bengali

আপনি যদি এই দলিলের একটি সারাংশ নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে ফো করবেন অথবা উল্লিখিত ডাক ঠিকানায় বা ই-মেইল ঠিকানায় আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করবেন।

### Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کا خلاصہ اپنی زبان میں درکار ہو تو، براہ کرم نمبر پر فون کریں یا مذکورہ بالا ڈاک کے پتے یا ای میل پتے پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

### Arabic

الحصول على ملخص لهذا المستند بلغتك،  
فارجاء الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو الاتصال على  
العنوان البريدي العادي أو عنوان البريدي  
الإلكتروني أعلاه.

### Gujarati

જો તમારે આ દસ્તાવેજનો સાર તમારી ભાષામાં જોઈતો હોય તો ઉપર આપેલ નંબર પર ફોન કરો અથવા ઉપર આપેલ ટપાલ અથવા ઇ-મેઇલ સરનામા પર અમારો સંપર્ક કરો.