

London's spatial development strategy: a guide to the London Plan

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LONDONASSEMBLY

Research Unit

Overview

The London Plan is the Mayor's statutory spatial development strategy for Greater London, which sets out an integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for how London will develop over the next 20-25 years.

The current London Plan was published in March 2021. This paper provides an overview of the current London Plan, the processes used to develop it, and scrutiny work by the London Assembly.

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.

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1 Background

1.1 History of the London Plan

The GLA was formally established on 3 July 2000 and took over the functions of the London Planning Advisory Committee and the Government Office for London on strategic planning.¹

The [first London Plan](#) was published in 2004 and was presented in the context that London had changed significantly over the preceding decades.² The GLA stated that some of these changes had been driven by international forces, such as “the globalisation of many economic sectors...an increased inter-relationship between major economies” and the “movement of people across borders”³ (in addition to others).

The GLA goes on to state that:

“These pressures have grown at a time where there has been no strategic plan for London...lacking its own strategic authority, London's economy developed and its population grew, without a clear vision of their place in the UK economy, without effective strategic planning, and without a clear assessment of the resources and policies required to deal with renewed growth”.⁴

Since 2000, there have been three Mayors of London that have produced three spatial development strategies for London:

- The [2004 London Plan](#) was produced under the former Mayor of London Ken Livingstone in March 2004. There were two sets of alterations to this plan and an updated version was published in February 2008.⁵
- The [2011 London Plan](#) was produced under the former Mayor of London Boris Johnson. There were two sets of alterations to this plan to ensure it was consistent with Government guidance and national legislation enacted in July 2011.⁶
- The [2021 London Plan](#) was produced under the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan. This is the current London Plan.

When a new London Plan is published, it is referred to as a ‘Replacement Plan’. This means it is not an alteration or update to previous plans. When a replacement plan is published, it replaces all previous versions.

¹ Litchfields, ‘[Spatial Awareness, The role of Spatial Development Strategies](#)’, May 2022

² GLA, [The London Plan](#), February 2004

³ GLA, [The London Plan](#), February 2004

⁴ GLA, [The London Plan](#), February 2004

⁵ Litchfields, ‘[Spatial Awareness, The role of Spatial Development Strategies](#)’, May 2022

⁶ Litchfields, ‘[Spatial Awareness, The role of Spatial Development Strategies](#)’, May 2022

1.2 Legislative background

The Greater London Authority (GLA) Act 1999 established the GLA, the London Assembly and the Mayor of London.⁷ Under this Act, the Mayor is required to publish seven statutory strategies, one of which is the spatial development strategy (the London Plan).⁸

The Mayor can choose to prepare and publish alterations to a spatial development strategy or a replacement plan at any point.⁹ The spatial development strategy is a statutory document which must be kept under review.¹⁰ National Planning Policy requires that the London Plan is reviewed at least every 5 years.¹¹

The current London Plan (2021) runs from 2019 to 2041 and aims to provide a longer-term view of London's development.¹² The 2021 London Plan must be reviewed by 2026, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.¹³

The strategy must include the Mayor's "general policies in respect of the development and use of land in Greater London".¹⁴ It must also be consistent with the general spatial development aspects of the Mayor's other strategies, which include transport, environment, economic development, housing, culture and health, and health inequalities.¹⁵ The London Plan must be consistent with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework.¹⁶

The London Plan must only deal with matters which are of strategic importance to Greater London,¹⁷ taking account of the principal purposes of the GLA. These purposes are:

- promoting economic development and wealth creation in Greater London
- promoting social development in Greater London and
- promoting the improvement of the environment in Greater London.¹⁸

The spatial development strategy (along with all other statutory Mayoral strategies) must have regard to:

- "the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people
- reducing health inequality and promoting Londoners' health
- achieving sustainable development in the United Kingdom
- climate change and the consequences of climate change

⁷ GLA Act 1999, [section 2 \(1\)](#)

⁸ GLA Act 1999, [section 41\(1\)](#)

⁹ GLA Act 1999, [section 341 \(1\)](#)

¹⁰ GLA Act 1999, [section 340 \(1\)](#)

¹¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [National Planning Policy Framework](#), December 2023

¹² GLA, The [London Plan](#), 2021

¹³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [National Planning Policy Framework](#), December 2023

¹⁴ GLA Act 1999, [section 334 \(3\)](#)

¹⁵ GLA Act 1999, [section 334 \(4\)](#)

¹⁶ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [National Planning Policy Framework](#), December 2023

¹⁷ GLA Act 1999, [section 334 \(5\)](#)

¹⁸ GLA Act 1999, [section 30 \(2\)](#)

- the desirability of promoting and encouraging the use of the Thames, particularly for passenger and freight transportation
- the resources available to implement the Mayor's strategies".¹⁹

2 The 2021 London Plan

2.1 Structure of the Plan

The [2021 London Plan](#) is split into 12 chapters. This section provides a summary of each chapter.²⁰

Chapter 1 sets out the Mayor's overall vision and introduces the concept of Good Growth, which are a set of principles that underpin the London Plan (outlined in section 2.2 below).

Chapter 2 sets out the Spatial Development Patterns for London. This section includes:

- **Opportunity areas:** the Mayor's growth strategies for specific areas in London identified as having the development capacity to accommodate new housing, commercial development, and infrastructure (like transport).
- **London's collaboration with the Wider South East:** the Mayor's policies to collaborate with the Wider South East to find solutions to shared strategic concerns – for example, barriers to housing and infrastructure delivery – and to secure mutual benefits.
- **The Central Activities Zone (CAZ):** the Mayor's policies with regards to London's centre which consider the unique assets of the area, such as globally recognised business locations, culture and heritage, entertainment, shopping and tourism.
- **Town centres and high streets:** the Mayor's policies related to how the "vitality and viability" of London's town centres and the "character and function of high streets" should be promoted and maintained.
- **Strategic and local regeneration:** the Mayor's policies in relation to "Strategic Areas for Regeneration", which denote areas in London that experience disproportionate levels of inequality and deprivation.

Chapters three to twelve cover topic-based policies and implementation.

Chapter 3, Design: this section covers a range of design-related policies from London's form, character and capacity for growth, to specific policies on housing quality and standards and fire safety.

Chapter 4, Housing: this section covers a range of policies related to housing from increasing housing supply to specific policies on specialist accommodation.

¹⁹ GLA, The [London Plan](#), 2021

²⁰ GLA, The [London Plan](#), 2021

Chapter 5, Social Infrastructure: this section covers policies related to services and facilities that contribute to a good quality of life, which includes “health provision, education, community, play, youth, early years, recreation, sports, faith, criminal justice and emergency facilities”.

Chapter 6, Economy: this section includes policies related to industrial locations and specific policies related to offices, workspaces, business spaces and the commercial sector (like retail, markets and hot food takeaways).

Chapter 7, Heritage and Culture: this section covers policies related to heritage conservation, growth and World Heritage Sites, and policies to support and maintain London's night-time economy, public houses and culture and creative industries.

Chapter 8, Green Infrastructure and Natural Environment: this section includes policies on London's Green infrastructure, London's Greenbelt and Metropolitan Land, and policies around specific environmental issues, like Geodiversity and Urban greening.

Chapter 9, Sustainable Infrastructure: this section covers a range of policies including air quality, managing heat risk and flood risk management.

Chapter 10, Transport: this section includes broader policies on a “strategic approach to transport” and “healthy streets”, as well as specific policies on areas like cycling and car parking.

Chapter 11, Funding the London Plan: this section sets out the policy framework for viability and planning obligations and estimates the investment in infrastructure needed to deliver the policies set out in the London Plan.

Chapter 12, Monitoring: this section sets out how the London Plan is kept under review using key performance indicators and the Annual Monitoring Report.

2.2 Good Growth

The current London plan is underpinned by the concept of “Good Growth”. The GLA defines “Good Growth” as “growth that is socially and economically inclusive and environmentally sustainable”.²¹ There are six Good Growth objectives that inform each policy area in the London Plan. Under each Good Growth objective, there is a list of considerations for those involved in planning and development. The six Good Growth objectives outlined in the London Plan are:

Building strong and inclusive communities refers to planning with, and for, the diverse communities of London. This section states that those involved in planning and development should:

“support and promote the creation of a London where all Londoners, including children and young people, older people, disabled people, and people with young

²¹ GLA, The [London Plan](#), 2021

children, as well as people with other protected characteristics, can move around with ease and enjoy the opportunities the city provides, creating a welcoming environment that everyone can use confidently, independently, and with choice and dignity, avoiding separation or segregation".²²

Making the best use of land refers to efficient and sustainable planning and development that achieves optimum development capacity of sites whilst protecting open spaces and promoting the creation of green infrastructure.

Creating a healthy city refers to reducing health inequalities and improving the mental and physical health of Londoners. Issues such as access to, and quality of, green spaces, the quality and standards of new buildings, and the creation of a healthy food system, are cited in this section. The Mayor's "Healthy Streets Approach" is the framework of the Mayor's Transport Strategy and is outlined in the "[Healthy Streets for London](#)" document, which sets out how the Mayor and Transport for London will encourage Londoners to walk, cycle and use public transport more.²³ The "Healthy Streets Approach" outlined in the London Plan described as aiming to:

"...tackle London's inactivity crisis, improve air quality and reduce the other health impacts of living in a car-dominated city by planning street networks that work well for people on foot and on bikes, and providing public transport networks that are attractive alternatives to car use. It will also ensure that streets become more social spaces".²⁴

Delivering the homes Londoners need considers how to accelerate the delivery of high quality, well-designed, accessible, and affordable housing in London.

Growing a good economy refers to the enhancement and conservation of London's economic success and global competitiveness. Those involved in planning and development are asked to:

- "ensure that London's economy diversifies and that the benefits of economic success are shared more equitably across London
- ensure that London continues to provide leadership in innovation, research, policy and ideas, supporting its role as an international incubator and centre for learning and
- promote and support London's rich heritage, cultural assets, and its role as a 24-hour city".²⁵

Increasing efficiency and resilience concerns the environmental impact of planning and development in London and the safety and security of the city. Some of the considerations those involved in planning and development are asked to consider include to:

- "ensure buildings and infrastructure are designed to adapt to a changing climate

²² GLA, The [London Plan](#), 2021

²³ GLA, 'Healthy Streets' [accessed 11 October 2024]

²⁴ GLA, The [London Plan](#), 2021

²⁵ GLA, The [London Plan](#), 2021

- create a safe and secure environment which is resilient to the impact of emergencies including fire and terrorism
- improve energy efficiency and support the move towards a low carbon circular economy".²⁶

3 London Plan Guidance

[London Plan Guidance](#) (LPG) aims to support developers, boroughs, and others with the practical application of the London Plan. LPG documents have no specific statutory weight and cannot create or change London Plan policies. They are, however, material considerations in planning decisions. According to the GLA, there is an expectation that the guidance will be taken into account by local planning authorities when creating local plans and other planning documents.²⁷

Earlier London Plans were supported by Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), which also set out how the Plan should be implemented. Sixteen SPGs were 'saved' when the current London Plan was published in March 2021 as they remained relevant to the London Plan 2021. The GLA website states that over time, the LPG will update and replace the remaining SPG documents.²⁸

Since 2020, the GLA has published a range of LPG documents. There is guidance relating to most chapters of the current London Plan. For instance, Chapter 3 on Design has LPGs on [Characterisation and Growth Strategy](#), [Optimising Site Capacity](#), [Small Site Design Codes](#), [Housing Design Standards](#), [Public London Charter](#), and the draft LPG on [Fire Safety](#).

The GLA also publishes 'Practice notes', which are documents that provide information on the practical application of specific planning matters. Examples include the "[Practice note on contaminated land](#)" and "[Practice note on industrial intensification](#)".

LPG does not undergo an examination in public like the London Plan, as it is based on policy of the London Plan. However, it is subject to consultation which the Mayor will take into account when signing off guidance documents.²⁹ Consultations are carried out by the GLA. All past consultations can be found on the [GLA website](#).

²⁶ GLA, The [London Plan](#), 2021

²⁷ GLA, [London Plan Guidance](#), accessed August 2024

²⁸ GLA, [London Plan Guidance](#), accessed August 2024. NB: SPG and LPG documents both refer to guidance that supports the implementation of the London Plan. For documents published before 2020, the term SPG was used rather than LPG. The GLA refers to SPGs when discussing policies in previous versions of the London Plan.

²⁹ GLA, [London Plan Guidance FAQs](#), accessed August 2024

4 Housing

In December 2021, the GLA began the process of engaging with Londoners and stakeholders through the “Planning for London Programme” (outlined in section 6.2).³⁰ The programme aims to gather information to identify issues that a future London Plan review could consider.³¹

In July 2024, the Mayor stated that housing delivery will be “at the heart” of the new London Plan and that tackling the housing crisis is an emerging priority.³² In May 2024, the Mayor stated that in addition to a new strategic housing market assessment, in preparation for the next London Plan, officers are drafting the first “digital housing capacity assessment”.³³

4.1 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Since the formation of the GLA in 2000, there have been a series of assessments of London's housing requirements, which began with the Mayor's Housing Commission in November 2000.³⁴ The GLA developed its own approach to assessing housing requirements, which resulted in the 2004 London Housing Requirements Study.³⁵ The methodology of this study was further developed into the 2008 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA),³⁶ which sets out estimates of Greater London's current and future housing requirements to inform the London Plan evidence base.

[The 2017 SHMA](#) sets out the number of new homes by tenure and type, as well as analysing the housing requirements needed to support important sub-groups of the population.³⁷ Though the SHMA provides evidence of London's housing requirements, it does not seek to determine the appropriate policy response.³⁸

4.2 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

[The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment](#) (SHLAA) determines the quantity and suitability of land that could be used for housing development. The evidence gathered through the SHLAA then determines the borough housing targets in the London Plan. The SHLAA identifies large sites (0.25 hectares or more) and small sites (under 0.25 hectares) for potential housing development, and has a specific process for each:

- Larger sites are assessed by the GLA and local planning authorities to assess the “capacity, availability, deliverability, and their suitability for residential and mixed-use development”.

³⁰ GLA, [‘Shaping the next London Plan’](#), accessed October 2024

³¹ GLA, [‘Shaping the next London Plan’](#), accessed October 2024

³² Questions to the Mayor, [MQT 2024/1430](#), 23 May 2024

³³ Questions to the Mayor, [MQT 2024/1430](#), 23 May 2024

³⁴ GLA, [The 2017 London Strategic Housing Market Assessment](#), November 2017

³⁵ GLA, [The 2017 London Strategic Housing Market Assessment](#), November 2017

³⁶ GLA, [The 2017 London Strategic Housing Market Assessment](#), November 2017

³⁷ GLA, [The 2017 London Strategic Housing Market Assessment](#), November 2017

³⁸ GLA, [The 2017 London Strategic Housing Market Assessment](#), November 2017

- Smaller sites are assessed solely by the GLA through a modelling exercise.³⁹

The 2017 SHLAA stated that:

“Large sites (0.25 hectares and more in size) provide capacity for 400,470 homes during this period, approximately 40,000 a year. This accounts for 62% of London's overall housing capacity during the 10 year period and represents an 11,000 a year increase on the large site capacity findings during phase two and three of the previous 2013 SHLAA study, which covered the period 2015 to 2025”.⁴⁰

It also stated that, “Small sites provide capacity for 245,730 homes over the 10 year period and account for 38% of overall housing capacity in London within the target”.⁴¹

5 Local and Neighbourhood Plans

Local plans and Neighbourhood plans must be in conformity with the spatial development strategy for London.

5.1 Conformity with The London Plan

London planning authorities consist of the 32 London boroughs, the City of London Corporation, and the Mayoral Development Corporations (the London Legacy Development Corporation⁴² and the Old Oak Park Royal Development Corporation).⁴³

Local planning authorities (LPAs) prepare “Development Plans” also known as local plans for their own areas. A local plan can be a single document or a number of documents like Core Strategies, Site Allocation documents, Area Action Plans and Waste and Mineral Plans.⁴⁴ These plans and any supplementary guidance documents must be in general conformity with the London Plan.⁴⁵

However, the London Plan does not preclude planning authorities and neighbourhood forums from bringing forward plans that may not align with specific policies in the London Plan if they can be shown to better achieve the broader objectives of the London Plan.⁴⁶

5.2 Mayoral review of local plans

Local planning authorities must submit their draft local plan (this is called the Regulation 10 stage) to the Mayor to assess whether the plan is in general conformity with the London

³⁹ GLA, [Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment](#), accessed August 2024]

⁴⁰ GLA, [Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment](#), accessed August 2024

⁴¹ GLA, [Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment](#), accessed August 2024

⁴² From 30 November 2024, the London Legacy Development Corporation will return planning powers to the local London Boroughs. See London Assembly Research Unit, [London Legacy Development Corporation](#), 2024

⁴³ GLA, [Local Plans and general conformity with the London Plan](#), accessed August 2024

⁴⁴ GLA, [Local Plans and general conformity with the London Plan](#), accessed August 2024

⁴⁵ GLA Act 1999, [section 344](#)

⁴⁶ GLA, The [London Plan](#), 2021

Plan.⁴⁷ The Mayor provides a response back to LPAs within 6 weeks from the date the request is made. This is the stage before the draft plan is submitted to the Secretary of State for an Examination in Public.⁴⁸

London's LPAs regularly consult with the Mayor at all stages of their local plan preparation and can choose to consult the Mayor at any point in the process. The Mayor can also provide a general conformity opinion at any time.⁴⁹ All the Mayor's [local plan consultation responses](#) are publicly available.

5.3 Neighbourhood Plans

The Localism Act 2011 introduced Neighbourhood Planning, which is a process led by the community (usually a neighbourhood forum) and supported by councils. Like LPADPs, neighbourhood plans must also be in conformity with the London Plan and with the strategic policies of the local plan. The Mayor is a statutory consultee for neighbourhood plans and is consulted at the pre-submission and publication stages.⁵⁰

5.4 Plans outside London

The Mayor may occasionally be consulted on local plans from planning authorities outside of London where they are likely to impact the city. The Mayor does not assess these plans based on any conformity to the London Plan as they are outside of his remit.

6 Call-ins

6.1 Criteria for call-ins

Under the [Town and Country Planning \(Mayor of London\) Order 2008](#), LPAs are required to consult the Mayor if they receive applications of “potential strategic importance” (PSI). These applications are known as “referred applications” and give the Mayor opportunity to consider whether the application complies with the London Plan and other strategic planning considerations.⁵¹ An application is referable to the Mayor if it meets the criteria set out in the Mayor of London order. These include, but are not limited to:

- development of more than 150 residential units
- development over 30 metres in height (outside the City of London)
- development on the Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land
- a building more than 25 metres high and adjacent to the River Thames

⁴⁷ GLA, '[Local Plans and general conformity with the London Plan](#)', accessed October 2024

⁴⁸ GLA, '[Local Plans and general conformity with the London Plan](#)', accessed October 2024

⁴⁹ GLA, '[Local Plans and general conformity with the London Plan](#)', accessed August 2024

⁵⁰ GLA, '[Local Plans and general conformity with the London Plan](#)', accessed 20 August 2024

⁵¹ London Assembly Planning and Regeneration Committee, '[Open Planning? Community engagement and transparency when the Mayor calls in planning applications](#)', March 2022

- a building more than 150 metres high (inside the City of London).⁵²

6.2 Process for call-ins

If a planning application does not meet the criteria, then the Mayor has no power to be involved. However, if one or more criteria are met and the application is referred to the Mayor, the application will go through two or three stages.⁵³

Stage 1: GLA consultation

GLA officers evaluate whether the submitted application meets the policies of the London Plan within six weeks of the submission. They will then write to the LPA with the Stage 1 Response, which includes the Mayor's comments on the application and any suggestions for changes to the application to ensure it is in conformity with London Plan policies.⁵⁴ The LPA then evaluates the Stage 1 response, alongside any other relevant documents written by planners, developers or local council officers. The Planning Committee of the local council will meet to grant or refuse planning permission.

Stage 2: The Mayor's decision

The Planning Committee's decision is referred back to the Mayor (this is called a Stage 2 referral). The Mayor has 14 days to review the Stage 2 referral and make a final decision on the application. The Mayor can approve the LPA's final decision and direct the LPA to refuse the application if it has been approved. The Mayor has directly refused 10 applications since 2016.⁵⁵ The Mayor also has the power to direct that he will become the local planning authority for an application. This is known as a "call-in"; these applications pass to Stage 3.

Stage 3: Call-ins

Call-ins are also commonly referred to as "public hearings", "representation hearings" and "Stage 3s".⁵⁶

The Mayor can only call-in applications that are of "potential strategic importance" (PSI), as set out in the Mayor of London order. The call-in criteria are as follows:

- the development would have a significant impact on the implementation of the London Plan
- the development would have significant effects that are likely to affect more than one London Borough; and
- there are sound planning reasons for issuing a direction.⁵⁷

⁵² [The Town and Country Planning \(Mayor of London\) Order 2008](#)

⁵³ Planning aid for London, [The Mayor and the call-in process](#), accessed 20 August 2024

⁵⁴ Planning aid for London, [The Mayor and the call-in process](#), accessed 20 August 2024

⁵⁵ GLA, [Direction to refuse applications](#), [accessed 20 August 2024]

⁵⁶ GLA, [Past Public Hearings](#), accessed 20 August 2024

⁵⁷ The Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008, [section 7 \(1\)](#)

The Mayor will hold a public hearing on called-in planning applications. During the hearing, the Mayor will hear from the applicant and the LPA. Individuals and organisations that submitted written evidence about the application to the GLA or LPA are eligible to speak at the hearing.⁵⁸ According to the charity 'Planning Aid for London', community groups have criticised the public hearing process for not giving them enough time to make their case.⁵⁹

When the Mayor's decision has been made, it is published on the GLA website.⁶⁰ All past and future public hearings can be found on [the GLA website](#).

During his tenure as Mayor between May 2008 and April 2016, Boris Johnson used the power to call in 17 times.⁶¹ Since May 2016, Sadiq Khan has used the power 30 times.⁶²

7 Consultation process

The London Plan is subject to an extensive consultation process. This includes meeting the consultation requirements that apply to all statutory Mayoral strategies, plus some additional steps specific to the London Plan, like the Examination in Public.⁶³

The Mayor is required by the GLA Act to consult the following groups when drafting or amending a statutory strategy:

- the London Assembly
- functional bodies
- each London borough council
- the council of any county or district that borders Greater London and is affected by the proposed strategy
- the Common Council
- the Secretary of State
- any other groups the Mayor considers appropriate⁶⁴

Each of these groups should receive a copy of the draft strategy and be able to make suggestions, referred to as representations, which must be considered by the Mayor. The Mayor is not obliged to make any changes to the plan based on these representations.⁶⁵

⁵⁸ GLA, [Procedure for Representation Hearings at the Greater London Authority](#), June 2021

⁵⁹ Planning aid for London, [The Mayor and the call-in process](#), accessed 20 August 2024

⁶⁰ GLA, [Procedure for Representation Hearings at the Greater London Authority](#), June 2021

⁶¹ GLA, [Past Public Hearings](#), accessed 20 August 2024. Figure based on the number of hearings listed.

⁶² GLA, [Public Hearings and Mayoral call-ins](#), accessed 18 October 2024. Figure based on the number of hearings listed.

⁶³ William Ditcham, ['Mayoral strategies in London'](#), July 2024

⁶⁴ GLA Act 1999, section 334 (3)

⁶⁵ GLA Act 1999, [section 335](#)

Furthermore, the bodies that the Mayor considers consulting must include each of the following:

- a) "voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit the whole or part of Greater London;
- b) bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in Greater London;
- c) bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in Greater London;
- d) bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in Greater London".⁶⁶

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 Assembly rejects.⁶⁷ See section 9 for further information.

7.1 Public examination

Before it can be published, The London Plan is also subject to an "Examination in Public" (EiP), which refers to a scrutiny process run by a panel appointed by the Secretary of State.⁶⁸ The EiP concludes with a report containing recommendations for the Mayor to consider. The Mayor can disregard these recommendations but is then required to send a statement to the Secretary of State explaining the reasoning.⁶⁹

The EiP of the 2021 London Plan was held between 15 January 2019 and 22 May 2019, and involved over 300 organisations and individuals contributing to the discussion of 94 matters in 51 hearing sessions. In response to these hearings and written evidence submitted by participants, suggested changes to the plan were added to the draft London Plan and sent back to inspectors.⁷⁰

The Secretary of State can direct the Mayor to make modifications to the plan where there is inconsistency with national policy, or if the plan would be detrimental to areas outside of London. This power was exercised in March 2020, when the Secretary of State directed the Mayor to make changes to several policy areas intended to increase housing delivery in London.⁷¹

Using the same powers, the Secretary of State can also direct the Mayor to make amendments to the Plan after it has been published, as happened most recently in March 2024.⁷² This review directed the Mayor to review specific policies related to "Industrial land"

⁶⁶ GLA Act 1999, [section 32 \(3\)](#)

⁶⁷ GLA Act 1999, [section 42 \(b\)](#)

⁶⁸ GLA Act 1999, [section 338 \(3\)](#)

⁶⁹ GLA, [Examination in Public for the Draft New London Plan](#), accessed October 2024

⁷⁰ GLA, [The London Plan](#), 2021

⁷¹ Secretary of State for previous Housing, Communities and Local Government [letter to the Mayor of London](#), 13 March 2020

⁷² Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities letter to the Mayor of London, [Further action on the London Plan and London Housing](#), 18 March 2024

and “Opportunity Areas” in the London Plan by 30 September 2024, with the aim to address the undersupply of housing in London. The review also requested that in the next statutory review of the London Plan, the Mayor focuses specifically on issues of strategic importance in London, and that he refines the London Plan accordingly, “to reduce its complexity and the overlap with local plans”.⁷³ On 30 September 2024, the new Labour government withdrew this review made by the previous government.⁷⁴

If the Secretary of State issues a direction to amend the London Plan, the Mayor must satisfy the Secretary of State that he has made the amendments necessary to conform with the direction.⁷⁵

7.2 Planning for London Programme

The GLA's [Planning for London Programme](#) aims to get the views of Londoners and stakeholders to identify issues that a further review of the 2021 London Plan could consider. This programme began in December 2021. This programme to date has included various forms of public consultation which can be found on the [GLA engagement portal](#), including:

- a Planning for London call for evidence⁷⁶
- a survey aimed at young Londoners
- stakeholder events
- ‘deliberative events’ (all-day events that bring together groups of Londoners to talk about specific issues)
- online discussion threads through ‘Talk London’ (City Hall’s online community)
- co-designed engagement through various panels and stakeholders (for example, the London Housing Panel).⁷⁷

⁷³ Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities letter to the Mayor of London, [Further action on the London Plan and London Housing](#), 18 March 2024

⁷⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, ‘[Deputy Prime Minister withdraws London Plan review](#)’, 30 September 2024

⁷⁵ GLA Act 1999, [Section 8A](#)

⁷⁶ Mayor of London, [Planning for London call for evidence](#), accessed 20 August 2024

⁷⁷ Mayor of London, [Planning for London Programme](#), accessed 20 August 2024

8 Monitoring

The 1999 GLA Act places a duty on the Mayor to monitor the implementation of the London Plan and collect data about issues relevant to the preparation, review, alteration, replacement, or implementation of the plan.⁷⁸

The 2021 London Plan is monitored by the statutory Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and is monitored by a framework agreed under MD2978 in 2022,⁷⁹ which uses the six Good Growth objectives (set out in section 3.2) and 12 Key Performance Indicators outlined in the 2021 London Plan, in addition to:

- consideration of social, environmental and economic value
- information about the London Plan Guidance
- further evidence to support the implementation of the Plan.⁸⁰

The 12 KPIs used to monitor the plan are:

- supply of new homes
- supply of affordable homes
- supply of office capacity
- supply of affordable workspace
- availability of industrial land
- protection of Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land
- carbon emissions through new development
- modal share
- Londoners engaging in active travel
- air quality
- impact of development on London's heritage
- provision of cultural infrastructure

The monitoring framework approved under the Mayoral Decision MD2978 monitors the 2021 London Plan but according to the GLA, this framework will be periodically reviewed and adjusted for future AMRs.⁸¹ Moreover, each version of the London Plan will define its own KPIs.⁸²

The London Plan is monitored by the GLA. According to the GLA, performance against the KPIs should be reported in the AMR each Spring.⁸³ However, there have been some delays in the publication of the AMR. For example, the [London Plan AMR 2019/20](#) took more than two years to publish.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ GLA Act 1999, [Section 341](#)

⁷⁹ [MD2978 Annual Monitoring Report Framework - London Plan 2021 | London City Hall](#)

⁸⁰ [London Plan AMR 19](#)

⁸¹ GLA, [Monitoring the London Plan 2021](#), accessed October 2024

⁸² [London Plan AMR tables](#), accessed October 2024

⁸³ [Chapter 12 Monitoring | London City Hall](#)

⁸⁴ [London Plan Annual Monitoring Report \(1\)](#)

This report was the first AMR for the London Plan 2021. This report contains several information sources that were used in the preparation of the report, which include:

- [The State of London report 2022](#), Greater London Authority
- [Beyond the data and one year on report 2021](#), Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
- [Design Quality Management Process Note 1](#): Maximising social value and EDI through the procurement of design teams, April 2021, Greater London Authority
- [Recovery Roundtables, Ten calls to action](#), April 2021, Greater London Authority

8.1 Integrated Impact Assessment

According to the current London Plan (2021), a key part of reviewing the London Plan is undertaking a full Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA).⁸⁵ The IIA is described by the GLA as a process that:

“investigates the impacts of different proposals within the London Plan against environmental, equality, health, and community safety objectives. Through this process, the London Plan options and policies can be developed and refined to maximise benefits and minimise adverse effects.”⁸⁶

The IIA covers the statutory requirements of:

- strategic environmental assessment
- sustainability appraisal
- equalities impact assessment
- health impact assessment
- community safety impact assessment⁸⁷

9 The London Assembly

The Planning and Regeneration Committee examines and reports on matters relating to spatial development, planning and regeneration in London and leads on scrutiny of the Mayor's Development Strategy. The Committee also has lead responsibility for scrutiny of Old Oak Common and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC) and London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC).

At the time of the consultation on the current London Plan, the Assembly had separate committees on Planning and Regeneration. The Planning Committee led on responding to the draft plan on behalf of the Assembly.

⁸⁵ GLA, The [London Plan](#), 2021

⁸⁶ GLA, [London Plan Integrated Impact Assessment Consultation Document](#), November 2017

⁸⁷ GLA, The [London Plan](#), 2021

The Housing Committee also plays a key role in relation to the London Plan. The Committee examines matters relating to housing in London and takes a lead on scrutiny of the Mayor's Housing Strategy. The Housing Committee does not lead on the scrutiny of the London Plan, but the London Plan is relevant to the work of the Housing Committee, given housing features in the Plan.

9.1 Responding to the 2021 London Plan

The Planning Committee's [response to the draft](#) was published in March 2018, in the form of a report.⁸⁸ Recommendations included making the importance of environmental sustainability to Good Growth clearer and making the role of the London Legacy Development Corporation in supporting Olympic legacy work explicit.

The Planning Committee's response was based on its work, as well as previous investigations conducted and meetings held by a range of Assembly committees, the Housing Committee, Environment Committee, Regeneration Committee and Transport Committee, as set out in the report.⁸⁹ The whole Assembly held a Plenary session in February 2020 to consider its response to the draft plan, at which the Assembly had the opportunity to reject the plan, in line with its GLA Act powers.⁹⁰ A [Consolidated Suggested Changes](#) version of the draft London Plan was then published in July 2019.

At the Assembly's Plenary session the Mayor gave a statement, and the Chair of the Planning Committee presented the Committee's response to the draft. After a question-and-answer session, the Assembly Chair moved the motion to note the draft plan. An amendment to the motion, to reject the plan, was proposed and seconded. However, the amendment was not carried after receiving 13 votes against and nine votes for. The original motion was then carried after receiving 11 votes in favour and ten votes against.⁹¹

9.2 Planning and Regeneration Committee investigations

The Planning and Regeneration Committee has held the following meetings in recent years which relate to the London Plan:

- Assembly year 2021-22:
 - o [“Opportunity Areas and Housing Zones”](#)
 - o [“Next for the London Plan's Tall Building Policy”](#)
 - o [“Open Planning? Community engagement and transparency when the Mayor calls in planning applications”](#)

⁸⁸ London Assembly Planning Committee, London Plan consultation response, March 2018

⁸⁹ London Assembly Planning Committee, London Plan consultation response, March 2018

⁹⁰ 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 Assembly rejects. GLA Act 1999, [section 42 \(b\)](#)

⁹¹ London Assembly, [Plenary Minutes](#), 6 February 2020

- Assembly year 2022-23:
 - o [“London Plan Guidance – Housing Design Standards and Small Sites Design Codes”](#)
 - o [“The Future of Planning in London”](#)
 - o [“The Future of the London Plan and the Planning for London Programme”](#)
- Assembly year 2023-24:
 - o [“London Plan Guidance on Affordable Housing and Development Viability Consultation Response”](#)
 - o The Assembly held a series of investigations throughout this year which focused on recommendations for the next London Plan, compiled into one report titled [“Shaping the Future London Plan”](#).

Key recommendations from the [2023-24 investigations](#) include:

- “the next London Plan should include policies that make explicit reference to the importance of creating gender-diverse spaces. The GLA should prepare stand-alone guidance on creating gender diverse spaces.
- the Mayor should publish London Plan Guidance (LPG) on inclusive design for developers, local authorities and planning authorities to follow throughout the design process. In doing so, the LPG should collate and present examples of good practice where tensions arise between “inclusive design” and “safety.” This guidance should also set out good practice on public consultations with specific groups who are typically less likely to engage with open consultation processes, such as young people.
- the GLA should create a training programme for Building Control Officers to ensure they are aware of how developments can comply with London Plan policies on improving accessibility for Disabled people”.⁹²

⁹² GLA, [“Shaping the Future London Plan”](#), [accessed 24 August 2024].

Other formats and languages

If you, or someone you know needs this report in large print or braille, or a copy of the summary and main findings in another language, then please call us on: 020 7983 4100 or email assembly.translations@london.gov.uk

Chinese

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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.

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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 ਫੋਨ 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 بلغة تذك،
فجاء الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو الاتصال على
العنوان البريدي أو عنوان البريد
الإلكتروني أعلاه.

Gujarati

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

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