

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

**REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3358**

**Title: Towards a new London Plan engagement document**

**Executive summary:**

This Mayoral Decision (MD) seeks the Mayor's agreement to publish *Towards a new London Plan*, the document for engaging with Londoners and stakeholders ahead of the next London Plan. An MD is required because the *Towards a new London Plan* document is linked to a future statutory strategy, the next London Plan, and the document proposes novel and contentious policies linked to unlocking London's future housing supply. A separate Director Decision (DD) was agreed for the associated engagement and communication plan including expenditure of up to £110,000 (DD2736). Engagement on the *Towards a new London Plan* document is expected to run from May to June 2025.

**Decision:**

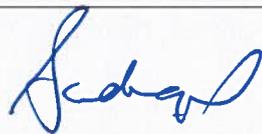
That the Mayor approves the publication of the document *Towards a new London Plan* (Annex A) and public and stakeholder engagement for a period of six weeks for the purpose of gathering evidence, capturing views and identifying issues that will help inform the development of a draft London Plan which will be consulted on during 2026. This public engagement exercise is an additional optional step to the statutory process required for the development of the next London Plan.

**Mayor of London**

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

**Signature:**



**Date:**

6/7/24

## PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE MAYOR

### Decision required – supporting report

#### 1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The current London Plan was published on 4 March 2021.
- 1.2 On 19 December 2023, the then Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (SoS) appointed a panel of expert advisers<sup>1</sup> to consider changes to the London Plan which might facilitate housing delivery on brownfield sites in London. The London Plan Review was published on 13 February 2024<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.3 On 18 March 2024, the then SoS wrote to the Mayor directing him to review his London Plan under section 340 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999. The direction was specific to two policy areas of the Plan – industrial land and Opportunity Areas. The SoS's letter requested an update (non-statutory) on the progress of the review of the two policy areas by the end of June 2024 and to have concluded by 30 September 2024 (statutory).
- 1.4 Following the 2024 general election the new SoS withdrew the direction on 30 September 2024 in favour of a partnership approach to tackling London's housing crisis and noted that a wider London Plan review and preparation of the next London Plan were underway.
- 1.5 Early engagement on the future of the London Plan commenced in December 2021, under the Planning for London Programme ([MD2992](#) and [DD2639](#)). The Planning for London Programme concluded in March 2023, with the exception of the Call for Evidence which remains open and will close at the end of this next phase of engagement. The programme engaged Londoners and stakeholders on their priorities for London through deliberative, stakeholder and co-designed events and Talk London discussions (see paragraph 4.11 below for more detail). This first phase of engagement was not focussed on the specifics of a London Plan or planning policy.
- 1.6 Insights and feedback from the *Towards a new London Plan* engagement exercise will help inform the draft London Plan which will be published in 2026 (see paragraphs 4.3 to 4.5 below).
- 1.7 An MD is required because the *Towards a new London Plan* document is linked to a future statutory strategy, the Mayor's next London Plan, and the document proposes novel and contentious policy positions linked to unlocking London's future housing supply. There is also a precedent for preparing an MD, this having been prepared for *A City for All Londoners*, the direction of travel document for the current Plan ([MD2043](#)).

#### 2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. This MD relates to the publication of the high-level direction document - *Towards a new London Plan* - ahead of the development of a draft London Plan. Engagement with Londoners and stakeholders on *Towards a new London Plan*, is expected to run from early May 2025 to June. This is an additional non-statutory stage in the preparation of the next London Plan, aimed at inviting public comment on specific potential options that may be considered amongst others for inclusion in the next London Plan before the statutory draft London Plan is developed.
- 2.2. The *Towards a new London Plan* document sets out some important policy options that could be included in the next London Plan. The purpose of the associated engagement is to receive feedback, views, experience and evidence to help inform the preparation of the next draft London Plan. The

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Katkowski KC, Cllr James Jamieson, Dr Paul Monaghan and Dr Wei Yang

<sup>2</sup> Housebuilding in London: London Plan Review – report of expert advisers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housebuilding-in-london-london-plan-review-report-of-expert-advisers>

publication of the draft London Plan is a statutory stage that will involve public consultation before submission to the Secretary of State and for Examination in Public by independent inspectors.

2.3. The scope of engagement on the *Towards a new London Plan* document will be more targeted than the Planning for London Programme engagement. It will focus on specific changes in approach that could be included in the draft London Plan. The engagement will be limited to a series of events and channels. The public and stakeholders will be invited to feedback primarily online (having regard to accessibility needs as appropriate). In addition to this, the following targeted opportunities for engagement are proposed to be undertaken, including to address gaps identified following the Planning for London engagement phase:

- a Talk London campaign
- specific work through the GLA Communities team to create specific inclusive engagement opportunities, including representatives from faith groups
- the Youth Assembly
- specific community-focused events
- events hosted by partners such as the London Housing Panel.

2.4. It is expected that engagement on *Towards a new London Plan* will deliver the following outcomes:

- valuable information and feedback to help inform the development of the next draft London Plan
- opportunities for Londoners to have their say on planning matters and the future of their city, in accordance with current London Plan Objective GG1(A): 'Building strong and inclusive communities – encourage early and inclusive engagement with stakeholders, including local communities, in the development of proposals, policies and area-based strategies'
- provide evidence to demonstrate appropriate engagement and consultation including at the future London Plan Examination in Public.

### **3. Equality comments**

3.1. The Mayor and the GLA are subject to the public sector equality duty ("the Duty"), as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ("EA 2010").

3.2. The Duty requires the Mayor and the GLA when exercising their functions to have *due regard* to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the EA 2010, advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

3.3. The relevant protected characteristics are race, disability, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

3.4. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low. Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding. Compliance with this Duty

may involve treating some persons more favourably than others but this does not permit conduct that would otherwise be prohibited under the EA 2010.

- 3.5. The proposed public engagement creates an opportunity to put a diverse group of Londoners at the heart of discussions about a future London Plan, including those with protected characteristics. The engagement process will target specific under-represented groups, including those with protected characteristics, and the GLA's London Plan team will work closely with colleagues in the GLA Communities team to identify opportunities to achieve this. This will enable the equality impact assessment (EqIA) of the next draft London Plan to start at the same time as the policy development process, allowing this assessment to fully inform any policy decisions in line with the Duty. It is also recognised that it will help inform development of the draft London Plan, recognising that many London Plan policies have important beneficial impacts for specific groups and in tackling inequalities, including health inequalities. The EqIA will be the subject of a future MD.
- 3.6. The engagement materials in respect of the *Towards a new London Plan* engagement document will be available in a format which is accessible to blind and visually-impaired people who use screen readers. On request, engagement materials will also be made available in an appropriate format for deaf and hearing-impaired people. In addition, people will be able to request paper copies of consultation material and are also welcome to provide responses in writing to a freepost address. Requests for the documents to be made available in other formats and translated into other languages will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

#### **4. Other considerations**

##### Key risks and issues

- 4.1. The draft London Plan will be examined by independent inspectors appointed by the SoS. While the engagement that is the subject of this MD is a non-statutory engagement stage, engagement on specific options will help to better inform policy development as well as reduce risk as compared to moving directly to publication of the draft London Plan. This is because this engagement stage will provide the opportunity for public feedback to help inform the development of the draft London Plan itself, rather than only receiving public feedback when the draft Plan is published for statutory consultation.
- 4.2. Due consideration was given to preparing specific alterations to the current London Plan rather than developing a new replacement London Plan and it was considered that a new London Plan was the best way forward for the following reasons:
  - the significant scale of change required to the Plan, in particular the increase in the number of homes planned for (and accompanying Local Planning Authority (LPA) housing targets)
  - the opportunity to streamline the Plan to reduce implementation costs and burdens
  - the need to align with national regimes put in place since the current Plan was drafted (in many cases, since 2017)
  - the significant risk, due to contingencies and inter-relationships, of revisions being proposed by Planning Inspectors to sections where no change was anticipated, and significant resource expended debating whether or not sections of the Plan were within or outside scope.
- 4.3. The current London Plan will be five years old on 4 March 2026. The Government's Housing Delivery Test measures LPA housing delivery performance against their housing targets. For the purposes of this test, housing targets are taken from the most recently adopted Development Plan Document (for London, either the London Plan or their own local plan) or, where this is more than five years old, the government's Local Housing Need (LHN) figure, calculated using the standard method.
- 4.4. Unlike other parts of the country, LPAs in London do not set their own housing targets; these are set through the London Plan. To arrive at these housing targets, London's housing need is aggregated

and reallocated across LPAs on the basis of capacity to meet that need, rather than where the need arises. This means that there is no real relationship between the government's LHN figures and the number of homes that LPAs should be planning for (see Appendix 1).

- 4.5. From March 2026, for those London LPAs that have not updated their local plan since adoption of the current London Plan, their Housing Delivery Test performance would normally be expected to be calculated based on the government's LHN figures. This can have implications for how boroughs take decisions on planning applications referred to as 'tilted balance', which is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. However, internal GLA analysis suggests many LPAs will have more recently adopted housing targets to rely on. It also suggests that many LPAs are likely to be in 'tilted balance' in any case because they do not have sufficient land supply.
- 4.6. To mitigate this risk, work is ongoing with the government to secure a pragmatic approach for London. This is important to ensure LPAs continue building their pipeline of permissions towards expected future targets. The publication of the *Towards a new London Plan* document is an important milestone in working towards draft housing targets and publication of a draft London Plan.

#### Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.7. The London Plan is the Spatial Development Strategy for London. It is the over-arching document that integrates the geographic and locational aspects of the other statutory Mayoral strategies setting out a framework for how London will develop and for the use of land over the next 20-25 years, underpinned by the Mayor's vision for Good Growth. The London Plan is part of the statutory development plan for London and planning applications across the capital should be made in accordance with this unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Boroughs' Local Plans and other development plan documents must also be in 'general conformity' with the London Plan, ensuring that the planning system for London operates in a joined-up way and reflects the overall strategy for how London can develop sustainably, as set out by the London Plan.
- 4.8. In revising any Mayoral strategy, the Mayor has a number of statutory duties as set out in the legal section of this MD. One of these duties under section 41 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 ("GLA Act") is to ensure that the London Plan is consistent with the Mayor's other statutory strategies. The *Towards a new London Plan* engagement document has had regard to these statutory strategies to ensure consistency.
- 4.9. While section.95 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 ("LURA 2023") made prospective amendments to the content of the London Plan as set out within the GLA Act and provision for further regulations amending the statutory procedure for the development of a London Plan, these provisions have not yet been enacted. The legislative context will be monitored, including any secondary legislation, throughout the plan-making process to ensure changes are reflected as they arise.

#### Consultation and public engagement

- 4.10. The GLA Act and associated regulations set out the requirements for public engagement in preparation of the next London Plan.
- 4.11. The preparation of *Towards a new London Plan* has been informed by the Planning for London Programme, including submissions to the Call for Evidence<sup>3</sup>. The following key engagement activities took place:
  - deliberative events – between December 2022 and March 2023, four deliberative events were held with 160 Londoners. Participants were recruited to ensure each cohort of 40 Londoners were representative of London's demographics as a whole, including both protected characteristics and other criteria such as household arrangements, voting activity etc

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<sup>3</sup> Call for Evidence further information and submissions can be found at <https://consult.london.gov.uk/planning-for-london-call-for-evidence>

- stakeholder events – between June and November 2023, 17 topic-based stakeholder events were held. These were open to any participants. Over 550 attendees joined the events (recognising there will be double-counting where a participant joined more than one event)
- two Talk London campaigns were hosted in March 2022 and June/July 2023. Online participation was also hosted on the Planning for London consultation portal
- the Mayor's 2023 Design Future London Programme involving children and young people provided feedback to the Planning for London Programme both through bespoke co-designed sessions in December 2023, a public exhibition and associated school sessions and through the submission of entries to the schools' competition programme
- co-designed engagement facilitated by partners through the London Housing Panel, New London Architecture and London Sustainable Development Commission.

#### Consultation and impact assessments

- 4.12. A separate Mayoral Decision (MD) will be undertaken for the relevant assessments including environmental assessment, the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and the EqlA in preparation for the draft London Plan, including any scoping stages. These will be captured in a cross-cutting Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA). It would not be feasible or appropriate to carry out similar assessments on a high-level scoping document such as *Towards a new London Plan*, but any evidence captured through the engagement process may inform these later assessments.
- 4.13. Where relevant, as the process develops, future MDs will need to have regard to the development of further secondary legislation under Part 6 of the LURA 2023 which makes provision for Environmental Outcomes Reports which will replace existing statutory requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment. This is a further element which would be covered by the IIA.
- 4.14. The draft new London Plan will also be subject to statutory consultation, as well as to an Examination in Public.

#### Duty to cooperate

- 4.15. Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011 introduced a duty on LPAs and prescribed bodies to co-operate (Duty to Cooperate) in a range of planning activities. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 made the Mayor a prescribed person for the purposes of this duty. The Duty to Cooperate extends to LPAs outside Greater London. However, the Duty to Cooperate does not apply to the preparation of the London Plan. In all other respects as set out below the Duty to Cooperate applies.
- 4.16. While LURA 2023 made provision to replace the Duty to Cooperate these measures are not yet in force. Regard will be had to Duty to Cooperate in any engagement and further statutory consultation to develop a new London Plan as they develop.
- 4.17. In addition to the legal requirements for the Duty to Cooperate, paragraphs 25-28 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2024) set out that effective and on-going joint working between strategic policy-making authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy. In particular, joint working should help the Mayor to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary, and whether development needs that cannot be met wholly within London could be met elsewhere. If any matters which require collaboration are identified during the plan making process (for example, through engagement on *Towards a new London Plan*), the Mayor will have regard to the policy requirement to make sure that the policies within the new London Plan align as fully as possible with those of other bodies where a strategic relationship exists and take into account the relevant investment plans of infrastructure providers, unless there is a clear justification to the contrary.

4.18. As part of the engagement on *Towards a new London Plan*, notwithstanding that it is a non-statutory stage, it will also be important to take into account wider policy requirements for the London Plan and specific engagement will therefore be undertaken with relevant bodies. This will cover, in particular, the policy requirements for the London Plan to ensure:

- a consistent approach is taken to planning the delivery of major infrastructure, such as major transport services/projects, utilities, waste, minerals, environmental improvement and resilience; and strategic health, education and other social infrastructure
- unmet development needs from neighbouring areas are provided for in accordance with paragraph 11b of the NPPF
- any allocation or designation which cuts across the boundary of plan areas, or has significant implications for neighbouring areas, is appropriately managed by all relevant authorities.

4.19. The Mayor will prepare and maintain a statement of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these, which will be made publicly available at the appropriate stages of the plan-making process.

4.20. In addition to the public-facing events, specific engagement is proposed with London's LPAs. This began with Planning for London programme events held in 2023 for elected members, Planning Directors and Planning Officers, and follows a "no surprises" commitment whereby LPAs are made aware of information before it goes into the public domain on a confidential and (as appropriate) embargoed basis. This ongoing engagement will include:

- meetings with specific LPAs
- meetings with London Councils and representatives from LPAs
- meetings to which all London's LPAs are invited
- communications with London's LPAs (either individually or collectively).

## **5. Financial comments**

5.1. Costs associated with this MD were approved under DD2736.

## **6. Legal comments**

6.1 The statutory framework which applies to the replacement of the London Plan is set out in the GLA Act and the Town and Country Planning (London Spatial Development Strategy) Regulations 2000 ("SDS Regulations") which provide for certain matters relevant to the operation of Part VIII of the GLA Act.

6.2 The Mayor has a duty under section 340 of the GLA Act to keep the London Plan under review and can under section 341(1)(b) prepare and publish a new London Plan at any time. As set out within paragraph 1.4 above, the Mayor intends to carry out a full review of the London Plan.

6.3 The London Plan must include the Mayor's general policies in respect of the development and use of land in Greater London and must deal only with matters which are of strategic importance. However, in making that determination, it is immaterial whether or not the matter affects the whole of Greater London. The London Plan must be consistent with the Mayor's other strategies and should include a statement dealing with the general spatial development (geographical and locational) aspects of the Mayor's other strategies, including those dealing with:

- transport

- environment
- economic development
- housing
- culture, and
- health and health inequalities.

6.4 While section 95 of the LURA 2023 made prospective amendments to the content of the London Plan as set out within the GLA Act and provision for further SDS Regulations amending the statutory procedure for the development of a London Plan, these provisions are not yet in force.

#### Matters to which the Mayor must have regard

6.5 Under section 342 of the GLA Act, when considering a new London Plan, the Mayor must have regard to any planning guidance issued by the Secretary of State so far as relating to an area which includes or adjoins Greater London and such other matters as they may prescribe. As set out within paragraphs 4.17-4.18 above the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a number of policies for strategic policy makers regarding consultation and collaboration.

6.6 Section 41 of the GLA Act sets out the general duties the Mayor has in respect of all of his strategies with obligations specific to the London Plan contained in Part VIII. In revising or replacing the London Plan, the Mayor shall have regard to the effect that it will have on various themes (health, health inequalities, sustainable development and climate change) as well as on the need to ensure consistency with national policies, the UK's EU obligations and such other international obligations the Mayor is notified of by the Secretary of State. The Mayor is also required to have regard to the resources available to implement the London Plan and the principal purposes of the Greater London Authority as set out in section 30 of the GLA Act:

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

6.7 In formulating the replacement Plan, regard must be had to the national waste management plan, the objectives of preventing major accidents and limiting their consequences, the need to (in the long term) maintain appropriate distances between establishments and residential areas, areas of public use and places of natural sensitivity, and in the case of establishments not increasing the risk to people from dangerous substances.

6.8 In addition, under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the GLA has to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder.

6.9 These considerations will be assessed in the IIA and the HRA that will be prepared alongside the statutory draft London Plan as detailed above. These will examine the likely impacts of the proposed policies against legal requirements regarding Sustainability Appraisal, the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 or LURA 2023 as applicable and Regulation 102 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). These will be the subject of a further MD.

6.10 The Mayor and GLA are also subject to the Duty addressed in section 3 of this MD above. An EqlA will also accompany the statutory draft London Plan consultation and will help to inform further MDs.

#### Consultation

6.11 Section 42, and 335(3)(a)-(c) of the GLA Act as well as the SDS regulations provides various consultation and public participation requirements for the process of producing a new London Plan. These provide that the statutory consultation on the draft London Plan must run for a period of not less than 12 weeks and that statutory notices are published in the London Gazette and by local advertisement. When the statutory consultation on the draft London Plan is carried out this will be done in accordance with these statutory requirements. However, as this engagement stage on the *Towards a new London Plan* document is an additional step to the statutory process, while regard has been had to the statutory requirements, these are not mandatory. The timescales chosen for this engagement enable meaningful consideration and engagement within the tight programme for drafting the next London Plan. Notices will be placed in local newspapers inviting people to contribute, however statutory notices are not required for this engagement stage.

## 7 Planned delivery approach and next steps

<b>Next Step</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
Engagement on <i>Towards a new London Plan</i>	Early May – June 2025
Scoping for IIA or similar as required by Environmental Outcomes Report legislation and any other assessments	Spring/Summer 2025 depending on secondary legislation
Publication of Draft London Plan	First half of 2026
Three month consultation	Spring/Summer 2026
Publication of minor changes to the draft London Plan	Winter 2026-27
Submission of draft London Plan to Secretary of State	Winter 2026-27
Appointment of Inspectors and examination preparation	TBC - Dependent on external factors
Examination in Public	2027
Further changes published	TBC - Dependent on external factors
Examination Inspectors' report	TBC - Dependent on external factors
Mayor's response to Inspectors' report and submission to Secretary of State	TBC - Dependent on external factors
London Assembly right of veto	TBC - Dependent on external factors
Any directions by the Secretary of State	TBC - Dependent on external factors
Adoption of the London Plan	March 2028

### Appendices and supporting papers:

Annex A: Planning for London engagement document

Appendix 1 Housing position for London Planning Authorities

**Public access to information**

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

**Part 1 – Deferral****Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? YES**

If YES, for what reason: To align with launch date of engagement.

Until what date: No earlier than 9 May 2025.

**Part 2 – Sensitive information**

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

**Is there a part 2 form – NO****ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:**

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

**Drafting officer:**

Lisa Fairmaner has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

**Sponsoring Director:**

Phil Graham has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

✓

**Mayoral Adviser:**

Jules Pipe has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.

✓

**Advice:**

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

**Mayoral Delivery Board**

This decision was agreed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 14 April 2025.

✓

**CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:**

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

**Signature:**

*Lisa Fairmaner*

**Date:**

30/04/2025

**CHIEF OF STAFF:**

I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Mayor

**Signature:**

*D. Bellamy*

**Date:**

22/04/2025