

Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system

Response from the Mayor of London

This response is on behalf of the Mayor of London and the Greater London Authority Group which includes the London Legacy Development Corporation and the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC).

Overview from the Mayor of London

The Mayor of London supports the government's ambition to build 1.5m new homes by the end of this Parliament and is playing his part to use all levers at his disposal to deliver the new safe and secure homes that Londoners need; promote economic growth; and create new jobs.

The Mayor agrees with the principles underpinning the NPPF by removing layering and streamlining planning where appropriate, and the next London Plan is being developed on this basis. It will seek to improve viability and give investors and developers the confidence to build, while still maintaining high standards for Londoners.

However, it is critical to bring forward the *right* Framework to help the government maintain the positive momentum behind its planning reforms. The adopted Framework must reflect London's distinctiveness and enable us to undertake appropriate strategic planning for London. Indeed, it is the government's own intention through its landmark devolution reforms that London should have the bespoke and necessary powers needed to carry out its planning function in order to provide the homes, jobs and economic growth that Londoners deserve.

London's built environment, connectivity and economy are unique. It is a much larger and denser city than any other part of the UK which means it faces different challenges and requires a nuanced and bespoke approach. London has also operated for over two decades with its own Spatial Development Strategy.

Moreover, the Mayor has specific duties including those set out in the Greater London Authority Act 1999, the Town and Country Planning (London Spatial Development Strategy) Regulations 2000 and the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 such as in relation to economic development and wealth creation; social development; and protection and improvement of the environment. The Mayor's capacity to discharge these duties should not be overridden by the Framework, which does not have the same standing as statute.

The Mayor understands and appreciates that it is the government's intention is to avoid multiple standards across different areas and to reduce complexities for developers. However, allowing some flexibility at the city-region level through the London Plan would enable a responsiveness to London's unique priorities while restricting excessive additional and differing local standards. The Mayor is also committed to ensuring that any such London-level policies will be achievable, more easily navigable and will not impose undue burdens on development. As currently drafted, draft policy PM1: Spatial development strategies, coupled with the restrictions in draft policy PM6: General principles for plan-making and PM13: Setting standards, in particular do not facilitate the necessary strategic planning for London.

To take an example: London is home to more than a million people with disabilities and it contains around 70% of the UK's high-rise buildings and four times the national average of high-rise homes. It must also be remembered that this is where the tragic Grenfell Tower fire tragedy happened. While the national regulatory regime has been strengthened, some key recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry remain unimplemented and the progress to date, while welcome, does not yet fully provide the level of protection London requires. It is therefore critical that the London Plan should be able to set some additional fire safety requirements, with a sunset clause stating that these will cease to apply when fit for purpose Building Regulations are in place.

The GLA wants to work with the government on refining the final NPPF to incorporate a bespoke London approach, particularly in the following areas:

- Fire Safety
- Energy Efficiency and embodied carbon
- Connectivity and Density
- Culture
- Affordable Workspace

The following detailed response to the consultation questions below outlines these issues in more detail.

Detailed Response to the Consultation Questions

1) Do you have any views on how statutory National Development Management Policies could be introduced in the most effective manner, should a future decision be made to progress these?

If in the future statutory NDMPs were to be introduced, they would need to be narrow in scope and strictly focused on policies that genuinely are 'national' in nature and they would need to reflect the needs of dense urban contexts which have distinct policy requirements.

2) Do you agree with the new format and structure of the draft Framework which comprises separate plan-making policies and national decision-making policies? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The new format is in general helpful and easier to navigate, although the latter could be further improved upon for example in cross-referencing of policies. 'Procedural' or quasi plan-making policies could also be separated from decision-making policies, as they do not affect decision-making on planning applications. For example: DM9 Use of development orders; and DM10 Removal of national permitted development rights should be moved from the DM policies into a separate new section.

3) Do you agree with the proposed set of annexes to be incorporated into the draft Framework? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree*

Partly agree, subject to the comments made elsewhere on these annexes.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

4) Do you agree with incorporating Planning Policy for Traveller Sites within the draft Framework? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Currently, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) 2024, requires the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities to be assessed and land identified to meet that need, mirroring the

NPPF's position on general needs housing. As such, it is sensible to bring the PPTS requirements into the NPPF and this inclusion is welcomed.

All Gypsies and Travellers' accommodation needs should be assessed and provision planned for regardless of whether a household lives in a caravan or mobile home on a site or in conventional bricks and mortar housing. Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessments often fail to assess the needs of the latter.

As such updated guidance on how needs assessments should be carried out is needed to sit alongside the revised NPPF – noting that those carrying out Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessments are having to rely on 2007 guidance, that is no longer in force. This could also consider broader accommodation options under the banner of culturally appropriate accommodation, such as Group Housing.

Capitalisation should always be used when referring to Gypsies or Travellers, given their status as recognised distinct ethnic groups under the Equality Act 2010 (for example Romany Gypsies or Irish or Scottish Travellers). This is an existing oversight in the current PPTS and the opportunity should be taken to rectify this in the new NPPF.

5) Do you agree with the proposed approach to simplifying the terminology in the Framework where weight is intended to be applied? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree*

Strongly agree

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree

Consistent terminology should aid clarity in the decision-making process.

6) Do you agree with the role, purpose and content of spatial development strategies set out in policy PM1? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

PM1 2d is too cautious. The NPPF should be clear that an SDS should establish the principle of Green Belt release and allocate broad locations for growth to take place to prevent this being re-visited in Local Plans.

7) Do you agree that alterations should be made to spatial development strategies at least every 5 years to reflect any changes to housing requirements for the local planning authorities in the strategy area? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

a) If not, do you think there should be a different approach, for example, that alterations should only be made to spatial development strategies every five years where there are significant changes to housing need in the strategy area?

Changes to an SDS could be made if circumstances change significantly for example to housing need or there are other reasons to alter an SDS. But mandating a change at least every 5 years could be onerous where this is not the case.

8) If spatial development strategies are not altered every five years, should related policy on the requirements used in five year housing land supply and housing delivery test policies, set out in Annex D of the draft Framework, be updated to allow housing requirement figures from spatial development strategies to continue to be applied after 5 years, so long as there has not been a significant change in that area's local housing need? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

In addition to requirements set out in Annex D, where an SDS is in the process of being updated, the existing housing requirement figures should also continue to apply until the new SDS is adopted. This would avoid consequences for boroughs e.g. a sudden ramping up or down of requirements and confusion in the interim.

In addition it is important to reconsider the approach to the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) overall, so that it is linked to boroughs identifying and planning for sufficient capacity – rather than delivery i.e. supply and demand side factors which they have limited broader control over. With higher housing targets in the context of supply and demand side challenges, this failure to reconsider the approach to the HDT risks undermining the plan-led system and penalising LPAs that have used the tools at their disposal to meet ambitious targets.

9) Do you agree with the role, purpose and content of local plans set out in policy PM2? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree*

a) Please provide your reason particularly if you disagree

10) Do you think that local plans should cover a period of at least 15 years from the point of adoption of the plan? Yes/No

No.

a) If not, do you think they should cover a period of at least 10 years, or a different period of time. Please explain why.

It would seem logical for them to cover the same period as the SDS – i.e. minimum 20 years so that there is a clearer link between the allocations and targets that have been identified in SDSs for LPAs, infrastructure planning, and their delivery through Local Plans.

11) Do you agree with the principles set out in policy PM6(1c), including its provisions for preventing duplication of national decision-making policies? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

In instances where the national standards are not the highest standard, there should be an allowance for the SDS to have content that reflects the needs of the strategic area. For example, in London, the fire safety policy requirements of the London Plan are higher than the national Building Regulations. Therefore, the meaning of 'modify' should be clarified. We would be very concerned if it was taken to preclude the setting of clearer expectations in the London Plan further to national policy.

For some policy areas of a more technical nature, there may be a need to provide a more detailed level of policy to supplement the high-level principles established in the NPPF for successful implementation in practice. This is the GLA's experience where additional guidance or specifications have proved necessary in some cases, helping developers know what is expected to comply and actually reduce delays and negotiations during the planning process. For example policy N6 (Areas of particular importance for biodiversity) relates to Local Wildlife Sites (known as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in London)), does not provide enough detail for effective implementation that adequately balances development needs with nature recovery needs and conservation. London Plan policy sets out a 'mitigation hierarchy':

- a. avoid damaging the designated features of the site
- b. minimise the overall spatial impact and mitigate it by improving the habitat quality or management of the rest of the site
- c. deliver off-site compensation of better biodiversity value.

This provides a clearer policy route to developers and planning decision makers.

12) Do you agree with the approach to initiating plan-making in PM7? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree

With respect to PM7(b) and Development Corporations, suggest deletion of 'by elected members' to account for development corporations' non-executive membership, which feature both elected and independent members. Further information should be provided regarding the scope and format of the "four-year plan evaluation report" referenced in PM7(2).

13) Do you agree with the approach to the preparation of plan evidence set out in policy PM8? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree

Policy PM8(3) would benefit from supplementary information in the Planning Practice Guidance regarding what would be considered as strong reasons. Clarity should also be given to whether new evidence submitted by stakeholders as part of the Examination in Public (EIP) would be accepted. The preference would be for external stakeholders not to submit new evidence once the EIP commences, unless expressly requested to do so by the Inspector, as

this can significantly lengthen examinations and result in protracted arguments that could have been addressed through a clear, fixed baseline.

14) Do you agree with the approach to identifying land for development in PM9? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

15) Do you agree with the policies on maintaining and demonstrating cross-boundary cooperation set out in policy PM10 and policy PM11? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Consideration should be given to some interim guidance on the implementation of these arrangements in practice in a context of local government reform and the rollout of Strategic Development Strategies across England, as there are significant barriers in practice to meaningful engagement when relevant geographies are not yet finalised, and regulations are not yet in place. For the London Plan, which will likely be the first SDS going through examination under the new NPPF, this presents an obvious challenge at EIP. In addition a pragmatic approach needs to be taken because it is not realistic to expect areas outside of London to take on London's Housing need unless compelled to do so.

The [Planning Practice Guidance for Statements of Common Ground](#) should be updated to reflect proposals in the NPPF.

16) Do you agree that policy PM12 increases certainty at plan-making stage regarding the contributions expected from development proposals? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Part 3 of Policy PM12 retains the previous NPPF's approach of ensuring clarity of planning policy requirements and demonstrating the deliverability of these through the plan-making process thereby reducing the need for a viability assessment at the decision-making stage. This is important to ensure that policy requirements are reflected in land values and is consistent with the London Plan Threshold approach.

17) Do you agree that plans should set out the circumstances in which review mechanisms will be used, or should national policy set clearer expectations? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Review mechanisms play an important role in assessing whether schemes that provide affordable housing contributions at a level that is below plan requirements can support

additional contributions if viability improves over the lifetime of the development. The support for review mechanisms in national planning policy is strongly welcomed.

We agree with Part 4 of Policy PM12 on the approach to reviews, i.e., that plans should set out when these are undertaken, and what form they should take. However, given the significant need for affordable housing and to promote consistency of application, the policy should also set out the in-principle requirement for reviews to be undertaken where policy requirements are not met.

Under the Mayor's approach, additional contributions only arise through reviews where the agreed profit target is exceeded. This helps to ensure that the applicant remains incentivised to proceed and that the scheme can be funded. For reviews to be effective it is however important that profit targets are not overstated and that the terms of reviews set out in S106 agreements are not designed to limit or rule out the prospect of additional contributions. These issues are considered further in responses to the questions relating to Annex B.

18) Do you agree with policy PM13 on setting local standards, including the proposal to commence s.43 of the Deregulation Act 2015? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Strongly disagree

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We strongly support the ability to set parking, design, infrastructure and placemaking related standards. However, there are a limited number of further areas where the Mayor is clear that a London approach is necessary and that the SDS should be able to set standards that would apply across London. Within this response we have sought to prioritise those particular requirements.

Evidence shows that much of the conflict / barriers faced are between national Building Regulations, enforcement and the overlap between planning and building control ([DCLG, 2012](#)). In 2026, this continues to be an issue following discussions in the application of Part O with MHCLG and the Future Homes Hub in recent months.

Fire Safety

Whilst the Mayor is supportive of the intention of the revised NPPF to streamline planning policy, his view remains that the national standards for fire safety that exist in Building Regulations (Approved Document B) are not yet sufficient.

Although the national regulatory regime has been strengthened since the Grenfell Tower fire - through the creation of the Building Safety Regulator and expanded requirements for sprinklers and second staircases – some key recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry remain unimplemented. The progress to date, while welcome, does not yet provide the level of protection London requires.

London faces a distinct set of pressures with a dense and complex built environment. London contains around 70% of the UK's high-rise buildings and four times the national average of high-rise homes. London also has a diverse population with nine million residents and more than a million people with disabilities.

Until national regulations reach a sufficiently robust standard, the Mayor believes the London Plan should continue to set enhanced requirements so that fire safety is embedded from the earliest stages of design and planning, ensuring Londoners can be safe in their homes. A sunset clause stating that the next Plan's requirements will cease to apply when fit for purpose Building Regulations which align with London's fire safety requirements are in place can be incorporated in the next London Plan.

The case for regional climate change and sustainability standards

The Greater London Authority Act 2007 places a legal duty on the Mayor of London and London Assembly to take action to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Allowing flexibility for the London Plan (and potentially other regional plans if relevant), to deviate from national standards would provide coordination and consistency at a regional level (with local plans to then reflect that approach). This allows policies to reflect particular issues (e.g. the particular impacts of climate change, such as overheating are distinct in London and different to other areas of the country, particularly less urbanised areas) along with the development context of localities (e.g. reflecting common development typologies and viability scenarios) and the market opportunity.

London planning policies addressing climate change and sustainability have driven innovation nationally and internationally and have helped to prime the development of green industry and supply chains ([University of Cambridge, 2023](#)).

Planning policies at the London level would be supported by clear evidence demonstrating viability and go through an independent examination in public. These requirements provide the appropriate checks and balances to ensure that policies are justified, achievable and tailored to their location and the market they are operating in.

The evidence commissioned to support the development of the next London Plan indicates that London can still set targets for energy efficiency and embodied carbon that would not add significant costs for developers but would continue to enable us to use these important policy levers.

Energy & Carbon

London has been setting its own energy efficiency standards since 2008. This has led to significant additional carbon reductions over this time compared with what would have been required to meet building regulations.

The value of regional planning policy in this area is multi-fold:

- Developers have responded positively since the London Plan introduced a net zero requirement for domestic development in 2016, with 91% of development exceeding the target of a 35 per cent carbon emission reduction beyond current Building Regulations ([GLA, 2023, pg. 19](#)).
- In 2024, referable-scale developments in London were delivering a 56 per cent improvement beyond the national Building Regulations, that is equivalent to approximately 33,000 tonnes of CO2 per year.

- In 2024, residential developments delivered 67 per cent carbon savings beyond the national Building Regulations, 18 per cent of this total 67 per cent were attributed to energy efficiency measures.
- In 2024, over £90m of carbon offsetting funds has been spent by local authorities to deliver community projects including retrofit of public sector buildings and estates, grants for residents and businesses, electric vehicle charging, community renewables.

The draft NPPF would undermine the positive steps made to reduce carbon emissions in London.

Climate mitigation and climate adaptation design must respond to the constraints and opportunities in London. This includes issues from the Urban Heat Island Effect to constraints around electricity supply and long-term availability of heat. High energy efficiency measures ensure resilience in terms of the pressures on local energy utilities. Removing the London Plan powers to set additional energy standards may mean that grid constraints become a bigger issue and constrain growth.

The proposed approach to climate policies in the NPPF does not appear to be supported by any form of Environmental Assessment or other impact assessment.

Energy efficiency

It is acknowledged that the current landscape, characterised by too many different energy standards nationwide, is inefficient and costly for developers. However, whilst the forthcoming Future Homes Standard as the national baseline is expected to be an improvement on existing Building Regulations, if it does not go far enough to drive energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions (see previous GLA consultation responses on this issue [GLA, 2024](#); [2019](#)) – the national standard would not reflect challenges and opportunities across the country which are different, and it will still be weaker than existing London Plan standards. Reducing London's energy efficiency standards would push up costs for heating and future retrofit and runs counter to the government's net zero ambitions and the recent £15 billion plan to retrofit older inefficient homes.

There is also clear evidence of the move towards prime office and other commercial space and London is already seeing the challenges from buildings that do not meet higher standards of energy efficiency which are no longer attractive to occupiers because there tends to be a preference for new high quality stock.

To reduce the impact of new development on energy infrastructure, already being evidenced in the electricity grid capacity constraints in west London, and the extra pressures that will come with further growth (including the need to deliver data centres to support the economy), the delivery of energy efficient homes and commercial spaces will also be key.

Our evidence base for the London Plan demonstrates that there is minimal impact on viability from the current London Plan energy efficiency standards themselves and the next London Plan is not expected to increase the cost burden and will focus on reducing process burdens as well as simultaneously deliver lowering running costs for Londoners.

Two-thirds of Londoners are concerned about their ability to pay energy and utility bills ([London Councils, 2023](#)). Energy efficiency measures are a key tool in this – more so in London than the rest of the country.

Overheating

London has been setting its own overheating policy since 2008 and this paved the way for TM59 modelling for new homes which is now part of building regulations ([London Plan, 2008](#)).

London is at higher risk of overheating, being in the South of England and a large, densely urban area with a high percentage of flatted development and faces much more complex issues than other parts of England. Both government and academic studies show the risk of this to health, economic productivity and energy security ([DESNZ, 2023](#); [Simpson, 2025](#)).

London must go further than might be appropriate in areas that do not have the same scale of challenges in this regard in order to manage these risks. This means that passive design measures need to be used as far as possible to minimise overheating before looking at active cooling (which adds to the urban heat island effect as well as increased energy demands and costs). We therefore need to be able to go further than the national standard. Setting a standard at the London level will still provide consistency for developers.

This is also an opportunity to support skills and supply chains for delivering overheating resilience (both with passive and active technologies) which can be expanded across the country. This will support domestic expertise and supply chains which can be exported and shared country and world wide.

Embodied carbon

Embodied carbon emissions could be representing almost 40-70% of the whole life carbon (WLC) emissions of a building (LETI Climate Emergency Design Guide) Embodied/whole life carbon is not addressed by national policy or regulations. Planning policy is a key component to helping us move towards net zero in a cost-effective way. Continued work on embodied carbon is required to identify and explore conflict with other regulation and design - without continued work and real-world projects the opportunities and challenges won't be identified.

Affordable workspace

Affordable workspace is a key policy for London as the cost of business space in the capital is significantly higher than other parts of the country. (CBRE. [UK Office Market Figures Q3 2025](#) (Examples of prime office rents per sq. Ft: London West End £190, City of London £87.50, Southbank £81 compared to Birmingham £46, Leeds £46, Manchester £45)

Its provision is a key element to support [The London Growth Plan \(2025\)](#). It also helps to address social inequality (a key objective set for the Mayor in legislation) by providing low-cost space for new business start-ups including from London's diverse communities. The draft NPPF, as currently worded would seem to prevent the London Plan or local plans from setting any standards such as a specific requirement for a % of affordable workspace or a discount level for workspaces. The absence of an option to embed such standards in this context will have a knock-on impact on developer provision and configuration of affordable workspace proposals in future.

Flexibility should be allowed in the London Plan to introduce standards for affordable workspace based on identified need standards and an assessment of the viability impacts in the Plan making process (i.e. development of the London Plan and Local Plans).

19) Do you agree that the tests of soundness set out in policies PM14 and PM15 will allow for a proportionate assessment of spatial development strategies, local plans and minerals and waste plans at examination? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree

a) If not, please explain how this could be improved to ensure a proportionate assessment, making it clear which type of plan you are commenting on?

Clarity should be given as to whether new evidence submitted by stakeholders as part of the Examination in Public would be accepted. The preference would be for external stakeholders not to submit new evidence once the EIP commences. The ability for external stakeholders to submit new evidence or information during the examination can significantly lengthen examinations.

20) Do you have any specific comments on the content of the plan-making chapter which are not already captured by the other questions in this section?

A minor clarification to paragraph a. should be made: 'A spatial development strategy, produced by strategic planning authorities and / or the Mayor of London'.

21) Do you agree with the principles set out in policy DM1? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Pre-application discussions on major and complex planning applications are an effective way of identifying issues early, providing certainty for applicants, speeding up the formal process and increasing the likelihood of applications being approved. Early engagement with the local community, if meaningful and effective, provides those affected with an opportunity to shape development proposals at an early stage and can reduce opposition at formal planning stage.

22) Do you agree with the policy DM2 on information requirements for planning applications? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Paragraph 2 setting out what should be included in local validation lists, along with the emphasis on proportionate and appropriate use given the scale and potential impact of the development is welcomed. There may be occasions when LPAs need to request additional information if this is justified by particular circumstances

23) Do you have any views on whether such a policy could be better implemented through regulations?

We do not consider regulations necessary and could be counterproductive. NPPF policy is sufficient.

24) Do you agree with the principles set out in DM3? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The principles set out in DM3 are best practice and are already followed by many planning authorities. They are also consistent with the existing legislative framework.

25) Do you agree that policy DM5 would prevent unnecessary negotiation of developer contributions, whilst also providing sufficient flexibility for development to proceed? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The Mayor supports the approach in policy DM5 which is intended to help to reduce cases of unnecessary site-specific viability assessment by clarifying when it may be appropriate at the decision-making stage. The requirement for any viability assessment accompanying a proposal to explain divergence from the plan's viability evidence and meet transparency standards is also supported, as is the approach which seeks to avoid overpayments for land resulting in failure to meet plan policy and the use of review mechanisms.

This policy will go some way to speed up the process for establishing planning obligations on policy compliant schemes (the GLA issued standard affordable housing / viability clauses in 2018 which are widely used across London. National s106 templates could be helpful in principle – but must avoid conflicting or confusing this approach). However, for non-policy compliant developments, the policy is silent on amendment planning applications such as under section 73. As such, the policy should set out how developments which are subject to a section 73, and consequently often a section 106A, are treated.

Transport infrastructure and mitigation that is necessary to make the development acceptable should be included in the viability assessment.

26) Do you have any further comments on the likely impact of policy DM5: Development viability?

Notwithstanding the Mayor's support for the approach in policy DM5, the principle of viability assessment at the application stage being undertaken in limited circumstances has been reflected in national guidance for several years, and yet the use of viability assessments to reduce the provision of affordable housing and other policy requirements has continued to be widespread. Furthermore, these are not typically undertaken in line with national, Mayoral and professional standards, with nearly all assessments indicating an unrealistically high level of financial deficit, including a negative profit or land value in some cases. This often conflicts with the applicant's case that the proposed development is deliverable and will contribute to meeting housing need. This approach is unhelpful for decision makers and is undermining the ability of the planning authorities to secure affordable housing and infrastructure contributions in the public interest and to support the delivery of sustainable development.

While it is noted that the current market situation is very challenging, without further measures, there is a significant risk that policy DM5 will not be effective in preventing the unnecessary negotiation of contributions and reductions of public benefits. To help address this, the tests set out in policy DM5 part 2 should be exhaustive, and the policy should specify that where these are not met, a viability assessment should not be submitted or considered as part of the planning process.

Furthermore, the criteria are currently too broad as drafted: c) should be amended to refer to significant costs which were unforeseeable, and d) should be amended to specify that economic circumstances deteriorated significantly since the plan was prepared. Without these changes it may still be possible to justify application stage viability assessment in almost every circumstance.

In addition, the policy should state that where contributions are proposed to be reduced below plan requirements, as a part of a new or amended application, decision makers should have regard to these reductions and give appropriate weight in the overall planning balance, alongside the wider merits of the scheme. In addition, support and training should be provided to planning authorities to help ensure that policy DM5 is implemented effectively.

27) Do you have any views on how the process of modifying planning obligations under S106A, where needed once a section 106 agreement has been entered into, could be improved?

Yes.

a) If so, please provide views on specific changes that may improve the efficacy of S106A and the main obstacles that result in delay when seeking modification of planning obligations.

S106A is the statutory route for enabling variations to planning obligations. Planning authorities can agree to vary a planning obligation at any time under S106A. The legislation also includes important safeguards to help protect against immediate, unnecessary or opportunistic requests to vary obligations following the grant of planning consent, which should be retained to help avoid the unnecessary reduction or removal of affordable housing or other obligations.

However, recently, the loss of affordable housing through variations to S106 agreements has become widespread through the use of S73 applications in combination with S106A. This has been used as a route to enable downwards viability reviews, in some cases immediately following the grant of planning consent. This, together with ongoing concerns regarding the reliability of the viability testing process, is resulting in the loss of thousands of affordable housing units in London including on large strategic sites. Furthermore, the use of S73 in this way is undermining the planning process, because there is no longer any guarantee that commitments made by an applicant as part of a planning application that are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms will be maintained and delivered.

Taking this into account, it is right that planning authorities should have discretion as to whether to agree to a variation for several years following the grant of consent, or that any other safeguards are sufficiently robust to secure the delivery of planning obligations, other than when it is absolutely necessary to vary these. In addition, the current S106A test for

varying an obligation which considers whether an obligation continues to serve a meaningful purpose should continue to apply.

However, at present there is no requirement to refer requests or applications to vary a planning obligation in relation to variations in provision of affordable housing under S106A to the Mayor for referable applications. The Mayoral Order should be amended to reflect this to allow the Mayor to have oversight over provision of affordable housing in London. This is having a significant impact on public benefits.

28) Do you have any views on how the process of modifying planning obligations could be improved in advance of any legislative change, noting the government's commitment to boosting the supply of affordable housing.

Yes.

a) If so, please provide views on the current use of s73 and, if any, the impact on affordable housing obligations.

The Mayor supports the government's review of the use of s73 as a route to varying planning obligations as set out in the Written Ministerial Statement and joint policy note published by government and the Mayor on 23rd October 2025. This stated that the government intends to clarify the use of S73 so that an application under this section to vary a condition of a planning permission should no longer be used as an alternative means of reconsidering fundamental questions of scheme viability or planning obligations.

The Mayor also supports the steps taken to remind the planning inspectorate, LPAs and developers of the need for scrutiny and robust justification for changes to planning obligations, and for decision-makers to have regard to the impact that a reduction in affordable housing may cause and give this appropriate weight in the planning balance, alongside the wider merits of the scheme.

The intended approach seeks to limit the fundamental review of viability where changes to planning obligations go beyond those linked to a specific variation of condition being sought under S73. The qualification based on the variation of a condition is correct where this results in a scheme amendment which is not consequential to a reduction in affordable housing, such as where a second staircase is being added, and there is a direct viability impact and a proportionate amendment to affordable housing provision is proposed (where necessary). However, it should also be noted that scheme amendments are often sought under S73 which are a direct consequence of the proposed reduction in affordable housing, for example, due to a reconfiguration of unit sizes arising from an increase in market tenure homes. The proposed approach therefore requires reconsideration to make clear that in this scenario a reduction in affordable housing may not be permissible even where this is linked to a variation to a condition.

Government has also set out the intention to undertake a wider review of the statutory framework for modifying or discharging planning obligations alongside work relating to the implementation of s73B of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act. It is important that this prevents and does not provide an alternative means for applicants to seek unnecessary, opportunistic or immediate applications to reduce affordable housing obligations following the grant of planning consent.

It is also important that the proposed changes in the NPPF that are intended to address longstanding concerns with the viability testing process are effective in establishing a more realistic basis of viability assessment for new and amended applications in line with national, Mayoral and professional standards.

29) Do you agree with the approach for planning conditions and obligations set out in policy DM6, especially the use of model conditions and obligations? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The GLA has used standard S106 clauses for several years which are widely applied across London. The Mayor supports the use of standard conditions and obligations where these reflect the specific circumstances in London and are consistent with and help to implement the policies in the London Plan.

Paragraph 3. should restate the requirement that applicants should be consulted on the drafting of conditions, particularly where pre-commencement conditions are being considered, as in many cases it's possible that the condition should be drafted to come into effect prior to commencement of 'the relevant part of the development' rather than the entire development.

30) Do you agree that policy DM7 clarifies the relationship between planning decisions and other regulatory regimes? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree

This policy is welcomed as the requirement through planning conditions to make duplicate submissions for approval for matters covered by separate regulatory regimes adds to the cost and administrative burden for the applicant. This is a particular issue for schemes affecting the marine environment requiring planning permission (such as for bridges across the River Thames). Transport for London has had to discharge planning conditions for matters that are covered by other regulatory regimes including marine licences (from the Marine Management Organisation), river works licences (from the Port of London Authority) and various permitting regimes managed by the Environment Agency.

However, other regimes do not necessarily consider the planning regime. For example, licensing authorities do not always consider the measures that should have been included into a sensitive use under the Agent of Change principle to protect the existing noise generating use.

31) Do you agree with the new intentional unauthorised development policy in policy DM8? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

There should be a clear steer on what standard of evidence would be required to conclude the unauthorised development was intentional.

Are there any specific types of harm arising from intentional unauthorised development, and any specific impacts from the proposed policy, which we should consider?

The planning harm arising from intentional unauthorised development is the loss of larger housing stock and industrial land where developers are seeking to conceal the scheme and "run out the clock" on the time limits in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This is less of an issue with April 2024 revisions to the time limits via LURA.

32) Are there any specific types of harm arising from intentional unauthorised development, and any specific impacts from the proposed policy, which we should consider?

a) If so, are there any particular additions or mitigations which we should consider?

Despite the increased time limit to ten years, the government may wish to consider removal of the application of the time limits in cases where historic intentional unauthorised development is very clear, without the LPA having to seek an Enforcement Order or make a judgement on when the Local Planning Authority became aware of the unauthorised development.

33) Do you agree with the new Article 4 direction policy in policy DM10? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

There are existing Article 4 directions covering parts of London which are needed to protect local amenity, housing stock and the vitality and viability of key economic areas. We therefore support the provisions in DM10 as they allow for the removal of permitted development rights where necessary.

However, the NPPF should support the use of Article 4 directions to remove permitted development rights, not only in parts of town centres but also areas with other strategic designations such as the Central Activities Zone (CAZ), designated industrial areas and designated strategic economic clusters.

Ensuring that the CAZ continues to operate effectively, adapts to changing economic conditions, and recovers fully from the impacts of the pandemic is of critical strategic importance to London and the UK. To strengthen its long-term resilience, commercial floorspace must be protected and enhanced to support the distinctive clusters of employment and commercial activity. It is also essential that sufficient floorspace is provided across the CAZ to meet future growth in demand to meet the needs of the London and UK economy.

London has lost 18 per cent of its industrial land between 2001 and 2020. Two thirds of the remaining industrial capacity is on designated industrial land, where less than 10 per cent is not in industrial use. The scarcity and demand for industrial land within London is reflected by the low vacancy rate in parts of London and increasing rents.

There are also other economic clusters identified in the London Growth Plan. Such areas tend to support emerging sectors as they can provide the modern space required. Areas currently not protected by a designation include the life science clusters at White City and Whitechapel.

New references to 'avoid wholly unacceptable adverse impacts' and 'seriously undermine' the vitality and viability of town centres and the new references added to preventing an over-concentration of uses which could affect the quality of life or community cohesion, or supporting the vitality and viability of parts of town centres, are welcome.

It is not clear whether other types of transport-related environmental impacts would fall under 'amenity'. Environmental impacts may in some locations be a reason for an article 4 direction, such as control of vehicle crossings or permeability of surfaces.

34) Do you agree with the proposed approach to setting a spatial strategy in development plans? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

It would be helpful if it could be clarified in S2 1a that settlement limits are unnecessary in the context of a conurbation with a green belt- that the inner green belt boundary effectively defines these and should be reviewed as part of the spatial strategy development process. It should also be recognised that SDSs as part of their spatial strategy establish the in-principle need for strategic infrastructure and green belt release, such that this shouldn't be re-visited in local plans.

In addition, it would be useful for policy S2(1)(b) to recognise that town centre, or other specific areas', boundaries may need to be indicatively identified on maps in areas of extensive long-term change where the precise street and block layout has yet to be determined. This would apply to urban extensions, new towns and large-scale regeneration areas such as Old Oak and Park Royal. It would place an unrealistic expectation otherwise which could undermine strategic spatial strategies.

[Achieving sustainable development](#)

35) Do you agree with the proposed definition of settlements in the glossary? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

36) Do you agree with the revised approach to the presumption in favour of sustainable development? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

37) Do you agree to the proposed approach to development within settlements? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree – subject to the change requested below.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We believe that 'outweighed' should be used rather than 'substantially outweighed' in S4 paragraph 1. We would also note that when taking transport impacts into account, while cumulative impacts are referred to in the framework (and which are significant in aggregate and have strategic implications) the impacts of an individual scheme and single decision are unlikely to be 'substantial' in themselves. But by the time the tipping point is reached it would be too late for effective mitigation to be secured.

38) Do you agree to the proposed approach to development outside settlements? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

39) Do you have any views on the specific categories of development which the policy would allow to take place outside settlements, and the associated criteria? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons.

We support the inclusion of major development for storage and distribution purposes which is in line with policy E3. It can be difficult to find sites suitable for modern logistics operations, especially in a context where more supply for housing development is required.

The acknowledgement of burial space needs is welcome given limited opportunities to provide for them within settlements

We agree particularly with paragraph 1.a. which provides for transport infrastructure.

We consider sustainable transport access is potentially important for several of the categories of development in S5 paragraph 1. We recommend amendments to address this, such as follows: in paragraph 1.a. '[...] outdoor sport and recreation if the development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to policy TR3 of this Framework [...]'; paragraph 1.d. 'The redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed-use including residential) if the development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to policy TR3 of this Framework'; and in paragraph 1.j. [...] 'where the development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to policy TR3 of this Framework and [...]'.

Given the potential for some tourism activities to attract thousands of trips by car, paragraph 1.b. should be amended: 'Development for rural businesses and services, including tourism based on rural features, where a location outside settlements is shown to be necessary.' Tourism activities that do not need to be in a rural area should not be captured.

We support the exclusion of Green Belt land from this policy, given that much of the land outside settlements in London is in the Green Belt, to ensure that transport impacts of development in London can be considered.

40) Do you agree with the proposed approach to development around stations, including that it applies only to housing and mixed-use development capable of meeting the density requirements in chapter 12? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, including any evidence that this policy would lead to adverse impacts on Gypsies and Travellers and other groups with protected characteristics.

In London higher train frequencies should be required for this development to be appropriate. As explained in response to question 122, the following should be added to the end of L3 paragraph 3.: '[...] unless both higher density standards and higher minimum connectivity levels are specified in a spatial development strategy'. The absence of this amendment risks undermining a more plan-led and prioritised approach to managing network impacts on London – which if not managed would undermine development more broadly.

In addition, the density floors (minima) run the risk of becoming problematic for speculative development ahead of the next London Plan. In London we would expect the densities to be much higher and it is key for the growth of London that this is not undermined now or in the future.

For consistency, footnote 44 should be replicated after 'railway station' in S5 paragraph 1.h., or a definition of 'railway station' should be added to the glossary

An amendment to Paragraph 1.h. on development near train stations is proposed to avoid prejudicing improvements to stations that would support the additional development, such as capacity improvements and step-free access. This could be resolved by changing the last part of paragraph 1.h. to 'where the development would not prejudice any proposals for long-term comprehensive development or transport infrastructure improvements that would support additional development in the same location'.

41) Do you agree that neighbourhood plans should contain allocations to meet their identified housing requirement in order to qualify for this policy? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree or disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

a) If not, please provide your reasons

The benefits of policy S6(1)(b) are that it incentivises neighbourhood plans to include allocations to meet their allocated housing requirement. However, there is a risk that policy S6(1)(a) may result in neighbourhood plan policies effectively restricting windfall development. This would be the case where site allocations may have demonstrated to have been deliverable or developable at the point of adoption of the neighbourhood plan but no longer have developer interest resulting in a shortfall in housing delivery.

Meeting the challenge of climate change

42) Do you agree with the approach to planning for climate change in policy CC1? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Partly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We welcome the stated ambition of CC1 and stronger wording around mitigation and adaptation, with the policy seeking a proactive approach to support the transition to net zero and to proactive adaptation to climate change. However, paragraph 1 a, sets a very narrow focus on development patterns and allocations rather than supporting additional broader approaches available to plan-makers to address this. The London Plan seeks to address this for example through a wide range of policy mechanisms including those that promote energy efficiency. The ability to set standards through CC1 is the only way to achieve the aims of CC2.

Paragraph 1.a. could be amended for clarity to state that densities (and design where linked to densities) could be included in the spatial strategy: 'Proposing development patterns and, as relevant to this, densities and design [...]'].

The ability to set local water efficiency standards for new development where these are justified in accordance with policy PM13 is welcome. However, permitting this approach for water efficiency but prohibiting the same approach in relation to energy efficiency seems contradictory. The draft wording rightly allows for water efficiency standards to be set in respect of local evidence – the same should also be permitted in an SDS for energy where conditions, constraints and climate hazards have a significant impact on the necessity of standards that go beyond the national approach.

Part 1 a requires plans to contribute to decarbonisation through the spatial strategy “which can be informed by an assessment of baseline carbon emissions” – this could be seen as supportive of the London Plan taking a pro-active approach to decarbonisation, including setting targets and is welcomed. It should also support LPAs in seeking appropriate baseline and actual emissions information for strategic development – something that is not possible when relying solely on building regulations methodologies.

Policy CC1 makes no reference to embodied emissions. Meeting the goal of Net Zero 2050 as per the provisions of the CCA requires radical reductions in embodied carbon as well as operational emissions. It is essential that the NPPF provides a mandate for the London Plan to address this issue, particularly since the proportion of embodied to operational carbon in new buildings is rapidly growing as the energy grid decarbonises.

We would recommend an amendment to CC1(a)(ii) to add 'public health' alongside 'public safety'. 'Public safety' implies this would only apply where there is an immediate risk to life, which is rarely an issue with planning decisions/policy. The harms to health and risk to life associated with climate and planning are non-acute but cumulative and better reflected, assessed and evidenced as 'risks to health', or 'public health risk'.

Including health outcomes related to climate mitigation and adaptation is important to support integrated and coherent planning decisions in context, which invariably involves interactions

and trade-offs. For example, energy efficiency measures need to consider overheating, ventilation and damp/mould.

43) Do you agree with the approach to mitigating climate change through planning decisions in policy CC2? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

a) If not, what additional measures could be taken to ensure climate change mitigation is given appropriate consideration?

CC2 1 d encourages re-use of existing structures and materials. Where demolition is proposed it should be appropriately justified and planned and there should be a reference to embodied carbon. The policy currently would not seem to support requirements such as a defined minimum percentage diversion of construction, demolition, and excavation (CD&E) waste from landfill as required by many extant planning policies. This should be addressed.

CC2 1 g requires development not to increase the extraction of fossil fuels unless permitted by policy M5. This is read as relating to proposals for extraction uses such as fracking facilities, however, as written, it could be seen to apply to all development since all development which uses newly created materials or energy which is not fully decarbonised in either its construction or the creation of its constituent materials and products will increase the extraction of fossil fuels by consuming fossil fuel products. This provision should be refined, for example “g. Not increase the extraction of fossil fuels through direct activity such as fracking or coal mining and reduce as far as possible the secondary extraction of fossil fuels in relation to construction and material manufacture processes.”

We strongly support the inclusion of choice of sustainable transport modes and access to amenities in paragraph 1.a. and b. However, for London (and other urban areas), ‘ultra low and zero emission vehicles’ must not apply in the definition of ‘sustainable transport modes’ in the glossary. In the context of London’s continued growth, we need to minimise the growth and use of private vehicles – regardless of how ‘clean’ they are - otherwise it will lead to unmanageable congestion impacts, and result in lower density development and less efficient use of scarce land. The emphasis on mode shift must be retained.

44) Do you agree with the approach to climate change adaptation through planning decisions in policy CC3? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

We support the new policy going “further than the current Framework by requiring development proposals to consider both current and future climate impacts over the lifetime of the development”.

a) What additional measures could be taken to ensure climate change adaptation is given appropriate consideration?

London has been setting its own overheating policy since 2008, before building regulations introduced overheating requirements and it set the standard for TM59 modelling for new homes when introduced into the national Building Regulations. In London, the risk of

overheating is significantly higher due to its location and additional risk of urban heat island effect ([DESNZ, 2023](#); [Simpson et al., 2025](#); [London Climate Resilient, 2024](#)). Air conditioning exacerbates the urban heat island effect and creates a harmful self-reinforcing cyclical problem with increasing energy demands. It is vital therefore that London can work to manage demand for this. We cannot afford to miss these opportunities in new development and must be able to effectively promote the use of passive design measures that can avoid and minimise risks of overheating. Passive design approaches are an important facet of design and we will assume that the London Plan can pursue appropriate policies, even if it may be seen as touching on Part O of the building regulations. It is only in this way that we can improve local resilience during heatwaves, reduce susceptibility during power outages and reduce energy bill costs to occupiers. This is also an opportunity to support skills and supply chains for delivering overheating resilience (with regards to external shading, glazing and cooling) which can be expanded across the country.

We support the reference in this policy to tree planting in accordance with policies DP3: Key principles for well-designed places and N3: Trees in new development.

45) Does the policy on wildfire adaptation clearly explain when such risks should be considered and how these risks should be mitigated? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons

Wildfire resistant planting is mentioned in policy CC3, however there is a need for a standardised method for determining and mitigating risk as with flood risk. Wildfire Risk Assessments (WRAs) are currently provided as part of EIA Screening. Since this only applies to certain development types, other types of development which could potentially be at risk from wildfire or increase wildfire risk through development activities are not routinely assessed. Furthermore, it is not known whether the requirement for WRAs will be retained in Environmental Outcome Reports following the adoption of provisions under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

46) How should wildfire adaptation measures be integrated with wider principles for good design, and what additional guidance would be helpful?

The WRA methodology and checklist contained within the Forestry Commission's Operations Note ON040 – Potential wildfire risk, is potentially suitable for adaptation to be used for desktop assessment of proposed development sites. To ensure consistency and appropriately scoped risk assessment, risk assessments should factor in climate change and use weather data including Design Summer Years (DSYs) 2 and 3. These datasets cover the years containing the most intense and longest heat events respectively.

Additionally, any risk assessment or checklist should consider architectural factors which may increase risk of wildfire such as curved reflective surfaces, proximity of reflective surfaces to flammable materials and glazing design including the degree of shading to windows.

The need for climate resilient trees is mentioned in policy N3. This should be strengthened by linkage with policy CC3. It should also be made clear that resilience and wildfire resistance depends on species selection, maturity of specimens, suitability of planting, suitability of

maintenance and irrigation strategies and co-location with other species, rather than species selection alone. Wildfire adaptation measures often link with flood mitigation measures, for example, where wet areas created to mitigate flood risk can act as fire breaks. This also means that a hazard from wildfire can damage other infrastructure including flood mitigation measures. It is important that co-benefits and cumulative impacts are considered at design stage and reported on during the planning process.

47) Do you have any other comments on actions that could be taken through national planning policy to address climate change?

Given that there is currently no statutory requirement for reduction of embodied carbon through the Building Regulations, national planning policy should enable the London Plan to establish limits which align with locally and nationally designated contributions to decarbonisation.

Evidence shows that the interface of national Building Regulations, enforcement and the overlap between planning and building control creates challenges ([DCLG, 2012](#)). In 2026, this continues to be an issue. The interaction of different parts of the building regulations, in particular on noise, ventilation, overheating and the conservation of fuel and power, can result in active cooling having to be installed as modelling has to assume windows cannot be opened. The application of building regulations for development in the context of London's dense urban environment should be reviewed so they do not result in unintended outcomes.

Delivering an efficient supply of homes

48) Do you agree the requirements for spatial development strategies and local plans in policy HO1 and policy HO2 are appropriate? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The policies provide clear requirements for assessing the need for homes and setting housing requirements. We welcome the clarity of HO1 paragraph 1. and HO2 paragraph 1. on the relationship between local plan and spatial development strategies in terms of establishing housing need and not duplicating the calculation of this.

We also welcome the inclusion of HO2 that "Spatial development strategies should establish a housing requirement and set pitch and plot requirements where a need has been identified, for each local planning authority within the strategy area. These figures should not be re-tested as part of local plan preparation unless there has been a significant change in circumstances which affects the overall requirement and its distribution to each local planning authority area".

[SEP] This approach should provide much needed clarity regarding how many homes should be planned for in each local authority area.

While we welcome the inclusion of HO2 4 'Pitch and plot requirements should reflect the extent to which identified permanent and transit site accommodation needs of Travellers in the area can be accommodated over the plan period as fully as possible, in accordance with policy S1' we request that this be amended to refer to the accommodation needs of 'Gypsies, Travellers

and Travelling Show people'. We also request that the NPPF use capitals throughout the document when referring to Gypsies and Travellers or Traveller sites as set out above.

49) Is further guidance required on assessing the needs of different groups, including older people, disabled people, and those who require social and affordable housing? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Agree.

a) If so, what elements should this guidance cover?

Clearer guidance is needed on assessing the needs of all groups of people with impairments. Guidance on assessing the needs of groups requiring specialist and supported housing, including but not limited to victims/survivors of domestic abuse, people with experience of rough sleeping, and people with substance misuse issues, should also be included.

It may be useful to consult on any amendments to Planning Practice Guidance on assessing the needs of different groups.

50) Do you agree with the approach to incorporating relevant policies of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites within this chapter? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

51) Is further guidance needed on how authorities should assess the need for traveller sites and set requirement figures? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Agree.

a) If so, what are the key principles this guidance should establish?

Yes, further guidance would be welcome. There is currently a lack of guidance on how to carry out a Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessment, with reliance currently places on guidance published in 2007 (but withdrawn some years ago). Consequently, the efficacy and robustness of assessments varies.

The guidance should support assessments of the need for group housing, alongside sites and pitches, when assessing the need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.

52) Do you agree the new Annex D to the draft Framework is sufficiently clear on how local planning authorities should set the appropriate buffer for their local plan 5-year housing land supply? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The application of the appropriate buffer for an LPA's 5-year housing land supply is clear. However, where an SDS is in the process of being updated, the existing housing requirement

figure should continue to apply until the new SDS is published and adopted, to avoid negative consequences in the interim for boroughs (and development corporations).

53) Do you agree the new Annex D to the draft Framework is sufficiently clear on the wider procedural elements of 5-year housing land supply, the Housing Delivery Test and how they relate to decision-making? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Notwithstanding the response made in Q8 that the approach to the Housing Delivery Test overall should be reconsidered to link it to what is within the control of boroughs in terms of identifying and planning for sufficient capacity – rather than delivery.

54) Do you agree the requirements to establish a 5-year supply of deliverable traveller sites and monitor delivery are sufficiently clear? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reason, particularly if you disagree.

There is no reference to any buffer so it is assumed that there will not be a requirement to account for the under-delivery of traveller sites.

55) Do you agree the plan-making requirements, for both local plans and spatial development strategies, in relation to large scale residential and mixed-use development are sufficiently clear? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We note the examples in HO4(1). Further consideration should be given to elaborating on these within the Planning Practice Guidance with relevant examples such as the OPDC area and other relevant Opportunity Areas within London.

We welcome the use of “Be capable of being supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities” and references to both “existing or planned infrastructure investment” in policy HO4(1)(a). This will support the delivery of long-term large scale mixed-use development such as in London’s Opportunity Areas. However, policy HO4(1)(b) would also benefit from similar phrasing to recognise that services and employment opportunities within development areas may be delivered after phases of residential development.

Policy HO4(1)(b) refers to larger towns; however, this does not account for urban contexts where nearby town centres or other spatial designations may provide services and employment opportunities.

Policy HO4(2)(b) refers to making a realistic assessment of the likely rates of delivery and identifying opportunities for supporting rapid implementation. This will be particularly important for long-term large-scale residential redevelopment such as that delivered by development

corporations and further Planning Practice Guidance would be useful on how to ensure likely rates of delivery are reflected in 5-year housing land supply so that Housing Delivery Test requirements can be met.

We support the acknowledgement of support needed by infrastructure and references to policies TR1: Vision-led approach to planning for transport and TR3: Locating development in sustainable locations, and access to services that does not unrealistically require self-containment in paragraphs 1.a. and b. We support that local plans should identify infrastructure required in paragraph 2. It is not clear what the 'New Town principles' referenced in paragraph 2.a. are or where to find them. If they are what is in the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's '[Building New Towns for the Future](#)' 13 February 2025 policy paper, under the section 'The next generation of new towns will...', this should be made clear.

56) Do you agree our proposed changes to the definition of designated rural areas will better support rural social and affordable housing? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

57) Do you agree with our proposals to ask authorities to set out the proportion of new housing that should be delivered to M4(2) and M4(3) standards? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

The London Plan already sets out the proportion of new housing required to be delivered to M4(2) and M4(3) standards. The national position should also require lower tiered plans to distinguish between M4(3)a and M4(3).

58) Do you agree 40% of new housing delivered to M4(2) standards over the plan period is the right minimum proportion? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree

a) Please provide your reasons, and would you support an alternative minimum percentage requirement?

In London at least 10% of new dwellings (to which Part M applies) are required to meet M4 (3) wheelchair user dwellings; the remainder should meet M4 (2). We would question why – when the rest of the country has an older population, that prevalence of disability increases with age, and that there is a significant lack of accessible accommodation impacting on people's quality of life and leading to higher costs (both for public bodies and individuals) – this approach is not applied nationally.

It is our understanding that 40% is retained nationally and would call for clarity in the NPPF setting that this is a minimum and that a higher level can be set in development plans, (i.e. that this national minimum does not limit authorities having significantly higher levels in development plans).

Whilst we are supportive of the Government's intention to raise the accessibility standards of new homes, believes that the NPPF could go further by requiring a higher percentage of new

homes to be built to the M4(2) and M4(3) standards. As reflected in the [Mayoral response to the former Government's consultation on accessible homes](#), the London Plan has had planning policy requirements for accessible housing since the first version of the London Plan published in 2004. Pre-2015, the London Plan required that 100 per cent of new homes met the Lifetime Homes Standards and 10 per cent were wheelchair accessible or adaptable. Since 2016, after the Government introduced the optional technical housing standards, London Plan policy has required 90 per cent of new-build dwellings to be built to M4(2) standards and 10 per cent to M4(3). These London Plan policies have, over the last 20 years, been successful in increasing both the number of accessible properties built in London, and the level of choice for people who require accessible housing.

GLA research shows that when building M4(2) homes there is minimal uplift above base construction costs. M4(2) homes enable future adaptations to be made such as the potential to fit a stair-lift and achieve a level access bathroom, thus enabling people to remain in their own homes for longer, saving costs in the long-term to individuals and the Government. The Mayor of London supports mandating 90% of new homes to meet the M4(2) standard and, at least, 10% of new homes to meet the M4(3) standard, which will increase the overall adaptability and accessibility of national housing stock, provide disabled people and carers with more housing choice, support health, wellbeing and employment outcomes and reduce costs in the long-term.

59) Do you agree the proposals to support the needs of different groups, through requiring authorities to identify sites or set requirements for parts of allocated sites are proportionate? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

60) Do you agree with our proposals to ask authorities to set out requirements for a broader mix of tenures to be provided on sites of 150 homes or more? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons and indicate if an alternative site size threshold would be preferable?

We strongly support the focus on the delivery of social and affordable homes through national policy requirements and authorities setting specific requirements for social rent homes and strengthened support for mixed tenure development. These principles align with the 2025 government consultation on implementing measures to improve build out and the GLA's response. To achieve this, the current London Plan is clear that requirements for a mix of affordable housing tenures should apply to all major developments (above 10 units) which accords with HO5 1a).

However, HO5 d) and the reference to 150 homes, could be inferred as a minimum for affordable housing requirements and would benefit from clarification in terms of its interaction with other parts of this policy. Moreover, if site-specific tenure policies are to be applied, this will result in lengthy Local Plan processes and the need for overly detailed design and viability evidence base on a site-by-site basis, plus it may result in Local Plans becoming rigid and inflexible. Notwithstanding the role of the SDS in setting affordable housing requirements, for

local plans a more appropriate size threshold for site allocations within settlement boundaries, and particularly London, would be at a master planning scale with reference to local housing needs.

61) Do you agree with proposals for authorities to allocate land to accommodate 10% of the housing requirement on sites of between 1 and 2.5 hectares? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons

Given London's high housing need, we continue to explore opportunities to optimise land comprising various sized sites. As such, ensuring land supply is underpinned by a diverse range of site sizes is, in principle, a sensible approach. However, the ability to achieve this percentage is likely to differ across the varied geographies of London and a 'one size fits all' approach may not be reasonable.

Policy HO6(1)(a) goes some way towards recognising variance enabling Local Plans to not meet NPPF requirements where there are strong reasons not to do so.

For development corporations, it may be the case that the supply of such sites is limited by the presence of large development sites in public land ownership (for example, in OPDC those currently used for High Speed 2 construction purposes). Planning Practice Guidance could be used to provide examples of what might be justifiable reasons and include specific references to local planning authorities with smaller geographic areas such as Mayoral Development Corporations and potentially New Towns.

62) Are any changes to policy HO7 needed in order to ensure that substantial weight is given to meeting relevant needs?

We support the approach in policy HO7 which states that substantial weight should be given to the benefits of providing accommodation that will contribute towards meeting the evidenced needs of the local community. To help ensure that the policy is clear, and that substantial weight is given to meeting relevant needs the policy should highlight the housing types that most effectively meet these needs, particularly affordable and social housing.

The interpretation of 'performance against the HDT' in relation to in settlement development is a concern. While S5(1)(j) and the associated annexes make clear the percentage that the HDT impacts decision making outside of settlements, HO7 refers to HDT performance but leaves the performance measure open to interpretation. This poses a risk of introducing protracted discussions to applications, appeals and through development plan examinations, over the weight that should be afforded to different rates of HDT 'failure', in turn potentially slowing down applications and development plan adoption. We would also reiterate strongly the concerns about the ability of LPAs themselves to meet the HDT (and this exacerbates the concerns about the implications of 'failure') and would urge Government to focus on those levers that are within the control and influence of LPAs e.g. identification of capacity / land supply, efficiency and effectiveness of decision-making.

Policy HO1 "Assessing the need for homes" and Policy HO5 "Meeting the needs of different groups" could be referenced within Policy HO7 in respect of "meeting the evidenced needs of the local community, taking into account any up-to-date local housing need assessment".

63) Do you agree that proposals to add military affordable housing to the definition of affordable housing, and allow military housing to be delivered as part of affordable housing requirements, will successfully enable the provision of military homes? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

64) Do you agree flexibility relating to the size of market homes provided will better enable developments providing affordable housing? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We agree with the principle of allowing flexibility in relation to the size of the market homes, where development proposals meet or exceed up-to-date development plan requirements for the proportion and mix of affordable housing tenures, including the minimum proportion of Social Rent properties. However, planning authorities should also ensure that the overall quality of accommodation would not be unduly compromised as a result.

Further, we consider that the market units should continue to meet the national described space standard and those set out in the London Plan.

65) Would requiring a minimum proportion of social rent, unless otherwise specified in development plans, support the delivery of greater number of social rent homes? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) If so, what would be an appropriate minimum proportion and development size threshold taking into account development viability?

Given the significant need for social rent housing in London and nationally, we support the proposal for a minimum proportion of social rent housing, which should be at least 10% of new homes for major development which should apply regardless of whether the scheme is viability tested. To avoid confusion with Development Plan policies, the NPPF should make clear that the national minimum social rent requirement is calculated based on the total number of units or habitable rooms with this scheme (rather than a proportion of the affordable housing component), and that it should be considered alongside Development Plan policies for a minimum level of social rent (and not usurp where requirements are higher).

66) Are changes to planning policy needed to ensure that affordable temporary accommodation, such as stepping stone housing, is appropriately supported, including flexibilities around space standards?

Yes.

a) If so, what changes would be beneficial?

The NPPF should enable planning authorities to set out the needs and requirements of affordable temporary accommodation for their area. It should also promote the provision of good quality temporary accommodation, which includes consideration of space standards taking into account how long a person may be living in this home. This should also include the provision of meanwhile housing for homeless households on suitable development sites where these provide nomination rights to councils or RPs, access to amenities and appropriate support for residents.

67) Do you agree that applicants should have discretion to deliver social and affordable housing requirements via cash payments in lieu of on-site delivery on medium sites? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Partly agree.

a) If so, would it be desirable to limit the circumstances in which cash contributions in lieu of on-site delivery can be provided – for example, should it not be permitted on land released from the Green Belt where the Golden Rules apply? Please explain your answer.

Schemes on small sites could be given greater discretion to provide affordable housing as cash in-lieu payments where it can be demonstrated that this can support delivery overall. Given the broad variety of site sizes delivered over different geographical areas, it is considered appropriate for the SDS to define the size threshold for such a policy, which should be reflected in the NPPF. The GLA does not agree that cash in lieu contributions should be automatically applied to Green Belt sites (for example).

b) If you do not believe applicants should have blanket discretion to discharge social and affordable housing requirements through commuted sums, do you think cash contributions in lieu of on-site delivery should be permitted in certain circumstances – for example where it could be evidenced that onsite delivery would prevent a scheme from being delivered? Please explain your answer

As set out above, for schemes on smaller sites (the size of which should be regionally defined), there should be a flexible approach in seeking affordable housing contribution off-site or as a financial in-lieu contribution where this would support overall delivery (and e.g. ongoing management of the housing).

However, for other schemes, affordable housing should only be provided off-site or as a cash in lieu contribution in exceptional circumstances, where it can be robustly demonstrated that affordable housing cannot be delivered on-site or where an off-site contribution would better deliver mixed and inclusive communities than an on-site contribution. In-lieu contributions should be at a level that is equivalent to onsite delivery and that is financially neutral for the applicant.

68) What risks and benefits would you expect this policy to have? Please explain your answer. The government is particularly interested in views on the potential impact on SME housing delivery, overall housing delivery, land values, build out rates, overall social and affordable housing delivery, and Registered Providers (including SME providers).

The intention to support SME developers is supported and for smaller (regionally defined) sites, a more flexible approach is appropriate in terms of delivery of affordable housing, provided that any off-site or financial in-lieu contribution secured would be equivalent to the on-site delivery, and that it will not be detrimental to the delivery of mixed and inclusive communities. Development Plans should set out the policy requirements for the circumstances where financial contributions in lieu of on-site delivery can be permitted for medium sized schemes – Development Plan policy would have inherently been shaped by an assessment of local viability, local housing needs and an assessment of the housing land supply.

However, any approach needs to be carefully balanced against the risk of land price inflation or of lowering much needed affordable housing delivery, especially as some areas will rely extensively on smaller sites to deliver their affordable housing offer. It is for this reason that a blanket approach set by the NPPF is inappropriate.

69) What guidance or wider changes would be needed to enable Local Planning Authorities to spend commuted sums more effectively and more quickly? Please explain your answer.

Guidance could be provided to support local authorities to deliver social housing using the developer contributions to ensure that affordable housing delivery is maximised and implemented without delay, as applicants can request that s106 contributions are repaid if not spent within 5 years. Public land can play a key role in delivery, but this depends on early land availability and access to financing. Access to a specific fund for site acquisition and delivery, which S106 contributions could be combined with could be a potential way to support delivery. In addition, given the significant need for affordable housing but the funding and capacity constraints in some authorities, commuted sums should also be available for purchasing consented affordable and market homes, and existing market homes for provision as affordable housing. In some circumstances, where an authority is unable to deliver additional affordable housing, it may also be appropriate to allow a proportion of the funding to be used for the provision of temporary accommodation.

70) Would further guidance be helpful in supporting authorities to calculate the appropriate value of cash contributions in lieu?

Yes, a more standardised approach in assessing the appropriate financial contributions (and how it should be indexed and/or reviewed) should be adopted to provide more certainty for all parties and reduce disputes and delays in planning applications.

a) If so, what elements and principles should this guidance set out? Please explain your answer. For example, guidance could make clear that contributions in lieu should be an amount which is the equivalent value of providing affordable housing on site, based on a comparison of the Gross Development Value of the proposed scheme with the Gross Development Value of the scheme assuming affordable housing was provided onsite.

We support the approach to calculating in-lieu contributions based on the comparison of the GDV between the proposed scheme and the notional scheme assuming the policy compliant level of affordable housing provision. This approach would ensure that the contribution is the equivalent to onsite provision and represents a financially neutral position for the applicant.

This also ensures that a higher profit level is not adopted which has the effect of reducing the level of contributions.

It may be appropriate to consider additional marketing and CIL costs associated with a 100% market housing scheme to account for the differences between the two scenarios, provided that they would not unduly reduce the overall level of financial contribution.

71) Do you support proposals to enable off site delivery where affordable housing delivery can be optimised to produce better outcomes in terms of quality or quantity? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

As stated above, we support a more flexible approach for SME sites where affordable housing could be optimised off-site or as an in-lieu contribution. Applicants would need to demonstrate that the affordable housing off-site contribution would be equivalent to or exceed the on-site delivery (in terms of both affordable housing tenure and floorspace) and that it will not be detrimental to the delivery of mixed and inclusive communities.

72) Do you agree the with the criteria set out regarding the locations of specialist housing for older people? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Additional considerations should be given to how the development could contribute to mixed and inclusive communities, as well as provision of affordable housing where applicable. The design of the proposal should not exclude provision of on-site affordable housing where feasible.

Older people also cycle and so we recommend the addition of 'cycling' to HO9 paragraph 1.a.i.

73) Do you agree with the criteria set out regarding the locations of community-based specialist accommodation, including changes to the glossary? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree

The definition is narrowly focused on custodial linked uses. Specialist housing not for older people could also include housing for people with support needs.

A clarifying amendment should be made in H09 paragraph 1.b., for consistency with the glossary: 'Specialist community-based specialist accommodation'. We also recommend adding to b.ii. 'Including by sustainable modes'.

74) Do you agree with the criteria set out regarding the locations of purpose-built student accommodation and large-scale shared living accommodation, including

changes to the glossary? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

We also recommend the inclusion of cycling in HO9 paragraph 1.c., and requiring all sustainable modes: 'by walking, cycling, wheeling or and public transport'.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

75) Do you agree the proposals provide adequate additional support for rural exception sites? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, including what other changes may be needed to increase their uptake?

76) Do you agree with proposals to remove First Homes exception sites as a discrete form of exception site? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

There is very limited evidence that First Homes can be delivered in London and still meet national requirements and the criteria for affordable housing set by the London Plan. As such, its relevance and deliverability as an intermediate affordable housing product is questionable especially for London. As such, it should not be treated with the same level of importance for example as much needed community-led housing or Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.

77) Do you agree proposals for a benchmark land value for rural exception sites will help to bring forward more rural affordable homes? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) If so, which approach and value as set out in the narrative for policy HO10 of the consultation document is the most beneficial for government to set out?

78) Do you agree the proposals to set out requirements for traveller sites at policy HO12 adequately capture relevant aspects from Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, whilst ensuring fair treatment for traveller sites in the planning system? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

79) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

It makes sense to incorporate the PPTS into the Framework given the requirements to assess the needs for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and to allocate land to meet these needs.

80) Do you agree the proposals in policy HO13 will help to ensure development proposals are built out in a reasonable period? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

HO13 policy 3a) should refer to scale and type of affordable housing to ensure that social housing requirements are set at the outset of phased developments.

We support the approach that infrastructure for large-scale developments should be secured through the consenting framework (paragraph 3.a.).

81) Do you agree the requirements to take a flexible approach to the consenting framework for large scale residential and mixed-use development is sufficient to ensure the opportunities of large-scale development are supported? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

HO13 policy 3b) should refer to the use of review mechanisms to support the delivery of additional affordable housing on large scale phased developments.

82) Are any more specific approaches or definitions needed to support the delivery of very large (super strategic) sites, including new towns? Yes, no

Maybe.

a) Please provide your reasons.

Subject to detail in the New Town NPS, specific approaches and definitions may need to be included in the final NPPF. It should also be confirmed that housing delivery in New Towns will be counted in relation to housing targets

83) Do you agree with the proposed changes to the Housing Delivery Test rule book? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The approach to remove the 'lower of' rule for up-to-date development plans is welcomed. However, as per the response to Q8) and Q53 further consideration should be given to how to account for emerging SDSs in terms of the housing requirement, given that these documents, even in draft, will have recently undertaken a thorough process of land identification and capacity calculation and will likely provide the most up to date picture of the appropriate housing requirement.

As also previously stated urgent consideration should be given to the nature of the Test in terms of focusing on the identification of sufficient capacity and other relevant metrics rather than delivery of the homes themselves which planning authorities will always have limited control over (beyond their direct delivery). This is an urgent issue which otherwise could risk undermining the plan-led system and actually disincentivise authorities to be ambitious when setting housing targets.

Building a strong and effective economy

84) Do you agree that more emphasis should be placed on relevant national strategies and the need for flexibility in planning for economic growth, as drafted in policy E1? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We support the reference to strategic strategies for economic development to enable the planning for businesses that support London's economy and residents in the most appropriate locations across the capital. The agglomeration of businesses, especially in the Central Activities Zones also supports the wider UK economy and London's international competitiveness in many sectors such as finance and professional services, frontier sectors, creative industries, and experience economy.

85) Do you agree with the approach to meeting the need for business land and premises in policy E2? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We support the reference to the economic vision and strategy for the area – these would enable a holistic, strategically, and locally evidenced and context specific view on all of the sectors that could play a vital role in the future of the regional and local economies

The approach especially will give confidence and support to sectors of the economy that have not been sufficiently planned for, in a market like London where land values are high and it has traditionally been difficult for some sectors / commercial land uses to compete.

86) Do you agree with the proposed new decision-making policy supporting freight and logistics development in policy E3? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The GLA supports this new policy, including the need to consider the impact on the environment (including air quality). Freight vehicles (notably diesel vans) are large contributors to poor air quality.

The caveats to the reference to sustainable modes should be removed. The broad definition of 'sustainable transport modes' in the glossary, which is also drafted in a way which is more relevant to passenger travel, and 'appropriate to the type of development' send a mixed message about the importance of decarbonising and removing freight when set against the more ambitious wording in TR1: Vision-led approach to planning for transport.

Paragraph 1.a. should therefore be amended: 'Have good access to transport networks (including via sustainable transport modes ~~where possible~~) appropriate to the type of development.' In addition, the definition of 'sustainable transport modes' in the glossary should

differentiate between sustainable modes for people and sustainable modes for freight. Sustainable freight modes should be defined as ‘rail, water, micro logistics including cargo cycle and pedestrian portage, and decarbonised road freight where it is necessary.’

E3(1b) could be improved by referencing opportunities for decarbonisation as a way to limit environmental impacts such as designing in EV charging infrastructure.

Logistics developments should also play a role in tackling air quality, including through consolidating deliveries. As such, we agree with the new requirement for these types of developments to have good access to sustainable transport networks. We would however again strongly recommend that the ‘sustainable transport modes’ are clearly defined for freight vehicles as these differ from passenger modes which are referenced in the definition of sustainable transport modes.

E3 (1c) should be amended to add the word ‘operational’ as set out below, the addition in bold underline:

Provide sufficient and secure parking for lorries or other **operational** vehicles to cater for the anticipated use.

87) Do you agree with the approach to rural business development in policy E4? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Ensuring the vitality of town centres

88) Do you agree with the proposed changes to policy for planning for town centres? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The text in TC1d should be amended (see below suggested additional text in bold underlined) so that the allocation of sites is clearly based on identified needs - “Where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available to meet the **anticipated needs** for main town centre uses identified under c), allocate appropriate edge of centre sites etc....”

We support the new reference to the need for policies to be informed by a strategy for town centres in principle at the strategic level and the next London Plan will set out an overarching strategy for London’s town centres and CAZ. There is a concern that Councils may have resource constraints around preparing town centre strategies, as such the reference to a strategy for town centres in the new NPPF should be linked to development plan policies for town centres, rather than a bespoke town centre strategy so that local development plan policies can be prepared in a timely and proportionate way being mindful of Council resources.

The increased references to bringing vacant sites and premises into use and a new emphasis on intensification is welcomed together with new references to design codes and support for Article 4 Directions in town centres however we are concerned that all references to markets have been removed. These should be reinstated.

We welcome the acknowledgement that a variety of uses including residential accommodation can contribute to the vitality and viability of town centres, whilst acknowledging the need to consider wider policies in the Development Plan.

89) Do you agree with the approach to development in town centres in policy TC2? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) If not, please explain how you would achieve this aim differently?

The text in TC2(1b) should be amended so that the reference to day-to-day services and the objectives of this are clear, for example, to promote the creation of healthy and inclusive places and support the provision of appropriate public services (as per section 16 of the NPPF). Alternatively, a definition of day-to-day services should be provided in the glossary.

90) What impacts, if any, have you observed on the operation of planning policy for town centres since the introduction of Use class E?

The changes have constrained LPAs' ability to manage changes of use in town centres. This means the potential for uses that provide access to key goods and services for local communities to be lost i.e. health and medical or nursery uses.

91) Do you believe the sequential test in policy TC3 should be retained? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The wording clarifies that the sequential test does not apply on sites which are allocated for that purpose in an up-to-date development plan.

A substantive change is the scope for disaggregation of edge/out of centre proposals i.e. whether the type of development proposed could be accommodated across multiple sites. We support the higher bar in the new NPPF to justify edge/out of centre development via the sequential test.

However, the text should be clarified so that its implementation is clear – it should not just apply to allocations as in some cases the Local Plan policies will be relevant to this test as well:

“A sequential test should be applied to proposals for main town centre uses for which planning permission is required, where these are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an allocation for that purpose in an up-to-date development plan.”

Paragraph 2. should make clear that preference should be given to accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre by sustainable means of transport: ‘When considering edge of centre and out of centre locations, preference should be given to accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre by sustainable transport.’ Otherwise, these types of developments are not easily accessible unless by car. In addition, we request that in continuously built up, relatively high-density areas such as inner London and parts of outer

London, developments which introduce variety to existing land uses should be promoted. For example, railway arches outside of town centres. Increasing the variety of amenities and employment opportunities in areas dominated by housing can make places more sustainable and reduce travel distances and enable more access by walking.

92) Do you agree with the approach to town centre impact assessments in policy TC4? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We support that it still refers to LPAs being able to set their own threshold for impact assessments in development plans as well as the helpful clarification that impact assessments are not required on sites which are allocated for the proposed use in the plan.

Supporting high quality communications

93) Do you agree that the updated policies provide clearer and stronger support for the rollout of 5G and gigabit broadband? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Partly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The draft NPPF introduces updated wording recognising the important role of digital communications infrastructure, including 5G and gigabit-capable broadband. However, the revised chapter does not actually represent a clear strengthening of policy support when compared with the existing framework, particularly in dense urban contexts.

The removal of the previous overarching policy recognition that high-quality digital infrastructure is essential for economic growth, social wellbeing and public service delivery represents a significant reduction in strategic clarity. That recognition has historically provided important policy weight in decision-making, helping local planning authorities to balance localised impacts against the wider public benefits of digital connectivity. Its absence weakens the ability of authorities to do so consistently and sits uncomfortably alongside wider government objectives for long-term infrastructure investment and digital growth.

Impact management is important and we welcome a focus on that – but it seems that the revised chapter places greater emphasis on this, particularly visual impacts, than on actively enabling delivery and this risks conveying reluctance to accommodate infrastructure rather than a positive national steer that advanced digital connectivity is a public good supported by government.

The draft also focuses predominantly on coverage, with limited recognition of capacity, densification, and network resilience as primary drivers of infrastructure deployment in mature urban areas. In London, coverage is often already present, yet performance and future readiness are constrained by demand intensity, changing landscape and availability of sites to host telecoms infrastructure. Without explicit policy recognition of capacity-led deployment,

local planning authorities lack clear national support when determining proposals that are necessary to maintain service quality rather than extend geographic reach.

The consultation document explains that plan-making policies for digital connectivity have been removed on the basis that national decision-making policies are considered sufficient. However, experience in London demonstrates that strategic planning policy can play an important and complementary role in addressing place-specific challenges that are not easily resolved through decision-making policies alone. The London Plan is designed to fill those gaps with a clear and effective framework for supporting digital connectivity in a dense urban environment, including addressing issues such as rooftop dependency, site intensification, tall buildings, conservation areas and the cumulative impacts of development. Retaining a clear national policy hook within the NPPF that supports the inclusion of local/regional specific digital connectivity policies in development plans would help ensure that these issues continue to be addressed proactively, and with direct relevance to the particular challenges and context, while remaining consistent with national policy objectives.

94) Do you agree the requirements for minimising visual impact and reusing existing structures are practical for applicants and local planning authorities? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The principle of prioritising the reuse of existing buildings, structures, and sites, and of minimising visual impact where new infrastructure is required, is appropriate and aligns with established planning practice and industry deployment models. The removal of prescriptive or outdated references, such as specific camouflage solutions, is welcomed as it reflects more modern and flexible design approaches.

However, greater clarity could support the practical application of these requirements. In dense urban environments such as London where reuse of existing infrastructure may be constrained by structural loading limits, radio frequency performance, access rights, or landlord refusal. The policy's reliance on the concept of a reasonable opportunity to reuse existing structures, without further guidance, risks inconsistent interpretation between authorities and may lead to delay through repeated requests for additional information.

The absence of national design guidance or exemplars also places a disproportionate burden on LPAs within London to make subjective judgements on visual impact, particularly where proposals require careful balancing of localised harm against wider public benefit. We would call for clearer guidance to be provided to mitigate against creating local challenges that could slow down investment and delivery of critical digital infrastructure.

These challenges are particularly pronounced in London, where the height, density and built form of development mean that there is often no realistic way for new development to avoid interacting with existing telecommunications infrastructure, given the reliance on rooftops and elevated sites. This reinforces the need for regionally specific policy such as the London Plan to support consistent and pragmatic decision-making, and we welcome this being recognised within the draft NPPF.

Paragraph 1.b. of CO1: Proposals for telecommunications infrastructure should be amended to include that physical siting impacts of proposals should be avoided or minimised: 'Be sited and designed to minimise the visual impact and physical impact (such as on walking and wheeling movement on footways and pedestrian safety) of the proposals, especially in situations where a new site or structure is proposed'.

95) Do you agree the supporting information requirements are proportionate and sufficient without creating unnecessary burdens? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The intention to require proportionate supporting information focused on siting, design, and engagement, rather than demonstrating need or market competition, is welcomed. The confirmation that local planning authorities should not question the need for digital infrastructure is particularly positive and reflects the essential role such infrastructure plays in modern society.

However, elements of Policy CO2 risk creating ambiguity and unintended burden for both applicants and decision-makers. In particular, the requirement for applicants to summarise how stakeholder issues have been addressed may be interpreted as implying that all concerns must be resolved. In practice, telecommunications proposals frequently involve unavoidable impacts, and the planning system is designed to weigh those impacts against significant public benefits rather than require consensus. This wording risks encouraging overly defensive submissions and creating uncertainty for authorities where objections remain but could be outweighed by wider considerations.

Clearer differentiation would also be beneficial between proposals for new infrastructure and upgrades to existing sites. Requiring alternative site assessments for minor upgrades or modifications can be disproportionate and risks discouraging timely improvements necessary to maintain service continuity and network resilience.

While pre-application engagement is supported in principle, the draft places the emphasis almost exclusively on telecommunications applicants. In practice, many of the most significant impacts on digital infrastructure arise from housing and commercial development. A more balanced approach would place an equivalent expectation on developers to engage early with infrastructure providers, with local planning authorities able to take this into account when assessing proposals.

The draft NPPF does not include a specific policy to encourage early consideration of the impact of a new development on existing digital infrastructure and services. As a result, opportunities for constructive engagement between developers and telecommunication providers are often missed at an early stage, when impacts can be most effectively avoided or mitigated. We propose an update to the NPPF to include a policy that is designed to encourage proportionate early engagement between developers and operators, to help ensure that digital connectivity is appropriately considered alongside other infrastructure requirements. This will reduce the risk of unintended service disruption and support better overall development outcomes, without introducing additional decision-making burdens for local planning authorities. In dense urban environments, the loss or displacement of

infrastructure, including through Notices to Quit, can have significant implications for network resilience, emergency services, and economic activity.

The absence of explicit national policy in this area represents a clear gap. While national policy cannot address regional variation in detail, this further underscores the importance of regional planning frameworks, such as the London Plan, in providing clarity on infrastructure protection, early engagement and service continuity in areas subject to intense development pressure, and we would propose for this to be reflected in the next iteration of the NPPF.

There should be an additional information requirement for a streetscape assessment in paragraph 1., to capture visual impacts and impacts on walking and wheeling: 'A streetscape assessment, which should consider the appearance, size, positioning, grouping and colour of the proposals and their impact on the streetscape. Where relevant, this should include the impact of existing poorly maintained assets owned by telecommunications and network operators on the public highway where new assets are proposed, and how this could be addressed through removal of assets. It should also include an assessment of walking and wheeling access, in the context of current and anticipated pedestrian flows and potential impact on safety.' Planning practice guidance could usefully refer to Transport for London's 2019 '[Pedestrian Comfort Guidance for London](#)' and the Department for Transport's 2021 '[Inclusive Mobility](#)' guidance.

96) Do you agree with the approach to planning for energy and water infrastructure in policy W1? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Partly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree, what alternative approach would you suggest?

More explicit direction to engage with utility providers, network operators and other relevant stakeholders is welcomed. This engagement is necessary but is likely to place pressure on the 30-month plan production process.

W1 requires that the development plan considers future impacts of climate change but makes no specification about the assumptions that should be used. If the goal is to standardise the plan-making process, it would be appropriate to specify that high-warming scenario such as the IPCC's socioeconomic pathway SSP5 8.5 is used until such time as it is replaced. The opportunity to specify that specific Design Summer Year (DSY) weather data is used to inform overheating analysis for example. It is recommended that DSY2 and DSY3 are required for this purpose. The current lack of this direction leaves the policy at risk that low or moderate impact scenarios would be used which do not reflect the risks (for example of overheating) during extreme weather events – particularly in urban contexts such as London.

W1 also fails to specify that development should be planned for in ways which align with locally and nationally set contributions to decarbonisation. This is likely to result in development which is not fit for purpose and risks the UK missing its target of net zero by 2050.

We agree with the intent of policy W1, particularly its relevance to London where strategic growth, decarbonisation and infrastructure constraints coincide at scale. However, we have concerns regarding its effectiveness, which will depend on regulatory and data sharing

arrangements outside the planning system being capable of supporting meaningful spatial planning.

A key issue for London is data transparency from utility networks. The quantum and timings of growth anticipated to be set through the next London Plan requires far stronger visibility of network constraints, connection queues and future investment to prevent infrastructure acting as a brake on development. Ofgem's Connections End-to-End Review is therefore critical, particularly measures to improve data transparency such as a public demand connection queue. Without these reforms being delivered quickly, and without London boroughs, the GLA and other strategic authorities being directly involved in shaping data standards that are usable for plan-making, the ability to apply W1 in practice will be limited.

There is also a significant misalignment between planning and infrastructure time horizons. Development Plans in London are expected to plan for at least 15 years, yet electricity and water networks continue to plan largely within five-year regulatory cycles, with Network Development Plans typically providing only a 10-year outlook. This constrains the ability of the development plan to safeguard land and coordinate infrastructure investment across large growth areas, reinforcing the need for closer alignment between infrastructure regulation and spatial planning.

It should also be recognised that utility networks are not currently required to plan their investment based on Government housing targets, including those set out in the London Plan. This creates a significant structural misalignment where local and strategic planning authorities are expected to plan for ambitious levels of growth, while infrastructure providers may plan for materially lower demand, weakening the effectiveness of policy W1. We have welcomed recent novel work by electricity Distribution Network Operators to account for data they would not traditionally have considered in their plans, such as development plan growth data, however a stronger requirement for spatial planning to account for infrastructure providers plans would also be welcomed.

Policy wording would benefit from greater clarity. Paragraph 2b is ambiguous as to whether 'constraints' refers to operational capacity constraints within utility networks, over which planning authorities have limited control, or to spatial constraints created by planning policies and designations that could restrict the future expansion of infrastructure. This distinction is particularly important in London, where safeguarding land and flexibility for network reinforcement are critical.

Local Area Energy Planning is well established across London and increasingly well-established across England and should be explicitly referenced in the NPPF as an effective evidence base for development plans and a useful tool for engagement between stakeholders and the Local Planning Authority. Spatial planning growth figures are also an important input to LAEPs to ensure energy demand from development is captured. LAEPs are essential for aligning and delivering upon local growth ambitions, net zero objectives and infrastructure investment.

It is also important that both spatial plans and LAEPs form a strong and meaningful formal input into Regional Energy Strategic Plans and other strategic energy and water infrastructure plans affecting London. Alignment between spatial planning and energy infrastructure planning is critical to ensure that sufficient infrastructure investment and capacity is in place at the right time to support both growth of homes and jobs and decarbonisation technologies.

From experience in London, assuming that spatial planning and energy planning regimes operate sufficiently without deliberate and meaningful engagement and coordination between actors to create alignment, creates worse outcomes for both energy and spatial planning.

While we support early engagement with infrastructure providers, framing the issue primarily around 'capacity' does not reflect how networks operate in practice. Capacity is not fixed, and infrastructure providers are required to respond to development by building and reconfiguring networks. A more effective framing would focus on how development plans should respond to current and future network operating contexts, including supply risks, resilience, and vulnerabilities, rather than capacity alone.

97) Do you agree with the amendments to current Framework policy on planning for renewable and low-carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure in policy W2? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We broadly welcome the content of Policy W2 but strongly emphasise the importance of Local Area Energy Planning as a critical evidence base and strategic tool to support development plans in delivering the objectives of policy W2. As such, they are well suited to informing the identification of suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy development, electricity network infrastructure, and opportunities for decentralised energy systems.

Explicitly recognising Local Area Energy Planning within national planning policy would strengthen the ability of plan making authorities to align energy infrastructure provision with growth ambitions, net zero objectives and wider spatial strategies. This is particularly important in complex urban areas where network constraints, competing land uses and high demand for electricity and heat require a coordinated and spatially informed approach.

We also note that the successful collocation of potential customers and suppliers of surplus heat or energy, as encouraged by policy W2, will depend on the ability of the planning system to secure such outcomes in practice. Uses that generate significant surplus heat, such as data centres, industrial uses or energy from waste facilities, are often consented without clear mechanisms to ensure that surplus heat can be captured and made available to nearby developments.

Plan making policy W2 supersedes §§ 165-168 of the current framework. As with the current framework, policy W2 does not mention energy resilience, including energy storage infrastructure. Development plans should actively encourage provision of infrastructure which will improve local energy resilience. This should include support for and encouragement of the use of energy storage and demand side response.

It is also recommended that the policy refers to the necessity for development to minimise energy consumption at the point of use to support decarbonisation and mitigate risk of grid connection issues.

98) Do you agree with the proposed approach to supporting development for renewable and low carbon development and electricity network infrastructure in policy W3? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree, and any changes you would make to improve the policy.

There is increasing need for net zero and climate resilient energy infrastructure, with particularly a need for winter heat and summer cooling in London, which will need to be supported.

We welcome the reference to substantial weight being given to the benefits of energy and electricity network infrastructure, for moving to a net zero future. This infrastructure will be essential for the transition to electric vehicles, particularly electric vans, and heavy goods vehicles where charging requirements may be higher.

99) Do you agree with the proposed approach to supporting development for water infrastructure in policy W4? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Policy W4 part 2 states that applicants should not need to demonstrate need for water infrastructure, this is supported and will contribute to reducing the supply gap.

W4 could encourage co-location and development of ecological enhancements with water infrastructure, particularly in relation to drainage and flood mitigation.

Facilitating a sustainable use of minerals

100) Do you agree with the proposed prohibition on identifying new coal sites in policy M1, and to the removal of coal from the list of minerals of national and local importance? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

101) Do you agree with how policy M1 sets out how the development plan should consider oil and gas? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

102) Do you agree with the proposed addition of critical and growth minerals to the glossary definition of ‘minerals of national and local importance’? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

103) Do you agree criteria b of policy M2 strikes the right balance between preventing minerals sterilisation and facilitating non minerals development? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

104) Do you agree policy M3 appropriately reflects the importance of critical and growth minerals? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

105) Do you agree with the exclusion of development involving onshore oil and gas extraction from policy M3? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

106) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

107) Do you agree policy M4 sufficiently addresses the impacts of mineral development, noting that other national decision-making policies will also apply? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

108) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

109) Do you agree with approach to coal, oil and gas in policy M5? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Facilitation of the exploration, appraisal, or production of oil and gas within licensed areas should not be considered necessary or beneficial, regardless of location in a licenced area. It is appropriate that the NPPF places an onerous justification requirement on this development type. The need for this type of development should be demonstrated on a case-by-case basis, alongside mitigation measures sufficient to offset the lifetime emissions associated with the extraction and consumption of the fossil fuels.

110) Are there any other exceptional circumstances in which coal extraction should be permitted? *Yes/No*

No

111) If yes, please outline the exceptional circumstances in which you think coal extraction should be permitted.

112) Do you agree policy M6 strikes the right balance between preventing the sterilisation of minerals reserves and minerals-related activities, and facilitating non-minerals development? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

113) Does policy M6 provide sufficient clarity on the role of Minerals Consultation Areas? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Making effective use of land

114) Do you agree policy L1 provides clear guidance on how Local Plans should be prepared to promote the efficient use of land? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

115) If not, what further guidance is needed?

We absolutely support the intent of paragraphs 1.a.iii. and iv. on minimum density standards. However, we have some concerns, including as to how effective the proposed wording may be in practice, and would ask for a number of changes to enable this to work to best effect in London.

First, in terms of the 'most appropriate level' (paragraph 1.) for setting density standards - we recommend indicating a preference for spatial development strategies to do this, to ensure a level of consistency across the spatial development strategy area, with higher standards permitted at the local level if justified.

Second, we support consistent and measurable requirements to ensure densities are sufficiently ambitious. Some caution is needed as to whether this is best expressed through the combination of: (1) minimum standards (as opposed to alternative mechanisms); and (2) densities as measured by dwellings per hectare.

Dwellings per hectare (DPH) measurements vary depending on what area total dwellings are divided by. In practice, this means a smaller site can appear as dense as a much larger site with taller buildings due to a greater proportion of the area being taken up by internal streets, open spaces, etc.

When combined with minimum standards, this effectively means smaller sites would likely be held to a less rigorous standard than larger sites. There may also a risk that minimums are set low on the basis they can be exceeded if justified, but in practice the minimum could start to be seen as a target.

Instead, we suggest that standards are set for specific ranges of densities and building heights expected in areas of good connectivity, as well as other areas as applicable. Referring to indicative building heights (alongside densities) would allow more consistent comparison across sites, make it easier to set a firmer minimum and would provide clarity where it is most useful. This would mean a site that meets minimum building height expectations can still be in line with policy even if the DPH appears low (e.g. if a development proposes more larger units) while a site could accommodate lower building heights (e.g. if this is needed for viability) if it finds other ways to meet minimum density expectations.

A key additional point, as per our response to Q150 and Q152, is that it is vital that the NPPF makes it clear that in London, it is appropriate for density standards based on transport connectivity to be defined around TfL-defined metrics and tools.

We welcome the inclusion of the re-use of car parks in paragraph 1.a.i. as these are unlikely to be an efficient use of land. Particularly in a dense urban context where land is at a premium for housing, economic, and other vital uses. However, 'transport infrastructure' should be qualified to protect existing operations or future expansion: 'and other transport infrastructure (where it can be re-provided to maintain existing required operations and cater for future required expansion).' Consideration should be given to including supplementary guidance within the Planning Practice Guidance for measuring density, for both solely residential development and mixed-use development to account for non-residential uses to help establish a consistent approach. This approach would benefit from considering the information in London Plan paragraphs 3.3.21 to 3.3.23 regarding measuring densities.

116) Do you agree policy L2 provides clear guidance on how development proposals should be assessed to ensure efficient use of land? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We welcome the inclusion of the re-use of car parks in paragraph 1.b.as these are unlikely to be an efficient use of land particularly in a dense urban con text where land is at a premium for housing, economic, and other vital uses. However, 'transport infrastructure' should be qualified that it is re-provided if required for existing operations or future expansion: 'and other transport infrastructure (where it can be re-provided to maintain existing required operations and cater for future required expansion).'

117) Do you agree policy L2 identifies appropriate typologies of development to support intensification? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) If not, what typologies should be added or removed and why?

The robust policy for brownfield redevelopment, the reuse of under-utilised land and buildings, and the alignment with more sustainable urban growth and land efficiency are welcomed. These measures have the potential to support compact, sustainable developments and reduce pressure on undeveloped land. The policy approach, and/or Planning Practice Guidance, could be further strengthened through clearer guidance on higher density typologies. For example, compact urban forms located close to public transport links could be more explicitly encouraged; this would complement policy L3(2) support for increasing densities and this will be needed for London to maximise its housing delivery. It should also include residential garages in addition to lock-ups to provide clarity and avoid confusion over the term lock-up.

118) Do you agree the high-level design principles provided in policy L2(d) appropriate for national policy? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Consideration should also be given to noise mitigation and provision, usability, and long-term quality of private and communal amenity space.

We would also recommend that existing assumptions around minimum building-to-building distances should be reviewed to reflect the realities of constrained and high-density urban environments. Issues such as privacy and overlooking can often be successfully addressed through careful, innovative, and context-responsive design.

It would be useful to acknowledge that perimeter block development, with access to buildings directly from streets, remains preferred and that redevelopment of plots should prioritise this form of development if possible. Paragraph 1.d.ii. could be amended: 'maintain safe, convenient and ideally direct street access and egress for occupiers and users [...].'

119) Do you agree policy L2 (d)(i) achieves its intent to enable appropriate development that may differ from the existing street scene, particularly in cases such as corner plot redevelopment and upwards extensions. *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Strongly agree.

120) Do you agree with the proposed safeguards in policy L2 that allow development in residential curtilages? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

121) Do you agree policy L3 provides clear guidance on achieving appropriate densities for residential and mixed-use schemes? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

a) If not, please explain how guidance could be clearer?

Higher densities than the minimum proposed will need to be pursued in London if we are to make the best use of land (see response to Q122) and we welcome the final policy enabling this.

We support that 'sustainable transport options' is included in paragraph 1. However, for urban areas, 'ultra-low and zero emission vehicles' should be removed from the definition of 'sustainable transport modes' in the glossary. The use of these vehicles – while they are cleaner than other private vehicles - in urban areas still leads to lower density development, congestion, and less efficient use of scarce land.

122) Do you agree with the minimum density requirements set out within policy L3? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We very much welcome the principle of optimising density in locations with good public transport connectivity. We support measurable requirements to ensure densities are sufficiently ambitious.

The proposed minimum density standards, 40 to 50 dwellings per hectare is very low in a London context, as is the level of connectivity these have been tied to. While this may be appropriate in many parts of England, these levels of connectivity and density are likely to see significant provision of car parking per dwelling. In London – with its intense pressures on land and space; the substantially higher levels of congestion; and the good levels of public transport connectivity - this type of more car dependent development significantly and unnecessarily risks the city's capacity for both housing and economic growth.

It is critical therefore that a higher bar is set through the London Plan to allow London to build at higher densities across areas where it is possible for many households to live without a car / with generally lower levels of car ownership. This is the only approach that can *both* tackle the housing crisis and keep congestion manageable for residents and business who do depend on motor vehicles. It is vital that the following is added to the end of L3 paragraph 3.: '[...] unless both higher density standards and higher minimum connectivity levels are specified in a spatial development strategy'.

A minor correction should be made to footnote 44: 'For the purpose of this policy references to railway stations also includes underground stations and stops on underground, tram, and other light rail systems' (or a similar definition of 'railway station' could be added to the glossary).

b) Could these minimum density requirements lead to adverse impacts on Gypsies and Travellers and other groups with protected characteristics? Please provide your reasons, including any evidence.

We consider that any adverse impacts could be avoided through comprehensive and inclusive plan making and decision-making processes.

123) Do you agree that using dwellings per hectare is an appropriate metric for setting minimum density requirements? Additionally, is our definition of 'net developable area' within the NPPF suitable for this policy? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Consideration should be given to how the definition accounts for mixed-use schemes where non-residential floorspace contributes to the height, massing, and population density of the site.

124) Do you agree with the proposed definition of a 'well-connected' station used to help set higher minimum density standards in targeted growth locations? In particular, are the parameters we're using for the number of Travel to Work Areas and service frequency appropriate for defining a 'well-connected' station? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons and preferred alternatives.

We very much welcome the general approach for supporting higher density development around stations. However, the bar for frequency (and the corresponding densities) are set too low for London (and potentially surrounding areas) given the considerable congestion challenge across the city (and the traffic it attracts from the Wider South East). As per the response to 122, the following must be added to the end of L3 paragraph 3.: '[...] unless both higher density standards and higher minimum connectivity levels are specified in a spatial development strategy'. This is vital to enable the next London Plan to set out a sustainable and deliverable growth strategy. It is crucial that the London Plan is able to set both aspects – recognising London's distinct context and challenges and that trying to set a national standard would either inevitably be too low for London or too high for many other parts of the country.

Consideration should also be given to referring to future planned stations and/or existing stations with planned increased services to support the delivery of higher densities.

Consideration should be given to broadening the definition of a "well-connected" train station to include it also reflecting the quality of intermodal interchange the station offers, particularly being able to travel to or from the station by bus, and opportunities to connect to a range of train/ underground/ tram services.

125) Are there other types of location (such as urban core, or other types of public transport node) where minimum density standards should be set nationally? Yes/No

a) If so, how should these locations be defined in a clear and unambiguous way and what should these density standards be?

126) Should we define a specific range of residential densities for land around stations classified as 'well-connected'?

No. The top of the range will require in some cases much higher density even outside London (e.g. recent developments around Woking station), at least part of which is driven by strategic objectives and design considerations, not just the station characteristics. However, the Framework in L3 could more clearly state the need for density to be proportionate to connectivity, not just 'taking into account [...] a site's connectivity'. If stated as a requirement this could be more effective than specifying a range that will not always be suitable given significant and inevitable differences in terms of challenges and opportunities at the national scale.

127) If so, what should that range be, and which locations should it apply to?

128) Do you agree policy L4 provides clear high-level guidance on good design for residential extensions? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

129) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Policy L4 would benefit from the inclusion of high-level guidance on materiality and noise and the need to consider impacts on immediate neighbouring properties. Where residential extensions are proposed in sensitive and constrained contexts, clearer policy direction on the

acceptability of materials, informed by any local character assessments, and the assessment of surrounding noise impacts would support more consistent decision-making.

Without these, there is a risk of variable interpretation and outcomes, particularly where incremental extensions cumulatively affect character, residential amenity, and living conditions.

130) Do you agree that policy GB1 provides appropriate criteria for establishing new Green Belts? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

No comment - same criteria as before.

131) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

132) Do you agree policy GB2 gives sufficient detail on the expected roles spatial development strategies and local plans play in assessing Green belt land? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree*

Partly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

GB2(2) misunderstands a GB Assessment – it doesn't identify the areas for additional investigation, the plan-making process of setting the spatial strategy does. It should also help understand the impact of doing so.

GB2 and GB3 should be clearer that any Green Belt boundary change should be based on it providing a sustainable location in terms of transport. Local plans should comply with spatial development strategies' Green Belt assessments, unless otherwise specified in the spatial development strategy.

GB(2) could also usefully reaffirm that, by identifying Broad Locations of Growth / areas where GB boundary changes will be required, the SDS sets out exceptional circumstance in principle, meaning this does not require reconsideration at the local plan examination stage.

133) Do you agree with proposals to better enable development opportunities around suitable stations to be brought forward? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The existing and efficient potential use of public transport infrastructure such as stations should be prioritised in identifying areas for growth. We request confirmation that the areas / distances from stations may be set within the SDS. In the London context, we do not support park and ride as this creates peak travel by car and requirements for land for car parks, and, conversely, we are seeking to redevelop car parks near train stations. This means station catchments need to be relevant to this context.

In addition, there should be a route available for SDSs to raise the minimum bar required in terms of frequency of services per hour for a station to be considered sustainable / have capacity to absorb growth. This is essential for the London context.

There is a risk that on constrained sites a defined minimum density could be treated as a target to meet rather than exceeded and could be used by objectors to cap a scheme or local planning authorities to refuse it. Again, there should be an acknowledgement that SDS play a role in setting suitable densities to reflect the context.

There may also be an unintended consequence in the current drafting of GB3 (1) in the way that it places the release of land close to stations outside of the exceptional circumstances test.

As a result, for an LPA to establish Exceptional Circumstances (EC) - for a site not close to a station, they must first determine how much of the unmet need can be delivered through all land close to stations before moving to alternative sites. In the London context, land close to well-connected stations should be prioritised for residential uses. This calls into question how a borough might justify EC when considering GB releases for other uses, for instance industrial, which is otherwise sustainably located next to the strategic highway. Given the point raised in the paragraph above in relation to suitability of certain train stations, this would also require an LPA to plan for the release of all land close to stations, regardless of whether they are identified as being suitable to accommodate growth, before considering alternative sites. This may add complexity to the well-established tests for demonstrating EC. It may also create a heavy burden on LPAs by requiring them to consider the release of land that might not be considered sustainable and greatly widening the scope of 'reasonable' alternatives that they must consider, slowing down the plan-making process.

An alternative approach which could avoid this issue would be to instead deem there to be automatic exceptional circumstances for the release of land close to stations with sufficient frequencies within the framework, rather than separating this land supply from the test completely.

Further to the above, GB4 (d) could be amended to make clearer that the relationship to transport infrastructure should be the main priority when determining whether new boundaries promote sustainable patterns of development. At present, the policy places a disproportionate weighting on the presence of grey belt land, but this should be seen as secondary. Wording on consistency with the SDS should also be tightened by the removal of the word 'broadly.'

134) Do you agree the expectations set out in policy GB5 are appropriate and deliverable in Local Plans? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree and note they also apply to SDS.

135) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

In particular, the hierarchy approach set out in GB5(1)(a) enabling a localised approach regarding Local Nature Recovery Strategies and offsetting through compensatory improvements is welcomed.

136) Do you agree policies GB6 and GB7 set out appropriate tests for considering development on Green Belt land? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The draft framework applies a decision-making approach to development on Green Belt land with Golden Rules requiring tangible public benefits in return for release. Generally, Policies GB6 and GB7 reflect an evidence-led approach. These policies, which combined with policy GB8, make references to Local Nature Recovery Strategies and the emphasis on landscape character and 'openness' which is welcomed.

We have set out previously our commitment to a brownfield first approach, but we have also been clear that some Green Belt release will be needed if we are to meet London's housing needs. This must be on the basis of building sustainable, liveable neighbourhoods with access to public transport in order to make the best use of land and minimise congestion and environmental impacts. This is the only way that we can minimise the overall loss of Green Belt. This would make use of grey belt as far as possible, however the disparate nature and location of grey belt across London does not fully lend itself to this approach and will lead to proposals for low density development or development in unsustainable locations. These may meet NPPF specifications but would fall short of what is required given the challenges we face in London and the need to deliver mid-rise new neighbourhoods.

As currently drafted, the NPPF would leave unchanged the site-based Grey Belt approach even where a Strategic Development Strategy has set out a more strategic approach to releasing Green Belt. This would risk undermining our ability to deliver the growth strategy; to manage impacts; and to secure the benefits this seeks to achieve. Because London's grey belt is not always located in the most sustainable locations, close to transit, allowing a site-based grey belt approach fundamentally does not align with ensuring development in the right places. Where a strategic approach to Green Belt release has been set out, Grey Belt policy should not apply, supporting a more strategic, plan-led solution rather than allowing ad hoc speculative development. This is vital in London where infrastructure and a sound spatial strategy require a plan led approach.

While an individual scheme – by itself - might meet the requirements of GB7(g), such an assessment should consider the additional cumulative impacts from such an approach. In practice, this will result in far more areas of GB being released than what is accounted for and mitigated against by the growth strategy. There is consequently an inherent conflict between GB7(g) and PM1/GB4. It is suggested that policy GB7(g)(iii) is amended to require conformity with the adopted SDS, where it is up-to-date and prepared in line with the framework.

Unless this conflict is resolved, there are various risks of unintended consequences. Firstly, plan-making will be slowed. LPAs will in effect need to identify and evaluate all grey belt sites in addition to those areas identified by the SDS as reasonable alternatives on the basis that their release may still be permitted under this policy route even where they are releasing Green Belt aligned with the strategic approach. This will create a considerable additional burden on LPAs and will fail to realise the streamlining potential provided by an up-to-date SDS. It will also create considerable uncertainty in the discharging of duties associated with Integrated Impact Assessments given that the scale and extent of growth cannot be clearly quantified.

Secondly, such a conflict may delay the delivery of homes by failing to provide a robust, de-risked growth strategy which can clearly signal which areas are suitable for release to the market. Instead, the policy encourages speculative schemes which need not align with the

SDS, resulting in protracted negotiations and considerable LPA resource implications for the evaluation of schemes and appeals.

Thirdly, where schemes are permitted under this route, considerable cost and resources will be expended in the planning and delivery of associated infrastructure to support these sites. This will distract from and delay the delivery of infrastructure enhancements that will be necessary to support the delivery of areas of growth associated with the growth strategy. There is also the risk that harm will be caused due to the inability to serve these sites with public transport and the associated impacts of congestion, pollution from increased car use and the impacts on biodiversity of the loss of Green Belt.

137) Do you agree policy GB7(1h) successfully targets appropriate development types and locations in the Green Belt, including that it applies only to housing and mixed-use development capable of meeting the density requirements in chapter 12? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

138) Please provide your reasons, including any evidence that this policy would lead to adverse impacts on Gypsies and Travellers.

We support the principle of prioritising development within walking distance of railway stations, as well as that this development should not prejudice long-term development proposals. However, as explained in response to Q22, it is critical that a higher bar is set through the London Plan to allow London to build at higher densities across a smaller section of better-connected land where it is possible to support a car-lite approach.

139) Do you agree that site-specific viability assessment should be permitted on development proposals subject to the Golden Rules in these three circumstances? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The three circumstances set out – previously developed land, multi-phase strategic sites, and development that is of a wholly different type to that assumed in the viability assessment that informed the plan, are too broad, and taken together could apply to most development on green belt land in London.

There is a risk of financial viability assessments being used by developers to promote and bring forward alternative forms of development typologies on Green Belt land such as lower density housing rather than mid-rise sustainable neighbourhoods. The use of viability assessments could also serve to undermine a Plan-led strategic approach to development on London's Green Belt and result in a 'leakage' of planning gain flowing to developer and landowner returns. This would significantly reduce the public benefits that need to be part of developing on greenbelt, undermining the public interest case for its release. It could also in turn make Greenbelt development a more commercially attractive proposition than brownfield development thereby undermining the government's 'brownfield first' agenda.

As such Policy GB8:3 should be amended to state that Development Plans should set out the circumstances where a site-specific viability assessment might be appropriate for green belt land having considered viability as part of the assessment that informed the Plan.

Applications proposing lower levels of affordable housing than required in the plan or through the Golden Rules should also be subject to a public interest test when assessing whether the loss of green belt is justified and whether permission should be granted. The level of affordable housing should be considered in the planning balance. The public interest test would identify lower levels of affordable housing as a harm in the planning balance as a part of the decision-making process.

140) With regards to previously developed land, are there further changes to policy or guidance that could be made to help ensure site-specific viability assessments are used only for genuinely previously developed land, and not predominantly greenfield sites?

In the context of London, the vast majority of 'grey belt' land is likely to be previously developed land, and strategic green belt release will inherently involve development on strategic sites and multi-phased development therefore resulting in a large proportion of development being capable of being the subject of site-specific viability assessments. This would reduce affordable housing and infrastructure requirements and ultimately serve to reduce the public benefits envisaged by the NPPF's Golden Rules for strategic Green Belt release.

As such the three circumstances specified under policy GB 8 3) which allow for viability testing should be reconsidered so that this is limited to genuinely exceptional circumstances.

141) Do you agree with setting an affordable housing 'floor' for schemes subject to the Golden Rules accompanied by a viability assessment subject to the terms set out? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Partly agree.

142) Please explain your answer, including your view on the appropriate approach to setting a 'floor,' and the right level for this?

We support the general principle of setting an affordable housing "floor" for viability tested schemes which are subject to the Golden Rules. We would suggest that the SDS is the appropriate vehicle to set a floor based on regional circumstances.

143) Do you agree with local planning authorities testing viability at the plan-making stage using a standardised Benchmark Land Values scenario of 10 times Existing Use Value for greenfield, Green Belt land? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Strongly disagree.

a) Please explain your answer.

We object to the principle of adopting a standardised approach to assume national Benchmark Land Value (BLV) as 10 times of Existing Use Value (EUV) for greenfield or green belt land. This approach is excessive, does not reflect the variation in EUV across different areas and uses, and significantly exceeds benchmark land values in London which are typically 0- 30%

above Existing Use Value. This would undermine the delivery of housing on green belt including affordable housing and infrastructure that provides a public benefit justification for the release of green belt. As such, existing national guidance for BLV for green belt sites should be retained, without setting specific benchmarks which would be detrimental to the delivery of affordable housing and infrastructure.

144) Do you have any other comments on the use of nationally standardised Benchmark Land Values for local planning authorities to test viability at the plan-making stage?

As set out above, it is highly unlikely that benchmark land values could be set at a national level that would be able to reflect for the variation in BLVs across different areas and sites. This is likely to result in BLVs being overstated in some circumstances which would undermine the delivery of affordable housing and infrastructure. Depending on the level at which they are set there is also the risk in some circumstances of being set at a level that disincentivises sites from being released from their current use for development. Existing national guidance setting out key principles for determining BLV should be retained without determining what those benchmarks should be at a national level.

145) Do you agree that proposed changes to the grey belt definition will improve the operability of the grey belt definition, without undermining the general protections given to other footnote 7 areas? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree

It does not define: (1) 'large built-up areas'; (2) 'towns'; or (3) 'historic towns'.

Annex E could be amended to provide further clarity on the following points:

Purpose A: application of the term 'large built-up area' and 'near to.'

Purpose B: application of the term 'town.' Although new footnote bring cities into scope is helpful, it would be useful for the annex to make clear that assessments may determine application of this term, i.e. whether areas within a large built up should be considered as individual settlements where they have areas of separating green belt, with regard to purpose B.

Purpose D: further clarification that assessments may determine application of the term 'historic towns,' and that 'setting and special character' in this context should be limited to where part of the historic environment record identifies specifically identified green belt setting as part of the historic significance.

Achieving well designed places

146) Do you agree that policy DP1 provides sufficient clarity on how development plans should deliver high quality design and placemaking outcomes? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Policy DP1 provides a clear and structured framework for delivering high-quality design and placemaking outcomes. The strategy from establishing a clear vision and understanding context, through site analysis, design guidance, site-specific policies, and design review creates a robust foundation for plan-making.

It supports LPAs in clearly articulating the kinds of places they want to deliver. By promoting a holistic and transparent design process, DP1 has the potential to reduce ambiguity, support consistent decision-making and help minimise avoidable delays in the planning process.

Further consideration could be given to amending policy DP1(1)(a) by making reference to future new character for areas of large-scale change in accordance with policies LP1(1)(iv) and DP3(1)(a).

147) Do you agree with the approach to design tools set out in policy DP2? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The approach is welcomed. Used alongside the National Design Guide, National Model Design Code and Building for a Healthy Life, these tools have the potential to provide clear, evidence-based reference points within the Local Plan and/or Supplementary Plans that help structure the design process and define expectations for development quality in the development management process.

Consideration should be given to referring to Supplementary Plans in DP2 reflecting their role for providing design guidance in policy PM4(1)(a).

Further consideration could be given to amending policy DP2(1)(a) by making reference to future new character for areas of large-scale change in accordance with policies LP1(1)(iv) and DP3(1)(a).

148) Do you agree policy DP3 clearly set out principles for development proposals to respond to their context and create well-designed places? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree but suggest changes below.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Policy DP3 clearly and effectively sets out the principles by which development proposals should respond to their context and contribute to well-designed places. The emphasis on context, function, density, legibility, movement, placemaking and sustainability represents a positive and coherent approach.

However, consideration should be given to amending policy DP3(4) to enable areas of large-scale regeneration to define their own form and layout which may be at a larger scale than their surroundings. This would ensure the policy aligns with policies LP1(1)(iv) and DP3(1)(a).

The GLA support the ambition to give substantial weight to outstanding and innovative design but are concerned by the requirement that such design be “consistent with the overall form

and layout of its surroundings.” Built form should be contextual, not necessarily consistent. Where housing growth and urban transformation are needed, intensification and change in form is required. Requiring consistency risks entrenching patterns that may no longer meet local needs. A focus on responsive, place specific design offers a more balanced and future focused approach.

We therefore recommend amending the wording from “consistent with” to “responsive to” to better support context led intensification and higher design standards.

DP3 g. describes qualities of public space but makes no mention of achieving an appropriate quantity of public space to deliver effectively for the scale of the development.

In paragraph 1.e. there should be reference to good connections within the site (as well as to the wider settlement) and to removing barriers to inclusive access: ‘Movement: provide transport infrastructure and choices which support the design vision for the site, provide good connections within the site and to the wider settlement (or those nearby), and prioritise walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport’. It may be preferable to have a separate statement on public transport (such as ‘prioritise good access to public transport for all’) and on walking, wheeling, and cycling (such as ‘encourage active travel through site layout, connectivity and landscape design’). We would also welcome a reference to modal shift or minimising car use.

In paragraph 1.g. we would welcome a stronger statement on personal security to include the feeling of safety. The current use of the word ‘secure’ may be taken to imply security of property only. Consideration should be given to use of streets and other public spaces at all times of day and night, with particular emphasis on safety for women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

The Government acknowledgement of the role of the built environment in preventing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and the 2025 [‘Freedom from Violence and Abuse: A Cross-Government Strategy to Build a Safer Society for Women and Girls’](#) document demonstrate that design and planning are critical tools in achieving a safe environment and embedding this approach in development and the built environment. The framework should take this opportunity to reinforce this message and include specific references to how design can help prevent violence against women and girls in public spaces.

In paragraph 1.h., we suggest that reference is also made to the idea of ‘belonging,’ which is important for encouraging a feeling of safety. See the Greater London Authority’s 2022 [‘Safety in Public Space: Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People.’](#)

The findings of the Angiolini Inquiry – Part 2, concluded that there is a clear opportunity to strengthen the prevention of VAWG if this priority is more explicitly reflected in planning guidance and principles.

We are pleased that clear guidance on VAWG is included in the Government’s Placemaking PPG, which is also out for consultation, however we believe it is paramount that this principle is also embedded within the NPPF, recognising both the urgency and scale of the issue, and affirming that preventing VAWG is a shared responsibility across all sectors of the built environment — not solely a matter for crime prevention agencies. Without explicit inclusion in the NPPF, this critical principal risks being overlooked in planning decisions.

To deliver this effectively, the definition of 'safe' should be expanded to explicitly acknowledge the feeling of safety, which can be a significant barrier for women and girls within communities, workplaces, and when travelling. The NPPF should embed VAWG considerations within its overarching principles, incorporating them into spatial strategies, local planning policy, plan-making, placemaking, and neighbourhood planning.

Explicit reference to women's safety — including the feeling of safety — should be made within HC1.

Relevant guidance includes: the Greater London Authority's 2022 'Safety in Public Space: Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People' and the London Legacy Development Corporation's 2024 'Creating places that work for Women and Girls: Handbook for Local Authorities, Developers and Designers'.

149) Do you agree with the proposed approach to using design review and other design processes in policy DP4? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) If not, what else would help secure better design and placemaking outcomes?

Continued use of design review as a positive, iterative tool will help improve design quality and reinforce good placemaking outcomes, particularly on complex or large-scale schemes.

For larger or more sensitive developments, consideration could be given to referencing the potential use of an ongoing design monitoring or "design guardian" role in policy DP4(2)(c), to help ensure that the quality secured at planning approval is carried through to delivery. Consideration should also be given to the use of other panels which complement design review panels, such as community review panels.

150) Do you agree that policy TR1 will provide an effective basis for taking a vision-led approach and supporting sustainable transport through plan-making? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We very much welcome the direction and aspirations of TR1. We do, however, have some concerns about how certain aspects will operate in practice.

Principal among these is the location of development. We recognise that the Department for Transport's 'Connectivity Tool' is a powerful piece of analysis and, outside London, represents a leap forward in this regard for many places. However, we believe London is clearly distinct from the rest of England in two critical ways:

(1) The difference in travel patterns, with greater public transport use, longer travel distances and greater commuting levels. This is in part a reflection of central London: its extremely high employee densities and productivity make it a trip attractor unlike anything in the rest of England.

(2) a history over 25 years of deepening integration between transport and land use and integrated working between the strategic transport authority and the plan making body, including through the use of Public Transport Access Levels (PTAL) over many years.

The former is not currently captured by the Department for Transport's Connectivity Tool, which is configured around national average travel patterns, which leads to some counter-intuitive results.

The latter creates considerable opportunities to use integrated transport planning to drive up housing potential, which could be undermined with a switch to a national metric not managed by Transport for London. We believe both issues can be resolved by the continued use of PTAL alongside the use of a complementary Transport for London developed metric which has been in development for several years (designed along similar principles to the Department for Transport's tool, but that is more relevant and calibrated to the London context).

Given this, we would ask for the references to the Connectivity Tool in TR1 and TR3 to refer to it applying 'outside of London', with the glossary definition of connectivity to defer to Transport for London for guidance on assessing connectivity within London.

We recommend an amendment to paragraph 1.d.: 'Identifying and protecting sites and routes which will widen genuine transport choice and are essential to facilitate sustainable development, including networks for walking, wheeling and cycling, and public transport infrastructure.' We recommend that paragraph 1.e. be amended to include bus garages and rail depots and stabling in the list of uses: 'This includes uses such as ports, airports, lorry parking facilities, freight interchanges, public transport hubs, bus garages, rail depots and stabling, and roadside services.' Alternatively, a reference to 'associated facilities that ensure smooth operation and use of public transport infrastructure' could be made. As well as recognising the need to retain and expand bus garages to support the network, this will be important for electrification and for Urban Transport Group members who are franchising bus services because they will need to develop their own network of garages. A major challenge is the additional space (about 20 per cent required to electrify a bus fleet). Likewise, rail depots and stabling are key in supporting aspirations for growth in rail services.

For urban areas, 'ultra-low and zero emission vehicles' should be removed from the definition of 'sustainable transport modes' in the glossary. These vehicles' use in urban areas leads to lower density development and less efficient use of scarce land.

The link between transport and health outcomes is missing, which is a key benefit of active travel and can be a persuasive factor for transport policies to be funded. Suggested definition of vision should include active, sustainable, accessible (or health-promoting).

TR1 1.a. should also include engagement with Directors of public health /borough public health officers as a key stakeholder in transport planning, who will have views on how to maximise health benefits through active and sustainable travel.

151) Do you agree that policy TR2 strikes an appropriate balance between supporting maximum parking standards where they can deliver planning benefits, and requiring a degree of flexibility and consideration of business requirements in setting those standards? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We welcome the recognition of the ability to set parking standards under PM13. Greater prominence should be given to the need to assess the potential for road network impacts in the development of parking standards. This extends beyond the 'local' network and should consider likely cross-boundary trips and cumulative network impacts. This is critical for those authorities surrounding London, who have significantly higher volumes of growth to plan for. If these authorities allow or potentially even require more parking than is necessary, London will see higher levels of inward traffic and congestion. This will also particularly affect the National Highways strategic road network. Expansion of junctions on these roads would not solve the problem as it would increase road capacity going into London without it being possible (or desirable, given induced demand) to create the corresponding capacity within London. The only option to achieve high housing growth both in and around London and keep the road network manageable is to design parking restraint in from the beginning in new development (as it is almost impossible to achieve this after it has been built).

Development plans should therefore be required to consider these challenges and evidence them proportionately (ideally at the spatial development strategy level) and adopt maximum standards as necessary to manage challenges not just on local roads but the broader surrounding road network.

The reference to local car ownership levels in paragraph 3.c. could lead to the status quo being maintained where existing levels are high, rather than helping to drive down ownership and shift to sustainable modes. This is critical in urban areas to reduce car use and enable the delivery of housing at appropriate densities.

We view the need to consider using ranges for parking standards in paragraph 3.e. as unnecessary. This requirement could result in lengthy debates during examinations in public, and remaining silent on this issue does not preclude using ranges. Equally, guidance could include this consideration rather than the Framework.

152) Do you agree with the changes proposed in policy TR3(1a), including the reference to proposals which could generate a significant amount of movement, and the proposed use of the Connectivity Tool? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Sustainable transport should also be considered from the earliest stages of development proposals – at the moment, the reference only appears to apply to Local Plans.

TR3 paragraph 1.b. could also include a reference to enhancing existing transport infrastructure to optimise density, as well as making use of existing and proposed investment: 'Opportunities should be taken to utilise existing or proposed transport infrastructure, or to enhance that infrastructure, in optimising the amount or density of development which can be accommodated in different locations'.

We believe the scale of housing and required approach to density within London can only be delivered by a London connectivity metric, managed by Transport for London and underpinning the London Plan. This is particularly important for development proposals. If the London Plan is to refer to a Transport for London defined metric, it could create unnecessary hurdles and delays for development as the current wording does not allow to the Department for Transport's 'Connectivity Tool' to be disregarded. It should be made clear that the Connectivity Tool should apply only outside London.

In addition, TR4 should include health and inequalities as a part of street design, using the healthy streets approach.

153) Do you agree that proposed policy TR4 provides a sufficient basis for the effective integration of transport considerations in creating well-designed places? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We recommend that endorsement of the (evidence-based) Healthy Streets Approach is included in this policy.

We also suggest making clear that the street design and connections should be considered in terms of how they will look and feel during different times of the day.

A permeable street network (that is, one with small blocks, without cul-de-sacs) is important in the design of new developments. This could be added through amendments to paragraph 1.a.: 'Give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, including through creating a permeable street network, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second—so far as possible—to facilitating easy access to high quality public transport, with layouts and densities which maximise the catchments for bus or other public transport services'. We also recommend adding a requirement to reduce road traffic and therefore road danger and dominance.

There should be scope included in the policy to consider night-time assessments and securing meaningful improvements beyond of lighting.

Paragraph 1.b. should be amended to 'sufficient, secure, high-quality and accessible cycle parking.'

Advertisements are a key source of unnecessary street clutter that could be added as an example to paragraph 1.c.: 'to avoid unnecessary street clutter, such as advertisements in the footway that detract from the amenity of the local area.' The Government could also consider providing powers to road authorities to prevent additional, and remove existing, on-street advertisements.

Reference in paragraph 1.c. to the perception of safety would be beneficial. While we clearly welcome the reference to the 'needs of disabled people, older people and children' this may not encourage application of a women's safety perspective, for example.

Consideration should also be given to ensuring transport considerations account for evening and night-time travel to support safe and well-designed places day and night. See response to Q148 for further context with regards to needs of women, girls, and gender diverse people.

Consideration should also be given to including more specific guidance around inclusion of greening and green infrastructure within street design.

Consideration should also be given to putting stronger emphasis on road safety. Policy TR4 (d) should be broadened to clarify that the efficient delivery of goods to developments should not compromise public highways, particularly any strategic plans for walking, cycling, and public transport improvements on public highways adjacent to developments. Policy TR4 (e) should include mention of disabled parking.

Reference could also be made to the importance of street design and transport for the planning of healthy communities.

Policy TR4 1.a. should reference to healthy streets approach which gives first priority to pedestrians and cyclists.

TR4 1.c. Safe, inclusive, and attractive are healthy streets principles, and the health impact of street design could be emphasised.

154) Do you agree with policy TR5 as a basis for supporting the provision and retention of roadside facilities where there is an identified need? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

155) Do you agree that the amended wording proposed in policy TR6 provides a clearer basis for considering when transport assessments and travel plans will be required, and for considering impacts on the transport network? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

This provides more clarity and detail than the current NPPF, which is welcomed.

However, the policy focuses on capacity. There should be something in the policy about the quality of the transport network and accessibility, and whether that is also sufficient to accommodate the impact of the development. The focus on highway safety is also outdated and should instead refer to people walking, cycling, and wheeling, rather than a catch-all highway reference.

Paragraph 2. should refer to mitigation for identified impacts, such as: 'Transport assessments and statements, and travel plans, should reflect the transport vision for the development and how it is intended to be achieved, including proposed mitigation for identified impacts on transport infrastructure or services, and (including, in the case of Travel Plans, identifying fallback options if initial measures do not deliver the expected outcomes).'

Noise and air quality impacts should also be considered when assessing transport impacts, and paragraph 3., as currently written, is unclear. We suggest rewording, such as: 'All development proposals should be capable of proceeding without having a severe adverse impact on the transport network (in terms of capacity, and congestion, noise or air quality, including cumulative impacts), or an unacceptable impact on highway safety, taking into account any mitigation measures proposed as well as any wider network improvements.'

Paragraph 4. states that ‘all reasonable future scenarios should be considered.’ While it provides welcome clarification that these should take into account ‘the promotion of sustainable modes of travel and realising the transport vision for the development itself’, there is a risk that the term ‘all reasonable’ could lead to numerous scenarios being assessed, which could be time consuming and expensive and lead to potential delays in the planning process. A focus on a single vision-led scenario with sensitivity testing where absolutely necessary would be preferable.

In addition, the policy does not mention assessing transport impacts during the construction phase of a development. It would be welcomed if the policy was broadened to include requirements for managing and assessing transport impacts during the construction phase, for example through the use of construction management plans.

We are concerned that transport statements with limited details may impact how well the impact on the network is understood and limit related assessments including air quality assessments. We would welcome more detail on what criteria would need to be met to justify a transport statement over an assessment and would suggest that the criteria is proportionate to the risk the development may pose to local air quality.

156) Do you agree the proposed text in policy TR7 provide an effective basis for assessing proposals for marine ports, airports, and general aviation facilities? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

This policy would benefit from sturdier environmental guardrails. Paragraph 1.a. could be amended to: ‘Facilitate the modernisation, sustainability, diversification and improvement of facilities and operations, including through innovation in the handling of goods and passengers, and the transition to the use of low and zero carbon fuels and technologies.’

We are concerned by how far ‘acceptable environmental effect’ in paragraph 1.d. is open to interpretation. We recommend strengthening this by referring to existing national and international thresholds and limit values and the responsibility of the developer to minimise and mitigate impacts.

A further paragraph, 1.e. could be added for all cases: ‘Provide and promote sustainable surface access for people and goods to such developments along with providing jobs in local communities.’

It is crucial to provide some flexibility for modifying this policy for London that allows a better coordination of existing capacity at its six airports and provision of surface access through public transport.

157) Do you agree with the additional policy on maintaining and improving rights of way proposed in policy TR8? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We recommend in paragraph 1.b.iii. a reference be added on the perception of safety.

Promoting healthy communities

158) Do you agree with the approach to planning for healthy communities in policy HC1, including the expectation that the development plan set local standards for different types of recreational land, drawing upon relevant national standards? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

There is strong support for an approach that strengthens requirements for the provision of recreational land, including for sports facilities which we welcome.

The evidence led and local standards approach (qualitative and quantitative) should help successfully address local needs and access to provision, retention and enhancement of appropriate community facilities and public service infrastructure. HC1 (1)(c) strongly aligns with the approach to development plans assessing and designating Local Green Space and planning for facilities that consider inclusivity for all sections of the community.

The expectation that development plans set local standards is welcomed, recognising the variation in appropriate and achievable levels of provision in different contexts (such as dense urban environments). It is important that these be based on robust assessment of existing provision and need – but the removal of wording requiring “robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision” could disincentivise this evidence gathering and limit the establishment and use of locally specific standards.

HC1 has no explicit mention of health inequalities (inequalities but not health inequalities), and where reducing inequalities is mentioned this is linked to service infrastructure. Planning influences a range of wider determinants beyond access to infrastructure. Addressing health inequalities through the wider determinants of health influenced by the built environment is key in this section. Additionally, the Mayor has a statutory duty to consider health inequalities and health improvement in exercising powers (GLA Act 1999). The Communities and devolution bill will give these powers to other strategic authorities. These are key statutory duties that the Mayor in part discharges through planning powers. HC1 should be amended to include explicit reference to addressing health inequalities through the built environment including service infrastructure.

Language around ‘minimising inequalities’ is in the chapter objective, which is not policy and therefore risks having little formal weight. There is no explicit reference to inequalities between ‘the most and least deprived communities’ or mention of deprivation, suggesting local plans may be less compelled to focus on spatial socio-economic disadvantages. HC1 should be amended to include explicit reference to reducing inequalities in deprivation.

It is welcomed that the new NPPF does mention assessment of a variety of impacts of development for example on transport (pg71), climate change (pg28), water quality (pg79), impacts on travellers health specifically of local environmental factors including noise and air quality (pg37), town centres (pg44), Green Belt land use (pg60-61), impact of development on

existing activities (pg79), heritage sites and conservation areas (pg97). However, there is no explicit mention of a systematic assessment of health impacts of development, or use of health impact assessment.

HC1 should be amended to include reference to the need to assess the health impact of developments where appropriate, including through health impact assessment (integrated or stand-alone).

There is an opportunity to build in street design and transport into planning for healthy communities. This is currently not emphasised.

Policy HC1 1.e. could be strengthened to include using the healthy streets approach to promote health and reduce health inequalities by: encouraging active travel, reducing road danger and air pollution (which are both experienced disproportionately) and connecting communities.

Paragraph 1.e. could be strengthened by making the link between active travel (walking, wheeling, and cycling) and public health outcomes clearer. This could form the basis for stronger direction on locating developments.

The definition of 'public service infrastructure' does not include transport infrastructure and services. This was an important part of the Government's '[Building for a Healthy Life](#)' guidance.

The quality of the recreational land is very important – not just quantity - and allotment land must be serviceable so that these open spaces can integrate with the community.

Explicit reference to women's safety — including the feeling of safety — should be made within HC1. See response to Q148 for further context with regards to needs of women, girls, and gender diverse people.

It should also be recognised that it can be difficult to plan for community facilities and public service infrastructure when some of these uses can be lost without planning permission due to permitted developments within the Use Class system.

159) Do you agree that Local Green Space should be 'close' to the community it serves? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Although there should also be recognition that the larger the space is the larger the community it can serve and associated catchment. A range of scales of accessible green spaces is vital for communities.

160) Do you agree that the proposed policies at HC3 and HC4 will support the provision of community facilities and public service infrastructure serving new development? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We welcome the strengthened role of community facilities and public infrastructure, with explicit developer contribution duties and that Health infrastructure is now embedded in the definition of public service infrastructure. We welcome the inclusion of identifying deficits and future needs in public service infrastructure including health care provision; setting rules for retention or replacement of key facilities, including local health facilities; the support for engagement with service providers; the ‘substantial weight’ for providing new/improved public service infrastructure; that developments generating large population increases must provide necessary new health facilities, on- or off-site; and the added wording to secure timely delivery of public service infrastructure to be available “when the development or an agreed proportion... is first occupied.”

However, the definition of ‘public service infrastructure’ does not include transport infrastructure and services. This was an important part of the Government’s ‘[Building for a Healthy Life](#)’ guidance (withdrawn in October 2025).

As highlighted in previous responses there is an important opportunity to give specific consideration for women and girls and designing this into spaces.

Policy HC4 (2) identifies engagement with children and families. It will also be important to consider intersectionality of the different needs of users.

161) Do you have any views on whether further clarity is required to improve the application of this policy, including the term ‘fast food outlets,’ and the types of uses to which it applies?

HC5: should be amended to make explicit what is meant by reasonable walking distance. Many boroughs use the 400-metre definition used in the 2021 London Plan, or a more stringent target. This is key for this policy to be effective in improving health.

To note:

Exclusion zones around schools have been found to demonstrably curb the proliferation of new take aways. [\[This study\]](#) of 35 local authorities found 92 per cent of those authorities used a 400m distance, and 54 per cent fewer takeaways opened than anticipated after six years.

Tackling obesity requires a multifactorial approach and planning controls on new hot food takeaway operations contribute to this approach. [\[This research\]](#) estimated that takeaway management zones around schools will reduce adult obesity prevalence by 1.5 to 2.3 percentage points by 2031 leading to reductions in a range of diseases including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and asthma.

162) Do you agree with the proposed approach to retaining key community facilities and public service infrastructure in policy HC6? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

Partly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We strongly support increased protection for community facilities, including facilities for sport, with additional requirement on replacement facilities to serve the existing community and we

welcome the inclusion of public houses as key community facilities. The glossary definition of community facilities is broad and could cover cultural venues as well as pubs, places of worship and other facilities.

However, clarification is urgently needed on the meaning of 'last of its type' in relation to community facilities and what geographical location would relate to 'the area concerned' in a London context. There is a real unintended consequence that this could allow for closing lots of pubs and venues in London as they will never be the last remaining in an area. This drafting does not reflect understanding of the distinctiveness of London's size, its clusters of night time economy uses and the diverse cultural offer of the city, which requires the prevention of the unnecessary loss of the capital's cultural assets. It also seems to be at odds with the government's direction of travel on strategic licensing and the government's and Mayor's desire to see a more vibrant and diverse nighttime offer in pursuit of economic growth and a stronger cultural offer.

We would ask for HC6.2 to reconsider applicability of 'last of its type', to big cities where these community facilities are crucial both to London's cultural and nighttime economies, and in local communities.

There is also a question with regards to the practical implementation of the policy for some types of use, given the flexibility within the Use Classes Order - some facilities can be lost without planning permission through the Use Class system.

The following amendments should also be considered:

Policy HC6(1)(a) should be strengthened to make reference to a competitive marketing exercise for a period of at least 12 months for alternative forms of public service infrastructure without an appropriate offer being received and that the loss of the facility would not lead to a short fall in provision.

Policy HC6(1)(b) should be strengthened to refer to the quantum and quality of provision being re-provided.

163) Do you agree with the approach taken to recreational facilities in policy HC7, including the addition of 'and/or' with reference to quantity and quality of replacement provision? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

In many cases it will be important that replacement facilities are better in terms of quantity and quality. Replacement with improvements in quality alone can cause issues in London (particularly in some areas) with the loss of irreplaceable larger playing fields that meet regulation size and replacement with 3G pitches which are restricted to certain types of sport only.

164) Do you agree with the clarification that Local Green Space should not fall into areas regarded as grey belt or where Green Belt policy on previously developed land apply? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Local Green Spaces are, by definition, not strategic in nature and therefore not identified by the Spatial Development Strategy. Regardless, we agree to the suggestion that elements of Green Belt policy relating to PDL, or grey belt should not apply.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree

Without more definitive criteria for new Local Green Space (LGS) designations linked to the need to enable the delivery of the adopted strategic growth strategy within local plans, there is a risk that land in sustainable locations may not come forward for development, if they become designated.

Policy HC2 (Local Green Space) should be amended to note that new LGS designations should not undermine the ability to deliver a broad location for growth identified within the adopted SDS.

Pollution, public protection, and security

165) Do you agree with policy P1 as a basis for identifying and addressing relevant risks when preparing plans? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Policy P1 would be strengthened by direction for development plans to use and require quantitative risk assessment methods in alignment with best practice such as decibel limits in alignment with the Professional Practice Guidance on Planning and Noise, and to make a corresponding reference in policy PM13 to make clear that this would not be contrary to the bar on quantitative standards.

While 'inequalities' are not specifically mentioned, the air pollution policy considers 'vulnerable groups' and 'cumulative impact.' However, there is no explicit mention of minimising inequalities in exposure to air pollution. P1 should be amended to including minimising inequalities in exposure to air pollution.

166) Are any additional tools or guidance needed to enable better decision-making on contaminated land?

Best practice quantitative measures of risk in relation to contaminated land which would be beneficial to standardise decision making on contaminated land include WHO guidelines on particulate and gaseous pollutant limits. Quantitative limits to support a standardised definition of "unacceptable" in relation to risks and impacts would support the effective implementation of policy P1.

167) Do you agree with the criteria set out in proposed policy P3 as a basis for securing acceptable living conditions and managing pollution? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Policy P3 should make direct reference to the need for plans to support reductions in pollution caused by construction activities including transport of materials and construction, demolition, and excavation waste. The policy should set an expectation that development plans set requirements for site waste management plans (SWMPs) or equivalent strategies, demonstrating how construction and waste transport emissions and air pollution will be reduced and mitigated. This is necessary since there is no current statutory requirement for SWMPs.

As in §187 e of the current framework, policy P3 requires that plans prevent development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution and land instability. Supporting development plans to set quantitative limits in relation to these risks will reduce inconsistent determination of what constitutes an unacceptable risk.

Part 2 b of policy P3 requires that development proposals contribute to compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives. In the case of air pollution this is expected to relate to the Environment Act 2021 however air pollution criteria in the EA are not consistent with current best practice.

The GLA supports further inclusion of air quality considerations as part of securing living standards. We would welcome further details on the specifics of this policy, in particular further emphasis on indoor air quality as a consideration for good living standards.

The Mayor has committed to aligning with the WHO guidelines as soon as possible, recognising that they better consider current health evidence, whereas the current national limits are far less strict. We encourage the WHO guidelines (where applicable) to be considered “acceptable” living standards, as opposed to the current national limits.

Vibration should be added to paragraph 1. and paragraph 2.c. as this has an important impact on living conditions during construction and post-construction, depending on the development.

168) Do you agree policy P4 makes sufficiently clear how decision-makers should apply the agent of change principle? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We strongly support the agent of change principle. However, the references to current and permitted level of activity should be amended to take into account the way different permitting regimes operate. For example, the way tonnage thresholds are set in waste permits administered by the EA is very different from setting licensing conditions for music and cultural venues. In addition, operational hours, and access routes to and from those operations should be considered when assessing impacts on sensitive developments.

As such the following amendments are suggested:

Existing businesses, community facilities, public services and defence and security activities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on their ongoing operation (taking into account relevant information on the current and permitted operations such as planning consents, permits and licences) as a result of development being approved after they were

established. This means that development proposals should be capable of being integrated effectively with existing business, community and public service activities and infrastructure in their vicinity (including, but not limited to, uses such as pubs, music venues, places of worship, sports clubs, blue light services, defence, electricity network infrastructure and industrial and waste sites).

Where the operation of an existing activity could have a significant adverse effect on a proposed new development in its vicinity, development proposals should:

- a. Identify the nature of the potential impacts, having regard to operational hours and also considering access routes and informed where necessary by early discussions between the applicant (i.e. the 'agent of change') and those existing uses which could be affected by the proposal to inform the scope for mitigation; and
- b. Be able to demonstrate that suitable mitigation can be provided before the development has begun to be occupied if the development is to be acceptable. Planning conditions or obligations should be used to secure agreed mitigation measures.

This applies to new development involving changes of use of land and property, as well as new construction, and includes situations where new development may interfere with the operation of electronic communications networks. Relevant information on the current and permitted operations such as planning consents, permits and licences should be taken into account when applying this policy.

Public transport infrastructure should be included in the list of uses in paragraph 1. (and include bus garages and other facilities, tram and rail lines, and rail depots).

169) Do you agree policy P5 provides sufficient basis for addressing possible malicious threats and other hazards when considering development proposals? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree. Consideration could be made to also referring to addressing anti-social behaviour in addition to crime and public safety.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

170) Do you agree that substantial weight should be given to the benefits of development for defence and public protection purposes? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Managing flood risk and coastal change

171) Do you agree with the proposed changes set out in policy F3 to improve how Coastal Change Management Areas are identified and taken into account in development plans? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

172) Do you agree with the proposed clarifications to the sequential test set out in policy F5? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The removal of reference to development in areas at risk of flooding if reasonably available alternative sites exist not being permitted risks leading to development with reduced resilience to climate change. Increased severe rainfall events, particularly after long dry spells are already occurring and will continue to increase in frequency. For this reason, it is essential that the wording in §174 of the current framework is retained.

Paragraph 2.b. includes no reference to land protected by flood defences and for land where updated flood modelling demonstrates that the development would not be on land at a risk of flooding (when compared to the published Environment Agency flood maps).

More detailed criteria for a proportionate approach to the sequential test is required in relation to the search area and what amounts to 'reasonably available' in local planning authorities going through a local plan review for residential and non-residential development.

We would note, however, that transport infrastructure is often linear development where it is not possible to locate this in areas with lower flooding risks. Transport infrastructure should also be exempted from the sequential test as a form of essential infrastructure. These schemes could otherwise fail the sequential test (although we are assuming they would satisfy the exception test).

173) Do you agree with the proposed approach to the exception test set out in policy F6? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The exception test is supported however the vulnerability classifications in Table 2 require revision to ensure that danger to human life posed by the most serious flood events is reflected as the highest risk category.

Comment on Annex F: Flood risk vulnerable classification: Hospitals are characterised as 'More vulnerable' but will have to maintain service (ie remain operable) regardless of flooding, and likely will experience an increase in demand. We suggest that they are re-characterised as Highly vulnerable or essential. Some residential settings are also highly vulnerable eg secure mental health residential settings, given they are very difficult to evacuate and re-house safely.

174) Do you agree with the proposed requirement in policy F8 for sustainable drainage systems to be designed in accordance with the National Standards? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) must be designed to avoid an increase in vectors, given the increased risk of vector-borne disease due to climate change – this issue is not captured in the national standards.

175) Do you agree with the proposed new policy to avoid the enclosure of watercourses, and encourage the de-culverting and re-naturalisation of river channels? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

176) Do you agree with the proposed changes to policy for managing development in areas affected by coastal change? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

177) The National Coastal Erosion Risk Map sets out where areas may be vulnerable to coastal change based on different scenarios. Do you have views on how these scenarios should be applied to ensure a proportionate approach in applying this policy?

178) Do you agree with the proposed new additions to Table 2: Flood Risk Vulnerability Classifications? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Should any other forms of development should be added? Please give your reasoning and clearly identify which proposed or additional uses you are referring to.

Conserving nature and enhancing the natural environment

179) Do you agree that the proposed approach to planning for the natural environment in policy N1, including the proposed approach to biodiversity net gain, strikes the right balance between consistency, viability, deliverability, and supporting nature recovery? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We consider that the changes to setting local standards for BNG in Policy N1 would unduly restrict planning authorities in providing polices suitable to their local context. Setting different BNG requirements on a site-by-site basis would be onerous for local authorities and could be less effective than a plan-wide approach. The option to choose between requiring higher standards on either a whole-plan or site-by-site basis would be preferred.

We would note however that for some schemes it may be difficult to achieve the statutory biodiversity net gain, for example on Transport for London's schemes (such as new bus garages, rail extensions, and alterations to stations). These schemes often face particular difficulties associated with meeting safety requirements and constructing in the vicinity of existing infrastructure, which imposes particular constraints. So, if local authorities are to set requirements it should accommodate flexibility / exceptions for such circumstances.

180) In what circumstances would it be reasonable to seek more than 10% biodiversity net gain on sites being allocated in the development plan, especially where this could support meeting biodiversity net gain obligations on other neighbouring sites in a particular area?

It would seem reasonable to seek more than the mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) on allocated sites in a development plan when it aligns with local evidence, LNRS or acts as a strategic habitat bank for surrounding developments.

Many local authorities have already introduced policies exceeding 10 per cent based on local evidence and some sites could contribute to the objectives of local nature recovery strategies, whether they are specifically allocated in local plans or not.

181) Do you agree policy N2 sets sufficiently clear expectations for how development proposals should consider and enhance the existing natural characteristics of sites proposed for development? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The specificity of paragraph 1.f. requiring integrated nest boxes (swift bricks) to be incorporated in all development proposals may come at the expense of other species requiring artificial habitat. While other species of birds and bees will often use swift bricks, the policy should be worded to enable bespoke solutions to be provided in response to local ecological conditions.

182) Do you agree the policy in Policy N4 provides a sufficiently clear basis for considering development proposals affecting protected landscapes and reflecting the statutory duties which apply to them? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, including how policy can be improved to ensure compliance.

183) Do you agree policy N6 provides clarity on the treatment of internationally, nationally, and locally recognised site within the planning system? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Policy N6 (Areas of particular importance for biodiversity) relates to Local Wildlife Sites (known as SINCS in London, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation) but does not provide

enough detail for effective implementation that adequately balances development needs with nature recovery needs. The policy states that development proposals affecting such sites should only be supported if 'there would not be a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the site' or 'the benefits of development... clearly outweigh the likely impact on the features which make the site valuable for nature conservation.' We would recommend that the London Plan 'mitigation hierarchy' is considered:

- a. avoid damaging the designated features of the site
- b. minimise the overall spatial impact and mitigate it by improving the habitat quality or management of the rest of the site
- c. deliver off-site compensation of better biodiversity value.

We agree that the policy provides clarity. However, we query the use of environmental delivery plans in this policy to compensate for biodiversity harms to sites of international importance and sites of special scientific interest. We otherwise support the criteria for refusal for developments affecting irreplaceable habitats.

See also Transport for London's responses to the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs' 2025 consultations 'Improving the Implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain for Minor, Medium and Brownfield Development' and 'Biodiversity Net Gain for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects'.

184) Are there any further issues for planning policy that we need to consider as we take forward the implementation of Environmental Delivery Plans?

185) Do you agree the government should implement the additional regard duties under Section 102 of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons.

186) Do you have any evidence as to the impact of implementing the additional regard duties for development?

187) Do you agree with the approach to plan-making for the historic environment, including the specific requirements for World Heritage Sites and Conservation Areas, set out in policies H1 – H3? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

188) Do you agree with the approach to assessing the effects of development on heritage assets set out in policy H5? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

The overall approach in Policy HE5 to assessing the effects of development on heritage assets is supported, particularly the emphasis on understanding significance and ensuring that impacts are clearly identified and justified. A structured assessment framework is essential to achieving consistent and informed decision-making.

However, the policy would benefit from greater clarity on how impacts should be assessed in practice, including clearer guidance on proportionality, the treatment of cumulative effects, and the role of design quality in mitigating harm. In complex or sensitive contexts, qualitative and design-led assessment should be afforded appropriate weight alongside traditional heritage analysis.

Ensuring that Policy HE5 requires the consideration of regional / local heritage evidence and design codes would support more robust, transparent, and predictable decision-making.

The removal of paragraph 208 of the current framework and its replacement with HE5 places a lot of emphasis on the developer's assessment of heritage and removes the requirement for local planning authorities to make an independent assessment of harm. This leads to a reliance on a developer's assessment which may not be considered objective, leading to potential challenges as decision makers would have relied on the developer's assessments of harm. Policy HE5 does state that 'Decision makers should be satisfied that this assessment accurately reflects the effects on heritage assets caused by the proposals'; but it does not provide any recourse should a decision maker not be satisfied, and this could result in legal challenges.

189) Do you agree with the approach to considering impacts on designated heritage assets in policy HE6, including the change from "great weight" to "substantial weight", and in particular the interactions between this and the statutory duties? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

190) Do you agree with the new policies in relation to world heritage, conservation areas, and archaeological assets in policies HE8 – HE10? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

Consideration should be given to whether Local Plans should summarise and/or signpost to relevant documents that define assets' significance and ensure that capacity assessments for sites consider the impact on these heritage assets in defining site specific design guidance. This could sit within policy HE2(1)(a) relating to design guides, design codes, or masterplans. This would avoid relying primarily on case-by-case assessment at application stage.

191) Do you have any other comments on the revisions to the heritage chapter?

The use of 'consistent' in HE4: Securing the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets paragraph 1.a. needs to be elaborated upon compared to paragraphs 214 to 215 of the current framework. This could align better with nationally recognised categories for the extents of harm

to the significance of a heritage assets for greater consistency of decision-making, as this is a very broad spectrum. The Greater London Authority's 2026 '[Planning Practice Note: Heritage Impact Assessments and the Setting of Heritage Assets](#)' sets out a terminology that has been proven to be effective.

Policies HE4 to HE6 do not consistently include 'setting'. This should be reviewed to ensure when the setting is a relevant consideration and be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset as explained in Historic England's 2017 '[The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 \(Second Edition\)](#)' guidance (available at historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/heag180-gpa3-setting-heritage-assets/).

Where there is a neutral impact there is ambiguity. It would be clearer if the framework specifically said this would be acceptable, to be consistent with legislation.

192) Do you agree with the transitional arrangements approach to decision-making? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

193) Do you have any further thoughts on the policies outlined in this consultation?

Local planning authorities must be adequately resourced and have access to sufficient environmental, ecological, heritage, architectural, and urban design expertise to prepare evidence-based policies and assess proposals consistently. Without this capacity, there is a risk that the policies may lead to variable interpretation, uncertainty for applicants, and uneven outcomes across authorities.

The transport policies outlined in this consultation do not provide guidance around managing freight and encouraging sustainable freight practices. It is an oversight to not include more policy that encourages 1) plan-making that establishes strategic and sustainable freight management solutions and 2) developments to take more sustainable approaches to managing associated freight. We otherwise risk just a 'predict and provide' approach that has implications not just for congestion but also pressures on land etc. It is strongly recommended that a policy is included in the transport section that specifically focuses on freight and deliveries.

A serious omission in the framework is the lack of an explicit policy supporting the provision of development proposals for almost all forms of sustainable transport—and the necessary associated infrastructure to support it—such as depots, substations, and bus garages. TR8 is the only policy and addresses public rights of way only. Policies to support development proposals for rail, light rail, tram, bus, cycling, as well as piers for freight and passenger use are required in the framework. This should also remind decision-makers that they should be considered against policies relevant to the proposal, not, as is often the case, considered against policies designed primarily for housing developments. Most proposals requiring consent such as bus garages, cycle hire docking stations and minor changes to stations that fall outside the remit of permitted development rights are authorised through the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 process. Transport for London has made the case for many years that cycle hire docking stations should have permitted development rights given the nature of

the use and the burden the application process adds to applicants and decision-makers. We are happy to provide more evidence on this point if that would be helpful.

In the final version of the NPPF it would be good to include hyperlinks within the document. For example, in PM1 where it references PM12 you should be able to click on the PM12 wording and be taken straight to this policy. Additionally, links to relevant Planning Practice Guidance sections would assist in the NPPF's implementation.

194) Do you agree with the list of Written Ministerial Statements set out in Annex A to the draft Framework whose planning content would be superseded by the policies proposed in this consultation? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

195) Do you consider the planning regime, including reforms being delivered through the Planning and Infrastructure Act, provide sufficient flexibility for energy generation projects co-located with data centres to be consented under either the NSIP or TCPA regime? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please give reasons.

196) Would raising the Planning Act 2008 energy generation thresholds for renewable projects that are co-located with data centres in England (for the reason outlined above) be beneficial? *Yes/No*

a) If so, what do you believe would be the appropriate threshold? Please provide your reasons.

197) Do you have any views on how we should define 'co-located energy infrastructure'? Please provide your reasons.

198) Do you think the renewable energy generation thresholds under Section 15 of the Planning Act 2008 for other use types of projects should be increased, or should this be limited to projects co-located with data centres? *Yes/No*

a) Please provide your reasons.

199) What benefits or risks do you foresee from making this change? Please provide your reasons.

In the London context, delays or uncertainty within the planning system are not necessarily the primary constraint on the delivery of AI data centres. Instead, the principal barrier is the availability of energy capacity and water in the locations most attractive to data centre development. Substantial electricity connection queues and limited available capacity remain the dominant factor affecting data centre delivery timelines. There are also significant knock on implications for other development – particularly housing from capacity constraints. The Mayor would welcome working with the government to develop approaches to data centre development that reduce energy and water use. This could include looking at how we incentivise academics and innovative companies to develop new solutions. There have recently been a number of data centres consented, and some under construction, in OPDC which have improved sustainability standards to conventional data centres which have been

developed in line with the improved sustainability ambitions in OPDC's award winning Industrial Supplementary Planning Document. These include data centres on Chandos Road and in Premier Park in Park Royal.

This issue is particularly acute in London, which hosts the majority of data centre development in the UK. Current reserved electricity connections for data centre schemes in London exceed 8GW, with connection dates extending to 2037. This is more than eleven times London's existing operational data centre capacity, demonstrating that grid access, rather than planning consent, is the binding constraint on delivery.

We recognise the significant work being undertaken by Ofgem and DESNZ to redirect development in areas with available capacity, including Ofgem's recent demand connections update and the designation of AI Growth Zones. However, given the current pipeline of projects are concentrated in London, it is likely that the majority of new UK AI data centre capacity will continue to be delivered in London's existing ecosystem in the near term. National policy should therefore more explicitly recognise the disproportionate impacts of data centre growth in London.

In this context, reform of the connection queue is critical, both to improve equity and to enable more effective proactive planning for data centre development at the strategic level. Alongside this, with clearer strategic planning, covering how much data centre capacity is required to meet national AI ambitions and where it should be located, strategic authorities would be better placed to plan for clusters of development, unlock local benefits such as waste heat reuse, and manage impacts on wider network capacity by providing clearer market signals to network operators.

The move of data centres into the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime needs to ensure that development of data centres does not accelerate in an uncoordinated manner, inhibiting more aligned infrastructure development by utility networks, reducing opportunities for more strategic planning and collaboration between schemes - unless this accounted for in the new NPS, this could undermine the potential benefits of clustering, coordinated infrastructure provision and integration with local growth and decarbonisation objectives.

We also have concerns regarding proposals to enable onsite energy generation for data centres while awaiting grid connection. While recognising the need for interim solutions, it is crucial that national policy is clear that co-located energy generation, particularly in urban areas, should exclude unabated gas and other non-renewable sources, to ensure that environmental and climate objectives can be met. Addressing data centre development and energy generation together through development plans, could support coordinated approaches to capacity delivery, including partnerships that can deliver broader benefits for local economic growth, energy system resilience, and decarbonisation.

We would highlight air quality impacts from backup diesel generators used for data centres. Dozens and sometimes hundreds of generators are sited with data centres in London. These generators are largely diesel powered and unabated, meaning they contribute to spikes in local air pollution during testing. The GLA and many London boroughs consider this to be a key under-addressed issue which is partly offsetting the improvements made in London's air quality. We strongly recommend that there should be a proportionate approach to mitigating air pollution from backup generators in areas where human exposure is high including London.

As such, we strongly support a focus on how we can move to less reliance on the use of these generators, for example the suggestion to co-locate data centres with reliable energy generating stations which may reduce reliance on backup generators. There should also be a focus on reducing human exposure through their specific location and reducing the need for testing or avoiding the need to turn them on for this (we understand there are examples of where this has been achieved). In the short-term generators should use the cleanest available fuel sources and the highest available emissions stage- generators were feasible, to support the shift towards zero-emission technologies as soon as possible. We would also strongly suggest mitigation of back-up generators through other regimes including the Environmental Permitting Regime. We will also respond to the upcoming draft National Policy Statement consultation for data centres.

200) Would you support the use of growth testing for strategic, multi-phase schemes? Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.

We consider that it is essential for viability assessors to consider how development values and costs may change over the development programme where appropriate, particularly for phased schemes.

Viability assessments that are undertaken on a current day basis typically result in significant financial deficits, including negative developer returns and land values in some cases. These assessments are unrealistic and not reflective of market assessments or the land market – land registry data indicates that planning viability assessments are out of kilter with the value that land is actually traded for, indicating that higher levels of affordable housing could be provided if the viability testing approach was undertaken in line with national, Mayoral and professional standards.

Assessing schemes on a current basis with financial deficits also leaves applications vulnerable to subsequent downwards reviews through S73 applications or variations to S106 agreements. This undermines the planning process as it removes any certainty for decision makers that planning obligations, which are likely to have been given positive weight in the planning balance, will actually be delivered.

Whilst review mechanisms can be used to reassess viability over time, these are not a legitimate alternative to ensuring that application stage assessments are objective and realistic. This is because reviews may not take place (for example if substantial implementation is reached by the milestone date), and late reviews allow for developers to retain additional surplus profit above the target return, which reduces the funding available to deliver additional affordable housing. It is also noted that the monitoring and enforcement of review mechanisms depends on each borough and furthermore developers could re-negotiate reviews post permission and reduce obligations. Review mechanisms should not be relied on as a justification for a current day approach which often results in appraisal outcomes that are not realistic and which understate viability.

Sales values tend to increase over time, particularly in circumstances where significant public transport infrastructure is being provided and a new city district is being created with associated place-making. While there may be some more challenging periods, this will result in the viability of delivering affordable housing increasing over time. It is recommended that

clear guidance is provided as to how and when to apply a growth factor to viability testing both in terms of development site testing and development plan viability testing.

201) Would you support the optional use of growth testing for regeneration schemes? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please explain your answer.

Yes, in addition to wider market changes, it is likely that value growth will occur in many scenarios due to a regeneration premium arising in the later phases of regeneration schemes. Therefore, it is important to consider how growth in values and costs may affect the viability position of the scheme as part of the planning assessment.

202) Do you agree greater specificity, including single figures, which local planning authorities could choose to diverge from where there is evidence for doing so, would improve speed and certainty? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please explain your answer. If you agree, the government welcomes views on the appropriate figure – for example, whether 17.5% would be an appropriate reflection of the industry standard for most market-led development.

The intended purpose of viability testing is to ensure that development can proceed, rather than being a tool through which the development sector can reduce planning obligations. As such the NPPF should clarify that the target profit is the minimum return necessary for a development to proceed (and not an aspirational high level which may be desirable to developers but not actually *required* for construction to be undertaken - or which is set intentionally high to maximise land and developer returns as the expense of affordable housing or community infrastructure provision). The target return should be associated with the risks of the development and may vary according to the tenures proposed and other circumstances such as the availability of public funding or infrastructure. The target return would also need to be subject to a sense check taking account of the outcome of the viability appraisal to ensure that this is realistic and reflective of the market.

While setting out specific levels of return may increase certainty, there is also a risk that nationally set rates are not appropriate for different areas or development types. We agree with the principle of authorities being able to adopt alternative rates, however it may in practice be difficult to diverge from those published by government. If these are set out nationally it is therefore vital that the rates are carefully considered and do not exceed the minimum levels of return that may be needed for development to proceed.

Careful consideration would also be required when setting national rates due to the lack of information publicly available regarding market profit assumptions adopted by developers when purchasing land. This can make it difficult for local authorities to gather site specific evidence for applications and so nationally set benchmarks for plan testing may become the default for site specific assessments.

It should also be noted that while a rate of 17.5% on gross development value may be appropriate in London for market for sale housing, significantly lower rates would be expected for investment typologies such as build to rent, student accommodation and co-living, and for affordable housing. The blended target return would therefore fall below this level in most cases.

203) Are there any site types, tenures, or development models to which alternative, lower figures to 15-20% of Gross Development Value might reasonably apply?

A wholly affordable housing scheme would warrant a significantly lower percentage than 17.5% on GDV.

Alternative tenures and delivery models, such as build to rent, purpose-built student accommodation and large-scale shared living accommodation (i.e. co-living), are also typically progressed with lower figures such as 12.5% to 15% on GDV to reflect the specific delivery model and the development risks associated with those types of development.

a) Please explain your answer. The government is particularly interested in views on whether clarifying an appropriate profit of 6% on Gross Development Value for affordable housing tenures would make viability assessments more transparent and speed up decision-making.

Yes, for schemes which carry lower development risk (e.g. construction and sales, and the availability of public subsidy) it would be reasonable to assume lower target profits for that specific development type. This includes residential investment types such as build to rent, student accommodation and co-living. In addition, a lower return of c6% is typically applied for affordable housing, however in some scenarios a lower figure would be more appropriate, for example, where all the affordable housing is being provided as social rent and there is no sales risk, or on some estate regeneration schemes.

Whilst longer term phased schemes may carry more uncertainty in general, phased schemes can also be controlled to a greater extent by applicants, with the timing of construction for phases varied according to market circumstances and sales rates.

204) Are there further ways the government can bring greater specificity and certainty over profit expectations across landowners, site promoters, and developers such that the system provides for the level of profit necessary for development to proceed, reducing the need for subjective expectations?

Yes. The Mayor of London's [Affordable Housing SPG](#) provides a useful starting place for expectations on profit.

a) Please explain your answer.

The implementation and enforcement of national standards which require assessments to be objective, transparent, and realistic would help to support this. In particular, greater evidence and sense checking as part of the assessment process, as well as transparency on market transactions and land agreements would help to provide more realistic data regarding the returns assumed in the market.

Developer's viability assessments are always interrogated by the local planning authority. Any national standards on input will help to reduce debate.

205) Existing Viability Planning Practice Guidance refers to developer return in terms a percentage of gross development value. In what ways might the continued use of gross development value be usefully standardised?

Assessing returns based on a percentage of gross development value should remain the primary basis of determining developer's profit in the majority of cases, and this standard approach should be reflected in the NPPF. As set out above there are risks associated with the publication of standard figures at a national level, however, it may be helpful to retain the current suggested 15-20% range for market housing for plan testing, together with 12.5% for residential investment property and 4-6% for affordable housing.

It should however be noted that these rates may not be appropriate for all circumstances and may, for example, be lower where a scheme is de-risked due to the availability of public land or subsidy. It is also the case that applying variable rates for market and affordable housing can have the effect of inflating profit requirements and reducing development viability for schemes with higher levels of market housing. This can incentivise applicants further to reduce affordable housing levels and result in unrealistic assessments/ unreasonably high financial deficits. As such it is important to undertake a sense check on assumed target returns including assessment of blended rates and benchmarking against schemes with a policy compliant level of affordable housing.

206) Do you agree there are circumstances in which metrics other than profit on gross development value would support more or faster housing delivery, or help to maximise compliance with plan policy? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please explain your answer.

There are very limited circumstances where it may be appropriate to consider alternative profit metrics, however these should be cross-checked on a percentage of GDV basis to ensure that they are realistic and strike the right balance between enabling the schemes to come forward and delivering sustainable development, affordable housing and infrastructure in the public interest.

Notwithstanding that we acknowledge that London is currently experiencing a downturn and we want to encourage investment in London we are concerned about the potential inappropriate use of IRR in many cases. While it might be useful for some schemes to assess development return over the period by using IRR - the risk in relying on that to assess viability means that the profit level can be controlled through development phasing, because IRR measures the scheme's expected rate of return over time. IRR is a highly sensitive and volatile metric and minor changes to costs, values and development programme assumptions can have a significant impact in the IRR outturn.

The use of IRR can inflate profit hurdles, reduce affordable housing, and render review mechanisms ineffective. There is growing evidence of applicants and assessors seeking excessive rates of return that are the equivalent to 30+% on GDV (which would require unrealistically high levels of value growth for the schemes to be viable or for review mechanisms to result in additional affordable housing).

The adoption of an IRR target can also incentivise a developer to slow down housing delivery so that the outturn IRR remains below the target – the effect of this is slower housing delivery, and the value growth over time flows to developers rather than meeting planning policy requirements and delivering benefits to the local communities impacted.

It must be cross checked by % on GDV to ensure that a reasonable allowance is set and where a super profit occurs, they can be utilised to meet policy requirements over the lifetime of the development.

207) Are there types of development on which metrics other than profit on gross development value should be routinely accepted as a measure of return e.g. strategic sites large multi-phased schemes, or build to rent schemes?

Yes, in certain circumstances.

a) Please explain your answer.

The target profit assumed in viability assessments is often based on the applicant's own assumptions, however, as planning applications are generally assessed on an applicant neutral basis, it is important for any alternative profit metrics to be sense checked on a % on GDV basis, to ensure that the assumptions made reflect market expectations rather than just the applicant's own assumptions or aspirations.

The response to the previous question considers whether internal rate of return could be considered in limited circumstances, however a number of potential risks and misapplications of this measure are identified based on the GLA's assessment of strategic applications in London.

It is also the case that for some applications, assessors have appeared to select the profit metric that most significantly inflates the target return as a means of reducing affordable housing provision and effectiveness of review mechanisms. This is the case on multi-phase schemes where outturn IRR metrics can be low (and fall significantly short of the stated target return) due to the length of programme and timing of value and cost inputs assumed. These aspects of a viability appraisal can however be difficult for planning authorities to assess, and so the use of IRR should be treated with caution, particularly on strategic sites and multi-phased schemes.

208) Do you agree that guidance should be updated to reflect the fact a premium may not be required in all circumstances? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) In what circumstances might a premium, or the usual premium, not be required?

It's our view that further guidance in the NPPF should be included to set out the circumstances where a premium above Existing Use Value may not be appropriate.

Such examples could include a site which is not income generating or which would have a negative Existing Use Value arising from any costs to maintain an existing use being higher than the income generated by the existing use. The circumstances could also include sites which have significant remediation costs or those which require a significant amount of

enabling works to bring the site forward for development, and as such a landowner would need less incentive to release a site for development.

In addition, where a site has an existing use which would be re-provided as part of a redevelopment, and the value of the existing use is not therefore being lost through development, a landowner premium would not be required. We would note that in these circumstances the landowner is receiving a new asset replacing the existing use and as such there is no loss of EUV (and indeed an enhanced use may be re-provided to the landowner) meaning the incentive to release the site is essentially accounted for in receiving the re-provided use (this can typically apply to supermarket redevelopments for example).

b) What impact (if any) would you foresee if this change were made?

209) Do you agree that extant consents should not be assumed to be sufficient proof of alternative use value, unless other provisions relating to set out in plans are met? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Strongly agree.

a) Please explain your answer.

If an applicant seeks to use an alternative use value it must fully reflect development plan policy requirements and there must be an existing implementable permission for that use. Where there is no existing implementable permission, an alternative use value should only be used if the alternative use is likely to be acceptable, it could be implemented and there is a demand for that use.

It's our view that further guidance in the NPPF to clarify the circumstances and the relevant considerations for where an Alternative Use Value based upon a consented scheme could be accepted as a Benchmark Land Value in a financial viability assessment.

We have encountered extant planning consents and consents that have been partly implemented to obtain a planning permission into perpetuity being relied upon to form an Alternative Use Value based Benchmark Land Value.

The principal consideration would be whether there exists a market demand for a rational developer to be sufficiently incentivised to implement and build out the extant planning consent and thereby crystallise a land value for the landowner. Clearly, where no rational developer would be incentivised to build out an existing planning consent, then no landowner return could be obtained and there would be no Alternative Use Value to inform the Benchmark Land Value.

Where an applicant is seeking a new planning consent on a site, it is logical to concur that there is no developer appetite to implement and deliver any extant consent on the site. This is arguably the greatest sense-check of whether the delivery of an extant scheme is a realistic prospect.

210) If extant consents were not to be assumed as sufficient proof of alternative use value, should this be at the discretion of the decision-maker, or should another metric (e.g. period of time since consent granted) be used? *Decision maker discretion / Another metric / Neither*

Decision maker discretion.

a) If another metric, please set out your preferred approach and rationale.

The weight to be afforded to an extant consent as an Alternative Use Value should be a matter for the decision-maker having considered a number of assessment metrics including: remaining lifetime of an unimplemented planning consent, the market demand for a rational developer to implement and build out the scheme which carries its own specific considerations: whether a residual appraisal of the consented scheme generates a lower developer profit when compared to the developer profit for the proposed scheme (where profit is included as a fixed cost to outturn a residual land value) - as a developer would be incentivised to deliver the scheme which generates the highest developer profit and as such only the land value generated by that scheme can be received by the landowner.

211) What further steps should the government take to ensure non-policy compliant schemes are not used to inform the determination of benchmark land values in the viability assessments that underpin plan-making?

Benchmark Land Values should be based upon Existing Use Value plus an appropriate landowner premium (where relevant). In the context of area-wide viability assessments for plan-making purposes, the Existing Use Values should be broadly representative of the Local Planning Authority's land supply and the types of sites expected to come forward over the Plan period. The landowner premium should appropriately account for emerging planning policy requirements and be informed by professional judgement.

There is a key risk that the use of inflated Benchmark Land Values from non-policy compliant schemes or those that reflect a different planning policy context (i.e. previous Development Plan context or different Development Plan) in area-wide viability assessments could serve to undermine the delivery of emerging planning policy requirements through introducing a circularity into the assessment.

212) Do you agree that the residual land value of the development proposal should be cross-checked with the residual land values of comparable schemes; to help set the viability assessment in context. *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly disagree.

a) Please explain your answer.

We support the cross-check of residual land values of proposed schemes as reported in financial viability assessments but considers that the cross-check should be undertaken using comparable land transactions, including for the subject site where available, rather than the residual land values of comparable schemes. This is in line with long-standing valuation practice as set out in professional standards and guidance.

Through his consideration of referable planning applications following the London Plan's Viability Tested Route, we have observed financial viability assessments reporting very low or significantly negative residual land values. Due to residual land valuations being very sensitive to minor input changes, the adoption of a number of overly pessimistic inputs can collectively serve to significantly reduce residual land values. The manipulation of residual land values

using inappropriate input assumptions, often coupled with unrealistic development programme assumptions, has been identified as an issue on some large strategic applications.

As the NPPF envisages that policy compliant developments would not be subject to site-specific viability testing, which we strongly support and is reflected in the London Plan's Fast Track Route, the ability to attain policy compliant residual land values for cross-checking purposes is limited, and as a consequence the data on residual land values would be limited to viability tested schemes which may be subject to the aforementioned issues.

There is a risk therefore that a cross-check of a scheme's residual land value against residual land values reported in FVAs for comparable schemes could have the unintended consequence of introducing a form of circularity which perpetuates the reporting of unrealistic residual land values within financial viability assessments. As such the NPPF should reflect standard valuation practice that residual value is cross-checked against comparable land transactions to help determine whether the inputs and assumptions and overall assessment are realistic, objective and in line with market practice.

In addition, we also strongly recommend that government sets out further measures to give greater confidence in viability assessments to public authorities as part of the statutory planning process. This should include measures proposed as part of the consultation on CIL relief including the use of statutory declarations and the monitoring of the viability assessment process through collection of a representative sample of assessments and decisions for auditing, to ensure that the information is submitted in line with national standards.

213) Do you agree that a 2.5 hectare threshold is appropriate? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Neither agree nor disagree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

In London given development densities it is unlikely the hectare threshold would be the factor that determines whether or not a scheme is a 'medium development'.

214) Do you agree that a unit threshold of between 10 and 49 units is appropriate? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

Partly agree.

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

We support the principle of having proportionate requirements for different scales of development, but it is important to retain some flexibility to set policy and information requirements for new 'medium' scale of development due to the potential cumulative impact of these developments

215) Do you foresee risks or operability issues anticipated with the proposed definition of medium development? *Yes/No.*

216) If so, please explain your answer and provide views on potential mitigations.

217) Do you have any views on whether the current small development exemption should be extended to cover a wider range of sites – indicatively to sites of fewer than 50 dwellings, or fewer than 120 bedspaces in purpose-built student accommodation?

a) Please provide your reasons.

218) If the exemption were to be extended, do you have any views on whether the development of 120 purpose-built student accommodation bedspaces is an appropriate equivalent to a development of 50 dwellings for the purposes of the levy exemption?

Yes agree.

a) Please provide your reasons.

Use of the HDT metric makes best sense. This represents a ratio of 2.4:1. it is worth noting that the London Plan uses a ratio of 2.5:1 to represent the contribution that student bedrooms make to meeting housing targets which would equate to 125 purpose-built student units.

219) If the exemption were to be extended, do you have any views on whether the exemption should be based solely on the existing metrics (dwellings/bedspaces) or whether there should also be an area threshold.

An area threshold could incentivise lower density development so is best avoided.

220) If you do have views on possible changes to the small developments levy exemption, please specify the potential impact of the possible change of the levy exemption on people with protected characteristics as defined in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

221) What do you consider to be the potential economic, competitive, and behavioural impacts of possible changes to the levy exemption? Please provide any evidence or examples to support your response.

222) Do you agree with the proposal to extend the Permission in Principle application route to medium development? *Strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree, strongly disagree.*

a) Please provide your reasons, particularly if you disagree.

223) Do you have views about whether there should be changes to the regulatory procedures for these applications, including whether there should be a requirement for a short planning statement?

We agree that there should be a short planning statement to aid the assessment of the eventual application.

224) Do you have any views on the impacts of the above proposals for you, or the group or business you represent and on anyone with a relevant protected characteristic?

a) If so, please explain who, which groups, including those with protected characteristics, or which businesses may be impacted and how.

225) Is there anything that could be done to mitigate any impact identified?

The NPPF aims to “contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions” and “avoid increased vulnerability and improve resilience to the effects of climate change” ([NPPF, 2025, pg. 27](#)).

Current building regulations do not deliver sufficiently high-quality construction and homes fit for residents, resulting in homes with condensation, mould, and overheating issues ([UK Parliament, 2025](#)).

London aims to go beyond this to enhance quality, however, in order to do so regional authorities, require the retention of powers to understand where skills must grow and develop and how construction standards can deliver more. We also need the ability to set standards across a broader range of aspects than the current NPPF allows. We would note that air quality, the costs of heating or mechanically cooling homes etc have unequal impacts across income and demographics and we need to be able to minimise and mitigate these.