

1. Overview of the Plan and Good Growth objectives

Draft London Plan (2026)

Key information

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Introduction

1.1 It is a legal requirement for the Mayor to publish a Spatial Development Strategy – the London Plan – and keep it under review. This is a new London Plan¹ which has been developed in line with relevant requirements² and has taken into account the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the government in December 2025.

1.2 The London Plan sets the Mayor's strategy for spatial development in Greater London, including the general policies that deal with development and use of land. It is the spatial expression of the Mayor's other strategies³ and other relevant policies.⁴ It deals with matters of strategic importance for Greater London and sets out an integrated framework for the development of London over the next 20 years, including requirements for homes, jobs, transport, and other infrastructure, as well as policies to ensure good quality development. The Plan will run from adoption to 2046-7. This enables the Mayor to plan properly ahead, and is reflective of the context in which major transport and other infrastructure takes many years to plan and deliver.

1.3 The Plan is made up of four parts comprising:

- **The introduction** (chapter 1) of the Plan, sets out the underpinning objectives, the Plan's approach to housing need with a high-level statement of justification and statement of regard to relevant legal requirements.
- **The main body** (chapters 2-6) of the plan includes five policy chapters. Each chapter starts with an overall justification of the policies within that chapter, (additional 'rationale' text is provided with each policy). This builds on the high-level statement of justification in the introduction, and together this constitutes the Reasoned Justification.⁵ Each policy also has implementation text (to aid understanding and application of policies). In a number of places the policies include boxes; for the avoidance of doubt, these should be taken to be part of the policy (have policy status), as should any tables or figures explicitly referenced in the policy or policy boxes.
- **Glossary and Table of Abbreviations**
- **Annexes.**

1.4 In preparing this draft Plan in accordance with legislation⁶ and associated regulations⁷, the Mayor has had regard to:

- the promotion of economic development and wealth creation, social development and the improvement of Greater London's environment (the Greater London Authority's (GLA's) principal purposes)
- promoting Londoners' health and reducing health inequality
- achieving sustainable development in the United Kingdom
- climate change and the consequences of climate change
- the desirability of promoting and encouraging the use of the Thames, particularly for passenger and freight transportation
- the resources available to implement the Mayor's strategies
- consistency with national policies and international treaty obligations notified to the Mayor by the government, without seeking to repeat national policy
- all relevant retained EU obligations
- the Mayor's other statutory obligations – including for the GLA to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998; and the public sector equality duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- regional planning guidance issued by the Secretary of State as relating to an area including or adjoining Greater London
- the national waste management plan
- the objectives of preventing major accidents and limiting the consequences of such accidents for health and the environment
- appropriate safety distances between residential and other areas; buildings and areas of public use; and major transport routes
- the protection of areas of natural sensitivity or interest
- such measures as are necessary in relation to existing establishments for the avoidance of risks to human health and the environment.

1.5 The location and nature of development across London has significant and cumulative impacts beyond individual borough boundaries. The London Plan plays an essential role in setting strategic planning policies so that city-wide positive outcomes are best realised and negative impacts (as far as possible) are minimised and mitigated.

1.6 London has inextricable links with its neighbouring regions, the South East and the East of England, and the Plan seeks to reflect this context as appropriate, noting however that the Mayor has no remit to plan beyond London's boundary.

Good Growth

1.7 The Mayor’s ambition for Good Growth – growth that drives economic productivity, is socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable – continues to underpin the Plan. The four objectives (shown in Table 1.1 together with the Good Growth sub-objectives), individually and collectively contribute to delivering Good Growth and addressing how London can respond most effectively to the challenges and opportunities the city faces.

Table 1.1 Good Growth objectives

Good Growth objective	Good Growth sub-objective	Reasoned justification
Making the best use of land	Meet development and transport needs through optimised land use to minimise loss of greenfield land and other valued features and ensure Londoners can keep moving in the most efficient way. Effectively manage competing land uses to ensure sufficiency in quantum and location for different needs. Ensure infrastructure better addresses existing needs and supports good growth in a timely, space-efficient, and cost-effective manner. Enable places to renew and evolve in a way that makes the most of place-based assets and opportunities and addresses both strategic and community needs.	Land is scarce and finite. Planning has a vital role to play in ensuring that its use is optimised to deliver against the range of requirements for housing and economic activities – as well as the green, transport social and utility infrastructure that is so important for Londoners. With every foregone opportunity to make better use of land, and to optimise densities, the pressures grow, adverse impacts accumulate, and key targets and outcomes become ever harder to achieve.

Good Growth objective	Good Growth sub-objective	Reasoned justification
Delivering the homes and neighbourhoods Londoners need	Address current housing shortfalls; and ensure enough good-quality homes for a growing and changing population can be brought forward.	
	Improve affordability and availability of suitable homes for all, in neighbourhoods that offer housing choice and bring diverse communities together.	Planning for the homes and neighbourhoods that London needs is a key priority for the London Plan. The lack of affordable and in some cases accessible housing is driving significant inequality; poor health outcomes and wider social inequality.
	Help to increase the rate, diversity and continuity of housing delivery.	In seeking to deliver more homes, their quality and that of wider neighbourhoods remains vitally important, particularly as London densifies.
	Ensure neighbourhoods provide safe, comfortable and convenient access to a range of facilities and services that address varied household and community needs.	

Good Growth objective	Good Growth sub-objective	Reasoned justification
Growing London's economy in a way that benefits all	Secure sufficient space and infrastructure to enable economic activity to grow. Support priority growth sectors and businesses to improve their productivity and to thrive. Support economic clusters to evolve, to better meet the diverse and changing needs of people and businesses; and to improve their resilience to economic and social change. Improve access to jobs, skills and opportunities for all. Contribute to an accelerated shift to a more sustainable economy, reducing local and global environmental harm.	Planning has a vital role to play in supporting the delivery of the London Growth Plan. As well as tackling the constraint of the lack of affordable housing, planning also needs to help unlock a range of premises for offices, lab space, industrial and creative workspace, experience, leisure and retail – as well as the growing demand for data centres. It also needs to ensure that land is available for critical infrastructure (such as transport and energy) and other needs. This needs to be done in a way that secures the benefits while minimising environmental and other impacts.

Good Growth objective	Good Growth sub-objective	Reasoned justification
Creating a greener, resilient and healthy city	Contribute to realising London's net zero- carbon ambition; and improve the resilience of people, buildings and places to climate change impacts. Conserve and enhance the natural environment to achieve environmental net gains; promote biodiversity and support recovery and renewal of natural systems. Support the creation of greener places that bring nature closer to people and a greener built environment that supports efficient resource use Contribute to a reduction in pollution and in exposure to pollution – supporting the ambition of achieving clean and healthy air and waterways. Enable improvements in mental and physical health; and a reduction in health inequalities.	The environment around us impacts on mental and physical health; and the resilience of people and places to climate change. Planning helps in setting clear expectations and in supporting delivery of built and natural environments that promote liveability; inclusion and equality of opportunity; resilience; net zero carbon; and improved health for all. As London grows and densifies it is ever more important to enhance access to green space and ensure that planning, place-based approaches and design create a greener, resource-efficient, resilient and healthy city.

1.8 The Plan is structured around these objectives and sets out the policies designed to support their delivery. The final chapter, “Place visions and place-based approaches”, sets out policies for particular locations or land-use designations; and draws together the associated approaches necessary to deliver the homes and jobs London needs in the most sustainable way.

The Plan's approach to addressing housing need

1.9 On past trends London is expected to add as many as 1 million more additional residents over the Plan period - growing to a population of over 10 million. A huge increase in housing delivery is needed to both accommodate future growth and address the chronic shortage of homes for existing residents. The government has set the housing need in London at 84,884 new homes per year.

1.10 This London Plan is necessarily more focused and directive than previous versions given this scale of challenge and the growing pressures on limited land to support not just housing but a range of other economic and functional activities. This comes in a context of significant viability challenges and, while the Plan looks beyond the immediate conditions and single economic cycles, it needs to reflect assumptions that are reasonable.

1.11 It must also avoid placing too high a burden on development in London. The Plan therefore seeks to strike a careful balance. It focuses on policies that are considered genuinely necessary to tackle the most pressing social and environmental challenges in our city (such as affordable housing, accessibility and heat risk) and to deliver development in a way that avoids unacceptable cumulative adverse impacts (by requiring densities to be optimised and focusing on sustainable locations). At the same time, the number of policies has been reduced, there has been significant alignment with the draft NPPF, reducing the detail in the draft plan and dovetailing with national requirements across a range of policy areas. In addition, processes have been streamlined and the Plan aims to set a consistent approach across London on a number of key matters such as energy-efficiency and market housing mix to make development simpler and more viable, while maintaining quality.

Setting the target

1.12 This Plan sets out how we can deliver 558,000 homes over the ten-year period up to 2037 and allocates targets on this basis to each plan-making authority in London.

1.13 This is based upon an assessment of what could be feasibly deliverable in the coming decade, taking into account viability and build-out rates, while analysing and optimising what more is possible through the lens of the Plan's new and ambitious policy framework – representing a step change in the approach to planning for housing in London. This includes policies to boost housing delivery through:

- optimising brownfield sites, building out Opportunity Areas and evolving town centres
- closer integration between land use and transport - leveraging all opportunities from existing and planned transport, using new tools & approaches
- making a step change in the approach to small sites (e.g. London-wide design code) and suburban densification (through the new Optimisation Framework)
- targeting some industrial land release in accessible locations for housing
- using the Green Belt to deliver major new settlements and ensure industrial provision, while increasing access to nature and deliver Biodiversity Net Gain.
- deploying a range of tools such as Local and Mayoral Development Orders to increase certainty in planning system and drive density and delivery in sustainable locations
- managing car parking to maximise land available for housing and other needs (and avoid unacceptable levels of congestion)
- tackling viability constraints through consideration of alternative delivery formats, and other development expectations, including quality place-making and more active public sector delivery role.

1.14 The Mayor is very conscious that this does not meet the government's housing need figure for London. More is possible beyond the initial ten-year period, and the Plan identifies opportunities and capacity to deliver homes up to and beyond the 850,000 - but this requires investment, measures and delivery rates that can only realistically and properly be put in place beyond the ten-year timeframe.

1.15 The Plan highlights further capacity to come on stream from across different sources of supply, including ongoing build-out of brownfield sites and small site delivery, unlocking of further capacity in Opportunity Areas, and further managed release of industrial and Green Belt land. The Mayor is putting in place the policies to unlock this future capacity, and will ensure that boroughs plan to bring it forward through their local plans.

1.16 Much of this potential is directly linked to enhanced connectivity, through new and improved public transport connections to enable it. This includes the West London Orbital to support over 25k homes; the Bakerloo Line Extension (BLE) to Hayes, to support more than 60k homes; further metroisation, for example South Central, supporting more than 30k homes, and a range of improvements to connections to locations in the Green Belt [which are not yet at design stage].

1.17 Alongside this needs to come the expansion and delivery of utilities, flood risk and social infrastructure, as well as regeneration and place-making investment. This will inevitably take time, not only in terms of the funding available but also its planning and delivery, with construction and supply-side constraints and impacts that must be managed by careful sequencing.

1.18 The Mayor is committed to doing all he can to help bring forward the homes that Londoners need as quickly as possible and is keen to work with central government, boroughs and other partners to tackle the issues and secure the necessary infrastructure. He will closely monitor the conditions and - as further locations become deliverable in a manner compatible with good growth - he will review the housing targets and increase them accordingly.

Managing adverse impacts

1.19 Thorough analysis makes clear it is not currently possible to go further than this on housing numbers in this next ten-year period. This would otherwise mean adopting unrealistic assumptions and significantly risking both unmanageable and unacceptable levels of adverse impacts as well as the longer-term trajectory for potential for higher housing delivery. While the Plan has identified capacity to meet the government housing figure, a range of important (and currently insurmountable) factors constrain the timescale for its delivery. These include:

- Denser, well-connected homes are significantly less environmentally harmful and the Plan has therefore focused first on currently sustainable locations. If homes are brought forward in a piecemeal way without good connections to public transport, and therefore at lower (car-dependent) densities, this would result in unmanageable congestion and associated environmental impacts. This is important not just in terms of the impacts themselves but because it would ultimately reduce the overall numbers of homes that could be delivered. London in this next period has only a certain scope for development before significant air quality impacts, including on protected sites. This scope would be used up quickly – and for a far lower number of homes overall - if we moved forward without the necessary transport infrastructure and mitigations.
- Furthermore, attempting such an unprecedented level of growth in a shorter timeframe would result in severe crowding on the existing transport network. The schemes highlighted above are critical to address this but so too are continued upgrades to existing public transport services across London (including London Underground, London Overground, DLR, trams, buses and national rail). The ten-year growth being planned for already assumes some pressures across the network even with continued upgrades, and there is a limit to how much more can be achieved in the same time period. Crossrail 2 will also ultimately be needed, as existing lines reach upgrade limits.

- The expansion of utilities, flood risk and social infrastructure needs aligning with housing delivery. This is vital not just to ensure basic needs are met, but also to provide for important resilience, address decades of underinvestment (which already have adversely impacted our environment, such as the state of London's waterways), support the move towards net zero and to continue to address health inequalities.
- London must also plan for other needs and land use requirements beyond housing supply. In order to support both the London Growth Plan and the National Industrial Strategy, the Plan seeks to provide sufficient land and supporting infrastructure to meet identified economic needs, including for growing uses such as data centres. Without this London would fail to deliver its economic potential, so vital for Londoners and nationally.
- London's housing capacity must also be net of greenspace needs. These are not just fundamental to the health and wellbeing of communities, but also to address environmental and resilience needs, including nature recovery, flood risk mitigation and urban cooling (noting the CCC report⁸ highlighted London as amongst the highest risk areas in the UK for heat deaths).
- It is also important to consider the consequences of the NPPF's Housing Delivery Test and 5-Year Housing Land Supply requirements. If targets are set in the London Plan beyond what is reasonably achievable for local planning authorities (LPAs), this would weaken the plan-led approach - and thereby undermine the very framework that is vital to actually enable the growth and address its impacts.

Beyond the Planning System

1.20 It is important to note how significant the required increases in levels and rates of delivery actually are. It has taken approximately 30 years to deliver the last 850,000 homes. In recent decades the peak of delivery has been around 45,000 homes per year. London has never developed at this rate before, and the closest that London got to these levels was in the 1930s with a major expansion of the tube network and the expansion of London's boundaries.

1.21 There are inevitably some constraints on build-out rates. Major multi-phase Opportunity Areas and Green Belt sites (which require whole new utility infrastructure) will take time. The Plan aims for ambitious delivery rates, supported by public sector intervention where appropriate, but there are limits to what can be assumed in the shorter to medium term, particularly from the current starting point.

1.22 The delivery of affordable housing is not only essential to meet Londoners' needs, but also to support housing delivery overall given its role in reducing exposure to absorption rate issues (i.e. how quickly homes can be sold in a market) which act as a significant limitation on the volume and speed of market housing delivery. Given the scale of housing need, significant increases in funding for affordable housing grant must be made available to bolster supply in both the 10 year and longer-term period. Whilst the Mayor has secured up to £11.7bn in grant funding through the London Social and Affordable Homes Programme 2026-36 (which is London's biggest and longest affordable housing funding settlement), this is still insufficient to meet the scale of housing delivery required.

1.23 Other mechanisms to enhance delivery will also be important, such as diversifying operators within the sector (e.g. small and medium-sized housebuilders and Build-to-Rent); increasing the level of institutional investment in London's housing market and new sources of finance to support housing delivery; tackling supply chain blockers (e.g. labour) and measures to support higher density housing.

1.24 A current lack of demand for market sale new-build housing is part of the reason schemes in London are stalling and slow to build out. Action is therefore also needed on progressive demand-side measures to help increase the numbers of people who are able to buy market homes, in turn creating the incentive for supply to speed up.

1.25 The Plan's supporting Viability Study⁹ shows that London is in an extremely challenging viability context due to e.g. increased build costs and interest rates. This is a particular limitation on shorter term delivery, even where appropriate land has been identified. This means that the growth required is not likely to be brought forward solely by the market at this time. New delivery models with greater public sector intervention will therefore be needed. The public sector requires the capacity to take a more interventionist role in both the housing and land markets to support housing delivery and create the conditions for investment. The Mayor has secured £324m in grant funding for the City Hall Developer Investment Fund to unblock stalled sites, and will deliver a further £1.5bn in low-interest loans for housing associations. Beyond this, delivery models such as greater land assembly, more pro-active intervention in de-risking sites and partnership approaches are required to unlock higher levels of housing.

Navigation links

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References

- [1](#)

Referred to in the Greater London Authority Act 1999 as a 'replacement plan'.

- [2](#)

Including s334(2) Greater London Authority Act 1999.

- [3](#)

Including those dealing with transport, environment, economic development, housing, culture, health and health inequalities.

- [4](#)

Including the [London Growth Plan](#).

- [5](#)

Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Spatial Development Strategy) Regulations 2000.

- [6](#)

This includes those matters specified in section 30, section 41, section 309 E-H and section 342(1) (a) of the GLA Act.

- [7](#)

Including Regulation 4 and 6 of the Town and Country Planning (London Spatial Development Strategy) Regulations 2000.

- [8](#)

[Climate Change Committee – ‘A well-adapted UK’.](#)

- [9](#)

London Plan Viability Study Phase 1 Report.