

## London Plan Written Representation

<b>Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)</b>	<b>Reference ID 2631</b>
<b>Matter Title – Form, Scope and Content of the Plan</b>	<b>Matter no. 7</b>
<b>Matter Question (s)</b> <b>M7.</b> Does the Plan set out a spatial development strategy in accordance with relevant legislation and national policy? In particular: a) Does the Plan deal only with matters which are of strategic importance to Greater London? b) Would the policies in the Plan provide an effective strategic framework for the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans in London? c) Does the Plan address detailed issues that would be more appropriately addressed in local plans and neighbourhood plans? d) Is the approach to planning in London described in paragraphs 0.0.21 and 0.0.22, particularly with regard to the relationship between the spatial development strategy and local plans, neighbourhood plans and the Borough's development management responsibilities, justified and consistent with national policy and legislation?	

## Summary of Government Response

1. In its response to the draft London Plan, the Government set out its concern that the draft London Plan is overly detailed and strays from the strategic remit that it is required to cover by legislation (GLA Act 1999) and into matters which are more local in nature.

## The Mayor's proposed Minor Modifications (MM) and response to the Preliminary Questions

2. The Government notes the Mayor's answers to the Panel's Preliminary Question PQ1. These set out that the Mayor's position is that all of his policies are strategic. Whilst most of the policies contained within the Plan address matters of Strategic importance, it is the detail into which these policies stray that gives rise to the most significant concern. Such detailed issues may be more appropriately dealt with in one of the following ways:
  - Supplementary Planning Guidance or Best Practice Guidance, of which the Mayor has previously produced a number of documents
  - Other Mayoral Strategies. The London Plan is the spatial expression of these other strategies but this does not make it necessary to repeat policy requirements which could more appropriately remain in those strategies
  - Local Development Plan Documents
  - Neighbourhood Plans
3. Whilst there will be an argument that having London wide approaches to some policies is simpler to understand for developers, communities and others involved in the planning process, there is also the risk that this could restrict the ability of local planning authorities and Neighbourhood Forums, in consultation with their local

communities, to provide more tailored local approaches that they consider are appropriate to their area. It will be useful for the Examination to explore whether the London Plan has struck the right balance in this respect.

4. Furthermore it is not clear that the regulatory impact of having such a detailed set of policies has been fully assessed. The GLA's Viability Assessment attempts to address this, and this will be covered under Matters M92-93 later in the Examination. However, it is worth noting at this stage that a range of concerns have been raised about the Viability Assessment and whilst individual policy requirements may seem relatively minor, the cumulative impact is unclear. Therefore there is a risk that the impact of a range of detailed policies will reduce the pipeline of development coming forward and therefore is an important element in the consideration of the overall Form, Scope and Content of the Plan.
5. The Government does not seek to provide a detailed analysis of how each policy might stray into detail but some examples might be:
  - Policy D4 Housing Quality and Standards, which in parts refers to built-in wardrobes, storage cupboards, and area sizes accurate down to hundredths of a square metre. The policy also notes that further guidance will also be produced.
  - Policies H3 and H8 both concern aspects of monitoring of housing delivery, and sit outside the Plan's Chapter 12 and notably succinct Policy M1 on Monitoring.
  - Policies D1, D2, H1, H2, H12 all include requirements for ensuring efficient use of land and optimising density/housing provision, this is on top of Policy D6 which specifically concerns optimising density.
  - Policy H18 which in parts refers to tenancy lengths, laundry and drying facilities, bedding and linen changing
  - There are six policies within the Plan dedicated to car parking and these rely on 4 tables that sit outside the policies to give the policies effect.
6. It is also notable that many policies contain a considerable amount of cross referencing to other policies. This has the effect of making what are already lengthy policies even longer. Given that the Plan should be read as a whole, and that this point is made at para 0.0.11, such cross referencing should be kept to a minimum.
7. Further, a small number of policies do not seem to serve a clear planning purpose. An example of such a policy would be Policy D9 Basements. This policy simply invites boroughs to establish policies to address the negative impacts of large scale basements, rather than give any specific strategic policy direction. Boroughs are already able to establish such policies within their Local Plans, provided relevant evidence exists, and it is therefore unclear what purpose this policy serves.
8. Policies GG1-GG6 appear difficult to translate into policies against which any specific development could be assessed. It is not entirely clear who should do what within the phrase "those involved in planning and development must...". It is notable that

previous iterations of the London Plan have contained similar statements to Policies GG1-6, but that these have previously been set out as the broad objectives of the London Plan, rather than policies.

9. A final point on the form of the Plan is that it is notable that some policies contain statements such as “Development proposals should...” or “In Development Plans boroughs should...”. In a lengthy document, such statements seem generally useful to help different users focus on the most applicable sections of the policies. However this approach is not always used and many policies do not make this distinction.
10. The MM’s at paras 0.0.22-23 that recognise the role of Neighbourhood Planning are welcomed as this was something of an omission from the original draft Plan.
11. However overall the MM appear to have added to the overall length of the Plan.

#### **Resolving the Government’s concern**

12. The London Plan could address the Government’s concerns by undertaking a review of each policy to:
  - remove unnecessary duplication and cross referencing
  - delete or move to Supplementary Planning Guidance, Best Practice Guidance or other Mayoral Strategies, any policies or aspects of policies which are of an overly detailed rather than strategic nature.
  - remove any policies or aspects of policies which are of a local nature and more appropriately left to be considered in Local Development Plan Documents or Neighbourhood Plans
13. Such changes should be able to be made without significantly affecting the overall strategy contained within the Plan, indeed such changes may assist in making the strategy clearer.

Word Count (excluding Question and title/references) = 997 words