

DRAFT NEW LONDON PLAN – EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC

Statement on Matter M88

Respondent Number	1684
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Town Centre Network

M88. Is the town centre network set out in the Plan justified and would it be effective in ensuring that identified needs for main town centre use developments are met in appropriate locations in accordance with national policy?

In particular:

a) Is the existing town centre network classification of (i) international, (ii) metropolitan, (iii) major and (iv) district centres illustrated on Figure 2.17 and set out in Table A1.1 justified?

b) Given the definitions of the classifications of town centres set out in Annex 1 and Figure 2.18, is the identification of centres other than “international” and “metropolitan” in the Plan justified and consistent with national policy relating to town centres and compliant with legislation relating to the purpose of a spatial development strategy?

c) Are the future potential changes to the town centre network illustrated on Figure A1.1 and set out in Table A1.1 justified?

d) Are the classifications, as set out in Table A1.1 and described in Annex 1, for (i) night-time economy functions, (ii) commercial growth potential, and (iii) residential growth potential justified?

National policy stresses the need to focus main town centre uses within town centres, but it is of necessity skeletal. The London Plan develops the spatial framework for providing shape to that policy. It defines a network and a hierarchy of town centres and a strategy for promoting their long-term vitality and viability, allowing them to grow and diversify. Over the last 20 years it has responded to rapid changes and provided a framework for this network.

The town centre network in the London Plan has been developed through successive plans, starting with LPAC’s Advice on Strategic Guidance for London (1993), RPG3: Strategic Guidance for London Planning Authorities (GOL, 1996) and successive London Plans in 2004, 2008, 2011, 2016 and the current draft London Plan.

The town centre network is kept under regular review (see SD7 B and para 2.7.3) and is supported by SPG: Town Centres (2014) and Town Centre Health Checks. Successive London Plans have provided, in Annex A1, a policy assessment for a wider range of major town centre uses, including offices, night-time economy and, in the latest draft, commercial growth potential, residential growth potential and whether it is within a strategic area for regeneration.

The London Plan policies on the Town Centres and High Streets (SD6), Town Centre Network (SD8) provide a strategic framework for London's town centres and the spatial interpretation of the NPPF for Greater London.

This aspect of the London Plan has proved the most robust section of the Plan over the last nearly 20 years.

M88 a) Yes – it provides a strong spatial framework for London and reflects the degree of scale, drawing power and range of town centre uses that these centres offer and the type of strategy that is appropriate for the growth and development. Policy SD8: Town Centre Network, Figure 2.17 and Annex 1 provide a strong, strategic framework for the London Plan's key spatial place-making policies: SD6, SD7 and SD8.

M88 b) Yes - Annex 1 provides a regularly reviewed list of London town centres, including an assessment of their capacity for growth and change. It is informed by the regular Health Checks and the assessment of which centres need to be added and which ones need promotion or demotion.

M88 c) Yes

M88 d) Yes These assessments help identify capacity to grow/change rather than London boroughs making unrealistic bids for their centres. This process of review provides a common framework.

Proposals:

SD6 A 1: Reinstate "infrastructure" after "social" in last line

Glossary: Add: Main town centre uses: Retail development; leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).