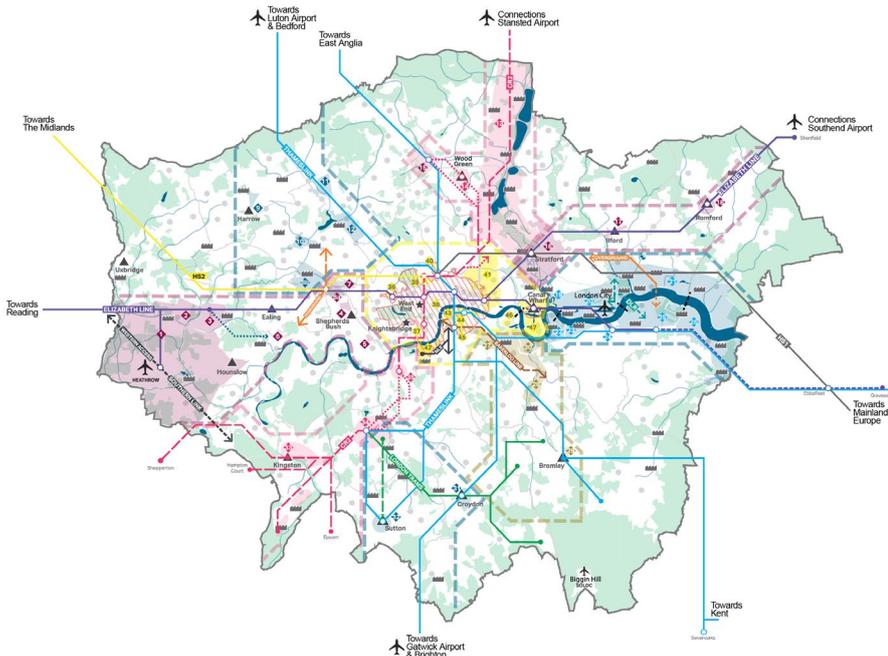


Growth is Good says draft London Plan

Following its release earlier today, the draft London Plan sets out a new framework for growth in the capital. Indigo has taken an initial look and provides its thoughts on some of the key themes that emerge.



“ Whilst the plan aims to make London a more affordable place to live, work and study, there remains concern that imposing future tariffs; specifically in relation to student accommodation and affordable workspace, will be counterproductive.

The Growth Agenda

- Through its ‘good growth’ agenda, the draft Plan stipulates growth on brownfield land within city limits, protecting Green Belt and MoL. The draft captures the GLA recent ambitious housing growth projections, an annual housing target requiring 66,000 new homes per year to 2041.
- The Mayor has reinforced the role of Opportunity Areas as well as surplus public sector land and industrial land (subject to review) in delivering growth and considerable reliance is placed on small sites (less than 0.25ha) with a requirement to deliver approximately 30% of the Mayor’s annual housing target.
- New Opportunity Areas have been identified, with new locations identified in outer London boroughs aligned with planned infrastructure including Cross Rail 2 and the Bakerloo Line. The Mayor continues to emphasise affordable housing in these locations; which will continue to pressurise housing delivery given contamination issues and the infrastructure burden for strategic brownfield sites.
- The disappearance of the density matrix marks the introduction of the ability to achieve optimum densities through high quality design, particularly in town centre

locations. The draft makes clear in policy, for the first time, that refusal should be directed where the potential of a brownfield site is not optimised.

- The new plan is keen to support for innovation in emerging residential sectors including purpose built student accommodation, build to rent, co-living and specialist accommodation for older people. The ability of these products to contribute to the overall housing targets is highlighted. There is also a strong focus on high density mixed use development on appropriate sites.

Affordable London

- The draft London Plan translates the Mayor's Affordable Housing and Viability SPG into strategic planning policy. The Mayor reaffirms a 50% plan target and threshold approach set out in the previously released Affordable Housing and Viability SPG; which sets out that no viability information is required if 35% is provided. Significant demands are placed on GLA partners, public sector land and affordable housing providers to deliver developments with 50-60% of floorspace as affordable.
- It is not yet clear how some of the viability policies within the Plan have been designed to interact – something that will no doubt be considered further over

Employment Land

- The Mayor reinforces the importance of Strategic Industrial Land (SIL) and plans for intensification, co-location and substitution of land for industry, logistics and services to support London's economic function. The Mayor has previously expressed serious concern over the rate of release; estimated at over four times London Plan levels. The Mayor has therefore identified potential for limited SIL release in three boroughs only; the London Boroughs of Newham, Havering and Barking and Dagenham.

the consultation period. Is the draft actually saying that viability assessments are not supported? This is clearly a bold move by the Mayor to limit viability delays.

- Whilst the plan aims to make London a more affordable place to live, work and study, there remains concern that imposing future tariffs; specifically in relation to student accommodation and affordable workspace, will be counterproductive. Developers are exposed to significant costs and development risks in a politically and economically fragile environment. Additional burdens will render development unviable and result in a shortage of supply and increased costs for end users.

- In parallel, the Mayor is advocating stronger protection for Locally Significant Industrial Sites (LSIS). The Plan states co-location with residential and other uses should only be considered as part of a plan-led process and not through ad hoc planning applications. This will inevitably introduce delay in Local Plan adoption and schemes coming forward. Blanket protection of LSIS is a crude tool and should be dealt with at local level based on individual site circumstances and comprehensive quantitative and qualitative assessment.

Indigo will be analysing the plan in further detail over the coming weeks. If you would like to know more about the draft London Plan and the consultation exercise that will be undertaken by the Mayor of London, please contact us.



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