

NOTES ON CITY PLAN

Spatial strategy – key points

Most commercial growth is to be absorbed by the West End.

- Much of this growth is expected to be achieved by intensifying sites - building 'up' and 'out'
- Between 2019 and 2040, Westminster's growth targets are to deliver 75,000 new jobs and 29,900 new homes - 50% increase on the draft London Plan

Spatial Development Priorities: West End Retail and Leisure Special Policy Area (WERLSPA) and Tottenham Court Road Opportunity Area created. **Leicester Square BID** area will be included in the WERLSPA

- Theatre and cinemas must be protected
- Hotels and conference centres will be protected

Housing – key points

The plan seeks to step up housing delivery, identifying residential as the priority use across Westminster, with a target of 30,000 homes by 2040. No viability evidence has yet been made available.

- Target of 1,495 dwellings p.a. (in excess of 1,010 draft London Plan target and 1,068 adopted City Plan target)
- 35% of all new homes to be affordable (40% social rented and 60% intermediate split). All schemes (exceeding 0.5ha, 10 dwellings, or 1,000sqm) to deliver on site. Off site will only be in exceptional circumstances (the draft sets out more rigorous criteria than the current City Plan). Payment in lieu is only accepted 'as a last resort'
- Hotel and Office extensions within the Central Activities Zone (CAZ) over 1,000 sqm (net uplift is presumed but not confirmed) will provide 35% of the floorspace as affordable housing on site. For hotels and office extensions of 750- 999sqm, a financial contribution will be required

Economy and employment – key points

Commercial growth is focussed on the West End, Paddington and Victoria. The draft policies seek to promote office development and cease the significant losses to residential and hotel uses within the CAZ.

However, at the same time the draft introduces significant requirements on much commercial development to deliver affordable housing.

- Loss of offices in the CAZ is resisted specifically for hotels and residential
- However, hotel and office extensions within the CAZ over **1,000 sqm will provide 35%** of the floorspace as affordable housing on site. On extensions of 750-999sqm, a payment will be required
- AI retail remains a priority but this needs to be supported by complementary town centre uses
- Residential use within the CAZ on upper floors is supported across all parts of town centre hierarchy

- New food and drink uses will be permitted where they are of a type and size appropriate to a location
- Pubs are protected and 18 months marketing is required where their loss is proposed
- A new Soho Special Policy Area is proposed to support Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs), specialist retailing, housing for those working in the area, food/drink/entertainment and live music venues
 - New hotels above 2,500 sqm will not be permitted. The document suggests that the amalgamation of office units behind retained facades will not be permitted other than Oxford St, Charing Cross Rd and Shaftesbury Avenue

Special Policy Area (SPA): Mayfair and St James's

A. Development in the Mayfair and St. James's SPA will complement, support and enhance its unique character and status in accommodating prestigious and renowned buildings and functions.

B. Additional floorspace for use as art galleries is supported in principle. The net loss of gallery floorspace from the SPA will be resisted.

C. The council will work with landowners and others to protect existing niche luxury and specialist AI retail floorspace. Additional retail of this type that complements the area's unique character is supported.

Food, drink and entertainment uses

Venues with later opening hours, will be likely to have disproportionately larger impacts on surrounding areas, these impacts will be felt more strongly within smaller commercial areas, given their role and function. The type of use, proposed as well as the concentration of uses in proximity, will also be taken into account. Applicants will be required to produce a management plan setting out the steps identified as a result of the assessment.

Connections

Prioritising pedestrian movement is an important aim and much of the Oxford Street District Strategy focusses on this. The benefits of freight consolidation, joint servicing arrangements and a streamlined bus service are all aimed at enhancing the walking experience.

- Car parking remains a requirement for residential uses albeit with a more flexible approach to delivery
- The council will strongly support consolidated facilities for freight, servicing and deliveries in new development
- Facilitating the use of cycling and electric vehicles is a priority and new development will need to achieve this
- Community facilities, both private and public continue to be protected unless the loss is robustly justified

Environment

The environment policies look to increase Westminster's resilience to climate change, and to better manage high levels of air pollution. The draft London Plan approach is brought into Westminster City Council's emerging targets and requirements.

- Major Development is required to be Air Quality Neutral (AQN) across the City, and Air Quality Positive (AQP) in Opportunity Areas, Regeneration Areas and Housing Renewal Areas
- Air Quality Assessments are to be submitted with major applications to cover both construction and operational phases
- 35% CO2 emissions reductions are to be achieved on site, and any further reductions needed to achieve zero carbon are to be offset through off-site measures/ financial payment. An SPG is to be prepared to detail the requirements for carbon offsetting, including the formula for calculating financial payments
- The Flood Risk Policy has largely been aligned with the National Planning Policy Framework and there is no longer the reference to highly vulnerable uses not being allowed with Zone 3
- The current Code of Construction Practice will continue to provide the framework for construction management

Design

Exemplary standards of high quality, sustainable and inclusive urban design and architecture befitting Westminster's world-class status is expected. New and of note, is a focus on 'people centred' design (accessible, reduces crime or anti-social behaviour and secures amenity).

In terms of density, height and site optimisation, the new plan is encouraging in its ambitions and is more specific about appropriate heights in the opportunity areas. That ambition is balanced with the protection of the historic environment and local residents' amenity.

- Policies seek to 'optimise' density and ensure the most efficient use of land
- Development should 'maximise' the opportunity to align proposals with the surrounding context
- Development above the prevailing height will need to demonstrate that it is the only way to use the site efficiently
- Protecting the historic environment remains a priority
- Upward extensions appear to be more readily welcomed both for commercial and residential buildings but the stated caveats mean that subjective interpretation will still be required
- Development in strategic views and protected vistas should seek to enhance established views and remedy past damage

Security measures in high-risk development and the public realm

A. Development will provide an integrated approach to security of the site including buildings and any associated public or private spaces.

B. Development and / or public realm improvement proposals will be required to incorporate appropriate counter-terrorism measures advised by the Metropolitan Police and / or the council. Where appropriate, the retrofitting of existing buildings and spaces may be required.

C. All security measures will be designed and implemented to take account of the functionality of the area and the needs of its users, and will be sensitively designed to respect the surrounding context and public realm.