

Fact sheet for planning levels

Planning level	Type of plan					
City Region / Greater London	Spatial Development Strategy					
National level	National Planning Framework, Planning Practice Guidance, Technical Guidance to the NPPF	National policy that must be taken account of in all lower level plans	Localism Act 2011; Housing and Planning Act 2016	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government	Binding for plans produced at lower levels	N/A
City regional level	Spatial Development Strategy	Written policies for land use and spatial development, alongside indicative key diagram	Greater London Authority Act 1999; Combined Authorities (Spatial Development Strategy) Regulations 2016	Greater London Authority; Combined Authorities	Binding for Local Plans	N/A
Supra-local level	Joint Strategic Plan	Written policies for land use and spatial development, alongside indicative key diagram	Localism Act 2011	Local Authorities	Binding for Local Plans	N/A

Source: Greater London Authority (2021) The London Plan: The Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. London: GLA, p. 28

Facts: London Plan 2021

Legal basis

- Greater London Authority Act 1999 (as amended) [<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1999/29/contents>]
- The Town and Country Planning (London Spatial Development Strategy) Regulations 2000 [<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2000/1491/contents>]
- (Elsewhere Spatial Development Strategies are prepared under the respective Combined Authority Order which refers to the relevant sections of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, and the Combined Authorities (Spatial Development Strategy) Regulations 2018 [<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/827/>])

Competences

- Section 334 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 determines that the Mayor of London should prepare a spatial development strategy.

Binding force

- Local Plans need to be 'in general conformity' with the development strategy ('London Plan') and the Mayor of London is a statutory consultee.

Tasks and content

- The spatial development strategy or London Plan sets out strategic planning policies for London. It sets the context for both the borough's local development plans and the Mayor's other policies and strategies. Importantly, it must only deal with matters of strategic importance for London.

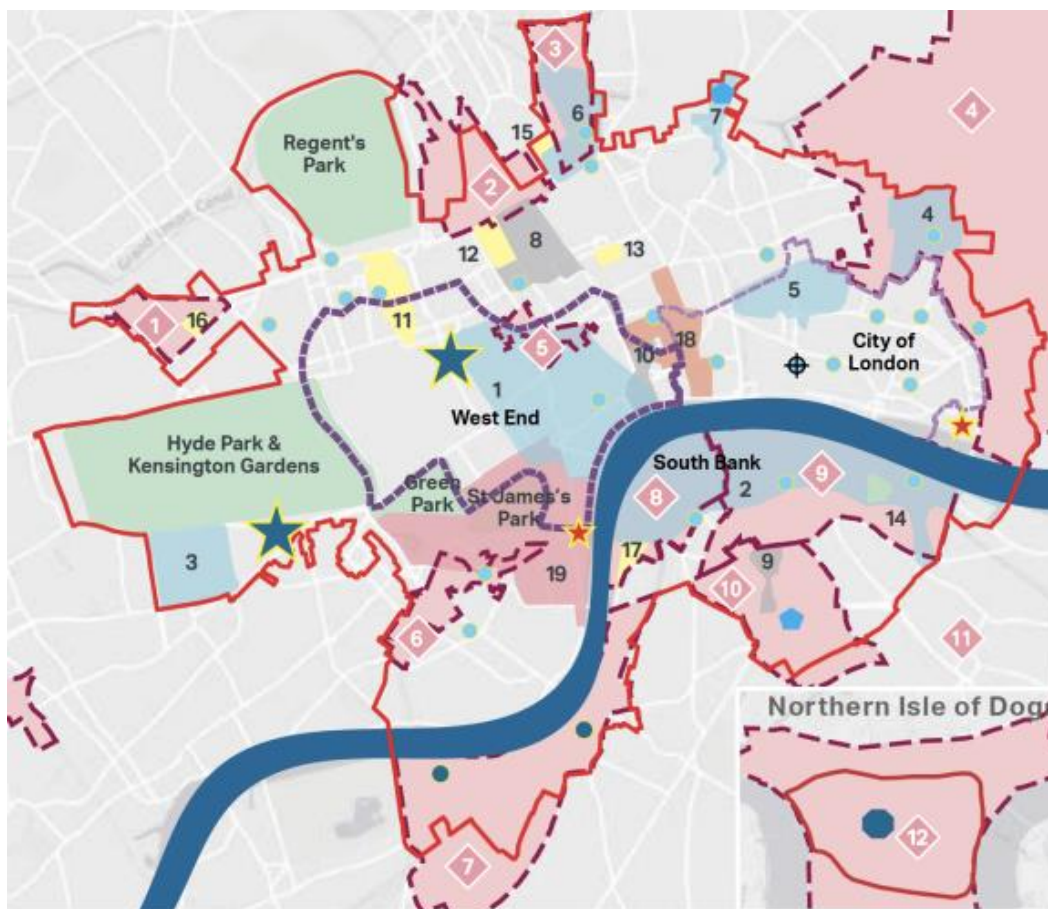
Process, duration, participation

- The process started with the publication of the Mayor's manifesto 'A City for all Londoners', which was then put out for consultation to inform the formulation of the plan. In 2017 the draft London Plan was launched and consulted on for three months. A revised version of the plan was then submitted for the Examination in Public which took place in 2019 and resulted in further changes. The Planning Inspectors made a number of recommendations in their final report, not all of which were accepted by the Mayor. The Secretary of State issued a formal direction to the Mayor to modify the plan accordingly. The plan was officially published in March 2021, nearly five years or a full electoral cycle after the Mayor was elected.

Duration of validity

- The time frame of the London Plan is 2019–2041. There is a duty to review the spatial development strategy; this would be triggered by a significantly different demographic or economic context or divergence from the Key Performance Indicators identified in the plan.

Details of the plan



The Central Activities Zone and the Northern Isle of Dogs

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|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| ○ CAZ and NIOD | Specialist Clusters | Source: GLA Planning |
| ⊕ St Paul's Cathedral | ● Academic | Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2019) |
| ⊕ World Heritage Site | ● Arts, culture and entertainment | |
| ★ Royal Parks | ● Health | |
| ⊕ City of London | ● Legal | |
| ⊕ West End | ● State | |
| ■ River Thames | | |
| ○ Opportunity Area | | |

Diagram for Central Activity Zone (CAZ).

Source: Greater London Authority (2021) The London Plan: The Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. London: GLA, p. 77

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Characteristics

Initial situation

The Wales Spatial Plan from 2004 was not part of the statutory development plan framework and therefore only had a coordinating function. It was updated in 2008, but had only limited influence on the planning system.

Particularities of the procedure and/or contents

The process became drawn out because the Secretary of State used his powers to make directions to revise the plan twice. Several policies became diluted, such as a blanket ban on development on green belt and metropolitan open land, densification, tall buildings, and maximum residential parking standards. In order to get the plan approved, the Mayor had to make some major concessions, which resulted in the approval of the plan just in time for the mayoral elections. The Secretary of State finally approved the plan, but not without highlighting his powers to review or alter the plan should it fail to deliver the housing numbers.

Notes and links

<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/new-london-plan/london-plan-2021>

Accessed 29 March 2022