



Courtesy: Alan Smithies

GLA Briefing – London Plan Guidance

08/03/2022

- **Overview** – The GLA are consulting on four new pieces of London Plan Guidance relating to design and housing quality. This is the second consultation on this guidance, which builds on the Good Quality Homes for All Londoners Guidance which was consulted on between 13 October 2020 and 15 January 2021. The GLA are consulting again because there have been quite significant changes made to the guidance including making it into four separate LPG.
- **The GLA public consultation is taking place between the 11th February and 27th March 2022** and more information on the documents and how to submit your feedback to the consultation can be found [here](#).
- **Characterisation and Growth Strategy LPG** – This guidance sets out a three-stage process to survey and analyse the characteristics of areas and use this to identify the character of different areas and define a tall building definition. This is then used to support a growth strategy that takes account of areas' capacity for change and capacity for growth, including areas where tall buildings might be appropriate and the heights in these locations.
- **Optimising site capacity: A design led approach LPG** – This guidance sets out a five-stage process for implementing the design-led approach to plan-making. For residential sites, this process also includes working out the indicative site capacity of specific sites using the site parameters set by the boroughs during the process. The sketch-up tool included in the guidance can help support both quality and policy compliance.
- **Small site design codes LPG** – This guidance relates to London Plan Policy H2 Small sites (parts B2 – 4). It sets out a process to analyse the opportunities for small site development and prepare and implement area-wide design codes. It can be used for plan-making and directly informing planning applications and covers relevant aspects of the National Model Design Code published in 2021 by national government.

- **Housing design standards LPG** – This guidance relates to London Plan Policy D6 Housing quality and standards and provides a set of housing standards. These form a checklist of London Plan policy requirements for new build, change of use and housing conversions all in one place. The document cross references back to the relevant policy in the London Plan and guidance about the type of development different standards apply to.
- **Area-wide policies** as a term can also refer to borough wide policies, and guidance is not only for boroughs but neighbourhood planning too. The evidence-based characterisation studies can be used for area policies for special character areas within the boroughs.
- **Character Types** are ‘non geographical’, they can appear in multiple different locations of the borough, whereas **Character Areas** are defined places and based on locally recognisable boundaries or hard boundaries, such as a river or open green space.
- **Area-wide design codes and guidance** have provisions for encouraging boroughs to identify small sites in which they might want to encourage development. Where a site is particularly unique or large it might be appropriate to do a site-specific design code or set of parameters, which would be dealt with through the “Optimising site capacity: A design led approach LPG”.

Feedback:

- **Flexibility and place sensitivity** is important within the part of the guidance which states that “Areas should be categorised into one of these three areas of change: conserve, enhance, transform and their capacity for growth assessed”. The guidance alongside the London Historic Character Thesaurus (LHCT) is set out to streamline the process and build consistency across London.
- **Access to resources**, such as open-source data, is needed, although if the Character Assessment is completed systematically, it can help minimise resources in the longer term as historical data will still apply. There is also a concern that the sequencing of the assessment steps may be too slow to cover real time change in governance/policy and therefore become out of date.
- **Human character** could be made more explicit in the Characterisation and Growth Strategy LPG. While the Appendix 3 of the document sets out some criteria, the human character needs to be captured more prominently, to clearly inform the design vision.
- **Lack of or insufficiently developed infrastructure** may prevent certain boroughs from meeting housing and green open space targets.



Courtesy: Alan Smithies

Speakers:

Alan Smithies, Senior Strategic Partner, GLA

Elliot Kemp, Policy Team Leader, GLA

Facilitators:

Marcus Wilshere, Director, The Collaborative City

Jane Briginshaw, Director, Design England

Hana Loftus, Director, HAT Projects

Attendees: 61