

Westminster Local Development Scheme 2021 – 2024

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1. Introduction

This Local Development Scheme sets out the council’s work programme for the documents that form its planning policy framework. It has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and regulations 7 and 8 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. It replaces the previous version of the Local Development Scheme, published in March 2020.

Within London, the Statutory Development Plan consists of three tiers. At the regional level, the Mayor of London produces the spatial strategy for all of London (known as the London Plan), which provides strategic direction that borough’s local planning policies should be in ‘general conformity’ with. At a local authority level, boroughs produce Local Plans to further guide development in their areas. At a neighbourhood level, locally designated Neighbourhood Forums produce Neighbourhood Plans, which focus on issues of a specific local interest. In Westminster, the Statutory Development Plan therefore currently consists of:

- The London Plan (adopted March 2021);
- The Westminster City Plan (adopted April 2021); and
- ‘Made’ Neighbourhood Plans (currently Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan, Mayfair Neighbourhood Plan, Soho Neighbourhood Plan, and Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Plan).

The remainder of this document sets out details of what additional documents the council now intends to produce as part of its planning policy framework. It includes details of documents that will have Development Plan status (known as Development Plan Documents), and other documents that will impact the planning process – such as Supplementary Planning Documents, the Statement of Community Involvement, and a review of the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.

2. Document profiles

Title	Site Allocations Plan
Role and content	The Site Allocations Plan is a Development Plan Document that will identify key development sites that can make a substantial contribution towards the growth targets set in the Westminster City Plan. It will provide site specific site guidance and requirements for individual sites, to ensure development comes forward in a manner that ensures each site fulfils its potential and properly responds to context.
Conformity	Consistent with the NPPF and strategic policies in the City Plan, general conformity with the London Plan.
Indicative timetable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call for sites [January 2022] • Regulation 18 Preferred Options published for consultation [Autumn 2022] • Regulation 19 Draft Plan published for consultation [Spring/ Summer 2023] • Submission to Secretary of State [Autumn 2023] • Examination [Autumn 2023/ Spring 2024] • Adoption – [Autumn 2024]
Arrangements for review	The development of sites identified within the Site Allocations Plan will be monitored through future Authority Monitoring Reports. If this identifies that sites are not coming forward for development in the manner set out in the Plan, this may necessitate a review.

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Title	Statement of Community Involvement
Role and content	Stakeholder involvement is a critical part of the planning process. The Statement of Community Involvement was last reviewed in 2014, and therefore needs to be updated to take account of additional requirements as determined by new Neighbourhood Planning Regulations and the PAS Review of Westminster’s Planning Service.
Conformity	Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and subsequent regulations.
Indicative timetable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence gathering/ preparation [Winter 2021] • Consultation and engagement [Spring 2022] • Adoption [Summer 2022]
Arrangements for review	To be reviewed as appropriate, and in response to any relevant changes in planning legislation.

Title	Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)
Role and content	<p>A number of new SPDs are required to provide additional guidance to support the implementation of Strategic Policies in the City Plan, and replace dated existing guidance. It is envisaged that the suite of new SPDs will include guidance on the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment; • Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing; • Public Realm; • Design; and • Heritage.
Conformity	Consistent with, and to supplement, policies in City Plan.
Indicative timetable	<p>The phased production and consultation on individual SPDs will be necessary, with priority given to the Environment SPD, the Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD and the Public Realm SPD.</p> <p>The Environment SPD is being finalised in response to comments received during consultation on a draft version in the summer of 2021, and formal adoption is anticipated at the end of 2021/ early 2022. Consultation on a Draft Affordable Housing and Planning Obligations SPD will then follow in early 2022, and a Draft Public Realm SPD in Spring 2022.</p>
Arrangements for review	These documents will be monitored through the Authority Monitoring Report, with further reviews or additional SPDs produced as and when required.

Title	Authority Monitoring Report
Role and content	To monitor the effectiveness of Development Plan policies in delivering their intended aims to help identify if any policies need reviewing, and to monitor progress on plan production against the timescales set out in this Local Development Scheme.
Conformity	Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and subsequent regulations.
Indicative timetable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence gathering/ preparation [Autumn each year] • Publication [December each year]
Arrangements for review	To be produced and published annually to ensure effective regular monitoring of plan production and policy implementation.

Other Workstreams

Neighbourhood Planning

The council has a statutory obligation to provide advice and support to local communities preparing Neighbourhood Plans through the Localism Act (2011) – plans that once formally ‘made’, have Development Plan Status.

Westminster has 21 designated neighbourhood areas – more than any other London Borough. Of these, 15 Neighbourhood Forums and one Community Council have responsibility for preparing Neighbourhood Plans in their areas. As these plans are not prepared by the council (and their timetables depend on community progress) they have not been included in the document profiles section of this Local Development Scheme.

To date four neighbourhood plans have been ‘made’ (Knightsbridge, Mayfair, Soho and Fitzrovia West), whilst Queens Park Neighbourhood Plan has also passed examination and referendum, and examination of the Pimlico Neighbourhood Plan is currently underway. Several other plans are also now in development, meaning supporting neighbourhood planning will continue to be a significant workstream alongside the production of council led policy documents.

CIL Charging Schedule

The council’s CIL Charging Schedule details the types of development required to pay the council a levy to fund investment in infrastructure to support development, and cost per square metre of development. These charges are in addition to the Mayor of London’s Community Infrastructure Levy, which is used to fund Crossrail.

Westminster’s current CIL Charging Schedule began being implemented in 2016, and the charges within it have been used to inform recent assessments of development viability as part of the examination of the City Plan. There is current uncertainty over the extent to which the government’s approach to funding new infrastructure may be subject to substantial reform as originally set out in the Planning White Paper: Planning for the Future, and subsequently paused following a change of Secretary of State. As such, an

immediate review of the council's CIL charge is not currently planned. Instead, existing charges will continue to be applied to new developments and incorporated into viability testing of planning policy documents referred to in section 2 above – including the Site Allocations Document, and the Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD. A full review of the council's approach to CIL charges will be kept on hold until the outcome of proposed planning reforms on infrastructure funding is clear.

Conservation Area Appraisals

Westminster has an unrivalled heritage value, reflected by 78% of the City being subject to Conservation Area designations. In total, 56 Conservation Areas exist, and 49 of these have an existing Conservation Area Appraisal. While many of these Appraisals have long been in existence, they are still considered fit for purpose given their focus on the historic built environment.

Alongside adopted City Plan policies, the forthcoming Site Allocations Document and new SPDs on Design and Heritage will help ensure that where new development comes forward, it properly responds to context and heritage value. Beyond the priority documents listed in section 2 above, the production of new Conservation Area Appraisals will therefore be subject to resource constraints, with priority given to those Conservation Areas that do not benefit from an existing Appraisal. The role of new or updated appraisals in informing future Site Allocations, may also justify their prioritisation.

3. Project management

Governance and Resources

Documents listed in this Local Development Scheme are governed by a cross-directorate officer group. This includes the Executive Directors of Innovation and Change and Growth Planning and Housing, and the Directors of Policy and Projects, and Place Shaping and Town Planning.

The Governance Group has regular meetings with the Cabinet Member for Business, Licensing and Planning, in an advisory capacity. These meetings serve to inform the Cabinet Member and provide context from which decisions can be made.

In addition to Cabinet Member approval, final adoption of the documents with Development Plan status will require adoption at Full Council.

The City Planning Policy team has the primary responsibility for preparing the documents listed within this Local Development Scheme. The team currently consist of:

- 1 x Head of City Planning Policy (currently on maternity leave)
- 1 x City Planning Policy Team Leader
- 4 x Principal Policy Officers (FTE = 3.6 posts)
- 3 x Policy Officers (FTE = 2.8 posts)
- 1 x Policy and Projects Support Officer (FTE = 0.8 posts)

Support is also provided by the Innovation and Change Directorate within which the team sits, and from other Directorates including Growth, Planning and Housing and Environment and City Management.

Risk Assessment

The indicative timetables in this document are considered realistic. Each has taken into account staff resources, stakeholder involvement, external involvement from the Planning

Inspectorate, and the council's own decision-making process. The Local Development Scheme and the timings within it will be reviewed and updated at least every three years.

Monitoring and Review

Progress on the preparation and successful implementation of the documents listed in this Local Development Scheme will be monitored annually through the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR).

Performance reports will take into account whether the proposed timescales presented in this document have been met, and assess the extent updated policies are achieving their intended goals. The outcomes of this monitoring may trigger a need to update the work programme set out in this Local Development Scheme; highlighting if adopted policies need revising, or new supplementary guidance to adopted policies is required. The government's planning reform agenda may also necessitate a revision to this work programme once the details of this become clear.