Newsteer

Draft London Plan consultation - a growth-focused reset for London

The Mayor published the Draft London Plan 2026 on 16 July 2026, with consultation running until 5pm on 15 October 2026. The document is intended to be a more streamlined, delivery-focused plan than the 2021 London Plan, with two clear priorities: maximising affordable housing delivery and supporting economic growth, while maintaining London's climate, design and place-making ambitions.

Executive summary

The Draft Plan is best read as a pragmatic 'pro-growth' document. It does not simply chase theoretical capacity; it seeks to identify where growth can realistically be delivered, where infrastructure is needed to unlock it, and how London can remain internationally competitive while addressing its housing crisis.

The headline housing target is 558,000 new homes between 2027 and 2036, with the Plan acknowledging that the Government's higher housing need figure of around 850,000 homes will require longer-term infrastructure investment, stronger market conditions and greater affordable housing support.

Overall strategy

The Draft London Plan sets a positive and ambitious spatial strategy for London over the next two decades. Its central proposition is that London must continue to grow, but that growth must be better directed, more deliverable and more closely linked to transport, infrastructure, employment and place-making. The Plan is framed around "Good Growth", but with a clearer emphasis than the current Plan on implementation, investor confidence and economic competitiveness.

A key change is the Plan's attempt to balance ambition with viability. City Hall has positioned the 558,000-home target as the most ambitious target that can credibly be delivered in the short to medium term, rather than a retreat from growth. The Plan expressly recognises the difficult market conditions facing housebuilding, including high interest rates, construction cost inflation, skills shortages, and the legacy of Brexit and the pandemic.

Spatially, the growth strategy continues to prioritise Opportunity Areas, town centres, well-connected urban land and brownfield locations, but it is more open than previous London Plans to difficult trade-offs. This includes a selective and plan-led approach to Green Belt release where brownfield land alone cannot meet need, and a more active approach to optimising density around public transport and town centre locations.

Role of Opportunity Areas

Opportunity Areas remain one of the main delivery mechanisms for London's growth. The Draft Plan refers to 'Brownfield First Opportunity Areas' as places within the existing urban area where significant housing and/or economic potential has already been identified, but where further intervention, infrastructure or coordination is needed to bring that capacity forward.

Their role is threefold:

- **To focus growth in sustainable locations** - Opportunity Areas help direct new homes, jobs and infrastructure to places where growth can be planned comprehensively rather than delivered through isolated or piecemeal development.
- **To prioritise brownfield land** - they support the Plan's brownfield-first strategy by identifying urban locations where underused land can be intensified before greater reliance is placed on Green Belt or other more sensitive sites.
- **To align growth with infrastructure** - many Opportunity Areas require transport, utilities, social infrastructure and public realm investment to unlock their full potential. The Draft Plan's wider spatial strategy links growth to sustainable transport and infrastructure capacity.

For developers, Opportunity Areas remain important because they are likely to be among the most policy-supported locations for higher-density mixed-use development, including residential, offices, retail, leisure, social infrastructure and, in some cases, industrial intensification or co-location. They also provide a useful policy hook for promoting more ambitious schemes where development can help deliver wider regeneration objectives.

Housing

Housing growth target

The Draft Plan increases London's overall housing target from 522,870 homes under the adopted 2021 London Plan to 558,451 homes over the next ten-year period, representing an uplift of approximately 6.8%. However, the Plan continues to fall materially short of the Government's assessed housing need (848,840 homes over ten years), creating a potential challenge at Examination and raising questions around soundness, deliverability and the robustness of borough-level housing targets.

A central theme of the Draft Plan is that housing delivery is increasingly dependent on infrastructure investment and delivery. While significant capacity has been identified, much of this relies on future transport improvements, utility upgrades and other infrastructure interventions that are not yet fully funded, committed or delivered. This creates a clear implementation risk, particularly for locations where growth is dependent on infrastructure sequencing.

The Draft Plan also acknowledges London's exceptionally challenging viability context. This is likely to increase tensions between housing delivery ambitions, affordable housing requirements, infrastructure contributions and wider planning obligations, particularly on more marginal development sites.

Notwithstanding, and from a strategic perspective, the Draft Plan provides stronger policy support for optimising sustainable sites and, in selected locations, considering targeted land-use change to support housing delivery. However, successful implementation will require careful balancing of housing growth against infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, employment needs, green infrastructure and broader place-making requirements.

Perhaps the most significant headlines are not the overall increase in housing numbers or demonstrable shortfall against government assessed need, but the substantial redistribution of housing targets across London. The new capacity-led methodology, including the explicit identification of both brownfield and greenfield capacity, results in a marked shift of housing delivery expectations towards a number of outer London boroughs.

Borough / Authority	2021 target	Draft 2026 target	Change	% change	Read across
Hillingdon	10,830	24,030	+13,200	+121.9%	Very significant uplift, driven by a large greenfield component of 14,750 homes.
Ealing	21,570	32,054	+10,484	+48.6%	Major brownfield-led increase.
Barnet	23,640	32,730	+9,090	+38.5%	Significant uplift, including 7,000 greenfield homes.
Havering	12,850	21,712	+8,862	+69.0%	Major increase, with the largest greenfield component after Hillingdon: 12,060 homes.
Enfield	12,460	21,062	+8,602	+69.0%	Large uplift, including 7,000 greenfield homes.
Wandsworth	19,500	26,609	+7,109	+36.5%	Significant brownfield-led uplift.
Waltham Forest	12,640	19,070	+6,430	+50.9%	Major brownfield-led increase.
Merton	9,180	14,272	+5,092	+55.5%	Material increase, brownfield-led.
Southwark	23,550	27,799	+4,249	+18.0%	Already high target, now increased further.
Harrow	8,020	12,010	+3,990	+49.8%	Uplift includes 3,150 greenfield homes.

Table 1 - Boroughs with the largest increase in housing target ('highest uplift')

The greatest increases are concentrated in outer London boroughs where the Draft Plan identifies additional greenfield opportunities and/or significant brownfield optimisation potential. Hillingdon is the most notable outlier, with its housing target more than doubling.

Borough / authority	2021 target	Draft 2026 target	Change	% change	Read across
Tower Hamlets	34,730	24,704	-10,026	-28.9%	Biggest numerical reduction; still a very high absolute target.
Barking and Dagenham	19,440	9,698	-9,742	-50.1%	Very significant reduction despite 1,140 greenfield homes.
Newham	32,800	26,260	-6,540	-19.9%	Still high, but burden materially reduced.
Kingston upon Thames	9,640	6,872	-2,768	-28.7%	Meaningful reduction.
Hackney	13,280	10,584	-2,696	-20.3%	Lower target, despite strong inner London accessibility.
Lewisham	16,670	14,052	-2,618	-15.7%	Moderate reduction.
Islington	7,750	6,768	-982	-12.7%	Reduced burden.
Bexley	6,850	6,217	-633	-9.2%	Small reduction.
Greenwich	28,240	27,850	-390	-1.4%	Broadly steady; still a very high target.
Bromley	7,740	7,507	-233	-3.0%	Broadly unchanged.

Table 2 - Boroughs with the largest reduction in housing target ('lowest uplift')

Tower Hamlets, Barking & Dagenham and Newham emerge as the principal beneficiaries of the redistribution. This is particularly noteworthy given the substantial housing burdens these boroughs carried under the 2021 London Plan and their historic role in delivering growth through Opportunity Areas and major regeneration programmes.

For landowners, developers and local authorities, the implications will be highly location specific. While the largest housing target uplifts may create significant development opportunities, these opportunities should be assessed alongside the political context in which delivery will take place. In this regard, the boroughs taking the greatest uplift under the Draft Plan are not politically neutral delivery environments.

The highest-risk areas are considered to be Hillingdon, Havering, Enfield, Barnet and Harrow, where increased targets are closely linked to greenfield / Green Belt capacity and where 2026 political outcomes have produced Conservative control, Reform control or no overall control. In these locations, the scale of opportunity may be matched by increased delivery risk, with the potential for slower local plan allocations, greater scrutiny of strategic sites and a higher likelihood of refusals and appeals. Brownfield-led uplifts in Ealing, Wandsworth, Waltham Forest, Merton and Southwark may be more closely aligned with existing policy objectives, but they still face challenges around density, infrastructure, affordability, design, carbon and local character. The practical response to this context is to view opportunity and deliverability together, supported by early political mapping, strong public-benefit narratives and appeal-ready planning strategies.

Brownfield, Green Belt and growth locations

The Draft Plan retains a strong brownfield-first approach, with priority given to making the best use of previously developed land, Opportunity Areas, town centres and highly accessible sites. However, it also recognises that brownfield land alone will not be sufficient to meet London's long term housing need.

The adopted London Plan 2021 takes a strongly protective position when it comes to the Green Belt. Policy G2 states that London's Green Belt should be protected from inappropriate development, that harmful proposals should be refused unless very special circumstances exist, and that de-designation should only occur through the Local Plan process in exceptional circumstances. In practice, this has meant that the current London Plan supports 'brownfield first' growth, intensification and Opportunity Area delivery, but does not provide a positive strategic framework for Green Belt release as part of London's housing or infrastructure response.

The Draft Plan represents a material shift. It still prioritises brownfield land but expressly recognises that brownfield capacity alone will not meet London's housing needs and introduces Policy PV7 (Sustainable development and enhancement of the Green Belt), with the stated aim of ensuring that any Green Belt release is focused in the most sustainable locations and optimised to deliver wider public benefits. The Draft Plan proposes limited and selective Green Belt release, particularly around railway stations and well-connected locations, where development can deliver sustainable, liveable, mid-rise neighbourhoods with access to public transport.

From a market perspective, the emerging policy is far more pragmatic than the adopted position. It moves the debate from "protection unless exceptional circumstances exist" towards a managed release model based on evidence, accessibility, infrastructure capacity, affordable housing delivery, biodiversity gain and better public access to green space. This aligns more closely with the Government's post-2024 NPPF direction, which gives greater emphasis to Green Belt review, grey belt land and the "golden rules" for affordable housing, infrastructure and green space where Green Belt land is released or developed.

However, this is not a free-for-all. The draft approach remains borough led, meaning Green Belt release would generally come forward through Local Plan reviews rather than direct allocation by City Hall. The commercial opportunity will therefore emerge unevenly, depending on individual borough politics, plan-making timetables, local evidence base work and the willingness of outer London authorities to identify suitable land. Sites that are poorly connected, environmentally sensitive, isolated from services, or dependent on speculative infrastructure are unlikely to benefit from the policy shift.

The likely impact on housing delivery is positive but not transformational in the short term. The draft plan aims to help deliver 558,000 homes by 2037, but the release mechanism is cautious, conditional and tied to local plan processes, which limits immediate supply side impact. The strongest near term opportunities are likely to be in outer London locations where Green Belt parcels sit close to existing or planned rail/TfL infrastructure, can support mid-rise housing, and can credibly fund affordable housing, schools, healthcare, utilities, active travel and green infrastructure.

The Draft Plan marks a significant and welcome move from ideological Green Belt protection towards a more commercially realistic, plan led growth strategy. It is more pragmatic than the adopted London Plan because it accepts that some Green Belt land may need to play a role in meeting London's housing and infrastructure requirements. That said, its success will depend less on the wording of PV7 and more on delivery: borough appetite, infrastructure funding, viability, political confidence and the speed of Local Plan reviews. For landowners, promoters, funders and developers, the message is clear. Green Belt land in London is no longer automatically off the table, but only the best-connected, best evidenced and most deliverable sites are likely to move from policy opportunity to planning permission.

Optimising Density

The Draft Plan introduces an Optimisation Framework (Table 2.1) alongside a new accessibility metric, the Sustainable Access Measure (SAM). The SAM assesses how easily people can reach jobs, services and amenities by walking and public transport, with locations assigned a score ranging from 1A (least accessible) to 5B (most accessible). Together, these provide indicative building height and residential density ranges to guide the appropriate form and scale of residential-led development. The framework does not apply to commercial development, PBSA or LSPBSL schemes. It also recognises that sites within Opportunity Area Planning Frameworks, designated tall building areas and areas subject to masterplans may support greater heights and densities than those indicated in the framework. The Optimisation Framework applies to residential-led sites of 0.25 hectares or more with a SAM score of 2 or above. Residential sites below 0.25 hectares are expected to follow the London 'Small Site Design Code' (or an equivalent local design code), while sites with a SAM score below 2 fall outside the framework and will continue to be assessed through local planning policy.

The process begins by identifying the site's 'Context Setting' using the London Context Map (Figure 2.5). Sites are categorised into one of six settings, ranging from predominantly outer suburban (Setting A), predominantly inner urban terrace (Setting B), district and local centres (Setting C), predominantly flatted development (Setting D), large town centres and central core (Setting E), through to low density land (Setting F). This is then combined with the site's SAM score to identify an indicative range of building heights (ranging from three to twelve storeys across London, depending on the site's Context Setting and SAM score) and residential densities (220–1,300 habitable rooms per hectare) appropriate for the site.

The Context Setting reflects the character of the surrounding area and its capacity to accommodate growth, while the SAM score reflects the level of sustainable accessibility. As either the Context Setting or the SAM rating increases, the expected scale and density of development also increases. Consequently, the highest levels of development are directed towards locations that are both well connected and characterised by a more urban form, while lower-density suburban areas generally have lower expectations for intensification.

The Draft Plan outlines that mid-rise development of four to nine storeys is a key focus in the Optimisation Framework, signalling a clear direction of travel towards delivering this form of development across a much wider range of locations in London.

Tall Buildings

The Draft Plan represents a significant shift from the current London Plan Policy D9. Most notably, it raises the principal tall building threshold from the current borough defined minimum of 18 metre (6 storeys) to a London wide definition of 30 metres and above, with a new category of "metropolitan tall buildings" for buildings over 100 metres. This means many schemes currently treated as tall buildings may instead be regarded as mid-rise development. The categories are now low-rise category up to 12 metres; mid-rise is 12 metres to 30 metres; tall buildings 30 metres +; and metropolitan tall buildings 100 metres +.

The current Policy D9 requires tall buildings to be located only in areas specifically identified in Development Plans. The draft policy remains plan-led but introduces greater flexibility by allowing proposals outside designated tall-building locations to be assessed against a series of strategic criteria – presumably in the context of the *R (London Borough of Hillingdon) v Mayor of London [2021] EWHC 3387 (Admin)* judgment. This potentially reduces the risk of refusal based solely on a site's location outside a mapped tall building area.

A major new element is the introduction of a London-wide hierarchy of 100m+ tall building clusters, with locations such as Canary Wharf, the City Cluster, Croydon, Greenwich Peninsula, North Acton / Old Oak Common, Old Kent Road, Stratford, Vauxhall, Blackfriars, Canada Water, Elephant and Castle, White City and other clusters identified as appropriate locations for metropolitan-scale towers. This provides greater certainty for large-scale development within these areas while making proposals outside them more difficult to justify.

The Draft Plan also places much greater emphasis on cluster planning, transport accessibility, and skyline composition, with a preference for the tallest buildings being concentrated at the centre of clusters and stepping down towards their edges. It introduces new requirements relating to personal safety at height, while retaining expectations for high quality design and publicly accessible (and safety) viewing areas in prominent tall buildings. Heritage considerations remain but are perhaps less critical.

Overall, the policy approach to tall buildings is more strategic, more focused on height bands and clusters, and potentially more flexible for schemes between 30m and 100m that can demonstrate compliance with the new locational criteria. This means a building of circa 25m is currently deemed 'tall' but will be deemed 'mid-rise' going forward.

Key notes are: -

- The headline threshold changes: 30m becomes the key tall-building threshold, with 100m+ treated as a separate metropolitan-scale category.
- There is clearer support for major towers in defined London clusters, but a tougher route for 100m+ buildings outside them.
- Sites outside local tall-building locations may have a clearer justification route than under current Policy D9, particularly where local plans are outdated or incomplete.
- Cluster form, skyline separation, transport accessibility and stepping down at cluster edges become central evidence points.
- Applicants should front-load 3D modelling, landscape/townscape views, transport accessibility, public realm benefits and safety-at-height design.

PBSA & LSPBSL

The Draft Plan represents a notable shift in the way Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) and Large-Scale Purpose-Built Shared Living (LSPBSL/co-living) are addressed. The previous standalone policies (H15 for PBSA and H16 for co-living) have been consolidated into a single policy, HN5: Managing Specialist Accommodation, creating a more integrated framework for alternative living products.

A significant change is the stronger strategic recognition of both PBSA and co-living as important components of London's housing delivery and diversification agenda. The draft policy explicitly acknowledges the role these accommodation types can play in increasing housing supply, diversifying tenure options and accelerating build-out rates. Boroughs are now expected to plan positively for PBSA provision through Local Plans and site allocations, with specific student accommodation targets allocated across most London boroughs. The Draft Plan identifies a requirement for 31,549 additional PBSA bedspaces across London over the plan period, providing a considerably clearer policy basis for future delivery.

The draft policy also places greater emphasis on location and connectivity rather than relying solely on prescriptive policy tests. Both PBSA and co-living schemes are expected to be located in areas that are well connected to local services, public transport and, for student accommodation, higher education institutions. Importantly, the policy expressly supports these uses as part of wider mixed-use regeneration and redevelopment schemes, reinforcing their role in unlocking strategic sites and supporting comprehensive regeneration.

For co-living specifically, many of the existing operational requirements remain, including single management arrangements, minimum three-month stays and the requirement for comprehensive management plans. However, the draft policy places a stronger emphasis on communal living and social interaction, requiring developments to provide high-quality communal facilities and amenities while ensuring that private rooms do not become effectively self-contained dwellings.

Overall, we consider that the draft policy adopts a more positive and strategically supportive approach to alternative living products than the existing London Plan. Rather than treating PBSA and co-living as distinct exceptions to conventional housing policy, the new framework embeds them more clearly within London's wider housing delivery strategy. This is likely to provide greater confidence for developers and investors whilst still allowing boroughs to manage local impacts where justified.

Overall, we consider the changes to be broadly positive for both PBSA and co-living sectors. The Draft Plan provides stronger strategic support than the current London Plan by explicitly recognising the role these accommodation types can play in meeting housing needs, supporting economic growth and facilitating regeneration. The introduction of borough level PBSA targets is particularly significant as it should assist in demonstrating strategic need and provide greater certainty for future schemes.

For co-living developers, the continued policy support and the integration of LSPBSL within a wider specialist accommodation framework signals that the Mayor views the sector as an established component of London's housing market rather than a niche product. Whilst the increased focus on clustering and mixed neighbourhood considerations may create additional scrutiny in some locations, the overall direction of travel remains supportive.

In our view, the principal opportunity lies in well-connected urban locations and regeneration sites where PBSA and co-living can demonstrably contribute to housing delivery, mixed-use placemaking and wider regeneration objectives. As a result, the draft policy is likely to improve prospects for appropriately located schemes and provide a stronger strategic platform to support planning applications across London.

Affordable housing

The Draft Plan has understandably generated headlines around housing targets, Green Belt release and economic growth. However, some of the most significant changes sit within its approach to affordable housing and, in particular, the relationship between affordable housing policy and viability.

The current London Plan was prepared in a very different economic climate. Construction costs were lower, borrowing was cheaper and many of the regulatory requirements that now affect residential development had not yet been introduced. Against that backdrop, the London Plan adopted a largely consistent threshold approach aimed at maximising affordable housing delivery across the capital.

Five years on, the development landscape looks very different. Higher construction costs, rising finance costs, Building Safety Act requirements and continued uncertainty across the residential market have placed significant pressure on viability. The Draft Plan reflects this changing context and, whilst retaining ambitious affordable housing objectives, proposes a more flexible approach to how those ambitions are delivered.

Affordable housing remains central to the Mayor's vision for London. The strategic aspiration for 50 per cent of new homes to be affordable remains unchanged. What has changed is the recognition that viability varies significantly across London and that a single threshold may not always represent the most effective route to delivery.

Perhaps the most notable change is the move away from a uniform London wide threshold. Instead, the Draft Plan proposes a series of borough groupings, with affordable housing expectations linked more closely to local market conditions. For schemes seeking to access the Fast Track Route, higher value boroughs including Westminster, Camden, Islington, Hackney, Southwark, Tower Hamlets and Kensington and Chelsea would be expected to provide 35 per cent affordable housing. Band B boroughs would generally be expected to provide 25 per cent affordable housing, whilst Band C boroughs would be subject to a 20 per cent threshold.

The Draft Plan also applies different affordable housing expectations to particular categories of development. Public sector land would generally be expected to deliver 40 per cent affordable housing, industrial sites 35 per cent, and land released from the Green Belt 50 per cent. Smaller schemes delivering between 10 and 35 homes would generally be able to access the Fast Track Route at 20 per cent affordable housing.

Alongside these longer term policy changes, the recently published Support for Housebuilding London Plan Guidance has introduced temporary viability focused thresholds, including 20% affordable housing on private land and 35% on public sector land, specifically intended to help unlock stalled schemes and accelerate delivery during challenging market conditions.

Taken together (and aside of the JR Challenge for a moment), these changes represent a notable shift in emphasis within London's planning policy. Historically, the policy debate often focused on a single question: *What level of affordable housing should a scheme provide?* Increasingly, the question appears to be: *What level of affordable housing enables a scheme to be delivered?*

This distinction is important. Affordable housing targets only have value if developments are capable of being brought forward. An undelivered scheme provides no affordable housing, no market housing, no infrastructure contributions and no wider economic benefits.

The Draft Plan appears to recognise this reality. While maintaining ambitious strategic affordable housing objectives, it adopts a more commercially realistic framework that acknowledges significant differences in viability across London. For developers, landowners, investors and lenders, the proposed approach should provide greater certainty at the outset of site appraisal, while potentially helping to bring forward schemes that may previously have struggled to proceed under a single London-wide threshold.

Ultimately, the success of the policy will not be judged by the number or percentage of affordable homes secured through planning permissions alone. The more meaningful test will be whether the new framework translates into a greater number of homes actually being built. As the Draft Plan progresses through examination and, ultimately, implementation, this balance between ambition and deliverability is likely to be one of the defining debates shaping London's housing market over the next decade.

Retail, town centres and main town centre uses

The Draft Plan continues to place town centres and high streets at the heart of London’s growth strategy. They are identified as key locations for intensification, mixed-use development, housing delivery, employment, services, culture, leisure and community activity.

The positive message for developers / landlords / occupiers is that town centres are not simply being protected as retail destinations; they are being positioned as flexible, mixed-use growth locations. This should support a broader range of proposals, including residential-led regeneration, workspace, leisure, culture, hospitality, health, education and civic uses, provided they strengthen the role and vitality of the centre.

Main town centre uses should generally continue to be directed to existing town centres, high streets and highly accessible locations, where they can support footfall, public transport use and the wider vitality of the centre. This aligns with the Draft Plan’s broader strategy of concentrating growth in places where homes, jobs, services and transport infrastructure can be brought together.

Hotels and Short Stay Uses

The Draft Plan recognises the role of visitor infrastructure, including hotels and other forms of transient accommodation, as part of London's economic ecosystem. Visitor accommodation supports tourism, business travel, culture, events, the night-time economy and London's global city role.

The key planning point is location. Consistent with the current London Plan, hotels and short-stay accommodation are likely to be most strongly supported where they are directed to the CAZ, town centres, transport hubs, visitor destinations and areas with strong public transport accessibility. In less accessible or more residential locations, proposals will need to demonstrate that they do not undermine housing delivery, local amenity or the balance of uses in the area.

For hotel and short-stay operators, the Draft Plan's growth agenda is broadly positive, but schemes will need to be carefully framed around economic contribution, local need, public transport accessibility and compatibility with surrounding uses.

Office space and employment floorspace

The Draft Plan gives continued strategic support to office and employment floorspace, particularly in highly accessible locations and established commercial centres. The Plan recognises that London's future employment growth is expected to be strongest in professional, scientific, technical and real estate activities, and that this will sustain demand for prime office space capable of meeting modern occupier requirements. It also identifies demand for other Class E space, research and life sciences floorspace, and "frontier innovation" uses.

This means that office space is likely to remain protected where it performs a clear economic function, particularly in the CAZ, Northern Isle of Dogs, town centres, strategic economic clusters and highly accessible locations. The Draft Plan does not suggest a wholesale relaxation of office protection in favour of residential conversion. Rather, it seeks to ensure that London has the right type of employment floorspace in the right locations, while allowing commercial stock to adapt to changing occupier needs.

For developers, the key point is that the policy direction remains broadly supportive of office-led and employment generating development, especially where schemes provide high quality, flexible, sustainable and well connected workspace. Secondary or obsolete office stock may face greater pressure for repurposing, but the Plan's economic growth agenda means that well located office floorspace should continue to be an important and protected part of London's spatial strategy.

In practical terms, proposals involving the loss of office floorspace are likely to require careful justification, particularly in locations where office demand remains strong or where the site contributes to a wider economic cluster. Conversely, proposals that deliver modern, flexible and sustainable office space should be capable of aligning strongly with the Draft Plan's growth objectives.

Industrial and logistics

The Draft Plan gives industrial and logistics uses a strategically important role in London's future economy. It recognises the need for sufficient land to support modern industrial functions, including logistics, freight, data centres, strategic infrastructure, circular economy uses and other employment-generating activities.

This is a helpful and commercially important signal. Industrial land is not treated simply as a residual land supply for housing. The Plan recognises that logistics, servicing, freight, production and infrastructure are essential to keeping London functioning as a successful global city.

At the same time, the Draft Plan recognises that some well connected industrial land may have a role in supporting housing growth, but this is expected to be managed through a plan led approach. The key balance is between protecting industrial capacity where it performs a strategic economic function, and identifying locations where intensification, co-location or selective release can support housing and mixed use growth.

For clients with industrial or logistics assets, the opportunity is twofold. First, strong performing industrial sites in appropriate locations should benefit from continued policy protection and recognition of their economic value. Secondly, in highly accessible locations, there may be scope to explore intensification, stacked logistics, co-location or mixed-use redevelopment where this can be justified through local plan processes and robust evidence.

Conclusions

The Draft Plan should be seen as a positive, commercially relevant and more pragmatic growth plan. It acknowledges the realities of today's development market, but it does not step back from London's need to grow. Instead, it seeks to provide a clearer route to delivery: more homes, more affordable housing, more support for specialist accommodation, stronger town centres, continued protection for strategically important office and employment space, modern industrial and logistics capacity, and better use of well-connected brownfield land.

Importantly, the Plan signals that growth will need to be distributed more widely across London, through Opportunity Areas, town centres, suburban intensification and, where justified, carefully managed Green Belt release. The strongest development opportunities are likely to be those that can demonstrate not only land-use acceptability, but also a clear contribution to housing delivery, affordability, economic growth, infrastructure and place-making.

The key uncertainty is political. Andy Burnham became Prime Minister on 20 July 2026, and his early messaging has focused on a new economic model, re-industrialisation, housing delivery and a ten-year plan for Britain. That may place London (and the Mayor) under increasing pressure to prove that it can continue to drive national economic growth while also addressing housing affordability, infrastructure constraints and delivery performance.

The opportunity is clear. If the Draft Plan is backed by infrastructure, funding and borough-level delivery, London has the basis for a more confident, investable and growth-oriented planning framework. The challenge will be turning that ambition into permissions, starts on site and completed development.