



City of London Corporation
City Plan 2040 — Examination in Public
Matters Statement

Opening Statement
25 March 2025

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Welcome and Introductions

Good morning everyone.

I am Shравan Joshi, chairman of the City Corporation’s Planning and Transportation Committee.

On behalf of the City Corporation, it is my pleasure to welcome you all to the Guildhall – and to welcome those viewing online – to the examination hearings for the City Plan 2040.

A particular welcome to Inspector Bridgewater and Inspector Phillips, and my thanks to you both for the work you are doing to scrutinise the City Plan.

I would like to thank Charlotte Glancy, the programme officer, who has worked behind the scenes to ensure these hearings and the examination run smoothly.

My thanks also to all the stakeholders who have fed into the City Plan, and particularly to those participating in these examination hearings.

I would like to introduce our team.

Our team is led by Rob McNicol, Assistant Director for Planning Policy and Strategy, and Gudrun Andrews, head of planning policy.

We are being advised on legal matters by Fleur Francis, chief lawyer at the Corporation, and by Russell Harris KC.

Rob and Gudrun are being supported by officers from across the City Corporation’s planning division and other departments. I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to all the officers who have worked tirelessly to prepare the City Plan.

Development of the Plan and political oversight

The City Plan 2040 encapsulates the City Corporation’s vision for the future of the Square Mile and sets out a suite of policies that will ensure development is socially, environmentally and economically sustainable.

The City Corporation is proud of the City Plan. It is a culmination of years of work, supported by extensive evidence and shaped by public engagement.

The Plan has strong political backing. The development of the Plan has been guided by the City Corporation's Local Plans sub-committee and has been approved by the Planning and Transportation Committee, the Policy and Resources Committee and the Court of Common Council. I would like to put on record my thanks to all the Members who have helped to shape this Plan.

Delivering commercial growth

The Square Mile is unique.

As the heart of the capital and a major business and financial hub, the City Plan promotes growth of national and even international significance.

The City generates over 97 billion pounds annually in economic output – the equivalent of 4% of all UK GVA.

Some 678,000 people work in the City – one in every 48 British workers – and growth continues to expand, with a 25% increase in the number of workers since 2019.

All of this happens in an area that is just over a square mile in size, and which makes up 0.001% of the size of the UK.

Unlike most local authority areas, the predominant land use in the City consists of places of work, and the demand for growth – as set out in the City Plan – is principally focussed on the delivery of a significant amount of high quality, new and refurbished office space.

Our evidence demonstrates strong demand, with a requirement for a minimum of 1.2 million sqm of additional floorspace.

It is crucial that this aim is realised – not only to boost growth, in line with the Government's mission, but also to create good quality employment opportunities, so that the people who work in the City can enjoy the fruits of

their labours, can have fulfilling careers, and can make their contribution to the wider world.

Celebrating heritage

The City has been a place of commerce since its inception, and over the intervening centuries its role as a centre of international trade and finance has been a defining feature.

Just last month archaeologists rediscovered the first Roman basilica underneath 85 Gracechurch Street. This basilica was part of the Roman forum, a site with various roles including serving as the commercial hub for Londinium and the people who worked, traded, lived and visited the city.

The Roman forum reminds us that the Square Mile is the historic heart of London. We are blessed with a rich and treasured abundance of historic buildings – Roman walls and bathhouses; medieval churches and the Corporation’s own Guildhall; many splendid Georgian places of worship; grand Livery halls and monumental civic and commercial buildings; warehouses and townhouses; and the modernist marvels of the 20th Century.

These layers of history overlap and intertwine, connected by a network of thoroughfares, public spaces, parks and gardens, and hidden courts and alleyways.

Together, the City tells its history in these layers – and the developments that come forward will add more layers.

It is our belief – reflected in this Plan – that these layers not only coexist harmoniously, but that this juxtaposition of old and new is a defining feature of the Square Mile, and that this is embraced and enjoyed by the people that come to the City.

The City Plan supports growth and it celebrates our heritage.

The heritage assets in and around the City have shaped the approach to growth in the Plan in many ways.

In turn, that growth enables us to better reveal and understand our heritage, through enhancing access to historic buildings, creating new vistas and viewpoints, and uncovering and celebrating the history buried beneath our feet.

Sustainability

As well as celebrating the past, we must look to the future – and especially to the need to ensure our buildings and public realm are improving the environmental sustainability of the City.

The City Plan builds on established processes to put in place a retrofit first approach, which is already bearing fruit in applications coming through the system.

The Plan champions low carbon development, prioritises sustainable and active travel, takes steps to make the Square Mile more resilient to the changing climate, and takes a sustainable approach to patterns of growth – optimising the use of land through facilitating development in one of the most accessible locations in the country.

Inclusion and health

The Square Mile must also be a place that welcomes everyone.

Whether it's through providing high quality accessible workplaces and new homes, ensuring our public realm remains safe and secure, enhancing the air we breathe, or delivering the social infrastructure our communities need – the policies in the City Plan will result in a more inclusive and healthier City.

Culture and visitors

The City is also fast becoming a destination in its own right – not only for the people that live, study and work here but for many visitors that come to explore our heritage, enjoy our cultural attractions or visit elevated public spaces.

We are ambitious about delivering a step change in the culture and leisure offer of the Square Mile, fuelled by new development and by our own investment in projects like the new London Museum in Smithfield.

Key Areas of Change

Different parts of the City will change in different ways.

Tall buildings in the City Cluster and Fleet Valley.

Improvements to Liverpool Street Station – the nation’s busiest – and its surrounding areas.

Enhancements to the cultural offer and the public realm around Smithfield and the Barbican.

Ongoing regeneration and investment in social infrastructure in Aldgate, Tower and Portsoken.

A rejuvenated Fleet Street.

And a more vibrant and welcoming river front along the north bank of the Thames.

The Key Areas of Change in the City Plan set out the priorities for those areas where we expect to see most development over the life of the Plan – but all parts of the City will play their part and see continued growth and the investment this brings.

London Plan

While the City is unique in many ways, it is not an island.

The City Plan sits within the wider spatial strategy of the London Plan, which supports the strategic roles of London’s Central Activities Zone and sets out the framework for the development of local plans across London.

Statutory and other duties

The City Plan has also been informed by the National Planning Policy Framework. The strategic priorities in the Plan respond to the three overarching sustainable development objectives – economic, social and environmental – and the Plan seeks opportunities to secure net gains across each of them.

The vision for the City Plan and how this will be delivered across the Square Mile is set out in the Strategic Priorities and Spatial Strategy of the City Plan at Chapters 1 and 2.

The City Plan preparation process has involved extensive public consultation and engagement. The team has worked effectively with statutory bodies, including under the Duty to Cooperate; and key stakeholders, and public consultation outcomes have shaped the nature and detail of the City Plan. Further detail on this approach can be found in the Consultation Statement, Duty to Cooperate Statements, Statements of Common Ground with statutory bodies and our Statement of Community Involvement.

As is demonstrated in these documents the City Plan has been prepared in accordance with the relevant legislation and regulations. It has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance, and is in general conformity with the London Plan 2021, and the Mayor's response under Regulation 21 can be found within the examination library.

The Plan is underpinned by an extensive, proportionate and high quality evidence base covering a broad range of topics from tall buildings to biodiversity. All of the evidence base is available on our webpage.

The City Corporation considers the City Plan, as submitted, to be sound, legally compliant and prepared in accordance with the duty to cooperate. The City Corporation has proposed some suggested changes to the City Plan for discussion through these examination hearing sessions. These are contained within the document LD26. The City Corporation has also formally asked Inspector Bridgewater and Inspector Phillips to recommend Main Modifications to the plan, if necessary, to make the Plan sound.

Inspector Bridgewater and Inspector Phillips have also kindly agreed to reschedule the hearings relating to tall buildings and heritage to June. This is to allow for the production and publication of addendums to the Strategic Views and Heritage impact assessments, reflecting changes that are being proposed by land owners on specific sites.

This reschedule is very welcome. Planning and development move at significant pace in the Square Mile, reflecting the dynamic land market and speed of development decisions. It is helpful that the production of the City Plan can be responsive to this reality.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the City Plan has been prepared within the context of all the relevant policy requirements and legislation. It is ambitious but deliverable. And it sets out an appropriate strategy and policy framework for sustainable development and decision-making in the Square Mile.