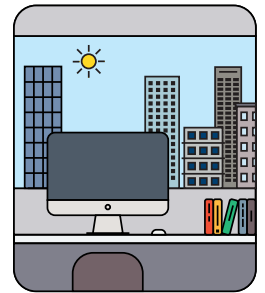


NLA Expert Panel Whitepaper: Work



Vision

“Together, we shape a better city – we have identified three key headings to use as a lens to shape this work: taking collective responsibility, providing clarity and building trust”

Goal

Any new policy to adhere to three main criteria.

- Define the process: set parameters within the London Policy plan to encourage consistency and set standard within London Boroughs. Any new policy and clearly worded to avoid confusion or misinterpretation.
- Set the targets: review the London Plan Policy frameworks to provide clear and achievable targets championing consistency across All the London boroughs.
- Quantify those targets: define the parameters for what is needed to meet the targets set.

Policies, People and Planet

① ***Workplaces must re-establish themselves as destinations boasting a quality experience that enhances the cultural platforms of the business, justifying employees' commutes and contributing to the city's placemaking.***

- Office policy should focus on places that are easiest to access via sustainable, affordable public transport, and focused on the end-user journey experience.
- Commute should be convenient and enjoyable and include active travel with a shift towards walking, running, cycling and personal micro-transport.
- A strong relationship with a strategic London-wide transport policy is required.
- Consideration of childcare facilities, to create a more diverse workforce and enhancing the capacity of the workforce to maintain sustainable economic growth.
- Building on, and better referencing existing detailed design guidance such as the London cyclist design guide. Consideration should also be given to future forms of transport, arrival, and delivery e.g., drones, and driverless cars.
- A renewed focus on the user journey has the potential to facilitate a stronger return to the office in a Post-COVID world

Policy Recommendation: there must be a renewed focus on the User journey, ensuring strategic clustering to support critical public transport, in addition to a doubling down on active travel. Policy (and guidance) should consider this from strategic location, logistics, service (including childcare etc.), site layout and form to detailed design and focused wider highways/public realm works.

② ***Workplaces must place the occupier and employee at the centre, focusing on the human experience in all aspects of its design.***

- Policy should treat offices as attractive destinations, and enablers in developing distinctive and diverse places which add richness to the human experience.

- Blur the boundaries between work and leisure and to deliver on the user experience 'at work', making it complement the 'at home' and tying it more closely to 'at leisure'.
- Remote working contributes to social isolation for many, workplaces that add real social value would also help to tackle loneliness. There needs to be more than one reason to come to work.
- Policy should deliver office spaces which are focused on human well-being. Objective measures for this have emerged akin to those sustainability measures adopted by policy, such as BREEAM and the WELL Standard.
- Accessibility Consultants should be engaged to ensure a safe and positive experience. This will benefit the wider population.
- All users should have access to the outside, views, and nature (gardens, terraces).
- Range of retail, to allow for a more enriching and diverse experience. Able to facilitate necessary and experiential shopping.
- Offices should have a purpose in the community and add social value to their place in the city.
- Local councils/boroughs to engage the local community to define what a new office development should comprise of. This would help deliver the right product to the local 'office' market.
- Cultural and F&B would allow for social engagements to be matched with workdays.
- Opportunities for learning and development to deliver professional and personal advancement through active collaborative learning experiences.
- Also consider integration of sports and fitness leisure, both public and for the office user, including gyms and spa facilities in addition to the 'incidental' workout (encouraging stair use by-design, informal sport and exercise in roof gardens or the wider public realm).

Policy recommendation: we expect a certain ratio of space dedicated to public and cultural uses co-created through the planning process, as determined by the local council and via public participation. Tenants are to adopt an agreed well-being standard (such as WELL), with a monitoring clause to report on the status every 4 years.

③ ***Workplaces must create permeability & transparency at the street level, encourage exploration and provide green space outside and inside where possible.***

- Modern office design has shifted from focusing on space efficiency to nurturing collaboration, education, culture, and community.
- Engaging with an inclusive community has a fundamental impact on the way people relate to their workplace.
- Integrating buildings into the wider, social structure through public spaces and participating street-level design fosters a sense of belonging.
- Careful and targeted curation of public open space; retail, food and beverage, health, social and cultural offerings are key to the enrichment and activity of a 24/7 city.
- This mix of different uses works best within a space that is accessible, green, and safe.
- The ground floor streetscape of buildings needs to be both inviting and active but also respond to the wider city movement patterns and connectivity, encouraging permeability and inclusiveness whilst balancing the provision of amenities with logistical requirements.
- Buildings that connect with and add to the local community will prosper.
- Any future policy should encourage mixed / hybrid use developments extending the lifespan / day / weekend occupation of the development—enterprising leasing structure to be encouraged in the New London Plan to begin to develop greater flexibility in building uses and 24/7 leasing strategies.

Policy recommendation: new office developments should enhance the surrounding public realm and ensure the new internal public realm as an active presence, engaging us with the programme and curation of the wider public realm.

④ **Workplaces must be agile in response to the impact of the changing work week.**

- Choice and mobility in how and where people work has become a post-pandemic expectation.
- Hybrid working, the 4-day work week and the economic downturn have impacted decision-making when it comes to the 'rightsizing' of office space.
- Workplace design should be informed by appropriate strategy and stakeholder engagement to ensure that this rightsizing supports a positive working experience for occupiers through the appropriate provision of space.
- Flexibility and efficiency in floorplate configuration are critical, as is modularity and simplicity /ease of reconfiguration for tenants.
- Consideration to be given to spaces being more than 'single use' in nature and designed to cater for a variety of uses, allowing for flexibility in use and choice over time.
- Occupiers are considering agile design and planning concepts as a response to possible rise of the shorter work week, landlords should consider the implications for flexible leasing options
- Developers could consider the provision of 'buffer zones' or 'just in time' workplace zones within the building to allow occupiers to expand and contract in a more fluid way to cater for ad hoc fluctuations in population.
- Any future policy should encourage mixed / hybrid use developments extending the lifespan / day / weekend occupation of the development – enterprising leasing structure to be encouraged in the New London Plan to begin to develop greater flexibility in building uses and 24/7 leasing strategies.

Policy recommendation: Landlords should consider flexible leasing options to support occupier demand for flexibility. New office developments should consider more 'fluid' occupation scenarios, with expansion and contraction buffer zones to support the occupier on an 'as needed' and agile basis.

⑤ **Affordable Workspace in both New and Refurbished Developments. Providing affordable and interesting workspaces is crucial to ensuring that cities such as London are at the forefront of the tech and creative industries, and therefore a draw for national and international talent.**

- Incorporation of affordable workspace, especially where it has a clear function as step-up incubator and growth space for industries with a wider social remit for workplace diversity and enriching the experience through collaboration.
- Workspace to be allocated on a project-by-project basis, suggest a reduced value of 2.5–5 per cent GIA and 27–33 per cent of market rent on a sliding scale depending on the size of the development.
- Often affordable workspace is allocated in the 'back' areas of the development and in some cases are unlettable or unsuitable for the local needs.
- Client should be required to establish the best workplace or community space requirements for the area through engagement with a viability and public benefit assessment.
- If it is established that a clear-cut community use would be of more value than affordable workplace, the rates payable, where appropriate, should follow the same discount of the rents payable under the affordable criteria.
- Ability to allocate an allowance of 2 per cent of GIA at zero rent for development in excess of 100,000 sq ft for community use or community infrastructure. Where evidence proves there is no demand, then the policy will be revert to affordable workspace under the proposed discounted rates.
- If none of the above criteria are achievable, and it can be proven that neither community nor affordable workspace is needed or feasible then payment of a levy can be implemented for use in the borough or surrounding borough to develop off site community or affordable opportunities.
- Retrofit criteria should be as defined above but set against its own size/area allowance that considers constraints in refurbishment.

- Policy should be introduced to allow developers to set up direct lease agreements with eligible occupiers, for example start-up companies, charity organisations and community use, nonprofit. Usually written into 106 agreements but should be standard and easier to implement.
- Introduction of greater flexibility post planning to change class use within the affordable area.
- Set a London wide base build criteria for affordable workspace to encourage quality, suitability, and value of spaces.
- Guidance should be set for minimum floor to ceiling heights, daylighting targets with the additional appropriate criteria for the proposed use, covering both new build and retrofit with definition between the two.
- Areas designated as affordable workplace to be subject to turnover caps on leases to ensure retention of affordable space within the developments.

Policy recommendation: clear definition and achievable criteria to provide viable affordable workspaces and social community uses within both new and refurbishment projects.

⑥ *Retrofit vs newbuild should have clear and separate criteria to consider equally the viability, sustainability and operational aspects for both retention, refurbishment or new development.*

- All new development on sites, with an existing building, will be required to provide clear justification for full or partial demolition. A consistent clear approach is needed across boroughs as is currently inconsistent.
- Approach development in the right way, setting targets for reuse, circular economy, operational footprint and/or of new buildings to encourage the industry towards greater change and innovation.
- If appropriate, the introduction of sustainability criteria within the DRP, to determine the true merits of recycling existing product vs newbuild to ensure that the social and environmental offer, is meaningful and beneficial to the development and surrounding areas.
- Opportunity to create an SRP (Sustainability Review Panel) that is GLA referable for developments where LAs are uncomfortable with the story around limitations of design when setting levels of sustainability/longevity/flexibility.
- Committees and LAs should review and give sway to developments that focus on flexibility, sustainability and community uses alongside design. The London Plan needs to provide clear guidelines for good practice within these criteria, to empower Local Authorities to make informed decisions.
- Clear statements on flexibility, future proofing, and adaptability to be included within the planning application. Workplace buildings could be a very flexible building commercial typology if they meet criteria of a class A office occupier i.e. with clear spans and high floor to ceiling dimensions, natural light etc. This could be enhanced to ensure that change of uses can be accommodated if required.
- Any new development should try to ensure that change of use can be accommodated within the lifecycle where possible.
- Long term targets to be set to quantify the use of recycled and repurposed materials used in buildings, with an aspiration to reuse materials if appropriate/where possible.
- Targets needed to be implemented to phase out the use of certain polluting practices that are still used in construction. For example, diesel generators, VOC high paints, construction waste to landfill.
- Long term targets are to be set for the use of recycled and repurposed materials. Standards for fit out to be developed so all buildings have a demountable and reuse strategy within the next 5–10 years to develop and push the circular economy into industry standard practice. This could allow for development of a nationwide database of materials for reallocation, repurchase and reuse.
- Shorter term demountable and circular economy targets for fit out to be developed to discourage waste and replace scenarios.
- There needs to be a requirement to provide clear statements on flexibility, future proofing and adaptability to be included within the planning applications, to minimise future demolition with the New London Plan setting clear targets for the lifespans of buildings.

- Review scope for possible Incentives for Reuse, Refurb, Reimagined schemes—for example percentage tax breaks for recycled content/materials saved from savings in business rates.

Policy Recommendation: Consistent and defined approach to construction, delivery, flexibility and sustainability of new build workplace environment in London. The New London Plan needs to set future targets with regards to building longevity, circular economy, demountable components within construction, focusing on future goals and achievable milestones to set clear targets and criteria for the benefit of new build vs retrofit.

About the Work Expert Panel

The way we work in the capital is changing, requiring workspaces that are agile and responsive to flexible and hybrid working patterns. This Panel considers what the future holds for London's office space, taking into account changes in worker behaviours and travelling patterns. They contemplate how adaptive reuse could be applied to existing office buildings and consider the benefits of mixed, hybrid use developments for connecting workspaces with local communities and economies. Looking long term, the panel explore how office requirements, space standards, and consideration of flexibility, sustainability and wellbeing can effectively future proof workspaces.

Chair: *Katrina Kostic Samen, KKS Savills*

Jason Balls, EPR Architects

Jane Clay, Gensler

Matthew Dillon, Arup

Ben Eley, City of London

Shelley Frost, Cumming Group

Matthew Holloway, Grimshaw

Puja Jain, British Land

Victoria Shin, Transport for London

Sascha Lewin, W.RE

Jason Margrave, Quintain

Clive Nichol, Fabrix

Steven Skinner, HB Reavis

Chris Waite, Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands

Amanda Whittington, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios

Laura Woolcock, KKS Savills