

MAYOR OF LONDON

# THE LONDON PLAN



THE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGY FOR GREATER LONDON

**MARCH 2021**

## Policy G3 Metropolitan Open Land

- A Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) is afforded the same status and level of protection as Green Belt:
- 1) MOL should be protected from inappropriate development in accordance with national planning policy tests that apply to the Green Belt
  - 2) boroughs should work with partners to enhance the quality and range of uses of MOL.
- B The extension of MOL designations should be supported where appropriate. Boroughs should designate MOL by establishing that the land meets at least one of the following criteria:
- 1) it contributes to the physical structure of London by being clearly distinguishable from the built-up area
  - 2) it includes open air facilities, especially for leisure, recreation, sport, the arts and cultural activities, which serve either the whole or significant parts of London
  - 3) it contains features or landscapes (historic, recreational, biodiverse) of either national or metropolitan value
  - 4) it forms part of a strategic corridor, node or a link in the network of green infrastructure and meets one of the above criteria.
- C Any alterations to the boundary of MOL should be undertaken through the Local Plan process, in consultation with the Mayor and adjoining boroughs. MOL boundaries should only be changed in exceptional circumstances when this is fully evidenced and justified, taking into account the purposes for including land in MOL set out in Part B.

8.3.1 Metropolitan Open Land is strategic open land within the urban area. It plays an important role in London's green infrastructure – the network of green spaces, features and places around and within urban areas. **MOL protects and enhances the open environment** and improves Londoners' quality of life by providing localities which offer sporting and leisure use, heritage value, biodiversity, food growing, and health benefits through encouraging walking, running and other physical activity.

8.3.2 Metropolitan Open Land is afforded the same status and protection as Green Belt land. Any proposed **changes to existing MOL boundaries** must



be accompanied by thorough evidence which demonstrates that there are exceptional circumstances consistent with the requirements of national policy.

- 8.3.3 Additional stretches of the River Thames should not be designated as Metropolitan Open Land, as this may restrict the use of the river for transport infrastructure related uses. In considering whether there are exceptional circumstances to change MOL boundaries alongside the Thames and other waterways, boroughs should have regard to Policy SI 14 Waterways – strategic role to Policy SI 17 Protecting and enhancing London’s waterways and the need for certain types of development to help maximise the multifunctional benefits of waterways including their role in transporting passengers and freight.
- 8.3.4 Proposals to **enhance access to MOL** and to improve poorer quality areas such that they provide a wider range of benefits for Londoners that are appropriate within MOL will be encouraged. Examples include improved public access for all, inclusive design, recreation facilities, habitat creation, landscaping improvement and flood storage.

## Policy G4 Open space

- A Development Plans should:
- 1) undertake a needs assessment of all open space to inform policy. Assessments should identify areas of public open space deficiency, using the categorisation set out in Table 8.1 as a benchmark for the different types required.<sup>136</sup> Assessments should take into account the quality, quantity and accessibility of open space
  - 2) include appropriate designations and policies for the protection of open space to meet needs and address deficiencies
  - 3) promote the creation of new areas of publicly-accessible open space particularly green space, ensuring that future open space needs are planned for, especially in areas with the potential for substantial change
  - 4) ensure that open space, particularly green space, included as part of development remains publicly accessible.

<sup>136</sup> Areas of Deficiency in Access to Public Open Space, GiGL, <https://www.gigl.org.uk/open-spaces/areas-of-deficiency-in-access-to-public-open-space/?highlight=open%20space%20deficiency>

