







Open and Green

Segregated play. GLA member Sian Berry called on the mayor to ban segregated play areas in new developments. This follows children living in social housing being barred from communal play areas on developments in several boroughs, including Camden, Greenwich and Lambeth. Speaking about segregated play areas in Church Road, Islington, the council’s executive member for housing and development said the site would not now be approved:

“We have been clear that all new formal play spaces should be free and accessible. Any application that would exclude affordable housing tenants from communal spaces would be strongly resisted.”

Greenwich council is considering enforcement action to end the practice. After the issue gained national media attention, Peabody promised to remove segregation at London Square, Streatham Hill. Henley Homes also backed down on segregation in Kennington 

Parks. Researchers said, “spending 20 to 30 minutes sitting or walking in a place that provides you with a sense of nature” and lowers levels of the stress hormone cortisol . The government has awarded funding for 34 pocket parks around the capital .



Biodiversity and trees. The controversial scheme to develop a tower block on a nature reserve known as the Limehouse Triangle next to the Regent’s Canal has received planning permission on its fifth application to Tower Hamlets council . Richmond council has adopted a conservation policy for green spaces including parks. It includes a biodiversity consideration for all planning applications . Lewisham council was criticised for bulldozing Old Tidemill Wildlife Garden days before it declared a climate emergency  in Tower Hamlets, residents are crowdfunding for a legal challenge against the decision to relocate the veteran Bethnal Green Mulberry Tree for redevelopment of the former London Chest Hospital .

The CPRE London eBulletin

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SAVE THE BETHNAL GREEN MULBERRY

Green space battles. Sadiq Khan said he is deeply concerned the plans for a holocaust memorial in Victoria Gardens might be rejected after strong opposition from heritage bodies and CPRE London . Campaigners trying to save Duncombe Hill Green, a small green space in Forest Hill, are trying to get it registered as a town green. Lewisham council has issued tree protection orders for the trees and is insisting that fencing erected by the developer is removed. More than 5,000 people have signed a petition in protest at the plans 



Plans for Duncombe Hill Green

The London Festival of Architecture takes place in June and a series of announcements on installations and shortlisted designers have been made. Designers will create a three ‘parklets’ in the City ; a series of bespoke public benches ; a public realm intervention alongside the Grand Union Canal in the Harrow Road area of Westminster ; and a new work for the St Paul’s Plinth outside St Paul’s tube station .

Thames Tideway Tunnel. The project is planning to create seven new landscaped areas at Chelsea, Albert, Victoria and Putney Embankments, and at Blackfriars Bridge, King Edward Memorial Park and Heathwall Pumping Station. The Blackfriars embankment will be named in honour of Victorian sewer engineer Sir Joseph Bazalgette .

YOUR RIGHT TO THE CITY
“Do we need an urban right to roam?”
Join us at CPRE London’s 2019 Public Meeting and AGM on 23 May. See page 6 for details.

Around the Capital

London's markets. Proposals are being considered for collocating Smithfield market, Billingsgate fish market and New Spitalfields fruit and vegetable market on sites either in the Docklands, Barking, Redbridge of Thurrock ^{Evening Standard} ^{Ad} ^{Re}. Campaign group Aldborough Hatch Defence Association is opposing the Redbridge option, saying it would consume 162 acres of farmland green belt. The group's chairman said: "The green lungs of London must be protected at all costs" ^{Gu} ^f. More than 2,300 people have signed a petition calling for the green belt to be protected ^{Re} ^{chan} ^{ge.org}.

Barking. Housebuilder Countryside Properties and affordable provider L&Q have gained the final go-ahead for the regeneration of Ford's former factory site in Dagenham. The Beam Park scheme includes 3,000 homes and 13 hectares of landscaped green space ^{Buil ding} ^{Verti West}.

Barnet council has given permission for the first housing project to take advantage of the mayor's small sites scheme ^{bd} ^{INS} ^{HO}.



Plans for Beechwood Avenue, Barnet

Bexley. Campaigners and councillors say the proposed incinerator at Belvedere would pollute the adjacent Crossness Nature Reserve, driving birds away ^T.

Brent council has granted full approval for 400 build-to-rent and affordable homes at Wembley Park ^{bd}.

Camden. Councillors and architects discussed redevelopment of estates in Euston. Council leader Georgia Gould said the redevelopment was a chance to use good design to improve social cohesion and wellbeing: "The priority is to show that regeneration can happen in a way that works with people" ^{ulo}.



Vision for Euston by Studio Egret West

City. The city's planning committee approved the controversial Tulip tower by 18 votes to seven. Historic England, the Royal Places and Sadiq Khan were among those who objected to the scheme. Historic England said the tourist attraction was "a lift shaft with a bulge" that would have a detrimental effect on views of the capital. It would compound harm caused by the Walkie Talkie building. The chair of the committee said he expected the application would be called in by the secretary of state ^g ^{ze} ^{bd} ^{bd} ^{bd} ^{bd} ^{AJ}. Proposals for a new Thameside office block near London Bridge have won approval, even though the scheme obscures part of the river view from Christopher Wren's grade I-listed Monument. The scheme includes a roof garden ^{bd} ^{LOND}. Exchange Square, part of the Broadgate development, is to be re-landscaped to increase the amount of green space fourfold and create a water feature ^{bd} ^{Evening Stan}.



Plans for Exchange Square, Broadgate

Croydon council has adopted its Suburban Design Guide – a supplementary planning document that provides guidance for windfall sites in the borough, including building at a higher density ^{CROY DON} ^P ^{EL}.

Hackney. The developers of the Bishopsgate Goodyard scheme have added a further 50 flats to meet the 500 homes target demanded by Hackney planners ^{bd}. Victorian houses in Wilberforce Road have been saved after the council rejected plans to demolish them for flats ^f. The council has approved to plans for a 27-storey hotel known as "The Drum", despite a strong objection from Historic England that the scheme will harm the architectural distinctiveness of Shoreditch ^{THE DRUM}.

Hounslow council is planning to clean up its streets in a £425,000 programme [🌳]. Chiswick will receive nearly £2m funding from the Sadiq Khan's Liveable Neighbourhoods Scheme. Part of the money will go towards making progress on the Barnes Bridge walkway on the Thames Path ^{W4}.

Islington. The former Holloway Prison site has been purchased by Peabody housing association to build 1,000 new homes, 60% of which will be affordable. Of these, 70% will be for social rent and the rest will shared ownership or London Living Rent ^{INS} ^{HO} ^{Gaz}.

Lewisham. City Hall has overturned the council's approval of a 34-storey tower and two other towers close to the Lewisham Tesco store, saying the amount of affordable housing on offer is wholly unacceptable ⁸⁵³.

Planning and Environmental News from CPRE London

Newham. The concept of back-to-back housing has been reinvented for 26 shared-ownership homes set around a central courtyard in Stratford ^{de}_{26e}. Plans have been submitted for the MSG Sphere, which will be the UK's largest entertainment with a capacity of 21,000 people **bd** .

Redbridge. Confusion reigned at a council meeting when Conservative councillors accidentally voted through a Labour amendment to green belt policy, allowing the green belt to be built on in exceptional circumstances. The opposition Tory group had thought it was voting on the main motion not the amendment ^{the}_{Re} **Re**.

Richmond council has launched a second competition to find a design team for Twickenham Riverside following original winner Francis Terry being removed from the scheme after local protests **bd** **Ric**. Nine new conservation areas have been adopted across the borough and six others extended **Ric**. More than 1,000 people have objected to plans for relocation of Turing House School to land near Hospital Bridge Road. Residents are concerned about the level of traffic on an already busy road. CPRE London has objected that metropolitan open land will be lost ^{Richm}_{Twick} **f** **MyL**

Southwark. Renzo Piano, architect of the Shard, unveiled plans for two buildings in Bermondsey. The tallest will be 16 stories high and retain the façade of a Victorian warehouse **bd**. Towers 37 and 48 stories tall feature in a recently approved 1,000 home development on the Old Kent Road **bd**. New London Architecture have been commissioned by Southwark council to create 'Museum of Us' – a free exhibition and programme of events, workshops and tours on Old Kent Road, to enable public engagement on the long-term plans for the area ^{nla} **nla**. A coalition of local people and groups have applied to the high court to overturn the planning approval for the redevelopment of the Elephant & Castle shopping centre ^{Southwark}_{London} **Southwark**

Tower Hamlets. A church court ruled a £1.5m nursery school built in 2013 must be demolished after heritage campaigners proved it was built unlawfully in the graveyard of the Grade-I listed Hawksmoor's Christ Church Spitalfields **bd**. Planning permission has been given for the Skylines scheme on the Isle of Dogs. It features residential towers of 49, 26 and 22 storeys, along with a 12-storey business centre ^{Built}_{ding} **bd**.



Skylines public realm

Westminster. Historic England called for the council to reject proposals for 29-43 Oxford Street and 16-19 Soho Square saying they were the antithesis of everything that gave the area its special qualities **bd**. Foster & Partners has submitted proposals for an 83-room hotel, new homes, shops and restaurants on Grafton Street, Mayfair **bd**. Axion Architects is the latest company to propose a radical overall for the Palace of Westminster. A new circular Central Assembly Hall would be flooded with natural light “making the building more collaborative than confrontational” ^{de}_{26e}.



Axion Architects plans

State of Brownfield 2019

CPRE said local authority brownfield registers identify 18,000 sites covering more than 26,000 hectares with capacity for 1,077,292 homes, a 2.4% increase since February last year. Just ten of 338 English planning authorities have granted permission in principle for brownfield register sites ^{CPRE}_P **CPRE P**.

CPRE London's director Neil Sinden said ^{CPRE}_{RE} **CPRE**:

“Our new report shows just how much capacity there is to provide housing on brownfield land in London – enough for over 10 years housing supply. And this is just the tip of the iceberg. Our recent work in Enfield suggests that actual brownfield capacity is well over ten times that suggested by the figures collected by councils in their Brownfield Land Registers. And if homes are built at sustainable densities, the capacity would be even greater.”




Planning and Housing



Healthy planning. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (Nice) said new flats and houses should be kept away from the roadside. Its guidance on using planning to cut exposure to dirty air said permission should be refused for schemes that do not mitigate air pollution. Buildings should be designed to avoid the need use cars. Schools, nurseries and care homes should not be built in polluted areas. Schemes should incorporate trees and green walls **NI**.







Inner and Outer. The Smith Institute has criticised the “city-centralist” approach which encourages prosperity and wealth creation through a focus on clusters of business activity in Central and Inner London areas. It calls for an urgent review of what it calls the “agglomeration” approach to economic development pursued by politicians and policy makers in recent years ^{LONDON}_{NI} **LONDON NI**.

Planning and Environmental News from CPRE London

Thames Estuary. In its response to the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission report, the government encouraged London boroughs to work with councils in Essex and Kent. It says two development corporations could be set up for the estuary corridor. Ministers will appoint a Thames Estuary Growth Board to oversee and drive economic growth plans  .

Permitted development rights. More than half of the top 20 local authorities that received the most applications for office to residential conversions last year were in London . The Local Government Chronicle said that permitted development rights are costing communities dear: “Kids forced to play in car parks, flats built without windows and other homes stuck on top of a nightclub” . The Guardian featured a conversion of an office in Balham to 26 flats, some as small as 18 square metres .




Affordable housing. Research by *Planning* into schemes permitted between January 2018 and January 2019 shows just over half of schemes of more than 500 homes met the mayor’s 35% affordable housing benchmark for fast-track processing. The level of affordable housing varied from 14% on a scheme in Barnet to 53% in Clapham  .





Tall buildings. London needs strategies to deal with the ‘avalanche’ of 541 towers due to come to the capital – or risk it getting ‘out of control’, a conference was told . The discussion came after New London Architecture launched its annual tall buildings report and declared 2019 ‘the year of the tall building’     .





2019 Tall Buildings Pipeline – Source: NLA
Blue towers under construction, yellow planned

Transport






High Speed 2. The government has overruled Hillingdon council’s decision to throw out HS2’s application to build an ecological mitigation site around the Colne Valley Viaduct. In considering the appeal, the planning inspector recommended that the appeal be allowed for its plans for ecology. But he said the appeal should be dismissed for its approach to archaeology. The secretaries of state agreed with the inspector on the ecological ruling but disagreed on his conclusion on archaeology. In approving the entire application, ministers said the necessary archaeological investigations will be carried out prior to earthworks being undertaken  . Engineers working on the HS2 hub at Old Oak Common are proposing to capture heat from the brakes and engines of high-speed trains to heat up to 500 new homes .

Crossrail. MPs sitting on the public accounts committee say they are not convinced that Crossrail will open in 2020. They also fear the project will need more than the extra £2.8bn currently allocated for completion. The chair said: “Wishful thinking is no basis for spending public money and there remain serious risks to delivering this programme, with a revised schedule. It is unacceptable that Parliament and the public still do not know the root causes of the failures that beset this project”    .

Trains. Sadiq Khan has asked ministers to transfer the control of railway tracks and stations in London from Network Rail to Transport for London to promote increased capacity and reduced journey times .


Buses. Rush-hour buses should be 90% full at their busiest points and times, according to new route planning guidance issued by Transport for London .



Shared space. Street furniture including planters will be reinstalled to separate cars and pedestrians along Exhibition Road in Kensington, seven years after the street was converted to shared space. The move follows growing safety concerns about shared space .

Air quality. Toxic air monitoring backpacks will be worn by 250 children from five inner London primary schools for a week to monitor and the levels of toxic air young Londoners are exposed to during the school day . Data from the London Atmospheric Emission Inventory show that two million Londoners live in areas which exceed legal limits for air pollution . The Ultra-Low Emission Zone has come into force in central London with charges of up to £100 a day for vehicles that do not meet the Euro VI diesel standard, Euro IV for petrol vehicles   .

Heathrow

High court. Airportwatch has published a resume of the arguments in the legal action against the aviation national policy statement . Teddington Action Group has published the statements by Neil Spurrier, a resident who is joined to the court action  . Richmond MP Zac Goldsmith said: “I hope that the court case will demonstrate that Heathrow’s plans are not compatible with pollution and other laws” .

Hounslow. A survey commissioned by the council has shown that a majority of people in the borough are in favour of the expansion of the airport. Overall, more than 60% of respondents were in favour of the third runway with around 25% against .

Flightpaths. A memo sent from DfT civil servants to Chris Grayling in November 2017, seven months before parliament approved the third runway, urged that data on future noise levels should not be published . One of the areas Heathrow wants to overfly at low level is Richmond Park . Ron Compton, the chairman of Friends of Richmond Park, said: “It is disastrous. It is shocking to see the potential impact the proposed flight paths could have on Richmond Park and its wonderful wildlife and environment so treasured by millions. The park is the darkest and the quietest place in London and this will be shattered by these new flight paths.”

London Plan Examination in Public

EiP. Three planning inspectors are conducting public hearings on the draft London Plan CPRE LONDON. This summary looks at the February sessions during which plans for green infrastructure, the green belt and metropolitan open land (MOL) were discussed CPRE LONDON. The hearings will continue until mid-May. The panel's report is expected before the end of the year.

The Mayor Defends the Green Belt

Q&A. In February, the panel questioned the plan's strict policies on green belt and metropolitan open land (NLP/EX/22). The inspectors asked the mayor to comment on proposals for reviews of green belt and metropolitan open land. The mayor's response to the panel's questions was robust (NLP/EX/29):

“Consideration of green belt release should be a last resort. To move directly to exploring green belt and metropolitan open land potential prior to pursuing the approach set out in the draft Plan, would not only be contrary to the NPPF, it could become a self-fulfilling prophecy by undermining the delivery of sustainable sites in existing urban areas... It continues to be the mayor's view that green belt release is not appropriate or justified.”

Modify the plan to accommodate growth in the green belt and metropolitan open land?

The mayor said the “vast majority” of London's development needs can be met without intruding on its green belt or other protected open spaces. If there is a shortfall of sites, he would work with councils to identify sites outside the metropolitan green belt before considering sites within it. He emphasised that green belt policy aids delivery of sites on brownfield and other land and removed the temptation to build on cheaper green belt land.

Encourage boroughs to undertake reviews?

Sadiq Khan opposed proposals that would require boroughs to review their green belt boundaries within a declared timetable saying it would disincentivise development of brownfield sites and intensification of existing sites. He said the London Plan's opposition to de-designation of green belt would not stop boroughs taking land out of the green belt where exceptional circumstances have been robustly demonstrated through the local plan process in line with the NPPF.

Working with the boroughs on a rapid review?

The mayor said it would take considerable time and research to identify broad development areas in green belt or metropolitan open land. He cited [CPRE research](#) that showed that housing in the green belt is built at a lower density. The proposal could also undermine sustainable transport and plans to improve air quality.

Pausing the EiP while the mayor carries out a review? The mayor argued that this would be inconsistent with the NPPF. The London Plan can only allocate broad locations not specific development sites. The plan could be delayed by up to two years if paused.

Green Belt

CPRE London strongly supported the green belt policies in the draft plan: “Clarity and simplicity are key strengths of national green belt policy as set out in the NPPF and we are pleased that the draft Plan retains and reinforces this clarity.” It wants the plan to be strengthened with the statement: “We will enforce a presumption against the loss of green belt.”

Amenity groups. London Food Link (Sustain) welcomed the green belt protection and said more food should be grown by small enterprises: “A productive green belt will be a protected green belt.” The London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies criticised the green belt policy as not consistent with the NPPF and said that exceptional circumstances must be allowed. It said that small areas of the green belt inside the GLA boundary could be developed with affordable and community housing “to the benefit of local people”.

Boroughs. Enfield said the green belt was one of its biggest land assets and it would not be sensible to rule out building in the green belt in exceptional circumstances. Kingston and Redbridge also called for the plan to allow building in the green belt in exceptional circumstances.

Developers said that the draft plan's policies on the green belt are not consistent with the NPPF and criticised the mayor for not conducting a green belt review. Consultancy CBRE said “the principle of a green belt review is pivotal to positive planning.” GL Hearn said that extension of the green belt would have to meet the same very special circumstances test as building within the green belt. It noted that councils around London had agreed to release green belt land.

Business groups. The London Chamber of Commerce said ruling out green belt development without first providing a mechanism for either local reviews or wider strategic review is unjustified. It emphasised the quantity of “brown space” in the metropolitan green belt. London First said 42% of green belt land that is not protected by an environmental designation is within 2km of a rail or tube station.

Metropolitan Open Land

CPRE London backed the plan's main policies:

“MOL performs a vital role in many parts of inner London, and more widely, in safeguarding precious green space for the benefit of local communities.”

However, it objected to the proposal that metropolitan open land can be swapped for alternative land:

“The possibility of ‘land swaps’ risks seriously undermining the fundamental purpose of this designation which is to protect and enhance the open environment.”

CPRE also wants the plan to support expansion of metropolitan open land: “The extension of MOL designations should be supported and undertaken through the local plan process, in consultation with the mayor and adjoining boroughs.”

Planning and Environmental News from CPRE London

Mayor moves to protect MOL. The mayor is proposing stronger wording on protection of metropolitan open land. The current draft says: “The principles of national green belt policy also apply to MOL.” He wants that changed to “metropolitan open land is afforded the same status and protection as green belt land.” Sadiq Khan also wants to delete from the plan the principle that metropolitan open land can be swapped for alternative land. He opposed designating parts of the Thames as metropolitan open land as different policies apply.

Amenity groups. The London Forum said there should be no development on metropolitan open land, including schools or land swapping. It also says the land should not be hired for private events unless local communities agree. The Canal and River trust opposed designation of its waterways as metropolitan open land.

Business groups. London First wants metropolitan open land protected “other than in exceptional circumstances or where such development provides... leisure, recreation, sport, arts or cultural facilities.”

Biodiversity and Food

CPRE London called for biodiversity policies to be strengthened. The overriding priority for all development proposals, however small, should be to enhance existing habitats and biodiversity. **SINCS** should be protected more strongly. The promotion of biodiversity, trees and local food growing should be a core aspect of making the best use of land. There should be strict controls of tree removal, including street trees, recognition of the importance of established hedgerows and the need to plant new hedges. Productive farmland should be protected from development.

Green groups. London Wildlife Trust wants stronger protection for veteran trees and ancient woodland. The Woodland Trust agrees and wants all planning applications that affect ancient woodlands referred to the mayor. Friends of the Earth said that biodiversity offsetting is discredited and “the theory behind net gain [of biodiversity] is not well established in practice nor proven by the empirical use of reliable metrics.”

Amenity groups. Just Space said the plan should provide for “secure and sustainable green spaces to manage the production of locally grown food which is accessible to all Londoners” along with provision for urban corridors within which productive urban orchards and forests can be established. These measures would support mental and physical health and wellbeing. London Forums called for the plan to “seek the creation of green chains or corridors to better sustain wildlife.” London Food Link wants revised wording to promote urban food growing to promote mental and physical health, including reference to urban farms and ensuring that all new housing developments incorporate an area that can be used for communal growing of food.

Bromley council said the lack of protection for biodiversity in private gardens and said that the potential for building on SINCS negated their purpose.

Green Infrastructure

Green and blue. CPRE London said:

“The future vibrancy of London and health of its inhabitants depends to a considerable degree on the quality of its green and blue spaces.”

CPRE warmly welcomed the mayor’s commitment to make more than half of London green by 2050. It wants the increase in green space achieved through accessible and attractive space at ground level – green roofs and walls are welcome but will do little to increase publicly accessible green space. It argues for a net gain of green space and biodiversity on small sites. Major schemes should contribute towards improving nearby parks and open spaces. Boroughs should be required to develop green infrastructure strategies. Just Space said:

“There is a lack of emphasis on the role of waterways (blue space) in addressing biodiversity conservation, sustainable drainage, deficiency of quantity and quality of green infrastructure.”


The Urban Greening Factor is a cornerstone of the mayor’s ambition for 50% of London to be green by 2050. CPRE London is worried the **UGF** could become a tick box exercise. Just Space said the UGF was simplistic, untested and lacks credibility. London Wildlife Trust and others called for a consistent UGF across boroughs. The Assembly Planning Committee wants a higher UGF and for London to follow Berlin by varying the weighting for different types of open space.

Open space. CPRE London said the plan should explicitly recognise the importance of private open space including gardens, allotments and open land on estates. The Hammersmith and Fulham Biodiversity Commission agrees and wants measures to limit paving gardens with decking and for parking cars. Sadiq Khan defended policies that could lead to building in gardens. CPRE London said properties should expand by adding extra stories not by garden grabbing.

National Park City. CPRE London was among many organisations welcoming the National Park City designation. Sadiq Khan said:

“National Park City is not a statutory designation and it does not impose any additional land-use planning constraints, but it helps to define London as a green city and to shape the actions of partners and stakeholders who contribute to London’s green infrastructure.”

Your Right to the City Do We Need an Urban Right to Roam?

CPRE London Public Meeting and AGM. As London becomes more densely populated pressure on green spaces and the public realm will grow. How can we improve and increase public access in London? CPRE London will discuss this with leading experts and campaigners including [Antonia Layard](#), [Anna Minton](#), [Marion Shoard](#), [Kate Ashbrook](#), [Dan Raven-Ellison](#) and [Crispin Truman](#). The AGM will be held on 23 May, 6pm at 77 Cowcross Street EC1M 6EL. Book for free .