

Policy D1 London's form, character and capacity for growth

Defining an area's character to understand its capacity for growth

- A Boroughs should undertake area assessments to define the characteristics, qualities and value of different places within the plan area to develop an understanding of different areas' capacity for growth. Area assessments should cover the elements listed below:
- 1) demographic make-up and socio-economic data (such as Indices of Multiple Deprivation, health and wellbeing indicators, population density, employment data, educational qualifications, crime statistics)
 - 2) housing types and tenure
 - 3) urban form and structure (for example townscape, block pattern, urban grain, extent of frontages, building heights and density)
 - 4) existing and planned transport networks (particularly walking and cycling networks) and public transport connectivity
 - 5) air quality and noise levels
 - 6) open space networks, green infrastructure, and water bodies
 - 7) historical evolution and heritage assets (including an assessment of their significance and contribution to local character)
 - 8) topography and hydrology
 - 9) land availability
 - 10) existing and emerging Development Plan designations
 - 11) land uses
 - 12) views and landmarks.

Planning for growth

- B In preparing Development Plans, boroughs should plan to meet borough-wide growth requirements, including their overall housing targets, by:
- 1) using the findings of area assessments (as required in Part A) to identify suitable locations for growth, and the potential scale of that growth (e.g. opportunities for extensive, moderate or limited growth) consistent with the spatial approach set out in this Plan; and

- 2) assessing the capacity of existing and planned physical, environmental and social infrastructure to support the required level of growth and, where necessary, improvements to infrastructure capacity should be planned in infrastructure delivery plans or programmes to support growth; and
- 3) following the design-led approach (set out in [Policy D3 Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach](#)) to establish optimised site capacities for site allocations. Boroughs are encouraged to set out acceptable building heights, scale, massing and indicative layouts for allocated sites, and, where appropriate, the amount of floorspace that should be provided for different land uses.

- 3.1.1 This Plan provides a policy framework for delivering Good Growth through good design. Part A of this policy sets out the requirements for assessing an area's characteristics and Part B sets out the steps for using this information to establish the capacity for growth of different areas and ensure that sites are developed to an optimum capacity that is responsive to the site's context and supporting infrastructure.
- 3.1.2 **Understanding the existing character and context** of individual areas is essential in determining how different places may best develop in the future. An evaluation of the current characteristics of a place, how its past social, cultural, physical and environmental influences have shaped it and what the potential opportunities are for it to change will help inform an understanding of an area's capacity for growth and is crucial for ensuring that growth and development is inclusive.
- 3.1.3 It is important to understand **how places are perceived, experienced and valued**. Those involved in commissioning or undertaking area assessments should consider how they can involve the widest range of people appropriate depending on the scope and purpose of the work.
- 3.1.4 **Area assessments** should be used to identify the areas that are appropriate for extensive, moderate, or limited growth to accommodate borough-wide growth requirements. This analysis should form the foundation of Development Plan preparation and area-based strategies. This process will be fundamental to inform decision making on how places should develop, speeding up the Development Plan process and bringing about better-quality development. It will also help speed up planning decision making by providing an easily accessible knowledge-base about an area that is integrated in Development Plan policies.