

## TOWARDS A NEW LONDON PLAN

Team London Bridge representations on the review of the London Plan  
June 2025

1. Team London Bridge (TLB) is a business improvement district (BID) representing approximately 400 businesses in the area between London Bridge to the west, Tower Bridge to the east, and south towards Bermondsey. TLB priorities are constantly being kept up to date through new strategies and consultation, ensuring our responses to planning reflect the wider aims of the business district. Our vision is *“to make London Bridge one of the most safe, sustainable and engaging places for business and tourism in the world”*.

2. We have discussed and shared positions on the London Plan review between the five BIDs which lie south of the river in the Central Activities Zone (CAZ) in Southwark and Lambeth. While this is not a shared response, we do often work collaboratively and there will be benefit in developing a more joined up and nuanced picture of this important and growing part of London as the London Plan evolves. As BIDs, we contribute significantly to the achievement of Good Growth objectives. We are closely involved in developing area-wide strategies; work alongside developers, local authorities and the local community; and often work together and discuss ongoing concerns and opportunities for London.

3. We welcome this opportunity to inform the review of the London Plan in the following sections:

### Central Activities Zone

We think the CAZ plays a positive role in recognising and protecting the unique agglomeration of strategic and local uses in central London. The existing controls over significant new residential development should be retained. Given its success we would welcome further work with BIDs on its evolving role including on boundaries and the mix of uses.

### Town centres and high streets

We ask that similar recognition is given to predominantly commercial areas as is provided to high streets and town centres and Strategic Industrial Locations in the current London Plan. Their economic contribution needs to be protected and enhanced alongside the opportunities for renewal and environmental improvement. With greater flexibility, particularly around class E, it will be important to protect the vital character of ground floors so that they remain active, interesting and accessible, as both commercial and visitor destinations.

### Opportunity Areas

We welcome the role of Opportunity Areas in delivering London Plan objectives. London Bridge as a commercial centre continues to grow, with a lot of investment forecast, such as the Life Sciences hub at Guy's Campus, which has not yet materialised. For this reason it is important to indicate that London Bridge is still a *maturing* area, not *matured* as indicated in Figure 2.3 of the consultation.

### Good Growth Objectives

We welcome the rounded approach to growth reflected in the current London Plan. As Mayor Khan's Foreword states "*Good Growth is not about supporting growth at any cost*" and this approach aligns with the role BIDs play in supporting commercial success alongside social, environmental and cultural improvement.

#### Specialist clusters of economic activity / Life science clusters

The approach to and understanding of the role of life sciences has grown significantly since adoption of the London Plan. The new London Plan should do more to actively recognise the benefits of geographical clusters, support the use of Special Policy Areas for life sciences and include the SC1 London Life Sciences Innovation District in the list of areas recognised as being of current significance.

#### Affordable workspace

We support the intention in the current London Plan to provide for affordable workspace to encourage diverse economic and employment opportunities. There has been mixed success in the implementation in our area. We welcome the consideration of a wider range of uses being proposed, including culture, food and drink and hospitality, though this provision exists in Southwark and has had mixed success as affordability has been limited. Affordable workspace in life sciences is also an area of opportunity, when linked to a cluster like SC1. The future approach should consider the need for controls over service charges as well as rents in making affordable provision

#### Net zero and London's heritage

There are many heritage buildings which create the distinct identity of London Bridge. We also have an ambition to be a net zero business district, which is resilient and adapts to climate change. We would welcome policy that can enable landlords to make sensitive adaptation and retrofit of historic buildings.

#### Heat zones

We are working to facilitate the development of a district heat network to support the decarbonisation of this commercial area, which will ensure its ongoing reputation and competitiveness, particularly as many of our businesses approach the dates of their net zero targets. Anything that London Plan can do to ensure all development where viable connects to heat networks unless it has a separate way of decarbonising would be helpful. The London Plan can also facilitate the delivery of heat network infrastructure, for example ensuring street works licenses on red routes and ensuring a joined-up approach with boroughs. The great potential of the River Thames in providing a source of energy or the transportation of waste heat by barge should also be mentioned and facilitated.

#### The strategic importance of London's waterways

The River Thames is perhaps London's greatest strategic asset. It defines the geography and character of central London. While the role of the Thames is recognised in the current London Plan we believe it needs much stronger recognition for the role that it plays – for example culture, transport, servicing, a source of energy, for commercial development, retail and footfall, biodiversity, leisure (and one day swimming).

#### Flood risk management

We certainly need to plan for flood risk and water level rises in the future, the extent of this challenge still feels very abstract to the business community that one day will be affected by it.

#### Sustainable transport networks to support

We ask that the new London Plan recognises the strategic importance of the Low Line, which runs across borough boundaries (Bermondsey to Battersea), as walking infrastructure. It includes hundreds of businesses as well as large scale development sites, which in the Southwark Plan must consider the viaduct in creating walking routes and making vibrant use of the arches for business and community uses.

#### Car parking, cycle parking and deliveries

There has been both a dramatic increase in cycling levels and a major change in the nature of cycling in London since the London Plan was adopted. The success of both docked and dockless hire bikes and growth of e-bikes has transformed travel behaviour. While we support the use of cycle parking standards we welcome the proposed review to ensure they keep in line with the changing approach to cycle use. We believe this is likely to result in a reduction in the number of cycle parking spaces required, particularly in offices, and increase requirements for new development to provide for cycle docking stations and on-street cycle parking for dockless hire bikes.

Making provision for effective servicing of new development in central London is one of the most significant practical issues that we face. Addressing it requires a strategic approach that cannot be delivered on a site-by-site basis. We believe a review of the future servicing demands from development in the CAZ over the period of the new London Plan is required. This should support the need for strategic provision of consolidation centres and transform the approach to last-mile delivery through the growth of cargo bikes, which also have huge potential to link with rail and river freight.