
FACT SHEET

Overseas Duty Visit Panel on Development

Spatial planning and urban renewal in London

Table 1 – Basic information on London

Basic facts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• London, the capital of the United Kingdom (UK), has an area of 1 578 km² and a population of 7.5 million. London is one of the world's leading business, financial and cultural centres.• The administration of London takes place in two tiers – a city-wide, strategic tier and a local tier. City-wide administration is carried out by the Greater London Authority (GLA), while district-level administration is taken up by 33 local authorities, comprising the City of London and 32 London boroughs.• GLA consists of two elected parts – the Mayor of London, who has executive powers, and the London Assembly, which scrutinizes the Mayor's decisions and can accept or reject his/her annual budget proposal.• GLA is responsible for formulating the overall policies on spatial planning, urban renewal, transport and economic development.
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Table 2 – Spatial planning in London

Responsible authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GLA and local planning authorities.
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
Major policy paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2001, GLA published a consultation paper on spatial planning strategy entitled "Towards the London Plan". The plan integrates land use with infrastructure development, economic and social policies, and environmental protection matters. A draft London Plan was published in 2002. GLA appointed a panel to assess the plan. After a series of assessments and public consultations, GLA published the London Plan in February 2004. Since then, the London Plan has been amended several times and is subject to further revision. The objectives of the London Plan include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) accommodating London's growth within its boundaries without encroaching on open spaces; (b) making London a better city for people to live in; (c) making London a more prosperous city with strong and diverse economic growth; (d) improving London's accessibility; and (e) enhancing London's image as a more attractive, well-designed and green city.
Spatial planning policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In London, the City Corporation of London and the 32 borough councils are the local planning authorities for their responsible areas. Under the Greater London Authority Act 1999, the local planning authorities are required to consult the Mayor on strategic planning applications. The Act also empowers the Mayor to direct the local planning authorities by means of rejecting their strategic planning applications. However, the Mayor does not have the powers to approve strategic planning applications, which belong to the local planning authorities only.

Table 3 – Urban renewal in London

Responsible authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GLA, local planning authorities and urban regeneration companies.
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing, Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and Regional Development Agencies Act 1998.
Urban renewal policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GLA works with local planning authorities to formulate urban renewal programmes which promote sustainable regeneration. In many cases, urban regeneration companies, which are independent companies established by national and regional regeneration agencies, the relevant local planning authorities, the private sector and other key partners, are set up to implement the redevelopment projects.

Table 4 – Possible sites for the visit¹

Docklands (spatial planning and urban renewal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Docklands is an area in the east of London, comprising parts of several boroughs such as Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Globe Town, Newham and Greenwich. The eponymous docks were formerly part of the Port of London, at one time the world's largest port. • In 1981, the UK government established a statutory body called the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) to redevelop the area. The massive development programme managed by LDDC during the 1980s and 1990s saw a huge area of the Docklands converted into a mixture of residential, commercial and light industrial space. • Among the redevelopment projects, an important one is the redevelopment of Canary Wharf, which currently contains the UK's three tallest buildings: the Canary Wharf Tower, the 8 Canada Square and the Citigroup Centre. • The success of the Docklands redevelopment has prompted a number of further development schemes, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) extending the Docklands Light Railway to Woolwich and possibly Dagenham; (b) building new railway lines between Canary Wharf, central London and north Kent; (c) redeveloping Blackwall Basin and Wood Wharf; and (d) redeveloping the Royal Docks area, including the Silvertown Quays project.
East End (spatial planning and urban renewal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The East End refers to the east of the medieval walled City of London and north of the River Thames. The 2012 Olympic Games will be held in the Olympic Park located at the East End, created on former industrial land around the River Lea. It is intended that the related redevelopment should leave a legacy of new sports facilities, housing, industrial and technical infrastructure, that will further help regenerate the area.

¹ In September 2002, the delegation of the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works to study the experiences of town planning, urban renewal and heritage preservation in Singapore, Berlin and London visited the sites of Docklands, Thames Gateway, Covent Garden and Paddington Waterside during its duty visit.

Table 4 – Possible sites for the visit (cont'd)

Thames Gateway (spatial planning and urban renewal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Thames Gateway is an area of land stretching eastwards from East London on both sides of the River Thames and the Thames Estuary. The area, which includes brownfields (abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contaminations), has been designated a national priority for urban redevelopment. The redevelopment of the Thames Gateway is seen as a long-term, market-led project, with completion set around 2020. • The planning framework principles for the Thames Gateway are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) making the most of the Thames Gateway opportunity – developments will be encouraged where they make best use of the area's strengths and resources for growth and regeneration, including its huge sites; (b) creating a vibrant and sustainable pattern of communities – the aim is for new developments to provide a mix of employment, housing and activities needed for thriving communities, minimizing the need for travel, and taking full account of the existing pattern of development; (c) relating transport opportunity and land use opportunity – the Thames Gateway can provide a practical example of the application of principles of sustainable development, with less need to travel and less reliance on cars; making the most of transport facilities, including public transport already in place or planned; and (d) bringing life to the river and river-front – much of the Thames Gateway has a water-frontage. The river is a valuable resource for transport, amenity and environmental benefits.
Covent Garden (spatial planning and urban renewal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covent Garden is a district which is dominated by shops, street performers and entertainment facilities such as the Royal Opera House. From the perspective of urban planning, Covent Garden has been quoted as an example of involving minimal infrastructure developments to re-develop the Central Market into a vibrant area with a well-established local community economy. • In August 2007, Covent Garden launched the UK's first ever food night market selling fresh produce/food products such as cheeses, mushroom sandwiches, candies and pork sausages. The aim of the night market is to bring Covent Garden back to its roots as the Larder of London. Organizers plan to make it a permanent event in 2008 as part of a wider initiative to regenerate interest in the Covent Garden area.

Table 4 – Possible sites for the visit (cont'd)

Paddington Waterside (spatial planning and urban renewal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paddington Waterside is a mixed residential and business development, situated adjacent to Paddington station and the Paddington branch of the Grand Union Canal. It is being developed on the site of the Great Western Railway's original London passenger terminus. New hotels, offices, shopping centres, restaurants, healthcare premises and leisure facilities have been built in this area.
Waterloo (spatial planning and urban renewal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterloo, located at the borough of Lambeth, is a major railway station and transport interchange complex in London. • In October 2007, GLA published the "Waterloo Opportunity Area Planning Framework", which is a blueprint for sustainable redevelopment in the area over the coming decades, bringing in thousands of new homes and jobs and placing an emphasis on the importance of outstanding architecture design. • GLA has made the following proposals for redeveloping Waterloo: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) creating an attractive new city square which will attract local people and visitors to gather; (b) encouraging the development of new world-class buildings around and above the railway station; and (c) improving the accessibility and capacity of the railway station and redefining it as a new centre for the area.

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