

Policy S1 Developing London's social infrastructure

- A When preparing Development Plans, boroughs should ensure the social infrastructure needs of London's diverse communities are met, informed by a needs assessment of social infrastructure. Assessments should consider the need for cross-borough collaboration where appropriate and involve relevant stakeholders, including the local community.
- B In areas of major new development and regeneration, social infrastructure needs should be addressed via area-based planning such as Opportunity Area Planning Frameworks, Area Action Plans, Development Infrastructure Funding Studies, Neighbourhood Plans or master plans.
- C Development proposals that provide high quality, inclusive social infrastructure that addresses a local or strategic need and supports service delivery strategies should be supported.
- D Development proposals that seek to make best use of land, including the public-sector estate, should be encouraged and supported. This includes the co-location of different forms of social infrastructure and the rationalisation or sharing of facilities.
- E New facilities should be easily accessible by public transport, cycling and walking and should be encouraged in high streets and town centres.
- F Development proposals that would result in a loss of social infrastructure in an area of defined need as identified in the borough's social infrastructure needs assessment required under Part A should only be permitted where:
 - 1) there are realistic proposals for re-provision that continue to serve the needs of the neighbourhood and wider community, or;
 - 2) the loss is part of a wider public service transformation plan which requires investment in modern, fit for purpose infrastructure and facilities to meet future population needs or to sustain and improve services.
- G Redundant social infrastructure should be considered for full or partial use as other forms of social infrastructure before alternative developments are considered, unless this loss is part of a wider public service transformation plan (see Part F2).

- 5.1.1 Social infrastructure covers a range of services and facilities that meet local and strategic needs and contribute towards a good quality of life. It includes **health provision, education, community, play, youth, early years, recreation, sports, faith, criminal justice and emergency facilities**. There are a wide variety of providers delivering these services, from large state-funded organisations, public and private institutions and specialist providers, to charitable trusts, the voluntary sector, community and faith groups, and individuals. Alongside more formal provision of services, there are informal networks and community support that play an important role in the lives of Londoners. This chapter primarily addresses the delivery of social infrastructure facilities. Many service providers may operate from or require other types of space, for example cultural facilities (addressed in [Chapter 7](#)) or offices (addressed in [Policy E1 Offices](#)). Green infrastructure in all its forms is also a key component of social infrastructure, and is addressed separately in Chapter 8, [Policy G3 Metropolitan Open Land](#) and [Policy G4 Open space](#).
- 5.1.2 Social infrastructure plays an important role in developing **strong and inclusive communities**. It can provide opportunities to bring different groups of people together, contributing to social integration and the desirability of a place.
- 5.1.3 **Planning for social infrastructure** in London is complex. There are a wide range of providers and stakeholders and the degree of clarity around future provision and funding varies. It is therefore important that boroughs work collaboratively with service providers and other stakeholders, including the local community, to fully understand existing and future social infrastructure needs and plan appropriately for these, including through their infrastructure delivery plan and the Community Infrastructure Levy. This will also help facilitate an integrated approach to service delivery.
- 5.1.4 **Needs assessments** should be informed by both an understanding of the demographic make-up and socio-economic data required by [Policy D1 London's form, character and capacity for growth](#) as well as an audit of existing facilities and services. Supplementary Planning Guidance will be developed to inform this.
- 5.1.5 The **loss of social infrastructure** can have a detrimental effect on a community. Where possible, boroughs should protect such facilities and uses, and where a development proposal leads to the loss of a facility, require a replacement that continues to meet the needs of the neighbourhood it serves. A realistic proposal for replacement social infrastructure should be able to demonstrate funding, appropriate site availability and timely delivery of adequate facilities. To further protect against the loss of social infrastructure that is valued by a local community or group, boroughs should consider approving the designation

of a facility as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) if put forward by the local community.

- 5.1.6 In cases where social infrastructure premises may be deemed redundant and a replacement facility is no longer necessary or appropriate, **other forms of social infrastructure should be considered** for the site or part of the site to help meet other community needs, before alternative uses are pursued.
- 5.1.7 It is recognised that there will be cases where social infrastructure providers are undertaking an agreed programme of social infrastructure re-provision or **service reconfiguration**, such as has been seen within healthcare. Where social infrastructure premises are deemed redundant as part of this process, such losses may be acceptable in line with Parts D and F of Policy S1 Developing London's social infrastructure and Policy Policy S2 Health and social care facilities and any related information or guidance to achieve the overall aims of the programme and to continue to meet the needs of Londoners.
- 5.1.8 In all cases, where housing is considered an appropriate alternative use, opportunities for **affordable housing provision** should be maximised.
- 5.1.9 Social infrastructure should be **easily accessible** by walking, cycling and public transport in accordance with the Healthy Streets Approach.
- 5.1.10 It is important to consider the way that social infrastructure integrates with other facilities and the way people who live or work in the area want to access it. **Shared use and co-location of facilities** should be encouraged, to align service provision, use land more efficiently and facilitate opportunities for different groups of people to come together, encouraging further inclusion and community participation. Shared use and co-location will help facilities and service providers work in a more coherent and joined-up way, and share maintenance and management costs. It could reduce the need to travel thereby improving accessibility. Examples of this include schools opening their facilities out of hours for use by the community, the co-location of health and sports facilities, or the co-location of facilities with housing to ensure effective usage.
- 5.1.11 Voluntary and community groups often find it difficult to find premises suitable for their needs. **Unused or underused facilities should be brought into use**, where possible, to help address these needs. The additional use or reuse of places of worship should be considered for providing accommodation for other traditions or faiths and/or wider community functions.