The London Plan cycle and car parking policy

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MAYOR OF LONDON

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON
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1 Introduction

This document sets out the rationale and evidence for the standards set out in the 2026 draft London Plan policy GHRII, 'Cycle and Car Parking' and those relating to car parking in policy PV7, 'Sustainable Development and Enhancement of the Green Belt'. The policies build on cycle and car parking policies in the 2021 London Plan. They require developments to provide cycle parking to enable cycle ownership and cycle use, while seeking to minimise car parking, in order to manage road congestion and make the best use of land. The policies are intended to help deliver the 2018 Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) target for 80 per cent of trips in London to be made on foot, by cycle or using public transport by 2041.[1]

2 Cycle parking

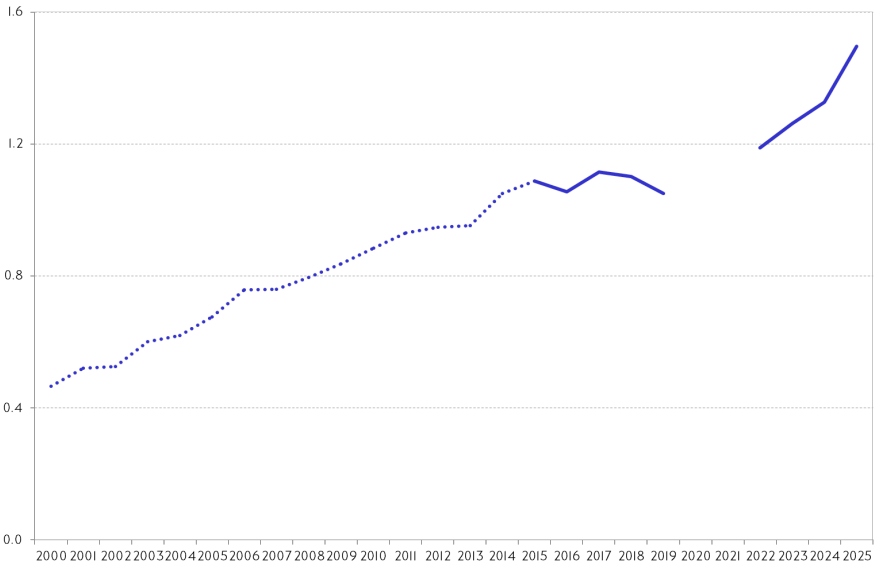
2.1 Background

Cycling in London has grown considerably in recent years, including since the pandemic. In 2025 the estimated number of daily cycle journey stages in London (journey stages are parts of trips which may include other modes) reached 1.5 million, more than three times the level of cycling in 2000, as shown in Figure 1. In 2024, cycling made up 4.7 per cent of all trips made in London, compared to 3.6 per cent in 2016.[2] In the context of an increasing population and the growing number of trips overall in London, this increase is significant. Given investment in cycling infrastructure in many parts of London, the volume of trips and mode share are expected to continue to rise.

There are a number of factors that will influence meeting the MTS 80 per cent sustainable mode share target. Those affecting cycling include improved cycling infrastructure (and perceptions of safety), parking provision in new developments and on-street parking. Sufficient and quality cycle parking is required to enable people to own cycles and make trips by cycle, and to continue to provide support to cycling and contribute towards meeting the target.

[1] Greater London Authority, 'Mayor's Transport Strategy' (March 2018), p. 21.
[2] Transport for London, 'Travel in London 2025: Active Travel Trends' (2025), p. 4.

Figure 1: Daily cycle journey stages (in millions) in London, 2000–2025[3]

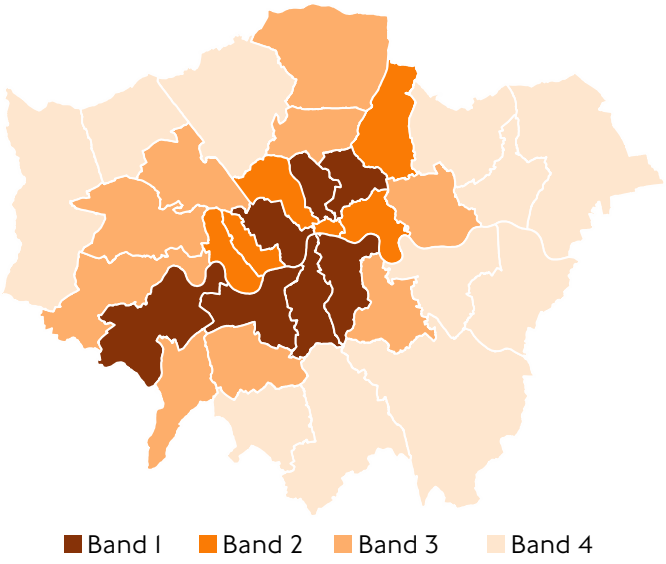


2.2 Proposals

2.2.1 Spatial variation through borough bands

The proposed cycle parking requirements vary across London, with boroughs grouped into four bands, as shown in Figure 2, with band 1 having the highest requirements and band 4 having the lowest. The bands are related to current cycle mode share to destinations in each borough. This targets the parking requirements to where they will be needed most and reduces the potential for under or over-provision of cycle parking.

Figure 2: Borough bands



[3] Transport for London, 'Travel in London 2025: Active Travel Trends' (2025), fig. 2.

To create the bands, current cycle mode shares for London residents were sourced from the 'London Travel Demand Survey' (LTDS).[4] Boroughs were first split into three bands based on the cycle mode share for trips from home (or all trips with a destination in that borough if sample sizes were too small to allow this). Given some boroughs have a particularly high mode share for trips to usual workplaces in that borough, the top band was then split into two. The mode shares for the resulting four bands are set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Borough bands and current cycle mode share percentages trip type

Band	All trips with a destination in the relevant borough	Trips from home in the relevant borough	Trips to usual workplaces in the relevant borough
1	5.2	5.5	9.0
2	4.1	4.3	5.8
3	2.5	2.6	4.5
4	1.1	1.1	3.2

2.2.2 Providing for current cycling levels plus room for growth for residential development

Previous London Plan cycle parking requirements have been based on the principle of enabling everyone to own a cycle.[5] The draft London Plan employs a more need-based approach to setting cycle parking standards.

Dwellings

For dwellings, the standards are between current cycle ownership levels (using data from households that have access to cycle parking) and the London Plan 2021 standards, as shown in Table 2 and Figure 3. (Further information on how existing ownership was calculated is set out under 'How the existing cycle ownership was calculated', at the end of this section.) This allows for reasonable growth in demand for cycle ownership as infrastructure is improved over time and as cycling increasingly becomes more mainstream. The degree of growth allowed for is varied across both borough band and dwelling size, with the most future growth (relative to existing levels) being allowed for band 4 boroughs and for smaller dwellings. Band 4 boroughs have lower existing cycle mode shares and have significant potential for growth (as has been seen in other boroughs as infrastructure and other improvements are delivered). Meanwhile, larger households have higher existing cycle ownership. For larger dwellings, the standards make allowance for growth, but this is moderated down slightly to avoid too high a requirement in absolute terms. (Bands 1 and 2 are combined for residential uses, as they are close together in terms of mode share for all trips, but differ more significantly for trips to workplaces.)

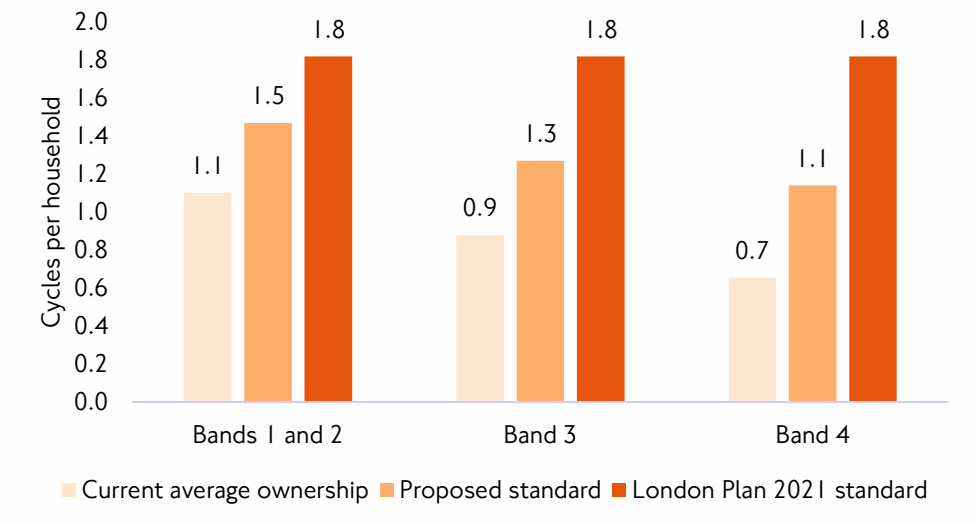
[4] LTDS is an annual survey of a random sample of 8,000 households in London about their travel habits. Further information about the survey is available at tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/how-we-work/planning-for-the-future/consultations-and-surveys and much of the data is reported on in 'Travel in London' reports, available at tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/travel-in-london-reports. Unless otherwise stated, figures in this document are from LTDS and are a 2022/23–2024/25 three-year average.

[5] See 'Early Minor Alterations to the London Plan 2011: Cycle Parking Standards: Supporting Evidence Report' (February 2012), 'TfL Cycle Parking Standards Report' (5 March 2014), and Transport for London, 'Cycle Parking: Part of the London Plan Evidence Base' (December 2017).

Table 2: Proposed minimum cycle parking standards

Band	1 bedroom dwelling	2 bedroom dwelling	≥3 bedroom dwelling
1 and 2	1.0	1.5	1.9
3	0.9	1.3	1.6
4	0.7	1.2	1.5

Figure 3: Current average ownership and London Plan 2021 and proposed dwellings standard[6]



One-bedroom dwelling standards have been simplified compared to the London Plan 2021 standards, removing the distinction between one- and two-person one-bedroom dwellings, but still reflecting average occupancy of 1.5 people. A three-bedroom standard was added given this data was available in LTDS. This also avoids the higher current ownership levels for three-bedroom dwellings being averaged across which could act to increase the requirements unnecessarily for one- and two-bedroom dwellings.

Hire cycles

The cycle parking requirements reflect the current use of hire cycles and the extent to which this means cycle parking at home is not required. Cycle ownership levels from LTDS already indicate how many households use hire cycles only. Interestingly, the current impact of cycle hire on cycle ownership is low: for 2022/23 to 2024/25, only 6 per cent of cycle trips by London residents were made by those without access to their own cycle. This indicates that cycle hire use complements cycle ownership rather than reducing it substantially.

Shared living and student accommodation

The proposed standards for one-bedroom dwellings (typical occupancy of 1.5 people) were taken and adjusted down to the occupancy of rooms for student accommodation and shared living (typical occupancy of 1 person). This results in the proposed standards in Table 3. LTDS data does not distinguish between students in purpose-built student accommodation and those living in other residential building types, but, overall, students have the same cycle ownership

[6] Based on an example mix of 30 per cent one-bedroom, 40 per cent two-bedroom and 30 per cent three-bedroom dwellings.

levels as all London residents: 38 per cent of all students own a cycle; 38 per cent of all Londoners do also.

Table 3: Proposed shared living and student accommodation standards

Band	Spaces per room
1 and 2	0.7
3	0.6
4	0.5

How the existing cycle ownership was calculated

Average current cycle ownership among households with access to cycle parking, by band and by number of people per household was obtained from LTDS, as shown in Table 4. (Access to cycle parking is defined in LTDS as inside their property, in a communal area, or off street in a secure, locked facility such as a cycle hangar.)

Table 4: Current average number of cycles owned per household, by number of people per household, for households with access to cycle parking[7]

Band	1 person households	2 person households	≥3 person households
1 and 2	0.4	0.9	1.6
3	0.3	0.7	1.4
4	0.2	0.5	1.1

The cycle ownership by people per household was then converted to cycle ownership by number of bedrooms per household. This was done using simple assumptions of what household sizes by people are likely for different dwelling sizes by number of bedrooms, as set out in Table 5. The assumptions arrive at the average number of people per household in new housing in the 'GLA Population Yield Calculator'.[8] The resulting cycle ownership by number of bedrooms per household is shown in Table 6.

Table 5: Assumed percentage and resulting average number of people per household for different dwelling sizes by number of bedrooms

	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	≥3 bedroom
1 person	50%	0%	0%
2 person	50%	70%	10%
3 person	0%	30%	90%
Average	1.5 people	2.3 people	2.9 people

Table 6: Estimated average number of cycles owned per household, by number of bedrooms, for households with access to cycle parking

Band	1 bedroom households	2 bedroom households	≥3 bedroom households
1 and 2	0.7	1.2	1.6
3	0.5	0.9	1.3
4	0.3	0.6	1.0

[7] Figures are for 2024/25 only, as access to cycle parking was added to the survey in that year.
[8] Greater London Authority, 'GLA Population Yield Calculator' (23 October 2019).

2.2.3 Providing for current cycling levels plus room for growth for places of employment

The London Plan 2021 standards have been streamlined to refer to a target mode share across all land uses, varied by band, rather than being fifteen separate standards that are dependent on floor space and land use. The mode share aspiration is between 7.5 and 15 per cent, which is considered a reasonable level of growth against current mode shares, as set out in Table 7.

Table 7: Current cycle mode share and proposed policy target cycle mode share for employment

Band	Current % (as per LTDS)	Proposed policy target %
1	9.0	15.0
2	5.8	10.0
3	4.5	10.0
4	3.2	7.5

The latest employee density and space utilisation rates in the GLA's 'London Employment Sites Database 2024'[9] or the 'Employment Density Guide'[10] could be used if the number of employees is unknown at the time of planning application submission.

For offices, this compares to the London Plan 2021's mode share target of 9.5–19 per cent. This reduction is considered appropriate to balance the continued growth (and aims for growth) with the practical challenges raised in relation to the current London Plan. For other employment uses, the London Plan 2021 standards were based on a sample of a limited number of sites, and the proposal is considered reasonable given the limited up-to-date data available other than LTDS and school travel surveys, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Employment use London Plan 2021 policy and current mode shares

Employment use	London Plan 2021 policy %[11]	Current mode share % for bands 1–4 (LTDS or 'Hands-up Survey'[12])
Retail	6.9–9.1	3.2–9.0
Light industrial	12.9–19.4	3.2–9.0
Industrial	6.8-19.0	3.2–9.0
Hospitals, care homes and health centres	20.0	3.2–9.0
University	25.0	3.2–9.0
Hotel, nursery, library, church, sports, cinema, bingo, etc.	12.5	3.2–9.0
School	12.5	1.8–12.6

2.2.4 Streamlining and response to use class changes for short-stay parking

Retail

To simplify requirements, and respond to changes to land use classes regulations, the London Plan 2021's retail standards have been merged. The standard for the lowest band broadly aligns with the 'Cycle Infrastructure Design: Local Transport

[9] Greater London Authority, 'London Employment Sites Database 2024' (March 2026).
[10] Homes & Communities Agency, 'Employment Density Guide', 3rd edition (November 2015).
[11] The ranges are as a result of different potential employment densities.
[12] Using data collected between 2024 and 2026 through the TfL Travel for Life programme.

Note 1/20' (LTN 1/20) national guidance.[13] For the two higher bands, upward adjustments have been made based on the higher current cycle mode share in these bands. The size threshold has been simplified to a consistent 1,000 square metres, with the difference in this between the London Plan 2021's 750 and 1,000 square metre thresholds judged to be insignificant.

The floorspace measurement has also been converted from gross external area (GEA) to net internal area (NIA), for consistency with how employment space is typically measured. (The conversion assumed NIA = GEA × 0.95 and NIA = GIA × 0.9.)[14]

Other uses

For other uses such as offices, hospitals and leisure uses, the draft policy requires provision of some level of short-stay cycle parking, with the quantity to be determined on a case-by-case basis and to include consideration of relevant Transport for London and national guidance. The policy also states that boroughs can collect contributions under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to provide parking in locations such as town centres.

[13] Department for Transport, July 2020, 'Cycle Infrastructure Design: Local Transport Note 1/20', in particular chapter 11.
[14] As suggested in Homes & Communities Agency, 'Employment Density Guide', 3rd edition (November 2015), para. 2.10–2.12.

3 Car parking

3.1 Background

As explored in detail in the 2017 London Plan car parking evidence[15]:

(1) Developments with more car parking have residents who are more likely to own cars;

(2) Areas with higher levels of car ownership have higher levels of car use; and

(3) Higher car use in London has various negative impacts for all Londoners as it leads to increased: road congestion (delaying journeys for all those who travel by car, as well as those using buses and transporting goods); deaths and serious injuries from traffic collisions; harmful air pollutants; carbon emissions; and physical inactivity, which in turn creates a variety of health risks.

These impacts are particularly relevant given the scale of London's growth. Average traffic speeds are already projected to fall even before accounting for the higher levels of growth being planned for in the draft new London Plan, particularly in outer London.[16] This means there is an onus on new development to make every reasonable effort to minimise its impact on the road network.

As well as transport impacts, the degree to which cars are relied on directly affects how effectively development sites are used. In the context of significantly higher housing needs, making best use of land is a central tenet of the draft London Plan. Through its Optimisation Framework,[17] it sets clearer expectations for development densities and seeks to promote mid-rise development over a wider area of London.

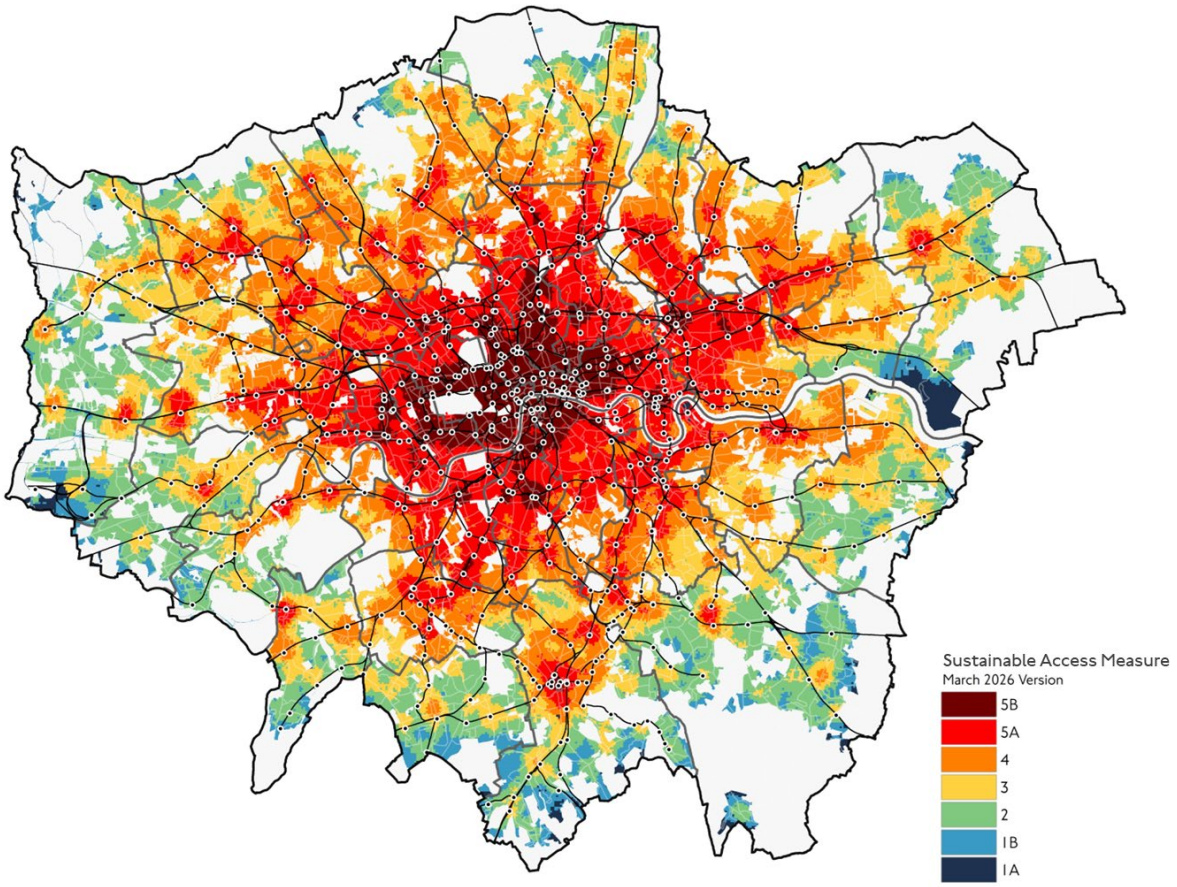
There is a strong relationship between development density and the level of car parking as part of a development. As a result, it is critical that the London Plan sets parking standards that are compatible with, and support, this approach to optimising the use of land. This is explored further in section 3.2.1 below.

The proposed standards below use TfL's new connectivity metric, the Sustainable Access Measure (SAM). This measure is calibrated on car ownership patterns in London and is a robust basis for setting car parking standards across different areas of London. Explanation of how SAM was developed is available in the summary methodology report[18] and a map of SAM is reproduced in Figure 4 below.

The following sections describe the rationale for the car parking standards at residential, office and retail developments respectively.

[15] Transport for London, 'Residential Car Parking: Part of the London Plan Evidence Base' (December 2017).
[16] This is explored in the interim July 2026 'Draft London Plan Strategic Transport Modelling Supporting Evidence' report.
[17] See policy MBUL2 of the draft London Plan.
[18] Transport for London, 'The Sustainable Access Measure (SAM): Methodology Summary Report' (July 2026).

Figure 4: SAM (March 2026 version)



3.2 Proposals

3.2.1 Residential

The proposed standards for dwellings (outside of the Green Belt) are set out in Table 9.

Table 9: Proposed maximum car parking standards

Sustainable Access Level	1	2	3	4	5 and Metropolitan and Major town centres
Settings A and B	1	0.8	0.6	0.4	0
Settings C and D	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.2	0
Settings E and F and BFOAs	0.6	0.4	0.2	0	0

The standards have been developed to:

- **Build on the current London Plan car parking standards**, that promote car-free and car-lite development across many parts of London.
- **Correspond to the Optimisation Framework of the draft London Plan** through the use of SAM and pairs of setting bands[19] to create a sliding scale of

[19] A = suburban, B = urban terraces, C = local centres, D = flatted, E = large centres/central London and F = low density land.

standards that relates to the density ranges put forward by the framework (see further explanation below).

- **Adjust for the reliance on cars in different areas while maintaining the aims of reducing traffic impacts** through allowing slightly higher provision at lower SAM bands. Meanwhile the highest SAM band (5) is proposed as car-free given the extent of alternatives in these locations, the opportunity to make the best use of land in these best-connected locations and the typically higher levels of congestion in these areas.

- **Set the maximum at 1 space per unit** in light of the challenges otherwise in accommodating multiple spaces per unit in even moderately dense development, the outsized traffic impacts of creating new multi-car households and the opportunities to supplement parking with car clubs.

- **Account for high prevalence of car parking availability within existing dwellings:** While the proposed standards minimise new car parking alongside new homes, the vast majority of the existing housing stock has access to on- or off-street parking. This provides a variety of housing options for those wanting to park their own car at home (including in some new developments). At the same time, it supports increasing housing supply in well-connected locations where many Londoners already choose to live without owning a car.

- **Account for disabled persons' parking outside of car-free standards** to ensure new development expands housing choice for disabled Londoners who own cars.

- **Adjust for Brownfield First Opportunity Areas (BFOA) and Metropolitan and Major town centres:** The former is required as these areas usually have design-led densities that may exceed the top of the Optimisation Framework density range. The latter maintains the existing car parking standard in these areas, is necessary to optimise the development opportunities in these locations and reflects the competition for space that already exist in these places.

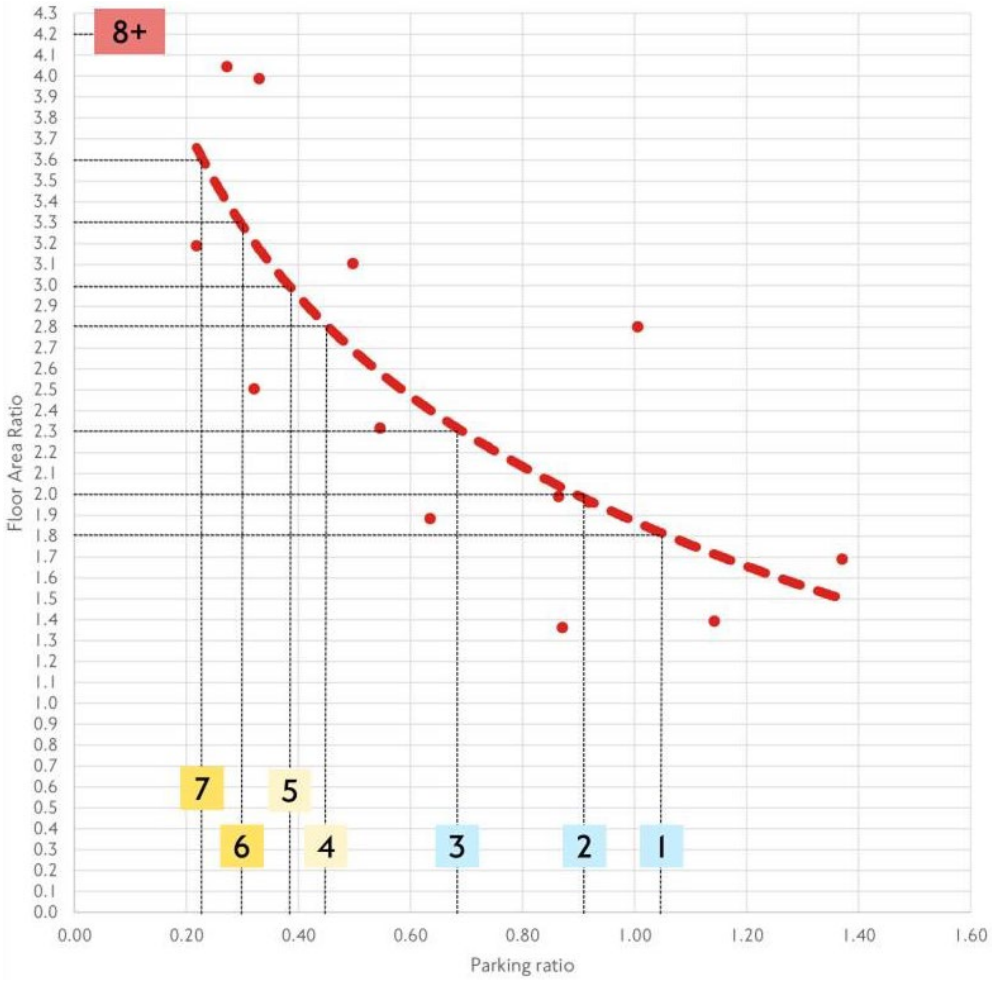
At the heart of the residential standards is the link to the draft London Plan's Optimisation Framework (OF).[20] This sets out expected density ranges for residential development in different locations within London. Density of development is strongly tied to, and can be limited by, the provision of car parking, given the significant space this takes up.

Both the OF and the proposed parking standards vary according to SAM and setting. As SAM increases, the alternatives to car ownership increase and thus maximum parking provision is decreased. As setting (i.e. existing built form surrounding a site) increases in 'intensity' (e.g. greater building heights, building cover and mix of uses), lower parking provision is generally required to support density and good design outcomes.

[20] Set out in draft London Plan policy MBUL2, 'Optimising the Use of Land and Site Capacity'.

Figure 5 illustrates an example of the relationship between density (in this case measured by floor area ratio[21] or 'FAR') and car parking ratio (the number of spaces per dwelling). This uses the case studies that informed the OF. Of the 12 case studies with 0.2 spaces per unit or greater, 11 align closely with a strong relationship between FAR and parking ratio. One outlier accommodates one space per dwelling with a floor area ratio of 2.8, but this is achieved through almost all the car parking being at basement level at that development. Car parking provision in basements is costly (i.e. impacts development viability), inflexible over time and carbon intensive so is not assumed to be necessarily an appropriate parking design solution when building at higher densities.

Figure 5: Relationship between car parking and floor area ratio at 12 case studies with at least 0.2 spaces per dwelling



The numbered boxes refer to the standardised typologies used to develop the OF, with denser typologies (higher numbers) typically requiring lower parking ratios.

While these are only 12 case studies and are therefore not definitive, some simple calculations can illustrate the relationship between density and the space required on site for car parking, as shown in Table 10. Assuming each space is 2.4 metres by 4.8 metres, and circulation space takes up the same area again as a

[21] Calculated by multiplying average building height by site coverage. E.g. a 4-storey building covering 50 per cent of a site has a FAR of 2.0.

parking space, we see that areas equivalent to significant proportions of the site would be needed for parking.

Table 10: Illustration of the percentage of site area required for car parking, at different dwellings per hectare densities and car parking spaces per dwelling ratios

Spaces per dwelling \ Dwellings per hectare	75	100	125	150	175	200	225	250	275	300	325	350	375	400	425	450	475	500	525
0.2	3%	5%	6%	7%	8%	9%	10%	12%	13%	14%	15%	16%	17%	18%	20%	21%	22%	23%	24%
0.4	7%	9%	12%	14%	16%	18%	21%	23%	25%	28%	30%	32%	35%	37%	39%	41%	44%	46%	48%
0.6	10%	14%	17%	21%	24%	28%	31%	35%	38%	41%	45%	48%	52%	55%	59%	62%	66%	69%	73%
0.8	14%	18%	23%	28%	32%	37%	41%	46%	51%	55%	60%	65%	69%	74%	78%	83%	88%	92%	97%
1	17%	23%	29%	35%	40%	46%	52%	58%	63%	69%	75%	81%	86%	92%	98%	104%	109%	115%	121%
1.2	21%	28%	35%	41%	48%	55%	62%	69%	76%	83%	90%	97%	104%	111%	118%	124%	131%	138%	145%
1.4	24%	32%	40%	48%	56%	65%	73%	81%	89%	97%	105%	113%	121%	129%	137%	145%	153%	161%	169%
1.6	28%	37%	46%	55%	65%	74%	83%	92%	101%	111%	120%	129%	138%	147%	157%	166%	175%	184%	194%
1.8	31%	41%	52%	62%	73%	83%	93%	104%	114%	124%	135%	145%	156%	166%	176%	187%	197%	207%	218%

For most higher parking ratios at higher densities, it becomes impossible to accommodate parking without significant impacts. Either large amounts of parking are needed within the urban realm (harming its design) or more expensive-to-build structures such as basements are needed (which impacts development viability).

In general the approach broadly aims to set maximum standards that avoid assuming more than 30 per cent of a site is needed for car parking (though some additional flexibility is applied at lower SAM bands and tighter restrictions are applied at higher SAM bands, as explained above). This is roughly equivalent to what can typically be accommodated while keeping within good design principles, such as through use of a podium under a central courtyard.[22]

Potential use of car clubs

Car clubs can enable people to hire a car for less frequent journeys that may not be easily made by more sustainable modes or more generally to provide flexibility for households. The draft London Plan provides for them except at SAM 5, where connectivity by public transport and walking is very high. As the draft policy on car parking is more restrictive in some locations compared to the London Plan 2021, it is considered appropriate to provide for car club parking spaces in these areas, and this is consistent with Proposal 19 of the Mayor's 2018 Transport Strategy.

[22] For instance, if a new building covers 45 per cent of the site, and two thirds of the ground floor footprint were to be used for car parking (given other space will be needed for uses such as servicing, refuse and active frontages), this would equate to 30 per cent of the whole site

Green Belt development

Green Belt proposals are subject to different standards. This reflects that many will be masterplanned around existing stations with new active travel networks, bus services and amenities planned but not yet in place, which will need to be taken into account. For the Green Belt, the most restrictive standard is car-free for development within 400 metres of a suitable rail station. The least restrictive standard is for development that is 800–1,200 metres from a suitable station (or greater than 1,200 metres from a suitable station if close to a suitable bus corridor), where up to 1 space per dwelling is permitted. This is necessary to minimise negative transport impacts of Green Belt development, while also allowing for some car ownership. Additionally, masterplan-led development in the Green Belt will be able to optimise for travel by sustainable modes and create sustainable travel behaviours from the outset, as well as accommodating facilities such as car clubs.

3.2.2 Office

The London Plan 2021's approach of office development in well-connected areas being car-free is retained, but using SAM 5 rather than the inner London boundary. In less well-connected areas, the maximum has been decreased for SAM 3–4, but increased for SAM 1–2. This aligns the standards with the connectivity levels in different places, rather than administrative boundaries. It also aligns better with the current mode shares of trips to usual workplaces from LTDS as shown in Table 11 and Table 12 (note this includes all workplaces not just offices. Car mode share to outer London offices specifically is likely to be significantly lower than to all outer London workplaces).

Table 11: Office London Plan 2021 policy and current car mode shares

Location	London Plan 2021 policy mode share	Current mode share (LTDS)
Central London	0%	2%
Inner London	0%	13%
Outer London	18%	42%

Table 12: Office proposed policy car mode share

Location	Proposed policy mode share
SAM 5	0%
SAM 3–4	10%
SAM 1–2	20%

The provision for BFOA (where not in SAM 5) has been increased from a nominal 3 per cent mode share to 5 per cent.

The London Plan 2021 sets out office car parking requirements by GIA square metre but in Table 11 they been expressed as a percentage mode share for comparison purposes with the proposal in Table 12. The mode shares assume that GIA = 1.2 × NIA and that there is 1 employee per 10 square metres NIA at 66 per cent utilisation so an effective density of 1 employee per 15 square metres NIA. This is

based on the assumptions in the 'London Employment Sites Database 2024'[23] and the 'Employment Density Guide'.[24]

3.2.3 Retail

As shown in Table 13 and Table 14, the draft London Plan proposes similar standards to the London Plan 2021 with three different levels of provision. The change mainly relates to where in London these standards apply, moving away from administrative boundaries to standards based on connectivity, as measured primarily by SAM. Areas of SAM 5 and Metropolitan and Major town centres are set as car-free, in keeping with the other uses above. SAM 3–4 and SAM 1-2 broadly equate to the standards previously applied to inner London and outer London respectively. However, both allow slightly more parking than the previous standards to moderate changes from switching the geographic basis of the standards.

For BFOAs, the London Plan 2021 standard has been retained (with minor rounding).

Table 13: London Plan 2021 policy on retail car parking

Location	London Plan 2021 policy[25]
CAZ and PTAL 5–6	None
Inner London	1 space per 67.5m² NIA
Outer London Opportunity Areas	1 space per 67.5m² NIA
Outer London	1 space per 45m² NIA

Table 14: Proposed policy on retail car parking

Location	Proposed policy
SAM 5 and Metropolitan and Major town centres	None
SAM 3–4	1 space per 60m² NIA
SAM 1–2	1 space per 40m² NIA
SAM 1–4 BFOAs	1 per 70 m² NIA

[23] Greater London Authority, 'London Employment Sites Database 2024' (March 2026).
[24] Homes & Communities Agency, 'Employment Density Guide', 3rd edition (November 2015), para. 2.11.
[25] Converted using NIA = GIA × 0.9, as per Homes & Communities Agency, 'Employment Density Guide', 3rd edition (November 2015), para. 2.10.