

Committee(s)	Dated:
Planning and Transportation Committee	21/10/2025
Subject: SPD update	Public report: For decision
This proposal: • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • Provides statutory duties	This report relates to the statutory planning function
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	n/a
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	n/a
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Summary

Work is progressing on a series of new and updated Supplementary Planning Documents to support the implementation of the City Plan 2040. To date this has focussed upon project initiation, fact-finding and research. Best practice research into engagement practices has focussed the approach to the engagement proposed within this report, emphasising input from key stakeholders at an earlier stage in the preparation process, ahead of scope finalisation and document drafting. This report seeks authorisation to seek a formal SEA Screening view from Environmental Bodies outlined in the legislation and to conduct a 'call for evidence'.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- NOTE the approach to SPD production and engagement
- APPROVE the request for a Screening opinion on the SPDs with the three Environmental Bodies
- APPROVE a public 'Call for Evidence' on the SPDs

Main Report

Background

1. At the February 2025 meeting members approved the new Local Development Scheme. This included a timetable for the preparation of eight new or updated Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

Local Development Scheme

2. There have been some minor amendments to the SPD timetables since preparation of the LDS. The main change is that the consultation will now be split into pre-engagement with key stakeholders ahead of the formal 'Regulation 13' consultation under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations, 2012. However, the anticipated adoption dates are all expected to be met or exceeded as set out below.

	Pre-engagement	Regulation 13 consultation	Adoption
Offices SPD (update)	Autumn 2025	Spring 2026	Summer 2026
Culture SPD	Autumn 2025	Spring 2026	Summer 2026
Planning Obligations SPD (update)	Autumn 2025	Spring 2026	Summer 2026
An Inclusive City SPD	Autumn 2025 to Spring 2026	Spring/Summer 2026	Spring 2027
Celebrating our Heritage SPD	Autumn 2025	Spring/Summer 2026	Winter 2026

3. The LDS also made a commitment to the preparation of an update to the Air Quality SPD, Protected Views SPD and a new Puddle Dock SPD. These are being prepared by other teams across the Corporation and will be brought back to members for consultation in due course.

Work to date

4. The SPDs listed above are considered a 'suite' of new guidance to support the emerging City Plan. Each document is being taken forward as a single project with a Project Initiation Document (PID), Scoping document and Engagement Strategy. A detailed work programme has also been developed to be able to meet the timescales as above.
5. Alongside the detailed project set-up processes, work has also commenced on background research and preparation of new evidence. This includes commissioning an update to the Viability Study which will provide evidence for the Planning Obligations SPD and Offices SPD in relation to the viability

requirements within Policy OF2. It will also support a future potential review of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This work has also involved gathering data and internal insight across the Corporation to identify initial key themes and focal points for each SPD. This has further influenced the scope of each SPD, however further external insight to be gathered through these 'pre-engagement' exercises will be considered before the scope is finalised and the SPD drafted.

6. This stage has also involved research into best practice in engagement exercises and how these can be adapted to apply to the SPD preparation process. This has identified potential to focus upon informal engagement ahead of the formal 'Regulation 13' consultation on draft SPD. Therefore, the engagement planned for Autumn 2025 as set out in the LDS will focus on input to the initial scope of the SPDs, allowing a degree of iteration of the themes and focal points ahead of the production of a draft document. Detailed stakeholder mapping has also fed into this approach by identifying the key stakeholders, their interests and perspectives alongside the potential risks of non-engagement, and this has been utilised to broaden the scope of engagement to more effectively capture views.
7. The SPD workstreams are also complementary to other Corporation projects. The Culture SPD presents an opportunity to further some of the discussions that have happened as part of the Corporation's Culture Strategy and expose selected stakeholders to a mechanism by which new cultural spaces could be delivered.

Approach to consultation and engagement

8. Taking into consideration learnings from the above, a series of engagement sessions are programmed for November 2025. In some cases, these will focus upon a particular SPD, for example the Celebrating our Heritage SPD will have a series of events with key heritage stakeholders. However other sessions will seek input on several of the SPD topics from groups identified within the stakeholder mapping exercises. At this stage the events will likely focus upon landowners, developers and planning agents; residents' groups and bodies; faith groups and cultural organisations; and neighbouring boroughs. The sessions will be tailored towards the stakeholders present but are likely to involve presentations of findings to date; workshops and roundtables; and attendance at suitable community events.
9. Market insights will also be captured through detailed interviews with commercial agents across the Square Mile. This will assist in understanding further the factors affecting the marketing and uptake of office stock within the City in relation to the key criteria within emerging Policy OF2: Protection of Offices.
10. The sessions will also gather developer perspective and residents' insight into the approach to S106 to be taken forward within the Planning Obligations SPD update. However, it is likely that further dedicated sessions may well take place in early 2026 once some of the outputs of the Viability Study update are known. These core stakeholders will also be engaged in due course in relation to the

Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) update, project prioritisation and the statutory processes associated with the potential review of the CIL.

11. Although the Inclusive City SPD sits later in the LDS timescales specific matters and questions will be raised in the engagement sessions in the Autumn relating to how groups experience the City. The engagement on this SPD will be conducted over several months utilising several different methods. The aim will be to capture views from a diverse range of users of the City, including from city workers, across the course of the day and week, visitors and residential communities. This work will also focus on groups with protected characteristics, to capture experience of the city from a broad range of perspective. The aim of is to utilise and develop new best practice for engagement across these communities, therefore this is likely to involve external engagement expertise and support.
12. It is also proposed that a public 'call for evidence' be put out. This is similar to the approach taken by the GLA on the London Plan and allows stakeholders to submit their own data, evidence or research for topics in relation to the SPDs. This will then be reviewed by officers, and where relevant may be utilised as part of the evidence base, or form part of follow-up informal conversations.

SEA Screening

13. It is best practice to undertake an SEA screening exercise for SPDs to determine whether it is likely to have 'significant effects'. This has been conducted for the SPDs set out in Table 1. Each assessment has concluded that there is no need for a full SA/SEA of the SPD as the matters have been accounted for within the over-arching City Plan Sustainability Appraisal. However, the SEA Screening documents will be sent out to the three Environmental Bodies as identified in section 4 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency) to provide comment on the appropriateness of the screening process and whether they agree with the conclusion. Where a consultation body decides to respond, it should do so within 5 weeks of receipt of the request, which will be made in the week commencing 27 October 2025.

Next steps

14. The pre-engagement exercises will take place during November 2025. This will assist in the preparation of the draft SPDs which will then be brought back to Committee for member approval to formally consult under Regulation 13 in Spring 2026.

Corporate & Strategic implications

15. The City Plan 2040 has been prepared to contribute to corporate objectives, in particular the Corporate Plan. The SPDs will sit under the City Plan and will assist in delivering the aims and objectives of the plan, as well as providing guidance on policies contained within it.

Financial implications

16. The preparation of the SPDs will be undertaken under existing and identified local plan budgets.

Resource implications

17. The resources associated with the preparation of the SPDs will be undertaken within the existing team structures.

Legal implications

18. The LDS has been prepared in accordance with Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Risk implications

19. None.

Equalities implications

20. The Public Sector Equality Duty is an ongoing requirement and will be taken into account by officers throughout the preparation of planning policy documents. Each SPD will be accompanied by an Equalities Impact Assessment which will be continually reviewed and updated and made available alongside the formal consultation on each SPD.

Climate implications

21. None.

Security implications

22. None.

Conclusion

23. The report provides and update on the new SPDs to be prepared in line with the LDS. It also seeks authorisation for formal consultation with the Environmental Bodies on the SEA Screening of the SPDs and to conduct a 'call for evidence'.

Appendices

- None

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