

Committee(s)	Dated:
Planning and Transportation Committee	22/06/2026
Subject: Offices SPD	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
Report of:	Katie Stewart, Executive Director of Environment
Report author:	Gudrun Andrews, Head of Planning Policy

Summary

A new Offices SPD has been prepared to support the implementation of policies relating to the protection of offices within the City Plan 2040. Building on consultation and engagement processes in Autumn 2025 and Spring 2026 this report seeks authorisation to adopt the Offices SPD by the Government's deadline of the end of June 2026, to be used in planning decisions within the Square Mile from 16 November 2026.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Approve the adoption of the Offices SPD with the adoption date to be no later than 30 June 2026
- Agree that the proposed implementation date of the SPD will be 16 November 2026 and conditional on the prior adoption of the City Plan 2040, from which time the Offices SPD (2015) is revoked and will no longer apply

Main Report

Background

1. Members of the committee approved formal consultation on a new Offices SPD on 13 March 2026. This SPD seeks to ensure continuity of planning guidance on

changes of use away from office once the new City Plan 2040 is adopted, and will support the policy approach to the protection of offices within City Plan Policies S4 and OF2.

2. Following Government policy changes in Autumn 2025, the final date for the adoption of SPDs is 30 June 2026. As the adoption of the City Plan will follow in late July/early August, the implementation of the guidance will need to be delayed until after this date.

Consultation and process

3. The SPD was prepared using the results of two rounds of engagement: early informal engagement in Autumn 2025 and formal Regulation 12 consultation in March/April 2026. The results of the consultation and engagement are set out in the Engagement Summary at: <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/assets/Services-Environment/SPD-Autumn-Engagement-What-We-Heard.pdf> and the formal Consultation Statement included at Appendix 2.
4. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening opinion was also sought from the statutory Environmental Bodies in Autumn 2025. Comments received confirmed that a full SEA was not required (see Appendix 3), so has not been prepared.

Changes made post consultation

5. The final SPD is included at Appendix 1. A series of changes have been made to the consultation draft SPD to reflect the comments emerging through the Regulation 13 representations. These changes are set out in within the Consultation Statement; however the key changes are set out below.
6. Several representations expressed concerns with the structure of Table 1 of the SPD. This table was intended to summarise the SPD text by setting out different areas of the City and what other factors would be taken into account in the determination of whether a site would be considered 'strategically important'. Feedback suggested that this approach could give rise to more rigid interpretations by decision-makers than was intended. Table 1 has now been removed and replaced with Diagram 1 showing attributes of a site/building in terms of location, size, distance from transport nodes and type on a scale of whether overall the site would be more or less likely to be considered 'strategically important'. Further clarity has been added to how the figure should be interpreted and that the text of the SPD is key. Subsequent further amendments have been made to the text of reflect this new figure and its positioning within the document.
7. Other concerns focussed upon whether some of the text within the SPD suggested the submission of additional documentation alongside a planning application, and amendment has been made at paragraph 4.5 to clarify this.
8. Several representations stated that the SPD did not highlight that there are other uses which support the business function of the City. Therefore some further

changes have been made to cross-reference other policies in the City Plan that support the primary business function of the City (see paragraph 1.11 of the SPD).

Implementation and next steps

9. As the new Offices SPD provides guidance relating expressly to Policies S4 and OF2 of the City Plan, it can only be used in planning decisions once the City Plan has been adopted. Subject to member approval, the SPD will be adopted before 30 June 2026 but officers are recommending that its implementation is conditional on the prior adoption of the City Plan 2040 and that it is not fully implemented until 16 November 2026. This will provide certainty for developers currently within the application process and allow time for investment and development decisions to reflect the guidance set out in the SPD.
10. In accordance with Regulation 11 of the Regulations an Adoption Statement will be prepared and made available on the Corporation's website to confirm the date of adoption and implementation; modifications made to the SPD following consultation; and notice of any person wishing to pursue judicial review on the process of adoption. Notice of the revocation of the Offices SPD (2015) will also be given under the legislation.

Corporate & Strategic implications

11. The City Plan 2040, and the SPDs which provide guidance on the application of the policies have been prepared in accordance with corporate and strategic policies, in particular the Corporate Plan.

Financial implications

12. No financial implications.

Resource implications

13. No resource implications.

Legal implications

14. The SPD has been prepared in full accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012.
15. Legal advice has been sought in relation to the timing of the SPD adoption in relation to the City Plan adoption. The intention is that the SPD will be adopted in June 2026 (ahead of the Government deadline) but will not come into effect or be applied until 16 November 2026 following the City Plan's adoption. It is noted that at the time of adoption an SPD must not conflict with the adopted development plan, which at this time is the City of London Local Plan 2015. As the SPD is not intended to support the Local Plan 2015 and will not be applied until the City Plan 2040 has been adopted, it is not considered that there is any conflict with the Local Plan 2015.

Risk implications

16. None.

General implications

17. There are not considered to be any other implications relating to the content of the proposal.

Equalities implications

18. The Public Sector Equality Duty is an ongoing requirement and is taken into account by officers throughout the preparation of planning policy documents. An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared alongside the SPD which concluded no negative or adverse impacts on those with protected characteristics (see Appendix 2 to Planning and Transportation Committee item, 13 March 2026).

Climate implications

19. None

Security implications

20. None

Conclusion

21. The Offices SPD has been prepared in accordance with the regulations and procedures. It has been subject to consultation, which has helped to identify areas where the SPD could provide greater clarity, and which did not identify significant issues that should prevent the adoption of the SPD. The SPD will be used as a material consideration in planning decisions once adopted and the implementation date has passed.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Offices SPD – Adoption version
- Appendix 2 Office SPD Consultation Statement
- Appendix 3 SEA Screening responses to the Air Quality, Celebrating Heritage, Planning Obligations and Offices SPDs

Background documents

- Report to the Planning and Transportation Committee on 13 March 2026- Offices SPD

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