

To help Londoners participate in the building of an inclusive and fair London, Planning Aid for London¹ is asking London Mayoral candidates to:

1. Provide long-term resource for planning aid advice services in London that are free to use for Londoners unable to afford professional advice to enable meaningful participation in the preparation and decisions on planning applications, policy and guidance.
2. Undertake capacity building for people especially those from disadvantaged communities living in areas of deprivation to enable successful participation in planning.
3. Working with partners, create a Mayoral Statement of Community Involvement that sets out minimum standards for meaningful public involvement in planning, defining how digital engagement methods will be inclusive and accessible for all, both at a London wide level and as guidance for local and neighbourhood level involvement.

The state of public involvement

Planning matters to London. Building a greener and sustainable city with decent housing and opportunities for all to live, work, learn and play requires good planning. Planning operates best when communities have real power over decisions that affect them. But the system has often not delivered the housing, work and services that people need. Planning affects everyone, but many people find the process inaccessible, and when they do interact, threatening and worrying.

People's trust in planning is worryingly low.² The statutory opportunities to participate alone cannot ensure positive participation and the Government's proposed planning reform is likely to further reduce opportunities for involvement.³ This will bewilder and unsettle Londoners, and disproportionately impact BAME communities, young people and other groups already facing barriers to participation in decision-making.

The case for supporting participation in planning

The Mayor of London needs to deliver tens of thousands new homes a year and implement a post-Covid recovery strategy. To deliver the ambitions of the Mayor, Londoners must be meaningfully involved. Important steps to build capacity within communities have been made, notably through Community Led Housing London, London Plus and Make London programme. Building on these to expand community planning services will help increase Londoners' faith and involvement in planning. The Mayor of London has the opportunity to ensure that London's communities can influence change in their neighbourhoods so that they can benefit from this.

Please contact Koen Rutten (Project Manager) at koen.rutten@planningaidforlondon.org.uk for further information.

¹ Planning Aid for London is a registered charity and company providing assistance to individuals and communities in London who have issues relating to development and planning and cannot afford professional advice. For 40 years we have offered training and advice to help disadvantaged community groups and individuals understand and engage with the planning system. For more information, please see www.planningaidforlondon.org.uk

² Grosvenor (2019) Rebuilding trust, [link](#)

³ Town and Country Planning Association (2019) 'London – Planning for a Just City?' [link](#); Planning Aid for London's (2020) response to the Planning White Paper *Planning for the future*, [link](#)