

# Weekly policy update from London Chamber of Commerce and Industry

*A round-up of key policy changes from the past seven days – 12 August 2024*

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## *Consultation on changes to planning framework*

- A consultation has been launched on reforming the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Government says that these proposed changes to the NPPF will:
  - Make the standard method for assessing housing needs mandatory, requiring local authorities to plan for the resulting housing need figure, planning for a lower figure only when they can demonstrate hard constraints and that they have exhausted all other options
  - Reverse other changes to the NPPF made in December 2023
  - Implement a new standard method and calculation for local plans
  - Broaden the existing definition of brownfield land, set a strengthened expectation that applications on brownfield land will be approved and that plans should promote an uplift in density in urban areas
  - Identify grey belt land within the Green Belt, to be brought forward into the planning system through both plan and decision-making to meet development needs
  - Improve the operation of ‘the presumption’ in favour of sustainable development, to ensure it acts as an effective failsafe to support housing supply, by clarifying the circumstances in which it applies; and, introducing new safeguards, to make clear that its application cannot justify poor quality development
  - Deliver affordable, well-designed homes, with new “golden rules” for land released in the

Green Belt to ensure it delivers in the public interest

- Make wider changes to ensure that local planning authorities are able to prioritise the types of affordable homes their communities need on all housing development and that the planning system supports a more diverse housebuilding sector
- Support economic growth in key sectors
- Deliver community needs to support society and the creation of healthy places
- The consultation includes some proposals to reform the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) regime as well
- The NPPF consultation can be found [here](#) and will close on **24 September 2024**. If you have any views you wish to be represented in LCCI's response, please contact the Policy Team on [policy@londonchamber.co.uk](mailto:policy@londonchamber.co.uk).

### *New consultation on charges for Silvertown and Blackwall tunnels*

- Transport for London (TfL) have launched a public consultation on proposed user charge levels for the Silvertown and Blackwall tunnels.
- The new Silvertown Tunnel will open in 2025, and TfL say that user charges will need to be introduced at both Silvertown and Blackwall tunnels, to help manage traffic and repay the construction costs.
- If paying via TfL Auto-Pay, the proposed rates would be:
  - Off-peak: £1.50 for cars, motorbikes and small vans; £2.50 for large vans; £5.00 for HGVs
  - Peak (defined as 6-10am and 4-7pm, Monday to Friday): £2.50 for motorbikes; £4.00 for cars and small vans; £6.50 for large vans; £10.00 for HGVs
- Exemptions would apply for taxis and blue badge holders, zero-emission capable and wheelchair-accessible private hire vehicles registered with TfL and DVLA-registered minibuses and coaches, as well as staff and patients eligible for the NHS reimbursement scheme.
- This includes:
  - 50% discount for low-income drivers living in east London
  - £1 discount on the standard off-peak charge for small businesses, sole traders and charities registered in host boroughs for at least one year
  - Free cross-river bus and DLR travel to support local residents for at least one year
  - A regular bus shuttle service through the Silvertown Tunnel for cyclists, free for at least one year

- The consultation on charge levels, including discounts and exemptions, runs until **3 September 2024**. LCCI would welcome any views from its members - please get in touch at [policy@londonchamber.co.uk](mailto:policy@londonchamber.co.uk). You can find more information on the consultation [here](#).

### *Extending the DLR to Beckton Riverside and Thamesmead*

- TfL have [announced](#) the results of their consultation from earlier this year on the extension of the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) to Beckon Riverside and Thamesmead.
- Having considered all feedback, TfL have said they will progress with the project. They will now work with our partners to develop the case for the scheme, including developing a funding and financing strategy for the project, which would likely require funding from the private and public sectors.
- TfL will also consider how to make the project more affordable and be delivered more quickly, while furthering discussions with Government on the potential removal of safeguarding for the Thames Gateway Bridge.
- TfL anticipate the development of an interim Outline Business Case (OBC) to be completed in spring 2025. The OBC will respond to Government feedback to the Strategic Outline Case and form the basis of future development and funding discussions for the scheme.
- You can view LCCI's response to the original consultation in March [here](#).

Both Houses of Parliament are currently in recess. If you have any queries, please contact the LCCI Policy Team at [policy@londonchamber.co.uk](mailto:policy@londonchamber.co.uk).