

BUSINESS
LONDON

March 2026

London Plan
Review Briefing
Paper:

REFORMING
CYCLE
PARKING
STANDARDS
IN LONDON



Introduction

1. London's cycle parking standards for new developments were first introduced in the 2016 London Plan and later strengthened in the 2021 Plan to support ambitious targets for cycling growth and encourage a shift from car use to active travel. These standards aim to ensure sufficient long-stay and short-stay cycle parking across residential, commercial, and specialist developments.
2. Since their introduction, the number of journeys undertaken by bike in the capital has increased by 43%,¹ but patterns of cycle use have evolved. While cycling has grown, bike ownership has not increased at the same rate as cycle hire schemes, and the rise of shared and dockless e-bikes has begun to shift demand away from private cycle parking. One in ten cycle journeys in London is now made using dockless e-bikes,² and London's largest provider, Lime, recorded an 85% increase in total journeys between 2024 and 2025.³ As these trends continue, this raises questions about whether current levels of private cycle parking remain appropriate in new developments.
3. This briefing note explains why cycle parking standards in London need to change, particularly in the context of the ongoing London Plan review. It outlines current policy, presents evidence from offices, Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA), and residential developments about how private cycle parking is being used, and examines the impacts of overprovision on design, carbon, and development viability. It concludes with BusinessLDN's recommendations for a simpler, more flexible, and evidence-led approach.

Existing Policy Framework

London Plan 2021 Requirements

4. Cycle parking standards are set out in Policy T5 (Cycling) of the London Plan 2021. T5 requires development to meet the minimum standards in Table 10.2, which vary by use class, development type, and location. For office developments, the Plan requires one long-stay cycle space per 75 sqm of gross external area (GEA) in higher-standard areas, including Central and Inner London, and one space per 150 sqm GEA in the rest of the city.
5. For residential developments, the rules differ depending on the type of housing. Private C3 homes are required to provide a minimum number of long-stay spaces per dwelling, ranging from one space for smaller units to two for larger homes, along with additional short-stay visitor spaces. Build-to-Rent (BTR) schemes are subject to similar per-unit requirements but may also include shared or communal provision across the building. PBSA, by contrast, often involves large-scale schemes where the per-bed standard results in hundreds of cycle spaces, particularly in areas designated as higher-standard locations. These differences reflect the distinct patterns of occupancy, turnover, and anticipated cycling demand across residential typologies.

¹ Transport for London, [Travel in London Report 16](#), (2025)

² Transport for London, [Travel in London Report 16](#), (2025)

³ Lime, [Meeting London's Cycling Boom: Lime Announces £20M Infrastructure and Safety Plan](#), (2025)

Support for Housebuilding London Planning Guidance

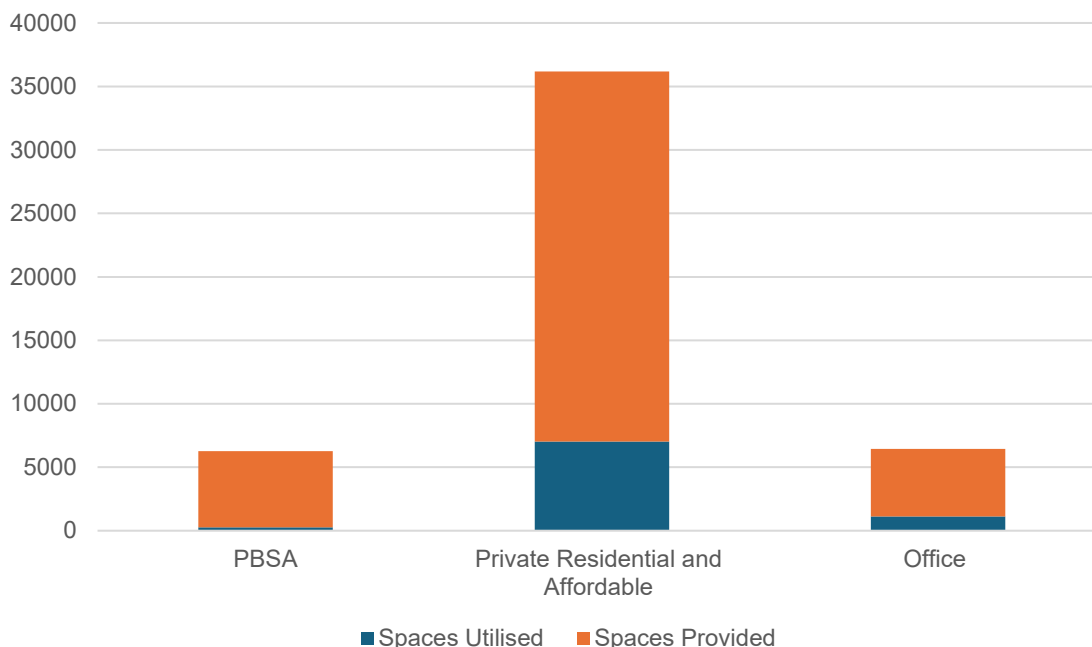
6. The recently adopted *Support for Housebuilding London Planning Guidance* recognises that there has been an overprovision of private, internal cycle parking in residential development and that, crucially, this is contributing towards undermining development viability. Large areas of internal space, often in basements, are taken up by underused cycle stores, which could otherwise be used for homes or other revenue-generating floorspace, or developers could avoid providing them entirely and save the high costs of construction. The guidance introduced lower minimum standards through a location-based banding system (Bands 1–3) intended to reflect differences in accessibility, density, and local context, alongside greater flexibility over how provision is delivered, including shared, on-street, and off-site solutions.
7. However, these reforms do not extend to commercial development or specialist housing typologies such as PBSA and co-living. Furthermore, even the revised residential baseline standards continue to exceed levels of demand evidenced in detailed utilisation surveys. As a result, many schemes remain subject to over-specified, space-intensive cycle parking requirements that are misaligned with levels of cycle ownership and parking requirements.

Evidence

8. We have collected data from our membership on how cycle parking is used in practice in PBSA and private C3 residential developments.⁴ For offices, we have used published data from the City Property Association's report, *Cycling and the City* alongside additional data from our membership. The developments included in this evidence vary in size, type, and location, but all were built to meet the London Plan's long-stay cycle parking standards. The data was collected in different ways, and therefore, we have standardised it where possible to make it comparable. Taken together, as detailed below in Figure 1, this evidence shows how private cycle parking is being used in practice and highlights where current policy does not match real-world demand.

⁴ The data collected is private reporting from members who are referenced further on.

Figure 1: Cycle Spaces Provided vs Utilisation by Development Type



Offices

9. Data from 13 major office buildings, totalling over 698,300 sqm of workspace, shows consistently low utilisation of long-stay cycle parking, with an average of just 28% of spaces occupied.⁵

PBSA

10. Across 19 PBSA schemes accommodating over 6,000 students and providing 5,985 cycle parking spaces, utilisation rates are extremely low. Almost all sites record utilisation below 5%, with a weighted average of just 4.6%,⁶ indicating minimal need for internal, long-stay cycle storage despite significant policy-driven provision.

Residential Development – Market and Affordable Housing

11. In the residential sector, a combined dataset covering 40 developments delivering over 30,000 homes and providing 29,164 cycle spaces across London, including sites in Bands 1, 2, and 3, shows similarly modest take-up.⁷ Only 24% of spaces are occupied, confirming that even in high-density, car-free, or car-light schemes, demand for internal, private parking remains well below London Plan expectations.⁸

⁵ City Property Association, *Cycling and the City* (2024); Derwent London, (2026)

⁶ Dominus, (2026); Unite Students, (2026); Telford Living, (2025); Tide, (2026)

⁷ Barratt London (2025); Fairview New Homes, (2026); Telford Living, (2025); Ballymore, (2025); Hadley Property Group, (2026); Tide, (2026); Berkeley Group, (2026)

⁸ Barratt London (2025); Fairview New Homes, (2026); Telford Living, (2025); Ballymore, (2025); Hadley Property Group, (2026); Tide, (2026); Berkeley Group, (2026)

Systemic Patterns

12. Paired with the data on the rising use of dockless e-bikes highlighted in the introduction, the evidence we have collected shows a clear pattern of overprovision and underuse of private cycle parking across all types of development. Demand for personal long-stay storage is low, while shared and dockless e-bikes are becoming increasingly popular, reducing reliance on private internal spaces. This underuse is consistent across boroughs, levels of public transport accessibility, and development types, demonstrating that the issue is system-wide rather than limited to individual sites.

Implications for Development in London

13. Evidence from BusinessLDN members shows a persistent mismatch between cycle parking requirements and how these spaces are used in practice. Delivering more parking than is necessary takes up valuable space that could otherwise be used for homes, shops, or green space. When this surplus space is in basements, it is particularly harmful: constructing basement cycle stores is expensive, time-consuming, and carbon-intensive, producing avoidable embodied carbon.
14. In practical terms, overprovision of cycle parking reduces flexibility in building design, increases costs, and can limit the amount of lettable or saleable floorspace, undermining the viability of schemes. Across offices, PBSA, and residential developments, meeting inflated cycle parking standards often means money and space are spent on infrastructure that is rarely used, while what is truly required – homes, workspace, and amenities – is constrained.

Recommendations

15. London Plan cycle parking standards are misaligned with actual use. Targeted reform of cycle parking standards would support the delivery of homes and workspace, cut unnecessary cost and carbon, and still promote active travel and modal shift.

Remove or Significantly Reduce Minimum Requirements

- **Residential Developments:** Replace the current minimum requirements with lower, evidence-based baselines that reflect how cycle parking is used in practice. Remove the location-based bands and apply the Band 3 standard across all of London. This would provide a moderate amount of cycle parking to meet typical demand, with extra spaces added only where local evidence shows they are justified.
- **Offices:** Base cycle parking requirements on Net Internal Area (NIA) rather than Gross External Area (GEA). NIA reflects the actual occupiable workspace and provides a more accurate estimate of employment levels, which better predicts cycling demand. By contrast, GEA includes non-occupiable areas such as plant rooms and cores, overstating potential cyclists and often leading to overprovision.
- **PBSA:** Introduce significantly lower baselines to reflect consistently low demand. Allow provision at around one space per 20–25 students, with flexibility to increase where supported by evidence.

Move to a Demand-Led, Flexible Model

- Keep the Support for Housebuilding LPG's flexibility for shared, off-site, or communal cycle parking, and extend it to include on-street hangars and folding bike lockers. This would give developers more options that match actual demand and fit the space available on each site.

Monitor Use, Not Theoretical Demand

- Require simple annual monitoring of long-stay cycle parking on larger schemes.
- Use real utilisation data to inform future policy updates, rather than relying on theoretical mode-share targets.

Conclusion

16. Across offices, PBSA, and C3 residential schemes, the evidence is consistent: cycle parking is being substantially overprovided under current London Plan Policy T5. A more proportionate, evidence-led approach would reduce over-specification, cut embodied carbon, and improve development viability, while continuing to support cycling through quality, flexibility, and responsiveness to real demand, rather than quantity alone.

Our mission

AT BUSINESSLDN, OUR MISSION IS TO MAKE LONDON THE BEST CITY IN THE WORLD IN WHICH TO DO BUSINESS, WORKING WITH AND FOR THE WHOLE UK.

We work to deliver the bigger picture, campaigning to tackle today's challenges and to secure the future promise of London.

We harness the power of our members, from sectors that span the economy, to shape the future of the capital so Londoners thrive and businesses prosper. We support business to succeed—locally, nationally, globally. We link up with other cities around the UK, to ensure the capital supports a thriving country.

We campaigned for the creation of the office of London Mayor and Transport for London, for the Elizabeth Line, for congestion charging, and we incubated Teach First.

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