

Response to a London Forum member's query on water fountains

There has been interest in reducing the use of bottled water, especially in single-use plastic bottles.

The [draft New London Plan](#) has a relevant Policy D7 M for 'Public Realm'

"Development Plans and development proposals should:

Ensure the provision and future management of free drinking water at appropriate locations in new or redeveloped public realm."

That is supported by a paragraph 3.7.11:-

"The provision of **accessible free drinking water** fountains helps improve public health, reduces waste from single-use plastic bottles and supports the circular economy through the use of reusable water bottles. Free drinking water fountains that can refill water bottles as well as be drunk from should be provided in appropriate locations in new or redeveloped public realm. Appropriate locations for these water fountains should be identified by boroughs during the planning process. These locations include areas with high levels of pedestrian activity, such as in town centres and inside shopping malls, as well as areas of the public realm used for play, exercise and relaxing, such as parks and squares. The ongoing management and maintenance of facilities should be secured and agreed at planning stage to ensure long-term provision is achievable."

The proposal is that London boroughs should secure the inclusion of water fountains as part of the S106 agreements in developments in appropriate locations. The policy above is now a material consideration for decision making whilst the replacement London Plan is in draft form.

Civic and community groups are recommended to find a Councillor as a "champion" for reduction in the use of plastic in the borough, with single-use plastic bottles as the prime target, for the repair of water fountains and the supply of additional ones.

Boroughs should know the location of water fountains and a Freedom of Information request may be relevant. There should be a planning policy in each borough for where additional water fountains should be provided.

The [Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association](#) can advise and they have a grant scheme.

Crowdfunding the repair of the existing fountains can be useful.