

John Lett
Outer London Commission

Response submitted by email

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Dear Sirs

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (London) Response to Initial Questions for the Outer London Commission Consultation

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (South) is pleased to respond to this consultation and contribute the expertise of its professional members in the London region across disciplines in planning, property and economic development.

RICS London wishes to highlight the following key points developed further in the attached response:

- Historic patterns of spatial development, transport and employment opportunities have created the characteristic differences between Central, Inner and Outer London's housing and employment markets. This has in turn influenced spatial development beyond London and into the regions with marked differences between the east and west.
- Increased employment opportunities can raise life aspirations and break the cycle of deprivation and low expectation, but these must be underpinned by access to training opportunities.
- Differences between the east and west of London will be relevant in shaping future economic growth and these differences shape the development of the regions beyond through 'permeable boundaries' where local economies have particular characteristics and skills
- Superhubs are an interesting concept that may have significant benefits if planned with caution
- Transport infrastructure is a key factor in success and adequate provision must underpin delivery of superhubs
- Beyond the existing downturn many sectors contribute to the success of Outer London, but it is essential to acknowledge the role of Central London and its ability to absorb the economic shocks of the future
- There is a need to avoid the doughnut effect experienced in global megacities by ensuring that Inner London shares in the success of Outer London
- There could be merit in having five superhubs around London, each with good connectivity and with distinct characteristics

Yours

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Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (South) Response to Initial Questions for the Outer London Commission Consultation

About RICS

RICS is the largest organisation for professionals in property, land, construction and related environmental issues worldwide. We promote best practice, regulation and consumer protection to business and the public. With 140 000 members, RICS is the leading source of property related knowledge, providing independent, impartial advice to governments and global institutions.

RICS London has in excess of 23 000 members working across a range of sectors in the capital who are uniquely well placed to offer genuine expertise as the leading property professional body, required by its Royal Charter to place the public interest at the core of all its activities.

The questions posed in this consultation are answered in sequence, although responses to the first two questions have been combined.

A) Economic

(1) Why has Outer London growth in employment lagged behind that of Inner and Central London and that of the South East?

(2) What factors have contributed to the uneven performance of economic sectors and geographic areas in Outer London? Why have some economic sectors prospered and others declined? Why have some areas done better and others worse?

The spatial and economic development of London and the greater South East has grown from historic origins, so that centres for commerce, finance and government have become concentrated in Central London. The need for residential accommodation for the workforce serving these sectors stimulated residential development initially in Inner London Boroughs before the introduction of the railway in the 19th Century, when Outer London became more accessible for commuting. This pattern has continued since then, with a concentration of residential development, particularly higher value housing, in the Outer London Boroughs, but especially where rail connections to London mainline stations have kept commuting journeys to an hour or less.

The model has become increasingly reinforced over the last 150 years and is demonstrated by a concentration of late Victorian development in Inner London, while pre-WWII housing expanded in Outer London, often in linear development. Higher proportions there of more affluent housing reflect the aspirations of more successful and high achieving workers to live in cleaner and less urban surroundings and this pattern has been self-reinforcing over many decades. The result in general terms has been higher concentration of employment-related development in Inner London, reflected by high land values, less affluent residential and residual industrial development there, and more affluent and lower density residential development in the Outer London suburbs.

This model is however overlain by the traditional east/west split between the affluent and more highly skilled west and the lower skilled and, in places, deprived east. The model extends beyond London to the labour markets and regional settlement patterns beyond. In the highly polycentric South East region local economies to the west tend to be more developed and more vibrant, with higher land values and greater pressure for residential development associated with the highly connected rail and road networks. This polarisation is evident in the contrast between the Kent Thames Gateway and the more economically vibrant Western Corridor and Blackwater Valley subregions.

The development of labour markets in Central London has therefore relied on a workforce commuting from Outer London and beyond. Salaries in Central London have come to attract a

premium, to compensate a growing workforce for both higher fares and increased travel time and this has created competition for more highly skilled workers who can access higher earnings in the London labour market than would be available in the Outer London suburbs or the regions beyond.

The better quality of life in the suburbs, the concentration of more pleasant residential development there and the higher earnings in Central London have all combined, so that Outer London suburbs lack the critical mass of employment necessary to generate a viable local labour market able to pay the higher salaries for a more skilled workforce. Additionally planning consents for some non-residential use may be less easy to obtain in Outer London where residents place a high value on a less densely developed local environment.

Caught between Central London and Outer London are the historically less skilled and more industrially focused Inner London Boroughs to the north and east, which are often characterised by lower land values, lower skills, fewer high value employment opportunities and consequent higher levels of deprivation. The more affluent Outer London suburbs, with lower density development and more congenial surroundings are net exporters of higher skilled workers, many of whom commute across Inner London to reach the higher value employment opportunities in Central London. Without a critical mass of higher value employment in Outer London these areas are uncompetitive in the labour market.

(3) What are the main barriers to economic and employment growth in Outer London and what factors need to be addressed to allow the region to fulfil its economic potential? In particular what investments are needed (particularly transport, both private/public and education/skills and business support) to best ensure employment growth to 2031 either in existing or new sectors?

RICS believes that the main barriers are

- i. The historic distribution of residential housing markets so that much of the land available in Outer London is already developed as either low density housing or as retail.
- ii. Traditional commuting patterns and the dominance of government and commercial presence and labour markets in Central London
- iii. Constraints on development due to the Metropolitan Green Belt which inhibits both residential and commercial markets
- iv. The pattern of rail and road transport networks, so that the majority of routes are intended to serve Central London rather than to facilitate movements laterally/radially across boroughs
- v. The skills deficit in both Inner and Outer London to the east and south east, exacerbated by the relative lack of public transport, particularly Underground. When combined with the relative deprivation across the eastern boroughs this does little to stimulate aspiration in individuals and communities, so that the low skills and deprivation in the past are reinforced for the future. The lack of affordable housing and the pressures on local authorities to meet the wider demand for social services in less affluent and more densely populated areas create challenges in promoting opportunities for change.
- vi. Self-reinforcing deprivation and lack of aspiration and empowerment results from long-term intergenerational lack of expectation. Breaking the cycle by offering opportunities that are accessible can raise aspirations once individuals perceive the scope for a better quality of life.

RICS can perceive benefits to these communities in the provision of more diverse employment opportunities, opportunities for skills training, investment in the physical fabric of communities to

enhance a sense of place and quality of life and much improved transport links. Those in the more deprived communities to the east and north might then feel that the benefits of a more affluent and higher quality life are more accessible.

(4) Which of the current employment sectors in Outer London will be thriving in 2031 and will any new sectors have emerged by then? Should we be actively encouraging particular sectors or focusing more on barriers that could be holding back growth in Outer London?

RICS anticipates that employment sectors associated with logistics and transport to serve the needs of Central London will thrive as London continues to expand. Transport, distribution and supply chains serving Heathrow are particularly likely to succeed and the legacy of commercial and retail development resulting from the 2012 Games will support the regeneration of parts of east London and increase diversity of opportunity there. The well established retail markets of Brent Cross and Croydon face challenges in the current economic climate but have the potential for regrowth. Tourism, particularly to the west, in Richmond, Kew and other attractive locations, is also likely to succeed. Vibrancy in the higher value financial, IT, pharmaceuticals and electronics industries is well established in and to the west of London. A growing population in London will continue to demand more capacity in food, healthcare and in goods and services associated with the residential housing market and retail sectors.

RICS highlights the need to provide goods and services to deliver climate change mitigation and adaptation across London is currently not well met and there may be significant potential in this sector. RICS understands from a recent event held by the London Climate Change Partnership that the cost of retrofitting London properties to reduce carbon emissions by around 70% would be in the region of £40 to £50 m and the cost of longer term adaptation is additional to this. The 'heat island' effect of London is a significant challenge in ensuring the wellbeing of the workforce and residents as well as the efficient functioning of the existing building stock. The sectors involved in retrofitting and adaptation would require manufacturing capacity, as well as logistics and installation capacity and have the potential to grow employment opportunities in London to a significant extent. The workforce involved would involve a range of higher and lower order skills in electronics, design and construction.

The demand for industrial, and commercial premises to support the varied industries and potential for manufacturing revival within this sector could be considerable, but it is difficult to see how this could be met within the Outer London Boroughs given that development is constrained by existing land use and by the Metropolitan Green Belt, and that existing road networks would be required to deliver the substantial vehicle movements essential in distribution. It might therefore be helpful to consider the possibility of stimulating skills acquisition in the new green industries in both Inner and Outer London Boroughs with the aim of locating employment in or near Inner London.

(5) The Commission's 'First Thoughts' paper outlines some ideas on the form 'superhubs' might take and possible locations. Do you consider the development of 4 or 5 super-hubs in Outer London would enhance the Outer London overall employment growth potential? What form do you think they might take? What role could mixed use development have there?

The proposal for around 4 or 5 'superhubs' in Outer London is very positive and aligns well with the Mayor's Planning for a Better London aspirations. The 'superhub' concept would be usefully underpinned by the following principles:

- i. Superhubs should reflect the existing sectors present in each of the locations and be able to harvest skills and sector experience in the local workforce, as well as to link wherever possible with existing activity in the area.

- ii. Superhubs should be served with excellent transport links and interchanges, or the development plan should be capable of upgrading existing facilities rapidly and at reasonable cost. Ideally each should be logically linked with local airport capacity, major roads and rail interchanges.
- iii. They should either have existing economic and residential densification to kick-start higher order development or be chosen for their strategic location and be capable of substantial benefit from regeneration investment.
- iv. The Mayor's proposals for subregional development with 'permeable boundaries' to reflect the need for increased interconnectivity between Central, Inner and Outer London with the regions beyond would relate well to superhubs in practical terms. Possibly the foremost example would be to use the potential to build on and integrate the high value economies of the Thames Valley with a potential superhub at Heathrow to drive economic growth to the west of London. Some other superhubs would need to be chosen with greater care to identify best opportunities resulting from this linkage.
- v. Each superhub would have the potential to improve connectivity in that part of the ring around London and each should have its own clear identity.

A superhub in Brent Cross would therefore be ideally placed to build on the success of the retail sector in that location, to use the commercial and retail skills available in the local workforce and to take advantage of the road transport links via the M1 to Luton Airport and beyond to the northern regions.

A superhub at Stratford would be well placed to link with the finance/commercial sectors at Canary Wharf and to provide linkage eastwards with food production in the Eastern region and possibly with recycling expertise also to the east.

The increased densification proposed would have the opportunity to increase employment substantially overall and, if a mixed use model is employed, to relate well to existing economic activity, it would have the potential to spread the success of Central London more widely. It is however essential to ensure that success is also spread through the adjacent Inner London Boroughs where these have the opportunity to contribute, so that the economic benefits are shared in more deprived areas and to avoid a 'doughnut' effect where investment is targeted at the Outer London Boroughs at the expense of the communities of Inner London. Interconnectivity with the Inner London labour markets would enable superhubs to access the workforce there so access to skills training is essential.

- vi. Substantial investment will be needed to ensure that superhubs generate sufficient presence to prevent the domination and gravitational pull of the financial services sectors of Central London in order that they are able to fulfil their potential.
- vii. While superhubs should have a strong business focus, they also have a role to play in R&D, especially in the sciences that will underpin climate change mitigation and adaptation and in health and pharmaceuticals. This diversification has the potential to spread economic risk for London across the sectors and to reduce the reliance on single sectors such as finance. Links with universities such as Imperial College, Kings, Brunel and Reading, located across London and beyond is essential in building high value partnerships to exploit higher order skills for the future.

(6) *Which super-hub locations would you consider best to meet the aim to improve Outer London's economic performance and why? What can be done to ensure that the superhubs are sufficiently attractive to business that businesses would want to base their operations there? What*

is required to ensure that a sufficient employment base is created for a super-hub; in particularly could growth be achievable with or without infrastructure improvements?

Superhub locations that would best meet the aim of improving the overall performance of Outer London are suggested as follows:

Heathrow

This location fits very well with the superhub concept in every respect. Transport, skills and connectivity are all present and little would be needed to upgrade public or road transport for the future. Key infrastructure projects in the pipeline are Crossrail and Airtrack that would provide the interregional connectivity essential to meet higher order workforce demands and to support the growth of a commercial centre with international accessibility and prestige. Heathrow would be well placed to build potential international trade across the higher value industries of electronics, communications, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, food and science if sufficient connectivity was established with those universities in and outside London with expertise in these sectors. RICS comment on the potential of Heathrow as a possible superhub is not intended to imply support or opposition for the future expansion of Heathrow as an airport, but merely to acknowledge that this location could have merit as an economic, residential and transport centre to build on its existing presence and connectivity.

Stratford

The 2012 regeneration and legacy would provide the investment needed for regeneration to enable connections with the City and Canary Wharf, as well as to establish connectivity with economies and skills outside the east and north east of London to would be useful to access. Stratford would be well placed to develop the potential for financial services, but equally the expertise in waste management and recycling markets exists to the east and these may be significant areas of growth.

Connectivity is good with excellent and upgraded public transport links within London, there is easy access to London City Airport and Stratford has a planned stop along the proposed Crossrail route, thereby providing cross-London and interregional connectivity. As Stratford is also well connected to the East of England region, and thereby to the European markets beyond it possibly has the best UK and European linkage. Challenges however will be in the skills deficit in East London in the short term as the impact of the 2012 legacy has yet to be realised in addressing social deprivation and under-achievement. Stratford also links well with Docklands regeneration, the eastern expansion of the City to Canary Wharf and to the East London and Eastern Region Thames Gateway.

Brent Cross/Cricklewood

The well developed retail sector is well connected to the north via the M1 and thereby to Luton Airport by road, as well as to the M25 and M40 and M4 beyond. There is rail linkage to Central London and to Brighton. The proposed Brent Cross/Cricklewood proposal exploits the development potential in this area and would provide sufficient capacity to grow the commercial presence. It would be a logical location for a superhub with a strong focus on retail and distribution, and capable of providing a pivotal link with the northern regions.

Croydon

Directly to the south of London and only a few minutes away by rail, Croydon has already experienced some densification and has existing high-rise buildings. There is already considerable employment provided by the Home Office and a well developed town centre with good retail capacity supports commuters from south London and from the London Fringe subregion of the

South East region. Croydon is well linked to Gatwick Airport and associated economic activity in the Gatwick Diamond subregion to the south. It is therefore highly accessible for a skilled workforce and is an existing higher order economic centre outside Inner London. It has the potential therefore to contribute quickly to local economies. One disadvantage in this location is the need to upgrade transport links within south London to improve connectivity with this superhub and to invest in cross country public transport, either by rail or coach. Existing residential development and the constraints of the Metropolitan Green Belt present challenges that may not be easy to overcome in delivering development or transport infrastructure. The potential to enhance rail networks in south London would avoid the worsening the already high levels of road congestion in the area, but this could be constrained by the availability of land.

Woolwich

It seems illogical to propose intensification of economic performance to the south, north east and west of London, while neglecting one of the least affluent areas in the Docklands that has excellent linkages to the very substantial Kent Thames Gateway, to the City and Canary Wharf and to Europe via the CTRL at Ebbsfleet, as well as via the Channel ports.

The regeneration capacity of the surrounding area is very substantial and there is excellent potential for academic links with the University of Greenwich. The area has a long history of industry, both at Woolwich Arsenal and elsewhere and is projected to have one of the fastest growing populations of all London Boroughs. It is close to the London City Airport. The Kent Thames Gateway will provide the largest development potential of all three regions involved in the Gateway and would sit well as a pivotal manufacturing and commercial centre as a link to London. The designation of Inner and Outer London boroughs dates back to the London Government Act 1963 (c 33) and reflected the characteristics of the boroughs as they were at that time. Since then much has changed and the southern parts of the London Borough of Greenwich are much less urban than comparable areas to the west, reflecting substantially less affluence and a closer association with the Gateway areas of deprivation. Even the northern parts of this borough around Greenwich, Woolwich and Abbey Wood have been subject to much less development pressure and there are marked areas of contrast between open greenspace, urban deprivation and industrial dereliction.

In this location there is certainly sufficient capacity in both land and labour markets for a superhub with an appropriate industrial focus. Woolwich is well located on the Docklands Light Railway and will have a Crossrail stopping point on the approach to Abbey Wood. It is served by frequent rail services direct to London Charing Cross and Cannon Street stations approximately 30 minutes away. Woolwich is an untapped and potentially very useful economic resource in developing a vibrant manufacturing sector, possibly in the new green industries and it is well located and well connected with the eastern approaches to London. Connectivity, land availability, the need for regeneration and the lack of planning constraints make this a practical and attractive location for development that is able to exploit the labour market within the wider Kent Thames Gateway as well as within this borough. Although there are existing rail links to east Kent and to London, additional DLR connection would add to the accessibility of this location, as would additional radial rail interconnectivity.

(7) *If superhubs are created, what role would you envisage for other town centres and other business locations/hubs (eg Park Royal) in Outer London and how can these roles be enhanced alongside the creation of superhubs?*

In each of these locations the hub and spoke model could provide a model to enhance connectivity to nearby centres, both in Outer London and beyond to Inner London and the surrounding regions. A focused approach to investment in these centres should stimulate growth and economic activity that would draw in employment and further investment. This should stimulate further growth in nearby areas, and possibly provide employment opportunities in less affluent areas. Within

London, and particularly south of the Thames where there is limited Underground connection, cross-country infrastructure is long overdue to allow these areas to realise their potential. Without that investment it is unlikely that they ever will, and so the superbub concept is particularly valuable for both Woolwich and Croydon.

(8) What do you consider would be the optimal balance of employment opportunity for Outer London between local opportunities, those in Central or Inner London, or those outside London in nearby growth corridors? What are the implications for these other areas?

The optimal balance of opportunities will depend entirely on the specific locations chosen and their economic objectives. In Croydon, Heathrow and Woolwich superbubs have the potential to attract commuters from the growth areas beyond, although possibly less so in Stratford and Brent Cross/Cricklewood. The impact on Inner London Boroughs could however be considerable. It is important that the presence and potential attraction for investment in each case does not result in increased deprivation in Inner London locations and this is a real concern for both Woolwich and Stratford. However this is a challenge that could be managed and it would be illogical to refuse investment in these quite vulnerable areas on this basis.

(B) Quality of Life

(9) In absolute and relative terms (compared with Central and Inner London and the South East) how has the residential environment changed (good or bad) in Outer London over the last 25 years and how has this affected its attractiveness and a place to live work and do business

Some development has taken place in Outer London Boroughs, but the general environment and quality of life there is good. The strict adherence to the constraints of the Metropolitan Green Belt has meant that development of all kinds has been limited and that some rural and semi-rural agriculture remains close to London. Government has recommended the selective release of portions of the Green Belt and the concept of 'wedges' rather than a belt has been proposed for strategic development. Where the landscape is of high quality and has genuine value RICS believes it should be maintained without development, unless this is essential. However there are areas where existing land use has compromised this quality and it has been suggested that these areas might be used for development rather than build on pristine country beyond. That the Metropolitan Green Belt remains attractive for residential use is clear.

(10) What improvements would bring about the greatest improvements to the quality of life for outer London residents, workers and businesses? How would these bear on the economic objectives for the Commission?

RICS believes that improved transport infrastructure and improved cross-country provision would substantially improve the quality of life of Outer London residents and the choices they make in access to employment and education. Business too would benefit from greater connectivity and the reduction in road traffic resulting from increased use of public transport would bring both an improved environment and health benefits from decreased vehicle emissions.

(11) How could superbubs affect the quality of life in Outer London for residents, workers and businesses?

Outer London economic development has the potential to greatly reduce the financial and time commitment of commuting to Central London and to bring more choice into local labour markets at all levels of skills and sector experience. This would impact very favourably on the quality of life experienced by many Londoners. The financial burden of commuting can be considerable and for those on lower pay the cost can make career-development opportunities inaccessible.

(12) How important is the provision of local social infrastructure to the quality of living in Outer London? (schools, health or other specific infrastructure) how does this bear on the economic objectives of the Commission?

RICS believes that local social infrastructure is essential throughout Outer London if development is to be sustainable. Public transport is not always well developed and the lack of existing provision means that those without access to a car are unable to access essential services. Road congestion is notorious and carbon emissions,, particularly for radial journeys poorly served by public transport, are high. Without cross-country public transport the absence of local infrastructure greatly compromises the sustainable development of communities and creates exclusion and consequent social disadvantage.

(13) What are the factors that give your or other districts in Outer London an sense of place and community ownership? How will these bear on the economic objectives of the Commission?

Existing town centres, open spaces, the historic environment and local architecture are all factors in promoting a sense of place and community ownership. RICS professionals work across these sectors and are well qualified to comment on the importance of the sense of place to sustainable communities and to quality of life.. Superhubs should not obliterate the places in which people currently live and work, and communities should not lose what is valuable in the local environment, but superhubs may have the potential to provide a functional and distinct solution in particular locations that have the capacity to bring greater prosperity and opportunity to people and to grow the local economies around London. They should not intrude on the more human scale of local communities as this is a particular factor in the heritage to which people assign a strong sense of community ownership and wish to safeguard for the future..

(14) What improvements would you like to see in the quality fo the public realm eg open space quality and provision? How will these bear on the economic objectives of the Commission?

The development of superhubs will inevitably impact on open space in Outer London, but the suggestion that densities should increase will go some way to mitigate that by freeing corresponding capacity for open space. There is a particular opportunity to deliver high-rise commercial development where the location is appropriate.

However for residential development it is worth highlighting the need to avoid the tower block experience of the 1960s where widespread development of this kind led to considerable distress among residents, to social problems and to the eventual demolition and replacement with buildings that fostered a greater sense of community and identity. Residential development at lower densities allows easier access to open greenspace and to community infrastructure and it has been suggested that this promotes a higher quality of life for families and the elderly in particular. Open space should include both recreational space and more natural environments where these are possible in order to retain the character and sense of place that have shaped the high quality environment of the Outer London Boroughs. This high quality experience is key in attracting inward investment and a highly skilled workforce, in addition to promoting community wellbeing.

Transport

(15) How could you make the superhubs you have indicated more generally accessible to residents and workers from across London and outside? What is an acceptable balance between public transport and provision for cars? Will this vary in different parts of Outer London eg in the Thames Gateway relative to West London?

In order for superhub development to be sustainable, CO₂ emissions should be minimised as far as practicable. It therefore seems perverse to provide increased and planned development that results in increased CO₂ emissions that do not align with carbon emission reduction targets,

particularly at a time when awareness of climate change has never been greater. All superhubs should be accessible by public transport, whether by rail or by coach. It is realistic to anticipate that future vehicle fuels may in future have a less damaging carbon implication and that not all journeys will be made by public transport. A balanced approach seems most sensible, although the deficit in cross-borough public transport in some areas does need to be addressed as a priority. The differential provision of public transport in either the east or the west would not relate well to the ethos of social equity. Residents in both areas would need to make journeys by road and by rail and areas to the east are already very poorly served by public transport. RICS believes that this requires improvement. The lack of affluence in the east also means that car ownership may be lower on a household and per capita basis so investment in public transport is essential here, particularly to facilitate connectivity between Inner and Outer London and to the regions beyond.

(16) What approach should be taken to traffic management including car parking congestion and pollution and the bearing these have on climate change? How could this bear specifically on super hubs and more generally across Outer London employment growth rose above historic levels and travel patterns changed as Outer London became a more attractive place to work?

The population of the UK, and certainly of London, is increasing at varying rates. If superhubs are to be delivered it is almost inevitable that increased numbers of journeys and vehicle movements are very likely. While it is unacceptable to prohibit car journeys to work, it is essential to provide attractive and realistically priced public transport to promote choice away from car journeys. Planning for superhubs should prioritise this rather than take a more prescriptive approach. Where car journeys are sometimes inevitable 'park and ride' schemes can sometimes provide a solution to congestion in more urban areas. The prohibition of car use would disadvantage those living in locations where inadequate public transport provision is provided and this would be inequitable if it precluded access to employment opportunities.

(17) Where traffic demand exceeds capacity in Outer London what tools would be most effective for smoothing traffic around town centres and managing crowding in addition to or where there is not scope for infrastructure movements?

Park and ride and bicycle hire, with bicycle lanes, are solutions. The best option would be to plan for sufficient capacity where possible and, where this cannot be achieved, to preferentially select locations where the issue would have less impact. It is unrealistic to plan for intensification without providing adequate and attractively priced public transport and insufficient capacity for anticipated car movements.

(18) Extensive radial public transport networks already exist to town centres and some superhubs, what needs to change to make them the modes of choice?

They need to be attractive to use, to cover the routes and destinations most needed, to be safe and frequent and within the price range of workers and those on retirement and non-working incomes in order to promote social inclusion. One possible way forward might be to attach public transport financial rewards to remuneration packages or to include discounts for frequent users, possibly funded through business rates or employer contributions.

(19) The development of super-hubs is likely to require public transport improvements to make them more accessible. That in turn is likely to need residential densities to be optimised around and within the superhubs to justify the necessary transport investment. Is this trade-off acceptable to secure better public transport access and employment growth and is there a particular, economically viable balance to be struck between residential densification, transport investment and employment growth?

Outer London residents already enjoy a high quality of life with lower residential densities than in much of Inner London. Safeguarding the high quality of the local environment ensures that a

highly skilled workforce is available to support economic growth in super-hubs. The proposal to deliver these would therefore be self-defeating if the quality of the environment was compromised to the extent that this workforce opted instead to relocate to a more congenial environment outside London and possibly to commute elsewhere. Improvements, and in some places very substantial improvements, will be needed to reduce carbon emissions from cars. This should not be sought as a rationale to reduce the quality of life and local environment for local people, especially as this funding is essential whether or not super-hubs are to be delivered.

(20) Do super-hubs need to evolved into 'hub and spoke' networks serving the neighbouring areas to make the most of opportunities for local residents? How could a hub and spoke network service the more geographically extensive labour markets required to support super-hubs (and provide accessible opportunities for more workers within and outside London)? If these networks are road based systems should options for further demand management be considered?

Public transport hub and spokes models should provide onward connections elsewhere within the transport network. This allows journeys of choice to be made, although possibly with one or more changes. Road networks, although overcrowded at times, are already quite well developed in Outer London so, apart from essential upgrades, a focus on providing a high quality public transport service attractive to users would seem to be more useful. A choice based system capable of attracting a skilled and numerous workforce would seem a better and more sustainable model than a prescriptive demand management approach. The benefits to business of providing less expensive commercial floorspace and access to a skilled workforce might create capacity for business contributions to provide transport that will support their economic success.

(21) What are the key destinations/services which people in Outer London want access to?

Key destinations include places of employment, public transport provision, retail outlets, banks, places of entertainment and leisure, social contact, schools, hospitals and GP services, access to FE and HE establishments and to the countryside for sports and leisure. This list is not a definitive list and residents of Outer London will no doubt have a much more extensive set of destinations. It omits the range of social contacts that individuals wish to maintain and reinforce and which will stimulate journeys made for this specific purpose.

(22) How important is the provision of local transport infrastructure to the quality of living in outer London? How does this bear on the economy of outer London

The provision of local transport infrastructure for Outer London is essential if the UK is to meet its carbon emission reduction targets and RICS strongly supports this aim. Car journeys should not be prohibited and travel should be at reasonable cost to promote the choice of public transport. This is essential in providing a high quality of life for the future, but it should not be at the expense of the quality of life that is currently enjoyed.

Greatly increased densification could have very negative consequences for local communities and for economies if Outer London Boroughs came to resemble their less attractive Inner London counterparts. One of the essential characteristics of Outer London is that its residents have made a positive choice to live away from the less attractive areas of Inner London. If road congestion, overcrowding and densification damages their experience of their local environment, these residents may, and certainly have the financial means to do so, opt to relocate to a more favourable environment. This will damage the newly grown economies of Outer London and create an even more acute skills shortage for Central and Inner London. The optimal solution would seem to be to constrain high densification to particular locations, while retaining the existing high quality environment experienced in many Outer London Boroughs.

Further comments:

The effect of increased employment and economic growth in the Outer London Boroughs may have unforeseen effects on both Inner London and Central London as well as on regions beyond the capital:

Central London

In encouraging growth in Outer London employment (particularly in the super hubs) care will be needed not to compete with the important Central London business cluster. Central London is the powerhouse of the London economy partly because of its critical mass and variety of commercial activities which feed off each other to mutual benefit. Dilution of this mass by attracting businesses away to Outer London centres could have serious impacts for London's economy as a whole.

Central London is also at the hub of the London, regional and, to an extent, UK public transport network. The radial public transport links into central London mean that a large proportion of the workforce and business visitors travel in by public transport, which is more environmentally sustainable than having these activities dotted around, say, the north circular or M25. It also means there is a variety of public transport options for accessing central London - if one link is out of action there are usually other routes. Key to the sustainability of the superhubs will be improved public transport links, particularly orbital, and local sustainable means of travel. The worst of all worlds would be if travel to/from the superhubs were predominantly by private car. Further, if the superhubs generated significant cross-London movement there could be clogging up of the public transport network. Transport modelling of potential impacts of the superhubs will be an important part of developing the concept.

Central London's critical mass also means it can better withstand shocks to the economy either positive or negative. The Outer London hubs will need to be careful not to become dependent upon one or a few major employers as they will be less able to absorb shocks such as a major layoff of staff or a relocation of the business. The impacts on local people would be concentrated near the hub unlike Central London where the impacts of such shocks are dissipated throughout London and the wider South East/East.

It may be helpful to develop a model where superhubs aim at accommodating a wide variety of smaller and medium sized employers as part of a mixed use economic base which sources predominantly local employees. The concept should incorporate a local network of sustainable travel options (walking/cycling/pub transport) and longer distance transport links between the superhubs should be predominantly by orbital public transport.

Inner London

Care should be taken to ensure that permeable boundaries extend into Inner London to provide for enhanced employment and skills acquisition by the workforce there. There is certainly a need for caution in that the gravitational pull of rapidly growing superhubs could deplete the investment that would otherwise be available for the regeneration and economic growth of Inner London, and thereby develop the 'doughnut effect' common to many of the megacities, where deprivation grows from the centre, making these areas of the city progressively less attractive and less affluent.

The regions

On that basis it is possible that economic growth in the Outer London Boroughs could have a positive effect on the regions beyond. This is most likely in the west where the hub of Heathrow may provide synergy along the Western Corridor into London. The impact of Woolwich and Stratford on the regional hinterland could be extremely positive if managed well, but if these regional links provide merely a workforce resource to service the Outer London Boroughs, the skills depletion may impact adversely on regional economies.

