

Designs on London

London Assembly Planning and Spatial Development Committee

April 2004



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Chair's foreword



The design and quality of London's built environment is a key to its future prosperity and to securing good quality of life. London cannot accommodate its rapid increase in population and improve conditions for existing residents without the highest standards of architecture and urban design to make the best possible use of land and buildings. Despite this, many of our buildings and spaces are still poorly designed and devoid of any sense of place. Equally, much of our existing fabric is suffering from neglect and poor maintenance. London cannot afford this if it is to maintain its position as a world city. So we decided to take a closer look at these issues and

understand how the London Plan's ambitions for an urban renaissance are being implemented.

This report shows that a lot of good work is being done to improve the quality of urban design across London, but much more is needed and our investigation found that political will, resources and skills are lacking. There is also a great need to improve coordination of efforts and promote a more integrated approach to urban design, which cuts across disciplines and service departments.

In the following chapters we seek to capture the main concerns outlined to us in both the oral and written evidence received and present a number of suggestions which we believe will help to address some of these issues and deliver the highest quality in the design of our buildings and spaces.

The Committee would like to thank the witnesses who participated in the public sessions as well as those who provided written evidence and those who contributed to the Committee's site visits.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Neill', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bob Neill
Chair of the Planning and Spatial Development Committee

The Planning and Spatial Development Committee

The Planning and Spatial Development Committee was established on 8 May 2002 as part of a major reorganisation by the London Assembly of its committee structure. It is one of eight Committees that between them cover the range of policy areas relevant to London government. The membership of the Committee, agreed in May 2003, is:

Bob Neill (Chair)	Conservative
Sally Hamwee (Deputy Chair)	Liberal Democrat
Tony Arbour	Conservative
Len Duvall	Labour
Noel Lynch	Green
Val Shawcross	Labour

Terms of reference

The terms of reference of the Committee are as follows:

1. To examine and report from time to time on
 - the strategies, policies and actions of the Mayor and the Functional Bodies
 - matters of importance to Greater Londonas they relate to spatial development and planning in London
2. To examine and report to and on behalf of the Assembly from time to time on the Mayor's Spatial Development Strategy, in particular its implementation and revision.
3. When invited by the Mayor, to contribute to his consideration of major planning applications.
4. To monitor the Mayor's exercise of his statutory powers in regard to major planning applications referred by the local planning authorities, and to report to the Assembly with any proposal for submission to the Mayor for the improvement of the process.
5. To review Unitary Development Plans (UDPs) submitted to the Mayor by the local planning authorities for consistency with his strategies overall, to prepare a response to the Mayor for consideration by the Assembly, and to monitor the Mayor's decision with regard to UDPs
6. To take into account in its deliberations the cross cutting themes of: the health of persons in Greater London; the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom; and the promotion of opportunity.
7. To respond on behalf of the Assembly to consultations and similar processes when within its terms of reference.

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Executive summary

London's population is set to grow by some 800,000 people by 2016¹. The Mayor's London Plan sets out the need to accommodate London's growth within the existing boundaries, through higher densities and intensification in line with public transport capacity, leading to a high quality "compact city" and embracing the Urban Task Force's recommendations for an urban renaissance. The London Plan rightly acknowledges that compact, intensive, mixed-use development is only viable if buildings and spaces are carefully designed, both in themselves and in the way in which they integrate with and complement their surroundings.

In this investigation we sought to understand how the Mayor's ambitions for high quality design are being implemented, what the barriers to progress are and how they might be resolved.

We found that significant progress has been made in creating a culture of awareness and an enabling policy environment for improving the quality of the built environment in London. Some results are also beginning to appear. Our investigation highlighted a number of recent projects and developments that suggest an increasing attention in the design and quality of the built environment.

However, despite many individual examples of successful urban design and urban improvement projects, our investigation found that there is no sign of a cohesive and coordinated effort beyond any one project, programme or department. Our greatest concerns, echoing those of our witnesses, are not about the one off set pieces (although these are important), but the everyday challenges set by the thousands of streets and public spaces that already exist around us, which constitute the living environment of most Londoners. The evidence we received highlighted a number of recurring themes including the lack of an integrated approach to urban design, the lack of leadership (both at officer and political level), concerns about the effectiveness of the planning system and planning control, the shortage of skills and the funding deficit.

The need for an integrated approach

There is a clear need for a broader, comprehensive approach to delivering, managing and maintaining high quality environments across London. We recommend that an articulated vision and action plan be developed to get everyone working together and to drive forward a more integrated approach to urban design, which cuts across disciplines and services departments.

Planning

The planning system has a key role to play in delivering better design. There was general agreement amongst our witnesses that the development control system in London – particularly at the local level – offers much greater scope than is currently realised to guide and influence the design and quality of resulting developments.

Some developments are underway. The concept and principles of urban renaissance are now embedded in the Mayor's London Plan, and the current reform of the planning system presents a unique opportunity to integrate design

¹ The London Plan, p. 25

principles into the Unitary Development Plan and development control process at the local level, which must be grasped.

But for the planning system to work effectively, it must be adequately resourced at all levels with appropriately qualified staff, including those with urban design skills. We recommend that the Mayor, the ALG and other relevant stakeholders make the case for additional resources at borough level to boost planning and architectural expertise.

Raising skills

Effort needs to be made to raise standards of urban design skills across London and to improve the awareness of the value of good design both in the public and the private sector. The newly established London Authorities Urban Design Forum and the LDA's forthcoming Centre of Excellence for Urban Regeneration are positive initiatives for enhancing urban design skills, raising standards and widening knowledge and awareness of urban design across the built environment interests.

Resources and funding

The lack of resources remains a major barrier to delivering, managing and maintaining high quality urban environments, particularly at local authority level. Greater investment, both from the public and the private sector, could be achieved by greater recognition of the social, environmental and economic benefits good urban design and high quality environments can bring.

1 Introduction

This report

- 1.1 This is the report by the London Assembly's Planning and Spatial Development Committee on its scrutiny of London's Urban Renaissance. It draws on discussions held at three evidentiary hearings held by the Committee in November and December 2003, supported by written evidence produced for those hearings.
- 1.2 The scrutiny examined what progress has been made in delivering an urban renaissance in London since the publication of the Government's Urban Task Force report "Towards an Urban Renaissance" in 1999, particularly in the areas of planning and urban design.

Scrutiny of London's Urban Renaissance

- 1.3 Our scrutiny's terms of reference, agreed on 21 October 2003, were to:
 - Review and assess progress made towards achieving a design-led urban renaissance in relation to planning policy, development control and regeneration practice in London; focusing on achievements against the key urban design principles as outlined in the Urban Task Force report.
 - Highlight examples of best practice in design-led urban renaissance in London.
 - Assess some of the obstacles that are being encountered in delivering an urban renaissance across London and what can be done to overcome them.
 - Review the effectiveness of policy and mechanisms to achieve an urban renaissance in London.
 - Assess and consider the role and performance of the Mayor's Architecture and Urbanism Unit in delivering an urban renaissance in London.
 - Make appropriate recommendations to the Mayor, Local Authorities and other key stakeholders.
- 1.4 Our first evidentiary hearing, held on 11 November 2003, examined key issues and challenges relating to the implementation of a design-led urban renaissance in London, quality of public spaces, urban design skills, resources and mechanisms for delivery; our second hearing on 25 November focused on practical achievements and reviewed successes and failures in delivering the urban renaissance in London. Our third hearing on 9 December 2003 focused on the role of the Mayor's Architecture and Urbanism Unit in delivering an Urban Renaissance in London.
- 1.5 In this report we draw on written evidence submitted to the Scrutiny Committee, on points raised by witnesses at the evidentiary hearings and information gathered from the Committee's visits to sites in Greenwich and Lewisham in January 2004 and to Amsterdam in February 2004. The list of witnesses attending each of the hearings is presented in Annex B. Those individuals and organisations that submitted written evidence are listed in Annex C. Other references used in this report are quoted in the footnotes.

2 National context

The Urban Task Force report and the Urban White Paper

- 2.1 The concept of Urban Renaissance grew out of the final report of the Government's Urban Task Force *Towards an Urban Renaissance*. The Task Force was set up in October 1998 by the Deputy Prime Minister to "identify causes of urban decline and to address the question of how to improve the quality of our towns and villages while at the same time providing houses for almost 4 million additional households in England over a 25-year period"².
- 2.2 The report, published in June 1999, set out a vision for an "urban renaissance" of British town and cities through making them compact, multi-centred, mixed-use, socially mixed, well designed and connected, and environmentally sustainable. It put on the agenda the need to upgrade the existing urban fabric, and promote high quality in the design of buildings and public spaces.
- 2.3 The report argues strongly that urban renaissance is "design-led" and that "promoting sustainable lifestyles and social inclusion in our towns and cities depends on the design of the physical environment"³. Design in this sense does not just mean aesthetics. It is also a process, a "core problem-solving activity"⁴ that not only determines the quality of the built environment – the buildings, public spaces, landscape and infrastructure – but is also a key to achieving economic, social and environmental goals.
- 2.4 In terms of design the report highlighted a number of key physical aspects, which impact on the performance of successful urban neighbourhoods and cities, including density, mix of uses, architecture, and, crucially, the layout of public spaces and the design of the transport network.
- 2.5 The report also includes a set of basic *principles for urban design*⁵ for assessing plans and proposals:
 1. *Respecting the site and setting*. The layout of a development must recognise its social and physical context, and seek to integrate with existing patterns of urban form and movement.
 2. *Respecting context and character*. Design must respect local traditions and relationships, and draw on them to inspire and guide new forms of development.
 3. *Priority to the public realm*. From the front door to the street, to the square, the park and on out to the countryside, designs should create a hierarchy of public spaces that relate to buildings and their entrances, to encourage a sense of safety and community.

² Further details on the Urban Task Force can be found at http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odpm_ind_ex.hcst?n=3563&l=2

³ Towards an Urban Renaissance, Final Report of the Urban Task Force, June 1999, p.49

⁴ Towards an Urban Renaissance, Final Report of the Urban Task Force, June 1999, p.39

⁵ Towards an Urban Renaissance, Final Report of the Urban Task Force, June 1999, pp.70-71

4. *Ensuring access and permeability.* A user-friendly public realm should make walking and cycling easy. Car dependency should be minimised and integration with public transport maximised.
 5. *Optimising land use and density.* The design potential of vacant urban sites and buildings should be optimised by intensifying development and uses in relation to local shops, services and public transport.
 6. *Mixing activities.* Diversity of activity and uses should be encouraged at different levels: within buildings, streets, urban blocks and neighbourhoods.
 7. *Mixing tenures.* To avoid single housing tenure, of whatever kind, designs should offer a wide choice of tenure options at urban block, street, and neighbourhood level.
 8. *Building durably.* Buildings should be designed to be durable over many generations and through changing social and economic needs.
 9. *Building to high quality.* Buildings, landscape and public spaces should be designed and build to high standard, aesthetically and structurally.
 10. *Respecting the environmental stock.* Development projects should as compact as possible and should enhance the environment.
- 2.6 Design-related recommendations and proposals included a national Urban Design framework to deploy the design principles throughout the development system; local strategies for public realm; integrated spatial master plans for localities of significant change; and proposals to increase skills and participation in urban regeneration and design.
- 2.7 The Task Force Report was followed by the publication in November 2000 of the Government's Urban White Paper "Our Towns and Cities: The Future – Delivering an Urban Renaissance", which set out a comprehensive framework for action at national, regional and local level to achieve an urban renaissance. The White Paper stresses the importance of better planning and design, of bringing previously developed land and empty property back into use, and of looking after the existing urban environment better.

The Sustainable Communities Plan and Government Planning Policy

- 2.8 Most recently, the Government's *Sustainable Communities Plan*⁶, published in February 2003, reiterated the Government's commitment to improving the quality of the built environment design as a key to creating attractive and sustainable communities in the South East. Through the *Sustainable Communities Action Programme*, published in July 2003, the Government has taken forward the policies and actions set out in the White Paper and the Sustainable Communities Plan. The action programme makes it clear that it is important to foster a well designed accessible and pleasant living and working environment. An important element of the action programme is to provide a total of £41m over the next 3 years to support, amongst a range of initiatives, the work of CABI, as the Government champion for architecture and urban design, to improve the design standards of buildings and spaces and the skills

⁶ Sustainable communities: building for the future, ODPM. February 2003, available at: <http://www.odpm.gov.uk/communities/plan/main/index.htm>

needed to deliver this. CABE's role has also been widened to create CABE Space, to improve liveability and champion high quality design.

- 2.9 The Government's commitment to good design is also demonstrated by recent developments in national planning policies.
- 2.10 Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 3 "Housing"⁷ requires local planning authorities to adopt policies which seek to improve the quality and attractiveness of residential areas and avoiding the profligate use of land, for example, to create places and spaces with the needs of people in mind, which are attractive, have their own distinctive identity but respect and enhance local character.
- 2.11 The draft revised Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 "Creating Sustainable Communities", recently published for consultation, underlines the importance of good design in creating sustainable communities and makes it clear that "there should be no acceptance of ill-conceived designs which do not contribute positively to making places better for people"⁸. The Government has just amended the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill to provide that applications for planning permission and listed buildings consent must be accompanied by a statement about the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development.
- 2.12 The Government has also amplified its design policies through good practice guidance. The companion guide to PPG1 "By Design"⁹, produced in partnership with CABE, encourages a move away from negative reliance on standards towards a more positive emphasis on place making. The companion guide to PPG3 "Better Places to Live", also produced jointly with CABE, sets out the principles of good design which contribute to the creation of successful residential development.
- 2.13 The Committee very much welcomes the Government's commitment to seek an urban renaissance and its recognition that better informed attention to urban design is central to the delivery of the Government's vision for sustainable communities.

⁷ *Planning Policy Guidance 3: Housing*, (DETR 2000) can be found on the ODPM website at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_606933.hcsp

⁸ Consultation Paper on Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities, ODPM, March 2004, p.13

⁹ *By Design. Urban design in the planning system: towards better practice*, DETR and CABE (2000) can be found on the ODPM website at http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_605981-01.hcsp

3 Delivering an Urban Renaissance in London

Introduction

- 3.1 London's population is set to grow by 800,000¹⁰ in the next thirteen years. The Mayor's London Plan sets out the need to accommodate London's growth within the existing boundaries, through higher densities and intensification in line with public transport capacity, leading to a high quality "compact city" and embracing the Urban Task Force's recommendations for an urban renaissance¹¹.
- 3.2 The London Plan rightly acknowledges that compact, intensive, mixed-use development is only viable if buildings and spaces are carefully designed, both in themselves and in the way in which they integrate with and complement their surroundings.

"As London's population and economy grow, the existing fabric will need to be carefully maintained, and new spaces and buildings sensitively introduced. Good urban design gives order to space and beauty to buildings. Poor design results in inefficient and fragmented use of land and buildings and spaces that make hostile and unattractive environments for citizens and communities".¹²

- 3.3 The challenge is to translate these fine words into action and change on the ground. As things stands, the quality of design, management and maintenance of many of London's new and existing buildings and spaces is poor. This investigation provided an opportunity to understand why this is and what can be done to improve this situation.

Progress and achievements

- 3.4 A lot has changed in London since the Urban Task Force report was published in 1999. There was consensus amongst our witnesses that the establishment of the Greater London Authority in 2000, after thirteen years without city government and strategic planning, marked a significant step forward, particularly through the Mayor's Spatial Development Strategy, the London Plan, which set a new strategic direction to achieve an urban renaissance of London's built and natural environment.
- 3.5 Richard Rogers (Chief Advisor to the Mayor on Architecture and Urbanism), believes significant progress has been made in creating a culture of awareness for enhancing the quality of urban design, but achieving results on the ground is a long-term process and there are significant challenges to be faced, particularly the lack of resources and the chronic shortage of urban design skills affecting London's local authorities.
- 3.6 However some visible results are beginning to appear. Our witnesses highlighted a number of recent projects and developments in the commercial and housing sectors as well as some encouraging regeneration projects and public realm improvements that suggest a premium on good design.

¹⁰ The London Plan, p.25

¹¹ The London Plan, p.6

¹² The London Plan, p.173

- 3.7 Richard Rogers referred in particular to the revitalisation of the South Bank, from Butlers Wharf and City Hall to Westminster, which has rediscovered a stretch of London's riverside, with major attractions like Millennium Bridge and the London Eye providing focuses for interest in the area.
- 3.8 Written evidence also referred to several housing developments. Bedzed – a zero carbon emissions development in Sutton – was mentioned as an example of sustainable high-density housing development. Reference was also made to the Greenwich Millennium Village as an important attempt to create higher density sustainable housing the Greenwich Peninsula, although there were differing views on its design merits, particularly in relation to its wider setting.
- 3.9 Dickon Robinson (Director of Development and Planning, Peabody Trust) highlighted the role of developments like Laban in Deptford¹³ and the Peckham Library in Southwark, which created a focus for the ongoing physical and social regeneration of the areas of Deptford and Peckham.
- 3.10 On a larger scale, a number of respondents, including Richard Rogers, Charmaine Young (Regeneration Director, St George Plc), Ludo Campbell-Reid (Chair, London Authorities Urban Design Forum), Simon Foxell (Chair, Royal Institute of British Architects) and LDA officers highlighted the role of the GLA Group in ensuring that many critical sites are properly masterplanned in advance of development. Examples we were given include the Royal Arsenal in Woolwich, Greenwich Millennium Village and more recently Silvertown Docks, Barking Reach and the Lower Lea Valley.
- 3.11 Several witnesses also highlighted the Mayor's "100 Public Spaces" programme, launched in 2002, aimed at creating or upgrading 100 public spaces across the capital over the next five years.
- 3.12 Despite these promising signs, however, our witnesses generally felt the progress is uneven, tends to be central London dominated and also tends to be architecturally led. While there is an increasing awareness and commitment to raising design standards, the effort is still partial and mostly focused around specific projects and individual buildings, mainly high profile ones.
- 3.13 Richard Rogers considered that for each notable building or revived public space, there are probably ten that undermine the principles set out in *Towards an Urban Renaissance*. Bland low density housing estates, schools, factories and offices still sprawl over many areas of London, squandering the limited supply of space that remains in the city. Even where streets are improved or parks created, these are often neglected, as maintenance budgets are stripped to the bone.
- 3.14 Our greatest concerns, echoing those of our witnesses, are not about the one off set pieces (although these are important), but the everyday challenges set by the thousands of streets and public spaces that already exist around us. London has its fair share of icons and flagship projects; what it needs is the high quality design, management and maintenance of its "everyday" buildings and spaces, which constitute the living environment of most Londoners.

¹³ Committee site visit, 6 January 2004

4 Key issues

In this section we look in more detail at some of the key issues and challenges facing the implementation of an urban renaissance in London and make recommendations on how they can be further improved.

Vision and strategy

- 4.1 There was agreement amongst our witnesses on the need for a coordinated vision and comprehensive action plan for a design-led renaissance of London's built fabric.
- 4.2 Although the London Plan was welcomed by all witnesses as a positive step forward, a number of participants, particularly Simon Foxell and David Walton (Director, Llewelyn Davies) felt it did not provide a clear and articulated vision for improving the design, quality and maintenance of London's built environment and that the importance of this task required a more articulated action plan, specifying actions and measures to achieve improvements, particularly in view of tightly limited resources. They stressed the importance that this vision be jointly developed and shared by all relevant organisations and stakeholders involved in its implementation, particularly the Boroughs.
- 4.3 There was agreement that the GLA should take the lead for promoting the development of this vision. We would suggest that, within the GLA, the Architecture and Urbanism Unit¹⁴ should be responsible for this task.

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the GLA Architecture and Urbanism Unit, in partnership with the London Authorities Urban Design Forum and with the boroughs, should develop a vision and comprehensive action plan for a design-led renaissance of London's built environment, shared by all the relevant stakeholders

Leadership

- 4.4 Ludo Campbell-Reid highlighted the need to have strong leadership and sustained commitment from all parties involved in implementation particularly the boroughs.
- 4.5 In this respect we welcome the initiative undertaken by the London Authorities Urban Design Forum (LAUDF) of establishing a family of 33 Local Authority Design Champions, one for each London Borough, to promote good design and high quality built environment within their boroughs. This group will deliver Borough Urban Design Action Plans in every London borough over the next three years. We believe the commitment and enthusiasm of these councillors can play a vital role in ensuring that design quality considerations influence local authorities' decisions affecting the built environment.

¹⁴ The role of the GLA Architecture and Urbanism Unit is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6

Coordination and partnership working

- 4.6 The delivery of high quality urban design is an objective that demands the establishment of close working relationships and partnership amongst key agencies, government bodies and departments and the private sector.
- 4.7 While most witnesses recognised that there are examples of successful coordination on specific projects, especially high profile ones, the general impression was that too many agencies are trying to do their best with limited resources, but with little coordination between efforts and with few attempts to question the rule books that guide key public services - highways authorities, planning authorities, regeneration agencies, waste collection and urban management.
- 4.8 It is essential that joint working and collaborative decision making procedures are established across relevant agencies and departments to provide focus and greater integration and to pool expertise, knowledge and resources together to deliver and sustain high quality public space. In this respect, the recently established London Authorities Urban Design Forum (LAUDF) is a positive and welcome development. The role of the Forum is briefly illustrated below.

The London Authorities Urban Design Forum

- 4.9 The LAUDF is a pan London best practice sharing network of around 200 multi-disciplinary officers within each of the 33 London Boroughs. The Forum has been established to attempt to foster a dialogue and engender a more collaborative approach among all relevant stakeholders to enhance the quality of urban design across the capital, including the promotion and sharing of best practice. Its aims to provide a bridge between strategic players, such as the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), and the Greater London Authority with the local authorities, who are ultimately responsible for translating strategic policies into action at the local level.
- 4.10 We fully support the role of the Forum in bringing together the 33 London Boroughs and other relevant stakeholders to promote and enhance the quality of design across London. The Forum has been established very recently. We believe it is important, as the role of the Forum develops, that the A+UU and the LAUDF should consider how most effectively to work together and complement their roles, to ensure synergy of efforts and maximise benefits.
- 4.11 Coordination is necessary not only at the London wide level but also within local authorities between services departments. We would like to see formal mechanisms developed - such as multidisciplinary teams - to facilitate joint working and take forward a more integrated approach to delivering and sustaining high quality environments, which cuts across departmental, sectoral and professional boundaries.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the Boroughs should establish formal mechanisms to facilitate joint working and encourage cooperation between relevant departments in delivering and sustaining high quality urban environments

Education and skills

- 4.12 The shortage of urban design skills, particularly in local authority departments, was raised by our witnesses as a principal impediment to achieving high quality design in the built environment.
- 4.13 A number of initiatives have been recently undertaken to tackle this problem. The LDA has recently specified a plan for establishing a regional Centre for Regeneration Excellence to provide professional training in a wide range of urban regeneration issues, including social, environmental as well as urban design dimensions. Raising skills is also a key aim of the London Authorities Urban Design Forum, which we have already mentioned. A number of initiatives have been undertaken by the Forum in partnership with the Mayor's Architecture and Urbanism Unit, including a series of regional design seminars on density.
- 4.14 The Committee welcomes the LDA's proposal to establish a Regional Centre of Excellence and support the role and initiatives of the London Authorities Urban Design Forum as positive steps towards tackling the lack of urban design skills in London. We believe it is important that these initiatives are fully coordinated in order to ensure synergy of efforts and maximise benefits. We would suggest that consideration be given to developing the role of the London Authorities Urban Design Forum to act as "Design Delivery Arm" of the LDA's forthcoming Centre of Excellence.

Recommendation 3

We support the establishment of LDA's Regional Centre of Excellence for Urban Regeneration and the London Authorities Urban Design Forum. We recommend that the LDA and the LAUDF should consider how most effectively to work together to provide urban design training

- 4.15 While there was agreement that there are particular problems of skills with local authorities department in London, some witnesses, particularly Huw Moseley, (Planning Consultant, Moseley and Webb) and Rowan Moore (Director ,Architecture Foundation) felt that that there is also a more complex long-term problem, involving the decline and demoralisation of the built environment professions, particularly planning.
- 4.16 We were told by Huw Moseley that research carried out by London First this summer showed that generally Careers Advisors in London secondary schools had little or no awareness of planning as a profession. According to the study 70% of a sample of 13-15 year-olds did not know what town planning was and only 3% considered planning as a career.

- 4.17 A number of organisations are already actively promoting these matters. In particular, London First runs master classes for chief officers, school competitions to encourage young people to take an interest in their environment, and is lobbying government to deal with the skill shortage facing planning authorities. Huw Moseley argued that the Mayor should support these initiatives.

Recommendation 4

The Mayor should work with London First, the ALG and other relevant organisations to promote the built environment disciplines and professions in secondary schools across London

Community engagement

- 4.18 Community involvement is central to achieving a successful urban renaissance and it is crucial to the design process.
- 4.19 The evidence we received from the London Civic Forum stressed the importance of involving the local communities in the planning and development stages of activities and projects affecting the built environment in which they live. This is essential to ensure the local knowledge of an area is built into development plans and projects and to help establish sustainability and long-term viability of improvements when the projects are completed.

Recommendation 5

We recommend that the Boroughs and the GLA should establish formal mechanisms to maximise engagement with civic organisations and local communities right from the beginning of the design process to ensure that projects and developments meet relevant design criteria and the local knowledge of an area is built into development plans and projects

Focus on the public realm

- 4.20 Matthew Carmona (Reader in Planning and Urban Design, University College London) expressed concerns about the poor state of the public realm in London - poor street, poor pavements, an uncoordinated cluster of street furniture, much of it vandalised, graffiti and uncontrolled poster board advertising.
- 4.21 There was consensus amongst our witnesses that over the years the quality of London's public realm has deteriorated, partly through a narrow engineering approach to the design of public spaces and partly through a lack of willingness on the part of both the public and private sector to invest adequately in the public realm as an important and crucial element of any development project.
- 4.22 In contrast, we were given examples of recent developments - such as Kensington High Street and Trafalgar Square - which demonstrated what impact investment on the public realm can have, but there was concern that these interventions are few and far between.

- 4.23 We heard that a number of initiatives have been and are being undertaken in London to achieve an improved quality and management of the public realm. The London Plan includes a requirement for the Boroughs to prepare a single strategy for their public realm and open space¹⁵, dealing with provision, design, management, maintenance and funding. The GLA has published draft guidance to preparing Open Space Strategies as best practice guidance¹⁶ to assist this process. We have already referred to the Mayor’s “100 Public Spaces Programme”¹⁷.
- 4.24 The Committee welcomes the Mayor’s commitment to achieving high quality in the design and management of public spaces and support the initiatives that have been undertaken to help achieve this.
- 4.25 High quality public spaces also need to be a primary aim of local authorities and other agencies and actors involved in delivery. Simon Foxell expressed concern that creating and managing high quality public spaces is not a sufficiently high priority on the local authorities policy agenda.
- 4.26 Matthew Carmona highlighted the need to improve coordination across the broad range of agencies and activities which impact on public spaces, including their design, layout, furnishing, maintenance and management. He suggested a formal mechanism should be established – such as a “summit” for London’s public spaces - to agree a shared strategy between the diversity of agencies and actors with a part to play in delivery, particularly the 33 boroughs. He suggested that this should also involve the Police, who need to take crimes such as vandalism and graffiti more seriously if the wider population are to feel safe in the streets and able to engage with them once again.
- 4.27 We agree an annual “summit” would go some way towards achieving better coordination of efforts and promoting leadership for continuing improvement and recommend that this proposal be taken forward by the Association of London Government (ALG), in partnership with the LAUDF.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the ALG, in partnership with the LAUDF and the GLA should establish a mechanism – such as an annual “summit” meeting - regularly bringing together the full range of agencies with a part to play in the delivery, management and maintenance of London’s public spaces, particularly the 33 London boroughs

¹⁵ London Plan Policy 4b.4, p.178

¹⁶ The Guide to Preparing Open Space Strategies Draft Best Practice Guidance was published in June 2003. The document can be found on the GLA website at http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds/open_space.jsp

¹⁷ Further details on the Mayor’s “100 public spaces” programme can be found on the GLA website at <http://www.london.gov.uk/approot/mayor/auu/publications.jsp>

Funding

- 4.28 Inevitably the lack of funding is a major barrier to implementing an urban renaissance in London.
- 4.29 In the main, London depends on government transfers and programmes for its development and physical regeneration efforts. Despite the strong commitment shown by the Government to seek an urban renaissance, the central issues of providing funding and mechanisms for delivery remains unresolved.
- 4.30 The Government, Richard Rogers argued, has rightly made education and health a priority, but investment in these vital public services will fail if they are set in a decaying urban fabric. UK health and education spending are set to rise by 33 and 27 per cent between 2002 and 2006; highway maintenance and environmental services in England will only receive increases of 8 per cent and 12 per cent in the same period – barely keeping up with inflation.
- 4.31 In view of existing constraints on public sector resources, there is a growing recognition that the private sector must be more involved in the provision of resources. However – as Huw Moseley pointed out – private finance is not going to flow to areas and projects where return on investment is more uncertain – such as areas with low land values, poor infrastructure and high incidence of land contamination – without some kind of public sector stimulation and support.
- 4.32 The challenge is not just boosting the overall supply of public funding available for achieving the urban renaissance (although it is clear that greater resources are needed) but – as the Urban Task Force recommended in their report – to find more efficient ways of using public resources to maximise incentives to the private sector to invest in sustaining and improving the built environment. The Task Force report highlighted important areas where raising the level and targeting of public resources invested in towns and cities would yield greater dividends. The LDA’s developments in Silvertown and at the Royal Arsenal in Woolwich illustrate this. At Silvertown, production of a detailed masterplan and public funding for infrastructure, such as the DLR extension, and amenities, such as a world-class aquarium, has leveraged a major investment in housing, workspace and retail from private sector partners. At Woolwich, which the Committee visited, decontamination of sites and infrastructure provision has unlocked key sites near Woolwich Town Centre for private investment in a major mixed-use development.
- 4.33 Mark Weintraub (Vice-Chair, Urban Land Institute) highlighted the constraints posed by local authorities’ lack of financial autonomy and capacity to raise capital and finance locally. He strongly argued that the Government should allow local authorities and agencies greater financial freedom in order to increase their flexibility to achieve the levels of spending required and to engage the private sector in the delivery of an urban renaissance. In this context, Simon Foxell stressed the need to put in place mechanisms that allow for greater “value capture”, to make sure that if investment is put into an area, then some revenue can flow back from that, in order that the process can continue and improvements can be sustained.

- 4.34 We support this argument and refer to the work being carried out by the London Assembly Economic and Social Development Committee as part of its scrutiny into Alternative Funding of Regeneration, which specifically considers the potential of “value capture mechanisms” for funding regeneration and infrastructure projects in London. Findings from this investigation will be published by the Committee in April.

Monitoring and evaluation

- 4.35 Monitoring and evaluating progress must be an integral part of implementing the urban renaissance in London to allow a clear and transparent review and evaluation of progress made. We recommend that the GLA and the Boroughs establish formal mechanisms for reviewing and evaluating progress towards achieving an urban renaissance.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that the GLA and the Boroughs should establish mechanisms for reviewing and evaluating progress towards achieving an urban renaissance in London

Best practice

- 4.36 We found several examples of successful developments and regeneration projects during this investigation. We visited places where design led interventions have made a clear improvement to the physical appearance of an area. Developments like Laban in Deptford show the value well-designed buildings can bring to a run-down area. There remain significant levels of environmental degradation in its surroundings, but it seems clear the positive role Laban can play in the long-term physical and social regeneration of Deptford, particularly in attracting creative industries and other business activities to locate nearby.
- 4.37 Evidence gathered during the scrutiny also emphasised the value of considering examples of best practice from other cities in Europe like Amsterdam, Barcelona, Copenhagen, where the urban renaissance is being successfully implemented and from which London should learn. The Committee’s site visit to Amsterdam highlighted the value and benefits of adopting a long term approach to bringing forward development sites in an integrated and phased manner.
- 4.38 In some cases, the mix of uses is not as widespread as in many UK developments: the developers of Java Island in the “Oostelijk Havengebied” secured a deal which allowed them exclusive rights to provide retail facilities, for ten years. But in general there seems to be a more coordinated masterplanning approach to the development of an area, where the city assumes a leading role in negotiating development, commissioning and sharing the cost of development plans with the private sector and participating closely in design.
- 4.39 We believe that successful experiences and achievements, both from the UK and from other countries, should be promoted more widely across London, to show the impact improvements to the built environment can make and to encourage greater investment in high quality urban design. We believe the London Authorities Urban Design could play a key role in this respect.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends the GLA should work with the London Authorities Urban Design Forum to promote best practice examples of urban design more widely across London.

5 The role of the planning system

- 5.1 The Urban Task Force report established a central role for the planning system in delivering an urban renaissance. It made clear that we will only realise our ambitions for high quality design if our land use planning system is working hard to deliver high quality objectives.
- 5.2 Our hearings discussed how the urban renaissance is being tackled within the planning system in London and identified a number of issues which need to be addressed to allow the planning system to respond better to the challenges posed by the urban renaissance and to deliver its design quality objectives.

Planning Policy

- 5.3 It was debated whether the current planning policy framework in London provides an adequate means for achieving high quality design in the built environment. This included consideration of the London Plan – the strategic planning strategy for London, and the Boroughs’ Unitary Development Plans (UDPs).

The London Plan

- 5.4 Achieving an urban renaissance is one of the key objectives of the Mayor’s London Plan, the first Spatial Development Strategy for London, which provides a strategic framework for local plans and development control.
- 5.5 The London Plan includes a chapter called “Designs on London”¹⁸. This is a crosscutting chapter, including policies which relate to all geographical areas and all land uses across London. As such the design principles it advocates are at the heart of the planning system. The Chapter is based around Policy 4b.1 *Design for a Compact City*¹⁹. This pulls together design-based objectives, which are central to the Plan’s vision for a sustainable, equitable world city. These principles include, among others, maximising the potential of sites, providing or enhancing a mix of uses, respecting the local context and enhancing the public realm. The chapter goes on to provide further policy on some of these general concepts where it was felt this was not provided within national policy or guidance. For example policy 4B.5 sets out principles for creating an inclusive environment. The last part of the chapter deals with specific issues to do with design and the built environment such as tall buildings and views.
- 5.6 We received detailed evidence from the London Plan Team²⁰, showing how policies within the draft London Plan follow the principles laid out in the urban task force report Towards an Urban Renaissance.
- 5.7 There was consensus amongst our witnesses that the key principles of urban renaissance are fully reflected in the London Plan, and witnesses generally welcomed the London Plan as a positive step in setting the general policy direction for improving the quality of London’s built environment.

¹⁸ The London Plan, p.173

¹⁹ The London Plan, p.173

²⁰ Written statement by London Plan Team

- 5.8 Debbie Mc Mullen – London Plan Programme Manager - confirmed that Supplementary Planning Guidance is being produced to elucidate and specify London Plan policies and to assist boroughs when reviewing their unitary development plans and when assessing planning applications. For example a guidance note 'Design for a Compact City' is being drafted to fill any gaps in detail left between the plan and national or local information. This guidance will also serve as a useful pointer to other relevant documents so helping to pull together the variety of non-statutory good advice available at the present time. The guidance will follow the principles set out in policy 4B.1 providing additional information for each. Officers are in discussion with the Metropolitan Police Architecture Liason Officer to ensure the right advice is provided in this central document on design to reduce crime. The guidance will also look in more detail at the measurement of density and so how the maximisation of land use can be assessed.
- 5.9 Other more specific supplementary design guidance are also in production. For example guidance on sustainable design and construction which will detail up the sustainability principles outlined in policy 4B.6 and will set targets which relate to targets in the Draft LP, the Mayor's other environmental strategies and Building Regulations and will also set gold standard targets looking to take forward exemplary best practice. Guidance on Accessible Environments has recently been through public consultation and sets standards and good practice for promoting and achieving an inclusive environment in London.
- 5.10 As already mentioned, the GLA has also published draft guidance to preparing open space strategies as best practice guidance. These will be prepared by the Boroughs and will look at creating, protecting and improving the quality of open spaces and the links between them.
- 5.11 We welcome the London Plan's commitment to achieving an urban renaissance in London and promoting the highest quality of design and its recognition that the good design is crucial to securing investment and ensuring an attractive environment.

Unitary Development Plans

- 5.12 London's Unitary Development Plans (UDPs) provide the detailed framework for the control of development and use of land in each of the 33 London Boroughs, in conformity with the London Plan. They provide an essential means of translating the policies and principles of the London Plan into action at the local level.
- 5.13 Most of London's Unitary Development Plans are currently under review. This provides an important opportunity for taking forward the agenda and the key principles of urban renaissance at the local level as UDPs, as they are revised, will have to be updated to be in general conformity with the London Plan.
- 5.14 Witnesses highlighted the key role of the Mayor in ensuring that key urban design principles and policies contained in the London Plan are consistently applied through UDPs and are interpreted correctly.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the Boroughs must take care to ensure that urban design policies and principles are appropriately included in Unitary Development Plans (UDPs) and their eventual replacements by Local Development Frameworks and Area Action Plans

Development control

- 5.15 There was general agreement amongst our witnesses that the development control system in London – particularly at the local level – offers much greater scope than is currently realised to guide and influence the design and quality of resulting developments.
- 5.16 Whilst witnesses agreed that relevant urban renaissance principles are generally being applied in determining planning decisions at the strategic level²¹, significant concerns were raised about the capability of the development control system at the local level to deliver design quality objectives, although the situation varies significantly from borough to borough.
- 5.17 Huw Moseley went so far as to say there was a “colossal failure” of town planning at the borough level. A particular concern was that local planning departments in London fulfil a largely reactive and regulatory role, which suits short-term political decision making more than long-term planning for the future of their areas. It was argued that planning departments need to adopt a more proactive approach, deal positively with long-term development and encourage investment in an area.
- 5.18 The chronic lack of resources and the shortage of urban design skills in Boroughs’ planning departments were identified as key barriers affecting the capability of the planning system to deliver design quality objectives.
- 5.19 The point was strongly made by Ludo Campbell-Reid that for the planning system to work effectively, it must be adequately resourced with appropriately qualified staff, including those with urban design expertise. We support this argument and recommend that the Mayor, in conjunction with the ALG and other relevant stakeholders make the case for more resources at borough level to boost planning and architectural expertise.

²¹Although the Boroughs are responsible for dealing with planning application within their areas, the Greater London Authority Act 1999 requires them to consult the Mayor of London on strategic planning applications. The Mayor can comment on and support these applications or, if he considers it necessary on strategic planning grounds, he can direct the borough to refuse planning permission. The Mayor is not able to direct approval of applications. In addition, the Mayor is consulted by applicants informally at the pre-application stage and by borough councils at the draft planning brief stage on many cases that are likely to lead eventually to strategic planning applications.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the Mayor, the GLA, the ALG and other relevant stakeholders make the case for more resources at borough level to boost planning and architectural expertise so that design merits of existing proposals can be adequately addressed

- 5.20 It was also argued that local authority planners should be trained to recognise and understand the importance of design in the planning system. They should be encouraged to become more pro-active and should adopt a more structured approach to assessing planning applications against key urban design principles. Ludo Campbell-Reid stressed that training should be provided not only to officers but also to their Committee Members to help them become aware of the importance of design and the impact of their decisions.
- 5.21 We believe it is feasible to provide urban design training to development control officers on a consistent basis with modest budgetary impact. We have already noted our support for the London Authorities Urban Design Forum and for the forthcoming LDA's Centre of Excellence for Urban Regeneration. We believe the provision of training to London Boroughs' development control officers should be a top priority for the Centre.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that the LAUDF, in partnership with the LDA's Centre of Excellence for Urban Regeneration take the lead in specifying and implementing a structured training programme in order to provide urban design training, on an on-going basis to local authority planners and councillors across London. We also recommend that the provision of training to London Boroughs' development control officers should be a top priority for the Centre.

- 5.22 Llewelyn Davies also pointed to the lack of an accepted framework for assessing good design in local authorities in London and stressed the need for better guidance. They also suggested that the GLA should test the value of developing an urban design "toolkit", providing a basic framework of principles for assessing good design in London's local authorities. The toolkit should outline and explain key urban design principles to be used to assess every application submitted and should also include a number of case studies of successful implementation of those principles.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that the GLA, in partnership with Boroughs and the London Authorities Urban Design Forum, should explore the value of developing an urban design "toolkit" for the use of local authorities development control planners. The toolkit should include case studies of successful implementation of key urban design principles.

5.23 Some witnesses also raised concerns in relation to the national framework for assessing the performance of development control departments, which values the speed of determining planning application rather than the quality of decisions. Although speed of decision-making is important in most situations, we believe this should not take precedence over reaching the right decision and a further negotiation may well result in a positive outcome. This is particularly relevant in relation to large sites, which cross borough boundaries.

6. The role of the Architecture and Urbanism Unit and the GLA Group

- 6.1 Our final hearing focused on the role of Architecture and Urbanism Unit in delivering an Urban Renaissance in London.

The Architecture and Urbanism Unit

- 6.2 The Architecture and Urbanism Unit (A+UU), led by Richard Rogers, was established by the Mayor in April 2001 with the aim of leading the urban renaissance in London. The role of the Unit,²² is to:
- Promote high quality architecture and urban design, in order to create socially balanced and sustainable communities
 - Optimise the potential of London's available sites, by linking transport and development opportunities
 - Improve London's public realm
- 6.3 The Unit's work falls into three categories:
- Masterplanning and Urban Strategy*
- 6.4 The Unit works alongside boroughs and, in particular, the LDA to commission high quality designs for major sites. It does this by advising on design briefs and procurement processes (design competitions) and through bringing design expertise to bear on other regeneration strategies. Currently, this resource is mainly focused on projects in London Thames Gateway. The Unit is working with the Thames Gateway London Partnership, the LDA and a range of other partners to prepare a design-led development framework – sustainable communities in London Thames Gateway, that will allow for the development of substantial quantities of new housing that will integrate with existing communities, with high quality public transport systems and with a public realm that will attract and retain residents and visitors. Simultaneously, the Unit is or has been involved in steering a wide range of other projects (together with partners in LDA and the boroughs), including Barking Reach etc.
- Public realm projects*
- 6.5 The Unit developed the Mayor's 100 Public Spaces in London, which we already mentioned.
- Campaigns and culture change*
- 6.6 The Unit:
- has published guides to masterplanning competitions and a handbook on housing density.
 - is currently developing campaigns on Living Roofs and the value of trees to London's public realm.
 - is working with the London Plan Team on urban design supplementary planning guidance.
 - it ran a seminar at City Hall for borough officers and members on championing urban design in local authorities.

²² Architecture and Urbanism Unit (A+UU) Brochure, p.3. The Brochure can be found on the A+UU website at <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/auu/docs/auu.pdf>

- 6.7 The Committee commends the work undertaken by the Architecture and Urbanism Unit since it was established in 2001.
- 6.8 There was general support from all witnesses for the role of the Unit, and praise for its focus on delivering projects that deliver tangible benefits to Londoners. However we – as our witnesses – believe there is great potential to improve the way the Unit operates and communicates.

Unit's role and profile

- 6.9 There was agreement among our witnesses that the Unit needs to raise its profile and increase awareness of its role across London, particularly at the local level. The Unit needs to establish a stronger presence and profile among other organisations and agencies with which it works, particularly the Boroughs.
- 6.10 It was suggested that the Unit should develop a clear work plan and publicise it across London to inform all those engaged in supporting the urban renaissance agenda in London of the contribution the Unit is making to its delivery.

Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends that the Architecture and Urbanism Unit should develop a work programme and publicise it across London. The programme should include a communication element to ensure that information is shared with partnership organisations and relevant stakeholders across London. The Unit should also monitor, evaluate and report on its activities and projects and publicise its achievements across London.

- 6.11 In the previous chapter we have discussed the need for an articulated vision and action plan for delivering an urban renaissance in London, including a recommendation that the A+UU take responsibility for developing this vision.

Information and communication

- 6.12 There was also agreement that the A+UU should improve communication and the exchange of information with local authorities, organisations and agencies involved in implementing the urban renaissance agenda across London and also with the public and communities, especially where projects are locally significant.

Recommendation 14

The A+UU should explore mechanisms by which it might better communicate and share information with local authorities and other organisations and agencies involved in implementing an urban renaissance across London and also with the public and communities, especially where projects are locally significant.

- 6.13 In this context, we would suggest that the A+UU should improve and expand information on its website (<http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/auu/index.jsp>) to include up to date information on its activities and case studies. The Unit

should also consider including information on best practice and urban design guidance. The Unit should also consider setting up a mailing list and should test the value of regular electronic newsletter, containing information on its activities and projects.

Balanced Approach

- 6.14 A recurrent theme throughout our hearing was the concern that efforts to improve the quality of architecture and urban design are being focused in Central London, while outside Central London, where there is less public attention and development values are lower, there has been far less impact on all fronts. We acknowledge that the A+UU has been working on projects spread across London and we would like a reassurance that efforts will continue to be directed towards improving the quality of the environment in Outer London.

Recommendation 15

The A+AU should continue to demonstrate effort to ensure that there is not a disproportionate focus on urban design and development in the central area to the detriment of outer London where there is less public attention, infrastructure costs are higher and developers are less keen to invest.

Resources

- 6.15 We are aware that the A+UU has limited resources and staff to carry out its activities and recognise that our recommendations have significant resources implications. In this respect we would suggest that the Mayor consider providing additional resources to the Unit.
- 6.16 We were informed by Richard Brown that the Unit will be undertaking a comprehensive review of its work and structure this year and that a Best Value Review of the Unit is being carried out.
- 6.17 A number of witnesses, particularly Simon Foxell and Ludo Campbell-Reid argued that the Unit needs to be strengthened if it has to fulfil its role to lead the delivery of an urban renaissance across London. We see value in strengthening the A+UU and suggest that the Mayor should consider this option.

The GLA Family

- 6.18 Within the GLA family, the London Development Agency and Transport for London have a major impact on the built environment and have an important role to play in delivering an urban renaissance.

London Development Agency

- 6.19 The LDA It is currently directly involved in a large number of projects which are either design-led or have a design element, from preparing area frameworks and regeneration strategies to bringing land forward for development on the ground to funding support for physical development projects and for promoting and supporting good practice.

- 6.20 The LDA Corporate Plan for 2003–06 recognises the important role that the LDA has to play in contributing to an urban renaissance. This includes the Agency’s direct involvement in spatial planning, area interventions and development projects on the ground (including exemplar projects), and its role in promoting best practice, skills and training across the development sector. The Economic Development Strategy also includes the objective (4.2) of ‘Working to achieve an urban renaissance in London’. In relation to design the LDA has recently undertaken a number of key initiatives. We already referred to the proposal for establishing a Centre of Excellence for Urban Regeneration in London.
- 6.21 The LDA has also recently established an International Design Committee of internationally-renowned architects to champion high quality design in LDA sponsored or influenced development projects, with a particular focus on the Thames Gateway. The functions of the Committee will be:
- To review and advise on the design issues for key areas and themes.
 - To advise on the development of briefs and design guidelines for new LDA-sponsored developments, with special attention to the quality and design of the public realm;
 - Suggest an appropriate design response/policy approach to a range of strategic issues in the Thames Gateway, including area frameworks, skills, procurement processes, design guidance, and the public realm.
- 6.22 The LDA has also established a panel of expert Design Advisors to promote exemplary architecture and urban design, through hands-on negotiation and advice of individual LDA-sponsored projects and working with the GLA and the London Boroughs. Design advisors roles will include:
- Preparing briefs for development design and masterplanning exercises within London Thames Gateway and other areas, in order to deliver the LDA’s vision for sustainable community development;
 - Helping to select and manage consultants for LDA-sponsored development, design and masterplanning exercises within London Thames Gateway;
 - Where requested by boroughs and agreed by the LDA, undertaking a similar role on behalf of boroughs and helping borough planning departments push for highest design quality, by reviewing and advising on emerging proposals and planning applications (‘catch and steer’).
- 6.23 We were pleased to learn of the initiatives undertaken by the LDA to deliver high quality design as an integral part of its regeneration projects and activities.

Transport for London

- 6.24 Transport for London has also an important role to play in delivering high quality urban design. We have already referred to the poor state of London streets as one of the most critical issues for improving the quality of London’s public realm.
- 6.25 TfL is working with the Mayor’s Architecture and Urbanism Unit and others to develop streetscape guidance that will set standards for better design of street improvements and for the maintenance and management of London’s streets, including repair of footways, signing, avoiding clutter, removing graffiti and rubbish, keeping streets adequately illuminated and the provision of CCTV. We

welcome the work being undertaken by TfL. We believe improving the design of London streets is a key to improving the quality of London's built environment and the quality of life of Londoners.

Annex A Recommendations

1. We recommend that the GLA Architecture and Urbanism Unit, in partnership with the London Authorities Urban Design Forum and with the boroughs, should develop a vision and comprehensive action plan for a design-led renaissance of London's built environment, shared by all the relevant stakeholders.
2. We recommend that the Boroughs should establish formal mechanisms to facilitate joint working and encourage cooperation between relevant departments in delivering and sustaining high quality urban environments.
3. We support the establishment of LDA's Regional Centre of Excellence for Urban Regeneration. We recommend that the LDA and the LAUDF should consider how most effectively to work together to provide urban design training.
4. The Mayor should work with London First, the ALG and other relevant organisations to promote built environment disciplines and professions in secondary schools across London.
5. We recommend that the Boroughs and the GLA should establish formal mechanisms to maximise engagement with civic organisations and local communities right from the beginning of the design process to ensure that projects and developments meet relevant design criteria and the local knowledge of an area is built into development plans and projects.
6. The Committee recommends that the ALG, in partnership with the LAUDF, should establish a mechanism – such as an annual “summit” meeting - regularly bringing together the full range of agencies with a part to play in the delivery, management and maintenance of London's public spaces, particularly the 33 London boroughs.
7. The Committee recommends that the GLA and the Boroughs should establish mechanisms for reviewing and evaluating progress towards achieving an urban renaissance in London.
8. The Committee recommends the GLA should work with the London Authorities Urban Design Forum to promote best practice examples of urban design more widely across London.
9. The Committee recommends that the Boroughs must take care to ensure that urban design policies and principles are appropriately included in Unitary Development Plans (UDPs) and their eventual replacements by Local Development Frameworks and Area Action Plans.
10. The Committee recommends that the Mayor, the GLA, the ALG and other relevant stakeholders make the case for more resources at borough level to boost planning and architectural expertise so that design merits of existing proposals can be adequately addressed.
11. We recommend that the LAUDF, in partnership with the LDA's Centre of Excellence for Urban Regeneration take the lead in specifying and implementing a structured training programme in order to provide urban design training, on an on-going basis

to local authority planners and councillors across London. We also recommend that the provision of training to London Boroughs' development control officers should be a top priority for the Centre.

12. The Committee recommends that the GLA, in partnership with boroughs, should explore the value of developing an urban design "toolkit" for the use of local authorities development control planners. The toolkit should include case studies of successful implementation of key urban design principles.
13. The Committee recommends that the Architecture and Urbanism Unit should develop a work programme and publicise it across London. The programme should include a communication element to ensure that information is shared with partnership organisations and relevant stakeholders across London. The Unit should also monitor, evaluate and report on its activities and projects and publicise its achievements across London.
14. The A+UU should explore mechanisms by which it might better communicate and share information with local authorities and other organisations and agencies involved in implementing an urban renaissance across London and also with the public and communities, especially where projects are locally significant.
15. The A+AU should continue to demonstrate effort to ensure that there is not a disproportionate focus on urban design and development in the central area to the detriment of outer London where there is less public attention, infrastructure costs are higher and developers are less keen to invest.

Annex B Evidentiary hearings and expert witnesses

The following witnesses appeared before the Committee:

11 November 2003

- Dr Matthew Carmona, *Reader in Planning and Urban Design, University College London*
- Simon Foxell, *Chair, Royal Institute of British Architects (London Region)*
- Debbie Mc Mullen *SDS Programme Manager*, and Esther Kurland, *Senior Planner, GLA Spatial Development Strategy Team*
- Tony Winterbottom, *Director of Strategy Implementation and Project Development* and Barney Stringer, *Head of Infrastructure, Development and Sustainability, London Development Agency*
- Charmaine Young, *Regeneration Director, St George Plc*
- Amanda Brace, *CPRE London Branch*
- David Walton, *Director, Llewelyn Davies*
- Huw Moseley, *Planning Consultant, Moseley and Webb*

25 November 2003

- Ludo Campbell Reid, *Chair of London Authorities Urban Design Forum*
- Rowan Moore, *Director, Architecture Foundation*
- Dickon Robinson, *Director of Development and Planning, Peabody Trust*
- Colin Wilson, *Senior Strategic Planner, GLA Planning Decisions Unit*
- Mark Weintraub, *Vice Chair, Urban Land Institute*
- Alan Byrne, *Regional Planner, English Heritage*
- Peter Eversden, *Chair, London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies*
- Kate Monkhouse, *Director* and Marian Larragy, *Policy Officer, London Civic Forum*

9 December 2003

- Richard Rogers, *Chief Advisor to the Mayor of London on Architecture and Urbanism*
- Ricky Burdett, *Consultant to Architecture and Urbanism Unit (A+UU)*
- Richard Brown, *Manager of A+UU*
- Colin Wilson, *Senior Strategic Planner, GLA Planning Decisions Unit*

Annex C Written evidence

Written evidence was received from the following organisations and individuals:

- Richard Rogers, Chief Advisor to the Mayor on Architecture and Urbanism
- London Authorities Urban Design Forum
- Government Office for London
- Campaign to Protect Rural England
- GLA Planning Decisions Unit
- GLA Spatial Development Strategy Team
- London Development Agency
- Dr Matthew Carmona, Reader in Planning and Urban Design, UCL Bartlett School of Planning
- Llewelyn Davies
- Royal Institute of British Architects
- English Partnership
- St George Regeneration
- Moseley and Webb
- English Heritage
- London Civic Forum
- Landscape Institute
- Peabody Trust

Annex D Principles of Assembly scrutiny

The powers of the London Assembly include power to investigate and report on decisions and actions of the Mayor, or on matters relating to the principal purposes of the Greater London Authority, and on any other matters which the Assembly considers to be of importance to Londoners. In the conduct of scrutiny and investigation the Assembly abides by a number of principles.

Scrutinies:

- aim to recommend action to achieve improvements;
- are conducted with objectivity and independence;
- examine all aspects of the Mayor's strategies;
- consult widely, having regard to issues of timeliness and cost;
- are conducted in a constructive and positive manner; and
- are conducted with an awareness of the need to spend taxpayers money wisely and well.

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Annex E Orders and translations

For further information on this report or to order a bound copy, please contact:

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