What is London?

A collection of presentations at a seminar at City Hall on 2 April 2004

COMMISSION ON LONDON GOVERNANCE

What is London?

A collection of presentations at a seminar at City Hall on 2 April 2004, organised by the Commission on London Governance

copyright

Commission on London Governance
October 2004

Published by

Greater London Authority
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA
www.london.gov.uk
enquiries **020 7983 5769**
minicom **020 7983 4458**

ISBN 1 85261 642 3

This document is printed on recycled paper

Acknowledgements
All the London maps are based on OS boundaries
© Crown Copyright, all rights reserved
(GLA)(LA100032379)(2004)

London's Functional Urban Area is derived from a map appearing in Les Cahiers No. 135, 4th quarter 2002; GEMACA

Data on residence of people working in London is from the Labour Force Survey 2001/02 and on house prices from ODPM, both Crown Copyright

contents

Speakers

Iain Sinclair

Author of *London Orbital*, Iain Sinclair has gained a reputation as one of the foremost writers on the capital. Born in Cardiff, he moved to Hackney in the 1960s. Iain trained at the London School of Film Technique and first began publishing his own poetry in the 1970s, paying the bills by working as an odd jobs man and then as an occasional book dealer. Iain's books include *Downriver; Landor's Tower; White Chappell, Scarlet Tracings; Lights out for the Territory* and *Lud Heat.*

Anthony Mayer

The former chief executive of the Housing Corporation took up the same role at the Greater London Authority in October 2000. He began his career in the Civil Service when he joined the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in 1967, rising to become principal private secretary to the Secretary of State for Transport between 1980 and 1982. He left the Civil Service in 1985 to join the merchant bankers N.M. Rothschild & Sons.

Tony Travers

The pre-eminent academic on the capital, Tony Travers is Director of the Greater London Group, a research centre at the London School of Economics. He is also Expenditure Advisor to the House of Commons Select Committee on Education and Skills, a Senior Associate at the King's Fund and a member of the Arts Council of England's Touring Panel. Tony has just published The Politics of London: Governing an Ungovernable City.

Michael Heseltine

After decades of public service, Lord Heseltine has emerged as the godfather of regeneration. Lord Heseltine became closely associated with the regeneration of Liverpool after the riots of 1981. In 1979 he was appointed Secretary of State for the Environment in Mrs Thatcher's first government. Amongst his first initiatives were the establishment of the Development Corporations in London and Liverpool. Many of the policy changes that remain at the heart of government regeneration policy first saw the light of day in Liverpool from 1979. In 2008, Liverpool will be the Capital of Culture.

Introduction

As Iain Sinclair, the Hackney-based author, recalled at City Hall last April, Ford Madox Ford once declared: 'The future of London is very much in our hands'. Almost a century after those words were written, their sentiment is as resonant as ever. While the creation in 2000 of the Greater London Authority (GLA) restored Londonwide strategic government, the need remains for wider debate about the structure and governance of public services both in the capital and throughout the country.

To establish where reform might be needed and what shape it might take, the London Assembly and the Association of London Government (ALG) have come together to set up the Commission on London Governance. The most significant review of its kind since the Herbert Commission in the 1960s and the Marshall Inquiry in the late 1970s, the joint project is inquiring into the best way that public services can be delivered and made more answerable to voters. The aim is to feed ideas into Government policy development.

To push the reform of London's governance further up the agenda, the commission hosted a seminar entitled What is London? at City Hall on 2 April 2004. First, Iain Sinclair spoke of the capital's history and how it shapes those who call themselves Londoners. Next Anthony Mayer used a series of slides to show the spread of London well outside its administrative boundaries.

Tony Travers then compared London's governance with that of other world cities, pointing out that few are as financially dependent on central government as our own capital. Michael Heseltine was last, calling for the Mayor of London to have more power and greater independence from central government to push through projects, such as the Thames Gateway, upon which the capital's future prosperity depends.

The speakers' presentations are, for the first time, presented in this booklet.

How the Thames has shaped London
Iain Sinclair

I am not a scholar nor an academic. I do not have any constituency; I am not a politician. I am just somebody who has bumbled about strategically trying to survive in London since 1968 and who has occasionally written accounts of curious walks, such as the most recent one in which I decided to define what London actually was, and where it finished, by circumnavigating the M25 on foot.

The most important thing for me, and I felt it again this morning walking here, is the very special light along this river. It is so persuasive. In a day's walking through London, the light changes all the time. When we just have to shuffle between meetings or we only see the open air for a brief period, we can have that darkness. However, if you are out there – if you take the opportunity to walk this river, which is the meaning, history and blood of London, then that light will change and shift all through the day. You can walk from the estuary in the rain, with clouds heavy and pressing down, and suddenly the clouds will part and you will see shafts of sunlight.

These epiphanies are the nature of London – its duality – and have been from the time the Romans were here establishing the religion of Mithras, the Mithraic religion which is schizophrenic and dualistic. It is darkness and light. The whole sense of London is always that, the kind of darkness you find in the gothic novels of Peter Ackroyd or Michael Moorcock, and the light you find in new writers like Zadie Smith, who show a multicultural city engaged and energised.

There is always a sense of strategic reality, political reality; things cannot be as the visionaries pitch them and would like them to be. The Temple of Mithras, which once stood alongside a now-vanished river coming down through the city, has actually moved into the grounds of a Hong Kong bank. It was dug up and replaced, so it is not where it was. Its meaning is completely changed and perverted – the alignments are all different and there are just a few rocks in the ground – but from these rocks can be traced the history and the blood of London. It is there. It comes in with the Romans, with the Vikings, and with wave after wave of immigrants. The most important thing is that we must know where we are before we can tell who we are.

We must also be very careful to understand that London, above everything else, is a city of language. It is now a city of many languages. Even the shapes of the buildings, the adverts on the walls, the signs, the scraps of paper you find in the gutter, all these things obsess me, and they are all forms of language – including graffiti. In an earlier book called *Lights Out for the Territory* I did an enormous survey, a gigantic 'V' that ran from Hackney down to Greenwich, where there was an exhibition about language in the university, and back up the other side of the River Lea recording the cultural contour lines of London in terms of the graffiti.

Hackney has a fabulous anthology of graffiti from anarchists, Kurdish political groups, Marxists, and just 'taggers' – often middle-class kids. The whole landscape was awash with these things, which people would treat as eyesores and as a disgrace the city should do something about. On the other hand, it is a sign of diversity and energy. As you moved into quieter, deader, more suburban boroughs, of course the graffiti vanished but I actually – bizarrely – felt diminished because some of this language was going.
In a place such as City Hall, I am very much aware that there are actually two forms of discourse and language that come into play. The normal one is the realpolitik, the political language of business, which most of you would be engaged with, and which I characterise perversely as taking real evidence – documentation, facts, committees and all the rest of it – and turning it into a final form which is not true, which is smoothed over and presented in the best possible light.

The side I represent, the poetic, which I use in the broadest sense, takes in all kinds of artists, painters, writers and anybody who thinks about the city. We all bend the evidence to start with. We tell lies, use fiction, exaggerate, satirise and do all of that to arrive at a truth. There is a naked truth or there is nothing for those writers. That side of it is the argument I would like to put.

That is how I see the river, in the way that the poets from Alexander Pope through to William Blake, Shakespeare to T.S. Eliot have been obsessed; they have understood that the river itself is London. Out of the river comes London. Out of the sediment of the river comes London, and it gradually grows up.

First of all, where we are is geology. It is geography. It is looking at Hawksmoor churches and seeing in the white Portland stone the fossils. It is in looking at the paving stones, seeing the fossil record

there, that we see where the city came from – out of the sea. We see the stones that are fish. We see the symbol of the fish in the Roman city. The city exists in this wonderful multiple time.

Where are we now? What was here before? Back to language again. We are in this strange building called City Hall. It is not in the City and it is not a Hall. This is the kind of business I mean. What it actually means, saying City Hall, is that we would like to be in New York. It is a virtual city and a virtual language; we cannot be in New York, so we will borrow the name. It signals what is going to happen. It is untrue.

We are actually on the site of a warehouse where beasts were brought in, killed and slaughtered for their skins. It stank. The Victorian city on this very point was a chaos of different smells and odours. I know those smells because I used to work in Stratford East. When the docks were collapsing there was a kind of movement to subvert this by using containerisation and employing the cheapest labour, such as students and layabouts like me, to work unloading the containers in Stratford – until we realised that and went on strike. The smell was the smell of sheep casings, as they were called, which came from Australia – big bundles of skins reeking. You realise what the products of the world actually are from the cargoes of the world that came in. These were animal skins. Next was a spice warehouse. Next to that a factory that pickled herring.

All of these things were there not so long ago, within living memory. If you looked out on the river it was black with traffic, with boats carrying goods up and down. What is there now? There are pleasure cruises giving a sanitised version of London history, with someone standing there spieling away – true or untrue – and landfill barges going down, taking out the waste. The excrement of the city is carried down. There is a fabulous metaphor there too, when the presidential cavalcade of Blair and Clinton went to Le Pont de la Tour for their dinner, and they had to open up Tower Bridge to let through landfill barges. Here they were, these people in a great political moment, held up and put into abeyance because the business of the city had to be transacted – which was a great truth, unlike Le Pont de la Tour which is not French and is not in France. It is not a French restaurant; it is a kind of corporate identity thing of the virtual city.

When I go to Waterstone's to look at books on London, suddenly there is this lovely glossy one, which is a vision of London by Terence

Conran, introduced by Ken Livingstone. It is a curious thing. There is this sort of ‘neighbourliness’ between the nice luxury restaurants there, and the City Hall, which is not a City Hall, and the heritage that moves on down the river.

When you are standing on Blackfriars Bridge you see a large metal sign, such as the ones produced for all the crimes that mark the city, that says ‘Shakespeare's Globe’ with a big arrow. It is not Shakespeare's Globe; it is Sam Wanamaker's Globe. It is not set where the Globe Theatre was; it is in the wrong place. The arrow is pointing in entirely the wrong direction because the arrow is only for cars. If you are in a car then you drive down this way. The Globe – as anyone can see – is actually there, but that is not how the city begins to work.

The only way you can really read the city, in my opinion, is by walking and moving through it. That is increasingly difficult, although there are great walks opening up now. The riverbank is beginning to come back into play, which I think is extremely exciting. To pass by the Dome, which was off-limits for a long time, is to see it as it really is – a piece of J.G. Ballard fantasy. It is wonderful. The biggest empty car park in London. There is this great circus tent unused and haemorrhaging money. There are several asylum seekers wandering slightly depressed through the car park picking up litter and there is a grand eco-zone of head-high grass.

It is like some vision of the future that you can walk by and carry on down towards Woolwich, Erith and all the marshes – and all this stuff that is going to become Thames Gateway. This is another wonderful term. It is as if London and the river itself were going to be turned into a gated community. Gateway to what? Come on. The housing will be erected where once upon a time criminals were sent on the Dickensian hulks; it is the same landscape. It is also where the plague ships were. It is the distance from the city to which disease and lunacy were once dispatched. If you go on to Dartford Marshes, where there is the fabulous Joyce Green Hospital, anyone from the East End knows that at one time cholera patients were shipped down there to get rid of the disease and contagion of the city, putting it out into a landscape. Thames Gateway will somehow massage the sores of the city, the inability to deal with housing.

What has happened is that nobody trusts the financial markets. They have obviously been completely dodgy, so people have been encouraged to put money into property. There are endless makeover programmes

about buying two homes and doing up your property, but there is not anything to sustain that. For people like my children, who grew up in Hackney, there is no way they can now live in Hackney. Hackney is as Islington was, on some levels, and a killing zone on other levels. Hackney is a whole universe, but that is another story.

If I have been too satirical about some things, I want to speak about what I think is good to have come out of this new 'riverine' makeover culture. The Tate Modern retains its history. You can see its history, which was as an electricity generating plant. It is an ugly building in some ways. It was at its most dramatic at the time when it was half a building site and half what it was subsequently to become. The engines and machinery were there. You saw something on the hinge of two cultures.

Now that it is finished, I think the experience of it is the turbine hall itself. The actual art is a bit mediocre; it is not a great collection and it is not very nicely hung.There is a kind of stair system out of Metropolis. It is really a restaurant and bookshop, but the turbine hall itself is a major experience. The show that has just been there was called the Weather Project. Another Danish invader has come along, a man called Eliasson, and produced this thing which is like an artificial sun shining in this hall, with slightly sugary smoke and a reflective ceiling. This thing was very simple but it really worked. It was a like a winter sun in the blood of Londoners. It was free and people were going into this extraordinary building which gives a resonance of what the history of London had been, and it gives them a sense of what a future could be. There it is, and it does not cost them a penny. They are lying on the floor making shapes; they are making star clusters; they are just drinking in this very simple event. I think we can do those things on the river. We can do those things that grow out of the river and grow out of these buildings. If we can do that, there is genuine hope and imagination for the future.

Equally, another project in there which I think is vital and crucial is by Mark Dion, called Archaeology, in which groups of people at Tate Modern and at Tate Britain went down on to the foreshore and gathered up anything that could be found there: shards of Roman pottery, broken bones, little bits of plastic, all kinds of stuff. They created this great cabinet of curiosities in which you can pull out drawers, like an old Victorian museum, and you can see the categories of London. You can see the sediment of which London is made. It is very exciting. Those two projects are where we can perhaps make a discourse between the language of poetry, which is always going to be exaggerated and extreme and wild, and the language of politics, where real things have

to be done. They do not have to be at each other's throats all the time – as long as we are careful with language. Language has to mean something, it cannot just fall back on terms that you put on the radio: 'issue', 'agenda', 'best value' and then streams of strange initials like GLA, GLC, or whatever. It is a smokescreen. You know that is there so as not to give meaning. I think we need to learn to say again, and we need to look and to be.

Getting back on to the river and walking outwards, walking that way, in a sense gives you what London was, because you are reversing the journey that all the immigrants made. You are seeing the river become a sea, you see it open, you see the oil container ships going down. It is working again as the port of London worked, and as there was real life on the banks of the river, rather than a series of *son et lumière* virtual reality histories: Dungeons of Darkness, Stories of the Tower in terms of torture and execution. It does not have to be that. As you walk in London, the poetic or romantic vision will always bang up against the realist vision. You will be stopped somewhere on that path. I got to a place called Crossness. I was so excited to have been able to get that far. I had not been able to for years. I had always had to stop and detour, especially around the Dome. I got to Crossness, which is a monster pumping station, and I was saying to my wife how wonderful it was that we had actually been able to walk from the inner city, from Hackney, as far as that. We were going to stop at Dartford and carry on down towards the coast without being stopped once.

Of course, at that very moment a very young, red-faced policeman stepped out and said 'Stop. There has been an incident'. We stopped and waited 10, 15, 20 minutes because these things happen. By that time a couple of dog walkers had turned up and a guy on a bicycle. The London Mob was forming itself there, and one policeman was looking very, very nervous. We all kept badgering him: 'Why not? What is going on?' We assumed there had been a suicide or something. He said, 'Well, actually, it is Prince Charles'. What had been the sewage pumping station of London, as ever, has become a heritage museum. Of course you could not have one of those without Prince Charles' cavalcade coming to open it.

Here we were, the London Mob in its bedraggled self on the riverbank trying to walk, trying to do all that, trying to experience the sky and the light – seeing this distant royal cavalcade sweep away with the photographers, and then the suddenly excited buzz and chatter of conversation of all the people who had been on their best behaviour while this visit took place.

At last we were allowed through. You arrive in evening light in Erith. I see it as it was, it is a marine town, it is a town on the side of the river, a town on the side of the sea. It is the way out. It is the landscape Joseph Conrad wrote about. Like so many of the great London writers, Conrad was an immigrant. At the period when Conrad was writing, the great writers in London would have been Henry James, who was an American but who came to London to settle. London was the place. Joseph Conrad, who was Polish and used French as his first language, lived at Stanford-le-Hope and went out sailing near Gravesend and taught himself to write in English, and agonised over this famous story called *Heart of Darkness*, which I have always been obsessed by as a kind of parable of colonialism and a journey down the dark Congo. It was only within the past six months that I discovered that when he himself came back from the Congo, collapsed, ill, and sick he was taken to the German hospital in Dalston. *Heart of Darkness*, all the journals and material he brought back from Africa, was actually cooked and created 200 yards from my own house. All the time I had been looking at this exotic notion of an African river and a journey into some kind of madness, and the thing cooks in London. London is the hinge of great fictions. By walking it or moving through it, you can experience that.

If you want to know about the future of London, the way to do it is to go backwards. The best elements in talking about London and seeing London that I discovered on the M25 walk were the novels of Bram Stoker and H. G. Wells. *Dracula* is the perfect description of Purfleet. Stoker sets his abbey in Purfleet and Dracula is the first estate agent. He is the forerunner of the age of estate agents. He goes out looking for property in Thames Gateway. He sends out a lawyer with a Kodak camera and actually describes how he goes out to these rundown areas, starts taking photographs and buys up bits of property. The other great image in that book is of storage and distribution. He stores Transylvanian earth and he distributes it in coffins to a series of addresses all around London, exactly where the Esso oil refinery is now and where the pickets were on the gates to stop them distributing oil. The same metaphors occur.

H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* takes place in the southeast corner of the M25, in Surrey. The images of invasion are exactly the kind of images we are getting out of the Gulf War, except that in that case the British were the ones on the run. The English were the ones who were taking to the hills and hiding in caves, helpless against weapons of mass destruction from an advanced technology. You have to keep going back in London to arrive at where we are now.

To finish I will go back to 1909, when Ford Madox Ford wrote a book called *The Future of London*. His vision then, and this was from an Edwardian gentleman, is very close to where we are now. He proposed a series of ring roads and parkways. He said, 'I must define the point at which London finishes'. For him it was 60 miles out. He said that you put the point of a compass in Threadneedle Street, set it to 60 miles, and you make a great circle. Everything within that circle is London, the south coast is London, Oxford is London, Cambridge is London; all of this refers back to the gravity of the centre, the culture of London. He finishes up with a sudden vision of the future:

'A vision of huge light, white inner city filling with the greater part of the shallow bowl; that is London. All the tall white buildings would be places for the transaction of business. There would be huge open spaces flagged with stone, from which would rise memorial buildings pinnacled, domed and august; representative of the idea of London – just as grandiose skyscrapers would represent that which is material. Beneath the central place there would be a huge junction of all the lines of communication coming into London underground, and all around would lie the outer ring. It should be a penalty, an impossible offence to build a dwelling in or upon a beauty spot. In that circle there would be ample space for all things, because the alternative is a slipshod, easygoing, random collection of towns scattered along the river.

'The benevolent tyrant that I have invented for you, or an enlightened council, would only be expressing the trend of what we may see going on around us. If we gain a huge, ordered city full of light and air, we must lose a romantic and glamorous old place, dirty and full of accidental charms and appeals and poetry. We must lose too some stretches of still unspoilt country within that radius of 60 miles.
The future of London is very much in our hands. We are the tyrants of the men who are to come. Where we build roads their feet must tread. The traditions we set up, if they are evil our children will find it hard to fight against. If you want vigilance, we must not let the beautiful places be defiled. It is our children who will find it a hopeless task to restore them.'

Where does London end?
Anthony Mayer

As the Herbert Royal Commission observed: 'Generally, the boundaries of Greater London reflect the works of Man rather than the works of nature.' There is very little in nature that has actually restricted the growth of London – maybe the Thames floodplain some years back, maybe the South Downs, maybe, oddly, according to Sir Edward Herbert, the Colne Valley west of London. As for Man, that is a different matter.

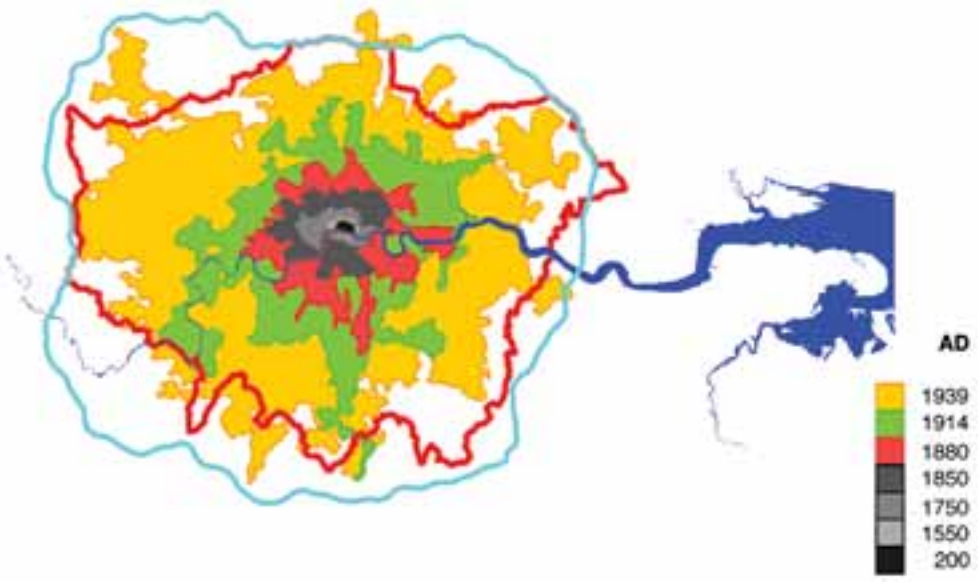
From the Romans to Winston Churchill

In the map below, the red is the current GLA boundary, previously GLC boundary. The blue is the M25. The black rectangle is Roman London. London was very small and remained very small until 1550, growing a little southwards to Southwark and London Bridge, and growing a little westwards to Holborn.

It was still very, very small geographically, moving if anything north and west. And then you see something which for me was a genuine surprise: the beginnings of growth corridors along the main routes out of London. By the time we land in 1880, you see these growth corridors become very, very much more pronounced. Gradually, the growth of London appeared first along corridors and then infilled between the corridors.

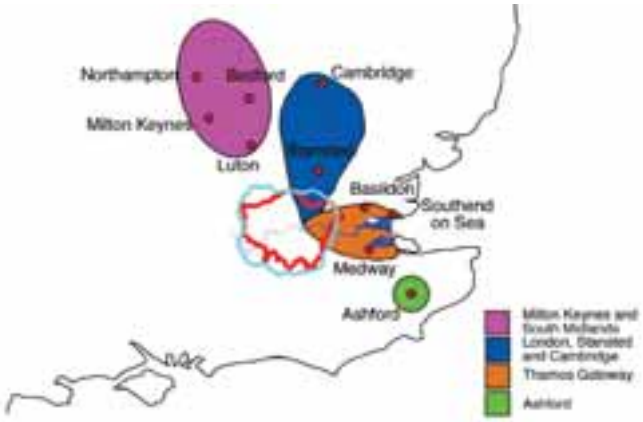
By the time we arrive at 1914 we see huge corridors: one particularly pronounced down to the south, down to Croydon along the Brighton Road; the other along the Thames to Richmond and Kingston.

Growth of London so far



We then touch down in 1939. What you see is this massive growth of London in a relatively small segment of its history – effectively two decades – but also ending, despite the previous odd pattern of growth, as a relatively round city. Interestingly, the government's plans for further growth, below, follow the same path; Stratford as an epicentre for two new corridors, one up the Lea to Stansted/Cambridge, and one down the Thames, north and south of the river.

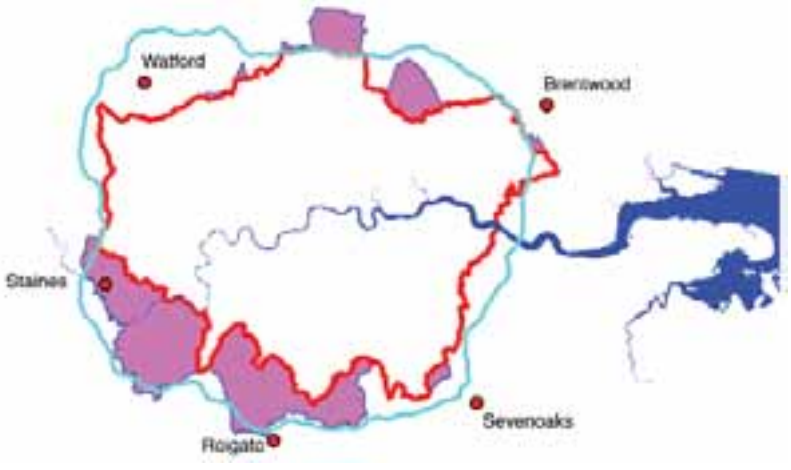
Government Sustainable Communities Plan



What is in and what is out

Let me now turn to Herbert; his Royal Commission remains the most important influence on London's pattern of governance since the war. It was set up in 1960 and its recommendations led to the setting up of the Greater London Council. In terms of defining what he and his commission were going to call the GLC, Herbert had three tests as to whether places should be inside or out. The first test was how independent and freestanding was the place. The second test was about the closeness of links with London. The third test was whether the place looked outwards psychologically, away from London or towards London. Those three criteria produced some very interesting results. Herbert more or less got it right. Outside the GLC area were Watford, Thurrock and Dartford. Inside the GLC area he would have included Banstead, Esher, Walton and Weybridge, Staines, Epsom and Ewell.

Areas outside London included in Herbert Commission's proposed Greater London



The figure below shows what I think is the biggest determinant of what we now call London: the 1947 Green Belt. It is probably the most longstanding and robust bit of planning ever done in any city, anywhere – not to exaggerate. What you see here are the urban areas in white. It is almost as though they are in-fills into a swathe of green. How wonderfully green London is, thanks to some clever civil servant and bold ministers doing their best in 1947.

London's Green Belt

We can now compare London with other world city regions. I have chosen five. What you see here are two very interesting things. One is that the urban form of London is actually much bigger in area than comparable world cities in terms of population. Secondly, London is an island. It is not part of a region; it is it. All the other world cities are actually set in regions, which do have an interest in the governance of those world cities, primarily in the area of planning and/or transport.

World city regions

Now if we look at the regional Government Offices, the extended state, there have been a number of changes since the war in terms of their boundaries in the south east. The powers that be never did quite make their minds up. Secondly, the way they have done it is to leave you with an east region and a south east region which, although close to each other and circling London, are necessarily going to have different priorities in terms of long-term investment, planning and views. Therefore there is a necessary in-built inconsistency of treatment – in terms of planning and strategy – for all those district councils around London.

Government Office regions in south east England

Another way of looking at London is as a so-called 'functional urban region'. This is becoming a standardised definition of a major conurbation. In the figure below:

- The area shaded green is the economic core of London where the jobs are.
- The hatched area is where at least 10 per cent of the population of working age actually work in London's economic core.
- The larger turquoise area represents the borders of those counties where at least 10 per cent of people work in the core economic area of London. What you can see on that geographical basis is an argument that London, in terms of economic relationships, actually goes much wider than even the M25.

Functional Urban Region

Next we return back to London's administrative region. The figure below shows those districts where more than one in four people of working age actually work in the GLA area. What you see is something that is noteworthy: more of these districts are in the east, with less in the west. This is because there is an alternative pole of employment up the Thames Valley to Reading. What you are seeing are actually patterns of outward migration from some of these western districts, as well as inward commuting.

Districts where more than 25 per cent of people in employment work in London

Next, we look at travel time into London. The figure below maps the ease of commuting to central London.

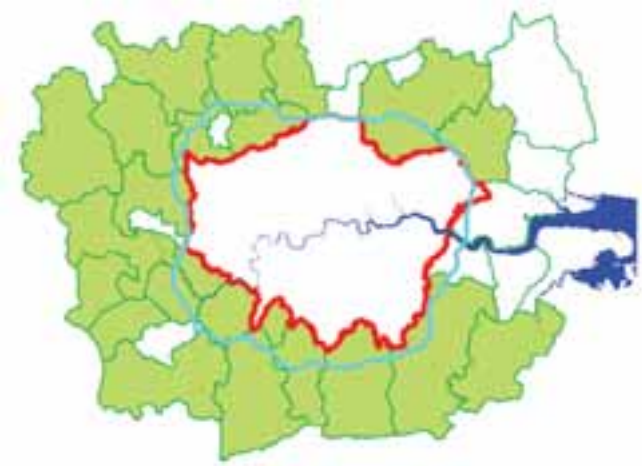
Districts with stations within 30 minutes commuting of central London

● Stations with a train between 8 and 9am, scheduled to arrive at a London terminus in 30 minutes

The vast majority of districts from whence you can catch a train to London in 30 minutes are actually in west London. Patterns of commuting (more from the east) do not have any relationship to speed of commuting (better from the west).

Again the inequalities between east and west are reflected in the effect of the London housing market on house prices. Districts where average house prices are higher than the outer London average tend to be to the west and south of the capital. There is clearly a major spread of the London housing market way beyond the M25.

Districts where average house prices exceed the outer London average



Finally, from housing to waste. About two-thirds of London's municipal waste is actually disposed of outside London. London, for the moment, gets rather a good deal out of this. There are only three major sites in London: Rainham, Lewisham and Edmonton. All the rest of the major sites are outside London, most of which are significantly far away from London.

Sites where 5 per cent or more of London's municipal waste is disposed

* *South East London Combined Heat and Power Plant*

So where does London end?

A tale of five capitals and two cities

Tony Travers

How does London compare with other world cities? What can we learn from how other cities are run? What do the relationships between other capitals and their hinterlands tell us about London's often uneasy interplay with the rest of the United Kingdom? To answer these questions, I would like to look at five capitals and two non-capital cities: London, Paris, Berlin, Moscow and Tokyo, and New York and Toronto.

For 800 years or more, the City of London has maintained its boundaries and in this way defined how the capital's government has subsequently developed. By refusing to give up on its independence, the Corporation of London has shaped the city's metropolitan growth. This has generated conflict between the authority at London's ancient core and the citywide institutions which have come and gone, responding to demands for public services and infrastructure as the metropolitan area grew well beyond the boundaries of the old city. Trying to square this circle produced six major reforms between 1855 and 2000.

Paris, like London, goes back a long way. For many centuries, the Ile de la Cité and its surrounds were pretty much the limits of that ancient city. But by the Second Empire, Paris had expanded to fill much of the small area within the Boulevard Périphérique. The boundaries of this 19th century metropolis, within which around two million people live, remain the limits of the modern city – with a Mayor leading a powerful, single authority. The only people who cross this border are Parisians heading for the airport or the poor who live outside, travelling in for work. Laid on top of this city is the Ile de France, a relatively weak regional authority, created in 1981 but with limited powers.

New York had its original settlement in Lower Manhattan. The City of London provided a blueprint for the first city government of New York. But there the similarities end. In response to rapid industrialisation, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island each held a referendum, voting to incorporate themselves into New York City. Staten Island – New York's Bromley – has subsequently held a referendum which unsuccessfully sought to overturn the earlier decision. The vast metropolis is similar to London in terms of population but concentrated in a smaller area. Unlike London, however, it has an all-powerful Mayor, and there is a metropolitan transportation authority, run by New York State, stretching out way beyond the boundaries of the city itself.

Berlin developed as a metropolis much later than Paris, New York and London but then caught up very quickly. By the 1920s, Berlin had become one of the great European cities. Divided in 1945, Berlin lost its pole position and became one of a number of regional centres in Germany. Even after reunification and moving the capital from Bonn, Berlin still has to regain its role as the dominant city in Germany. Berlin and New York are alike in that they enjoy extensive autonomy and self-government.

Berlin is both a regional government and a municipality. The system of government that the Allies introduced to Germany after the war was highly decentralised, granting enormous powers to the parliaments of the regions. One of these regional assemblies is Berlin, which has all the powers of Scotland, including tax raising, but with a population half that of London. The city has a very powerful parliament and a governing mayor. An attempt to merge with the surrounding land of Brandenburg was rejected by Brandenburgers, rather than Berliners, but none the less its city government remains the most powerful in Europe.

Moscow is the dominant capital of Russia. It is a city of eight million people, very similar in size to New York and London. It has an incredibly autonomous city government: Mayor Luzhkov really is the master of all he surveys. He is a very powerful figure but within a political system where the capacity for individuals to compete with the Russian president is limited.

Tokyo, like Moscow, New York and London is a very large city, with 12 million people. It is part of an enormous urban sprawl. I think I am right in saying that within about 10 years of a policy to impose a London-style greenbelt, it had been built over. The urban sprawl spreads out from Tokyo and engulfs other cities – a very good picture of what would have happened to London, I guess, if we had had no greenbelt.

Finally, Toronto is a city which, like London, has seen recent reform to its city governance system. It is a city of 2.5 million people, and there is a great deal of power at the upper, provincial level of government with much less devolved to the city of Toronto itself. It has a new office of mayor, first elected in 1998. If you want an example of city government in a broadly Anglo-Saxon originated culture similar to London, then Toronto fits the bill.

No two cities the same

There are a number of cities that have one tier of government within the city and some that have two. Paris, New York, Moscow and Toronto are single-tier governments. It is true there are arrondissements in Paris and five boroughs in New York, but they are relatively weak. It is the city government that is dominant in these cities, and there is very little capacity for anything below the citywide level to get a toehold on power.

London is not unique in having two tiers. Elsewhere in Europe, Berlin has two tiers although – and this may make the blood run chill among London boroughs – the number of its boroughs has been reduced from 21 to 12 within the last five years. Tokyo also has two elected tiers.

Some cities have directly elected mayors: New York, Moscow, London now, Toronto now and Tokyo – called a governor – but Paris and Berlin have indirectly elected mayors. Each of them is different from the other. When you vote for a party in Paris, you know that if the party wins, the candidate at the top of its list of candidates will become mayor. It is an ambiguous, near-directly elected system but not precisely directly elected. In Berlin, there is a system of first among equals, where a 'governing mayor' heads a team of senators who have significant autonomy in their own service areas.

Then you have stronger and weaker city councils, such as the London Assembly. In Berlin, Paris and Toronto, there are relatively powerful city councils which can hold the executive to account. New York and Tokyo are like London in that they each have a relatively weak city council. I think it is fair to say that the difficulties London Assembly Members have faced trying to act as a check and balance on the executive are very similar to the experiences of New York City councillors who are forever trying valiantly, if often unsuccessfully, to do battle with a very, very powerful mayor.

And again, some cities have more financial freedom and others less. At the 'more' end of the spectrum are Moscow, Berlin, New York and Tokyo. These cities have a considerable degree of freedom financially. New York raises perhaps 65–70 per cent of its income locally, for example. At the other end of the spectrum, those with very little financial freedom, include Toronto and London. Paris is somewhere in between.

City states or cities integrated into the state?

When it comes to boundaries and how they relate to the surrounding region, all cities vary as to how the administrative borders reflect the wider area dependent upon the economic activity within the metropolis. In Paris, there is a small city – the equivalent of inner London – with an agglomeration around it – something like London before 1965 – and then a larger region around that. In New York, you can see a larger city and a big city government, although as anyone who has travelled across to New Jersey knows, not the entire built-up area lies within the city. Berlin, like New York and London, has a larger city authority, extending over almost the whole of the built-up area, with the exception of Potsdam. Tokyo is a larger city with a vast urban region, an almost ungovernably large urban area. Therefore, London, in common terms, is a larger city. It is not like Paris, with a tightly drawn central city. What you can say from all of this is that few, if any, of these cities have tidy boundaries or effective regional governments. Paris is probably the nearest and even there the regional government level is a relatively weak one.

It is fair to say that Berlin, New York and Tokyo on this kind of analysis are close to being ‘city states’ in terms of the ancient use of these words. These are places which can control their own destiny. Of course, New York City has to operate within New York State law but in the end these are cities where there is an entirely city-focused political system and where the elected leader, the mayor or the governor, is hugely important.

Moscow would be in that group were it not for the ambiguity of the overall political control within Russia. I have put it in the ‘others’ category with London, Paris and Toronto, which are clearly not city states. These are places that are integrated within the wider government arrangements for the country and have very much less freedom accordingly. As I say, Moscow hovers uneasily. With a different president in Russia it would probably fall in the top group.

Lessons to learn

What are the implications of all of this for London and for the review of London’s governance? First and most obviously, there is no question that history, political culture and the constitutional arrangements of each country – whether they are federal or unity states, have a written constitution or not, are inimical to domination by a single centre – profoundly affect the room for manoeuvre in creating an independent city government. You only have to look at the way that the national media in Britain struggles with representing London in its national newspapers to see this struggle in action every day.

There is some movement, not only in London, towards mayoral systems, presumably reflecting the ethos of the era, the desire in a celebrity-driven world for visible individuals whom the electorate can fully understand. This was very much the language that was used by Downing Street when creating the office of Mayor of London. Another implication, perhaps to help the London Assembly feel that its job is not uniquely difficult, is that assemblies and city councils often struggle to gain attention compared with the enormous magnetism and bright light generated by the office of mayor. In that sense the London Assembly is in good company.

It is also important to note that one fact, which absolutely makes London's citywide and borough level of government stand out, is the desperately low proportion of resources that are raised locally, either by the GLA or by the boroughs. Only around 20–25 per cent of revenue is raised locally in London, compared with around 70 per cent in New York City and 60–65 per cent in Paris. Even Toronto, which is seen within Canada as a relatively weak form of urban government, raises 40 per cent of the money spent within the city from local taxation. In the context of the wider review of local government finance in Britain – dare I say the permanent review of local government finance in Britain – this is clearly an issue that will need to be tackled both at the borough and at the Londonwide level.

Another important point is that this sounds as if it is a problem specific to London. But it is true elsewhere in Britain; few countries reform their systems of local government, or its financing, or the services it runs, with the relentless, Maoist continuous revolution that we do here in Britain. The sense of permanent change is clear for all to see.

Finally, one obvious point: what you can learn from looking at other systems of government in other major cities in the world is that there is no perfect model. I know this is a very obvious thing to say, but it is important to notice this. Each system is organically grown and they are vernacular – the outcome of a political system and urban culture within a particular country.

To conclude, we have now had four systems of government in London since 31 March 1965 – London does seem particularly unstable. In those terms, another review of the governance of London is to be welcomed. Perhaps next time will finally produce a long-lasting solution.

London tomorrow
Michael Heseltine

Imagine if you will such a speech in 1954. Remember the background: a Commonwealth-facing Britain, just emerging from post-war rationing, austerity and loaded with massive debt; civil aviation in its infancy; television a flickering experiment unknown to a mass audience; the City of London operated at the sharp end by arm-waving floor traders; and a population almost exclusively white and of Anglo-Saxon descent. Europe was no more than the framework of the Schuman Plan, with the Messina Conference and the European Union still two years away. The Soviet Union was breathing down the necks of Greece, France, Italy, and halfway across Germany.

Who would have looked forward with confidence to a European Union established and enlarged to 25 nations, our home market; Russia returned to its historic frontiers, with NATO members adjacent to it; an economy ranked amongst the world's most prosperous; three international airports, a Channel Tunnel and the M25 hardly able to cope with their position at the heart of one of the world's largest centres of travel; the Internet as the connecting rod of commerce, research and much else as well; and a more multiracial, multicultural and more tolerant society?

Will the changes of the next 50 years be so dramatic? In anything except the most horrendous circumstances, which we can all imagine but will hopefully never see, London is certain to enjoy a future that is prosperous, diverse and as exciting as any urban society on earth. It is a city in the round. There may be more powerful, more attractive cities, possibly richer cities, but there is no city on earth that so embraces the ambitions, achievements and satisfactions of human beings as London does. As Dr Johnson once said, 'When a man tires of London, he tires of life.' It is all here: the power of politics; financial institutions, corporate headquarters and administrative wealth; the culture and history of great buildings; the arts, heritage, sports and entertainment; and education.

The cultural diversity of many religions, races and their traditions is embraced here. The service industries that clothe, feed and satisfy their every need are here. No city can offer such a horizon of human endeavour. This is important for London and those who live here, but it is equally important for the rest of the UK. For London is not only

the UK's greatest advertisement; it is the point of entry for businesses, visitors and tourists. It is no wonder that governments and their agencies seek to spread the countless flow of people travelling into London out into every part of the UK – and rightly so, but never lose sight of the fact that, for the huge majority, it is London that brings them here in the first place.

I say London can look forward with confidence by building on its strengths, and so it can, but others of course will compete. The globalisation of business has only just begun. Imagine what will happen when the Chinese and the Indians follow up on their growing economic progress and begin to travel on the scale that is assumed normal in more advanced economies today. The growth of tourism will be huge. The advance guard are, of course, the 70,000 Chinese students already studying here. London will compete for its share and for Britain's share of these huge opportunities.

Let us ask ourselves: what are London's strengths? I choose a selection. Others could elect another list and there are many to pick from, but I choose mine:

- the financial and professional establishment – law, accounting, architecture and many more
- a cultural heritage of world-class museums, galleries, parks and gardens
- a natural centre for world or European corporate headquarters, backed, of course, by the English language
- a uniquely broad cultural and racial mix
- the mother of parliaments
- a world-class corruption-free bureaucracy
- an unmatched breadth and depth of sporting facilities and abilities
- world-renowned creativity in the performing arts
- world-class colleges and medical schools – Imperial College, LSE and King's, to name just three
- international cuisine to serve every taste.

Such a background more than justifies London's status as one of the world's great cities. However, no city can remain frozen in aspic. They are living entities with their own dynamic for constant change.

Circa 2054

Let us look today at how the London we know already indicates the London of 50 years' time. I have stressed the worldwide nature of London as a city. Already the advanced world centres much of its business here, but there are numerous and often large economies that are only just or have yet to become global players. Those economies, starting with China and India, will follow existing patterns and locate many of their companies here. London has the service industries and the cultural diversity to attract them, as well as the English language.

Those industrial and commercial trends, added to the explosion of tourism, will have consequences. London's house prices will remain amongst the world's highest. More and more offices will open on a 24-hour basis to serve the world's time zones. There will be a dramatic increase in the diversity and scale of the service industries able to cater for these trends. Significantly, this will affect the education provision, with yet more languages to add to the existing pressures.

Although the domestic office is an electronic reality today, the human instinct to congregate will ensure that people will still come to work. The traditional nine-to-five is already breaking down and I think will increasingly do so, but meeting people, sharing experiences and having fun will not be compatible with all of us sitting at home pressing buttons.

The living conditions in London will improve. Pedestrianisation will be extended and the use of private cars curtailed and regulated. The biggest change will be a central grid where cars are guided electronically, thus significantly increasing road capacity. Congestion charges will be replaced by road pricing. All-year-round restaurants will be weatherproofed by canopies and heat zones.

The Thames will be clean; I mean really clean. It will be restored to its central role in London's history. Every imaginable use will be explored for transportation, entertainment and catering. Hopefully the South Bank will be redeveloped, but this time by a generation who can see the opportunity to create an urban profile of outstanding quality. It will need a vision and an overall development agency, and I wish I had created it in the 1970s.

The demand for air transport will be large. Airport capacity will have to be found to cater for the size of aircraft and the explosion of numbers. The good news is that immigration queues at airports will largely disappear, as people are identified electronically, either at airports or before they leave their home cities.

There are two big infrastructure projections: cross-Channel demand will have led to the first cross-Channel bridge. Londoners will have seen the completion of the outer ring road that was part of the original motorway box concept.

London is Europe's financial centre and Europe is our principal market. We will long since have joined the Euro and the opposition to it will be remembered, if at all, as we now look back at the opposition to decimalisation.

Finally for this speech, but not of course for all of the changes that will have happened, London will have had its first non-white mayor. Just as Britain's first Jewish prime minister and first Asian MP were Tories, so will be London's first black mayor.

London must compete

However, there is no room for complacency. London is a city which can trace its roots back for 2,000 years. Much of today's life has to be supported by infrastructure built for quite different times and circumstances. I am not just thinking of Elizabethan, Georgian or Victorian streets designed for horse-drawn traffic. Much of London's airport facilities do not even match the airports of the third world today, let alone the futuristic fantasies that British architects and consultants are building all over the world.

In a global economy London has to compete. Emerging nations are pouring untold resources into the pursuit of excellence in every field. The USA has the resources to afford excellence in virtually any field and to go on improving its standards to sustain such pre-eminence, for example, and crucially, in higher education.

I have mentioned the existence of a multiracial, multicultural society. The integration of the last 50 years has done much good for the whole community. Such a fusion of faith and colour at such a speed would however test any society. Many would break under the strain, as is all too evident as one looks across the rest of the world. Britain has gained immeasurably from successive waves of

immigrants; conspicuously, the Huguenots and the Jews in earlier times. Today, the post-war generations from Asia, Africa and the West Indies are increasingly conspicuous as modern British icons in a multitude of activities, from industry and commerce, the law, medicine, theatre and sport.

However, there is another side: that is educating huge numbers of young people for the sophisticated jobs of the business world. Do we really have a strategy commensurate to the challenges or are we just sort of muddling through, hoping that something will turn up? Or worse, that it will not?

A question haunts me: is there any realisation of how to ensure that London will compete? If there is such a realisation, is it restricted to cosy armchair analysis or some compulsory tome by Corelli Barnett explaining what went wrong?

Canary Wharf to Thames Gateway

In a question more familiar in the private sector than in the public: who is in charge? Answer comes, there is no one. Let us take an example: the plans for Thames Gateway. I am very familiar with the problems. Today's problems are much as they were when I faced similar issues in 1979. I had, as a junior minister in the Department of the Environment in 1972, been appalled by what was happening on the south bank of the Thames. One of the world's most significant urban waterscapes was literally being vandalised by a concrete jungle of characterless, tasteless buildings. I asked my officials to prepare legislation to set up a development corporation with planning and land assembly powers. Perhaps as a consequence I was promoted to be Minister of Aerospace and Shipping, and the plans lay dormant. Sadly, the vandalisation of the south bank proceeded apace.

By the time I returned to government in 1979 as Secretary of State for the Environment, my focus of interest had changed. I had discovered the unbelievable wastelands of east London, where municipal and nationalised ownership had suffocated any prospects for economic and social regeneration of vast areas within a stone's throw of one of the world's most prosperous centres. There was one obvious solution: to revive the dormant plans, take over thousands of acres of derelict land, and bring it back to life. In a sentence, to create a new town corporation in an urban setting: London Docklands Development Corporation was born.

Everybody was against. Keith Joseph was against because it was interventionist. Geoffrey Howe, as Chancellor, was against because it was expensive. The GLC was against, the boroughs were against, my officials were against – only Mrs Thatcher and I were in favour, but it was enough. One organisation, one chief executive, one chairman and one committed cabinet minister. Let us consider the assembled array of activists now holding sway in Thames Gateway:

- delivery agencies – there is no single agency set up to deliver the regeneration in the Thames Gateway
- a cabinet committee, chaired by the Prime Minister
- a minister for the Thames Gateway called Keith Hill. If I may make the worst joke of the day, he certainly has a mountain to climb. I thought I would get lots of groans rather than laughs at that stage, but I could not resist it.
- the Thames Gateway Strategic Executive in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Sustainable Communities Directorate
- the Thames Gateway Delivery Office has not yet been delivered
- the Mayor's London Development Agency
- the South East Regional Development Agency
- the East of England's Regional Development Agency
- the New Thurrock Urban Development Corporation
- the proposed East London Development Corporation
- English Partnerships, who you will be glad to know has a special Thames Gateway division
- the Housing Corporation
- the boroughs and county councils.

And so on. I could go on. There are many others. The East London Urban Development Corporation (UDC) proposed to cover an area of east London that includes the Lower Lea Valley, including the projected Olympic sites, Barking, Dagenham, Thamesmead, Belvedere and Erith. The extent of the UDC's planning powers and its lifespan are still to be resolved. The UDC itself is still not up and running. There are said to be disagreements between boroughs and government around the extent of borough representation on its board – nothing new in that problem. It is scheduled to be up and running in June. Sir Peter Hall, who worked with me and has experience in spades, has accused the government of dithering even about the precise prescription of the UDC, saying that voluntary collaboration is much less effective than an executive body with clearly defined powers and resources.

Faith to build

Anyone who understands the complexity of these problems knows that a solution has got to be imposed. The local authorities will not voluntarily agree to an organisation that can drive progress at the pace required. Of course, behind closed doors many of the leaders and chief executives may well agree that giving them only minority status on a UDC is very sensible, as it gives them real influence while providing them with the ready made excuse that it was 'not their fault' when things go wrong.

What is happening in terms of transport improvements? The Strategic Rail Authority has proposed running domestic trains on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL), cutting commuter times from the midway towns; the extension of Docklands Light Railway (DLR) to City Airport and the Transport and Works Act approval for DLR extension to Woolwich; and proposals for bus capacity increases. There are promises of government and mayoral funding for the East London Bridge at Becton and Woolwich, although it still has to go to a planning inquiry. It is not scheduled to be completed until 2012. Why do they not use the special development order powers available to Parliament and cut the consultation period to about a year?

There are many agreements with private sector house builders, but does anybody actually think we will see the vision that drove the Georgians and Victorians to build the great terraces and the excellence of London parks? Or will it be politically correct conformists of today's politically correct world regenerating what someone once described as 'semi-detached couples living in semi-detached houses'.

It is easy to be critical, and I have a huge sympathy with those now responsible for this great project. I know full well that if I had allowed the word 'vision' to cross my lips in 1979 my ideas would have been holed below the waterline. The Treasury would have had all the evidence they needed to assert their characteristic role encapsulated in that simple, single word: 'no'.

How did those earlier generations of British people find the confidence and the cash to give us our heritage? No one looks at the great buildings that we treasure today and utters 'how much better it would have been if it had all been spent on council housing.' There was a pride and a confidence in the creation of legacy. I just hope that somewhere in the Thames Gateway we see that same faith in what we as a generation will be judged by, and which we leave behind.

There have been endless series of reports and investigations into every aspect of East London. Ministers cannot make up their minds; when they do, planning constraints grind the decision making process into yet more delay. That is the reason why UDCs are so essential. We used new town corporations to rebuild post-war Britain. That process did much to relocate people and jobs out of our older cities. The UDCs are the reverse of the process, designed to create the conditions in which human life and activity is attracted back into an urban environment.

The government needs to put in place effective decision-making arrangements. Crossrail is undergoing another review. There needs to be a better legislative vehicle than the expensive and time-consuming hybrid bill process. The Treasury is exploring new taxes on development gain, which will simply slow the availability of land as owners wait for the inevitable repeal when governments change. However, the Treasury is – and these are words nobody has ever heard me say before – to be congratulated on the new proposals to allow above-market compensation for land purchase when it is needed for development, and equally its recognition that seeking market value for every acre sold will never deliver the environmental space such as parks that so enhance our life.

A one-stop shop UDC approach also provides a single focus for all those departments and agencies which are outside the mainstream of the regeneration process, but are vital to it – such as the police, schools and the health service.

Give the Mayor more power

I have moved from the generality of London and its competitive challenge to the specific issues of the Thames Gateway. I remain today as convinced as I ever was that the reform that is needed requires a significant increase in the powers of London's directly elected mayor. I intend to say nothing, one way or the other, about the present incumbent. In a few months the electorate will have a chance to do that. Whoever is in the job, the problem is that it is a non-job. The government made a gesture, when the reality needed a landslide of power from the overbearing centralism of Whitehall to a powerful decision-making person directly answerable to Londoners. Today no one is in charge. Committees abound, powers are diffuse; that is not a formula with which to win the race to be the world's greatest city 50 years from now.

Other formats and languages

For a large print, Braille, disc, sign language video or audio-tape version of this document, please contact us at the address below:

Public Liaison Unit
Greater London Authority
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

Telephone 020 7983 4100
Minicom 020 7983 4458
www.london.gov.uk

You will need to supply your name, your postal address and state the format and title of the publication you require.

If you would like a summary of this document in your language, please phone the number or contact us at the address above.

Chinese

中文
如果需要此文檔的您的母語拷貝，
請致電以下號碼或和下列地址聯係

Vietnamese

Tiếng Việt
Nếu bạn muốn bản sao của tài liệu này bằng ngôn ngữ của bạn, hãy gọi điện theo số hoặc liên lạc với địa chỉ dưới đây.

Greek

Αν θα θέλατε ένα αντίγραφο του παρόντος εγγράφου στη γλώσσα σας, παρακαλώ να τηλεφωνήσετε στον αριθμό ή να επικοινωνήσετε στην παρακάτω διεύθυνση.

Turkish

Bu brosürü Türkçe olarak edinmek için lütfen asagidaki numaraya telefon edin ya da adrese basvurun.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦੀ ਕਾਪੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਰਾਬਤਾ ਕਰੋ:

Hindi

यदि आप इस दस्तावेज़ की प्रति अपनी भाषा में चाहते हैं, तो कृपया निम्नलिखित नम्बर पर फोन करें अथवा दिये गये पता पर सम्पर्क करें।

Bengali

আপনি যদি আপনার ভাষায় এই দলিলের প্রতিলিপি (কপি) চান, তা হলে নীচের ফোন্ নম্বরে বা ঠিকানায় অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Urdu

اگر آپ اِس دستاویز کی نقل اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں، تو براہِ کرم نیچے دیئے گئے نمبر پر فون کریں یا دیئے گئے پتہ پر رابطہ قائم کریں.

Arabic

إذا أردت نسخة من هذه الوثيقة بلغتك، الرجاء الاتصال برقم الهاتف او الكتابة الى العنوان أدناه:

Gujarati

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજની નકલ તમારી ભાષામાં જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપા કરી આપેલ નંબર ઉપર ફોન કરો અથવા નીચેના સરનામે સંપર્ક સાધો.

GREATERLONDONAUTHORITY
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA
www.london.gov.uk
Enquiries 020 7983 4100
Minicom 020 7983 4458

MoL/Oct 04/MR D&P/MT/650R

London Assembly

The London Assembly is the scrutiny arm of the Greater London Authority (GLA). Its 25 Members hold the Mayor to account. Assembly Members scrutinise his £7.5 billion spending plans and examine how he is fulfilling his wide-ranging responsibilities towards services in London, such as transport, policing and economic development. Empowered by statute to carry out scrutinies – akin to House of Commons Select Committees – the London Assembly also raises issues of importance to Londoners. Assembly Members test those in charge of public, private and voluntary sector agencies, highlighting any failures and proposing solutions that will improve the lives of Londoners.

Association of London Government

The Association of London Government (ALG) is a voluntary umbrella organisation for the 32 London boroughs and the Corporation of London. It is committed to fighting for more resources for London and getting the best possible deal for London's 33 councils. Part think-tank and part lobbying organisation, it also runs a range of services designed to make life better for Londoners. It lobbies for more resources and the best deal for the capital, taking a lead in the debate on key issues affecting the capital. Most important, the ALG provides the London boroughs with a single, powerful voice in negotiations with the Government and other organisations in London.

LONDONASSEMBLY

Association of London Government