

# LONDON EUROPE'S GLOBAL CITY?



# GOVERNING THE UNGOVERNABLE?

Deyan Sudjic

The single most arresting fact about London is that it is growing. After decades in which, like every other major European and North American city, it was haemorrhaging people, the victim of the hollowing out doughnut effect, London has turned around. The forecasts now point to sustained and substantial population increases; much of it through migration. Something remarkable has happened here. A combination of an ageing population beginning to understand that the only source of the young and able-bodied that will be needed to care for the baby boomers in their declining years, and to pay the contributions needed to fund their pensions will have to be from outside, and of the booming opportunities for the highly skilled in everything from banking to the art market, have between them transformed the character of the city, and its prospects. The transformation is both reflected in, and in part the product of, a transformed system of city government for London.

Recently, London's only remaining evening newspaper carried a front page story to the effect that the first directly elected mayor in the city's history, Ken Livingstone, was so exercised by the thought of his legacy that he intended to run for office for two more terms so as to be able to preside over the opening ceremonies for the Olympics of 2012. The story does not have to be literally true to pose real questions about the impact of the singularly un-British approach to local government that Livingstone represents. After two or more decades of drift, and ambiguity, London as an urban entity now has a clear focus of power. It is a development that is the most startling product of Tony Blair's local government reforms. They were intended to change the face of all the country's big cities. London is the one success story of a reform that has elsewhere failed to take root. It should have been the most difficult, and the most unmanageable, and yet it has turned out to be the city in which a change of government, or rather the introduction of a government, has had the most clear cut impact.

Despite his incendiary past as a self-styled man of the left, Livingstone is clearly now modelling himself on a combination of big city American mayors of the stamp of La Guardia, Koch and Giuliani, with a touch of the imperial style of Francois Mitterrand thrown in, rather than the more restrained tradition of municipal public service. It's inconceivable that a Labour traditionalist would, as Livingstone has done, earmark £100,000 from the Greater London Authority's budget to spend on fighting a public inquiry to defend his personal choice of sculptor for a singularly lifeless tribute to Nelson Mandela destined for Trafalgar Square. Nor would such a figure ever have claimed that it was his duty as mayor to lead, rather than to listen, a destiny manifest in his decisions on everything from questions of aesthetics, to the extension of the congestion charging zone westward.

The intriguing question posed by Livingstone's highly personal, interventionist style of shaping London in his own image is

personified at the most superficial level by the affair of the Mandela statue, and in a much more far reaching way by the eruption of a wall of skyscrapers which have been breaching the 305 metre barrier along Bishopsgate, encouraged by Livingstone's enthusiasm for creating Europe's first skyline to aspire to the model of Shanghai rather than Manhattan. How much is the jaw dropping scale of the capital's once in a century transformation the product of the imposition of a single guiding vision, or would it have taken place without it?

London has tended to shrug off attempts to tame and direct its growth ever since its townsfolk ignored the attempts of Tudor monarchs to prevent the growth of suburbs outside its city walls, and its refusal to accept Christopher Wren's masterplan for its reconstruction after the Great Fire of 1666. Its rush westward was given a massive, and entirely unintended boost by the random creation of a heavy bomber aerodrome at Heathrow that later became Europe's largest airport. And the Great Lurch East of the 1990s, represented by the eruption of the Canary Wharf financial centre from the site of a derelict banana warehouse was equally accidental. It was the product of the market taking ruthless advantage of a set of tax incentives and planning relaxations, intended to have a quite different effect and encourage the growth of small business in the area.

If one believes that London is a gently anarchic city that has always grown haphazardly in fits and starts, and it is that quality that is behind its long-term robust good health, then the interventionism proposed by Livingstone is either irrelevant, or even counterproductive. In fact, the Mayor has produced a blueprint for future development that is as prescriptive as anything London has seen. It remains to be seen how effective it will be. Certainly London has had large-scale urban visions in the past. It was Nash's London that was heroic enough to inspire Napoleon III to remodel Paris, just as it was the London Underground that used to set the pace for the Paris Metro. The Barbican, London Wall and Paternoster Square were all the product of carefully considered planning strategies, at least two of which have subsequently been expunged.

But in the last quarter of a century, London has got out of the habit of seeing that such strategies are possible, which is what makes Livingstone's blueprints for physical and transport policy seem so strikingly different from what has gone before. For London, it is the legacy issues that are really what the Olympics are all about. Learning from Barcelona's experiences, Livingstone is planning to use the games for the catalytic effect that they will have on London's bleak eastern fringes. The Olympics will be focussed on Newham and Stratford to help kick start London's eastward growth, in the attempt to find somewhere to put the extra 800,000 Londoners that Livingstone is predicting will need to be housed in the next two decades.

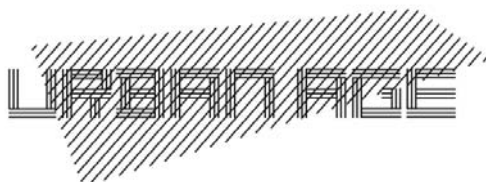
Development will be concentrated on Stratford, which will get the stadium, the pool, an aerodrome, hockey stadium and four indoor arena, and the 17,000 bed Olympic Village; the Lower Lea Valley that will be the

site of the smaller venues. The scale of the project is massive, and will see what amounts to the total reengineering of East London. Depending on how you count the cost, it could be anything from £2 to £4 billion, once the games have ended and everything has been tidied up. As far as transport is concerned, the flagship will be the Olympic Javelin, a high-speed shuttle running on the cross channel rail track from St. Pancras to the Olympic stadium in just ten minutes. There are promises for an expansion of the East London line, the Docklands Light Railway and the North London Line, but not as yet any clear commitments from the government about the future of Crossrail.

Nor are these the only major developments underway in the city. The area around King's Cross is just beginning to take in the scale of the transformation that is about to overtake it. The new St. Pancras station, designed to handle traffic on the high-speed link to Paris and Brussels through the channel, is just the first step. The huge glass and white steel box awkwardly tacked onto the back of Victorian St. Pancras will soon form just part of a sprawling development on the site of the railway and canal lands. As one developer labours on a masterplan for a project that will match Canary Wharf in its scale, another has already opportunistically swooped in to take advantage of the possibilities offered by a shift in perceptions of the area that is already taking place. This is no longer an area dominated by the drug and sex trade. The Guardian newspaper will be moving into offices here. At White City, a gap in the city's fabric for most of a century is being filled in by a giant shopping complex. South of the Thames, at Elephant & Castle, the comprehensive approach to planning of the 1960s is being unpicked on a massive scale.

This is a shift that is producing qualitative as well as quantitative changes. For the rest of the world it provides a unique opportunity to see the tensions and fault lines between planning and market forces, between a centralised vision and laissez-faire. For Londoners it's a giddy, dizzying ride, which once more puts it in the uncertain territory of a metropolis in the midst of the kind of change it has not seen for a century.

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# ACCOMMODATING GROWTH OR CONFLICT?

## Housing and urban neighbourhoods

**H**igh land values, continuous price hikes and the inability of supply to keep pace with rising demand have made housing one of the most difficult hurdles to London's continued growth. It is a key factor determining Londoners' well-being: renters are burdened by housing costs and prospective first time buyers face increasing difficulties in accessing home-ownership. Disadvantaged immigrant families suffer overcrowding in some parts of London and those living in temporary or transitory accommodation rank by the hundreds of thousands, while middle class families continue haemorrhaging to the outer edges of an ever more extended metropolitan region, all due to the lack of space and suitable units within London. Policy-makers and planners, for their part, are pressed to make room for new construction, devise mechanisms to provide affordable units and guide the growth process so that new developments can be integrated to the fabric of existing neighbourhoods to enhance, rather than detract, from the grain of the city's built environment. To add to the challenge, there is widespread concern – especially at the level of local councillors – that intensification of land should not compromise public amenities, such as open and green spaces or the river, and that intensi-

fication can lead to town-cramming and over-development.

A prevalent argument among those studying the social geography of the city has been that the concentration of social disadvantage in inner London results from the uneven distribution of affordable housing units. While certain inner districts are dominated by estates owned and managed by local councils, providing social units which are affordable yet many are problematic in terms of construction quality, maintenance and social conditions, the same quantum of housing is virtually non-existent in the outer boroughs. After decades of governmental neglect, the impact of renewed interest by volume house builders, coupled with public sector grants and the growing involvement of civil society have not solved this basic issue. While many core neighbourhoods have experienced a return of the middle classes, in parts of Hammersmith, Brixton and Clerkenwell, for example – the decaying and rapidly shrinking stock of affordable housing in inner London continues to be, depending on the analyst's view, an entrapment or the last resort for the least fortunate in a largely unaffordable metropolitan housing market.

Current policies in London aim to increase the supply of housing and develop dense and vibrant urban neighbourhoods with a social mix and a variety of housing

sizes, building typologies and tenure types. The urgency of this agenda transcends the realm of housing and it has important implications for social integration and for London's ability to keep functioning; many of the city's key workers in the fields of health, transport, policing and education find it increasingly difficult to secure housing within the city. However, this goal is obstructed by ingrained preferences for low density neighbourhoods (with house and garden typologies) and against multi-family units. Despite high land values, there are often insufficient incentives for housebuilders to build more affordable units. Many new up-market developments in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are self-segregated from the local urban fabric, especially along the River Thames, and actively buffer their residents from the everyday life of their surrounding communities. Even subtle design differences and the distribution of units within a scheme can lead to the formation of micro-ghettos, such as those developments which clearly separate affordable units from those at a market rate, thus stigmatising their occupants; a phenomenon that is often unintentionally caused by the requirements of social housing providers for low maintenance costs in shared areas and the need for larger family units.

Good design can make higher densities compatible with urban attractiveness, reconciling the demand for personal space and privacy, with London's need to grow in a compact manner. A combination of units of varied sizes and costs, the integration of housing with other uses and open spaces, and an overall upgrading of the quality of new developments through clearer design and construction guidelines, constitute important steps towards more socially integrated communities. These principles have been embraced in the UK and wholeheartedly adopted by the

Mayor of London since the publication of the Urban Task Force Report. The redevelopment of large portions of East London in preparation for the 2012 Olympic Games is seen as an opportunity to demonstrate the reach of design in practice. How much will the Olympic Park, like other regeneration sites across the city, catalyse a regeneration of the derelict areas surrounding it? And what legacy will the Olympic Village create as a model of socially sustainable housing? Are questions worth asking. How to stimulate housing construction and secure affordability, the important roles for the private and social sectors to play, and the response of the general public to a denser model of city living remain important issues that must not be neglected. Financing and design strategies must be thought simultaneously from the formulation of citywide strategies to the implementation of individual projects. It is in the challenging realm of housing that the need for joined-up thinking makes itself the most evident at every stage of the development process, from the drafting of citywide housing strategies to the implementation of individual projects and the creation of sustainable and socially integrated urban communities from their very inception.

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# EXPANDING THE CITY CORE

## Labour market and workplaces

London is growing. It continues to show a robust demographic growth, unlike most large European cities, and in contrast to the other global cities, its employment levels are still rising. In the face of a recent economic slow down, activity in the city has been sustained by a number of factors that include the current volume of major urban development projects, some of them already under construction, and a larger number on the drawing boards or passing through the planning process. In a longer term, this array of commercial space construction, public works and infrastructure investments will play an important role in determining the direction that London's economy will take. Without doubt, it will change the city's face and the grain of its built environment. So, rather than asking whether or not London is growing, the important questions ahead relate to what drives the city's economic dynamism, what social and physical implications are to be expected from its current development path and how public policies and interventions can sustain this growth at the same time that they extend its benefits to those who have been left behind and the areas where concentrated disadvantage persists.

Expanding the supply of office space in London is a clear policy priority in the urban

competitiveness agenda put forward by the Livingstone administration. The expansion of Canary Wharf and the rash of new office towers planned in the City and its fringes sparked by the iconic success of the Gherkin, confirm the commercial reality of this trend. If the city is to continue attracting foreign investments, the Mayor argues, it needs to cater to their spatial needs; the lack of suitable state-of-the-art offices may become the most important bottleneck to the consolidation of London as a world city and financial capital in the context of intensified regional competition for high value-added functions. The Mayor's London Plan, put forward in response to these challenges, envisions a central activity zone characterised by high-rise buildings and the intensification of land-uses in "opportunity areas" (such as White City, Elephant & Castle, King's Cross and Stratford) that are scattered throughout metropolitan London. They present an under-utilised capacity of transport accessibility.

Urban and regional economists may question this agenda in terms of the external linkages and sources of growth on which the London economy actually depends; the extent to which the city's dynamism is linked to transnational finance and its related sectors is a matter of debate. But, so is the relative weight of office costs in the location budgets of firms deciding to either stay in

or leave London, where labour costs far exceed those in other regions of the UK or abroad. Turning the argument on its head, critics may argue that it is the concentration of high-skilled workers and the continuous replenishment of all segments of the city's labour force through international migration, rather than the supply of office and other commercial space, which ties these firms to the city and offsets the high costs of doing business here. Hence, protecting and strengthening this urban asset of London should be a policy priority that supersedes property-led development strategies. A final question relates to the effects that the current emphasis on the "office economy" will have on London's diverse urban economy and segmented labour markets: how will the benefits of growth reach those at the periphery or unrelated to this services-oriented complex? How effectively are mechanisms such as planning gain or affordable housing quotas used to tackle pervasive exclusion?

Adding to this question are overarching concerns about the actual strength of the projected growth, given the highly cyclical and volatile character that the London economy has shown in the past, and about the accuracy of the estimated ratios of office space needed per new job created. It has been argued that the deep technological, economic and social changes that are currently reconfiguring the relationship between work routines and workplaces have changed the assumptions on which quantitative assessments of office needs are posited at the same time that they necessitate more thorough qualitative appraisals of the functionality of workplaces and their morphological capacity to facilitate cooperation processes and non-routine tasks.

The debate for planners and urban designers also extends to concerns about the multidimensional effects that the proposed

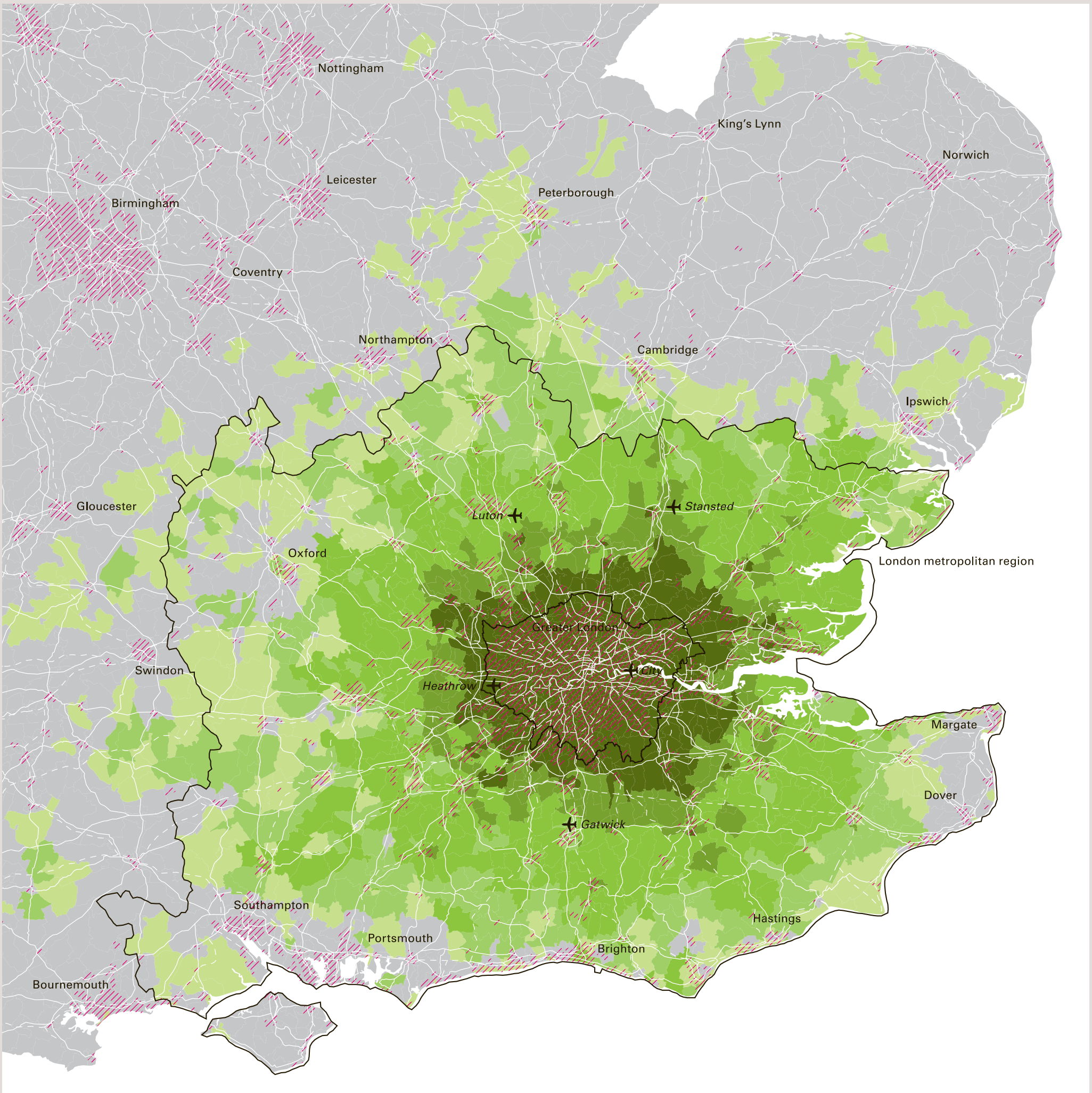
regeneration schemes will cause both on their immediate vicinity and on the city as a whole. Issues range wide: from the impacts of high-rise structures on microclimates and visual corridors to the effects that employment clusters may cause on the quality of life and congestion levels of the neighbourhoods where they will be located. While some may find office developments a threat to the urban fabric of residential areas, others will see the mixed-use schemes in which most of these developments will be embedded as an opportunity to enhance local connectivity and remediate longstanding urban blight.

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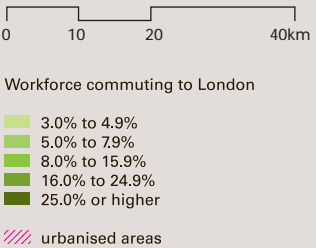


# THE GREATER GREATER LONDON



Past controls and development boundaries have shaped the growth of London and led to a compact form in which the city's continuous built-up area is still well contained within the limits of Greater London. Contemporary London is meshed, however, in a functional region of over 17 million people that extends far beyond these boundaries, leaping over the greenbelt in every direction and increasingly outpouring into the southeast of England. Evidence of regional interdependencies is manifold, from shared regional infrastructure to extended “commuter-sheds” and overlapping labour and housing markets. Three out of the five international airports frequently used by Londoners are located outside Greater

London, more than 55 kilometres or an hour away from central London in the case of Luton and Stansted. Even though employment trends have shown long-term decentralisation, peripheral growth has outstripped that of the centre and multiple economic clusters and development corridors have appeared outside Greater London; commuters into the city make up significant portions of the workforce in most of the region. Related to these extended commutes is the lengthy journey to work for London workers, 43 minutes on average and 56 minutes for those based in central London, the predominant mode being public transport (more than 85%).





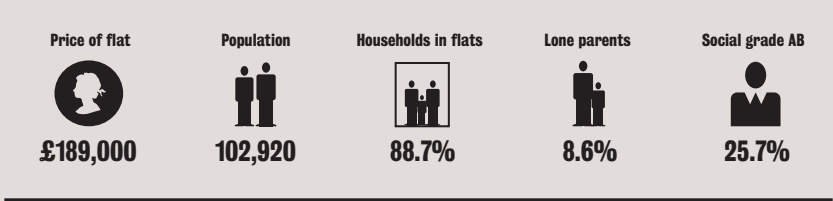
# AREAS IN TRANSITION

## NORTH: KING’S CROSS

As one of London’s major transport nodes, King’s Cross will become perhaps the best connected development site in the capital with the completion of the new international station at St. Pancras, improved Thameslink services and direct links to the four main airports in the South East – Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and Luton. Historically cut off from the mixed and intense residential neighbourhoods of Camden and Islington, the site acts as a hole in the fabric of North London, punctuated by elegant industrial buildings, gas holders and a romantic urban landscape along the Regent’s Canal. Abutting London’s institutional area to the south of Euston Road, the area has for genera-

tions been associated with the informal economy and activities of a large city station. A project to redevelop the 27 hectare site by the developers Argent, is currently in the planning stage and envisages nearly 750,000 square metres of offices, shops and housing centred on a framework of tree-lined avenues and public squares. The key question raised by this mega-project is how to reconcile the aspiration to create a commercially viable neighbourhood with the enormous volume of through movement generated by its bustling transport infrastructure. How will the development cope with the needs of both transient and local populations, current and future residents?

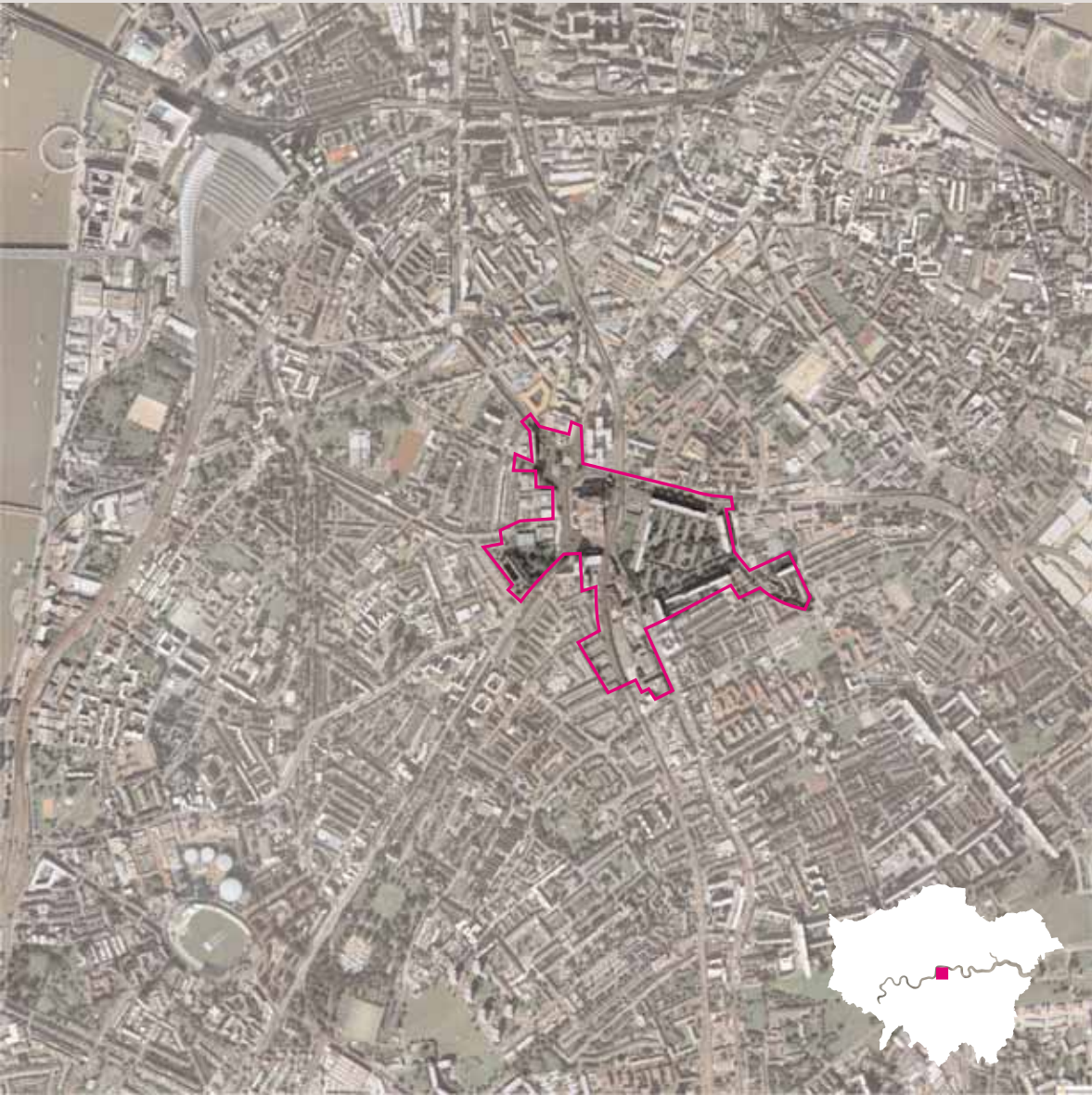
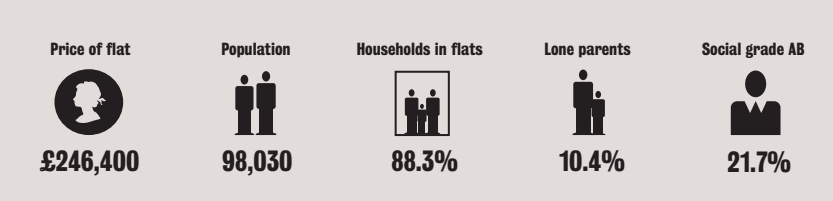
These statistics represent the people living in the 9 square kilometres shown in the aerial photograph



## SOUTH: ELEPHANT & CASTLE

Elephant & Castle occupies the geographical centre of London in a highly dynamic and gritty part of the city. For several years the London Borough of Southwark – which owns a large percentage of the social housing blocks in the vicinity – has sought innovative ways of transforming an area perhaps better known for its unattractive pink shopping centre, double traffic roundabout and run-down post-war housing blocks than its strong transport connections and proximity to cultural institutions and the River Thames. Today, the area demonstrates the vibrancy of London’s housing market, with a range of infill and conversion schemes that are attracting new residents with a broader economic profile.

Covering an area of 68.8 hectares with 5,300 new and replacement homes, 75,000 square metres of retail and commercial space that will bring 4,000 new jobs to the area, the objective of the current initiative is to “create a place that people travel to, not through”. Given the large costs of replacement housing and infrastructure, Southwark is currently searching for a development partner in the private sector to implement the £1.5bn scheme while securing public support from the diverse and engaged local residential communities. The central issue for Elephant & Castle is how to create a new public realm that connects and integrates its diverse, existing communities without creating social severance and conflict.





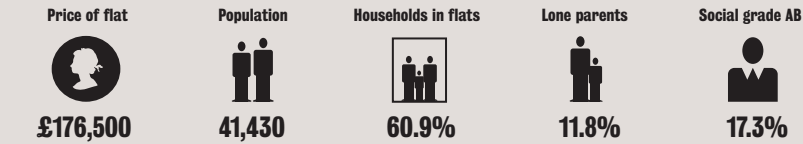
# EAST: OLYMPICS / LOWER LEA

The London Olympic Games in 2012 will be one of the main catalysts of social, physical and environmental change in the wider London Thames Gateway. Located at the heart of East London's diverse communities, composed of traditional local residents and successive waves of mainly Asian immigrants, the 270-hectare Olympic site is close to Stratford town centre and its major transport connections that will link to central London and the Continent in 2007.

The urban landscape is fragmented and constrained by busy roads and train lines, but large amounts of green space and water in the Lower Lea Valley provide significant potential for a new piece of city in East London. 9,400

homes will be located within the Olympic Park, half of which are targeted to be within affordable price ranges, alongside the 37,000 new housing units planned for the wider area. A major commercial and retail complex is planned for Stratford City, creating a new focus for jobs and economic development. The new sports facilities will be set in an open and generous landscaped environment that creates links to the surrounding communities.

The key question that will determine the success of this project is how to build, in a previously decayed area, a new piece of sustainable and accessible city with housing that is both affordable and appealing to a wide range of income and social groups.

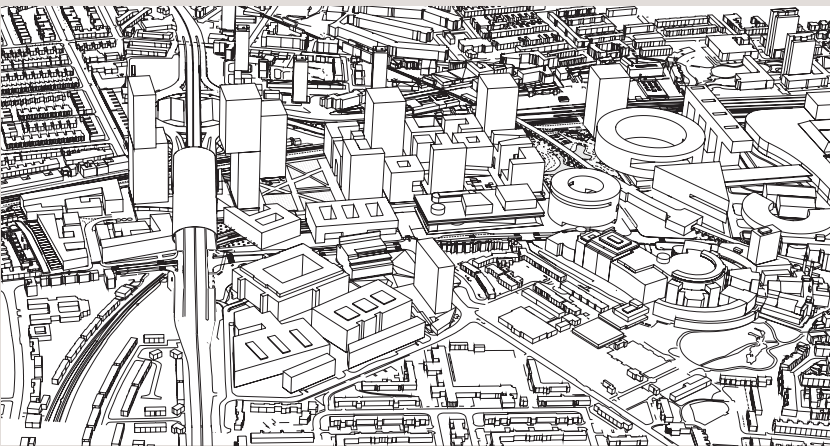
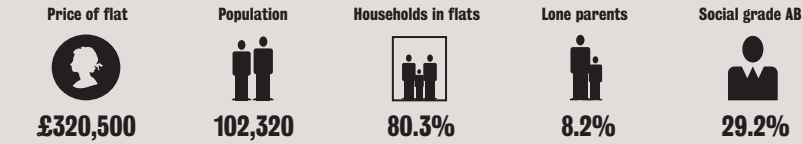


# WEST: WHITE CITY

White City constitutes a large gap in West London's urban fabric. Bounded by motorways on two sides, the long, linear site is close to the dense residential neighbourhoods of Notting Hill and Shepherd's Bush and is well served by public transport. The BBC's new Media Centre, with 8,000 professional workers is nearby, while one of London's largest shopping centres is under construction at the southern end of the site. White City is identified by the London Plan as an opportunity area for regeneration, creating a step-change in the scale and density of development in this "forgotten" urban landscape, currently occupied by a loose array of industrial sheds and commercial buildings. A consortium of landowners has appointed Rem

Koolhaas of OMA to redevelop the 17.4 hectare site providing up to 15,000 new jobs and 3,000 new homes.

In an attempt to stitch the site back to the city, the masterplan envisages three clusters of dense development, with open spaces that branch out into the surroundings. Besides local gains, the important question to ask for White City is its future role as a key employment node for London: its ability to respond to the growing and shifting needs for office space and the possibility to create a synergetic interaction between the "office economy", creative industries and other sectors in the diverse urban economy of contemporary London, together with housing and social facilities.



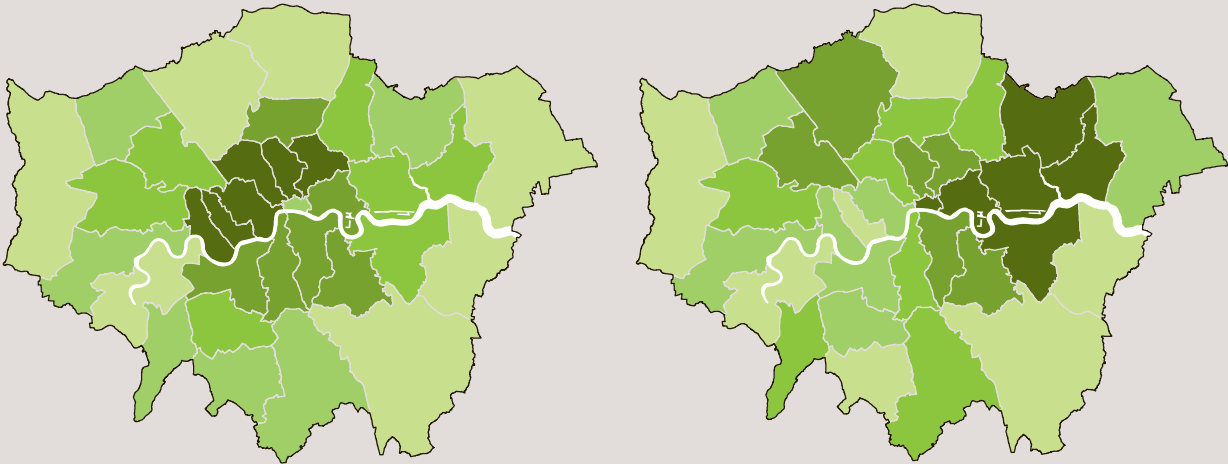


# FUTURE TRENDS

## HOUSING

### CURRENT

The spatial distribution of London's housing units presents three significant characteristics: an overall level of density below the average for cities of comparable size; a relatively flat gradient from the centre to the edges; and a structural imbalance between the denser West side and the less developed East. It is from these very features of London, long seen as the source of its weaknesses as an urban environment, that opportunities must be found to accommodate its rapidly growing population, expected to increase by 80,000 people each year until 2016 - structural densification, intensification of centralities and regeneration of opportunity areas are the key words in the debate on the future of London.



Residential units per hectare 2004

- 15 or less
- 16 to 17
- 18 to 25
- 26 to 43
- 44 or more

Source: Housing Strategy  
Statistical Appendix, GLA 2004

### FUTURE

The East of London along the Thames River and the Lower Lea Valley are areas with high capacity that can accommodate new residential units. Added to the relatively low structural density of their housing stocks, these areas present multiple disused industrial sites that are now derelict. The London Plan identifies areas in East London that concentrate new housing in the boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Greenwich, Newham and Barking and Dagenham. Public investments in transport and in local amenities are a key factor in the materialisation of this possible future for London.

Projected housing growth 2016

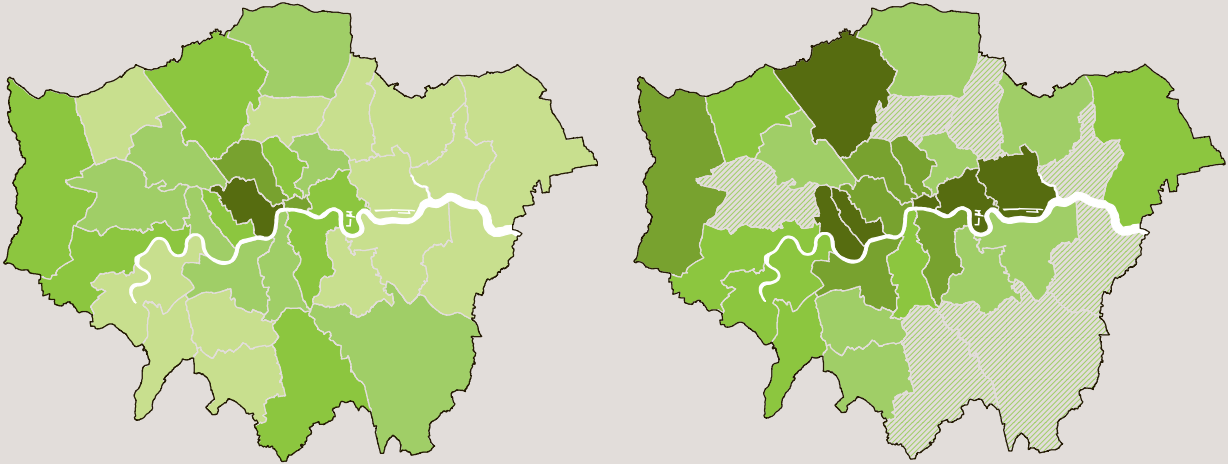
- 4.5% or lower
- 4.6% to 6.2%
- 6.3% to 9.6%
- 9.7% to 14.9%
- 15.0% or higher

Source: London Housing  
Capacity Study, GLA 2004

## EMPLOYMENT

### CURRENT

London has multiple employment nodes. In addition to the job-rich City of London and City of Westminster, the Canary Wharf complex in the borough of Tower Hamlets has continued growing, as has the western corridor under Heathrow Airport's sphere of influence. The high-rise office cluster in the borough of Croydon serves South London. The largest area with low employment levels is found in East London on both south and north of the Thames River.



Number of jobs 2002

- 88,999 or less
- 89,000 to 134,999
- 135,000 to 188,999
- 189,000 to 327,999
- 328,000 or more

Source: Interim borough level  
employment projections,  
GLA economics 2005

### FUTURE

Important employment gains are forecasted for the coming decade, particularly in the East London boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Newham. Growth in the City of London will continue apace. The low or negative growth expected for outer London boroughs signals further metropolitan decentralisation beyond Greater London and a possible lack of space and suitable workplaces in these areas; this issue needs to be considered in the planning of a more balanced regional economy for both London and the South East of England.

Projected job growth 2016

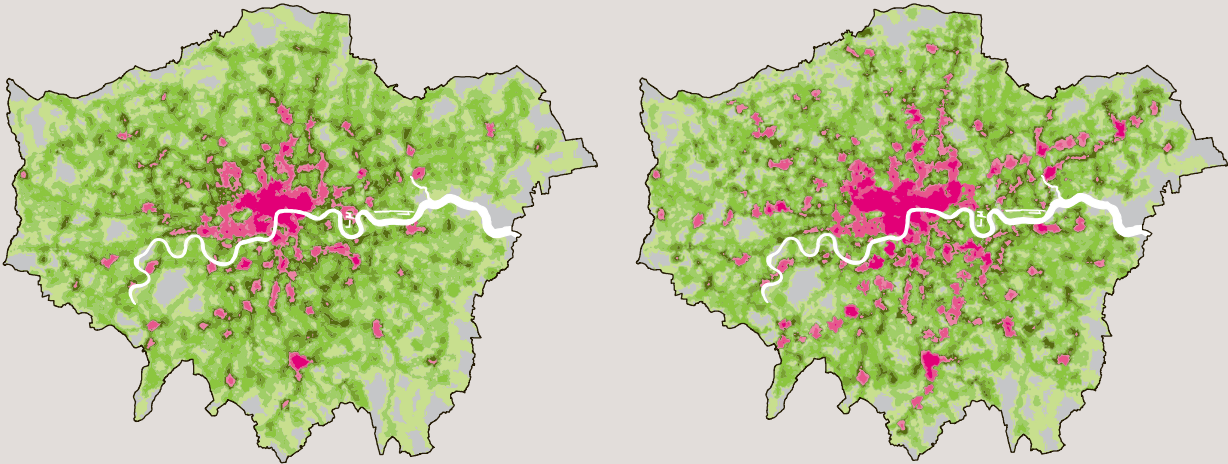
- 12.5% to 0%
- 0% to 5.6%
- 5.7% to 10.9%
- 11.0% to 14.9%
- 15.0% or more

Source: Interim borough level  
employment projections,  
GLA economics 2005

## TRANSPORT

### CURRENT

Access to public transport is uneven in London. The city's core is served by a variety of modes converging from various points in Greater London, the wider South East region and beyond. The corridors of good transport access that appear in the North and West regions reach to areas in outer London. While the South does not present a comparable level of access through the limitations of the system are the clearest in East London. The low levels of access to public transport in most of outer London are one of the factors behind the car-dependency evidenced in these areas.



Public Transport Access 2005

- 0
- 1a
- 1b
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6a
- 6b

Source: Transport for London 2005

### FUTURE

With a number of capital investments and increased services planned, the projected map of public transport access for London in the year 2016 indicates an overall expansion of areas with good access, particularly in East London. The Crossrail lines are expected to better link the various regions of Greater London and to improve circulation through the city centre. Improved access is also evidenced in areas surrounding the office district of Croydon in South London.

Public Transport Access 2016

- 0
- 1a
- 1b
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6a
- 6b

Source: Transport for London 2005





# BRINGING LONDON TOGETHER

## Transport and mobility

**T**ransport is an urban obsession. From the iconic importance of subway systems via the brave new architecture of airports to the humble bus shelter, city governments find themselves locked in a permanent struggle to build, maintain and improve their transport systems. They need to be sure people can move within their cities and get to them. Civility, commerce and competitiveness all demand movement. Thus, London's Underground diagram, Charles de Gaulle airport and Los Angeles's freeways are each, respectively, a powerful expression of their city. Londoners understand their urban landscape in a particular way because of the false simplicity of Harry Beck's Tube map.

London has in recent years spent much time and money attempting to improve its urban transport. After more than half a century of under-investment, the city's commuter rail and Underground systems had fallen into serious disrepair. The Tube, in particular, which had been the world's best urban transport system in the 1930s, has suffered years of breakdowns and failures. A low-subsidy policy has also been pursued, which has given London some of the highest public transport fares in the world.

Conservative governments in the 1980s and 1990s started a process of re-investment

which Labour has continued since 1997. First, the Docklands Light Railway was constructed from the edge of the City of London to the Isle of Dogs in the former docklands. The same government gave the go-ahead for a major extension of the Jubilee Line, which ran from Green Park via Westminster and the South Bank to the new business district at Canary Wharf (on the Isle of Dogs). The extended Jubilee Line has significantly assisted the regeneration of inner south London and the East End. A new tramway was built in Croydon, a major sub-centre in the far south of the city. The Underground was extended to Heathrow Terminal 4, while BAA (the private airport utility) constructed the Heathrow Express.

The office of Mayor of London was inaugurated in 2000 and one of its key responsibilities is transport, including buses, the Underground, river services, major roads and taxi regulation. Having reduced fares and increased bus services in the period 2000 to 2004, Mr. Livingstone has now embarked on a different policy. Fares are being increased in real terms to provide resources to allow the Mayor to invest in new infrastructure.

To invest in new assets including the East London Line, the Thames Gateway Bridge, the West London Tram and the extension of the Dockland Light Railway, the Mayor's agency, Transport for London, has been given

Treasury permission to borrow under newly introduced rules. Bonds have been issued to raise the necessary resources.

Thus, London's bus system has been enhanced, its existing Underground is (albeit over a long time scale) being renewed and additional infrastructure is being built. Following many years of decline and under-investment, significant resources are being devoted to improvements. It is not yet possible to judge how well rebuilt or new assets will perform.

Congesting Charging was introduced in 2003 and has proved a successful example of demand management. Drivers entering a zone in the centre of the city during working hours must pay an £8 a day charge. Traffic reductions have been in the range 15 to 20%, with a greater cut in congestion. The Mayor has advanced plans in place to extend the zone westwards.

London is a vast, polycentric city. The Greater London Authority (i.e. the Mayor and Assembly) is responsible for an area of 1,500 sq. km., though the commuter rail system embraces an area six times this size. The Underground is one of the world's most extensive urban rail systems, as is the bus network. Travel-to-work times in London are long by international standards – 56 minutes each way, on average.

Another key transport development is the final section of the high-speed rail-link from St. Pancras to Paris and Brussels. This line will provide a new link from Kent and Stratford to King's Cross. To the north of King's Cross and St. Pancras lies a vast tract of abandoned industrial land. These "railway lands" are currently in the process of being regenerated as part of a major scheme which will, in effect, extend central London northwards. The development will see substantial numbers of new homes, workspace, retail

and public facilities within easy walking distance of the West End. Because of the available rail, underground and bus transport, the area is extremely accessible and will be redeveloped (as will Stratford City) at relatively high densities.

London's original expansion was actively encouraged by its Tube and rail systems. If it had not been for the imposition of the "Green Belt" around the Greater London area in 1939, the transport system would almost certainly have created the relentless sprawl found in many other contemporary cities. As it is, London's growth has jumped over the Green Belt to places such as Reading, Milton Keynes, Crawley, Essex and Kent.

In today's London, public transport is increasingly seen as a means to encourage greater intensification of uses, particularly around interchanges and stations. King's Cross, Stratford, Elephant & Castle and Cricklewood/Brent Cross each use transport capacity as the catalyst for major developments. Additional projects such as the east-west Crossrail and improvements to the north-south Thameslink would make significantly larger developments possible around their stations.

Without effective mass transit systems, cities – London among them – are unlikely to prosper, except as car-dominated, low-intensity, polluted super-suburbs. For this reason, transport's dominance of urban thinking is wholly justified.

*Tony Travers is the Director of the Greater London Group, London School of Economics and Political Science*





# CHANGING VALUES

## Public life and urban spaces

London's relationship with its public domain is changing. Walk along Kingsway, a busy thoroughfare split by an underpass and polluting traffic, and you will find nearly twenty new bars, cafes, sandwich shops and fusion-food takeaways, all of them opened in the past five years. They are crowded and thriving, and they spill out onto the street. Many have young French, Italian and Polish staff serving behind the counters, demonstrating a seemingly natural expertise at handling an espresso or toasting a panino.

These scenes are duplicated across London, in the high streets of Clerkenwell and Chiswick, Stratford and Stoke Newington. The new cappuccino culture reflects not only the pervasive presence of a younger and more international population, but also a new attitude to London's "old" public realm. Historically, London's public spaces have been residential squares, or larger parks. The city's current imagination of public realm encompasses spaces that are less green and more densely occupied; a shift in lifestyle that is both threatening and enriching. The downside is the pervasive consumerism that nullifies street culture; the upside is the recognition that the quality of the public realm – paving, lighting, street furniture and landscaping – does matter, and that we are beginning to take pride in how our city looks and feels after years of neglect.

Trafalgar Square must be the flagship

of this new-found attitude. Somerset House, Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, the renovated Southbank, and the King's Road are others. Trafalgar Square had become a race track with three lanes of traffic whizzing round the "heart of the capital", where Londoners have traditionally met to celebrate, commiserate and protest. Only four years ago, it was hard to reach the heart of the Square; a perception reinforced by the statistic that in 1997 less than 10% of users were Londoners. The simple act of reuniting one side of Trafalgar Square to the National Gallery, and opening a grand staircase to the north, has redefined the sense of both enclosure and permeability to one of London's iconic urban landmarks. Today, tourists and Londoners alike use the space as a stage-set of theatre and reality. Regardless of the, at times, overly aggressive programming of events, Trafalgar Square does perform an important function in the public life of the capital; and all this without the overpowering presence of retail.

The Mayor of London has followed the lead of Rome, Barcelona and Copenhagen in initiating the 100 Public Spaces programme, which aims to transform three places in every London borough over the next decade. The goal is to create spaces that work throughout the day and year, for the many constituencies that are beginning to re-engage with the city's public realm. As such, they constitute a new approach to inner city liveability at a time of increasing density and rising demands for quality open spaces.

Behind central London's facade of happy consumerism lies another reality. London may be one of the world's greatest cities, yet its physical environment does not live up to this reputation, and in many ways it epitomises JK Galbraith's maxim of "private affluence, public squalor". The so-called public space of many housing estates is "SLOAP" (Space Left Over After Planning); abandoned territories of fear and conflict which only now are receiving attention. Much of London remains gritty to the point of squalor, with cracking pavement, unsafe lighting, an incoherent clutter of street furniture, poor design and shoddy workmanship.

While the tension between inner city residents and night-time revellers seems to have attained equilibrium in the streets of Barcelona, Amsterdam or Manhattan, London is still struggling to balance this equation. The City of Westminster famously reversed its decision to pedestrianise a large part of Soho because of the noise and disruption it caused to the local residents (i.e. voters), including acres of rubbish from heaving restaurants and bars. As inner-city regeneration grows increasingly reliant on the mantra of mixed-use development, its combination of different and at times incompatible activities can engender conflict and fuel a sense of increasing social exclusion.

As ever, in this profoundly mercantile city, private investors have got there first. In the 18th and 19th Centuries, London's developers created beautiful and sustainable set-pieces of urban design: the great squares and streets of Bloomsbury, Belgravia or Bedford Park. In the 1980s, Canary Wharf took the bold steps of investing in high quality open spaces for its privileged users in what was then an unknown location. This has paid off handsomely. Retail developers have taken note: the remodelling of the Elephant & Castle site will

replace an enclosed shopping mall with a traditional grid of streets, and interstitial landscaped public spaces. Today Broadgate, Paddington Basin and More London vie to create London's slickest and most controlled environments as unique selling points of these emerging commercial districts.

One pressing question is if, and how, London can leverage private funding for public realm projects without relinquishing control to private interests. The Elephant & Castle scheme illustrates the challenge of revamping a space's negative image while preserving its character and generating benefits for local stakeholders.

The promotional rhetoric of new projects at Stratford City, Elephant & Castle, King's Cross and White City privileges the design of their spaces over the design of their buildings, underscoring the significance of public space in realising the commercial potential of a regeneration area. While this signals a new-found engagement with the civic, the increasing privatisation of the "public" realm raises questions about whether and how London's public spaces can create the spontaneous possibilities of truly urban places and continue to be spaces where, as Richard Sennett put it, you feel safe "lost in a crowd."

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# TOWARDS A EUROPEAN CITY MODEL?

Joan Clos

It is difficult to speak of a standard European model of the city if we take into account the diversity of the continent's cities, especially in terms of their respective traditions, whether Anglo-Saxon, Central European, Nordic or Mediterranean. Nonetheless, we can extract a set of common characteristics that are present in all these cities, and which define a similar way of understanding the city.

The normative European city is a dense, compact area where a host of various activities occur in the same place and where there are also people from a substantial mix of social backgrounds. Its public areas are places of peaceful, enriching co-existence. Its residents' mobility is not entirely dependant on cars and public transport plays a major role.

Let's examine the aforementioned characteristics more closely. We are talking about cities that are:

- Compact: grouped around a core and rather than sprawling like American cities, thereby preserving the integrity and coherence of their open spaces;
- Suitably dense: favouring mobility on foot or by public transport, bringing services closer, and avoiding an excessive level of green field development;
- Used for many purposes in the same area: combining residence, work and leisure to create an urban lifestyle that is diverse and complex;
- Home to people from diverse backgrounds: reducing the tendency towards ghettos caused by income, origin or race, thus encouraging better levels of social integration;
- Based on public spaces: these act as integrating platforms for various activities and for peaceful co-existence of different social groups;
- Places where public transport dominates: the pressure of private cars is limited.

These features are interdependent. Public transport needs a high concentration of people, and public areas also call for a variety of uses. All of this shapes the city.

This form of city construction originated in part from the city's maturity and size when the industrial revolution began and when private vehicles first made their appearance. It was a city accustomed to compact, high density lifestyles; either within city walls or within surrounding districts. Activities were mixed and everything took place in the areas marked out by streets or public squares. This tradition continued at the advent of the industrial revolution, when homes lay cheek-by-jowl with factories.

At the start of the 20th Century, economic activity became more specialised, especially in industry and transport. The demand for quality housing and improved living conditions in the city prompted public health officials and modern architects to try and regenerate the city. Such regeneration, however, was often carried out with considerable respect to the existing city fabric, and zoning redirected new economic and residential uses towards the suburbs. Consequently, the compactness of the core was preserved. However, the city witnessed spatial segregation of activities and sometimes a reduction of densities in the new growth areas.

The other major factor behind the trans-

formation of cities in the 20th Century was the private vehicle, which offered the appeals of freedom and efficiency. New growth areas in European cities were built around car use. However, the old city centre was ill-equipped for this new traffic. Consequently it encountered major problems when trying to make cars the universal means of transport as American cities had done. Due to the compactness and density of European cities, public transport had to play a vital role to ensure the city's function.

The original city, which still exists, is now the heart of this new European city, thanks to its capacity to transform itself, to integrate economic and social changes and, at times, to rebuild what war had thoroughly destroyed. This is a complicated, yet necessary, internal transformation, and public authorities have been highly involved in the process. This can be seen with the remodelling of the old Paris by Haussmann or the opening of the Via Laietana in Barcelona, for example.

Of course, we cannot say that all European cities are true to these characteristics. In many cases they show opposite trends, especially when they have undergone expansion and transformation in the latter half of the 20th Century. We can mention countless examples of this. Other cities are paradigms of this European model and yet, combine compactness with dispersion, as is the case of the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona. Why is this so?

Social segregation and specialisation in production are spontaneous trends brought about by individuals, groups and sectors with a view to improving efficiency. This gives rise to spatial segregation which is supported by people simply expecting the car to solve all their mobility problems. In the long run, this zoned approach to the city, which for a certain time was useful for production, generally brings about strong restrictions to a city's economic and social efficiency. Accordingly, we must seek different models of organisation.

As we enter the 21st Century, how are the internationalisation of socio-economic relations and the growth of the knowledge economy influencing the European city?

Industrial manufacturing activity is losing its specific weight in the economy, particularly in Europe and the rest of the developed world. This is due both to the relocation of production to other places and to the declining use of human labour in the manufacturing process. Classic industrial specialisation will no longer play a major part in shaping the city, but creative synergy in all spheres of services and production activity requiring high levels of knowledge, will find a better setting in this complex but not necessarily standardised city. In this sense, we may say that the characteristic traits of the European city are efficient in terms of advanced economic development.

From the standpoint of positive co-existence in the city, experience shows that solutions which create ghettos, while apparently straightforward and reassuring in the short-term, may sow the seeds of far-reaching conflicts, whereas integrating solutions, although more complicated, better contribute to establishing and enriching long-term co-existence.

Lastly, it should be pointed out that the compact, integrated city is friendlier to its

surroundings, offering coherence and diversity and environmental benefits (conservation of energy, water, air).

Nevertheless, it is necessary to avoid the unconsidered and standardised repetition of these characteristics. We must not forget that some of the features we now value such as density, without quality urban design and with a mix of incompatible uses for example, have led in the past to situations of deep crisis in the city and could do so again in the future.

We therefore need to "reinvent" older European cities on the basis of their experiences of urban transformation. Their continuing capacity for transformation, by preserving their assets and at the same time rectifying failures, will once again make it possible to rebuild cities that can look to the future with optimism.

*Joan Clos is the Mayor of Barcelona*



From top to bottom: detailed ground plans showing one kilometre squares of Barcelona, Paris, Berlin and London



A man with dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and dark jeans, stands with his hands in his pockets in front of a vibrant market stall. The stall is filled with various items including colorful fabrics, a large rainbow-colored wheel, and bags of snacks. The background is a busy street scene.

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ISBN 0 7530 1950 7



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