

# THE FUTURE OF LONDON

2050

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Edited by Ryan Shorthouse and Liam Booth-Smith



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# Foreword

Mark Boleat

London has been an incredibly successful city over the last 30 years - a world leader in so many areas, including education, culture, sport, finance, the law and science. Unarguably it is one of the few global cities, and arguably the most global. This has brought huge benefit to Londoners and indeed Britain as a whole through job opportunities, economic prosperity and tax revenue.

Of course there are downsides in the form of high house prices and congestion, although these can largely be attributed to public policies that have failed to adequately accommodate growth. And yes there is unacceptable poverty and inequality, although it is difficult to attribute these directly to London's success. The huge improvement in the quality of London's schools in the last 20 years will make a significant contribution to tackling inequality and shows just what can be done when brilliant minds are allowed to tackle a problem.

No one planned London's path to global status. Rather, it resulted from a combination of circumstances. Some are long standing, such as the English language and the strength of the legal system, some are more recent, such as the UK's membership of the European Union, and some are due to the mistakes of others - excessive regulation in the US and other major European countries.

London's success is not guaranteed. Staying at the top is more difficult than getting there. So what must London do to continue to retain its pre-eminent global position and economic prosperity? This is a more important issue given the recent Brexit referendum and its implications for London.

The answer can probably be summed up in one word: "open". London must be open to the best in the world - people, ideas and businesses - in a multitude of different fields. And to be open London needs world class connections - physical, in particular runway capacity, and digital, where we need access to state of the art broadband. And we need a planning system that stimulates development not frustrates it.

In the short term how Britain handles the Brexit negotiations will determine London's future prosperity. The wrong outcome - a messy and hard divorce from the EU combined with a continued determination to pursue unrealistic immigration targets and increasing xenophobia would be disastrous. The right outcome - maintenance of strong links with the European continent combined with more openness towards businesses and people from the high growth economies in Asia, South America and Africa - should see London preserve its global status.

The issue of inequality must continue to be tackled regardless of the macroeconomic issues. There is more to do to bring poorly performing schools up to the standard of the best, and to improve employment skills, which too many young people, through no fault of their own, lack.

The authors of this collection of essays illustrate the talent that London has. Their analysis and ideas deserve close attention and should be the starting point for an important debate on London's future. If the right and brave decisions are taken, London will continue to prosper in the decades to come.

*Mark Boleat is Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee at the City of London Corporation. He has been an elected member since 2002 representing the ward of Cordwainer.*



## Introduction

Ryan Shorthouse and Liam Booth-Smith

If we cast back three decades ago, we find a Britain under the premiership of our first, and only other, female Prime Minister, who took it upon herself to take the state and our economy in a new direction. The ripple effect of choices made by Margaret Thatcher are still being felt today. Such has been the power of her successes and failures. This is especially true of London, now the world's financial and cultural powerhouse, but also a deeply unequal city, with high levels of poverty and illiteracy.

The ambition for our current Prime Minister, Theresa May, should surely be to have a legacy as enduring as Thatcher's, setting a new course for our country but also being mindful not to repeat mistakes. Certainly there are similar challenges; capitalism in need of rehabilitation, public services requiring reform, the need to fight social injustices, and big questions about British identity and solidarity. But there are unique challenges too: most strikingly, taking the UK out of the European Union.

Londoners overwhelmingly wanted the UK to stay in the European Union. Now is not the time to wallow in defeat, but to roll up our sleeves and ensure London remains the capital of capitalism and the epicentre of global culture.

This collection starts the conversation of how London, after the UK leaves the EU, can keep a step ahead of rival world cities in the decades ahead. It brings together a diverse group of influential, experienced and talented Londoners who outline an original action plan and vision for London in 2050 across a range of fields - from education and the environment to culture and commerce. There are three main themes to this collection: growing London; living London; and a fairer London. We're confident in saying that within this document exists the outline of a new London, which is both more prosperous and fairer.

London motors ahead of the rest of the country. But you'll be glad to hear we are not calling for it to be an independent city state, a sort of Monaco-on-the-Thames. London belongs to Britain. Its success should, and in many cases already does, benefit the rest of the United Kingdom. The thinking in this collection, then, chimes with the current Government's 'One Nation' agenda, seeking to ensure economic prosperity and social justice in both the capital and the wider country.

## **Growing London**

Kickstarting this essay collection, the new Foreign Secretary and former Mayor of London, the Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, argues that to keep up with economic and population growth, London must grow up, down, and out.

Upwards – by catalysing the delivery of new affordable housing and office space and by making use of “the beautiful London brick that is once again ubiquitous”. Downwards – by allowing the city to breathe and grow by facilitating the construction of new transport infrastructure such as Crossrail 2, Crossrail 3 as well as new road tunnels. And outwards – by ensuring the future development of London encompasses the whole of the Thames Gateway region.

In Chapter Two, Gillian Tett, US Managing Editor of the Financial Times, highlights London's position at the centre of the global financial services sector and asks whether the City will be able to maintain this

role in the future. She outlines London's many advantages, such as its "huge infrastructure of talent", the position of the English language as "the modern lingua franca for the world" and its "open, pragmatic culture".

The aftermath of both the 2008 financial crash and the Brexit vote have increased the risks that rival cities, from both inside and outside the European Union, will seek to surpass London as the centre of global finance. Gillian argues that these risks mean London must fight for "a sensible regulatory climate, effective infrastructure and good relationship with the European Union". However, she argues that the biggest underlying threat comes from the need for British politicians and voters to appreciate London's strengths and defend them.

Gerard Grech - the Chief Executive Officer of Tech City UK - uses his essay, in Chapter Three, to foresee a technological revolution. London has always been a city that is ahead of the curve, and he argues this dynamism will continue. He believes that there are three areas where a considerable change will occur. First, the sharing economy; second, the use of data and artificial intelligence; and third, more relevant education.

The sharing economy will foretell the decline of car ownership. People will split the ownership of cars through apps and schemes; only summoning a car when it is needed. Offices are similarly likely to be shared. Local and national government will be more 'tech-literate'. Big and open data will allow public services to develop technologically driven solutions to big problems. In education, London will embrace augmented video and remote immersive learning; using the best teachers from around the world to teach Londoners over the internet.

In Chapter Four, Sir Peter Hendy - the chairman of Network Rail and the former Commissioner of Transport for London - explains how to keep London moving. Two full tube trains of residents arrive in London every week. By 2050, the capital will be a 'megacity' with a population of 11 million. This growth reflects the economic success of London, but

it also brings significant challenges; not least to the transport system.

To deal with this population growth, London must increase the capacity of its tube and overground rail services. Eighty percent of journeys in London are made by road so investing continually in them is also essential. New river crossings are needed, particularly in the east of the city. If all of this is done, then the London of 2050 can be a truly interconnected hub; benefiting not just London but the whole of the UK.

Higher education is the focus of Chapter Five. Professor Michael Arthur - the President and Provost of University College London - observes that London is home to more “world-class” universities than any other city in the world.

But London’s universities cannot afford to be complacent. An ‘innovation cluster’ akin to the Bay Area in California would benefit the whole of the UK. This would bring together innovators from universities, business and the public sector, as well as the facilities, the partnerships and the venture funding necessary to accelerate progress for London and for the rest of the country.

In Chapter Six, Professor Tony Travers, Director of LSE London and chair of the London Finance Commission, writes that London is unique and that the city attracts extraordinary levels of wealth, jobs and stardust, but it also faces a very particular set of challenges in relation to housing, inequality and transport.

All of this demands City Hall and London’s boroughs gain significantly more resources and power, such as retaining a greater proportion of stamp duty and more control over the way local public services like housing are run. Crucially, however, Professor Travers rejects the idea of London becoming an independent city state, arguing that “London and the rest of the country will have little choice but to grudgingly get on.”

## Living London

Michael Liebreich – founder of Bloomberg New Energy Finance – focusses on the environment in Chapter Seven. He argues that London's success in 2050 will be judged on the city's overall quality of life. If, for Londoners, the capital is spacious, efficient, healthy and resilient, then policymakers will have succeeded.

Liebreich argues that London needs to continue investing in public transport as we see the retreat of the car. In fact, he argues that declining car ownership will free up much needed space, allowing more bus lanes, cycle lanes, filter lanes, pocket parks, cafés, or even housing.

What's more, London's power system will be entirely based on renewables and nuclear, millions of new trees will have been planted and a second tidal barrier will have been commissioned.

In Chapter Eight, architect Sir Terry Farrell CBE writes that as London's population grows, there is a risk that the city could become a victim of its own success. He warns "there is a very real danger of losing the characteristics that have made it such an attractive place to live, work and invest in."

For quality of life to keep pace with growth, Sir Terry suggests London can deliver 'good growth' with three key changes in the planning system: greater collaboration, a renewed focus on density, and a review in the way daylight is regulated.

In Chapter Nine, Sir Peter Bazalgette, Chair of Arts Council England, argues London is the world's cultural capital and outlines how its dominance can continue to 2050 and beyond.

First, to maintain levels of investment in cultural infrastructure, public and private finance must continue to work together and provide the required capital. Second, in addition to large modern venues, smaller venues and public spaces must be protected and allowed to flourish. Finally, ever stronger bonds need to be forged across the nation, with northern, western and eastern powerhouses of art and culture established. To drive this, London should share its resource

and capacity – as has been the case with the expansion of Tate galleries outside the capital.

In Chapter Ten, Justine Roberts – the Co-Founder and Chief Executive of Mumsnet – argues that London in 2050 must have truly flexible working. Despite considerable attention over the last few years, just one in five workplaces offer truly flexible working. This is despite evidence that it confers significant benefits to business’ bottomlines. But, by 2050, pressure from working parents, an ageing workforce and younger people must make flexible working the norm.

## **Fairer London**

The Rt Hon Alan Milburn, Chair of the Social Mobility Commission, makes the case for London being the world’s best city for school education by 2050. Highlighting the strong foundations upon which the capital can build, he outlines a five-point plan to break the link between deprivation and destiny in the city.

First, prioritising teacher quality. Second, ensuring equality of resource and access to the best teachers for schools in the most disadvantaged areas. Third, improving early years education for the poorest children to the highest quality. Fourth, enabling schools to prepare their pupils as best they can for the world of work. And finally, striking the right balance between autonomy for and collaboration between schools.

In Chapter Twelve, Matthew Taylor – the Chief Executive of the Royal Society of Arts – tackles the issue of integration. London is a very diverse city which is more at ease with mixed communities than citizens of any other part of Britain. Yet, surprisingly, London has some of the lowest levels of social integration in the UK.

London needs to be a more cohesive city. Whether it is transport infrastructure or local planning, the provision of public services or local tax raising, seeing strong communities as both the cause and effect of social progress is the clearest way to a London that works for all.

Finally, in Chapter Thirteen, Gavin Kelly – the Chief Executive of the Resolution Trust – imagines himself in 2050, pondering over the fight against poverty in the preceding decades. The Mayor has introduced a legal living wage for London, higher than outside the capital. A city-wide private rented housing regulator has been created to prevent the growth of substandard housing in the sector. London has been given the power to overhaul its tax system.

Most positively, Gavin Kelly observes that social mobility in Britain is finally rising, with the wealth of London's youngest generation now less determined by their parents' backgrounds than their predecessors. While the UK as a whole became far older, inner London bucked the trend.

Not everyone who has written in this essay collection will necessarily agree with one another. But our contributors have offered insights and ideas like pins in a map, dots to be connected to light up London in 2050.

***Ryan Shorthouse** is the Founder and Director of Bright Blue. Ryan was previously a Research Fellow for the think tank the Social Market Foundation and a policy adviser to the Conservative Party.*

***Liam Booth-Smith** has been Chief Executive of Localis since July 2016. He has over a decade's experience as a writer and researcher on politics, culture and public service reform and is a regular commentator in the media, writing columns for national newspapers and magazines.*



# **GROWING LONDON**



## Upwards, downwards and outwards

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP

I remember how it was eight years ago. The markets fell off a cliff. Like other western cities, London was engulfed in the greatest financial crisis in living memory.

A female TV journalist from the USA took me on to the roof of City Hall – and in front of millions of Americans, then probably eating their Froot Loops, she gave me a mauling I have never forgotten.

“Mr Mayor!” she yodelled, “Look around you! Look at the skyline! No one is building anything.” And she was right. The development of the city was paralysed. The cranes were gone. Confidence had evaporated and there was a time when some thought it would never come back.

So it is with some satisfaction that I swivelled around on my chair in my final days of Mayor and looked around at a horizon now writhing and sprouting with growth like a speeded-up Walt Disney nature film.

Every evening I looked from east to west across that amazing panorama – from Greenwich to Canary Wharf to the Royal Docks to the Olympic Park to Shoreditch to the City of London itself – and everywhere I saw the red aviation warning lights of hundreds of gigantic cranes. They are testimony to the biggest and fastest building programme for 40 years.

London is now by far the most dynamic and successful urban

economy in Europe. We are the number one city for finance, biosciences, arts, media, culture, law, universities and tech of all kinds - and in many respects we are now the leading city in the world. For three years running London has now been officially the world's most popular city - attracting 18.8 million tourists; that is, more international visitors than either Paris or New York.

In the eight years of my mayoralty the population rose faster than any other west European city - up to 800,000 more people. We will hit almost 10 million by the end of the decade; at least 11 million by 2050.

“London is now by far the most dynamic and successful urban economy in Europe”

I know what you are thinking: all this growth sounds great. It's certainly an irrefutable signal of confidence in London. But where are we going to put them all? At City Hall, as you can imagine, we had the answers.

In the immediate future London can build perhaps 400,000 homes on the existing brownfield sites. We have regeneration taking place across the city in places that never seemed viable before - and indeed it is crucial, if we are to exploit the brownfield sites, that we do not prematurely relax protections on the green fields and so give developers the easier options.

But then what? There are three logical answers. We go up, we go down, and we go out.

We go up with good quality high rise buildings at transport hubs, both office and residential. We make use of the beautiful London brick that is once again ubiquitous, to build the superb homes - which manage to be both high density and low-rise - that you can now see being erected across the city, with the distinctive oblong recessed windows that mark the new London vernacular.

I am a passionate brick man. Go to New York and look at the 1930s brick skyscrapers, and see how time has given them a fascination that is

rare in other materials. These new homes will last for centuries.

“The story of London in the last few years has been of an outwards expansion, as the suburbs have turned into economic powerhouses”

We go down, in the sense that we need to keep digging the giant holes and tunnels that will let the city breathe and grow. We need Crossrail 2 – the new tunnel from Wimbledon to Tottenham Hale, and we need it by 2030.

We need simultaneously to begin developing Crossrail 3 – possibly protracting HS2 in tunnel from Euston to Stratford. We have already launched plans for a pair of gigantic road tunnels that will together take about 20% of the traffic off London’s roads. They would create an inner orbital north and south of the river, from the A40 at park Royal to the A12 at Hackney Wick, and from the A4 in Chiswick to the A13 at Beckton.

These tunnels would be tolled; they could be used to speed the transition to driverless and fumeless cars; and they would release pressure on the existing road network, so encouraging the cycling that has doubled in the last eight years. By tunnelising congested sections of London’s main roads – at the A3 and A13, for instance – it is possible to create fantastic new parks and places to live.

If we put in the right transport networks, we will be able to ease the pressure by growing steadily outwards, and in the right places. The story of London in the last few years has been of an outwards expansion, as the suburbs have turned into economic powerhouses – and above all a great eastward explosion of investment, as we steadily regenerate and rediscover areas that were left behind by Britain’s post-industrial decline.

The future development of London must encompass the whole of the Thames Gateway region – bringing together Kent and Essex with the capital city in a project to revive defunct brownfield sites, while

protecting and encouraging the surrounding environment and wildlife.

At some stage before 2050 I confidently predict that we will have finally taken the decision to solve our aviation capacity problems, long-term, with a 24 hour four runway hub airport that will knock spots off our continental rivals and give UK business and holidaymakers the connexions they need, and all reason dictates that this should be situated to the east of the city, probably in the Estuary.

“By tunnelising congested sections of London’s main roads, it is possible to create fantastic new parks and places to live”

And if we get all those things right – and I have no doubt that we can and will – then London will by 2050 have lengthened its already handsome lead as the greatest city on earth.

***The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP** is the current Foreign Secretary and MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip. He was Mayor of London between 2008 and 2016.*

## **Politicians cannot be complacent about the City**

Gillian Tett

A couple of decades ago, just after I had started working as a reporter on the economics team at the Financial Times, I started to receive press releases from a lobbying group called “British Invisibles”; this was a trade group which seemed to be irritated by the fact that most of the media (not to mention politicians or voters) did not pay it much attention.

That struck me as bizarre; indeed, it might have been taken from Alice in Wonderland; how could a group that called itself “Invisible” complain about the fact it was unseen?

But when I dug into the British Invisibles trade group - which has now (thankfully) renamed itself - I realised that this odd tale had a point: their campaign was trying to explain that when ordinary onlookers try to work out what drives the City of London and the wider British economy, they often miss the really important parts.

### **The money machine**

To non-economists, the world of economics is all about factories, and trade, or shops and goods; people imagine trade as warehouses that are full of items that we can touch and see. But in reality, Britain’s biggest

economic success story today lies not so much with tangible - visible - goods but the enormous pool of activity that is now occurring in 'invisible' ways, or through services. And while this business is often intangible, because it takes place in cyber space, real-world geography matters deeply too: much of this activity, in terms of the people and companies who drive it, is clustered in London.

These services include the business of finance, and all the myriad ways that financiers have developed to push money around the world, such as banking, asset management, insurance, stock markets, commodities trading and so on. But the money machine has spawned a dense ecosystem of services too: the vast armies of lawyers who are writing business and financial deals in London, the hordes of accountants and auditors who monitor finance; the information technology experts who provide the computing know-how to support these activities; or the educational facilities which train them up.

"Britain's biggest economic success story today lies not so much with tangible - visible - goods but the enormous pool of activity that is now occurring in 'invisible' ways, or through services"

And if you add together all these invisible 'services', the economic impact is striking: although the UK has run a balance of payments deficit of around 7% of gross domestic product for manufactured goods in recent years, it has a 5% surplus for services. In plain English, that means that the UK sells far more services to foreigners than it receives - and a large slice of these are lined to the financial hub of London itself. The City is banking on far more than just banks.

### **Staying on top of the world?**

Can London maintain this role in the future? There are several reasons to think it might. For one thing, the City already has such a dominant role in so many financial markets fields, that sheer inertia

would make it hard for other cities to grab that crown. Almost half the world's derivatives contracts are written in London, and half of all foreign exchange trading takes place there. Meanwhile, a quarter of marine insurance contracts emanate from The City, and a large chunk of global stock and bond market trading is located there too.

London has spawned a huge infrastructure of talent which would be hard to replicate quickly elsewhere; many contracts written in the global financial markets, for example, are created under English law. And London has other crucial advantages too: its language is the modern lingua franca for the world; it sits in a time zone which is conveniently located halfway between Asia and America; its imperial past has created strong links with the rest of the world; and - perhaps most importantly - London has an open, pragmatic culture that has historically embraced trade and outsiders. Its history has created the culture of an entrepôt trading hub.

“London has spawned a huge infrastructure of talent which would be hard to replicate quickly elsewhere”

But the problem with having an economy built on the so-called invisibles - namely services - is that it is often hard for voters to understand how this bonanza of activity has emerged and what must be done to protect it. Since 2008, political support for finance has, unsurprisingly, declined, as regulation has tightened. Meanwhile, Britain's future relationship with the rest of the European Union has become uncertain, following the Brexit vote.

### **Stiff competition?**

This could undermine London's role in the future. Indeed, cities such as Dublin, Amsterdam, Paris and Frankfurt are already trying to grab business away. In fact, even before the Brexit vote, some business was leaving: banks such as Morgan Stanley and JP Morgan, for example, have quietly started to move some of their back office functions out of

London to other, cheaper locations.

Separately, the leaders of New York are keen to usurp London's financial position - a goal helped by the fact that the US economy has been more vibrant than the European economy in recent years, and American banks have become more ascendant than their European rivals. The growth of China is fueling the rise of an Asian centre too; these days Hong Kong rivals (and sometimes eclipses) London and New York as a location for initial public offerings. Indeed, some bank leaders suspect that the most likely consequence of any decline in London's position would be that business moves not to the Eurozone - but outside Europe altogether.

“Some bank leaders suspect that the most likely consequence of any decline in London's position would be that business moves not to the Eurozone - but outside Europe altogether”

This may never occur. But the leaders of London cannot afford to be complacent; if they want to remain a major financial centre, they have to fight for a sensible regulatory climate, effective infrastructure and good relationship with the European Union. But perhaps most important of all, British politicians and voters also need to appreciate London's invisible strengths and defend them; otherwise, the City might slowly decline in subtle ways that nobody notices until it is too late.

***Gillian Tett** is US Managing Editor at the Financial Times. In 2014, she was named Columnist of the Year in the British Press Awards and was the first recipient of the Royal Anthropological Institute Marsh Award. She has previously served as assistant editor, capital markets editor, deputy editor of the Lex column, Tokyo bureau chief, and a reporter in Russia and Brussels at the Financial Times.*



## A technological revolution?

Gerard Grech

Let me tell you a secret; my home in east London is already something of a test-bed for the future. My wife and I have neither a car nor a TV and we have invented a virtual currency for our children to teach them about sharing chores and winning rewards. My young son thinks it's completely normal that we don't have a car. But my older neighbour says she finds it unusual, especially for a family of five. Yet to my mind, the sharing economy is the future.

The millennials have grasped this already. Many of them take it for granted that they would rent out their spare room on AirBnB or swap their home on Love Home Swap or share a ride home via Uber. My 11-year-old's generation will drive these concepts further still.

As a city, London has always been ahead of the curve; whether it was the financing of explorers in the seventeenth century or the generation of punk music and high fashion in the twentieth century. More recently, London brains have led the way on alternative finance and technology.

This dynamism will continue. Here are three areas where I believe we will see a lot of change: first, the sharing economy; second, the use of data and artificial intelligence, and third, more relevant education.

## The sharing economy

Take cars, one of the world's most under-utilised assets. According to Morgan Stanley, cars are on average standing still, parked, for 92% of the time. What a waste of money, energy and space. As I know from experience, hiring or sharing a car works fantastically well. Car sharing will soon be ubiquitous on London's streets because it makes economic and social sense.

Take UK-based Lift Share or BlaBla car based in France, spreading across Europe. Their apps connect drivers of cars with empty seats making inter-city trips with people wanting to travel to the same place. In Stockholm, Audi is testing a 'micro-sharing' plan where friends and colleagues can share ownership of a car – splitting the costs and organising usage through an app. In London, our family loves hopping in and out of Germany's 'Drive Now' cars, especially coveting their cute Mini convertibles when the sun's out.

“Cars are on average standing still, parked, for 92% of the time. What a waste of money, energy and space”

Cars are not the only assets to be shared. So will other products which none of us need to own individually: power drills, hedge trimmers or solar energy. All products which could be bought communally and the costs shared.

What about offices? Why shouldn't they move too? Mobile office pods are already starting to take off and offer a brilliant low-cost concept which suits business people on the move. At Tech City UK, we already do this. Over the last two years, we have moved office space five times and have just moved to Second Home, a fantastic co-working space in East London. New environments bring new experience, with lots of new people to meet.

Additionally, remote co-working satellite office spaces will emerge on the outskirts of London equipped with deep immersive communication video and augmented reality technologies, alleviating congestion from the daily commute into central London.

However, people are tribal by nature; they like to follow each other around. It's why the City is such a successful financial centre and also why specialists in hardware cluster around Haggerston and those with knowledge-based skills tend to congregate around Kings Cross. No doubt we will see more specialist technology clusters emerge in these places too.

## **Data and artificial intelligence**

The second big change we will see concerns data, and how we will use it to improve public policy. Every digitally enabled Londoner is a hub of real-time data. When analysed in isolation, there's no actionable intelligence. But when data is viewed on a macro scale, the possibilities for innovation are endless. City Hall (and city authorities across the UK) need to encourage an open attitude to data, whereby personal data can be anonymised and crowd-sourced in order to produce smarter, happier cities.

By 2050, our city and national governments will be increasingly 'tech-literate', open to faster, more efficient solutions made possible by artificial intelligence. Our health services, housing authorities, educators and police forces can all be improved by opening out to tech-driven solutions offered by developers keen on improving our lives.

"Personal data can be anonymised and crowd-sourced in order to produce smarter, happier cities"

The millions of us who have been perfectly happy to hand over our personal data to the likes of Facebook and LinkedIn, will by 2050 see the sense in government using our data to improve all our lives. The good news is that the UK has already laid the ground for this change in our use of data. The new London-based Alan Turing Institute has started bringing data-science research and businesses together; the Open Data Institute drives the innovative use of open data, and the government's Digital Service encourages civil service departments to analyse and interpret data for better decision-making.

Ultimately, the way we use data on a macro level will help reduce inequality and improve health and education for all. It will encourage London's dynamism and prosperity to ripple out to all of our cities. This is the true, all-embracing 'Tech Nation' that I look forward to being part of.

## Education

Finally, London will become a world-class hub for redefining education and learning. As home to so many of the world's greatest brains in artificial intelligence such as DeepMind and augmented reality, I anticipate we will be one of the first cities to embrace augmented video and remote immersive learning, drawing on the best teachers from all around the world to teach Londoners of all ages mathematics and science over the internet. As well as more formal disciplines, there will be more teaching on what have traditionally been seen as the softer skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, and greater emphasis on cognition and creativity.

"The way we use data on a macro level will help reduce inequality and improve health and education for all. It will encourage London's dynamism and prosperity to ripple out to all of our cities"

What I am confident of is that London will continue to marry creativity with technology to make life easier for its citizens. However, I am also aware that humans tend to overestimate in the short term the impact of technology on their lives, but underestimate the effect in the long term. London has a lot to look forward to.

*Gerard Grech is Chief Executive Officer at Tech City UK – a non-profit set up to support the East London tech cluster known as London Tech City or 'Silicon Roundabout'. Gerard has previously worked for a number of tech companies, including Orange, Nokia and Blackberry.*

## Keeping London moving

Sir Peter Hendy CBE

London, 2050; a city where transport has facilitated economic growth, jobs and houses. Where the Elizabeth line, Crossrail 2 and Thameslink will be linking north and south, east and west; world-leading buses will be zero emission; an air conditioned, 24-hour Tube will serve a thriving economy; and a walking, cycling city, on a par with our European neighbours. An ambitious vision, but one which is deliverable with steady and sustained investment, a relentless focus on reliability, and staying close to the changing needs of users.

London's population is growing – faster than any previous forecasts, and faster than any other European city. Last year, the population surpassed its previous peak reached in 1939 – about 8.6 million people. This will become a 'megacity' of 10 million by 2030, and more than 11 million by 2050.

This growth – the rate of two full tube trains every week – is a reflection of London's success and represents an enormous opportunity for the future in terms of economic growth and productivity.

Cities drive national productivity, and transport enables cities to work. Transport connectivity allows for the density of jobs and housing – and people – that 'supercharge' growth and increase incomes.

The consequences of not planning effectively and delivering those

plans is increased congestion and overcrowding, throttling the economic potential and quality of life of the city. Only effectively planned integrated transport can provide for growth.

## **Integrated ticketing**

The Oyster card revolutionised ticketing by offering customers a single way of paying for travel on all Transport for London (TfL) services. People have come to trust Oyster, knowing that they will be charged the best fare automatically and refunded automatically if TfL, or they, make a mistake. However, it is already 'old' as contactless bank cards and mobile telephone payment, such as Apple Pay, offer the same fare and refund process as Oyster without a separate card.

The same approach is now applied to customer service information, delivering high-quality information in real time which allows people to plan their journey on the move, making best use of every form of transport the network provides. This information is provided increasingly through apps – by making data available to developers who move quickly to deliver for customers. There are 360 apps so far.

In 2050, who knows what the media might be – but the principles above will almost certainly still apply.

## **Tube modernisation and upgrades**

By 2050, London Underground will be approaching its 200th birthday, and it is a constant challenge to keep a system designed and built by Victorians fit for the 21st century. TfL is still catching up on the lack of investment over the previous 40 years, but with continued sustained funding, 2050 won't have to face the same challenges.

The extensive Tube improvement programme is delivering huge capacity increases across the network. By 2050, all lines will have new, high-capacity trains with smart technology and modern accessible stations. The Victoria line was one of the first to see an upgrade and now has 34 trains per hour during peak times. Soon it will be 36 trains

an hour – one every 100 seconds. It's the same for the Jubilee line, and increasing peak frequency on the Northern line to one train every 120 seconds by 2022. Night Tube network will be expanded to the Overground and other Tube lines, so by 2050 we will have a consistent 24-hour service on all lines.

Extending existing Tube and rail lines also open up new parts of the city for houses and jobs. The Northern line extension to Battersea Nine Elms, due for completion by early 2020, will create 16,000 new homes and up to 25,000 jobs. Plans to extend the London Overground into the Barking Riverside development, the largest housing development in east London, will create up to 10,800 new homes. Without the extension, only 1,500 homes can be built. And extending the Bakerloo line by 2050 will finally put south-east London on the Tube map.

“The Night Tube network will be expanded to the Overground and other Tube lines, so by 2050 we will have a consistent 24-hour service on all lines”

## **New lines**

It will take more than just sustained investment in existing networks to keep up with London's growth. It also takes truly transformational projects like the Elizabeth line. This new line will increase London's rail capacity by 10% and goes well beyond London's borders, serving communities from Reading in the west to Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east. It will connect the four key areas of London's economy for the first time – Heathrow, the West End, the City and Canary Wharf. It's already helping regenerate areas of London years ahead of opening: Abbey Wood is experiencing a property boom, with house prices set to rise 22% above the borough average by 2021.

The Elizabeth line will be almost full from day one of operation. So Crossrail 2 is already in planning and will run from north east into south west London and into Surrey. It can and must be open before 2050. This is an essential piece of national infrastructure, relieving pinch points

on the national rail and Tube networks, unlocking growth, jobs, and homes. It will bring hundreds of thousands more people within a one-hour commute from central London, to further secure the economic potential of the city.

“It will take more than just sustained investment in existing networks to keep up with London’s growth. It also takes truly transformational projects like the Elizabeth line”

## **Roads modernisation**

To keep buses moving alongside all other road traffic, the road network needs to function efficiently. When 80% of journeys in London are made by road, investing continuously to keep the streets moving smoothly is vital.

An astounding 23 million journeys are made on London’s roads every day including 250,000 freight movements. Even with a continued shift to public transport, as the city grows to 11 million by 2050, the pressure on the road network will increase. This is why the biggest investment in a generation in the Roads Modernisation Plan is so important. Over £4 billion will transform and improve hundreds of bridges, tunnels, junctions and public places around the city.

For example, opportunity areas in East London can deliver over 200,000 jobs and 120,000 homes over the next 25 years. But here the River Thames is a barrier to the movement of people and goods, so the planned new crossings at Silvertown, Gallions Reach and Belvedere will transform the connectivity of east London, opening up major sites for development and supporting the delivery of jobs and homes across a wide area.

More bus priorities for a faster, more reliable bus service – and smarter road user charging to ration by price, not congestion, are inevitable for 2050.

Cycling is growing fast, up more than 80% across London in the last 15 years. Getting more people on their bikes will reduce pressure



on the road, bus and rail networks, cut pollution, and improve life for everyone. Walking is equally important; public realm improvements will be vital to make a city of 11 million people happy, healthy, and liveable.

“When 80% of journeys in London are made by road, investing continuously to keep the streets moving smoothly is vital”

## **Conclusion**

London is a truly exciting city which is driven by its transport infrastructure. There is a huge amount needed to deliver to make the most of future economic opportunities – not least the opportunity fuelled by population growth. The London of 2050 will be an interconnected hub that drives the UK economy, with energy efficient transport that is user friendly and seamlessly integrated with the rest of the UK.

*Sir Peter Hendy CBE is the chairman of Network Rail. Peter was formerly the Commissioner of Transport for London, having risen from the position of managing director of Surface Transport. He was knighted for services to transport and the community in the 2013 New Year Honours.*

## **A new innovation cluster**

Professor Michael Arthur

Higher Education is a key force for the public good and it sits at the heart of driving London's and the nation's economy. The sector's major contributions are to provide a constant stream of highly skilled talented graduates, ideas and expertise from our academic staff and our entrepreneurial students, as well as the fruits of our research spinning out into innovation and enterprise with business and industry. Universities are actively tackling the major global challenges and are making a real difference to the world we live in.

### **Universities today**

London is home to more 'world class' universities than any other city in the world. Four of the capital's universities feature prominently in the world league tables, with University College London (UCL), Imperial College London, the London School of Economics (LSE) and King's College London (KCL) amongst the top 50 in most world university rankings, with UCL and Imperial achieving top ten status in some.

The age old adage that UK researchers are good at ideas but not good at exploiting them for economic advantage is outdated, or more frankly, plain wrong today. Our universities are an incredible resource that are the envy of other nations and their capital cities, and this gives

London and the UK a leading global position and advantage in a future world that will be increasingly driven by the wise and intelligent use of knowledge. But there's much more potential.

### **The 'innovation cluster' of 2050**

By 2050, London must create and be at the heart of an 'innovation cluster' to rival that of the Bay Area in California or in Boston around Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) – and benefit the whole of the UK through its economic and societal success. This is not an easy ambition, but London is the only city in Europe that has the potential to achieve at this level. London and its citizens will benefit, through the prosperity, employment and regeneration this innovation cluster will bring. So too will the nation as London institutions collaborate with innovation and research partners across the UK, bringing yet greater benefit to us all.

To achieve this, universities need to create the conditions that will not only facilitate the organic development of such a cluster, but perhaps catalyse its more rapid development. Several factors that will be critically important in making this happen, some of which are already underway.

“London must create and be at the heart of an 'innovation cluster' to rival that of the Bay Area in California or in Boston around Harvard and MIT”

Universities must promote partnership above competition. With relatively new leadership at each of London's world-leading universities there is a very strong sense of greater and closer partnership working being the key way forward. Active major examples include joint working with the Crick Institute, the Turing Institute, and The London Centre for Nanotechnology. This sits astride a myriad of collaborative research activities between London institutions. To achieve the 2050 vision, London institutions also need to work even more closely with

the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, the emerging 'Northern Powerhouse', and elsewhere. The 'cluster' that needs to be created needs to develop well beyond the strict geographic boundaries of London for it to be a global success.

The National Health Service is also critical to the development of this cluster. UCLPartners is a good model: an academic health and science partnership which has grown to involve 23 NHS Trusts, 20 Clinical Commissioning Groups, 26 boroughs and local councils, 11 higher education institutions, and industrial relationships. The UCLPartners Quintiles Prime Site is the highest performing recruitment centre for patients entered into clinical trials anywhere in the world. As new ideas and technologies emerge from universities, and London based institutes such as the Crick and Turing, these extended health partnerships will allow us to translate research more rapidly and effectively into the treatment of human disease, creating economic and health benefits for London and the nation. Supporting and further developing these networks across the NHS will be important for building the 'innovation cluster' envisaged.

"Universities must promote partnership above competition. With relatively new leadership at each of London's world-leading universities there is a very strong sense of greater and closer partnership working being the key way forward"

If this is correct for medicine and health, we might also benefit from taking the same coordinated partnership approach to other defined sectors of business and industry in and around London, where we can find similar global advantage. The London Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the Greater London Authority (GLA), Medcity, and agencies such as London First are critical to making this happen. We also need to work jointly to create the appropriate dry and wet incubator and other facilities and a highly creative environment that allows the unthinkable

to happen and for research-driven entrepreneurship to catch fire.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, London already has much of what is needed to be at the centre of a cluster of innovation that will ultimately rival any other in the world. We stand at the threshold of making it happen at scale and we should seize the opportunity to create another major economic string to London and the UK's bow.

We need a coordinated effort to bring together the innovators from both universities and business, as well as the facilities, the partnerships and the venture funding necessary to accelerate progress. Not another agency or talk shop, but more a coming together of creative and talented individuals with entrepreneurial spirit and a complete lack of understanding of the word 'no'. We should resource them appropriately and ask them to jointly tackle the task of making London a leading global innovation cluster.

***Professor Michael Arthur** is President and Provost of University College London. Professor Arthur is the former Chair of the Advisory Group for National Specialised Services (NHS), the Worldwide Universities Network and the Russell Group of Universities. He is a former Member of the Medical Research Council and a former US/UK Fulbright Commissioner.*

## **London the city state?**

Professor Tony Travers

It is increasingly easy to characterise London as a ‘city state’. Its scale, wealth and multi-dimensional differences (as compared to the rest of the country) means it has more in common with New York or Toronto than Yorkshire or Scotland. The creation of the Office of Mayor of London, a glamorous Americanised form of government, makes such differences all the more obvious. London is unique and, arguably, alien to the rest of the UK. The Brexit referendum, where London produced a 60:40 ‘remain’ vote, compared with the 48:52 UK-wide ‘leave’ outcome, hugely reinforced this perception of difference.

### **London powers ahead**

The city’s population will soon pass nine million, with official projections suggesting it will reach 10 or even 11 million by the 2030s. Population density is ten times higher than the next highest region. It has more residents than Scotland and Wales combined and produces well over a fifth of the UK’s GDP. About 40% of its population was born outside the UK and about 40% are non-white. The city’s tax payments considerably exceed its total of public expenditure: £10 billion to £20 billion of its taxation each year is ‘exported’ to the rest of the UK.

Given this wealth, productivity and scale of difference, could London

go it alone as a city state? Might it make sense for the rest of the UK if somewhere so unrepresentative of it were no longer influencing its government, values and economic system? Might Hong Kong or Singapore be better models for London?

The more London's population and economy expands, the greater the propensity of (at least some) people elsewhere in the country to resent it. It is perceived to 'suck in' resources and talent. It benefits, we are often told, from a disproportionate share of investment. Footloose global capital settles there, creating glittering clusters of skyscrapers owned by rich foreigners. Business, government, culture and the media all have their headquarters in the city. Anything this successful causes the British to worry. London's apparent success compared to many other parts of the country was seen (by at least some people) as part of the rationale for the UK's Brexit vote.

### **All that glitters is not gold**

Most of the time, Londoners accept their city will be attacked for flourishing so ostentatiously. But there is a parallel alternative narrative, which includes important truths, about the cost of housing, growing inequality and the standard of living faced by many London residents. House-building lags population growth in the capital, while the rising cost of renting or buying a home has reduced many households' disposable income.

"The more London's population and economy expands, the greater the propensity of people elsewhere in the country to resent it"

Because London is not currently a city-state, it cannot access the full yield of its own tax base to seek to address the challenges of inequality and poverty faced by many of its inhabitants. Chancellors remove part of the capital's massive tax-take to fund public spending in other parts of the country. High-end homes in Kensington and Chelsea and

Westminster pay a large proportion of UK stamp duty, but the cash yield is not used locally to help those with housing need.

If London were partly or wholly independent of the UK, it seems likely the city's political leaders would use a chunk of its large tax yield to increase the amount of 'affordable' housing. The resources could certainly be used to clear ex-industrial sites for housing and to pay for the infrastructure needed to allow development.

The London median voter would alter the way public spending was used, partly because the bigger and more densely-populated a city, the greater its dependence on trains, buses, sewers, utilities and housing. There would surely be less consumption and more investment.

“High-end homes in Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster pay a large proportion of UK stamp duty, but the cash yield is not used locally to help those with housing need”

### **Better off alone?**

There are excellent arguments for giving London (or Greater Manchester or Birmingham/West Midlands or other city regions) greater control over their own resources. But would other parts of the country really want to be rid of their super-charged capital?

In reality, London and the rest of the UK are substantially intertwined. Despite being a 'global city', most of the capital's trade links are with the rest of Britain. Over 60% of the city's population were UK-born and many who were not adopt the inclusive word 'Londoner' within hours of arrival. People from all over the UK live in London, including 90,000 born in Scotland, 54,000 in Wales and 33,000 in Northern Ireland. Without London's (and the South East's) tax 'surplus' the rest of the country would face a huge budget deficit.

The outer border of London is the same length as the one between England and Wales: could London be more welcoming to migrants (with a London-only visa, for example) while the rest of the UK



reduced migration? This possibility has been raised since the Brexit result. It would be hard, but not impossible, to differentiate trading and taxation rules between, say, Harrow and Watford. Nevertheless,, many symbols of British and English nationhood are located in or near central London: remember St Paul's in the Blitz.

“London and the rest of the UK are substantially intertwined”

### **Let's stick together**

The capital may look more and more like a city state, but it and the rest of the country will stick together. Like a successful and rich relative who has left the provinces for the big city, London can be seen to have ‘moved on.’ But in reality, family ties still bind. Despite ancient rivalries, contemporary competition and occasional envy, ‘city state’ London and the rest of the country have little choice but grudgingly to get along.

*Professor Tony Travers is the Director of LSE London. He has published a number of books on London, local government and politics, as well as chairing the London Finance Commission.*

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# LIVING LONDON

## **An environment fit for Londoners**

Michael Liebreich

The success of London in 2050 will be measured by its environment. By this I don't just mean the quality of its air, or whether it has retained its biodiversity (important though those are), I mean the overall quality of life for Londoners. Will they experience the city as spacious, efficient, healthy, and resilient? Or will they experience it as over-crowded, dysfunctional, stressful and insecure?

The background to the question, of course, is London's continuing population growth. The only safe assumption – seeing as London is the greatest city in the world – is that the next Mayor needs to be planning for a city of 11 or even 12 million by 2050.

### **Investing in transport**

Continuing to develop London's transport system will be key. We simply have to keep investing in rail and Underground capacity, the single best way to move people around the city at scale without overwhelming surface transport and streetscapes. Londoners still have no idea of the impact Crossrail will have when it comes on line in 2018. By 2050 we must have Crossrail 2, probably Crossrail 3, and be working on Crossrail 4. We will also need significant upgrades to over-ground commuter rail, which is now set to transfer to Transport for London

(TfL). And we will want every extension to the Underground and several of the East London river crossings currently under discussion.

While the rail and underground system in 2050 will look recognisable to today's Londoners, albeit significantly expanded, not so surface transport. Technology is going to change the way we move around to an extent we can barely imagine. It's not that we will be swooshing around town in driverless pods, taking delivery of our groceries by drones, but pervasive use of digital technology will enable massive shifts in our modes of transport – and very much for the better.

### **The retreat of the car**

In London, as in most cities, around one third of road space is taken up by parked cars, a really daft use of road space (not to mention a vast subsidy for those who happen to own cars). Private cars have had a good century: they have dominated our streets, for good and for bad, but they are palpably going out of fashion in cities around the world.

“Technology is going to change the way we move around to an extent we can barely imagine”

It's not simply that public transport is improving – remarkably so in London – it is also that owning a car is no longer the key to urban mobility which it used to be. If you need a car, you now summon one on your phone – whether it is a cab, or a minicab. Need to get out of town? That's what car-clubs are for. Need a van? There's an app for that. And maybe you don't need a car at all, because now you have an all-knowing travel-planner in your hand, so you can make sense of all those train and bus routes and timetables. Or perhaps you'll just walk – because now even tourists can find their way around unerringly, using the maps on their phone. Or jump on a Boris bike, and yes, they will still be called that in 2050.

So what are we going to do with all the parking spaces this revolution will free up? Bus lanes, cycle lanes, filter lanes, pocket parks, cafés, even

housing. Or car-club parking spaces: for every 12 people who join a car-sharing scheme, 11 cars are taken off the road.

“Private cars have had a good century: they have dominated our streets, for good and for bad, but they palpably going out of fashion in cities around the world.”

Of course our streets will still be busy. We’re talking London after all! One thing we won’t have is taxis and minicabs circling around looking for their next fares. Even though most of London’s vehicles will be electric by 2050 – they will be cheaper and better than internal combustion vehicles on all dimensions within the next decade – clogging our roads with empty vehicles already makes no sense at all. With or without drivers, taxis and minicabs will be parked up, waiting to jump into action at the click of a button.

## **Enhanced environment**

Digital management of road space and parking, along with the electrification of almost all vehicles, will have solved London’s current air quality problems by 2050 (though we may be worrying just as much about metallic and plastic dust, rogue nanoparticles or volatile organic compounds by then).

Our power system will be entirely based on renewables and nuclear power, with natural gas as back-up. More importantly, London’s buildings will be vastly more energy-efficient and clad in unobtrusive solar photovoltaics, saving Londoners billions of pounds in utility bills.

London already has enough tree cover to qualify as a forest under international definitions, but it will be even greener by 2050. We will have planted millions of new trees, and not just ornamental ones - I would hope big London plane trees too.

London’s population growth and climate change mean that the super-sewer will be seen for what it is: a costly, over-engineered white elephant, which fails to solve the problem it was meant to eliminate. By

2050 we will have shifted to sustainable drainage approaches to rainfall management. London will be a sea of green roofs, new roadside and rail-side parks, restored riverscapes and permeable road surfaces. The Green Belt will have survived more or less intact.

By 2050, we will have commissioned a second tidal barrier and enhanced flood protection, to make absolutely sure that London is spared the catastrophic floods that will be increasingly affecting coastal cities around the world.

## **Conclusion**

London will have spread East, and it will be more densely populated. But it will still be the greatest city in the world. It will provide a wonderful environment in which to live and work – and it will have to, because other cities will be competing relentlessly to attract the smartest, most mobile knowledge workers.

But I am getting ahead of myself. All this depends on decisions to be made by the new Mayor. So no pressure!

*Michael Liebreich is Chairman of the Advisory Board and Founder of Bloomberg New Energy Finance. Michael also serves on the UN Secretary General's High-Level Group on Sustainable Energy for All. He is a Visiting Professor at Imperial College London, Board Member of Transport for London and Chairman of a Medical Charity funding research on colorectal illness. All views expressed here are personal.*

## **Good growth**

Sir Terry Farrell

As a member of the former Mayor's Design Advisory Group, we focused on the big issues facing London's urban planning and design and the subject of 'good growth'. London is a hugely successful world city, which is largely down to its unique selling point as the world's most 'liveable' city. But as the population expands and the city grows, there is a very real danger of losing the characteristics that have made it such an attractive place to live, work and invest in. London may become a victim of its own success.

In the last five years we have added the population of Edinburgh and in the next ten years we will add a 'Birmingham'. The Greater London Authority have identified the challenges that will be placed on the capital, including doubling the capacity of the underground system and building 600 schools for the predicted population in 2050.

How can the capital grow while Londoners maintain their quality of life? Three related changes are needed in the planning process: a more proactive and collaborative approach; a renewed focus on density; and a rethink in the way we regulate daylight.

## **Planning for and with the public**

One of the main conclusions of the Farrell Review was the need for

more proactive planning. Our experience when masterplanning major sites throughout London is that often we are working within a void, with little or no agreement at the outset on the shape and form of the built environment from one place to the next. There is also surprisingly little dialogue between different stakeholders, like transport operators and the development industry, and even less with communities themselves.

Local authority plans supposedly set out frameworks, but these are simply policies and guidelines which are either adhered to religiously or, as is becoming increasingly common, ignored as hard up boroughs look to private development as a vital source of revenue. We need to involve the wider public more effectively in the debate from the outset, and explain what the alternatives are, rather than simply presenting schemes where many of the decisions have already been made.

“Three related changes are needed in the planning process: a more proactive and collaborative approach; a renewed focus on density; and a rethink in the way we regulate daylight”

In my own borough of Westminster for example, there needs to be a consensus on the appropriate places for increasing density. This is something that the proposals for a new 72 storey ‘super tower’ next to Paddington station have brought sharply into focus. This tower is completely the wrong scale for the location and will be surrounded by low rise historic buildings and residential streets and squares. Areas like Church Street or Harrow Road which connects Paddington with Ladbroke Grove are far more appropriate locations for high density buildings; they are clearly in need of the improvements to the public realm and retail offer that new mixed use development will bring. However, density does not mean building tall, something which is often misunderstood.



## **With density comes liveability**

There has been much debate about a new generation of towers planned or under construction, and much of the criticism has been centred on the rejection of the fabric and DNA of the city we know and love.

However, London is still only half the density of other world cities like Paris and New York. We have to accept that with density comes liveability and quality of life. In certain parts of London where clusters are emerging like the City and Canary Wharf, tall buildings can be appropriate. Many have questioned why we are not building more of the typical, street-based residential blocks that are found in areas like Islington and Covent Garden, areas that we preserve and make 'conservation areas'. One of the major constraints is the set of rules we have come to accept around daylight and sunlight. These rules are actually based on a suburban model rather than the urban model we need in order to move towards a denser London with a radical mix of uses.

"Density does not mean building tall, something which is often misunderstood"

With higher density comes greatly improved quality of life – access to amenities and public spaces. The closer buildings are together and the more compact the city as a result, the less reliance there is on cars and the easier it is to walk and cycle with all the associated health benefits and reduction in carbon emissions. So there is a very pressing need to review and refresh the rules, and how they are interpreted, in order to understand the unintended consequences.

## **Seeing the light on guidance**

With a new Mayor of London, there is no better time to start reimagining our future city. In the last few decades we have seen swathes of the capital transformed from former industrial land into publicly accessible, greened spaces. These reimagined parts of the

city have been made within the framework of planning rules, often responsive in nature and created in isolation to each other.

Layers of technical advice and guidance have been applied to new buildings, which reduce the opportunity and flexibility of design and leads developers to rely on a small number of 'safer' typologies and devices. These controls range from city-wide rules, like the abstract London Views Management Framework, to architectural detail like the Building Research Establishment (BRE) daylight guidance – which provide non-mandatory guidelines on the loss of light to existing buildings that development causes and on daylight provision in new buildings. Surely it is time to review these rules and question whether are they fit for purpose in order for us to move towards a denser London?

“With a new Mayor of London, there is no better time to start reimagining our future city”

Recent studies by Gordon Ingram Associates on existing daylight levels within some of London's best-loved districts exemplify the problem. These areas are full of life, character and charm but if they were to be assessed at planning stage using our current daylight methodology they would never have been built. It will be argued that the BRE 'guidance' is simply that, however it takes an experienced and confident planning officer to capture the full opportunity and flexibility of its wording.

Similarly, the distances between buildings in these areas go against the often quoted 18 metre face to face 'rules' of many development control officers. Our collaborative research with Savills is looking to establish that proximity is no barrier to quality or value. It is interesting, for example, that many of our most valuable streets in Kensington and Chelsea measure little more than 14 metres wide.

## Looking back

All this has led me to looking again at some of the capital's finest streets and the emerging thinking in respect to mansion block typologies – comfortable apartment blocks that emerged in the late-nineteenth century – which give a tried and tested alternative to the formulaic perimeter blocks – apartment blocks often designed around an internal court or garden – we see all too often these days. Mansion blocks by their nature have good percentage of ground coverage and this means that a site's use can be optimised. In turn, we can build lower and more cheaply which is increasingly important in a cooling residential market and can also provide the opportunity for a mix of tenures and more affordable housing. This approach goes against the rules though. Typically, as we increase densities, buildings get taller and further apart in their 'search' for daylight.

The mansion block typology is closer and tighter and through its architecture moves the debate into a more expansive discussion of quality and experience rather than one based on numbers. Its elevated ground level together with its heightened ceilings on lower floors creates a spatial experience that goes beyond sub-BRE daylight levels. Its angled bays change the orientation of its rooms relieving the face-to-face relationships between neighbours and asking more demanding questions of architects.

It may seem ironic that in looking for ideas for the future, we are starting with the solutions of the past. But it is the long standing popularity, flexibility and ultimately the value of these buildings that may hold all the clues.

*Sir Terry Farrell CBE is an architect and urban designer famous for completing the MI6 building in London. Since his completion of the government-commissioned 'Farrell Review' of architecture and the built environment, he has been increasingly relied upon as an adviser on major building projects in the UK.*

## **Culture capital**

Sir Peter Bazalgette

For the vast majority of visitors, London is the gateway into our nation and our economy. In its choice and quality of cultural producers, its assets and its tourist offer, London is the flagship for the UK's status and its economy. Arguably, it is the world's capital of culture, with an extraordinary breadth and depth of culture on offer every night. It's ahead of New York and Paris in many ways – for example, figures suggest in the last couple of years it has taken the lead over New York in the number of theatre shows available.

### **Public Private Partnership?**

Both commercial cultural organisations and those supported with public investment have played parts in this success. They are much more closely interrelated than first glance might suggest, with the commercial sector providing opportunities for the cultural work and the talent developed through public investment.

In fact, the amazing thing is that London's arts and cultural sector now manages to deliver this dazzling return with modest public investment. Sadler's Wells receives just 9% of its income from the Arts Council, and makes 75% from ticket sales. Artsdeport, a vibrant cultural centre in the borough of Barnet, receives only 16% of its income from public

subsidy. The Discover Children's Story Centre - a registered charity located in the borough of Newham - manages to generate 52% of its income through a programme of talks and events for children and young people, as well as through sponsorship and donations.

London's arts institutions are of course fortunate in attracting private wealth; approximately 80% of England's philanthropic giving goes to London-based organisations. But this favourable environment is one they have helped to create, and they make the most of it. Look at the capital campaign for the £260 million Tate Modern Switch House extension. Central government contributed £50 million and £7 million came from the Greater London Assembly. The vast majority of the remainder has now been raised from the private sector, one of the largest cultural fundraising campaigns ever launched. (The Switch House opened this June, and in its first month attracted a million visitors.)

“London's arts and cultural sector manages to deliver this dazzling return with modest public investment”

Nonetheless, that fundraising campaign would not have got off the ground without the initial public investment; this pump-priming stimulates private individuals to give. Public and private finance need to work together: it is in the interest of both business and government to have flourishing cities with a rich cultural life that will create strong communities, while attracting visitors and providing a quality of life that will attract the best qualified workers.

## **People and places**

London's current position is due in no small measure to past investment in cultural infrastructure - the long term importance of that investment is increasingly apparent, with the South Bank now arguably Europe's biggest and best arts campus. So we should look to the future and think what London will need to stay competitive.

London's richness of culture and credibility is founded upon the diversity of its cultural ecology – the mixed scales of organisations and venues, as well as the sheer diversity of its people; its liberality, inclusiveness and tolerance. When we Londoners hear a politician complain about the number of conversations in foreign tongues on the tube, we listen in blank amazement. We Londoners are not only comfortable with our rich mix; we love it. Within that cultural ecology, organisations interrelate: the arts feed one another. It's an effective nursery, where progression is possible and where our leading conservatoires and colleges nurture and deliver the next generation of talent. Contrary to the way in which some people have interpreted the result of the EU referendum, a Britain outside the EU will have to be more open to the world than ever before. We need to be a magnet for the world's talent – and this means enabling higher education to offer degree courses to international students.

At the high end we will need to think about substantial modern venues, working with organisations like the Olympic Park. The developments underway there for Sadler's Wells and for the V&A will benefit future generations in this growing part of the city. At the other end of the scale, London needs to address the shrinking supply of small venues and the sell-off of public spaces, which will ultimately create barriers to that talent essential to London's vibrancy.

We need to think about how we can ensure inclusion for all communities, especially for our children and young people. This is an increasingly important part of the Arts Council's work, in London as across the whole of England. We are committed to supporting work that reflects of the diversity of our society. Through our Cultural Education Challenge, we want to ensure opportunities for children and young people everywhere to benefit from participation in the arts. And our Creative People and places programme works with communities that are currently least engaged with art and culture.

## Drawing on its strengths

With wealth and privilege comes responsibility. London is a showcase of what a city can be: in the global league, it has successfully played up its cultural strengths to help overcome disadvantages in terms of its physical infrastructure - and even its erratic climate. But art and artists have driven the regeneration of large parts of London, only to find themselves priced out. So we need to think how we can ensure that the city can continue to attract and support practitioners. London needs affordable housing and workspace, not to mention ultra-high speed broadband.

There will always be complaints about London's success, but this is wrong. The problem is not that London is too big, but that our other cities are too small. It will be important that London forms ever stronger bonds across the nation, sharing its resources to help build our national capacity – not only in terms of financial investment. London's institutions can form potent partnerships. Look at what the Tate has been able to do in St Ives, in Liverpool and through the Plus Tate network. Or how the Royal National Theatre has built strong partnerships with many regional theatres. And there are many important cultural organisations that have a London address, but do ground-breaking work elsewhere – one example would be Artichoke which is based in the East End, but in the last few years has taken over the centres of Durham and Londonderry to put on extraordinary public light shows.

We need cities; in the UK we are going to need them more than ever to lead our economic revival, and we will need every trick that London can teach us.

*Sir Peter Bazalgette has been a leading influence in the television industry for over a decade. Whether in his current capacities as Chair of Arts Council England and Chairman of ITV, or in leading his own production company, he has had a distinctive impact on modern television and culture.*

## **A city that works flexibly**

Justine Roberts

When I was asked to contribute to this publication, my first impulse was to advocate for a futuristic daydream: elevated cycle tracks soaring above the city, perhaps, or high-rise domestic eco-pods on reclaimed land (or personal rocket-packs, which I still very much hope someone else will be covering).

It was with a degree of reluctance that I chose instead to focus on an idea that appears at first glance to be rooted in the 20th century: flexible working. Retrospective as it may seem, I still believe it's an idea whose time is coming - and that it will be increasingly important to the future of living and working in our brilliant city. Indeed, when you look at the demographic changes thundering down the tracks, it's fair to argue that by 2050, flexibility - in both working hours and places of work - will be the norm, and the transition will be driven by people-power.

### **The benefits of flexible work**

Despite a great deal of chatter about flexibility over the last decade or so, it remains a minority pursuit. According to analysis for the Department for Transport [DfT] in 2013, only about one in five workplaces make extended use (defined as more than 50% of staff) of flexible working, despite a growing chorus of workers who want to



be able to combine a fulfilling career with the ability to accommodate extracurricular commitments.

It's also despite an ever-growing body of evidence that flexibility is very good for businesses' bottom lines. Few of the companies analysed by the DFT were actively encouraging employees to work more flexibly, but around one half of them said that they expected the take-up of flexible working to increase. They cited changes in workforce demographics (an older workforce and higher maternal employment rates), cost considerations (office space savings and IT changes making home-working more efficient) and employee impetus (greater knowledge of the right to request flexible working and more desire for it).

“Only about one in five workplaces make extended use of flexible working”

By 2050, flexibility - in both working hours and places of work - will be the norm, and the transition will be driven by people-power

## **Working parents**

The needs of parents with young children are usually the most visible of the social trends driving flexibility. Maternal employment rates are rising across the UK, and the Work Foundation has estimated that by 2030, one in five British workers will be a mother. And, of course, this issue doesn't just affect mothers. National policies such as the introduction of Shared Parental Leave are likely to increase demand for flexible working among fathers, and it seems reasonable to predict that arguments for better paternity leave packages will only grow louder as time goes on (currently, the paucity of paternity pay packages seems to be a big factor in their low take-up.)

## **An ageing workforce**

The arguments about parents, then, are well rehearsed. What's really

interesting are the other demographic forces driving the demand for flexibility. In the DFT survey, employers cited older people's changing work needs as one of the biggest push factors. The state retirement age will rise to 68 and possibly beyond as we move past 2020, and the Work Foundation claims that the falling value of basic pensions packages could push people to continue in paid work whether they're drawing a pension or not. Meanwhile, long-term demographic trends will result in a huge growth in the number of older workers from roughly 2030 onwards.

Older workers - whether men or women - tend both to want flexible working, and actually to need it for health reasons. The ageing structure of London's population will also have a considerable knock-on effect on the 'sandwich generation' of middle-aged workers, who need flexibility to meet their caring responsibilities for older parents as well as growing children. The company Matalan has a listening forum for its employees, and one of the major requests to come out of that forum over the past year has been phased retirement for older workers, with a gradual reduction in hours rather than a sudden cessation and a carriage clock.

"Long-term demographic trends will result in a huge growth in the number of older workers from roughly 2030 onwards"

## **Demanding youngsters**

And what of younger workers? It's early days, but already there's quite a lot of chatter from employers indicating that this group has a distinctive approach to careers. At a Bloomberg hosted conference on 'Good Business' in November 2015, representatives from Barclays, Ernst & Young and Standard & Poor's spoke about the distinguishing characteristics of 'millennials' in the workplace. The message was that younger workers tend to arrive with an expectation of flexibility and patchwork careers; they're surrounded by a start-up, pop-up culture, and tend to be much more upfront about wanting flexibility and

variety - not just from a work-life balance perspective, but also as a way of building varied and satisfying careers.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that they're much more likely than previous generations to ask for extended time out or sabbaticals; for those with patchwork careers and personal side-projects, home-working and part-time working will be actively desirable.

"Younger workers tend to arrive with an expectation of flexibility and patchwork careers"

## **Conclusion**

The case for flexibility just keeps building. It cuts costs (no small factor, as anyone who's priced office space in London recently will know). It improves staff loyalty and retention rates. It even seems to lead to a reduction in sick leave. It's popular with parents and older workers, and offers younger workers the variety they seek.

Increased flexibility would reduce the load on London's horribly overstretched childcare provision, and could also prove to be part of the solution to the ever-growing burden on the city's transport infrastructure - which will be handy if those rocket-packs don't get off the ground. It's not space-age, and it's not glamorous. But it could be one of the most significant changes in the lives of London's workers over the next 30 years.

*Justine Roberts is Chief Executive Officer and Founder of Mumsnet, an online community of parents sharing advice, support and product recommendations. Justine was listed seventh in BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour's Power List of the 100 most powerful women in the UK today.*



# **FAIRER LONDON**

## **The world's most socially mobile city**

The Rt Hon Alan Milburn

London is the world's greatest capital city, a global icon for enterprise, innovation and culture. It is an economic success story today and on that sure foundation it should set itself the ambition of being the world's most socially mobile city by 2050.

Of course, there is no single lever that can make that happen. Family networks, parenting styles and job opportunities all make a difference. But as the UK's economy becomes ever more reliant on higher levels of skill, education will be the key that unlocks social mobility in future. Study after study has come to the same conclusion: time spent in education is the most important determinant of future social status.

So London should set itself a new ambition - to become the best city in the world for school education. Again it has a good foundation on which to build. Arguably, the transformation of London's schools has been the UK's greatest social mobility achievement of the last twenty years. As recently as 2000, London's schools were seen as the worst in the country; now they are the best, with poor children in London having a 50% higher chance of doing well at GCSE level than similar kids elsewhere. A decade of effort to raise standards and recruit good teachers has paid off.

But while London schools lead the UK, they lag behind the best in

the world. The Mayor's Office reckons that if London was assessed separately from the rest of the UK, it would rise 10 places to 17th in the OECD rankings, putting it on a par with Germany. The question is: what would take it to reach first place?

## **Becoming the best city for education**

The global evidence suggests there are five characteristics of high-performing school systems which London should seek to emulate.

First, an unrelenting focus on teacher quality. Parents make the biggest difference to a child's life chances, but the next biggest influence is the quality of teaching in schools. Good teachers are able to provide a learning environment which gets the balance right between strong discipline and creative thinking. Higher performing schools systems across the world tend to pay teachers more relative to per capita GDP with better rewards for the best performers. Conversely, poorly performing teachers are actively encouraged to leave the profession. London needs to adopt those lessons.

“As the UK's economy becomes ever more reliant on higher levels of skill, education will be the key that unlocks social mobility in future”

Second, ensuring that the most disadvantaged schools and students have equal access to resources and the best teachers. Selective educational systems are not the best performers worldwide and tend to be associated with increased inequality and worse student attitudes towards learning. Unless disadvantaged children have a real chance to access high-performing schools – and are not prevented from doing so by financial constraints or admission rules - the global evidence suggests that competition will be less effective at improving the school system. That evidence is also clear that a good quality teacher can add a year's extra learning to a child's education compared to a poorly performing teacher, but too often resources - financial and human -

are sucked towards schools and pupils that are already doing well. If London is to be a global capital for social mobility its government - and that of the UK - will need to do more to ensure that pay, hiring and allocation systems get more of the best teachers into the worst schools.

“Good teachers are able to provide a learning environment which gets the balance right between strong discipline and creative thinking”

Third, enabling poorer children to access high quality early years education. The OECD evidence shows that child poverty is lowest and social mobility is highest where parents can rely on universal, high-quality, affordable early years services. It is welcome that in England all three and four year olds now have access to some free early education provision and that it is being extended to the most disadvantaged two year olds. But we are a long way from childcare being affordable, universal or of high enough quality. A long-term plan is needed to address that and to get early years services better focussed on preparing children for school. London should take a lead in making that happen.

Fourth, helping schools do more to prepare young people for the world beyond schools. Getting good exam results is critical, but in today's labour market – let alone the future one – they are not enough to guarantee success. Employers are looking for good character skills as well as academic ones. Some schools help nurture these skills. Many don't. Similarly, too often careers advice is seen as an afterthought for schools. It has withered on the vine and needs to be revived. The same is true for work experience. Less than half of British youngsters have access to a high quality work experience placement compared to 85% in France and 61% across the whole of Europe. London should pioneer a new outcome-based means of assessing school performance so that schools focus harder on the quality of extra-curricular activity, character development and careers guidance.

Fifth, getting the balance right between autonomy for and collaboration

between schools. Systems where schools have most autonomy tend to perform best, so academies and free schools should be encouraged. But a school is not an island and the global evidence suggests that accountability arrangements and incentives that encourage schools to collaborate produce the best results. Closer to home, the success of the London Challenge in the early 2000s proves that point. London should be aiming for a distinctive approach which strikes a balance between setting schools free and establishing a city-wide framework for school improvement.

“Getting good exam results is critical, but in today’s labour market – let alone the future one – they are not enough to guarantee success”

### **Breaking the link between deprivation and destiny**

For many decades it was assumed that, when it came to learning, deprivation was destiny. Better-off children would do well. Poorer children would do badly. In the last few decades London has proved that form of social determinism wrong. Its schools have become engines of social mobility. And yet low-ability children from wealthy families still overtake high-ability children from poor families during primary school. That is not just a social injustice. It is a moral outrage - and it must change.

If it adopts the right approaches, London can be the city which breaks the link between deprivation and destiny. In so doing it can be beacon to the world for how economic prosperity and social mobility can be two sides of the same coin. That is an ambition worthy of as great a city as London.

*The Rt Hon Alan Milburn is currently in his fourth year as the Chair of the Social Mobility Commission; an advisory body that monitors the Government’s progress towards improving social mobility in the UK. Before that he was MP for Darlington from 1992 to 2010 in which time he held several ministerial posts including Chief Secretary to the Treasury and Secretary of State for Health.*



## A city of communities?

Matthew Taylor

How should we think about London's current strengths and weaknesses and its many possible futures? Some will emphasise economic dynamism, arguing that without growth nothing else is possible; others will focus on social justice, asserting that only a fair city is a great city; a third voice might shout out for the environment, urging a focus on the quality of the public realm and the long term sustainability of an international city on a warming planet. Could the ideal of a city of communities offer another, perhaps more unifying, lens through which to peer at our city in 2016 and its potential in 2050?

A successful modern urban community is a diverse group of people whose norms, bonds and resources enable them to act together in pursuit of common goals. Communities can be built on many foundations; shared values, experiences or interests but, as this is a collection about a geographical concept - the city - I will focus on place.

There is a subjective and an objective case for strong place-based communities. On the one hand, people say they prefer to live in areas with a sense of community (although this is only one of many factors in the equation). On the other hand, there is evidence of the benign effects of community cohesion on outcomes including individual mental health and collective resilience. In his seminal studies of

Chicago communities, Professor Robert J Sampson found an enduring ‘neighbourhood effect’ which led to better social outcomes in more civically-active localities than others with a similar socio-economic profile. Research by the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) shows social connectedness to be crucial to the economic prospects and well-being of disadvantaged people.

## **Changes in the City**

The recent history and current record of London as a city of geographical communities is complex and chequered. Ever since Michael Young and Peter Willmott’s classic 1957 study *Family and Kinship in East London* there has been a powerful narrative that slum clearance and modern estate development in the post war era damaged traditional communities irreparably.

But a later study from the University of York suggests the picture was mixed with most resettled residents feeling able to maintain social networks and enjoying the benefits of modern accommodation and facilities. In the late twentieth century, housing policy and public architecture took the rap for social problems more rooted in changes in the economy and family.

Another account of lost community focusses on London’s changing population. It is certainly the case that waves of mass migration have disrupted existing communities and sometimes led to tensions, and a sense of loss among long-standing locals. One researcher into London’s poor recently told me that the phrase “there’s been a lot of change round here” has replaced ‘I’m not racist but...’ as the preface to people bemoaning greater diversity.

Yet, as a whole, modern Londoners are more at ease with mixed communities than citizens of any other part of Britain. Our most attractive and popular neighbourhoods exemplify what sociologist Susanne Wessendorf has described - referring specifically to Hackney - as “commonplace diversity”.

For London communities this can feel like the best and the worst of times. Gentrification both make places less socially inclusive while also spawning a micro-culture of local food, independent shops and social enterprises. London's attractiveness increases housing density and makes community businesses and activities more viable, but London as a magnet for absentee global investment has turned West End neighbourhoods into weekend ghost towns. The best developments, like Kings Cross, create a very modern sense of mixed use community, the worst have bleak shared space and use separate entrances for the poor. At times national and London policy seems to have had greater social segregation as its implicit goal.

“Gentrification both make places less socially inclusive while also spawning a micro-culture of local food, independent shops and social enterprises”

## **Engineering integration**

In 2014 the independent Social Integration Commission, which I chaired, compared levels of integration by class, age and ethnicity with the local population mix (obviously, a resident of Tower Hamlets would be expected to have more diverse networks than a Cornish villager). Which city came out as furthest behind the expected levels of integration? Step forward, with head bowed, London. It was a surprise: because the city's population is so diverse we wrongly assume people's social networks will be too. Integration doesn't happen naturally as an accident of proximity, it is something we have to work at, including permitting a degree of social engineering.

So, among all the commendable aspirations for London 2050 and beyond contained in this essay collection, let me raise the banner for a London of diverse, cohesive and active local communities.

This would be a 2050 London that not only functioned at multiple geographical levels – global, European, national, city, locality and neighbourhood – but which exploited the synergies between those

levels. Every community would have a story about how its own internal social capital makes it stronger, more resilient and creative but also how it is a doorway to the world with street neighbours helping each other reach out to both geographical and non-geographical networks of people around the world.

“Because the city’s population is so diverse we wrongly assume people’s social networks will be too. Integration doesn’t happen naturally as an accident of proximity, it is something we have to work at”

These local communities would have strong cores but also be porous, finding creative ways of making even short-term visitors feel immediately at home and connected (something that can become an inherent part of platforms like Airbnb) and maintaining links to a neighbourhood diaspora around the world (think of a Facebook page for former residents of the Tooting Bec who now live in Lagos).

Other writers in this collection have talked about the importance of stronger governance with more power at city level but we will also see new models at the locality and neighbourhood level. As public spending continues to be inadequate to meet public need we will see more explicit social contracts between places and councils through which citizens commit to certain forms of behaviour, engagement and collective action as part of the deal for receiving service levels; existing schemes like Lambeth’s volunteer snow sweepers point the way to a more general blurring of the boundary between state and civic action.

Similarly, we should hope to see more imaginative solutions to our housing crisis and the funding of community facilities through development trust and sharing economy models through which citizens own a stake in local assets.

As the strength of community become an ever more important factor in determining the quality of people lives enlightened politicians and officials will move from promising to solve people’s problems

to understanding how best to enable people and to act together themselves. Economic necessity can help create a more participative democratic culture.

## **Conclusion**

The London of communities 2050 will evolve naturally but there are things we can do to help it and also to stand in its way. To build the city we want in 30 years we need to start taking community more seriously today. Whether it is transport infrastructure or local planning, the provision of public services, local tax raising or forms of governance seeing strong communities as cause and effect of social progress is the surest way to a London that works for anyone who wants to call themselves a Londoner.

*Matthew Taylor is the chief executive of the Royal Society of Arts. He was previously director of the think tank the Institute for Public Policy Research, and was head of the Number 10 Policy Unit under Tony Blair's premiership.*

## **A view from 2050: did London share the wealth?**

Gavin Kelly

Looking back from the mid-21st century it's striking that, even after the post-Brexit wobble, there was still underlying confidence about London's long-term outlook. Belief in London's capacity to grow and expand was etched into the city's identity. That confidence did not, however, extend to the question of how fairly that growth would be distributed. The nature of poverty and disadvantage certainly changed over time – gains were made, new problems emerged - but the city's deep divisions remained.

### **Wages, housing and childcare**

The accelerating cost of living in London spurred on the Living Wage campaign and resulted in a major reboot of the popular and voluntary London Living Wage. London's Mayor Sadiq Khan rightly took pride that under his watch – and with powerful use of the bully pulpit – the real Living Wage increasingly became the accepted benchmark in some mass-employing sectors like retail and hospitality. In the early 2020s, during his second term, the Mayor received the power to set a higher legal minimum wage than the rest of the country. After an initial row with business, a higher wage floor was introduced (following advice

from the Low Pay Commission). It quickly became uncontentious and no party ever proposed reversing it.

But London's poverty problem went far beyond the issue of hourly pay. For a start, the weekly earnings of low-paid Londoners continued to oscillate far more than those in other parts of the country over the economic cycle due to big shifts in hours worked (the 20% fall experienced in the years following the 2008 financial crisis wasn't recovered until the mid-2020s). This meant that during difficult times Londoners needed to rely heavily on in-work welfare support and housing benefit, which continued to be scaled back by national government.

Above all else there remained the towering issue of housing costs. For some years inner London's poor, who lost out the most from benefit retrenchment, stayed put facing rising housing costs which pushed them into deeper disadvantage. But eventually there was a big shift in the make-up of inner London as more poor families moved to the outer fringes of London and beyond – both East and West.

Homelessness continued to rise and the rash of scandals concerning the plight of families living in overcrowded housing stock eventually become a major political issue. London's 'favelas with Wi-Fi', as they became dubbed, together with the work of newly formed London Tenants' Movement - which became the most powerful lobby group in the capital during the early 2020s - led to new tenant rights and the creation of a city-wide powerful regulator for the private rented sector. Progress of a sort, but the capital's underlying issue of chronically inadequate housing supply amidst steady population growth continued - and continued to hit the poor hardest.

Consequently, relative poverty rates in London continued to outstrip the rest of the UK (after housing costs). The capital's poverty problem was compounded by its strikingly low levels of maternal employment (again, the worst in the UK), which dragged down family incomes. Among other things this reflected a decades-long failure to address

exorbitant childcare costs, as well as the city's lack of decent 'mid-level' part-time jobs. Eventually, however, childcare made its way up the city's priority list, establishing itself as an essential form of social infrastructure (after some powers transferred from boroughs and Whitehall). Predictably, though, it took London's first female Mayor, not elected until 2028, to achieve this.

“Eventually there was a big shift in the make-up of inner London as more poor families moved to the outer fringes of London – both East and West”

### **New twists**

As well as continuity in the nature of these challenges and responses, there were surprises too. One was that London – with its weak trade unions representing under 10% of the private sector workforce in 2016 – became the city where the first inklings of a new politics of work emerged. It started with the rise of a vibrant freelancers' union, echoing the experience in New York. Founded in 2020 by a diverse mix of London's self-employed - by then more than one in five of the workforce – it became a magnet for those who wanted to share some costs, risks and networks but who were priced-out of the glitzy high-end co-working office spaces that had become such a feature of the fashionable parts of the city. New pro-worker associations emerged focussing on particular sectors ranging from couriers to care workers, designers to doormen. This reinvented twenty-first century version of craft unionism didn't, of course, provide anything like the collective muscle of their mid-twentieth century industrial forebears. But for growing strands of London's workforce it offered an important counter to the atomised work culture that dominated from the 1990s through to the 2020s.

Another unexpected shift came in the form of tax and housing. In the early 2020s, Whitehall – having finally given up any hope of ever leading on the reform of Council Tax – gave London (and other cities) similar



powers to Scotland to overhaul its own system. Political caution, and a haggles over the share of the revenue London could keep, meant that at first these powers remained dormant. Eventually, however, the need for funds, and the unprecedented ferocity of the debate about access to housing in the capital, put them to use. To the surprise of many, in the early 2030s – a full 40 years on from the last Council Tax revaluation – high-value London led the way in England, shaking-up its council tax system: new bands were introduced at the top to help boost spending on new housing for key workers.

### **A city for neither young nor old?**

London's experience over these decades led to a mixed picture on social mobility. For starters, it was striking that it wasn't until the 2020s that the fog really lifted on the extent to which birth was destiny in London compared to the experience in other cities; metropolitan comparisons became the norm after it was revealed that the variation within nations were at least as large as those between them.

“To the surprise of many, high-value London led the way in England in shaking-up its council tax system: new bands were introduced at the top to help boost spending on new housing for key workers”

Great pride was taken in the fact that the earnings of ‘the London Challenge generation’, now approaching middle age, were less determined by their parents’ status than their predecessors. This was warmly received across the political spectrum though it was notable that some prominent commentators – on left and right – couldn't come to terms with writing positive pieces about rising social mobility. But the good news was tarnished by the finding that a large chunk of the school-age gains had been eroded due to a mixture of weak post-school college performance and London's still deeply stratified jobs market, particularly for those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

The city's policy elite lamented that more hadn't been done to sustain the great strides made by that early 2000s generation of working-class children.

As the country as a whole became far greyer, inner London largely bucked the trend. As the home-owning baby boomers start to fade out in the 2030s, the next generation of retiring Londoners on modest incomes – many more of whom were tenants relying on housing support - were forced further out.

An imbalance of a different sort concerned the growing dependence of a wide array of the city's small charities and community organisations on a handful of vast philanthropic foundations created by the big tech and financial corporations, who had all developed close ties to City Hall. Questions about their governance and accountability rose to the fore.

“Pride was taken in the fact that the earnings of ‘the London Challenge generation’, now approaching middle age, were less determined by their parents’ status than their predecessors. This was warmly received across the political spectrum though it was notable that some prominent commentators – on left and right – never came to terms with writing pieces about rising social mobility”

## Conclusion

Looking back, there was a sense of genuine pride in the progress alongside bitter disappointment about missed opportunities. Sure, there were also big constraints – the balance of powers with central government, the global slow-growth context and the post-Brexit chill to name a few.

Yet the opportunity was there. After all, London had unparalleled civic resources with which to tackle its social evils. Large numbers of high-skilled jobs continued to be created. People with talent continued

to want to come and work here. Money could be borrowed at rock-bottom rates. Our schools further outstripped the national average – a few boroughs even made history by removing altogether the stain of the class attainment gap at age 16. Civil society was ever more active and innovative. And the capital's model of city governance gradually, if haphazardly, acquired more powers alongside a broader tax-base. During those decades of the early twenty-first century London had scope to bear down on the poverty and lack of opportunity in its midst.

***Gavin Kelly** is chief executive of the Resolution Trust. Gavin previously spent over a decade in Whitehall and was a member of the Council of Economic Advisors at the Treasury, the Senior Advisor to the Secretary of State at the Department for Education and the Department for Communities and Local Government, Deputy Head of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit and a member of the No 10 Policy Unit.*

Over the past thirty years, London has become the capital of capitalism and the epicentre of global culture. But, especially since the result of the EU referendum, there are big challenges ahead. This essay collection starts the conversation on how London can keep a step ahead of rival cities in the decades ahead.

Influential and talented people come together to outline an original action plan and vision for London in 2050 across a range of fields - from education and the environment to culture and commerce.



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