

Architecture and Urbanism Unit

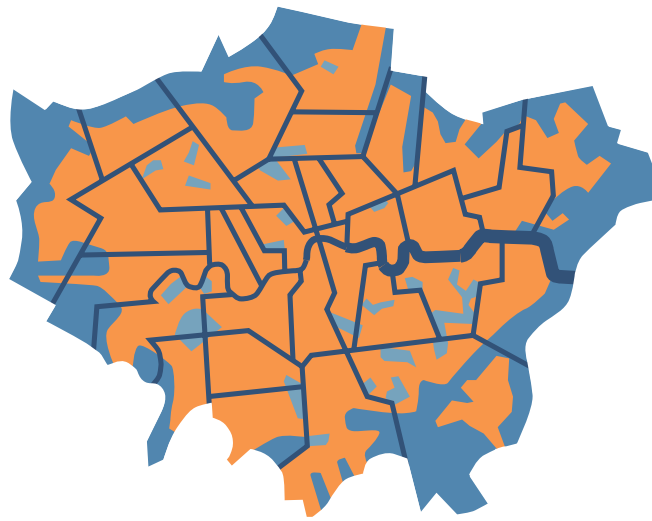


MAYOR OF LONDON



The Thames
Above: London's greatest asset, but underused


Fitting it all in
Right: London needs to accommodate 700,000 more people within its 33 boroughs, and all the housing, jobs and services they need, by 2016, without expanding into the green belt or reducing urban land



 **Industry**

 **Transport**

 **Health care**
11,000 jobs

 **Education**
126,000 school children
500,000 in higher education

 **Office space**
463,000 office jobs
93 ha of office floorspace

 **Retail**
10,000 jobs

'My vision for London's urban renaissance'

Richard Rogers

Chief Advisor to the Mayor on Architecture and Urbanism

London is one of the world's greatest cities, but its physical environment does not live up to this reputation. In many ways, it epitomises JK Galbraith's maxim of 'private affluence, public squalor'.

Over the next fifteen years, London's population will grow by at least 700,000. We need to harness this population growth and the economic growth that goes with it to make London a more sustainable city. I am deeply concerned that, if we do not, London will become more fragmented and socially polarised.

The built environment provides the physical framework for all our institutions and government programmes such as education, health, crime, jobs and transport. If the city fabric is well designed and maintained, government programmes will flourish. If the fabric is badly designed and fragmented these public programmes will disintegrate, and the money and time invested will offer poor value.

As a resident, I care passionately about London and its future. As chair of the Urban Task Force, I know that urban renaissance needs a compact, mixed-use, well-connected and well-designed city. This is why I agreed to help the Mayor to achieve an urban renaissance by setting up the Architecture and Urbanism Unit. This document sets out further details of our vision and main areas of work.

Our role is to:

- Promote high quality architecture and urban design, in order to create socially balanced and sustainable communities
- Optimise the potential of London's available sites, by linking transport and development opportunities
- Improve London's public realm

We will achieve these aims by:

- Working through the Greater London Authority, Transport for London and the London Development Agency
- Acting as resource to London's boroughs and communities
- Delivering demonstration projects
- Creating a culture that values urban design and good architecture

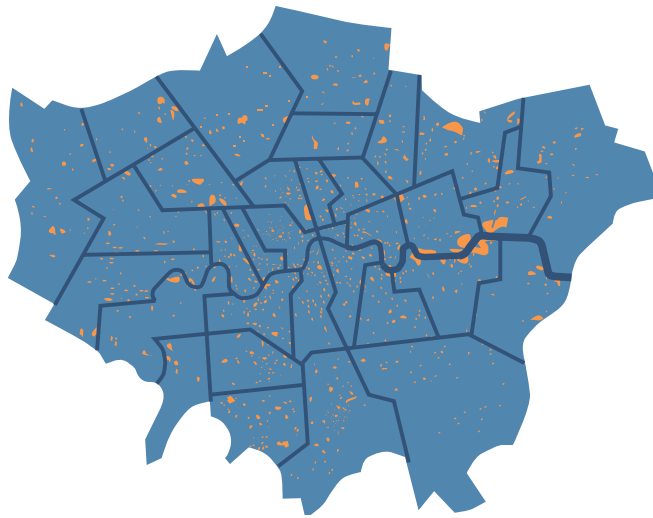


A diverse city

Above: London should build on its strengths as a dynamic and multi-centered metropolis

Finding space for housing

Right: We need to find space for 311,000 new homes by 2016. Research confirms that we can accommodate about 240,000 homes on available sites across London. Unless we raise densities, we will need to find the equivalent of 6 Hyde Parks to accommodate the rest



Sustainable growth in a world city

The Mayor's vision for London is radical and challenging. He has stated that London's population and economic growth should be accommodated within the city's current boundaries, without erosion of open land. When one takes into account the other needs that these will create (from schools to health centres, and from parks to recycling facilities), it is clear that we need to make better use of available land and buildings, and to link the most intensive developments to new and existing public transport.

An urban renaissance should be founded on principles of design excellence, economic strength, environmental responsibility, good governance and social well-being. Design is the tool we use to give order, scale and beauty to our buildings and our public spaces. Design makes the difference between density and cramming, increases the quality of space and brings vitality to communities and neighbourhoods.

Design-led urban renaissance is about improving the quality of life in a city to make it a place where people want to live, rather than from where they want to escape. A successful and sustainable city needs to be both beautiful and environmentally responsible, both compact and polycentric, both coherent and as diverse as its citizens and communities. London needs to accommodate a mix of uses both locally and citywide, with good public transport, walking and cycling connections for the movement of its citizens. We must use previously developed land before green space, and should recycle buildings or adapt existing buildings to new uses. London's development should build on its transport hubs and town centres, and should be based on sensitive planning, not unplanned sprawl or restrictive zoning.

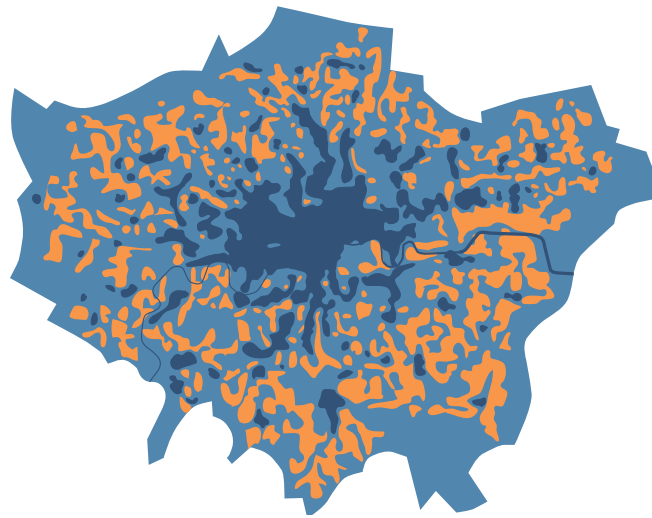
We should use the opportunity of increased demand to build a new generation of spacious, well-lit and sustainable homes that meet the changing demographics of the city. We should worry more about low ceilings and less about high buildings (which can improve London's unremarkable skyline, especially if grouped in clusters). We should look at new ways of using space, with roof gardens for citizens.

London has many fine residential buildings and public spaces – like the Georgian squares of Chelsea and Notting Hill – but precious few have been created in recent years. London should lead Europe in the quality of its buildings and spaces, not look with envy across the Channel or even at other UK cities. We can and must make London a sustainable and beautiful example to the world.



Transport is the key
Above: Croydon's tramway has played an important role in connecting communities, stimulating investment and promoting sustainable development

Transport accessibility
Right: Much of London's periphery is poorly served by public transport. Unless access is improved many opportunity sites, especially along the Thames Gateway, will be severely underdeveloped



Meeting the challenge

The challenge facing London is immense. With limited resources, the Architecture and Urbanism Unit can only deliver change by concentrating on a few exemplary projects, delivered in partnership with other agencies and through strategic influence on the culture of urban change.

Making the most of opportunities

The demand for housing and office space in London is creating new development opportunities across London, and is enabling redevelopment where land has been underused. But London's supply of space is not inexhaustible. To avoid encroachment on green land, or unsustainable displacement of industry and other 'lower value' land uses, we need to make the most of what we've got. The key to sustainable development in London is linking transport and development, to focus on previously developed or derelict brown field sites, around major transport corridors and – most of all – at transport hubs.

We will work with developers, local authorities and communities on a few key projects in order to enable densification and revitalisation, improve the quality of buildings and spaces, promote forms of development and management that minimise damage to the environment, encourage inclusive change and provide examples of how this can be achieved elsewhere.

The best way we can contribute to these projects is through involvement in the briefing and design procurement process, as well as an ongoing role as design mentors for particular developments. We will help to select architects and urban designers through as open a process as possible, advise on design competitions, and assist in the preparation of briefing material and specifications for developers, architects and masterplanners.

The level and type of involvement will be tailored to local circumstances and needs. In all cases, we will seek to maximise benefit for local communities and London as a whole, and to ensure an open and participative process.

Thames Gateway is recognised as the major development opportunity in London. We are looking at the overall opportunities for optimising land use and density in this critical area of London.



Vauxhall Cross
Above: The road congestion charge around central London will reduce traffic and increase the potential for well-designed places for people

100 public spaces
Right: Renewed public spaces will make London a more walkable and liveable city



Improving London's public realm

London's public realm comprises everything from our doorsteps, to our great squares, parks and the River Thames. While there have been many examples of high quality building development in London, many of our public spaces have become hostile and shabby environments, underused or avoided by Londoners. This underuse is not just wasteful; it is also harmful to local communities and local economies.

A network of well-designed public space makes walking and cycling a pleasure, and provides a stage for the public life of a city. The Architecture and Urbanism Unit will support improvements to public spaces across London. We will work with Transport for London and the London boroughs on street improvements, and develop longer term programmes to improve 100 public spaces across London over the next five years, to plant a million new trees in London, and to link and map our spaces to make a coherent network.

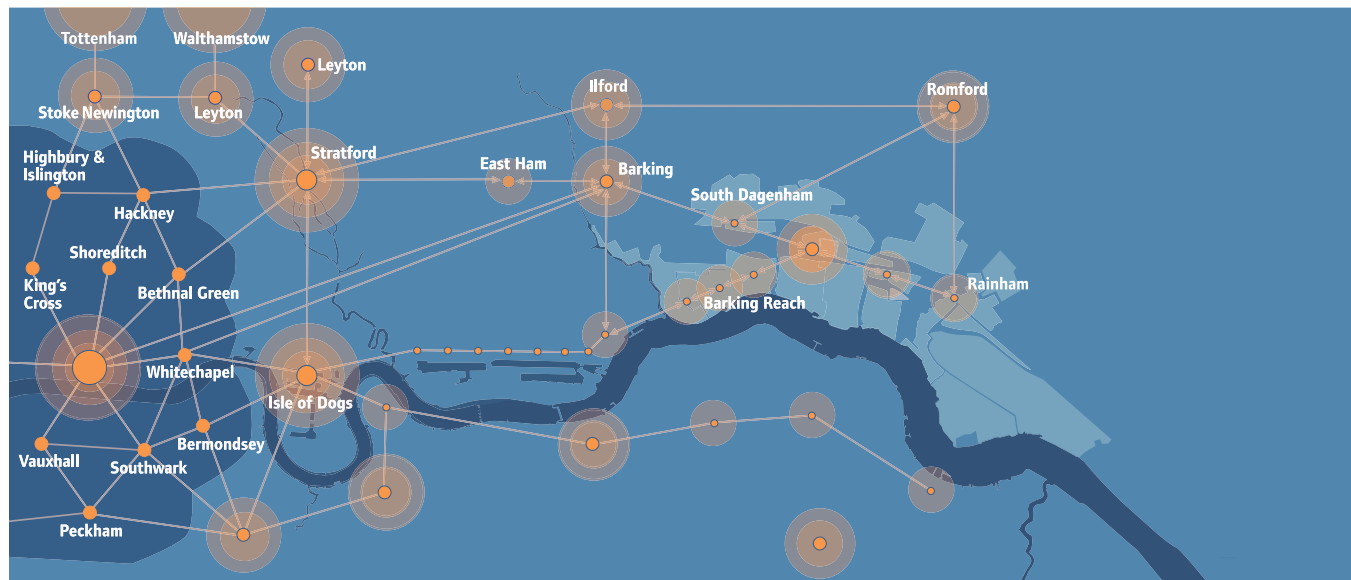
Public authorities should value urban design and lead the way in showing what can be achieved. The Mayor is determined that the GLA and the four bodies it funds (Transport for London, the London Development Agency, and the Police and Fire Services) should set an example in this way. All of these bodies own considerable property across London. We will work together to ensure that these assets are used to promote urban renaissance as well as fulfilling their own operational requirements.

Changing the culture

Like many of the UK's cities, London has suffered from poor quality development in the past. We need a better skills base and a new culture, which values design and improves the skills of its design practitioners and its clients, especially in the public sector. We will look at how international and European models of design procurement, partnering and delivery can be translated to work in the UK, and will promote the value of open and competitive design processes, as a key to securing inclusive and high quality strategies and designs.

We will develop a series of occasional papers and seminars, to disseminate lessons to the widest possible audience.





The Thames at Rainham
Above: Wild space at the edge of London

London Riverside
Left and below: These diagrams were drafted to show how new transport can open up areas for new residential communities, and for the intensification of existing housing and industrial developments. The A+UU has been working in partnership with London boroughs and local and strategic partnerships to form a development framework for London Riverside, on the north east bank of the Thames

How we work

The Architecture and Urbanism Unit will only be able to deliver results and promote best practice through partnership. We will work with the other members of the GLA family (in particular, colleagues within the GLA, London Development Agency and Transport for London), and with boroughs, partnerships and voluntary organisations across London, including organisations such as Living Streets and Trees for London.

We will work with key regional and national organisations (including the Government's Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and the independent Architecture Foundation) and professional networks (such as the London Authorities Urban Design Forum and the Royal Institute of British Architects). We therefore welcome all comments, views and suggestions on how our work can have the best possible impact.



Architecture and
Urbanism Unit team

Richard Rogers

Mark Brearley

Richard Brown

Ricky Burdett

John Fannon

Emily Greeves

Gale Valentine

For further information contact:

Architecture and Urbanism Unit

Greater London Authority

City Hall

The Queen's Walk

London SE1 2AA

Telephone 020 7983 6568

Email gale.valentine@london.gov.uk