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### **Managing the metropolis: economic change, institutional reform and spatial planning in London.**

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## **CHAPTER 7**

### **MANAGING THE METROPOLIS: ECONOMIC CHANGE, INSTITUTIONAL REFORM AND SPATIAL PLANNING IN LONDON**

**[11,817 words including references]**

**Nick Bailey**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The introduction of the United Kingdom's first spatial development strategy in London coincided with a unique set of circumstances in the last three years of the 1990s and the first three of the new millennium. Having languished for 14 years without any form of metropolitan government, London emerged from a long period of political decline with the first elected mayor in Britain, a new and significantly different form of administration from previous approaches and with a remit for spatial planning, in line with the emergent European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) published in 1999, which promoted the adoption of regional spatial development strategies (Hall 2006: 167). The 1990s were also the start of London's economic and demographic resurgence, confirming it as one of only three undisputed world cities (Newman and Thornley 2005; Hall and Pain 2006). Moreover, these reforms were introduced relatively early in the period of office of the New Labour government first elected in 1997, and represented just one part of a broader approach to 'modernising' local government and the emergence of 'a new territorial governance' (Roberts 2000; Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger 2006) throughout the United Kingdom. Few could have predicted that London's fortunes could have changed so quickly and that by 2000

it would be piloting a new form of city government with a novel, and as then untried, system of spatial planning.

However, while London's statutory spatial development strategy has a number of original features, it is also embedded in London's long history of experimentation with regional plans and metropolitan governance (Hall 2006). The introduction of a regional spatial development strategy, which provides a statutory basis for coordinated land use and non-land use action, can therefore be seen as one more stage in an evolving regional planning process. While the post-war plans for London were primarily land use based, custom and practice, if not the law, left some ambiguity as to what was, and was not, a land use matter.

Prior to 2004, London had been the subject of only three city-wide statutory plans, each reflecting strongly the spirit of its time. The first was Forshaw and Abercrombie's visionary County of London Plan (LCC 1943)<sup>i</sup> which provided the basis for post-war reconstruction. The second was also produced by the London County Council – The Administrative County of London Development Plan - and thus only covering inner and central London (LCC 1951). It was subject to three years of public enquiry and ministerial deliberation and finally adopted in 1955. This was replaced by the Greater London Development Plan in 1969, prepared by the newly established Greater London Council (GLC 1969). Each in its way struggled to encapsulate an analysis of London's needs and to apply the procedural tools available to steer the capital over a period of 10 to 20 years. As will be noted later, as well as having substantial differences, the London Plan (2004) inherited many characteristics of its predecessors.

London experienced a long period of relative stagnation after the Second World War with national policy favouring industrial decentralisation and the out-migration of the population, especially from the overcrowded inner boroughs. The population of the capital reached a peak of 8.6 million in 1939 and then declined for five decades to reach a low-point of 6.8 million in 1983. London's boundaries had been extended in 1965 with the creation of the Greater London Council (GLC), but the adoption of what some saw as increasingly strident Left-Wing policies in the 1980s meant that it became a target for abolition by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Government, along with other metropolitan counties covering the major British conurbations (Travers 2004: 30).

In parallel with the decline in population, London's economy was also changing rapidly. From the 1970s onwards London's manufacturing industry was in freefall with the loss of 600,000 manufacturing jobs over a 30 year period. This decline in manufacturing began to stabilise in the 1990s and its effect on overall employment was moderated by a rapid growth in business services, other service industries, retailing and tourism. These trends were enhanced by a series of macro-economic changes introduced by the Conservative Government which was determined to make London a world player in the global economy. Pressures to accommodate increasing numbers of international banks and financial services coincided with a boom in demand for office space in locations such as the City of London and London Docklands, the latter's traditional role having been redundant from the 1960s onwards. London was becoming an increasingly important location for global corporations both for economic and fiscal reasons and because of its geographic location as a bridgehead for business between the United States and mainland Europe. Its demographic structure was also changing as it attracted an increasingly younger and more ethnically diverse population.

In the period before the 1997 general election there had been a gradual realisation in political, academic and business circles that London, and by implication the British economy, was suffering as a result of the absence of a strategic authority for the capital city. London was no longer perceived as being in terminal decline and those engaged in business services, cultural activities and tourism in particular were increasingly demanding improvements in the delivery of transport infrastructure, the provision of housing and the promotion of a higher quality urban fabric. A consensus was emerging that London's growth was severely restricted by the lack of an institutional framework, based on local democratic accountability, which could take a strategic view of the capital.

The preparation of the London Plan from 2000 onwards marked an important turning-point in the capital's prospects. The political map had changed significantly in just two decades, as had London's role as the core of the wider South East of England. It had become by far the largest regional generator of economic activity and tax revenue in the United Kingdom, accounting for two fifths of national Gross Domestic Products (GDP). Its economic status had also changed so that by the beginning of the new millennium, on several measures it was out-ranking New York and Tokyo as the pre-eminent world city (Massey 2007).

The challenge facing the Mayor was to accommodate the growth in business activity and the projected population increase, whilst ensuring that transport and infrastructure were improved and that the needs of its diverse population were met. Moreover, under-used capacity in the capital needed to be realised leading to additional growth particularly in the eastern boroughs of the Thames Gateway. It was generally accepted

that the former top-down approach to planning (Hall 2006: 167) had to be replaced with one which would set out clear strategic guidelines and encouragement for development, as well as co-ordinating the delivery of infrastructure and related services, complementing and providing the context for actions best carried out at a more local level by the 33 London boroughs. However, more consultation was needed with the second-tier authorities, since it was the boroughs which in the past had often strongly resisted undue interference from the GLC (Young and Kramer 1978).

In this chapter it will be argued that planning in London has responded to a number of overriding pressures which have heavily influenced the way space and place in the city are conceptualised. First, the national, regional and metropolitan economies have largely dictated the extent to which planning policies are promotional or restrictive. Second, the institutional framework of governmental legislation has determined the legal and organisational context in which policy is produced. Third, the perceptions of local, national and business elites have influenced the ‘narrative’ of the city determining whether London is perceived as, for example, a critical patient in need of radical surgery or a boom town where growth can only be sustained if adequately supplied with appropriate infrastructure. In responding to these changing pressures, it will be noted that while the planning system has evolved and adapted to changing circumstances, continuity can also be observed in that many of the methods of allocation, designation and control in the planners’ tool-box remain unchanged.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first discusses the unique context of London in terms of its size, population and economic structure. It will go on to examine the political economy of London by reviewing the main economic trends and the

growth of employment in key service industries. It will also demonstrate how the new institutional framework of an elected mayor and Greater London Authority responded to these issues. The second examines how the emergence of the new institutional framework gave rise to a number of constituencies arguing for sectional interests which were incorporated to varying degrees in the Plan. The third section discusses the content of the spatial strategy, explores the process by which the Plan was produced and examines the extent to which it embodies different philosophical interpretations. The final section reviews the extent to which the Plan might be defined in relation to positivist, structuralist and post-modern conceptions of planning as discussed in Chapter One and draws conclusions on how the case of planning in London reflects broader trends in spatial planning.

## **THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF LONDON AND THE NEW INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT**

London's size and its dominance in all aspects of the British economy, cultural life and society have meant that the way in which it is administered has also been extremely contentious. For more than a century different methods of local representation and accountability have reflected the ongoing debate about central-local relationships in the country as a whole. The major issue of debate has been how far London should be permitted to manage its own affairs when it is also the seat of national government and the location for many of the essential command and control functions of the country as a whole. This debate has been accentuated by the political volatility of the London electorate which tends to vote in favour of greater local determination but often against

the national party in government (Travers 2004). Thus the changing economic structure of London, its system of government and how it is planned are all closely related.

The geographical definition of London has also proved extremely contentious, both in terms of the delivery of services and political control. London's boundaries have undergone only two major changes in over 100 years. The boundary of the London County Council was drawn relatively tightly in the 1880s to cover the central area and the inner boroughs which marked the extent of nineteenth century expansion. This gave the Labour Party a built-in majority for thirty years from 1934. The appointment of the Herbert Commission in 1957 by a Conservative Government recommended that a new two-tier system of government should cover a much enlarged area of over 1500 square kilometres which took London's boundary up to the Green Belt in the surrounding counties. Recommendations proposed that the new Greater London Council (GLC) should acquire additional strategic planning, housing and related powers, while the lower tier would be made up of 32 boroughs, together with the historic Corporation of the City of London.

London emerged from the Second World War as an overcrowded and congested city with an outdated infrastructure. Its economy was still largely dependent on manufacturing and its housing stock was deficient both in quantity and quality. Both the County of London Plan (1943) and the Administrative County of London Plan (ACLP) (1955) were heavily orientated towards relocating population beyond the Green Belt and into, for instance, the New Towns. The 1955 plan was the first and only London plan to be based on a system of land use zoning. The problems of infrastructure were largely perceived in terms of major road-building programmes. The GLDP (1969) was



designed to be a strategic plan which, until the regulations were changed in 1970, would guide and inform the preparation of borough-wide Structure Plans. This plan also contained major infrastructure proposals, such as the controversial Motorway Box around central London, as well as providing the basis for the GLC's extensive house-building programme and for determining large numbers of strategic planning applications. Above all, the GLDP sought 'balance' between competing uses. For example, it promoted preferred office and industrial locations, identified 'Action Areas' to promote regeneration, and argued strongly for the protection of the historic fabric, open space and environmental quality. It also identified at least one strategic centre to provide retail, leisure and employment opportunities for each borough. The GLDP's view on the London economy was also a balanced one, arguing that both manufacturing and services should grow and prosper so long as they were in the right locations and were not able to displace other uses, such as housing and community facilities.

The GLDP was finally approved in 1976 and was very much a product of its time (see Figure 7.1). It had rejected the positivist zoning philosophy of the ACLP and had adopted a positivist approach which depended on designations and definitions of areas for single or mixed uses (for example, in strategic centres) or concerted action by the GLC (for example, in action areas) to create a balanced distribution of activities. Its conception of London was of a city where variety of uses and good planning would sustain the economy and benefit all its inhabitants. In 1984 the GLC published alterations to the GLDP (GLC 1984). These were partly an attempt to update the GLDP, but also a response to a major recession: unemployment in London had increased by 375 per cent between 1971 and 1984 (GLC 1984: 6). The alterations also included a much wider array of policies on equal opportunities, energy consumption, waste

disposal and the protection of 'Community Areas' – all well ahead of current planning thinking at the time. The designation of Community Areas, linked to additional funding for social housing and community facilities strongly influenced by community organisations, suggested a structuralist approach. Under powers given to the Secretary of State, adoption never took place and abolition of the GLC followed two years later. However, much of the thinking about planning in London was sustained through the work of the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) until the revival of London government in 2000.

Prior to the 1990s, London was a beleaguered city with both a declining economic base and a decreasing population. Strategic planning was very much about improving infrastructure, protecting the industry and jobs which remained and ameliorating the environmental impacts of poor housing and inadequate services. From the mid 1990s the tone of the debate began to change and the positive (post-modern) features of London's emerging global role became apparent (see for example Simmie 1994). A new philosophy began to emerge, aided by Lord Rogers' Urban Task Force report (1999). This report argued that a rapid growth in jobs, population and prosperity could be accommodated through increasing housing densities, and improved (public) transport provision, all within the context of a high quality urban environment. Richard Rogers was later employed as Chief Advisor to the Mayor on architecture and urbanism.

London had always housed a relatively small financial sector, but it has played an important role over several centuries in underpinning the expansion of global trade and banking (Hebbert 1998). Its position as a global player amongst a limited number of

other world cities was enhanced after a series of moves to deregulate the Stock Exchange and other financial services in the mid-1980s, characterised by the media as 'The Big Bang'. By 2004 London accounted for 15 per cent of total UK employment and for 18 per cent of UK output in 2003 (GLA Economics 2005: 45). Its economy has always been distinctive compared with the rest of the UK with a much larger concentration of financial and related professional business services, and smaller proportions employed in manufacturing and the public sector. In particular, London's size and density of companies and population mean that its economy is highly productive through the benefits of clustering, economies of scale and agglomeration effects. Indeed, by 2005 productivity per person was around 20 per cent higher than the rest of the UK (LDA 2005: 9), while London's economy grew by an average of three per cent per annum over the decade from 1994 to 2004, consistently exceeding that of the UK as a whole (GLA Economics 2005: 46).

London's economy is clearly well placed to compete in UK, European and world markets but also faces significant challenges. Extended growth in key sectors, such as financial and businesses services, has created a two-speed economy bringing significant benefits to those with appropriate skills and qualifications. However, large sections of the population experience exclusion and relative poverty. London has the highest rate of unemployment amongst the English regions, together with lower rates of employment and participation in the labour market (LDA 2005). Unemployment rates are significantly higher amongst black and minority ethnic groups and London has the highest proportion of children living in poverty in Great Britain. It also has a larger share of deprived wards than any other region except the North East (LDA 2005: 12). Inequalities of educational attainment, health and life expectancy vary significantly

between areas of relative affluence and poverty. Moreover, the rapid inflation in average house prices in London in the past decade and the under-provision of social housing has created high levels of homelessness and housing stress. This in essence is the paradox that the new London agencies are addressing: to promote competitiveness in those sectors where there is growth potential, to use the benefits of growth to reduce deprivation and the under-use of human and other resources, while also creating an integrated, well connected and sustainable city for all.

As Gordon (2003) and others have noted, London's economy is characterised by its size, its relationships with markets at a range of geographical scales, and above all by its complexity: By far the largest proportion of the workforce is employed by companies providing services locally, to London as a whole and to the rest of the UK. It is the 'thick' network of economic activity which provides the essential services to those global and world city functions which tend to grab the headlines.

Complexity is the essential characteristic of the London economy, and it is this rather than any specific segment of demand which deserves to be seen as its key driver. But it is a very hard picture to represent, so there is a continual temptation to focus in on the most distinctive activities as though they were representative. (Gordon 2003: 7)

Global trends, competition from higher value land uses and ineffective (and sometimes unrealistic) planning policies have all contributed to the decline of London's manufacturing sector. For at least four decades after 1945 manufacturing in London was characterised by small workshops and factories in the central area and inner boroughs

and a number of large concentrations in West London, the Lea Valley and along the peripheral roads out of the capital. In 1971, 1.3 million were employed in manufacturing making up one in four jobs. By 2003 this figure had declined to 267,000 manufacturing jobs or just six per cent of London's total workforce. Projections suggest that manufacturing jobs will halve again to 133,000 in 2026, or just three per cent of the total (GLA Economics 2005: 41).

The decline in manufacturing is almost exactly mirrored by the rise of finance and business services, which is likely to reach almost a third of all jobs by 2026. The total number of jobs in London has increased steadily from 2002 with a growth rate of more than 2 per cent in 2005, which for the first time exceeded that of Britain as a whole. These structural changes are echoed in London's changing economic geography. Employment growth over the last economic cycle was concentrated in the west and, more importantly, the centre. Conversely almost a fifth of boroughs experienced a decline in employment and another fifth only a marginal increase – many in south and east London. While over 60 per cent of future growth is expected to be outside the Central Activities Zone, its potentially uneven distribution if historic trends continue is a major concern of the alterations to the London Plan.

In essence, London's economy is increasingly exposed to the opportunities and challenges of a highly interdependent global economy. More recently, central government has accepted that increased devolution of decision-making to the 'city-region' enables cities to adapt to changing market opportunities and to maximise opportunities for innovation. As a recent Treasury report notes:

Cities represent the spatial manifestation of economic activity – large, urban agglomerations in which businesses choose to locate in order to benefit from proximity to other business, positive spill-overs and external economies of scale (HM Treasury *et al.* 2006: 1).

### **London's Changing Institutional Context**

While London's economy was undergoing change in the 1990s, its institutional structures were also subject to political scrutiny. The Thatcher Government of the 1980s took the view that London needed to become more competitive in order to compete in global markets and that economic benefits would trickle down to the population at large (Thornley 1993). With the abolition of the GLC, strategic planning for the capital was taken over by the Department of the Environment, advised by the 33 Boroughs through the statutory London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC 1988). Nominally informed by this body, the Secretary of State issued Strategic Planning Guidance for London (DoE 1989) which was implemented by the boroughs through their then new Unitary Development Plans (UDPs).

With the re-election of the Conservative Government in 1992 during a period of economic recession, a different strategy began to emerge (Bailey 1997). This marked a departure in government policy in recognising that the private sector was unwilling or unable to take on the full burden of regenerating London's economy and that public investment would be needed to underpin the capital's economic revival. A Cabinet sub-committee for London was created, chaired by John Gummer, the then Secretary of State for the Environment, and composed of Ministers from 11 government

departments. London First was also established to represent over 200 London-based companies while the London First Centre took on responsibility for attracting inward investment to the capital.

The local elections in London in 1994 resulted in a shift in control to the Labour Party, leaving the Conservatives in the majority in only four boroughs. This swing to Labour also enabled a merger to be created between the two party-dominated local authority associations, resulting in the establishment of the all-party Association of London Government in 1995. The same year the London boroughs had a minority role, with the institutions of business and central government, in the London Pride Partnership, which was invited by the Secretary of State to prepare a prospectus for the future development of the capital (London Pride Partnership 1995). Localism without direct democratic accountability was further enhanced by the establishment of the Government Office for London (GOL) in 1994 which brought together representatives of five Whitehall departments. GOL's budget of over £1billion a year was to be used to promote business, planning, transport and regeneration objectives, as well as promoting London's interests in government as a whole.

Despite these tensions, the DoE Secretary of State sponsored LPAC research into London planning issues and showed himself more receptive than previous incumbents to the Committee's new strategic planning advice for London (LPAC 1994), incorporating much of this in the revised planning guidance for the capital (GOL 1996). Its housing targets reflected borough parochialism and were not ambitious given the government's broader commitment to growth. However, its approach to office capacity

was sufficiently robust and flexible to accommodate significant fluctuations in the office market.

While in opposition, the Labour Party came out strongly in favour of correcting what it argued was a 'democratic deficit' for the capital and in election manifestos for 1987, 1992 and 1997 was committed to creating a 'Greater London Authority'. This was conceived in the traditional local government format with members elected for wards and the majority party choosing a leader for the council (Travers 2004: 44). However, when Tony Blair became party leader he promoted a very different model of local government and strongly supported the introduction of city mayors. In a speech Blair argued:

Strong civic leadership could help restore some of the much-needed civic pride in London. It could provide vision and direction for London's future, someone to drive the development of the city, to pull together the partnerships needed to make things happen. (Carvel 1999: 255)

The introduction of an elected London Mayor had received limited support from a number of politicians from all parties but by 1997 public opinion appeared far more committed to the improvement of public services, such as transport, the health service and education. Moreover, the London Labour Party was far more committed to re-establishing an elected 'voice for London' than an elected mayor. As Carvel notes 'A radical departure from the British local government tradition was imposed from the top down by a leader who had no political roots in local council politics' (Carvel 1999: 256).



It was only a matter of months after the 1997 Labour victory in the general election that a consultative paper was issued on London government (DETR 1997) and a referendum on the constitutional changes was pencilled in for May 1998. A White Paper and a legislative bill followed soon after, culminating in the Greater London Authority Act of 1999. The Labour government in Westminster were clearly hoping that the post of Mayor would be filled by a leading national or business figure at some remove from party politics. These expectations were severely challenged when Ken Livingstone, formerly leader of the Greater London Council and a critic of many aspects of New Labour before resigning his parliamentary seat, proved most popular with the voters as an independent mayoral candidate. The public-private partnership proposed for London Underground before transfer to the Mayor was a particular bone of contention between Livingstone and the Treasury.

The implementation of the legislation was largely delegated to the Government Office for London. The main separation of powers was created between the elected mayor with his appointed cabinet and advisors, and the assembly of the Greater London Authority with 25 members whose main function is scrutiny. The four functional bodies accountable to the Mayor are the London Development Agency, Transport for London, the Metropolitan Police Authority, and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority. In all cases, the Mayor appoints some members of the board of each agency and also sets an annual budget, subject to the approval of the assembly. The Spatial Development Strategy is one of eight strategies<sup>ii</sup> the Mayor is required to produce and which are subject to the scrutiny of the GLA assembly.

Six years after the launch of the new ‘constitutional experiment’ (Rydin *et al* 2004: 55) in London the verdict of many commentators is that the Mayor and GLA have achieved much more than many pessimists in 2000 dared to expect. The Mayor is often commended for introducing Britain’s first congestion charge in a major city and for modernising and increasing bus usage. The London Plan is also acknowledged for providing strategic guidance to the development of the capital, it has been broadly accepted by the boroughs and, especially after clarification of the issue of ‘general conformity’, is being incorporated in their development plans. The achievements of the Mayor were capped in 2005 through his role in helping to secure the Olympics Games in 2012. Moreover, the most dynamic sectors of London’s economy go on growing. Yet as commentators demonstrate, the new institutional framework ‘is very weak, both formally and in terms of resources’ (Gordon 2003: 4). As Travers, perhaps overstating the case, argues:

To secure its long-term future, London will certainly need further reform. The mayor will need more powers and greater financial autonomy. The assembly will have to be given greater capacity to hold the mayor to account. There should be a transfer of power from Whitehall to the GLA. The relationship between the GLA and the boroughs will have to be reviewed. The continuous revolution in London government is, without doubt, continuing. (Travers 2004: 210).

All that has been said so far suggests that the new institutional framework represented the outcome of extremely complex forces at work in a particular economic and political context. The broad consensus amongst the corporate sector, the media and the electorate

was that the democratic deficit needed to be corrected and that London needed to be represented nationally, in Europe and on the world stage. The business community was extremely critical of the evident failure of government at all levels to deliver the infrastructure, transport and an adequate supply of housing which a modern city needed to compete effectively in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. London local government eventually joined this consensus but tensions remained over the form of the future strategic body, including the concept of an elected executive Mayor. The case for a more effective, regionally responsive strategic planning service was also made strongly by the London Planning Advisory Committee, chaired by Nicky Gavron, now Deputy Mayor. The Labour Government, on the other hand, after its election in 1997, sought to avoid recreating what it saw as a heavy-handed bureaucracy in the mould of the GLC, which at one time employed over 10,000 staff. If London was to be granted devolved powers, these should conform with current thinking about the ‘modernisation’ of local government and the ‘Third Way’ (Thornley *et al.* 2005). Above all, the GLA should be about working with stakeholders to steer the strategic direction of the capital at minimal extra cost to the tax-payer, rather than imposing another layer of expensive and bureaucratic service delivery.

Many of these sentiments fed through into the London Plan which embodied much of the then current thinking in policy and planning circles. Thus the coalition of forces which determined how London should be governed also influenced the way it was being planned. Many of the limitations imposed on the governance of London are evident in its planning systems. Nevertheless, while Government was initially cautious about the Mayor’s role, by 2006 legislation was being prepared to provide additional powers to address the strategic issues facing London (DCLG 2006). These include the

right to determine certain strategic planning applications, together with a co-ordinating role in relation to waste management, skills and training, and social housing investment.

## **THE INFLUENCE OF FOUR CONSTITUENCIES ON THE EMERGING CONTEXT**

In the discussion of the ways in which the political economy of London influenced decisions about its administration it is worth highlighting the influence of four key sectors, especially in the formative period of the London Plan. The business sector was probably the most organised lobby, although by no means unanimous in its representations to government. Whilst the media, a number of academics, think-tanks and other policy specialists played important roles in the debate, we focus here on the corporate sector's role which most clearly reflected the changing political economy of London. The Mayor's election manifesto drew on all these influences. Indirectly, the media, political parties, academia and London local government were also 'players' in preparing the Plan, together with the 'LPAC bequest'. As might be expected from an independent Mayoral candidate with a 'rainbow alliance' constituency, black, other minority ethnic and other groups together with those associated with different facets of the 'green lobby' were also influential. As the London Plan has matured from a single document to a process involving Sub-Regional Development Frameworks and a range of statutory alterations the concerns of these groups have assumed increasing public prominence.

## The Business Sector

Thornley *et al.* (2005) suggest that ‘business privilege’ led to the evolution of an ‘urban regime’ because of the strong mutual interests linking leading business lobby groups and the Mayor. From the early 1990s leading London businesses became convinced that the capital needed a strategic authority in order to enable it to enhance its competitive position and therefore set out to maximise its lobbying power. At least five organisations played a leading role in this process.

These were the London Confederation of British Industry (LCBI), the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), London First, the City of London Corporation and the London Development Partnership (LDP) established in 1998 by leading business interests to pave the way for the London Development Agency. London First was set up in 1992 as a business campaign group based mainly on leading firms in the service and development sectors to ‘engage the business community in promoting and improving London, using the vision, energy and skills of business leaders to shape and secure the capital’s future’ ([www.london-first.co.uk](http://www.london-first.co.uk)). The City of London Corporation is London’s most ancient, essentially business based political institution. It developed a more strategic role beyond its own boundaries by managing open spaces such as Hampstead Heath after the abolition of the GLC, through its funding for the arts, by commissioning research on London-wide issues and by greater engagement in pan-London activities (Thornley *et al.* 2005: 1959).

The LCCI, drawing on local Chambers in different parts of London, advocated the formation of a London Business Board to provide a focus for business interests. This,

together with the LCBI and London First, published *The Business Manifesto for the Mayor and the GLA* in the period before the mayoral election. Close links between the administration and the business constituency continue (Thornley *et al.* 2005: 1957-58).

Thornley *et al* (2005) ascribe the success of the business sector in promoting its agenda, through the various organisations outlined above, to two main factors. First, it was well organised and able to influence the new institutions as they were being established. Because agencies such as the London Development Agency were under pressure to become operational as quickly as possible, they were persuaded to adopt positions and policies already prepared and which could be operationalised without undue controversy. Regular briefings and well researched reports meant that practical solutions were always available to key decision-makers such as GOL and the Mayor. Second, the business lobby had been well organised since London government reorganisation was first on the agenda and had effective organisations, such as the London Business Board and the LDP to lobby the incoming administration. Above all, the business community developed an astute strategy of accepting the need for the Mayor and the associated bureaucracy on condition that its case for competitive policies formed the foundation of the various strategic documents to be prepared for the capital.

The incoming administration considered this lobbying in the context of its wider objectives and devised a strategy for promoting private sector investment and funding public goods. In 2001 the Mayor's long-standing economic advisor, John Ross, set out his management philosophy which underpins the London Plan. It argued that only an elected Mayor, subject to democratic control, could wring inefficiencies out of monopoly situations such as public transport in London. The political system must,

however, 'be maximally open and democratic in order to most effectively transmit consumer/electoral pressure. A combination of the greatest electoral democracy, and management institutions most directly expressing the pressure from the Mayor would...be optimal...' (Ross 2001: 37).

Ross (2001) demonstrated that the GLA's approach was to seek efficiency gains in the services it provided, while its socialist credentials lay in the extent to which these gains were used to improve the environment and to reduce poverty. For example, Ross argues that to tackle housing and office supply-side shortages, planning policy might increase the 'density of office development including high buildings in certain parts of the city, thereby increasing profitability, while tightening rules to increase the proportion of affordable housing' (Ross 2001: 41). Similarly, he suggests that the Mayor's commitment to his equalities programmes and training meant that social exclusion would be reduced, but also that economic efficiency would be improved by increasing the supply of appropriate labour.

### **London Planning Advisory Committee**

Established by the Act which abolished the GLC, strictly limited to providing only advice on strategic planning matters, and composed of borough nominees, LPAC was never destined for glory in the annals of London government. However, in the fourteen years to 2000 it was the nearest London came to a regionally accountable strategic planning body and can now be seen as the forebear of regional planning bodies elsewhere in the country. After fraught beginnings the Committee strove for consensus across the 33 boroughs, the achievement of which owes much to its chairs. For much of

its life it was chaired by two borough politicians who went on to take leading roles within the GLA and had an influence on the preparation of the London Plan.

The need to sustain this consensus, coupled with the spirit of the 1990s, meant that LPAC took a more pragmatic approach to accommodating the market than the GLC, but maintained a strong social imperative, notably in its approach to affordable housing. Not only were some of its proposals radical for their time, it was also able to establish a working political consensus, with over two thirds of Boroughs often implementing its individual proposals. At the very least, through extensive consultation, it introduced a sense of local ownership of a pan-London strategy and engendered local debate over strategic planning issues.

Learning from the experience of SERPLAN, one of LPAC's distinguishing operational characteristics was to maintain a secretariat and strategic policy development budget which was independent of local interests. Coupled with an entrepreneurial approach to leveraging additional research funds, this allowed it to develop evidence-based strategic policy which challenged first inherited GLC orthodoxy and, perhaps more contentiously, then set the foundations for much of what has evolved into GLA land use policy – ideas that London could and should increase housing provision substantially; that it should use the planning system more proactively to increase affordable provision; on linking housing density to location, public transport accessibility, parking and design; on developing London's role as a world city; taking a plan, monitor and manage approach to office capacity; actively managing the stock of industrial land; developing a flexible network of town centres; de-coupling the spatial approach to deprivation from the Central Activities Zone and adding sub-regional nuances to broad pan-London



policy. Initially these were perceived as constraining the business driven growth agenda outlined above, as well as having too close associations with the former regime which the GLA was replacing. In the longer term however, many of its policies were incorporated in the London Plan.

### **Social and Community Constituencies**

Although Harrison *et al* (2004) have suggested that the voluntary and community sectors were less effective than the business sector in lobbying to meet their needs during preparation of the 2004 Plan, in the Mayor's vision for London the need for social equality is given equal weight to economic considerations. Moreover, as the London Plan has evolved, mechanisms for engaging with these constituencies have been refined to make strategic planning more responsive to their needs and ways of tackling them have also been incorporated in the wider 'One London' agenda. This had its most public expression in the campaign to foster community cohesion, especially in the aftermath of the '7/7' terrorism incidents in London, and can be seen as part of a much broader approach to social inclusion.

Social equality also underpins the reconfiguration of London's sub-regions proposed in the further alterations to the London Plan. This is designed to help break down historic divisions between central London and the rest of metropolis. The new sub-regions are seen as valuable mechanism in redressing the social exclusivity which was associated with what some perceived to be a 'central area' Plan, as well as providing a sounder functional basis for coordinating strategic service delivery. They are supported in the Alterations by stronger policies to address the needs of the suburbs in terms of

improved access to employment opportunities, quality of life and engagement in London's development as an exemplary sustainable world city. It is intended that the next round of Sub-Regional Development Frameworks (SRDF) should be prepared on the basis of the revised boundaries and will integrate and target London Plan, Transport for London and London Development Agency strategies, as well as providing a sub-regional context for community strategies. They will be the subject to further public scrutiny as they are incorporated into the boroughs' Local Development Frameworks.

### **The Environmental Imperative**

Less coherently than those of business, concerns to address the 'environmental imperative' through the London Plan were expressed by a wide variety of stakeholders, ranging from large institutions such as the Environment Agency and Friends of the Earth, through to well organised 'single issue' lobbies associated with for example, rivers and waterways, to more local civic and amenity societies. Environmental issues have an established history in London's political economy, going back to campaigns against the GLC's motorway proposals in the 1970s, and articulated in London governance during the 1990s by the current Deputy Mayor, Nicky Gavron through her role as Chair of LPAC. Unlike those of business, they have also become mainstream concerns of the electorate – a political status reinforced within the GLA by close working between the Green and Labour groups. While receiving less attention from commentators, the 2004 Plan's environmental objectives have equal weight to those of business in its vision for London. The underlying policies were sufficiently robust to support production of Supplementary Planning Guidance on sustainable design and construction (GLA 2006d), which is regarded as radical even though it is based on

existing standards and merely articulates the need for a more sustainable approach to development.

The Mayor's concerns to secure London's water supply and its future waste management arrangements on a more sustainable basis were recognised as both contentious and essential by the Examination in Public into the Early Alterations to the London Plan. Given local force by London's position as an estuarine city, 'climate change' provides the impetus for the Further Alterations to the London Plan. The Mayor has made clear that, together with transport infrastructure, climate change is one of his key political priorities.

The prominence now given to environmental concerns thus begs the question as to whether the perceived ascendancy of the business lobby will continue to dominate the London Plan process, whether a better organised green lobby with a wider electoral base will continue to run in parallel with that of business or whether the two should find common cause. Despite some initial, negative business reaction towards the short term costs associated with adapting to and abating climate change, there is an emerging realisation that these costs cannot be avoided and there may be competitive advantage in learning how to address them.

## **THE CONTENT OF THE LONDON PLAN**

My vision, which guides all my strategies, is to develop London as an exemplary, sustainable world city, based on three interwoven themes: strong, diverse, long-term economic growth; social inclusivity to give all Londoners

the opportunity to share in London's future success; fundamental improvements in London's environment and use of resources. (GLA 2004: xii).

This statement from the Mayor sets out his vision for the eight strategies he is required to produce under the legislation and was reiterated at the beginning of the London Plan. This document is designed to set out the spatial development strategy for the capital and in many ways incorporates the other seven. The way that it is worded suggests that the London Plan goes beyond the traditional focus on land use and development and includes strategies towards the economy, social inclusion, environmental quality and the use of resources. In these respects it demonstrated all the hallmarks of recent conceptions of spatial planning.

The main guidance for preparing the London Plan was set out in the Government for London Circular 1/2000 (GOL 2000). This clearly indicated that the Strategy should go well beyond traditional land use issues in order to bring together the geographical and locational aspects of transport, economic development, environmental and other strategic policies for London. 'By doing so it should help to secure the effective co-ordination and targeting of activities and resources, and a consistent, holistic approach to the delivery of policy objectives' (GOL 2000: 6). It should also assist in the achievement of sustainable development, a healthy economy, and a more inclusive society.

In preparing the Plan, the Mayor was required to have regard to the ESDP and the Community Initiative on Transnational Co-operation on Spatial Planning (INTERREG).

The Plan also has to take account of relevant national policy and must have regard to regional planning guidance produced by the Secretary of State for areas which include or adjoin Greater London. The Plan should not be site-specific but should identify 'broad areas of particular strategic importance as development opportunities. It may also need to identify broad locations that may be suitable for particular types of use' (GOL 2000: 9). The guidance then identifies twelve issues which the plan should specifically address, such as sustainable development and transport.

Following the establishment of the GLA there was something of a hiatus in preparing the Plan. Livingstone's manifesto gave a clear indication of the way to proceed on housing but there were tensions between his business and economic agenda and the values perceived to be imbedded in the strategic planning team which he had inherited from LPAC. It was not until early 2001 that drafts of the statutory proposals for the spatial development strategy were produced. By then work was well advanced on preparing the Mayor's Economic Development and Transport Strategies and these influenced the preparation of the London Plan.

### **Methods of Engagement**

Newman and Thornley (2005: 148) record that the draft proposals report submitted to the Mayor's office was rejected 'because it was too much influenced by the boroughs and did not sufficiently reflect the new Mayor's agenda'. Responsibility for preparing the Plan was transferred to external management consultants and technical leadership passed to two external, independent planning advisors. The first statutory draft of the Plan was published in June 2002 for consultation with the Assembly and functional

bodies. Following this, the public consultation draft was published for a three month consultation period. The Examination in Public (EIP) was held in March and April 2003.

Before the EIP took place, the London Assembly's Planning and Spatial Development Committee carried out a detailed scrutiny of the draft Plan. The Committee's final report (GLA 2002) drew attention to a number of factors which they felt could threaten the viability of the Plan. While supporting the broad vision as expressed by the Mayor, the Committee was concerned that Londoners would not be able to compete in sufficient numbers for the new jobs being created because of skills deficiencies and that the planned public transport improvements would not come on stream in time. It also drew attention to the lack of clarity between growth in financial services, which were largely focused on the City and Canary Wharf, and the far larger number of jobs in business services, which it claimed could be allocated more widely to town centres in the outer boroughs. Employment growth, the Assembly argued, was largely based on 'predict and provide', while the other parts of the Plan employed the 'plan, monitor and provide' approach.

The Examination in Public provided for many objectors the first opportunity for two decades to air their views on pan-London planning issues. The broad thrust of many representations was that the Plan had 'a centralising strategy, focusing development to serve London's 'World City' role in the central and eastern sub-regions, underplaying the potential of London's other centres and leaving most of outer London to play a dormitory role' (GLA 2003: 2). The EIP report was submitted to the Mayor in July 2003. While it broadly accepted the Mayor's spatial strategy, it made over 180

recommendations. Those concerned purely with the spatial dimension wished to see a greater emphasis on London's polycentric development, better co-ordination of London's development with that of surrounding regions and clarification of the phasing of growth with increased capacity in public transport. Other major recommendations were concerned with strengthening the status of Sub-Regional Development Frameworks and clarifying the approach to flood risk. Particular emphasis was placed, as a matter of urgency, on the production of early alterations to improve arrangements for waste management and mineral extraction and to replace the housing targets which the Mayor had inherited from LPAC.

### **Interpretations of Space and Place**

The London Plan was formally adopted in 2004. Some see it as being unashamedly pro-growth and orientated towards enhancing London's position as a pre-eminent world City. But as has already been discussed, its strategy is a more demanding one: to harness growth in order to meet the needs of all Londoners, as well as establishing long-term sustainability. For example, although Newman and Thornley (2005: 159) suggest that 'Since 2000 it could be said that a growth-orientated urban regime has evolved' they do go on to ask, 'Can the regime lobby successfully persuade central government to align its own resources behind the agenda?' The lobbying power of this regime, and the extent to which central government, the Prime Minister, and the business sector worked closely with the Mayor in securing the 2012 Olympic Games perhaps demonstrates this coalition of forces most clearly. However, the context in which such questions are posed is set to become more complex as environmental concerns become more salient features in London's political economy alongside established needs for

additional infrastructure and housing investment. Indeed, this new environmental dimension to the mayoral agenda is already driving further alterations to the London Plan and, with the importance attached to sustainable waste management, also pre-figured strongly in the earlier alterations. It will also feature strongly in any future planning work programme. Of five proposals for new Supplementary Planning Guidance, two are concerned with the environment (the 'green grid' and renewable energy) and three with aspects of a social inclusion/suburban agenda (children's play, communities and town centres)

Although the London Plan adopts a generic approach to the social, economic, environmental and physical aspects of London's growth, it depends heavily on more traditional mechanisms and techniques for managing change. In doing this, the discourse is heavily reliant on spatial and strategic elements. The Plan states:

The greatest challenge faced in this spatial plan is to accommodate significant growth in ways that respect and improve London's diverse heritage while delivering the Mayor's vision for an exemplary, sustainable world city. This will involve the sensitive intensification of development in locations that are, or will be, served by public transport (GLA 2004: 37).

Yet the approach underlying the strategy emphasises the need to allocate growth (in terms of additional jobs and housing in particular), to increase accessibility through public transport infrastructure and to ensure that planning offers strategic direction towards the broader principles of equity and environmental sustainability. Fixed and predetermined approaches to space and place are deployed, for example, through 28



Opportunity Areas which have been identified where opportunities for new jobs and homes can be maximised:

Typically, each can accommodate at least 5000 jobs or 2500 homes or a mix of the two, together with appropriate provision of other uses such as local shops, leisure facilities and schools. These areas generally include brownfield sites with capacity for new development and places with potential for significant increases in density. Their development should be geared to the use of public transport and they are either located at areas of good access or would require public transport improvements to support development' (GLA 2004: 41).

In addition, 14 Areas of Intensification are included which 'have significant potential for increases in residential, employment and other uses through development or redevelopment of available sites and exploitation of potential for regeneration, through higher densities and more mixed and intensive use' (GLA 2004: 41).

Areas of Regeneration are also identified which target areas of deprivation where major change is required. These are very similar to Action Areas in the former GLDP:

In their UDPs, Community Strategies and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies, boroughs should identify Areas for Regeneration and set out integrated spatial policies that bring together regeneration, development and transport proposals with improvements in learning and skills, health, safety, access, employment, environment and housing. These policies and actions should state how they

seek to achieve the government's objective, which the Mayor supports, that no-one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live within 10-20 years (GLA 2004: 42).

In the period since the adoption of the London Plan, the GLA has carried out detailed consultations with the boroughs, Transport for London, the London Development Agency and other stakeholders in order to prepare the five SRDFs. These were published in May 2006 for North, South, East, West and Central London (see for example GLA 2006b and 2006c). The SRDFs are an innovative approach to spatial planning in that in the past the GLC relied on the planning system to ensure that the boroughs' plans were in conformity with the GLDP. They are non-statutory and adopt a 'permeable' approach to boundaries (GLA 2006c: 5). They set out detailed guidelines on how the growth elements of the London Plan might be allocated within the sub-region and phased to ensure even and sustainable development is achieved. For example, in Central London the SRDF sets out plans for an additional 240,000 jobs between 2001 and 2016 with approximately 60 per cent in financial and business services (GLA 2006c: 16).

The SRDFs are designed to be integrated with sub-regional transport and economic development strategies and they flesh out possible approaches to Areas of Intensification and Opportunity Areas. Unlike the former GLC Action Areas where very often development was led by the GLC, the SRDFs are designed to promote a partnership approach where the expectation is that the GLA will operate as a 'hands-off' co-ordinator with a variety of other agencies (including the private sector) taking the lead. The former SRDF boundaries and the main spatial policies in the London Plan

are illustrated in Figure 7.2. The new designation of SRDFs, to be adopted in the proposed alterations, divide London into five segments radiating from the centre so that each includes a proportion of the central area (GLA 2006e). This arrangement may suggest a political accommodation to the outer boroughs which felt they were not getting access to the economic benefits of the central activities zone.

### **Concepts of the Future and Time**

One of the main purposes of spatial planning is to set out an agreed strategy, based on full public consultation, over a fixed period of time and in order to include maximum certainty to all stakeholders. Time is therefore a linear concept in planning and normally only one single and agreed ‘vision’ can be put forward. The process of public consultation and public hearings ensures that, at least in theory, all possible alternative scenarios are fully evaluated and rejected. The plan is therefore assumed to be achievable over an agreed period of 10, 15 or occasionally 20 years and it is made manageable through the phasing of development and growth targets over time. These assumptions are made despite the fact that regular reviews will result in significant changes in the future.

The London Plan adopts many of these assumptions and conventions and the first review is already extending the time horizon to 2025. There is no suggestion in the plan that economic and demographic growth might not continue and no alternative or fall-back scenarios are discussed. In this respect, the Plan adheres to positivist conventions about the linear, mechanistic nature of change and that all drivers of change are inherently controllable by appropriate policy. The recent draft further alterations (GLA

2006e) have already signalled a conceptual change in planning towards a more post-structural emphasis on sustainability and climate change. Thus timescales, and associated targets, become more fluid and constantly extending into the future.

### **Visualisation, Representation and Scale**

As Figure 7.2 indicates, the London Plan Key Diagram emphasises London's fluid nature and its essential linkages to its regional context. London is no longer perceived as a stand-alone metropolis, as the GLDP strategy might suggest (see Figure 7.1). Yet while the Plan acknowledges the importance of London in its regional and national context, there is little guidance as to how this relationship should be perceived in terms of its economic, political and environmental impacts. The planning discourse largely focuses on London itself, rather than the complex reciprocal and relational aspects of London and its hinterland in an increasingly globalised world.

As has already been noted, the current strategy was strongly influenced by the Mayor's political priorities and the importance ascribed to the economy by business, tourism and related interests. Whereas previous plans tended to be dirigiste and top-down, the London Plan accepts that implementation will largely take place through the agency of others, and in particular the private sector. The philosophy underpinning the Plan is that London needs democratic accountability, strategic vision and a coordinating body able to set the agenda and 'steer' other partners in the required direction. The more post-structuralist elements of the Plan are the SRDFs where boundaries are permeable and there is an explicit acceptance that the boroughs and other stakeholders will have a

major role to play in delivery. Meanwhile, area designations and the allocation of housing and employment growth targets reflect positivist approaches to planning.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Although there was historical precedent in the evolution of regional planning in London, the governance of the metropolis underwent one of its periodic paradigm shifts in the late 1990s in response to broader national and international trends in thinking about regions and cities in a globalised economy. As this chapter has indicated, London is also experiencing a period of unprecedented growth and change in its economic structure, its demography and its expanding role as a world city. Thus the political economy of London not only reflected its changing economic role, but gave rise to pressures for change which in turn influenced the way in which strategies for spatial development came to be defined. These are continuing as the new environmental imperative emerges as a key driver of the political economy and, in response, the London Plan evolves from a single document to a longer term, iterative process. Spatial planning in London can therefore be seen as both a product of, and influence on, the current political economy and institutional context.

In reviewing spatial planning in Amsterdam and Cambridge, Healey draws on Scott (1998) who suggests that government inherently involves the mobilization of ways of seeing, which he calls 'seeing like a state'. She argues that this leads to the inevitable 'simplifications involved in arriving at some kind of perspectival synthesis on which to base collective action, but also underlines the dangerous exclusions and oppressions that such necessary simplification can produce' (Healey 2006: 526). Following this line

of argument, it is possible to see the London Plan as a simplified version of reality which promotes a particular, and as argued earlier, growth-oriented perspective, of how the capital should be required to accommodate large increases in population and business activity. Because of the political and administrative constraints on boundary definitions, the network of connectivity with adjoining regions, the global flows of labour and capital, and the spatial implications of the growing dominance of London in the world economy have been acknowledged but not fully explored.

Strong leadership in urban management, such as through an elected mayor, can also require simplifications and the exclusion of issues and interests which do not fit easily into the dominant political rhetoric (Healey 2004). Certain channels of communication become privileged while others are afforded token acknowledgement or are screened out. From her research in the Netherlands and the UK, Healey concludes:

Current endeavours in strategic spatial planning seem thus to experience difficulty in translating an appreciation of relational complexity into a multiplex, relational spatial imagination....Instead, there is a strong tendency to revert back to traditional physicalist concepts about spatial order. These help in allocating sites for development and developing criteria for guiding changes to local environments. But they fail to capture the dynamics and tensions of relations with very different driving forces and scalar relations as these coexist in particular places and flow through shared channels. (Healey 2006: 536)

A review of the techniques applied in the London Plan confirms this analysis. While the discussion of London's economic and social trends reflects a post-modernist perspective where relational aspects of delivery are set out, for instance in the SRDFs, many of the planning methods apply conceptions of space and place which have always been in the planners' armoury. The designation of Areas of Opportunity, Areas of Regeneration and the definition of Town Centres and population projects and allocations of housing and jobs reflect the long-established positivist traditions of town planning. The new emphasis on climate change and sustainability perhaps reflects a post-modern perspective. Thus while containing, managing and promoting change are major themes of the Plan, many of the management systems reflect the continuity of practice and the need to define space in positivist or structuralist terms. At least in part, this continuity was maintained by the planning staff involved in preparing the GLDP alterations, the LPAC Advice and the London Plan. The broad system of ideas and philosophies which underpin any plan come from a variety of sources: local circumstances, political filtering through dominant political parties, and national guidance and directives which themselves embody dominant political philosophies however watered down and simplified these might be.

Thus the current vogue for spatial planning, at least in the case of London, has given rise to new perspectives, new conceptions of the urban and a realisation that the city can no longer be seen in isolation from its wider regional, national and global context. New and complex relational networks have also evolved which are either incorporated into the dominant perspective or side-lined. While new systems of management, planning and accountability have been created to provide guidance, promotion and accountability, the planning systems created to direct change are often restricted by

administrative boundaries, positivist understandings of time and space and structural conceptions of social and economic priorities.

Above all, the last decade has been a period of dramatic growth in London's economy with far-reaching impacts on its society, environment and systems of governance. Spatial planning can be seen as an important element of this transformation and re-assertion of its identity with many innovative features which no doubt will be adapted and extended in the future. But, as already noted, the complex re-engineering of the planning system has largely been superimposed on existing methods and procedures, rather than replacing them. However, as climate change and sustainability become an increasingly urgent political priority, the revised Plan to be published in 2008 may well set new environmental targets which go far beyond current national standards of, for example, energy consumption, the re-use of brownfield sites (the new target is likely to be 100 per cent), local generation of renewable energy and in achieving much higher standards of energy conservation and in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. To achieve these objectives, a new planning discourse may be required, which is currently not evident in the Plan.

This chapter has sought to demonstrate how the interweaving of economic, demographic and environmental change has given rise to new institutional frameworks which in turn define the nature of the political discourse about space and place. As Massey notes (2007: 194), London has a duty to challenge the globalised production of inequalities and the negative effects of climate change, as well as responding to them within its own boundaries. Spatial plans are inevitably a simplified narrative about the essence of the place and its long term aspirations which constructs one dominant



perspective. The narrative itself plays an essential role in building consensus and providing a road map for deliberation and collaboration (Healey 2007). This narrative can also be applied beyond the planning sphere, most notably in place-marketing, social cohesion, negotiations with central government and capturing major investment opportunities such as the Olympic Games in 2012.

The political apparatus of London has demonstrated exceptional skills in ‘selling’ the city but it is also apparent that the ‘mechanics’ of delivering the strategy remain very similar to previous representations, most notably the reliance on statistics, targets and the definition of areas for ‘opportunity’ and ‘action’. The post-structuralist conception of space thus relates far more to the agenda-setting and narrative-building process, rather than the delivery. But, as already discussed, the focus on implementation through SRDFs and the growing importance of addressing issues of climate change, are possible indicators of how the ‘narrative of planning’ might evolve in the future.

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<sup>i</sup> Patrick Abercrombie also produced the Greater London Plan in 1944 for the Standing Conference on London Regional Planning and published by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. This addressed London in its wider regional context by reasserting the importance of the Green Belt and the need to reduce congestion through the construction of New Towns.

<sup>ii</sup> The Act requires the Mayor to produce the following strategies: spatial development, transport, economic development, waste management, air quality, ambient noise, biodiversity and culture.