

**ADDITIONAL NOTE OF COMMENTS ON ROUNDTABLE QUESTIONS  
(in addition to material on the website)**

- 1. Andrew Jones: Aecom**
- 2. Duncan Bowie: University of Westminster**
- 3. Catriona Riddell: Former Director of Planning SE Regional Assembly**
- 4. Ian Gordon : LSE**
- 5. Martin Simmons: Former Director of LPAC**
- 6. Corinne Swain : Responses to questions for roundtable**
- 7. Michael Edwards : Responses to questions for roundtable**
- 8. Ian Wray : Responses to questions for roundtable**

## **ANDREW JONES , AECOM ; A MANIFESTO FOR LONG TERM GROWTH OF THE LONDON CITY REGION : DELIVERING DIFFERENTLY**

Governance for growth needs to be ‘fit for purpose’ to ensure co-ordinated decisions are taken which balance development and investment across the London City Region, as well as foster proactive partnering for UK-wide growth. We need a refreshed system of governance.

### **Fit for purpose**

The current ‘Duty to Co-operate’ across local authority boundaries does not work as a mechanism by itself. Delivering growth in the London City Region requires a more joined-up approach to implementation which involves the public and private sector working in partnership if we are to manage the pace of change which is forecast.

The approach needs to balance local decision-making and influence within a framework capable of creating and implementing an integrated spatial London City Region plan that seeks balanced growth across the region to maximise economic potential and quality of place; efficient delivery of infrastructure to drive synergies across the region beyond individual projects; and proactive partnering with other UK city regions to drive UK-wide growth.

Today, strategic governance and cooperation is strong within London, with the elected Mayor, Greater London Authority and TfL taking the lead on strategic issues. Across the region, where a significant amount of growth pressure exists, the statutory mechanisms for joined-up thinking between and across counties, boroughs and districts have been largely dismantled.

Yet, citizens and businesses operate agnostic to administrative boundaries with over a million people crossing the GLA boundary every day and many more travelling between the region’s economic centres. Many businesses locate in the region’s towns and cities because of the proximity and agglomeration effects of London. We need an approach to governance that reflects how the region works, lives, travels, invests and communicates.

The approach is required at multiple levels, building on existing organisations arrangements and relationships, not creating new for the sake of change. Boundary reform may play a part in the solution, particularly for those districts that are functionally and culturally connected to the capital.

We support the establishment of a two- tiered approach to London City Region collaborative governance – which will need statutory weight and funding if it is to have real impact.

**A London City Region Board** would be the vehicle for ensuring an overall integrated approach to planning and implementation across the London City Region through:

- development and ownership of a co-ordinated strategic spatial plan alongside long-range economic and infrastructure plans;
- a build-up and integration of plans for each of the City Region growth corridors;
- managing cross-region, cross- boundary and orbital relationships;
- strategic decision-making on
- core projects;
- leading the rethink of the Metropolitan Green Belt with a dedicated commission as part of the wider Green Review; and
- furthering the role of London City Region as a collaborative UK region and global city

## Andrew Jones additional commentary

“There are a few principles that we might address on Wednesday:

- Is London’s government ‘fit for purpose’ with 33 boroughs under the GLA as currently formed? Perhaps there are too many mid-size authorities with some strategic responsibility and a GLA that develops planning policy to a too detailed level. The balance does not feel right for the city (and Capital Region) that we have
- Although not explored in the L2065 document fewer sub-regional boroughs able to look at delivery and detailed policy frameworks may be more streamlined and efficient than the current set up
- Alongside this, a more strategic GLA with a wider geographic remit would capture the strategic growth and infrastructure needs of the LCR and deal with cross-London (Region) issues such as housing policy, protection of green infrastructure, and strategic transport
- This suggestion did not make it to the document as the prospect of a Boundary Commission review, restructuring the emotional balance between London and the Home Counties felt like a step too far in an environment where the government and Mayorality of the time were not going to move towards a ‘regional’ approach; and the prospect of a 5-10 years process would delay implementation and the prospect of making a change in the short term to meet housing and transport needs.
- However, we have subsequently been appointed by a number of County Councils to undertake Growth and Infrastructure Frameworks (Kent, W Sussex, Surrey, Essex) and a clear message in these ‘growth’ administrations is a frustration at the void in planning and coordination (and governance?) at a strategic level immediately adjacent to the boundary with Greater London when these authorities share common housing markets and economies with the outer GLA area, and their growth is driven by infrastructure priorities and decisions made at City Hall or in Westminster.
- Conversely, there is too much reliance on the decision-making of the non-met districts in the inner county areas which are resisting growth putting disproportionate pressure on less-sustainable growth in the outer Capital Region – when that growth is really supporting London-based housing demand. There is no strategic decision-making to get that balance right or introduce funding tools for infrastructure such as CIL or TIFs or the equivalent of a Mayoral precept. This continues the shortfall in housing delivery and fetters funding decisions about larger-scale or longer-term infrastructure to support growth. This is not working either!
- Although LEPs across England cross-admin boundaries and can act as a broker for collaborative decision-making/planning the system across the LCR reinforces the boundaries that exist. You are either in the GLA area (with the unsuccessful London LEP) or outside and by implication a ‘second class’ location. Interestingly, the London-Stansfield corridor consortium wanted to come together and form a LEP based on the common functional economy in the area but this was resisted. Their work as a consortium has however borne fruit and with a combined approach the consortium has a high profile, it coordinates housing and inward investment and also plays a role as advocate for Crossrail 2.

It was this background that helped us shape our proposals for delivery/governance in the London Manifesto:

- Extend the geographic remit of a strategic authority or governance structure to address the LCR challenges
- Formalise transport (and therefore growth) with a cross-region TfL
- Prioritise local needs and collaboration at the 'corridor' level where there are common housing and economic drivers “

**Duncan Bowie:** Notes from his speech The Challenges of Sustainable Development in London and the Compact City

There is no national spatial plan or regional planning outside London and the Duty to Cooperate has failed. The LEPs are seen as potential strategic planning agencies but are limited in terms of their scope, resources and competences. Combined authorities are emerging but are as yet untested.

As a result, there is no consistent assessment of housing need and capacity. Cross boundary policy conflicts have therefore arisen in terms of housing; employment; retail provision; parking' waste management. In terms of delivery there is no linkage between spatial planning decisions and infrastructure investment decisions at national or metropolitan regional level.

Any strategic planning where it exists operates on a sub-regional basis including;

- Combined authority groupings based on travel to work areas
- Statutory requirement to produce a sub-regional plan
- Sub-regional SHMA
- Sub-regional SHLAA
- LPA level housing and employment targets
- Sub-regional transport, economic, housing, infrastructure and sustainable development strategy
- Where LPAs fail to agree, Inspector can impose LPA level targets based on evidence base

A new metropolitan regional planning arrangements needs to be based on:

- An delivering and sustaining an agreed spatial planning framework/strategy across London Capital region including criteria for selection of locations for major new developments
- An agreed metropolitan region district level population and household projections, linked to a Metropolitan region SHMA and SHLAA
- A democratically accountable metropolitan regional planning body of some form comprised of representatives of Mayor and Rest of South East sub-regional groups
- Serviced by metropolitan region strategic planning and transportation team – an enhanced form of SERPLAN
- The strategy must have status including duties (e.g. LPAs in metropolitan region having to have regard to relationship with London) and incentives (viz, RTPi proposal)

## CATRIONA RIDDELL: Governance Models

The starting point for considering any governance models is the recognition that there won't be any changes in governance in London. The emphasis, therefore, has to be on getting a structure in place that allows the LAs outside London to have the same level of authority/responsibilities as the Mayor, with any proposed new body acting with one voice. In the past, as you know, we have had a non-statutory body in SERPLAN, which worked in partnership with LPAC, and we had the 2 statutory Regional Assemblies (South East and East of England) which worked with the GLA/Mayor through the Inter-Regional Forum. One of the reasons the IRF failed to be effective though was that it was established as a light touch 'talking shop' with no real authority, and we had three regional plans and not one for the city region. As much as we tried to ensure they were integrated, this proved very challenging, particularly as they were all being prepared on different timescales.

There is obviously no chance of the Government re-introducing a statutory body (unless the NIC is used – see my comments below) therefore, in my view, there needs to be an effective voluntary organisation that is structured well to do the job in hand. The SERPLAN model is not fit for purpose now but the idea behind it remains sound – see Michael Howard's Foreword<sup>1</sup> from a document celebrating 30 years of SERPLAN (1994). Unfortunately, SERPLAN does not have positive connotations with the districts as the decision-making was through the counties who had responsibility for structure plans at the time. However, there was a common bond amongst all the LAs (in the Rest of South East -RoSE) as they were dealing with growth of London and the impact on infrastructure, Green Belt and housing, and therefore had a real incentive to work proactively together. We are in exactly the same space we were in when SERPLAN was invented in the 60s. So some form of voluntary but formally constituted body could work, but it needs to have a clear remit and cover the right geography, and must include some form of executive committee e.g. leaders board or cabinet structure. At some point in the future, this may become easier if all authorities moved towards some form of combined authority/ large unitary model, therefore there would be less authorities involved. Given that LAs have to be self-sufficient by 2020, this is not pie in the sky.

One of the factors in effective governance will be whether the LAs are willing to include stakeholders in the decision-making i.e. those not directly elected and therefore with no political accountability. The RA stakeholders were a really influential part of the whole RS process as they brought in the expertise around wider social, environmental and economic issues. Their downfall was the fact that they were not elected, even though they only made up a third of the Assembly Members (110 Members in total, 74 of which were LAs, with similar proportions in the EofE). So perhaps a way round this is to have some form of stakeholder sounding board, comprising organisations with an interest in the plan-making/delivery e.g. infrastructure providers, HBF, CPRE but also Government agencies.

However, if the SE and EE authorities don't want to go down this route i.e. there is a reluctance to move to anything that looks like a return to regional planning, the other intriguing option would be using the Nat Infrastructure Commission and its new, wider strategic planning role e.g. as in the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor. <https://www.nic.org.uk/publications/strategic-planning-governance-cambridge-milton-keynes-oxford-corridor-discussion-paper/>. You can see a scenario where the Government goes ahead with Crossrail 2 running from Herts to Surrey and sets up some form of governance structure, as proposed in the O-C paper. The models floated in this feel very familiar i.e. very much based on SERPLAN. This could have interesting repercussions – Oxford Authorities are trying to get their act together on strategic

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<sup>1</sup> See Statement by Michael Howard at end of this note

planning because they are worried that the NIC will take over all the decision-making and they will lose control. A similar threat in London/SE could promote a quick response from the LAs in terms of getting their act together! Maybe we need something like this to get something sorted!

### **Strategic geography**

One of the main reasons the Inter-Regional Forum failed in addressing 'city-region' issues effectively was because the area it covered was wrong; a large proportion of the SE and EE RAs were not really interested in London as they were too far out. So the current 'wider SE' simply won't work. SERPLAN had a better geography as it covered the 'city region' with RoSE working with London Authorities. RoSE was made up essentially of the Home Counties and therefore those areas with the greatest direct relationship with London. I think anything bigger than this simply won't work as there will not be the same level of incentive – the areas immediately around London have common issues around constraints on infrastructure (particularly education and transport) and of course, the Green Belt.

### **City region priorities**

In order for any governance structure to work effectively, there needs to be a clear remit and a clear output; how will the shared priorities be set out – a statutory city region plan (unlikely) or some form of non-statutory strategic framework focusing on city region priorities around housing, infrastructure and jobs (and the GB). The current situation where the councils are working with GLA to influence the London Plan simply doesn't work as there is no coherent plan/strategy that shows what future growth means for the wider city region. No Government is going to re-introduce regional planning on a statutory basis so the best that can be hoped for is a non-statutory framework with direct influence on the London Plan and the LPs of surrounding areas. Unless the NIC prepare a 'statutory' sub-regional plan for the Crossrail 2 corridor!

### **Technical support**

Both SERPLAN and the Regional Assemblies worked well at a technical level because they had a dedicated resource and therefore it was part of the day job to deal with the city region issues. I really struggle working with LAs on strategic planning where there is no shared resource as the strategic issues are always treated as less important. Probably more important though is the need to have dedicated advisors to provide impartial advice i.e. decisions are based on the advice of a team responsible to the strategic body rather than individual authorities within that body. Of course, in both the SERPLAN and RA models, officers from the individual LAs still had a level of influence and this was really important in ensuring wider ownership of the work and decision-making. A dedicated (impartial) staff resource for the SE LAs is therefore essential if there is to be a plan/ strategy prepared in the interests of the city region.

## Foreword

by the Secretary of State for the Environment, The Rt. Hon. Michael Howard QC, MP

**I**T IS A great pleasure to be associated with this commemoration of SERPLAN's first thirty years of achievement.

SERPLAN was the first regional conference of local planning authorities and provided a model for all the other English regions. It is all the more valuable in that it was not invented by Government but was seen to be needed by the local authorities of the South East as a forum to consider matters of common interest affecting the planning of the whole region. Therein lies its strength. The commitment of the member authorities, and their ability to pursue a common course through SERPLAN despite their very different interests, have served the region well.

For my predecessors as Secretary of State and me SERPLAN's advice and co-operation with Government over the preparation of regional planning guidance has been particularly valuable. With the changes to the planning system brought about by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 regional planning guidance takes on even greater importance in providing a framework for development plans.

I am sure that this approach to regional planning is the right one. Instead of a separate remote tier of bureaucracy, we have a process which brings together local authorities, sensitive to the needs of the region and in touch with the reality that results from implementing planning decisions.

Over the past thirty years SERPLAN has dealt with many challenging issues. No doubt more challenges lie ahead. I am sure SERPLAN has a long future and I wish it well.



*The Secretary of State for the Environment, The Rt Hon Michael Howard, QC MP*

## **Ian Gordon: Functional integration, political conflict and muddled metropolitanism in the London region : Looking for a Way Forward**

After more than a century and a half London still presents a metropolitan governance problem with important implications for its capacity to continue growing, sustaining its economic role and addressing the needs of its poor – though both the geographic scale and substantive priorities have changed. From the provision of basic infrastructure to a compact core city with a radius of some 10 kms., the central issues are now ones of affordable housing and a sustainable transport system across a region with a radius more than 10 times as great – as Wells (1903) had envisaged it would now be<sup>8</sup>. Though he was right (indeed remarkably prescient) about that, Wells was mistaken both in believing that a (rational) metropolitan perspective could simply overwhelm localism, and that a massive municipality for this region would be a viable and acceptable basis for its governance. What he missed in his forward-look was the complex, polycentric way in which the super-region would evolve (rather than simply expanding), *and* the fact that (as argued at the start of this chapter) that territorial governance always has involved market-type interactions and informal institutions, as well the intended rationality of formally authoritative.

Indeed, interactions between each of the three types of governance process have been key to the way in which the Greater South East, as London's extended functional region has evolved since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and particularly since Wells' first appreciation of its potential scale. Most of the dynamic has actually come from market forces (responding to

In principle Wells' bounds are set by a feasible one hour commute to central London at the peak speeds he expects to be eventually reached around 2000, i.e. 100-115 kms. radius – yielding an area comparable to Peter Hall's (1989) Greater South East changes in the forces/relations of production), rather than directly from the state. But the socio-spatial impacts across this region evidently reflect the way they have responded to state initiatives: quite directly, in the case of the development of infrastructure networks across the region; but more perversely, in reaction to the 'green blanket' spread over much of it during the last half of the period. How regional and local authorities have engaged with these market forces has also been conditioned by powerful informal institutions, in terms of understandings of community - where interests are shared (or not) and co-operation/ mobilisation is worthwhile (and not) - and beliefs about the relative roles of local versus social forces in shaping the varying prosperity and life-satisfaction of residents in different areas. In some key respects too these have been affected by the particular ways in which British local authorities have been funded over recent decades, with a very large (formulaic) contribution from national grants, intended to secure equitable service provision independent of local conditions and to discourage economically wasteful forms of territorial competition between areas – though these are now subject to radical change, in the names of localism and national competitiveness.

Given the fact that (against Well's rational expectations), local relations and localist values have continued to be salient within this mature metropolitan region, his proposed single tier ('massive municipality') governmental solution might simply be adapted - as the LCC was – by adding on a second tier of local governments, to deal (on the subsidiarity principle) with issues free of substantial spatial externalities. But two immediate political problems remain with this neo-Wellsian kind of regionalist solution for the Greater South East. One is that of legitimacy, in that (at the present time) very few people are likely to identify with such an extended region as (even one of) their 'imagined communities'. The other is that - within an integrated UK, but still

more within one eaten into by devolution/defection - the Greater South East simply represents too large (and too strategic) a fraction of the national territory and its competitive economic sectors for central government ever to allow it autonomy in relation to core policy areas such as those already passed to a devolved Scottish parliament. These are barriers not only to a purely governmental (Wellsian) approach to the governance issue, but also need to be taken seriously in thinking about broader approaches attending to the other two sides of the governance triangle.

In the case of the legitimacy problem there is some reason to think that this may substantially ease as other forms of integration grow. After all, it was only sometime after the abolition of the GLC that a majority of outer borough residents came to see themselves as Londoners - with time, institutional deprivation and experience of voluntary collaboration all apparently playing a part (Hebbert, 1998). In relation to legitimating governance over a much wider region, the point is to work at building habits of co-operation, mitigating the downside costs of more active collaboration, developing a clearer understanding of (market) interdependences, the irrelevance of internecine competition to resolving (shared) structural problems etc. – *by any means possible*. In other words, to pursue adaptation of all three of the component governance processes in an integrated way, over a long run (rather than the artificial timescales of ambitious national politicians), via demonstrably useful collaborations, and accumulation of real achievements. This would include, for example initiatives such as the current London-Standed-Cambridge consortium – not because corridors are *the* key geography for managing economic development, but because the growth potential of this one provides a really good test-bed for developing habits and appreciation of co-operation. Perhaps the other key consideration would be to look for issues where repressed/ concealed conflicts are seriously distorting the way in which strategic issues are addressed, and seek ways of releasing these. The Green Belt issue, though generally seen as the most intractable example, might now actually be such an example, given the crisis state which the housing supply issue has reached across the GSE.

In relation to the other problematic interface, between the (capital city) region and the central state, the key may not simply be to argue for closer integration of government *within* the GSE as crucial for securing national goals (with side-benefits for the prestige of national politicians). Mobilising regional actors around strategic priorities to secure more effective governance of this core region needs leadership resources – in terms of a credible capacity to commit behind key initiatives – that only high level central government participation (and kudos sharing) may be able to secure, preferably through an open process, rather than another implicit deal.

#### **Additional Comment**

- I also believe that developing a more collaborative approach to governance of the extended London region is both really important and politically more realistic now than it was before the localist and recognition of the severity of the housing supply crisis; and because
- I am very sceptical of model organisational solutions as a route to building the required kinds of capacity .

## **Martin Simmons: Framing a Spatial Perspective on the Future for the UK**

### **FURTHER CONTRIBUTION FROM LONDON AND THE SOUTH EAST**

Following the Symposium on 7 December 2016, this Note amplifies the baldly stated growth propositions in this part of the country, mentioned at the end of my paper dated 18 November and orally at the event. It was a personal contribution to preparation of the CFN's interim Prospectus, and is now, updated as appropriate, for the 31 May Round-table on the Prospectus's Proposition 5. As indicated in my 18 November paper, Brexit will be significant for the scale of London growth in two particular respects: whether the extent of net in-migration is reduced, likely to impact particularly on the knowledge industry, hospitality and construction sectors; and whether financial and related services retain some form of open access to the EU including 'passport rights'. These are key issues for the negotiations and we will not know the outcome for some time.

Critical for our purpose will be the effect of Brexit on expectations for London's housing requirements. Work for the London Plan Review, starting from trend-based projections of household growth, indicates requirement over the Plan period of around 55,000 new dwellings per year. While the Mayor will seek to maximise the extent to which this can be provided within London's boundaries (from sources referred to in my earlier paper) it is clear that a significant proportion would need to be provided beyond. I would tentatively assess this proportion at around a quarter of the total, based on a realistic assessment of land capacity within the boundary and a steady increase in the net movement of Londoners out in search of more affordable housing and a wider choice: it could be higher.

However, the trend basis of the requirement assessment seems unlikely to remain valid given the Brexit impacts. This indicates that the future will be unlike the past, casting doubt on trend-based projections. A reduction in the overall requirement could result, the extent of which is unknown at present. The situation posits a scenario approach, to explore the implications of lower levels of growth.

The very high cost of housing and other factors stimulating out-migration require consideration of where provision should be made for those who will be unable to find housing which is affordable and of the type they desire. I stated in my earlier paper that the wider London region as it has been understood, both within and beyond the Metropolitan Green Belt, could not be expected to make further provision for Londoners. The following reasons are apparent:-

- LPAs are finding it increasingly difficult to meet their own assessments of housing need in ways that are in any sense sustainable, and are likely to oppose further demands;
- Transport infrastructure, both road and rail, is increasingly at or over capacity; new development is predominantly car-based and is worsening traffic congestion and air pollution and hence quality of life. Traffic conditions on the M25 London Orbital, despite years of capacity enhancements, is steadily worsening.
- There is a growing lack of capacity in strategic water supply and drainage infrastructure, and increasing risks of flooding.
- Social services including the NHS are under particularly increasing strain.

I conclude that the wider region, up to 50 miles from central London, should be regarded as generally 'full up' and unable to accept more 'overspill' from London.

The only possibilities for London-related growth within the wider region may be within the Growth Corridors shown on the existing London Plan Key Diagram, extending outwards. Three such corridors are significant:-

- Thames Gateway including Ebbsfleet Garden City, with centres out to Medway and Southend, with some of the least unaffordable housing in the south-east; it is now the

subject of a Government-led Thames Estuary Growth Commission, expected to report shortly.

- London-Stansted-Cambridge, being advanced by the joint public/private consortium, including Crossrail 2 and upgrading the West Anglia main line, with sustainable development potential at Harlow, around Cambridge and Huntingdon (now to be advanced by the new Cambridgeshire CA);
- The Western Wedge, whose profile would be greatly enhanced by the Government decision in favour of Heathrow runway 3 and terminal 6, which would generate considerable employment (estimated by proponents

at between 40,000 and 70,000 new jobs) requiring additional housing growth – cross- boundary collaboration would be essential.

These growth corridors need to take a polycentric approach, recognising and building on the network of centres in the wider region and stimulating economic development and employment within them, rather than facilitating more commuting into central London.

These apart, and if we accept that what used to be known as the ‘Outer Metropolitan Area’ (aka the Home Counties) should no longer be seen in planning terms as available for London ‘overspill’, where should we be looking to provide for the London region’s growth, however large it may be post-Brexit?

The essential purpose should be to provide for the growth generated by London’s economy in ways which pursue two spatial objectives. The first is to get away from its high property costs, which is deterring business growth in knowledge industries – the ‘tech’ and creative sectors – particularly among SMEs where mounting anecdotal evidence suggests many are seeking locations in lower cost areas. This needs facilitating. The second is to locate London-generated growth sufficiently far from the metropolis that it escapes the magnetic pull of London and links effectively with other parts of the country along strategic transport routes. This would include the Midlands area where it can be related to the ‘Midland Engine’ concept, and westwards to relate to growth in the Bristol region and south-east Wales.

### **A Growth and Infrastructure Commission**

These objectives would need considerable underpinning by research and analysis, so that they can be expanded into an evidence-based spatial strategy. The agenda for this would include investigation of the present and foreseen extended functional geography of London’s labour market and other influences along main transport spines; and where infrastructure capacity in the round exists or can readily be provided (e.g. the spatial effect of HS2 on the WCML).

To undertake this effectively, a ‘Growth and Infrastructure Commission’ would be needed and resourced. This could comprise a mix of academic, public and private sector representatives, which would examine the spatial situation and options in geographical sectors generally 50-100 miles (but with no outer limit) from central London.

Such a Commission would examine such development options based on relating sources of economic development and employment to housing provision, while understanding and respecting environmental situations and constraints. It would investigate ways in which provision made at a distance from London can be related to and relieve unsustainable pressures within the metropolis.

The Commission would take into account spatial concepts already being advanced, including the Oxford-Milton Keynes-Cambridge Arc currently under investigation by the National Infrastructure 12

Commission; this would link towards Cambridge with the London-Stansted-Cambridge Growth Corridor referred to above. It would also examine development possibilities in the South Midlands area, towards and potentially linking with Birmingham and the East Midlands cities, and in the Western sector.

Such a Commission would form a sub-set of the nation-wide organisational arrangements being considered in the CFN's Prospectus and its propositions. It would clearly require effective links with the NIC.

**For discussion.**

**Martin Simmons**

28 December 2016

Updated 23 May 2017

## Corinne Swain: Response to Roundtable, Questions

### 1 Current arrangements

Yes, unsatisfactory for the proper planning of the London city-region. But recognise that it may suit some Home Counties District Councils fine – they can avoid taking unpopular decisions about accommodating extra housing, and "spreading the pain" between a large number of small settlements even if this leads to scattered Green Belt releases is seen by them as politically easier than leading the case for a more strategic release.

There are rare examples of voluntary cooperation e.g. Epping Forest, Harlow and East Herts on Harlow North, one of the 3 recipients of funding from the government's garden cities initiative. NB there's a big difference between commissioning extra studies, and carrying through with huge local opposition (Stop Harlow North campaign).

The Growth and Infrastructure Investment Forum, initiated under Mayor Johnson, still continues, but mainly dealing with non-contentious issues.

Ad hocery leads to deal making with pro growth local authorities

### 2 Big wins from an integrated strategic approach

A coordinated approach to London and WSE would make it possible for:

- demographic and economic projections on a consistent basis
- objective analysis of opportunities and risks through a scenarios based approach (both alternative scales of growth and spatial distributions)
- a strategic review of Green Belt linked to options for public transport investment, plus any remaining brownfield or low value land, especially in public ownership
- expansion valves for London, so as to avoid political pressure to continue increasing densities within London, sometimes in unsuitable locations and without the necessary physical and social infrastructure
- focusing public and private investment on cities/towns within the WSE to increase the non-London dependent aspects of their economies, hence their self-containment levels from London, if connected together within a stronger network

### 3 Governance options

- SERPLAN style
- Regional Summits and political steering group supported by officer groups, in operation since 2015
- growth corridors/sub-regional partnerships (local authorities, LEPs) and use of TfL investment as a negotiating lever for Home County districts to accept more strategic level growth
- independent expert commission to provide evidence on which political decisions could be made (as favoured in my Arup Thoughts piece in August 2013 – see attached for ease <http://thoughts.arup.com/post/details/301/debating-londons-options-for-growth>)
- a New York style (Tristate) Regional Plan – would the private sector be that altruistic?

All options could benefit from a greater role for central government - either directly as institutional partners, or indirectly e.g. change of mood music on green belt release and housebuilding models, regulatory changes to make greater land value capture possible)

### 4 Deal breakers

System of local government, particularly Home Counties districts - too many of them, no incentive for local Councillors to think long term – no votes in accommodating extra housing, quite the reverse. Limited competence and often no interest in thinking about the needs of broader areas. Happy to accommodate extra job growth, brings prestige to the Council and in some areas the prospect of retaining growth in business rates. Needs to be some financial benefit to the Council in accommodating extra housing, not just to pay for extra physical infrastructure, but additional revenue over and above rate support grant with retrospective adjustment for extra population.

Current government has stopped TfL taking over rail franchises in the WSE (temporarily?), hence made it more difficult to do deals with growth orientated local authorities in return for station and line upgrades.

Few private sector interests, other than developers and businesses having immediate property aspirations, who are prepared to engage with a strategic planning perspective/framework.

Current housebuilding and land trader models. Limited number of development vehicles prepared to use a patient capital approach to developing high-quality places over the long term.

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## **Additional Note on Managing London's Growth**

### **Debating London's growth option**

Rapid urbanisation is a worldwide phenomenon, with uncontrolled urban sprawl being a major problem in many developing countries. In the UK where our planning system has encouraged the compact city model, concerns relate to the failure of new house building to keep up with demand and the forecast scale of future population increase..

With the Mayor of London predicting the capital will need [one million new homes in the next 22 years](#) (+25%), it's time to consider some radical growth options. Unfortunately, London and its wide hinterland beyond, lacks an organisational framework to debate these options.

To reflect future uncertainties, discussions should consider a range of scenarios to accommodate this growth. These discussions must also consider ways in which 'green belt' land can be managed. This is land which has a long established planning policy designation to check unrestricted urban sprawl. The aim of these discussions would be to make more productive use of this land for recreational access, local food production, [climate change resilience](#) and [nature](#) – because, in my view, releasing this land en masse for housing is far too simplistic a solution.

The problem stems from the fact that, in the UK, we seem incapable of having a measured discussion about how and where to accommodate growth – except in a very localised context. In London, the current solution rests solely on densification and major re-development of opportunity areas. But for how much longer will it be possible to shoehorn all new development into the existing urban fabric without compromising housing choice, affordability and quality of life? And outside London, is there then a risk that Londoners in search of new family housing will outbid local house purchasers thereby adding to housing pressures there?

The fundamental issue is that many economically buoyant cities in the UK are hemmed in by their own administrative boundaries. Informal cooperation is just about working in most city regions in the north of England, and in some smaller cities that have a collaborative culture. In some instances this has led to selective green belt releases, fully justified within a local authority's strategic vision, as expressed in its Local Development Framework. Ironically, though, where the challenges are greatest (in the wider London hinterland), there is probably the least institutional capacity to deal with them.

So the challenge then becomes how a strategic assessment of growth options might be organised. I think there are three possible models for bringing together interests across the London boundary.

1. A partial model approach, led by local authorities and/or Local Enterprise Partnerships, focussed along major transport corridors in and beyond London.

2. A city region approach, led by the Mayor of London and surrounding local authority leaders with officer working groups.
3. An inter-regional approach led by an expert commission using public appointment procedures and covering an area from the Midlands to the South Coast.

Although counter to the prevailing spirit of localism, I suspect the expert commission route might undertake the preparatory work most efficiently and allow a more objective assessment of the issues and options. Besides assimilating existing research findings, its evidence-gathering role could be done transparently through futures workshops, inviting written evidence, interactive debates, and local sittings. It would then be responsible for analysis and strategy recommendations back to democratically elected politicians.

It is instructive that a vision is currently emerging for Paris beyond the city's immediate confines. Here, the French president is supporting proposals for an ambitious investment in new orbital rail lines linked to housing schemes ([Le Nouveau Grand Paris](#)).

Surely there are lessons here about how formulating forward-thinking strategies across multiple local authority boundaries can give long-term stability for both public and private sector investors.

## Michael Edwards : comments on the Prospectus and the Round Table Questions.

1. I shall do mostly listening on Wednesday. The approach is a technical / professional fix, seeking a consensus in a field where there are deep antagonisms and that's not my approach, but I always learn a great deal from these discussions - and shall greatly miss Peter Hall who was such a great devotee of creative consensus.

2. In my view it's unhelpful to view London as *a great success story but...* (with some problems...housing...poverty...air quality). More accurate and more constructive, in my view, to emphasise:

1. Key processes which produce wealth/GDP necessarily produce impoverishment (accumulation through housing, land and property; most housing policies of recent governments have reinforced these links;
2. Massive and continuing state investment in infrastructure is needed to keep the machine in motion, with benefits substantially harvested as housing and land appreciation;
3. The growth and structure of effective demand for housing in NCR (for investment and occupation combined) is such that the pressures on low and middle earners are enormous, extruding people outwards at low and middle incomes; exporting the evils of house price/rent escalation across all those towns and villages in the region, so earners of local low and middle incomes cannot house themselves as they did in former times.
4. Our highly distributed settlement pattern out beyond the M25 is utterly car-dependent, even where fast trains run to central London. Very hard to remedy that. Crossrail 1 / 2 / n exacerbate this problem and worsen affordability in the outlying places served. A dense Oxford-MK-Cambridge linear city is very appealing.

3. The publications of this group should be much more careful about definitions and captions - e.g. whether household incomes are reported before or after housing costs; whether GDP is allocated to workplaces or to homes... and so on.

4. It could be interesting to talk about Brexit. If Brexit can't be averted, I imagine that very severe labour shortages will soon emerge in sectors of the economy which are able to survive in revenue terms (agriculture, health services, armaments, software) and the labour shed by shrinking sectors may not have the right locations or skills (vehicles and other internationally-integrated products, universities, coffee shops). I'd enjoy hearing views. If/where labour becomes seriously scarce we might see private sector fixed capital formation in productive (non-property) equipment get started again and eventually some productivity growth. Further education and labour force training have been one of our many failings and Brexit might help there too. Silver linings are hard to find.

5. I'm sure we'll all agree that the non-existence of regional government is a problem. Myself I doubt that non-elected committees (or even Commissions) of experts will help, nor committees of mayors. To unleash the needs of society (not 99% but a big majority) and prevail upon minorities who stand in the way would require elected organisations. Bilateral deals between London's City Hall and compliant regional politicians are not a very substantial answer.

**Ian Wray** : to answer the questions you first have to pose some deeper ones, relating to political, technical, economic and social factors. Including the following, to which I have supplied some very tentative answers:

- What's going to happen to the globalisation project of which London has been a prime beneficiary?  
I'd expect it to continue but other cities might start to challenge London's world role especially in finance. However London's role in the creative and 'creative technology' sectors seems unassailable and any fall in rents property prices could work to London's benefit
- What's going to happen to the UK economy post Brexit and to what extent might London be insulated from the downsides and benefit from the upsides?  
McCann's work suggests that London will be largely insulated from a post Brexit downturn. However London's central area congestion seems to be reaching a threshold. Gridlock is only prevented by holding traffic back using the traffic lights and this has another 5 years to run
- Where will young highly educated people want to live in the future in the UK, especially post age 30?  
I'd expect some rebalancing to take place in favour of the other big cities with implications for many employers. See yesterday's FT piece
- What effect will Brexit have on net migration into London and environs?  
Depends on the Brexit deal and the future UK immigration policies but I would expect some reduction
- What's the outlook for public resources and especially investment?  
Poor
- What's the outlook for London's property sector and thus contributions to infrastructure project costs?  
Subdued
- Will the past pattern of investing heavily in London's infrastructure at the expense of other big cities continue?  
Unlikely. The new city devolution arrangements will be a countervailing force. Six of the new metro mayors are Tory. London is Labour. Birmingham is a major opportunity for decentralisation of offices and airport functions, post HS2 Phase 1, which is about 10 years off. The May government will want to accelerate this timetable.

If my analysis is correct and putting this together it should mean that London will face a much more challenging future, though its basic dynamism remains undiminished. I'd expect this to increase the need and the pressure for a more integrated approach and a common front, which could augur well for new voluntary arrangements, for example.

**Additional Comment** on Briefing Note

"My only substantial comment is on governance models. Surely one government model would be a wholly independent private sector financed model on the lines of New York's Regional Plan Association. Is it worth including this in the list of options, to explore its advantages and disadvantages?"

And a tangential comment on advisory plans: in my 30 plus years involvement in planning from inner city project management to regional planning, I've always found advisory, informal and non - statutory plans to be more influential and effective than formal and statutory exercises. Though statutory plans are often useful for sweeping up decisions already taken by other processes!"