

Sustainable London

Index. In a report that some might think redefines sustainability, the Centre for Economics and Business Research named London the world's second most sustainable city _____. It was pipped to the lead by Frankfurt. The London entry in the Sustainable Cities Index says:

London is starting to become a victim of its own success... Congestion and aging infrastructure are at the heart of current issues, but so too are a chronic shortage of affordable housing, declining air quality, and the more visible impact of climate change...

The Mayor's vision identifies the shortage of housing as the gravest crisis London currently faces. Although housing delivery is increasing, it is still far short of the 49,000 net new homes that are needed every year to house the growing population and meet the backlog of need. London will also need to change its behaviours towards consumption, whether in energy, waste, modes of transport.

The Index of fifty cities ranks London second after Frankfurt for the economic dimension of sustainability; third for the social dimension behind Rotterdam and Seoul; and twelfth for environmental sustainability. Nairobi was the least sustainable city.

Population. London's population has topped 8.6 million, the highest since its 1939 peak. Boris Johnson said the figure was predicted to reach 11 million by 2050 [IL] [BEC] [IES] [L] [A]. Richard Brown of the Centre for London said:

As London regains its pre-war stature, you can feel the transition from a slack city to a tight one, and the stress that this is bringing to city systems. Tube stations like Brixton that once seemed like suburban outposts are now teeming and congested... But we also need to think more fundamentally about how our lifestyles and the character of our city will change. London does not have a history of the hyper-dense development patterns of New York, Barcelona or Hong Kong... How will the oases of calm in the city – places like Cleaver Square, the Camley Street Nature Reserve, New River Park – be affected? How will London's wild spaces – Rainham Marshes, Bow Back Rivers, Epping Forest – respond? [cn.]

Guardian London blogger Dave Hill commented:

London's increasing population... need not make the place unbearable to live in. Making the city's high density neighbourhoods work best for those who live in them is all about balances, blends and, of course, resources. And that, of course, is where the politics begin **§**.

Southern Powerhouse?

Garden suburbs. In a report on devolution, the Assembly's Conservative group said the GLA should be granted powers to create new garden suburbs in partnership with the county councils surrounding the city to help meet the capital's future housing needs a presc. It says: "As a result of the large amounts of green space and parks in the capital, there will soon come a time when there simply isn't enough land in London on which to build new homes." It wants the GLA to have much greater influence over an area it calls 'Thames City', which extends into the home counties and green belt. It cites the Policy Exchange argument that at least 40 garden developments of more than 10,000 homes will be required over the next few decades:

Much of London's future housing needs will have to be met outside the capital's boundaries. London should, therefore, be granted powers to create new Garden Suburbs in partnership with those county councils that surround the city... The likely outcome is that London will, in a collegiate manner, need to exert greater influence over policy decisions outside of the M25.

The Conservative group calls for rail lines and stations in the "travel to work" area around the capital to be transferred to Transport for London. It also wants a 'super' local enterprise partnership for the region.



Conservative concept for 'Thames City'

Minister says no regional plan. In a letter to Boris Johnson announcing he will not object to the Further Alterations to the London Plan, Brandon Lewis rejected suggestions that there could be a new regional plan for the South East P. This follows hints there could be a new Abercrombie Plan for Greater London and the South East E. Lewis said:

Authorities outside London face their own issues and challenges in meeting their own needs, which may impact on their ability to accommodate any of London's unmet housing needs. The government abolished the topdown regional strategies, which built up nothing but resentment and we have no intention of resurrecting 'SERPLAN' or the South East Plan from the dead.

Planners point out that SERPLAN – the London and South East Regional Planning Conference – was set up by councils not by minsters. Brandon Lewis also told Johnson: "The NPPF is clear that the green belt should be given the highest protection in the planning system and is an environmental constraint which may impact on the ability of authorities to meet their housing need."

The Public Realm

Tree champions. Sir Terry Farrell, who was recently named a trustee of The Trees and Design Action Group, has called for a rethink of urban design to prioritise more trees. He said: "The concept of 'landscape urbanism' is gaining traction on mainland Europe, with an approach based on organising cities through the design of the city landscape rather than by the design of its buildings." He added that the London National Park concept would be "hugely influential in better planning for green infrastructure" in the capital P. Lord Framlingham called for: "A nationally co-ordinated approach to the design and management of hard landscapes. This would ensure the maximum and most imaginative use of trees and guarantee both their planning and their aftercare"

Parks. The Canons in Mitcham has been awarded nearly £4 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery 🐨 🞰. The Landscape Institute is to support The Parks Alliance by providing communications services 🔲.

Health. Research from the University of East Anglia shows that health risks can be reduced through regular outdoor walking in groups **g**. A Natural England survey suggests visits to urban green spaces have decreased slightly. A quarter of people who visit an outdoor space go to a park in a town or city **b**.

Socially restricted access. After a request from Berkeley Homes, Southwark's planning committee agreed to alter a legal agreement to bar tenants of a new block of council housing at One Tower Bridge from using a communal garden available to private residents set. After national press coverage, the council said it would review its decision. The City is also to fight the ban **g i set**.

Heritage. Duncan Wilson has been appointed the first chief executive of Historic England, which will take on English Heritage's planning applications and listed buildings functions hd. Kate Mavor will become chief executive at the residual part of English Heritage, which will look after monuments and buildings . English Heritage has listed three post-war offices in London: 30 Cannon Street; 1 Finsbury Avenue; and Brown Shipley on Moorgate i . To the station have been removed to allow an expansion of the station for Crossrail is i .

Big Green Poll. Seven projects have been shortlisted for a share of £900,000 to improve local green spaces in the second round of the Mayor's Big Green Fund **GLA**. Vote by 2 March **GLA**. The shortlisted projects are:

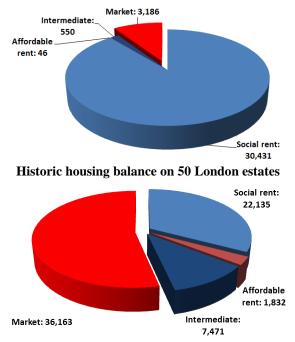
- Wetland to Wetland Greenway, connecting two wetland centres in Hackney L.
- The Duke's River Link, creating a wildlife habit in Richmond and Hounslow
- Firs Farms Wetlands habitat in Enfield **L**.
- Riding the Roding, a new riverside cycle path in Redbridge L.
- Stanmore Marsh, improving open space and wetlands in Harrow L.
- Thamesmead Thames Path upgrade, Greenwich LG.
- Wandle Park, Croydon, improved access YLG CA.

Green award. Employee wellbeing, sky gardens and the intrusion of green spaces into buildings are at the core of a concept by Organic Grid+ which snatched the top prize of a Metropolis magazine competition .

Affordable Housing

Knock it down? The regeneration of fifty London housing estates over the last decade has resulted in the net loss of more than 8,000 affordable social homes, according to a report, *Knock it Down or Do It Up*, from the Assembly's Housing Committee [a, a] C. The regeneration projects, many of which are still planned or ongoing, have almost doubled overall housing density with massive increases in homes for market sale and intermediate rent. The committee recommends holding an independent ballot on any decision to demolish an estate, as well as creating a steering group of residents to help guide the process. Darren Johnson, assembly member for the Green Party and chair of the Housing Committee, said:

Market homes play an important role in unlocking investment to plough into creating decent social homes, but the extent of the housing crisis means we need homes for all income groups, not just the well-heeled. What's also clear is that the most popular regeneration schemes are those where councils and housing associations genuinely engage existing residents in decisions, rather than taking important decisions about people's family homes from behind closed doors.



Future housing balance on 50 London estates

Affordable roundup. Thousands gathered outside City Hall to demand Boris Johnson tackle the lack of affordable housing in the capital and curb spiralling rents **g**. The London Labour group said that the right to buy is likely to reduce net council housing stock by 6,000 homes over the next ten years III. Writing in The Wharf, Giles Broadbent said: "Affordable housing has become a bargaining chip rather than a line in the builders' sand. The developers have the public authorities over a barrel" An advert boasting that a luxury block of flats, Abbey Tower in Greenwich, is a "fully private block with no social housing" caused a furore **g es**. The £200m London Housing Bank is likely to undershoot its target to create 3,000 homes, with developers planning to build just 106 properties by the 2018 deadline III. Central London is facing a surfeit of expensive new homes squeezing developers' profit margins **FT**.

Vacant Building Credit

The credit. In December, the communities department said it would press ahead with a policy change that would require councils to deduct a financial credit from affordable housing contributions. The credit is to be "equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of any vacant buildings brought back into any lawful use or demolished for re-development." Minister Brandon Lewis said the scheme would help small housebuilders but critics say it will lead to a drastic reduction in rural affordable housing [ab]. This deduction has since become known as the vacant building credit and it has led to protests from politicians, councils and major housebuilders.

Letter. Tessa Jowell MP, the leaders of Kingston, Sutton and Southwark councils and others wrote to the Observer P. Calling on planning minister Brandon Lewis to suspend the policy until its impact is reviewed, they argued:

This policy... risks permanently damaging the social mix of our capital city. It has created a perverse incentive for unscrupulous landlords and developers to evict existing tenants and could result in the loss of billions of pounds' worth of affordable housing investment from developers.

Councils. The City Corporation and Westminster council have joined the criticism. The City stands to lose £8 million in affordable housing contributions a year. Westminster said it could lose up to £1 billion a year P ^{EC}. Great Marlborough Estates which is planning 80 homes near Regent's Park was expected to pay £18.7m in affordable housing contributions. Westminster said the council now expects to lose more than £10m of that. Southwark council issued a press release:

This policy means that former industrial sites that are currently vacant ahead of being developed could deliver only a fraction of the potential affordable housing, rather than the 35 per cent affordable housing provision usually required [IG].

Developers. The Westminster Property Association (WPA), which represents major property developers including Berkeley Homes, British Land, Land Securities, the Crown Estate and Grosvenor Estates, joined the criticism telling Brandon Lewis:

[The credit] removes an important element of developer contribution to the provision of affordable housing. The unintended consequences of such policies will actually lead to a further erosion of the ability of people from a wide range of backgrounds to live in the heart of the capital.

The developers also said the policy would encourage empty offices to be converted into homes, weakening the economy in central London **g**. The chairman of the WPA added:

It's illogical to spend billions on Crossrail so commuters can reach central London more quickly, at the same time as eroding the very jobs which those people would travel to. There is undoubtedly a need for new housing, but that cannot be done at the expense of jobs in the centre of the city **S**.

Ministers. Brandon Lewis defended the policy, saying: "It was crazy to be levying a tax on empty and redundant buildings being brought into productive use."

Around the Capital

Bishopsgate Goodsyard. Writing in the Observer, Rowan Moore said: "Boris Johnson's support for a luxury highrise development on Bishopsgate Goodsyard illustrates his contempt for localism"

Brent. The latest tower at North West Village, Wembley Park has been given the go ahead



Wembley Park plans

Brixton retailers fear gentrification after Network Rail announced it would evict tenants from the railway archways before refurbishment **itv**.

Bromley council has demanded that the Chinese developer planning to recreate the Crystal Palace exhibition centre makes a down payment of £5m and details its intentions, or risk losing the project. Bromley has also appointed landscape architects to conduct a feasibility study into £2.4m worth of improvement works in the park bd.

Camden Council has approved a £41 million improvement of Tottenham Court Road. The one-way system on the road and on Gower Street will be replaced with two-way, tree-lined streets. Five new public spaces will be created . A planning inspector has approved a block of luxury flats in the Hampstead conservation area. It replaces a 1930s nurses hostel that campaigners wanted retained bd. Goggle has scrapped designs for its King's Cross HQ, apparently because they are "too boring" fil.

City. Developer British Land has submitted detailed plans to refurbish and extend the 100 Liverpool Street Exchange Square building . Avery Associates Architects has unveiled designs for No.1 Undershaft, a 270-metre tall office tower directly adjacent to the Cheesegrater . Great Arthur House, a Grade II high-rise residential tower block on the Golden Lane Estate, is to be given a green makeover with new double glazing and curtain walling to help aid insulation, increase thermal standards .

Croydon. A planning inspector has rejected plans by Croydon council to expand Greenlawn Memorial Park outside the borough into the green belt at Warlingham, which is under the jurisdiction of Tandridge council a definition He said: "Although there would be no additional harm to the green belt by reason of the effect on openness or purposes, the NPPF provides that inappropriate development is harmful by definition... The proposal would harm local countryside character." He concluded the usefulness of the extra burial plots "do not clearly outweigh the harm to the green belt and to the character of the area that would occur". **Greenwich**. The Greenwich Reach Swing Bridge over Deptford Creek has started operation. Funded by an adjacent housing development, the bridge removes a lengthy diversion on the Thames Path from the riverside **C**. The *No Ikea Greenwich* campaign has been advised that a legal challenge against the replacement of Sainsbury's with Ikea will not succeed. The group had hoped to challenge the increased traffic **C C**. The University of Greenwich's new building on Stockwell Street, which has green roofs, won the Best Town Centre category in the London Planning Awards . The Information Commissioner has told Greenwich council to fully disclose financial details behind its decision to allow a reduction in affordable homes proposed for a 10,000home development on the Greenwich Peninsula **P G**.

Hackney. English Heritage and the East End Preservation Society are among objectors opposing the demolition of Swan Wharf. They say demolition of the Edwardian stable block will make a mockery of the extension of the Hackney Wick and Fish Island conservation area mc. Open Dalston held a wake and wrote an open letter to the Mayor of Hackney, Jules Pipe, in protest at the destruction of a Georgian terrace C. Architects have been appointed to transform the landscape and public realm as part of the regeneration of the Nightingale Estate .



Preliminary plans for the Nightingale Estate

Hillingdon. Waste and recycling company Powerday has decided not to appeal Hillingdon council's decision to refuse planning permission for a 450,000-tonne materials and recovery centre at the Old Coal Depot [www].

Islington. A site infested with Japanese knotweed is to be developed for 156 homes with climbing plants, green walls and green roofs. The landscaping will form part of a nature trail to be used by local schools **bd**.

Kingston. Plans have been submitted to redevelop the Old Post Office site for 380 homes and retail uses. The scheme includes two community gardens $\boxed{16}$ $\boxed{0}$. Kingston Residents' Alliance has submitted a petition opposing the development. It says: "It is going to be an eyesore. We are a market town and we want to save the skyline. It is not in keeping with the area" $\boxed{1}$.



Plans for the Old Post Office site Kingston

Planning and Environmental News from CPRE London

Lambeth. Clapham Old Town Regeneration Project won the Best New Public Space category in the London Planning Awards. The scheme remodelled the 1960's gyratory increasing the ratio of pedestrian footway to carriageway from 35% to 65%. Street furniture was rationalised, maximising space for pedestrians and minimising visual clutter. Crossings were located on key desire lines and 102 trees were planted .



Clapham Old Town Regeneration

Lewisham. Plans have been detailed for the Ladywell Pop-Up Village, one of the UK's first contemporary temporary housing sites. The short term housing will provide accommodation for 24 families, with community and commercial spaces at street level. The housing will be relocated when the site is redeveloped .



Ladywell Pop Up Village

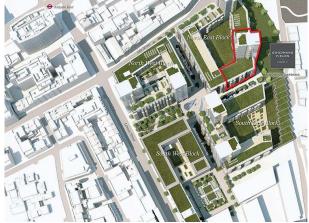
Newham. Design agency Carillion Igloo Genesis won the competition for the design of a 15-acre floating village at the Royal Docks. The plans for custom designed homes include a "blue water square" . The Centre for Cities said business wants to be based in central London not the Royal Docks, which it says is "an obvious answer to the chronic housing shortage in the capital" .



Proposed blue water square at Royal Docks

Old Oak. Eric Pickles approved a mayoral development corporation to build 24,000 homes and create 55,000 jobs in the Old Oak Common and Park Royal area **bd cd**. A Flickr Group has been set up to create a photographic record of the regeneration of the area .

Southwark. English Heritage has urged Southwark council to reject plans for a 21-storey tower close to Tate Modern because it will detract from views of St Paul's Cathedral from Alexandra Palace. Boris Johnson has also expressed concerns over the tower's height and "its impact on local views and the character of Bankside" set **Tower Hamlets**. The Spitalfields Historic Buildings Trust has launched a campaign against plans to redevelop Shoreditch's City fringe. It wants to block developments which will see more than 70% of the buildings within the Elder Street conservation area demolished. It is calling for a similar approach to that used at the Regents Quarter, King's Cross, where gaps were filled between existing historic structures bd. Tower Hamlets council has approved a 53-storey residential tower on the Isle of Dogs. Nearly three-quarters of the site will be new public realm with a cafe, public gardens and children's playground bd. Plans for three towers up to 23 storeys high and a 12-storey podium block have been approved for the Goodmans Fields site at Aldgate O



Plans for Goodmans Fields

London Riverside. Boris Johnson has published a revised London Riverside Opportunity Area Planning Framework. The 20-year plan anticipates the delivery of 26,500 new homes and 16,000 new jobs over 12km from east Beckton through Barking and Dagenham to Rainham Marshes. Consultation closes on 24 March and a la and a



London Riverside Opportunity Area

Westminster. The Twentieth Century Society warned that demolishing Basil Spence's Hyde Park Barracks would deprive the nation of "a truly remarkable, innovative and singular group of buildings." A decision on whether English Heritage will list the buildings is awaited bd bd. King's College is planning to demolish four historic buildings on the Strand to expand its campus. The Victorian Society said: "They are characterful structures which make a positive contribution to the conservation area and are a last remnant of the historic streetscape in that stretch" bd. Plans to demolish the St John's Wood Barracks, former home to the King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery, for a £1.5 billion luxury housing have been approved. English Heritage said: "The plans to demolish the Officer's Mess will cause considerable harm to the character and appearance of the area" [PS] O [] [16].

Planning

Green infrastructure. A group of organisations including the Landscape Institute and the Town and Country Planning Association expressing concern at the disappearance of green infrastructure guidance from the National Planning Practice Guidance [1].

FALP. The Assembly criticised the housing targets in the Further Alterations to the London Plan for being too low but a Labour challenge to the plan was rejected \square \square [H].

Short term lets. The government is to remove long established planning restrictions on letting homes for less than 90 days in the capital. Properties will not be able to be rented out for more than a total of 90 days a year. Westminster City Council had asked for the length of short term lets permitted to be reduced from three months to one. It said: "This is not about being bureaucratic – it is about making sure housing in central London does not become a chain of default hotels with rooms rented out at exorbitant prices to the highest bidder" $P \square$ (1) (2)

Gypsy and travellers. The London Assembly called on the Mayor to trial temporary sites to increase provision and reduce illegal pitches **IH**.

Tall buildings. Planning minister Brandon Lewis set out Conservative party plans to demolish and regenerate London's high-rise housing estates with more traditional streets. Lewis said the high-rise estates built throughout the 1960s and 1970s were something "none of us should be particularly proud of". He pointed to Union Square in Islington, a new development that mimics traditional terraced housing, as an example to follow **g**.Writing in the Observer, Fred Wagner asks if vertical self-contained villages will ever become a reality **g**.

Devolution. Nine East London councils met to discuss greater devolution of powers, including over housing, from Whitehall and the Mayor to the boroughs [BBC].

Going Underground

Tunnels. Boris Johnson unveiled five locations for road tunnels or decking, opening up land for development **GLA**:

- A mini tunnel at the A13 in Barking Riverside
- Decking of the A3 in Tolworth
- A fly-under at the A316 at Chalkers Corner
- A fly-under at the A4 in Hammersmith
- Decking or a mini-tunnel at the A406, New Southgate.

The schemes are subject to further feasibility work by Transport for London. Mr Johnson reiterated his interest in replacing the Inner Ring Road with an inner orbital tunnel or two cross city tunnels.



Ideas for the A3 at Tolworth

Transport

Air pollution. The Assembly Environment Committee said Boris Johnson's proposals for an Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) are too little, too late. The committee wants the planned exemption for the new routemaster buses from ULEZ restrictions to be removed **GLA g**. From 1 April, Islington council is to introduce a £96 annual surcharge on resident permits for diesel vehicles in a bid to cut emissions LG #. Campaigners against the Silvertown tunnel are calling for residents north of the river in Tower Hamlets and Newham to help in the ongoing air pollution study **C**. A former TfL planner says the Silvertown tunnel should never be built because it will lead to increased congestion and air pollution. John Elliot also called for a congestion charge for all roads within the M25 . University of Surrey researchers found that peak particle concentration is 29 times higher at traffic lights than in free-flowing traffic \square .

Cycling as mass transport. Cycle use in the capital grew by 10% last year. Bikes now make up around 16% of traffic in Central London \varTheta 🗌. The London Underline, a proposal for a subterranean cycleway, won the "best conceptual project" at the London Planning Awards. Current plans envisage using disused tube tunnels between Green Park and Charing Cross Road, and between Holborn and Aldwych **i**. A residential tower scheme in Islington designed by Foster and Partners will include one cycle storage space for each apartment . Transport for London approved plans for the construction of four new cycle superhighways (East-West, North-South, CS1 and the inner section of CS5) and upgrades to the four existing cycle superhighway routes (CS2, CS3, CS7 and CS8) \ominus s. The Royal Parks Agency is refusing to allow CS2 to pass in front of the Queen Victoria Memorial and want it routed along the edge of The Mall instead **ES**. From the beginning of September, vans and HGVs over 3.5 tonnes will be banned from Greater London unless they have safety equipment to protect cyclists and pedestrians, such as blind spot safety mirrors and sidebars Θ s.

Roundup. A resident has launched a legal challenge to the garden bridge, claiming Lambeth council failed to comply with its duty to protect the historic settings of listed buildings in the area, including Somerset House **g**. Driverless cars are to be piloted in Greenwich $\Box C \Box G$. Funding for The Bounceway, an urban trampoline for commuters and leisure, was turned down TfL. The project may now be crowd funded $\overline{\mathbf{m}}$.



The Bounceway

Airports

Northolt. Biggin Hill and Oxford airports lost a high court case in which they argued that use of RAF Northolt for civilian flights was unlawful. The airport is expecting 17,500 movements this year, just 5,500 of which will be military. The judge said the CAA has the power to impose civilian safety standards on the airport **P**.

City. Newham council has approved an expansion of London City Airport. The £200 million proposal includes an extension to main building, more aircraft stands and a 260 bedroom hotel allowing the airport to handle six million passengers a year. Council officers said: "Most impacts can be mitigated against although some can't, such as noise, impacts to open spaces and gardens, the greater disturbance during the peak times and building over the dock." Anti-expansion group HACAN East said: "The expansion will create noise ghettos and misery for hundreds of thousands of people living below the flight path" **P ES**.

Thames Tideway Tunnel

Challenge rejected. The high court rejected four judicial reviews against planning permission for the supersewer [...] **P** [...] **P** [...] **Southwark council's challenge was thrown** out by the high court after the judge ruled the paperwork was delivered one day too late. The Thames Blue-Green Plan suffered a similar fate. David Percival, who made his own case for alternative solutions, was told his case lacked a point of law and was also refused. The Thames Blue-Green Partnership had argued that the planning inspectors should have considered alternative proposals but the judge said the National Wastewater policy statement gave a clear direction that the Thames Tideway Tunnel should be built. Environmental group Thames 21 welcomed the news:

This project means that we can look forward to a River Thames we can be truly proud of, that we can use and enjoy safely and with confidence, and where wildlife can thrive.

Campaigning

Exhibition. *Rethinking the Urban Landscape* examines how landscape architecture can offer sustainable solutions to challenges facing contemporary urban society, including flooding and public health. Organised by the Landscape Institute. Until 26 February 2015, at the Building Centre, Store Street L.

CPRE London. Georgia Wrighton is the new Director. She has previously directed campaigns at CPRE Sussex. CPRE London is advertising for a Green Spaces Officer. Closes 9 March **R**.

The CPRE London eBulletin

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