

**THE LONDON RECIPE:
HOW SYSTEMS
AND EMPATHY MAKE
THE CITY**

*Charles
Leadbeater*

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Charles Leadbeater is a leading authority on innovation and creativity. A past winner of the prestigious David Watt prize for journalism, he has advised companies, cities and governments around the world on innovation strategy. Charles has worked extensively as a senior adviser to the governments, advising the 10 Downing St policy unit, the Department for Trade and Industry and the European Commission on the rise of the knowledge driven economy and the Internet, as well as the government of Shanghai. He is an advisor to the Department for Education's Innovation Unit on future strategies for more networked and personalised approaches to learning and education. He is a co-founder of the public service design agency Participle. A visiting senior fellow at the British National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts, he is also a visiting fellow at Oxford University's Saïd Business School.

About Centre for London

Centre for London is a new politically independent not-for-profit think tank focused on the big challenges facing London. Through its research and events, the Centre acts as a critical friend to London's leaders and policymakers, promotes a wider understanding of the challenges facing London, and develops long-term, rigorous and radical policy solutions for the capital. It looks for support from a mixture of private, voluntary and public sector funders and works collaboratively with its supporters, drawing on their experience and expertise. Launched three years ago, the Centre is quickly developing relationships with sister organisations across the globe.

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THE PANEL

Our research for this pamphlet was informed by in-depth discussions with four focus groups of Londoners in the north east and south west of the city. The panel was not a scientifically representative sample of Londoners but the groups covered a cross section of people of different ages, educational backgrounds and ethnic backgrounds. The research was conducted by Simon Roberts at IdeasBazaar. The quotes from interviews in the report are taken from his transcripts of the discussions.

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Centre for London would like to thank Capital & Counties Properties PLC, without whom this project would not have been possible.

FOREWORD

London, as Charles Leadbeater notes in this important paper, “is inventing a new kind of urban society”. It is a city, he writes, “made exciting by its scale, surprise and diversity”.

Capital & Counties Properties PLC is proud to have supported the development of *The London Recipe* and continues to participate in the various events and discussions around the content.

As the company responsible for the continued transformation of Covent Garden and the re-imagination of Earls Court – possibly the largest urban regeneration project in Europe – we are both significant investors in the capital and very much committed to ensuring London’s future success. Our dedication to creating value and growing value is matched by a fundamental belief in creating and sustaining public value, too, supporting what Charles identifies as “a thriving and creative civil society” with a genuine empathy for “the collective genius of city life”.

There are no grounds for complacency in getting the recipe right. London is, we believe, the world’s greatest city and, in Covent Garden and Earls Court, where Kensington, Chelsea and Fulham meet, we continue to work diligently as long-term stewards and custodians of two of the capital’s greatest addresses and destinations. We are critically aware of the need to keep our own thinking fresh and innovative – in dealing with the diversity of challenges highlighted in this paper, from embracing “generation rent” and delivering “thoughtful design” to introducing “socially smart” systems where urbanisation connects with digital technology. The London Recipe – systems and empathy combined – will help inform our forward planning.

I commend this paper to all the architects and planners, policy makers and investors, designers and developers, media and cultural contributors who help make London such a magnificent, world-leading, global city. Above all, this work is a celebration of the citizens

and residents of London who, together, make the London
recipe unique.

Ian Hawksworth
Chief Executive
Capital & Counties Properties PLC

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1 THE IDEA OF LONDON

Cities that lead the world are not just rich, productive and powerful. Cities exert a lasting impact on our lives when they stand for an idea which attracts people to them and persuades others to emulate them, an idea of how we should live.

Athens gave us the ideal of democracy and Rome the organised state. Paris bred the revolution which brought us liberty, equality and fraternity, while Leningrad delivered the dictatorship of the proletariat. Manchester produced cotton and the modern idea of free trade. The merchants of Venice and Florence funded art of striking beauty. Detroit invented the idea that anything could be organised like a factory, and with it the figure of the affluent, industrial worker around whom post-war capitalism revolved until the 1970s. New York gave us the very idea of the modern metropolis, the city of skyscrapers and cars, built around the power of Madison Avenue and Wall St. Meanwhile Silicon Valley, more an urban agglomeration than a conventional city, has given us the entrepreneurial, networked, high tech economy in which it is possible to get rich while wearing a hoody.¹

London is the most successful, widely admired city in the world, at the moment. At first glance it might seem the city stands for very little by way of a big idea. London is best known internationally for the Royal Family and its homes; the City of London and the 2012 Olympics; a property market that people all over the world want a piece of.

Yet London's idea is right under our noses, an idea is so obvious that, like fish in water, Londoners take it for granted. However what is taken for granted in London must seem like an incredible creation to people who have to live without it; it is flourishing in diversity. The people gathering in London from all over the world are creating a highly cosmopolitan, civil, convivial, safe and largely self-governing city, in which their differences generate a flow of dividends in the form of new ideas

in culture, work, entertainment, and business. London is not the first city to create this cosmopolitan ideal. In eighteenth century Salonica Christians, Jews and Muslims, Arabs, Greeks and Europeans, lived happily together in a rich mix of culture, trade and religion.² New York became a metropolis through becoming a city of ethnic neighbourhoods driven by nineteenth century immigration. Modern London is different. It is remaking itself socially while already operating on a very large scale: it is like an airliner being rebuilt by its passengers mid-flight.

London's ability to pull off this fearsomely complex trick is its real competitive advantage. It has not come about by design but nor is has it emerged from thin-air. The city's capacity to be self-governing at scale rests on infrastructures that provide the platform on which people can be creative. The combination of two ingredients lies at the heart of London's success. Understanding those ingredients and how they combine will be vital to its future success.

2 THE INGREDIENTS

Systems for energy, transport, housing, food, water, waste and finance make cities work at scale serving lots of people at reasonable cost.³ People live well in a city when they can rely on easy-to-use systems to get things done: swiping their way from the underground onto a 'Boris bike', buying a latte, checking email on their smartphone and into work. Yet despite their busyness, cities with good systems can feel dead if they don't feed a thriving social life. People need spaces where they can relax, connect, find common ground, and enjoy one another's presence. Those social capabilities depend on the shared capacity for empathy among citizens who want to bridge their differences and through that to make the most of them.

When London gets the combination of systems and empathy right – as it did to spectacular effect in the 2012 Olympics – then it is unbeatable: the city takes off. If London could find a way to repeat that trick, over and over again, then it would be on the verge of a golden age. It could become the world's most admired city for decades to come: a new kind of society, symbolising an ideal of cosmopolitan self-governance at scale which inspires people all over the world. If it can't, the current glow of well-being could simply be a post-Olympics flash in the pan. There are no grounds for complacency.

Without investment in systems for transport and housing, waste management and water, energy and health, the city will become too expensive for many to live well and too congested to work efficiently. It will fall behind the best in the world, its creaking infrastructures overrun by growth. If those systems put quantity over quality and become insensitive, cold and impersonal – high-rise developments, soulless shopping malls, dull housing estates, roads that belittle pedestrians – they will slowly suck London's social life dry. Rather than cohering, the city could start to fragment. The centre of London could become an exclave of the international wealthy. That would spell its death as a source of innovation: it would become more like a giant First Class departure lounge, Dubai without the malls. There could be a backlash against immigrants and foreigners who come and go, apparently treating the city as no more than an investment vehicle or a place to earn some money. London could yet become a giant social centrifuge, flinging people away from the centre, and communities away from one another.

This report is about how London can avoid those risks and grasp its remarkable opportunity to embark on a golden age of self-governance. The key to that is whether London can get the right balance between those two vital ingredients: systems and empathy.

Systems and the city

No one comes to a city to be self-sufficient. City dwellers

are rich because they can rely on often impersonal systems to sustain their lives: from flushing the toilet, to flicking a switch to turn on the light, getting money from a cashpoint, swiping an Oyster card to get on a bus, buying food from a supermarket, or, putting rubbish in a bin and expecting it to be collected. Without a backbone of shared systems cities are chaotic, unreliable and often unsafe.

A system brings together disparate interacting components to achieve a common purpose: ticket machines, escalators, trains, signalling software, all are part of the Underground system, which is part of the much larger public transport system. Not all the systems we rely upon are public: supermarkets, for example, run complex systems to restock the shelves we pull products from.⁴

Yet systems are also methods, processes and rules: a way to do things fairly, transparently and reliably. London's boroughs operate a planning system: a way to make decisions about what should be built. We have systems for welfare benefits, health provision and even parking. The quality of London's legal system, the rule of law and an independent judiciary, is a part of the city's appeal for many immigrants, rich and poor alike. London's much improved education system combines better schools and teachers with better methods for teaching and learning.

Without systems, city life would be chaotic, just as London was before many of its modern systems were put in place.

In 1700 London was the largest city in Europe. By 1800 it was the largest in the world. It was, in Daniel Defoe's phrase, a 'great and monstrous' place. In the summer of 1708 the plague of flies was so dense that dead insects fell like snow, deep enough for people to leave footprints. Bed bugs were so common that even the King had his own bug doctor. Most of the raw sewage produced by the capital's one million inhabitants went into the Thames, which also provided most of the city's drinking water. Life expectancy in the capital was much

shorter than elsewhere in the country. Deaths among children were the norm: each year children made up between 40% and 50% of the city's dead. There was more of everything: prostitutes of all stripes and men with wooden legs, highway-men and pick-pockets, writers and scientists. London was a place of enormous vitality but also of disorder and violence, conflict and disharmony: the Gordon Riots in 1780, which lasted just a week, destroyed ten times as much property as the French revolution.⁵

London's citizens now enjoy longer life expectancy than the rest of the UK because of the innovations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to make city life liveable at scale: mass systems for energy, water, waste, transport and health. City life has to be quantified and planned for otherwise fixed infrastructures can be overrun by growth (London's challenge at the moment) or become an excessive burden as a city contracts (the challenge in declining industrial cities such as Detroit). London is a growing city, attracting the equivalent of two bus-loads of arrivals each day. The city cannot be one of the best in the world with second rate, unreliable systems held together by sticking plaster. As the city's impeccably Conservative Mayor says: it needs to plan.⁶

Our reliance on systems becomes painfully evident as soon as they go wrong: when escalators breakdown, trains are delayed or cashpoints stop dispensing their bounty. London runs on very tight schedules: the tiniest glitch can cause havoc.

Yet cities also rely on empathy and when that elusive, intangible and ephemeral quality evaporates, the city can break down even more profoundly than when its systems fail.

The Dark Matter of city life

Cities are unfolding, daily experiments in how we live together. City life is made attractive by the presence of other people who are not like us, who make different food, dress differently, produce different culture and ideas. We come to cities to make the most of those

differences. Yet different people living densely together do not automatically create a thriving and creative civil society. For that to happen something more is needed.

Creative cities depend on a kind of dark matter, something that must be there to make them work, but which cannot be observed directly. That dark matter is empathy, our capacity to connect with other people who are different from us, to find common ground and to engage in sharing and exchange. That is the basis for the collective genius of city life: collaboration, cooperation and civility.

This capacity for empathy comes in two closely-related parts: it is one part cognitive – an ability to ‘read’ what other people want to do – and one part emotional – caring enough to respond accordingly.⁷

Empathy operates at every register of the city from the micro to the macro. It is present in everyday, minor acts of civility that are essential to make city life bearable, such as the minute positional adjustments made by city residents sitting on a bench to allow enough room for other people. It is there in an innovative economy which depends on the skills of creative collaboration. Fellow feeling gets cities through crisis, most famously in London during the Blitz. Foreign immigrants become UK citizens through a formal legal process; they become Londoners by adopting the civility and manners of the city.

Systems and empathy are the ingredients that make London successful. But ingredients are useless without a recipe. Many of the best recipes use two basic ingredients – tomato and basil, smoked salmon and cream cheese, gin and tonic, bacon and egg, fish and chips. London excels at blending its two basic ingredients in many different ways. The most impressive recent example, as alluded to above, was the 2012 Olympics.

The Olympic recipe

The 2012 Games were an outstanding success of systems, planning and infrastructure. The venues, accommodation, media centres, stations and parks, were built on time, on

budget and to very high standards. Despite widespread scepticism, and slightly to the surprise of many Londoners, the systems worked. Ten rail lines delivered up to 240,000 passengers an hour to the Olympic Park. Nothing broke down; the city was not gridlocked.

The millions who gathered for the Games did so in a highly convivial atmosphere which was friendly, warm, welcoming, generous and celebratory, not just for the more than seven million who went to the Olympic Park itself but in the public events around the Games and across the city as a whole. That was largely due to the social force behind games: the 70,000 volunteer ‘Games Makers’, chosen from 240,000 applicants, who jollied people along, proudly wearing their purple polo shirts. They set a tone of helpful friendliness, and London as a whole followed suit. The systems worked efficiently, but the Games were made by the empathy of Londoners.

Making new recipes

The Olympics were just one example of how systems and empathy can be combined in an extraordinary festival. There are many other ways in which they can be mixed up, large and small, public and intimate, fleeting and lasting. Some of those possibilities are mapped out in the diagram below (Figure 1), which can guide us through London’s strengths and weaknesses.

The vertical axis measures the city’s systems. Low system experiences, at the bottom, would be small scale, bespoke and largely unrepeatable, like going for a walk on Hampstead Heath: it is never the same twice. High system experiences, on the other hand, are repeatable, transactional and quantifiable: the army of people who flow through London’s main railway stations each day want the experience to go the same each time, without a hitch. A city needs experiences along this entire range.

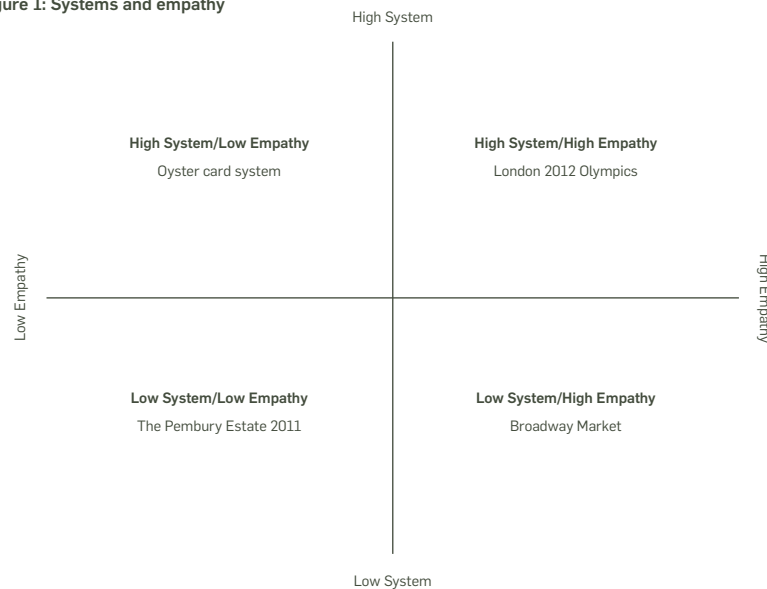
The horizontal axis measures the degree of empathy involved in an experience. In highly empathic experiences people feel a strong connection with and understanding of one another, such as in a discussion with a friend over a meal. Low empathy experiences

are where there is barely any interaction, such as when using the self-service check out at the supermarket. Again, cities need both ends of the spectrum and everything in between.

The city is at its absolute best up in the top right, the Olympic corner, where lots of people use efficient systems to have a highly convivial, charged, shared experience. The worst places to live in a city, and our worst experiences of city life, are down in the bottom left-hand corner where there are few systems and little empathy. This is where the city seems on the verge of break down, functionally and socially. Parts of London, like the Pembury estate in Hackney, found themselves in this position during the summer riots of 2011.

Cities can go too far towards the top left hand corner and become too systematic. Systems designed to do things *for* us start doing things *to* us when they treat us like a number and leave us feeling insignificant. In the 1950s and '60s cities all over the world succumbed

Figure 1: Systems and empathy



to the planner's vision of the city as a machine for living, with people often stranded in inhospitable spaces between busy roads and big buildings. Many of the rapidly growing planned cities of the Far and Middle East are making similar mistakes, with high rise towers, huge malls, wide roads and vast car parks combining to create efficient but soulless places.

People attract people to a city. So in all cities people yearn to find time and space to be with other people in a way which is not programmed and which allows them to connect, browse and linger. These experiences are in the bottom right hand corner of the grid, like an eddy in a fast flowing river: the farmer's market rather than the mall; the quiet local café rather than the rigid format of Starbucks; a small public garden in which to eat lunch with a few other people.

This mix of experiences is available to rich citizens living in affluent pockets in many cities the world. Some smaller, socially homogenous European cities provide this kind of experience for most of their populations. What stands out about London is that it provides this mix for so many, highly cosmopolitan citizens. Yet to continue to lead the world London needs to do even better. To avoid becoming a social centrifuge, London needs better systems to cope with the higher expectations of a growing population, and it needs even greater empathy to keep pace with the city's expanding diversity. We start by looking at the kinds of systems London will need in future.

3 SYSTEMS: MORE, BETTER, DIFFERENT

London is a systems city. It has depended on successive generations of ingenious and far-sighted civic engineers who created the systems needed to sustain a modern city, from railways and roads, to sewers and drains. London's 8.4m people, in 3.38m households, swelled each day by

hundreds of thousands of commuters and tourists, make more than 2.7m tube journeys a day, and two billion bus journeys a year. The centrality of these systems – especially public transport – was borne out by the Londoners we spoke to.

Lucian, a pensioner from North London remarked:

*It is so easy to get around in London,
anytime of the night, anytime of the day,
it's so good. So long as you are on a good
bus route you're sorted.*

Terry, also from the outer edges of north London, put it this way: “When you go to Essex there are no buses: 11pm that is the deadline. After that you're walking.”

Sandra, from south London, drew this contrast:

*My husband comes from Wales and you
have to wait for about an hour for a bus and
on a Sunday there aren't any. If you live in
London they are just there, aren't they?*

However, to keep pace with demand, changing expectations and international competition, London will need three complementary improvements to its systems: more, better and different.

More

London will have to invest in more capacity to support a population projected to grow by 1m to about 9.4m in the next decade, and then to 10m in the following decade. The number of daily trips on all forms of transport is likely to rise to 30m by 2020.⁸ Between 40,000 and 50,000 new homes will be needed a year to cope with growth. Demand for water will soon surpass the current daily supply of 125m litres.⁹ One of the most contentious issues facing the city is whether to expand Heathrow or Gatwick or create a new airport in the Thames Estuary.

London faces a significant challenge to plan, finance and build the infrastructure to support a growing city. Investing in more, new capacity, however, is just part of the solution.

Better

London also needs to get better results from the infrastructure it already has. Planned upgrades to the existing tube network, modernising signalling software, rolling stock and stations, could increase capacity by 33% by 2020, according to some estimates.¹⁰ The Victorian housing stock will need upgrading to reduce carbon emissions and contain energy bills. All this is as much about software as hardware; changing how people behave and use the city's systems will be as important as investing in entirely new systems.

Different

On top of all of that, however, London will need different kinds of systems to respond to the different challenges it faces and to make the most of new technologies. Waste is a prime example. Landfill sites in London are close to capacity and the two remaining sites are due to close within the next decade.¹¹ Sites outside London are increasingly expensive. Reducing and recycling waste will become critical. London already produces less waste per household than the rest of the UK – 385kg per year compared to 431kg – and the proportion of waste going to recycling has risen markedly in the last decade. Yet the city still lacks a really effective, coordinated and integrated recycling system to compare with Malmo, Sweden and Freiburg in Germany.

As it develops these systems, however, it is vital that they are designed to feed the city's sociability. London needs to excel at creating socially intelligent systems. Here are six ways it should do that.

Six ways to create socially intelligent systems

1 – *Change behaviour to make systems more productive*
Cities are places where citizens learn new habits

from one another, through emulation and imitation. Encouraging new norms of behaviour is one way to create new systems out of old, by citizens showing one another how to get better results from the hardware available.¹²

London will need new norms of sharing so people on modest incomes can make the most of scarce resources. One example is the way young people are living with their parents or sharing flats until they are well into their 30s. Many in “generation rent” would say this new norm is being forced upon them. Yet inventive forms of shared living – for young and old – will be essential to London’s future.¹³ One example is the growth of more frugal consumption among the squeezed middle – especially among families – making better use of free local, public facilities. As one of our interviewees put it:

Paddling pools, sandpits, we’ve got the works in Worcester Park. I think it’s amazing for the kids. We did not go anywhere for the summer holidays when the Olympics were on and we didn’t struggle at all.

The decline in car ownership and the spread of car clubs across the city, encouraged by councils and commercial businesses such as Zipcar, is another example of a new norm.¹⁴ More shared car ownership should reduce the need for on street parking which could create more space for cycling and public transport. Berlin is experimenting with an integrated shared mobility system, which allows people to use public bikes, cars, trains and buses all using a single card.¹⁵ London should be developing something similar.

Outside rush hour, London’s transport system works well within its capacity. If people could be encouraged to adopt more flexible working patterns, including home working, and so reduce the pressure during the rush hour the existing infrastructure would be better able to cope.¹⁶

London will need a new wave of shared solutions based on new norms of consumption. People have taken

to the shared Boris bikes with enthusiasm: that should inspire other flexible, shared solutions in housing, work and transport.

2 – Focus on the edges

Large systems can be made more humane if they are softer at the edges where people come into contact with them. Well-designed systems create the impression of being more personal, responsive and friendly, because they have edges and interfaces that are intuitive and welcoming.

One reason people find the Canary Wharf development overpowering is the way the towers front straight onto the street without any attempt to soften the blow. In contrast, the new development behind Kings Cross station has deliberately created softer edges and spaces. In summer children play in the square in front of the Central St Martin’s building, while people sit on the steps down to the canal. Significantly, Canary Wharf’s owners want the new extension to the development, Wood Wharf, to be much more like a normal part of the city, with houses as well as offices, small companies as well as large corporations, and independent retailers as well as outlets for chains. It will have softer edges.

Jan Gehl, who was responsible for much of the remaking of Melbourne and Copenhagen, through investment in cycling, pedestrian walkways and smaller public spaces, is the master of making the hard feel soft. The city streetscape should be varied and irregular, Gehl argues, offering many different niches, including private and semi-private spaces where people can gather, even if the buildings above are large and imposing.¹⁷ London will have more taller buildings in future. That will work so long as those buildings have thoughtfully designed edges that invite social life to develop around them. If not, all social life will wither in the heavy shadow they cast.

Systems which are methods and processes can also be made more humane if they pay more attention to what people need, treat their customers with respect

and communicate in everyday language that people can understand. Transport for London has thankfully not provided its tube drivers with a script to follow when making announcements; they are trusted to do so with a sense of personality. Our panel of Londoners did not like systems, such as parking, which apply impersonal rules without discretion. One of the biggest issues facing London is that a significant minority of people do not feel that they are treated with respect by the Metropolitan Police. Indeed there is a large body of research to suggest that the way the police behave in their day-to-day interactions with the public has a deep influence on people's trust in the police and their willingness to work with them.¹⁸ People want systems with the intelligence to be able to adjust and respond to who they are and what they need.

3 – Invest in the power of small

Investments in small spaces can have a big impact when they are well designed. Although most political attention is focussed on London's big systems challenges – new airports, homes and railway lines – many of the investments which will make the greatest difference to everyday life are much smaller scale.¹⁹

A sociable city creates networks of smaller spaces, accessible through walking, cycling or public transport, so that people are never far from a social oasis. The walks on either side of the Thames from Tower Bridge to Westminster are one example of a walking system linking many places. London's alleys are a hidden asset whether around the Inns of Court, threading through Clerkenwell or connecting Bermondsey to Southwark and Waterloo. In Hackney, where the Regents Canal tow path has become a 'low-line' for cycling and walking, a string of canal-side restaurants and cafés has sprung up.

These networks of small spaces tend to mix the public and private: witness the phenomenal spread of coffee and sandwich shops such as Eat, Costa and Caffé Nero. These chains have created a highly systematic network of places, which deliver reliable, repeatable fast

food to large volumes of people in a hurry and yet also provide others with a space to sit, talk, hold a meeting, answer emails or read a book.

London should do more to celebrate, connect and develop its smaller spaces. One option would be to create on-street 'parklets', shaded, green spaces where perhaps ten people could sit and gather. Another would be to apply the 'Boris bikes' model to chairs and sun umbrellas, to allow people to create ad hoc places to sit in the city during the summer. A third would be to follow Portland, Oregon's example and allow communities more opportunities to create low-cost public art at intersections, to add a sense of personality and ownership in an area.

4 – Retrofit social systems

London is retrofitting itself with a system designed to make the city both more efficient and more social: a cycling system. Between 2000 and 2011 the number of daily cycling trips rose from 286,000 to 572,000 and the number of cyclists increased by 173%.²⁰ Yet as Richard, one of our panel remarked:

One thing that gets me is the fractured nature of the cycle lanes. What I don't understand is you get a section of cycle path and then all of a sudden it ends. What are you meant to do? There are so many people cycling these days. That's my one big thing that can be improved.

The Mayor is investing about £1bn to upgrade the cycling infrastructure, with cycling superhighways, quietways for less confident cyclists and 80,000 more bike parking places to take cycling up to 15% of journeys in central London by the end of the decade. Cities which create cycling systems are cleaner, quieter and more lively, as well as being more mobile (benefitting all forms of transport).²¹

Yet returning London to a walking city, as it was in the eighteenth century, may be even more important, not just to transport and the environment, but also for health. Six out of ten trips in London are shorter than 2km

(1.25miles). Many more of those could be walks if the city was safer and more conducive to pedestrians rather than cars. A 1m increase in the number of walking trips in London would be a 16% increase.²² A 1m increase in cycling trips would be a more than 90% increase. London should create its own versions of the *paseo* and the *ramblas* to promote walking.

5 – *The social tech city*

Cities are acquiring a new digital skin and nervous system which could transform how citizens use them. The mobile phone, with its maps, contacts and web access is the new passport to the city. As information and communication becomes more readily available to citizens all the time, they also become more able to coordinate and organise themselves.²³ These networks, which link people, their computers and their mobile devices, are starting to embrace buildings, cars, goods, shops and workplaces. Better shared information should allow better coordination, reduce duplication and eliminate waste. The Wayz transport app is a sign of things to come: people who sign up for the app generate data about how fast they are moving through the city which in turn alerts other users to where the traffic jams are – simple, social and effective. Public services should become more efficient: the London fire service uses data about households where house fires are most likely, to focus its resources on prevention, working with landlords and tenants' groups.

London should be a standard bearer for the socially smart city, enabling a myriad of social, civic and commercial entrepreneurs to use digital technology to amplify and orchestrate the social life of the city. London should promote digital systems that put citizens more in control, feed its distributed capacity for social creativity and steer clear of a top down, urban operating system run by a large technology company on behalf of the city. Urbanisation and digital technology are two of the most potent forces reshaping how we work and live. London needs to lead the world in their creative combination.

6 – *Build new social systems*

London will need to evolve very different kinds of systems that are highly relational in character: the most glaring example is in health.²⁴

London's specialist acute hospitals are among its most famous brands, from Great Ormond Street to Guy's and St Thomas's and Bart's. The wealthy of the world visit the consulting rooms of Harley St and the delivery ward at Portland Place. It was in London that Cecily Saunders started the modern hospice movement which has inspired emulators all over the world. The city has a world-class medical research infrastructure, much of it clustered along the Marylebone and Euston Roads from the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital at Paddington, home to a global centre for health innovation run with Imperial College, to University College hospital, the Medical Research Council, the Wellcome Trust, the Royal College of General Practitioners' new headquarters and the new Watson and Crick Institute at the rear of the British Library.

These are huge assets. Yet London needs to fashion a different kind of health system over the next decade. The current system was developed to prevent and respond to infectious diseases, which often killed young people living in poor, cramped conditions, in houses with inadequate water and sewerage. These days London's health challenges are long term conditions, often associated with affluent lifestyles, such as diabetes, and the multiple conditions that come with ageing, from dementia to heart and lung disease. Hospitalisation is a very expensive way to treat these conditions. Instead we need more effective prevention and long-term self-management by patients working with professionals and peers in the community. The health systems of the future will not just serve people in hospitals when they fall ill, but enable them to live healthier lives without going near a hospital. That means more emphasis on diet, exercise, relationships and community-based health care provision, from pharmacies to GPs and local clinics, supported by technology in the home and carried about with us. This brings us right back to where we started:

behaviour change. Motivation is the new medicine: motivating people to better look after themselves will be a much more sensible investment than treating them in hospitals once they fall ill.²⁵

A city of empathic systems

London will never have the shiniest, newest, smartest systems in the world. Younger cities in the Middle and Far East, starting from a blank sheet, can afford state-of-the-art infrastructures. Instead London should, I have argued, focus on better and different systems, which feed the city's sociability and so the ability of its citizens to be self-governing, to find their own solutions together. That will mean leading the way with socially intelligent, empathetic systems to:

- encourage people to change their behaviour to make better use of the resources already available, including new norms of shared consumption;
- soften the edges of big systems to make them more human;
- create strings of small places and packets of resources, so people are always close to opportunities for conviviality;
- retrofit pro-social systems into the city, such as infrastructures for cycling and walking which reclaim social space from systems designed around the anti-social technology of the car;
- use the information and communications systems of the digital city to allow citizens to devise better shared solutions to the challenges they face;
- reconfigure high-cost, centralised systems such as health and waste to encourage more preventative, community-based solutions.

4 INVESTING IN EMPATHY

Great cities are places where people see what makes them different as their chief asset. That explains why trade and exchange thrive in cities but also why new ideas and styles in arts, fashion, politics and architecture do. Underlying all these activities is the ability to recognise, connect and make the most of our combined differences. This collective effort to celebrate what makes us different, provides the buzz of a creative city, what the urban theorist Michael Storper calls the “collective genius” of the city.²⁶

The overwhelming majority of our panel of Londoners welcomed the city's diversity as its greatest asset. But diversity and density on their own are not enough. Bridges are required to help people to make the most of what makes them different. The face-to-face contact that people seek in a city, often in tandem feeds the exchange of fuzzy, tacit knowledge, which is difficult to codify, does not travel well, but plays a vital role in innovation. London may not yet be quite as proficient as New York has been in expressing difference; but it is gaining ground fast. London's empathy, civility and conviviality are critical to this.

None of that means London is an easy place to live. Life in London is widely seen as relentless. Sandra remarked: “Londoners are not friendly. Everyone's too busy. No eye contact. You dare not give eye contact.” London is not for the faint-hearted. As Yuroko from south London put it:

I think almost part of London is ruthless. When you're on top of the world London loves you. As soon as you are down and out it doesn't have time for you. London is a place where to experience and enjoy the city you need money, and a stable and supportive network.

You have to be able to stand up for yourself, as Sheena from south London said: “Londoners can spot a

weakness and they will exploit it. You've got to have a mouth."

Indeed, for our panel, the main downsides to life in London stem from how other people behave: rudeness, aggression and crime, exemplified by this exchange between Terry and Amy, in our group of younger people in north London.

Terry: You see an old woman on a bus and she's proper frail and no one can be bothered to give her a seat.

Amy: I was on a bus the other day and there was an old woman and loads of school children and not one of the kids got up to give her a seat. I asked them 'Are you going to get up?' that's really rude.

Becoming a Londoner requires resilience. It also means fitting in. One vital skill is to know when *not* to talk to other people, to respect their privacy, for example on a bus or train. Most of the time getting along with strangers in a city requires a form of peaceful co-existence. Very few of the Londoners we interviewed knew their neighbours other than to say 'hello' in the street. Annie, who lives on what she described as a troubled estate in north London, said: "It's a tower block, I might not see my neighbours for months because it's into the lift and out again." Most were happy to inhabit the city with other people they do not know so long as people did not interfere with one another. Yuroko, put it this way:

When I am shopping I am just in and out. Don't talk to me. I like the fact that in London everyone is doing a million different things and they can just get on with what they are doing.

Yet for a city to come to life the connections between people need to do more than just rub along. People

establish a more intense, empathetic relationships with one another when they are pushed to do so by circumstances or they are pulled to do so because it seems attractive.

Pushed to connect

People make a connection with strangers in a city in exceptional circumstances: a middle aged woman loses her balance on the tube and falls back into the arms of a young man on his way to work. Everyday life in London is peppered with small acts of kindness and consideration that make it bearable.

An even more powerful experience of empathy comes when people respond with fellow feeling to a shared crisis. The silver lining to the 2011 riots was the collective clean up afterwards, conjuring up reservoirs of community spirit left over from the Blitz, a foundational experience of what it means to be a Londoner.

Deeper-seated still, communities form a sense of identity in conditions of adversity. So while some smaller, deprived communities and housing estates may look soulless, as Annie, from the Shires estate in north London, remarked: "It is a troubled estate but actually when you are in it there is a strong sense of community."

In each of these examples – accident, crisis, adversity – bonds of fellow feeling form in response to an external challenge. Empathy helps people cope, and civility helps to make a city safe. But successful cities need more than that. They need empathy to generate new solutions, ideas and understandings. For that cities need to be thoughtfully designed to pull people together, to allow the laws of attraction to work.

Designing for empathy

Empathy becomes a generator when people are pulled to overcome their differences for the sake of creating something larger. New connections do not emerge automatically when density meets diversity; they need to be encouraged into being through thoughtful design and prompting.

Small places

Cities need places that are well designed to attract a mix of people and to invite them to linger and mingle. These are not vast, cold, monumental spaces but smaller, denser, more intimate spaces, where people feel they can relax with one another and make eye contact. Such spaces are not fancy and over designed but adaptable and colloquial. Metre for metre, small, empathetic spaces deliver the biggest social multipliers.²⁷ London has about 50 large parks and open commons but many hundreds of smaller, more intimate spaces. These are the most socially powerful spaces in the city. There are 30,000 allotments within London which provide a place for people to work together on a shared hobby.

Attract women and families

The best design guide for these social spaces is that they should be attractive to women and families. If women and parents feel comfortable in such a space, and feel comfortable about their children using it, then not only will they signal to other women and families that it is a safe space, but their presence will also attract men.²⁸

Food and the convivial class

Those spaces become all the more attractive if they also involve eating food (and sitting outside). Much of London's success as a global city coincides with an explosion of food entrepreneurship, which has created a myriad of smaller convivial places for people to gather. Making it easier for independent, often ethnically diverse restaurants to set up is an essential economic and social strategy for a modern city: an outstanding example is the resurgence of Brixton market around scores of smaller, independent restaurants. More people work in the restaurant business in London than in the high-tech sector.²⁹

Convivial work

The growth of the London restaurant and café trade depends on a workforce for conviviality, whose main

role is to help create situations in which people feel relaxed, looked after and comfortable. Of course there is a danger that 'meeters and greeters' – ambassadors wearing bowler hats – might seem contrived and artificial to London residents. But street wardens, lollipop men and women, local carers, postal workers, local shops and even hairdressers are all part of the conviviality workforce, whose job is to look out for other people. Among our London panel there was nostalgia for bus conductors: people who put a human face to a system (and it is significant that the new Routemaster buses once more feature conductors, with no role other than to ensure passenger safety and provide a human face to the system). As the population ages we will need to expand this community-based, sometimes informal, often peer-supported conviviality workforce of local carers and befrienders. Parking wardens might be less resented if there were given a wider mission to help people locally and not just to enforce parking rules to make money for local authorities.

Objects of public love

Smaller convivial places can be made all the more attractive if they can be intelligently designed around what Bonnie Honig, the American political philosopher, calls "objects of public love."³⁰ Post boxes, old telephone boxes and Routemaster buses are all objects of public love: people feel attracted and attached to them because they are both efficient and pleasing. The Millennium Bridge linking St Paul's Cathedral to the Tate Modern is an object of public love. Several of our interviewees mentioned outdoor exercise gyms sprouting in small parks across the capital as a signal of public investment in well-being. Benches, gardens, playparks and fountains can all provide the focus for people to come together. The point is not to create fancy attractions that people come to look at, but to create public spaces where people attract other people. At a different scale, some of London's fast improving schools are also becoming objects of public love.

Cultural animation

These spaces can take on yet more life when they are animated with events and cultural life. Lucian, from north London, likes to wander around Camden soaking up the cosmopolitan atmosphere. Music, festivals, carnivals and markets all provide the setting for rejuvenating, shared experiences, where people gather together, sometimes in large numbers. Those ingredients are present at the Proms in the Park and the Notting Hill Carnival. The strength of London's cultural sector, its cultural institutions and creative industries, is vital to its capacity for generating empathy. One of our interviewees, James, put it this way:

There are so many free museums and art galleries. And even walking up and down the Thames, there's so much to do there.

Covent Garden stood out for several people as a place where free culture, shopping and food came together. Annie explained:

It's a nice pleasant atmosphere. It's busy. It's got all the buskers which are free, Punch and Judy in the summer. I love it up there. We go a lot with my friends.

Tribes and villages

Our panel identified with London as an idea, a city made exciting by its scale, surprise and diversity. Yet they also all wanted places that they could call home. London is a city of tribes and villages. People who have lived in the city for a while tend to have 'hyphenated' identities.³¹ No one fully assimilated into the city just comes from London: they come from Turnham Green, Dalston, Forest Hill, Brixton or Denmark Hill. No one thinks the rest of London is quite like where they come from. Londoners want to feel they can come back to their own neighbourhood after venturing out into the larger city.

As Richard, from Richmond put it:

There is a sense of community in Richmond because people are living in the same houses for a long time. I know all my neighbours and even if you don't know them you nod your head to them so there's a sense of community, perhaps not like a village community where everyone knows everyone and knows what they are doing but there is a familiarity with other people and that's nice. I've never lived in the centre but I suspect you would not get that there.

Jaya, from Worcester Park, said her sense of community varied from street to street:

On our particular road I don't know anyone but one road down I know about 20 people. It came about because of the children and making friends at school.

When ethnographer Daniel Miller studied households in a single south London street for a year he found that although neighbours often barely knew one another each household had rich and varied social networks which linked them to other people in the city and beyond. Just because people do not know their neighbours does not mean they are socially disconnected.

Social bridges

London's success depends on being able to bridge differences. Those bridges can take many forms: a place, a meal, an event, digital technology, a cause, an object, a market, a hobby, a school, a voluntary association. Strengthening London's empathetic, convivial culture depends on making many more small, thoughtful investments often with local communities and entrepreneurs, finding locally appropriate solutions. That is why London is at ease with itself while becoming an increasingly, open, diverse, tolerant, creative and cosmopolitan city.

Where London is weak

Yet as with systems, there is a lot London needs to do to strengthen its capacity for empathy and fellow feeling.

Time

Empathy can be part of a fleeting encounter, a moment of mutual recognition, a small act of kindness to a stranger, an antidote to the scramble of city life. Yet to go deeper, empathy requires more time, to linger, dwell and establish a relationship, consummated with a degree of regularity to build real bonds. While London does well for casual, fleeting empathy, people are less sure it is conducive to the deeper, longer forms of empathy required to build lasting social capital or to ensure older people in the community are properly cared for. A London that is always churning will not be good for relationships and forms of empathy that require more time.

People like the fact that London is fast moving and yet it can also feel too fleeting and transient to allow people to put down roots or build stronger relationships. Terry explained:

Most of the time now the hours are ridiculous. You get 12 hours a week from a company because there are so many people fighting for work. Companies are getting into the fashion of zero hours contracts.

James concurred: “No one is going to give you a mortgage on one of those contracts”, and Pauline remarked, “Turnover is very high and there a hell of a lot of temporary housing. People in temporary have no respect for where they live.”

Depth

Depth goes with time. London is a welcoming and convivial place for the browsing, affluent cultural consumer. Columbia Road flower market on a spring Sunday morning is a prime example: a traditional East End street market which is now adorned with a host

of shops and food from Portugal, and Spain, France and Japan.

Browsing of that kind involves little of the enduring commitment that leads people to care deeply about one another or the place they live in. A better test of London's empathetic capacity is the extent of loneliness, perhaps the biggest chronic social challenge the capital faces. As mainly young, employed, busy people rush by, an alarming number of people over the age of 75 are trapped indoors, often seeing no one for days on end, the television their main companion. More than a quarter of Londoners say they feel lonely often or all the time.³²

Scale

Fellow feeling operates at different social scales from the intimate to the mass. There is ample evidence that London is attractive to young people who come to the city to form relationships. There are ample places for them to meet. People can also feel a sense of fellow feeling when they are part of a crowd which shares an intense experience: at a concert at the O2; in the very large, mainly African churches in the city's north east. Where London might be weak compared to smaller cities such as Barcelona and Copenhagen is in the intermediate area, as a place where smaller groups get together to do things. One good example of what is possible is the spread of the Park Run movement, in which people come together every Saturday morning in a public park to run 5km together in a friendly, supportive and self-organised way. The Park Run model could be applied to other activities, such as art, walking or music making.

Segregation

Londoners are keenly aware of social distinctions between places that make little sense to outsiders. Yet one cost of this self-identification is that people tend to live in a social bubble, only ever associating with people like them and choosing to remain largely ignorant of people living quite different lives quite nearby. There

is a danger that London could become a diverse, but increasingly segregated city, with people on different incomes living quite separately. London will die if it becomes a city of enclaves.

That is a real possibility if young people on modest incomes feel the centre of the city is beyond their reach because housing and transport costs are too high. The movement of younger people out to the city fringes in search of affordable housing may feed a suburban revival as places such as Leytonstone and Forest Hill become trendy and London becomes increasingly polycentric. Yet it could also breed a sense of resentment. A hint of that came from a group of young people in Enfield, living on the edge of the city, who complained that they felt judged when they went into the centre because they felt it was a place for the rich. London could become a victim of its own success. There are only three London boroughs (Barking and Dagenham, Bexley, and Newham) where people on incomes between £22,000 and £50,000 can easily afford an average family house.³³ The ratio of house prices to incomes has more than doubled in the past 15 years. Meanwhile private rents have also risen: people in rented accommodation earning £250 – £399 per week are on average paying 49% of their wages in rent.³⁴ London could become a winner-takes-all city, in which the already wealthy enjoy increasing returns especially from property, while those unable to get on the property ladder struggle to build up assets.

To ease these pressures London needs something like a city version of a New Deal in which more of the wealth being created in the centre of the city is recycled and reinvested in creating more vibrant, liveable, shared communities on its fringes, equipped with good transport links and local leisure and cultural facilities.

The drama of difference

London is inventing a new kind of urban society. London has become markedly more diverse over the last decade. By 2011 almost 40% of Londoners were born outside the UK, compared with 27% a decade

earlier, and the proportion is much higher among young people.³⁵ London's population is set to become even more cosmopolitan in future. Those immigrants add enormously to the city's vitality. Yet all these different people seem to get on better than ever. About 90% of Londoners say that different people get on well together where they live, up from 80% a decade ago.³⁵ Londoners are far more tolerant of people from different backgrounds than people elsewhere in the UK, and they are far more likely to have friends from different ethnic groups.³⁶

Being a Londoner used to mean coming from the city, perhaps especially from the East End. Now the defining characteristic of a modern Londoner is someone who revels in difference. People are drawn to London because they see in the city an unfolding drama, compelling, exciting, uplifting, hopeful, which they want to be part of, the story of the cosmopolitan, civil, self-governing world city.

The influx of foreign investment into the London property market is a boon to London and an endorsement of the city's global standing. Yet if we want to develop the city's social life we should keep in mind other measures. Is London friendly, tolerant and open to newcomers from different cultures, poor as well as rich? Are there ample social places where women feel comfortable to sit and talk; where parents feel able to let their children play? Are the proportions of people feeling lonely in decline? Is the city a good place to feel cared for as you age well?

5 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Londoners we interviewed displayed a striking sense of optimism about the city. Even in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crash and recession they regard it as an exciting, compelling, attractive place to live. Yet that should not mislead us into thinking that everything is rosy.

London should also be judged by what it does to improve the worst places to live, where systems are weak and there is little social capital to rely upon. In these circumstances life feels like a hard, sometimes dangerous daily struggle for survival. These places are probably the most deprived and desolate housing estates, which are often disconnected from the mainstream economic systems of the rest of the city – malls, shops, markets and jobs, and which from the outside at least seem low on empathy, trust and social capital. The Pembury Estate in Hackney, one of the centres of the riots of 2011, was widely regarded as one such place.

The long history of regeneration shows that new buildings, public spaces, playgrounds and community centres are only an important first step towards renewal. A second vital step is to connect these places to the wider economic flows of the city for transport and jobs. But the most important ingredient is that there is a sense of renewal from within, to change culture and create a sense of local ownership and attachment.

The prospects for these places which have been left behind by London's growth are another critical test for the city's success. Tottenham is just such a place.

Tottenham's reputation among those who do not live there is deeply coloured by riots, on the Broadwater Farm estate in the 1980s and following the shooting of Mark Duggan in 2011. In the ten years to 2008, during an economic boom which brought growth to every community in London's Zone 2 travel area, Tottenham's economy stagnated. All that could change in the decade to come as Tottenham gets more, better and different hardware: a £125m investment in transport links and stations; 10,000 new homes; 5,000 new jobs; a district heating scheme; a major redevelopment of the football stadium; 1m square feet of new retail space; a revived high street which is already attracting designers and fashion outlets; new schools, including one sponsored by Asos, and links with Durham University. Tottenham is ideally positioned: Cambridge, Stansted airport, the Olympic Park, the City of London and Kings Cross are

all within easy reach.³⁷ Yet much of the regeneration of Tottenham will have to come from within as it attempts to become a new model suburb. The systems will arrive, the question is whether Tottenham's vibrant civic life can flower and lay to rest its riotous reputation.

6 LONDON AS AN IDEAL

London is evolving a new ideal of citizenship, one in which the highly diverse citizens of a very big city largely govern themselves. This marks a striking new development. Until now citizenship has been a hierarchical relationship: we are citizens of the state that stands above us. The state accords us rights of citizenship and we allow it power over us, so long as that power is exercised legitimately. Citizenship and the state go hand in hand.

Yet London does not work like that, because it is a very odd, quite weak, kind of state. The GLA and the Mayor, recent creations, exercise important but very limited powers. Most Londoners are not clear what the Mayor does, even if they think he's a jolly good thing. They are even less clear about the GLA. Much of the rest of London is governed by a loose patchwork of local councils which play little role in the lives of most people. Most Londoners regard their local council as distant and largely powerless.

The relative weakness of London's patchwork state means that the most important players in the daily governance of the city are Londoners, who are developing a resilient and mature capacity for self-governance. For much of the time the citizens, in effect, rule themselves because there is no alternative. This is a lateral not a hierarchical sense of citizenship: peers govern peers.³⁸ By chance rather than design London finds itself neither over-governed – a powerful central London state would be a disaster for the city – nor under-governed. There is just enough coordination

to make things work and to invest in the shared infrastructures the city needs for the future. This relatively dispersed patchwork state has helped to create the conditions in which citizen self-governance has emerged. In impressive northern European cities such as Freiburg and Copenhagen, the state plays a much more active role. In many of the cities of the developing world, the government is widely regarded as ineffective and sometimes corrupt. London represents a distinct approach, with public and private, state and civil society, centre and boroughs making for a highly networked form of governance.

That is true in transport where the city needs trunk roads, that efficiently move people from A to B as well as quieter local side streets which are designed to be places for social life rather than cars. London needs both the malls of Westfield and Stratford, and the independent retailers of Muswell and Primrose Hill. London feels safe not primarily because of the system of CCTV cameras but because of the civility of its residents.

London's patchwork state, the Mayor working with thirty-three local authorities, has created its own diversity visible in the city's skyline. Islington, Tower Hamlets, Newham, Wandsworth, Lambeth, Southwark and the City of London allow high-rise developments. Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea do not. If there were a single, London wide planning system, then London's skyline might start to look uniform with tall buildings spread evenly across the city. Thanks to the diversity of approaches taken by the boroughs the skyline looks different as different places pursue their own strategies.³⁹

Yet the patchwork state now faces a profound challenge driven by London's success as the world's prime destination for property investment. Central London's skyline is set to be remade by more than 230 high-rise towers either under construction or being planned.⁴⁰ The Shard, the Walkie Talkie and the Gherkin will be joined by the Quill in Bermondsey, 1 Merchant Sq in Paddington and the Vauxhall Tower at St George's

Wharf. Some of these towers look as though they belong in modern cities in the Far East, like Kuala Lumpur, which makes sense because that is where many of the investors buying them will come from. These towers, mostly for luxury apartments, do not only threaten to remake the skyline. To maintain their exclusivity they will likely create gated zones around themselves, which will be largely empty and dead. Rather than bringing the city to life, many of these towers threaten to overshadow it, reminding us just how much the centre of the city has become remade as a property investment vehicle rather than a place to live.

So far the patchwork state and the self-governing citizen have gone hand in hand in London's success, providing just enough coordination to avoid chaos and just enough local control to provide for diversity. Yet if the patchwork state allows an ill-coordinated rash of anti-social high-rise developments which turn London into an unsightly 'Dubai-on-Thames' then it will have proven to be a failure. The answer is almost certainly not further centralisation but better coordination, more public involvement and tougher planning guidelines to make sure tall buildings do not create social dead zones in their shadow. New York imposes strict conditions on high-rise developments and ensures developers invest in proper public space: London should not sell itself short.

People are drawn to London for all sorts of reasons, to work, study, invest, create art, make music, cook food and find love. But the force of attraction that underlies all of this is the drama of living in a city of such difference. Everyone wants to be a part of that drama, as Yuroko, one of our interviewees put it: "In London you get ten different experiences in ten square metres."

How London creates the conditions for those 10-by-10 experiences is part of its collective genius. London is a large city by European and even by world standards, especially if its hinterland is taken into account. London manages to operate at scale only because it has efficient systems, which stop it grinding to a halt and falling apart at the seams. Yet the dark matter which holds

London together is its capacity for empathy, civility and fellow-feeling. London's big innovation stems from that combination: the large, diverse, largely self-governing city in which civil society is massively more powerful than the state.

The Londoners we interviewed identified strongly with London as an exciting, aspirational, dramatic place. Other cities may have shinier, larger buildings, and systems for transport, water and energy. Only London is creating a new way for people from all over the world to govern themselves at scale. That is why what happens in London in the next few years is of global significance, a model for the world. Everyday life in London is a miracle of cosmopolitan collective self-organisation in which millions of people, usually without much fuss, sort things out for themselves through trade, barter, exchange, collaboration and mutual accommodation. And whereas other large, diverse cities such as Mumbai, Karachi, Lagos and Sao Paulo feel tumultuous, they often also seem on the edge of chaos and violence. At its best London seems tumultuous and yet unruffled.

London is a place for people who revel in difference at scale. London needs to be able to match the different scales and speeds at which people want to live: fast, purposeful and efficient when every second counts; able to linger, browse, sit, chat and watch when they have time. Other cities make that kind of mix available to the wealthy, in places like the cafes of tree-lined Polanco in downtown Mexico City, or in the waterfront complex of bars and restaurants of Cape Town. Those are mere pockets however in vast cities where most people live in shanties and favelas. London makes that mix available to more people, more of the time than any other city in the world.

In the after-glow of the 2012 Olympics London is enjoying a golden moment in which it is everyone's favourite place. There are all sorts of reasons why this golden moment might not last. London is an exciting and edgy place precisely because its systems are just good enough to cope with the pressures upon them

with barely any capacity to spare. The city's culture of civility only just contains its cacophonous and explosive spirit of diversity. London is not cosy and comfortable: to be creative it cannot be too settled. Yet to stay ahead of its own growth, London needs to invest both in more socially intelligent systems for housing, transport, energy, waste and water *and* in better ways for its diverse population to hang together.

London's success could easily prove short lived, especially if the city becomes self-satisfied. The boost London got from the Olympics may soon start to fade. London's cosmopolitan culture is not as well established as New York's, where ethnic neighbourhoods create their own distinctive public spaces. Without continual investment in infrastructure the city could become congested and difficult, especially for those travelling long distances to work. If too many young, hard-working people are forced to the edges of a city that no longer feels theirs, then they may start to feel betrayed. London's tolerance for immigrants may become strained. Immigration is already controversial in the rest of the UK; London is not necessarily immune to these pressures.

There are many ways in which London could get things wrong in the next decade or two. But if the city can avoid those pitfalls then it could turn a golden moment into a golden age in which it embodies an ideal which inspires people around the world.

London's remarkable qualities only come into focus when seen from a wider perspective. Moscow's leaders have decided to annexe the Crimea by force; Damascus is gripped by an awful civil war; public homosexuality has just been made illegal in Lagos; the authorities in Istanbul are trying to ban Twitter; there is no free speech in Beijing; some of Europe's most famous cities seem more like museums; in many of the most dynamic developing world cities such as Mexico City most people live without either basic amenities or the rule of law; a city like Shanghai is undoubtedly impressive and dynamic but it also seems to combine at scale every environmental blight created in the twentieth century.

In a world of cities London represents an inspiring model of future urban society: a liberal, cosmopolitan city, that provides a decent quality of life for nearly all its diverse citizens, in an atmosphere of civil self-governance, underpinned by the rule of law, legitimate institutions and effective systems. It is not nirvana. London is not perfect. But at the moment it represents a kind of society of which most people can only dream.

RESPONSES

NEW HOMES: THE LONDON RECIPE

Richard Blakeway

Charlie Leadbeater's helpful system-empathy framework offers us a useful way of understanding and tackling one of London's biggest challenges: housing.

With London's population heading to 10 million people, there is now widespread, if only quite recent, consensus that more homes are essential to support London's economic prosperity and address historic housing problems—from homelessness to affordability. Yet much of the policy debate is still quite narrow. It focuses mostly on central London, foreign buyers, empty homes, and planning levies. It is dominated by flawed data. Instead the debate should be about what sort of market London needs post-recession and how to get there, with solutions to the housing crisis elevated to the stature of health and education where, give or take, there's been a mainstream and enduring consensus. The challenge is three-fold: build more, build more quickly, and build a bigger choice of homes.

So what's required? The first step is to move on from a largely academic discussion about how many homes should be built (there's capacity for at least 42,000 homes a year, which would be unprecedented post-war) to whether the system is capable of delivering broadly double. That objective runs deeper than questioning whether we have enough skilled workers or bricks being manufactured, although both are real concerns. It is this structural challenge that the Mayor's Housing Strategy seeks to address. Indeed the signs are that London is reaching pre-recession levels of house-building, with numbers of both homes registered to be built, and construction orders placed, the highest on record last year, and over 75,000 affordable homes have been completed since this Mayor was elected. (When completed in two years, the Mayor's affordable homes programme will house an estimated quarter of a million Londoners who would otherwise face living in overcrowded, temporary or more expensive accommodation.)

But to reach levels not seen since the 1930s requires something else: a market completely different to the one we had before the economic crash. This means a wider range of products, affordable to a wider number of income groups, homes being built by a bigger pool of providers, and funding streams other than conventional bank debt. Change is starting to happen. New and more patient forms of capital are coming into the market. Europe's largest pension fund, the Dutch APG, recently signed a deal in Elephant and Castle for purpose-built rent. Legal & General and M&G are investing too. It has been a long haul to convince such institutions to finance residential development at scale, as well as office and retail. In addition there is an influx of private money from India and China into major regeneration projects that the UK market ignored and helping to cement the perception of London as a leading global city.

With this new money come new players, whether contractors morphing into developers, housing associations creating subsidiaries to do more private development, or purpose-built private rent specialists. There is some way to go. For example, how many housing associations will use their enviable position to be creative around development, especially low cost housing for a broader range of households, rather than hunkering down to just management of existing stock. But this quiet explosion of new providers is fundamental to restructuring London's market—we can't double the number of homes being built with fewer developers than in 1994.

It leads us to the second challenge: product. Leadbeater rightly talks about the importance of London being able to accommodate a wide range of households on different incomes and backgrounds. For too long there has been an imbalance in London's housing supply, a binary between stock built to sell in the open market and conventional affordable housing. There has been a real deficit in what the experts call the 'lower mainstream'. London needs a far wider range of products to help working households meet their housing needs

and aspirations, otherwise we risk undermining London's competitiveness with some experts, such as Professor Michael Ball, estimating the loss of productivity as high as £20bn over the next decade.

There are two new products in particular which should be accelerated, purpose-built private rent (which is talked about a lot) and intermediate housing to own (which isn't talked about enough) to meet the needs of so-called 'generation rent'. There is clear emergence of purpose-built private rent, as noted above, supported by new planning policy and public land. The offer is exciting and distinct from buy-to-let, with no fees, longer tenancy agreements, and index-linked rents. Given London's population is growing largely with a net migration of twenty-somethings, and there has also been a surge in families living in private rent, this sort of offer sets a benchmark in the private rented sector as well as continuing to aid labour mobility.

If it is time for a renaissance in purpose-built private rent, last seen with Dolphin Square, the same must also happen with intermediate housing. Intermediate is best exemplified by shared ownership but, aggregated all of the products out there, comes to just 1.7% of London's housing stock despite its popularity. It could be massively expanded, with 250,000 Londoners living in the tenure over the next decade, offering simpler and more flexible financial products, the opportunity to passport and trade shares, and finance from institutions. In addition affordable housing at low rents, which continues at scale, should be prioritised for low income working households on waiting lists.

And these products could also help to accelerate development—a major challenge in London. While there is a focus on landbanking, especially by non-house builders speculating in the market, there is less focus on the pace of development once a scheme has begun. Building homes on later phases of schemes to be rented for a fixed period and sold later could provide homes sooner without undermining the viability of the traditional and reliable build-to-sell house builder model.

That's one aim of the mayor's forthcoming London Housing Bank.

But perhaps the biggest challenge is where to build. It is striking how a polarised debate between towers along the River Thames and the greenbelt, often outside Greater London itself, ignores vast swathes of developable land within the capital. Leadbeater rightly points out the wonderful renaissance around the capital from Dalston to Brockley. Building new homes offers one of the best prospects for economic regeneration. Look at the capital's 200 hundred town centres. More residential, including homes purposely built for older London incorporating new technical and tax incentives to downsize, is a major opportunity for economic regeneration in outer London. The creation of new 21st century garden suburbs on post-industrial land, alongside quality workspace, will transform areas like Barking Riverside into major towns in their own right. Regenerating post-war estates like the Aylesbury, Thamesmead, and Grahame Park, builds more homes, improves the public realm and creates economic benefits by tackling worklessness. Or the 38 Opportunity Areas from Old Oak Common to Croydon, and underused employment land, with the potential for at least 300,000 homes and half a million jobs.

Yet it's not just about the big brownfield sites. London's capacity for housing shows a quarter—over 100,000 homes—could come on small sites often developed by SME builders or indeed councils building themselves, especially were they given new freedoms. It's time to stitch these together with the residential equivalent of Enterprise Zones which helped to transform the docklands. This means developing a series of Housing Zones across London, bringing together planning certainty, capital funding, land assembly (whether releasing public land or acquiring it to stimulate the market) and tax incentives for consumers and investors.

One final word on London's housing mix. Most Londoners' housing experience will never be in a new

build home or affordable housing. Our existing homes must work for them. It's incredible for how long some tenures have had so little policy framework around them. This is changing over the private rented sector with policies to support its growth in a managed way, with accreditation and use of legislative powers to improve what is already a much better product than tenants experienced in the 1970s rent-controlled sector. But other areas are lacking. Private sector leaseholders, for example, have had little protection and face huge legislative hurdles to overcome to have the 'right to manage' to avoid costly service charges, despite there being an estimated 1.5m Londoners affected.

The reforms and innovations proposed and being pursued by the Mayor will set us on the way to meeting London's housing challenge. They will, in Leadbeater's language, help ensure that London's housing 'system' delivers for the city. But Leadbeater is quite right to argue that we need to make sure that London does not just work at the level of system but that it remains a convivial, empathetic city. When it comes to housing that will mean, in essence, that as we build more we also have to build better. We know what people value in homes. They want space, they want high standards of construction, and they want to live in a place that looks and feels like a neighbourhood, with conventional street patterns and a good range of local amenities, and a safe, attractive, green and lively public realm. This can be achieved in high density—both mid and high rise—and the Mayor has helped ensure it will be achieved by enshrining in the highest space and design standards seen in the city since the Parker Morris standards of the 1960s.

It is arguable that London government was expanded as a result of concerns over housing, with the London County Council emerging from the Charles Dilke-led Royal Commission on housing conditions in 1884 and subsequent legislation. It led to decades of action on housing and a long-term and ultimately cross-party consensus with one of the most revolutionary

housing policies in the form of ‘metroland’ and helped to rebuild London. That sort of consensus and long term commitment from all tiers of government and the industry is needed today. And, to be able to rise fully to the challenge, London government again needs more power with a new financial settlement. Notably the capital should retain stamp duty land tax receipts. It is increasingly a London tax but could be reformed to make it more progressive and, together with the proceeds from other property taxes, be reinvested in an infrastructure and quality housebuilding programme to enrich London even further, both economically and socially.

Richard Blakeway is Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land and Property, Greater London Authority.

SYSTEM AND EMPATHY AND THE FUTURE OF LONDON'S PUBLIC REALM

Patricia Brown

They were standing just south of Tower Bridge, in a public transport desert, on a hot summer day. Two women, one elderly, both looking tired, distressed and clearly in need of some help. So obviously so, I called from my car as it inched along in heavy traffic. ‘Can I help?’ I asked. ‘How do we get to Catford?’ came the weary response, in a southern American accent.

What came next was quicker than any attempted explanation; I scooped them into my car and dropped them off moments later at London Bridge station. A few minutes’ drive, but a million miles as far as they were concerned. I learnt that they had assumed that direction signs would point their way from Tower Bridge following their sightseeing day.

But nope; this was 2005 and signs were conspicuous by their absence. Meanwhile, these visitors were hot, lost and out of energy, and certainly not alone, since this was not atypical.

I recounted this story at the opening of the 2006 exhibition about Legible London, the proposed cross-boundary wayfinding system being promoted by my then organisation, Central London Partnership— an organisation devoted to improving quality and navigability of Central London’s public realm. Since then, the system has become a familiar beacon in many parts of the capital, doing what we hoped for when we set out our goal—to ‘give people the confidence to get lost, safe in the knowledge they will get found again.’

Legible London was just part of Central London Partnership’s vision of the capital as a city that puts a subliminal arm around visitors, making them feel welcome in ways that are not necessarily obvious, but evident. We saw this focus on the quality of experience as a key component of London’s future economic success, since it should be self-evident that a city that welcomes and supports people is one that attracts the talent,

workforce and visitors it needs to succeed. It wasn't a breeze to get the concept through. Some people were initially resistant; too difficult, complicated, expensive. Or they didn't see the need, since London's twists and turns, the relationship between the tube and the streets above, the way the river distorted distance were familiar.

For wayfinding read street-works, along with numerous other initiatives that have the capacity to screw up urban life. The ability to put ourselves in others' shoes is a powerful tool in shaping better solutions, reducing the stress of daily life and even providing a sense of being cared about. As a neutral body, Central London Partnership could act as broker of common cause, forging agreement between the many organisations with a stake in London's roads, streets and public realm, and their sometime conflicting interests.

Since those early years of the 21st century, significant effort has gone into figuring out how we balance competing forces in the capital. Indeed, for a city of the size, scale and complexity, London's ecology has had a fair amount of attention in the past decade, both formally and informally.

Congestion charging, bus priority, improved road layouts, refashioned public spaces, cultural events, bike hire and a general upswing in cycling have combined with numerous other smaller, incremental, improvements. All in all they have created a marked improvement in everyday life, equally matched by the transformative effect of technology.

London's economy is being powered by the convergence of creativity and tech, and this growing creative sector is etching a mark on the capital's built form. Lifestyles and choices are different and evident, from transport and business space to the convergence of work and social space, spilling out to the burgeoning café society. In fact, we are all living our lives more publicly; the timid Brit feels less self-conscious about spending time in the public domain, since that call/email/search provides a reason to sit—even if we linger long after the task has been dispatched.

The technological downside is an army of people navigating London's streets and transport deep in conversation or concentration, barely registering their surroundings or taking account of other people.

And taking account of other people is getting more and more important, as the capital's population swells, putting strain on its housing stock, amenities, transport system and roads and street network.

It is on our roads that the battle for space is tangibly being played out, with old conflicts between powered vehicles and pedestrians being joined by throngs of cyclists—up to 52% of peak hour vehicles at some junctions. While we are starting to refashion our roadspace to take account of this but it's not easy. The tension is palpable. Car drivers can act like they have never walked and pedestrians have no truck with cars and cyclists.

We planned 20th century cities, and our road sense and rules, around motorised vehicles. Now we find ourselves, living in a glorious magnet of a city, slowly unpicking where we can to retrofit the needs of people into that system.

Remodelling our physical system cannot in itself create harmony. The initial vision for Legible London was for the wayfinding hardware to sit within a wider movement system for London, one where walkers and cyclists don't live in a dog-eat-dog world, and drivers assured of relatively speedy passage, but are not king of the road.

To achieve that, this cycling, walking, tube riding, bus using, taxi taking car driver thinks we need to plan our ecosystem empathetically, with the needs of the diverse users as just the starting point. Let's create and communicate new rules of the 'road', fit for our time, where the ability to move in a pleasant and easy manner is a right. And respect for each other is given.

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THE OLYMPIC RECIPE: SYSTEM AND EMPATHY IN EAST LONDON

Richard Brown

London is not well-served by stock footage. The default establishing shots, of red buses chugging round Piccadilly Circus or over Westminster Bridge, say little about the real character of the city. Still less do they reveal what Charles Leadbeater calls the ‘dark matter’ of London, the unseen forces that enable millions of people from across the world to live and work together successfully.

Reading Charles Leadbeater’s account of how systems and empathy work together to make London a success, I reflected on how the city has unfolded itself to successive generations of newcomers. On arriving in London, I was awed and daunted by its systematic frenzy, by the crowds surging in and out of rail and tube stations, by the speed and intensity of shoppers and workers thronging through West End streets, by the feeling that you had to leap into the maelstrom or risk being spat out.

Over time the city begins to reveal its riches. You discover quieter streets and byways, and begin to explore on foot or by cycle rather than emerge blinking from the tube network. You may still not talk to your next-door neighbours, but you find that every niche interest group or subculture—from brutalist architecture fans, to gay soul aficionados, to experimental bakers—can find a network of like-minded people. And you start to savour an urban character that does not reside in huge set-piece buildings and spaces, but in myriad juxtapositions of scale and style, from the churchyards converted to pocket parks in the shadow of City towers, to the medieval street patterns of Southwark encircling Tate Modern.

As you find your place in the city’s systems, London becomes much less daunting; the moments of empathy more noticeable. And, in recent years, the city’s deep character has become much more easily accessible. Initiatives like the Legible London walking maps have shown visitors how to navigate above ground as easily as underground. Tourist guides now celebrate markets and

streetlife as well as museums and palaces. And a new era of digital connection has broadened the networks and knowledge available to Londoners and visitors alike, enabling and fuelling, rather than substituting for, face-to-face meetings and conviviality.

Charles Leadbeater cites the London 2012 Olympics as the epitome of high-system-high-empathy London, a golden moment when the construction and logistical challenges of the world’s biggest sporting event were successfully met, creating the platform for a celebration that seemed to permeate every corner of the city. London Legacy Development Corporation, which is managing the legacy of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and its venues, is trying to learn from this success.

During the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Park hosted events that will last in people’s memories for a lifetime. In coming years, there will be more opportunities for the excitement of mega-events, when the Park hosts Rugby World Cup matches in 2015, or the World Athletics Championships in 2017. But these events will be exceptional; we want Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park to be somewhere that works as well on a wet Thursday afternoon in February as on a sunny match day in the height of summer.

This has meant remodelling the Park to create a platform for conviviality—from the macro to the micro; creating a public space that can still accommodate crowds numbering tens of thousands, but will also allow for smaller-scale interactions and connections, through everything from dog-walking, to nature trails, to theatre and dance workshops, to kick-about football. As Leadbeater says, it is these local interactions, fostered in small spaces and local places, which people often value most about the city.

The Park is flanked by Hackney Wick to the west and Stratford’s Westfield shopping centre to the east, and draws on both of these contrasting neighbours. Westfield attracts 40 million people a year to shops offering everything from designer labels to locally-made Indian sweets. Alongside the Stadium, Aquatics Centre and

ArcelorMittal Orbit, Westfield is reinventing Stratford as a new growth pole for east London, attracting world-class institutions like University College London and the Victoria and Albert Museum, as well as an increasing number of businesses and public agencies seeking new office space.

On the other side of the Park, Hackney Wick and Fish Island offers a completely different—and differently scaled—model for urban re-invention and success. Old warehouses and yards have been adopted by a thriving community of artistic, creative and manufacturing businesses, from circus performers, to print shops, to fish smokeries, to micro-breweries. Across the canal from Hackney Wick the former Olympic press and broadcast centre has been reborn as ‘Here East’, sub-dividing 1,000,000 square feet of workspace for small and medium sized enterprises, plugged in both to the excellent digital infrastructure left by the Games, and to the ecosystem of creativity and entrepreneurialism that has revitalised Hackney Wick. High system and high empathy.

The day before I wrote this, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park reopened to the public following its conversion. 40,000 people thronged the walkways and lawns, exploring the new fountains, playgrounds and attractions of the South Park Plaza, as well as the calmer riverbanks of the North Park. The crowds, guided by a new generation of volunteers, moved smoothly from the Underground Station to the Park; families were watching children playing together to create a joyful racket in the Musical Maze; visitors were creating their own paths and seating places, heedless of designers’ intentions. Londoners were again coming together, softening and adapting systems to create a platform for empathy.

Richard Brown is Director of Strategy at the London Legacy Development Corporation.

LONDON'S SQUEEZE

Rock Fielding-Mellen

Charles Leadbeater’s description of the interplay between “systems” and “empathy” sums up the key ingredients of London’s current success. The emphasis he places on the “empathy” side of things, and the explanation of how they contribute toward the “collective genius” of cities, is particularly valuable because they can too often be overlooked when planning the big investments that a growing city needs.

Charles also highlights some of the challenges that London faces. However, I wasn’t quite as convinced by his proposed solutions as I was by his diagnosis. I’m sure that London does need “more, better and different” investment in its big “systems”, but more recycling, retrofitting our Victorian housing stock with better insulation, and encouraging more journeys on foot are not going to meet many of the major challenges identified by Charles.

From my perspective as the Cabinet Member responsible for housing and regeneration in Kensington and Chelsea Council, I would have liked to see more ideas about how we can change our current systems both to increase the supply of development land and also to increase the capacity of the house-building industry. But even more important, given the emphasis placed on “empathy”, is what can be done to preserve the cohesion and sense of belonging that our mixed communities currently provide.

Like London, Kensington and Chelsea is a truly mixed community. It is well-known for its wealthy residents, expensive properties, smart shops, snazzy restaurants, and world-class cultural and educational institutions. But despite being one of the most expensive areas anywhere in the world, almost 25% of all housing in Kensington and Chelsea is socially rented, and Golborne ward, in the north of the borough, was ranked as the joint most deprived ward in London in 2012. Fortunately, however, it is not just the affluent and

cultural consumers straight out of a Richard Curtis film that love living in the borough. In fact, a recent study by the London School of Economics and Octavia Housing demonstrated that people on the lowest incomes also love living in Kensington and Chelsea because the opportunities for them and their children outweigh the strains and costs it entails. To my mind, it is this very mix that provides much of the borough's charm.

In Kensington and Chelsea, we already focus on many of the small, socially intelligent investments that foster connections and relationships: street trees, community kitchen gardens, outdoor gyms, street markets, pop-up restaurants and much else besides. Charles is right in that it is typically these things, rather than the twice-weekly bin collection or planning system, that win the affections of local people, that make them feel that they belong to a community, and that can help to bridge the differences between the various interlocking tribes.

However, as Charles points out, there are serious challenges to maintaining the civility, fellow-feeling, and tolerance that currently make London, and Kensington and Chelsea, such successful places. One such challenge that particularly concerns me is the ever-diminishing supply of housing that is affordable for hard-working households on middle-incomes.

In Kensington and Chelsea this problem is especially acute. In 2012, an annual income of £85,000 was needed to be able to buy a one-bedroom property in the least expensive part of the borough, while an income of over £58,000 was needed to rent a comparable property in the private sector. However, this problem is spreading far and wide, with ever larger swaths of London becoming unaffordable to all but the most well-off. It is not just the 21-year-old graduate management trainee at a high street bank or the newly qualified teacher that has little hope of renting, let alone buying, their own property in central London; it is also becoming increasingly difficult for the solicitor, engineer, or middle manager at a major multinational corporation to buy a family

home anywhere other than the outskirts of London. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that people on middle incomes are also effectively excluded from all social housing, for which the eligibility criteria prioritise only those most in need. Therefore, what have been finely-balanced mixed communities now run the risk of becoming “dumb-bell” communities that are home to those at either extreme of the income spectrum, but not to those in the middle. As Charles points out, there is a growing risk that our overlapping “tribes and villages” become starkly divided enclaves, from which any outsiders feel excluded. Without that gel in the middle, the heady mix of diversity and density could stop generating choice and creativity, but instead start generating envy and discord.

So what can be done to meet this challenge? It is certainly necessary to double the supply of new housing in London, but even if that is achievable, will it be sufficient to mitigate this risk, especially if increasing house prices continue to outstrip any growth in earnings? I suggest not. Nor even will avoiding the mistakes of the past and designing in the socially intelligent small spaces and investments so clearly outlined by Charles.

I propose that the Mayor, the Councils, and London's developers must have a renewed focus on providing more “intermediate” homes, for sale or for rent, specifically targeted and made affordable to those households with annual incomes between £18,000 and £85,000. I know that some people, from the left and from the right, will flinch at the prospect of subsidising housing for people earning up to £85,000 a year, but I think Charles' description of the critical role of “empathy” goes a long way towards explaining why it is important for us to ensure that all parts of London can remain home to at least some people from across the full spectrum of incomes.

This proposal is not revolutionary as the Mayor and some Councils are already heading in this direction, but London has a long way to go in order to deliver

the intermediate homes that are needed, and this issue needs more prominence in public policy debates.

In conclusion, Charles is spot on when he says “Great cities are places where people see their differences as an asset.” But to ensure that remains the case in London, and in Kensington and Chelsea, we need to preserve the civility and tolerance that stems from the overlapping and intermingling of different “tribes and villages”, rather than allowing our magnificent city to be divided into separate enclaves and ghettos. That is why we need to take some radical steps to increase the supply of new housing, and to ensure that enough of that new supply across the whole city is affordable to people on middle incomes.

Rock Fielding-Mellen is Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Property and Regeneration, The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

PLANNING FOR EXPANSION

Sir Peter Hall

Charlie Leadbeater raises two key issues: efficiency and empathy.

The efficiency of the infrastructure of London—or of any other city—is a product of two basic elements: investment, meaning money, and management. London’s basic rail network has seen a spectacular improvement since the end of the 1990s, when it was literally falling to pieces. It was vital to upgrade a system that ranged in age from 100 years (the deep-level tubes) to 150 years (the sub-surface Underground, which celebrated its centenary in 2013). At huge cost and no little disruption to weekend services, it has been done and is being done. It will soon be completed with new trains for the remaining lines. It is right that this was prioritised ahead of ambitious new networks like Thameslink and Crossrail. Desirable as they may be, they represent a future bonus to future Londoners. We were right to stress everyday improvements in the here and now. Coupled with a notable upgrade in management, they are producing a system that offers “Good Service” virtually every day, all day—an almost Japanese level of competence. And that massively matters to Londoners in their everyday lives.

Empathy is of course very different. Charlie Leadbeater suggests that the key is to create lots of good urban spaces where people can meet and relate. Fine, and they did it outstandingly in Barcelona, twenty years ago. But northern-European London is not southern Barcelona, and the spaces may need to be different—or, if the same, managed for winter warmth.

Whichever, what is above all needed is sensitive appreciation of small urban spaces. Malcolm Grant, as Provost of UCL, managed it brilliantly there by turning desolate residual spaces into places of animated meeting, both between the buildings—often, behind the classical quad, nondescript and uninviting—and inside them.

But in order to get empathy, you have to get people to be empathic. This is easy for people who have plenty of experience of living and working in London's rich ethnic-cultural mix. It isn't so easy for those who don't. I notice it on Ealing Broadway station, where scores of people fight to get into the first door of the train while the attendant desperately broadcasts that there are five, or seven, other doors — presumably because many passengers don't understand him. They may never learn, but their children will. It will take a generation.

There's another point about planning. The physical qualities of London that Leadbeater describes, the London of village spaces, were those that the great Danish architect-planner, Stein Eiler Rasmussen, wrote about in 1937, in what is still the best book on London ever published — *London: The Unique City*. Because London very early escaped its medieval city walls, it was free to spread — especially after the coming of the railways, which were creating semi-detached London suburbia as he wrote. Rasmussen warned about continental architectural ideologies, above all those coming from Le Corbusier, which could turn London into a very different high-density high-rise city. That happened to a degree after World War Two, but the effect was muted because for forty years London actually lost people as Londoners migrated to new towns or new suburbs.

Since the mid-1980s the process has reversed; London's population is now almost back to its 1939 peak of 8.5 million, and two million more are expected by the mid-2030s. That would turn London into a very different and less attractive place, and already the Observer's architecture critic Rowan Moore is warning about the 230 high-rise towers that threaten to rise above London in the next few years.

Of course, it may not happen, and I personally doubt that it will; the housing price bubble is already forcing people out along the commuter lines, some for considerable distances, as they did fifty years ago. But

meanwhile the stresses and strains — on the streets, in the shops, on the trains — will worsen; London will become a less convivial city, Londoners less empathic people. That is the real challenge we should be facing as London's planners.

Sir Peter Hall is Bartlett Professor of Planning and Regeneration, University College, London.

THE DELICATE ACT OF GOVERNING LONDON

Tessa Jowell

London as described by Charlie Leadbeater is the London I recognise. London is a highly empathetic city — if you travel on the bus or tube at rush hour people understand how to deal with being crammed together. From this intimacy, often conversations rueful or otherwise, can start. I admired a young woman's trousers the other day and there was a chorus of approval from other women leaning on her. There are other moments like the gentle courtesy extended to a pregnant woman or older person as a seat is offered up.

It is easy to sound whimsical about these encounters, but they illustrate how we are an optimistic city not a pessimistic one. We need London to continue to be open and in touch with the highly elusive characteristic which is the soul of our city. Charlie Leadbeater is right to point out, however, that the bonds we create to navigate our capital city are fragile. The increasing inequality we are witnessing, whether in the form of housing wealth, health inequality, wage differentials or intergenerational difference, risks creating two Londons—a London of the super-rich who buy properties and rarely live in them, and a London of the poor who would like to enjoy all the city has to offer but are excluded from it.

Of course tackling these inequalities is no easy task. But among other things, we need deepen and extend the sense of belonging that comes with a rich and accessible public realm. Our public squares, food markets, our glorious parks, the café culture developing on our streets, our art galleries free to enter—all this is London's public realm where people meet as equals.

Much of this can happen by chance, but the role of government is to coordinate, not exhort. Perhaps this is where I diverge slightly from Charlie's analysis. It is true that much of what makes London special grows organically. Look at Tech City in Shoreditch. The entrepreneurs who settled there did so not because of state planning or dictat, but because of the low rents and

diverse culture. Shoreditch was avant garde—simply an exciting place to live and work. In order to harness that potential for growth, however, both local and national government had to recognise the need to invest in better infrastructure—improved transport links, high speed broadband, and buildings such as the Broadcast and Media Centre in the Olympic village, which have become the home of new tech industries to create a tech corridor.

In London, as other great cities, Government should hold out an enabling arm, but this is delicate. I remember a GamesMaker during the Olympics telling me how much more people were prepared to give as long as they were not being told to do it by the Government.

I have been struck recently by the example of The Mayor of Oklahoma, Mick Cornett, whose city had been named as one of the fattest in America. On New Year's Eve in 2007, Mick Cornett announced that his city was going on a diet and collectively everyone was going to work to lose a million pounds in weight. Inspired by his own need to lose weight, Cornett embarked on an extraordinary mission—to inspire his residents to make their own weight-loss journey while changing the city around them.

Oklahomans reached their goal, but in the meantime, Cornett convinced them that the city needed to stop relying on the car and focus on walking. Streetscapes were changed, businesses started offering discounts on healthy food to anyone on the diet programme, and Cornett won re-election three times. Mayor Cornett put his own frailty on show and turned it into a characteristic of leadership.

Closer to home, citizens are taking matters into their own hands. Through an organisation called North London Cares, young professionals are addressing the huge issue of older people's isolation by hosting film nights, international cooking evenings and story-telling. Over two years, 720 volunteers have engaged with 900 older people on a regular basis, building relationships and sharing history and experience. In both cases, citizens are reshaping the character of their city. A global city

such as London will always find new challenges, not least because of swift migration and growth, but the lesson is that politicians must be open to the character of their city and not be part of a pompous ruling elite.

Let's take the increase in cycling in London. There has been a huge increase in cycling, but cyclists are not yet fully accommodated. There needs to be a conscious shift of the city to ensure as this the growing ranks of cyclists feel safe. Charlie refers to Jan Gehl, the Danish architect who created the notion of the cycling city and revolutionised Copenhagen. In a lecture earlier this year at the Hackney Empire he remarked, that cycling policy in London seems designed for "people who consider cycling an extreme sport." He pointed out that in Copenhagen 56% of cyclists are women and they are from all age groups.

Gehl's key message was that too often cities were shaped by the grand ambitions of planners and politicians rather than organised and shaped to meet the needs of its residents. That is not to say he rejects the role of politicians altogether. In fact he suggested that good city leaders with the right powers can make all the difference to a city. This is why London must continue to fight for more powers for its Mayoralty—when only 7% of taxes raised in London stay in London, it's little wonder that London does not always work for its citizens or that they feel a disconnection between them and their government.

I want to evoke one last gorgeous Olympic memory that captures the pride and identity of London. There were two technical rehearsals for the opening ceremony to which about 120,000 people were invited. At the beginning Danny Boyle simply asked that nobody would reveal what they saw in order to #savethesurprise. Nobody did. This coming together of the community can happen again. Indeed in an empathetic city such as London, it is only a matter of when.

Tessa Jowell is MP for Dulwich and West Norwood. She was Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, 2001–2007, and Minister for London and Minister for the Olympics.

DEVELOPMENT AND EMPATHY

Paul Katz

The balance between empathy and systems in cities—between that which makes them operate efficiently and that which makes them resonate socially—is of great importance. Architecturally, cities showcase their empathy and systems through their public spaces and skylines. If London is perhaps currently the most admired city in the world it is because of the balance it has struck between these two ingredients.

Just compare London to two of its closest comparators, New York and Hong Kong—one particularly strong on empathy and the other on systems.

In New York, even some of the most fundamental systems were established with a remarkably empathetic logic, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's flat-fare subway scheme being a prime example. Instead of choosing a usage-based fare structure, authorities chose a flat-rate fare structure in designing the current scheme to reduce population density in the city center, which also strengthened ethnic enclaves. Communities developed and flourished, and today as many as 800 languages are spoken in the city. In New York, a set US\$2.50 fare pays for any distance of travel on the nearly 700 miles of available subway track, whereas in London and Hong Kong, subway fares range significantly depending on travel distance, from GBP £2.20–8.90 (US\$3.65–14.76), and from HK\$4.00–46.00 (US\$0.52–5.93).

Public spaces in Hong Kong tend to emphasise systems at the expense of empathy. Escalators in the MTR operate 50 percent faster than traditional escalators. An intricate network of covered walkways links one kilometre of commercial and office developments in the Central district. The Star Ferry and street trams are popular attractions—nostalgic yet frequent and reliable means of public transport. Although Hong Kong residents are able to commute safely, quickly, and in any weather, these places put empathy to the test. The highly-efficient trains and buses

facilitate significant cross-border tourism, prompting frequent newspaper editorials complaining of pedestrian density. Domestic workers picnic on public footbridges in the luxurious Central district on Sundays, causing the affluent to avoid these areas during those times. The urban realm is both a product of its high-efficiency systems and victim of their shortcomings in the realm of civic empathy.

In some cases, cities can use innovative systems to strengthen empathy, such as Hong Kong's Central-Mid-Levels Escalators, New York's High Line, and London's Millennium Bridge. In Hong Kong, the outdoor covered escalators help about 50,000 people commute to work every day, and for the past two decades, have helped to create one of the liveliest neighborhoods in the city. New York's High Line has quickly become one of the City's most sought-after public spaces for residents, fostering a renaissance (and in the case of Hudson Yards, a naissance) in the neighborhoods it touches. Similarly, London's pedestrian-only Millennium Bridge creates new links and communities, and has inspired cities around the world to want a South Bank and a Tate Modern of their own. Among denser, wealthier, and more developed modern cities there is a growing consensus around the importance of inventing new and better public spaces, which are increasingly pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly.

And among the same cities, the rise of the question, "Who owns the skyline?"

New York's skyline belongs more to the idea of individual expression and ownership. Anyone is free to name and create, as evidenced by the more than 5,000 designers who submitted entries for the 9/11 Memorial. New York tries to protect the general good through panels, development corporations, and public reviews, though these have relatively limited power and only rarely prevent or limit development. Buildings like the Empire State, though privately run, feature lights that celebrate local sports teams, community events, and charitable organizations. And by offering a frame in

which to work freely, New York's street grid offers a kind of flexibility that is lacking in London. During the last period of the Bloomberg administration the Department of City Planning introduced the idea of 'up-zoning' a large swath of Midtown Manhattan to encourage redevelopment; although not originally approved, a version of this will probably be introduced by the new administration. Even the construction of towers over 1,000 feet overlooking Central Park has sponsored a public debate that pales a bit in comparison to those taking place in the other two cities.

Recently, Hong Kong's debate on density and height has been more intense than either New York's or London's. Pollution and congestion raise grave concerns on quality of life issues. The Chief Executive, local government, and Beijing are all discussing legislation to curb emissions and regulate density. The Building Department's new limits on the development of and height of buildings stifle growth and further inflate property value—so much so that local media is full of London high-rise apartment listings, and Hong Kong residents ironically contribute the pressures of density in London.

Hong Kong's skyline further highlights the strengths of its systems and sheds light into its empathetic condition. Land value and competition among developers have pushed the city both horizontally into Victoria Harbour and vertically in the last three decades, with the most iconic towers sitting on reclaimed land. Hong Kong's tallest building, the International Commerce Centre, sits above a retail and infrastructure hub, connecting to the airport in 20 minutes, and, in a few years, to Shenzhen in nearly the same time. The skyline is used to attract visitors, with 45 buildings participating in a nightly light show (and dozens more sporting vivid LED displays 24/7). And yet, of the hundred tallest towers in the city, only one is named after a person.

The quality of the public debate on systems and empathy is one of London's great strengths, something manifest in the 2012 Olympics which beat skepticism

with new rail lines, no systematic failures, and high national camaraderie. But London knows better than to rest on past laurels and ignore the future. Coping with the population increase, the 400,000 homes needed in the next decade will dictate the evolution of the skyline. Public awareness is at an all-time high, with education forums like New London Architecture and with Sirs Antony Gormley and Anish Kapoor leading campaigns against mediocre development. London is indeed exceptionally poised—and its people exceptionally engaged—as it becomes ever more the world's favourite city.

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TWO CHEERS FOR LONDON

Derek Myers

For a world city with antiquity, London has had too few essayists. The contribution by Charles Leadbeater is therefore a splendid addition. His vision of London as a thriving organism fed by good systems and the ties that bind-human empathy is attractive.

London matters because it is the default magnet for young people across the UK and beyond. Young people join London as, in a less sophisticated age, young boys joined the army. London can take you in, show you a good time, and spit you out if you do not adjust.

My parents were Londoners when that was a less complicated definition, but like others were bombed out to the suburbs and settled in Estuary Essex. Like others, I moved to London, for work, for love, for the good times. London has delivered for me, and I have tried to make that reciprocal.

But London life is tough, and to make it sensible to live in London you have to ride the thing. London is too noisy, too scruffy, too threatening to enjoy if the downsides are not balanced with the upsides—the events, the museums, the shopping, the big nights out.

This sense of London as prize-fighter—awaiting new contenders but knowing it will outlast all comers—explains why few of us are Londoners now, but why all the world feels they could be Londoners for a while. London is home to 150,000 Russians and 300,000 Arabs, is the 6th biggest French city and offers a place to live, play and hide to those with generosity, and otherwise, in their hearts. These London dwellers know they lived somewhere before and will likely move on again. In two clicks they are skypeing or calling their loved ones across the globe. London is the place they are, not the place they have settled. Why else do affluent Londoners buy a second home elsewhere? Why else is London the place for a second home if you are a successful business sort, actor, celebrity, anywhere else in the world? London is a nation state, but a nation without a flag—no common

heritage, no single football team, and little to wear as a badge outside the tourist tat produced in Taiwan.

If we want London to stay successful—out of local pride, economic realism or simple competitive instinct—then we must start with a reasonable assessment of where we are now.

London is much less scruffy than it was 20 years ago. Its central boroughs, buoyed by their ability to milk motorists without rebellion, have invested well in streetscape and could be choosy about inward investment into new buildings.

But London's housing supply is in crisis. Only two boroughs out of 32 offer house prices accessible to those on ordinary; nurses'; teachers' wages. Too many developments are aimed at young professionals without children. There are too few housebuilders. The land supply system is not working.

Transport infrastructure though more productive is struggling to keep up. Radial routes remain poor. Travelling is to be endured not enjoyed.

London's policing is dogged by scandal; a persistent sense that the force is alien, drawn from white cops riding in on their free travel passes from the home counties, to stop and search London's united and dis-united nations.

London has too much traffic. Planners have lost the confidence to plan freeways, so every way is a rat run now.

And Austerity threatens. With 230 further very tall buildings to be erected there will be many reasons to look up. But London can get easily degraded if street cleansing, road repairs and basic maintenance are diluted and deferred. The test of London's quality is not what we see when we look up but what we see when we look down.

Leadbeater's London is praised for high system, high empathy places. The examples are from London's central core—the Zone 1 from which international visitors never stray. But not every London places works so well. The persistent underachievement of Tottenham High Road, the scruffiness of King Street, Hammersmith,

the relentless chicken shops of Walthamstow. More reside here than in the buy-to-leave mansion flats of the core. So London's success must not be deepened but widened. We do not want a city with York Stone paving in Kensington but tarmac in Hounslow. London is a city built on class boundaries, but we must resist allowing them to rip London apart.

London needs better market provision or more market intervention. Why is broadband coverage so patchy? Why are gated communities allowed at all? Why cannot the city's residents be assured a GP appointment, an affordable gym, clean air, or an affordable home?

Commendably Leadbeater's essay drew on the reported experience and views of real London residents. We must respect their perspectives. Prominently sad amongst these was a dismissal of local government as a force for good, or a stimulator of empathy.

These Londoners saw councils as bossy bureaucrats, most likely to spring out from hiding to punish motorists. Councils' roles to protect the vulnerable, police food shops, deter selfish development and recycle cash to pay for chores we do not wish to do individually, or sustain things we want to take for granted, are not well acknowledged.

And yet it seems to me that local government, if local enough and government enough (as in benign, honorable but decisive), offers probably the only chance to encourage the humanisation of the city. Councils can grant aid innovation, recognise service, boss bullies and speak up for minorities.

Leadbeater says that systems are necessary but not sufficient. Empathy is needed to ensure that cities are enjoyable.

Testing ourselves against London is fun. But any test is best done within clear rules and limits. Empathy takes a generosity of heart, but also a sense of security and a platform of having basic needs met. Empathy will flourish where the greedy are only a discredited minority. Settled Londoners and transient Londoners alike have

much to gain from shared kindnesses, respect, civility and trust, as well as a place whose systems work.

Derek Myers recently retired as joint Chief Executive of the London boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham. He is Chair of Shelter and a trustee of Centre for London.

SUSTAINING LONDON'S UNIQUENESS

Ben Rogers

Reading Charles Leadbeater's essay I kept thinking about Stein Eiler Rasmussen's great book, *London: Unique City*, published 80 years ago this year (1934). Of course Rasmussen, a Danish architect, planner, historian and anglo-maniac, did not employ Charles' system-empathy framework. But his book can be read as a history of a city that has managed to do system and empathy in uniquely successful ways.

London: Unique City revolves around a simple contrast between Continental cities like Paris or Frankfurt and London.

Most European cities, argues Rasmussen, had always had two characteristics. Firstly, their development had been tightly constrained. For centuries they had been kept to the limits provided by their city walls. Secondly, they had long histories of strong autocratic government. These characteristics were closely linked. Autocratic governments tended to prohibit or discourage development beyond the city limits, because it eroded their tax base and security. This constraint had two repercussions. These cities did not grow as fast as they would otherwise have done. And insofar as they did grow, it led to high-density apartment living, which Rasmussen believed to be obviously undesirable.

This was only one example of a more general pattern—continental cities were not designed so much for the benefit of their inhabitants as for their rulers. Nearly a half of Paris was cleared by Baron Haussmann when he remodeled the Capital in the 1860s. And the new model Paris served, Rasmussen contended, served ordinary citizens badly. Haussmann's avenues and monuments were good for marching armies and for showy emperors and kings, but less good for the many residents who were squeezed out of the city or squeezed into apartments. Investment in transport was similarly governed by the interests of the ruling class. Money went into grand projects like roads linking administrative and military

centres—Paris to Lyon, say—but not into enabling extramural suburban development.

London evolved in a very different way, largely because of the City. By the end of the middle ages the City had emerged as an important European economic centre with strong traditions of self-government. The crown was always dependent on city, and so the crown's ability to impose its will on the city—to remodel it in the crown's image or interest—was limited. After the Fire of London, Christopher Wren and a number of others produced masterplans for the City, complete with wide avenues, large squares, and regular square blocks in the best European fashion. Charles II was much taken by these plans, but their realisation would have in effect involved the expropriation by the state of much of the City, and the City was not having that. The result was that a new version of the old City was built, albeit in stone rather than timber, and with somewhat wider streets and higher, more regular buildings—and some fine new churches, chief among them St Paul. But the new City was closer to the old City than to Wren's plans.

Another significant feature of the City of London was that it was, by international standards, very small. Rasmussen shows for instance that it much smaller in area than Paris or Cologne. It was very hard to contain its growth within its walls. At the same time, London's relatively peaceful history—the city hardly ever faced the threat of invasion—meant there was little danger in developing beyond its walls. So as the City grew and prospered, its burghers typically built their homes outside it. Villages around it gradually coalesced into a single larger city, but a polycentric one (albeit with a strong business pole in the around St Pauls, and a strong religious, political and administrative one in Westminster). The resulting conurbation was relatively low-rise, irregular and verdant. Other features of this city also stood out. An English mania for outdoor games and sports ensured large areas of the city were preserved as parkland. The attempts by developers to encroach on this were fiercely resisted. Secondly, transport systems tended

to be developed privately—this was true first of roads, and then rail—in a way which enabled the further growth of the city, and demonstrated that cities did not have to be small and high density to work. Paris' metro system served, at least initially, to link parts of the city together. London's version from near its start helped commuter move from the Centre to the outer quarters.

The outcome, Rasmussen believed, was a uniquely human city, designed for its freedom-loving people rather than its rulers. This was reflected in the informal nature of its parks and domestic architecture, the prevalence of houses with gardens over flats, and the modest character of its monuments and palaces. It was also reflected in its irregular patchwork government—London was late to develop a pan-city level of government, and to this day this tier of government (the GLA) remains weak, with the boroughs doing many of the things that are done by city governments elsewhere.

What should we make of Rasmussen's interpretation today? Clearly the contrast between London and continental cities lends itself to caricature. It is not as simple as that. At the same time there is surely something in the distinction. Had we attended to Rasmussen more carefully we would have avoided some of the worse developments of the last 80 years. No Rasmussenian would have permitted the large, high-rise council housing developments or the flyovers of the 60s and 70s, or the more soulless suburban developments, gated communities, high-rise students flats and Thames-side apartments of recent years.

This is a rather long preamble to Charles' essay. But that he can write about London in the appreciative terms that he does suggests that the capital has far from lost all that Rasmussen thought made it special.

Rasmussen I suspect, would have approved of Charles' system-empathy framework. It would be fairly easy to recast London: The Unique City using it. But Charles' essay has one advantage over Rasmussen's book. Where London: The Unique City is basically a history book, Charles' system-empathy framework gives

us a set of tools which citizens, politicians, policymakers, planners and developers can use to help ensure that as London develops it does so in a way which is true to its history and its spirit.

Ben Rogers is Founding Director of Centre for London.

BUILDING SYSTEMS OF EMPATHY

Sonal Shah

My most poignant moment at The London Community Foundation came while reading a grant application from a lady in her 80s. On state pension credit, with poor health and living in a run-down London estate, she made the smallest request: £10 from our surviving winter fund to replace her tattered duvet. I remember thinking how tragic and absurd it was that in a modern and prosperous city—capital of the world’s 6th largest economy—this woman had been forgotten.

My work brings me in touch with stories like this all too often, but few have affected me so deeply. Maybe it was the modesty and simplicity of the request. She could have asked for £500, the maximum grant available, but she didn’t. Perhaps she thought someone else might need the money more than she did.

We gave her £500 to pay for her heating, to insulate her flat and to buy a new duvet. The grant was only made possible through the generosity of a few Londoners who had given up their annual winter fuel allowance for the benefit of others.

For me, this story illustrates the extremes of empathy that can be found in London. A lack of empathy was at least partly responsible for the desperate situation this lady found herself in. An act of empathy eventually helped her—albeit in the smallest way.

Successful cities do indeed require the right mix of systems and empathy, as Charles Leadbeater suggests, but unless both these elements serve those on the margins as well as those of us who are better off, their success can only be limited. As one of Leadbeater’s interviewees expressed, “When you are on top of the world London loves you. As soon as you are down and out it doesn’t have time for you.”

Don’t get me wrong... I love London. It pulls me like a magnet. Having grown up in rural Lincolnshire (which I loved for different reasons), it is the depth of London’s cultural experience that attracts me most.

The sheer diversity of the place means that anyone can be a Londoner — whether you are natural born or not. Tolerance, openness to difference and indeed the ‘active welcoming of difference’ enriches our city. It also means that London has an extraordinary capacity to develop empathy and systems across divides.

When I first moved to London however, I felt something was missing. I was enjoying the culture and social opportunities that London had to offer, but I was failing to scratch the surface; like many others I felt like I was living in a bubble. Yes, the day to day civilities of city life connected me with strangers, and public spaces offered a place for interaction with those from other walks of life. But the connection and interaction felt somewhat fleeting and superficial in comparison to the towns I had lived in outside of London.

I had experienced what Charlie sums up so well in his report: “Whilst London does so well as far as... casual, fleeting empathy is concerned, people are far less sure that it is conducive to the deeper, longer forms of empathy required to build lasting social capital.”

Working for The London Community Foundation, however, has given me a different perspective. What I see every day is the capacity we Londoners have for deeper connection. I have seen it operating in droves. This is a city where empathy for others spurs people to take action and change lives for the better. As Charlie says, “for a city to come to life the connections between people need to go deeper than just rubbing along”.

Take Iris and Patricia who started in a Deptford churchyard serving cups of tea and sandwiches to local homeless people; or Colin who set up a befriending charity for isolated older people in South Westminster after they cared for him when he was homeless; or Diana, who fights against honour killings and forced marriages every day; or Peter who works with gang members trying to show them another way, another life. And then there are all the donors we work with who put some of their earnings aside for the benefit of fellow Londoners.

These stories and countless more demonstrate that alongside civility and sociability there is plenty of deep empathy in London. But I’d argue that we need to develop London’s civic culture and institutions—its habits of neighbourliness and volunteering, its trusts, charities and foundations—to ensure that all this empathy has more system behind it. We need systems that are empathetic, as Leadbeater argues, but we also need systems which strengthen sociability and empathy across divides. We need a system which turns empathy into generosity—turning our ability to understand the feelings of others into a process that gives those on the margins a better deal of this wonderful city. I hope that the London Community Foundation, for which I work, helps put a system behind London’s empathy in this way. But the capital certainly has further to go.

Sonal Shah is chief executive of The London Community Foundation, which has invested over £40 million into more than 5,000 charitable projects across the capital since it was started in 1995.

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More and more people, it seems, want to live and work in and visit London. But what is it that makes it so alluring? What makes a truly successful city? What does London need to do to remain a world-beating capital?

In this paper acclaimed thinker Charles Leadbeater analyses the key ingredients to London's success. Drawing on focus groups with a range of Londoners, *The London Recipe* explores how Londoners experience their city and the ways it could be made to work better for them.

This publication also comprises responses from experts and policymakers including Tessa Jowell MP (former Minister for London), Richard Blakeway (Deputy Mayor for Housing), Sir Peter Hall (Professor of Planning, UCL), and Ben Rogers (Director, Centre for London).

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