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VISIONS OF DELIVERY

Institutional Capacity, Governance and Spatial Planning in London Thames Gateway

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ABSTRACT

This study is about the delivery of urban visions. New institutional landscapes are being formed across London and power is increasingly diffused across multiple sectors under a new multi-level network pattern of governance. The new institutional arrangements for London and the inauguration of the Greater London Authority in particular embody the contradictory New Labour modernisation agenda displaying evidence of centralism, managerialism and localism at the same time (Brooks, 1999). In London Thames Gateway the omnipresence of the central state is revealed despite the 'devolution' of power to a new citywide Mayor. This also suggests that Government is increasingly being 'hollowed-out' (Houghton and Counsell, 2004) but that central Government continues to 'steer' the course.

If the last few years are anything to go by spatial planning and strategic planning projects in particular, are back in vogue. As in the post-war period London is faced with a projected population and jobs explosion, although for very different reasons. 'Big bang' strategic planning has returned with a vengeance but for London Thames Gateway the same old questions remain: delivery – how, who and where? The current institutional apparatus continues to confuse and bemuse and this study is about contributing towards the task of converting paper plans and a multitude of competing urban visions into lived reality.

A broader reconfiguration of the state, economy and civil society means that a more sophisticated understanding is required to get to grips with the different actors involved within networks and the relationships of these networks. In the context of institutional fragmentation London Thames Gateway is used as a 'window' into the current institutional framework to see how the New Labour modernisation agenda is working 'on the ground'. The study uses semi-structured interviews across the various governance tiers (i.e. central Government, pan-London and sub-regional levels) to analyse the internal and external working relationships of the various actors involved. The analysis suggests that for those organisations involved in London Thames Gateway there is a 'sense of a widely-held common project' (Amin and Thrift 1995) and that this is the 'institutional glue' that binds

these organisations together. In this sense the study draws on anthropology by isolating typologies or generic characteristics to understand what binds (or not) these institutions together.

The evidence also suggests that participation in developing an urban vision for London Thames Gateway has broadened to encompass sectors (such as the health sector) previously neglected in planning processes and this is a positive aspect of the reforms. In an analysis of the proposed Urban Development Corporation a number of positive (generic) components can be identified. However, the analysis also emphasises that the New Labour modernisation programme is likely to generate significant tensions and some of these are in evidence in London Thames Gateway. This is because the many changes and innovations that result from this programme are creating new institutional arrangements and there is evidence of competing cultures as emerging institutions bring with them a whole new set of values and rules-in-use.

These new governance structures can be linked to London's position within the global economy, the 'flavour' of the new planning system and the spatial plans being produced to take account of these trends. The global economic race for economic competitiveness dictates that planners and planning must respond, whilst at the same time steering a course through social cohesion and environmental sustainability. It is argued that there is no spatial *fait accompli* and political institutions and civil society in London Thames Gateway are able to manoeuvre to steer these forces in a positive direction. And so, the broader of role of planners and their ability to deliver through these emerging institutional mechanisms is brought into question. In so doing we argue that this has forced them to cast aside traditional working practices and to develop new approaches to ensuring economic, environmental and social objectives are met through the prism of spatial planning.

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ALG	Association of London Government
A+UU	Architecture and Urbanism Unit (GLA)
CID	Common Interest Development
CPRE	Council for the Protection of Rural England
EDS	Economic Development Strategy
ESDP	European Spatial Development Strategy
EP	English Partnerships
EERA	East of England Regional Assembly
FUR	Functional Urban Region
GLA	Greater London Authority
GLC	Greater London Council
GoL	Government Office for London
GORs	Government Offices for the Regions
LCC	London County Council
LDA	London Development Agency
LDDC	London Docklands Development Corporation
LDF	Local Development Framework
LFEPA	London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
LHF	London Housing Federation
LPAC	London Planning Advisory Committee
LTG	London Thames Gateway
MPA	Metropolitan Police Authority
NIMBY	'Not in my back yard'
NHS	National Health Service
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance Note
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
QuANGOs	Quasi-Autonomous Non-Governmental Organisations
RDA	Regional Development Agency
RPG	Regional Planning Guidance
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
TCPA	Town and Country Planning Association
TGLP	Thames Gateway London Partnership
TIF	Tax Increment Financing
UDC	Urban Development Corporation
SCAP	Sustainable Communities Action Plan
SCDU	Sustainable Communities Delivery Unit
SDS	Spatial Development Strategy
SEERA	South East England Regional Assembly
SERPLAN	London and South East Regional Planning Conference
SRDF	Sub-regional Development Framework
TGDIF	Thames Gateway Development and Investment Framework
TfL	Transport for London

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction
1.1 Key Research Questions
1.2 Translating theory into research

These are interesting and uncertain times with the advent of a new planning system. At the time of writing the reforms to the planning system are making their way through the idiosyncrasies of parliamentary scrutiny such that it is now difficult to match the imminent statutory controls with the revolutionary rhetoric of the opening Planning Green Paper (DTLR, 2001) back in 2002. Nevertheless, there are many reasons why this is an interesting time to study the delivery of urban visions or 'sustainable communities' as the Government has termed it. This comes at a time when the broader role of planners and planning is under the central Government spotlight. High profile reviews by Kate Barker on housing supply, and more recently Sir John Egan (ODPM, 2004c) on skills for delivery, go to the heart of the planning profession, its purpose, ethos and efficacy, leading to uncomfortable questions previously swept under the carpet. As a general observation, it is interesting to note that a report on housing supply should have been commissioned by the Treasury which suggests that the under-supply of housing is having macro–economic consequences. The findings of both these reports make interesting reading and should not be allowed to pass us by. Both, in differing ways, pave the way for a reconfiguration of the planning system, its purpose, role and effectiveness and remain pertinent to the focus of this study.

London Thames Gateway is the definitive test-bed for the new planning system and Government rhetoric. In the case study discussed here we are interested in whether or not the new face of planning really does exist. This new face is about crossing a new threshold for planners and built environment professionals. There are a number of key themes running through Government messages, namely: replacing adversarial and negative regulatory processes with positive and proactive development management; pursuing the joint aims of sustainable development; pursuing the creation of successful and sustainable communities; comprehensive and unifying urban visions; replacing silo mentalities and professional barriers with integrated sectors in the pursuit of holistic urban management; horizontal working

and consensus building in urban governance; transparency; comprehensive consultation; and outreach to groups previously under-represented in planning processes. As laudable as these objectives are the new language of 'urbanism' (called for in the Urban Task Report, 1999) masks inherent conflicts and in this research London Thames Gateway is used as a critical prism through which to view these aspirations.

Ironically, the draft Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1), released in early 2004 (ODPMb), provides perhaps the most obvious example of conflictive aspirations and competing urban visions. A clear example of this is the renewed emphasis on community engagement, such as the requirement on local planning authorities to produce statements of community involvement as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF), but the renewed emphasis remains *"promoting a strong stable, productive and competitive economy that ensures prosperity for all"* (paragraph 1.26).

Much was promised in PPS1, not least a purported attempt to enshrine the purpose of planning in national policy without being embedded in legislation – a definition of sustainable development or spatial planning perhaps? Well, almost, but it is far enough away from binding legislation to avoid handing more work to planning lawyers and complete system paralysis. The revised note succinctly gets to the crux of the planning paradigm bringing to fore the emerging themes of sustainable development, community planning and spatial planning. However, the guidance raises more questions than it answers.

The task of reconciling economic competitiveness, social cohesion and environmental objectives has certainly not become an easier one for planners. The advice offered is that the planning authority

> *...may consider that, in its circumstances, extra weight should be given in its policies to an economic, social or environmental objective as against the others* (PPS1 1.24).

In all of this planners should

> *...consider how their plans are addressing the four aims of sustainable development. They should seek to achieve outcomes which enable economic, social and environmental objectives to be achieved together over time* (ibid paragraph 1.23).

Whilst the policy direction is to move away from purely land-use decision making towards integrating sectors with spatial implications, the guidance simultaneously reinforces the impression that the role of planners is to "*positively manage development*" (ibid paragraph 1.5). Curiously, the guidance continually refers to development, rather than spatial planning or sustainable development (Rydin, 2004).

Whilst there may be little in this to 're-ignite planning's fire' there has been a broader and more positive attempt to drag the British town and country planning system (and some planners) kicking and screaming into the twenty-first century. In the main this has centred around the elusive concept of spatial planning (Rydin, 2004), brought about by the European Spatial Development Perspective (CEC, 1999) and forms a central theme in the new planning system. There is, at the heart of this shift, an attempt to move towards a concern for the nature of space and place, though in draft PPS1 this appears to sit uncomfortably with traditional land-use messages and established planning methods; but there is reason for optimism. The Government has thrown down the gauntlet to planners and other built environment professionals by offering them the opportunity to step outside longstanding silo professional mentalities and help to shape space and place in a positive manner. It is easy to view changes to a regulatory machine as unwieldy and cumbersome as the British town and country planning system as more upheaval and unnecessary delay, but it is much more than that. Spatial planning is multi-dimensional, participatory, visionary, integrative and deliverable (Tewdwr-Jones, 2004). In this sense the spirit of draft PPS1 is right; planners must therefore look beyond administrative boundaries and identify how social, environmental and economic objectives can be met. If planning is to broaden its scope to become all encompassing, integrated and dynamic it needs planning professionals to sell this message working across previously neglected sectors. This also means bringing planning out of its traditional (and heavily embedded) home in the Council Chamber where it has become adversarial and somewhat unloved, into a more positive light at new spatial scales and using those sectors and users previously under-represented in the planning system.

In this research we start from the premise that local and regional institutions(Councils and pan-London agencies) can be extraordinarily effective. They can be innovative, dynamic, efficient and forward thinking (even at the same time) and this research seeks to unveil examples of all of these attributes. That is not to say that this is an easy task. Indeed, such examples tend to be the exception rather than the rule, but nor does this mean it should always be so. We are in many ways seeing a revival of town (spatial) planning in London, largely brought about by the emergence of large scale planning projects, all of which test the limits of urban governance in London as well as the rest of the institutional apparatus. The London Thames Gateway case study selected here is in the midst of this challenge and faces further challenges in the future, thereby providing a useful 'window' into this institutional framework. This study is therefore about examining how the new and emerging institutional arrangements work 'on the ground' in London Thames Gateway. In the following sections, more specific research questions relating to London Thames Gateway are elaborated and used to guide the study, but the aim of this introduction has been to present the subsequent empirical analysis in the context of changes to the planning system and the future role of planners in delivering urban visions.

1.1   *Key research questions*

Six inter-related but distinguishable research questions form the foundation for this study, providing reference points for wider discussions and these will be re-visited at varying stages throughout the study. As a result, these central questions have largely dictated the structure and format of this study, culminating in a conclusion which seeks to address these broader questions in full based on empirical analysis. Chapter 2 sets the conceptual framework for answering these questions. The debates outlined in Chapter 2 represent crosscutting themes and the analysis therein is designed to inform a critical understanding of approaches to London Thames Gateway and the key research questions outlined below. Before embarking upon detailed analysis and empirical testing it is useful to elaborate upon these key questions, their origin and how they inter-relate.

1. How has urban governance changed in London Thames Gateway, and what role, if any, does it play in delivering strategic objectives?

The face of urban governance is changing rapidly. In London this is being performed at new spatial scales such as citywide, regional and sub-regional. How has this affected the way in which London is governed? This leads us to ask how these new arenas have impacted upon the delivery of strategic objectives, whether these have made it easier or more difficult. This question is addressed in Chapters 4 *(New Institutional Landscapes)* and 5 *(Urban Governance and Spatial Planning)*. Chapter 4 describes how urban governance has changed in London and how this 'fits' in the broader New Labour modernisation agenda. Of particular significance is the introduction of the Mayoral system in London and the changing perceptions *(interview b)* of the role of local authorities in this multi-actor context. In Chapter 5 we describe the spatial effects of these changes for London Thames Gateway and how this has been translated into action 'on the ground'. This formed a central topic of discussion in the semi-structured interviews (see appendix A; *Institutional Relations and Integrated Sectors*).

2. What is/are the most effective delivery mechanism(s) for reconciling economic competitiveness, social cohesion and environmental sustainability in London Thames Gateway?

This question refers to the ever-present paradigm facing built environment professionals, such that reconciling these objectives is like trying to square the planning circle. The reforms to the planning system, now caught up in the evolving concept of spatial planning, makes a valiant attempt at pinning this down. In this new multi-actor context, novel and more sophisticated delivery mechanisms are needed to co-ordinate collective action. What form should these take? How powerful should they be? Should they follow the 'Reithian' (1946) principle of single-purpose executive agencies with land assembly powers? What lessons can we draw from historical examples (see section 3.2)? Crucially, this debate brings us to the question of fiscal and other measures being touted to 'enable' development and bring much needed investment in public infrastructure. Following on from an assessment of historical approaches to delivery in section 3.2, Chapter 5 seeks to translate these lessons into delivery mechanisms for London Thames Gateway. This includes an assessment of the proposed Urban Development Corporation for London Thames Gateway as well as other fiscal measures open to Government to

enhance delivery. Delivery mechanisms formed the final topic of discussion for the semi-structured interviews (see appendix A; *Implementing Strategic Policy*).

3. To what extent do institutions in London Thames Gateway act as 'enablers' in achieving collective goals? And, how successful are they in this role?

The modernisation agenda suggests central Government increasingly views local and regional government as enablers of development. The question then becomes whether or not this is borne out in reality and how successful are they in this role? This question remains pertinent to the debates raised in Chapter 4 and the discussion centres on the broad thrust of the modernisation agenda for local and regional authorities. The analysis in Chapter 5 goes on to assess what this means for the overall role of local authorities and pan-London public authorities in London Thames Gateway. The evidence gathered from interviews provides an insight into the roles and responsibilities of public institutions in London Thames Gateway and also what this means for delivery (see interview pro-forma; *Enabling Role*, appendix A).

4. How far do these processes, together with globalisation trends, help to achieve an economically and socially balanced London Thames Gateway, which is both economically competitive and socially equitable?

Incomes are more polarised in London than elsewhere in the country with profound inter- and intra-borough disparities. This has contributed towards a longstanding spatial imbalance. It is therefore increasingly difficult to envisage delivering balanced communities at whatever spatial level in London. Do the changes in urban governance in London and the new spatial planning focus make this task easier or more difficult? The debates surrounding globalisation are highlighted to gauge its impact, if any, on spatial plans and development patterns. This brings us to the emerging conceptual tool of polycentricity (see section 3.4) and in subsequent sections we attempt to understand how this concept might be used to enrich strategic policy and what sort of spatial structure this might produce.

5. How is the gap between strategic and local policy being bridged?

This is a crucial nexus. The juxtaposition of local and strategic needs is a major issue for London Thames Gateway. It also presents inherent conflicts, with competing demands and urban visions. How are these differences reconciled and through which arenas? What techniques are used? In answering these questions we draw on material derived from the semi-structured interviews (see section 2.3), which provide an insight into the internal workings of organisations as well as their relationships with external 'actors' in the network. This assessment enables us to examine how, for instance, the Greater London Authority interacts with Government at the national level and Thames Gateway London Partnership at the local level and in Chapter 2 we are able to identify situations where strategic policy has successfully translated into local policy and action (see interview pro-forma; *Enabling Role*, appendix A).

6. What challenges does the spatial planning and governance agenda pose for planners and other built environment professionals, and how have they reacted to these challenges?

Undoubtedly, the broad thrust of the new planning system and spatial planning in particular, places new emphasis on integrating multiple sectors, such as housing, health, leisure, utilities and many more. Whose job is it to integrate these sectors so that the aspiration for holistic urban development is achieved? Draft versions of PPS1 suggest that this is the job of the planner. How have they reacted to this challenge and do they have the necessary skills to do the task? The study concludes with the broad implications of these trends (see Chapter 6) and this is a recurring theme throughout the research. This issue formed a central theme in the semi-structured interviews (see interview pro-forma; *Knowledge Resources* section, appendix A).

1.2   Translating theory into research

Social scientists are, at one point or another, faced with the task of testing theoretical schools of thought through empirical research. This research is no different. It stems from a central aim to understand meta-physical networks (such as global flows of international capital) and their physical (spatial) consequences. This leads us to the starting point of untangling the perception of urban problems

as a series of identifiable but heavily inter-related problems (Buck et al, 2000). We sift through these relationships by examining the process and outcomes in the day-to-day workings of urban management systems. In this sense results and/or outcomes are the focus of patterns of governance and implementation strategies.

It is this retrospective train of thought, through the eyes of area-specific stakeholders, that is of value here. Many of the philosophical debates that surround this field of research underpin this methodological approach. That is not to say that the epistemological assumptions that surround this approach are not acknowledged; after all, the mechanical nature of quantitative methods does not, alone, provide the sophisticated understandings of the world required for this research. In this instance, the process of assigning meaning to human experience requires something more subtle than the tools of quantitative analysis alone can provide. The process-outcome relationship has led to the formulation of a contextualised approach to research.

In this study we seek to study systems of governance and not just government (Stoker 1996, 1999). How, then, do we go about analysing these systems? Traditionally, we have been used to analysing organisations in a hierarchical manner with significant attention paid to understanding the state-public dynamic. The proliferation of non-state/quasi-state organisations renders this approach inadequate. Instead, a more sophisticated understanding is required to get to grips with the different actors within networks and the relationships of these networks. That is to say, to consider internal networks as well as networks and outside actors (Thornley 2003). In this new institutional structure these actors rely on interdependence more than ever, a feature, which signifies the importance of how we analyse these relationships. This raises the question of how these actors mobilise these relationships to achieve their goals and direct resources, as some have suggested that single actors no longer have the 'capacity to act' (Stoker 1996, 1999) on their own. So we have sought to understand London governance as a network of relationships, which implies collaborative action and multiple resources.

This raises new challenges for social scientists, disabling traditional methods of evaluating organisations and their inter-relationships, instead placing new

emphasis on evaluating institutions, their internal and external workings and relationships. The approach adopted here seeks to go beyond an analysis of hierarchical organisations and lines of authority towards understanding the relationships that bind (or not) these institutions together. We are interested in how these workings operate on the ground in terms of asserting working practices, values and the parameters of behavioural rules. In this sense the institutional approach draws from anthropology, by helping to uncover institutional relationships through the prism of human behaviour (Douglas, 1986). These epistemological dynamics shed light on the horizontal working relationships being established in urban governance in London, many of which are still in the process of bedding down. This framework also enables us to understand how actors work together (or do not work together) to achieve collective goals, and to what Douglas (1986) referred to as the 'glue' that holds institutions together. This brings us back to another nuance of urban governance – institutional capacity, a relatively new conceptual tool developed to evaluate the capacity of organisations to mobilise collective action. This allows us to examine the 'thickness' of evolving institutional relationships, pinpointing examples of close working relationships as well as those where the institutional 'glue' losing its adhesive properties and/or where it has lost them completely.

Here, we use both tools to understand the institutional and organisational structures being designed, constructed and maintained across London Thames Gateway and how these have impacted on the spatial development of the London Gateway as well as providing some useful pointers for future institutional structures across the U.K. The recentness of these relationships also means that the parameters of acceptable or appropriate behaviour have yet to be fully established and this leads to question marks over institutional capacity. On the other hand anthropological study suggests that these will only become established as cultural norms when they are repeated through rounds of appropriate behaviour, and in some cases the use of institutional sanctions where these actions are perceived to be inappropriate (Douglas, 1986).

The empirical analysis in this study is based on a number of key sources. In covering the London Thames Gateway sub-region the scope of the interviewees

represented institutions across the various governance tiers and the key purpose of the semi-structured interviews throughout has been to provide a 'window' into the institutional framework. The national scale was represented by the Office Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) (*interview a*), the citywide level by officers and advisors from the Greater London Authority and the Mayor's Office (*interviews b, c, d*) and the London Boroughs by the Thames Gateway London Partnership (*interview e*). In most cases permission was given for recording the interviews, with a condition of confidentiality. However, direct quotations have not been used. Instead, where the views of individuals typified the general view of a particular group or organisation this has been linked to a key group (e.g. interviews a, b, c). All the interviews undertaken were semi-structured and based on the interview pro-forma as appended (see appendix A). Its scope of the topic area covered five key topics in the context of London Thames Gateway: knowledge; institutional relations and integrated sectors; mobilising sectors; enabling role; and implementing strategic policy.

The views expressed in the interviews did not necessarily represent those of the organisation being represented and this led to the decision not to quote directly from the semi-structured interviews. Far from being a limitation to the methodology this paved the way for a better understanding of the subtleties of relationships between organisations. This is consistent with the aim of this research to understand the internal workings of organisations and the appropriation of cultural norms and values. A considerable amount of secondary source material was compiled to assist in the analysis of views of particular organisations or groups. This included various written submissions to the Examination in Public (EIP) into the *draft* London Plan. These were essentially treated as public position statements. A number of technical reports commissioned by various bodies and organisations also provided a rich source of secondary material and helped form an understanding of the complexities of London Thames Gateway. Finally, a multitude of planning policy, planning frameworks, investment schedules, lobbying documents and press releases were also analysed as part of the research process.

The following chapters are developed from a research process which explores the issues facing urban governance in London Thames Gateway. We take as our starting point the current institutional apparatus in London Thames Gateway and this is evaluated here to act as a 'window' into the current institutional framework. This provides some useful indications of the success of current practices; but this is an institutional landscape in constant turmoil: therefore it is necessary to consider how this landscape might be re-formed so that it is in a better position to deliver urban visions. This means drawing upon historical examples (e.g. Uthwatt, 1949; Abercrombie, 1944) to extrapolate successful interventions, as well as learning from more recent but less successful examples.

Many of these debates have a theoretical grounding and the first chapter describes the relevant concepts in more detail. Some of these concepts act at an abstract (meta-physical) level (such as institutional capacity), others at a physical level (such as residential segregation) but all frame current thinking in urban governance such that they pose a series of difficult problems for urban decision makers. These concepts act as critical prisms through which to view the London Thames Gateway case study and point towards a need to understand broader patterns of change in urban governance. The debates surrounding postmodernism are well documented (Harvey, 1989) but there is a spatial dimension to this debate and in this discussion this points towards a need to understand how London, with all the trappings of a World City, portrays these meanings in the urban environment. London like most other large cities around the world reveals broader patterns of intra- and inter-urban segregation and this can be linked to broader global processes, although the extent of this influence is disputed. Chapter 2 is about understanding the causes and influences of these patterns before turning to the specific example of London Thames Gateway. Moreover, there are many nuances to these patterns and many of the patterns take on a specific meaning in the context of London Thames Gateway. Gentrification, welfare regimes, social housing, ethnicity and culture all play a noticeable role in urban segregation and these are important factors for decision makers in London Thames Gateway. In this section it is argued that images of a 'dual city' (Marcuse, 1989) or similar universal conceptual frameworks highlight the spatial nature of urban segregation but do little to add to our

understanding of these complex processes and how these relate to space and place, not least the specific complexities of London Thames Gateway.

The emerging concept of institutional capacity takes on a specific role within this research because the concept is consistent with the changing face of urban governance, the position of local authorities within an ever more complex network of organisations and a growing recognition that a new relationship between the state and civil society is being formed. The concept of urban governance has broadened to encompass an ever growing plethora group of institutions across multiple sectors, thus, bringing to the fore the need to mobilise these actors to best effect. Delivering urban visions is therefore dependent on mobilising, co-ordinating and galvanising these actors. The concept of institutional capacity helps us to get to grips with this task and how these networks can build institutional capacity at the local and strategic level. This approach also draws upon anthropology, being based on observations at the micro-level and the appropriation of social norms, behavioural patterns and values. This implies evaluating organisations and their inter-relationships, to an understanding of what binds (or not) these institutions together. These concepts are then brought together in a schematic conceptual approach, which is used to frame the evaluation of local case studies and in turn, a research strategy. In subsequent sections we use this framework to consider the internal workings of institutions, their relationships with other institutions and their position within the network. This helps to understand how these actors work together (or do not) to deliver urban visions for London Thames Gateway. These concepts are designed to act as the prelude to critical empirical analysis.

To date the stance has been to accept the argument that there is an inevitability about processes of globalisation and this is largely borne out in the policy direction of the London Plan (2004). There is considerable debate as to whether or not the short-term gains of competitive advantage in the global economic game equals the longer-term advantages of a greater emphasis on broader social and environmental sustainability (Thornley 2003; Syrett and Baldock 2001; Kreukels 2003; Massey 2001).

From the outset, this research has made it clear that the New Labour modernisation agenda asks new questions of orthodox institutions, forcing them to cast aside traditional (typically hierarchical) ways of working and having to find their position within a fluid network of multi-level governance. In the context of this study this has had two particularly pertinent implications; firstly, it throws down the gauntlet to planners and other built environment decision makers who must appropriate new forms of behaviour, values and social norms to mobilise collective action and reconcile ever more conflictive aspirations; secondly, new levels of spatial governance have produced competing cultures, some of which overlap, such that new ways must be found to bridge the local-strategic gap. The Greater London Authority and London Thames Gateway Urban Development Corporation are paradigm cases here. Many of these cultures are at an early stage in life, but the recent nature of these changes is one of the reasons why London is a particularly interesting city-region to study. This process has strong connections with the academic literature, not least Harvey's (1985; 1989) recognition that in the post-Fordist era economies have shifted from 'managerial' to 'entrepreneurial' modes of production. This shift is true also of emerging institutions, which display all the characteristics of entrepreneurial spirit, as opposed to traditional (and heavily embedded) institutions, some of which are less eager to embrace this cultural shift.

These broader processes feed quite neatly into a more detailed examination of London Thames Gateway within the setting of London as a city-region. The social and economic context of Thames Gateway London is dependent on external spatial patterns well beyond those in the Greater London Authority boundary. A short historical synopsis also helps to shed light on previous institutional mechanisms and provides some useful lessons, if not a template, for the future delivery of strategic planning projects. It also reminds us of the magnitude of the task facing decision makers in Thames Gateway London and its place in history. This is contrasted with more recent trends in spatial development and policy-making emerging from European quarters. In this sense we refer to the concept of polycentricity, and how, in the case of London, policy makers might square this with London's monocentric tendencies brought about by its position at the apex of the global economy.

This is followed by a brief description of the Greater London Authority as a 'constitutional experiment' (Travers, 2002) and the political context this presents for London Thames Gateway. This political context is linked to the broader governmental modernisation agenda and we are able to draw a number of conclusions from this shift and its ideological origins. This has also formed a new arena of conflict at the citywide scale with a struggle over financial autonomy. It is the institutional context for the localised case studies, both of which are seen as key actors in this modernisation agenda. This has had numerous consequences for local authorities, although the extent to which all local authorities have embraced this change (and its spatial implications) is a key objective of this research. It also raises the question of how the two tiers inter-relate against a backdrop of competing cultures. The sub-regional dimension represents the new forum through which these aspirations are reconciled, and will be an important arena for the dissemination of strategic policy, and for that matter the full involvement of local stakeholders.

Attention then turns to the evolving urban vision for London Thames Gateway, the actors involved and the delivery structures in place to 'make things happen'. This leads us to question: are these structures 'delivery friendly' (Walker, 2004) or is the result institutional fragmentation and partnership fatigue?

In all of this a new institutional landscape is being formed, begging the question: will these institutions deliver? Perhaps – but this is heavily reliant on mobilising and coordinating these institutions to achieve collective goals, that is of course if they aspire to the same goals. The inception of the Greater London Authority and the Mayor epitomises the contradictory New Labour modernisation agenda, which takes as its theme a more transparent and responsive government. Both local and citywide government in London are being re-moulded as 'enablers' of development and are charged with mobilising actors to achieve collective goals. Of course, there is little evidence that the current Mayor of London (or any future Mayor for that matter) sees his role in quite this way, hence the efforts to recapture more effective fiscal and transport powers to reverse public disinvestments in London. The analogy of government 'steering' rather than 'rowing' is particularly apt in this context (Buck et al, 2000). The following sections therefore seek to test and

challenge these assumptions against a backdrop of the U.K.'s most important regeneration opportunity.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.   Conceptual framework
2.1   *Postmodernism, urban networks and globalisation*
2.2   *Institutional capacity*
2.3   *'World City' or 'World Class City'?*
2.4   *London's Spatial Plan*
2.5   *Schematic conceptual approach*

The focus of the study represents the point at which several literatures converge. In this chapter we expand upon the literatures which have informed current thinking in the field of urban regeneration and the value (or not) of broader conceptual tools in helping us to understand spatial processes in London Thames Gateway. The conceptual strands explored in this section crystallise some of the problems associated with urban planning in London and are designed to inform answers to all the research questions identified at the outset. Perhaps more importantly, they pave the way for a critical understanding of urban problems in the Gateway, and in turn the solutions proposed to reconcile conflictive aspirations. With these debates in mind, the interest is in if and how these policy discourses are interpreted and implemented through current institutional arrangements. Most notably, these debates present a critical theoretical prism through which to evaluate and analyse the delivery of urban visions in London Thames Gateway. These conceptualisations first and foremost are designed to act as hypotheses, a prelude to critical empirical analysis.

2.1   Postmodernism, urban networks and globalisation

> *Postmodernism cultivates, instead, a conception of the urban fabric as necessarily fragmented, a 'palimpsest' of past forms superimposed upon each other, and a 'collage' of current uses, many of which may be ephemeral (Harvey, 1989, p.66).*

The onslaught of postmodernism and the debates which surround it take on a special significance in the context of this study, primarily because it publicises in a very specific sense the aesthetics of diversity, the elusive search for a 'sense of place' and the creation of urban visions. In many ways the debates surrounding postmodernism fuse the local-global nexus and how these meanings are represented

in the urban environment. In short, it helps shed light on the power struggles over the expression of meaning and its urban representation. London, in its self-proclaimed World City role, is at the fore of this struggle, and this study is concerned with how these struggles are fought in a new multi-actor context.

Postmodernist architecture is seen to be pre-occupied with aesthetic gratification and spectacle rather than any *"overarching social objective"* (Harvey, 1989, p.66). Postmodernism has many guises, Harvey remarks, such as the puzzling contrast between those concerned with traditional *"classical"* urban values (restoration and rehabilitation of urban space) and the equally postmodern forms demonstrated in Disneyland and Las Vegas (ibid p.68). It is about *"a new respect for place and tradition...a return to difference and particularity"* (Robins 1991, p.1).

Postmodern architects, it seems, discovered the ability to communicate a discourse through the built environment in a way never conceivable in modernist thinking. Postmodernism has flourished as a reaction to modernist discourse. Technological advances, particularly communications, have transformed international connectedness whilst simultaneously creating significant internal contrasts. As Fordist mass production methods have diminished (Amin, 1994), they have been replaced with culturally specific and tailored products designed for distinctive environments. But Harvey is quick to point out the limitations of postmodernism, not least the way in which it goes about expressing an aesthetics of diversity.

Problems arise, emblematic of global cities generally, when these cultural tastes and personalised demands are dictated by market forces. Postmodernism is thus in danger of self-destruction – it advocates aesthetic diversity but creates homogenous urban forms which represent anything but diversity. Remarking on London Docklands, Jon Bird says

> *The ideology of regeneration (represented as a natural process of decay, death and rebirth) masks the economic and social relations that characteristically determine a history of neighbourhood decline and abandonment"* (Bird, 1992 p.123).

Saskia Sassen, (1986, 1991, 1995, 1996) follows a similar argument in highlighting the homogenising nature of advanced economic sectors in Tokyo, New York and

London. The emergence of London as a global command centre is seen to bring it in line with the global economy. Cities like Manchester on the other hand are integrated further into the national economy. London displays all the characteristics of a global city. It is: a key command and control centre; a centre of trade and finance; it houses corporate services e.g. law and accountancy firms; it is a centre of innovation; and, it has a large domestic market to test and promote its own products. It is these characteristics, which appear to create *"this pressure towards homogeneity [which] overrides history and culture"* (1996, p.23). Sassen sees these global processes as being constituted in the urban economy and urban space. Whilst Sassen's conception of the way in which inequality is produced highlights global processes it has been strongly contested for over-emphasising globalisation patterns and ignoring other factors which create counter pressures.

Fundamentally, though, it leaves us questioning the extent to which we should intervene in these urban processes. Given that the focus, for the most part, of this research is concerned with networks, we should acknowledge the varying spatial scales through which these networks are mobilised and operationalised. The influential work of Manuel Castells (1996a; 1996b; 1999) seeks to identify the main features and processes of the so-called 'network society' (1996a p.126) and 'information age'. The information economy he comments:

> *...opens up an extraordinary potential for solving our problems, but, because of its dynamism and creativity, it is potentially more exclusionary than the industrial economy if social controls do not check the forces of unfettered market logic" (p.126).*

It is this market logic that lies at the heart of the London quandary and the way in which social polarisation and social exclusion is manifest.

> *As a result of these trends, most societies in the world, and certainly OECD countries, with the US and the UK at the top of the scale, present powerful trends towards increasing inequality, social polarization and social exclusion. There is increasing accumulation of wealth at the top, and of poverty at the bottom (Castells 1996a, p.129).*

Of value here too are the spatial implications of the *"logic of space of flows over space of place"* (Castells 1996a, p.132). As we suggest in subsequent sections, these broader patterns produce identifiable spatial patterns, which include *"intra-metropolitan*

dualism" (p.132). Scott (1988) explores further the relationship between divisions of labour and urban form and finds evidence of the influence of changes in the organisation of production processes as manifest in urban form (Scott 1988, p.145). The case of the jewellery quarter in Birmingham, which emerged towards the end of the eighteenth century, exemplifies the "*spatial aggregations of industry in intra-urban space*" (ibid p.145). In other words, and without engaging too heavily in reductionism, these processes (i.e. modes of production, or decisions over global capital investment) have the effect of inducing territorial patterns of governance, which can also be manifest in uneven patterns of regional development, as Scott (1988) has shown. This specific dimension of global networks is of particular significance in the context of this study for the way in which it identifies the local consequences in terms of social exclusion, thus leading us to the conclusion that it hampers efforts at achieving social cohesion. This point is succinctly concluded by Castells (1996a) when he says:

> *The dynamics of networks push society towards an endless escape from its own constraints and controls, towards an endless supersession and reconstruction of its values and institutions, towards a meta-social, constant rearrangement of human institutions and organisations (p.133).*

Marcuse and Kempen (1999) conceptualise the social and spatial effects of these urban divisions into certain categories, including: citadels, gentrified neighbourhoods, exclusionary enclaves, urban regions, edge cities, ethnic enclaves and excluded 'racial' ghettos. They see this as creating pressure towards 'layered cities' (1999) and the complex divisions within it, though discount the premise that these trends can form a universal global model or concept. The spatial manifestations of globalisation, they conclude, are many and varied and do not amount to a standard pattern or template.

What, therefore, can we draw from this version of events? And how do all these global networks apply in any real sense to the London of today and its inhabitants? In one sense these networks lead us to the conclusion that 'global' cities like London are caught in an institutional landscape in constant turmoil in an effort to somehow bring these dynamics down to a manageable (human) level. In London this is exemplified by the historical presence of the private sector in London-wide

issues (e.g. London First), as well as the emergence of new governance structures associated with the New Labour modernisation agenda (e.g. the Mayor of London and London Assembly; see discussion of London's World City status). Clearly, this is a colossal task, so long as the power of flows continues to operate at the metaphysical level, rendering the actions of nation-states and even the multi-level states futile. It is at this point that the theoretical grounding for this research converges with the reality of London's paradox, that is to say, observing the:

> ...*simultaneous growth and decline of economies and societies within the same metropolitan area [which] is a most fundamental trend of territorial organisation, and a key challenge to urban management nowadays"* (Castells, 1996 p.132).

The concept of the network society asks serious questions of nation-states and their institutions, and in particular how they respond to these global networks. The key point is that these networks now dominate networks of power such that institutions and even nation-states must form multilateral partnerships (e.g. Thames Gateway London Partnership at the sub-regional level or the European Commission at the trans-territorial level) to be able to manage global flows of wealth. However, as is argued in subsequent sections (see World City) this is not necessarily confined to 'global' cities. The bypassing of flows of power and social checks is a key feature of the Castells theory, but also the way in which these networks reproduce and multiply to the extent that there is an endless search for new human organisations and institutions in the hope, perhaps in vain, that this will arrest the fallout from global economic flows.

Postmodernists do not see urban space as an opportunity to design for social purposes thus global cities, such as London, are left with a *"double burden"* (1989, p.76) as Harvey puts it. They juggle a landscape of power with representations of a global city. 'Global' cities like London are torn between the need to portray a vibrant commercialism in order that it sustain and build upon international investment and its moral obligations created through the current economic, cultural and social predicament. Thus, quasi-governmental institutions, such as the London Development Agency (like other RDAs), are tasked with devising strategies which reconcile these tensions (e.g. *Success through diversity*: Economic Development Strategy for London, 2001). Struggles over urban representations seemingly

mirror those found elsewhere, not least attempts to reconcile economic competitiveness and social cohesion, except to say that these debates must now navigate the maze of regional governance.

Where one urban form (such as tall office buildings in the City of London) presents itself as part of the global economy, suffused in internationalism and North American capitalism, others, while international in origin, are reconstituted as a local vernacular form. The former is read as disembedded in the way Giddens (1987) has described certain aspects of modernity – trans-territorial to the point of being thought of as a-spatial through such concepts as the knowledge economy and telematics. The other is read as deeply embedded – in an economic, social and cultural territory of neighbourhoods and particularistic traditions. This is one of the reasons why the globalisation school of thought (see also discussion of London's World City status) should not be overplayed, to the extent that we lose sight of the importance of embedded cultural and social factors, which also create counter pressures towards local distinctiveness. This can include areas (such as Ilford in north east London or Deptford in south east London) with a diverse social and ethnic mix, which may lead to equally powerful local economic forces (e.g. markets for ethnic speciality products and services).

Sharon Zukin (1996) examines further the meanings conveyed through the built environment:

> *One person's 'text' is another person's shopping centre or office building, both a lived reality and a representation space of financial speculation. The ambiguity of urban forms is a source of the city's tension as a struggle for interpretation. To ask 'Whose City?' suggests more than a politics of occupation; it also asks who has the right to inhabit the dominant image of the city. This often relates to real geographical strategies as different social groups battle over access to the centre of the city and over symbolic representations in the centre* (1996, p.204).

The general definition of economic globalisation is that economies are now networked across the whole world through technological developments. On this theme there are two particularly interesting trends to note. The first is related to global economic competitiveness discussed below and the second is a parallel movement centred around the concept of sustainable development. There is another

interesting aspect that relates to the sustainable development thesis and that is the way in which its discourse has manifested itself across various geographical scales. At one extreme we have seen a global environmental movement typified by such trans-territorial environmental lobbyists as Greenpeace, through to the emergence of local environmental awareness groups and activists. Some have argued that this local awareness has come about because local actors are best placed to implement the principles of sustainable development (Marvin and Guy, 1997). The term 'glocalisation' has thus emerged to capture the divergent nature of sustainable development.

These trends form an important backdrop to understanding the rise of governance structures which have evolved to take account of these trends (see Chapter 4). The response to economic globalisation has been one in which a network of institutions has formed with more porous forms of governance working across various geographical levels and administrative tiers. This has also been thought of as leading to *"the rise of multi-scalar governance"* (Haughton and Counsell, 2004, p.35). In Britain it is true to say that the vast majority of environmental legislation has flowed from European institutions acting in response to global resources and pollution flows. It is also fair to add that, whatever the political debate about the loss of national sovereignty, it is unlikely individual nation-states would have responded in the same way to environmental issues had they acted independently. Another noticeable characteristic of globalisation is the way in which it has caused institutions (at all geographical levels) to focus their efforts on supply-side policies. This underpins efforts to capture, locally, footloose global capital. This is consistent with the school of thought that there is an inevitability about globalisation processes. Thus, it follows that institutions should focus their efforts and policies towards creating places that are able to compete for international investment (see discussion of London's World City role). At the same time we should not underestimate the power and sway of local distinctiveness, particularly culture, which continues to form an important part of the attractiveness of locations for decision makers deciding where to invest international capital.

> *Most commentators accept that the world has 'gone global' in one way or another — that money, markets, firms, politics, people and cultures now transcend territorial boundaries, that the influences and problems of the*

world are becoming one, and that access to remote parts of the world has become easier. Geographies seem to be shrinking, perhaps even disappearing (Amin and Thrift, 1997 p.69).

This has facilitated easier physical movement around the globe through improved air transport and an enormous advance in the use of *"electronic space"* as a result of new telecommunication and computer technology (Castells, 1996). The global economy is characterised by its inter-connectedness, such that economic problems in one part of the world can have a ripple effect throughout the rest of the world economy e.g. Russia, Brazil, East Asia. It is also noticeable that the characteristics of globalisation tend to be played out through global companies such that their decisions transcend national boundaries. This is observed when global companies make their decisions over production, administrative, location and marketing without regard to national boundaries. This view has been particularly strong in the business and management literature (e.g. Ohmae, 1995). In response others argue that there is nothing new about globalisation and make references to other periods in history that were equally global (Knox et al 2003; Storper, 1997).

There is also the criticism that the decline has been exaggerated and that instead there is a shifting of power and responsibilities between supra-national, national and sub-national levels in which the national level still has an important role. Rather than a global-national duality a new and more complex pattern is emerging (Sassen, 1995; Brenner, 1998). This pattern includes global regulation, regional structures such as the European Union and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), as well as the greater autonomy of cities.

This interplay generates a number of critical questions in the context of this study and in relation to the debates surrounding governance and urban visions, namely: Who dictates which image should be portrayed and through which mechanisms/arenas are these struggles fought? Which meanings and representations should be given greatest prominence? Even at the outset of this research we are able to identify and establish strong connections between globalisation and governance structures. In London this is closely related to the debates surrounding an evolving urban hierarchy and World City status (see 2.3 World City). All these issues feature strongly in this research and in subsequent

chapters we seek to unpick these close connections in the context of the chosen case study. We return to the issues raised here in the discussion of London's World City role.

2.2 Institutional capacity

As we have already established, urban governance is undergoing a period of flux (perhaps indefinitely) against a backdrop of societal change and a reconfiguration of the state, economy and civil society. A complex institutional apparatus brings with it the need to mobilise these actors working across multiple sectors to deliver collective goals. Thus, it follows from this that it is no longer adequate to simply evaluate the internal actions of orthodox governmental organisations (Thornley 2003; Newman and Thornley 1996). The Council Chamber is no longer the conceded domain of institutional decision-making, or political action for that matter. The concept of institutional capacity goes some way towards addressing this shift and the tools we use to evaluate such processes. Rather, a more subtle approach is required to examine the complexities of external relations at the micro-level. It is in this sense that we must make the distinction with the physical capacity of institutions to act. In this context the term is not used to refer to the physical capacity of formal institutions to act in financial terms or their physical resource capability.

Rather, the concept of institutional capacity helps inform our thinking on how these networks can build institutional capacity at the local level as well as at the strategic level. This approach also draws upon anthropology, being based on observations at the micro-level and the appropriation of social norms, behavioural patterns and values. This implies evaluating organisations and their inter-relationships, to an understanding of what binds (or not) these institutions together. We are therefore interested in whether this produces competing cultures, and to take this one step further, how urban governance interrelates at the local-strategic nexus. Others have suggested that these processes are likely to create an amalgam of 'continuity and change' (Imrie and Raco 2003; Jessop 2002; Le Gales 1998; Painter and Goodwin 2000), at least at the local level.

Healey (2003, p.254) states that institutional capacity is the *"capacity of organisations to create new relationships for engaging in purposeful, collective action"*. But as the case studies will demonstrate, building these new relationships is dependent on collaborative aspirations, a feature not necessarily associated with existing institutional arrangements in London. These issues are particularly pertinent for London as the major U.K economic driver along with all its associated development pressures. It is here where urban governance is truly put to the test. Against these broader trends it is increasingly difficult to see how existing institutional arrangements can meet the spatial planning challenges in London.

In this research we draw upon the term institutional capacity as a means of evaluating how 'institutional thickness' is generated; in other words, identifying situations where these qualities exist and what characterises these situations. However, the debates surrounding institutional capacity strongly suggests that these qualities (where they exist), vary from time to time and place to place. This perspective draws heavily from the work of Amin and Thrift (1995), who in turn drew their analysis from observations of Italian industrial districts and the financial centre of London. In their analysis Amin and Thrift distil six characteristics, all of which combine to create a 'territorialised economic system', namely:

- The persistence of local institutions
- A deepening 'archive' of commonly held knowledge (tacit and formal)
- Institutional flexibility (the ability of organisations to change)
- High innovation capacity
- Capacity to develop relations of trust and reciprocity
- Sense of a widely-held common project

SOURCE: AMIN AND THRIFT (1995)

In this context we use these characteristics to spot examples of good institutional working, or what we may wish to refer to as 'joined-up' thinking. We are interested in examining vertical and horizontal interactions, working across the multiple levels of urban governance in London, such as central government through to the neighbourhood level and across pan-London agencies, institutions and stakeholders. However, we also need to expand and develop these characteristics to tailor them to the specific nuances of London Thames Gateway. This has led to an expanded

conceptualisation, encompassing broader trends likened to the experiences of London Thames Gateway. In light of the interviews undertaken as part of this research we are able to isolate the following characteristics or typologies, which have been identified by key actors as contributing towards successful delivery. In the context of London Thames Gateway these were taken to represent the views of particular organisations. These are displayed diagrammatically below (see fig. 2.1):

FIGURE 2.1 *Vision delivery characteristics*

SOURCE: ADAPTED FROM AMIN AND THRIFT (1995)

Appropriate and effective arenas/forums – where are decisions taken and who takes them? At what levels are these decisions being taken and are these levels appropriate to the types of decision being taken? This entails striking a balance between political and professional decision making. These forums must be appropriate to the types of decision making required so that arenas do not become talking shops, inevitably leading to partnership fatigue and disillusionment where partnerships become ineffective (*interviews a, d*).

Appropriate and effective mechanisms for resolving tension are required, particularly as broad partnerships with a multitude of actors are prone to breaking down. Are there means of resolving tensions in these situations? Are there any techniques for common problem solving? Do partnerships revert to a default position when problems occur? What is the default position? Is there sense of a widely-held common project or do actors revert to self defined goals in tough situations? *(interviews a, d)*.

Delivery and vision capacity refers to the need for innovation and pragmatism. A careful balance needs to be struck between the two. Do public authorities in London Thames Gateway have this capacity? In particular do they have skills to drive forward the vision, demand high standards from consultants and the private sector and a strong desire to resist 'market friendly' solutions? Are they good clients? *(interview d)*. This relates back to capacity and re-emphasises that the right structures need to be in place to ensure that existing capacity in public institutions is optimised.

Institutional glue is a pre-requisite for effective partnerships and effective delivery. What, if anything, holds these institutions together? Is there a unifying vision which all agencies and actors are signed up to? *(interviews b, c, d, e)*.

Clear lines of authority are increasingly being blurred as governance structures fragment. Horizontal working practices are required to bring together actors and sectors but where does the buck stop? *(interview c)*.

Leadership and consensus building in equal measure – these attributes create the conditions for innovation and pragmatism. Both are necessary. Who takes the lead and when? *(interviews a, b, c, d, e)*.

Institutional maintenance/repair - There is also a need for adaptable institutional arrangements and actors who are not afraid to change with the evolution of the project *(interview d)*.

2.3 'World City' or 'World Class City'?

It is argued that a new form of economic globalisation is taking place that is leading to changes in the economic activity of cities and therefore London and London Thames Gateway are at the forefront of these changes. As a result a hierarchy of cities is evolving with 'World Cities' at the apex. The policy response to these developments is dominated by the notion of enhanced competitiveness and some have argued that this results in a global economic game to retain and enhance World City status at the cost of achieving a world class City.

> *The effects of expansion of finance, professional services and suchlike on the rest of the urban economy are now well documented. There are certain benign and positive effects, of course, but there are also...troubling tensions. London's manufacturing has suffered from the rise in land prices. The land market forces out otherwise profitable sectors, and has had serious spatial effects...The extremely high salaries in parts of the World City sectors produce a city with a greater degree of economic inequality than anywhere elsewhere in the country, and the knock on effect on, for instance house prices and rental levels...leads to a real difficulty in sustaining a public sector* (Massey, 2001 p.145).

There are a number of strands to the World City thesis, namely: new economic forces are operating at a global (meta-physical) level; these forces are inevitable; changes are taking place in the nature of cities; the cities are becoming more powerful *vis-à-vis* nation states; there is increasing competition between cities; planning and planners must respond with a new approach that accommodates globalisation and increased competition (Newman and Thornley, 1996; Thornley, 2003). Here, there are strong and direct linkages with the changing role of planning and the 'flavour' of the recent reforms to the planning system. The pressure towards a system of global economic competitiveness has been followed by a movement away from the narrow conception of a purely land-use based planning system. The new planning system has therefore been designed with these pressures in mind, reflecting a need for a more rounded and integrated view of spatial development. In these modern times it is noticeable that state intervention and policymaking is now largely judged by its market friendliness. There are many examples of this in *The London Plan* (2004) including policies aimed at maximising affordable housing contributions through the planning system (Policy 3A.7) and similar policies which require a mix of on site or off-site uses (Policy 3B.4).

Planners and planning are now expected to leverage market forces to enhance economic competitiveness. This process is not merely confined to World Cities like London, and is in evidence elsewhere in the U.K. Many U.K. towns have seen the rise of knowledge-based resources associated with economic competitiveness leading to heavy growth pressure around specific nodes, such as scientific and other bio-technology sectors in Cambridge and other university towns (e.g. Manchester), whilst in areas of market collapse the task for planners is to resuscitate the market for social benefit.

The debates surrounding globalisation have also stemmed from a broad academic discussion of the changing role of cities, and there is a large pool of literature on this theme. One of the first expressions of this was in the article by Friedman and Wolff (1982), developed by Friedman (1986) as the 'world city hypothesis'. Cities are measured by the degree to which they can be identified as global players and are categorised in a hierarchical manner in the same way that Friedman identified primary and secondary cities. Thrift and Peet (1989) identified a new urban hierarchy comprising New York, London and Tokyo as global cities, a second tier as zonal regions and a third as regional centres. The academic literature has also tended to centre on the means of measuring and defining this hierarchy and therefore the typologies have tended to depend on the criteria used. Friedman and Thrift focus particularly on the concentration of international institutions, banks and the headquarters of transnational corporations. Thus the primary determination of world city status is seen to be the administrative decisions of such companies. There is a general consensus that New York, London and Tokyo stand apart at the top of the hierarchy. These are the three cities explored by Sassen in her seminal work, *The Global City* (1991). She builds on the world city hypothesis and conducts a detailed empirical investigation of economic activity, labour markets and demography. The central theme of her work is that these cities provide the location for the principal command and control points for international business and commerce. As globalisation allows economic functions to disperse more widely round the globe so the need for central control and management also increases and these functions are concentrated in fewer, key locations. Certain other activities are also seen to operate at a global level because of their nature – here a principal example is the financial services industry. The intense concentration of such

institutions generates further activity in the form of other services or the production of financial, computing or media innovations.

Envisaging complex social divisions as the cause of spatial segregation in a simplified manner, such as the 'dual city', does not in itself explain the processes taking place in global cities. Sassen (1991; 1999) sees global cities as characterised by growth in polarisation of income and occupational groups. Further, the decline in a manufacturing base and increase in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs has resulted in an expansion of the top and bottom end of the occupational structure. She asserts that this has squeezed the middle classes resulting in an hourglass shape rather than the normal egg shape. Social stratification in world cities is therefore determined by a high wage sector working in the globally oriented activities and a low-wage, often immigrant, population servicing these people. The new class alignment, as Sassen terms it, is the result of occupational polarisation in the global city. Characteristically, Sassen would assert, global cities such as L.A., London, New York and Frankfurt display growing inequalities.

Such social differentiation in world cities is also discussed by other authors (see Fainstein *et al* 1992; Mollenkopf and Castells 1991) although a simplistic notion of a dual city is dismissed in favour of a more complex pattern of change. The value of the world city hypothesis and Sassen's work is that it established firm links between the global economic processes and changes within cities themselves; however it has come under much criticism. These largely relate to the need to build on the work to provide greater analytical complexity. It is certainly undeniable that the growth in the world financial system, the process of internationalisation (particularly within multi national companies), and the dispersal in production have combined to create an escalation in social inequalities. Nevertheless, the concept is broadly based on the experience of New York and L.A. which have undergone specific socio-economic and demographic changes, not least a large influx of immigrant labour, which has served to exacerbate income and occupational polarisation. It is not clear how far the characteristics are a general phenomenon and how far they are restricted to the three top cities. Social polarisation can be said to be the result of more general economic changes not confined to those cities attracting the core command and control functions. There is also said to be a deterministic flavour to the analysis.

Others have argued that a greater historical dimension would have strengthened the discussion of the relative importance of local contexts and cultures (Dieleman and Hamnett, 1994). Thus it can be seen that 'globalisation' and the 'world city hypothesis' are concepts that generate considerable debate and potential for further analytical development. The aim in providing this outline is to show that the topic is complex and contains considerable variety of opinion.

In his empirical work on London, Hamnett, (1994a; 1994b; 2001 Hamnett and Cross, 1998) concludes that a process of professionalisation has been taking place rather than polarisation while others (e.g. Bruegel, 1996) stress the need to explore the gender dimension. Hamnett (1994) in his critique of Sassen's global city thesis describes how London's experience is one of professionalisation. Between 1981 and 1991 the number of professionals in London grew by 25% (Hamnett and Cross 1998, p.407). Similarly, there is no evidence of growth in the number of less skilled in fact there has been a decline. As such the assertion of a direct link between changes in the economic base and social structure is broken. Economic restructuring does not take place, as this theory assumes, within a social and political vacuum. In this sense the global generalisation of this process is unhelpful and is seemingly contradicted by local experiences. The main point of these discussions for planners is that whatever the details of these social changes they have spatial implications. For example, gentrification has been occurring for a long while in these cities but the new economic changes may be creating an intensification or variation of these processes. The question arises as to whether or not there are adverse consequences for the city that require some form of policy intervention. Peter Hall concludes that these processes result in

> ...*acute problems of urban imbalance and social equity for cities and their populations: islands of affluence surrounded by seas of poverty and resentment. This is one of the main questions to be addressed in strategic urban thinking"* (Hall, 1998, p.964).

The Global City model is epitomised by major shifts in economies from manufacturing to information and knowledge based systems, the *"Informational City"* as Castells has termed it. Footloose industries rely more on this new economy than anything else and it is these flows of information that are seen to control economies. Nowhere is this more obvious than in London Thames Gateway.

Major structural change has led to declining employment densities (TGDIF, 2004, p.16) and the policy direction is to target the release of 50 hectares of industrial land each year in East London (TGDIF, 2004, p.16). This shift is exemplified by the closure of the manufacturing arm of the Ford Motor plant in Dagenham only to be replaced by higher value and more intensive manufacturing and international research (Centre for Engineering in Manufacturing and Excellence in Dagenham). The decision to re-invest in Dagenham was taken following some intensive political lobbying from the Mayor of London, the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) and an element of public subsidy from the London Development Agency. Market logic would have otherwise dictated that high-tech and research activity move west towards the M4 Corridor to benefit from a concentration of highly skilled labour. The point of this example is to demonstrate that decisions over international capital (and there is hardly a more international one than Ford) do not take place within political and social vacuums. Political resolve and spatial plans can still prove to be decisive in influencing the spatial pattern of development.

In the literature on globalisation there is a debate about the degree of inevitability in the process. As already described, one argument is that the global economic forces require cities to respond competitively with adaptive strategies that can attract the new economic investments. This leads to a certain kind of strategy with particular kinds of plans, policies and land allocations discussed below. In the case of London the stance to date has been to accept this argument (London Plan, 2004). Alternatively it can be argued that Government does have the discretion to intervene more positively in this process and pursue a wider range of aims. These could include a greater emphasis on environmental and social objectives. It can be argued that the dedicated striving to win the competitive economic game can create severe problems of environmental degradation and social polarisation. In the longer term, environmental and social sustainability is important for economic prosperity. This is an argument that can be used to lobby for more comprehensive strategic plans. It also requires the involvement of a wider range of local institutions and a positive attitude on the part of Government. The London case also shows that the situation is not static or predetermined. In this context it is relevant to note that Tony Blair sees globalisation as inevitable and requiring an accommodating stance from Government. He has said that

Since it is inconceivable that the UK would want to withdraw unilaterally from the global market-place, we must instead adjust our policies to its existence (Blair, 1996, p.86).

Moreover, it demonstrates the strategic position of London Thames Gateway within this complex network and the race for economic competitiveness. It is argued that London Thames Gateway can play a central role in London's World City role in this respect as an absorber and engine (in equal measure) of population and economic growth. As Harvey noted almost fifteen years ago there has been a shift in the attitudes of urban government from a managerial approach to entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989). This entrepreneurial stance includes viewing the city as a product that needs to be marketed (see section 4.4, e.g. Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Philo & Kearns, 1993; Paddison 1993). The particular image or vision adopted can determine policy priorities – here we can identify an emphasis on mega-events and developments that attract media attention. In the academic literature such events might fall within Edward Soja's version of the simcity – "*on the restructured urban imaginary and the increasing hyper-reality of everyday life*" (1997 p.190), or Sharon Zukin's "*landscapes of power*" (1991 p.197). Mega-events also evoke thoughts of the spectacle city, of which the Dome at the Greenwich peninsula was designed to be one. There is also a 'flavour' of this in the strategy for London Thames Gateway centred on (primarily) the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics bid, a proposed new aquarium in the Royal Docks and major events and exhibition space at ExCel, also in the Royal Docks (TGDIF, GLA, 2004). In the case of world class conference centres political imperative has been ascribed to finding suitable sites in London to fulfil this function[1]. For the latter there is no larger example than the Olympics and the sporting facilities this demands. In both instances the key concern is one of losing to competing global centres.

The city marketing approach also assumes certain customers for the city product. These customers are likely to be the decision-makers in the international institutions identified by Friedman, Sassen and others as the leading determinants of World City status. The land, buildings and infrastructure required for these institutions and the activities linked to them will figure strongly in a city marketing strategy. The provision of these facilities can potentially create problems for some existing citizens, for example through higher housing costs, gentrification or

airport noise, and can also lead to lost opportunities as resources are devoted to these world city functions (Massey, 2001). Some have argued that the response to globalisation has produced a renewed emphasis on strategic thinking that directly taps into the developments in the global economy (Thornley and Rydin, 2003). London and London Thames Gateway increasingly view themselves as being in a competitive environment in which they must take a proactive stance to capture economic activity and maintain their position in the world city hierarchy. The London Plan (2004) and London Thames Gateway Development and Investment Framework (2004) are an important part of this approach and are closely linked to city marketing. As a result it is argued that economic objectives dominate the plans.

2.4 *London's spatial plan*

The issue of globalisation, planning for growth and urban networks has re-ignited the age-old planning paradigm of economic growth versus environmental protection. But this interface has entered a new phase with a whole new re-emphasis now shifting towards positively managing growth, as oppose to negative land-use regulation. This paradigm is brought into sharp focus in areas with strong economic pressure, such as London Thames Gateway and in this section we examine the effect of these pressures on the production of spatial plans, in this case The London Plan (2004). There are also strong connections here with emerging theories in the European Spatial Development Strategy (CEC, 1999) revolving around polycentric and balanced patterns of spatial development, discussed in Chapter 3. Squaring this circle has caused headaches amongst policy makers. Typically, the response has been a knee-jerk one, centred around urban containment. In the Thames Gateway this has caused concern that the approach will lead to house building on flood prone areas.[2]

The current policy direction is to 'go for growth' although, we do not know nearly enough about what this actually means for cities like London, or indeed what kind of growth we want to achieve. There is little analysis to date of the spatial implications of an unrelenting drive for growth in particular sectors of the economy. Will such an approach *spread* or *concentrate* benefits, and how will this impact upon the quality of life of Londoners? Who is included in this growth and the rewards it brings and conversely who is excluded? Thus, there is a clear link in London between city marketing and the spatial approach adopted in the London Plan (2004 see New Political Landscapes, Chapter 4), particularly the desire to market the city across the world.

The central premise of the London Plan is that policies on this spatial scale cannot be prepared without a vision. The task then becomes translating vision into policy objectives and finally into detailed delivery mechanisms. This in itself is not an easy task particularly as the Plan is rightly ambitious in its vision. The London Plan essentially sets out a growth strategy for London along the lines of projected economic development and population trends. London's future is planned as a

response to market forces, which are dependent on growth in the financial services sector. This growth translates as 636,000 extra jobs and 700,000 additional residents (usually quantified as equal to the population of Leeds) forecast up to the end of the Plan period 2016. This growth then sets the foundations for the argument that if this growth is planned, public and private investment can be secured and the relevant infrastructure provided to meet these targets, improve London's economic competitiveness and secure the relevant investment to make life run more smoothly for its residents and businesses. A failure to do so will result in a continuing diminution of London's quality of life as growth overwhelms its infrastructure.

These aspirations are interlocked across geographical scales and are seen to impact over cross-related issues. The model of the World City being pursued by the Mayor has many implications for Londoners. Arguably, an unremitting drive for economic growth spearheaded by the financial services sector de-limits the ability of London's sub-regions to participate in this economic growth, other than for those middle-income workers and professionals who travel in to work in central London and support the financial services. Sub-regional centres have developed diverse and competitive economies outside the global financial services sector. An over-dependency on financial services runs the risk of discouraging a diverse economy based on social enterprises, small and medium sized enterprises, green industries, research and development-based manufacturing and enterprises based around the products and services of London's ethnic minorities. Existing and potential sub-regional centres such as Ilford, Croydon, Upper Lee Valley and Willesden are examples of those areas which hold this potential, and which together can form a powerful strategic force. In this sense the drive should be towards a World *Class* City rather than a World City, leading to a spatially and socially balanced economy, which by virtue of its diversity contains the ability to be sustained in the long term. It is for this reason that efforts are being made to spearhead investment in sub-regional centres as a means of re-invigorating local economies outside the global financial services sector. This will also require a move away from the narrow conception of the role of these town centres as solely retail centres. Residential 'densification' should go hand in hand with back office functions, ethnic minority speciality product and service centres and small/medium size enterprises. These

local economies hold the potential to become diverse and self-sustaining communities but it will require a degree of ingenuity and an exemplary approach to overcome NIMBY attitudes to development proposals.

There is uncertainty as to whether or not the London Boroughs will endorse the strategy, not least any attempts to increase residential density around public transport nodes in Outer London. It is conceivable that the practical realities of Local Authority politics will thwart this strategy at least in the short-term thus threatening the Plan's already tight implementation timetable. The Mayor's role as a strategist is clearly in danger of being undermined if this happens and the strategy will fail to build adequate consensus. Inevitably local electorates are anxious about this strategy. Many of these sub-regional centres sit within close proximity to Conservation Areas and suburban Councillors are wary of being dubbed performers of 'town cramming' and a repeat of badly designed 1960s high-rise developments.

The sub-region of London Thames Gateway is one example of an area under severe development pressure and where intense controversy exists as to the most effective delivery mechanism. Within London institutional capacity continues to be constrained by central Government, which imposes top-down policies and which has refrained from affording the Mayor of London the fiscal powers to enable him to finance strategic projects highlighted in his own London Plan. It is this deficiency which undermines such a strategy, raising the question as to whether or not such aspirations are deliverable. Historically, despite its economic prominence, London has remained relatively Conservative with regards to strategic planning. Now at least, London has, in the form of the Mayor, the opportunity to focus on issues and problems from a regional level working across longstanding administrative, bureaucratic and electoral boundaries. In this respect there is reason for subdued optimism, if not the convincing evidence that a co-ordinating role is sufficient to meet the conflicting demands of London. Certainly history would suggest that it may not be enough.

2.5 *Schematic conceptual approach*

The research strategy adopted in this study reflects a broad church of conceptual thinking and academic literature and these have been brought together in a schematic approach (see fig. 2.2 below) here as a means of weaving them together to form a single whole. This also reflects a desire to understand how all these factors inter-relate to the extent that we need to be able to understand the practical implications of these trends for London Thames Gateway.

FIGURE 2.2 *Schematic Conceptual Approach*

GLOBALISATION AND 'WORLD CITY' STATUS

INSTITUTION:
Capacity
Delivery
Structure

NATION-STATES:
Welfare regimes
Labour markets
Regeneration

SPATIAL PLANS

POLYCENTRIC SPATIAL STRUCTURE

MONOCENTRIC SPATIAL STRUCTURE

POTENTIAL FALLOUT:
URBAN SEGREGATION
SOCIAL AND INCOME POLARISATION
AREAS WITH POOR TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY
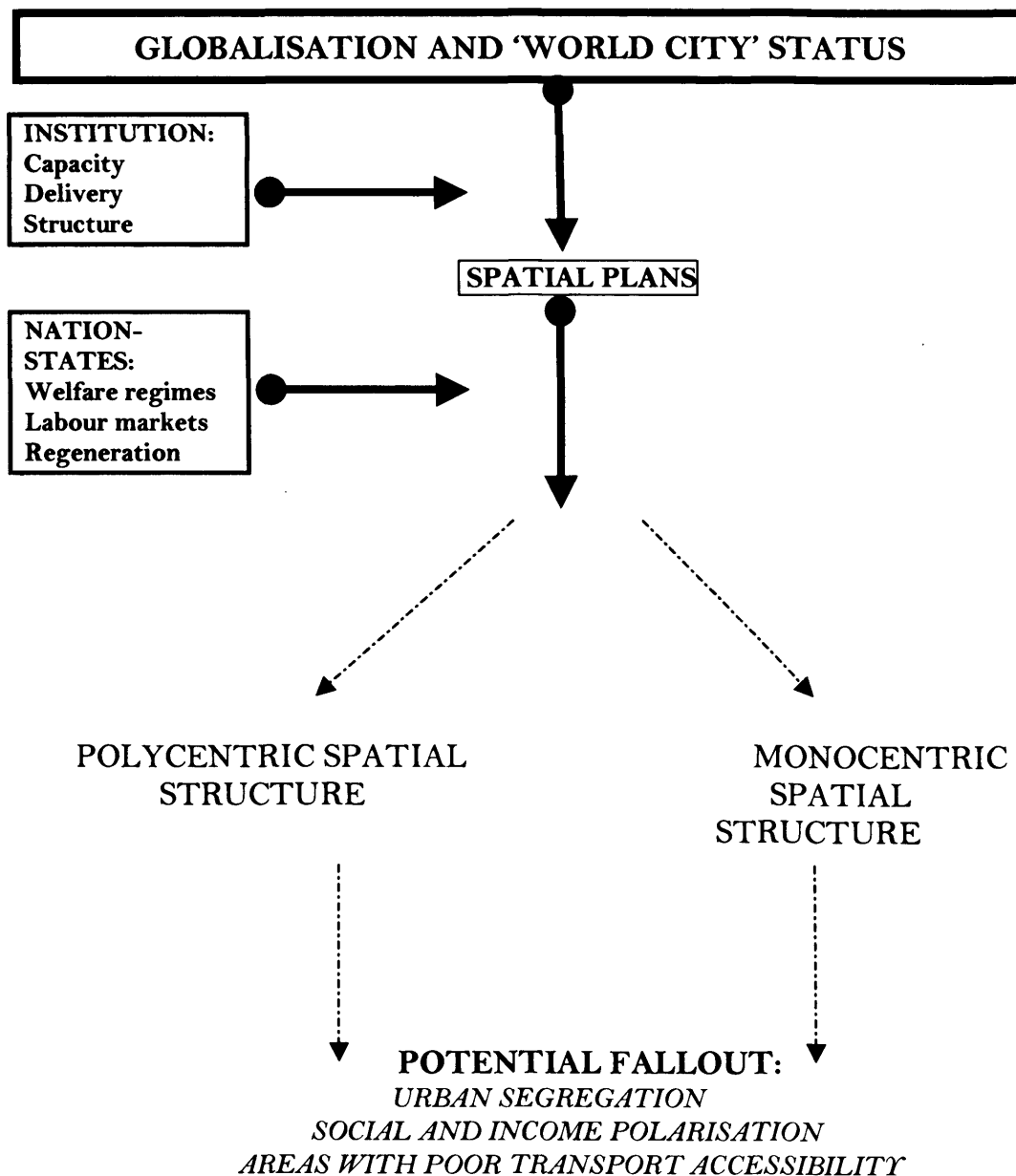
The discussion of London's World City status has emphasised that a number of processes have been set in motion in the institutional set-up of all governance tiers. We have also observed that World City status and broader globalisation trends are creating downward pressures for governance networks, individual institutions, spatial plans and city marketing to reposition in order to take account of these trends (see fig. 2.2). For London this has led to a particular kind of spatial strategy, with economic objectives a driving component. In subsequent sections we consider the spatial implications of these trends for London Thames Gateway in particular.

The aim of this chapter has not been to attempt to devise a new all-encompassing (universal) conceptual framework to address the problems of delivery in London Thames Gateway. The issues are too multi-faceted for that. Rather, the aim is a modest one. That is to highlight the variety of opinion and debate in relation to urban problems and globalisation. We have also identified the concept of institutional capacity as a tool for assessing the capabilities of individual organisations and their relationship with other actors in the network for use in subsequent chapters. As we will see in relation to London Thames Gateway, globalisation processes are closely entwined with emerging governance patterns. We have also seen how some of the academic debates resonate in the context of London Thames Gateway. Spatial plans relating to London Thames Gateway are seen to be closely related to the debates surrounding city marketing and the emphasis on mega-events and other leisure/visitor attractions which can attract media attention. Although this is not inherently negative, planners and policymakers need to be alert to the danger of neglecting broader social and environmental objectives (Thornley and Rydin, 2003; Massey, 2001). Nevertheless, even at this early stage the literature review has demonstrated that the death of the nation-state *vis-à-vis* urban competitiveness has been exaggerated in some academic quarters and that nation-states (although they may now share powers with supra-national and regional organisations) are still important. The key message here for London Thames Gateway is that spatial patterns are not pre-determined and the example of the Ford plant in Dagenham demonstrates that the nation-state, spatial plans, local and cultural factors are still key for decision makers.

GEOGRAPHIES OF LONDON

There are several dimensions to this chapter and they revolve around the changing Geographies of London. The discussions in this chapter form the foundation for addressing the challenges of urban governance across a vast functional urban region *(research question 1)*, historical approaches to delivery *(research question 2)*, bridging the gap between local and strategic needs *(research question 5)*, and achieving a socially and economically balanced London Thames Gateway *(research question 4)*.

3.1 Metropolitan-wide governance

At this point it is important to make the distinction between metropolitan (city-) wide government and regional governance. Both, as we shall see, are mutually interdependent. In London the current City government (GLA Group)[3] has assumed a geographical control over those areas overseen by its predecessor; - the Greater London Council (GLC). Of course London will never be as geographically coherent as these new administrative boundaries assume. The broader South East region stretches for 60 miles beyond the green belt of London containing a population of some 18.1 million in 2000 ((Thornley, 2003) see figure 3.1 below). Travel-to-work patterns, housing and utilities markets, land use planning and economic trends have never conformed to administrative boundaries, nor would one expect them to. The Greater South East region is the U.K's economic powerhouse or an economic *"super-region"* as some have termed it (Gordon, 2003). Unlike other European cities of a similar population size (Paris being the prime example), London is expressly polycentric in geographical scale and form, somewhat reinforced through the decentralisation plans of Abercrombie (1945) but also in a historical sense. London's housing density is far lower than in other world cities and is only the third most dense city in Europe (Cabinet Office, 2003).

The level of geographical coherence is more effectively displayed spatially (see fig. 3.1 below), which identifies the GLA boundary, overlaid against the economic core, the M25 (as the key vehicular transport route), the administration of European funds and the functional urban region. This gives a truer picture of London within the context of its functional regional setting, though there is some dispute as to the way in which a functional urban region should be defined. In this instance it has been defined on the basis of labour market flows and the journey to work statistics this produces. But it can also reflect non-work related trip generation (e.g. leisure and tourism) and the flow of other resources such as goods and information. At first sight it is difficult to discern the logic behind the current administrative boundary, particularly in attempting to make a World City function efficiently. As we will see later this is partly explained by historical circumstances, though arguably these circumstances are now outdated and in need of review in search of a more geographically coherent form of administration[4].

FIGURE 3.1 *The functional urban region*
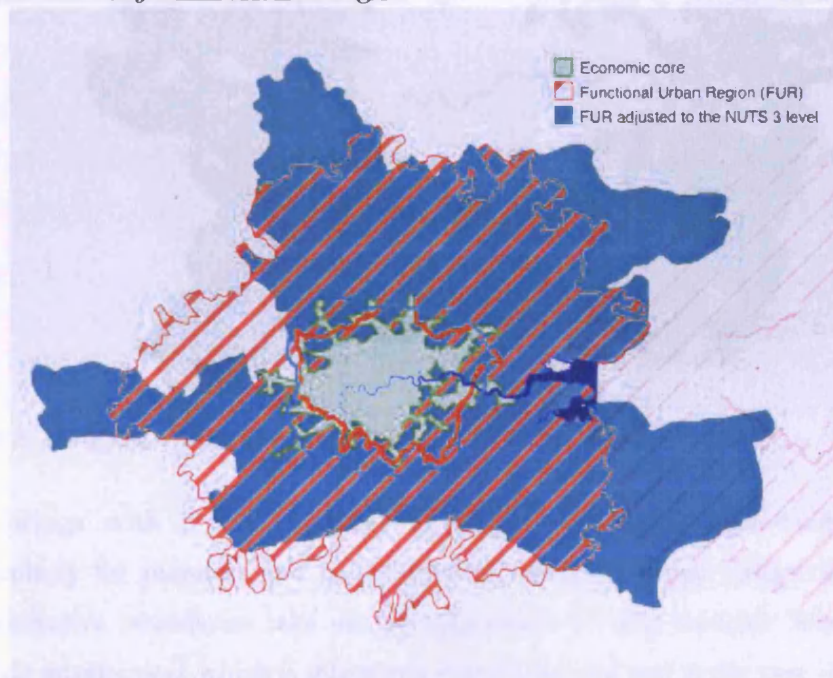
SOURCE: BASED ON DATA PROVIDED BY GLA, 2004

This scale of governance is of course the obvious one for London, the definitive boundary provided by the green belt (see fig. 3.2 below) is easily identifiable, and it is difficult to envisage any other arbitrary boundary working in an administratively

efficient way. However, a recent MORI (2004) poll found strong public agreement that the M25 seems to act as London's natural boundary. Nor, indeed, would it be politically feasible not least because it would reinforce the impression (and reality) of the South East as the powerhouse of the British economy, as well as pouring fuel on the argument that the South East continues to dominate the national policy agenda. Such a boundary is considerably more identifiable in terms of marketing the city brand across the world (see sections 2.4 and 4.4).

FIGURE 3.2 - *London's green belt*

KEY

‒‒‒‒‒
M25
‒‒‒‒‒
GLA
boundary
‒‒‒‒‒
Green
belt
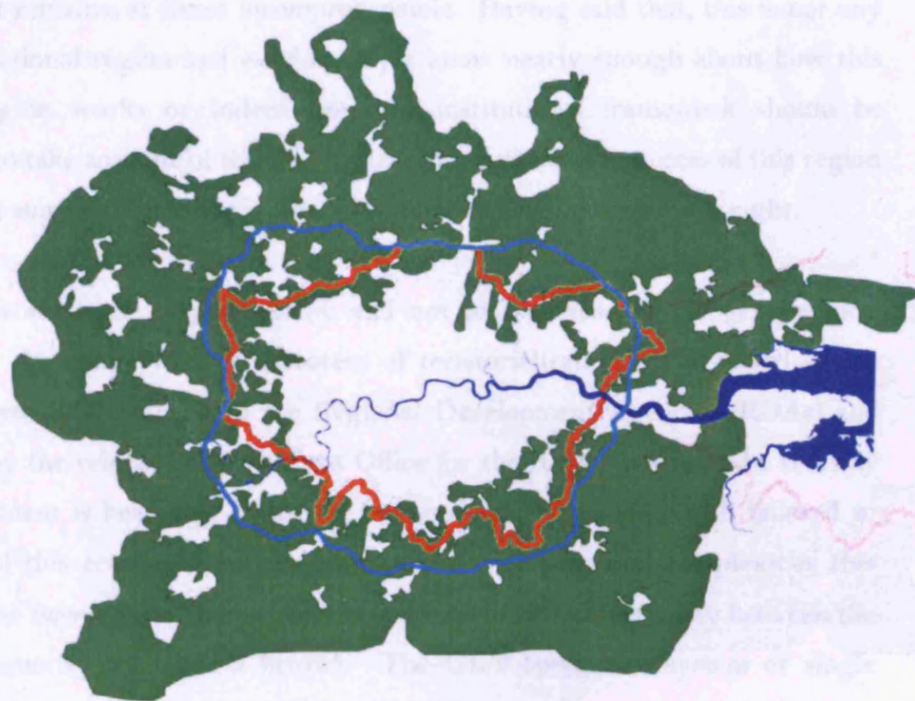
SOURCE: ADAPTED FROM DATA PROVIDED BY THE GLA, 2004.

This brings with it the challenge of spatial and institutional co-ordination (particularly for planners and policy makers) and a very real danger that these administrative boundaries take on the appearance of 'iron curtains' leading to a citywide government which is inherently inward looking and in the case of London, globally minded. In practice, the pattern of governance comprises three separate governmental institutions, namely the Greater London Authority (GLA), South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) and East England Regional Assembly (EERA) (see fig. 3.3 below) across a functional area inextricably linked in economic and social terms. It is fair to say that if one were designing an institutional

framework from scratch for a 'super-region' of this magnitude this is probably the last structure one would have chosen. Ideally, one would choose a single governance structure to transcend the whole functional region. In reality, however, this is an unlikely proposition under this, or any future Government. It would take a brave Government to devolve power to a single unit covering the country's engine of growth. Many of the Home Counties are happy to remain institutionally disassociated with London and all its mega-city problems. Arguably, tinkering with these governance structures would only serve to create more problems than it would solve. Even for those who work within these structures it remains, at times incomprehensible. Having said that, this is not any average functional region and we do not yet know nearly enough about how this complex region works or indeed how the institutional framework should be configured to take account of this. The phenomenal economic success of this region does at least suggest that these institutions must be getting something right.

The current structure is problematic and not just because of the geographical boundaries. It brings with it a process of territorialisation. The model of the Regional Assembly attached to the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and shadowed by the relevant Government Office for the Region seems to be the way the Government is heading. However, this model does not seem well tailored to the needs of this economic 'super-region' and the geographical complexities this raises. In the *inter regnum* there is this strange set-up with little parity between the three institutions (see fig. 3.3 below). The GLA operates a system of single Executive Mayor, meanwhile SEERA and EERA continue to perform a quasi-governmental role while the issue of devolved regional governance remains unresolved. The South East, East Region and the GLA are all trying to integrate their activities within their own boundaries, and for very good reasons. The task of externally co-ordinating these regions, however, is no small feat and raises serious resource implications. The problem with this complexity, of course, is that it needs people to manage it effectively – it is a vicious circle.

This is where the Government needs to step in. The three Government offices could usefully merge here to satisfy a strategic need, acting as an effective co-ordinator of the institutions and overseeing the Communities Plan's four growth regions, all of which transcend the current Government office set-up. For

European examples (particularly Madrid and Berlin) where the unitary Governments are seen to be more dominant see Salet *et al* (2003). The GORs were established as *"functional organisations"* (Salet *et al* 2003, p.386) to bridge the expansive gap between citizen and Government. However, in the context of emerging (semi-independent) regional institutions there is increasing overlap. Furthermore, the emerging regional assemblies and the GLA bring a degree of democratic legitimacy and the role of the GORs will need to evolve to take account of these trends. The GORs are able to bring technical expertise and Government resources to bear and this is why they would prove to be a useful means of integrating policy and action across the South East and elsewhere in the U.K. There seems to be little logic in the Government retaining offices in the region, unless the objective is to shadow the every move of regional government in a 'nanny-like' manner, waiting to intervene where the 'child' becomes petulant. The Government would say that it is only allowing time for these new institutions to bed down *(interview b)* but one senses that this is being used as a smoke screen for retaining central power.

FIGURE 3.3 - *London in its regional setting*
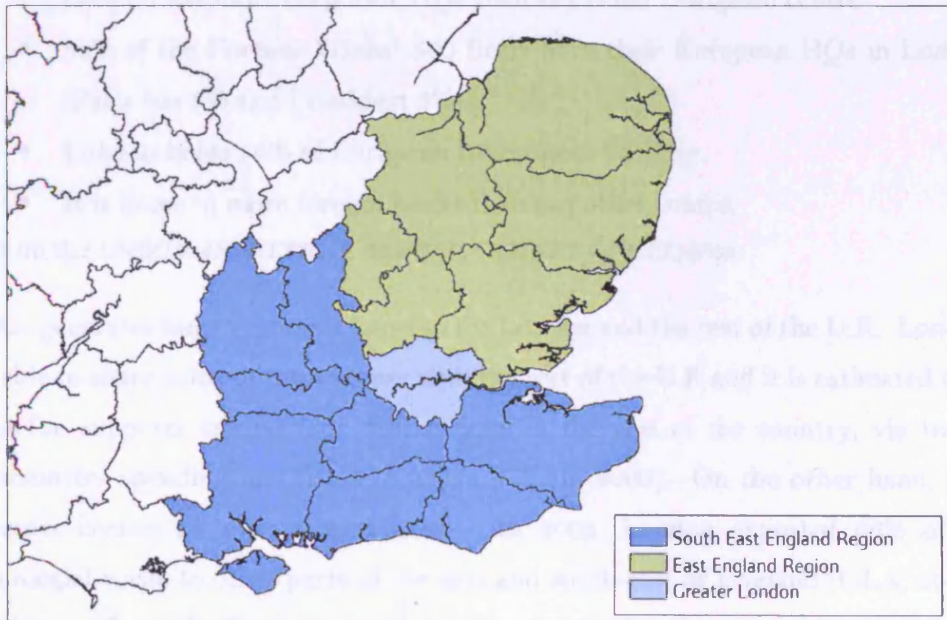
SOURCE: REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE GLA, 2004.

Arguably, this is what the Government Office for London (GoL) has done in the early years of the GLA. One might also think that GoL's budget would have diminished since the birth of the GLA Group. In fact its grown since the office

took over the administration of transport grants and LDA funding for the capital. We also have the oddity of GoL administering neighbourhood renewal funds for London while the LDA oversees the 'single pot' (former SRB funds) regeneration funds for London. If that is not evidence of overlap and administrative empiricism (Walker, p.29, 2004) then it is difficult to see what is. These are civil-service bodies and though they do an important job of acting as a bridge between Whitehall departments, its Ministers and London Boroughs (and the GLA), they only retain influence in selected areas of policy, such as New Deal for Communities. It is increasingly difficult to follow lines of authority in this structure, particularly as GoL now reports to the Regional Coordination Unit based in the ODPM and not Keith Hill ((the Minister for London) Walker, p.29, 2004). One wonders how on earth any public money is spent, or even if it is ever spent once it has been fed through a web of departments and agencies.

As we have already established, London is at the apex of the global city hierarchy and with New York is one of the two key hubs in the world cities network. It is worth underlining this pre-eminence.

- London has more corporate HQs than any other European centre
- 33% of the Fortune Global 500 firms have their European HQs in London (Paris has 9% and Frankfurt 3%).
- London holds 50% of European Investment banking.
- It is home to more foreign banks than any other centre.

SOURCE: LONDON ANALYTICAL REPORT, CABINET OFFICE, 2003.

This generates huge economic benefits for London and the rest of the U.K. London is able to share some of this success with the rest of the U.K and it is estimated that London supports around four million jobs in the rest of the country, via trade, commuters spending and fiscal transfers (CEBR, 2003). On the other hand, this success creates its own externalities. In 2001, London exported 66% of its municipal waste to other parts of the east and south-east of England (GLA, 2004). If this continues the Environment Agency estimates that there are only 5-7 years of landfill capacity left in these regions (Cabinet Office, 2004). Another major externality has been on land and house prices and this has spread well beyond London's administrative boundary (see fig. 3.6 below).

The spatial implication of this is a major dependency on higher skilled workers from outside London's boundaries (see fig. 3.4 below). What is also striking about this pattern for London Thames Gateway is that these districts surround the regeneration area, highlighting a heavy reliance on commuters for London's growth. This also suggests that there are insufficient people inside London's boundaries with the skills to fill this need, but also that these people are drawn in vast numbers to live outside London. This also signals that the task for decision makers is to create places and communities within London's boundaries where people will actively choose to live.

FIGURE 3.4 - *Districts where more than 25% of people in employment work in London*

KEY

——
M25
——
GLA
boundary
——
Districts wit
> 25%
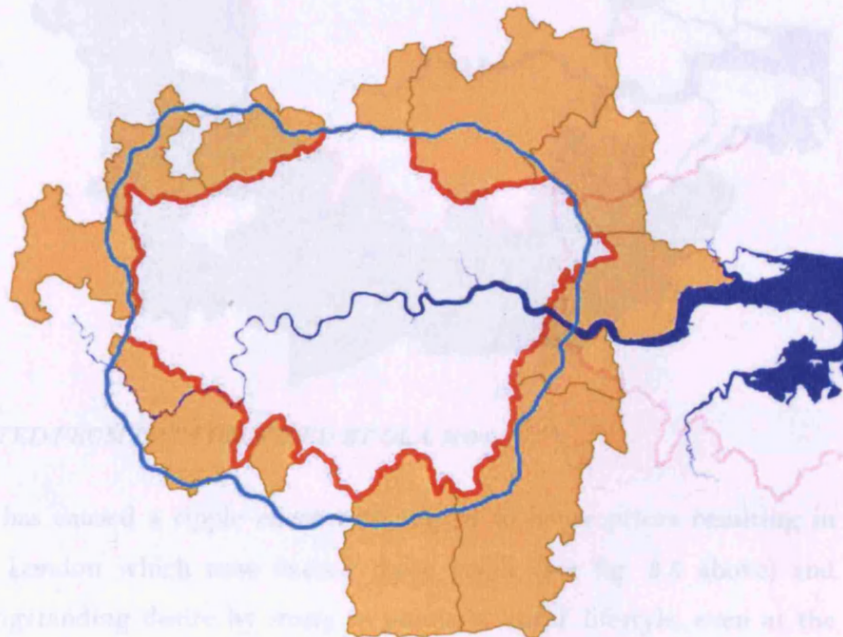
SOURCE: ADAPTED FROM DATA PROVIDED BY THE GLA, 2004.

Almost all London's surrounding districts exceed the Outer London average. This is particularly problematic as we know that the vast majority of commuters are mid to high-income workers. The vast majority of London's needs for high skilled workers are met by commuters and migrant workers. Over 300,000 of London's employed residents arrived in London in the last five years (ONS, 2003). This process will only intensify in the coming years. The number of higher skilled jobs created in London is expected to increase by 300,000 by 2010 with growth in the number of professionals (e.g. lawyers, consultants) and associate professionals (e.g.

nurses, finance analysts) (ONS, 2004). Furthermore, it is likely that the majority of these jobs will be filled by more commuters and migrants. The number of commuters is forecast to grow by 10-20% by 2010, whilst the number of international migrants will increase by half a million by 2010.

FIGURE 3.5 - *Districts where average house prices exceed the Outer London average*

KEY

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M25
— — — — — —
GLA
boundary
— — — — — —
Districts above
average
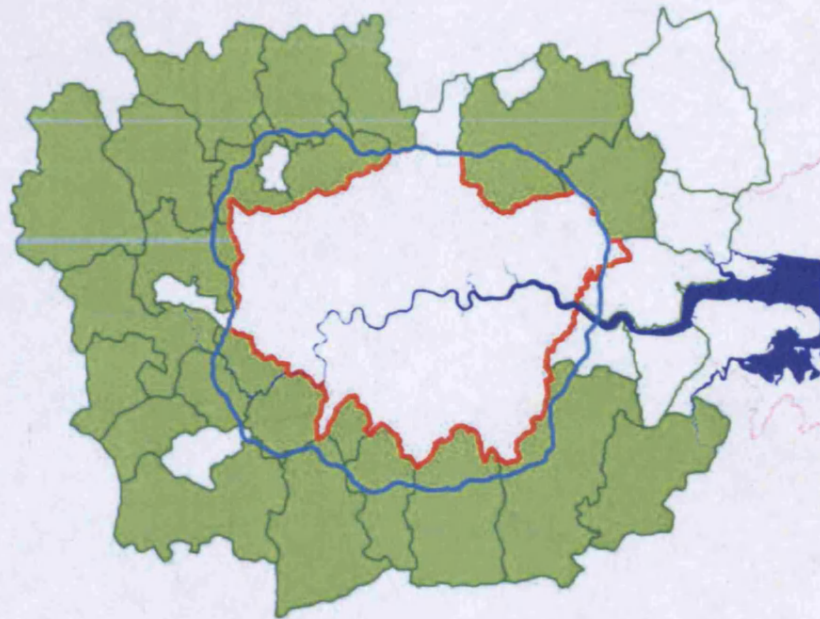
SOURCE: ADAPTED FROM DATA PROVIDED BY GLA, 2004.

London's pull has caused a ripple effect with regard to house prices resulting in prices outside London which now exceed those inside (see fig. 3.5 above) and reflecting a longstanding desire by many to pursue a 'rural' lifestyle, even at the expense of longer distance commuting. In many ways this relationship is inverse and reflects a situation where higher skilled jobs are increasingly being filled by either migrant workers or those living outside London, placing a particular strain on the capital's main transport arteries. With the projected increase in population and jobs in London this situation is likely to deteriorate before it improves. It also suggests that the call for an 'urban renaissance' is all the more urgent, even though it will be an uphill task convincing professionals and families that London's homes and communities meet all their increasingly high aspirations relating to quality of life. After all, home movers do not make their choices according to administrative boundaries (with the one big exception of schools and education).

Historically, London has grown outwards in line with the growth of the railway and tube, hence London has one of the most extensive rail and tube networks in the world - almost twice the route length of other World Cities like Tokyo or New York (Cabinet Office, 2004). This has led to a particular kind of spatial structure with a longstanding pattern of population dispersal. Conversely, London's jobs growth has continued unabated in the centre leading to a transport system heavily reliant on radial transport routes through the heart of the capital. Patrick Abercrombies' (1945) big plans for a strategic road network for London comprising 5 orbital rings and 10 express arterial routes through London, were, thankfully, shelved owing to environmental impact and cost. Ironically, however, this spatial pattern is what is needed now for the public transport system rather than road building.

FIGURE 3.6 - *Districts with stations within 30 minutes commuting of central London*

KEY

———
M25
———
GLA
boundary
———
Districts within
30 minutes
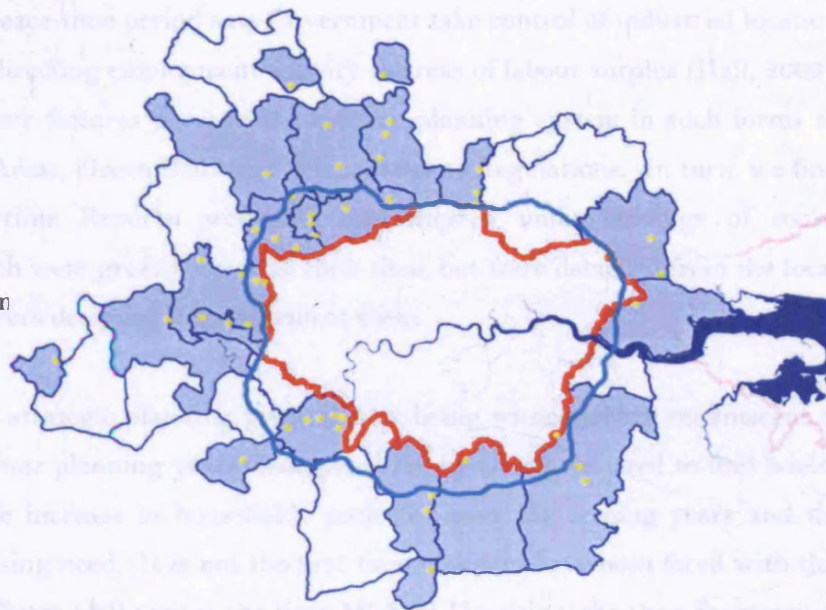
SOURCE: ADAPTED FROM DATA PROVIDED BY THE GLA, 2004.

A similar pattern is therefore evidenced by the location of commuter rail stations (see fig. 3.6 above) within 30 minutes' travel of London, and the two closely correspond. The outer Thames Gateway along the Kent and Essex coastlines stand out as having weaker rail connections with London and, thus, house prices are relatively low.

3.2   Planning London: a historical synopsis

The British road to post-war planning has been a long and arduous one littered with inefficiencies and frustrations yet the principles which underlined the wartime reports and subsequent statutory planning foundation (in the form of the Town and Country Planning Act 1947) continue to perform a central role in the planning sphere even today. Inevitably, the planning system has had difficulty in keeping pace with the evolving society it seeks to control. The wartime reports laid the foundations for unprecedented state intervention in physical planning in the U.K. born out of a context of social reform during the immediate aftermath of World War II. This social reform context, as yet unmatched in scale and nature, created a system heavily weighted towards negative controls. A new confident and optimistic agenda for 'social reconstruction' embraced the regulatory nature of centralised control, the principles of which are paramount to today's planning system. The peace-time period saw Government take control of industrial location as a means of directing employment activity to areas of labour surplus (Hall, 2002). These regulatory features pervade the modern planning system in such forms as Conservation Areas, Green Belts and Advertisement Regulations. In turn, we find that the Wartime Reports presented sophisticated understandings of social processes, which were greatly ahead of their time, but were detached from the local regulatory powers designed to complement them.

The 'big bang' strategic planning projects now being witnessed are reminiscent of the early post-war planning years, brought about by an urgent need to find homes for the massive increase in households projected over the coming years and the backlog of housing need. It is not the first time planners have been faced with this predicament. Peter Hall recites the time Michael Heseltine, the then Secretary of State for the Environment, took a helicopter trip over London's Docklands in the early 1970s, and said: *"There were all kinds of committees, reports, discussions, but beneath me stretched this appalling proof that no-one was doing anything effective...Everyone was involved. No one was involved"* (Hall, P. 2004 RTPI Gold Lecture).

More recently, John Prescott took the very same helicopter trip and if Government press releases are to be believed the current Government is also dissatisfied with

this inaction and has committed itself to delivering the paper plans outlined in the *Sustainable Communities Plan* (ODPM, 2003c) for the Thames Gateway. As well as highlighting the circuitous nature of British politics, this also suggests that the key question remains – delivery.

The struggle over land and property rights was re-examined by the Uthwatt (Lord Justice Uthwatt, 1879-1949). Although many of the most radical proposals purported by Uthwatt never materialised in statutory form the resulting post-war legislation did transfer all development rights for undeveloped land onto the state. It was also the state's prerogative to recapture the betterment value brought about by their interest in the land (Cullingworth and Nadin, 2002). This interest was overseen by the Central Land Board, which assumed the power to levy betterment charges (of varying amounts) on owners who had gained planning permission to develop land. The actual amounts were in fact arbitrary and dependent upon the relative increase in the market value brought about by the development proposals. It is not surprising therefore that we appear to have come full circle. At the time of writing this research, the Government has woken up to a housing crisis, and the results of a Treasury funded report have re-ignited the prospect of betterment (community) tax in an attempt to recoup some of the land uplift value brought about by state intervention and planning permission (Barker Review, 2004).

The extended control of public and private land was a step change for land management in the U.K. In essence the reform created a *de facto* style of land nationalisation. The perception was that the state would be the sole buyer of this land, if and when it would be required for urban development, not realising that this situation would evolve as it has, leaving a legacy of control which can no longer deliver the public interest value it was designed to achieve. The conflict between public and private interest was evident in this report and it led to a planning system preoccupied with property rights and land-use issues not effectively controlled at a national level.

The administration and operational needs of local planning authorities were not matched with the strategic policies being fed through national policies. This lack of synthesis and the relative autonomy of local planning authorities meant that the negative nature of planning control lay solely at the local level. The scope of

administrative control being devolved to local planning authorities was unprecedented, comprising for example: control over ribbon development and advertisements; powers to preserve woodlands; the power to require the proper maintenance of waste land; and the power for local authorities to compulsory purchase land for housing developments (Cullingworth and Nadin, 2002). With the exception of the last, these powers were predominantly negative creating the machinery for statutory control.

The sophisticated understandings of social processes, the patterns of industrial location and the decentralisation of regional populations, which had been so commendably highlighted by the Wartime Reports, could not feed through to the administrative level at which these powers were being implemented. And so, the relatively narrow public perception of planning's role was shaped at the local level, later becoming synonymous with negative planning controls.

These early notions were later enshrined in statutory undertakings but they did not form part of the overall Town Planning movement which emerged around this time. Moreover, the huge changes taking place in the form of population geography, industrial location and regional economic development were detached from the Town Planning profession, which was increasingly being seen as a mechanistic part of the state. The sweeping powers which resulted from the wartime reports were designed at a time when public sector development was assumed to be indefinitely buoyant whilst private sector development would remain marginal. This estimated balance of development was by no means unrealistic; all the same, the reality was very different. And so, at a time when Town Planning emerged as a utopian art form and an effective professional tool, propagated in the main by pioneering practitioners such as Abercrombie (1944) and Unwin (1921), its localised administrative level was moving in the opposite direction. The problems of the urban areas, traffic congestion and industrial location were well understood by Town Planners but their remit focused on that of garden cities and suburbs. Instinctively Town Planning reverted to vernacular forms of housing design instigating a housing reform programme centred on the principles of separating town from country advocated by Ebenezer Howard (1902).

Abercrombie's *Greater London Plan* (1945) embraced these processes fully into the Town Planning portfolio. Population forecasts were the basis for much of the Plan which would seek to address London's burgeoning overcrowding and sanitary problems. Deprived and blighted areas in inner London would be completely re-developed and replaced with spacious housing to meet minimum standards. The resulting overspill population would be housed in self-contained satellite communities beyond the proposed green belt set up around London at the point where the urban sprawl had stopped.

The pattern of residential dispersal in the post-war period was also driven by the growth of the Underground and passenger rail network. Almost 700,000 homes were built in London between 1918 and 1939 (ONS, 2004). This was a controlled and organised programme of re-housing designed to mitigate the effects of overcrowding. At the same time the green belt would act as a constraining mechanism to prevent the unimpeded sprawl of metropolitan London. It is an act of urban containment that has survived the evolution of planning. Indeed, the notion of urban containment now forms a central theme in the belated follow up to *The Greater London Plan*, the *Spatial Development Strategy* (The London Plan 2004). The concept of sustainability is now grounded in the principle of building within London's existing boundaries, resisting the temptation to continue building into the countryside. Here too, the fear that town and country may merge, thereby blurring the distinction, remains pertinent in today's planning system. And so these principles were faithfully followed but they did not work in tandem with the regulatory role performed by Local Planning Authorities.

These ideas were re-affirmed by the Reith Committee (1946), whose recommendations formed the basis for the decentralisation of the population into new towns, the size of which would be carefully controlled. The local government structure was not viewed as suitable for administering large scale re-housing and was largely separated from these programmes. A special vehicle for delivering these proposals came in the form of development corporations. These public building agencies assumed the role of positive planning largely unconnected to the negative mechanisms operated by local authorities. Between 1946 and 1950 eight such corporations were set up around London to fulfil Abercrombie's vision of decentralisation based on the conceptual model of satellite towns envisaged by

Howard. The wartime reports and work of Reith (1946) and Abercrombie (1944) in particular had prepared the ground for the realisation of urban containment. Further reforms which appeared later, elaborated upon the principle of extending country towns (conceived by Abercrombie) eventually leading to The Town Development Act 1952. This act saw the extension of towns such as Basingstoke, Swindon and Andover. The evolution of both models created a twin-track approach to overcrowding in the urban conurbations by expanding existing populations and creating new self-contained (and sustainable) communities. These proposals were by no means negative, for they attempted to tackle head on the social and economic issues of the urban arena. Such resolutions are resurfacing again in an attempt to halt the escalating problems of London by increasing densities in satellite towns such as Milton Keynes.

There is a reason for this exploration into the beginnings of British town planning and that is to learn a number of key lessons. For once, they relate to the successes of Town Planning and of the early delivery mechanisms. As Peter Hall (2003) stated in his RTPI Gold lecture:

> *These [New Towns built between 1961 and 1970] were amazing achievements for which British planners and architects became justifiably famous throughout the world. But again ask: how did it all so effectively get done? And the answer comes straight back: by again using the same mechanism, the Reithian vision of the strong single-purpose executive agency.*

More recently, Lord Heseltine reflected on his time as Secretary of State for the Environment at a seminar held at City Hall (April 2004) to mark the start of a yearlong review of London Governance. In it, he said:

> *I remain today as convinced as I ever was that the reform that is needed requires a significant increase in the powers of London's directly elected Mayor...whoever is in the job, the problem is: it is a non-job. The government made a gesture when the reality needed a landslide of power from the overbearing centralism of Whitehall to a powerful decision making person directly answerable to Londoners. Today, no-man, no one is in charge. Committees abound, power is diffused – that is not a formula with which to win the race to be the world's greatest city in 50 years from now* (Lord Heseltine, City Hall, April 2004).

A hybrid version of this mechanism has re-emerged with the reincarnation of the Urban Development Corporation (see section 5.4), but with a hint of democratic accountability, yet maintaining the single-purpose agenda in its designated area. It all sounds very 'third way', but in fact fulfils a very simple vision of effective delivery irrespective of political ideology. This form of delivery has stood the test of time and remains our greatest chance of delivering communities on the sort of scale now required.

3.3   Grapes or bananas? Polycentric V monocentric

Following on from a profile of London's geographies, this section discusses the spatial form of this development and the implications of this for London Thames Gateway. During the last few years European countries have seen the rise of a new academic and political discourse relating to European spatial development. A major role is being played by the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), published in 1999 (CEC 1999) and this discourse is beginning to permeate through down to the city-region level (Waterhaut et al, 2003). The ESDP is a non-binding document written by representatives of the European Commission and the previous 15 Member States of the EU (Faludi & Waterhaut, 2002). One of the key messages to flow from the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP, 1999) adopted by Ministers for Spatial Planning at the Potsdam Council on 10 and 11 May 1999 is the

> ...*development of a polycentric and balanced urban system and strengthening of the partnership between urban and rural areas. This involves overcoming the outdated dualism between city and countryside* (European Spatial Development Perspective, CEC, 1999, p.19).

As cities have grown we have also seen the rise of these two competing conceptualisations of the core-periphery relationship in the form of polycentric and monocentric patterns of development. Broadly speaking the polycentric model of development consists of a centre and a number of concentrated sub-centres with high population and employment densities. There is assumed to be a dynamic inter-dependent relationship between these centres where the hierarchy is less clearly defined and the relationship is one of organised mutual inter-dependence (see fig. 3.7).

FIGURE 3.7 *A Bunch of Grapes (Kunzmann and Wegener, 1991)*

SOURCE: REPRODUCED FROM KUNZMANN AND WEGENER (1991)

At the other extreme, the monocentric model of development is strictly hierarchical with a dominant (possibly overbearing) metropolis at the centre of a dispersed urban structure with no discernable urban edge between centres (see fig. 3.8 below).

FIGURE 3.8 *The Blue Banana (Brunet, 1989)*
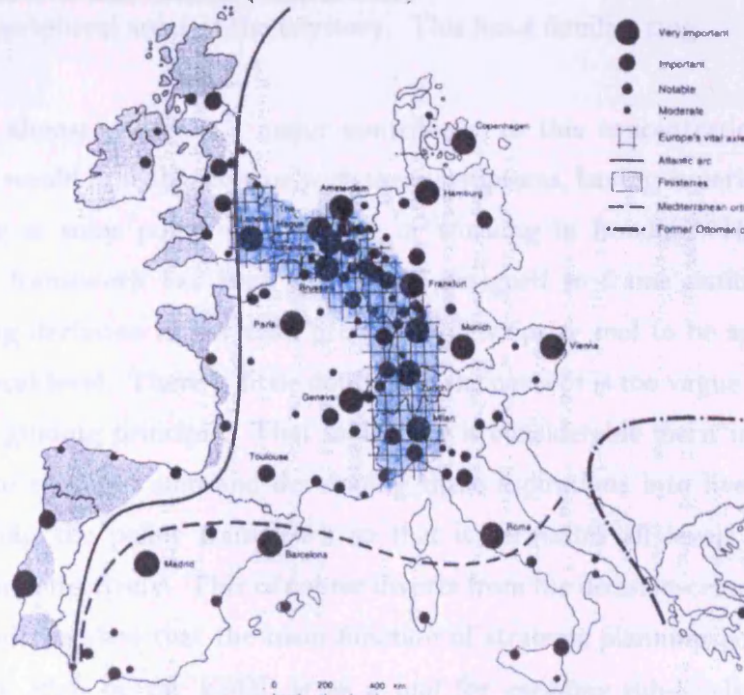
SOURCE: REPRODUCED FROM BRUNET (1989)

Like much planning terminology the precise definition of the concept remains vague. Some have argued that the ambiguity of the concept is the main reason why it has been able to build a degree of political consensus at the European level (Hague, 2003). In its broadest sense it refers to the balanced, sustainable development of the European territory. This has been a policy response to the divergent and fragmented nature of the EU territory as well as a means of planning for the imminent enlargement of the EU, a process which will almost certainly reveal more profound inter- and intra-regional economic disparities. Furthermore, the enlargement is set to raise the population of the EU by 28% and increase the landmass of the EU by 34% (ESDP, p.46). The rationale for such a policy is that, like nation-states, the EU is immersed in the global economy, and that the economic competitiveness of the EU demands a stronger integration of European regions into this economy. The current EU spatial structure is heavily concentrated in a pentagon defined by the metropolises of London, Paris, Milan, Munich and Hamburg, within which 50% of the EU's GDP is generated (see figs. 3.8 and 3.9). This level of concentration is considered to be a problem for the EU, which threatens future prosperity. Combating 'hyper-concentration' (Faludi & Waterhaut, 2002) is therefore a stated aim of the ESDP, the externalities of which can include congestion, pollution and property inflation and can have a detrimental impact on peripheral areas of the territory. This has a familiar ring.

London is almost certainly a major contributor to this concentration and most Londoners would probably concur with these symptoms, having experienced one or all of these at some point whilst living or working in London. However, this conceptual framework has been specifically designed to frame national (spatial) plan-making decisions rather than provide a prescriptive tool to be applied at the regional/local level. There is little doubt that the concept is too vague at this stage to act as a guiding principle. That said, there is considerable merit in taking this discourse to the next step and developing these aspirations into lived reality by strengthening the policy framework so that it permeates all levels of decision-making more effectively. This of course diverts from the decision-centred school of thought and the view that the main function of strategic planning policy such as the London Plan or the ESDP is as a tool for *enriching* sub-levels of decision making rather than propagating prescriptive spatial planning policies (Faludi, 2000, 2002a, 2002b, 2004). This emerging conceptual model provides a useful

counterpoint to understanding the perplexities of the current economic predicament in London Thames Gateway, as well as providing a more sophisticated policy tool for developing strategic planning policy across most spatial scales, including that of the city-region.

FIGURE 3.9 - *Gross Domestic Product in the EU*

GDP by PPS Per Capita 1995
Index: EUR 15 = 100

NUTS 2

- below 75
- 75 up to below 100
- 100 up to below 125
- 125 and more

Source: Eurostat

Açores (P)

Madeira (P)

Canarias (E)

Guadeloupe (F)

Martinique (F)

La Réunion (F)

Guyane (F)

SOURCE: REPRODUCED FROM ESDP (1999)
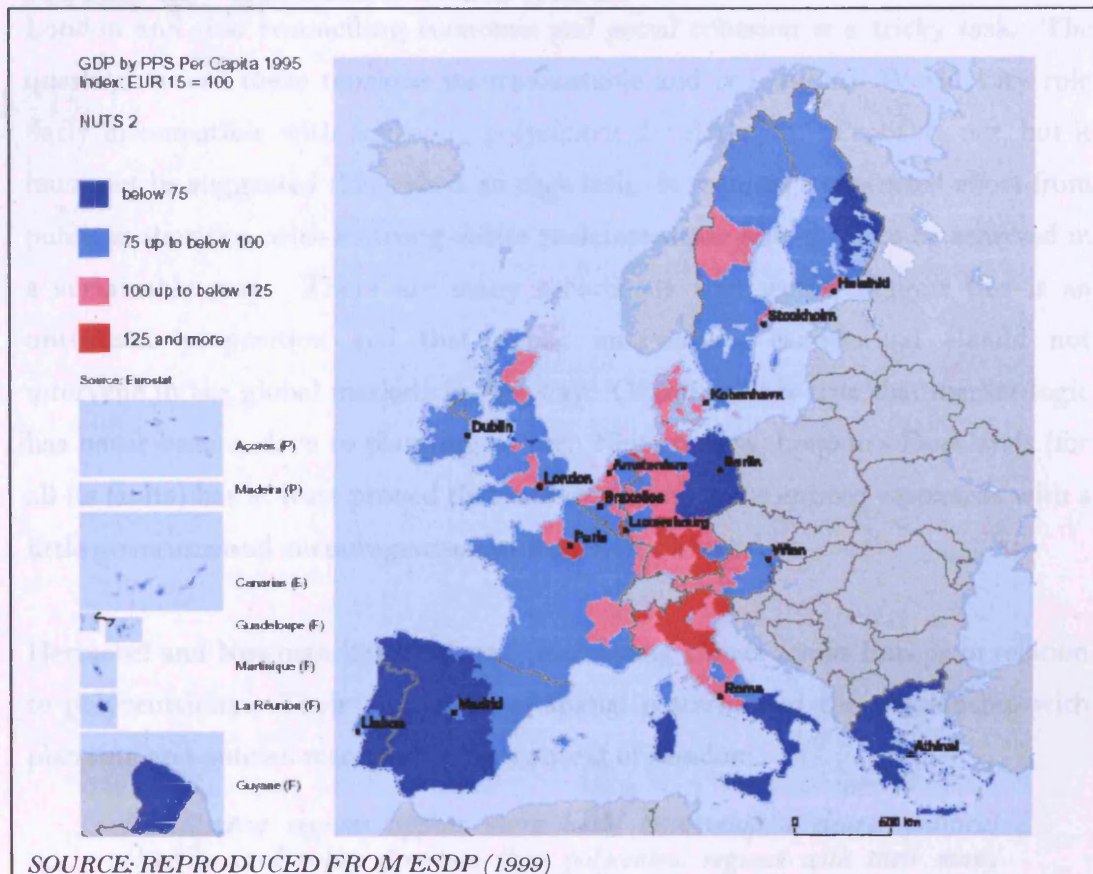
The extent to which this discourse has infiltrated national spatial strategies is currently the topic of European funded research.[5] Not surprisingly, the evidence is largely drawn from other EU countries, as no national spatial strategy exists in the U.K. for this concept to permeate through. There is reason for subdued optimism, however, since devolved regional governance will provide the main route through which to 'spread the word'. In London the Spatial Development Strategy has already embraced the concept and it has formed a central theme in the future vision for London, particularly the desire for urban containment and the strengthening of the town centre network. Considerable debate remains however, and there is a question mark over whether this fits squarely with the plan's considerable emphasis on London's World City role and the monocentric tendencies of speculative market trends.

There is considerable tension inherent in the dual aim of achieving meaningful polycentric patterns of development and London's position within the global economy. Most would agree with the central objective of achieving spatial balance and attempting to diminish regional, sub-regional and borough level disparities. We have already established that these patterns are typically complex across London and that reconciling economic and social cohesion is a tricky task. The question is: are these tensions insurmountable and is London's World City role flatly incompatible with achieving polycentric development? Probably not, but it must not be suggested that this is an easy task. It requires a concerted effort from public authorities, with a strong desire to demonstrate how this can be achieved in a sustainable way. There are many economists who would suggest this is an unrealistic proposition and that public intervention cannot and should not intervene in the global markets in this way. Of course, it is true that market logic has never been a slave to planning policy. Nevertheless, London's Docklands (for all its faults) has at least proved that market forces can be enticed eastwards with a little governmental encouragement (and a few tax breaks).

Herrschel and Newman (2002) identify interesting trends across Europe in relation to polycentricity. Their discussion of spatial patterns and the relationship with planning and politics resonates in the context of London:

> *Monocentric regions appear more likely to develop a clearer political objective and policy direction than polycentric regions with their many players and diverse, competing interests. The former are thus a potentially greater challenge to the unitary state than the latter, because inter-communal competition for regional influence is more likely to allow, or even require, a 'guiding' involvement by the central state* (p.112).

The issue of London governance, and its structures, is discussed in more detail in the following chapter, though it is clear that this issue remains inextricably linked to spatial structure and patterns of development. The relationship between spatial development and political objectives is all the more significant in London Thames Gateway where city marketing, and other economic objectives associated with London's World City role, dominate the plans. In short, monocentric patterns of development and the elusive search for economic competitiveness produce a centralised system of governance typically characterised by informal networks of organisations constrained by central Government dictat. There is a connection

here with central Government's historically close working relationship with the private sector in London in the post-GLC years (e.g. London Pride). Traditionally this has been driven by Thatcher's reforms and the age of financial de-regulation.

The GLA is not (yet) a territorialised political power base and it remains constrained by central Government in case it poses a challenge to established central or local state autonomy. The key point here is that informal or network based sub-regions, such as London Thames Gateway, are not embedded and can be easily dismantled, reconfigured or removed all together. This is where the U.K. institutional framework departs from the continent, typically characterised by: federal state structures; heavily embedded and institutionalised regional structures; clearly defined and strongly demarcated territorialised patterns of governance; and they carry a degree of political and institutional credibility and legitimacy (Salet et al, 2000). This is not to say that these contrasting systems of governance are problem-free or any more efficient. In fact, conversely, the main challenge to these structures is that there is a constant atmosphere of anxiety between the levels of governance through fear of a re-distribution of power across the tiers.

The development of successful urban networks is therefore dependent on the nurturing of mutually beneficial relationships, not least between London Boroughs in the case of London Thames Gateway and the need for common problem solving. Chapter 5 explores the links with urban governance and the extent to which mutual collaboration exists. This is where the connection between urban governance and spatial planning is most pronounced. There is a clear opportunity in London Thames Gateway, and other areas with heavy economic pressures, to pioneer policy innovations for implementation and roll-out elsewhere. This is why the appropriate governance structures must be in place, an issue to be discussed in subsequent sections. In this study we seek to track a course through competing demands and to consider economic competitiveness more cohesively in the context of London Thames Gateway. How, then might polycentricity look in London Thames Gateway? Figure 3.10 (below) gives a useful starting point.

FIGURE 3.11 *Polycentricity in practice*
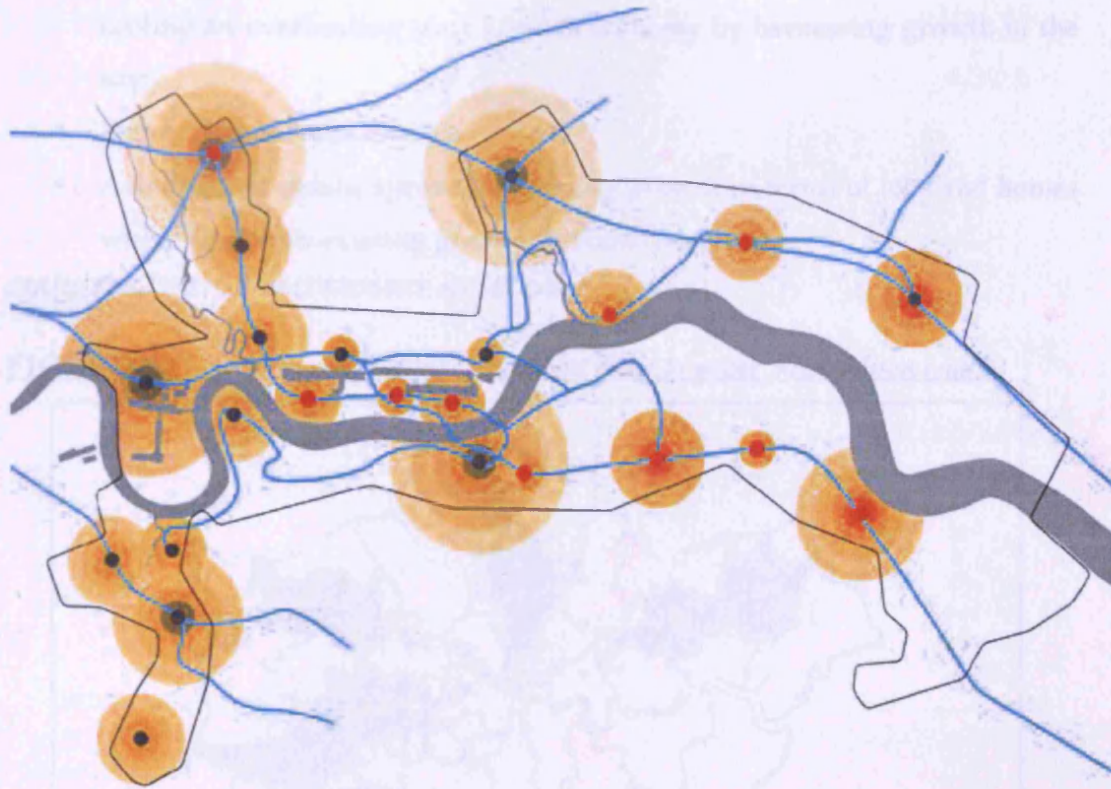
SOURCE: TGIF (2004), REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF A+UU, GLA.

Also, how does London Thames Gateway fit into the rest of London, the U.K. and Europe in the most balanced and sustainable way? Applying a normative concept such as polycentricity in this context may seem a crude exercise but there are a number of important messages running through this concept, all of which can permeate planning policy to create a balanced and sustainable urban network which has the potential to become the template for other large-scale regeneration projects. The approach here, therefore, is to do away with theoretical pretensions. There are also multiple scales at which the concept can be applied, including intra-urban (London Thames Gateway as a sub-region of a metropolis), inter-urban (London and the rest of the south-east) or inter-regional (European context) making the concept unusually versatile and adaptable to practical application. The relevant principles include the following:

- Developing more **spatial balance/equity** in the sense of diminishing regional disparities
- Strengthening the **competitive position** of sub-regional urban centres
- Developing of **urban networks** (hierarchical urban centres)

- **Counterbalance** (redressing the historical east-west imbalance in London, cooling an overheating west London economy by harnessing growth in the east)
- Prevention of **rural exodus**
- Avoidance of **urban sprawl** (containing growth in terms of jobs and homes within London's existing green belt boundaries)

SOURCE: BASED ON WATERHAUT ET AL, 2000.

FIGURE 3.11 *30 minute travel time catchment zones to major metropolitan centres*

Data Source: TfL Integration - CAPITAL
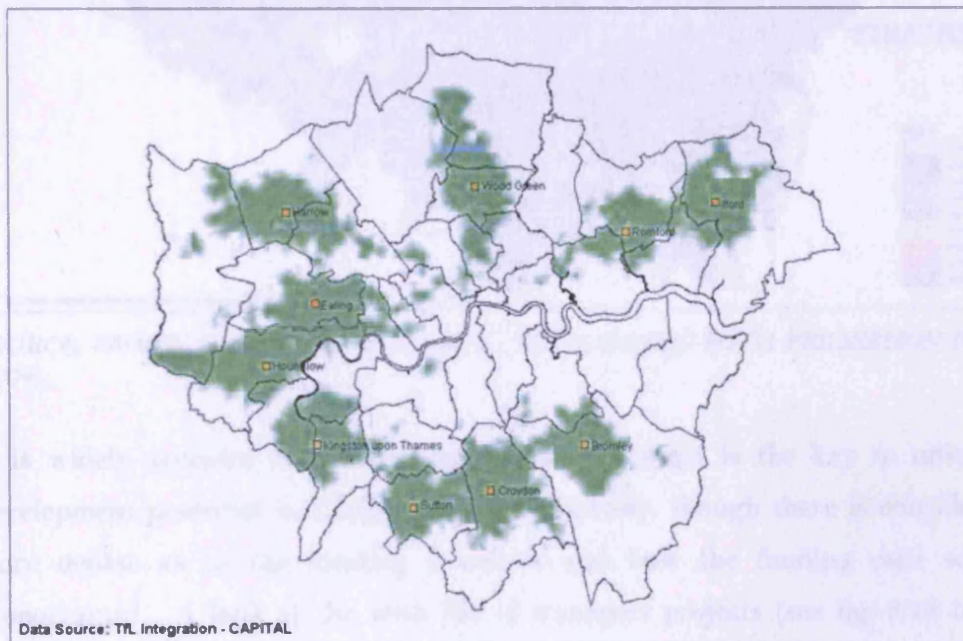
SOURCE: REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF TfL, (2004)

For historical reasons, orbital and through travel in London is less well provided by public transport. This causes particular difficulties for those needing to travel around Outer London (see fig. 3.11). This is also a major hindrance to the development of a successful (polycentric) urban network in London Thames Gateway not least because the development programme and policy direction is founded on the mantra of higher densities close to transport nodes and linked to Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTALs see figures 3.12 PTAL map and 3.11). The transport investment programme is therefore a good pointer to future spatial development patterns.

FIGURE 3.12 *Public Transport Accessibility Levels in London (PTALs)*
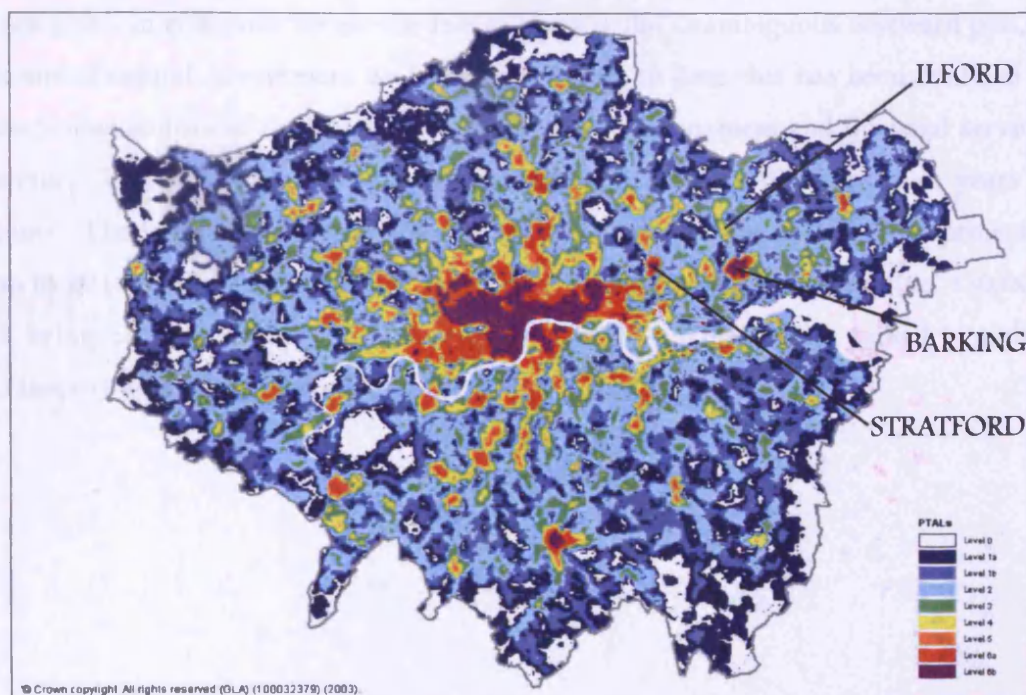
SOURCE: CROWN COPYRIGHT MATERIAL, REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF TfL (2004).

It is widely accepted that improving public transport is the key to unlocking development potential in London Thames Gateway, though there is considerably more debate as to the funding priorities and how the funding cake will be proportioned. A look at the wish list of transport projects (see fig. 3.13 below) reveals how the emphasis is evolving. Broadly speaking there has been a deliberate emphasis on improving north-south movement (currently non-existent in public transport terms), with the one very big exception of Crossrail 1, as a means of connecting communities north and south of the River Thames. These have tended to be smaller localised transport systems, such as the East London Transit and Greenwich Waterfront Transit although the Thames Gateway bridge will act as a key strategic link with a much broader catchment for car-borne travel. This also suggests the intention is to reconnect Outer London centres such as Woolwich, Bromley and Ilford. There are clear advantages to this strategy and it will almost certainly strengthen the economic hand of Outer London centres, many of which remain overly reliant (unsustainably so) on vulnerable local retail economies.

That almost certainly deals with the second principle of polycentric development already identified. The question of developing and sustaining a complementary

hierarchical urban structure is much less certain. Here, many more factors come into play. In economic terms the Isle of Dogs is the unambiguous eastward pull, in terms of capital, investment and jobs. However, to date this has been confined to particular sectors of the economy, most notably the business and financial services sector. This trend is projected to continue, and indeed will intensify in years to come. The Isle of Dogs is projected to absorb 100,000 of the 250,000 jobs projected up to 2016 (The London Plan, 2004). The majority of this projection (i.e. 180,000) is being channeled through identified Opportunity Areas, again linked to public transport accessibility levels.

FIGURE 3.13 *Transport projects in London Thames Gateway*

SOURCE: TfL (2004)

This scenario raises a number of implications and suggests that in practice the Isle of Dogs will play a much more dominant role in the sub-region, hence the orange circles (see fig. 3.11 above) would probably be much bigger and more intense than is currently envisaged. If East London is the new 'gateway' into the city then Canary Wharf and the Isle of Dogs certainly 'hold the key'. The London Plan (2004) anticipates that the East sub-region will absorb 31% of London's increase in dwellings and 39% of its growth in employment. The first question is how will this concentration be balanced with the rest of London Thames Gateway? The concentration of jobs and growth must be read in the context of a hierarchy of urban centres if the concept of creating 'a city within a city' is to be fully realised. There is already considerable, sometimes overwhelming, pressure on radial transport routes through London and this pressure will inevitably increase. Crossrail, if the funding issues are ever resolved, is already projected to be at full capacity on its opening day. The lobbying for Crossrail has continued unabated over many years, although this has been criticised in some academic quarters for pandering to the business sector and being a Zone 1 project with little benefits for those living in Outer London who do not commute into the city daily (Edwards, 2003). Moreover, it is widely acknowledged that major overground rail projects tend to encourage ever-longer distance commuting and disproportionately benefit middle to higher income households. In reality however, this comes down to political pragmatism and London needs all the transport projects and central Government funding it can lay its hands on.

Of course the danger with a dominant sector such as business and financial services is that it distorts the urban hierarchy, resulting in monocentric patterns of development and subservient peripheral centres. Though not an inherently negative proposition, if these processes go unchecked there is the very real danger that a number of peripheral urban centers, rather than becoming complementary and self-sustaining, will be forced to engage in a damaging economic race with competing centres for back-office functions. Larger office occupiers are particularly 'footloose' and, as demand resulting from merger and acquisition activity increases after a period of subdued market activity, there will be a battle between the sub-centres to capture the higher value uses, inevitably at the expense of others. Spatial plans must deal with this tension by seeking to diversify the employment bases of the more vulnerable centres such as Woolwich, Ilford, Barking and others to

include, for instance, green industries, research and development activities, warehousing and distribution, ethnic and other speciality product industries and creative industries. The most recent market assessments are indicating that there is more than enough office pipeline development to satisfy demand to the end of the London Plan period (i.e. 2016, GLA, 2004). This process has already begun to occur in anticipation of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) with both Greenwich Peninsula and Stratford City vying for the title of Canary Wharf's little brother/sister. Diversifying the employment bases in these centres will be crucial to securing a future for them beyond residential dormitories serving an overbearing urban centre.

A striking feature of London Thames Gateway has always been the absence of Metropolitan Centres generally, but particularly in south-east London (see fig. 3.14 below). The rise and rise of Stratford will offset this to an extent though it seems unlikely Bexley and Greenwich will see the birth of a Metropolitan town within their jurisdictions in the foreseeable future, particularly as they fall well within the retail catchments of both Bluewater (Western Quarry) and Lakeside (Thurrock). Having said that, Bromley town centre seems to have taken full advantage and is now recognised as a major retail pull. On top of those reasons already discussed, this acts as a particular hindrance on growth as a strong Metropolitan town centre network is the backbone of a successful mega-city urban network. Amongst other things it provides jobs, shops, nightlife, public transport and sometimes cultural activities.

The prevention of rural exodus and avoidance of urban sprawl is undoubtedly integral to the Thames Gateway project and is also now enshrined in the London Plan. The main stumbling block for those institutions involved has been over the development scenarios and there has been a level of disagreement over figures for new dwellings in London Thames Gateway between the ODPM and the GLA *(interviews a, b and c)*. The ODPM has set a target of 60,000 new dwellings across London Thames Gateway in the period 2003-2016. The Mayor of London together with Thames Gateway London Partnership and other partners has taken the view that 91,000 new dwellings are achievable. The reality is probably that both are underestimates but this is not just a question of housing numbers. The crux of the matter is how this housing will be timed with public investment and

what the emerging infrastructure (roads, education, health, public transport etc) will be able to support? One senses from the debate that this may, in part, be as much a disagreement about levels of central Government investment as it is about housing numbers, but whatever the agenda behind this, a driving component has always been avoiding encroachment beyond London's green belt boundaries. It is noticeable also that just as the number of highly skilled jobs has increased in London Thames Gateway (i.e. Isle of Dogs) there has been a similar eastward trend in the number of professionals living in the traditionally less desirable areas of Tower Hamlets, Southwark and, more recently, Docklands.

FIGURE 3.14 *London's centres*

◆ International Centre
● Metropolitan Centre
■ Major Centre
• District Centre
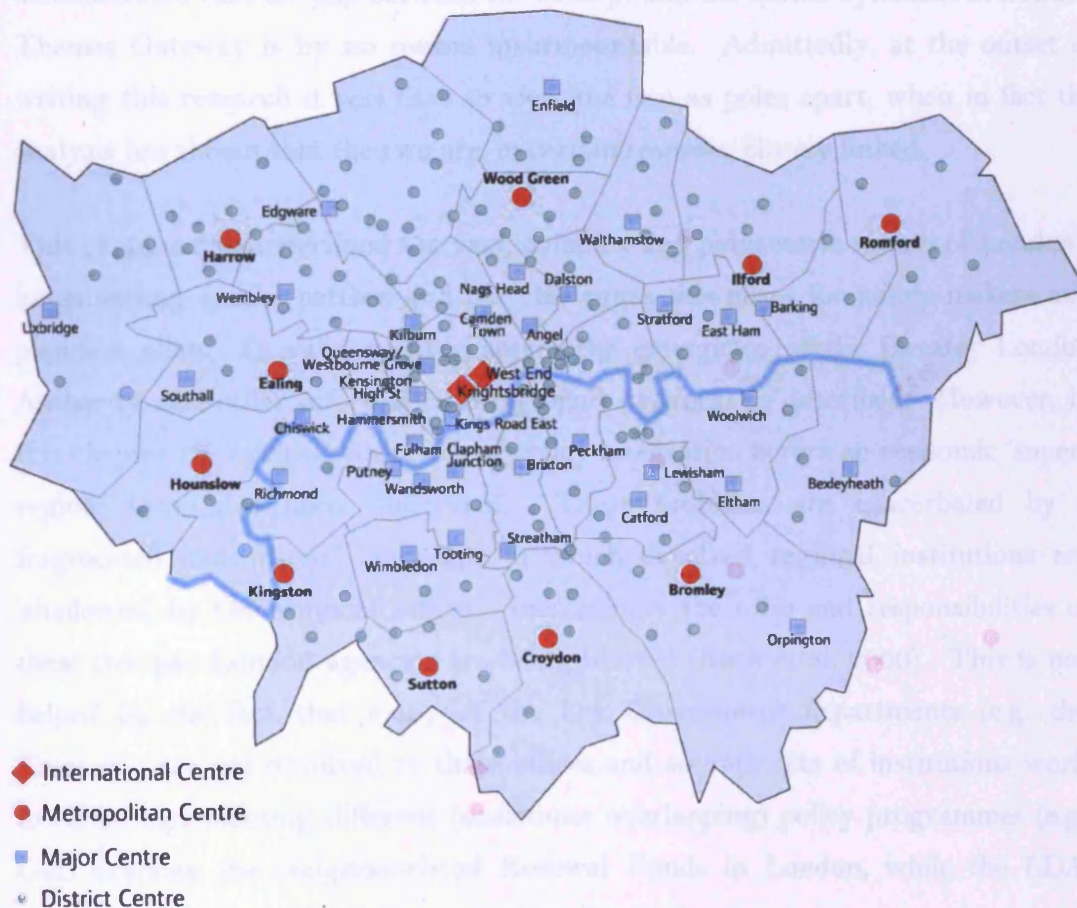
SOURCE: REPRODUCED FROM THE LONDON PLAN (2004), COURTESY OF GLA.

At this point it important to dispel the myth that urban compaction equals sustainable development. Undoubtedly, it forms a driving component, but there is no assumed link and perpetuating this thesis would only serve to feed complacency.

Urban compaction must go hand in hand with open space strategies, health and education provision and so on. It must also embrace broader environmental sustainability objectives and design quality.

The concept of polycentricity is no panacea to the problems of London Thames Gateway. As we have seen polycentricity is multi-dimensional and this helps us to understand spatial patterns in a more integrated way. The concept has some way to go before it can be thought of as a guiding principle for all spatial plans but there is no reason why, given more time and research, it should not become just that. The concept has proved a positive tool in contemplating the spatial complexities of London Thames Gateway and the wider region and this analysis has at least demonstrated that the gap between the concept and the spatial dynamics of London Thames Gateway is by no means insurmountable. Admittedly, at the outset of writing this research it was easy to view the two as poles apart, when in fact the analysis has shown that the two are, in certain respects, closely linked.

This chapter has underlined the vast, complex and polycentric nature of London's longstanding spatial pattern and the challenges this poses for policy makers and planners alike. In subsequent chapters the emergence of the Greater London Authority and other informal (sub-regional) networks is described. However, in this chapter the existing problems of policy integration across an economic 'super-region' have also been illustrated. These problems are exacerbated by a fragmented institutional landscape in which devolved regional institutions are 'shadowed' by Government offices. Increasingly the roles and responsibilities of these two pan-London agencies are being blurred (Buck et al, 2000). This is not helped by the fact that many of the key Government departments (e.g. the Treasury) are not devolved to these offices and so both sets of institutions work towards implementing different (sometimes overlapping) policy programmes (e.g. GoL oversees the Neighbourhood Renewal Funds in London, while the LDA administers the 'single pot' of regeneration funding).

The chapter concludes that the creation of a single unit of governance to cover the functional urban region is unlikely under this, or any future Government. There is also the point that vast and powerful unitary authorities risk distancing political institutions too far from the citizens they serve (Salet et al, 2003). Instead, it is

argued that more effective coordination and policy integration is required across the functional urban region to avoid these institutions becoming entrenched in territorialised economic and administrative systems. Inevitably, the GLA, SEERA and EERA will concentrate their efforts on 'their patch' and this is not unreasonable. However, the inter-dependencies of these regions are obvious to all (e.g. London Stansted airport falls well outside the GLA boundary). In the context of the Government's 'Sustainable Communities Plan' and the national urgency for action to combat the housing crisis in the South East there is a clear opportunity to merge the Government Offices to create a *'Super-Regional Office'* (Buck et al 2000, p.387) to co-ordinate policy and action, particularly across the identified growth areas.

NEW INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPES

4. New Institutional landscapes

4.1 London governance and institutional delivery

4.2 New Labour – New Governance? The modernisation agenda

4.3 London: a new political landscape

4.4 The GLA: a new citywide institution

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and analyse the major changes to governance structures in London and to gauge the overall impact of these changes on the spatial development of London Thames Gateway. Both these aims are in pursuance of answers to the research questions posed at the beginning of this study, in particular, questions 1, 3 and 5 relating to urban governance, enabling role and bridging the local-strategic policy gap.

4.1 London governance and institutional delivery

In London there is a legacy of previous Conservative policy pervading existing institutional arrangements, which, as has already established, are increasingly complex. A by-product of this process is the disenchantment of the general public with democratic accountability and a confusing plethora of quasi-autonomous bodies serving primarily public functions. Conservative Policy during the 1980s and early 1990s sought to undermine the capacity of regional government, which was seen as an unnecessary and bureaucratic tier of government. The abolition of Economic Planning Councils and a reduction in the depth of Regional Planning Guidance was also an indication of a derisory attitude towards planning generally. Existing institutional arrangements, brought about through the London Governance White Paper (1998),[6] indicate that central Government remains wary of devolving significant power to the Mayor of London and other devolved institutions along the lines of previous powers enjoyed by the Greater London Council (GLC). Former tensions, which were a daily feature of central Government – regional government relations, have clearly left their mark. So, the Mayor of London performs a largely 'strategist' role for the region. Whilst the role of the London Development Agency, London Planning and Emergency Agency and Transport for London remain under the auspices of the Mayor, the London Boroughs continue to fulfil regulatory day-to-day functions and so are closest to the public. However, the nature of this form of institution reinforces the impression that regional governance is the future face of spatial planning. As a

result the Mayor's most important document is arguably the London Plan as a means of co-ordinating these roles. However, as will be seen later, this does not necessarily mean that these conflicting demands are reconciled through a consensus-building approach; indeed the Mayor lacks the financial autonomy to steer such policies.

Where, then, does London's new governance structure leave institutional delivery? The first issue, and it is a political one, is whether or not the Mayor holds the necessary 'tool-box' to deliver the eight strategies he is statutorily obliged to produce. In establishing such a system the Government has pinned its hopes on the Mayor achieving horizontal integration, although at the time no-one expected the post to be filled by an independent candidate. This of course mirrors Tony Blair's sentiments, when he set out his vision for Britain in Third Way rhetoric, saying in a Fabian Pamphlet that the vision is to *"reconcile themes which in the past have been regarded as antagonistic"* (*New Britain: my vision of a new country* 1998, p.1). At the time of writing Ken Livingstone is approaching the end of his first term as Mayor of London and there is little sign that he views the apparatus in this horizontal manner. Equally, there is patchy evidence of the extent to which these partnerships can be mobilised across London, leading to a hotchpotch of networks, some of which produce results, some of which reinforce antagonistic traditions along political lines. He has also publicly stated his desire to recapture city-state-like powers along the lines of those previously enjoyed by the GLC and currently the norm in many American cities, such as New York. With the position of the Mayor now well on its way to bedding down, there will be a relentless battle from the Mayor's Office, whoever the Mayor is, to lobby the Government for more powers, including fiscal powers to make the public investment that London so desperately needs (see fig. 4.1 below).

Indeed, since Ken Livingstone's re-admittance into the Labour party, there are signs from the Treasury that moves are afoot to devolve such powers (such as investment bonds) to the Mayor (Guardian, January 26th 2004). Central Government – Mayoral relations have, thus, provided an endless source of material for satirical caricatures (see fig. 4.1).

FIGURE 4.1 *ObikenKenobi*
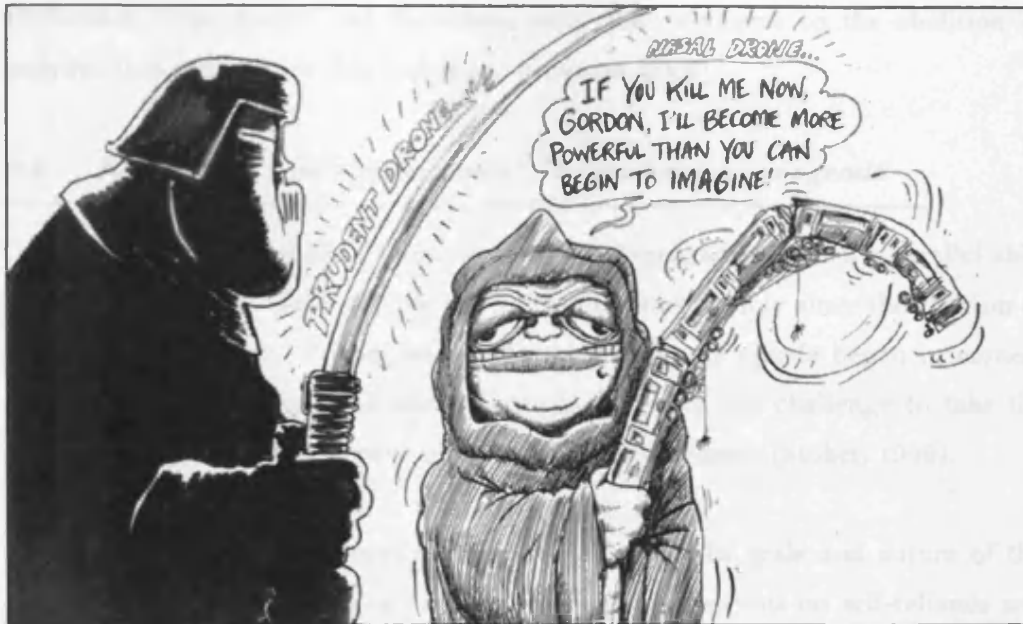
SOURCE: MARTIN ROWSON, 28 MARCH 2001, GLA

The nature of spatial planning has shifted significantly in recent years. This has superseded a previous tendency for vertical integration through hierarchical state powers. Rather, we find that regional government, like all other levels, is required to perform horizontal integration whereby it must seek to build a general consensus. There are many reasons for this shift, discussed elsewhere (Stoker and Stewart, 1995) such as public impudence towards the tax burden and the need for justification through a centrally defined 'value for money' test. The increase in quasi-autonomous state-funded agencies (e.g. English Partnerships; Housing Corporation) is further evidence of this integration and an increasing need for regional institutions such as the Mayor of London to act as the 'enabler'.

These very issues lead us to question how public/public or public/private institutions can harness their actions to meet centrally defined goals. Within this new governmental structure a geographical mismatch has occurred between spatial development and administrative boundaries. Perhaps this is inevitable, but London and the South East provides, arguably, the most pertinent example of this mismatch which has led to informal measures of inter-governmental co-ordination, such as SERPLAN in the world of spatial planning. These complex governmental structures are not confined to the U.K, although recent re-organisations exemplify

the attempts being made to address these patterns. During the 1980s cities such as Rotterdam, Copenhagen and Barcelona were also witnesses to the abolition of metropolitan governance (Herrschel and Newman, 2002).

4.2   New Labour – new governance? The modernisation agenda

The academic shift in thinking towards governance preceded a parallel shift in political rhetoric. This process has intensified considerably since the election of New Labour in 1997. Nevertheless, the modernisation agenda began in earnest under the Conservatives and many Councils embraced the challenge to take the lead in governance under a wave of 'new public management' (Stoker, 1999).

The Conservative Government's impudence towards the scale and nature of the state was indicative of a more profound ideological emphasis on self-reliance and individual choice. At the same time, what remained of the Government structure was strictly hierarchical and thus heavily weighted from the top downwards. In this sense the relationship between government and individual was very different, characterised by self-reliance and individualism. Withdrawing the state from social and economic programmes was fulfilling an ideological vision of this individualism, and in doing so rejecting the notion of collective social goals. The Thatcher years witnessed the emergence of the 'enabling state', which she herself described as a departure from a *"centralising, managerial, bureaucratic interventionist style of government"* (*The Downing Street Years* 1993, p.6). In practice, however, the state was not rolled back; rather, local state powers were recaptured by the central state such that they controlled spending powers. This sentiment framed the relationship between local government and the public and continues to pervade the current relationship.

With the wheels of local government modernisation in motion following the 1997 general election, New Labour saw through the modernisation process, now fully entrenched in *Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People* (DETR, 1998) and subsequent legislation. The process was, however, dressed up in different political clothes. Rhetorically speaking, a key aim was to broaden public participation to provide a more transparent and responsive form of Government answerable to the

needs of the public it serves. Stewart (2002, p.1) identifies three themes from the modernisation programme:

- Community leadership or the role of local authorities working with their partners and with local people in meeting economic, social and environmental needs;

- Democratic renewal, building a new and active relationship between local authorities and their citizens; and

- Improving performance in meeting needs and in providing services

Whilst these measures were a deliberate attempt to emphasise clear water between New Labour and the centralising tendencies of the previous Conservative Government (somewhat necessary following Labour criticisms during the opposition years), these were also a clear and unambiguous signal to the perceived 'old' Labour Councils of a new era of governance.

These notions are symptomatic of an emerging wider debate centred around the individual versus the collective. Government rhetoric in recent years has attempted to redefine the relationship between government and its people by purporting to create a more transparent and responsive government. Previously, the Conservative Government advocated a business approach to local government, which sought to reduce its autonomy and which was exemplified by rate capping and compulsory competitive tendering. The emphasis has shifted again, seemingly brought about by contextual circumstances and the decline of the welfare state. Central Government is no longer prepared to shoulder the total burden of social welfare acknowledging the limited patience and resources of taxpayers together with the increasing need for value for money, now entrenched in 'best value' initiatives. The Government has issued itself with an agenda for change with strong performance-related mechanisms; in return the public is asked to share the responsibility for collective social goals. The practical realities of this new emphasis are all too visible. Best Value, Comprehensive Performance Assessment, Service Level Agreements and mission statements all amount to an institutional framework gearing itself up to face the citizen (for which one should perhaps read: customer).

The term governance has entered mainstream discourse and reflects a broader change in the meaning of government. Typically, this re-invention has been characterised as government 'steering' rather than 'rowing' (Osborner and Gaebler, 1992; Buck et al, 2002). Whereas traditionally the focus has been on how authoritative and hierarchical patterns of government address social and economic problems, the concept of governance is used to frame the new relationship between civil society and the state. This means harnessing inter-governmental organisations (public and private agencies) to achieve collective goals and address equally complex urban problems. The concept has also positively served both ends of the political spectrum, having being applied to the benefit of both the 'left' and the 'right', although some may argue that this just highlights the blurring of traditional political lines, but that is a completely different story. In one sense governance is a pre-cursor to 'less government', and can be linked to a general consensus (on the part of the press and the general public) towards the limits of government and thus, a derisory attitude towards large-scale government and large-scale spending in particular.

These new structures have also been described as a form of *"multi-scalar governance"* (Haughton and Counsell, 2004, p.35). But these processes are deceptive for these structures have not necessarily led to a diminution of central state power. Though government is increasingly choosing to contract out services traditionally thought of as public functions so that it is no longer a direct service provider, it has retained central powers over which bodies run these services and how they run them. In this sense it is very much 'selective government' or 'government by lottery' (Storper, 1997). As has already been established, the restructuring of the British state system must be seen in the context of broader global trends and thus a redistribution of power across tiers from supra-national organisations down to local partnerships. Haughton and Counsell (2004) describe this as a process of *"hollowing out"*, whereby nation-states have become *"decentred"* (p.35).

But these changes can be linked to a more profound ideological shift, which positions the local state as the 'enabler' and local government as functioning within a complex framework of agencies and organisations. Clearly, this in itself has repercussions for the relationship between local government and the public. As a result of this emphasis the boundaries and roles of each player become blurred,

particularly as local government is seen to move away from the model of a political institution. The voting public can no longer be assured that decisions will lie solely at the door of the Town Hall where decisions are increasingly influenced by QuANGOs[7] which seek a central Government agenda. This is seen to be a danger within the field of regeneration where public participation is largely reliant on partnerships between a plethora of non-governmental organisations. Within the field of social housing, funding is directed towards housing associations and away from locally elected councillors. The introduction of Arm's Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) has caused considerable controversy amongst Council tenants in London and elsewhere with, in some instances, public funding being withheld where tenants have not voted in favour of transfer to quasi-autonomous organisations (e.g. L.B. Camden, 2004). Here, the 'carrot and stick' approach is being used by government to ensure public funding falls outside the Treasury's Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR). This is a particular problem in London where the Council housing stock is generally in a poorer condition compared to the rest of the country.

These features of the current local government structure have served only to undermine the level of political activism at the local level. Whilst there is much merit in the principle of collective goals there is little evidence that current structures produce effective results in the way of public participation. Recent policies and legislation by the New Labour Government have attempted to address this political inactivity by re-assessing local government structures and the role of the public. Here again the role of the local authority is brought into question. New political structures being brought into place have left the door open to local authorities to pick and choose the most suitable form of political structure for their area. Here it is important to stress the nature of these new structures, which have framed the relationship between the public and local government. These new representative systems have tended to follow an area-based approach to service delivery, which, as we will see is increasingly inappropriate. Models of cabinets, area-based committees and Mayors have tended to focus on administrative units, their functionality and efficiency. As Raco and Flint (2001) identify, communities are formed across broad spatial scales and run along social, economic, religious, sexual and racial lines. They do not, in essence, conform to the traditionally defined administrative units which local government continues to work through.

Admittedly, the practical realities of administering local services through a-spatial forms of government is unworkable but it brings into sharp focus the need for spatially coherent and co-ordinated forms of administration. This detachment is increasingly being blamed for diminishing local political activity. An institutional structure, which engenders administrative synthesis and co-operation, is therefore a pre-requisite for tackling political apathy. And so there is evidence that the emerging consensus on local govern*ance* rather than local govern*ment* and the local state as the 'enabler' is being heavily restrained by a spatially incoherent form of administration, a factor explored in more detail in the case study.

Other forms of reform to local government have tended to focus on functionalism. In tightening the grip on local government, central Government has served only to further detach local authorities from the public they serve. Yet, as local political structures become further entrenched in area-based systems, wider socio-economic systems continue to travel in the opposite direction. It is increasingly difficult to see how the civil-state and political structures will reconcile these differences. The term 'space-place tension' (Taylor, 1999) is used to conceptualise this mismatch. It is this form of space-place compression which has contributed to the blurring of the relationship between the public and local government. Here, again, there is evidence that individualism continues to pervade the current system as communities continue to be defined as spatially fixed and local government as the vehicle of service delivery and it is this underlying assumption which frames the current tension between local government and the public. In subsequent sections we examine how these broader trends have been translated into institutional structures in London (e.g. citywide Mayor) and London Thames Gateway (Urban Development Corporation).

4.3 London: a new political landscape

The Thatcher Government of the late 1980s spelled the death knell of citywide government in London with the abolition of the Greater London Council (GLC). Far from being driven by the need for administrative efficiency the move was heavily motivated by political intransigence towards a left-wing Council headed by Ken Livingstone. The resulting landscape was a fragmented and unco-ordinated local government system devoid of strategic co-ordination, least of all in the world

of spatial planning. What effect, if any, this has had on the spatial development of London and the South East has not been examined, although it is clear that the lack of any coherent strategic direction has led to a lack of political direction at the citywide scale.

The London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) had been set up in the wake of abolition to discuss planning issues that crossed the boundaries of the thirty-three local planning authorities within London. This committee, that had representation from these authorities, prepared strategic planning reports but it was only an advisory body. It presented its ideas to central Government, which prepared the statutory strategic planning guidance for the city. In tune with the non-interventionist ideology of the period, the guidance in 1989 was only a few pages long and set out the main parameters within which the local authorities should operate. As a result of the ideology of non-intervention and institutional fragmentation, very little strategic planning took place after the abolition of the GLC (Newman and Thornley, 1997). LPAC produced strategic policies but these had limited impact on central Government. By the early 1990s central Government had also accepted the view that more needed to be done to enhance London's competitive position to counteract its fragmented institutional structure (Newman and Thornley, 1997). In 1992 central Government set up the London Forum to promote the capital but the following year this was merged into London First, a similar body set up by the private sector. This set the pattern of private sector leadership with central Government backing that was to dominate strategic thinking in London over the next five years. Meanwhile central Government was becoming more and more involved in strategic planning for the city as the problems of fragmentation continued. It established a Minister for London, a Cabinet Sub-Committee for the capital, the Government Office for London with representation from the difference Ministries with interests in London policy, and produced a new enhanced Strategic Guidance for London that extended to seventy-five pages. This arrangement re-emphasises the close working relationship between central Government and the private sector. Since the election of Tony Blair in 1997 a completely new political arrangement, the Greater London Authority, has been devised (see below). For the first time in history this includes an elected Mayor for the whole of London. A major theme for the new authority is the co-ordination and integration of policy.

4.4   The Greater London Authority: a new citywide institution

The year 2000 marked the end of a period of 14 years in which London lived without a citywide government and saw the creation of a new institution of local democracy, 'a constitutional experiment' as many have dubbed it – the Greater London Authority (GLA) (Travers, 2002). Since the demise of the Greater London Council (GLC), the 32 London Boroughs and the Corporation of the City of London had been left to deal with strategic urban issues of waste management, transport policy and urban development planning.

The informal institutional structure built up during this period to fill the void was very much part of the rise of urban governance, though prior to 2000 these arrangements were not formally acknowledged as a new form of urban governance. Much was, therefore, expected of the new GLA and, indeed, much was promised. It would create a voice for London on the world and national stages; it would provide democracy for Londoners; it would generate strategic action on pan-London issues and solve problems of co-ordination across the capital. There are a number of key elements: - the Mayor, the Assembly and the Functional Bodies. The Mayor himself is expected to be a voice for London and this has been a source of material for political satirists (see fig. 4.2 below). Of these, the Mayor and the Assembly are directly elected - the Mayor by a vote for a named person; and the Assembly through two sets of votes, one for the 14 constituency members and one for the 11 members from a list, a system designed to achieve some degree of proportionality in the make-up of the Assembly.

The powers conferred on the Mayor and the Assembly under the GLA Act place policy integration at the heart of its business and day-to-day working. The Act defines three principal purposes for the GLA, namely: balancing economic, environmental and equality goals (sometimes referred to as the three Es (West et al, 2003)). It is not surprising, however, in the context of a new and evolving strategic authority that there have been difficulties in integrating these aspirations, both technically and ideologically (see West et al, 2003). After all there are inherent tensions between these aims and the GLA was set up with this in mind, and is typically characterised as a legitimate institutional structure through which these difficult political choices should be made.

The four functional bodies are arm's length agencies, which run important pan-London services:

- **Transport *for* London** (a unitary transport authority headed by a high profile American Transport Commissioner, charged with managing London's transport system, except for overground rail).

- The **London Development Agency** (the London equivalent of the Regional Development Agencies, responsible for economic promotion, urban regeneration budgets and some important sites previously owned by the LDDC/English Partnerships).

- The **London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority** (handling issues previously covered by an ad hoc board).

- The **Metropolitan Policy Authority** (for the first time, shifting control of London's police from the Home Office to local government).

All these functional bodies are effectively under the direction of the Mayor. In each case he formally appoints the members of the Boards, including those that have to be drawn from the Assembly. He also sets the budget for TfL, MPA and LFEPA, subject to Assembly approval. In the case of TfL, Ken Livingstone has wide powers of direction and has also chosen to sit personally as Chair of the Board. The directly elected elements are supported by two bureaucracies: the Mayor's Office of some 30 staff (about a dozen of whom are policy advisors), who report directly to the Mayor, and the GLA bureaucracy, currently approaching about 600 staff. This bureaucracy incorporated certain pre-existing bodies, which had developed a role during the *inter regnum*: the London Ecology Unit, the London Planning Advisory Committee and the London Research Centre. Originally, this bureaucracy had to serve both the Mayor and the Assembly and this dual role for the bureaucracy created some tensions. The Assembly does have a budget to appoint its own consultants and support staff and this has now been increased to resolve these tensions.

FIGURE 4.2 London Day 2001

I KNOW HE THINKS HE'S A SYMBOL OF LONDON, BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS!!

AND WHEN DOES IT START WORKING?

Drawn to mark the 1st LONDON DAY, the 1st Anniversary of the Mayor of London & the G.L.A. taking office and the TOPPING OUT of the New G.L.A. Building, designed by N.FOSTER. 3rd July 2001
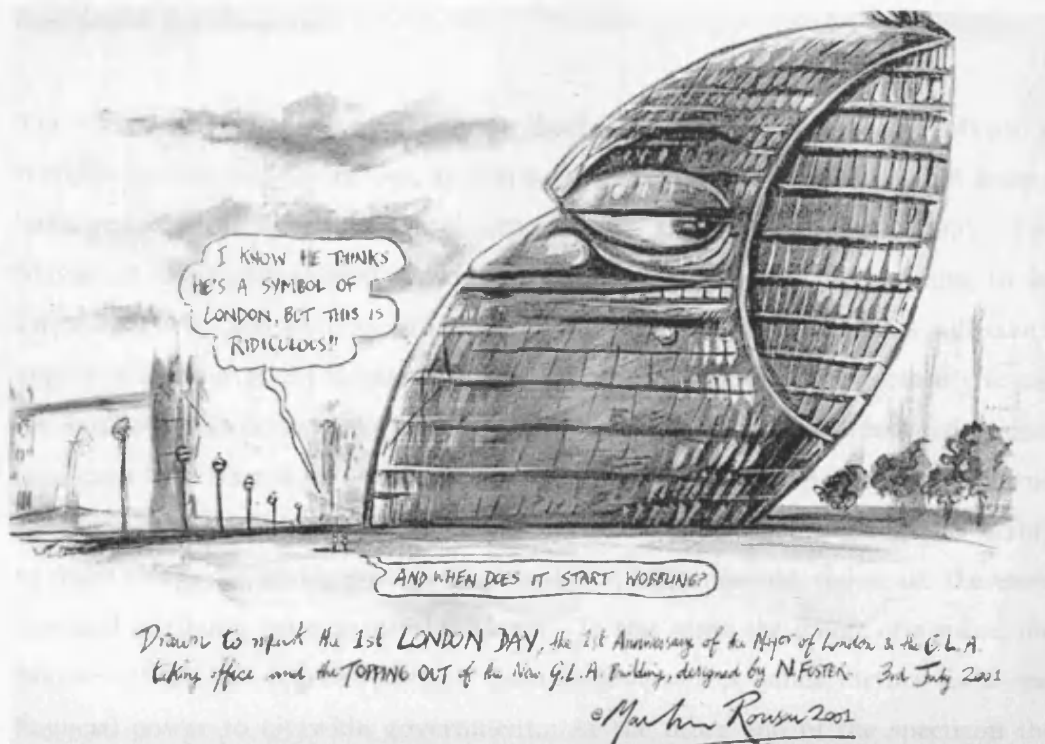
Martin Rowson 2001

SOURCE: MARTIN ROWSON, 3 JULY 2001, GLA

The broader New Labour programme of constitutional reform and modernisation, has involved a range of activity from devolution in Scotland and, to a lesser extent, in Wales, down to modifications of the detail of service delivery within local government, as with the Best Value initiative. The overall thrust of this programme has sometimes been difficult to discern. Stoker has described it as 'government by lottery' (1999) and Brooks has shown how it involves elements of managerialism, centralism and localism all at the same time (1999).

The Mayoral system in London has implications for the broader New Labour modernisation agenda and the rest of the U.K. It is the first real test of the American urban model of Mayors though Sweeting (2003) has shown that in contrast to the American model the Mayor is strong within the GLA Group but is weak outside it. Whatever the Government may say about devolving power to the regions the Mayor has very little financial autonomy, and deliberately so. This is because *'central Government interventions undermine mayoral authority'* (Sweeting p.476). Thus, the Mayor's strength lie's in symbolic power (also see fig. 4.2 above) and this is where the future legitimacy, authority and profile of the Mayor rest.

This has opened up a new arena of conflict in London creating a relentless battle over power and resources.

The structure of the Greater London Authority and the role of the Mayor is therefore a New Labour edifice, an institutional representation of the shift from a 'managerial' to an 'entrepreneurial' economy, as Harvey termed it (1989). The Mayor of London's limited fiscal and regulatory apparatus forces him to be 'entrepreneurial' and creative in the use of the tools he does have. This will take a degree of ingenuity. At the same time the Mayor is offered the opportunity to use his symbolic power to make the case for more tools. In this new institutional landscape, the Mayor of London is expected to be an entrepreneur (Syrett and Baldcock, 2001). This entails using his coordinating role to bring together actors to make things happen – powers of persuasion, influence and vision are therefore essential attributes for a successful Mayor. In this sense the gauge of a successful Mayor will be the degree to which central Government hands further fiscal and financial power to citywide government. At the other end of the spectrum the relationship between Mayor and local government is being tested and there is still much scope for further reform of the split of functions/services between these two tiers. We shall not have to wait too long for the relationship between all three tiers to be reconstituted once again.

In this chapter we have been interested in the emergence of new institutional landscapes. For delivery and London Thames Gateway in general these broader (structural) changes could be very important. A key observation is that both local and citywide authorities are unable to respond in ways to which they were accustomed. There are simple reasons for this: both tiers of governance (Councils and citywide authorities) have lost powers, resources and responsibilities. In the case of the GLA (and in contrast to its predecessor - the GLC) significant institutional capacity rests with GoL or other centralised Whitehall departments (most notably the Treasury) in the case of transport funding. This is significant since many of the Mayor's key interests lie in Whitehall rather than the Government Office *(interview c)*. For local authorities there has been a debilitating loss of local autonomy which has haemorrhaged resources and powers (as we noted in the case of ALMOs for social housing) which has done little to improve local political apathy at a time when the general public must already be disillusioned by a

diffusion of power across non-governmental organisations. The key conclusion here, for both delivery and London Thames Gateway, is that local authorities must return to 'local service delivery' (Buck et al, 2000).

At the moment, Government messages are mixed and as Buck et al (2000) have demonstrated this has meant some local authorities in London (e.g. Newham and Greenwich) have developed *'local competitiveness'* strategies (p.373) when both competitiveness and social cohesion would be better served by focusing on efficient and *'actual service delivery'* (p.373). At the strategic level there is also a broad and thin spread of power hindering effective and responsive urban governance. This forces the Mayor to work with and through partners to deliver and this has reaped some participatory rewards, as we will see in subsequent sections. The overall picture here is one of contradictory evidence. Urban planning in London to date has been characterised by fragmentation and centralisation. The non-interventionist political ideology of the 1980s pervades existing arrangements. Interest in London-wide planning has increased in recent years culminating in the creation of the GLA but decision-making remains fractured across a complex pattern of governance. The key weakness of this structure and the broader modernisation agenda is that this reduces rather than enhances the prospect of delivery and in Chapter 5 we consider the implications of this for London Thames Gateway.

URBAN GOVERNANCE AND SPATIAL PLANNING

5. Urban governance and spatial planning
5.1 The regional and sub-regional dimension
5.2 The Thames Gateway vision and the Communities Plan
5.3 Key stakeholders and delivery structures
5.4 The return of the UDC: a third way?
5.5 Institutional delivery
5.6 Developing and deploying 'weapons of mass construction'

In the previous chapter we sought to understand broader institutional changes across the U.K. and how this has shaped the current London governance network resulting in new arrangements such as the Greater London Authority. In this section research questions 1, 2, 3 and 5 are re-visited to consider urban governance, delivery mechanisms, the role of institutions in this new framework and the techniques being deployed to bridge the gap between strategic and local policy. The aim in this section is also to re-establish the link between urban governance patterns and spatial planning and to assess the extent to which this is engendering delivery. This is achieved by examining the specific proposals for a UDC in London Thames Gateway together with the emergence of the sub-regional level. In so doing it is argued that this has opened up new opportunities for local authorities in particular to think outside their administrative units and consider the 'bigger picture'. Within the context of London Thames Gateway there is considerable reason to believe that enhanced strategic planning will enable more effective consultations across non-spatial stakeholders thus producing a more comprehensive, inclusive and legitimate strategy. This is evidenced by the number of bodies and agencies involved in preparing the London Thames Gateway Development and Investment Framework (see TGDIF, GLA, 2004). A failure to implement these intentions, however, can cause planning bodies to divert sharply from collective goals. Furthermore, this tends to produce disillusionment within central Government as it becomes wary of devolving autonomy in such a way.

5.1   The regional and sub-regional dimension

The new spatial planning agenda and the broad thrust of the new planning system places a new emphasis on the previously neglected tiers of planning at the regional and sub-regional level. London has led the way in regional governance at the city-wide scale and now forms the basis for the Government's plans to devolve

power to the English regions along the same lines. In ideological terms this is a shift towards the European orthodoxy of devolved decision making, though as has been identified in previous sections the two models are at variance in spatial terms, with London in particular retaining a World City model of development.

In the same vein the present Government intends to roll out Regional Assemblies across the country, or at least to those regions that want them. Regional referenda for the formation of a new regional tier (and inevitable rationalisation of local tiers of government into Unitary Authorities) are programmed for late 2004, with the North-East, North-West and Yorkshire and the Humber all due to take part. These referenda, will of course, provide a useful indication of the public's appetite for multi-level governance. The Government has outlined a specific role for the regions:

> *An elected assembly would ensure that regional functions are carried out more effectively and better reflect the needs of the region, improving the quality of life for people in its regions. Elected assemblies will have greater capacity to take effective action on improving the regional economy, and reflecting the regions particular priorities on planning, housing, transport, culture and other key regional issues such as employment. Assemblies powers and functions to achieve this will include responsibility for joining up strategies for strengthening the region, ensuring that relevant stakeholders are engaged in developing and delivering these strategies, and a range of executive and influencing functions to help to implement regional policies* (ODPM, Regions White Paper, 2003, p.13).

The consolidation, rationalisation and formalisation of existing quasi-governmental organisations is a welcome reform and will almost certainly enable a stronger voice for the regions within a more legitimate institutional structure. The regional policy approach of the current Government has been one in which under-performing regions must build on their strengths to compete for international investment to achieve parity across the regions. In the current structure the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) are expected, but not statutorily obliged, to consult as widely as possible in forming Economic Development Strategies, a weakness which allows them to drift gradually from spatial planning objectives and other conflicting objectives and sectors such as transport and environmental sustainability. By reconnecting, formally, the link with spatial plan-making there is now, at least, the forum for these conflicting objectives to be discussed and resolved

even though it may not be to everyone's satisfaction. It is questionable however, the extent to which synthesis can be achieved where, as currently proposed and unlike the Greater London Authority model, the regional structures would be devoid of transport powers despite the fact they are asked to produce regional spatial strategies under the new planning arrangements. A stated aim of the regional agenda is achieving regional competitiveness. But for all the prophesising of a new regional era, the proposals fall short of devolving power in any significant sense. The *zeitgeist* of new regional governance masks a longstanding reluctance to relinquish central state control.

In British terms (because this is the norm in most European countries) planning has found a welcoming counterpart in the form of regional government. It has the opportunity to operate in a pro-active manner of the sort Patrick Abercrombie practised whilst devising the first *Greater London Plan* and acting at the kind of spatial scale that makes the task meaningful. Furthermore, it enables the profession to move away from its popular adversarial reputation, offering the opportunity to sell itself in this new spatial forum, whilst retaining the regulatory muscle afforded to planners working at the local level.

There is no doubt that sub-regional planning is back in vogue, or at least in London and the South East. This is broadly encouraged by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). The London Plan has brought about the re-emergence of the sub-regional dimension with a strong emphasis on building upon the existing non-statutory and multi-agency partnerships which have emerged sporadically across varying spatial scales in London. They can be viewed in two ways; a reaction to a threat or a reaction to an opportunity (Thompson, 2004). In a broader sense they are a reaction to global and sometimes meta-physical flows of the sort Castells referred to. So, the theory goes, this space-place compression has a corrosive effect on the ability of local authorities (such as London Boroughs) to work in any meaningful way against these global flows. As we have already established, society is increasingly moving away from area-based networks.

Thus, if this logic is followed, local authorities will intuitively join forces (a kind of safety in numbers theory) to either share this burden or co-ordinate their activities in a pro-active strike. London Thames Gateway is one example of this and has now

established itself fully as a sub-region and institutional organisations have mobilised themselves to account for this geographical identity. The recency of the regional agenda is such, however, that London's other sub-regions have not been so quick off the mark. In the case of the Thames Gateway perhaps this can be explained by the political commitment on the table, of which London's other sub-regions can only dream of. There is no doubt that this is a crucial tier of the institutional chain for central Government and the Mayor of London as a mechanism through which to disseminate policy discourse and engage local communities. This is the channel through which the Mayor can build consensus, develop partnerships and deliver the objectives of the London Plan. It will be an important means of winning over the hearts and minds of local communities and convincing sckeptical councillors of the merits of higher densities in Outer London.

There are clear benefits to such a spatial scale, namely:

- **Reconciling the local-strategic nexus** is more likely to be achieved by a critical mass of authorities which straddle areas with varying economic pressures and environmental conditions

- The sub-regional dimension offers a **forum for strategic thinking** for authorities used to thinking 'inside the box' and within administrative boundaries, and moves away from formal planning mechanisms which can be a restraint to strategic thinking.

- A sufficiently large spatial scale to **reconcile traditional sectoral activities** such as education, health and the housing industry.

- A forum through which **partnerships can be formed and maintained** to formulate strategy and present a long-term vision for their area.

SOURCE: BASED ON THOMPSON (2004)

Notwithstanding the positive aspects outlined above the existing London Thames Gateway set-up is not without its problems. Even at face value there is a clear overlap between Thames Gateway London Partnership and the Greater London Authority. In practice, this results in an ongoing 'turf-war', with both seeking to fill the strategic void by acting as the strategic voice for London Thames Gateway *(interviews d and e)*. This brings us back to the point that institutional fragmentation creates competing cultures and rules-in-use, even with the best

intentions and consensus building efforts. The current set-up lacks any degree of certainty about roles and responsibilities and TGLP in particular needs to make the bridge between pan-London agencies and local authorities and to pave the way for more porous governance patterns by breaking down administrative boundaries and helping Boroughs think 'outside the box'. The alternative is a constant battle to keep the many 'tanks' off the many 'lawns'.

Communities are now more likely to be formed over the internet than they are across the street or over the neighbour's fence. These communities can run along social, racial, sexual, economic, gender or political lines and they are no longer constrained by physical proximity in the way they used to be. This makes life increasingly difficult for local authorities working tirelessly through geographically defined administrative units. It also brings to the fore the critical need for equally responsive and co-ordinated institutional networks. The New Labour modernisation agenda has put these wheels in motion, but this is not necessarily in the nature of many local authorities in London, particularly for those with antagonistic relations with neighbouring Boroughs *(interview b)*. This has tended to engender a culture of competition between Boroughs rather than an atmosphere of 'New Labour' style network governance. This is consistent with Buck *et al's* (2000) view that in some London Boroughs there has been a focus on 'local competitiveness' strategies rather than 'actual service delivery' (p.373).

5.2   Thames Gateway vision and the Sustainable Communities Plan

London Thames Gateway is probably the biggest and most ostentatious of all current urban visions in Europe. The concept is almost as large as the geographical area it tries to cover. In London, the stated vision is as follows:

> *By 2020, London Thames Gateway will be a destination of choice for living and working. It will form a new city within a city...Tapping into the development potential of the Thames Gateway will help to accommodate London's growth without encroaching on green field sites or the Green Belt, will deliver significant quantities of affordable housing, and will improve quality of life through integrated social environmental and economic revitalisation...Public sector agencies, and local and regional authorities, will work with the private sector to build new housing that is integrated with - and reflects the character of - East London's existing communities, that centres on hubs served by new and existing public transport...New and emerging opportunities such as London's bid for the 2012 Olympic and*

Paralympic Games will be managed to optimise local benefit and act as catalysts for these changes (p.3).

London Thames Gateway Development and Investment Framework, 2004 [8].

This is the current vision, but it is worthwhile rewinding to the origins of the Thames Gateway vision and how it has reached the stage it has. London Thames Gateway began its life as the East Thames Corridor, building on the work of SERPLAN. The Conservative Government designated the 43 mile long corridor from the east of London out to the Kent/Essex coastline (see fig. 5.1 below), a large-scale regeneration opportunity in 1991 (Hall, 2002). Historically, the east of the city has been unable to capture anything like the level of economic buoyancy being enjoyed to the west of the city, and the A13 has never quite been a match for the M4 corridor. This huge envelope of land encompasses the largest collection of brownfield sites in the country (see fig. 5.1 below). Most of these have risen from the ashes of de-industrialisation, the loss of shipping and associated Docklands activities and the demise of mineral extraction in certain parts of Kent.

FIGURE 5.1 – *Thames Gateway*
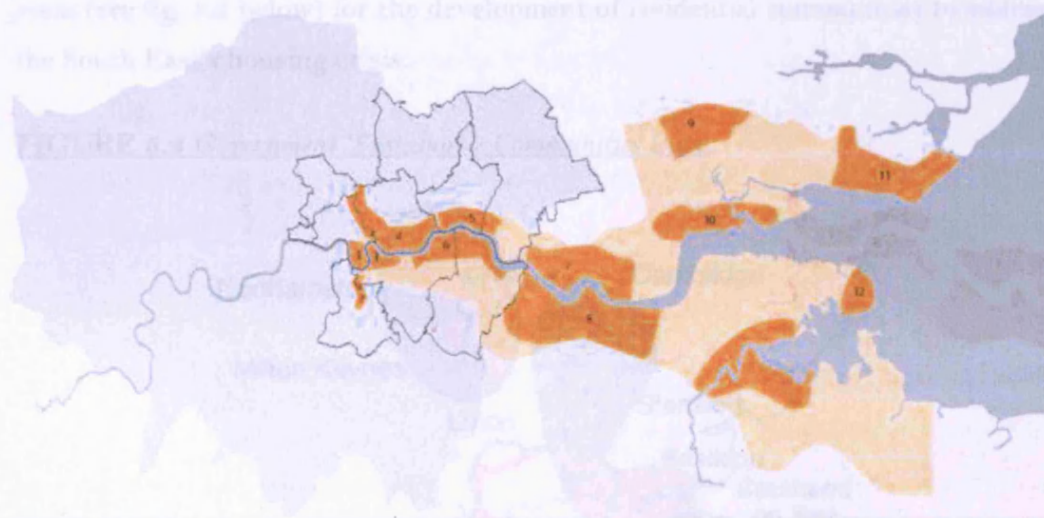
SOURCE: TGDIF (2004) REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF A+UU, GLA.

Zones of change:

1. Isle of Dogs
2. Deptford and Lewisham
3. Greenwich Peninsula
4. Stratford, Lower Lea, Royal Docks
5. London Riverside and Barking
6. Woolwich, Thamesmead, Erith
7. Kent Thameside

8. Medway
9. Grain
10. Sittingbourne, Sheerness
11. Thurrock Riverside
12. Basildon
13. Canvey, Shellhaven
14. Southend

What was once viewed as a 'release valve' (Reynolds and Rand, 2003, p.93) for London's housing surplus and a dumping ground for 'dirty industry' is now being re-thought as the new home for high-quality innovative development within a network of urban villages across a linear city. This leap of faith and imagination is an achievement in it self. The Gateway's hidden heritage, marshland and ecological richness are now being re-framed as a major strength and the test-bed for new urban thinking and innovative architecture. Many of the original proposals and ideas were cast in regional planning guidance and the Thames Gateway even had its own guidance – RPG9a Thames Gateway Planning Framework issued in 1995, which gives an early indication of the level of political capital being invested.

The Thames Gateway as a whole is a key priority for both London and the national Government. RPG9a identified the area as presenting the main opportunity for growth within London and the South East. In February 2003, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister launched *'Sustainable Communities: Building for Future' – the Sustainable Communities Action Plan* (SCAP, ODPM, 2003c). This document confirmed the status of the Thames Gateway as one of the four priority growth areas (see fig. 5.2 below) for the development of residential communities to address the South East's housing crisis.

FIGURE 5.2 *Government 'Sustainable Communities Plan'*
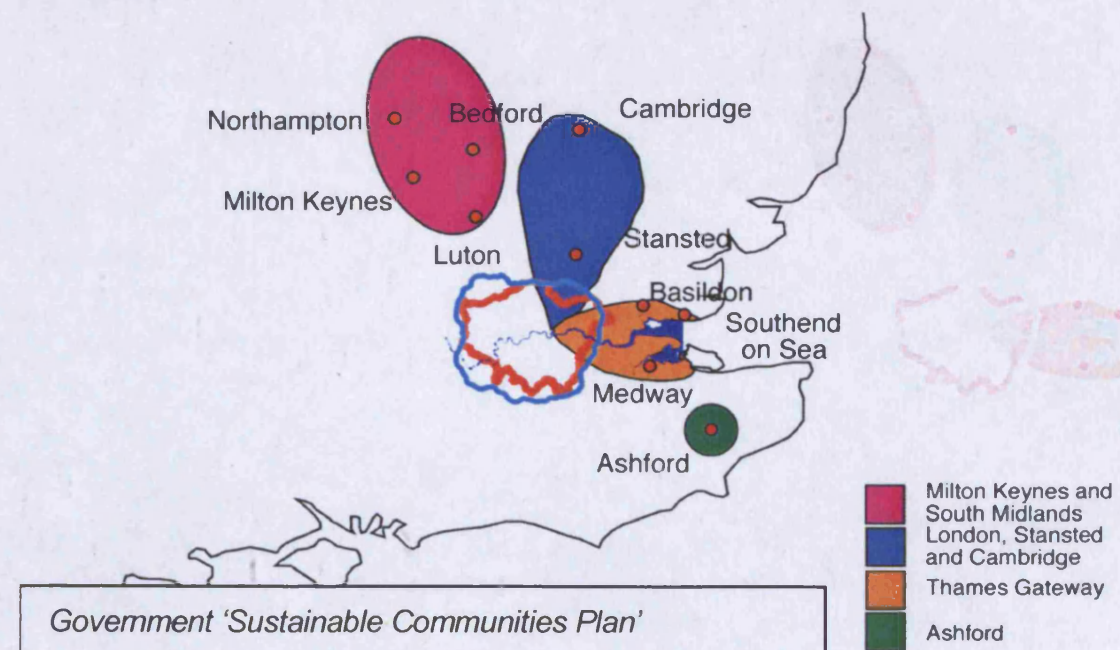
SOURCE: BASED ON 'SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PLAN' (2003), ODPM.

The development programme for London Thames Gateway is set within a framework of *Zones of Change* (see figs. 5.1 and 5.3 below and above) prescribed by central Government. The Government is to be congratulated for having the courage to face up to a housing crisis, something successive previous Governments have failed miserably to do. *'Sustainable Communities – Building for the Future'* (ODPM, 2003a) was the first real sign of this acceptance. A number of key commitments have been placed firmly on the table, namely:

- Working towards achieving a target of 200,000 additional homes (in addition to RPG figures) in four growth areas.

- Providing a range of delivery vehicles using New Town Development Corporation powers

- £446 million for Thames Gateway including money for site assembly, land remediation, affordable housing and delivery mechanisms.

- Setting up a new Cabinet committee chaired by the Prime Minister.

- Extra funding for affordable housing and social housing including £1.2 billion for Arm's Length Management Organisations (ALMOs), £685 million of credits for refurbishment through the Public Private Finance Initiative (PFI).

- £201 million for local environmental improvements, including extra money for CABE space (which champions best practice for open space projects).

The housing crisis has reached a point where doing nothing is no longer a conceivable option. The everyday social and economic costs of this crisis are becoming all too common. If one extrapolates the current completion rate for new housing from the projected population increase then one is left with a 70,000 dwelling deficit by 2016 (ONS, 2004 based on 2001 Census). Of course this does not take into account the existing housing need backlog. In an age of financial deregulation and in the current owner-occupier frenzy, flats and houses are spiraling beyond the means of today's young people forcing them to borrow excessive amounts of money which only serves to artificially prop up their parents' generation of home owners. This inter-generational inequality is not an acceptable state of affairs, especially not in one of the world's richest city-regions. As is also

known, and as Kate Barker (2004) acknowledged, housing constraints place a particular strain on public sector employment and key workers and have many social consequences, such as breaking up families and communities. As public sectors have less purchasing power when it comes to housing in London this acts as a serious threat to public service provision and the social and economic functioning of the city.

The riverside zones of change (see fig. 5.3 below) are the focus of activities, most notably the Development and Investment Framework (TGDIF) and other area development frameworks. There are six such zones stretching from the Isle of Dogs and Deptford in the west, to Rainham, Erith and the London Marshes in the east and Area Development Frameworks (ADFs) are being produced for each of these by the London Development Agency.

FIGURE 5.3 *Thames Gateway London Zones of Change*

Thames Gateway London Zones of Change

1 Isle of Dogs
2 Deptford and Lewisham
3 Greenwich Peninsula
4 Stratford, Lower Lea, Royal Docks
5 London Riverside, Barking Town
6 Woolwich, Thamesmead, Belvedere, Erith

SOURCE: REPRODUCED FROM TGDIF (2004) WITH PERMISSION OF A+UU, GLA.

The investment framework is in many ways unprecedented. The significance of this document is that for the first time it outlines the total public sector investment required across the Gateway *(interviews a to e)*. The framework has been designed

to provide a bridge between local and strategic investment requirements so that the two can be co-ordinated. It is intended to be as flexible as possible so that it is in a better position to adapt to varying investment requirements across London Thames Gateway. These frameworks are also designed to act as crucial levers for private investment and investor confidence.

There are other strategic studies running concurrently with this programme and many of these relate to cross-cutting themes, such as: flooding; public realm; telecommunications; leisure/retail; water/waste water; energy; health; population change; education; economy and skills; business support; innovation; industry mix; employment and transport. These are particularly detailed technical studies and it is crucial that the subtleties of the findings of these reports are not lost in the institutional structure, or indeed hi-jacked by dominant sectors (such as housing). The semi-structured interviews revealed that there is already considerable market interest, particularly from large speculative house builders *(interview d)*. Paradoxically, there is a delivery dilemma here. Public authorities are under pressure to 'be seen to be delivering on the ground' and the market (particularly the housing market) has reacted with alacrity to the planning policy direction but the full infrastructure ('soft' and 'hard') is not yet in place. The danger here is a delivery of the 'lowest common denominator' development and by that it is meant sub-standard design quality, poor social infrastructure with little or no integration with surrounding communities and a repeat of the mistakes of the 1960s and 1980s. This is what happened to an extent at Beckton under the auspices of the London Docklands Development Corporation resulting in low-quality, low-density and car orientated development largely isolated from the rest of east London (Roger Tym & Partners, 2004). The lesson here, and perhaps this contradicts the prevailing message of delivery in this study, is that public authorities should not settle for 'second best' in the false hope that this is 'delivering'.

This has strong connections with the characteristics of delivery identified in Chapter 2 and in particular the need for vision and delivery capacity in public authorities. This will require a new approach from planners and policymakers and a particularly sophisticated form of 'plan, monitor and manage' (London Plan, 2004) planning. In a break from tradition, planning policy will need to be responsive to market trends, planners will need to be 'brave' in applying flexible

policies to leverage market forces in positive directions, masterplans need to be robust and should be able to withstand whatever the market can throw at them, and above all, planners need to demand a high-quality product from the private sector if the visionary rhetoric is to be realised. As will be seen the Woolwich Arsenal scheme example does at least demonstrate that where public authorities take over the role of private developers these objectives are more likely to be achieved and this is certainly one pragmatic way forward.

CASE STUDY: *Royal Arsenal, Woolwich*

The 76 acre site is owned by the London Development Agency, is entering the next phase of development and is due to be completed in 2010. iOG was selected by the LDA to provide industrial/warehouse space. Phase 1 comprises 76,665 sq ft (7,030 m. sq.) of new industrial/warehouse space in 10 units. Construction of Phase 2 (85,500 sq ft) will commence this year. Phase 3 will provide a further 91,500 sq ft of industrial/warehouse space as well as 27,700sq ft of office space. The historic Gunnery Terrace building was refurbished to create 15 industrial/warehouse units. The LDA has signed a development agreement with Berkeley Homes who are developing the residential/leisure arm of the development, providing up to 3,000 new homes.

New business park at Royal Arsenal, Woolwich

SOURCE: GLA, 2004.

This development scheme at Woolwich Arsenal does show that there is reason to be optimistic and that the Gateway's outlying centres do have a potential viable future beyond that of residential dormitories. This is a mixed-use regeneration scheme and in practice the commercial arm of the development, which includes storage and light industry, is now viable in its own right and does not require cross-subsidy from the residential sales (GLA, 2004).

The smaller commercial units are being let on flexible short-term leases with the potential to move up and on at later stages. This has needed a particularly sophisticated 'plan, monitor and manage' approach, with a strong desire from public authorities to demonstrate how the development can be phased in a sustainable way. This example also demonstrates that in areas of economic pressure market forces can be levered in a positive way to satisfy a broader array of strategic and local planning objectives. A typical scenario in this case, and if left to market forces

alone, would be a predominantly residential scheme, with only a few commercial units as a token gesture. From these examples a number of recurring characteristics can be drawn, namely: a flexible, nimble and sometimes 'brave' planning approach, leadership and consensus building; and a sense of a widely-held common project and institutional flexibility.

5.3   Key stakeholders and delivery structures

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) is responsible for strategic policy direction in the whole of the Gateway, national planning policy and implementing the Sustainable Communities Action Plan (SCAP).

Greater London Authority Group comprising the Mayor of London through the Greater London Authority, Transport for London (TfL) and the London Development Agency (LDA) is responsible for setting the strategic planning framework for London *(The London Plan: Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London)* and delivering transport and economic development (see section 4.5).

Thames Gateway London Partnership (TGLP) is a sub-regional alliance of thirteen local authorities, five universities, the Learning and Skills Council London East and the London Development Agency working together with the private sector, local communities and strategic agencies to deliver the economic, physical and social regeneration of the Thames Gateway in London.

London Boroughs in Thames Gateway comprising Tower Hamlets, Newham, Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Lewisham, Greenwich and Bexley. Other London Boroughs in the Zone of Influence (defined as the wider Thames Gateway region that will benefit from major development in the zones of change) are Hackney, Waltham Forest and Redbridge.

The Housing Corporation's role in the Thames Gateway is to regulate to promote a viable, properly governed and properly managed housing association sector and to invest for the creation and maintenance of safe and sustainable communities.

English Partnerships is the national regeneration agency, supporting high quality sustainable growth across the country. EP is a key delivery agency for the urban

renaissance and the Government's Sustainable Communities agenda in the Thames Gateway.

The National Health Service (NHS) in London, through the North East London and South East London Strategic Health Authorities and Workforce Development Confederations, is responsible for forward planning for existing and future communities in the London Thames Gateway.

FIGURE 5.4 *Delivery Structures:*

London Thames Gateway Partnership Board
Charied alternately by the Mayor of London and the Minister for London
Comprises: TGLP, LDA, TfL, Housing Corp, EP, A+UU, UDC, private sector

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

London Thames Gateway Steering Group
Officer group responsible for high level strategic policy: all major partners organisations including the boroughs through TGLP

HIGH-LEVEL STRATEGIC POLICY

Sustainable Communities Delivery Unit
Delivery office established by ODPM

UDC, Private Developers London Boroughs GLA Group, EP, NHS

IMPLEMENTATION

London Thames Gateway Partnership Board was established by the Deputy Prime Minister in the Sustainable Communities Plan in February 2003. It is chaired alternately by the Mayor of London and the Minister for London. It includes representatives from the Boroughs (through TGLP), the London Development Agency, Transport for London, the Housing Corporation, English Partnerships, the Mayor's Chief Advisor on Architecture and Urbanism, the private

sector and the chair of the Urban Development Corporation (when appointed). The board first met in July 2003.

The London Thames Gateway Steering Group is the officer level group responsible for high level strategic policy implementation. It includes representatives from all the major partner organisations and the Boroughs (through TGLP). The secretariat role is provided by the GLA.

Sustainable Communities Delivery Unit has been established within the ODPM following the Communities Plan launch. The unit is prioritising the establishment of a new delivery office located in the Gateway to work alongside the major local, regional and national partners and to turn the strategic plans into operational programmes. The unit is also ensuring that advice and support from the private sector is available to help steer the work.

London Thames Gateway Urban Development Corporation is in the process of being set up for London Thames Gateway. This will cover parts of the Lower Lea Valley and London Riverside (see fig. 5.5 below). The new UDC will have a clear remit and the necessary powers to drive forward development. The new delivery mechanisms offer a framework for co-ordinating land assembly, development and local infrastructure to secure comprehensive regeneration.

5.4   The return of the UDC: a third way?

In February 2003 the Deputy Prime Minister set up a delivery plan in the form of *'Sustainable Communities: building for the future'*. In it he announced the return of a new kind of Urban Development Corporation. It is interesting to note that this is the third time in the history of planning that an incumbent Government has returned to the principle of establishing public development corporations (UDCs) to deliver development on the ground. Curiously, this follows in the tradition of both the Attlee Labour Government in 1945-50 in building new towns and, more recently, Margaret Thatcher's Urban Development Corporations in the 1980s (Hall, 2002). Despite the fact that these two political heavyweights could not be further apart on the political spectrum urban planning history tells us that whatever the political ideology the key objective remains – delivery. Although the

two versions were different in certain respects, such as focus and longevity, both public development corporations in question were directly funded by the Treasury (fast becoming a pre-requisite for delivery in the U.K.), with devolved powers to assemble land (including compulsory purchase powers), reclaim and service derelict land and provide the necessary infrastructure for development to flourish, such as roads, utilities and the local environment. And so it is no coincidence that in the context of a housing crisis in the South East these principles have returned once again, albeit in a hybrid version. On 17 November 2003 the ODPM released a consultation paper on the proposed London Thames Gateway Urban Development Corporation, seeking comments on its remit, geographical coverage and relationship with existing institutional arrangements.

With the legacy of the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) still fresh in the memory of many in East London, and further a-field, the negotiations over the appropriate UDC boundary were, inevitably, intense and emotive particularly amongst smaller community groups. Thus, the Government has been faced with the task of reconciling powerful delivery powers with community involvement and democratic legitimacy. Many, however, still see this vehicle as a means of bypassing local democracy

> *The local community groups LTGF represents feel most strongly that their views and local expertise are likely to be ignored.*

> (Genia Leontomitsch, LTG Forum, quoted in ODPM decision document, May 2004)

In the early consultation documents the ODPM proposed a UDC boundary encompassing three areas: Lower Lea Valley, London Riverside and Thamesmead/Belvedere/Erith. In the end the ODPM opted for just two of these areas (see fig. 5.4 below) to encompass London Riverside and the Lower Lea Valley. However, the boundaries were extended to include hinterlands such as the Gascoigne Estate in Barking, Trowbridge Estate in Hackney and Canning Town centre to promote the integration of regeneration strategies through functional areas and avoid the 'cliff edge' barrier effect which characterised the LDDC boundaries. Curiously, the UDC boundary seems at odds with the existing Zone of Change for Stratford, Lower Lea and Royal Docks (Zone 4).

In the end the ODPM decided not to expand the scope of the UDC south of the river believing the UDC would have plenty of plots to be getting on with and there is considerable merit in the argument that increasing the scope of the UDC would only serve to dilute regenerative efforts (paragraph 25). However, this has raised the prospect of 'new delivery mechanisms' (paragraph 29) for Greenwich and Bexley - as yet unspecified. The prospect of another variation on the partnership theme raises serious questions about the degree to which delivery institutions can be fragmented in this way, or indeed how all these identities and cultures can co-exist harmoniously. There are only so many institutions private investors can deal with before disillusionment sets in.

FIGURE 5.5 *London Thames Gateway Urban Development Corporation*
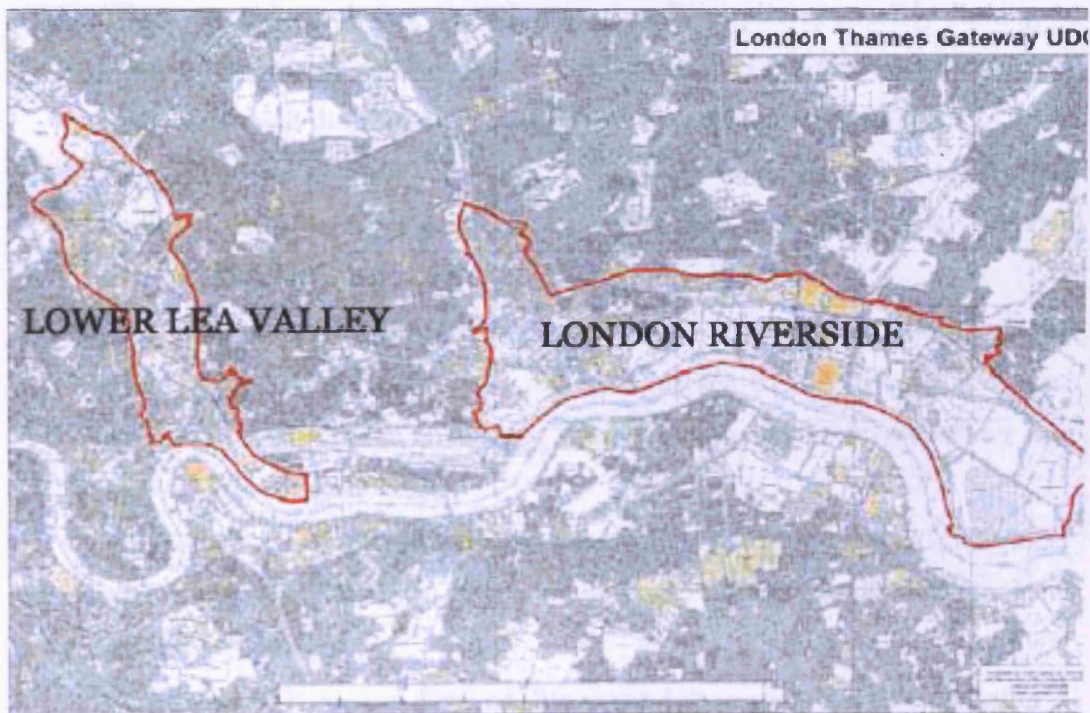
SOURCE: REPRODUCED AND ADAPTED FROM LTG UDC ODPM DECISION DOCUMENT (2004).

Despite this institutional complexity there are a number of (generic) elements that point towards a 'delivery friendly' institution. These elements are considered here in isolation of the current institutional framework. In terms of delivery one of the most obvious benefits to this system is that the UDC will receive a direct stream of Government funding and if the UDC can be seen to making a difference on the

ground then it seems likely that this stream will increase. In turning to the characteristics and components of the UDC there are a number of positive aspects.

- The UDC can **work across the entire development continuum** (see fig. 5.6 below) by bringing together all the required development components *(interview b)*. This is something LPAs have been unable to do in the past and has meant they tend only to be involved at intermittent periods during the development process.

- The UDC will work within a **clearly demarcated administrative unit** and will enable the UDC to prepare effective and focused planning frameworks. This leads to a single-minded attitude and (geographically) focused objectives.

- They are able to **bring together regional suppliers,** possibly linking in with other growth areas or perhaps bulk buying from utility suppliers.

- The UDC will be **directly funded by Government,** although the UDC must ensure it puts in place long term management and funding arrangements before closing to ensure it does not allow newly created places and spaces to deteriorate.

- The UDC will be tasked with **mapping and strategically planning land ownership** to overcome the barriers presented by fragmented land ownership. UDCs can encourage landowners to collaborate and enter into agreements (contractual).

- The UDC will be able to **capture land values** by acting as public developer and using the funds to invest in up-front infrastructure costs to lever private investment.

- The UDC will have a **limited life span** (10 years with a review after 5 years), placing an emphasis on timescales and delivery. The UDC will be committed to a tight business plan and this will be closely scrutinised by central Government as a direct sponsor. The UDC will also be subject to Treasury based 'value for money' exercises.

These generic characteristics represent positive aspects of the institutional set-up but what is disconcerting is that many of these features/powers already exist in one form or another. Logically, these powers could have been brought together under

the umbrella of regional governance. Instead, the Government has chosen to retain central control over the UDCs - their remit, make-up and funding.

However, the key problem with this emerging mechanism is that it remains largely detached from the existing London governance network and this suggests that Government remains nervous about devolving significant power and/or resources to regional bodies. These powers could usefully be conferred onto the LDA as the lead agency with a specific team set-up with this focused remit and under the umbrella of a directly elected Mayor, a position, which carries a degree of institutional and democratic legitimacy and a clear line of authority.

FIGURE 5.6 *Development spiral*

DEVELOPMENT SPIRAL
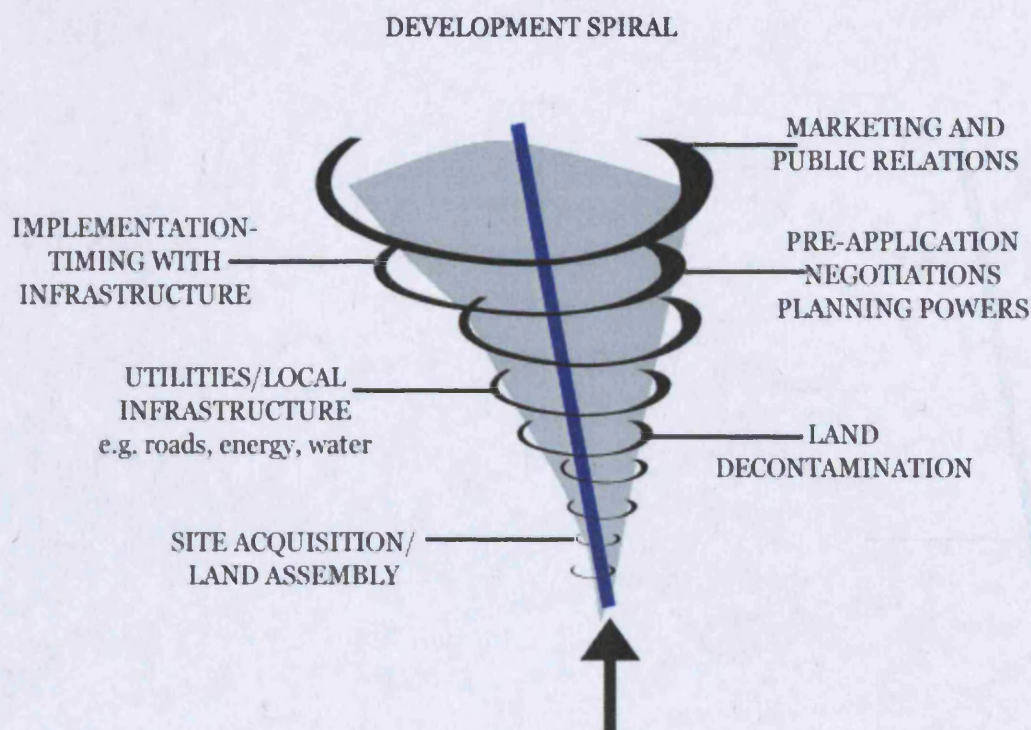
Therefore, at this juncture it is necessary to try and fit these pieces into the broader institutional 'jigsaw'. The many agencies and actors with a stake in London Thames Gateway are also grappling with the prospect of East London hosting the Olympics in 2012. Although this has created a degree of uncertainty, it has also been a major driver for change and has forced the planning machinery to swing into action. The Olympics bid, encompassing two separate development scenarios (the Olympics and their legacy) has galvanised actors into action and has been a major source of momentum for the public and private actors involved. Inevitably,

the speculative market has been quick off the mark primarily because the deadlines associated with bidding for and hosting the Olympics demand huge sums of committed public investment.

To complicate matters the UDC area will transcend the Olympics zone and six London Councils: Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Newham and Waltham Forest in the Lower Lea Valley. At London Riverside the UDC will cover areas previously controlled by Havering and Barking & Dagenham Councils. In practical terms this process has resulted in the formation of a new kind of planning authority - the Joint Planning Authorities Team (JPAT). JPAT is working on the Olympic and Legacy planning applications in the Lower Lea Valley for and on behalf of the four application Boroughs (Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest) and in partnership with the London Borough of Greenwich (to learn from the Dome and Greenwich Peninsula planning application experience) and the Greater London Authority. This is the first time public authorities across administrative boundaries in London have formed a full-time working organisation for a single purpose. It is also evidence that the gap between local and strategic policy can be bridged *(research question 5)*. This involves: validating the application; carrying out the consultation; undertaking technical and policy assessment; negotiating legal agreements; and preparing a report with recommendations for decision - to the four separate borough planning committees. There has been no delegation of planning powers to JPAT and the team fulfils an advisory function for its constituent Councils and the GLA. This gives an indication of the way in which the proposed UDC will work on the ground in terms of its relationship with the Boroughs. The crucial difference is that the UDC will have strategic planning powers across its area (discussed below).

The applicant for the Olympics bid is the London Development Agency (LDA), the LDA which is not directly responsible for promoting the London Olympic Bid, but has undertaken the responsibility for obtaining the required planning permissions and assembling the site in support of the bid. The London Olympic Bid is being promoted by London 2012 Limited, which is a company formed by the main sponsors of the London Olympic Bid: the Department of Culture, Media and Sport; the GLA; and the British Olympics Association. London 2012 has responsibility for promoting the Olympic Bid on behalf of London and submitted the Initial

Questionnaire in January 2004. If it is successful, the Olympic Games will be organised by the Organising Committee of the Olympic Games.

A key area of contention relates to the powers of the UDC and this has opened up a whole new arena of conflict. What follows is an attempt to untangle this complex framework. The ODPM has decided that the London Thames Gateway UDC will appropriate development control powers over planning applications *'relevant to its purpose'* (p.36) though the precise definition of these powers has yet to be determined. It is likely that the UDC will appropriate powers similar to those enjoyed by the Mayor i.e. planning applications defined as 'strategic' under the necessary legislation such as planning applications proposing more than 500 houses or flats (Mayor of London Order, 2000). The existing Councils will determine all other planning householder, and minor planning applications.

However, in practice there is evidence of institutional overlap here as both the Mayor of London and the UDC board will assess and determine 'strategic' planning applications. The ambiguity of roles and relationships does not bode well for delivery. There is potential for conflict here as the parameters of influence of the UDC have been clearly defined by central Government and not by the Mayor. The chairperson of the UDC has been appointed by central Government and the UDC is directly funded by the Treasury.

FIGURE 5.7 – *Industrial capacity in London Thames Gateway*
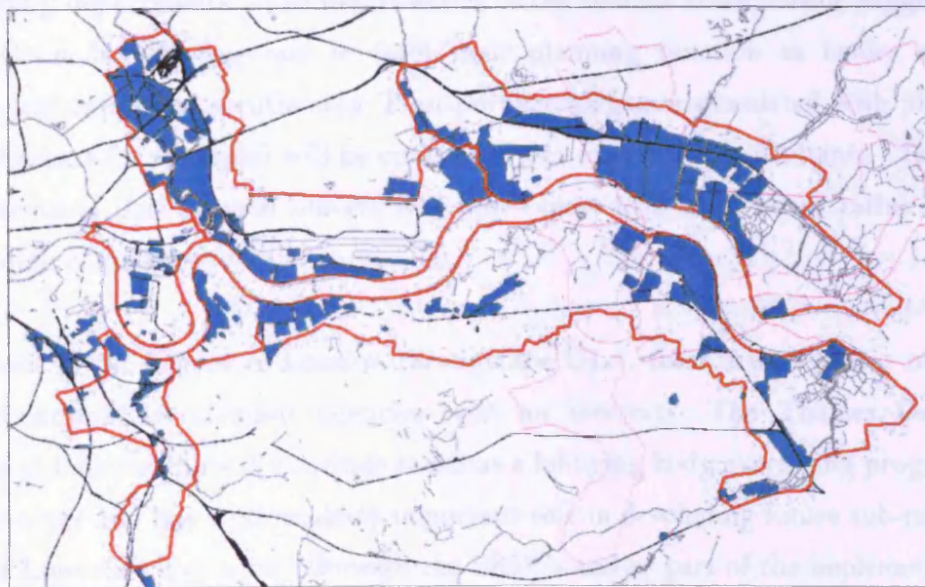
SOURCE: A+UU (GLA), 2004.

The Mayor of London will retain his strategic planning powers and this includes his power to direct refusal of applications of 'strategic importance'. This is important for two reasons. Firstly, a number of safeguarded wharves fall within the UDC boundaries and these are protected by virtue of directions issued by the Secretary of State, but based on the recommendations of the Mayor as the strategic planning authority for London. Secondly, the UDC boundaries fall across vast areas of traditional employment land (see fig. 5.7), much of it protected by local and strategic planning policy. Inevitably, much of this land will be released for other, more mixed and intensive uses, although it is important that this is managed in a pan-London context to avoid the premature and unnecessary loss of longstanding industrial uses which would have otherwise remained in business.

There are some oddities in the proposed institutional set-up. Working practices are likely to dictate that (in line with the day-to-day working of the Thurrock UDC) the advisory planning function (i.e. assessing planning application, writing reports and making recommendations) of the UDC will be contracted back to the Councils. This seems to undermine the guiding principle of an independent single-purpose executive agency bearing in mind that the stated purpose of the UDC is to allow *"them to deliver action quickly and effectively in areas of intended change"* (Lord Evans of Temple Guiting, Hansard text for 25 June 2004; Column 1507). This also raises question marks over institutional capacity – the advantage of a single-executive agency is that it takes workload pressure off overstretched Council planning departments. The practicalities of the current arrangement suggest that the Councils will continue to fulfil their planning function as before or that technical expertise (scrutinising Transport Assessments associated with planning applications for example) will be contracted out to external consultants. The only difference is that Council officers will now report to a UDC board rather than a planning committee.

As well as the Mayor of London through the GLA, there are a number of other pan-London/East London agencies with an interest. The Thames Gateway London Partnership will continue to act as a lobbying body overseeing progress in these areas and has a particularly important role in developing future sub-regional (East London-wide) policy through the SRDFs and as part of the implementation of the London Plan[9]. The LDA also has significant landholdings in these areas

(growing in anticipation of the Olympics) and this will be a particularly sensitive relationship. Again, there appears to be an overlap here, with the UDC operating powers already in use by the London Development Agency. There will need to be effective co-ordination of practices and programmes to ensure synergy in land assembly/site acquisition activity against a backdrop of development requirements for the Olympics. The problem of co-ordination for the Olympics is compounded by the fact that the UDC will determine applications *within* the Olympic zone but not Olympic-related.

In the exercise of its local planning authority status the UDC will be able to set up its own Planning sub-committee, although as we have already highlighted this needs to be synchronised across the Councils. It is expected that those landowners/developers with interests within the UDC boundary will enjoy the benefits of quicker planning decisions than those outside and this may have a positive impact on private sector confidence. It may, equally, affect land values if these committees are perceived to be more permissive when it comes to development control matters. This may, at the same time, cause some friction with existing planning sub-committees who may feel undermined by the 'new kids on the block'.

It is not proposed that the UDC will have plan-making powers and therefore it will have to work under the existing umbrella of Unitary Development Plans (UDPs). This may not be as problematic as it first appears. The UDC will be able to bring the various actors together to prepare Strategic Planning Frameworks for both these areas, and thus there will be a mechanism for resolving tensions between UDPs and the London Plan. These frameworks could usefully be aligned with the implementation of the London Plan and the Opportunity Areas contained within it. Furthermore, as LPAs prepare for the new planning system the emerging LDFs will be able to take account of these frameworks and the London Plan. The board of the UDC itself will consist of twelve people. Up to six of these appointments can be filled by candidates nominated by London Boroughs or the GLA. Each of the Councils involved will be able to nominate candidates.

It is here where the 'institutional glue' is vulnerable to breaking down, slowing delivery and making the simple processing of planning applications a particularly

long and arduous process (see fig. 5.8 below). There are connections (some stronger than others) between all these organisations and they work across varying spatial scales to their own objectives. The relationships between these actors are many and varied and attempting to 'join up the dots' would probably make the diagram illegible. The aim here is not just to demonstrate the number of actors involved in decision making (as this is well known) but also to draw attention to the crosscutting themes and the various spatial scales. This diagram also illustrates the omnipresence of central Government across almost every tier (whether directly or indirectly through QuANGOs) and there is little sign this is diminishing. If anything it is growing.

FIGURE 5.8 *Citywide planning*

SCAP DELIVERY UNIT
Established by ODPM to work alongside local, regional, national partners to implement paper plans.

ODPM
Sets national planning policy; decided planning appeals; subsidises social housing; decides on funding for LPAs; devises targets for LPAs; final say on SE and East development strategy; oversees Communities Plan; and, co-ordinates Regional Housing Boards.

ENGLISH PARTNERSHIPS
National regeneration agency, powers to acquire and remediate contaminated land; delivery agency for 'Sustainable Communities' Plan; part applicant for Greenwich Peninsula planning application.

HOUSING CORPORATION
Allocates resource to RSLs for social housing.

NATIONAL

Others: Planning Inspectorate, CABE, NHS, DfT, SRA, DTI, CPRE, DfES, Network Rail

GOL
Works on strategic planning with GLA, ODPM; directs European funding; scrutinises London UDPs/LDFs and planning applications; oversees LDA budget and transport grants; and, acts as Chair for London Housing Board.

SUB-REGIONAL HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS
5 LAs form sub-regional partnerships to produce sub-regional strategies

13 BOROUGHS
Local planning and housing authorities; LSPs; deliver local public services.

Mayor of London
Prepares SDS/London Plan; scrutinises UDPs/LDFs for 'General Conformity'; can refuse strategic planning applications as strategic planning authority.

TGLP
Sub-regional partnership for London Thames Gateway; lobbying force for investment; alliance of thirteen local authorities; helps prepare SRDF for East London; and, works with private sector.

LTG UDC
Drive forward development; co-ordinate land assembly, development and local infrastructure to secure comprehensive regeneration in the Lower Lea Valley and London Riverside.

LDA
Lead agency for Olympics; owns sites in LTG; CPO powers.

TfL
Pan-London transport authority except for overground rail.

RSLs
Deliver new social housing across London.

REGIONAL
Others; London Housing Board, ALG

SUB-REGIONAL
Others: Strategic health authorities

LOCAL
Others: Community and amenity groups, charities.

PRIVATE DEVELOPERS
Acquire and speculate on land; submit planning applications; develop masterplans in conjunction with public authorities.

5.5   *Institutional delivery*

The risk with the aspirations of the *Sustainable Communities Plan* has always been that the Government spotlight will turn elsewhere and in the tradition of political whim attention will turn towards headline grabbing issues of the day. Many well thought out intentions need to be carried through and do not deserve to be left half finished.   Long-term decisions require long-term decision-making patterns with unwavering political will.   Another nagging concern with the Government's proposals has always been that they offer very little comfort, by way of substance, that the approach is truly holistic and that 'sustainable communities' is truly the end result. Beyond transport, housing, open space and delivery vehicles there is little in this to suggest that this approach is any more pluralistic than what has gone before.   How are the Government's wider objectives going to be met? Is higher education, research and development (R&D), or energy funding aligned with Communities Plan objectives?

History has taught us that a number of important components combine to engender successful delivery.   These are considered here in the context of existing New Town Development Corporation legislation and the recently revived Urban Development Corporation powers.   There are a number of important components, displayed diagrammatically below (fig. 5.9):

<u>**FIGURE** 5.9 *UDC delivery components*</u>
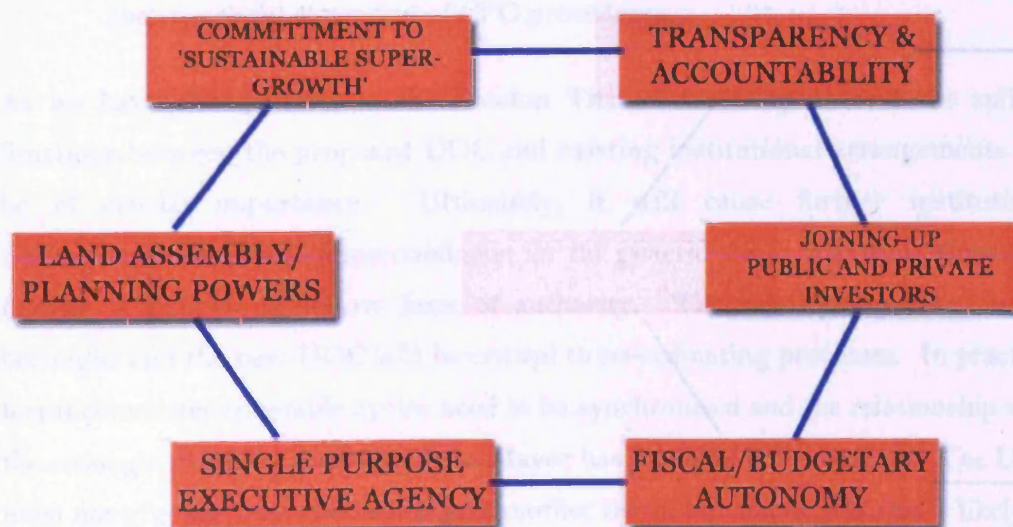
SOURCE: BASED ON SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS AND WALKER (2004)

- **Land assembly and planning powers** – in-house site acquisition and compulsory purchase expertise is required.

- **A single purpose executive agency** – following the 'Reithian' principle of strong development control and plan-making powers within a clearly defined administrative unit.

- **Fiscal and budgetary autonomy** – historical examples suggest that delivery has occurred where Government loans money to buy land and devolves powers to capture land value uplift. The s.106 regime is too clumsy a tool and too arduous a process to recoup the necessary funds for infrastructure development, although this can still prove useful for environmental mitigation/improvement measures and other regenerative benefits.

- **Joining up public and private investors** – joining up Government departments. Aligning and galvanizing these actors at an early stage.

- **A commitment to sustainable 'super growth'** embracing broader principles of exemplary environmental sustainability and high quality design.

- **Transparency and accountability** are essential attributes to help build investor confidence and to carry existing communities to avoid the alienating effect of former UDCs. Transparency is also a prerequisite for the successful execution of CPO procedures.

As we have already seen in the London Thames Gateway context the split of functions between the proposed UDC and existing institutional arrangements will be of crucial importance. Ultimately, it will cause further institutional fragmentation not to mention confusion for the general public who must already be finding it difficult to follow lines of authority. The relationship between the boroughs and the new UDC will be critical to co-ordinating processes. In practical terms committee timetable cycles need to be synchronised and the relationship with the strategic planning function of the Mayor has yet to be fully resolved. The UDC must not give the impression it is just another tier of bureaucracy as this is likely to be damaging to private investor confidence and therefore the link between local boroughs at one end of the spectrum and the Mayor at the other needs to be

seamless. In all of this the test will be: is the process 'delivery friendly'? Does it engender *"transparency, efficiency, simplicity and predictability?"* (Walker 2004, p.85). Despite the rhetoric about speeding up delivery the analysis suggests that the reality of bringing a new public actor to the table (beyond the need to find ever larger meeting rooms) is likely to result in further institutional overlap as the UDC brings with it a whole new set of values, rules-in-use and working cultures. For those who work within these structures there is uncertainty as to how this vehicle 'fits' in the existing institutional structure. The semi-structured interviews revealed that most partners do not yet know how these intricate relationships will develop *(interviews a, c, d, e)* and that is probably to be expected. However, there are significant problems of policy integration with Councils, the Mayor of London, the LDA and overlapping programmes with ongoing Olympics planning and major planning applications such as Stratford City. The point here is that an abundance of programmes, bureaucracies and partnerships seems likely to create overlapping spatial territories.

5.6   Developing and deploying 'weapons of mass construction'

There are a multitude of taxation and fiscal policy measures open to Government to enhance delivery. Typically, they are complex and this is exemplified by the fact that an appropriate mechanism has yet to be agreed. Many also remain too big and bitter a political pill for Governments to swallow. Government is currently considering the various taxation, financial incentives, subsidies and other economic instruments available and the modernisation proposals for planning gain agreements are part of this (ODPMd, 17 June 2004). For London Thames Gateway and the four growth areas more broadly these debates take on a special significance as they are a vital component in terms of delivery. As has already been established, public transport infrastructure is the key to unlocking development potential and, to date, the up-front costs have discouraged some developers from taking on high-risk development in parts of the Gateway.

One option currently being proposed and considered along with others by the Government, is the American model of Tax Increment Financing (TIF). This option allows public authorities to borrow against future revenue increments

brought about by public investment (Lloyd et al, 2001). The Jubilee line tube extension is often cited as a missed opportunity in this context – it is estimated that the land value uplift of the improvements could have paid for the cost of infrastructure many times over.

Land value uplifts of this kind are likely to be felt over a sustained period of time in the form of increased business rates and possibly Council Tax collections. This mechanism would mean having to hypothecate future receipts to service the debt and would also mean significant future spending commitments, but it would enable public authorities to break free from the shackles of centrally defined capital rationing (RICS, 1998). Furthermore, and this is why this option is particularly attractive to the Mayor of London, it would enable decisions about regional investment priorities to be made at the regional level and through emerging governance structures. Despite the complexity of this option, particularly the calculations this would involve, it is well tailored to large-scale transport infrastructure projects, as their impact is more easily defined based on previous experiences of land value uplift. The hypothecation of increased business rates also forms part of Barker's recent proposals and would for the first time incentivise local authorities to positively manage development, knowing central Government would not reap all the financial benefits (Barker, 2004). This, together with Barker's other proposals for a 'Community Investment Fund', would go some way towards *"squaring the cash flow circle"* (Walker, p.81) and addressing some of the up-front costs, which have tended to frighten off cost-sensitive developers.[10]

Of course none of these options goes quite so far as a general betterment tax and it is fair to say this option can be discounted on the basis that it rings too heavily in the ears of the business sector and therefore tends to have a similar effect on the Chancellor of the Exchequer. A general betterment tax also raises the spectre of landholding/banking and/or discouraging development altogether (Urban Task Force, 1999). Meanwhile, planners and those involved in the development process stumble on with the current covert taxation regime, also know as S.106/planning gain agreements. This is a particularly clumsy vehicle for overworked planners and a significant obstacle to faster delivery, but it is likely to play an increasingly important role in plugging the investment gap left by the public sector. Having said that, and despite the Government's serious back tracking on this issue, the

modernisation proposals are likely to strengthen the hand of public authorities. Notwithstanding the likelihood that some local authorities will welcome the option of adopting a fixed scale of charges as a means of covertly blocking development where it is not politically desirable, the proposals usefully allow for regional or sub-regional pooling mechanisms (ODPM, 2004d). This will be music to the ears of those seeking to fill the Crossrail financial gap.

Another pragmatic option open to Government under the current arrangements is for them to allow public bodies to act as developers. This approach has been used to a limited extent by agencies such as English Partnerships (e.g. Greenwich Peninsula) and the London Development Agency (e.g. Woolwich), with some success.[11] Based on the New Towns model this allows public agencies to recoup profits that would normally have been siphoned off to the private sector. There are signs this is being used more widely in London as a means of providing more affordable housing, particularly for key workers.[12]

Mainstreaming sustainable development principles and the objectives of the Communities Plan across Government departments and beyond the vicinity of Bressenden Place must surely be a primary goal. A recurring theme of this discussion has been how to broaden planning's scope, using the spatial planning conceptual framework to bring about real and lasting change beyond the delivery of housing numbers. The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) has been a strong voice in this field for many years, though it has tended to fall on deaf ears. It has long argued for communities to benefit from development by sharing in the betterment value brought about by planning permission. This principle is grounded in social justice and fairness. Historically, there have been several failed attempts at implementing this principle through the general taxation system, particularly because it is fraught with difficulties and is an incredibly complex system to operate. Planning gain supplements have been suggested for over 60 years and the Labour Government sought to introduce mechanisms in 1947, 1967 and again in 1976, only for the Acts to be rescinded by incoming Conservative Governments (Hall, 2004).

In this chapter we have seen how the emergence of new spatial scales (i.e. regional and sub-regional) has opened up new opportunities for planners, planning, policy

makers and institutions more broadly, resulting in organisations like Thames Gateway London Partnership (TGLP). The benefits of this for spatial planning are real and lasting, enabling sectoral activities (such as utilities, health, tourism) previously neglected in planning processes to be brought into the fold. In particular, this has galvanised the NHS into action, culminating in the London Thames Gateway Health Services Assessment (2003). This is somewhat unprecedented in the U.K. for an organisation used to reacting (often too late) to population and demographic changes once they have occurred.

It has also been shown how these new spatial scales are necessary if governance patterns are to break down administrative barriers to reflect the fact that communities are no longer constrained by physical proximity in the way they used to be. However, there is evidence this has opened up a new arena of conflict at the sub-regional level resulting in a 'turf war' between the GLA and TGLP seeking to fulfil a strategic policy function *(interviews c, d, e)*. In turning to the London Thames Gateway vision, results derived from the semi-structured interviews indicate that there is a sense of a widely-held common project *(interviews a-e)*. This has been fruitful, resulting in the Thames Gateway Development and Investment Framework (TGDIF) and the first public statement of public investment requirements across the Gateway. This is significant for two reasons; firstly, because we know from fig. 5.7 *(citywide planning)* that a whole array of organisations are needed to deliver on the ground and, secondly, this signals that the actors involved are 'signed up' to the stated vision.

In considering the proposed UDC for London Thames Gateway in isolation from the existing pattern of governance, generic components have been identified, all of which point towards a highly effective delivery vehicle with sufficient powers to drive forward development and 'make things happen'. Alas, delivery mechanisms do not work within political, social and economic vacuums. Therefore, it is necessary to assess the merits of the Government's proposals in the current London Thames Gateway multi-level/actor governance context. This throws an altogether different light on the analysis and suggests that the proposals are likely to give rise to significant tensions. This new institution is being introduced into a complicated web of actors bringing with it its own set of values and working cultures. The key problem here is that this is likely to result in tensions with

existing governance patterns primarily due to a lack of alignment with existing regional governance arrangements (i.e. the Mayor of London).

We have already seen how this is resulting in 'institutional overlap' in the area of sub-regional policy formulation. A similar relationship is emerging between the proposed UDC and the Mayor of London in relation to the processing of 'strategic' planning applications. This signals inherent contradictions in the UDC which displays all the characteristics of a powerful delivery vehicle, when in practice it will be constrained by the institutional capacity of its constituent Councils. In all these examples the overall direction of the changes to urban governance in London Thames Gateway is difficult to discern and the assessment of the proposed UDC suggests that these changes are likely to exacerbate institutional complexity vis-à-vis the purpose of the UDC to deliver action quickly. There is also the key point that the omnipresence of the central state in all of these arenas is a challenge to the legitimacy and authority of the Mayor and is a further indication that the Government remains wary of devolving powers and resources to the regional structures it has introduced.

CONCLUSIONS

In this analysis an attempt has been made to avoid 'drowning' in the complexities of the English planning system. Instead, it is argued that an understanding is needed of the delivery of urban visions through broader conceptual tools and the example of London Thames Gateway but also that it is necessary to challenge some longstanding and simplistic generalisations, such as the polarising and destructive nature of globalisation processes.

In Chapter 2 a number of key academic debates were drawn upon in order to develop a schematic approach to research. These conceptual 'tools' were designed to act as a prelude to critical empirical analysis. So, what have they taught us? A number of key points can be made from these discussions. Part of the theoretical grounding is founded on the debates surrounding postmodernism and in focusing on the spatial dimension of these patterns it can be concluded, with a degree of certainty, that there are severe limitations to technological advances and international connectedness. Postmodernism advocates aesthetic diversity but remains vulnerable to market forces, which create pressures towards homogenous urban forms. The conclusion here is that these have a tendency to mask the economic and social relations of global cities. The 'network society' (Castells, 1996) therefore has the potential to create exclusionary and divisive spatial patterns but only if this market logic goes unchecked. For institutions, and this applies to London Thames Gateway, this is problematic as it results in an endless search for new ways and means of bringing these meta-physical forces down to a manageable (human) level. It has already been seen how institutions have responded pro-actively to steer these forces in a positive direction, forming multi-lateral partnerships to manage global flows of wealth (e.g. London Thames Gateway Partnership at the sub-regional level and the European Union at the trans-territorial level).

Institutional capacity is an increasingly appropriate concept for evaluating the internal actions of organisations and what binds them together (or not). Thus, throughout the study it has proved an effective means of assessing the actions of a growing number of actors involved in the London Thames Gateway project. This is in recognition of the shift from govern*ment* to govern*ance* patterns and also the

need to examine how all these actors work (or do not work together). This tool has proved particularly effective in isolating the subtleties of relationships between and within institutions, cultural norms, values and behavioural patterns at the micro-level. The value of this means of evaluation is the ability to understand how urban governance relates at the local-strategic nexus. In doing so, common typologies or characteristics could be developed that contribute towards delivering urban visions. There was evidence of flexibility and innovation in the institutional set-up with a broad *"sense of a widely-held common project"* as Amin and Thrift also emphasise (1995). This broad consensus has been built around a long-term urban vision for London Thames Gateway and this has galvanised some actors into action, bringing about a significant degree of momentum, particularly in the early years of the project. This is an absolute pre-requisite for London Thames Gateway due to the scale of the project and the sheer number of actors needed to 'make things happen'. In contemplating the prospect of delivery at the outset of this research, and taking into account the whole array of organisations and institutions with a stake, it was easy to regard this as a foregone conclusion i.e. destined to break down. Yet, what is striking about the consensus is the level of 'buy-in' and the extent to which this has unified groups of organisations behind the stated vision. This is what we can refer to as the institutional 'glue' that holds these institutions together and stops them from reverting to default modes and reaching for self-defined goals. The Olympics bid has further strengthened this glue, bringing together actors and organisations with previously antagonistic relations. This has also contributed to the sense of a widely-held common project. However, a note of caution is required, as these visions are not static and must be maintained and updated if this 'glue' is to hold. Otherwise, the loss of a unifying vision is likely to lead to the break down of these relations and this is the fundamental problem with fragmenting institutions.

The vision has been backed up at all political levels and over a long period of time. Moreover, there is some evidence of new actors being brought into the fold (e.g. NHS, utilities), and this is particularly positive as these have tended to be sectors previously neglected in planning processes. We have also found evidence of innovation and flexibility in structures, including evidence that many of these organisations (perhaps owing to their relative infancy) have the ability to change and evolve with the project. Examples of this included the introduction of the Urban Development Corporation and the evolving nature of the London Thames

Gateway Partnership Board, as the Thames Gateway moves towards implementation phases. In these structures evidence was found of appropriate and effective means of resolving tensions although there was also some indication of disillusionment and partnership fatigue where these structures were seen to be nearing the end of their natural 'lifespan'.

In section 2.4 the discussion of London's role within the global economy raised serious questions about the degree to which this can be blamed for London's pronounced intra- and inter-borough spatial differences. In outlining these debates the intention was to demonstrate that there is considerable variety of opinion and, equally, that the topic is complex. In particular there is considerable debate as to the inevitability of global processes and this can be linked to the preparation of plans and strategies, such as the London Plan (2004), where the emphasis has been on developing adaptive strategies that are able to respond to these nimble and 'footloose' forces by seeking to attract international investments in competition with other global centres. Equally, it was possible to link this trend to the 'flavour' of the new planning system (outlined in draft PPS1) and the expectation that planners must leverage market forces to deliver a broader range of objectives whilst at the same time helping to meet social, economic and environmental objectives – not much to ask then! London Thames Gateway has a particularly important role in this respect as an absorber and engine of London's future growth. In many ways it has been held-up as the answer to London's problems: helping to avoid urban sprawl; one of the solutions to London and the South East's housing crisis; the home to new and emerging industries; and the test-bed for new urban thinking and architecture.

This formed the conceptual framework for a more detailed evaluation of spatial patterns across London and London Thames Gateway in particular. In turning to the geographies of London we were struck by the degree of geographical mismatch between the administrative boundaries and the broader, all-encompassing functional urban region. It is also observed that for historical reasons the green belt boundary is embedded in the Capital's consciousness and has thus formed a rigid administrative boundary, simultaneously creating problems for strategy integration across an expansive functional mega-city region. The growth of the South East has produced a 'super-region' (uncontrollable monster, others would

argue) containing a population approaching 20 million. This economic pre-eminence is a 'double-edged sword' leading to environmental and social externalities. For the regional authorities there is the ever-present problem of policy integration and co-ordination, further complicated by the lack of institutional parity between the three authorities in terms of set-up and remit. The Government's contradictory approach to regional governance has not made life any easier. In this section we argued that the model of RDAs attached to Regional Assemblies and shadowed by the GORs being pursued by the Government is not well tailored to this economic 'super-region'. This has intensified the need for more effective means of co-ordination between the regions and across the growth areas. This led to the suggestion that this role could usefully be undertaken by the GORs or by a Minister covering a 'Super-Regional Office' as Buck et al (2000, p.387) have suggested, rather than seeking to shadow the every move of regional actors.

In Chapter 3 we also took a brief exploration into the beginnings of the Town Planning movement and we were able to learn a number of key lessons from historical approaches to delivery, particularly in relation to New Towns. The success of the early delivery mechanisms is founded on their resolve and the core 'Reithian' principle of single-purpose executive agencies together with the need to capture land value uplift for the wider public benefit. These lessons then formed the basis for developing characteristics for today's delivery mechanisms and the re-emergence of Urban Development Corporations.

In mapping and assessing London's geographies it was possible to reveal pronounced spatial differences across the city and the scale of the task facing policy makers. There are many longstanding spatial patterns and these are formed across crosscutting themes. These patterns have severely hampered regenerative initiatives and the situation has been one in which those who have greater opportunities tend to be able to move away from these poorer areas, only to be replaced by others who are in relative terms, equally poor. As Power (2000) has pointed out this leaves policy makers with a quandary – is the task to ensure that particular households are not socially excluded or is it to raise the incomes and opportunities of those living in particular areas? The likely scenario for London Thames Gateway is a negative one. The trends in housing, income and employment suggest that there is a need to strengthen weak attachments to the

labour market and that currently the educational attainment of those in social housing will be inadequate to enable them to take jobs in the growth sectors, other than in catering and personal services.

Section 3.4 discussed the emergence of a new academic and political discourse relating to European spatial development. This provided a useful counterpoint to understanding the core-periphery relationship. In turn, it was possible to link this to London's position within the global economy and the rise of governance structures to take account of these trends. In Chapter 4 connections were identified with the non-interventionist ideology of central Government in the post-GLC years in which the private sector developed a close working relationship with Government in the absence of any citywide authority. The key concern in the *inter regnum* was London's competitive position in the global economy.

We then sought to understand how the emerging polycentric conceptual tool could enrich strategic planning policy, and also how this might help us understand spatial processes in London Thames Gateway. There are a number of key polycentric messages running through the London Thames Gateway project, most notably the attempt to redress the longstanding east-west spatial imbalance in London by cooling an overheating economy in west London and harnessing growth in east London. In so doing the tool was found to be adaptable and conducive to practical application, if only at a strategic (and slightly abstract) level. However, aspects of the strategy are less well aligned with the polycentric ethos and the economic pull of the Isle of Dogs (confined to particular sectors such as finance and banking) seems likely to distort the urban hierarchy without adequate checks. The key point here is that monocentric patterns of development are not pre-determined and spatial plans must pro-actively seek to influence development patterns through spatial plans that seek to diversify the employment bases of sub-regional centres. This will take a concerted effort from public authorities, although the evidence is that in areas of growth pressure it is possible to lever private investment in a positive direction. The example of Woolwich Arsenal proves that this is not an unrealistic proposition and that sub-regional centres have a future beyond residential dormitories.

In Chapter 4 we attempted to analyse the overall direction of the New Labour modernisation agenda. We have established that there is now a broad recognition of the changes to urban governance and a reconfiguration of the state, economy and civil society. London has been at the forefront of pioneering new institutional arrangements, although at times it has been difficult to discern the overall direction. This study has attempted to analyse the London experience and how these structures are working on the ground. The analysis has shown that these structures involve elements of managerialism, centralism and localism at the same time, as Brooks also states (2000). In many ways this has been a 'constitutional experiment' for London and the role of the Mayor. The irony of the Government's decision to emulate the city Mayor model is that these systems work on the very premise that the Mayor is able to command a much greater range of powers and resources. The reality of the London mayoral system is that the only real devolution has been in symbolic capital. Central Government has refrained from affording the Mayor the financial and regulatory muscle to enable him to deliver on the ground in his own right. With such a limited range of 'tools' the Mayor is tasked with bringing together various actors to make things happen, to set the spatial vision for London and to use his significant symbolic power to make the case for more 'tools'. In this new institutional landscape, the Mayor of London is expected to be an entrepreneur (Syrett and Baldcock, 2001). This entails using his co-ordinating role to bring together actors to make things happen – powers of persuasion, influence and vision are therefore essential attributes for a successful Mayor. In this sense the gauge of a successful Mayor could be the degree to which central Government hands further fiscal and financial power to citywide government.

The term governance has entered mainstream discourse and reflects a broader change in the meaning of government. Typically, this reinvention has been characterised as government 'steering' rather than 'rowing' (Osborner and Gaebler, 1992; Buck et al, 2002). Whereas traditionally the focus has been on how authoritative and hierarchical patterns of government address social and economic problems, the concept of governance is used to frame the new relationship between civil society and the state. That means harnessing inter-governmental organisations (public and private agencies) to achieve collective goals and address equally complex urban problems. On the issue of London's governance, it has

become clear that there will be a relentless battle from the Mayor's Office, whoever the Mayor is, to increase citywide financial and institutional autonomy and reverse historical disinvestments in London's infrastructure.

It is clear also that in introducing this porous framework of governance the Government sees the Mayor of London and other pan-London agencies as the 'enablers' of development, working horizontally across the various organisations to deliver *(interview b)*. It was seen how this has opened up opportunities for informal sub-regional alliances to emerge to bridge the gap between local and strategic needs *(research question 5)*.

The aim of Chapter 5 was to assess the spatial implications of these governance patterns. As has already been acknowledged the new regional and sub-regional dimension to spatial planning has brought about opportunities and problems. The two key positive aspects to this shift are, firstly, that it has opened up opportunities for local authorities to 'think strategically' and beyond technocratic boundaries; secondly, that it opens up whole new spatial arenas for planners and policy makers used to working within administrative boundaries. This has led to the proposal for Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) in the new planning system and the prospect of a more rounded and integrated spatial vision for regions. Conversely however, new sub-regional alliances (e.g. TGLP) have produced competing cultures and institutional overlap with citywide governance *(interviews a, c, d, e)*.

In Chapter 5 an attempt was made to apply these understandings to the Government's *Sustainable Communities Plan* and London Thames Gateway. Institutional fragmentation, it was seen, has caused difficulties for delivery, particularly citywide planning. The analysis has shown that whatever the Government's rhetoric about devolved governance new and emerging institutions such as the LTG UDC are shackled by central control when what is needed is a rationalisation of governance patterns. The Government would be better focusing its efforts on co-ordinating work across the growth regions through the ODPM Delivery Unit and the Government Offices for the Regions, rather than seeking to shadow the every move of regional and local actors. The emphasis must now therefore be on co-ordinating the activities of these institutions across the whole of

Thames Gateway, including synchronising working practices with local Councils and the London Development Agency.

Finally, there was an attempt to translate these into 'weapons of mass construction' and the tools open to Government to turn paper plans into reality. Traditionally, and mostly for political reasons, fiscal and taxation measures to ensure delivery have been a major stumbling block. The options were outlined here to give a sense of the complexity of this issue but also to suggest more pragmatic ways forward, such as devolving more powers to public bodies to play the role of developers and fulfil public policy aims. The examples of English Partnerships at Greenwich Peninsula and the London Development Agency at Woolwich Arsenal demonstrate that partnerships with the private sector can be extremely productive and may satisfy a broader array of strategic and local objectives by working horizontally across various actors involved in London Thames Gateway. These are positive examples despite the fact there is a lack of clarity about which public agency (regional or national in this case) should take the lead. This, as we have seen, is symptomatic of the approach to delivery being adopted by Government.

In all of this the message has also been that Ministers and civil servants need to join up Her Majesty's spending departments. The Government has, to date, yet to fully grasp the idea that creating 'sustainable communities' entails something more than the granting of planning permission, a very limited window within the development continuum and where the scope for trying to integrate everything in sight is constrained. Consideration needs to be given to broader aspects of environmental sustainability, fiscal policy measures, social welfare programmes and other aspects of this elusive concept 'quality of life', a popular phrase which is often used but whose meaning could be all things to all men. There is also the danger that we conclude with a 'market friendly' solution but in doing so sacrifice all the visionary rhetoric espoused in a multitude of paper plans calling for a step change in design quality and place making in exchange for the lowest common denominator. If that happens we can wave goodbye to the vision.

The key original research questions for this study have provided reference points for these broader discussions and in the spirit of iterative research these key questions have opened up new debates. Many of these debates are beyond the

scope of this work. However, the value has been in highlighting a number of key areas in which much more research is required. At the top of this list must surely be fiscal measures and how Government can put in place a fiscal framework that engenders delivery. Certainly Barker's review has gone a considerable way towards this by highlighting the central principle that communities should benefit from the land value uplift brought about by the granting of planning permission. But, much more work is needed and in this study it has only been possible to present an overview of what is a complex, legalistic and heavily politicised area of policy. This task is probably well beyond the capabilities of this mere town planner. Also, it has been shown how London sits within a complex and expansive functional urban region and not nearly enough is known about how this bewildering city-region works and what spatial patterns it continues to produce. Finally, the emerging concept of polycentric development opens up a whole new field of urban conceptual thinking. This study has only touched the surface of this conceptual tool and it has been difficult to pin down its exact (spatial) meaning. It is certainly the 'policy tool' of the day and there is some debate as to whether or not this amounts to a versatile and practical policy tool or simply a vague and ambiguous academic model. Nevertheless, there are already signs that it is evolving into a sophisticated policy tool for enriching strategic planning policy debates and this can only be positive.

Here, there will be a return to these questions individually and in the context of empirical analysis.

1. How has urban governance changed in London, and what role, if any, does it play in delivering strategic objectives?

The 'New Labour' architecture of governance displays contradictory evidence of central power and devolved governance at the same time. The example of the Mayoral system in London is part of the broader New Labour modernisation agenda and a lack of local autonomy has opened up a new arena of conflict over power and resources for London. The analysis has emphasised that this programme is likely to generate significant tensions and some of these are in evidence in London Thames Gateway. This is because the many changes and innovations that result from this programme are creating new institutional arrangements. Arguably, these structures have not been given sufficient time to

bed down and there is considerable truth in the argument that a constant stream of new organisations will do little to improve this position. Also, there is merit in the argument that the new arrangements have broadened participation in planning London Thames Gateway, bringing in sectors and organisations previously under-represented in planning processes (e.g. NHS) and this is a positive aspect of the reforms. This has certainly resulted in a more robust and legitimate strategy (TGDIF, 2004).

However, it is increasingly difficult to understand why London's monocentric tendencies brought about by its World City status should produce the current London governance network. In the GLA era there is a clearer political and policy direction but there is still a 'hangover' from previous institutional arrangements and central Government has retained its involvement in strategic planning for the city through the Government Office for London and, more recently, the Urban Development Corporation for London Thames Gateway. Paradoxically, London's World City status seems to be creating pressures towards greater institutional complexity. London remains institutionally detached from its regional hinterland, despite the obvious interdependence. Increasing complexity and fragmentation will not resolve these tensions, or deliver economic competitiveness if indeed that is the objective. The current citywide institutional structure has pioneered policy-led initiatives (through devolved governance), but central Government continues to define the parameters of influence, primarily through existing (and centralised) funding streams. An example of this is European regeneration funding, which continues to be channelled through the Government Offices for the Regions, rather than new and emerging regional structures, such as the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). It is increasingly difficult to discern the logic behind this trend.

This study is concerned with delivery and there is a compelling case for a rationalisation and realignment of these institutions, not least because of the political priority being afforded to delivery. A recurring theme in this analysis has been the need to simplify lines of authority to deliver these aspirations under the umbrella of a democratically elected (and theoretically more legitimate) citywide Mayor. Only then will the practical realities of delivering urban visions in London Thames Gateway be realised. The new and overlapping organisations, strategies, mechanisms of service delivery and modes of participation carry with them new and

overlapping norms, routines and rules-in-use. While the Government may argue for 'joined up thinking', the programme of modernisation and constitutional reform has resulted in more complex patterns of governance, as Stoker also stresses (2000). The problem with complexity, of course, is that whatever the innovation decision-makers find themselves embroiled in institutional structures with competing and overlapping cultures. This has been seen to be the case in London Thames Gateway with the Greater London Authority, Thames Gateway London Partnership and the forthcoming Urban Development Corporation vying for the position of strategic authority in policy and development control arenas. In these circumstances it is difficult to envisage effective delivery.

2. What is/are the most effective delivery mechanism(s) for reconciling economic competitiveness, social cohesion and environmental sustainability in London Thames Gateway?

There has been an attempt to isolate generic characteristics and to develop typologies of rules-in-use and powers to provide an adaptive model for future delivery institutions. The London Thames Gateway UDC has been designed to act as the 'client' for delivery and the Government has made clear it should not replicate or displace the work of existing institutions. Where local authorities are found wanting the UDC is expected to fill the void, namely: bringing private sector skills and techniques; faster and more effective decision making; building private investor confidence; marketing and public relations expertise; delivering local infrastructure; and capturing land value uplift, and these are positive aspects of the changes that are consistent with historical evidence. In this new institutional landscape, however, roles are increasingly being fragmented. The key problem with this fragmentation is that roles and responsibilities are increasingly blurred and all these institutions bring with them competing cultures, rules-in-use and values. In practice the new UDC may command sufficient powers and resources to be able to overcome these obstacles to delivery but there remains little or no synergy with existing governance patterns. The Chief Executive of the UDC will sit on the London Thames Gateway Partnership Board but will continue to report to central Government despite the creation of the Greater London Authority and other regional institutions.

In-so-far as this generic assessment goes, the evidence is positive and the advantage of public development corporations are in joining up the development components and their single-mindedness nature. Unfortunately, these structures do not work within political, social and economic vacuums. The detailed analysis of the day-to-day workings of this institution indicates that this is not quite the delivery vehicle that Government would have us believe. The emerging UDC model for London Thames Gateway is not well tailored to the existing (complex) institutional framework and there is ample evidence of overlap across both policy and development control matters. It is feasible that in the passing of time these 'grey' areas will be fully clarified through informal arrangements between the various organisations, but this leaves too much to chance. Certainly, historical examples suggest that there is no room for ambiguity. The key conclusion here is that the proposed UDC is not closely aligned with existing regional governance arrangements and this is likely to result in competing cultures. The UDC has a clear line of authority leading back to Whitehall and the analysis of the practical working relationships raises serious question marks over the true capacity of the corporation to deliver, given that the planning advisory function is likely to revert back to the existing Councils.

3. *To what extent do institutions in London Thames Gateway act as 'enablers' in achieving collective goals? How successful are they in this role?*

It has been observed that these changes are taking place within a much broader shift, which positions the local state as the 'enabler' functioning within a complex and ever-growing framework of institutions. At the micro level, local authorities are no longer seen as having the capacity to act on their own and are therefore now perceived to be the 'managers' of action on the ground *(interview b)*. The return of Urban Development Corporations also reinforces this impression. Buck *et al* (2000) have shown how in London some Boroughs are less eager to embrace this culture shift and prefer to work through longstanding administrative boundaries, going or on to conclude that 'actual service delivery' (p.373) is the key to achieving both social cohesion and competitiveness, rather than attempting to 'strategise' (p.373). This analysis has shown that Government views local Councils as the 'managers' of change on the ground *(interview b)* and pan-London agencies and the Mayor as

the enablers of change. In Chapter 4 the 'lean and mean' nature of the Greater London Authority was described; a single executive Mayor backed up by a relatively small bureaucracy, in sharp contrast to its predecessor – the GLC. This set-up is deliberate; the Mayor is tasked with devising strategies and must work through partners, the 33 London Boroughs, private developers and other public QuANGOs to deliver these strategies. However, it is clear from the introduction of a centrally controlled UDC that the Government will continue to have a hand in this as well. The UDC, meanwhile, is seen as the 'client' of change *(interview b)*. These roles are not clearly demarcated and there is considerable ambiguity, particularly at the local level where Councils are unsure whether to focus their efforts on strategies for local competitiveness or 'actual service delivery' (Buck et al, 2000, p.373).

The problem with diffusing power in this way is that there is now a heavy burden placed on partnership working and the job of 'enabler' becomes all the more difficult. Increasing complexity and fragmentation may have reaped some benefits in terms of bringing actors to the table and helping to build a more legitimate vision, but the fundamental flaw is that power is spread too thinly for anyone to act on these good intentions in any meaningful way. The analysis has also demonstrated that this complexity results in significant resource implications, as complexity tends to breed complexity. Institutional coordination is now very much the name of the game. The emerging London governance pattern can be linked back to the discussion of London's World City role and monocentric patterns of development. It is clear that in these circumstances the emphasis is on marketing the city across the world and central Government continues to define the parameters of influence by setting up informal networks of institutions which are easily dismantled or reconfigured.

4. How far do these processes, together with globalisation trends, help to achieve an economically and socially balanced London Thames Gateway, which is both economically competitive and socially equitable?

It is true that globalisation trends are creating pressures towards spatial and social development that are distinctly different from those in the past despite longstanding historical trends towards the internationalisation of economic

activity. London's financial centre is suffused in internationalism and global flows of wealth are causing problems for those outside these spheres, generally the poorest, as well as threatening the everyday economic and social functioning of the city. However, on the basis of this discussion it would be easy to overplay the 'globalisation card'. Although the term has entered mainstream discourse to describe powerful forces, creating in its path an evolving hierarchy of cities, globalisation is only one of the forces determining the position of cities. In the context of urban residential segregation, despite the decline of welfare provision in the U.K. and U.S. by Thatcher and Reagan and the rhetoric about 'rolling back the state', the reality is that the nation-state is still a major player. Whilst accepting the dominant forces of global networks, the impact and consequence of global economic restructuring is channeled, in part, by the economic and social policies of nation-states and in Chapter 2 we saw evidence of this in Scandinavian countries. The key point in the context of this study is that there is no spatial *fait accompli* and therefore globalisation and other universal 'global city' models are to a certain extent red herrings. They can distract from a more valuable and fruitful focus on mediation strategies and spatial plans. In this pattern nation states and city-regions may still play a pivotal mediating role and the state remains heavily involved in facilitating business and other activities. In reality there are not many truly transnational corporations and most multinational companies still have roots in their home country. In a situation of continued risk, local and cultural factors are still important; for example, companies draw on very specific localities for their research and development activity (Storper, 1997).

In turning to London Thames Gateway economic competitiveness was considered more cohesively and through the emerging concept of polycentric development. There is reason to conclude, perhaps surprisingly, that the onslaught of globalisation and its spatial effects does not present the cataclysmic prognosis some would have us believe. In parts of the literature these forces have been characterised as unstoppable, all encompassing, polarising and destructive. Rather, the evidence has been about the active and pro-active ways in which political institutions and civil society has manoeuvred to steer these forces in a positive direction. Though it is true that some of these characteristics manifest themselves in London's social, economic and spatial development, the evidence is that this does not amount to a spatial *fait accompli* and these forces are themselves open to

mitigation, management and manipulation for the better. The more meaningful question is: are current governance structures in a position to grasp these opportunities and deliver the visionary rhetoric? The evidence in this respect has been far more circumspect.

Here, the interest is in developing the idea of a 'sub-regional polycentrism' in pursuance of the aim of achieving a socially and economically balanced London Thames Gateway. The concept of polycentrism is the concept of the day but it is also work in progress and it has yet to reach its full potential. The value of this tool in the context of this study is that it enriches debates about spatial strategy and what Williams (1996) referred to as 'spatial positioning'. That means London boroughs thinking about the spatial position of their centres within the broader context and pan-London agencies thinking about the London Thames Gateway sub-region within the broader context which includes the rest of the Gateway and London, the South East region, the U.K. and even Europe. The concept is seen to have a certain quality as a 'soft instrument' (Waterhout *et al* 2003) for thinking about spatial visioning. Despite the absence of a national spatial strategy the city-wide/regional apparatus is in place and there is also now a policy framework (i.e. The London Plan, 2004 and Sub-Regional Development Frameworks) for this to permeate through. There are also informal sub-regional structures in place for the concept to develop and this is where a political consensus will have to be built and sectoral interests will have to be reconciled. The concept has implications for patterns of economic development and private sector investment and therefore these interests need to be part of the process through such informal structures as London Thames Gateway Partnership. This policy approach is no panacea for achieving an economically and socially balanced pattern of development in London Thames Gateway, nor is it likely to occur overnight. The approach requires: political leadership working horizontally and vertically; the support of the business community; consensus across public and private investors (such as private utility companies); and a concerted effort from public authorities to demonstrate how this can be achieved with a willingness to advocate the longer-term benefits of maximising the economic potential of regions and avoiding over-concentration.

5. How is the gap between strategic and local policy being bridged?

In London Thames Gateway we have seen the rise of informal sub-regional structures (i.e. TGLP) in an attempt to fill the void between local and strategic capacity. This is a crucial channel of communication for both the Mayor and the London boroughs, as the implementation of strategic policy will require collaboration and co-ordination across public authorities. Urban governance in London Thames Gateway has responded with alacrity to the London 2012 Olympics bid by forming a partnership-based authority for determining the planning applications and this suggests that the strategic-local gap is being bridged. However, in the broader sub-region there is evidence that these informal structures are not without their tensions and this has led to a 'turf war' for strategic policy control across London Thames Gateway *(interviews c, d and e)*. Equally, the proposed UDC for London Thames Gateway is likely to create further institutional overlap in the development control arena with competing planning powers over 'strategic' planning applications.

At the pan-regional level there are more deep-seated problems with policy integration between the GLA, SEERA and EERA. The Functional Urban Region (FUR) is vast and complex and in the absence of a single unit of governance we have seen the creation of a Pan-Regional Advisory Forum on Regional Planning (following the signing of a strategic planning protocol in 2001) in an attempt to address problems of policy integration. However, it seems unlikely that this will be enough to hold back a process of territorialisation as these new institutions develop more powerful political bases. The conclusion here, as Buck et al (2000) also suggest, is for Government to create a *'Super-Regional Office'* and merge the Government offices to transcend these regions and, more importantly, the *Sustainable Communities* growth areas. A single Minister to cover the functional urban region would re-focus efforts on co-ordinating policy and action across technocratic boundaries whilst maintaining a clear line of communication with Whitehall departments.

A striking feature of the U.K planning system and a key finding of this study has been the degree to which central Government continues to hold the critical 'cards' in all these spheres. For all the prophesising of a new regionalism, and despite the clear movement towards regional governance, Government continues to retain central power. Government may increasingly be 'decentred' but there has certainly

been no diminution of central power. A central conclusion here is that in almost every area of planning the lines of authority lead us back to Whitehall and it is something Government itself seems to acknowledge:

> *Britain has one of the most centralised systems of Government in the western world. Decisions affecting our regions are often taken far away from the people and places they will affect. But there must be real doubt whether this has led to better Government* (Cabinet Office and DTLR, 2002 p.1).

This control extends across many areas, including: the issuing of national planning policy guidance PPSs; the role and work of the Government Offices for the Regions (GORs) including scrutinising UDPs and LPA decision-making; call-in powers and control over appeals; the funding and remit of planning research; the allocation of social housing funding; the final say over Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs); the allocation of regeneration and transport funding and the list goes on. A key finding here is that Government, in its frustration, has tended to resort to centralist measures when faced with problems related to delivery (or lack of) and the make-up of the proposed UDC is evidence of a continuation of this trend.

6. What challenges does the spatial planning and governance agenda pose for planners and other built environment professionals, and how have they reacted to these challenges?

For planners and planning the Government hopes a new day may be dawning. Planning had started to lose its way, having been shaken by Thatcher's reforms, and it has been in danger of being fossilised in a deep-seated culture of negative regulation and quasi-judicial adversary. There is no doubt that the new planning system has thrown down the gauntlet to planners, forcing them to cast aside traditional working practices and to develop new approaches to ensure economic, environmental and social objectives are met. This is noticeable in London Thames Gateway at both the strategic and local level. In this multi-actor, multi-level context it has been argued that planners must appropriate new techniques to bring sectors 'to the table'. In the case study examined this has entailed having to: demand higher standards from the private sector to ensure that private investment delivers the stated public policy aims; acting as a 'good client' *(interview d)* for the private sector with a flexible 'plan, monitor and manage' approach *(see Woolwich*

Arsenal example); and, perhaps above all else, selling 'urban visions' across the entire institutional spectrum to galvanise key players and to build a robust consensus which can withstand the normal ebb and flow of partnerships. Traditional land-use regulation is out, 'spatial planning' is in. This will demand a major culture change. This move has been encapsulated in the elusive and fluid concept of spatial planning and it is a definite move in the right direction.

In the context of London Thames Gateway there is a clear opportunity to grasp this agenda. There is evidence that this is beginning to happen and those sectors previously neglected in planning spheres are being brought into the fold. A good example of this is the National Health Service, which has been particularly pro-active in London Thames Gateway in planning for the projected population explosion (see LTG NHS Health Service Assessment, 2003). Other sectors are less well advanced, such as education, and more work is needed to convince these sectors of the merits of being involved in planning processes *(interview d)*.

The U.K. planning system has become accustomed to longstanding mono-issue debates, many of which are played out in the media; countryside v. concrete; jobs v. nature conservation; economy v. social cohesion and so on. These simplistic debates have become cemented in silo mentalities, entrenched behind professional barriers and pigeonholed in socio-politicised classes. They have done nothing to take us any further forward, least of all towards an integrated understanding of how best to guide development. The traditional and purist planning paradigm of environment v. economy is still very much in place and these longstanding assumptions still need to be challenged.

Overall, the analysis has revealed a special relationship between spatial planning and governance. Further, the recent changes to urban governance have created a very specific context for urban planning in London and London Thames Gateway in particular. It is noticeable how this relationship has been profoundly influenced by Thatcher's reforms and it is still evolving. Planning London is no longer the sole responsibility of public authorities and its legitimacy lies across business sectors; community voices; environmental lobbyists and many more. However, the non-interventionist political ideology of the 1980s has been replaced with a much more complex, diffuse and sometimes incomprehensible form of urban governance

which displays evidence of managerialism, centralism and localism at the same time (Brooks, 1999).

Planners are tasked with delivering the objectives of the 'Sustainable Communities Plan' and other paper plans. Here, we find the link with institutional capacity. Planners and other built environment professionals are an important part of establishing effective urban governance. This study has identified how they are in a position to influence urban policy by: devising and implementing urban visions; setting the policy and legal framework; and co-ordinating and reconciling competing sectors and interests. In this institutional framework this means having to work across new spatial scales and sectors, towards a concern for the nature of space and place. All of this is positive for planners and planning and there is every likelihood that with a little repackaging and marketing planning will begin to rebuild its reputation, moving away from embedded silo mentalities and encouraging more people to enter the profession from a greater variety of professional and academic backgrounds.

As it stands, and as Sir John Egan (2004) has sought to address, there is a major shortfall of planners (not to mention many other built environment professionals) with the necessary skills. The danger is that unless the planning profession rises to the challenge, and it has yet to, others will emerge to fill the void and this is something that central Government has recognised *(interview b)* by throwing down the gauntlet to planners. Planners have become well accustomed to producing paper plans (and there are certainly many of them) but the profession's record on delivery is less convincing. This brings us full circle to the main theme of this discussion - the delivery of urban visions. This of course departs from the school of thought that the production of spatial plans is merely a process of *'mutual learning involving interaction between a multitude of actors'* (Faludi, 2000, p.299). As laudable as this objective is it does not go far enough and the objective must also be implementing these 'mutual understandings'. On this issue the key point is that unless these plans or strategies can be implemented and places made better then faith in planners and planning will diminish altogether. This will need to change if the profession is to survive and evolve.

APPENDIX A

Interviewees:

Interview a –Greater London Authority (GLA)
Interview b – Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)
Interview c – Mayor's Office
Interview d -Greater London Authority (GLA)
Interview e – Thames Gateway London Partnership (TGLP)

INTERVIEW PRO-FORMA FOR THE STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

To seek the views of interviewees on the following areas with reference to specific projects within London's Thames Gateway. The interview will cover the four following topics:

- ❑ Knowledge
- ❑ Institutional relations and integrated sectors
- ❑ Mobilising resources
- ❑ Enabling role
- ❑ Implementing strategic policy

KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES

- Main problems/qualities of area (What are the causes of urban problems? What are the symptoms and how are they displayed? What are the consequences of these problems?)
- Significance of the area, both locally and strategically (What role does the area play in the London/South East/National context?)
- What are the most important sectors in the area (e.g. industry, tourism, environment etc)
- How have these roles changed, and what role in future?

Origin and evolution of interviewee's 'vision' for regeneration and strategies to achieve it:
- What have been the main events in generating a vision for the area? (i.e. milestones)
- Interviewee's understanding of what should be transformed? (What are the priorities for this area?)
- How have these priorities been formed?

Interviewee's perception of processes and procedures involved in the regeneration of the area:
- What kind of professional and personal skills are essential to the delivery of the project/programme?
- Are these skills available and have they been used effectively?
- How the perception of the importance of these skills has evolved and why?
- What kind of instruments (e.g. legislation) are essential to the project?
- What kind of organisational structures are essential to delivery?
- Are these available and have they been used effectively?
- Have any innovative practices or structures been used? If so, what are they and how have they come about/matured?

Strategies:
- local and strategic policies of most relevance to those areas
- how have these strategies been formed
- momentum – how formed, likely to build/drop/steady?

INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

The interviewees' views on:
- Who the key players are.
- If and how has this changed over time, for the better?
- Who (people/organisations, interest groups, sectors of society) have not been involved and why?
- Interviewees' involvement in relevant networks (members of fora, steering groups etc)
- In relation to these networks, what are the purposes, who are the members with relevance for their participation in the project (e.g. by providing contacts, support and backing, forum for discussing strategies)?
- Who is in control of the overall project? And, are lines of responsibility clearly demarcated?
- How have these roles changed?
- Which are the arenas (formal and informal) where the strategic decisions for the area project have been made?

Interviewee's views on integrated sectors (e.g. housing, tourism, transport, environment, industry etc):
- Do all sectors share the same urban development vision for the area?
- Are there any competing urban visions? If so, what are they and who holds them?
- Which sectors are driving the prevailing vision (e.g. environment, economic sectors?) Why is this?
- How proactive are these sectors in joining-up thinking? Do they see it as worthwhile?
- Does the institutional framework support joined-up thinking?
- Does joined-up thinking lead to more or less complexity in planning?

MOBILISING RESOURCES AND ENABLING ROLE

The context and reasons for the involvement of the interviewees and their organisations:
- When their participation in the area began and why they decided to participate.
- What has been the form of their involvement and what has it implied in practice (in workload, money, personnel, time etc)?
- Longevity of involvement (How long do they expect to be involved? Do they want to be involved for this long?)
- What they view as their role and main mission in the project/area.
- How do they view the timing of the project in the national/regional context?

Interviewee's decision-making structures within the project:
- The arenas (boardrooms, committees, etc) in which interviewees define their own strategies regarding their participation in the project

- The main issues which have required strategic decisions and how these have been reached.

Agendas:
- How their agenda fits (in terms of focus, priorities and approach) in the context of the overall project
- Who they view as their main allies in their effort to shape the project/area
- The main areas/issues over which there have been differences (of priority, approach etc) between the interviewee's agenda and those of other participants in the project and what the conflicting views represented are
- What have been the main arenas for putting different views across?
- What, if any, mechanisms were used for arriving at a decision on contentious issues?
- The interviewee's perception of who have been the 'movers' and 'shakers' (who has played that role?)
- What has been their importance in the overall project?

Enabling role:
Interviewee's views on delivering urban regeneration:
- Whether the partnerships/networks/forums they have engaged in have enabled them to deliver their objectives for the area? (If yes, through which arenas have differences been resolved? If not, do they envisage these issues being resolved through these arenas?)
- Optimistic or pessimistic for future partnerships/networks? (Disillusioned with current partnerships or confident of future progress?)
- What (if any) are the outstanding issues?
- How have policies evolved in this respect? (Is this in response to new recent partnerships/networks or would it have happened in any case?)
- How they view their overall role within these partnerships/networks (have they led/observed the partnership?) What role should they play in their area?
- How they view the strategic-local relationship (e.g. strained, positive) in terms of implementing policy
- Where there are differences, how should these be reconciled? (through which arenas?)
- Overall views on their role (and/or organisation's) role within the current London structure.

DELIVERY VEHICLE
- How/who/where?
- Form/shape of delivery institution? (How should these institutions be represented? Should they be represented?)
- How are strategic/local views best delivered? (how should the delivery vehicle address this?)
- How powerful should the vehicle be? (e.g. Reith principle of single purpose; New Towns type powers; UDC; a combination of above).

Finally- personal urban vision for London Thames Gateway. How will LTG look and feel in twenty years from now?

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[1] The London Conference Centre Commission (2004) was set up by the Mayor to investigate potential sites for an international convention centre in London and is being led by the London Development Agency.

[2] Select Committee on Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions investigated Planning for Sustainable Housing and Communities in February 2003.

[3] The GLA Group comprises the Greater London Authority, London Development Agency and Transport for London.

[4] An all-party committee review of London Governance (including administrative boundaries) was launched in April 2004 at City Hall by the London Assembly.

[5] EU-funded project under the ESPON Programme on The Role of Cities in the Polycentric Development of Europe (2002-2004) being conducted by the Centre for Urban Development and Environmental Management in Leeds.

[6] The White Paper included the proposal for a Mayor and Assembly for London: The Government's proposals for modernising the governance of London Cm 3897.

[7] QuANGOs - Quasi-Autonomous Non-Governmental Organisation attributed to Sir Douglas Hague, was originally invented as a joke, but fell into common usage in the United Kingdom to describe the agencies produced by the growing trend of government devolving power to appointed, or self-appointed bodies.

[8] The investment programme has been jointly produced by a number of public agencies and institutions, including: NHS, Housing Corporation, English Partnerships, TG London Partnership, Transport for London, London Development Agency, Mayor of London.

[9] There are four Sub-Regional Development Frameworks being produced in conjunction with sub-regional partners as part of the implementation of the London Plan. These frameworks will also act as forerunners to the review of the London Plan.

[10] See TCPA *'A taxing question: the contribution of economic instruments to planning objectives'* by B. Evans and R. Bate (2000) for more on fiscal policy options.

[11] English Partnerships were joint applicants with Meridian Delta Ltd for the Greenwich Peninsula (Dome) planning application, and brokered a deal on behalf of Government, including the recovery of some of the costs relating to the Dome itself.

[12] See work of English Partnerships (on its website) in London. Government is currently funding EP to buy land in London for this sole purpose.