



London Recharged: Our Vision for London in 2025

Q&A

Catherine McGuinness

Great. Well, thank you very much. Thank you very much, everybody for that great presentation. We're now going to open up to questions as you've heard. And I'd like to welcome Giles French to join us on the panel. And so far, we've had two questions from the audience so that I hope that people will be thinking hard about what else they might want to ask. Let's start with that difficult question on Brexit that has been raised not directly on the report. And although actually I really plan to throw all the questions over to the panel, this one, I might just attempt a little response to myself. Of course, Brexit is another challenge and the end of the transition period is another challenge for us. And, of course, we will be losing some business as a result of leaving the EU. But this is an international connector to capital. And its and its business is not simply EU facing, it puts a greater impetus on us to work on our competitiveness going into the future, to work on those new trading arrangements, trading relationships, including developing our new relationships with our EU partners, collectively and individually. And as we look, in fact, at shared challenges going into the future, such as the challenge of recovery that we all face, such as the challenge of climate change. And indeed, I've been spending the last couple of days at the end of last week and yesterday, in a set of virtual meetings, well a set of meetings with colleagues in Brussels, from the EU, but also from individual states, looking at what we should be working on into the future. Clearly, we're at a critical stage, I will just take this platform as I would take any platform to say that a deal would be much better than no deal, so that we can start on those conversations about the future relationship, or we

can continue those conversations about the future relationship from a harmonious basis. But Brexit is just one of a number of issues. And we are absolutely confident that with London's fundamental strengths, provided we grasp our future and to take the steps that we need to make sure that London continues to develop. It is another issue amongst others, and we're very confident in London's long-term position. That's what I want to say. I don't know if any of the panel wants to come in on that or if we should move on to something more directly related to the report. I see no hands do signal members of the panel if you want to come in. And let's move on then to the question that we've had about whether we're engaging or proposing to engage with the construction industry. And I think, Martin or Nick, that is probably for you. And then I might come to Giles on that as well.

Nick Jackson

Thank you, Catherine. Yeah, I mean, the question relates to the, let me just read, engagement appetite for bringing new practice. Well, I think this sits at the heart of what we're trying to say about the environment and sustainability. We have to change or radically challenge our approach to the environment and the way we redevelop the city, if we're going to have a significant impact on climate change. I think that's very clear. And everybody understands that the opportunity to bring in some challenging targets that really address the carbon impact of buildings, both in their construction and operation, must question the way we use materials and think about materials so that we really value the use of materials. And that will inevitably mean looking at new materials, innovative materials, as well as working harder at how we can use things like timber that have a natural sequestration of carbon. There are technical challenges with that, but that is certainly something we're working hard on. And we would love to see the city promoting through the planning process with new development.

Catherine McGuinness

Thank you, did you want to come in this tool I have on that Martin or Giles?

Giles French

I'm happy to add something I mean, all I'd say is that we've had really promising initial conversations with the property and development sector who are keen to work with us on the implementation of the recommendations. So I mean, we see this report as something of a roadmap, it's going to take, you know, this isn't just about what happens immediately. This is going to take some time for us to work with the factory, deliver on its recommendation. But we've been very, very pleased with the warm reception we've had so far. And I think I can say pretty confidently that the industry shares our ambition.

Catherine McGuinness

And speaking from the perspective of the City of London Corporation as the local authority for the square mile, we'll be looking at working with the construction industry as we implement our own climate action strategy. But we're also working to look at what we need to do with our planning functions and planning policies and so on as we as we go forward. So, let me take as the next question, the question around the actions which government businesses should be taking now to ensure that this positive vision bears fruit. So who would like to have a start on that? John, would you like to come in first on that, any thoughts on what governments and businesses should be doing now to make sure this vision bears fruit

John Romeo

Catherine, this really links to one of the other questions on the extent to which people are open to new ideas. And I think it's really a reframing of the construct in which we're, we're looking at opportunity. It's only when things stop working, that you begin to appreciate the, the full, I guess, ramifications of why they stopped and how smoothly they worked previously, and the pandemic

has caused many people to rethink, we saw a switch to remote working, we saw businesses changing at speed, and we achieved more than we thought possible. So to me, the most important thing is retaining that sense of possibility of what can be achieved and to reimagine London, because we're able, we think we've shown we're able to change in a way at more speed and size than we ever thought possible before. And so retaining that sense of possibility rather than be strong is that the DNA, muscle memory kicks in to go back to how we operated before, I think we need to retain that sense of, of change. And in the report, we've tried to identify very specific areas where different stakeholders can come together to begin to drive some of that.

Catherine McGuinness

Thank you any offers from any other members of the panel.

Lisa Quest

I'd just say building on that I think the power of public private partnerships is incredibly important. And specifically kind of given the velocity of change that we're seeing and some of the new industries that we're trying to attract, making sure that we have both the formal and informal communication channels open between enterprise and government to help drive the growth agenda in a safe and innovative way, is incredibly important to both attracting and growing industry within London.

Catherine McGuinness

I wonder if the panel would agree with me during the response to the pandemic, I've seen closer partnerships than I've seen that other times, I've seen government, national and local come together with business on for example, the London transition board, which is another body looking at the response for London to the, to the virus, or indeed working together on the London Recovery Board. I think that's something we'll need to build with, build on. Do you feel that society is more open to new ideas post COVID? Anybody?

I think we do need to be innovative. I mean, I would suggest that we've seen that we've seen people have to innovate, because in order to carry on, and we will need to see that spirit continue.

John Romeo

And I think that's right at the heart of all of this and why we're excited about it and why it's not just an incremental plan, but reimagining London that vision, because there is that window, the chance to change because of that, that option. I think that goes right to the heart of why we think this is so exciting.

Martin Reed

Yes, John, thank you. Martin here. And I think that from a transport perspective, we've seen some really radical shifts. So effectively, in many ways, just accelerating trends that have been out there already improved facilities for people walking for people cycling, giving more space, more space to people, of course, some of that is temporary. It's experimental. It's related to COVID. But there are there are issues out there about closing roads to vehicles at certain times of day. They are even larger issues across the country, the way in which the rail franchising system has changed and adapted or is being adapted, the way that we understand that government is looking at flexible season tickets for people these are understand, these are issues that have been effectively pushed forward by COVID. And this is this is a great opportunity as a result to, to move forwards.

Nick Jackson

Yeah, I was just going to add, I'm sorry, Catherine, I think you know, we have all seen a radical change in our working experience. There's obviously a lot of debate about how that's going to impact on what our relationship between our home and our workplace is no doubt. You know, there are extreme views of it all being one thing or all being the other. We won't go back to the same live/work experience. It probably won't be as polarised as some people have

speculated I don't think the office is dead. I think the office is still a very important place in our lives. But I think we've probably can't learn to value it as a place that is much about education and about collaboration and about how we work with people and different generations come together, as it is simply a place that you come to so that the experiential factor of our engagement with the city and work is I think going to be much more fundamental to how we relate to the city.

Catherine McGuinness

Giles, what is the city cooperation hearing about people's wish to return to their offices?

Unknown Speaker

Yeah, I think one of the things that surprised me with when we produced the report was the determination that people do see that they have an absolute commitment to Central London, they definitely see the value in the agglomeration effects. They want to be co-located with their clients and their competitors. They see that's how they come up with new ideas and innovate. But that doesn't mean they're going to do it in exactly the same way they did before the pandemic. And I think we're definitely gonna see, and we already have seen an evolution in working practices. And we have to create the environment which enables that. I mean, there's no doubt it's been a remarkable success story, how adaptable London's have been in the last six months, for those of us who can work from home. But I think the businesses we spoke to, I think most of them see that as they have a diminishing return over time. And, you know, you can't serve certain activities with non face to face engagement. So, and I'm not so you know, dismissing the fact that things have changed. But I was struck by how much people still saw the benefits of coming together, bringing their teams together, learning from one another and innovating. And that requires, you know, close proximity.

Catherine McGuinness

Thank you. So we're asked, what short term actions should we be taking, this report is looking to the longer term, any quick recommendations on short term actions that the panel would like to see, John, what do you think?

John Romeo

Well, while the delivery of a lot of the recommendations and the impact ends up being longer term, actually, the shorter term, there's shorter term actions associated with virtually all of them. And I think on some of that you can begin to see immediate payback. So if I think about some of the innovation ecosystems, the first one, bringing together that advisory group with different cross sector representation to begin to drive that is important. There are various things in the infrastructure of working alongside the GLA, some of the emerging tech, the recommendations on the data side, some of the standards, all these things need to begin to, to build now because there's the opportunity, we think, to start to put them in place, even if ultimately the change of behaviour may come a little bit further down the road.

Catherine McGuinness

Any other short term actions Martin, Nick, thought, what would you like to see immediately?

Nick Jackson

Well, I think as you as you travel into London, you see already that there's been dramatic changes in the streetscape, you know, we've already started to redefine the relationship between the pedestrian and cyclist, the vehicles. A lot of that is temporary. But that can happen very quickly, I think. And it's created things that might have taken a decade to change have happened, you know, almost overnight, which I think is really exciting. I think we've just got to build on that. I think we've got to start looking hard at how we set, you know,

meaningful targets across the environmental spectrum for all parts of the environment.

Martin Reed

Yes, I think that's absolutely right, Nick. And I think that what what's been great is that a lot of London authorities, and the mayor and TfL have been looking to advance and introduce measures now in advance of and partly to help with people in the current situation, but also to prepare for the world post COVID. and preparing with temporary and experimental measures is a tremendous way I think of, of being ready and being more ready I think for when we can come back in a different way. And I think that the improvement in the public realm, and the space for pedestrians and cyclists is a great thing too and to be, you know, excited about for the long term future.

Catherine McGuinness

Lisa, any immediate steps from you to add to that?

Lisa Quest

I think I agree with everything that the other panellists have said that the only thing I would say is we need to think about the bodies in which this is taken forward. So there are existing bodies that exist. Catherine, you mentioned the Transition Board the Recovery Board, we need to look at who's already addressing the recommendations that we put forward, make sure we're driving the recommendations through the existing bodies, where they don't exist we need to set up a new body that's accountable for driving these forward and making sure that we're putting the right resources and collaborating with the right people to get it done. This isn't about London just telling the other boroughs or the other parts of the UK what to do. It's about working with them effectively and learning from what they've done really well as well, to take it forward together.

Catherine McGuinness

Thank you. I think that partnership point is a really important one and looking at the bodies that have been set up and making sure we don't have an alphabet soup and that we've got something that actually is coherent. And you've raised a couple of points I'd like to come on to in a minute, which is where business might play a part in this, and also how we relate to the rest of the country. A couple of questions have been asked. Giles, I just want to check quickly with you. Is there anything else you would add about short term action and anything to observe on from what we're doing at the City Corporation?

Giles French

I mean, only that I know exactly what the other's have said. I think it's about leveraging the existing structures to move quickly. I mean, you'll see in the report, some of the recommendations are about scaling, and accelerating existing initiatives. And you know, we don't, we're not precious about that, there's lots of excellent work going on across London about skills training, about digital skills about SDN inclusion, I think the real difference is, is this alignment between public and private sector, and getting on with things and perhaps some of the old impediments, which existed, people are more likely to move out of the way. And I think that's what we would really encourage.

Catherine McGuinness

Thank you. Let's come on to the question of what role business can play in helping us achieve the aims of this report? And Giles since you're right on my screen, why don't I come to you first on that question.

Giles French

And yeah, I mean, I mean, absolutely. As John and Lisa said in the presentation previously, I mean, we are capable of delivering some of this on our own, but we've designed the report very deliberately, we need others to participate and help us and business is crucial for that. I mean, one of the things we saw,

particularly when we were addressing how do we help the SME community develop and build their resilience in future, a lot of the things we heard, based on smaller businesses and larger businesses was a desire and willingness to work more closely, to share access to share ideas and training. And I think so we would be wanting to work with businesses from a range of sizes to help implement some of those recommendations pretty quickly. And we've had some private discussions already. And I think a lot of businesses in the City and Central London are keen to play their part.

Catherine McGuinness

Lisa, any thoughts on how business can play a role here

Lisa Quest

I think business will play a critical role here, as Giles said. And I think the partnerships that the government, as we've said, and also working to foster and create that innovative growth, start-up mentality is really important. So we're looking at industries of the future, how can London attract and retain the best and the brightest, both companies and individuals. And I think the companies that we attract here will be critical to that.

Catherine McGuinness

Thank you, John, anything to add to that?

John Romeo

No, nothing to add

Catherine McGuinness

Martin, or Nick, do you have any thoughts here?

Nick Jackson

There's a real opportunity to try and try and create connections between, you know, large, established businesses and the start-up businesses and, you know, build those sort of linkages that allow them to collaborate. And some of that is a little bit of what we're thinking about in terms of the rethinking of what the retail environment might be how to use some of those spaces, as a way of curating and supporting those small, medium sized businesses, that want to come and be part of London or be part of the City.

Catherine McGuinness

Thank you. And we've talked about our aspiration to partner with other parts of the UK. And we have a question around how we how we see London success helping other UK cities, and how we can work together. Who would like to take a first shot at this question? Thank you, John.

John Romeo

I guess we have two specific areas that come into mind which I mentioned in the presentation was the Lord Mayor, obviously promotes London but often beyond on overseas trade missions, then eventually, when he's allowed to travel again, those are going in person rather than virtual, and bringing other cities along on some of those trade missions is a specific recommendation, we would suggest that you promote London as a gateway where we were bringing the whole of the UK. Another, the second area we had flagged in there was Mayors from other large cities are facing very similar issues. And is there a way to begin to convene them to share some of the thinking in the best practice on policy topics on common issues that they're fighting, and that could even materialise into recommendations to the government on areas like some elements of funding allocation where the government decides how to do that, rather than not necessarily disagreeing with the amount but thinking of an alternative way to do that, with the cities come together they may be able to come to a better solution. That works for all.

Catherine McGuinness

Thank you, Giles, any thoughts?

Giles French

I mean, this crisis has actually sort of seen a resurgence of sort of civic leadership around the UK. And I think, from the work we've done previously, we already know that actually, other parts of the country, you see London as contributing to their success as long as that partnership and relationship is approached in the right way. And I think, you know, this is an opportunity for us to make the case more clearly that London success is not at the expense of the rest of the country, but also that London does have a responsibility to help the rest of the country with its recovery. And again, something which struck me when we were interviewing businesses for the report, time and again unprompted business leaders were saying that, and I think there is a real ambition and commitment from business leaders to make sure that the recovery is UK wide and not, not just London alone, that is in our interest. And I think that the report provides a blueprint, which is valuable for any major urban centre, we've got lots to share with others, but we've also got a lot to learn from them as well.

Catherine McGuinness

So, Martin, Nick, or Lisa, do you want to raise your hand if you'd like to come in, and I will bring you bring you in? Martin I see that there is I see no hands raised, come back later. If you want to commit to coming on that one. I'd like to move on to something which is actually really exercising me. And it's the question from Tony Travers. How should the City of London and other public and private institutions work to re-establish the physical presence of business activity and their employees in central London in the medium term future? Is there a risk of significant productivity loss, if London spreads out into a less concentrated version of a metropolis, and if a return to a concentrated downtown is a

desired outcome, what policy steps will be required? And I have to say, I'm very concerned in the short term about the lack of footfall that we're seeing in our square mile or indeed in the central activity zone. And what that means for some of the businesses that provide the vibrancy on the street, the arts and cultural organisations, the bodies, which rely so much on footfall to thrive, what are the implications of this for the long term? And what should we be doing about it? So thank you, Tony, for asking that really significant question. And I need to start with Arup this time. Martin, do you want to come in first?

Martin Reed

Yes, thanks very much, Catherine. I think there was another question about the 15 minute city. And I think that there's a lot to be said for the way in which our lives have changed in the short term, where we haven't been able to be in the city, and we haven't been able to work in, in, in the downtown area. And that's, that's been great. And I think that a lot of people are thinking a bit more about local travel, walking and cycling, which is, which has been really good for health and I hope, help some of the well being issues I know people have been struggling with. But of course, in the longer term, you know, I think that being in the downtown has the agglomeration benefits that John and others have mentioned, which is which is really critical. And I think perhaps that there is to an extent, without wishing it to be too much of a sort of a cop out, there is an to an extent, there is a degree of flexibility here where we understand that, that we've talked about flexible season tickets, we talked about the way in which some people, you know, will be able to work from home a little bit more or, but of course, wanting to be in the city, those long term agglomeration benefits means that the being in the city as much, you know, is a very, very good thing for people for the city. for everybody. I think.

Nick Jackson

I think I would add to that, that whilst there is a, I think, a very strong desire to, to meet together to collaborate people, I think we all in the periods when we

haven't been able to come into the city into central London, have missed that opportunity to engage, there is no replacement for the face to face interaction. That's the sort of spark of creativity it's the spark of innovation. That doesn't happen in the same way over the digital process, however, great it has proven to be. And that will always be a very powerful draw. But there is certainly going to be a rebalancing as a reassessment. And I think that for the quality of experience and the environmental experience that we expect, both from when we go to work, and when we're not in the sort of, you know, the urban environment is going to be, you know, really important, otherwise it won't have that cohesive draw. And that is both just what you experienced when you're walking down the street, but it also is about how we have to remember how valuable the cultural draw is. Entertainment, the social interaction that comes around that because that drives a huge amount of the 24-7, part of the life of the city. And it is that life of vibrancy of the city, that for, you know, 300 years 400 years has made the city work that that is not going to change overnight simply because of the pandemic. But we are going to find it will take time to bring people back and that needs positive sort of catalysts and activity. And a lot of support from government and local authorities. I think

Giles French

I just had, I think Tony also asked about productivity. And I think, sorry to repeat what I said earlier about the value the businesses still place on sort of coming together and the agglomeration, and I think what you might see is that some of those activities in firms, which don't actually require you to be sort of, you know, five days a week, nine to five at your desk may happen more remotely with people working from home for a portion of their time. And although I expect it slightly overdone, the idea that people will work from home full time, all the time, in perhaps some of the numbers which people suggest, the real sort of added value, the creativity, the new ideas, the new products and services the technological option that will still happen when people come together. And I think you know, that's so I think that sort of productivity question,

you will still see the benefit of agglomeration effects taking place in central London but that will be accompanied by an evolution with the way that large businesses and small have their entire workforce deployed.

Catherine McGuinness

John, Lisa, do you have anything to add on this one? John?

John Romeo

I mean, I, I guess we've thought about this a little bit in three steps. I don't think it happens overnight. First is just needing to renew confidence in to that city centre. Right. And that's at an individual level and institution level. It's addressing some of the gaps Nick and Martin talked about on the infrastructure side. Then there's a second step, which is that new normal for prosperity, which is some of the ecosystems, we talked about, the workspaces, some of those changes that begin to get things driving, and that's both on the business side, but equally on the arts, you need that. And then the third step becomes that sort of future proofing, if you like, and where we go from here, some of those bigger infrastructure upgrades that a fairer and more inclusive system that the laying that foundation for much longer term growth. And it links to one of the comments earlier on the short term versus long term. I think we've got to resist a little bit the focus on expecting to fix this tomorrow. If you look at Crossrail, you look at the extension to the Jubilee line, some of these really positive developments, they were they were 50 years in the planning and the making. And yes, we want some of the short term impact, but we can't take our eye off the ball on some of those longer term planning and investments that are going to be able to transform the city in the future.

Catherine McGuinness

Lisa, do you want to come in?

Lisa Quest

I think the other panellists have summarised it very well, but I would I would double down because creativity, collaboration, I don't think those go away. And I don't think we moved to a digital world. So I think the steps that Giles laid out, and the points Nick and Martin, are very well made.

Catherine McGuinness

And it's definitely something that we're hearing from the businesses that we're talking to a real wish to get people back into the centre to get exactly that so that the creative sparks can fly and corporate spirit can be developed. And Stewart Lipton makes an important point in the chats that the city is a wonderful place but will need to work, even harder, will need to be even better to attract people from their homes. Stewart, completely agree and we will be focusing on making sure that the square mile is as attractive a place as it possibly can be. And we'll be working here across the range of our activities, including we are planning to look at that. I'd like to come on to some of the other questions. There are a host of questions around planning and transport, which I'll come to in a minute. Let me first of all, take a question further question about collaboration and learning, I suppose. And from Richard Byrd, we've mentioned the elite universities, but there are also a multiplicity of innovative small specialised institutions in research and training. How do we bring the broad sweep of HE and FE into the effort and of course this is something which is replicated across the UK, we have wonderful Centres of Excellence across the UK with our great universities. Anybody wish to comment on the on the HE and FE sector? Lisa would you like to come in on that one,

Lisa Quest

Catherine, I think you already started saying we have broad Centres of Excellence across the country. And I think making sure that we're linking up with where we have Centres of Excellence and creating that positive feedback loop between what is happening in academia, what is happening in HE and FE, and translating that into business, making sure we have the feedback loop

between private equity, venture capitals, start-up funding, so that these businesses are then able to establish a route and grow in the UK supported by a safe innovative regulatory environment that allows them to thrive. And so to me that that point is about all of these things come together. And this isn't just about elite universities, this is about creating an entire academic system that develops the right specialists to feed the right industry and supported by the right finance, capital and regulatory environment that helps them grow. And that then also brings in the right people into the UK as well. So we need to make sure that the immigration system is aligned and allows specialists to come in to these academic institutions, remain in the country and then and then grow and thrive and build their businesses here.

Catherine McGuinness

Great, thank you very much. Anybody wish to add at all to that?

Nick Jackson

I mean, I think that's a really interesting question, because I think it relates to the question Tony Travers asked earlier, if you look at how the knowledge quarter and the sort of fringe running along Euston Road from Kings Cross, the Crick, through to Welcome and so on how that has developed. And, you know, a lot of that has to do with the triangle of rail routes up to Cambridge into Oxford. It's building on the tech businesses that are related both to the relationship to the educational institutions, and the businesses that want to be located there. And it's that sort of symbiotic relationship with them. That is what comes together when you have a city like London, and I think that is really central to both for the large organisations, large businesses, large education institutions, but then all the smaller, innovative, you know, much more agile organisations that thrive off that really. And it's the ecosystem that makes up the city in that sense, that's really interesting. I think education, is we hugely undervalue the power of education, both locally but also on a global level, what a draw it is to connect.

Catherine McGuinness

Great, thank you very much. Anyone else on that? In that case, I'd like to move on to another question about sustainability. We've got a question saying that it was great to hear about the focus of on sustainability in the report. And there's a nexus between regulatory leavers, industry leadership and talent in finding new and better ways to deliver world leading action. On the roadmap, what are the three most important contributors by way of action to make this a reality? Would anybody like to offer their thoughts on this? Nick, you're on my screen.

Giles French

I don't mind kicking off?

Giles French

This is a question from Sophia, who was a contributor to the report. Thank you, Sophia. And I think that we will think opportunity for London and the UK over the next twelve months is around COP26 next year, the big sustainability conference up in Glasgow, but also the Green Horizon Summit that the corporation is working on with the government and the Bank of England, I mean, that's a real opportunity for the UK to show global leadership, and commitment to sustainable investment. And ultimately, all of these ambitions and targets have to be financed. And there is a huge desire and commitment from business to drive capital towards sustainable investment. And I think this period could be a real moment to realise those ambitions, because we need to invest, both because of economic situation, but also because of our climate commitment. And I think you know, that this is a sort of potential for everything to align at the right time, and for London and the rest of the UK to really show the way not just domestically, but globally.

Nick Jackson

I think it's a challenge to come up with what are the three things you put at the start of trying to address climate change? I mean, as a business at Arup, we have referred to the UN SDGs as a sort of fundamental reference point that we gauge, almost all our work against as a sort of central measure, in a way. I think, fundamentally, one has to look at London to provide leadership. I think this is a place where London can connect with other cities across the UK, to create an aligned approach to fundamentally how we change our attitude to the environment, and it has to be led by the local authorities, I think in the government and I think the thing at the centre of it all is carbon. We can't talk about carbon enough and the impact of what we do on the environment in terms of its carbon.

Catherine McGuinness

Thank you. Anyone else wish to come in on that from the panel?

John Romeo

Should I grab that at a, I guess, three specific things

[Dog barking] Give me one second.

Catherine McGuinness

Just proving the importance of biodiversity I think here

Martin Reed

From a transport perspective, Catherine, if I may, just need to just briefly to say, of course, there's a there's a well known quote by Jan Gehl who said that an endless number of green buildings don't make a sustainable city. And while that's, you know, absolutely, I hope not intended to, from Jan Gehl, to denigrate any of the great work that Nick and colleagues have done, and do, there is an importance in placing transport there in that in that low carbon environment. Hence, I think, you know, walking and cycling as very, very low carbon activities to improve the role in which, you know, not just health and

well being but also our contribution to sustainability. And, and central London has seen that low car parking, very high levels of cycle parking, and, and a very strong mayoral strategy towards increasing walking and cycling.

Catherine McGuinness

Thank you. John.

John Romeo

I'm sorry for the interruption. I guess on top of what the others have said three things that I would stress, I think we have an opportunity to build on the momentum from taking COP26, and the Green Horizons Summit that Giles has mentioned. One is defining and endorsing sustainability targets. Second is really incentivizing business to improve their sustainability. And then the third, again, that the city can run is helping to identify areas for shared investment. And those three together, just practical things we can put on to particularly on to businesses, but any of the organisations operating to help continue to drive this forward.

Catherine McGuinness

Thank you. I'd like to ask the question around a little bit further about transport, there is a question in the Q&A around how we get the... increasing walking and cycling and so on is great, but we won't deliver the same volume of people into the centre. How does that marry? How do we marry that sort of aspiration with our transport approach with the footfall that we need in our central activities own if it's going to remain a strong hub as it's been in the past? Any thoughts on transport, on the conundrums here?

Martin Reed

Yes, Catherine, thanks, I'll be happy to say a few words on the City, the City's own transport strategy, something like putting the needs of people first, when

designing when designing streets and people, you know, generally in the centre of London, they walk and they're able to cycle and those are very, you know, very dense modes of transport. And they can be, allowing for COVID, thinking about perhaps more of a COVID, post COVID situation. So I think that there to an extent, I think that there really is a joined up strategy, I think the mayor's transport strategy for healthy streets for promoting walking and cycling is helpful and does work. I know, there's a lot of pressure and there has been, of course, on the subterranean public transport and the rail based public transport. And of course, we have to remember that the Crossrail will open, I think the first half of 2022 is when that's now due. And that will, you know, that will provide a massive amount of extra capacity for when people think that the tube lines that they historically remember are very busy then of course, Crossrail will make, or the Elizabeth Line as it will be, will make a huge amount of difference. So I think that there that there is a strategy in place. And I think that there are other opportunities, and we should be open to those things. Road user charging, for example, the way in which the congestion zone works and the ultra low emission zone. But perhaps there is a change, for longer term change for an opportunity for road user charging, again, to think about the way in which central London can place people first and the movement of people before the modes of transport, before vehicles.

Catherine McGuinness

Yes, thank you. Any other thoughts from the panel? Raise your hand if there's anything you'd like to ask. Yes, Lisa.

Lisa Quest

I think I agree with all of Martin's very practical suggestions on kind of what specifically needs to change. I think ultimately, this comes back to the first point John made around the reopening and making people feel safe. So I do think it needs to be combined with effective government communications around how the disease is spread, in which circumstances give us some fact-

base upon which to make those decisions to make commuters feel safe in their journey into the city. So I agree with all those changes. But I think we also coupled with effective promotion from the government as well.

Catherine McGuinness

Thank you. Any other offerings from the panel? I'd like to group a few of the questions on planning and we have a question. The specific question around the city where we have a very small residential population. And we talk about making spaces more flexible. Do we see the introduction of live/work spaces for innovative start-ups a possibility or do land values work against that? I'd like to widen that out a bit. And of course, there is the emerging white paper 'Planning for the future'. How do the panellists envisage the London Recharged report aligning with that white paper? And how can the aspirations of the respective reports work together to achieve the targets? And then there is also a question from Georgina from Hackney Council, saying that they were seeing the increasing creep of blue chip businesses, business activity into Shoreditch and further up into the borough. And how do we see demands for office floorspace changing following COVID-19 and Brexit? So there's three actually probably completely diverse questions. Probably unfair to throw them at you all at once. But I'm afraid I'm going to go to Arup first of all, to ask for thoughts on that. Nick, do you want to come in first?

Catherine McGuinness

And we talk about making spaces more flexible. And how Yes, what do we see the introduction of live workspaces for innovative start-ups the possibility or do land values work against that. I'd like to widen that out a bit. And of course, there is the emerging white paper planning for the future. How do the panellists envisage the London recharged report aligning with that white paper? And how can the aspirations of the respective reports work together to achieve the targets? And then there is also a question from Georgina from Hackney Council, saying that they see the worsening of the increasing creep of blue

chip businesses business activity into shortage and further up into the bearer. And how do we see demands for office floorspace changing following COVID-19 and Brexit? So these are three actually probably completely diverse questions. Probably unfair to throw them at you all at once. And but I'm pretty good to go to Eric, first of all, to ask her thoughts on that. Nick, do you want to come in first?

John Romeo

Yeah, well, I'll take two of those points. I think Hackney is quite an interesting question. There's sort of what the migration or the spread of some blue chip businesses toward Shoreditch and so on, part of that is to do I suspect with availability of certain types of building stock that suit the size of those businesses and so on, because historically, you would say that sort of, as you move to the fringes of the city, you find smaller, more agile space that you may be able to lease on different sort of terms from maybe the larger properties in the centre. I think the other thing is to Hackney's credit, I would say, is actually it's the experience, it's the interest in the diversity of what Shoreditch or Commercial Road has been able to offer, that attracts those businesses, their staff want to be there, it's a funky place to be, you know, as London is made up, you know, the classic Abercrombie plan of London made up of the villages, and each village has its identity is very strong point. And the city is one of those villages in a way. So I think that is that will continue, the issue about what will change to the office environment, I think there's a lot of questions around densification. Are we going to keep chasing very, very high density office space? Or actually are we going to rethink what that workplace looks like? I don't think that'll necessarily change the space take, I think it'll change the balance of how we use our workplace. And it comes back to the whole sense of well, being around the workplace we'll want different things from the space we go to work for. And we go there to collaborate, we go there to meet cross generational to teach, to train to learn, as well as to do our business. So I think that is interesting. And housing is housing is a question I throw back in a way to the city, I think it's

for the city to influence and shape the city isn't one thing, it has, it's very the square mile in the core. But there's a lot of other parts to the city that can very well lend themselves to live/work and that mix of living and working that we're all experiencing.

Catherine McGuinness

Thank you. Who else would like to come in on that question, Martin?

Martin Reed

Thanks, Catherine. I think it's very early days, I think for the planning white paper. And there's a lot of detail in there that we still will still need to see more of, for example, there's barely any mention of transport in the planning white paper, which is certainly very, very concerning, when you think about the clear implications that transport has on large schemes. I think that the planning white paper also has a large focus on housing at the moment. So developing, developing that further to commercial spaces is very important, too. And I think we've I think we'd like to see more detail on what that might mean. I think there's there is a an implication, I think of additional resource that would need to be required to manage the speeding up of the way in which that planning process, that planning system would work and democratic accountability. So I think more detail needs to be seen on that one.

Catherine McGuinness

Any other comments from anybody?

Giles French

The thing that I that, Catherine is that the point which Nick was making that I think you'll see, I don't think it's going to be as simple as maybe businesses taking less space in future, I think it might be about how they use that space, how it's designed, how they might bring in other businesses or creative businesses into the same space. It feels like people are seeing this as a way of

evolving, how they operate, and how they structure their business and the environment in which they operate. And it's quite difficult for any of us to know sitting here today exactly what that will look like. But I don't think it's as, it's going to be as simple as either, you know, the same amount of spaces where it's taken in the same way or not. I think it's going to be a blended model in future.

Catherine McGuinness

What I'm going to do in about five minutes time is ask you to pick a question that I haven't asked from the Q&A, from the questions that have been proposed, either pick a question that I haven't passed on from there, or pick a question that you wish you'd been asked. And I'll come to each of you in a few minutes asking for your final thoughts, perhaps along those, those lines. So, SMEs, we've talked about the importance of SMEs for the future and the importance of building resilience for SMEs. Of course, there is a challenge for SMEs in the short term, particularly those businesses that depend on footfall to thrive. And I think probably, this report looks to the to the next stage, and rather than to what we should be doing in the short term as supporting SMEs, but I don't know, Giles perhaps you want to come in and talk a little bit about the shorter term.

Giles French

Yeah, thank you, Catherine. And I think there's sort of probably a couple of things to say, one this report was very deliberately an attempt to look a little bit further ahead. Because we're conscious that you know most businesses and institutions in London were having to focus on the near term crisis we are facing. So that was a very deliberate, we are talking about a year or two out, 2025. But at the same time, of course, we understand a lot of businesses, particularly in a retail, hospitality, it is an extremely difficult time, and no one wants to see the centre of London, decimated by the next six months. It's very difficult to say precisely what we can do. But some of the points that people have raised about how do we, when public health enables it, that we can

bring people back into the centre, whether that's for, you know, arts and cultural engagement, as well as workplace. You know, I think all of that will help. But undoubtedly, it needs a range of measures to support in the short term as we see the emergence of the medium term vision that we've articulated this morning. But we don't underestimate how difficult that is.

Catherine McGuinness

Any other thoughts from the panel on SMEs? Okay, are people ready to give us some questions that they wish they'd been asked? Lisa, why don't I go to you first. You're nodding. Thank you,

Lisa Quest

Thank you. So there was a question in the chat around government support? And how long will that continue? And I think, you know, obviously, over the past six months, there's been unprecedented government intervention into the economy and into our personal lives, I think through C bills, B bills, Eat Our to Help Out, CJRS, the initial interventions were necessarily blunt, given the timescales that we saw, I think now government is very proactively looking at what are the future areas that will require support, what will happen if we end the government schemes now or evolve those over the long period to support new kinds of interventions that will be required. As the interventions become more targeted either by region, or by sector or by or by type of population, I think we'll see the government start to act in a in a more specific manner than they have previously and aligned to the restrictions that citizens are facing in business and the challenges that businesses are facing in each area. So to answer the question directly, I don't see this as a short term government intervention. And I think that the government will continue to act over the long term, but that will happen in a much more targeted and necessarily focused area than it has previously and it won't necessarily happen on the broad national scales that we have seen. And so what we're looking to do, and what we're looking for government to do as we evolve that is make sure that we're

helping businesses and communities that need the help most and we're making sure that those that are most vulnerable are protected and supported both from a personal wellbeing perspective, from a health perspective, but also from an economic perspective. So saving lives, but also kind of saving the livelihoods of people that are working in the UK.

Catherine McGuinness

Thank you, who would like to come in next? Nick, what would your question be that you have?

John Romeo

Interesting, interesting end to our conversation. I would like to sort of talk I think if we'd been asked about how do you put this into action? And I think the question is one about the sort of leadership from local governments, you know I think you have enough opportunity with an agility at the local level that maybe doesn't exist at national level. But I think it needs an alliance across London between boroughs. Also an alliance with the key stakeholders in the built environment, in the urban environment. So that's both the sort of institutional stakeholders, but also the businesses to actually come together and set the you know, really set some very ambitious targets and commit to achieving them in terms of changing the city. And we, you know, we have a once in a lifetime opportunity to really reset our relationship to the urban environment that can transform, you know, London for our children and their children and beyond.

Catherine McGuinness

Thank you. And it's been good to see, as I mentioned earlier, it's been good to see through this pandemic, the way the boroughs have come together and the way the London government's tiers have come together, and indeed have been working with business. And I think you're right, that that's something we need to continue building on. And in answer to the question from Waltham

Forest, in the Q&As, I think there probably isn't a tension between people working, staying in the boroughs and coming into the central activities. And we need to look at different ways of using our great city. And I think that we should view it as just a different way of working in the city rather than a competition, I would suggest. Interestingly, before we got into the pandemic, I was talking to the leader, I was visiting the leader at Kingston, who was saying that it could be a benefit to the city if people work from home a couple of days a week and use their own boroughs, and then came in on other days. And I think what we've seen with the benefits of the flexible, well, the ability, we all now have to work remotely, depending on the business we're in, if we can carry that on, if we can see something that will work really well, you know, across borough boundaries.

Nick Jackson

Absolutely. I think that's interesting.

Catherine McGuinness

Okay, and actually, on our climate action strategy, we're also writing out to all the boroughs, where people have many really good initiatives on foot just to talk about how we can compliment how our strategy can fit in with others, I do think putting that puzzle together will be really key. So John, do you want to come in with what you wish you'd been asked?

John Romeo

In one, a really important area that underlines underlies a lot of the recommendations we haven't really touched on is the diversity lens. And I think that becomes really important in terms of shaping where we're trying to get to, in terms of the ideas on a jobs fair, or really figuring out how to bring, bring new talent into the workforce that may not have had these opportunities, some of the diversity targets and teaching of digital skills. And to get that right, it's going to require involvement from all the different stakeholders around us and the

business, the public policy side and the City of London using some of its convening power and influence to help really drive this but I think that becomes really important to London being able to fulfil its potential.

Catherine McGuinness

Thank you for raising that. That's a really important point. And I'm glad you picked up on it. So, Giles.

Giles French

I think the only thing I was going to add is, I think one of the things you'll see in the report is there's a real opportunity around how we use data, and how the acceleration in people using technology to access public services has really increased. And I think that there's potentially some really quite exciting short to medium term areas we could look at so that London citizens are sort of accessing both, you know, commercial goods, but also their public services and a more efficient and more data driven way. And I think that could be, you know, a potential real long term win for all of us.

Catherine McGuinness

Thank you. And Martin.

Martin Reed

Thanks, Catherine. I think one of the things that we haven't really talked about has been freight and the consolidation of freight and, and making that more environmentally cleaner and sustainable. Nick mentioned, mentioned electric vehicles earlier. And I think it would be great to see a greater commitment across London to understanding freight and to make that to improve the way that it works both for the for the drivers as well as for the for the people in the city too, and the city with a lowercase C. We know that the city with an uppercase C has already been looking at that and consolidation centres, developers in the city, AXA, British Land and others have been looking at the

detail of this, but it's something that we're seeing across London, we know that the leader of Westminster city council has been talking about it as well. And I'd like to see that sort of considered more holistically across London and across the sort of Central inner London boroughs.

Catherine McGuinness

Thank you very much. I think that's another great point. And there's one big asset that I think is underused these days, but it was used for years and years by London to get around. And that is our river. And I think looking at greater use of our river for deliveries is something, and indeed passenger use, is something that we're really keen to explore with partners, indeed, already are exploring in the context of some developments out in East London, of which consolidating our three wholesale food markets is just a small part. So look, this has been a really great discussion. It's been really broad ranging, there's a lot more we could cover, whether it's the challenging question in the chat box around the amount of energy that we're using running servers for our virtual lives these days, and how do we reconcile that with sustainability? Really interesting question. A number of other really good points have been made there. And I'm very sorry that we haven't been able to tackle all of them. But I think it just shows how stimulating this report has been, and how much how much there is to explore as we take the recommendations forward. So I just like to say thank you very much to everybody who's joined us this morning for this launch. I'd like to thank you all for your excellent questions. And my apologies to those whose questions I didn't get round to posing. Thank you so much to our panel, for taking us through the report's findings. And, and most importantly, the recommendations. And thank you for your very thought provoking your views in response to the questions. So everybody will soon be receiving a link to the report. And I really encourage you to share it through your networks. The coming months are undoubtedly going to continue to be challenging for all of us. But it's also very clear as we look to the future that we have opportunities, opportunities to build on the positive changes accelerated by the pandemic,

opportunities to make London an undisputed place to innovate and collaborate, and opportunities to support the economic recovery across the UK. So we really look forward to working out with our London and UK partners to ensure that we emerge from this difficult period better and stronger than ever. The city with its long history has seen disasters come and go and has come out of them better. This current challenging situation is I think, another opportunity for us to show that to show that spirit, as I say, working, working together with our partners. So thank you all very, very much ending four minutes early, so you have time for a cup of tea before your before your next meeting. And please keep in touch and let us have any feedback. And thanks once again to everybody who worked on this report. Thank you