

London Research Challenges

Summary

1. This proposal calls for London HEIs to set themselves **research challenges** related directly to the Mayoral objectives for London.

The Concept

2. Many HEIs in London already contribute to meeting the Mayor's strategies through the research they do. However, in preliminary discussions with HEIs and stakeholders it was felt that more could be done. In looking at some of the obstacles to engagement with the strategies it was hypothesized that whilst the strategies are drafted in terms of *aspirations* and targets, the knowledge base is driven by *research problems* and challenges.
3. In looking through the strategies we pondered whether the documents needed to be 'translated' from one (aspirations) into the other (research questions).
4. A third element emerged. Was it, in fact, possible to meet all of the Mayoral goals using just the London knowledge base? i.e. do London HEIs possess the relevant centres of excellence in all the areas that the Mayoral strategies cover? Again, we concluded that it would be wise to go through the strategies with this question in mind.
5. In preliminary discussions with HEIs and Mayoral officials a **four stage** framework emerged; a) identify the key Mayoral strategies and objectives; b) scrutinize these from a HE research question perspective; c) ascertain which aspirations can be met by existing research excellence and which would require partnerships outside London; d) publish and promote these findings directly to the London research base.
6. We can also envisage follow-up activities that might be required to develop research proposals collaboratively.
7. *Outcomes*. In so doing we reason that London HEIs would readily find research questions that were of interest to them and be motivated to seek external funding to address them. If this were possible then all sides in the initiative would seem to win: The Mayor has his aspirations progressed; London HEIs are awarded research funding; and London benefits from the subsequent discoveries/innovations (we take as granted that the goal set in out in the Mayoral strategies are, indeed, in the best interests of London and Londoners).
8. The following two sections set out: a) the Mayoral Strategies of immediate relevance; and b) a methodology for 'translating' them into research questions.

Mayoral Strategies

9. The Mayor currently has responsibility for twelve statutory strategies. These are briefly summarized below:
- a) *The London Plan*. The London Plan is the name given to the Mayor's spatial development strategy. It sets out an integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of the capital over the next 20-25 years <http://www.london.gov.uk/shaping-london/london-plan/strategy/>. The examination in public can be found here: <http://www.london.gov.uk/london-plan-eip>.
 - b) *The Mayor's Transport Strategy* (MTS, May 2010) is a statutory document, developed alongside the London Plan and Economic Development Strategy as part of a strategic policy framework to support and shape the economic and social development of London over the next 20 years. The MTS identified six goals for the strategy: to support economic development and population growth; enhance the quality of life for all Londoners; improve the safety and security of all Londoners; improve transport opportunities for all Londoners; reduce transport's contribution to climate change and improve its resilience; and support delivery of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and its legacy <http://www.london.gov.uk/publication/mayors-transport-strategy>
 - c) *The Economic Development Strategy* (EDS, May 2010) sets out intentions to promote London internationally, to keep our business environment competitive and to give all Londoners the opportunity to share in this success. It has five main objectives: i) to promote London as the world capital of business, visitor destination, and leading international centre of learning and creativity; ii) to ensure that London has the most competitive business environment; iii) to make London one of the world's leading low carbon capitals by 2025 and a global leader in carbon finance; iv) to give all Londoners the opportunity to take part in London's economic success, access sustainable employment and progress in their careers; and v) to attract the investment in infrastructure and regeneration which London needs, to maximise the benefits from this investment and in particular from the opportunity created by the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and their legacy. There are cross-cutting themes which include, health inequality, innovation and climate change. <http://www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/mayor/publications/business-and-economy/eds>
 - d) *The London Housing Strategy* (Feb, 2010) has three main aims: i) Raising aspirations, promoting opportunity - to promote opportunity and a real choice of homes for all Londoners, in a range of tenures that meets their needs at a price they can afford; to deliver the First Steps housing programme that will enable many more Londoners to become homeowners, and to develop initiatives to help existing homeowners at risk of repossession and homelessness; and to provide many more affordable rented homes and ensure that social renting provides an opportunity to foster aspirations and gives support to those who need it; to promote a vibrant and attractive private rented sector to support London's economic vitality. ii) Improving homes, transforming

neighbourhoods - to promote high quality design 21st century homes that will match London's rich architectural heritage; to deliver higher environmental standards for all London's homes and neighbourhoods in the new homes we build, our existing homes and the areas that surround them; to promote successful, strong and mixed communities in which people are proud to live; and to deliver and maintain a reduction in the number of long term empty and derelict buildings iii) Maximising delivery, optimising value for money – to develop, through the HCA, new partnerships and better approaches to providing homes in successful communities; and to work with London's boroughs to ensure the effective local delivery of our shared aims.
<http://www.london.gov.uk/publication/london-housing-strategy>

- e) *The London Cultural Strategy* (Cultural Metropolis, December 2010) sets out the Mayor's vision, priorities and recommendations for how to strengthen the cultural life of Londoners across the capital: i) Maintaining London's position as a world city for culture; ii) Widening the reach to excellence (ensuring that the city's inhabitants have access to high quality local cultural services); iii) Education, skills and careers (there remain a significant section of young people who do not access cultural opportunities; iv) Infrastructure, environment and the public realm (through planning and investment the Mayor will work with partners to maximise the opportunities for culture to generate employment and enterprise in priority areas); v) Culture and London in 2012 (in addition to the official Cultural Olympiad projects, plans are being developed to take place across the capital that will animate spaces and buildings with festivals, productions, exhibitions and cultural activities of every form. <http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/art-culture/cultural-metropolis>
- f) *The London Health Inequalities Strategy* (April 2010) has five objectives: i) empowering individuals and communities; ii) equitable access to high quality health and social care services; iii) income inequality and health; iv) health, work and well-being; and v) and healthy places.
<http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/LondonHealthInequalitiesStrategy.pdf>

Environmental Strategies

- g) The Mayor's draft [climate change adaptation strategy](#) sets out how London can reduce its carbon emissions. The Draft strategy identifies the key risks to London and Londoners and it proposes a range of actions to manage them including: by 2025 London will have the leading low carbon market share of any global city in financing, carbon trading, business, consulting and legal services, architecture and design, engineering and the creative industries; ii) by 2025 London will have the largest number of effective low carbon innovation clusters of any UK city.
- h) [The Mayor's draft climate change mitigation and energy strategy](#) sets out how London can reduce its carbon emissions. The strategy outlines practical schemes such as using less energy in buildings and encouraging low emission transport.

- i) [The Mayor's Draft Air Quality Strategy](#) This Strategy sets out a framework for delivering improvements to London's air quality and includes measures aimed at reducing emissions from transport, homes, offices and new developments, as well as raising awareness of air quality issues.
- j) The Mayor's draft [London Water Strategy](#), published for consultation, sets out proposals for managing London's water resources. i) achieve the best UK industry standard for leakage by 2035; iii) the introduction of water metering throughout London by 2015, and all blocks of flats by 2020; iv) all new homes to meet the highest level of the Code for Sustainable Homes for water consumption; v) the need for existing homes to become more water efficient; vi) raise awareness of the benefits of water efficiency, including the possible savings that householders can achieve through their water and energy bills; vii) raise awareness of the high quality of London's tap water, the contribution of bottled water to climate change, and the benefits of drinking water to health and wellbeing; viii) encourage green roofs, rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling and sustainable drainage through planning policies in his new London Plan; ix) create a strategic-level surface water management plan for London by 2012; x) support the construction of the Thames and Lee Tunnels; xi) a survey of sewer misconnections as part of the surveys at the time of sale of a property; xii) identify ways in which the management of sewage can provide renewable energy and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.
- k) Draft [Municipal Waste Management Strategy](#) (London's Wasted Resource) The Strategy is made up of six key policy chapters: i) Policy 1 - Inform producers and consumers of the value of reducing, reusing and recycling; ii) Policy 2 – London will have a greenhouse gas standard for municipal waste management activities to reduce their impact on climate change; iii) Policy 3 – Capture the economic benefits of waste management; iv) Policy 4 – London to achieve 50 per cent municipal waste recycling or composting performance (including anaerobic digestion) by 2020 and 60 per cent by 2031; v) Policy 5 - Catalyzing municipal waste infrastructure in London, particularly low-carbon technologies; vi) Policy 6 – Achieving a high level of street cleanliness.
- l) Mayor's [Ambient Noise Strategy](#) (Sunder City - 2004) sets out a comprehensive agenda aimed at securing support for minimising noise and improving soundscape quality across the capital. Priorities include: i) Securing good, noise reducing surfaces on Transport for London's roads; ii) Securing a night aircraft ban across London; iii) reducing noise through better planning and design of new housing. Other aims include: less disruptive streetworks, encouraging quieter vehicles, smoothing traffic flow, 'Streets for People' and similar measures, developing a Traffic Noise Action Programme for TfL roads, trialling fuel cell and hybrid-electric buses, improving railway track quality and maintenance, securing photovoltaic noise barriers, and promoting exemplary acoustic design more widely.

In addition

- m) [Skills and Employment Strategy for London](#) (2009-2014) takes into account the impact of the recession and the steps necessary to contribute to recovery. It maintains the

strategic goals for employers, Londoners and the simplification of the employment and skills system as well as establishing a set of short term priorities to March 2011. The three strategic aims are i) work with employers to support them in developing their businesses and keeping London’s economy competitive to provide more job and skills opportunities to Londoners; ii) support Londoners to improve their skills, job and advancement prospects through integrated employment support and training opportunities; and iii) create a fully integrated, customer-focused skills and employment system. Identified targets include: i) close the gap in employment between London and the UK to 2%; ii) reduce the gap in employment within London for BAME, disabled people and lone parents from 19.4% to 16%; and iii) increase the percentage of Londoners with a qualification to 92.4%. <http://www.london.gov.uk/lseb/strategy.jsp>

The London Research Challenges Proposal

10. It is proposed to set up six working groups call ‘translation Groups’ under the *London Research Excellence Group*. Each corresponds (in general) to one or more of the Mayor’s strategies. Provisionally the six groups are:

Translation group	Mayoral Strategy	
Environment	Climate change adaptation strategy	
	Climate change mitigation and energy strategy	
	Air Quality Strategy	
	London Water Strategy	
	Municipal Waste Management Strategy	
	Ambient Noise Strategy	
Health	The London Health Strategy	
Economy	The Economic Development Strategy	
	Skills and Employment Strategy for London	
Culture	London Cultural Strategy	
Planning	The London Housing Strategy	
Transport	Transport Strategy	

11. *The London Plan* is considered separately.

Stage 1: How Working Groups will Operate

12. *Terms of Reference*: Each working group will be asked to examine the Mayoral strategy or strategies relevant to their theme and to determine how the aspirations contained in the strategy can be translated into research questions capable of being addressed by groups of London HEIs and their partners.

13. *Membership of the Working Groups.* Each working group will comprise 3-5 members. These should comprise: a) an independent rapporteur who is familiar with the themes being considered; b) 2-3 research specialists in the field(s); c) a business representative drawn from a relevant business sector; d) a representative from a relevant third sector agency working on one or more of the fields.
14. *Resources.* Each working group will be given: i) hard and electronic copies of the relevant Mayoral Strategies; ii) a 'starting brief', drawn up by Mayoral officials, which may draw out some of the details in the published strategy; iii) meeting rooms and reasonable administrative costs (including some travel); iv) a rapporteur to record their discussions and prepare an agreed final statement; v) an opportunity to meet GLA officials responsible for the strategies they are considering.
15. *Ways of Working.* Each group is free to work in the manner which best suits their goals. However discussion should concentrate on *how* the stated objectives of the strategy might be met or solved by elements of the London research base; the groups are *not* intended to critique the strategies, nor offer solutions that cannot be met, at least in part, by one or more HEIs (although partnerships outside London or the UK are encouraged).
16. *Outputs of the Working Groups.* It is expected that each working group, through its rapporteur, will provide a **written report** comprising: a) a list of **research challenges** drawn from the strategy that can be met by London HEIs and their partners; the research challenges should be framed as research questions that are readily interpreted by the HE research community. In addition, the groups should also suggest: b) **research partners** able to address the question (ideally at PI or research centre level); c) **funding sources** that might be accessed to undertake the proposed research; d) existing **research projects** that bear, in part or wholly, upon the question. Working Groups may suggest at their discretion other aspects relating to the meeting of objectives set out in the strategies, such as related research.
17. *Quality assurance of results.* Reports submitted by the Transition Groups must be signed off by the Group itself and will also be submitted to the *Research Excellence Group* for final quality assurance.

Stage 2: Publicizing the London Research Challenges

18. *Compendium Report.* Once all working group reports have been received London Higher will collate them into a single document. The document will be professional designed and published electronically via relevant website; a limited number of hard copies will be produce for dissemination to key stakeholders.
19. *London Research Challenge Conference.* London Higher and its partners will convene a Research Challenge Conference that will aim to bring together those partners cited in the Challenges Report, relevant funders and Mayoral representatives to: a) discuss the solutions identified; and b) where possible to facilitate the progression of the research questions into funding proposals.

20. *Moving towards funding.* It is recognized that further work may be required to move the identified challenges to a point where funding can be secured. The project will seek to offer additional consultant time to participating HEIs to assist them in developing related funding proposals.

Stage 3: Evaluation the success of the Challenges

21. *Evaluation Report.* London Higher will engage an independent agency to conduct an evaluation of the initiative aiming to: a) how many of the original research questions have been secured funding; b) an analysis of the reasons why some research questions were not taken forward; c) an estimation of how, and in what ways, the London research base has contributed to meeting the Mayor's objectives.

22. *Outcomes.* The outcomes are expected to be: a) the London research base is showcased globally as a pioneer in addressing the challenges of major cities; b) the profile of London HEIs is raised with city authorities and regional/national bodies; c) research conducted in London is recognized by the public (and national bodies) as relevant to the modern day world; d) there is a positive impact on London and the lives of Londoners.

Timescale

23. This is a **three-stage project** over a **one year** period. We estimate to establish the first trial groups in January 2011.