

CENTRE FOR LONDON

London Futures

Workshop pack

#MyFutureLondon

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What is London Futures?

London lacks a new shared vision for the future.

The London Futures review is a once in a generation opportunity to take a long term, strategic approach to the city, led by Centre for London.

Centre for London is the capital's dedicated think tank. Our mission is to develop new solutions to London's critical challenges and advocate for a fair and prosperous global city.

In 2020 we published *'London at a crossroads'*, the first part of the review. It provided a summary of London's history and development, the global challenges facing the city and their impact on building London's future.

To build this vision, we need to establish what Londoners want the future to be like and what the city's priorities should be.

Why now?

In **1991** a report called London: World City was published. It was the last big strategic review of the city. It argued that London could be a leading world city, a key hub of the global economy. The recommendations included enhancing London's infrastructure, more active marketing of the city, and a return to citywide government.

By **2000** London had a new Mayor and London Assembly, the two parts of the Greater London Authority (GLA). A new economic development agency and promotional agencies for tourism and inward investment were created, while a business grouping, London First, also emerged. These each, in turn, helped to remake the city.

What is this pack for?

We want to help you explore the state of London today and what kind of London you would like to see in 30 years' time.

We've designed this workshop pack to help people engage with groups and lead discussions about London's future, and feed thoughts back into the London Futures review.

It aims to help groups debate and decide which aspects of London's future are most important, and so deserve more attention now and in the future.

Your feedback will help to shape a new vision for the city, and could help convince the Mayor, the boroughs, and national government to work towards your priorities.

Whilst the slides provided are guides, please steer the session in a way that best suits your group. The workshop should last no more than one hour.

How to use these slides

Slides 8-19 provide a summary of the first section of our 'London at a crossroads' report, London Today. It gives an overview of the following topics with accompanying data and graphs that you can present to your group:

- **London's people**
- **London's economy and business**
- **London's places and the environment**
- **London's institutions**
- **London and the UK**
- **London and the world**

Feel free to present all the content, or sections relevant to your group. We have provided suggested discussion points to steer the conversation. For more information on each of the topics please refer to the corresponding chapter in the [*'London at a crossroads'*](#) report.

Slides 26 - 42 contains group exercises and illustrations of the possible London Futures that could come about through prioritising different aspects of city life. Priorities can be in tension with another. We set out some challenges facing London, and five scenarios to explore these tensions.

We would like you to engage your group with these scenarios, and ideally, come to a consensus of what your preferred London future would look like. We have provided some example exercises but please feel free to include your own.

Some icebreaker questions:

What makes a good city?

Thinking about your local area, what makes it attractive?

What is not appealing about it?

Why would you tell someone to move to London?

Or the reverse?

Activity time: 10 minutes

London's people

After decades of decline, London's population has grown sharply since the early 1990s. It may grow by two million by 2050.

What went well

London has successfully absorbed this growth, becoming much more diverse, high social cohesion.

What went less well

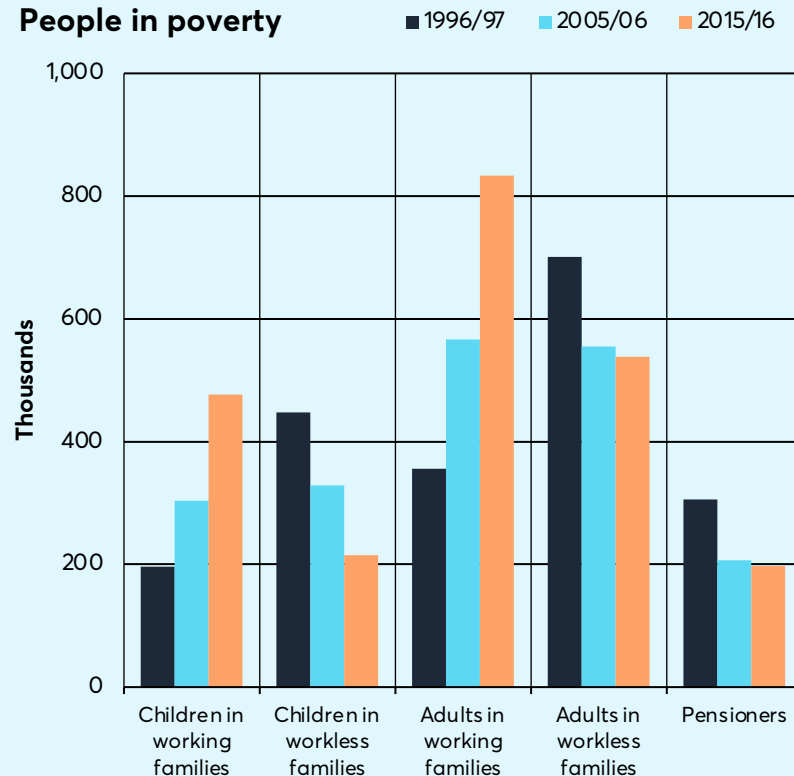
Inequalities in wealth, income, education, employment, safety and health. More Londoners live in poverty than in any other part of the UK.

London's unemployment rate had plummeted since the 1990s – pre-covid there was nearly full employment.

But growth has been in low-paid city serving sectors as well as specialised high value services.

So, in-work poverty has increased sharply. Poverty is higher than any other region – largely because of housing costs.

People in poverty





Credit: Fred Rivett

Discussion time: 10 minutes

Do we want London's population to continue growing?

What does an ageing population mean for London?

Which aspects of inequality matter most,
and what might we do to reduce them?

London's economy and businesses

Home to 14 per cent of the UK's population, London now accounts for 24 per cent of its economic output.

What went well

Economy has boomed. Employment has grown.
A global hub for professional services, creative industries, education and HQs.

What went less well

Productivity growth has stalled.
Wages are low for many.

Growth in the capital has been faster than the rest of the UK's over 20 years; the capital now accounts for 25 per cent of the national economy.

London's economy has specialised in a range of advanced financial and business services.

Productivity – broadly how much economic output is generated for each hour worked - in London remains ahead of other cities and regions, but growth in productivity has stalled in recent years.

Median hourly wage in fastest growing sectors, 2018



Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey, 2020



Credit: Carlotta Bognesi

Discussion time: 10 minutes

What are likely to be the key industries in London's long-term future?

How might we enable Londoners to compete more effectively for London's future jobs?

How might London take advantage of the opportunities of Brexit, and reduce any negative impact?

How do we want the economy to change as we recover from Covid?

London's places and environment

London has grown largely within its boundaries, building clusters of skyscrapers in the city centre, and much denser residential development in some neighbourhoods.

What went well

Transport investment improved connectivity and helped London accommodate its growth. Many areas redeveloped. Air quality has improved, but is still poor.

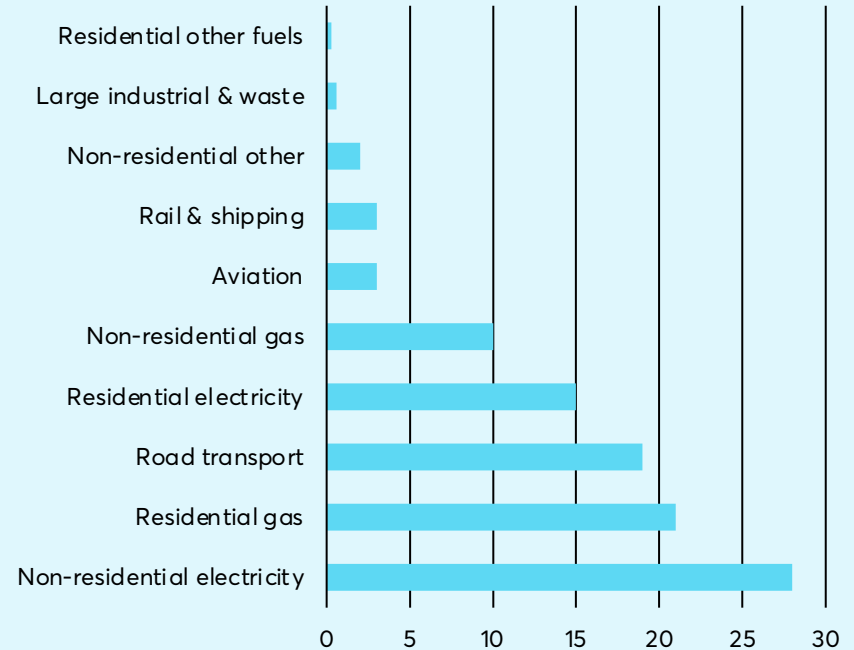
What went less well

Little progress in decarbonising transport and heating. Congestion still major challenge. Housing costs and overcrowding. Homelessness has re-emerged.

The UK power supply is rapidly decarbonising, but decarbonizing transport and buildings - especially heating - is not on track.

Electrification of transport and heating, and reducing consumption through insulation, smarter services and active travel need more impetus to meet net zero targets.

% of total CO2 emissions



Source: Mayor of London, London Environment Strategy, 2018



Credit: Edward Howell

Discussion time: 10 minutes

What should London do about air travel, given the climate emergency and air travel's former role in the global economy?

How might London's transport needs change in the future? How can we keep moving, yet also reach net-zero emissions?

How might we shift to lower-carbon buildings and homes in London?

London's institutions

London returned to metropolitan governance in 2000 with its own Mayor and Assembly.

What went well

The mayoralty has been seen as a success, innovating in transport, winning and delivering the 2012 Olympics, and gaining more powers over planning and housing.

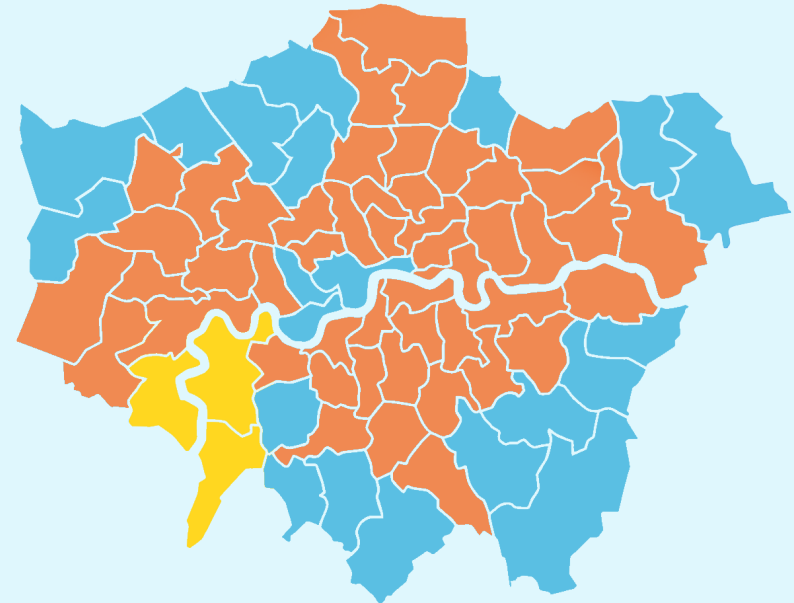
What went less well

Devolution to the capital has stalled. There are concerns about the longer-term implications of clashes over key policies like funding Transport for London.

London also faces a particular set of challenges. A government that came to power pledging to "level up" the UK economy, and shift economic and political power out of the UK capital, has talked more of devolution outside London than in it.

London's political map

Conservative Labour Liberal Democrat



Source: 2019 General Election: London political map, [London Councils](#).



Credit: Etienne Godiard

Discussion time: 10 minutes

Will London's institutions be fit for purpose during the rest of the 21st century? If not, where are changes or reforms most needed?

More specifically, does London government work well? Where are the major institutional pressures?

Should London be made more democratic, and if so, how?

London and the UK

As the UK's only global city, London's profile and its growth are seen as a problematic part of the UK's regional imbalances.

What went well

London's success has helped to fund the rest of the UK, and has acted as a magnet.

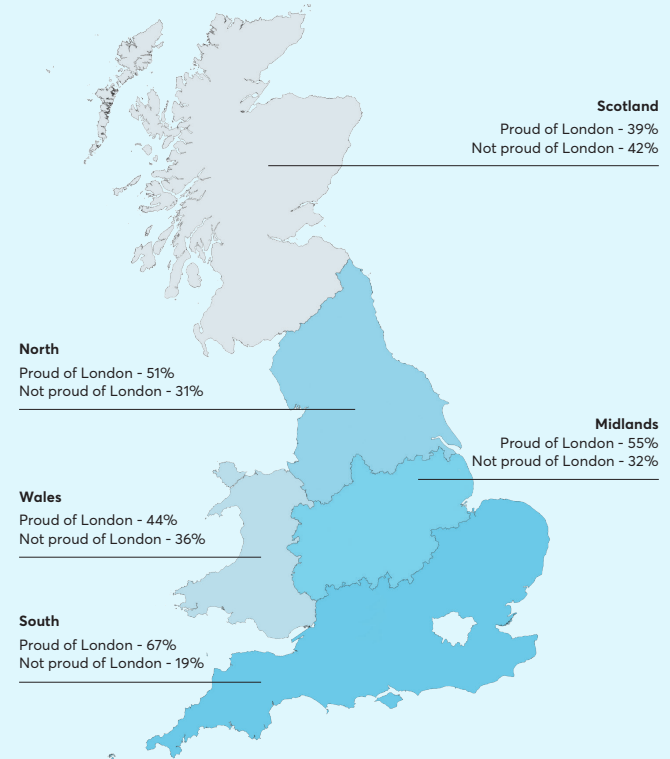
What went less well

London's economic, political and cultural dominance has a cost. There is growing focus on 'levelling up' from government and the media.

While incomes are higher in London, housing costs bring average disposable incomes to a similar level to other UK regions.

London attracts significant public investment, but it pays £40 billion more in taxes than it costs in services.

Pride in London as capital city of the UK, by region





Credit: Benjamin Davies

Discussion time: 10 minutes

How could the “levelling up” agenda be used to tackle London’s challenges?

What other issues are there in London’s relationship with the UK?

What could London learn, or emulate, from other parts of the UK?

London and the world

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Composite rank of perception and reputation of major cities among global audiences (visitors, investors, citizens, etc)

Jan 2013 – June 2016		
Rank	City	ELO Algorithm Score (max = +1; min = -1)
1	Sydney	0.84
2	Vienna	0.75
3	Venice	0.63
4	Stockholm	0.54
5	London	0.54
6=	Edinburgh	0.45
6=	Copenhagen	0.45
6=	Vancouver	0.45
9	Geneva	0.35
10	Munich	0.35
11=	Barcelona	0.26
11=	Melbourne	0.26
13	Zurich	0.21
14	Montreal	0.03

London
has fallen
9 places

June 2016 - present		
Rank	City	ELO Algorithm Score (max = +1; min = -1)
1	Vienna	0.65
2	Sydney	0.61
3	Stockholm	0.51
4	Copenhagen	0.45
5	Vancouver	0.45
6=	Melbourne	0.41
6=	Toronto	0.33
6=	Montreal	0.32
9	Tokyo	0.23
10	Rome	0.19
11=	Zurich	0.19
11=	Barcelona	0.18
13	Venice	0.17
14	London	0.16



Credit: Shane Rounce

Discussion time: 10 minutes

What more could be done to improve London's reputation globally?

Is the global elite's view of London important in the same way as regular citizens' views?
If so (or not), why?

How important, relative to other priorities, is London being open to the world in terms of labour, capital and ideas?

Major forces shaping our world

Today's world is changing, perhaps faster than ever, many forces extrinsic to London and the UK will combine to profoundly influence London's future.

Our 'London at a crossroads' report explores six major forces shaping our world.

**Recovery from
coronavirus**

**Climate
change goals**

**Disruptive
technologies
and services**

**Rise of
nationalism
and populism**

**Continued rise
of the Asian
economies**

**Ageing global
population**

Discussion time: 5 - 10 minutes

Which of these forces will be most important in shaping London's next 30 years?

Recovery from
coronavirus

Climate
change goals

Disruptive
technologies
and services

Rise of
nationalism
and populism

Continued rise
of the Asian
economies

Ageing global
population

**What are the greatest challenges
facing London in the long run?**

**Here are a list of examples of challenges facing London.
 Discuss in your group what you think the most pressing challenges are.
 Try to order them from most important to least.
 How well is London doing in solving them?**

Economic inequality	Limited devolution	Rehabilitating public transport	Unemployment
Lack of joined up governance with South-East	Cybersecurity and new technologies	Future of air travel	Racism
Housing costs	Long term covid-19 health impacts	Road congestion	Changing migration patterns
Growing health inequalities	Poor air quality	Warming climate	Hospitality and creative sector bounce back
Obesity + inactivity	Unaffordable/overstretched care provision	Terrorism	Future of Central London/office space
Decarbonisation	Public transport investment	Vulnerability to poverty and ill health	Future of the high street



Illustration: Andreas Chronopoulos

Tensions and trade-offs

Understanding where London is today helps us explore what type of future might be possible.

With certain futures comes with it a trade-off, a necessary feature of politics.



Illustration: Andreas Chronopoulos

Scenarios

To help us explore these trade-offs we created five illustrative scenarios. These scenarios aim to strike a balance between realism and challenge and are designed to stimulate a debate.

We have focused on what priorities for Londoners these scenarios reflect, as well as key policies and changes.



Scenarios

Each scenario prioritises two complementary values of city life.

For example, we combined security and resilience with health, and created a scenario that explores what London might be possible if we really prioritized health and security outcomes over a long period.

The next five slides outline each hypothetical scenario in more detail.

Scenario: Safety First London

Investment is switched towards public health, security and adapting to the warming climate.

Epidemic control measures piloted during the first wave of COVID-19 develop into new and permanent features of city life. More is spent on ensuring a resilient economy and society.

Security of food, medical supplies and biosecurity become paramount, alongside the control of citizens' movements and the monitoring of their health using new technologies.

London's flood defences and a new fund for cooling the city during heat spikes are the most popular policies of the 2032 mayoral election.

A new 'moonshot' target to eradicate childhood obesity catches the imagination and shapes education, food policy and street design.



Totemic project:
Thames Barrier II

Net Zero by: 2050

Population by 2050:
9 million

Key changes

- Security, health and resilience prioritised
- Primary healthcare and social care expanded
- Data-led policing and city management
- Mandatory citizen health monitoring
- Epidemic control measures
- Adaptation for warmer climate

Possible impact

- Limited aviation recovery
- Health improvements including dramatic drops in childhood obesity
- Future shocks mitigated
- Loss of privacy and liberty

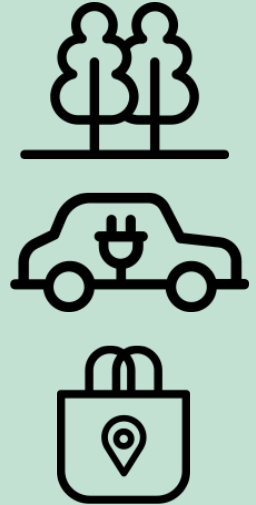
Scenario: 15-minute London

London's leaders back neighbourhoods and low-carbon living as the centrepiece of a green recovery. They commit to delivering net-zero greenhouse gas emissions 20 years ahead of national targets and plan accordingly.

Bold targets are set for eliminating fossil fuels from London. The era of the combustion engine and the gas boiler is coming to an end. Energy efficiency measures are widely adopted too. Businesses and supply chains accelerate towards low-carbon alternatives. Air travel never recovers fully.

Londoners give up their cars as a London wide road user charging scheme bites. They instead switch to the rehabilitated public transport network, bikes, e-bikes and a new generation of small, electric vehicles.

Central London office life repopulates with residents. Across London, local groups increasingly take charge of housing homeless people, primary education, social care, and some aspects of healthcare.



Totemic project: Some airport capacity converted to solar energy farm

Net Zero by: 2030

Population by 2050: 9 million

Key changes

- Burning fossil fuels banned by 2030
- Car use restricted in inner London
- Road user charging expanded
- Community organisations coalesce into "parish" bodies, gaining power over planning, schools

Possible impact

- Local amenities flourish
- Petrol/diesel cars and gas boilers eradicated
- Central business, shopping and entertainment district shrinks
- Traffic lower on main roads; journeys shorter, but more frequent
- Much less air travel and international trade

Scenario: Londependence

A new cross-party consensus delivers unprecedented new powers to London as part of a new constitutional settlement.

A new federal district delineates national and London government more clearly. New tax powers are given to the GLA, as well as new responsibilities for health, housing, social care and even welfare. Boroughs flourish too as powers and revenue cascade down.

A new Citizens' Assembly is established that advises and complements the formal London government bodies. Some government departments and functions exit the capital. New policies for London are trialled, tackling homelessness, housing affordability, inequality and competitiveness (including a fast-track London visa scheme for EU nationals).

London takes full control on planning matters and fast-tracks new rules to allow development of new homes to London-specific standards.



Totemic project: London visa scheme

Net Zero by: 2045

Population by 2050: 10 million

Key changes

- London acquires major new powers to govern itself
- Some national government functions leave
- Could be part of federalised UK
- London government grows as national agencies are devolved e.g. NHS, welfare
- London Citizens' Assembly
- New London planning regime to deliver

Possible impact

- City Hall expanded
- Whitehall federal district/repurposed
- Increasingly tailored solutions to longstanding issues, e.g. homelessness, migration
- More London-specific taxes
- More affordable "London Standard" homes built
- Less support from central government in future crises

Scenario: London Megacapital

The “levelling up” agenda falls away and a new pro-London attitude emerges, driven by the need to raise tax revenues given the post-coronavirus fiscal strain.

London reasserts its dominant position in the UK. Economic growth is pursued above other goals, with priority given to global connectivity. Air travel, despite carbon goals, is prioritised in the recovery.

London’s global business sectors build back strongly from the 2020 low point. “Brand London” is re-embraced as a core part of the post-EU “Global Britain” push for increased trade and tourism. London’s startup scene rebounds and becomes worldleading.

Greater London’s boundaries expand beyond the M25 territory. But some devolution is reversed: national government takes direct control of some areas and pushes the pace on housing development and other significant growth projects. Crossrail 2 is given the go-ahead to relieve congestion and overcrowding.



Totemic project: London boundary expands, absorbing Epsom, Watford, Loughton and Dartford

Net Zero by: 2075

Population by 2050: 15 million

Key changes

- Maximising London’s economic growth London’s direct sphere of influence and power grows to wider south east
- Greater London boundary expands
- Capital retains and expands national and international power
- Pro-business deregulation
- Directed public investment stimulates innovation

Possible impact

- Incomes rise
- More concentration of economic activity in London
- Pressure on transport network
- Some devolution reversed
- Crossrail 2 goes ahead
- Growing wealth inequality

Scenario: Levelled Up London

In 2023 London's Mayor, the boroughs and national government agree a new plan to make London fairer.

New investments to protect London's most fragile people take shape. New laws create greater powers to requisition empty homes in order to house the most disadvantaged. Street homelessness is eliminated.

A London Minimum Wage is launched. Public transport is made free to all, and radical schemes to address age-old inequalities are piloted, with the most successful scaled up.

Parents, minorities, and the lower-skilled benefit. But new restrictions are placed on immigration into London. Population growth reverses, and the economic output per capita grows only slowly. Nevertheless, Londoners become more equal in terms of income, wealth, rights and opportunities, and relative poverty drops, which is reflected in a new civic ethos across social groups.



Totemic project:
Free public transport

Net Zero by: 2055

Population by 2050:
8 million

Key changes

- Equality first
- Radical redistribution of wealth
- Empty homes requisitioned
- Income equalisation measures (e.g. London Minimum Wage, salary caps)
- Public services improved and free to all
- Public spaces opened up more and used by all

Possible impact

- Poverty reduced
- Inequalities between groups reduced
- Social mobility enhanced
- Street homelessness eradicated
- Business threatens exodus
- Population growth reverses

What would be your top three preferred outcomes for London's long-term future, and how would you rank them?

Less unequal	Fewer regulations	Better place in UK constitution	Cleaner air
Easier to get around	Less discriminatory	Better governance and democracy	More fun
More innovative	Fewer carbon emissions	Fairer	Wealthier
More creative	Better stewardship of nature	Less poverty	Better housing
Kinder	Better for young and old	More economically dynamic	More green space
More resilient	Global leader	Better connected	Less surveillance
Cleaner	Safer	Healthier	More affordable

What would you like to see in London?

What would you like to see in London?

Less unequal

Cleaner air

Easier to get around

More fun

More innovative

Wealthier

More creative

Better housing

Kinder

More green space

More resilient

Less surveillance

Cleaner

More affordable

Activity time: 30 minutes

1. Decide your individual preferences **(5 mins)**
2. Using breakout sessions, split into groups of minimum 2 people and come to a consensus of the top 3 preferred outcomes **(10 mins)**
3. Come together as one group to share and discuss each groups preference. **(5 mins)**
4. Try to come to an overall group consensus of the top three preferred outcomes. What is significant about these outcomes compared to the others? **(10 mins)**

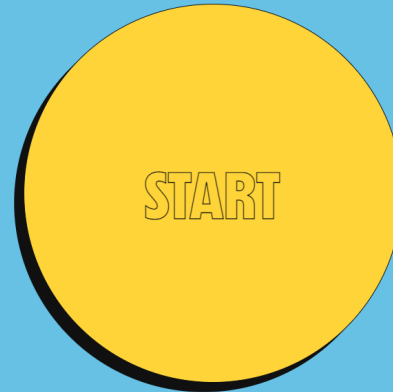
Visit futures.centreforlondon.org/have-your-say to complete a quiz that will determine the scenario that best fits your version of London.

Activity time: 5 minutes

Discuss your result with the rest of the group.
Does it fit the vision for London you had in mind?

**HAVE YOUR
SAY IN
LONDON'S
FUTURE!**

To create a shared vision for London to 2050 and beyond, we need to understand what's most important to you.



What should the vision for London in 2050 be?

Here are some suggestions, can you think of others?

Fair, prosperous and green	A data driven city	Opportunities for all	The best big city in the world
A city for all ages	Wage growth and high living standards	Community spirit /neighbourhood cohesion	Business capital of the world
Travel equity for all	Even greater London	A sustainability champion	Culture on every street
A collaborative city	Global capital	Culture capital	Innovative and dynamic
4 day working week	A one planet city	Top quality working conditions	A city of great neighbourhoods

Thank you for your participation



Illustration: Andreas Chronopoulos

Your input will be fed into our second report, setting out a new vision for London which will be released in the second half of 2021. In the meantime there are many ways to get involved:

Explore the rest of the 'Your Future London' site and share your image of your future London on social media with the hashtag #MyFutureLondon

Complete our [consultation form](#) and share more thoughts of what you think the London of the future should look like.

Read our [London at a Crossroads](#) report which details the sections explored in this pack.