

“London is a world-class city with unique and world-class challenges. Yet strangely it has no think-tank of its own...”

THE CENTRE FOR LONDON AT DEMOS

Ben Rogers and Kitty Ussher

March 2011

About Demos

Demos is a think-tank focused on power and politics. Our unique approach challenges the traditional, 'ivory tower' model of policymaking by giving a voice to people and communities. We work together with the groups and individuals who are the focus of our research, including them in citizens' juries, deliberative workshops, focus groups and ethnographic research.

Through our high quality and socially responsible research, Demos has established itself as the leading independent think tank in British politics. Our work is driven by the goal of a society populated by free, capable, secure and powerful citizens.

Find out more about our work at www.demos.co.uk

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While London is a hugely successful, world-class city, it also faces world-class challenges. Yet strangely for a city of seven and a half million people - the largest urban settlement in Europe, generating nearly a third of the UK's GDP, and with extremely high levels of poverty - London does not have a think tank of its own.

This paper sets-out why we need a new Centre for London, and what its role will be.

The Centre for London will:

- be a multi-disciplinary and politically independent research institute
- focus primarily on issues confronting London and the problems facing Londoners;
- act as a critical friend to London's leaders and policy makers, and a credible voice for London in national and international policy debates;
- be grown by Demos, Britain's leading independent think tank;
- potentially cover all policy areas of relevance to London, but with a work programme structured according to robustly established research priorities;
- deploy both quantitative and qualitative research techniques;
- look for support from a mixture of private sector, voluntary sector and public sector funders;
- work collaboratively with its funders and supporters, drawing on their experience and expertise;
- offer a busy annual programme of conversations, seminars, conferences, speeches, and other events;

- promote its research and influence through a high profile presence in the print, broadcast and digital media.

Leaders in London government, local public services, charities, community organisations and London businesses have all welcomed the prospect of a new think tank.

WHY A THINK TANK FOR LONDON?

London challenges at a glance

London has taken great strides over the last decade. It is the most economically productive region of the UK and the only English region with a directly elected government. It has, so far, weathered the recession relatively successfully, and probably won't be as badly hit as some other regions by the public spending squeeze. But it also faces very great challenges.

- London is the most unequal region in England, with the highest proportion of people in the top tenth of households nationally and the bottom tenth. It has the highest rate of child poverty (around 40 per cent) and pensioner poverty (22 per cent) of all English regions, the highest rate of severe child poverty, and the highest proportion of working poor. The richest 10 per cent of people in London have 273 times the wealth of the bottom 10 per cent.
- London's economy will almost certainly continue to expand, with the GLA estimating that around half a million new jobs will be created in the next decade. But more than half of these jobs will require degree-level skills – and those that don't will increasingly require 'social skills', like customer service skills and team working skills. Yet only half of young Londoners gain 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and Maths. London's employment rate has consistently lagged behind the national average by between three and five per cent for almost two decades.

- London's population is projected to grow by 1.25 million over the next 20 years. That means London will have to absorb a city larger than Birmingham. Sustained, well-aimed investment in infrastructure including transport, housing, energy, waste and water will be essential if London's competitiveness and innovation are to be maintained.
- London will face increasing competition from long-term rivals in Europe and North America but also emerging cities and city regions in Asia and South America. Ensuring that the capital has robust, maximally effective economic, skills and industrial policies in place going forward will be vital if London is not to fall behind.
- London faces a desperate housing shortage that, on present trends, is set to worsen. London is projected to grow by around 32,000 households a year over the next twenty years but the number of new homes completed in the last decade has never risen above 12,000 and looks set to drop to just 5,500 in 2012. London has more people in temporary accommodation than in any other English region. Moreover the homes that have been built have tended to be small and often poorly designed. In 2000, 34 per cent of new homes were houses, but by 2010 the figure had fallen to 6 per cent.
- To meet current targets London needs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60 per cent from their 1990s levels by 2025. This is a far more demanding target than for the UK as a whole. As a low-lying, high-density, estuarial city, London is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change – flooding, overheating and drought. London has relatively poor provision of green space and green infrastructure and Londoners are less happy than other people in England with the quality of their local environment.
- As the only 'region' in England with directly elected government, London has a significant strategic advantage. But the mayor's responsibilities are more limited than many comparable cities and public services are far from well-joined

up or sufficiently strategic: PwC have estimated that saving of around 15 per cent or £11bn each year could be made to public spending in London if services were better integrated.

- Crime has fallen significantly in London over the last 15 years, and satisfaction with way area is policed has increased from 40 per cent to 63 per cent. But crime remains a major concern, especially in poorer areas, and improving policing is a top priority for Londoners. London remains an attractive target for terrorists.

Public policy in London

The extent to which London rises to the challenges it faces, and makes the most of its many opportunities will depend crucially on the quality of strategic decisions made by national government, the GLA, borough councils and local services.

Fortunately London already has a strong ‘policy sector’, with a host of non-governmental organisations contributing to policy debate, informing policy development and holding decision-makers to account. These include some of the best universities and research centres in the world (such as the LSE and UCL) and a range of national think tanks (the Young Foundation, RSA, Policy Exchange, ippr, Centre for Cities and Demos itself), which, while not focusing exclusively on London, work on issues of relevance to it. Private sector consultancies and pressure groups, and third sector organisations offer further policy expertise.

There is however no independent think tank devoted to looking at London’s issues in the round and dedicated to promoting the interests of London and Londoners. We believe that such a think tank will make a vital contribution and will quickly come to seem indispensable.

THE CORE IDEA

The Centre for London is an independent, multi-disciplinary policy institute that focuses solely on London. It will act as a critical friend to London's leaders and policy makers, and a credible voice for London in national and international policy debates.

Through maintaining a sustained and holistic focus on London's future, the centre will improve the quality of policy making in the city.

The need for a dedicated London think tank has, arguably, never been greater than it is at present. The capital's policy capacity is not getting any stronger. Capital Ambition is winding-up. LDA funding has been cut, and policy units of the GLA, London Councils and individual borough councils will come under increasing pressure as the cuts to local government spending bite.

The centre was launched in 2011. By 2012, the Centre for London will be an established and respected voice, contributing, for instance, to debates around the GLA elections and the Olympics.

The Centre for London will be 'grown' by Demos, with a view to becoming independent in time. Demos, located a few hundred metres from City Hall, is ideally suited to support the development of the new centre. It is one of the UK's best-known and most successful think tanks, with strong ties into central and local government, and across all the main political parties and a proud track record of ground breaking policy research, including influential work on London policy. It also has close relations with think tanks around the world, including many that work on urban issues.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The **vision**:

A radically fairer, more prosperous, democratic and sustainable London.

Its **mission**:

To promote understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing London and lead in the development of rigorous and radical policy ideas for the capital.

Its **objectives** are to:

- Foster discussion and debate about the future of London
- Build collaborative networks among leaders, thinkers and policy-makers across the private, public and not-for-profit sectors
- Undertake research into the challenges and opportunities facing the city
- Develop new policy ideas and foster practical social innovation
- Challenge policies that are poorly formulated and help hold politicians and other leaders to account for their decisions.

POSITIONING AND GOVERNANCE

Positioning and Governance

The Centre for London is, like Demos itself, politically non-partisan, but broadly progressive in its values. It will not be afraid to criticise government, where criticism is based on robust research and evidence. Its work will be overseen by an advisory board of leaders and experts drawn from the worlds of business, politics, public services, universities and the voluntary sector. The board will seek a cross-party membership to ensure it was able to influence and engage across the political spectrum.

RESEARCH, ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

Research

We recognise that the success of the Centre for London will depend on the calibre of its research and quality of its thinking. Demos already has an exceptionally strong team of researchers in place, with particular expertise in economics, statistics, and qualitative methods including focus groups and deliberative workshops. The new centre will draw on this expertise and seek to build on it. It will employ a wide variety of research techniques, quantitative and qualitative. Its work programme will combine ambitious, large-scale research projects with shorter, occasional publications and papers. Throughout we will attach a particular importance to drawing on the expertise and networks of our partners and supporters.

Focus

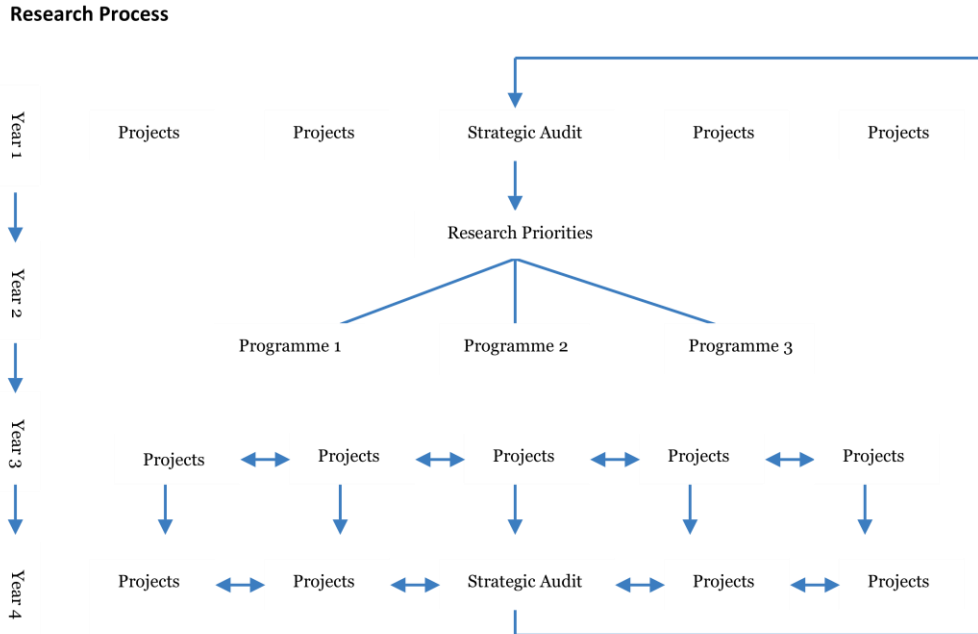
The Centre for London's work will potentially cover all policy areas of relevance to the capital, including but not limited to: economic and industrial policy; environmental policy; public service reform and efficiency; digital policy; education and skills policy; health and well-being; crime security and community safety; planning; transport; housing; urban design; culture and sport; political reform and democratic renewal; civil renewal and community cohesion.

The centre's work programme will be structured according to robustly established research priorities, reviewed every year and renewed every three or four years.

A strategic audit for London

While the research programme of the centre has yet to be agreed, we envision its first major project being the creation of a strategic review or audit the challenges and opportunities facing London. We believe a strategic audit of this kind could make a large contribution to policy thinking for the capital, and inform debate leading to the Mayoral election of 2012, while also structuring the centre's subsequent work programme. However the centre will also pursue a

number of smaller, high profile research projects alongside the strategic audit, so helping to put the centre on the ‘map’.



Events and communications

The Centre for London will offer a busy annual programme of seminars, conferences, speeches, launches and other events, cumulating in an annual conference on the future of London.

It will promote its research and influence through a strong presence in the print, broadcast and digital media.

CONTACT

For more information about the Centre for London, please contact:

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APPENDIX 1

PROJECT TEAM

Dr Ben Rogers

Ben has been appointed as the Director of the Centre for London at Demos. He is an Associate Fellow of Ippr and Demos and a Visiting Fellow of the RSA. He was an Associate Director of ippr 2003 – 2007 and has subsequently led strategy teams in Haringey Council, The Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit and DCLG. Ben has written several acclaimed books on philosophy and history, published in the UK and US and is an experienced journalist and broadcaster. He is a contributing editor of Prospect Magazine and was chair of judges for this year’s Prospect Think Tank of the Year awards.

Kitty Ussher

Kitty is the Director of Demos. An economist by training she has worked on economic policy in and out of government for the last 17 years. She was Economic Secretary to the Treasury at the start of the credit crunch, covering the collapse of Northern Rock and the run-up to the Lehmans crisis and also had a spell in the Department for Work and Pensions helping to oversee the response to the recession for the most vulnerable. From 2001-04 she worked as a special adviser to the then Department for Trade and Industry on industrial and trade policy. As MP for Burnley from 2005-10 she helped get a university, new schools, better housing and a new health centre. She holds degrees in economics from Balliol College, Oxford and Birkbeck College, London and was also a councillor in Lambeth where she chaired the finance and environment scrutiny committees.

Julia Margo

Julia is the Deputy Director of Demos. Her areas of expertise include social trend analysis, including demographic change, social mobility, social and emotional well-being and character development. She is a regular commentator in the international and

national press and previously was Associate Director and Head of the Strategic Research Team at the Institute for Public Policy Research (ippr). She was also Editor of Public Policy Research (PPR) the leading policy and politics journal published by Wiley-Blackwell. Prior to working at ippr she worked as commissioning editor on the Sunday Times' News Review, and as Parliamentary Researcher to Paddy Ashdown and Simon Hughes.