



convergence

Within 20 years the communities who host the 2012 Games will have the same social and economic chances as their neighbours across London

Turning slogans into actions

Themes

1. Making aspiration happen, data and targets
2. “Are we winning?” The inevitable need for measurement
3. The Challenge of Sticking with it! Convergence takes time, a long time, time beyond Politicians’ attention span or patience!
4. Putting your money where your mouth is; focussing resources against the noise of demand
5. Capital Development is good but also a distraction
6. Sorting the wheat from the chaff: improvement in target communities needs to be measured separately from the impacts of gentrification in all its guises
7. Levelling up – Well, will it?

Background

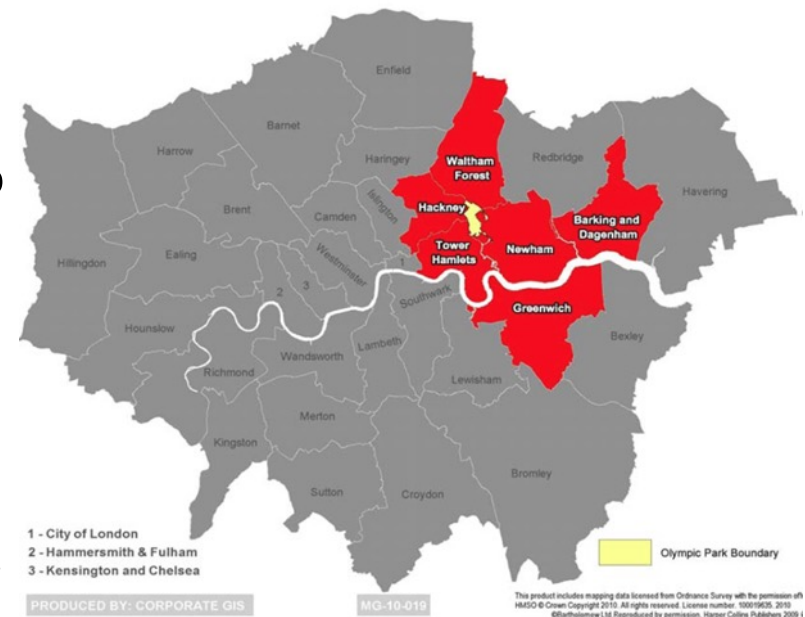
The UK Olympic and Paralympic Bid stated that:

“The most enduring legacy of the Olympics will be the regeneration of an entire community for the direct benefit of everyone who lives there”

- October 2009 the Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) brought together a vision and strategy to achieve the regeneration of the people living in the Olympic boroughs under the principle of “Convergence”
- The Convergence principle states that **“within 20 years the communities that host the 2012 Games will have the same social and economic chances as their neighbours across London”**
- In 2011 the Convergence Action Plan was agreed and published jointly between the Host Boroughs and the GLA. Organised around three themes, it attempted to bring together the parties necessary to ensure that the socio-economic conditions of the people of the Host Boroughs/GrowthBoroughs are brought up to that of the average for London

Making aspiration happen, data and targets

- The task was - 20 years to achieve a fair share of London's prosperity for London's poorest boroughs. To reduce the inequality gap in the Olympic Boroughs, (later called the Growth Boroughs) to bring these boroughs up to the average for London.
- To measure this we developed a basket of indicators. Annual reports were published each year showing progress, or lack of it, against the targets.
- Initially we developed a large number of indicators that were regularly monitored and detailed in annual reports. Today we will share just a the few key indicators, updated with recent data.



Data and targets–

Key Measure	London			6 Growth Borough			Gap or difference			2020 Gap Target	Progress
	2009	2016	2022	2009	2016	2022	2009	2016	2022		
Employment rate (Sep) (economically active people in employment)	67.8	73.5	75.2 (Mar 22)	62.5	71.0	73.8	5.3	2.5	1.4	2.5%	Target met
Unemployment rate (Sep)	8.5	6.0	5.4 (Mar 22)	11.4	7.4	6.0 (Mar 22)	2.9	1.4	0.6	1.4%	Target met
Life expectancy: (male)	78.5 (07/09)	80.2 (13/15)	80.3 (18/20)	76.5 (07/09)	78.6 (13/15)	79.0 (18/20)	2.2	1.6	1.3	1.1 years	Target not met
(female)	82.9	84.1	84.3	81.3	82.6	83.2	1.7	1.4	1.1	0.8 years	Target not met

Data and targets–

While the indices of deprivation have not been among the Convergence targets they are widely seen as the bench marks for deprivation and inequality.

The picture shows considerable movement on this, with the situation in all boroughs other than Barking and Dagenham improving significantly.

Borough	Ranking in 2010	Ranking in 2015	Ranking in 2019
Barking & Dagenham	20th	9th	18th
Greenwich	29th	70th	72nd
Hackney	1st	11th	22nd
Newham	2 nd	23rd	53rd
Tower Hamlets	3rd	3rd	44th
Waltham Forest	13th	41st	77th

Themes

“Are we winning?” The inevitable need for measurement

You can't know if your policies to achieve Convergence are working unless, based on the targets you have set, you are able to measure progress, or the lack of it.

The Challenge of Sticking with it! Convergence takes time, a long time, time beyond Politicians' attention span or patience!

Convergence takes a long time, and there is no magic wand. As we found in East London politicians lose interest, add new constraints, move to other newer challenges or simply are replaced by others who never made the commitment. We describe the solution which has worked well for physical development and recommend that an adapted model taken from Development Corporations would be the most elegant solution to coping with the more complex problems of societal convergence.

Themes

Putting your money where your mouth is; focussing resources against the noise of demand

It's no good setting targets unless policy makers are brave enough to channel resources too. This problem is illustrated by the Southern backlash to Northern investment.

Capital Development is good but also a distraction

The Olympic Park Development Corporation has done a good job in turning the park into a living community; but too few of the people for whom Convergence was developed now live there. Also a spatial and development focus is no substitute to the hard work of improving education, health, housing and employment throughout disadvantaged communities; and it often provides a distraction from the more complex challenges. Convergence in East London is not achieved when the Olympic Park is completed! It's a cynical trick to pretend it is.

Themes

Sorting the wheat from the chaff: improvement in target communities needs to be measured separately from the impacts of gentrification in all its guises

As communities are improved and convergence starts to have an effect, it will lead almost certainly to inflows of less disadvantaged people keen to take new jobs and housing and sufficiently articulate to prompt improvements in education and health. Their presence will confuse the data and can be used to "prove", wrongly, that convergence is working.

Levelling up – Well, will it?

We assert that Levelling Up will remain simply a slogan until the Government and its successors can demonstrate that they have put in place the policies and practices that this paper argues for. An industrial estate here and affordable housing there is not levelling up unless it is comprehensive and linked to real life chance improvement which can be measured against data and targets and crucially afforded specific long term funding and other support.